# Person restrictions in South Baffin Inuktitut: An argument for feature movement*

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**Abstract:** The South Baffin dialect of Inuktitut exhibits an apparent person restriction that bans 1st/2nd person (though not 3rd person) agreement morphology from co-occurring with oblique case. I argue that, contrary to surface appearances, this phenomenon is not actually a restriction on 1st/2nd person features; rather, it is a byproduct of moving the φ-features out of the agreement head and into the head hosting oblique case. The broader theoretical claim is that *feature movement* is a possible means of valuation by Agree.

**Keywords:** syntax, morphology, agreement, oblique case, Inuktitut

## 1 Introduction

This paper investigates an apparent person restriction in the South Baffin dialect of Inuktitut (Eskimo-Aleut) that prevents 1st/2nd person agreement morphology from co-occurring with oblique case; the restriction is illustrated here with possessive agreement on nouns and verbal agreement in relative clauses. I argue that this phenomenon arises when two heads enter into a φ-Agree relation, triggering movement of the relevant φ-features from the lower head to the higher head. I therefore make the following theoretical claim:

(1) **Theoretical claim:** A φ-probe on a head $X^0$ may be valued by the φ-features on a lower head $Y^0$ by moving the φ-features from $Y^0$ to $X^0$.

The person restriction in South Baffin Inuktitut constitutes evidence for the existence of feature movement, originally proposed by Chomsky (1995: ch.4) as an alternative to covert phrasal movement. I will demonstrate that South Baffin Inuktitut has multiple constructions in which a lower head is featurally impoverished while a higher adjacent head is simultaneously featurally enriched; I propose that this is symptomatic of feature movement. I conclude that the person restriction in South Baffin Inuktitut is only superficial; it is derived by moving φ-features out of an agreement head into the head hosting oblique case.

This paper makes two general contributions. First, it provides a morphosyntactic account for a phenomenon previously presumed in the Inuktitut/Eskimo literature to be morphophonological. Second, this paper argues for the existence of φ-feature movement, contra, e.g., Rezac (2010), as well as the dual ability for heads to simultaneously probe and be probed, along the lines of Baker and Willie (2010) and Henderson (2013).

* The data from this talk are, unless otherwise noted, from the South Baffin dialect of Inuktitut, spoken on Baffin Island, Nunavut. The properties described here do not necessarily extend to other dialects or related languages. I'd like to thank my consultant, Saila Michael, for sharing her knowledge of Inuktitut with me, and also the following people for helpful comments and suggestions: the participants at WSCLA19, Richard Compton, Michael Yoshitaka Erlewine, Alana Johns, Norvin Richards, Coppe van Urk, and especially David Pesetsky. All errors are my own.

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## 2 Background

Inuktitut has an ergative case system (Dixon 1979, Johns 1992, a.o.). Ergativity is manifested via case-marking on the noun and portmanteau subject/object agreement on the verb:

(2) a. qimmi-up kii-ja-nga anguti
dog-ERG bite-TR-3S/3S man.ABS[1]
'The dog bit the man.'

b. anguti tikit-tuq
man.ABS arrive-3S.INTR
'The man arrived.'

As indicated by the different agreement endings in *kiijanga* 'it bit him' and *tikittuq* 'he arrived,' Inuktitut has separate paradigms for transitive (subject/object) and intransitive (subject) agreement. The transitive agreement paradigm is generally syncretic with possessor/possessum agreement marked on the possessum (Johns 1987, 1992), as shown in (3). Ergative and genitive case are also morphologically identical, as shown in (4):

(3) a.

| | |
|---|---|
| qimmi-**ra** | 'my dog' |
| qimmi-**it** | 'your (sg) dog' |
| qimmi-**nga** | 'his/her dog' |
| qimmi-**vut** | 'our dog' |
| qimmi-**si** | 'your (pl) dog' |
| qimmi-nga | 'their dog' |

b.

| | |
|---|---|
| kapi-ja-**ra** | 'I stab it' |
| kapi-ja-**it** | 'you (sg) stab it' |
| kapi-ja-**nga** | 'he/she stabs it' |
| kapi-ja-**vut** | 'we stab it' |
| kapi-ja-**si** | 'you (pl) stab it' |
| kapi-si-ju-it | 'they stab it'[2] |

(4) a. Jaani-**up** qimmi-nga
John-GEN dog-3S/3S
'John's dog'

b. Jaani-**up** kapi-ja-nga
John-ERG stab-TR-3S/3S
'John stabbed it.'

The parallels between possessive phrases and transitive clauses are important here because the apparent person restriction is found in both constructions, as I will show in Section 3.

Finally, Inuktitut, being polysynthetic, has a complex and rigid word-internal syntax. It is generally understood that the position of a morpheme within a given word corresponds to its position in the syntax (Johns 2007, Compton and Pittman 2010, a.o.); thus, the rightmost suffix, usually case or agreement, is structurally highest. This is shown in the Inuktitut verb complex in (5), which is comprised of an incorporated noun, light verb, adverb, negation, and agreement:

(5) umia-liu-gaju-nngit-tuq
boat-create-often-NEG-PART.3S
'He doesn't often make boats.' (Johns 2007)

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[1] **Abbreviations:** ABS = absolutive case; ALL = allative case; AP = antipassive; EQU = equalis case; ERG = ergative case; HAB = habitual; GEN = genitive case; I = variant (I) oblique case; II = variant (II) oblique case; INTR = intransitive; LOC = locative case; MOD = modalis case; NEG = negation; PART = participial mood; PL = plural; POSS = possessive; PST = past; TR = transitive; VIA = vialis case; 1S = 1st person singular; 2S = 2nd person singular; 3P = 3rd person plural; 3S = 3rd person singular

[2] My consultant uses the antipassive construction, as marked by the morpheme *si*, when a transitive subject is 3rd person plural, probably to disambiguate it from 3rd person singular.

## 3 The person restriction

### 3.1 Data

The person restriction is repeated below:

(6) **Person restriction (descriptively):**
1st/2nd person agreement cannot occur on a lexical item if this lexical item is marked with oblique case.

In addition to genitive, ergative, and absolutive case, Inuktitut possesses several other cases, all oblique.[3] The restriction is found for possessive agreement in oblique possessive phrases, as exemplified in (7):

(7) ***[1/2]-OBL vs. ✓[3]-OBL:**

a. *Jaani surak-si-juq titirauti-**kka**-nit
John.ABS break-AP-3S.INTR pencil-**1S/3P**-MOD
**Intended:** 'John broke **my** pencils.'

b. *Jaani surak-si-juq titirauti-**tin**-nit
John.ABS break-AP-3S.INTR pencil-**2S/3P**-MOD
**Intended:** 'John broke **your** pencils.'

c. Jaani surak-si-juq titirauti-**ngin**-nit
John.ABS break-AP-3S.INTR pencil-**3S/3P**-MOD
'John broke **his / their** pencils.'

The person restriction in also seen in relative clauses.[4] Relative clauses may exhibit case concord with the head noun, and may thus be marked with oblique case when the relativized nominal is oblique. In these cases, 1st/2nd person transitive agreement is banned:

(8) ***[1/2]-OBL vs. ✓[3]-OBL:**

a. *Jaani mumi-suuq arnaq-titut [taku-lauq-ta-**ra**-titut]
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB woman-EQU see-PST-TR-**1S/3S**-EQU
**Intended:** 'John dances like the woman that **I** saw.'

b. *Jaani mumi-suuq arnaq-titut [taku-lauq-ta-**i(t)**-titut]
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB woman-EQU see-PST-TR-**2S/3S**-EQU
**Intended:** 'John dances like the woman that **you** saw.'

[3] Throughout this paper, I will gloss these oblique cases as they are traditionally glossed in the literature. The reader should take any case marker that is not ERG, ABS, or GEN to be oblique.
[4] Though see Johns (1992), Compton (2012), and Yuan (2013) for some arguments that Inuktitut relative clauses are actually nominalized. If this is so, then we may simply view the person restriction as a general ban on 1st/2nd person agreement on oblique nominals.

c. Jaani mumi-suuq arnaq-titut [taku-lauq-ta-**nga**-titut]
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB woman-EQU see-PST-TR-**3S/3S**-EQU
'John dances like the woman that **he** saw.'

This restriction is circumvented by the construction in (9), which has two salient properties. The agreement morphology is realized as 3rd person, and the 1st/2nd person possessor/agent is expressed periphrastically with an overt pronoun. I will refer to this construction in the following discussion as the **periphrastic construction**.

(9) a. Jaani surak-si-juq **uvanga** titirauti-**ngin**-nit
John.ABS break-AP-3S.INTR 1S pencil-3S/3P-MOD
'John broke my pencils.' *cf. (7a)*

b. Jaani surak-si-juq **igvit** titirauti-**ngin**-nit
John.ABS break-AP-3S.INTR 2S pencil-3S/3P-MOD
'John broke your pencils.' *cf. (7b)*

c. Jaani mumi-suuq arnaq-titut [**uvanga** taku-lauq-ta-**nga**-titut]
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB woman-EQU 1S see-PST-TR-3S/3S-EQU
'John dances like the woman that I saw.' *cf. (8a)*

d. Jaani mumi-suuq arnaq-titut [**igvit** taku-lauq-ta-**nga**-titut]
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB woman-EQU 2S see-PST-TR-3S/3S-EQU
'John dances like the woman that you saw.' *cf. (8b)*

Absolutive arguments are exempt from the person restriction, and thus the periphrastic construction is unavailable in those contexts:

(10) a. qimmi-up kii-qqau-ja-nga irni-**ra**
dog-ERG bite-PST-TR-3S/3S son-**1S/3S**.ABS
'The dog bit my son.'

b. *qimmi-up kii-qqau-ja-nga **uvanga** irni-**nga**
dog-ERG bite-PST-TR-3S/3S 1S son-**3S/3S**.ABS
**Intended:** 'The dog bit my son.'

Also, the restriction is not observed on a genitive-marked or ergative-marked possessed nominal (i.e. on a possessor/agent that is possessed by a 1st/2nd person nominal), as shown in (11). This is because there is a separate portmanteau paradigm for possessive agreement on a possessor/agent; this portmanteau morphology cross-references two arguments (possessor/agent and possessum/object) and additionally encodes genitive/ergative case. For example, the bolded agreement morphology in (11a) encodes the person of the possessor of *ilisaiji* 'teacher,' as well as the fact that *ilisaiji* is itself a possessor. Similarly, in (11b), *-tta* cross-references a 1st person plural possessor (*our*) and a 3rd person singular possessum (*mother*), and additionally conveys that the possessum (*mother*) is an ergative-marked agent.

(11) a. ilisaiji-**ngma** qimmi-nga ‘my teacher’s dog’
ilisaiji-**vit** qimmi-nga ‘your (sg) teacher’s dog’
ilisaji-**ngata** qimmi-nga ‘his/her teacher’s dog’
ilisaiji-**tta** qimmi-nga ‘our teacher’s dog’
ilisaiji-**si** qimmi-nga ‘your (pl) teacher’s dog’
ilisaiji-**ngata** qimmi-nga ‘their teacher’s dog’

b. anaana-**tta** niri-ja-nga iqaluk
mother-1P/3S.ERG eat-TR-3S/3S fish.ABS
‘Our mother ate the fish.’

The lack of the person restriction effect in these contexts is, I assume, due to the fact that a single morpheme is used to encode both agreement and case.[5] The chart below summarizes what has been discussed so far:

(12)

| | **ENFORCED** | **EXEMPT** | **CIRCUMVENTED** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Person restriction?** | [1]/[2] + OBL | [1]/[2] + ABS | [1]/[2] + ERG/GEN |
| **Periphrastic construction?** | Required | Unavailable | *Not discussed here:* Optional, see footnote 5 |

### 3.2 Previous discussion

The phenomenon investigated in this paper has received fairly little attention in the existing literature on Inuktitut. It is briefly discussed by Dorais (2003:95-96), who takes the phenomenon to be phonologically motivated.[6] As shown below, 1st/2nd person obliques in neighbouring dialects of South Baffin such as North Baffin (spoken further north on Baffin Island) encode 1st/2nd person obliques with nasal clusters:

(13) *North Baffin dialect:*

a. nuna-**nn**ut
land-1S.POSS.ALL
‘to my land’

b. nuna-**ngn**ut
land-2S.POSS.ALL
‘to your land’ (Dorais 2003)

South Baffin, however, has a higher degree of regressive place assimilation, so the /nn/ vs. /ŋn/ contrast in North Baffin is neutralized in South Baffin to [nn].[7] According to Dorais, the periphrastic construction emerged so that 1st and 2nd person could still be disambiguated.

Though this presents a plausible diachronic explanation for why the person restriction is found only in the South Baffin dialect, the story is, by itself, too simplistic for several reasons. First, it

[5] In these contexts, the periphrastic construction is actually optional, though constrained. The facts here are rather complicated; I set them aside for the purposes of this paper.
[6] See also Compton (2012:57).
[7] See Dorais (1988, 2010) and Bobaljik (1996) for extensive discussion of regressive assimilation across dialects of Inuktitut.

misses the generalization that the person restriction holds for *all oblique cases* in South Baffin Inuktitut, including non-nasal-initial ones.[8]

(14) **Oblique cases in South Baffin:**

a. uvanga qimmi-nga-**nit** / *qimmi-ra-nit
1S dog-3S/3S-MOD dog-1S/3S-MOD
'my dog (antipassive)'

b. uvanga qimmi-nga-**nut** / *qimmi-ra-nut
1S dog-3S/3S-ALL dog-1S/3S-ALL
'to my dog'

c. uvanga ilinniavi-nga-**niit** / *ilinniavi-ra-niit
1S school-3S/3S-LOC school-1S/3S-LOC
'in my school'

d. uvanga niuvikvi-nga-**gut** / *niuvikvi-ra-gut
1S store-3S/3S-VIA store-1S/3S-VIA

e. uvanga anaana-nga-**titut** / *anaana-ra-titut
1S mother-3S/3S-EQU mother-1S/3S-EQU
'like my mother'

Moreover, I will argue below that the person-restricted obliques in South Baffin Inuktitut behave the same as plural obliques, a generalization that would be lost under a purely morphophonological analysis. I will propose that this person/number parallel may be uniformly captured under a morphosyntactic analysis that makes reference to φ-features and the nature of Agree. It is possible that the periphrastic construction emerged as a response to the phonological change that took place, and that its morphosyntax developed in analogy to the existing morphosyntax of the plural obliques.

## 4 Agreement and feature movement

### 4.1 Preamble

My analysis addresses the following questions: why is a periphrastic pronoun present only when 1st/2nd person agreement is impossible, and why does the agreement surface as 3rd person in these environments?

The first question can be given a straightforward answer. Inuktitut is a pro drop language, and 1st/2nd person core arguments (subjects, objects, and possessors) are in general obligatorily null if they are cross-referenced by the agreement morphology. Correspondingly, 1st/2nd person oblique pronouns, which are not cross-referenced by agreement, *are* overtly realized. These are shown below:

(15) a. *Jaani-up taku-lauq-ta-anga uvanga
John-ERG see-PST-TR-3S/1S 1S
**Intended:** 'John saw me.'

[8] Moreover, the person restriction in effect holds for all 1st/2nd person + singular/dual/plural number combinations.

b. Jaani mumi-suuq uvanga-titut
John.ABS dance-3S.HAB 1S-EQU
'John dances like me.'

I follow Holmberg (2005), Roberts (2010), and others in assuming that, in pro drop languages, pronominals may be licensed for deletion if their features are recoverable, e.g. through agreement. I additionally assume that this condition is inviolable in Inuktitut, since it appears to be exceptionless. It thus follows that the pronoun in the periphrastic construction is the overt realization of a 1st/2nd person possessor/agent that is normally deleted at PF. Because the agreement is impoverished in this construction, the pronominal cannot be deleted.

This brings us to the next question: why is the agreement impoverished at all? To address this, I will show that impoverishment in oblique contexts extends beyond the person cases discussed so far: obliques with marked number (i.e. plural obliques) resemble singular obliques; this suggests that φ-feature impoverishment in oblique contexts is a general requirement in South Baffin Inuktitut. This will be a central clue to the correct analysis of the person restriction.

### 4.2 Morpheme variance

As I have shown throughout this paper, 1st and 2nd person agreement morphology is realized as 3rd person in oblique environments; 3rd person agreement morphology, however, is unaffected by this restriction and remains as it is. Examples (16) and (17) demonstrate that plural number agreement also does not appear in oblique environments.[9]

(16) a. nanuq
polar.bear.ABS
'polar bear'

b. nanur-mit
polar.bear-MOD
'polar bear (obl.)'

(17) a. nanu-**it**
polar.bear-PL.ABS
'polar bears'

b. *nanu-**i(t)**-nit
polar.bear-PL-MOD
'polar bears (obl.)'

c. ✓nanur-nit
polar.bear-MOD
'polar bears (obl.)'

The way to express 'polar bears (obl.)' is *nanurnit*, as in (17c), which lacks a dedicated plural morpheme *i(t)* normally found in absolutive contexts. Yet, this form is unambiguously plural. This is because the morpheme *-nit* that signals the oblique argument is plural; its singular counterpart is *nanur**mit*** in (16b). In fact, (most) oblique cases in Inuktitut have two variants, provided in (18) below, which I will call **column (I) and column (II) variants**:

(18)

| **CASE** | **(I)** | **(II)** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Modalis | **-m**it | **-n**it | |
| Allative | **-m**ut | **-n**ut | |
| Locative | **-m**iit | **-n**iit | |
| Vialis | **-kk**ut | **-g**ut | |
| Equalis | -titut | -titut | *(invariant, see below)* |

[9] The /q/→[ʁ] change between *nanuq* and *nanur-mit/nit* is due to regressive manner assimilation.

Note that, even though the oblique equalis case marker *-titut* is invariant, its stem is still obligatorily impoverished. For instance, in (19), *pusikaaqtitut* 'cat (obl.)' is morphologically impoverished for number but still takes on a plural meaning:

(19) **Context:** *You see a group of women scuffling. They are pulling hair, scratching each other, etc. You say:*
arna-it paa-juit **pusikaaq**-titut/(*pusikaa-**t**-titut)
woman-PL fight-3P.INTR cat-EQU ( cat-PL-EQU)
'The women are fighting like cats.'
# 'The women are fighting like a cat.'

All the other oblique cases have two variants, whose use is conditioned by two factors. As shown above, it is conditioned by whether the stem is *singular* or *plural*, though that is not all. It is additionally conditioned by whether the stem is *uninflected* or *inflected* (Dorais 1988, a.o.). This is illustrated below with the modalis case marker *-mit/-nit*:

(20)

| | **-MIT (I)** | **-NIT (II)** |
|---|---|---|
| **NUMBER** | nanur-mit<br>'polar bear' | nanur-nit<br>'polar bear**s**' |
| | arnar-mit piu-ju-mit<br>woman-MOD pretty-3S.INTR-MOD<br>'the woman that **is** pretty' | arnar-nit piu-ju-nit<br>woman-MOD pretty-3S.INTR-MOD<br>'the women that **are** pretty' |
| **INFLECTION** | qimmir-mit<br>dog-MOD<br>'dog' | qimmi-nga-nit<br>dog-3S/3S-MOD<br>'**his/her/their** dog' |

In the left column, we see that the column (I) variant *-mit* is found on singular, non-possessed nouns as well as on singular verb agreement. In the right column, we find the column (II) variant not only on plural nouns and after plural verb agreement, but also on stems with (singular or plural) possessive agreement. Moreover, the column (II) variant is used in the person-restricted possessive obliques shown throughout Section 3. We thus see that the choice of variant depends on whether the stem contains a person or number suffix (assuming, following Nevins (2011), that singular number is the absence of plural).

To account for this pattern, I propose the following. First, I assume that oblique case is realized on a prepositional head $P^0$ and that this head bears an [uvalφ] feature. I moreover posit that the choice of the oblique case suffix is conditioned by the presence or absence of person or number features (φ-features). This, in turn, may be captured by Preminger's (2011) thesis that φ-Agreement may fail; Agree obligatorily takes place if a suitable goal is found, but Agree failure in the absence of such a goal is also acceptable. When the unvalued φ-probe on $P^0$ searches for a potential goal but fails to find anything (when its stem is singular or uninflected), the [uvalφ] feature remains unvalued and the oblique case suffix is realized with its column (I) variant (*-mit*). However, when the probe on $P^0$ does find φ-features to Agree with within its c-command domain,[10] it is realized with its column (II) variant (e.g. *-nit*). That the morphological shape of a head may be conditioned

[10] Recall that Inuktitut is head-final, meaning that the rightmost suffix is structurally highest. The oblique case suffix thus takes scope over the stem it attaches to.

solely by successful vs. failed Agree is also demonstrated in Halpert (2012) for the Zulu (Bantu) conjunct/disjunct alternation.

The proposal for South Baffin Inuktitut is illustrated schematically in (21) and (22) below. I assume that [uvalφ] on $P^0$ is valued by the φ-features on a head, which I label as $φ^0$ for now (I will amend this below).[11]

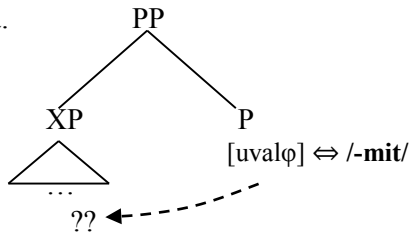
(21) *Number goal:*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Failed Agreement | → | Ø | nanur-**mit** 'polar bear (obl.)' |
| | Successful Agreement | → | [PL] | nanur-**nit** 'polar bears (obl.)' |

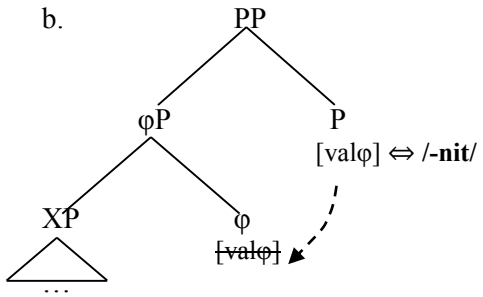
*Person goal:*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b. | Failed Agreement | → | Ø | qimmir-**mit** 'dog (obl.)' |
| | Successful Agreement | → | [1]/[2]/[3] | qimmi-nga-**nit** 'his dog (obl.)' |

(22) a.




b.




### 4.3 Impoverishment as feature movement

I showed above that, when a probe on $P^0$ Agrees with its goal, the oblique marker is realized with its column (II) variant. This is not the only change induced by this process; the agreement morphology adjacent to the oblique is featurally impoverished, i.e., singular or 3rd person. Thus, two morphosyntactic changes take place: the higher head becomes featurally enriched while the lower head becomes featurally impoverished:

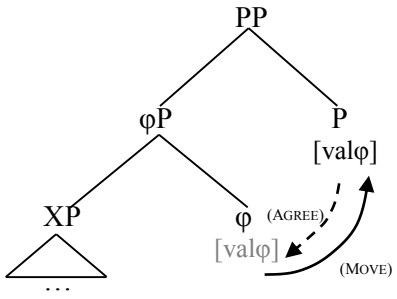
(23) **Higher head:** […] → [F, …]
**Lower head:** [F, …] → […]

I propose that this is symptomatic of *feature movement* (Chomsky 1995:ch.4). What looks like "valuation and impoverishment" is actually a single operation, in which an Agree relation between two heads $X^0$ and $Y^0$ causes the φ-feature to move from $Y^0$ to $X^0$.[12] This is illustrated in (24) below:

[11] The $φ^0$, in turn, gets its features by Agreeing with a lower nominal.

[12] Heidi Harley at WSCLA19 pointed out that, under the copy theory of movement, feature movement would leave behind a copy of said feature. I assume that feature movement creates chains, just as XP movement does, and that a postsyntactic process of Chain Reduction deletes the lower copy. I stipulate that this chain holds only between the two heads, i.e. it does not affect the pronominal argument that the lower head Agrees with in the first place, since this argument is overtly realized (= not deleted) in the periphrastic construction.

(24)




According to this analysis, valued heads can Agree with other valued heads (i.e. a given head can both Agree and be Agreed with within a single derivation). This contradicts Chomsky's (2000) stance that uninterpretable features are deleted once checked/valued. However, head-head Agreement is cross-linguistically attested, for instance in Ibibio (Niger-Congo) (Baker and Willie 2010) and in Bemba (Bantu) (Henderson 2013). There is also evidence for head-head Agreement in South Baffin Inuktitut. Example (25) shows that verb agreement normally encodes both person and number. However, as shown in (26), there is a small set of speaker-oriented adverbs in Inuktitut that attach outside of verb agreement; in such constructions, plurality is directly encoded on the adverb, while the verb agreement suffix is obligatorily impoverished (singular).

(25) a. ani-**juq**
go.out-3S.INTR
'He left.'

b. ani-**juit**
go.out-3P.INTR
'They left.'

(26) a. ani-ju-**tuqaq**
go.out-**3S**.INTR-old
'He left a long time ago.' (Compton 2012)

b. ani-ju-**tuqait**
go.out-**3S**.INTR-old.PL
'They left a long time ago.'

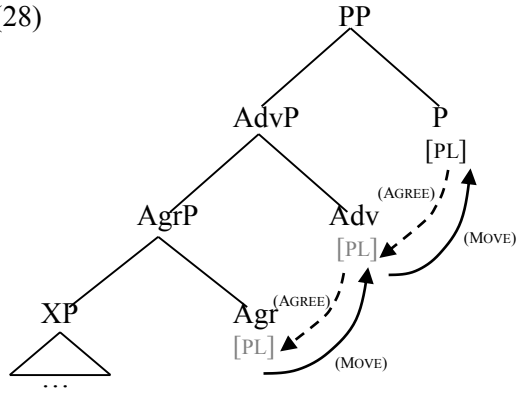
Thus, we see that agreement between (what I take to be) $Adv^0$ and $Agr^0$ triggers feature movement, parallel to the structures with $P^0$ and $\varphi^0$ in the nominal domain. Significantly, when there is additional φ-Agreeing morphology outside of these adverbs, such as an oblique case marker, the plural agreement disappears from the adverb as well; it is instead encoded on the *outermost suffix only*. In (27) below, the oblique case marker is realized with its column (II) variant *-nit*, indicating that φ-valuation has occurred on $P^0$:

(27) a. Miali piuksaq-tuq [anguti-mit [ani-ju-tuqar-**mit**]]
Mary.ABS like-3S.INTR man-MOD.I go.out-3S.INTR-old-MOD.I
'Mary likes the man who left a long time ago.'

b. Miali piuksaq-tuq [anguti-nit [ani-ju-tuqar-**nit**]]
Mary.ABS like-3S.INTR man-MOD.II go.out-3S.INTR-old-MOD.II
'Mary likes the men who left a long time ago.'

In other words, φ-features may move successive-cyclically up a tree. Example (28) illustrates this in greater detail. The [PLURAL] feature on $Agr^0$ moves to $Adv^0$, valuating the φ-probe on $Adv^0$. Once $P^0$ is Merged, the φ-probe on $P^0$ searches for a goal and finds the [PLURAL] feature on $Adv^0$, which is closest to it; Agree (and feature movement) takes place once again. The end result is that plurality is encoded only on the highest head, and all lower Agreeing heads are impoverished.[13]

(28)




### 4.4 Analyzing the apparent person restriction

I demonstrated above that feature movement occurs throughout the number system of South Baffin Inuktitut. Turning now to the person-restricted obliques, I propose a parallel analysis – that the ban on 1st/2nd person in oblique contexts is also a matter of feature movement. The data in (29) show that only the φ-features of the possessum, and not those of the possessor, are reflected on the agreement morpheme in oblique contexts; that is, the choice between singular *-nga* (29a, b) and plural *-ngit* (29c, d) depends entirely on the number of the possessum.

(29) a. qimmi-ra → uvanga qimmi-**nga**-nut
dog-1S/3S 1S dog-3S-ALL.II
'my dog' 'to my dog'

b. qimmi-vut → uvagut qimmi-**nga**-nut
dog-1P/3S 1P dog-3S-ALL.II
'our dog' 'to our dog'

c. qimmi-kka → uvanga qimmi-**ngin**-nut
dog-1S/3P 1S dog-3P-ALL.II
'my dogs' 'to my dogs'

d. qimmi-vut → uvagut qimmi-**ngin**-nut
dog-1P/3P 1P dog-3P-ALL.II
'our dogs' 'to our dogs'

[13] Note that it is unlikely that plurality is directly encoded so high in the structure because number is Merged higher than other projections. Speaker-oriented adverbs, for instance, arguably occupy illocutionary space above CP (Speas and Tenny 2003, Miyagawa 2012), which might be outside the realm of φ-Agreement.

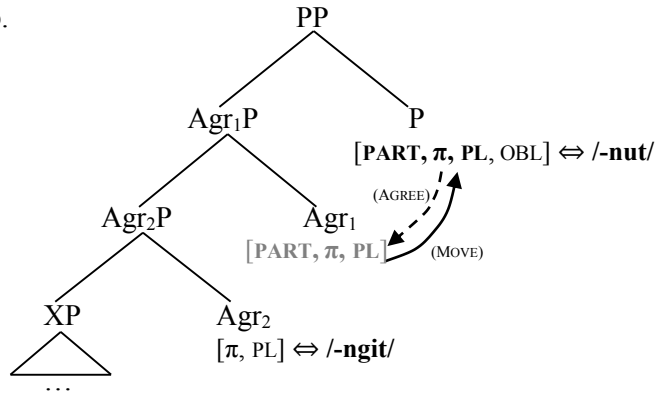
Therefore, although the possessive agreement normally encodes the φ-features of both arguments, in oblique environments the possessor's features are impoverished. At this point, we have an answer for why the agreement morphology is realized as 3rd person: it is not because 3rd person is default per se, but because it only cross-references the possessum, which is inherently 3rd person.

Although the exact structure of the possessor phrase is beyond the scope of this paper, we may infer two things. First, since only the φ-features of the possessor raise to $P^0$, the features of the possessum are inaccessible for Agreement. This suggests that there are two separate heads cross-referencing the φ-features of the possessor and possessum respectively, which I will call $Agr_1{}^0$ and $Agr_2{}^0$.[14] Second, $Agr_1{}^0$ (possessor) is structurally higher than the $Agr_2{}^0$ (possessum); the φ-features of the possessum never undergo movement to $P^0$ because the φ-features of the possessor are closer to the probe and thus intervene. I illustrate with *uvagut qimminginnut* 'to our dogs':

(30) a.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| qimmi-vut | → | uvagut | qimmi-ngin-nut |
| dog-1P/3P | | 1P | dog-3P-ALL.II |
| 'our dogs' | | 'to our dogs' | |

b.




A question that arises here is what prevents $Agr_1{}^0$ from probing $Agr_2{}^0$, since it was established earlier that South Baffin Inuktitut allows head-head Agreement. Although I must leave this as an open question for now, one could stipulate that $Agr_2{}^0$ is simply not a suitable goal for $Agr_1{}^0$; one possibility is that these two Agr heads specifically probe for DPs.

To conclude, the analysis developed in this paper takes the 'person restriction' in South Baffin Inuktitut to be spurious, in that there is no restriction on person in oblique contexts at all. Rather, the φ-features of the possessor vacate $Agr_1{}^0$, triggered by Agree. This yields the appearance of a restriction on person. The remaining agreement morphology is 3rd person because it always cross-references the possessum, whose φ-features do not undergo feature movement. That the mechanism of feature movement exists in South Baffin Inuktitut is not immediately obvious when examining person agreement in obliques alone; the argument for its occurrence comes from the behaviour of oblique plurals, which can be derived in a uniform fashion.

### 4.5 Some cross-dialectal differences

Finally, why does feature movement occur in South Baffin Inuktitut at all? There are attested cases of head-head φ-Agreement without feature movement; for example, Baker and Willie (2010) show

[14] The 1st/2nd person portmanteau morphemes found in absolutive contexts are presumably the result of a postsyntactic fusion of two terminal nodes into one (Halle and Marantz 1993).

that, in Ibibio (Niger-Congo), all heads in a clausal spine display φ-agreement and do so by successively Agreeing with one another. It is possible that the nature of valuation is a point of cross-linguistic variation or parametrization. A brief comparison between South Baffin and other dialects of Inuktitut suggests that this could well be the case:

(31) a. *Taqramiutitut dialect (Hudson Strait)*
ulu-**ga**-nut
ulu-**1S/3S**-ALL.II
'to my ulu (traditional women's knife)'

b. *Itivimiutitut dialect (Hudson Bay)*
ulun-ni=**uvanga**
ulu-ALL.II=**1S**
'to my ulu (traditional women's knife)' (Dorais 1988)

In (31a), we see that the Taqramiutitut dialect does not display any person restriction effects; yet, the oblique morpheme is realized with its column (II) variant, indicating that Agreement between the two heads has still taken place. Conversely, in the Itivimiutitut dialect example in (31b), the column (II) variant of the oblique is present, though what appears to be conditioning it is the 1st person clitic *uvanga.* A potential avenue of further research is to determine whether this apparent variation in how feature valuation occurs is truly unpredictable across languages or whether a more careful examination might reveal some systematicity.

## 5 Conclusion

South Baffin Inuktitut displays what appears to be a restriction on 1st and 2nd person agreement morphology in the presence of an oblique case marker. I showed that plural morphology is banned in the same environments; in both cases, the agreement morphology is featurally impoverished, and a particular variant of the oblique case morpheme surfaces. I proposed that both restrictions are best analyzed as feature movement; the φ-features on an agreement head move to a higher head as a result of Agree taking place between the two heads. This has an interesting theoretical ramification. Contrary to some authors who argue against the existence of feature movement in φ-Agreement processes (e.g. Rezac 2010), the South Baffin Inuktitut data suggest that syntax does have a place for feature movement after all.

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