

Agreement vs Concord in Icelandic

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This paper examines the morphology of passive participles, floated quantifiers, and secondary predicates in Icelandic. In Icelandic, verbs and passive participles agree only with nominative DPs. Floated quantifiers and secondary predicates, on the other hand, agree with whatever DP they modify, irrespective of the case of the DP. The theoretical generalization that arises is that passive participles (like verbs) agree only with structurally case-marked DPs, while floated quantifiers and secondary predicates agree with both structurally and non-structurally case-marked DPs. I show that this difference suggests that agreement morphology and concord morphology come about via different mechanisms. I argue that because of its relationship to case, verbal agreement – including passive participle agreement – should be determined in the syntax. I provide an analysis of passive participles based on Bhatt’s (2005) idea of covaluation. I argue that T covaluates the case feature on the participle when T probes a nominative DP. By contrast, I argue that floated quantifier and secondary predicate concord come about via a combination of syntactic case assignment and PF feature-copying.

This analysis contrasts with two types of proposals. The first type, building on parallels between DPs and CPs, argues that both agreement and concord are established in the syntax via a probe-goal relationship (e.g., Baker 2008, Carstens 2000). The second kind of analysis argues that both types of features are established at PF (e.g., Embick and Noyer 2007, Halle and Marantz 1993, Sigurðsson 2006). I argue that the Icelandic data suggest a more nuanced approach, namely that agreement and concord phenomena should not be treated with a one-size-fits-all approach.

As is well-known, DP-internal concord generally involves case, gender, and/or number features while verbal agreement generally involves person, gender, and/or number features. In their agreeing forms, passive participles in Icelandic morphologically pattern like floated quantifiers and secondary predicates. That is, all three items show case, gender, and number features. On the surface, this pattern seems to suggest that passive participle agreement is a form of concord. However, passive participles syntactically behave like verbs, even though their morphology differs.

Icelandic verbs agree in person and number with nominative DPs, as shown in (1)a. In (1)b, the verb does not agree with the dative subject. Rather, the verb appears in the default form, which is homophonous with the third person singular.

- (1) a. Við lásu/*las bókina. b. Stelpunum leiddist/*leiddust.
 we.nom read.1pl/dft book.the girls-the.dat.pl bored.dft/*3pl
 ‘We read the book.’ ‘The girls felt bored.’

In passives, the participle agrees in case, number, and gender with the nominative subject. The auxiliary patterns like main verbs and also agrees (in person and number) with the nominative, as shown in (2)a. Just as in actives, when there is not a nominative, the verb appears in the default. In (2)b, neither the auxiliary nor the participle agrees with the dative.

- (2) a. Strákarnir voru aðstoðaðir/*aðstoðað. b. Strákunum var hjálpað.
 boys.the.nom was.3pl aided.nom.pl.masc/*dft boys.the.dat was.dft helped.dft
 ‘The boys were aided.’ ‘The boys were helped.’

(Boeckx and Hornstein 2006, ex 2-3)

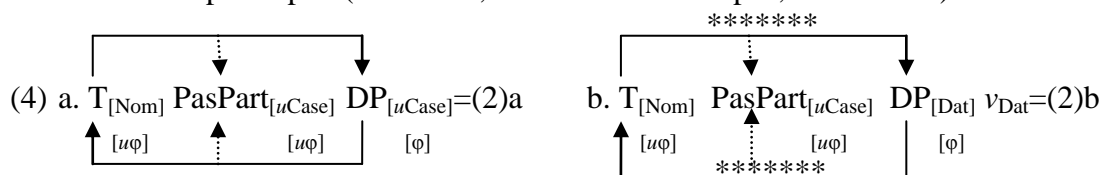
Following Legate 2008 and Woolford 2006, I assume that nominative is a structural case and dative is a non-structural case. As such, T assigns nominative and v_{Dat} assigns dative.

Building on Bhatt's (2005) analysis of long-distance agreement in Hindi-Urdu, I argue that passive participle agreement in Icelandic is a consequence of Agree plus covaluation. Hindi-Urdu exhibits long-distance agreement in some infinitival constructions. Verbs in Hindi-Urdu agree with the highest DP within the clause that is morphologically unmarked for case. Ergative subjects appear in clauses with perfective aspect and are overtly case-marked. Consequently, verbs do not agree with ergatives. In constructions with ergative subjects and infinitival complements, the matrix verb may agree with the embedded object. In this situation, the infinitival verb also agrees with the embedded object, as shown in (3). When the matrix verb does not agree with the embedded object, all verbs appear in the default form.

- (3) Shahrukh-ne [tehnii kaat -nii] chaah-ii thii. LDA in Hindi-Urdu. All
 Shahrukh-erg branch.fem cut-inf.fem want-pfv.fem.be.past.fem. verbs agree with
 'Shahrukh had wanted to cut the branch.' (Bhatt 2005, EX 6) embedded object.

Bhatt (2005) proposes that when the matrix T probes the embedded object, it *covaluates* the unvalued ϕ -features on the infinitive. The infinitive agrees with the embedded object only when the matrix verb does as well.

Given that Icelandic passive participles agree with a DP only when T assigns case to that DP, I propose an analysis for (2) based on Bhatt's (2005) proposal. The analysis for (2)a is shown in (4)a. T probes the DP and assigns nominative. Because the participle also has an unvalued case feature and is in the c-command domain of T, T also assigns nominative to the participle via covaluation. The DP, in turn, values the ϕ -features on T and covaluates the ϕ -features on the participle. (Of course, the DP moves to Spec,TP for EPP.)



Unlike in (4)a, in (4)b, T does not assign case to the DP. Consequently, T cannot value the case feature on the participle. Nor can the DP value the ϕ -features on the participle because the DP does not value the ϕ -features on T. The participle, therefore, appears in the default.

By contrast, secondary predicates and floated quantifiers agree with whatever DP they modify. In (5) 'both' and 'alone' agree with the dative subject.

- (5) a. Bræðrunum var báðum boðið á fundinn.
 brothers.the.dat was.def both.dat.masc.pl invited.dft to meeting.the
 'The brothers were both invited to the meeting.' (Sigurðsson 2008, ex 17)
 b. Ólafí leiddist einum í veislunni.
 Olaf.dat bored.def alone.dat.masc.sg in party.the
 'Olaf felt bored alone in the party.' (Sigurðsson 2008, ex 20)

I propose that concord comes about via case assignment in the syntax and PF feature-copying. I follow Sigurðsson's (2006) suggestion that floated quantifiers should be analyzed as DP-internal concord and that secondary predicates could have either a raising or a control structure. I build on this proposal by articulating a PF mechanism that delivers the concord morphology. In (5)a, v_{Dat} assigns dative to the DP *both the brothers* in the syntax. At PF, an AGR node (Embick and Noyer 2007) attaches to the quantifier and copies the features of the head noun. Similarly, in (5)b, v_{Dat} assigns dative to the subject in the syntax. On a raising analysis of (5)b, *Olaf* is merged inside of the adjective phrase, and on a control analysis, a coindexed PRO is inside the AP. Irrespective of the syntax, both analyses require that an AGR node attaches to *alone* at PF and copies the features of the subject. A syntactic covaluation analysis cannot account for (5)b because this would require a case-assigning head to probe an AP, as opposed to probing a DP.