On quirky subjects and the person restriction in Icelandic and Italian

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In this paper, I show that Italian impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement and Icelandic quirky dative constructions have much in common: of them the verb agrees with a Nominative object and they both exhibit a person restriction on the object, which can only be 3rd person. I present evidence that Italian impersonal *si* constructions are actually quirky dative constructions and that the person restriction on the object is caused by the presence of the reflexive impersonal *si* in Italian and by the reflexive suffix *–st* in Icelandic.

1. Introduction

In Nominative-Accusative languages, Nominative case is usually associated with the highest θ-role (Agent or Experiencer), while Accusative case is associated with a lower θ-role, such as Patient or Theme.

An exception to this are the so-called quirky dative (or quirky subject) constructions. In these constructions, the Patient or the Theme gets Nominative case, while the Agent or the Experiencer surfaces as *quirky* dative. This dative is called *quirky* because datives are usually associated with Benefactives or Goals but not with Agents or Experiencers. (1) is an example of a quirky subject construction in Icelandic:

(1) Henni   leiddust   strákarnir
     her-DAT   bored-3RD PL   the boys-PL NOM
     'She found the boys boring'   [Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

In (1), the Theme *strákarnir* is Nominative and agrees with the verb, and the Experiencer *henni* is marked with dative.

In the next section I introduce Italian impersonal *si* constructions and show that they pattern with quirky dative constructions. I then present the problem of the person restriction on the object. In section 3, after a short summary of other accounts, I propose an alternative analysis for Italian, which also sheds some light on the Icelandic data.

2. The quirky status of impersonal si

Impersonal *si* constructions in Italian present two different agreement patterns, exemplified in (2) and (3). In (2), the verb agrees with the Nominative object (see D'Alessandro 2001, 2002), while in (3) there is no verb-object agreement and the object is Accusative. The verb in (3) shows the default 3rd person ending.

(2) In   Italia si mangiano   gli spaghetti
     in   Italy si eat-3RD PL   the spaghetti-MASC PL NOM
     'In Italy one eats spaghetti'
(3) In Italia si mangia   (gli)   spaghetti[1]
     in Italy si eats-3RD SG (the)   spaghetti-MASC PL ACC
     'In Italy one eats spaghetti'

Observe that in both (3) and (4) *spaghetti* is a Theme. In this paper, I am only concerned with constructions of the type exemplified in (2), that is with the verb-object agreeing constructions.

A thorough investigation of the examples (2) and (3) can help us to detect the feature composition of impersonal *si*.

2.1. The feature composition of impersonal si

Impersonal *si* doesn't bear inflectional morphology, and therefore one can determine the existence of its features only observing the agreement facts related to *si*.

It is usually assumed that the number feature of *si* is specified for plural, as the following examples show:

(4) Non si è   mai   contenti
     not si is never happy-MASC PL
     'One is never happy'
(5) Al   giorno d'oggi   si è sempre belle
     at-the   day   of-today   si is always beautiful-FEM PL
     'One (a woman) is always beautiful today'

In (4) and (5) the presence of *si* determines a plural agreement ending on the adjective, independently of the gender specification chosen.

There is, however, another piece of data which seems to contradict the statement that *si* is plural. It is well known that the agreement patterns of *si*

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[1] Some Italian speakers do not accept the definite article in sentences with no verb-object agreement. For further discussion on this point, see D'Alessandro (to appear *a*).

constructions with unergative verbs differ from those with unaccusative verbs, as shown in (6) and (7):

(6) Si   è   telefonato
     si   is   called-MASC SG
     'People have called'

(7) Si   è   arrivati
     si   is   arrived-MASC PL
     'People have arrived'

(6) and (7) seem to show that number on *si* is not defined in a unique way. It might be that the plural agreement in (4) and (5) is a kind of semantic agreement, provided by the fact that *si*, without further specification, identifies a *group* of people, and never one single person (Chierchia 1995). Semantic plurality, however, doesn't entail the presence of a plural syntactic feature (contra Sauerland 2003). For this reason, I assume that *si* is not specified for number (cf. Manzini 1986).

(4) and (5) also show that *si* does not have gender specification.

Another relevant feature on *si* is *animacy*. As Chierchia (1995) points out, *si* identifies a group of human beings performing the action expressed by the verb. Although the fact that *si* semantically identifies a group of people doesn't entail that *si* has a syntactic feature for person, I take this to be the case, following Boeckx (1998), Ormazabal & Romero (2001), and Anagnostopoulou (2002).

The nature of such a person feature is not clear, and the variation in the inclusiveness/genericity of the interpretation suggests that the person feature on *si* is made up of sub features which get specified in different ways (see D'Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003). Leaving these matters aside, we can simply assume that *si* has a person feature, and that this feature is not 3rd person. Building on Benveniste's (1966) intuitions, we can assume that *si* patterns together with 1st and 2nd person because of its reflexive morphology. 3rd person pronouns, according to Benveniste, are 'no-person' pronouns. In current terms, we can say that they lack a person feature. This is not the case for *si*, which has a person feature whose effects are visible in the person restriction of the object, as we will see in section 2.4.

Observe that impersonal *si* and reflexive *si* differ with respect to their person feature. They are both morphologically reflexive, and therefore they both hold a person feature. The person feature on impersonal *si* is however referential, because it identifies a group of people performing the action expressed by the verb. The person feature on reflexive *si* is instead not referential, and this *si* needs an antecedent in order to get its reference (see Manzini 1986). We can consider the person feature on reflexive *si* as a kind of 'defective' feature, which cannot value the person feature on the verb because it needs to be valued itself. More on this difference will be presented in section 3.4.1.

The position of impersonal *si* in the clause is also a matter of debate. I will present a short introduction to this problem in the next section.

2.2. The position of impersonal si

A never-ending debate has been carried on in the last years regarding the position of *si* in the clause. If the landing site of *si* is quite evident, the merging site of *si* isn't as clear.

The standard assumption is that *si* is an external argument (Burzio 1986, Manzini 1986), at least in *si* constructions with verb-object agreement (Cinque 1988, Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, 1999). With transitive verbs, it is merged in the position where external arguments are usually merged, namely Spec, IP or Spec, VP or Spec, *v*P, depending on the framework which is adopted. A different view is adopted in Manzini-Savoia (2000), who consider *si* as an object clitic, which is directly merged in a functional position above the TP, named OriginP.

In this paper, I don't consider in details the merging site of *si*. I follow the standard assumption which sees *si* as an external argument with verbs which do have an external argument, and as an internal argument otherwise.

The Case that *si* receives is also a matter of debate. According to Cinque 1988, (argumental) *si* is Nominative. According to Dobrovie-Sorin 1998, 1999, it bears Accusative.

In the following section, I show that *si* doesn't seem to beat Nominative nor Accusative case, but dative.

The landing site of *si* is less discussed, as it evidently cliticizes on the verb and needs to end up in a position which is 'around' T. There is no agreement on the exact landing site of *si*, but it is clear is that impersonal *si* is closer to the verb than any other clitic, as shown in (8):

(8) Ce   lo   si è detto
    us-DAT it-MASC SG ACC   si is said
    'One has said it to another/we have said it to each other'

It is not possible to change the order of clitics in (8), as shown in (9):

(9) a. *Si ce   lo   è detto
        si us-DAT it-MASC SG ACC   is said
    b. *Ci   se lo   è detto[2]
        us-DAT si it-MASC SG ACC is said

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[2] For some Italian speakers (9b) is acceptable, while (9a) is ungrammatical for all speakers.

Impersonal *si* is thus the closest to the T head. There are several possible positions in which it can land: *si* can land on the specifier of a dedicated projection, or on the specifier of the TP or on the T head.

If we assume, with Chomsky (1995), that clitics are in fact both maximal projections and heads, then *si* will end up on the T head. Otherwise, we will need to assume that *si* is an XP.

I do not discuss the position of *si* in this paper (for further discussion on this point, see D'Alessandro 2002, to appear *a*, *b*). For my purposes, it is enough to observe that *si* is closest to T than any other clitic, i.e. that no other clitic intervenes between *si* and the T head. I will therefore adopt the model according to which *si* is both a head and an XP, and incorporates on the T head.

So far, we have been concerned with *si* itself and with its relations with other elements in the structure. In the next section, I compare impersonal *si* to Icelandic quirky datives, and show that we are actually dealing with the same construction.

2.3. Impersonal si and Icelandic quirky dative constructions

So far, we have seen that Icelandic quirky dative constructions of the type illustrated in (1) have the following characteristics:

- A Nominative Theme which agrees with the verb
- A dative subject

One remark on the terminology: it has been shown by Zaenen, Maling & Thrainsson (1985) that the dative DP in Icelandic is a subject, and therefore I adopt this term here to define the dative DP.

For the Nominative object Sigurðsson (1996) has proposed the term *sobject*, because Nominative is usually the case of the subject, but in Icelandic quirky dative constructions it is associated with an object position. I do not adopt the term *sobject* here, but I simply refer to such a DP as to a Nominative object.

Strikingly similarities hold between Icelandic quirky datives and Italian impersonal *si* constructions. Also impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement of the type exemplified in (2), for instance, exhibit a Nominative Theme which agrees with the verb.

The distribution of impersonal *si* and impersonal datives shows that impersonal *si* constructions also have a dative subject. Supportive evidence for this claim is presented in the next section.

Another important similarity between *si* constructions and quirky datives in Icelandic is that their Nominative objects are both affected by a person restriction: they cannot be other than 3rd person. This phenomenon will be discussed and analyzed in section 3. Both the fact that *si* is a dative and the common phenomenon of the person restriction on the object lead to the certain

conclusion that we are dealing with the same kind of construction in two different languages.

2.4. *'Ci si'*

The hypothesis outlined in the previous section is that impersonal *si* constructions in Italian are quirky dative constructions. In this section, I show that *si* is the dative element in Italian *si* constructions with verb-object agreement.

If this is the case, the constructions in with dative *si* shouldn't allow for other datives. Moreover, the impersonal constructions which do not have a dative *si*, namely the constructions with no verb-object agreement, should allow the presence of a dative in the sentence. In other words: if *si* is dative in verb-object agreeing constructions, no other impersonal dative should be present. It should be possible to find another dative only in those sentences which do not have a dative *si*, i.e. in sentences with no verb-object agreement. In such sentences in fact the object is marked with Accusative and the subject is Nominative (cf. D'Alessandro 2002, to appear *a, b*).

This prediction is in fact borne out: impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement do not allow for an impersonal dative.

It is a well-known fact about Italian that two *si*'s cannot coexist in one sentence: the way one expresses the impersonal dative is by means of *ci*, which is the dative of the 1st person plural *noi* ('we'). This is known as the *ci-si* phenomenon, and is illustrated in (10):

(10) *Si   si   è scambiati   gli auguri
     si-DAT   si   is exchanged-MASC PL   the greetings
     'People/we greeted each other'[3]

The reason for this disambiguation has been investigated by several people in different ways (Burzio 1986 and Cinque 1995 among others). According to Burzio (1996), the *ci si* disambiguation is due to phonological reasons. The two *si*'s cannot be adjacent, and when this happens a phonological rule applies which changes one *si* into a *ci*. The *ci si* disambiguation, however, takes place also when the two *si*'s are not adjacent, as shown in (11):

(11) Ce   li   si è scambiati
     si-DAT   them-MASC 3RD PL ACC   si is exhanged-MASC PL
     'People have exchanged then (one another)'

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[3] In some contexts, *si* can have an inclusive reading, that is it can be used with a 1st person plural meaning. I leave the discussion on this issue aside. For further discussion on this point, refer to D'Alessandro & Alexiadou (2003).

Cinque (1995) has a 'morphological' analysis for the *ci si* disambiguation. According to him, a morphological constraint is active when a clitic bundle is present in a sentence. This constraint states that only one occurrence of a clitic can be present in a clitic 'template'. If an occurrence of *si* is already present, there cannot be another one in the same template. This in turn entails that *ci* is not the dative form of impersonal *si* but a locative. In Italian, in fact, *ci* is also a locative particle.

The meaning of *ci* in *ci si* constructions is, however, that of a dative. There is no locative meaning whatsoever in the sentence, and therefore this analysis appears defective in some respects.

Ci has a dative meaning, and realizes a Benefactive θ-role. There is no reason for not considering it as a dative. *Ci*, as outlined above, is the dative form of the 1st person plural pronoun *noi*. It is no surprise that the non-inflecting *si* realizes its dative form with a suppletive form which is the 1st plural pronoun. There is in fact a strict correlation between impersonal pronouns and 1st person plural pronouns (cf. Cinque 1988, D'Alessandro & Alexiadou 2003).

Assuming then that *ci* is an impersonal dative, we would expect that its presence is blocked in those contexts where an impersonal dative is already present, i.e. in impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement. This is indeed the case. Compare (12) and (13):

(12) A Natale   ci   si   scambia   gli auguri
      at Christmas   si-DAT   si   exchanges-3RD SG   the greetings
      'At Christmas people exchange greetings (with each other)'
(13) ??? A Natale   ci   si scambiano gli   auguri
      at Christmas   si-DAT   si exchange   the greetings
      'At Christmas people exchange greetings (with each other)'

The sentence in (12) is very odd, unacceptable for most speakers. This is exactly what we would expect if *si* is dative in verb-object agreement constructions.

Another piece of evidence that *si* constructions with verb-object agreement are indeed quirky subject constructions comes from a very puzzling phenomenon: the person restriction on the object. Both Icelandic quirky datives and Italian impersonal *si* constructions undergo a selectional restriction of the object, which can only be 3rd person. This parallel behaviour corroborates the hypothesis that we are dealing with the same kind of construction.

2.5. Crosslinguistic evidence: the person constraint

It is a well known fact that Icelandic quirky dative constructions do not admit every DP in object position. The Nominative DPs need to be 3rd person, or the sentence is ungrammatical. This characteristic of Icelandic quirky datives has

been pointed out in several studies, such as Sigurðsson (1996) and Hrafnbjargarson (2001, 2002). The following examples show how the person restriction on the object operates in Icelandic:

(14) Henni   leiddust   stràkarnir /   þeir
     her-DAT   bored-3RD PL   the-boys-PL NOM   they-3RD PL NOM
     'She found the boys boring'   [Sigurðsson (1996:1)]

(15) *Henni leiddust   þið/   leiddumst   við
     her-DAT bored-2ND PL you-2ND PL NOM bored-1ST PL we-1ST PL NOM
     'She found you/us boring'   [Sigurðsson (1996:28)]

(14) shows that the Nominative object cannot be 1st or 2nd person in Icelandic. Interestingly, Italian impersonal *si* constructions undergo the same constraint: their Nominative object cannot be other than 3rd person, as shown in examples (16)- (18):

(16) In televisione   si   vede   Maria /lui
     in television   si   sees-3RD SG Maria/ he-3RD SG NOM
     'One sees Maria/ him on TV'

(17) In televisione   si   vedono   Maria e   Gianni/ loro
     in television   si   see-3RD PL   Maria and Gianni they-3RD PL NOM
     'One sees Maria and Gianni/ them on TV'

(18) *In televisione si vedo   io /   vedi   tu /
     in television   si see-1ST SG I-1ST SG NOM see-2ND SG   you-2ND SG

     vediamo   noi/   vedete   voi
     see-1ST PL   we-1ST PL NOM   see-2ND PL   you-2ND PL NOM
     'One sees me/ you/ us/ you on TV'

Boeckx (1998) and Anagnostopoulou (2001, 2002) both propose to analyze the person restriction on the object as an instance of the Person-Case constraint, which was first observed in Bonet (1994). Such constraint applies only to weak elements and is roughly stated as follows:

(19) **Person-Case Constraint:** if DAT then ACC 3rd   [Bonet (1994:36)]

This constraint can be expanded to include Nominative objects in the case of Icelandic, where these Nominative DPs are not weak elements (Boeckx 1998 and Anagnostopoulou 2001, 2002). Interestingly, the only other case in which this constraint is active with full DPs are Italian impersonal *si* constructions. This suggests once more that there is much in common between the two structures.

Sigurðsson (1996), Boeckx (1998), Anagnostopoulou (2001, 2002) attribute a special prominence to the role that dative plays in the agreement patterns. I will give a short overview of the main ideas on the person restriction in the next section. Subsequently, I provide a different explanation for the facts observed

in this section, based on the role that reflexive morphology plays in determining the person restriction.

3. The person restriction on the object

In section 2.5. I have shown that a restriction holds on the person of Nominative objects in quirky subjects constructions. Such constraint doesn't allow a 1st or 2nd person in object position. Before summarizing in short the major proposals which have been put forward in order to account for such constraint, we should draw our attention to another quirky dative construction, which is very similar to Icelandic quirky dative and Italian *si*: the psych verb construction.

3.1. Psych verbs

It is well known that some Italian psych verbs require a dative subject. In (20) we have an example of a psych verb of this kind:

(20) Gli   piacciono   le auto
     him-DAT   likes-3RD SG the cars-FEM PL
     'He likes cars'

In (20), just like in the Icelandic constructions we have considered so far, the verb agrees with a Nominative object, and the subject is dative.

Belletti & Rizzi (1988) and Cardinaletti (2003) show how the dative DP ends up in subject position (Spec, AgrSP). We are thus dealing with another quirky dative construction, which is exactly parallel to the ones we have considered so far.

Interestingly, these psych verb constructions do not undergo the person restriction on the object, as shown in (21):

(21) Gli   piaccio   io /   piaci   tu
     him-DAT   like-1ST SG I-1ST SG NOM like-2ND SG you-2ND SG
     'He likes me/you'

In (21), the verb agrees with a Nominative object which is 1st or 2nd person. No restriction on the object person holds.

Any theory which aims to account for the person restriction on the object in Icelandic and in Italian *si* would also need to justify the lack of person restriction with Italian psych verbs.

In what follows, I give a short overview of the main proposals that have been made in order to account for the person restriction on the object in Icelandic.

3.2. Structural constraints

Several analyses have been put forward in order to account for the person restriction on the object in Icelandic quirky subject constructions. In this section, I shortly summarize the most relevant proposals (Sigurðsson 1996, Boeckx 1998, Anagnostopoulou 2001, 2002).

 Sigurðsson (1996) accounts for the facts which relying on a structural constraint. He starts from the assumption that a head and its specifier cannot be both specified, i.e. that there can be either agreement features on the head or Case features on the specifier of a projection. Sigurðsson shows that the quirky dative in Icelandic moves to the specifier of the AgrSP projection, that is it moves to the position where the subject usually lands. The specifier of the AgrS projection is thus occupied by a DP which is specified for case. This means that the AgrS node cannot be specified for agreement, because there is already a specification on its specifier. The AgrS which assigns Nominative needs to be underspecified for agreement. Underspecification for agreement means lack of the person feature in particular, and therefore agreement with a DP which has no person or is marked with 3rd person. 3rd person is in fact considered, since Benveniste (1966), as no person (see Roberts 2002 for 3rd person marking in English as marker for lack of person).

Sigurðsson's analysis is technically very appealing, but fails to account for the cause of the person constraint, which needs to be sought elsewhere. Moreover, in Sigurðsson's model there is nothing which can explain the lack of person restriction on the object in Italian psych verb constructions.

Boeckx (1998) and Anagnostopoulou (2001, 2002) both propose, in different terms, that the dative DP has a central role in causing the person restriction on the object. According to this line of reasoning, the dative agrees with the verb, which in turn agrees with the DP object to which it assigns Nominative case. The dative has a person feature which checks the person feature on T, because datives are 'intrinsically animate' (cf. Anagnostopoulou 2001, 2002). According to Anagnostopoulou, the dative DP lacks number, and hence it cannot check the number feature on T. Thus, T results in having a person specification after agreement with the dative. The number specification will be received via agreement with the DP object. Since both the DP object and the dative DP agree with T, the object needs to be 3rd person in order to avoid feature mismatch on T.

The idea of the double agreement of the verb both with the dative and with the DP accounts for the person restriction phenomenon, but leaves a question open as to why the dative should agree with the verb in T. Also, it is not completely clear that dative doesn't have a number feature. This assumption would mean that a pronoun has different φ-features depending on its Case-case. In addition to this, if the dative DP was the cause of the person restriction on the object, this constraint should automatically hold for Italian psych verbs of the kind exemplified in (20). As shown in (21), this is not the case.

These considerations force us to direct our attention towards something else as responsible for the person restriction on the object. The origin of the person constraint, I believe, resides in the reflexive pronoun which happens to be used as an impersonal. Impersonal *si* has reflexive morphology. Since Beneveniste (1966) it is a common assumption that reflexive pronouns pattern together with 1st and 2nd person pronouns. In other words, reflexive pronouns do have the person feature that other 3rd person pronouns lack (see also Kayne 2000).

In the next section, after a short introduction of the theoretical background which I assume, I will show that the reflexive pronoun is responsible for the person restriction on the DP object.

3.3. Some theoretical assumptions

My analysis is based on the following assumptions, which are in conformity with Chomsky (1999):

- Unvalued (uninterpretable) features on lexical items need to be valued (and eliminated) in the syntax during the derivation, before the interface level with other systems is reached.
- The valuation of unvalued features takes place via Match of φ-features + Agree.
- The Agree relation doesn't necessarily take place in a Specifier-Head configuration, but it can act long-distance, subject to locality conditions.

Some other assumptions concern the nature of *si* and the feature distribution on functional heads. As I have shown in section 2.1., impersonal *si* is not specified for number.

By observing the agreement facts of *si* impersonal constructions, and especially the fact that the verb always shows 3rd person inflection, one might be tempted to conclude that *si* is 3rd person. According to Benveniste (1966), 3rd person is lack of person, and therefore *si* should lack a person feature. As we have observed before, however, the intrinsic animacy of *si* and the fact that *si* has reflexive morphology both indicate that *si* actually has a person feature. This view is assumed, among others, by Bonet (1991, 1995), Taraldsen (1995), Kayne (1998) and Anagnostopoulou (2001, 2002).

The person feature on *si* is not specified. It is worth observing, though, that the interpretation of impersonal *si* constructions varies between an inclusive reading ('we' reading) and an exclusive one. Several factors seem to be responsible for such variation, aspect being one of the main causes of change in interpretation. The inclusive/generic alternation hints at a more complex composition of the person feature, which might be made up of subfeatures. I will not go into the details of the composition of the person feature of *si* in this paper. For the present purposes, it is enough to say that *si* has a person feature.

It is commonly assumed that there must be uniformity of features on a head. In particular, if a clitic incorporates on a head, its φ-features cannot be different from those on the head. This requirement has a fundamental importance for the determination of the person restriction on the object.

3.4. A derivational analysis of the person restriction

Let us reconsider example (2), here repeated as (22):

(22) In   Italia si mangiano   gli spaghetti
     in   Italy si eat-3RD PL   the spaghetti-MASC PL NOM
     'In Italy one eats spaghetti'

The derivation of (22) runs as follows (cfr. D'Alessandro 2002 a, b):

- The DP *gli spaghetti* is merged with the verb and gets the internal θ-role. Such DP needs to have its Case feature valued.
- A defective *v* is merged with the VP. Such *v* doesn't assign Accusative case.
- The DP object remains without Case, because *v* cannot value its Case features.
- *Si* is merged in the specifier of *v* (see Manzini 1986, Harley 1998, Embick 2000, Cuervo 2002), and there it gets quirky dative.
- The T head is merged. The verb moves to T.
- Right after the merging of T, an Agree relation in established between T and the DP object, which gets Nominative case.
- *Si* cliticizes on T, incorporating on the T head (Chomsky 1995).

At this point, on the T head there are virtually two person features: the one which is introduced by *si* and the one which is provided by the DP. There seems to be a conflict on the T head. The sentence in (22) is however grammatical and the derivation doesn't crash. Hence, we need to conclude that one of the two person features is actually not there. By taking a closer look at the DP object in (22), we can easily conclude that this is indeed the case: the object DP lacks a person feature. According to Beneveniste (1966) and Kayne (2000), only 1st and 2nd person pronouns and reflexives have a syntactic person feature. The other pronouns, namely the 3rd person pronouns, lack a person feature. This line of reasoning can of course be extended to all lexical items. The DP object in (22) is 3rd person, and thus has no person feature. Thus, there is only one person feature, namely *si*'s, on the T head. The feature mismatch is avoided, and the derivation is grammatical.

If the object had a person feature, there would be a feature mismatch on the T head and the derivation would crash.

Observe that if impersonal *si* has a person feature, this in turn entails that the verb can never show 1st or 2nd person agreement when *si* is present. This is indeed the case, as I show in the next section.

3.4.1. Si never triggers plural agreement

One important consequence of the fact that *si* has a person feature is that no verb can show 1st or 2nd person inflection when impersonal *si* is present. The person of *si* values the person feature of the verb, thus preventing its valuation in any other way. In other words, even if there are other elements in the clause which could trigger 1st or 2nd inflection on the verb, they have no chance of triggering person agreement on the verb because of the presence of *si*.

The following data from Italian show that this is exactly what happens:

(23) Ti   vedi   sempre   in tv!
     you-2ND SG ACC see-2ND SG   always   in tv
     'One always sees you on tv'

(24) Ti   si vede   sempre   in tv!
     you-2ND SG ACC si sees-3RD SG   always   in tv
     'One always sees you on tv'

In (23) the reflexive form *vedersi* is used. This reflexive *si* doesn't trigger any restriction, as anticipated in 2.1. This is due to its non-referentiality, and thus to the different nature of its person feature.

Whenever impersonal *si* is present, no matter which verb class we consider, the person feature on the verb will not be 1st or 2nd, as the next example shows:

(25) Si   telefona/   *o/   *i/   *iamo
     si   calls-3RD SG / call-1ST SG/ call-2ND SG call-1ST PL
     'One calls'

Si is thus responsible for the person restriction on the object and for the inflection on the verb in impersonal *si* constructions.

In section 2.3. I showed that *si* impersonals and Icelandic quirky subjects undergo the same person constraint. I also showed that in Italian *si* constructions *si* is responsible for the person restriction on the object. The question now is whether there is something in Icelandic which has the same role as *si* for the person restriction. The answer is yes: such element is the *–st* ending of Icelandic verbs that allow for a dative subject. I show the details of this proposal in the next section.

3.5. Icelandic –st verbs

Not all verbs allow for a quirky dative in Icelandic. According to Anderson (1990) and Taraldsen (1994), the verbs which allow for dative subjects all share a common feature: the *-st* ending. This is a feature which belongs to 99% of the Icelandic verbs which allow a quirky dative subject (Jonsson 2002).

Very interestingly, *-st* is etymologically a reflexive pronoun. The form *–st* has derived from the Old Icelandic reflexive pronoun *sik*. This means that the ending *–st* has a person specification. That is, *-st* shares the same properties as impersonal *–si* in Italian. We can conclude that Icelandic *–st* has functioned as Italian *si* in quirky constructions, restricting the person feature on the Nominative object. In particular, *-st* is the person specification on Icelandic verbs. If the verb in T already has a person specification, it can only agree with no person DPs, i.e. with a 3rd person object. The person restriction on the object of Icelandic quirky subject constructions is thus also due to a reflexive element which provides the verb with a person feature.

3.6. Psych verbs

In section 3.1. I claim that a model which provides an explanation for the person restriction on the object needs to provide one also for the lack of such restriction in Italian psych verbs.

Those Italian psych verbs which allow a dative subject and have a Nominative object which agrees with the verb do not undergo the person restriction on the object. This fact would sound mysterious if we attributed the cause of the person restriction to the presence of the dative subject. The facts appear less mysterious if we attribute the cause of the person restriction to another element, which is present in *si* constructions and in Icelandic quirky datives but is absent in psych verbs. There is no element in psych verbs constructions which can perform the role that *si* and *–st* perform. Therefore, there is nothing in such constructions which can cause the person restriction.

4. Conclusions

In this paper, I have shown that Italian impersonal *si* constructions with verb-object agreement and Icelandic quirky dative constructions are indeed the same construction, and that the common phenomena that they present, such as a Nominative object which agrees with the verb and the restriction on the person of this object, are to be traced back to the same underlying structure. In particular, a crucial role for the person restriction on the object is played by the morphologically reflexive pronouns (*si* for Italian, *-st* for Icelandic, which is derived from a reflexive pronoun). The absence of such pronouns explains the lack of person restriction in other quirky constructions, such as Italian psych verb ones.

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