Case (mis)matching in fragment answers   Jim Wood & Matthew Barros *Yale University*

This talk examines case matching and mismatching effects in Icelandic fragment answers, arguing that…

- the identity condition on ellipsis in fragments is syntactic, and there must be silent structure; this accounts for both the robust case *matching* effects, as well as constrained case *mismatching* effects
- the factors deciding between accusative and dative for experiencer subjects are not encoded in the syntax, but are instead determined in the post-syntactic morphological component

1. Case Matching Fragment answers in Icelandic generally require case-matching. Consider the data in (1) and (3). The (A) examples show that *hjálpa* 'help' takes a dative object while *aðstoða* 'assist' takes an accusative object. The (B) examples show that the fragment answers must match the case of the *wh*-word in the question. These facts support an ellipsis analysis of fragment answers along the lines of (2) and (4), where the short answer is moved to a high position (perhaps [Spec,CP]) and the rest of the sentence is deleted under syntactic identity with the antecedent clause in the question (Merchant 2001). Since syntactic identity is required, (4) cannot be used to derive accusative case in (1B), and (2) cannot be used to derive dative case in (3B), despite the semantic similarities between, and in many contexts pragmatic near-equivalence of the verbs *hjálpa* 'help' and *aðstoða* 'assist'. It has

(1) A: {**Hverjum**/ *hvern   } hjálpuðu þau   fyrst?
    {who.DAT / *who.ACC} helped   they.NOM first
    'Who did they help first?'
   B: { **Ólafi**   / *Ólaf / *Ólafur }
    { Ólafur.DAT / *ACC   / *NOM   }
    'Ólafur.'

(2)   [Ólafur.DAT [~~helped they ‹Ólafur› first~~]]

(3) A: {*Hverjum / **hvern**   } aðstoðuðu þau   fyrst?
    {*who.DAT / who.ACC} assisted   they.NOM first
    'Who did they help first?'
   B: { **Ólaf**   / *Ólafi / *Ólafur }
    { Ólafur.ACC / *DAT   / *NOM   }
    'Ólafur.'

(4)   [Ólafur.ACC [~~assisted they ‹Ólafur› first~~]]

long been noted that Icelandic has many pairs of verbs that mean more or less the same thing but assign different cases to their subjects or objects (Andrews 1982). They all pattern like (1) and (3) in fragments.

2. Case Mismatching One might suppose that the case-matching effects arise from something more superficial than a syntactic analysis like (2)/(4). For example, Barros (2014) proposes a semantic theory of identity with an additional case-matching stipulation that acts as a filter on possible silent structures. Thus, (4) would not be a possible structure to derive (1B) precisely, and perhaps only, because it would not yield case-matching. However, another set of facts shows that case matching cannot itself be stipulated, because such a stipluation would block grammatical instances of case *mis*matching. Consider (5). Despite the fact that the *wh*-word in the question is unambiguously dative, either dative or accusative is possible in the response. This is because *langa* 'want' is a verb subject to what is known as "Dative Substitution," where the traditional (and prescriptively preferred) accusative experiencer subject may instead be dative, as illustrated in (6a) (Jónsson & Eyþórsson 2005). Thus, the question in (5A) could have had an accusative *wh*-word *hvern* instead of the dative,

(5) A: Hverjum langar að fara?
    who.DAT wants to go
    'Who wants to go?'
   B: { *Ég   / mig   / mér   }!
    { *I.NOM / me.ACC / me.DAT }!

(6) a. { *Ég   / Mig   / Mér   } langar að fara. b. { Ég   / *Mig   / *Mér   } vil   fara.
    { *I.NOM / me.ACC / me.DAT} want   to go   { I.NOM / *me.ACC / *me.DAT} want go
    'I want to go.'   'I want to go.'

and still, either accusative or dative would be possible in the answer. This shows clearly that case matching is not a surface true generalization, and therefore cannot be stipulated as such. Once again, the semantically similar verb *vilja* 'want' has a different case pattern, and requires a nominative subject, as shown in (6b).

3. Case Mismatching and Syntactic Identity The reason that dative or accusative is possible in (5B) is that the DP moves from a structure, later deleted, that contains the verb *langa* 'want', and that verb is compatible with a dative or an accusative subject. Thus, the response to (5A) could be either (7) or (8), but not (9), where a different verb meaning 'want', *vilja*, takes a nominative subject. This means that the identity condition is sensitive to the choice of

(7) [me.DAT [‹~~me.DAT~~› *langar* 'want' to go]]
(8) [me.ACC [‹~~me.ACC~~› *langar* 'want' to go]]
(9) [I.NOM   [‹~~I.NOM~~› *vil* 'want' to go]]

lexical verb, but not specifically sensitive to the case marking that results from that choice.

4. Impossible Mismatches Case mismatching is not always possible, however, even when the one verb assigns two different cases. *Klóra* 'scratch' may assign accusative or dative (see 10), but the difference has a semantic effect (Maling 2002). If accusative is chosen, it means she affected me physically, and probably hurt me or damaged my skin. If dative is chosen, it means I benefitted from the event, as if she scratched me kindly or scratched an itch. With verbs of this kind, a case mismatch in a fragment answer is impossible. This shows that we cannot

(10) Hún   klóraði {mig   / mér   }.
she.NOM scratched {me.ACC / me.DAT}
'She scratched me.'

(11) A: **Hverjum** klóraði   hún?
who.DAT   scratched she.NOM
'Who did she scratch?'
B: { *Ég   / *mig   / **mér**   }.
{ *I.NOM / *me.ACC / me.DAT }
'Me.'

(12) A: **Hvern** klóraði   hún?
who.ACC scratched she.NOM
'Who did she scratch?'
B: { *Ég   / **mig**   / *mér   }.
{ *I.NOM / me.ACC / *me.DAT }
'Me.'

simply assume that case-features are ignored for the purposes of the identity condition. (It is *possible* that the choice of case in (10) corresponds to an independent syntactic distinction, in which case we *could* assume that case-features are ignored; but that remains to be shown.) Assume the generalization in (13).

(13) **Case Mismatching Generalization**: when case-mismatching in ellipsis is possible, the choice of case will not have a semantic effect

This generalization can be derived as follows. Assume that for any case alternation with a semantic effect, there must be a distinction in the syntax under a minimalist model where the syntactic structure is transferred to the LF and PF interfaces. That distinction (even if it is as small as a different case feature) will tell LF to make the semantic distinction and PF to make a morphophonological distinction (in case marking). It will also be present for the purposes of the syntactic identity condition, preventing the structure with one case from licensing ellipsis of the structure with the other case. If, however, a case alternation is triggered at PF (see below), then that alternation would not interfere with a syntactic identity condition; and there is no way that it could feed a semantic distinction, because it takes place on the PF branch, "out of view" of LF.

5. Dative Substitution as Impoverishment We propose that the "Dative Substitution" alternation is determined post-syntactically, in the morphological component, as in McFadden (2004) and Sigurðsson (2000). The experiencer for a verb like *langa* 'want' is introduced in [Spec,Appl(icative)P], and there is a general (syntactic or PF) rule that assigns dative to a DP in [Spec,ApplP]. Following McFadden (2004), dative is [+OBL(IQUE),+INF(ERIOR)] while accusative is simply [+INF(ERIOR)]. The basic rule would then assign dative to a DP in [Spec,ApplP], but in the context of particular verbs—which speakers would have to learn individually—the [+OBL] feature would be deleted by the optional impoverishment rule in (14). (See also Sigurðsson 2012 for the PF rule deriving the Appl*+.) This captures the fact that speakers really have to learn on a case-by-case basis which verbs take accusative, but the general system pushes in the direction of dative.

(14) [+OBL,+INF] —> [+INF] / __ {*langa* 'want', etc.}

6. Further Support The present proposal offers a clear way of analyzing other instances of case mismatching discussed in detail by Jónsson (2013). Consider (15) and (16). Usually, modifiers like *sjálfur* 'self' have to agree with the DP they modify in case. However, an accusative subject of a dative substitution verb can take a dative or accusative 'self' (15), but a dative subject can only take a dative 'self.' Suppose that agreement of this sort operates in the post-syntactic morphology (Sigurðsson 2006; Bobaljik 2008); this is plausible, since the semantic branch doesn't seem to be sensitive to whether or how agreement takes place. Then, (15)–(16) are generated by the timing of impoverishment with respect to the agreement: agreement may take place before impoverishment (generating ACC-DAT) or after impoverishment (generating ACC-ACC), or impoverishment may not apply (generating DAT-DAT). But none of the logical options generate the marked DAT-ACC in (16).

(15) **Mig**   { **sjálfan** / **sjálfum** } langar að vita   það.
me.ACC { self.ACC / self.DAT } want   to know that
'I myself want to know that.'

(16) **Mér**   { ??**sjálfan** / **sjálfum** } langar að vita   það.
me.DAT { ??self.ACC/ self.DAT } want   to know that
'I myself want to know that.'