

## How not to agree

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Since the turn of the millennium there has been a series of interesting and important works in the area of morphosyntax investigating what can happen when there is (apparently) only a single locus for the exponence of agreement but (apparently) more than one potential controller. One set of data that has played an important role here is the pattern(s) of agreement in DATIVE/NOMINATIVE constructions in Icelandic—constructions where the subject is Dative but there is a lower Nominative argument that may trigger agreement on a finite verb.

#### The basic pattern in Icelandic DAT/NOM constructions:

Agreement for Number with a low Nominative is possible:

- (1) Henni **leiddust** þeir.  
her.DAT bored.3.PL they.M.NOM  
'She was bored by them.' SIMPLEX DAT-NOM

Agreement for Person with a low Nominative is not possible:

- (2) \*Henni **virtumst** við vera duglegar.  
she.DAT seem.1.PL we.NOM be industrious  
Intended: 'We seemed to her to be industrious.' COMPLEX DAT-NOM

"Default" agreement possible only in the COMPLEX construction:

- (3) a. ?\* Henni **leiddist** við. b. Henni **virtist** við vera duglegar.  
her.DAT liked.3.SG we.NOM she.DAT seem.3.SG we.NOM be industrious  
'We bored her.' 'We seemed to her to be industrious.'

A second configuration that has come to the fore more recently involves "binominal" copular constructions: copular clauses where both subject and predicate are DPs that may differ in both person and number from each other:

- (4) ... hvort aðalvandamálið %væri/%væruð þið. (Icelandic)  
... whether main problem.DEF.NOM be.3.SG/be2.PL you.PL.NOM  
'... whether the main problem was you.PL.'
- (5) Ich **bin** du. (German)  
I.NOM be.1.SG you.SG.NOM  
'I am you.'

In this talk I'll aim to explore the different possible ways of explaining the agreement patterns in such configurations and what they show about the featural make-up of nominal phrases and the derivation of "person effects" leading to ineffable combinations. I'll draw on the recent literature, and on empirical work carried on in collaboration with Jutta Hartmann (Bielefeld).