

## On Infinitivals Hosting Logophors: The Case of Icelandic

Hans-Martin Gärtner

*Abstract.* This squib provides counterexamples to the claim that Icelandic reflexive *sig* cannot be construed logophorically if immediately contained inside an infinitival clause. Consequences for Eric Reuland's views on the division of labor between grammar and pragmatics are discussed.

*Keywords.* Icelandic, Reflexives, Logophors, Infinitival Clauses, Subjunctives.

*Postal Address.*

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Research Institute for Linguistics, Benczúr utca 33, 1068 Budapest, Hungary.

*E-Mail.* gaertner@nytud.hu

Largely due to work by Philippe Schlenker (e.g., 1999, 2003, 2004), recent years have seen intensified interest in indexicality and how it filters into contexts of speech and thought representation. For linguists, this has reraised the question of how to model the division of labor between grammar and pragmatics. Our modest purpose here is to contribute to this debate by reviewing a particular aspect of logophoricity in Icelandic, namely, its licensing within infinitivals.

It has become a matter of general agreement that Icelandic reflexive *sig* can find an antecedent independently of structural conditions like being a co-argument, a clausemate, or c-commanded, as long as the minimal CP containing *sig* is a subjunctive CP whose content represents the speech or thought of the antecedent (cf. Reuland 2006, and references cited there). At the same time, Reuland and Sigurjónsdóttir (1997) have argued that *sig*, when minimally contained within an infinitival clause, must obey structural binding conditions (cf. Reuland 2006; Thráinsson 2007). In fact it was concluded that

the situation reflects [...] the lack of interaction between the computational and interpretive systems. Both operate blindly. Within sentence grammar, properties of the computational system cut across the patterns of the interpretive system. Whenever there is a choice, using the computational system takes precedence. Only where the computational system has nothing to say can the effects of pragmatic conditions on interpretation be directly observed (Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997:334).

The evidence from infinitivals supporting such a view crucially boils down to the following three examples (Reuland 2006:549; Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997:330; cf. Thráinsson 2007:494).

- (1) a. \* [DP Skoðun Jóns<sub>i</sub> ]<sub>j</sub> virðist [CP *t<sub>j</sub>* vera hættuleg fyrir sig<sub>i</sub>. ]  
*opinion John's seems.IND be.INF dangerous for REFL*  
'John's opinion seems to be dangerous for him.'
- b. \* [DP Ósk Jóns<sub>i</sub> ]<sub>j</sub> er líkleg til  
*wish John's is.IND likely to*  
[CP *t<sub>j</sub>* að hafa slæmar afleiðingar fyrir sig<sub>i</sub>. ]  
*to have.INF bad consequences for REFL*  
'John's wish seems to have bad consequences for him.'
- c. \* [DP Álit Jóns<sub>i</sub> ]<sub>j</sub> er sagt [CP *t<sub>j</sub>* hæfa sér<sub>i</sub> vel. ]  
*belief John's is.IND said suit.INF REFL well*  
'John's belief is said to suit him well.'

Clearly, ‘[t]hese sentences contain a constituent that is a possible perspective holder, but does not c-command *sig*’ (Reuland 2006:548). ‘Thus, the sentences in [(1)] show that for *sig* in infinitival clauses, discourse factors are unable to compensate for the lack of c-command’ (Reuland 2006:549).

However, as pointed out by Gärtner (2009), the examples in (1) violate an important condition on logophoric licensing: the infinitival CPs do not represent (or invite construal as representing) the speech or thought of the putative attitude holder, Jón. They do not express the content of Jón’s opinion, wish, or belief but, instead, form part of predications over these abstract objects. Via an anonymous reviewer, this critique has found its way (in simplified form) into the recapitulation of these matters by Reuland (2011:314-323). There it is suggested that ‘ideally one should test structures of the form [(2)]’ (p. 320).

(2) Jon’s wish is for SIG to have talent

Also, it is correctly pointed out that (direct counterparts of) such structures, i.e., *for*-infinitivals, are absent from Icelandic. At the same time, it is denied somewhat apodictically that ‘any other structure with the required properties [...] exist[s] in Icelandic’ (ibid.). This is what I would like to take issue with. In fact, quite acceptable counterexamples like the control infinitivals in (3) are not so hard to construct.<sup>1</sup>

(3) a. [DP Krafa Jóns<sub>i</sub> til okkar ] er  
*request John’s to us is.IND*  
 [CP að styðja sig<sub>i</sub> við þessar aðstæður. ]  
*to support.INF REFL with these conditions*  
 ‘John’s request from us is to support him in this situation.’

b. [DP Ráð(legging) Jóns<sub>i</sub> (til okkar) ] var  
*advice John’s to us was.IND*  
 [CP að vitna í sig<sub>i</sub> á hverri blaðsíðu. ]  
*to cite.INF PRP REFL on every page*  
 ‘John’s advice (to us) was to cite him on every page.’

The infinitival in (3b), for example, is (construable as) used to report on a first person directive by Jón such as *Cite me on every page!* or *I want you to cite me on every page.*

Interestingly, there is some speaker variability concerning such examples (see Endnote 1). However, as became clear to me through comments by Höskuldur Thráinsson (p.c.), the main factor on which to pin this variability is the ease with which speakers tolerate “object” control in control noun configurations. Thus, even for speakers who allow this, a slight blocking effect may result from the fact that a perfectly acceptable finite subjunctive competitor exists (*að við styðjum sig<sub>i</sub> við þessar aðstæður* ‘that we support him in this situation’) that resolves any interpretive ambiguities. Further clarification requires more large scale inquiry into control noun configurations (cf., e.g., Restle 2006), an undertaking that goes beyond the scope of the current remarks.

One may, of course, wonder whether the existence of logophors inside infinitival clauses changes anything for the interaction between grammar and pragmatics. This clearly depends on how that interaction is modeled. Reuland (2006:552) tentatively concludes that ‘[i]nsofar as Icelandic logophoric *sig* requires a subjunctive [...] the role of the subjunctive should be that of blocking a syntactic connection between *sig* and its antecedent.’ The implementation of this goes back to Reuland (2001:466-467). Accordingly, the bindable features of the

reflexive,  $\varphi_{sig}$ , get (optionally) attracted (along with  $I^0$ ) by a subjunctive operator in the C-domain. From there,  $\varphi_{sig}$  is no longer available for A-chain-formation and thus no longer accessible for structural binding. This mechanism accounts for the option of logophoric construal.

Now, if one wants to preserve such a perspective in the light of examples like the ones in (3), it is by no means unattractive to postulate the optional presence of a similar operator in the C-domain of control infinitivals.<sup>2</sup> Formally, that option plausibly does not arise in cases of (counterparts of) clause union, so the standard mechanism of extending the binding domain for reflexives in infinitivals, i.e., “verb raising” at LF according to Reuland and Sigurjónsdóttir (1997:336,fn.18), remains unaffected there. On the interpretive side it is striking that Kempchinsky, one of the authors endorsed as sources for the operator analysis of the subjunctive (Reuland 2001:466), suggests ‘that subjunctive complements to verbs of volition, influence, and command are in some sense like embedded imperatives’ and that licensing involves ‘an imperative operator in the subordinate C’ (Quer 2006:669). This fits nicely with our above observations regarding the examples in (3).<sup>3</sup>

Independent evidence for the necessity of a suitable operator in the left periphery of infinitivals would also come from the licensing of logophoric *sig* in purpose clauses. Example (4) is a case in point.<sup>4</sup>

- (4) Jón<sub>i</sub> dreymdi að María<sub>j</sub> hefði keypt kjól  
*John dreamed.IND that Mary had.SUBJ bought dress*  
 [ til að PRO<sub>j</sub> ganga í augun á sér<sub>i</sub>. ]  
*for to go.INF in eyes on REFL*  
 ‘John dreamed that Mary had bought a dress (in order) to please him.’

In sum, there are reasons to believe that Icelandic does allow logophoric reflexives inside infinitival clauses. At the same time, there are reasons to believe that this can be treated in ways compatible with a strict division of labor between grammar and pragmatics as envisioned by Reuland (2001, 2006, 2011) and Reuland and Sigurjónsdóttir (1997).<sup>5</sup>

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Examples (3a), (3b), and (4) have been constructed with the help of native speaker Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson, who also endorsed them as acceptable. (3a) is modeled on a related example pointed out by Halldór Sigurðsson, which, however, can be reanalyzed as involving standard binding under c-command (Reuland 2006:553,fn.13).

In response to reviewer requests, I asked four native speakers, who are all linguists, to rate the examples on a five point scale: (i) perfectly fine; (ii) somewhat odd but still ok; (iii) unclear; (iv) rather odd; (v) completely unacceptable. The scores are as follows: (3a) = 3×(ii); 1×(v) / (3b) = 3×(ii); 1×(iv) / (4) = 3×(i); 1×(iii). For (3b), the proviso was made that *ráð* be disambiguated to *ráðlegging* and that *til okkar* be added. For (4), one speaker suggested that judgments are clearer if *María* is changed to first person *ég* (*mutatis mutandis*).

<sup>2</sup> For (building blocks of) approaches that opt for a more direct modeling of logophoricity and speech/thought representation, see, among others, Koopman & Sportiche (1989), Sigurðsson (2004), and von Stechow (2004).

<sup>3</sup> As is well-known, it is not obvious that a unified semantics for the subjunctive (operator) can be given. This is discussed in some detail by Schlenker (2005) and Portner (2011). In addition to substantial cross-linguistic variation – even inside the Romance and the Germanic language families – and cases of grammaticalization (for Icelandic, see Sigurðsson 2011; Thráinsson 2007:8.1), one recurrent theme is a major split, likely to be due to modern (Indo-European) subjunctives being syncretisms of old subjunctives and optatives (cf., e.g., Diekhoff 1911). Thus, under Kempchinsky’s perspective, ‘subjunctive-taking verbs that do not belong to the volitional or directive type do not select such an imperative operator, and consequently I-to-C movement does not apply’ (Quer 2006:670).

<sup>4</sup> Whelpton (2002) provides some relevant discussion of Icelandic infinitival purpose/reason clauses.

<sup>5</sup> In order to develop a better understanding of the extent to which the licensing of logophors can become independent of (overtly realized) subjunctive mood, further research should be done on Faroese. Recent work on Faroese “long-distance reflexives” has been carried out by Strahan (2011), who points out mismatches between Faroese and Icelandic and cautions against simplistic approaches to the latter.

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