

Unusual agreement targets: Agreement or concord?

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Theoretical accounts for grammatical agreement have – explicitly or otherwise – shared the expectations about the nature of the agreement targets. As Baker (2008) puts it, “verbs are consistently the most prolific agreeers ... adjectives clearly participate in agreement, but they do so more modestly ... nouns do not need to agree with another NP in their environment” (p.1). Yet a growing body of evidence indicates that cross-linguistically verbs are not the only targets involved in clause-level agreement. Agreeing adverbs are attested across unrelated families of Eurasia, including Nakh-Daghestanian, Indo-Aryan and Uralic, agreeing adpositions are observed in Nakh-Daghestanian, Coastal Marind (New Guinea) and Songhay (the Sahara), whilst nouns and pronouns that agree with clause-level arguments are attested in Nakh-Daghestanian and Romance. I will be discussing these unusual targets agreeing with a controller that (i) functions as an argument of the clause containing the target, yet (ii) is not an argument of the target, and (iii) neither it is its head. Property (ii) makes the analysis of these instances as proper agreement problematic and (iii) presents challenges for the concord analysis. I will discuss morpho-syntactic properties of this unusual type of agreement and propose a multifactorial analysis covering different types of targets.