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The Syntax of Icelandic

Höskuldur Thráinsson

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The Syntax of Icelandic

Icelandic is a syntactically interesting language, with aspects of its word order, clause structure, agreement patterns and case system arousing much theoretical interest and debate in recent years. This is an informative and accessible guide to the structure of Icelandic, focusing in particular on those characteristics that have contributed greatly to syntactic research. Each chapter is divided into two main sections – providing both a descriptive overview and a discussion of the theoretical and comparative issues involved – and a wide range of topics is covered, including case, agreement, grammatical relations, thematic roles, word order, clause structure, fronting, extraposition, complement, adjuncts, pronouns and inflection. Also explored in detail are the similarities and differences between Icelandic and other related languages. Presupposing only a basic knowledge of syntax and complete with an extensive bibliography, this comprehensive survey will be an important tool for all those working on the structure of Scandinavian and Germanic languages.

HÖSKULDUR THRÁINSSON is Professor in the Department of Icelandic, University of Iceland. His recent books include *Íslensk tunga: Setningar* (*A Handbook on Icelandic Syntax*, 2005), and *Faroese: An Overview and Reference Grammar* (2004).

CAMBRIDGE SYNTAX GUIDES

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The Syntax of Icelandic

HÖSKULDUR THRÁINSSON



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Preface and acknowledgements

The purpose of this book is twofold: first, to present some of the basic and most interesting facts about the syntax of Icelandic in an accessible and organized fashion, and second, to introduce the reader to the research that has been done on Icelandic syntax. It is mainly intended for students and researchers in the field of linguistics, especially those who are interested in Scandinavian syntax. The book is thus a theoretically oriented descriptive work that refers the reader to a representative sample of the research done on Icelandic syntax over the past thirty years. Hence it should be a useful introduction for those who want to do such research on their own and familiarize themselves with the descriptive and theoretical issues that have figured in the linguistic discussion, possibly preventing them from re-inventing the wheel. Special emphasis is on those areas that have aroused interest among theoretical linguists and those doing research on comparative syntax. For that reason the book contains a fair amount of comparative material from the other Scandinavian languages, especially Faroese, the Scandinavian language closest to Icelandic, and far more references to linguistic literature than is common in handbooks and overviews.

As can be seen from the table of contents, the chapters typically fall into two parts. The first part gives a descriptive overview and the second contains a discussion of some theoretical and comparative issues. Those who are mainly interested in a quick overview of the basic facts covered in each chapter can thus simply read the first part and skip the theoretical and comparative discussion. Those who are more interested in theory and comparison, for example, because they are already familiar with the main characteristics of Icelandic syntax, can concentrate on the second part of each chapter. Obviously, theory and description cannot be entirely separated, and hence this kind of organization necessarily leads to some overlap and repetition. It should, however, make the book accessible and interesting to a wider audience. Thus the book should be a suitable introduction to Icelandic syntax for students of Germanic or Scandinavian languages, even if they are not particularly interested in syntactic theory. But it should also be pointed out

that this kind of organization has two additional consequences: first, references to relevant theoretical literature are often mainly found in the theoretical sections and not in the descriptive overview; second, the descriptive overview is sometimes an oversimplification, as overviews tend to be (although exceptions to the main rule are sometimes pointed out in footnotes).

Because of its twofold aim, the book is not simply a handbook on the syntax of Icelandic, presenting the facts in the framework most fashionable today (or in some entirely theory-neutral fashion, if that were possible). Instead, it frequently dwells on analyses and arguments that have been presented in frameworks of yesterday. One of the reasons is the author's firm belief that the fashionable analyses and frameworks of today will soon be considered just as obsolete as those of yesterday. Another reason is the fact that it is frequently possible to learn something about the nature of syntactic facts and syntactic argumentation by studying previous accounts and the reasons why they were proposed in the first place and then abandoned for more recent ones (by some linguists at least). For this reason it should be possible to use this book as a textbook and not only as a handbook.

Although the book thus refers to much of the research that has been done on the syntax of Icelandic, it has not been possible to do justice to it all. The book is also inevitably influenced by my own beliefs about the nature of Icelandic, and to some extent it contains a summary of my own research but also some new observations. The theoretical slant is influenced by the framework adopted in most of the existing research on Icelandic syntax, that is, some version of the so-called Principles-and-Parameters approach, including pretty faithful government-binding (GB) variants, minimalist variants and other less orthodox variants. This is arguably not entirely fair to those who have done interesting work on Icelandic within other frameworks, such as LFG, GPSG/HPSG, construction grammar, optimality theory, and so on. I have, however, tried to include the results of research done in different frameworks, and I have also tried to avoid going into very technical and theory-specific details. Although this is not always possible, I believe that most of the book should be accessible to advanced undergraduates and beginning graduate students of general linguistics and Germanic (including Scandinavian) linguistics.

Much of the material in this book has been developed in connection with the teaching of various courses, mostly in the Department of Linguistics at Harvard University (1991–95) and at the University of Iceland (mainly after 1995). It has also been tried out on students at the European Summer School of Logic, Language and Information (Copenhagen Business School 1994),

the LOT Winter School of Linguistics (Catholic University of Nijmegen 1997), LSA Summer Institute (Cornell University 1997) and the University of the Faroes in Tórshavn (2002). In addition, it has figured in various linguistic talks and presentations that I have given in different places. Feedback from students and colleagues at all these places has been invaluable.

At the risk of offending most of those that have assisted me in one way or another in this project, I would like to mention a few who stand out: Steve Anderson for his role in getting this project off the ground; Jorge Hankamer and Judy Aissen for introducing me to syntax way back when; Avery Andrews for being a pioneer in Icelandic syntax research and discovering various intriguing facts about it; Joan Bresnan, Sten Vikner, Sam Epstein, Jonathan Bobaljik and Chris Collins for working with me and thus making me a better linguist; Noam Chomsky for his interest in Icelandic syntax and his thought-provoking ideas; Joan Maling for keeping the syntactic flame in Iceland going when it seemed to be turning into a mere flicker; Eiríkur, Halldór Ármann, Sigga Sigurjóns, Jóhannes, Matthew and Tolli for being instrumental in establishing a community of syntacticians in Reykjavík, who could talk to each other about syntax (although we tend to have too little time to do so); the Scandinavian syntax mafia, including Christer, Anders, Lars, Tarald, Peter, Elisabet, Kirsti, Sten, Tor, Øystein, Lars-Olof, Cia, Kjartan, Gunnar Hrafn, Jóhanna, Thorbjörg and others, for creating interesting and stimulating networks in various guises and under various names; my Faroese collaborators and teachers, Zakaris, Jógvan, Hjalmar and Turið, for teaching me Faroese and about Faroese, and the same goes for Eivind and for Michael Barnes; Thóra and Martin, my Faroese host family, for making it possible for me to feel at home in Tórshavn; and my students at Harvard (including the ones from MIT), in Reykjavík, in Tórshavn and elsewhere, who have made me work hard at presenting facts about Icelandic syntax in an accessible way and have provided me with interesting ideas of their own in theses, papers and homework problems too numerous to acknowledge properly (although some of their work figures rather prominently in the references). Special thanks to Matthew and Halldór Ármann for reading the whole manuscript and making extremely valuable comments on it, to Øystein and Gunnar Hrafn for commenting on parts of it, and to my students Theódóra and Hlíf for going through the entire manuscript in a critical and inquisitive fashion in a seminar in the spring of 2006, together with Eiríkur, Jóhannes, Tolli and me.

This book is partially based on research made possible by grants from the Icelandic Research Fund (through RANNÍS) and from the Research Fund of

the University of Iceland, and I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to work on it during sabbaticals at MIT, University College London, and in Jónshús in Copenhagen (although I was always trying to do too many other things at the same time). In addition to people already mentioned, Guðrún Höskuldsdóttir, Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir, Ásgrímur Angantýsson, Halldóra Björt Ewen and Einar Freyr Sigurðsson assisted in this research and I thank them for their pleasant cooperation.

I would like to thank my family for bearing with me while I was spending time on this book instead of spending it with them. Special thanks to my wife Sígga for reading and discussing parts of this work and telling me when she thought the presentation could be improved. Last but not least, many thanks to Helen Barton at CUP who kept believing (it seemed) that I would eventually finish the book.

Introduction

1.0 Icelandic and its closest relatives

Icelandic is a North Germanic language currently (2007) spoken by some 300,000 people. It is thus most closely related to the other Nordic languages, that is, Faroese, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish (see, e.g., Haugen 1976, 1982; Braunmüller 1991; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a; Vikør 1995; Torp 1998). It is often maintained that it has changed less than the other Germanic languages, presumably largely due to its geographical isolation. From roughly 1870 to 1915 some 20,000 Icelanders emigrated to North America, and Icelandic was spoken by these emigrants for some decades, for example, in Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and North Dakota. There are still some relics of this Western Icelandic in North America, although it is about to disappear (see, e.g., Haraldur Bessason 1967, 1971; Clausen 1986; Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir 1990, 1997).

Modern Icelandic is closer to Faroese than to the other Nordic languages, both morphologically and syntactically. Hence there are numerous references to Faroese in this book, especially in the comparative sections at the end of each chapter. In addition, these sections contain comparative material from the other Nordic languages, although it is more anecdotal.

1.1 Nominal inflection and agreement

Some knowledge of Icelandic morphology is necessary for anyone who wants to understand the morphosyntax of the language. In the following overview the main emphasis is on those aspects of inflectional morphology that figure in various case and agreement phenomena. For further details the reader is referred to Stefán Einarsson 1945 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a.¹

¹ Icelanders use the patronymic system and thus most people do not have a family name. People are not called by their 'last name' (this being their father's (or sometimes mother's) first name plus *-son* 'son' or *-dóttir* 'daughter') nor is it used for the

1.1.1 Nouns and adjectives

Icelandic has a three-valued **gender** system, **m**(asculine), **f**(eminine) and **n**(euter). The grammatical gender of nouns is only indirectly related to the sex of their referents, as in German, for instance. Thus while most words referring for instance to female humans are feminine, it is also possible to find masculine and neuter words referring to females. Besides, words referring to things and concepts can be masculine, feminine or neuter:

- (1.1) a. strákur (m.) ‘boy’, stóll (m.) ‘chair’, svanni (m.) ‘woman (poetic)’
 b. stelpa (f.) ‘girl’, mynd (f.) ‘picture’, hetja (f.) ‘hero’
 c. barn (n.) ‘child’, borð (n.) ‘table’, fljóð (n.) ‘woman (poetic)’, skáld (n.) ‘poet’

Nominal categories, such as nouns, adjectives, articles, pronouns, have four **cases**, **N**(ominative), **A**(ccusative), **D**(ative) and **G**(enitive) and two **numbers**, **sg.** (singular) and **pl.** (plural). The inflectional paradigms of the **nouns** vary, depending on the gender and inflectional class of the noun (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a:153). Adjectives modifying nouns agree with them in gender, case and number. This holds both for attributive and predicative adjectives:

- (1.2) a. **gular** hestur gul mynd
 yellow(Nsg.m.) horse(Nsg.m.) yellow(Nsg.f.) picture(Nsg.f.)
 gult borð **gular** myndir
 yellow(Nsg.n.) table(Nsg.n.) yellow(Npl.f.) pictures(Npl.f.)
- b. Ég sá gula hænu.
 I saw yellow(Asg.f.) hen(Asg.f.)
- c. Þessar hænur eru gular.
 these hens(Npl.f.) are yellow(Npl.f.)

1.1.2 Articles and definiteness

Icelandic has no indefinite article and the **definite article** is normally suffixed to nouns but has its own inflection (gender, number, case). This is illustrated in (1.3):

- (1.3) Inflection of the suffixed definite article:
 m. f. n.
 Nsg. hest-ur-**inn** mynd-**in** borð-**ið**
 Apl. hest-a-**na** mynd-ir-**nar** borð-**in**

Footnote 1 (*cont.*)

purposes of alphabetization in Iceland. Hence I will refer to Icelandic authors by their full name here and they will be listed under their first name in the references.

In addition, there is a lexical (or free-standing) form of the article. It can only be used if the noun is modified by an adjective, and it is commonly said to be characteristic of formal or written Icelandic. As we shall see below, this is not entirely accurate since the two forms of the article are not completely equivalent from a semantic point of view. Adjectives modifying definite nouns normally have the ‘weak’ (or definite) form, regardless of the position of the article (i.e., whether it is free or suffixed) (st. = strong; w. = weak):

- (1.4) **gulur** hani **guli** hani-**nn** **hinn** guli hani
 yellow(st.) rooster yellow(w.) rooster-the the yellow(w.) rooster

The free-standing article and the suffixed article are in complementary distribution, that is, there is normally no ‘double definiteness’ in Icelandic of the type found, for example, in Faroese, Norwegian and Swedish (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004, section 5.2.1 passim):²

- (1.5) **gula** borðið **hið** gula borð ***hið** gula borðið
 yellow(st.) table-the the yellow(w.) table the yellow table-the

There is an exception to the rule that weak adjectives modify definite nouns. Consider the following near-minimal pair:

- (1.6) a. Ég horfði upp í bláan himin.
 I looked up into blue(st.A) sky-the(A)
 b. Ég horfði á bláa bílinn.
 I looked at blue(w.A) car-the(A)

In (1.6a) we have a strong (or indefinite) form of the adjective *blár* ‘blue’ and the sentence means roughly ‘I looked up into the sky, which happened to be blue’ (non-restrictive). Sentence (1.6b), on the other hand, can be paraphrased roughly as ‘I looked at the blue car (and not, say, the red one)’, that is, the weak (or definite) adjective gives a restrictive reading when modifying a noun with the suffixed article. When no such restriction is appropriate, the weak form sounds semantically odd, since it implies an inappropriate restriction (§ is used here and elsewhere to indicate semantic (or pragmatic) anomaly):

² There are some exceptions to this in Icelandic. Thus the demonstrative pronoun *hinn* ‘the other’ obligatorily modifies a definite noun, for instance: *hinn *maður/maðurinn* ‘the other man(indef./def.)’ (lit. ‘the other man-the’). In a few other cases the suffixed definite article is possible after a demonstrative pronoun; cf. examples like the following: *Hann er á neturvakt þessa vikulvikuna* ‘He has the night shift this week(indef./def.)’. We will return to the distribution of the definite article in chapter 3 below, where some comparison with the other Scandinavian languages will be made.

- (1.7) Rautt/\$rauða nefið á honum glóði í myrkrinu.
 red(st./\$w.)nose-the on him glowed in dark-the
 ‘His red nose glowed in the dark.’

The weak form of the adjective would imply that the person had more than one nose.

Interestingly, this semantic generalization does not hold for weak adjectives following the free-standing article. Thus *hinn blái bíll* ‘the blue car’ (which sounds very formal or even poetic) does not have a restrictive reading of the kind *blái billinn* does. The distribution of the articles will be discussed in more detail in the section on noun phrases in chapter 3. But it should be noted here that the free-standing article is sometimes required and the suffixed one excluded when a non-restrictive reading of a definite noun phrase is needed (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b):

- (1.8)
- a. **Hin** vinsæla hljómsveit/*Vinsæla hljómsveit**in** 4 × 100 leikur fyrir dansi.
 the popular band / popular band-the 4 × 100 plays for dance
 ‘The popular band 4 × 100 plays during the dance.’
- b. Ég styð **hina** sanngjörnu tillögu/*sanngjörnu tillög**una** um launahækkun.
 I support the fair proposal/fair proposal-the about salary-raise
 ‘I support the fair proposal of salary increase.’

Hence it is clearly a simplification to say that the difference between the free-standing article and the suffixed one is mainly one of formal vs. informal language.

1.1.3 Pronouns

Most pronouns in Icelandic inflect for case, number and gender. The inflection is sometimes quite irregular and suppletive, as is common in Germanic. The (simplex non-possessive) **reflexive pronoun** *sig* is different from other pronouns in that it does not inflect in gender nor in number and has no nominative form (A *sig*, D *sér*, G *sín*). The reflexive pronoun can only have 3rd person antecedents, that is, there is no special reflexive form for 1st and 2nd person in Icelandic (nor in any of the other Scandinavian languages). There is also a **complex reflexive** pronoun in Icelandic, *sjálfan sig* ‘self refl.’ The first part of it inflects for gender and number and agrees with the antecedent, and both parts inflect for case, which is assigned by the relevant case assigner (e.g. a transitive verb or a preposition):

- (1.9) a. Strákarnir; elska **sjálfa** **sig**.
 boys-the(Npl.m.) love self(Apl.m.) refl.(A)
 ‘The boys love themselves.’

- b. Hún_i er ekki með sjálfri sér_i.
 she(Nsg.f.) is not with self(Dsg.f.) refl.(D)
 ‘She is out of her mind.’

There are no **relative pronouns** in Icelandic, only relative particles (or complementizers). The most common relative complementizer is *sem* ‘that, which’, but *er* ‘that, which’ is also used in written or formal Icelandic:

- (1.10) a. Þetta er maðurinn [sem kom í gær]
 this is man-the that came yesterday
 ‘This is the man that came yesterday.’
 b. Konan [sem ég talaði við] er hollensk.
 woman-the that I talked with is Dutch
 ‘The woman that I talked to is Dutch.’

The relative complementizer *sem* in Icelandic behaves very similarly to the English relative *that*. Thus it cannot follow a preposition (**Konan við sem ég talaði . . .* **The woman to that I spoke . . .*), it cannot occur in possessive phrases (**Maðurinn sem kona hringdi . . .* **The man that wife called . . .* (intended sense: *whose wife. . .*)), and so on. But it differs from its English counterpart in that it can introduce non-restrictive as well as restrictive relative clauses. Thus the following sentence is in principle ambiguous (in spoken Icelandic there would normally be an intonational difference, sometimes also indicated by commas around the non-restrictive relative in written Icelandic):

- (1.11) Íslendingar **sem** borða mikinn fisk verða almennt gamlir.
 Icelanders that/who eat much fish become in general old
 ‘Icelanders that eat a lot of fish become old in general.’
 ‘Icelanders, who eat a lot of fish, become old in general.’

1.1.4 Unstressed pronouns and cliticized forms

Unstressed 3rd person pronouns in Icelandic typically have somewhat reduced forms and it is useful to be familiar with these:

- (1.12) hann → ‘ann ‘he(N/A)’, honum → ‘onum ‘him(D)’
 hún → ‘ún ‘she(N)’, hana → ‘ana ‘her(A)’, henni → ‘enni ‘her(D)’
 það → ‘ða ‘it(N/A)’, því → ‘ðví ‘it(D)’

This reduction of unstressed pronouns is normally not shown in the orthography and it will only be indicated in this book when there is special reason to do so. The unstressed pronominal forms do not function as clitics of the type familiar from the Romance languages, for instance. Thus there is no difference in the position of pronominal objects and full NP objects in sentences like the ones in (1.13):

- (1.13) a. Ég hef lesið bókina.
I have read book-the
- b. Ég hef lesið hana / 'ana.
I have read it [lit. 'her', since *bók* 'book' is feminine]
- c. *Ég 'ana hef lesið.

There are constructions, however, where (unstressed) pronominal objects do not have the same 'distribution' as full NP objects:

- (1.14) a. Ég las ekki bókina / bókina ekki.
I read not book-the / book-the not
'I didn't read the book.'
- b. Ég las *ekki 'ana / 'ana ekki.
I read not it / it not
'I didn't read it.'

The variant where the object precedes the negation is normally referred to as Object Shift, and facts of this sort are commonly described by saying that it is obligatory to 'shift' (unstressed) pronouns across the negation and sentence adverbs with similar distribution. This phenomenon will be discussed in some detail below.

A more clitic-like element is the unstressed form of the 2nd person pronoun which is normally attached to the imperative and to the finite verb in (other) verb-subject contexts, for example direct questions. Observe the following:

- (1.15) a. the imperative form: far 'go' finn 'find' les 'read'
- b. imperative + pronoun: far þú finn þú les þú
go you find you read you
- c. the common imp. form: farðu finndu lestu
- d. direct question: ferð þú? finnur þú? lest þú?
ferðu? finnurðu? lestu?
go you find you read you

The imperative itself is the bare stem of the verb. In formal speech the 2nd person pronoun *þú* 'you' can follow it, but it does not have to. The bare imperative without an accompanying pronominal form is found in very formal or even biblical and poetic language: *Gjör rétt, þol ei órétt*, lit. 'Do right, tolerate not injustice', *Kom, vornótt, og syng* . . . lit. 'Come, spring night, and sing . . .'. It is also found in various relatively fixed expressions: *Kom inn!* 'Come in!', *Gef mér!* 'Give me (some)!'. The imperative with the non-reduced form is similarly restricted in the modern language: *Far þú og gjör slíkt hið sama* 'Go and do likewise.' In the common form of the imperative the 2nd person pronoun attaches to the verbal stem in a reduced form, as shown in

(1.15c) (the *-ðu*, *-du*, *-tu* – for a discussion of the morphophonemics of the Icelandic imperative forms, see, e.g., Orešnik 1972, 1980).³ Similarly, the informal direct question forms would be *ferðu*, *finnurðu* and *lestu* as shown in (1.15d), meaning ‘do you go?’, ‘do you find?’ and ‘do you read?’, respectively (subject-verb inversion is not restricted to auxiliaries in Icelandic and there is no *do*-support).⁴

Finally, it should be mentioned here that the *-st*-ending of the so-called ‘middle verbs’ (or ‘*-st*-verbs’) in Icelandic is generally considered to derive historically from the reflexive pronoun *sig* (Old Norse *sik*, see especially Kjartan G. Ottósson 1992). This is illustrated in a simplified form in (1.16):

(1.16) ON *Þeir klæddu sik* → ON *Þeir klæddusk* → Mod. Ic. *Þeir klæddust*
 they dressed refl. they dressed they dressed

Thus Old Icelandic had both the reflexive construction *Þeir klæddu sik* ‘They dressed’ (lit. ‘They dressed themselves’) and the middle form (with a reflexive reading) *Þeir klæddusk* ‘They dressed’, where the connection between the reflexive pronoun *sik* and the middle marker *-sk* may have been fairly transparent. Modern Icelandic has the middle (or *-st*-) form *Þeir klæddust* ‘They dressed’ and also a roughly synonymous reflexive construction *Þeir klæddu sig* ‘They dressed.’ But the semantic differences between many *-st*-forms in the modern language and the corresponding reflexive constructions, and sometimes also a complete lack of non-*-st*-verbal forms corresponding to some *-st*-verbs, make it difficult to argue for a synchronic derivation of the *-st*-forms from an underlying reflexive construction or some such in many

³ As pointed out by Orešnik and others, ‘hybrid’ forms of the imperative also occur, i.e. forms like *farð þú* ‘go!’, where the *-ð* at the end of the verbal form would seem to derive from forms like *farðu*, with the enclitic *-ðu*, although a full form of the pronoun *þú* follows. While interesting from a morphophonemic point of view, these need not concern us here.

⁴ When ‘orders’ are given to more than one person, the basic verbal form used is identical to the 2nd plural form (indicative) of the verb: *þið farið* ‘you go’, *farið!* ‘go (pl.)’. Here, too, a weakened form of the personal pronoun can be attached to preceding verbal forms. Thus *farið þið* → *fariði* ‘go(pl.)’, *finnið þið* → *finniði* ‘find(pl.)’. The same goes for other cases where a finite verb precedes the 2nd pl. pronoun, e.g. in direct questions. Thus *lesið þið?* ‘do you read?’ becomes *lesiði?* in non-formal speech. This reduction of the plural pronoun is normally not indicated in the spelling, however, whereas the reduction of the singular form is. Note that the parallelism between imperative (or cohortative) forms and (other) verb-subject cases mentioned above breaks down in the 1st pl. There the cohortative construction cannot have a pronoun (cf. *Förum!* ‘Let’s go!’ and not **Förum við*) whereas the inversion constructions do, of course (cf. *Förum við á morgun?* ‘Are we going tomorrow?’, lit. ‘Go we tomorrow?’).

instances (see, e.g., Anderson 1990; for a more derivational approach, see Kissonck 1995). We will return to the middle verbs in chapter 4.

1.2 Verbal morphology, agreement and auxiliary constructions

1.2.1 Person and number

Finite verbs in Icelandic agree with (nominative) subjects in **person** and **number**. The morphological markers for person and number appear to be fused, however (just like the markers for case and number in the nominal inflection), or at least very difficult to separate. This can be seen from the examples in (1.17) (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a:159 – for arguments that person and number are distinct syntactic categories in Icelandic nevertheless, see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000, 2001):

(1.17)	present indicative			past indicative			
	1sg.	ég	horf-i	bít	ég	horf-ð-i	beit
	2 -	þú	horf-ir	bít-ur	þú	horf-ð-ir	bei-st
	3 -	hann	horf-ir	bít-ur	hann	horf-ð-i	beit
	1pl.	við	horf-um	bít-um	við	horf-ð-um	bit-um
	2 -	þið	horf-ið	bít-ið	þið	horf-ð-uð	bit-uð
	3 -	þeir	horf-a	bít-a	þeir	horf-ð-u	bit-u
			'look'	'bite'			

The verb *horfa* is an example of a weak (or regular) verb and *bíta* is a strong (or irregular) verb.

1.2.2 Tense and mood

Icelandic only has two morphologically distinct **tenses**: the unmarked **present** (or non-past) tense and the **past** tense. Weak verbs form past tense with a dental suffix, as is typical for Germanic languages (-ð-, -d- or -t-, depending on the final sound of the stem), whereas strong verbs show various (systematic but unpredictable) vowel changes (the so-called **ablaut** patterns). The rich agreement morphology illustrated above is one of the main differences between Icelandic and the other Scandinavian languages and it is of some interest to note that it is found both in the **indicative mood** and the **subjunctive mood**, since it has sometimes been maintained that subjunctive forms are non-finite or 'non-tensed' in Icelandic.⁵

⁵ It is true, however, that the tense of an embedded subjunctive clause is typically dependent on the tense of the matrix clause. This will be discussed in chapter 8.

(1.18)	present subjunctive			past subjunctive			
	1sg.	ég	horf-i	bít-i	ég	horf-ð-i	bit-i
	2 -	þú	horf-ir	bít-ir	þú	horf-ð-ir	bit-ir
	3 -	hann	horf-i	bít-i	hann	horf-ð-i	bit-i
	1pl.	við	horf-um	bít-um	við	horf-ð-um	bit-um
	2 -	þið	horf-ið	bít-ið	þið	horf-ð-uð	bit-uð
	3 -	þeir	horf-i	bít-i	þeir	horf-ð-u	bit-u

1.2.3 *Non-finite verb forms*

The non-finite verb forms are traditionally considered the **infinitive** and the two participles, the **present participle** and the **past participle**. The infinitive typically ends in *-a* in Icelandic, as can be seen if it is compared to the imperative:

(1.19)	infinitives:	tala	horf-a	dæm-a	bít-a
	imperatives:	tala	horf	dæm	bít
		‘talk’	‘look’	‘judge’	‘bite’

The so-called present participle is formed by adding *-(a)ndi* to the stem of the verb: *sofandi* ‘sleeping’, *gangandi* ‘walking’. It does not inflect at all in Modern Icelandic. The past participle usually ends in *-ur* or *-inn* and it inflects in gender, number and case as illustrated here with partial paradigms:

(1.20)		m.		f.		n.
	Nsg.	dæm-d-ur	bit-in-n	dæm-d	bit-in	dæm-t bit-ið
	A -	dæm-d-an	bit-in-n	dæm-d-a	bit-n-a	dæm-t bit-ið
	Npl.	dæm-d-ir	bit-n-ir	dæm-d-ar	bit-n-ar	dæm-d bit-in
	A -	dæm-d-a	bit-n-a	dæm-d-ar	bit-n-ar	dæm-d bit-in
		‘judged’	‘bitten’			

The past participle is used in the passive, for instance, where it agrees with a (nominative) subject: *Hundurinn var bitinn* ‘The dog(Nsg.m.) was bitten(Nsg.m.)’, *Bækurnar voru lesnar* ‘The books(Npl.f.) were read(Npl.f.)’. The accusative form can then occur in the so-called accusative-with-infinitive construction, for instance: *Ég tel bókina hafa verið lesna* ‘I believe the book(Asg.f.) to have been read (Asg.f.)’. The perfect auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’ selects a non-inflecting form of the main verb, and this form is identical to the N/Asg.n. form of the participle: *Hundurinn hefur bitið manninn* ‘The dog has bitten the man.’ Because this form is non-inflecting, it is sometimes referred to as the **supine** form of the verb, but it is always identical to the form of the participle which is found in the passive when the participle agrees with a Nsg.n. subject (for a discussion of syntactic differences between inflected participles and supine forms, see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:322ff.):

- (1.21) a. Barnið var **elt**.
 child-the(Nsg.n.) was chased(Nsg.n.)
- b. Þeir hafa **elt** hana.
 they have chased(Nsg.n. – or sup.) her

While all types of main verbs in Icelandic can take *hafa* ‘have’ as the perfective auxiliary, inflected participial forms of certain intransitive verbs of motion can be used with the verb *vera* ‘be’ in a resultative sense: *Hann hefur farið* ‘He has gone(Nsg.n. – or supine)’ vs. *Hann er farinn* ‘He is gone(Nsg.m.).’ Auxiliary constructions are discussed in more detail in the [next section](#) (for a discussion of resultatives see Whelpton 2006).

1.2.4 Auxiliary constructions

The so-called auxiliary verbs in Icelandic do not form a separate inflectional class. Thus the verbs that are most frequently listed as auxiliaries in Icelandic grammar books (*hafa* ‘have’, *vera* ‘be’, *munu* ‘will’) show rich agreement morphology like other verbs and also inflect for tense. Furthermore, these verbs do not have special ‘privileges of occurrence’ like auxiliaries in some other languages (cf. English, for instance, where it is basically auxiliary verbs only that undergo subject-verb inversion), except that the modal *munu* can never be preceded by another auxiliary. (The same holds for the modal *skulu* ‘shall’.) Because of this, auxiliary verbs in Icelandic can only be defined as ‘the class of verbs that are used systematically to express grammatical categories’, such as the **passive**, **perfect**, **progressive** and various **modal** constructions (e.g. with *munu* ‘will’).

The **passive** in Icelandic is formed by the auxiliaries *vera* ‘be’ and *verða* ‘become’ plus the past participle of the main verb, as already mentioned. The passive auxiliary normally agrees with a nominative subject in person and number and the participle agrees with a nominative subject in number and gender (and even case, as illustrated above – for further discussion, see chapter 3). The agent of a passive construction can be expressed in a prepositional phrase with the preposition *af* ‘by’ + D, but it is normally left unexpressed:

- (1.22) a. Einhver opnaði skápinn.
 somebody(Nsg.) opened(3sg.) cupboard-the(Asg.)
 ‘Somebody opened the cupboard.’
- b. Skápurinn var **opnaður**.
 cupboard-the(Nsg.m.) was(3sg.) opened(Nsg.m.)
 ‘The cupboard was opened.’

The *-st*-forms (or middle forms) of many verbs in Icelandic can have a passive-like meaning:

- (1.23) Skápurinn opnaðist.
cupboard-the opened
'The cupboard opened.'

Crucially, there is no understood agent in *-st*-verb constructions like (1.23) whereas there is in regular passives formed with the auxiliaries *vera/verða*. Hence it is impossible to use a *-st*-form when an agent is expressed, whereas an agentive prepositional phrase can follow a periphrastic passive:

- (1.24) a. Naglarnir eru framleiddir af Vírneti hf.
nails-the are manufactured by Vírnet Inc.
b. *Naglarnir framleiðast af Vírneti hf.
nails-the manufacture-*st* by Vírnet Inc.

In this respect this *-st*-construction differs from the *s*-passive in the other Scandinavian languages, as we shall see in the comparative discussion of passives below.

The basic Icelandic **perfect** is formed by the auxiliary *hafa* 'have' and an uninflected past participle of the main verb (I will sometimes refer to this form as the **supine** (sup.) below, for ease of exposition, but it is identical to the N/Asg. of the participle, as mentioned above):

- (1.25) a. María hefur aldrei lesið þessa bók.
Mary has never read(sup.) this book
b. Pósturinn hefur ekki komið í morgun.
mail-the has not come(sup.) in morning
'The mail has not arrived this morning.'
c. Þessi bók hefur aldrei verið lesin.
this book has never been read

As these examples suggest, Icelandic does not have a general 'have/be' auxiliary alternation in the perfect of the type found in Danish and German, for instance (see, e.g., Vikner and Sprouse 1988 and references cited there). Thus it is not possible to use *vera* 'be' as a perfective auxiliary in the passive and say, e.g. **Þessi bók er verin lesin* or some such, which would correspond to the Danish *Denne bog er blevet læst* 'This book has been read' (lit. 'This book is been read') and German *Dieses Buch ist gelesen worden*. The verb *vera* 'be' can, however, be used with inflected (agreeing) participial forms derived from various intransitive verbs of movement. This construction has a stative (or adjectival) meaning (picks out lexical result state) whereas the regular perfect has various readings (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1992). Consider first the examples in (1.26):

- (1.26) a. Jón hefur farið til Boston.
John has gone(sup.) to Boston
b. Jón er farinn til Boston.
John is gone(past part.) to Boston

Here (1.26a) can either mean that John has visited Boston, possibly several times (an event reading or existential reading), or else that some evidence indicates that John has gone to Boston (an inferential perfect, as in the story about Goldilocks: *Somebody has slept in my bed*, etc.), although he may be back. (1.26b), on the other hand, can only mean that John has left for Boston and hasn't returned. For this reason these 'have' and 'be' constructions have different restrictions (see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1992):

- (1.27) a. Jón hefur þrisvar farið til Boston.
 John has three times gone(sup.) to Boston
 'John has visited Boston three times.'
- b. *Jón er þrisvar farinn til Boston.
 John is three times gone(Nsg.m.) to Boston
- (1.28) a. *Pósturinn hefur ókomið.
 mail-the has un-arrived
- b. Pósturinn er ókominn.
 mail-the(Nsg.m.) is un-arrived(Nsg.m.)
 'The mail isn't here.'

The 'be'-construction is incompatible with the event-reading implied by 'three times' in (1.27), whereas the stative or adjectival (resultative) reading of the 'be'-construction allows for the typical adjectival prefix *ó-* 'un-' in (1.28); the more active or verbal meaning of the 'have'-perfective does not (as there is no verb **ókoma* 'unarrive'). To put it differently: there is a **state of not being** here but not an **action** of not being here.

There is, however, a second perfect-like construction in Icelandic, formed by *vera búinn að* (lit. 'be finished to') plus the infinitive of the main verb:

- (1.29) Ég er búinn að borða morgunmat.
 I am finished to eat breakfast
 'I have had breakfast (already).'

The most natural reading of (1.29) is one where the result of the action is emphasized, implying, for instance, that I don't need anything. The 'have'-perfective, on the other hand, would have a slightly different reading:

- (1.30) Ég hef borðað morgunmat á Hótel Sögu.
 I have eaten breakfast at Hotel Saga

Here an event-reading would be natural, and such a reading can be negated by the adverb *aldrei* 'never', whereas that would be very odd in the case of a resultative reading (\$ indicates semantic oddity as before):

- (1.31) a. Ég hef aldrei borðað morgunmat.
 I have never eaten breakfast
- b. \$Ég er aldrei búinn að borða morgunmat.
 I am never finished to eat breakfast

The following would be natural, on the other hand:

- (1.32)
- a. Ég er aldrei búinn að borða morgunmat þegar hún kemur.
 I have never finished to eat breakfast when she arrives
 ‘I have never had my breakfast when she arrives.’
- b. Ég var aldrei búinn að senda þér afmælisgjöf.
 I was never finished to send you birthday present
 ‘I never got around to sending you a birthday present.’

Whereas the resultative *vera* + participle is restricted to a particular class of verbs (intransitive verbs of motion, cf. the discussion of *er farinn* ‘is gone’ above), the resultative *vera búinn að* is not lexically restricted in the same fashion. The subtle semantic differences between the *hafa*-perfect and the *vera búinn að*-perfect are, however, quite difficult to master for second language learners, but they will not be discussed further here (see Jón G. Friðjónsson 1989, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989 (especially section 3.2), Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1992, Wide 2002 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005 (e.g. section 8.2.3) for some details about auxiliary constructions in Icelandic).

To express a **progressive** aspect Icelandic uses the auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ plus the infinitive of the main verb (with the infinitival marker *að*):

- (1.33) Ég var að borða morgunmatinn þegar hún kom.
 I was to eat(inf.) breakfast-the when she arrived
 ‘I was having breakfast when she arrived.’

As the English translation indicates, the *vera að* + inf. construction in Icelandic corresponds roughly to the English progressive *be* + the present participle in *-ing*. The semantic restrictions are also partly similar. Thus the Icelandic progressive *vera að* cannot be used with stative verbs, for instance (see, e.g., Van Valin 1991:154ff., Theódóra A. Torfadóttir 2004, Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir 2005, Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:487ff. and references cited by these authors):⁶

⁶ There is some (recent) variation in Icelandic with respect to this. Thus some (younger?) speakers of Icelandic can for instance say *Ég er bara ekki að skilja þetta* lit. ‘I am just not understanding this’, where *skilja* ‘understand’ would seem to be a stative verb. The nature of this variation is currently being investigated in a research project on syntactic variation in Icelandic (principal investigator Höskuldur Thráinsson).

- (1.34) a. *Haraldur er að kunna latínu.
Harold is to know(inf.) Latin (cf. **Harold is knowing Latin.*)
- b. *Guðrún er að vera hávaxin.
Gudrun is to be tall (cf. **Gudrun is being tall.*)

The *vera að*-construction is also rather odd or even impossible with some activity verbs, especially non-agentive ones, and thus it seems somewhat more restrictive than its English counterpart (for a more systematic comparison of the Icelandic and English progressive, see Theódóra A. Torfadóttir 2004). The context does play a role here, however, and there is perhaps some speaker variation involved too (cf. n. 6):

- (1.35) a. (?)Oddur er að hlaupa.
Oddur is to run(inf.) (cf. *Oddur is running.*)
- b. ?María er að hlæja.
Mary is to laugh (cf. *Mary is laughing.*)
- c. ??Það er að rigna.
it is to rain (cf. *It is raining.*)
- d. *Ég var að sitja á gólfinu.
I was to sit(inf.) on floor-the (cf. *I was sitting on the floor.*)

When *hlaupa* ‘run’ means ‘run one’s daily run’ or ‘compete in an event’, the *vera að* construction becomes more natural:⁷

- (1.36) a. Er Oddur heima? Nei, hann er að hlaupa.
‘Is Oddur at home? No, he is running.’
- b. Oddur er einmitt að hlaupa (400 metrana) núna.
‘Oddur is just running (the 400 metres) now.’

Similarly, one could probably look out the window after a longish spell of rain and say (somewhat annoyed): *Það er enn að rigna* ‘It is still raining’. We cannot go further into the subtleties of the Icelandic *vera að* progressive here.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the construction *vera* + present participle can also have a progressive-like interpretation in Icelandic in certain contexts, although it is much more restricted in this usage than its

⁷ With a few non-agentive verbs, Icelandic can use *vera* ‘be’ + the present participle to indicate an ongoing activity – or perhaps rather a state: *Hann er sofandi* ‘He is sleeping/asleep’, *Hún er vakandi* ‘She’s awake’. For a further discussion of aspectual constructions in Icelandic, see, e.g., Stefán Einarsson 1945:143ff., Kress 1982:159ff., Theódóra A. Torfadóttir 2004 and Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir 2005. See also the discussion in the text of *vera* + present participle of event verbs.

English counterpart. Note the following contrasts, for instance (cf. Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir 2005:38–9):

- (1.37) a. Jón er að borða.
John is to eat(inf.)
'John is eating.'
- b. *Jón er borðandi.
John is eating(pres.part.)
- c. Jón er alltaf borðandi / að borða.
John is always eating(pres.part.) / to eat(inf.)
'John eats constantly.'

As Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir points out, eventive verbs like *borða* 'eat' can normally only occur in the *vera að* + inf. progressive and not in the *vera* + pres.part. construction, but when adverbs like *alltaf* are added, the participial construction become possible too.

Finally, it is frequently said that the modal *munu* 'will' is used in auxiliary constructions in Icelandic to indicate future tense. Examples that are supposed to show this usually contain some independent reference to future time, such as an adverbial or a prepositional phrase, and this tends to blur the **modal** reading frequently associated with constructions with *munu*. Consider the following:

- (1.38) a. María kemur.
Mary comes(pres.)
- b. María mun koma.
Mary will come(inf.)

Without any context, it is difficult to give (1.38a) an exact interpretation. This is so because the present tense in Icelandic is arguably the default non-past tense. Hence verbal forms in the present can have various readings, including a habitual reading, future reading, and so on. Some of these are clearly ruled out by the modal present in (1.38b), such as the habitual reading. This can be seen more clearly if more context is given, as in (1.39):

- (1.39) A. Hefur einhver komið í þessa tíma sem þú ert með?
has anybody come in these classes that you are with
'Has anybody been coming to these classes that you are giving?'
- B. Já, María kemur/\$mun koma.
yes Mary comes/ will come
'Yes, Mary (always, usually) comes.'

When future reference is excluded, as is typically the case with stative verbs, the modal nature of *munu* becomes much clearer (although the construction is rather formal in this context):

- (1.40) a. Þú ert Englendingur.
 you are Englishman
 ‘You are an Englishman.’
- b. Þú **mun** vera Englendingur.
 you will be Englishman
 ‘I gather that you are an Englishman.’

Here (1.40b) either implies somebody else’s report or else probability (evidential or inferential; see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:54ff. and references cited there; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:418ff., 471ff.). Similarly, a modal interpretation of *munu* is often quite clear in perfective constructions like (1.41b), where the adverbial *í fyrra* ‘last year’ excludes any future reference. The English glosses of the a- and b-versions are meant to capture the different modalities:

- (1.41) a. Þetta hefur verið í fyrra.
 this has been last year
 ‘This was evidently last year.’
- b. Þetta **mun** hafa verið í fyrra.
 this will have been last year
 ‘I think this was last year.’

I conclude, then, that it is somewhat misleading to say that *munu* is simply a future auxiliary in Icelandic. It is a modal verb and modal constructions will be considered in more detail in chapter 8.

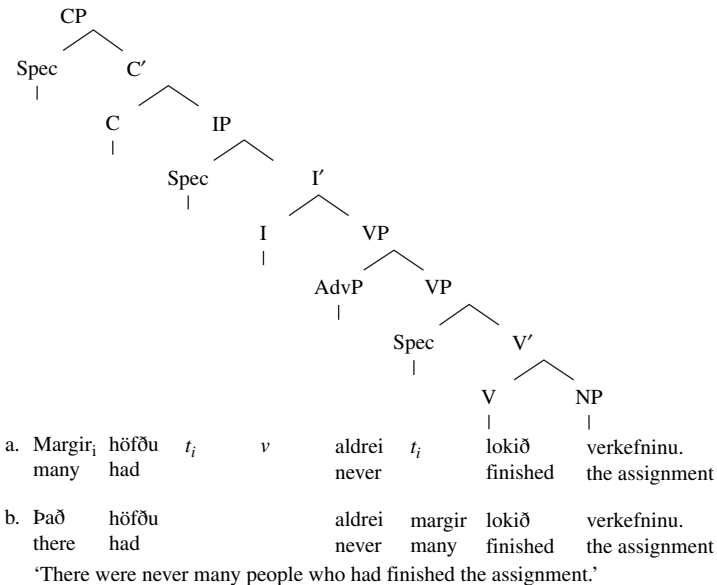
Word order and clause structure

2.1 A descriptive overview

2.1.1 *The basic clause structure assumed*

Most of the work that has been done on Icelandic syntax over recent decades has assumed that the structure of Icelandic sentences can be more or less adequately represented with the help of tree diagrams of roughly the following sort (ignoring for the moment various controversies, details and further developments of the basic ideas expressed by this kind of diagram). Here *t* indicates the basic position of the subject and the object, respectively, and *v* an alternative (and more basic) position of the finite verb (the auxiliary in this case):

(2.1)



c.	hvort whether	María _i Mary	hefði had	ekki not	<i>t_i</i>	lesið read	bókina the book
d.	Bókina _j the book	hefur has	hún _i she	<i>v</i> not	ekki not	<i>t_i</i> read	<i>t_j</i>

‘She has not read the book.’

Theoretical principles presupposed by the diagram in (2.1) include the following (they are not all shared by all linguists who have worked on Icelandic syntax within this kind of framework):

- (2.2)
- Syntactic structures are typically binary branching (see, e.g., Kayne 1984 and later work).
 - All phrases have a head and they may have a specifier position (standardly abbreviated as SpecXP, where XP is the relevant phrase) and a complement position.
 - Sentence adverbs, including *aldrei* ‘never’, the negation *ekki* ‘not’ and others, typically precede the verb phrase (VP). This can be expressed by assuming that they are left-adjoined to the VP.
 - The basic position of the subject is inside the verb phrase (i.e. in SpecVP), i.e. the position occupied by the quantifier *margin* ‘many’ in (2.1b) (on the ‘VP-internal subject hypothesis’ see, e.g., Burton and Grimshaw 1992 and references there).¹

¹ As will be discussed below, e.g. in sections 2.1.3, 2.1.6, 2.2.2 and 2.2.5, sentences containing more than one auxiliary do not seem to contain more than one full-fledged VP. There are at least two sets of facts that suggest this. First, sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’, *aldrei* ‘never’, etc. cannot follow a second auxiliary but only the finite auxiliary and the first non-finite verb, be it an auxiliary verb or a main verb (I use the adverb *presumably* to capture the modal nature of *munu* ‘will’, cf. the discussion at the end of chapter 1):

- (i) a. Jón mun **aldrei** [hafa [lesið bókina]].
John will never have read the book
‘John has presumably never read the book.’
b. *Jón mun [hafa **aldrei** [lesið bókina]].
John will have never read the book

This would follow from an analysis that maintains that adding auxiliaries does not add to the number of full-fledged VPs (adjunction sites for sentence adverbs). Second, a subject like *margin* ‘many’ cannot intervene between a non-finite auxiliary and a main verb but only between a finite auxiliary and the highest non-finite verb, be it an auxiliary verb or a main verb (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1983, Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990c and much later work):

- (ii) a. Það munu aldrei **margin** [hafa [lokið verkefninu]]
there will never many have finished the assignment
‘It will presumably never be the case that many have finished the assignment.’
b. *Það munu aldrei [hafa [**margin** lokið verkefninu]]
there will never have many finished the assignment

- e. The finite verb of the clause (here the auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’) can either occur in the head position (I) of the inflection phrase (IP) or in the head position (C) of the complementizer phrase (CP).
- f. The default position of the subject of the clause is SpecIP but it can be fronted to SpecCP like other constituents, see (2.2h) below). The fact that it is always interpreted as an argument of the main verb is expressed by the coindexed trace (t_i) in SpecVP (see (2.1a, c, d)) – and if it ‘moves’ all the way to SpecCP it also leaves a trace in SpecIP.
- g. Complementizers head the complementizer phrase (CP) if the clause is an embedded one.
- h. When something is preposed (topicalized) in the sentence, e.g. the object, it will show up in SpecCP. The fact that a preposed object will still be interpreted ‘in situ’ (i.e. as an object) is expressed by the coindexed trace (t_j) left in that position (cf. (2.1d)). When a non-subject is preposed in this sense, the finite verb will occupy the head position (C) of the CP and thus precede the subject position, but leave empty the usual position of the finite verb (this is indicated by the v in the I-position in (2.1d)).²

The arguments for most of these claims will be discussed below. They may seem somewhat abstract and theory-specific at first, but most of them are also made, *mutatis mutandis*, in a quite different framework that has been popular in Scandinavia, namely the so-called positional schema or ‘sentence schema’ (Da. *sætningsskema*) developed by the Danish linguist Paul Diderichsen (1946, 1964). This can be illustrated in a simplified fashion as in (2.3) (see, e.g., Allan, Holmes and Lundskær-Nielsen 1995:492ff. and Platzack 1998:89ff. – but note that the schema below is adapted for Icelandic):

(2.3)

subord.		k	n	v	a	?	V	N
main	F	v	n		a	?	V	N
a.	Margir many	höfðu had			aldrei never		lokið finished	verkefninu the assignment
b.	Það there	höfðu had			aldrei never	margir many	lokið finished	verkefninu the assignment
c.		hvort whether	María; Mary	hefði had	ekki not		lesið read	bókina the book
d.	Bókina	hefur	hún		ekki		lesið	

Footnote 1 (*cont.*)

This would follow if there is only one SpecVP position available for subjects and this position immediately precedes the first non-finite verb. We will return to this issue below, especially in section 2.2.2.3.

² Here I have assumed, with Diderichsen and others, that a main clause subject is also ‘preposed’ to SpecCP, although that is not so obvious in Icelandic. We will return to this issue below.

The labels are all from Diderichsen (except for the question mark) and they can be spelled out as follows (see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:492):

- (2.4) F = front position v = finite verb position k = conjunction position
 n = subject position V = non-finite verb a = clausal adverbial
 N = complement position

The positions illustrated in (2.3) are those that Diderichsen assumes for Danish with two exceptions. First, he does not have an alternative subject position where we have the question mark. Second, he assumes that the order of positions for the finite verb and the sentence adverb is not the same in embedded clauses and main clauses. Both of these differences follow from the fact that he is describing Danish. For one thing, Danish does not have transitive expletive constructions like (2.3b) and hence there is less evidence for this ‘extra subject position’ in Danish than there is in Icelandic. For another, the order of the finite verb and the sentence adverb is typically not the same in embedded and main clauses in Danish, whereas it normally is in Icelandic, as we shall see below.

While Diderichsen assumed one kind of schema for subordinate clauses and another for main clauses (see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:498), tree diagrams like the one in (2.1) try to capture the similarities between the two clause types by maintaining that C is a position where either a complementizer in an embedded clause or a finite verb in a main clause can occur. This is the position referred to as k in embedded clauses and v in main clauses by Diderichsen. As already mentioned, it is not as obvious in Danish (nor Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) in general) as it is in Icelandic that main clauses and subordinate clauses have the same basic structure. In Icelandic the finite verb precedes sentence adverbials in both clause types (see, e.g., the discussion in section 2.2.3 below).

Despite various differences between the diagrams in (2.1) and (2.3), partially caused by the different theoretical frameworks that they are based on, they can be said to have two properties in common. First, both assume that there can be empty or unfilled positions (since Diderichsen does not assume any kind of movement, he does not have anything like traces). Second, both analyses propose that there is a special front position (or ‘front field’, *Da. fundament*) which precedes the position typically occupied by the finite verb in main clauses and which can be filled by various kinds of element. This is then followed by the ‘middle field’. This corresponds roughly to the differentiation between CP and IP (and its subparts) in the structural theory that diagrams like (2.1) are based on (for a revised version of Diderichsen’s approach, see, e.g., Hansen and Heltoft 1999).

In the following sections, I will assume clause structure of the kind illustrated in (2.1) and try to give an overview of Icelandic word order in terms of this kind of structure. Hopefully, the descriptive and theoretical claims will be explicit enough to be translatable in principle into other frameworks.

2.1.2 *The default order of constituents and some variations*

Icelandic is standardly said to be an SVO-language, but it is sometimes also claimed that the word order is relatively free because of the rich morphology.³ Thus it should be clear who is doing what to whom even if word order is varied. Consider the following, for instance:⁴

- (2.4) a. *María* *elskar* *Harald*.
 Mary(N) loves Harold(A)
- b. *Haraldur* *elskar* *Mariu*.
 Harold(N) loves Mary(A)
- c. *Harald* *elskar* *María*.
 Harold(A) loves Mary(N)
 ‘Harold, Mary loves.’

Although *María* is the subject in both (2.4a) and (2.4c) and *Harald* the object in both (2.4a) and (2.4c), as suggested by the case marking, it would be a mistake to use such sentences to argue against the claim that Icelandic is an SVO-language and maintain that it could just as well be called an OVS-language. First, the subject-first (or SVO-order) represented in (2.4a,b) is clearly the default order and an order with the object first (as in (2.4c)) is

³ As will become increasingly clear as we proceed, the supposedly ‘free word order’ of Modern Icelandic is somewhat of a myth, despite the rich morphology of the language. The word order variation in Icelandic is quite structured and arguably more so than in, say, German (no scrambling of the type found in German) and Classical Latin, for instance.

⁴ The morphological cases involved are not distinguished in all nouns. This is true for several proper names, for instance, such as *Jóhannes* and *Sif*. Hence an example like (i) would be ambiguous because it is not clear from the structure whether the position after the finite verb corresponds to the SpecIP position in diagram (2.1) or the complement position inside the VP.

- (i) *Jóhannes* *elskar* *Sif*.
 Jóhannes(N/A) loves Sif(N/A)
 ‘Jóhannes loves Sif/Jóhannes, Sif loves.’

The reason for this ambiguity is that a finite main verb apparently ‘moves’ out of the VP, as will be discussed below (see sections 2.1.4 and 2.2.3) and the subject always follows the finite verb when a non-subject is preposed (the verb-second phenomenon). This kind of ambiguity is resolved when an auxiliary is present, as will be shown presently.

marked. Second, it can be demonstrated that the subject *María* in sentences like (2.4c) is not ‘postverbal’ in the same sense as the object in the other sentences is. Rather, the subject in (2.4c) is in the position immediately following the finite verb. Thus if we had an auxiliary verb in a sentence with the object first, the subject would only follow the finite auxiliary and not the non-finite main verb. This is illustrated in (2.5):

- (2.5) a. Harald hefur **María** elskað.
 Harold(A) has Mary(N) loved.
 ‘Harold, Mary has loved.’
 b. *Harald hefur elskað **María**.
 Harold(A) has loved Mary(N)

In addition, the finite verb, be it a main verb or an auxiliary verb, has to precede the subject whenever some non-subject occurs in initial position.⁵

- (2.6) a. *Harald *María* elskar. (compare (2.4c))
 b. *Harald *María* hefur elskað. (compare (2.5a))

This is known as the verb-second (V2) phenomenon, which has already been mentioned.

Despite this, it is often claimed that the word order in Icelandic is somewhat less restricted than that of the other Scandinavian languages (although that is

⁵ As discussed by various linguists (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1985, 1990a; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986a, and Höskuldur Thráinsson and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990) there are some interesting exceptions to this claim, notably the following:

- (i) a. Kannski ég komi á morgun.
 maybe I come(subjunct.) tomorrow
 b. Bara hún fari ekki.
 only she go(subjunct.) no
 ‘If only she wouldn’t go.’
 c. Ætli hann vilji þetta ekki?
 wonder he want(subjunct.) this not
 ‘I wonder whether he does not want this.’

All these examples seem to have the order X-subject-finite verb. Interestingly, the finite verb is in subjunctive mood in all of these examples and the (present) subjunctive mainly occurs in embedded clauses (cf. the discussion in section 8.1). In addition, it is possible to add the complementizer *að* to these examples: *Kannski að ég . . .*, *Bara að hún . . .*, *(?)Ætli að hann . . .* This suggests that these examples are subordinate-clause-like in some sense and this might prevent the finite verb from moving to the C-position. For a (partly historical and comparative) discussion of *kannski (að)*, *bara (að)* and *ætli*, see Willson 2000.

undoubtedly an oversimplification). As we shall see in section 2.2, some of the differences between Icelandic and MSc have to do with possible subject positions. Consider the variations illustrated in (2.7)–(2.8). The so-called transitive expletive construction illustrated in (2.7c) would not be possible in MSc (cf. section 2.2.2) and the ‘shift’ of full NP objects shown in (2.8b) is not found in MSc (see section 2.2.4). Some of the constituents are highlighted in order to draw attention to different positions:

- (2.7) a. Nokkrir stúdentar höfðu aldrei séð þessa mynd í fyrra.
 some students(N) had never seen this film(A) last year
- b. Í fyrra höfðu nokkrir stúdentar aldrei séð þessa mynd.
 last year had some students(N) never seen this film(A)
 ‘Last year, some students had never seen this film.’
- c. Það höfðu nokkrir stúdentar aldrei séð þessa mynd í fyrra.
 there had some students never seen this film last year
 ‘Some students had never seen this film last year.’
- (2.8) a. Nokkrir stúdentar sáu aldrei þessa mynd í fyrra.
 some students(N) saw never this film(A) last year
 ‘Some students never saw this film last year.’
- b. Nokkrir stúdentar sáu þessa mynd aldrei í fyrra.
 some students saw this film never last year
 ‘Some students never saw this film last year.’

The sentences in (2.7) contain an auxiliary verb (*hafa* ‘have’) but the ones in (2.8) do not. Otherwise, all five sentences in (2.7)–(2.8) contain the same words but there is some word order variation. One of the main objectives of this chapter is to illustrate what one can conclude about the structural properties of Icelandic sentences by studying possible and impossible word order variations. As we shall see, sentences containing auxiliary verbs frequently give more reliable or detailed information about the sentence structure than sentences without auxiliaries do. To give the reader a feeling for some of the issues involved, we can begin by asking the following questions:

- (2.9) a. Is the **position of the finite auxiliary** in (2.7a) the same as that of the finite main verb in (2.8a)?
- b. Is the **position of the non-finite main verb** in the sentences in (2.7) different from the position of the finite main verb in (2.8)?
- c. Is the **position of the ‘logical subject’** *nokkrir stúdentar* ‘some students’ in (2.7a) (where it precedes the finite verb) different from its position in (2.7b) (where it follows the finite verb)?
- d. Is the **position of the ‘topicalized’ prepositional phrase** *í fyrra* ‘last year’ in (2.7a) the same as that of the expletive *það* ‘there’ in (2.7c)?

- e. Is the **position of the object** *þessa mynd* ‘this film’ in (2.8a) different from its position in (2.8b)?

The standard answers to these questions within the kind of framework outlined in connection with the diagram in (2.1) above are the following:

- (2.10) a. Yes, the finite main verb in (2.8a) cannot be in the VP since it precedes the sentence adverb *aldrei* ‘never’, just like the finite auxiliary does in (2.7a). It must be in a ‘higher’ position.
 b. Yes, the non-finite main verb is in V in the verb phrase, the finite main verb is ‘higher’ in the structure (i.e., in I or C, cf. the preceding footnote).
 c. Well, it is presumably in the specifier position of IP when it follows the finite verb. When it precedes it, it could be in SpecCP, as assumed in (2.1), but it is actually difficult to tell.
 d. Yes, both appear in the specifier position of CP (according to the analysis presented in (2.1), but that is in fact not uncontroversial, as will be discussed in section 6.2).
 e. Well, it must be if we are assuming that the sentence adverb *aldrei* ‘never’ is in the same position in both examples.

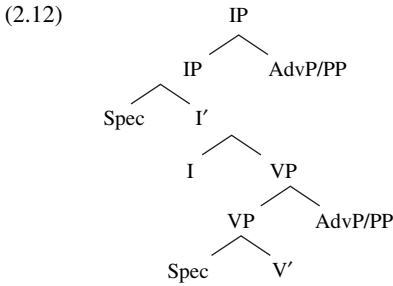
As the reader will note, the claims made in (2.10a–d) are parallel to those that Diderichsen would probably have made (except for the labels of the positions). But Diderichsen did not consider varying positions of full NP-objects and hence questions like (2.8e) did not arise for him. The reason is that this kind of variation is not found in Danish. Theoretical details aside, the question is whether the position occupied by the object in (2.8b) is the same as the position occupied by the subject in sentences like (2.7b, c) or whether an extra position is needed. The answer to that question will partially depend on our belief about the nature of SpecIP: is it a position restricted to subjects or is it a ‘catch-all’ like SpecCP? As we shall see below, it has typically been assumed that SpecIP (or its equivalents) is a dedicated subject position (or an argument position, A-position, cf. the discussion in 2.2.2 below). That means, then, that we either need another (dedicated?) position for objects (preceding the position of sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’) or else that we must assume that objects can be adjoined to the VP above this adverb position. Whether the latter is a viable proposal or not depends in turn on our assumption about the nature of adjunction. We will return to this question in section 2.2.4 below.

The reader may have noted that the prepositional (or adverbial) phrase *í fyrra* ‘last year’ would not fit into the structural diagrams in (2.1) and (2.3) above. The default position of time and place adverbials is at the end of the relevant clause, with place usually preceding time:

- (2.11) a. Nokkrir stúdentar sáu þessa mynd í Reykjavík í fyrra.
 some students(N) saw this film(A) in Reykjavík last year

- b. ?Nokkrir stúdentar sáu þessa mynd í fyrra í Reykjavík.
last year in Reykjavík

The fact that adverbials do not seem to be arguments of the main verb of their clause can be expressed by assuming that they are right-adjoined to some constituent, such as the VP or the IP, as illustrated in (2.12):



In Diderichsen's schema the positions for adverbials of this kind (labelled A by him) follow the object position.

Many of the issues raised by the (relatively standard) assumptions listed above will be discussed in some detail below. These include the following:

- (2.13)
- The **position of the subject in subject-initial main clauses** like (2.1a) – is it in SpecCP or SpecIP in the terminology used in diagram (2.1)?
 - The **position of the overt expletive *það*** in examples like (2.1b) – is it in SpecCP or is it in the 'dedicated subject position' (A-position) SpecIP (and if so, which positions are then available to the 'associate' of the expletive, i.e. the 'logical subject')?
 - The **position of the finite verb in embedded clauses** like (2.1c) (which is apparently the same as in main clauses in Icelandic but not in Mainland Scandinavian and sometimes but not always in Faroese).
 - The **nature of the V2 phenomenon** (the fact that the finite verb tends to come in second position and thus precedes the subject when the sentence begins with a non-subject).
 - The **position of the object** in sentences like (2.8b) (the so-called Full NP-Object Shift found in Icelandic but not the other Scandinavian languages).

In a restrictive theory, the problem will not simply be one of providing enough slots for the pieces of this puzzle to fit into. Rather, some testable claims need to be made about the nature of these 'slots' and the phenomena that characterize this nature. I will now first try to demonstrate where these slots would seem to be and then in section 2.2. consider some claims about their nature and interaction.

2.1.3 Alternative subject positions

So far we have mainly considered sentences where the subject has been in one of the following positions (not ruling out the possibility that some of these may be ‘the same position’):

- (2.14) a. The initial position in main clauses (cf. (2.1a)).
 b. The initial position in embedded clauses (cf. (2.1c)).
 c. The position immediately following a finite verb with a non-subject in initial position (2.1d).
 d. The position following a sentence adverbial (2.1b).

Now consider the following example:

- (2.15)
 Ég veit ekki [hvort það hafa einhverjir nemendur ekki lokið verkefninu]
 I know not whether there have some students not finished assignment-the
 ‘I don’t know whether some students haven’t finished the assignment.’

If the complementizer *hvort* ‘whether’ is in the C-position in the embedded complement clause, then the expletive *það* ‘there’ would seem to have to be in SpecIP (rather than in SpecCP as assumed for (2.1b) above). But where could the logical subject (or the associate of the expletive as it is sometimes called) then be? Since it precedes the sentence negation *ekki* ‘not’ it cannot be inside the VP. Do we need another subject position?

Note also the following contrasts (cf., e.g., Vangsnes 1995, 2002a – examples of this kind will be discussed in more detail below, especially in section 2.2.2, where further references to the theoretical literature will be given):

- (2.16)
 a. ... hvort það hefur einhver útlendingur verið í sumarhúsinu.
 whether there has some foreigner been in the summer house
 ‘... whether there has been some foreigner in the the summer house.’

- b. ... hvort það hefur verið einhver útlendingur í sumarhúsinu.

- (2.17) a. ... hvort það hefur einhver útlendingur lesið bókina.
 whether there has some foreigner read the book
 ‘... whether some foreigner has read the book.’

- b. *... hvort það hefur lesið einhver útlendingur bókina.

We see here that the logical subject can intervene between the intransitive (or ‘unaccusative’) verb *vera* ‘be’ and the following locative phrase in (2.16) but it cannot intervene between the transitive verb *lesa* ‘read’ and its object in (2.17).

Finally, observe the following:

(2.18)

- a. Í fyrra voru í sumarhúsinu [nokkrir gestir frá Færeyjum]
 last year were in the summer house some guests from the Faroe Islands
 ‘Last year some guests from the Faroe Islands were in the summer house.’
- b. Í fyrra lásu bókina [þrír erlendir bókmenntagagnrýnendur]
 last year read the book three foreign literary critics
 ‘Last year three foreign literary critics read the book.’

In these last examples the subject occurs at the very end of the sentence and the type of the main verb plays no role.

It seems, then, that more subject positions may be needed than those assumed in (2.1) above. As will be demonstrated in 2.2.2, however, there appears to be a difference between the Scandinavian languages with respect to the subject positions available. In addition, it can be shown that these positions are not equivalent in the sense that they are favoured by different types of subjects. This will be discussed in section 2.2.2 and also in connection with expletive constructions in chapter 6.

2.1.4 *Positions of finite and non-finite verbs*

As already shown, the position of the verb depends on its finiteness. This can be seen by comparing the position of a non-finite and finite main verb to that of a sentence adverb like *aldrei* ‘never’ (here the brackets are meant to indicate the boundaries of the VP and __ indicates the ‘pre-movement’ position of the finite verb):

- (2.19) a. Jón hefur **aldrei** [lesið bókina]
 John has never read the book
- b. Jón **las** **aldrei** [__ bókina]
 John read never the book
 ‘John never read the book.’

As pointed out above, this is standardly described by assuming that a finite main verb in languages like Icelandic occurs in the position that a finite auxiliary otherwise occupies. As the English glosses in (2.19) indicate, no such evidence is available for English (see, e.g., Pollock 1989 and later work).

As illustrated in (2.20), finite main verbs also typically precede sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’, *aldrei* ‘never’ and the like in embedded clauses, a property that distinguishes Icelandic from most Germanic languages, except for Yiddish and to a limited extent also Faroese (see the contributions in

Haider and Prinzhorn 1986 and Lightfoot and Hornstein 1994, the extensive discussion in Vikner 1995a, and the discussion in section 2.2.3 below).⁶

- (2.20) a. ... hvort Jón hefði aldrei [lesið bókina].
 whether John had never read the book
 b. ... hvort Jón læsi aldrei [__ bókina]
 whether John read never the book
 ‘... whether John never read the book.’

As already mentioned in connection with the analysis in (2.1), this phenomenon has been described in generative syntax by claiming that the main verb moves out of the VP whenever the position for finite verbs needs to be filled. In an embedded clause like the one in (2.20b) this must be the I-position if one assumes the structural framework illustrated in (2.1). In main clauses, on the other hand, this could be the C-position, assuming that this position needs to be filled by a finite verb in main clauses in V2 languages like Icelandic (a proposal usually attributed to den Besten 1983 – for an early review of different theoretical accounts of V2, see Platzack 1985b). Similarly, any kind of finite verb can occur sentence-initially in a ‘yes/no’-question in a V2 language (but not in English, of course):

- (2.21) a. Hefur Jón ekki [lesið bókina]?
 has John not read the book
 ‘Hasn’t John read the book?’
 b. Las Jón ekki [__ bókina]?
 read John not the book
 ‘Didn’t John read the book?’

Additional verb-first (or V1) phenomena found in Icelandic include the imperatives (for some discussion, see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2000 – see also section 1.1.4 above for a description of the form of the imperative) and the so-called narrative V1 mainly found in ongoing written narratives (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1983, 1990a; Höskuldur Thráinsson

⁶ There are mainly two sets of exceptions to this claim: first, as pointed out below, there is a class of adverbs that have scope over the whole sentence and can easily intervene between the subject and the finite verb. Such adverbs are referred to as V3-adverbs in section 2.1.6 below (for early discussions of this phenomenon, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986a and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1986). Second, there are also instances of apparent Mainland Scandinavian word order in some embedded clauses in Icelandic (see, e.g., Ásgrímur Angantýsson 2001 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003). It will be argued in section 2.2.3, however, that the finite verb does in fact move out of the VP in such instances too; i.e. that the reason for the adverb-verb order is the ‘high’ position of the adverb and not the ‘low’ position of the verb.

1986a:172–173; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990 and references cited by these authors):

- (2.22) a. Far þú/Farðu heim!
 go you/go-you home
 ‘Go home!’
 b. Koma þeir nú að stórum helli og ...
 come they now to big cave and
 ‘Then they get to a big cave and ...’

Imperatives cannot be embedded in Modern Icelandic, not even in ‘that’-clauses, which are otherwise more similar to main clauses than other types of embedded clauses are:

- (2.23) *Hann sagði [að farðu heim]
 he said that go-you home

One might think that imperatives are a typical main-clause phenomenon and semantically incompatible with embedded clauses. Hence it is interesting to note that it is possible to find examples of imperatives in embedded clauses in Old Icelandic (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2000, 2005:621–2). The status of embedded narrative V1 in Modern Icelandic is more controversial. It can be embedded, but only marginally, except for the second conjunct of conjoined complement clauses if the complementizer is absent. This is illustrated in (2.24) (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986a; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:22):⁷

- (2.24)
 a. (?)Hann sagði [að hefðu þeir þá komið að stórum helli og ...]
 he said that had(subjunct.) they then come to big cave and
 ‘He said that then they had come to a big cave and ...’
 b. Hann sagði [[að þeir hefðu haldið áfram]
 he said that they had(subjunct.) continued
 1. og [að þeir hefðu þá komið ...]]
 and that they had(subjunct.) then come
 2. ? * ... og [að hefðu þeir þá komið ...]]
 3. ... og [þeir hefðu þá komið ...]]
 4. ... og [hefðu þeir þá komið ...]]
 and had(subjunct.) they then come
 ‘He said that they had continued and they had then come ...’

⁷ Attempts to find examples like (2.24a) attested in texts have been unsuccessful, as far as I know, and many speakers find them doubtful although Eiríkur and Höskuldur (1990) maintain that they are passable.

In the b-example the first variant of the second conjunct, *og að þeir hefðu . . .* ('and that they had . . .'), has a complementizer (*að* 'that'), a preverbal subject and an auxiliary in the subjunctive mood, since this is a clause embedded under *segja* 'say' (cf. the discussion of finite complements in section 8.1 below). The second variant, *og að hefðu þeir . . .* (lit. 'and that had they . . .'), has a complementizer and a V1 order and it sounds quite bad. The third variant, *og þeir hefðu . . .* ('and they had . . .'), has no complementizer but a subject-verb order and it is fine. The fourth variant, *og hefðu þeir . . .* (lit. 'and had they . . .'), has no complementizer but a finite verb in the subjunctive and a V1 order and this is also fine. This could be taken as an argument for the possibility of moving the finite verb to an empty C-position. Interestingly, this last example sounds like a narrative V1.

The finite verb also occurs in initial position in conditional clauses when there is no conjunction (such clauses are often preposed, as in the c-example, but need not be):⁸

- (2.24) a. Jón verður góður [ef hann æfir sig].
John becomes good if he practises self
'John will be good if he practises.'
- b. Jón verður góður [æfi hann sig]
John becomes good practise(subjunct.) he self
'John will be good if he practises.'
- c. [Æfi Jón sig] verður hann góður.
practise(subjunct.) John self becomes he good
'If John practises, he will be good.'

Note that the finite verb shows up in the subjunctive form if it appears clause initially in conditional clauses of this kind. The observed alternation between conditional clauses with a conjunction in clause-initial position (presumably

⁸ Note in passing that the so-called backwards pronominalization frequently found in English is typically impossible in Icelandic, e.g. in examples like a and c below:

- (i) a. *[Ef hann_i æfir sig] verður Jón_i góður.
if he practises self becomes John good
- b. [Ef Jón_i æfir sig] verður hann_i góður.
if John practises self becomes he good
'If John practises, he will be good.'
- c. *[Æfi hann_i sig] verður Jón_i góður.
practise(subjunct) he self becomes John good

The English variant corresponding to the (ungrammatical) a-example would be *If he practises, John will be good*, which is fine. Syntactic properties of pronouns and reflexives are discussed in chapter 9.

the C-position of diagrams like (2.1) and the k/v-position in Diederichsen's schema, cf. (2.2)) and conditional clauses with a finite verb in the initial position can be interpreted as evidence for possible movement of the finite verb to the C-position when it is not filled by some sort of a complementizer. This phenomenon is also found in other Germanic languages.

As shown in (2.1) above, sentence adverbs occur between the finite auxiliary and the verb phrase headed by the non-finite main verb. If more than one auxiliary is present, only the first one will be finite and the sentence adverb will precede all the others. Nothing can intervene between a non-finite auxiliary and a following non-finite verb, be it another auxiliary or a main verb as in (2.25b) (cf. n. 1 above):

- (2.25) a. Jón mun **aldrei** [_{VP} hafa [lesið bókina]]
 John will never have(inf.) read(sup.) the book
 'John has apparently never never read the book.'
- b. *Jón mun [_{VP} hafa **aldrei** [lesið bókina]]
 John will have(inf.) never read(sup.) the book

We obviously need a principled account of this (see also the comment in n. 1 of this chapter). If auxiliary verbs take VP-complements, then we might expect adverbs to be able to adjoin to the complement of *hafa* in (2.25b) but they obviously cannot. We will return to this issue in sections 2.1.6, 2.2.2 (especially 2.2.2.3) and 2.2.5 below.

2.1.5 *Alternative object positions*

As shown in (2.8) above, an object can either precede or follow a sentence adverb like *aldrei* 'never'. This is only true, however, if the main verb is finite and thus precedes the adverb. This, known as Holmberg's generalization (first suggested by Holmberg 1986), is illustrated in (2.26) (the basic position of the 'shifted' object is indicated by *t* and the position of the main verb inside the verb phrase by *v* when the main verb is not there):

- (2.26) a. Jón hefur aldrei [lesið þessa bók]
 John has never read this book
- b. *Jón hefur **þessa bók** aldrei [lesið *t*]
- c. Jón **las** aldrei [*v* þessa bók]
 John read never this book
 'John never read this book.'
- d. Jón **las þessa bók** aldrei [*v t*]
 John read this book never
 'John never read this book.'

The alleged ‘movement’ of the object to the position in front of the sentence adverb in (2.26d) is referred to as Object Shift, or more precisely Full NP Object Shift (Full OS, NPOS) since it affects full NPs and not just pronouns. By contrast, Pronominal Object Shift (Pronominal OS) is obligatory in Icelandic in the sense that unstressed pronominal objects cannot follow sentence adverbs (although heavily (e.g. contrastively) stressed pronouns can). Pronominal OS is dependent on verb movement just like Full OS, however (since *bók* ‘book’ is feminine it is referred to as ‘her’, cf. section 1.1 above):

- (2.27) a. Jón hefur aldrei [lesið hana]
 John has never read her
 ‘John has never read it.’
- b. *Jón hefur **hana** aldrei [lesið t]
- c. *Jón **las** aldrei [v hana]
 John read never her
- d. Jón **las hana** aldrei [v t]
 John read her never
 ‘John never read it.’
- e. Jón las aldrei [v HANA]
 John read never HER
 ‘John never read IT (but he may have read something else).’

As the reader may have noted, the shifted object has always been definite in some sense in all the examples considered so far. The reason is that indefinite objects normally do not undergo OS. Interestingly, however, they can do so if the finite main verb is heavily stressed (see, e.g., the discussion in Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a) and even the sentence adverb:

- (2.28) a. Ég les aldrei bækur.
 I read never books
 ‘I never read books.’
- b. ? *Ég les **bækur** aldrei.
 I read books never
- c. Ég **LES** **bækur** aldrei.
 I **READ** books never
 ‘I never **READ** books (I only buy them).’
- d. Ég les **bækur** **ALDREI**.
 I read books **NEVER**
 ‘I **NEVER** read books (not only rarely so).’

The reason for the acceptability of (2.28c, d) could be something like the following: indefinite objects tend to be the focus (and new information) of the

sentence. Object Shift is incompatible with focus (and new information). Putting a heavy stress on the verb or the sentence adverb de-focuses the indefinite object and it becomes easier to interpret it as old information (something that has already been mentioned in the discourse).

Note also that although shifted and non-shifted variants often appear to be semantically equivalent, as in the case of (2.26c, d) above, it is possible to find sentences where the two variants do not have the same readings (see the references cited above and also Diesing and Jelinek 1993; Diesing 1996, 1997):

- (2.29) a. Ég las aldrei þrjár bækur.
 I read(past) never three books
 ‘I never read three books.’
 b. Ég las þrjár bækur aldrei.
 I read three books never
 ‘There are three books that I never read.’

Here (2.29a) is probably most naturally understood as meaning ‘It was never the case that I read three books’ although it could also mean ‘There are three books that I never read.’ In the second reading the phrase *þrjár bækur* ‘three books’ is specific, that is, one could continue by saying something like ‘namely *Moby Dick*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Wuthering Heights*’. In the first reading *þrjár bækur* does not refer to any specific books. In (2.29b) the phrase *þrjár bækur* can only have the specific reading, as indicated by the English gloss. We see, then, that OS seems to be sensitive to specificity and not simply to grammatical definiteness, as *þrjár bækur* ‘three books’ is an indefinite form. We will return to issues of this kind in section 2.2 below.

It should be noted that the shift under discussion can neither affect prepositional phrases nor the objects of prepositions, not even when weakly stressed pronouns are involved, as already pointed out by Holmberg (1986:199 – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:150–1):

- (2.30) a. Ég talaði aldrei við Maríu.
 I spoke never to Mary
 ‘I never spoke to Mary.’
 b. *Ég talaði við Maríu aldrei.
 c. *Ég talaði Maríu aldrei við.
 I spoke Mary never to
 d. Ég talaði aldrei við hana.
 I spoke never to her
 ‘I never spoke to her.’
 e. *Ég talaði við hana aldrei.
 f. *Ég talaði hana aldrei við.

In this respect Icelandic OS differs to some extent from the so-called Scrambling found in German and Dutch, for instance (for an extensive comparison of the two phenomena, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a and references cited there), and also from Topicalization which can front constituents of almost any kind (see the discussion in chapter 7). Furthermore, the shift applies to objects regardless of their morphological case, including nominative objects (see the discussion of case marking of arguments in section 4.1.2):

- (2.31) a. Mér líkaði aldrei þessi bíll.
me(D) liked never this car(N)
'I never liked this car.'
- b. Mér líkaði þessi bíll aldrei.
me(D) liked this car(N) never
'I never liked this car.'

The properties of OS will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.4.

Interestingly, the differences between full NPs and unstressed pronouns observed above with respect to OS are mirrored by their behavior in the context of particle verbs (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:104ff. – see also Svenonius 1996a, b, the discussion in Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, section 3.2.2.6, and further references cited there):

- (2.32) a. Ég skrifaði niður símanúmerið.
I wrote down the phone number
- b. Ég skrifaði **símanúmerið** niður.
I wrote the phone number down
- c. *Ég skrifaði niður það.
I wrote down it
- d. Ég skrifaði **það** niður.
I wrote it down

Here, however, Icelandic is exactly like English, as indicated by the glosses, although English does not seem to have OS of the kind found in Icelandic (but see Johnson 1991 for a somewhat different view).⁹

Finally, negative elements in complement position show a rather special behaviour (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1987b and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996, section 3.4). First, observe the following:

⁹ It is important to note, however, that shift of objects around verbal particles is independent of the finiteness of the main verb (cf., e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:595) whereas OS is not, as pointed out above (the so-called Holmberg's Generalization). Particle Shift behaves the same way, as illustrated above when an auxiliary is present and the main verb non-finite:

- (i) a. Ég hafði skrifað niður símanúmerið/símanúmerið niður.
I had written down the phone number/the phone number down

- (2.33) Ég hef **enga bók** lesið.
 I have no book read
 'I haven't read any book.'

Here it might seem that the negative object *enga bók* 'no book' has undergone OS and 'moved' to the left of the non-finite main verb. That would be an exception to Holmberg's Generalization, which states that OS only takes place when the main verb is finite (and has thus 'moved away'). Closer inspection reveals, however, that the apparent 'shift' in (2.33) is a different phenomenon. First, it seems to be obligatory:

- (2.34) *Ég hef lesið enga bók.¹⁰
 I have read no book

Second, negative objects of prepositions and even whole prepositional phrases containing a negative NP can undergo this process:

Footnote 9 (*cont.*)

- b. Ég hafði skrifað *niður það/það niður.
 I had written down it/it down.

The shift of light adverbs around sentence adverbs like *ekki* 'not' and *aldrei* 'never' is, however, sensitive to the finiteness of the main verb (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c.):

- (ii) a. Hún var aldrei/ekki þar.
 she was never/not there
 b. Hún var þar aldrei/ekki.
 she was there never/not
 c. Hún hefur aldrei/ekki verið þar.
 she has never/not been there
 d. *Hún hefur þar aldrei/ekki verið.
 she has there never/not been

A similar situation is found in Swedish, for instance, involving unstressed *där* 'there' (cf. Josefsson 1994, 2003 and references cited there):

- (iii) a. Därför bor Sten inte där.
 therefore lives Sten not there
 b. Därför bor Sten där inte.

As Josefsson demonstrates, this shift is dependent on stress, just like pronominal OS, which is perhaps not surprising since locative adverbs like *där* 'there' are pronominal in a sense. The relevance of this for an account of NPOS is not entirely clear.

¹⁰ This example can be contrasted with the following which contain the negative polarity item *neinn* 'any':

- (i) a. Ég hef ekki lesið neina bók.
 I have not read any book
 b. Ég las ekki neina bók.
 I read not any book
 'I didn't read any book.'

- (2.35) a. *Jón hefur talað við engan.
John has spoken to nobody
- b. Jón hefur **engan** talað við
John has nobody spoken to
'John hasn't spoken to anybody.'
- c. *María hefur talað um ekkert annað í meira en viku.¹¹
Mary has spoken about nothing else in more than week
- d. María hefur **um ekkert annað** talað í meira en viku
Mary has about nothing else spoken in more than week
'Mary hasn't spoken about anything else for more than a week.'

It seems, then, that this phenomenon is more reminiscent of West German Scrambling in certain respects than Scandinavian OS.¹² In structural terms we can say that the question is therefore once again whether we have

Footnote 10 (*cont.*)

Note also that it is possible to construct examples with negative objects like *enga bók* 'no book' in sentences without an auxiliary and show that under such circumstances a regular OS can optionally apply and it has a similar semantic effect as in other instances:

- (ii) a. Ég las aldrei enga bók.
I read never no book
'It was never the case that I read no book at all.'
- b. Ég las **enga bók** aldrei.
I read no book never
'There was no book that I never read.'

¹¹ Some speakers do not find this variant completely unacceptable. The reason for this is not entirely clear, but it may have something to do with the perceived relationship between the verb and the prepositional phrase; e.g., to what extent the preposition can be interpreted as being a part of the predicate. This needs to be investigated further.

¹² As Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson has observed (1987b), this process also applies to non-negative quantificational objects, but here it is optional and has a stylistic effect (the moved versions sound more bookish):

- (i) a. Jón hefur lesið margar bækur.
John has read many books
- b. Jón hefur **margar bækur** lesið.
John has many books read
'John has read many books.'
- c. Jón hefur talað við ýmsa.
John has spoken to various
'John has spoken to various people.'
- d. Jón hefur **við ýmsa** talað.
John has to various spoken
- e. Jón hefur **ýmsa** talað við.
John has various spoken to

movement to a unique displaced object position or whether we have adjunction. Issues of this kind will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.

2.1.6 Positions of adverbs

As the reader has undoubtedly noted, many of the claims made above about moving verbs and shifting objects depend on the assumption that sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ and the negation *ekki* ‘not’ have a relatively fixed position in the syntactic structure and can thus be used as landmarks of sorts. What is important in this connection is that it can be argued that adverbs of this kind cannot follow the VP. In that respect they contrast in fact with various manner adverbs like *vandlega* ‘carefully’ and also frequency adverbs like *oft* ‘often, frequently’, for instance:

- (2.36) a. Hún hafði lesið leiðbeiningarnar **vandlega/oft**.
 she had read instructions-the carefully/often
 b. *Hún hafði lesið leiðbeiningarnar **aldrei/ekki**.
 she had read instructions-the never/not

To account for this difference one could propose that adverbs like *vandlega* ‘carefully’ and *oft* ‘often’ can be right-adjoined to the VP (unless they are inside the VP, cf. below) whereas adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ and *ekki* ‘not’ cannot.

Adverbs like *oft* can, however, also precede the VP as shown in (2.37):

- (2.37) Hún hafði **oft** [lesið leiðbeiningarnar]
 she had often read instructions-the

Because of this property of adverbs like *oft* (i.e. that they can apparently either precede or follow the VP), they are not as reliable indicators of the position of elements from the VP as adverbs like *aldrei* and *ekki* are.

Note, however, that the adverb *oft* does not have exactly the same meaning in the medial and the final position. In the medial position it has scope over the whole sentence (= ‘It has often been the case that ...’) whereas in the final position it modifies the verbal action, having roughly the meaning ‘over and over’. This shows, then, that the position of the adverb in the sentence can play a semantic role. The generalization would be that when *oft* occurs after the VP, then it is interpreted as a manner adverb but when it clearly precedes the VP it is interpreted as a sentence adverb. Hence it is not surprising that pure manner adverbs like *vandlega* ‘carefully’ cannot really occupy the medial position:

- (2.38) *Jón hefur vandlega lesið leiðbeiningarnar.
 John has carefully read instructions-the

It is well known, of course, that different semantic classes of adverbs have different ‘privileges of occurrence’ (see, e.g., Jackendoff 1972; Travis

1988 – and more recently Alexiadou 1997; Cinque 1999 among others). The syntax of Icelandic adverbs has not been investigated in great detail, but various preliminary studies and analyses of particular classes exist (see Sveinn Bergsveinsson 1969; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2002; Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir 2005; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:123–37). Thus Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (2002) considers the following sub-classes of S-adverbs (as he calls them) in Icelandic: **speech act adverbs** (*einfaldlega* ‘simply’), **evaluative adverbs** (*skiljanlega* ‘understandably’), **evidential adverbs** (*greinilega* ‘clearly’), **modal adverbs** (*líklega* ‘probably’) and **conjunctive adverbs** (*samt* ‘still’). This is mainly a semantic classification and the semantics of adverbs of this type (and others) is discussed by Ernst (2002), for instance. Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir’s paper (2005) presents a semantic analysis and sub-classification of temporal adverbs, showing, for instance, how they interact with different forms of the progressive construction.

We will return to the representation of adverbs in syntactic structure at the end of this chapter, but as a first step we can assume the main distributional classes listed in (2.39). While this classification should suffice for most of the theoretical and comparative discussion in 2.2, it is obviously too simplistic as it does not go into any details about the relative order of adverbs that have scope over the whole sentence, for instance. Note, however, that the class referred to as ‘V3 adverbs’ here is a distributional class, but semantically these adverbs have scope over the whole sentence and would thus fall into the class of S-adverbs discussed by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson.¹³

- (2.39)
- a. **Sentence adverbs** that typically occur in the medial position and not in the post-VP position. They can also easily be preposed: *aldrei* ‘never’, *augljóslega* ‘obviously’, *ekki* ‘not’, *greinilega* ‘obviously’, *semnilega* ‘probably’, *sýnilega* ‘evidently’, *trúlega* ‘probably’
 - b. **Manner adverbs** that typically occur in the post-VP position (before place and time adverbs) and not in the medial position. They cannot easily be preposed: *hratt* ‘fast’, *klaufalega* ‘clumsily’, *kæruleysislega* ‘carelessly’, *nákvæmlega* ‘accurately’, *vandlega* ‘carefully’
 - c. **Place and time adverbs** that typically occur in the post-VP position (after the manner adverbs) but not in the medial position. They can easily be preposed: *hér* ‘here’, *hérna* ‘here’, *inni* ‘inside’, *i fyrra* ‘last year’, *i gær* ‘yesterday’, *nú* ‘now’, *núna* ‘now’, *úti* ‘outside’, *þar* ‘there’, *þarna* ‘there’, *þá* ‘then’
 - d. Adverbs that can intervene between the subject and the finite verb in subject-initial clauses (sometimes referred to as **V3 (or verb-third)**)

¹³ As is commonly done, Jóhannes Gísli (2002) includes prepositional phrases and other adverbial expressions in his discussion. The present discussion is restricted to the lexical class of adverbs and fossilized expressions like *i fyrra* ‘last year’.

adverbs). They fit naturally into the medial position and they can also occur in the post-VP position, but only some of them can easily be preposed: *auðvitað* ‘naturally, obviously’, *bara* ‘just’, *einfaldlega* ‘simply’, *ennþá* ‘still’, *kannski* ‘maybe’, *líklega* ‘probably’, *náttúrulega* ‘naturally’, *sennilega* ‘probably’, *vonandi* ‘hopefully’

- e. **Discourse particles** (or modal particles) that typically occur in the medial position and cannot be preposed. They are difficult to translate directly into other languages: *jú, nú, sko*

This distribution is illustrated in (2.40)–(2.44):

(2.40) Sentence adverbs:

- a. Jón hefur aldrei/augljóslega/ekki/greinilega/sennilega/sýnilega/trúlega lokið þessu.
John has never/obviously/not/obviously/probably/evidently/probably finished this
- b. *Jón hefur lokið þessu aldrei/augljóslega/ekki/greinilega/sennilega/sýnilega/trúlega.
- c. Aldrei/augljóslega/ekki/greinilega/sennilega/sýnilega/trúlega hefur Jón lokið þessu.
never/obviously/not/obviously/probably/evidently/probably has John finished this

(2.41) Manner adverbs:

- a. *Jón hefur hratt/klaufalega/kæruleysislega/nákvæmlega/vandlega lokið þessu.
John has fast/clumsily/carelessly/accurately/carefully finished this
- b. Jón hefur lokið þessu hratt/klaufalega/kæruleysislega/nákvæmlega/vandlega.
- c. ? *Hratt/klaufalega/kæruleysislega/nákvæmlega/vandlega hefur Jón lokið þessu.¹⁴

(2.42) Place and time adverbs:

- a. *Jón hefur hér/inni/í fyrra/í gær/nú/úti/þar/þá lokið þessu.
John has here/inside/last year/yesterday/now/outside/there/then finished this
- b. Jón hefur lokið þessu hér/hérna/inni/í fyrra/í gær/nú/núna/úti/þar/þarna/þá.
- c. Hér/hérna/inni/í fyrra/í gær/nú/núna/úti/þar/þarna/þá hefur Jón lokið þessu.

(2.43) V3 adverbs:

- a. Jón bara/einfaldlega/kannski/náttúrulega/sennilega lýkur þessu einhvern daginn.¹⁵
John just/simply/maybe/naturally/probably finishes this some day(A)
‘John will just/simply/maybe/naturally finish this some day.’

¹⁴ These are probably not all equally bad. Thus ??*Vandlega hefur Jón lokið þessu* (lit. ‘Carefully has John finished this’) sounds stilted or bookish whereas ??*Hratt hefur Jón lokið þessu* (lit. ‘Fast has John finished this’) sounds worse.

¹⁵ The adverb *loksins* ‘finally’ commonly intervenes between the subject and the finite verb in embedded clauses, especially temporal ones, as originally pointed out by Maling (1980:176–7n – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986a and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:44ff., for instance):

- (i) Þegar ég **loksins** fann þetta ...
when I finally found this

- b. Jón hefur bara/einfaldlega/kannski/náttúrulega/sennilega lokið þessu.
 John has just/simply/maybe/naturally/probably finished this
- c. Jón hefur lokið þessu bara/einfaldlega/kannski/náttúrulega/auðvitað.
- d. *Bara/einfaldlega hefur Jón lokið þessu.
 just/simply has John finished this
- e. Kannski/náttúrulega/sennilega hefur Jón lokið þessu.
 maybe/naturally/probably has John finished this

(2.44) Discourse particles:

- a. Jón hefur júnúsko lokið þessu.
 John has well/now/look finished this
 ‘Well, John has finished this.’
- b. *Júnúsko hefur Jón lokið þessu.¹⁶

This is obviously a simplified account of adverbial positions – and the topic of discourse particles has hardly been touched on at all here. But this overview should give a rough idea of the issues involved. We will return briefly to this topic in section 2.2.5.

2.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

2.2.1 The nature of V2

As pointed out in section 2.1.1, it has become widely standard to maintain that in the Germanic V2 languages the finite verb ‘moves’ to C, the head position of CP, but in embedded clauses this position is normally filled

Footnote 15 (*cont.*)

As pointed out by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1989:44n), *loksins* ‘finally’ is not a V3 adverb of the kind listed above as it is usually quite unnatural in this position in main clauses (some examples can be found on the Net, however):

- (ii) ? *Ég loksins fann þetta ...
 I finally found this

The reason for this particular restriction on the occurrence of preverbal *loksins* is not obvious. Bobaljik and Thráinsson (1998:64–5) maintain that examples of this sort involve adjunction of the adverbs in question to TP and that the verb has only moved to the tense position (T) and not to the agreement position (Agr) – an analysis that is entirely compatible with the checking theory they propose. We will return to further instances of this sort in section 2.2.3 below (see also Ásgrímur Angantýsson 2001 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003 for further examples and discussion).

¹⁶ Since *nú* can also be a temporal adverb, *Nú hefur Jón lokið þessu* is fine in the sense ‘Now John has finished this’ but then *nú* is not a discourse particle.

by the complementizer and hence the verb cannot move there. The main motivations are the following:¹⁷

- (2.45) a. The finite verb precedes sentence adverbs in main clauses but not in embedded clauses in V2 languages like Dutch, German and the Mainland Scandinavian languages, for instance. This would follow if the finite verb moves to C (and the subject to SpecCP if it precedes the finite verb) in main clauses but not in embedded clauses. This is often referred to as the main clause/subordinate clause asymmetry.
- b. Topicalization (movement of non-subject constituents to clause-initial position) is mainly found in main clauses and topicalized elements are immediately followed by the finite verb in V2 languages. This would follow if Topicalization is movement to SpecCP, accompanied by movement of the finite verb to an empty C (which is not available in embedded clauses).

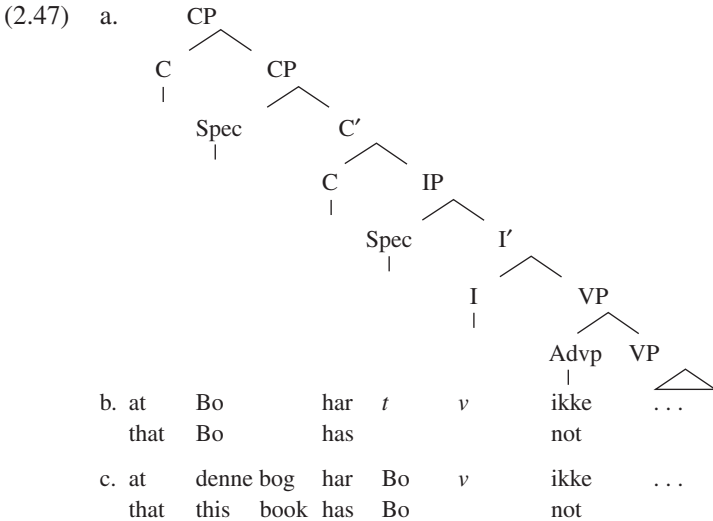
While this kind of analysis has been very popular among linguists working on Germanic V2 languages, it is not unproblematic and hence not entirely uncontroversial. First, the main clause/subordinate clause asymmetry does not hold for Icelandic, as we have seen (and it does not hold for Yiddish either, cf., e.g., Diesing 1990; Santorini 1994). Second, while it is true that Topicalization is mainly found in main clauses, it is also found in certain types of embedded clauses.

In most Germanic languages, embedded Topicalization can be found in ‘that’-complements, especially the complements of so-called bridge verbs, i.e. verbs like ‘answer’, ‘assume’, ‘claim’, ‘hope’, ‘know’, ‘say’, ‘think’ (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a:71–2; see also Erteschik 1973). It has then been pointed out that these complements are more main-clause-like in other respects too. In particular, one can find main-clause order of the finite verb and sentence adverbs in bridge-verb complements in various Germanic languages, including Mainland Scandinavian. This is illustrated for Danish in (2.46) where the normal order of finite verb and sentence adverb is given in the first variant, the main clause order (i.e., finite verb – sentence adverb) in the second, and the third variant is an example of embedded Topicalization with the finite verb preceding the subject (cf. Vikner 1995a:67):

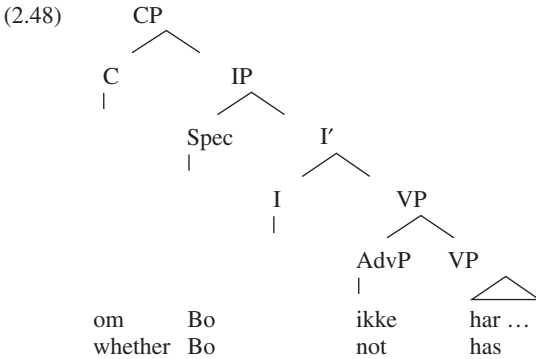
¹⁷ The original insight is usually attributed to den Besten (e.g. 1983). For critical overviews, see, for instance, Haider, Olsen and Vikner 1995, Höskuldur Thráinsson, Epstein and Peter 1996, and the contributions to Lightfoot and Hornstein 1994 (e.g. Vikner 1994, Thráinsson 1994b and Santorini 1994). See also Vikner 1995a for extensive discussion and relevant data from various Germanic languages.

- (2.46) a. Vi ved [at Bo ikke har læst denne bog]
 we know that Bo not has read this book
 b. Vi ved [at Bo **har ikke** læst denne bog]
 c. Vi ved [at **denne bog** har Bo ikke læst]
 we know that this book has Bo not read
 'We know that this book Bo has not read.'

Now if Topicalization is always movement to SpecCP then it would seem that the embedded clauses allowing embedded Topicalization would have to have an extra SpecCP below the C position occupied by the complementizer – and then another C position below that to host the finite verb. This is partially illustrated in (2.47) for the Danish examples in (2.46b, c) (for analyses along these lines, see, e.g., Platzack 1986a, Holmberg 1986 and Vikner 1995a, with extensive references):



This is known as the CP-recursion analysis. The main evidence for it in languages like Danish is the fact that there we get the main clause order subject – finite verb – adverb (as in (2.46b)) in exactly those types of embedded clauses where Topicalization is also possible, namely the complements of bridge verbs. The idea is, then, that the reason we get this correlation is that in clauses of this kind we have an extra CP, making the C-position and SpecCP available for constituents to move into as in main clauses (although the subject and the verb would presumably move ‘through’ SpecIP and I, respectively, as indicated by *t* and *v* in the diagram above). In other types of embedded clauses we would have the structure illustrated in (2.48):



It has also been pointed out in this connection that, although it is frequently possible to leave out the complementizer in bridge verb complements in MSc, it is not possible if a non-subject has been preposed and it is also quite bad with the subject in initial position in the embedded clause followed by a Vf-adv order (see, e.g., Reinholtz 1989 and Vikner 1995a:85 – here \emptyset indicates an empty complementizer position and $*\emptyset$ that it cannot be empty):

- (2.49)
- a. Karen siger at/ \emptyset Peter ikke har læst den bog.
 Karen says that/ \emptyset Peter not has read that book.
 'Karen says that Peter hasn't read that book.'
- b. Karen siger at/ $*\emptyset$ den bog har Peter ikke læst.
 Karen says that/ $*\emptyset$ that book has Peter not read
- c. Karen siger at/?? \emptyset Peter har ikke læst den bog.
 Karen says that/?? \emptyset Peter has not read that book

This again suggests a connection between embedded Vf-adv order in Danish (and MSc in general) and the possibility of having embedded Topicalization.

As shown above, the I position is in this approach not believed to play any active role in languages like Danish. The same would then hold for the other MSc languages since there we find the same word order in embedded clauses (this is also the default word order in Modern Faroese, although here the situation is a bit more complex as we shall see in section 2.2.3). But since the order subject – finite verb – adverb (S-Vf-adv) is found in all types of embedded clauses in Icelandic and Yiddish, and not just those where embedded Topicalization is natural, it is commonly assumed that in these languages the finite verb always moves to I (see, e.g., the diagram for (2.1c) above – for a discussion of apparent exceptions, see section 2.2.3 below). The dissociation of the Vf-adv order and embedded Topicalization in Icelandic can be shown by examples like the following (for an overview of embedded Topicalization in Icelandic, see Friðrik Magnússon 1990):

- (2.50)
- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|----------|---------|------------------|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| a. | Hann | spurði | [hvort | Haraldur | hefði | lesið | þessa bók] |
| | he | asked | whether | Harold | had | not | read this book |
| b. | ??Hann | spurði | [hvort | þessa bók | hefði | Haraldur | lesið] |
| | he | asked | whether | this book | had | Harold | read |
| c. | Þetta er | stelpan | [sem | Haraldur | gaf | ekki | bókina] |
| | this is | the girl | that | Harold | gave | not | the book |
| d. | *Þetta er | stelpan | [sem | bókina | gaf | Haraldur | ekki] |
| | this is | the girl | that | the book | gave | Harold | not |

As shown here, the order Vf-adv is the normal word order in embedded questions and relative clauses in Icelandic although Topicalization is usually quite bad or even impossible.¹⁸

With this in mind, it may be of some interest to note that in Icelandic it is completely impossible to leave out a complementizer when a non-subject is preposed although it is often possible in the case of a subject-first embedded clause, especially if the subject is a pronoun. Compare the Icelandic examples in (2.51) to the Danish ones in (2.49):

- (2.51)
- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|-------|----------|-------------|------|------|----------|----------|
| a. | Ég | held | [að/Ø | þeir | hafi | ekki | svikið | hana] |
| | I | think | that/Ø | they | have | not | betrayed | her |
| b. | Ég | held | [að/ *Ø | hana | hafi | þeir | ekki | svikið] |
| | I | think | that/ *Ø | her | have | they | not | betrayed |

This indicates that although the presence of the complementizer may be important for the licensing of an embedded topicalized element in Icelandic, as it is in Danish, it has nothing to do with the embedded Vf-adv order in Icelandic.¹⁹

¹⁸ As has been pointed out in the literature, it is possible to find passable examples with Topicalization in embedded questions in Icelandic (see, e.g., some of the examples cited by Iatridou and Kroch 1992). The judgements of these vary, however, as is the case with various other instances of embedded Topicalization. It has even been suggested that there is a dialectal split in Icelandic with respect to this (cf., e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996 and Gärtner 2003). The extent and nature of this variation remains to be investigated in detail. The point made here is simply that even in embedded clauses where Topicalization is impossible, the order Vf-adv is in no way degraded. It is the general rule (default order) in these clause types just like it is in other types of clauses.

¹⁹ It is notoriously tricky to judge examples of this sort since intonation and stress may differ from one sentence type to another. But note that although a pronominal subject like *þeir* 'they' in (2.51a) would normally be unstressed and a fronted object pronoun like *hana* 'her' in (2.51b) would be stressed, the observed difference in acceptability cannot be linked to this stress difference. This can be shown by the fact that even if we stressed the pronominal subject *þeir* in the variant without the complementizer, the result would still be acceptable:

- (i) Ég held [Ø ÞEIR hafi ekki svikið hana]
 I think THEY have not betrayed her

Among the theoretical issues raised by this kind of approach one could mention the following:

- (2.52) a. If the order S–Vf–adv in embedded clauses in Icelandic (and Yiddish) is not due to any kind of Topicalization (and CP-recursion), as it supposedly is in MSc for instance (i.e. ‘movement’ of the subject to SpecCP and the finite verb to C), why assume, then, that the subject is in SpecCP and the finite verb in C in main clauses in these languages (cf. the diagram for (2.1a) above) and not in SpecIP and I, respectively? How could one tell?²⁰
- b. If it is the case that non-subjects can more easily be topicalized in embedded clauses in Icelandic and Yiddish than in the other Germanic languages, does that mean, then, that CP recursion is more general in these languages or could it mean that fronted non-subjects are in a different position in Icelandic and Yiddish than they are in MSc, for instance?

Various approaches have been proposed to deal with these issues and it is neither possible nor necessary to review them all here (the reader is again referred to Haider, Olsen and Vikner 1995 and Höskuldur Thráinsson, Epstein and Peter 1996 for useful overviews – and also to the overview in Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a and the extensive discussion and wealth of data presented in Vikner 1995a).²¹ These approaches typically involve suggestions about the nature of Topicalization and the proposed ‘landing sites’ of topicalized elements (e.g. SpecCP), the properties (and number) of subject positions in different languages and the nature of verb movement and possible syntactic positions of finite verbs. These issues will be discussed further in sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 and in chapter 7.

2.2.2 *Subject positions and functional categories*

2.2.2.1 **An overview of the subject positions**

As the reader may recall, some of the Icelandic facts reviewed in section 2.1 suggested that there is a need for more than one subject position in Icelandic. These facts included examples like the ones listed in (2.53). The

²⁰ Here ‘how could one tell’ does not only apply to the linguist trying to analyse the language, of course, but also to the child acquiring the language – see, e.g., Kjartan G. Ottósson 1989, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990.

²¹ A serious attempt to resolve the CP-recursion issue is made in Iatridou and Kroch 1992, who conclude that while CP-recursion is responsible for V2 in most Germanic languages, languages like Icelandic and Yiddish have a more general V2 in embedded clauses not dependent on CP-recursion. We will return to this issue in the following section.

examples are slightly changed and simplified here (for reasons of space): the relevant subjects are in boldface and their relative positions are important for the discussion below:

- (2.53)
- | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------|
| a. | Margir höfðu | | aldrei lokið | því. |
| | many had | | never finished | it(D) |
| b. | Hana hefur hún | | ekki lesið | |
| | it(A) has she | | not read | |
| c. | hvort María hefði | | ekki lesið | hana. |
| | whether Mary had | | not read | it(A) |
| d. | hvort það hafa einhverjir | | ekki lokið | því |
| | whether there have some | | not finished | it |
| e. | Það höfðu | | aldrei margir lokið | því. |
| | there had | | never many finished | it |
| f. | hvort það hefur einhver | | verið | í því. |
| | whether there has somebody | | been | in it |
| g. | hvort það hefur | | verið einhver | í því. |
| | whether there has | | been sby | in it |

In the preceding discussion we have considered claims like the following about the possible position of these subjects:

- (2.54)
- The sentence-initial subject in (2.53a) *Margir höfðu aldrei* ...** ('Many had never ...') **could be in SpecCP** (and the finite verb in C – the standard analysis). As pointed out above, however, it is not obvious that sentence-initial subjects in Icelandic are not in SpecIP (and the finite verb in I).
 - Assuming (2.54a), **the subject in (2.53b) *Hana hefur hún* ...** (lit. 'Her has she ...') **is presumably in SpecIP** since this is a non-subject initial sentence (with the finite verb arguably in C).
 - The subject in (2.53c) *hvort María hefði* ...** ('whether Mary had...') **is presumably in SpecIP** since this is an embedded question with the complementizer *hvort* 'whether' in C. (An alternative might be that Icelandic has the so-called 'generalized CP-recursion' which would allow an extra CP layer in pretty much all types of embedded clauses and then the complementizer *hvort* would be in the C-position of the first CP, the subject in the SpecCP of the second CP and the finite verb in the C-position of that CP.)
 - This is a problematic example which we did not really discuss above. First, it contains the expletive *það* 'there' inside an embedded question *hvort það hafa einhverjir* ... (lit. 'whether there have some...'). As shown above, Topicalization is usually quite bad in embedded questions in Icelandic but (2.53d) is fine. This suggests that the expletive *það* may not be in SpecCP. But if it is in SpecIP, **then it is not clear where the logical**

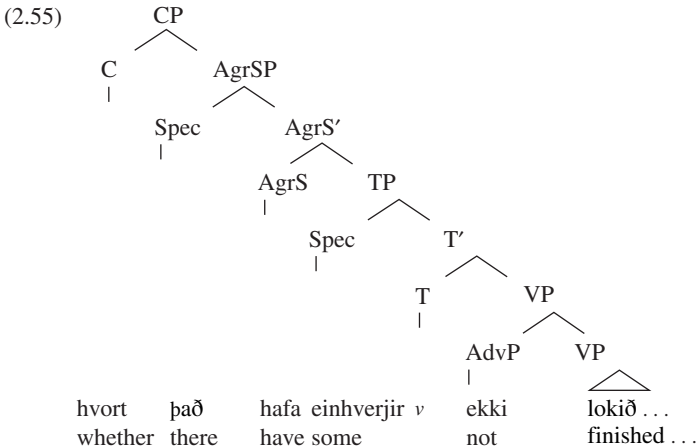
- subject *einhverjir*** is since it precedes the sentence adverb (the negation *ekki* ‘not’).
- e. In the discussion around (2.1) above, it was suggested that in examples like *Það höfðu aldrei margir lokið ...* (lit. ‘There had never many finished ...’) **the subject could be in SpecVP** since it follows the sentence adverb and precedes the (non-finite) main verb.
 - f. In sentences like *hvort það hefur einhver ...* (lit. ‘whether there has somebody ...’) **the subject could presumably be in SpecVP too**, although it could also be in the same position as the subject in (2.53d) (whatever that position may be) since there is no sentence adverb to tell us whether it is inside or outside the VP.
 - g. Finally, **this subject follows the (non-finite) main verb** in *hvort það hefur verið einhver ...* (‘whether there has been somebody ...’). As the reader can verify, this is the typical position for logical subjects in expletive constructions with intransitive verbs in English – and also in MSc in fact – whereas the position corresponding to the one in (2.53f) is generally not available. It is standardly assumed that this is the ‘object position’ and it is available here since this is an intransitive (and unaccusative or ‘ergative’) verb.

In my theoretical discussion so far, I have not really considered any arguments having to do with the alleged subject positions in (2.53d, e, f). I will now consider these in turn.

2.2.2.2 The second subject position before the sentence adverb

Although it was not proposed in order to account for facts of this sort, the so-called Split IP hypothesis of Pollock (1989 – later modified by Chomsky 1991 and many others) suggests a solution to the problem mentioned in (2.54d). According to this hypothesis, the inflection phrase (IP) is not a single functional category but should be ‘split’ into an agreement phrase (AgrP) and a tense phrase (TP).²² Given this, a partial structure like the following could be proposed for examples like (2.53d) (see, e.g., Jonas 1996a, b, Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, Bobaljik and Jonas 1996 and much later work):

²² Chomsky 1991 suggests that the agreement phrase should in turn be split into a subject agreement phrase (AgrSP) and an object agreement phrase (AgrOP) and more recently there has been a proliferation of suggested functional phrases. AgrOP will be discussed in section 2.2.4 in connection with possible object positions. The general question of functional categories will then be discussed briefly in section 2.2.5. For the moment I will restrict myself to a single AgrP (referring to it as AgrSP as it is arguably a subject position of some sort) and a TP.



An analysis like this immediately raises various theoretical questions:

- (2.56)
- What is the role of SpecAgrSP? Can it sometimes be filled by an overt expletive and sometimes by the logical subject? Can that vary from language to language?
 - What is the role of SpecTP and its head T? Can the subject sometimes be in SpecTP? What are the conditions for that? Does that vary from one language to another? How could that be?
 - What, if any, is the relationship between the functional categories AgrSP and TP to morphological agreement and tense?²³

Questions of this sort have been discussed extensively by various linguists for quite some time, in particular those working on Scandinavian languages (see, e.g., Bobaljik 1995, 2002; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2004a, b, c, d, 2005b; Holmberg 1993, 2000, 2001; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, 2003;

²³ A further development along the lines originally suggested by Pollock's (1989) approach has led to the suggestion that there may be more functional projections of the kind represented here by AgrP and TP, e.g. related to such grammatical categories as aspect (AspP) and mood (ModP – see, e.g., Cinque 1999 and much later work). Such projections will be ignored here, both for reasons of space and because of my adherence to the 'Real Minimalist Principle' outlined in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:261: 'Assume only those functional categories that you have evidence for' (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003:186; Kjartan Ottosson 2003:254–5). According to this belief, assuming unrestricted proliferation of functional projections would make them meaningless. This does not imply, however, that everybody who has suggested more functional projections than those assumed here has done so in an unrestricted fashion, only that I cannot reproduce convincing arguments for them here.

Jonas 1994, 1996a, b; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996; Kjartan Ottosson 2003; Nilsen 1997, 1998; Svenonius 2000, 2002a; Vangsnes 1995, 1999, 2000, 2002a and references cited by these authors). A part of the reason is that there are both enough morphological and syntactic similarities and enough pertinent differences between the Scandinavian languages to make them an interesting testing ground for theoretical hypotheses.

Some of the theoretical issues lurking behind the questions in (2.56a, b) can be paraphrased as follows in fairly theory-neutral terms:

- (2.57) a. Is the functional structure of clauses related to morphology or to more abstract (and more semantically based) notions?
 b. Are there fixed syntactic positions that can only be occupied by constituents that have some specific syntactic role (such as subject, object – or even topic, focus) or is the nature of the syntactic positions determined, at least in part, by the constituents or elements that occupy them?

To take the first question first, we see that if the functional structure of clauses has a more or less direct relation to (overt) morphology, some of which has no direct semantic interpretation such as agreement, then we would expect it to be able to vary considerably from one language to another and we would expect overt morphological differences between languages to show up to some extent as differences in their syntactic structure. To put it simply: complex inflectional morphology might be reflected in complex syntactic structure and ‘more positions’ in the syntax, hence possibly more variability in word order. But if functional categories in the syntactic structure are related to more semantic (and interpretable) features, then we would expect them to be fairly uniform from language to language.²⁴ We will return to these issues in the discussion of word-order variation in this chapter and in the discussion of agreement in chapter 4.

The second question is more relevant for our immediate purposes in this chapter. The question might usefully be restated as follows:

- (2.58) Does it make sense to divide the syntactic positions available into argument positions (A-positions) and non-argument positions (A'-positions)?

This is all highly relevant in connection with the positions and types of constructions under discussion here. Thus it has standardly been maintained

²⁴ This debate is actually somewhat reminiscent of the debate between the so-called lexicalist position and the generative semanticist position in the 1970s: those who want to relate functional positions to overt morphology present in the lexical elements take a lexicalist stand; those who want to relate functional structure more closely to semantically based notions take a position somewhat similar to the generative semanticist position.

that SpecCP is a non-argument position which can be filled by all sorts of fronted elements. One of the questions is, then, whether SpecIP (or SpecAgrSP and SpecTP in a split-IP structure) are argument positions (A-positions) in the sense that they can only be occupied by subjects, are dedicated subject positions so to speak, or whether they can be occupied by, say, the overt expletive *það* or even fronted (topicalized) elements.

As the reader will recall, there is some evidence that it is easier to front non-subjects in embedded clauses in Icelandic than in most other Germanic languages, except for Yiddish. Proposed accounts of this are relevant for the issues just discussed. Thus some linguists have wanted to maintain that all fronting (Topicalization) must be to SpecCP, which is a non-argument position, and if fronting is more general in embedded clauses in Icelandic and Yiddish than in other Germanic languages, then that must mean that SpecCP is more generally available in embedded clauses in these languages than in others (i.e. CP recursion is more general, cf. above). The arguments for this kind of analysis have been most thoroughly presented by Vikner (e.g. 1994 and especially 1995a – see also Vikner and Schwartz 1995). Alternatively, one could propose that Icelandic and Yiddish differ from the other Germanic languages in that they allow non-subjects to ‘move’ to SpecIP (or SpecAgrSP). That would mean that SpecIP (or SpecAgrSP) would not (necessarily) be an A-position in these languages. This kind of analysis was, for instance, advocated early on by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1990 – see also Friðrik Magnússon 1990) for Icelandic and by Santorini (1988, 1989) and Diesing (1990) for Yiddish.

While these analyses make different claims about the nature of the difference between the groups of languages involved, their proponents are usually not very specific about the deeper reasons for the observed differences: How can it be that a phenomenon like CP recursion is more general in some languages than others? What is that related to? What could explain it? Similarly, how could the ‘same’ syntactic position, such as SpecIP or SpecAgrSP, have different properties in different languages? While I cannot go into the various attempts to account for these cross-linguistic differences in Germanic, it is probably fair to say that the facts discovered in this research cast some doubt on the relevance of the once popular A/A’-distinction, and around 1990 it seemed to be falling apart in various works inspired by the GB-approach and later the Minimalist Program.

Another set of facts that might bear on the number and nature of (dedicated?) subject positions and cross-linguistic differences with regard to these has to do with the positions available for the so-called associate of the expletive (the ‘logical subject’, as it is sometimes called). While expletive constructions will be discussed in some detail in chapter 6, we can note here that some of the

evidence for different subject positions presented for Icelandic in (2.53) cannot be found in the Mainland Scandinavian languages. Compare the following Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian and Danish examples, for instance (cf., e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004, section 5.3.1; Vangsnes 1995, 2002a; Vikner 1995a:184ff. – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000 for a discussion of different positions of indefinite subject, or ‘Subject Float’ as he calls it).²⁵

- (2.59) a. hvort það hefur **einhver köttur** verið í eldhúsinu. (Ic)
 b. um tað hevur **ein ketta** verið í kjøkinum. (Fa)
 c. *om det har **ein katt** vore på kjøkenet. (No)
 d. *om der har **en kat** været i køkkenet. (Da)
 whether there has some/a²⁶ cat been in kitchen-the
- (2.60) a. hvort það hefur verið **einhver köttur** í eldhúsinu. (Ic)
 b. um tað hevur verið **ein ketta** í kjøkinum. (Fa)
 c. om det har vore **ein katt** på kjøkenet. (No)
 d. om der har været **en kat** i køkkenet. (Da)
 ‘if there has been some/a cat in the kitchen’

As shown here, Icelandic and Faroese seem to have two different positions available for the associate of the expletive (the ‘logical subject’) in constructions of this sort, whereas MSc (like English, in fact) only has one, that is, the position following the (intransitive) main verb (here ‘be’) and thus presumably inside the VP. We will return to expletive constructions in section 6.2. Note, however, that it has been suggested that the fact that Icelandic and Faroese seem to have more subject positions available than MSc has, in the sense illustrated by (2.59)–(2.60), may be related to the existence of expletive constructions with transitive verbs in Icelandic and Faroese, whereas MSc does not in general have

²⁵ The presentation of the facts is necessarily simplified here and some linguists have argued for ‘more subject positions’ in MSc. Thus Holmberg has maintained (1993) that there is evidence for ‘two subject positions in IP’ in MSc. Nilsen (1997, 1998) has presented complex data from Norwegian, typically involving a string of adverbs, arguing for various positions of subjects relative to adverbs and ‘finding something on the order of twenty different possible relative sites for the subject’ (Svenonius 2002a:225). Many of the arguments involve preferred readings and are thus somewhat difficult to evaluate, but they are reviewed and critically evaluated by Svenonius (2002a). Despite his criticism, he concludes that MSc may very well have ‘two internal subject positions’, i.e. both a SpecAgrSP and a SpecTP in the split-IP analysis. The interaction between adverb positions and subject positions in Icelandic is discussed by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2000). For a further discussion of some of these issues, see section 2.2.5 below.

²⁶ Since there is no indefinite article in Icelandic, the noun phrase *einhver köttur* ‘some cat’ is used here in Icelandic as bare NPs might have a more restricted distribution than indefinite NPs with an indefinite article or some sort of a modifier.

that construction: transitive expletive constructions require an extra subject position of the sort available in Icelandic and Faroese (the VP-external position illustrated in (2.59a, b)) since the complement position (the subject position illustrated in (2.60)) is filled by the object in the case of transitive verbs and hence not available for the associate of the expletive in transitive expletive constructions although it is in the case of intransitive verbs like the ones in (2.60).²⁷

We have now considered some theoretical interpretations of the apparent evidence for several subject positions in Icelandic. The positions mainly considered in the discussion above correspond to the ones labelled SpecCP, SpecAgrSP and SpecTP in the diagram in (2.55) (or their equivalents in other frameworks). To these we can add the ‘subject position’ inside the VP, the one labelled SpecVP in the diagram in (2.55) and ask to what extent we can assign different properties to these positions. To put it differently, we can ask if they place different restrictions on the (subject) NPs that can occupy them. Issues of this sort have been discussed by a number of linguists with special reference to Icelandic (e.g. Kjartan G. Ottósson 1989, 2003; Vangsnes 1995, 2002a; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Jonas 1996b; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998). Without going too far into the theoretical issues at stake, it can be pointed out that the factors that seem to play a role include the following:

- (2.61) a. Definiteness of the subject.
b. Quantification of the subject.

In the presentation of the following data I will make the following assumptions, some of which are quite common in recent literature on Icelandic syntax:

- (2.62) a. Fronted (or topicalized) constituents, such as adverbial phrases or prepositional phrases, typically occur in SpecCP, at least in main clauses (although there is perhaps some evidence that they may end up in a lower position in Icelandic, as discussed above).
b. Sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’, *alltaf* ‘always’ are adjoined to the VP.
c. Some adverbs that have scope over the whole sentence, such as *auðvitað* ‘obviously’, *líklega* ‘probably’, *semnilega* ‘probably’ can be adjoined to a higher position, presumably TP in diagram (2.55).

Given these assumptions, we can use the presence of topicalized elements and different combinations of adverbs to help determine the position of subjects as outlined in (2.63) (again, assuming a structure like (2.55)):

²⁷ Not all speakers of Faroese are equally happy with transitive expletives – and there may also be some dialectal (or idiolectal) variation in Faroese with respect to available subject positions (positions for the associate of the expletive) in sentences like (2.61)–(2.62) (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:284ff.; Vikner 1995a:189).

- (2.63) a. A subject that follows a fronted constituent should not be higher than in SpecAgrSP.
 b. A subject that follows sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ and *alltaf* ‘always’ in their default position should be inside the VP, whereas one that follows sentence adverbs such as *líklega* ‘probably’ may not be.²⁸
 c. A subject that precedes adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ should be outside (and to the left of) the VP.

We can now look at a few examples with these assumptions in mind. First, note that whereas definite subjects do not seem to be able to intervene between adverbs like *auðvitað* ‘obviously’ and *aldrei* ‘never’, indefinite quantified subjects easily can:

- (2.64) a. *Í fyrra höfðu stelpurnar auðvitað aldrei lesið þessa bók.*
 last year had girls-the obviously never read this book
 ‘Last year the girls obviously had never read this book.’
 b. **Í fyrra höfðu auðvitað stelpurnar aldrei lesið þessa bók.*
- (2.65) a. *(?)Í fyrra höfðu einhverjar stelpur auðvitað aldrei lesið þessa bók.*
 last year had some girls obviously never read this book
 b. *Í fyrra höfðu auðvitað einhverjar stelpur aldrei lesið þessa bók.*
 last year had obviously some girls never read this book
 ‘Last year some girls obviously had never read this book.’

While some of the judgements here are rather delicate, it is clear that the higher of the two subject positions under discussion is strongly preferred for the definite NP *stelpurnar* ‘the girls’. For the indefinite quantified NP *einhverjar stelpur* ‘some girls’ on the other hand the lower position is fine and the higher one perhaps a bit less natural.²⁹

²⁸ Recall also that adverbs like *auðvitað* ‘obviously’, *líklega* ‘probably’, *sennilega* ‘probably’ can intervene between a clause-initial subject and the finite verb (the so-called V3-phenomenon), whereas sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’, *alltaf* ‘always’ cannot. This can be seen as further evidence for the different structural properties of these adverbs (see also the discussion in 2.1.6 above):

- (i) a. *Hann auðvitað/líklega/sennilega trúir þessu.*
 he obviously/probably believes this
 ‘He probably believes this.’
 b. **Hann aldrei/alltaf trúir þessu.*
 he never/always believes this

²⁹ It is somewhat tricky to use unmodified and unquantified NPs in contexts of this sort in Icelandic. First, there is no indefinite article in Icelandic and indefinite bare singular NPs like *stelpa* ‘girl’ have a rather restricted occurrence. Second, it is often tricky to rule out a generic reading of indefinite plurals like *stelpur* ‘girls’ and generics tend to have special distributional properties.

Second, if we try to put a definite subject after adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’, *alltaf* ‘always’, the result is very bad, whereas indefinite quantified subjects seem to be able to occur there:³⁰

(2.66)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------|-------|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|------|
| a. | *Í fyrra | höfðu | auðvitað | aldrei/alltaf | stelpurnar | lesið | þessa | bók. |
| | last year | had | obviously | never/always | girls-the | read | this | book |
| b. | Í fyrra | höfðu | auðvitað | aldrei | neinar stelpur | lesið | þessa | bók. |
| | last year | had | obviously | never | any girls | read | this | book |
| c. | Í fyrra | höfðu | auðvitað | alltaf | einhverjar stelpur | lesið | þessa | bók. |
| | last year | had | obviously | always | some girls | read | this | book |

In (2.66b) we get the negative polarity item *neinn* ‘any’ (f.pl. *neinar*) following *aldrei* ‘never’ but not following *alltaf* ‘always’ in (2.66c).³¹

Facts of the sort just discussed are reminiscent of data standardly used to demonstrate the existence of the so-called ‘definiteness effect’ typically found in expletive constructions. This effect has to do with definiteness restrictions on the associate of the expletive and it is of relevance here, especially because it is arguably more complex than has frequently been assumed. Issues of this kind will be discussed later, and in the meantime we can summarize the results so far as follows:

- (2.67)
- a. Different types of NPs have different distributional properties. If one assumes a feature-checking framework of the sort adopted in most minimalist work after Chomsky 1993, then this may be expressed by maintaining that different types of NPs have different features to check – and different features are checked in different positions. It is notoriously difficult, however, to pinpoint these positions, especially since some types of NPs (or DPs if you will) have considerable freedom of occurrence.
 - b. There are cross-linguistic differences with respect to the ‘availability’ of certain positions – there is some evidence that Icelandic, for instance, has more subject positions than MSc. We will return to that issue below, e.g. in section 2.2.4 (object positions) and in chapter 6 (expletive constructions).

³⁰ This has also been argued by Kjartan G. Ottósson (1989), but he was not assuming a split IP structure, so some of his arguments do not apply if one assumes a structure like (2.55).

³¹ The negative polarity item *neinn* ‘any’ needs to be licensed by some sort of a (c-commanding) negative element (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996, 2005b:446ff.). In the b-example it is licensed by the preceding (and c-commanding) *aldrei* ‘never’ and it cannot precede it since then this relationship would be destroyed: *Í fyrra höfðu auðvitað neinar stelpur aldrei lesið þessa bók.

We now turn to some theoretical issues having to do with SpecVP as a possible subject position.

2.2.2.3 The subject in Spec-VP – but where?

It is well known, of course, that there is a special relationship between the main verb of the clause and the subject. First, there is a selectional relationship between the main verb and the subject but not between the auxiliary verbs and the subject. To put it differently, the main verb determines what kind of subject is appropriate for the clause, the auxiliaries do not care (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b):

- (2.68) a. *Tíminn/ *Jón leið.*
 the time/ *John elapsed
- b. *Tíminn/ *Jón hefur liðið/mun hafa liðið ...*
 the time/ *John has elapsed/will have passed

The verb *liða* ‘elapse’ can take a subject like *tíminn* ‘the time’ but not a subject referring to a person, such as the proper name *Jón*. The presence or absence of auxiliary verbs plays no role in this respect. This is often expressed by saying that main verbs typically assign thematic roles to their subjects but auxiliary verbs do not.

Second, main verbs in Icelandic may assign lexical case to their subjects and the presence or absence of auxiliaries has no effect on this. This can be illustrated with verbs such as *leiðast* ‘be bored’, which takes a lexically marked dative subject (for a discussion of case marking in Icelandic, see chapter 4 and references cited there):

- (2.69) a. **Hún/ *Hana/Henni leiðist.*
 she(*N/ *A/D) is bored
- b. **Hún/ *Hana/henni mun hafa leiðst.*
 she(*N/ *A/D) will have bored
 ‘She will have been bored/She has apparently been bored.’

Given this close relationship between the main verb and the subject of the clause, one could argue that it should not come as a surprise that the subject can occur in the specifier position of the VP headed by the main verb. This is actually what was claimed above for examples like the following (cf. (2.1b) and (2.54e)):

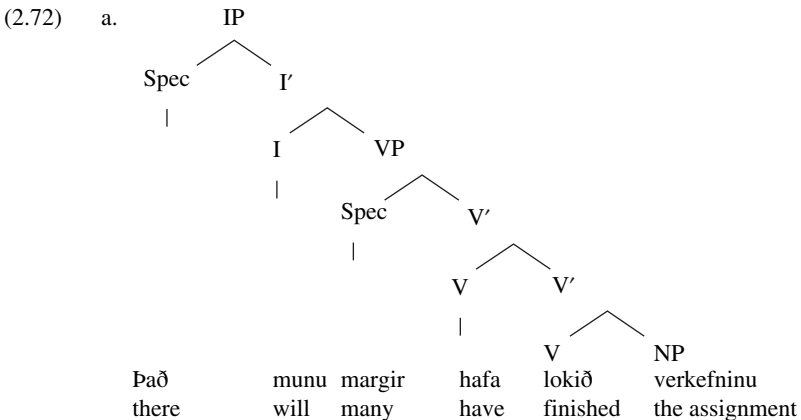
- (2.70) *Það höfðu aldrei [_{VP} margir lokið verkefninu]*
 there had never many finished the assignment

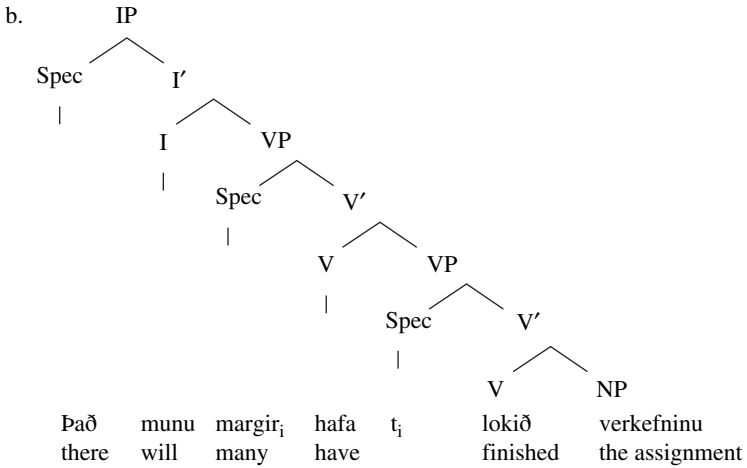
In this example, and others like it discussed above, we only have one auxiliary and we have assumed that this auxiliary is associated with the

I-position in a structure like the one illustrated in (2.1) and the non-finite verb heads the VP. In clauses containing two or more auxiliaries, we might expect there to be two or more VPs, assuming that auxiliaries take VP-complements. If subjects can occur in SpecVP, we might therefore expect there to be two or more SpecVP-positions where a subject could show up, that is, the one inside the VP headed by the main verb and then possibly also a higher one headed by a non-finite auxiliary. As mentioned above, this is not the case, however. As has frequently been pointed out in the literature (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1983; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990c, et al.), the subject cannot intervene between a non-finite auxiliary and a main verb but only between a finite auxiliary and the highest non-finite verb, be it an auxiliary verb or a main verb):

- (2.71) a. Það höfðu aldrei [**margin** lokið verkefninu]
 there had never many finished the assignment
 'It was never the case that many had finished the assignment.'
- b. Það munu aldrei [**margin** hafa [lokið verkefninu]]
 there will never many have finished the assignment
 'It will presumably never be the case that many have finished the assignment.'
- c. *Það munu aldrei [hafa [**margin** lokið verkefninu]]

There are undoubtedly many formal ways of expressing this. Two of these can be diagrammed as follows in a simplified fashion, assuming the kind of structural representation illustrated in (2.1) and elsewhere in this chapter:





In the a-version the claim would be that there is only one full-fledged VP and auxiliaries (like *hafa* ‘have’, for instance) take a V'-complement. Thus there is only one SpecVP position and it is ‘above’ the (first) non-finite auxiliary and that is where a subject (like *margir* ‘many’) can sometimes be found (i.e., when it does not ‘move’ to some higher position like SpecIP (SpecTP, SpecAgrP) or SpecCP). What remains to be accounted for in a principled fashion under an approach like this is the fact illustrated above that the subject bears a special relationship (selectional restrictions, determination of lexical case) to the main verb (the lowest verb) and not to the non-finite auxiliary. It is as if the auxiliary is some sort of a minor verb. In the b-version, on the other hand, the subject would be generated in the SpecPosition of the main verb (the lowest verb) and then moved to the higher SpecVP position. This kind of analysis would account for the close relationship between the main verb and the subject, but then an explanation of the apparent obligatoriness of the movement of the subject to the higher SpecVP position would be sorely needed.

Attempts to go further into this question will soon become too technical for a book like this, as they have to take a stand on such abstract issues as the so-called VP-shell (cf. Larson 1988, the discussion in section 3.2.2 and references cited there), the so-called light verbs (commonly represented by *v* or *v** in structural diagrams) and their proposed projections (*v*Ps or *v**Ps, common in the minimalist literature, see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006a for a discussion of Icelandic facts in these terms). But as pointed out in n. 1 at the beginning of this chapter, there is another set of facts that is relevant in this respect and has often been pointed out in the literature: sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’, *aldrei* ‘never’ and so on cannot intervene between a non-finite

auxiliary and another non-finite verb, but only between the finite auxiliary and the first non-finite verb, be it an auxiliary verb or a main verb:

- (2.73) a. Jón hefur **aldrei** [lesið bókina].
 John has never read the book
- b. Jón mun **aldrei** [hafa [lesið bókina]].
 John will never have read the book
 'John has apparently not read the book.'
- c. *Jón mun [hafa **aldrei** [lesið bókina]]
 John will have never read the book

This would follow if sentence adverbs adjoin to VPs and only the phrase headed by the first non-finite verb is a full-fledged VP, along the lines illustrated in (2.72a). Whatever the proper formal account of these facts may be, it seems that it should both account for the possible and impossible subject positions illustrated in (2.71) and the adverb placement facts presented in (2.73).

2.2.3 Verbal morphology and embedded word order

As stated in (2.45a) above, the finite verb precedes sentence adverbs (like 'never', 'always', for instance) in default word order in main clauses but not in (most) embedded clauses in MSc. In Icelandic, on the other hand, there is not a systematic difference of that kind between main clauses and embedded clauses. A standard analysis of this difference is to say that the finite verb moves to I (or to AgrS – though this proposed movement is still usually referred to as V-to-I) in embedded clauses in Icelandic but it does not in MSc. The question is then, of course, why this should be the case, and this has been extensively discussed in the linguistic literature. A common line of thought goes like this (see, e.g., the overview in Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003):

- (2.74) a. Old Norse seems to have had V-to-I movement in embedded clauses and Old Norse had rich verbal inflection.
 b. Modern Icelandic has preserved rich verbal inflection and V-to-I movement.
 c. The system of verbal inflections has been simplified in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, and these languages appear to have lost V-to-I movement in embedded clauses (for the most part at least – see, e.g., Platzack 1988a, b; Falk 1993).
 d. One Swedish dialect, the dialect of the Älvdal valley (Älvdalsmålet), has preserved relatively rich verbal inflection and also V-to-I movement in embedded clauses.³²

³² Information about Älvdalsmålet in the literature is usually gleaned from an old grammar (Levander 1909). A thorough investigation of its syntax today would obviously be of theoretical interest.

The relevant facts are then partly illustrated by diagrams like (2.75) (see, e.g., Vikner 1995b – the choice of verbs is partially determined by the existing linguistic evidence):

(2.75)

	Da	Ic	Old Sw (14th cent.)	Mid. Sw (16th cent.)	Älvdalsmålet (Sw dial.)	Hallingmål (No dial.)
1 sg.pres.	hører	heyr-i	kræf-er	kräv-er	hör-er	høyr-e
2 –	hører	heyr-ir	kræf-er	kräv-er	hör-er	høyr-e
3 –	hører	heyr-ir	kræf-er	kräv-er	hör-er	høyr-e
1 pl. pres.	hører	heyr-um	kræf-um	kräv-a	hör-um	høyr-æ
2 –	hører	heyr-ð	kræf-in	kräv-a	hör-ir	høyr-æ
3 –	hører	heyr-a	kræfi-a	kräv-a	hör-a	høyr-æ
1 sg. past	hør-te	heyr-ð-i	kraf-þ-i	kräv-de	hör-d-e	høyr-dæ
2 –	hør-te	heyr-ð-ir	kraf-þ-i	kräv-de	hör-d-e	høyr-dæ
3 –	hør-te	heyr-ð-i	kraf-þ-i	kräv-de	hör-d-e	høyr-dæ
1 pl.past	hør-te	heyr-ð-um	kraf-þ-um	kräv-de	hör-d-um	høyr-dæ
2 –	hør-te	heyr-ð-uð	kraf-þ-in	kräv-de	hör-d-ir	høyr-dæ
3 –	hør-te	heyr-ð-u	kraf-þ-u	kräv-de	hör-d-e	høyr-dæ
	'hear'	'hear'	'demand'	'demand'	'hear'	'hear'

Here we see that in Icelandic, Old Swedish and Älvdalsmålet it is easy to distinguish the inflectional morphemes that mark tense on the one hand and subject-verb agreement on the other. In Danish there is just one form for the present tense and another for the past tense. In Middle Swedish singular and plural are distinguished in the present tense but there is only one form for the past tense and the same is true of the Norwegian dialect Hallingmål. Hence there is no obvious synchronic evidence in Middle Swedish and Hallingmål for distinguishing between a past tense marker and an agreement marker. In other words, nothing suggested (or suggests) to a child acquiring Middle Swedish or Hallingmål that *-d-* should be interpreted as a past tense marker and *-e* or *-æ* a marker for person and number. The chunks *-de* (in Middle Swedish) and *-dæ* (in Hallingmål) can just as easily be past tense markers.

If one looks at the word order in embedded clauses in these languages and dialects, it is possible to find an interesting correlation: in the languages where the agreement markers are easily distinguishable from the tense markers we find clear evidence for V-to-I movement but typically not in the others (see, e.g., Platzack 1988a, b; Trosterud 1989; Platzack and Holmberg 1989; Holmberg and Platzack 1995; Vikner 1995a, b, 1997–8; Rohrbacher 1999). As a consequence, many linguists have concluded that there is a correlation between V-to-I in embedded clauses and 'rich' verbal inflection. Several linguists have tried to come up with the appropriate generalizations about this

correlation, as most extensively surveyed by Vikner (cf., e.g., Vikner 1997–8:121 and references cited there). Two of these attempts are listed in (2.76):

- (2.76) a. SVO languages have V-to-I movement in embedded clauses if and only if they show person distinction in both (or all) tenses (cf. e.g. Vikner 1995b, 1997–8).
 b. A language has V to I raising if and only if in at least one number of one tense of the regular verb paradigm(s), the person features [1st] and [2nd] are both distinctively marked [where ‘distinctively marked’ means that forms bearing the feature in question are distinct from the forms lacking it] (cf. Rohrbacher 1999:116).

Vikner’s and Rohrbacher’s generalizations are both meant to hold for the Scandinavian data we have seen so far. Thus the ‘reason’ why Icelandic, Old Swedish and Älvdalsmålet have V-to-I movement according to Vikner is that they have person distinctions both in the present tense and in the past tense (although some of them do not have person distinction in both numbers in both tenses). According to Rohrbacher, on the other hand, the crucial morphological fact about these languages in this connection is that they distinguish 1st and 2nd from the 3rd person in the plural.

The main problem with these generalizations is that they are not really true. What seems to hold (for the Scandinavian languages at least) is the following (cf. Bobaljik 2002; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003 – apparent counterexamples will be considered presently):

- (2.77) If a language has rich verbal inflection (in a sense to be explained below) it has V-to-I movement in embedded clauses. The converse does not necessarily hold, however.

Crucial data come from the Kronoby dialect of Swedish, from the Tromsø dialect of Norwegian and from Faroese. Some (frequently cited) examples are given in (2.78) and more will be added below (see, e.g., Platzack and Holmberg 1989:74; Barnes 1992:27; Vikner 1995b:24–5, 1997–8:126 (who also cites Iversen’s grammar of the Tromsø dialect from 1918); cf. also Jonas 2002; Bobaljik 2002; Bentzen 2003; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003):

- (2.78)
- a. He va bra et an **tsöfft int** bootsen. (Kron)
 it was good that he bought not book-the
 ‘It was good that he didn’t buy the book.’
- b. Vi va’ bare tre stökka før det at han Nilsen **kom ikkje**. (Troms)
 we were only three pieces for it that he Nilsen came not
 ‘There were only three of us because Nilsen didn’t come.’
- c. Han kom så seint at dørvakta **vilde ikkje** sløppe han inn. (Troms)
 he came so late that door-guard-the would not let him in
 ‘He came so late that the guard wouldn’t let him in.’

- d. Hann spyr hví tað **eru ikki** fleiri tílikar samkomur. (Fa)
 he asks why there are not more such meetings
 ‘He asks why there aren’t more meetings of that kind.’

Bentzen (2003) also presents examples that she takes to show that there is optional V-to-I movement in the modern Tromsø dialect (or more generally in Northern Norwegian). There seems to be a general consensus that the Kronoby and Tromsø dialects do not have ‘rich verbal morphology’, however that is to be defined.³³ There has been more controversy about Faroese, and paradigms like the one in (2.79) are frequently cited:

(2.79)

	present	past
1 sg.	hojr-i	hojr-di
2 –	hojr-ir	hojr-di
3 –	hojr-ir	hojr-di
1 pl.	hojr-a	hojr-du
2 –	hojr-a	hojr-du
3 –	hojr-a	hojr-du
	‘hear’	

This is a bit misleading, however, since the majority of Faroese speakers do not distinguish between final unstressed /i,u/. Hence the singular and plural will sound the same in the past tense for those speakers. This means that the distinctions in Faroese verbal morphology are rather similar to those of Middle Swedish (cf. (2.75) above).

Coming back to the relevant definition of ‘rich verbal morphology’, Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1998) argue that what is crucial in this context is that tense and agreement markers are clearly distinguishable. They want to relate this to the nature of the IP-projection. More specifically, they argue as follows (see also Bobaljik 2002 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003:163):

- (2.80) a. Languages vary with respect to the functional projections instantiated. In particular, the IP can be split into an agreement projection (AgrP (possibly more than one)) and a tense projection (TP), along the lines first discussed in detail by Pollock (1989) and Chomsky (1991). Other languages may have an unsplit (or fused) IP (cf. also Bobaljik 1995; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996).

³³ According to Bentzen (2003:578–9), finite verbs in the Tromsø dialect (or Northern Norwegian as she calls it) show no person and number distinctions. There is just one form for the present tense and another for the past. For a verb like *hoppe* ‘hop’, for instance, the present is *hoppe* and the past tense *hoppa*, regardless of person and number of the subject.

- b. Since functional projections are not universally instantiated, the child needs evidence for their ‘presence’ in the language being acquired. This evidence can be both syntactic and morphological. In most languages the child will be presented with various kinds of syntactic evidence for a functional projection ‘above’ the VP and ‘below’ the CP, such as facts having to do with the position of subjects in finite clauses, possibly also the position of sentential adverbs, etc. But the child will not ‘assume’ that this projection is split into two (or more) unless presented with syntactic or morphological evidence for it. A clear morphological distinction between tense and agreement markers on finite verbs will count as morphological evidence for this split. But evidence for ‘V-to-I movement’ in embedded clauses would also count as evidence for a split IP.

The last part of this has to do with the particular theory of feature checking that Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson assume, and we need not go into that here. But the gist of their analysis is that a clear distinction between agreement and tense markers will be sufficient evidence for the language acquirer to assume a split IP (i.e., both an AgrSP and a TP), and a split IP forces ‘V-to-I’-movement under the checking theory assumed by them. This means, then, that the apparent examples of the MSc word order (i.e. adverb-finite verb) found in Icelandic embedded clauses, such as the following (see, e.g., Ásgrímur Angantýsson 2001; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998:64–5; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003:181–4) cannot be due to lack of verb movement out of the VP:

- (2.81) Það var Hrafinkelssaga sem hann ekki hafði lesið.
 it was Hrafnel’s saga that he not had read
 ‘It was the Saga of Hrafnkell that he had not read.’

Instead, the verb must have moved out of the VP as usual and the sentence adverb must be adjoined exceptionally to a higher position than VP, presumably to TP. There is some evidence that this is in fact the case. This word order seems to be restricted to certain types of embedded clauses (e.g. relative clauses, interrogative clauses, temporal clauses); and it typically works best with light or unstressed subjects (these favour high positions in the structure, e.g. SpecAgrSP), and it is virtually impossible when the subject is indefinite (such subjects may favour lower position, e.g. SpecTP). Thus there is a clear contrast between the regular verb-adverb order in the a-example below and the exceptional adverb-verb order in the b-example (which has an indefinite subject), whereas the c-example is acceptable with the proper intonation (having a definite pronominal subject and the adverb-verb order – the examples are based on Ásgrímur Angantýsson’s discussion (2001)):

- (2.82) a. *Það* var Hrafnkelssaga sem **einhver** **hafði ekki** lesið.
 it was Hrafnkel's saga that somebody had not read
- b. ? *Það* var Hrafnkelssaga sem **einhver ekki hafði** lesið
 it was Hrafnkel's saga that somebody not had read
- c. *Það* var Hrafnkelssaga sem **hann ekki hafði** lesið.
 it was Hrafnkel's saga that he not had read

There would be no reason to expect this contrast if the finite verb in the b- and c-examples was inside the VP.³⁴

Under the account proposed by Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1998), the evidence for a split IP will be more equivocal (or ‘fragile’ as Lightfoot puts it (2006:106)) in the absence of rich morphology. In such cases the language learner can only have distributional evidence from the syntax to ‘acquire’ V-to-I movement. Hence it is likely that languages with ‘poor’ verbal morphology will eventually ‘lose’ V-to-I or that there will be variation with respect to V-to-I in such languages (possibly ‘competing grammars’ in the sense of Kroch 1989 and others, cf. the discussion by Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003). Interestingly, there is apparently extensive variation with respect to V-to-I in Faroese (although it seems to be on the way out), and there is also some evidence that V-to-I was ‘optional’ in the Tromsø dialect described by Iversen in early twentieth century. Thus (2.83a) would be preferred by many Faroese speakers to (2.78d) (see, e.g., Barnes 1992; Barnes and Weyhe 1994; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004), (2.83b) (cited by Iversen 1918, cf. Vikner 1995b:25, 1997–98:126) can be contrasted with (2.78b, c), and sentences like (2.83c) can be found in Danish dialects, although Danish does not as a rule have V-to-I (cf. Petersen 1996 – see also the V-to-I data from the Tromsø dialect provided by Bentzen 2003):

(2.83)

- a. *Hann* spyr *hví* *tað* **ikki** **eru** fleiri *tílikar* *samkomur*. (Fa)
 he asks why there not are more such meetings
- b. ... *at* *dæm* **ikkje** **mátte** *klive* *op* *på* *det* *taket* (Troms)
 that they not could climb up on that roof-the
 ‘that they couldn’t climb on the roof’

³⁴ As will be discussed in the section on infinitives (see especially section 8.2.2), there is evidence for verb movement out of the VP in Icelandic control infinitives, as has often been noted (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1984, 1986b, 1993; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989). This fact argues against any kind of account of verb movement where the verb moves to ‘pick up’ inflectional suffixes. It does, however, follow from an account like the one proposed by Bobaljik and Thráinsson, as pointed out by them (1998:63–4 – see also the discussion in Bobaljik 2002:142ff.).

- c. Der kan jo være nogen der **kan ikke** tåle det. (Da dial.)
 there can of-course be somebody that can not stand it
 ‘There can obviously be somebody who cannot stand it.’

Thus it seems safe to say that there is not a one-to-one correlation between verbal morphology and the position of verbs in embedded clauses in Scandinavian languages, although there may be some connection between the two phenomena.

2.2.4 *Object positions, functional categories and properties of objects*

So-called Object Shift (OS) in Scandinavian has been the focus of lively discussion in the linguistic literature because of its intriguing properties and the puzzling cross-linguistic differences in its occurrence. Many of these are extensively reviewed elsewhere (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a, which also contains some comparison of OS and (Dutch and German) Scrambling). The issues that have intrigued linguists and triggered much of this discussion include the following:

- (2.84) a. OS applies to objects – and only to objects.
 b. OS applies to pronouns and full NPs in Icelandic but it is restricted to pronouns in MSc.
 c. OS seems dependent on verb movement (Holmberg’s Generalization) – or sensitive to (certain types of) ‘intervening material’.
 d. OS interacts with semantics to some extent.

We will consider these issues in turn.

2.2.4.1 OS applies to objects – and only to objects

As pointed out in section 2.1.5, OS only moves verbal objects (direct or indirect) and not, say, objects of prepositions, PPs or AP predicates (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:150–1). In this respect it differs to some extent from Scrambling in Dutch and German, for instance (see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1997:507, 2001a:158; also Weerman 1997). This is reviewed below (here and elsewhere the displaced constituents are in boldface and indicates the ‘gap’ left by such a constituent):

- (2.85) a. Jón ávarpaði ekki Maríu.
 John addressed not Mary(A)
 b. Jón ávarpaði **Maríu** ekki
 ‘John didn’t address Mary.’

c. Jón gaf aldrei Maríu bókina.
John gave never Mary book-the

d. Jón gaf **Maríu** aldrei __ bókina.
'John didn't give Mary the book.'³⁵

(2.86) a. Fyrirlestrar hans eru alltaf skemmtilegastir.
talks his are always most-interesting
'His talks are always the most interesting ones.'

b. *Fyrirlestrar hans eru **skemmtilegastir** alltaf __

c. Jón málaði ekki hurðina dökkgræna.
John painted not door-the dark-green
'John didn't paint the door dark-green.'

d. *Jón málaði **dökkgræna** ekki hurðina __

In this sense OS is dedicated to objects and the question is how to account for this.

The morphological case of the object in Icelandic does not matter: OS applies not only to accusative objects as in (2.85b) but also to dative, genitive and even nominative objects. This is obviously of some theoretical interest since linguists have often tried to relate OS to case marking (or case checking) in one way or another, as we will see below (see, e.g., Holmberg 1986; Holmberg and Platzack 1995:168ff. – cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1997:507):

(2.87) a. Ég stal **bókinni** ekki __.
I stole the book(D) not
'I did not steal the book.'

b. Ég sakna **þessarar stelpu** ekki __.
I miss this girl(G) not
'I do not miss this girl.'

³⁵ As discussed by Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:181ff., direct objects cannot shift across indirect ones:

(i) a. Sjórinns svipti ekki konuna eiginmanninum.
ocean-the deprived not woman-the(A) husband-the(D)
'The ocean didn't deprive the woman of her husband.'

b. Sjórinns svipti **konuna** ekki __ eiginmanninum.
'The ocean didn't deprive the woman of her husband.'

c. *Sjórinns svipti **eiginmanninum** ekki konuna __

This is presumably some sort of a minimality condition, as can be seen from the fact that if the verb is one that allows the so-called Inversion of indirect and direct object and thus also allows the DO < IO order, then the DO can be shifted, presumably because it will not be shifting across the IO. For further discussion see section 3.2.2.4.

- c. Mér líkar þessi bíll ekki ____.
 me(D) likes this car(N) not
 'I do not like this car.'

Thus the lexically assigned (or irregular or quirky) dative and genitive object cases do not prevent objects from shifting, for instance.

2.2.4.2 OS of full NPs vs. pronominal OS

As first noted by Holmberg (see, e.g., Holmberg 1986), full NPs undergo OS in Icelandic but not in MSc, as illustrated by the following contrast between Icelandic and Danish (representing MSc):

- (2.88) a. Nemandinn las **bókina** ekki ____ (Ic)
 b. *Studenten læste **bogen** ikke ____ (Da)
 student-the read book-the not

On the other hand, in most of the Scandinavian languages and dialects, unstressed (but non-reduced) pronouns undergo OS (this shift is normally not obligatory in Swedish, though, as shown below, and some speakers of Norwegian also accept unshifted unstressed pronominal objects as in the examples in (2.89)):

- (2.89) a. *Nemandinn las ekki hana. (Ic)
 b. *Studenten læste ikke den. (Da)
 c. Studenten läste inte den. (Sw)
 student-the read not it
- (2.90) a. Nemandinn las **hana** ekki ____ (Ic)
 b. Studenten læste **den** ikke ____ (Da)
 c. Studenten läste **den** inte ____ (Sw)
 student-the read it not
 'The student didn't read it.'

A morphological account of this contrast might seem promising at first for the following reasons:

- (2.91) a. Nouns and pronouns have rich case morphology in Icelandic – and nouns (or full NPs or DPs) and pronouns in Icelandic undergo OS.
 b. MSc has some remnants of case morphology on personal pronouns but not on nouns – and personal pronouns undergo OS but full NPs do not.

But if overt case morphology were the only relevant parameter, then we would probably not expect stress, modification and conjunction of pronouns to play a role here, but they do: stressed, modified and conjoined pronouns

cannot be shifted in MSc but they can in Icelandic (cf. Holmberg and Platzack 1995:162n).³⁶

- (2.92) a. Hún sá **mig** / **MIG** / [**mig og þig**] / [**þennan á hjólinu**] ekki ___ (Ic)
 b. Hun så **meg** / ***MEG** / ***[meg og deg]** / ***[ham på sykkel]** ikke ___ (No)
 she saw me / ME / me and you / him on the bike not
 'She didn't see me/me and you/him on the bike.'

As illustrated, all the objects in question can be fronted in Icelandic, but in Norwegian only the unstressed pronominal object can. The other MSc languages work roughly like Norwegian in this respect.

Another and potentially more serious complication is the following: Faroese case morphology is in all relevant aspects just as rich as that of Icelandic. Yet Faroese seems to work exactly like MSc with respect to OS and not like Icelandic: pronouns obligatorily undergo OS but full NPs cannot:

- (2.93) a. *Næmingurin las **bókina** ekki ___ (Fa)
 student-the read book-the not
 b. *Næmingurin las _____ ekki hana.
 student-the read _____ not it
 c. Næmingurin las **hana** ekki ___
 'The student didn't read it.'

This is one of the reasons why Holmberg and Platzack (1995:173) maintain that case in Faroese is syntactically weaker in some sense than Icelandic case, but that seems a rather doubtful claim.³⁷ Besides, it seems that it is

³⁶ The shift of light locative adverbs mentioned in section 2.1.5 above (Icelandic *þar*, Swedish *där* and also corresponding forms in Danish and Norwegian) is also a problem for the case-morphology approach. These forms bear no case morphology and never have.

³⁷ Holmberg and Platzack cite two kinds of facts as support for their suggestion that Faroese case is weaker in some sense than Icelandic case. First, they maintain that lexical object case is generally not preserved in passives in Faroese whereas it is in Icelandic. As pointed out by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1999), this is not entirely true, however (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004, especially section 5.4.4). Although lexical object case is often not preserved in the passive in Faroese (and thus lexically case-marked passive subjects may be on the way out), it is preserved in the passive of some verbs (e.g. *bíða* 'wait for', *dugna* 'help', *takka* 'thank', *trúgva* 'believe'). Second, Holmberg and Platzack say that lexical subject case is not preserved in Faroese when verbs taking lexically marked dative subjects are embedded under ECM predicates (i.e., in 'Accusative-with-Infinitive' structures) whereas it is in Icelandic. This is probably based on a misunderstanding. The example they use involves the verb *dáma* 'like', which is one that takes a nominative subject for most speakers of modern Faroese, although it can also occur with a dative subject. Hence it is likely that when this verb is embedded under an ECM

very difficult to find clear examples of NPOS in Old Icelandic (Old Norse) and an investigation of the history of Norwegian (Sundquist 2002) did not turn up any evidence in favour of the idea that NPOS is triggered by rich case marking: no examples of NPOS were found in the Middle Norwegian texts studied despite the rich nominal case morphology of the older texts.

A slightly different type of account maintains that a difference in the syntactic structure of Icelandic on the one hand and MSc (and Faroese?) on the other explains the fact that NPOS is possible in Icelandic and not in MSc. Informally, the idea is that the syntactic structure of Icelandic is ‘richer’ and ‘contains more object positions’ than that of MSc. The main arguments will now be reviewed.

First, recall that the more or less standard assumption has been that certain sentence adverbs are left-adjoined to VP in Scandinavian (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a, b; Holmberg and Platzack 1995; Jonas 1996a, b; Bobaljik 1995; Jonas and Bobaljik 1993; Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998 and references cited by these authors – see also the discussion in 2.2.5). Under this assumption, we only have evidence so far for objects shifting ‘just out of’ the VP and not to some higher position. It seems very difficult to find evidence for any ‘long OS’ in Scandinavian, for example, one where the shifted object has landed to the left of a postverbal subject, say in a Topicalization structure where the subject is postverbal. Observe (2.94):³⁸

Footnote 37 (cont.)

predicate, a dative subject will be dispreferred by many speakers. But if a verb that exclusively takes a dative subject is used in this context, e.g. *standast við* ‘be nauseated by’ (cf. *mær stendst við orðalagslæru* lit. ‘me(D) is nauseated by syntax’, **eg standist við orðalagslæru* ‘I(N) ...’), then that dative will be preserved in an ECM construction and the accusative will be ruled out:

- (i) Hann heldur mér/ *meg standast við orðalagslæru.
 he believes me(D/*A) be-nauseated by syntax
 ‘He believes me to be nauseated by syntax.’

³⁸ I am abstracting away from the special instances of long pronominal OS of the type *Gav deĵ snuten kørkortet tillbaka* (Sw – lit. ‘Gave you the cop the driver’s licence back’) to be discussed below. Note also that an example like *Pess vegna keyptu bókina ekki nema fáeinir fyrsta árs nemendur* (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c., lit. ‘Therefore bought the book not more than a few first year students’) are not convincing examples of leftward NPOS over a postverbal subject since the subject is the heavy constituent *ekki nema fáeinir fyrsta árs nemendur* as can be seen from the direct word order variant *Ekki nema fáeinir fyrsta árs nemendur keyptu bókina* ‘Only a few first year students bought the book’.

- (2.94) a. Þá máluðu allir strákar­nir stundum bílana rauða.
 then painted all boys-the(N) sometimes cars-the(A) red(A)
- b. Þá máluðu allir strákar­nir **bílana** stundum ____ rauða.
 ‘Then all the boys sometimes painted the cars red.’
- c. *Þá máluðu **bílana** allir strákar­nir stundum ____ rauða.

As can be seen here, the shifted object *bílana* ‘the cars’ can only shift as far as immediately across the sentential adverb *stundum* ‘sometimes’, not across the subject *allir strákar­nir* ‘all the boys’. If the object is an unstressed pronoun and the subject quantified, on the other hand, it is possible to get crossing arguments in sentences like the following:

- (2.95) a. Það las **hana** enginn.
 there read her nobody
 ‘Nobody read it.’
- b. Það pöntuðu **þetta** stundum allir gestirnir.
 there ordered this sometimes all the guests
 ‘Sometimes all the guests ordered this.’

It is not obvious how to account for this, but an example like the following seems to be of a similar nature (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000:82):

- (2.96) Það lásu **hana** þá sennilega ekki margir stúdentar fyrir prófið
 there read it then probably not many students for exam
 ‘Probably not many students read it for the exam, then.’

One popular analysis of OS has been that it is movement to the specifier position of an ‘object agreement’ phrase, that is, SpecAgrOP (see, e.g., Déprez 1989 – but for opposing views see, e.g., Holmberg and Platzack 1995:141ff. and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000). Since SpecAgrOP is presumably a ‘dedicated object position’ in some sense, this kind of analysis is consistent with the fact that OS only applies to objects and not, say, to PPs or objects of prepositions, as we have seen.

The AgrOP is usually assumed to intervene between the TP and the VP, and this would be consistent with the apparent position of shifted objects in Scandinavian. Now if AgrOP and AgrSP are in some sense ‘two sides of the same coin’ (cf. Chomsky 1991, 1993) and if there is no AgrSP in MSc (cf. the discussion in section 2.2.2 above), then one could argue that there should not be any AgrOP in MSc either and hence OS should not be found in MSc (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:274ff. – see also the discussion in Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Jonas 1996a, b; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998).

But if one wants to account for the lack of NPOS in MSc by analysing it as a movement to SpecAgrOP which is ‘lacking’ in some sense in MSc, then a number of questions arise, including the following:³⁹

- (2.97) a. If NPOS is movement to SpecAgrOP, a position lacking in MSc, what kind of movement is involved in the pronominal OS found in MSc?
 b. If NPOS and pronominal OS are different kinds of movements, how come they share a number of properties, such as only applying to verbal objects and being restricted by verb movement (Holmberg’s Generalization) and definiteness?

Since pronominal OS only applies to (unstressed) pronouns, one might think that it could involve some sort of cliticization. Such an analysis has in fact been proposed (see especially Josefsson 1992, 1994) and it seems at first sight to have a number of things to recommend it.

First, if pronominal OS involves cliticization of the pronominal object on to the adjacent main verb, then we would expect it to be dependent on movement of the main verb. As we shall see in the *next section*, this is true of OS in Scandinavian in general: if the main verb moves, then the pronominal object moves (or can move) with it but otherwise it stays in situ. Second, this would explain why only pronominal objects of verbs and not, say, of

³⁹ It should be noted here that it has been claimed that full NPOS exists in MSc, or in Norwegian in particular. To show this Nilsen typically uses sentences containing a stack of adverbs such as the following (1997:19), where there are various possibilities with respect to the order of the object and the adverbs, as Nilsen shows:

- (i)
 a. Etter dette slo Guri ærlig talt heldigvis ikke lenger alltid **Per** i sjakk.
 after this beat G. honestly spoken fortunately not longer always P. in chess
 b. Etter dette slo Guri ærlig talt heldigvis ikke lenger **Per** alltid i sjakk.
 after this beat G. honestly spoken fortunately not longer P. always in chess
 etc.

As will be discussed at the end of this chapter (see also Svenonius 2002a), it is very difficult to know what stacked adverbs tell us about the location of particular constituent boundaries in the syntactic structure. Hence I have limited my investigation of the applicability of NPOS to sentences containing single sentence adverbs like the negation, for instance. When that is done, a clear difference emerges between Icelandic on the one hand and MSc (and Faroese) on the other. Thus the following is fine in Icelandic but bad in Norwegian:

- (ii) a. Guðrún vann **Pétur** ekki. (Ic)
 b. *Guri slo **Per** ikke. (No)
 G. beat P. not

prepositions move, since only the verbal objects would be adjacent to the main verb and thus able to cliticize onto it. Third, since clitics are unstressed and simple, we would not expect pronominal OS to apply to stressed pronouns or coordinated or modified pronouns under this analysis, but if NPOS is of a different nature, then we might expect stressed pronouns and coordinated and modified pronouns to undergo NPOS. As shown above, this is the right prediction: stressed and coordinated and modified pronouns can shift in Icelandic (which has NPOS) but they cannot in MSc (which does not have NPOS).

One prediction of the cliticization analysis of pronominal OS is not really borne out, however (see, e.g., Holmberg and Platzack 1995:154ff.): if weak pronominal objects can cliticize onto a finite main verb and move with it to the I-position (split or unsplit), then we would a priori expect it to be able to move all the way to initial position (the C-position), for example, in direct questions. Although there are some examples of this kind of ‘long pronominal OS’ in modern Swedish and even older Icelandic and Danish, it is either heavily restricted or impossible in the modern languages. Some illustrative examples are given in (2.98) (cf. Holmberg 1986:230ff.; Josefsson 1992; Hellan and Platzack 1995:58–60, Heinat 2005):

(2.98)

- a. Varför gömde **sig** barnen ____? (Sw)
 why hid self children-the
 ‘Why did the children hide?’
- b. Gav **dej** snuten ____ körkortet tillbaka? (Sw)
 gave you cop-the driver’s-licence-the back
 ‘Did the cop give you your driver’s licence back?’
- c. Nu befallde **oss** rånaren ____ att vara tysta. (Sw)
 now ordered us robber-the to be silent
 ‘Now the robber ordered us to be silent.’
- d. Ekki hryggja **mig** hót þín _____. (Oic)
 not grieve me threatens your
 ‘Your threats don’t disturb me.’
- e. Snart indfandt **sig** dette _____. (No 1833)
 soon presented itself this
 ‘Soon this presented itself.’
- f. Derfor forekommer **mig** maaske det hele ____ mere betydningsfuldt. (Da 1860)
 therefore seems me perhaps the whole more important
 ‘Therefore the whole thing perhaps appears more important to me.’
- g. *Las hana María ekki ____? (Ic)
 read it Mary not

As can be seen here, the pronominal objects are either simplex reflexive pronouns or 1st or 2nd person pronouns. According to Holmberg (1986:230) and Hellan and Platzack (1995), one could not substitute a 3rd person pronominal object in (2.98a) or (2.98c), for instance, and (2.98g) is bad in Icelandic. The reason for this restriction is unclear, and it is unexpected under a cliticization analysis of pronominal OS (but see Heinat 2005 for a binding theory account of some of these restrictions).

2.2.4.3 Holmberg's Generalization: short moves or 'intervening material'?

As mentioned in 2.1.5, OS in Icelandic is restricted by the position of the main verb. The same holds for OS in Scandinavian in general: when the main verb is finite and appears to move out of the VP, as it does in all types of clauses in Icelandic and in main clauses in MSc, OS is applicable, but it does not apply in auxiliary constructions, when the main verb apparently stays inside the VP, nor in MSc embedded clauses where a finite main verb cannot move out of the VP. Thus we get contrasts like the following (cf. Holmberg 1986:165; Vikner 1989; Josefsson 1992, 1994, 2003; *v* indicates the main verb's base position):⁴⁰

- (2.99) Hún spurði [_{CP} af hverju stúdentarnir læsu **bækurnar** ekki [_{VP} v ___]]
 she asked for what students-the read books-the not
 'She asked why the students didn't read the books.'
- (2.100) a. Varför läste studenterna **den** inte [_{VP} v ___]? (Sw)
 why read students-the it not
 'Why didn't the students read it?'
- b. *Varför har studenterna **den** inte [_{VP} läst ___]? (Sw)
 why have students-the it not read
- c. *Hon frågade [_{CP} varför studenterna **den** inte [_{VP} läste ___]] (Sw)
 he asked why students-the it not read

Since Holmberg's dissertation (1986), the observation that there is a relationship between the position of the main verb and the shiftability of the object in Scandinavian has come to be known as **Holmberg's Generalization** and it has been extensively discussed in the literature (for an overview and references, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a, e.g. section 2.2.5). Needless to say, the attempts to explain this generalization vary considerably depending on the theoretical persuasion of their proponents. I will briefly review some proposals here for the sake of illustration.

⁴⁰ As will be discussed in section 2.2.5 below, Negative Object Movement or Negative Scrambling in Icelandic is not subject to Holmberg's Generalization (see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1987b; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996, section 3.4, 2005b:448–51; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:575–6).

Within the so-called checking theory of the Minimalist Framework, it has been proposed, for instance, that movement of the main verb extends its ‘checking domain’ and that this makes it possible to shift the object without violating certain minimality conditions on movement (some variant of a ‘shortest move’ requirement, see, e.g., Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Ferguson 1996; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996). One problem with these analyses is the fact that all types of OS in Scandinavian are dependent on verb movement but yet there are different restrictions on OS in Scandinavian as we have seen, as it is sometimes ‘obligatory’, sometimes optional, sometimes impossible. We will return to some of these restrictions below, but they show that there is more to OS than pure ‘structural mechanics’ as it were.

Another type of explanation maintains that OS is a phonological rule in some sense (a PF-rule). Thus Holmberg (1997, 1999) maintains that OS appears to be dependent on verb movement because phonological material may block OS and hence the verb has to ‘get out of the way’ as it were. He argues, for instance, that particles may block OS in Swedish, because Swedish differs from, say, Icelandic in not shifting pronominal objects obligatorily around particles.⁴¹ As Bobaljik (2000:55ff.) has pointed out, however, the facts seem to be a bit more complicated and call for a different explanation, cf. (2.101) (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:194–5).⁴² There is a dialectal split in Swedish with respect to the acceptability of the order object < particle. While Standard Swedish does not accept this order, some Swedish dialects do, although this depends on the type of particle involved. This is illustrated in (2.101), where % means ‘acceptable in certain dialects’ (cf. Bobaljik 2000: 55ff. – cf. also Vinka 1998):

⁴¹ Other types of ‘phonological material’ that block OS under this approach, according to Holmberg, include prepositions (hence no shift of prepositional objects, cf. (ia) below) and indirect objects (hence no shift of direct objects over indirect ones, cf. (ib) below, see, e.g., Holmberg 1997:203ff.):

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------|--------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|------|
| (i) a. | *Jag | talade | henne | inte | med | ___ | (Sw) |
| | I | spoke | her | not | to | | |
| | b. | *Jag | gav | den | inte | Elsa | ___ |
| | | I | gave | it | not | Elsa | (Sw) |

⁴² The so-called ‘long OS’ in Swedish, where a pronominal object is apparently shifted around an indefinite subject, is also problematic for this kind of account (cf. Josefsson 2003:204):

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------------------------|----------|--------------|-----|-------|----------|-------|------|
| (i) | I | hallen | mötte | honom | en | hemsk | syn | — | (Sw) |
| | | in | hall-the | met | him | a | terrible | sight | |
| | | ‘In the hall he met a terrible sight.’ | | | | | | | |

- (2.101) a. %Dom kastade hunden ut. (Sw)
 they threw dog-the out
 b. *Dom smutsade tröjan ner. (but OK: ... ner tröjan)
 they dirtied shirt-the down

Interestingly, the particle constructions that allow the object < particle order not only allow object shift but also passive, whereas the others do not:

- (2.102) a. %Dom kastade **den** inte ___ ut. (Sw)
 they threw it not out
 b. *Dom smutsade **den** inte ner ___
 they dirtied it not down
 c. %Hunden blev kastad ___ ut
 dog-the was thrown out
 d. *Tröjan blev smutsad ner ___
 shirt-the was dirtied down

This correlation between passivization and OS can obviously not be captured by an adjacency restriction that is specifically designed for OS as Holmberg's account is. An approach that relates passive and OS in some fashion (e.g. as both being an instance of A-movement) would seem more promising.

A somewhat similar concept of phonological (or morphological) visibility plays a role in an account proposed by Bobaljik (1994, 1995). According to him, the fact that OS appears to be dependent on verb movement follows from the requirement that an affix and the relevant stem must be adjacent in syntactic structure in order for them to be combined (see, e.g., Bobaljik 1994:2). If an object is shifted across a finite non-moving verb, for example, in embedded clauses in MSc, the finite verb will no longer be adjacent to the I that he assumes hosts the relevant inflectional affix (or feature) and the result is ungrammatical (cf. (2.103a)). Similarly, if an object is shifted across a non-finite main verb in an auxiliary construction, Bobaljik maintains that the non-finite main verb will no longer be adjacent to the functional head hosting the participial affix (or feature) that it needs to be able to merge with (cf. (2.103b)). This is illustrated below where *I* indicates the inflectional head allegedly hosting the past tense marker (feature) and *P* the head that is meant to host the participial marker and the (ungrammatically) shifted object is in boldface:

- (2.103) a. ... *hvorfor Peter *I* **den** ikke køb- ___ (Da)
 why Peter it not buy
 b. *Pétur hefur *P* **bókina** ekki les- ___ (Ic)
 Peter has book-the not read

This analysis faces various complications, however. First, it has to stipulate that the negation (and other sentence adverbs) do not block adjacency, since the relevant sentences would be grammatical with a non-shifted object but with the negation still intervening between the verb and the relevant verb form. Second, the position of the alleged participial phrase needs to be independently motivated (cf. also Holmberg 1997:205). In addition, it seems that the so-called Negative Object Movement (or Negative Scrambling) to be discussed in section 2.2.5 seems to violate this adjacency requirement (as it is not subject to Holmberg's Generalization).

We can conclude, then, that a generally accepted account of Holmberg's Generalization has not yet been found.

2.2.4.4 Definiteness and interpretation possibilities

As pointed out in 2.1.5, indefinite NP objects can only be shifted in Icelandic when they receive a special interpretation or under certain conditions having to do with stress and intonation – or when they can have a specific interpretation (as in the case of OS of indefinite NPs like *þrjár bækur* 'three books' discussed above). Definite NPs shift more readily. Before we consider this in more detail, it is worth noting that indefinite pronouns normally do not shift, neither in MSc nor Icelandic (see also Diesing 1996:76):

(2.104) Nei, jeg har ingen paraply, (No)
no I have no umbrella

a. men jeg kóper muligens en i morgen.
but I buy possibly one tomorrow

b. *... men jeg kóper **en** muligens ___ i morgen.
'I don't have an umbrella, but I may buy one tomorrow.'

(2.105) Ég á ekkert eftir Chomsky. (Ic)
I have nothing by Chomsky

a. Átt þú ekki eitthvað?
have you not something

b. *Átt þú **eitthvað** ekki ___?
'I don't have anything by Chomsky. Don't you have something?'

But the facts are a bit more complicated. As pointed out in section 2.1.5, indefinite objects can shift if the verb is stressed as in (2.106):

(2.106) Ég LES **bækur** ekki ___
I READ books not
'I don't READ books (I only buy them).'

Note, however, that in order for sentences like (2.106) to be natural, books (or bookreading) must have been a topic of discussion. Observe also the following contrast:

- (2.107) Context A: Þekkir Jón Stríð og frið?
 knows John War and Peace
 ‘Does John know War and Peace?’
- a. Já, hann les **Stríð og frið** alltaf ___ í fríinu sínu.
 yes he reads W&P always in vacation-the his
 ‘Yes, he always reads W&P in his vacation.’
- b. ?Já, hann les alltaf Stríð og frið í fríinu sínu.
 yes he reads always W&P in vacation-the his
- (2.108) Context B: Hvað gerir Jón í fríinu sínu?
 what does John in vacation-the his(refl.)
 ‘What does John do in his vacation?’
- a. *Hann les **Stríð og frið** alltaf ___
 he reads W&P always
- b. Hann les alltaf Stríð og frið.

These contrasts suggest that constituents representing new information (as ‘War and Peace’ in (2.108)) cannot readily undergo OS. Since indefinite NPs frequently represent new information, they are rarely shifted. The main exception to this has to do with quantified NPs like *þrjár bækur* ‘three books’ as pointed out above. Relevant examples are repeated here for convenience:

- (2.29) a. Ég las aldrei þrjár bækur.
 I read(past) never three books
 ‘I never read three books.’
- b. Ég las **þrjár bækur** aldrei.
 I read three books never
 ‘There are three books that I never read.’

As Diesing and Jelinek were the first to observe (Diesing and Jelinek 1993, see also Diesing 1996, 1997 and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005b:444–6), the fronted constituent *þrjár bækur* ‘three books’ in the b-example can only have a specific interpretation whereas the non-fronted one in the a-example is ambiguous with respect to specificity. So there is not a one-to-one relationship between formal definiteness/indefiniteness and ‘shiftability’ of objects (for further examples, see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005b:445).

In addition to this, Diesing and Jelinek (1993, 1995; see also Diesing 1996, 1997) observed that shifting the object can also have semantic relevance having

to do with specificity when a definite quantified object is involved. Consider the following (most of these examples are inspired by Diesing's work):

- (2.109) a. *Ég les sjaldan lengstu bókina.*
 I read rarely longest book-the
 'I rarely read the longest book (whichever it is).'
- b. *Ég les lengstu bókina sjaldan __*
 I read longest book-the rarely
 'There is a book that is the longest and I rarely read it.'

We need not go into the details of Diesing's account for this here (e.g. her 'Mapping Hypothesis' and her 'Scoping Condition', cf., e.g., Diesing 1997:373, 375). What is important for our purposes is to observe that we have here some interaction between specificity (or quantificational interpretation) and word order.

As Diesing recognizes (see especially Diesing 1997:419ff.), the Diesing and Jelinek approach to Scandinavian OS faces a disturbing complication, however: although OS is supposed to be driven by the semantics, as it were, it only applies when the syntax allows it to. As the reader will recall, Scandinavian OS is dependent on verb movement: if the lexical verb does not leave the VP, the object cannot shift. Now the Diesing and Jelinek approach maintains that objects move out of the VP for interpretational reasons. But if pronominal objects have to move out of the VP for interpretational reasons, how can they be interpreted inside the VP when they do not undergo OS, for example because the main verb stays in situ? Complications of this sort force Diesing to assume that some objects move out of the VP at the ('invisible') level of logical form (LF) when they cannot do so overtly.⁴³

Without going further into the details of this kind of approach, we can see that the 'softness' of the constraints assumed are reminiscent of constraints in various functional approaches to language (see, e.g., the work of Kuno 1987 and references cited there) and also of the kinds of constraints assumed in the so-called Optimality Theory (OT). The basic tenet of OT is that constraints are violable and the 'best' derivation (of a sentence or a phonological form) is the one that violates the lowest-ranked constraints. Thus OT maintains that sentences can be grammatical, although they violate certain syntactic constraints. Hence Vikner (1997) argues that the violability of Diesing and Jelinek's Scoping Condition in Scandinavian OS indicates that an OT

⁴³ As Diesing points out (1997:420), this would appear to be a violation of the Procrastinate Principle of Chomsky (1993:30 and later work), which states that movement should be delayed to LF whenever possible.

approach to Scandinavian OS is superior to a Minimalist approach of the kind proposed by Diesing (1997), for instance. Vikner bases his argumentation on examples of the following type (the examples are somewhat simplified here, but the account of the readings is based on Vikner's – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:192ff.):

(2.110)

- a. Þau sýna alltaf [viðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu. (Ic)
 they show always interviews with Blair clock eleven
 'They always show interviews with Blair at 11 o'clock.' (existential)
 (i.e., 'It is always the case that they show interviews with Blair at 11 o'clock.')
- b. Þau sýna **[viðtöl við Blair]** alltaf — klukkan ellefu.
 they show interviews with Blair always clock eleven
 'They show interviews with Blair always at 11 o'clock.' (generic)
 (i.e., 'Whenever there are interviews with Blair, they are always shown at 11 o'clock.')
- c. Þau hafa alltaf sýnt [viðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu.
 they have always shown interviews with Blair clock eleven
 'They have always shown interviews with Blair at 11 o'clock.' (ambiguous)
- d. *Þau hafa **[viðtöl við Blair]** alltaf sýnt — klukkan ellefu.
 they have interviews with Blair always shown clock eleven

Vikner's basic point is that the non-shifted and the shifted indefinite objects in (2.110a, b) have different readings, but the indefinite object in (2.110c) is ambiguous because it cannot shift. Basing his semantic account (partially) on Diesing's, he argues that when OS does not apply in sentences like (2.110a), the adverb (here *alltaf* 'always') has scope over the object, but when OS does apply, as in (2.110b), the object has scope over the adverb. But when an indefinite object cannot move out of the VP, as in (2.110c) (here the main verb cannot move because there is an auxiliary present and hence OS is impossible), it will have an ambiguous interpretation.

Without going further into Vikner's account, we can see that it crucially depends on the claim that a non-moved object which can move will have a narrower scope than an adverb that c-commands it. Diesing (1997) also assumed that if objects with the definite/specific/strong reading could move out of the VP, they would do so. This implies that sentences like the following should not be ambiguous:

- (2.111) Þau sýna alltaf [viðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu. (cf. (2.110a))
 they show always interviews with Blair clock eleven
 'They always show interviews with Blair at 11 o'clock.'

Example (2.111) is modelled on the examples in Vikner 1997, and speakers of Icelandic seem to agree that it *can* have the 'strong' reading, although the 'weak'

reading is more natural (see also de Hoop 1992:139 on the reading of comparable sentences in Dutch). When an object of this kind shifts, on the other hand, the weak reading seems to be eliminated (see also de Hoop 1992:139):

- (2.112) Þau sýna [viðtöl við Blair]; alltaf __ klukkan ellefu. (cf. (2.110b))
 they show interviews with Blair always clock eleven
 ‘They always show interviews with Blair at 11 o’clock.’

Thus the correct generalization seems to be that the weak/existential reading is incompatible with OS but objects having the strong/quantificational/specific reading do not necessarily have to shift or scramble. Facts of this sort are obviously relevant for the general issue of optionality: to what extent can syntactic movement rules be truly optional? The Minimalist Program predicts that such rules should not exist, since if constituents do not have to move, they should not move, due to the principle of Procrastinate mentioned above.

2.2.5 *Adverbs and syntactic structure*

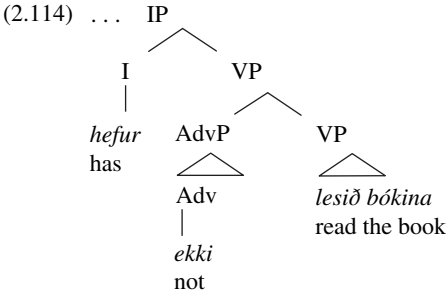
As reviewed in section 2.1.6 above, different semantic classes of adverbs have different ‘privileges of occurrence’. As a result, syntacticians frequently use adverbs as diagnostics in arguments about syntactic structure and the syntactic position of various constituents, as frequently illustrated in the preceding sections. Various theoretical and comparative issues arise in this connection and we will consider some of these here. An excellent overview of these can be found in Svenonius 2002a.

The following assumption is typically made in arguments for syntactic structure based on the position of adverbs:

- (2.113) The default position of adverbs of type A is P. Hence the position of adverbs of type A relative to the positions of constituents X and Y in the same clause can be used as a diagnostic to determine the syntactic position of X and Y.

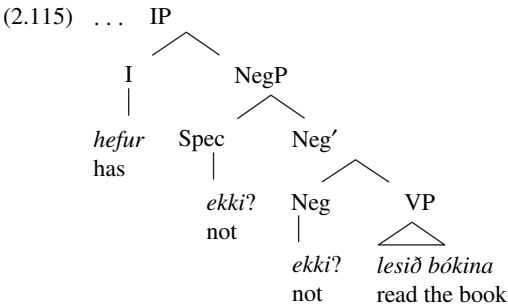
Assumptions like (2.113) can be found in various types of framework, including Diderichsen’s (1946, 1964).

In the preceding sections I have generally assumed, either explicitly or implicitly, that adverbs (or adverbial phrases) are normally adjoined to constituents of various kinds, for example to VP or to IP (or its sub-constituents AgrSP and TP). This has been a common assumption in the literature on Scandinavian syntax. Thus sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’ and *aldrei* ‘never’, for instance, are typically said to be adjoined to the VP in the fashion roughly outlined in (2.114) (disregarding possible sub-constituents of IP, for instance):



As shown here, it is standardly assumed that an adjunction of this sort ‘extends’ the phrase that is being adjoined to, so when an AdvP is adjoined to a VP the phrasal node immediately dominating the AdvP is also a VP.⁴⁴

One possible alternative would be that there is a special adverbial projection that takes VP as its complement. Such an analysis has in fact often been suggested for the sentence negation ‘not’ in various languages, assuming a special Negation Phrase (NegP) (for an overview of the descriptive and theoretical issues, see Zanuttini 2001). Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996, section 3.4) has argued for that kind of an analysis of Icelandic negative phrases and K. R. Christensen (2003) has proposed a similar analysis. As discussed by Jóhannes Gísli, two variants of this analysis are possible: the negation *ekki* ‘not’ could be the head of such a NegP or it could be its specifier, and as Zanuttini points out, languages might differ with respect to the phrasal status of the negation or even have different kinds of negative elements (i.e., heads and maximal projections). Consider the structure in (2.115) (see also K. R. Christensen 2003:15, who maintains that the negation *ekki* ‘not’ in Icelandic and its counterparts in Norwegian and Swedish can either function as a head or as a maximal projection):



⁴⁴ The analysis of finite verb movement offered by Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998 crucially depends on this aspect of adverbial adjunction in Icelandic.

Given various assumptions about word order and syntactic movement operations, it should be possible in principle to determine whether the negation in any given language functions as a head or as a maximal projection. Various diagnostics are discussed in this connection by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996, especially section 3.4.4) and Zanuttini (2001 – see also Bobaljik 1994:12, n. 10). Here we will just consider a couple of the more relevant ones for Icelandic.

First, if the negation *ekki* ‘not’ was a head in Icelandic (i.e. in the Neg-position in (2.115) and not in the Spec-position), we might expect it to interfere with the movement of heads because of the so-called Head Movement Constraint, which is supposed to block the movement of heads over heads (cf. Travis 1984 and much later work). But as we have seen above, the standard diagnostic of finite verb movement in Icelandic is to determine whether the finite verb (which is a head) has moved over the negation (cf. the discussion in sections 2.1.4 and 2.2.3).

Second, as Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson shows (1996), the negation *ekki* ‘not’ can be modified, for example by *alls* ‘at all’, and objects can be shifted across this modified negation, and it can apparently as a whole undergo the so-called Stylistic Fronting:⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson mentions a class of examples, originally discussed by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1986), where it appears that *ekki* ‘not’ has cliticized onto the finite verb and moved to initial position, such as this V1 exclamative (ia). Examples like (ib) are discussed by K. R. Christensen (2003:14), who also points out similar examples from Norwegian and Swedish:

(i) a. Er ekki Jón kominn upp á þak!
is not John come up on roof
‘What on earth is John doing on the roof!’

b. Hefur ekki Jón lesið bókina?
has not John read the book
‘Hasn’t John read the book?’

Interestingly, *ekki* does not have any kind of negative meaning in (ia) and functions more like a discourse particle of some sort, as Jóhannes Gísli points out. In both the a- and b-type the negation is unstressed and the examples get worse if we have an unstressed pronominal subject following it, as pointed out to me by Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson (p.c.):

(ii) a. *Er ekki hann kominn upp á þak!
is not he come up on roof

b. *Hefur ekki hann lesið bókina?
has not he read the book

The conditions for this phenomenon have not been studied in detail, but it suggests that the negation can sometimes function as a head in Icelandic.

- (2.116) a. *Ég les alls ekki þessa bók.*
 I read at all not this book
- b. *Ég les þessa bók alls ekki __*
 ‘I do not read this book at all.’
- (2.117) a. *Þetta eru menn [sem geta alls ekki unnið saman]*
 these are men that can at all not work together
- b. *Þetta eru menn [sem alls ekki geta __ unnið saman]*
 ‘These are men that cannot work together at all.’

Third, the negation *ekki* ‘not’ can undergo Topicalization, and if that is a process which moves elements to the SpecCP, then it should only move maximal projections and not heads, under standard assumptions about movement:⁴⁶

- (2.118) a. *Þeir hafa ekki lokið verkinu í dag.*
 they have not finished work-the to-day
- b. ***EKKI** hafa þeir __ lokið verkinu í dag.*
 ‘They have not finished the work today.’

Now the arguments just presented do not, of course, argue for the existence of NegP in Icelandic, merely for the claim that the adverb *ekki* ‘not’ behaves (in these cases at least) more like a maximal projection than a head, and that is, of course, what we would also expect if it was adjoined to the VP in the fashion illustrated in (2.114).

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996) considers an interesting set of facts that he maintains support the NegP analysis (see also K. R. Christensen 2003, 2005). These have to do with the so-called Negative Object Movement or Negative Object Shift in Icelandic already mentioned in section 2.1.5. A couple of relevant examples are repeated here for convenience:

- (2.119) a. *Ég hef engar bækur lesið __*
 I have no books read

⁴⁶ This also holds for the Swedish negation *inte* ‘not’, for instance (see, e.g., Platzack 1998:163):

- (i) a. *Jag vet inte vem som har gjort det.*
 I know not who that has done it
 ‘I don’t know who has done it.’
- b. ***Inte** vet jag __ vem som har gjort det.*
 not know I who that has done it

As the reader will note, English *not* cannot be topicalized in this fashion.

- b. María hefur **um engan annan** talað ___ í heila viku.
 Mary has about nobody else spoken for whole week
 ‘Mary hasn’t spoken about anybody else for a whole week.’

(cf. also: María hefur ekki talað um neinn annan í heila viku.
 Mary has not spoken about anybody else in whole week)

In fact, **Negative Scrambling** would be a more suitable term than Negative OS since this operation is in many respects more like (Dutch and German) Scrambling than Scandinavian OS as summarized in (2.120):

- (2.120) a. Negative Scrambling is not subject to Holmberg’s Generalization but OS is.
 b. Negative Scrambling applies to objects of prepositions and to prepositional phrases but OS does not.⁴⁷

Thus Negative Scrambling moves a negative object across a non-finite main verb when an auxiliary is present, as illustrated in section 2.1.5,⁴⁸ but OS does not apply at all in auxiliary constructions (Holmberg’s Generalization). In fact, the Negative Scrambling is ‘obligatory’ in the sense that a negative object like *enga bók* cannot really be left in situ. If the object is left in situ, then we get the sentence negation *ekki* ‘not’ and the relevant negative polarity item. A similar situation obtains in Norwegian (see K. K. Christensen 1986 – see also the discussion in K. R. Christensen 2003, 2005):⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996) also argues that Negative Scrambling appears to have relatively clear A’-properties whereas OS is more similar to A-movement if anything, as discussed by Höskuldur Thráinsson (2001a, section 2.2.4, *pace* Holmberg and Platzack 1995).

⁴⁸ In typical non-auxiliary constructions, Scrambling of negative objects would not be visible since it would apply string-vacuously, as pointed out by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996). But it can be shown that Negative Scrambling also applies in non-auxiliary constructions, as pointed out by Jóhannes Gísli (data originally from Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1987b, but the a-version is apparently not accepted by all speakers):

- (i) a. Jón er **engar augabrúnir** með ___
 John is no eyebrows with
 ‘John has no eyebrows.’
 b. Jón er ekki með neinar augabrúnir.
 John is not with any eyebrows
 ‘John doesn’t have any eyebrows.’

See also the comment in the next footnote.

⁴⁹ In Norwegian the scrambled variant *Jeg har ingen bøker lest*, corresponding to (2.119a) (lit. ‘I have no books read’), would be fine too.

- (2.121) a. *Ég hef lesið engar bækur. (Ic)
 I have read no books
- b. Ég hef ekki lesið neinar bækur.
 I have not read any books
- c. *Jeg har lest ingen bøker. (No)
 I have read no books
- d. Jeg har ikke lest noen bøker.
 I have not read any books

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996) argues the position that the fact that Negative Scrambling differs in so many ways from OS suggests that it is movement to a different position. He follows many others in maintaining that OS is movement to the specifier position of the ‘object-agreement’ phrase, that is, to SpecAgrOP, and suggests that Negative Scrambling (his ‘Negative Object Movement’) is movement to SpecNegP. The former he takes to be an A-position, the latter not.

While Negative Scrambling is definitely a puzzling phenomenon, it is not clear that its existence presents arguments for a special NegP. Its properties seem just as compatible with an adjunction analysis along the lines often suggested for Dutch and German Scrambling (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a and references cited there). As Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996) notes, it is not entirely restricted to negative elements either as it can also apply to non-negative quantified elements (although here it is not ‘obligatory’ the way it is in the case of negative elements – the observation of facts of this sort is originally due to Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1987b):

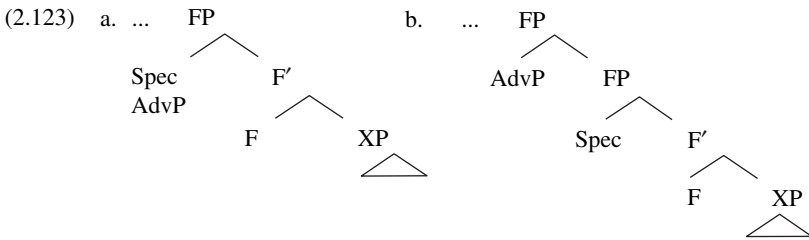
- (2.122) a. Jón hefur lesið ýmsar bækur.
 John has read various books
- b. Jón hefur ýmsar bækur lesið __
 John has various books read

For this reason the operation is perhaps more aptly referred to as **Quantifier Scrambling**.

We can now reconsider the VP-adjunction analysis of sentence adverbs in the light of the data just presented. As already mentioned, the arguments that the negation *ekki* ‘not’ behaves more like a maximal projection than a head is perfectly compatible with the standard VP-adjunction analysis. Note also that if there are cases where the negation behaves like a head, for example undergoes some sort of head-movement (cf. the discussion of Stylistic Fronting in chapter 7) or even cliticization (see the facts discussed by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996 and K. R. Christensen 2003 mentioned in

n. 44), then such behaviour is also compatible with a VP-adjunction analysis. In such cases it would simply be the head of the adjoined AdvP that moved. In addition, the arguments about the behaviour of *ekki* ‘not’ just reviewed also apply to other sentence adverbs of the type used in the discussion above, such as *aldrei* ‘never’, *sjaldan* ‘rarely’, *alltaf* ‘always’, and so on.⁵⁰ The fact that all these adverbs behave in very much the same fashion militates against proposing a special treatment of negation in Icelandic along the lines of the NegP analysis but favours a unified approach like the adjunction analysis.

A third type of analysis is in a sense a mixture of the two: several linguists have argued that adverbs typically occur in the specifier position of functional projections. This means that their maximal projections are not a part of the ‘backbone’ of the clause structure the way NegP is supposed to be (cf. the diagram in (2.115) above). Schematically the difference between an adjunction analysis and a specifier analysis can be shown as in (2.123), where FP stands for an arbitrary functional projection and XP for its complement:



Cinque (1995, 1999) and Alexiadou (1997) are often cited as pioneers of the specifier analysis of adverbs whereas Ernst 2002 contains the most detailed presentation of the adjunction approach. As discussed in section 2.1.6 above, different (semantic) classes of adverbs have different privileges of occurrence. Under the approach advocated by Ernst, the hierarchical position of adverbs (and other adjuncts) is basically determined by whether they can receive a proper interpretation in that position. Cinque and Alexiadou propose, on the other hand, to account for such privileges of occurrence by having a tight connection between adverbs and functional structure. Thus a particular semantic class of adverbs is supposed to occur in the specifier position of a particular type of functional projection, for example ‘aspectual’ adverbs in

⁵⁰ There are two exceptions: these adverbs cannot be modified by *alls* ‘at all’ – the possible modifications seem to depend on the semantics of the adverbs. Thus *sjaldan* ‘rarely’ can be modified with *mjög* ‘very’, for instance. The other sentence adverbs do not double as discourse particles (which are presumably minimal projections or heads) moving with the verb to the C-position as *ekki* ‘not’ can at times, cf. the discussion of exclamation (i.e. *Er ekki Jón ...* ‘Isn’t John ...’) in n. 45 above.

the specifier position of an AspP projection (aspect phrase). Ideally then, the ordering restrictions of adverbs should follow from a universal ordering of the functional categories that they relate to.

While this kind of analysis has not yet been applied to Icelandic, Nilsen (1997, 1998) applies it to Norwegian. As mentioned above, many of his arguments for the relative position of subjects and adverbs involve preferred readings, for example the ‘strong’ vs. ‘weak’ readings familiar from the work of Milsark (1974, 1977), Vangsnes (1995, 2002a) and others. A couple of illustrative examples are given in (2.124) (cf. Svenonius 2002a:226):

(2.124)

- a. Þess vegna ögra **ennþá mörg leikrit** áhorfendum nútímans.
 this because-of provoke still many plays(N) audiences(D) today’s(G)
 ‘For this reason, many plays still provoke today’s audiences.’
- b. Þá ætla **margir málvísindamenn vonandi** að koma.
 then intend many linguists(N) hopefully to come
 ‘Then many linguists hopefully plan to come.’

Under a Cinque-type analysis, an adverb like *ennþá* ‘still’ should be a low one. Now if the weak/strong readings of quantified NPs depend on their structural positions (low NPs get weak interpretation, high NPs get strong interpretation), as often assumed (see, e.g., the discussion in Bobaljik and Jonas 1996, Vangsnes 1995, 2002a and references cited there), then we would expect the NP *mörg leikrit* ‘many plays’ only to have the so-called weak reading, but in fact it can also have the (wide scope) strong reading (i.e. ‘Many plays are such that ...’). Conversely, the adverb *vonandi* ‘hopefully’ should be a high adverb, and it does, in fact, typically precede adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’, *ennþá* ‘still’, *ekki* ‘not’. Yet it seems possible, at least for some speakers, to get the weak (narrow scope) reading of the NP *margir málvísindamenn* ‘many linguists’ in (2.124) (i.e. the non-specific ‘I don’t care which ones’ reading – although the order with *vonandi* ‘hopefully’ preceding the subject would be more natural under that reading).

As Svenonius (2002a) points out, the basic problems with accounting for adverb placement relative to other constituents in the clause can be stated as follows:

- (2.125) It does not seem possible to relate different classes of adverbs to definite ‘positions’ in the clause structure, e.g. to claim that an adverb of type A always adjoins to (or occurs in the specifier type of) projection XP whereas adverb of type B always adjoins to (or occurs in the specifier position of) projection YP. There is too much variability to make such an account plausible. Yet a great deal of regularities and strong tendencies can be observed with regard to positional preferences and interaction of position and interpretation of adverbs and NPs.

Svenonius maintains that the observed regularities and variations are more appropriately handled by a model that allows for an interaction between syntax and semantics than by a model that seeks to incorporate the relevant semantic categories into the syntactic structure, as a Cinque-model tends to do (e.g. by proposing a great proliferation of (universally ordered?) functional projections). He also concludes that a specifier-analysis of adverbs does not seem to offer any advantages over the more ‘traditional’ adjunction analysis.⁵¹ Similar argumentation has been presented by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson. He concludes that a Cinque-type theory ‘necessitates an excessive functional architecture with multiple subject positions in between the adverb-related projections and this is both theoretically problematic and unmotivated’ (2002:73).

For the reasons outlined above and summarized in (2.125), I have tried to be very careful in using the position of different types of adverbs to argue for the particular structural position of other syntactic constituents. But I have generally assumed that if a given constituent precedes sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’, *aldrei* ‘never’, and so on, then it must be outside the VP, and I have not seen any reason to revise this assumption.⁵²

⁵¹ It should also be mentioned that the distinction between specifiers and adjuncts is by no means universally accepted in recent syntactic theory – and Svenonius (2002a) assumes, for instance, that there is no such distinction. That means, among other things, that a subject and an adverb could be adjoined to the same functional projection, say TP, and presumably in either order (see, e.g., Svenonius 2002a:232).

⁵² Whether the position of an element after such adverbs implies that the element must be inside the VP is obviously a different matter. Svenonius (2002a), for instance, does not accept that kind of argument. In fact, he wants to argue that if tense is relevant to the interpretation of a given adverb, then that adverb should not be adjoined below T (the head of the tense phrase TP).

Order of elements within the phrase

3.1 A descriptive overview

3.1.1 Order within the (extended) noun phrase

3.1.1.1 Order of the modifiers

The order of elements within the NP (or DP) is quite fixed. If we have a quantifier (such as an indefinite pronoun), demonstrative pronoun, numeral and an adjective, the default order is as shown in (3.1) and other orders are usually quite bad, as they would also be in English, for instance:

- (3.1) Allir þessir þrír íslensku málfræðingar hafa skrifað um þetta.
 all these three Icelandic linguists have written about this
 Q(u)ant D(em) Nu(m) A(dj) N(oun)

Although adjectives typically precede the nouns they modify, as do demonstrative pronouns, the reverse order is sometimes used in relatively formal or bookish written Icelandic:

- (3.2) a. Gunnar átti gráan hest.
 G. had grey horse
 b. Gunnar átti hest gráan.
 G. had horse grey
- (3.3) a. Í þessari ritgerð ætla ég að ...
 in this paper intend I to ...
 b. Í ritgerð þessari ætla ég að ...
 in paper this intend I to ...

When more than one adjective modifies a noun, their respective ordering is not entirely free, as demonstrated by Gylfi Hafsteinsson (1998), but the tendencies seem similar to those found in other languages and will not be considered further here.¹

¹ Gylfi suggests, for instance, that the ordering relations can be schematized as follows, although some of these tendencies are stronger than others (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:51–2):

3.1.1.2 The articles

As discussed in 1.1.2, there is no indefinite article in Icelandic. The definite article is usually suffixed, but a free-standing article can occur instead if there is an adjective in the noun phrase:²

(3.4)	rauður hestur	rauði hesturinn	hinn rauði hestur
	red horse	red(def.) horse-the	the red(def.) horse
	‘a red horse’	‘the red horse’	‘the red horse’

As already mentioned, the two articles are in complementary distribution and inherently definite modifiers such as demonstrative pronouns also typically preclude the suffixed definite article. The demonstrative pronoun *hinn* ‘the other’ is an exception to this as it requires a definite noun:

(3.5)						
a.	*þessi	rauði hesturinn	þessi	rauði hestur		
	this	red horse-the	this	red horse		
b.	hinn	rauði hesturinn	*hinn	rauði hestur	(out if <i>hinn</i> = ‘the other’) ³	
	the other	red horse-the	the other	red horse		

The interaction of the article with various modifiers will be discussed in some detail in section 3.2.1.

A possessive pronoun preceding a noun also precludes the suffixed definite article, but if the possessive pronoun follows the noun it modifies, then the noun typically bears the definite suffix. This is summarized in the simplified overview below:

Footnote 1 (*cont.*)

(i)	quality	>	size	>	shape	>	colour	>	origin
	fallegur		hár		kringlóttur		dökkur		bandarískur
	‘beautiful’		‘high’		‘round’		‘dark’		‘American’

² As pointed out in chapter 1, noun phrases with a definite (or weakly inflected) adjective modifying a noun with the suffixed article, such as *rauði hesturinn* have a restrictive reading whereas noun phrases containing the free-standing article, such as *hinn rauði hestur*, do not. As pointed out there, the free-standing article has a limited use, although it occurs in certain contexts, e.g. in poetry: *Hinn rammi safi rennur frjáls í gegn* ... lit. ‘The strong juice flows free through ...’. In addition, it is the natural choice for noun phrases like *hinn þekkti leikari Clint Eastwood* ‘the famous actor C.E.’ In such a context the suffixed article cannot be used at all: **þekkti leikarinn Clint Eastwood*.

³ Although the Icelandic free-standing article *hinn* and the demonstrative pronoun *hinn* ‘the other’ are homophonous for the most part, their neuter forms are different in S/A.sg. (the article is *hið*, the demonstrative pronoun is *hitt*). In addition, the demonstrative pronoun is normally stressed but the article never is.

(3.6)	impossible:	contrastive:	default:	formal:
	<i>poss + def. noun</i>	<i>poss + noun</i>	<i>def.noun + poss</i>	<i>noun + poss.</i>
	*mín bókin	mín bók	bókin mín	bók mín
	my book-the	my book	book-the my	book my

Here the first variant (possessive + definite noun) is impossible and the second (possessive + indefinite noun) will typically have a contrastive reading (e.g. ‘this is my book, not yours’). The third variant (definite noun + possessive) is the default one while the fourth variant (indefinite noun + possessive) usually sounds formal when the noun has a concrete meaning (like *bók*) but it is the default variant with abstract nouns like *hugmynd* ‘idea’, for instance: *Hugmynd! *Hugmyndin mín er að ...* ‘My idea is that ...’ (lit. ‘Idea/*Idea-the my is that ...’). There is more to this, however, as will be discussed in some detail in the [next section](#) (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b).

The definite article is normally not used on kinship terms or relational terms when these are used with possessive pronouns. Nouns referring to spouses seem to be an exception:

(3.7)	afi/*afinn minn	mamma/*mamman mín	bróðir/*bróðirinn minn	kona/konan mín
	‘my granddad’	‘my mom’	‘my brother’	‘my wife’

In the last example the variant without the article (*kona mín*) is more formal.

Similarly, proper names only exceptionally take the definite article:

- (3.8) a. Hér búa tveir Jónar. Annar Jóninn er frá Húsavík.
 here live two Johns one John-the is from Husavik.
 ‘Two Johns live here. One of the Johns is from Husavik.’
- b. Hann bjó með Helgu þegar hann var á Helgunni.
 he lived with Helga when he was on Helga-the
 ‘He lived with Helga when he was on the Helga.’

In the latter example the latter Helga would be the name of a ship – in such instances the definite article is often added colloquially.

The suffixed definite article also occurs on nouns referring to ‘the thing possessed’ in possessive constructions with (definite) genitive nouns as shown in the following summary:

(3.9)	impossible:	contrastive (at best):	default:	questionable:
	<i>noun(G) + def.noun</i>	<i>noun(G) + noun</i>	<i>noun + noun(G)</i>	<i>def.noun + noun(G)</i>
	*stelpunnar bókin	?stelpunnar bók	bók stelpunnar	?bókin stelpunnar
	girl-the(G) book-the	girl-the(G) book	book girl-the(G)	book-the girl-the(G)

Additional varieties show up in the case of proper names and kinship terms that have a similar function (*pabbi* ‘dad’, *mamma* ‘mom’, etc.) in the role of the (genitive) possessor:

(3.10)

impossible:	contrastive:	default:	formal:
<i>name(G) + def.noun</i>	<i>name(G) + noun</i>	<i>def.noun + pron. + name(G)</i>	<i>noun + name(G)</i>
*Jóns bókin	Jóns bók	bókin hans Jóns	bók Jóns
J’s(G) book-the	J’s(G) book	book-the his J’s(G)	book J’s(G)
	‘John’s book’	‘John’s book’	‘John’s book’
*pabba bókin	pabba bók	bókin hans pabba	bók pabba
dad’s(G) book-the	dad’s(G) book	book-the his dad’s(G)	book dad’s(G)
	‘dad’s book’	‘dad’s book’	‘dad’s book’

The (genitive) personal pronoun *hans* is sometimes referred to as the ‘proprial article’ (see, e.g., Delsing 1993a, 2003a; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b). As shown here, it occurs in the default form of possessive constructions with proper names and certain kinship terms. When it is used with such nouns in other instances, it has a special stylistic value:⁴

(3.11)	<i>hann pabbi</i>	<i>hún mamma</i>	<i>hann bróðir minn</i>	<i>hún María</i>
	he dad	she mom	he brother my	she Mary
	‘dad’	‘mom’	‘my brother’	‘Mary’

Additional combinations of personal pronouns and nouns also exist. The most interesting ones are listed in (3.12), where the second column illustrates the kind of ‘gapping’ analysis of the relevant types suggested by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2006b):

(3.12)	a. við	strákarnir
	we	the boys
	b. við Jón	= við [ég og Jón]
	we John	= we I and John
		‘John and I’
	c. þið	stelpurnar
	you(pl.)	the girls

⁴ Phrases like *hann pabbi*, *hún María* in Icelandic correspond at least partly to German phrases like *die Maria* (where a demonstrative pronoun (or a proprial article) is used with a proper name) and phrases like *ho Marit*, *han Ole* (lit. ‘she Marit, he Ole’) in Norwegian dialects. Similar phrases can also be found in Swedish dialects. In some of these languages/dialects such phrases have a special stylistic value, as they do in Icelandic, in other languages/dialects they are the general rule or obligatory, e.g. in Northern Norwegian dialects (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:67; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b; Delsing 1993a:54, 2003a).

- d. þið María = þið [~~þú~~—~~og~~ María]
 you(pl.) Mary = you(pl.) you(sg.) and Mary
 ‘you and Mary’
- e. þau hjónin
 they the couple
- f. þau María = þau [~~Jón~~—~~og~~ María]
 they Mary = they John and Mary
 ‘Mary and X’

The illustrative gapped examples (the ones with the overstrike) are meant to show how these phrases can mean what the English glosses say that they do. Obviously, the reference of the third person (plural neuter) pronoun *þau* ‘they’ would not be clear without some context, either a particular deictic situation or a discourse context. Hence *þau María* ‘they Mary’ basically means ‘Mary and X’, but the reference of this X would be clear from a context like the following, for instance (see also the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b, who refers to this construction as the ‘gapped proprial article construction’):

- (3.13) Jón hringdi. Þau María koma á morgun.
 John called they Mary come tomorrow
 ‘John called. He and Mary are coming tomorrow.’

We shall now consider possessive constructions in more detail.

3.1.1.3 The possessives

As illustrated above, it is useful to divide possessive constructions into a few classes, since they show partially different syntax. The most important classes are the following (this classification owes much to the insights of Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson’s paper 2005c):

- (3.14) a. constructions with a possessive pronoun (cf. (3.6): *bókin mín* ‘my book’, etc.).
 b. constructions with a common noun in the genitive (cf. (3.9): *bók stelpunnar* ‘the girl’s book’, etc.).
 c. constructions with a proper noun in the genitive (cf. (3.10): *bókin hans Jóns* ‘John’s book’, etc.).

Considering the first type first, it should be added that non-agreeing genitive forms of personal pronouns have the same distributional properties as agreeing possessive pronouns. This is illustrated below:

- (3.15) a. Hún tók bókina **mína/hans.** (default)
 she took book-the(Asg.f.) my(Asg.f.)/his(G)
- b. Hún stal **mínum/hans** penna. (contrastive)
 she stole my(Dsg.m.)/his(G) pen

- c. Hún tók bækur **mínar/hans.** (formal)
 she took books my(Apl.f.)/his(G)

Here the possessive constructions involve the inflecting and agreeing 1st person possessive pronoun *mín* ‘my’ on the one hand and the non-agreeing non-reflexive genitive form of the 3rd person pronoun *hann* (cf. the discussion in section 1.1.3). As mentioned in the preceding section, the version in (3.15a) is the default one, (3.15b) is slightly contrastive and (3.15c) is formal in instances of this sort, that is, if the noun in question refers to something concrete. In this respect, Icelandic differs from Danish and standard Swedish (but not Norwegian and some Swedish dialects). In Danish and standard Swedish a construction corresponding to (3.15b) would be the default variant and the other variants ungrammatical, as will be discussed in section 3.2.1.2 below.

As already mentioned, the acceptability of these possibilities varies somewhat, depending on the semantic class of the noun involved (see also Friðrik Magnússon 1984:100–1; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a:192–3). Sometimes the differences are rather subtle. Note the following, for instance (inspired by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c.):

- (3.16) a. Bók/Bókin mín um íslenska setningafræði fékk góða dóma.
 book/book-the my on Icelandic syntax got good reviews
 ‘My book on Icelandic syntax got good reviews.’
 b. Hvar er ?*bók/bókin mín um íslenska setningafræði?
 where is book/book-the my on Icelandic syntax
 ‘Where is my book on Icelandic syntax?’

In the first example, where *bók* ‘book’ obviously refers to a particular work, one could either use the indefinite or definite form, but the indefinite form seems quite odd when a particular copy of a book is being referred to, as in the second example.

In the illustration of possessive constructions with a common noun in the genitive in (3.9) above, an attempt was made to distinguish between contrastive, default and questionable variants (if we exclude the clearly ungrammatical one). These are repeated here with additional examples:

- (3.17) contrastive (at best): default: questionable:
- a. ?stelpunnar bók bók stelpunnar ?bókin stelpunnar
 girl-the(G) book book girl-the(G) book-the girl-the(G)
 ‘the girl’s book’ ‘the girl’s book’ ‘the girl’s book’
- b. ??hússins þak þak hússins *þakið hússins
 house-the(G) roof roof house-the(G) roof-the house-the(G)
 ‘the roof of the house’ ‘the roof of the house’

As shown here, the semantics of the genitive noun (the possessor) plays some role here. Thus while the first variant in the a-example, *?stelpunnar bók*, could be used contrastively, the corresponding variant of the b-example, *??hússins þak*, sounds much more far fetched.⁵ And while the third variant of the a-example, *?bókin stelpunnar*, can occur (possibly dialectally), the third variant of the b-example, **þakið hússins*, seems completely out.

Instead of this last variant, **þakið hússins*, a prepositional phrase would normally be used. This possibility is mainly restricted to expressions having to do with body parts and other ‘parts’ of something, or inalienable possession of various kinds. In such instances there is often (still) some logic to (or semantic motivation of) the preposition selected (e.g. the choice between ‘on’ and ‘in’) and in that sense Icelandic has not developed a generalized possessive preposition. These prepositional phrases usually alternate with genitive constructions that tend to be more formal:⁶

(3.18)

	colloquial:			more formal:			
a.	þakið	á	húsinu	sætin í	bílnum	þak hússins	sæti bílsins
	roof-the	on	house-the(D)	seats-the	in car-the(D)	roof house-the(G)	seats car-the(G)
	‘the roof of the house’			‘the seats of the car’			
b.	hárið	á	henni	tennurnar í	henni	hár hennar	tennur hennar
	hair-the	on	her	teeth-the	in her(D)	hair her(G)	teeth her(G)
	‘her hair’			‘her teeth’			

⁵ Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1993a:188–9) stars examples of this kind: **málfræðingsins fyrirlestur* lit. ‘linguist-the(G) lecture’, **Péturs fyrirlestur* lit. ‘Peter(G) lecture’. I find the second example fine if *Péturs* has a contrastive stress – and in fact much easier to get than *?stelpunnar bók* above. Oddly enough, *málfræðingsins fyrirlestur* seems still harder to get. We will return to this issue in section 3.2.1.2 below.

⁶ As the reader will have noted, many of the examples in (3.18) involve nouns referring to body parts: *hár* ‘hair’, *tennur* ‘teeth’, *nef* ‘nose’, *augu* ‘eyes’. Such nouns have standardly had the indefinite form in possessive expressions like the ones given above (*hár hennar*, etc.). There is some evidence that the use of the definite form is becoming more common in constructions of this sort, i.e. *hárið hennar* (lit. ‘the hair her’), *nefið mitt* (lit. ‘the nose my’), etc. Previously, such forms were characteristic of a special style or even ‘motherese’ (the speech of mothers to children). Note, however, that they would be quite normal for everybody in contexts like the following (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:78):

- (i) [Proud parents looking at their newborn baby:]
 Hún er með **nefið** þitt og **augun** mín.
 she is with nose-the your and eyes-the mine
 ‘She has your nose and my eyes.’

c. nefið á mér augun í mér nef mitt augu mín
 nose-the on me(D) eyes-the in me nose my(poss.) eyes my(poss.)

As seen here, there is no general ‘possessive preposition’ in Icelandic on a par with English *of*, for instance.⁷

Possessive expressions involving proper nouns or nouns that have a similar function (*pabbi* ‘dad’, *mamma* ‘mom’) were illustrated in (3.10) above. Here the so-called proprial article occurred in the default variant, as shown again below (where % means ‘dialectally acceptable’):

(3.19)

formal:	dialectal:	default:
a. bók Margrétar	%bókin Margrétar	bókin hennar Margrétar
book Margret(G)	book-the Margret(G)	book-the her(G) Margret(G)
‘Margret’s book’		
b. bók pabba	%bókin pabba	bókin hans pabba
book dad(G)	book-the dad(G)	book-the his(G) dad(G)
‘dad’s book’		

Here the first version (*bók Margrétar*, *bók pabba*) is again slightly formal, the second one (the one with the definite form of the noun referring to the thing possessed) only dialectally acceptable (*bókin Margrétar*, *bókin pabba*) and the default variant for most speakers is the last one, where the possessive noun is modified by a personal pronoun, as it were.

Finally, a ‘possessive dative’ can be used for inalienable possessions but only following a prepositional phrase. This dative is quite formal, literary or even poetic, and can alternate with other possessive constructions (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:217–19):

(3.20)

poetic:	formal:	colloquial:
a. um háls honum	um háls hans	um hálsinn á honum
around neck him(D)	around neck his(G)	around neck-the on him(D)
‘around his neck’		
b. í hjarta þér	í hjarta þínu	í hjartanu í þér
in heart you(D)	in heart your(poss.)	in heart-the in you
‘in your heart’		

⁷ In Faroese the preposition *hjá* (originally ‘at’) is used in many possessive constructions (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:62ff., passim): *hundurin hjá mær* ‘my dog’ (lit. ‘the dog with me’), although normally not to indicate inalienable possessions or parts of something (cf., e.g., **takið hjá húsinum* lit. ‘the roof at/of the house’). There is some evidence that the same preposition is developing in this direction in Icelandic, cf., e.g., *Hugmyndin hjá mér var sú að . . .* ‘My idea was to . . .’ (lit. ‘the idea at/of me was . . .’).

Interestingly, this possessive dative is only possible when a prepositional phrase precedes it:

- (3.21) a. Háls hans var grannur. Hjarta þitt er stórt.
 neck his(poss.) was slim heart your(poss.) is big
- b. Hálsinn á honum var grannur. Hjartað í þér er stórt
 neck-the on him(D) was slim heart-the in you(D) is big
 'His neck was slim.' 'Your heart is big.'
- c. *Háls honum var grannur. *Hjarta þér er stórt.
 neck him(D) was slim heart you(D) is big

As we will see below, some of the possessive variants have interested theoretical linguists in recent years whereas others have gone relatively unnoticed.

3.1.2 Order within the (extended) verb phrase

3.1.2.1 Objects and particles

As originally observed by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1990a) (and by Johnson 1991 for English), the distribution of complements of simplex verbs and the distribution of complements of particle verbs is strikingly similar in many respects (cf. also the discussion of object positions and Object Shift in sections 2.1.5 and 2.2.4). The similarities include the ones listed in (3.22)–(3.23) (the first example in each pair contains a regular transitive verb plus a sentence adverb, the second a particle verb):

- (3.22) Full NP objects can precede a sentence adverb and a particle but they do not have to, whereas unstressed pronominal objects have to:
- a. Jón las ekki bókina.
 J. read not the book
 Jón tók upp bókina.
 John picked up the book
- b. Jón las **bókina** ekki.
 Jón tók **bókina** upp.
- c. *Jón las ekki hana.
 J. read not it.
 *Jón tók upp hana.
 John picked up it
- d. Jón las **hana** ekki.
 John read it not
 Jón tók **hana** upp.
 John picked it up

- (3.23) Prepositional complements and clausal complements can precede neither sentence adverbs nor particles.⁸
- a. Jón talaði ekki við konurnar.
J. talked not to the women
Jón hélt til hjá systrunum.
John held to with the sisters
'John stayed with the sisters.' [e.g., had room and board there]
- b. *Jón talaði við konurnar ekki.
*Jón hélt hjá systrunum til.
- c. Jón sagði ekki [að María hefði farið].
John said not that Mary had left
'John didn't say that Mary had left.'
Jón tók fram [að María hefði farið].
John took forth that Mary had left.
'John explicitly mentioned that Mary had left.'
- d. *Jón sagði [að María hefði farið] ekki.
*Jón tók [að María hefði farið] fram.

Despite these similarities, there is a crucial difference between the Object Shift involving simplex verbs and the 'shift' of the object in particle constructions, as shown by Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996:430), among others: the apparent shift of the object of particle verbs is not dependent on movement of the main verb the way 'normal' OS is (cf. the discussion in sections 2.1.5 and 2.2.4). Thus the 'shifted' versions of (3.22) are just as good with a finite auxiliary and a non-finite main verb in situ, as illustrated in (3.24):

- (3.24) a. Jón hefur tekið **bókina** upp. (cf. (3.22b))
J. has picked book-the up
'J. has picked up the book.'

⁸ In addition, adverbial NPs, e.g. non-complement adverbial accusatives, cannot shift around sentence adverbs (i.e., they do not undergo Object Shift of the kind discussed in 2.2.4 above), but they seem somewhat better before verbal particles in Icelandic, if not perfect (they are apparently worse in English, cf. Johnson 1991:594):

- (i) a. Jón talaði aldrei allan daginn.
John spoke never the whole day(A)
'John never spoke the whole day.'
Jón kastaði upp allan daginn.
'John threw up the whole day(A).'
- b. *Jón talaði **allan daginn** aldrei.
??Jón kastaði **allan daginn** upp.

- b. Jón hefur tekið **hana** upp. (cf. (3.22d))
 J. has picked her up
 ‘J. has picked it up.’

We will return to this construction in section 3.2.2.5 below.

3.1.2.2 Direct and indirect objects

The so-called indirect object of ditransitive verbs (frequently a goal) normally precedes the direct one (see, e.g., Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987; Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b, 2005a:404–5; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:327). The most common case marking pattern for ditransitive verbs is NDA, that is, a **nominative** subject, a **dative** indirect object and an **accusative** direct object, but other patterns can also be found (cf. 4.1.2):

- (3.25) a. María gaf Haraldi bókina.
 Mary(N) gave Harold(D) book-the(A)
 b. Hann sýndi strákunum bátinn.
 he(N) showed boys-the(D) boat-the(A)
 c. Dómarinn svipti lögmanninn málflytningaréttindunum.
 judge-the(N) deprived lawyer-the(A) licence-the(D)
 ‘The judge revoked the lawyer’s licence.’

For a relatively small number of ditransitive verbs it is possible to reverse the ordering of the indirect and direct object (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:103–4; Holmberg 1991b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:294–5, *passim*; Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:415ff. and references cited there), but the reversed order is always marked. Some examples are given in (3.26). In each case the second variant is the ‘shifted’ (i.e., non-default) variant). As indicated by the English glosses, the shifted variants of the a- and b-sentences correspond roughly to the English variants where the goal follows the direct object, except that in English the goal would be prepositional (*to the king*, *to the parents*):

- (3.26) a. Bóndinn gaf konunginum bjarndýrið.
 the farmer gave the king(D) the bear(A)
 ‘The farmer gave the king(D) the bear(A).’
 Bóndinn gaf **bjarndýrið** **konunginum**.
 ‘The farmer gave the bear to the king.’
 b. Hjúkrunarkonan sýndi foreldrunum ungbörnin.
 the nurse showed the parents(D) the babies(A)
 ‘The nurse showed the parents the babies.’

- | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|
| | Hjúkrunarkonan | sýndi | ungbörnin | foreldrunum. |
| | 'The nurse showed the babies to the parents.' | | | |
| c. | Sjórinn | svipti | konuna | manninum. |
| | the sea | deprived | the woman(A) | the husband(D) |
| | 'The ocean deprived the woman of her husband.' | | | |
| | *Sjórinn | svipti | manninum | konuna. |

In designing 'fair' examples for testing this, it is important to control for various features. Definiteness, heaviness and even semantic features like animacy may play a role. Thus the following can be contrasted with the shifted versions in (3.26):

- (3.27) a. ??Bóndinn gaf bjarndýr konunginum.
'The farmer gave a bear to the king.'
- b. ?Sjórinn svipti manninum
[gömlu konuna sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið].
'The sea deprived of her husband
the old woman who everybody felt so sorry for.'
- c. (?)Ég gaf bókina Jóni.
I gave the book(A) John(D)
'I gave the book to John.'

Here the a-example has an indefinite direct object and it is not as good as the corresponding variant with a definite object in (3.26).⁹ Conversely, the b-example here has a heavy indirect (accusative) object and the example seems passable, although the corresponding variant in (3.26c) is bad. Finally, the c-example in (3.27) has an inanimate direct object and it seems slightly worse than the corresponding variant in (3.26), which has an animate direct object.

In addition, pronominalization of the indirect object seems to make it very difficult to shift the direct object around it, as it were, even if the direct object is also a pronoun:

- (3.28) a. Bóndinn gaf honum bjarndýrið.
the farmer gave him(D) the bear(A)
- *Bóndinn gaf bjarndýrið honum.
the farmer gave the bear him
- b. Bóndinn gaf honum það.
the farmer gave him(D) it(A)
- *Bóndinn gaf það honum.

⁹ This suggests that discourse factors (old/new information, focus . . .) play a role in determining the preferred ordering of objects of verbs that allow inversion, but this has not been investigated in detail.

The features pointed out here have all been controlled for in (3.26) but yet there is a clear contrast between the reversibility of the objects of verbs like *gefa* ‘give’ and *sýna* ‘show’ on the one hand (the a- and b-examples) and the objects of *svipta* ‘deprive’ on the other. This supports the claim commonly made in the literature that only some double object verbs allow the inversion of the objects.¹⁰ We shall return to this issue in section 3.2.2.2 below.

3.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

3.2.1 *Noun Phrase architecture and the order of constituents*

3.2.1.0 Introduction

In the preceding sections I have sometimes used the term ‘the extended noun phrase’ when referring to a NP containing various modifiers. The structure of this type of phrase (or phrases) in Scandinavian has been extensively studied, especially since Delsing’s dissertation (1993a). This work has led to a wealth of papers, anthologies (see, e.g., *Studia Linguistica* 47, 1993; Vangsnæs et al. 2003) and even monographs (e.g. Julien 2005). It is impossible to do justice to this work here, but I will nevertheless try to outline some of the descriptive and theoretical issues that have been discussed.

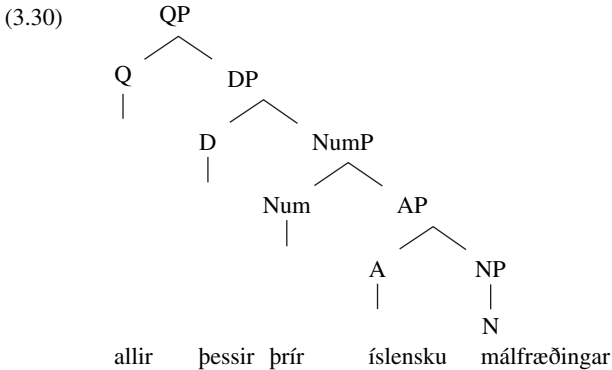
In a non-restrictive phrase structure framework one might suggest that the structure of the extended noun phrase containing several modifiers could be something like the following, where the N represents the modified main word (head) of the NP (cf. also (3.1)):

(3.29)	[_{NP}	QP	DP	NumP	AP	N]
		allir	þessir	þrír	íslensku	málfræðingar	
		all	these	three	Icelandic	linguists	

Then one could state (e.g. in the form of a phrase structure rule or by means of some other ordering restrictions) that the quantifier phrase (QP) had to precede the determiner phrase (DP), the number phrase (NumP) and the adjective phrase (AP), and all these modifiers should precede the noun (N). That would obviously be a brute force way of stating the facts and would not offer anything in the way of a theoretical account or explanation. In the widely accepted binary branching schema (as implemented for instance in the X'-schema of Chomsky 1986a and much later work) this kind of analysis is

¹⁰ As shown by Dehé (2004), many speakers find the ‘inverted’ word order quite marked, even with verbs like *gefa* ‘give’ and *sýna* ‘show’, which are typically cited as ‘inversion’ verbs.

obviously not available. In such a framework, something like the following would however be a legitimate representation of the phrase in (3.29), with each ‘modifying’ phrase taking the next one as its complement and the lowest one taking the NP itself as its complement:¹¹



One could then describe the fact that the demonstrative pronoun (or determiner) *þessir* ‘this’ has to follow the quantifier *allir* ‘all’ as a kind of a selectional restriction or subcategorization phenomenon: quantifiers can take DPs as their complement (*allir þessir ...*) but determiners cannot take QPs as their complement (**þessir allir ...*) whereas they can take NumPs as their complement (*þessir þrír ...*). Similarly, numerals can take APs as their complements (*þrír íslenskir ...* ‘three Icelandic ...’) but adjectives cannot be followed by NumPs (**íslenskir þrír ...*).

As many linguists have noted, an analysis along the lines suggested here is too simplistic for various reasons.¹² First, it is not the case that quantifiers can only take DPs as their complement nor that determiners can only take NumPs as their complements. The (crude) generalization for the phrases in (3.29) is rather the one given in (3.31):

- (3.31) For each of the phrases ‘modifying’ NP in a structure of the kind illustrated in (3.29), it holds that it can be immediately followed by any of the phrases to the right of it but not by the ones to the left of it.

¹¹ Universal quantifiers like *allir* ‘all’ precede demonstrative pronouns as indicated, whereas quantifier-like expressions like *margir* ‘many’ follow them, which is why Abney (1987) proposed a structure with QP below DP. The distribution of quantifiers and numerals will be discussed in section 3.2.1.4 below.

¹² It is not being maintained here that anybody has suggested exactly this simple analysis of Icelandic (or Scandinavian or any other) NPs. It is merely presented in this simple fashion in order to reveal some of the facts that need to be accounted for. For extensive discussions of the structure of the extended NP where Icelandic data play a major role, see, e.g., Friðrik Magnússon 1984; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a, 2006b; Vangsnes 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004.

Observe the examples in (3.32)–(3.33) for instance:

- (3.32) a. þessir þrír íslensku málfræðingar
 these three Icelandic linguists
 Dem. Num. Adj. Noun
- b. þessir íslensku málfræðingar
 Dem. Adj. Noun
- c. þessir málfræðingar
 Dem. Noun
- (3.33) a. *íslensku þrír þessir málfræðingar
 Icelandic three these linguists
 Adj. Num. Dem. Noun
- b. *íslensku þessir málfræðingar
 Adj. Dem. Noun

This is, of course, the way it works in English and many other languages too, and facts of this sort might seem more similar to scopal relations than to subcategorization phenomena. Nevertheless, they have often been described in subcategorization terms. One way of doing that is to say that the determiner selects a NumP and when no overt numeral is present, we still have a NumP but it has an empty head. Such a claim would have more explanatory force if one could find some independent evidence for the presence of the Num-head even when it does not contain anything numeral. An added twist in this story is the existence of sentences like (3.34a), where a numeral comes at the end of the extended phrase, much as a possessive normally does in Icelandic, as shown in (3.34b) (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a; Vangsnæs 1999, 2001, 2004):

- (3.34) a. íslensku bækurnar þrjár
 Icelandic books-the three
 ‘the three Icelandic books’
- b. íslensku bækurnar mínar
 Icelandic books-the my
 ‘my Icelandic books’

Second, the noun in an ‘extended noun phrase’ of the sort under discussion is intuitively the main word of the whole construction and the extended phrase is thus in some sense a noun phrase. On the one hand, it seems that the extended NP as a whole, be it a QP, DP, NumP or AP in the sense of the diagram in (3.29), has by and large the distributional properties of a NP. If a given head, say a verb or a preposition, subcategorizes for a NP then it does not care whether it is the smallest NP or one of the extended variants. Note

also that the case marking shows up on each and every element in the extended NP:

- (3.34) a. Ég þekki [málfræðinga].
I know linguists(A)
- b. Ég þekki [íslenska málfræðinga]
I know Icelandic(A) linguists(A)
- c. Ég þekki [þrjá íslenska málfræðinga]
I know three(A) Icelandic(A) linguists(A)
- d. Ég þekki [þessa þrjá íslensku málfræðinga]
I know these(A) three(A) Icelandic(A) linguists(A)
- e. Ég þekki [alla þessa þrjá íslensku málfræðinga]
I know all(A) these(A) three(A) Icelandic(A) linguists(A)

In addition, all the modifiers of the extended NP agree with the N in number, gender and case, as already mentioned, and under common assumptions about agreement this might seem to suggest that the N is the head of this extended noun phrase.¹³ Some agreement facts are illustrated in (3.35)–(3.36) (for an extensive overview of Icelandic agreement, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a, 2004a):

- (3.35) a. Málfræðingar koma oft til Íslands.
linguists (Npl.m.) come often to Iceland
'Linguists often come to Iceland.'
- b. Allir þessir þrír málfræðingar koma oft til Íslands.
all(Npl.m.) these (Npl.m.) three (Npl.m.) linguists(Npl.m.) come often to Iceland
'All these three linguists often come to Iceland.'

- (3.36) a. Málfræðingum leiðist í bókmenntatímum.
linguists(Dpl.m.) get-bored in literature-classes
'Linguists get bored in literature classes.'
- b. Öllum þessum þremur málfræðingum leiðist ...
all(Dpl.m.) these (Dpl.m.) three (Dpl.m.) linguists (Dpl.m.) get-bored ...

Here we see that the modifiers in the extended NPs in the b-examples occur in the same case, number and gender as the bare noun in the corresponding a-examples.

¹³ Note, however, that the N-feature itself of the noun does not get 'copied' on to the agreeing elements, only the gender, number and case features (for some discussion, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004b). As will be discussed presently, it has been argued that determiners head NPs, i.e. that (extended) NPs are really DPs.

Third, there is an added complication involving the demonstrative pronoun and other determiners (including the article): as we saw in section 3.1.1.2, a definite determiner triggers a definite form of the adjective modifying the noun. This is reviewed in (3.37) – and note that it does not matter whether a numeral intervenes between the determiner and the adjective or not (but numerals like *þrír* ‘three’ do not have a definite (or weak) form):

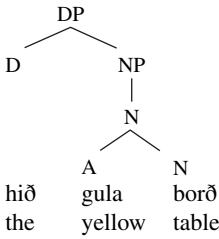
- (3.37) a. Allir íslenskir málfræðingar eru gáfaðir.
 all Icelandic(Npl.indef.) linguists(Npl.indef.) are smart(Npl.m.)
- b. Allir þessir (þrír) íslensku málfræðingar eru gáfaðir.
 all these (three) Icelandic(Npl.def.) linguists(Npl.indef) are smart(Npl.m.)

Having made these observations, we can now review some theoretical and comparative issues having to do with the structure of the NP. Although Abney (1987) is usually credited with the proposal that the (extended) NP really is a DP in the sense that a determiner is the real head of the (extended) NP,¹⁴ a similar proposal had already been made by Hellan (1986a) for Norwegian. Hellan’s main arguments had to do with agreement phenomena in Norwegian NPs and the distribution of definiteness markers. Subsequently the DP analysis of (extended) NPs has been applied to various Scandinavian languages and dialects in a number of guises, for example at the workshop on Scandinavian NPs (see, e.g., Holmberg 1992 and *Studia Linguistica* 47.2, 1993).¹⁵ Delsing’s dissertation (1993a) on the internal structure of the Scandinavian NP has been very influential and a large part of Vangsnes’ (1999) dissertation is also devoted to the structure of the Scandinavian NP in this kind of framework. I cannot go into all the descriptive and comparative issues that work on the Scandinavian NP has raised but we will have a look at a few where similarities and differences between Icelandic, the other Scandinavian languages and English raise interesting questions. For a much more detailed comparison of NP structures in Scandinavia the reader is once again referred to Delsing (1993a, 2003a), Vangsnes (1999, 2001, 2003, 2004), Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1993a, 2006b) and Julien (2002b, 2005), for instance.

¹⁴ For a general discussion of the DP hypothesis see Bernstein 2001 and Longobardi 2001.

¹⁵ This particular issue of *Studia Linguistica* is devoted to ‘Determiners and Adjectives’ in Scandinavian. It contains a selection of the papers published in Holmberg 1992, including a paper by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson on the structure of the Icelandic NP.

(3.40)



Here the attributive adjective *gula* is head-adjoined to the noun *borð* and the variant *gula borð-ið* would then be derived by adjoining the complex head $[_N \text{ gula borð}]$ to the functional head *hið*, along the lines illustrated in (3.39).

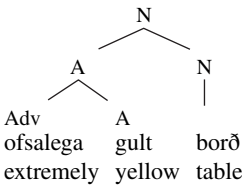
Second, observe the following type of facts originally pointed out by Friðrik Magnússon (1984:95):

(3.41) **hin** þrjú gula borð gula borð**in** þrjú *þrjú gula borð**in**
 the three yellow tables yellow tables-the three three yellow tables-the

As shown here, the free-standing article precedes the numeral (*þrjú*) in the extended NP, but if the article is suffixed, then the adjective and the definite noun (*gula borðin*) precede the numeral. This is predicted if the adjective undergoes head movement to D together with the noun. Under the rightward movement analysis discussed by Friðrik Magnússon, the numeral would have to be lowered together with the article.

Note also that if attributive adjectives are always head-adjoined to the nouns they modify, then their own modifiers cannot be specifiers of an AP as assumed by Abney (cf. the diagram in (3.40)). Rather, the (degree) adverbs modifying attributive adjectives will in turn have to be head-adjoined to them, as pointed out by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1993a:195):

(3.42)



If this is correct, then it should be possible to move a complex head like the one in (3.42) and adjoin it to a definite article (cf. also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a:195):

(3.43) **hið** ofsalega gula borð ofsalega gula borð**ið**
 the extremely yellow table extremely yellow table-the

The facts considered so far seem to fit rather nicely into this kind of an account. As usual, however, they are a bit more complex than one might want them to be and there are also some theoretical difficulties with this analysis.

First, recall that we have very extensive agreement in the extended NP in Icelandic. Consider the following, for instance:

- (3.44) Alla nýja stráka vantaði í tímunn.
 all(Apl.m.) new(Apl.m.) boys(Apl.m.) lacked in class
 ‘All new boys were missing from class.’

Here both the quantifier *alla* ‘all’ and the adjective *nýja* ‘new’ agree with the noun *stráka* ‘boys’ in case, number and gender. According to Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson’s analysis (1993a), some of this agreement would be local head-head agreement of some sort (the agreement between the noun and the adjective) and some of it might have to be taken care of by movement at LF, triggering Spec-Head agreement (1993a:187). Admittedly, it is not entirely simple to account for this agreement under current theories, as we shall see in section 3.2.1.3 below.

In addition, the attributive adjectives can seem quite complex. Consider the following (see, e.g., Delsing 1993a:164 for examples of the first type – and the discussion in Vangsnes 2001, 2004, for instance):

- (3.45) a. **hinar** [NP [þriggja metra] löngu slöngur]
 the three(G) metre(G) long hoses
 b. [DP [þriggja metra löngu slöngur]_i **-(hi)nar** [NP t_i]
 three(G) metre(G) long hoses-the
 ‘the three metre long hoses’
 c. Þetta er ofsalega gult borð.
 this is extremely yellow table
 d. **Ofsalega** er þetta ___ gult borð!
 extremely is this ___ yellow table
 ‘This is an extremely yellow table!’

In (3.45a, b) we have an instance of a measure phrase (*þriggja metra* ‘three metre’) which is in some sense governed by the adjective (*löngu*) and thus shows up in the genitive. As the b-example shows, under a N-to-D analysis one would have to assume that the whole complex *þriggja metra löngu slöngur* is a simple N, which does not seem very plausible. In (3.45c, d) the adjective is modified by the adverb *ofsalega* ‘extremely’, which would have to be a head under Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson’s analysis.¹⁶ As shown in the d-example,

¹⁶ An intriguing and unexplained difference between Swedish and Icelandic is illustrated in the following (cf. also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a:195):

this modifying adverb can be fronted. Now if this is an instance of Topicalization, then the modifying adverb *ofsalega* should not be a head since Topicalization is normally assumed to move maximal phrases (e.g. to SpecCP) and not heads. While this kind of fronting is admittedly very restricted (it mainly applies to complex adverbs formed by *-lega* ‘-ly’), this suggests that at least some modifying adverbs are not head-adjoined to adjectival heads but are either maximal adjuncts or specifiers of AP.¹⁷ It should be noted here that Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson actually assumes (1993a:195) that *some* adjectives head their own projections, namely predicative adjectives, since they ‘are theta-role assigners’. While there does not seem to be any obvious difference between predicative adjectives and attributive ones with respect to possible modification, predicative adjectives act more

Footnote 16 (*cont.*)

- (i) a. en [sin hustru trogen] man (Sw)
 a his wife faithful man
 ‘a man faithful to his wife’
- b. *[konu sinni trúr] / *[trúr konu sinni] maður (Ic)
 wife his(D) faithful faithful wife his(D) man

As shown here, adjectives taking NP complements (and assigning case to them) can occur in the usual prenominal position in Swedish but not in Icelandic. In Icelandic it is possible, on the other hand, to get such adjectives in postnominal position (cf. also Delsing 1993a:194):

- (ii) maður [trúr konu sinni]
 man faithful wife his(D)
 ‘a man faithful to his wife’

English is apparently like Icelandic in this respect.

¹⁷ Some linguists believe that this kind of fronting should not exist at all, e.g. because it would violate the so-called Left Branch Condition first discussed by Ross 1967. But violations of this constraint are known to exist, as Ross himself pointed out (see also Bošković 2005). The kind of fronting mentioned in the text also occurs in contexts like the following (cf. also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1996b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:135):

- (i) a. Hann söng hræðilega illa.
 he sang terribly badly
- b. **Hræðilega** söng hann — illa.
 terribly sang he — badly.
- (ii) a. Þú stoppar hvað lengi?
 you stay how long?
- b. **Hvað** stoppar þú — lengi?
 how stop you — long
 ‘How long are you going to stay?’

like verbal heads than attributive adjectives do in that they can take dative NPs¹⁸ and PPs as complements:

- (3.46) a. Hún er lík Haraldi.
 she is similar Harold(D)
 'She resembles Harold.'
- b. Hann er hræddur við Virginíu.
 he is afraid of Virginia(A)

Leaving adjectives aside for the moment and returning to the determiners (the structural properties of attributive adjectives will be discussed again in section 3.2.1.2), we might note that Halldór does not state explicitly what triggers the alleged N-to-D movement. In a restrictive theory of movement one would like to know, and it is interesting to note that this movement is obligatory if there is no adjective present:

- (3.47) *hið borð borðið
 the table table-the

Facts of this sort raise some difficult questions, for example with respect to acquisition for various reasons. First, there is no indefinite article in Icelandic and hence the 'article position' is presumably much less prominent than in most other Germanic languages. Second, the free-standing article has a rather restricted use, as described above. Third, phrases containing the free-standing article are usually not synonymous with corresponding phrases containing the suffixed one, as we have seen (the suffixed article normally yielding a restrictive reading but the free-standing one not). Hence one might wonder how the child acquiring Icelandic finds out that the article 'lives' in a determiner phrase above the noun, the adjective and the numerals and that the noun 'moves' there in order to be marked for definiteness.¹⁹ Unless the child

¹⁸ In Old Norse one can find genitive complements of adjectives of the following type:

- (i) Konungsgarður er þröngur brottfarar.
 king's palace is narrow departure(G)
 lit. 'The king's palace is narrow with respect to departure', i.e., 'Once you become a member of the court, it is difficult to leave.'

Comparable examples are only found in fixed expressions in the modern language (e.g. *erfiður viðureignar*(G), lit. 'difficult with respect to dealings', i.e., 'difficult to deal with'). Accusative complements of adjectives do not seem to exist at all.

¹⁹ It might be interesting to look at Icelandic acquisition data from this point of view. Since Icelandic is the only Scandinavian language that does not have an indefinite article, it should be interesting to compare the acquisition of the determiner systems

is aided by some universal principles in the discovery of the movement analysis, one might think that a morphological analysis would be just as plausible, namely one where the suffixation of the definite article is a morphological process in some sense. What that would mean exactly will obviously depend on the morphological model assumed and I will outline one such analysis here for the sake of concreteness.

Hankamer and Mikkelsen (2002, henceforth H&M) argue for a morphological analysis of definite nouns in Danish. Because definite NPs in Danish have much in common with their Icelandic counterparts, and also because the account that H&M propose is relatively theory-neutral and accessible, it is useful to consider how this analysis could be adapted to Icelandic. To summarize in general terms, H&M assume a morphological process (the definiteness rule or D rule) that ‘takes a noun, combines it with the definite suffix and yields a determiner’²⁰ resulting in a non-branching DP where the definite noun is a determiner head, whereas an indefinite non-marked noun would head a NP:²¹

(3.48)	DP	N
	D'	N'
	D	N
	hesten	hest
	horse-the	‘horse’

Footnote 19 (*cont.*)

in the Scandinavian languages. Moreover, Icelandic and Danish differ from the other Scandinavian languages with respect to the so-called ‘double definiteness’ as illustrated above, which also should make comparative acquisition studies in this area interesting.

²⁰ Hankamer and Mikkelsen (2002, n. 13) maintain that there is ‘ample evidence that the postnominal definiteness marker is an ordinary suffix, and not, for example, a clitic’ and cite results of the tests that are meant to distinguish between suffixes and clitics according to Zwicky and Pullum 1983.

²¹ Somewhat similar ideas can be found elsewhere in the literature, i.e. ideas suggesting that the suffixed article (such as the *-en* in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, *-inn* in Icelandic) has a different categorial status in the Scandinavian languages. Thus Julien (2005) proposes that Danish *-en* is a D-head whereas, say, the Norwegian *-en* is not. In a similar vein, Vangnes (2003:137ff.) suggests two Scandinavian dialect groups with respect to the nature of the definiteness marker. In one group the structure of a definite noun will be [N+SUFF]+DEF, with a definiteness suffix separate from the plural suffix, for instance. In the other group the corresponding structure will be [N+SUFF], where the suffix can simultaneously mark definiteness, number etc. Icelandic and Danish would be of the first type, other Scandinavian languages and dialects typically of the second, according to Vangnes.

Thus the operation they assume is very much like Merge in minimalist terms (cf. Chomsky 1993 and later work), except that the D rule is supposed to be morphological rather than syntactic. To support that claim, H&M cite a number of properties that should characterize a morphological rather than a syntactic rule, such as sensitiveness to morphological make-up of words. In addition they point out several properties of definite nouns in Danish that would seem surprising if they were derived by an N-to-D movement rule along the lines described above and proposed by Delsing (1993a), for instance. Since some of these also hold for definite nouns in Icelandic, it is of some comparative interest to list them here ('+' means 'true' and '-' means 'false'):

(3.49)	Danish	Icelandic
a. The free-standing definite article and the suffixed definite article are in complementary distribution	+	+
b. When no adjective is present, only postnominal definiteness marking is possible.	+	+
c. Definite nouns (Da. <i>hesten</i> , Ic. <i>hesturinn</i> 'the horse') do not co-occur with attributive adjectives.	+	-

The statements in (3.49a, b) have already been under discussion whereas the difference referred to in (3.49c) is illustrated below:

(3.50)	Da.	den	røde	hest	*røde	hesten
	Ic.	hinn	rauði	hestur	rauði	hesturinn
		the	red	horse	red	horse-the

To account for the complementary distribution of the two articles, H&M maintain that there is only one D-position in the syntax and since the free-standing article and the definite noun are both Ds, only one of them can occur and neither can take (the other as) a DP complement. To account for the fact that in the absence of adjectives only the postnominal definite article is possible, they resort to the so-called 'blocking effects' well known in morphology and extended here to the blocking of phrasal constructions. Referring to work by Poser (1992), they argue that when a word-formation process and a phrase-forming syntactic process compete for the expression of exactly the same morphological category, the word-formation process wins and the phrasal construction is blocked. Thus since the phrase **den hest* in Danish would express the same morphological category as the lexical formation *hesten*, the lexical formation blocks the phrasal one.²²

²² A parallel example of blocking might be the expression of degree by suffixes on the one hand and by auxiliary words on the other: in Icelandic only indeclinable adjectives express degree by the auxiliary words *meira* 'more' and *mest* 'most',

To account for the ungrammaticality of **rode hesten* in Danish (cf. (3.50)), H&M claim that attributive adjectives adjoin to NPs and not to DPs. Since definite nouns are DPs and not NPs, according to their analysis, they cannot take attributive adjectives. Now since definite nouns in Icelandic behave in most respects like definite nouns in Danish, for example with respect to the facts illustrated in (3.50a, b), we might want to adopt H&M's account and analyse definite nouns in Icelandic as DPs. The problem with that is that H&M's account of the ungrammaticality of **rode hesten* would make the wrong prediction for the corresponding construction in Icelandic, *rauði hesturinn*, which is fine. Since the distribution of attributive adjectives is in other ways rather similar in Icelandic and Danish (they cannot modify personal pronouns in either language,²³ which would follow if such pronouns are DPs, as suggested by H&M, and adjectives cannot adjoin to or function as the specifiers of DPs), it seems unlikely that we should need two quite distinct analyses of attributive adjectives in Icelandic and Danish. A transfer of the H&M account would, however, require this.

Another difference in the distribution of articles in Icelandic and Danish has to do with the free-standing article: in Danish the free-standing article can occur with nouns that are modified by a relative clause but in Icelandic it cannot:

(3.51)

- a. Den hest der vandt løbet ... (Da = (52) in Hankamer and Mikkelsen 2002)
 b. *Hinn hestur sem vann hlaupið ... (Ic)
 the horse that won race-the
 'The horse that won the race ...'

As H&M point out, the *den* in (3.51a) can be the unstressed article *den* and does not have to be the stressed demonstrative *den*.²⁴

Although it is frequently assumed that there is a single projection DP and thus a single D-head that can either be filled by a free-standing article or a

Footnote 22 (cont.)

e.g. *meira hissa* 'more surprised', *mest hissa* 'most surprised' whereas other adjectives use suffixes and this possibility seems to block the use of the auxiliary words: *rikari* 'richer', *?*meira rikur* lit. 'more rich', *rikastur* 'richest', *?*mest rikur* lit. 'most rich'. The situation is similar in English, as Poser (1992) points out. In Swedish, on the other hand, some adjectives can either have comparative suffixes or use *mer(a)* and *mest*: *en mera bortskämd/bortskämdare flicka* lit. 'a more spoiled/spoiled girl' (cf. Holmes and Hinchliffe 1994:111).

²³ Ignoring exclamatives like Danish *Lille du!* 'Poor you!' (lit. 'Little you!'), *Aumingja þú!* 'Poor you!', as pointed out to me by Vangsnæs (p.c.). It is unclear what to make of these.

²⁴ The demonstrative pronoun *den* and the free-standing article *den* are homophonous in Danish, as in many Germanic languages, but there is typically a difference in

demonstrative pronoun in various languages, it is not entirely clear that this is the right analysis. Note, for instance, that if one wants to account for the complementary distribution of free-standing and suffixed articles in Icelandic, be it along the lines of Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1993a) or by adopting some version of H&M's proposal, then something special has to be said about examples (e) and (f) in the following illustration of the interaction between the demonstrative pronouns *sá* 'that' and *hin* 'the other' with the definite article in Icelandic (cf. also Friðrik Magnússon 1984:96):

- (3.52) a. *sú* *gamla* *kona*
 that old woman
- b. ?*sú* **hin** *gamla* *kona*
 that the old woman
 'That old woman'
- c. **sú* *gamla* *konan*
- d. **hitt* *litla* *barn*
 the-other little child
- e. **hitt* **hið** *litla* *barn*
 the other the little child
- f. *hitt* *litla* **barnið**
 the other little child-the

Here we see that the demonstrative pronoun *sá* 'that' in Icelandic is marginally compatible with the free-standing definite article (the b-example sounds formal or bookish) but not with the suffixed one, whereas the demonstrative *hin* 'the other' requires the suffixed definite article on the following noun and is incompatible with the free-standing one. Facts of this sort are perhaps more reminiscent of morphological quirkiness or subtle semantic restrictions than structural constraints on syntactic operations.

Footnote 24 (*cont.*)

stress (cf. also comments on the Icelandic article *hin* and the demonstrative *hin* above). Note in passing that the free-standing article *hin* is normally not used in Modern Icelandic in elliptical constructions like the following but Danish *den* can be used. In Icelandic it is normal to use demonstrative pronouns in such contexts:

- (i) a. *Hvaða bók viltu?* (Ic) *Vilken bog vil du (have)?* (Da)
 which book want-you which book want you (have)
 'Which book do you want?' 'Which book do you want?'
- b. ??*Hina/Þá/Þessa gulu.* *Den/?Denne gule.*
 ??the/that/this yellow the/this yellow
 'The yellow one.' 'The yellow one.'

Another difference between (structural?) properties of demonstrative pronouns and definite articles can be found in the Scandinavian languages that allow double definiteness. In those languages the free-standing article is in general incompatible with non-modified nouns, with or without the suffixed definite article, whereas certain demonstrative pronouns co-occur with non-modified definite nouns. The general pattern is given for Swedish in (3.53), where the *det* in the a-examples is meant to be the unstressed definite article and not the stressed demonstrative pronoun (cf. Delsing 1993a:116–17; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:96, etc.):

(3.53)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. * <i>det</i> stora hus | det stora huset | * <i>det</i> hus | * <i>det</i> huset |
| the big house | the big house-the | the house | the house-the |
| | ‘the big house’ | | |
| b. ?* <i>detta</i> stora hus | <i>detta</i> stora huset | ?* <i>detta</i> hus | <i>detta</i> huset ²⁵ |
| this big house | this big house-the | this house | this house-the |
| | ‘this big house’ | | ‘this house’ |

H&M propose to account for the double definiteness phenomenon by saying that definite nouns in Norwegian, Swedish (and then presumably also Faroese) can be analysed as Ns and do not have to be analysed as Ds (i.e., the category change part of the D-rule is optional in these languages). What this implies can be seen by comparing some Swedish phrases to their Icelandic counterparts. The table below is modelled on the overview that H&M give to illustrate the differences between Swedish and Danish examples. The types are reordered here, and marks in parentheses in the present version indicate exceptional instances, to be explained below:²⁶

(3.54)

- | | Swedish | Icelandic |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| a. demonstrative pronouns can be used with an indefinite noun (type: * <i>detta hus</i> , <i>þetta hús</i>) | – | + (–) |

²⁵ This is not entirely accurate. According to Teleman et al. (1999a:307–8), *detta hus* is fine for most speakers of Swedish, whereas *detta huset* is dialectal (Southern and Southwestern Swedish – including presumably the area that Delsing comes from). In addition, the definite form of the noun is used with *detta* in certain fixed expressions, such as *i detta livet* ‘in this life’. The demonstrative pronoun *den* (*här/där*) ‘this/that’, on the other hand, standardly takes the definite form of the following noun: *den* (*här/där*) *boken* ‘this/that book’ (cf. Teleman et al. 1999a:314ff., 322ff.).

²⁶ See also the preceding note on dialectal differences with regard to *detta hus* vs. *detta huset* in Swedish.

	Swedish	Icelandic
b. demonstrative pronouns can be used with definite nouns (type: <i>detta huset</i> , * <i>þetta húsið</i>)	+	– (+)
c. free-standing definite article can be used with an indefinite noun (type: * <i>det hus</i> , * <i>hið hús</i>)	–	–
d. free-standing definite article can be used with a non-modified definite noun (type: * <i>det huset</i> , * <i>hið húsið</i>)	–	–
e. free-standing definite article can be used with a modified definite noun (type <i>det stora huset</i> , * <i>hið stóra húsið</i>)	+	–
f. attributive adjectives can be used with definite nouns (i.e. nouns with the suffixed article, type: * <i>stora huset</i> , <i>stóra húsið</i>)	– (+)	+

This table contains a summary of a large number of facts and it is of some interest to recapitulate and give a brief overview of the account offered by H&M.

The first two types have to do with the interaction between demonstrative pronouns and the suffixed article, and here the two languages differ (and Danish patterns with Icelandic): type a, **detta hus*, *þetta hús*, is supposedly ruled out in Swedish because the demonstrative pronoun typically selects a definite noun in Swedish. In Icelandic, on the other hand, most demonstrative pronouns would select an indefinite noun, although the demonstrative pronoun *hinn* ‘the other’ selects a definite noun, as we have seen (i.e., *hitt húsið* lit. ‘the other house-the’ is the exception, cf. (3.52f) above – there are apparently no exceptions of this kind in Danish). Conversely, type b, *detta huset*, **þetta húsið*, is fine in Swedish but not in Icelandic and the reason would then be that demonstrative pronouns in Swedish select definite nouns, whereas they normally select indefinite nouns in Icelandic (*hitt húsið*, lit. ‘the other house-the’, would be the exception).

The next three types have to do with the distribution of the free-standing article, which is only partially similar in the two languages. Type c, **det hus*, **hið hús* (literally corresponding to the English *the house*), would supposedly be ruled out in both languages because of the blocking effect that H&M assume: since the **lexical** variant *huset/húsið* ‘the house’ exists, a synonymous **phrasal** one (**det hus*, **hið hús*) is blocked. Type d, **det huset*, **hið húsið*, is also ruled out in both languages – either because definite nouns are Ds and hence cannot be selected by other Ds (this would be the case in Icelandic if Icelandic is like Danish, cf. the discussion around (3.49) above) or else by the blocking effect assumed by H&M: although *huset* in Swedish can be analysed

as a definite N, the phrasal *det huset* will be blocked with *det* interpreted as an article because the synonymous lexical (i.e. morphologically derived) *huset* exists. It would seem that a similar account could be proposed to rule out **hið húsið* in Icelandic. Type e, *det stora huset*, **hið stóra húsið*, is fine in Swedish because a definite noun in Swedish, such as *huset*, can be analysed as a N (contrary to its Danish counterpart, which is a D, according to H&M). Hence the Swedish phrase *stora huset* is a definite NP and thus it can be selected by the Swedish free-standing article.

So far, then, the account proposed by H&M seems to be able to account for the observed differences between Icelandic and Swedish, although it was mainly designed to explain the differences between Danish and double definiteness languages like Swedish. But now the parallelism between Icelandic and Danish breaks down. H&M maintain that the reason **det store huset* is out in Danish is that a definite noun (here *huset*) is a D and not a N in Danish and hence it cannot be modified with the adjective *store* (adjectives only modify Ns, not Ds under H&M's account). That would also be the explanation why type f, **store huset*, is out in Danish. But since type f, *stóra húsið* is fine in Icelandic, as already mentioned (in the discussion after (3.49)), we cannot use the 'Danish' account to rule out double definiteness in Icelandic of type e, **hið stóra húsið*. This type cannot be out in Icelandic because *húsið* would necessarily be a D in Icelandic (as maintained for its counterpart *huset* in Danish), because then type f (*stóra húsið*) should also be out in Icelandic. Instead we would have to say that the free-standing definite article in Icelandic selects indefinite NPs, like most demonstrative pronouns also do (except for *hin* 'the other', as we have seen). Note also that since type e is fine in Swedish, *det stora huset*, we would not a priori expect type f, **stora huset*, to be completely out in Swedish, as indicated by the star. In fact, this type is not out in all instances, although it is much more restricted than in Icelandic. Some examples are given in (3.55) (cf. Holmes and Hinchliffe 1994:97–8 – see also Delsing 1993a; Vangsnes 1999):²⁷

- (3.55) *Vita huset* 'The White House', *Röda korset* 'The Red Cross'
svenska folket 'the Swedish people', *katolska kyrkan* 'the Catholic Church'
stora flickan 'the big girl', *gamle gardet* 'the old guard'

While the first few examples are obviously proper names or have a similar function, the latter ones are apparently of a different nature. According to Holmes and Hinchliffe (1994:97) such phrases are 'very common in

²⁷ Vangsnes' proposed generalization is that the article can be left out when the adjective has a non-restrictive reading.

newspaper style' and 'often found with certain frequent adjectives'. The fact that this does apparently not occur in Danish may suggest some underlying difference between NPs in the two languages. It is also interesting to note that here there is a very marked difference between Danish and Icelandic, although Danish and Icelandic NPs are similar in many respects as we have seen. It would be nice to have a principled account of this difference and not have to propose ad hoc differences in subcategorization (selection).

3.2.1.2 The distribution of possessives

As has often been noted, possessive pronouns have certain properties in common with the definite article. Hence it has sometimes been suggested that they, too, occupy the D-position in the extended NP. Examples like the following might seem to lend some support to such an account, especially because of the apparent complementary distribution of the free-standing definite article and the pronominal possessive:

- (3.56)
- | | | | | | | |
|----|--------|--------------|--------------|-------|------|-----------|
| a. | allar | hinar | | þrjár | nýju | kenningar |
| | all | the | | three | new | theories |
| b. | allar | þínar | | þrjár | nýju | kenningar |
| | all | your | | three | new | theories |
| c. | *allar | hinar | þínar | þrjár | nýju | kenningar |
| | all | the | your | three | new | theories |
| d. | *allar | þínar | hinar | þrjár | nýju | kenningar |
| | all | your | the | three | new | theories |

As already discussed, the possessive pronoun in Icelandic normally follows the noun it modifies:

- (3.57)
- | | | | |
|----------|------------|--------------|---------|
| default: | | contrastive: | |
| kenning | þín | þín | kenning |
| theory | your | your | theory |

With this in mind, it might seem attractive to propose some sort of a movement analysis to account for the alternation. It is of some interest to compare that movement to the N-to-D movement proposed by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1993a, 2006b) and others to account for the distribution of free and suffixed articles, repeated here for convenience:

- (3.39) [DP hið [NP borð]] → [DP borði -(h)ið [NP t_i]]
 the table table-the

Now recall that the movement involved is supposed to move (head-adjoined) adjectives together with the nouns, accounting for pairs like the following:

- (3.58) a. **hinar** þrjár nýju kenningar
 the three new theories
- b. nýju kenningarnar þrjár
 new theories-the three

Now observe that a postnominal possessive can co-occur with the free-standing definite article although a prenominal possessive cannot (cf. also (3.56)):

- (3.59) a. **hinar** þrjár nýju kenningar **þínar**
 the three new theories your
 ‘your three new theories’
- b. ***hinar** þrjár nýju **þínar** kenningar

While (3.59a) could arguably be derived by some sort of movement of the noun across the possessive pronoun (obligatory in this case) within a (subpart of) the NP (or the **case phrase**, KP, as suggested by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a:191), it is difficult to reconcile such an analysis with the order observed in (3.60) (see, e.g., Friðrik Magnússon 1984:99):

- (3.60) nýju kenningarnar **þínar** þrjár
 new theories-the your three
 ‘your three new theories’

A phrase like (3.60) could, however, be derived (by N-to-D movement along the lines suggested by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a), assuming an underlying structure more similar to the following:

- (3.61) **hinar þínar** þrjár nýju kenningar
 the your three new theories

But then something special must be said about the fact that this movement is ‘obligatory’ (in the sense that the free-standing definite article is incompatible with the prenominal possessive: **hinar þínar þrjár* . . . is out) and phrases like (3.59a) call for a different underlying structure (or right adjunction of the possessive *þínar*). Note also that examples like the following, discussed by Vangsnes (2004), could be interpreted as involving phrasal movement (XP movement) across the numeral, but then the possessive would have to be carried along across the numeral:

- (3.62) a. þessar fjórar bækur mínar
 these four books my
- b. þessar **bækur mínar** fjórar
 these books my four
- c. *þessar bækur fjórar mínar
 these books four my

- d. *bækurnar* *mínar* *fjórar*
books-the my four
- e. **bækurnar* *fjórar* *mínar*
books-the four my
- f. **frægu** **bækurnar** **mínar** *fjórar*
famous books-the my four

The distributional similarities and differences between the possessive pronouns (*mínn* ‘my’, *þinn* ‘your’, *sinn* ‘his/her/its(refl.)’), possessive pronominal genitives (*hans* ‘his(G)’, *hennar* ‘her(G)’ . . .) and possessive genitives of nouns are also rather intriguing. First, observe the following:

- (3.63) a. *allar* *þessar* *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar* **þínar**
all these three new theories(pl.f.) your(pl.f.)
- b. *allar* *þessar* *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar* **hennar**
all these three new theories(pl.f.) her(Gsg.)
- c. *allar* *þessar* *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar* *Mariú*
all these three new theories(pl.f.) Mary(G)
- d. *allar* *þessar* *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar* *málfræðingsins*
all these three new theories linguists-the(G)
- (3.64) a. *allar* **þínar** *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar*
all your(pl.f.) three new theories(pl.f.)
- b. *allar* **hennar** *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar*
all her(Gsg.) three new theories(pl.f.)
- c. **allar* **Mariú** *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar*
all Mary(G) three new theories(pl.f.)
- d. **allar* **málfræðingsins** *þrjár* *nýju* *kenningar*²⁸
all linguists-the(G) three new theories

Here we see that the pronominal possessives, be they (agreeing) possessive pronouns (the a-examples) or pronominal (non-agreeing) genitives (the b-examples), can immediately follow the quantifier *allar* ‘all’ in the extended noun phrase but non-pronominal possessors cannot, neither proper names (*Mariú*) nor definite common nouns (*málfræðingsins*). This is something that any analysis of possessive needs to account for. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2006b) assumes that the free-standing article and the possessive pronouns compete for the D-position, as it were, and hence cannot co-occur in pronominal position.

²⁸ The (fixed) expression *allar heimsins lystisemdir* ‘all the delights of the world’ (lit. ‘all the world’s delights’) would seem to be an exception to this.

Despite these similarities, there are also some differences between the possessive pronouns and the pronominal possessive genitives (in addition to the agreement differences). Consider the following (cf. also Delsing 1993a:170):

(3.65)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. | <i>konan</i> | <i>þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>] | <i>bíll</i> | [<i>konunnar þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>]] | |
| | woman-the | there | with hat-the | car | woman(G) there | with hat-the | |
| | 'the woman (over) there in the hat' | | | 'the car of the woman (over) there in the hat' | | | |
| b. | <i>hún</i> | <i>þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>] | <i>bíll</i> | [<i>hennar þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>]] | |
| | she | there | with hat-the | car | her(G) there | with hat-the | |
| | 'she (over) there in the hat' | | | 'the car of her (over) there in the hat' | | | |
| c. | <i>þú</i> | <i>þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>] | * <i>bíll</i> | [<i>þinn</i> | <i>þarna</i> | [<i>með hattinn</i>]] |
| | you | there | with hat-the | car(Nsg.m.) | your(Nsg.m.) | there | with hat-the |
| | 'you (over) there in the hat' | | | | | | |

As shown in the first member of each of these pairs, nouns and pronouns can be modified by a locative adverb and a prepositional phrase (it is not necessary to include both modifiers). When such nouns and pronouns occur in the possessive genitive, they can still be so modified. That does not hold, on the other hand, for agreeing possessive pronouns like *þinn* 'your' in the c-example, suggesting a structural difference between the possessive *þinn* 'your' in the c-example and the genitive of nouns (like *konunnar* 'the woman(G)' in the a-example) and pronouns (*hennar* 'her(G)' in the b-example).

Delsing (1993a:170ff.) proposes an analysis where 'possessive pronouns are base generated in the head of a PossP' and argues that this makes it possible to account for the agreement phenomena observed as well as facts of the sort illustrated in (3.65). We will return to the agreement facts in section 3.2.1.3, but first let us review some more constructions with possessive pronouns and add some comparative material (cf. also Delsing 1993a:173ff. – see also Delsing 2003a):

(3.66)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. poss.pro. + indef. noun | 2. indef.noun + poss.pro. | 3. def.noun + poss.pro. |
| a. <i>mitt hús</i> | <i>hús mitt</i> | <i>húsið mitt</i> |
| my house | house my | house-the my |
| b. <i>mín skoðun</i> | <i>skoðun mín</i> | * <i>skoðunin mín</i> |
| my opinion | opinion my | opinion-the my |
| c. <i>??minn bróðir</i> | <i>bróðir minn</i> | * <i>bróðirinn minn</i> |
| my brother | brother my | brother-the my |

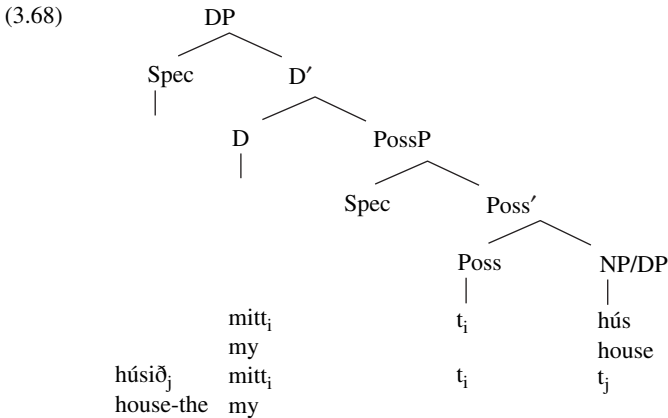
As noted in section 3.1.1.3, the third variant (definite noun followed by a possessive pronoun) is the default one if we have a concrete noun like *hús*. In such cases the first variant is contrastive and the second one sounds formal or bookish (not ungrammatical, as indicated by Delsing 1993a:173). If the noun

is an abstract one, on the other hand, the third variant becomes impossible and the second one default. The situation is similar in the case of nouns referring to blood relations, except that here it seems more difficult to get the first variant with a contrastive stress on the possessive pronoun.

As Delsing (1993a:173ff., see also Delsing 2003a, section 4) points out, there is an interesting variation among the Scandinavian languages and dialects with respect to these variants. Thus the first variant is the default one in Danish and Swedish, the second one is normal in Faroese²⁹ and the third is the default variant in Norwegian and also found in Northern Swedish. None of the languages or dialects discussed by Delsing allows the fourth conceivable variant:³⁰

- (3.67) 4. poss.pro. + def.noun:
 *mitt húsið
 my house-the

Delsing proposes to account for this (language-internal and cross-linguistic) variation by means of various movement rules, including a rule which moves a maximal projection, e.g. a DP or a NP, across the head of a possessor phrase (cf. Delsing 1993a:174):



The reason for the movement of definite NPs like *húsið* 'the house' to the specifier position of the (upper) DP is supposedly that the case features assigned to the extended NP (i.e. the topmost DP in this instance) cannot

²⁹ There is apparently some variation in Faroese with respect to the choice between the first and second variant: some speakers (and writers) seem to prefer the second variant while others prefer the first one (see Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:250; Barnes 2002).

³⁰ As pointed out by Vangsnes, however (1999, 2003:113ff., 165ff.), the Skellefteå dialect of Swedish has constructions of exactly this type:

- (i) mine hestn/*hest
 my horse-the/*horse

seep (or ‘percolate’) down into a DP. That could then provide an account of the unacceptability of variants like (3.67) **mitt húsið* lit. ‘my house-the’. Delsing maintains, on the other hand (1993a:174) that in ‘cases where the complement [of Poss] is NP, AP or DegP [i.e. “degree phrase” such as phrases involving degree adverbials], the Case-feature of the phrase may percolate downwards’. More specifically, Delsing assumes what he calls a Percolation Principle under which features, including case, can percolate from one phrase to another within the extended NP but such percolation is supposed to be blocked by case assigners (see also Delsing 1993a:106). Moreover, Delsing has to assume that case features cannot percolate (or seep) into phrases that normally receive their case through some sort of direct assignment, as DPs supposedly do.

This kind of analysis is also supposed to account in a unified fashion for the relevant agreement facts so let us therefore briefly (re-)consider some of them.

3.2.1.3 Agreement within the extended noun phrase

As already mentioned, it is the noun that is responsible for the number and gender agreement in the extended NP, but the agreement also involves governed features like case:

(3.69)

- a. Allar þessar þrjár nýju kenningar þínar eru ...
 all(Npl.f.) these(Npl.f.) three(Npl.f.) new(Npl.f.) theories (Npl.f.) your (Npl.f.) are ...
- b. Frá öllum þessum þrem nýju kenningum þínum ...
 from all(Dpl.f.) these (Dpl.f.) three (Dpl.f.) new (Dpl.f.) theories (Dpl.f.) your (Dpl.f.)³¹

It has often been assumed in the generative framework that the agreement relation par excellence is the so-called Spec-Head (i.e. specifier-head) relation. Now that kind of analysis would work for the agreement inside the extended noun phrase if it really was a NP headed by the N and all the modifiers were specifiers of that N. That would then obviously call for multiple specifiers – something that various linguists have wanted to adopt at one point or another, but preferably in a principled fashion (cf. the discussion and references in Ura 2000). It is not obvious, on the other hand, how to account for the agreement if various ‘independent’ projections are involved, such as NumP, DP, QP: why should there be overt agreement of this kind between elements that belong to different phrases (different projections)?³²

³¹ I assume here that the dative plural forms are feminine forms although the Dpl. ending is always identical for all genders.

³² As always, it will be possible to come up with some formal way of expressing this fact. One such proposal can be found in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004b,

As already mentioned, Delsing (1993a) suggests that the agreement in extended NPs is taken care of by feature percolation (or seepage): in an example like (3.69b) the number and gender features would then percolate upwards from the noun *kenningum* ‘theories’ to the prenominal modifiers, and possibly also seep down to the postnominal possessive *þínum* ‘your’, whereas the case feature would originate with the preposition *frá* ‘from’ and seep down through the entire extended NP as long as no other case assigner intervened. But if the noun *kenningum* ‘theories’ assigns a possessive genitive to another NP, then all feature percolation and seepage is blocked:

(3.70)

frá þessum nýju kenningum [ungs málfraðings]
 from these(Dpl.f.) new(Dpl.f.) theories(D.pl.f.) young(Gsg.m.) linguist(G.sg.m.)
 ‘from these new theories of a young linguist’

Consider also examples like the following (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984c; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004b:19; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:56–7, 311–14):

(3.71)

- a. **Strákarnir** flugu flugvélinni **fullir**.
 boys-the(Npl.m.) flew plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Npl.m.)
 ‘The boys flew the plane drunk.’
- b. Strákarnir flugu **flugvélinni** **fullri**.
 boys-the(Npl.m.) flew plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Dsg.f.)
 ‘The boys flew the plane full.’ (i.e., the plane was full)
- c. Löggan taldi **strákana** hafa flogið flugvélinni **fulla**.³³
 cops-the believed boys-the(Apl.m.) have flown plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Apl.m.)
 ‘The cops believed the boys to have flown the plane drunk.’

Footnote 32 (*cont.*)

who basically argues that morphological agreement, including the kind of agreement under discussion here (which he refers to as DP-internal concord), is a phenomenon to be accounted for at the PF-level (the level of phonetic form) and thus different from the abstract syntactic relation Agree. A description of this account of NP-internal (or DP-internal) agreement in these terms would take us too far afield.

³³ Some speakers apparently accept the following variant, where there is only number and gender agreement but no case agreement between *strákana* ‘the boys’ and the adjunct *fullir* ‘full’:

- (i)
 Löggan taldi **strákana** hafa flogið flugvélinni **fullir**
 cops-the believed boys-the(Apl.m.) have flown plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Npl.m.)

The extent and nature of this variation remains to be investigated.

- d. Löggan taldi strákana hafa flogið **flugvélinni** **fullri**.
 cops-the believed boys-the(Apl.m.) have flown plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Dsg.f.)
 ‘The cops believed the boys to have flown the plane full.’

In the a-example the adjunct *fullir* ‘full, drunk’ agrees in case, gender and number with the subject *strákarnir* ‘the boys’ but in the b-example *fullri* ‘full’ agrees with the object *flugvélinni* ‘the plane’, which is in turn assigned case by the main verb *flogið* ‘flown’. When these constructions are embedded under the case-assigning ECM-verb (or object raising verb) *taldi* ‘believed’, then the adjunct referring to the subject *strákana* ‘the boys’ in the c-example will get the accusative case assigned (to *strákana*) by this verb whereas the adjunct *fullri* ‘full’ in the d-example will be ‘protected’ from any changes by the lower case assigner *flogið* ‘flown’ and thus still agree with the object *flugvélinni* in case, number and gender.

3.2.1.4 The nature and positions of quantifiers

Finally, let us look at a few examples involving quantifiers, which can occur as the topmost element of the extended NP:

- (3.72) a. **Allar** þessar ungu stelpur hafa lært málvísindi.
 all(Npl.f.) these young girls have studied linguistics
 b. *Þessar **allar** ungu stelpur hafa lært málvísindi.
 c. *Þessar ungu **allar** stelpur hafa lært málvísindi.
 d. *Þessar ungu stelpur **allar** hafa lært málvísindi.
 e. Þessar ungu stelpur hafa **allar** lært málvísindi.
 f. *Þessar ungu stelpur hafa lært **allar** málvísindi.
 g. (?)Þessar ungu stelpur hafa lært málvísindi **allar**.
 these(Npl.f.) young girls have studied linguistics all(Npl.f.)

As shown here, the universal quantifier *allar* ‘all’ can either be at the top of the extended NP (and that is the only place for it inside the NP) or show up between the finite auxiliary and the main verb or (somewhat marginally) occur after the VP – and this does not affect the agreement of the quantifier with the noun it modifies. As the reader may already have noticed, the non-initial positions correspond to (some of the) positions available to adverbs. Note in particular that the post-auxiliary position in (3.72e) resembles the favourite position of sentence adverbs like *ekki* ‘not’, *aldrei* ‘never’, and so on.

Similar variability in the position of quantifiers is found in many languages and is often referred to, more or less informally, as **quantifier float** (or **floating/float**ed quantifiers). As described very thoroughly by Bobaljik (1995:194ff.),

one can distinguish between at least three different theoretical approaches to quantifier float:

- (3.73) a. Floating quantifiers are base generated in adjoined positions (like adverbs in many theories, cf. the discussion 2.1.6 above) (see, e.g., Williams 1980).
 b. Floating quantifiers are base-generated as a part of an extended NP (or DP) but they can ‘float away’ from this NP and adjoin to other phrases (see, e.g., Maling 1976).
 c. Floating quantifiers are base-generated as a part of an extended NP (or DP), e.g. a subject NP base-generated in SpecVP, and they can then be ‘left behind’ when that NP moves, e.g. to clause-initial position (see, e.g., Sportiche 1988).

Bobaljik argues extensively for an account of the first kind, combined with a semantic analysis to explain some of the ordering restrictions and scope phenomena observed, and it would take us too far off topic to go into his arguments here. We can note, however, that that kind of approach is similar to the adjunction analysis of adverbs mentioned in section 2.1.6 above: the syntax of adjunction is fairly free but there are various semantic restrictions that need to be spelled out – and can be spelled out. Nevertheless, it is worth making a few comments here.

First, note that if one assumes an adjunction analysis of the type described in (3.73a), then the theory of agreement adopted has to account for the fact that the (supposedly adjoined) quantifiers agree with the noun they are construed with (the ‘antecedent’ as Bobaljik calls it). But as the discussion around (3.71) suggests, a theory of agreement may need to take adjuncts into consideration anyway.

Second, note that these different analyses make the same predictions in many instances. Thus if Sportiche’s account (i.e. something like (3.73c)) is right, and the analysis of sentence adverbs as being (typically) adjoined to VP is right, then we would certainly expect to be able to find floating subject quantifiers following sentence adverbs (i.e. in SpecVP) and probably also intervening between sentence adverbs and the finite auxiliary – for example if the subject moves through SpecTP and the finite auxiliary to AgrS in a structure of the kind illustrated in (2.55) in section 2.2.2. Under standard assumptions, the adjunction analyses would presumably make the same prediction – and this seems borne out:

- (3.74) a. Þessar ungu stelpur hafa aldrei **allar** komið í tíma.
 these young girls have never all come to class
 b. ?Þessar ungu stelpur hafa **allar** aldrei komið í tíma.

The expected scope differences are observed: the (somewhat strained) b-example is synonymous with (the more natural) *Allar þessar ungu stelpur hafa aldrei komið í tíma* ‘All these young girls have never come to class’, where the universal quantifier takes scope over the whole clause, whereas the first one has wide adverbial scope: ‘It has never been the case that these young girls have all come to class.’

Third, the universal quantifier cannot precede a personal pronoun in an extended NP but a floating one can be construed with such a pronoun:

- (3.75) a. ***Allar** þær hafa lært málvísindi.
 all(Npl.f.) they(Npl.f.) have studied linguistics
- b. *Þær **allar** hafa lært málvísindi.³⁴
 they all have studied linguistics
- c. Þær hafa **allar** lært málvísindi.
 they have all studied linguistics

Note the ungrammaticality of (3.75b) – the corresponding order seems fine in English, but this may have something to do with verb movement.³⁵ The universal quantifier can follow an object pronoun, as shown in (3.76), but there it may be right-adjoined to the VP:

- (3.76) Ég sá þær **allar**.
 I saw them all

The facts can probably just be accounted for under the theories described above: there is some sort of a constraint that prohibits the universal quantifier from immediately dominating a pronoun. However, if floating quantifiers really are ‘left behind’ by movement of NP (or DP), then the following examples are apparently problematic:

³⁴ This seems better if *þær allar* ‘they all’ is clearly deictic, as in ‘those (girls) over there’. See also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006b for some discussion of the interaction between (subject) pronouns and quantifiers.

³⁵ Different placements of quantifiers have been used to argue for V-to-I movement. Thus Roberts (2001:120) gives the following pairs of sentences, contrasting English and French:

- (i) a. The children **all** eat chocolate.
 b. *The children eat **all** chocolate.
 c. *Les enfants **tous** mangent le chocolat.
 d. Les enfants mangent **tous** le chocolat.

Not surprisingly, Icelandic patterns with French here.

- (3.77) a. **Allar** hafa þessar ungu stúlkur lært málvísindi.
 all have these young girls studied linguistics
 ‘These young girls have all studied linguistics.’
- b. **Allar** hafa þær lært málvísindi.
 all have they studied linguistics
 ‘They have all studied linguistics.’

This turns out not to be a problem, however, in light of our earlier discussion of V2 Topicalization structures. As described in section 2.2.1 above, it is usually assumed that Topicalization fronts elements to SpecCP and the subject is then ‘left behind’ in SpecIP (or the corresponding position in a split-IP structure). Thus the ‘inverted’ order of the subject and the finite verb in such constructions is not caused by any ‘lowering’ of the subject but rather its failure to raise to the topmost position (since that position is occupied by the fronted element). That means, however, that quantifiers can at least sometimes ‘take off’ on their own. Under a base-generated adjunction analysis of floating quantifiers (i.e. (3.73a)), one would then have to say that sentences like (3.77a) involve movement of the quantifier *allir* ‘all’ from some lower adjunction position to SpecCP, whereas it would be adjoined to the subject NP in initial position in sentences like (3.72a).

3.2.2 Verb Phrase architecture and the order of constituents

3.2.2.1 Some structural considerations and asymmetries

Ditransitive verbs are very common in Icelandic and many other languages and one might think that a structural representation of a VP containing a main verb and two objects might be straightforwardly represented by a partial tree diagram like (3.79) (the main verbs are all given in the infinitival form to avoid issues having to do with finite verb movement, cf. the discussion in chapter 2):

- (3.79)
- | | | | |
|---------|------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | VP | | |
| | ├───┬───┘ | | |
| V | NP1 | NP2 | |
| gefa | Haraldi | hestinn | |
| give | Harold(D) | horse-the(A) | |
| svipta | manninn | skírteininu | |
| deprive | man-the(A) | licence-the(D) | (i.e., revoked the man’s licence) |

As will be discussed in 4.1.2, other case patterns also exist, but the dative-accusative (DA) pattern (or NDA if one takes the subject into account) is by far the most common one. Hence we will mainly consider examples of the NDA type unless there is a special reason to include other types too.

A diagram like (3.79) suggests that the two objects have a similar structural status (except for linear order, which will be discussed in some detail in section 3.2.2.2), but it is obviously impossible if one assumes that all syntactic structures are binary branching. Under the binary branching hypothesis one of the objects should structurally dominate the other. As first pointed out by Barss and Lasnik (1986), there is in fact some evidence that the indirect object (NP1) is structurally superior to the direct one (NP2). Most of their arguments can be replicated using Icelandic examples but we will only review a couple of them here.

First, it is well known that the first object (the indirect object, IO) can be the antecedent of a second object (the direct object, DO) reflexive but not vice versa:³⁶

- (3.80) NP1 can be the antecedent for (bind) a reflexive in NP2 but not vice versa:
- a. Þú sviptir eiginmanninn_i konu **sinni_i**.
 you deprived husband-the(A) wife(D) his-refl.(D)
 'You deprived the husband of his wife.'
- b. *Þú sviptir eiginmann **sinn_i** konunni_i.
 you deprived husband(A) her-refl.(A) wife-the(D)

It can be shown that the ungrammaticality of (3.80b) is not simply a function of the linear order of the arguments – fronting (topicalizing) the second object does not lead to any improvement:³⁷

- (3.81) *Konunni_i sviptir þú eiginmann sinn_i.
 wife-the(D) deprived you husband(A) her-refl.(A)

In this respect the binding relations in the double object construction seem rather similar to those found with verbs that take a prepositional second argument: here the first argument can be the antecedent for a reflexive inside

³⁶ As we shall see in section 3.2.2.2, there is a reason why I use this (somewhat contrived) example with *svipta* 'deprive' rather than using the more common verb *gefa* 'give' here, although the examples in (3.80) would have worked just as well with *gefa*:

- (i) a. Þú gafst eigandanum hundinn_i **sinn_i**.
 you gave owner-the(D) dog-the(A) his-refl.(A)
- b. *Þú gafst eiganda **sínum_i** hundinn_i.
 you gave owner(D) his-refl.(D) dog-the(A)

³⁷ Movement rules like Topicalization (a typical A'-movement) should not 'create new binding possibilities'.

the prepositional argument but not vice versa – and moving the PP to the front does not change this:

- (3.82) a. *Ég sendi Rauðhettu_i til ömmu **sinnar**_i.*
 I sent LRRH(A) to grandma(G) her(refl)(G)
 ‘I sent Little Red Riding Hood to her grandma.’
 b. **Ég sendi vínið **sitt**_i til ömmu_i.*
 I sent wine(A) her(refl.)(A) to grandma(G)
 c. **Til ömmu_i sendi ég vínið **sitt**_i.*
 to grandma(G) sent I wine(A) her-refl.(A)

Second, a negative first object can license a negative polarity item in the second object position but not vice versa:

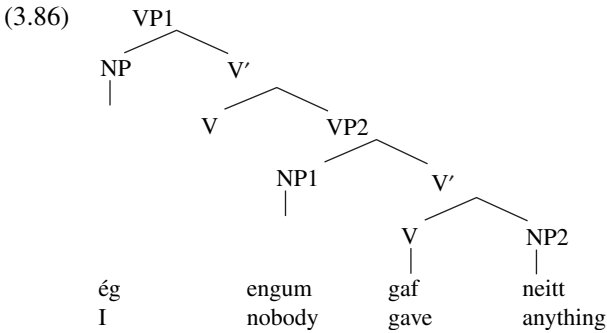
- (3.83) a. *Ég gaf engum **neitt**.*
 I gave nobody anything
 b. **Ég gaf **neinum** ekkert.*
 I gave anybody nothing

Similar facts obtain for the other Scandinavian languages, for example with respect to the binding relationships. Some examples follow:

- (3.84) a. *Jeg gav ham_i **sin**_i hund.* (Da)
 I gave him his(refl.) dog
 b. **Jeg gav **sin**_i ejer hunden_i.*
 I gave his-refl. owner dog-the
- (3.85) a. *Jeg viste [Jens og Marit]_i **hverandre**_i.* (No)
 I showed J. and M. each other
 b. **Jeg viste **hverandre**_i [Jens og Marit]_i.*
 I showed each other J. and M.

Various structures have been suggested in order to account for the observed asymmetry between the two objects in double object constructions and the so-called VP-shell structure of Larson (1988) is undoubtedly among the best-known ones. The basic ideas can be illustrated with Icelandic examples as in (3.86):³⁸

³⁸ This diagram differs from Larson’s original proposal in that the indirect object is here base generated in its position (specifier of the lower VP) rather than moved to that position. – In recent minimalist literature (since Chomsky 1993 and especially 1999), various more abstract variants of the VP-shell idea have been proposed. See e.g. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000 for a discussion of Icelandic case marking assuming such ideas.



This complex structure is intended to capture the hierarchical relationship between the arguments of a ditransitive verb: in the underlying structure the subject (here *ég*) is in the specifier position of the higher VP in the VP-complex, the IO in the specifier position of the lower VP and the DO in its complement position of the main verb. The main verb then obligatorily moves to the higher V-position,³⁹ giving the normal S-V-IO-DO order.

Several variants of this hierarchical analysis of double object constructions have been proposed (partly) on the basis of Scandinavian evidence, for example by Sprouse (1989), Vikner (1989), Falk (1990), Holmberg (1991b), Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996:137ff.) and Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996). There is no reason to compare these in any detail here, but some properties of the double object constructions should become clearer in the next subsections. Note, however, that an analysis along these lines predicts that one might find some similarities between subjects and indirect objects since both occupy a specifier position. Their parallel behaviour with respect to the so-called *hva-for*-extraction in Norwegian could be such an example (see, e.g., Áfarli and Eide 2003:126). In that construction the question element (*hvem* 'who', *hva* 'what') can be extracted out of the complex *hvem/hva for NP* in object position but not in subject position or indirect object position (see also Hellan 1991a:78):

(3.87)

- a. *Hvem_i ga [t_i for noen] barna sine ei bok til jul? (No)
 who gave for somebody children-the his-refl. a book for Xmas
- b. *Hvem_i ga du [t_i for noen] ei bok til jul?
 whom gave you for somebody a book for Xmas

³⁹ This upper position is frequently represented by a *v* in more recent literature and the higher VP then as a *vP*. Details of this sort are ignored here – but see again Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000, for instance.

- c. Hva_i ga du barna dine [t_i for noe] til jul?
 what gave you children-the your for something for Xmas
 ‘What did you give your children for Christmas?’

Another family of analyses of double object constructions (e.g. Hellan 1991a; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1991a, 1993) assumes that the indirect and direct object are sisters and thus form a phrase of their own.⁴⁰ It seems, however, that these analyses face an empirical problem: it does not seem to be possible to front the IO and the DO together, although we would expect to be able to do so if they formed a constituent of their own (see also Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:412):

- (3.88) a. Ég hef ekki lánað Maríu bækurnar.
 I have not lent Mary books-the
 ‘I haven’t lent Mary the books.’
 b. *[Maríu bækurnar] hef ég ekki lánað.
 Mary books-the have I not lent

In the following subsections we will look at some other reordering and movement possibilities in double object constructions in order to determine what they can tell us about their structure.

3.2.2.2 Inversion and other reorderings

As originally discussed by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1990a), some double object verbs in Icelandic allow a DO–IO order of their arguments in addition to the normal IO–DO order (see also Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:415 and references cited there):⁴¹

- (3.89) a. Hann gaf konunginum ambáttina
 he gave king-the(D) maidservant-the(A)
 ‘He gave the king the maidservant.’

⁴⁰ As Kjartan G. Ottósson shows (1991a, 1993), the small clause variant of this analysis has various things in common with a Larsonian shell-type analysis as regards claims about the grammatical and thematic function of the IO and DO.

⁴¹ Apologies for these politically incorrect examples, but one needs to try to match the two objects with regard to animacy, humanness and ‘pronominalization’ in order to get the most reliable results. See also Kiparsky 1997 and Weerman 1997 for discussions of the historical development and the nature of restrictions on direct and indirect object orderings. See also Dehé 2004 for a report on an acceptability judgement study where she tries to control for various features possibly affecting the judgements, such as focus and stress. She finds that many of her subjects reject the sentences containing the inverted order or at least find them ‘rather odd’.

b. Hann gaf ambáttina konunginum.
 he gave maidservant-the(A) king-the(D)
 'He gave the maidservant to the king.'

(3.90) a. Þau sýndu foreldrunum krakkana
 they showed parents-the(D) kids-the(A)
 'The showed the parents the kids.'

b. Þau sýndu krakkana foreldrunum
 they showed kids-the(A) parents-the(D)
 'They showed the kids to the parents.'

For most double object constructions, this seems impossible:⁴²

(3.91) a. Sjórinns svipti sjómanskonuna fyrirvinnunni.
 sea-the deprived fisherman's-wife-the(A) provider-the(D)
 'The sea deprived the fisherman's wife of her provider.'

b. ?*Sjórinns svipti fyrirvinnunni sjómanskonuna.
 sea-the deprived provider-the(D) fisherman's-wife-the(A)

Verbs that take two dative objects are perhaps particularly interesting in this respect:

(3.92) a. Mannræninginn skilaði foreldrunum börnunum
 kidnapper-the returned parents-the(D) kids-the (D)
 'The kidnapper returned the kids to the parents.'

b. Mannræninginn skilaði börnunum foreldrunum.
 kidnapper-the returned kids-the(D) parents-the(D)

Can only mean: 'The kidnapper returned the parents to the kids',
 i.e. it does not have the 'inversion reading' 'returned the kids to the
 parents'.

The reordering involved has been referred to as Object Inversion, and it is important to note here that it is different from 'Heavy NP Shift'. As already pointed out above, it is possible to create passable examples of the DO-IO order with verbs that do not allow the Object Inversion:

(3.93) a. Sjórinns svipti konuna manninum.
 sea-the deprived woman-the(A) husband-the(D)
 'The sea deprived the woman of her husband.'

⁴² Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996:417) maintain that only (some?) NDA-verbs allow this 'inversion' of the objects and no other ditransitive verbs do. For a different (non-movement) approach, see Zaenen, Maling and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1985 (section 4.2).

- b. ?Sjórinn svipti manninum
 sea-the deprived husband-the(D)
 gömlu konuna sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið.
 old woman-the(A) that all pitied so much
 ‘The sea deprived of her husband the old woman who everybody felt so
 sorry for.’

The Inversion and Heavy NP Shift constructions do not have the same binding properties, however: the DO can function as an antecedent for (bind) an IO-reflexive in the Inversion construction but it cannot in the Heavy NP Shift construction. Compare (3.94) and (3.95) (see also Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996:416–17):

- (3.94) a. Þau sýndu foreldrunum_i krakkana sína_i.
 they showed parents-the kids-the their(refl.)
 ‘They showed the parents their kids.’
 b. Þau sýndu krakkana_i foreldrum sínum_i.
 they showed kids-the parents their(refl.)
 ‘They showed the kids to their parents.’

- (3.95) a. Sjórinn svipti konuna_i manni sínum_i.
 seathe deprived woman-the(A) husband her(refl.)
 ‘The sea deprived the woman of her husband.’
 b. *Sjórinn svipti manninum_i
 sea-the deprived husband-the(D)
 [gömlu konuna sína_i sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið]_i.
 old woman-the his(refl) that all pitied so much

Intended meaning:

‘The sea deprived of the husband his(refl.) old woman that everybody felt so sorry for.’

This suggests that the Heavy NP Shift involved in (3.95) has A'-movement properties (it does not ‘create new binding relations’ nor does it destroy old ones) whereas the Inversion construction has the properties characteristic of base generation or an A-movement construction.⁴³

⁴³ As Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996:417–18) observe, the Inversion construction seems to require stress on the IO. Hence it is unacceptable with a reduced pronominal IO, although such a pronoun is fine in the regular IO position and a stressed IO pronoun is also fine in the Inversion construction:

- (i) a. Þeir gáf’ ’onum ’ana.
 they gave him her
 ‘They gave her to him.’

With this in mind, it is interesting to look at the interaction between Inversion and various other processes that can affect double object constructions, such as Passive and Object Shift.

3.2.2.3 Double object constructions and passive

In the passive of Icelandic transitive verbs a nominative subject corresponds to an accusative object in the active form. If a transitive verb takes a dative object, on the other hand, this object will show up in the dative in the passive:

- (3.96) a. Þeir seldu bókina.
 they(Npl.m.) sold(pl.) book-the(Asg.f.)
 b. Bókin var seld.
 book-the(Nsg.f.) was sold(Nsg.f.)
- (3.97) a. Þeir stálu bókinni.
 they(Npl.m.) stole(pl.) book-the(Dsg.f.)
 b. Bókinni var stolið.
 book-the(Dsg.f.) was stolen(sg.n.) (or supine)

As (3.97b) indicates, we get a non-agreeing participle (or the supine form) if the passive subject is not nominative.

With this in mind, we might a priori expect to be able to get two passives of ditransitive verbs in Icelandic, that is, that either object of a ditransitive active verb could be promoted to subject. As described by Platzack (2005), however, there is considerable variation within Germanic and even within Scandinavian with respect to passivization possibilities in double object constructions. In the Icelandic ones we usually get only one passive variant, that is, the one where the first object is promoted to the subject position:

- (3.98) a. Þeir sviptu manninn vinnunni.
 they deprived man-the(A) work-the(D)
 'They deprived the man of the work.'
 b. Maðurinn var sviptur vinnunni.
 man-the was deprived work-the(D)
 'The man was deprived of his work.'
 c. *Vinnunni var svipt/sviptur manninn/maðurinn.
 work-the(D) was deprived(n./m.) man-the(A/N)

Footnote 43 (cont.)

- b. *Þeir gáf' 'ana 'onum.
 they gave her him
 c. Þeir gáf' 'ana HONUM.
 'The gave her to HIM.'

- (3.99) a. Þeir skiluðu **foreldrunum** börnunum.
they returned parents-the(Dpl.) kids-the(Dpl.)
'They returned the kids to the parents.'
- b. **Foreldrunum** var skilað börnunum.
parents-the(Dpl.) was(sg.) returned(sg.n.) kids-the(Dpl.)
'The parents were returned the kids.'
- c. *Börnunum var skilað foreldrunum.
[out in the sense: 'The parents were returned the kids.']
- (3.100) a. Þeir leyndu **hana** því.
they concealed her(A) it(D)
'They concealed it from her.'
- b. **Hún** var leynd því.
she(N) was concealed it(D)
'It was concealed from her.'
- c. *Því var leynd hún.
it(D) was concealed she(N)
- (3.101) a. Þeir óskuðu **honum** þess.
they wished him(D) it(G)
- b. **Honum** var óskað þess.
him(D) was wished(sg.n.) it(G)
- c. *Þess var óskað honum.

With a few NDA-verbs, on the other hand, it is possible to get to variants of the passive:⁴⁴

- (3.102) a. Þeir gáfu konunginum ambáttina.
they gave king-the(D) maidservant-the(A)
'They gave the king the maidservant.'
- b. Konunginum var gefin ambáttin.
king-the(D) was given(Nsg.f.) maidservant-the(Nsg.f.)
'The king was given the maidservant.'
- c. Ambáttin var gefin konunginum.
maidservant-the(N) was given(Nsg.f.) king-the(Dsg.m.)
'The maidservant was given to the king.'
- (3.103) a. Þeir seldu einhverjum útlendingum harðfiskinn.
they sold some foreigners(D) dried-fish-the(A)
'They sold some foreigners the dried fish.'

⁴⁴ In testing for the passivization possibilities, it is important to keep in mind that differences in animacy, humanness and pronominal form may interfere with the acceptability of the two variants.

- b. Einhverjum útlendingum var seldur harðfiskurinn.
 some foreigners(Dpl.m.) was sold(Nsg.m.) dried-fish-the(Nsg.m.)
- c. Harðfiskurinn var seldur einhverjum útlendingum.
 dried-fish-the(Nsg.m.) was sold(Nsg.m.) some foreigners(Dpl.m.)

Two things are of interest here. First, note that even when the IO shows up in the subject position, the DO takes on the nominative form and the verbal complex agrees with it. Second, it seems that it is basically the ditransitive verbs that allow Inversion of the objects that can take two kinds of passive (see also Maling 2002b:58–9). Hence one might want to argue that in Icelandic it is generally the ‘first object’, whichever it may be, that can passivize. Observe also that when the first object is omitted, then the second one can generally passivize. Thus compare the following to (3.100) and (3.101):

- (3.104) a. Þeir leyndu því.
 they concealed it(D)
 ‘They concealed it.’
- b. Því var leynt.
 it(D) was concealed
- (3.105) a. Þeir óskuðu þess.
 they wished it(G)
- b. Þess var óskað.
 it(G) was wished

This suggests some sort of a minimality effect in Icelandic passives: move the closest object and do not move the second object over the first one in passivization.⁴⁵

Interestingly, it seems that no such effect is found in Faroese. Here the order of the two objects seems relatively fixed and it is the second object which is straightforwardly passivized (first object passivization is marginal) (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:269ff.):

- (3.106) a. Teir seldu bóndanum kúnna. (Fa)
 they sold farmer-the(D) cow-the(A)

⁴⁵ German also allows two orders in the passive (cf., e.g., Kiparsky 1997:484):

- (i) a. Das Geld wurde meinem Bruder gegeben.
 the money(N) was my brother(D) given
- b. Meinem Bruder wurde das Geld gegeben.

It is not clear, however, that this means that there are ‘two passives’ of verbs rather than just two orderings with different focusing. For an overview of passivization possibilities in double object constructions in Germanic, see Platzack 2005.

- b. ??Teir seldu kúnna bóndanum.
 they sold cow-the(A) farmer-the(D)
- (3.107) a. Kúgvín varð seld bóndanum.
 cow-the(N) was sold farmer-the(D)
- b. ??Bóndanum varð seld kúgvín.
 farmer-the(D) was sold cow-the(N)⁴⁶

There is some evidence that Danish patterns to some extent with Icelandic here and Swedish with Faroese. Consider the following (cf. also Falk 1990; Holmberg 1991b, 2001; Platzack 2005):

- (3.108) a. De tilbyder ham en stilling. (Da)
 they offer him a job
- b. Han blev tilbudt en stilling.
 he was offered a job
- c. *En stilling blev tilbudt ham.
 a job was offered him
- (3.109) a. Dom erbjöd honom ett nytt jobb. (Sw)
 they offered him a new job
- b. Hani erbjöds ett nytt jobb.
 he was-offered a new job
- c. Ett nytt jobb erbjöds honom.
 a new job was-offered him

Here we see that in Swedish it is apparently possible to passivize either object but not in Danish. More comparative Scandinavian research in this area might be of interest (but see Platzack 2005 for a recent overview).

⁴⁶ Although most dative-subject verbs take accusative objects in Faroese (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:255ff.), passives with dative subjects and accusative ‘objects’ are apparently worse than passives with dative subjects and nominative objects like here (cf. also Barnes 1986a):

- (i) *Bóndanum varð selt kúnna.
 farmer-the(D) was sold cow-the(A)

Note in addition that although many originally dative subjects of active verbs have changed into nominative subjects in Faroese (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:226ff., 427ff.), and although some monotransitive verbs taking dative objects in the active can take nominative subjects in the passive in Faroese (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:266ff.), double object verbs like *selja* ‘sell’ are completely out in the passive with a nominative subject corresponding to the indirect object (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:272):

- (ii) *Bóndin varð seldur kúgvín/kúnna.
 the farmer(N) was sold the cow(N/A).

3.2.2.4 Double object constructions and Object Shift

Some apparent ‘minimality effects’ can also be observed in Object Shift in double object constructions in Icelandic, as discussed rather extensively by Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996): if we take a ditransitive construction that does not allow Inversion, then the first object can shift across a sentence adverb, or they can both shift, but the second object cannot shift across the first one:

- (3.110) a. Þeir sviptu aldrei manninn vinnunni.
 they deprived never man-the(A) work-the(D)
 ‘They never deprived the man of the work.’
- b. Þeir sviptu **manninn** aldrei vinnunni.
 they deprived man-the(A) never work-the
- c. ?Þeir sviptu **manninn vinnunni** aldrei.
 they deprived man-the(A) work-the(D) never
- d. *Þeir sviptu **vinnunni** aldrei manninn.

As might be expected, on the other hand, either object can shift alone if we have a construction with a NDA-verb where Inversion is possible. Thus the following should be compared to (3.90):

- (3.111) a. Þau sýndu **börnunum** aldrei foreldrana.
 they showed children-the(D) never parents-the(A)
 ‘They never showed the parents to the children.’
- b. Þau sýndu **foreldrana** aldrei börnunum.
 they showed parents-the(A) never children-the(D)
 ‘They never showed the parents to the children.’

Now the shifting of both objects together is obviously not surprising under an analysis where the two objects are believed to form a constituent of their own (cf. Hellan 1991a; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1991a, 1993) and Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996) also propose a technical account of this within the framework they assume, where various further examples are also discussed. But since none of the other Scandinavian languages allow Object Shift of full NPs, comparative research cannot shed any light on this.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ In the case of an Inversion verb, both orders of the objects are possible when both objects shift. In the case of a non-Inversion verb, the only possible order of the objects when both objects shift is the one found in the non-shifted variant. Hence the following pattern (recall that *sýna* ‘show’ is an Inversion verb, *svipta* ‘deprive’ is not):

- (i) a. Þau sýndu **börnunum foreldrana** aldrei.
 they showed children-the(D) parents-the(A) never
 ‘They never showed the parents to the children.’

3.2.2.5 Prepositional arguments and particle constructions

Finally, let us look at some ordering relations of prepositional arguments and particles (for some preliminary observations on verb particles vs. prepositions in Icelandic, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:25ff.).

First, observe the contrast between the prepositional verb *halda við* (+A) ‘support’ (lit. ‘hold with’) and the particle verb *halda við* (+D) ‘keep up, keep in shape’:

- (3.112) a. Tveir menn héldu við stigann.
two men held with stairs-the(A)
‘Two men supported the stairs.’
- b. Tveir menn héldu við hann.
two men held with it(A)
‘Two men supported it.’
- c. *Tveir menn héldu hann við.
two men held it with
- d. Við stigann héldu tveir menn.
with stairs-the(A) held two men
‘The stairs, two men supported.’
- (3.113) a. Tveir menn héldu við húsinu.
two men held with house-the(D)
‘Two men kept the house in shape.’
- b. *Tveir menn héldu við því.
two men held with it(D)
- c. Tveir menn héldu því við.
two men held it(D) with
‘Two men kept the house/it in shape.’
- d. *Við húsinu héldu tveir menn.
with house-the(D) held two men

The preposition *við* in (3.112) precedes its object (the a- and b-examples) and it cannot follow it, not even when it is a pronoun (the c-example). The PP headed by the preposition *við* ‘with’ can be fronted as a whole, on the other

Footnote 47 (*cont.*)

- b. Þau sýndu foreldrana börnunum aldrei.
they showed parents-the(A) children-the(D) never
‘They never showed the parents to the children.’
- c. (?)Þeir sviptu manninn vinnunni aldrei.
they deprived man-the(A) work-the(D) never
- d. *Þeir sviptu vinnunni manninn aldrei.
they deprived work-the(D) man-the(A) never

hand, just like other constituents (the d-example). But while the particle *við* in (3.113) can precede the object of the particle verb when it is a noun or a full NP (the a-example), it cannot precede a pronominal object but has to follow it (the b- and c-examples). In addition, the particle cannot be fronted together with the object of the particle verb (the d-example), suggesting either that it does not form a constituent with it or else that there is some independently motivated movement constraint in operation here.⁴⁸

This pattern is obviously similar to the one found in English, for instance. As pointed out in section 2.1.5, the behaviour of the non-pronominal and pronominal objects of particle verbs is reminiscent of the behaviour of non-pronominal and pronominal objects with regard to Object Shift around sentence adverbs in Icelandic: non-pronominal ones optionally shift around the relevant element (particle, sentence adverb), pronominal ones (unstressed at least) obligatorily do so. With this in mind, Johnson (1991) suggested that English does in fact have Object Shift similar to the one found in Icelandic. Some relevant examples are given here:

- (3.114)
- | | | | | |
|----|---------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| a. | Mickey | looked | up | the reference. |
| b. | Mickey | looked | the reference | up. |
| c. | *Mickey | looked | up | it. |
| d. | Mickey | looked | it | up. |
| e. | *Up | the reference | Mickey | looked. |
| f. | Mickey | looked | up | THEM. |
| g. | Mickey | looked | up | him and her. |

As shown here, a full NP can occur on either side of the particle (the a- and b-examples), an unstressed pronoun can only precede it (the c- and d-examples) and the particle cannot be fronted together with the object of the particle verb (the e-example). In addition, a (contrastively) stressed pronoun can ‘stay in situ’ (for contrastive stress to be licensed it is obviously necessary to have

⁴⁸ It should be noted that this has nothing to do with the case governed by the particle verb – the same pattern is found with particle verbs that govern the accusative, for instance:

- (i)
- | | | | | | |
|----|------|---------------|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. | Þeir | tóku | upp | pakkann/pakkann | upp. |
| | they | took | up | parcel-the(A)/parcel-the(A) | up |
| | | | | | ‘They opened the parcel.’ |
| b. | Þeir | tóku | *upp | hann/hann | upp. |
| | they | took | *up | it(A)/it(A) | up |
| | | | | | ‘They opened it.’ |
| c. | *Upp | pakkann | tóku | þeir. | |
| | up | parcel-the(A) | took | they | |

some context and hence (3.114f) sounds odd out of the blue) and so can a conjunction of pronouns (the f- and g-examples), a pattern familiar from the discussion of Scandinavian Object Shift in sections 2.1.5 and 2.2.4 above, and it can be replicated for Icelandic particle verbs too:

- (3.115) a. *Magnús fletti upp þeim.
Magnus looked up them
- b. Magnús fletti þeim upp.
- c. (?)Magnús fletti upp ÞEIM.
Magnus looked up THEM
- d. Magnús fletti upp honum og henni.
Magnus looked up him and her

Despite the striking similarities between ‘Particle Shift’ (PS) and Object Shift (OS), there are also some interesting differences, both within languages and across. First, the presence of an auxiliary and the associated lack of verb movement blocks OS but not PS, as has often been observed (see, e.g., Svenonius 1996a:63ff. – see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:104ff. and the discussion in section 2.2.4 above). This can be seen very clearly in constructions where OS and PS could potentially both apply:

- (3.116) a. Ég fletti aldrei upp nöfnunum. (no shift)
I looked never up names-the(D)
‘I never looked up the names.’
- b. Ég fletti aldrei **nöfnunum** upp. (PS only)
I looked never names-the(D) up
‘I never looked the names up.’
- c. Ég fletti **nöfnunum** aldrei upp. (PS and OS)
I looked names-the never up
- (3.117) a. Ég hef aldrei flett upp nöfnunum. (no shift)
I have never looked up names-the(D)
‘I have never looked up the names.’
- b. Ég hef aldrei flett **nöfnunum** upp. (PS only)
I have never looked names-the(D) up
‘I have never looked the names up.’
- c. *Ég hef **nöfnunum** aldrei flett upp. (OS blocked)
I have names-the never looked up

This suggests that if some sort of OS is involved in the observed shift in particle constructions, it moves the object to a lower position than the one involved in ‘regular’ OS. Hence the structure of particle constructions may be more

complex than it would seem at first, and this is the tack taken by a number of linguists. Thus Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1996) tie this in with their (rather complex) analysis of VPs, which they argue is necessary to account for OS in double object constructions. Others have suggested some sort of a bi-clausal or small clause analysis of particle constructions (see, e.g., Svenonius 1996a, b). As discussed most extensively by Svenonius in various publications, there is more to particle constructions in Scandinavian than immediately meets the eye, including some interesting cross-linguistic twists. A few of these will be illustrated below, but space does not permit me to go far into the structural analyses proposed.

First, full NPs and pronouns obligatorily undergo PS in Danish (see, e.g., Herslund 1984), Faroese and Norwegian allow PS to apply to full NPs (optionally – but recall that NPOS is not found in these languages) as well as to pronouns (obligatorily, except for some Norwegian dialects), but usually neither version applies in Swedish (see, e.g., Åfarli 1985; Holmberg 1986:166, 200; Svenonius 1996b; Holmberg and Platzack 1995:203; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:247–8):

- (3.118) a. Jeg skrev op *nummeret/*det. (Da)
 I wrote up *number-the/*it
- b. Jeg skrev **nummeret/det** op.
 'I wrote the number/it down.'
- c. Hann gjørði upp snørið/*tað. (Fa)
 he made up fishing-line-the/*it
 'He wound up the fishing line.'
- d. Hann gjørði **snørið/tað** upp.
 he made fishing-line-the/it up
 'He wound the fishing line/it up.'
- e. Han spiste opp tørrfisken/*den. (No)
 he ate up dryfish-the/*it
- f. Hann spiste **tørrfisken/den** opp.
 'He ate the dried fish/it up.'
- g. Hon kastade ut Johan/honum. (Sw)
 she threw out J./him
 'She threw Johan/him out.'
- h. *Hon kastade **Johan/honom** ut.

This again suggests that PS is not the same phenomenon as the kind of OS found elsewhere in Scandinavian, despite striking similarities. In addition, the differences in this area between these closely related languages call for an explanation.

The apparent optionality of PS and OS is also of some theoretical interest since various linguistic theories maintain that true optionality should not exist because the most economical variant should always win out. This issue is explicitly discussed by Svenonius (1996b), who shows that in many instances phenomena like heaviness of the relevant object NP, type of modification, definiteness, stress and discourse phenomena (such as focus) may determine the preferences where ‘optional’ PS is involved, although the relevance of these factors seem to vary somewhat from language to language and even speaker to speaker. His discussion of the optionality of NP PS in Icelandic can be summarized as follows, where + means ‘preferred’, (+) means slightly preferred, (?) means slightly dispreferred and ? dispreferred (cf. Svenonius 1996b:60–3; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:28; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:104ff.):

- | | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|----------|
| (3.119) | | heavy NPs | indef. NPs | quantified NPs | def. NPs |
| | NP-particle order | ? | (?) | (+) | + |

This is illustrated in (3.120–3.123), where the particle is highlighted and the same marks are used as in (3.119) to indicate acceptability of the NP-particle order:

(3.120)

- a. ?Stelpan bar [allar stóru töskurnar sem við komum með úr fríinu] **inn**.
 girl-the carried all big bags-the that we brought from vacation-the in
 ‘The girl carried all the big bags that we brought from the vacation in.’

- b. Stelpan bar **inn** [allar stóru töskurnar sem við komum með úr fríinu]

- (3.121) a. (?)Stelpan bar töskur **inn**.
 girl-the carried bags in
 ‘The girl carried bags in.’

- b. Stelpan bar **inn** töskur.

- (3.122) a. (+)Stelpan bar nokkrar töskur **inn**.
 girl-the carried some bags in
 ‘The girl carried some bags in.’

- b. Stelpan bar **inn** nokkrar töskur.

- (3.123) a. + Stelpan bar töskurnar **inn**.
 girl-the carried bags-the in
 ‘The girl carried the bags in.’

- b. Stelpan bar **inn** töskurnar.

Svenonius (1996b) maintains that the preferences are similar in English and Norwegian, for instance, but claims that intonational differences and discourse factors do not influence the (relative) acceptability in Icelandic

whereas they do (for at least some speakers)⁴⁹ in English and Norwegian. He includes Norwegian examples like the following (slightly modified here):

(3.124) A: 'Where are you going?'

- B: a. Vi skal plukke jentene **opp**. (No)
 we shall pick girls-the up
 'We are picking the girls up.'
 b. Vi skal plukke **opp** jentene.

(3.125) A: 'How will Ingrid and Turid get here?'

- B: a. Vi skal plukke jentene **opp**. (No)
 we shall pick girls-the up
 'We are picking the girls up.'
 b. (?)Vi skal plukke **opp** jentene.

(3.126) A: 'Who have you picked up?'

- B: a. (?)Vi har plukket jentene **opp**. (No)
 we have picked girls-the up
 'We have picked the girls up.'
 b. Vi har plukket **opp** jentene.

According to Svenonius, the orders are pretty much equivalent with a neutral intonation, but if the NP is 'epithetic' (and thus old information or 'no information') as in (3.125), the NP-prt. order is preferred, but if the NP represents new information as in (3.126), the preferences are reversed. Although many speakers of Icelandic may be insensitive to comparable differences (as Svenonius' informants were), it seems to me that it is quite difficult to get the prt.-NP order if the NP is epithetic (or old information, discourse-old) – that is, the general preference of NP-prt. order (in the case of definite NPs) is stronger than usual in such cases:

(3.127) A: Hvernig getum við látið kjósa Siggu og Maju í nefndina?

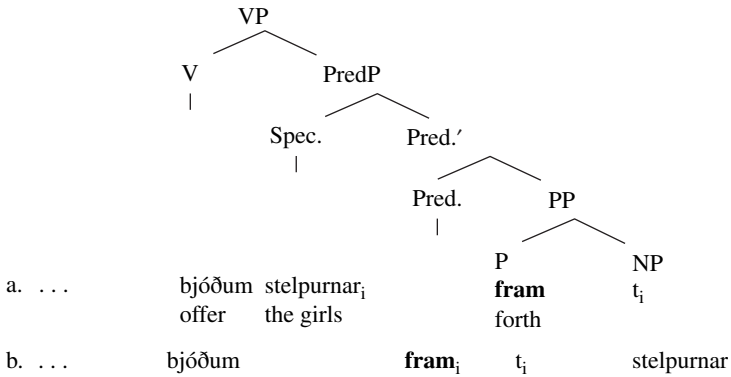
'How can we have Sigga and Maja elected to the committee?'

- B: a. Nú, við bjóðum stelpurnar **fram**.
 well, we offer the girls forth
 'Well, we will propose the girls.'
 b. ?*Nú, við bjóðum **fram** stelpurnar.

⁴⁹ Svenonius (1996b:55) refers to Sandøy (1976) and Faarlund (1977) for reports on Norwegian speakers who generally prefer the Particle-NP order. Conversely, many speakers of Icelandic prefer the NP-prt. order (in the case of definite NPs and neutral intonation), as Svenonius notes (1996b:60).

As mentioned above, Svenonius (1996a, b) suggests a biclausal analysis of sorts for the particle constructions, proposing structures roughly like the following (where the PredP is supposed to be a ‘typical small clause’ – for another small-clausey analysis of particle constructions, see Collins and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996):

(3.128)



This analysis is meant to capture the similarities between particles and prepositions (particles are often homophonous with some prepositions, cf., e.g., Svenonius 2003 – although they can also be homophonous with directional adverbs; see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:126–7, 134–5) and the differences between VPs containing particle verbs and VPs containing verbs subcategorizing for PP-complements that are not small clauses (cf. the discussion around (3.112) and (3.113) above): the underlying PP in the particle construction never stays intact since either the NP (or DP) moves out of it or else the particle (the ‘preposition’) does. In both instances the movement is supposed to be caused by the need to check ‘strong features’ of the functional head of the small clause (here labelled PredP). The features in question allegedly have something to do with the so-called Extended Projection Principle, EPP, which is basically the idea (going back to Chomsky 1981) that every clause needs a subject of some kind. One problem with this kind of analysis is that the EPP has proved to be notoriously difficult to account for and understand (see, e.g., the papers in Svenonius 2002). Another problem is the fact that the division of features into weak and strong has often been criticized for being just an ad hoc way of describing facts that need to be explained. But the observed facts and differences are surely intriguing, as Svenonius has explicitly shown (1996a, b, 2003 – see also Ramchand and Svenonius 2002).

Case, agreement, grammatical relations and thematic roles

4.1 A descriptive overview

4.1.1 *Some structural properties of subjects and objects*

Some of the most frequently listed structural properties of Icelandic subjects are illustrated in the following subsections and contrasted with object properties when possible (for a general overview of subject properties, see McCloskey 1997 and references cited there; for overviews of the properties of Icelandic subjects, see, e.g., Zaenen et al. 1985; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989, 1997, 2002a; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1997; Jóhanna Barðdal 2002; Jóhanna Barðdal and Thórhallur Eythórsson 2003a, b; Thórhallur Eythórsson and Jóhanna Barðdal 2003, 2005; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:269ff. and references cited by these authors). Since a large part of this chapter will be devoted to the properties of oblique subjects, it is necessary to establish ways of distinguishing these from preposed objects. Hence the behaviour of canonical nominative subjects will often be contrasted with that of preposed objects in the following sections. In the following subsections some (further) properties of objects are reviewed. Note that it is not being claimed here that these alleged properties of subjects show that ‘subject’ is necessarily some sort of a primitive notion in linguistic theory. These properties listed below are presumably of various types. All that is being shown is that NPs that most linguists will call subjects typically have certain properties that (preposed) objects do not have. In the following sections we will then see that the so-called oblique subjects share these properties with nominative subjects and not with objects. That can then be used – and has been used – to support the claim that the oblique subjects really are subjects and not (preposed) objects of some kind.

4.1.1.1 **Unmarked word order and ‘yes/no’-questions**

The unmarked (default, neutral, normal) word order in declarative sentences is **subject**–finite verb but in direct ‘yes/no’-questions it is finite verb–**subject**, also when the finite verb is a main verb:

- (4.1) a. **Álfurinn** hefur étið ostinn.
Elf-the(N) has eaten cheese-the(A)
- b. Hefur **álfurinn** étið ostinn?
has elf-the(N) eaten cheese-the
- c. **Át álfurinn** ostinn?
ate elf-the(N) cheese-the(A)
'Did the elf eat the cheese?'

Note that a preposed object will not invert with the verb in a direct question:

- (4.2) a. Ostinn hefur álfurinn étið.
cheese-the has elf-the eaten
- b. *Hefur ostinn álfurinn étið?
has cheese-the elf-the eaten

4.1.1.2 Non-subject preposing and word order (the V2 phenomenon)

When some non-subject is preposed in a clause, the **subject** usually immediately follows the finite verb, be it an auxiliary verb or a finite main verb (this is a part of the V2 phenomenon):

- (4.3) a. Ostinn hefur **álfurinn** líklega étið.
the cheese(A) has the elf(N) probably eaten
'The cheese, the elf has probably eaten.'
- b. Í gær át **álfurinn** allan ostinn.
yesterday ate the elf(N) all cheese-the(A)
'Yesterday, the elf ate all the cheese.'

When an object has been preposed, further preposing is ruled out and an attempt to 'invert' the order of a preposed object and a finite verb will not improve such a movement:

- (4.4) a. Ostinn hefur álfurinn étið í gær.
cheese-the has elf-the eaten yesterday
- b. *Í gær ostinn hefur álfurinn étið.
yesterday cheese-the has elf-the eaten
- c. *Í gær hefur ostinn álfurinn étið.
yesterday has cheese-the elf-the eaten

4.1.1.3 Subject definiteness and expletive constructions

Sentences with **indefinite subjects** can usually begin with an expletive *það* 'there', but this is normally unacceptable if the subject is definite (but see

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000a). The definiteness of an object does not play any role here:

- (4.5) a. Það hefur álfur/*álfurinn étið ostinn.
 there has elf/*elf-the eaten cheese-the
 ‘An elf has eaten the cheese.’
- b. Það át einhver álfur ost/ostinn.
 there ate some elf cheese/cheese-the
 ‘Some elf ate cheese/the cheese.’

4.1.1.4 Antecedents of clause mates (binding)

Subjects cannot serve as antecedents for personal pronouns or non-reflexive possessive pronouns in the same clause but objects can:¹

- (4.6) a. **Haraldur**_i rakaði *hann_i /son *hans_i.
 Harold_i (N) shaved *him_i / son *his_i
- b. Ég færði Harald_i bjórinns hans_i.
 I brought Harold(D) beer-the his_i
 ‘I brought Harold his beer.’

4.1.1.5 Antecedents of long-distance reflexives

Subjects can serve as antecedents for long-distance reflexives whereas objects cannot:²

- (4.7) a. **Álfurinn**_i sagði mér [að þú værir hræddur við sig]_i.
 Elf-the(N) told me that you were afraid of REFL
 ‘The elf told me that you were afraid of him.’
- b. *Ég sagði álfinum_i [að þú værir hræddur við sig]_i.
 I told elf-the(D) that you were afraid of REFL

4.1.1.6 Subject ellipsis

It is possible to leave the subject out in the second conjunct in coordinated structures if it is coreferential (coindexed) with the **subject** in the first conjunct but not if it is coreferential with the object (for discussions of elliptical structures in Icelandic, see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1982b, 1990b; Bresnan and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993):

¹ I cannot do justice to the distribution of personal pronouns and reflexives and their interaction here. I will return to that issue in section 9.1.1 below.

² For further details about long-distance reflexives the reader is referred to section 9.1.2.

(4.8)

a. **Álfurinn**_i stal ostinum og [_e_i bauð bræðrum sínum í mat]
 Elf-the(N) stole cheese-the(D) and *e* invited brothers his(REFL) to dinner
 ‘The elf stole the cheese and (he) invited his brothers to dinner.’

b. *Ég hitti álfinn_i og [_e_i bauð mér í mat].
 I met elf-the(A) and *e* invited me to dinner

4.1.1.7 Subject-to-object raising

Verbs like *telja*, *álíta* and a few others in Icelandic can take as their complement the so-called ‘Exceptional Case Marking’ (ECM – or ‘Accusativus-cum-Infinitivo’ (AcI) or ‘Subject-to-Object Raising’ (SOR)) construction. Any sentence of the form **subject** – finite verb – X can be ‘turned into’ such a complement if it is embedded under verbs of this kind. Then the subject shows up in the accusative, or else in the dative or genitive if it is so marked lexically (cf. 4.42), and the verb in the infinitive. A sentence where some non-subject (e.g. an object) has been preposed cannot be so embedded:

- (4.9) a. **Álfurinn** hefur stolið ostinum
 Elf-the(N) has stolen cheese-the(D)
 → Ég tel [**álfinn** hafa stolið ostinum].
 I believe elf-the(A) have(inf.) stolen cheese-the(D)
 ‘I believe the elf to have stolen the cheese.’
- b. Ostinum hefur álfurinn stolið.
 cheese-the(D) has elf-the(N) stolen
 → *Ég tel [ostinum hafa álfurinn stolið].
 I believe cheese-the(D) have elf-the(N) stolen

4.1.1.8 Non-overt infinitival subjects

Infinitives exhibiting strict or arbitrary control have non-overt subjects, frequently referred to as **PRO** in the syntactic literature. Hence one can say that one of the properties of subjects is to be able to occur in a non-overt form in infinitives of this kind. Preposed objects cannot (control is represented by identical indices below, as is customary):

- (4.10) a. **María** hitti forsetann á kaffihúsi.
 Mary(N) met president-the(A) at coffee-house
- b. María_i vonaðist til [_{að} **PRO**_i hitta forsetann á kaffihúsi].
 Mary hoped for to meet president-the at coffee-house
 ‘Mary hoped to meet the president in a café.’

- c. [Að PRO hitta forsetann á kaffihúsi] væri skemmtilegt.
 to meet president-the at coffee-house would-be interesting
 'To meet the president in a café would be fun.'

(4.11)

- a. Forsetann hitti **María** á kaffihúsi.
 president-the(A) met Mary(N) at coffee-house
 'The president, Mary met in a café.'
- b. *Forsetinn_i vonaðist til [að PRO_i hitta María á kaffihúsi].
 president-the(N) hoped for to meet Mary(N) in coffee-house
 (Intended meaning: 'The president hoped that Mary would meet (him) in a café.')

It is not even clear how to construct an example to illustrate the impossibility of an arbitrary object PRO.³

4.1.1.9 Extraction out of embedded clauses

Finally, elements can be extracted out of subject-first complement clauses ('that'-clauses):

(4.12)

- a. Ég held [að **María** hafi gefið forsetanum bókina].
 I think that Mary(N) has given president-the(D) book-the(A)
- b. Forsetanum held ég [að **María** hafi gefið ___ bókina].
 president-the(D) think I that Mary(N) has given book-the(A)
 'To the president I think that Mary has given the book.'

Extraction out of complement clauses where a non-subject has been preposed is usually very difficult, on the other hand:

(4.13)

- a. Ég held [að bókina hafi **María** gefið forsetanum ___].
 I think that book-the(A) has Mary(N) given president-the(D)
- b. *Forsetanum held ég [að bókina hafi **María** gefið ___].
 president-the(D) think I that book-the(A) has Mary(N) given

Some of the references given above discuss further characteristics of Icelandic subjects, but this will suffice to give a general idea and to make it possible to compare the properties of oblique (non-nominative) subjects and (preposed) objects.

³ This is not surprising under standard assumptions about PRO (see, e.g., Chomsky 1981): It should not be able to occur at all in object positions.

4.1.1.10 Objects and passive

It is much more difficult to come up with a list of structural properties of objects and indirect objects than of subjects. Although it is often said that objects have the structural property of being able to ‘undergo passivization’, this is not entirely true. Although most direct objects in Icelandic can (regardless of their morphological case) be passivized in the sense that objects of active constructions correspond to subjects of passive ones, not all objects can. First, observe the following (objects highlighted):

- (4.14) a. Þeir skömmuðu **hundinn**.
 they scolded dog-the(Asg.m.)
- b. Hundurinn var skammaður.
 dog-the(Nsg.m.) was scolded(Nsg.m.)
- c. Þeir hjálpuðu **manninum**.
 they helped man-the(D)
- d. Manninum var hjálpað.
 man-the(Dsg.m.) was helped(Nsg.n.)
- e. Þeir söknuðu **mannsins**.
 they missed man-the(Gsg.m.)
- f. Mannsins var saknað.
 man-the(Gsg.m.) was missed(Nsg.n.)

As illustrated here, accusative, dative and genitive objects can all passivize, although the case and agreement patterns will vary: accusative objects in the active correspond to nominative subjects in the passive, while dative and genitive objects correspond to dative and genitive subjects in the passive. This will be discussed in more detail in the following sections, including the subject properties of the non-nominative passive subjects (see also Zaenen et al. 1985), as will the related agreement pattern.⁴ Note also that although agentive verbs (verbs taking agent subjects in the active) are most likely to undergo passivization, some non-agentive verbs also do, for example *sakna* ‘miss’ (experiencer subject). But many non-agentive verbs do not passivize at all in Icelandic, although corresponding verbs often passivize in English, for instance:

⁴ As the observant reader may have noted, nominative subjects in the passive trigger case, number and gender agreement on the past participle in the passive (cf. (4.14b)) whereas dative and genitive subjects in the passive do not trigger any agreement at all and the past participle shows up in the default (nominative) neuter singular form (also referred to as the supine form, as mentioned in chapter 1).

- (4.15) a. Þeir eiga **hundinn**.
they own dog-the(Asg.m.)
- b. *Hundurinn er áttur (af þeim).
dog-the(Nsg.m.) is owned (by them(D))
- c. Þeir hlutu **vinninginn**.
they got prize-the(Asg.m.)
- d. *Vinningurinn var hlotinn (af þeim).
prize-the(Nsg.m.) was got (by them)
- e. Þeir heyrðu **hávaðann**.
they heard noise-the(Asg.m.)
- f. *Hávaðinn var heyrður (af þeim).⁵
noise-the(Nsg.m.) was heard (by them)
- g. Þeir týndu **hundinum**.
they lost dog-the(Dsg.m.)
- h. *Hundinum var týnt (af þeim).
dog-the(Dsg.m.) was lost (by them)

This shows, then, that not all objects passivize. Furthermore, it is not only direct objects that undergo passivization. Indirect objects typically do too (in fact, direct objects apparently do not passivize over indirect ones, cf. section 3.2.2.4), as reviewed below (direct objects highlighted):

- (4.16) a. Þeir hafa sent henni **peningana**.
they have sent her(D) money-the(Apl.m.)
goal theme
'They have sent her the money.'

⁵ It is possible that regular passivization of the experiencer verbs *heyra* 'hear' and *sjá* 'see' is blocked by the existence of the *-st*-forms *heyrast* 'be heard' and *sjást* 'be seen' of these verbs. As indicated here, these *-st*-verbs have a passive meaning. Similarly, the *-st*-verb *finnst* 'be found' corresponds to the agentive *finna* 'find', which cannot undergo regular passivization either:

- (i) a. Hann sást/*var séður þar.
he saw-*st*/*was seen there
'He was seen there.' (only the *-st*-form possible)
- b. Hún fannst/*var fundin þar.
she found-*st*/*was found there
'She was found there.' (only the *-st*-form possible)

Facts of this sort are discussed in chapter 5, e.g. section 5.1.2.

- b. Henni hafa verið sendir **peningarnir**.
 her(D) have(pl.) been sent(Npl.m.) money-the(Npl.m.)
 goal theme
 ‘The money has been sent to her.’

Note in particular that, although the dative goal (*henni* ‘her’) shows up in the subject position here, the theme is now marked nominative and triggers number agreement on the finite auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’ and case, number and agreement on the past participle *sendir* ‘sent’. This might seem rather suspicious for various reasons: first, nominative is the canonical subject case and objects typically show up in the accusative (or some other non-nominative case) and not in the nominative. Second, objects normally do not trigger number agreement of finite verbs in Germanic languages. Hence it is necessary to present some arguments for the subjecthood of the dative goal *henni* ‘her’ in (4.16b) – and thus the objecthood of the nominative theme *peningarnir* ‘the money’ – and I will do so in the [following section](#).

It should be noted here, however, that passivization is more strictly limited to objects (direct or indirect) in Icelandic than it is in some other languages, in that objects of prepositions cannot be passivized in Icelandic. Observe the following contrast between Icelandic and English, for instance (see also Maling and Zaenen 1985; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:393):

- (4.17) a. People often talked about this man.
 b. This man was often talked about __ (by people).
 c. Somebody has slept in this bed.
 d. This bed has been slept in __ (by somebody).
- (4.18) a. Fólk talaði oft um þennan mann.
 people talked often about this man(A)
 ‘People often talked about this man.’
 b. *Þessi maður var oft talaður um __ .
 this man(N) was often talked about
 c. Einhver hefur sofið í þessu rúmi.
 somebody has slept in this bed(D)
 d. *Þetta rúm hefur verið sofið í __ .
 this bed(N) has been slept in

As illustrated in (4.17), it is possible to find completely acceptable examples in English where it seems that the object of a preposition has been passivized. (i.e. ‘turned into’ the subject of a passive). This is not possible in Icelandic. In (4.18b) I have tried to make the accusative object of the prepositional verb

tala um ‘talk about’ into a nominative subject in the passive but the result is clearly ungrammatical. In (4.18d) we see that it is also impossible to get a nominative passive subject corresponding to the dative governed by the preposition *í* ‘in’, although a corresponding sentence is fine in English (e.g. *This bed has been slept in by George Washington*).

Now it must be pointed out, for the sake of clarification, that the following is fine:

- (4.19) Þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofð í ____ .
 this bed(D) has (never) been slept in

At first blush this might look like a passive version of (4.18c), with the (lexical) dative case of the active object ‘preserved’ on a passive subject. It can easily be shown, however, that *þessu rúmi* ‘this bed’ in (4.19) is not a subject but rather a preposed prepositional object in an impersonal passive construction of the kind illustrated in (4.20a). Various constituents can be preposed in such a construction and in all instances the expletive *það* ‘there’ ‘disappears’ as usual (the expletive *það* in Icelandic only occurs in preverbal position, as discussed in section 6.1 below). This is shown in (4.20b, c, d):

- (4.20) a. Það hefur (aldrei) verið sofð í þessu rúmi.
 there has (never) been slept in this bed(D)
- b. Þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofð í ____ .
 this bed(D) has (never) been slept in
- c. Í þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofð ____ .
 in this bed(D) has (never) been slept
- d. Aldrei hefur__ verið sofð í þessu rúmi.
 never has been slept in this bed(D)

In addition, if *þessu rúmi* ‘this bed(D)’ was a subject in (4.19) then it should be possible to get it in second position after the finite verb in a direct question (cf. the subject test in (4.1) above). But that is impossible:

- (4.21) *Hefur þessu rúmi aldrei verið sofð í ____ ?
 has this bed(D) never been slept in

The English translation of (4.21) is fine, of course, because English allows passivization of (some) prepositional objects. Thus it is clear that while preposition stranding is fine in Icelandic, for example in Topicalization and *wh*-movement, passivization does not apply to prepositional objects. I will return to this issue in section 5.1.3 below.

4.1.1.11 Objects and Object Shift

As discussed in section 2.1.5, Object Shift in Icelandic only applies to verbal objects (including indirect objects as discussed in section 3.2.2.4) and not to objects of prepositions. It is thus restricted to NP-complements of verbs just like passivization is (cf. the discussion in the preceding section). A relevant contrast is shown below:

- (4.22) a. *Ég snerti ekki bókina.*
 I touched not book-the
 'I didn't touch the book.'
- b. *Ég snerti **bókina** ekki.*
 I touched book-the not
- c. *Ég kom ekki við bókina.*
 I came not with book-the
 'I didn't touch the book.'
- d. **Ég kom **bókina** ekki við __.*

In this respect, Object Shift differs from West Germanic Scrambling, for instance, as discussed in chapter 2 (see also the discussion in Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001a:158, *passim*).

4.1.1.12 Structural relations between the verb and its objects

As discussed in section 3.2.2.1, there is some evidence that the indirect object (IO) is structurally superior to the direct object (DO) (i.e., higher in the hierarchical structure). This is usually demonstrated by reference to some of the so-called Barss-Lasnik asymmetries reviewed in section 3.2.2.1. Another set of facts is standardly taken to suggest that the thematic relationship between the verb and DO is more 'direct' than that between the verb and its IO. Thus it is quite common, for instance, to find idioms that are made up of a verb and a particular DO with the IO being 'left open' as it were. Some Icelandic examples are given in (4.23) (cf. Kjartan G. Ottósson 1991a:82):

- (4.23) a. *gefa X gætur*
 give X(D) guards(A) = 'observe somebody'
- b. *senda X tóninn*
 send X(D) tone-the(A) = 'scold, yell at'
- c. *krefja X sagna*
 demand X(A) stories(G) = 'ask, ask for information'
- d. *árna X heilla*
 wish X(D) luck(G) = 'congratulate'

Recall that under a Larsonian-type VP-shell analysis of the kind described in section 3.2.2.1, the verb and its DO form a constituent, that is the DO is the sister of the verb in underlying structure whereas the IO is in a specifier position of its VP. In that sense such an analysis can be said to account for this relative closeness between the verb and its DO as opposed to the IO.

4.1.2 Case marking of subjects, objects and indirect objects

4.1.2.1 Subject cases

Although nominative is the canonical subject case in Icelandic, as already stated, there is not a one-to-one relationship between case and grammatical relations in the language.⁶ First, nominative also marks left-dislocated NPs, appellatives and some objects in the active:

(4.24)

- a. **María**_i, ég veit ekki hver hjálpaði henni_i. (left dislocation)
 Mary(N) I know not who helped her(D)
 ‘Mary, I don’t know who helped her.’
- b. Vantar þig ekki peninga, **María**? (appellative)
 lack you(A) not money(A) Mary(N)
 ‘Don’t you need money, Mary?’
- c. Mér hafa alltaf leiðst þessir **kjölturakkar**. (nom. object)
 me(D) have(pl.) always bored these poodles(Npl.m.)
 ‘I have always found these poodles boring.’

The left-dislocated NP in (4.24a) shows up in the nominative although it is coreferential with the dative *henni* ‘her’ later in the sentence (for some discussion of left dislocation in Icelandic, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:59ff.). Similarly, the appellative *María* in the b-example is marked nominative

⁶ Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b) has estimated the relative frequency of the different subject cases in corpora containing different kinds of text. Her percentages are roughly like this (excluding modern children’s literature and modern spoken Icelandic to make the corpora as comparable as possible, cf. Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:180):

	Subject case:		Object case:	
	Mod. Ic	Old Ic	Mod. Ic	Old Ic
N	94%	93%	3%	6%
A	1%	1%	69%	67%
D	4%	6%	25%	22%
G	< 1%	< 1%	3%	5%

As shown here, there are no drastic differences between the two stages.

although it corresponds to the preceding accusative *þig* ‘you’ (*vanta* ‘lack’ being one of the verbs that take a non-nominative subject in Icelandic). Finally, (4.24c) is an example of a sentence with a dative experiencer subject (*mér* ‘me’) and a nominative object (*þessir kjölturakkar* ‘these poodles’), and the object triggers number agreement on the finite auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’, something that obviously calls for further discussion. The point here is simply that nominative is not reserved for NPs in subject position. A part of the nominative story could be accounted for by maintaining that nominative is the default case in Icelandic. As a further argument for such a claim one could mention constructions like the following, where Icelandic contrasts with English, to some extent at least:

- (4.25) a. Hver er þetta? Það er **ég**/*mig/*mér/*mín.
 who is this it is I(N/*A/*D/*G)
 ‘Who is there? It’s me.’
- b. María og **ég**/*mig/*mér/*mín fórum á námskeiðið.
 Mary and I(N/*A/*D/*G) went to course-the
 ‘Mary and I took the course.’

In addition to the elements already mentioned, nominative is also found on agreeing predicate NPs (see also Yip et al. 1987:243 – for a more extensive discussion of the case marking of predicative NPs in Icelandic, see Maling and Sprouse 1995 and references cited there):

- (4.26) a. María er **snillingur**.
 Mary(N) is genius(N)
- b. Hún var kosin **forseti**.
 she(N) was elected president(N)

Here (4.26b) is the passive version of (4.27), where the secondary predicate *forseta* ‘president’ (A) agrees with the object in case and not the subject as in the passive:

- (4.27) Þeir kusu hana forseta.
 they elected her(A) president(A)

The claim that the predicate NPs in (4.26) receive their case by agreement rather than independent case assignment of some sort is supported by the fact that if these constructions are embedded under an ECM-verb which governs the accusative on the embedded subject (of the infinitive), these predicate NPs also show up in the accusative (cf. also Yip et al. 1987:243ff., for a different view see Maling and Sprouse 1995):

(4.28)

- a. Ég tel Maríu (vera) snilling.
 I believe Mary(A) (be(inf.)) genius(A)
 'I believe Mary to be a genius.'
- b. Þeir telja hana verða kosna forseta.
 they believe her(A) become(inf.) elected(A) president(A)
 'They believe her to be elected president.' (i.e., 'They believe that she will be ...')

The accusative infinitival (or small clause) subjects can in turn be passivized, as if they were in object position (a standard argument for a subject-to-object raising analysis of the kind made famous by Postal 1974). Then they show up in the nominative, and the predicate NPs again agree with them in case:

(4.29)

- a. María er talin (vera) **snillingur**.
 Mary(N) is believed (be) genius(N)
 'Mary is believed to be a genius.'
- b. Hún er talin verða kosin **forseti**.
 she(N) is believed become elected president(N)
 'She is believed to be elected president.' (i.e., 'It is believed that she will be ...')

The facts reviewed above can be interpreted as showing that nominative is the default case in Icelandic, although that is by no means the whole story, as we shall see.

I have now established that nominative case is not reserved for subjects, that is, that not all nominative NPs are subjects. Conversely, it has often been argued that Icelandic has a variety of non-nominative (i.e. accusative, dative or genitive) subjects. This means that the relationship between morphological case and grammatical relations in Icelandic is much more indirect than frequently assumed for Germanic languages, for instance.⁷ The alleged non-nominative subjects include NPs like the following (highlighted here) (for rich lists and thematic classification of Icelandic verbs taking oblique subjects, see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003, 2005a:405ff.):⁸

⁷ For arguments supporting the claim that oblique subjects are a 'Germanic inheritance', see Thórhallur Eythórsson and Jóhanna Barðdal 2003, 2005.

⁸ Andrews (1976) was apparently the first to present syntactic arguments for the claim that non-nominative subjects exist in Icelandic, but it might be noted here that the relevant NPs are sometimes referred to by the term *frumlagsígildi* (lit. 'subject equivalents') in some traditional Icelandic grammars – or referred to as the 'logical subject' of the relevant verb (see, e.g., Stefán Einarsson 1945:107).

(4.30) *Accusative subjects*

- a. **Strákana** rak á land á eyðieyju.
 boys-the(A) drifted to shore on desert-island(D)
 'The boys drifted ashore on a desert island.'
- b. **Míg** grunar að hann sé farinn.
 me(A) suspects that he be(subjunct.) gone
 'I suspect that he has left.'
- c. **Hana** vantar peninga.
 her(A) lacks money(A)
 'She lacks(needs) money.'

(4.31) *Dative subjects*

- a. **Stelpunum** leiddist í skólanum.
 girls-the(D) bored in school-the(D)
 'The girls were bored in school.'
- b. **Mér** býður við setningafræði.
 me(D) loathes against syntax(D)
 'Syntax makes me sick.'
- c. **Þeim** líður vel.
 them(D) feels good
 'They feel fine.'

(4.32) *Genitive subjects*

- a. **Stórhriðarinnar** gætti ekki í hellinum.
 blizzard-the(G) was-noticeable not in cave-the(D)
 'The blizzard wasn't noticeable in the cave.'
- b. **Ykkar** nýtur ekki við lengur.
 you(G.pl.) enjoys not with longer
 'You are no longer here to help us.'

As shown here, the oblique subjects can be accusative (not very common), dative (quite common) and genitive (very rare).⁹ For the sake of completeness

⁹ One can get a rough idea about the frequency of verbs and predicates taking non-nominative subjects in Modern Icelandic by considering the figures given by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1997–1998 (=JGJ-98) and 2003 (=JGJ-03)) and Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b:249, JB). Note that Jóhannes' figures are based on a dictionary count (*Íslensk orðabók* 1983), Jóhanna's on actual occurrences in her corpora. Observe further that in his first paper Jóhannes only included verbs and usages that he was familiar with, in the second one he included all the verbs and usages he found in the dictionary, including very rare verbs and obsolete usage. Thus the figures marked JGJ-03 are probably more representative of older Icelandic than of the modern language. In both instances fixed idioms and predicates with *vera* 'be', *verða* 'become' are excluded in the count (although Jóhannes 1997–1998 includes many examples of that kind). In addition, note that some of the verbs included can

we can add a few passive and active examples that were discussed above while the indirect relationship between case marking and grammatical relations was being demonstrated:

- (4.33) a. **Manninum** var hjálpað.
man-the(Dsg.m.) was helped(Nsg.n.)
- b. **Mannsins** var saknað.
man-the(Gsg.m.) was missed(Nsg.n.)
- c. **Henni** hafa verið sendir peningarnir.
her(D) have(pl.) been sent(Npl,m.) money-the(Npl.m.)
'The money has been sent to her.'
- d. **Mér** hafa alltaf leiðst þessir kjölturakkar.
me(D) have(pl.) always bored these poodles(Npl.m.)
'I have always found these poodles boring.'

In addition to the types of oblique subject constructions listed here, there are a number of constructions with a dative or genitive subject + the verbs *vera* 'be' or *verða* 'become' followed by a predicate of some sort. Some of these are relatively fixed idiomatic expressions (although idioms with oblique subjects are not restricted to constructions of this sort, see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2003:150–1), others are more productive (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:202ff.; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998:34):

- (4.34) a. **Mér** er kalt.
me(D) is cold(Nsg.n.)
'I am cold.'
- b. **Ólafi** er ekki bjóðandi.
Olaf(D) is not inviting(pres.part.)
'Olaf cannot be invited.' (i.e., he is not 'invitable')

Footnote 9 (*cont.*)

take either an accusative or a dative subject. Last but not least: these figures should just be taken as rough estimates – and they disregard the possibility that, say, new verbs taking dative subjects could occur:

	JGJ-98	JGJ-03	JB
(i) a. accusative subjects:	60	160	15
b. dative subjects:	120	225	70
c. genitive subjects:	(not listed)	(not listed)	<10

This shows that dative subjects are much more common than accusative ones, especially in the modern active use.

- c. Þess er enginn kostur.
of-that(G) is no(N) choice(N)
'That is not an option.'
- d. Honum er vorkunn.
him(D) is pity(N)
'He can be forgiven.' (i.e. 'It is understandable that he ...')
- e. Engan mann var að sjá.
no(A) man(A) was to see
'There was nobody to be seen.'
- f. Hans er ekki að vænta fyrir en á morgun.
his(G) is not to expect until tomorrow
'He is not expected until tomorrow.'

Except for (4.34a), and to some extent also (4.34b), these constructions are relatively fixed idiomatic expressions, and they will not figure prominently in the discussion below.

As has often been shown, the oblique subjects illustrated here have virtually all the structural properties that nominative subjects have. This can be demonstrated by going through the subject properties discussed in sections 4.1.1.1–4.1.1.9 and testing oblique subjects against them. This is done below, although we cannot consider all the properties for all the oblique subjects mentioned above (see also Zaenen et al. 1985; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:204ff., 1991 and references cited by these authors). In addition, since all types of (alleged) oblique subjects mentioned above behave the same way with respect to these tests, it is sufficient to give just a couple of examples involving each construction. The candidates for subjecthood (the oblique NPs) are highlighted.

First, oblique subjects precede the finite verb in default word order and invert with it in direct 'yes/no'-questions:

- (4.35) a. **Strákana** rak á land á eyðieyju.
boys-the(A) drifted to shore on desert-island(D)
→ Rak **strákana** á land á eyðieyju?
drifted boys-the(A) to shore on desert-island(D)
'Did the boys drift ashore on a desert island?'
- b. **Stelpunum** leiddist í skólanum.
girls-the(D) bored in school-the(D)
'The girls were bored in school.'
→ Leiddist **stelpunum** í skólanum?
bored girls-the(D) in school-the(D)
'Did the girls get bored in school?'

- c. **Stórhriðarinnar** gætti ekki í hellinum.
 blizzard-the(G) was-noticeable not in cave-the(D)
 ‘The blizzard wasn’t noticeable in the cave.’
- Gætti **stórhriðarinnar** ekki í hellinum?
 was-noticeable blizzard-the(G) not in cave-the(D)
 ‘Was the blizzard not noticeable in the cave?’
- d. **Henni** hafa verið sendir peningarnir.
 her(D) have(pl.) been sent(Npl,m.) money-the(Npl,m.)
 ‘The money has been sent to her.’
- Hafa **henni** verið sendir peningarnir?
 her(D) have(pl.) been sent(Npl,m.) money-the(Npl,m.)
 ‘Has the money been sent to her?’

Second, when some non-subject is preposed, the oblique subjects invert with the finite verb:

- (4.36) a. Ígær vantaði **hana** peninga.
 yesterday lacked her(A) money
 ‘Yesterday she needed money.’
- b. Þá var **mannsins** saknað.
 then was man-the(Gsg,m.) missed
 ‘Then the man was missed.’
- c. Þessir kjölturakkar hafa **mér** alltaf leiðst.
 these poodles(Npl,m.) have(pl.) me(D) always bored
 ‘These poodles have always bored me.’

Note in particular that when the nominative NP in the c-example is preposed, the dative subject occurs immediately after the finite verb and not in the object position after the main verb, as the corresponding NP does in the English translation. That kind of order would in fact be ungrammatical, but it is the one which would be expected if the nominative NP was the subject and the dative the object (as the corresponding NP apparently is in English):

- (4.37) *Þessir kjölturakkar hafa alltaf leiðst mér
 these poodles(Npl,m.) have(pl.) always bored me(D)

This suggests that the nominative NP cannot be the subject of this predicate.¹⁰

¹⁰ As discovered by Helgi Bernóðsson 1982, a few Icelandic D-N predicates (dative subject, nominative object) can apparently also assign the subject role to the nominative argument and the object role to the dative and thus fit the N-D pattern. These include verbs like *falla í geð* ‘like’ (see also Zaenen et al. 1985:469; Smith 1996; Kiparsky 1997:484–5; Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–1998; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001a; Þórhallur Eythórsson and Jóhanna Barðdal 2003:165). Consequently, there are two possible ‘default’ orders and either subject (D or N) will then have the subject

Third, the definiteness of oblique subjects blocks expletive constructions just like the definiteness of nominative subjects does:

(4.38)

- a. Það rak ***strákana/einhverja stráka** á land á eyðieyju.
there drifted *boys-the(A)/some boys(A) to shore on desert-island(D)
'Some boys drifted ashore on a desert island.'
- b. Það býður ***stelpunum/sumum stelpum** við setningafræði.
there loathes *girls-the(D)/some girls(D) against syntax(D)
'Syntax makes some girls sick.'
- c. Það hafa ***henni/einhverjum** verið sendir peningarnir.
there have *her(D)/somebody(D) been sent(Npl,m.) money-the(Npl.m.)
'Somebody has been sent the money.'

Note that in the last example the definiteness of the nominative NP has no effect, but we would expect it to if the nominative was the subject.

Fourth, oblique subjects show the same antecedent properties within clauses as nominative subjects, that is, they can be coreferential (coindexed) with reflexive pronouns in the same clause but not with personal pronouns:

- (4.39) a. **Hana_i** vantar peningana ***hennar_i / sína_i**
her(A) lacks money(A) her *nonrefl./refl.
'She lacks(needs) money.'
- b. **Honum_i** býður við spegilmynd ***hans_i / sinni_i**
him(D) loathes against reflection(D) his *nonrefl./refl.
'His (own) reflection makes him sick.'
- c. **Manninum_i** var hjálpað heim til ***hans_i / sín_i**
man-the(Dsg.m.) was helped(Nsg.n.) home to *him/himself
'The man was helped to his (own) home.'

Footnote 10 (*cont.*)

properties under discussion, such as being able to invert with the finite verb in direct 'yes/no'-questions:

- (i) a. Þér hefur fallið bíllinn vel í geð.
you(D) have fallen car-the(N) well in liking
- b. Bíllinn hefur fallið þér vel í geð.
car-the(N) has fallen you(D) well in liking
'You have liked the car./The car has been to your liking.'
- c. Hefur þér fallið bíllinn vel í geð?
- d. Hefur bíllinn fallið þér vel í geð?
'Have you liked the car?/Has the car been to your liking?'

It would not be surprising to find that some speakers prefer one of these versions over the other, but this has not been investigated systematically.

Fifth, oblique subjects can function as antecedents of long-distance reflexives:¹¹

- (4.40) **Hana**_i grunar [að þú elskir sig_i].
 her suspects that you love refl.
 'She suspects that you love her.'

Sixth, oblique subjects can license the ellipsis of nominative subjects – and vice versa (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1982b):

- (4.41) a. **Stelpunum** leiddist í skólanum og (þær) fóru heim.
 girls-the(D) bored in school-the(D) and (they(N)) went home
 'The girls were bored in school and (they) went home.'
- b. Stelpurnar fóru í skólann en (**þeim**) leiddist þar.
 girls-the(N) went to school-the(A) but (them(D)) bored there
 'The girls went to school, but (they) were bored there.'
- c. **Hana** vantar peninga og (hún) verður að fara að vinna.
 her(A) lacks money(A) and (she(N)) has to go to work(inf.)
 'She lacks(needs) money and (she) must go to work.'
- d. Hún eyðir miklu og (**hana**) vantar alltaf peninga.
 she spends much and (her(A)) lacks always money

Seventh, constructions with oblique subjects can be embedded under ECM-verbs:

- (4.42)
- a. Ég tel **honum** vera vorkunn.
 I believe him(D) be pity(N)
 'I believe that he can be forgiven.' (or: '... that it is understandable that he ...')
- b. Við álitum **mannsins** hafa verið saknað lengi.
 we believe man-the(Gsg.m.) have been missed(Nsg.n.) long
 'We believe the man to have been missed for a long time.'

Note that although the ECM-verbs govern accusative, the oblique subjects keep their lexically assigned case (dative, genitive).

Eighth, controlled and arbitrary non-overt infinitival subjects (PRO) can correspond to oblique subjects, although this is quite rare (see the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1991 and references cited there):¹²

¹¹ Since long-distance reflexivization is heavily dependent on the presence of verbs of saying (cf. the discussion in chapter 9), thinking and the like, this property can only be tested with a very limited set of oblique subjects.

¹² One of the complications is the fact that control infinitives normally have to represent some voluntary action, preferably agentive, and oblique subjects are never agents, as we shall see below. Hence one can only use control verbs like *búast við* 'expect', *vonast til* 'hope for' and not, say, *reyna* 'try'.

- (4.43) a. Strákarnir_i búast við [að **PRO**_i reka á land á eyðieyju].
 boys-the(N) expect for to drift to shore on desert-island
 'The boys expect to drift ashore on a desert island.'
- b. [Að **PRO** reka á land á eyðieyju] gæti verið spennandi.
 to drift to shore on desert-island could be exciting
 'To drift ashore on a desert island could be exciting.'
- c. Stelpurnar_i vonast til [að **PRO** leiðast ekki í skólanum].
 girls-the(N) hope for to be-bored not in school-the
 'The girls hope not to get bored at school.'
- d. [Að **PRO** leiðast í skólanum] hefur komið fyrir marga.
 to be-bored in school-the has happened to many
 'To be bored at school has happened to many.'

As will be discussed in section 8.2.2 below, this test has been somewhat more controversial than the others in theoretical and comparative discussions.

Ninth, it is just as easy to extract out of embedded clauses with oblique subjects as embedded clauses with nominative subjects:

- (4.44) a. Í hellinum held ég [að **stórhriðarinnar** hafi ekki gætt __].
 in cave-the think I that blizzard-the(G) has not been-noticeable
 'In the cave I think the blizzard was not noticeable.'
- b. Peningarnir sagði hann [að **henni** hefðu verið sendir __ í gær].
 money-the(N) said he that her(D) had been sent yesterday
 'The money he said had been sent to her yesterday.'
- c. Þessir kjölturakkar veit ég [að **honum** hafa alltaf leiðst __].
 these poodles know I that him(D) have always bored
 'These poodles I know have always bored him.'

A variant of this last demonstration can also be phrased as follows (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:205–6): non-subject fronting (Topicalization) is difficult in certain types of embedded clauses, for example indirect questions, but oblique subjects are fine in initial position in such clauses (i.e. immediately after the complementizer). In this respect they contrast with preposed objects, including nominative ones:

- (4.45) a. María spurði [hvort **mér** hefði aldrei leiðst hann].
 Mary asked whether me(D) had never bored he(N)
 'Mary asked whether I had never been bored by him.'
- b. *María spurði [hvort hann hefði **mér** aldrei leiðst].
 Mary asked whether he had me(D) never bored

We have seen, then, that the oblique subjects can be shown to have a variety of subject properties. In addition, the nominative objects can be shown to have object properties, to the extent that objects have structural properties of their own. Thus they show the same behaviour with respect to Object Shift as non-nominative objects do (optional NPOS, obligatory OS of unstressed pronouns):¹³

- (4.46) a. Mér leiðast ekki þessir kjölturakkar.
me(D) bore not these poodles(Npl.m.)
'I am not bored by these poodles.'
- b. Mér leiðast **þessir kjölturakkar** ekki.
me(D) bore these poodles not
- c. *Mér leiðast ekki þeir.
me(D) bore not they(Npl.m.)
- d. Mér leiðast **þeir** ekki.
me(D) bore they(N) not
'I am not bored by them.'

The only canonical subject property that oblique subjects do not have is that they do not trigger subject-verb agreement. We have seen several examples of this above and a few are added here for the sake of completeness: in (4.47) I have varied the person and number of the oblique subject and, as the reader will note, this has no influence on the form of the finite verb. It always shows up in a form corresponding to 3sg. In the a-examples we have accusative subjects, in the b-examples dative subjects and in the c-examples genitive subjects:¹⁴

¹³ This cannot be demonstrated for nominative objects of passive constructions since OS is dependent on finite main verb movement, and thus the absence of an auxiliary verb, but the passive in Icelandic always involves an auxiliary. Note that the fact that these nominative arguments show the 'object property' of undergoing OS (see also section 4.1.1.11) can be interpreted as an argument against the analysis proposed by Van Valin 1991, who wanted to argue that these nominative NPs were not really objects, witness their inability to undergo passivization (Van Valin 1991:176). As we shall see, however, passive in Icelandic is more closely connected to agentivity of the main verbs involved than passive in English is, for instance. All verbs taking non-nominative subjects are non-agentive, but so are many verbs that take nominative subjects, and these typically do not passivize either (see sections 4.1.1.10 and 5.1).

¹⁴ Note that there is some case syncretism in the pronominal forms. Thus Apl. and Dpl. are identical in the 1pl. and 2pl. pronouns, for instance.

- (4.47) a. Mig/Þig/Hana/Okkur/Ykkur/Þá grunaði ekkert.
 me/you(sg.)/her/us/you(pl.)/them(3pl.m.) suspected(3sg.) nothing
 'I/You/She/We/You/They suspected nothing.'
- b. Mér/Þér/Henni/Okkur/Ykkur/Þeim leiðist aldrei.
 me/you(sg.)/her/us/you(pl.)/them get-bored(3sg.) never
 'I/You . . . never get bored.'
- c. Vindsins/Vindhviðanna gætti ekki.
 wind-the(sg.)/wind-gusts-the(pl.) was-noticeable(3sg.) not
 'The wind was not noticeable.'

The reason is, obviously, that agreement of the finite verb is dependent on nominative case for some reason. Thus we do not only get agreement of the finite verb with nominative subjects but we also get number agreement of the finite verb with nominative objects, as we have seen (cf., e.g., examples (4.16b) and (4.24c) above). We will return to this issue in section 4.2.3 below.

4.1.2.2 Case marking and monotransitive (dyadic) verbs

Overviews of Icelandic case marking patterns can be found in Stefán Einarsson 1945:105ff., Andrews 1982a, Kress 1982:210ff., Yip, Maling and Jackendoff 1987, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:198ff., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:323ff., and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:403ff., for instance. As Yip et al. (1987:230) point out, there are sixteen (i.e. 4×4) logical possibilities of two-case combinations given the four morphological cases in Icelandic. This is illustrated in (4.48) where non-existing patterns are marked by an asterisk and an overstrike and very rare or exceptional ones enclosed in parentheses (as before I use the abbreviations N, A, D, G for nominative, accusative, dative and genitive, respectively):

- | | | | | |
|--------|------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| (4.48) | (NN) | (AN) | DN | (GN) |
| | NA | AA | * DA | * GA |
| | ND | * AD | * DD | * GD |
| | NG | (AG) | * DG | * GG |

As indicated here, only five of the logically possible sixteen are reasonably common for dyadic verbs, seven do not occur at all and four are either very rare or special in some sense. While no convincing deeper reasons have been proposed in the literature for these apparent restrictions and some of them may be accidents, it is of some interest to look more closely at the patterns. We will first consider the four rare ones.¹⁵

¹⁵ In the following discussion the default assumption is that the verbs involved are transitive (except for the ones that obviously take non-referential predicative NPs).

The NN pattern is the one found in predicative constructions with the copula ‘be’, as mentioned above (see the discussion around (4.26)). It is of course ‘common’ but arguably of a different nature than the rest. The pattern also includes uses of the copula in descriptions of role playing and the same pattern is found with a few other intransitive verbs, such as *verða* ‘become’, *heita* ‘be called’:

(4.49)

- a. *María* er *læknir*.
 Mary(N) is doctor(N)
- b. *Haraldur* er *læknirinn* í nýjustu *uppfærslu* leikritsins.
 Harold(N) is doctor-the(N) in most-recent production play-the(G)
 ‘Harold is the doctor in the most recent production of the play.’
- c. *Þú* verður *lögfræðingur*.
 you(N) become lawyer(N)
 ‘You will become a lawyer.’
- d. *Hún* heitir *María*.
 she(N) is-called Mary(N)

Case marking in constructions of this type is arguably different from the kind of case marking found with transitive verbs. As demonstrated above, the case of the object is not really determined by the (intransitive) main verb. If constructions of this type are embedded under ECM verbs, the case of the subject will ‘turn into’ accusative case and so will the case of the second NP (the predicative NP or whatever). If the matrix ECM-verb is passivized, the case of the two NPs ‘changes’ again into nominative. This was illustrated for predicative constructions with the copula *vera* ‘be’ in (4.28)–(4.29) above, and it can also be demonstrated for *heita* ‘be-called’:

- (4.50) a. *Þeir* telja *hana* *heita* *Maríu*.
 they believe her(A) be-called Mary(A)
 ‘They believe her to be called Mary.’
- b. *Hún* er talin *heita* *María*.
 she(N) is believed be-called Mary(N)
 ‘She is believed to be called Mary.’

Footnote 15 (*cont.*)

A somewhat different analysis has been suggested by Van Valin (1991). He maintains, for instance, that apparent nominative marking of objects is not what it seems to be. The example he discusses (1991:174–6) is *þykja* ‘find, think’, e.g. *Henni þykir Ólafur leiðinlegur* ‘She(D) finds Olaf(N) boring(N)’, which he claims is intransitive in the sense that it only takes one ‘macrorole argument’. Since it is not an activity verb, its macrorole will be an undergoer (roughly = a logical object) and not an actor (roughly = logical subject) and hence the theme (*Ólafur*) and not the experiencer (*henni*) will be the highest ranking argument and thus marked nominative. See also the discussion of thematic roles in 4.2.3.0.

In this sense the NN pattern looks more like an agreement pattern than an ‘independent’ case assignment pattern of particular verbs. Note also that the second NP in these constructions is not an argument of the verb but rather predicated of the first NP. As we are concentrating on case-marking patterns of transitive verbs here (verbs with two arguments), this pattern is enclosed in parentheses in (4.48).¹⁶ Note also that since predicate NPs are not referential, they cannot be ‘referred to’ by the regular personal pronouns. Instead, the (default) neuter singular *það* ‘it’ is used in constructions like the following:

(4.51)

- a. *María er lækni og Guðrún er *hann/það líka.*
 Mary is doctor(Nsg.m.) and Gudrun is *he(m.)/it too
- b. *Þú heitir María og hún heitir *hún/það líka.*
 she is-called Mary(Nsg.m.) and she is-called *she/it too
- c. *Haraldur er lækni núna en Jón var hann/það síðast*
 Harold is doctor-the now but John was he/it last time
 ‘Harold is (i.e. plays) the doctor now but John was last time.’

In the last example there is a choice between a referential pronoun (*hann* ‘he’) and a non-referential one (*það* ‘it’).¹⁷

As indicated in the overview (4.48), the AN-pattern and the AG-pattern are rare and they may in fact be restricted to one verb each, and neither of them sounds colloquial in this kind of usage (cf. Yip et al. 1987:230):

¹⁶ The verb *verða* ‘become’ works the same way, as does *vera* in the sense ‘play the role of’. This can be contrasted with the transitive *leika* ‘play the role of’, which governs the case of its object whatever may happen to its subject in ECM constructions:

- (i) a. *Haraldur lék lækni.*
 Harold(N) played doctor-the(A)
 ‘Harold played the (role of the) doctor.’
- b. *Þeir telja Harald leika lækni.*
 they(N) believe Harold(A) play doctor-the(A)
 ‘They believe Harold to play the doctor.’
- c. *Haraldur er talinn leika lækni.*
 Harold(N) is believed play doctor-the(A)
 ‘Harold is believed to play the doctor.’

¹⁷ What the examples in (4.51) show, of course, is that referential pronouns do not refer to nouns in the text but to the same individuals that the nouns (including names) refer to. So when the nouns are non-referential, as predicate nouns are, referential pronouns cannot be used in the context.

- (4.52) a. Hana hefur líklega sótt syfja.
 her(A) has probably sought sleepiness(N)
 'She has probably become sleepy.'
- b. Þig hefur aldrei iðrað þess.
 you(A) has never regretted that(G)

The initial accusative NPs seem to behave like subjects, however, as shown by the direct question 'inversion', for instance:

- (4.53) a. Hefur hana aldrei sótt syfja?
 has her(A) never sought sleepiness(N)
 'Has she never become sleepy?'
- b. Hefur þig aldrei iðrað þess?
 have you(A) never regretted that(G)

The GN pattern is also extremely restricted – all the examples seem to involve the copula *vera* 'be' and a fixed (predicative?) noun (cf. Yip et al. 1987:230; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:202–3; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998:34; cf. also the examples in (4.34) above):

- (4.54) a. Þess var þá enginn kostur.
 of-that(G) was then no choice(N)
 'That was not possible.'
- b. Hans er bráðum von.
 his(G) is soon hope(N)
 'He is expected soon.'

In the modern language it appears that the genitive is in the subject position of the clause, witness, for instance, the subject-verb inversion in direct questions:

- (4.55) a. Var þess þá enginn kostur?
 was of-that(G) then no choice
 'Was that not possible then?'
- b. Er hans bráðum von?
 is his(G) soon hope(N)
 'Is he expected soon?'

But whatever the proper analysis, it seems that this extremely restricted type is quite different from the more common ones.

We are left, then, with five reasonably common types, and as Yip et al. point out, one would like to find an explanation for the fact that there are not more of them, given the sixteen logically possible combinations. Some

theoretical proposals will be mentioned in section 4.2.1. Here I will concentrate on the descriptive overview.

The NA pattern is apparently the most common one and it could probably be considered the default pattern:

- (4.56)
- | | | | |
|----|--------|--------|-------------|
| a. | Hann | elskar | hana. |
| | he(N) | loves | her(A) |
| b. | Hún | las | bókina. |
| | she(N) | read | book-the(A) |

The ND pattern is also quite common, much more so than in most related languages that have a similar case-marking system. Maling (2002b:31–2) maintains that the archives of the University Dictionary Project contain some 750 ND verbs and to these one could add at least some 70 verbs that are recent borrowings or slang (cf. Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:121). Maling claims that the corresponding number for ND verbs in German is around 140. Some common ND verbs are listed below (see also Maling 2001):

- (4.57)
- | | | | |
|----|--------|----------|-------------|
| a. | Hún | hjálpaði | honum. |
| | she(N) | helped | him(D) |
| b. | Ég | strauk | kettinum. |
| | I(N) | petted | cat-the(D) |
| c. | Hann | kastaði | boltanum. |
| | he(N) | threw | ball-the(D) |

The NG pattern is much less common, on the other hand:

- (4.58)
- | | | | |
|----|-------|--------|-----------------|
| a. | Hann | saknar | hennar. |
| | he(N) | misses | her(G) |
| b. | Ég | krefst | bóta. |
| | I(N) | demand | compensation(G) |

In some instances a prepositional argument is more common than simple genitive case marking in the spoken language. In certain cases the difference between the two variants is not only stylistic, but also semantic, and in others the genitive argument may be restricted to more or less fixed expressions (for further examples, see Kress 1982:220, who does not always explain the difference – observe that there are sometimes non-prepositional variants in English too that are more formal than the prepositional ones):

(4.59)

- a. Hún bíður hans / eftir honum.
 she(N) waits him(G) / for him(D) (the G variant more formal)
 ‘She awaits him /waits for him.’
- b. Ég leitaði þín / að þér.
 I searched you(G) / for you(D). (the G variant more formal)
 ‘I sought you/looked for you.’
- c. Þú verður að geta þess / um það.
 you have to mention it(G) / about it(A) (*geta* ‘mention’ is rather formal)
 ‘You have to mention it.’

The AA pattern is not particularly common and, as we shall see in 4.2.2, it is not entirely stable. Here are some examples (see also Yip et al. 1987:230–1; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:201; Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–1998):

- (4.60) a. Hana vantar vinnu.
 her(A) lacks work(A)
 ‘She needs work.’
- b. Mig dreymdi draum.
 me(A) dreamt dream(A)
 ‘I had a dream.’
- c. Harald brast kjark.
 Harold(A) failed courage(A)
 ‘Harold’s courage failed him. / Harold wasn’t courageous enough.’

The DN pattern, on the other hand, is apparently much more robust and common (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:201) and here we get the number agreement with the object which I mentioned above:¹⁸

- (4.61) a. Mér áskotnuðust peningar.
 me(D) lucked-onto(pl.) money(Npl.)
 ‘I got money by luck.’
- b. Henni líkuðu hestarnir.
 her(D) liked(pl.) horses-the(Npl.)
 ‘She liked the horses.’
- c. Barninu batnaði veikin.
 child-the(D) got-better sickness(N)
 ‘The child recovered from the sickness.’
- d. Stráknum leiddust kennararnir.
 boy-the(D) bored(pl.) teachers-the(Npl.)
 ‘The boy was bored by the teachers.’

¹⁸ There is apparently some speaker variation with respect to this number agreement (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1992a): there are speakers that prefer non-agreement in some constructions of this kind.

4.1.2.3 Case marking and ditransitive (triadic) verbs

With triadic verbs the logical case-marking possibilities are again multiplied by four, that is, the possible combinations should be 64 ($4 \times 4 \times 4 = 64$). But as Yip et al. point out (1987:227) only six of these actually occur, and at least one of them is very rare. Some examples, together with an estimate of the frequency, are given in (4.62) (mostly based on Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:73; see also Kress 1982:210ff.; Maling 2001:459, 2002b:44ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:327ff.; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:404–5). Note that the subject is always nominative:

(4.62)	case			estimated
	combination:	typical verbs:		number:
	NDA	<i>gefa</i> ‘give’	<i>segja</i> ‘tell’	> 220
	NAD	<i>svipta</i> ‘deprive’	<i>leyna</i> ‘conceal’	40
	NDG	<i>óska</i> ‘wish’	<i>synja</i> ‘deny’	30
	NDD	<i>lofa</i> ‘promise’	<i>skila</i> ‘return’	30
	NAG	<i>spyrja</i> ‘ask’	<i>krefja</i> ‘demand’	20
	NAA	<i>kosta</i> ‘cost’	<i>taka</i> ‘take’	2

As shown in (4.62), the NDA-frame is by far the most common, and there is some evidence that it is productive in the sense that new verbs can be used transitively in such a frame. Some examples are given below, including some recent borrowing (*meila* ‘e-mail’, *faxa* ‘send by fax’):

(4.63)	a.	María Mary(N)	<i>gaf</i> gave	Haraldi Harold(D)	<i>bókina</i> . book-the(A)
		‘Mary gave Harold the book.’			
	b.	Hann he(N)	<i>sýndi</i> showed	strákunum boys-the(D)	<i>bátinn</i> . boat-the(A)
		‘He showed the boys the boat.’			
	c.	Haraldur Harold(N)	<i>sendi</i> sent	mér me(D)	<i>ost</i> . cheese(A)
		‘Harold sent me (some) cheese.’			
	d.	Þeir they(N)	<i>föxuðu</i> faxed	mér me(D)	<i>samninginn</i> . contract-the(A)

As Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b:155) and Maling (2002b:44–45) observe, there is some speaker variation with respect to the use of recent loans like *faxa* ‘fax’ and *meila* ‘e-mail’ with the NDA frame, the reason probably being that there are conflicting tendencies at play with regard to the association of morphological case and theme (see section 4.2.3.2).¹⁹

¹⁹ As will be shown in section 4.2.3.2, there appears to be some tendency to assign dative case to object themes, i.e. objects that refer to something that moves: *sparka boltanum* ‘kick the ball(D)’, *henda steininum* ‘throw the rock(D)’, etc. This

The so called dative alternation (or Dative Shift) found in English and many other languages, that is, a pattern where an IO alternates with a prepositional argument, is in Icelandic pretty much restricted to NDA verbs that express actual movement of the direct object. Thus while such an alternation would be possible for all English verbs corresponding to the ones in (4.63), it is only possible for the last two in Icelandic:

- (4.64)
- | | | | |
|-------------|--------|-----------------|----------------|
| a. *María | gaf | bókina | til Haraldar. |
| Mary(N) | gave | book-the(A) | to Harold(G) |
| b. *Hann | sýndi | bátinn | til strákanna. |
| he(N) | showed | boat-the(D) | to boys-the(G) |
| c. Haraldur | sendi | ost | til mín. |
| Harold(N) | sent | cheese(A) | to me(G) |
| d. Þeir | föxuðu | samninginn | til mín. |
| they(N) | faxed | contract-the(A) | to me(G) |

The NAD-frame is also fairly common (cf. Kress 1982:211; Maling 2002b:45; Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 2000b:81ff., 2005a:405):

- (4.65)
- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| a. Lögreglan | svipti | hann | ökuleyfinu. |
| police-the(N) | deprived | him(A) | driver's-licence-the(D) |
| 'The police revoked his driver's licence.' | | | |
| b. Þeir | leyndu | hana | sannleikanum. |
| they(N) | concealed | her(A) | truth-the(D) |
| 'They concealed the truth from her.' | | | |
| c. Dómararnir | rændu | þá | sigrinum. |
| referees-the | robbed | them(A) | victory-the(D) |
| 'The referees snatched the victory from them/robbed them of the victory.' | | | |
| d. Meirihlutinn | varði | stjórnina | falli. |
| majority-the(N) | protected | government-the(A) | fall(D) |
| 'The majority protected the government from falling.' | | | |

In the discussion of the most common pattern, the NDA pattern described above, I said that the first object (the dative) was the 'indirect' one and the second object (the accusative) the 'direct' one. Hence one might wonder which of the two objects in the NAD pattern should be considered direct and which one indirect. To put it differently, do we have any reason to expect that the case on the object tells us whether it is 'direct' or 'indirect' – for example that the accusative always marks the direct object and the dative

Footnote 19 (*cont.*)

sometimes gives rise to interesting minimal pairs, such as *sópa gólfíð* 'sweep the floor(A)' vs. *sópa rykinu undir teppið* 'sweep the dust(D) under the carpet'.

the indirect one? There is apparently no reason to expect that. First, mono-transitive verbs do not only take accusative objects (although accusative is arguably the default direct object case) but also dative, genitive and even nominative objects. Second, we get a variety of case-marking patterns with ditransitive verbs, as shown in (4.62). Thus it is clear that not all indirect objects are marked dative (some of the case patterns in (4.62) have no dative argument), although one could argue that dative is the typical case for indirect objects. Similarly, it is clear that not all direct objects in ditransitive constructions are marked accusative (some of the patterns do not have any accusative argument). Hence it seems a priori more likely that the (default) order of the arguments gives a better indication of their grammatical role in most cases, with indirect objects normally preceding objects (but see the discussion of Inversion structures in section 3.2.2.2 above). More research into the properties of the two objects in ditransitive constructions in Icelandic would be welcomed.²⁰

This said, it seems pretty evident that the NAD verbs in (4.65) belong to different subclasses. Some of them take a direct object and a prepositional argument in English, as shown by the glosses, and prepositional alternatives exist for some of these verbs in Icelandic too. In such instances the PP typically substitutes for the first (or indirect) object, as in the NDA patterns described above. Similarly, the prepositional variant is less formal in some other instances when such a variant exists:

- (4.66) a. Þeir leyndu sannleikanum fyrir henni.
 they(N) concealed truth-the(D) from her(D)
 ‘They concealed the truth from her.’
- b. Dómararnir rændu sigrinum frá þeim.
 referees-the robbed victory-the(D) from them(D)
 ‘The referees snatched the victory from them/robbed them of the victory.’

In cases of this sort the ‘indirect object nature’ of the accusative (first) object in the NAD pattern seems pretty clear. It is probably less clear in examples like (4.65d), and in examples like the following the dative looks very much like an instrumental dative (and the accusative object would then presumably be the direct object – see also the discussion in 4.2.2):

²⁰ Some properties of indirect objects are listed by Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:292. Recall (from chapter 3) that passivization is not a reliable indicator of which object is ‘direct’ and which one is ‘indirect’ in Icelandic since the NP corresponding to the first object in the active typically shows up in subject position in the passive regardless of its case.

- (4.67) Þau skreyttu bílinn fánúm.
 they(Npl.n.) decorated car-the(A) flags(D)
 ‘They decorated the car with flags.’

Not surprisingly, in this example it is the second object that alternates with a prepositional phrase:

- (4.68) Þau skreyttu bílinn með fánúm.
 they(Npl.n.) decorated car-the(A) with flags(D)
 ‘They decorated the car with flags.’

Instrumental datives tend to be more formal than corresponding prepositional phrases and even archaic in some instances.

Although the NDG frame competes with the NDD frame for the third place on the frequency list, it is in fact quite restricted. Most of the verbs involved do not really belong to the informal register and in some instances they are only used in this case frame in fixed expressions (cf. Kress 1982:212; Maling 2002b:48–9; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:405):

(4.69)

- a. Ég óska þér velfarnaðar.
 I wish you(D) well-going(G)
 ‘I wish you luck.’
- b. Haraldur synjaði Guðmundi ráðahagsins. (formal)
 Harold(N) denied Guðmund(D) marriage-the(G)
 ‘Harold refused Guðmundur’s marriage proposal.’ (i.e. to H’s daughter)
- c. Þeir unnu honum ekki sannmælis.
 they(N) granted him(D) not fair-discussion(G)
 ‘They didn’t do him justice in their discussion.’
- d. Þeir hafa aflað sér mikilla upplýsinga.
 they(N) have got themselves(D) much information(G)
 ‘They have got themselves a lot of information.’

The dative in the last example is arguably a benefactive of sorts (see also the discussion in 4.2.2).

The class of verbs occurring in the NAG case frame seems quite small. Only a handful of the verbs are used in the modern language but a few more can be found in written texts, especially older ones (cf. Kress 1982:212; Maling 2002b:47; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:80, 2005a:405):

- (4.70) a. Þeir spurðu hana margra spurninga.
 they(N) asked her(A) many questions(G)

- b. Hann krafði hana sagna.
 he(N) demanded her(A) stories(G)
 ‘He asked her to reveal the information.’
- c. Ég bað hana afsökunar.
 I(N) asked her(A) excuse(G)
 ‘I asked her for forgiveness.’
- d. Við löttum hann fararinnar. (formal)
 we(N) discouraged him(A) journey-the(G)
 ‘We tried to talk him out of going.’

Prepositional variants also exist in some instances, although they are not always completely equivalent semantically:

(4.71)

- a. Þeir spurðu hana um margt/*um margar spurningar.
 they(N) asked her(A) about many-things(A)/*about many questions(A)
- b. Hann krafði hana um peningana/*um sagnirnar.
 he(N) demanded her(A) about money-the(A)/*about stories-the(A)
 ‘He demanded the money from her.’
- c. Ég bað hana um fyrirgefningu/?*um afsökun.²¹
 I(N) asked her(A) for forgiveness(A)/*for excuse(A)
 ‘I asked her for forgiveness.’

The NDD case frame seems much more alive, and most of the verbs concerned are commonly used in this case frame in modern spoken Icelandic (cf. Kress 1982:211; Maling 2002b:47–8; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:405):

- (4.72) a. Ég lofaði henni því.
 I(N) promised her(D) it(D)
 ‘I promised it to her.’
- b. Hún skilaði mér bókinni.
 she(N) returned me(D) book-the(D)
 ‘She returned the book to me.’
- c. Jarðskjálftinn olli þeim miklu tjóni.
 earthquake(N) caused them(D) much damage(D)
- d. Hann svaraði henni engu.
 he(N) answered her(D) nothing(D)

²¹ A sentence like *Ég bað hana um afsökun* is possible in the sense ‘I asked her that she would apologize (to me).’

In some of these examples the second dative is semantically close to an instrumental, for example in the last one at least historically. In others the first dative is obviously a recipient of some sort, making it likely that it is indeed the indirect object (IO), as IOs are often recipients or goals, as we shall see. As in the case of the NDA case frame, the recipient can often be expressed in a PP argument in English, but in Icelandic that option is pretty much restricted to verbs denoting actual movement:

- (4.73) a. *Ég lofaði því til hennar.
I(N) promised it(D) to her(G)
- b. Hún skilaði bókinni til mín.
she(N) returned book-the(D) to me(G)
'She returned the book to me.'
- c. *Jarðskjálftinn olli miklu tjóni til þeirra.
earthquake(N) caused much damage(D) to them(G)

Finally, it seems that only two verbs occur in the NAA case frame, and the second accusative is arguably a measure phrase of sorts, at least originally:

- (4.74) a. Maturinn kostaði mig fjóra dollara.
food-the(N) cost me(A) four dollars(A)
- b. Ferðin tók okkur tvo tíma.
trip-the(N) took us(A) two hours(A)

4.1.2.4 Other instances of oblique cases

Various instances of nominative marking of non-arguments were exemplified in the beginning of section 4.1.2.1. The adnominal (or possessive) genitive has also been illustrated (cf. sections 3.1.1.3 and 3.2.1.2) and so has the possessive dative (cf. section 3.1.1.3). Hence I will leave the nominative and possessive out of the discussion here and concentrate on (other) oblique NPs that are not direct arguments of verbs (see also Stefán Einarsson 1945:106ff.; Jón G. Friðjónsson 1986; Kress 1982:224ff.; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003:230ff.):

- (4.75) Accusative with prepositions:
- a. Ég talaði við **Harald**.
I spoke to Harold(A)
- b. Við fórum í **skólann**.
we went to school-the(A)

(4.76) Dative with prepositions:

- a. Við erum í **skólanum**.
we are in school-the(D)
- b. Við fórum að **skólanum**.
we went up-to school-the(D)
'We went up to the school.'

(4.77) Genitive with prepositions:

- a. Hún kom til **mín**.
she came to me(G)
- b. Ég gerði þetta vegna **hans**.
I did this because-of him(G)

While some semantic regularities or tendencies can be found in the case government of prepositions (such as 'accusative indicates movement to a place, dative rest at a place' (cf. *í skólann* 'to school(A)' vs. *í skólanum* 'in school(D)'), it is not difficult to find minimal pairs where a semantic account is not obvious (cf. *í skólann* 'to school(A)' vs. *að skólanum* 'towards the school(D)'). In addition, prepositional use in verbal arguments is notoriously idiosyncratic.

Some adverbial accusatives are alive and well, such as the measure phrases in (4.78):

(4.78) Adverbial accusative:

- a. Hann var þar **þrjá daga**.
he was there three(A) days(A)
- b. Hún kastaði kúlunni **fjóra metra**.
she threw shot-the four(A) metres(A)

Many adverbial datives, on the other hand, such as the instrumental dative, are mainly found in fixed expressions or formal style. In more colloquial language prepositional phrases will often be used for such datives²² but in several instances no prepositional alternatives exist (sometimes at least because the expression is fixed):

²² The truth of this statement depends in part on the definition of 'instrumental'. As shown in section 4.1.2.3, one of the objects of ditransitive verbs sometimes has a reading that comes close to an instrumental.

(4.79)

- a. Hún vafði barnið **reifum** / *með reifum / í reifar.
 she wrapped child-the rags(D) / *with rags(D) / in rags(A)
 ‘She wrapped the child in rags.’ (used in the Bible, for instance)
- b. Þau þöktu gröfina **blómum**/með blómum.
 they covered grave-the flowers(D)/with flowers(D)
 ‘They covered the grave with flowers.’
- c. Þeir kölluðu **hárri röddu**/ ?*með hárri röddu.
 they called loud(D) voice(D) /?*with (in) loud voice
 ‘They called in a loud voice.’

A few adjectives take dative complements (see also the discussion in n.16 in chapter 3 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:59; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:372–3):

- (4.80) a. Hann er líkur **þér**.
 he is similar you(D)
 ‘He looks like you.’
- b. Hún var trú **sannfæringu sinni**.
 she was faithful conviction(D) her(refl.)(D)
 ‘She stuck to her conviction.’
- c. Hann hefur alltaf verið **mér** góður.
 he has always been me(D) good
 ‘He has always been good to me.’

A subcase of this can be found with the comparative form of adjectives or adverbs:

- (4.81) Hann er **þér** fremri.
 he is you(D) further-to-the-front
 ‘He is better than you.’

The so-called comparative dative is arguably more adverbial in nature (cf. Kress 1982:226):

- (4.82) a. Hann er **tveimur árum** eldri en ég.
 he is two(D) years(D) older than I
- b. Hún stökk **heilum metra** lengra en hann.
 she jumped whole(D) meter(D) longer than he
 ‘She jumped a whole metre further than he (did).’

This concludes my descriptive overview of morphological case marking in Icelandic.

4.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

As has often been remarked, various aspects of morphological case marking in Icelandic appear to be quite irregular, and it is probably true that some of them are. It is commonly believed that the reason for this is historical: the Icelandic case-marking system has developed from a Germanic or Indo-European system where the relationship between various morphological cases and the semantics (including thematic roles) was more transparent.²³ Despite this, various attempts have been made in recent years to find regularities in the modern Icelandic case-marking system – or to distinguish between (partly) regular case marking and (completely) irregular or idiosyncratic case. Some of these attempts will be described below.

4.2.1 *Structural and lexical case*

Since Yip et al. 1987, at least, linguists working on Icelandic have typically distinguished between **structural case** on the one hand and **lexical case** on the other. As has become increasingly clear over the years, the latter in turn falls into two groups as illustrated in (4.83) (see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998:21, 2003:128 passim; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:317ff.).²⁴

(4.83)

- a. **Structural morphological case** (usually just *structural case*) which depends on the grammatical role (or relation) of the NP in question: in a language like Icelandic the structural case of subjects is nominative and the structural case of objects is accusative.

²³ A development from something regular to something irregular may seem unlikely, but linguistic changes often involve more than one component of the grammar. A part of the reason for a development of the kind mentioned here could, for instance, be (phonological) merger of previously distinct case markers.

²⁴ Yip et al. 1987 assumed that most instances of lexical case were ‘quirky’, i.e. idiosyncratic, and even implied that if the thematic role of an argument determined its case marking, it was not an instance of lexical case marking (see the discussion below). As we shall see, however, there is good reason to assume the classification shown in (4.83) where thematically determined case is a subclass of lexically assigned case. For a slightly different approach, see Vainikka 1985, who divides case into (a) **structural**, (b) **thematic** and (c) **lexical**, where the last one is not predictable based on the position of a NP or its thematic role and has to be specified in the lexicon. One of her goals is to show that truly idiosyncratic case may not exist at all (1985:2), but that may be easier to believe if your native language is Finnish than if it is Icelandic. See also Woolford 2006, who distinguishes between **lexical case** (idiosyncratic) and **inherent case** (associated with particular thematic roles).

b. **Lexical morphological case** (usually just *lexical case*) which is determined by the lexical case assigner, such as the main verb, preposition, adjective, etc. There are two kinds of lexical morphological case:

thematic (or thematically based) case, determined by the thematic role of the argument and thus predictable (to some extent at least)

idiosyncratic (or quirky) case, which is not predictable in any way

The basic idea here is that there is a structurally default morphological case for subjects and for objects. In an ‘accusative language’ like Icelandic the structural case for subjects is nominative and the structural case for objects is accusative.²⁵ The main difference between structural case²⁶ and lexical case is that lexical case is not influenced by operations that ‘change’ the grammatical role of the NP in question, such as passive and subject-to-object raising (embedding under ECM (accusative with infinitive) verbs), whereas structural case is. Consider first the structurally case-marked NP in (4.84a) and the lexically case-marked one in (4.84b):

- (4.84) a. **Þeir** hafa söfið.
 they(N) have slept
- b. **Þeim** hefur leiðst.
 them(D) have bored
 ‘They have been bored.’

Simple clauses of this kind can be embedded under ECM verbs and ECM constructions can be passivized. As shown in (4.85), these operations lead to changes in structural case marking ($N \rightarrow A \rightarrow N$) whereas lexical case marking remains unchanged (D throughout):

²⁵ This will not hold for ergative languages, of course, where subjects of transitive verbs have one case and the objects of transitive verbs and subjects of intransitive ones another case (the traditional terms are absolutive and ergative, respectively). See, e.g., the discussion in Yip et al. 1987:220. For a general account of ergativity, see Dixon 1994.

²⁶ In this section, I will use the term *structural case* in the sense ‘structural (or structurally determined) morphological case’. This is also the meaning of the term in much recent work on Icelandic case (e.g. works by Maling, Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson and Þórhallur Eythórsson referred to in the text – for a slightly different take on this issue, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a, who uses the term *relational case* instead of *structural case*). It should not be confused with the (related but not synonymous) notion of **structural abstract case** as defined by Chomsky (1981:170 and later) and later adopted by many (including Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003, for instance). The difference will become clearer in section 4.2.2.

(4.85)

- a. Við teljum [þá hafa sofið]. (ECM: $N \rightarrow A$)
 we believe them(A) have(inf.) slept
 'We believe them to have slept.'
- b. Við teljum [þeim hafa leiðst]. (ECM: D remains)
 we believe them(D) have(inf.) bored
 'We believe them to have been bored.'
- c. Þeir eru taldir hafa sofið. (passive of ECM: $A \rightarrow N$)
 they(N) are believed have slept
 'They are believed to have slept.'
- d. Þeim er talið hafa leiðst. (passive of an ECM: D remains)
 them(D) is believed have bored
 'They are believed to have been bored.'

This can also be illustrated for structural vs. lexical case marking of objects like the ones in (4.86):

- (4.86) a. Þeir hafa étid fiskinn.
 they(N) have eaten fish-the(A)
 'They have eaten the fish.'
- b. Þeir hafa hent fiskinum.
 they(N) have discarded fish-the(D)
 'They have thrown the fish away.'

Here the difference can first be shown by comparing the passives: structural accusative 'changes' to nominative, lexical dative remains. Then these passives can be embedded under an ECM verb and the ECM construction can be 'passivized' again, and so on (cf. also the examples (4.85)). Again, we see changes in structural case marking whereas the lexical case is preserved:

(4.87)

- a. Fiskurinn hefur verið étinn. (passive: $A \rightarrow N$)
 fish-the(N) has been eaten
- b. Fiskinum hefur verið hent. (passive: D remains)
 fish-the(D) has been discarded
- c. Við teljum fiskinn hafa verið étinn. (ECM of passive: $N \rightarrow A$)
 we believe fish-the(A) have been eaten
 'We believe the fish to have been eaten.'
- d. Við teljum fiskinum hafa verið hent. (ECM of passive: D remains)
 we believe fish-the(D) have been discarded

- e. **Fiskurinn** er talinn hafa verið étinn. (pass. of pass. ECM: A → N)
 fish-the(N) is believed have been eaten
 ‘the fish is believed to have been eaten.’
- f. **Fiskinum** er talið hafa verið hent. (pass. of pass. ECM: D remains)
 fish-the(D) is believed have been discarded
 ‘the fish is believed to have been thrown away.’

As can easily be seen, the morphological case of the structurally case-marked arguments in these examples ‘changes’ depending on the grammatical role these arguments play in the examples in (4.86)–(4.87): if they play the role of a subject, they show up in the nominative, if they play the role of an object (including the object of an ECM (or subject-to-object raising) verb like *telja* ‘believe’), they appear in the accusative. Conversely, the lexically case-marked arguments keep their lexically assigned case (here dative) in the examples in (4.86)–(4.87), regardless of their grammatical role, which varies from subject to object. This phenomenon is often referred to as ‘case preservation’.

One way of expressing this difference is to say that lexical case marking takes place ‘before’ all syntactic operations like movement, including operations that change the grammatical relation of the elements involved: lexical case is determined ‘in the lexicon’, or lexical case is assigned ‘first’, and irrevocably, in the syntactic derivation, and the structurally determined case assignment takes place ‘later’ (see, e.g., Yip et al. 1987:222–4 – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a). Obviously, the details of such accounts depend on the theoretical framework assumed. It is important to note, however, that this preservation of non-structural case works both for truly idiosyncratic case and thematically related lexical case (see section 4.2.3).

Various interesting theoretical and comparative issues arise here. One is whether the structural nominative of subjects is ‘assigned’ in some sense (e.g. by the finite verb or the functional category that houses it, such as I or AgrS) or just a default case which shows up where no case assignment takes place. As illustrated in 4.1.2.1 above, there is some reason to assume that nominative is the default case in Icelandic, but that does not mean, of course, that it could not be assigned in some sense to subjects. Note also that there are some cross-linguistic differences within Scandinavian with respect to the (default?) case that shows up in constructions like the following (cf. Yip et al. 221; see also Allan et al. 1995:142ff.; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a and references cited there):

- (4.88) a. Hver er þetta? Ég/*mig. (Ic)
 b. Hvør er hetta? Eg/*meg. (Fa)
 c. Vem är det? Jag/*mig. (Sw)
 d. Hvem er det? *Jeg/mig. (Da)
 who is this I/me
- (4.89) a. Jón og ég/*mig förum á morgun. (Ic)
 b. Jógvan og eg/*meg fara í morgin. (Fa)
 c. Jens og jag/*mig reser i morgon. (Sw)
 d. Jens og (?) jeg/mig rejser i morgen. (Da)
 J. and I/me go tomorrow

Here Danish seems to be closer to English than Icelandic, Faroese and Swedish are.²⁷

Second, there is an interesting difference between Icelandic and Faroese with respect to case preservation in the passive: lexical case is always preserved in Icelandic passives (i.e., if a verb takes a dative or genitive object in the active, it will take a dative or genitive subject, respectively, in the passive) but it is only preserved in the passive of some verbs in Faroese but not others (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:266ff. – see also the discussion in 5.2.1 below):²⁸

- (4.90)
- a. Teir bíðaðu honum. → **Honum** varð bíðað. (case preserved)
 they waited him(D) him(D) was waited
 ‘They waited for him.’ ‘He was waited for.’
- b. Teir takkaðu honum. → **Honum** varð takkað. (case preserved)
 they thanked him(D) him(D) was thanked
 ‘They thanked him.’ ‘He was thanked.’
- c. Teir hjálptu honum. → **Hann** varð hjálptur. (case not preserved)
 they helped him(D) he(N) was helped
- d. Teir róstu henni. → **Hon** varð róst. (case not preserved)
 they praised her(D) she(N) was praised

²⁷ There are some differences with respect to details. Thus, while one can say *It is I* in (formal) English, the corresponding **Det er jeg* is not an option in Danish. But the variant *Jens og jeg rejser . . .* is just a more formal variant than *Jens og mig . . .*, which is a similar difference as between *John and I . . .* vs. *John and me . . .* in English. For a comprehensive discussion of cross-linguistic differences in predicate constructions, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a. We will return to his main idea below.

²⁸ It is likely that the case representation was the rule in earlier stages of Faroese, although examples of non-preservation can be found in nineteenth-century Faroese texts (Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:435), and one might suspect that case preservation is on the way out in modern Faroese. It will be interesting to follow its development.

Third, there is a further difference between Icelandic and Faroese with respect to structural and lexical case marking that is often cited. One of the most interesting claims of Yip et al. (1987) was that there is a ‘hierarchy’ of structural cases: nominative is assigned ‘first’, then accusative. Furthermore, the assignment of structural case is blocked by the assignment of lexical case. Thus, if a verb takes a subject that is lexically assigned dative, then that subject cannot also receive structural nominative. If such a verb has an object which is not marked for lexical case, then the unassigned structural nominative will be realized on this object. This was meant to explain the fact that we get nominative objects with dative subject verbs, as illustrated in (4.91):

(4.91) lexical case tier:	D		
	Mér	líkar	mjólkin.
	me(D)	likes	milk-the (N)
structural case tier:	N	A	

Here the subject is assigned a lexically determined dative case. This has the effect that when the structural nominative looks for a NP that it can be assigned to, it has to skip the subject and move on to the object, *mjólkin* ‘the milk’. The structural accusative then remains unassigned. This works rather nicely for verbs of this kind in Icelandic. It also expresses the common belief that (structural) accusative is somehow dependent on nominative. Another way of capturing this insight has been formulated by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, who refers to the constraint he formulates as the **sibling condition** (recall that *relational* in Halldór’s terminology is equivalent to *structural* for our purposes) and it could be stated informally as follows (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a:97):²⁹

(4.92) Structural accusative presupposes structural nominative but not vice versa.

²⁹ The frequently cited Burzio’s Generalization (see, e.g., Burzio 1981) was also meant to express this: verbs can only assign accusative to an object if they assign a thematic role to a subject. Still earlier, the proponents of Relational Grammar maintained that nominative was higher on the hierarchy of cases than accusative (see, e.g., the contributions to Perlmutter 1983), an idea that is partially reflected in Zaenen et al. 1985.

Halldór then proposes that the cross-linguistic differences between predicative constructions exemplified in (4.88) reflect different domains of the sibling condition. Languages like English and Danish have extended it to predicative constructions, only allowing one instance of nominative there.

Coming back to transitive verbs with dative subjects of the kind illustrated in (4.91), it is of some interest to note that many (probably most) transitive dative subject verbs in modern Faroese have accusative rather than nominative objects. This includes the verb *dáma* ‘like’, which is synonymous with Icelandic *líka* illustrated in (4.91). Contrary to common assumptions (see, e.g., Woolford 1997:192n.; Haider 2001; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003:250–1), however, this does not hold for all dative subject verbs in Faroese (see Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:228–9):

- (4.93) a. Henni manglar pening/*peningur.
her(D) lacks money(A/*N)
‘She lacks money.’
- b. Henni treyt pening/(?)peningur.
her(D) ran-out-of money(A/(?)N)
‘She ran out of money.’
- c. Mær eydnadist *túrin/túrurin væl.
me(D) succeeded trip-the(*A/N) well
‘The trip turned out nicely for me.’

While the DN assignment in the b- and c-examples may show a residue of an older stage in Modern Faroese, it should be pointed out that the DN pattern is also found in passives in Faroese, and here a DA pattern seems generally bad (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:271).³⁰ But whatever the proper analysis,

³⁰ While the DN pattern seems to be much less common in Faroese passives than in Icelandic ones and a ND pattern is generally preferred, the DN pattern does exist, whereas a DA pattern in Faroese passives is typically out (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:269–71):

- (i) a. Ein kúgv varð seld bóndanum
a(N) cow(N) was sold farmer-the(D)
- b. ?Bóndanum varð seld ein kúgv.
farmer-the(D) was sold a(N) cow(N)
- c. *Bóndanum varð selt eina kúgv.
farmer-the(D) was sold a(A) cow(A)

As shown by Höskuldur Thráinsson et al., Faroese does not lack nominative objects (it even has finite verb agreement with nominative objects like Icelandic does, cf. section 4.2.4 below) and thus it is not like Nez Perce (cf. Woolford 1997:192n).

the fact that the DA assignment appears to be more common indicates that the account provided by Yip et al. (1987) of the Icelandic facts cannot be extended to Faroese without some modification. Whatever the proper analysis of these facts may be, they suggest that the difference between Icelandic and Faroese case marking may be less pervasive than sometimes assumed. Additional comparative remarks will be made below in connection with the discussion of various theoretical issues having to do with case marking.

Some additional facts from Icelandic also call for a modification. Consider the following (from Yip et al. 1987:231ff.):

- | | | | | |
|--------|----|------------|------------|------------|
| (4.94) | a. | Mig | brestur | kjark. |
| | | me(A) | fails | courage(A) |
| | b. | Mennina | þraut | mat. |
| | | men-the(A) | ran-out-of | food(A) |
| | c. | Mig | vantar | hníf. |
| | | me(A) | lacks | knife(A) |

Now if the (accusative) subject case on all these verbs is lexically assigned in all instances, then we would expect the structural case assignment to mark the objects nominative. An AN case pattern is very rare in Icelandic, however, and possibly restricted to one verb (*sækja* ‘seek’ in expressions like *Mig sækir syfja* ‘I am getting sleepy’, cf. the discussion around (4.52) above). The question is, then, whether the accusative case on the object could be lexically assigned. In principle one would be able to test that by seeing if the morphological case of the object is preserved in the passive, but the oblique subject verbs do not passivize in general, presumably since most (or at least the best) candidates for passive in Icelandic are verbs that take agentive subjects and none of the oblique subjects are agentive, as we shall see (cf. section 4.2.3). Interestingly, there is some evidence that the verbs in (4.94) show different behaviour with respect to case marking: while they can all undergo the so-called Dative Substitution, substituting dative for accusative case marking on their subject, this can only result in replacement of the accusative on the object by nominative for the first two verbs and not the third one (cf. Yip et al. 1987:231–2):

- | | | | | |
|--------|----|--------|------------|------------------|
| (4.95) | a. | Mér | brestur | kjarkur/?kjark. |
| | | me(D) | fails | courage(N/?A) |
| | b. | Honum | þraut | þróttur/?*þrótt. |
| | | him(D) | ran-out-of | strength(N/?*A) |
| | c. | Mér | vantar | *hnífur/hníf. |
| | | me(D) | lacks | knife(*N/A) |

Yip et al. take this to suggest that the object accusative of the verbs *bresta* ‘fail’ and *þrjóta* ‘run out of, lack’ in (4.94) is structurally assigned, and hence it ‘switches’ over to nominative when the accusative subject turns into a nominative. The accusative case marking of the object of *vanta* ‘lack’, on the other hand, is lexically fixed, and hence does not change when its subject changes to dative. As a further piece of evidence for this they point out that when these verbs are used intransitively with a subject which thematically corresponds to the object in the transitive version, this subject shows up in the nominative with the verbs *bresta* and *þrjóta* (there is possibly some speaker variation here) but in the accusative with *vanta* (Yip et al. 1987:232):

- | | | | |
|--------|----|-----------------|----------|
| (4.96) | a. | Kjarkurinn | brast. |
| | | courage-the(N) | failed |
| | b. | Þolinmæðin | þraut. |
| | | patience-the(N) | ran out |
| | c. | Peningana | vantaði. |
| | | money-the(A) | lacked |

While this looks like a plausible account, there are two problems with it. First, it still does not explain why transitive ‘impersonal’ verbs like *bresta* and *þrjóta* in (4.94) can take an accusative object. Yip et al. suggest that the reason may be that the case of the oblique subject of these verbs may be thematically determined, but it is difficult to see how or why that should prevent the object from getting a structurally determined nominative under their account if we make the (by now quite generally accepted) classification of morphological case illustrated in (4.83), where thematically related case is a subclass of lexical case.³¹

Second, it is not entirely clear what to make of the ‘preservation’ of object case in ‘unaccusative’ constructions like (4.96c). As first illustrated systematically by

³¹ In a footnote (p. 229) Yip et al. say that ‘allowing for thematically based case, in addition to truly idiosyncratic lexical case, potentially admits too many case-marking patterns’. But there is ample evidence that some instances of non-structural case marking are more regular than others. Although this does not influence synchronic case preservation, it has an effect on diachronic development, and it also has an effect on acquisition (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003, 2005a:380ff.; Maling 2002a, b; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b; Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson and Þórhallur Eythórsson 2003, 2005). See also the discussion by Woolford (2006), who maintains that only lexically assigned subject case and the case assigned to goals are thematically regular. We will return to that issue below.

Zaenen and Maling (1984 – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:278ff., and 2005a:102ff.), object case is sometimes preserved and sometimes not in transitive–unaccusative pairs and there is no direct correlation between that kind of preservation and the preservation in passives (see also the discussion in section 5.1.6.2 below):

- (4.97)
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|--------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| a. | Þeir | sökktu | skipinu. | |
| | they | sank | ship-the(D) | |
| b. | Skipinu/*Skipið | var | sökkt. | (passive, case preserved) |
| | ship-the(D/*N) | was | sunk | |
| c. | *Skipinu/Skipið | sökk. | | (unaccusative, non-preserved) |
| | ship-the(*D/N) | sank | | |

(4.98)

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------|-------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| a. | Aldan | braut | bátinn | í spón. | |
| | wave-the(N) | broke | boat-the(A) | in splinters | |
| | ‘The wave broke the boat into splinters.’ | | | | |
| b. | *Bátinn/Báturinn | var | brotinn | í spón. | (passive, non-preserved) |
| | boat-the(*A/N) | was | broken | in splinters | |
| | ‘The boat was broken into splinters.’ | | | | |
| c. | Bátinn/*Báturinn | braut | | í spón. | (unaccusative, preserved) |
| | boat-the(A/*N) | broke | | in splinters | |
| | ‘The boat broke into splinters.’ | | | | |

As seen here, the lexical dative object case with transitive *sökkva* ‘sink’ in (4.97) is preserved, as expected, in the passive, whereas it is not in the corresponding intransitive (or unaccusative). Conversely, the structural accusative object case with *brjóta* ‘break’ in (4.98) is not preserved in the passive, as expected, but it is in the corresponding intransitive (unaccusative) version. Based on facts of this sort, Zaenen and Maling (1984) wanted to argue that the derivation of passives and unaccusatives could not be collapsed, as standardly assumed in the GB-framework, for instance.

It should also be emphasized here that whereas the semantic relationship between the active-passive pairs illustrated above is regular as expected, there are often important semantic differences between transitive and unaccusative constructions of the type exemplified above, as pointed out by Kjartan G. Ottósson (1988:148). Consider the following additional examples (see the discussion by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a:103ff. – note that the arrow is not meant to necessarily imply some sort of a derivational syntactic relationship):

- (4.99) a. Vatnið fyllti **bátinn**.
 the water filled the boat(A)
 → **Bátinn** fyllti.
 the boat(A) filled
 ‘The boat filled by accident.’
- b. ?Aldan rak **okkur** að landi.
 the wave drove us(A) to shore
 → **Okkur** rak að landi.
 we(A) drifted to shore
 ‘We drifted ashore (by chance).’
- c. ?Brotsjórinn tók **sjómanninn** út.
 the breaker took the sailor(A) out
 → **Sjómanninn** tók út.
 the sailor(A) took out
 ‘The sailor got swept overboard (by accident).’
- d. Félagið seinkaði **ferðinni**.
 the company delayed the trip
 → **Ferðinni** seinkaði.³²
 the trip(D) delayed
 ‘The trip was accidentally delayed.’
- e. Aldan hvolfdi **bátnum**.
 the wave turned-over the boat(D)
 → **Bátnum** hvolfdi.
 the boat(D) got-turned-over
 ‘The boat capsized.’

The question marks are meant to show that the active versions are semantically odd, as pointed out by Kjartan G. Ottósson (1988:147f.).

As a final example of ‘unexpected accusatives’ the following lexically restricted type should be mentioned (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:218f., 2005a:109–10):

- (4.100) a. Ólaf var hvergi að finna.
 Olaf(A) was nowhere to find
 ‘Olaf was nowhere to be found.’
- b. Hestana var ekki að sjá.
 the horses(A) was not to see
 ‘One could not see the horses.’

³² Actually, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2005a) maintains that dative examples like this one do not contain the semantic feature FATE that he attributes to accusative examples of the sort shown here – his **fate accusatives**. That may be true in this case, although the involvement of fate is perhaps a matter of degree, but the e-example (*Bátnum hvolfdi*) seems pretty fateful.

The constructions illustrated above suggest that either the accusative is not as dependent on nominative as one might think, or that there are more instances of lexical accusatives than one might think, or that we need a more abstract analysis of case relationships than we might have thought. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (e.g. 2005a) opts for the last type of approach.

4.2.2 *Morphological case and abstract case*

The so-called Government-Binding (or GB) approach to syntax (originating with Chomsky 1981 and exemplified in the literature on Icelandic syntax most prominently by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson's 1989 dissertation and much later work of his) emphasized the importance of distinguishing between morphological case and abstract case. The notion of Case plays an important role in the GB approach and it was originally defined essentially as follows by Chomsky (1981:170):

(4.101)

- a. NP is **nominative** if governed by AGR³³
- b. NP is **objective** if governed by a transitive V
- c. NP is **oblique** if governed by P
- d. NP is **genitive** inside NPs
- e. NP is **inherently Case marked** as determined by properties of its [-N] governor

Chomsky then refers to types a–d as **structural Case** and e as **inherent Case**. As an example of the latter he mentions the direct object in double object constructions like *John gave Bill a book*. He maintains further (1981:171) that structural case is ‘dissociated from theta-role; it is a structural property of a formal configuration. Inherent Case is presumably closely linked to thematic role.’ It should be obvious from this that structural Case in this sense is not the same notion as the notion of **structural morphological case** described above. Furthermore, the ideas of **inherent Case** and the relationship between thematic roles and Case expressed here are rather different from most of the ideas that will be described in section 4.2.3.

As the reader has presumably already realized, the whole case (and Case) terminology is a rather unfortunate and confusing one. Following most of the literature on Icelandic syntax, I have used the term *oblique* in the sense of ‘non-nominative’ and not in the sense described in (4.101). More

³³ This is the feature or functional element related to agreement, typically believed to reside in the I-position of IP (or Agr of AgrP). We return to the relationship between case and agreement in section 4.2.4.

importantly, the relationship between structural Case and morphological case, even the structurally determined morphological case, can be quite confusing. This can be further illustrated by considering a typical derivation of passive constructions in a framework of the kind under consideration here:

(4.102) $[_{NP}e]$ var barinn Haraldur → Haraldur_i var barinn t_j.
 was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit

To capture the fact that the subject of a passive sentence like *Haraldur var barinn* ‘Harold was hit’ has the same thematic role that the object of a corresponding active sentence would have (e.g. *Einhver barði Harold* ‘Somebody hit Harold’), namely that of a patient or some such, the subject of the passive ‘originates’ in object position in the underlying structure of the passive and is then ‘moved’ to the subject position. But why does it have to move? In other words, why isn’t, for instance, the variant in (4.103) an acceptable realization of the underlying structure shown in (4.102):

(4.103) *Það var barinn Haraldur.
 there was hit Harold

A typical GB-account goes like this: all NPs have to get (abstract) case. The passive form of a verb cannot assign abstract object case (i.e. accusative). Hence the underlying object *Haraldur* in (4.102) has to move to subject position and there it will be assigned subject case (i.e. nominative). (4.103) is still no good because *Haraldur* is still in object position and cannot get abstract case.

The confusing aspect of this kind of analysis is the fact that passive verbs can very well assign lexical morphological case (i.e. dative or genitive) to their (underlying) objects but that does not save such objects from having to be moved to subject position (cf. the discussion in 4.2.1 of case preservation in Icelandic passives).³⁴

³⁴ As discussed in sections 2.1.3 and 2.2.2, and as will be discussed in chapter 6, indefinite logical subjects in expletive constructions (i.e. the associate of the expletive as it is often called) can show up in different positions in Icelandic. This includes expletive passives: it is thus possible to get expletive constructions of passives if the subject (which is the ‘underlying object’) is indefinite, and in such instances it can even show up in the object position, although the position immediately after the finite auxiliary is more natural in most instances. Again, the morphological case of this NP is irrelevant (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989 and much later work):

- (4.104) a. $[_{NP} e]$ var hjálpað Haraldí → Haraldíj var hjálpað t_i .
 was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit
- b. *Það var hjálpað Haraldí.³⁵
 there was helped Harold(D)
- c. $[_{NP} e]$ var saknað Haraldar → Haraldarj var saknað t_i .
 was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit
- d. *Það var saknað Haraldar.
 there was missed Harold(G)

Consequently it is necessary in this framework to maintain that NPs need not only morphological case but also abstract case, and the lack of abstract case will force them to move to some case assigning position, even if they are marked for a particular morphological case. The inelegance of this kind of account led some syntacticians to abandon the ‘lack-of-case’ approach to passives and propose something else as the reason for the obligatory movement of the NPs in question (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:197ff. – and in somewhat different guises 2003, 2004e, 2006a). In addition, the confusing ‘case vs. Case’ terminology had the effect that many linguists preferred to speak of **argument licensing** rather than abstract case assignment: arguments (subjects and objects) are licensed in certain structural positions and if they are not base-generated in such a position they have to move there. In the Minimalist Framework (of Chomsky 1993 and later work), the checking of case features (or Extended Projection Principle (EPP) features) plays a similar role.

Footnote 34 (*cont.*)

- (i) a. Það var **einhver strákur** barinn þar.
 there was some boy(N) hit there
- b. Það var barinn **einhver strákur** þar.
 there was hit some boy(N) there
- c. Það var **einhverjum stráki** hjálpað þar.
 there was some boy(D) helped there
- d. Það var hjálpað **einhverjum stráki** þar.
 there was helped some boy(D) there

This suggests that it may not be case (or Case) that matters here but rather definiteness or something of that nature. See also the discussion of ‘the new passive’ in section 5.1.4 below.

³⁵ As will be shown in section 5.1.4, the so-called new passive (new impersonal), most extensively discussed by Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling 2001 and Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, appears to have this form: an ‘unmoved’ definite NP in the object position of a passive verb. The analysis of the construction is not uncontroversial as we shall see.

Unfortunately, there is an additional source of confusion here: while some linguists use the term *structural case* in the sense described in section 4.2.1, that is, ‘**morphological** case that is sensitive to the grammatical role (or structural relationships) of the relevant argument’, others use it in the sense of Case just described, that is, ‘**abstract** case that depends on the grammatical role of the relevant argument (but typically realized as a given morphological case in languages with rich inflection)’. These two notions are not entirely equivalent as revealed by these questions:

- (4.105) a. Do arguments that are marked for a given lexical morphological case (in a language like Icelandic, for instance) also have an abstract case?
 b. Do argument NPs in all languages have abstract case – and if so, how can one tell which case it is if there is no morphological evidence?

There has been considerable controversy with respect to the first issue in the discussion of Icelandic syntax. As illustrated above, Yip et al. (1987) opted for the ‘single case’ approach. For their analysis it was crucial to assume that a structural case is *not* assigned to arguments that are (already) marked for lexical case. But various linguists working in the GB-framework were more or less forced to assume a ‘double case’ approach for the reason described in the discussion of a typical GB-passive derivation above: even if a given argument has been assigned a lexically determined morphological case, it will have to move to the proper structural position to be assigned the appropriate abstract case (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996 – for a single case approach within the GB-framework, see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989, 1992b).

It is important to note in this connection that a strictly morphological approach to case, maintaining that you only have case where it is overtly marked, does not offer a simple solution. First, it will always be necessary to assume zero markings in many instances (not all nominal elements are overtly marked for case in languages like Icelandic, as is well known). Second, and more interestingly, even within a strictly morphological approach to case, like that of Yip et al. (1987), one seems to be forced to assume that subject clauses are marked for case. Consider an example like the following (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003:249):

- (4.106) [Að María skyldi segja þetta truflaði mig/*ég.
 that Mary should say this disturbed me(A/*N)

Here the object of the verb *trufla* ‘disturb’ has to be marked accusative and that is exactly what we would expect under an approach like that of Yip et al. *if* the argument clause in subject position has been assigned nominative case. If no nominative is assigned to that argument, we would expect the object to be marked nominative, just like the object of dative subject verbs such as

líka ‘like’ (cf. (4.91) above).³⁶ This is also consistent with the commonly made assumption that accusative is in some sense dependent on nominative (cf., e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003:249; see also Woolford 1997). The problem is, however, that the dependence of (structural) accusative on nominative is not as clear as is often assumed – witness the pattern exhibited by (most) active dative subject verbs in Faroese (cf. the discussion around (4.93) above) and the existence of AA and DA patterns (after Dative Substitution) with Icelandic verbs like *vanta* ‘lack, need’, as discussed at the end of section 4.2.1.

Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2003:251) suggests that the apparent difference between Icelandic and Faroese case marking can be accounted for by saying that in Icelandic but not in Faroese the assignment of structural case is blocked by lexical case assignment. That means then that Faroese can have double case (lexical and abstract or ‘structural’ in Halldór’s sense) whereas Icelandic can not. But that remains just an ad hoc statement until it can be related to something else (but see also the discussion of these and related issues in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a). The facts are rather complex, as we have seen, so more work would obviously be welcomed in this area.

With respect to the issue raised in (4.105b), Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2003:245) points out that, if one assumes that even languages like Chinese, which never shows any morphological case distinctions, nevertheless have abstract case, the question arises (at least academically and presumably also in language acquisition) whether they have accusative or ergative case systems!

Finally, there has been considerable controversy in the literature as to where in the structure and by which elements abstract case is assigned (or (equivalently for our purposes) where the relevant argument licensing or case feature checking or matching takes place). Without going into any details, one can distinguish between essentially two approaches, an **in situ** approach and a **movement** approach:

(4.107)

- a. The (abstract) case of subject and object case is assigned (checked, matched, licensed ...) **in situ** and this does not trigger any kind of movement.
- b. The (abstract) case of subject and object is assigned (checked, matched, licensed ...) in a structural position that these arguments have to **move** to.

In the GB-literature it is commonly assumed that the relevant case assignment of objects takes place in situ (i.e. in canonical object position, the complement position of VP), whereas subjects have to move somewhere to

³⁶ This is by no means a new idea: argument clauses are standardly referred to as *fallsetningar* ‘case clauses’ in traditional Icelandic grammars.

get their case (or have it licensed), typically to SpecIP. With the proliferation of functional projections discussed in chapter 2, it became popular to assume that objects also had to move to get their case (or have it licensed, checked . . .), for example to SpecAgrOP. It is probably fair to say that the existence of lexical case marking of subjects and objects in languages like Icelandic has made the movement approach to case assignment less promising than it might otherwise have seemed. This was illustrated for the derivation of passives in the discussion around (4.104) above. Similar issues arise with respect to lexical case assignment of subjects, that is, oblique subjects of the kind discussed above: their morphological case is obviously determined by the relevant main verb, but that has no effect on their privileges of occurrence, as extensively illustrated in 4.1.2.1 (see also the discussion by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989 and later work of his, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996, et al.). Various other features of the arguments, such as definiteness, seem to play a more important role with respect to the positions available to them.

Now if one assumes some version of the VP-internal subject hypothesis, as many syntacticians do (see the discussion of subject positions in chapter 2), it is perhaps a small step from realizing that lexical subject case must be assigned by the main verb (and hence presumably in the VP) to suggesting that all subject case marking (case checking, case licensing . . .) takes place locally, that is, in situ in SpecVP, and this is essentially what Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson has suggested (2000, 2003:246, 258).³⁷ This does not mean, however, that subject (or object) arguments may not have to move to other positions for some sort of licensing/checking/feature matching. It only means that such movement has nothing to do with case. It may instead have something to do with definiteness, scope or even person features (which is what Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson suggests – see also the discussion in section 2.2.2). We will return to some questions of that sort in section 4.2.4.

We have now seen that a movement analysis of subject case assignment is problematic in languages like Icelandic. Some of the same problems arise with respect to the often proposed movement of objects to SpecAgrOP if one wants to maintain that this movement has something to do with case assignment. If this is what Object Shift is, then it looks initially promising to connect it with case because in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) only pronominal objects are marked for morphological case and only pronominal objects shift, whereas full NP objects are also

³⁷ The fact that Halldór assumes a slightly more complex VP structure than the standard three-storey structure with one V slot and a specifier and a complement position need not concern us here.

marked for morphological case in Icelandic and in Icelandic we have Object Shift of full NPs as well as pronominal objects. But closer inspection reveals various problems. First, full NPs are case marked in Faroese but yet there is apparently no NPOS in Faroese, only pronominal OS (cf. the discussion in section 2.2.4.1). Second, the overt morphological case marking of objects has no effect on their movability: objects move or do not move irrespective of the kind of morphological case that they carry, be it structurally assigned accusative or nominative, or lexically assigned dative or genitive (cf. the discussion at the end of section 2.2.4.2). But as demonstrated in section 2.2.4.1, OS in Icelandic is indeed dedicated to objects of verbs and does not, for instance, apply to PPs or prepositional objects. This can be interpreted as suggesting that OS has something to do with licensing of verbal arguments in some sense (or whatever it is that distinguishes argumental objects from argumental PPs), although it has nothing to do with morphological case.

4.2.3 *Case, semantic association and thematic roles*

4.2.3.0 Introduction

In analyses of ‘dead’ languages, like Latin or the old Germanic languages, there is a long tradition of trying to discover the ‘meaning’ or proper semantic interpretation of the different morphological cases. Traditional grammars of modern languages typically contain such explanations of the semantic role or ‘use’ of the various cases (see, e.g., Stefán Einarsson (1945:105ff.) and Kress (1982:210ff. and 224ff.) for Icelandic). In such accounts it is common to find Latin names for the different uses, such as *dativus commodi*, *genitivus subjectivus/objectivus/partitivus/possessivus* ... (see, e.g., Kress 1982). In some instances such references to Latin seem to be intended as explanations of the nature of the relevant case, in others more as a reference to something that the reader might already be familiar with.

There are also various attempts to adapt this approach to less traditional accounts of case, at least since Fillmore’s work (1968, 1971). Fillmore developed the proposal that there is a universal set of eight cases (sometimes referred to as **deep cases** to distinguish them from morphological or ‘surface’ cases, see also Blake 1994:64):

(4.108) agent, experiencer, instrument, object, source, goal, place, time

As the reader will note, these labels are very similar to the ones used in later work on thematic (or theta) relations and argument structure, such as those of

Jackendoff (1972) and Grimshaw, who have proposed the hierarchy of the thematic relations illustrated in (4.109) (cf. Grimshaw 1990:8; for a slightly different hierarchy, see Smith 1994:686).³⁸

(4.109) agent > experiencer > goal/source/location > theme

Hierarchy is ‘properly understood as the organizing principle of a[rgument] structures’ (Grimshaw 1990:7). There is also a hierarchy of grammatical relations, with subject more prominent than object, and the claim is that the highest grammatical role will carry the highest thematic role available, the availability being determined by the thematic properties of the predicate in question. For a transitive verb, then, which assigns the thematic roles of agent and theme, the subject will be the agent and the object the theme and not the other way around. The subject could also be an experiencer and the object a theme but not the other way around. I will return to issues of this kind presently.³⁹

Various definitions of thematic roles have been proposed, including the following which will suffice for our purposes (see, e.g., Blake 1994:68ff. – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:319ff.; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2003, 2005a:373ff.).⁴⁰

³⁸ Grimshaw’s **theme** is roughly equivalent to Fillmore’s **object** and her **location** to his **place**. Grimshaw’s hierarchy does not include two of the relations listed by Fillmore, namely **time** and **instrument**. These are arguably more adverbial in nature than the others and rarely figure as thematic roles of arguments.

³⁹ A slightly different approach to thematic relations is taken by Van Valin in his work on Icelandic (1991), within the framework of Role and Reference Grammar. Van Valin assumes two ‘macroroles’, Actor and Undergoer (reminiscent, in fact, of the (pretheoretical) notions of logical subject and logical object) and argues for a hierarchy of thematic relations that goes in opposite directions for the two macroroles. Thus the most typical Actors are Agent, Effector and Experiencer in this order, whereas the hierarchy is Patient > Theme > Locative > Experiencer for the macrorole of Undergoer. Van Valin then wants to argue that the so-called quirky case is in many (or even most) instances due not to idiosyncratic case marking but rather to what he terms ‘irregular transitivity’ of certain verbs.

⁴⁰ For a more extensive list of thematic roles, see, e.g., Barðdal 2001b:61–2 (who also includes various adverbial roles); for a feature-based approach to thematic roles, see Kjartan G. Ottósson 1988; for a more rigorous definition of thematic roles, see Ladusaw and Dowty 1987.

(4.110)

Descriptions of the thematic roles assumed:

- agent:** the entity that performs an activity or brings about a change of state (sometimes the notion of **agent** is restricted to an animate entity performing volitional acts and the terms **cause(r)** or **effector** used about non-sentient causers of a change of state)
- experiencer:** the creature experiencing an emotion or perception (**perceiver** is a related notion, restricted to actual perception)
- instrument:** the means by which an activity or change of state is carried out
- goal:** the point to or towards which an entity moves or is oriented (**recipient** is a related notion, a sentient destination, and so is **benefactive/beneficiary**, cf., e.g., Maling 2002b:43; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:78)
- source:** the point from which an entity moves or derives
- location:** the position of an entity
- theme:** the entity viewed as existing in a state, undergoing change, located somewhere, moving, affected or effected by an entity (**patient** is a related notion, the affected or effected entity – its inclusion makes it possible to restrict the notion of **theme** more or less to a moving entity or an entity located somewhere)

As can be seen here, the last role tends to be a catch-all (and it is also lowest on the hierarchy).

In the following subsections we shall see that, although it is possible to find some relationship between thematic roles of arguments like those listed in (4.110) and morphological case in Icelandic, the relationship is many-to-one and one-to-many (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003; Joan Maling 2001, 2002a, b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003). In addition, the case-marking possibilities are to some extent restricted by the grammatical function (subject, object, indirect object) involved. Hence it is necessary to consider each function separately.⁴¹

4.2.3.1 Case marking and thematic roles of subjects

As discussed in 4.1.2 above, all four morphological cases are found on Icelandic subjects, although it is clear that the nominative is the default (structural) case:

⁴¹ A different approach is advocated by Vainikka 1985, who wants to avoid reference to the notions **subject** and **object** in her account of Icelandic case marking.

- (4.111) a. **Haraldur** borðaði fiskinn.
Harold(N) ate fish-the(A)
- b. **Mig** dreymdi illa.
me(A) dreamt badly
'I had a bad dream.'
- c. **Þeim** finnst Haraldur skemmtilegur.
them(D) find Harold(N) interesting(N)
'They find Harold interesting.'
- d. **Hennar** nýtur ekki við lengur.
her(G) enjoys not with longer
'She is no longer here (to help).'

If one considers the possible thematic roles of the subjects, it turns out that there are certain restrictions and regularities.⁴²

Given the fact that the nominative is the default (structural) case of subjects, it is not surprising that nominative subjects can have various thematic roles. Although many, perhaps most, nominative subjects are **agents**, like the subject in (4.111a), the thematic role of the nominative subject depends on the argument structure of the verb, and nominative subjects can have various other thematic roles (cf. Kjartan G. Ottósson 1988; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003, 2005a:380ff.; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:65–7; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:323).⁴³

First, in the following examples the nominative subject is arguably a **theme**:

- (4.112) a. **Rósin** fólnaði.
rose-the(N) withered
- b. **Steinninn** valt niður brekkuna.
stone-the(N) rolled down hill-the
- c. **Bókin** er á borðinu.
book-the(N) is on table-the

None of these subjects pass standard tests for agenthood, such as being able to occur in clauses where the predicate has adverbial modification meaning

⁴² The following discussion disregards passive subjects for the most part. Thematic restrictions on the passive will be discussed in section 5.1.1.

⁴³ Note that this also includes the less prototypical types of agent, such as **cause** or **effector**, i.e. non-animate subjects:

- (i) a. **Fellibylurinn** olli miklu tjóni.
hurricane-the(N) caused much damage(D)
- b. **Glæpurinn** vakti hörð viðbrögð.
crime-the(N) aroused strong reactions(Apl.)

‘willingly’, ‘on purpose’ or the like. The case marking here is typical of nominative-accusative languages like Icelandic as opposed to ergative ones: the subject of intransitive verbs (including unaccusative or ‘ergative’ verbs like the ones in (4.112), see, e.g., Perlmutter 1978) is nominative.

Second, a nominative subject can be an **experiencer** (see again Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003:135ff., 2005a:382; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:321):

- (4.113) a. **Stúlkan** fann mikið til.
 girl-the(N) found much to
 ‘The girl was in pain.’
- b. **Haraldur** heyrði að einhver var að koma.
 Harold(N) heard that somebody was to come
 ‘Harold heard that somebody was coming.’
- c. **Sigurður** elskar Jónínu.
 Sigurd(N) loves Jonina(A)

Again, the subjects fail the standard tests for agenthood and it is pretty clear that they fulfill the semantic criteria of an experiencer.

Third, a nominative subject can be a **goal**, including **recipient** (‘a sentient destination’):

- (4.114) a. **Sjórinn** tekur við öllu skólpinu.
 ocean-the(N) takes with all sewage-the(D)
 ‘The ocean accepts all the sewage.’
- b. **Eiríkur** fékk verðlaunin.
 Eirikur(N) got prize-the(A)
- c. **Sigíður** eignaðist barn.
 Sigrid(N) got child(A)

Fourth, a nominative subject can apparently be a **source**:

- (4.115) a. **Fatan** hefur lekið öllu vatninu.
 bucket-the(N) has leaked all water-the(D)
- b. **Gígurinn** gaus eldi og brennisteini.
 crater-the(N) emitted fire(D) and brimstone(D)

The thematic roles of non-nominative subjects are more restricted. Most importantly, a **non-nominative subject is never an agent**. As frequently demonstrated, non-nominative subjects can have various other thematic roles (see, e.g., Levin and Simpson 1981; Andrews 1982a:463ff.; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003, 2005a:381; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b:65ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:321). We will first consider accusative subjects, which seem to fall into two main types.

First, an accusative subject can be a **theme** (including **patient**):

- (4.116) a. **Snjóa** leysir sjaldan þar fyrr en í júní.
snows(Apl.) melt(sg.) rarely there until in June
- b. **Tröllskessuna** dagaði uppi.
giantess-the(A) dawned up
'The giantess got caught by daylight.'
- c. **Áhorfendurna** dreif að.
spectators-the(Apl.) drove(sg.) at
'The spectators came swarming.'
- d. **Skipbrotsmanninn** rak á land.
shipwrecked-man-the(A) drove to shore
'The shipwrecked man drifted ashore.'

If one excludes relatively fixed expressions, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1997–1998:35) lists some fourteen verbs taking accusative subjects that take either a patient subject (cf. examples a–b) or a theme in the narrow sense (cf. examples c–d). Some of the verbs involved are not particularly common in the spoken language (cf. Jóhannes Gísli 2003), others alternate with transitive verbs in so-called 'ergative pairs'. Such pairs will be discussed in section 5.1.6.

Second, an accusative subject can be an **experiencer** ('the creature experiencing an emotion or perception', including the more narrowly defined **perceiver**):

- (4.117) a. **Hana** langar í súkkulaði.
her(A) longs in chocolate
'She wants chocolate.'
- b. **Harald** vantar peninga.
Harold(A) needs money(A)
- c. **Stelpuna** svimaði uppi á klettinum.
girl-the(A) felt-dizzy up on rock-the
- d. **Mig** minnir [að hann sé þýskur]
me(A) remembers that he be(sbj.) German
'I seem to remember that he is German.'

Jóhannes Gísli (1997–1998) lists thirty-seven verbs taking accusative experiencer subjects and divides them further into semantic classes, such as verbs of emotion (*langa í* 'want', *vanta* 'need'), bodily sensation (*svima* 'feel dizzy') and thinking/perception (*minna* '(seem to) remember').⁴⁴ We will

⁴⁴ As before, Jóhannes' 2003 paper has a more extensive list of verbs, as it includes verbs and usages not familiar to him (i.e. obsolete or rare) but nevertheless found in the dictionary he collected his examples from.

return to this classification below in the discussion of the so-called Dative Substitution (or ‘Dative Sickness’).⁴⁵

As already mentioned, dative subjects are more common, and the thematic roles played by these are also more varied. Consider first the large class of verbs taking dative **experiencer** subjects:

- (4.118) a. **Mér** býður við setningafræði.
me(D) is-nauseated by syntax
‘I find syntax nauseating.’
- b. **Henni** sárnaði þetta.
her(D) was-hurt-by this(N)
‘She was hurt by this.’
- c. **Þeim** hlýnaði strax.
them(D) got-warm immediately
- d. **Honum** misheyrðist.
him(D) mis-heard
‘He misheard.’
- e. **Ræðumanninum** mæltist vel.
speaker-the(D) spoke well
‘The speaker happened to speak well.’

Here Jóhannes Gísli (1997–1998:37–9) lists some 100 verbs, excluding a number of relatively fixed expressions and predicative constructions with *vera* ‘be’ and *verða* ‘become’. He divides these into various semantic classes, including verbs of emotion (*bjóða við* ‘be nauseated by’, *sárna* ‘be hurt by’), bodily sensations (*hlýna* ‘get warm’), thinking and perceiving (*misheyrast* ‘mishear’). The verb *mælast (vel)* ‘(happen) to speak (well)’ is an interesting one, since it might seem that here the subject is an agent. But as Jóhannes shows (1997–1998:23, 2003:131–2), verbs of this kind fail standard tests of agentivity:⁴⁶

- (4.119) *Honum mæltist/talaðist vel til að heilla áheyrendur.
him(D) spoke well in order to impress listeners
‘He managed to speak well in order to impress the listeners.’

⁴⁵ The semantic classification used by Jóhannes Gísli is largely based on work by Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir (1996) and Levin (1993).

⁴⁶ Andrews 1982a:463 calls the dative here ‘dative of success’, and one of the properties of constructions like this is that some sort of qualification is needed, e.g. *vel* ‘well’. Thus **Honum mæltist* is out whereas *Honum mæltist vellekki vellþokkalega ...* ‘He happened to speak well/not well/pretty well ...’ is OK.

Second, there is a sizable class of verbs that take dative **goals** as subjects. Interestingly, these are mostly *-st*-verbs if one excludes relatively fixed expressions (see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998:37, 2005a:401–2). Although some of the *-st*-verbs can be said to have a passive meaning, this does not hold for all of them:⁴⁷

- (4.120) a. **Mér** áskotnaðist gamall bíll.
me(D) lucked-onto old car(N)
- b. **Henni** bauðst starf hjá Íslenskri erfðagreiningu.
her(D) was-offered job(N) at Icelandic Genetics
- c. **Þeim** fæddist dóttir í gær.
them(D) was-born daughter(N) yesterday
'They got a daughter yesterday.'
- d. **Þér** stendur þetta ekki lengur til boða.
you(D) stands this not longer to offer
'This is not an option for you anymore.'

Note that whereas dative subject goals are not uncommon, it seems that accusative subjects are never goals, as Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1997–1998:39) points out.

Third, dative subjects can be **themes**, including animate **patients**:

- (4.121) a. **Nemendum** hefur fjölgað.
students(Dpl.) has(sg.) gotten-more-numerous
- b. **Stríðinu** lauk eftir 30 ár.
war-the(D) ended after 30 years
- c. **Bátnum** hvolfdi í briminu.
boat-the(D) capsized in breakers-the
- d. **Flakinu** skolaði á land.
wreck-the(D) flowed to shore
'The wreck drifted ashore.'

Again, some of these verbs occur in 'ergative pairs', and we will return to these in section 5.1.6.

Finally, genitive subjects are so rare that it is apparently impossible to state any generalization about their thematic roles. They are presumably

⁴⁷ Some of these *-st*-verb only exist in the *-st*-form and hence it is difficult to argue for a synchronic derivation of these from a non-*-st* form (cf. also 5.1.6). This holds for *áskotmast* 'luck onto', for instance.

idiosyncratically marked (see, e.g., Andrews 1982a:463; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996:201).⁴⁸

- (4.122) a. **Hennar** nýtur ekki lengur við.
 her(G) enjoys not longer with
 ‘She is no longer here (to help).’
- b. **Vindsins** gætir ekki lengur.
 wind-the(G) is-noticeable not longer
 ‘The wind is no longer noticeable.’
- c. **Gunnars** getur víða í heimildum.
 Gunnar(G) is-mentioned widely in sources
 ‘Gunnar is mentioned in many sources.’

Concentrating on nominative, accusative and dative subjects, the relationship between case marking and thematic role of subjects appears to be as follows (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:323):

(4.123) subject case	agent	exper.	goal	source	theme
nominative	+	+	+	+	+
accusative		+			+
dative		+	+		+

As shown here, the thematic roles of instrument and location have not figured in the discussion so far.⁴⁹ Now if this table is correct, a couple of entailments seem to hold:

- (4.124) a. If a subject has the thematic role of an agent, then it will be nominative.
 b. If a subject has the thematic role of a source, then it will be nominative.
 c. If a subject has the thematic role of a goal, then it will not be accusative.

No predictions can be made about the thematic role of a subject given its case. This is of some importance since it has been claimed that ‘the predictability runs from the syntax (argument structure) to the semantics, not from the semantics to the syntax’ (Smith 1994:700).

The table in (4.123) shows, however, that experiencers, goals and themes can have more than one subject case. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson has argued (2003) that the choice of case in these instances is not completely arbitrary, however, and so has Andrews (1982a:463ff.). The reader is referred to their papers for descriptions of certain tendencies.

⁴⁸ There are also a few predicative constructions with *vera* ‘be’ (cf. (4.54) above).

⁴⁹ As Jóhanna Barðdal points out (2001b:73), an example like *Lykillinn opnaði dyrnar* ‘The key opened the door’ is conceivable in Icelandic although a bit odd. Here ‘the key’ would be an instrument, at least as defined by Fillmore (1968:22).

Jóhannes Gíslí has also attempted to give at least a partial account of the case marking of subject themes. He divides the verbs involved into two subclasses (2003:143): (i) **motion verbs** and (ii) **verbs denoting change of state**. Many motion verbs enter into transitive-intransitive pairs where the object of the transitive variant has the same thematic role as the subject of the intransitive one:

(4.125)

- a. **Eihver** hreyfði stólinn. / **Stólinn** hreyfðist.⁵⁰
 someone(N) moved chair-the(A) chair-the(N) moved
- b. **Straumurinn** rak bátinn á land. / **Bátinn** rak á land.
 current-the(N) drove boat-the(A) to land boat-the(A)drove to shore
 ‘The current drove the boat ashore.’ ‘The boat drifted ashore.’
- c. **Tillagan** þokaði málinu áleiðis. / **Málinu** þokaði áleiðis.
 proposal-the(N) moved case-the(D) forward case-the(D) moved forward

Jóhannes refers to verbs that do not enter into pairs of this kind (more on these in section 5.1.6) as ‘strictly intransitive’ and states the following generalization about these (2003:144):

(4.126) Strictly intransitive motion verbs cannot have an oblique theme subject.

These include verbs like *detta* ‘fall’, *falla* ‘fall’, *fljóta* ‘flow’, *ffjúka* ‘blow away’, *fossa* ‘gush’, *hrynja* ‘collapse’, *rísa* ‘rise’, *seytla* ‘trickle’ and *síga* ‘sink’. Jóhannes maintains that the subjects of these verbs are more ‘agent-like’ than those of the intransitive verbs that have transitive counterparts.

Some change-of-state verbs taking oblique subjects seem to be strictly intransitive, on the other hand. These include the following (Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 2003:145):

- (4.127) a. **Tillöguna** dagaði uppi.⁵¹
 proposal-the(A) dawned up
 ‘The proposal got nowhere’ (got swept under the rug, was forgotten)
- b. **Keisaradæminu** hnignaði.
 empire-the(D) declined

But most change-of-state verbs take nominative subjects. This includes non-strictly intransitive verbs like the following:

⁵⁰ Jóhannes claims that only intransitive motion verbs with nominative subjects get productive suffixes like (the ‘middle’) *-st*.

⁵¹ The original and literal meaning of this verb is ‘be caught by daylight’ and is used in folk tales about giants and giantesses who get caught by daylight and (hence) turn into stone (literally ‘petrified!’).

- (4.128) a. **Þeir** opna bankann kl. 9. / **Bankinn** opnar kl. 9.
 they(N) open bank-the(A) at 9 bank-the(N) opens at 9
- b. **Þeir** loka búðinni kl. 6. / **Búðin** lokar kl. 6.
 they(N) close store-the(D) at 6 store-the(N) closes at 6

Note that it does not matter for the subject case of the intransitive whether or not the object of the transitive variant is (structurally) marked accusative or (lexically marked) dative.⁵²

Although the subregularities noted above are not extremely clear, it is safe to say that the case assignment of oblique subjects is probably not as irregular (or ‘quirky’) as often assumed, but there is ‘no invariant meaning that one can assign each case which will then provide an explanation of its distribution’ (Andrews 1982a:464).

4.2.3.2 Case marking and thematic roles of objects of dyadic verbs

It has often been pointed out in the literature that near-synonymous transitive verbs may assign different cases to their objects. Relevant examples include the following (see, e.g., Maling 2002a:3, 2002b:33 and references cited there – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:330ff.; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:383ff.):

- (4.129) a. Hún keyrði **bílinn** / ók **bílnum**.
 she(N) drove car-the(A) drove car-the(D)
- b. Hún aðstoðar **hann** / hjálpar **honum**.
 she(N) assists him(A) helps him(D)
- c. Við kláruðum **verkið** / lukum **verkinu**.
 we(N) finished job-the(A) finished job-the(D)
- d. Ég hitti **Harald** / mætti **Haraldi**.
 I met Harold(A) met Harold(D)
- e. Þeir vernduðu **hana** / hlífðu **henni**.
 they(N) guarded her(A) protected her(D)
- f. María elskar **Harald** / ann **Haraldi**.
 Mary(N) loves Harold(A) loves Harold(D)
- g. Þau pössuðu **börnin** / gættu **barnanna**.
 they looked-after kids-the(A) looked-after kids-the(G)

While the verbs in these pairs are arguably not always completely equivalent or synonymous, their existence has often discouraged linguists from trying to find a

⁵² Interestingly, intransitive use of verbs like *opna* ‘open’ and *loka* ‘close’ is sometimes frowned upon by purists.

rhyme or reason for lexical case assignment to objects in Icelandic. Various attempts have been made, however, for example by Jóhanna Barðdal (2001b), Maling (2001, 2002a, b), Svenonius (2002b), Höskuldur Thráinsson (2005:330ff.) and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (2005a:383ff.). Svenonius' work can partly be seen as an attempt to give a more formal semantic account of some of the observations made by Jóhanna Barðdal, Maling and others. I will now review some of these attempts, concentrating on accusative and dative objects, since nominative and genitive objects are probably too rare to yield interesting sets for comparison.

Since accusative is arguably the default (or structurally assigned) case of direct objects, we might a priori expect relatively few thematic restrictions on accusative objects. This seems to be borne out to some extent. Thus many accusative direct objects play the role of a **theme**, especially in the broader sense where theme includes **patient** – or if the notion of a theme is used to cover anything which is not obviously something else (see also Svenonius 2002b:210):

- (4.130)
- | | | | |
|----|----------------|-----------|-----------------|
| a. | María | hlóð | vörðuna. |
| | Mary(N) | built | cairn-the(A) |
| b. | Haraldur | eyðilagði | bílinn. |
| | Harold(N) | ruined | car-the(A) |
| c. | Húsvörðurinn | sópaði | salinn. |
| | janitor-the(N) | swept | hall-the(A) |
| d. | Ég | þekki | Harald. |
| | I | know | Harold(A) |

Second, an accusative object can also be an **experiencer** in examples like the following:

- (4.131)
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| a. | Draugurinn | hræddi | gömlu konuna. |
| | ghost-the(N) | frightened | old(A) lady-the(A) |
| b. | Jólasveinarnir | glöddu | krakkana. |
| | Christmas-trolls-the(N) | pleased | kids-the(A) |
| c. | Móðirin | róaði | drenginn. |
| | mother-the(N) | calmed | boy-the(A) |

Third, an accusative object can apparently be a **goal** (although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish direct object goals from patient or even location, cf. below):

- (4.132)
- | | | |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Hún | aðstoðaði | Harald. |
| she(N) | helped | Harold(A) |

Fourth, there are a few instances where an accusative NP following a stative verb or a movement appears to play the role of **location** (or **path**):

- (4.133) a. *Bóndinn* *fyllti/hlóð* **vagninn.**
 farmer-the(N) filled/loaded wagon-the(A)
- b. *Snjórinn* þekur **jörðina.**
 snow-the(N) covers ground-the(A)
- c. *Útlendingar* *riðu/fóru/keyrðu/gengu ...* oft **þennan stíg.**
 foreigners(N) rode/went/drove/walked ... often this path(A)

We will return to verbs of the ‘fill, load’-type in the discussion of double object constructions in section 4.2.3.3 (cf. also Svenonius 2002b:219), where the alternative thematic role assignment of goal will be discussed. In the b- and c-examples it might be argued that the relationship between these verbs and the accompanying NPs is not a typical verb-argument relationship. The b-example involves ‘a stative physical relationship’ (cf. Svenonius 2002b:210) and the notion of location seems more appropriate than, say, that of a theme. In the c-example it might seem that the role of the NP is an adverbial one (‘accusative of path’, cf. Zaenen et al. 1985:474; Maling 2002b:76) but the NPs involved in constructions of this sort apparently have some object properties, including passivizability and their behaviour with respect to object shift.⁵³

- (4.134) a. *Þessi stígur* *var oft riðinn/farinn/keyrð/genginn* af *útlendingum.*
 this way(N) was often ridden/gone/driven/walked by foreigners
- b. *Íslendingar* *riðu/fóru/óku/gengu* **þennan stíg/hann** *aldrei.*
 Icelanders rode/went/drove/walked this path(A)/it(A) never
- c. *Íslendingar* *riðu/fóru/óku/gengu* *aldrei þennan stíg/*hann.*
 Icelanders rode/went/drove/walked never this path(A)/*it(A)

⁵³ As Zaenen et al. (1985) point out, adverbial NPs do not passivize in general. They also give the following example:

- (i) a. *Hann* *keyrði bílinn* *þessa leið.*
 he drove car-the(A) this route.
- b. **Þessi leið* *hefur aldrei verið keyrð bílinn.*
 this route(N) has never been driven car-the(A)

From this they conclude that path accusatives like *þessa leið* ‘this route’ and *þennan stíg* ‘this path’ above are non-arguments but can nevertheless be passivized when there is no argument around. This is also assumed by Smith 1994:705n. But since passivization in Icelandic is in general restricted to verbal arguments, as is Object Shift, this account is suspicious. Fortunately, an alternative suggests itself: as we have seen, objects cannot in general be passivized over other objects in Icelandic. Hence we would not expect (ib) to be acceptable unless the ‘inverted’ order in (ii) was possible, and it is not (cf. the discussion of passives in double object constructions in section 3.2.2.3):

- (ii) **Hann keyrði þessa leið* *bílinn.*
 he drove this route(A) car-the(A)

Finally, it should be pointed out that that **object NPs** supporting **secondary predicates** are typically marked accusative. As already pointed out (in the discussion around (4.26)), the secondary predicate will then agree in case with the nominative subject in the passive:

- (4.135) a. Þeir kusu **hana** forseta.
 they elected her(A) president(A)
 b. Hún var kosin forseti.
 she(N) was elected president(N)

Interestingly, it seems that dative direct objects can play most of the thematic roles illustrated above for accusative objects. Dative direct objects are frequently **themes**, for instance, especially in the narrower sense of ‘moving entities’ (see, e.g., Stefán Einarsson 1945:108; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b; Maling 2001, 2002a, b; Svenonius 2002b:211; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:331; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:384):

- (4.136) a. Kúluvarparinn kastaði **kúlunni**.
 shot-putter-the(N) threw shot-the(D)
 b. Strákurinn henti **ruslinu**.
 boy-the(N) threw-away garbage-the(D)
 c. Stelpan sparkaði **boltanum**.
 girl-the(N) kicked ball-the(D)

Second, some verbs take dative direct object **experiencers** (see also Svenonius 2002b:217):

- (4.137) a. Hann skapraunar **henni**.
 he(N) irritates her(D)
 b. Stelpan stríddi **stráknum**.
 girl-the(N) teased boy-the(D)

Third, dative direct object **goals** can also be found, especially if one includes the subcase of **recipient**. They are especially common with verbs of helping, for instance (cf. Maling 2002b:60ff; Svenonius 2002b:213ff.):

- (4.138) a. Við hjálpuðum **Haraldi**.
 we(N) helped Harold(D)
 b. Þyrlan bjargaði **ferðamanninum**.
 helicopter-the(N) saved traveller-the(D)
 c. Formaðurinn þakkaði **nefndinni**.
 chairman-the(N) thanked committee-the(D)

It seems, then, that the most important thematic roles that can be played by accusative direct objects can also be played by dative objects (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:332):⁵⁴

(4.139)	direct object	theme	exper.	goal	location
	accusative	+	+	+	+
	dative	+	+	+	

As shown by various linguists (e.g. Jóhanna Barðdal, Maling and Svenonius), however, it is possible to find some interesting subregularities and tendencies. This becomes clearer if one tries to divide the verbs involved into semantic subclasses.⁵⁵

Consider first the following pairs (cf., e.g., Maling 2002b:71ff.; Svenonius 2002b:212–13; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:384):

(4.140)	a. Húsvörðurinn janitor-the(N)	sópaði swept	salinn/ruslinu. hall-the(A)/trash-the(D)
	b. Haraldur Harold	mokaði shovelled	tröppurnar/snjónum. steps(A)/snow-the(D)
	c. Óli Oli(N)	skaut shot	fuglinn/kúlunni. bird-the(A)/bullet-the(D)
	d. Þeir they 'They rid the heath of sheep/rounded up the sheep.'	smöluðu 'shepherded'	heiðina/fénu. heath-the(A)/sheep-the(D)
	e. Hún she	jós bailed	bátinn/vatninu. boat-the(A)/water-the(D) 'She bailed the boat/scooped the water out of the boat.'

Considering examples like the ones in (4.140), one could argue that another way of expressing the generalization involved is by dividing the role of theme into 'real theme' in the sense of 'moved object' (the dative in these examples)

⁵⁴ I disregard here some of the less typical roles mentioned above, such as **path** (although it may be considered a sub-case of location) and also datives of instrumental nature. We will return to the latter in the discussion of the thematic roles played by objects of ditransitive verbs. For further examples of adverbial datives, see, e.g., Maling 2002b:77ff.; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2003:233–4.

⁵⁵ Conversely, Woolford (2006) maintains that regularly assigned thematic case is restricted to subjects and goal IOs, and irregular (quirky – her lexical) case is restricted to direct objects ('themes/internal arguments' as she puts it). Although it is definitely true that there are more regularities in the thematic case marking of subjects and goal IOs than, say, direct objects – and fewer instances of irregular case marking – Woolford's conclusion seems to involve considerable simplification. That should emerge from the discussion in the text.

and patient in the sense of ‘affected object’ (accusative here). The problem is, however, that not all ‘moved themes’ are marked dative, as can be seen by comparing the following (cf., e.g., Svenonius 2002b:211–12):

(4.141)

a. Some verbs taking dative object themes:

dúndra ‘kick a ball hard’, *henda* ‘throw, discard’, *kasta* ‘throw’, *þeyta* ‘fling’,
þrykkja ‘kick, thrust’

b. Some verbs taking accusative object themes:

draga ‘pull’, *flytja* ‘move’, *færa* ‘move’, *hækka* ‘raise’, *lækka* ‘lower’

The difference here lies in the types of events involved, according to Svenonius. In the first set we have verbs of ‘ballistic motion’ whereas in the second we have verbs where ‘the motion is accompanied throughout the event by a causer’. Contrary to proposals linking the dative marking of moving objects to rapidity of the motion involved, Svenonius cites dative-taking verbs like the following, where he argues that the movement is ‘independent of the actions of an agent or causer’:

(4.142) More verbs taking dative object themes:

dreypta ‘drip’, *fleyta* ‘float’, *sleppa* ‘release’, *stökkva* ‘sprinkle’, *sökkva* ‘sink’,
velta ‘roll’

Turning to direct object experiencers, one might think that dative case might be more common here than accusative since dative subject experiencers seem to be more common than accusative subject experiencers (cf. the discussion in 4.2.3.1 above). Pairs like the following might seem to support this assumption (cf. Maling 2002b:64; Svenonius 2002b:215–16):

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| (4.143) a. | Ég
I(N) | greiddi
combed | barninu /hárið.
child-the(D)/hair-the(A) |
| b. | Við
we(N) | kembdum
combed | hestinum /ullina.
horse-the(D)/wool-the(A) |
| c. | Kristín
Kristin(N) | þurrkaði
dried | barninu /handklæðið.
child-the(D)/towel-the(A) |
| d. | Hún
she(N) | strauk
patted | kettinum /steininn.
cat-the(D)/rock-the(A) |
| e. | Hann
he(N) | þvoði
washed | barninu /bílinn.
child-the(D)/car-the(A) |

In pairs of this sort the dative is used if the object is a ‘sentient being’ but accusative if it is not. Nevertheless, it seems that very many direct object

experiencers can be marked accusative, for instance in examples like the following (cf. Svenonius 2002b:217):

- (4.144) a. Jólásveinarnir glöddu **krakkana.**
 Christmas-trolls-the(N) pleased kids-the(A)
- b. Fjölmiðlarnir ergja **ráðherrann** svakalega.
 mass-media-the(N) annoy minister-the(A) terribly
- c. Hávaðinn fældi **hestinn.**
 noise-the(N) terrified horse-the(A)
- d. Þetta truflar **mig** ekkert.
 this(N) disturbs me(A) nothing
 ‘This does not disturb me.’

Svenonius (2002b:215, 217) maintains that typical experiencer objects are marked accusative (with some exceptions, cf. (4.137) vs. (4.131)), whereas the dative objects in (4.143) are **beneficiaries** (benefactives). Observe also the following pair (Maling 2002b:64; Svenonius 2002b:216):

- (4.145) Stelpan klóraði **mig / mér.**
 girl-the(N) scratched me(A/D)

Here the accusative implies ‘scratched, leaving scratch marks’ (negative) whereas the dative means ‘scratch an itch’ (positive).

A more puzzling set is made up by a class of verbs that can either take a dative experiencer object or a dative experiencer subject (cf., e.g., Helgi Bernódsson 1982; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998:39; Jóhanna Barðdal 1999b; Christer Platzack 1999):

- (4.146) a. Hefur **þér** hentað þetta vel?
 has you(D) suited this(N) well
- b. Hefur þetta hentað **þér** vel?
 has this(N) suited you(D) well

This class includes verbs that are quite similar in meaning such as *hæfa* ‘suit’, *passa* ‘suit, fit’, *sæma* ‘suit, become’, but also verbs such as *falla* ‘like’ (cf. the discussion in footnote 10 above – see also Jóhanna Barðdal 1999b, 2001a and Christer Platzack 1999 for different accounts of these). Since the problem is more one of mapping between thematic roles and grammatical function than thematic roles and case, these verbs will not be considered further here.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Jóhanna Barðdal 2001a gives a much longer list of verbs and complex predicates and proposes that the relevant semantic classes include emotive verbs, perception verbs, cognition verbs and benefactive verbs. It remains to be investigated in

Although it is not easy to find clear semantic differences between accusative and dative direct object goals, it should be pointed out that there are very few clear instances of accusative goals. Thus the accusative of the a-example below contrasts with the more typical dative in b and c (see also Yip et al. 1987:229):

- | | | | | |
|---------|----|--------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (4.147) | a. | Hún
she(N) | aðstoðaði
helped | Harald.
Harold(A) |
| | b. | Við
we(N) | hjálpuðum
helped | Haraldi.
Harold(D) |
| | c. | Hjúkrunarkonan
nurse-the(N) | hjúkraði
nursed | sjúklingnum.
patient-the(D) |

But unless there is a clear semantic difference between *aðstoða* ‘assist’ on the one hand and *hjálpa* ‘help’, *hjúkra* ‘nurse’, and so forth on the other, the different case selection remains a puzzle here.

Despite these and other puzzles, Svenonius (2002b:222) suggests that linguists have often ‘not looked in the right place for the system, which raises the hope that perhaps there is no such thing as idiosyncratic lexical case’. The first part of the statement is undoubtedly true and the second is interesting because different assumptions about the existence of idiosyncratic lexical case lead to different predictions:

- (4.148)
- a. If idiosyncratic lexical case exists, as well as regular or predictive lexical case, then we would expect these two kinds of lexical case to fare differently in language acquisition and linguistic change: idiosyncratic lexical case should be more difficult to acquire and would be more likely to disappear.
 - b. If all lexical case is predictable, then we would a priori expect lexical case to be roughly equally easy (or difficult) to acquire and we would not expect major differences in diachronic development.

Now if it turns out that some types of lexical case are in fact more difficult to acquire than others, and perhaps on their way out, then one could of course still argue that they may be regular or predictable – the problem is just that it is so difficult for the learner to discover the relevant triggers. But the step from a poor trigger or barely discernable regularity to irregularity or idiosyncrasy may be a small one and we shall return to this issue in section 4.2.4. Before we

Footnote 56 (*cont.*)

more detail, however, which of the verbs considered do in fact allow for the subject–object alternation.

do, it is useful to look at the relationship between case marking and thematic relations in double object constructions.

4.2.3.3 Case marking and thematic roles in double object constructions

As illustrated in section 4.1.2.3, these are the most common case-marking patterns of double object verbs, roughly in the order of frequency (the patterns reflect default order of the arguments, not inverted orders):

(4.149)	NDA	<i>gefa</i> ‘give’	<i>segja</i> ‘tell’
	NAD	<i>svipta</i> ‘deprive’	<i>leyna</i> ‘conceal’
	NDG	<i>óska</i> ‘wish’	<i>synja</i> ‘deny’
	NDD	<i>lofa</i> ‘promise’	<i>skila</i> ‘return’
	NAG	<i>spyrja</i> ‘ask’	<i>krefja</i> ‘demand’

As pointed out above, the subject is always nominative in double object constructions. Although this is largely because it is usually an **agent** (as we have seen, agents are always marked nominative in Icelandic), this is not always the case (cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:75). In fact, most of the other thematic roles that subjects play can also be played by subjects of double object constructions, although agents are by far the most common. Since many of the expressions involved are heavily idiomatic, the thematic roles of the arguments are not always entirely clear, however. Note also that many of these constructions are obligatorily reflexive with the reflexive pronoun in the (apparent) indirect object position. In that sense they are not truly double object constructions:

(4.150)

- a. **Haraldur** kann henni engar þakkir fyrir þetta. **experiencer**
 Harold(N) feels her(D) no(A) thanks(A) for this
 ‘Harold feels no gratitude towards her for this.’
- b. **María** gat sér gott orð í skólanum. **goal(?)**
 Mary(N) got refl.(D) good(A) word(A) in school-the
 ‘Mary earned herself a good reputation in school.’
- c. **Atburðurinn** átti sér stað á skólalóðinni. **theme**
 incident-the(N) owned refl.(D) place(A) on school-grounds-the
 ‘The incident took place on the school grounds.’
- d. **Hún** kenndi sér einskis meins. **experiencer**
 she(N) felt refl.(D) no(G) pain(G)

When trying to give an account of the relationship between other aspects of case marking in double object constructions and the thematic roles involved, one of the problems is that the definition of indirect object (IO) is not very clear, as pointed out in the discussion around (4.65) above. Three rather informal possibilities are given in (4.151):

- (4.151) a. The IO is the dative object in a ditransitive construction.
 b. The first object in the default word order in a ditransitive construction is the IO.
 c. The goal-type argument in a ditransitive construction is the IO.

I have already dismissed the first proposal, an important reason being the fact that sometimes there are two dative objects and sometimes there are none. The idea behind the second proposal is that it is generally possible to state (default) word-order generalizations in terms of grammatical functions and that languages like Icelandic are S-(V_f)-(V_{nf})-IO-DO languages (where V_f and V_{nf} stand for 'finite verb' and 'non-finite verb', respectively). The third proposal implies that there will always be some sort of a goal-type argument in double object constructions and this argument will then be (i.e. behave syntactically as) an IO. For the purposes of this discussion I will continue to assume the second 'definition' (for a discussion that takes the third one as a point of departure see Maling 2001).⁵⁷ Note, however, that it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish non-argument NPs (e.g. instrumentals) from arguments. This means that

⁵⁷ As Maling (2001:421ff.) shows, Baker (1997) and Hudson (1992), for instance, list a number of alleged differences between IOs and DOs. Many of their tests do not go through in Icelandic, though, partly because of the licensing role of case and agreement. Secondary predicates can thus be hosted by any argument NP, for instance, and not only by DOs as argued by Baker and Hudson for English (cf. also Maling 2001:421, 457):

- (i) a. *Ég sendi Hildi fiskinn hráan.*
 I sent Hildur(Dsg.f.) fish-the(Asg.m.) raw(Asg.m.)
 'I sent Hildur the fish raw.'
- b. *Ég sendi Hildi fiskinn svangri.*
 I sent Hildur(Dsg.f.) fish-the(Asg.m.) hungry(Dsg.f.)
 'I sent Hildur the fish (when she was) hungry.'
- c. *Ég sendi fiskinn til Hildar hráan.*
 I sent fish-the(Asg.m.) to Hildur(Gsg.f.) raw(Asg.m.)
 'I sent the fish to Hildur (when it was) raw.'
- d. *?Ég sendi fiskinn til Hildar svangrar.*
 I sent fish-the(Asg.m.) to Hildur(Gsg.f.) hungry(G.sg.f.)
 'I sent the fish to Hildur (when she was) hungry.'
- e. *Ég setti kjötið í ofninn heitan.*
 I put meat-the(Asg.n.) in oven-the(Asg.m.) hot(Asg.m.)
 'I put the meat in the oven (when it (the oven) was) hot.'

In addition, we have seen that in Icelandic it is often important to distinguish between case-marked arguments and arguments in PPs (e.g. in Passive and Object Shift), although secondary predication seems quite insensitive to this.

it might be difficult to tell a S-IO-DO order from an instance of S-DO-AdvNP order, as we have already seen (see the discussion around (4.67) of possible instrumental datives in NAD structures).

Assuming that the first object is typically the IO, we can begin by looking at possible thematic roles for dative IOs. Since dative IOs are obviously more frequent than accusative IOs (and other types do not exist), we can begin by looking at the thematic roles played by dative indirect objects.

Not surprisingly, then, a **dative IO** is often ‘a **goal**-type argument’, including the more narrowly defined role of **recipient** (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:78ff.). This holds for all the case patterns where the IO is marked dative (i.e. NDA, NDD, NDG):

- (4.152)
- | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| a. | Við | gáfum | Jóni | bókina. |
| | we(N) | gave | John(D) | book-the(A) |
| b. | Hún | sendi | Haraldi | ost. |
| | she(N) | sent | Harold(D) | cheese(A) |
| c. | Nefndin | úthlutaði | henni | þessari íbúð. |
| | board-the(N) | assigned | her(D) | this apartment(D) |
| d. | Við | óskum | þeim | alls góðs. |
| | we(N) | wish | them(D) | all good(G) |

The role of **benefactive** (beneficiary) is an interesting subcase of this as IOs do not seem to be quite as free to assume that role in Icelandic as in some other Germanic languages. According to Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (2000b:78), this role is ‘typically found with verbs of creation (including verbs of cooking), selection or acquisition’. Jóhannes Gísli defines beneficiaries as ‘intended rather than actual recipients’ and says that they are ‘not part of the verb’s core meaning’. Thus, while one can argue that having a recipient argument is a part of the ‘core meaning’ of the verb ‘send’, having a benefactive argument is not a necessary part of the meaning of the verb ‘bake’. Consider the following examples (cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:79, 2005a:376; Maling 2002b:51–52; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:334):

- (4.153)
- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|
| a. | Þeir | fundu | henni | nýtt | starf. |
| | they(N) | found | her(D) | new(A) | job(A) |
| b. | Samningurinn | opnar | fyrirtækinu | nýja | möguleika. |
| | contract-the | opens | company-the(D) | new(A) | possibilities(A) |
| c. | Bærinn | reisti | skáldinu | minnisvarða. | |
| | town-the(N) | erected | poet-the(D) | monument(A) | |
| d. | Þetta tæki | auðveldar | okkur | störfin. | |
| | this tool(N) | facilitates | us(D) | jobs-the(A) | |

The benefactive need not in fact benefit from the action as the ‘malefactive’ (the person adversely affected) is obviously the same kind of role (Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:79):

- (4.154) a. Myrkrið torvelðaði þeim leitina.
 darkness-the(N) made-difficult them(D) search-the(A)
 b. Við gerðum henni grikk.
 we(N) did her(D) trick(A)
 ‘We played a trick on her.’

Interestingly, several verbs only allow reflexive benefactives in Icelandic or, more precisely, an indirect object benefactive that is coreferential with (or bound by) the subject of the relevant verb. Consider the following (see Holmberg and Platzack 1995:201–4; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:79; Maling 2002b:51):

- (4.155) a. Ég bakaði mér/??þér köku.
 I(N) baked me/??you(D) cake(A)
 ‘I baked myself a cake.’
 b. Bakaðu þér köku.
 bake(imp.) yourself cake
 ‘Bake yourself a cake.’
 c. Þú hefur veitt þér/*mér fisk í soðið.
 you(N) have caught you/*me(D) fish for cooking
 ‘You have caught yourself fish for cooking.’
 d. Konurnar pöntuðu sér/?*henni eftirrétt.
 women-the(N) ordered refl./her(D) dessert(A)
 ‘The women ordered themselves a dessert.’

In these instances the non-coreferential benefactive would have to be expressed in a prepositional phrase in Icelandic (and thus preferably follow the direct object as PPs normally do):

- (4.156) a. Ég bakaði köku handa þér.
 I(N) baked cake(A) for you
 b. Þú hefur veitt fisk handa mér í soðið.
 you(N) have caught fish(A) for me for cooking
 c. Konurnar pöntuðu eftirrétt handa henni.
 women-the(N) ordered dessert for her

We will return to this restriction on benefactives below in a comparison of benefactive constructions in Icelandic and Faroese, for instance.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ As Holmberg and Platzack point out (1995:201ff.), Icelandic differs from MSc in that at least some MSc languages allow benefactives more freely, although there may be

I conclude, then, that in all the case frames where the IO is marked dative, it typically has a goal-type thematic role, often a recipient and sometimes a benefactive. Accusative IOs seem rather different in this respect. Considering first the verbs occurring in the NAG case frame, it has already been pointed out that this class is very restricted in Modern Icelandic. According to Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (2000b:80), only some six verbs occur in this frame in the modern language and three of these form a semantic class of sorts:

- (4.157) a. Þeir spurðu **manninn** fréttu.
 they(N) asked man-the(A) news(G)
 'They asked the man if he had any news.'
- b. Við kröfðum **hana** skýringa.
 we(N) demanded her(A) explanations(G)
- c. Ég bað **þig** hjálpar.
 I(N) asked you(A) help(G)

While one could argue that the IO is in some sense the 'target' of the action, it is not really a goal or a receiver of any kind. It is in fact more like a **source**: the agent wants the news/explanations/help to come **from** the IO (although this is perhaps not as clear in all instances involving the verb *biðja* 'ask', cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:80–1).⁵⁹

An accusative IO also has the thematic role of **source** in a subset of the verbs occurring in the NAD frame, as pointed out by Zaenen et al. (1985:470; see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:84):

- (4.158) a. Þjófarnir rændu **hana** aleigunni.
 thieves-the(N) robbed her(A) all-possession-the(D)
 'The thieves robbed her of everything.'
- b. Lögreglan sviptir **marga** ökuskrteininu.
 police-the(N) deprives many(A) driver's-licence-the(D)
 'The police deprive many of their driver's licence.'

Footnote 58 (cont.)

some dialectal difference in that respect (Holmberg and Platzack 1995:203n.). German also appears to allow benefactives more freely than Icelandic, cf., e.g., *Er hat mir das Buch übersetzt* 'He has translated the book for me' (lit. 'He has translated me the book'). It does not seem that all the puzzles regarding the cross-linguistic variation of these so-called free benefactives have been solved.

⁵⁹ Jóhannes Gísli lists three more verbs as occurring in the NAG case frame in Modern Icelandic: *dylja* 'conceal from, not tell', *hvetja* 'urge', *letja* 'discourage from'. They all sound bookish or stilted to me in this kind of frame. Still, one might argue that they are semantically related to the 'source' examples above – i.e. 'conceal from' and 'discourage from' are not very far from 'deprive of', and here again the first object would then be a potential source which is deprived of a potential possession, as Matthew Whelpton has pointed out to me (p.c.).

Hence it seems fairly clear that one of the roles that accusative IOs can play is that of a source. In some instances, however, it is more like a **theme**, such as in verbs denoting connection of some sort, the other sizable class of NAD verbs (see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:81, 94):

- (4.159) a. Þeir tengja **flóðin** loftslagsbreytingum.
 they(N) connect floods-the(A) climatic-changes(D)
 ‘They relate the floods to the climatic changes.’
- b. Inflytjendurnir samlöguðu **sig** nýju þjóðfélagi.
 immigrants(N) adapted REFL(A) new society(D)
 ‘The immigrants adapted to a new society.’
- c. Hún gifti **son sinn** ríkri ekkju.
 she(N) married son(A) her(REFL.poss.A) rich widow(D)
 ‘She married her son away to a rich widow.’

Finally, consider verbs of ‘spraying, loading and filling’ (cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000b:82):

- (4.160) a. Vinnumennirnir hlóðu **vagninn** heyi.
 farm-hands-the(N) loaded wagon-the(A) hay(D)
 ‘The farm hands loaded the wagon with hay.’
- b. Ég vil gæða **söguna** meiralfí.
 I(N) want endow story-the(A) more life(D)
 ‘I want to liven up the story.’
- c. Forsetinn sæmdi **Harald** orðunni.
 president-the(N) awarded Harold(A) medal-the(D)
 ‘The president awarded Harold the medal.’

The question is how best to describe the relationship between the two objects. Does it make sense, for instance, to say that any of the accusative IOs here are goals or recipients? Now I have already maintained that true ‘fill and load’-verbs like *hlaða* in the a-example take a **location** argument and not a goal (cf. also Svenonius 2002b:219) – and the IO there is certainly not a recipient. Yip et al. (1987:228–9) have claimed that the verbs in the b- and c-examples take recipient goals, and thus they consider them to be exceptions to the otherwise quite general rule that recipients are marked dative. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson has argued (2000b:82n.) that the IO role involved is more like that of a **location**. Note, for instance, that the IO in the b-example is clearly not a ‘sentient destination’. Observe also that *sæma* ‘award’ in most instances implies that something has to be ‘put on’ the person, for example a medal (although it can also be a *nafnbót*, i.e. a title). Finally, Matthew Whelpton has suggested (p.c.) that this is more like a patient-instrumental pattern where one ‘changes the state of x by means

of y: the wagon becomes full, the story becomes interesting, the person becomes honored ... by means of the second object’.

The relationship between case marking and thematic roles of indirect objects can then be summarized as follows (with some simplification, perhaps, disregarding tough cases – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:335):

(4.161)	indirect object	theme	goal (recipient)	benefact.)	source	location
	accusative	+			+	+
	dative		+	+	+	

The ‘division of labour’ seems pretty clear here, then: an accusative IO is a theme, source or location, whereas a dative IO plays a ‘goal-type’ role (including recipient and benefactive).

The roles played by direct objects (i.e. the second object) in double object constructions do not seem to be significantly different from those played by objects of monotransitive verbs. Note, however, that while most of the dative DOs associated with the verbs of the kind illustrated in (4.160) could easily be subsumed under dative DO themes (‘moving entities’), one could also argue that some of them at least are of adverbial nature. Thus note that an instrumental PP can also be substituted for the dative DO with *hlaða* ‘load’:

(4.162)	Vinumennirnir	hlóðu	vagninn	með heyi.
	farm-hands-the(N)	loaded	wagon-the(A)	with hay
	‘The farm hands loaded the wagon with hay.’			

Note also that here the alleged DO can easily be left out, whereas it is otherwise more common that the IO and not the DO can be left out in double object constructions. Neither of these comments applies to the other verbs in (4.160), on the other hand.

It is possible to conclude, then, that the relationship between thematic role assignment and case marking is apparently more regular in double object constructions than in monotransitive and intransitive constructions.

4.2.4 *Some changes – and comparison with the other Scandinavian languages*

4.2.4.1 **Subject case and thematic roles in Faroese and Icelandic**

As already mentioned, Faroese is the only Scandinavian language other than Icelandic that has non-nominative subjects. As in Icelandic, these are never agents. Very few verbs in Faroese take accusative subjects only (see

Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:253), mainly these (and they are apparently very rare in the spoken language):

- (4.163) a. **Meg** nøtrar í holdið. (Fa)
 me(A) shudders in flesh-the
 ‘I shudder.’
- b. **Meg** órði tað ikki.
 me(A) expected that(A?) not
 ‘I did not expect that.’

The thematic role here is apparently an **experiencer**. Several verbs that used to take accusative experiencer subjects now more commonly take nominative subjects (Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:253–4 – perfect minimal pairs cannot be constructed here because of syncretism in the Faroese morphology):

- (4.164)
- a. **Meg** droymdi / **Vit** droymdu ein so sáran dreym. (Fa)
 I(A) dreamed(sg.) / We(N) dreamed(pl.) one such painful dream
 ‘I/We had such a bad dream.’
- b. **Meg** grunaði / **Vit** grunaðu hetta ikki.
 me(A) suspected(sg.) / we(N) suspected(pl.) this not
 ‘I/We didn’t suspect this.’
- c. **Meg** vardi einki ilt.
 me(A) expected nothing bad
 ‘I didn’t expect anything bad.’

A few verbs can either take accusative or dative subjects, with no change in thematic role, but most of them are rarely used in the modern language (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:254):

- (4.165) a. **Meg/mær** fýsir ógvuliga lítið at fara. (Fa)
 me(A/D) wants extremely little to go
 ‘I have very little desire to go.’
- b. **Meg/mær** hugbítur eftir tí.
 me(A/D) longs for it
 ‘I desire it a lot.’
- c. **Meg/mær** lystir at dansa.
 me(A/D) wants to dance
 ‘I want to dance.’

Finally, some verbs that used to take accusative experiencer subjects now exclusively take dative experiencers (Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:255ff.):

- (4.166) a. **Mær** skortar ikki pening.⁶⁰ (Fa)
 me(D) lacks not money(A)
 'I don't lack money.'
- b. **Mær** tørvar góða hjálp.
 me(D) needs(3sg.) good(A) help(A)
 'I need good help.'
- c. **Henni** vantar góða orðabók.
 her(D) lacks good(A) dictionary(A)
 'She needs a good dictionary.'

The same tendency is found dialectally in Icelandic for verbs of a similar semantic class, but it has been frowned upon and it is commonly known as 'Dative Sickness' (or Dative Substitution, which might be politically more correct – see, e.g., Ásta Svavarsdóttir 1982; Smith 1994; Allen 1996; Thórhallur Eythórsson 2002; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Thórhallur Eythórsson 2003, 2005 and references cited by these authors):

- (4.167) a. **Mig/Mér** vantar peninga.
 me(A/D) lacks money(A)
 'I need money.'
- b. **Mig/Mér** langar í bjór.
 me(A/D) longs in beer
 'I'd like a beer.'

It is likely that there is a common reason for these changes, since it is very unlikely that either language has influenced the other in this area. In addition, similar changes are known in other languages (Old English, Old Norwegian, Old Swedish, see Smith 1994). The commonly accepted account is that since accusative subject experiencers are exceptional but datives ones are not, we have here a change from an idiosyncratic lexical case to a more semantically (or thematically) regular one (see, e.g., Thórhallur Eythórsson 2002, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998).

Accusative **theme** subjects do not seem to be found in Faroese anymore. Consider the verb *reka* 'drift', which apparently took an accusative subject in Old Norse and still does to some extent in Icelandic (see Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:277, 427–8):

⁶⁰ Interestingly, Halldór Halldórsson (1982) mentions that *skorta* 'lack', the same verb as in the Faroese example (5.168a), is found with a dative subject in an Old Icelandic law book although it is otherwise used with accusative subjects in Old Icelandic and in Modern Icelandic too (it is a rather literary verb, though).

- (4.168) a. **Vit** róku í fleiri dagar. (Fa)
 we(N) drove(pl.) in many days
 ‘We drifted for days.’
- b. **Okkur** rak í marga daga. (Ic)
 us(A) drifted(sg.) in many days
 ‘We drifted for days.’

This change from accusative to nominative case marking on theme subjects is also found in Icelandic, and here it has been suggested that an idiosyncratic lexical case is changing to a structurally determined one (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998; Thórhallur Eythórsson 2002).

In Icelandic it is (still) rare to find a change from the relatively robust dative lexical case on dative experiencers to a structural one. In Faroese, on the other hand, this is quite common, although the dative is normally still possible (see Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:257 – see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Thórhallur Eythórsson 2005):

- (4.169) a. **Henni** dámar væl fisk. (Fa)
 her(D) likes well fish(A)
 ‘She likes fish a lot.’
- b. **Eg** dámi ikki tvøst og spik.
 I(N) like(1sg.) not whale-meat and blubber
 ‘I don’t like whale meat and blubber.’
- c. **Honum** leingist altíð heimaftur.
 him(D) longs always back home
 ‘He is always homesick.’
- d. **Vit** leingjast altíð heimaftur.
 we(Npl.) long(pl.) always back home
 ‘We are always homesick.’
- e. **Mær** lukkast ikki at fáa hetta liðugt.
 me(D) succeeds not to get this done
 ‘I’m not getting this done.’
- f. **Eg** lukkast ikki at fáa hetta liðugt.
 I(N) succeed(1sg.) not to get this done
 ‘I am not getting this done.’

This change from oblique subject case to nominative has been referred to as Nominative Substitution in the literature (see, e.g., Smith 1994; Thórhallur Eythórsson 2002 – see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Thórhallur Eythórsson 2005). Interestingly, this change has affected dative subjects with adjectival predicates in Faroese. Hence we do not have the same case alternation between theme subject and experiencer

subjects in Icelandic and Faroese with such predicates (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:233–4):

- | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----------------------|----|---------------|------|
| (4.170) | a. | Ofninn | er | kaldur. | (Ic) |
| | | Ovnurin | er | kaldur. | (Fa) |
| | | radiator-the(Nsg.m.) | is | cold | |
| | b. | Drengnum | er | kalt. | (Ic) |
| | | boy-the(Dsg.m.) | is | cold(Nsg.n.) | |
| | | Drongurin | er | kaldur. | (Fa) |
| | | boy-the(Nsg.m.) | is | cold(Nsg.m.) | |
| | | ‘The boy is cold.’ | (= | ‘feels cold’) | |

In Icelandic the experiencer subject *drengnum* ‘the boy’ is marked dative and hence we do not get any agreement on the predicative adjective since only nominative subjects trigger agreement. The theme subject *ofninn* ‘the radiator’, on the other hand, is marked nominative and triggers agreement in Icelandic. In Faroese there is no such difference: both subjects are marked nominative and trigger agreement.

4.2.4.2 Object case and thematic roles in Faroese

Not surprisingly, accusative is arguably the default object case in Faroese. A number of verbs take dative objects, however, and the semantic classes are quite similar to those found in Icelandic, for example verbs of ‘helping, ordering, praising, thanking, welcoming’ (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:257ff.). This suggests that the thematic roles involved are largely the same. Note, for instance, that we get the same kind of dative/accusative alternation in Faroese as in Icelandic with verbs like ‘wash’ and ‘dry’ (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:261; see also the discussion around (4.143) above):

- | | | |
|---------|----|------------------------------------------|
| (4.171) | a. | Hann vaskaði barninum . |
| | | he washed child-the(D) |
| | | ‘He washed the child.’ |
| | b. | Hann vaskaði bilin/*bilinum . |
| | | he washed car-the(A/*D) |
| | | ‘He washed the car.’ |
| | c. | Hon turkaði sær væl og virðiliga. |
| | | she dried refl.(D) well and thoroughly |
| | | ‘She dried herself thoroughly.’ |
| | d. | Hon turkaði borðið/*borðinum . |
| | | she dried table-the(A/*D) |
| | | ‘She wiped off the table.’ |

As in Icelandic, the dative seems to mark a human **experiencer** here but the accusative a theme.

Dative object **themes**, on the other hand, seem less common in Faroese than in Icelandic. Consider the following pairs, for instance (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:258n. – see also Maling 2002a, b and other references cited in section 4.2.3.2 above):

(4.172)

- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------|
| a. | kasta/sparka/varpa | boltanum (Dsg.) | | (Ic) |
| | kasta/sparka/varpa | bóltin (Asg.) | | (Fa) |
| | throw/kick/throw | ball-the | | |
| b. | skjóta | örinni (Dsg.) | | (Ic) |
| | skjóta | pílina (Asg.) | | (Fa) |
| | shoot | arrow-the | | |
| c. | æla/spúa | innýflunum (Dpl.) | | (Ic) |
| | spýggja | invølrnar (Appl.) | (úr sær) | (Fa) |
| | vomit | entrails-the | (out-of oneself) | |
| | 'vomit violently' | | | |

In addition, while there seems to be some tendency towards dative (and from accusative) case on theme objects in Icelandic (a thematically conditioned change), the tendency is apparently rather in the opposite direction in Faroese (a structurally conditioned change). Thus it seems that in instances where there is a choice between dative and accusative object of verbs of this kind, the accusative is more recent or colloquial. These verbs include *floyta* 'float', *lyfta* 'lift', *lætta* 'lift, raise', *reiggja* 'waive, brandish', *tarna* 'delay', *vika* 'move, budge' (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:260, 430 – see also Henriksen 2000:66).

Other than this, the semantic classes of verbs taking dative object in the two languages seem largely comparable. Thus Faroese verbs of helping (e.g. *bjarga* 'save', *dugna* 'help', *gagnast* 'be useful to', *hjálpa* 'help', *skýla* 'protect' ...), inviting, greeting and thanking (e.g. *bjóða* 'invite', *fagna* 'welcome', *heilsa* 'greet', *prísa* 'praise', *rósa* 'praise', *takka* 'thank' ...) tend to take dative objects, as they do in Icelandic (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:258 – see also Maling 2002a, b). Thus one can conclude that the dative is well preserved on direct objects that have the thematic role of **goal** (or **recipient**).

Finally, it should be noted that genitive objects are not found anymore in modern Faroese, although they can still be found in the traditional Faroese ballads. The verb *bíða* 'wait', for instance, is now most commonly used with a prepositional argument in Faroese (*bíða eftir* 'wait for') whereas it took a genitive object in Old Norse. Other verbs that used to take genitive objects

now either take a dative or (more commonly) an accusative (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:261, 431). Thus the structurally default accusative is also gaining ground here. Examples include *hevna* ‘avenge’, *njóta* ‘enjoy’, *vitja* ‘visit’, *vænta* ‘expect’.

4.2.4.3 Case marking and thematic roles in double object constructions in Faroese

As pointed out above, ditransitive verbs in Icelandic have preserved a number of case-marking patterns. Interestingly, several of these patterns have been lost in Faroese. A (somewhat simplified) comparison of the development is given in (4.173). Changes are highlighted by boldface. The examples are given in Faroese orthography, but cognates exist in Icelandic (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:261ff., 431ff.). Note that in some instances two variants in the modern languages (i.e., one involving a case marked NP, the other a PP) correspond to a single variant in Old Norse:

(4.173)	Old Norse	Mod. Ic.	Mod. Fa.	Faroese examples
	N-D-A	N-D-A	N-D-A	<i>bjóða</i> ‘offer’, <i>geva</i> ‘give’, <i>senda</i> ‘send’
	N-A-D	N-A-D	N-A-PP	<i>loyna</i> ‘conceal’, <i>ræna</i> ‘rob, plunder’
		N-D-PP		
	N-D-D	N-D-D	N-D-A	<i>lova</i> ‘promise’, <i>valda</i> ‘cause’
	N-A-G	N-A-G	N-A-A	<i>biðja</i> ‘ask’, <i>spyrja</i> ‘ask’
		N-A-PP	N-A-PP	
	N-D-G	N-D-G	N-D-A	<i>ynskja</i> ‘wish’, <i>unna</i> ‘wish, grant’

As seen here, the most common NDA-pattern is the only one that is still completely preserved in Faroese. The changes observed for the other patterns are of two kinds:

(4.174)

- a. In some instances a prepositional argument (a PP) has replaced a case-marked indirect object or a genitive argument. This type of change is found in both Icelandic and Faroese, although it is more common in Faroese. In some instances the case-marked variant is still preserved in Icelandic but not any more in Faroese.
- b. In other instances the (structurally default) accusative has replaced a dative or genitive argument in Faroese. Thus there are no instances of genitive arguments any more in ditransitive constructions in Faroese. Comparable change does not seem to have occurred in Icelandic.

These types of changes are illustrated below (Old Norse examples are not included, since the Old Norse variants are still possible in modern Icelandic):

(4.175)

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| a. | Hann | leyndi | hana | hugsunum | sínum. | (Ic) |
| | he(N) | concealed | her(A) | thoughts | his-refl.(D) | |
| | 'He concealed his thoughts from her.' | | | | | |
| b. | Hann | leyndi | | hugsunum | sínum | fyrir henni. (Ic) |
| | he | concealed | | thoughts | his-refl(D) | from her |
| | Hann | loyndi | | hugsanir | sínar | fyrir henni. (Fa) |
| | he | concealed | | thoughts | his-refl(A) | from her |

Whereas the prepositional alternative is possible in this construction in Icelandic (and it is the more common variant for some of the verbs involved), it is the only possible alternative in Faroese. In addition, the (lexical) dative has changed to (a structural) accusative in Faroese but it is still preserved in Icelandic. That has happened in some other cases too in Faroese where Icelandic has preserved the dative:

- | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------|------|
| (4.176) | Peir | lofuðu | honum | því/*það. | (Ic) |
| | they(N) | promised | him(D) | it(D/*A) | |
| | Teir | lovaðu | honum | *tí/tað. (Fa) | |
| | they(N) | promised/allowed ⁶¹ | him(D) | it(*D/A) | |

Similarly, it seems that structural accusative has sometimes replaced lexical genitive in Faroese but not (yet) in Icelandic.⁶² In some instances a PP can appear in either language instead of a genitive argument in a ditransitive structure:

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|----|------|-------|--------|-----------|--------------------------|------|
| (4.177) | a. | Ég | bað | hann | einnar | bónar/* eina bón. | (Ic) |
| | | I(N) | asked | him(A) | one | favour(G/*A) | |
| | | Eg | bað | hann | *einar | bønar/ eina bón. | (Fa) |
| | | I(N) | asked | him | one | favour(*G/A) | |
| | b. | Ég | bað | hann | um | það. | (Ic) |
| | | Eg | bað | hann | um | tað. | (Fa) |
| | | I(N) | asked | him(A) | for | that | |

⁶¹ Note that in Icelandic the difference between the NDD-verb *lofa* 'promise' and the NDA-verb *lofa* 'allow' is still preserved, whereas they both occur in the NDA-pattern in modern Faroese. Hence the Faroese version of (4.176) is ambiguous but with the NDD-pattern it can only mean 'promise' in Icelandic.

⁶² There is some evidence that at least a few of the NAG-verbs show a tendency to replace the genitive with accusative in the speech of the youngest generation of Icelanders, though. This has not been investigated in any detail, however.

- c. *Ég óskaði honum alls góðs/*allt gott.* (Ic)
 I(N) wished him(D) all good(G/*A)
- Eg ynskti honum *als góðs/alt gott.* (Fa)
 I(N) wished him(D) all good(*G/A)
 'I wished him luck.'

It is not surprising, of course, that genitive marking of arguments in double object constructions has disappeared in Faroese since the genitive is very weak in the language anyway (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:248ff., *passim*). But there is also another fairly clear generalization here: dative is well preserved on arguments in Faroese double object constructions when it has the thematic role of **goal** (or **recipient**) but otherwise it has virtually disappeared.

It is of some interest to note in this connection that dative benefactive indirect objects (benefactives arguably being a subcase of goal) are apparently more common or more widely accepted in Faroese than in Icelandic. Benefactive indirect objects are also frequently acceptable in MSc when they are not in Icelandic (cf. Holmberg and Platzack 1995:202–4; Maling 2002b:49ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:264).⁶³

- (4.178) a. *??Ég bakaði mömmu minni köku.* (Ic)
 I(N) baked mother my(D) cake(A)
- Eg bakaði mammu míni eina kaku.* (Fa)
 I(N) baked mother my(D) a cake(A)
- Jag bakade min mor en kaka.* (Sw)
 I baked my mother a cake

⁶³ As pointed out in the discussion around (4.155) above, examples of this kind are fine in Icelandic if the indirect object is coreferential with the subject:

- (i) *Ég bakaði mér köku.*
 I baked myself cake
Hann bakaði sér köku.
 he baked refl. cake

There are also some semi-poetic examples like the following (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, *p.c.*):

- (ii) a. *Hún orti honum ljóð.*
 she wrote him(D) a poem(A)
- b. *Hann fléttaði henni krans.*
 he braided her a wreath

b. ?*Ég	keypti	syni	mínum	nýtt	hjól.	(Ic)
I(N)	bought	son	my(D)	new	bike(A)	
Eg	keypti	soni	mínum	eina	nýggja súkklu.	(Fa)
I(N)	bought	son	my(D)	a	new bike(A)	
Jag	köpte	min	son	en	ny cykel.	(Sw)
I	bought	my	son	a	new bike	

Finally, note that there is considerable difference between the Scandinavian languages with regard to the productivity (or generality) of the IO/PP-alternation sometimes referred to as Dative Shift: in Icelandic the PP-alternative is pretty much restricted to verbs of sending (i.e., where the IO is an actual goal of some sort of a movement); as we have seen, in MSc the alternation is much more general and includes verbs like ‘give’ (as in English) but Faroese seems to occupy a middle ground here. Observe the following, for instance (cf. Holmberg and Platzack 1995:194ff., 204f.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:264 – the non-shifted variants are probably not all equally natural):

(4.179)	Ég	sendi	henni	bréfið /	bréfið	til	hennar.	(Ic)
	Eg	sendi	henni	brævið /	brævið	til	hennara.	(Fa)
	Jag	skickade	henne	brevet /	brevet	till	henne.	(Sw)
	I	sent	her	the letter /	the letter	to	her	
(4.180)	Ég	seldi	henni	bókina	/ *bókina	til	hennar. ⁶⁴	(Ic)
	Eg	seldi	henni	bókina	/ bókina	til	hennara.	(Fa)
	Jag	sålde	henne	boken	/ boken	till	henne.	(Sw)
	I	sold	her	the book	/ the book	to	her	

⁶⁴ Interestingly, if the verbs *gefa* ‘give’ and *selja* ‘sell’ can be interpreted as having a directional sense, then it becomes normal to use the prepositional variant in Icelandic:

(i)

- a. Ég gaf bækurnar til Háskólabókasafnsins (cf. Holmberg and Platzack 1995:204n.)
I gave the books to the University Library
- b. Þeir seldu skipið til Englands.
they sold the ship to England

In the last example a dative IO would not be a possibility since ‘England’ would not be the actual recipient (unless one was talking about the English (or British) state or some such – the same would be true in English, for instance):

- (4.181) Ég lánaði henni bókina / *bókina til hennar. (Ic)
 Eg lænti henni bókina / ??bókina til hennara. (Fa)
 Jag lånade henne boken / boken till henne. (Sw)
 I lent her the book / the book to her
- (4.182) Ég gaf henni bókina / *bókina til hennar. (Ic)
 Eg gav henni bókina / ??bókina til hennara. (Fa)
 Jag gav henne boken / boken till henne. (Sw)
 I gave her the book / the book to her

It is not clear how to account for this difference (for some speculations see Holmberg and Platzack 1995:204–5).

4.2.5 Relationship between case and agreement

4.2.5.1 Types of agreement in Icelandic

In preceding sections we have discussed to some extent the agreement between a nominative subject and the finite verb⁶⁵ and the agreement (or concord) within the (extended) NP. Other types of agreement in Icelandic include the following (for a much more extensive overview of Icelandic agreement types; see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004b):

- (4.183) a. Person and number agreement between the finite verb and a **nominative** predicate NP (if the relevant features of the subject are unmarked, cf. below).
 b. Number agreement between the finite verb and a **nominative** object (but perhaps no person agreement, cf. below).
 c. Number, gender and case agreement between a **nominative** subject and a predicative adjective or a past participle (e.g. in the passive).
 d. Number, gender and case agreement between subjects or objects on the one hand and secondary predicates on the other.

These different types are briefly illustrated below with boldface identifying the agreeing elements and the agreeing features:

Footnote 64 (*cont.*)

- (ii) \$\$Þeir seldu Englandi skipið.
 they sold England the ship

⁶⁵ For a discussion of agreement (and non-agreement) between coordinated subjects and the finite verb, see Jón G. Friðjónsson 1990–1991.

- (4.184) a. Þetta **höfum** líklega verið við.
 this(Nsg.n.) have(**1pl.**) probably been we(**1pl.**)
- b. Mér **hafa** alltaf leiðst þessar bækur.
 me(D1sg) have(**3pl.**) always bored these books(**pl.**)
 ‘I have always found these books boring.’
- c1. Kindurnar **voru** alveg **spikfeitar**
 sheep-the(**Npl.f.**) were(**3pl.**) completely very-fat(**Npl.f.**)
- c2. Kindurnar **voru** **reknar** heim.
 sheep-the(**Npl.f.**) were(**3pl.**) driven(**Npl.f.**) home
- d1. Stelpurnar **hittu** strákana **fullar**.
 girls-the(**Npl.f.**) met(**3pl.**) boys-the(**Apl.m.**) drunk(**Npl.f.**)
 ‘The girls met the boys drunk.’ (= the girls were drunk)
- d2. Stelpurnar **hittu** stákana **fulla**.
 girls-the(**Npl.f.**) met(**3pl.**) boys-the(**Apl.m.**) drunk(**Apl.m.**)
 ‘The girls met the boys drunk.’ (= the boys were drunk)
- d3. Þeir kusu konuna **forseta**.
 they(**Npl.m.**) elected(**3pl.**) woman-the(**Asg.f.**) president(**Asg.m.**)

Agreement with secondary predicates has been briefly mentioned a few times above and it will not be discussed further here. Instead we will concentrate on the first two types listed here.

Before turning to the discussion of these agreement types, it is worth demonstrating that the position of the subject has in general no effect on subject-verb agreement. This is of some relevance within frameworks that assume movement for feature matching (checking, eliminating ...) purposes:

- (4.185) a. **Einhverjir stúdentar** hafa líklega verið á bókasafninu.
 some students(**Npl.**) have(**3pl.**) probably been in library-the
- b. Það hafa **einhverjir stúdentar** líklega verið á bókasafninu.
- c. Það hafa líklega **einhverjir stúdentar** verið á bókasafninu.
- d. Það hafa líklega verið **einhverjir stúdentar** á bókasafninu.

In all these examples the finite verb agrees with the subject in number, even when it is apparently internal to the VP as in the d-example (recall that subjects can only occur in ‘object position’ if the main verb is intransitive).⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (2002a, 2004a, b) refers to agreement between the finite verb and a following NP as ‘reverse agreement’. As he points out, this reverse agreement can then be of different kinds:

4.2.5.2 The difference between agreement with NP-predicates and agreement with objects

Agreement between the finite verb and a predicative NP is only found when the subject is semantically empty and has only unmarked features (i.e. 3sg.n., cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:466; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990–1991:61), such as the elements *þetta* ‘this’ and *það* ‘it’ (both n.sg.). This agreement can involve both person and number, although person agreement does not always seem obligatory. The following can be construed as answers to questions like ‘What was this/it?’:

- (4.186) a. *Þetta hafa* /**hefur* líklega verið hestar.
 this(Nsg.n.) have(3pl./*sg.) probably been horses(Npl.m.)
 ‘These have probably been horses.’
- b. *Það hafið*/?*hafa*/**hefur* líklega verið þið.
 it(Nsg.n.) have(2pl./?pl./*sg) probably been you(N2pl.)
 ‘It has probably been you.’
- c. *Þetta höfum*/?/?*hafa*/**hefur* líklega verið við.
 this(Nsg.n.) have(1pl./??pl./*sg.) probably been we(N1pl.)

In the last two examples the plural form which does not agree in person (i.e. the 3pl. or default pl.) seems slightly better than the singular, but the form that agrees completely seems best (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996:42).

When we have a nominative object, on the other hand (which we can only have in Icelandic if the subject is dative), agreement between the finite verb and a 1st or 2nd person object is usually said to be out of the question (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990–1991, 1996; Taraldsen 1995). Examples cited in this connection might include the following:

Footnote 66 (*cont.*)

- (i) a. Agreement with a ‘late subject’ (cf. the examples in (4.185)).
 b. Agreement with nominative objects (e.g. *Henni hafa leiðst þeir*, lit. ‘Her **have** bored they’, i.e. ‘She has found them boring.’).
 c. Agreement with predicative NPs (e.g. *Þetta hafa verið hestar*, lit. ‘This **have** been horses’).
 d. Agreement of an ‘upstairs’ finite verb with the nominative subject of an infinitive (e.g. *Henni hafa virst þeir vera leiðinlegir*, lit. ‘Her **have** seemed they be boring’).

Since these types differ considerably, they are not grouped together here but will be discussed in separate sections.

- (4.187) a. Henni **leiðast** strákarnir.
her(Dsg.f.) bore(3pl.) boys-the(Npl.m.)
'She finds the boys boring.'
- b. *Henni **leiðumst** við.
her(Dsg.f.) bore (1pl.) we(N1pl.)
(Intended meaning: 'She finds us boring.')
- c. *Henni **höfum** leiðst við.
her(Dsg.f.) have(1pl.) bored we(N1pl.)
(Intended meaning: 'She has found us boring.')
- d. *Henni **hafð** leiðst þið.
her(Dsg.f.) have(2pl.) bored you(N2pl.)

Interestingly, however, most speakers find partial agreement and non-agreement no better when we have a first or second person plural object (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1992a):⁶⁷

⁶⁷ To avoid ambiguous forms it is necessary to use the auxiliary construction when the subject is a second person plural since the second person forms for *leiðast* would be ambiguous in principle: *leiðist* (sg. or 2nd pl. pres.) and *leiddust* (2nd and 3rd pl. past). The verb *líka* 'like', which is often used in this connection, is problematic since most speakers find it unnatural with human objects and prefer a PP complement:

- (i) a. Mér líkar bókina.
me(Dsg.) likes book-the
'I like the book.'
- b. ?*Mér líkar María.
me(Dsg.) likes Mary(Nsg.)
- c. Mér líkar við Maríu
me(Dsg.) likes with Mary
'I like Mary.'

We will return to the ambiguity issue presently, but it is worth noting here that the incompatibility of *líka* with [+human] nominative objects and the compatibility of *leiðast* with such subjects cannot simply be related to the lack of a *-st*-suffix in *líka* and its presence in *leiðast*, as suggested by Taraldsen (1994). As shown by Maling and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1995), a number of non-*-st*-verbs allow [+human] nominative objects and not all *-st*-verbs taking nominative objects do. A couple of examples suffice to illustrate this:

- (ii) a. Mér hafa alltaf nægt tveir bjórar/tveir einkaritarar .
me(D) have(pl.) always sufficed two beers/two secretaries
- b. Mér hafa alltaf gramist þessi ummæli/*þessi börn.
me(D) have(pl.) always angered these remarks/*these children

- (4.188) a. Henni *leiðast/*leiðist við.
 her(Dsg.f.) bore(***pl.**/*sg.) we(N1**pl.**)
- b. Henni ?*hafa/*hefur leiðst við.
 her(Dsg.f.) have(***pl.**/*sg.) bored we(N1**pl.**)
- c. Henni ?*hafa/*hefur leiðst þið.
 her(Dsg.f.) have(***pl.**/*sg.) bored you(N2**pl.**)

This situation has led to a variety of proposals about the nature of (object) agreement. Linguists working within a framework assuming several functional projections having to do with agreement and other types of feature matching or checking have often suggested that person and number agreement features ‘live’ in different projections and thus they can be checked separately, with objects perhaps only having access in some sense to a projection hosting the number feature (see, e.g., Taraldsen 1995; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996, 2000 – for an overview see Schütze 2003:297–8).⁶⁸ The idea behind this is, of course, that apparent person agreement with 3rd person nominative objects is in fact non-agreement in person since 3rd person is a non-person (or the 3rd person form a default form).

Now it should be noted that the facts are not really crystal clear here. Various degrees of acceptability have been cited for clauses of this kind involving non-agreement, partial agreement and full agreement, most of them based on informant work done by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (see his papers from 1990–1991, 1992a, 1996, 2000) and there is apparently some speaker variation in this area.⁶⁹ Abstracting away from this for the most part, we can say that while separating number agreement and person agreement might seem a promising line to account for some of the facts observed, it is not immediately obvious under such an approach why partial agreement is not (or at least not clearly) preferred to non-agreement when we have nominative objects (but see the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2006a – see also López 2003). From that point of view the agreement in the predicative constructions might seem better behaved, where partial agreement is apparently preferred to no agreement at all.

⁶⁸ Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996:161–2) offers a slightly different account: he is assuming the double case approach outlined in section 4.2.2 above. For him, then, the number agreement in nominative object constructions is licensed by the abstract nominative case which is assigned to the dative subject – and this abstract nominative can trigger number agreement because of its linking with the nominative assigned to the object.

⁶⁹ Some speakers do not seem to like object agreement at all (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996:33ff., 2000:88), and it is not clear at present what kind of variation is involved here, e.g. whether it is mainly related to age or geography or both.

An interesting alternative has been suggested by Schütze (2003). He maintains that oblique subjects do in fact trigger (non-)agreement of the finite verb – as a result of trying to agree with an oblique subject the verb gets the 3sg. form (a similar idea can be found in Boeckx 2000). At the same time the nominative object requires complete agreement of the finite verb, person as well as number, and this means that ‘the verb is required to be in two different forms’ and hence ‘the derivation crashes’ (Schütze 2003:299). Now Schütze must somehow allow for plural number to override singular in the case of 3rd person nominative objects where we obviously get number agreement with the object and not the non-agreeing form otherwise called for by the dative subject. But his account makes an interesting prediction: if the inflectional paradigm happens to make it possible to satisfy both the requirements of the nominative object and the dative subject in a single form, that is, if there is a form that has the appropriate ambiguity (or syncretism), then the derivation might not crash. And there is actually some evidence that this prediction is borne out. As already observed by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1990–1991), there is an acceptability contrast as indicated between examples of the following sort (see also Schütze 2003:300):

- (4.189) a. *Henni leiddumst við.
 her(Dsg.) bored(1pl.) we(N1pl.)
- b. (?)Henni leiddist ég.
 her(Dsg.) bored(sg.) I
 ‘She found me boring.’
- c. (?)Henni leiddist þú.
 her(Dsg.) bored(sg.) you(sg.)
 ‘She found you boring.’

The claim is that here the b- and c-examples are pretty good because the singular form *leiddist* is ambiguous between 1st, 2nd and 3rd person. Another set of relevant examples would be the following (not cited by Halldór Ármann nor Schütze):

- (4.190) a. *Henni hefur leiðst ég.
 her(Dsg.) has(3sg.) bored I
- b. (?)Henni hefur leiðst þú
 her(Dsg.) has(3sg./2sg.) bored you(sg.)

Here the b-example sounds better than the a-example and the reason might be the fact that the form *hefur* could either be a 2sg. or a 3sg. but not a 1st (which would be *hef*).

It seems safe to conclude, then, that this problem has not been satisfactorily solved as yet. Part of the reason may be that the judgements of individual speakers (or speaker types) need to be kept apart more clearly (although Halldór Ármann 2000 attempts to do that). We will return to agreement with nominative objects in the [next subsection](#).

4.2.5.3 Agreement of predicate adjectives and past participles

As has often been observed above, finite verbs, predicative adjectives and past participles (e.g. in the passive) do not agree with non-nominative subjects at all:

- (4.191) a. Strákarnir voru kaldir og blautir
 boys-the(Npl.m.) were(3pl.) cold(Npl.m.) and wet(Npl.m.)
 ‘The boys were cold and wet.’
- b. Strákunum var kalt
 the-boys(Dpl.m.) was(sg.) cold(Nsg.n.)
 ‘The boys felt cold.’

In the a-example we have a nominative subject and a finite verb agreeing in number (since the 3rd person is arguably ‘no person’, as we shall see below, it is not clear that any person agreement is involved there) and predicative adjectives agreeing in case, number and gender. The nominative subject is arguably a theme, but the predicative adjective *kaldur* ‘cold’ can also take an experiencer subject in the dative, as shown in the b-example (cf. the discussion around (4.170) above). Then the emphasis is on ‘feeling cold’ rather than just physically being cold (or wet) and there is no agreement with the dative subject.⁷⁰ Interestingly, this blocking of agreement not only affects the finite

⁷⁰ There are lexical restrictions on dative experiencers of this kind. Thus one can have *mér er kalt/hlýtt/theitt/illt/óglatt* ... ‘I feel cold/warm/hot/sick/nauseated ...’ but not **Mér er blautt/trakt/stirt* ... in the intended sense of ‘I feel wet/damp/stiff ...’ The latter predicates only take nominative subjects. Kids have been observed to generalize the dative experiencers, though, and say something like **Mér er sveitt* in the intended sense of ‘I feel sweaty’ (Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir p.c.). There are also odd restrictions like the following (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson p.c.):

- (i) a. Ég er stíður.
 I(N) am stiff
- b. *Mér er stirt.
 me(D) is stiff
- c. Mér er stirt um gang.
 me(D) is stiff to walk
 ‘I have problems walking.’

verb but also the predicative adjective ‘cold’, which shows up in the default neuter singular (sg.n.) when the subject is marked dative. The same kind of pattern is observed in passives. As the reader will recall, lexically marked objects keep their lexical case in the passive whereas the arguments corresponding to objects having structural case (i.e. accusative objects) show up in the nominative in passives and trigger agreement. Thus we get the contrast illustrated between the b-versions of the following examples:

- (4.192) a. Einhver rak kindurnar heim.
 somebody drove sheep-the(Apl.f.) home.
 b. Kindurnar voru reknar heim.
 sheep-the(Npl.f.) were(3pl.) driven(Npl.f.) home.
- (4.193) a. Einhver hjálpaði kindunum heim.
 somebody helped sheep-the(Dpl.f.) home
 b. Kindunum var hjálpað heim.
 sheep-the(Dpl.f.) was(sg.) helped(Nsg.n.) home.

Now if a verb takes a dative IO and an accusative DO, the IO is normally more natural in subject position (but see the discussion of inversion in 3.2.2.2). In such cases the finite (auxiliary) verb and the past participle agree with the DO which shows up in the nominative:

- (4.194) a. Þeir hafa selt bóndanum kýrnar.
 they have sold farmer-the(Dsg.) cows-the(Apl.f.)
 b. Bóndanum hafa verið seldar kýrnar.
 farmer-the have(pl.) been sold(pl.f.) cows-the(Npl.f.)

Now it can be shown that the dative *bóndanum* ‘the farmer’ in the b-example shows the typical syntactic behaviour of subjects in all respects (with the exception of triggering agreement), such as ‘inverting’ with the finite verb in direct ‘yes/no’-questions and occurring in ECM-constructions:

- (4.195) a. Hafa bóndanum verið seldar kýrnar?
 have farmer-the been sold cows-the
 ‘Has the farmer been sold the cows?’
 b. Þeir töldu bóndanum hafa verið seldar kýrnar.⁷¹
 they believed farmer-the(D) have been sold cows-the
 ‘They believed the farmer to have been sold the cows.’

⁷¹ Being a lexically assigned case, the dative of *bóndanum* is not affected by the embedding of the clause in an ECM (or ‘Accusative-with-infinitive’) construction.

Hence passives like (4.194b) are also an instance of agreement with nominative objects – and in this instance the agreement does not only involve the finite verb but also the passive participle. Conversely, if we have a verb that occurs in a NDD-frame, such as *lofa* ‘promise’, with a lexically assigned case on both objects, we do not get any nominative in the passive and hence no agreement at all:

(4.196)

- a. Þeir hafa lofað bændunum peningunum.
 they have promised farmers-the(Dpl.m.) money-the(Dpl.m.)
- b. Bændunum hefur verið lofað peningunum.
 farmers-the(Dpl.m.) has(3sg.) been promised(sg.n.) money-the(Dpl.m.)

The difference between examples in (4.194) and (4.196) illustrate rather neatly the dependence of this kind of agreement on nominative case.

Now it should be noted that the agreement with nominative objects in passive constructions appears to be more robust than comparable agreement in actives. No optionality is involved here:⁷²

- (4.197) a. *Bóndanum hefur verið seldar kýrnar.
 farmer-the has(sg.) been sold(pl.f.) cows-the(Npl.f.)
- b. *Bóndanum hefur verið selt kýrnar.
 farmer-the has(sg.) been sold(sg.n.) cows-the(Npl.f.)

For this reason, this type of construction makes it possible to test systematically for person agreement with nominative objects. Imagine the following scenario: a group of people have been given (as slaves) to a king. Obviously, then, this group can include the person spoken to (2nd person) and even the speaker (1st person). Assume further that these groups include only women. Now compare the acceptability of the following pairs (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996:32):

⁷² Possibly those who accept the so-called ‘New Passive’ (or ‘New Impersonal’) construction illustrated below might accept (4.197b):

- (i) Það var hrint mér.
 there was pushed me
 ‘I was pushed.’

As far as I know, their judgements of passive constructions of this kind have not been extensively investigated.

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (4.198) | a. | Þeir
they(Npl.m.) | hafa
have | gefið
given | konunginum
king-the(Dsg.) | þær.
them(Apl.f.) |
| | b. | Konunginum
king-the | hafa
have(pl.) | verið
been | gefnar
given(Npl.f.) | þær.
they(Npl.f.) |
| | c. | Þeir
they | hafa
have | gefið
given | konunginum
king-the(Dpl.) | ykkur.
you(A2pl.) |
| | d. | *Konunginum
king-the | hafið/hefur
have(2pl./3sg.) | verið
been | gefnar
given(Npl.f.) | þið.
they(N2pl.f.) ⁷³ |
| | e. | Þeir
they | hafa
have | gefið
given | konunginum
king-the(Dpl.) | okkur.
us(A1pl.) |
| | f. | *Konunginum
king-the(D) | höfum/hefur
have(1pl./3sg.) | verið
been | gefnar
given(Npl.f.) | við.
we(N1pl.f.) |

The variants involving agreement between the finite passive verb and the 2nd and 1st person nominative objects are clearly bad and non-agreement (the default 3sg.) is no better. But since *gefa* is an ‘inversion verb’ in the sense discussed above (section 3.2.2.2), the accusative DO can also precede the IO and hence a passive version with a nominative subject ‘derived’ from the accusative DO is also possible. Needless to say, in that version person agreement with the nominative NP is possible (and in fact necessary):

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|----|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (4.199) | a. | Þið
you(N2pl.f.) | hafið/*hefur
have(2pl.) | verið
been | gefnar
given(Npl.f.) | konunginum.
king-the(Dsg.) |
| | | ‘You have been given to the king.’ | | | | |
| | b. | Við
we(N 1pl.f.) | höfum/*hefur
have(1pl.) | verið
been | gefnar
given(Npl.f.) | konunginum.
king-the(Dsg.) |

As before, however, the exact position of the subject does not play a role. Thus the finite verb has to agree in person and number with the inverted passive subjects of (4.199) so one cannot simply claim that simple linear order is all that matters here:

⁷³ The ‘actual gender’ (or sex) of the 2nd person pronoun is indicated here, although there is no gender variation in the form of the pronoun itself. The actual gender influences the form of the participle. Thus one would say *Þið voruð gefnir* ‘You were given(Npl.m.)’ if the persons spoken to were all male and *Þið voruð gefnar* ‘You were given(Npl.f.)’ if they were all female. Similar comments apply to the 1st person pronoun in the f-example below.

- (4.200) a. Hafid/*Hefur þið verið seldar konunginum?
 have(2pl./*3sg.) you(2pl.) been sold king-the(Dsg.)
- b. Höfum/*Hefur við verið seldar konunginum?
 have(1pl./*3sg.) we(1pl.) been sold king-the(Dsg.)

Because of the inherent definiteness of 1st and 2nd person subjects, however, they cannot be ‘moved back’ in the clause like the indefinite 3rd person subjects of (4.185), so further testing of the relevance of the subject position is impossible.

4.2.6 *Some comparative notes*

Faroese finite verb agreement is in principle similar to its Icelandic counterpart, except that separate forms for the three different persons are only found in the present tense of verbs: there is only one plural form of each finite verb in present and past tense and there is only one form for the past tense singular. In addition, many speakers do not distinguish between the past tense singular forms of regular verbs (ending in /i/) and the past tense plural ones (ending in /u/), since unstressed /i/ and /u/ have merged in many dialects. In MSc, on the other hand, there is no finite verb agreement at all.

We have also seen that finite verbs in Faroese only agree with nominative subjects and not with oblique ones. Furthermore, it is possible to find some instances of agreement with nominative objects in Faroese, although they are much less frequent than in Icelandic, since many verbs taking dative subjects in Faroese take accusative objects. But to the extent it is possible to get nominative objects, they do trigger finite verb agreement as in Icelandic. Sometimes there is even a choice between a nominative object triggering agreement and an accusative one which does not trigger agreement, although speakers vary with respect to their preferences (see Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:229):

- (4.201) a. Henni munnu ongantíð tróta hesir pengar. (Fa)
 her(Dsg.) will(3pl.) never run-out-of these money(Npl.)
- b. Henni man ongantíð tróta hesar pengar.
 her(Dsg.) will(3sg.) never run-out-of these money(Apl.)

Nominative object agreement in passives is also quite rare in Faroese since the most natural way of passivizing double object verbs is to turn the DO into a subject. The following appear to be typical judgements (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:269–70):

- (4.202) a. Teir seldu bóndanum tríggjar kýr. (Fa)
 they sold farmer-the(Dsg.m.) three(Apl.f.) cows(Apl.f.)
- b. Tríggjar kýr blivu seldar bóndanum.
 three(Npl.f.) cows(Npl.f.) were(3pl.) sold(Npl.f.) farmer-the(Dsg.m.)
- c. ?Bóndanum blivu seldar tríggjar kýr.
 farmer-the(Dsg.m.) were(3pl.) sold(Npl.f.) three(Npl.f.) cows(Npl.f.)

Here the b-example is the most natural one. It is important to note, however, that the relatively low acceptability of the c-example has nothing to do with the nominative case of the DO and the agreement: the variant with an accusative DO and non-agreement is much worse, as can be seen if we pick an example where there is a clear difference between nominative and accusative, as originally pointed out by Barnes (1986a – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:271):

- (4.203) *Bóndanum varð selt eina kúgv. (Fa)
 farmer-the(D) was sold(Nsg.n.) a(Asg.f.) cow(Asg.f.)

Another interesting difference between Icelandic and Faroese with respect to agreement facts is that Faroese does not have any predicative adjectives that take oblique subjects (cf. 4.2.4.1).

In Icelandic and Faroese the default perfect auxiliary is ‘have’, which takes the default non-agreeing neuter singular (or supine) form of the past participle. In both languages one can also get stative or adjectival expressions with ‘be’ and predicates derived from intransitive verbs, and these stative (or adjectival) participles agree with the relevant subject, whereas participles with ‘have’ do not. This is illustrated in (4.204):

- (4.204) a. Þeir eru farnir. (Ic)
 they(Npl.m.) are(pl.) gone(Npl.m.)
 ‘They are gone.’
- b. Þeir hafa farið illa með hana.
 they(Npl.m.) have(pl.) gone(Nsg.n.) badly with her
 ‘They have treated her badly.’
- c. Teir eru farnir. (Fa)
 they(Npl.m.) are(pl.) gone(Npl.m.)
 ‘They are gone.’
- d. Teir hava farið illa við henni.
 they(Npl.m.) have(pl.) gone(Nsg.n.) badly with her
 ‘They have treated her badly.’

Since the agreeing ‘participles’ here are stative or adjectival in nature (having a resultative sense), one could argue that ‘be’ in examples a and

c is the copula rather than a perfective auxiliary. But whereas one could maintain that Icelandic only has ‘have’ as a perfective auxiliary, it seems that Faroese is moving towards a split between ‘have’ and ‘be’ as perfective auxiliaries, and sentences like the following would then be genuine examples of perfect participle agreement in Faroese, whereas the corresponding example in Icelandic would be ungrammatical (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:73):

(4.205)

- a. Eg haldi hann er farin illa við henni í nógv ár. (Fa)
 I think he(Nsg.m.) is gone(Nsg.m.) badly with her in many years
 ‘I think he has treated her badly for many years.’
- b. *Ég held hann sé farinn illa með hana í mörg ár. (Ic)
 I think he(Nsg.m.) is gone(Nsg.m.) badly with her in many years

Here the Icelandic variant must have *hafi farið* ... ‘has treated ...’

Another difference has to do with the perfect formation of passive constructions. Here Icelandic uses the auxiliary ‘have’ followed by a non-agreeing participial (supine) form, whereas it is necessary to use the perfect auxiliary ‘be’ in passive constructions in Faroese (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:73):

- (4.206) a. Þeir **hafa** oft verið barðir. (Ic)
 he(Nsg.m.) have(pl.) often been(Nsg.n.) beaten(Npl.m.)
- b. Teir **eru** ofta blivnir avsmurdir. (Fa)
 they(Npl.m.) are(pl.) often been(Npl.m.) off-smearred(Npl.m.)
 ‘They have often been beaten up.’

Although there is no finite verb agreement in MSc, there is some predicative adjective agreement and participle agreement in these languages (see also Holmberg 2001 and especially Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a, 2004a). Interestingly, there is some variation in MSc with respect to this. All the languages have at least some predicate adjective agreement, although there are some differences in detail, partly because of the lack of case in MSc and the fact that some variants of MSc only have two genders, neuter and common gender and most of them do not make any gender distinctions in the plural. Observe in addition the possibility of interpreting indefinite nouns as having an abstract or collective sense and hence no gender features, in MSc, giving rise to the non-agreeing or default (n.sg.) form of the adjective predicated of them (cf. the c–e examples below):

(4.207)

a. Huset house-the(sg.n.)	er is	høgt. high(sg.n.)	Stolane chairs-the(pl.)	er are	høge. high(pl.)	(No)
b. Den färska sillen the fresh herring(sg.c.)	var was	god. good(sg.c.)	Böckerna books-the(pl.)	var were	goda. good(pl.)	(Sw)
c. Tronge bukser tight pants(pl.)	er is	populært. popular(sg.n.)				(No)
d. Färsk sill fresh herring(sg.c.)	är is	gott. good(sg.n.)				(Sw)
e. Rygning smoking(sg.c.)	er is	skadeligt. harmful(sg.n.)				(Da)

Danish and Norwegian bokmål (No.bo.) differ from the other MSc languages, including the *nynorsk* ('new Norwegian' No.ny.) variant, in not having any agreement of past participles that have a 'verbal' function, that is, arguably follow the auxiliary 'be' or occur in the passive construction (see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:285ff.; Faarlund et al. 1997:518ff.; Christensen and Taraldsen 1989; Holmberg 2001; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a):

(4.208)

a. Han/De he/they	er are	rejst. gone/have left				(Da)
b. Gjestene guests(pl.)	er is(sg.)	komet. arrived(sg.n.)				(No.bo.)
c. Gjestene guests(pl.)	er is(sg.)	komne. arrived(pl.)				(No.ny.)
d. Brevet letter-the(sg.n.)	är is	kommet. arrived(sg.n.)				(Sw)
e. Breven letters-the(pl.)	är is	komna. arrived(pl.)				(Sw)
f. Han/De bliver he/they are	dømt. judged					(Da)
g. Han/De ble he/they was	bedt. asked					(No.bo.)
h. Tre böcker three books(pl.)	blev were	skrivna. written(pl.)				(Sw)

In some variants of MSc it is possible to find variation between agreeing and non-agreeing forms in expletive constructions depending on the relative position of the subject, whereas subject position plays no role with respect

to agreement in Icelandic and Faroese (see, e.g., Christensen and Taraldsen 1989; Christensen 1991a, b; Holmberg 2001; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a, 2004a).⁷⁴

(4.209)

- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| a. | Þrjár bækur | voru | skrifaðar | / | *var skrifað | (Ic) |
| | three books(Npl.f.) | were(pl.) | written(Npl.f.) | | was(sg.) written(Nsg.n.) | |
| b. | Tre böcker | blev | skrivna/*skrivet. | | | (Sw) |
| | three books(pl.) | were | written(pl./*sg.) | | | |
| c. | Það voru | skrifaðar | / | *var skrifað | þrjár bækur. | (Ic) |
| | there were(pl.) | written(Npl.f.) | /*was(sg.) | written(Nsg.n.) | three books(Npl.f.) | |
| d. | Det ble | skrivet/*skrivna | treböcker. ⁷⁵ | | | (Sw) |
| | it was | written(sg./*pl.) | three books(pl.) | | | |
| e. | Nokre gjester | er | (nett) | komne/*kome. | | (No.ny.) |
| | some guests(pl.) | is(sg.) | (just) | arrived(pl./*sg.) | | |
| f. | Det er | *komne/kome | nokre | gjester. | | |
| | it is | come(*pl./sg.) | some | guests(pl.) | | |

It should be clear from this simplified overview why agreement in Scandinavian has provided theoretical linguists with a lot of food for thought. Without going too far into the theoretical proposals that have been made, I can summarize some of the general directions.

Some of the approaches have wanted to relate the agreement differences to different functional structure, suggesting that the existence of Agr-projections might correlate to some extent with the presence of overt agreement morphemes (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, 2003 and references cited there). Others have used the evidence to argue for a split of the Agr-projections into (or a replacement of the Agr-projections by) a NumP and a PersP, mainly based on the restrictions found in object agreement (see, e.g., Taraldsen 1995; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996, 2000). Then there are the proposals that have used facts of this sort to argue for particular ways of formalizing the agreement process, trying to restrict it to Spec-Head

⁷⁴ Apparently, some West Norwegian dialects are like Icelandic and Faroese in this respect (cf., e.g., Christensen and Taraldsen 1989; Holmberg 2001; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a, 2004a). Holmberg refers to this variant of Norwegian as ‘Norwegian 3’ (2001:101).

⁷⁵ The non-agreeing form here might in fact be of the same nature as the so-called New Passive (New Impersonal) in Icelandic (see, e.g., Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling 2001; Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002). It would be interesting to compare that construction in Icelandic systematically to the MSc ones represented here by Swedish and Norwegian nynorsk.

agreement (e.g. Christensen and Taraldsen 1989; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1996) or attributing some of it to agreement with (apparent) expletive elements, suggesting that at least a part of the variation lies in the nature of the expletive elements themselves (see, e.g., Christensen 1991a, b). The different proposals obviously follow the changing winds in the theoretical climate with a particular set of the proposals being influenced by the suggestion (going back to Pollock 1989 and Chomsky 1991) that agreement has its own functional projections in the syntax (and hence can be inserted from the lexicon) – or the alternative stand discussed in chapter 4 of Chomsky's book on the Minimalist Program (1995) that maybe there is no Agr in the lexicon and thus no special Agr-projections (see, e.g., Boeckx 2000; Holmberg 2001; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2002a, b, 2004a, b) and hence that the (parametric) variation cannot be related to the presence or absence of Agr-projections or a different number of these.

Another and partially related issue which pops up in this discussion is the following:

- (4.210) To what extent are the observed (parametric?) differences between the languages in question reflected in the (underlying) syntactic structure of the languages?

This question has been raised before. The answer depends to some extent on the stand taken on the issue of the relationship between syntactic and morphological structure. It has often been suggested that syntactic variation between languages is in some sense restricted to morphology or partially triggered by morphological evidence (for a radical position on this, see, e.g., Rohrbacher 1999; for a more moderate position, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003). Chomsky's Uniformity Principle (1999:2) is sometimes cited in this connection:

- (4.211) In the absence of compelling evidence to the contrary, assume language to be uniform, with variety restricted to easily detectable properties of utterances.

The question in the present context is then whether this means that the 'easily detectable properties' of morphological agreement can function as triggers for children acquiring language and lead them to 'assume' different syntactic structures (as suggested, e.g., by Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998, Rohrbacher 1999 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003, for instance), or whether the difference triggered will mainly be one involving different types of features to be checked or different phases in the derivation (as suggested by Holmberg 2001), or whether it means that the 'Narrow Syntax' of all languages is virtually the same, including the role of (abstract)

Agree and that morphological agreement (which is the visible or audible reflection of Agree to a different extent in different languages) is relegated to the phonetic (or ‘perceptible’) level (as suggested by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004b, for instance). This is obviously a question that has to do with the most sensible division of labour between different parts of the grammar and it will not be discussed further here.

Passives, middles and unaccusatives

Although this chapter is divided into two main sections, that is, a descriptive overview and a section containing theoretical and comparative issues, the descriptive part probably contains more ‘theory’ than corresponding parts of the other chapters. The reason is that here it is even more difficult than usual to separate description and theory. Hopefully this has not made the descriptive section too opaque.

5.1 A descriptive overview

5.1.0 Introduction

Various aspects of the passive construction in Icelandic have been discussed above. The main points mentioned so far include the following (some of them have actually been discussed at length, others mentioned more or less in passing):

- (5.1) a. Although passivization¹ in Icelandic is not restricted to verbs taking agentive subjects, it seems to be more restricted thematically than in many other languages, including English.
- b. Verbs taking accusative, dative and genitive objects undergo passivization. Accusative is structurally assigned, and so is nominative, and hence accusative objects in the active correspond to nominative subjects in the passive, whereas dative and genitive objects ‘preserve’ their case in the passive. This also holds for NPs that have been ‘raised’ to object position in the ECM (or Accusative-with-Infinitive) construction. Verbs taking nominative objects do not passivize, but this is probably related to a thematic restriction on passives (*pace* Van Valin 1991): nominative objects only occur with verbs

¹ In this chapter (and elsewhere) the term *passivization* is used roughly in the sense of ‘the construction of a passive structure’, without any strict theoretical preconception of what kind of a process that may be (lexical, morphological, syntactic ...). Thus the sentence in the text means: ‘Although **the construction of a passive structure in Icelandic** is not restricted to verbs ...’

- taking dative experiencer subjects whereas the best candidates for passivization are verbs taking agentive subjects in the active.
- c. There is no prepositional passive ('pseudo-passive') in Icelandic, i.e. passivization does not apply to objects of prepositions although it applies to lexically case-marked verbal objects, and impersonal passives (i.e. passives without a promoted argument) also occur.
 - d. A recent innovation in Icelandic involves constructions with a passive morphology and a definite argument in object position, but the 'passive' properties of this construction are somewhat controversial. Hence it is sometimes referred to as 'The New Passive' and sometimes as 'The New Impersonal'.
 - e. So-called unaccusative (or 'ergative') verbs may have a passive-like meaning and the same is true of some *-st*-verbs (or 'middle verbs').²

These points are further illustrated and discussed below, beginning with thematic role restrictions (cf. the discussion of thematic roles of subjects in 4.2.3.1).

5.1.1 *Regular passivization and thematic roles*

Note first that a verb taking an animate **agent** is more easily passivized than one which takes a non-animate causer as a subject; or to put it differently: the understood agent of a passive construction cannot really be interpreted as an inanimate **effector**:

(5.2)

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| a. Varnarliðið | hrakti | óvininn | á brott. | (agent subj.) |
| defence-force-the(Nsg.) | drove | enemy-the(A) | away | |
| b. Stórhriðin | hrakti | kindurnar | í sjóinn. | (causer/effector subj.) |
| blizzard-the(Nsg) | drove | sheep-the(A) | into ocean-the | |

² The accusative/unaccusative/ergative/unergative terminology in the literature is very confusing, especially because some linguists use the term 'ergative' to refer to what others call 'unaccusative'. The relational grammar terminology used by Perlmutter 1978 and employed here was based on the following distinction (see Pullum 1988:582ff. for an attempt to set things straight):

- (i) a. ergative = NP1 in a [NP1 V NP2] structure
- b. unergative = NP1 in a [NP1 V] structure
- c. accusative = NP2 in a [NP1 V NP2] structure
- d. unaccusative = NP1 in a [V NP1] structure

Verbs of type d are then frequently referred to as unaccusative verbs and verbs of type b as unergative verbs and this is the terminology used here. In Burzio's terminology (1981), and in much of the GB-literature, verbs of class d are referred to as ergative verbs rather than unaccusative.

- (5.3) a. Óvinurinn var hrakinn á brott (af varnarliðinu).
 enemy-the(N) was driven away (by defence-force-the(D))
- b. Kindurnar voru hraktar í sjóinn (?*af stórhriðinni).
 sheep-the(N) were driven into ocean-the (*by blizzard-the)

Here the most natural interpretation of (5.3b) (without any mention of the agent in a prepositional phrase) is that some animate being drove the sheep into the ocean (could have been a dog) and it will not be understood as an inanimate causer like a blizzard, as evidenced by the fact that such an ‘agent’ cannot be mentioned in a prepositional agentive phrase. In many instances it is possible to form a *-st*-form with a passive meaning of these verbs, for example *Kindurnar hróktust í sjóinn* ‘The sheep were driven into the ocean’ (no agent understood, cf. 5.1.5) or even an unaccusative (or ergative) variant like *Kindurnar (Apl.) hrakti í sjóinn* ‘The sheep were driven into the ocean’ (cf. 5.1.6 below).

Consider also the following pair of examples:

- (5.4) a. Móðirin vakti drenginn klukkan sjö.
 mother-the(N) woke boy-the(A) clock seven
 ‘The mother woke the boy up at seven.’
- b. Drengurinn var vakinn klukkan sjö (af móðurinni).
 boy-the(N) was awakened clock seven (by mother-the(D))
- (5.5) a. Glæpurinn vakti hörð viðbrögð.
 crime-the woke (aroused) strong reactions(Npl.)
- b. *Hörð viðbrögð voru vakin (af glæpnum).
 harsh reactions(Npl.) were aroused (by crime-the(D))

Here we see that if the verb *vekja* ‘wake up’ takes an animate agent, it can easily be passivized whereas *vekja* in the sense ‘arouse’ cannot. The same is actually true of *vekja* in the sense ‘awaken’:

- (5.6) a. Jarðskjálftinn vakti drenginn.
 earthquake-the(N) awakened boy-the(Asg.)
- b. *Drengurinn var vakinn af jarðskjálftanum.
 boy-the(Nsg.) was awakened(Nsg.m.) by earthquake-the(D)

Here it would be possible, on the other hand, to use the unaccusative *vakna* ‘awaken’ in the intended sense of (5.6b): *Drengurinn vaknaði við jarðskjálftann* ‘The boy awoke from the earthquake’ (where the prepositional phrase is not an agentive phrase, of course – cf. also 5.1.6 below).

This does not mean, however, that only verbs taking animate agents can be passivized. An inanimate manufacturer, such as an industrial plant or a knitting mill or some such, is perfectly acceptable as an ‘agent’ of a passive – and such ‘agents’ are probably more frequently mentioned in an agentive phrase in a passive construction than other types:

- (5.7) a. Prjónastofan Malín prjónaði peysuna.
knitting-mill-the Malin(N) knitted sweater-the(A)
- b. Peysan var prjónuð af prjónastofunni Malín.
sweater-the(N) was knitted by knitting-mill-the Malin(D)
‘The sweater was knitted by the knitting mill Malin.’

Nominative subjects of ‘frighten’-verbs in the sense of ‘involuntarily causing fright’ are arguably **causers** (or **effectors**) rather than agents (see the discussion in section 4.2.3.0 above). Such verbs do not passivize in Icelandic (for some discussion of psych-verb pairs like ‘frighten – fear’ in Icelandic, see Kjartan G. Ottósson 1991b; Jóhanna Barðdal 1999b; Platzack 1999; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2003) and the same is true of the stative verb *eiga* ‘own’, whatever the thematic role of its subject may be (a theme? – see also the discussion in 4.1.1.10 above and by Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:386ff.):

- (5.8) a. Hundar hræða mig.
dogs(Npl.) frighten me
- b. *Ég er hræddur af hundum.³
I am frightened by dogs(D)
- c. Ég á hundinn.
I(Nsg.) own dog-the(Asg.m.)
- d. *Hundurinn er áttur (af mér).
dog-the(Nsg.m.) is owned(Nsg.m.) (by me(D))

When the subject is clearly an agent, actively trying to cause fright, on the other hand, passivization is possible:

³ Note that if the verb *hræða* means ‘scare away’ it is possible to come up with passable passives (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c.):

- (i) ?Hann var hræddur í burtu (af tveim vöðvafjöllum).
he was scared away (by two musclemen)

(5.9)

Ég var oft hræddur með draugasögum (af bróður mínum) í gamladaga.
 I(N) was often scared with ghost-stories(Dpl.) (by brother my) in old days
 'I was often scared with ghost stories (by my brother) in the old days.'

Transitive verbs taking **experiencer** subjects are quite common. These verbs typically have to do with feeling, sensation, perception, thought, belief and so on. Most of them are stative and only some undergo passivization. For verbs of feeling or psychological state (psych-verbs) it seems that passivization works best in general statements where the agentive phrase could be 'by everybody' or some such – and this also holds for loanwords like *fila* 'like, appreciate, dig' (from Eng. *feel*):

- (5.10) a. Jón elskaði Maríu.
 John(N) loved Mary(A)
 b. María var elskuð (??af Jóni/af öllum).
 Mary(N) was loved (??by John(D)/by everybody(Dpl.))

(5.11)

- a. Haraldur fílaði Bítlana í botn en ekki Stones.
 Harold(N) dug Beatles-the(A) to bottom but not Stones(Apl.)
 'Harold dug the Beatles to the core but not the Stones.'
 b. ??Bítlarnir voru fílaðir í botn (*af Haraldi/af öllum) en ekki Stones.
 Beatles-the(Npl.) were dug to bottom (*by Harold(D)/by everybody(D)) but not Stones(Npl.)

To the extent that the verbs *elska* 'love' and *fila* 'dig, like' can be passivized, it seems that the more general the statement, the better. This 'generality' can be expressed in the 'by-phrase' or in the predicate itself. Thus the judgements given in (5.11) above are meant to show that *??Bítlarnir voru fílaðir í botn af öllum en ekki Stones* 'The Beatles were dug to the core by everybody but not the Stones' is somewhat better than **Bítlarnir voru fílaðir í botn af Haraldi*. The following is probably even better (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c.):

- (5.12) Þetta var náttúrulega fílað í botn af öllum viðstöddum.
 this was of-course dug to the core by all those present

Similarly, the judgements in (5.10b) can be compared to further examples illustrating this point:

- (5.13) a. ??*María var elskuð af Jóni.*
 ‘Mary was loved by John.’
- b. *María var elskuð af öllum.*
 ‘Mary was loved by everybody.’
- c. *María var elskuð af börnum sínum og barnabörnum.*
 ‘Mary was loved by her children and grandchildren’
- d. *María var elskuð og dáð.*
 ‘Mary was loved and admired.’

It is not obvious how to account for such varying degrees of acceptability in the grammar.

Psych-verbs like *hræðast* ‘fear’, *óttast* ‘fear’ and also *undrast* ‘be astonished by’ and so on cannot occur in personal passive constructions:

- (5.14) a. *Haraldur hræðist/óttast stríðið/eldgosið.*
 Harold(N) fears war-the(Asg.n.)/eruption-the(Asg.n)
- b. **Stríðið/*Eldgosið er hræðst/óttast (af Haraldi/öllum).*⁴
 war-the(Nsg.n.)/eruption-the(Nsg.n.) is feared(Nsg.n.) (byHarold(D)/by everybody(Dpl.))

- (5.15) a. *Allir undruðust þetta.*
 everybody(Npl.) was-astonished-by(3pl.) this
 ‘Everybody was astonished by this.’
- b. **Þetta var undrast (af öllum).*
 this was astonished (by everybody).

It is not so clear, however, that thematic restrictions are involved here since apparently no transitive *-st*-verbs taking accusative objects in the active can occur in regular passive form:

⁴ A neuter singular subject is used here to try to avoid the added complication caused by attempts to form agreeing past participles of *-st*-verbs, where it is not entirely clear what they should look like and conceivable alternatives sound bad, such as the intended Nsg.m. participial forms of *hræðast* ‘fear’, **hræðstur* and **hræddurst* (these alternatives differ with respect to the positioning of the *-st*-suffix, as the reader will notice, and we return to that issue in 5.1.5 below). But the addition of an overt agreement morpheme does not seem to be the culprit here, since the passive in (5.14b) is bad anyway with the (default) sg.n. form *hræðst* (homophonous with the acceptable supine (*hann hefur*) *hræðst* ‘(he has) feared’). See, however, the discussion of the non-agreeing passive of verbs like *krefjast* ‘demand’ in 5.1.2 below.

- (5.16) a. Þau önnuðust barnið.
 they(N) took-care-of child-the(A)
 'The took care of the child.'
 → *Barnið var annast.⁵
 child-the(N) was taken-care-of
- b. Þeir ábyrgjast greiðsluna/málið.
 they(N) guarantee payment-the(A)/case-the
 → *Greiðslan/Málið var ábyrgst.
 payment-the(N)/case-the(N) was guaranteed

This fact will be of some importance in the upcoming discussion of passivization of verbs taking nominative objects (see also the discussion of the passivization of Faroese *-st*-verbs at the end of section 5.2.1).

Turning now to experiencer-verbs of sensation and perception, we note that these do not easily passivize, and here it does not help to try to turn the passives into more general statements:

- (5.17) a. Allir fundu jarðskjálftann.
 everybody(Npl.) felt earthquake-the(Asg.)
- b. *Jarðskjálftinn var fundinn (af öllum).
 earthquake-the(Nsg.m.) was felt(Nsg.m.) (by everybody(Dpl.))
- (5.18) a. Þeir sáu ísbjörninn í gær.
 they(Npl.) saw polar-bear-the(A) yesterday
- b. *Ísbjörninn var séður í gær.⁶
 polar-bear-the(Nsg.m.) was seen(Nsg.m.) yesterday

⁵ In the case of a prepositional verb like *annast um* 'take care of', it is possible to form an impersonal passive with the expletive *það* 'there':

- (i) a. Þau önnuðust **um** barnið.
 they took-care-of child-the
 'They took care of the child.'
- b. Það var annast **um** barnið.
 there was taken-care of child-the
 'The child was taken care of.'

We will return to impersonal passives in section 5.1.3.3 below.

⁶ There are some twists to this story. First, *sjá* 'see' can be used in a passive form in a couple of modal constructions in Modern Icelandic:

- (i) a. Hann er ekki allur þar sem hann er séður.
 he is not all there that he is seen(past part.)
 'He is a tricky guy.' (lit: '... not all where he can be seen')

- (5.19) a. Margir heyrðu hávaðann.
 many(Nsg.) heard noise-the(Asg.)
- b. *Hávaðinn var heyrður (af mörgum).
 noise-the(Nsg.m.) was heard (by many(Dpl.))

Interestingly, many verbs of this sort are found in a *-st*-form with a ‘passive’ meaning, as we shall see in 5.1.5 below.

Experiencer verbs of thinking and believing, on the other hand, passivize easily, but most of them take clausal objects in the active (or neuter pronouns referring to such complements) and hence there is no agreement in the passive:

- (5.20) a. Margir hafa lengi talið [að tunglið sé úr osti].
 many have long believed that moon-the be(subjunct.) of cheese
 ‘Many have believed for a long time that the moon is made of cheese.’
- b. [Að tunglið sé úr osti] hefur lengi verið talið.
 that moon-the be(subjunct.) of cheese has long been believed
- c. Það hefur lengi verið talið [að tunglið sé úr osti].
 it has long been believed that moon-the be(subjunct.) of cheese
 ‘It has been believed for a long time that the moon is made of cheese.’

For some reason it is apparently quite bad to add an *af*-phrase (‘by-phrase’) in passives of this sort, such as *af mörgum* ‘by many’.

Turning now to verbs that take **goal** (or **source**) subjects in the active, it seems that these do not undergo passivization:

Footnote 6 (*cont.*)

- b. Það verður ekki séð [að Jón geti farið].
 it can-be not seen(past part.) that John can(subjunct.) go
 ‘It doesn’t seem that John can go.’

Second, in Old Icelandic the participle form *sénn* ‘seen’ can be found in passives (the first example here is from the saga of King Olaf Tryggvason, the second from the Book of Homilies):

- (ii) a. En er sauðurinn var sénn annan tíma ...
 but when sheep-the was seen(past part.) another time(A)
- b. Í ríki Augustus var sénn guðlegur hringur ...
 in state Augustus’ was seen(past part.) divine ring ...

- (5.21) a. Eiríkur fékk verðlaunin.
Eiríkur(Nsg.) got prize-the(Apl.n.)
- b. *Verðlaunin voru fengin (af Eiríki).
prize-the(Npl.n.) were got(Npl.n.) (by Eiríkur(Dsg.))
- (5.22) a. Besti umsækjandinn hlaut styrkinn.
best applicant-the(Nsg.) got grant-the(Asg.)
- b. *Styrkurinn var hlotinn (af besta umsækjandanum).
grant-the(Nsg.m.) was got(Nsg.m.) (by best applicant-the(D))

We see, then, that there is a clear relationship between the thematic structure of (monotransitive) verbs and their passivizability. The preceding discussion can be summarized as follows (with some simplification):

(5.23)		the subject in the active is				
		agent	causer	theme	exper.	goal
	passivization:	+	-	-	+/-	-
	passives with agentive <i>af</i> :	(+)	-	-	-	-

The first row of this table is meant to show that passivization of verbs taking (true) agentive subjects is easy, it is impossible if the active subject is an inanimate causer or a theme, it varies if the subject in the active is an experiencer (most acceptable in general in the case of verbs of thinking and believing) and it is bad if it is a goal. This suggests that the thematic restrictions on the Icelandic passive are more strict than those of the English passive; witness, for example, the fact that passive sentences like *The sheep were driven into the ocean by the blizzard*, *He is feared by everybody*, *The polar bear was seen yesterday* are fine in English whereas their Icelandic counterparts are bad. The second row shows that agentive *af*-phrases are possible with verbs that take agentive subjects (although not always very natural) but typically impossible with passives of other verbs (some exceptions involving phrases like *af öllum* ‘by everybody’ were pointed out above). Thus the agentive prepositional phrase is clearly much more restricted (more agentive in nature?) in Icelandic passives than, say, the *by*-phrase in English. We shall return to comparative aspects of the passive in section 5.2.

5.1.2 Passivization of ‘impersonal’ verbs

As has often been pointed out in the literature, verbs (allegedly) taking non-nominative subjects do not undergo passivization. Illustrative examples are given in (5.24):

- (5.24) a. Marga vantar peninga.
 many(Apl.) needs(3sg.) money(Apl.)
 → *Peningar eru vantaðir (af mörgum).
 money(Npl.) are needed (by many)
- b. Öllum líkar þessi forseti.
 everybody(Dpl.) likes(3sg.) this president(Nsg.)
 → *Þessi forseti er líkaður (af öllum).
 this president(N) is liked (by everybody)
- c. Fólki leiddist ræðan.
 people(Dsg.) bored speech-the(N)
 → *Ræðan var leiðst.
 speech-the was found-boring

There is no clear alternative to a thematically based account of the restriction on verbs like *vanta* ‘need’: they take an accusative object and one might thus expect, other things being equal, that this object should be able to be ‘promoted’ to subject position in the passive version. The fact that it cannot suggests a thematic restriction. It also predicts that, if we could find a roughly synonymous verb taking a nominative subject and an accusative object, it should also fail to passivize. The verb *þurfa* ‘need’ is a case in point:

- (5.25) a. Margir þurfa peninga.
 many(Apl.) need(3pl.) money(Apl.)
 → *Peningar eru þurftir (af mörgum).
 money(Npl.) are needed (by many)

One might, however, suggest that the reason why one cannot form passives with *líka* ‘like’ and *leiðast* ‘be-bored-by, find boring’ could be that the nominative arguments that these verbs take in their active forms are in fact not objects, as assumed here (and in most of the recent linguistic literature). Hence they show up in the nominative case (whereas objects normally do not) and hence they cannot be promoted to the subject position in the passive form of these verbs. Thus the behaviour of these verbs with respect to passive is of some interest in the debate about the relationship between case and grammatical relations and the question of whether there are any non-nominative subjects and nominative objects (see, e.g., the discussion in Van Valin 1991:176). Let us therefore consider the properties of these verbs in more detail in the light of our knowledge about the Icelandic passive.

Taking nominative object verbs ending in *-st-* like *leiðast* ‘be bored by’ first, it is perhaps not so surprising that they do not undergo passivization since apparently no *-st-* verbs do if the resulting construction would in principle require an agreeing participle. This can be illustrated with *hræðast* ‘fear’:

- (5.26) a. Haraldur hræðist hunda.
 Harold(Nsg.) fears dogs(Apl.m.)
 b. *Hundar eru hræðstir/hræddirst (af Harald).
 dogs(Npl.m.) are feared(Npl.m.) (by Harold)

As already pointed out in connection with (5.14) and (5.15) above, selecting a Nsg.n. subject for the passive does not suffice to make passives of verbs like *hræðast* possible. Still, the badness of attempted passives with *leiðast* ‘be bored by’ might be expected on agreement grounds alone:

- (5.27) a. Öllum leiðast þessir hundar.
 everybody(Dpl.) are-bored-by(pl.) these dogs(Npl.m.)
 ‘Everybody finds these dogs boring.’
 b. *Þessir hundar eru leiðstir/leiddirst (af öllum).
 these dogs(Npl.m.) are been-bored-by (by everybody(Dpl.))

Now observe that if we have an agentive *-st-* verb that takes a lexically case-marked object in the active, the case of which is then preserved in the passive and prevents agreement, then passive is fine in some instances at least (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:318):

- (5.28) a. Þeir kröfðust peninganna.
 they(Npl.) demanded money-the(Gpl.)
 b. Peninganna var krafist (af þeim).
 money-the(Gpl.) was(sg.) demanded(Nsg.n.) (by them(Dpl.))

The acceptability of the passives in (5.29b) seems more questionable, despite the lexical case marking of the objects:

- (5.29) a. Börnin óhlýðnuðust kennaranum aldrei.
 children-the disobeyed teacher-the(D) never
 ‘The children never disobeyed the teacher.’
 b. ??Kennaranum var aldrei óhlýðnast.
 teacher-the(D) was never disobeyed

- (5.30) a. Fólk kynntist útlendingunum ekki.
 people got-to-know foreigners-the(D) not
 'People didn't get to know the foreigners.'
- b. ?*Útlendingunum var ekki kynnst.
 foreigners-the(D) was(D) not got-to-know

We see, then, that although we cannot simply say that *-st*-verbs do not passivize, there are considerable restrictions on the passivization of *-st*-verbs.⁷ It may have something to do with the the role of the *-st*-suffix in some

⁷ As pointed out by Anderson (1990:243), *-st*-verbs of change and movement are not found in the stative predicative participial construction that intransitive verbs of movement and change can otherwise occur in. Compare the following:

- (i)
- a. Hann fór/hljóp/skreið/lak ... út.
 he went/ran/crept/leaked out
- b. Hann var farinn/hlaupinn/skriðinn/lekinn ... út.
 he(Nsg.m.) was gone(Nsg.m.)/run(Nsg.m.)/crept(Nsg.m.)/leaked(Nsg.m.) out
- c. Hann hefur farið/hlaupið/skriðið/lekið ... út
 he(Nsg.m.) has gone(Nsg.n.)/run(Nsg.n.)/crept(Nsg.n.)/leaked(Nsg.n.) out
- (ii)
- a. Hann læddist/laumaðist/skreiddist ... út
 he(Nsg.m.) sneaked/sneaked/crept out
- b. *Hann er læðstur/laumastur/skreiðstur ... út
 he(Nsg.m.) is sneaked(Nsg.m.)/sneaked(Nsg.m.)/crept(Nsg.m.) out
- c. Hann hefur læðst/laumast/skreiðst ... út
 he(Nsg.m.) has sneaked(Nsg.n.)/sneaked(Nsg.n.)/crept(Nsg.n.) out

With the *-st*-verbs in (ii) only the perfective with *hafa* 'have' and the non-agreeing supine is possible whereas with the semantically similar verbs in (i) both the regular perfect with *hafa* 'have' and the stative participial construction with the agreeing participle are possible. Note, however, that it is not the actual form of the agreement but rather the principled distinction between agreement and non-agreement that seems to play a role here. Thus neuter singular subjects are no better in the 'agreeing' variant:

- (iii)
- a. Barnið *er læðst / hefur læðst út.
 child-the(Nsg.n.) *is sneaked(Nsg.n.)/has sneaked(Nsg.n.) out
- b. Barnið *er ferðast / hefur ferðast til Reykjavíkur.
 child-the(Nsg.n.) *is travelled(Nsg.n.)/has travelled(Nsg.n.) to Reykjavík

This could be seen as an argument for distinguishing the non-agreeing supine from the (homophonous) Nsg.n. of the participle (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:322ff.).

cases. Note, for instance, that there is arguably a reflexive element to the meaning of *jáfast* ‘promise to get married to’, *giftast* ‘marry’ (cf. *gifta sig* ‘marry’) and so on. But while the passivization restrictions on *-st*-verbs are not very well understood, one could still argue that it should not come as a surprise that ‘impersonal’ verbs such as *leiðast* ‘get bored by’ do not passivize. Hence their failure to do so can hardly be used as an argument against the claim that they take a nominative object in the active.

There is no obvious morphological reason why *líka* ‘like’ does not passivize, on the other hand. It seems to me, however, that an attempted passive of *líka* is not much worse than the attempted passive of the NA-verb *fíla* ‘dig, like’ mentioned above – although it is probably somewhat worse:

- (5.31) a. Allir fíla þessa hunda.
 everybody(Npl.) like(pl.) these dogs(Apl.m.)
 b. Öllum líka þessir hundar.
 all(Dpl.) like(pl.) these dogs(Npl.m.)
- (5.32) a. ?*Þessir hundar eru fílaðir (af öllum).
 these dogs(Npl.m.) are dug(Npl.m.) (by everybody(Dpl.))
 b. *Þessir hundar eru líkaðir (af öllum).
 these dogs(Npl.m.) are liked (by everybody)

If this is true, then the restriction on the passivization of *líka* ‘like’ might be of a thematic nature.

Another piece of evidence for the claim that it is the thematic roles of the arguments of nominative object verbs that prevents them from undergoing passivization, rather than the grammatical function of the alleged nominative objects (i.e., that they are not really objects but rather subjects in some sense – cf. the discussion in Van Valin 1991), comes from the psych-verbs that have a ‘dual nature’ with respect to the assignment of grammatical roles to their arguments. As first discussed by Helgi Bernóðsson (1982), but later by many others, verbs like the following seem to be able to take oblique subjects and nominative objects or else nominative subjects and oblique objects (see also the discussion by Jóhanna Barðdal 1999b, 2001a, Platzack 1999 and around (4.146) above):

- (5.33)
 a. **Honum** hefur hentað/hæft/passað/sæmt þessi staða vel.
 him(Dsg.m.) has suited/suited/suited/become this position(Nsg.f.) well
 b. **Þessi staða** hefur hentað/hæft/passað/sæmt honum vel.
 this position(Nsg.f.) has suited/suited/suited/become him(Dsg.m.) well

The thematic roles of the arguments are obviously the same in both instances. Furthermore, there is hardly any doubt that the dative argument in the

b-variant is the object. Now the nominative argument in the a-variant cannot undergo passivization, and if I am right in claiming that the reason for this has to do with the thematic roles of the arguments, then passivizing the dative object in the b-variant should be just as bad. But if the reason why we cannot ‘turn’ the nominative argument into a passive subject has to do with its grammatical relation, namely that it is not an object, then we might expect to find a difference in passivizability between the two variants. The fact is, however, that they are equally terrible:

- (5.34) a. **Þessi staða var hentuð/hæfð/pössuð/sæmd (af honum).
 this position(Nsg.f.) was suited/suited/suited/become(Nsg.f.) (by him)
- b. **Honum var hæft/hentað/passað/sæmt (af þessari stöðu).
 him(Dsg.m.) was suited/suited/suited/become(Nsg.n.) (by this position)

We can conclude, then, that there is some support for the claim that the reason why ‘impersonal’ verbs, that is, verbs taking non-nominative subjects, fail to passivize has to do with their thematic structure. This includes verbs taking nominative objects, such as *líka* ‘like’ and *leiðast* ‘be bored by’, although there may also be some special restrictions on *-st*-verbs involved.

5.1.3 Prepositional passive, impersonal passive and the expletive passive

5.1.3.1 Distinguishing prepositional passives from topicalization structures

It was claimed above that there is no pseudo-passive (i.e., passive where the passive subject corresponds to a prepositional object in the active) in Icelandic and the following examples were cited to support this claim (cf. the discussion around (4.17) in 4.1.1.10):

- (5.35) a. Fólk talaði (oft) um þennan mann.
 people talked (often) about this man(A)
 ‘People often talked about this man.’
- b. *Þessi maður var (oft) talaður um __ .
 this man(N) was (often) talked about
- c. Einhver hefur sofð í þessu rúmi.
 somebody has slept in this bed(D)
- d. *Þetta rúm hefur verið sofð í __ .
 this bed(N) has been slept in

This argumentation assumes, however, that the subject in a prepositional passive would be structurally case marked, that is, nominative. Since we have seen various kinds of lexically case-marked subjects in Icelandic, for example

in passives of verbs taking lexically case-marked objects, it is entirely possible a priori that the subject of prepositional passives could be lexically case marked, that is, that it would preserve the case assigned to it in the corresponding active. At first sight, it seems that this is in fact what we find in Icelandic:

- (5.36) a. **Þennan mann** var (oft) talað um __.
 this man(Asg.m.) was (often) talked(Nsg.n.) about.
 b. **Þessu rúmi** hefur (aldrei) verið sofíð í __.
 this bed(Ds.m.) has (never) been slept(Nsg.n.) in

As pointed out by Maling and Zaenen (1985), there are various ways of finding out whether the oblique NPs in (5.36) are (passive) subjects or not. If they are, they should pass the different tests for subjecthood commonly applied to oblique NPs to determine their grammatical function. These include subject-verb inversion in direct questions and the ability to immediately follow ECM verbs (Accusative with Infinitive verbs). Consider (5.38) and (5.39) where these tests are applied to the oblique subjects of the passives in (5.37) on the one hand and the oblique NPs of (5.36) on the other:

- (5.37) a. **Þessum manni** hefur verið hjálpað.
 this man(Dsg.m.) has been helped(Nsg.n.)
 b. **Þessa manns** hefur lengi verið saknað.
 this man(Gsg.m.) has long been missed(Nsg.n.)
- (5.38) a. Hefur **þessum manni** verið hjálpað?
 has this man(Dsg.m.) been helped(Nsg.n.)
 b. Ég tel **þessum manni** hafa verið hjálpað.
 I believe this man(Dsg.m.) have(inf.) been helped
 c. Hefur **þessa manns** lengi verið saknað?
 has this man(Gsg.m.) long been missed
 d. Ég tel **þessa manns** hafa lengi verið saknað.
 I believe this man(Gsg.m.) have(inf.) long been missed
- (5.39) a. *Var **þennan mann** oft talað um?
 was this man(Asg.m.) often talked about
 b. *Ég tel **þennan mann** hafa verið talað um.
 I believe this man(Asg.m.) have(inf.) been talked about
 c. *Hefur **þessu rúmi** verið sofíð í?
 has this bed(Dsg.n.) been slept in
 d. *Ég tel **þessu rúmi** hafa verið sofíð í.
 I believe this bed(Dsg.n.) have been slept in

The contrast is very clear: the oblique passive subjects in (5.37) pass the subjecthood tests applied in (5.38) whereas the oblique NPs in (5.36) fail them in (5.39). Hence I conclude, with other researchers that have discussed this phenomenon (see especially Maling and Zaenen 1985), that examples like the ones in (5.36) involve Preposition Stranding and Topicalization of non-subjects. The non-topicalized structures could, for example, be as shown in (5.40) and (5.41) (fronted constituents in boldface; see also the discussion around (4.19)):

- (5.40) a. Það var (oft) talað um þennan mann.
 there was (often) spoken about this man(Asg.m.)
 b. **Um þennan mann** var (oft) talað __ .
 about this man(Asg.m.) was (often) spoken
 c. **Oft** var __ talað um þennan mann.
 often was spoken about this man(Asg.m.)
- (5.41) a. Það hefur (aldrei) verið sofð í þessu rúmi.
 there has (never) been slept in this bed(D)
 b. **Í þessu rúmi** hefur (aldrei) verið sofð __ .
 in this bed(D) has (never) been slept
 c. **Aldrei** hefur __ verið sofð í þessu rúmi.
 never has been slept in this bed(D)

Here the a-variant is the default version of the so-called impersonal passive: it has the expletive *það* in initial position and a passive form of the verb. The b- and c-variants involve preposing of some constituent and then the expletive disappears, as it always does in Icelandic when something is preposed. Before looking more closely at the impersonal passive, it should be pointed out that passives of (the superficially similar) particle verbs are fine, but these contrast with prepositional verbs in interesting ways.

5.1.3.2 Passives of particle verbs

First, consider the following examples of particle verbs:

- (5.42) a. Þeir hafa tekið **fram** diskana.
 they(Npl.m.) have taken forth plates-the(Apl.m.)
 b. Þær hafa skipt **niður** verkefnum.
 they(Npl.f.) have divided down tasks-the(Dpl.n.)
 ‘They have divided up the tasks.’

On the face of it, the oblique NPs in (5.42) look rather similar to prepositional objects: they immediately follow ‘small words’. But it can easily be shown that the NPs do not form constituents with *fram* ‘forth’ and *niður* ‘down’:

- (5.43) a. ***Fram diskana** hafa þeir tekið ____.
 forth plates-the(Apl.m.) have they taken
- b. ***Niður verkefnumum** hafa þær skipt ____.
 down tasks-the(Dpl.n.) have they divided

In addition, these constructions also show the common characteristic of particle constructions that unstressed pronouns cannot follow ‘forth’ and ‘down’ here but have to precede them:

- (5.44) a. Þeir hafa tekið *fram þá / þá fram.
 they have taken *forth them / them forth
- b. Þær hafa skipt *niður þeim / þeim niður.
 they have divided *down them / them down

We can conclude, therefore, that the oblique NPs in (5.42) are direct objects of the verbs in question and not prepositional objects. Having established this, we should not be surprised to see that they can easily passivize:

- (5.45) a. Diskarnir hafa verið teknir fram.
 plates-the(Npl.m.) have(pl.) been taken(Npl.m.) forth
- b. Verkefnumum hefur verið skipt niður.
 tasks-the(Dpl.n.) has(sg.) been divided(Nsg.n.) down

As the reader will have noticed, the (alleged) passive subject in (5.45b) is (still) marked dative, which is not surprising since the dative of objects is a lexical case in the sense discussed earlier and hence ‘preserved’ here. In contrast with the topicalized oblique prepositional objects of (5.36), this NP passes the standard subject tests, including those used above:

- (5.46) a. Hefur **verkefnumum** verið skipt niður?
 has(sg.) tasks-the(Dpl.n.) been divided down
 ‘Have the tasks been divided up?’
- b. Ég tel **verkefnumum** hafa verið skipt niður.
 I believe tasks-the(Dpl.n.) have(inf.) been divided down
 ‘I believed the tasks to have been divided up.’

There is thus a clear contrast between objects of particle verbs and prepositional objects of prepositional verbs in Icelandic: the former can undergo passivization, just like any other verbal object, whereas the latter cannot.

5.1.3.3 Impersonal passives and expletive passives

As already discussed to some extent in section 2.2.2 above, Icelandic has a wealth of ‘expletive constructions’, that is, constructions with an expletive element in initial position and either no ‘logical subject’ at all or a logical subject (usually indefinite) somewhere later in the clause. In this section we shall discuss two kinds of passive constructions that can have an expletive in initial position.⁸

As has been discussed by various researchers, monoargumental agentive verbs can occur in the so-called impersonal passive form, that is, with the regular passive auxiliary *vera* ‘be’ and passive morphology of the verb, but non-agentive intransitive verbs cannot (see, e.g., Zaenen and Maling 1984, Maling 1987 and especially Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:312ff.). Typical contrasts cited include the following (this particular contrast may not be equally bad for all speakers and there is probably some lexical and individual variation involved):

- (5.47) a. Fólk dansaði alla nóttina.
 people(Nsg.) danced all night(A)
 → Það var dansað alla nóttina.
 there was danced(Nsg.n.) all night(A)
- b. Fólk datt á svellinu.
 people fell on ice-the
 → *Það var dottið á svellinu.⁹
 there was fallen(Nsg.n.) on ice-the

⁸ Since the overt Icelandic expletive only occurs in initial position, many expletive constructions in Icelandic do not have any overt expletive element (see, e.g., the discussion in section 9.1.4.2 and the overview of expletive constructions in 6.1). I will nevertheless refer to these as expletive constructions. Hence the following would both qualify as expletive passives although only one of them has the overt expletive *það*:

- (i) a. Það var talað um málið þá.
 there was spoken about the matter then
 b. Þá var talað um málið.
 then was spoken about the matter

⁹ Jóhanna Barðdal and Molnár (2000:129) maintain that the following example cited in the work by Joan Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir in their work on the so-called New Passive (e.g. 2002:127 – see also the discussion in 5.1.4) is acceptable because *detta* ‘fall’ can either be an unaccusative verb or an unergative one:

- (ii) Það var dottið í hálkunni fyrir framan blokkina.
 there was fallen on the ice in front of the apartment-building

An unergative reading presumably implies, then, that the verb is being interpreted as volitional – people were falling down on purpose. I am not considering such a reading here but I will return to this problem towards the end of section 5.1.4.

In this connection it is often maintained that the basic split is between unaccusative (or ergative) verbs, which universally cannot passivize (cf., e.g., Perlmutter 1978), and other verbs – or between agentive verbs (verbs taking a volitional agent), which typically passivize, and other verbs (cf., e.g., Zaenen and Maling 1984). As we shall see below, these generalizations appear to be too crude, although they are on the right track. First, impersonal passives are not found in all languages that have passivization, including English and Italian. Second, the acceptability of impersonal passives in Icelandic seems to be influenced by a number of semantic factors, sometimes rather subtle ones. It is thus of some interest to illustrate the kinds of predicates that do or do not allow impersonal passives.

If a ‘volitional agent’ in the active is a precondition, then that will (correctly) rule out predicates of the following kind, for instance (see especially Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:315ff.):

(5.48)

a. No-argument predicates, such as weather verbs:

Í gær rigndi mikið.
yesterday rained much

→ *Það var rignt mikið í gær.
there was rained(Nsg.n.) much yesterday

b. Predicates taking oblique subjects in the active (since these are never agents):

Mann svimaði í hitanum.
one felt-dizzy in heat-the(D)

→ *Það var svimað í hitanum.
there was felt-dizzy in heat-the

c. The unaccusative (ergative) member of a transitive – unaccusative pair, since the unaccusative member does not have an agent:

Þeir stækkuðu garðinn.
they(N) enlarged garden-the(A)

→ Garðurinn stækkaði
garden-the(N) grew-bigger

→ *Það var stækkað.
there was grown-bigger

d. True middles (cf. below), since these do not have any agent:

Dyrnar opnuðust
door-the(N) opened

→ *Það var opnast.
there was opened

So far, then, we have a rather simple story. But there is apparently more to it than we have seen so far. First, consider the following impersonal passives

(cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:311, 320; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1988, n. 5), suggesting that semantic features like agentivity or volition may play a role in licensing the impersonal passive in Icelandic:

- (5.49) a. Það **var farið** snemma af stað.
 there was gone early from place
 ‘People left early.’
- b. Það **var komið** til mín í gærkvöldi út af þessu.
 there was come to me last night because of this
 ‘People came to me last night because of this.’
- c. Það **var alltaf sofnað** snemma heima.
 there was always fallen-asleep early at home
 ‘People went to bed early at my place.’
- d. Enn **er barist og dáið** fyrir föðurlandið.
 still is fought and died for fatherland-the
 ‘People are still fighting and dying for their fatherland.’

Since verbs like *fara* ‘go’, *koma* ‘come’ and *sofna* ‘fall asleep’ are typically said to take theme subjects, or be unaccusative verbs, the fact that they can occur in the impersonal passive construction might seem to pose a counterexample to the generalization stated above. What is crucial about the examples in (5.49), however, is the voluntary aspect of the examples, which is partially evident from the glosses. Thus *fara* in the a-example means basically ‘take off’, which is clearly a voluntary act; *koma* in the b-example refers to a voluntary visit; *sofna* in the c-example has to do with going to bed rather than actually falling asleep. In (5.49d) (from Kjartan G. Ottósson 1988) the unaccusative verb *deyja* ‘die’ has clearly a volitional aspect to it – people are sacrificing themselves for their fatherland. An interesting minimal pair is cited by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1989:320), illustrating nicely the importance of the voluntary aspect of the predicate for the impersonal passive to be possible: *sit* in the first example means ‘sitting around for pleasure’ or some such, whereas it means ‘being trapped’ in the second example, clearly an involuntary act (the examples are slightly modified here):¹⁰

¹⁰ Note also that to the extent that impersonal passives can be formed using predicates that normally refer to ‘involuntary bodily processes’ (cf. Perlmutter 1978) like *Það var mikið hikstað/lmerrað/þóstað/pissað/ropað/lælt*, lit. ‘There was much hiccupped/sneezed/coughed/peed/burped/vomited . . .’, it seems to be understood that this was done voluntarily, e.g. as a part of joking around. Similarly, *Það var sofið frameftir*,

- (5.50) a. Við sátum á gólfinu allt kvöldið og sungum.
 we sat on floor-the all night-the and sang
- b. Það var setið á gólfinu allt kvöldið og sungið.
 there was sat on floor-the all night-the and sung
 ‘People sat on the floor singing all night.’
- c. Við sátum í gildru allt kvöldið og bölvuðum.
 we sat in trap all night-the and cursed
 ‘We sat in a trap all night and cursed.’
- d. *Það var setið í gildru allt kvöldið og bölvað.
 there was sat in trap all night-the and cursed

Now note that although ‘true middles’ like *opnast* ‘open’ cannot be used in the impersonal passive construction, it is not the case that the impersonal passive is ruled out for *-st*-verbs in general. This is of some interest in connection with the discussion of regular passivization and *-st*-verbs in the preceding subsection:

- (5.51) a. Það var ólmast um allt hús.
 there was acted-wildly over all house
 ‘People acted wildly all over the house.’
- b. Það var djöflast allan daginn.
 there was ‘deviled’ all day(Asg.)
 ‘People worked like mad all day.’
- c. Það var fylgst vel með börnunum.
 there was followed well with children-the
 ‘People looked carefully after the children.’

The last example takes us to a second class of impersonal passives, namely predicates that take a prepositional complement. As before, these contrast with verbs taking regular case-marked objects, be they structurally or lexically case marked:

- (5.52) a. Við töluðum um bókina.
 we talked about book-the(Asg.)
- b. Það var talað um bókina.
 there was talked about book-the(Asg.)

Footnote 10 (*cont.*)

lit. ‘There was slept in’, implies that people were voluntarily sleeping late. Subtle contrasts of this kind suggest that a simple list of thematic roles does not do justice to the complexity of argument structure of verbs.

- (5.53) a. Við ræddum bókina.
we discussed book-the(Asg.)
- b. *Það var rædd bókin.¹¹
there was discussed book-the(Nsg.)
- c. *Það var rætt bókina.
there was discussed book-the(Asg.)
- (5.54) a. Við hældum bókinni.
we praised book-the(Dsg.)
- b. *Það var hælt bókinni.
there was praised book-the(Dsg.)

While (5.52b) is fine for everybody, the starred variants in (5.53) and (5.54) need some comments. First, (5.53b) would be fine if *bókin* ‘the book’ was indefinite: *það var rædd bók*, lit. ‘There was discussed a book.’ Similarly, (5.54b) would be fine if *bókinni* was indefinite: *það var hælt bók*, lit. ‘There was praised a book.’ I will return to these variants below and refer to them as ‘expletive passives’. The example in (5.53c) looks like the ‘New Passive’ (or ‘New Impersonal’) which will be discussed in section 5.1.4.

What we have seen so far, then, is that various (typically agentive) intransitive verbs can occur in the so-called impersonal passive construction – and this includes verbs taking prepositional complements. Common to all these constructions is that an agent cannot be referred to in an agentive prepositional phrase (see also Maling 1987; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:322, n. 48):

- (5.55) a. Það var dansað alla nóttina (*af fólkinu).
there was danced all night-the(A) (*by people-the)
- b. Það var setið á gólfinu allt kvöldið (*af okkur).
there was sat on floor-the all night (*by us)
- c. Það var ólmast um allt hús (*af krökkunum).
there was acted-wildly about all house (*by children-the)
- d. Það var talað um bókina (*af öllum).
there was talked about book-the (*by everybody)

¹¹ The form *rædd* ‘discussed’ is the agreeing feminine form of the participle (m. *ræddur*, f. *rædd*, n. *rætt*) whereas the form *rætt* in the next example is the non-agreeing form (identical to the n.sg. as always).

Turning now to the expletive passives mentioned above, all passives that have a lexical (logical) subject can be turned into expletive passives if the lexical subject is indefinite and does not occur in initial position. This is exactly parallel to the restrictions on passive constructions in the active. The case of the subject plays no role here. This is illustrated below. In (5.56a) we have an active intransitive expletive construction and in (5.56b, c) we have examples of passive expletive ones:

- (5.56) a. Einhver nemandi mun hafa verið í bókasafninu.
 some student(Nsg.m.) will have been in library-the
- b. Einhver nemandi hefur verið tekinn í bókasafninu.
 some student(Nsg.m.) has been taken(Nsg.m.) in library-the
- c. Einhverjum nemanda hefur verið hjálpað í bókasafninu.
 some student(Dsg.m.) has been helped(Nsg.n.) in library-the

As shown in (5.57)–(5.60), the positions available to the associate of the expletive are the same in the active intransitive expletive construction and in the expletive passives:

(5.57)

After the finite auxiliary

- a. Það mun **einhver nemandi** hafa verið í bókasafninu.
 there will some student(Nsg.m.) have been in library-the
- b. Það hefur **einhver nemandi** verið tekinn í bókasafninu.
 there has some student(Nsg.m.) been taken(Nsg.m.) in library-the
- c. Það hefur **einhverjum nemanda** verið hjálpað í bókasafninu.
 there has some student(Dsg.m.) been helped(Nsg.n.) in library-the

(5.58) Not between a non-finite auxiliary and a non-finite verb

- a. *Það mun hafa **einhver nemandi** verið í bókasafninu.
 b. *Það hefur verið **einhver nemandi** tekinn í bókasafninu.
 c. *Það hefur verið **einhverjum nemanda** hjálpað í bókasafninu.

(5.59) After an intransitive or passive main verb

- a. Það mun hafa verið **einhver nemandi** í bókasafninu.
 there will have been some student(Nsg.m.) in library-the
- b. Það hefur verið tekinn **einhver nemandi** í bókasafninu.
 there has been taken some student(Nsg.m.) in library-the
- c. Það hefur verið hjálpað **einhverjum nemanda** í bókasafninu.
 there has been helped some student(Dsg.m.) in library-the

(5.60) After a locative phrase

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| a. Það mun hafa verið | í bókasafninu | einhver nemandi. |
| there will have been | in library-the | some student(Nsg.m.) |
| b. Það hefur verið tekinn | í bókasafninu | einhver nemandi. |
| there has been taken | in library-the | some student(Nsg.m.) |
| c. Það hefur verið hjálpað | í bókasafninu | ei hverjum nemanda. |
| there has been helped | in library-the | some student(Dsg.m.) |

As shown here, three ‘late positions’ are available to the associate of the expletive in all instances, that is, immediately after the finite auxiliary, after the main verb or at the end of the clause, but the position after the non-finite auxiliary does not seem to be available. As discussed in section 2.1.3, the position immediately after the main verb is only available to the associate of the expletive in active clauses if the main verb is an intransitive (especially unaccusative) one – and here we see that the passivized verb behaves the same way. Now it should be noted that the availability of the three positions depends to some extent on the exact nature of the associate, such as quantification and heaviness. We will return to such issues in chapter 6. But we may note in passing that adding agentive *by*-phrases of the sort standardly used in agentivity tests seems quite unnatural in expletive passives, as in the ‘true’ impersonal passives discussed above (see (5.55)). Such *af*-phrases are clearly much worse in expletive passives than in the non-expletive variants as illustrated below (here the expletive passives are preceded by their non-expletive counterparts to illustrate this contrast).¹²

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| (5.61) a. Einhver nemandi var gripinn | (af kennaranum). |
| some student was caught | (by teacher-the) |
| → Það var gripinn einhver nemandi | (?*af kennaranum). |
| there was caught some student | (?*by teacher-the) |
| ‘Some student was caught.’ | |

¹² The reason I refer to these *af*-phrases as ‘the sort standardly used in agentivity tests’ is the following: the agentive *af*-phrases are much more restricted than, say, their counterpart in English. They often sound formal or less than felicitous for some reason. The best, or most neutral, examples involve *af*-phrases containing NPs that are names of companies, offices and so on (cf. the examples in 1.2.4 above), and these are perhaps not typical agents. Hence the *af*-phrases ‘standardly used’ in tests for agentivity do not contain such NPs but NPs referring to persons and the like. The reason for this is probably that the main function of the Icelandic passive is to ‘hide’ the agent, as it were, and hence it often sounds odd to mention the agent in an *af*-phrase. This is apparently less odd if the *af*-phrase contains a ‘pseudo-agent’ such as a company or an office.

- b. Einhverjum nemanda var hjálpað (af kennaranum).
 some student was helped (by teacher-the)
 → Það var hjálpað einhverjum nemanda (?*af kennaranum).
 there was helped some student (?*by teacher-the).
 ‘Some student was helped.’

This may turn out to be important in the discussion of the New Passive in 5.1.4.¹³

It is important for the purposes of this discussion to consider the role of the definiteness of the associate. Consider the following near-minimal pairs:

(5.62)

- a. Það var mikið talað um **einhverjar bækur** í þættinum.
 there was much talked about some books in programme-the
 ‘Some books were talked about a lot in the programme.’
- b. Það var mikið talað um **þessar bækur** í þættinum.
 there was much talked about these books in programme-the
 ‘These books were talked about a lot in the programme.’
- c. (?)Það var mikið hælt **einhverjum málfræðibókum** í þættinum.
 there was much praised some linguistics-books(Dpl.) in programme-the
- d. *Það var mikið hælt **þessum bókum** í þættinum.
 there was much praised these books in programme-the

As shown (and recapitulated) here, the definiteness of the NP inside the prepositional phrase in the impersonal passive in (5.62a, b) plays no role, whereas the definiteness of the associate of the expletive in the expletive passive in (5.62c, d) is important and most speakers reject (5.62d). What we have there is, however, very similar to the so-called New Passive, to which we will now turn.

5.1.4 *The New Passive/New Impersonal*

The New Passive¹⁴ has been studied in considerable detail by Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir (see, e.g., Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir

¹³ As Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson has pointed out to me (p.c.), it is possible to find decent examples of expletive passives involving the ‘institutional *af*-phrase’ mentioned in the preceding footnote:

(i)

Það voru bara gefin út fjögur leyfi af menntamálaráðuneytinu núna.
 there were only given out four licences by the Ministry of Education this time.

¹⁴ I will mainly be using this (more common) term, occasionally abbreviating it as NePa, although the main investigators of the phenomenon, Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Joan Maling, prefer to call it ‘The New Impersonal’ and have presented arguments against the claim that it is a passive construction, as we shall see below.

and Maling 2001, Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002 – henceforth collectively as SS&JM when there is no special need to distinguish these publications) and there is some reason to believe that it deserves the label ‘New’, as they have pointed out, since ‘most adults consider it ungrammatical’, although some examples have been collected from speakers who were in their forties and fifties around 2000. This is also supported by the fact that it was apparently first noted in the linguistic literature around 1980 (Helgi Bernódusson 1982; see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:355) and it was first discussed extensively by Helgi Skúli Kjartansson (1991; he also suggested the name ‘The New Passive’ and maintained that the phenomenon was mainly found in children’s language).

Some of the examples of the NePa look like expletive passives where the indefiniteness requirement has been violated (forms restricted to ‘the New Passive dialect’ are highlighted):

- (5.63) a. Henni/Einhverri stelpu var hrint í skólanum.
her(Dsg.f.)/some girl(Dsg.f.) was pushed in school-the
‘She/Some girl was pushed in school.’
- b. Það var hrint **henni**/einhverri stelpu í skólanum.
there was pushed her/some girl in school-the
- c. Hennar/Einhværrar stelpu var saknað í skólanum.
her(Gsg.f.)/some girl(Gsg.f.) was missed in school-the
‘She/Some girl was missed in school.’
- d. Það var saknað **hennar**/einhværrar stelpu í skólanum.
there was missed her(Gsg.f.)/some girl(Gsg.f.) in school-the

But if the NePa dialect would just differ from other dialects in not observing the indefiniteness requirement in expletive passives, we would expect the NePa variant of a regular passive with a definite nominative subject as in (5.64a) to be (5.64b). Instead, it is (5.64c), ‘preserving’ the accusative of the active object, as it were (cf., e.g., Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:98):

- (5.64) a. Stúlkan var lamin í klessu.
girl-the(Nsg.f.) was beaten(Nsg.f.) in mess
‘The girl was badly beaten up.’
- b. *Það var lamin stúlkan í klessu.
there was beaten(Nsg.f.) girl-the(Nsg.f.) in mess

- c. *Það var lamið stúlkuna í klessu.*¹⁵
 there was beaten(Nsg.n.) girl-the(Asg.f.) in mess
 'The girl was badly beaten up.'

As shown here, the 'associate of the expletive' remains in object position, and it preserves its accusative case and thus does not trigger any agreement of the verbal complex. Hence one cannot simply say that speakers of the NePa dialect do not observe the expected indefiniteness requirement in this construction.

In their extensive survey (almost 1700 adolescents (fifteen to sixteen years old) and 200 adults from nine different areas in Iceland), SS&JM basically found that the typical NePa constructions were rejected by their adult controls but accepted by the school children they tested in different parts of the country, with the lowest rate of acceptance in the area they refer to as 'Inner Reykjavík' (the centre of the capital). These results confirm the initial proposal that the NePa represents a 'change in progress' that has its origin in child language, as Helgi Skúli Kjartansson suggested (1991).

At this point it is worth clarifying the differences between the NePa dialect and other dialects. Consider the following examples, where the judgements given in the Std column are those relevant for the 'standard' dialect that does not have the NePa and the problems listed in the last column refer to the differences that need to be accounted for.

(5.65)				NePa	Std	problems
a.	<i>Það var barið</i>	<i>strák.</i>		+	-	case, agree
	there was hit(n.sg.)	boy(Asg.m.)				
b.	<i>Það var barið</i>	<i>barn.</i>		+	+	
	there was hit(n.sg.)	child(N/Asg.n.)				
c.	<i>Það var hjálpað</i>	<i>manni.</i>		+	+	
	there was helped(n.sg.)	man(Dsg.m.)				
d.	<i>Það var barið</i>	<i>strákinn.</i>		+	-	case, agree, def.
	there was hit(n.sg.)	the boy(Asg.m.)				

¹⁵ As pointed out in the preceding footnote, available evidence suggests that the *það* in the NePa construction is simply the (strictly initial) expletive *það*. Thus the following variant would not be acceptable:

- (i) *Var **það** lamið stúlkuna í klessu?
 was there beaten the girl in mess

				NePa	Std	problems
e.	Það var barið	barnið.				
	there was hit	the child(N/Asg.n.)		+	-	def.
f.	Það var barinn	strákur.				
	there was hit(m.sg.)	boy(Nsg.m.)		+	+	

As shown here, the a-sentence is impossible in the standard dialect since *strák* ‘boy’ is in the accusative instead of nominative and (hence) the passive participle does not agree with it (it only agrees with nominative subjects, as explained in section 1.2). The b-example is fine in the standard dialect since the noun *barn* ‘child’ is a neuter noun and hence it cannot be seen whether it is in the nominative or the accusative – and the form of the passive participle would be the same whether it is agreeing (with a neuter singular noun) or non-agreeing. The c-example is also fine in both dialects, the reason being that the case of the indefinite noun *manni* ‘man’ would be dative in everybody’s dialect because *hjálpa* ‘help’ is a verb that assigns (lexical) dative to its object (in the active) and in the passive speakers of both dialects would preserve the lexical case of the object. Hence there would be no agreement of the passive participle for speakers of either dialect. The d-example is bad for at least two reasons in the standard dialect: the case of *strákinn* ‘the boy’ is wrong (accusative instead of nominative – and hence there is no agreement) and it is also definite and thus violating the indefiniteness requirement on the associate of the expletive. The e-example is bad in the standard dialect because of the definiteness of the noun *barnið* ‘the child’, but the case is ambiguous as before and it cannot be seen whether the passive participle is agreeing or non-agreeing since the noun is neuter singular. Finally, the f-variant is the standard expletive passive variant (indefinite noun in the nominative case) and it seems that this variant is also accepted by speakers of the NePa dialect.

The overview just given is interesting because it shows that there is considerable overlap between the two dialects. That means, of course, that in the primary linguistic data (PLD) available to a child acquiring the language there is a lot of ambiguity even if the data all come from speakers of the standard dialect. That is a typical situation for ‘misanalysis’ by children, an important source of language change according to many linguists (see, e.g., Hale 2006, Lightfoot 2006 and references cited there).

There is no example of a definite nominative noun in (5.65) but it would obviously be interesting to see if speakers of the NePa dialect would accept that version or whether they observe the indefiniteness condition in the case of an ‘old’ expletive passive. SS&JM maintain that there is some evidence

that they do in fact observe it. In their survey most NePa speakers rejected the following example (the relevant NP highlighted):

- (5.66) *Það hefur komið **Ólafur** of seint í skólann í dag.
 there has come Olaf(Nsg.m.) too late to school-the today

The problem is that this example is not entirely conclusive as a test of the indefiniteness requirement since the acceptability of a NP in the postverbal position in this kind of example depends on its nature as indicated in (5.67) (for further discussion see chapter 6):

(5.67)

- a. *Það hefur komið **strákur** of seint í skólann í dag.
 there has come boy too late to school-the today
- b. Það hafði komið **einhver strákur** of seint í skólann þennan dag.
 there had come some boy(NSg.m.) too late to school that day(A)

Hence it would be interesting to investigate the role of the indefiniteness requirement in the grammar of NePa speakers in more detail. But whatever the outcome, it is clear that the difference between a NePa grammar and other grammars cannot be reduced to aspects of the definiteness effect since there is also a case-marking difference involved if the case of the underlying object (the object in the active) is structural rather than lexical.

In their work on the NePa construction, SS&JM have compared two hypotheses about the nature of the construction. They can be described informally as follows (see, e.g., Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Maling 2001:148; Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:100–2 – their structural diagrams are slightly simplified here and the description is reworded):

(5.68)

In a NePa structure like the following (where *e* is an empty position and *Aux* an auxiliary verb or verbal complex):

[_{IP} *e* [_I *Aux* [_{VP} V NP]]

the following two analyses suggest themselves:

- a. This is a passive construction, which implies that the subject position is not assigned any thematic role and the overt NP is a formal subject.
- b. This is an active construction with a phonologically null subject position which is assigned a thematic role by the main verb and overt NP is an object.

These different analyses make different predictions about the formal and functional properties of this construction as shown here:

(5.69)

- a. Under a standard passive hypothesis we might expect the following:¹⁶
1. that the verbal morphology would be passive;
 2. that the overt NP would have certain subject properties, e.g. with respect to case marking, binding, etc. (but see the preceding footnote);
 3. that the overt NP could only stay in situ if it was indefinite.
- b. Under the active hypothesis we would expect:
1. that the verbal morphology would not be passive;
 2. that the overt NP would have object properties, e.g. with respect to case marking, binding, etc.;
 3. that the overt NP could stay in situ regardless of its definiteness.

As we have already seen, the verbal morphology supports the passive hypothesis (the construction would then typically be a variant of the expletive passive discussed above)¹⁷ whereas the ability of the overt NP to stay in situ (e.g. to occur in expletive constructions) supports the active hypothesis. This means then that under the passive hypothesis something special must be said about the apparent object case of the overt NP in structures like (5.68), and under the active hypothesis something special must be said about the passive morphology of the verbal complex. SS&JM then considered various phenomena which they

¹⁶ By ‘standard’ I mean the assumption that the passive always involves two elements in some sense, i.e. (a) ‘removal’ of an active verb’s external argument; (b) suppression of the verb’s case-marking ability. There has been some discussion in the generative literature about whether both elements are necessary for something to qualify as a passive – i.e. whether there could be such a thing as a ‘half-passive’ requiring, say, only (a) and not (b), as Matthew Whelpton has pointed out to me (p.c.). Note also that at least some of the subject properties of the NP in question will depend on further assumptions about the derivation and nature of passives, such as ‘when’ or ‘where’ the passive subject receives its subject’s properties. In particular, does it have them/acquire them even if it is not ‘moved’ to the subject position?

¹⁷ Note, however, that an overt expletive would not be required here if some preposed constituent precedes the finite verb. That is a general property of ‘subjectless constructions’ in Icelandic as the Icelandic expletive only occurs in initial position. The following announcement seen in an Icelandic cinema illustrates this neatly:

- (i) *Skoðað* *verður* *miða* *við* *innganginn*.
 examined(Nsg.n.) will-be tickets(Apl.m.) by entrance-the
 ‘Tickets will be examined by the door.’

Here the participle *skoðað* ‘examined’ has been fronted to initial position, a process commonly known as Stylistic Fronting (see chapter 7 below) and then no expletive shows up. The NePa properties of the construction are obvious from the accusative case of *miða* ‘tickets’. The ‘normal’ variant would be *Skoðaðir verða miðar* . . . , lit. ‘Examined(Npl.m.) will-be(pl.) tickets(Npl.m.)’.

argue tip the scales in favour of the active hypothesis. Since the NePa is an interesting phenomenon and apparently represents an ‘ongoing change’, the arguments presented by SS&JM are worth considering in some detail.

First, Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir (2002:117) show that the overt NP in (5.68) cannot immediately follow a finite auxiliary as subjects normally can, that is, examples like the following are judged unacceptable by NePa speakers:

- (5.70) a. *Var **stúlkuna** lamið í klessu?
 was girl-the(Asg.f.) beaten in mess
- b. *Eftir matinn var **mig** beðið að vaska upp.
 after meal-the was me(Asg.) asked to wash up

This is expected if the NPs in question are objects, as assumed by the active hypothesis, but under the passive hypothesis one would have to say that the subject NP cannot be preposed at all but has to stay in situ.

The second test SS&JM suggest is the addition of an agentive prepositional phrase. They maintain that since a thematic role (an agentive one) is assigned to the null subject under the active hypothesis, addition of an agentive ‘by-phrase’ should be out – and it was not really appreciated by the speakers tested, for instance in examples like the following (see, e.g., Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:119):

- (5.71) ?*Það var skoðað **bílinn** af bifvélavirkjanum.
 there was examined(Nsg.n.) car-the(Asg.m.) by mechanic-the(Dsg.m.)

As Maling and Sigurjónsdóttir mention, however (2002:120n.), this argument is rather problematic because of the fact that *by*-phrases are generally dispreferred in impersonal passives and expletive passives, as noted above (see the discussion around (5.55) and (5.61)).

The third test has to do with binding of anaphors, including the simplex *sig*, the complex *sjálfan sig* ‘himself’ and the reciprocal *hvor annan* ‘each other’. The idea is that if the empty element in (5.68) is a subject which can be assigned a thematic role, then that subject should be able to bind an anaphor in the place of the overt NP, but under the passive hypothesis there should be no such binder (given their assumptions about the nature of the passive, at least). The pattern that SS&JM obtain for this test is not very clear cut, and a part of the reason may be that different constructions are in fact involved. The following is based on their data (see, e.g., Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:120–2 – the percentage of young speakers accepting the construction in the ‘most tolerant areas’ is given in

parentheses and that percentage is lower in all instances for adult speakers):

(5.72)

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|-----|---------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|-----------------|
| a. | Það | var | haldið | sig | innandyra | út af | óveðrinu. | (82%) |
| | there | was | kept | refl. | in | doors | because of | bad-weather-the |
| b. | ?*Það | var | hjálpað | hverjum öðrum. | | | | (14%) |
| | there | was | helped | each | other(Dsg.m.) | | | |
| c. | *Það | var | oft | kaffært | bróður | sinn. | | (5%) |
| | there | was | often | dunked | brother | possREFL | | |

Although some of the examples are rated quite highly, especially by the younger speakers, it is not entirely clear how to interpret the results. First, some of the examples that receive the highest rating are also accepted by various speakers who generally reject NePa examples. This includes to some extent the (obligatorily reflexive) example in (5.72a) (accepted by 37% of the adult speakers tested by SS&JM whereas ‘typical’ NePa examples were normally accepted by less than 10% of these) and also impersonal constructions like the following (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:355n.; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:75n. – see also the discussion in section 9.2.2.4):

- (5.73) a. Það var leikið **sér** allan daginn.
 there was played REFL all day-the(Asg.m.)
 ‘People (kids) were playing all day long.’
- b. Það er verið að raka **sig**.
 there is been(sup.) to shaveREFL
 ‘One is shaving oneself.’

Thus it seems that to the extent that anaphors can be bound in impersonal constructions of the type discussed by SS&JM, the phenomenon is more or less restricted to the simplex *sig*, whatever the reason may be.¹⁸ What SS&JM want to show, however, is that the NePa speakers treat the NePa construction on a par with active impersonal constructions rather than passives.

A fourth set of facts cited by SS&JM has to do with subject-oriented participial adjuncts. First, they give examples and judgements like the following:

¹⁸ Examples like *Það var horft á sjálfan sig í speglinum* (contains the complex reflexive, lit. ‘There was looked at oneself in the mirror’) and *Það var haldið með sínu liði* (contains the possessive reflexive, lit. ‘There was supported one’s own team’), were also judged favourably by more than half of the younger speakers tested – but also by over 30% of the adults, which is a much higher acceptance rate by adults than for the NePa examples in general. For a discussion of the binding properties of *sig*, including constructions like this, see section 9.2.2.4.

(5.74)

- a. ??Hundurinn var barinn **hágrátandi**.
 dog-the was beaten crying-bitterly [= the beater was crying]
- b. ??Valsinn var dansaður **skellihlæjandi**.¹⁹
 waltz-the was danced laughing-uproariously

The alleged reason for the degraded acceptability of these examples is the lack of a suitable controller for the participle, as ‘many speakers find it difficult to interpret the understood agent as the controller’ (Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:125). Then they give the results for test sentences like the following:

- (5.75) a. Það var komið skellihlæjandi í tímenn.
 there was come laughing-hard to class
- b. Það var farið hágrátandi heim.
 there was gone crying-bitterly home
- c. Það var lesið **minningargreinina** grátandi.
 there was read memorial-article-the crying

Here only the last example involves the NePa construction – the other two contain unaccusative verbs (cf. also the discussion in section 5.1.6). Over 60% of the most permissive group of adolescents tested by SS&JM found all these examples fine and about half of their adult subjects accept the a- and b-variant (but not the NePa variant, of course). This they take as a support for their claim that there is an understood thematic subject controller in all of the sentences in the grammar of the NePa speakers and in the unaccusative examples in the speech of about half of the adults. While the facts are clearly intriguing, their interpretation is not entirely unproblematic, both because it is generally assumed that unaccusative verbs do not assign any external (or agentive) thematic role (and hence should not allow impersonal passives – and many of them do not in the speech of the subjects tested by Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir (2002:127)) and also because the subjects were not tested on passive examples like the ones in (5.74), which should contrast sharply with those tested under the active hypothesis favoured by SS&JM. In addition, it seems that the constraints on interpreting adjuncts of this sort in Icelandic are not very well understood in general.

¹⁹ As Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir point out (2002:125n.), examples like (5.74b) can be improved considerably given more context.

Finally, SS&JM argue that if the NePa construction is in fact a New Impersonal, then it should not be subject to the thematic restrictions known to hold for passives (i.e., that passives are typically formed of agentive verbs and verbs that take (nominative) experiencer subjects in the active, as discussed above). Based on this, they suggest that the speakers of the NePa dialect should be able to form impersonal-passive-like constructions with unaccusative verbs although unaccusatives do not normally allow impersonal passives, as discussed above. They then present results like the following from their survey (see, e.g., Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:127):

(5.76)		Adults	Inner Reykjavik	Elsewhere
	Það var dottið í hálkunni ...	25%	45%	55%
	there was fallen on the ice ...			

Here we see that the adults are least likely to accept this construction and the adolescents outside Reykjavík are more likely to. But the results obtained seem to vary considerably for the sentences tested, ranging from 2% to 58% acceptance rate by the adults and 14% to 55% acceptance rate by adolescents outside Inner Reykjavík. Hence the results are not as clear-cut as one might have wanted, although they can be said to be suggestive.

To sum up, it is useful to look at the two possible analyses of the NePa described above, that is, the ‘New Impersonal’ analysis favoured by SS&JM and the ‘New Passive’ implied by its common name, and try to determine to what extent the evidence discussed supports one over the other. A + in a column indicates that the evidence is consistent with the analysis in question, a – that it is inconsistent with it (unless an independent explanation can be found) and a ? that the data appear to be inconclusive:

(5.77)		New Impers.	New Pass.
	a. verbal morphology	–	+
	b. position and role of the associate NP	+	–
	c. agentive <i>af</i> -phrase	?	?
	d. binding of reflexives	?	?
	e. subject-oriented adjuncts (participles)	?	?
	f. extension of impersonal actives	?	?

The only clear-cut results obtained have to do with the verbal morphology (which is unambiguously passive) and the grammatical role and position of the associate of the NP (which is expected under the active analysis but not under the passive one). All the other tests are arguably somewhat

ambiguous: agentive *af*-phrases are not perfect in constructions that are indisputably expletive passives (see the discussion around (5.55) and (5.61) above); the facts having to do with binding of reflexives are not very well understood since the best examples are also accepted by adults who reject typical NePa structures (see the examples in (5.73) and the discussion at the end of chapter 9 below); the so-called subject-oriented participial adjuncts are not very clear either (see the discussion of examples (5.74) and (5.75)); and the extension to unaccusatives also gives a pretty unclear picture (see (5.77) above). Hence it seems clear that linguists will continue to investigate the NePa construction for some years to come and disagree about its exact nature.

5.1.5 ‘Middle verbs’ and the passive

5.1.5.1 Some morphological characteristics of ‘middle verbs’

In many Icelandic grammars all verbs ending in *-st* in the infinitive are referred to as ‘middle verbs’, and it is often claimed that the *-st* derives from the reflexive pronoun *sig*, or rather its Old Norse form *sik* as schematized in (5.78) (for a detailed description of the origin of the *-st*-suffix see Kjartan G. Ottósson 1986 and especially 1992):

(5.78)	(hann)	klæddi+sik	>	klæddi-sk	>	klæddi-st
	(he)	dressed+self		‘dressed’		‘dressed’

where *klæddisk* is an attested form in Old Norse. While various researchers have attempted to relate (true) middles synchronically to the reflexive, for example because many reflexive forms have the so-called ‘reflexive meaning’ (see, e.g., Taraldsen 1994; Kissock 1995), this will not be attempted here. Since only a subset of the verbs ending in *-st* in Icelandic can be said to have any kind of a middle-like meaning (i.e. those meanings most frequently associated with middles in the literature, namely **reflexive**, **reciprocal**, **passive** and even **inchoative** – see, e.g., the extensive overview of the types of *-st*-verbs in Icelandic given in Anderson 1990 and the discussion in Kjartan G. Ottósson 1986 and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:392ff.), the class as a whole will mostly be referred to as *-st*-verbs and the most ‘middle-like’ ones will occasionally be referred to as ‘true middles’. This classification will hopefully become clearer in the course of the discussion.

While many of the *-st*-verbs are obviously related in one way or another to non-*-st*-verbs, some *-st*-verb stand all by themselves or are related to nouns or adjectives rather than verbs. Consider the following (for a large

set, see Anderson 1990:250ff. and Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:407–8 – see also the discussion in 5.1.5.2 below and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:258ff.):

(5.79)

- a. noun: *andskoti* ‘devil’, derived verb: *andskot-a-st* ‘work like mad, behave badly’
 b. adjective: *ólmur* ‘crazy’, derived verb: *ólm-a-st* ‘behave like crazy’
 c. verb: *loka* ‘close’, derived form: *loka-st* ‘close, be closed’

Now there is a fairly large class of pairs like (5.79c), where one member is a transitive verb without a *-st* and the *-st* variant has a passive-like meaning, except that the agent is not simply left unexpressed but completely eliminated, as can be seen from the fact that it is completely impossible to add an agentive prepositional phrase to an *-st*-verb in contrast with the corresponding passive:

- (5.80) a. Dyrnar voru opnaðar (af dyraverði).
 door-the(Npl.f.) were opened(Npl.f.) (by doorman(Dsg.m.))
 b. Dyrnar **opnuðust** (*af dyraverði)
 door-the(Npl.f.) opened(pl.) (*by doorman)

Other tests for agentivity of predicates also fail in the case of middles but not when a regular passive is involved, such as the addition of the adverb *viljandi* ‘on purpose’ or a purpose clause or purpose infinitive with *til þess að* ‘so that’, ‘in order to’ (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:395):

- (5.81) a. Stóllinn var eyðilagður (viljandi).
 chair-the was destroyed on purpose
 b. Stóllinn **eyðilagðist** (*viljandi).
 chair-the got-destroyed (*on purpose)
- (5.82) a. Víninu var hellt niður (til þess að þú fengir það ekki).
 wine-the(D) was poured down (so that you got it not)
 ‘The wine was spilled (so that you would not get it).’
 b. Vínið **hellist** niður (*til þess að þú fengir það ekki).
 wine-the spilled down (*so that you got it not)
 ‘The wine spilled (*so that you would not get it).’

Because of the productivity of this pattern and the semantic regularity involved, *-st*-verbs like *opnast* ‘open’ are sometimes referred to as ‘true middles’, and they are then considered the most promising candidates for ‘middle inflection’, where **middle** would then be a particular ‘genus verbi’ on a par

with **active** and **passive** (for an extensive discussion of issues of this kind, see Kjartan G. Ottósson 1986). The *-st*-suffix of the true middles could then be analysed as an inflectional suffix, whereas the *-st*-suffix deriving *-st*-verbs from nouns and adjectives is clearly a derivational suffix. But it is important to note that the *-st*-suffix interacts with other suffixes in exactly the same fashion in both instances. In particular, it typically follows all inflectional suffixes or ‘endings’, which is actually not what we would expect if it was a word formation suffix. The only exception is the imperative clitic-like ending *-u*. Some examples are given below:

(5.83)	inf.	1pl.pres.	1pl.past	imp.
	klæð-a-st ‘dress’	klæð-um-st	klæd-d-um-st	klæð-st-u
	andskot-a-st ‘work hard’	andskot-um-st	andskot-uð-um-st	andskota-st-u

Now it is sometimes pointed out as an argument for the status of the *-st*-suffix as a derivational suffix that some speakers tend to put it before certain inflectional markers, for example the first person plural endings (see, e.g., the discussion in Kjartan G. Ottósson 1986). Again, possible differences in the role of the *-st*-suffix play no role here. Besides, the past tense marker apparently sometimes precedes the *-st* (or *-ust*-) and sometimes follows it in the speech of those concerned, so it is difficult to know what to make of this variant.²⁰

(5.84)	1pl.pres.	1pl.past
	klæð-ust-um	klæd-d-ust-um
	andskot-ust-um	andskot-ust-uð-um

As shown here, the past tense marker *-d-* which is a part of the geminated (assimilated) *-dd-* in the past of *klæðast* precedes the middle *-ust*-marker whereas the past tense marker *-uð-* follows it.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the *-st*-verbs are morphologically deficient in the sense that they normally do not form inflected past participles nor present participles. Thus observe the following contrasts:

²⁰ There are even some reported cases of an ‘inversion’ of the markers in imperatives of certain verbs, at least *setjast* ‘sit down’ and *leggjast* ‘lie down’ as illustrated here:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|------------|---|------------|------------|----------------------------------------------|
| (i) | set-st-tu | → | set-tu-st | ‘sit down’ | (giving <i>settust</i> for <i>setstu</i>) |
| | legg-st-tu | → | legg-ðu-st | ‘lie down’ | (giving <i>leggðust</i> for <i>leggstu</i>) |

This is probably rather rare, although it has not been investigated systematically.

- (5.85) a. lenda: Það var ekki **lendandi** á flugvelli-
 ‘land’ it was not landing(pres.part.) on airport-the
 ‘It was not possible to land on the airport.’
- b. setjast: Það var ekki ***setjastandi/*setjandist** á flugvelli-
 ‘land’
- (5.86) a. ske: Atburðurinn var þegar **skeður** klukkan sjö.
 ‘happen’ event-the was already happened(past.part.)clock seven
 ‘The event had already happened at 7 o’clock.’
- b. gerast: Atburðurinn var þegar ***gerstur/*gerðurst** klukkan sjö.
 ‘happen’

The verbs *setjast* ‘sit down’ and *leggjast* ‘lie down’ are exceptions to the last generalization:

- (5.87) a. Hann var sestur niður.
 he was sat(past.part.) down
 ‘He had sat down.’
- b. Hann var þegar lagstur.
 he was already lain(past.part.)
 ‘He had already laid down.’

Interestingly, the *-st*-suffix precedes the participle ending here. As the reader may recall, many *-st*-verbs, including psych-verbs like *hræðast* ‘fear’, *óttast* ‘fear’, do not passivize. But *-st*-verbs taking lexically case-marked objects can passivize as no participial agreement is involved in such instances:

- (5.88) a. Veitingahúsin krefjast nafnskírteina.
 restaurants-the demand ID-cards(Gpl.n.)
- b. Nafnskírteina er **krafist**.
 ID-cards(Gpl.n.) is demanded(Nsg.n.)
- c. Menn munu minnst þess lengi.
 people will remember that(Gsg.n.) long
- d. Þess verður lengi **minnst**.
 that(Gsg.n.) will-be long remembered(Nsg.n.)

This does not mean, of course, that all *-st*-verbs taking lexically case-marked objects can passivize. As demonstrated above, the argument structure of the verb, especially the thematic role of its subject, plays an important role here. Thus the verb *líkjast* ‘resemble’ does not passivize although it takes a lexically case-marked (dative) object:

- (5.89) a. Margir líkjast Guðmundi. (theme subject)
 many resemble Gudmund(Dsg.m.)
- b. *Guðmundi er líkst (af mörgum).
 Gudmund(DSg.m.) is resembled (by many)

5.1.5.2 Some classes of *-st*-verbs

As shown by Anderson (1990), many of the syntactic classes found among non-*st*-verbs can also be found in the class of *-st*-verbs, such as the following (see also Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 2005a:402ff.):

- (5.90) a. intransitive verbs: *ólmast* ‘act wildly’, *endast* ‘last’
 b. transitive with Acc. objects: *nálgast* ‘approach’
 c. transitive with Dat. objects: *líkjast* ‘be similar to’
 d. transitive with Gen. objects: *minnast* ‘remember’
 e. prepositional verbs: *vingast við* ‘make friends with’
 f. verbs with Dat. subjects: *leiðast* ‘be bored’

There are apparently no *-st*-verbs with accusative or genitive subjects. Genitive subjects are very rare anyway, but the non-existence of accusative subjects with *-st*-verbs might call for an explanation (see Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–1998:31).

Semantically, the *-st*-verbs are also quite varied. Considering first the verbs that are semantically related to verbs without *-st*, the most commonly cited relationships are presumably the following – and these are actually found in a number of languages (see Anderson 1990; cf. also Kissock 1995):

- (5.91) a. verbs expressing a **reflexive** or a **reciprocal** relationship:
klæða ‘dress’ – *klæðast* ‘dress oneself’
bíta ‘bite’ – *bítast* ‘bite each other’
- b. verbs expressing a **passive** or **inchoative** relationship:
opna ‘open (tr.)’ – *opnast* ‘open (intr.)’
finna ‘find’ – *finnast* ‘be found’

Icelandic *-st*-verbs fall into a variety of other semantically definable classes, as Anderson has shown (1990). Rather than going into these here, we can look more closely at alternations of the second kind illustrated here, that is, alternations between transitive and intransitive verb classes, and see to what extent they are reflected in Icelandic as a non-*st*-verb vs. *-st*-verb alternation. As we shall see, Icelandic also uses different word-formation strategies, including no change at all (i.e., intransitive verbs that are homophonous

with the transitive ones, as in English *open, close*, etc.), the so-called *-na*-verbs and an alternation between a weak transitive verb and a strong intransitive one (cf. Levin 1993 for English examples – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:273ff.):

(5.92)

transitive non-<i>st</i>- verb	intransitive -<i>st</i>-verb	intransitive homophonous	intransitive -<i>na</i>-verb	intransitive strong verb
<i>auka</i> ‘increase’	<i>aukast</i> ‘increase’			
<i>breyta</i> ‘change’	<i>breytast</i> ‘change’			
<i>dreifa</i> ‘spread’	<i>dreifast</i> ‘spread’			
<i>finna</i> ‘find’	<i>finnast</i> ‘be found’			
<i>loka</i> ‘close’	<i>lokast</i> ‘close’	<i>loka</i> ‘close’		
<i>opna</i> ‘open’	<i>opnast</i> ‘open’	<i>opna</i> ‘open’		
<i>snúa</i> ‘turn’	<i>snúast</i> ‘turn’	<i>snúa</i> ‘turn’		
<i>hækka</i> ‘raise’		<i>hækka</i> ‘rise’		
<i>byrja</i> ‘begin’		<i>byrja</i> ‘begin’		
<i>hvolfa</i> ‘turn over’		<i>hvolfa</i> ‘capsize’		
<i>dýpka</i> ‘deepen’		<i>dýpka</i> ‘deepen’		
<i>beygja</i> ‘bend’	<i>beygjast</i> ‘bend’		<i>bogna</i> ‘bend’	
<i>brjóta</i> ‘break’			<i>brotna</i> ‘break’	
<i>rifa</i> ‘tear’			<i>rifna</i> ‘tear’	
<i>losa</i> ‘loosen’			<i>losna</i> ‘loosen’	
<i>velta</i> ‘roll’	<i>veltast</i> ‘roll’			<i>velta</i> ‘roll’
<i>skella</i> ‘clash’	<i>skellast</i> ‘clash’			<i>skella</i> ‘clash’
<i>sökkva</i> ‘sink’				<i>sökkva</i> ‘sink’
<i>sleppa</i> ‘let lose’				<i>sleppa</i> ‘escape’

As can be seen here, the non-*st*-verb vs. *-st*-verb alternation, where the non-*st* member is transitive and the *-st*-verb is intransitive and has some sort of a passive meaning, is extremely common and productive. The list could be made much longer and I will refer to the *-st*-verbs involved as ‘true middles’ and discuss them further in the next subsection. The homophonous (‘no change’) pairs involve common verbs (but only few pairs of this kind exist) and will be the topic of section 5.1.6, with some comparison with verbs where there is a change in the inflection and an occasional reference to the (somewhat irregular) *-na*-verbs. But before turning to the true middles, we can note that in a few instances more than one method can be applied to form the intransitive member of the pair. In such instances one of them has usually acquired a specialized meaning. Thus the *-st*-verb *beygjast* means basically ‘inflect’ (as in grammar) whereas *bogna* has the intransitive ‘bend’ meaning (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:274–5).

5.1.5.3 Syntactic properties of the true middle verbs and related verb classes

As mentioned above, the most important aspect of the thematic relationship between the true middle verbs and their transitive counterparts is the ‘elimination’ of the external thematic role, that is, the thematic role of the active subject. In this respect the middles contrast with the passives, where the agent is merely left anonymous but can in many instances be mentioned in a prepositional agentive phrase. Compare the following (see also Sigríður Valfellis 1970; Kress 1975; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1986; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:263ff.):

(5.93)

- a. Útlendingar veiddu laxana í Laxá.
 foreigners caught salmons-the(Apl.m.) in Salmon River
- b. Laxarnir voru veiddir í Laxá (af útlendingum).
 salmons-the(Npl.m.) were(pl.) caught(Npl.m.) in Salmon River (by foreigners)
- c. Laxarnir veiddust í Laxá (*af útlendingum).
 salmons-the(Npl.m.) got-caught(pl.) in Salmon River (*by foreigners)

Another interesting difference between the true middles and the passive has to do with the preservation/non-preservation of case. As mentioned several times above, lexically case-marked objects of actives preserve their lexical case in the corresponding passive in Icelandic, but structurally case-marked objects (i.e., accusative objects) do not. This does not hold for true middles that correspond to monotransitive verbs: they *never* preserve the case of the corresponding direct object of the active. Some illustrative examples are given below:

- (5.94) a. Þeir breyttu borginni.
 they changed city-the(D)
- b. Borginni var breytt.
 city-the(D) was changed
- c. **Borgin** breyttist.
 city-the(N) changed
- (5.95) a. Þeir helltu mjólkinni niður.
 they spilled milk-the(D) down
 ‘They spilled the milk.’
- b. Mjólkinni var hellt niður.
 milk-the(D) was spilled down
 ‘The milk was spilt.’
- c. **Mjólkinn** helltist niður.
 milk-the(N) spilled down
 ‘The milk spilled.’

- (5.96) a. Ég óska nýrra starfsmanna.
I wish new employees(G)
- b. Nýrra starfsmanna er óskað.
new employees(G) is(sg.) wished
'New employees are sought.'
- c. **Nýir starfsmenn** óskast.
new employees(N) are-wished-for
'New employees sought.'

This is completely regular and robust. Interestingly, however, it is possible to find *-st*-verbs that preserve the lexical case of an **indirect object** – and in that case the direct object shows up in the nominative case, as in the corresponding passive, and triggers number agreement on the *-st*-verb, since all the ditransitive verbs involved seem to belong to the (largest) NDA-class. This is not a large class of verbs but again the pattern is regular (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:270n.):

- (5.97) a. Þeir buðu mér peninga.
they(N) offered me(D) money(Apl.m.)
- b. Mér voru boðnir peningar.
me(D) were(pl.) offered(Npl.m.) money(Npl.m.)
- c. **Mér** buðust peningar.
me(D) were-offered(pl.) money(Npl.m.)
- d. *Ég bauðst peningar.
I(N) was-offered(sg.) money(Npl.m.)
- (5.98) a. Þeir fyrirgáfu honum alla glæpina.
they(N) forgave him(D) all crimes-the(Apl.m.)
- b. Honum voru fyrirgefnir allir glæpirnir.
him(D) were(pl.) forgiven(Npl.m.) all crimes-the(Npl.m.)
- c. **Honum** fyrirgáfust allir glæpirnir.
him(D) were-forgiven(pl.) all crimes-the(Npl.m.)
- d. ***Hann** fyrirgafst allir glæpirnir.
he(N) was-forgiven all crimes-the(Npl.m.)
- (5.99) a. Fólk leyfði þeim alla hluti.
people(N) allowed them(D) all things(Apl.m.)
- b. Þeim voru leyfðir allir hlutir.
them(D) were(pl.) allowed(Npl.m.) all things(Npl.m.)

- | | | | | |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | c. Þeim | leyfðust | | allir hlutir. |
| | them(D) | were-allowed(pl.) | | all things(Npl.m.) |
| | d. * Þeir | leyfðust | | allir hlutir. |
| | they(Npl.) | were-allowed(pl.) | | all things(Npl.m.) |
| (5.100) | a. Þeir | veittu | öðrum | þennan heiður. |
| | they(N) | gave | others(D) | this honour(Asg.m.) |
| | b. Öðrum | var | veittur | þessi heiður. |
| | others(D) | was(sg.) | given(Nsg.m.) | this honour(Nsg.m.) |
| | c. Öðrum | veittist | | þessi heiður. |
| | others(D) | was-given(sg.) | | this honour(Nsg.m.) |
| | d. * Aðrir | veittust | | þessi heiður. |
| | others(Npl.) | were-given(pl.) | | this honour(Nsg.m.) |

While it is not obvious how to account for this difference in case preservation of monotransitive and ditransitive constructions (i.e. the fact that the dative DO of a monotransitive verb turns up in the nominative with a corresponding *-st*-verb whereas the dative IO of a ditransitive verb never does, cf. the d-examples above), it is possible that turning both objects into a nominative would violate some ban on two nominative arguments (see, e.g., a proposal to that effect by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a). As a result we have a parallelism between the case-marking passives and middles of ditransitive verbs: one can say that once the lexical dative has been assigned, in both instances it is the highest ‘remaining’ argument that gets the nominative, that is, the one corresponding to the active DO. What is puzzling is that if the verb is monotransitive, the difference between lexical and structural object case does not play any role in the derivation of *-st*-verbs. The lexically assigned dative case is not preserved and neither is the structural accusative.

Since the argument corresponding to the active DO shows up in the nominative in the middle constructions involving ditransitive verbs (cf. the c-examples above), one might perhaps expect it to be able to function as a subject in some instances, since this was possible in some passives (the passives from ‘inversion’ verbs, cf. the discussion in 3.2.2.2 above). But this seems impossible in all instances, as evidenced, for example, by the inability of the nominative to immediately follow a finite auxiliary in direct ‘yes/no’-questions. In all instances it seems that only the dative argument can occur in that position:

(5.101)

a.	Hafa	þér	boðist	peningar?
	have(pl.)	you(D)	been-offered	money(Npl.m.)
	→ *Hafa	peningar	boðist	þér? ²¹
	have(pl.)	money(Npl.m.)	been-offered	you
b.	Hafa	honum	fyrirgefist	allir glæpirmir?
	have(pl.)	him(D)	been-forgiven(pl.)	all crimes-the(Npl.m.)
	→ *Hafa	allir glæpirmir	fyrirgefist	honum?
	have(pl.)	all crimes-the(Npl.m.)	been-forgiven	him
c.	Hafa	þeim	leyfst	allir hlutir?
	have	them(D)	been-allowed	all things(Npl.m.)
	→ *Hafa	allir hlutir	leyfst	þeim?
	have(pl.)	all things(Npl.m.)	been-allowed	them(D)

In addition to examples of the sort just discussed, several other *-st*-verbs take dative subjects – and if they are dyadic they take a nominative object, as we have seen. Some *-st*-verbs taking dative subjects are listed in (5.101) (see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:405–6):

(5.102)

auðnast ‘manage to’, *áskotnast* ‘luck onto’, *förlast* ‘get worse’, *gremjast* ‘be annoyed (by)’, *leiðast* ‘be bored (by)’, *lærast* ‘get to learn’, *misheppnast* ‘not succeed’, *mælast* (*vel/illa*) ‘speak (well/badly)’, *skjátlast* ‘err’, *sýnast* ‘seem’, *takast* ‘manage’, *virðast* ‘seem’, *yfirsjáast* ‘not notice’.

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1997–1998) maintains that these verbs typically take an experiencer subject (cf. *gremjast* ‘be annoyed’, *leiðast* ‘be bored’, etc.) except when they denote ‘happenings’ of some sort. Then the subject can, for example, be a goal (*áskotnast* ‘luck onto’).

Finally, it should be noted that some of the *-st*-verbs in passive meaning listed above are used where English, for instance, would use a regular passive, which seems to be ruled out in Icelandic. These include verbs of perception that take an experiencer subject in the active (see also the discussion in 5.1.1 above):

²¹ The following is perhaps somewhat better:

(i)	??Hafa	mörg tækifæri	boðist	þessari	hljómsveit?
	have(pl.)	many opportunities(Npl.)	been-offered	this	band(D)

The natural order is still the one with the dative argument in second position, i.e. *Hafa þessari hljómsveit boðist mörg tækifæri?*

- (5.103) a. Haraldur **sást** síðast á laugardaginn. [*var séður]
 Harold(N) was-seen last on Saturday [*was seen]
 ‘Harold was last seen on Saturday.’
- b. Köll hans **heyrðust** í gegnum hávaðann. [*voru heyrð]
 shouts his were-heard through noise-the [*were heard]
 ‘His shouts were heard (could be heard) through the noise.’

We now turn to a class of verbs that have some of the same semantic properties as true middles, namely the so-called unaccusatives (or ergatives).

5.1.6 Unaccusatives

5.1.6.1 Outlining the class

The so-called ‘unaccusative hypothesis’ described in Perlmutter’s influential paper (1978) divides intransitive verbs into two main classes, which he refers to as **unaccusative** and **unergative**. The basic characteristic of unaccusative verbs is that they have a single argument and this argument bears a thematic role characteristic of objects rather than a subject, that is, it is not an agent but rather a theme. In many frameworks, including the Relational Grammar framework that Perlmutter was assuming at the time, this argument is a subject which is ‘derived’ from an object, and a similar kind of analysis was proposed within a Government Binding framework, for example by Burzio (1981). Under these analyses, then, unaccusative constructions are expected to be similar to passives in certain ways, since the subject is in both instances derived from (or somehow related to) an underlying object, for example by movement.

According to Perlmutter’s original hypothesis, predicates like the following, for instance, should be likely candidates for unaccusativity, although their syntactic properties may vary from one language to another:²²

(5.104)

- a. Intransitive predicates whose thematic role is a ‘patient’ (in Perlmutter’s sense):
bogna ‘bend’, *brenna* ‘burn’, *detta* ‘fall’, *drukkna* ‘drown’, *fljóta* ‘float’, *hanga* ‘hang’,
hrasa ‘stumble’, *hristast* ‘shake’ ...
- b. Intransitive inchoative verbs that involve a change of state:
blána ‘become blue’, *bráðna* ‘melt’, *deyja* ‘die’, *farast* ‘perish’, *frjósa* ‘freeze’, *gufa*
upp ‘evaporate’, *hrynja* ‘collapse’, *loka* ‘close’, *lokast* ‘close’ ...

²² Perlmutter gives English examples, I have tried to find corresponding verbs in Icelandic.

- c. Intransitive predicates of existing and happening:
birtast ‘turn up’, *eiga sér stað* ‘happen’, *gerast* ‘happen’, *koma fyrir* ‘happen’, *ske* ‘happen’, *vera til* ‘exist’ . . .
- d. Non-voluntary emission of stimuli that impinge on the senses (light, noise, smell, etc.):
glampa ‘glitter, shine’, *glamra* ‘clink, rattle’, *glitra* ‘glitter’, *ilma* ‘smell’ . . .
- e. Intransitive aspectual predicates:
byrja ‘begin’, *enda* ‘end’, *halda áfram* ‘continue’, *hefst* ‘begin’, *hætta* ‘stop’ . . .
- f. Intransitive duratives:
dveljast ‘stay’, *endast* ‘last’, *halda áfram* ‘continue’, *lifa af* ‘survive’ . . .

As the reader will note, some of these predicates have already been mentioned, such as some of the the ones ending in *-st-* (*dreifast* ‘spread’, *hristast* ‘shake’, *lokast* ‘close’, *opnast* ‘open’, *snúast* ‘turn’, *sveiflast* ‘dangle, swing’) and the inchoative *-na-*verbs. But not all of *-st-*verbs listed here and none of the *-na-*verbs are derived from other verbs in a productive fashion (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:273–6). Since I am mainly interested in productive relationships, I will concentrate on verbs that are promising candidates for revealing interesting facts about such a relationship. But before looking more closely at the unaccusative verbs, it may be of some interest to contrast them with the other main class of intransitive verbs in Perlmutter’s classification, namely the so-called unergatives, since these have in fact figured in the description of the impersonal passive above, for instance. In addition, it is interesting to see if this class can also contain *-st-*verbs. The list in (5.105) is based on Perlmutter’s classification as before (see the preceding footnote):

(5.105)

- a. Predicates describing willed or volitional acts:
berjast ‘fight’, *biðjast fyrir* ‘pray’, *blístra* ‘whistle’, *brosa* ‘smile’, *dansa* ‘dance’, *djöflast* ‘work/behave like crazy’ . . .
- b. Manner of speaking verbs:
hvísla ‘whisper’, *kalla* ‘shout’, *klæmast* ‘use obscene language’, *muldra* ‘mumble’, *öskra* ‘yell’ . . .
- c. Predicates describing animal sounds:
baula ‘moo’, *gelta* ‘bark’, *hneggja* ‘whinny’, *hrína* ‘oink’, *mjalma* ‘meow’ . . .
- d. Certain (normally involuntary) bodily processes:
hnerra ‘sneeze’, *hósta* ‘cough’, *pissa* ‘pee’, *ropa* ‘burp’, *æla* ‘vomit’ . . .

As the reader will note, I have used several of these verbs in the illustrations of the impersonal passive, whereas it was maintained that unaccusative verbs could not occur in that construction. Observe also that some *-st-*verbs can also be unergative, such as *berjast* ‘fight’, *biðjast fyrir* ‘pray’, *djöflast* ‘work (behave) like crazy’, *fljúgast á* ‘fight’, *ólmast* ‘act wildly’, *klæmast* ‘use obscene language’. These can all be used in impersonal passives.

5.1.6.2 Accusatives with unaccusatives

In the light of the preceding discussion of passives and (true) middles, it is interesting to see how unaccusative verbs behave with respect to case preservation, especially since it has often been maintained that some of them at least are synchronically related to transitive verbs and the subject of the unaccusative then corresponds to the object of the transitive member of the pair. This is illustrated in (5.106):

- (5.106) a. Bankamaðurinn opnaði **bankann** klukkan níu.
 banker-the(N) opened bank-the(A) clock nine
 ‘The banker opened the bank at nine o’clock.’
- b. **Bankinn** opnaði klukkan níu.²³
 bank-the(N) opened clock nine
 ‘The bank opened at nine o’clock.’

Here the theme argument ‘the bank’ is an object in the transitive a-variant and a subject in the intransitive (unaccusative) b-variant. This is obviously reminiscent of the relationship between actives and passives. If unaccusatives are basically ‘passives’ without the passive morphology, we might expect them to preserve lexical object case of the corresponding transitive verbs but not structural case (see the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:307ff.). But they could, of course, be like middles in this respect and not preserve any direct object case. The example in (5.106) might suggest, however, that they are indeed like passives in this respect: the structural accusative case of the object in the transitive variant is not preserved in the unaccusative one. This would seem to support a syntactic derivation of

²³ As shown here, the (structural) accusative of the transitive member of the pair is not preserved in the intransitive (unaccusative) member. While this is what one might have expected under some theories about unaccusative verbs and their relationship to transitive structures (to be discussed presently), sentences like (5.106b) are sometimes frowned upon in schools and the remark made that they are illogical because ‘the bank cannot open anything’. The same goes for pairs like transitive *loka* ‘close’ and intransitive *loka* ‘close’. The passive is then recommended instead, i.e. *var opnaður* ‘was opened’, *var lokað* ‘was closed’. Although this intransitive (unaccusative) use of verbs like *opna* ‘open’ and *loka* ‘close’ may be an innovation, there are a number of transitive-intransitive pairs where (structural) accusative on the object of the transitive member is not preserved on the subject of the intransitive one (cf. the discussion in 5.1.6.4 below). This innovation then suggests that the pattern is productive in Icelandic.

the unaccusatives on a par with passives, and that has been suggested in the literature. The ‘underlying’ structure could then be something like this:

- (5.107) [NP *e*] *opnaði bankinn*
 opened bank-the

The idea would then be that the theme argument would ‘move’ to the subject position, or be promoted to it, for some structural reason, one of the proposals being that the intransitive verb ‘open’ could not assign accusative case (object case) to this argument and hence it had to move to the subject position to get subject case, hence the nominative.²⁴

As we saw in chapter 4 (especially towards the end of section 4.2.1), unaccusatives in Icelandic are rarely as similar to passives, or as ‘well behaved’ with respect to case preservation, as *opna* ‘open’ in the example above: some unaccusatives appear to preserve object case, others do not, and this does not seem to have anything to do with the distinction that is usually drawn between lexical and structural case (cf. Zaenen and Maling 1984; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:271ff., 2005a:102ff.). The examples discussed in chapter 4 included the following type, where it seemed that a (structural) accusative of the transitive variant was ‘preserved’ in the unaccusative variant:

- (5.108) a. *Sjórinn* *fyllti* ***bátinn***.
 sea(N) filled boat-the(A)
- b. ***Bátinn*** *fyllti*.
 boat-the(A) filled

Now it is obviously rather unfortunate that **unaccusative** verbs should show up with accusative subjects. But as pointed out in chapter 4, the relations between the unaccusative verb and the transitive counterpart are not always entirely straightforward. The examples of accusative preservation typically cited have to do with drifting, capsizing or breaking of boats, and this is not an accident (no pun intended!). To express this fact, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (e.g. 2005a) has suggested that a semantic feature of FATE is involved in the unaccusative variant (see again the discussion towards the end

²⁴ This is a big part of the often cited Burzio’s Generalization. Burzio’s idea (1981) was that unaccusative verbs could not assign accusative to their (underlying) objects because only transitive verbs could. See also the discussion in section 4.2.1 above and by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2005a.

of section 4.2.1) but not in the corresponding passive variant, for instance. Halldór also pointed out, as had Kjartan G. Ottósson (1988), that the proposed transitive member of transitive-unaccusative pairs of the kind exemplified above ('preserved' accusative) is often less than completely felicitous.

In other instances of intransitive verbs that seem to have an unaccusative meaning and an accusative subject, it is even more difficult to come up with a plausible transitive counterpart. Some examples are given below:

- (5.109) a. **Daginn** lengir.
day-the(A) grows longer
- b. **Snjóinn** leysir.
snow-the(A) melts (lit. 'loosens')

What these examples have in common with the previously mentioned ones is that they too have something to do with 'forces of nature' (although it is not very clear from a linguistics point of view 'who' or 'what' makes the day longer or melts the snow). But not all examples of intransitive verbs with accusative subjects fall into this category:

- (5.110) **Gestina** bar að garði klukkan átta.
guests-the(A) bore to house clock eight
'The guests arrived at eight o'clock.'
- (5.111) a. **Bóndann** vantaði **hestana**.
farmer-the(A) missed horses-the(Apl.)
- b. **Hestana** vantaði.
horses-the lacked
'The horses were missing.'

In addition, many of the transitive verbs cited above alternate with other kinds of intransitives, such as *-st*-verbs where the (structural) accusative is not preserved, or even a *-na*-verb, whereas the case-preserving unaccusative verbs can typically only be used in the special kinds of contexts exemplified above (and discussed in section 4.2.1), and they cannot be used in a 'non-specialized' reading as shown by the b-examples below:²⁵

²⁵ Note that the examples involving boats above could also be used with these more common or neutral non-preserving verbs, e.g.

- (i) **Báturinn** barst að landi.
boat-the(N) was-carried to land
'The boat drifted ashore.'

- (5.112) a. Pósturinn **barst** til mín. (a *-st*-verb)
 mail-the(N) got to me
 b. *Póstinn **bar** til mín.
 mail-the(A) was-carried to me
- (5.113) a. Bollinn **brotnaði** í mask. (a *-na*-verb)
 cup-the(N) broke into pieces
 b. *Bollann braut í mask.
 cup-the(A) broke into pieces
- (5.114) a. Bollinn **fylltist.** (a *-st*-verb)
 cup-the(N) filled
 b. *Bollann **fyllti.**
 cup-the(A) filled

We can thus conclude that (preserved) accusative on unaccusative verbs is not a very regular phenomenon and it is arguably rather marginal in the modern language. Hence it is not surprising that it tends to disappear and be replaced by the nominative, which is what we might have expected in the first place (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003; Thórhallur Eythórsson 2002; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Thórhallur Eythórsson 2003, 2005). Then we get changes like the following:

- (5.115) a. **Bátinn** > **Báturinn** rak að landi.
 boat-the(A) boat-the(N) drifted to shore
 ‘The boat drifted ashore.’
 b. **Skessuna** > **Skessan** bar við loft.
 giantess-the(A) giantess-the(N) bore with sky
 ‘The giantess could be seen against the sky.’

5.1.6.3 Datives with unaccusatives

It is less surprising that lexically assigned dative case is preserved in some transitive-unaccusative pairs (cf. Zaenen and Maling 1984):

- (5.116) a. Þeir fjölguðu/fækkuðu **kennurum.**
 they(N) increased/decreased teachers(Dpl.m.)
 ‘They hired more/fewer teachers.’
 b. **Kennurum** fjölgaði/fækkaði.
 teachers(D) got-more/less-numerous
 c. Þeir hvolfdú **bátnum.**
 they(N) capsized boat-the(D)

- d. **Bátnum** hvolfdi.²⁶
 boat-the(D) capsized
- e. Þeir luku **verkinu** klukkan átta.
 they(N) finished work-the(D) clock eight
 ‘They finished the job at eight o’clock.’
- f. **Verkinu** lauk klukkan átta.
 work-the(D) got-finished clock eight

This is what would be expected under a derivational account of unaccusatives of the kind sketched in (5.107) above.

5.1.6.4 Non-preservation of case in transitive-unaccusative pairs

It is also unsurprising when structural accusative of transitive verbs is not preserved in the corresponding unaccusative verb:

- (5.117) a. Þeir breiðkuðu veginn.
 they(N) widened road-the(A)
- b. **Vegurinn** breikkaði.
 road-the(N) widened
- c. Við byrjuðum leikinn klukkan sjö.
 we(N) began game-the(A) clock seven
- d. **Leikurinn** byrjaði klukkan sjö.
 game-the(N) began clock seven
- e. Þau dýpkuðu/grynnkuðu/mjókkkuðu/víkkuðu skurðinn.
 they(N) deepened/made shallower/narrower/wider ditch-the(A)
- f. **Skurðurinn** dýpkaði/grynnkaði/mjókkaði/víkkaði.
 ditch-the(N) deepened/got shallower/narrower/wider.

As pointed out in connection with examples like (5.106) above, this pattern may very well be productive in Icelandic, whereas the preservation of accusative is not.

Non-preservation of lexical dative case in comparable pairs is perhaps unexpected, on the other hand, especially if we want to assume a productive

²⁶ Intransitive *hvolfa* can be used with a nominative subject in the stative sense of ‘lying upside down’:

- (i) **Báturinn** hvolfir í fjörinni.
 boat-the(N) lies-upside-down in beach-the
 ‘The boat is lying upside down on the beach.’

syntactic relationship between transitives and unaccusatives (cf. Zaenen and Maling 1984; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989 – see also the discussion in Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1997–1998):

- (5.118)
- | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------|
| a. | Þau | óku | bílnum | hratt. |
| | they(N) | drove | car-the(D) | fast |
| b. | Bílinn /*Bílnum | ók | | hratt. |
| | car-the(N/*D) | drove | | fast |
| c. | Hundurinn | dillaði | skottinu. | |
| | dog-the(N) | wagged | tail-the(D) | |
| d. | Skottið /*Skottinu | dillaði. | | |
| | tail-the(N/*D) | wagged | | |
| e. | Kaupmaðurinn | lokaði | búðinni | á hádegi. |
| | merchant-the(N) | closed | store-the(D) | at noon |
| f. | Búðin /*Búðinni | lokaði | á hádegi. | |
| | store-the(N/*D) | closed | at noon | |

While this may all seem rather puzzling, Zaenen and Maling (1984) made an interesting observation which can be stated as follows:

- (5.119) If an unaccusative verb is case preserving, then it is morphologically identical to the transitive member of the unaccusative-transitive pair.

They wanted to argue, on the basis of this, that case-preserving unaccusatives are ‘the same verb’ in some sense as the corresponding transitive variant and thus more closely related (however one chooses to account for that relationship formally). Thus they maintain that there are no instances of case-preserving unaccusatives where there is a difference in inflection (weak transitive vs. strong intransitive) or where the unaccusative verb is a *-st*-verb and the transitive verb is not. We have already seen that this holds for all intransitive *-st*-verbs that are related to monotransitive verbs (although dyadic *-st*-verbs preserve the case of the indirect object when they are related to triadic (ditransitive) NDA-verbs, as we have seen). Zaenen and Maling maintain that this also holds for weak-strong pairs of the sort listed in (5.92) and that seems to be correct:

- (5.120)
- | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| a. | Þeir | veltu | steininum | niður | brekkuna. | (weak verb) |
| | they(N) | rolled | stone-the(D) | down | slope-the | |
| b. | Steinninn /*Steininum | valt | niður | brekkuna. | | (strong verb) |
| | stone-the(N/*D) | rolled | down | slope-the | | |

c.	Hún	skellti	stólnum	í vegginn.	(weak verb)
	she(N)	clashed	chair-the(D)	against wall-the	
d.	Stóllinn /*Stólnum	skall		í vegginn.	(strong verb)
	chair-the(N/*D)	clashed		against wall-the	
e.	Þeir	sökktu	bátnum.		(weak verb)
	they	sank	boat-the(D)		
f.	Báturinn /*Bátnum	sökk.			(strong verb)
	boat-the(N/*D)	sank			

This is very interesting, but unfortunately the generalization does not work the other way around: it is not the case that case is preserved in all instances where the unaccusative verb is morphologically identical to the transitive one, witness all the non-preserving verbs exemplified in (5.117) and (5.118).

As Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson has shown (1997–1998, 2003, 2005a), it is possible to find some thematic subregularities in the case marking of non-nominative subjects (see also the discussion in 4.2.3.1 above). But because the subjects of unaccusative verbs are typically themes and theme subjects in general can be marked nominative, accusative and dative (see the summary in (4.123) above), it is not surprising if the picture of subject case marking of unaccusatives sketched above has seemed somewhat confusing.

5.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

5.2.1 Faroese middles, passives and case (non-)preservation

Faroese has a similar set of *-st*-verbs as Icelandic. Some of them are obviously related to non-*-st*-verbs and display the typical reflexive, reciprocal and passive meanings (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:71):

(5.121)

a.	Hann	settist	niður.	(Fa)
	he	sat	down	(reflexive meaning, cf. <i>setti seg</i> ‘sat self’)
b.	Teir	berjast	altíð.	
	they	fight	always	(reciprocal meaning, lit. ‘they hit each other ...’)
c.	Oyggjin	kallast	Nólsoy.	
	island-the	is-called	Nólsoy	(passive meaning)

As in Icelandic, it is not possible to add an agentive phrase to *-st*-verbs that have a passive meaning whereas this is often possible in the regular passive (Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:71):

- (5.122) a. Fólk noyddu hann av landinum.
 people forced him off country-the
 'People forced him to leave the country.'
- b. Hann varð noyddur av landinum (av myndugleikumum).
 he was forced off country-the (by authorities-the)
 'He was forced to leave the country (by the authorities).'
- c. Hann noyddist av landinum (*av myndugleikumum).
 he was-forced off country-the (*by authorities-the)
 'He was forced to leave the country.'

Regular passives are formed with the auxiliaries *verða* 'be, become' and *blíva* 'be, become'. They are apparently equivalent in most respects (except that *blíva* is presumably a loanword from Danish and hence possibly more colloquial). In addition, the auxiliary *vera* 'be' is sometimes used to form the passive.²⁷ The Faroese passive is very similar to its Icelandic counterpart in most respects. One important difference has to do with the preservation of case, as we have already seen (see, e.g., the examples in (4.90)): lexical dative case is often not preserved in passivization of monotransitive verbs, although there is some lexical variation here (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:266ff.; see also Smith 1996; Henriksen 2000:69, 74). This is illustrated below, beginning with a couple of case-preserving verbs (see also the discussion in section 4.2.1 above):²⁸

- (5.123) a. Teir takkaðu honum.
 they thanked him(D)
- b. **Honum** bleiv takkað.
 him(D) was thanked(sup.)
- c. *Hann bleiv takkaður.
 he(N) was thanked(sup.)

²⁷ Because there is no [ð] in Faroese although ð is used in the spelling, many forms of *vera* 'be' and *verða* 'become' are homophonous, including the infinitive. Hence it is often difficult to tell which verb is being used – and this is true both for the linguist and the child acquiring the language ('the little linguist').

²⁸ As pointed out in chapter 4, some Faroese verbs can either take an accusative or a dative object. When checking for case preservation, it is obviously necessary to make sure that the verb used in the testing is one that does not allow both cases in the active since the case of an accusative object would not be preserved in the passive – hence the a-examples below, which show that the verbs being used here can only take dative objects.

- (5.124) a. Tey trúðu henni kanska ongantíð.
 they believed her(D) perhaps never
- b. **Henni** bleiv kanska ongantíð trúð.
 her(D) was perhaps never believed
- c. *Hon bleiv kanska ongantíð trúð.
 she(N) was perhaps never believed

Non-preservation of dative case is evidently much more common with mono-transitive verbs (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:268–9):

- (5.125) a. Tey buðu henni/*hana í brúðleyp.
 they invited her(D/*A) in wedding
 ‘They invited her to a wedding.’
- b. *Henni bleiv boðið í brúðleyp.
 her(D) was invited(sup.) in wedding
- c. **Hon** bleiv boðin í brúðleyp.
 she(N) was invited(Nsg.f.) in wedding
 ‘She was invited to a wedding.’
- (5.126) a. Tey heilsaðu honum/*hann.
 they greeted him(D/*A)
- b. *Honum varð heilsað.
 him(D) was greeted(sup.)
- c. **Hann** varð heilsaður.
 he(Nsg.m.) was greeted(Nsg.m.)
- (5.127) a. Teir hjálptu honum/*hann upp aftur á turt.
 they helped him(D/*A) back on dry (land)
 ‘They helped him back on dry land.’
- b. *Honum varð hjálpt upp aftur á turt.
 him(D) was helped(sup.) back on dry
- c. **Hann** varð hjálptur upp aftur á turt.
 he(Nsg.m.) was helped(Nsg.m.) back on dry
 ‘He was helped back on dry land.’
- (5.128) a. Teir róstu henni/*hana alltíð.
 they praised her(D/*A) always
- b. *Henni varð alltíð róst.
 her(D) was always praised(sup.)
- c. **Hon** varð alltíð róst.
 she(Nsg.f.) was always praised(Nsg.f.)

Passives of double object constructions are of some interest in this connection. Faroese has virtually lost all the double object case patterns found in Old Norse and Icelandic except for the (most common and productive) NDA-pattern (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:431–3 – see also the discussion in section 4.2.4.3 above).²⁹ The (lexical) dative of the IO in this pattern is always preserved and the (structural) accusative is not, but it is apparently much less common to promote the dative IO into a subject than it is in Icelandic. Definiteness and heaviness of the DO can play a role here, however, with dative IO promotion being easier if the DO is indefinite or heavy:

- (5.129) a. Teir seldu bóndanum kúnna.
they sold farmer-the(D) cow-the(A)
- b. Kúgvín varð seld bóndanum.
cow-the(Nsg.f.) was sold(Nsg.f.) farmer-the(D)
'The cow was sold to the farmer.'
- c. ??Bóndanum varð seld kúgvín.
farmer-the(D) was sold(Nsg.f.) cow-the(Nsg.f.)
- d. ?Bóndanum varð seld ein kúgv.
farmer-the(D) was sold(Nsg.f.) a cow(Nsg.f.)
'The farmer was sold a cow.'
- (5.130) a. Tey góvu gentuni telduna.
they gave girl-the(D) computer-the(A)
- b. Teldan bleiv givin gentuni.
computer-the(Nsg.f.) was given(Nsg.f.) girl-the(D)
'The computer was given to the girl.'
- c. ??Gentuni bleiv givin teldan.
girl-the(D) was given(Nsg.f.) computer-the(Nsg.f.)
- d. ?Gentuni bleiv givin ein telda.
girl-the(D) was given(Nsg.f.) a computer(Nsg.f.)
'The girl was given a computer.'
- (5.131) a. Tey sýndu gestunum tilfarið.
they showed guests-the(Dpl.) material-the(Asg.)
- b. Tílfarið bleiv sýnt gestunum.
material-the(Nsg.) was shown guests-the(Dpl.)
'The material was shown to the guests.'

²⁹ It also has a couple of verbs entering into a NAA-pattern, but other case patterns have partially been replaced by prepositional constructions.

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|----------|----|-----------|
| c. ??Gestunum | bleiv sýnt | tilfarið. | | | |
| guests-the | was shown | material-the | | | |
| d. ?Gestunum | bleiv sýnt | nógv | tilfar | um | Heinesen. |
| guests-the(D) | was shown | much | material | on | Heinesen |

As the reader may recall, most dative subject verbs take accusative objects rather than nominative ones in Faroese (see section 4.2.1, e.g. the discussion around the examples in (4.93)). Hence one might expect that the doubtful passives with a dative argument in subject position and a nominative in object position might improve if the case of the object was changed to the accusative (which in turn leads to loss of agreement between the participle and the object). As Barnes has shown (1986a), however, such passives are usually much worse than the ones where the DO case is not preserved (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:271):³⁰

- (5.132) a. *Bóndanum varð selt eina kúgv.
 farmer-the was sold(sg.n.) a cow(Asg.f.)
- b. *Gentuni bleiv givið eina teldu.
 girl-the(D) was given(sg.n.) a computer(Asg.f.)

This fact has not figured prominently in the theoretical discussion so far (but see the comments in section 4.2.6 above).

³⁰ One of the examples cited by Barnes (1986b) is an exception to this. He maintains that his informants preferred the b-variant to the a-variant below:

- (i) a. ?Honum varð ynskt ein góð ferð.
 him(D) was wished a good journey(N)
- b. Honum varð ynskt eina góða ferð.
 him(D) was wished a good journey(A)

He suggests that this may be related to the fact that it is apparently more difficult to promote the DO to subject with the verb *ynskja* 'wish' than with *selja* 'sell' and *geva* 'give'. Hence the usual passive with the nominative (the one corresponding to the active DO) argument in subject position is apparently degraded with *ynskja* whereas it is the rule with the verbs exemplified in the text:

- (i) ?Ein góð ferð varð ynskt honum.
 a good journey(N) was wished him(D)

This is obviously something that warrants closer investigation.

5.2.2 *Passives and middles in Mainland Scandinavian*

The MSc languages all have the so-called *s*-passive in addition to passives formed with auxiliary verbs.³¹ On the face of it, this *s*-passive looks very much like the Icelandic and Faroese *-st*-middle with passive meaning. There is one crucial difference, however: the (true) *s*-passives in MSc (as opposed to the *s*-middles, that can also be found, as will be discussed presently) do not involve ‘elimination’ of the agent the way the Icelandic and Faroese middles do. Hence the agent can typically be referred to in a prepositional phrase, just like it can in the auxiliary passive construction (for a comparison of the passive in Icelandic and MSc, see Jóhanna Barðdal and Molnár 2000):

- | | | | | | |
|---------|----|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------|
| (5.133) | a. | Politiet
the police | fjernede
removed | cyklerne.
the bicycles | (Da) |
| | b. | Cyklerne
the bicycles | fjernedes
were-removed | (af politiet).
(by the police) | |
| | c. | Svigerfaren
the father-in-law | eier
owns | huset.
the house | (No) |
| | d. | Huset
the house | eies
is-owned | (av svigerfaren).
(by the father-in-law) | |
| | e. | En ekspertgrupp
an expert-group | utarbetade
prepared | rapporten.
the report | (Sw) |
| | f. | Rapporten
the report | utarbetades
was-prepared | (av en ekspertgrupp).
(by an expert-group) | |

This suggests that the so-called *s*-passive in MSc is a true passive and not only a middle construction of the kind found in Icelandic and Faroese. But the role of the *-s*-suffix can vary and in some instances we can have ambiguous examples like the following (cf. also Jóhanna Barðdal and Molnár 2000:118):

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|----|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------|
| (5.134) | a. | Dörren
the door | öppnades
was-opened | av vaktmestaren.
by the janitor | (passive) | (Sw) |
| | b. | Dörren
the door | öppnades
opened | utan att någon öppnade den.
without anybody opening it | (middle) | |

Consider also the following Norwegian examples (see Faarlund et al. 1997:511):

³¹ The choice between *-s*-passives and periphrastic passives may depend on the verb and the semantics of the arguments (e.g. human vs. non-human, etc. – see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:317ff.; Teleman et al. 1999c:397ff.; Engdahl 1999).

- (5.135) a. Blinken skal **treffes** av minst åtte skudd. (passive) (No)
 the target shall be-hit by at least eight shots
- b. Vi **treffes** i morgen. (middle)
 we meet tomorrow

As shown in the Swedish and Norwegian examples above, agentive *av*-phrases are compatible with true *-s*-passives (as opposed to the *-s*-middles). As one would expect, predicates containing the *-s*-passive can also be modified with adverbial phrases such as *avsiktligt* ‘on purpose’ (see, e.g., Teleman et al. 1999c:379).

The readings cited for middle *-s*-forms in MSc are for most part the typical middle readings familiar from descriptions of other languages, including reflexive and reciprocal (see, e.g., (5.135b)). The so-called absolute reading found in Swedish is something of an exception to this (cf. Teleman et al. 1999a:555):

- (5.136) Hunden **biter**. (as opposed to *biter* = ‘bites(3sg)’)
 the dog bites-people

5.2.3 Impersonal passives in Scandinavian

Impersonal passives are found in all the Scandinavian languages and they seem to work very much like their counterpart in Icelandic – and in MSc they can involve the *s*-passive just mentioned (see, e.g., Maling 1987; Vikner 1995a:168, 209–10; Allan et al. 1995:315; Holmes and Hinchliffe 1994:310; Faarlund et al. 1997:845; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:274–5):

- (5.137) a. Der blev danset hele natten. (Da)
 there was danced whole night-the
- b. Tað varð dansað alla náttina. (Fa)
 there was danced all night-the(A)
- c. Det vart dansa heila natta. (No.ny.)
 there was danced whole night-the
- d. Det dansades hela natten. (Sw)
 there was-danced whole night-the

The restrictions seem to be similar to those found in Icelandic. Thus impersonal passives are normally blocked if the verb is unaccusative and they are usually interpreted as involving a human (or at least an animate) agent. Thus the following example would not be interpreted as referring to a whistling tea kettle (cf. Maling 1987):

- (5.138) Det visslades. (Sw)
 there was-whistled

Despite this, an agentive prepositional phrase is normally ruled out (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:322n.):

- (5.139) a. Tað varð dansað alla náttina (*av teimum). (Fa)
 there was danced all night-the (*by them)
 b. Det dansades hela natten (*av dom). (Sw)
 there was-danced whole night-the (*by them)

Expletive passives, that is, passives with ‘postposed’ indefinite subjects (or ‘passive transitives’, as Vikner (1995a:201–2) calls them), differ from the ‘true’ impersonal passives in this respect:

- (5.140) a. Tað bleiv etið eitt súrepli (av næmingunum). (Fa)
 there was eaten an apple (by students-the)
 b. Der blev spist et æble (af studenterne). (Da)
 there was eaten an apple (by students-the)

This contrasts with expletive passives in Icelandic (cf. the discussion around the examples in (5.61) and also the discussion of the New Passive in section 5.1.4).

Different types of expletive constructions

6.1 A descriptive overview

6.1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the most important facts about expletive constructions mentioned in the preceding chapters and then to add some features to give a more comprehensive picture. Expletives have figured extensively in the modern syntactic literature because they offer interesting opportunities for crosslinguistic comparison: they are similar in many respects but display interesting differences in others and thus raise intriguing descriptive and theoretical questions (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a; Jonas 1996a; Svenonius 2002).

6.1.1 Types of expletive constructions in Icelandic

The term ‘expletive construction’ is normally used about constructions where a semantically empty (or at least nearly-empty) element appears in a position where an argument would be expected, most frequently the subject position (or clause-initial position).¹ The following is a representative list of expletive constructions in Icelandic, concentrating for the moment on constructions with the overt expletive element *það* ‘there, it’. Although there is no lexical difference between ‘there’-type expletives (or ‘true expletives’) and ‘it’-type expletives (or ‘quasi arguments’) in Icelandic, I will usually vary the translation depending on the type assumed to be involved. Most of the constructions listed below have figured to some extent in the preceding discussion and I am not taking any stand on the question about their alleged or real differences by listing them under different names here (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:163–4; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:336ff.):

¹ In fact, it is a matter of debate whether object expletives exist (see, e.g., Postal and Pullum 1988 – see also the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:167–70 and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b:371ff. and references cited there).

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(6.1) Existential constructions:

- a. Það eru mýs í baðkerinu.
there are mice in bathtub-the
- b. Það búa tröll í fjöllum.
there live giants in mountains-the

(6.2) Constructions with unaccusative verbs:

- a. Það komu fjórir nemendur í tímann í gær.
there came four students to class yesterday
- b. Það bráðnaði stórt stykki af jöklinum.
there melted big piece from glacier-the

(6.3) Constructions with other intransitive verbs ('unergatives'):

- a. Það hlupu þrjár rollur yfir veginn.
there ran three sheep over road-the
- b. Það slógust allir á ballinu.
there fought everybody at dance-the

(6.4) Impersonal passives:

- a. Það var dansað til miðnættis.
there was danced to midnight
- b. Það hefur verið talað um hann.
there has been spoken about him

(6.5) Expletive passives (or passive intransitives):

- a. Það voru dregnir út þrír vinningar.
there were drawn out three prizes
- b. Það hafði verið skotinn ísbjörn í fjárhúsunum.
there had been shot polar-bear in sheep-houses-the

(6.6) Impersonal 'middles'

- a. Það veiddust þrjár laxar í fyrra.
there were-caught three salmons last year
- b. Það hafa skemmst einhver þök í stórhriðinni.
there have got-damaged some roofs in blizzard-the

(6.7) Transitive expletives:

- a. Það beit maður hund á réttardansleiknum.
there bit man dog at roundup-dance-the
- b. Það hefur einhver stolið hjólinu mínu.
there has somebody stolen bike-the my

- (6.8) Impersonal present participle:
- a. Það er ekki hlægjandi að þessu.
 there is not laughing at this
 ‘This is no laughing matter.’
- b. Það er varla talandi við hann.²
 there is hardly talking to him
 ‘One can hardly talk to him.’

- (6.9) Impersonal modal construction:
- a. Það þarf að kaupa mjólk.
 there needs to buy milk
 ‘It is necessary to buy milk.’
- b. Það má ekki ganga á grasinu.
 there may not walk on grass-the
 ‘No walking on the grass.’

- (6.10) Weather expressions:
- a. Það rignir sjaldan í Mývatnssveit.
 it rains rarely in Myvatn-district
- b. Það á að hvesa á morgun.
 it is to get-windier tomorrow

- (6.11) Extraposition constructions (predicates taking finite or non-finite clausal subjects):

- a. Það er líklegt [að tunglið sé úr osti].³
 it is likely that moon-the be(subjunct.) of cheese
- b. Það getur valdið útbrotum [að liggja í sólbaði].
 it can cause rash to lie in sunbath
 ‘Sunbathing can cause rash.’

² There are some fixed expressions involving this construction and they sometimes have a rather special word order:

- (i) a. Það er varla hundi út sigandi.
 there is hardly dog(D) out siccing
 ‘One can hardly sic out a dog.’ (= ‘the weather is really bad’)
- b. Þetta er ekki mönnum bjóðandi.
 this is not people(D) offering
 ‘One cannot offer this to people.’ (= ‘this is really bad’)

³ As first pointed out by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1979:181ff.), *það* can be ambiguous in extraposition context, i.e. it can either be the expletive *það* or a referential *það* modified by a clause. The latter does not have the properties typical of the Icelandic expletive and is not restricted to clause-initial position as shown by examples like the following, which is natural in a discourse context where the price of gas has

This overview shows that Icelandic has an unusually rich collection of expletive constructions.

6.1.2 *The positions available to the overt expletive in Icelandic*

Although it has been pointed out several times above, and will be discussed again in section 9.1.4.2 below, it is worth illustrating here that the overt expletive in Icelandic is restricted to clause-initial position, regardless of the type of expletive construction involved. Hence it ‘disappears’ (or is replaced by a null-expletive) when something is preposed in the clause and in direct ‘yes/no’-questions where the finite verb comes in initial position. This is illustrated in (6.12), where an asterisk on the parenthesized expletive element means that it is unacceptable in this position:

- (6.12)
- | | | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Eru | (*það) | mýs | í | baðkerinu? |
| are | (*there) | mice | in | bath-tub-the |
| b. Komu | (*það) | fjórir | nemendur | í tímunn í gær? |
| came | (*there) | four | students | to class yesterday |
| c. Hlupu | (*það) | þrjár | rollur | yfir veginn? |
| ran | (*there) | three | sheep | over road-the |
| d. Var | (*það) | dansað | til miðnætis? | |
| was | (*there) | danced | to midnight | |
| e. Voru | (*það) | dregnir út | þrjú vinningar? | |
| were | (*there) | drawn out | three prizes | |
| f. Veiddust | (*það) | þrjú laxar | í fyrra? | |
| were-caught | (*there) | three | salmons last year | |
| g. Beit | (*það) | maður | hund | á réttardansleiknum? |
| bit | (*there) | man | dog | at round-up-dance-the |
| h. Er | (*það) | ekki hlægjandi | að þessu? | |
| is | (*there) | not laughing | at this | |

Footnote 3 (cont.)

been discussed (see also sections 7.1.6 and 9.1.4.2 and the discussion in Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2002 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:588ff.):

- (i) a. **Það** [að bensínið er dýrt] skiptir engu máli en ...
it [that the gas is expensive] makes no difference but ...
- b. Skiptir **það** engu máli [að bensínið er dýrt]?
makes it no difference that the gas is expensive

i. Þarf needs	(*það) (*there)	að kaupa to buy	mjólk? milk		
j. Rignir rains	(*það) (*it)	sjaldan rarely	í Mývatnssveit? in Myvatn-district		
k. Er is	(*það) (*it)	líklegt likely	[að tunglið that moon-the	sé be(subjunct.)	úr osti]? ⁴ of cheese

As we shall see below, Icelandic differs from the other Scandinavian languages in this respect.

6.1.3 *The positions available to the associate of the expletive in Icelandic*

As the reader may have noted in the preceding examples, Icelandic allows more than one position for the so-called ‘associate’ of the expletive. This has been illustrated a couple of times above, especially in section 2.2.2 (see also 5.1.3.3). As discussed most extensively by Vangsnes in several publications (e.g. 1995, 1999, 2002a; cf. also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996, section 3.2.2), some associates are more versatile than others with respect to the position they can occupy. The overt expletive in Icelandic can, on the other hand, only occur clause-initially, but it can occur in main clauses and subordinate clauses, including clauses where it is virtually impossible to front non-subject elements. With the preceding discussion of ‘possible subject positions’ and clause structure in 2.2.2 in mind, we can describe the relevant positions in Icelandic (informally and semi-formally) as follows:⁵

⁴ This is ungrammatical as an expletive construction but not if *það* is referential, cf. the preceding footnote.

⁵ In various papers on word order in MSc it has been claimed that there are more positions available to subjects than those assumed here, possibly even many more (cf. n. 25 in chapter 2 – see, e.g., Nilsen 1997 on Norwegian). What these papers have in common is that the example sentences contain a number of ‘stacked’ adverbs and then it is shown that several of these can either precede or follow the subject. (Nilsen also uses the behaviour of such stacks of adverbs to argue for the existence of full NPOS in Norwegian, contrary to the standard assumption, as mentioned in n. 39 in chapter 2.) Under a Cinque-type account of adverbs (1999), these positions would be ‘different’ since different projections would be involved. Under an adjunction account of adverb placement, more along the lines of Ernst (2002), the placement of the adverbs involved would not mark specific positions or ‘boundaries’ in the syntactic structure. Some of this literature on subject placement is critically reviewed in Svenonius 2002a, who concludes that an adjunction-type analysis is preferable. This is also the conclusion reached in section 2.2.2 above. Hence I am following Vangsnes (1995, 1999, 2002a) here and making a rather conservative assumption

(6.13)

- a. The **top-position**, where fronted (topicalized) elements go, often assumed to be SpecCP.
- b. The **canonical subject position**, which immediately follows the finite verb when a non-subject is fronted and is then occupied by the subject (it will then be the third position), often assumed to be SpecIP or else SpecAgrSP in a ‘split IP’ structure. This could be the position typically occupied by the overt expletive in Icelandic (although the overt expletive never shows up when a non-subject is fronted to SpecCP).
- c. The **higher intermediate position**, immediately following the finite verb in clauses with an overt expletive but preceding sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ and *alltaf* ‘always’, for instance. This could be SpecTP in a split IP structure and it can be occupied by certain associates of the expletive.
- d. The **lower intermediate position**, following sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘always’ and *alltaf* ‘never’ but preceding the non-finite main verb. This could be the SpecVP position (or else a position adjoined to VP below sentence adverbs) and it can be occupied by certain associates of the expletive.
- e. The **VP-complement position**, immediately following the non-finite main verb. It can be occupied by certain associates of the expletive, but only when the verb is an intransitive one or has been passivized.

The positions are illustrated in the following:

(6.14)

- a. **Einhver köttur/Kötturinn** hafði alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. (top position)
 some cat/cat-the had always been in kitchen-the
- b. Í eldhúsinu hafði (?)**einhver köttur/kötturinn** alltaf verið. (can. subj. pos.)
 in kitchen-the had some cat/cat-the always been
- c. Það hafði **einhver köttur/*kötturinn** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. (higher interm.)
 there had some cat/*cat-the always been in kitchen-the
- d. Það hafði alltaf **einhver köttur/*kötturinn** verið í eldhúsinu. (lower interm.)
 there had always some cat/*cat-the been in kitchen-the
- e. Það hafði alltaf verið **einhver köttur/*kötturinn** í eldhúsinu. (VPComp.)
 there had always been some cat/cat-the in kitchen-the

As pointed out in section 2.2.2, one cannot tell, of course, whether a main-clause-initial subject occupies the top position or the canonical subject position, assuming that the top position is SpecCP and it is generally available in main clauses for fronted (or foregrounded) constituents.⁶ But since the expletive element *það* is not an element that would seem appropriate for

Footnote 5 (cont.)

about the ‘different subject positions’ available. For a different view, see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2000.

⁶ As we shall see in chapter 7, the foregrounded constituents will usually have been a topic of discussion – hence indefinite NPs are rarely topicalized in Icelandic.

foregrounding, one can assume that it will not occur in the top position but rather in the next-highest one, that is, something like SpecIP (in a non-split structure) or SpecAgrSP (in a SplitIP structure).⁷ This means in turn that the associate of the expletive will not be higher than in the position referred to here as ‘the higher intermediate position’, which could be SpecTP in a split IP structure. But if sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ and *alltaf* ‘always’ are adjoined to VP, as frequently assumed, then the associate of the expletive will have to be lower than that when it follows such adverbs, that is, either inside the VP (in SpecVP position or some such) or else adjoined to VP below these adverbs.

As discussed in 2.2.2, the fact that different positions appear to be available to associates of expletives in the Scandinavian languages has been used to argue for differences in their syntactic structure. It has been pointed out that MSc is like English in only allowing the associates of the expletive to occur in the VPComp position and (hence?) not allowing transitive expletives. Some linguists have suggested that this is because MSc has no SpecTP available to subjects and possibly only an unsplit IP-structure (see, e.g., Jonas 1994; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Jonas 1996a, b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996; Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998 – cf. also the discussion in 2.2.2 above). Others have maintained that SpecTP is not available to the associate of the expletive in MSc for reasons having to do with different requirements on feature checking in MSc on the one hand and Icelandic on the other (cf. Vangsnes 2002a, for instance).⁸ But if a lower intermediate position is

⁷ This has not been uncontroversial in the linguistic literature, especially because of the fact that the overt expletive in Icelandic never shows up when a non-subject is fronted (presumably to SpecCP) and the subject occupies some lower position. This would be accounted for if the SpecCP position was the sole position available to the expletive *það* in Icelandic. But because of the general acceptability of the expletive *það* in different kinds of embedded clauses, this account is problematic. Besides, given common assumptions about the discourse role of fronted constituents (they typically represent old information, a selection from the set of discourse topics, cf. the preceding footnote), the expletive *það* is not a priori a likely candidate for fronting to a topic position, which otherwise seems to be the main role of SpecCP. But it is, of course, possible that *það* in such a position could have some other discourse-related function, e.g. as a marker of some sort. We will return to this controversy in section 6.2.1 (see also the discussion in Holmberg 2000).

⁸ Still another alternative has been proposed by Svenonius (2002a), namely that neither Icelandic nor MSc have a ‘split IP’ in the sense described above (i.e. that there is no Agr-projection, cf. also Chomsky 1995, chapter 4) but simply an unsplit IP and that adverbs can adjoin either above or below the subject in SpecIP, i.e. either to IP or I'. The possible orderings will then depend on semantic interpretation of the adverbs and the role of topic, theme and focus, with partially different requirements in the different Scandinavian languages. We will return to issues of this sort in chapter 7.

available to the associate of the expletive in Icelandic, possibly SpecVP, then the question is, of course, why that position would not be available to the associate in transitive expletive constructions in MSc.

In his pioneering work on the different positional requirements of different associates of the expletive in Icelandic, Vangsnes has concentrated on the different properties of the VPComp position (available in Icelandic and MSc) and a higher position (available in Icelandic but not in MSc). He assumes, however, that the higher position in question must be the one referred to here as the higher intermediate position, basing his conclusions on examples of the following kind (cf. also Jonas 1994; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996 – the example has been changed a bit to make it sound more natural):

- (6.15) Það lásu sennilega **einhverjir nemendur** þessa bók aldrei.
 there read probably some students this book never
 ‘Probably some students never read this book.’

Here the argument is that *einhverjir nemendur* must be outside the VP since it precedes the shifted object *þessa* ‘this’, which has shifted out of the VP (e.g. to SpecAgrOP or to a position adjoined to VP, cf. the discussion in 2.2.4 above). Vangsnes assumes further (2002a:46), following Jonas, Bobaljik, Höskuldur Thráinsson and others, that sentence adverbs like *aldrei* ‘never’ are ‘uniformly adjoined to VP’ whereas *sennilega* ‘probably’ in sentences like (6.15) is adjoined to some higher position, presumably TP. Hence he concludes that the ‘intermediate position’ occupied by the associate of the expletive in examples like (6.15) must be SpecTP. Under the same assumptions, however, the position of the associate in examples like the following must be a lower position, as assumed here:

- (6.16) a. Það hafði alltaf **einhver köttur** verið í eldhúsinu.
 there had always some cat been in kitchen-the
 b. Það hafði aldrei **neinn köttur** verið í eldhúsinu.
 there had never any cat been in kitchen-the

There is every reason to believe that *alltaf* ‘always’ occupies the same position in the structure as *aldrei* ‘never’ does. Still, one might claim that these examples are not entirely parallel to the one used by Vangsnes (and others), one possibility being that *aldrei neinn köttur* ‘never any cat’ forms some sort of a constituent. This would be rather difficult to maintain. First, the compositional semantics of *aldrei neinn köttur* ‘never any cat’ is not obvious. Second, this alleged constituent cannot be fronted as a whole (the a-example below) and *aldrei* ‘never’ can also easily be separated from *neinn köttur* ‘any cat’ by

parenthetical material without any deterioration in acceptability of the sentence (the b-example):

(6.17)

- a. ***Aldrei neinn köttur** hafði verið í eldhúsinu.
 never any cat had been in kitchen-the
- b. Það hafði aldrei, þegar þetta gerðist, **neinn köttur** verið í eldhúsinu.
 there had never, when this happened, any cat been in kitchen-the

Based on this, I conclude that there are three potential positions to be studied when one tries to determine the different positional restrictions on the associates of the expletive, namely the following (using the labels explained in (6.13)):

- (6.18) a. the higher intermediate position (possibly SpecTP or its equivalent);
 b. the lower intermediate position (possibly SpecVP or its equivalent);
 c. a lower position still, presumably the VP complement position.⁹

I will now try to determine some of the properties (or requirements) of these positions.

6.1.4 *The positional requirements of different associates*

As Vangsnes has shown (e.g. 2002a), partially basing his work on Milsark (1974, 1977) and de Hoop (1992), it is necessary to consider various kinds of NPs in trying to determine the positional requirements of associates of the expletive (or of subjects in general):

⁹ Vangsnes (e.g. 2002a) uses the term ‘intermediate position’ for the position referred to here as the ‘higher intermediate position’ and assumes that the lower one is not available to the associate of the expletive for reasons already outlined. He refers to the lowest position under consideration here as ‘the postverbal position’, but I have avoided that terminology for two reasons: first, auxiliaries are arguably verbs and thus the (higher) intermediate position could also be characterized as ‘postverbal’, even when the main verb is non-finite and comes later in the clause. Second, since it is standardly assumed that a finite main verb in Icelandic always moves out of the VP to some high position in the clause, a finite main verb will precede the (higher) intermediate position and thus make it ‘postverbal’ in a sense. As pointed out in section 5.1.3.3, heavy or informative subjects can also follow VP-external material, but we will ignore that ‘final position’ for the moment and assume that it has to do with ‘Heavy NP Shift’ or some such (see also Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1996:185–6).

(6.19)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. bare indefinites | <i>köttur</i> ‘cat’ |
| b. modified indefinites | <i>svartur köttur</i> ‘black cat’ |
| c. plain definite NPs | <i>kötturinn</i> ‘the cat’ |
| d. generic NPs (with individual-level predicates) ¹⁰ | <i>kettir</i> ‘cats’ |
| e. universally quantified NPs without the definite article | <i>allir kettir</i> ‘all cats’, <i>sérhver köttur</i> ‘every cat’ |
| f. universally quantified NPs with the definite article | <i>allir kettirnir</i> ‘all the cats’ |
| g. (existentially) quantified NPs | <i>einhver köttur</i> ‘some cat’ |
| h. partitive NPs | <i>einn af köttunum</i> ‘one of the cats’ |

Let us first consider the higher intermediate position and try to determine which kinds of NPs could occur there:¹¹

(6.20)

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|-------|---------|----------------------------|
| a. ?Það hefur köttur | alltaf | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| there has cat | always | been | in | kitchen-the |
| b. Það hefur svartur köttur | alltaf | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| there has black cat | always | been | in | kitchen-the |
| c. *Það hafa kettir | alltaf | verið | gáfaðir | eins lengi og menn muna. |
| there have cats | always | been | smart | as long as people remember |
| d. *Það hefur kötturinn | alltaf | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| there has cat-the | always | been | in | kitchen-the |

¹⁰ The so-called individual-level predicates are useful to force generic interpretation of indefinite plurals as illustrated below (where *gáfaðir* ‘smart’ is an individual-level predicate (an essential and constant property) and *veikir* ‘sick’ a stage-level predicate (an accidental temporary property). Observe the following contrast (I return to the relevance of this presently):

- | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|--------------------------|
| (i) a. *Það eru | fiðluleikarar | gáfaðir | (svo þetta gengur ekki). |
| there are | violinists | smart | (so this won’t work) |
| b. ?Það eru | fiðluleikarar | veikir | (svo þetta gengur ekki). |
| there are | violinists | sick | (so this won’t work) |

¹¹ The judgements are meant to be relative. In an attempt to simplify things, a description of the appropriate discourse context is left out as usual. Hence the reader will have to imagine the appropriate setting, which may not always be obvious. Thus some of the sentences judged appropriate here may sound odd. But a sentence like (6.20e), for instance, could be used in a context where somebody was complaining about cat hairs on the couch and the speaker was explaining why that could not be the case in this particular house.

- e. Það hafa **allir kettir** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 there have all cats always been in kitchen-the
- f. Það hafa **allir kettirnir** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 there have all cats-the always been in kitchen-the
- g. Það hefur **einhver köttur** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 there has some cat always been in kitchen-the
- h. Það hefur **einn af köttunum** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 there has one of cats-the always been in kitchen-the

First, note that the slight awkwardness of the plain indefinite (and bare, since there is no indefinite article in Icelandic) NPs in this higher intermediate position in (6.20a) also holds for the top position (or canonical subject position, which cannot be distinguished from the top position in subject-initial sentences):

- (6.21) **?Köttur/Svartur köttur** hefur alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 cat/black cat has always been in kitchen-the

Observe further that when a non-subject is fronted, both types of indefinite subjects are awkward or even unacceptable except in the VPComp position – and it does not seem to matter whether the modifying adjective is included or not:

- (6.22) a. Í eldhúsinu hefur **??köttur/??svartur köttur** alltaf verið.
 in kitchen-the has **??cat/??black cat** always been
- b. Í eldhúsinu hefur alltaf **?*köttur/?*svartur köttur** verið.
 in kitchen-the has always **?*cat/?*black cat** been
- c. Í eldhúsinu hefur alltaf verið **köttur/svartur köttur**.
 in kitchen-the has always been cat/black cat

This suggests that discourse phenomena such as foregrounding, focusing and so on may play a role in determining the possible positions of the indefinite associates, which is not surprising since they are often referred to as ‘focus NPs’ (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 2000a and references cited there).

Plain definite NPs are unacceptable in the positions considered here (the various lower (postverbal) positions) since they are in general ruled out in expletive constructions by the Indefiniteness Requirement (or Definiteness Effect). Generic NPs are also known to be excluded from expletive constructions in other languages. Instead of the plural *kettir* and an individual level predicate (ILP) one could also have used the generic pronoun *maður* ‘one’, as Vangsnes (2002a:49–50) points out. Since it is homophonous with the indefinite

noun *maður* ‘man’ we get the following minimal pair, where the stressed MAÐUR must mean ‘a man’ because the generic pronoun is always unstressed:

- (6.23) Það hefur ?MAÐUR/*maður alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
 there has ?a man/*one always been in kitchen-the

Here the indefinite noun is simply awkward, as before, whereas the generic pronoun is completely out. This suggests that it is not the presence of the ILP per se which makes (6.20c) bad, and this is supported by examples like the following (cf. Vangsnæs 2002a:50; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:138–9):

- (6.24) a. Það eru margir fiðluleikarar gáfaðir.¹²
 there are many violinists smart
 b. Það eru allir menn dauðlegir.
 there are all men mortal

Statements of this kind are obviously not truly generic once the quantifiers have been added.

For those who are familiar with Milsark’s work on English expletive constructions (1974, 1977), it will be unexpected to see that Icelandic has an expletive construction containing universally quantified associates, like the ones in (6.20e, f). But as Vangsnæs points out (2002a:51), the (higher) intermediate position seems to work fine for all types of quantificational associates, including existentially quantified NPs and partitive ones – and it works better for all quantified NPs than for non-quantified (and non-modified) bare NPs.

¹² The acceptability of expletive constructions is heavily influenced by the context. Compare the following examples with stage-level predicates (SLPs, cf. also Vangsnæs 2002a:50 – the first example is his):

- (i) a. *Það eru fiðluleikarar þreyttir á tónleikum.
 there are violinists tired at concert-the
 b. ?Það voru fiðluleikarar veikir á tónleikum núna.
 there were violinists sick at concert-the now
 c. Það voru tveir fiðluleikarar veikir á tónleikum.
 there were two violinists sick at concert-the
 d. ?*Það voru tveir fiðluleikarar gáfaðir á tónleikum.
 there were two violinists smart at concert-the

Changing the tense from present to past, putting stress on the associate, changing the SLP and adding a temporal adverb makes the b-example much better than the a-example. Similarly, adding a (quantifying) numeral makes the c-example perfect whereas a similar change does not do much for the ILP predicate in the d-example, which sounds odd in a report about a particular event in the past.

Before considering the next position, it is worth noting in passing that some of the quantified NPs that can occur in the higher intermediate position contain the definite article, namely the universally quantified type (6.20f) (*allir kettirnir* ‘all the cats’) and the partitive variant (6.20h) (*einn af köttunum* ‘one of the cats’). These NPs look like violations of the Indefiniteness Requirement (the Definiteness Effect) in some sense, and this is how Vangsnes (2002a:48) interprets them, as they can be shown to be anaphorically definite and not just formally. We will return to this issue in section 6.1.5 below. Thus these NPs are not simply ‘apparent counterexamples’ or ‘false definites’ like the following (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000a):

- (6.25) Það hafði þessi risastóra fluga verið í súpunni.
 there had this gigantic fly been in soup-the

Apparent exceptions of this kind can also be found in English (see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2000a; Ward and Birner 1995) whereas sentences with NPs parallel to the ones in (6.20f, h) are ruled out in English. We shall return to these ‘apparent counterexamples’ in the next section and see to what extent they can be explained away, as it were.

We can now test whether similar restrictions hold for the lower intermediate position:

- (6.26)
- | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|-------|--------|-------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|--------------------|
| a. | ?Það | hefur | alltaf | köttur | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | has | always | cat | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| b. | Það | hefur | alltaf | svartur köttur | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | has | always | black cat | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| c. | *Það | hafa | alltaf | kettir | verið gáfaðir | eins | lengi | og menn muna. |
| | there | have | always | cats | been smart | as | long | as people remember |
| d. | *Það | hefur | alltaf | kötturinn | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | has | always | cat-the | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| e. | Það | hafa | alltaf | allir kettir | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | have | always | all cats | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| f. | Það | hafa | alltaf | allir kettirnir | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | have | always | all cats-the | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| g. | Það | hefur | alltaf | einhver köttur | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | has | always | some cat | | been | in | kitchen-the |
| h. | Það | hefur | alltaf | einn af köttunum | | verið | í | eldhúsinu. |
| | there | has | always | one of cats-the | | been | in | kitchen-the |

It seems to me that the judgements are the same as before: the bad examples are still bad and the good examples are still good (although some of them are perhaps a bit less natural when the associate follows the sentence adverb). If this is true, then it apparently makes no difference whether the associate precedes or follows sentence adverbs like *alltaf* ‘always’. The same result would be obtained if the sentence adverb *aldrei* ‘never’ was substituted for *alltaf*, except that then we would need the negative polarity item *neinn* ‘any’ instead of *einhver* ‘some’ in the g-example. I will return to these results when I have tested the VPComp position:

(6.27)

a.	Það	hefur	alltaf	verið	köttur		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	has	always	been	cat		in	kitchen-the
b.	Það	hefur	alltaf	verið	svartur köttur		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	has	always	been	black cat		in	kitchen-the
c.	*Það	hafa	alltaf	verið	kettir	gáfaðir	eins lengi og menn muna.	
	there	have	always	been	cats	smart	as long as people remember	
d.	*Það	hefur	alltaf	verið	kötturinn		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	has	always	been	cat-the		in	kitchen-the
e.	?*Það	hafa	alltaf	verið	allir kettir		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	have	always	been	all cats		in	kitchen-the
f.	?*Það	hafa	alltaf	verið	allir kettirnir		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	have	always	been	all cats-the		in	kitchen-the
g.	Það	hefur	alltaf	verið	einhver köttur		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	has	always	been	some cat		in	kitchen-the
h.	?*Það	hefur	alltaf	verið	einn af köttunum		í	eldhúsinu.
	there	has	always	been	one of cats-the		in	kitchen-the

Here the judgements indicate two differences very clearly: first, the bare indefinite NP *köttur* ‘cat’ is fine in the VPComp position here and not awkward as before. Second, the universally quantified and partitive associates that were fine in the intermediate positions are now quite bad (examples e, f and h).¹³ As the reader may note, these are exactly the kinds of associates that are also bad in expletive constructions in English, for instance, which is

¹³ It seems to me, however, that they are not quite as bad in this position if there is a sentence adverbial like *alltaf* ‘always’ in the sentence, as there is in (6.27). Thus (ia) seems worse than (ib):

understandable if only the VPComp position is available for the associate of the expletive in that language.

Without going too far into the interesting theoretical issues at the moment, we can summarize the results so far as follows.

First, although there are stronger restrictions on the VPComp position than the intermediate positions, plain definite associates are also ruled out in the VP-external position(s) in Icelandic, although that position is available in many expletive constructions (I now give examples that do not differentiate between the two potential intermediate positions since that difference seems unimportant for the present purposes):

- (6.28) a. *Það hefur verið **flugan** í súpunni.
 there has been fly-the in soup-the
 b. *Það hefur **flugan** verið í súpunni.
 there has fly-the been in soup-the

Second, simple indefinite (and hence bare in Icelandic) NPs seem more natural inside the VP than outside – and this includes the initial position(s) (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:301–3):

- (6.29) a. ?**Mús** hefur verið í baðkerinu.
 mouse has been in bathtub-the
 b. (?)Það hefur **mús** verið í baðkerinu.
 there has mouse been in bathtub-the
 c. Það hefur verið **mús** í baðkerinu
 there has been mouse in bathtub-the
 ‘There has been a mouse in the bathtub.’

Third, so-called ‘weakly quantified’ NPs (in the sense of Milsark 1974, 1977 – e.g. NPs like ‘some students’, ‘many cats’, ‘three books’, ‘few linguists’) can occur either inside the VP or outside it, whereas ‘strongly quantified’ NPs can only occur outside it (e.g. ‘all (the) students’, ‘every cat’, ‘both pizzas’, ‘neither subject’ – cf. also Vangsnes 1995, 2002a):

Footnote 13 (*cont.*)

- (i) a. *Það hafa verið allir kettirnir í eldhúsinu.
 there have been all cats-the in kitchen-the
 b. ?*Það hafa alltaf verið allir kettirnir í eldhúsinu.
 there have always been all cats-the in kitchen-the

I do not have any account of this.

(6.30)

- | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. Það hafa nokkrir kettir/allir kettirnir verið í eldhúsinu.
there have some cats/all the cats been in kitchen-the |
| b. Það hafa verið nokkrir kettir/*allir kettirnir í eldhúsinu.
there have been some cats/*all the cats in kitchen-the |

The ban on strongly quantified NPs in the VPComp position has apparently the effect of ruling out existential sentences with strongly quantified associates in languages where a higher position is not (or higher positions are not) available for the associate. We will return to this in section 6.2.2 below.

6.1.5 More on real and apparent exceptions to the Indefiniteness Requirement

As shown above, certain kinds of definite NPs can occur in the higher associate position(s) in Icelandic, although they are ruled out in the VPComp position. Vangsnes has argued that these NPs are ‘real definites’ in the sense that they may very well be anaphoric, that is, definite because they have just been mentioned in the preceding discourse or contextually anaphoric, as definite NPs typically are. He illustrates this (2002a:49) by using the following example (i.e. (6.31a)) from an advertisement where it is clear that the phrase *allir smokkarnir* ‘all the condoms’ refers to the condoms in the ad – otherwise an indefinite form of the noun would have been used, as in the b-example:¹⁴

- | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (6.31) a. Það eru ekki allir smokkarnir prófaðir af RFSU.
there are not all condoms-the tested by RFSU
‘It is not the case that all the condoms are tested by RFSU.’ |
| b. Það eru ekki allir smokkar prófaðir af RFSU.
there are not all condoms tested by RFSU
‘It is not the case that all condoms are tested by RFSU.’ |

¹⁴ Note that in this example the associate follows the sentential negation – and it is clear that the negation has scope over the whole sentence, i.e. the sentence means ‘It is not the case that all the condoms ...’ and not ‘It is the case that not all the condoms ...’ as it would mean if this was an instance of constituent negation. Thus Vangsnes’ example is one where the associate is in the ‘lower intermediate position’, under standard assumptions about the adjunction site of the sentence negation in Icelandic (cf. the discussion in Chapter 2).

In this sense, then, the definite NPs are real exceptions to the Indefiniteness Requirement, although plain definite NPs are disallowed in the position(s) in question in Icelandic. Conversely, various exceptions that have previously been noted in the literature are only apparent, and in Icelandic they were first discussed (and explained away) by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982a). His original examples included predicative constructions of the following kind (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990a:136):

- (6.32) Það var troðfullur **salurinn** þegar hljómsveitin byrjaði að leika.
 there was packed room-the when band-the began to play

Eiríkur maintains that in this context *salurinn* ‘the room’ is not really definite in the usual sense since it need not have been mentioned before – it is explained in the accompanying temporal clause which room is being referred to. A similar account holds for the following contrast with an unaccusative verb (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984a:365; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:294–5):

- (6.33) a. *Það er kominn **náunginn**.
 there is arrived guy-the
 b. Það er kominn **náunginn** sem þú hittir í gær.
 there is arrived guy-the that you met yesterday

(6.33a) is unacceptable as the definiteness would have to be anaphoric – the guy would have to be the topic of the discussion. (6.33b) is different, on the other hand, since the explanation follows in the relative clause. A comparable instance of formal definiteness is found in examples like (6.34): we just refer to ‘the sun’ with a definite article, even without having mentioned it in the preceding discourse, because we are normally just assuming one of the kind (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984a:365):

- (6.34) Það skín alltaf blessuð **sólin**.
 there shines always blessed sun-the

As Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (2000a) has described in some detail, one can classify (apparent) exceptions to the Indefiniteness Requirement in Icelandic, and the classification will include the following types (the labels will be explained below – this is partially based on work by Ward and Birner 1995):

- (6.35) a. false definites;
 b. hearer-new tokens of hearer-old types;
 c. hearer-new entities with uniquely identifying descriptions.

We have already seen an example of false definites (cf. (6.25)) but Jóhannes points out an interesting contrast regarding these:

- (6.36) a. *Það var hin besta fluga í súpunni.*
 there was the best fly in soup-the
 b. **Það var besta flugan í súpunni.*
 there was best fly-the in soup-the

Jóhannes argues that the reason why (6.36b) is out is that the NP with the suffixed definite article will necessarily refer to a specific fly (2000a:129) whereas the variant with the free-standing article in the a-example ‘is most naturally interpreted as referring to some non-specific fly’, that is, it is a ‘false definite’.

As an example of ‘hearer-new tokens of hearer-old types’ Jóhannes gives the following example, for instance:

- (6.37) *Það var hinn fullkomni nemandi í þessum bekk.*
 there was the perfect student in this class

Basing his account on Ward and Birner 1995, Jóhannes maintains that the definiteness in cases of this sort is licensed by the fact that the type is identifiable (‘the perfect student’) whereas the expletive existential construction is licensed by ‘the hearer-new status of the current instantiation of that type’ (i.e., that there was such a student in the class). Again, however, it seems impossible to use the suffixed definite article here, as Jóhannes points out (although that is not true to the same extent of all the examples he gives):

- (6.38) **Það var fullkomni nemandinn í þessum bekk.*
 there was perfect student-the in this class

The ‘hearer-new entities with uniquely identifying descriptions’ discussed by Jóhannes are reminiscent of some of the examples originally pointed out by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982a, 1984a). Some of his examples are given below (with some additions):

- (6.39)
 a. *Það er alltaf fyrir hendi sá möguleiki að Jón verði ráðinn.*
 there is always at hand that possibility that John be(subjunct.) hired
 ‘There is always the possibility at hand that John will be hired.’
 b. *Það er alltaf fyrir hendi hinn skelfilegi möguleiki að Jón verði ráðinn.*
 there is always at hand the terrible possibility that John be hired

- c. Það er alltaf fyrir hendi möguleikinn að Jón verði ráðinn.¹⁵
 there is always at hand possibility-the that John be hired

Although the relevance of examples of this kind for understanding the Indefiniteness Requirement may not be crystal clear, they are reminiscent of Eiríkur's original examples discussed above.

6.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

6.2.1 Structural position and role of expletive elements

As already mentioned, several linguists have suggested that the expletive element in Icelandic occurs in SpecCP. This is because the basic generalization about the Icelandic expletive element is that it can never follow the finite verb (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:187 and much later work):

- (6.40) a. Það höfðu einhverjir stúdentar stolið smjörinu.
 there had some students stolen butter-the
- b. Höfðu (*það) einhverjir stúdentar stolið smjörinu?
 had (*there) some students stolen butter-the
- c. Smjörinu höfðu (*það) einhverjir stúdentar stolið.
 butter-the had (*there) some students stolen
- d. Af hverju höfðu (*það) einhverjir stúdentar stolið smjörinu?
 for what had (*there) some students stolen butter-the
 'Why had some students stolen the butter?'

¹⁵ Jóhannes also gives the variant *Það er alltaf sá möguleiki að . . .* and shows that then a NP with the suffixed definite article will not work, starring the following example:

- (i) *Það er alltaf möguleikinn að Jón verði ráðinn.
 there is always possibility-the that John be hired

The example in the text is much more natural, whatever the reason may be. Note also that the following seems OK with an anaphoric *sá möguleiki* 'that possibility', e.g. in a conversation:

- (ii) Já, það er alltaf sá möguleiki.
 Yes, there is always that possibility

This is probably the same phenomenon as the following, which is fine in an English conversation:

- (iii) Well, there's always John.

To account for distributional facts of this sort, it has been suggested (e.g. by Platzack 1983; Christensen 1991a, b; Vikner 1994, 1995a – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989) that *það* can only occur in SpecCP.¹⁶ In (6.40b–d) the verb is arguably in C, with SpecCP perhaps filled by an empty *wh*-operator in (6.40b), by the topicalized element in (6.40c) and by the fronted *wh*-phrase in (6.40d). While this is certainly suggestive, other linguists have maintained that *það* generally occupies the SpecIP position (or its equivalent – see, e.g., Kjartan G. Ottósson 1989; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Kosmeijer 1991; Hornstein 1991; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996; Vangsnes 2002a; Holmberg 2000; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 2004c). Some of the arguments have to do with the general acceptability of the expletive in embedded clauses (more general than topicalized elements, as shown by Friðrik Magnússon 1990). Second, if SpecCP is to be considered the designated site for topicalized elements or operators, the unstressable and semantically empty *það* is not a likely candidate for such a position. Third, the role of the invariable and semantically empty expletive *það* in Icelandic is arguably the same as the role of the various constituents that can be fronted in the so-called Stylistic Fronting (see especially Holmberg 2000 – for a different view see Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a, for instance). It is worth considering some of the evidence bearing in these issues.

First, although Topicalization is possible in various types of embedded clauses in Icelandic (see chapter 7), the expletive *það* can occur in certain embedded clauses where Topicalization is pretty much ruled out:

(6.41)

- a. Fílar verða hræddir ef **það** setur einhver mýs í vatnsdallinn.
 elephants become scared if there puts somebody mice in water-bowl-the
 'Elephants get scared if somebody puts mice in their water bowl.'
- b. ?*Fílar verða hræddir ef **mýsnar** setur einhver í vatnsdallinn.
 elephants become scared if mice-the puts somebody in water-bowl-the

- (6.42) a. Ég fór þegar **það** voru 20 mýs í baðkerinu.
 I left when there were 20 mice in bathtub-the
- b. ?*Ég fór þegar **í baðkerinu** voru 20 mýs.
 I left when in bathtub-the were 20 mice

Note also that the expletive *það* can occur in certain *wh*-clauses where it is often assumed that there is a *wh*-operator in the SpecCP position:

¹⁶ Vikner (1995a:186) proposes in fact that *það* is generated in SpecIP (for case assignment purposes) but then obligatorily moved to SpecCP.

- (6.43) Ég man ekki hvenær það voru síðast mýs í baðkerinu.
 I remember not when there were last mice in bathtub-the
 'I don't remember when was the last time we had mice in the bathtub.'

Second, there are some extraction differences between *það*-clauses and topic-initial clauses:¹⁷

- (6.44) a. Ég held [að það verði ball í skólanum á morgun]
 I think that there will-be dance in school-the tomorrow]
 b. Hvenær heldur þú [að það verði ball í skólanum ___]?
 when think you that there will-be dance in school-the
- (6.45) a. Ég held [að í skólanum verði ball ___ á morgun]
 I think that in school-the will-be dance tomorrow
 b. ?*Hvenær heldur þú [að í skólanum verði ball ___ ___]?
 when think you that in school-the will-be dance

Third, consider that the element *ætli* 'wonder-if' acts like a complementizer in main clauses, triggering the subjunctive form of the finite verb and having an interrogative force of sorts:

- (6.46) Ætli Jón komi á morgun?
 wonder-if John come(subjunct.) tomorrow
 'I wonder if John comes tomorrow.'

This complementizer-like element can easily be followed by the expletive *það*, for example in an impersonal passive, but not by a topicalized element (cf. Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1996:49):

- (6.47) a. Ætli það verði talað við Jón á morgun?
 wonder-if there will-be(subjunct.) spoken to John tomorrow
 'I wonder if John will be interviewed tomorrow.'
 b. *Ætli á morgun verði talað við Jón?
 wonder-if to morrow will-be(subjunct.) spoken to John

Finally, it should be mentioned here that the so-called Stylistic Fronting in Icelandic and the expletive *það* appear to have a similar role, in many instances at least, and they are in complementary distribution in the sense that they cannot both occur in the same clause (see, e.g., Maling 1980;

¹⁷ Recall, however, that it is possible to find passable examples of extraction out of clauses containing topicalized elements, although it is much more difficult than to find good examples of extraction out of expletive clauses, cf. the discussion in 2.2.2 (see also Iatridou and Kroch 1992).

Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991; Poole 1992, 1996; Holmberg 2000 and references cited there). Stylistic Fronting is an operation which moves an element to a position which looks like the subject position of a finite clause. As originally pointed out by Maling (1980), this can only happen when the subject position has been ‘vacated’ by some independent process, as in the case of a subject gap in a relative clause, subject gap in an embedded question, subject gap of a complement clause whose subject has been ‘extracted’, and in various ‘impersonal’ constructions when the logical subject has either been ‘postposed’ or no subject argument is present. This construction will be described in more detail in chapter 7, but examples like the following might seem to suggest similarities between Stylistic Fronting (SF) and the overt expletive *það* (this is modelled on an example in Holmberg 2000:451–2):

(6.48)

- a. **Það** hefur komið fram að **það** hefur verið veitt í leyfisleysi á svæðinu.
it has come forth that there has been fished without permit in area-the
‘It has been reported that there has been illegal fishing going on in the area.’
- b. **Fram** hefur komið __ að **veitt** hefur verið __ í leyfisleysi á svæðinu.
forth has come that fished has been without permit in area-the
‘It has been reported that there has been illegal fishing going on in the area.’

Note that the first *það* in the a-example is apparently an extraposition ‘it’, ‘replacing’ the clausal subject (‘að það hefur verið veitt ...’) whereas the second is a true expletive ‘there’ in an impersonal passive inside the subject clause. In the b-example the particle *fram* ‘forth’ has been fronted to the ‘gap’ left by the extraposed subject clause and inside the extraposed clause the subject ‘gap’ in the impersonal passive has been filled by the participle (or supine) *veitt* ‘fished’. As we shall see below, words (or word forms) of this sort belong to the set of the most frequently fronted elements in SF. Note that these elements cannot be fronted if there is an overt expletive around:

(6.49)

- *Fram það hefur ... /*Það fram hefur ... /*Fram hefur það ... /*Það hefur fram ...
*forth it has ... /*it forth has ... /*forth has it ... /*It has forth ...

Note further that the element fronted in SF is similar to the overt expletive in Icelandic in that it can only occur in clause-initial position (the complementizer does not count, of course). Thus it is ruled out in sentences where some constituent is topicalized and then immediately followed by the finite verb and is also impossible in direct ‘yes/no’-questions, just like the overt expletive:

- (6.50) a. *Í fréttunum hafði **fram** komið að ...
 in news-the had forth come that ...
- b. *Hefur **fram** komið að ...
 has forth come that ...

All this may seem to suggest that the elements fronted by SF and the overt expletive have a similar role. This does not necessarily mean that they occupy the same position, although various things would follow if they did. But if these elements have some sort of a feature-checking function (assuming that kind of framework), one of them could do its checking in a specifier position and the other in a head position – or adjoined to a head. One could probably also rule out the illegal combinations in (6.49) by independently motivated constraints, such as those needed to account for the verb-second phenomenon (whatever they may be) or constraints saying that the expletive element and the fronted SF element cannot follow the finite verb. We need not rule them out by saying that the elements are ‘competing for the same position’ or that they have the same role and hence they cannot both occur. Note, for instance, that we do not want to say that all fronted elements, for example those that are fronted for some sort of foregrounding effects, have the ‘same function’ as the overt expletive although they cannot co-occur with it.

Without going too far into formal details at the moment, it could be pointed out that it would be somewhat surprising if elements fronted by SF and the overt expletive *það* occupied the same position: because of the apparent pronominal origin of the expletive *það* in Icelandic, it does not seem far-fetched that it could fill the subject position, which is normally taken to be a specifier position (SpecIP or some such). The elements fronted in SF usually look like heads, on the other hand, and hence it has often been argued that SF is some sort of a head movement (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1991; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993; Poole 1992, 1996; Holmberg and Platzack 1995). In fact, it is possible to show that it does indeed make a difference in certain instances whether we have an overt expletive or an element fronted by SF. Consider the following:

(6.51)

- a. Það var þá sem það voru einhverjir kettir reknir út.
 it was then that there were some cats driven out
- b. Það var þá sem það voru reknir einhverjir kettir út/út einhverjir kettir.
 it was then that there were driven some cats out/out some cats
- c. *Það var þá sem út voru einhverjir kettir reknir.
 it was then that out were some cats driven

- d. Það var þá sem **út** voru reknir **einhverjir kettir**.¹⁸
 it was then that out were driven some cats

Here we see that the ‘logical subject’ (the associate) is fine in either position if there is an overt expletive in the clause, as in (6.51a, b), but when a particle has been fronted by SF, as in (6.51c, d), the associate can only occur in the lower (i.e. VComp) position. As pointed out in n. 18, this can hardly have to do with stress and focusing (the fronted particle *út* being stressed, the overt expletive not, cf. also the discussion around (6.22) above).¹⁹ It is not likely that the content of the overt expletive itself plays any role here since in examples like the following, where the fronted constituent *í dag* ‘today’ in (6.52c, d) need not be stressed, the restrictions on the associate stay the same, although the overt expletive ‘disappears’ when this kind of a phrase is fronted:

- (6.52) a. Það hafa **nokkrir kettir/allir kettirnir** verið í eldhúsinu í dag.
 there have some cats/all the cats been in kitchen-the today
 ‘Some cats/all the cats have been in the kitchen today.’
- b. Það hafa verið **nokkrir kettir/*allir kettirnir** í eldhúsinu í dag.
 there have been some cats/*all the cats in kitchen-the today
- c. Í dag hafa **nokkrir kettir/allir kettirnir** verið í eldhúsinu.
 today have some cats/all the cats been in kitchen-the
 ‘Today some cats/all the cats have been in the kitchen.’
- d. Í dag hafa verið **nokkrir kettir/*allir kettirnir** í eldhúsinu.
 today have been some cats/*all the cats in kitchen-the

If we front the prepositional phrase *í eldhúsinu* ‘in the kitchen’, on the other hand, then that phrase will be foregrounded and get stress on the noun

¹⁸ Whereas Topicalization obeys certain discourse constraints (only ‘topics’ in some sense can be felicitously topicalized), SF does not obey comparable constraints on the frontable elements. Hence SF can apply to unstressed ‘meaningless’ elements such as verb particles. In an example like (6.51d) the stress would not be on the adverb *út* ‘out’ but rather on the (focused) constituent *einhverjir kettir* ‘some cats’, just as it would in a particle construction like the following:

- (i)
 Það var þá sem **fram** voru lagðar **einhverjar tillögur** um lagfæringar.
 it was then that forth were put some proposals about improvements

For a different view on SF, see Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a. See also the discussion in 7.2 below.

¹⁹ A different proposal is made in Holmberg 2000:464–5, having to do with minimality effects (the Minimal Link Condition) and I will return to this when I discuss further examples of differences in the distribution of the expletive *það* and elements moved by SF, see section 7.1.3.

eldhúsinu ‘the kitchen’, and the associate is no longer appropriate in the intermediate position whereas the indefinite one is again fine in the VPComp position:

- (6.53) a. ??Í eldhúsinu hafa **nokkrir kettir/allir kettirnir** verið í dag.
 in kitchen-the have some cats/all cats-the been today
- b. Í eldhúsinu hafa verið **nokkrir kettir/*allir kettirnir** í dag.
 in kitchen-the have been some cats/*all cats-the today

Although the facts just discussed seem complex and difficult to interpret, they suggest that what is crucial with regard to the licensing of the associate positions (or checking of the EPP feature, if one assumes that kind of an approach, cf., e.g., Holmberg 2000 and Vangsnes 2002a) cannot be the content of the overt expletive itself in languages like Icelandic, as it seems that a similar effect can be obtained when there is no overt expletive around.²⁰ I will return to the role of SF and Topicalization in chapter 7 and discuss possible ‘content’ of the overt expletive in connection with a comparison to elements fronted by SF. In the next subsections I will consider some differences between expletive constructions in Icelandic and the other Scandinavian languages to see if that comparison can tell us anything about the nature and role of expletives.

6.2.2 *Expletive constructions in the other Scandinavian languages*

It seems that Icelandic and Faroese are very much alike with regard to the nature and range of expletive constructions as opposed to MSc. Thus the following overview of expletive constructions in Faroese is virtually identical to the one given above for Icelandic, except that some speakers apparently do not like transitive expletives (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:282–3; see also Vikner 1995a; Jonas 1996b; Petersen 2000).²¹

²⁰ As pointed out by Vangsnes (e.g. 2002a:64), facts of this sort suggest ‘that the idea of expletive-associate replacement at LF is on the wrong track’ (he is referring to commonly accepted accounts (based on Safir’s theory of chains 1985), where the semantic interpretation of the associate of the expletive is explained by assuming that it covertly moves at LF to the position of the overt expletive (which is supposed to be coindexed with it) and ‘replaces’ it). For a similar conclusion see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (1996:206ff.).

²¹ Vikner’s Faroese informants are apparently among those who do not like transitive expletives at all (in fact, Vikner’s Faroese informants appear to represent a variant of Faroese rather closer to Danish in many respects than the variants described by other linguists). Jonas suggests a dialect split and Petersen reports mixed results. It should be noted here that transitive expletives are not unknown in Germanic outside Insular Scandinavian: as Vikner (1995a) describes in detail, for instance, transitive expletives are also found in German.

(6.54) The copula and (other) unaccusative verbs: generally accepted:

a. Tað eru mýs í baðkarinum.
there are mice in bathtub-the

b. Tað komu nakrir gestir úr Íslandi í gjár.
there came some guests from Iceland yesterday
'Some guests from Iceland came yesterday.'

(6.55) Other intransitive verbs: generally accepted:

Tað dansaði eitt par í havanum í gjárvøldið.
there danced a pair in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
'A couple danced in the garden yesterday evening.'

(6.56) Impersonal passives: generally accepted:

Tað bleiv dansað í havanum í gjárvøldið.
there was danced in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
'People danced in the garden yesterday evening.'

(6.57) Transitive verbs: accepted by some speakers:

Tað keypti onkur útlendingur húsið hjá Eivindi.
there bought some foreigner house-the at Eivind
'Some foreigner bought Eivind's house.'

(6.58) Expletive passives: quite generally accepted:

Tað blivu nógv hús keypt í Fuglafirði í fjør.
there were many houses bought in Fuglafjørður in last-year
'Many houses were bought in Fuglafjørður last year.'

(6.59) Weather verbs: generally accepted:

Tað regnar ofta í Havn.
it rains frequently in Tórshavn
'It frequently rains in Tórshavn.'

(6.60)

Extraposition constructions (predicates taking finite or non-finite clausal subjects): generally accepted:

a. Tað er lítið skilagott [at koyra við summerdekkum um veturin].
it is little sensible to drive with summer-tyres in winter-the
'It is not wise to use summer tyres in the winter.'

b. Tað var spell [at báturin sakk].
it was shame that boat-the sank
'It was a shame that the boat sank.'

So far, then, the differences are minimal. It seems, however, that Faroese differs from Icelandic (and MSc) in allowing (but not requiring) the overt expletive after the finite verb, for example when some constituent has been

fronted or in direct ‘yes-/no’-questions, but it remains to be determined to what extent there is speaker variation with respect to this (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:285–7; see also Barnes 1992:27 – the parentheses are meant to indicate that the overt expletive inside them could be left out but does not have to be):

- (6.61) a. Eru (tað) ongantíð mýs í baðikarinum?
are (there) never mice in bathtub-the
- b. Eru (tað) komnir nakrir gestir úr Íslandi?
are (there) come any guests from Iceland
‘Have any guests arrived from Iceland?’
- c. Í havanum varð (tað) nógv dansað í gjárkvöldið.
in garden-the was (there) much danced in yesterday-evening-the
- d. Í Fuglafirði blivu (tað) keypt nógv hús.
in Fuglafjörður were (there) bought many houses
- e. Í Havn regnar (tað) ofta.
in Tórshavn rains (it) often
- f. Er (tað) skilagott [at koyra við summerdekkum um veturin]?
is (it) sensible to drive with summer-tyres in winter-the
‘Is it sensible to use summer tyres in the winter?’

We can thus say that Faroese is partially like Icelandic, and different from MSc, in that it allows transitive expletive constructions and it allows ‘null expletives’ (i.e., allows the overt expletive to ‘disappear’ when it should follow a finite verb). At the same time it is not exactly like Icelandic in this respect since not everybody likes the transitive expletives, and it seems that most speakers **allow** overt expletives after the finite verb. Some examples from MSc are given below to verify the claims made here about the impossibility of ‘null expletives’ in these languages (see Christensen 1991a, b; Holmberg and Platzack 1991; Vikner 1995a; Platzack 1996; Vangnes 2002a, et al. – here an asterisk on the parentheses means that the element inside them cannot be left out – which would then presumably imply a null expletive, cf. the discussion in sections 9.1.4.2 and 9.2.3 below):

- (6.62)
- a. Igår blev *(det) dansat. (Sw)
yesterday was *(there) danced
‘Yesterday there was dancing.’
- b. Igår dansades *(det) på skeppet. (Sw)
yesterday was-danced *(there) on ship-the
‘Yesterday there was dancing on the ship.’

- c. Igår regnade *(det). (Sw)
 yesterday rained *(it)
 'Yesterday it rained.'
- d. Vid den tiden kom *(det) många immigranter till USA. (Sw)
 at that time came *(there) many immigrants to USA
- e. I dag har *(det) kommet en mann hit. (No)
 today has *(there) come a man here
- f. Igår er *(der) kommet en dreng. (Da)
 yesterday is *(there) come a boy

Similarly, the standard claim is that transitive expletives are not possible in MSc (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; Jonas 1996a, b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, et al.):

(6.63)

- a. *Der har nogen spist et æble i bilen. (Da)
 there has somebody eaten an apple in car-the
- b. *Det åt en student puddingen. (Sw)
 there ate a student pudding-the
- c. *Det har en mann kjøpt boken. (No.bo.)
 there has a man bought book-the
- d. *Det har ein katt ete mysene. (No.ny.)
 there has a cat eaten mice-the

The observed differences between expletive constructions in the Scandinavian languages obviously call for an explanation, and several have been offered. One variant maintains that the Icelandic type expletive is not really a subject but rather some sort of a place holder in SpecCP. As already mentioned, this would account for the fact that it never follows the finite verb. The idea would then be that the MSc type expletive actually is a subject with the relevant set of features and occupies the subject position (see, e.g., Christensen and Taraldsen 1989; Christensen 1991a, b; Holmberg 1994). As Christensen (1991a, b) has pointed out, for instance, this approach also suggests a possible account of why Icelandic but not MSc allows transitive expletives: since the overt expletive is in SpecCP in Icelandic, the subject position is free and hence the real subject can occur there in a transitive expletive. In MSc, on the other hand, the expletive element is a subject, and this means that the 'logical subject' (or the associate) would have nowhere to go in a transitive expletive construction since the VPCOMP position is occupied by the object if the verb is transitive.

In the preceding discussion it was pointed out, however, that there are various problems with the SpecCP analysis of the Icelandic expletive, one of them being that the overt expletive does not look like any kind of a topic/theme element. Zaenen (1983:496) has described this as follows: ‘what the dummy [i.e. the overt expletive] actually does is to allow for a sentence type in which nothing is topicalized, not even the subject that in general acts as a discourse topic by default’ (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:292ff. and 2004c for somewhat similar ideas). Besides, the facts concerning possible positions of the associate of the expletive are a bit more complex than they are often made out to be. We will now return to that issue since it may shed additional light on the nature of the expletive construction.

6.2.3 *The ‘associate positions’ revisited*

As most extensively described by Vangsnes (e.g. 1995, 2002a – see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990c:72ff.), there is a quite clear contrast between MSc (or Norwegian in particular) and Icelandic with regard to the positions available to the associate of the expletive (or the logical subject) in expletive constructions. To put it simply: in MSc only the VPComp position is available for the associate, but in Icelandic the intermediate position is also available, as we have seen. Some illustrative examples from Norwegian and Danish are given in (6.64) (see Vangsnes 2002a:44; also Vikner 1995a:188):

- (6.64) a. *Det har **ein katt** vore på kjøkenet. (No)
 there has a cat been in kitchen-the
- b. Det har vore **ein katt** på kjøkenet.
 there has been a cat in kitchen-the
- c. *Der er **en dreng** kommet. (Da)
 there is a boy come
- d. Der er kommet **en dreng**.
 there is come a boy

In this respect, then, MSc is like English. This apparently has the effect (in Norwegian at least) that ‘strongly quantified’ NPs are ruled out as associates of the expletive, as they are in English (cf. Milsark 1974, 1977). As the reader may recall, such associates were only possible in the higher position(s) in Icelandic. Illustrative examples from Norwegian are given in (6.65), where the former is presumably bad because the higher subject (or associate) position is not available in Norwegian but the latter because of the ban on strongly quantified NPs in VPComp (cf. Vangsnes 1995, 2002a):

(6.65)

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|-------|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|----------------|------|
| a. | *Det | har | alle kattane | vore | | på kjøkenet. | (No) |
| | there | have | all the cats | been | | in the kitchen | |
| b. | *Det | har | | vore | alle kattane | på kjøkenet. | (No) |
| | there | have | | been | all the cats | in the kitchen | |

In Faroese, on the other hand, it seems that most (or at least many) speakers allow both positions for most of the expletive constructions under discussion. This is illustrated below (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:284–5):²²

- (6.66) a. Tað hava **nakrar mýs** verið í baðikarinum.
 there have some mice been in bathtub-the
 ‘There have been some mice in the bathtub.’
- b. Tað hava verið **nakrar mýs** í baðikarinum.
 there have been some mice in bathtub-the
 ‘There have been some mice in the bathtub.’
- c. Tað eru **nakrir gestir** komnir úr Íslandi.
 there are some guests come from Iceland
 ‘Some guests have arrived from Iceland.’
- d. Tað eru komnir **nakrir gestir** úr Íslandi.
 there are come some guests from Iceland
 ‘Some guests have arrived from Iceland.’
- e. Tað blivu **nógv hús** keypt í Fuglafirði.
 there were many houses bought in Fuglafjørður
 ‘Many houses were bought in Fuglafjørður.’
- f. Tað blivu keypt **nógv hús** í Fuglafirði.
 there were bought many houses in Fuglafjørður
 ‘Many houses were bought in Fuglafjørður.’
- g. Tað hevir **eitt par** dansað í havanum í gjárkvøldið.
 there has a pair danced in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
 ‘A couple have danced in the garden last night.’
- h. *Tað hevir dansað **eitt par** í havanum í gjárkvøldið.
 there has danced a pair in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the

²² Again, Vikner’s (1995a) Faroese informants do not quite agree with these judgements, whatever the reason may be. It seems that they generally follow the MSc pattern here too.

- i. Tað hevur **onkur útlendingur** keypt húsið hjá Eivindi.
 there has some foreigner bought house-the at Eivind
 ‘Some foreigner has bought Eivind’s house.’
- j. *Tað hevur keypt **onkur útlendingur** húsið hjá Eivindi.
 there has bought some foreigner house-the at Eivind

The only unexpected judgement here, from an Icelandic point of view, is that speakers of Faroese appear not to treat ‘unergative’ intransitive verbs (e.g. *dansa* ‘dance’) like the transitive ones in the sense that they do not allow the associate in the VPComp position after these, only after unaccusative and passive verbs. As is well known, however, some languages only allow expletive constructions with unaccusative-type predicates (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a).

6.2.4 *The differences – and what can be said about them*

The cross-linguistic differences in Scandinavian with regard to expletive constructions include the following (with some simplification):

(6.67)

- a. In Icelandic and Faroese the overt expletives are only required in initial position (and only possible in Icelandic in that position). In MSc they can follow a (fronted) finite verb (compare, e.g., the examples in (6.12), (6.61) and (6.62) above).
- b. Icelandic and Faroese (at least in part) have transitive expletives, MSc does not (see, e.g., the examples in (6.7), (6.57) and (6.63) above).
- c. Icelandic and Faroese have more positions available for the associate of the expletive than MSc has (see the examples in section 6.1.3 and 6.2.3).

It seems unlikely that these differences are unrelated and hence one would like to look for a principled account. The accounts that have been proposed seem to fall into three categories:

(6.68)

- a. The overt expletives occupy different positions in the languages in question – i.e. they are SpecCP elements in Icelandic and Faroese but SpecIP elements (with real subject properties) in MSc. This ‘higher positioning’ of the expletives in Icelandic and Faroese ‘frees up’ an extra position for the associate. Hence Icelandic and Faroese allow transitive expletives – and this could also account for the availability of the ‘intermediate position’ discussed by Vangsnes (1995, 2002a). This is the kind of approach advocated by Christensen (1991a, b), for instance.
- b. Icelandic – and Faroese to some extent at least – has ‘more subject positions’ than MSc. More specifically, Icelandic and Faroese can make use of both AgrSP and TP whereas MSc has only one such position (possibly just an unsplit IP). This makes transitive expletives possible in Icelandic (and Faroese) but not in MSc. This kind of approach is advocated by Jonas 1994, 1996a, b; Bobaljik and Jonas 1996; and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1996, for instance (with some variations in detail), cf. also the discussion in section 2.2.2).

- c. The Scandinavian languages have virtually identical structural positions available to the relevant items and the overt expletives occupy the same position in these languages. The checking requirements are different, however, especially with respect to EPP (Extended Projection Principle) requirements. This kind of approach is advocated by Holmberg 2000 and Vangsnes 2002a, for instance.

Since Stylistic Fronting plays an important role in Holmberg's argumentation (2000), this is an appropriate point to stop and turn to the [next chapter](#), where Topicalization and Stylistic Fronting will be the main topics.

Fronting, focusing, extraposition and NP-shift

7.1 A descriptive overview

7.1.1 *Fronting of non-subjects*

It is often assumed that languages with rich morphology have a relatively free word order, as opposed to those with simpler morphology. The basic idea is that case marking, for instance, will be sufficient to mark the grammatical relations so various restrictions on word order are unnecessary. In other words, the nominative argument in sentences like those in (7.1) will unambiguously be interpreted as the subject and hence ‘free scrambling’ of the arguments should be allowed. Latin is often cited as an example, and it is then maintained that at least the orders (7.1a, b, c) were acceptable in Classical Latin. But although Icelandic also has a rich morphology, it does not allow all the same orders as Classical Latin did, as can be seen by comparing the Icelandic examples (7.1a’, b’, c’, d’) to their Latin counterparts:

(7.1)	a.	Puer boy(N)	puellam girl(A)	amat. loves	(SOV, Lat)
	a.’	*Drengurinn boy-the(N)	stúlkuna girl-the(A)	elskar. loves	(*SOV, Ic)
	b.	Puer boy(N)	amat loves	puellam. girl(A)	(SVO, Lat)
	b.’	Drengurinn boy-the(N)	elskar loves	stúlkuna. girl-the(A)	(SVO, Ic)
	c.	Puellam girl(A)	puer boy(N)	amat. loves	(OSV, Lat)
	c.’	*Stúlkuna girl-the(A)	drengurinn boy-the(N)	elskar. loves	(*OSV, Ic)

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| d. | ?*Puellam
girl(A) | amat
loves | puer.
boy(N) | (?*OVS, Lat) |
| d.ʹ | Stúlkuna
girl-the(A) | elskar
loves | drengurinn.
boy-the(N) | (OVS, Ic) |
- ‘The boy loves the girl.’

This indicates that, despite its rich nominal and verbal morphology, Icelandic does not have a very free word order and disallows the SOV and OSV orders in (7.1a, c). As discussed in chapter 2, on the other hand, the order in (7.1d) is possible since Icelandic is a V2 language, but that order is apparently not found in Classical Latin.

The order in (7.1d) is standardly described by saying that the object can be ‘preposed’ to sentence-initial position if it is then immediately followed by the finite verb. I have used examples of this kind in preceding chapters and followed common practice in referring to them as Topicalization. The fronted constituent is often a definite noun since NPs are usually topicalized if they have been the topic or theme of the discussion, that is, Topicalization of some NP ‘out of the blue’ sounds odd in many instances:

- (7.2)
- | | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. | Lögreglan
police-the(N) | fann
found | þjóf
thief(A) | í húsinu.
in building-the |
| | ‘The police found a thief in the building.’ | | | |
| b. | ?*Þjóf
thief(A) | fann
found | lögreglan
police-the(N) | í húsinu.
in building-the |
| c. | Þjófinn
thief-the(A) | fann
found | lögreglan
police-the(N) | í húsinu.
in building-the |

While (7.2a) is fine, with the NP in object position being indefinite, suggesting that it has not been mentioned in previous discourse, the version where this indefinite NP has been fronted, (7.2b), sounds very odd. If it had been definite, and thus presumably already a topic (or theme) of the discussion, then fronting would have been fine, as illustrated in (7.2c).

It is, however, possible to front more than just objects. Other types of constituents can also be fronted, including prepositional phrases and adverbials of various kinds as illustrated below. (In many of the illustrative examples, constructions involving auxiliary verbs will be used, since such constructions make it easier to determine the structural positions involved, as we have seen, mainly because then the main verb stays in situ.) As before, I will use ___ to indicate positions vacated by movement:

(7.3)

- a. Haraldur hefur ekki búið á Akureyri.
 Haraldur has not lived in Akureyri
 'Haraldur has not lived in Akureyri.'
- b. **Á Akureyri** hefur Haraldur ekki búið ___. (PP fronted)
 in Akureyri has Harold not lived
- c. **Ekki** hefur Haraldur __ búið á Akureyri. (sentence adverb fronted)
 not has Harold lived in Akureyri

It seems that here the discourse effect of the fronting varies somewhat and this would be reflected in the intonation. Thus the fronting of the prepositional phrase *á Akureyri* 'in Akureyri' in the b-example could have a foregrounding or even contrastive role ('Haraldur has not lived in Akureyri, but he has lived . . .') whereas fronting of the negation in the c-example has more of a stylistic value, and a natural interpretation of the sentence could be something like 'It doesn't seem that Harold has lived in Akureyri' or possibly even 'I can't believe that Harold has lived in Akureyri!', given the right intonation. Note also that some adverbial elements, such as some of the V3 adverbs (adverbs that can easily intervene between the subject and the finite verb in main clauses, cf. the discussion in section 2.1.6), modal particles and the particles accompanying particle verbs cannot be fronted in this fashion:

- (7.4) a. Haraldur bara býr á Akureyri.
 Harold just lives in Akureyri
- b. ***Bara** býr Haraldur á Akureyri. (V3 adverb fronted)
 just lives Harold in Akureyri
- c. Haraldur býr sko á Akureyri.
 Harold lives mod.prt. in Akureyri
 'Harold lives, you know, in Akureyri.'
- d. ***Sko** býr Haraldur á Akureyri.¹ (modal particle fronted)
 mod.prt. lives Harold in Akureyri

¹ One could, on the other hand, begin a sentence with an initial *sko* followed by an intonation break and a subject-first word order. Then *sko* means something like *look* in English:

- (i) Sko, Haraldur býr á Akureyri og ...
 look, Harold lives in Akureyri and ...

This option is not available for V3 adverbs like *bara* 'just'.

- e. Strákarnir hafa tekið bækurnar upp.
 boys-the have taken books-the up
 'The boys have unpacked the books.'
- f. ***Upp** hafa strákarnir tekið bækurnar. (verb particle fronted)
 up have boys-the taken books-the

The inability of particles to undergo this kind of fronting will be of some interest when we compare Topicalization to Stylistic Fronting (SF) in 7.1.4.

In certain contexts it is possible to front predicate adjectives and even secondary predicates. The non-finite forms of a main verb following a modal auxiliary, the perfective auxiliary or the passive auxiliary cannot be topicalized in a natural way, on the other hand:

(7.5)

- a. Haraldur var fljótur að flytja til Reykjavíkur.
 Harold was quick to move to Reykjavik
 → **Fljótur** var Haraldur __ að flytja til Reykjavíkur! (pred. adj. fronted)
 quick was Harold to move to Reykjavik
- b. Hann málaði bílinn rauðan.
 he painted car-the red
 → ?**Rauðan** málaði hann bílinn __ . (secondary predic. fronted)
 red painted he car-the
- c. Strákarnir munu lesa bækurnar.
 boys-the will read(inf.) books-the
 → ?***Lesið** munu strákarnir bækurnar.² (infinitive fronted)
 read(inf.) will boys-the books-the
- d. Strákarnir hafa lesið bækurnar.
 boys-the have read(sup.) books-the
 → ?***Lesið** hafa strákarnir bækurnar. (supine fronted)
 read(sup.) have boys-the books-the

² As Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson points out to me (p.c.), it is possible to find passable (if bookish) examples of fronted non-finite verb forms, such as the following, for instance:

- (i) **Vita** skaltu __ að ég er vinur þinn.
 know shall-you that I am friend your
 'You should know that I am your friend.'

These examples typically involve modal verbs. I have no explanation for this.

e. Bækurnar	voru	lesnar	upp til agna.	
books-the	were	read(past part.)	up to pieces	
'The books	were	read to shreds.'		
→?*Lesnar	voru	bækurnar	upp til agna.	(passive participle fronted)
read(past part.)	were	books-the	up to pieces.	

Fronting of the predicative adjective in (7.5a) seems to have a special stylistic value, as indicated by the exclamation mark, whereas it is more difficult to imagine a proper context for fronting of the secondary predicate in (7.5b) – hence the question mark. We will consider the different discourse functions of Topicalization in 7.2. The significance of the inability of infinitives and participles to be fronted will become clearer when Topicalization is compared to SF below, but it is presumably related to the fact that these constituents are unambiguously syntactic heads and cannot be interpreted as anything larger (i.e., they are not maximal constituents).

Icelandic also shows certain variants of Topicalization which are ruled out in some languages. First, noun phrases can sometimes be fronted out of certain types of prepositional phrases, 'stranding' the preposition but keeping the case governed by the preposition (see examples (7.6)–(7.7) below). In other instances the so-called pied piping (moving of the preposition together with the noun phrase) is more or less obligatory, also in *wh*-sentences (cf. examples (7.8)–(7.10)). As the reader will see, there are apparently some differences between Icelandic and English in this respect, but the restrictions on preposition stranding in Icelandic remain to be studied in detail:³

(7.6)

a. Ég	hef	aldrei	talað	við	Sigrúnu.	
I	have	never	spoken	to	Sigrun(A)	
b. Sigrúnu	hef	ég	aldrei	talað	við ___.	(preposition stranded)
Sigrun(A)	have	I	never	spoken	to	
c. Við Sigrúnu	hef	ég	aldrei	talað	___.	(PP fronted)
to Sigrun(A)	have	I	never	spoken		

³ In spoken Icelandic one can sometimes hear examples of a doubling of the preposition, i.e. the preposition is fronted and also left in situ. I believe this is restricted to *wh*-questions, as indicated here:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| (i) a. ?Við hvern | talaðirðu | við ___? | |
| with whom(A) | spoke-you | with | |
| 'Who did you talk to?' | | | |
| b. *Við Maríu | talaði | ég | við ___. |
| to Mary(A) | spoke | I | too |

This phenomenon also remains to be studied.

- (7.7) a. *Ég* *fer* *ekki* *með Haraldi.*
 I go not with Harold(D)
 ‘I am not going with Harold.’
- b. **Haraldi** *fer* *ég* *ekki* *með* ____.
 Harold(D) go I not with
- c. **Með Haraldi** *fer* *ég* *ekki* ____.
 with Harold(D) go I not

(7.8)

- a. *Ég* *hef* *aldrei* *búið* *á Akureyri.*
 I have never lived in Akureyri
- b. **?*Akureyri** *hef* *ég* *aldrei* *búið á* ____ . (stranding disallowed)
 Akureyri have I never lived in
- c. **Á Akureyri** *hef* *ég* *aldrei* *búið* ____ .
 in Akureyri have I never lived

- (7.9) a. *Jón* *sendi* *bréfið* *til Haraldar.*
 John sent letter-the to Harold(G)
- b. **?*Haraldar/?*Hvers** *sendi* *Jón* *bréfið* *til* ____ .
 *Harold(G)/*who sent John letter-the to
- c. **Til Haraldar/Til hvers** *sendi* *Jón* *bréfið* ____ .
 to Harold(G)/to whom sent John letter-the

- (7.10) a. *María* *prjónaði* *peysuna* *handa Jóni.*
 Mary(N) knitted sweater-the(A) for John(D)
- b. ***Jóni/*Hverjum** *prjónaði* *María* *peysuna* *handa* ____ .
 *John(D)/*whom(D) knitted Mary sweater-the(A) for
- c. **Handa Jóni/Handa hverjum** *prjónaði* *María* *peysuna* ____ .
 for John(D)/for whom(D) knitted Mary sweater-the(A)

In other cases the preposition stranding variant is quite fixed and in such instances the case of the fronted element may be ‘lost’ if the element is the neuter demonstrative pronoun *það* ‘that’ (for a similar phenomenon in older Swedish, see Delsing 1995; see also Delsing 2003b):⁴

⁴ Delsing (2003b:82–3) observes that there is apparently some kind of correlation between morphological case and preposition stranding and argues that preposition stranding is not compatible with syntactically active case. Since preposition stranding is found in Icelandic, however, he is forced to maintain that case in Icelandic is ‘syntactically inactive’ in some sense although ‘morphologically active’. It is not entirely clear what that means, e.g. in the light of the discussion of case marking of subjects, objects and indirect objects in chapters 4 and 5 above.

- (7.11) a. *Ég býst ekki við því/*það.*
I expect not with that(D/*A)
'I don't expect that.'
- b. **Því/Það** býst ég ekki við ____.
that(D/A(N?))⁵ expect I not with
'That I don't expect.'
- c. *?Við því/*Við það býst ég ekki ____.*
?with that(D)/*with that(A) expect I not
- (7.12) a. *Ég reikna ekki með því/*það.*
I reckon not with that(D/*A)
- b. **Því/Það** reikna ég ekki með ____.
that(D/A(N?)) reckon I not with
- c. *?Með því/*Með það reikna ég ekki ____.*
?with that(D)/*with that(A) reckon I not

More interestingly, it is sometimes possible to front a degree adverb out of an adjectival phrase – and this kind of movement is then preferred to moving the whole adjectival phrase (see also n. 17 in chapter 3 and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1996b):

- (7.13) a. Hann hleypur [svakalega hratt].
he runs terribly fast
- b. **Svakalega** hleypur hann [____ hratt]!
terribly runs he fast
'How fast he runs!'
- c. *?*[Svakalega hratt] hleypur hann ____!*
terribly fast runs he
- (7.14) a. *María er [ofsalega góður kennari].*
Mary is extremely good teacher
'Mary is an extremely good teacher.'
- b. **Ofsalega** er María [____ góður kennari]!
extremely is Mary good teacher
'What a great teacher Mary is!'
- c. **Ofsalega góður er María [____ kennari]!*
extremely good is Mary teacher
- d. *??[Ofsalega góður kennari] er María ____!*
extremely good teacher is Mary

⁵ Since N and A are always identical for neuter nominals, one cannot tell whether this is nominative or accusative.

- (7.15) a. Þetta er [djöfull góður bjór].
 this is devil good beer
 ‘This is devilishly good beer!’
- b. **Djöfull** er þetta [___ góður bjór]!
 devil is this good beer
 ‘What a great beer this is!’
- c. ***Djöfull góður** er þetta [___ bjór]!
 devil good is this beer
- d. ?***[Djöfull góður bjór]** er þetta ___!
 devil good beer is this

This kind of fronting seems to be restricted to a relatively small set of ‘exclamatory’ adverbs, cf. the unacceptability of (7.16b) (see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1996b):

- (7.16) a. María er [mjög góður kennari].
 Mary is very good teacher
 ‘Mary is a very good teacher.’
- b. ***Mjög** er María [___ góður kennari].
 very is Mary good teacher

In a relatively bookish or old-fashioned style one can also find apparent ‘constituent splitting’ as in the Topicalization example (7.17b), although (7.17c) seems to be out:⁶

⁶ This kind of constituent splitting is more common in Old Icelandic texts, as discussed by Faarlund (1990:97–9) and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1995:8–11), for instance (note that in the following it is not always clear which of the constituent parts is *in situ* although I have tried to make an educated guess, as indicated by the bracketing):

- (i) a. barnit var [at ___] komit **dauða**.
 child-the was to come death
 ‘The child was almost dead.’
- b. en [___ væta] var á **mikil** um daginn.
 but wetness was on great in day-the
 ‘It rained much during the day.’
- c. **Engi** var hann [___ hermaðr].
 no was he soldier
 ‘He was not a good soldier.’

Here only the c-example would be marginally possible in Modern Icelandic.

- (7.17) a. Hann var [góður smiður].
 he was good carpenter
 'He was a good carpenter.'
- b. **Smiður** var hann [góður ____].
 carpenter was he good
- c. ***Góður** var hann [____ smiður].
 good was he carpenter

Given this variety of preposable constituents (and parts of constituents) in Icelandic, it is perhaps surprising to find that VPs (or however we want to label the constituent following the finite auxiliary) cannot really be preposed in a natural fashion:

- (7.18) a. Hún hefur [keypt nokkrar bækur].
 she has bought some books
- b. ***[Keypt nokkrar bækur]** hefur hún.
 bought some books has she
- c. Hún mun [lesa allar bækurnar].
 she will read all books-the
- d. ***[Lesar allar bækurnar]** mun hún.
 read all books-the will she

As we shall see in 7.2, MSc seems to have certain variants of VP-fronting that are not found in Icelandic. But Icelandic does have finite verb fronting in narrative style, the so-called Narrative Inversion, although such fronting is not found in spoken Icelandic and presumably involves movement to the C-position rather than SpecCP in the kind of structure assumed here (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1983; Platzack 1985a, 1987a):

- (7.19) a. Þeir gengu inn og heilsuðu fólkinu.
 they walked in and greeted people-the
 'They entered and greeted the people.'
- b. **Gengu** þeir inn og heilsuðu fólkinu.
 walked they in and greeted people-the

All the examples considered so far have involved Topicalization inside a clause. We will now turn to 'long distance' Topicalization and other kinds of fronting across clause boundaries.

7.1.2 *Topicalization and Wh-movement across clause boundaries*

As is well known, it is easier to extract elements out of some types of embedded clauses than others (see, e.g., Ross 1967 and Erteschik 1973 for some early discussion in the generative literature). Clauses or constructions

that are difficult to extract out of are standardly referred to as ‘islands’, and many of the so-called island constraints can be shown to hold in Icelandic. Consider the following contrasts, for instance, this time adding instances of the so-called *wh*-movement to the Topicalization examples. As can be seen, the case of the extracted element is still preserved (i.e., it is determined by the relevant element in the embedded clause):

- (7.20) a. *María* heldur [að *Jón* treysti *Haraldi*].
 Mary believes that John trusts Harold(D)
- b. **Haraldi** heldur *María* [að *Jón* treysti ____].
 Harold(D) thinks Mary that John trusts
- c. **Hverjum** heldur *María* [að *Jón* treysti ____]?
 whom(D) thinks Mary that John trusts

(7.21)

- a. *María* trúir ekki [_{NP} þeirri staðhæfingu [að *Jón* treysti *Haraldi*]].
 Mary believes not that claim that John trusts Harold(D)
 ‘Mary doesn’t believe the claim that John trusts Harold.’
- b. **Haraldi* trúir *María* ekki [_{NP} þeirri staðhæfingu [að *Jón* treysti ____]].
 Harold(D) believes Mary not that claim that John trusts
- c. **Hverjum* trúir *María* ekki [_{NP} þeirri staðhæfingu [að *Jón* treysti ____]]?
 whom(D) believes Mary not that claim that John trusts

As shown here, the so-called Complex NP Constraint is observed in Icelandic: elements cannot be extracted out of a complement clause that modifies a NP and makes it ‘complex’ as indicated by the bracketing. Similarly, it is usually impossible to extract out of relative clauses and adverbial clauses:

- (7.22) a. *María* þekkir mann [sem treystir *Haraldi*].
 Mary knows man that trusts Harold
 ‘Mary knows a man who trusts Harold.’
- b. ***Haraldi** þekkir *María* mann [sem treystir ____].
 Harold(D) knows Mary man that trusts
- c. ***Hverjum** þekkir *María* mann [sem treystir ____]?
 whom(D) knows Mary man that trusts
- (7.23) a. *María* kemur [ef *Jón* treystir *Haraldi*].
 Mary comes if John trusts Harold
- b. ***Haraldi** kemur *María* [ef *Jón* treystir ____].
 Harold(D) comes Mary if John trusts
- c. ***Hverjum** kemur *María* [ef *Jón* treystir ____]?
 whom(D) comes Mary if John trusts

Icelandic does not appear to have the so-called ‘*that*-trace filter’ found in many languages, that is, it does not observe any kind of a ban on extracting subjects out of embedded complement clauses, leaving a ‘trace’ (or a vacated position) immediately after the complementizer (see, e.g., Maling and Zaenen 1978; Zaenen 1980; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:26). This is shown in (7.24):

- (7.24) a. *María* heldur [að *Helgi* treysti *Haraldi*]
 Mary(N) believes that *Helge(N)* trusts *Harold(D)*
 ‘Mary believes that John trusts Harold.’
- b. **Helgi** heldur *María* [að ___ treysti *Haraldi*]
Helge(N) thinks *Mary(N)* that trusts *Harold(D)*
- c. **Hver** heldur *María* [að ___ treysti *Haraldi*?]
 who(N) thinks *Mary(N)* that trusts *Harold(D)*

As shown in (7.25), examples corresponding to (7.24b, c) would be bad in (standard) English. They do, however, improve when the complementizer *that* is left out:

- (7.25) a. *John, Mary believes that ___ trusts Harold.
 b. John, Mary believes ___ trusts Harold.
 c. *Who does Mary believe that ___ trusts Harold?
 d. Who does Mary believe ___ trusts Harold?

This is the reason for the name of the ‘effect’ – it seems that it is the adjacency of the overt complementizer *that* and the trace (the vacated position) which causes the problem in English. Once the offending complementizer is removed, the sentence improves. Removing the complementizer has the opposite effect in Icelandic, on the other hand:

- (7.26) a. ?***Helgi** telur *María* [___ treysti *Haraldi*]
Helge(N) believes *Mary(N)* trusts *Harold(D)*
- b. ?***Hver** telur *María* [___ treysti *Haraldi*?]
 who(N) believes *Mary(N)* trusts *Harold(D)*

While the observed difference between English and Icelandic is puzzling (compare (7.25) and (7.26)), a part of the reason for the unacceptability of the sentences in (7.26) could be the fact that complementizer deletion is much more restricted in Icelandic than it is in English. We will have a look at that phenomenon in section 8.1.6.

Finally, the reader may recall from the discussion of the V2 phenomenon in chapter 2 that Topicalization applies more generally in embedded clauses in Icelandic than in most Germanic languages (with the exception of Yiddish – cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Iatridou and Kroch 1992; Santorini 1994; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1994; Vikner 1994, 1995a; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994b, and references cited by these authors). As surveyed in great detail by Friðrik Magnússon (1990), the acceptability of Topicalization in embedded clauses varies from one clause-type to another, and it is generally quite bad in temporal clauses and certain types of indirect questions and relative clauses. Some examples are given below (see also the discussion in 2.2.2):

(7.27)

- a. Þeir sögðu [að **í bæinn** hefði rútan komið klukkan sjö ____].
 they said that to town-the had bus-the come clock seven
 ‘They said that the bus had come to town at seven o’clock.’
- b. ??Þetta var [þegar **í bæinn** kom rútan klukkan sjö ____].
 this was when to town-the came bus-the clock seven
- c. ?Þeir spurðu [hvort **í bæinn** hefði rútan komið klukkan sjö ____].
 they asked whether in town-the had bus-the come clock seven
- d. *Þeir spurðu [hvern **í bæinn** hefði rútan flutt ____ klukkan sjö].
 they asked whom(A) to town-the had bus-the carried clock seven
- e. *Þetta er strákurinn [sem **í bæinn** flutti rútan ____ klukkan sjö].
 this is boy-the that to town-the carried bus-the clock seven

Having outlined the range of Topicalization in Icelandic, and to some extent also *wh*-movement, we now (re)turn to Stylistic Fronting, partially with comparison to Topicalization in mind.

7.1.3 Stylistic Fronting and the overt expletive

In the preceding discussion I have sometimes referred to SF and given examples that were supposed to illustrate it. Since SF is typically said to require a ‘subject gap’ and the overt expletive arguably shows up when the logical subject is not in its canonical position, as discussed in chapter 6, it is useful for the understanding of SF to try to determine to what extent it alternates with the overt expletive. In the following discussion, variants with an ‘unfilled gap’ are included for ease of exposition and the gap left by the constituent fronted in the SF process is indicated by _____. Consider first the following relative clauses:

(7.28)

- a. Þetta er mál sem ___ hefur verið rætt.
 this is issue that has been discussed
- b. Þetta er mál sem **rætt** hefur verið ___. (past part.)
 this is issue that discussed has been

(7.29)

- a. Þetta er mál sem ___ hefur ekki verið rætt.
 this is issue that has not been discussed
- b. Þetta er mál sem **ekki** hefur ___ verið rætt. (neg. adv.)
 this is issue that not has been discussed
 'This is an issue that hasn't been discussed.'

(7.30)

- a. Þetta er mál sem ___ hefur komið upp.
 this is issue that has come forth
 'This is an issue that has come forth.'
- b. Þetta er mál sem **upp** hefur komið ___. (particle)
 this is issue that forth has come

What these SF examples have in common is that the fronted element has always been moved to an apparent subject position in a relative clause that otherwise would have had a subject gap. Interestingly, these gaps cannot be filled by the overt expletive *það* although 'expletive insertion' and SF often seem to have similar effects (see, e.g., Friðrik Magnússon 1990; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991; Holmberg 2000). Thus the following examples show that an overt expletive would be ungrammatical where a stylistically fronted element in (7.28)–(7.30) is fine (the b-examples above):

- (7.31) a. *Þetta er mál sem **það** hefur verið rætt.
 this is issue that there has been discussed
- b. *Þetta er mál sem **það** hefur ekki verið rætt.
 this is issue that there has not been discussed
- c. *Þetta er mál sem **það** hefur komið upp.
 this is issue that there has come forth

The same is usually true of gaps created by *wh*-extraction and Topicalization out of subject position of embedded clauses: such gaps can (optionally, as here) be filled by SF (the b-variant) but not by the overt expletive (the c-variant):

- (7.32) a. **Hver** heldur þú [að ___ hafi verið í eldhúsinu]?
 who think you that has been in kitchen-the
- b. Hver heldur þú [að **verið** hafi ___ í eldhúsinu]?
 who think you that been has in kitchen-the
- c. *Hver heldur þú [að **það** hafi verið í eldhúsinu]?
 who think you that there has been in kitchen-the
- (7.33) a. **Þessi maður** held ég [að ___ muni verða formaður].
 this man believe I that will be chairman
- b. Þessi maður held ég [að **verða** muni ___ formaður].
 this man believe I that be will chairman
- c. *Þessi maður held ég [að **það** muni verða formaður].
 this man believe I that there will be chairman

The basic generalization seems to be that the expletive *það* cannot be used at all to fill a gap created by the relativization or question formation (or Topicalization) process itself whereas SF is fine in such instances (cf. Maling and Zaenen 1978; Maling 1980 – see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991).⁷ Interestingly, overt expletive is fine in *wh*-questions with a *wh*-complementizer, that is, when no NP has been extracted (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:31):

- (7.34) a. Ég spurði [hvort **það** hefðu margir komið í veisluna].
 I asked whether there had many come to party-the
 'I asked whether many people had come to the party.'
- b. Veistu [hvenær **það** fer að skyggja]?
 know-you when it begins to darken
 'Do you know when it begins to get dark?'

We will return to the issue of the possible 'content' of the expletive as opposed to the SF element in section 7.2.

Consider now the following examples of SF, alternating with the overt expletive (there is probably some speaker variation with respect to the acceptance of the variants with unfilled subject gaps (the a-variants below)):

⁷ There are some instances of passable examples of overt expletive *það* in relativization and *wh*-extraction contexts (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:30ff.). We will return to the different domains of SF and expletive *það* in section 7.2.1 below.

- (7.35) a. ?*Þeir segja* [að ___ *verði dansað í brúðkaupinu*].
 they say that will-be danced in wedding-the
 ‘They say that there will be dancing in the wedding.’
- b. *Þeir segja* [að **dansað** *verði ___ í brúðkaupinu*].
 they say that danced will-be in wedding-the
- c. *Þeir segja* [að **það** *verði dansað í brúðkaupinu*].
 they say that there will-be danced in wedding-the

(7.36)

- a. ?*Hún heldur* [að ___ *hafi verið mýs í baðkerinu*].
 she thinks that have been mice in bathtub-the
- b. *Hún heldur* [að **verið** *hafi ___ mýs í baðkerinu*]. (past part.)
 she thinks that been have mice in bathtub-the
- c. *Hún heldur* [að **það** *hafi verið mýs í baðkerinu*]. (overt expl.)
 she thinks that there have been mice in bathtub-the

(7.37)

- a. ?*Hann hélt* [að ___ *gæti verið skemmtilegt* [að *rækta tómata*]].
 he thought that could be interesting to grow tomatoes
- b. *Hann hélt* [að **skemmtilegt** *gæti verið ___* [að *rækta tómata*]].
 he thought that interesting could be to grow tomatoes
- c. *Hann hélt* [að **það** *gæti verið skemmtilegt* [að *rækta tómata*]].
 he thought that it could be interesting to grow tomatoes

In (7.36) we have a ‘real expletive’ construction with the verb ‘be’ and we see that the ‘gap’ can be filled either by a SF element or the overt expletive *það* ‘there’. In (7.37), on the other hand, we have an extraposed (non-finite) subject clause, and here, too, the subject position vacated by the extraposition can either be filled by an adjective (*skemmtilegt* ‘interesting’) or by the *it*-expletive *það*. This is perhaps particularly interesting since it has been claimed that this kind of expletive is more ‘argument-like’ than the *there*-type expletive and hence the *it*-expletive has sometimes been referred to as ‘quasi-argument’ (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a). Yet this expletive too can be ‘replaced’ by a SF element, suggesting once more that the two expletives have a very similar function in Icelandic, they are not just accidental homophones.

7.1.4 Stylistic Fronting and Topicalization

So far I have not been very specific about the alleged differences between SF and Topicalization. Although most linguists would agree that

some examples are unambiguously instances of Topicalization and others are clear instances of SF, there is not a complete consensus as to where the boundary lies between the two constructions.

In her original paper on SF, Maling (1980) maintained that the differences listed in (7.38) distinguished between Topicalization and Stylistic Fronting (which she referred to as Stylistic Inversion at the time – Maling’s presentation is slightly modified here). Illustrative example sentences are given in (7.39), some of them modelled on Maling’s examples, others on examples in Friðrik Magnússon’s extensive comparison of Topicalization, SF and overt expletives (1990):⁸

(7.38)	Topicalization	Stylistic Fronting
a. applies to:	NPs, PPs, etc.	past participles, adjectives, some adverbs, particles, etc.
b. emphasis on fronted constituent:	common	not necessarily present
c. application in embedded clauses:	uncommon	common
d. application in relative clauses and <i>wh</i>-clauses:	questionable (at best)	accepted by everybody
e. boundedness:	unbounded	clause bounded
f. gap requirement:	does not require a ‘subject gap’	requires a ‘subject gap’

(7.39)

a. Different constituents moved:

Top: **Bennan mann** hef ég aldrei séð ___ áður.
 this man have I never seen before

SF: Honum var sama [hvað **sagt** var ___ um hann].
 him(D) was equal what said was about him
 ‘He didn’t care what was said about him.’

b. Differences with respect to emphasis:

Emphasis natural on the topicalized NP *bennan mann* in (7.39a) but not on the stylistically fronted participle *sagt*.

⁸ Since I have yet to compare Topicalization and SF in detail, I try to stick to unambiguous examples of Topicalization and SF here, i.e. movement of maximal constituents in constructions with overt definite subjects (Topicalization) vs. movement of head-like constituents in clauses that arguably would have a subject gap (at least if SF had not applied).

c. Differences with respect to application in embedded clauses:

Top: (?)Ég flyt ekki burt [nema þessar kýr geti ég selt ___].
 I move not away unless these cows(A) can I sell

SF: Ég flyt ekki burt [nema seldar verði ___ einhverjar kýr].
 I move not away unless sold will-be some cows

d. Differences with respect to application in relative clauses:

Top: *Hann var með bíl [sem um morguninn hafði hann keypt].
 he was with car that in the morning had he bought

SF: Hann var með bíl [sem keypt hafði ___ einhver útlendingur].
 he was with car that bought had some foreigner
 ‘He had a car that some foreigner had bought.’

e. Differences with respect to boundedness:

Top: Þessari bók sagði strákurinn [að þú hefðir stolið ___].
 this book said the boy that you had stolen

SF: *Bókin [sem stolið var sagt [að þú hefðir ___]].
 book-the that stolen was said that you had

f. Differences with respect to the subject gap requirement:

Top: Ég held [að þessari bók hafi Jón stolið ___].
 I think that this book has John stolen

SF: *Ég held [að stolið hafi Jón ___ þessari bók].
 I think that stolen has John this book

Although the judgements in (7.39) are pretty clear, some of the differences do not look like ‘hard and fast’ differences but rather matter of degree (cf., e.g., statements like ‘common’ vs. ‘uncommon’ or ‘does not require’ vs. ‘requires’). Because of this, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982a) wanted to argue that SF and Topicalization were the same kind of fronting process, and this approach was further pursued by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1990). Since further attempts to distinguish the two will necessarily require certain theoretical assumptions, I will postpone further discussion of this issue until the second half of this chapter (section 7.2).

7.1.5 Left Dislocation and Contrastive Dislocation

As originally discussed in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979, the so-called Left Dislocation construction can be found in Icelandic. As in the case of Topicalization, the targeted constituent has normally been mentioned in the preceding discourse and hence it will be definite (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:61ff.). The discourse function of the construction can be said to be the

reintroduction of a discourse topic or theme. Hence they require a particular discourse context, and indefinite NPs are usually very odd in left-dislocated position since the dislocated element will typically have been mentioned in the previous discourse. A NP in the dislocated position will be in the nominative but a pronominal copy in situ (italicized below) carries the appropriate case. A distinct intonation break (“comma-intonation”) characterizes this construction (hence the comma after the dislocated element!):

- (7.40) a. Þeir ákváðu upphæðina strax.
 they determined sum-the(A) immediately
- b. **Upphæðin**, þeir ákváðu *hana* strax.
 sum-the(N) they determined it(A) immediately
- (7.41) a. María sá prest í bænum í gær.
 Mary saw minister(A) in town-the yesterday
 ‘Mary saw a minister in town yesterday.’
- b. ***Prestur**, María sá *hann* í bænum í gær.
 minister Mary saw him in town-the yesterday
- c. **Presturinn**, María sá *hann* í bænum í gær.
 minister-the Mary saw him in town-the yesterday

As in English, so-called pronominal epithets can also be used in situ to refer to the dislocated element:

- (7.42) **Presturinn**, María sá *það fífl* í bænum í gær.
 minister-the, Mary saw that idiot in town-the yesterday
 ‘The minister, Mary saw the idiot in town yesterday.’

A superficially similar dislocation construction also exists. Compare the following (where capitals are meant to indicate contrastive stress):

- (7.43) a. **Þessi hringur**, Ólafur hefur lofað Maríu *honum*.
 this ring(N) Olaf(N) has promised Mary(D) it(D)
 ‘This ring, Olaf has promised it to Mary.’
- b. **ÞESSUM HRING**, *HONUM* hefur Ólafur lofað — Maríu.
 this ring(D) it(D) has Olaf(N) promised Mary(D)
 ‘This ring, that one Olaf has promised to Mary.’

In addition to the indicated difference in stress pattern, the case of the dislocated element in the b-example is determined by its role in the following clause, whereas a left-dislocated element is normally nominative. Because of the stress pattern, this latter type of dislocation has been referred to as **Contrastive Dislocation** (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:61ff.). And

whereas Left Dislocation seems impossible in embedded clauses, Contrastive Dislocation seems better (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:63 – see also Zaenen 1980):

(7.44)

- a. ?*Jón segir [að **þessi hringur**, Ólafur hafi lofað Maríu *honum*].
 John says that this ring(N) Olaf has promised Mary it
- b. Jón segir [að **ÞESSUM HRING**, *HONUM* hafi Ólafur lofað Maríu ____].
 John says that this ring(D) it(D) has Olaf promised Mary(D)

I will have reason to return to these constructions in connection with the discussion of discourse properties in section 7.2.

7.1.6 *Clefts and relatives*

Constructions like (7.45b) are often referred to as **clefts** in English:⁹

- (7.45) a. María sá lítið lamb.
 Mary saw little lamb(A)
 ‘Mary saw a little lamb.’
- b. Það var **lítið lamb** sem María sá ____.
 it was little lamb that Mary saw
 ‘It was a little lamb that Mary saw.’
- (7.46) a. Nemendurnir fundu smjörið í ruslafötunni.
 students-the found butter-the in garbage-can-the
 ‘The students found the butter in the garbage can.’
- b. Það var **í ruslafötunni** sem nemendurnir fundu smjörið ____.
 it was in garbage-can-the that students-the found butter-the
 ‘It was in the garbage can that the students found the butter.’

Now observe that in addition to (7.45a) one can also have (7.47) in Icelandic:

- (7.47) Það sem María sá ____ var lítið lamb.
 it that Mary saw was little lamb
 ‘What Mary saw was a little lamb.’

⁹ Note that Icelandic does not have the so-called pseudo-clefts or *wh*-clefts familiar from English, cf. the English translation below:

- (i) *Hvað María sá var trjádrumbur.
 what Mary saw was a log

So by *clefts* in Icelandic I will not mean *wh*-clefts but rather the variant sometimes referred to as *it*-clefts in English.

Because of its structure this kind of construction has been referred to in the literature as ‘It Relative’ (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:76ff.), and as can be seen from the gloss it corresponds semantically to the so-called *wh*-clefts in English.

Now the question is whether (7.45b) is possibly more closely related to (7.47) than to (7.45a). Note that in (7.45a) the phrase *lítið lamb* ‘little lamb’ is an object whereas it is a predicative NP in (7.47). Hence we might expect a difference in case marking of the phrase *lítið lamb* in constructions like (7.45b) depending on their ‘source’, that is, accusative vs. nominative. Since *lítið lamb* is neuter we cannot tell, but once we select a different noun, we see that both possibilities exist (for most speakers at least):¹⁰

- (7.48) a. Það var **líttinn hund** sem María sá.
 it was small dog(A) that Mary saw
 ‘It was a small dog that Mary saw.’
 b. Það var **lítill hundur** sem María sá.
 it was small dog(N) that Mary saw

We could then say that the focused (accusative) element in (7.48a) is somehow related to the (accusative) object in a sentence like (7.49a) whereas the focused (nominative) element in (7.48b) is related to the (nominative) predicative NP in an It Relative sentence like (7.49b):

- (7.49) a. María sá **lítinn hund**.
 Mary saw little dog(A)
 b. Það [sem María sá ___] var **lítill hundur**.
 it that Mary saw was little dog(N)

While derivation of (7.48b) from (7.49b) is straightforward (all that is needed is extraposition of the relative clause), it is not entirely obvious how to relate (7.49a) to something like (7.48a), although the case of the focused constituent suggests a relation. It may be of some interest in this connection to observe that cleft constructions with prepositional phrases in focus position, such as (7.46b), cannot be derived by extraposing a relative clause since a source like (7.50) is impossible:

¹⁰ This is of some comparative interest since both variants are also found in Faroese (cf. Petersen 1999; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:198).

- (7.50) *Það [sem nemendurnir fundu smjörið] var í ruslafötunni.¹¹
 it that students-the found butter-the was in garbage-can-the

Extrapositions of various kinds will be the topic of the next subsection.

7.1.7 *Extrapositions and rightward movement*

In this final subsection of the descriptive overview I will briefly consider a few instances of apparent rightward movement and other ‘right-heavy’ constructions in Icelandic (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984a, 1990a). These are of some general interest since certain theories have favoured leftward movement analyses over rightward movement ones or even completely ruled out the latter (see Kayne 1994 and much later work in the same spirit).

It is useful to begin by giving an overview of alleged rightward movement constructions, including some that we have already considered to some extent. The ‘vacated position’ will be marked by as before or else filled by an expletive element. Note that by giving this overview I am not taking any stand on the correctness of the proposed rightward movement analyses, which is sometimes implied in the common name of the construction, but as we shall see below, some of these analyses are more plausible than others:

- (7.51) Indefinite Subject Postposing:

Nokkrir	málfræðingar	höfðu	verið	í	heita	pottinum.
some	linguists	had	been	in	hot	tub-the
→ Það	höfðu	verið	nokkrir	málfræðingar	í	heita pottinum.
there	had	been	some	linguists	in	hot tub-the

- (7.52)

Heavy NP Shift:

Ég	sá	nokkra	málfræðinga	með	ráðstefnumöppur	í	strætó.	
I	saw	some	linguists	with	conference-folders	in	bus	
‘I saw some linguists with conference folders in the bus.’								
→ Ég	sá	<u> </u>	í	strætó	nokkra	málfræðinga	með	ráðstefnumöppur.
I	saw		in	bus	some	linguists	with	conference-folders

¹¹ Note that the following is also bad:

- (i) *Þar [sem nemendurnir fundu smjörið] var í ruslafötunni.
 there that students-the found butter-the was in garbage-can-the
 although *þar sem* often corresponds to English *where*.

(7.53) Extraposition:

- a. [CP Að Halldór missti af strætó] olli vandræðum.
 that Halldor missed of bus caused troubles
 → **Það** olli vandræðum [CP **að Halldór missti af strætó**]
 It caused troubles that Halldor missed of bus
 ‘It caused problems that Halldor missed the bus.’
- b. [CP Að reykja sígarettur] er hættulegt.
 to smoke(inf.)cigarettes is dangerous
 → **Það** er hættulegt [CP **að reykja sígarettur**]
 it is dangerous to smoke cigarettes

(7.54)

Extraposition out of NP:

- a. [NP Maðurinn [CP sem hringdi í gærkvöldi]] er kominn að hitta þig.
 man-the that called in last-night is come to see you
 ‘The man that called last night has come to see you.’
 → [NP Maðurinn ___] er kominn að hitta þig [CP **sem hringdi í gærkvöldi**].
 man-the is come to see you that called in last-night
 ‘The man has come to see you that called last night.’
- b. [NP Ritdómur [PP um nýjustu bók Chomskys]] mun birtast í næsta hefti.
 review about newest book Chomsky’s will appear in next issue
 → [NP Ritdómur ___] mun birtast í næsta hefti [PP **um nýjustu bók Chomskys**].
 review will appear in next issue about newest book Chomsky’s
 ‘A review will appear in the next issue of Chomsky’s latest book.’
- c. [NP Sú staðreynd [CP að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt]] er merkileg.
 that fact(f.) that earth-the shall be round is interesting(f.)
 ‘The fact that the earth is round is interesting.’
 → f. [NP Sú staðreynd ___] er merkileg [CP **að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt**].
 that fact(f.) is interesting(f.) that earth-the shall be round
 ‘The fact is interesting that the earth is round.’
- d. [NP Það [CP að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt]] er merkilegt.
 that(n.) that earth-the shall be round is interesting(n.)
 ‘The fact that the earth is round is interesting.’
 → [NP Það ___] er merkilegt [CP **að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt**].¹²
 that(n.) is interesting(n.) that earth-the shall be round
 ‘It is interesting that the earth is round.’

¹² As has already been pointed out (section 6.1.1, n. 3), and will be discussed presently and in section 9.1.4.2, this kind of Extraposition is different from the ‘regular’ Extraposition illustrated in (7.53): the *það* here is not the expletive *það* but rather a referential *það* which is not restricted to clause-initial position.

(7.55) Right Dislocation:

- a. **Hann** er langbestur, (**hann**) **Alfreð**.
 he(N) is long-best (he) Alfred(N)
 'He is by far the best, Alfred.'
- b. Ég þekki **hana** ekkert, **dóttur hans**.
 I know her(A) nothing, daughter(A) his
 'I don't know her at all, his daughter (that is).'

(7.56)

Right Node Raising:

María er sennilega **á barnum** og Jón er áreiðanlega **á barnum**.
 Mary is probably on bar-the and John is certainly on bar-the
 → María er sennilega ___ og Jón (er) áreiðanlega **á barnum**.
 Mary is probably and John is certainly on bar-the
 'Mary is probably, and John is certainly, in the bar.'

These constructions are obviously of different types. As the reader may have noted, the alleged 'gap' left by the rightward movement in question is sometimes left unfilled, sometimes apparently filled by an overt expletive element and sometimes a pronominal copy is left behind. This is summarized in (7.57), based on the examples in (7.51)–(7.56):

(7.57)	leaves unfilled gap	expletive fills gap	leaves a pron. copy
a. Indef. Subject Postposing	–	+	–
b. Heavy NP Shift	+	–	–
c. Extraposition	–	+	–
d. Extraposition out of NP	+	–	–
e. Right Dislocation	–	–	+
f. Right Node Raising	+	–	–

The so-called Right Node Raising is just included here for the sake of completeness but I will have nothing further to say about it (for some discussion, see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:370ff.).

As already hinted at in the discussion of possible subject positions in section 2.1.3, it is not necessary to assume that apparent **Indefinite Subject Postposing** involves rightward movement: the subject is generated in some position inside the VP, like other arguments, that is, either in SpecVP (or the equivalent in other frameworks) or possibly in VComp position (if the verb is an unaccusative or passive verb). The idea is, then, that the (logical) subject normally moves to a 'higher' position, such as the position immediately following the finite verb or to a preverbal position (SpecIP or even

SpecCP – cf. also the discussion in chapter 2). The surface position of the subject depends on the definiteness and ‘heaviness’ of the subject and even the kind of modifiers it has (cf. the discussion of different types of quantifiers in sections 6.1.3 and 6.1.4). If the subject does not ‘move’ all the way to the top position, the ‘subject gap’ can apparently be filled by an overt expletive or by some element moved by Stylistic Fronting (cf. the discussion in 7.1.3 above). In either case, it is not necessary to assume any kind of rightward movement.

Now some instances of apparent Heavy NP Shift could be explained away as ‘incomplete leftward movement’, for example (7.58b):

(7.58)

- a. **Nokkrir málfræðingar með ráðstefnumöppur** höfðu verið í strætó.
 some linguists with conference-folders had been in bus
 ‘Some linguists with conference folders had been in the bus.’
- b. **Það** höfðu verið **nokkrir málfræðingar með ráðstefnumöppur** í strætó
 there had been some linguists with conference-folders in bus
 ‘There had been some linguists with conference folders in the bus.’
- c. **Það** höfðu verið í strætó **nokkrir málfræðingar með ráðstefnumöppur**.
 there had been in bus some linguists with conference-folders
 ‘There had been in the bus some linguists with conference folders.’

Here we could say that in (7.58b) the logical subject (the associate of the expletive) has not been fronted from the VComp position after the unaccusative verb *vera* ‘be’ and in that position it naturally precedes the PP *í strætó* ‘in the bus’. But such an analysis is obviously insufficient for (7.58c) as here the subject appears to be even further to the right, that is, after the PP. This does not work so well if the subject is not ‘heavy’, cf. (7.59b):

- (7.59) a. Það höfðu verið **málfræðingar** í strætó.
 there had been linguists in bus
- b. ?*Það höfðu verið í strætó **málfræðingar**.
 there had been in bus linguists

Hence it seems that some sort of ‘heaviness’ is required for the subject to be able to occur clause-finally, and the same condition holds for objects, as can be seen by comparing the following to (7.52) above:

- (7.60) a. Ég sá **málfræðinga** í strætó.
 I saw linguists in bus
 ‘I saw linguists in the bus.’
- b. ?*Ég sá ___ í strætó **málfræðinga**.
 I saw in bus linguists

For this reason it has often been assumed that heavy NPs can be moved to the right.

Some of the same issues crop up when we consider the different types of extraposition listed above. As argued at length by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1979:155ff.) and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1990a), the ‘extraposed’ clauses exemplified in (7.53) are the ‘logical subjects’ of the relevant predicates, although the subject position appears to be filled by an expletive element. As shown above, the overt expletive in Icelandic is not required in the expletive constructions – the initial position could also be filled by some other element or the finite verb could occur sentence-initially, for example in a ‘yes/no’ question, as is also the case in other expletive constructions as illustrated in chapter 6:

- (7.61) a. Þá olli vandræðum [_{CP} að Halldór missti af strætó] vandræðum.
 then caused troubles that Halldor missed of bus troubles
 ‘Then it caused problems that Halldor missed the bus.’
- b. Er hættulegt [_{CP} að reykja sígarettur] ?
 is dangerous to smoke cigarettes
 ‘Is it dangerous to smoke cigarettes?’

Now various linguists have argued against a ‘rightward movement’ analysis of extraposition constructions (see, e.g., Haider 1997 and references cited there) and there is no need to go into these arguments here. What is relevant for our purposes is that the expletive found in extraposition constructions in Icelandic behaves like expletives that ‘fill’ a subject position in constructions with a delayed subject. Nevertheless, there are some differences between extraposition constructions of the kind under discussion and more typical expletive constructions. First, the ‘logical subject’ (the associate of the expletive) cannot occur in the position immediately following the finite verb, not even when something is preposed or in direct ‘yes/no’-questions:

- (7.62) a. *Þá olli [_{CP} að Halldór missti af strætó] vandræðum.
 then caused that Halldor missed of bus troubles
- b. *Er [_{CP} að reykja sígarettur] hættulegt?
 is to smoke cigarettes dangerous

Second, the expletive *það* in the extraposition construction corresponds to English *it* rather than *there*, and it has at times been argued that *it* is more argument-like than *there* and hence it has been referred to as a ‘quasi-argument’ (cf., e.g., Vikner 1995a:224ff. and references cited there). Thus one might think that the *það* in extraposition constructions is more of a subject (more argument-like) than the ‘true expletive’ *það* ‘there’. Since this is relevant to the analysis of the ‘extraposed’ clauses, two comments are in order here in this connection.

As illustrated in some detail in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979, chapter 4, it is necessary to distinguish between constructions where a clause is extraposed out of a NP, that is, from a *það*-head in a NP, as in (7.54d), and constructions where the extraposed clause is the logical subject. Consider the following (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:181–2):

(7.63)

A: Ég hugsa [_{CP} að Jón hafi borðað hákarlinn] og nú ætla ég að ...
 I think that John has eaten shark-the and now intend I to
 ‘I think that John has eaten the shark and now I intend to ...’

B: a. [_{NP} Það [_{CP} að Jón hafi borðað hákarlinn]] er líklegt, en ...
 it that John has eaten shark-the is likely but ...
 ‘It is likely that John has eaten the shark, but ...’

b. [_{NP} Það ___] er líklegt [_{CP} að Jón hafi borðað hákarlinn], en ...
 it¹³ is likely that John has eaten shark-the but
 ‘It is likely that John has eaten the shark, but ...’

As illustrated here, an example like the b-answer of Speaker B could be derived by extraposition of the clause out of a NP with a *það*-head. This means that many constructions with an extraposed clause are structurally ambiguous. But if the *það* in such clauses is (a part of) an argument and not the expletive *það*, then it should be able to follow the finite verb, and indeed it can in contexts of this sort, that is, when *það* refers to a previously discussed eating (see also (7.54d) above):¹⁴

(7.64) a. Er **það** líklegt [_{CP} að Jón hafi borðað hákarlinn]?
 is it likely that John has eaten shark-the

b. Er **það** ekki merkilegt [_{CP} að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt]?
 is it not interesting that earth-the shall be round
 ‘Isn’t it interesting that the earth is round?’

In such instances, the extraposed clause is an extraction island (like other clauses that are a part of a complex NP, cf. (7.54c)) but not otherwise:

¹³ Since this *það* is stressed it should perhaps be translated as ‘that’ rather than ‘it’ but the (neuter) demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ and the (neuter) personal pronoun ‘it’ are homophonous in Icelandic.

¹⁴ In the example of ‘extraposition from a *það*-head’ illustrated above I gave an explicit conversational context to illustrate the (referential) nature of *það*. As discussed in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979, section 4.3.5, it seems that factive predicates may allow subjects of the type [_{NP} Það [_{CP} að ...]] without such explicit context when the ‘fact’ being discussed is common knowledge, as it were. (7.64b) would be a case in point.

- (7.65) a. *Hákarlinn er það líklegt [CP að Jón hafi borðað ___]
 shark-the(A) is it likely that John has eaten
- b. Hákarlinn er líklegt [CP að Jón hafi borðað ___]
 shark-the is likely that John has eaten
 ‘The shark it is likely that John has eaten.’

Another difference between an argumental *það* and expletive *það* can be found in constructions like the following (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:204ff.):

- (7.66) Það truflar mig [CP þegar þú kitlar mig].
 it disturbs me when you tickle me

Here we have an adverbial (temporal) clause in final position and a *það* in initial position. Now we would not expect the temporal clause to be an argument (i.e. a subject) and hence the *það* in constructions like this would have to be the actual subject argument and not an (Icelandic-type) expletive. If so, then it should be able to follow the finite verb, for example in direct questions, and it can (and it cannot be left out – the *e* is meant to indicate an empty element):

- (7.67) Truflar það/**e* þig [CP þegar ég kitla þig] ?
 disturbs it you when I tickle you
 ‘Does it disturb you when I tickle you?’

We can conclude, then, that the properties of extraposition of ‘true’ subject clauses are different from those of extraposition from an argument-*það*. In the first case the *það* has the properties of an expletive (and the extraposed clause is then more like an associate of the expletive) whereas in the latter the *það* has argument properties and seems to be the actual subject, just like the *það* found in constructions with an adjunct clause in sentence-final position (cf. (7.66)–(7.67)).

The so-called **Right Dislocation** construction looks at first like a mirror image of the Left Dislocation construction discussed above. Compare (7.68a,b):

- (7.68) a. Ég þekki hana ekkert, Maríu. (Right Dislocation)
 I know her(A) nothing Mary(A)
 ‘I don’t know her at all, Mary (that is).’
- b. María, ég þekki hana ekkert. (Left Dislocation)
 Mary(N) I know her(A) nothing
 ‘Mary, I don’t know her at all.’

In both instances it seems that the dislocated constituent has to have been a topic of the conversation, that is, neither of the constructions can be used out

of the blue. Note, however, that in Right Dislocation the dislocated constituent agrees in case with the pronominal copy ‘left behind’ whereas the left dislocated constituent shows up in the nominative. I will not be discussing these facts further here as other constructions have figured more prominently in the linguistic discussion.

This concludes the descriptive overview of the constructions involved and now I turn to some theoretical and comparative issues.

7.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

7.2.1 *Stylistic Fronting vs. Topicalization*

Although most linguists would presumably agree on the classification of the examples of Topicalization and SF listed in (7.39), there has been some controversy in the literature as to the exact differences between these two constructions. Let us first consider the kinds of elements that SF and Topicalization are usually said to apply to. In terms of standard differentiation between constituent types, the elements affected by SF look like heads, whereas Topicalization seems to apply to maximal projections. Because of this it has indeed been suggested that SF is head movement (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1991; Holmberg and Platzack 1995; Poole 1992, 1996; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993).¹⁵ Nevertheless, others have suggested that it moves elements to a specifier position and hence (presumably) must be an operation that can move maximal projections (see, e.g., Kjartan G. Ottósson 1989; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Platzack 1987a; Holmberg 2000). Still others have argued that SF can either move maximal projections or heads and hence the landing sites will vary (Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2003, 2004a, b). The reason why these linguists have come to different conclusions (or the same linguists have come to different conclusions at different times) is apparently that they have been concentrating on different sets of data. Hence it is worth trying to sort out the data once more. We can begin by considering the following assumptions commonly made in discussions of SF and Topicalization:¹⁶

¹⁵ In this discussion, as elsewhere in this book, I will disregard so-called ‘remnant movement’ analyses, which make it very difficult to distinguish between types of movement. Doing so makes it easier to concentrate on the empirical differences rather than the technical accounts of them.

¹⁶ As we shall see below, not all linguists who have written about SF share these assumptions, but something similar to them underlies much of their discussion in one form or another.

(7.69)

- a. SF is only possible if there is a **subject gap** in the sense first outlined by Maling (1980:182ff.). As subject gaps she discussed gaps 'left' by extracted (or deleted) subjects of indirect questions and relative clauses (cf. examples like (7.28b) and (7.32b) above), subject gaps in impersonal constructions, including impersonal passives (cf. the examples in (7.35) above), and subject gaps left by postposed indefinite subjects (cf. (7.36)). This means that if we have a fronting process and no subject gap, then that fronting process cannot be SF.
- b. Topicalization is a process that moves **maximal projections** to a high specifier position, presumably SpecCP (at least in main clauses).
- c. While Topicalization does not **require** a subject gap, this does not mean that it is ruled out by the presence of such a gap.

It seems that the first assumption has been made by all linguists discussing SF since Maling's original description of it. The second assumption is also fairly uncontroversial. What the third assumption means is that if a maximal constituent is fronted in the presence of a subject gap, then it is not ruled out a priori that this fronting could be Topicalization and not SF. It seems, however, that many linguists have been unwilling to make this assumption and have automatically assumed that any fronting process in the context of a subject gap must be SF by definition. Because it can be shown that such fronting processes sometimes involve maximal projections, they have concluded that SF cannot be head movement.

It is important to make absolutely clear what is at stake here before I continue the discussion of SF. The main options can be summarized as follows:

(7.70)

- a. *The subject gap is the distinguishing factor:*
Every time some constituent gets fronted 'into' a subject gap (or next to it) it is an instance of SF.
- b. *The bar-level of the moved constituent is the distinguishing factor:*
Every time a XP (a maximal projection) is fronted it is an instance of Topicalization, whereas comparable fronting of a head is an instance of SF.
- c. *The discourse function is the distinguishing factor:*
Every time a constituent is fronted for focusing purposes it is an instance of Topicalization. If the fronting has no focusing effect it is an instance of SF.

As we shall see below, proposed analyses of SF vary widely with respect to their choice of the distinguishing factor. Consequently, their conclusions about the nature of SF will be very different. But it should also be noted that it could very well be that options b and c coincide, so to speak, namely

that all instances of fronting for the purposes of focusing involve constituents that can be interpreted as XPs whereas no instances of fronting that can only be interpreted as head movements have anything to do with focusing. We shall return to these issues at the end of this section.

Now it must be pointed out that it is not always easy to determine whether a fronted constituent is a head or a maximal projection. If an adverb like *ekki* ‘not’ or *aldrei* ‘never’ is fronted, for instance, then it could either be a whole adverbial phrase (an AdvP) or just the head of such a phrase. Similarly, a fronted predicate adjective could presumably either be an adjective phrase (AdjP) or just the head of such a phrase. It is very difficult, on the other hand, to see how a fronted particle from a particle verb construction could be anything larger than a head, but one has to keep in mind that verb particles are typically homophonous with adverbs and adverbs are structurally ambiguous in the sense just described (they can either be heads or whole adverbial phrases). Similarly, the non-finite form of a verb in a VP should be just the head of that VP.

With this in mind, it is interesting to note that particles and non-finite forms of main verbs are among the elements that are not easily fronted in main clauses with definite NP subjects, as already pointed out (cf. (7.4) and (7.5) above):

(7.71)	a. *Upp up	hafa have	strákarnir boys-the	tekið taken	—	þessar kartöflur. these potatoes
	b. ?*Lesið read(inf.)	munu will	strákarnir boys-the	—		einhverjar bækur. some books
	c. ?*Lesnar read(sup.)	hafa have	strákarnir boys-the	—		flestar bækurnar. most books-the
	d. ?*Lesnar read(past part.)	voru were	bækurnar books-the	—	upp til agna up to pieces	í fyrra. last-year

A context of this type is, on the other hand, generally unproblematic for the fronting of maximal projections, that is, the kind of fronting that is standardly referred to as Topicalization. This is illustrated in (7.72):

(7.72)	a. Þessar kartöflur	hafa	strákarnir	tekið	upp	— .
	these potatoes	have	boys-the	taken	up	
	‘These potatoes, the boys have dug.’					
	b. Einhverjar bækur	munu	strákarnir	lesa	— .	
	some books	will	boys-the	read(inf.)		
	‘Some books, the boys will read.’					

- c. **Flestar bækurnar** hafa strákarirnir lesið ____ .
 most books-the have boys-the read(sup.)
 'Most of the books, the boys have read.'
- d. **Í fyrra** voru bækurnar lesnar upp til agna ____ .
 last year were books-the read up to pieces
 'Last year the books were read to shreds.'

Conversely, the small elements unsuccessfully fronted in (7.71) are the elements that figure most prominently in typical SF contexts, such as gaps created by relativization:

- (7.73) a. Leikurinn sem **fram** hafði farið ____ kvöldið áður ...
 game-the that forth had gone night-the before
 'The game that had taken place the night before ...'
- b. Þeir sem **búið** hafa ____ í útlöndum ...
 those that lived(sup.) have in out-lands
 'Those who have lived abroad ...'
- c. Bækurnar sem **lesnar** voru ____ upp til agna ...
 books-the that read(past part.) were up to pieces.
 'The books that were read to shreds ...'

Note also that in sentences of this type there is typically no focusing of the fronted element involved. Under normal intonation the focus in the a-example would be on *kvöldið ÁÐUR* 'the night BEFORE', in the b-example the focus is on *í ÚTLÖNDUM* 'abroad' and in the c-example it is on *upp til AGNA* 'to SHREDS'. This is the same kind of focus as one would get in corresponding examples without the SF (here the 'unfilled' subject gaps are indicated by ____):

- (7.74)
- a. Leikurinn sem ____ hafði farið fram kvöldið áður ...
 game-the that had gone forth night-the before
 'The game that had taken place the night before ...'
- b. Þeir sem ____ hafa búið í útlöndum ...
 those that have lived(sup.) in out-lands
 'Those who have lived abroad ...'
- c. Bækurnar sem ____ voru lesnar upp til agna ...
 books-the that were read(past part.) were up to pieces.
 'The books that were read to shreds ...'

Thus the facts considered so far are consistent with the common claim that SF typically moves 'small elements' (heads) and has no focusing effect,

whereas Topicalization typically moves maximal constituents and has a focusing (foregrounding) effect.

Although the typical instances of SF are mainly found in subordinate clauses, as Maling points out (1980), it is also possible to find main clauses where a subject gap has been ‘independently created’ and ‘small elements’ like particles and non-finite main verbs can be fronted (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:27–8):

- (7.75) a. **Fram** hafði komið ___ [að ...].
 forth had come that
 ‘It had become clear that ...’
- b. **Komið** höfðu ___ margir stúdentar á bókasafnið og ...
 come(sup.) had many students to library-the and

Although these examples involve fronting in the main clause, there is no focusing involved. The particle *fram* ‘forth’ cannot possibly have any kind of focus reading in the a-example and by *komið* ‘come’ in the b-example it is not being implied, for instance, that other students had ‘gone’ or whatever.

We can also look at the so-called ‘accessibility hierarchy’ proposed by Maling (1980, section 2.3) to account for the apparent fact that if there are multiple candidates for fronting by SF, it is normally the case that only one (typically the highest one in the structure) can be fronted. Some of these facts can apparently be accounted for by referring to the so-called Head Movement Constraint (HMC), originally proposed by Travis (1984:131 – see also Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991 and the critical discussion in Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a), or by its equivalent or replacement in other frameworks (e.g. the Minimal Link Condition (MLC) of Chomsky (1995:355–6 – see also Holmberg 2000) or some sort of a ‘Shortest Move’ constraint).¹⁷ As is well known, such a constraint does not affect the fronting of maximal projections in regular Topicalization. Thus we would not expect it to be involved either in the fronting of maximal projections in subject gap structures if that kind of fronting is in some sense of a different nature than the regular SF, for example if one affects maximal projections and the other heads for some principled reasons. Consider the following with this in mind:

¹⁷ As the reader may have noted, the element fronted by SF seems to cross some heads on its way to clause-initial position, e.g. the finite verb. This could either be accounted for by assuming that it adjoins to these heads (e.g. the finite verb) or else by defining a ‘relevant head/element’ in some way (cf., e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991; Holmberg 2000). We shall return to this issue below.

(7.76)

- a. **Það** hafði ekki komið fram í umræðunum [að ...]. (Ic)
 it had not come forth in discussions-the that
 'It had not become clear that ...'
- b. **EKKI** hafði ___ komið fram í umræðunum [að ...].
 not had come forth that in discussions-the that
- c. **?*Fram** hafði ekki komið ___ í umræðunum [að ...].
 forth had not come in discussions-the that
- d. **Í umræðunum** hafði ekki komið fram ___ [að ...].
 in discussions-the had not come forth that

As shown here, the subject gap created by the extraposed subject clause can be 'filled' (or neutralized) in three different ways:

- (7.77) a. by the overt expletive *það* 'it'
 b. by moving the negation *ekki* 'not' to initial position
 c. by fronting the prepositional phrase *í umræðunum* 'in the discussion'

Interestingly, it cannot be filled/neutralized by moving the particle *fram* 'forth' across the negation *ekki* 'not', although it is fine to move the maximal projection *í umræðunum* 'in the discussion' across it. This suggests that, however we want to formulate this constraint, it has to be able to account for the differences between moving a 'small' element like a particle (a head or a zero-level category in X-bar terms) and a 'large' element like a prepositional phrase (a maximal projection). We will return to this in section 7.2.3 and 7.2.4 and have a look some Faroese data for comparison and at apparent counterexamples to this cited by Holmberg (2000), for instance.

Finally, a similar contrast between moving maximal projections and head-like elements shows up when we attempt to move such elements out of infinitival complements. As pointed out in (7.38), Maling (1980) originally maintained that SF is clause bounded, whereas it is well known that Topicalization is not. This alleged difference was illustrated with the following examples (repeated from (7.39e) – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993):

- (7.78) a. **Þessari bók** sagði strákurinn [að þú hefðir stolið ___].
 this book said the boy that you had stolen
- b. ***Bókin** [sem stolið var sagt [að þú hefðir ___]].
 the book that stolen was said that you had

An interesting contrast shows up, however, when we consider attempted extractions out of infinitival complements. As illustrated in (7.79), we get an ungrammatical sentence if we try to do SF out of a control complement across

the infinitival marker *að* but not out of the complement of a control verb that takes an infinitival complement without the infinitival marker *að* (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993 – see also Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1989 and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:57–9 and the discussion in section 8.2.5 below):

- (7.79) a. Þetta er maðurinn sem lofaði [að lesa allar bækurnar].
 this is man-the that promised to read all books-the
- b. *Þetta er maðurinn sem **lesa** lofaði [að __ allar bækurnar].
 this is man-the that read promised to all books-the
- c. Þetta er maðurinn sem vildi [lesa allar bækurnar].
 this is man-the that wanted read all books-the
- d. Þetta er maðurinn sem **lesa** vildi [__ allar bækurnar].
 this is man-the that read wanted all books-the

Now if this difference has something to do with the attempted movement of the (head-like) non-finite verb across the (head-like) infinitival marker *að*, then we would not expect to find any contrast of this kind if we attempted to extract the maximal projection *allar bækurnar* ‘all the books’ in the same way. And this prediction is borne out:

- (7.80) a. ?Þetta er maðurinn sem **allar bækurnar** reyndi [að lesa __].
 this is man-the that all books-the tried to read
 ‘This is the man that tried to read all the books.’
- b. ?Þetta er maðurinn sem **allar bækurnar** vildi [lesa __].
 this is man-the that all books-the wanted read
 ‘This is the man that wanted to read all the books.’

There is no contrast in acceptability between these two examples, and even if some speakers may not find them perfect, they are clearly much better than attempts to ‘fill’ the gap in the relative clause with the overt expletive:

- (7.81) a. *Þetta er maðurinn sem **það** reyndi að lesa allar bækurnar.
 this is man-the that there tried to read all books-the
- b. *Þetta er maðurinn sem **það** vildi lesa allar bækurnar.
 this is man-the that there wanted read all books-the

As we shall see below, other evidence suggests that the relevant constraint is not simply sensitive to distinctions between heads and non-heads but also to the ‘purpose’ of the movement.

Having illustrated these differences and similarities between Topicalization and SF we now turn to further discussion of the interaction between SF and the overt expletive.

7.2.2 *Stylistic Fronting, expletives and subject gaps*

As shown above, the overt expletive is typically ruled out from the subject ‘gap’ position in indirect questions and relative clauses that is coindexed with an extracted *wh*-element or the head of a relative clause. This was originally pointed out by Maling and Zaenen (1978). Here the overt expletive contrasts sharply with stylistically fronted elements, which are fine in this context (see, e.g., the examples in (7.28)–(7.31) above). Other kinds of gaps in relative clauses can (although sometimes marginally) be filled by the overt expletive. The following examples are partially modelled on examples given by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1990:30–1) and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1990a:54); the traces (or gaps) bound by the relativizer are indicated by a coindexed trace (*t*). We clearly have instances of ‘expletive constructions’ inside the relative clause, a transitive expletive in the a-example and an expletive with *vera* ‘be’ in the b-example, the associate being *margar konur* ‘many women’ in both instances:

(7.82)

- a. ??Þetta var bók_i [sem það höfðu margar konur lesið *t_i*].
 this was book that there had many women read
- b. ?Þetta var bók_i [sem það voru margar konur hrifnar af *t_i*].
 this was book that there were many women fond of

Similarly, the following are passable (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:33 – the extraction sites left by the *wh*-element are marked with a coindexed *t*):

(7.83)

- a. ??Hvaða tegund_i heldurðu [að það hafi flestir drukkið *t_i* í partíinu]?
 which sort think-you that there have most-people drunk in party-the
- b. ?Hvaða tegund_i heldurðu [að það hafi verið drukkið mest af *t_i* í partíinu]?
 which sort think-you that there have been drunk most of in party-the

While these sentences are somewhat unnatural, they are clearly much better than attempts to fill a real relative or *wh*-question subject gap with an overt expletive as in the following examples repeated from above:

- (7.31) a. *Þetta er mál sem það hefur verið rætt.
 this is issue that there has been discussed
- b. *Þetta er mál sem það hefur ekki verið rætt.
 this is issue that there has not been discussed
- c. *Þetta er mál sem það hefur komið upp.
 this is issue that there has come forth

These examples are completely ungrammatical. This must have something to do with the feature content of the overt expletive itself (see also Holmberg 2000:473).

7.2.3 *Some comparative evidence*

It is probably fair to say that the interaction between Stylistic Fronting, overt expletives and permissible and impermissible subject gaps is among the more intriguing phenomena illustrated in the first part of this chapter. As is often the case, it is possible that comparative evidence from other languages can shed some light on the theoretical issues involved.

It is useful to begin by restating some of the questions raised by the data illustrated above:

(7.84)

- a. What is the role of (or effect of) Stylistic Fronting and why is it incompatible with the overt expletive in Icelandic?
- b. What is the role of (or effect of) Topicalization and why is it incompatible with the overt expletive in Icelandic?

Note first that Stylistic Fronting (SF) is no longer a part of modern MSc, although it is found in older forms of all the MSc languages (cf., e.g., Platzack 1987b:397; Falk 1993; Holmberg 2000:451; Delsing 2001; Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a – see also Vikner 1995a:116 and references cited there):

(7.85)

- a. en ... som **likir** var — enom hofman (older Sw)
 one that alike was a courtier
 ‘one that looked like a courtier’
- b. ... som **sodhne** ärw j lupinj (Sw, 16th century)
 that boiled are in lupin
 ‘... that are boiled in lupin.’
- c. oc alt thet hin hører til er **dræpet** hauær — (Old Da)
 and all that the one belongs to that killed has
 ‘and all the things belonging to the one who has killed’
- d. Tha mintis honum thæt som **skrifvit** staar — (Middle Da)
 then remembered him that which written stands
 ‘Then he remembered what is written.’

(7.86)

- a. *den, som **först** är ___ att göra mål (Sw)
 he who first is to score goal
- b. *Hvem tror du **stjålet** har ___ sykkelen? (No)
 who think you stolen has bike-the
- c. *Kvinden som **hjem** gik ___ var hans søster. (Da)
 woman-the that home went was his sister

SF is still found in modern Faroese, however, as originally pointed out by Barnes (1987), and it works very much as in Icelandic: it is most frequently found in embedded clauses, it appears to fill ‘subject gaps’ of various kinds, and some of these gaps, but not all, can just as well be filled by an overt expletive – and some of the gaps can also be left ‘open’ (cf Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:298–9; see also Barnes 1987, 1992):

(7.87) Filling subject gaps of subjectless verbs:

- a. Vit spæla ikki fótbólt, tá ið **illa** regnar ___ .
 we play not football when badly rains
- b. Vit spæla ikki fótbólt, tá ið **tað** regnar illa.
 we play not football when it rains badly
- c. ?Vit spæla ikki fótbólt, tá ið ___ regnar illa.
 ‘We don’t play football when it rains heavily.’

(7.88) Filling a subject gap left by a ‘postposed’ subject:

- a. Eg fari ikki í baðikarið, um **har** hava verið mýs ___ .
 I go not in bathtub-the if there have been mice
- b. Eg fari ikki í baðikarið, um **tað** hava verið mýs har.
 I go not in bathtub-the if there have been mice there
- c. ?Eg fari ikki í baðikarið, um ___ hava verið mýs har.
 I go not in bathtub-the if have been mice there
 ‘I won’t go in the bathtub if there have been mice there.’

(7.89) Filling subject gaps in relative clauses:

- a. Konan, sum **heim** fór ___, var systir hansara.
 woman-the that home went was sister his
- b. *Konan, sum **tað** fór heim, var systir hansara.
 woman-the that there went home was sister his
- c. Konan, sum ___ fór heim, var systir hansara.
 woman-the that went home was sister his
 ‘The woman that went home was his sister.’

(7.90) Filling a subject gap in an indirect question:

- a. Hann sá, hvør **inn** kom ____ .
 he saw who in came
- b. *Hann sá hvør **tað** kom inn.
 he saw who there came in
- c. Hann sá hvør ____ kom inn.
 he saw who came in

Here we see that the empty subject position of subjectless verbs can be filled by Stylistic Fronting or by the overt expletive (or ‘weather-*it*’) *tað* and the same is true of the subject gap left by a ‘postposed’ (or ‘non-fronted’) indefinite subject. In (some) embedded clauses these gaps can also be left open, although they normally cannot in main clauses:¹⁸

- (7.91) a. *Regnar illa. (Fa)
 rains badly
- b. *Hava verið mýs har.
 have been mice there

The subject gaps in relative clauses and indirect questions can also be filled by Stylistic Fronting, as in Icelandic, and ‘optionally’ so in the sense that they can also be left unfilled (see the examples in (7.89) and (7.90)). They cannot, on the other hand, be filled with an overt expletive.

Although SF in Faroese typically ‘moves’ elements that are arguably heads, such as individual adverbs, the negation, particles and non-finite verb forms, it is also possible to find apparent movement of maximal projections in many of the same environments, as shown by Barnes (1987, see especially section 2.6 – most of the following examples are based on those given by Barnes), that is, the type of fronting that would normally be analysed as Topicalization:

(7.92)

- a. Hjár teimum, sum **hárið** høvdu klipt, flagsaði tað um heysin. (Fa)
 on those that hair-the had cut flapped it around head-the
 ‘On those who had cut their hair short it flapped around their heads.’
- b. ?Tað var myrkt, tá ið **tíl Eiðis** var komið.
 it was dark when to Eidi was come
 ‘It was dark when they got to Eidi.’

¹⁸ Direct ‘yes/no’-questions are, of course, ‘exceptions’ to this – i.e., the sentences in (7.91) could be questions of that kind.

Although (7.92b) may be less than perfect, it is not completely out.¹⁹

It is a bit tricky, however, to test the ‘accessibility hierarchy’ in Faroese since sentence adverbs tend to precede finite verbs in most types of embedded clauses anyway. Hence we would expect (7.93c) to be ungrammatical for most speakers just because the finite verb (*er* ‘is’) precedes the sentence adverb *neyvan* ‘hardly’ (i.e., it has ‘moved’ to some sort of an I-position in the terms explained in chapter 2). Conversely, the fronting of a sentence adverb to a higher position in relative clauses containing a subject gap would be string-vacuous – or to put it differently: a sentence adverb preceding a finite verb in a relative clause could be ‘in situ’ (e.g. adjoined to VP – cf. (7.93a,b)). But if SF moves an element to the subject position, or at least to some position above the regular position of sentence adverbs (which are often taken to be adjoined to the VP), then we would expect (7.93d) to be a possible variant with the sentence adverb in situ and the predicate adjective *vanligt* ‘usual’ in this higher position licensed by the subject gap, unless some principle prevents the predicate adjective from moving across the sentence adverb. Note also that (7.93e) is fine with *vanligt* in this higher position (cf. also the discussion in Barnes 1987, section 2.7):

(7.93)

- a. Hetta er nakað, sum ___ neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd. (Fa)
 this is something which hardly is usual out on village
- b. Hetta er nakað, sum **neyvan** ___ er vanligt úti á bygd.
 ‘This is something which is hardly usual out in rural communities.’
- c. *Hetta er nakað, sum **vanligt** er neyvan ___ úti á bygd.
 this is something which usual is hardly out on village
- d. *Hetta er nakað, sum **vanligt** neyvan er ___ úti á bygd.
 this is something which usual hardly is out on village
- e. Hetta er nakað, sum **vanligt** er ___ úti á bygd.
 this is something which usual is out on village
 ‘This is something which is usual out in rural communities.’

As pointed out before, it is likely that predicative adjectives can alternatively be analysed as heads (of the AP-projection) or as maximal projections (as the

¹⁹ As Barnes (1987) points out, it is often easier to front negative objects, even if they are clearly maximal projections:

- (i) Ein nál, ið **onga tøðu** hevur ...
 a shoot that no manure has
 ‘A shoot that hasn’t been manured ...’

This might have something to do with the Negative Scrambling mentioned in section 2.2.5, for instance (see also Christensen 1986).

whole AP projection). The fact that they can undergo Topicalization in main clauses suggests the latter possibility, also in Faroese:

- (7.94) a. Hetta hevur neyvan verið vanligt. (Fa)
 this has hardly been usual
 b. **Vanligt** hevur hetta neyvan verið ____.
 usual has this hardly been

As shown in (7.94b), the predicative adjective *vanligt* ‘usual’ can move across the adverb *neyvan* ‘hardly’ in main clause Topicalization, which is not surprising if Topicalization applies to maximal projections. The reason it cannot in embedded clause SF as in (7.93d) would be compatible with the claim that SF applies to heads (and hence it is subject to the Head Movement Constraint (HMC) or its equivalent, cf. the discussion in 7.1.3 above) and hence *vanligt* cannot be moved as a head across the sentence adverb *neyvan*, and it cannot be moved as a maximal projection either, since Topicalization (= movement of maximal projections) is difficult in general in relative clauses. But the facts are not as simple and clear-cut as one might want them to be. Thus while it is in general impossible to topicalize an element in relative clauses that contain a lexical subject, it is possible to find passable examples of maximal projection fronting in relative clauses that contain a subject gap, for example (7.95d) (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:297–8; Barnes 1987, section 2.7):

- (7.95) a. Tey, sum hann hevði møtt í Danmark ... (Fa)
 those that he had met in Denmark
 b. *Tey, sum í Danmark hevði hann møtt ____ ...
 those that in Denmark had he met
 c. Tey, sum ____ hava verið í Danmark ...
 those that have been in Denmark
 d. Tey, sum í Danmark hava verið ____ ...
 those that in Denmark have been
 ‘Those who have been in Denmark ...’

Similar examples can also be found in Icelandic (cf., e.g., Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson 1991; Holmberg 2000:449 – see also Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a), that is, instances of maximal projection fronting that require a subject gap to be possible:

- (7.96) a. Þeir sem hann hafði hitt í Danmörku ... (Ic)
 those that he had met in Denmark
 b. *Þeir sem í Danmörku hafði hann hitt ____ ...
 those that in Denmark had he met

- c. Þeir sem ___ hafa verið í Danmörku ...
 those that have been in Denmark
- d. Þeir sem í Danmörku hafa verið ___ ...
 those that in Denmark have been
 'Those who have been in Denmark ...'

Interestingly, such fronting is impossible in embedded clauses when a sentence adverb is around (whether it precedes or follows the finite verb), whereas it is fine in main clauses with such an adverb present – and this holds for Faroese and Icelandic

- (7.97) a. Tey, sum ___ ikki hava verið í Danmark. (Fa)
 those that not have been in Denmark
- b. *Tey sum í Danmark ikki hava verið ___ ...
 those that in Denmark not have been
- c. *Tey sum í Danmark hava ikki verið ___ ...
 those that in Denmark have not been
- d. Í Danmark havi eg ikki verið __.
 in Denmark have I not been
 'I have not been in Denmark.'
- (7.98) a. Þeir sem ___ hafa ekki verið í Danmörku ... (Ic)
 those that have not been in Denmark
- b. Þeir sem ekki hafa ___ verið í Danmörku ...
 those that not have been in Denmark
- c. *Þeir sem í Danmörku hafa ekki verið ___ ...
 those that in Denmark have not been
- d. Í Danmörk hef ég ekki verið.
 in Denmark have I not been
 'I have not been in Denmark.'

The fact that fronting of maximal projections in relative clauses with a subject gap seems to be subject to the same kind of 'shortest move' (or 'minimal link') condition as SF that involves elements which can be analysed as heads can, of course, be taken to suggest that the same kind of process is involved (see, e.g., Holmberg 2000:454–5) – and that this process is different in nature from Topicalization of maximal projections in main clauses.

There is also an interesting additional twist to the story: as noted above, SF alternates with overt expletives in some instances – and in these instances it is generally also possible to front maximal projections. But here we do not seem to find the same kind of shortest move constraint when

maximal projections are involved, although we do when non-maximal projections are:

(7.99)

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|--------|------|----------------------|------|------|-------|------|----|----------------------------|------|
| a. | *Eg | haldi, | at | — | hava | ikki | verið | mýs | í | baðikarinum. ²⁰ | (Fa) |
| | ?Ég | held | að | — | hafi | ekki | verið | mýs | í | baðkerinu. | (Ic) |
| | I | think | that | | have | not | been | mice | in | bathtub-the | |
| b. | Eg | haldi, | at | tað | hava | ikki | verið | mýs | í | baðikarinum. | (Fa) |
| | Ég | held | að | það | hafi | ekki | verið | mýs | í | baðkerinu. | (Ic) |
| | I | think | that | there | have | not | been | mice | in | bathtub-the | |
| c. | Eg | haldi, | at | ikki | hava | — | verið | mýs | í | baðikarinum. | (Fa) |
| | Ég | held | að | ekki | hafi | — | verið | mýs | í | baðkerinu. | (Ic) |
| | I | think | that | not | have | | been | mice | in | bathtub-the | |
| d. | *Eg | haldi, | at | verið | hava | ikki | — | mýs | í | baðikarinum. | (Fa) |
| | *Ég | held | að | verið | hafi | ekki | — | mýs | í | baðkerinu. | (Ic) |
| | I | think | that | been | have | not | | mice | in | bathtub-the | |
| e. | Eg | haldi, | at | í baðikarinum | hava | ikki | verið | mýs | — | . | (Fa) |
| | Ég | held | að | í baðkerinu | hafi | ekki | verið | mýs | — | . | (Ic) |
| | I | think | that | in bathtub-the | have | not | been | mice | | | |

These examples show the following:

(7.100)

- The subject gap in sentences of this kind cannot be left open (Faroese informants reject this, some speakers of Icelandic are more likely than others to accept this).
- This kind of subject gap can be ‘filled’ (or ‘neutralized’) by an overt expletive, by fronting a head and by fronting a maximal projection.
- The fronting of a head across the negation head is not possible, whereas the fronting of a maximal projection across the negation is fine.

²⁰ I am using the Vf-adv (i.e. ‘finite verb – sentence adverb’) order for the Faroese examples here since most speakers of Faroese allow this order in complements of ‘bridge verbs’ like *halda* ‘believe’, and it simplifies the comparison to use the same order in the Faroese and Icelandic examples. It seems, however, that the adv-Vf order is also possible in the grammatical examples, even when the PP has been fronted:

(i)

- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|-------|------|----------------|------|------|-------|------|----|--------------|
| a. | Eg | haldi | at | tað | ikki | hava | verið | mýs | í | baðikarinum. |
| | I | think | that | there | not | have | been | mice | in | bathtub-the |
| b. | Eg | haldi | at | í baðikarinum | ikki | hava | verið | mýs | — | . |
| | I | think | that | in bathtub-the | not | have | been | mice | | |

Although this pattern may seem puzzling when compared to the pattern in (7.97)–(7.98), it can be interpreted as follows: in embedded complement clauses of this kind (‘that’-clauses) it is generally possible to front maximal projections, and this fronting does not require a subject gap. This suggests that it is regular Topicalization. Such fronting has some sort of foregrounding effect, just as Topicalization normally has, and it is thus different in nature from SF. But although Topicalization does not require a subject gap, there is no reason to assume that the kind of subject gap involved here rules it out. Thus we can apply Topicalization as in (7.99e) and it is a process different from SF and thus not subject to the shortest move constraint on SF. It seems, however, that it in some sense fulfils ‘in passing’ the same role that SF fulfils in that it ‘removes’ (or ‘neutralizes’) the offending subject gap.

As the reader may recall, a similar pattern was observed in (7.76) above, repeated here for convenience:

(7.76)

- a. **Það** hafði ekki komið fram í umræðunum [að ...]. (Ic)
 it had not come forth in discussions-the that
 ‘It had not become clear that ...’
- b. **EKKI** hafði ___ komið fram í umræðunum [að ...].
 not had come forth that in discussions-the that
- c. **?*FRAM** hafði ekki komið ___ í umræðunum [að ...].
 forth had not come in discussions-the that
- d. **Í umræðunum** hafði ekki komið fram ___ [að ...].
 in discussions-the had not come forth that

Here we have a ‘subject gap’ created by the extraposed subject clause, and this gap can be filled by the overt expletive or by applying SF to a head (the negation) or by Topicalization of a maximal projection (a PP). The Topicalization is not subject to the shortest move requirement but fronting of a verb particle is.

Thus the generalization seems to be that it is possible to front a maximal projection across an adverbial head (a sentence adverbial) as long as that fronting can be interpreted as something that has an extra purpose. While it is possible to front various kinds of elements in relative clauses containing a subject gap, either heads or maximal projections, such fronting can only be an instance of SF since true Topicalization (for emphasis or foregrounding effects) is generally not possible in relative clauses.²¹ Hence it is not possible

²¹ Fronting in indirect questions with a subject gap works the same way, cf. below.

to front anything across a sentence adverb to such a gap, not even an unambiguous maximal projection like a PP. This latter fact suggests that this ban cannot have anything to do with the HMC but must be some sort of a shortest move or minimal link requirement, insensitive to the bar-level of the moved element.²²

Finally, it seems that in this connection movement of elements in the VP-domain, such as non-finite main verbs, objects, predicative adjectives and locative complements of *vera* 'be', counts as equally short (cf. Barnes 1987, section 2.7):

- (7.101) a. Tey, sum ___ hava verið í Danmark ... (Fa)
 those that have been in Denmark
- b. Tey, sum **verið** hava ___ í Danmark ...
 those that been have in Denmark
- c. Tey, sum **í Danmark** hava verið ___ ...
 those that in Denmark have been
 'Those who have been in Denmark ...'
- (7.102) a. Hon spurdi, hvat ___ hevði verið vanligt úti á bygd. (Fa)
 she asked what had been usual out on village
- b. Hon spurdi, hvat **verið** hevði ___ vanligt úti á bygd.
 she asked what been had usual out on village
- c. Hon spurdi, hvat **vanligt** hevði verið ___ úti á bygd.
 she asked what usual had been out on village
- (7.103) a. Tað er hon, ið ___ hefur fingið skyldina. (Fa)
 it is she that has received blame-the
- b. Tað er hon, ið **fingið** hefur ___ skyldina.
 it is she that received has blame-the
- c. Tað er hon, ið **skyldina** hefur fingið ___ .
 it is she that blame-the has received
 'It is she who has received the blame.'

²² It does not seem, however, that the facts discussed at the end of 7.1.3 (ban on movement across the infinitival marker) can be accounted for in these terms. If the infinitival marker itself is the 'offending head', then the reason cannot be that it is a head that could be moved by a 'shorter move' since it is completely immovable. Maybe the reason has something to do with 'clause-boundedness' in some sense, with infinitival complements lacking the infinitival marker being less clause-like than those containing it.

7.2.4 Possible landing sites and some theoretical proposals

So far I have not said much about the possible landing site of the elements moved by SF. Various theories have been proposed, including the following:

(7.104)

- a. SF moves elements to actual subject position, i.e. SpecIP (or its equivalent – cf., e.g., Maling 1980; Kjartan G. Ottósson 1989; Platzack 1987a; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Holmberg 2000). Thus it literally ‘fills’ the subject gap.
- b. SF is head movement and adjoins the fronted element to I (or its equivalent – cf., e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991; Poole 1992, 1996; Holmberg and Platzack 1985; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993).
- c. SF moves elements to a ‘functional projection right above IP’ (Bosković 2001:79).
- d. SF moves elements to a FocusP in an split-CP domain. It can either move a maximal projection to SpecFocusP or a head into the head position of that phrase (Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2003, 2004a,b).

The proposed landing sites will obviously vary depending on the kinds of constituents that SF is supposed to move. If one assumes that SF moves maximal projections, then that would be incompatible with (7.104b). Note also that some variants of (7.104b) at least assume that SF is dependent on V-to-I, namely that the relevant category gets fronted to the I-position because it is adjoined to the finite verb which moves to the I-position (otherwise fronting of the head across the finite verb head would constitute a violation of the HMC). But as we have seen above, SF typically applies in relative clauses and indirect questions (although ‘optionally’ in the sense described above) in Faroese, and these are exactly the kinds of clauses where hardly any speakers of Faroese allow V-to-I (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2001b, 2003 and references cited there).

It has also been argued that if SF can be shown to be subject to a head movement constraint of some sort, then that rules out (7.104a). As illustrated above, however, it seems that the relevant constraint does not, in fact, seem to be sensitive to the bar-level of the moved element, but rather to the ‘purpose’ of the movement (except possibly in the kinds of examples cited at the end of section 7.1.3, involving SF out of infinitival complements).

Holmberg’s account (2000) attempts to accommodate facts of this sort. It is an account which makes use of many theory-specific assumptions from Chomsky’s Minimalist Program (cf., e.g., Chomsky 1993, 1995, 1998). The basic assumptions are as follows: a nominal feature [D] (or a set of nominal features) is associated with I (or its equivalent in more complex structures). This is a feature that needs to be checked and it can be checked by a

(definite) subject. If there is no subject in SpecIP, then this feature will only be checked by the finite verb in I. But because most ‘subject gaps’ need to be filled in Icelandic (and Faroese), that is, clauses can normally not be verb-initial, an additional assumption is needed: there is an additional feature associated with I and this feature is referred to as [P] by Holmberg (2000:456: ‘suggesting *phonological*’). This feature can be checked by any ‘phonologically visible category moved to or merged in’ SpecIP (Holmberg 2000:456), that is, either by an overt expletive or by a category moved to SpecIP by SF.

While this proposal tries to account for various puzzling aspects of the interaction between overt expletives, SF and Topicalization in an ingenious way, such as the lack of SF non-V-to-I languages like MSc and English, it is not without its problems. First, recall that the ‘no subject gap’ (or ‘no clause-initial V’) condition is not only satisfied by overt expletives and elements moved by SF in Icelandic (including maximal projections when a shorter movement involving heads is not possible), but it can apparently also be satisfied by ‘true Topicalization’, that is, movement of maximal projections that are *not* subject to the shortest move/minimal link conditions typical of SF (cf. the examples in (7.99) and (7.76) above). If true Topicalization is different from SF by being movement to SpecCP, as is standardly assumed (except by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990), then this means that filling of SpecIP is not crucial here (unless the topicalized elements somehow pass through SpecIP). Second, recall that SF typically applies in those kinds of embedded clauses in Faroese where V-to-I does *not* apply, namely relative clauses and indirect questions. This is problematic for Holmberg’s account as it relies crucially on the finite verb’s ability to move to I to check the [D]-feature when there is no definite subject in SpecIP to do so. Third, Holmberg suggests (2000:454n.) a relation between SF in Faroese and V-to-I in the sense that those speakers of Faroese who are reluctant V-to-I movers will also be reluctant to apply SF, assuming that there is a clear-cut division between a V-moving dialect and non-V-moving dialect in Faroese. As shown by Höskuldur Thráinsson (2001b, 2003), for instance, the V-to-I facts are rather complex, and some (especially younger) speakers apply V-to-I very sparingly. It seems, however, that there is no comparable dialect split with respect to SF in Faroese (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:298–300).

While there are some problems with Holmberg’s (2000) account, he may very well be on the right track in his attempt to relate the satisfaction of the EPP to ‘any kind of expletive’, that is, by maintaining that different kinds of overt elements can satisfy this mysterious requirement. As we have seen,

however, it varies somewhat from construction to construction which kinds of elements can. Sometimes it is possible to satisfy it by an overt expletive *or* an element moved by SF or even Topicalization, in other instances it is only possible to satisfy it by an element moved by SF. Interestingly, it seems that it is especially in the latter case that SF appears to be optional, and it has been suggested that this appearance is due to covert movement of an empty operator (cf. Holmberg 2000:471ff.). Furthermore, Holmberg (2000:473) suggests that the feature content of the overt expletive *það* in Icelandic (and *tað* in Faroese) is incompatible with the properties of the (empty) operator involved in clauses of this kind.

Finally, consider the approach proposed by Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson, developed in his work on his dissertation (2004b) and also described in a couple of papers (2003, 2004a). His main claims can be summarized as follows:

(7.105)

- a. SF is driven by the need to check a focus feature.
- b. This focus feature ‘resides’ in a special FocusP (assuming a split-CP structure along the lines suggested by Rizzi 1997).
- c. This focus feature can be checked by an XP (a maximal projection) moving to Spec-FocusP or by a head moving to the Focus head.
- d. When a focused NP subject is available, it will check this focus feature and hence SF will not be needed for feature-checking purposes (and thus impossible). This explains the subject gap condition.
- e. Contrary to the common assumption, this means that SF has semantic effects.

If one compares Gunnar Hrafn’s analysis and his examples to most of the previous analyses and the preceding discussion, it becomes very clear that the properties one attributes to SF depend crucially on the initial assumptions made. Gunnar Hrafn seems to take it for granted that a subject gap is the factor distinguishing between SF and Topicalization (see the options listed in (7.70) above). He then shows that when constituents are fronted in the context of a subject gap, this can have a focusing effect. His examples include the following, for instance (2004a:93 – his translation and emphasis):

- (7.106) a. Hann sýndi mér flöskurnar sem ___ hafði verið smyglað inn.
 he showed me bottles-the that had been smuggled in
 ‘He showed me the bottles that had been smuggled in.’
- b. Hann sýndi mér flöskurnar sem **inn** hafði verið smyglað ___.
 he showed me bottles that in had been smuggled
 ‘He showed me the bottles that had been smuggled IN.’

Gunnar Hrafn then maintains that in the b-example the focus is on the word *inn* ‘in’, which he calls a verb particle, and he represents this by capitalizing *IN* in the English gloss. This he takes as an argument for the claim that SF has semantic effects and constitutes movement to a specific FocusP constituent.

The most significant part of Gunnar Hrafn’s analysis is that he tries to capture and formalize the fact that it is typically easier to front a constituent when the subject is not competing for the initial focus (or topic or whatever . . .) position in the sentence. This is especially true of fronting in embedded clauses, as pointed out by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982a:90–3), for instance. This then raises two questions: first, is it necessary to assume a special FocusP to account for this, and second, does this have anything to do with SF? Since I have not been discussing the merits of a split CP analysis of the Rizzi-type here, I will not discuss the first question. But let us look more closely at the second one, which is obviously relevant for the discussion of the similarities and differences between Topicalization and SF.

When we consider Gunnar Hrafn’s analysis of the example in (7.106) in this light, it turns out that there are a couple of problems with his account. First, it is not clear at all that *inn* is a particle. It seems more likely that it is an adverb, literally meaning ‘in’. Hence it can, for instance, have a contrastive focus (as opposed to *út* ‘out’, as Gunnar Hrafn points out). But this also means that it can be interpreted as a maximal projection (i.e. an AdvP) rather than a head, and then the movement in question is not head movement but rather an XP movement. That would, of course, be consistent with the claim that what is involved here is not SF but Topicalization, if one wanted to maintain that SF was head movement and Topicalization was XP movement (option b in (7.70) above).

Most of the examples that Gunnar Hrafn gives to illustrate alleged focusing effects of SF involve constituents that can be interpreted as XPs. That is true, for instance, of the negation *ekki* ‘not’ in examples like the following (2004a:94–5 – Gunnar Hrafn’s translation again):

- (7.107) a. Allir sem ___ höfðu ekki fengið lýsi veiktust.
 all that had not received cod-liver-oil got-sick
 ‘Everyone that had not received cod liver oil became sick.’
- b. Allir sem **ekki** höfðu ___ fengið lýsi veiktust.
 all that not had received cod-liver-oil got-sick
 ‘Everyone that had NOT received cod liver oil became sick.’

Here Gunnar Hrafn maintains that there is a semantic difference between the two variants such that in the b-variant it is implied that those who received

cod liver oil did not get sick whereas this is not implied in the a-variant, but I must admit that I do not share this intuition.

Gunnar Hrafn also maintains that fronting participles in the context of a subject gap can have a focusing effect. One of his examples is the following (2004a:93–4):

- (7.108) Hann sýndi mér flöskurnar sem **smyglað** hafði verið ___ inn.
 he showed me bottles-the that smuggled had been ___ in.
 ‘He showed me the bottles that had been SMUGGLED in.’

He then maintains that here the focus is on *smyglað* ‘smuggled’, as indicated by the capitalization in the English gloss. While I agree that the participle can be stressed and get a contrastive focus reading, it is just the same reading that this participle can also get in situ with a contrastive stress, and I do not get the other focus reading he discusses (his *verum* focus). Besides, it is not clear to me what kind of focus *smyglað* ‘smuggled’ could have if one stressed the adverb *inn* ‘in’ in this variant, which is certainly possible.²³

²³ Gunnar Hrafn also mentions a kind of SF that has not been discussed in the literature, namely one where he maintains that a constituent can be fronted in the presence of a weak pronoun (as opposed to a subject gap). His examples include the following (2004a:117 – his judgements):

- (i)
 a. ?Allt sem ’ann **lesið** hafði ___ í bókinni var satt.
 all that he(weak) read had in book-the was true
 ‘Everything that he had read in the book was true.’
 b. *Allt sem hann **lesið** hafði ___ í bókinni var satt.
 c. *Allt sem hann **í bókinni** hafði lesið ___ var satt.

Here the claim is that the former variant, with a reduced weak pronoun (see the discussion of pronominal forms in chapter 1), is better than the one with an unreduced pronoun (the b-variant). The reason is supposedly that a weak pronoun does not have an inherent focus feature and hence it cannot check such a feature in the projection, although it can move to SpecFocusP (see, e.g., Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson 2004a:121, 131). Hence the head *lesið* ‘read’ can move into the head position of the FocusP and check the relevant feature, whereas a maximal projection like *í bókinni* ‘in the book’ cannot. Hence the c-variant is bad. One problem with this analysis is that the a-variant is quite bad, for some speakers at least, including at least one of Gunnar Hrafn’s informants and the present writer. Another is the theoretical problem of allowing elements without focus (the weak pronoun) to move to SpecFocusP anyway, without checking the relevant focus feature, which makes the whole focus-feature story less attractive.

To sum up, it is probably true that in many instances where a constituent is fronted in the context of a subject gap a focusing effect can be involved. But this only means that SF has focusing effect *if* we choose option (7.70a) above, namely take subject gap as a defining characteristic of SF. The alternative would be to choose option (7.70b) and say that whenever an XP is fronted we have an instance of Topicalization, whereas SF proper is movement of small constituents (head movement). Then it has not been conclusively shown, as far as I can see, that SF has any kind of semantic or focusing effect. I would like to maintain that it at least typically does not – witness examples that involve unambiguous verbal particles like the following, repeated from above:

- (7.109) Leikurinn sem **fram** hafði farið __ kvöldið áður ...
 game-the that forth had gone night-the before
 ‘The game that had taken place the night before ...’

We can then conclude that while we have already learned a great deal about the interaction between overt expletives, SF and Topicalization and various linguists have solved some of the puzzles involved, it is probably fair to say that nobody has solved them all.

7.2.5 *Syntactic positions, movements, gaps and information structure*

Finally, a few additional words about the ‘purpose’ or ‘effects’ of various movements and the different roles of sentence-initial and sentence-final positions.

While some linguists want to explain virtually all movements and word-order restrictions by reference to formal features of some sort, such as the D-feature (or EPP-feature) supposedly involved in movements to the subject position, others maintain that everything can and should be explained by reference to discourse principles or the ‘flow of information’, for example positional restrictions on elements representing ‘new information’ or ‘old information’ or focus, theme, rheme, topic, comment, and so on (see, e.g., Kuno 1975, 1987). There are also various attempts to unite the two kinds of approaches, for example by proposing that particular positions in the syntactic structure are designated for topics or focus elements or some such (see, e.g., Rizzi 1997). Some of these elements can be seen as a part of the programme of defining universal syntactic structures for all languages, while others want to argue that some of the word-order differences between languages reflect structural differences. Thus É. Kiss (2002a, b) presents an

account of Hungarian syntax where the existence of both a Topic projection and a Focus projection is assumed, both to the left of (i.e. above) the VP.

It seems that the syntax of Hungarian is in certain significant respects rather different from that of, say, Icelandic and English. This is partially reflected in the common claim that Hungarian is a topic-prominent language rather than a subject-prominent one, meaning that ‘the functions associated with the different structural positions are logical functions instead of the grammatical functions subject, object, etc.’ (É. Kiss 2002a:2). The topic is ‘the logical subject of the predication’ (ibid.) but it can be followed by a focus constituent ‘expressing exhaustive identification’ (É. Kiss 2002a:3). It is of some interest in the present context to consider the different roles of these constituents. In the following the topic is in boldface and the focus in small capitals (cf. É. Kiss 2002a:3, VM refers to a so-called verbal modifier):

- (7.110) a. **János** MARIT kérte fel.
 John(N) Mary(A) asked VM
 ‘As for John, it was Mary that he asked for a dance.’
- b. **Marit** JÁNOS kérte fel.
 Mary(A) John(N) asked VM
 ‘As for Mary, it was John who asked her for a dance.’

Some of the constructions discussed above appear to have similar discourse functions. Consider the Left Dislocation and ‘It’-cleft/‘It’-relatives in (7.111) (the dislocated constituent in boldface and the focused constituent in small capitals):

- (7.111)
- a. **Jón,** það var MARÍA sem hann bauð upp. (það-relative)
 John(N) it was Mary(N) that he(N) asked up
 ‘John, it was Mary that he asked for a dance.’ (or: ‘As for John, it was Mary ...’)
- b. **Jón,** það var MARÍU sem hann bauð upp. (það-cleft)
 John(N) it was Mary(A) that he asked up
 ‘John, it was Mary that he asked for a dance.’ (or: ‘As for John, it was Mary ...’)

Although the discourse functions are similar, the syntactic structures appear to be different, and I have assumed that Icelandic does not have the kind of TopP or FocP found in Hungarian. Yet conversational topics tend to occur early in the sentence in Icelandic as in Hungarian, possibly because of some universal tendencies having to do with old and new information.

While the discourse function of different syntactic constructions in Icelandic has not been investigated in great detail, some preliminary remarks

can be found in Höskuldur Thráinsson's dissertation (1979:64ff.) and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's Master's thesis (1982a). Accepting the notion of **topic** 'objects and concepts that have been mentioned and recorded in the registry of the present discourse' (Kuno 1973:39), they argue that elements moved to the topic position in Icelandic (SpecCP) are typically already established topics in Kuno's sense and hence they are usually definite. The same is usually true of left-dislocated elements in Icelandic (cf. 7.1.1 and 7.1.4 above). Somewhat similar requirements are formalized by É. Kiss (2002b:110) by stating that the topic has to be referential and specific, although the exact syntactic positions are different.²⁴

Although Icelandic is not a topic-prominent language in the usual sense, it could be mentioned here that it appears to have empty elements that are licensed by discourse conditions. Like many other languages, Icelandic allows ellipsis of subjects of coordinated sentences (for an overview of (pronominal) null elements in Icelandic, see section 9.1.4 below). As originally pointed out by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982b), it is possible to leave out a subject in the second conjunct if the subject is coreferential with a subject in the first conjunct, even if they do not have matching case (see also Bresnan and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990 – the 'elided' subject is here represented by *e* and its coreference to an antecedent shown by an identical index):

- (7.112) a. Þeir_i sjá stúlkuna og þeim_i/e_i finnst hún álitleg.
 they(N) see(pl.) girl-the and them(D)/e find(sg.) she attractive
- b. Þeim_i líkar maturinn og þeir_i/e_i borða mikið.
 they(D) like(sg.) food-the and they(N)/e eat(pl.) much

As shown by Höskuldur Thráinsson and Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir (1986:152–3), it is even possible to have an element agreeing with the empty

²⁴ It could also be mentioned here that Icelandic has formally indefinite noun phrases that are nevertheless specific and referential. This form is mainly used if the NP in question has a unique reference (like *rektor* 'the president of the university'), but it is also used anaphorically of nouns referring to occupation or the like in special narrative style (see also Kossuth 1981). Such formally indefinite NPs are quite naturally topicalized:

- (i) a. **Rektor** hafði ég aldrei hitt ___ áður.
 president(A) had I(N) never met before
 'The president I had never met before.'
- b. **Bónda** sögðust þeir ekki hafa séð ___ .
 farmer(A) said they(N) not have seen
 'The farmer they said that they had not seen.'

subject, suggesting that it is ‘syntactically real’ (see also the discussion of empty elements in chapter 9):

- (7.113) a. Þeir_i kaupa matinn og þeir_i borða hann einir.
 they(N) buy food-the and they(N) eat it alone(N)
- b. Þeir_i kaupa matinn og *e_i* borða(pl.) hann einir.
 they(N) buy food-the and *e* eat(pl.) it alone(N)
- c. Þeir_i kaupa matinn og þeim_i líkar hann einum/*einir.
 they(N) buy food-the and them(D) likes(sg.) it alone(D/*N)
- d. Þeir_i kaupa matinn og *e_i* líkar hann einum/*einir.
 they(N) buy food-the and *e* likes(sg.) it alone(D/*N)

It appears to be necessary, however, that the subject left out in the second conjunct is a topic in the conjunct – or its most prominent topic – in the sense that if something else is topicalized in that conjunct, the subject cannot be left out (see also Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993):

- (7.114) a. Þeir_i keyptu matinn og þeir_i/*e_i* borðuðu hann síðan.
 they bought food-the and they/*e* ate it then
- b. Þeir keyptu matinn og síðan borðuðu þeir_i /**e_i* hann.
 they bought food-the and then ate they/*e* it

We will return to phenomena of this sort in section 9.2.3 below, where it will be shown that Modern Icelandic differs from Old Icelandic to some extent with respect to the conditions on null subjects in coordinated structures (see also Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993 and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993c).

Finite and non-finite complements and adjuncts

8.1 A descriptive overview of finite subordinate clauses

8.1.1 *Complements vs. adjuncts*

The main difference between complement clauses and adjunct clauses is the fact that the former are selected by the main verb (or predicate), like other verbal complements, whereas the latter can be adjoined to any kind of clause, regardless of the type of main verb involved. Structurally, on the other hand, these subordinate clauses are very similar in Icelandic:

(8.1)

- a. Hún segir [að tunglið sé úr osti].
 she says that moon-the be(subjunct.) from cheese
 ‘She says that the moon is made of cheese.’
- b. Hún veit [að tunglið er úr osti].
 she knows that moon-the is(indic.) from cheese
- c. Hún spurði [hvort tunglið væri úr osti].
 she asked if moon-the was(subjunct.) from cheese
 ‘She asked if the moon was made of cheese.’
- d. Hún verður ekki ánægð [nema tunglið sé úr osti].
 she will-be not happy unless moon-the be(subjunct.) from cheese
 ‘She won’t be happy unless the moon is made of cheese.’
- e. Hún verður ekki ánægð [ef tunglið er úr osti].
 she will-be not happy if moon-the is(indic.) from cheese
 ‘She won’t be happy if the moon is made of cheese.’

As the reader may have noted, we get the subjunctive form of the finite verb in some of these subordinate clauses but indicative in others. In complement clauses the selection of mood depends to a large extent on the semantic class of the matrix main verb, in adjunct clauses (or adverbial clauses) the mood is in many instances determined by the subordinating conjunction.

8.1.2 *Tense and mood in complement clauses*

Icelandic has a productive distinction between indicative (the default mood of finite main clauses) and subjunctive. It is worth emphasizing in this connection that the subjunctive has rich agreement morphology, much as the indicative. This can be seen from the following paradigm (see also section 1.2 above):

(8.2)		indicative (ind.)		subjunctive (sbj.)	
		pres.	past	pres.	past
	1sg.	hef	hafði	hafi	hefði
	2 -	hefur	hafðir	hafir	hefðir
	3 -	hefur	hafði	hafi	hefði
	1pl.	höfum	höfðum	höfum	hefðum
	2 -	hafið	höfðuð	hafið	hefðuð
	3 -	hafa	höfðu	hafi	hefðu

In the *að*-complements (i.e. *that*-complements) of verbs of saying and believing, for instance, Icelandic has the so-called tense agreement or ‘sequence of tenses’ (lat. *consecutio temporum*). With some simplification, we can say that this means that if the matrix verb is in the present tense, the finite verb in a subjunctive complement must also be in the present tense. If the matrix verb is in the past tense, on the other hand, the finite verb in the complement clause must also be in the past tense. This is illustrated below (for a more detailed discussion of examples of this sort, see Kress 1982:236 – see also the proposal in Anderson 1986:74ff. and the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:314ff.):¹

- (8.3) a. Jón **segir** [að þú **takir** blöðin].
 John says(pres.) that you take(pres.) papers-the
 ‘John says that you take/will take the papers.’
- b. Jón **segir** [að þú **hafir** tekið blöðin].
 John says(pres.) that you have(pres.) taken papers-the
 ‘John says that you have taken the papers.’
- c. Jón **sagði** [að þú **tækir** blöðin].
 John said(past) that you took(past) papers-the
 ‘John said that you took/would take the papers.’
- d. Jón **sagði** [að þú **hefðir** tekið blöðin].
 John said(past) that you had(past) taken papers-the
 ‘John said that you had taken/would have taken the papers.’

¹ As will be discussed presently, these matrix verbs actually take subjunctive complements, but here we are concentrating on the differences in tense.

As we shall see below, verbs of saying and believing typically take subjunctive complements. Now it should be noted here that the subjunctive in the past tense can be used ‘independently’ in an irrealis reading, for example in main clauses:

- (8.4) Ég **færi** ef ég **gæti** (en ég get það ekki).
 I go(past.sbj.) if I could(past.sbj.) but I can it not
 ‘I would go if I could (but I can’t).’

This kind of subjunctive can actually also be used in embedded clauses. Hence (8.3c, d) are actually ambiguous, as indicated in the glosses, and the (past tense) irrealis would also be possible in complements after matrix verbs in the present tense. Compare the following to (8.3a, b):

- (8.5) a. Jón **segir** [að þú **tækir** blöðin ef ...].
 John says(pres.) that you took(past subj.) papers-the if
 ‘John says that you would take the papers if ...’
 b. Jón **segir** [að þú **hefðir** tekið blöðin ef ...].
 John says(pres.) that you had(past subj.) taken papers-the if
 ‘John says that you would have taken the papers if ...’

The tense of this irrealis subjunctive is thus in a sense an exception to the general sequence of tenses in complements of verbs of saying and believing. But in the complement of such a matrix verb in the past tense it is not possible to have a finite verb in the present tense. Thus the following should be compared to (8.3c, d):

- (8.6) a. *Jón **sagði** [að þú **takir** blöðin].
 John said(past) that you take(pres.) papers-the
 b. *Jón **sagði** [að þú **hafir** tekið blöðin].
 John said(past) that you have(pres.) taken papers-the

Similar rules appear to hold for the sequence of tense in *hv*-complements (i.e. *wh*-complements) of verbs like *spyrja* ‘ask’:

- (8.7) a. Hann **spyr** [hvort Jón **taki** bækurnar].
 he asks if John take(pres.sbj.) books-the
 ‘He asks if John takes the books.’
 b. Hann **spyr** [hvort Jón **hafi** tekið bækurnar].
 he asks if John have(pres.sbj.) taken books-the
 ‘He asks if John has taken the books.’

- c. Hann **spurði** [hvort Jón **tæki** bækurnar].
 he asked if John took(past subj.) books-the
 'He asked if John took/would take the books.'
- d. Hann **spurði** [hvort Jón **hefði** tekið bækurnar].
 he asked if John had(past subj.) taken books-the
 'He asked if John had taken/would have taken the books.'

Turning now to the selection of mood in complement clauses, the main rule is that the subjunctive is typically used in *að*-complements of epistemic non-factive verbs (e.g. *halda* 'believe, think', *ímynda sér* 'imagine', *telja* 'believe') and also in the complements of verbs of saying (*segja* 'say', *halda fram* 'claim', *fullyrða* 'maintain') and wanting (e.g. *vilja* 'want'). The indicative, on the other hand, is typically used in the complements of (semi-)factive verbs like *vita* 'know', *gera sér grein fyrir* 'realize' and so on:

- (8.8) a. Jón heldur [að jörðin ***er/sé** flöt].
 John thinks that earth-the ***is(ind.)/be(sbj.)** flat
- b. Jón veit [að jörðin **er/*sé** flöt].
 John knows that earth-the **is(ind.)/*be(sbj.)** flat

Based on examples of this sort, it is often claimed that the indicative is used to state a fact (see, e.g., Jakob Jóh. Smári 1920:172; Stefán Einarsson 1945:154; Kress 1982:261–3; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:290ff., 2005:459ff.; Kristján Árnason 1981; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b). Since the speaker presupposes the truth of the complement of factive verbs, it seems likely that the semantic difference between subjunctive and indicative has something to do with presupposition. This can actually be demonstrated more clearly if we select a matrix predicate that can either take a subjunctive or an indicative complement. A few predicates do, and *lesa* 'read' and *frétta* 'hear, learn' are among them, in certain contexts at least (others include *sýna fram á* 'prove', *sanna* 'prove', *viðurkenna* 'admit', *átta sig á* 'realize', see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:292, 2005:463ff.):

- (8.9) a. Jón las það í blaðinu [að María **hafði/hefði** komið heim].
 John read it in paper-the that Mary had(ind./sbj.) come home
- b. Jón frétti [að María **hafði/hefði** komið heim].
 John heard that Mary had(ind./sbj.) come home

Minimal pairs of this kind make it possible to determine whether the selection of indicative vs. subjunctive has something to do with the speaker's presupposition: by adding a statement contradicting the content of the complement clause, we should get a contradiction if the truth of the complement is presupposed but otherwise not. The following examples thus suggest that

the truth of the complement is presupposed if the finite verb is in the indicative but otherwise not (I use \$ here to indicate a semantically incoherent example):

(8.10)

- a. \$Jón frétti [að María **hafði** komið heim] en hún kom ekki.
 John heard that Mary had(ind.) come home but she came not
- b. Jón frétti [að María **hefði** komið heim] en hún kom ekki.
 John heard that Mary had(sbj.) come home but she came not
 ‘John heard that Mary had come home but she hadn’t come home.’

In examples of this kind the subjunctive shows that the speaker is just reporting something and not vouching for its truthfulness, whereas the indicative reveals that the speaker presupposes the truth of the complement, assumes that it is a fact. As already mentioned, this kind of choice is only possible with a limited set of matrix predicates. After verbs of saying and believing, for instance, there is no choice of mood in contexts of this sort – only the subjunctive is possible:

- (8.11) Jón sagði [að María ***hafði/hefði** komið heim].
 John said that Mary had(*ind./sbj.) come home

A somewhat similar difference can be seen in minimal pairs like the following, although here one could argue that the difference has to do with two different meanings of the verb *heyra* – that is, ‘hear something oneself’ and ‘hear something from others, learn, be told’:

- (8.12) a. Ég heyri [að þú **ert** danskur].
 I hear that you are(ind.) Danish
 ‘I (can) hear that you are Danish.’
- b. Ég heyri [að þú **sért** danskur].
 I hear that you be(sbj.) Danish
 ‘I am told that you are Danish.’

The facts are somewhat more complex than this, however. First, the difference between indicative and subjunctive can be neutralized in an indirect speech context. In such a context one typically gets the subjunctive ‘all the way down’, triggered by the topmost verb of saying (or believing):

- (8.13) María segir [að Jón **viti** [að Helga **sé** farin]].
 Mary says that John know(sbj.) that Helga be(sbj.) gone
 ‘Mary says that John knows that Helga is gone.’

Here the verb *segja* ‘say’ triggers not only the subjunctive of the next finite verb down, namely *vita* ‘know’, but also the subjunctive in the complement of

vita ‘know’, that is, the form *sé*, although *vita* normally takes an indicative complement as we have seen. This ‘domino effect’ is typically found in indirect speech and in the representation of an inner monologue. We will return to this below in the discussion of so-called long-distance reflexivization, where it plays a crucial role (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:297ff.). In the present context the main point is that the domino effect (‘subjunctive all the way down’) indicates that the whole sequence is attributed to the subject of the relevant verb of saying or believing. Hence the speaker need not agree with its contents, not even when the complement of a (semi-)factive verb is included. This is reflected in the fact that a statement contradicting the factive complement can be added here without resulting in a semantic anomaly:

- (8.14) *María segir* [að *Jón viti* [að *Helga sé* *farin*]]
 Mary says that John know(sbj.) that Helga be(sbj.) gone
 en *hún er* *reyndar ekki* *farin*.
 but she is(indic.) actually not gone
 ‘Mary says that John knows that Helga is gone, but actually she isn’t gone.’

The indicative used in the added comment (*hún er* ... ‘she is ...’) shows that this is no longer a part of the reported speech of *María* but rather something added by the speaker. Interestingly, it is also possible to have an indicative in the complement of the verb *vita* ‘know’ here, but then again the speaker is stating this and presupposing its truthfulness:

- (8.15) *María segir* [að *Jón viti* [að *Helga er* *farin*]].
 Mary says that John know(sbj.) that Helga is(ind.) gone
 ‘Mary says that John knows that Helga is gone.’

Not surprisingly, this change has the effect that a contradicting statement can no longer be added without resulting in a semantic anomaly:

- (8.16) \$*María segir* [að *Jón viti* [að *Helga er* *farin*]]
 Mary says that John know(sbj.) that Helga is(ind.) gone
 en *hún er* *reyndar ekki* *farin*.
 but she is(indic.) actually not gone

A second complication is the following: many so-called true-factive verbs (in the sense of Kiparsky and Kiparsky 1970, also referred to as emotive factive verbs), such as *harma* ‘regret’, take complements with the modal verb *skulu* ‘shall’ in the subjunctive:²

² Some speakers can have indicative complements with *harma* ‘regret’.

- (8.17) Jón harmar [að María *skal/skuli vera hér].
 John regrets that Mary shall(*ind./sbj.) be(inf.) here
 'John regrets (the fact) that Mary is here.'

Although the indicative is not acceptable here, the truth of the complement is still presupposed, witness the semantic anomaly that arises when a contradicting statement is added:³

- (8.18) \$Jón harmar [að María skuli vera hér]
 John regrets that Mary shall(sbj.) be(inf.) here
 en hún er ekki hér.
 but she is not here

This is an interesting phenomenon that awaits further analysis (but for a suggestion, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:325).⁴

Some interesting subtleties are found in the use of the subjunctive. Because it tends to have something to do with the speaker's presupposition, it is not surprising that phenomena like tense, negation and even person can interact with it in complex ways. Note the following minimal pair, for instance:

- (8.19) a. María vissi [að þú komst heim].
 Mary knew that you came(ind.) home
 'Mary knew that you came home.'
 b. María vissi [að þú kæmir heim].
 Mary knew that you came(sbj.) home
 'Mary knew that you would come home.'

Here the semantic difference is adequately reflected in the English glosses 'came' vs. 'would come', but this kind of choice is only possible with the past

³ Recently, the verb *harma* 'regret' is frequently used by politicians and other public figures in the sense 'express dissatisfaction/dismay/regret':

- (i) Forsætisráðherrann harmaði [að fólkid skyldi hafa farist].
 prime-minister-the expressed regret that people-the should(sbj.) have perished

It is not clear that any presupposition of truth is involved in such statements.

⁴ Emotive factive predicates taking clausal subjects, such as *vera sorglegt/hörmulegt/hræðilegt* 'be sad/regrettable/terrible, also show the same selection of mood. As usual, these clausal subjects are normally extraposed:

- (i) Það er sorglegt/hörmulegt/hræðilegt [að fólkid skuli hafa farist].
 it is sad/regrettable/terrible [that people-the shall(sbj.) have perished]
 'It is sad/regrettable/terrible that the people perished.'

tense of the matrix verb *vita* ‘know’, as *vita* in the present tense normally takes indicative complements as shown above (see also Kristján Árnason 1981; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:321ff.).

Another interesting pair is the following (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:326ff.):

- (8.20) a. Jón sér [að þú **ert**/***sért** bestur].
 John sees that you are(ind./*subj.) best
 ‘John sees (realizes) that you are the best.’
- b. Jón sér ekki [að þú **ert** bestur].
 John sees not that you are(ind.) best
 ‘John doesn’t see (i.e. realize) that you are (in fact) the best.’
- c. Jón sér ekki [að þú **sért** bestur].
 Jon sees not that you be(sbj.) best
 ‘John has no evidence (for the claim) that you are the best.’

Here we see that the difference in mood selection has something again to do with factivity, but it can only be brought to light if there is a negation in the matrix clause. Not surprisingly, this kind of phenomenon is sensitive to the person properties of the matrix clause. Thus it sounds very odd to have a first person subject of the matrix factive verb in the present tense and then a negation plus a factive complement whose truth is presupposed:⁵

- (8.21) \$Ég veit ekki [að þú **ert** bestur].
 I know not that you are(ind.) best

But if we change the tense of the matrix verb to the past, we can again have a choice of moods with much the same semantic effect:

- (8.22) a. Ég vissi ekki [að þú **varst** bestur].
 I knew not that you were(ind.) best
 ‘I didn’t know that you were (in fact) the best.’
- b. Ég vissi ekki [að þú **værir** bestur].
 I knew not that you were(sbj.) best
 ‘I didn’t know that you were the best.’

Note that with (semi-)factive predicates like *vita* ‘know’ the speaker is free to choose the tense of the complement and does not have to follow the usual ‘sequence of tenses’ that holds for complements of verbs of saying and believing (cf. above). Observe the following, for instance:

⁵ Unless we imagine very special circumstances, e.g. playing some kind of a game: ‘Let’s pretend that I’m stupid and I don’t know that you are the best . . .’

- (8.23) Jón vissi ekki [að þú **ert/varst** bestur].
 John knew not that you are(pres.)/were(past) best
 'John didn't know that you are/were (in fact) the best.'

Note also that the restriction on tense with first person subjects does not hold with *hv*-complements of factive verbs like *vita* 'know':

- (8.24) Ég veit ekki [hvort þú **ert/varst** bestur].
 I know not whether you are(pres.ind.) best
 'I don't know whether you are/were (in fact) the best.'

This is not difficult to understand: I don't know whether you *are* (present tense) the best now or whether you *were* (past tense) the best then.

8.1.3 Distribution of *að*-clauses and *hv*-clauses

As discussed at length by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1979; see also Kress 1982:238ff.), *að*-clauses and *hv*-clauses in Icelandic have a distribution that is very similar to that of NPs, even more so than their counterparts in many other languages. As a result, these clause types are often referred to as *fallsetningar*, lit. 'case clauses', in Icelandic grammars. They do not only occur as logical subjects and objects of predicates, but they can also occur in prepositional phrases, much more freely in fact than their English counterparts, for instance. As the following examples indicate, many prepositional verbs, such as *hugsa um* 'think about', *bíða eftir* 'wait for', *langa til* 'long for', *kenna e-m um* 'blame sby for' can take *að*-clauses or *hv*-clauses as the direct complements of the prepositions associated with them (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:25ff.):

- (8.25)
- Jón var að hugsa **um** [að María væri líklega farin].
 John was to think about that Mary were(sbj.) probably gone
 'John was thinking that Mary had probably left.'
 - Jón var að hugsa **um** [hvort María myndi koma].
 John was to think about whether Mary would(sbj.) come
 'John was wondering whether Mary would come.'
 - Ólafur beið **eftir** [að Helga kæmi].
 Olaf waited for that Helga came(sbj.)
 'Olaf waited for Helga to come.'
 - Jón langar **til** [að María komi hingað].
 John wants for that Mary come(sbj.) here
 'John wants Mary to come here.'

- e. Lögreglan kenndi Ólafi **um** [að bíllinn valt].
 police-the blamed Olaf for that car-the turned-over(indic.)
 'The police blamed Olaf for the fact that the car turned over.'

Since *that*-clauses in particular do not freely occur as objects of prepositions in English, various linguists have maintained that *that*-clauses need to be distinguished sharply from NPs, not only structurally but also distributionally. It is not clear what the reason for this cross-linguistic difference is.

Some of the distributional properties of subordinate clauses seem to have something to do with their 'heaviness'. Like many other heavy constituents, they tend to gravitate to the right. Observe the following, for instance (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:27):

- (8.26) a. Þeir töluðu [um þetta] [við Jón].
 they talked about this to John
 b. Þeir töluðu [við Jón] [um þetta].
 they talked to John about this
- (8.27) a. ?Þeir töluðu [um [að María kæmi]] [við Jón].
 they talked about that Mary came to John
 b. Þeir töluðu [við Jón] [um [að María kæmi]].
 they talked to John about that Mary came
 'They talked to John about Mary's coming.'

While the postverbal PPs in (8.26) can be ordered either way, there is a strong preference to postpose the PP containing the clause in (8.27). This could be a part of the reason why subject clauses are preferably extraposed. Thus the b-variants of the following examples are more natural:

- (8.28) a. [Að tunglið er fullt] veldur mér áhyggjum.
 that moon-the is full causes me worries
 b. Það veldur mér áhyggjum [að tunglið er fullt].
 it causes me worries that moon-the is full
 'It worries me that the moon is full.'

- (8.29)
 a. [Hver verður kosinn forseti] hefur mikil áhrif á þetta.
 who will-be elected president has great influence on this
 b. Það hefur mikil áhrif á þetta [hver verður kosinn forseti].
 it has great influence on this who will-be elected president
 'Whoever president will be elected will greatly influence this.'

8.1.4 Tense and mood in adjunct clauses

The distribution of indicative and subjunctive in adjunct (or adverbial) clauses sheds some additional light on the semantics of the subjunctive, but it also indicates that it is partially governed by certain grammaticalized rules that are not entirely transparent anymore from a semantic point of view. Thus certain subordinating conjunctions require the subjunctive mood, although it is not obvious that this has anything to do with factivity or presupposition, for instance. Consider the following (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:291, 2005:468ff.; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:324):

(8.30)

- a. Jón er hér [þó að María *er/sé hér]
 John is here although Mary is(*ind./sbj.) here

(Sen María er ekki hér).
 but Mary is not here

- b. Það er kominn snjór [þótt það *er/sé ekki kominn vetur].
 there is come snow although it be(*ind./sbj.) not come winter
 ‘There is snow although winter isn’t here yet.’

Here the subjunctive is required in the adjunct (concessive) clauses, although its truth is clearly presupposed (or stated?), as witnessed by the fact that adding a contradicting statement would lead to semantic anomaly (cf. (8.30a)).

The subordinating conjunction *nema* ‘unless’ normally requires the subjunctive (see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1992):

(8.31)

- a. Hún syngur alltaf í sturtu [nema hún *er/sé mjög hás].
 she sings always in shower unless she be(*ind./sbj.) very hoarse

‘She always sings in the shower unless she is very hoarse.’

- b. Ég fer ekki [nema þú *kemur/komir með].

I go not unless you come(*ind./sbj.) with
 ‘I won’t go unless you come with me.’

As in the case of complement clauses, the presence of negation in the matrix clause can influence the choice of mood, sometimes giving rise to interesting minimal pairs (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:327):

- (8.32) a. Jón fór [af því að hann var/*væri reiður].
 John left because he was(ind./*sbj.) angry

- b. Jón fór ekki [af því að hann **var** reiður].
 John left not because he was(ind.) angry
 'John didn't leave because he was angry.'
 (= 'It is not the case that John left, and the reason was that he was angry.')
- c. Jón fór ekki [af því að hann **væri** reiður].
 John left not because he was(sbj.) angry
 'It is not true that John left because he was angry.'
 (= 'John left, but the reason was not that he was angry.')

If there is no negation in the matrix clause, we can only get the indicative in the 'because'-clause. But when there is a negation in the matrix, we have a choice between the indicative and the subjunctive. If the indicative is used, the 'because'-clause states a fact: John was angry and that was the reason he did not leave. If the subjunctive is used, the 'because'-clause no longer states a fact but describes a hypothetical situation that was in fact not the reason for John's leaving. A direct translation into English would be ambiguous in this respect: 'John didn't leave because he was angry.'

While there are thus some subtle and semantically significant differences between adjunct clauses containing indicatives and subjunctives, there are also certain grammaticalized rules that do not make obvious sense. Thus 'if'-clauses standardly take the indicative:

- (8.33) Hvað á ég að gera [ef hann **er** ekki heima].
 what am I to do if he is(ind.) not home
 'What am I supposed to do in case he is not at home?'

Since the meaning of *ef*-clauses ('if') seems related to the meaning of *nema*-clauses ('unless'), both standardly being classified as conditional clauses,⁶ it is not surprising that many speakers tend to substitute the subjunctive for the indicative in *ef*-clauses (here the % sign is used to indicate dialectal or idiolectal acceptance):⁷

- (8.34) %Hvað á ég að gera [ef hann **sé** ekki heima].
 what am I to do if he be(sbj) not home
 'What am I supposed to do in case he is not at home?'

⁶ As discussed by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1992, the conjunction *nema* is often said to be equivalent to *ef ekki* 'if not', although that is by no means true of all instances.

⁷ Conditional clauses of this kind are probably semantically related to the so-called *conjunctivus potentialis* (cf., e.g., Kress 1982:261–2).

This usage is frowned upon in schools. Note, however, that the subjunctive is standardly used in (preposed) conditional clauses if the subordinating conjunction is omitted:

- (8.35) a. [Ef hann **er**/***sé** ekki heima] kemur þú bara aftur.
if he is(ind./*sbj.) not home come you just back
'If he isn't at home, you just come back.'
- b. [***Er/Sé** hann ekki heima] kemur þú bara aftur.
be(*ind./sbj.) he not home come you just back
'If he isn't at home, you just come back.'

This indicates further that the semantics of the conditional clauses is related to that of the subjunctive.

Finally, some interesting minimal pairs can be created on the basis of the fact that the conjunction *svo að* can either introduce a final clause ('in order to') or a consecutive one ('such that'). Final complementizers like *svo að* 'so that', *til þess að* 'so that' take subjunctive complements, consecutive ones take the indicative:

- (8.36)
- a. Ég lokaði hliðinu [svo að hestarnir **kæmust** ekki inn]. (final)
I closed gate-the so that horses-the came(sbj.) not in
'I closed the gate so that the horses would not be able to get in.'
- b. Ég lokaði hliðinu [svo að hestarnir **komust** ekki inn]. (consecutive)
I closed gate-the so that horses-the came(ind.) not in
'I closed the gate so that the horses were not able to get in.'

This is then another instance of an interesting semantic contrast between subjunctive and indicative.

8.1.5 Relative clauses and *hv*-clauses

It is well known that relative clauses are similar to *wh*-clauses in certain respects. In some languages they are introduced by pronouns that look very much like interrogative pronouns. Besides, they tend to have gaps in them, like *wh*-clauses do.

This is only partially true of relative clauses in Icelandic. The reason is that there are no relative pronouns in Modern Icelandic, only the relative conjunctions or complementizers *sem* 'that' and *er* 'that', the latter mainly used in written or formal style. Consider the following examples, where the gap in the relative clause is indicated by a __:⁸

⁸ The Icelandic relative complementizer *sem* is translated here as 'that' and it has some of the same properties as relative *that* in English. Note, however, that it can be used

- (8.37) a. Þetta er maðurinn [sem ___ hitti Maríu í gær].
 this is man-the that met Mary yesterday
- b. Þetta er maðurinn [sem María hitti ___ í gær].
 this is man-the that Mary met yesterday
- c. Þetta er maðurinn [sem María fór með ___ í gær].
 this is man-the that Mary went with yesterday

Structurally, these relative clauses can be compared to *wh*-clauses like the following:

- (8.38) a. Ég veit [hver ___ hitti Maríu í gær].
 I know who(N) met Mary yesterday
- b. Ég veit [hvern María hitti ___ í gær].
 I know who(A) Mary met yesterday
- c. Ég veit [hverjum María fór með ___ í gær].
 I know who(D) Mary went with yesterday

As shown here, the gaps are in the same positions in the *wh*-clauses in (8.38) as in the relative clauses in (8.37). The main difference is that the *hv*-element *hver/hvern/hverjum* ‘who(N/A/D)’ shows case-marking differences, depending on the case that would be appropriate for an element in the gap. The relative complementizer *sem* shows no case distinctions. Furthermore, it is possible to pied-pipe the preposition with a *hv*-pronoun in an interrogative clause, but no such pied piping is possible in the case of the relative complementizer:

- (8.39) a. *Þetta er maðurinn [með sem María fór ___ í gær].⁹
 this is man-the with that Mary went yesterday

Footnote 8 (*cont.*)

to introduce non-restrictive relative clauses as well as restrictive ones, whereas English relative *that* is normally only used in restrictive relatives:

(i)

- a. Maðurinn sem skrifaði bókina er bandarískur.
 man-the that wrote book-the is American
- b. Bandaríkjamaðurinn, sem reyndar er fæddur á Englandi, verður hér í vetur.
 American-the that actually is born on England will-be here in winter
 ‘The American, who actually was born in England, will be here this winter.’

⁹ In pre-modern written Icelandic (and possibly also in translations today) it is possible to find *hv*-pronouns used as relative pronouns, presumably because of foreign influence. These then show the relevant morphological differences and they also allow pied piping of prepositions. The following would be a case in point:

- (i) Þetta er maðurinn [með hverjum María fór ___ í gær].
 this is man-the with whom Mary went yesterday

- b. Ég veit [með hverjum] María fór ___ í gær].
 I know with whom Mary went yesterday

Another interesting restriction is found in relative clauses where we would expect the gap to correspond to a possessive genitive. First, consider the following *wh*-clauses:

(8.40)

- a. Hann er bróðir hvers?
 he is brother whose
 'He is whose brother?' (an echo question)
- b. Ég veit ekki [bróðir hvers hann er ___].
 I know not brother whose he is
 'I don't know whose brother he is.'
- c. *Ég veit ekki [hvers hann er bróðir ___].
 I know not whose he is brother

As shown here, it is necessary to pied-pipe the whole NP in Icelandic questions when the *hv*-word corresponds to a possessive genitive – and the same is actually true of English too as indicated by the gloss of (8.40b) and the unacceptability of the English variant of (8.40c).¹⁰ Since English has a relative pronoun, it can form relative clauses that correspond to the interrogative (8.40b), but this is not possible with the Icelandic relative complementizer *sem* (nor in fact with its English counterpart *that*, as can be seen from the translation of (8.41c)):

- (8.41) a. This is the man [whose sister I met ___ yesterday].
 b. *Þetta er maðurinn [systur sem ég hitti ___ í gær].
 this is man-the sister that I met yesterday
 c. *Þetta er maðurinn [sem ég hitti systur ___ í gær].
 this is man-the that I met sister yesterday

¹⁰ Note that since possessive genitives in Icelandic normally follow the noun that governs their case (see the extensive discussion of the structure of NPs in chapter 3) whereas English possessives generally precede the corresponding noun, we get a different order in the two languages of the interrogative element and the accompanying noun in (8.40b). The same difference is found in NPs like *bróðir Jóns* (lit. 'brother John's') and *John's brother*.

Note that this is not a restriction on the genitive case as such, since gaps in relative clauses can correspond to prepositional and verbal objects in the genitive. This can be seen if one compares the *hv*-clauses below to their relative clause counterparts, where the preposition *til* ‘to’ and the verb *sakna* ‘miss’ both take genitive complements:

- (8.42) a. Ég veit ekki [hvers hún fór til ____].
 I know not who(G) she went to
- b. Þetta er maðurinn [sem hún fór til ____].
 this is man-the that she went to
- c. Ég veit [hvers hún saknar ____ mest].
 I know what(G) she misses most
- d. Það er þetta [sem hún saknar ____ mest].
 it is this that she misses most

Thus it is clear that this is only a restriction on possessive constructions, whatever its explanation may be.¹¹

8.1.6 Complementizer deletion

Finally, it could be noted that complementizer deletion seems to be more restricted in Icelandic than in many other languages. Thus the *að*-complementizer is mainly left out after verbs of saying and believing and mainly before pronominal subjects, as suggested by examples like the following (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:214f. – ?*e*, ??*e* and **e* indicate lowered acceptability of the deletion):

- (8.43) a. Þú hélt [(að) hún væri farin].
 You believed that she was(sbj.) gone
- b. Ég veit [(að) þú kemur í kvöld].
 I know that you come tonight
- c. Ég harma [að/?**e* hún skuli hafa farið].
 I regret that she shall have gone
 ‘I regret that she left.’

¹¹ It may be of some interest to note here that this can hardly have anything to do with some sort of a Left Branch Condition (in the sense of Ross 1967) since the possessive genitives tend to be on the right branch in Icelandic, as we have seen, although they are left-branch elements in English.

- (8.44) a. Þú héltst [að/?e María væri farin].¹²
 you believed that Mary was gone
- b. Ég veit [að/??e Haraldur kemur í kvöld].
 I know that Harold comes tonight

Complementizers of relative clauses are apparently not left out at all (**e* indicates that the position cannot be empty):

- (8.45) Báturinn sem/**e* Jón á er stór.
 boat-the that John owns is big

As we shall see below (section 8.3.1), the other Scandinavian languages tend to be more liberal than Icelandic in this respect.

8.2 A descriptive overview of infinitive constructions

8.2.0 Introduction

Infinitives occur in a wide variety of constructions. The major ones are exemplified below (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993, 2005: chapter 9), beginning with the types that do not seem to have an ‘extra’ visible subject of the infinitive, in addition to the visible subject of the verb that governs the infinitive, if there is one.

In the first set of examples, there is obviously no such verb and the infinitive is ‘independent’ in that sense:

- (8.46) Independent infinitives:
- a. [Að lækka kaupið] væri heimskulegt.
 to lower salary-the would-be stupid
- b. [Að borða of mikið] leiðir til offitu.
 to eat too much leads to obesity

¹² Interestingly, it is not only (weak) pronominal subjects that can license this complementizer deletion but also the ‘proprial article’ *hann* ‘he’, *hún* ‘she’ often used with proper names (see the discussion in 3.1.1.2 above):

- (i) a. Þú héltst [að/e hún María væri farin].
 you believed that she Mary was gone
- b. Ég veit [að/e hann Haraldur kemur í kvöld].
 I know that he Harold comes tonight

The second type looks similar, but here the interpretation of the (non-overt) subject of the infinitive is determined or ‘controlled’ by the matrix verb, as will be explained below. Hence the label:

(8.47) Direct complements of control verbs:

- a. Hún reyndi [að skrifa skáldsögur].
she tried to write novels
- b. Ég lofaði mömmu [að henda ruslinu].
I promised mom to throw-out garbage-the
- c. Vala skipaði Óla [að láta ekki eins og fífl].
Vala ordered Oli to act not like idiot
‘Vala ordered Oli not to act like an idiot.’

Verbs taking prepositional (rather than direct) complements can also control the same type of infinitives:

(8.48) Complements of prepositional control verbs:

- a. Þeir töluðu um [að lækka kaupið].
they talked about to lower salary-the
‘They talked about lowering the salary.’
- b. Hún hefur gaman af [að dansa].
she has fun of to dance
‘She is fond of dancing.’
- c. Þeir bíða eftir [að komast í Bessastaði].
they wait after to come to Bessastaðir
‘They await the opportunity to go to Bessastaðir.’

Modal verbs take infinitival complements, often (but not always) without any infinitival marker:

(8.49) Complements of modal verbs:

- a. Hún kann [að leysa þetta vandamál].
she knows to solve this problem
‘She knows how to solve this problem.’ or:
‘She may solve this problem.’
- b. Ég á [að mæta í viðtal á morgun].
I am to meet to interview tomorrow
‘I am supposed to come to an interview tomorrow.’
- c. Biskupinn vill [leysa deiluna].
bishop-the wants solve problem-the
‘The bishop wants to solve the problem.’

- d. Þú mátt [mæta í viðtal á morgun].
 you may meet to interview tomorrow
 'You can come to an interview tomorrow.'

The so-called aspectual verbs, that is, verbs describing the state of an action (beginning, ongoing, finishing ...), also typically take infinitival complements. As we shall see below, these infinitives do not have the same properties as the complements of the control verbs exemplified above:

(8.50) Complements of aspectual verbs:

- a. Það byrjaði [að rigna eftir hádegi].
 it began to rain after noon
 'It began to rain in the afternoon.'
- b. Það hætti [að snjóa um kvöldmat].
 it stopped to snow about dinner
 'It stopped snowing around dinner.'

Infinitives can also modify nouns or noun phrases, much the same way that relative clauses do. Such infinitives then contain a gap like relative clauses:

(8.51) Infinitival relatives:

- a. Þetta er bón [til að bóna bíla með ___].
 this is wax for to polish cars with
- b. Hér eru vasapeningar [til að nota ___ á ferðalaginu].
 here are pocket-money for to use on trip-the
 'Here is some pocket money to use on the trip.'

Some adjectives can take infinitival complements. While the a- and b-types exemplified below are presumably accepted by everybody, the c-type is arguably of a somewhat different kind and apparently not as widely accepted. It will be discussed below:

(8.52) Complements of adjectives:

- a. Jón er andskoti góður [að tefla].
 John is devilishly good to play chess
 'John is damned good at playing chess.'
- b. Hún er býsna lagin [að bjarga sér].
 she is pretty skilful to save REFL
 'She is pretty skilful at getting by.'

- c. Þessi dúkur er mjög auðveldur [að þrifa].¹³
 this cloth is very easy to clean

Infinitives of the following type are often referred to as *raising infinitives*. The reason is that their syntactic (and semantic) properties have been described by assuming a ‘raising’ of the matrix subject (e.g. *hesturinn* ‘the horse’, *fiskurinn* ‘the fish’ in the examples below) out of the infinitival complement. This will be explained below:

(8.53) Raising infinitives:

- a. Hesturinn virðist [hafa týnt knapanum].
 horse-the(N) seems have lost jockey-the
 ‘The horse seems to have lost its jockey.’
- b. Fiskurinn reyndist [vera alveg nýr].
 fish-the(N) proved be completely fresh
 ‘The fish proved to be completely fresh.’
- c. Bíllinn sýndist [vera í lagi].
 car-the(N) looked be in order
 ‘The car seemed to be in order.’
- d. Hún þykir [vera góð söngkona].
 she is-found be good songwoman
 ‘She is considered to be a good singer.’

It is possible that this last example is not of the same type as the preceding two.

The most obvious visible difference between the types listed above is the presence vs. absence of the infinitival marker *að* ‘to’. An overview of this is given below, with the relevant examples being referred to in parentheses at the bottom of each column:

(8.54)

	ind.	ctrl.	prep.	mod.	asp.	rel.	adj.	rais.
inf. <i>að</i>	+	+	+	+/-	+	+	+	-
	(46)	(47)	(48)	(49)	(50)	(51)	(52)	(53)

¹³ The more common variant of this is the following:

- (i) Það er auðvelt [að þrifa þennan dúk].
 it is easy to clean this cloth

The so-called raising infinitives stick out here, having no infinitival marker *að*. As we shall see below, this distribution of the infinitival marker is similar to what we find in the most closely related languages, although the frequency of infinitival markers in complements of modal verbs is a bit surprising. We shall return to the comparative aspect of infinitives in section 8.3 below.

Let us now turn to the types of infinitival constructions where we find an ‘extra’ NP that seems to function in some sense as the subject of the infinitival construction. This NP is marked in boldface below and, as can be seen there, it typically shows up in the accusative or nominative (unless the main verb in the infinitival complement is one that assigns a lexical dative or genitive to its subject – cf. the discussion in sections 4.1.2.1 and 4.2.1 above):

(8.55) Accusative with infinitive:

- a. Við teljum **[frambjóðendurna]** vera frambærilega].
 we believe candidates-the(A) be pretty good
 ‘We believe the candidates to be pretty good.’
- b. Ég álit **[íslensku stúlkuna]** eiga góða möguleika].
 I consider Icelandic girl-the have good possibilities
 ‘I consider the Icelandic girl to have good possibilities.’
- c. Þeir segja **[hvalina]** hafa étið allan þorskin].
 they say whales-the(A) have eaten all cod-the

Arguably, the term *accusative with infinitive* is a misnomer since the relevant argument could also show up in dative or genitive, as already mentioned.¹⁴ So-called causative and sensory verbs appear to take the same kinds of complements in Icelandic:

(8.56) Complements of causative verbs:

- Þeir létu **[mig]** drekka lýsi].
 they made me(A) drink cod liver oil

¹⁴ Examples of datives and genitives in the ‘accusative with infinitive’ construction include the following:

- (i) a. Ég tel **[stelpunum]** vera kalt].
 I believe girls-the(D) be cold
- b. Þau álitu **[vindsins]** gæta minna bakvið húsið].
 they believed wind-the(G) be-noticeable less behind house-the
 ‘They believe the wind to be less noticeable behind the house.’

(8.57) Complements of sensory verbs:

- a. Við heyrðum [kettina læðast upp stigan].
 we heard cats-the(A) sneak up stairs-the
- b. Ég sá [lögguuna sveifla kylfunni].
 I saw cop-the(A) swing bat-the
- c. Hún fann [kjólinn límast við bakið á sér].
 she felt dress-the(A) get-stuck to back-the on REFL
 ‘She felt the dress sticking to her back.’

Whereas the apparent subject of the infinitive in the kinds of infinitives just discussed typically shows up in the accusative (unless it has a lexical case assigned by the main verb of the infinitival complement), the corresponding argument in the next two types shows up in the nominative (unless, again, assigned a lexical case by the main verb of the infinitival complement). Note that in these types the matrix subject is in the dative:

(8.58) Nominative with infinitive (with raising(?) verbs):

- a. Henni virtist [hesturinn hafa týnt knapanum].
 her(D) seemed horse-the(N) have lost jockey-the
 ‘It seemed to her that the horse had lost its jockey.’
- b. Þeim sýndist [bíllinn vera í lagi].
 them(D) looked car-the(N) be in order
 ‘It seemed to them that the car was in order.’

(8.59) Nominative with infinitive (with middles of sensory verbs):

- a. Honum heyrðust [kettirnir læðast upp stigan].
 him(D) seemed-to-hear(pl.) cats-the(Npl.) sneak up stairs-the
 ‘He thought I heard the cats sneak up the stairs.’
- b. Henni fannst [kjólinn límast við bakið á sér].
 her(D) felt dress-the(N) get-stuck to back-the on REFL
 ‘She thought she felt the dress sticking to her back.’

The relationship between the dative and nominative here is intriguing since we have already seen that there is a special relationship between dative subjects and nominative objects in Icelandic (cf., e.g., section 4.1.2 above).

In the following discussion of these different types of infinitives we will concentrate on properties which suggest that some of these infinitives are more clause-like than others. These include the following:

- (8.60) a. properties of the (sometimes invisible) infinitival subject
 b. agreement phenomena
 c. adverbial modification and evidence for verb movement and object shift

We will also keep the question about the possible role of the infinitival marker *að* in mind throughout.

8.2.1 Independent infinitives

The independent infinitives exemplified above appear to play the role of subject, just like *that*-clauses can. Like these, they can be extraposed:

- (8.61) a. *Það væri heimskulegt [að lækka kaupið].*
 it would-be stupid to lower salary-the
- b. *Það leiðir til offitu [að borða of mikið].*
 it leads to obesity to eat too much

These infinitives do not have a visible subject, but it is of some interest to note that their invisible (and arbitrary) subject can correspond to visible subjects in different morphological cases. It even appears that it can trigger case agreement or prevent number and gender agreement like non-nominative subjects can. The relevant phenomena are reviewed below:

- (8.62) a. Haraldur er of **hávaxinn**.
 Harold(Nsg.m.) is too tall(Nsg.m.)
- b. Haraldi var **kalt**.
 Harold(Dsg.m.) was cold(Nsg.n.)
- c. Haraldur kom **einn** í tíma.
 Harold(Nsg.m.) came alone(Nsg.m.) to class
- d. Harald vantaði **einan** í tíma.
 Harold(Asg.m.) lacked alone(Asg.m.) in class
 ‘Harold alone was missing from class.’
- e. Fanganum var kastað **einum** í dýflissu.
 prisoner-the(Dsg.m.) was thrown alone(Dsg.m.) in dungeon

In the a-example we have agreement in case, number and gender between the predicative adjective *feitur* ‘fat’ and the nominative subject. The b-example illustrates the fact that when we have a Dat. (experiencer) subject in constructions of this sort, the predicative adjective shows up in the (default) Nsg.n. form (see the discussion in 4.2 above). Examples c–e show that appositive adjectives can show agreement with subjects in different cases.

As illustrated below, it appears that the invisible subject of infinitives (indicated here by PRO) can trigger agreement and non-agreement in the same way as an overt lexical NP would (for discussion of similar facts, see Andrews 1976; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1991):

- (8.63) a. [Að PRO vera of **hávxinn**] getur valdið erfiðleikum.
to be too tall(Nsg.m.) can cause problems
- b. [Að PRO vera lengi **kalt**] veldur stundum lungnabólgu.
to be long cold(Nsg.n.) causes sometimes pneumonia
'To be cold for a long time sometimes causes pneumonia.'
- c. [Að PRO koma **einn** í tíma] er vandræðalegt.
to come alone(Nsg.m.) to class is embarrassing
- d. [Að PRO vanta **einan** í tíma] er of áberandi.
to lack alone(Asg.m.) in class is too conspicuous
'To be alone missing from class is too conspicuous.'
- e. [Að PRO vera kastað **einum** í dýflissu] er hræðilegt.
to be thrown alone(Dsg.m.) in dungeon is terrible

Facts of this sort would seem to indicate that infinitives of this type are clause-like in the sense that they can have a subject with case properties although it is not visible (see, e.g., Andrews 1976 and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1991).

Another clause-like property of the independent infinitives is the fact that they show some evidence for verb movement across sentence adverbs, including the negation *ekki* 'not':

- (8.64) a. [Að PRO hafa ekki **lesið** Chomsky] varð henni að falli.
to have not read Chomsky became her(D) to fall
'Not having read Chomsky caused her downfall.'
- b. [Að PRO **lesa** ekki Chomsky] varð henni að falli.
to read not Chomsky became her(D) to fall
'Not reading Chomsky caused her downfall.'
- c. [Að PRO **lesa** **Chomsky** ekki] varð henni að falli.
to read Chomsky not became her(D) to fall
'Not reading Chomsky caused her downfall.'

Here we see that the main verb 'moves' across the negation when no auxiliary is around, the very phenomenon that I used to argue for verb movement to (some sort of) an I-position in chapter 2.¹⁵ In the c-example the object (*Chomsky*) has also been shifted across the negation. It can also be demonstrated that if this object was an unstressed pronoun, this shift would have been obligatory, as pronominal object shift normally is when the main verb moves out of the VP:

¹⁵ This implies, however, that the movement of the verb cannot be 'caused' by the verb's need to 'pick up' agreement morphemes since infinitives do not show any agreement morphology. We will return to this issue in the theoretical and comparative discussion in 8.3.

- (8.65) [Að PRO lesa hann ekki/*ekki hann] varð ...
 to read him not/*not him became ...

Having demonstrated some clausal properties of the independent infinitives, we now turn to the so-called control infinitives, which show much the same properties.

8.2.2 *Complements of control verbs, including prepositional verbs*

In contrast with the arbitrary subject of the independent infinitives, the subject of the complements of the so-called control verbs is 'controlled' by the subject or object of that verb (hence the name). This is often indicated by subscripts:

- (8.66)
- a. [Að PRO_{arb} synda yfir Ermarsund] getur verið hættulegt.
 to swim across the English Channel can be dangerous
- b. María_i reyndi [að PRO_i synda yfir Ermarsund].
 Mary tried to swim across the English Channel
- c. María skipaði Jóni_i [að PRO_i synda yfir Ermarsund].
 Mary ordered John to swim across the English Channel

While the a-example means that it can be dangerous for anybody to swim across the channel and the PRO subject of the infinitive is arbitrary in that sense, the subjects of the last two examples are understood as being identical with the coindexed NPs in the matrix.¹⁶ This difference can also be seen quite clearly in the different behaviour of reflexive pronouns in infinitival phrases of these types:

- (8.67) a. [Að PRO_{arb} raka sig_{arb}] er leiðinlegt.
 to shave REFL is boring
- b. *Ég_i reyndi [að PRO_i raka sig_i].
 I tried to shave REFL

¹⁶ As shown above, a predicative adjective agreeing with an arbitrary PRO will normally show up in the (less-marked) masculine form rather than the (more-marked) feminine. Given the appropriate context, however, we could get the feminine form. Imagine a situation where a young girl is trying to get to see a restricted movie and is being turned away, much to her dismay. Then one could use either gender of the predicative adjective in a comment like this one (although the masculine form might be preferred):

- (i) [Að PRO_{arb} vera of ungur/ung] getur verið erfitt.
 to be too young(m./f.) can be difficult

- c. Jón_i reyndi [að PRO_i raka sig_i].
 John tried to shave REFL
 'John tried to shave himself.'

In the a-example we have the third person reflexive form *sig* with an arbitrary reference (coindexed with, or bound by, the PRO_{arb} if you will). Because the PRO-subject in the controlled infinitive in the b-example is coindexed with the first person pronoun *ég*, it is impossible to have the third person reflexive form *sig* there. This becomes possible again in the c-example, but then the reflexive pronoun no longer means 'oneself' but rather 'himself' as it is coindexed with *Jón* (through the controlled PRO).

In other respects the control infinitives show much the same properties as the independent infinitives. Thus the PRO-subject can correspond to a non-nominative lexical subject, as originally pointed out by Andrews (1976; for a more detailed discussion, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1991), triggering the same agreement phenomena as those observed above for independent infinitives. Some examples are given below (compare the examples in (8.62) and (8.63) above, cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:302):

(8.68)

- a. María_i vonast til
 Mary(Nsg.f.) hopes for
 [að PRO_i vanta ekki **eina**_i í tíma].
 to lack not alone(Asg.f.) in class
 'Mary hopes not to be missing alone from class.'
- b. Haraldur_i kvíðir fyrir
 Harold(Nsg.m.) is-apprehensive about
 [að PRO_i verða kastað **einum** í dyflissu].
 to be thrown alone(Dsg.m.) in dungeon
 'Harold is apprehensive about being thrown alone into a dungeon.'
- c. (?)Kennarinn skipaði Jóni_i
 teacher-the ordered John
 [að PRO_i vanta aldrei aftur **einan**_i í tíma].
 to lack never again alone(Asg.m.) in class
 'The teacher ordered John not be be missing alone from class ever again.'

In these examples we have elements inside the infinitival phrase that appear to agree in case, gender and number with the PRO subject, that is, they show up in the case, number and gender that a lexical subject in the subject position would have had. For some reason it seems easier to find passable examples of

this kind when the control verb takes a prepositional rather than a direct complement (cf. *vonast til, kviða fyrir*).¹⁷

In some instances it is possible, however, to get an element inside the infinitival phrase to agree with a subject or object in the matrix clause, although the acceptability of this kind of agreement seems to vary. Observe the following (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:301 – note that here the appropriate case, number and gender of a lexical subject with the verb in the infinitive is shown in parentheses under the PRO):

(8.69)

- a. Ég bað **hana**_i [að PRO_i fara **ein/eina** þangað].
 I asked her(Asg.f) to (Nsg.f.) go alone(N/Asg.f.) there
- b. Ég skipaði **honum**_i [að PRO_i fara **einn/(?)einum** þangað].
 I ordered him(Dsg.m.) to (Nsg.m.) go alone(N/Dsg.m.) there

This kind of agreement is hardly possible in examples of the kind shown above, although the judgements may vary somewhat (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:302, who seems to have been more tolerant at the time):

- (8.70) a. ?***María**_i vonast til
 Mary(Nsg.f.) hopes for
 [að PRO_i vanta ekki **ein**_i í tíma].
 to lack not alone(Nsg.f.) in class

¹⁷ Many examples of control infinitives where the invisible subject corresponds to a non-nominative lexical subject sound odd. The reason is typically the fact that the complements of many control verbs are required to have agentive predicates and non-nominative subjects are never agents (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:301). Prepositional control verbs like *vonast til* 'hope for', *kviða fyrir* 'be apprehensive about', *hlakka til* 'look forward to', *langa til* 'long for, want' etc. are not as restrictive in this respect. Similarly, PRO subjects corresponding to non-nominative lexical subjects are fine in independent infinitives (I give the extraposed versions here):

- (i) a. Það er ekki gott [að PRO vanta einan í tíma].
 it is not good to lack alone(A) in class
 'It is not good to be missing alone from class.'
- b. Það er leiðinlegt [að PRO vera vísað einum á dyr].
 It is sad to be shown alone(D) to door
 'It is sad to be shown the door alone.'

In the latter example the PRO corresponds to the dative passive subject in *Honum var vísað á dyr* 'Him(D) was shown the door.'

- b. ***Haraldur**_i kvíðir fyrir
 Harold(Nsg.m.) is-apprehensive about
 [að PRO_i verða kastað **einn** í dyflissu].
 to be thrown alone(Nsg.m.) in dungeon
- c. ***Kennarinn** skipaði **Jóni**_i
 teacher-the ordered John(Dsg.m.)
 [að PRO_i vanta aldrei aftur **einum**_i í tíma].
 to lack never again alone(Dsg.m.) in class

It is also possible to find evidence for verb movement across sentence adverbs in control infinitives – as well as object shift:

- (8.71) a. **María**_i lofaði [að PRO_i **lesa** ekki __ **bókina**].
 Mary promised to read not book-the
- b. **María**_i lofaði [að PRO_i **lesa** **bókina** ekki __ __].
 Mary promised to read book-the not
 ‘Mary promised not to read the book.’
- c. **María**_i lofaði [að PRO_i **lesa** **hana ekki**/***ekki hana**].
 Mary promised to read it not/*not it
 ‘Mary promised not to read it.’

As the reader will have noted, the order of the infinitival marker and the negation is not the same in English and Icelandic. This may tell us something about the nature and structural position of the infinitival marker. We will return to this issue in section 8.3.

8.2.3 *Complements of modal verbs*

For the present purposes we can define modal verbs as verbs that can typically express a modal meaning of two kinds, namely **epistemic** and **root**. While the epistemic sense ‘qualifies the truth value of the sentence containing the modal’, the root sense expresses ‘necessity . . . obligation, permission, volition or ability of an agent which is usually . . . expressed by the . . . subject of the sentence’ (Platzack 1979:44; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:52 and references cited there). Modal verbs in Icelandic take infinitival complements, but the properties of these infinitival complements vary considerably depending on the sense of the modal verb. In short, infinitival complements of modal verbs in the root sense have virtually the same properties as complements of control verbs do, whereas complements of modal verbs in the epistemic senses show properties similar to those of standard

auxiliary verbs (see Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995; cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b).

As already mentioned, some modal verbs in Icelandic take complements with the infinitival marker *að*, others do not. It is not clear what determines this and it may be a lexical idiosyncrasy. It is generally not linked to the root vs. epistemic senses (but see *geta* ‘may, be able’ in (8.73)). The most important Icelandic modal verbs are listed below (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:55):

- (8.72) a. Icelandic modal verbs taking bare infinitival complements:
geta ‘may’, *mega* ‘may’, *munu* ‘will’, *skulu* ‘shall’, *vilja* ‘will’
 b. Icelandic modal verbs taking infinitival *að*-complements:
eiga ‘ought (to)’, *hljóta* ‘must’, *kunna* ‘can’, *verða* ‘must’, *þurfa* ‘need’,
ætla ‘intend, need’
 c. An Icelandic modal verb taking a participial complement:
geta ‘can, may, be able to’

The verb *geta* is special in that it usually takes a supine (or participial) complement. When it does, it can either have an epistemic or a root sense. Thus the following example is ambiguous as shown:

- (8.73) *María getur komið á morgun.*
 Mary can come(sup.) tomorrow
 ‘Mary may come tomorrow.’ (epistemic)
 ‘Mary is able to come tomorrow.’ (root)

In clauses with the perfective auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’ it can either (1) follow the perfective auxiliary, show up in the past participle (as verbs following perfective *hafa* always do) and take a participial complement as usual (in which case the root sense is more natural although the epistemic sense is not ruled out); or (2) it can precede the perfective auxiliary *hafa* and select the infinitival form of *hafa* (in which case it can only have the epistemic sense). This is illustrated below:

- (8.74)
 a. *María hefur getað lesið bókina.*
 Mary has could(sup.) read(sup.) book-the
 ‘Mary may have read the book.’ (epistemic)¹⁸
 ‘Mary has been able to read the book.’ (root)
 b. *María getur hafa lesið bókina.*
 Mary may have(inf.) read(sup.) book-the
 ‘Mary may have read the book.’ (epistemic)

¹⁸ The epistemic reading is much weaker in the a-example than in the b-example.

The b-variant is presumably an innovation. It may be modelled on the behaviour of the near-synonymous *kunna* ‘can, may, be able to’ which has to precede the perfective auxiliary *hafa* when it has the epistemic reading but follows it when it has the root sense (*Hann kann að hafa teft* ‘He may have played chess’ vs. *Hann hefur kunnað að tefta* ‘He has known how to play chess’).¹⁹

At this point it may be useful to list the most important semantic classes of modal verbs and some typical Icelandic representatives (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:55; see also Davidsen-Nielsen 1990, Coates 1983):

(8.75) Some root senses of modal verbs:

- a. obligation: *eiga* ‘have to’
- b. permission: *mega* ‘may’
- c. ability: *geta* ‘can, be able to’, *kunna* ‘can, know how to’
- d. volition: *vilja* ‘will, want’

(8.76) Some epistemic senses of modal verbs:

- a. possibility: *geta* ‘can, may’, *kunna* ‘can, may’
- b. necessity: *mega* ‘must’, *verða* ‘must’
- c. probability: *munu* ‘will’, *vilja* ‘will’
- d. report: *eiga* ‘?’, *munu* ‘?’ (cf. ‘I hear/I understand/It is said that ...’)

While it is not clear that modal *munu* ‘will’ has any clear root sense, the different types of meanings can be illustrated for most of the others. Since the root senses typically imply some sort of obligation, permission, ability or volition of the **subject argument**, it is easy to force the epistemic reading by selecting a verb that does not assign any thematic role to a subject. The so-called weather predicates are easy to use for this purpose:

¹⁹ Another innovation can be found on the Net, for instance, namely a new supine form of *hafa* ‘have’ after *geta*:

- (i) Jón getur hafað gert þetta.
John may have(sup.) done this

Otherwise the supine form of *hafa* is *haft*. I have only recently been made aware of this new form.

(8.77)

- a. 1. María **á** að mæta fyrir rétti.
Mary has to appear in court (root, obligation)
2. Það **á** að rigna á morgun.
it is to rain tomorrow
'It is supposed to rain tomorrow.' (epistemic, report)
- b. 1. Þú **mátt** koma í heimsókn.
you may come for visit (root, permission)
2. Það **má** þá rigna mikið.
it must then rain much
'Then it must rain a lot.' (epistemic, necessity)
- c. 1. Hún **getur** lyft þessum steini.
she can lift this rock (root, ability)
2. Það **getur** snjóáð á morgun.
it may snow tomorrow (epistemic, possibility)
- d. 1. Fischer **kann** að tefla.
Fischer can to play chess
'Fischer knows how to play chess.' (root, ability)
2. Fischer **kann** að flytja til Íslands.
Fischer may to move to Iceland
'Fischer may move to Iceland.' (epistemic, possibility)
- e. 1. Haraldur **vill** selja bókina.
Harold will sell book-the
'Harold wants to sell the book.' (root, volition)
2. Það **vill** oft kólna á kvöldin.
it will often get-cooler in evening-the
'It often tends to cool off in the evening.' (epistemic, probability)
- f. Þið **munuð** finna ungbarn ...
you will find infant
'You will find an infant ...' (epistemic, probability)
- g. Þú **munt** vera Bandaríkjamaður.
you will be American
'I hear/understand that you are an American.' (epistemic, report)

As the reader may have noted, control verbs can only take an animate (and often also agentive) subject. Hence they never allow a semantically empty element like the weather-*það*. In this respect they are like modal verbs in the root senses and different from modal verbs in the epistemic senses. A couple of (ungrammatical) examples are given below to illustrate this point:

- (8.78) a. *Það reyndi að rigna í gær.
 it tried to rain yesterday
- b. *Það vonast til að snjóa mikið í vetur.
 it hopes for to snow much in winter

Note also that it is possible to find verbs whose meaning is very similar to the root sense of a given modal verb but that do not have any epistemic sense and thus do not qualify as modal verbs. Hence they cannot take weather-*það*, for instance. One such verb is *áforma* ‘intend’, which can be contrasted with *ætla* ‘intend’:

(8.79)

- a. Það ætlar [að rigna á morgun].
 it intends to rain tomorrow
 ‘It will probably rain tomorrow.’ (epistemic, probability)
- b. *Það áformar [að rigna á morgun].
 it intends to rain tomorrow (no epistemic reading available)

It seems, then, that a part of the difference between root modals and epistemic modals could be that root modals assign a thematic role to their subject, just like control verbs do, whereas epistemic modals do not. In this respect, then, epistemic modals would be like auxiliaries (and some of them, like *munu* ‘will’, for instance, are standardly included in the class of auxiliaries). If this is true, we might expect epistemic modals to accept non-argumental idiom chunks licensed by the infinitival verb, whereas we would not expect root modals (nor control verbs) to do so, preserving the idiomatic reading. This prediction is borne out (see Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:59; cf. also Chomsky 1981:35–7; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b:252–3):

(8.80)

- a. **Skörin** færast upp í bekkinn.
 step-the moves up in bench-the
 ‘This is going too far.’
 (Lit. ‘Those who used to sit in the lower seats (on the skör “steps”) are now sitting in the higher seats (on the bekkur “bench”).’)
- b. Skörin kann að færast upp í bekkinn.
 step-the can to move up in bench-the
 ‘This may go too far.’ (root impossible)

(8.81)

- a. Þarna liggur hundurinn grafinn.
 there lies dog-the buried
 ‘This is where the problem is.’

- b. Parna getur hundurinn hafa legið grafinn.
 there may dog-the have(inf.) lain buried
 ‘That’s where the problem may have been.’ (root impossible)

A third property that distinguishes epistemic modals from their root counterparts and control verbs has to do with non-nominative subjects: epistemic modals are ‘transparent’ with respect to the case marking licensed by the infinitival verb, whereas root modals and control verbs are not. This means that epistemic modals, just like any auxiliary, can take non-nominative subjects licensed by the infinitival (or main) verb, whereas root modals cannot (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986b; Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:59ff.). This can be shown by using the predicates of (8.82), which take an accusative and a dative subject, respectively:

- (8.82) a. Harald vantar peninga.
 Harold(A) lacks money(A).
 b. Haraldí líkar vel í Stuttgart.
 Harold(D) likes well in Stuttgart
 ‘Harold likes it in Stuttgart.’

- (8.83) a. Harald vill oft vanta peninga.
 Harold(A) will frequently lack money
 ‘Harold frequently tends to lack money.’ (epistemic only)

- b. Haraldí ætlar að líka vel í Stuttgart.
 Harold(D) intends to like well in Stuttgart
 ‘It looks like Harold will like it in Stuttgart.’ (epistemic only)²⁰

So far, then, the complements of root modals seem quite similar to those of control verbs. It seems, however, that it is more difficult to find clear evidence for verb movement and object shift in modal complements than in

²⁰ Note that it is not possible either to get a root modal reading by having a nominative matrix subject in this context. Such constructions are either ungrammatical or very odd for most speakers (the a-example somewhat better than the b-example, though):

- (i) a. ?*Haraldur vill aldrei vanta peninga.
 Harold(N) wants never lack money
 b. *Haraldur ætlar að líka vel í Stuttgart.
 Harold(N) intends to like well in Stuttgart

It is perhaps not entirely clear whether the reason for this is semantic or syntactic or both.

control complements. An important part of the reason seems to be that the modal complements are more resistant to independent modification by sentence adverbials than control complements are. Hence many attempts to position a sentence adverb inside a modal complement result in an odd sentence:

- (8.84) a. Þú átt/þarft **ekki/aldrei** [að borða fisk].
 you ought/need not/never to eat fish.
- b. ??Þú átt/þarft [að borða **ekki/aldrei** fisk].
 you ought/need to eat not/never fish
- c. *Þú átt/þarft [að **ekki/aldrei** borða fisk].
 you ought/need to not/never eat fish

Although the b-example here is quite unnatural, the c-example, with no verb movement and a sentence adverb intervening between the infinitival marker and the non-finite verb is much worse. Based on facts of this sort, it has been reported that verb movement across a sentence adverb in modal complements is bad (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:51; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993:199). But it seems possible to find passable instances of verb movement in such complements and then Object Shift is also fine, as expected:

- (8.85) a. Þjófurinn kundi **ekki** [að opna lásinn].
 thief-the knew not to open lock-the
 ‘The thief didn’t know how to open the lock.’
- b. Þjófurinn kundi [að skemma **ekki** lásinn].
 thief-the knew to ruin not lock-the
 ‘The thief knew how not to ruin the lock.’
- c. Þjófurinn kundi [að skemma lásinn **ekki**].
 thief-the knew to ruin lock-the not
 ‘The thief knew how not to ruin the lock.’

It even seems possible to get this kind of movement in the complement of epistemic modals (although some speakers find this difficult):

- (8.86) Þig kann [að vanta **aldrei** peninga], en ...
 you(A) can to lack never money but
 ‘You may never lack money, but ...’
 [i.e. ‘It is possible that you never lack money, but ...’]

This is in rather sharp contrast with the (more auxiliary-like) epistemic modal *munu* ‘will’:

- (8.87) a. Þig mun **aldrei** [vanta peninga].
 you will never lack money
- b. *Þig mun [vanta **aldrei** peninga].
 you will lack never money

It is not clear what determines these different properties (or preferences) of modal complements but it would be worth investigating further.

8.2.4 *Complements of aspectual verbs*

Icelandic has a number of verbs that take infinitival complements, with the infinitival marker *að*, and arguably have some sort of aspectual meaning. They are similar to (epistemic) modals in that they do not appear to assign a thematic role to their subject position and are thus ‘transparent’ to downstairs subjects, allowing, for example, weather-*það* and non-nominative subjects licensed by the non-finite verb in their infinitival complement. They include the following (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:55ff. and references cited by him):

- (8.88) *byrja* ‘begin’, *fara* ‘begin’, *hætta* ‘stop’, *taka* ‘begin’, *vera* ‘be’
 (i.e. progressive), *vera búinn* ‘be finished, be done, have’

In the following examples the element in the subject position of the aspectual verb is licensed in all instances by the main verb of the infinitival complement:

- (8.89) a. Mig byrjaði [að klæja í þetta í gær].
 me(A) began to itch in this yesterday
 ‘This began to itch yesterday.’
- b. Það fór [að skyggja strax upp úr hádegi].
 it began to darken right after noon
 ‘It began to turn dark right after midday.’
- c. Hana hætti [að langa í súkkulaði eftir þetta].
 her(A) stopped to long in chocolate after this
 ‘She stopped wanting chocolate after this.’
- d. Það tók [að hvesa og skyggnið versnaði].
 it began to get-windy and visibility-the worsened
 ‘It became windier and the visibility got worse.’
- e. Honum var [að kólna].
 him(D) was to get-colder
 ‘He was getting colder.’
- f. Honum er búið [að vera kalt í allan dag].
 him(D) is done to be cold(Nsg.n.) in all day
 ‘He has been cold the whole day.’

As in the case of the modal verbs, it is possible to find verbs that appear to have similar meaning but lack the crucial property of being ‘transparent’ to downstairs subjects. One such verb is *klára* ‘finish’ (cf. also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:55ff.):

- (8.90) *Hana kláraði [að langa í súkkulaði eftir þetta].
 her(A) finished to long in chocolate after this

Hence *klára* ‘finish’ will not be included in the class of aspectual verbs here.

While the ‘transparency’ illustrated above shows that the aspectual verbs resemble (epistemic) modal verbs in certain respects, and differ from control verbs (and root modals), they also share some properties with control verbs: while modal verbs cannot undergo passivization of any kind, aspectual verbs occur in constructions that look like impersonal passives (or expletive passives):

- (8.91) a. Það var byrjað [að rækta banana hér í fyrra].
 there was begun to grow bananas here last year
 ‘People began growing bananas here last year.’
- b. Það var farið [að borða humar á Íslandi á síðustu öld].
 there was begun to eat lobster in Iceland in last century
 ‘People began eating lobster in Iceland during the last century.’
- c. Það var hætt [að veiða hvali fyrir löngu].
 there was stopped to hunt whales for long
 ‘People stopped hunting whales long ago.’
- d. Það var tekið [að hvesa og skyggnið versnaði].
 there was begun to get-windy and visibility-the worsened
 ‘It became windier and the visibility got worse.’
- e. Það var verið [að borða].
 there was been to eat
 ‘People were eating.’
- f. Það var búíð [að mála húsið].
 there was finished to paint house-the
 ‘People had finished painting the house.’

The same is true of control verbs:

- (8.92) a. Það var reynt [að rækta banana hér í fyrra].
 there was tried to grow bananas here last year
 ‘People tried growing bananas here last year.’
- b. Það var lofað [að veiða enga hvali á síðustu öld].
 there was promised to hunt no whales in last century
 ‘People promised to hunt no whales in the last century.’

- c. Það var áformað [að mála húsið].
 there was intended to paint house-the
 'People intended to paint the house.'

This is not possible with modal verbs, on the other hand, not even those that seem quite close semantically to certain control verbs:

- (8.93) a. *Það var ætlað [að mála húsið].
 there was intended to paint house-the
 b. *Það var þurft [að rækta banana].
 there was needed to grow bananas
 c. *Það var átt [að veiða þorsk].
 there was ought to catch cod

With respect to verb movement (and object shift), on the other hand, it seems that aspectual verbs are more similar to modal verbs: it is very difficult to find any evidence for such a movement in the complements of the aspectual verbs. In fact, most of them seem to be as resistant to modification by sentence adverbs as the complements of modal verbs are (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:66):

- (8.94)
 *Við byrjuðum/fórum/hættum/tókum/vorum [að lesa **ekki/aldrei** bókina].
 we began/began/stopped/began/were to read not/never book-the

These intriguing similarities and differences between complements of control verbs, modal verbs and aspectual verbs definitely call for an explanation.

8.2.5 *On the distribution of að-infinitives*

I have now given an overview of most types of *að*-infinitives. The only remaining types are the infinitival relatives and infinitival complements of adjectives:

- (8.95) a. Þetta er bón [til að bóna bíla með ___].
 this is wax for to polish cars with
 b. Hér eru vasapeningar [til að nota ___ á ferðalaginu].
 here are pocket-money for to use on trip-the
 'Here is some pocket money to use on the trip.'
- (8.96) a. Jón er andskoti góður [að tefla].
 John is devilishly good to play chess
 'John is damned good at playing chess.'

- b. Hún er býsna láginn [að bjarga sér].
 she is pretty skilful to save REFL
 'She is pretty skilful at getting by.'
- c. Þessi dúkur er mjög auðveldur [að þrifa].
 this cloth is very easy to clean

I do not have many revealing comments on these types as they need to be studied in more detail in Icelandic (for a discussion of infinitival relatives in Norwegian, see Christensen 1983). A more careful study may show that they fall into interesting groups. Note, for instance, that something seems to be left out in the last complement, as the sentence basically means 'It is easy (for people) to clean this cloth.' Some speakers might even be tempted to stick in a pronoun after *þrifa* 'clean'. In other post-adjectival *að*-infinitives there are even more obvious 'gaps', reminiscent of the infinitival relatives in (8.95), such as the following:²¹

- (8.97) Hinrik VIII var erfiður [að búa með ___].
 Henry VIII was difficult to live with

As the reader will undoubtedly have noted, the distribution of the *að*-infinitives in Icelandic is in some ways similar to that of finite *að*-clauses (*that*-clauses). As in English, both types can occur as subjects (preferably extraposed, though) and direct complements of verbs. Interestingly, both finite *að*-clauses and non-finite *að*-infinitives can occur freely as complements of prepositions in Icelandic, but neither *that*-clauses nor *to*-infinitives can in English, as can be seen from the English glosses below:

- (8.98) a. Hún talaði um [að Jón hefði farið til Grænlands].
 she talked about that John had gone to Greenland
- b. Hún talaði um [að fara til Grænlands].
 she talked about to go to Greenland

²¹ So variants like these are not inconceivable:

- (i) a. ?Þessi dúkur_i er auðveldur að þrifa hann_i.
 this cloth is easy to clean it
- b. ?Hinrik_i var erfiður að búa með honum_i.
 Henry was difficult to live with him

Constructions of this kind were sometimes referred to as 'tough movement' constructions in the early generative literature, since the adjectives involved typically mean 'tough' or 'difficult' – or 'easy'. That term has not figured prominently in the GB-literature, but it might come back with more abstract and more semantic derivations.

The first example can be made acceptable in English by inserting a noun and the second by turning the infinitive into a gerund:²²

- (8.99) a. She talked about **the fact that** John had gone to Greenland.
 b. She talked about **going** to Greenland.

In both instances English resorts to ways of making the complement more ‘nominal’. This might suggest that Icelandic *að*-complements and *að*-infinitives are more nominal in some sense than their English counterparts (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979). In this connection it is also worth noting that many so-called adverbial conjunctions (conjunctions introducing adverbial clauses) can be structurally ‘decomposed’ into a preposition followed by the finite complementizer *að* or the infinitival *að*, with or without an intervening pronominal head carrying the relevant case (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1981 – **e* indicates ungrammatical omission as before):

- (8.100) a. Ég kom [til (þess) að þú gætir farið].
 I came to it(G) that you could go
 ‘I came so you could go.’
- b. Ég kom [til (þess) að fara í sturtu].
 I came to it(G) to go in shower
 ‘I came in order to take a shower.’
- c. Ég fer [úr því/**e* að hann er kominn].
 I leave from it(D) that he is arrived
 ‘I’ll leave since he has arrived.’
- d. Hún kom [eftir að þú varst farinn].
 she came after that you were left
 ‘She came after you had left.’
- e. Við fórum [eftir að hafa sópað gólfíð].
 we left after to have swept floor-the
 ‘We left after having swept the floor.’

As can be seen here, a case-carrying pronominal element is sometimes optional (a, b), sometimes obligatory (c) and sometimes not present at all (d, e) (for an overview of adverbial conjunctions, see, e.g., Stefán Einarsson 1945:176–7; Kress 1982:246ff.).

In the preceding discussion of *að*-infinitives, we have seen that some of them at least have certain ‘clausal’ properties. This is especially true of the

²² The first example could also be saved by turning it into a non-finite gerund construction:

- (i) She talked about John’s having gone to Greenland.

independent infinitives and the complements of control verbs. These properties include the following:

- (8.101) a. Their PRO-subject cannot only replace a caseless subject, or a subject in a default case, but also subjects that would have been marked accusative or dative. These properties of the PRO-subject show up in agreement facts.
 b. The non-finite verb can undergo verb movement which appears to be similar to the verb movement found in finite clauses. When there is evidence for such movement, the object can also shift across a sentence adverb in the familiar fashion.

Now if this means that the control complements, for instance, are more ‘clausal’ than, say, the modal complements and the complements of aspectual verbs, we might expect this to be reflected in different behaviour with respect to some clause-bounded processes. The Stylistic Fronting (SF), extensively discussed in the [preceding chapter](#), is one such process. As originally pointed out by Maling (1980), it does not move elements out of finite clauses. There are also severe restrictions on SF out of control complements (see, e.g., Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991:15), whereas SF out of modal complements and complements of aspectual verbs applies much more freely. Interestingly, the presence or absence of the infinitival *að* plays a crucial role here (cf. Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1989; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:57ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993:194ff.). As the reader may recall, infinitival complements of the modal *munu* ‘will’ can be fronted across *munu*:

- (8.102) a. Þetta eru börn [sem ___ munu [lesa þessar bækur]].
 these are kids that will read these books
 b. Þetta eru börn [sem **lesa** munu [___ þessar bækur]].
 these are kids that read will these books

Fronting of an infinitive out of an *að*-complement of a modal verb is only possible, however, if the *að* is left out, but then it is fine (*e* indicates that omission is fine, starred **að* is bad):²³

²³ The following dilemma or paradox should be noted here: in chapter 7 it was argued that fronting in main clauses that contain a definite subject is Topicalization. It was also argued that Topicalization typically moves maximal projections, and that was suggested as a reason for the fact that non-finite verb forms (supines, participles, infinitives) are not easily fronted in such a context (see, e.g., the discussion in 7.1.1 and the comparison of Topicalization and SF in that chapter). As noted in n. 2 in chapter 7, examples like the following are an exception to this, although they are stylistically marked:

(8.103)

- a. Þetta eru börn [sem __ þurfa/kunna [að lesa þessar bækur]].
 these are kids that need/can to read these books
- b. Þetta eru börn [sem **lesa** þurfa/kunna [*e*/*að __ þessar bækur]].
 these are kids that read need/can *to these books
 ‘These are kids that need to read these books.’
 ‘These are kids that can/may read these books.’

This is somewhat odd since the infinitival marker cannot be left out otherwise in the complements of these verbs, neither in the a-structure nor in simpler ones (this is indicated by the starred *e*):

(8.104)

- a. Þetta eru börn [sem __ þurfa/kunna [að/**e* lesa þessar bækur]].
 these are kids that need/can to read these books
- b. Börnin þurfa/kunna [að/**e* lesa þessar bækur].
 kids-the need/can [to read these books].
 ‘The kids need to read these books.’
 ‘The kids can/may read these books.’

As indicated here, this has nothing to do with the difference between root and epistemic senses.

Based on the comparison of the complements of control verbs, modal verbs and aspectual verbs above, we might expect complements of aspectual verbs to behave like modal complements in this respect, whereas control complements might be different. This does not seem to be the case, however: it is much more difficult to front verbal heads out of control complements and aspectual complements than out of modal complements, although here, too, it helps to leave out the infinitival *að* (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson

Footnote 23 (*cont.*)

- (i) Vita skaltu að ég er vinur þinn.
 know shall-you that I am your friend

The infinitive from the complement of *þurfa* ‘need’ can also be fronted in a similar (bookish) fashion. Interestingly, such fronting is completely unacceptable if the infinitival *að* is left in situ, although *þurfa* ‘need’ otherwise requires *að*:

- (ii) ?Lesu þarf ég (*að) þessa bók.
 read need I (*to) this book
 ‘I need to read this book.’

In this respect, then, this movement behaves like head movement, if the analysis in the text is correct, and that would be consistent with a standard analysis of such infinitives, but yet the movement looks more like Topicalization (there is no subject gap involved).

1989:58–9; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1991:15; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993:195 – see also the discussion in section 7.2.1 above):

- (8.105)
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---------|-----|----------|------|-------------|--------|-----|------|------------|
| a. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | — | reyndu | [að | lesa | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | | tried | to | read | books-the |
| b. | ??Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | lesa | reyndu | [| — | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | read | tried | | | books-the |
| c. | *Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | lesa | reyndu | [að | — | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | read | tried | to | | books-the |

(8.106)

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------|-----|----------|------|-------------|--------------|-----|------|------------|
| a. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | — | byrjuðu/voru | [að | lesa | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | | began/were | to | read | books-the |
| | ‘These are the kids that began to read the books.’ | | | | | | | | |
| | ‘These are the kids that were reading the books.’ | | | | | | | | |
| b. | *Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | lesa | byrjuðu/voru | [| — | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | read | began/were | | | books-the |
| c. | **Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | lesa | byrjuðu/voru | [að | — | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | read | began/were | to | | books-the |

Interestingly, these restrictions only hold for fronting of head-like elements, as discussed in section 7.2.1. It is easy to front maximal phrases out of any kind of infinitival complement, also to ‘subject gaps’ in relative clauses. In such instances the infinitival marker has to be left in, and this holds for all kinds of complements as indicated by the starred *e* below (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993:196):

(8.107)

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------|------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|------|------------|
| a. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | — | þurftu/kunnu | [að | lesa | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | | needed/could | to | read | books-the |
| b. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | bækurnar | þurftu/kunnu | [að/* <i>e</i> | lesa | —]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | books-the | needed/could | to | read | |
| c. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | — | byrjuðu/voru | [að | lesa | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | | began/were | to | read | books-the |
| | ‘These are the kids that began to read/were reading the books.’ | | | | | | | | |
| d. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | bækurnar | byrjuðu/voru | [að/* <i>e</i> | lesa | —]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | books-the | began/were | to | read | |
| e. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | — | reyndu/lofuðu | [að | lesa | bækurnar]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | | tried/promised | to | read | books-the |
| f. | Þetta | eru | börnin | sem | bækurnar | reyndu/lofuðu | [að/* <i>e</i> | lesa | —]. |
| | these | are | kids-the | that | books-the | tried/promised | to | read | |

We will return to this intriguing issue in section 8.3. We now turn to infinitives without *að* and begin with the ones that might appear to have an overt lexical subject in situ.

8.2.6 Accusative with infinitive

In the overview of infinitival constructions above, the following types were listed separately:

(8.108) Accusative with infinitive:

a. Við teljum [frambjóðendurna vera frambærilega].
 we believe candidates-the(A) be pretty good
 ‘We believe the candidates to be pretty good.’

b. Complements of causative verbs:

Peir létu [mig drekka lýsi].
 they made me(A) drink cod liver oil

c. Complements of sensory verbs:

Við heyrðum [kettina læðast upp stigann].
 we heard cats-the(A) sneak up stairs-the

The first type mainly includes complements of verbs of saying and believing (*telja* ‘believe’, *álíta* ‘consider’, *segja* ‘say’ . . .). The second typically involves a limited set of causative verbs like *láta* ‘make, let’ and possibly some synonyms.²⁴ The third involves a number of sensory verbs like *sjá* ‘see’, *heyra* ‘hear’, *finna* ‘feel’.²⁵

²⁴ Kress (1982:246) includes *biðja* ‘ask’ in this class. This does not seem to be correct. The verb *biðja* appears to be a ditransitive (object) control verb much like *skipa* ‘order’. The main difference is that *biðja* typically occurs in a NAG case frame whereas *skipa* is a NDA verb (cf. the discussion in section 4.1.2.3 above). In addition, it is sometimes possible to leave out the infinitival marker *að* in the complement of *biðja*, which is probably the reason why Kress includes it in his discussion of AcI verbs. Example: *Hann bað mig (að) fara* ‘He asked me(A) to go’, where it would be possible, although old fashioned, to leave out the infinitival *að*.

²⁵ One question is whether sensory prepositional verbs like *horfa á* ‘look at’, *hlusta á* ‘listen to’ should be included in this class: *Hann horfði á hhlustaði á hana spila* ‘He looked at/listened to her(A) play’. Kress (1982:246) includes them and they look superficially similar in certain respects (no *að* marker, accusative NP), but because they take prepositional complements the accusative NP will not show the typical object behaviour that the accusative in AcI constructions otherwise does. Hence examples of this kind will be left out of the discussion here.

As the reader may have noted, however, these types are all similar in that they contain an accusative NP, represented here as being a part of the infinitival phrase, and thus they could all be labelled ‘Accusative with infinitive’. There is no immediately obvious reason to distinguish these types in Icelandic (see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:83ff.) but they are often distinguished in grammars of other languages. One reason is that infinitives with verbs of believing, saying and the like (cf. the a-example here) are probably less common than the others, for example in the Germanic languages. In addition, they sometimes have a different form. In English, for instance, the first type contains a *to*-infinitive whereas the other two have bare infinitives:

- (8.109) a. We believe the candidates **to** be pretty good.
 b. The made me drink cod liver oil.
 c. We heard the cats sneak up the stairs.²⁶

We will return to the cross-linguistic distribution of these constructions in section 8.3. It should be noted here, however, that the first type has figured extensively in theoretical discussions, and since it is well known in Latin it is often referred to by the abbreviation for its Latin name, AcI (for *accusativus cum infinitivo*). This abbreviation is also used by some authors to refer to all three types and it will often be used here as a cover term in that sense. The first type has also often been referred to as an ‘exceptional case marking’ structure or ECM for short. The reason is that if the accusative NP is indeed a part of the infinitival clause, as indicated by the bracketing I have used, one might not expect its case to be governed by the matrix verb, as it seems to be.

Although the ‘accusative’ argument in this construction is clearly selected by the main verb in the infinitival complement (and assigned lexical case by it, if it is such a verb), it behaves in other respects much like a matrix object. Hence it has been suggested that this argument is ‘raised’ to the object position of the matrix verb. Hence the (early) generative term ‘subject-to-object raising’ used in this connection. This raising was then said to be responsible for the matrix object properties of this arguments. One of these properties is that it ‘undergoes’ passivization. Then an interesting agreement pattern is found (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:360ff.; Andrews 1982b;

²⁶ As the reader may have noted, the present participle (or gerund) form could be substituted for the infinitive in the last example in English but not in the others: *We heard the cats sneaking up the stairs.*

Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:94–5; for a discussion of a similar pattern in ancient Greek, see, e.g., Andrews 1971):²⁷

(8.110)

- a. **Hún** er rík.
she(Nsg.f.) is rich(Nsg.f.)
- b. Fólk telur [**hana** hafa verið **ríka**].
people believe her(Asg.f.)have been rich(Asg.f.)
'People believe her to have been rich.'
- c. **Hún** er **talin** [hafa verið **rík**].
she(Nsg.f.) is believed have been rich(Nsg.f.)
'She is believed to have been rich.'
- d. Ég álit [**hana** vera **talda** [hafa verið **ríka**]].
I consider her(Asg.f.) be believed(Asg.f.) have been rich(Asg.f.)
'I think that she is believed to have been rich.'
- e. **Hún** er **álitin** [vera **talin** [vera **rík**]].
she(Nsg.f.) is considered(Nsg.f.) be believed(Nsg.f.) be rich(Nsg.f.)
'People think that she is believed to have been rich.'

Although these examples would not win any beauty contest, the case marking and agreement pattern is very clear. As shown in the a-example, predicate adjectives agree with the subject of the copula. Now if this kind of construction is embedded under an AcI verb, the subject of the predicate construction will show up in the accusative and the predicate adjective also (cf. the b-example). Now it is possible to 'apply' passivization to that kind of construction, whereby the accusative will 'turn into' a nominative subject of the passive, as usual. Then the agreeing elements (the passive participle and the predicative adjective) will show up in the nominative (the c-example). This kind of construction can then in turn be embedded under another AcI verb, 'turning' the subject into an accusative NP and this case will also show up on the agreeing elements (the d-example). Passivization could then be 'applied' again, changing everything to nominative. Facts of this sort

²⁷ A predicate noun would behave in a similar fashion with respect to case agreement (although it would not show any agreement in gender):

- (i) a. Fólk telur [**hana** vera **snilling**].
People believe her(A) be genius(A)
'People believe her to be a genius.'
- b. **Hún** er talin [vera **snillingur**].
she(N) is believed be genius(N)
'She is believed to be a genius.'

have been used to argue for a derivation where the most deeply embedded subject of the infinitive is ‘raised’ into the matrix object position, then moved to the matrix subject position by passivization, then raised and passivized again, and so on (see, e.g., Postal 1974 and references cited there – see also section 4.1.1.7 above). We will return to the theoretical aspects of this in section 8.3.

Turning now to a brief comparison with the *að*-infinitives, it has been shown that it is very difficult to find clear evidence for verb movement and object shift inside AcI complements. In fact, the AcI complements are rather resistant to modification by sentence adverbs. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1989:85) gives examples like the following to illustrate this point (see also Johnson and Vikner 1994:70):

- (8.111) a. Ég hafði talið [Maríu lesa bókina].
 I had believed Mary(A) read book-the
- b. *Ég hafði talið [Maríu sennilega lesa bókina].
 I had believed Mary(A) probably read book-the
- c. *Ég hafði talið [Maríu **lesa** sennilega bókina].
 I had believed Mary(A) read probably book-the
- d. *Ég hafði talið [Maríu **lesa bókina** sennilega].
 I had believed Mary(A) read book-the probably

Here it appears that we have a general reluctance of the infinitival complement to accept modification by the sentence adverb *sennilega*: the b-example is bad already, although I have not made any attempt there to move the verb or the object.

It seems, then, that the AcI infinitives are similar to modal infinitives in not being easily modified by sentence adverbs. Examples like the following are probably as close as one can get to acceptability in this area:

- (8.112) a. ?*Ég hafði aldrei talið [Maríu ekki elska Ólaf].
 I had never believed Mary(A) not love Olaf
- b. ?Ég hafði aldrei talið [Maríu **elska** ekki Ólaf].
 I had never believed Mary(A) love not Olaf
- c. ?Ég hafði aldrei talið [Maríu **elska Ólaf** ekki].
 I had never believed Mary(A) love Olaf not
 ‘I had never believed that Mary didn’t love Olaf.’

Here it seems that if we ‘force’ modification by a sentence adverbial upon the AcI complement, the verb would rather move than not move. Then the object can also move. But it is not clear how much can be based on examples of this kind.

8.2.7 *Nominative with infinitive and raising to subject position*

My initial overview of infinitival constructions contained the following types (for a much fuller discussion of examples of this kind, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:95–100):

(8.113) a. Raising infinitives:

Hesturinn virðist [hafa týnt knapanum].
horse-the(N) seems have lost jockey-the
'The horse seems to have lost its jockey.'

b. Nominative with infinitive (with raising(?) verbs):

Henni virtist [**hesturinn** hafa týnt knapanum].
her(D) seemed horse-the(N) have lost jockey-the
'It seemed to her that the horse had lost its jockey.'

c. Nominative with infinitive (with middles of sensory verbs):

Honum heyrðust [**kettirnir** læðast upp stigann].
him(D) seemed-to-hear(pl.) cats-the(Npl.) sneak up stairs-the
'He thought he heard the cats sneak up the stairs.'

At first blush, the a- and b-examples might seem simple variants, the second one has some sort of an experiencer argument which is missing in the first one. Interestingly, however, it can be argued that the nominative NP is the subject in the a-variant whereas the b-variant has a dative experiencer subject. Similarly, the dative experiencer NP in the c-type can be shown to have subject properties. One piece of evidence comes from the word order in direct 'yes-/no'-questions where the datives and not the nominatives will occupy the subject position (immediately after the initial finite verb):

(8.114) a. Virtist henni hesturinn hafa týnt knapanum?
seemed her(D) horse-the(N) have lost jockey-the
'Did it seem to her that the horse had lost its jockey?'

b. *Virtist hesturinn henni hafa týnt knapanum?
seemed horse-the to-her have lost jockey-the

c. Heyrðust honum kettirnir læðast upp stigann?
seemed-to-hear him(D) cats-the(N) sneak up stairs-the
'Did he seem to hear that the cats were sneaking up the stairs?'

d. *Heyrðust kettirnir honum læðast upp stigann?
seemed-to-hear cats-the him(D) sneak up stairs-the

In the a-type, on the other hand, the nominative NP will behave like a subject in this respect:

- (8.115) Virðist hesturinn [hafa týnt knapanum]?
 seems horse-the(N) have lost jockey-the
 'Does the horse seem to have lost its jockey?'

Another interesting aspect of the b- and c-type, the nominative with infinitive, has to do with the agreement facts. As shown in the c-example, the matrix verb agrees with the nominative argument, which is, as we have just seen, not the subject of the matrix clause. Rather it behaves much like a nominative object, also with respect to the agreement facts. This kind of agreement has been discussed extensively in recent literature, especially in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson's work on agreement (e.g. 2004a, b, d – see also Holmberg and Thorbjörg Hróarsdóttir 2003). Because of the (nominative-) object-like properties of this argument, it was tentatively suggested by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1979:426) that this argument of the infinitival complement was 'raised' into the matrix clause, in much the same way as the (accusative) argument in the accusative with infinitive construction.

The a-type here, the raising infinitive, seems to behave in most respects like its well-known English counterpart, the so-called raising construction (or subject-to-subject raising construction). The matrix NP appears to be selected by the predicate in the infinitival complement. A predicate adjective in the infinitival complement will agree with the (raised) subject – and the whole construction could then in turn be embedded under an AcI verb changing the case and agreement facts:

- (8.116) a. **Hestarnir** virtust [vera **feitir**].
 horses(Npl.m.) seemed(pl.) be fat(Npl.m.)
 b. Hún taldi [**hestana** virðast [vera **feita**]].
 she believed horses-the(Apl.m.) seem(Inf.) be fat(Apl.m.)

The raising verbs in question include *virðast* 'seem', *sýnast* 'seem', *reynast* 'prove', *þykja* 'be found, be considered', and most of them can occur naturally with or without a dative experiencer. If there is one, it will occupy the subject position, otherwise the nominative argument (the logical subject of the infinitive) will (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:426f.):

- (8.117) a. Bíllinn sýndist [vera í lagi].
 car-the(N) looked be in order
 'The car seemed to be in order.'
 b. Sýndist bíllinn [vera í lagi]?
 seemed car-the(N) be in order
 'Did the car seem to be in order?'

- c. Henni sýndist [bíllinn vera í lagi].
 her(D) seemed car-the(N) be in order
 ‘To her it seemed that the car was in order.’
- d. Sýndist henni [bíllinn vera í lagi]?
 seemed her(D) car-the be in order
 ‘Did it seem to her that the car was in order?’
- e. Hún þykir [vera góð söngkona].
 she(N) is-found be good songwoman
 ‘She is considered to be a good singer.’
- f. Þykir hún [vera góð söngkona]?
 is-found she(N) be good songwoman
 ‘Is she considered to be a good singer?’
- g. Honum þykir [hún vera góð söngkona].
 him(D) finds she(N) be good songwoman
 ‘He finds her to be a good singer.’
- h. Þykir honum [hún vera góð söngkona]?
 finds him(D) she(N) be good songwoman
 ‘Does he find her to be a good singer?’

This is apparently a quite regular pattern.²⁸

As already shown in chapter 4, finite verbs in Icelandic never agree with non-nominative subjects but they may agree in number with nominative objects. As the reader may have noted, the finite matrix verb in the experiencer nominative-with-infinitive (or NcI) construction agrees with the nominative and not the matrix experiencer argument in its subject position (although there may be some speaker variation here, as in the case of verb-object agreement otherwise):

²⁸ As we shall see below, the copula is often left out of predicative infinitival complements, making them look like small clauses:

- (i) a. Hún virðist [góð söngkona].
 she seems good singer
- b. Mér virðist [hún góð söngkona].
 me(D) seems she good singer
 ‘She seems a good singer to me.’

It seems that in the case of the verb *reynast* ‘prove’, a dative experiencer is more natural when the complement is a small clause without the copula than when the copula is present:

- (ii) Mér reyndist [Haraldur (?vera) góður nágrenni].
 me(D) proved Harold be good neighbour

- (8.118) a. Henni sýndust [bílarnir vera í lagi].
 her(Dsg.) seemed(pl.) cars-the(N) be in order
- b. Honum þykja [þær vera góðar söngkonur].
 him(Dsg.) find(pl.) they(Npl.) be good songwomen
 'He finds them to be good singers.'

Finally, it should be noted that it is just as difficult to find evidence for verb movement and object shift in these infinitival complements as it is in the ACI complements considered above. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson cites the following examples in this connection (1989:85; see also Johnson and Vikner 1994:70):

- (8.119) a. María hafði virst [lesa bókina].
 Mary had seemed read book-the
- b. *María hafði virst [sennilega lesa bókina].
 Mary had seemed probably read book-the
- c. *María hafði virst [lesa sennilega __ bókina].
 Mary had seemed read probably book-the
- d. *María hafði virst [lesa bókina sennilega __ __].
 Mary had seemed read book-the probably

(8.120)

- a. Mér hafði virst [María lesa bókina].
 me had seemed Mary read book-the
- b. *Mér hafði virst [María sennilega lesa bókina].
 me had seemed Mary probably read book-the
- c. *Mér hafði virst [María lesa sennilega __ bókina].
 me had seemed Mary read probably book-the
- d. *Mér hafði virst [María lesa bókina sennilega __ __].
 me had seemed Mary read book-the probably

This concludes the descriptive overview of infinitival constructions in Icelandic. We now turn to some comparative and theoretical issues that arise in connection with finite and non-finite complements and adjuncts.

8.3 Some theoretical and comparative issues

8.3.1 *Complementizer deletion*

Deletion (or omission) of complementizers is apparently more restricted in Icelandic than in the other Scandinavian languages. This

may even be true of the *that*-complementizer, although it cannot be freely deleted in any of the languages. It is most easily deleted after verbs of saying and believing in all the languages and apparently not restricted to clauses with pronominal subjects except in Icelandic (cf. section 8.1.6 above, Allan et al. 1995:464–5, 519; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:300ff.; Faarlund et al. 1997:984ff.; Teleman et al. 1999b:536–7 – as before, parentheses indicate free omission, ?*e* or **e* that omission is questionable or bad):

(8.121)	Hann	sagði	að/? <i>e</i>	María	hefði	lesið	bókina.	(Ic)
	Han	sagde,	(at)	Marie	havde	læst	bogen.	(Da)
	Hann	segði,	(at)	Maria	hevði	lisið	bókina.	(Fa)
	Han	sa	(at)	Marie	hadde	lest	boka.	(No)
	Han	sa	(att)	Maria	hade	läst	boken.	(Sw)

There are various restrictions on complementizer deletion in all the languages and they appear to be more or less the same (cf. the descriptions cited above). First, the semantic class of the verb, and perhaps even its frequency, may play a role – omission being less acceptable after less common verbs and verbs that do not fall into the semantic class of saying and believing:

(8.122)

a.	Kolumbus	prógvaði,	at/? <i>e</i>	jørðin	er	rund.	(Fa)
	Columbus	proved	that	earth-the	is	round	
b.	De	spådde	at/* <i>e</i>	prisene	ville	stige.	(No)
	they	predicted	that	prices-the	would	rise	
c.	Han	hävdade	att/? <i>e</i>	Svensson	skulle	komma.	(Sw)
	he	claimed	that	Svensson	would	come	

Second, omission of the complementizer is typically bad if the complement clause does not immediately follow the matrix verb:

(8.123)

a.	De	sagde	til ham	at/* <i>e</i>	han	arbejdede	hårdt.	(Da)
	they	said	to him	that	he	worked	hard	
b.	Vita	skalt	tú, at/?* <i>e</i>	hatta	var	illa	gjørt.	(Fa)
	know shall	you that	this	was	badly	done		
	'I want you to know that this was a bad thing to do.'							
c.	Han	trudde	fullt og fast	at/* <i>e</i>	prisane	kom til	å stige.	(No)
	he	believed	full and hard	that	prices-the	came for	to rise	
	'He firmly believed that the prices would rise.'							
d.	Vi	har	hoppats i	flera år	att/* <i>e</i>	han	skulle	komma hem.
	we	have	hoped	for many years	that	he	would	come home

Sentence adverbs and light pronouns may sometimes intervene, however, at least in some of the languages:

(8.124)

- a. Han trudde ikkje (at) prisane kom til å stige. (No)
 he believed not that prices-the came for to rise
 'He didn't believe that the prices would rise.'
- b. Ho fortalde oss (at) det var for seint. (No)
 she told us that it was too late

Third, if the *that*-clause is a prepositional complement, the complementizer cannot be left out:

- (8.125) a. Vit tosaðu um at/?*e hon skuldi koma. (Fa)
 we talked about that she would come
- b. Han tenkte på at/*e det snart var sommer. (No)
 he thought about that it soon was summer
 'He thought about the fact that it would soon be summer.'
- c. De pratade om att/*e du skulle komma. (Sw)
 they talked about that you would come

The same is true of *that*-clauses that are complements of nouns:

(8.126)

- a. Den tanken at/*e prisene kommer til å stige, er forferdeleg. (No)
 the thought-the that prices-the come for to rise is terrible
 'The thought that the prices will rise is terrible.'
- b. Den omständigheten att/*e han aldrig visar seg, retar kamratarna. (Sw)
 the situation that he never shows REFL annoys friends-the
 'The fact that he never shows up annoys his friends.'

Fourth, the complementizer is obligatory if the *that*-clause is in subject position:

(8.127)

- a. At/*e jørðin er flöt, er væl hugsandi. (Fa)
 that earth-the is flat is well conceivable
- b. At/*e prisane kjem til å stige, er ein forferdelig tanke. (No)
 that prices-the come for to rise is a terrible thought
 'That the prices will rise is a terrible thought.'
- c. Att/*e han skulle komma hem til jul var inte att vänta. (Sw)
 that he should come home for Xmas was not to be-expected
 'That he should be home for Christmas was not to be expected.'

The same is true of preposed (topicalized) *that*-clauses:

(8.128)

- a. At/**e* han arbejder hårdt, har jeg altid sagt. (Da)
 that he works hard have I always said
- b. At/**e* prisane kjem til å stige, har eg aldri meint. (No)
 that prices-the come for to rise have I never believed
 ‘That the prices will rise, I have never believed.’

An interesting aspect of this has to do with the so-called *that*-trace phenomenon (see, e.g., Chomsky and Lasnik 1977 and Maling and Zaenen 1978):²⁹ in many languages it is more difficult to extract NPs from subject position of *that*-clauses than from other positions. This is also true of English, and there it helps to leave out the *that*-complementizer. It has been suggested that this eliminates the offending sequence *that* +*t*, where *t* is supposed to be the trace left by the extracted element. There is some evidence that similar restrictions hold in the Scandinavian languages, at least the standard dialects, except for Icelandic (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:296; Faarlund et al. 1997:986; see also Barnes 1992; Holmberg and Platzack 1988; Holmberg and Platzack 1991):

(8.129)

- a. Þetta_i vonum við að/*?*e* t_i muni einhver tíma verða gert. (Ic)
 b. Hetta_i vóna vit *at/*e* t_i fer onkuntíð at verða gjört. (Fa)
 this hope we that will sometime to be done
 ‘This we hope will be done at some point.’
- c. Denne boka_i veit eg ?*at/*e* t_i vil interessere deg. (No)
 this book know I that will interest you
 ‘This book I know will interest you.’
- d. Vem tror du *att/*e* har begått brottet? (Sw)
 who think you that has committed crime-the

²⁹ The attempted accounts of this phenomenon have varied with the development of the theory – names such as Nominative Island Constraint (NIC), Empty Category Principle (ECP), etc. might ring bells for some readers. We need not go into these here.

It is not entirely clear why Icelandic occupies a special position here, or why it is similar to Dutch in this respect (cf. Maling and Zaenen 1978), despite various attempts to look for an explanation.

While *wh*-complementizers cannot in general be left out in any of the Scandinavian languages, most of them allow deletion of complementizers of (restrictive) relative clauses. As mentioned above, Icelandic does not (cf. 8.1.6 above). In most of the languages this deletion is restricted to relative clauses that do not have a subject gap (see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:519; Faarlund et al. 1997:1055–6; Teleman et al. 1999:489ff.) – the gaps in the relative clauses are indicated here by as before):

(8.130)

- a. Det er ham, som/*e har set mig. (Da)
 it is him that has seen me
- b. Det er ham, som/e jeg har set .
 it is him that I have seen
- c. Her er den boka som/*e handlar om Kongen. (No)
 here is the book-the that is about king-the
- d. Her er den boka som/e eg kjøpte i går.
 here is the book-the that I bought yesterday
- e. Bilen som/*e står där er mycket vacker. (Sw)
 car-the that stands there is very beautiful
- f. Bilen som/e vi mötte er mycket vacker.
 car-the that we met is very beautiful

It is apparently bad to leave out the complementizer of a non-restrictive relative clause:

(8.131)

- Den här bilen, som/*e jag aldrig har sett förut, er vacker. (Sw)
 this here car which I never have seen before is beautiful
 ‘This car, which I have never seen before, is beautiful.’

Faroese is similar to MSc in allowing the deletion of relative clause complementizers that do not have a subject gap. In addition, it has an interesting way of licensing relative clauses with a subject gap and a deleted complementizer: while such clauses are bad with the default word order, they can be saved by fronting of some element by Stylistic Fronting (or Topicalization – cf. Barnes 1987:17–33; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:302–3):

(8.132)

- a. Báturin, (sum) Jón eigur, er stórir. (Fa)
 boat-the that John owns is big
- b. Tær konurnar, sum/*e ___ skulu vera heima, eru burturstaddir.
 the women-the that shall be home are away
 'The women that are supposed to be at home are away.'
- c. Tær konurnar, sum/e **heima** skulu vera ___, eru burturstaddir.
 the women-the that home shall be are away

This is an exception to the general rule that SF is 'optional' and plays no syntactic role.

The *that*-trace phenomenon was a popular subject in the GB-literature in different guises (see, e.g., Holmberg and Platzack 1991 and references cited there), but different frameworks will call for different approaches to this puzzle. It is still there.

8.3.2 *Extra complementizer elements*

Another difference between Icelandic on the one hand and the rest of Scandinavian on the other has to do with 'extra' elements in the complementizer position of *wh*-clauses: in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish a *wh*-phrase introducing an indirect question must be followed by 'an extra element' when there is a subject gap in the *wh*-clause, but otherwise it is usually ungrammatical (cf. Taraldsen 1986; Allan et al. 1995:193; Faarlund et al. 1997:992; Teleman et al. 1999b:555ff.):

(8.133)

- a. Jeg ved ikke, hvem der/*e ___ har boet i det hus. (Da)
 I know not who that has lived in that house
 'I don't know who has lived in that house.'
- b. Jeg ved ikke, hvem *der/e Jens har truffet ___
 I know not who that Jens has met
 'I don't know who Jens has met.'
- c. Han spurte hvilken buss som/*e ___ gikk til sentrum. (No)
 he asked which bus that went to centre
 'He asked which bus went to the centre of town.'
- d. Han spurte hvilken buss *som/e vi ville ta ___.
 he asked which bus that we would take
 'He asked which bus we should take.'

e. Det spelar ingen roll vem som/*e __ väckte uppmärksamhet.³⁰ (Sw)
 It plays no role who that aroused attention
 'It does not matter who caught people's attention.'

f. Det spelar ingen roll vem ?*som/e du väckte __.
 It plays no role who that you woke-up
 'It does not matter who you woke up.'

The 'extra element' corresponds to relative complementizers in these languages. In Icelandic it is generally impossible to add such elements (see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:16).³¹ In Faroese one of the relative complementizers can be added after question words but it is optional, and the position of the gap is apparently irrelevant (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:303–4; cf. also Barnes 1992).³²

(8.134) a. Ég veit ekki hver *sem/e __ kemur. (Ic)
 Eg veit ikki hvør ið/e __ kemur. (Fa)
 I know not who(N) that comes
 'I don't know who will come.'

b. Ég veit ekki hvern *sem/e hann hefur séð __. (Ic)
 Eg veit ikki, hvønn ið/e hann hevur sæð __. (Fa)
 I know not who(A) that he has seen
 'I don't know who he has seen.'

Note, on the other hand, that the complementizer *að* 'that' is often added to various complementizers in spoken Icelandic, including the interrogative complementizer *hvort* 'whether' and the relative complementizer *sem* 'that', but it cannot be added after *wh*-pronouns:

³⁰ As is often the case in MSc, there are apparently some dialect differences here. Thus for Platzack, for instance, the *som* would be optional here (see Platzack 1986a:204).

³¹ In older Icelandic texts one can find examples of such elements following *wh*-words that were used to introduce relative clauses (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1980:71–2):

- (i) a. gete þier þann kalek druckit Huern at eg mun drecka __
 can you that chalice drink which(A) that I will drink
 b. hökull hvør eð var gefinn ...
 cloak which(N) that was given

In the first example the *wh*-word represents an object, in the second one a subject.

³² The (more common) relative complementizer *sum* 'that' is apparently normally not used in these constructions in Faroese (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:303).

- (8.135) a. Ég veit ekki hver *að/e ___ hefur skrifað þetta.
 I know not who that has written this
 ‘I don’t know who has written this.’
- b. Ég veit ekki hvort að/e Jón hefur skrifað þetta.
 I know not whether that John has written this
 ‘I don’t know whether John has written this.’
- c. Þetta er bókin sem að/e ég keypti ___.
 this is book-the that that I bought
 ‘This is the book that I bought.’
- d. Ég kem ef að/e þú býður mér.
 I come if that you invite me

This ‘extra element’ is probably unrelated to the extra elements found in the complementizer position of MSc *wh*-clauses like those exemplified in (8.133) above.

Various theoretical proposals have been made to account for the difference described here between Icelandic on the one hand and MSc on the other, especially within the GB-framework (see, e.g., Holmberg 1986:104–6; Holmberg and Platzack 1988, 1991). While they have contributed to our knowledge of Scandinavian syntax, they are definitely not the last word on this. As in many other instances, the intermediate position of Faroese is intriguing.

8.3.3 *Some structural properties of control complements*

If (some) infinitival complements are clauses, then the question arises why they normally cannot have a regular overt subject. The so-called Extended Projection Principle (EPP) originally proposed in the GB framework of Chomsky (1981 and later) basically states that all clauses must have a subject (see, e.g., the discussion in Svenonius 2002c and references cited there). In many approaches, lack of case was supposed to be a crucial feature in explaining the distribution of the invisible infinitival subject PRO, and for that reason the apparent evidence for case-marked PRO reviewed above and most extensively discussed by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (especially 1991) created a lot of interest (see also Martin 1992).

Another intriguing cross-linguistic question about infinitives is the status and structural position of the infinitival marker. As reviewed by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1993, 1998), for instance, it seems that the so-called infinitival markers in different languages occupy different structural positions. This is even true of control complements within Scandinavian. In the following examples the boldfaced sentence adverb is meant to have scope over the

infinitival complement only in all the languages (cf. also Platzack 1986b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:52–53; Johnson and Vikner 1994; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998:354; Vangsnes 2002b; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:310):

(8.136)

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|--------|------|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------|------|
| a. | Þau | lofuðu | ekki | [| að | borða | aldrei | graut]. | (Ic) |
| b. | De | lovede | ikke | [| aldrig | at | spise | grød]. | (Da) |
| c. | Tey | lovaðu | ikki | [| aldri | at | eta | greyt]. | (Fa) |
| d. | De | lovte | ikke | [| å | aldri | eta | graut]. | (No) |
| e. | De | lovade | inte | [| att | aldrig | äta | gröt]. | (Sw) |
- they promised not (never) to (never) eat (never) pudding
 ‘They didn’t promise never to eat pudding.’

As indicated here, Danish and Faroese position the relevant sentence adverbial before the infinitival marker (as English does), in Norwegian and Swedish it would intervene between the infinitival marker (this may vary dialectally in Norwegian, with some dialects preferring the Danish variant) and the infinitival verb but in Icelandic it would have to follow the non-finite verb. The question is what all this shows – or how to explain it.

First, it seems likely that this suggests that the infinitival markers are of a different nature and occupy different positions. What exactly this is taken to mean in structural terms will obviously depend on the kind of structural framework assumed. In a CP-IP framework (with an ‘unsplit’ IP) one could say, for instance, that control infinitives are CPs in Swedish and Norwegian but IPs in Danish and Faroese. This is basically what Platzack (1986b) suggests (although he concentrates mainly on Swedish and Danish). That means, however, that he has to assume that sentence adverbs are adjoined to IP and not to VP as has more commonly been assumed in recent years.

Note also that it would be tempting to account for the apparent verb movement in Icelandic infinitives in a similar fashion as finite verb movement in embedded clauses. The obvious suggestion would then be that it is some sort of V-to-I movement and that the Icelandic infinitival marker is in C, at least in control infinitives (that is where the clearest evidence for the verb movement is found). This has basically been suggested by a number of linguists, including Höskuldur Thráinsson (1984:253, 1986a:254 1986b:247, 1993:191), Holmberg (1986:156), Hornstein (1989:217), Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1989:50), Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir (1989:38) and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Thráinsson (1990:19). These linguists are not all assuming the same basic clause structure and consequently the details of their analyses vary somewhat. Thus some assume an unsplit IP, others a split

IP structure which would allow for V-to-T (see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993). The main difference between Icelandic and Swedish control infinitives would then be the movement of the V in Icelandic but not in Swedish, just as in finite clauses. In both languages the control infinitives would be CPs. But as already mentioned, this kind of analysis is problematic under the fairly standard assumption that the ‘reason’ for V-to-I has something to do with a finite inflection morpheme or a finiteness feature ‘attracting’ the verb. Similarly, if finite V-to-I movement is taken to be necessary to license a lexical subject in SpecIP, then we would not expect similar verb movement in non-finite clauses that do not have a lexical subject. Note also that French, which is supposed to be a V-movement language, does not seem to have V-movement in control infinitives (see, e.g., Pollock 1989). That is a puzzle to be solved, and one possibility is that the infinitival subject PRO in Icelandic control infinitives needs special licensing by the verb, perhaps because of its case properties discussed above.

The oddity of non-finite V-to-I movement led Johnson and Vikner (1994) to suggest that the verb movement in Icelandic infinitives is not simply V-to-I but rather V-to-I-to-C and that we have a double CP (i.e. CP recursion) in Icelandic control infinitives. This makes it possible, of course, to maintain the thesis that no ‘independent’ V-to-I movement (i.e. V-to-I movement without further movement to C) is possible when there is nothing in the I-position to attract the verb (cf. Johnson and Vikner 1994:63). There is some reason to believe, however, that this thesis is untenable anyway (see, e.g., Bobaljik and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1998; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003). Besides, since CP-recursion was originally ‘invented’ to account for Topicalization in embedded clauses, one might expect such Topicalization to be possible in control infinitives, but it is not (cf. also Johnson and Vikner 1994:69):

(8.137) *Pétur lofaði [CP að [CP á morgun fara [IP PRO til London]]].
 Peter promised to tomorrow go to London

Johnson and Vikner have to rule this out by resorting to certain principles inherent to the GB approach, and they would not be available in all frameworks.

8.3.4 *AcI, Object Shift, NcI and raising*

The AcI construction with verbs of saying and believing is quite restricted in some of the Scandinavian languages. In addition to Icelandic it

is mainly found in Faroese and Swedish (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:312ff.; Teleman et al. 1999a:576ff.; Platzack 1986b:128ff.):³³

- (8.138) a. Eg haldi gentuna vera úrmæling. (Fa)
 I believe girl-the be genius
 'I believe the girl to be a genius.'
- b. Bengt ansåg problemet vara interessant. (Sw)
 Bengt considered problem-the be interesting
 'Bengt considered the problem to be interesting.'

As the reader may recall, Icelandic AcI infinitives have no infinitival markers and neither do the Faroese and Swedish ones.

Comparable infinitival constructions are more common with sensory verbs and causative verbs. These are found in all the Scandinavian languages, and they do not have an infinitival marker in any of them (see, e.g., Allan et al. 1995:276; Platzack 1986b:129; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:312ff.; Faarlund et al. 1997:1007ff.; Teleman et al. 1999a:575ff.). At first sight, they appear to be virtually identical in all the languages:

- (8.139) a. Jeg hørte bilen køre bort. (Da)
 I heard car-the drive away
- b. Hun lod ham vaske op. (Da)
 she let/made him wash up
- c. Hann sá hana leypa yvir um gótuna. (Fa)
 he saw her run over across street-the
- d. Hon læt hann vaska upp. (Fa)
 she made him wash up
- e. Vi hørte dere snakke om oss. (No)
 we heard you talk about us
- f. Ho lét døra stå open. (No)
 she let door-the stand open
 'She left the door open.'
- g. Eva såg mördaren hoppa in i bilen. (Sw)
 Eva saw murderer-the hop into car-the
- h. Amelia lät sekreteraren köpa presenten. (Sw)
 Amelia made secretary-the buy present-the

³³ With some Swedish verbs the AcI construction seems pretty much restricted to reflexive accusatives, e.g. *tro* 'believe': *Han trodde sig/*hennes bli utnämnd före jul* 'He believed himself/*her to be nominated before Christmas' (cf. Teleman et al. 1999a:576–7).

An interesting difference is found, however, in causative constructions when the agent is not specified (see, e.g., Taraldsen 1984; Platzack 1986b:130ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:313n.):

- (8.140) a. Hún lét byggja húsið/*húsið byggja. (Ic)
 she let build(inf.) house-the/*house-the build(inf.)
 ‘She had the house built.’
- b. Hon lod *bygge huset/huset bygge. (Da)
 she let *build house-the/house-the build
- c. Eg læt prenta bókina/bókina prenta. (Fa)
 I let print book-the/book-the print
- d. Vi lot løslate fangene/fangene løslate. (No)
 we let release prisoners-the/prisoners-the release
- e. Hon lät bygga huset/*huset bygga. (Sw)
 she let build house-the/*house-the build

Here we see that Icelandic and Swedish go together in only allowing the order infinitive-object, Danish only allows the other order, but both orders are possible in Faroese and Norwegian. The Danish order is obviously similar to a passive, and hence it has been suggested that it involves movement of the object to an empty subject position (cf., e.g., Platzack 1986b:131).

As mentioned above, the AcI construction has also been referred to as an exceptional case marking (ECM) structure. What is supposed to be exceptional about it is the fact that an argument which semantically seems to belong to the embedded clause clearly receives its (accusative) case from the matrix verb. Various ways of explaining this situation have been proposed and they are basically of two types: the first one maintains that the accusative NP is somehow moved or raised out of the infinitival clause into the matrix clause and hence receives its case there; the second one (the ECM approach) attempts to explain how a matrix verb can assign case across some sort of a clause boundary. The original version of the first approach is usually referred to as Subject-to-Object Raising and was most extensively argued for by Postal (1974 – see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979 for Icelandic).

The main difference between the two approaches has to do with the structural position of the accusative NP. When it has a thematic role, this role is clearly assigned by the predicate of the infinitival complement. Under an ECM approach the accusative NP ‘stays’ in the infinitival clause, but in the Raising approach it is raised into the matrix clause in the course of the derivation. One piece of evidence for the Raising approach in languages like Icelandic involves word order like the following:

- (8.141) Þeir töldu **Harald** **allir** vera heimskan.
 they(Npl.m.) believed Harold(Asg.m.) all(Npl.m.) be(inf.) stupid(Asg.m.)
 ‘They all believed Harold to be stupid.’

Here the accusative NP *Harald* precedes the quantifier *allir* ‘all’ which modifies the matrix subject *þeir* ‘they’ and agrees with it. This is unexpected under the ECM approach and calls for a special interpretation.³⁴

An interesting variant of a ‘raising’ type approach was first suggested by Holmberg. His idea (1986:222ff.) was that the process responsible for the Icelandic word order observed in (8.141) was in fact Object Shift (OS). This immediately makes certain predictions with respect to Icelandic and Swedish, for instance (not Danish nor Norwegian to the same extent since AcI hardly occurs there). Some are listed in (8.142) (cf. the discussion of OS in chapter 2):

- (8.142) a. Since OS only applies when there is no auxiliary around, there should be no evidence for raising of the accusative NP into the matrix clause if there is a matrix auxiliary verb.
 b. Since pronominal OS is obligatory in Icelandic but OS of full NPs is not, we should see evidence for the same difference in AcI constructions.
 c. In Swedish, pronominal OS is optional whereas full NPs (and modified pronouns and heavily stressed pronouns) cannot be shifted. This should be reflected in AcI constructions if OS is involved there.
 d. Since OS is dependent on verb movement and verb movement (V-to-I) does not apply in embedded clauses in Swedish, there should be no evidence for OS in AcI constructions in embedded clauses in Swedish but there should be in Icelandic.

As Holmberg (1986:222ff.) shows, all these predictions are borne out (see also the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:86):

³⁴ Various other constituency tests suggest that the accusative NP can be a part of the matrix clause in Icelandic, including the following, which works differently in English (cf. also Stowell 1983; Holmberg 1986:221):

- (i) a. *I believe Harold myself to be a spy.
 Ég tel Harald sjálfur vera njósnara. (Ic)
 b. I ordered Harold myself to go home.
 Ég skipaði Haraldi(D) sjálfur að fara heim.

With object control verbs like *order/skipa* there is obviously a matrix (indirect) object that can precede the matrix element *myself/sjálfur*. With the AcI verb *believe/telja* this same element cannot follow the accusative in English but it can in Icelandic, suggesting that the surface structure may be different. For other tests that are meant to show the opposite for English, see Postal 1974 (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979 for an extensive discussion).

(8.143)

- a. *Þeir hafa **Harald** allir talið vera heimskan. (Ic)
 they have Harold(A) all believed be stupid(A)
 ‘They all have believed Harold to be stupid.’
- b. 1. Þeir töldu **hann** allir vera heimskan. (Ic)
 they believed him all be stupid
2. Þeir töldu allir **Harald/*hann** vera heimskan. (Ic)
 they believed all Harold/*him be stupid
- c. 1. Dom anser **honom/*Harald** alla vara dum. (Sw)
 they believe him/*Harold all be stupid
2. Dom anser alla **Harald/honom** vara dum. (Sw)
 they believe all Harold/him be stupid
- d. Ég veit ekki hvort þeir telja **hann** allir vera heimskan. (Ic)
 *Jag vet inte om dom anser **honom** alla vara dum. (Sw)
 I know not whether they believe him all be stupid
 ‘I don’t know if they all believe him to be stupid.’

Although the facts just observed are very convincing and indicate that OS can indeed apply to the accusative in the Acl construction, they actually do not solve the whole problem. What remains to be accounted for is the fact that the case marking of the infinitival subject is not dependent on this shift: in Icelandic and in Swedish a non-shifted subject of the infinitive will receive accusative case marking as if it were the object of the matrix predicate:³⁵

- (8.144) a. Þeir hafa allir talið Harald vera heimskan. (Ic)
 they have all believed Harold(A) be stupid(A)
- b. Dom anser alla honom vara dum. (Sw)
 they believe all him(A) be stupid

Thus we either have to assume that the unshifted accusative is in the complement position of the matrix verb and hence receives object case (as unshifted objects normally do) or that it is in the subject position of the infinitival complement and receives object case ‘exceptionally’. A standard argument against the first approach is that there can be no ‘extra’ matrix object position

³⁵ As Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson has pointed out (2003), the accusative argument can also occur later in the sentence:

- (i) Ég taldi hafa verið seldu **einhverja báta**.
 I believed have been sold some boats(A)

This suggests that it is not the exact structural position of the argument that is responsible for the case.

for the accusative to occupy since it seems that the matrix verb is a monotransitive one, taking only one internal argument, which would seem to be the whole infinitival complex and not just its subject (cf., e.g., Holmberg 1986:220–1). Under the second alternative we are back to some sort of an ECM account.

The Nominative with Infinitive (NcI) construction reviewed above provides an interesting twist to this story. In Icelandic we get this construction only when there is a dative (experiencer) subject. As the reader may recall, some Icelandic verbs taking dative experiencer subjects take nominative objects. In Faroese, on the other hand, such verbs typically take accusative objects, although some can take nominative objects, at least optionally (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:229). Now if the nominative in the NcI construction in Icelandic gets its nominative because it is in some sense the object of the matrix verb, then we might expect to find accusatives in the same position in Faroese – that is, a D + A + Inf. pattern and not, or at least not only, the D + N + Inf. pattern found in Icelandic. The former pattern should be impossible in Icelandic, on the other hand. This prediction is indeed borne out (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:314):

- (8.145) a. Honum þótti [stúlkan vera skemmtileg]. (Ic)
 him(D) found girl-the(N) be interesting(N)
- b. *Honum þótti [stúlkuna vera skemmtilega].
 him(D) found girl-the(A) be interesting(A)
- c. Honum tókti [gentan vera stuttlig]. (Fa)
 him(D) found girl-the(N) be interesting(N)
- d. Honum tókti [gentuna vera stuttliga].
 him(D) found girl-the(A) be interesting(A)
 ‘He found the girl interesting.’

Needless to say, neither variant is possible in MSc where no oblique subjects are found.

The simple subject-to-subject raising structure can be found in MSc as well as in Insular Scandinavian, on the other hand. Here there are some differences with respect to the distribution of the infinitival marker and the kind of matrix predicates that enter into this construction. Consider first the following passives (see, e.g., Platzack 1986b:126–7; Vikner 1995a:256ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:315; Faarlund et al. 1997:1026ff.; Taraldsen 1984):

- (8.146) a. Hann er sagður [*að/e hafa verið veikur]. (Ic)
 he is said to have(inf.) been sick
- b. Han siges [at/*e have været syg]. (Da)
- c. Hann sigst [at/e hava varit sjúkur]. (Fa)

- d. Han siges [å/*e ha vært sjuk]. (No)
 e. Ha sägs [*att/e ha varit sjuk]. (Sw)
 he is-said³⁶ to have(inf.) been sick

Again, Icelandic and Swedish go together here in not allowing the infinitival marker. It is obligatory in Danish and Norwegian and optional in examples of this kind in Faroese. If we change the verb, however, to a *-st*-form of a sensory verb, the infinitival marker becomes impossible in Faroese (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:315):

- (8.147) Mýsnar hoyrdust/sáust *at/e spæla á loftinum.
 mice-the were-heard/were seen to play(inf.) in attic-the

With some of these verbs at least it is possible to have a small clause complement without the copula, although there is some cross-linguistic difference here too (cf. Vikner 1995a:263):

- (8.148) a. Pétur er sagður [góður]. (Ic)
 Peter is said good
 b. *Peter siges [flink]. (Da)
 Peter is-said nice

Small predicative clauses can also occur without the copula with AcI predicates, and hence it has been suggested that AcI complements are in some sense small clauses by nature (see also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:91):

- (8.149) Við töldum [hana góða].
 we believed her(A) good(A)

What this means in structural details will depend on the theoretical framework assumed.

8.3.5 *Modal constructions*

Finally, two comments on modal complements are in order. First, Scandinavian modals differ from their (standard) English counterparts in that they can follow other auxiliaries and they can be stacked (see, e.g., Platzack 1979:48; Höskuldur Thráinsson and Vikner 1995:53, *passim*):

³⁶ Note that although some Icelandic *-st*-verbs have passive sense, *segjast* ‘say+*st*’ is not one of them. It only has the reflexive sense. Hence *Hann segist hafa verið veikur* can only mean ‘He claims that he has been sick’ (= ‘says of himself’).

- (8.150) a. Bengt har kunnat tala grekiska. (Sw)
 Bengt has could(sup.) speak(inf.) Greek
 'Bengt has been able to speak Greek.'
- b. Han har villet tjene mange penge. (Da)
 he has would(sup.) earn much money
 'He has wanted to earn a lot of money.'
- c. Mig hefði ekki átt að vanta peninga. (Ic)
 me(A) had not ought(sup.) to lack(inf.) money
 'I shouldn't have been short of money.'
- d. Det bør ha kunnet bli flo sjø innen da. (No)
 there should have could(sup.) be(inf.) high tide by then
 'There should have been high tide by then.'

Second, Faroese modal verbs in the past tense can not only take infinitival complements, with or without the infinitival marker as the case may be, but they can also take supine complements (with and without the 'infinitival' marker). The choice has semantic consequences (cf. Barnes 1986–1987; Barnes and Weyhe 1994:211; Henriksen 2000:42ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:309–10).³⁷

- (8.151) a. Hann mundi **detta**.
 he would(past) fall(inf.)
 'I think he fell.'
- b. Hann mundi **dottið**.
 he would(past) fallen(sup.)
 'He almost fell.'
- c. Vit áttu at **spyrja** teg.
 we ought(past) to ask(inf.) you
 'We were supposed to ask you.'
- d. Vit áttu at **spurt** teg.
 we ought(past) to asked(sup.) you
 'We should have asked you.'

³⁷ A formally similar but semantically different phenomenon is found when a control verb occurs in the supine (because it follows the perfective auxiliary). Then this supine can optionally spread to the following infinitival complement (cf. Henriksen 1991; Sandøy 1991; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:363):

- (i) a. Hann royndi at lesa/*lisið bókina.
 he tried to read(inf./sup.) book-the
- b. Hann hefur roynt at lesa/lisið bókina.
 he has tried to read(inf./sup.) book-the

This is completely impossible if the modal verb is in the present tense:

- (8.152) a. Hann man detta/*dottið.
 he will(pres.) fall(inf./*sup.)
- b. Vit eigu at fara/*farið.
 we ought(pres.) to go(inf./*sup.)

This completes our review of Scandinavian infinitives. As the reader will have seen, there are intriguing similarities and differences to be accounted for.

Pronouns, reflexives and empty categories

This chapter mainly describes the distribution of personal pronouns and reflexives, but it also gives an overview of the so-called empty pronominal elements found in Icelandic. Because the chapter deals with classifications of pronominal elements, some discussion of the empty ones (i.e., the cases where expected pronominal elements can be left unexpressed) is necessary to get a full picture. The chapter begins with a fairly non-theoretical overview, but in later sections much of the discussion will often be couched in the terminology of the so-called Binding Theory (BT) of Chomsky (1981 and later), since it is arguably the most explicit attempt to classify pronouns of the kind under discussion and account for their syntactic distribution. As we shall see, important aspects of the distribution of Icelandic pronouns and reflexives cannot be readily accounted for under the standard BT.

9.1 A descriptive overview

9.1.1 *Basic distribution of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns in Icelandic*

In Icelandic we find the following kind of ‘complementary distribution’ of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns (with identical indices indicating coreference (coindexing) of NPs and starred indices impossible reference or coreference (coindexing)):

- (9.1)
- | | | | | |
|----|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| a. | Egill _i | rakaði | hann _{*i/j} . | |
| | Egil | shaved | him | |
| b. | Egill _i | rakaði | sig _{i/*j} . | |
| | Egil | shaved | REFL | |
| | | ‘Egil shaved himself.’ | | |
| c. | Egill _i | tók | bókina | hans _{*i/j} . |
| | Egil | took | book | his(non-refl.) |
| | | ‘Egil took his book.’ | | (= somebody else’s) |

- d. Egill_i tók bókina sína_{i/*j}.
 Egil took book his(refl.)
 'Egil took his book.' (= his own)

Some of this is familiar from English, some of it is not. Hence the following remarks are in order:

- (9.2) a. This 'complementary distribution' extends to possessive phrases (cf. examples c, d).
 b. There is no complementary distribution of this kind in 1st and 2nd person pronouns but it does extend to 3rd person plural.

This second point is illustrated in (9.3), where the a- and b-examples show that the same form is used for 1st and 2nd person in reflexive and non-reflexive use in Icelandic (as opposed to English):

- (9.3) a. Ég rakaði **mig** en hann rakaði **mig** ekki.
 I shaved me but he shaved me not
 'I shaved myself but he didn't shave me.'
- b. Þú rakaðir **þig** en hann rakaði **þig** ekki.
 you shaved you but he shaved you not
 'You shaved yourself but he didn't shave you.'
- c. Þeir_i /Þær_i /Þau_i rökuðu þá_{*i/j} /þær_{*i/j} /þau_{*i/j}.
 they(pl.m./f./n.) shaved them(pl.m./f./n.)
 'They shaved them.'
- d. Þeir_i /Þær_i /Þau_i rökuðu sig_{i/*j}.
 they(pl.m./f./n.) shaved REFL
 'They shaved themselves.'

It seems rather clear that the 'reason' why the complementary distribution is different in Icelandic and English is related to the availability of reflexive pronouns: in Icelandic there are no special reflexive pronominal forms for 1st and 2nd person. Hence the facts in (9.3a, b) are different from corresponding facts in English, as suggested by the English translation and gloss (**I shaved me* would be ungrammatical in English). Conversely, there is no possessive reflexive pronoun in English. Hence it is fine to say *Egil took his book*, with coreference (coindexing) between *Egil* and *his*, but the corresponding sentence is ungrammatical in Icelandic (cf. (9.1c)) as the reflexive possessive has to be used. We will return to this issue of complementary distribution in section 9.2.2 below.

According to the standard description, the Icelandic non-possessive reflexive has no nominative form and it shows no gender or number differences. The possessive reflexive *sinn*, on the other hand, inflects like the non-reflexive

possessives *minn* ‘my’ and *þinn* ‘your’, marking all cases; indeed it marks case, gender and number agreement with the noun that it modifies (for some discussion of alleged case restrictions on reflexives, see, e.g., Everaert 1991, 2001):

(9.4)

	non-possessive reflexive	possessive reflexive					
	sg./pl.	m.	sg. f.	n.	m.	pl. f.	n.
N	—	sinn	sín	sitt	sínir	sínar	sín
A	sig	sinn	sína	sitt	sína	sínar	sín
D	sér	sínum	sinni	sínu	sínum	sínum	sínum
G	sín	síns	sinnar	sins	sinna	sinna	sinna

In the examples considered above, the reflexive pronouns were always coreferential with a subject. As has been demonstrated in various papers describing the subject properties of non-nominative subjects, the case of the subject is irrelevant for the complementary distribution of reflexive and non-reflexive pronouns in object position (see, e.g., Zaenen, Maling and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1985; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1992b):

- (9.5) a. Egil_i vantar bókina sína_{i/*j}/hans_{*ij}.
Egil(A) needs book his(refl.)/his(non-refl.)
‘Egil needs his book.’
- b. Henni_i þykir bróðir sinn_{i/*j}/hennar_{*ij} leiðinlegur.
her(D) thinks brother her(refl.)/her(non-refl.) boring.
‘She finds her brother boring.’

The situation is rather different with non-subject antecedents. Most speakers accept at least some object antecedents of reflexive pronouns (including indirect objects), although they also accept coreference of non-reflexive objects with such antecedents (see, e.g., Maling 1986), but NPs inside prepositional phrases are generally rejected as antecedents of reflexives:¹

¹ Maling (1986) cites a couple of examples where her informants rejected object antecedents of reflexives, but remarks that this depends to some extent on the verb (and hence the type of object) involved (see, e.g., her n. 6). She also reports that she found some speaker variation. I have also observed some speaker variation here (e.g. among my students) but it has not been investigated systematically yet.

- (9.6) a. Ég sendi Ólafi nýjan einkennisbúning á sig; /hann;.
 I sent Olaf new uniform for REFL/him
 'I sent Olaf a new uniform for himself/him.'
- b. Ég hjálpaði Ólafi við heimavinnuna sína; /hans;.
 I helped Olaf with homework his(REFL./non-refl.)
- (9.7) Ég talaði við Ólafi um bókina *sína; /hans;.
 I talked to Olaf about book his(*refl./non-refl.)

In addition to the so-called simple reflexive *sig*, Icelandic also has a complex reflexive, *sjálfan sig* 'self REFL'. The first part inflects for case, number and gender and agrees in number and gender with its antecedent. The complex reflexive is mainly used with predicates where the subject and object are normally not identical, such as *hjálpa* 'help', *tala við* 'talk to', *lækna* 'cure', *gefa* 'give' and so on (this class of predicates has been referred to as the 'give'-class by Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Nina Hyams in various publications, e.g. Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1992; Hyams and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1990; Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992). In such cases the simplex reflexive sounds very odd (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a:170ff.):

- (9.8) a. María; getur ekki hjálpað *sér; /sjálfri sér;.
 Mary can not help *REFL/self REFL.
 'Mary cannot help herself.'
- b. Haraldur; talar oft við *sig; /sjálfan sig;.
 Harold speaks often to *REFL/self REFL
 'Harold often speaks to himself.'
- c. Læknirinn; læknaði ?*sig; /sjálfan sig;.
 doctor-the cured ?*REFL/self REFL

With predicates where the object may or may not be identical with the subject, such as *raka* 'shave' in (9.3) (this class is actually referred to as the 'shave'-class by Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams in the publications cited above), the complex reflexive will be interpreted as emphatic, and this will also typically be reflected in the stress (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a:170):

- (9.9) Egill; rakaði SJÁLFAN sig;.
 Egil shaved HIMSELF (but not somebody else)

Finally, in the case of inherently reflexive predicates, or reflexive idioms, where the reflexive is arguably not a semantic argument of the predicate, the complex reflexive is completely ungrammatical:

- (9.10) a. Haraldu_i mismælti sig_i /*sjálfan sig_i.
 Harold misspoke REFL/*self REFL
 'Harold misspoke.'
 b. María_i skammaðist sín_i /*sjálfur sín_i.
 Mary was-ashamed-of REFL/*self REFL
 'Mary was ashamed of herself.'

As is well known, personal pronouns can have deictic reference and do not need any kind of antecedent in the discourse. On the other hand, reflexive pronouns cannot have deictic reference. In a situation where a boy is sitting in a corner looking very bored, then one can refer to him by a personal pronoun without having ever mentioned him in the preceding discourse, but a reflexive pronoun cannot be so used (cf. also Hankamer and Sag 1976; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:61–2):

- (9.11) Honu_i /*Sér_i leiðist.
 him(D)/*REFL(D) is bored
 'He is bored.'

Having reviewed some basic facts about clause-internal anaphoric dependencies in Icelandic, we can now turn to cross-clausal ones.

9.1.2 *Cross-clausal anaphoric dependencies*

In this section I will concentrate on dependencies between reflexives in tensed clauses and antecedents outside these clauses. In English and many other languages, the basic rule about reflexive pronouns is that they need an antecedent in their own clause. But, as first discussed in a generative framework by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1976, see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990), the simple reflexive in an Icelandic subjunctive complement can have a matrix subject as an antecedent (cf. also a large number of other studies, including Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991, 1992; Maling 1984; Pica 1984, 1987, 1991; Anderson 1986; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1986; Everaert 1986, 1991, 2001; Sells 1987; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b; Reuland and Koster 1991; Reinhart and Reuland 1991; Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1992; Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992; Reuland and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1997, et al.). These reflexives have come to be known as long-distance reflexives (or LDRs for short) since there can be a 'long distance' between them and their antecedent (very long, in fact, as we shall see below). Typical instances are shown in (9.12):²

² When translating the Icelandic subjunctive forms into English below I will frequently use an infinitive-like form of the English verb (such as *have*, *be*, etc.). I do

(9.12)

a. Subordinate reflexive object correferential with matrix subject:

Jón_i heldur [að ég hafi logið að **sér_i**].
 John thinks that I have(sbj.) lied to REFL(D)
 'John thinks that I lied to him.'

b. Subordinate non-nom. refl. subject coref. with a matrix subject:

Jón_i segir [að **sig_i** langi til að eignast bíl].
 John says that REFL(A) long(sbj.) for to get car
 'John says that he wants to get a car.'

c. Subordinate poss. refl. in object pos. coref. to a non-nominative matrix subject:

Jón_i finnst [að þú hafir svikið föður **sinn_i**].
 John(D) feels that you have(sbj.) betrayed father(A) his(refl.A)
 'John feels that you have betrayed his father.'

d. Subordinate possessive refl. in subject pos. coref. to a matrix subject:

Jón_i segir [að bókin **sín_i** verði til sölu á morgun].
 John says that book-the(N) his(refl.N) will-be for sale tomorrow
 'John says that his book will be for sale tomorrow.'

As shown in the b-example, the embedded reflexive can be a non-nominative subject (not a nominative one since there is no nominative form of the non-possessive reflexive). The c-example shows that a non-nominative subject (the dative *Jóni*) can be the antecedent of a LDR, this time the possessive variant. Finally, the possessive reflexive in example d demonstrates that nominative LDRs are possible.

For most speakers of Icelandic, LDRs in finite clauses are restricted to subjunctive clauses. Then the judgements in (9.13) obtain:³

Footnote 2 (*cont.*)

this to make it clearer to the reader that the form of the Icelandic verb is different from the default indicative form. But it should be remembered that the subjunctive forms in Icelandic show person and number distinctions just like the indicative forms, as shown in chapter 1 above. Hence it can be somewhat misleading to represent them with non-finite (non-agreeing, non-tense marked ...) forms in the English translation.

³ Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1990b:313, 333) reports that sentences like (ia) are possible for him and other speakers of the 'indicative dialect' (or the I-dialect) (see also Jakob Smári 1920:135; Maling 1984, n.5) whereas (ib) is bad:

(i) a. **Jón_i** veit [að María elskar sig_i].
 John knows that Mary loves(ind.) REFL
 'John knows that Mary loves him.'

b. ***Jón_i** veit ekki [að María elskar sig_i].
 John knows not that Mary loves(ind.) REFL

- (9.13) a. *Jón_i veit [að ég hef logið að sér_i].
 John knows that I have(ind.) lied to REFL(D)
- b. *Jón_i finnur [að þú hefur svikið föður sinn_i].
 John(N) feels that you have(sbj.) betrayed father his(refl.)
 ‘John feels that you have betrayed his father.’

As has been demonstrated in many studies, the facts concerning Icelandic LDRs are quite complex. First, long distance reflexivization is not ‘obligatory’ in the way that clause-bounded reflexivization is. Thus there is no strict complementarity between LDRs and personal pronouns with the same reference (although some speakers may say that they prefer one over the other):⁴

- (9.14) Jón_i heldur [að þú hatir sig_i/hann_i].
 John believes that you hate(sbj.) REFL/him
 ‘John believes that you hate him.’

Despite this, it appears that there is a subtle difference in meaning between the reflexive and the non-reflexive variant. It has been claimed that this has to do with the ‘point of view’ expressed, the reflexive representing the matrix subject’s point of view. This semantic difference can be brought out more clearly by changing the subject (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:303, 1991:74–6):

Footnote 3 (*cont.*)

I have found it very hard to find speakers of this dialect, hence I will disregard it for the most part in the following. But speaker variation has not been studied systematically in this area yet, and it is not unlikely that the present link between subjunctive mood and the LDR will get lost (cf. also the discussion of Faroese LDRs in section 9.2). It should also be noted that LDRs can be found in indicative as well as subjunctive clauses in Old Icelandic, such as the following (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2005:613):

(ii)

- a. Er hann_i sá [að pilturinn var kominn í höggfæri við sig_i ...].
 when he saw that the boy was(indic.) come within hitting-reach of REFL
 ‘When he saw that the boy was within his reach ...’
- b. Kaupmenn_i sögðu [að sér_i væri ekki ...].
 merchants said that REFL(D) was(sbj.) not
 ‘The merchants said that they were not ...’

⁴ Thus some speakers may say that they prefer the reflexive over the non-reflexive in sentences like the following because the non-reflexive is ambiguous (*hann* ‘him’ could refer to somebody else):

- (i) Jón heldur að þú hatir sig/hann.
 John believes that you hate(sbj.) REFL/him

- (9.15) a. Aðeins Jón_i telur [að María elski sig_i].
 only John believes that Mary loves REFL
- b. Aðeins Jón_i telur [að María elski hann_i].
 only John believes that Mary loves him

For some speakers, at least, the strongly preferred reading of (9.15a) is the so-called bound variable reading, which can be paraphrased as (9.16a), whereas the preferred reading of (9.15b) is the ‘referential’ reading paraphrased as (9.16b):⁵

- (9.16) a. John is the only one who believes: ‘Mary loves me.’
 b. John is the only one who believes: ‘Mary loves John.’

Second, the relationship between the subjunctive and the LDR is by no means mechanistic. As the reader may recall, the subjunctive is found in various adverbial (or adjunct) clauses. A LDR cannot have the matrix subject of such clauses as an antecedent (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:294ff.):

- (9.17) a. *Jón_i kemur ekki [nema þú bjóðir sér_i].
 John comes(ind.) not unless you invite(sbj.) REFL
- b. *María_i heimsækir þig [þótt þú hatir sig_i].
 Mary visits(ind.) you although you hate(sbj.) REFL

Thus only certain types of the subjunctive correlate with LDRs, in particular the kind of subjunctive that is selected by verbs of saying and believing. Interestingly, this kind of subjunctive can ‘spread’ to clauses that are embedded under the complement of these verbs of saying and believing, creating a sort of a ‘domino effect’ (cf. the discussion in 8.1 above). Such a chain of subjunctives opens up the possibility of a LDR, even out of an adverbial clause (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990:295ff.). Thus compare the following to the examples in (9.17):

⁵ For a further discussion of the semantics of LDRs, see Höskuldur Thráinsson (1991:59–61). Note also that it is probably too strong a claim that (9.15a) only has the bound variable reading and (9.15b) only the referential one, as I have stated earlier (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1976, 1990 – see also Sells 1987:467). Similarly, while (ia) is clearly better than (ib), many speakers disagree with my earlier claim (1990:303) that (ib) is ungrammatical (cf. also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:75):

- (i) a. Enginn_i telur að María elski sig_i.
 nobody believes that Mary loves REFL
- b. ?Enginn_i telur að María elski hann_i.
 nobody believes that Mary loves him

(9.18)

- a. Jón_i segir [að hann_i **komi** ekki [nema þú **bjóðir** sér_i]].
 John says that he come(sbj.) not unless you invite(sbj.) REFL
 'John says that he won't come unless you invite him.'
- b. María_i heldur [að hún_i **heimsæki** þig [þótt þú **hatir** sig_i]].
 Mary thinks that she visit(sbj.) you although you hate(sbj.) REFL
 'Mary thinks that she will visit you although you hate her.'

Here the subjunctives in the adverbial clauses are a part of an unbroken chain of subjunctives selected by the verb of saying or believing in the topmost clause. Then a LDR becomes possible. If there was another verb of saying or believing in the middle of this chain, a LDR could also have its subject as an antecedent (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1976:226, 1991:55). In addition, there does not seem to be any limit on the length of this 'chain':

- (9.19) a. Jón_i segir [að María_j **telji** [að þú **hatir** sig_{i/j}]].
 John says that Mary believe(sbj.) that you love(sbj.) REFL
 'John says that Mary believes that you love him/her.'
- b. Jón_i segir [að María_j **telji** [að Haraldur_k **vilji**
 John says that Mary believe(sbj.) that Harold want(sbj.)
 [að þú **heimsækir** sig_{i/j/k}]].
 that you visit(sbj.) REFL
 'John says that Mary believes that Harold wants you to visit him/her.'

The subject of an intervening verb of a different kind, as the verb *koma* 'come' or *heimsækja* 'visit' in (9.18), for instance, cannot function as the subject of an LDR even if it is in the middle of a subjunctive chain of this sort. Compare (9.20) to (9.18):

(9.20)

- a. Ég segi [að hann_i **komi** ekki [nema þú **bjóðir** *sér_i/honum_i]].
 I say that he come(sbj.) not unless you invite(sbj.) *REFL/him
 'I say that he won't come unless you invite him.'
- b. Þú heldur [að María_i **heimsæki** þig [þótt þú **hatir** *sig_i/hana_i]].
 You think that Mary visit(sbj.) you although you hate(sbj.) *REFL/her
 'Mary thinks that she will visit you although you hate her.'

This suggests that a particular structural relationship may not be enough and that semantics play a role in the licensing of LDRs (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Maling 1984; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b).

Third, while objects (indirect objects in particular) can be antecedents of clause-bounded reflexives, they cannot be antecedents of LDRs:

- (9.21) Ég sagði Jóni_i [að þú hefðir svikið *sig_i/hann_i].
 I told John that you had(sbj.) betrayed *REFL/him
 'I told John that you had betrayed him.'

This again suggests that the structural requirements on the relationship between LDRs and their antecedents may be different from those that hold for the relationship between clause-bounded reflexives and their antecedents. Moreover, it appears that certain semantic aspects are more important for LDRs than structural ones, as will be discussed below.

Fourth, as first pointed out by Maling (1984), certain possessive NPs inside other NPs can act as antecedents of LDRs:

- (9.22) [Skoðun [Helgu_i]]_j er [að sig/*_j vanti hæfileika].
 opinion Helga's(G) is that REFL(A) lack(sbj.) talent
 'Helga's opinion is that she lacks talent.'

Since the embedded verb *vanta* 'lack' is one that takes a non-nominative (i.e. accusative) subject, we can have the LDR accusative *sig* as a subject and it is interpreted as being coreferential with the possessive NP *Helgu* and not with the larger NP *skoðun Helgu* 'Helga's opinion' nor its head *skoðun* 'opinion'. Note that here we can have a subjunctive in the *that*-clause, licensing the LDR. The reason is presumably that the noun *skoðun* 'opinion' is semantically related to verbs of saying and believing, which normally take a subjunctive complement. A NP like *vandamál Helgu* 'Helga's problem' would not take a subjunctive *that*-clause and hence a LDR coreferential with the possessive *Helgu* would not be licensed there, not even if the whole thing was embedded under a verb of saying and believing which would trigger a 'domino-effect' subjunctive chain:

- (9.23)
- a. [Vandamál [Helgu_i]]_j er [að *sig_i/hana_i vantar hæfileika].
 problem Helga's(G) is that *REFL(A)/her(A) lacks(ind.) talent
 'Helga's problem is that she lacks talent.'
- b. Ég held [að [vandamál [Helgu_i]]_j sé
 I think that problem Helga's(G) be(sbj.)
 [að *sig_i/hana_i vanti hæfileika].
 that *REFL(A)/her(A) lack(sbj.) talent
 'I think that Helga's problem is that she lacks talent.'

Once more we have here a difference between the clause-bounded reflexive and the LDR. There are apparently no instances of clause-bounded reflexives where a possessive NP inside another NP can act as an antecedent.

Consider the following, for instance (see also the examples in Maling 1984:220ff.):

- (9.24) a. [Skoðun [Helgu_i]]_j varð *sér_i /henni_i til skammar.
 opinion Helga's(G) became *REFL(D)/her(D) to shame
 'Helga's opinion was a shame for her.'
- b. [Vandamál [Helgu_i]]_j minnir okkur stöðugt á sig*_{i/j}.
 problem Helga's(G) reminds us constantly of REFL
 'Helga's problem constantly reminds us of itself.' (not 'herself')

These examples suggest that a possessive NP inside another NP cannot be the antecedent for a clause-bounded reflexive but the whole larger NP (or its head) could (cf. the b-example).

Fifth, it should not come as a surprise anymore that inanimate NPs cannot serve as antecedents for LDRs. Compare the following examples (cf. also Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b:335):

- (9.25) a. Jón_i krafðist þess [að við **hugsuðum** stöðugt um sig_i].
 John demanded it that we thought(sbj) constantly about REFL
 'John demanded that we would constantly think about him.'
- b. *Þetta vandamáli_i krafðist þess [að við **hugsuðum** stöðugt um sig_i].
 this problem demanded it that we thought(sbj) constantly about REFL

Here we see that there is a clear contrast between the animate *Jón* and the inanimate *þetta vandamál* 'this problem'. The latter cannot be the antecedent of a LDR. It could very well be the antecedent of a local reflexive, on the other hand:

- (9.26) Þetta vandamáli_i minnir okkur stöðugt á sig_i.
 this problem reminds us constantly of REFL
 'This problem constantly reminds us of itself.'

Sixth, it can be shown that LDRs can even have antecedents in a different sentence, not just in a higher clause. The examples in (9.27) indicate, however, that this is normally not the case, and an 'independent' subjunctive (here some sort of *conjunctivus irrealis* or counterfactual subjunctive) would not help:

- (9.27) a. Jón_i hélt margar ræður en [ég hlustaði ekki á *sig_i / hann_i].
 John held(ind.) many speeches but I listened(ind) not to *REFL/him
 'John held many speeches but I didn't listen to him.'
- b. Jón_i **gæti** haldið margar ræður en [ég **kysi** *sig_i / hann_i samt ekki].
 John could(sbj.) hold many speeches but I elect(sbj.) *REFL/him still not
 'John could hold many speeches but I still would not elect him.'

If a context like this is embedded under a verb of saying or believing, on the other hand, we could get a domino-effect subjunctive chain, showing that somebody's speech is being reported or his/her thoughts are being represented. In such a case we can have a LDR in a separate sentence coreferential with the person whose speech or thoughts are being reported/represented. In such instances there is obviously no syntactic binding involved but coreference is important (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991 – see also Barnes 1986b on Faroese (also discussed below)):

(9.28)

Jóni sagði að hann **héldi** margar ræður. Sumar **væru**
 John said that he held(sbj.) many speeches some were(sbj.)
 um efnahagsmálin, aðrar **fjölluðu** um trúmál eða fjölskyldumál.
 about economics, others dealt with religion or family values
 Samt **kæmi** ég aldrei til að hlusta á sig.
 yet came(sbj.) I never for to listen to REFL
 'John said that he gave many speeches. Some of them were about economics, others about religious matters or family values. Still I would never come to listen to him.'

Here the LDR *sig* in the last sentence has *Jón* in the first sentence as its antecedent. There is an unbroken chain of subjunctives between them, indicating that the whole sequence is a report of John's speech (a similar phenomenon can be found in German and classical Latin). If this chain had been broken, for example in the last sentence, the LDR would not have been possible:

(9.29) ... Samt fer ég aldrei til að hlusta á *sig_i/hann_i.
 yet go(ind.) I never for to listen to *REFL/him
 '... Yet I never go to listen to him.'

Here the present indicative *fer* 'go' shows that the thoughts of John are no longer being represented. Instead, the speaker is stating a fact from his own point of view. Then a LDR is no longer possible.

Finally, it is important to note that the complex reflexive *sjálfan sig* can never function as a LDR, as has been pointed out in many studies (see, e.g., Pica 1984, 1987, 1991; Anderson 1986; Hellan 1986b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1992, et al.). The same is true of the so-called reciprocal pronoun *hvor/hver annan* 'each other':⁶

⁶ The form *hvor* 'each' is, or was, used for each of two whereas *hver* was used for each of more than two. This distinction is not made systematically anymore by all speakers, with *hver* probably becoming generalized. Hence (ia) would be 'ambiguous' for many speakers, i.e. *hver annan* could either refer to two or more, whereas for

- (9.30) a. *Jón_i segir [að ég hati sjálfan sig_i].
 John says that I hate(sbj.) self REFL
- b. *Strákarnir_i segja [að ég hafi svikið hvor annan_i].
 boys-the say that I have(sbj.) betrayed each other
- c. Strákarnir_i sviku hvor annan.
 boys-the betrayed each other
 ‘The boys betrayed each other.’

We will return to this difference in section 9.2.

9.1.3 Reflexives inside infinitival complements

From examples like the ones in (9.31), it might seem that the behaviour of Icelandic reflexives inside infinitival complements is similar to that of their English counterparts:

- (9.31) a. Ég bað Jón_i [að PRO_i raka sig_i].
 I asked John to shave REFL
 ‘I asked John to shave himself.’
- b. *Ég_i lofaði Jón_i [að PRO_i raka sig_i].
 I promised John to shave REFL
- c. Ég tel [Maríu_i hata sjálfa sig_i].
 I believe Mary hate self REFL
 ‘I believe Mary to hate herself.’

In the a-example we have the simple reflexive *sig*, a ‘shave’-type verb and the infinitival PRO as a local antecedent (controlled by the matrix object *Jón*). In the b-example we have an infinitival PRO controlled by the matrix subject *ég* ‘I’, and here a reflexive embedded in the infinitival clause is impossible since it has no appropriate antecedent: the PRO-subject cannot serve as an antecedent since it is controlled by a 1st person pronoun and the 3rd person reflexive *sig* is incompatible with 1st person. The matrix object *Jóni* cannot be an antecedent either since objects cannot be antecedents for non-clause-bounded

Footnote 6 (*cont.*)

those who make the distinction between *hvor* and *hver* it could only refer to more than two persons since they would use the b-variant if they wanted the reciprocal to refer to two people:

- (i) a. Þeir_i hata hver annan_i.
 they hate each other
- b. Þeir_i hata hvor annan_i.

reflexives, as we have already seen. In the c-example we have the complex reflexive *sjálfan sig* in the infinitival complement, which is to be expected since the verb is of the ‘give’-class and there is a local antecedent, the accusative *Mariu* (or its trace if it has been moved or shifted to the matrix clause by Object Shift or some such, cf. the discussion in section 8.2.6).

Further study reveals, however, that the behaviour of Icelandic reflexives inside infinitival complements differs in some respects from that of English reflexives (cf., e.g., Anderson 1986; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:51ff.). A representative set of examples is given in (9.32)–(9.33):

- (9.32) a. Pétur_i bað Jón_j um [að PRO_j raka sig_{i/j}].
 Peter asked John for to shave(inf.) REFL
 ‘Peter asked John to shave him/himself.’
- b. Anna_i telur [þig hafa svikið sig_i].
 Anne believes you(A) have betrayed REFL
 ‘Anne believes you to have betrayed her.’

- (9.33) *Ég_i lofaði Önnu_j [að PRO_i hjálpa *sér_j /henni_j].
 I promised Anne to help *REFL/her

In (9.32a) we see that the reflexive *sig* in the control complement can either take PRO as a local antecedent or the matrix subject *Pétur*. The latter would be impossible in English:

- (9.34) *Peter asked me to shave himself.

In (9.32b) we have an ACI complement and here the matrix subject can function as the antecedent of a reflexive inside the infinitival complement. This, too, would be impossible in English:

- (9.35) *Anne believes you to have betrayed herself.

As (9.33) shows, however, an object outside a subject control complement cannot serve as an antecedent inside that complement in Icelandic. Needless to say, this would also be impossible in English:

- (9.36) *I promised Anne to help herself.

Now one of the theoretical questions raised here is whether the reflexives inside infinitival complements in Icelandic that have antecedents outside the complements are of the same type as the ‘truly’ long-distance reflexives discussed above or whether they are a variant of local reflexives. This will be one of the questions discussed in section 9.2.

9.1.4 Empty pronominal elements

Although Icelandic is not a pro-drop language in the same way as, say, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish (cf. section 9.1.4.1), it often allows empty positions where one would expect a pronoun. For this reason it is often said that it has a rather wide variety of ‘empty pronominal elements’. Chapter 5 in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson’s dissertation (1989, see, eg., sections 5.2.2 (134ff.) and 5.3.1 (161ff.)) is the most comprehensive overview of ‘non-lexical NPs’ in Icelandic (but see also Maling and Zaenen 1978; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1982b, 1990b; Bresnan and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990; Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993, et al.). The different categories that Halldór Ármann distinguishes will be shown below and the empty pronoun will be represented by *e* as before. The labels used in this typology are not all taken from Halldór Ármann’s work but many of the examples are, either directly or indirectly. Partly following his example, I will divide the examples into two main categories: non-expletive and expletive empty elements (or referential and non-referential, as he calls them). As will become clearer as we go along, the expletive empty elements alternate with the overt expletive whereas the non-expletive elements alternate with personal pronouns.

9.1.4.1 Non-expletive empty elements

First, it is useful to demonstrate in what sense Icelandic differs from Romance languages like Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, for instance, with respect to the so-called pro-drop possibilities. This can be illustrated by examples like the following (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson and Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1986:151 – see also C.-T. J. Huang 1984:533–4):

- (9.37) a. José sabe [que *e* viu María]. (Po)
 J. knows that *e* saw María
 ‘Jose knows that he saw María.’
- b. *Jón veit að *e* sá Maríu. (Ic)
 J. knows that *e* saw María

In Portuguese (and Italian and Spanish) a pronominal subject is typically ‘dropped’ in a context like (9.37a) but in Icelandic this is not possible, as indicated by the b-example. In Icelandic the personal pronoun *hann* ‘he’ would be necessary in the embedded clause to get the intended reading. Hence it is often said that Icelandic is not a real or genuine pro-drop language (it is sometimes called a semi-pro-drop language, e.g. by Halldór Ármann

Sigurðsson 1989) whereas the Romance languages listed above are real ones (for a discussion of Icelandic (and Faroese) as a pro-drop language, see, e.g., Platzack 1987b).

Despite this, pronominal subjects can be left out in a variety of constructions in Icelandic, even if we leave out the infinitival clauses discussed in section 8.2. As the reader will see, some of these constructions are familiar from other Germanic languages, but an overview is nevertheless useful (see also the discussion in section 7.2.2 above). We begin with a familiar type:

(9.38) Imperative (or optative) subjects:

- a. Farið þið/e þangað!
 go(2pl.) you there
 'Go there.'
- b. Förum ?*við/e þangað!
 go(1pl.) we there
 'Let's go there!'

As mentioned in chapter 1, the 2nd person plural subject *þið* is typically reduced and (probably) cliticized onto the verb in examples of the a-type (the relevant form could be represented as *fariði* although this reduction/cliticization is normally not shown in the written form). The subject can, however, be left out completely. In the 1st person plural it is pretty much obligatory to leave the subject out, as indicated.

(9.39)

Subjects in elliptical constructions:

- a. Við vorum svangir og við/e keyptum okkur hamborgara.
 we were(1pl.) hungry and we/e bought(1pl.) ourselves hamburger
 'We were hungry and (we) bought a hamburger.'
- b. Við vorum svangir og okkur/e vantaði peninga.
 we(N) were(1pl.) hungry and us(A)/e needed(3sg) money
 'We were hungry and (we) needed money.'

When a subject appears to be left out in the first conjunct in examples like (9.39a), then one might want to argue that what are being conjoined are not two clauses but something smaller, for example two verb phrases or some such with the common subject *við* 'we', as illustrated in (9.40):

- (9.40) Við [[vorum svangir] og [keyptum okkur hamborgara]].
 we(1pl.) were(1pl.) hungry and bought(1pl.) ourselves hamburgers

The subject *við* ‘we’ would then be the subject of the finite verb in both conjuncts, and then it would make perfect sense that these verbs both show up in the 1pl. form. But as originally pointed out by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1982b), examples like (9.39b) without the second subject cannot be analysed as some sort of VP-coordination since the first subject (*við* ‘we’) is nominative and should therefore trigger 1pl. agreement on the verb in the second conjunct if it was the only subject of the sentence. That is not what we get, however. Instead we get the default 3sg. in the second conjunct, both when an overt non-nominative subject is there and when it is left unexpressed. That is interesting from a theoretical point of view, since it sheds light on the nature of elliptical constructions, as Eiríkur pointed out (for some further discussion, see, e.g., Bresnan and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990).⁷

(9.41) Empty 1st person subjects in postcard, diary and telegram (or SMS?) style:

- a. *Ég/e* vaknaði snemma. *Ég/e* rakaði mig og ...
I/e woke-up(1sg.) early *I/e* shaved(1sg.) myself and
 ‘Woke up early. Shaved and ...’
- b. *Við/e* komum til London í gær. *Við/e* sáu ...
we/e came(1pl.) to London yesterday *we/e* saw(1pl.)
 ‘Came to London yesterday. Saw ...’

This phenomenon is quite common, of course, in several languages, including English. Note, however, that Icelandic differs from English (and MSc) here in that the finite verb forms are often non-ambiguous because of the person and number agreement. But although the 1pl. forms *komum* and *sáum* in the b-example are morphologically unambiguous, the singular forms *vaknaði* and *rakaði* in the a-example are morphologically ambiguous, that is, they could be 1sg. or 3sg. forms. Nevertheless, elliptical constructions of this kind can only be understood as having non-overt 1st person subjects, just as their counterparts in English, for instance. Still, the rich agreement of Icelandic makes it more like the Romance languages (e.g. Italian, Spanish), where it has been

⁷ As pointed out in section 7.2.2, it is also possible to get case and number agreement with the null subject of second conjuncts (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson and Þóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1986:152–3). In the following we get the same kind of agreement on the adjunct *einir/einum* when there is a null subject in the second conjunct as when there is an overt one:

- (i) a. *Þeir_i* kaupa matinn og *þeir_i /e_i* borða hann einir.
 they(Npl.) buy food-the and they(Npl.)/e eat(3pl.) it alone(Npl.)
- b. *Þeir_i* kaupa matinn og *þeim_i /e_i* líkar hann einum/*einir.
 they(Npl.) buy food-the and them(D)/e likes(3sg.) it alone(Dpl./*Npl.)

argued that the rich agreement system makes the well-known pro-drop possible (cf. (9.37a) – see, e.g., the discussion in Taraldsen 1980; Platzack 1987b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:131, *passim*). We will return to this issue in section 9.2.3

(9.42) Elliptical answers or remarks, leaving out 1st person subjects:

- a. Ég/e veit það.
I/e know that
- b. Ég/e þekki hann ekki.
I/e know him not
'Don't know him.'
- c. Við/e eigum ekki sjónvarp.
we/e own not TV
'We don't have a TV.'

Elliptical expressions are obviously heavily discourse conditioned (require a conversational context). They mainly occur in the 1st person singular, but 1pl. examples are also possible, as shown in (9.42c). As pointed out by C.-T. J. Huang (1984), elliptical examples of this kind are found in a variety of languages that do not allow Romance style pro-drop, including German, for instance. They also occur in MSc (see, e.g., Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:143). Hence C.-T. J. Huang wanted to distinguish between genuine pro-drop and topic-drop, as he called it. We will return to this issue in section 9.2.3.

(9.43) Stage directions:

- Hann/Hún/e fer út til hægri.
he/e goes out to right
'He/She exits stage right'/'Exit stage right.'

The stage directions type presumably exists in a number of languages, although its form may vary somewhat. Note, for instance, that in English the typical form would either be *He/She exits* or else *Exit stage right* (*Exit Mary* would also be possible). In Icelandic, on the other hand, an agreeing form of the verb would always be used).

(9.44) Exclamations:

- a. Þú/Hann/Hún/e situr bara og drekkur bjór!
you(sg.)/he/she/e sit(2sg./3sg.) just and drink(2st./3sg.) beer
'Aren't you just sitting there drinking beer!'
'If (s)he isn't just sitting there drinking beer!'
- b. Þið/e sitjið bara og drekkið bjór!
you(pl.) /e sit(2pl.) just and drink(2pl.) beer
'Aren't you just sitting there and drinking beer!'

Note that since the 2sg. and 3sg. of verbs like *sitja* ‘sit’ and *drekka* ‘drink’ are identical in the present tense, the b-example is ambiguous in Icelandic but the c-example is not, since the 2pl. form is unambiguous. Exclamations of this type are also said to occur in Swedish, and because of the lack of subject agreement they would always be morphologically ambiguous (but not pragmatically).

The instances of non-expletive (or referential) empty elements considered so far have all involved the subject position. In addition, it is also possible to find evidence for ‘null objects’ in Modern Icelandic, as shown by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1990b). These elements occur in coordination structures and they need to be licensed by coreferential objects in a preceding conjunct. The following examples are based on examples in Eiríkur’s paper (1990b:370–1):⁸

(9.45)

Null objects in elliptical constructions:

- a. Ég elska þig_i og dái þig_i/e_i.
I love you and admire you/e
- b. Ég hjálpaði honum_i á fætur og fylgdi honum_i/e_i heim til sín.
I helped him on feet and followed him/e home to REFL
‘I helped him to his feet and accompanied him home.’
- c. Hann_i hjálpaði mér á fætur og ég fylgdi honum_i/*e_i heim til sín.
he helped me on feet and I followed him/*e home to REFL
‘He helped me to my feet and I accompanied him home.’
- d. Ég tók bókina_i og færði hana_i/e_i eiganda sínum_i.
I took book-the and brought it/e owner REFL
‘I took the book and brought it to its owner.’

As the c-example shows, a coreferential subject in the first conjunct does not license a null object in the second.

As Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson points out, it appears that the null objects in examples like (9.45b, d) can in fact serve as antecedents for the following reflexives. This can be seen by substituting a different NP for the empty

⁸ As pointed out by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1979:470), examples of this kind appear to be much worse if there is not a match between the cases in the object positions involved:

- (i) a. Þeir lömdu hann og börðu hann/e.
they hit him(A) and beat him(A)/e
- b. Þeir hæddu hann og ógnuðu honum/?*e.
they mocked him(A) and threatened him(D)/?*

object, for example in the b-example. Then the reflexive becomes impossible, evidently because no suitable antecedent can be found any more:

- (9.46) Ég hjálpaði honum_i á fætur og fylgdi þér heim til *sín_i /hans_i.
 I helped him to feet and followed you home to *REFL/him
 'I helped him to his feet and accompanied you to his home.'

As the reader may have noted, the alleged examples of null objects above do not have an overt subject either. Hence one might a priori think that the second conjunct is not really a clause but some smaller constituent, for example a VP. But as pointed out by Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir (1993; see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b:375; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993c), it is possible to find examples of null objects where an analysis of the VP-coordination type would not work because the (first) subject is a nominative subject and hence we would expect the second verb to agree with it if that was the only subject was available (cf. also the discussion around example (9.39) above):

- (9.47) Englendingar_i drekka dökkan bjór_i og e_i þykir e_j góður.
 Englishmen(Npl.) drink(3pl.) dark beer and e find(3sg.) good
 'Englishmen drink dark beer and find it good.'

Since the verb *þykir* 'find' in the second conjunct shows up in the 3rd sg. form, we can hardly have any kind of VP-conjunction here since the only overt subject is the nominative plural *Englendingar* 'Englishmen', which would call for a plural agreement form of the verb.

In section 9.2.3 below we will return to some of the types of empty pronominal elements discussed above, although relatively few have received close attention in the theoretical discussion of empty elements and pro-drop. Empty categories in expletive constructions have been more extensively discussed in the theoretical literature and we now turn to these.

9.1.4.2 Empty elements in expletive constructions

As pointed out several times above (especially in chapter 6), Icelandic apparently often allows an empty subject position where other Germanic languages would fill it with an expletive. In this connection it may be useful to distinguish between *it*-expletives, or quasi-arguments as they are sometimes called (see, e.g., Vikner 1995a – see also Chomsky 1981:325), and *there*-expletives, or true expletives. Let us first look at a couple of constructions corresponding to *it*-constructions in English (and *det* in Danish):.

(9.48) Weather constructions:

- a. **Það** rigndi mikið í Reykjavík þá.
it rained much in Reykjavík then
'It rained a lot in Reykjavík then.'
- b. Þá rigndi *það/e mikið í Reykjavík.
then rained it/e much in Reykjavík
'Then it rained a lot in Reykjavík.'
- c. Rigndi *það/e mikið í Reykjavík þá?
rained *it/e much in Reykjavík then
'Did it rain much in Reykjavík then?'

As shown here, the empty expletive occurs when the overt expletive would not have been in clause-initial position. Observe that it can also occur in the so-called accusative-with-infinitive construction discussed in section 8.2.6 (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:481–2; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b:373):

- (9.49) Ég tel það/e hafa rignt mikið í Reykjavík.
I believe it/e have rained much in Reykjavík
'I believe it to have rained a lot in Reykjavík.'

Note that here the relevant verb (the auxiliary *hafa* 'have') is non-finite and hence shows no agreement. This is of some theoretical interest since the availability of empty elements in subject position has often been related to rich agreement morphology (see, e.g., Platzack 1987b – see also the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989). We will return to this issue below.

A null expletive can apparently also occur in the so-called extraposition construction under similar conditions:

(9.50)

- a. [Að bensínið er dýrt] hefur aldrei skipt neinu máli.
that the gas is expensive has never made any difference
- b. **Það** hefur aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensínið er dýrt].
it has never made any difference that the gas is expensive
- c. Hefur *það/e aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensínið er dýrt]?
has *it/e never made any difference that the gas is expensive
'Has it never made any difference that the gas is expensive?'
- d. Síðan hefur *það/e aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensínið er dýrt]?
since then has *it/e never made any difference that the gas is expensive
'Since then it has never made any difference that the gas is expensive.'

Here the b-example is the standard extraposed version, the c-example a direct question variant and the d-example involves fronting of a non-subject. In the

last two versions we get an empty element where we might have expected an overt expletive subject.⁹

We can now turn to ‘true expletive constructions’, that is, constructions involving expletive *það* that would correspond to English *there* and Danish *der*. As shown in 6.1.1 above, Icelandic has a wealth of these. There is no reason to repeat them all here since empty pronominal elements occur under the same conditions in all of them, for example when a non-subject is fronted and in direct questions, as in the case of the *it*-expletive constructions just reviewed. Typical examples are given below:

- (9.51) a. *Það hafa líklega verið mýs í baðkerinu þá.*
 there have probably been mice in bathtub-the then
- b. *Þá hafa *það/e líklega verið mýs í baðkerinu.*
 then have there/e probably been mice in bathtub-the
 ‘Then there have probably been mice in the bathtub.’
- c. *Höfðu *það/e verið mýs í baðkerinu?*
 had *there/e been mice in bathtub-the
 ‘Had there been mice in the bathtub?’

Again, the empty expletive can also occur in an accusative-with-infinitive construction (see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:481–2; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b:373):

- (9.52) *Ég tel það/e hafa verið mýs í baðkerinu.*
 I believe there/e have been mice in bathtub-the
 ‘I believe there to have been mice in the bathtub.’

Speakers may vary with respect to their preference for the overt vs. non-overt expletive.

⁹ I am starring the overt expletive *það* in the c- and d-examples since I believe that it cannot occur in this position. The homophonous referential *það* can, however, as in examples like (ic) (see also the discussion of this phenomenon in sections 6.1.1 (n. 3) and 7.1.7 and references cited there):

- (i) a. *Það [að bensínið er dýrt] skiptir engu máli.*
 it [that gas-the is expensive] makes no difference.
- b. *Skiptir það [að bensínið er dýrt] engu máli?*
 makes it that gas-the is expensive no difference
- c. *Skiptir það engu máli [að bensínið er dýrt]?*
 makes it no difference that gas-the is expensive

As shown in (ia), pronominal *það* in subject position can be modified by a clause. Such a subject can follow the verb, as in the b-example, and the modifying clause can be extraposed, giving rise to constructions that are very difficult to distinguish from expletive extraposition constructions of the kind discussed in the text.

9.2 Some theoretical and comparative issues

9.2.1 *The standard Binding Theory*

Many interesting facts about Icelandic and Scandinavian pronouns and reflexives have been discovered rather recently, most of them after 1980. It is probably fair to say that the so-called Binding Theory (BT) of Chomsky (1981 and later) led to much of this discovery, despite the fact that the standard BT does not work very well as an account for Scandinavian pronouns and reflexives as we shall see. Hence it is useful to begin by giving an overview of the BT.

Informally, the standard BT of Chomsky can be understood as an attempt to define classes of NPs. They should fall into the following categories (cf., e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:50ff.):¹⁰

(9.53)

- a. anaphors = NPs that must be **bound within a particular (local) domain**
- b. pronominals = NPs that must **not be bound within a particular (local) domain**
- c. R-expressions = NPs that must **not be bound at all**

The terms ‘bound’ and ‘free’ can then be defined roughly as follows:

- (9.54)
- a. If an element is coreferential (coindexed) with a c-commanding (constituent-commanding) element, then it is **bound** by that element.
 - b. An element which is not bound is **free**.

The notion of c-command is crucial here. It is usually said to go back to Reinhart (1976), and it can be semi-formally defined as follows (in case some of the readers are not familiar with this crucial notion – apologies to those who are):

- (9.55) X c-commands Y if the next branching node above X is also above Y.

Since the definition refers to a ‘branching node’, the concept is best visualized with the help of a tree diagram:

¹⁰ This is not exactly the formulation that Chomsky (1981) used. He used the phrase ‘within its governing category’ for what is given here as ‘within a particular (local) domain’. His classification was also supposed to include an element that would have to be bound and free within its governing category – which is a contradiction unless the element in question has no governing category. He maintained that infinitival PRO was actually such a category and hence it could only occur in an ‘ungoverned position’. The subject position of infinitives was supposed to be such a position, hence PRO could (only) occur there. This has often been referred to as ‘the PRO theorem’ but I am leaving it out of the present discussion.



In the a-structure X c-commands Y because the first branching node above X, namely XL, is also above Y in the structure (it is possible to reach Y from XL without ever going ‘up’ in the tree diagram). In the b-diagram X does not c-command W because the next branching node above X, namely XL, is not above W.

Since the R-expressions (referential expressions like *Mary*, *the girl*, etc.) do not show any major cross-linguistic differences, we can leave them out of the discussion here and concentrate on anaphors and pronominals. Standardly, English reflexives and reciprocals are believed to fall into the category of anaphors: they have to be locally bound, which means roughly that they have to be coreferential with a c-commanding element within their minimal clause (with some exceptions that need not concern us here). Conversely, English personal pronouns will fall into the category of pronominals, which means that they have to be free within the same local domain. This accounts to a large extent for the so-called ‘complementary distribution’ of (English) pronouns and reflexives discussed above. It is illustrated in (9.57):

- (9.57) a. John_i shaved him_{*i/j}.
 b. John_i shaved himself_{i/*j}.

Being a pronominal, the personal pronoun *him* in the a-example has to be free. Hence it cannot be coreferential (coindexed) with *John* and has to have a different index. Conversely, the reflexive *himself* in the b-example has to be bound since it is supposedly an anaphor. Hence it has to be coreferential with *John* (the only possible antecedent in the clause) and cannot have any other index.

9.2.2 Pronouns and reflexives in the Scandinavian languages

9.2.2.1 The basic facts

At first sight, pronouns and reflexives in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc) appear to be rather similar to their Icelandic counterparts. Thus MSc has possessive reflexives in addition to the non-possessive ones, and it has both simple and complex reflexives. Taking Danish as an example of MSc, we can have the following, for instance (for basic facts of this sort, see also

Anward 1974; Vikner 1985; Hellan 1986b; Anderson 1986; Thráinsson 1991:51; Faarlund et al. 1997:1160ff., etc.):

- (9.58) a. Jens_i vaskede sig_i/*ham_i. (Da)
 Jens washed REFL/him
 'Jens washed himself.'
- b. Jens_i snakker ofte med *sig_i/sig selv_i.
 Jens speaks often to REFL/REFL self
 'Jens often speaks to himself.'
- c. Jens_i vaskede sin_i/*hans_i bil.
 Jens washed refl-poss/*non-refl. poss car
 'Jens washed his car.'

Except for a few word-order differences (the complex reflexive is *sig selv* 'REFL self' in Danish but in Icelandic it is normally *sjálfan sig* 'self REFL'; the possessive normally precedes the noun in Danish, in Icelandic it normally follows it) this looks very similar to the Icelandic examples discussed above.¹¹ The similarity continues when we look at reflexives inside infinitival complements (see e.g. Vikner 1985).¹²

- (9.59) a. Peder_i bad Jens_j om [PRO_j at barbære sig_{i/j}]. (Da)
 Peter asked Jens for to shave REFL
 'Peter asked Jens to shave him/himself.'
- b. Anne_i hørte [mig snakke med dig om sig_i].
 Anne heard me(A) talk(inf.) with you about REFL
 'Anne heard me talk to you about her.'

¹¹ In Danish, but usually not in the other MSc languages, there is a special twist with respect to the possessive reflexive: it is not used to refer to a plural subject:

- (i) Drengene_i vaskede *sin_i/deres_i bil.
 boys-the washed *refl. poss./non-refl. poss car
 'The boys washed their car.'

There is apparently some tendency to adopt this system in Faroese too (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:327n.: *tey... síggja... teirra kæra Glyvursnes...* 'they... see their(non-refl.) dear Glyvursnes...') and the same is reported for southern Swedish dialects (cf. Teleman et al. 1999a: *Skottar är kända... för deras sparsomhet* 'The Scots are known for their(non-refl.) thriftiness').

¹² Since it is not clear that the Danish infinitival marker is a complementizer, I have put the PRO subject before it (cf. the discussion in section 8.3.3).

- (9.60) Jeg_i lovede Anne_j [PRO_i at hjælpe *sig_j/hende_i].
 I promised Anne to help *REFL/her
 'I promised Anne to help her.'

As the examples in (9.59) show, it is possible to have a reflexive inside a Danish infinitival complement although the antecedent is not in the infinitival complement itself but rather the matrix subject. This holds both for control complements and for AcI complements. This is what we found for Icelandic above and it is not possible in English. The example in (9.60) shows, on the other hand, that a matrix object cannot be the antecedent of a reflexive inside an infinitival complement in Danish. Faroese works the same way in these respects (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:332–3):

- (9.61) a. Jógvan_i bað Hjalmar_j [PRO_j raka sær_{i,j}].
 Jógvan asked Hjalmar shave REFL(D)
 'Jógvan asked Hjalmar to shave him/himself.'
- b. Eg_i lovaði Jógvani_j [PRO_i at hjálpa *sær_j/honum_j].
 I promised Jógvan to help *REFL/him
 'I promised Jógvan to help him.'

If we take personal pronouns into account, however, there is apparently some difference between Icelandic and Mainland Scandinavian with respect to infinitival complements. Observe the following (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:53–4; Hellan 1983; Vikner 1985; Anward 1974 – see also Anderson 1986). Faroese appears to follow Mainland Scandinavian in this respect (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:332):

- (9.62) a. ?*Pétur_i bað okkur_j [að PRO_j hjálpa honum_i]. (Ic)
 Peter asked us to help him
- b. Susan_i bað mig_j om [PRO_j at ringe til hende_i]. (Da)
 Susan asked me for to call to her
 'Susan asked me to call her.'
- c. Jógvan_i bað meg_j [PRO_j hjálpa honum_i]. (Fa)
 Jógvan asked me help him
 'Jógvan asked me to help him.'
- d. Jon_i bað oss_j [PRO_j hjelpe ham_i]. (No)
 John asked us help him
 'John asked us to help him.'
- e. Hon_i bað mig_j [PRO_j klippa henne_i]. (Sw)
 she asked me cut her
 'She asked me to cut her hair.'

This difference is sometimes described by saying that ‘reflexivization is obligatory’ in this kind of context in Icelandic but it is not in Mainland Scandinavian. In other words, Mainland Scandinavian can have personal pronouns in object control complements coreferential with the matrix subject of these complements but Icelandic cannot.

9.2.2.2 LDRs in Faroese and elsewhere

When it comes to true LDRs, Faroese is the only Scandinavian language in addition to Icelandic where true LDRs of the ‘Icelandic kind’ are systematically found. As originally pointed out by Barnes (1986b), these can even lack a syntactic ‘binder’ in the technical sense (see (9.64) below), just as they can in Icelandic, as long as there is a possible discourse antecedent (see also Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:55; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:334ff.):

- (9.63) a. *Jens_i sagde [at jeg havde svigtet sig_i]. (Da)
 b. Jógvan_i segði [at eg hevði sviðið seg_i]. (Fa)
 J. said that I had betrayed REFL
 ‘Jógvan said that I had betrayed him.’

- (9.64)
 ... hann_i vildi ekki leypa frá sínari ábyrgð, tá ið hann_i (Fa)
 he would not run from refl.poss. responsibility, now that he
 var komin soleiðis fyri við Sigrid.
 was come so for with Sigrid.
 Hon hevði meiri krav upp á seg_i enn hin.
 she had more demand up on REFL than the other
 ‘He would not run away from his responsibility now that he had got into this situation with Sigrid. She had more right to him (refl.) than the other [girl had].’

The last example is from a Faroese novel and originally discovered by Barnes (1986b). It is parallel to the Icelandic examples cited above, where there is no antecedent for the LDR in the relevant sentence.

Further research into the behaviour of Faroese LDRs confirms that they behave very much like their Icelandic counterparts (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:334ff.):

- (9.65) The Faroese LDRs cannot have object antecedents:
 Eg fortaldi Hjalmar_i [at Guðrun elskaði *seg_i /hann_i].
 I told Hjalmar that Gudrun loved *REFL/him

(9.66) Faroese LDRs typically do not ‘refer out of’ non-complement clauses:

- a. Hjalmar_i hitt_i kvinnuna [sum vitjaði *seg_i /hann_i í fjør].
 Hjalmar met woman-the that visited *REFL/him last year
- b. Marjun_i kemur [um tú ringir til *sín_i /hennara_i].
 Marjun comes if you call to *REFL/her
 ‘Marjun comes if you call her.’

(9.67) If non-complement clauses are embedded under verbs of saying and believing in Faroese, an LDR can ‘refer out of’ them:

Marjun_i sigur [at hon_i kemur [um tú ringir til sín_i]].
 Marjun says that she comes if you call to REFL

(9.68) The complex LDR in Faroese must have an antecedent inside its own clause just like its Icelandic counterpart (it must be strictly locally bound in BT terms):

Jógvan_i sigur [at tú elskar *seg sjálvan_i / seg_i /hann_i].
 Jógvan says that you love *REFL self/REFL/him
 ‘Jógvan says that you love him.’

With facts of this sort in mind, one could argue that the Icelandic and Faroese LDRs show a behaviour typical of so-called **logophoric pronouns** rather than anaphors. Such pronouns occur in various languages, and they often have the same form as regular reflexive pronouns (though not always, cf. Clements 1975 – see also the discussion in Maling 1984, Sells 1987 and the classification of pronominal elements proposed in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991 and 1992) and they need some sort of an antecedent, but they do not obey strict syntactic restrictions on binding. In fact, they do not have to be syntactically bound at all, but their antecedents are often the subjects of verbs of saying or believing.

The related concept of **point of view** is also frequently used in the account of LDRs of this kind, as mentioned in section 9.1.2 above and exemplified there. An important type of example illustrating this is the following (see the discussion in Maling 1984: 232ff.):

- (9.69) a. Ég sagði Jóni_i [að þú hefðir svikið *sig_i /hann_i].
 I told John that you had(sbj.) betrayed *REFL/him
 ‘I told John that you had betrayed him.’
- b. Jóni_i var sagt [að þú hefðir svikið ?*sig_i /hann_i].
 John was told that you had(sbj.) betrayed ?*REFL/him
 ‘John was told that you had betrayed him.’

As pointed out before, the (indirect) object *Jóni* in the a-example is an impossible antecedent for the LDR *sig* in the embedded subjunctive clause.

But as indicated in the b-example, the corresponding passive subject *Jóni* is also quite a bad antecedent for an LDR (although probably somewhat better than the indirect object). This could be explained by saying that, although *Jóni* is a subject of a verb of saying in the matrix clause, the sentence (or the embedded clause) does not represent the subject's point of view since the matrix verb is in the passive. Still, the embedded clause is in the subjunctive. That is because it is not stated as a fact – its truth is not presupposed by the speaker.

Pinning down what is relevant in this interaction between point of view, factivity, choice of mood (indicative vs. subjunctive) is notoriously tricky, however. A couple of additional examples from Icelandic will make this clearer. First, as noted by Maling (1984:239), the passive subject in (9.70b) seems to be a better antecedent than the passive subject in (9.69b):

(9.70)

- a. Ég taldi Jóni_i trú um [að *sig_i /hann_i vantaði hæfileika].
 I convinced John(D) belief about that *REFL/he(A) lacked talent
 'I made John believe that he lacked talent.'
- b. Jóni_i var talin trú um [að ?sig_i /hann_i vantaði hæfileika].
 John was convinced belief of that ?REFL/he(A) lacked talent
 'John was made to believe that he lacked talent.'

Maling takes this to show that the passive in (9.70b) 'happens to satisfy the requirements of logophoricity'. That may very well be the case, although it is not obvious how that can be.

Another case in point is the following: the verb *heyra* 'hear' can either take an indicative or a subjunctive complement as illustrated here (the dollar sign indicates semantic anomaly of the following clause – see also the discussion in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1990, 1991:56 and in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1990b):

- (9.71) a. Jón heyrði [að þú **hafðir** hringt] \$en þú hafðir ekki hringt.
 John heard that you had(ind.) called \$but you had not called
- b. Jón heyrði [að þú **hefðir** hringt] en þú hafðir ekki hringt.
 John heard that you had(sbj.) called but you had not called

The indicative complement in (9.71a) is factive, that is, the speaker presupposes its truth. Hence he cannot deny it by adding the 'but'-clause, as shown in the a-example. That would be a contradiction. The subjunctive complement of (9.71b) just reports something that John had heard and the speaker takes no responsibility for its truth. One could thus say that it is reported from

the subject's point of view, not the speaker's. Interestingly, a LDR would only be compatible with the subjunctive complement:

- (9.72) a. Jón_i heyrði [að þú **hafðir** hringt til *sín_i /hans_i].
 John heard that you had(ind.) called to *REFL/him
 'John heard that you had called him.'
- b. Jón_i heyrði [að þú **hefðir** hringt til sín_i /hans_i].
 John heard that you had(sbj.) called to REFL/him
 'John heard that you had called him.'

Although there is no productive subjunctive in Faroese, we find very similar conditions on LDRs there as in Icelandic. This was illustrated above. Systematic occurrences of this kind are not found in the standard MSc languages. It has often been noted, however, that sporadic examples of LDRs are also found there, at least dialectally (see especially Strahan 2003 on Norwegian). While some of these correspond to possible LDRs in Icelandic, for instance, others are quite different. Consider the following attested examples from Norwegian (Lødrup 2006, p.c.; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:335n.; Barnes p.c.):

- (9.73)
- a. **Regjeringen_i** regner ikke med [at **sitt_i** forslag vil ...]. (No)
 government-the reckons not with that refl.poss proposal will
 'The government doesn't expect that its proposal will ...'
- b. **Kjell_i** ... er spent på [hva legen_j sier om fingerskaden **sín_i**].
 Kjell is excited about what doctor-the says about finger injury refl.poss.
 'Kjell is anxious to hear what the doctor will say about his finger injury.'
- c. Det er ikke akkurat det [**man_i** vil [**sine_i** barn skal drive med]].
 it is not exactly this one wants refl.poss. children shall work with
 'That's not exactly what one would want one's children to be doing.'
- d. **Hun_i** trodde [**hun_i** gjorde det [som var best for **seg, selv**]].
 she believed she did it that was best for REFL self
 'She thought she did what was best for her.'

While the a- and b-examples are arguably similar to what one could find in Icelandic and Faroese, the c- and d-examples appear to be somewhat different. In the c-example we have an impersonal construction containing the impersonal *man* 'one' in a generic sense. As shown by Lødrup (2006), special rules appear to hold for the use of reflexives in generic constructions in Norwegian (at least for some speakers – for preliminary remarks on binding in impersonal constructions with *maður* 'one' in Icelandic, see Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1990). The d-example apparently involves a long-distance complex reflexive, something which is normally not found in

Icelandic and Faroese. Interestingly, there are also examples where the complex reflexive apparently occurs without any binder, especially in generic contexts (cf. Lødrup 2006):¹³

- (9.74) a. et helt hus for **seg selv** er et slit
 a whole house for REFL self is a drag
 ‘a whole house for oneself is hard work’
- b. sikkerhetsbelte til ungene og **seg selv** er visst utenkelig
 seat belt for the kids and REFL self is probably unthinkable
 ‘seat belts for the kids and oneself are probably unthinkable’

There are even examples of unbound reciprocals in Norwegian, as shown by Lødrup (2006):

- (9.75) Respekt for **hverandre** er grunnleggende for vår samhandling.
 respect for each other is basic for our cooperation

I do not know of any examples of this kind in Icelandic and Faroese. This suggests that the lexical elements in question, that is, possessive reflexives, complex reflexives and even reciprocals can be unspecified for the relevant classificatory features, as Lødrup suggests, at least for some speakers. At any rate, it is not clear that Norwegian (nor any of the other MSc languages) have typical LDRs of the ‘logophoric’ kind found in Icelandic and Faroese, although this needs to be investigated in more detail (but see Strahan 2003 for Norwegian).

9.2.2.3 An interim summary, some theoretical problems and proposals

In the preceding sections we have seen evidence for the following claims among others:

- (9.76) a. Some of the Scandinavian facts about the distribution of different types of pronouns within clauses are similar to facts that are known from English and many other languages.
- b. Scandinavian clause-bounded reflexives appear to be partially different from their English counterparts.

¹³ Actually, complex reflexives like *sig selv* are tricky to deal with since some of their uses may fall under the so-called emphatic use of focus anaphors (see, e.g., Kuno 1987; Zribi-Hertz 1989). Such examples can even be found in English (see, e.g., Reinhart and Reuland 1993:672):

(i) This letter was addressed only to **myself**.

Here *myself* is obviously not syntactically bound.

- c. There are some cross-linguistic differences within Scandinavian as far as personal pronouns and reflexives are concerned, especially with respect to non-clause-bounded reflexives.

As we have seen above, Scandinavian reflexives and personal pronouns do not fit smoothly into the categories of anaphors and pronominals defined by standard BT for various reasons. It is useful to try to summarize the main descriptive and theoretical problems.

The first problem has to do with the simple vs. complex dichotomy found in all the Scandinavian languages. Interestingly, this dichotomy is found in many other languages, for example such widely different languages as Italian (simple *sé*, complex *se stesso*, see, e.g., Giorgi 1984, 1991) and Chinese (simple *ziji*, complex *ta ziji*, see, e.g., C.-T.J. Huang and Tang 1991 – see also other contributions in Koster and Reuland 1991, in Bennis et al. 1997 and in Cole et al. 2001, the overview by Höskuldur Thráinsson 1992, the overview by Y. Huang 2000, etc.). Both types typically differ from personal pronouns in their binding properties, and hence neither of them can easily be classified as a pronominal in the BT sense. Interestingly, the complex ones are often more likely to observe strict locality restrictions on binding, just like the Icelandic *sjálfan sig*, for instance. As shown above, the complex reflexive in Icelandic (and Faroese) can be said to be a well-behaved anaphor in the BT sense, and the same is true of the reciprocal (see, e.g., the discussion around (9.30) above). Under a BT approach, then, one will either have to try to formulate different binding restrictions for the complex reflexives and the reciprocals on the one hand and the simplex reflexives on the other, or else say that there are more types of pronouns than the standard BT assumes. Both approaches have been tried as we shall see below.

The second problem is that the domain within which Mainland Scandinavian simple reflexives need to be bound does not appear to be the same kind of ‘governing category’ (or ‘minimal clause’) which seems to work pretty well for their English counterparts, for instance. Thus reflexives inside infinitival complements can often have matrix subjects as their antecedents, even when the infinitival PRO is controlled by the matrix object as shown above (see, e.g., the examples in (9.59) and (9.60)). It also turns out that it is only subjects and not objects that can bind reflexives across the boundaries of infinitival complements. For this reason, various linguists have tried to define the relevant binding domains in terms of tensed clauses (see, e.g., the overviews in Anderson 1986, the accounts of Manzini and Wexler 1987 and Wexler and Manzini 1987, the overview in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991, etc.).

The third problem is that the apparent complementary distribution of pronouns and reflexives so well known from English is neatly captured in

standard BT if the domain within which pronominals (like personal pronouns) have to be free and the domain within which anaphors have to be bound is the same. Unfortunately, the domain within which MSc personal pronouns need to be free does not seem to coincide with the domain within which the reflexives need to be bound. The problem is that in Danish, for instance, personal pronouns inside infinitival complements can be bound by matrix subjects just like reflexives can (see the discussion around (9.62) above – the Icelandic facts are different, as shown there).

The fourth problem is that true LDRs in Icelandic and Faroese do not seem to have to be syntactically bound at all, as extensively discussed above. Yet Icelandic (and Faroese) reflexives need some sort of an antecedent. They cannot, for instance, have deictic reference as shown above (see the discussion around (9.11) above). Thus they are different from pronominals. This raises the possibility that the simple reflexive in Icelandic and Faroese might not be an anaphor at all but something different, although not a regular pronominal. We will return to this possibility below.

The fifth problem is that although simple *sig* in Icelandic and *seg* in Faroese need not be syntactically bound at all when they are LDRs, there is considerable evidence that they need to be syntactically bound in the formal sense when they are clause-bounded reflexives. They cannot, for instance, have prepositional objects as their antecedents, nor can they have possessive NPs (genitive NPs modifying a noun) as their antecedents, whereas LDRs sometimes can (see, e.g., the discussion around examples (9.7), (9.22) and (9.24) above). This suggests that locally bound reflexives and LDRs might not be the same category, as discussed above. We will return to that proposal presently.

Given this wealth of descriptive problems and puzzles, it is not surprising that a number of theoretical proposals have been advanced to account for the facts. They cannot be reviewed here in any detail, of course. Instead we will have to be satisfied with a very brief overview and a classification of the approaches.

First, there are various proposals that attempt to **redefine the notion of the binding domain** relevant for the reflexives and personal pronouns. Central to most of these attempts is the idea that the binding domain of the BT can be extended in some meaningful way in order to account for the behaviour of the LDRs. Some of these approaches try to unify the conditions on medium-distance reflexives (or MDRs as one could call them) inside infinitival clauses bound by antecedents outside them and the conditions on true LDRs in subjunctive clauses. The idea is, then, that the ‘minimal tensed clause’ is the relevant binding domain. This assumes that subjunctive clauses are not tensed in some sense, although the Icelandic subjunctive does in fact show tense

distinctions as shown in chapter 1.¹⁴ Attempts of this sort include the ones proposed by Anderson (1986), Manzini and Wexler (1987), Wexler and Manzini (1987), Pica (1991), Hestvik (1992) and others. But there are several crucial problems with this kind of approach. One has to do with examples where the coreferential antecedent is not in the same sentence but only present in previous discourse (see the Icelandic and Faroese examples in (9.28) and (9.64) above). It is difficult to see how any kind of syntactic domain extension could cover such examples. Another problem has to do with the fact also observed above that the antecedent of a LDR does not always c-command it because the antecedent may be a possessive noun buried inside a NP (see, e.g., example (9.22) above). A third problem is that this binding domain does not extend to all instances of subjunctives as the LDRs are only licensed inside some subjunctive clauses and not others (cf. the discussion around examples (9.17)–(9.20) above). A fourth problem is the fact that we find the same conditions on LDRs in Faroese as in Icelandic, although there is no subjunctive in Faroese as pointed out above – and the reported existence of speakers of Icelandic that allow LDRs in indicative clauses raises the same problem (see n. 3 above). Last but not least, it seems pretty clear that the nature of the MDRs (the medium-distance reflexives inside infinitival clauses) is different from that of the true LDRs. This has been most extensively demonstrated by Reuland and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir (1997). They show, for instance, that non-c-commanding possessive nouns inside NPs cannot be antecedents of MDRs, although they can be the antecedents of LDRs as shown above. Thus we get the following contrast:

- (9.77) a. Jón_i neyddi mig_j til [að PRO_j svara sér_i / *honum_i].
 John forced me for to respond to REFL/*him
 'John forced me to respond to him'
- b. [Skoðun Jóns_i]_k neyddi mig_j til [að PRO_j svara *sér_i / honum_i].
 opinion John's forced me for to respond to *REFL/him
 'John's opinion forced me to respond to him.'

This would obviously be unexpected under an account that treats the LDRs and the MDRs in the same way.

Another kind of approach attempts to **redefine and extend the classes of NPs defined by BT** so that it can include more types of NPs, such as true LDRs that appear to need a coreferential antecedent of some sort but do not

¹⁴ The basic idea would then be that subjunctive clauses are not 'independently tensed' since they typically copy the tense of their matrix clause (the tense agreement or 'sequence of tenses' discussed in section 8.1.2 above).

need to be syntactically bound (see, e.g., Hellan 1991b; Anderson 1986; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991, 1992; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b; Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992; Reuland and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1997 etc.). Some of these are combined with attempts to redefine the notion of binding domain, for example the one proposed by Anderson (1986), as pointed out above. Others are combined with attempts to redefine the notion of binding, for example the account favoured by Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams (1992). They assume the kind of binding theory proposed by Reinhart and Reuland (1991, 1993). It would take us too far afield to go into Reinhart and Reuland's (henceforth R&R's) binding theory in any detail, but its basic ingredients include the following:

- (9.78) a. Distinction **between predicates that are semantically (lexically) reflexive** (basically inherently reflexive verbs like *hegða sér* 'behave oneself', etc.) and those that are not (including transitive verbs such as *gefa* 'give', *hata* 'hate', *raka* 'shave', *þvo* 'wash'). The apparent objects of reflexive verbs (e.g. *sér* in the construction *hegða sér*) are not arguments.
- b. Distinction **between transitive verbs that are unambiguously transitive** (such as *gefa* 'give', *hata* 'hate') and those that are **lexically ambiguous** in the sense that they are 'listed twice' in the lexicon, i.e. as transitive predicates (cf. *raka einhvern* 'shave somebody', *þvo einhverjum* 'wash somebody') and as reflexive predicates (e.g. *raka sig* 'shave oneself', *þvo sér* 'wash oneself').
- c. Distinction between **simple** and **complex** anaphors, where the complex anaphors (or SELF anaphors, such as *sjálfan sig*) can serve to mark the predicate of a clause as reflexive (they have a 'reflexivizing function'), whereas the simple ones (like *sig*) cannot.
- d. Distinction between pronouns that can have **referential independence** (such as the personal pronouns) and those that cannot (such as the reflexives).
- e. A **chain condition** that states that each 'argument chain' (in the technical sense of a sequence of coindexed NPs headed by an argument, cf. Reinhart and Reuland 1993:693) can only contain one element that has referential independence (is +R in the terminology of Reinhart and Reuland) and is Case marked.

Many of these distinctions have been made in a similar fashion in the previous literature on pronouns and reflexives, of course, for example in some of the work that has been done on Scandinavian in general and Icelandic in particular. Thus the necessity of distinguishing between reflexives that are arguments and those that are not (such as the (apparent) objects of inherently reflexive verbs) is emphasized in much of Hellan's work (1983, 1986b, 1988, 1991b).¹⁵

¹⁵ An interesting difference between Icelandic and English is the following: where Icelandic has an inherently reflexive verb taking a simple reflexive complement,

Similarly, the importance of distinguishing between pronouns that are capable of independent reference and those that are not is central to proposals that have been made by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1991, 1992). Other aspects of R&R's approach involve a more radical departure from previous approaches to pronouns and reflexives, such as their chain condition in (9.78e) and their formulation (or replacement) of the binding principles. I can only make a couple of comments on these.

As the reader will recall, one of the main properties of standard BT is that it accounts for the so-called complementary distribution of pronouns and reflexives illustrated in (9.1), for instance. It has often been pointed out, however, that English has (or can have) personal pronouns (pronominals) where the standard BT would predict that only reflexives (anaphors) should occur. Relevant examples include the following (cf. R&R 1993:663–4):

- (9.79) a. **Max**_i likes jokes about **him**_i.
 b. **Max**_i saw a gun near **him**_i.
 c. ***Max**_i relies on **him**_i.

An important part of R&R's theory is designed to account for the contrast between the a- and b-examples on the one hand and the c-example on the other. The claim is that in the c-example *him* is an argument of the prepositional verb *rely on* and thus this example is supposedly ruled out by R&R's chain condition in (9.78e). This is so because the coindexed *John* and *him*

Footnote 15 (*cont.*)

English often has a verb without any complement at all but with the same semantics. This can be seen by comparing the idiomatic English gloss to the Icelandic sentences below:

- (i) a. Jón missteig sig.
 John misstepped REFL
 'John tripped.'
 b. Jón mismælti sig.
 John misspoke REFL
 'John misspoke.'

This also extends to the reflexive uses of verbs like *raka* 'shave' and *þvo* 'wash', although here the English verbs could have a complement:

- (ii) a. Jón rakaði sig.
 John shaved REFL
 'John shaved (himself).'
 b. Jón þvoði sér.
 John washed REFL
 'John washed (himself).'

would constitute an argument chain and the pronoun is +R (capable of independent reference) and Case marked and hence the chain is ruled out. Conversely, the pronouns in the a- and b-examples are not arguments of the predicates (verbs) *like* and *see* and hence these sentences are not ruled out by the chain condition. An approach of this kind would not work for Icelandic, on the other hand, because here a pronoun coreferential with the subject would be out in both types of constructions:

- (9.80) a. ***Jóni**_i líka brandarar um **hann**_i.
 John likes jokes about him
- b. ***Jón**_i sá byssu nálægt **honum**_i.
 John saw gun near him
- c. ***Jón**_i treystir á **hann**_i.
 John relies on him

Thus it appears that this distinction between arguments and non-arguments built into R&R's chain condition is irrelevant for the distributional properties of personal pronouns in Icelandic.¹⁶

Another potential drawback of R&R's binding theory, with respect to Icelandic at least, is that it is heavily based on the notions of reflexivity and reflexive marking and thus has nothing to say about the distribution of reciprocals (see, e.g., Reinhart and Reuland 1993:660n.). This is unfortunate since reciprocals appear to be well-behaved BT anaphors in Icelandic, as shown above (see, e.g., (9.30) and the discussion in Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991, 1992, for instance). In that respect the theory of R&R is less comprehensive than standard BT.¹⁷

¹⁶ There are, however, exceptions to the complementary distribution of pronouns and clause-bounded reflexives in Icelandic, as shown above, namely when the antecedent is an object and not a subject. Problems of this sort are extensively discussed in a Scandinavian perspective by Anderson 1986. See also Hestvik 1992 for a different approach.

¹⁷ R&R (1993:660n) cite a couple of examples from English where reciprocals are not bound. Corresponding examples are totally impossible in Icelandic:

- (i) a. *Hús Jóns og Maríu höfðu til smekks hvors annars.
 houses John(G) and Mary(G) appealed to taste each other(G)
 'John and Mary's houses appealed to each other's taste.'
- b. *Rökin sem Jón og María héldu fram voru grunnurinn.
 arguments-the that John and Mary presented were basis-the
 að greinum hvors annars.
 for articles each other(G)

'The arguments that John and Mary presented were the basis for each other's articles.'

Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams (1992) argue, on the other hand, that R&R's theory provides an interesting insight into the acquisition of pronouns and reflexives in Icelandic. In particular, they maintain that R&R's approach makes it possible to explain why Icelandic children have a greater problem acquiring the rules that govern the distribution of personal pronouns and the simple reflexive *sig* than the rules governing the strictly local complex (SELF) reflexive *sjálfan sig*. The crucial aspect of R&R's approach here is their claim that the a- and b-sentences below are ungrammatical for the same reason, namely a violation of their version of binding condition B:

- (9.81)
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|--------|----------------------------|
| a. | *Jón _i | elskar | hann _i . |
| | John | loves | him |
| b. | *Jón _i | elskar | sig _i . |
| | John | loves | REFL |
| c. | Jón _i | elskar | sjálfan sig _i . |
| | John | loves | self REFL |

Standard BT has in itself nothing enlightening to say about the b-example, that is, why some verbs can only take the complex reflexive as their complement, whereas others (like *raka* 'shave') allow the simple one.¹⁸ According to R&R's story, the verb *elska* 'love' is not lexically reflexive. If its arguments are coindexed in a particular clause, then the predicate of that clause has to be reflexive-marked, as they call it, by a (complex) SELF reflexive like *sjálfan sig*, since the simple *sig* reflexives do not reflexive-mark predicates. In this sense, the simple reflexive *sig* and the personal pronoun *hann* are both 'pronominals', that is, they are both subject to R&R's version of principle B (this does not hold when *sig* has a non-local antecedent). Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams do not claim, however, that the children they studied have not mastered condition B (the R&R version) nor that they have not grasped the chain condition proposed by R&R and described above. Rather they suggest that the children have 'difficulty with the pragmatic rule governing coreference' (1992:410).

It is not possible to go further into the arguments presented by Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams (1992) for their analysis and the theory of pronouns and reflexives that they assume. Instead I would like to end this

¹⁸ Similarly, the fact that inherently transitive verbs in Icelandic (and Dutch, Norwegian etc.) can only take a simple reflexive and not a complex one (cf., e.g., (9.10) above) does not follow from anything under R&R's theory. They suggest that it may have something to do with economy, i.e. that 'reflexivity' of the predicate should not be marked twice, as it were, i.e. in both in the lexicon and by a SELF anaphor (1993:667n.).

overview by proposing a somewhat different account of the interaction between pronouns and reflexives. Parts of this account have been sketched before (see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991 and especially 1992) and it is partly similar to the R&R account in that it assumes a basic distinction between pronouns capable of independent reference (personal pronouns) and those that are not (reflexives), but it is different in that it relates this difference to differences in morphological feature specification of these pronouns (see also Burzio 1991).

9.2.2.4 A lexical-morphological approach

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, it seems pretty clear that the domain where pronominals are licensed is partially determined by the types of reflexive pronouns that exist in the language. The Scandinavian languages only have reflexive pronouns for 3rd person. Hence 1st and 2nd person pronouns can be used in Scandinavian in domains where 1st and 2nd person pronouns are ruled out in English. This can be seen by comparing the Icelandic examples below to their (ungrammatical) direct translations into English:

- (9.82)
- | | | | |
|----|------------|---------|------------|
| a. | Ég | rakaði | mig. |
| | I(1sg.N) | shaved | me(1sg.A) |
| b. | Þú | rakaðir | þig. |
| | you(2sg.N) | shaved | you(2sg.A) |
| c. | Við | rökuðum | okkur. |
| | we(1pl.N) | shaved | us(1pl.A) |
| | etc. | | |

Conversely, English has no reflexive 3rd person possessives but the Scandinavian languages do. Hence the (non-reflexive) possessives *his*, *her* and so on in English can be used where the non-reflexive possessives in Scandinavian cannot be used (because the reflexive ones would be required). Relevant contrasts between English and Icelandic are repeated below, but the other Scandinavian languages work like Icelandic in this respect, as we have seen (see the discussion at the beginning of 9.2.2.1). Here the Icelandic examples are bad whereas their English counterparts would be fine:¹⁹

¹⁹ To make the Icelandic examples maximally parallel to their English counterparts I use the non-default order poss+N here, whereas the default variants would be ... *bilinn hans* (lit. 'car-the his') and ... *bilinn þeirra* (lit. 'car-the their'). This does not affect the argumentation.

- (9.83) a. Jón tók hans bíl.
 John took his car
- b. Þær tóku þeirra bíl.
 they(3pl.f.) took their car
 etc.

If we assume with (pretty) standard BT that anaphors are marked [+anaphor] in the lexicon and pronominals are marked [+pronominal], we account for the interrelationship of the two as follows. First, assume some version of the standard BT principles A and B, for example as in (9.84):

- (9.84) a. A NP marked [+anaphor] must be bound in a particular domain.
 b. A NP marked [+pronominal] must be free in a particular domain.

Then assume the following interdependency between pronominals and anaphors:

- (9.85) A given pronoun, X, cannot have the feature [+pronominal] unless a corresponding pronoun has the feature [+anaphor] (where ‘corresponding’ means ‘having the same phi-features (person, number, gender . . .)’).

This would mean that 1st, 2nd and 3rd person pronouns in English would be marked [+pronominal] because English has ‘corresponding’ pronouns marked [+anaphor] (namely *myself*, *yourself*, *himself*, *herself* . . .). In Scandinavian only the 3rd person pronouns would be marked [+pronominal] because there is no [+anaphoric] element for 1st and 2nd person (no 1st and 2nd person reflexives). Conversely, Scandinavian possessive forms like Icelandic *hans* ‘his’, *hennar* ‘her’ and so on would be marked [+pronominal] because of the existence of their reflexive counterparts, but the English possessives *his*, *her* and so on would not be so marked since there are no reflexive possessives in English.

What this could mean in terms of acquisition is the following:

- (9.86) A child acquiring the pronominal system of a given language initially assumes that principle B of BT does not hold for any pronoun, i.e. the child ‘assumes’ that all pronouns have the value [– pronominal] until (s)he has found a ‘corresponding’ pronoun which obeys principle A, i.e. is marked [+anaphor].

There is, in fact, considerable evidence that something like (9.86) is correct: the so-called ‘developmental delay’ with respect to pronouns has been demonstrated in many acquisition studies (see, e.g., Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992 and references cited there).

This does not, of course, explain the semantic aspects of LDRs in Icelandic nor the fact that they need some sort of an antecedent in discourse. The last fact could be explained along the lines suggested by Burzio (1991): elements lacking almost all phi-features cannot have ‘independent reference’ even if they need not be syntactically bound. The Icelandic simple reflexive *sig* and its Scandinavian counterparts has relatively few phi-features – it is **underspecified** as it were (see Höskuldur Thráinsson 1992): it has no gender, no number and it only exists in the 3rd person (which is arguably a non-person or a default). Although that is by no means the whole story, it may be a part of it.

As a final piece of evidence for the claim that this approach is on the right track consider the following: if (a part of) the reason why the simple reflexive *sig* needs an antecedent is the fact that it has very few positive phi features (is underspecified), we might perhaps expect to find a *sig* without an antecedent in some sort of an impersonal context, since in such a context the phi features are arguably irrelevant. As has been pointed out in the literature, such examples do in fact exist (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991:75n. – for more examples and a slightly different interpretation, see Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:335n.; Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002:120, who related this to the New Passive discussed in 5.1.4 above):

- (9.87) a. Það er bara verið að raka **sig**.
 there is just been to shave REFL
 ‘Well, one is just shaving oneself.’
- b. Svo var bara drifið **sig** á ball.
 then was just driven REFL on dance
 ‘Then one just hurried to a dance.’

Obviously, a more detailed analysis of examples of this kind would be desirable (but see the proposals in Maling and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 2002).

9.2.3 *Is Icelandic a pro-drop language?*

Finally, let us return briefly to the non-overt pronouns described in section 9.1.4. As mentioned there, it has sometimes been claimed that Icelandic is a pro-drop language, perhaps together with Faroese (see especially Platzack 1987b). The proliferation of expletive (or non-referential) null elements has been a major reason for this claim. We have already seen Icelandic examples of this and a few Faroese ones can be added to refresh the reader’s memory (see Platzack 1987b; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:287). Note, however, that the overt expletive is always an option in these Faroese constructions, whereas it would not be in their Icelandic counterparts:

- (9.88) a. Í Havn regnar tað/e ofta. (Fa)
 in Tórshavn rains it/e often
 'In Torshavn it often rains.'
- b. Nú er tað/e heilt víst [at Jógvan hevurmøtt Mariu].
 now is it/e completely clear that John has met Mary
 'Now it is completely clear that John has met Mary.'
- c. Heðani var tað/e ikki langt til garðarnar.
 from-here was it/e not far to farms-the
 'From here it was not far to the farms.'
- d. eru tað/e ongantíð mýs í baðikarinum?
 are there/e never mice in bathtub-the
- e. eru tað/e komnir nakrir gestir úr Íslandi?
 are there/e come any guests from Iceland
 'Have any guests arrived from Iceland?'

Platzack wants to relate these (and other) possibilities of having empty pronominal elements to the allegedly rich verbal inflection of (Icelandic and) Faroese. As has been pointed out in recent literature (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson 2003, for instance), the Faroese verbal inflection is actually somewhat less rich than often assumed (because unstressed /i,u/ have merged in the majority of dialects), although that is perhaps not a major concern here. It is clear in any event that the differences between Icelandic, Faroese and MSc with respect to the possibilities of having overt and non-overt expletive elements in non-initial position are puzzling, and I do not know of a particularly convincing theoretical account of these differences.

As mentioned above, the variety of non-expletive (or referential) null elements in Icelandic has not been discussed as extensively in the literature. Part of the reason may be the fact that most of these arguably look more like null topics (or null themes or some such) than null subjects of the Romance type. More precisely, these null elements can only occur in initial position as shown below (and as already pointed out for some of these constructions in section 7.2.5 above – see also Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b; Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993:110; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:145ff.):

(9.89)

Elliptical subjects in coordinate structures:

- a. Þeim_i líkaði maturinn og þeir_i/e_i komu aftur daginn eftir.
 them(D) liked food-the and they/e came back day-the after
 'They liked the food and (they) came back the next day.'

- b. Þeim_i líkaði maturinn og **daginn eftir** komu þeir_i/**e*_i aftur.
 them(D) liked food-the and day-the after came they/**e* back
 ‘They liked the food and the next day they came back.’

(9.90) Ellipsis in postcard style:

- a. *e* fórum í leikhúsið í gærkvöldi.
e went to theatre-the last night
 b. *Í gærkvöldi fórum *e* í leikhúsið.
 last night went *e* to theatre-the

(9.91) Ellipsis in conversations:

- a. *e* veit það.
e know that
 b. *Það veit *e*.
 that know *e*

In addition, the subject ellipsis in Icelandic is limited to coordinated clauses and is not found in subordinate clauses. This was demonstrated for complement clauses in (9.37) (in contrast with Romance languages) and the same holds for adjunct clauses (see Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1993:109):

- (9.92) Bjarni_i flýtir sér_i til þess að hann _i/**e*_i komist fyrr heim.
 Bjarni hurries REFL in order that he/**e* gets earlier home
 ‘Bjarni hurries up so that he will sooner get home.’

Despite these restrictions, it has been argued that the empty referential elements in Icelandic are ‘syntactically real’. Thus the empty pronominal subjects can apparently play a role in agreement (see the discussion around (9.39) and (9.40)) and the empty pronominal objects can serve as antecedents for reflexives (see the discussion around (9.45) and (9.46)). As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, classifications of NPs in terms of their binding properties and the like have typically tried to include null elements, and it could be mentioned here that Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1990b) has suggested that the Icelandic null objects could fit into the extended classification of NPs proposed by Höskuldur Thráinsson (1991).

Whatever the proper account of empty referential elements in Modern Icelandic may be, it is of some interest to note that the conditions on their distribution are not the same as in Old Icelandic (or Old Norse). As documented extensively by Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir (1993; see also Höskuldur Thráinsson and Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir 1986; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993c; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1995, 2005:609, 630ff.), it was possible, for instance, to leave out the subject of a second conjunct under

coreference with a non-subject in the first one. This is no longer possible in Modern Icelandic. The following examples are modelled on Old Icelandic (or Older Icelandic) examples cited by Höskuldur Thráinsson and Thóra Björk Hjartardóttir (1986:155). Although that is not indicated here (since these are examples from older texts), all these examples would be bad in Modern Icelandic, but they were apparently fine during older stages:

- (9.93) a. ... veita okkur_i hjálp svo að e_i verðum leystir ...
 give us help so that will-be freed
 ‘... give us help so that we will be freed’
- b. Hann heggur sverðinu_i og e_i kom í þvertréð ...
 he hits sword-the(D) and came in beam-the
 ‘He hits with the sword and it hits the beam ...’
- c. Það var róið til þeirra_i og e_i voru fiskimenn ...
 there was rowed to them and were fishermen
 ‘People rowed out to them and it turned out that they were fishermen ...’
- d. Hann þrífur hornin ...og e eigast lengi við ...
 he grabs horns-the and fight(3pl.) long with
 ‘He grabs the horns and they [= he and the bull] fight for a long time ...’

In the modern language subject ellipsis is only possible under coreference with a preceding **subject**. In examples (9.93a–c) we have a null subject that is coreferential with a verbal or a prepositional object. In the d-example there is actually no overt antecedent at all. As already mentioned, corresponding examples are ungrammatical in the modern language so the conditions on subject ellipsis have obviously changed.

References

Abbreviations used in this list of references:

NELS = *Papers from the North East Conference of Linguistics* (different locations)

NLLT = *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*

NOWELE = *North-Western European Language Evolution*

WPSS = *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax* (volumes 1–27 published by the Department of Linguistics, University of Trondheim, volumes 28 and onwards by the Department of Scandinavian Languages, University of Lund)

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Index of subjects

Some abbreviations used below:

cases and case patterns: A = accusative, D = dative, G = genitive, N = nominative, AA = accusative-accusative, NA = nominative-accusative, NDA = nominative-dative-accusative, etc.

AcI = accusative with infinitive, BT = binding theory, ECM = exceptional case marking, EPP = extended projection principle, GB = Government Binding framework, IO = indirect object, ISc = Insular Scandinavian, LDR = long-distance reflexive, MSc = Mainland Scandinavian, NcI = nominative with infinitive, OI = Old Icelandic, SF = Stylistic Fronting

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