

Paradigmatic gaps in (Quasi-)Serial Verb Constructions

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English go get is restricted by two morphological conditions (Pullum 1990; Bjorkman 2016):

(A) Both verbs (V1 & V2) must be formally identical, and (B) in their bare form, cf. (1) and (2).

(1) I'll go get some rest.

(2) *Every day, John goes gets the paper

Bjorkman (2016) analyzes this as *ameliorative syncretism*. She argues that in these cases, multiple Vocabulary Items (VI) exceptionally compete for a single position. This can be resolved if one VI realizes the complete set of features, i.e. the bare form that reoccurs in multiple inflectional categories. However, this account does *not* straightforwardly extend to a similar Faroese construction which allows *some*, but not all, **non-bare forms**. This seemingly indicates that conditions like (B) do not reflect syncretism repair. Nevertheless, we argue that the Faroese pattern receives a natural explanation in Bjorkman's account once we make more explicit assumptions about the *composition* and *distribution of features*. Specifically, we argue that INF can be assigned in *two positions*: In its **interpretable** position and in an exceptional **uninterpretable** position, which derives the inflectional restrictions. We additionally argue that the imperative is a type of infinitive, allowing imperative features to be assigned to an infinitive without creating a conflict.

Bjorkman (2016) claims that the VP-selecting motion verbs in constructions like *go get* bear an uninterpretable [*u*INFL: DIR] feature that can be copied to the lower verb via a modified version of Wurmbrand's (2012) Reverse Agree, but that does not block additional agreement between either verb and a higher head. This results in exceptional feature stacking on the two verbs, compare (3).

- (3) a. [XP X_{[u}INFL: F] [VP₁ V1_{[u}INFL: DIR] [VP₂ V2_{[u}INFL: _] ...]]]
 b. [XP X_{[u}INFL: F] [VP₁ V1_{[u}INFL: DIR, uINFL: F] [VP₂ V2_{[u}INFL: F, uINFL: DIR] ...]]]

In English, a verb bearing [*u*INFL: DIR] must appear in its bare form. If this is compatible with the form dictated by [*u*INFL: F] for both V1 and V2, the result is two bare verbs, otherwise, the feature conflict causes ungrammaticality (cf. Asarina 2011, Hein & Murphy 2019 on similar conflicts).

English try and (4) has a similar restriction as *Go get* (3), i.e. *try* must appear in a bare form (5).

(4) Try and get some rest.

(5) *John tried and found his glasses.

However, in this case, V2 is always bare, and needn't have features that match V1 (6) (Ross 2013).

(6) Every day, I try and {be/*am} happy.

Faroese try and is formed with one of two verbs, *royna* or *prøva* 'try', and both obey the identity condition on (A) (Heycock and Petersen 2012). Unlike English *Go get*, Faroese allows non-bare forms like (7a) Imperative Singular or Imperative Plural, (7b) Infinitive, and (7c,7e) forms syncretic with the infinitive, *but no other forms* (7d). Note that /ð/ in (7e) is not pronounced in Faroese (only *prøva* is possible in (7e) as the participle form of *royna* ends in non-syncretic *-t* instead of *-a(ð)*).

- (7) a. Royn-(ið) og les-(ið) bókina! d. *Hann royn-ir og les-ur bókina.
 Try.IMP-(PL) and read.IMP-(PL) book.DEF He try-3SG and read-3SG book.DEF
 'Try and read the book!' Int.: 'He tries to read the book.'
- b. Tú mást royn-a og les-a bókina. (Heycock & Petersen 2012:31)
 You must try-INF and read-INF book.DEF
 'You must try and read the book.'
- c. Tey royn-a og les-a bókina. e. Eg havi prøva[ð] og leita[ð] ...
 they try-PRS.PL and read-PRS.PL book.DEF I have tried.PTCP and search.PTCP
 'They try and read the book.' 'I have tried searching ...'
 (Kvinna.fo, 2008)

Unlike the English bare form condition in (B), it is unclear how to define the Faroese restrictions.

Proposal. We assume that in both Faroese and English, V1 c-commands V2, but remain agnostic about the precise nature of the structure. One possibility is that some functional head pronounced *og/and* (likely not a true conjunction) selects V2, and V1 selects the resulting structure. We also

assume that INF and DIR are part of the same *feature hierarchy*, with DIR depending on INF. Thus, all imperatives bear INF[DIR], much as first-person arguments bear PERS[PART[SPKR]] (Harley 1994). There is also evidence for this from Korean (8), where there is a marked infinitive which is contained within the imperative. Following Bjorkman (2016), we assume the higher verb bears a *radically*

(8) Swukcey-lul hay-la! *uninterpretable* feature, but here it is [INF] rather than [DIR].
 homework-ACC do.INF-IMP Additional features from the wider syntactic context are assigned simultaneously to both *try* and V2 in Faroese. A single VI must realize all features. However, unlike English, verbs with [*u*INFL: INF] can occur in three forms in Faroese: (i) IMP.SG -Ø, (ii) IMP.PL -ið, (iii) INF/PRS.PL/PTCP -a.

-a forms. We propose that infinitives are spelled out according to (9) ((10) is explained below).

(9) [*u*INFL: INF] → -a (10) [*u*INFL: PRES, ϕ: 3PL] → -a
 If the clause is actually non-finite, the interpretable [*i*INFL: INF] head does not cause anything to be added to our verbs since they already bear [*u*INFL: INF]. Thus they can be straightforwardly spelled out with -a, as in (7b). If the clause is instead finite in the present tense with a 3PL subject, PRS and 3PL features are copied to both verbs (11), as in (9c).

(11) [TP T [*i*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3PL] [VP₁ V1 [*u*INFL: INF, *u*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3PL] og [VP₂ V2 [*u*INFL: INF, *u*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3PL] ...]]

Present-tense verbs with 3PL subjects are spelled out by (10). Since (9) and (10) output the same form, we get ameliorative syncretism (Soares 2023), and can spell out the feature sets of both verbs as -a. This derives (7c). (7e) is essentially the same, with another syncretic VI rule for participles.

Imperatives. For the morphological (singular and plural) imperative in Faroese, we assume there is a high *Imp head*, which bears [*i*INFL: INF[DIR]]. The verbs copy this and its number feature (marked # in (12)), as well as [*u*INFL: INF] from V1. We take the approach to agreement with feature hierarchies used by, e.g., Béjar & Rezac (2009), where copying features onto a probe that already has parts of the copied feature hierarchy simply causes the hierarchies to merge. Thus, the verbs have [*u*INFL: INF] before agreeing with Imp, and afterward, they have [*u*INFL: INF[DIR]] (and a number feature), with no extra INF feature. The result is (12).

(12) [ImpP Imp [*i*INFL: INF[DIR], #] ... [VP₁ V1 [*u*INFL: INF[DIR], #] og [VP₂ V2 [*u*INFL: INF[DIR], #] ...]]

In other words, both verbs have the same features as a verb in an ordinary imperative construction. Such verbs are spelled out according to (13). This generates the forms in (7a).

(13) a. [*u*INFL: INF[DIR], #: SG] → -Ø b. [*u*INFL: INF[DIR], #: PL] → -ið

Ungrammatical contexts are caused by feature conflicts. For example, in the present tense with a 3SG subject, we get (14). The verbs are subject to VI rules like those in (15), which conflict with (9) because they don't output -a (i.e., a form syncretic with the infinitive).

(14) [TP T [*i*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3SG] [VP₁ V1 [*u*INFL: INF, *u*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3SG] og [VP₂ V2 [*u*INFL: INF, *u*INFL: PRS, ϕ: 3SG] ...]]

(15) a. [*u*INFL: PRES, #: SG] → -ir / √ROYN__ b. [*u*INFL: PRES, #: SG] → -ur / √LES__

Thus this configuration leads to ungrammaticality, explaining (7d).

Similar form restrictions occur in Marsalese where all person-number combinations are possible as long as the verb stem does not change (Cardinaletti and Giusti 2001). Interestingly, in Marsalese, only V2 *needs* be syncretic for all features while V1 to can also be bare (also in Hebrew; Faust 2024) – the *reverse* of English *try and* where V1 needs to be syncretic, but V2 can be bare. This again indicates that the position, as well as the composition, of the imperative feature can vary. In our talk, we will show how our account of Faroese – and English – *try and* can be extended to Marsalese.

Conclusions. Restrictions on Faroese *Try and* can be understood as morphological repairs to a conflicting feature structure once we take the hierarchy and position of features into account. Thus, despite the language's idiosyncratic complexities, Bjorkman's (2016) proposal for English Quasi-Serial Verb Constructions can also be extended to Faroese. Further, our account provides an argument that the imperative should be thought of as featurally dependent on a non-finite feature.