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Icelandic Quirky Agreement Restrictions

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28 March 02015



uOttawa



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- In Icelandic Quirky subject sentences, the finite verb does not agree with the subject. Instead, it agrees with the nominative object. (Sigurðsson 1996, Boeckx 2000, among others)

(1) Henni leiddust strákar.
her.3SG.DAT bored.3PL the boys.3PL.NOM
'She found the boys boring.'

- Icelandic Quirky subject sentences block a 1st or 2nd person nominative object.

(2) * Henni leidd-umst/-ust/-ist við.
her.DAT bored(1PL/3PL/DFT) we.1PL.NOM
'She found us boring.'



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Research Question 1

Why does the finite verb agree with the Nominative object, rather than with the Quirky subject?

Research Question 2

Why are 1st and 2nd person Nominative objects blocked in Quirky subject constructions?



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Framework

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Conclusion & Further Work

- I adopt a strong Minimalist framework for my analyses.
- Earlier analyses of Icelandic Quirky case rely heavily on non-Minimalist components.
- Schütze (1993), Sigurðsson (1996), Boeckx (2000), &c.



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- Activity Condition
- 1st/2nd person: [+Person]
- 3rd person: [~~Person~~]
- Relative φ Completeness: w.r.t. DPs



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Defective T

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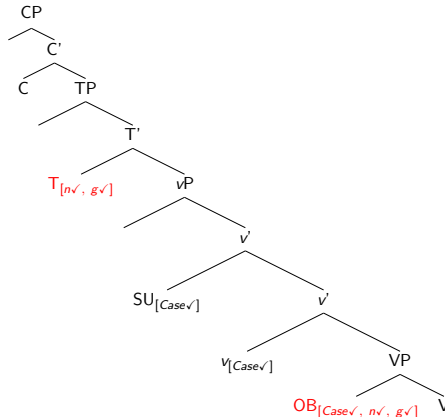
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Conclusion & Further Work

- T is φ -defective in Quirky subject constructions, lacking [Person]
- T only agrees in [Number] and [Gender] with the nominative object
- This is the analysis I adopt



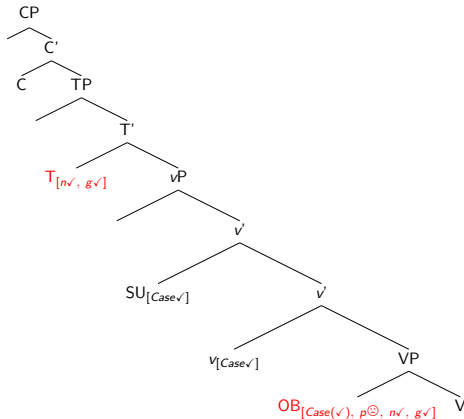
- Quirky subject checks Case with the verb
- Defective T finds the nominative object as its goal, checks [Number] and [Gender]





Quirky Subject, 1st/2nd Person Nominative Object

- When defective T probes to check φ -features, it is not relatively φ -complete compared to the nominative object.
- Relative φ -incompleteness causes the derivation to crash.
- This yields the 1st/2nd person restriction.



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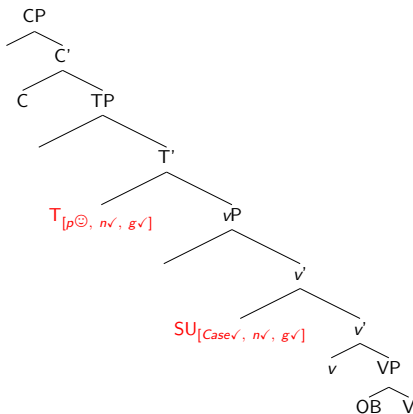
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Nominative Subject, 3rd Person

- T finds the subject as its goal and checks [Number] and [Gender]
- Even though the 3rd person subject lacks [Person], T and the subject are still relatively φ -complete



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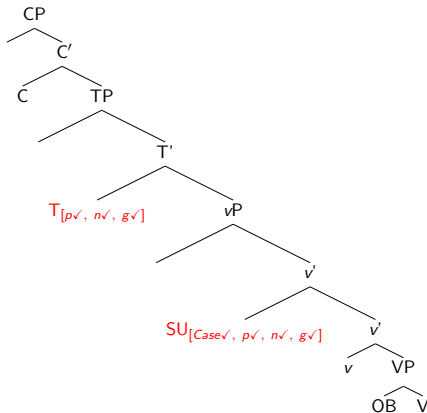
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Nominative Subject, 1st/2nd Person

- T finds the subject as its goal and checks [Person], [Number], and [Gender]



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Defective T – Conclusion

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Conclusion & Further Work

- Object agreement ✓
- Person restriction ✓
- Defective T: Why?
- Unchecked [Person] on T



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Split φ

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- T agrees with the Quirky subject for [Person]
- T agrees with the nominative object for [Number] and [Gender]
- [Person] probes separately from [Number] and [Gender]
- Sigurðsson & Holmberg (2008)



Split φ – Derivations

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- Quirky

- ① [Person] probes, checking with the Quirky subject.
- ② [Number] and [Gender] probe. The Quirky subject is now inactive, so they find the nominative object.
- ③ If the nominative object is 1st/2nd person, it won't establish a relatively φ -complete Agree relation with T, and the derivation will crash.

- Non-Quirky

- ① [Person] probes and finds the nominative subject.
- ② The subject still needs to check Case, so it remains active.
- ③ [Number] and [Gender] find the subject as their goal.



Split φ – Conclusion

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Conclusion & Further Work

- Object agreement ✓
- Person restriction ✓
- Requires [?] on Quirky subject to make it accessible
- [Person] behaves differently than the other φ -features



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- Richards (2013): Case-stacking in Lardil
- Semantically uninterpretable morphology can be replaced
- Semantically interpretable morphology can't be

(3) Russian

a. Anna pišet pis'mo ručkoj.

Anna writes letter.ACC pen.INSTR

'Anna is writing a letter with a pen.'

b. Anna ne pišet pis'ma ručkoj.

Anna not writes letter.GEN pen.INSTR

'Anna isn't writing a letter with a pen.'



φ -Stacking

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Conclusion & Further Work

- T agrees with the Quirky subject (for all φ -features)
- T agrees (a second time) with the nominative object



φ -Stacking – Assumptions

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- T can (and must!) agree with two different DPs in Quirky subject constructions
- T only agrees with the nominative subject in non-Quirky sentences
- The Quirky subject's [Person] feature is interpretable (can't be replaced/overridden)
- A Quirky subject's [Person] feature always looks like 3rd person/default



φ -Stacking – Quirky Subject, 3rd Person Nominative Object

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- Quirky subject, 3rd person nominative object
 - ① $T \rightarrow$ Quirky subject
 - ② $T \rightarrow$ nominative object
 - ③ T replaces its [Number] and [Gender] with those from nominative object and values nominative case
- Quirky subject, 1st/2nd person nominative object
 - ① $T \rightarrow$ Quirky subject
 - ② $T \rightarrow$ nominative object
 - ③ T can't replace its [Person] feature from that of the nominative object
 - ④ The nominative object can't value Case, and the derivation crashes



φ -Stacking – Conclusion

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- Object agreement ✓
- Person restriction ✓
- Stipulative assumptions
 - φ -features on T
 - φ -features on DPs



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López (2008)

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Conclusion & Further Work

- T, the Quirky subject, and the nominative object all form a complex dependency



López (2008) – Assumptions

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Conclusion & Further Work

- Full Sharing
- Minimal Compliance
- Extra layer (K) on top of Quirky DP, no φ -features
- Unvalued Case can be a probe



López (2008) – Derivations

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- ① K probes its unvalued Case feature and finds the nominative object as its goal.
- ② They must satisfy Full Sharing, but since their features are still unvalued, they become co-indexed/co-valued.
- ③ T's [Person] feature probes and finds the Quirky subject + nominative object complex dependency.
- ④ The Quirky subject and nominative object must have the same value for [Person] (Full Sharing), K has no [Person], so the nominative object cannot have a value for [Person].
- ⑤ T's [Number] finds the complex dependency. Due to Minimal Compliance, the Quirky subject the nominative object may have different values for [Number].



López (2008) – Conclusions

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- Object agreement ✓
- Person restriction ✓
- Stipulative assumptions
 - Why does unvalued Case act as a probe and find another nominal?
 - Why does [Person] have to probe first?
 - If K has no φ -features, could the nominative object satisfy Full Sharing vacuously?



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(4) Henni leiddust strákarir.
her.3SG.DAT bored.3PL the boys.3PL.NOM
'She found the boys boring.'

(5) * Henni leidd-umst/-ust/-ist við.
her.DAT bored(1PL/3PL/DFT) we.1PL.NOM
'She found us boring.'

Research Question 1

Why does the finite verb agree with the Nominative object, rather than with the Quirky subject?

Research Question 2

Why are 1st and 2nd person Nominative objects blocked in Quirky subject constructions?



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- The defective T analysis presented here best explains the Icelandic Quirky case data
 - Based in accepted theory (T can be defective, DPs can lack [Person]).
 - Doesn't require the stipulative/non-Minimalist assumptions that other analyses rely on.
- Why is T [Person]-defective in these constructions?
- Unchecked [Person] on T paradox in non-Quirky sentences? CP subjects



Takk kærlega! / Thank you! / Merci beaucoup!

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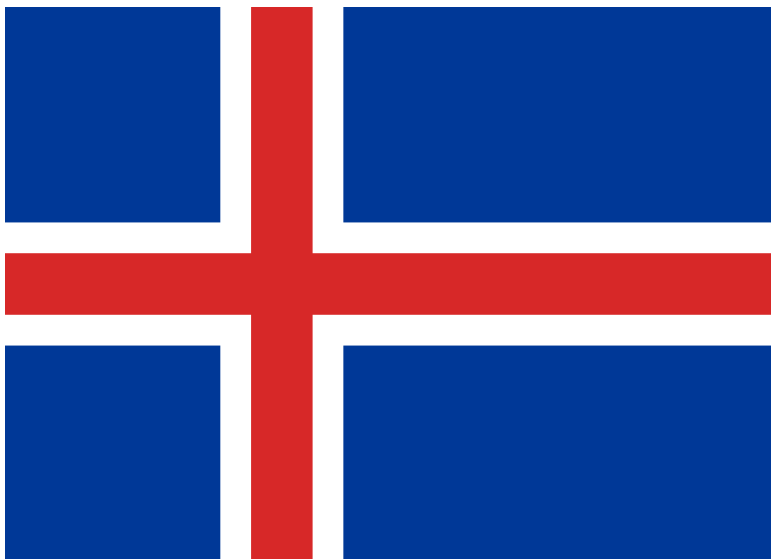
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Structural Case

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Zupon

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- Case is often classified as either structural (determined by a particular structural configuration) or lexical (determined by the verb).
- In a nominative-accusative language, like Icelandic, subjects usually take nominative case and direct objects usually take accusative case.
- In these constructions, the verb always agrees with the subject in person, number, and gender.

(6) Einhver keupti bækurnar.
 someone.3SG.NOM bought.3SG the books.3PL.ACC
 ‘Someone bought the books.’



Quirky Case

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- In addition to the standard nominative-accusative pattern, Icelandic also has Quirky case (Schütze 1993, Sigurðsson 1996, Boeckx 2000, among others)
- Schütze (1993): Non-nominative markings on subjects and non-accusative markings on objects
- Thráinsson (2007): Idiosyncratic lexical case marking



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- (7) Mér líkar þessir bílar.
me.DAT likes these cars.NOM
'I like these cars.'
- (8) Mig vantar peninga.
me.ACC lacks money.ACC
'I lack money.'
- (9) Ég saknaði hans.
I.NOM missed him.GEN
'I missed him.'
- Thráinsson's description fits the data better; Schütze's over- and under-generates.



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- I adopt a strong Minimalist framework for my analyses.
- Earlier analyses of Icelandic Quirky case rely heavily on non-Minimalist components.
- Schütze (1993) & Sigurðsson (1996): AgrS and AgrO
- Boeckx (2000): Distributed Morphology; Person-Case Constraint (Bonet 1994)
- Sigurðsson (1996) & Boeckx (2000): Assumptions contrary to the empirical data



φ -Stacking Modifications

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- Defective T and φ -stacking?
- Feature mismatch?
- Schütze (2003): T must agree with the subject and with the nominative element