Icelandic Dative Intervention:
Person and Number are separate probes

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Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions generally observe the Person Restriction, allowing only 3rd person NOM to control agreement. This can be illustrated with English glosses:

(1) a. /him.DAT have.3PL always liked **they**.NOM/ = 'He has always liked them.'
b. * /him.DAT have.1PL always liked **we**.NOM/

In addition, however, there is variation within the 3rd person, one variety (Icelandic C) allowing only the default 3SG form of the verb (i.e., generally disallowing agreement), another variety (Icelandic B) generally disallowing 3rd person agreement with NOM *across an overtly intervening DAT*, and a third variety (Icelandic A), allowing many but not all instances of 3rd person agreement across DAT. Thus, we find the pattern in (2a) in Icelandic A but the pattern in (2b) in Icelandic B and C:

(2) a. /there have.3PL/?has.3SG only one linguist.DAT liked **these ideas**.NOM/ A
b. /there *have.3PL/has.3SG only one linguist.DAT liked **these ideas**.NOM/ B/C

However, when the dative raises outside of the probing domain of the finite verb, three patterns can be discerned: Preferable 3PL agreement in Icelandic A, optional agreement in Icelandic B and agreement blocking (default 3SG) in Icelandic C:

(3) a. /him.DAT have.3PL/?has.3SG always liked **they**.NOM/ A
b. /him.DAT have.3PL/has.3SG always liked **they**.NOM/ B
c. /him.DAT ??have.3PL/has.3SG always liked **they**.NOM/ C

We develop a unified analysis of the Person Restriction, blocking 1st and 2nd person agreement in cases like (ib), and the 3rd person agreement variation in (ii) and (iii) (and elsewhere in the language). The analysis is based on the hypothesis that interpretable (but unvalued) Person and Number are *separate probes* ('heads') in the clausal structure.

1. Introduction*

There are two histories behind this article. First, as has been widely discussed in the generative literature on agreement, since Sigurðsson (1991, 1996) and Taraldsen (1995, 1996), Icelandic

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DAT-NOM constructions show an unusual PERSON RESTRICTION, allowing *only 3rd person* NOM to control agreement.[1] Second, however, 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. This intervention effect was first reported by Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2003, 2004), henceforth **H&H**, and has since been discussed by many (e.g., Hiraiwa 2005, Nomura 2005, Chomsky 2005). H&H discussed a variety of Icelandic where the facts in (4) hold true:

(4) a. Henni virð**a**st **myndirnar** vera ljótar.
her.DAT seem.3PL paintings.the.NOM be ugly
'It seems to her that the paintings are ugly.'

b. Það virð**i**st/*virð**a**st einhverri konu **myndirnar** vera ljótar.
EXPL seems.3SG/*3PL some woman.DAT paintings.the.NOM be ugly

c. Hvaða konu finnst/??finn**a**st **myndirnar** vera ljótar?
what woman.DAT finds.3SG/*3PL paintings.the.NOM be ugly
'Which woman finds the paintings ugly?'

The DAT argument of a *seem*-type verb usually raises out of the probing (c-commanding) domain of the verb, as in (4a), in which case T may agree with the lower NOM argument.[2] However, if DAT remains in a low position, as in (4b), it blocks agreement between the verb and NOM, apparently a case of defective intervention. If DAT *wh*-moves, as in (4c), agreement is still blocked. H&H drew the conclusion that the *wh*-DAT must move directly to SpecCP, since if it moved via SpecTP, as in (4a), it would thereby have moved out of the probing domain of the verb, thus not intervening for agreement between T and NOM, contrary to fact. Chomsky (2005) took this to provide evidence for his theory of parallel movement, whereby the dative argument in (4c) moves to SpecTP and SpecCP by two parallel movements, creating two disjoint chains, an A and an A-bar chain.

However, soon after the publication of H&H, it became clear that the intuitions reported there are not shared by all native speakers. Since Sigurðsson's description (1991) and analysis (1996) of the Person Restriction was to a large extent based on an informant survey, we found

[1] Schütze 1997, 2003, Boeckx 2000, Chomsky 2000, Hrafnbjargarson 2001, Anagnostopulou 2003, d'Alessandro 2004, Hiraiwa 2005, Nomura 2005, among many.

[2] The relevant situation arises before the verb raises to C (see below). Verb raising to C does not generally affect any of the processes discussed here.

it appropriate to make a similar survey on the H&H intervention effect.[3] This survey revealed that there are basically three varieties of Icelandic with respect to the H&H intervention effect, one that does not generally have it (Icelandic A), one that has it, as described in H&H (Icelandic B), and one that disallows agreement in DAT-NOM constructions, regardless of overt intervention (Icelandic C).[4] In the first variety (A), number agreement (in the third person) is stronger than in the H&H variety (B), in the sense that it may apply across a dative argument, as in (4b), or across a *wh*-trace, as in (4c). In the third variety (C), number agreement is, trivially, still weaker than it is in the H&H variety. There are reasons to believe that the strongest number agreement variety is the oldest one and that the no agreement variety is the most recent one, that is, there seems to be an ongoing change from A to B to C:[5]

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. However, we will show that both phenomena can be accounted for if *Person and Number are separate probes*. Given that assumption, the Person Restriction can be explained as another effect of intervention by the Dative argument. This will also account for certain other puzzling facts regarding Icelandic agreement, including 'half agreement', that is, when the verb agrees with the number but not unambiguously with the person of the (1st or 2nd person) object.

2. The Person Restriction: the central facts

[3] Our knowledge of the variation, then, is mainly based on two surveys, a 1990 survey on agreement in the simplex DAT-NOM construction (9 informants), reported in Sigurðsson 1991 and 1996, and a 2005 survey on agreement in the ECM DAT-NOM construction (9 informants, 4 of which also participated 1990, including Sigurðsson). Many thanks to our informants: Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson, Höskuldur Thráinsson, Jóhanna Barðdal, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, Jón Friðjónsson, Thórhallur Eythórsson, and Teodóra Torfadóttir. In addition, Gunnar Hrafn, Jóhanna, Thórhallur, Teodóra, and Thorbjörg Hróarsdóttir, kindly filled in for us the 1990 survey on the simplex construction.

[4] However, 'Icelandic A', 'Icelandic B' and 'Icelandic C' are to a certain extent idealizations, since we mostly take only the clearest extremes into account. There is considerable variation 'in between' these extremes, to which we cannot do any justice here, although we mention some of it.

[5] We cannot make a claim to this effect on the basis of our limited informant survey. However, our oldest informants are Icelandic A speakers, whereas the youngest ones are speakers of Icelandic C.

DAT-NOM constructions where NOM is the sole, unrestricted agreement controller are cross-linguistically common, found in German, Russian, Romance varieties,[6] South-Asian languages, Hungarian, etc. This is illustrated for the *Simplex DAT-NOM Construction* in German in (5):

(5) a. Ihm würd**en** **wir** gefallen haben. ok1P AGR
him.DAT would.1/3PL we.NOM liked have
'He would have liked us.'

b. Ihm würd**et** **ihr** gefallen haben. ok2P AGR
him.DAT would.2PL you.NOM.PL liked have

c. Ihm würd**en** **sie** gefallen haben. ok3P AGR
him.DAT would.1/3PL they.NOM liked have

In contrast, Icelandic is known to observe the Person Restriction in (6):[7]

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

Let us begin by describing the facts for Icelandic A, the strongest agreement variety. As illustrated in (7)-(8), it observes the Person Restriction in both active and passive constructions:

(7) a. * Honum lík**um** **við**. *1P AGR
him.DAT like1PL we.NOM

b. * Honum lík**ið** **þið**. *2P AGR
him.DAT like.2PL you.NOM.PL

c. Honum lík**a** **þeir**. **ok3P AGR**
him.DAT like.3PL they.NOM
'He likes them.'

(8) a. * Henni vor**um** sýndir **við**. *1P AGR
her.DAT were.1PL shown we.NOM

b. * Henni vor**uð** sýndir **þið**. *2P AGR

[6] But on an Icelandic-like variety of Spanish, see Rivero 2004.

[7] Since Boeckx 2000, this restriction has commonly been assumed to be closely related to the Person Case Constraint in, e.g., Romance and Slavic languages (Anagnostopoulou 2003, D'Alessandro 2004, etc.). In our view, the two phenomena are unrelated, but, for reasons of space, we cannot discuss the issue here.

her.DAT were.2PL shown you.NOM.PL

c. Henni vor**u** sýndir **þeir**. **ok3P AGR**

her.DAT were.3PL shown they.NOM

'They were shown to her.'

In addition to this Simplex DAT-NOM Construction, Icelandic has a *Complex ECM DAT-NOM Construction*, with the raising verbs in (9):

(9) *finnast* 'think, feel, find, consider' s*ýnast* 'seem (to see/look)'

virðast 'seem' *þykja* 'find, seem, think (that)'

heyrast '(seem to) hear', 'sound as if' *reynast* 'prove (to be ...)'

skiljast '(get to) understand'

As in the simplex construction, 1st/2nd person agreement is generally excluded in the complex ECM-like construction, whereas third person agreement is generally grammatical in Icelandic A, as illustrated in (10):

(10) a. * Honum mund**um** virðast **við** (vera) hæfir. *1P AGR

him.DAT would.1PL seem we.NOM (be) competent

b. * Honum mund**uð** virðast **þið** (vera) hæfir. *2P AGR

him.DAT would.2PL seem you.NOM.PL (be) competent

c. Honum mund**u** virðast **þeir** (vera) hæfir. **ok3P 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 nominative downstairs subject, instead showing up in the default 3SG (here *mund**i***), all persons are allowed in the nominative argument:

(11) a. Honum mund**i** virðast **við** (vera) hæfir. ok3SG verb – 1PL NOM

him would.3SG seem we (be) competent

b. Honum mund**i** virðast **þið** (vera) hæfir. ok3SG verb – 2PL NOM

c. Honum mund**i** virðast **þeir** (vera) hæfir. ok3SG verb – 3PL NOM

In this case, the verb evidently does not probe NOM, presumably probing the whole infinitival complement instead. We assume that NOM has undergone Short Raising out of the infinitival TP in cases like (10c) (see section 4 below; see also Schütze 2003:297, fn. 2).

In the simple, monoclausal construction, on the other hand, probing NOM is the only option, hence we expect default or non-agreeing 3SG to be degraded. This is borne out for Icelandic A (glosses: him would have liked we/you/they):

(12) a. * Honum mund**i** hafa líkað **við**. * 3SG verb – 1PL NOM
b. * Honum mund**i** hafa líkað **þið** * 3SG verb – 2PL NOM
c. ? Honum mund**i** hafa líkað **þeir**. ? 3SG verb – 3PL NOM

In the examples in (10)-(12) there is no overt DAT intervention, i.e., the relevant order of elements is DAT-verb-NOM (and not X-verb-DAT-NOM). In such structures, 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). In Icelandic C, on the other hand, default 3SG is preferable in examples like (12c) (and not sharply unacceptable in (12a,b)). This is accounted for if DAT in Icelandic C intervenes between the verb and NOM at the derivational stage where number agreement takes place. See the analysis in (24) vs (24)' below.

3. High Intervention

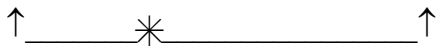
In (7)-(12) above, DAT has raised out of the c-commanding or probing domain of the finite verb, that is, there is no overt DAT-intervention between the finite verb and NOM:

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

As we just mentioned, Icelandic A and Icelandic 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, but, importantly, this pertains only to clauses where the *NOM* argument is in the 3rd *person*, that is:

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

The fact that Icelandic A allows agreement across the dative is illustrated for the simplex construction in (15a) and for the complex one in (15b):[8]

Icelandic A:

(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

In Icelandic B, on the other hand, agreement is blocked by intervention, and in Icelandic C agreement is generally unacceptable in DAT-NOM constructions. This is illustrated for the simplex construction in (16a) and for the complex one in (16b):

Icelandic B/C:

(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.3PL/3SG one linguist.DAT these arguments.NOM strong

For *1st and 2nd person NOM*, on the other hand, (full morphological) agreement is generally unacceptable, in all three varieties, regardless of the position of the dative.[9] This is sketched in (17) and exemplified (for the 2nd person plural) in (18):

[8] *Þóttu* in (15b) is a past tense form of *þykja*, one of the verbs listed in (9) above. We assume that NOM in (15b) has undergone Short Raising out of the infinitival TP (see section 4).

Icelandic A, B & C:

(17) 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
b. * Það hafið einhverjum alltaf líkað/virst **þið** (...)
EXPL have.2PL some.DAT.SG/PL always liked/seemed you.NOM.PL

In descriptive terms, then, we are dealing with three phenomena:

(19) a. 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.
b. 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.
c. General agreement blocking in DAT-NOM constructions in Icelandic C.

However, we will 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 or patterns in (19) thus can and should get a unified account. Such an account can be developed if *Person and Number are separate probes*.

4. Split Person/Number probing

[9] As a matter of fact, though, one (and only one) of our A-informants preferred person agreement in the complex construction, as opposed to the simplex construction. We have not developed any analysis of this interesting, but, to our knowledge, exceptional grammar.

The Person Restriction suggests that Person probing and Number probing are distinct phenomena. Adopting the approach pursued by Sigurðsson (2004a, 2006a, 2006b), we 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 (cf. Sigurðsson 2000, and, e.g., Cardinaletti 2003):[10]

(20) $[_{CP}$ … Top … Fin … $[_{TP}$ … Pn … Nr … T … v … DAT … NOM]]][11]

Another important factor is that DAT moves out of vP, thus complying with the generalization (Alexiadou and Anagnostopoulou 2001) that the subject always has to raise from a 'full verb phrase', containing both a subject and an object (parallel facts hold for Icelandic nominative subjects):

(21) a. Það mundi alltaf **einhverjum** **stúdent**
EXPL would always some student.DAT
hafa [__ virst [prófin óréttlát]].
have [__ seemed [exams.the.NOM unfair]]

b. * Það mundi alltaf hafa
EXPL would always have
[**einhverjum** **stúdent** virst [prófin óréttlát]].
[some student.DAT seemed [exams.the.NOM unfair]]

[10] Apart from the case labels, we assume that the features in (20) are universal (but their linearization in individual languages, other than Icelandic, is unimportant for the purposes of this article). The Fin feature is identified as 'Speech Location' in Sigurðsson 2004a:228ff. The general approach to clausal architecture assumed here is discussed in considerable detail in Sigurðsson 2004a, 2004b and 2006a (Sigurðsson 2006b assumes a more complex structure, distinguishing between subject vs object Pn and Nr, but we abstract away from that here).

[11] Assuming that Pn and Nr are merely distinct features located on a single head in some sort of a feature geometry is less attractive (in fact impossible in our view). It would call for a number of non-innocent assumptions: 1) That such complex heads are for some reasons parts of grammar in the first place – calling for a theory of how the come into being and of why they are differently complex in different languages; 2) that the individual features nontheless act as independent probes; 3) that they should be able to c-command out of the complex head; 4) that they probe in a certain order; 5) that their 'probing results' are differenly affected by movement of arguments around the putative complex head.

As is well known, Icelandic also has a higher subject position ('SpecIP'), preceding all sentence adverbs, that is, one has to distinguish between the Low Subject Raising in (21a) and regular High Subject Raising.[12]

Given that Pn and Nr attract T to two different positions, and given this Low Subject Raising out of vP, we can account for the observed agreement variation. Reconsider Icelandic A, with no intervention effect:

Icelandic A:

(22)	Það	þótt**i**/þótt**u**	einum	málfræðingi	**þessi**	**rök**	sterk.
	EXPL	thought.3SG/3PL	one	linguist.DAT	these	arguments.NOM	strong

The derivation of (22) is as follows, where, however, we do not show optional Short Raising of NOM out of the infinitival TP, yielding optional agreement in the third person (for simplicity also, we show the structure as if everything was merged at once and do not show V-raising to T; 'TP' indicates the infinitival TP, not the matrix TP):

(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)[13]
(26)	… (EXPL)	T/Nr/Pn	DAT	~~*T/Nr*~~	~~*T*~~	[$_{vP}$ ~~*DAT*~~	V	[$_{TP}$ NOM	… (T/Nr-raising to Pn)

As indicated by the initial dots, we do not show V2 raising of the finite verb (to 'C'), nor do we show potential topicalization of DAT to the high left edge ('SpecCP'), as these processes do not generally affect agreement.[14]

[12] In addition, the subject my be topicalized into a still higher position ('SpecCP'). Since we adopt a tucking in approach to movement (see below), we do not assume any specifier positions, instead using the notions *high left edge* ('SpecCP') and the *low left edge* ('SpecIP'), the former targetted by topicalization and the latter by High Subject Raising. We do not have any term for the position targetted by Low Subject Raising (but in a Spec approach the term would have been 'SpecNr').

[13] We do not have an account of why T-raising to Nr takes place *after* Low Subject Raising of DAT (perhaps, it takes place for morphological purposes only). Either, we have to allow local phase-internal repairing processes of this kind or the derivation is more complex than we assume here. Possibly, DAT probes T, raising it across Nr, but we will not pursue the issue here.

[14] However, one of our informants shows vague agreement-sensitivity to DAT-raising to the high left edge.

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. Also, we assume, Nr and Pn probing must take place immediately after T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn, respectively. Notice, in passing, that 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', cf. Sigurðsson 2006a:228f).

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 singular is available, cf. the optional number agreement in (22), and in (10c)/(11c) above. Person agreement is established in (26), but since DAT intervenes, the verb cannot reach NOM, instead probing DAT, which yields default 3SG (cf. Boeckx 2000, but see section 7 for a slight reformulation). Hence the Person Restriction ('true' person excluded). High Subject Raising to the low left edge ('SpecIP'), as in (27), generally has no effects upon agreement, taking place too late for that:[15]

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

Now, consider *Icelandic C* ((28) = (16b) above):

(28) Það þótt**i**/*þótt**u** *einum málfræðingi* **þessi rök** sterk.
EXPL thought.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these arguments.NOM strong

Suppose that the derivation in Icelandic C differs from the derivation in Icelandic A in only one, minimal respect, T-raising to Nr taking place prior to Low Subject Raising out of vP. If so, the derivation of (28) is as sketched below:

(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)

[15] 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).

As in Icelandic A, number probing takes place immediately after T-raising to Nr, here in (24)', but since this happens prior to Low Subject Raising in Icelandic C, DAT will inevitably induce an intervention effect, blocking plural 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 kind of a hybrid between Icelandic A and C. When DAT remains low the result is the same as in Icelandic C, agreement being blocked. However, when DAT undergoes High Subject Raising to the edge ('SpecIP'), as in (27), Icelandic B behaves either as Icelandic A or as Icelandic C. This is illustrated in (29) for the simplex DAT-NOM construction:

							Agr	-Agr
(29)	a.	að	henni	lík**uðu**/?lík**aði**	þeir.	Icelandic A	ok	?
	b.	að	henni	lík**uðu**/lík**aði**	þeir.	Icelandic B	ok	ok
	c.	að	henni	??lík**uðu**/lík**aði**	þeir.	Icelandic C	??	ok
		that	her.DAT	liked.3PL/3SG	they.NOM			

The default 3SG alternative *líkaði* in (29b) can be analyzed as a regular C-grammar derivation (as above). On the other hand, we do not have any obvious account of the agreeing alternative *líkuðu*. Reconsider (27) (the relevant structure for (29)):

(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 ('Spec,IP'), alternatively filled by an expletive or a stylistically fronted element (see Holmberg 2000, Sigurðsson 2004a:230ff), that is, the raising of the dative subject is arguably EPP-driven (see below).[16] It is suprising that this raising removes the intervention effect of the dative with respect to *only* number and *not* also with respect to person:

[16] As has been widely discussed, the Icelandic expletive *það* 'there, it' is confined to clause initial position in both main and subordinate clauses (see Sigurðsson 2004a and the numerous references cited there). On the assumption that *það* (negatively) matches the speech event features discussed below under distant Agree, it can be analyzed as staying in 'Spec,IP' even in main clauses (blocking the finite verb and other elements from moving into the CP domain).

Icelandic B:

(30) a. * Honum líkum við.
him.DAT like.1PL we.NOM
b. * Honum líkið þið.
him.DAT like.2PL you.NOM.PL
c. Honum líka/líkar þeir.
him.DAT like.3PL/3SG they.NOM
'He likes them.'

As for German, on the other hand, one could account for the unrestricted agreement in examples of this sort (see (2) above) if both person and number agreement is established in a structure like (27). Alternatively, and perhaps more plausibly, German NOM has scrambled into a higher position than DAT at the derivational stage when full person and number agreement takes place (DAT being raised to the edge later on in the derivation):

(31) a. Pn T/Nr ~~T~~ … NOM … DAT …. ~~NOM~~ Number agreement
b. T/Nr/Pn ~~T/Nr~~ ~~T~~ … NOM … DAT …. ~~NOM~~ Person agreement

In contrast, 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.

Since Icelandic B seems to be historically intermediate between Icelandic A and C one could hypothesize that it is an amalgam of the two, most commonly applying Icelandic C grammar but resorting to Icelandic A grammar in the case of High Subject Raising. If so, this would be a case of so-called Grammar Competition, advocated by Kroch (1989) and others as an account of the seemingly chaotic progress of grammar change. We leave the issue at that, noticing however that if this is the case, then 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.

Not all overt arguments induce intervention in Icelandic, as illustrated by *Reverse Predicate Agreement*, RPA (see Sigurðsson 1996, 2004b), in clauses with demonstrative *þetta* 'this' and *það* 'it, that' as a subject:[17]

(32) a. Það/Þetta er**um** (bara) **við**.
it/this are.1PL (only) we.NOM
'It/This is (only) us.'

b. Það/Þetta er**uð** (bara) **þið**.
it/this are.2PL (only) you.NOM.PL
'It/This is (only) you.'

(33) a. Líklega höf**um** það þá (bara) verið **við**.
probably have.1PL it then (only) been we.NOM
'Probably, it has then (only) been us.'

b. Vor**uð** þetta þá ekki (bara) **þið**?
were.2PL this then not (only) you.NOM.PL
'Wasn't this (only) you, then?'

Evidently, *það* and *þetta* are devoid of ϕ-features, like expletive *það* 'there, it' (these elements being interpreted as default 3SG.NEUT in morphology). Unlike the expletive, however, demonstrative *það* and *þetta* are genuine subjects, as for instance suggested by the fact that they invert with the finite verb in V2 and V1 contexts. RPA is strictly confined to clauses with demonstrative *þetta* 'this' and *það* 'it, that' as a subject:

(34) a. Þetta höf**um**/?*hefur líklega bara verið **við**. RPA
this have.1PL/3SG probably only been we.NOM
'This has probably only been us.'

b. **Þessir menn** haf**a**/*höfum líklega bara verið við. Subject Agreement
these men.NOM have.3PL/*1PL probably only been we.NOM

[17] These facts seem to apply to Icelandic in general (i.e., we did not find any differences here between Icelandic A, B and C). Often (but not necessarily), examples of this sort contain a focalizing element like *bara* 'only, just'.

To be a visible intervener with respect to person and number probing an element has to have active ϕ-features itself, suggesting Relativized Minimality with respect to *individual features*.

In the following sections we will discuss some further complications that arise and also some further evidence in favor of the approach taken here. Before doing so, however, we need to briefly address some of the general issues that arise under the present analysis. Let us take another look at the Icelandic A derivation:

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

The derivation is compatible with the approach to movement taken in Sigurðsson (2004a, 2006a), where there are no specifiers, Move instead tucking in to the right of a probe. On this approach both expletive insertion and (alternative) High Subject Raising into the low left edge ('SpecIP'), as in (27), is driven by a silent EPP feature of the CP domain (identified as 'Fin(ite)' or 'Speech Location' in Sigurðsson 2004a:228ff), whereas subject topicalization to the high left edge ('SpecCP') is driven by Top (or speaker/hearer features, not shown in (20) above, but see below). On the other hand, Low Subject Raising out of vP, as in (24), remains unexplained, as in other approaches.[18]

An important aspect of the analysis is that Pn and Nr are *interpretable* features or heads in the clausal structure, that is, they are not a split 'AgrS' in disguise. Consider this for Pn. Many languages, including Amharic, Donno Sɔ, Navajo, Kannada, Tamil, Hindi, Kurdish, Persian and Punjabi, show *person shift* in regular subordinated clauses (much as seen in direct speech in languages like English, but without the quotation force):

(35) /<u>he</u>$_1$ said to <u>me</u>$_2$ [that **I**$_1$ wrote to **you**$_2$]/
'He said to me that he wrote to me.'

[18] In Sigurðsson 2006a, 2006b it was assumed that (subject-) Pn attracted DAT (the dative tucking in to the right of Pn), but that analysis is not available in the present approach (where intervention does not boil down to special inherent properties of quirky DAT). Another possiblity is that DAT is attracted by some little v or a CAUSE/VOICE head (in the spirit of Svenonius 2005), merged right below Pn, but we will not pursue the issue here.

This person shift is accounted for if any clause contains silent speaker/hearer features in its CP domain, the logophoric agent and the logophoric patient in the terminology of Sigurðsson (2004a), $\mathbf{\Lambda_A}$ and $\mathbf{\Lambda_P}$ for short.[19] These features may be thought of as either the actual or the represented (or intended) speaker vs hearer. Most commonly, the lambda values are kept constant, as identical with the actual, overall speaker/hearer, but if they are shifted from the actual to the represented speaker/hearer (the arguments of the matrix clause in cases like (35)), the reference of the person values changes accordingly. This is sketched in (36), where *i* and *k* are the indexes of the actual speaker and hearer and where *j* and *l* are the indexes of the logophoric features in the subordinate CP domain, inherited from the matrix arguments:

(36) $[_{CP} .. \{\Lambda_A\}_i .. \{\Lambda_P\}_k .. [_{IP} .. \mathbf{he_j} .. \mathbf{me_l} .. [_{CP} .. \mathbf{\{\Lambda_A\}_j} .. \mathbf{\{\Lambda_P\}_l} .. [_{IP} ... I_j ... you_l \ldots$

Evidently, person values are not given in the numeration but computed in syntax.

A predication like *write (x, y)* or *write (θ_1, θ_2),* can of course be expressed as in (37):

(37) writer writes (to) writee

However, this is not how language typically works. Rather, any argument must match a Pn head as being either +Pn or –Pn, +Pn arguments in turn entering into a further matching relation, $\leftrightarrow$, with the lambda features of the CP domain, with this second (and higher) matching yielding the actual person values of a pronoun:

(38) $\theta \leftrightarrow$ +/–Pn

(39) a. +Pn $\leftrightarrow$ $+\Lambda_A, -\Lambda_P$ = 1P by computation
b. +Pn $\leftrightarrow$ $-\Lambda_A, +\Lambda_P$ = 2P by computation
c. +Pn $\leftrightarrow$ $-\Lambda_A, -\Lambda_P$ = 3P by computation
d. –Pn: = 3P by default

Generally, it seems to hold that event features, like event participants, $\mathbf{\theta}$, and event time, $\mathbf{E_T}$, are matched against grammatical features like **Pn** and **T**, which in turn are matched against

[19] Lambda in line with 'theta' and 'phi'; capital lambda in order to avoid confusion with lambda calculus.

contextual or speech event features of the CP domain, like **Top, Fin**, the logophoric features, $\mathbf{\Lambda_A/\Lambda_P}$, and the speech time, $\mathbf{S_T}$.

We cannot go any further into these complex issues here, and must instead refer the reader to previous work by Sigurðsson (2004a, 2006a, 2006b, etc.) as well as to recent works by a number of other researchers (e.g., Bianchi 2003, Schlenker 2003, Di Domenico 2004, Speas 2004, Tenny 2006). What matters for our purposes is that Pn and Nr are interpretable (but unvalued) features or heads in the clausal structure, present and active regardless of morphological verb agreement, hence just as real in Chinese as in Italian or Icelandic. Uninterpretable verbal person/number agreement, on the other hand, is a distinct, secondary phenomenon, a PF reflection or interpretation of the underlying syntactic relations (see further below).

We now proceed, illustrating how our split person/number probing approach accounts for some further recalcitrant facts.

5. Low Intervention

In the cases we have been looking at so far, the intervening element is in a relatively high position, in a main clause, like the underlined datives in (40):

(40) a. Þess vegna mund**i**/*mund**um** henni líklega virðast **við** vera hæfir.
that for would.3SG/1PL her.DAT probably seem we.NOM be competent
'Therefore, we would probably seem competent to her.'

b. Þess vegna mund**i**/%mund**u** henni líklega virðast **þeir** vera hæfir.
that for would.3SG/3PL her.DAT probably seem they.NOM be competent
'Therefore, they would probably seem competent to her.'

However, intervention may also be 'low', induced by a dative in the subject position of the infinitive, as in (41) (from Sigurðsson 2000:99):

(41) a. Okkur virt**i**st/*virt**u**st henni hafa leiðst **þeir**.
us.DAT seemed.3SG/*3PL her.DAT have found-boring they.NOM

b. Okkur sýnd**i**st/*sýnd**u**st honum hafa hentað **pennarnir** vel.
us.DAT appeared.3SG/*3PL him.DAT have suited pens.the.NOM well

In DAT-NOM passives, the participle agrees in case, number and gender with NOM:

(42) a. Henni voru sýnd**ir** **hestarnir**.
her.DAT were.3PL shown.MASC.PL.NOM horses.the.MASC.PL.NOM
b. Henni voru sýnd**ar** **bækurnar**.
her.DAT were.3PL shown.FEM.PL.NOM books.the.FEM.PL.NOM

Having raised, the dative does not induce an intervention effect between the participle and the NOM object. Simultaneously, however, it can be an intervener for a finite matrix verb:

(43) Mér virt**i**st/%virt**u**st henni hafa verið sýnd**ir** **hestarnir**.
me.DAT seemed.3SG/3PL her.DAT have been shown horses.the.MASC.PL.NOM

As indicated by the percent sign some speakers find verb agreement possible in (43) or at least clearly better than in (41), that is, the number agreement of the participle enhances finite verb agreement, it seems. We do not have any account of this curious fact, and thus we only analyze the variety where verb agreement is unacceptable in (43) as well as in (41).

As far as we have been able to determine, there is no dialectal variation with regard to the low intervention in (41). This is what we predict, since the dative argument cannot, in this case, raise out of the probing domain of the matrix Nr. The relevant structure is sketched in (44):

(44) $[_{CP} \ldots$ Pn Nr T $[_{vP}$ DAT V $[_{TP}$ DAT … NOM …

The higher DAT subsequently raises across Nr, as we have seen, but the lower one is locked within the vP phase.[20]

An alternative account of the variation between Icelandic A and Icelandic B/C would ascribe the difference to a property of dative case, such that dative case is transparent to agreement in Icelandic A, but blocks agreement in Icelandic B/C. However, the fact that both Icelandic A and Icelandic B/C observe an intervention effect in (41) suggests that the present

[20] The (good) question of why this fact is a fact is irrelevant for our present purposes. It could be made to follow from PIC or from the property that makes the left edge of ECM infinitives a 'freezing' position, but we don't wish to pursue the issue here.

approach is more to the point, and so does the fact that all three varieties respect the Person Restriction (if we are right that it is just a subcase of Dative Intervention). We will see more evidence of that in the next section.

6. *Wh*-movement and agreement

In the approach pursued by H&H, not only the overt DAT in (45) (which has undergone Low Subject Raising) but also the *wh*-copy in structures like (46) induces an intervention effect:[21]

(45)	Líklega	mundi/*mund**um**	henni	þá	~~*henni*~~	virðast	[**við**	vera hæfir].
	probably	would.3SG/1PL	her.DAT	then	~~*DAT*~~	seem	we.NOM	be competent

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

In (46), however, NOM can undergo 'Long Raising', a scrambling-like movement, across the *wh*-copy. In this case, intervention is circumvented, as the embedded nominative subject moves to a position higher than the (copy of) the otherwise intervening dative argument:[22]

(47)	Hverjum	*mundi/mund**um**	**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?'								

Notice that agreement is obligatory if the nominative scrambles, otherwise it is excluded.[23]

[21] However, H&H only discussed structures of this sort with third person nominatives. As in many other respects, *wh*-copies are evidently 'stronger' in some sense than A-copies, thus inducing an intervention effect like overt arguments but unlike A-copies. We don't know why this is the case, nor does anyone else, as far as we know.

[22] See H&H, who suggested that this was a Stylistic Fronting type of movement (in the sence of Holmberg 2000), while noting that it has a number of properties which are unlike Stylistic Fronting. A clear difference is, for instance, that the fronted nominative has to be emphatic.

[23] We have not done any informant survey on the interaction of agreement and *wh*-movement, so the present description is based solely on Sigurðsson's Icelandic A intuitions. They are partly different from the Icelandic B judgements in H&H, where agreement in structures like (47) was reported to be only optional (with third person nominatives; H&H did not consider first and second person nominatives). The main reason why we did not include *wh*-movement structures in our informant survey is that it is extremely difficult to retain stable and reliable intutions in these structures. Thus, we opted for narrowing down our study here to the one grammar we have

These facts confirm that the Person Restriction is indeed caused by intervention: When neither a dative argument nor a clause boundary intervenes between T/Nr/Pn and the nominative argument, then person as well as number agreement has to apply. Also, this further confirms that agreement restrictions in Icelandic 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 at least Boeckx 2000, shared by, e.g., Sigurðsson 2006a, 2006b).[24]

The scrambling of the embedded nominative subject is possible only if the dative has *wh*-moved. This is illustrated by the echo-questions in (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, wheras a *wh*-copy does not.[25]

Now, reconsider the type of examples in Icelandic B that lead H&H to conclude that *wh*-elements move directly to SpecCP:

Icelandic B:

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

In the framework of H&H 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.[26]

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constant and unlimited access to. It follows that we have no information on agreement in Icelandic C in the constructions under discussion.

[24] An alternative account of the Person Restriction would be that person agreement, for some reason, requires a spec-head relation (cf. Hrafnbjargarson 2001, Koopman 2006). However, (44), and, in particular, the Reverse Predicate Agreement in (32) and (33), show that this is not the case.

[25] Another question, discussed by H&H, albeit only inconclusively so, is why regular NP-movement does not 'open the gates' for NOM-scrambling, as opposed to *wh*-movement. We will not discuss this here.

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

(50) Hvaða knapa mund**i**/mund**u** þá finnast **þessir hestar** vera fljótir?
what jockey.DAT would.3SG/3PL then find.INF these horses.NOM be 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 (here a *wh*P) 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.

That is to say, we cannot maintain Chomsky's (2005) disjunction of A and A-bar chains. In particular in the case of Icelandic A, we have to assume that DAT, whether it is a *wh*P 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

Reconsider Icelandic A:

(22) Það þótt**i**/þótt**u** einum málfræðingi **þessi rök** sterk.
EXPL thought.3SG/3PL one linguist.DAT these arguments.NOM strong

(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)

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 number agreement in the 3rd person to be obligatory. However, the common or average judgements of our A informants are the following:

[26] Direct *wh*-movement to SpecCP was argued for already by Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson 1990, albeit on different grounds.

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

b. Það líkuð**u**/(?)líkað**i** 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 examples like (51) is a 'half-agreement' of sorts, violating or disobeying 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 (also involving person), but it is nonetheless quite awkward and clearly worse than default 3SG:

(52) Henni ?mund**i**/?*mund**u**/*mund**uð** 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 suvey provides evidence that it should not, as it were, be solved, 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). Most of our informants had the following judgements:[27]

(53) a. Henni virt**i**st/virt**u**st **þið** eitthvað einkennilegir.
her.DAT seemed.3SG/2-3PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange
'You seemed somewhat strange to her.'

b. Henni virt**i**st/?*virt**u**st/*virt**um**st **við** eitthvað einkennilegir.

[27] The 2PL form *virtust* in (53a) was fully acceptable to five of our nine informants and was given a question mark by further two informants (including Sigurðsson). Two B/C-informants found it quite unacceptable (two question marks and a star).

her.DAT seemed.3SG/2-3PL/1PL we.NOM somewhat strange

(54) a. Henni þótt**i**/??þótt**u**/*þótt**uð** **þið** eitthvað einkennilegir.
her.DAT thought.3SG/3PL/2PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange
'She found you somewhat strange.'

b. Henni þótt**i**/??þótt**u**/*þótt**um** **við** eitthvað einkennilegir.
her.DAT thought.3SG/3PL/2PL you.NOM.PL 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. Very interestingly, however, the plural form *virtust* in (53a) is acceptable to most of our informants, and the reason is presumably that it can be interpreted *as agreeing with the 2P.PL NOM, without unambiguously agreeing with it in person*. That is, speakers can "both eat their cake and have it too" (Sigurðsson 1996:35). This is not possible for *þykja* in (54), but 3PL is nonetheless slightly better than fully, unambiguously person agreeing forms.

The same effect is seen in the singular for so-called 'medio-passive' verbs, formed with an *-st* suffix, since these verbs never show any person distinction in the singular.[28] Thus, many speakers find examples like (55a) either fully grammatical or fairly acceptable. In contrast, speakers who accept (55a) generally find (55b), with unambiguous person morphology (1PL), impossible (see Sigurðsson (1996:33):

(55) a. Henni leidd**i**st **ég/þú**.
her.DAT found-boring.1-2-3SG I/you.NOM.SG
'She found me/you boring.'

b. * Henni leidd**um**st **við**.
her.DAT found-boring.1PL we.NOM

The facts in (55) are well-known since Sigurðsson (1991, 1996). In contrast, it is new knowledge that morphological syncretism can lead to grammaticality in the plural as well, as in (53a) above. This new knowledge is important, because it shows that what matters here is not

[28] Thus, it is probably not a coincidence that so many DAT-NOM verbs are *-st* verbs (see, e.g., the lists of quirky subject constructions in Jónsson 1998, 2005). For these verbs, a morphological person agreement clash between DAT and the NOM can never arise in the singular.

the defaultness of 3SG but absence of *person* agreement as such, as 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, then, is evidently acceptable to many speakers. Similarly, many 1st and 2nd person NOM objects gain in acceptability in infinitival constructions. Thus, while most speakers find (56) impossible, some speakers find (57) quite acceptable:[29]

(56) a. * Henni höfð**um** leiðst **við**.
her.DAT had.1PL found-boring we.NOM
b. * Henni höfð**uð** leiðst **þið**.
her.DAT had.2PL found-boring you.NOM.PL

(57) ? Hún vonaðist auðvitað til að leiðast **við/þið/þeir** ekki mikið.
she hoped of-course for to find-boring.INF we/you/they.NOM not much
'She of course hoped not to find us/you/them very boring.'

Schütze (2003:299) suggests that the 'repairing effect' of morphological syncretism is accounted for if the finite verb must agree in person *and* number **1)** with the subject, AND **2)** with NOM, if there is any – but this would exclude the plural agreement in (53a) and make wrong predictions for reverse predicate agreement, intervention and agreement feeding of NOM-scrambling (as in (47) above). Inspired by Schütze's proposal, however, we 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.

(26) (EXPL) T/Nr/Pn DAT ~~*T/Nr*~~ ~~*T*~~ [$_{vP}$ ~~*DAT*~~ V [$_{TP}$ NOM …

[29] The question mark in (57) reflects Sigurðsson's intuitions. It might be due to minor problems with control into some quirky PRO infinitives. – *Líka* 'like' would be impossible in the infinitive in (57) with 1st and 2nd person NOM, as it only allows non-human (or, rather, 'non-personal') NOM, see Maling and Jónsson 1995 (in contrast to Dative Intervention, this 'Human Factor' is probably related to the Romance and Slavic type of Person Case Constraint, an issue that we shall however not discuss here).

Recall that Nr and Pn probing must take place immediately after T-raising to Nr and T/Nr-raising to Pn, respectively. Hence, 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 (cf. Sigurðsson 1996, Boeckx 2000), and NOM is ruled in as long as person probing of NOM neither leads to a 'non-third' person form (which would be incompatible with person probing of DAT) nor to a form that contradicts the person of NOM. In (53a) and (55a), then, T/Nr probes NOM, yielding plural in (53a) and singular in (55a); subsequently, T/Nr/Pn probes both DAT and NOM for (only) person, and since this yields a form that is compatible with the person requirements of *both* DAT and NOM, the derivation converges. Otherwise, it crashes, as in (55b) and in, e.g., the 'half-agreement' version of (53b) (with *virtust*.2-3PL, but 1PL NOM). Once again, then, it is evident that Pn and Nr probing are distinct phenomena, Pn probing applying later in the derivation than Nr probing.[30]

The relevant descriptive generalization, call it the SYNCRETISM GENERALIZATION, is stated in (58):

(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 (DAT intervening between T/Nr/Pn and NOM), so it is evident from this that intervention is affected by purely morphological, non-syntactic factors. This is not surprising if much of 'syntax' in the traditional sense is actually morphosyntax or 'PF-syntax', operating in a 'syntactic fashion' with abstract features and feature matching but crucially taking place after transfer to PF (including morphology), hence out of sight for the semantic interface (Sigurðsson 2006a, 2006c, Sigurðsson and Maling 2006). If so, it is no wonder that agreement morphology is generally semantically vacuous or uninterpretable (Chomsky 1995 and subsequent work).

[30] Notice that this account suggests that Nr probing of NOM from T/Nr across DAT should be possible in structures like (24)' above in Icelandic B and C, as long as this does not lead to a morphological mismatch (i.e., in case DAT and NOM are in the same number, either both singular or both plural). Our data are not extensive enough to allow any firm conclusions here, but they indicate, albeit vaguely, that this might be correct for at least some Icelandic B speakers. The same is suggested by some of the judgements in H&H, e.g., the contrast between their (16b) and (17b) (see also the contrast between their (18b) and (19b)).

8. Conclusion

In this paper we have shown that 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, however, 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, as argued by H&H, among others. A new claim made here is that 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 follows 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 theory is supported by the observation that when DAT movement is prevented, number agreement is excluded even in Icelandic A, and by the observation that when the NOM object is able to raise above the dative, number and person agreement is possible. 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 or 2nd person NOM object in number without unambiguously agreeing (or 'disagreeing') with it in person.

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