

Icelandic Dative Intervention: Person and Number are separate probes

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Abstract

Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions generally observe the Person Restriction, allowing only 3rd person NOM to control agreement. In addition, there is variation within the 3rd person:

- Icelandic C: only the default 3SG form of the verb (=disallowing agreement),
- Icelandic B: generally disallows 3rd person agreement with NOM *across an overtly intervening DAT*,
- Icelandic A: allows many but not all instances of 3rd person agreement across DAT.

When the dative raises outside of the probing domain of the finite verb:

- Icelandic A: preferable 3PL agreement,
- Icelandic B: optional agreement
- Icelandic C: agreement blocking (default 3SG)

Goal: develop a unified analysis of the Person Restriction.

The analysis is based on the hypothesis that interpretable (but unvalued) Person and Number are *separate probes* ('heads') in the clausal structure.

1. Introduction

Previous work:

- Sigurðsson (1991, 1996) and Taraldsen (1995, 1996): Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions show a **PERSON RESTRICTION**, allowing only 3rd person NOM to control agreement.
- Even for 3rd person agreement, **DATIVE INTERVENTION** may arise, such that DAT blocks the verb from agreeing with NOM if it intervenes between the two (first reported by Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004).
- However, the intuitions reported in Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004) are not shared by all native speakers, Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) make an informant survey of the reported effect (9 informants).

Survey results: three varieties of Icelandic with respect to the DAT intervention effect

- Icelandic A: does not generally have it (preferable 3PL agreement),
- Icelandic B: has optional agreement as in Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004)
- Icelandic C: disallows agreement in DAT-NOM constructions, regardless of overt intervention (agreement blocking (default 3SG))
- In Icelandic A, number agreement (in the third person) is stronger than in Icelandic B, in the sense that it may apply across a dative argument or across a *wh*-trace. In Icelandic C, number agreement is still weaker than it is in Icelandic B.
- There are independent reasons to believe that the strongest number agreement variety is the oldest one and that the no agreement variety is the most recent one:

Icelandic A > *Icelandic B (H&H)* > *Icelandic C*
Agreement *Intervention* *No agreement*

- In contrast to Dative Intervention, the Person Restriction holds across all three varieties.
- Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008) show that both phenomena can be explained if Person and Number are separate probes.

2. The Person Restriction: the central facts

- DAT-NOM constructions where NOM is the sole, unrestricted agreement controller are cross-linguistically common (German, Russian, Romance varieties, Hungarian, etc):

(5) a. Ihm würden wir gefallen haben.^{ok} 1P AGR
 b. Ihm würdet ihr gefallen haben.^{ok} 2P AGR
 c. Ihm würden sie gefallen haben.^{ok} 3P AGR

- In contrast, Icelandic is known to observe the Person Restriction in (6):

(6) In DAT-NOM constructions, **only 3rd person NOM may control agreement**

Icelandic A (the strongest agreement variety)

- **Simplex construction:** the Person Restriction in both active and passive:

(7) a. *Honum líkum við. b. Honum líkið þið.
 him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM him.DAT like.2PL you.NOM.PL
 Intended: 'He likes us.' ntended: 'He likes you.'

c. Honum líka þeir. ^{ok} 3P AGR
 him.DAT like.3PL they.NOM
 'He likes them.'

- **Complex construction**

- Icelandic also has a Complex ECM DAT-NOM Construction, with the raising verbs.
- Again, 1st/2nd person agreement is excluded, whereas 3rd p. agreement is grammatical:

(10)a. * Honum mundum virðast við vera hæfir. *1P AGR
 him.DAT would.1PL seem we.NOM be competent
 Intended: 'We would seem competent to him.'

b. * Honum munduð virðast þið vera hæfir. *2P AGR
 him.DAT would.2PL seem you.NOM.PL be competent
 Intended: 'You would seem competent to him.'

c. Honum mundu virðast þeir vera hæfir. ^{ok}3P AGR
 him.DAT would.3PL seem they.NOM be competent
 'They would seem competent to him.'

- However, if the finite verb does not agree with the NOM downstairs subject, instead showing up in the default 3SG (*mundi*), all persons are allowed in the NOM argument:

(11) a. ^{ok}3SG verb-1PL

Honum mundi virðast **við** vera hæfir. NOM
 him.DAT would.**3SG** seem **we**.NOM be competent
 ‘We would seem competent to him.’

b. ^{ok}3SG verb – 2PL NOM

Honum mundi virðast **þið** (vera) hæfir.
 him.DAT would.**3SG** seem **you**.NOM.PL (be) competent
 ‘You would seem competent to him.’

c. ^{ok}3SG verb – 3PL NOM

Honum mundi virðast **þeir** vera hæfir.
 him.DAT would.**3SG** seem **they**.NOM be competent
 ‘They would seem competent to him.’

- In this case, the verb does not probe NOM, presumably probing the whole infinitival complement instead.
- NOM has undergone **Short Raising** out of the infinitival TP in cases like (10c).
- In the simple construction, on the other hand, probing NOM is the only option, hence default (non-agreeing) is degraded:

(12) Icelandic A

a. * Honum mundi hafa líkað **við**. *3SG verb – 1PL NOM
 him.DAT would.**3SG** have like.3SG **we**.NOM
 Intended: ‘He would have liked us.’

b. * Honum mundi hafa líkað **þið** *3SG verb – 2PL NOM
 him.DAT would.**3SG** have like.3SG **we**.NOM
 Intended: ‘He would have liked you.’

c. ? Honum mundi hafa líkað **þeir**. ? 3SG verb – 3PL NOM
 him.DAT would.**3SG** have like.3SG **we**.NOM
 Intended: ‘He would have liked them.’

- In (7)-(12) there is **no overt DAT intervention**, i.e., the relevant order of elements is DAT-verb-NOM (and not X-verb-DAT-NOM).

Icelandic B: In structures like (7)-(12), Icelandic B differs only minimally from Icelandic A, such that the default 3SG in (12c) is just as acceptable as the 3PL agreement in (7c).

Icelandic C: default 3SG is preferable in examples like (12c) (and not sharply unacceptable in (12a,b)).

3. High Intervention

- In (7)-(12), DAT has raised out of the probing domain of the finite verb > no overt DAT-intervention between the finite verb and NOM:

(13) **DAT** would ~~DAT~~ like/seem/... **NOM** (...)

3rd person

- Icelandic A and B differ only minimally in structures like (13).
- However, if DAT remains in the verb's probing domain, variation arises between Icelandic A and Icelandic B/C in clauses where the NOM argument is in the 3rd person:

(14) X = an adverbial or the expletive *það* 'there, it'

a. ^{ok}X would.AGR **DAT** like/seem/... **NOM.3P** ... **Icelandic A**
 ↑ _____ ↑

b. * X would.AGR **DAT** like/seem/... **NOM.3P** ... **Icelandic B/C**
 ↑ _____ X _____ ↑

Icelandic A: agreement across the DAT in the simplex and complex constructions:

(15) a. *það líkuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir.*
 EXPL liked.3PL one linguist.DAT these **ideas.NOM**

b. *það þóttu einum málfræðingi þessi rök sterk.*
 EXPL thought.3PL/3SG one linguist.DAT these **arguments.NOM** strong

Icelandic B/C:

- In Icelandic B, agreement is blocked by intervention of DAT.
- In Icelandic C, agreement is generally unacceptable in DAT-NOM constructions.

(16) a. *það líkaði/*líkuðu einum málfræðingi þessar hugmyndir.*
 EXPL liked.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these **ideas.NOM**

b. *það þótti/*þóttu einum málfræðingi þessi rök sterk.*
 EXPL thought.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these **arguments.NOM** strong

1st and 2nd person

For 1st and 2nd person NOM (full morphological) agreement is generally unacceptable in all three varieties (Icelandic A, B & C) regardless of the position of the DAT:

(17) 1st & 2nd person

a. * DAT would.1/2AGR ~~DAT~~ like/seem/... **NOM** (...)

b. * X would.1/2AGR DAT like/seem/... **NOM** (...)

X = an adverbial or the expletive *það* 'there, it'

- (18) a. * Einhverjum hafið alltaf líkað/virst þið (...)
 some.DAT.SG/PL have.2PL always liked/seemed you.NOM.PL
 ‘You always seemed ... to some people / Some people always liked you.’
- b. * það hafið einhverjum alltaf líkað/virst þið (...)
 EXPL have.2PL some.DAT.SG/PL always liked/seemed you.NOM.PL

Intermediary summary

- The **PERSON RESTRICTION** in Icelandic A, B and C, blocking 1st and 2nd person NOM from controlling agreement in both the simplex and the complex DAT-NOM constructions, regardless of the position of DAT.
- Overt **DATIVE INTERVENTION** in Icelandic B, blocking 3rd person NOM from controlling number agreement across DAT in both the simplex and the complex DAT-NOM constructions.
- General agreement blocking in DAT-NOM constructions in Icelandic C.

Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) argue that both the Person Restriction and the general agreement blocking in Icelandic C are actually due to (covert or overt) intervention, and that all three phenomena in (19) can get a unified account. Such an account can be developed if *Person and Number are separate probes*.

4. Split Person/Number probing

- The Person Restriction suggests that Person probing and Number probing are distinct phenomena.
- Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) assume the order of elements in (20), where not only T and C-type features like Fin(iteness) and Top(ic), but also **Pn** (=Person) and **Nr** (=Number) are clausal heads (the basic assumption being that any clausal head is a single feature):

(20) [_{CP} ... Top ... Fin ... [_{TP} ... Pn ... Nr ... T ... v ... DAT ... NOM]]

- DAT moves out of vP, thus complying with the generalization that the subject always has to raise from full VP (parallel to Icelandic NOM subjects).
- Icelandic also has a higher subject position (‘SpecIP’), preceding all sentence adverbs > one has to distinguish between the Low Subject Raising in (24a) and regular High Subject Raising.
- Given that Pn and Nr attract T to two different positions, and given this Low Subject Raising out of vP, Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) can account for the observed agreement variation.
- For Icelandic A with no intervention effect:

(22) það þótti/þóttu einum málfræðingi þessi rök sterk.
 EXPL thought.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these **arguments**.NOM strong
 ‘One linguist find these arguments strong.’

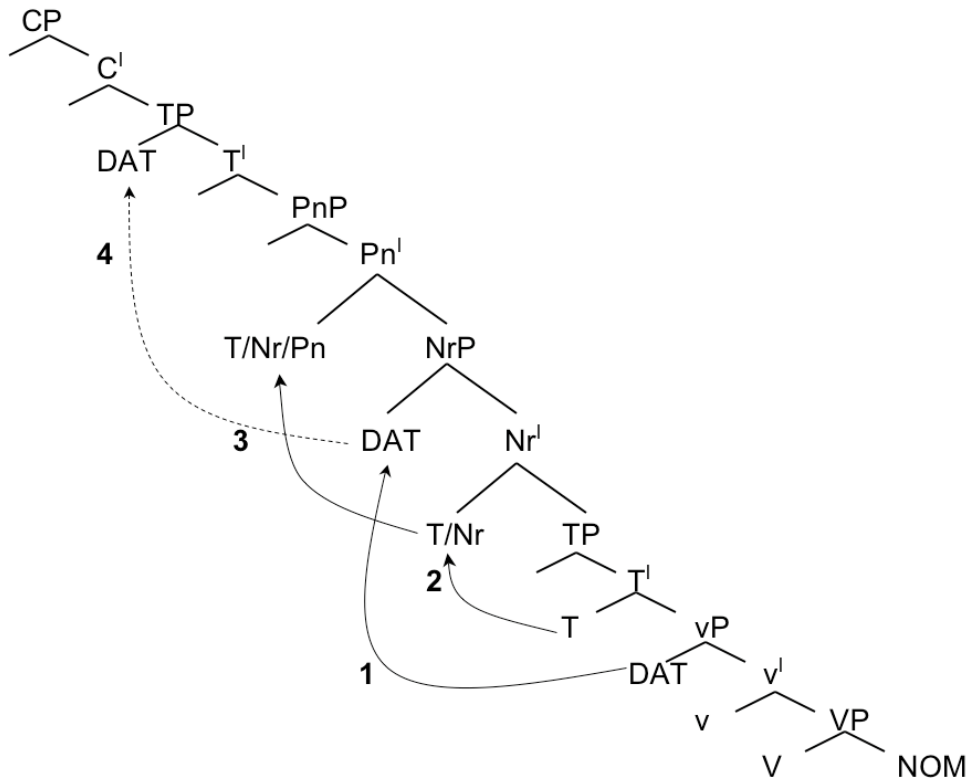
- The optional Short Raising of NOM out of the infinitival TP is not shown, yielding optional agreement in the third person:

(23) ... (EXPL) Pn Nr T [_{VP} DAT V [_{TP} NOM ...

(24) ... (EXPL) Pn **DAT** Nr T [_{VP} ~~DAT~~V [_{TP} NOM ... (Low Subject Raising)

(25) ... (EXPL) Pn DAT T/Nr T [_{VP} ~~DAT~~V [_{TP} NOM ... (T-raising to Nr)

(26) ... (EXPL) T/Nr/Pn DAT ~~T/Nr~~ T [_{VP} ~~DAT~~V [_{TP} NOM ... (T/Nr-raising to Pn)



- Nr and Pn probing is activated by T-raising, that is, T cannot probe for DP number / person unless it has joined Nr and Pn.
- Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) assume that Nr and Pn probing must take place immediately after T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn, respectively. This roll-up type of T-movement yields the order of tense, number and person markers in morphology (e.g., *lær-ð-u-m* = learn-PAST-PL-1P ‘(we) learned’).
- **Number agreement** with NOM is established in (25), T having joined Nr, and DAT having raised ‘out of the way’.
- If NOM undergoes optional Short Raising out of TP, number agreement is obligatory, but if it does not raise, T/Nr probes the infinitival TP as a whole, in which case only the default 3SG is available (optional number agreement in (22), and in (10c)/(11c)).
- **Person agreement** is established in (26), but since DAT intervenes, the verb cannot reach NOM, instead probing DAT, which yields default 3SG > the Person Restriction.
- **High Subject Raising** to the low left edge (‘SpecIP’), as in (27), generally has no effects upon agreement, taking place too late for that (Since it takes place later than T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn (recall that Nr and Pn probing must take place immediately after T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn).):

(27) ... **DAT** T/Nr/Pn ~~DAT~~ ~~T/Nr~~ T [_{VP} ~~DAT~~V [_{TP} NOM ... (High Subject Raising)

Icelandic C (cf. 16b)

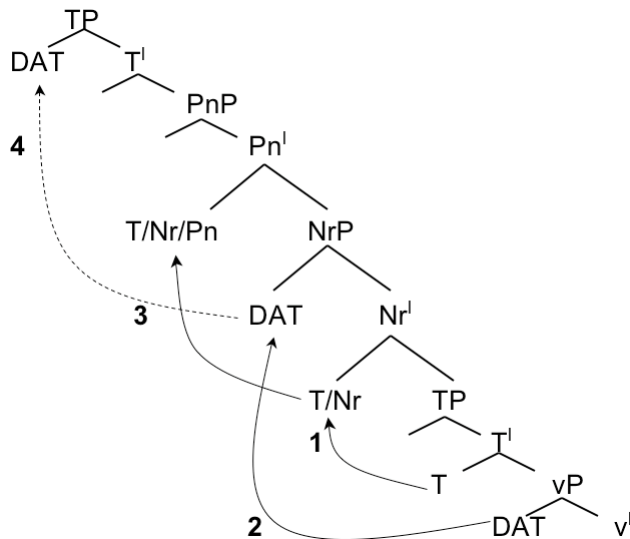
- The derivation in Icelandic C differs from the derivation in Icelandic A in only one respect: T-raising to Nr taking place prior to Low Subject Raising out of vP:

(23) (EXPL) Pn Nr T [_{vP} DAT V [_{TP} NOM ...

(24)' (EXPL) Pn T/Nr ~~T~~ [_{vP} DAT V [_{TP} NOM ... (T-raising to Nr)

(25)' (EXPL) Pn DAT T/Nr ~~T~~ [_{vP} ~~DAT~~ V [_{TP} NOM ... (Low Subject Raising)

(26) (EXPL) T/Nr/Pn DAT ~~T/Nr~~ ~~T~~ [_{vP} ~~DAT~~ V [_{TP} NOM ... (T/Nr-raising to Pn)



- As in Icelandic A, **number probing** takes place immediately after T-raising to Nr in (24)', but since this happens prior to Low Subject Raising in Icelandic C, DAT will inevitably induce an intervention effect, blocking 3PL agreement.
- As in Icelandic A (and generally), **person** cannot be probed until after T/Nr-raising to Pn, hence the same Person Restriction as in Icelandic A ('true' 1st and 2nd person agreement excluded).
- Thus, DAT always intervenes in Icelandic C (overtly or covertly), regardless of where it is situated in surface structure.

Icelandic B is a hybrid between Icelandic A and C:

- when DAT remains low the result is the same as in Icelandic C, agreement being blocked;
- when DAT undergoes High Subject Raising to the edge ('SpecIP'), as in (27), Icelandic B behaves either as Icelandic A or as Icelandic C:

(29)

					Agr	-Agr
a.	að	henni	líkuðu/?líkaði	ðeir.	Icelandic A	ok ?
b.	að	henni	líkuðu/líkaði	ðeir.	Icelandic B	ok ok
c.	að	henni	??l'kuðu/l'kaði	ðeir.	Icelandic C	?? ok
	that	her.DAT	liked.3PL/3SG	they.NOM		

'... that she liked them.'

- The default 3SG alternative *líkaði* in (29b) can be analyzed as a regular C-grammar derivation (as above). On the other hand, Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) do not have any obvious account of the agreeing alternative *líkuðu*.

(27) ... DAT T/Nr/Pn ~~DAT T/Nr T~~_[vP] ~~DAT V~~_[TP] NOM ... (High Subject Raising)

- The position taken by DAT in (29)/(27) is the canonical (post-C) subject position, alternatively filled by an expletive or a stylistically fronted element, that is, **the raising of the dative subject is EPP-driven**. It is surprising that this raising removes the intervention effect of the dative with respect to *only* number and *not* also with respect to person:

(27) * Honum líkum við. b. * Honum líkið ðið.
 him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM him.DAT like.2PL you.NOM.PL

c. Honum líka/líkar ðeir.
 him.DAT like.3PL/3SG they.NOM
 'He likes them.'

"... the fact that High Subject Raising of DAT removes or circumvents the intervention effect with respect to only number in Icelandic B does not get any satisfactory account under the present approach. However, we have at least been able to identify the problem. To our knowledge, it has not been noticed previously." (Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008: 261)

- Since Icelandic B seems to be historically intermediate between Icelandic A and C one could hypothesize that it is a blend of the two, Icelandic B most commonly applies Icelandic C grammar but resorting to Icelandic B grammar in the case of High Subject Raising.
- The intervention effect of Icelandic B is an epiphenomenon, arising not because of the properties of "grammar B" but because Icelandic B resorts to two different grammars, neither of which has exactly the B-type intervention effect.

5. Low Intervention

- So far the intervening element was in a relatively high position, in a main clause. However, intervention may also be 'low', induced by a dative in the subject position of the infinitive:

(41) a. Okkur virtist/*virtust henni hafa leiðst ðeir.
 us.DAT seemed.3SG/*3PL her.DAT have found-boring they.NOM
 'It seemed to us that they found her boring.'

- There is no dialectal variation with regard to the low intervention in (41). This is what is predicted, since the dative argument cannot, in this case, raise out of the probing domain of the matrix Nr:

(44) [_{CP} ... Pn Nr T [_{vP} DAT V [_{TP} DAT ... NOM ...

- The higher DAT raises across Nr, as we have seen, but the lower one is locked within the vP phase.

6. *Wh*-movement and agreement

- In Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004; Icelandic B), not only the overt DAT (which has undergone Low Subject Raising) but also the *wh*-copy in structures like (46) induces an intervention effect:

(46) Hverjum mundi/*mundum þá ~~WH~~ virðast [við vera hæfir]?
 whom.DAT would.3SG/1PL then ~~DAT~~ seem we.NOM be competent
 'To whom we would have seemed competent?'

- In (46), however, NOM can undergo 'Long Raising', a scrambling-like movement, across the *wh*-copy (cf. 47). In this case, intervention is avoided, as the embedded NOM subject moves to a position higher than the (copy of) the otherwise intervening dative argument:

(47) Hverjum *mundi/mundum við þá ~~WH~~ virðast [við vera hæfir]?
 whom.DAT would.3SG/1PL we.NOM then ~~DAT~~ seem ~~NOM~~ be competent
 'Who would we then seem competent to?'

- The agreement is obligatory if the NOM scrambles, otherwise excluded.
- Thus, the Person Restriction is indeed caused by intervention: When neither a DAT argument nor a clause boundary intervenes between T/Nr/Pn and the NOM argument, then person as well as number agreement has to apply.
- This further confirms that agreement restrictions in DAT-NOM constructions are structural, hence not a consequence of some special inherent property of the Icelandic dative (in contrast to the prevailing view since Boeckx 2000).
- The scrambling of the embedded NOM subject is possible only if the dative has *wh*-moved (cf. (48), where the underlined *wh*-DAT remains in situ):

(48) a. þá mundi/*mundum hverjum virðast [við vera hæfir]?
 then would.3SG/3PL who.DAT seem we.NOM be competent

b. *þá mundi/mundum við hverjum virðast [við vera hæfir]?
 then would.3SG/3PL we.NOM who.DAT seem ~~NOM~~ be competent

- Thus, an overt *wh*-phrase blocks scrambling, whereas a *wh*-copy does not.
- Examples like (49) from Icelandic B lead Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004) to conclude that *wh*-elements move directly to SpecCP:

(49) Hvaða knapa mundi/*mundu þá finnast
 what jockey.DAT would.3SG/3PL then find.INF
 þessir hestar vera fljótir?
 these horses.NOM be fast
 'Which jockey would find these horses fast.'

- In the framework of Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004) the failure of plural agreement here meant that the DAT *wh*P must move directly to SpecCP, since, if it

moved through the low left edge (their SpecTP), it would, at that point, not intervene between T and the NOM argument.

- In Icelandic A, however, plural agreement is perfectly fine in this construction:

(50) Hvaða knapa mundi/mundu þá finnast
 what jockey.DAT would.3SG/3PL then find.INF
þessir hestar vera fljótir?
 these horses.NOM be fast
 'Which jockey would find these horses fast.'

- In the present framework this follows if DAT undergoes Low Subject Raising, to the left of Nr, prior to *wh*-movement.
- If so, the DAT argument (a *whP*) doesn't intervene between Nr and the NOM argument, which means that we get number agreement in Icelandic A.
- But in Icelandic B, where number agreement happens before DAT-raising to the left of Nr, DAT still intervenes.
- > Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) have to assume that DAT, whether it is a *whP* or not, first undergoes movement to the left of Nr, and then undergoes *wh*-movement to SpecCP.

7. 'Half-agreement' and invisible double Person agreement

- In Icelandic A (22-26), if NOM undergoes Short Raising out of its minimal TP, number agreement is obligatory, otherwise excluded (hence the optionality in (22)).
- In the simplex DAT-NOM construction, however, NOM is not 'protected' by any local TP boundary and hence we would expect obligatory number agreement in the 3rd person. However, the common judgements for Icelandic A informants are the following:

(51)a. Henni líkuðu/?líkaði ekki **þessar** hugmyndir.
 her.DAT liked.3PL/?3SG not these ideas.NOM
 'She did not like these ideas.'

b. það líkuðu/(?)líkaði bara einum málfræðingi **þessar** hugmyndir.
 EXPL liked.3PL/(?)3SG only one linguist.DAT these ideas.NOM
 'Only one linguist liked these ideas.'

- The default 3SG in (51) is a '**half-agreement**', violating only number agreement, but not person agreement.
- Now, notice that it should be possible to establish number agreement in (25), regardless of person, that is, the present analysis would seem to wrongly predict that 3PL agreement with 1PL and 2PL NOM should be possible. Such 'half-agreement' is indeed slightly better than full agreement (involving person), but it is nonetheless clearly worse than default 3SG:

(52) Henni ?mundi/?*mundu/*munduð hafa leiðst **þið**.
 her.DAT would. ?3SG/?*3PL/*2PL have found-boring you.NOM.PL
 'She would have found you boring.'

- This half-agreement problem is ‘solved’ in Sigurðsson (2006a, 2006b), but our informant survey provides evidence that it should not, as it were, be solved or eliminated, namely: In case a verb form in the 2PL is homophonous with the 3PL form, plural agreement becomes better than elsewhere (that is, better than for other inflectional paradigms, where there is no such 2-3PL syncretism):

(53)a. Henni virtist/virtust þið eitthvað einkennilegir.
 her.DAT seemed.3SG/2-3PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange
 ‘You seemed somewhat strange to her.’

b. Henni virtist/?*virtust/*virtumst við eitthvað einkennilegir.
 her.DAT seemed.3SG/2-3PL/1PL we.NOM somewhat strange
 ‘We seemed somewhat strange to her.’

(54) a. Henni þótti??þóttu/*þóttuð þið eitthvað einkennilegir.
 her.DAT thought.3SG/3PL/2PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange
 ‘She found you somewhat strange.’

b. Henni þótti??þóttu/*þóttum við eitthvað einkennilegir.
 her.DAT thought.3SG/3PL/2PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange
 ‘She found us somewhat strange.’

- As expected, the default 3SG is possible in all cases in (53-54), whereas the plural forms in (53b) and (54) are impossible or degraded.
- The plural form *virtust* in (53a) is acceptable to most of informants, and the reason is that it can be interpreted as *agreeing with the 2PL NOM, without unambiguously agreeing with it in person*.
- This is not possible for *þykja* ‘think’ in (54), but 3PL is nonetheless slightly better than fully, unambiguously person agreeing forms 2PL.
- This new knowledge is important, because it shows that **what matters here is not the defaultness of 3SG but absence of person agreement as such**, as a distinct from number agreement. Thus, this is one further piece of evidence that person and number agreement are separate phenomena.
- Agreement that does *not* involve or show *unambiguous person* agreement is acceptable to many speakers.
- Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008) suggest that T/Nr/Pn in the structure in (26) probes for *person* (but crucially *not* number) in both DAT and NOM, in case this does not lead to a morphological clash.

(23) (EXPL) T/Nr/Pn DAT ~~T/Nr~~ T_{VP} DAT V T_{TP} NOM ...

- As Nr and Pn probing must take place immediately after T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn, Nr probing cannot take place after T/Nr raising to Pn, whereas Pn probing has to take place precisely then.
- Person probing of DAT always yields third person, and as long as person probing of NOM does not lead to a ‘non-third’ person form, NOM is ruled in. Otherwise, the

derivation crashes, as in, e.g., (55b). Once again, then, it is evident that Pn and Nr probing are distinct phenomena, Pn probing applying later in the derivation than Nr probing.

- The relevant descriptive generalization: **SYNCRETISM GENERALIZATION:**
(58) For most speakers, no Person Restriction arises in DAT-NOM constructions if, for morphological (paradigmatic) reasons, the 'would be' first or second person agreeing form is homophonous with the third person form (in the same number).
- The Person Restriction is just a special case of Dative Intervention (between T/Nr/Pn and NOM), so it is evident from this that intervention is affected by purely morphological, non-syntactic factors.

8. Conclusion

- There are three varieties of Icelandic which differ with respect to number agreement with a postverbal NOM object in the presence of a DAT subject.
- All varieties are subject to the Person Restriction prohibiting person agreement with the same NOM object.
- Absence of number agreement is caused by intervention of the DAT argument.
- The Person Restriction is also caused by ordinary DAT intervention, instead of being due to some special property of the Icelandic dative (*pace* Boeckx 2000, Sigurðsson 2006a, 2006b). This is possible if:
 - (a) Person (Pn) and number (Nr) are separate probes
 - (b) Number agreement in the variety that permits it (Icelandic A) is possible since the DAT argument moves out of the intervening position between Nr and the NOM object before Nr probes
 - (c) In no variety does DAT move high enough/early enough to avoid intervening between Pn and the NOM object
- The separation of Pn and Nr is also supported by the possibility of half-agreement, under certain restricted circumstances, that is when the verb agrees with a 1st and 2nd person NOM object in number without unambiguously agreeing (or 'disagreeing') with it in person.

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