Rich Agreement and Dropping Patterns:
pro-Drop, Agreement Drop, No Drop[*]

Marta Ruda
Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland

This paper looks into patterns of possible variation in the expression of the φ features of the subject in rich-agreement languages. Based on evidence from three rich-agreement systems spoken in Poland, standard Polish, Kashubian, and Silesian, I show that in addition to the cross-linguistically widely attested subject drop, a rich-agreement language can manifest verbal-agreement drop in the presence of an overt subject. Thus, rich agreement does not in itself enforce *pro*-drop. I then offer an analysis of agreement drop, a pattern which has not received much attention so far. The paper also clarifies the status of the Avoid Pronoun Principle, that is the principle enforcing the use of PRO or a null pronoun rather than an overt pronoun wherever possible (Chomsky 1981). I will show that conditions on subject drop may not be syntactic in nature and that the Avoid Pronoun Principle is rather a conversational/discourse-reference-tracking requirement.

1   Expression of Subject φ in Generative Theorising

With a growing number of studies of rich-agreement languages, evidence for a correlation between the distribution of overt agreement and conditions on the use and interpretation of overt and covert pronouns has accumulated, offering an interesting data set for linguistic analysis.

Discussing *pro*-drop languages, Chomsky (1982) suggests that pronominals are associated with phonological features only when this is required by some element of the grammar, possibly by lack of government by rich AGR, a version of his Avoid Pronoun Principle, first introduced in Chomsky 1981:65. Even though Chomsky (1981) treats the Avoid Pronoun Principle as a conversational rule and as a tendency rather than a formal requirement, some analyses of *pro*-drop explicitly aim to derive its effects within the syntactic component of the grammar. For example, in her GB analysis employing the requirements of licensing and identification of *pro* introduced in Rizzi 1986, Fernández Soriano (1989:229) suggests the condition in (1):[1]

(1) *pro* is obligatory when it is licensed and fully identified.

The condition in (1) makes the prediction that whenever verbal inflection reflects all φ features of overt pronouns in a language, an overt pronominal subject should be ungrammatical if I/AGR is a licensing head. Similarly, Roberts (2010) develops a mechanism ensuring his generalisation in (2) (Roberts 2010:76), where *pro* counts as a defective goal in *pro*-drop languages on his approach:[2]

(2) Defective goals always delete/never have a PF realisation independently of their probe.

   In what follows, data from three linguistic systems of Poland, namely standard Polish (henceforth Polish), Kashubian, and Silesian will be

---

[1] Rizzi (1986:519–521) modifies Chomsky's (1982) theory of *pro*, postulating the following conditions on the licensing and identification of *pro*:
(i)   Licensing of *pro*
       pro is governed by X_y^0
       (modified further into:
       pro is Case-marked by X_y^0),
       where the set of heads able to license *pro* is subject to cross-linguistic variation.
(ii)   Identification of *pro*
       a. Let X be the licensing head of an occurrence of *pro*: then *pro* has the grammatical specification of the features on X coindexed with it.
       b. Assign arb to the direct θ-role.
[2] A defective goal is one which is constituted by a set which is a subset of the set constituting the probe initiating Agree.

brought to bear on the question of the limits of variation with respect to the expression of the φ features of a subject in a rich-agreement system.[3] The data will show that both logically possible patterns of subject-related-φ omission are possible, that is *pro*-drop and verbal-agreement drop. Furthermore, the option where nothing is dropped is also attested in the data (and the pronoun is neutral in information-structural terms), suggesting that conditions such as (1) and generalisations such as (2) are too strong. The original conception of the Avoid Pronoun Principle as in Chomsky 1981, relating it to conversational principles/discourse factors, rather than to syntactic conditions, might thus be more adequate in the context of *pro*-drop. The presentation of the data in section 2 is followed by a more detailed discussion of the second pattern of subject-related-φ omission, namely verbal-agreement drop, in section 3. In short, I will suggest that the dropping of agreement marking in Kashubian and Silesian results from an application of the obliteration operation to T in the post-syntactic component. This option is available when obliteration of T does not affect the verb, which has to be realised in accordance with the inflectional paradigms of a language. Section 4 concludes the paper.

2 Configurations of the Expression of Subject φ: the Case of Polish, Kashubian, and Silesian

Polish is a typical null-subject language, using overt subject pronouns only in information-structurally marked environments, as illustrated in (3)–(4):

---

[3] Officially, Silesian, spoken in Upper Silesia (a region between south-western Poland and the north-eastern Czech Republic), is a dialect of Polish. Kashubian, spoken in the North of Poland (Pomerelia), currently tends to be treated as an ethnolect (regional language separate from Polish). In the 2011 population census, 529,377 people declared Silesian as the main language used at home (this includes only speakers of Silesian living in Poland), of whom 126,509 declared it as the only language used at home (a vast majority of respondents declared (standard) Polish in addition). In the same census, 108,140 people declared Kashubian as the main language used at home, of whom 3,802 declared it as the only language used at home (again, a vast majority of respondents declared Polish as the other language; information available at http://stat.gov.pl/download/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD_ludnosc_stan_str_dem_spo_NSP2011.pdf). Both Kashubian and Silesian used to be in close contact with German.

(3) Gdzie   jest mama?
    where   is   mum
    'Where's mum?'
    a. Poszła   na   zakupy.
        went$_{SG.F}$ on   shopping
        'She's gone shopping.'
    b. #Ona   poszła   na   zakupy.
        she   went$_{SG.F}$ on shopping
        'It's her who's gone shopping.'   [Polish]

(4) ON poszedł   na   zakupy?
    he went$_{SG.M}$ on   shopping
    'Is it him who's gone shopping?'
    a. #Nie,   poszła.
        no   went$_{SG.F}$
        'No, she did.'
    b. Nie,   ONA poszła.
        no   she   went$_{SG.F}$
        'No, SHE did.'   [Polish]

These facts are unproblematic for any implementation of the Avoid Pronoun Principle.[4] However, the issue becomes more complex when Polish is contrasted with Kashubian and Silesian. The three systems are exactly parallel in terms of the richness of verbal inflectional morphology. The finite verb inflects for person and number in the present tense (and future perfective).[5] To illustrate, Table 1 presents the Kashubian, Polish, and Silesian present tense forms of the verb *sweep*.[6]

---

[4] Since pronouns in stressed positions are not in competition with *pro*, which cannot receive stress, the Avoid Pronoun Principle does not apply to cases such as (4).

[5] Future perfective is constructed with the perfective form of the finite stem. Future imperfective requires the use of an auxiliary, inflecting for person and number, and the imperfective *l*-participle form, inflecting for gender and number, or the infinitive.

[6] The Kashubian pattern is from Breza 2001:173. Silesian is characterised by significant intra-dialectal variation and some patterns of verbal inflection differ for speakers from different areas. The Silesian data presented in what follows (in standard Polish orthography) which are not attributed to other sources were provided to me by speakers from the Tarnowskie Góry area.

	Kashubian	Polish	Silesian
	Singular		
1.	Zamiôtaja	zamiatam	zamiatom
2.	Zamiôtôsz	zamiatasz	zamiatosz
3.	Zamiôtô	zamiata	zamiato
	Plural		
1.	Zamiôtómë	zamiatamy	zamiatomy
2.	zamiôtôta/zamiôtôce	zamiatacie	zamiatocie
3.	Zamiôtają	zamiatają	zamiatajom

Table 1. Present tense inflection of the verb *sweep*
in Kashubian, Polish, and Silesian

In the past tense, the so-called *l*-participle form of the lexical verb is used in all three systems. The *l*-participle obligatorily agrees with the subject in gender and number. The expression of the person and number features of the subject is the point of variation between the three systems which is of greatest interest from the current perspective.

In Polish, the *l*-participle is always used in combination with person/number markers in the past tense (e.g. *szedł-em* 'walked$_{SG.M-1SG}$'/ *że-m szedł* 'ŻE$_{1SG}$ walked$_{SG.M}$' ('I walked'), see (18)–(19) below). The *pro*-drop pattern is operative throughout the temporal and aspectual distinctions. However, despite the similarity in the verbal inflectional properties in the three systems discussed here (see in Table 1), only standard Polish is a canonical *pro*-drop language.

Pronominal subjects are not omitted in Kashubian, as illustrated in (5)–(6) from Cybulski & Wosiak-Śliwa 2001:186:[7]

---

[7] According to Cybulski & Wosiak-Śliwa (2001), the subject is omitted only in the imperative and optative mood in Kashubian, but Nomachi (2014) suggests that pronominal subjects are not fully obligatory also in the indicative mood. Even if the latter is the case, the sole fact that the pronoun need not be dropped is sufficient in the context of the current discussion. My preliminary study of portions of naturally occurring texts suggests that there is significant inter-speaker variation in this respect, with the patterns ranging from typically *pro*-drop to strictly non-*pro*-drop.

Nomachi (2014:35) notes that the third-person-plural and second-person-singular impersonal constructions require the pronoun to be dropped, or else only definite interpretation of the subject is possible. This seems to be similar to what is observed in Russian, which also is not a canonical *pro*-drop language (see Franks 1995 for discussion).

(5) Jô   muszã   so   głowã   umëc.
    I   have.to$_{1SG}$ self$_{DAT}$ head   wash
    'I have to wash my hair.'   [Kashubian]

(6) Mogła   ona   miec   tak osémdzesąt   centimétrów.
    could$_{SG.F}$ she   have$_{INF}$ PRT 80   centimetres
    'It could be about 80 centimetres.'   [Kashubian]

According to Breza (2001:176), three patterns are attested in the
Kashubian past tense (throughout the person/number/gender
distinctions).[8] The first one, which is considered archaic and is used by
elder people, involves the use of a subject pronoun, accompanied by the
present tense of *bëc* 'be', inflected for person and number, and by the *l*-
participle (see (7)). The second one, which is described as more recent
and widespread, involves the use of a pronoun and the *l*-participle (see
(8)). The third option, characteristic of South dialects, involves a
pronoun, a dummy element *że* with the person/number marker attached
to it in first and second person, and the *l*-participle (see (9)).[9]

---

[8] Yet another available option is to use the auxiliary verb *have* and the passive participle,
e.g., *jô móm napiekłé* 'I have baked' (Breza 2001:176).

[9] The item *że* functions as the declarative complementiser and *ż(e)* functions as an
emphatic particle. That *że* in the context discussed here is a dummy element not serving
any of these functions is suggested, among others, by the fact that (i) it can co-occur with
the complementiser; (ii) it can appear in root clauses, where the complementiser is always
null; (iii) no emphasis is needed for it to be inserted. For some discussions of *że* support
in (standard) Polish, see Witkoś 1998, Bański 2001, Migdalski 2006.

 A reviewer asks if it is indeed true that *że* can be treated as a pleonastic element and
does not contribute anything to meaning, not even emphasis. Even though detailed
discourse analysis of larger portions of texts might be useful to answer this question with
certainty, according my judgments of (standard) Polish, the difference between examples
with the person/number marker attached to *że* and to the participle is in register (*że*
insertion is colloquial in my judgment), but *że* in its own right (e.g. with neutral stress on
all elements) does not contribute to meaning.

 The pleonastic element *że* does not appear in third person because the
person/number marker is null in this case. This means that *że* insertion is sensitive to the
morphophonological features of the morpheme which it supports.

(7) *pronoun + present tense of* bëc *'be' +* l-*participle*
    jô   je-m gonił/   goniła
    I   be$_{1SG}$ chased$_{SG.M}$ chased$_{SG.F}$
    'I chased'   [Kashubian]

(8) *pronoun +* l-*participle*
    jô   robił/   robiła
    I   did$_{SG.M}$ did$_{SG.F}$
    'I did'   [Kashubian]

(9) *pronoun + że + person/number marker +* l-*participle*
    jô   że-m szedł/   szła
    I   ŻE$_{1SG}$ walked$_{SG.M}$ walked$_{SG.F}$
    'I walked'   [Kashubian]

The pattern of the expression of the past in Kashubian in (8) is the reverse of what is observed in Polish: while in both Polish and Kashubian the person feature of the subject is realised overtly only once, unlike in Polish, in Kashubian it is the subject pronoun which is overt rather than the person/number agreement marker.

The patterns in (7) and (9), taken together with the lack of *pro*-drop in the present tense in Kashubian, show that rich verbal agreement does not enforce null subjects, contra what is predicted by some analyses of *pro*-drop (see section 1; see Ackema & Neeleman 2007 for a pragmatic treatment of the relation between rich agreement and *pro*-drop). Some scepticism as to the crucial role of rich agreement in *pro*-drop has been expressed previously, for example, in Jaeggli & Safir 1989. However, the data presented here suggest that their approach is not sufficient to capture all the relevant facts, either. In particular, Jaeggli & Safir (1989) suggest that licensing null arguments crucially depends on morphological uniformity, defined as follows:

(10) *Morphological Uniformity (Jaeggli & Safir 1989:30)*
      An inflectional paradigm P in a language L is morphologically uniform iff P has either only underived inflectional forms or only derived inflectional forms.

Identification is further achieved by the condition in (11):

(11) *Identification by Agreement (Jaeggli & Safir 1989:35)*
      AGR can identify an empty category as thematic *pro* iff the
      category containing AGR Case-governs the empty category.

As noted above, inflectional paradigms in the three systems discussed here are exactly parallel (in the present tense) and the inflectional paradigms in all tenses and moods are uniform by Jaeggli & Safir's criteria, as all forms are decomposable into a stem and inflection. Furthermore, the category containing agreement features (T on current assumptions) assigns nominative to the subject in all three systems, hence the identification condition seems to be satisfied as well.

What might be relevant here is that, unlike in Polish (see (3)–(4)), an overt pronominal subject is not associated with any additional information-structural colouring in Kashubian (see Nomachi 2014, who quotes Cybulski & Wosiak-Śliwa 2001 and Duličenko 2005). It seems that the effects attributed to the Avoid Pronoun Principle might hold only of the languages in which overt pronouns are associated with specific information-structural functions (or, vice versa, specific information-structural functions can be associated with overt pronouns only in the languages which obey the Avoid Pronoun Principle). In *pro*-drop contexts, the principle might thus be reduced to the information-structural fact of the association of an overt pronoun with a pragmatically non-neutral function, that is the association with focus. In this case, an overt pronoun will need to be interpreted in accordance with the information-structural properties of a language, and hence will not be used in information-structurally neutral contexts.

Silesian shows a mixed pattern, in which the determining factor is the person and number features of the subject. My informants provide the following paradigm for the past tense of the verb *go*:[10]

---

[10] More research using larger portions of naturally occurring texts is needed to determine the exact conditions under which pronouns can/should be dropped in Silesian.

(12) 1SG: jo   szoł/   że-ch szoł
          I   walked$_{SG.M}$ ŻE$_{1SG}$ walked$_{SG.M}$
     2SG: ty   szłe-ś/   ty   że-ś szoł/   ty
          you walked$_{SG.M-2SG}$ you   ŻE$_{2SG}$ walked$_{SG.M}$ you
          szoł   że-ś
          walked$_{SG.M}$ ŻE$_{2SG}$
     3SG: on   szoł
          he   walked$_{SG.M}$
     1PL: my   szli
          we   walked$_{PL.M}$
     2PL: wy   szli-ście/   wy-ście szli/   wy
          you walked$_{PL.M-2PL}$ you$_{2PL}$ walked$_{PL.M}$ you
          że-ście szli
          ŻE$_{2PL}$ walked$_{PL.M}$
     3PL: oni   szli
          they$_M$ walked$_{PL.M}$
          'I/you$_{SG}$/he/we/you$_{PL}$/they$_M$ walked'   [Silesian]

The data show that Silesian requires the verbal person/number marker to be dropped in first-person plural and makes the dropping of the agreement marker possible in first-person singular. Variation in the remaining environments pertains to the host to which the person/number marker attaches.

In addition, Tambor (2006:165–166) reports that two options are available in the past tense with first-person subjects.[11] In first-person singular, the subject can be dropped and the first-person singular marker *-ch* is attached to the *l*-participle or to a different host (see (13)–(14)). In first-person singular for younger speakers and first-person plural for all speakers, an overt pronoun can be accompanied only by the *l*-participle marked for number and gender (see (15)–(16)).

(13)   pro-*drop* + -ch *attached to the* l-*participle*
      urodził-ech się na wsi
      born$_{SG.M-1SG}$ SE on village
      'I was born in a village'   [Silesian]

---

[11] Unfortunately, Tambor does not discuss other persons.

(14) pro-*drop* + -ch *attached to a non-verbal host*
      dlaczego-ch   sie sprowadziył do Goduli
      why$_{1SG}$ SE moved$_{SG.M}$ to Godula
      'why I've moved to Godula'   [Silesian]

(15) *first-person singular, obligatory pronoun* + l-*participle*
      jo   z   nióm rozmawjoł
      I   with her   talked$_{SG.M}$
      'I've talked to her'   [Silesian]

(16) *first-person plural, obligatory pronoun* + l-*participle*
      jag   my dostali tu   pszidział
      when we got$_{PL.M}$ here allotment
      'when we got allotment here '   [Silesian]

As illustrated in (17), the two ways of expressing first-person singular inflection in the past tense enumerated in Tambor 2006 and shown in (12) can co-exist in the same sentence:[12]

---

[12] This example is taken from Karaś (2010), http://www.dialektologia.uw.edu.pl/ index.php?l1=opis-dialektow&l2=dialekt-slaski&l3=slask-srodkowy&l5=lagiewniki-slaskie-tekst4#.

   Veselovská (2008:5) notes that in Czech first-person singular structures with an inflected auxiliary *be*, either the auxiliary or the pronoun can be omitted (the passive auxiliary, the copula and existential *be* cannot be omitted; see also Toman 1980):

(i)   a. Já jsem   chválil   Petra.
         I AUX$_{1SG}$ praised   Peter$_{ACC}$
         'I praised Peter.'
      b. Chválil   jsem   Petra.
         praised   AUX$_{1SG}$ Peter$_{ACC}$
      c. Já chválil   Petra.
         I praised   Peter$_{ACC}$ [Czech]

Additionally, Věra Dvořák (p.c.) informs me that the data in (17) can be reproduced in Czech and that φ-drop is possible (though not obligatory) both in first-person singular and plural in contexts such as (12). See Kučerová2012 and references cited therein for discussions of null subjects in Czech.

   The systems discussed here use the *l*-participle or the infinitive and the auxiliary *be* to form future imperfective. Dropping the auxiliary is not an option here, as it would result in a form indistinguishable from the past tense:

(ii) a. (My)bydymy   cytały.
         we   AUX$_{1PL}$ read$_{PL.F}$
         'We will read/be reading.'   [Silesian]

(17) **jo** tam **zaczynoł** ty swoja robota, bo   tam wtedy
     I   there started$_{SG.M}$ this self's job   because there then
     był Ośrodek Badawczo-Rozwojowy Maszyn i Urzondzyń
     was centre research-development   machines and devices
     Walcowniczych, [...] i   tam jako młody synek
     rolling   and there as   young guy
     po Politechnice Ślunskij **ze-ch przyszedł** do swojij
     after polytechnic Silesian ŻE$_{1SG}$ came$_{SG.M}$ to self's
     roboty, bo   **ze-ch** sie nie **wyobrażoł** [...]
     job   because ŻE$_{1SG}$ SE not imagined$_{SG.M}$
     'I started working there, because the Research and Development
     Centre for Machines and Rolling Devices, [...] was there then and
     as a young graduate of the Silesian University of Technology I
     came to work there, because I didn't imagine [...]'   [Silesian]

Examples such as (17), where a single speaker produces two different
patterns with the same person (i.e. an overt pronoun accompanied with
verbal-φ drop and a null pronoun with overt verbal φ) show that the
verbal-φ marker is indeed dropped rather than being simply absent from
the morphological inventory of a speaker's grammar.

     The patterns of expression of subject φ attested in the three systems
discussed here can be summarised as follows (φ here refers to the
fusional person/number marker, gender being obligatorily reflected in the
fusional gender/number agreement morphology on the *l*-participle):
(i) *pro*-drop and φ reflected in verbal morphology (Polish, Silesian);
(ii) overt subject and φ reflected in verbal morphology (Kashubian,
Silesian, and, when the subject is information-structurally marked,
Polish); (iii) overt subject and verbal φ dropped (Kashubian, Silesian).

     If null subjects are treated as deleted pronouns, as originally
suggested by Perlmutter (1971), the data can be divided based on
whether deletion applies and if so, whether the deleted element is the

---

     b. My ~~bydymy~~ cytały.
        we   AUX$_{1PL}$ read$_{PL.F}$ [hypothetical]
     c. My cytały.
        we read$_{PL.F}$
        'We read/were reading.'   [Silesian]

subject pronoun or the agreement marker.[13] Neither pattern (ii) nor pattern (iii) can be explained if the Avoid Pronoun Principle is treated as a general syntactic condition on *pro*-drop. The remaining part of this paper develops an analysis of pattern (iii), namely verbal-φ drop.

3 Verbal-φ Drop

I suggest that the dropping of verbal-φ marking in Kashubian and Silesian is possible due to the nature of the person/number inflection in the two systems. For concreteness, in the past tense the person/number marker is autonomous from the verb, unlike gender/number inflection, which is obligatory on the *l*-participle (this also holds of Polish).[14] The agreement person/number marker appears attached to the verb, to the pleonastic element *że*, or to a different pre-verbal host.[15] For the sake of direct comparison, some of the first-person singular past-tense forms in which verbal φ is expressed are provided in parallel in (18)–(20):[16]

---

[13] For some relevant discussion of the syntactic representation of null subjects, see, among others, Holmberg 2005, who argues that the minimalist conception of establishing agreement relations by the application of Agree requires null subjects to be analogous to overt pronouns in terms of their φ-feature specification; see, for example, Barbosa 2013 for a different view.

[14] Investigating whether this separation of person/number and number/gender inflection follows from there being two different φ probes in the clausal spine (e.g. a person/number probe in T and a gender/number probe in the Asp(ect) head) or from a process of splitting a person/number/gender φ set originating in T at the SM interface needs to be left for future research.

[15] For discussions of some phonological and morphosyntactic aspects of the person/number marker in Polish, see Embick 1995, Franks & Bański 1999, Migdalski 2006, and the references cited therein.

[16] Options available with first-person plural and second person seem to be the same in the three systems as with first-person singular, apart from first-person plural in Silesian, where person/number agreement is never overt. The third-person singular and plural morpheme is zero-realised in all three systems. Not all of the enumerated options may be available to all speakers.

(18) *φ on lexical V (Polish and Silesian)*
    a.   *pro* szedł-em
          walked$_{\text{SG.M-1SG}}$
          'I walked'   [Polish]
    b.   *pro* szedł-ech
          walked$_{\text{SG.M-1SG}}$
          'I walked'   [Silesian]

(19) *φ on że (Polish, Kashubian, Silesian)*
    a.   *pro* że-m szedł
          ŻE$_{\text{1SG}}$ walked$_{\text{SG.M}}$
          'I walked'   [Polish]
    b.   jô   że-m szedł
          I   ŻE$_{\text{1SG}}$ walked$_{\text{SG.M}}$
          'I walked'   [Kashubian]
    c.   (jo) że-ch szedł
          I   ŻE$_{\text{1SG}}$ walked$_{\text{SG.M}}$
          'I walked'   [Silesian]

(20) *φ on auxiliary (Kashubian)*
    jô jem   gonił
    I   be$_{\text{1SG}}$ chased$_{\text{SG.M}}$
    'I chased'   [Kashubian]

The pattern in which the person/number agreement marker is attached to the verb is prevalent in Polish, with the variant in which the marker is attached to a different host being perceived as colloquial. On the other hand, the latter pattern is prevalent in Silesian and it seems to be the only option possible when verbal φ is overt in Kashubian (see Breza 2001). There thus seems to be a correlation between the preference for the realisation of verbal φ on a host different than the verb and the availability of verbal-φ drop, even though this picture is complicated by the fact that verbal-φ drop in Silesian is dependent on the value of the person and number feature of the subject and is possible only in first person (and required in first person plural), whereas the realisation of person/number markers on different hosts is not constrained by the features of the subject.

In the present context, verbal-φ drop seems to be sensitive to the nature of the exponent of T rather than only to its features. That it is the autonomous nature of the person/number marker which is important here (rather than the past tense as such, for example) is suggested by there being two non-past contexts in which verbal-φ drop is attested, namely conditional mood and the present tense of *be*.

Conditional mood, which is also based on the *l*-participle, shows either the verbal-φ-drop pattern (see (21)) or the no-drop pattern (see (22)) in Kashubian in all person/number configurations (see Breza 2001:177):

(21) jô   bë   ucekł
     I   COND   run$_{SG.M}$
     'I would run/escape'   [Kashubian]

(22) jô   bë-m   przëszedł
     I   COND$_{1SG}$ cross$_{SG.M}$
     'I would cross'   [Kashubian]

Similarly, *be* in the present tense in Kashubian is also attested with verbal-φ drop (in addition to forms with an overt pronoun accompanied by *be*, with the person/number marker attached either to *be* or to the pleonastic *że*; see Breza 2001:174):

(23) jô   je/   jô   jest
     I   be$_{PRSNT.SG}$ I   be$_{PRSNT.SG}$
     'I am'   [Kashubian]

(24) të   je/   të   jest
     you   be$_{PRSNT.SG}$ you   be$_{PRSNT.SG}$
     'you are'   [Kashubian]

Importantly, *be* is the only verb which inflects via the autonomous person/number markers rather than the regular person/number present tense inflection (see Table 1).

The same holds of Silesian, with the familiar restriction to first person (Szołtysek 2008:32):

(25)   1SG: jo   je
              I   be_PRSNT.SG
       2SG: ty-ś   je
              you_2SG   be_PRSNT.SG
       3SG: łon/ łona/ łono je
              he   she   it   be_PRSNT.SG
       1PL: my som
              we be_PRSNT.PL
       2PL: wy-ście   som
              you_2PL   be_PRSNT.PL
       3PL: łoni/   łone som
              they_M   they_F be_PRSNT.PL
              'I am, you are, he/she/it is, we are, you are, they are'
                                                            [Silesian]

These data suggest that verbal-φ drop can apply whenever person/number agreement is expressed via person/number markers autonomous from the verb.

3.1   Analysis via T Obliteration

I suggest that verbal-φ drop in Kashubian (e.g. (8) above) and Silesian (e.g. first-person inflection in (12) and in (15)–(17) above) results from the application of obliteration (i.e. a post-syntactic operation of terminal deletion (see, e.g., Arregi & Nevins 2012 for discussion)) to T. To capture the difference between the patterns of inflection expressed directly on the verbal stem and inflection employing the person/number markers, I suggest that the former pattern involves the formation of a V-T complex head and the latter does not.[17] The formation of the V-T complex is obligatory in the present tense, except with *be*. Forms such as *zamiôtaja/zamiatam/zamiatom* 'I am sweeping/I sweep' [Kashubian/Polish/Silesian] (see Table 1) thus have the following structure:

---

[17] Determining whether this complex head is created as a result of V-to-T head movement or by affix hopping is irrelevant for the present purpose and will be left for future research. The diagram in (26) illustrates the former option. See, for example, Borsley & Rivero 1994; Migdalski 2006; Wiland 2009; Witkoś 1998 for different views.

(26)

$$T^{min}$$

T^{min} V^{min}

{[PRSNT],[1SG]}   *sweep*
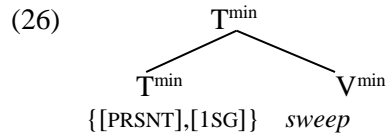
In the past tense, the conditional mood, and the present tense of *be*, no V-T complex is formed. This leaves T with three options, namely, obliteration in Kashubian and in first person in Silesian; if obliteration does not apply, T attaches to a host within its clause in the post-syntactic component (either to the verb (by verb raising or by affix hopping) or to a pre-verbal constituent); or dummy-*że* insertion applies.

The obliteration rules can now be formalised as follows (formulation in the spirit of Arregi & Nevins 2012):[18]

(27) *Kashubian: T Obliteration*
    a. Structural description: non-branching T^{min} such that it is not dominated by a T^{min}.
    b. Structural change: delete T^{min}.

(28) *Silesian: T Obliteration*
    a. Structural description: non-branching T^{min} such that it is not dominated by a T^{min} and φ on T is [1(PL)].
    b. Structural change: delete T^{min}.

This formulation is meant to capture the fact that obliteration does not apply in cases such as (26). On the other hand, obliteration can apply in cases such as (29):

(29)

$$TP$$

T^{min} VP

{[PAST],[1SG]}   *sweep*

---
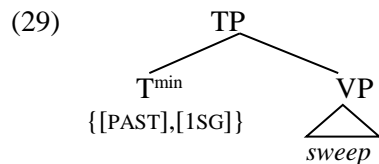
[18] A reviewer notes that obliteration provides a mechanism to capture the data, but does not provide an explanation of the relevant restrictions on its application (e.g. the person restriction in Silesian). It is not completely clear to me at this point that a deep theoretical explanation within a synchronic morphosyntactic analysis can be provided for data of this type. Investigating the possibility that it can be needs to be left for future research.

This analysis has the following theoretical consequences, unless some factors determining the particular choices can be discovered in future research: obliteration can be optional in some languages (cp. the different ways of expressing the past in Kashubian and the [1SG] variants in Silesian); if T lowering/raising precedes dummy-*że* insertion, post-syntactic lowering/raising can be optional; if dummy-*że* insertion precedes lowering/raising, insertion of a pleonastic element can be optional.

The obliteration rules derive the verbal-φ-drop pattern, raising at the same time the question of the way in which they interact with the deletion of the pronoun in the subject position, especially in Silesian, where *pro*-drop can also apply (unlike in Kashubian). Even though this issue is beyond the scope of this paper, it seems that a possible explanation of why it is either the pronoun or the agreement marker which is deleted, but not both, could rely on the observation that a first-person structure to which both *pro*-drop and obliteration would apply would be indistinguishable from third person and the first-person feature could not be identified on the basis of any overt element:[19]

(30)   1SG: jo   szoł
              I   walked$_{SG.M}$
              'I walked'   [Silesian]
     1SG: ~~jo~~   szoł
              I   walked$_{SG.M}$ [hypothetical]
     3SG: szoł
              walked$_{SG.M}$
              'he walked'   [Silesian]

---

[19] Similarly, with respect to the deletion of first-person singular *be* in Czech (see footnote 12), Toman (1980:307) notes that the blocking of deletion of both the pronoun and the auxiliary is due to the indistinguishability of first and third person which would result from deletion applying to both of them:
(i)   a. ~~ja~~ ~~jsem~~   jedl
           I am   eaten
           'I ate'
    b. ~~on~~jedl
          he   eaten
          'he ate'   [Czech]

The application of both pronoun deletion and obliteration could thus be blocked by the principle of deletion up to recoverability, prohibiting the two operations from applying to the same structure. The important question of the nature and formalisation of this principle remains to be explored.

4 Conclusions

This paper has attempted to clarify the status of the Avoid Pronoun Principle, showing that it is not a syntactic requirement, but an interface phenomenon sensitive to the information-structural properties of (unstressed) overt and covert pronouns in a language. In addition, the data presented here have shown that given a choice between pronoun and verbal-φ drop, a language can manifest the latter, so long as the application of an obliteration rule to T does not affect the morphological realisation of the verb. Even though the realisation of the subject but not the agreement marker does not seem to be the usual case cross-linguistically (when rich verbal agreement is available), that this should be possible does not seem unexpected when the phenomenon is considered from the point of view of elliptical structures. The principle of deletion up to recoverability seems neutral as to whether it is the subject pronoun or the verbal agreement marker which is deleted, both of them reflecting overtly only two features relevant for interpretation, that is the person and number feature of the subject. The reason why the pattern in which the subject is unrealised is much more robust cross-linguistically may be due to morphological factors. In particular, the choice between deletion of the pronoun and agreement is at issue only if deletion of agreement can target the agreement marker without affecting the verb itself, a situation requiring agreement not to be expressed directly via inflection on the verb.

References

Ackema, Peter & Ad Neeleman. 2007. Restricted pro drop in Early Modern Dutch. *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics* 10. 81–107.

Arregi, Karlos & Andrew Nevins. 2012. *Morphotactics: Basque auxiliaries and the structure of Spellout*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Bański, Piotr. 2001. Last resort prosodic support in Polish. In Gerhild Zybatow, Uwe Junghanns, Grit Mehlhorn & Luka Szucsich (eds.), *Current issues in formal Slavic linguistics*, 179–186. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Barbosa, Pilar. 2013. *Pro* as a minimal NP: Towards a unified approach to *pro*-drop. Ms., University of Minho. http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/001 949.

Borsley, Robert D. & María Luisa Rivero. 1994. Clitic auxiliaries and incorporation in Polish. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 12. 373–422.

Breza, Edward. 2001. Podstawowe wiadomości z morfologii [The basics of morphology]. In Edward Breza (ed.), *Kaszubszczyzna. Kaszëbizna [Kashubian]*, 125–184. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski.

Chomsky, Noam. 1981. *Lectures on government and binding. The Pisa lectures*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

Chomsky, Noam. 1982. *Some concepts and consequences of the Theory of Government and Binding*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Cybulski, Marek & Róża Wosiak-Śliwa. 2001. Składnia kaszubska [Kashubian syntax]. In Edward Breza (ed.), *Kaszubszczyzna. Kaszëbizna [Kashubian]*, 185–201. Opole: Uniwersytet Opolski.

Duličenko, Aleksandr. 2005. Kašubskij jazyk [Kashubian]. In Aleksandr M. Moldovan, Sergej S. Skorvid, Andrej A. Kibrik, Natal'ja V. Rogova, Ekaterina I. Jakuškina, Aleksej F. Žuravlev & Svetlana M. Tolstaja (eds.), *Jazyki mira: Slavjanskie jazyki. [The languages of the world: The Slavonic languages]*, 383–403. Moscov: Academia.

Embick, David. 1995. Mobile inflections in Polish. In Jill N. Beckman (ed.), *Proceedings of the North East Linguistic Society 25*, 127–142. Amherst, MA: GLSA (Graduate Linguistic Student Association).

Fernández Soriano, Olga. 1989. Strong pronouns in null subject languages and the Avoid Pronoun Principle. *MIT Working Papers in Linguistics* 11. 228–240.

Franks, Steven. 1995. *Parameters of Slavic morphosyntax*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Franks, Steven & Piotr Bański. 1999. Approaches to "schizophrenic" Polish person agreement. In Katarzyna Dziwirek, Herbert Coats & Cynthia Vakareliyska (eds.), *Formal Approaches to Slavic*

Linguistics: The Seattle meeting 1998, 123–143. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications.

Holmberg, Anders. 2005. Is there a little pro? Evidence from Finnish. *Linguistic Inquiry* 36. 533–564.

Jaeggli, Osvaldo & Kenneth J. Safir. 1989. The Null Subject Parameter and parametric theory. In Osvaldo Jaeggli & Kenneth J. Safir (eds.), *The Null Subject Parameter*, 1–44. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Karaś, Halina (ed.). 2010. Dialekty i gwary polskie. Kompendium internetowe [Dialects and subdialects of Poland. An online compendium]. http://www.dialektologia.uw.edu.pl/index.php.

Kučerová, Ivona. 2012. The syntax of null subjects. *Syntax* 17. 132–167.

Migdalski, Krzysztof. 2006. *The syntax of compound tenses in Slavic*. Utrecht: LOT Publications.

Nomachi, Motoki. 2014. On the Kashubian past tense form *jô bëł* 'I was' from a language contact perspective. In Elżbieta Kaczmarska & Motoki Nomachi (eds.), *Slavic and German in contact: Studies from areal and contrastive linguistics*, 27–57. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University.

Perlmutter, David. 1971. *Deep and surface structure constraints in syntax*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Rizzi, Luigi. 1986. Null objects in Italian and the theory of *pro*. *Linguistic Inquiry* 17. 501–557.

Roberts, Ian. 2010. A deletion analysis of null subjects. In Theresa Biberauer, Anders Holmberg, Ian Roberts & Michelle Sheehan (eds.), *Parametric variation: Null subjects in minimalist theory*, 58–87. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Szołtysek, Marek. 2008. *Rozmówki śląskie [Silesian phrasebook]*. Rybnik: Wydawnictwo Śląskie ABC.

Tambor, Jolanta. 2006. *Mowa górnoślązaków oraz ich świadomość językowa i etniczna [The speech of Upper Silesians and their linguistic and ethnic awareness]*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.

Toman, Jindřich. 1980. Weak and strong: Notes on *be* in Czech. In Gunter Brettschneider & Christian Lehmann (eds.), *Wege zur Universalienforschung: Sprachwissenschaftliche Beiträge zum 60. Geburtstag von Hanjakob Seiler*, 305–310. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

Veselovská, Ludmila. 2008. The extended verbal projection in Czech: Three variants of the verb *be*. Ms., Palacký University, Olomouc. [Published as Veselovská, Ludmila. 2008. The extended verbal projection in Czech: Three variants of the verb *be*. In Zybatow, Gerhild, Szucsich, Luka, Junghanns, Uwe & Meyer, Roland (eds.), *Formal Description of Slavic Languages: The Fifth Conference, Leipzig 2003*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.].

Wiland, Bartosz. 2009. *Aspects of order preservation in Polish and English*: University of Poznań dissertation.

Witkoś, Jacek. 1998. *The syntax of clitics. Steps towards a minimalist account*. Poznań: Motivex.

marta.ruda@uj.edu.pl