**Icelandic sig: a standard anaphor, after all**

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**Goal** - Should there be different binding domains for anaphors (Wexler & Manzini 1987, a.o.)? and is the domain size correlated with the morphological complexity of anaphors (Pica 1987, a.o.)? One of the best known cases motivating positive answers to both of these questions is based on the contrast between the morphologically simple Icelandic anaphor sig and the morphologically complex English anaphor x-self. The research reported here shows that, under closer scrutiny, it is warranted to treat the English and the Icelandic anaphors alike, removing a major obstacle on the way to a universally valid Condition A, imposing a unique binding domain for all anaphors.

**Background** - It has been observed that in various languages, some instances of anaphors seem not to satisfy locality conditions imposed by the “standard” Condition A (very roughly – but enough for here: an anaphor must be bound within its clause, Chomsky 1986, a.o.). To account for this, two main approaches have been adopted: (i) Postulate different binding domains (ii) Exempt anaphors from binding requirements when used logophorically: anaphors anteceded by perspective centers – call them logophors - can escape locality conditions (Sells 1987, Pollard & Sag 1992, a.o.). Thus, either cross-linguistic or cross-anaphor uniformity is lost; or logophoric exemption (and its theory) is needed. Strikingly, the facts reported for Icelandic, which clearly distinguishes infinitive from finite clauses, have been generally argued to require both approaches simultaneously (Thráinsson 1976, Maling 1984, Sells 1987, Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997, Thráinsson 2007). These authors conclude that on the one hand, the anaphor sig in infinitive clauses (need not be logophoric and) must be anteceded by a binder outside of the standard domain, so that the binding domain for sig in Icelandic is the finite clause; on the other hand, sig in subjunctive clauses is a logophor exempt from binding or locality conditions anteceded by a perspective center.

One hypothesis which does not lead to such an uneconomical conclusion, namely Anderson (1986), only adopts approach (i), by taking both infinitives and subjunctives as extending the domain within which sig must be anteceded by a binder. But this has been convincingly refuted based on the crucial role logophoricity plays for sig in subjunctive clauses (see references above).

We will defend the reverse hypothesis, so far never seriously entertained, which takes sig anteceded from outside its clause in both infinitive and subjunctive clauses to be in fact logophoric.

**Arguments for logophoric sig in infinitives** – This hypothesis predicts that: (a) sig in infinitives, just like in subjunctives, cannot be long distance bound when it is not logophoric; (b) conversely, sig in infinitives, just like in subjunctives, need not be c-commanded by its antecedent when it is logophoric.

Following Charnavel & Sportiche (2016), we test point (a) with inanimate sig, which cannot be logophoric, as perspective centers require a mental state which inanimates lack. The distribution of inanimate sig thus reveals the binding locality constraints sig is subject to without the potential confound due to logophoric readings. Accordingly, (2) shows that inanimate sig (vs. the pronoun) is disallowed when long distance bound in infinitives, just like in subjunctives (3) (*pace* Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997, cf. Reuland 2006: fn 13, Reuland 2011: 318), while it is acceptable if locally bound as in (1). In other words, sig in an infinitive cannot be long distance bound when it is not logophoric.

(1) [Petta vandamál], minnir okkur stöðugt á sig,
   [local]
   “[This problem], constantly reminds us of itself.”
   (Thráinsson 2007: 471)
(2) a. [Petta alvarlega vandamál], fékk Jón til [jon að leita lengi lausnar á {*sér / hví;}].
   [infinitive]
   “[This serious problem], made John look for its solution for a long time.”
   b. Síminn, neyðir mig til [jon að hlæða { *sig / hann;} á tveggja tíma frestí].
   “[The telephone], forces me to charge it every two hours.”
(3) [Petta vandamál], kraflöst þess [um að við hugsaum stöðugt um {*sig / það;}].
   [subjunctive]
   “[This problem], demanded that we constantly thought about it.”
   (Sigurdsson 1990: 335)
This is corroborated by examples such as (4) where sig in an infinitive cannot refer to a non-logophoric animate (object) antecedent, just like in (5) involving a subjunctive.

(4) *Eg hótaði Jóni, [jon að lemlja sig].
   [infinitive]
   “I threatened Joni to hit him.”
   (Reuland 2011: 319)
(5) Jóni, sannfærói Maríu um [um að ég hejði gleymt sér].
   [subjunctive]
   “Johni, convinced Maryi that I had forgotten him/her.”
   (Sigurdsson 1990: 334)
All examples in the literature that are claimed to involve long distance sig in infinitives disallow
inanimate sig, hence involve logophoricity. The most straightforward cases use as antecedents subjects of verbs like ask, order, believe...etc, which all are or can be perspective centers.

Point (b) has been claimed not to hold by consistent Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997 (who argue for consistent differences between the antecedent possibilities of sig in subjunctives vs. infinitives, see also Reuland 2006, 2011: 8.5) based on contrasts such as that between (6) and (7).

(6) *Skoðun Jóns, virist [ska vera hættuleg fyrir sig].

"John's opinion seems to be dangerous for him." (Reuland & Sigurjónsdóttir 1997: 330)

(7) Skoðun Jóns er [ska sig vanti hæfileika].

"John's opinion is that he lacks talent." (Maling 1984: 222)

This contrast is however not conclusive. While a perspective center as antecedent is necessary to license a logophor, it is not sufficient: the logophor must also occur in a constituent expressing the content of this perspective center’s thoughts. And although the subjunctive clause containing sig in (7) indeed describes the content of John’s opinion, the infinitive clause containing sig in (6) does not express the content of this opinion (cf. Reuland’s 2011 remark: 320, Gärtner 2015): the infinitive clause expresses the perspective of the evidential source of seem, not John’s. The exact infinitival counterpart of (7) does not exist in Icelandic, but (8)-(9) show that sig need not be antecedent by a c-commander if it is contained in an infinitive clause expressing the perspective of this antecedent.

(8) Samkvæmt Haraldi, þá fêkk lagið hans Mariú til [infinitive]

"According to Harold, his song got Mary to think about him."

(9) Ráð,legging Jóns, (til okkar) var [infinitive]

"John’s advice (to us) was to cite him on every page." (Gärtner 2015)

Space prevents us from discussing here other published putative counterexamples but they similarly suffer from confounding factors, either failing to control for the behavior of inanimates or tied to the various logophoricity dimensions available (see Sells 1987, Charnavel & Zlogar 2016, a.o.).

Finally, it is sometimes argued, based on the near complementarity between anaphors and pronouns in their binding domain, that finite clauses form sig’s binding domain because sig and hann (the pronoun) are: it is claimed - in complementarity distribution as exemplified in (10).

(10) Jón, skiptaði mér [infinitive]

"John, ordered me to shave him." (Anderson 1986)

This overlooks the de se and non de se distinction. As shown in (11), sig needs to be read de se in infinitives while hann cannot and there is in fact no positional complementarity.

(11) [Context: Maria and others have taken part in a recorded song competition. Ultimately, Jon will decide who is the winner. Jon listens to the recordings and states that Maria is the best singer.

a. (de se context) Maria hears Jon say “this is the best singer” and realizes he is talking about her.

b. (non de se context) Maria hears Jon say “this is the best singer” but does not realize he is talking about her (she does not recognize her voice in the recording).

Maria, taldi [infinitive]

"Maria, believed John to have elected her."

Thus, the apparent complementarity between sig and hann is not due to Condition B (as also shown by 2), but is interpretively driven and follows, we argue, from a general preference for more specified forms (see e.g. Schlenker 2005): sig is preferred over hann under de se readings as in (10)-(11a). If time permits, we will discuss why complementarity is not as readily observed when sig is used logophorically in subjunctives, tying this behavior to whether an embedded clause under an attitude must (infinitives) or only may (subjunctives) express the content of the attitude holder’s perspective, and relating this to the complex dialectal situation in subjunctives/indicatives (Sigurðsson 1990: 332).

Conclusion – The only condition exempting sig from Condition A is logophorarity. Pending extensions to others cases (e.g. Scandinavian/Germanic), a crosslinguistically uniform binding domain regardless of morphological complexity (as suggested for Mandarin ziji in Huang & Liu 2001) is a parsimonious and viable option.