

Binding and Agreement in Icelandic ECM Constructions: From Nominative Reflexives to Pronouns¹

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1 Introduction

- In this talk, we observe certain constructions in Icelandic in which the co-reference possibilities of pronouns seem to influence phi-agreement on the verb, or vice versa.

- (1) a. Konunum_i fannst Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3SG they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
- b. Konunum_i fundust Þær_{*i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3PL they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{*i/j} to be gifted.’ (Taraldsen 1995: 317)

- In particular, our aim is to try and provide an analysis that explains why a pronoun can behave as a reflexive (1b), and why the co-reference possibilities of the pronoun seem to correlate with the presence or absence of covarying phi-agreement.
- By doing so, we have a look at the resolution of co-reference in Icelandic non-finite embedded constructions (ECM), as well as the distribution of pronouns and anaphors (Chomsky 1981).

(2) *Binding Theory:*

- a. Principle A: Anaphors must be bound in their domain, i.e. they must be locally bound.
 - b. Principle B: Pronouns must be free in their domain, i.e. pronouns cannot be locally bound.
- We propose an analysis that relies on nothing more than a traditional binding theory and a standard locality domain for agreement.
 - Our analysis crucially relies on the notion that the locality domain for agreement and binding are same (Reuland (2011), Hicks (2009), Rooryck and van den Wyngaerd (2015)).
 - In a nutshell, we propose that (1a) and (1b) have different underlying structures as a result of a restructuring operation (Wurmbrand, 2001, 2004, Cinque 2004, Bhatt 2005).
 - Specifically, we argue that in (1a), the pronoun is in a different TP than its antecedent and the finite verb, thus non-local in terms of binding and agreement. By contrast, in (1b), they are all in the same TP (the matrix one), thus local. This approach correctly derives both the binding and the agreement facts.

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- Outline of the talk:
 - Section 2 - Data
 - Section 3 - Anaphors or pronouns?
 - Section 4 - Analysis: structural ambiguity
 - Section 5 - Accounting for variation
 - Section 6 - Conclusion
 - Section 7 - Appendix: Object Shift

2 Data

2.1 Dative subject constructions

- Icelandic is well-known for having (quirky) dative subjects and nominative objects. In (3), the finite verb agrees with the nominative object in person and number.

- (3) Henni leiddust Þeir
 She-DAT was-bored-by-**3PL** they-**NOM**
 ‘She was bored with them’ (Taraldsen 1995: 307)

- However, the same configuration rules out the reflexive in the nominative object position.

- (4) a. *Maríu_i leiðist sig_i
 Mary-DAT finds.boring **REFL.NOM**
 ‘Mary finds herself boring’ (Everaert 1991: 289 (27))
 b. Maríu_i leiðist hún_{*i/j}
 Mary-DAT finds.boring **she.NOM**
 ‘Mary finds herself boring’ (Everaert 1991: 289 (31))

- Rizzi (1990) independently makes the observation that nominative anaphors *sig* are banned in Icelandic.

2.2 ECM constructions

- The same facts can be observed in ECM constructions with dative subject and nominative object. The coreferential nominative pronoun is acceptable but not the nominative reflexive.

- (5) Nominative Object
 a. *Maríu_i fannst sig_i vera gáfuð.
 Mary.DAT found.3SG **REFL.NOM** be gifted.F.SG.NOM
 ‘Mary_i found herself_i to be gifted’
 b. Maríu_i fannst hún_i vera gáfuð.
 Mary.DAT found.3SG **she.NOM** be gifted.F.SG.NOM
 ‘Mary_i found herself_i to be gifted’ (Taraldsen 1995: 315-316)

- Interestingly, with an accusative pronoun, there is a condition B effect.

- (6) Accusative Object
 a. Henni_i virðist sig_i vanta peninga.
 Her.DAT_i seems **REFL.ACC_i** lack money
 ‘She_i seems to herself_i to lack money’

- b. Henni_i virðist **hana**_{*i/j} vanta peninga.
 Her.DAT seems **her**.ACC lack money
 ‘She_i seems to her_{*i/j} to lack money’

(Everaert 1991: 288)

Puzzle 1: Given that pronouns elsewhere cannot be locally bound in (6b) and (4b), is there a principle B violation in (5b)?

2.3 Binding and Agreement

- Once agreement enters the picture, things get even more interesting.
- The co-referential possibilities of the pronoun seem to be restricted by phi-agreement.

- (7) a. Konunum_i fannst Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3SG they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
 b. Konunum_i fundust Þær_{*i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3PL they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{*i/j} to be gifted.’ (Taraldsen 1995: 317)

- When there is phi-covarying agreement in the matrix verb (7b), the pronoun cannot be bound by its antecedent, i.e. it behaves like a true pronoun.
- On the other hand, when there is a 3SG (default) agreement (7a), the pronoun can be bound by its antecedent, like an anaphor.
- The co-referential possibilities of the pronoun seem to be restricted by phi-agreement. We seem to have agreement in the absence of binding (in (7b)) and binding in the absence of agreement (in (7a)).

	Default agreement	Covarying agreement
(8) Bound reading _{<i>i>i</i>}	yes	no
Free reading _{<i>i>j</i>}	yes	yes

- A free reading is expected of pronouns under Principle B, independent of agreement. A bound reading is unexpected, even with default agreement.
- What’s more, a bound reading of the pronoun in (7) and covarying phi-agreement seem mutually exclusive, i.e. you can only have one in absence of the other.

Puzzle 2: Why are binding and phi-agreement mutually exclusive?

3 ‘True’ pronouns or anaphors in disguise?

- One simple way to account for the apparent principle B violation in (5b) and (7b) is to assume that there is no morphological form for nominative reflexive, and that the nominative pronoun is syncretic with nominative reflexives Maling (1984).
- If this is really the case, then we would expect *hún* in (5b) and *Þær* in (7a) to be underlyingly reflexive with surface pronominal morphology.
- However, evidence that pronouns in Icelandic exhibit none of the syntactic and semantic properties usually associated with anaphors is listed in Everaert (1991).

3.1 Strict vs sloppy readings in VP-deletion contexts

Anaphors exhibit only sloppy (bound) readings, whereas pronouns exhibit both strict and sloppy readings.

- (9) John hopes that I like **him** and Peter does too.
 a. Sloppy reading: John hopes that I like John and Peter hopes that I like Peter.
 b. Strict reading: John hopes that I like John and Peter hopes that I like John.
- (10) John likes **himself** and Peter does too.
 a. Sloppy reading: John likes John and Peter likes Peter.
 b. Strict reading: *John likes John and Peter likes John.
- (11) Jóni_i finnst **hann_i** (sjálfur)/*sig_i vera skríttinn og Haraldi_j líka.
 John.DAT finds **he.NOM** (self)/*REFL.NOM be strange and Harald.DAT too
 'John thinks he is strange and Harald thinks it too.'
 a. Sloppy reading: (#)John thinks John is strange and *Harald thinks **Harald** is strange.*
 b. Strict reading: John thinks John is strange and *Harald thinks **John** is strange.*

(Everaert 1991: 291)

- It is never the case that *hann_i* gets only the sloppy reading → not anaphor-like behaviour.

3.2 Topicalization

- Anaphors allow topicalization while pronouns do not.
- (12) a. Jóni_i syndist hann_i (sjálfur) vera að tapa
 John.DAT seemed he.NOM (himself) be to lose
 'It seemed to John that he was losing'
- b. ***Hann_i** (sjálfur) syndist Jóni_i *e_i* vera að tapa
 He.NOM (himself) seemed John.DAT be to lose
 'To him(self) it seemed to John he was losing'
- c. ?**Sig_i**(sjálfan) virtist Jóni_i *e_i* vanta peninga
 Himself.ACC seemed John lack money
 'To himself seems John to lack money.'

(Everaert 1991: 292)

- *hann_i* cannot be topicalized → pronoun-like behaviour.
- This clear contrast between the pronouns and the anaphors in Icelandic clearly suggest that pronouns are just pronouns and they are not syncretic with anaphors.

4 Analysis: Structural ambiguity

Puzzle 1: Given that pronouns elsewhere cannot be locally bound, is there a principle B violation?

Puzzle 2: Why are binding and phi-agreement mutually exclusive?

- We propose that the minimal pair in (7) (repeated as in (13)) has two different underlying structures.

- (13) a. Konunum_i fannst [TP þær_{i/j} vera gáfaþar]
 women-DAT seemed-3SG they-NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
 b. Konunum_i fundust [_{vP} þær_{*i/j} vera gáfaþar]
 women-DAT seemed-3PL they-NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{*i/j} to be gifted.’

- We argue that is the result of a restructuring operation (Wurmbrand 2001, 2004, Bhatt 2005, Nomura 2005, Ussery (to appear)).
- Specifically, one involves a TP complement (as in (13a), reflexive reading, no agreement) and the other a smaller, vP complement (as in (13b), pronominal reading, agreement) that has undergone restructuring.
- (13a) with a TP complement behaves like a biclausal construction for purposes of binding and agreement, whereas (13b) would be monoclausal, i.e. the vP complement does not act as a clause boundary.
- In other words, in (13a), the pronoun is in a different TP than its antecedent and the finite verb ; (13b), they are all in the same TP (the matrix one).

4.1 Agreement and restructuring

- **Restructuring** refers to the linguistic phenomenon where an apparently biclausal structure involving two verbal pieces, the lower one a non-finite one, shows monoclausal effects. (Sundaresan 2015)
- It is an optional mechanism by which the matrix verb selects for a small(er) infinitive complement, for instance a bare VP or a vP (Wurmbrand 2001, 2004).
- Restructuring predicates manifest *transparency effects* with respect to phenomena like agreement or case licensing.

An example from German long-passives:

(14) Restructuring predicate

- a. dass **der** Traktor zu reparieren versucht wurde
 that the.NOM tractor to repair tried was
 ‘that they tried to repair the tractor’
 b. weil Hans **den** Traktor zu reparieren versuchte
 since John the.ACC tractor to repair tried
 ‘since John tried to repair the tractor.’ (Wurmbrand 2001)

(15) Non-restructuring predicate

- a. *dass **der** Traktor zu reparieren geplant wurde
 that the.NOM tractor to repair planned was
 ‘that they planned to repair the tractor’
 b. dass **den** Traktor zu reparieren geplant wurde
 that the.ACC tractor to repair planned was
 ‘that they planned to repair the tractor’ (Wurmbrand 2001)

- Wurmbrand (2001, 2004) argues that there is restructuring in (14a). Here the infinitive *reparieren* is a bare VP. There is no source for accusative in the lower clause and ‘the tractor’ in (14a) receives nominative from the higher clause *versucht*.

- In contrast, the infinitive in (15a) does not have the option of restructuring. It is a full CP and has all the functional projections below it, therefore it can assign accusative to ‘the tractor’ in (15b).
- Therefore nominative case cannot be assigned from above and (15a) is ungrammatical.

4.2 Deriving the binding and agreement restriction

- (16) a. Konunum_i fannst [_{TP} þær_{i/j} vera gáfapár]
 women-DAT seemed-3SG they-NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
- b. Konunum_i fundust [_{vP} þær_{*i/j} vera gáfapár]
 women-DAT seemed-3PL they-NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{*i/j} to be gifted.’

- In our analysis, (16a) is an ECM construction with TP complement and (16b) is an ECM construction with vP complement that has undergone restructuring.
- Crucially, we assume that locality domain for both binding and agreement relations to be the same (Reuland 2011, Hicks 2009, Rooryck and van den Wyngaerd 2015).
- TP constitutes a local domain for binding and agreement, whereas vP is not. In other words, a TP complement acts as a clause boundary for binding and agreement; A vP complement is transparent for such purposes and (16b) behaves as if it were monoclausal.

This structural difference gives us the desired result for the binding and agreement puzzle.

Binding facts:

- Principle B of Binding theory: The pronoun cannot be locally bound. Recall also that we established that these elements are truly pronouns.
- The pronoun in (16a) can be coreferential because it is in different local domain from its dative antecedent. The pronoun in (16b) cannot be coreferential because it is in the same local domain of its dative antecedent.

Similarly, for agreement:

- The pronoun in (16a) cannot control the agreement because it is not in the same local domain of the verb and the pronoun in (16b) can control the agreement because it is in the same local domain of the verb.

4.3 Person restriction

- Supporting evidence for this analysis comes from the person restriction facts.
- In Icelandic Dat-Nom constructions, a monoclausal cannot take 1st or 2nd person nominative objects, irrespective of agreement as in (17a).
- However, a biclausal can take 1st or 2nd person nominative objects (17b).

- (17) a. *Henni mundum/mundi alltaf líka við
 her-DAT would.1PL/would.3SG always like **we**.NOM.PL
 ‘She would always like us’

- b. Mér mundi/*mundum þá virðast [við vera hérna]
 me-DAT would.3SG/*1PL then seem we.NOM.PL be here
 ‘It would seem to me that we are here’ (Sigurðsson 2002:117)

Given this person restriction, we should expect (13b) to exhibit the person restriction but not (13a). This prediction holds to be true.

- (18) a. Konunum_i fannst [_{TP} við vera gáfaþar]
 women-DAT seemed.3SG we.NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women thought we were smart’
 b. *Konunum_i fundumst [_{vP} við vera gáfaþar]
 women-DAT seemed.1PL we.NOM be gifted-FEM.PL-NOM
 ‘The women thought we were smart’

Indeed, in our analysis, (13b) acts a monoclauses whereas (13a) is a biclauses. The person restriction facts support the structural difference analysis.

5 Accounting for variation

- Icelandic has a lot of dialectal variation, especially with regard to agreement. In ECM dative nominative constructions, agreement with the nominative object is optional across different varieties.
- For some speakers, this optionality seems correlated with person restriction and binding facts. This is the variety that we have dealt with so far. Let’s call it variety A.

Variety A: Interaction of binding and agreement

- (19) a. Konunum_i fannst Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3SG they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
 b. Konunum_i fundust Þær_{*i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3PL they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’ (Taraldsen 1995: 317)

Variety B: No phi-covarying agreement

- (20) a. Konunum_i fannst Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3SG they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’
 b. *Konunum_i fundust Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3PL they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’ (Anton Karl Ingason p.c)

Variety C: Free variation

- (21) a. Konunum_i fannst Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3SG they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’

- b. Konunum_i fundust Þær_{i/j} vera gáfaðar.
 women.the.DAT found.3PL they.NOM be gifted.F.PL.NOM
 ‘The women_i found them(selves)_{i/j} to be gifted.’ (Halldor Sigurðsson p.c)

		Agreement	Binding	Restructuring
(22)	Variety A	default	i/j	No
		phi	*i/j	Yes
	Variety B	default	i/j	No
		*phi	i/j	-
	Variety C	default	i/j	No
		phi	i/j	Yes?

Variation and restructuring

- Our analysis proposed for the variety A straightforwardly accounts for the variety B as well. Here the only thing that need to said is that this variety B doesn’t allow restructuring at all.
- Variety C is not straightforwardly accounted for by the analysis. None of the options we have contemplated provides a satisfying answer, therefore we leave this issue open for now.³

6 Conclusion

- We proposed that optional restructuring derives different structures. This structural difference between the TP and the vP complement gives the expected binding and agreement pattern.
- If the complement is a TP, then it acts a locality boundary for binding and agreement and if the complement is a vP, then it is transparent for the binding and agreement.
- This analysis explains why binding happens in the absence of agreement and agreement happens in the absence of binding.
- We provided evidence from the person restriction facts in Icelandic to support the structural difference between the two similar looking constructions.
- Finally, we discussed on how our analysis extends to different varieties of Icelandic.

7 Appendix: Object Shift

- Object Shift (OS) (Holmberg 1986) designates "movement of a DP leftward, from a position inside VP to a position outside VP but inside the same clause" (Vikner 2005: 393).
- Icelandic has the additional particularity that it has obligatory Pronominal Object Shift (POS).

(23) Optional DP Object Shift

³We have at least three speculations on how to account for variety C. (1) In this variety, nominative reflexives are syncretic with pronouns and the co-referring elements are therefore anaphors, which can be locally bound; (2) Locality domains are different for binding an agreement; (3) Principle B is pragmatic in nature, i.e. there is pragmatic competition between reflexives and pronouns: whenever the reflexive fails to occur, the pronoun can take over without provoking a principle B violation.

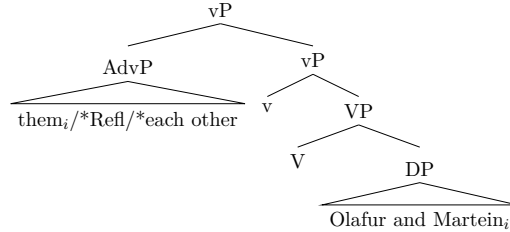
- a. Af hverju las Pétur aldrei **Þessa bók**?
 why read Peter never this book
- b. Af hverju las Pétur **Þessa bók_i** aldrei t_i ?
 why read Peter this book never
 'Why did Peter never read this book?'
- (24) Obligatory Pronominal Object Shift
- a. *Af hverju las Pétur aldrei **hana**?
 why read Peter never it
- b. Af hverju las Pétur **hana_i** aldrei t_i ?
 why read Peter it never
 'Why did Peter never read it?' (Vikner 2005: 394)
- If the pronoun has to move out of its embedded clause in a sentence like (16a), it could be a problem for an analysis in terms of restructuring to account for the binding and agreement facts.
 - How does this obligatory movement of the pronoun fits with our account?

7.1 Object shift does not correlate with agreement or binding facts

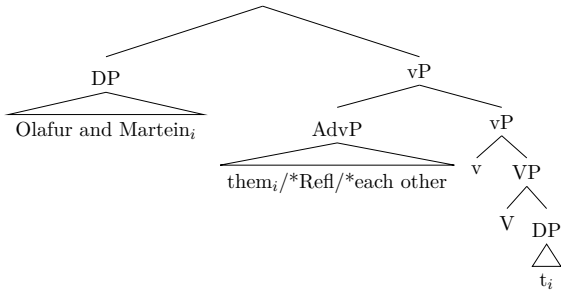
- Movement triggered by the object shift, in general, does not change either the case, the agreement or the bindings facts (Nomura 2005, Holmberg and Platzack 1995).
 - In (25), the object shift does not change the agreement facts. Therefore, movement of embedded subjects to the matrix clause and agreement do not show any correlation (Nomura 2005: 113).
- (25) a. Okkur virtust/virtist ekki [**hestarnir** vera seinir]
 us.DAT seemed.3PL/3SG NEG horses.NOM be slow
- b. Okkur virtust/virtist **hestarnir_i** ekki [t_i vera seinir]
 us.DAT seemed.3PL/3SG horses.NOM NEG be slow
 'It did not seem to us that the horses are slow.' (Nomura 2005: 111-112)
- Similarly for binding, Holmberg and Platzack (1995) note that movement under OS cannot create a new binding relation, whereas movement under passivization can create a new binding relation.
 - In (26a), the pronoun in the main clause adverbial is coreferential with the subject of embedded infinitive. In (26b), the object pronoun is shifted to a position c-commanding the main clause adverbial, the binding relation remains the same. However in (26c), the movement under passivization changes the binding relation.
- (26) a. Hann taldi, Þeim_i/*sér/*hvorum öðrum til undrunar, [**Ólaf** **og**
 he considered, them/REFL/each other(DAT) to wonder, Olafur.ACC and
Martein vera jafn góða].
 Marteinn.ACC be equally good
 'He considered, to their surprise_i, Olafur and Marteinn_i to be equally good.'
- b. Hann taldi **flá_i/Ólaf** **og Marteinn_i**, Þeim_i/*sér/*hvorum
 he considered them/Olafur.ACC and Marteinn.ACC, them/REFL/each
 öðrum til undrunar, [e vera jafn góða].
 other(DAT) to wonder, be equally good
 'He considered them_i/Olafur and Marteinn_i, to their_i surprise, to be equally good.'

- c. **Olafur and Marteinn_i** voru, ***Peim_i/sér/?hvorum öðrum** til
 Olafur.NOM and Marteinn.NOM were, them/REFL/each other(DAT) to
 undrunar, taldir [e vera jafn góða].
 wonder, considered be equally good.
 ‘Olafur and Marteinn_i were, to their_i surprise, considered to be equally good.’
 (Homberg and Platzack 1995: 149)

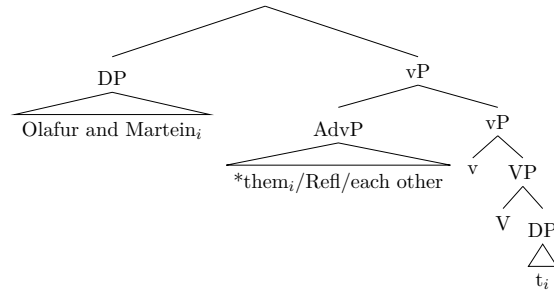
(27) **Base position**



(28) **Obligatory pronominal shift**



(29) **Passivization**



- Thus it is very clear that shifting the object does not affect either the agreement or the binding patterns in the way other types of movement would.
- What seems to matter is the base position of the pronoun.

7.2 Pronominal Object Shift and Negation

- Given this we can safely conclude that object shift does not have any effect on the agreement or the binding facts, but we still might want to say more about it.
- One issue that raises from obligatory POS is that, in a sentence with pronominal shift, there would no way to have embedded negation (or any adverbial, for that matter).

- (30) a. *Okkur virtust/virtist ekki [**Peir** lesa bókina].
 us.DAT seemed.3PL/3SG NEG they.NOM read the.book
 ‘It did not seem to us that they read the book.’
 b. Okkur virtust/virtist **Peir_i** ekki [*t_i* lesa bókina].
 us.DAT seemed.3PL/3SG they.NOM NEG read the.book
 ‘It did not seem to us that they read the book.’ (Nomura 2005: 112)

- The following proposal also addresses this particular question.
- It rests on the following assumptions:
 1. All the DAT-NOM ECM constructions that we know of involve Neg-Raising (e.g. *seem*). So saying ‘I think she doesn’t have to leave now’ amounts to saying ‘I don’t think she has to leave now’, and these sentences have virtually indistinguishable meanings.

2. Negative adverbs normally merge at the vP boundary as an adjunct, so in a restructured construction with an embedded vP, NegP would stand at the clause edge.
3. A TP is bigger than a vP.

- So we propose the following configurations for (P)OS in ECM with negation:

- (31) a. No OS: ... $V_{DEF} [_{TP} \text{Neg Obj}]$
 b. OS: ... $V_{DEF} [_{TP} \text{Obj Neg}]$

- In constructions without restructuring, i.e. involving a TP, i.e. with default agreement, the object shifts within the TP.
- This is not unexpected, since we assume that TP is clause-like and that OS occurs within a clause.

- (32) a. No OS: ... $V_{AGR} [_{vP} \text{Neg Obj}]$
 b. OS: ... $V_{AGR} \text{Obj} [_{vP} \text{Neg}]$

- In restructuring predicates, i.e. involving a vP, i.e. with covarying agreement, the object must shift outside of the vP.
- In this case, there is no room within the vP for the object to shift into, so it must shift outside of it.
- This has no syntactic consequences since we assume these constructions act as if they were monoclausal (there is agreement anyway).
- This has also no semantic consequences for the scope of negation since these constructions are Neg-Raising.

We thus analyze the Object Shift in terms of (33).

In (33a), there is no restructuring so the pronoun shifts within the TP complement.

In (33b), where there is restructuring, the pronoun moves out of the vP.

The binding and agreement facts established before follow here as well.

- (33) a. OS: ... $V_{DEF} [_{TP} \text{Obj}_i (\text{Neg}) \text{t}_i]$
 b. OS: ... $V_{AGR} \text{Obj}_i [_{vP} (\text{Neg}) \text{t}_i]$
 c. No OS: ... $V_{DEF} [_{TP} (\text{Neg}) \text{Obj}]$
 d. No OS: ... $V_{AGR} [_{vP} (\text{Neg}) \text{Obj}]$

- In this section, we have introduced the phenomenon of Object Shift in Icelandic and why it could be a problem for our analysis.
- We have shown that it is actually not, by demonstrating, firstly, that shifting of the object doesn't correlate with the agreement or binding facts, i.e. it seems that for this purpose it is the base position of the object that matters.
- Finally, we considered a specific issue raised by POS in an approach in terms of restructuring, i.e. the position of negation, and proposed a way to accommodate it in our analysis.

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