Abo Optional Anti-Agreement

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1. Introduction[1]

Anti-Agreement Effects (AAE) are traditionally described as the lack of subject verb agreement. The term, as first used by Ouhalla (1993), was used to describe the lack of feminine inflection on verbs in Berber. In example set (1), all the verbs which normally inflect as *tzra* 'saw feminine' do not bear the feminine inflection (Ouhalla 1993:3).

(1) a.   man   tamghart   ay   yzrin   Mohand?
         which   woman   COMP   saw.PART M.
         'Which woman saw Mohand?'
     b.   tamghart   nni   yzrin   Mohand.
         woman   COMP   saw.PART M.
         'The woman who saw Mohand.'
     c.   tamghart-a   ay   yzrin   Mohand.
         woman-this   COMP   saw.PART M.
         'It is the woman who saw Mohand.'

These examples all show AAE are associated with extracted subjects. In Berber, non-extracted subjects show canonical agreement in which a feminine noun triggers feminine agreement on the verb. Phrase types identified by Ouhalla as being associated with extraction of subjects are relative clauses, WH-questions, and focus constructions.

Similar effects were described by Ouhalla (1993) in Turkish, Celtic, and Italo-Romance dialects. In the years following Ouhalla's (1993) article, AAE were found in a variety of languages around the world, some of which were in the Bantu family, such as Kinande and Bemba among others. Bantu AAE involve the alternation between the 3rd person singular subject agreement marker **a-* and the Class 1 subject agreement marker **u-* (Cheng 2006 , Schneider-Zioga 2000 & 2007, Henderson 2009, Dierks 2009). The following examples demonstrate AAE in Bemba (Cheng 2006):

(2) a.   umulumendo   **a-**   ka-   belenga ibuku
         1.boy   3SG   FUT   read   5.book
         'The boy will read the book.'
     b.   umulumendo   ú-   **u-**   ka-   belenga ibuku
         1.boy   1.REL   1.SUBJ   FUT   read   5.book
          'The boy who will read the book.'
     c.   *umulumendo   ú-   **a-**   ka-   belenga ibuku
         1.boy   1.REL   3SG   FUT   read   5.book

In these examples, use of the 3rd person singular agreement marker for Class 1 subjects is permissible only in a matrix sentence, but not in a relative clause. Distributionally, the 3rd person singular agreement marker is the "default" agreement marker. In the relative clause only the Class 1 subject marker can be used. The use of the Class 1 subject marker is called AAE in Bantu syntax, despite the fact that there is no clear reason why one should assume that one agreement marker is more basic than the other. Bantuists have raised concerns with referring to this alternation in agreement marking as

AAE because, unlike the AAE in example set (1), there are still agreement features which are marked on the verb. Another reason why Bantu AAE are unlike traditional AAE is that they do not occur in all of the same environments of traditional AAE. Bantu AAE have only been described in WH-questions and relative clauses, but not focus constructions.

Like the traditional AAE literature, the previous literature on Bantu AAE has linked the effects to movement, with variation in the finer details of why movement would cause such an effect. Schneider-Zioga (2000) argues that AAE are not merely the morphological reflection that a subject has been extracted from TP. She argues that AAE reflect the locality of the extracted subject in relation to its verb. AAE tend to break down the further away the extracted subject is from its verb, and optional AAE can occur. It should be noted, however, that the example which is used to demonstrate the locality effect on optionality in AAE does not contain a minimal pair (Schneider-Zioga 2000:2).

Henderson (2009a, b) argues that AAE are purely morpho-syntactic realizations of restricted φ-features of the subject. φ-features are restricted based on which phrase the subject is in. This is because AGREE has access to different features of a noun based on the clause level the noun occupies. If the subject is within TP, AGREE has full access to the φ-features of the subject including person, number, and class. When the subject has been extracted to CP, person information cannot be passed to the verb in TP and therefore only class and number information is reflected in the verbal agreement marker within T^0. Tree 1 shows the Bantu AAE morpho-syntactic agreement structure proposed by Henderson.
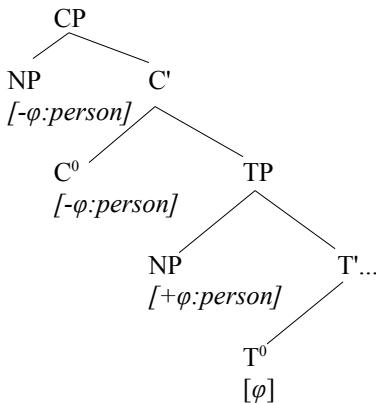
Tree 1. AAE in Minimalism via AGREE

There is more structure to the lower levels of the clause presented in Tree 1, but for the sake of brevity it is not discussed.[2] While it is not the purpose of this paper to present a new theoretical model of AAE in Bantu languages, this paper will argue that based on optional AAE blocking effects in Abo, the proposal set forward by Henderson (2009a, b) is the most adequate model to explain AAE in Bantu languages.

The rest of this paper will demonstrate that all AAE found in Abo are syntactically governed. Based on this, I will argue that any optionality of AAE is the result of two different underlying syntactic structures and is never free morphological variation. Section 2 will contain information about the basic syntax of Abo which does not trigger AAE and constructions which always trigger AAE. Section 3 presents information on constructions which display seemingly optional AAE and constructions which permit the blocking of optional effects. Section 4 will conclude with the findings of this paper and areas for future research.

2. Abo Syntax and Static Grammaticality[3]

This section provides basic syntactic information about Abo and its matrix and embedded clause structures. *Static grammaticality* is a term which I use to describe agreement whose implementation (or lack thereof) results in an evaluation of an utterance as either "grammatical" or "ungrammatical"

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2 Ellipses following a syntactic node indicates that there is more structure, but it will not be discussed for the sake of presentation.

3   For Abo agreement paradigms, see Appendix A

by the consultant. These will stand in contrast to *dynamic grammaticality* in which the consultant approved of the use of either agreement marker with no change in the semantic value of the utterance. Dynamic grammaticality will be explored further in §3.

2.1. Basic Abo Syntax

Word order in Abo declarative sentences and polar interrogatives is SOV.[4]

(3) a. m-ăn à jɛ́ kó
       1-child 3SG eat.PST 9.chicken
       'The child ate chicken.'
    b. m-ăn à jɛ́ kó=ò
       1-child 3SG eat.PST 9.chicken=INTR.
       'Did the child eat chicken?'

The only difference between a declarative sentence (3a) and its polar interrogative counterpart (3b) is an enclitic =*ì*, which assimilates to sentence final vowels. Both of these sentences bear the 3rd person singular subject marker *à*.

A declarative sentence in Abo with 3rd person and Class 1 subjects may be marked either with the 3rd person singular marker *à* or the AAE Class 1 marker *nú*.

(4) a. nyɛ́ à jɛ́
       he 3SG eat. PST
       'He ate.'
    b. nyɛ́ nú jɛ́
       he 1.SUBJ eat.PST
       'He who ate.'

While both sentences (4a) and (4b) are grammatical, they have different readings. (4a) has a matrix declarative reading, (4b) has a reading similar to that of a relative clause. Trying to force the reading of (4a) on (4b) or vice-versa results in ungrammaticality. Either agreement marker is permissible in example set (4), albeit with different semantic readings, only if there is an overt lexical subject. If there is no over lexical subject, use of *nú* is ungrammatical. The marker *nú* always requires an overt lexical subject whereas *à* does not.

2.2. Static AAE

Abo exhibits a commonly attested type of AAE which are found in most descriptions of Bantu AAE: those that have static grammaticality judgments as they are defined in §2.1. Sentences (4a) and (4b) in §2.1 both exhibit static grammaticality judgments because even though both are possible, they have different semantic interpretations which are associated with the use of different agreement markers. Switching the agreement marker to get the reading of the other sentence would produce an ungrammatical utterance.

Static grammaticality judgments are found in relative clauses and WH-questions. In relative clauses, AAE will only occur if a subject is the extracted element of the relative clause.

(5) a. ŋ-kànè nù là nú kó
       1-chief REL.1 COMP 1.SUBJ fall.PST
       'The chief that fell.'
    b. mw-èlɛ́ mù là ŋ-kànè à jɛ́
       3-banana REL.3 COMP 1-chief 3SG eat.PST
       'The banana that the chief ate.'

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4   In this paper, the subject marker and the inflected verb are treated as a single element in T[0].

In sentences (5a) and (5b) *ŋkànè* 'chief' is the subject of both relative clauses, but *ŋkànè* 'chief' is only extracted in (5a) as shown by the fronted placement of the noun and the class agreement which occurs on the complementizer *là* 'that.' It is ungrammatical to use the subject marker *à* in (5a) and it is ungrammatical to use the subject marker *nú* in (5b).

The complementizer in the relative clause may be elided in an utterance. As shown in example (6) even if the complementizer is elided, the relative clause structure is still evident by the morphological realization of the subject marker.

(6) m-ǎn   (nù   là)   nú   jɛ́   kó
     1-child REL.1 COMP 1.SUBJ eat.PST 9.chicken
     'The child that ate the chicken.'

Example (6) is similar to example (4b) as the only available semantic reading is that of a subject relative clause. If one were to use the agreement marker *à* instead of *nú*, example (6) would be grammatical, but it would be like example (4a) which has the reading of a matrix sentence with nothing elided. Based on the evidence from relative clauses, we may formulate a hypothesis in which the subject marker *nú* is associated with movement of an overt Class 1 subject from Spec-TP to Spec-CP and the subject marker *à* is associated with Class 1 subjects that remain in Spec-TP. Trees 2 and 3 show the syntactic structure of this hypothesis.
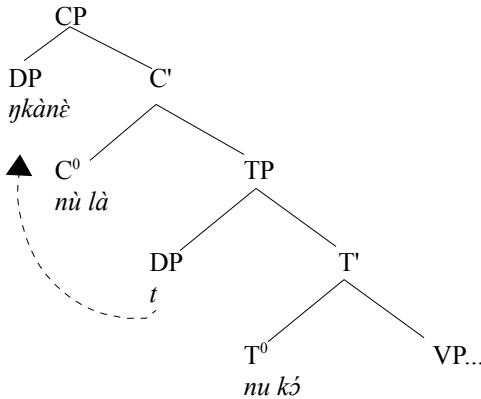
Tree 2. Subject Relative Clause
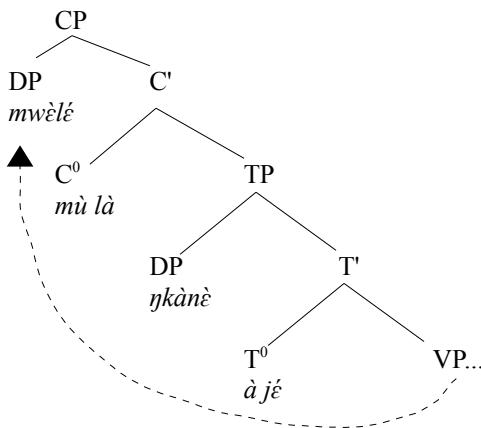
Tree 3. Object Relative Clause

The structure of these two trees match the structure of Tree 1. In Tree 1, person, number, and gender can value the φ-features of T^0 via AGREE if the subject is located within the TP as in Tree 3, which has the 3rd person singular subject marker. If the subject is in the CP as in Tree 2, AGREE cannot value T^0 with person features and only class and number information are reflected on the subject marker.

Additionally, this hypothesis can also help explain why it is that the subject marker *à* may occur either with or without an overt subject, but *nú* cannot. If *à* is associated with pro drop, the element in Spec-TP can be either *pro* or an over lexical subject. If *nú* is associated with movement and must always occur with an overt lexical subject, this is evidence in favor of the view that *pro* cannot move out of Spec-TP in Abo.

WH-questions in Abo with Class 1 subjects use the agreement marker *nú* unlike polar questions as shown in example (7).[5]

(7)   n-jɛ́   nú   jɛ́   kó
        1-who   1.SUBJ   eat.PST   9.chicken
        'Who ate chicken?'

A-priori there is no reason to assume that any type of question in Abo should involve movement, as there are other Bantu languages that do not require movement in WH-questions, such as Zulu (Sabel and Zeller 2006). However, based on our hypothesis of movement developed for the appearance of *nú* in relative clauses, we should ask if the difference in static grammaticality judgments are related to movement. Evidence from WH-questions in which the WH-element is an object suggest that optional movement can happen with WH-questions as shown in example set (8).

(8) a. n-gìlà   ì   nɔ́:   n-jɛ́
        9-lion   9.SUBJ   kill.PST   1-who
        'Whom did the lion kill?'
    b. n-jɛ́   n-gìlà   ì   nɔ́:
        1-who   9-lion   9.SUBJ   kill.PST
        'Whom did the lion kill?'

In example (8a) the ordering of the constituents is SVO as expected in a matrix clause. In example (8b), however, the WH-object may precede the subject. Polar questions, such as those presented in (3b), do not have the option of ordering constituents other than SVO.

Double WH-questions provide additional evidence that movement is in fact involved in subject WH-questions. When a double WH-question has the order SVO and a Class 1 subject, the marker *nú* appears, but when the order of the double WH-question is OSV, only the marker *à* can appear.

(9) a. n-jɛ́   nú   nɔ́:   njâ: mùt
        1-who   1.SUBJ   kill.PST   which   1.person
        'Who killed which person?'
    b. njâ: mùt   n-jɛ́   à   nɔ́:
        which   1.person   1-who   3SG   kill.PST
   'Who killed which person?'

Both sentences (9a) and (9b) have the same meaning, but they do not form minimal pairs, as the placement of the object varies in addition to the subject marker which is used. Example set (9) involves static grammaticality judgments as the variation in the syntactic order does not allow for free variation of the subject marker.

We can suggest that difference in morphological realization of Class 1 subject markers in example set (9) is due to the WH-element which resides in Spec-CP. In example (9a) the subject is in Spec-CP and the object would be in-situ within the VP, thus giving AAE. In example (9b) the object is in Spec-CP and the subject is in Spec-TP; this is why no AAE are observed. This structure would be consistent with the proposed structure for relative clauses. Trees 4 and 5 give the structures for (9a) and (9b) respectively.

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5   WH-questions also differ from polar questions in that they lack the enclitic *=ì*.
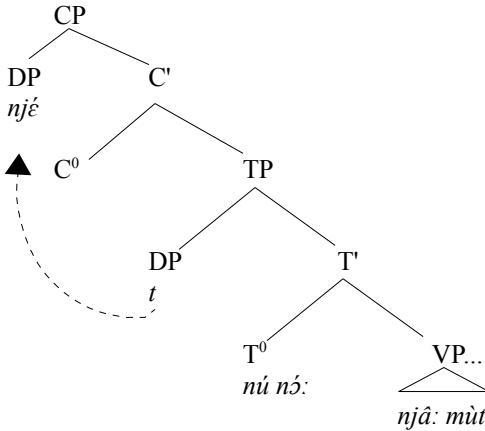
Tree 4. Double WH Subject Movement
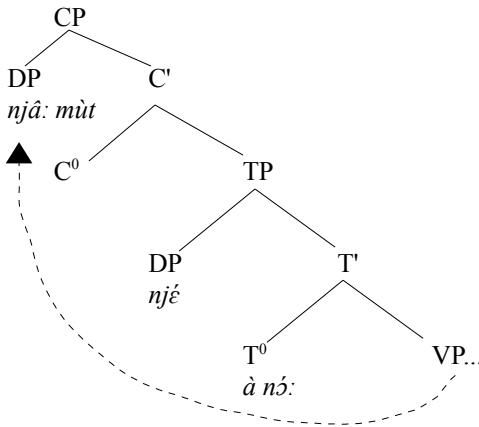
Tree 5. Double WH Object Movement

Cleft WH-questions can be formed for added emphasis. These WH-questions bear out the prediction contributed by the relative clause. If a cleft WH-question has the marker *nú*, the WH-element will reference the subject. If a cleft WH-question has the marker *à*, the WH-element will reference the object as shown in example set (10).

(10) a. n-jɛ́$_i$ nù   là   ___$_i$ nú   nɛ́
      1-who   REL.1   COMP   1.SUBJ   see.PST
      '*Who* saw?' Lit: 'Who is it that saw?'

    b. n-jɛ́$_i$ nù   là   (nyɛ́)   à   nɛ́   ___$_i$
      1-who   REL.1   COMP   he   3SG   see.PST
      '*Whom* did he see?' Lit: 'Whom is it that he saw?'

This section has presented data on AAE in Abo that are associated with static grammaticality judgments. The hypothesis at this point is that AAE in Abo should be predictable based on whether or not a Class 1 subject occupies Spec-TP or Spec-CP. Additionally this section has presented the hypothesis that while over lexical subjects can move out of Spec-TP, *pro* cannot.

3. Focus Constructions in Abo

The relative clause construction encountered in section 2.2 can be used in a cleft for focus as shown in example set (10). In addition to this relative clause construction, Abo has a separate focus construction which uses the particle *ndí*. The particle *ndí* may be used to add focus to WH-questions, much like the

cleft construction, but it is incompatible with the cleft WH-constructions as shown in example set (11).

(11) a.   *cɛ́   ndì   kì   là   n-jɛ́   à   wán
        7.what   FOC   REL.7   COMP   1-who   3SG   buy.PST

    b.   *cɛ́   kì   là   ndì   n-jɛ́   à   wán
        7.what   REL.7   COMP   FOC   1-who   3SG   buy.PST

    c.   *cɛ́   kì   là   n-jɛ́   à   wán   ndí
        7.what   REL.7   COMP   1-who   3SG   buy.PST   FOC

The rest of this section will explore the grammatical uses of *ndí* and the dynamic grammaticality judgments that accompany its use. This section will also explore the *ndí* construction of Abo, the kinds of grammaticality judgments that accompany it, and the theoretical implications of those judgments.

3.1. Dynamic AAE

As defined in §2, dynamic grammaticality judgments are those in which AAE are optional but do not correspond to different readings. In example set (4) morphological variation occurred with different semantic readings, but in example set (9), syntactic and morphological variation occurred with the same grammatical reading. This section will present morphological variation which occurs with no variation in semantic reading and no variation in surface-level syntactic linearity. I will argue that dynamic grammaticality is related to two different syntactic structures and over all supports the hypothesis of AAE as put forth by Henderson (2009a, b), which relies entirely on syntactic positioning determining AAE and not the view proposed by Schneider-Zioga (2000) in which optional AAE is random variation.

Example set (12) gives an example of dynamic AAE.

(12) a.   m-ăn   ndì   á   kɔ́
        1-child   FOC   3SG   fall.PST
        '*The child* fell.'

    b.   m-ăn   ndì   nú   kɔ́
        1-child   FOC   1.SUBJ   fall.PST
        '*The child* fell.'

These sentences are reported to be synonymous and only vary in the subject agreement marker, which gives the appearance that these sentences are true minimal pairs. As either subject marker is permissible and there is no overt sign of movement of the subject to a position like Spec-CP in (12b), it might be the case that Henderson's analysis fails to capture all instance of AAE in Abo and that Schneider-Zioga's locality argument might be more insightful. I caution against taking this view, because as shown in §2, WH-subjects involved movement even though it was not always observable based on linear word order alone.

The *ndí* focus constructions are associated with movement, as when an object is placed under focus the word order may be either the basic SVO with the focus particle IAV (13b) or OSV with the focus particle immediately following the focused constituent (13c).

(13) a.   à   wán   bì-kɔ́ŋkòŋ
        3SG   buy.PST   8-snail
        'He bought snails.'

    b.   à   wán   ndí   bì-kɔ́ŋkòŋ
        3SG   buy.PST   FOC   8-snail
        'He bought *snails*.'

    c.   bì-kɔ́ŋkòŋ   ndì   á   wán
        8-snail   FOC   3SG   buy.PST
        'He bought *snails*.'

While there is evidence that movement and reordering is associated with *ndí* and objects, we are still faced with the problem that there is no such direct evidence for movement or reordering of a focused

subject. In §3.2 we shall see that the dynamic grammaticality judgments can be blocked by embedded structures that are not relative clauses. This blocking suggests that there are really two underlying syntactic structures that give rise to dynamic grammaticality judgments.

3.2. Blocking Dynamic AAE

The verb *tóŋ* 'want' can take either a DP or a CP as its complement. When the subject is a CP, the verb *tóŋ* behaves as a control verb and the verb in the lower clause will inflect based on whether or not its subject is co-referential with the subject of the higher clause.

(14) a.

ă*i*	tòŋ	là	ă*i*	sák
3SG	want.PRES	COMP	3SG	dance.PRES.IND

'He wants to dance.'

 b.

| ă*i*	tòŋ	là	ă*j*	sék
3SG	want.PRES	COMP	3SG	dance.PRES.SBJV

'He wants him to dance.'

In example (14a) the indicative mood is used, as the subjects refer to the same real world referent. In example (14b), the subjunctive mood is used because the subjects of the two clauses are different.

Using the *ndí* construction when the subjects refer to the same real world referents the following restrictions occur.

(15) a.

m-ăn	ndì	á	tòŋ	là	à	sák
1-child	FOC	3SG	want.PRES	COMP	3SG	dance.PRES.IND

'*The child* wants to dance.'

 b.

*m-ăn	ndì	á	tòŋ	là	nú	sák
1-child	FOC	3SG	want.PRES	COMP	1.SUBJ	dance.PRES.IND

 c.

m-ăn	ndì	nú	tòŋ	là	nú	sák
1-child	FOC	1.SUBJ	want.PRES	COMP	1.SUBJ	dance.PRES.IND

'*The child* wants to dance.'

 d.

m-ăn	ndì	nú	tòŋ	là	à	sák
1-child	FOC	1.SUBJ	want.PRES	COMP	3SG	dance.PRES.IND

'*The child* wants to dance.'

As shown by (15b), there is not free morphological variation despite the fact that all of these sentences should mean the same thing. If it were the case that optional AAE were truly free morphological variation as suggested by Schneider-Zioga (2000), (15b) should be grammatical. The ungrammaticality can be predicted by the hypothesis proposed by Henderson (2009a, b) and the hypotheses put forward above in respect to movement of *pro* and overt subjects that was discussed in §2. In example (15c) we can assume that *măn* 'child' is generated in the lower clause and moves up the entire clause structure to the position of Spec-CP of the upper clause. The result of this structure is that one would find *nú* as the subject marker of both clauses, as the only agreement probe is in a position associated with [φ:-person]. The structure of (15a) would have a *pro* in each Spec-TP, one for the lower clause and one for the upper clause. This would mean that *ndí* would be associated with a construction which base generates an NP that is co-referential with a *pro* in Spec-TP. This means that there are two possible underlying structures for the *ndí* construction. One structure moves the focused lexical item from Sprec-TP to Spec-CP and is associated with the use of *nú*. The other independently generates an overt lexical item in Spec-CP and has *pro* in Spec-TP which cannot move and is associated with the use of *à*.

The blocking which is highlighted in (15b) and (15d) is the result of these two *ndí* constructions trying to interact with each other. Tree 6 shows combined *ndí* structure found in (15d).
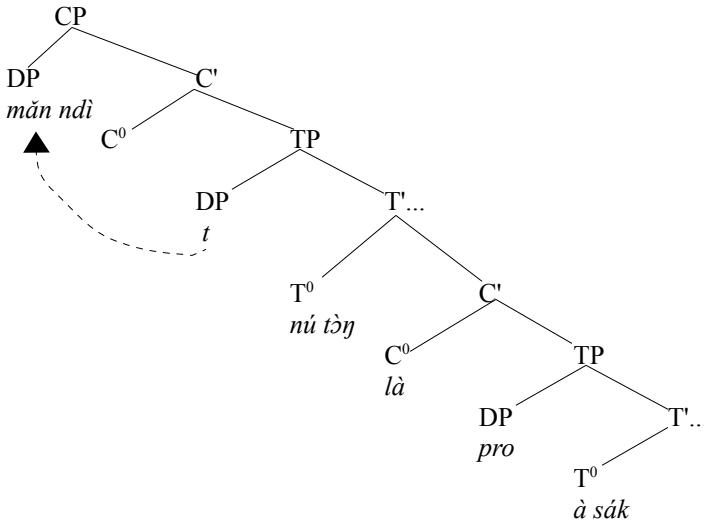
Tree 6. Control verb combined *ndí* construction

While it is possible for a *pro* to reside peacefully in the lower clause and an overt lexical subject in the upper clause to move to Spec-CP (15d), it is not possible for the *pro* of an upper clause to co-exist with a lower clause in which the subject has moved. If this were the case, the subject of the lower clause would have to skip over the subject of the upper clause, which would incur a movement violation and the derivation would crash.

This section has provided evidence that optional AAE, as seen in §3.1, can be the result of two different underlying structures. One structure involves base generation of the focused element Spec-CP and the other structure involves movement of the focused element from Spec-TP to Spec-CP. This variation in structure is also linked to variation in morphological realization of the Class 1 subject's subject marker as predicted by Henderson's analysis of Bantu AAE.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has argued that AAE in Abo are very much like those found in other Bantu languages with the exception of the *ndí* focus constructions. AAE in Abo, like many other Bantu languages, is syntactically driven and is not free morphological variation. The most appropriate framework to date which accounts for the syntactic structure and motivations behind AAE in Bantu languages is that of Henderson (2009a, b). An area of future research would be to investigate how AAE are manifested in control structures and serialization structures.

Appendix A. Agreement Charts

	Noun	Class Prefix	Relator	Pronoun	Subject Marker
I	mùt 'person'	m- N-	nú	nyɛ́	à
II	ɓòt 'people'	ɓà-	ɓá	ɓɔ́	ɓá
III	mùkǎŋ 'root'	mù- N-	mú	mɔ́	mú
IV	mìkǎŋ 'roots'	mì-	mí	myɔ́	mí
V	ìpón 'hole'	dì- ì-	dí	jɔ́	dí
VI	màpón 'holes'	mà-	má	mɔ́	má
VII	kìpúmá 'orange'	(k)ì- è-	(k)í	yɔ́	(k)í
VIII	bìpúmá 'oranges'	bì-	bí	byɔ́	bí
IX	títí 'meat'	N- 0-	ì	yɔ́	ì
X	títí 'meat'	N- 0-	í	yɔ́	í
XI	wě: 'wood'	w- 0-	wú	wɔ́	wú
XIV	bwàŋá 'chest'	bw- 0-	bú	bwɔ́	bú

Table 1. Abo Noun Class Agreement Marking

	1st sg	2nd sg	3rd sg	1st pl	2nd pl	3rd pl
Agreement Marker	mɛ̀	ɔ́	á	sá	ɓé	ɓá
Pronoun	mɛ̀	wɛ̀	nyɛ́	ɓěs	ɓè	ɓɔ́

Table 2. Person Agreement Marking

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