

KURYŁOWICZ'S FOURTH LAW IN SYNTAX AND MORPHOLOGY AND A POSSIBLE EXCEPTION. EXAMPLES FROM FAROESE

by
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1. Introduction

There is a general tendency in Faroese to change Accusative Subject Constructions (ASC) and Dative Subject Constructions (DSC) to Nominative. This, and the loss of genitive, is the topic of this paper, where we see Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law at work in syntax. The last section deals with the development of the verbs *hava* 'to have', *leggja* 'to lay', and *sigja* 'to say', where we will suggest that past tense in these verbs show an exception from Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law.

A definition of analogy is given in Anttila (1989:88) where he says that: 'Analogy is a function of the relational aspects of grammar and a mental striving for simplicity or uniformity'. Sturtevant's paradox says that sound changes are regular and cause irregularity, while analogy is irregular and causes regularity. The reason for mentioning this paradox is that even though analogy is irregular, Jerzy Kuryłowicz (1895-1978), a Polish linguist, proposed analogical laws in 1947 (Kuryłowicz 1947). His fellow countryman, Witold Mańczak, building on the idea of Kuryłowicz, suggested nine specific principles of analogy, which he calls tendencies (Mańczak 1958). Note the different wording.

One law, Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law, is relevant for the present paper. This law says that:

Given a morphological derivation resulting in two differentiated forms, the derived form takes over the primary function and the old form is reserved for a secondary function. (Collinge 1985:249)

We will illustrate the law with the development of nominative and vocative in Old Irish. The paradigm is shown below (from Thurneysen's Old Irish Grammar (Thurneysen 1980). The inflected word is the word for *man*.

Table 1

| | SINGULAR | PLURAL |
|----|----------|----------|
| N. | fer | fir |
| V. | fir | firu |
| A. | fer | firu |
| G. | fir | fer |
| D. | fiur | fer(a)ib |

The nominative plural requires lenition. Thurneysen says that 'By lenition the stops *c*, *t* (and *p* in loanwords), *g*, *d* and *b* are transformed into the spirants *ch*, *th*, *ph* (=f), *γ*, *δ* and *β*...' (Thurneysen 1980:76).

Insular Celtic *casidanī* shows the vowel in the nominative plural. The ending goes back to the pronominal ending **-oi* (Greek *-oi*, Gothic *-ai*) (Thurneysen 1980). The old nominative ending in plural is preserved in the vocative plural *-u* (*fīru*) from the Indo-European nominative plural ending **-ōs*, corresponding to Sanskrit *-āh* and Gothic *-ōs* (Thurneysen 1980).

This is an example of Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law, that is: a new morphological form or derivation (the *-oi* ending of the pronouns) gets a primary function, marking nominative, while the old morphological form, the original **-ōs* in nominative plural, has a secondary function, namely to signalize the vocative in the plural.

We will, as mentioned in the beginning of this paper, apply Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law to a syntactic change in Dative and Accusative Subject Constructions (see section 2), and Possessive Constructions (see section 3) in Faroese.

At the end of the paper (section 4), we will show a possible exception from the Fourth Law, where the past tenses of the verbs *hava* 'to have', *leggja* 'to lay', and *sigja* 'to say' presumably got their root vowels from the subjunctive (Weyhe 1996). That is: a secondary form got a primary function from the subjunctive to mark past tense.

The syntactic constructions under consideration are illustrated in (1) below.

The example in (1) is an Accusative Subject Construction. The sentence is nothing more than an idiomatic expression in Modern Faroese.

- (1) meg lystir at vita
me-acc. like-3p-sg. to know
'I would like to know'

The example in (2a) shows that the nominative case is ruled out, while (2b) and (2c) show how a different verb is used in colloquial Faroese.

- (2) a. *eg lysti(r) at vita
I-nom. like-1/3p-sg. to know
'I would like to know'
- b. eg kundi hugsað mær at fingið at vitað
I-nom. would like me-dat. to get to know
'I would like to know'
- c. eg hevði havt hug at vitað (or: fingið at vitað)
I-nom. had had desire to know (or: got to know)
'I would like to know'

2. Change in Dative and Accusative Subject Constructions

Faroese and Icelandic are the only Scandinavian languages that allow Dative Subject Constructions (DSC) and Accusative Subject Constructions (ASC) (Barnes 1986, Ura 2000, Eythórssón 2000).¹ It is possible to have a Dative Subject as in (3) below:

- (3) a. Mær dámar mjólkina
me-dat. like-3p.sg. milk-the
'I like the milk'
- b. Okkum tørvar pengarnar
us-dat.pl. need-3p.sg. money-acc.-the
'We need money'
- c. Tær vantar pengarnar
you-dat.sg. lack-3p.sg. money-acc.-the
'You need the money'

These constructions are common in written Faroese, although there is a widespread use of nominative instead of dative in colloquial Faroese (Barnes 1986). (3a) would be:

- (4) Eg dámi mjólk
'I like milk'

There are examples with Accusative Subject Constructions, e.g. from the Bible translation of Victor Danielsen with accusative subjects as in (5a), and from the Bible translation of Dahl and Viderø (5b, c, d) in addition to an example from *Føroysk orðabók* (Faroese Dictionary = FD) (Poulsen et al. 1998) in (5e). Note that (5a,b) contain examples with DSC with the verb *tykja* 'seem', in past tense *tókti*.

- (5) a. Tá id høvuðsbakarinn sá, at ráðanin var góð, segði Jósef: »Eisini meg droymdi dreym og tókti mær, at eg bar á høvdi mínum tríggjar tægur við hveitibreyðum« (1. Gen 40,16).

(An approximate translation would be):

When the master baker saw that what was done was good, Josef said: Me-acc. too dreamt a dream-acc., and seemed me-dat. that I had on my head three baskets with wheat bread.

- b. »Eisini meg droymdi dreym og tókti mær, at eg bar á høvdi mínum tríggjar tægur við hveitibreyð« (1. Gen 40,16).

Me-acc. too dreamt a dream-acc. and seemed me-dat. that I carried on my head three baskets with wheat bread.

- c. Og einaferð í brundtíðini droymdi meg (1 Gen 31,10)
And once in the mating season dreamt me-acc.

- d. »Kanst tú at siga mær dreymin, sum meg droymdi, og tyðing hans?« (Dan 2,26).
Are you able to tell the dream-acc.-the that me-acc. dreamt and the interpretation of it?

- e. meg droymdi
me-dat. dreamt
'I dreamt'

The examples in (5) are archaic, and colloquial Faroese has regularly *eg droymdi* 'I-nom. dreamt'.

We note further, irrelevant for the present paper, but still in need of further investigation, that some constructions are only possible with an Expletive as in (6).

- (6) a. tað frøir meg, at tú komst
it gladden me that you came
b. *meg frøir, at tú komst
me-acc. gladden that you came

In addition to this, we note that it is not possible in the following instances to change the subject to nominative – people would use different expressions instead –; the matter is different with the verb *dáma* 'like' (see 4 above), which takes may take dative or nominative subjects.

- (7) a. mær hóvar so illa ímillum teir høgu harrarnar
me-dat. like-3p.sg. so bad among the high masters
'I do not like to be among the (high) masters'
b. *eg hóvi so illa ímillum teir høgu harrarnar
I-nom. like-1p.sg. so bad among the high masters
'I do not like to be among the (high) masters'
c. eg trívist ikki ímillum teir høgu harrarnar
'I am not happy among the (high) masters'

(7a) is a DSC with *mær* 'me-dat.' as the subject is in the dative,² while (7b) is ungrammatical. It is not possible to say **eg hóvi* 'I-nom. like', nor to use any other person as **vit hóva* 'we-nom. like' – that is with the subject in the nominative, while (7c) shows spoken Faroese with the Danish verb *trives* 'be happy'.³ (8a) illustrates the same matter, only with a different verb, *eydnast* 'succeed', which may be used with a Dative Subject *mær* 'me-dat.', while the nominative is ungrammatical, as illustrated in (8b). It is not possible to use the first person *eg* 'I-nom.', nor any other person, like *tú* 'you-nom.', *hann* 'he-nom.', and so forth. Note that (8a, b) would be grammatical with an expletive – a matter that needs further investigation, as noted above.

Colloquial Faroese uses the Danish verb *klare* 'to make it', which becomes *klára* 'manage' in Faroese.

- (8) a. mær eydnaðist at fara
me-dat. succeeded to leave
'I succeeded to leave'
- b. *eg eydnaðist at fara
*I succeeded to leave
- c. Tað eydnaðist mær at fara
It succeeded me-dat. pl. to leave
- d. Eg kláraði at fara
I-nom. succeeded to leave
'I succeeded to leave'

In (9a), we have the verb *lysta* 'like'. (9a) is an idiomatic expression in Modern Faroese and it is not possible to use a nominative in front of *lysta* 'like'; the usual way of expressing the same phrase is by using an auxiliary + a main verb *kunna* 'be able to' + *vita* 'know'.

- (9) a. meg lystir at vita
me-dat. like-3p.sg. to know
'I would like to know'
- b. *eg lysti at vita
*I-nom. like-1p.sg. to know'
- c. eg kundi hugsað mær at vitað
I-nom. would-1p.sg. like me-dat. to know
'I would like to know'

The same pattern is observed in (10a) through (10c) with the verb *tykja* 'seem'. It is possible to have a dative subject in front of *tykja* 'seem' as in (10a), while the nominative case is ruled out, as illustrated in (10b). Colloquial Faroese has another verb *halda* 'to think':

- (10) a. mær tykir hetta undarligt
me-dat. seems-3p.sg. this strange'
'I find this strange'
- b. *eg tyki hetta undarligt
*I-nom. seem-1p.sg. this strange
'I find this strange'
- c. eg haldi hetta vera undarligt
I-nom. think-1p.sg. this to be strange
'I think that this is strange'

The last example is with the verb *vanta* 'to lack', which allows a dative subject, but not a nominative subject. Again, there is a different way of expressing the need for money – that is as in (11c), with the Danish verb *mangle* 'to lack', which is borrowed as *mangla* 'to lack' into Faroese.

- (11) a. mær vantar pengar
me-dat. lack-3p.sg. money
'I lack money'
- b. *eg vanti pengar
*I lack-1p.sg. money
'I lack money'
- c. eg mangli pengar
I-nom. lack-1p.sg. money
'I am short of money'

If we assume that there is an analogical change in these constructions, that is to say, that the noun phrases get the nominative case because this is the common case for subjects in Faroese (Lockwood 1977, Petersen et al. 1998), then we could assume that for example *eg mangli pengar* 'I lack money' or *eg dámi mjólkina* 'I like the milk', with the subject in nominative and the object in accusative case, are analogical, due to phrases like *eg máli bátin* 'I-nom. paint the boat', and that the original phrases with Dative Subject Constructions and Accusative Subject Constructions have a secondary

function in Modern Faroese, namely to be used only in high style like the Bible, or to give an impression of scholarship, or in idioms as (9a); this would be an example of Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law in syntax or discourse.⁴

3. Possession

Possession is commonly expressed in colloquial Faroese with a definite noun in the nominative, the preposition *hjá* 'with, at' and a noun/pronoun in dative (Lockwood 1977, Petersen et al. 1997).

- (12) Bilurin hjá mær
car-the-nom. with/at me-dat.
'My car'

Such an expression could possibly be attributed to Celtic influence, where we find possession expressed in e.g. Gaelic and Breton with the verb *to be* in the following manner:

- (13) a. *Gaelic*
Tha nighean aig Catriona
There is a daughter at Catharine
'C. has a daughter'
(Robertson & Tylor 1993:36)

- Breton*
b. Ul levr a zo gant ar paotr
A book is with the boy
'The boy has a book'
(Delaporte 1991:30)

We stress the word *possibly*, since Faroese has the verb *hava* 'to have' to express possession, where Breton and Gaelic use the verb *to be*, but one could still imagine Celtic influence and/or a discourse where, e.g., a boat is 'at/with John', that is, 'John is in person standing beside the boat', which then further develops into the common expression for possession. Note further, and probably more importantly, Nynorsk:

- (14) Spráket hjá Ibsen
Language-the at/with Ibsen
'Ibsen's language'
(Hovdenak et al. 1986)

The examples in (13) and (14) can be interpreted in different ways, for example as:

- Hjá* expressions in Faroese developed in Nynorsk and Faroese from Old Norse
- Sameness in syntactic structure gave rise to the constructions
- Celtic influence in both Nynorsk and Faroese
- A discourse development which developed independently in both languages.

There is obviously much more to say about this in the history of Faroese, but we will leave the matter here.

The Old Norse genitive is still in use in written Faroese. That is, at least, in the case of *-s* of masculine and neuter, presumably due to influence from the Danish *s*-genitive, since Faroese speakers are bilingual (Hagström 1992). Possession is expressed in Danish as in:

- (15) Peters båd
'Peter's boat'⁵

The *s*-genitive is seen in written Faroese, as witnessed by the handful of examples below, all from a database that Sjúrdur Gullbein collected in his work on Synthetic Faroese Speech.

- (16) a. Formaðurin í lögtingsins figgjarnvnd
'The President of the Løgting's Financial Committee'
- b. Landsstýrismaðurin í figgjarmálum legði í gjár sína ætlan um landsstýrisins figgjarpolitik fyri 2001 fyri lögtingið.
'The Landstýrisman of Finances presented yesterday his plan for the Finance Politics of the Landstýri for 2001 to the Løgting'.

Note that it is difficult for speakers of colloquial Faroese to form the genitive in the singular and plural of feminine nouns, something that shows that genitive is not a part of the mental grammar. It would be impossible for a native speaker off the top of his/her head to construct a phrase like (17), simply because he/she does not have the rules in his/her mental grammar.⁶

(17) a. Hurðarinnar hvíta máling
Door-the-gen-sg. white paint
'The white paint of the door'

Hurðarinna hvíta máling
Doors-the-gen.-pl. white paint
'The white paint of the doors'

The examples with *s*-genitive in Modern Faroese shows that it is only used in a certain style, mainly in written Faroese, while colloquial Faroese uses expressions with the preposition *hjá* 'with, at' as in (12). The primary form has a secondary function; it is only in use in written Faroese, and would thus be another example with Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law – but here in syntax or discourse.

4. Possible Exceptions from Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law

We have above shown examples where the Fourth Law works, but there are at least three examples that seem to form exceptions to the Fourth Law, namely in the development of the past tense of the verbs *hava* 'to have', *sigja* 'to say', and *leggja* 'to lay'.

The conjugation of these verbs is shown in Table 2 (Weyhe 1996, Petersen et al. 1998).

Important for our discussion is the past tense singular *hevði* [heɪɪjɪ] 'had', *segði* [seɪɪjɪ] 'said' and *legði* [leɪɪjɪ] 'laid down' (see also Weyhe 1996).

Table 2

| PRESENT | PAST | PRESENT | PAST | PRESENT | PAST |
|-----------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|
| <i>SINGULAR</i> | | | | | |
| 1. havi | hevði | sigi | segði | liggi | legði |
| 2. hevur | hevði | sigur | segði | leggur | legði |
| 3. hevur | hevði | sigur | segði | leggur | legði |
| <i>PLURAL</i> | | | | | |
| 1. hava | høvdu | sigja | søgdu | leggja | løgdu |
| 2. hava | høvdu | sigja | søgdu | leggja | løgdu |
| 3. hava | høvdu | sigja | søgdu | leggja | løgdu |

These verbs have been discussed in Weyhe (1996), where he concludes that it is the third person singular of the subjunctive, past tense, that is used as past tense indicative in Modern Faroese, as shown in Table 2.

The conjugation of Old Norse *hava* 'to have' and *sigja* 'to say' was as follows (indicative, singular and plural), as shown in Noreen (1970:360):

Table 3

| | | | |
|-----|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Sg. | 1. | hefe, alt auch hef, spät hefir | sege, alt auch sehr selt. seg, spät segir |
| | 2.3. | hefer, alt oft hefir | seger, alt auch segr |
| | Pl. | 1. | hofum, hafum |
| | 2. | hafaþ, -t, -r | segeþ, -t, sægir |
| | 3. | hafa | segia |

We note the *e*-vowel in the root in the singular in both *hef-* and *seg-*, while the past tense has an *a*-vowel in the root: *hafða* 'I had' and *sagða* 'I said', as opposed to *-e* in Faroese *hevði* and *segði*.

The conjugation of *leggja* 'to lay' in Old Norse was as follows:

Table 4

| | | | |
|--------|------|-------|---------------|
| leggja | legg | lagða | lagð(e)r |
| | | | (Noreen 1970) |

Supposing that Weyhe (1996) is right when he assumes that the third person subjunctive in the past tense singular in e.g. *hefði* 'he had' in Old Norse was generalized in Faroese as *hevði* in the past tense singular in all persons, then we will have to say that a secondary function, the subjunctive, has taken over a primary function (and form), disproving Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law, which says the exact opposite.

Although an analysis along the lines above is possible, we still have to keep in mind that the vowel could be analogical from the present tense.⁷

To summarize: Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law is observed in some syntactic constructions in Faroese; it is not only morphological, since we observe it in Dative and Accusative Object Constructions and in the use of Old Norse Genitive. Possible evidence against Kuryłowicz's Fourth Law is shown by the Faroese subjunctive, a secondary function in any language, taking over a primary function, namely Past Tense.

FO-360 Sandavági
Føroyar

Notes

1. Faroese behaves like Tamil in that the subject is in the dative (or accusative), while the object is in accusative, opposite to Icelandic, where the object is in nominative as in e.g. Japanese and Korean (Ura 2000). See among many others Barnes (1986) for examples. I will not discuss why some verbs still take Dative Subjects, and why Accusative Subjects generally have changed to Nominative Subject Constructions, since this is a topic for a different paper.
2. See Barnes (1986) for arguments in favor of subjecthood of the dative subject.
3. It is possible that the Danish verb *trives* 'be happy' has replaced *hóva* 'like', due to low frequency of the latter.

4. There is an additional blocking in some verbs, such that they cannot change from DSC to nominative, preferring another verb or expression – something that may be due to the low frequency of the impersonal verbs.
5. The genitive is present in the inflection of personal pronouns (Lockwood 1977, Petersen et al. 1998). There is a clitic *-sa* in Faroese, which is adjoined to personal names like *Jógvan-sa bátur* 'John's boat' and kinship words like *mamma* 'mother' as in *mammusa bilur* 'mother's car' or whole utterances like *Tummas á Dómarakontórinum-sa bilur* 'Thomas at the Judges Office's car'. This clitic is discussed at length in Staksberg (1996).
6. Traces of the old *-a(r)* genitive are still seen after the preposition *til* 'to' as in *til Havnar* 'to Thorshavn'. The question is if *til* 'to' here governs the genitive, or if *-ar* simply is a kind of Accusative 2. The usual expressions with the old *-ar* genitive after *til* 'to' are place names, and given the indexical nature of these, such a residue is not surprising.
7. Another possible explanation is that the Old Norse sequence *-af-* probably was pronounced as something like /av/ or /au/ in *hafði* 'had'. The Old Norse diphthong /au/ becomes regularly /ei/ in Faroese as in *braun* to *reyn* (see, among others, Snædal 1992). This does not explain *segði* 'said' and *legði* 'laid', which correspond to Old Norse *sagða* and *lagða*, and we would then as well expect *navn* 'name', *havn* 'harbor' and other words with *-avn-*, pronounced as [avn] or [aun] (Werner 1970) in Faroese, to undergo the same change to *ey*, although we must note that we then need to assume that the sequence *-avn-* was indeed pronounced as [avn] or [aun] at the time of the change of the Old Norse diphthong *au* to *ey*, something that is not certain at all.

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