There is not just one way to agree

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Summary: Recent work concerning the directionality of phi-feature agreement challenges the standard view that Agree exclusively probes downward. Zeijlstra 2012, Zeijlstra & Bjorkman 2014, & Wurmbrand 2012 argue that the *goal* must c-command the *probe* (Upward Agree (UA)), while Preminger & Polinsky 2015 defend standard Downward Agree (DA): the *probe* must c-command the *goal*. Carstens 2013 argues for a directionality neutral approach: a probe immediately searches downward for a goal but valuation can be delayed. This can lead to UA if the goal has undergone displacement. In this paper, I present novel data that indicate that DA clearly occurs for phi-feature agreement in the Bantu language Kinande, contra Baker 2008 who proposes direction of agreement as a macroparameter, set to UA for Kinande. The data primarily come from Specificational Copular Clauses (SCC). I demonstrate that contra Preminger 2013 & Preminger and Polinsky 2015 local agreement relations can be used to test directionality of agreement hypotheses and conclude that Kinande provides evidence there is not a universal single direction of Agree.

Agreement in Kinande: The Bantu language of Kinande has been the archetype language used in support of upward Agree: the verb agrees with the c-commanding preverbal XP, regardless of whether or not it is the thematic subject. For example, the verb in Kinande agrees with the preverbal locative phrase in locative inversion constructions rather than with the postverbal thematic subject:

(1) **O-mo-mulongo mu**-kabi.hika mukali 'A woman just arrived in the village.' aug-18-3village 18-just.arrived 1woman

Original data involving SCCs challenge the upward Agree generalization for Kinande. With SCCs, agreement is downward: the copula must agree in class (indicated by numbers) with the post-copular XP, the thematic subject.

(2)a.[ebyalya ebyo nyanzire kutsibu] w'	a ma timo	b. émbugá	lô	lúhi
8food 8that I.like strongly 6CC	P 6bananas	9problem	11COP	11war
'The food that I like best is bananas.'	'The proble	m is the	WAR.'	

Analysis: The SCC facts cannot be dismissed as only apparent downward Agree. To try to save the principle of UA, one might hypothesize additional structure where the postcopular XP is actually in a specifer/head relation with the copula at some point (3a), agrees with it (3b), and then the copula (3c) and surface initial XP (3d) subsequently raise across the agreeing XP. I assume here a small clause analysis of SCCs following den Dikken 2006, where RP = relator phrase.

(3)	a.	RP	XP ₁	[R'	COP(ula	ı)	[XP ₂]]			
	b.	[RP	["bananas" XP_1] _{y-ϕ}	[R'	$COP_{y-\phi}$		["the food	d that I l	ike b	est" XP ₂]j
	c. COP _y	-φ [RP	["bananas"] _{y-φ}	[_R ,	t _y		["the food	d that I l	ike b	est"] _j]	
	d. [_{TP} ["t	he foo	d that I like best"] _j	С	OP _{y-φ}	[RP	["bananas	s"] _{y-φ} [$\mathbf{t}_{\mathbf{y}}$	t _j]]	

d. [TP] ["the food that I like best"]_j COP_{y- φ} [RP ["bananas"]_{y- φ} [t_y t_j]] Alternately, one could imagine that the postcopular XP is part of a chain with a non-overt head of the chain occurring in the precopular position where it undergoes upward agree. None of those scenarios can be correct if we consider agreement facts involving proper names and pronouns as postcopular XPs in SCCs. Postcopular proper names exceptionally do not agree with the copula in SCCs. If they agreed, we would expect the agreeing copula *yo*. Instead, the non-agreeing copula *ni* occurs. *Ni* displays no verbal properties. It lacks tense and class agreement morphology and is inherently 3p (discussed further below):

(4) Omugalimu **ni/*yo** Kambale

The teacher is /*1COP Kambale

Proper names can agree fully with the **yo** copula when they are overtly precopular. These sentences can occur in the same context as SCCs, but the focus is in initial position. I follow Hedberg & Schneider-Zioga 2015 and analyze them as *reversed* SCCs:

(5) Kambale yo mugalimu

1Kambale 1is teacher

A similar upward versus downward agreement asymmetry exists for postcopular pronouns:

6a. ingye (* ni) mwana {Null Copula}	6b. eprobleme	ni	ingye
I child	aug.9problem	NI	me
'I am a/the child.'	'The problem is	me.	,
reversed SCC	SCC		

In (6a), a reversed SCC, where agreement is normally with the precopular focus, a null copular is required when a 1p (or 2p) pronoun is in initial position. In contrast, in SCCs (6b) where agreement is normally with the postcopular XP, the non-agreeing copula *ni* occurs with 1p (& 2p & 3p). (7) demonstrates for reverse SCCs that the 1 & 2p pronoun cannot stand in a precopular position and have **ni** as the copula. A 3p pronoun can be precopular with a **ni** copula, but the resulting sentence is interpreted predicationally, rather than as a reverse SCC:

first person		second person		third person		
7a.*Ingye ni	mugalimu	b.*Iwe n	i mugalimu	c. Iye	ni mugalimu	
I NI 1	teacher	you.sg NI 1t	eacher	(s)he	NI teacher (≠SCC)	

If there were covert upward agreement as outlined in (3), we could not explain why there is an asymmetry in copula valuation when names and personal pronouns entered into postversus pre-copular phi-agreement relations. These data are consistent with DA and provide evidence against *Upward Agree as a principle* of the grammar.

Bjorkman & Zeijlstra 2014, who allow for UA and under restricted circumstances DA, also cannot account for the Kinande data. Under their account, downward phi-agreement in Kinande would have to be tied to an additional unvalued feature such as Case. In Kinande apparent examples of UA are never tied to Case (see (1) and Baker 2008). Postcopular agreement in Kinande is tied to semantic focus: the agreed with XP in an SCC must always be interpreted as focused. However, focus cannot be the additional unvalued feature that allows for DA in Kinande. There are agreeing constructions elsewhere in the language that demonstrate that agreement and focus are dissociated.

Carstens' 2013 proposal of delayed valuation can successfully account for the Kinande data. She argues that valuation happens immediately when it can. This means Agree will initially be downward if the probe and goal are close enough since the derivation proceeds from the bottom up. I argue that the well-known cases (e.g.(1)) in Kinande show UA because the agreeing *probe* is located in a high position on the articulated left edge, (see Baker 2003, Henderson 2006, & Schneider-Zioga 2000, 2007 for relevant discussion). DA cannot take place upon merge then because the distance between *probe* on the left edge and a potential goal within vP is too great. Merge of the goal to a position where it c-commands the agreeing probe (UA) is both allowed and required for successful valuation in these cases. By contrast, SCCs in Kinande have less structure than sentences with theta-assigning verbs. In this case, DA can proceed derivationally as no relevant structure intervenes between the copular phi-probe and the postcopular external argument goal in SCCs. Work by van der Wal 2012 on agreement with in-situ subjects in Makhuwa and Matengo reveals the existence of DA in those Bantu languages. The prediction is that such Bantu languages systematically involve less structure when theta-assigning verbs are involved than a language like Kinande. **Conclusion:** This paper argues that neither UA nor DA is a universal agreement mechanism. Instead, evidence exists for a direction-free approach to agreement. Furthermore, I demonstrate that the relatively minimal syntactic structure of copular sentences allows us to formulate falsifiable hypotheses about the direction of Agree when maximally local agreement configurations are involved.