THERE IS NO COMPOSITE A'/A MOVEMENT

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• **Synopsis:** The talk presents a comparative investigation of composite [A'/A] probes and the movement chains they invoke. I argue that there is no "composite A'/A movement": whilst features may bundle together to composite probes and thereby restrict their search to specific goals, the movement such a probe induces is an A-chain. The claim builds on the empirical observation that composite A'/A constructions cross-linguistically exhibit a highly systematic pattern of A'/A properties.

• **[A'/A] probes and composite constructions:** Since their first appearance in van Urk 2015, composite [A'/A] probes received a lot of attention in syntactic research and have been applied to a variety of movement phenomena that do not straightforwardly pattern with either A'- or A-movement. The traditional A'/A distinction divides phrasal movement into two kinds, defined by clusters of mutually exclusive properties, summarized in table 1. I pursue a featural approach to movement, in which A-movement is induced by [A] probes ([D], [ϕ]), A'-movement by [A'] probes ([rel], [top], [foc], [wh]).

TABLE 1 **A-movement**	**A'-movement**
case-related, restricted to ϕ-goals, cannot cross CP/DPs, new antecedent for variable binding, no reconstruction, no parasitic gaps, feeds further A-movement (BIM), no info-structural/clause-typing effects	not case-related, not restricted to ϕ-goals, can cross CP and DPs, no new antecedents for variable binding, obligatory reconstruction effects, parasitic gap licensing, does not feed further A-mvt, info-structural/clause-typing effects

In a variety of unrelated languages we find constructions exhibiting a mixture of A'- and A-properties within a single movement chain, which I term *composite A'/A constructions*; they are regularly analyzed as "composite A'/A movement", invoked by an [A'/A] probe. Across literature, [A'/A] probes are applied to broadly three different phenomena: i) A'-extraction restricted to the closest DP (a.o. Branan & Erlewine 2020, Coon et al 2021; Keine & Zeijlstra 2024), ii) topic-/wh-movement with A-properties (van Urk 2015, Erlewine, Levin, van Urk 2019), and iii) passivization/raising with A'-properties (a.o. Longenbaugh 2017; Wurmbrand 2019; Colley & Privoznov 2020; Chen 2023). I focus on phenomena ii)-iii) and address the following questions: in the variety of existing analyses, it becomes unclear what it implies if a probe is [A'/A] and a phrase undergoes A'/A movement. Is the A'/A distinction obsolete in these languages? Do composite constructions exhibit random combinations of A'- and A-properties? Are we buying into an "anything goes" analysis by including [A'/A] probes in our syntax? In the following I argue that the answer to all three questions is no.

• **Systematic distribution of A'/A properties:** I investigate four derivations that have been analyzed via [A'/A] probes: **Dinka** extraction (van Urk 2015), **Balinese and Malagasy** promotion to pivot (Erlewine, Levin, van Urk 2019; Lohninger & Katochoritis 2024), **Mandarin** BEI passives (Chen 2023), and **Khanty** passives (Colley & Privoznov 2020), and show that empirically, we find highly systematic combinations of A'/A properties in these constructions, summarized in row (i) of table 2.

TB.2		**1 anaph. binding**	**2 WCO**	**3 case, ϕ-agr**	**4 reconstruction**	**5 feeds A-mvt**	**6 restr. to ϕ-goal**	**7 info-struct effects**	**8 can cross DP**	**9 can cross CP**
i.	A'/A	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	varies
ii.	A	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	×

Movement in composite A'/A constructions creates new antecedents for variable binding (does not induce WCO and binds anaphors from the landing site), feeds morphological case assignment, ϕ-agreement and subsequent A-movement, tends to lack condition C reconstruction, and is restricted to ϕ/D-goals (taking into account that language-specific peculiarities (e.g. lack of morphological case) render some values unattestable). As a comparison, row (ii) summarizes the properties of standard A-movement (e.g. Engl. passives); crucially, properties 1.-6. are the same in A'/A- as well as A-derivations. Where A'/A constructions differ from regular A-movement is in three aspects only (properties 7.-9.): movement involves information-structural/clause-typing effects (e.g. topicalization or wh-extraction), may cross intervening DPs, and, in some cases, CP boundaries. Based on these findings, I suggest that the movement an [A'/A] probe triggers is an A-chain, i.e. abstraction over individuals (Sauerland 1998, Fox 2000, Ruys 2000, van Urk 2015). Even though probes can bundle together and search for a goal in unison (visible from properties 7.-9.), the movement chain itself is always of type A (visible from 1.-6.).

• **The syntax of [A'/A]:** I propose that composite constructions emerge when a movement-inducing [A] probe ([•ϕ•] or [•D•]) occurs on a phase head (C or *v*) and bundles with an [A'] probe therein. **1. Conjoined probing:** assuming that, for economy reasons, two features on the same head search for a single goal which satisfies both feature's needs (*Multitasking*; van Urk & Richards 2015), [A'/A] aims for a goal that carries both [ϕ]/[D] and [A'] features (language-specifically, [A'/A] probes may permit the two probes to split up and attract separate goals when no full fit is available, Scott 2021; Lohninger & Yip 2023). **2. Defective intervention:** the [A'/A] probes under discussion probe conjointly (Scott 2021), and are able to skip partly fitting goals in favor of a full match, which makes them insensitive to defective intervention (van Urk 2015, Chen 2023). Evidence comes from ditransitives and long-distance extraction in the languages under discussion, where, empirically, intervening DPs can be successfully skipped in [A'/A] induced movement. Note that the minimality profile of [A'/A] probes is subject to discussion: I point out that the only case where A-minimal [A'/A] probes (sensitive to defective intervention) are employed is in A'-extraction restriction analyses (Branan & Erlewine 2020, Coon et al 2021); these constructions seem to be instances of pure A'-movement restricted to the closest DP, with no further indication of A'/A mixture. The derivations relevant for this talk are different: they all involve A-movement properties and have been described as insensitive to defective intervention. **3. A-movement:** if a fully fitting goal is found, [A'/A] attracts it to its specifier. The goal A-moves there and is case-assigned at the landing site. Following Abels 2007, I assume that A-operations (case, ϕ) are timed before A'-operations; extending this idea, I propose that if an [A'] and an [A] probe combine on a single head, [A] gets precedence in attracting movement (since it operates first), whereby movement induced by [A'/A] is always an A-chain. Hence, the moved goal exhibits properties associated with A-movement, but at the same time has repercussions on information-structure and targets a specifier that is usually out of reach for A-operations (e.g. SpecCP). Note that A-movement induced by [A'/A] obeys the BIM just like regular A-movement does: it cannot be fed by A'-movement but can feed subsequent A-movement.

• **The emergence of [A'/A] probes:** [A'/A] probes mainly occur on phasal heads (C or *v*); in a way, they constitute an A'-phase-head which, somehow, acquired the ability to mediate/trigger A-movement. I advance that composite probes are never the default case; phasal heads usually only bear [A'] probes. The presence of an additional [A] feature (= an [A'/A] probe) can have different reasons; i) it can be the result of parametric [ϕ] under-inheritance (Miyagawa 2010), thereby present on all phasal heads (e.g. Dinka), ii) it can emerge through language change, e.g. topic-to-subject grammaticalization in Austronesian, via which C obtains case-licensing properties (Lohninger & Katochoritis 2024), or iii) it can develop on non-canonical passive *v* heads, allowing topic/object promotion across an agent (e.g. Mandarin, Khanty). Given that there are different pathways via which [A'/A] probes enter the syntactic structure, they can either apply to all movement operations within a language or to single operations/heads alone, as well as co-occur with bare A'- or A-movement. Last, under the assumption that A-operations happen before A'-operations (Abels 2007), an [A'/A] phase head is less economic than a bare [A'] head (thus potentially less common in syntax): it requires keeping the time window for A-movement open until the phase-edge is reached, i.e. until more structure is built than in usual A-operations.

• **Accounting for mixed A'/A properties:** The probing mechanism of [A'/A], combined with different possible locations thereof (on C and/or *v*), as well as the claim that movement itself is an A-chain derives the empirically attested A'/A mixture of composite configurations in table 2. Properties 1.-6. indicate that movement semantically abstracts over individuals (thereby creates new binding environments) and lands in a case position (thereby allows for the absence of reconstruction effects, cf. Takahashi & Hulsey 2009). Properties 7.-9. tie to the probing head. 7: when an [A'/A] probe initiates the search, the goal needs to involve [A'] features, thereby is a top, rel, foc or wh-element. 8: given that an [A'/A] probe can skip a partly fitting goal, the induced movement can cross an intervening DP (even though it is A-movement). 9: [A'/A] probes occur on phase heads and thereby trigger movement to the phase-edge; if [A'/A] is located on C, it, in principle, allows A-movement to leave a CP clause.

• **Discussion:** My work allows to understand [A'/A] probing in a more systematic way, and makes precise predictions about (im)possible A'/A mixtures, thereby counteracts an anything-goes syntax of [A'/A]: the main claim being that the A'/A movement distinction can be upheld, even in composite

constructions. The talk further addresses the nature of A-movement, the intersection between featural and positional approaches to movement, as well as (im)possible distributions of probes within the clause.