Syntactic and semantic agreement in the Gújjolaay Eegimaa noun class system (Oral/Poster)

Typological research on agreement systems has revealed that syntactic agreement is more canonical than semantic agreement (Corbett 1991, 2006).

The distinction between syntactic and semantic agreement types is usually illustrated in English by the contrast in; *the committee has/have decided*, where *has* agrees with the formal property of the controller, whereas *have* agrees with its semantic properties. Eegimaa, a Jóola language of the Atlantic family of the Niger-Congo phylum spoken in Southern Senegal also exhibits such a phenomenon as illustrated by the hybrid noun *bá-jur* 'young woman', which triggers syntactic agreement on the NP, but human class semantic agreement on the predicate.

(1) **bá**-jur   **ba**b**u**   ***a***-kkoŋ-ut
     CL5-young.woman CL5:DEF   CL1-cry-NEG
     'The young woman did not cry'

Corbett (1991, 2006) demonstrates that the opposition between syntactic (canonical) and semantic (non-canonical) agreement follows rules of an agreement hierarchy (attributive > predicate > relative pronoun > personal pronoun). The hierarchy predicts that levels on the left are more likely to show syntactic agreement whereas those on the rightmost side will show semantic agreement. The goal of this paper is to discuss agreement mismatches which occur in Eegimaa lexical hybrids and location nouns, and their relevance to the agreement hierarchy predictions.

In addition to the most familiar hybrid nouns, Eegimaa also has typologically fascinating type of semantic agreements, which occur with location nouns, and which are scarcely discussed in the literature. These agreements, which can use agreement markers of up to four different noun classes, may be termed *constructional mismatches* following Corbett (2006).

Similar to Eegimaa hybrids, constructional mismatches also trigger different agreement markers at the same time. However, two types of semantic agreement may be distinguished here in addition to the syntactic agreement illustrated in (2) below. One with the human plural agreement (Class 2) attested on predicates as illustrated in (3), and another one expressing general location with class 5, precise location with class 13 and location inside with class 14 as in (4) below, and which is only found on relative pronouns and personal pronouns.

(2) **é**-suh   yayu   **y-**o   na-juh   me   **e**-tos-ut
     CL3-village CL3:DEF CL3-PRO 3SG-see   SUBORD CL3-move-NEG
     'The village that he saw has not moved'

(3) **é**-suh   yayu   ***bug-***o   na-juh   me   ***gu-***tos-ut
     CL3-village CL3:DEF CL2-PRO 3SG-see   SUBORD CL2-move-NEG
     'The people that he saw have not moved'

(4) **é**-suh   yayu   ***b-***o/***t-***o/***d-***ó   nú-pull-o   me   **e**-tos-ut
     CL3-village CL3:DEF CL5-PRO/CL13-PRO/CL14-PRO 2SG-come.out-DIR SUBORD CL3-move-NEG
     'The village where he came out from has not moved'

This paper augments the typology of agreement by examining rare data from an African language and by providing a detailed analysis of its three-way agreement mismatches with locatives. I discuss the different levels of the agreement hierarchy where semantic agreement types occur, and show that both hybrids and constructional mismatches conform to the predictions made by the agreement hierarchy. I also provide a detailed examination of the different constructions where agreement mismatches such as those in (3) and (4) are attested, and discuss the semantic contrasts indicated by these mismatches.