



Supp Handout

# Infixation on the CV Tier: Evidence from Alabama Agent Agreement

Romi Hill · romihill@bu.edu · Boston Morphology Workshop · May 1 2026

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

## 1. THE PUZZLE

- In the Muskogean language Alabama, agent agreement markers can be realized as a **prefix**, **infix**, or **suffix** depending on the prosodic structure of the stem.
- The **negation** marker also appears to target the same position as the agent agreement affix.

Stem	Root	2SG Form		Gloss
		Positive	Negative	
iCV	<i>ipa</i>	<b>is</b> -pa-ti	<b>chi-k</b> -p-o-ti	'you ate'
CVVCV	<i>choopa</i>	choo< <b>s</b> >pa-ti	cho< <b>chi-kii</b> >p-o-ti	'you bought'
CVCCV	<i>hosso</i>	ho< <b>chi</b> >sso-ti	ho< <b>chi-ki</b> >ss-o-ti	'you wrote'
CVCV	<i>hompani</i>	hompan- <b>chi</b> -ti	hompan- <b>chi-k</b> -o-ti	'you played'
-ka	<i>loska</i>	los< <b>is</b> >ka-ti	los< <b>chi-k</b> >k-o-ti	'you deceived'
-li	<i>bitli</i>	bit- <b>chi</b> -ti	bit- <b>chi-k</b> -o-ti	'you danced'

- Following the general architecture of Kalin (2022), I show that infix placement in Alabama is prosodically conditioned and can be captured in a **Strict CV** framework.

## 2. PHONOLOGICAL RULES

### Sample VI Rules:

- AGR<sub>[2SG, AGT]</sub> ↔ *ch*
- NEG ↔ *k*
- √BUY ↔ *choopa*

### Some Phonological Rules:

- Complex segments (*ch*) require licensed C positions.
- Ungoverned V slots trigger i-epenthesis.

### Pivot Placement:

- Prefixing:** Monosyllabic root.
- Suffixing:** Unfilled final V (e.g. floating final segment in root)
- Infixing:** See below.

## 3. INFIXING PIVOT RULES

### Infixation:

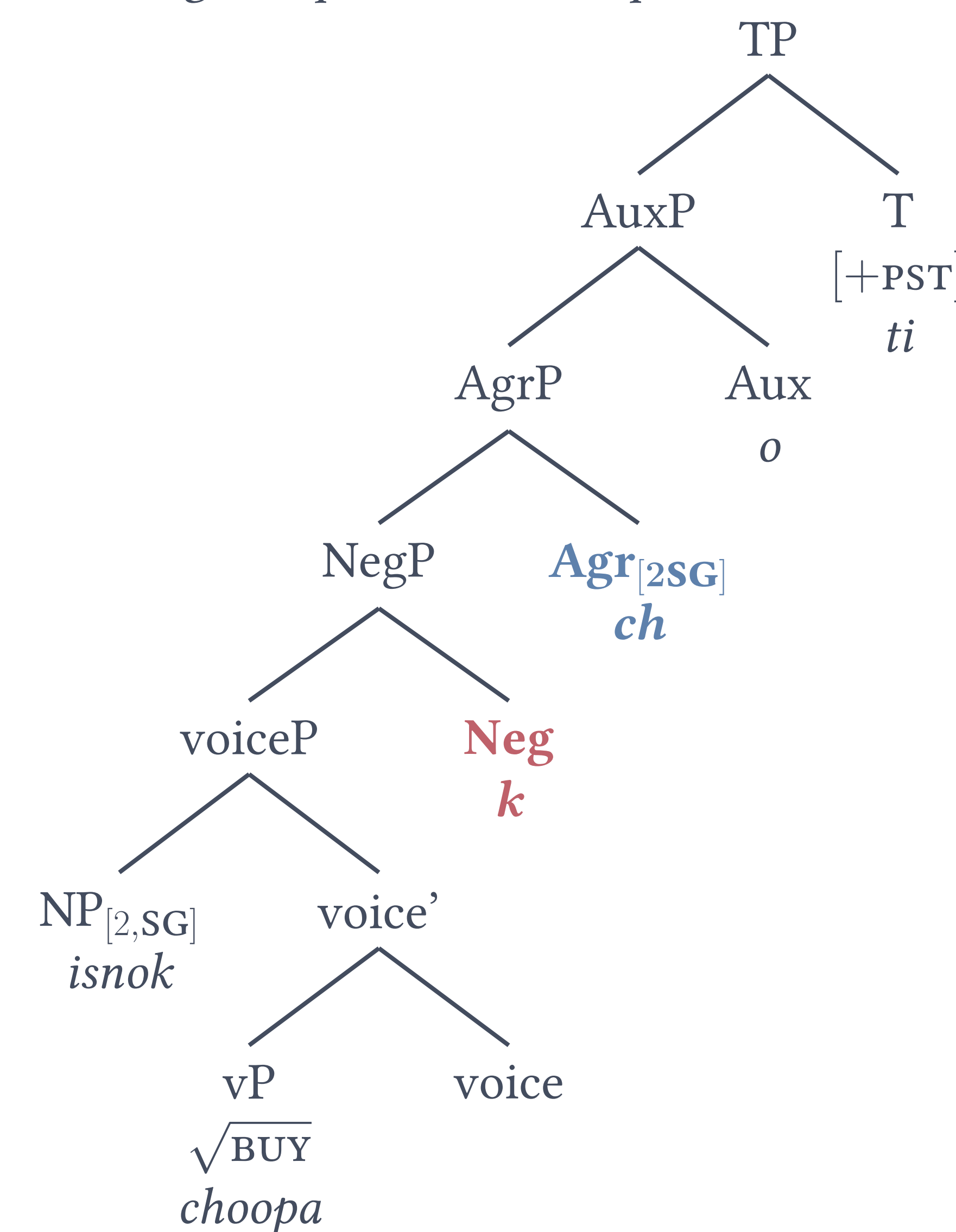
- If the rightmost C and V are filled, **insert the infix in the middle of the first filled V<sub>i</sub>C<sub>i+1</sub> sequence from the right**. Empty C V segments are ignored in this stage of the derivation.

$$V_i \ C_{i+1} \ \dots \ C_n V_n \ \# \ \rightarrow \ V_i \ \langle CV \rangle \ C_{i+1} \ \dots \ C_n V_n \ \#$$

- Negation infix** surfaces to the right of V<sub>i</sub>
- Agent infix** surfaces to the left of C<sub>i+1</sub>

## 4. UNDERLYING STRUCTURE

Deriving *choopa* → *chochikiipoti*



## 5. STRICT CV DERIVATION

### 1. Underlying form *choopa*

C <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>
ch	o			p	a

### 2. Infixation of NEG, right of V<sub>1</sub>

C <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	<C <sub>4</sub> V <sub>4</sub> >	C <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>
ch	o	<b>k</b>			p	a

### 3. Infixation of 2sg, left of C<sub>4</sub>

C <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	<C <sub>5</sub> V <sub>5</sub> >	<C <sub>4</sub> V <sub>4</sub> >	C <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>
ch	o	<b>ch</b>	<b>k</b>			p	a

### 4. i-insertion: V<sub>5</sub> and V<sub>4</sub> are ungoverned

C <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	<C <sub>5</sub> V <sub>5</sub> >	<C <sub>4</sub> V <sub>4</sub> >	C <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	V <sub>3</sub>
ch	o	<b>ch</b>	<b>i k i</b>			p	a

### 5. Remaining affixes & surface phonology: *cho<chi-kii>p-o-ti* 'you didn't buy'

## 6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- This account derives (almost) all positive and negative agent agreement.

→ **Exception:** in 1PL in all verbal stems.

- cho<ki-lii>p-o-ti* 'We didn't buy'
- cho<chi-kii>p-o-ti* 'You didn't buy'

→ **Exception × 2:** *-li* stems have an alternate form, where 1PL < NEG. This alternate also realizes 1PL as the suppletive allomorph.

- bit<k-il>k-o-ti* 'We didn't dance'
- bit<hili-k>k-o-ti* 'We didn't dance'

→ **Key Takeaways/Implications:**

- ★ Alabama agent agreement supports a bottom-up model of exponence, where infixes are displaced suffixes sensitive to the CV tier.
- Exponence applies before phonological repair, with infixation computed serially over the CV tier.
- The NEG infix and AGT infix target the same position, and align to different C V positions (V vs. C).
- NEG is displaced first, but *not* to the closest position satisfying the pivot. This suggests a weakening of strict locality.

## SELECTED REFERENCES

- [1] Kalin, L. (2022). *Infixes really are (underlyingly) prefixes/suffixes: Evidence from allomorphy on the fine timing of infixation*. *Language*, 98(4), 641–682.
- [2] Montler, T. R., & Hardy, H. K. (1990). *The phonology of Alabama agent agreement*. *WORD*, 41(3), 257–276.
- [3] Scheer, T. (2004). *A Lateral Theory of Phonology, Volume 1: What is CVCV, and why should it be?*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, the consultants, Tanya Bondarenko, the Harvard WOLF Lab, Jacob Fernandes and Ava Silva for collecting much of this data, Neil Myler for guidance and feedback, and Mike Everdell for helpful discussion.