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TO BE AN OBLIQUE SUBJECT: RUSSIAN VS. ICELANDIC*

ABSTRACT. This paper addresses the question of whether ‘main clause infinitival datives’ in Russian should be analyzed as oblique or ‘quirky’ subjects, in contrast to another type of subject-like datives in Russian, ‘I-nominals’. In particular, it examines a claim to this effect made by Moore and Perlmutter (2000). By comparing the datives in question to Icelandic oblique subjects, above all with respect to agreement, the paper demonstrates that Moore and Perlmutter’s arguments are untenable, i.e. their arguments do not distinguish between the two dative types in the way they claim. However, it does not follow that Russian infinitival datives are best analyzed as ‘non-subjects’. Rather, it is argued, the interesting question raised by subject-like non-nominatives across languages is not whether they should be classified as subjects by some postulated standards, but what they tell us about the interaction of case and other features or properties of language, in particular sentence structure and agreement. The concluding section of the paper presents evidence that Russian I-nominals differ from Icelandic quirky subjects in not entering into a ‘quirky null-agreement’ correlation with the finite complex of the clause. In contrast, it is pointed out, Russian infinitival datives could and probably should be analyzed as sharing this peculiar property with Icelandic ‘quirks’.

1. SUBJECT-LIKE NON-NOMINATIVES: ICELANDIC AND BEYOND

Icelandic is renowned for its oblique or QUIRKY subjects (dative, accusative, or genitive),¹ as in (1)–(4); the nominative in (1) is an object, see further below:

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¹ “Quirky” is a somewhat unfortunate label, in that these arguments are not that quirky from either a broad typological perspective or the language-internal perspective. However, since oblique subjects in Icelandic are widely known in the generative literature as ‘quirky subjects’, I (somewhat reluctantly) use the term here. For typographical convenience, I use as short grammatical abbreviations as possible in the glosses: N, A, D, G, I, for nominative, dative, accusative, genitive, and instrumental, M, F, N for masculine, feminine, and neuter.



- (1) **Henni** leiddust strákar
her(D) bored boys.the(N)
 She found the boys boring.
- (2) **Henni** var kalt
her(D) was cold
 She was freezing.
- (3) **Hana** vantaði vinnu
her(A) lacked job(A)
 She lacked/needed a job.
- (4) **Hennar** var saknað
her(G) was missed
 She was missed.

Agentive subjects in Icelandic are exclusively nominative, and both experiencer and theme subjects are commonly nominative.² Quirky subjects are nonetheless a pervasive trait of the language, found in a wide variety of constructions – with almost any conceivable predicate type in the language (active, passive, adjectival, nominal, prepositional, particle-headed and so on; see, for instance, Sigurðsson 1989, p. 198 ff.; Jónsson 1997–1998, 1998).³

Most traditional grammars (e.g., Einarsson 1949, p. 167 ff.) refer to clauses of the type or types in (1)–(4) (or at least (2)–(4)) as ‘impersonal’. The general assumption behind that terminology was that these clause types are subjectless, with a fronted non-subject (often referred to as a ‘quasi-subject’ or a ‘logical subject’, though). Certain such arguments are called ‘inversion nominals’ in Relational Grammar or I-NOMINALS in Moore 1, 2, 3 for first, second, and third person, and SG, PL for singular and plural. Thus, for instance, NM.SG denotes nominative, masculine, singular, and 3PL denotes third person plural. Grammatical features that are directly translatable by the English glosses (such as infinitival and past and present tense forms) are not specifically pointed out, since that would only make it harder to process the glosses. In the same spirit, grammatical features that are irrelevant or beside the point are not highlighted either.

² Around 93 percent of all subjects in the counts reported on in Barðdal (2000) were nominative.

³ Jónsson (1998) contains a list of around 690 non-passive predicates that take a non-nominative subject, but many of them are ‘complex’ in the sense that they enter into more than one quirky construction (i.e., the number of quirky constructions is considerably higher). In addition, many passives take a non-nominative subject.

and Perlmutter (2000, pp. 379–381). For convenience, I shall adopt that term here and apply it, in an entirely descriptive and theory-independent sense, to all subject-like non-nominatives, thereby contrasting them with ‘true’ quirky subjects.

The belief that the boldface NPs in (1)–(4) are I-nominals or fronted non-subjects was in full accord with the traditional understanding of ‘similar’ NPs in Latin, as in (5) taken from Blake (1994, p. 148, ex (51)):

- (5) Moderandum est **mihi** ōrātiōnī meae
moderating is me(D) speech my
 I must moderate my speech.

As pointed out by Blake (1994, p. 148f.), dative I-nominals or ‘indirect subjects’ of this sort are ‘subject-like’ in the sense that they bear a thematic role that is normally encoded as subject and, in some languages, they also exhibit syntactic properties associated with subjects. Extensive research over the last quarter of a century has revealed that similar oblique arguments in Icelandic, such as the boldface non-nominative NPs in (1)–(4), seem to be best analyzed syntactically as ‘true subjects’ (see, for instance, Andrews 1976; Thráinsson 1979; Zaenen et al. 1985; Sigurðsson 1989, 1991, 1992; Jónsson 1996, 1997–1998). Thus, these ‘quirky NPs’ behave like subjects and not like fronted objects with respect to a host of syntactic phenomena that have come to be known as ‘subjecthood tests’, including the following ones (see, e.g., Sigurðsson 1989, p. 204 ff., 1992, pp. 5–6, 1997):⁴

- (6)a. Reflexivization
 b. Subject-verb inversion (in V1 and V2 environments)
 c. Subject position in ECM infinitives
 d. Raising
 e. Control (i.e. the ability of being a controllee)
 f. Conjunction reduction

⁴ However, these and other subjecthood tests are not tests of ‘subjecthood’ but of properties and patterns that are typical of ‘subjects’ (cf. Sigurðsson 1989, p. 209). That is, ‘subjecthood’ is plausibly not a primitive of language; see section 3.

Many languages other than Icelandic and Latin have subject-like oblique arguments, for instance Old English and other Older Germanic languages as well as modern German. Consider the German examples in (7)–(8):

(7) **Mir** ist kalt
me(D) is cold
 I am freezing.

(8) **Mir** wurde geholfen
me(D) was helped
 I was helped (by somebody).

However, while Icelandic quirky subjects (mostly) behave syntactically like canonical subjects in Icelandic, German subject-like non-nominatives do not generally behave like canonical subjects in German. Thus, (many or most) Icelandic ‘quirky constructions’, such as the one in (9a), can easily be embedded under control verbs, as in (9b), whereas similar German constructions cannot, as illustrated in (10):

(9)a. **Mér** var hjálpað
me(D) was helped
 I was helped

b. Ég vonaðist til að verða hjálpað
*I hoped for to be helped (i.e., to PRO(D) be helped)*⁵
 I hoped to be helped.

(10)a. **Mir** wurde geholfen
me(D) was helped

b. *Ich hoffte geholfen zu werden
*I hoped helped to be (i.e., *PRO(D) helped to be)*

Similarly, Icelandic quirky subjects ‘participate’ in Coordination Reduction, whereas German subject-like non-nominatives do not:

(11) Ég hafði mikið að gera og (**mér**) var samt ekki
I(N) had much to do and (me(D)) was nonetheless not
 hjálpað
helped

⁵ The infinitive marker *að* ‘to, that’ is arguably a complementizer (see, e.g., Sigurðsson 1989, p. 53 ff.), hence the order *to PRO*.

- (12) Ich hatte viel zu tun, und *(**mir**) wurde trotzdem nicht
I(N) had much to do and (me(D)) was nonetheless not
 geholfen
helped

In short, German subject-like non-nominatives seem to be best analyzed as I-nominals, whereas the opposite is true of Icelandic: that language really does have non-nominative subjects, it seems. Notice, however, that all subjecthood diagnostics are bound to be language-internal, a fact that begs the question of what it means ‘to be a subject’. We shall return to that question in section 3.

Russian is yet another language with subject-like non-nominatives, as illustrated in (13)–(14), from Franks (1995, p. 250):

- (13) **Mne** legko govorit’ po-russki
me(D) easy to.speak in Russian
 It is easy for me to speak Russian.
- (14) **Mne** uxodit’
me(D) to.leave
 I have to leave.

These dative types differ with respect to selection: like German I-nominals and (at least most) Icelandic quirky subjects, the ‘impersonal dative’ in (13) is lexically selected (by the adjective *legko* ‘easy’). In contrast, the dative in (14) is semantically selected or controlled and can thus combine with most infinitives. Consider the semantics of the infinitival dative construction in (15), taken from Moore and Perlmutter (2000, their (7), p. 377):

- (15) **Borisu** ne istratit’ tak mnogo deneg na sebja
Boris(D) not to.spend so much money on himself
 It’s not (in the cards) for Boris to spend so much money on himself.

As pointed out by Moore and Perlmutter (2000, fn. 6, p. 377), “this construction implies that what the clause describes is beyond the subject’s control”. That is, the infinitival dative construction has a certain deontic modality of obligation or destiny, a reading that Moore and Perlmutter “attempt to capture with the ‘in the cards’ translation”. I shall follow them in doing so as well.

The status of the Russian dative types in (13) and (14)/(15) has been a matter of much interest and discussion (see the references in Moore and Perlmutter 2000, pp. 382, 385–386). Traditionally, of course, they were treated as non-subjects, whereas they were analyzed as subjects in, e.g., Franks and Greenberg (1988). However, comparison of Russian with several other Slavic languages later led Franks (1995, p. 269 ff.) to the interesting conclusion that these dative types differ in nature. Thus, he claims, the impersonal dative in (13) is a non-subject, whereas the infinitival dative in examples like (14) and (15) is a subject. If so, Russian differs from both German and Icelandic in being a ‘mixed’ language, with both I-nominals and oblique subjects, whereas Icelandic has no I-nominals and German no oblique subjects.⁶

2. THE STATUS OF RUSSIAN SUBJECT-LIKE DATIVES

Comparative evidence led Franks to the conclusion that Russian infinitival datives should be distinguished from ‘impersonal’ datives or I-nominals. Moore and Perlmutter (2000, henceforth M&P) adopt Franks’s analysis and develop it by adding language-internal arguments in favor of it. Their arguments are the following:

- A. I-nominals do not behave like subjects with respect to raising or ECM.
- B. As opposed to infinitival datives, I-nominals are excluded from infinitival constructions (including ‘main clause infinitives’).
- C. Infinitival datives trigger predicate agreement, I-nominals do not.
- D. Infinitival datives can be ‘represented’ as PRO, I-nominals cannot.

⁶ But, it should be noted, this taxonomy has perhaps only a superficial descriptive value (see, e.g., Fanselow 2001 and the discussion in section 3 below). Finnish is yet another language that has subject-like non-nominatives, that is, certain genitives, partitives and even adessives (see, e.g., Vainikka 1989; Maling 1993; Karlsson 1985, pp. 92–94, 106–107, 125), but further research is required to establish the status of these arguments (Sigurðsson 1996, p. 5). Similarly, Russian has certain genitives of negation that are sometimes analyzed as subjects (by, e.g., Freidin and Sprouse 1991, p. 398), but it is not clear that the DPs in question are really ‘promoted’ to subject (see, e.g., Neidle 1988, p. 66 ff.; Franks 1995, p. 197, and the references cited there).

Interesting as M&P's claims are, comparison with Icelandic illustrates, quite clearly, that they are inconclusive. I shall show this in the following, thereby, I hope, demonstrating the import of the comparative aspect in theoretical syntax. However, it is not my goal to disprove or even argue against M&P's claim that infinitival datives and I-nominals differ with respect to subjecthood; the claim as such is plausible or at least not implausible. Rather, my intention is to demonstrate that M&P's arguments in favor of their position are seriously flawed and in fact untenable. If these arguments were tenable they would have far-reaching consequences for our understanding of the properties and nature of non-nominative subjects, and it is therefore important that these arguments be inspected and evaluated. By doing so, I hope to further our knowledge and understanding of non-nominative subjects and other subject-like non-nominatives.

2.1. *Raising and ECM*

M&P claim that the following example (their (44a), p. 399) illustrates raising of an infinitival dative:

- (16) **Im** ne načat' rabotat' odnim
 them(D) not to.begin to.work alone(D)
 It is not (in the cards) for them to begin to work alone.

However, it is not self-evident that one should analyze the dative as coming from 'downstairs' by raising rather than as generated 'upstairs', controlling PRO downstairs. As seen by the following examples, the dative could in principle originate either upstairs or downstairs:

- (17) **Im** ne načat' odnim
 them(D) not to.begin alone
 It is not (in the cards) for them to begin alone.⁷

- (18) **Im** ne robotat' odnim
 them(D) not to.work alone
 It is not (in the cards) for them to work alone.

⁷ Michael Yadroff tells me that the most natural meaning of (17) is: 'They are not able to start it on their own (they need someone's help)'. Steven Franks points out that the imperfective *nacinat'* would be more natural than perfective *načat'*.

Byrja ‘begin’ is the Icelandic translation of *načat*, and just like *načat* and, e.g., English *begin*, it is either a main verb, as in (19), or a raising predicate, as in (20):

(19) Ólafur byrjaði of seint
Olaf(N) began too late

(20) Það byrjaði að rigna
it began to rain

As a raising predicate, *byrja* allows raising of both nominative subjects, as in (21b), and of oblique subjects, as in (22b):

(21)a. **Ólafur** las bókina
Olaf(N) read book.the(A)
Olaf read the book.

b. **Ólafur** byrjaði að lesa bókina
Olaf(N) began to read book.the(A)
Olaf began to read the book.

(22)a. **Ólafi** leiddist
Olaf(D) bored
Olaf was bored.

b. **Ólafi** byrjaði að leiðast
Olaf(D) began to bore
Olaf began to get bored.

Crucially, the dative in (22b) must have raised, i.e., it cannot possibly be generated upstairs (as opposed to the Russian dative in (16)–(17)), as illustrated in (23):

(23) **Ólafur*** **Ólafi** byrjaði
*Olaf(N/*D) began*

In general, any raising predicate in Icelandic allows at least some instances of ‘oblique raising’.⁸ Some further examples:

(24) **Ólafi** virtist hafa leiðst
Olaf(D) seemed to.have bored
Olaf seemed to have been bored.

⁸ They are, however, variably ‘transparent’ to oblique raising, as pointed out in Sigurðsson (1989, pp. 96–97, fn. 31).

(25) **Ólaf** var talið hafa leiðst
Olaf(D) was believed to.have bored
 Olaf was believed to have been bored.

(26) **Ólaf** reyndist hafa leiðst
Olaf(D) turned.out to.have bored
 It turned out that Olaf had been bored.

Similarly, non-nominative subjects show up in the subject position of ECM constructions in Icelandic (retaining their inherent case), as in (27):

(27) Við töldum [**Ólaf** hafa leiðst]
we believed Olaf(D) to.have bored
 We believed Olaf to have been bored.

M&P give no comparable example from Russian. On the other hand, they illustrate (p. 401) that I-nominals do not show up in the accusative in the subject position of ECM constructions. However, it should be noticed, Icelandic quirky subjects always retain their inherent case under both raising and ECM, i.e., the question of whether or not they show up as structurally case-marked under raising (nominative) or ECM (accusative) is beside the point. In addition, of course, Russian infinitival datives cannot be embedded under ECM verbs either, that is, ECM does not distinguish between them and I-nominals in any case.

To repeat: There is conclusive evidence that dative subjects of Icelandic raising verbs, such as, e.g., *byrja* ‘begin’, should be analyzed as raised, as sketched in (28):

(28) $\text{dat}_i \text{ begins } [to t_i \dots]^9$

In contrast, one cannot exclude the possibility that similar datives with infinitival *načat* ‘begin’ in Russian are main clause infinitival datives of the same type as in (17) above (cf. also (14) and (15), without an infinitival complement):

(29) $\text{dat}_i \text{ to.begin } [\text{PRO}_i \dots]$

This is *not* to say that M&P’s raising analysis of (16) cannot be right, but it *is* to say that their evidence in favor of it is inconclusive. In contrast, the evidence for dative raising in the Icelandic (22b) and (24)–(26) is decisive.

⁹ Recall that the infinitive marker is arguably a complementizer in Icelandic – hence its position in front of the trace.

2.2. *The Distribution Argument*

M&P illustrate that I-nominals are systematically excluded from infinitives. Thus, for instance, the Dat-Nom construction in (30) is ungrammatical with an infinitival verb, as in (31) (M&P's (49a) and (49b), pp. 401–402):

- (30) Takim ljudjam **ponravjatsja** ègoističnye aktery
such people(D) like(3PL) egoistical actors(N)
 Such people will like egoistical actors.

- (31) *Takim ljudjam ne **ponravit'sja** ègoističnye aktery
such people(D) not to.like egoistical actors(N)
 It is not (in the cards) for such people to like egoistical actors.

In contrast, of course, the infinitival dative in (32) is grammatical:

- (32) Takim ljudjam ne **rabotat'** odnim
such people(D) not to.work alone
 It is not (in the cards) for such people to work alone.

This is rather surprising if both (31) and (32) are truly monoclausal infinitives. If Russian infinitives are free to take a subject with a semantic dative, expressing modality of obligation or destiny, then it is not clear why this should be excluded in (31) as opposed to (32). As we shall see, the reason why these examples differ in grammaticality is plausibly that they are both biclausal, (31) involving an illicit dative PRO, whereas (32) has licit nominative PRO.

Russian is a 'null-copula language' in the present tense, that is, the copula has no present tense forms. Hence, the contrast between the present tense in (33) and the past tense in (34) (from Comrie 1990, p. 342):

- (33) Viktor glup
Victor(N) stupid(short form)
 Victor is stupid.

- (34) Viktor **byl** glupym
Victor(N) was(M.SG) stupid(IM)
 Victor was stupid.

In view of this, it would seem straightforward to analyze the infinitival dative construction in examples like (32) as a finite null-copular construction, as sketched below:

(35) *such people(D) [is] not to work alone*

As argued by Franks (1995, p. 250 f.), this analysis would seem to gain support from the contrast between the present and past tense readings of the infinitival dative construction, as in (36) (= (14) above) and (37) (from Franks 1995, p. 250):

(36) Mne uxodit'
me(D) to.leave
 I have to leave.

(37) Mne **bylo** uxodit'
me(D) was(N.SG) to.leave
 I had to leave.

Notice that the neuter singular form *bylo* is a non-agreeing default finite form in Franks's approach.

However, Moore and Perlmutter (in both M&P, and, in particular, in 1999) argue against the null-copular analysis of the infinitival dative construction, claiming, first, that *bylo* is not a temporal auxiliary but a temporal particle, and, second, that not only present tense examples like (36) but also past tense examples like (37) are truly infinitival. I shall return to Moore and Perlmutter's non-copular analysis in section 2.3. In the meanwhile, I will assume without discussion that Franks's copular analysis is correct.

In contrast with Russian, Icelandic is an 'obligatory copula language', much like, e.g., English. However, it has a finite dative construction that is strongly reminiscent of the Russian infinitival dative construction. The verb of this construction is not the copular *vera* 'be' but the deontic modal *bera* 'be to, have to, have the (moral) obligation to', as illustrated in (38), that should be compared to (36) above:

(38) Mér ber að fara
me(D) bears to leave
 I have to leave / It is my duty to leave.

Next, consider the fact that Icelandic, like Russian, has a Dat-Nom construction, as in, e.g., (1) above and in (39):

- (39) Honum líka sjálfelskir leikarar
him(D) like(3PL) egoistical actors(N)
 He likes egoistical actors.

However, while the dative in Dat-Nom examples of this sort is an I-nominal in Russian, it is a quirky subject in Icelandic, the nominative being an object. Thus the dative may, for instance, be represented as PRO in Icelandic infinitivals, whereas the nominative undergoes so-called Object-Shift, like ordinary objects (as discussed in, e.g., Sigurðsson 2000, p. 77). Therefore, the following grammaticality patterns are interesting:

Russian:

- (31) *Takim ljudjam ne **ponravít'sja** ègoističnye aktery
such people(D) not to.like egoistical actors(N)
 It is not (in the cards) for such people to like egoistical actors.
- (32) Takim ljudjam ne **rabotat'** odnim
such people(D) not to.work alone
 It is not (in the cards) for such people to work alone.

Icelandic:

- (40) Svona fólki ber ekki **að líka** sjálfelskir leikarar
such people(D) bears not to like egoistical actors(N)
 It is not for such people to like egoistical actors.
- (41) Svona fólki ber ekki **að vinna** einu
such people(D) bears not to work alone
 It is not for such people to work alone.

Ponravít'sja and its Icelandic translation *líka* 'like' both select a dative 'external' (or 'prominent') argument, whereas *rabotat'* and its counterpart *vinna* 'work' both take a plain nominative subject. In view of this, let us assume that the Russian constructions in (31)–(32) are parallel to the Icelandic ones in (40)–(41), having the structures sketched in (42)–(43):

- (42) **such people(D) [is] not [PRO(D) to-like egoistical actors]*
- (43) *such people(D) [is] not [PRO(N) to-work alone]*

Thus, if both languages allow nominative PRO whereas only Icelandic allows inherently case-marked PRO, the contrast between the Russian (31)/(42) and the Icelandic (40) is accounted for – on the assumption of course that the Russian construction is biclausal, like the Icelandic one. If this line of reasoning is on the right track, Russian is like German but different from Icelandic in disallowing inherently case-marked PRO (although PRO may perhaps be analyzed as bearing some kind of a structural dative in Russian; see section 2.6 for further discussion).

This is *not* to say that M&P's subject analysis of infinitival datives is incorrect, but it *is* to say that their distribution argument has no bearing on the putative difference between such datives and I-nominals with respect to subjecthood. Thus, again, their arguments are untenable. There are reasons to believe that the infinitival dative construction may in fact be biclausal, involving a matrix clause with a 'silent' copula. We shall see further evidence that points in this direction.

2.3. *The Agreement Argument*

M&P's third argument that infinitival datives differ from I-nominals comes from agreement: Infinitival datives, they claim, trigger predicate agreement, while I-nominals never do. This agreement argument is in fact M&P's most central argument in favor of their subject analysis of infinitival datives, because, they claim, "surface subjects determine subject/predicate agreement" (p. 391, see also p. 396).

The evidence that I-nominals do not determine agreement is straightforward, coming from examples like the following (modelled on examples from M&P, pp. 394–395); as seen, the boldface predicates show up in a default non-agreeing neuter singular form:

- (44) Takomu professoru ne **nužno** deneg
such professor(D) [is] not necessary(N.SG) money(G)
 That kind of professor doesn't need money.

- (45) Borisu **bylo** **veselo**
Boris(D) was(N.SG) merry(N.SG)
 Boris had fun.

In contrast, M&P's arguments that infinitival datives do control primary predicate agreement are indecisive and unconvincing. Their analysis is based on examples like the following (modelled on M&P's (36b), p. 393), where the feminine singular of the instrumental participle is supposed to

be diagnostic; for clarity, the dative agreement controller is underlined whereas the agreeing predicate is boldface.¹⁰

- (46) Toj rukopisi ne byt' **opublikovannoj**
that manuscript(DF.SG) not to.be published(IF.SG)
 It is not (in the cards) for that manuscript to be published.

However, while (44)–(45) are monoclausal on all accounts, (46) might be biclausal, with a silent copula, as sketched in (47) (see also the discussion in section 2.5):

- (47) *that manuscript [is] not [PRO to.be published]*

If this is the case, then we are dealing with two quite different types of potential agreement environments in (44)–(45) vs. (46). In the monoclausal type in (44)–(45), potential agreement would obviously be local and involve finite verbs and adjectival or participial primary predicates. In the biclausal type in (46), on the other hand, we would be dealing with long distance copying of agreeing features across predicate boundaries, that is, from within a primary matrix predicate into a secondary infinitival predicate (see further below).

As mentioned in section 2.2, Moore and Perlmutter (1999) argue at length against the null-copular analysis of the infinitival dative construction. However, given the fact that Russian *is* a (present tense) null-copula language, it is hard to see how one could in principle exclude the possibility of a null-copula in, for instance, (46). The ‘audible’ copula in, e.g., Icelandic does not seem to put any subcategorization restrictions on its predicative ‘complements’, taking, for instance, infinitives as well as NPs, APs, AdvPs, and PPs. A claim to the effect that the Russian null-copula should be more restrictive, specifically rejecting infinitival complements, would seem to need to be not only empirically justified but also theoretically accounted for in some coherent manner. Moore and Perlmutter offer no such account, nor do they discuss the theoretical status or the temporal properties of ‘non-finite main clauses’ in general.

¹⁰ While case agreement of adjectival and participial predicates is a general phenomenon in Icelandic, Russian commonly restricts agreement of adjectival and participial predicates to gender and number (combining the agreeing gender and number features with an instrumental case form, as in (46), or with a non-cased short form rather than an agreeing case form). Sometimes, however, Russian adjectival and participial predicates either may or have to agree in (nominative) case as well as in gender and number (see, e.g., Franks 1995, p. 220 ff., and the references cited there).

Icelandic has two types of clausal agreement, as sketched below:

- (48) PRIMARY AGREEMENT, i.e., predication-bounded agreement of the finite verb and of a primary adjectival or a participial predicate with their local nominative argument (most commonly the subject).
- (49) SECONDARY AGREEMENT, i.e., non-predication-bounded agreement of a secondary adjectival or participial predicate with an ‘antecedent’.

Primary agreement of both the finite verb and an adjectival/participial predicate is illustrated in (50) and (51):

- (50) Mennirnir **hafa** sennilega verið **drukknir**
men.the(NM.PL) have(3PL) probably been drunk(NM.PL)
 The men have probably been drunk.

- (51) Konan **hefur** oft verið **kosin**
woman.the(NF.SG) has(3SG) often been elected(NF.SG)
 The woman has often been elected.

Secondary agreement, crossing predicate boundaries, is illustrated in (52)–(54) (the secondary predicate in (52) is presumably a small clause, see further below):

- (52) Við sáum mennina í bænum [**drukkná**]
we saw men.the(AM.PL) in town.the drunk(AM.PL)
 We saw the men drunk downtown.

- (53) Við sögðum mönnum [að vera **rólegum**]
*we told men.the(DM.PL) to be calm(DPL)*¹¹
 We told the men to be calm.

- (54) Mennirnir vonuðust til [að verða **kosnir**]
men.the(NM.PL) hoped for to be elected(NM.PL)
 The men hoped to be elected.

There are reasons to believe that predicate agreement controlled by Russian infinitival datives, as in (46) above, is akin to Icelandic secondary

¹¹ There is no gender distinction in dative and genitive plural.

agreement and not to Icelandic primary agreement. Thus, as we shall see, the agreement in question has no bearing on the subject status of the datives triggering it. In order to underpin this important conclusion, we have to present a coherent analysis of both Icelandic primary agreement, section 2.4, and Icelandic secondary agreement, section 2.5.

2.4. *Icelandic Primary Agreement*

The subject status of Icelandic ‘quirks’ has been undisputed since at least Zaenen et al. (1985) or even since Thráinsson (1979). The reason for this wide consensus is simple, namely the fact mentioned in section 1 that Icelandic ‘quirks’ or non-nominative subjects behave like ordinary nominative subjects and not like preposed objects with respect to almost any conceivable ‘subjecthood test’, such as reflexivization, control, coordination reduction, raising, ECM, subject-verb inversion, various other word order phenomena, cliticization, and so on (eleven such subjecthood tests are listed in Sigurðsson 1989, pp. 204–205, sixteen in Sigurðsson 1997, p. 302). In view of this, it is striking that these subjecthood tests do *not* include agreement.

M&P claim that primary or local agreement in Russian is contingent on subjecthood as such, and not specifically on nominative case. Accordingly, it is important for them that infinitival datives control local agreement, because agreement is for them a proof of the subjecthood of these datives. However, exactly the opposite of what M&P claim to hold of Russian is true of Icelandic, namely the following generalization (Sigurðsson 1989, 1990–1991, 1991, 1993, 1996):

- (55) ICELANDIC PRIMARY AGREEMENT *crucially correlates with nominative case*, whereas it does not specifically correlate with subjecthood (although agreement is most commonly controlled or triggered by subjects).

As illustrated in (50)–(51) = (56)–(57), primary agreement involves person (1, 2, 3) and number (SG, PL) of the finite verb and number, gender (M, F, N) and case of a primary adjectival or a participial predicate:¹²

- (56) Mennirnir **hafa** sennilega verið **drukknir**
men.the(NM.PL) have(3PL) probably been drunk(NM.PL)
 The men have probably been drunk.

¹² The agreeing predicate cases are nominative in finite clauses and accusative in ECM constructions. On accusative agreement in ECM infinitives and small clauses, see, e.g., Andrews (1990), Sigurðsson (1991, 1993), and on nominative predicate case see, e.g., Sigurðsson (1989), Maling and Sprouse (1995).

- (57) Konan **hefur** oft verið **kosin**
woman.the(NF.SG) has (3SG) often been elected(NF.SG)
 The woman has often been elected.

Finite constructions fall into three classes or types with respect to primary agreement:

- (58) NOMINATIVE SUBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS
 → Obligatory subject agreement
- (59) NON-NOMINATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS
 → Obligatory non-agreement (= 3SG AND N/AN.SG)
- (60) NOMINATIVE NON-SUBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS
 → Obligatory or optional nominative non-subject agreement
 (depending on constructions)

Two more examples of nominative subject controlled agreement are given below (facts of this sort have been discussed by many, see, e.g., Sigurðsson 1989, p. 185 ff., 1991):

- (61) Strákarnir **höfðu** verið **illir**
boys.the(NM.PL) had(3PL) been bad(NM.PL)
 The boys had been angry.
- (62) Stelpurnar **höfðu** verið **illar**
girls.the(NF.PL) had(3PL) been bad(NF.PL)
 The girls had been angry.

In the absence of a nominative argument, on the other hand, neither the finite verb nor a primary predicate may agree but must instead show up in a default non-agreeing form, 3SG and N/AN.SG, respectively. This is illustrated in (63) for an impersonal subjectless clause and in (64)–(65) for clauses with non-nominative subjects:

- (63) Um morguninn **hafði** verið **illt** í sjóinn
in morning.the [it] had(3SG) been bad(N/AN.SG) in sea.the
 The sea had been rough in the morning.
- (64) Strákunum **hafði** verið **illt**
boys.the(D) had(3SG) been bad(N/AN.SG)
 The boys had been ill/felt badly.

- (65) Stelpunum **hafði** verið **illt**
girls.the(D) had(3SG) been bad(N/AN.SG)
 The girls had been ill/felt badly.

Third, however, nominative non-subjects sometimes either may or must ‘take over’ as agreement controllers. This is illustrated below for three subtypes of ‘nominative non-subject constructions’:

- (66) Stelpunni **voru** **gefnir** hestarnir
girl.the(DF.SG) were(3PL) given(NM.PL) horses.the(NM.PL)
 The girl was given the horses.
- (67) Mér **höfðu** alltaf **virst** [stelpurnar vera
me(D) had(3PL) always seemed girls.the(NF.PL) to.be
gáfaðar]
intelligent(NF.PL)
 The girls had always seemed to be intelligent to me.
- (68) Það **erum** bara við
it are(1PL) only we(N)
 It is only us.

Agreement controlled by non-subjects is more heavily constrained than subject-controlled agreement (see Sigurðsson 1996, and section 3 below), but this is immaterial here. What matters for our purposes is the plain fact, stated in (55) above, that Icelandic primary agreement obviously *correlates with nominative case* and not with subjecthood. In contrast, Icelandic secondary agreement is not conditioned by case-marking in any sense (although it often involves case-copying), as we shall see in the next subsection.

2.5. Icelandic Secondary Agreement – And Its Counterpart in Russian

Reconsider the fact that Icelandic quirky subjects never control agreement of finite verbs and primary predicates:

- (69) Strákunum **var** mjög **kalt**
boys.the(DM.PL) was(3SG) very cold(N/AN.SG)
 The boys were very cold.

- (70) *Strákunum voru mjög köldum
boys.the(DM.PL) were(3PL) very cold(DPL)

In contrast with primary predicates, however, secondary predicates agree with their non-nominative ‘antecedents’, as for instance in (71):

- (71) Strákunum var mjög kalt, svona
boys.the(DM.PL) was(3SG) very cold(N/AN.SG) so
fáklæddum/*fáklætt
few.clad(DPL/N/AN.SG)*
 The boys were very cold so scantily dressed.

‘Antecedents’ trigger agreement of their secondary predicate irrespective of their case and grammatical function, as further illustrated below:¹³

- (72) Strákarnir hittu kennarann **drukknir**
boys.the(NM.PL) met teacher.the(AM.SG) drunk(NM.PL)

The boys met the teacher drunk (i.e. the boys were drunk).

- (73) Strákarnir hittu kennarann **drukkin**
boys.the(NM.PL) met teacher.the(AM.SG) drunk(AM.SG)

The boys met the teacher drunk (i.e. the teacher was drunk).

- (74) Strákarnir sýndu kennaranum óvirðingu
boys.the(NM.PL) showed teacher.the(DM.SG) disrespect
drukknnum
drunk(DM.SG)

The boys showed the teacher disrespect (when he was) drunk.

The basic facts of Icelandic secondary agreement, then, may be summarized as follows:

- (75) ICELANDIC SECONDARY AGREEMENT involves agreement of a secondary (adjectival or participial) predicate with an ‘antecedent’, *irrespective of the antecedent’s case*. The agreeing features are number, gender, and case (with some exceptions, see further below).

¹³ Not unexpectedly, though, predicates that solely take non-nominative arguments never agree, not even as secondary predicates (inasmuch as they are acceptable as secondary predicates). That is, only those predicates that (take a nominative argument and hence) agree as primary predicates are amenable to agreement as secondary predicates.

Secondary agreement involves feature copying under non-predication bounded control (cf. Andrews 1990), whereas primary agreement involves a predication-bounded relation (that may, e.g., be thought of as probing under c-command, as in Chomsky 1999). Evidently, this local or predication-bounded relation is blocked by inherent case, whereas the non-predication bounded relation involved in secondary agreement is not so constrained. The reason for this difference has to do with case-assignment or case-matching. A primary predicate with a non-nominative subject is itself an assigner or a matcher of the inherent case, whereas a secondary predicate of an argument so case-marked is not its case assigner. That is, a predicate cannot agree with its own case assignee.¹⁴

One way of accounting for (or thinking of) secondary agreement is to assume that it is transmitted by PRO, as sketched in (77) for (76):¹⁵

- (76) **Henni** leið illa **drukinni**
her(DF.SG) felt(3SG) badly drunk(DF.SG)
 She felt bad (when) drunk.

- (77) dat_i felt bad [PRO_i drunk]

Under this approach, PRO inherits not only the gender and number but also the case of its controller or antecedent and passes the so-inherited feature values on to its predicate.

A slight complication arises from the fact that secondary agreement sometimes does not involve case, as illustrated below:

- (78) **Henni** leið illa sem **presti/prestur**
her(DF.SG) felt(3SG) badly as priest(D/N)
 She was unhappy as a priest.

- (79) **Henni** verður kalt svona
her(DF.SG) becomes(3SG) cold(N/AN.SG) so
fáklæddri/?fáklædd¹⁶
few.clad(DF.SG/?NF.SG)
 She will be cold so scantily dressed.

¹⁴ In Icelandic and commonly in languages. For further discussion see Sigurðsson (1993, 2001), where it is suggested that agreement with an inherently case-marked DP leads to a 'double-visibility' that is commonly (but not universally) illicit in languages.

¹⁵ Many of the facts discussed in the following (and in Sigurðsson 1991) can be seen as challenging Hornstein's (1999) movement/trace analysis of PRO, but discussing this would take us much too far from the matter under consideration here. Suffice it to say that in order to maintain the movement/trace analysis one would have to develop some coherent alternative approach to the agreement facts discussed here.

In cases of this sort (in, e.g., a structure like [PRO so few-clad]), PRO does not necessarily inherit the case of its controller but may instead get nominative from within its predicate, like the overt subject in (80) does:¹⁷

- (80) **Hún** var fáklædd
she(NF.SG) was(3SG) few.clad(NF.SG)
 She was scantily dressed.

A similar kind of indeterminacy arises in control infinitives (see Thráinsson 1979, p. 297 ff.). Consider the finite construction in (81) and its behavior with respect to agreement when it is embedded under a control verb, as in (82)–(84); the relevant case facts are highlighted above each example:

NOM – **NOM**:

- (81) **Hún** varð **fyrst**/*fyrsta/*fyrstri í hlaupinu¹⁸
*she(NF.SG) was(3SG) first(NF.SG/*AF.SG/*DF.SG) in race.the*
 She was number one in the race.

NOM – [PRO – **NOM**]:

- (82) **Hún** vonaðist til [að PRO_i verða **fyrst**/*fyrsta/*fyrstri]
she(NF.SG) hoped for to PRO(N) be
*first(NF.SG/*AF.SG/*DF.SG)*
 She hoped to be number one.

ACC – [PRO – **NOM/ACC**]:

- (83) **Hana**_i langaði til [að PRO_i verða **fyrst/fyrsta**/*fyrstri]
*her(AF.SG) longed for to PRO(N) be first(NF.SG/AF.SG/*DF.SG)*
 She wanted to be number one.

¹⁶ As seen, partial agreement, NOM-FEM-SG, is slightly less acceptable here than full agreement, DAT-FEM-SG. In contrast, non-agreement, NOM/ACC-NEUT-SG, is totally out, just as in (71) above.

¹⁷ For arguments that PRO is case-marked, see section 2.6 below and Sigurðsson (1991), and for arguments that nominative case is vP- or predicate-internal and hence not contingent on tense, see Sigurðsson (2000, 2001). However, even if nominative is vP-internal (vP being used in the sense of Chomsky 1999), it is not assigned by the lexical head of the predicate (here the adjective), thus differing from lexical case.

¹⁸ The verb *verða* (past tense 3SG *varð*), here glossed simply with English *be*, replaces copular *vera* ‘be’ in both the future tense ‘will be’ and in the accomplishment reading ‘get, become’.

DAT – [PRO – NOM/DAT]:

- (84) Henni_i fannst gaman [að PRO_i verða
her(DEF.SG) found fun to PRO(N) be
fyrst/*fyrsta/fyrstri]
*first(NF.SG/*AF.SG/DEF.SG)*
 She found it fun to be number one.

In (81), of course, the adjectival predicate has only one potential ‘antecedent’, namely its local nominative subject, hence the nominative of the predicate. In (82), the predicate has two potential ‘antecedents’, the main clause subject and PRO, but since they are both nominative the predicate can only show up in the nominative. In (83) and (84), on the other hand, the main clause subject and PRO have conflicting cases and hence the adjectival predicate may agree with either one (thus showing up in either accusative or nominative in (83) and in either dative or nominative in (84)).

The agreement controllers in (83)–(84) are quirky subjects. Parallel facts are found for object controllers, as illustrated below:

- (85) Við skoruðum á **hana**_i [að PRO_i verða
we dared on her(AF.SG) to PRO(N) be
fyrst/fyrsta/*fyrstri]
*first (NF.SG/AF.SG/*DEF.SG)*
 We exhorted her to be number one.
- (86) Við skipuðum **henni**_i [að PRO_i verða
we ordered her(DEF.SG) to PRO(N) be
fyrst/*fyrsta/fyrstri]
*first (NF.SG/*AF.SG/DEF.SG)*
 We ordered her to be number one.

In all these cases, PRO obligatorily copies both the number and gender of its controller (and passes these features on to its predicate). In contrast, PRO need not copy the controller’s case, as it can instead resort to a nominative determined or ‘assigned’ within its own predicate (in a parallel fashion as in (81)). As a matter of fact, case-copying down into infinitives is marked or questionable for many speakers and even out for some (whereas case-copying in secondary predicates is the unmarked option in non-infinitival structures like (78)–(79) above).

To summarize, Icelandic secondary agreement is sharply different from primary agreement, as sketched below:

- (87) ICELANDIC PRIMARY AGREEMENT is crucially predication-bounded and contingent on nominative case; hence, non-nominative arguments never control primary agreement in Icelandic.
- (88) ICELANDIC SECONDARY AGREEMENT always crosses predication boundaries and is crucially independent of case; hence, secondary agreement may freely be controlled by non-nominative arguments (as well as by nominative ones).

Now, recall that Russian I-nominals never trigger primary agreement, thus behaving just like non-nominative arguments in Icelandic. Russian infinitival datives, however, do control agreement in examples like (46) = (89):

- (89) Toj rukopisi ne byt' **opublikovannoj**
that manuscript(DF.SG) not to.be published(IE.SG)
 It is not (in the cards) for that manuscript to be published.

Thus, at first sight, it would seem that Icelandic and Russian primary agreement are radically different, the former being contingent on nominative case and not on subjecthood, whereas the latter would be contingent on subjecthood as such and not on nominative case.

If, however, the dative infinitival construction in Russian is biclausal, having a silent copula, as argued by Franks (1995) and many others, then the agreement in (89) is not primary agreement but secondary agreement, as sketched in (90):¹⁹

- (90) *DF.SG_i [is] not [PRO_i to.be IE.SG_i]*

As seen by the instrumental case of the predicate, this kind of long distance agreement does not involve case-copying, which is interesting in view of the fact mentioned above that case-copying down into infinitives in Icelandic is a marked option.²⁰ Notice, in addition, that the agreement

¹⁹ If the biclausal analysis of the dative infinitival construction is correct, Perlmutter's (2000) analysis of raising in Russian is also mistaken, but to discuss this would take us too far afield.

²⁰ Recall, however, that case agreement of predicates has a very restricted distribution in Russian as compared to Icelandic.

‘mechanism’ in (90) is operative also in infinitives that are uncontroversially subordinate, as in (91) and (92) (from Franks 1995, p. 222, slightly simplified):

- (91) Ivan ne xočet [prijti domoj **p’janym**]
Ivan(NM.SG) not wants to.come home drunk(IM.SG)
 Ivan does not want to come home drunk.

- (92) Ja proposil Ivana [ne prixodit’ **p’janym**]
I(N) asked Ivan(AM.SG) not to.come drunk(IM.SG)
 I asked Ivan not to come drunk.

To repeat: if the biclausal or bipredicational analysis in (90) is correct, then the Russian infinitival dative does *not* trigger primary agreement but *secondary* agreement, just like non-nominative subjects in Icelandic and objects in both Russian and Icelandic. It also follows, then, first, that this agreement has no bearing whatsoever on the subject status of the datives in question, and, second, that primary agreement differs from secondary agreement in being conditioned by nominative case of the agreement controller in Russian as well as in Icelandic.

Once again, then, M&P’s arguments do not go through. It should be noticed, however, that the failure of their agreement argument does not undermine their subject analysis of Russian infinitival datives, as such. It does, however, undermine their claim that agreement distinguishes between Russian infinitival datives and I-nominals.

2.6. *The PRO Argument*

M&P’s fourth argument for distinguishing between infinitival datives and I-nominals is, they claim, that infinitival datives can be ‘represented’ as PRO, whereas I-nominals cannot. They substantiate their claim by giving one example of an infinitival dative being represented as PRO, namely the following (their (40b), p. 397):²¹

- (93) Boris sdelał vse vozmožnoe [čtoby PRO rabotat’ **odnomu**]
Boris(N) did all possible in.order PRO to.work alone(D)
 Boris did everything possible to work alone.

The dative of the semipredicate *odin* ‘alone’ is the putative indicator that PRO is dative in examples of this sort. This is the so-called SECOND DATIVE,

²¹ In addition, they demonstrate that *čtoby*-infinitives can have an overt dative subject. I assume that these subordinate structures are full finite clauses, with a silent copula.

studied in detail in Comrie (1974) and widely discussed since (see, for instance, Neidle 1988; Franks 1995, 1998; Babby and Franks 1998; Moore and Perlmutter 1999).

Icelandic offers impressive evidence that PRO can be case-marked, structurally as well as inherently (see Sigurðsson 1991 and the references cited there, in particular Thráinsson 1979). The evidence comes above all from agreement; that is, nominative predicate agreement (vs. default non-agreement in non-nominative constructions), agreement of floating quantifiers and agreement of semipredicates like *einn* 'alone, one' and *sjálfur* 'self' (i.e., 'himself', 'herself', and so on). Thus, for instance, *sjálfur* agrees with its subject in case (and gender and number), as seen below:

NOM – NOM:

- (94) Ólafur talaði **sjálfur**/*sjálfan/*sjálfum á fundinum
*Olaf(N) talked self(N/*A/*D) at meeting.the*
 Olaf talked at the meeting himself.

ACC – ACC:

- (95) Ólaf vantaði **sjálfan**/*sjálfur/*sjálfum á fundinum
*Olaf(A) lacked self(A/*N/*D) at meeting.the*
 Olaf was missing at the meeting himself.

DAT – DAT:

- (96) Ólafi mistókst **sjálfum**/*sjálfur/*sjálfan á fundinum
*Olaf(D) failed self(D/*N/*A) at meeting.the*
 Olaf failed at the meeting himself.

As illustrated, the verbs *tala* 'talk', *vanta* 'lack, be missing, be absent' and *mistakast* 'fail' take a nominative, accusative, and dative subject, respectively, and the semipredicate *sjálfur* regularly shows up in the same case as its subject, irrespective of whether it is structural or inherent. Strikingly, *sjálfur* retains oblique case agreement in control infinitives, as seen below; as indicated this is accounted for if PRO is case-marked in the same manner as 'corresponding' overt subjects:²²

²² Under certain circumstances case copying can lead to complications in examples of this sort that are avoided here (but see Thráinsson 1979, p. 301 ff.).

[PRO/ACC – SELF/ACC]:

- (97) Ólafi leiddist [að PRO vanta **sjálfan**/*sjálfum á
*Olaf(D) annoyed to PRO(A) lack self(A/*D) at*
 fundinum]
meeting.the
 Olaf was annoyed by being absent from the meeting himself.

[PRO/DAT – SELF/DAT]:

- (98) Ólaf langaði ekki til [að PRO mistakast **sjálfum**/*sjálfan
*Olaf(A) longed not for to PRO(D) fail self(D/*A)*
 á fundinum]
at meeting.the
 Olaf did not want to fail himself at the meeting.

Similarly, floating quantifiers like *allir* ‘all, everybody’ retain oblique case agreement in infinitives (inasmuch as they are felicitous in infinitives):

[PRO/ACC – ALL/ACC]:

- (99) Prófessorunum leiddist [að PRO vanta **alla**/*öllum á
*professors.the(D) annoyed to PRO(A) lack all(A/*D) at*
 fundinum]
meeting.the
 The professors were annoyed by all being absent from the meeting.

[PRO/DAT – ALL/DAT]:

- (100) Prófessorana langaði ekki til [að PRO mistakast
professors.the(A) longed not for to PRO(D) fail
öllum/*alla á fundinum]
*all(D/*A) at meeting.the*
 The professors did not want to all fail at the meeting.

Moreover, normal adjectival and participial predicates show the same case-dependent morphology in PRO infinitives as they do in finite clauses (as illustrated in Sigurðsson 1991). Facts of this sort are accounted for if Icelandic PRO is regularly assigned the same case as overt subjects in ‘corresponding’ finite clauses.

In comparison with the evidence that Icelandic PRO is case-marked, the evidence that Russian PRO is dative is truly slender, coming only from the case-marking of two lexical items, *odin* 'alone', as in (93) above, and *sam* 'self'. Moreover, it is hard to exclude the possibility that the second dative of *odin* and *sam* in Russian PRO infinitives is a default non-agreeing form rather than an agreeing form (see Franks 1995, p. 223 ff.).²³

I have no intention, however, of arguing against the dative case analysis of Russian PRO. Disproving that it is dative is probably even harder than proving that it is. Thus, I shall tentatively assume that M&P (like many other researchers) are right that Russian PRO should or at least might be analyzed as being dative. Even so, however, the case-marking of PRO does not render any support to M&P's distinction between I-nominals and overt main clause infinitival datives.

Reconsider M&P's example in (93):

- (93) Boris *sdelal vse vozmožnoe [čtoby PRO rabotat' **odnomu**]*
Boris(N) did all possible in.order PRO to.work alone(D)
 Boris did everything possible to work alone.

The infinitival construction clearly does not have 'dative semantics'. That is, it lacks the crucial diagnostic of the main clause infinitival dative construction, namely its deontic modality of obligation or destiny. Instead, it has plain 'nominative semantics', and is thus the infinitival version of (101), and not of (102):

- (101) Boris *rabotaet **odin***
Boris(N) works alone(N)
 Boris works alone.
- (102) Borisu *rabotat' **odnomu***
Boris(D) to.work alone(D)
 Boris should work alone. / It is (in the cards) for Boris to work alone.

While the dative in (102) is semantically related, the putative dative of PRO in (93) is not so related and would thus have to be analyzed as being purely structural (and thus the term 'second' dative is quite appropriate). Indeed, as discussed by, e.g., Franks (1998), the second dative of *odin* and

²³ However, Franks has since adopted the agreement analysis of Comrie (1974), in Franks (1998) and in Babby and Franks (1998).

sam is conditioned by structural properties, i.e., it shows up in contexts of non-subject control, arbitrary control and whenever there is overt material in either Comp or Spec,CP. In contrast, *odin* and *sam* show up in the nominative if they can be ‘successfully bound’ by a superordinate nominative subject. Consider the following minimal pair (taken from Neidle 1988, (13)–(14), p. 127), where *sam* is obligatorily dative in the presence of the complementizer *čtoby* ‘in order to’ in (103) but obligatorily nominative in its absence in (104) (and notice that the infinitive in (103) lacks ‘dative semantics’, just like the infinitive in (93) above).²⁴

- (103) Ljuda priexala čtoby pokupat’ maslo **samoj**/*sama
*Ljuda(N) came in.order to.buy butter herself(D/*N)*
 Ljuda came to buy the butter herself.

- (104) Ljuda priexala pokupat’ maslo **sama**/*samoj
*Ljuda(N) came to.buy butter herself(N/*D)*
 Ljuda came to buy the butter herself.

If PRO is dative in infinitives like (93) and (103), then its dative is presumably assigned or matched by some invisible functional head (at least given minimalist assumptions) that does not relate to modal semantics, whereas it seems plausible to assume that the overt main clause infinitival dative in, e.g., (102) is matched by some modal or aspectual head, perhaps a special ‘small v’ in the sense of Arad (1999); see also Cinque (1999) and Julien (2000) on modal and aspectual heads in clausal structure. Both strategies are arguably different from the lexical assignment or matching of the dative of I-nominals (and of at least most Icelandic quirky subjects). If so, I-nominals and main clause infinitival datives are indeed different in nature. However, the second dative of PRO infinitives relates to neither type and hence it does not bear on the putative difference between the two with respect to subjecthood.

3. TO BE A SUBJECT ... IS PERHAPS NOT THE QUESTION

Many, perhaps most, case languages have clause types where either the only nuclear argument or the ‘most prominent’ argument is inherently case-marked. Such arguments typically correspond to subjects in non-case and case-impooverished languages and are also typically subject-like

²⁴ Babby and Franks (1998) argue that bare infinitives, as in (104), are VPs rather than CPs.

to a certain extent, but variably so, both across languages and language-internally. Thus, as we have seen, it is very hard to come up with any clear evidence that Russian infinitival datives are ‘true subjects’, definitely much harder than to find evidence in favor of the subjecthood of Icelandic quirky subjects. In addition, and more importantly, we have seen that M&P’s arguments that Russian infinitival datives and I-nominals differ with respect to subjecthood do not hold.

It does *not* follow, however, that Russian or for instance German subject-like non-nominatives are best analyzed as ‘non-subjects’. Grammatical functions like ‘the subject of the clause’ are arguably taxonomic artifacts rather than primitives of language (see Chomsky 1981, p. 10). Thus, the interesting question raised by these arguments is not whether they are ‘true subjects’ by some postulated standards but rather what they tell us about the interaction of case and other features or properties of language, in particular sentence structure and agreement.

The importance of Icelandic quirky subjects lies above all in the fact that they cast serious doubts on certain central and widely held assumptions about case, clausal structure, and agreement. Thus, they illustrate that agreement is not only configurationally but also morphologically conditioned. Moreover, they strongly suggest that EPP, NP-movement, and, more generally, the distribution of PRO vs. overt DPs should *not* be explained in terms of case (neither overt case nor ‘null-case’) and hence that we have to look harder for explanations of these extremely important features of language.

An aspect of Icelandic ‘quirks’ that has recently raised much interest and discussion is that they interfere with finite verb agreement in a peculiar way.²⁵ That is, in the DAT-NOM construction, dative subjects block agreement in ‘true’ person (i.e., 1st and 2nd person) with the nominative object, whereas it does not block agreement in number (in the 3rd person). Hence, the contrast between the ungrammatical (105)–(106) and the grammatical (107):²⁶

- (105) *Ég veit að honum líkum við
 I know that him(D) like(IPL) we(N)
 (Intended reading: I know that he likes us.)

²⁵ This was first described in detail in Sigurðsson (1990–1991). See also Sigurðsson (1996, 2000, 2001), Taraldsen (1995), Chomsky (1999), Boeckx (2000), among many.

²⁶ As discussed in Sigurðsson (1991–1992, 1996), examples with 1st and 2nd person nominative objects gain in acceptability if the verb is in the default 3rd person, and some such examples are even perfect for some speakers.

- (106) *Ég veit að honum **líkið** þið
I know that him(D) like(2PL) you(NPL)
 (Intended reading: I know that he likes you(PL).)

- (107) Ég veit að honum **líka** þeir
I know that him(D) like(3PL) they(N)
 I know that he likes them.

In contrast, of course, nominative subjects both allow and require full person agreement.

One way of interpreting this subject-object agreement asymmetry is to say that quirky subjects are like nominative subjects in entering into person agreement with the finite verb, albeit only default null-agreement (= 3rd person). If so, the finite verb is already ‘engaged’ in (null-) agreeing with the person of the ‘quirk’, thus being unable to also agree in person with the nominative object (but free to agree with it in number, when no true person agreement is required, i.e., in the 3rd person). See Boeckx (2000) and Sigurðsson (2000) for a discussion of ‘quirky null-agreement’ along these lines.

No person agreement asymmetry of this sort is found in Russian DAT-NOM constructions, as illustrated in the examples below:²⁷

- (108) Ja znaju, emu **nравimsja** my
I know him(D) like(1PL) we(N)
 I know that he likes us.

- (109) Ja znaju, emu **nравites’** vy
I know him(D) like(2PL) you(NPL)
 I know that he likes us.

- (110) Ja znaju, emu **nравjatsja** oni
I know him(D) like(3PL) they(N)
 I know that he likes them.

German behaves like Russian in this respect, showing obligatory full person agreement with DAT-NOM verbs like *gefallen* ‘like’.²⁸

²⁷ Michael Yadroff, p.c.

²⁸ Gisbert Fanselow, p.c. The DAT-NOM order, as opposed to NOM-DAT, is somewhat degraded in the presence of a complementizer (but perfect in verb-second subordinate clauses without a complementizer).

Subjects typically enter into an active relation with the PERSON/NUMBER of the finite complex of the clause. Thus, the main reason why Icelandic quirky subjects are ‘so subject-like’ is plausibly that they enter into such a relation, in contrast with, e.g., German and Russian I-nominals.

In a minimalist approach it is natural to analyze the finite complex of the clause as many independent features or heads with basically deictic or speaker anchored point of view semantics, such as Force, Topic, Person, Tense and Mood – typically being lexically (but not syntactically) amalgamated with each other. If so, we can say that ‘personal’ subjects (1st and 2nd person), for instance quirky ones, match the highest Person head of the clause (as in Sigurðsson 2000, 2001). For our purposes, however, it is sufficiently accurate to say that ‘personal’ subjects match the person feature of the finite complex by entering into an agreement correlation with it.²⁹

Unfortunately, there is no way of testing whether Russian infinitival datives enter into an active relation with the Person of the finite complex of the clause – for trivially obvious reasons: First, the finite complex is not visible at all, as we have discussed, and, second, of course, the Russian infinitival dative construction never involves a nominative object (that would possibly show ‘reduced agreement control’, because of the interference of the dative). However, the fact that Russian infinitival datives can never be construed with a verb that visibly inflects for person is thought-provoking (the copula is phonologically null in the present tense and verbs do not inflect for person in the other tenses in Russian). As just discussed, Icelandic ‘quirks’ enter into a null-agreement relation with the Person feature or head of the finite complex of the clause, but, as discussed in sections 2.4 and 2.5, ‘real’ agreement with quirky subjects is nonetheless always totally out. Thus, quirky subjects must ‘agree’ with the Person feature or head, but they may only do so ‘discretely’, such that only a default, seemingly nonagreeing verbal form is heard, the 3rd person form. In the same spirit, Russian could be analyzed as being even more discrete, allowing ‘quirks’ only when no verbal person-form is audible at all.

Needless to say, generalizing over Icelandic quirky subjects and Russian infinitival datives in these terms is impossible unless the Russian infinitival dative construction is biclausal, involving a silent ‘copula’ or finiteness complex. Contradictory as it may seem, then, the underlying finiteness of this morphologically non-finite construction is the key to our understanding of its properties.

²⁹ Notice that this approach does not and should presumably not extend to PRO (quirky or not), i.e., it is plausible to assume that PRO does not raise out of its vP into a higher functional domain containing features or heads such as Person and Tense.

Russian infinitival datives have more interesting properties. Thus, they suggest that inherent case can be assigned non-lexically (hence externally to VP or the lexical predicate phrase), perhaps by a modal or an aspectual ‘small *v*’ (hence vP-internally). In addition, they indicate that even invisible or silent functional heads may be syntactically active, very much so indeed. If that is a correct interpretation, then these unusual or quirky datives lend support to the general view of language underlying the work of Cinque (1999) and related work (e.g., Rizzi 1997), that is, a view where there is not necessarily a one-to-one correlation between functional heads in syntax and the morphological/lexical structure of individual languages. Hopefully, future research will further our knowledge and understanding of these very important issues.

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