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Agreement mismatch in Uyghur partitives: A split φ-feature analysis

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Abstract. This research presents a novel case study of agreement mismatch in Uyghur partitive DPs, where DPs containing 1st/2nd person pronouns show third-person possessor agreement but 1st/2nd person verbal agreement. I propose a dual-feature analysis in which φ-features split into morphological (φM) and semantic (φS) features, and different probes are relativized to target either type of φ-features. To prevent overgeneration within this system, I introduce the Structural Constraint on Probe Escalation (SCOPE), which dictates that probe specifications escalate monotonically from φM to φS up the syntactic spine. This analysis offers a unified account for both categorical and exceptional patterns in Uyghur partitives, and potentially similar patterns in other languages. By reflecting the basic tendencies of the Agreement Hierarchy, it provides a typologically informed and flexible framework with broader potential to capture hybrid agreement cross-linguistically.

Keywords. agreement mismatch; partitives; phi-features; hybrid agreement; relativized probing; Uyghur; Turkic

1. Introduction. In Uyghur, a Turkic language spoken in Central Asia, two primary types of agreement can be found. The first is subject-verb agreement, in which the subject controls agreement on the finite verb. We also find possessor-possessum agreement, in which the possessor controls agreement on the possessum. Under normal circumstances, the system is mostly regular, such that subjects or possessors reliably trigger co-varying person and number agreement morphology on their respective targets, exemplified in (1) and (2).[1][2]

(1) men xet(-ni) jazd-im/*-i
I letter-ACC wrote-1SG/-3
'I wrote a/the letter.'

(2) (biz-niŋ) dost-ler-imiz/*-i
we-GEN friend-PL-1PL.POSS/-3.POSS
'our friends'

However, this consistency breaks down with the introduction of a specific class of DPs headed by numerals or quantifiers, such as *ikk-imiz* 'two of us' or *bezilir-imiz* 'some of us'. Following Jackendoff (1977) and recent work (Falco & Zamparelli, 2019), I will refer to them as *partitive DPs*. When functioning as a possessor, partitive DPs containing local-person (first- or second-person) pronouns strictly control third-person agreement on the possessum, as shown in (3).

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, the data and judgements presented in this paper were collected from two native Uyghur speaker informants. Both speakers are fluent in standard Uyghur, as spoken in the northwest of China.

[2] Abbreviations used in this paper: 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person, ACC = accusative, GEN = genitive, NOM = nominative, POSS = possessive, NEG = negation, SG = singular, PL = plural.

(3) (biz) ikk-imiz-niŋ dost-ler-i/*-imiz
we two-1PL.POSS-GEN friend-PL-3.POSS/-1PL.POSS
'two of us's friends.' (the friends of two of us's)[3]

Conversely, when functioning as subject of a clause, the same DPs trigger co-varying local-person agreement on the finite verb, as shown in (4).

(4) (biz) ikk-imiz kett-uq/*-i
we two-1PL.POSS left-1PL/-3
'Two of us left.'

A second puzzle occurs with a specific subset of these partitives, headed by elements such as *bir* 'one', *bezilir* 'some', and *hechqaysi* 'none', which I term *exceptional partitives*. Unlike regular partitives (or other nominals), the exceptional partitives show apparent optionality in subject-verb agreement, freely alternating between co-varying local-person and third-person agreement, as shown in (5).

(5) (biz) hechqays-imiz ket-mid-i/-uq[4]
we nobody-1PL.POSS left-NEG-3/-1PL
'None of us left.'

However, in possessor agreement, the only viable agreement option remains third person, as shown in (6).

(6) (biz) hechqays-imiz-niŋ kitab-i/*-imiz
we nobody-1PL.POSS-GEN book-3.POSS/*-1PL.POSS
'none of us's book.'

Table 1 helps summarize the distribution of these agreement patterns in Uyghur.

(All involving a 1/2 pronoun)	Subject Agreement		Possessor Agreement	
	1/2	3	1/2	3
Pronouns	✓	*	✓	*
Partitives	✓	*	*	✓
Excep.Partitives	✓	✓	*	✓

Table 1. Summary of Agreement Pattern for Pronouns and Partitive DPs

In sum, agreement is mismatched for Uyghur partitive DPs: they control co-varying local-person agreement on the verb when in subject position but strictly trigger third-person agreement on the possessum when in possessor position. Exceptional partitives complicate the pattern by allowing optional third-person verbal agreement when the partitive contains a local-person pronoun.

To account for these asymmetries, this paper proposes a unified analysis for regular pronouns, partitives, and exceptional partitives utilizing a dual-feature system. This system formally distinguishes between morphological features (φM) and semantic features (φS). I argue that partitive DPs involve a mismatched feature bundle, which is compositionally derived via Feature

[3] It cannot mean "two of [our friends]".

[4] Adapted from Major (2024: 90); judgment checked with native speakers.

Percolation (Norris 2014). Furthermore, the agreement asymmetry is derived through relativized probing, wherein probes are specified for the exact φ-feature they target. Particularly, structurally lower probes in the nominal domain target φM, yielding third-person possessive agreement with partitive DPs, while structurally higher probes in the verbal domain target φS, yielding co-varying local-person agreement with the same partitives.

In the end, I will discuss the theoretical implications of this proposal and introduce a principled constraint on probe specification: SCOPE (Structural Constraint on Probe Escalation). SCOPE dictates that probes may only escalate monotonically from φM to φS up the syntactic spine, and never the reverse, thereby deriving the unidirectional restriction observed in the Agreement Hierarchy (Corbett 1979).

2. Stage. In this section. I will first briefly introduce the theoretical background of the dual-feature system, then demonstrate how this framework successfully accounts for cases of agreement mismatches, specifically the "3/4 pattern" observed in English, which serves as the theoretical foundation for the proposed analysis of Uyghur partitives. Crucially, my analysis also expands upon this foundation by introducing an innovation grounded in the rich relativized probing literature.

To understand the agreement mismatches in Uyghur, it is instructive to examine similar phenomena, such as the agreement pattern of English collective nouns (e.g., *the government*). In certain varieties of British English, these nominals exhibit optionality in the agreement values they control across different targets. However, when two distinct agreement targets are present within the same construction, such as a finite verb and a bound anaphor, only three of the four possible agreement combinations are acceptable, yielding a 3/4 pattern, as illustrated in (7).

(7) British English (Smith 2021; cited in Messick 2023: 8)
   a. The government has offered itself up for criticism.
   b. The government have offered themselves up for criticism.
   c. The government has offered themselves/each other up for criticism.
   d. * The government have offered itself up for criticism.

As illustrated in the paradigm above, a systematic restriction arises: the configuration in which the verb reflects a plural feature associated with the semantic meaning of the noun, while the anaphor reflects a singular feature associated with the morphological form of the noun, is ruled out (7d).

Messick (2023) extends this observation to English Quantified NPs (QNPs), such as *each of us*. Strikingly, the paradigm of acceptability for QNP agreement mirrors that of collective nouns, as illustrated in (8).

(8) English (Messick 2023: 62 & 65)
   a. Each of us lies to himself.
   b. Each of us lie to ourselves
   c. Each of us lies to ourselves.
   d. * Each of us lie to himself.

In (8), the configuration in which the verb reflects a non-singular feature associated with the embedded pronoun *us*, while the anaphor reflects a singular (and third-person) feature associated with the quantifier *each*, is illicit (8d).

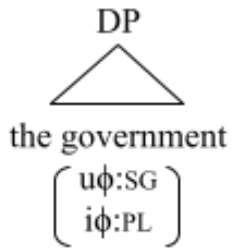
To account for the asymmetry in agreement mismatches, also often referred to as hybrid agreement, between formal (morpho-syntactic) agreement and semantic agreement, two main

theoretical avenues have developed. Structural or configurational accounts (e.g., Pesetsky 2013 on Russian hybrid nouns and Puškar 2018 on BCS hybrid agreement) derive these mismatches by assuming features that control semantic agreement are introduced via a dedicated functional head merged at varying syntactic heights.[5] In contrast, feature-based accounts capture the asymmetry by formally splitting the features themselves within the nominal.

Earlier feature-based accounts, such as those proposed by Smith (2015, 2021) and Wurmbrand (2017), formalized the φ-features of a nominal into uninterpretable (uφ) and interpretable (iφ) components to explain these discrepancies.

Smith (2015, 2021) proposes that all nouns carry a bundle of both uφ and iφ features, which often, but do not necessarily, match. In the case of English collective nouns, he argues for a mismatched feature bundle consisting of a singular uφ and a plural iφ, which ultimately derives the hybrid agreement pattern from (7), as illustrated in (9).

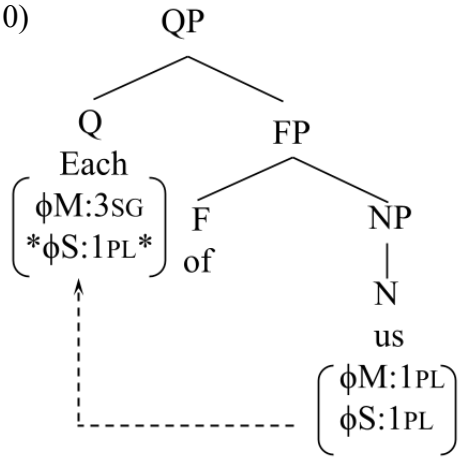
(9)



Building on this intuition, Messick (2023) refines this split by explicitly distinguishing Morphological features (φM), which drive formal morphological agreement, from Semantic features (φS), which drive semantic agreement reflecting the referent's meaning.

In Messick's analysis of English QNPs like *each of us*, QNPs, as a whole, are argued to possess a mismatched feature bundle of φM:3SG and φS:1PL, resembling the configuration of collective nouns. The quantifier *each* enters the derivation with its own morphological feature (φM:3SG) but lacks a valued semantic feature. The embedded pronoun *us* carries both valued morphological and semantic features (φM:1PL, φS:1PL). Through derivation, the Q head's semantic feature gets valued by the semantic feature of the pronoun (the N head) via feature percolation. This results in the mismatched feature bundle in (10), mirroring the collective noun in (9).

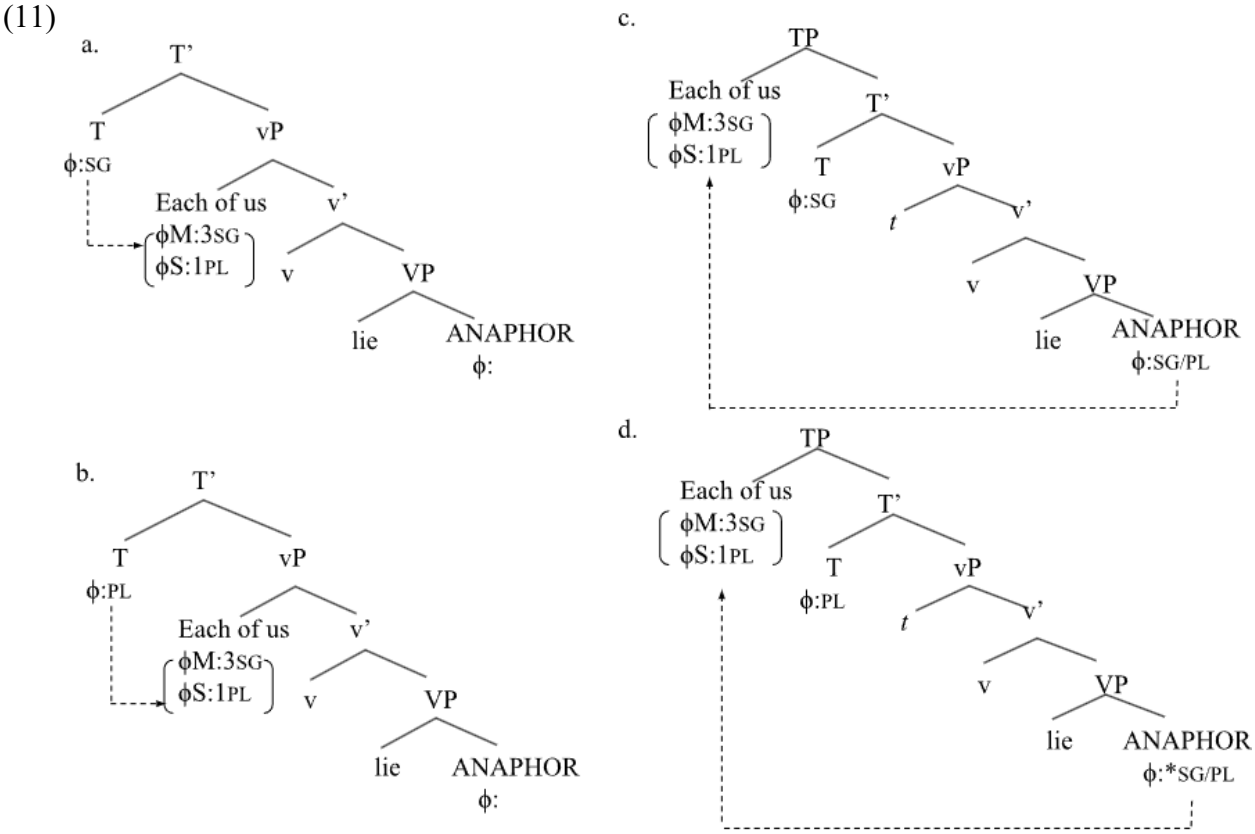
(10)



[5] A fuller discussion of these alternative theoretical approaches, along with a preliminary application of the current split φ-Feature system to BCS hybrid nouns, appears in the author's master's thesis (Zheng 2025).

When a probe on T searches for features, it can potentially copy either the morphological feature (as in 11a) or the semantic feature (as in 11b) from the QP/Q head. Furthermore, Messick assumes that anaphor agreement occurs later in the derivation at the interface, at which point it can also potentially target either the morphological or the semantic feature of the QP (as in 11c and 11d). However, empirical data demonstrate that a derivation where T agrees with the semantic feature (plural) and the anaphor subsequently agrees with the morphological feature (singular) is illicit (8d).

(11)



To rule out (8d) and its collective counterpart (7d), Messick introduces the Constraint on Agreement with Semantic Features (CASF), formalized in (12).

(12) *Constraint on Agreement with Semantic Features* (Messick 2023: 57)
Once semantic features have been accessed for an agreement operation, all other subsequent agreement operations must target the semantic features.

Under CASF, if T initially agrees with the semantic features, all subsequent agreement operations must follow suit. Assuming that anaphor agreement happens later in the derivation, this constraint correctly filters out the illicit fourth pattern (8d and 7d), preventing the anaphor from reverting to the morphological feature once the semantic feature of a nominal has been targeted.

This dual-feature framework, particularly the formal distinction between φM and φS, provides a promising theoretical foundation for analyzing agreement mismatches. However, a direct application of this analysis to Uyghur data encounters immediate challenges. Unlike English collective nouns and QNPs, where probes appear able to flexibly target either φM or φS (subject to CASF), agreement on Uyghur partitives is largely invariant: possessor agreement uniformly targets one set of features, while verbal agreement uniformly targets another (with the exception

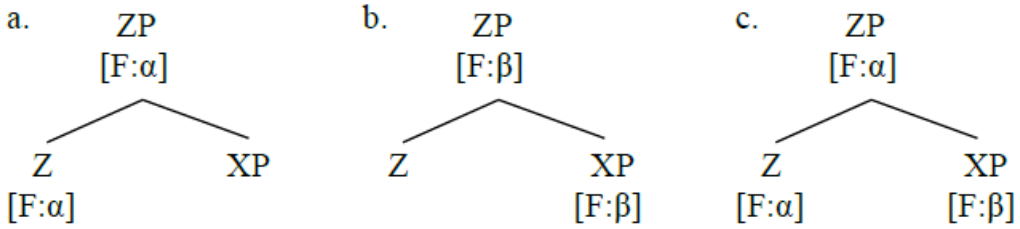
of exceptional partitives that allow optionality on the verb). In other words, even if one assumes a mismatched feature bundle on Uyghur partitive DPs, different probes cannot freely select between φM and φS. This observation points to a stricter system. Rather than relying solely on derivational timing and CASF, I propose an analysis that builds on this robust body of literature (Smith 2015, 2021; Wurmbrand 2017; Landau 2016; Corbett 2023; Messick 2023) and also incorporates an innovation from the relativized probing literature (Bejar & Rezac 2009, Georgi 2012, Deal 2015, Puškar 2018): probes in Uyghur are relativized to search exclusively for one specific type of φ-feature depending on their syntactic position. This mechanism forms the core of the analysis detailed in the next section.

3. Analysis. To capture the systematic agreement asymmetries observed in Uyghur, I propose an analysis with two central parts. First, I argue that probes in Uyghur are relativized to search for specific types of φ-features based on their syntactic position. Specifically, the probe on the T head searches exclusively for semantic features (formally, T: [*φS: __ *]*).* In contrast, the head responsible for agreement within the nominal domain, which I designate as F (analogous to an AGR head), probes exclusively for morphological features (formally, F: [*φM: __ *]). Second, I propose that Uyghur partitive DPs function much like English QNPs in Messick's analysis; their overall feature bundles are compositionally derived, resulting in a maximal projection that carries mismatched φS and φM values. Since higher probes (F in a possessive structure or T in a finite clause) are relativized to different features, the partitive DP predictably controls divergent agreement on its respective targets.

3.1. FEATURE PERCOLATION. To derive the mismatched features of the partitive DP, this analysis utilizes the mechanism of Feature Percolation laid out in Norris (2014) as in (13), and schematized in (14) (see also Danon 2013 for a similar idea).

(13) *Feature Percolation Principles*: (Norris 2014: 242)
   a. All projections of a head X^0 have the feature-value pairs that X^0 has.
   b. Let [F:val] be a valued feature on XP.
      Let Z^0 be a head lacking the feature [F].
      Let X^0 and Z^0 be members of the same extended projection (i.e., both [+N]).
      When Z^0 merges with XP, projecting ZP, ZP also has the valued feature [F:val].

(14) An example scheme for Feature Percolation: (Norris 2014: 243)



The configurations in (14) demonstrate how the formalization in (13) plays out during derivation. In cases where the projecting head Z^0 carries a valued feature [F:α], but its complement XP does not, the resulting projection ZP inherits the feature from Z^0 (14a). When the head Z^0 lacks the feature [F], but XP is specified for it [F:β], the feature from XP percolates upward to the projection ZP (14b). When both Z^0 and XP have (potentially conflicting) values for the same feature F,

the feature value on Z^0 [F:α] determines the feature and value of its projection ZP [F:α] (14c). In such cases, the feature also percolates from the head rather than the complement.[6]

Broadly, Feature Percolation allows for features that are unvalued or absent on a projecting head to be supplied by its complement. In the context of a dual-feature system and partitives, if a head within a nominal domain (e.g., a Q or Num head) enters the derivation with a valued morphological feature but lacks a semantic feature, it creates an opportunity for the semantic feature of a structurally lower element to percolate up to the maximal projection of the DP, thereby potentially creating a mismatched φ-feature bundle.

3.2. DERIVING THE MISMATCHED FEATURE BUNDLE. With the mechanics of Feature Percolation in place, we can formalize the derivation of the mismatched feature bundle for Uyghur partitives. Let us first consider a standard, referential local-person pronoun, such as *biz* 'we'. A referential pronoun enters the syntactic derivation fully specified and valued for both its morphological and semantic features. Therefore, *biz* inherently carries matching φ-features [φM:1PL] and [φS:1PL].

For the Quantifier/Numeral that heads a partitive DP, I follow Messick (2023) in positing that these heads possess only a valued morphological feature [φM:3SG/PL] but crucially lack a valued semantic feature. I further adapt a structure from Jackendoff (1977)'s analysis of English partitives, utilizing his arguments for an empty category N head (in the sense of "two units of…"). To this, I also add the FP projection, which I argue is the locus for what is traditionally called possessor agreement in Uyghur. The head of FP is a probe that functionally tracks and reflects the φ-features of an embedded DP.

Crucially, I argue that there is no actual possessive structure *per se* in simple partitive cases. Straightforward evidence for this comes from genitive case marking. While genitive case marking is mandatory on regular possessors (when overt), as shown in (15); it is strictly banned on the pronoun portion of the partitive DP, as shown in (16). This hints at a structural difference between the two.[7]

(15) biz*(-niŋ) dost-ler-imiz
we-GEN friend-PL-1PL.POSS
'our friends. (friends of us)'

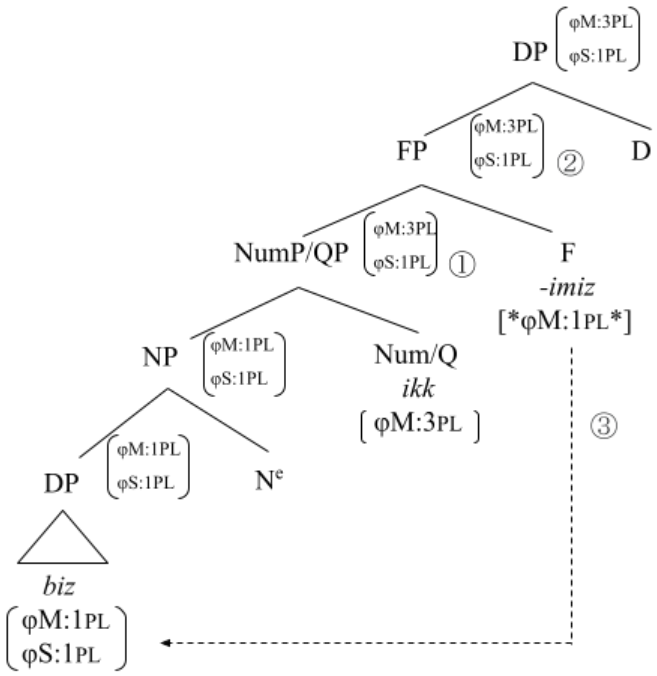
(16) biz(*-niŋ) ikk-imiz
we-GEN two-1PL.POSS
'two of us'

Putting the analysis together, the derivation of a Uyghur partitive is given in (17):

[6] Notably, the percolation rules do not allow for feature transmission from specifier positions, meaning that specifiers are not sources for percolated features under this system. Consequently, the rules predict that the features of a possessor DP, which occupies a specifier position, will not percolate to PossP or higher projections (though the features of specifiers may still be accessible via Agree).

[7] One could argue (one source of) genitive case is a form of inherent case assigned by the Poss head, which is absent in the partitive structure. I leave the broader discussion on genitive case assignment in Uyghur out of the current work but refer interested readers to Asarina, A. (2011) on case in Uyghur.

(17)



Following the principles of Feature Percolation, the features of the pronoun *biz* percolate upward, bypassing the featureless empty category N. The crucial step occurs when the Num head ikk- merges with NP. As the projecting head, its morphological feature [φM:3PL] percolates up to NumP. However, as it lacks a valued semantic feature, the semantic feature from its complement NP [φS:1PL] is allowed to (and must) percolate. This results in a mismatched feature bundle at the NumP projection.

This mismatched feature bundle then percolates further when NumP merges with the projecting F head. I assume that percolation happens at the point of Merge, prior to the Agree operation initiated by the probe on F. Thus, FP and the subsequent maximal DP both inherit the mismatched feature bundle [φM:3PL, φS:1PL]. Meanwhile, the probe on F gets valued via Agree with the features from the pronoun as [φM:1PL] (assuming downward Agree following Chomsky 2001), correctly surfacing as *-imiz*, which is traditionally identified as the 1PL possessor agreement suffix.[8]

As the final result, the entire partitive DP carries a mismatched feature set. Its [φM:3PL] originates from the Num head *ikk*, while its [φS:1PL] originates from the embedded pronoun *biz*. We now predict that the future Agree operation targeting this partitive DP will correctly reflect whatever φ-feature the searching prob is relativized for, F for φM and T for φS.

3.3. DERIVING AGREEMENT MISMATCH. Having discussed the internal structure of the partitive DP and how its mismatched feature bundle is derived, we now demonstrate how the proposed relativized probes interact with these features to yield the observed agreement mismatches. Consider the core puzzle piece introduced at the beginning, repeated below as (18):

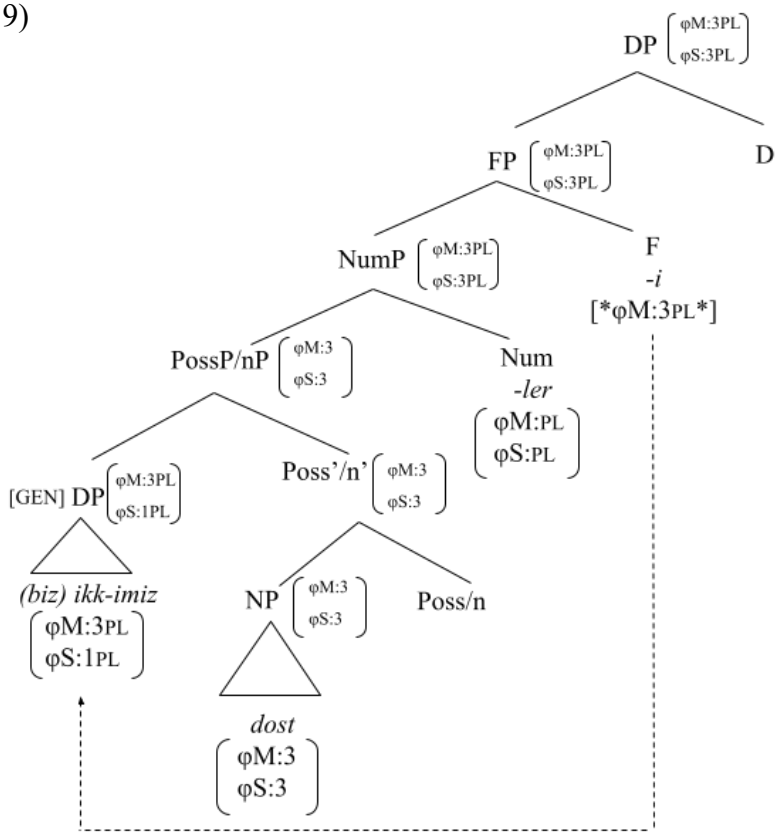
[8] The careful reader may notice that the probe on F seems to have skipped the structurally closer Num head, which also carries a valued φM. One solution is to suggest that these probes are implicitly specified for a D-feature, that is, they only probe for valued features on a full DP. This is the assumption adopted in this paper.

(18) a. (biz) ikk-imiz-niŋ dost-ler-i/*-imiz
we two-1PL.POSS-GEN friend-PL-3.POSS/-1PL.POSS
'two of us's friends.'(the friends of two of us's)

b. (biz) ikk-imiz kett-uq/*-i
we two-1PL.POSS left-1PL /-3
'Two of us left.'

Recall that the partitive DP *biz ikk-imiz* 'two of us' carries a systematically mismatched feature bundle at its maximal projection [φM:3PL, φS:1PL]. Let us first consider the case of possessor agreement in (18a). When this partitive DP is merged as a possessor (in the specifier of the Poss/n head) within a larger nominal structure, it is targeted by the probe on the structurally higher F head. As proposed earlier, the nominal F probe is relativized to search only for morphological features. Upon probing its c-command domain, the F head locates the nearest partitive DP and copies its morphological feature [φM:3PL]. Consequently, possessor agreement reliably surfaces as the third-person suffix *-i*, ignoring the semantic local-person φ-feature embedded within the partitive.[9] The derivation of (18a) is illustrated in (19).

(19)

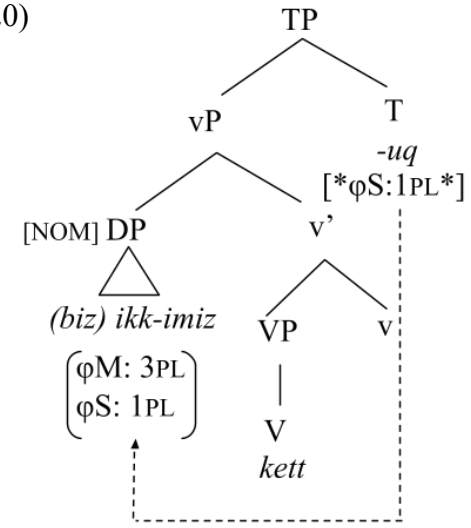


Conversely, let us now consider (18b). When the exact same partitive DP functions as a nominative subject in a finite clause, the relevant probe is located on T. The T head in Uyghur is

[9] Note that in Modern Uyghur, all 3PL and 3SG agreement morphemes are syncretic across the board (i.e., there is no number distinction in third-person agreement), differing from other major Turkic languages. I make the assumption to attribute this syncretism to post-syntactic morphological operations, which do not significantly impact the analysis proposed here and are therefore left for future investigation. See footnote 8 above for why F seems to skip other intervening materials.

relativized to search exclusively for semantic features. When T probes the subject DP, it ignores the morphological feature and copies the semantic feature [φS:1PL]. This operation values the verbal agreement as first-person plural, surfacing as *-uq*. The derivation of (18b) is illustrated in (20).

(20)



By formally splitting the feature bundle on the partitive DP and relativizing the probes that target different types of φ-features, this system straightforwardly derives the core agreement asymmetry puzzle. Once derived (possibly in a parallel workspace), the partitive DP does not change its feature makeup between different environments. The divergent agreement outcomes are a direct consequence of the relativization of the external probes.

Crucially, the current analysis differs from previous accounts given for similar patterns in Turkish (e.g., Satık 2020; Paparounas & Akkuş 2024). In those approaches, the third-person agreement on partitive DPs is analyzed as a morphological reflex of Agree failure, or a "default" value inserted, due to the added structure complexity of the genitive construction. Under the present dual-feature analysis, there is no failed Agree *per se*. Rather, all instances of agreement are instances of "full" agreement, in the sense that the probe successfully copies back the exact feature it was specified to find, which happens to be a third-person morphological feature in the case of possessor agreement.

The two different approaches naturally lead to different empirical predictions. And I argue that the current dual-feature analysis holds a slight edge over default-agreement accounts in its ability to more straightforwardly explain the puzzle of exceptional partitives. When partitive DPs in Uyghur are headed by specific items such as *bir* 'one', *bezilir* 'some', or *hechqaysi* 'none' (and the embedded pronoun is local-person), they allow for optional third-person verbal agreement. A default-based analysis would struggle to explain this phenomenon. If verbal agreement successfully accesses the local pronoun in regular partitives (as there is no intervening genitive structure), it should uniformly do the same for exceptional partitives, agreeing with the local pronoun. There is no apparent added structural complexity in a nominative exceptional partitive that would cause Agree to *fail*, thereby triggering default verbal agreement. The dual-feature system, however, can capture this cleanly through lexical specification, to which I now turn.

3.4. EXCEPTIONAL PARTITIVES. Let us first repeat the cases of exceptional partitive DPs here as (21), using *bir* 'one'.

(21) a. (biz) bir-imiz-niŋ dost-ler-i/*-imiz.
we one-1PL.POSS-GEN friend-PL-3.POSS/-1PL.POSS
'one of us's friends'

b. (biz) bir-imiz kett-uq/-i.
we one-1PL.POSS left-1PL/-3
'One of us left'

Again, these exceptional partitives, headed by *bir* 'one', *hechqaysi* 'none', *bezilir* 'some' (and potentially other singular-denoting numerals/quantifiers), while also controlling invariant local possessor agreement (21a), they differ from regular partitives in that they allow optional third-person verbal agreement (21b).

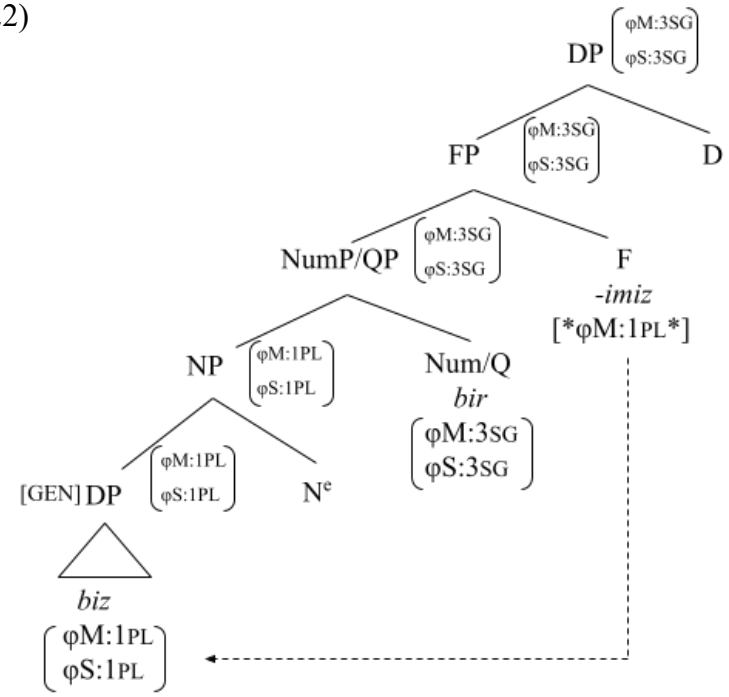
To account for exceptional partitives, I propose that specific lexical heads in Uyghur can optionally enter the derivation fully specified with a valued semantic feature. While standard numerals and quantifiers possess only morphological features, like *bir* 'one' can be optionally specified with [φS:3SG].[10] Interestingly, all exceptional heads identified thus far appear to be singular denoting, an observation that would be worthwhile to explore in future research.

When the head is not specified with a semantic feature in the numeration, the derivation proceeds exactly as outlined in Section 3.3. The lack of a semantic feature on the head allows the local-person semantic feature of the embedded pronoun to percolate to the maximal DP projection, resulting in the mismatched feature bundle and generating co-varying local-person verbal agreement.

However, when the head enters the derivation with its own semantic feature, the derivation shifts. Because the head itself now carries a valued semantic feature [φS:3SG], the mechanics of Feature Percolation dictate that its own valued semantic feature takes precedence over those of its complement XP. This effectively blocks the semantic feature of the local pronoun from percolating upward, unlike in the regular partitive cases. (22) illustrates such a derivation; comparing it to (17), notice that this time *bir* comes with both valued φM and φS.

[10] A similar way to frame this is to propose that these heads exist as two distinct lexical variants: one lacking semantic feature (like a standard numeral), which we might call *bir*^{M}, and one equipped with a valued semantic feature [φS:3SG], which we might call *bir*^{S}. There is no apparent analytical difference between the two approaches for our current purposes, so I leave the precise theoretical implementation open here.

(22)



As a result, the semantic feature of the head shadows the embedded local-person feature, yielding a uniform, non-local feature bundle on the resulting partitive DP [φM:3SG, φS:3SG]. When the T probe searches for semantic features, it encounters [φS:3SG], resulting in the optional third-person verbal agreement. Meanwhile, the F probe in a possessive structure still reliably finds the [φM:3SG] feature originated from the Num/Q head, maintaining the invariable third-person possessor agreement. By positing a simple difference in the specification of semantic features for exceptional partitives, the dual-feature framework successfully captures the optionality in the verbal domain.

4. Discussion and Typological Prediction. While the dual-feature system and relativized probing capture the specific agreement-mismatch asymmetries of Uyghur partitives, a system that allows probes to freely target either morphological or semantic features risks severe overgeneration. If probe specification were entirely arbitrary, we would expect to find natural languages exhibiting completely random distributions of morphological and semantic agreement along the derivational steps (provided, of course, that the targeted nominal carries a mismatched feature bundle, as with hybrid nouns, collective nouns, or QNPs/partitives)

However, cross-linguistic data reveal a more restricted tendency in how hybrid agreement manifests. A robust generalization, originally observed in Corbett's (1979) Agreement Hierarchy (23), dictates that once a target on the left of the scale demonstrates semantic agreement, any target to its right cannot revert to morphological agreement.

(23) *Agreement Hierarchy* (Corbett 1979):
Attributive > Predicate > Relative Pronoun > Personal Pronoun

Another way to interpret the hierarchy in (23) is that as the syntactic distance from the agreement controller (the feature source) increases, the likelihood of semantic agreement monotonically increases. To formally capture this unidirectional restriction within a dual-feature system, and to prevent the overgeneration of probe relativization, I propose the Structural Constraint on Probe Escalation (SCOPE), formulated in (24).

(24) *Structural Constraint on Probe Escalation:*
Under SCOPE, φ-probe specifications escalate monotonically from φM to φS in the syntactic spine, never the reverse.

SCOPE dictates that the syntactic position of a probe, specifically, its distance from the original source of the nominal's φ-features, constrains its potential specification. Probes structurally closer to the nominal source are more likely to be relativized to morphological features, while higher or further probes can escalate to semantic features. Crucially, once a probe in the syntactic spine is specified for φS, no structurally higher probe can "revert" to searching for φM. In other words, an F probe specified for φS and a T probe specified for φM cannot co-occur in the same numeration.[11]

Under this constraint, SCOPE predicts two broad typological classes of hybrid agreement languages:

I. Rigid-specification languages: Uyghur partitives represent a system where probe–feature mapping is fixed by structural height within the lexicon. The lower probe in the nominal domain (F) is always specified to search only for φM. The higher probe in the clausal domain (T) is conversely specified to search only for φS. Given a featurally mismatched DP, such as a partitive DP, this type of language predicts an obligatory M–S mismatch. Crucially, the directionality of the probe specification means that configurations such as M–M, S–S, or S–M are categorically ruled out for these featurally mismatched DPs.

II. Flexible-specification languages: Languages such as English (with collective nouns and QNPs) and previously examined hybrid agreement cases like Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (Puškar 2018) and Russian (Pesetsky 2013), represent a more flexible system. Under the present framework, these languages can be analyzed such that probes may optionally be specified for either feature in the lexicon, but they remain strictly bound by the monotonic directionality of SCOPE (φM > φS). If a probe in a lower domain is specified for φM, higher domain probes within the same numeration may either match it (φM) or escalate their specification to φS. However, if a lower probe targets φS, all higher probes in the same numeration must also be specified for φS. This neatly derives the classic "3/4 patterns" observed in these languages: M–M, S–S, and M–S are all licit derivational options, but the ungrammatical S–M configuration is systematically ruled out.

By enforcing a monotonic directionality, SCOPE makes falsifiable predictions regarding the typology of agreement systems. First, it rules out "Reversal" languages, where a closer agreement target obligatorily shows semantic agreement, but a further target obligatorily reverts to morphological agreement (producing S–M configurations exclusively). Second, it rules out "Zigzag" languages: systems with non-monotonic, unconstrained alternation where probe specifications freely oscillate along the syntactic spine (e.g., F:φM → T:φS → C:φM). Such a system would freely generate all four logically possible configurations (M–M, S–S, M–S, and S–M), directly contradicting the generalizations of the Agreement Hierarchy. To the best of my knowledge, such unconstrained systems appear to be unattested.

[11] A careful reader may wonder what happens if a structurally more distant F probe (such as in potential cases of nominalized verbal clauses with an embedded T) could be relativized for φS. I stipulate that this is not viable, as the restriction in (24) does not calculate the distance between the probe and the source in real-time; rather, the relative specification possibilities are determined in the lexicon. Thus, a probe within the nominal domain (such as F) may probe for φM (or φS), and a probe outside the nominal domain (such as T) may probe for φS (or potentially φM, provided no structurally lower probe has already been specified for φS in the same numeration)

5. Conclusion. This paper has presented a novel empirical observation regarding asymmetric agreement mismatches regarding Uyghur partitive DPs. While previous research has already demonstrated the versatility of a dual-feature system in accounting for hybrid agreement in phenomena such as English collective nouns and QNPs (e.g. Smith 2015, 2021; Messick 2023), this paper brings forth a new contribution by integrating the mechanism of probe relativization into the framework. I have argued that the agreement split in Uyghur partitives arises because the relevant probes are rigidly specified to target distinct feature types: the nominal F probe (responsible for possessor agreement) targets only Morphological features φM, while the clausal T probe (responsible for subject-verb agreement) targets only Semantic features φS.

Through the mechanism of Feature Percolation (Norris 2014), partitive DPs compositionally derive a mismatched φM/φS feature bundle. Because the external probes are relativized to different types of φ-features, this mismatched DP predictably controls divergent agreement on its respective targets, thereby deriving the core asymmetry, and can be extended to account for exceptional cases by adding additional specification of semantic features on the Num/Q heads.

Furthermore, to prevent potential overgeneration, this paper proposed Structural Constraint on Probe Escalation (SCOPE). By restricting probe specification to escalate monotonically from φM to φS up the syntactic spine, SCOPE captures the observed directional restrictions on agreement. This constraint not only situates the Uyghur data within the broader generalizations of the Agreement Hierarchy (Corbett 1979), which predicts the typology of hybrid agreement across languages, but also has the potential to account for other similar problems cross-linguistically.

Moving forward, I believe it will be fruitful to examine the robustness of the proposed system in accounting for previously observed hybrid agreement and agreement-mismatch patterns, and to extend this framework to novel configurations that have not yet been discussed.

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