

# Multivaluation (or not) in Icelandic

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All the work presented here has been done in equal collaboration with  
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## 1 Two different possible environments for multivaluation in Icelandic

Two different cases where the finite verb may have two possible nominals with which it may agree:

- DATIVE-NOMINATIVE constructions: (dative subject and nominative lower argument)
- Specificational Copular Clauses (SCCs)

Rather different effects; typically discussed with respect to data from different languages. Today: talk about them within a single language and see what that tells us about the interaction of clausal structure, person agreement, where multivaluation may occur, and where it may be problematic.

## 2 Some classic data from Icelandic and two theoretical approaches

### 2.1 Person effects in Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions

- Icelandic allows for LOW NOMINATIVES in two types of DAT-NOM structures:
  1. SIMPLEX DAT-NOM: the objects of certain verbs whose subject is dative, see (1);
  2. COMPLEX DAT-NOM: the subjects of embedded non-finite and small clauses, see (2);

- (1) Henni líkaðu þeir.           SIMPLEX  
her.DAT liked.3.PL they.M.NOM  
'She liked them.'

- (2) Honum mundu virðast þeir (vera) hæfir. COMPLEX  
 him.DAT would.3.PL seem they.M.NOM (be.INF) competent.M.PL  
 ‘They would seem competent to him.’ (Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008, p. 255)

- Low Nominatives are blocked from controlling Person agreement in both. (PERSON EFFECT I)<sup>1</sup>

- (3) \*Henni virtumst við vera duglegar. COMPLEX  
 she.DAT seem.1.PL we.NOM be industrious  
 Intended: ‘We seemed to her to be industrious.’ Sigurðsson 1996, (76b)

- (4) \*Henni líkaðir þú. SIMPLEX  
 her.DAT liked.2.SG you.SG.NOM  
 Intended: ‘She liked you.’

- “Default” 3sg is possible with the complex DAT-NOM construction and a non-3rd person nominative, as in (5), but not with the simplex DAT-NOM cases, as in (6). (PERSON EFFECT II).

- (5) Henni virtist við vera duglegar. COMPLEX  
 she.DAT seem.3.SG we.NOM be industrious  
 ‘We seemed to her to be industrious.’ Sigurðsson 1996, (76b)

- (6) \*Henni líkaði þú. SIMPLEX  
 her.DAT liked.3SG you.SG.NOM  
 Intended: ‘She liked you.’

## 2.2 Theory I: Not enough agreement

One line of analysis of the Person Effects in the Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions: Person agreement with the lower argument is blocked, and 1st/2nd person pronouns have a need to be licensed by person agreement (the PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC)).

- (7) PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC)

Interpretable 1st/2nd-person features must be licensed by entering into an *Agree* relation with an appropriate functional category. (Béjar and Rezac 2003)

How this applies to the DAT-NOM constructions in Icelandic:

**Agree** The Dative argument is higher than the Nominative within vP. Assuming downward Agree operating before A-movement, the Dative **intervenes**. Either the Dative induces 3rd person agreement (regard-

<sup>1</sup>This agreement is independent of the position of the dative argument, in contrast to the variation that we find with respect to number agreement, see Holmberg and Hróarsdóttir (2004), Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008), Thráinsson et al. (2015), Ussery (2017), Hoover (2020) for extensive discussion of inter-speaker differences in the patterns of Number agreement with Low Nominatives and the effect of the position of the Dative argument

less of the Person of the contained DP) or the Person probe aborts when it encounters the Dative (resulting in “default” 3rd person).

→ no Person agreement with the Low Nominative (Person Effect I).

**Move** Once the Person probe has found, and matched/attempted to match the Dative, the Dative moves high enough not to intervene for further probing (in the terminology of Béjar and Rezac 2003, T “displaces the dative to [Spec, TP] via its [ $\pi$ ]-Probe”)<sup>2</sup>

**Agree** The Number probe now initiates a search, finds the Nominative, and agrees with it.

→ Low Number Agreement

Importantly, if the Low Nominative is 1st or 2nd person, according to the PLC it **must** be agreed with. That predicts ungrammaticality for default agreement in the simplex construction, as in (6). But it also, incorrectly, rules out default agreement in the complex construction (5). Preminger’s (2011) solution: take advantage of the fact that in the complex construction the Nominative originates, at least, in an embedded (small/infinitival) clause, and relativize the Person Licensing Condition:

(8) PERSON LICENSING CONDITION (PLC)—REVISED VERSION

A 1st/2nd-person pronoun in the same clause as a person  $\phi$ -probe must be agreed with by that  $\phi$ -probe. Preminger (2011)

→ Default agreement in the simplex DAT-NOM construction (but not in the complex) with a non-3rd person nominative gives rise to ungrammaticality (Person Effect II).

### 2.3 Theory II: Too much agreement

A set of alternative accounts (Schütze 2003, Nevins 2007, Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008, Ackema and Neeleman 2018, Coon and Keine 2020) have argued that the pattern of agreement in these cases is due to the finite verb trying to agree with both arguments for both Person and Number (**double agreement**—Coon & Keine’s *Feature Gluttony*).

- A dative DP triggers 3rd singular agreement.
- As in all other accounts, in the COMPLEX cases, the nominative argument can remain in a domain that is inaccessible to the person probe. Result: 3rd singular agreement.
- In the SIMPLEX cases, the person probe (at least) matches against both the dative **and** the lower, nominative argument and copies features from both. There is no possible simultaneous morphological exponence for both 3rd person (triggered by the Dative DP) and 1st/2nd person (agreement with a low

<sup>2</sup>It appears to be a problem for this account that for speakers of Icelandic B as described in Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008), A-movement of the Dative to a position above the finite verb removes it as an intervenor for Number, but has no such effect for Person. See Hoover (2020) for a recent account of this pattern.

1st/2nd person Nominative)

- Person effect I: agreeing *only* with the person of the lower argument is excluded; and
- Person effect II: *not* agreeing at all with the person of the lower argument is also excluded.

- There are different possible ways of dealing with the possibility of number agreement with the lower nominal (see Nevins 2007, Ackema and Neeleman 2018, Hoover 2020). For now I set this issue aside.

Implementation in Coon and Keine (2020):

- Person and Number are distinct probes in Icelandic; Person probes first.
- Probes vary in how specified they are for the part of the feature geometry (the **segment**) that will **satisfy** them (and hence halt their search)
- If a probe encounters an element bearing features that *partially* match its specification, it will copy over the **entire** feature hierarchy that includes the matching features, delete the part of its own specification that is matched, but continue searching either until there are no more features to be found within its domain, or until it finds a set of features that satisfy it, in which case again the containing feature hierarchy will be copied over, but now the search will halt.
- In Icelandic, the person probe is specified for PARTICIPANT:

(9)

$$\left[ \begin{array}{c} u\text{Pers} \\ | \\ u\text{Part} \end{array} \right]_{\pi}$$

- The probe will find a partial match in the dative argument (3rd person, by hypothesis), and copy over that entire person feature structure.
- The probe will continue (as it still has some unmatched specification) and then find a complete match in the 1st/2nd person nominative argument. Now **that** entire person feature structure is copied over.
- There are two distinct Vocabulary Items each of which is the best candidate for one of the two person feature structures. Result: ineffability.
- Unless ...

... Syncretism to the rescue!

## (10) SYNCRETISM GENERALIZATION

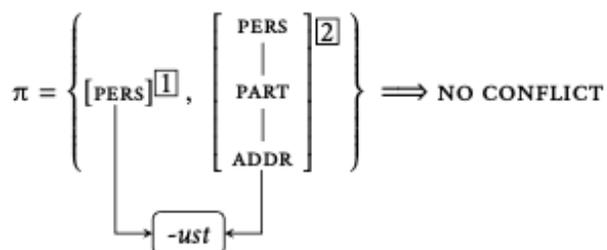
For most speakers, no Person Restriction arises in DAT-NOM constructions if, for morphological (paradigmatic) reasons, the “would be” 1st or 2nd person agreeing form is homophonous with the 3rd person form (in the same number).

(Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008, (58))

- (11) a. \*Henni leiddist/leiddumst við.  
 her.DAT bored.3.S/bored.1.PL we.NOM  
 Intended: ‘She found us boring.’ SIMPLEX, No 1.PL/3.PL syncretism
- b. Henni **leiddist** ég/þú  
 her.DAT bored.1/2/3.SG I.NOM/you.SG.NOM  
 ‘She found me/you boring.’ SIMPLEX, 1/2/3.SG syncretism

- (12) a. Henni virtist/\*virtumst við eitthvað einkennilegir.  
 her.DAT seemed.3.SG/\*seemed.2/3.PL we.NOM somewhat strange  
 ‘We seemed somewhat strange to her.’ COMPLEX, No 1/3.PL syncretism
- b. Henni virtist/**virtust** þið eitthvað einkennilegir.  
 her.DAT seemed.3.SG/seemed.2/3.PL you.NOM.PL somewhat strange  
 ‘You seemed somewhat strange to her.’ COMPLEX, 2/3.PL syncretism

Implementation in Coon and Keine (2020): If a probe winds up with two values (because of its gluttony), but due to the syncretism pattern of the verb, the “same” Vocabulary Item (VI) is demanded by both, it is possible to simultaneously satisfy both by inserting this single, syncretic VI:



(13)

- Relatively little empirical work on this syncretism effect; Conflicting data in Sigurðsson 1996 vs. Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008.
- Also some possibly non-innocent assumptions hidden in the implementation of how syncretism resolves features conflicts illustrated in (13).

### 3 What is the empirical evidence for a syncretism effect?

#### 3.1 Testing person agreement in the DAT-NOM construction

A “thermometer” study (Featherston 2008) of the acceptability, in both simplex and complex DAT-NOM constructions, of 3 types of agreement with a non-3rd plural “low nominative,” giving a 2×3 design:

- Variable 1: Structure
  - Embedded clause (complex DAT-NOM construction) COMPLEX
  - Single clause (simplex DAT-NOM construction) SIMPLEX
- Variable 2: Agreement
  - “Default” agreement (unambiguously 3rd person singular) DEFAULT
  - Unambiguous full Person agreement FULL
  - Syncretic Person agreement SYNCRETIC

All the verbs that were used have the same pattern of syncretism as for *leiðast* in (14);

	<i>leiðast</i> ‘to be fed up with’
1sg	<b>leiddist</b>
2sg	<b>leiddist</b>
(14) 3sg	<b>leiddist</b>
1pl	leiddumst
2pl	<b>leiddust</b>
3pl	<b>leiddust</b>

The six conditions in the DAT-NOM experiment are exemplified in (15)–(16), with *finnast* ‘to find, to consider’ (complex DAT-NOM) and *leiðast* ‘to be fed up with’ (simplex DAT-NOM).

- (15) A. Kennarum fannst þið so sniðug.  
 the.teacher.DAT found.SG you.NOM.PL so clever  
 ‘The teacher found you so clever.’  
 COMPLEX—DEFAULT
- B. Kennarum fundumst við so sniðug.  
 the.teacher.DAT found.1.PL we.NOM.PL so clever  
 ‘The teacher found us so clever.’  
 COMPLEX—FULL

- C. Kennarum fundust þið so sniðug.  
the.teacher.DAT found.2/3.PL you.NOM.PL so clever  
'The teacher found you so clever.'  
COMPLEX—SYNCRETIC
- (16) D. Kennarum leiddist þið alveg rosalega  
the.teacher.DAT bored.SG you.NOM.PL very much  
'The teacher was really fed up with you.'  
SIMPLEX—DEFAULT
- E. Kennarum leiddumst við alveg rosalega  
the.teacher.DAT bored.1.PL we.NOM.PL very much  
'The teacher was really fed up with us.'  
SIMPLEX—FULL
- F. Kennarum leiddust þið alveg rosalega  
the.teacher.DAT bored.2/3.PL you.NOM.PL very much  
'The teacher was really fed up with you.'  
SIMPLEX—SYNCRETIC

60 participants, aged between 22 and 79 (mean age 48). Asked to rate each sentence in relation to two reference sentences, one pre-determined to be grammatical and assigned a rating of 30; on pre-determined to be marginal and assigned a rating of 20.

Raw judgments z-transformed per participant (with fillers included), in order to normalise for the different ways in which individual participants might have used the scale.

### 3.2 What we found

Table 1 gives the overall means for the raw ratings, as well as the z-scores for the 6 conditions.

Agreement				Complex			Simplex		
				Cond	z-score	Rating	Cond	z-score	Rating
Default	Dat.3.S	V.3.S	Nom.2.PL	A	0.69	26.7	D	-0.45	17.5
Full	Dat.3.S	V.1.PL	Nom.1.PL	B	-0.93	13.7	E	-0.75	15.1
Syncretic	Dat.3.S	V.2/3.PL	Nom.2.PL	C	-0.32	18.3	F	-0.33	18.7

Table 1: Conditions and results of the rating study on Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions

These z-scores are graphed in Figure 1, which additionally plots standard errors for each condition.

- Default agreement:

The results clearly support the observation from the literature that default agreement is available in the complex construction (A).

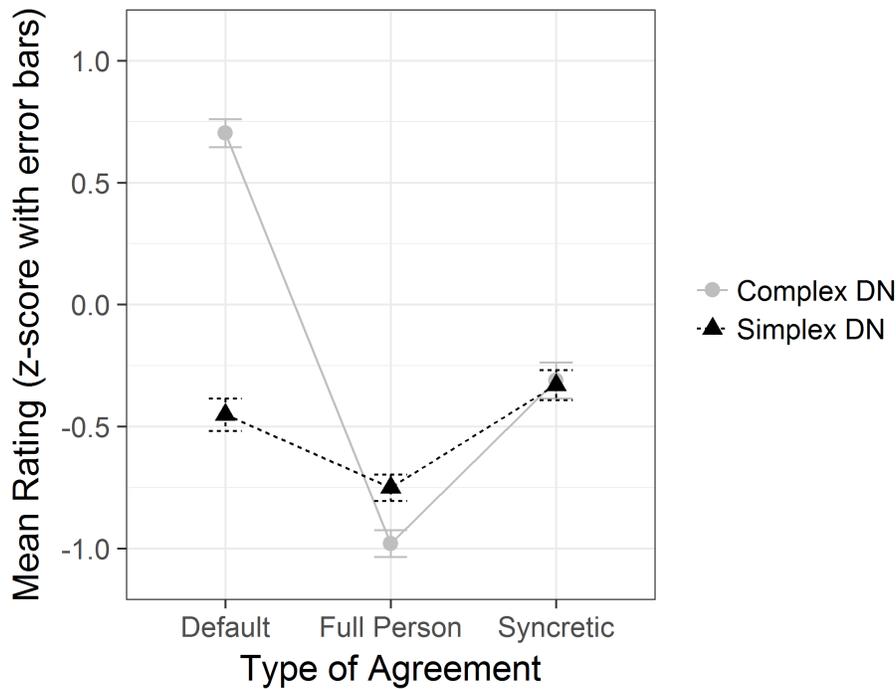


Figure 1: Normalized mean ratings for the Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions.

As expected, default agreement is given much lower ratings in the simplex construction (D).

- Nevertheless, even in the simplex construction, and very clearly in the complex construction, the lowest ratings are for full, morphologically unambiguous Person agreement (conditions E and B respectively).
- Importantly, these data also **show an effect of morphological syncretism**. In both the complex and the simplex conditions, the examples where the agreement with the (2nd person plural) Nominative argument is syncretic with 3rd person plural agreement (C and F) are better than the comparable examples where the agreement with the (1st person plural) Nominative argument is unambiguous (B and E): (B vs. C:  $t_1(58)=6.41^{***}$ ,  $t_2(17)=8,646^{***}$ ; E vs. F:  $t_1(58)=5.00^{***}$ ;  $t_2(17)=3,66^{**}$ ).

**This result then supports the “double agreement” accounts.**

However, as you can see, the effect is not categorical. Why not? Two possible factors to consider:

- **Number.** The account of the “syncretism fix” from Coon and Keine (2020) above includes the assumption that the **number** value is plural (so the dative argument does not trigger singular agreement). But we know that when person is not at issue (i.e. the low nominative argument is 3rd person) for most speakers it is grammatical not to agree with it in number; and in the complex DAT-NOM construction in particular this seems to be quite strongly preferred (Thráinsson et al. 2015, pp. 209–220). That is, the examples shown in (1)–(2) with plural agreement are also at

the least possible with singular agreement:

- (17) Henni líkaðu/líkaði þeir.           SIMPLEX  
her.DAT liked.3.PL/3.SG they.M.NOM  
'She liked them.'
- (18) Honum mundu/mundi virðast þeir           (vera) hæfir.           COMPLEX  
him.DAT would.3.PL/3SG seem they.M.NOM (be.INF) competent.M.PL  
'They would seem competent to him.' (Sigurðsson and Holmberg 2008, p. 255)

To the extent that a speaker disprefers plural agreement in the DAT-NOM construction they would be predicted also to disprefer the syncretic forms at issue, since these were unambiguously plural

– **Neutrality vs. Ambiguity.** (Asarina 2011, Ch. 4): When there are two feature structures competing for a single insertion site, it is not enough that the phonological output be the same, rather “All feature structures on a single item must be spelled out **by a single insertion rule**”. In Icelandic, it is only some verbs that have syncretism between 2nd and 3rd person forms in the plural. Thus there are two possible ways a speaker might analyse the syncretic forms:

- \* 2nd person and 3rd person in the *leiðast* class are realised as  $-\emptyset$ - in the context of plural, by a (lexically conditioned) default rule
- \* There is a specific rule realising 2nd person as  $-\emptyset$ - in the *leiðast* class; the realisation of 3rd person as  $-\emptyset$ - is the result of a general rule that applies across many verb classes

Under these assumptions, a speaker who adopts the second analysis would not be able to resolve the clash between the two feature structures even if they result in phonologically identical forms.

## 4 Another case with a “low nominative:” Specificational copular clauses

### 4.1 Another potential environment for multiple agreement

A potential candidate for multiple agreement: copular constructions with two nominative noun phrases. We focus on one here: **Specificational Copular Sentences (SCCs)**, as in (19).

- (19) Hann var að velta fyrir sér hvort aðalvandamálið    %væri/ %væruð/ %væru þið.  
he was wondering if main problem.DEF **be.3.SG/ be.2.PL/ be.3.PL** you.PL  
'He was wondering whether the main problem is you.PL'

It is hard to give a good definition of what are classified as specificational copular clauses in the literature. As a rough approximation we can say that they necessarily have a 3rd person as the first nominal (DP1) (typically a definite description) and a referring expression as the second (DP2); the second nominal is obligatory interpreted as the focus.

- (20) a. Who committed the crime? The culprit is {Colonel Mustard/YOU}!  
 b. The cause of the riot was the police intervention.  
 c. My favourite author is Joseph Heller.  
 d. My only hope is you.

Since the first DP is 3rd person, when it is singular (the usual case), at least to a first approximation we would expect these cases to behave just like the DAT-NOM construction we've just been looking at.

#### 4.2 Testing person agreement in Specificational Copular Clauses

We already have the results of a production study that suggested a pattern different from that observed in the DAT-NOM construction: speakers varied as to whether they produced agreement with DP1, or with DP2, even when DP2 was 1st or 2nd person and there was no syncretism in the verbal morphology.<sup>3</sup> Can we confirm the findings from the production data in an acceptability judgment study?

This rating study and the one just described for the DAT-NOM construction were both subparts of a single experiment.

The experiment investigated judgments on person agreement in the six conditions set out in Table 2 and exemplified in (21).

Condition	DP1	DP2	Agreement	Agreement type	Example
A	3.SG	2.PL	væri (1/3.SG)	DP1/Default	The main problem be.1/3.SG you.PL
B	3.SG	2.PL	væruð (2.PL)	DP2	The main problem be.2.PL you.PL
C	3.SG	2.PL	væru (3.PL)	DP2 Num only	The main problem be.3.PL you.PL
D	3.PL	2.PL	væri (1/3.SG)	Default	The most likely winners be.1/3.SG you.PL
E	3.SG	3.SG	væri (1/3.SG)	Full match/Default	The main problem be.1/3.SG she
F	3.SG	1.SG	væri (1/3.SG)	Syncretic match/Default	The main problem be.1/3.SG I

Table 2: Conditions for experiment on Person agreement in Specificational Copular Sentences

- (21) Þau voru að velta fyrir sér hvort ...  
 they were wondering whether
- A. aðalvandmálið væri ekki þið.  
 main.problem be.3.SG not you.PL.NOM  
 the main problem wasn't you.PL
- B. aðalvandmálið væruð ekki þið.  
 main.problem be.2.PL not you.PL.NOM  
 the main problem wasn't you.PL
- C. aðalvandmálið væru ekki þið.  
 main.problem be.3.PL not you.PL.NOM

<sup>3</sup>The pattern was actually more complex than this: see Hartmann and Heycock (2017)

- the main problem wasn't you.PL
- D. líklegustu sigurvegararnir væri ekki þið.  
 likeliest winners be.3.SG not you.PL.NOM  
 the most likely winners weren't you.PL
- E. aðalvandmálið væri ekki hún.  
 main.problem be.3.SG not she.NOM  
 the main problem wasn't her
- F. aðalvandmálið væri ekki ég.  
 main.problem be.1/3.SG not I.NOM  
 the main problem wasn't me

### 4.3 What we found

Cond	DP1	DP2	Agreement	Type of agreement	z-score	Rating
A	3.SG	2.PL	væri (1/3.SG)	DP1/Default	0.34	23.4
B	3.SG	2.PL	væruð (2.PL)	DP2 Person & Number	-0.14	20.0
C	3.SG	2.PL	væru (3.PL)	DP2 Number only	-0.40	17.8
D	3.PL	2.PL	væri (1/3.SG)	Default	-0.66	15.6
E	3.SG	3.SG	væri (1/3.SG)	Full match/Default	0.43	24.6
F	3.SG	1.SG	væri (1/3.SG)	Syncretic match/Default	0.56	25.5

Table 3: Conditions and results of the rating study on Icelandic SCC construction

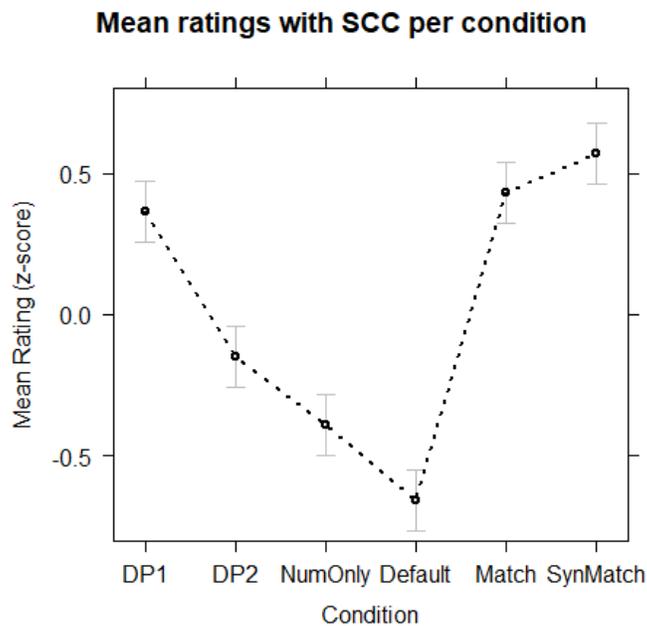


Figure 2: Normalized mean ratings for Icelandic copular clauses.

- Do we find agreement in person with a low nominative?
  - Yes, even though DP2 agreement is rated lower than DP1 agreement (B<A), there are still some speakers who fully accept DP2 agreement, or even prefer it over DP1 agreement.
- Do we find default agreement?
  - Unambiguous default agreement (D) receives very low ratings: ungrammatical in SCCs.
- Do we find non-3rd person pronouns not agreed with in a low position?
  - Yes. Ratings for DP1 agreement are in fact higher than DP2 agreement

#### 4.4 So what do we see when we put the two cases of “low nominatives” together?

Overall point: Agreement in SCCs is distinct from agreement in the DAT-NOM construction. Look at the ratings in Figure 3.

In all the cases graphed here, the first DP (a Dative in the DAT-NOM cases, a Nominative in the SCC cases) is 3rd singular, and the second DP is non-3rd person. Examples of all the relevant conditions are given in (22).<sup>4</sup> Note that there is no example in (22) of the syncretic condition for the specificational copular clauses because the verb *vera* ‘be’ does not exhibit any syncretism in the plural.

- (22) 3.SG agreement (agreement with Dative/DP1)
- a. ... aðalvandmálið væri ekki þið.  
       main.problem be.3.SG not you.PL.NOM  
       ‘... the main problem wasn’t you.PL.’ SCC: 3.SG
- b. Kennarum fannst þið so sniðug.  
       the.teacher.DAT found.SG you.NOM.PL so clever  
       ‘The teacher found you so clever.’ Complex DAT-NOM: 3.SG
- c. Kennarum leiddist þið alveg rosalega  
       the.teacher.DAT bored.SG you.NOM.PL very much  
       ‘The teacher was really fed up with you.’ Simplex DAT-NOM: 3.SG
- (23) Full person agreement with Nominative/DP2
- a. ... aðalvandmálið væruð ekki þið.  
       main.problem be.2.PL not you.PL.NOM  
       ‘... the main problem wasn’t you.PL.’ SCC: 2.PL
- b. Kennarum fundumst við so sniðug.  
       the.teacher.DAT found.1.PL we.NOM.PL so clever  
       ‘The teacher found us so clever.’ Complex DAT-NOM: 1.PL

<sup>4</sup>The SCC clauses were all presented as embedded interrogatives to avoid the complications of V2; we omit the matrix clause here just for ease of comprehension.

Also, if you’re following along in the talk, note that examples (22)–(24) are not given in the slides.

- c. Kennarum leiddumst við alveg rosalega  
 the.teacher.DAT bored.1.PL we.NOM.PL very much  
 ‘The teacher was really fed up with us.’

Simplex DAT-NOM: 1.PL

(24) Syncretic (2/3.PL) agreement with Nominative DP

- a. Kennarum fundust þið so sniðug.  
 the.teacher.DAT found.2/3.PL you.NOM.PL so clever  
 ‘The teacher found you so clever.’

Complex DAT-NOM: 2/3.PL

- b. Kennarum leiddust þið alveg rosalega  
 the.teacher.DAT bored.2/3.PL you.NOM.PL very much  
 ‘The teacher was really fed up with you.’

Simplex DAT-NOM: 2/3.PL

- Is there evidence for multiple agreement in SCCs, or is multiple agreement specific to DAT-NOM?

→ SCCs do not show effects of multiple agreement:

- High rating for syncretic condition is simply a result of ambiguity between DP1 and DP2 agreement.
- No (or at least only limited) evidence for Person effect I: agreeing *only* with the person of the lower argument is possible and even preferred for some speakers.

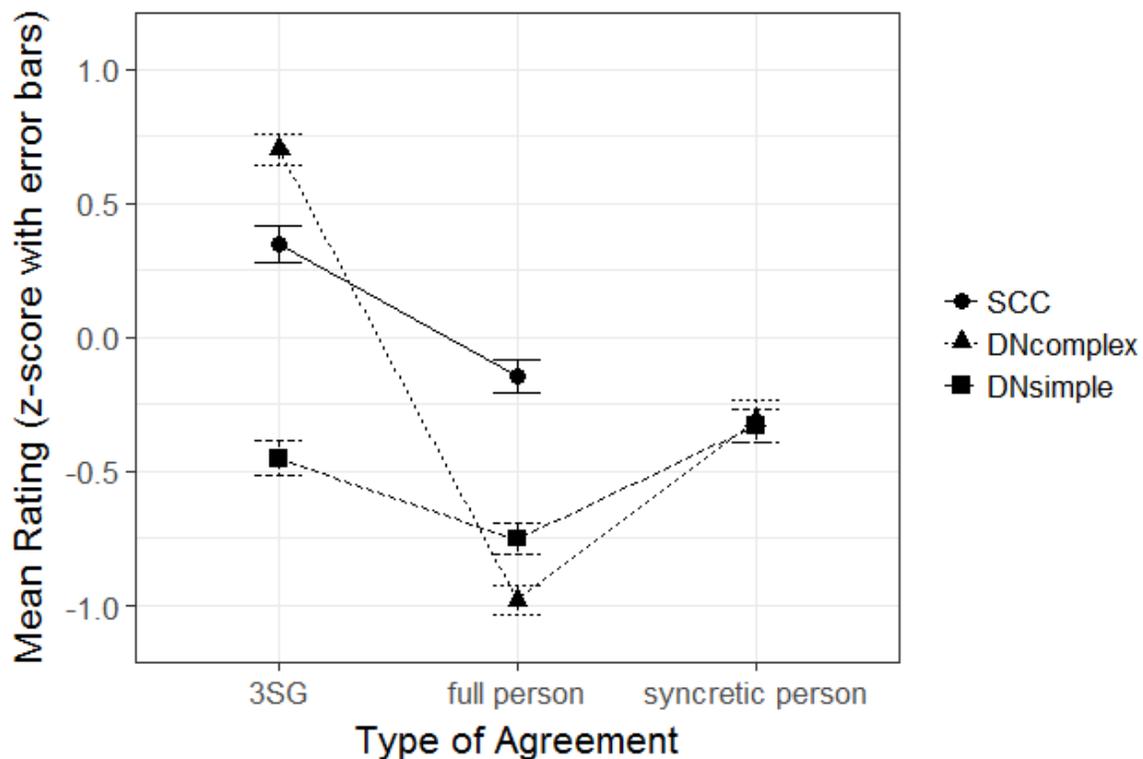


Figure 3: Comparison of agreement in SCC and DAT/NOM constructions

- No evidence for Person effect II: *not* agreeing at all with the person of the lower argument is also possible and preferred for some speakers.

But hold on . . .

Even if the possibility of full agreement with DP2 makes the copular cases unlike the DAT-NOM cases, isn't the possibility of DP1 agreement just like what we find in the COMPLEX DAT-NOM cases? Isn't that what we'd expect if copular clauses contain small clauses/PredPs?

No, the evidence seems to suggest that DP2 is always in the domain of agreement. Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008):

- (25) Þetta höfum/?\*hefur líklega bara verið við. [NB: This example is (22) in the slides]  
 this have.1.PL/3.SG probably only been we.NOM  
 'This has probably only been us.'

The absence of agreement with the initial demonstrative can be accounted for if it is devoid of  $\phi$ -features. But if the second DP here could remain in a clausal domain that shields it from the reach of the agreement probe, 3rd singular agreement should still be possible just as a default. This appears not to be the case, so we have to conclude that whatever the structure below the copula may be, it does not allow DP2 to escape the reach of the agreement probe. So:

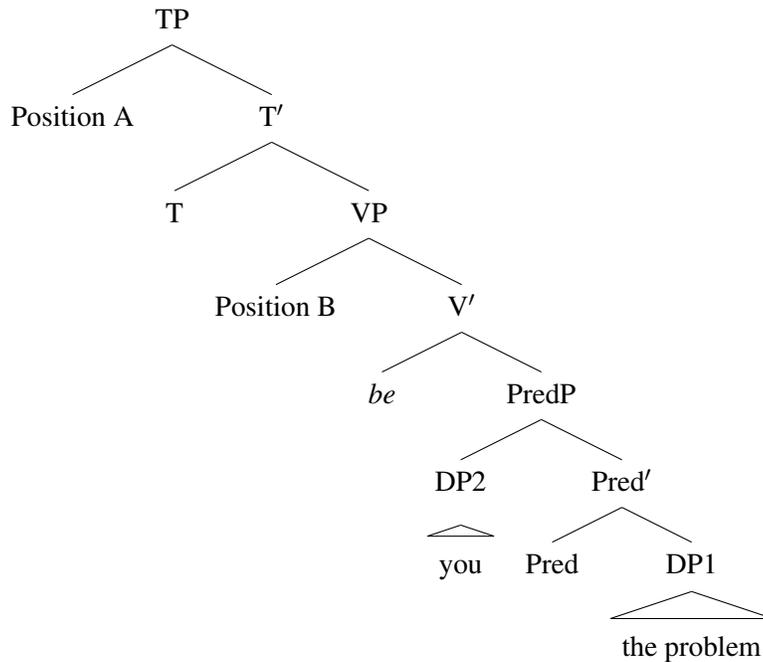
#### 4.5 Difference in structure

So why is the copular construction different?

Elsewhere we've proposed that the possibility of DP1 or DP2 agreement is based on the hypothesis that DP1 may move directly to a position either below or above the agreeing head. In simplified form:

(26)

[NB: (23) in the slides]



- If both DPs were to remain within the small clause, “DP2” would always be higher, and so the first Goal found by an agreement Probe. However, one DP always raises.
- If “DP1” moves first to Position B, below the Probe, it will now be the closest Goal → DP1 agreement.
- If “DP1” moves to Position A, above the Probe, it will “evade” agreement completely, the Probe will find DP2 → DP2 agreement

As we have seen, there is considerable variation between speakers as to their preferences. Some speakers seem to favour a derivation involving Position B (DP1 agreement); others Position A (DP2 agreement); others are fully variable. At present we do not have an explanation for these differences.

## 5 Conclusion and Outlook

- Icelandic DAT-NOM constructions are subject to double agreement for person, see Schütze (2003), Nevins (2007), Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008), Ackema and Neeleman (2018), Coon and Keine (2020)
  - A non-third person low nominative gives rise to a morphological problem as there is a clash between agreement with the dative (always 3rd) and the nominative argument.
  - For some speakers this conflict can be resolved if the verbal form is syncretic for person, but such resolution is restricted.

- This can be explained in terms of double agreement (e.g. Coon & Keine’s *Feature Gluttony*) given certain assumptions about how syncretism can resolve morphological conflicts.
- Default agreement arises when the nominative argument is not in the domain of the probe.
- The analysis of the person effect in the DAT-NOM construction in terms of a (revised) Person Licensing Condition cannot be upheld
  - No account for syncretism effect.
  - Wrongly predicts ungrammaticality for DP1 agreement in SCCs.
- SCCs differ from DAT-NOM in that they do not show the hallmarks of multiple agreement
  - For many speakers, non-syncretic agreement with a 1st/2nd person DP2 is grammatical.
  - For most speakers, agreement with a 3rd person DP1 even in the presence of a 1st/2nd person DP2 is grammatical
  - This can be explained if DP1 can evade agreement entirely by moving directly to a position above the probe.
  - It seems that a nominative 3rd person DP causes the person probe to halt its search, while this is not true for a Dative. But why/how?

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