The Syntax of Icelandic

Höskuldur Thráinsson
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.

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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, Óystein, Lars-Olof, Cia, Kjartan, Gunnar Hrafn, Jónhanna, Thorbjörg and others, for creating interesting and stimulating networks in various guises and under various names; my Faroese collaborators and teachers, Zakaris, Jógván, 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 Óystein and Gunnar Hrafn for commenting on parts of it, and to my students Théódóra 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.

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Sigga 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 even-
tually finish the book.
1

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; Clausing 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 Stéfan Einarsson 1945 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 1994a.¹

¹ Icelandic 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. stępua (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. gulur 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 gula.
    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:

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<th>m.</th>
<th>f.</th>
<th>n.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nsg.</td>
<td>hest-ur-inn</td>
<td>mynd-in</td>
<td>borð-ið</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apl.</td>
<td>hest-a-na</td>
<td>mynd-ir-nar</td>
<td>borð-in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

\[(1.4) \text{gulur hani guli hani- } \text{minn guli hani}
\]

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):

\[(1.5) \text{gula } \text{borðið } \text{hið gula } \text{borðið}
\]

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:

\[(1.6) \begin{align*}
a. \ & \text{Ég horfði upp í bláan himin } \text{inn}. \\
& \text{I looked up into blue(st.A) sky-the(A)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[(1.6) \begin{align*}
b. \ & \text{Ég horfði á bláa } \text{bilinn}. \\
& \text{I looked at blue(w.A) car-the(A)} \\
\end{align*}
\]

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 næturvakt þessa víkú/víkuna ‘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.
Rauða nefið á honum glóði í myrkrinu. ‘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 bill ‘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. Hín vinsela hljómsveit/*Vinsela hljómsveitin 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 tillöguna 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 séð, 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 er ekki með sjálfrí sér.
   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.’

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

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.

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:

a. the imperative form: far ‘go’ finn ‘find’ les ‘read’

b. imperative + pronoun: far þu finn þu les þu
go you find you read you

c. the common imp. form: farðu finndu lestu
d. direct question: ferð þu? finnur þu? lest þu?
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 þu ‘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 órét, lit. ‘Do right, tolerate not injustice’, Kom, vornòtt, 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 þu og gjør 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). 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).

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 þu ‘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 þu 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 Kissock 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

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
1\text{s} & \text{m} & \text{f} \\
\text{sg.} & \text{eg} & \text{horf-i} & \text{bit} & \text{eg} & \text{horf-}\text{ð-i} & \text{beit} \\
2\text{-} & \text{þ} & \text{horf-ir} & \text{bit-ur} & \text{þ} & \text{horf-ð-ir} & \text{bei-st} \\
3\text{-} & \text{han} & \text{horf-ir} & \text{bit-ur} & \text{han} & \text{horf-ð-i} & \text{beit} \\
1\text{pl.} & \text{við} & \text{horf-um} & \text{bit-um} & \text{við} & \text{horf-ð-um} & \text{bit-um} \\
2\text{-} & \text{þið} & \text{horf-ið} & \text{bit-ið} & \text{þið} & \text{horf-ð-uð} & \text{bit-uð} \\
3\text{-} & \text{þeir} & \text{horf-a} & \text{bit-a} & \text{þeir} & \text{horf-ð-u} & \text{bit-u} \\
\end{array}
\]

The verb horfa is an example of a weak (or regular) verb and bita 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 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.
1.2.3 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 bit-a

imperatives: tala horf dæm bit

‘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

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 hafir bitið mannin* ‘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.):
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* skáppinn.
    somebody(Nsg.) opened(3sg.) cupboard-the(Asg.)
    ‘Somebody opened the cupboard.’

b. Skáppurinn *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:
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 Virnet Inc.

b. *Naglarnir framleiðast af Vírneti hf.
   nails-the manufacture-st by Virnet 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 leisið þessa bók.
    Mary has never read(sup.) this book

b. Poṣturinn 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 Gisli 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 ókomíð.
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. Ség 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 þer 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., Theóðóra 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).
a. *Haraldur er að kunna latinu. (cf. *Harold is knowing Latin.)
Harold is to know Latin.
b. *Guðrún er að vera hávaxin. (cf. *Gudrun is being tall.)
Gudrun is to be 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 Theodóra 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. (cf. Oddur is running.)
Oddur is to run.
b. ?Maria er að hlaea. (cf. Mary is laughing.)
Mary is to laugh.
c. ??Það er að rigna. (cf. It is raining.)
it is to rain.
d. *Ég var að sitta á gólfinu. (cf. I was sitting on the floor.)
I was to sit.

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

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): *Pað 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., Theodóra 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)  
\begin{align*}
a & \text{ Jón er að borða. } \\
& \text{ John is to eat(inf.)} \\
& \text{ ‘John is eating.’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
b & \text{ *Jón er borðandi. } \\
& \text{ John is eating(pres.part.)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
c & \text{ Jón er alltaf borðandi / að borða. } \\
& \text{ John is always eating(pres.part.) / to eat(inf.)} \\
& \text{ ‘John eats constantly.’}
\end{align*}

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)  
\begin{align*}
a & \text{ María kemur. } \\
& \text{ Mary comes(pres.)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
b & \text{ María mun koma. } \\
& \text{ Mary will come(inf.)}
\end{align*}

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)  
\begin{align*}
A & \text{ Hefur einhver komið í þessa tíma sem þú eft með? } \\
& \text{ has anybody come in these classes that you are with} \\
& \text{ ‘Has anybody been coming to these classes that you are giving?’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
B & \text{ Já, María kemur/þmun koma. } \\
& \text{ yes Mary comes/ will come} \\
& \text{ ‘Yes, Mary (always, usually) comes.’}
\end{align*}
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 *ýfrra* ‘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) CP
   Spec
   C'
   Spec
   C
   I'
   Spec
   I
   Spec
   AdvP
   VP
   V'
   Spec
   V
   NP

a. Margir höfðu t₁ v aldrei t₁ lokið verkefninu.
   many had never finished the assignment

b. Það höfðu aldrei margir lokið verkefninu.
   there had never many finished the assignment.

‘There were never many people who had finished the assignment.’
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) a. Syntactic structures are typically binary branching (see, e.g., Kayne 1984 and later work).

b. 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.

c. 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.

d. The basic position of the subject is inside the verb phrase (i.e. in SpecVP), i.e. the position occupied by the quantifier *margir ‘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 have never 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 *margir ‘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. *Dó *munu aldrei *margir [hafa [lokð verkefninu]].

   there will never many have finished the assignment

   ‘It will presumably never be the case that many have finished the assignment.’

b. *Dó *munu aldrei [hafa [margir lokð verkefninu]].

   there will never many have finished the assignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hvort</th>
<th>María</th>
<th>hefði</th>
<th>ekki</th>
<th>tₗ</th>
<th>lesið</th>
<th>bókina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>whether</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>tₗ</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>the book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bókina</td>
<td>hefur</td>
<td>hun,</td>
<td>ekki</td>
<td>tₗ</td>
<td>lesið</td>
<td>tₗ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td>has</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘She has not read the book.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Maríai</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maríai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 (*ti*) 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 (*ti*) 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 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)).

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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>subord.</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>v</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>main</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Margir</td>
<td>hóðu</td>
<td>aldrei</td>
<td>lokið</td>
<td>verkefninu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>many</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>finished</td>
<td>the assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Það</td>
<td>hóðu</td>
<td>aldrei</td>
<td>margir</td>
<td>lokið</td>
<td>verkefninu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>there</td>
<td>had</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>finished</td>
<td>the assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>hvort</td>
<td>María,</td>
<td>hefði</td>
<td>ekki</td>
<td>lesið</td>
<td>bókina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whether</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>read</td>
<td>the book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Bókina</td>
<td>hefur</td>
<td>hún</td>
<td>ekki</td>
<td>lesið</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

\[(2.4)\] 
\[F = \text{front position} \quad v = \text{finite verb position} \quad k = \text{conjunction position} \]
\[n = \text{subject position} \quad V = \text{non-finite verb} \quad a = \text{clausal adverbial} \]
\[N = \text{complement position} \]

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:\(^4\)

\[
\begin{align*}
(2.4) & \quad \text{a. Maria} \quad \text{elskar} \quad \text{Harald.} \\
& \quad \text{Mary(N) loves Harold(A)} \\
& \quad \text{b. Haraldur} \quad \text{elskar} \quad \text{Mariu.} \\
& \quad \text{Harold(N) loves Mary(A)} \\
& \quad \text{c. Harald} \quad \text{elskar} \quad \text{Maria.} \\
& \quad \text{Harold(A) loves Mary(N)} \\
& \quad \text{‘Harold, Mary loves.’}
\end{align*}
\]

Although *Maria* 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.

\[
\begin{align*}
(\text{i}) & \quad \text{Jóhannes} \quad \text{elskar} \quad \text{Sif.} \\
& \quad \text{Jóhannes(N/A) loves Sif(N/A)} \\
& \quad \text{‘Jóhannes loves Sif/Jóhannes, Sif loves.’}
\end{align*}
\]

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 Marı́a 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 Marı́a elskar.  
Harold(A) has Mary(N) loved.  
    ‘Harold, Mary has loved.’

b. *Harald hefur elskar Marı́a.  
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 Marı́a elskar. (compare (2.4c))

b. *Harald Marı́a hefur elskar. (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

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\(^5\) As discussed by various linguists (see, e.g., Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1984b; Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1985, 1990a; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1986a, and Höskuldur Thráínsson 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 þessa mynd í fyrra.
    some students(N) had never seen this film(A) last year

    b. Í fyrra höfðu nokkrir stúdentar aldrei 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 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 söu 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 söu 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 Reykjavik last year
b. ?Nokkrir stu´dentar sáu þessa mynd í fyrra í Reykjavı´k.
   last year in Reykjavik

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):

(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) a. 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)?

b. 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’)?

c. 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).

d. 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).

e. 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 don’t know 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 been some foreigner in 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’

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 sumarhúsínunokkrir gestírrá Færeyjum
   ‘Last year some guests from the Faroe Islands were in the summer house.’

b. Í fyrra þásu bókinaþrér erlendir bókmennagagnýrnendur
   ‘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

\[(2.20) \]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{hvort } \text{Jón } \text{hefði aldrei [lesið bókina].} \\
& \quad \text{whether John had never read the book}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{hvort } \text{Jón lasi aldrei [__ bókina]} \\
& \quad \text{whether John read never the book}
\end{align*}\]

\[\ldots \text{whether John never read the book.} \]

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):

\[(2.21) \]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Hefur Jón ekki [lesið bókina]?} \\
& \quad \text{Hasn’t John read the book}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Las Jón ekki [__ bókina]?} \\
& \quad \text{Didn’t John read the book}
\end{align*}\]

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.
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 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...]
  ‘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 hefur* ... (*‘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 hefur þeir* ... (*lit. ‘and that had they . . .’*), has a complementizer and a V1 order and it sounds quite bad. The third variant, *og þeir hefur* ... (*‘and they had . . .’*), has no complementizer but a subject-verb order and it is fine. The fourth variant, *og hefur 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 practice(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; æfir sig] verður Jóni góður.
   if he practises self becomes John good

   b. *[Ef Jóni æfir sig] verður hanni góður.
   if John practises self becomes he good
   ‘If John practises, he will be good.’

   c. *[Æfi hann; sig] verður Jóni 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 bök ‘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. Óg las þrjár bækur.
I read(past) never three books
‘I never read three books.’

b. Óg 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. Óg talaði aldrei við Mariú.
I spoke never to Mary
‘I never spoke to Mary.’

b. *Óg talaði við Mariú aldrei.

c. *Óg talaði Mariú aldrei við.
I spoke Mary never to
‘I never spoke to Mary.’

d. Óg talaði aldrei við hana.
I spoke never to her
‘I never spoke to her.’

e. *Óg talaði við hana aldrei.

f. *Óg 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):

\[(2.31)\]
\[
a. \text{Mér líkaði aldrei þessi bíll.} \\
\text{me(D) liked never this car(N)} \\
\text{‘I never liked this car.’}
\]
\[
b. \text{Mér líkaði þessi bíll aldrei.} \\
\text{me(D) liked this car(N) never} \\
\text{‘I never liked this car.’}
\]

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):

\[(2.32)\]
\[
a. \text{Ég skrifaði niður símanúmerið.} \\
\text{I wrote down the phone number} \\
\text{‘I wrote the phone number down} \\
\text{‘I wrote down it} \\
\text{‘I wrote it down}
\]

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:

\[(i)\]
\[
a. \text{Ég haði skrifað niður símanúmerið/símanúmerið niður.} \\
\text{I had written down the phone number/the phone number down}
\]

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. \text{Ég haði skrifað niður símanúmerið/símanúmerið niður.} \\
\text{I had written down the phone number/the phone number down}
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.*
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 hafið 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 dår.
therefore lives Sten not there

b. Därför bor Sten dår 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.

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 adjunc-


tion. 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; Hóskuldur 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 (greinileg ‘clearly’), modal adverbs (lı´klega ‘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: aldreí ‘never’, augljoslega ‘obviously’, ekki ‘not’, greinileg ‘obviously’, sennileg ‘probably’, sýnileg ‘evidently’, trúleg ‘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’, klaufaleg ‘clumsily’, karuleysleg ‘carlessly’, nákvaemleg ‘accurately’, vandleg ‘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: héð ‘here’, hérna ‘here’, inni ‘inside’, í fyrra ‘last year’, í 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))

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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 í 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:

   John has never/obviously/not/obviously/probably/evidently/probably finished this
   c. Aldrei/augljo’slega/ekki/greinilega/synnilega/trúlega hefur Jón lokið þessu.

(2.41) Manner adverbs:

   c. ?*Hratt/klaufalega/kæruleysislega/nákvæmlega/vandlega hefur Jón lokið þessu. 14

(2.42) Place and time adverbs:


(2.43) V3 adverbs:

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

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
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 . . .

\[ \text{I finally found this} \]

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).

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:  

(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 topologicalized 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.
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):

(2.47) a. CP
    ┌────────────────┐
    │                 │
    │ C              │
    │     Spec      │
    │     ┌─────────┐  │
    │     │          │
    │     C'       │
    │     └─────────┘
    │           Spec
    │           ┌───┐
    │           │ I' │
    │           │    │
    │           └───┘
    │ VP
    │   Advp  

b. at Bo har t v ikke . . .
   that Bo has not

c. at denne bog har Bo v ikke . . .
   that this book has Bo not

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 Ø indicates an empty complementizer position and *Ø that it cannot be empty):

(2.49) a. Karen siger at/Ø Peter ikke har læst den bog.
Karen says that/Ø Peter not has read that book
‘Karen says that Peter hasn’t read that book.’

b. Karen siger at/ *Ø den bog har Peter ikke læst.
Karen says that/ *Ø that book has Peter not read

c. Karen siger at/??Ø Peter har ikke læst den bog.
Karen says that/??Ø 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):
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. Óg held [að/Ø þeir hafi ekki svikið hana]
I think that/Ø they have not betrayed her

b. Óg 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

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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) Óg 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 Rognvaldsson 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** hofðu aldrei lokið þvi. (‘Many had never finished it’)  
b. Hana hefur hún ekkki lesið it(A). (‘Has she not read it?’)  
c. hvort María hefði ekkki lesið hana. (‘Whether Mary had not read it?’)  
d. hvort það hafa einherjir ekkki lokið þvi (‘Whether there have some not finished it’)  
e. það hofðu aldrei margir lokið þvi. (‘There had never many finished it’)  
f. hvort það hefur einher verið í þvi. (‘Whether there has somebody been in it’)  
g. hvort það hefur verið einher í þvi. (‘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)  
a. The sentence-initial subject in (2.53a) **Margir** hofðu 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).

b. 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).

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.)

d. 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 einherjir** . . . (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). 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):

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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:

a. 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?

b. 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?

c. 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;

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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

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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 Eirikur Rögnvaldsson and Höskuldur Þráinsson (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 eldhúsiniu. (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/a 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 Hóskuldur 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:

\[(2.61)\]
\[
a. \text{Definiteness of the subject.} \\
b. \text{Quantification of the subject.} 
\]

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:

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

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. Hóskuldur 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 alltæf ‘always’ in their default position should be inside the VP, whereas one that follows sentence adverbs such as liklega ‘probably’ may not be.\textsuperscript{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 hōðu stelpnar auðvitað aldrei lesið þessa bók.
   ‘Last year the girls obviously had never read this book.’
   b. ?Í fyrra hōðu auðvitað stelpnar aldrei lesið þessa bók.

(2.65) a. (?)Í fyrra hōðu einhverjar stelpur auðvitað aldrei lesið þessa bók.
   ‘Last year some girls obviously had never read this book.’
   b. Í fyrra hōðu auðvitað einhverjar stelpur aldrei lesið þessa bók.

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.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Recall also that adverbs like auðvitað ‘obviously’, liklega ‘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’, alltæf ‘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/liklega/sennilega trúir þessu.
   he obviously/probably believes this
   ‘He probably believes this.’
   b. *Hann aldrei/alltæf trúir þessu.
   he never/always believes this

\textsuperscript{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 Gíslason 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 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 høfðu aldrei [VP margir lokið verkefninu]

there had never many finished the assignment
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 Rògnvaldsson 1983; Hòskuldur 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 hòfðu aldrei [margir lokið verkefninu]  
there had never many finished the assignment  
‘It was never the case that many had finished the assignment.’

b. Það munu aldrei [margir 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 [margir 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:

(2.72)  
a. IP
   
   Spec
   I
   |  
   I
   |  VP
   |  Spec
   |  V
   |  V
   |  V
   |  NP

   Það  munu  margir  hafa  lokið  verkefninu
   there  will  many  have  finished  the  assignment
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 obligatory 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)  
\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Jón hefur} \text{ aldrei} [\text{lesið bókina}]. \\
& \text{John has} \text{ never} \text{ read the book.} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Jón mun} \text{ aldrei [hafa [lesið bókina].} \\
& \text{John will} \text{ never have} \text{ read the book.} \\
\text{c. } & \text{*Jón mun [hafa aldrei [lesið bókina] ]} \\
& \text{John will have never read the book.}
\end{align*}

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

Information about Ålvdalsmålet 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Da</th>
<th>Ic</th>
<th>Old Sw (14th cent.)</th>
<th>Mid. Sw (16th cent.)</th>
<th>Ålvdalsmålet (Sw dial.)</th>
<th>Hallingmål (No dial.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 sg. pres.</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-i</td>
<td>kraf-er</td>
<td>kräv-er</td>
<td>hör-er</td>
<td>höyr-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-ir</td>
<td>kraf-er</td>
<td>kräv-er</td>
<td>hör-er</td>
<td>höyr-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-ir</td>
<td>kraf-er</td>
<td>kräv-er</td>
<td>hör-er</td>
<td>höyr-e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pl. pres.</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-um</td>
<td>kraf-um</td>
<td>kräv-a</td>
<td>hör-um</td>
<td>höyr-æ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-ir</td>
<td>kraf-in</td>
<td>kräv-a</td>
<td>hör-ir</td>
<td>höyr-æ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hører</td>
<td>heyr-a</td>
<td>kraf-i-a</td>
<td>kräv-a</td>
<td>hör-a</td>
<td>höyr-æ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 sg. past</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-i</td>
<td>kraf-p-i</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-e</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-ir</td>
<td>kraf-p-i</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-e</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-ir</td>
<td>kraf-p-i</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-e</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pl. past</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-um</td>
<td>kraf-p-um</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-um</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-uð</td>
<td>kraf-p-in</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-ir</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hor-te</td>
<td>heyr-ð-u</td>
<td>kraf-p-u</td>
<td>kräv-de</td>
<td>hör-d-e</td>
<td>höyr-dæ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we see that in Icelandic, Old Swedish and Ålvdalsmålet 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 Ålvdalsmål 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’

b. Vi va’ bare tre støkka før det at han Nilsen kom ikkje. (Troms)
    ‘There were only three of us because Nilsen didn’t come.’

c. Han kom så seint at dørvakta vilde ikkje slappe han inn. (Troms)
    ‘He came so late that door-guard-the would not let him in.’
d. Hann spyr hví tað eru íkkki fleiri tilitkar samkomur. (Fa)
   ‘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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>present</th>
<th>past</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 sg.</td>
<td>hoyr-i</td>
<td>hoyr-di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hoyr-ir</td>
<td>hoyr-di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hoyr-ir</td>
<td>hoyr-di</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pl.</td>
<td>hoyr-a</td>
<td>hoyr-du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>hoyr-a</td>
<td>hoyr-du</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hoyr-a</td>
<td>hoyr-du</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Hrafnkelssaga sem hann ekki hafði lesið.
       it was Hrafnkel’s saga that he not had read
       ‘It was the Saga of Hrafnkel 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)): 
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 íkkj eru fleiri ti líkar samkomur. (Fa) he asks why there not are more such meetings

b. … at dæm íkkje mátte klíve op på det taket (Troms) ‘that they not could climb up on that roof-the’

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 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 Mariu.
    John addressed not Mary(A)

b. Jón ávarpaði Mariu ekki __
   ‘John didn’t address Mary.’
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 did not steal the book.’

   b. Ég sakna þessarar stelpu ekki __.
   ‘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. Sjórinn 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. Sjórinn svipti konuna ekki __
   ‘The ocean didn’t deprive the woman of her husband.’

   c. *Sjórinn 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.
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)

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 læste inte den. (Sw)

(2.90) a. Nemandinn las hana ekki ___ (Ic)
    b. Studenten læste den ikke ___ (Da)
    c. Studenten læste den inte ___ (Sw)

‘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):\textsuperscript{36}

(2.92)  a. Hún sá \textit{mig} / \textit{MIG} / \[mig og \textit{þig}] / \[þennan á hjólinu] ekki ___ (Ic)

b. Hun så \textit{meg} / *\textit{MEG} / *\{meg og deg; / *\textit{ham på sykkelen\} ikke ___ (No)

‘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 \textit{bókina} ikki ___ (Fa)

b. *Næmingurin las ikki \textit{hana}.

c. Næmingurin las \textit{hana} ikki ___

‘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.\textsuperscript{37} Besides, it seems that it is

\textsuperscript{36} The shift of light locative adverbs mentioned in section 2.1.5 above (Icelandic \textit{þar}, Swedish \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{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 HöskuldurThráinsson (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 \textit{is} preserved in the passive of some verbs (e.g. \textit{biða} ‘wait for’, \textit{dugna} ‘help’, \textit{takka} ‘thank’, \textit{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 \textit{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. mer 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 mær/ *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 dej snuten körkortet 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 fæinir 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 fæinir fyrsta árs nemendur as can be seen from the direct word order variant Ekki nema fæinir 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)
   ‘Then all the boys sometimes painted the cars red.’

   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 póntuðu 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 stuðentar fyrir prófíð
   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
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 discus-
sion in Bobaljík and Jonas 1996; Jonas 1996a, b; Bobaljík 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:  

\[(2.97) \quad \text{a. If NPOS is movement to SpecAgrOP, a position lacking in MSc, what kind of movement is involved in the pronominal OS found in MSc?} \]

\[ \text{b. If NPOS and pronominal OS are different kinds of movements, how come they share a number of properties, such as only applying to verbal objects and being restricted by verb movement (Holmberg’s Generalization) and definiteness?} \]

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

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

\[(i) \quad \]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

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:

\[(ii) \quad \]a. Guðrún vann Pétur ekki. (Ic)

b. *Guri slo Per ikke. (No)
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 höt þin ___. (OIC)
   not grieve me threats 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 Marı́a 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 __]?

why read students-the it not

‘Why didn’t the students read it?’

b. *Varför har studenterna den inte [VP läst __]?

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 Rógnvaldsson 1987b; Jóhannes Gíslí 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 Thrainsson 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. 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 Thrainsson 2001a:194–5). 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 __ (Sw)
   I gave it not Elsa __

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

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 ekkî 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 þrýr 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 køper muligens en i morgen.
but I buy possibly one tomorrow

b. *... men jeg køper 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 eithvað?
have you not something

b. *Átt þú eithvað 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 Strið og frið?
   knows John War and Peace
   ‘Does John know War and Peace?’

a. Já, hann les Strið og frið alltaf __ í frínu sinu.
   yes he reads W&P always in vacation-the his
   ‘Yes, he always reads W&P in his vacation.’

b. ?Já, hann les alltaf Strið og frið í frínu sinu.
   yes he reads always W&P in vacation-the his

(2.108) Context B: Hvað gerir Jón í frínu sinu?
   what does John in vacation-the his(refl.)
   ‘What does John do in his vacation?’

a. *Hann les Strið og frið alltaf __
   he reads W&P always

b. Hann les alltaf Strið 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 þrjar bækur ‘three books’ as pointed out above. Relevant examples are repeated here for convenience:

(2.29) a. Ég las aldrei þrjar bækur.
   I read(past) never three books
   ‘I never read three books.’

b. Ég las þrjar 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 Gisli Jónsson 2005b:444–6), the fronted constituent þrjar 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 Gisli 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 lengstú 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 interpre-
tation) and word order.

As Diesing recognizes (see especially Diesing 1997:419ff.), the Diesing and 
Jelinek approach to Scandinavian OS faces a disturbing complication, how-
ever: 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 [víðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu. (Ic)  
   ‘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 [víðtöl við Blair] alltaf __ klukkan ellefu.  
   ‘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 [víðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu.  
   ‘They have always shown interviews with Blair at 11 o’clock.’ (ambiguous)

   ‘They have interviews with Blair always shown at 11 o’clock.’

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 [víðtöl við Blair] klukkan ellefu. (cf. (2.110a))  
   ‘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):

\[(2.112) \text{Íðau sýna } [\text{vítötl víð Blair}], \text{ alltaf ___ klukkan ellefu. (cf. (2.110b))} \]

\[\text{They show interviews with Blair always clock eleven \text{``They always show interviews with Blair at 11 o’clock.’}}\]

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:

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

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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{ekki} ‘not’ in Icelandic and its counterparts in Norwegian and Swedish can either function as a head or as a maximal projection):

\begin{itemize}
  \item The analysis of finite verb movement offered by Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998 crucially depends on this aspect of adverbial adjunction in Icelandic.
\end{itemize}
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 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 he come up on roof
   ‘What on earth is John doing on the roof!’

   b. *Hefur ekki Jón lesið bökina?*
   has not he 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 bökina?*
   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.
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

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:

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 preposi-
      tional phrases but OS does not.  

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, 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):  

47 Jóhannes Gíslason (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 Gíslason
(1996). But it can be shown that Negative Scrambling also applies in non-
auxiliary constructions, as pointed out by Jóhannes Gíslason (data originally from
Eiríkur Røgnvaldsson 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.
Jóhannes Gíslí 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 Gíslí 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 ymsar bækur.
   John has read various books

   b. Jón hefur ymsar 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 Gíslí 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:

\[
\text{(2.123) a. } \ldots \text{ FP Spec AdvP } \quad \text{b. } \ldots \text{ FP Spec AdvP } \quad \text{FP AdvP FP}.
\]

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 exclamatives (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 ennþa´ mórg leikrit áhorfendum nútimans.  
   ‘For this reason, many plays still provoke today’s audiences.’

b. Þa´ ætla margir málvísindamenn vonandi að koma.  
   ‘Then many linguists hopefully plan to come.’

Under a Cinque-type analysis, an adverb like ennþa´ ‘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 mórg 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’, ennþa´ ‘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. 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’, aldi ‘never’, and so on, then it must be outside the VP, and I have not seen any reason to revise this assumption.

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).
3

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 þrîr íslensku málfraðingar hafa skrifað um þetta.

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:

(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 hinn = ‘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 himn 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.
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 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:

\[(3.7)\]

\[afí/*afínn minn mamma/*mammáinn mín bróðir/*bróðirinn mín kona/kónan mín ‘my granddad’ ‘my mom’ ‘my brother’ ‘my wife’\]

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

Similarly, proper names only exceptionally take the definite article:

\[(3.8)\]

\[a. Hér búa tveir Jónar. Annar Jóninn er frá Húsavík. ‘Two Johns live here. One of the Johns is from Husavik.’\]

\[b. Hann bjó með Helgi þegar hann var á Helgunní. ‘He lived with Helga when he was on the Helga.’\]

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:

\[(3.9)\]

\[impossible: contrastive (at best): default: questionable: noun(G) + def.noun noun(G) + noun noun + noun(G) def.noun + noun(G)\]

\[*stelpunnar bókin ?stelpunnar bók bók stelpunnar ?bókin stelpunnar girl-the(G) book-the girl-the(G) book book girl-the(G) book-the girl-the(G)\]
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:

\[(3.10)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>impossible:</th>
<th>contrastive:</th>
<th>default:</th>
<th>formal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>name(G) + def.noun</td>
<td>name(G) + noun</td>
<td>def.noun + pron. + name(G)</td>
<td>noun + name(G)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Jóns bók in
J’s(G) book-the
*ubba bók in
dad’s(G) book-the

in | in | in
---|---|---
Jóns bók | bók hans Jóns | bók Jóns
J’s(G) book | ‘John’s book’ | ‘John’s book’
pabba bók | bók hans pabba | bók pabba
dad’s(G) 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

\[(3.11)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hann pabbi</th>
<th>hún mamma</th>
<th>hann bróðir minn</th>
<th>hún María</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he dad</td>
<td>she mom</td>
<td>he brother my</td>
<td>she Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘dad’</td>
<td>‘mom’</td>
<td>‘my brother’</td>
<td>‘Mary’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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).
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 Maríá* ‘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 Maríá 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 *mínahans.* (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
Here the possessive constructions involve the inflecting and agreeing 1st person possessive pronoun minn ‘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 min um íslenska setningafráði 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 min um íslenska setningafráði?
    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. *þækkinn 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. *þakhússins 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. 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:

(3.18)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>colloquial</th>
<th>more formal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. þakið á húsinu sætin í bilnum þak hússins sæti bilsins</td>
<td>roof-the on house-the(D) seats-the in car-the(D) roof house-the(G) seats car-the(G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. hárið á henni tennurnar í henni hár hennar tennur hennar</td>
<td>hair-the on her teeth-the in her(D) hair her(G) teeth her(G)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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 mit (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.’
As seen here, there is no general ‘possessive preposition’ in Icelandic on a par with English *of*, for instance. 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)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>formal:</th>
<th>dialectal:</th>
<th>default:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. bók</td>
<td>bókin</td>
<td>bókin</td>
<td>hennar Margrétar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margrétar</td>
<td>Margrétar</td>
<td>her(G) Margret(G)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Margret’s book’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. bók pabba</td>
<td>bókin pabba</td>
<td>bókin hans pabba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pabba</td>
<td>book-the</td>
<td>book-the</td>
<td>his(G) dad(G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘dad’s book’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>poetic:</th>
<th>formal:</th>
<th>colloquial:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. um hálshonum</td>
<td>um hálshans</td>
<td>um hálshinn á honum</td>
<td>'around his neck'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘around his neck’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. í hjartá þér</td>
<td>í hjarta þinnu í hjartánu í þér</td>
<td>in heart your(poss.) in heart-the in you</td>
<td>'in your heart'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 meir* ‘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. Hjartar 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.’

    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

   John picked up the book

c. *Jón las ekki hana.
   J. read not it.

   *Jón tók upp hana.
   John picked up it

d. Jón las hana ekki.
   J. read it not

   Jón tók hana upp.
   John picked it up
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
   ‘John talked not to the women.’

b. *Jón talaði við konurnar ekki.
   *Jón hélt hjá systrunum til.
   Jón stayed with the sisters.
   ‘John stayed with the sisters.’ [e.g., had room and board there]

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.’

   *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’

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):

    ‘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 máflutningsrétindunum.
    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 bjørnýrið.
    the farmer gave the king(D) the bear(A)
    ‘The farmer gave the king(D) the bear(A).’

    Bóndinn gaf bjørnýrið konunginum.
    ‘The farmer gave the bear to the king.’

b. Hjúkrunarkonan síndi foreldrunum ungboðin.
    the nurse showed the parents(D) the babies(A)
    ‘The nurse showed the parents the babies.’
The nurse showed the babies to the parents.

The ocean deprived the woman of her husband.

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 bjarndyr konunginum.
    ‘The farmer gave a bear to the king.’

b. ??Sjórinn svipti manninum konuna
    [gömlu konuna sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið].
    ‘The sea deprived of her husband
    the old woman who everybody felt so sorry for.’

c. (?)Eg gaf bókina Jóni.
    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). 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 the bear
    *Bóndinn gaf bjarndýrið honum.
    the farmer gave the bear him

b. Bóndinn gaf honum það.
    the farmer gave him it
    *Bóndinn gaf það honum.

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.\textsuperscript{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; Vangsnes 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)):

\[(3.29) \quad [NP \quad QP \quad DP \quad NumP \quad AP \quad N] \]

\[
\text{allir þessir þrír íslensku málfraðingar}
\]

\[
\text{all these three Icelandic linguists}
\]

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\textsuperscript{-}-schema of Chomsky 1986a and much later work) this kind of analysis is

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

(3.30) $\begin{array}{l}
\text{QP} \\
\quad \text{Q} \\
\quad \text{DP} \\
\quad \text{D} \\
\quad \text{NumP} \\
\quad \text{Num} \\
\quad \text{AP} \\
\quad \text{A} \\
\quad \text{NP} \\
\quad \text{N} \\
\end{array}$

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 íslenskr . . . ‘three Icelandic . . .’) but adjectives cannot be followed by NumPs (*íslenskr 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 málfraðingar
   these three Icelandic linguists

b. þessir íslensku málfraðingar
   Dem. Adj. Noun

c. þessir málfraðingar
   Dem. Noun

(3.33) a. *íslensku þrír þessir málfraðingar
   Icelandic three these linguists

b. *íslensku þessir málfraðingar
   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; Vangsnes 1999, 2001, 2004):

(3.34) a. íslensku bækurnar þríjárnar
   Icelandic books-the three
   ‘the three Icelandic books’

b. íslensku bækurnar mínars
   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 [málfraðinga].
I know linguists(A)  
\(b. \) Ég þekki [islenska málfraðinga]
I know Icelandic(A) linguists(A)  
\(c. \) Ég þekki [þrjá íslenska málfraðinga]
I know three(A) Icelandic(A) linguists(A)  
\(d. \) Ég þekki [þessa þrjá íslensku málfraðinga]
I know these(A) three(A) Icelandic(A) linguists(A)  
\(e. \) Ég þekki [alla þessa þrjá íslensku málfraðinga]
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)  
\(a. \) Málfraðingar koma oft til Íslands.
linguists (Npl.m.) come often to Iceland
‘Linguists often come to Iceland.’  
\(b. \) Allir þessir þrír málfraðingar 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)  
\(a. \) Málfraðingum leiðist í bókmenntafíðum.
linguists(Dpl.m.) get-bored in literature-classes
‘Linguists get bored in literature classes.’  
\(b. \) Öllum þessum þremur málfraðingum 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 málfraðingar eru gáfaðir.  
all Icelandic(Npl.indef.) linguists(Npl.indef.) are smart(Npl.m.)

b. Allir þessir (þrír) íslensku málfraðingar 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.
3.2.1.1 The position of determiners and the nature of definite NPs

Under an Abney-type analysis (1987), there is supposedly some parallelism between the functional categories associated with the clause (such as C and I (and subparts of I like AgrP and TP)) on the one hand and the categories associated with the NP. As Abney was concentrating on English, he was not too concerned with agreement phenomena and he did not have to worry about different positions of determiners. As soon as one looks at languages like Icelandic, on the other hand, various additional considerations need to be taken into account.

First, the definite article in Icelandic is usually suffixed, although Icelandic also has a free-standing article in adjectival constructions. The two are in complementary distribution in Icelandic, however (no ‘double definiteness’, as remarked above):

(3.38) gula borðið hið gula borð *hið gula borð-ið
yellow table-the the yellow table the yellow table-the

An obvious way of accounting for this in a generative framework is to assume that the article is ‘base generated’ in one of the positions and then, under certain conditions, moved to the other. Since it is by no means obvious how to represent a post-nominal article in an underlying structure, Friðrik Magnússon (1984) suggested that the Icelandic definite article was generated in the pre-adjectival position and then moved to the position following the noun (a move reminiscent of the so-called affix-hopping suggested in early generative accounts of morphology). But since this kind of movement would involve ‘lowering’ if one assumes a binary-branching structure of the kind under discussion here, Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson suggested instead (inspired by Delsing 1993a) that it is the noun that moves to the determiner position, illustrating the movement as follows (1993a:180):

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

As Halldór points out, this movement could then be analysed as an adjunction of a lexical head (i.e. the noun) to a functional head (i.e. the determiner), which is the same kind of movement as the V-to-I movement discussed above.

This kind of analysis has some interesting consequences. First, it forced Halldór to assume a structure like the following for the type of extended NP under discussion (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1993a:178):
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 *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):

\[(3.41) \quad \text{hin þrju´ gulu borð gulu borðin þrjú *þrju´ gulu borðin} \]

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 (*gulu 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):

\[(3.42) \quad \text{ADV ofsalega} \quad \text{gult} \quad \text{borð} \quad \text{extremely yellow table} \]

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):

\[(3.43) \quad \text{hið ofsalega gula borð ofsalega gula borðið} \]

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 tímann.
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 longu slöngur]
the three(G) metre(G) long hoses
b. [DP [þriggja metra longu slöngur]i -(hi)nar [NP tl]
‘the three metre long hoses-the’
c. Þetta er ofsalega gult borð.
this is extremely yellow table
d. Ofsalega er þetta ____ gult borð!
‘extremely is this 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 ofsálega 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 adjunctions 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
   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 Boškovic 2005). The kind of fronting mentioned in the text also occurs in contexts like the following (cf. also Eiríkur Rógnvaldsson 1996b; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:135):

(i) a. Hann söng hraðilega illa.
    he sang terribly badly

    b. Hraðilega 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 NPs\textsuperscript{18} and PPs as complements:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(3.46)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Hún er lík Haraldí.
\begin{itemize}
\item she is similar Harold(D)
\end{itemize}
\textit{‘She resembles Harold.’}
\item b. Hann er hræðdur við Virginíu.
\begin{itemize}
\item he is afraid of Virginia(A)
\end{itemize}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

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:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(3.47)]
\begin{enumerate}
\item *hið borð borðið
\begin{itemize}
\item the table table-the
\end{itemize}
\end{enumerate}
\end{enumerate}

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.\textsuperscript{19} Unless the child

\begin{itemize}
\item In Old Norse one can find genitive complements of adjectives of the following type:
\item Equivalent examples are only found in fixed expressions in the modern language (e.g. \textit{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.
\item 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
\end{itemize}
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:\(^{21}\)

\[
(3.48) \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{DP} \\
\mid \\
\text{D'} \\
\mid \\
\text{D} \\
\text{hesten} \\
\text{horse-the}
\end{array} \quad \begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\mid \\
\text{N'} \\
\mid \\
\text{N} \\
\text{hest} \\
\text{‘horse’}
\end{array}
\]

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 -\textit{en} in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, -\textit{inn} in Icelandic) has a different categorial status in the Scandinavian languages. Thus Julien (2005) proposes that Danish -\textit{en} is a D-head whereas, say, the Norwegian -\textit{en} is not. In a similar vein, Vangsnes (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 Vangsnes.
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’):

\[(3.49)\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Icelandic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The free-standing definite article and the suffixed definite article are in complementary distribution</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. When no adjective is present, only postnominal definiteness marking is possible.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*

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 *røde 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 analyze definite nouns in Icelandic as DPs. The problem with that is that H&M’s account of the ungrammaticality of *røde 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, 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 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 bortskömd/bortskömare flicka lit. ‘a more spoiled/spoileder girl’ (cf. Holmes and Hinchliffe 1994:111).

23 Ignoring exclamatives like Danish Lille du! ‘Poor you!’ (lit. ‘Little you!’), Aumingjá þú! ‘Poor you!’, as pointed out to me by Vangsnes (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 hinn ‘the other’ with the definite article in Icelandic (cf. also Friðrik Magnússon 1984:96):

(3.52)  

(a) sú gamla kona  
that old woman  
(b) hinn 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 hinn ‘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 hinn and the demonstrative hinn above). Note in passing that the free-standing article hinn 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)  
which book want-you  
‘Which book do you want?’  
(b) Den/?Denne gulur.  
the/this yellow  
‘The yellow one.’  

(b) ??Hina/Pá/Pessa gulur.  
??the/that/this yellow  
‘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. *det stora hus det stora huset *det hus *det huset
   the big house   the big house-the   the house   the house-the
   ‘the big house’
b. ?*detta stora hus detta stora huset ?*detta hus detta huset
   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:

(3.54)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Icelandic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>demonstrative pronouns can be used with an indefinite noun (type: *detta hus, þetta hús)</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
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 hú´s, 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 hu´sið, 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 hu´sið, 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 hu´sið, 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 hú´s (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 hú´s) 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 himn ‘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 þinar þrjár nýju kenningar
    all your three new theories

c. *allar hinar þinar þrjár nýju kenningar
    all the your three new theories

d. *allar þinar 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) \[ [DP hið [NP borð]] \rightarrow [DP borði -(h)ið [NP t]] \]
    the table table-the

Now recall that the movement involved is supposed to move (head-adjointed) adjectives together with the nouns, accounting for pairs like the following:
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 kenningar 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 minar
    these four books my

b. þessar bækur minar fjórar
    these books my four

c. *þessar bækur fjórar minar
    these books four my
The distributional similarities and differences between the possessive pronouns (minn ‘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 þinar
    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 Mariu
    all these three new theories(pl.f.) Mary(G)
 d. allar þessar þrjár nýju kenningar málfraðingsins
    all these three new theories linguists-the(G)

(3.64) a. allar þinar 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 Mariu þrjár nýju kenningar
    all Mary(G) three new theories(pl.f.)
 d. *allar málfraðingsins þrjár nýju kenningar28
    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 (Mariu) nor definite common nouns (málfraðingsins). This is something that any analysis of possessive needs to account for. Halldór Árman 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 prenominal 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. konan þarna [með hattinn] bı ´ll [konunnar þarna [með hattinn]]  
    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. hún þarna [með hattinn] bı ´ll [hennar þarna [með hattinn]]  
    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. þu´ þarna [með hattinn] *bı ´ll [þinn þarna [með hattinn]]  
    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. mitt hús hús mitt hús mitt  
   my house house my house-the my  
b. mín skoðun skoðun mín *skoðunin mín  
   my opinion opinion my opinion-the my  
c. ??minn bróðir bróðir minn *bróðirinn minn  
   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 Faroese 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:

\[\text{(3.67)}\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{4. poss.pro. + def.noun:} \\
\ast \text{mitt} & \quad \text{húsið} \\
\text{my} & \quad \text{house-the}
\end{align*}
\]

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):

\[\text{(3.68)}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Spec} \\
\text{D} \\
\text{PossP} \\
\text{Spec} \\
\text{Poss'} \\
\text{Poss} \\
\text{NP/DP}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{mitt}_i \\
\text{my} \\
\text{húsið}_j \\
\text{my} \\
\text{húsið}_j \\
\text{my} \\
\text{húsið}_j \\
\text{my}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
t_i \\
\text{húsið} \\
t_j \\
\text{húsið} \\
\text{húsið} \\
\text{húsið} \\
\text{húsið} \\
\text{húsið}
\end{array}
\]

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

\[\text{29}\] 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).

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

\[
\begin{align*}
(i) \quad \text{mine hestn/\*hest} \\
\text{my horse-the/\*horse}
\end{align*}
\]
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:

\[ (3.69) \]
\[ \begin{align*}
  \text{a. Allar ðøssar þrjár nýju kenningar þínar eru} & \ldots \\
  \text{all(Npl.f.) these(Npl.f.) three(Npl.f.) new(Npl.f.) theories (Npl.f.) your (Npl.f.) are} & \ldots \\
  \text{b. Frá öllum þessum þrem nýju kenningum þínum} & \ldots \\
  \text{from all(Dpl.f.) these (Dpl.f.) three (Dpl.f.) new (Dpl.f.) theories (Dpl.f.) your (Dpl.f.)} & \ldots
\end{align*} \]

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)?

---

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:

\[(3.70)\]
\[
\text{frá þessum nýju kenningum [ungs málfraðings] from these(Dpl.f.) new(Dpl.f.) theories(D.pl.f.) young(Gsg.m.) linguist(G.sg.m.)} \\
\text{‘from these new theories of a young linguist’}
\]

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.  
\[
\text{Strákarnir flugu flugvélinni fullir.} \\
\text{boys-the(Npl.m.) flew plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Npl.m.)} \\
\text{‘The boys flew the plane drunk.’}
\]
b.  
\[
\text{Strákarnir flugu flugvélinni fullri.} \\
\text{boys-the(Npl.m.) flew plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Dsg.f.)} \\
\text{‘The boys flew the plane full.’} \\
\text{(i.e., the plane was full)}
\]
c.  
\[
\text{Löggan taldi strákana hafa flogið flugvélinni fulla.}^{33} \\
\text{cops-the believed boys-the(Apl.m.) have flown plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Apl.m.)} \\
\text{‘The cops believed the boys to have flown the plane drunk.’}
\]

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.

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’:

\[(i)\]
\[
\text{Löggan taldi strákana hafa flogið flugvélinni fullir} \\
\text{cops-the believed boys-the(Apl.m.) have flown plane-the(Dsg.f.) full(Npl.m.)}
\]

The extent and nature of this variation remains to be investigated.
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 málvisindi.
    all(Npl.f.) these young girls have studied linguistics

b. *Þessar** allar ungu stelpur hafa lært málvisindi.

c. *Þessar ungu** allar stelpur hafa lært málvisindi.

d. *Þessar ungu stelpur** allar hafa lært málvisindi.

e. Þessar ungu stelpur hafa **allar** lært málvisindi.

f. *Þessar ungu stelpur hafa lært** allar málvisindi.

g. (?)Þessar ungu stelpur hafa lært málvisindi **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’, *alldrei* ‘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/floated 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 málvisindi.  
   all(Npl.f.) they(Npl.f.) have studied linguistics
b. *Þær allar hafa lært málvisindi.  
   they all have studied linguistics
34  c. Þær hafa allar lært málvisindi.  
   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. 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.
    c. *Les enfants tous mangent le chocolat.
    d. Les enfants mangent tous le chocolat.

Not surprisingly, Icelandic patterns with French here.
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):

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. Þu sviptir eiginmanninni konu sinni.
      you deprived husband-the(A) wife(D) his-refl.(D)
      ‘You deprived the husband of his wife.’
   b. *Þu sviptir eiginmann sinni konunní.
      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) *Konunní sviptir þu eiginmann sinní.
      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. Þu gafst eigandanum hundinni sinn.
      you gave owner-the(D) dog-the(A) his-refl.(A)
   b. *Þu gafst eiganda sínunum hundinní.
      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:

\[(3.82) \quad \text{a. } \text{Ég sendi Rauðhettu}_i \text{ til ömmu } \text{sinnar}_i. \]

I sent LRRH(A) to grandma(G) her(refl)(G)

‘I sent Little Red Riding Hood to her grandma.’

\[(3.82) \quad \text{b. } \text{*Ég sendi vinið } \text{sitt}_i \text{ til ömmu}_i. \]

I sent wine(A) her(refl.)(A) to grandma(G)

c. *Til ömmu_i sendi ég vinið sitt_i.

to grandmas(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:

\[(3.83) \quad \text{a. } \text{Ég gaf engum } \text{neitt}. \]

I gave nobody anything

\[(3.83) \quad \text{b. } \text{*Ég gaf } \text{neinum } \text{ekkert}. \]

I gave anybody nothing

Similar facts obtain for the other Scandinavian languages, for example with respect to the binding relationships. Some examples follow:

\[(3.84) \quad \text{a. } \text{Jeg gav ham}_i \text{ sin}_i \text{ hund.} \quad (\text{Da}) \]

I gave him his(refl.) dog

\[(3.84) \quad \text{b. } \text{*Jeg gav } \text{sin}_i \text{ ejer hunden}_i. \]

I gave his-refl. owner dog-the

\[(3.85) \quad \text{a. } \text{Jeg viste } \text{[Jens og Marit]}_i \text{ hverandre}_i. \quad (\text{No}) \]

I showed J. and M. each other

\[(3.85) \quad \text{b. } \text{*Jeg viste } \text{hverandre}_i \text{ [Jens og Marit]}_i. \]

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 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, 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 Gíslis 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., Åfarli 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. *HvemÍ ga [ti for noen] barna sine ei bok til jul? (No)
   who gave for somebody children-the his-refl. a book for Xmas

b. *HvemÍ ga du [ti 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. Hvaði ga du barna dine [tí 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. 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):

\[
(3.88) \begin{align*}
\text{a. Óg hef ekki lánað Mariú bækurnar.} \\
&\text{I have not lent Mary books-the} \\
&\text{‘I haven’t lent Mary the books.’} \\
\text{b. *[Mariú bækurnar] hef óg ekki lánað.} \\
&\text{Mary books-the have I not lent}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
(3.89) \begin{align*}
\text{a. Hann gaf konunginum ambáttina} \\
&\text{he gave king-the(D) maidservant-the(A)} \\
&\text{‘He gave the king the maidservant.’}
\end{align*}
\]

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. 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’.

41
Order of elements within the phrase

b. Hann gaf ambâttna 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.\(^\text{42}\)

(3.91) a. Sjórinn svipti sjómannskonuna fyrirvinnunni.
         sea-the deprived fisherman’s-wife-the(A) provider-the(D)
         ‘The sea deprived the fisherman’s wife of her provider.’

b. *Sjórinn svipti fyrirvinnunni sjómannskonuna.
         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. Sjórinn 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).
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 krakkana sínun.
They showed parents-the kids-the their(refl.)
‘They showed the parents their kids.’

b. Þau sýndu krakkana foreldrum sínun.
They showed kids-the parents their(refl.)
‘They showed the kids to their parents.’

(3.95)  
a. Sjórinn svipti konuna mannum.
The sea deprived woman-the(A) husband her(refl.)
‘The sea deprived the woman of her husband.’

b. *Sjórinn svipti mannum [gömlu konuna sínun sem allir vorkenndu svo mikið].
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 gáfu ‘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 staðu 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 maninn 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.’

    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.’
a. Þeir skiluðu foreldruman børnunum.
   ‘They returned the kids to the parents.’

b. Foreldruman var skilað børnunum.
   ‘The parents were returned the kids.’

c. *Børnunum var skilað foreldruman.
   [out in the sense: ‘The parents were returned the kids’]

(3.100) a. Þeir leyndu hana því.
   ‘They concealed it from her.’

b. Hún var leynd því.
   ‘It was concealed from her.’

c. *Því var leynd hún.
   [out in the sense: ‘It was concealed from her’]

(3.101) a. Þeir óskuðu honum þess.
   ‘They wished him it.’

b. Honum var óskað þess.
   ‘The king was given the maidservant.’

c. *Þess var óskað honum.

With a few NDA-verbs, on the other hand, it is possible to get to variants of the passive:

(3.102) a. Þeir gáfu konunginum ambáttina.
   ‘They gave the king the maidservant.’

b. Konunginum var gefin ambáttin.
   ‘The king was given the maidservant.’

c. Ambáttin var gefin konunginum.
   ‘The maidservant was given to the king.’

(3.103) a. Þeir seldu einhverjum útlendingum harðfiskinn.
   ‘They sold some foreigners the dried fish.’
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 passi-
vize. 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.
    they sold farmer-the(D) cow-the(A)

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.
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 erbjuder honom ett nytt jobb. (Sw)
   they offered him a new job

b. Hani erbjuds ett nytt jobb.
   he was-offered a new job

c. Ett nytt jobb erbjuds 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 Thránisson 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):

\[(i)\]

*Bo"ndanum varð selt kúna.
   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 Thránisson 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 Thránisson 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 Thránisson et al. 2004:272):

\[(ii)\]

*Bóndin varð seldur kúgin/kúnn.
   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:

\[(3.110) \begin{align*}
a. & \text{Þeir sviptu aldrei manninn vinnunni.} \\
& \text{they deprived never man-the(A) work-the(D)} \\
& \text{‘They never deprived the man of the work.’} \\
b. & \text{Þeir sviptu } \text{manninn aldrei vinnunni.} \\
& \text{they deprived man-the(A) never work-the} \\
c. & \text{?Þeir sviptu manninn vinnunni aldrei.} \\
& \text{they deprived man-the(A) work-the(D) never} \\
d. & \text{*Þeir sviptu vinnunni aldrei manninn.}
\end{align*}\]

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):

\[(3.111) \begin{align*}
a. & \text{Þau sýndu börnunum aldrei foreldrana.} \\
& \text{they showed children-the(D) never parents-the(A)} \\
& \text{‘They never showed the parents to the children.’} \\
b. & \text{Þau sýndu foreldrana aldrei börnunum.} \\
& \text{they showed parents-the(A) never children-the(D)} \\
& \text{‘They never showed the parents to the children.’}
\end{align*}\]

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.\footnote{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):

\[(i) \begin{align*}
a. & \text{Þau sýndu börnunum foreldrana aldrei.} \\
& \text{they showed children-the(D) parents-the(A) never} \\
& \text{‘They never showed the parents to the children.’}
\end{align*}\]}

\[47\]
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 heðu við stigann.
   two men held with stairs-the(A)
   ‘Two men supported the stairs.’
   
   b. Tveir menn heðu við hann.
   two men held with it(A)
   ‘Two men supported it.’
   
   c. *Tveir menn heðu hann við.
   two men held it with
   
   d. Við stigann heðu tveir menn.
   with stairs-the(A) held two men
   ‘The stairs, two men supported.’

(3.113) a. Tveir menn heðu við húsinu.
   two men held with house-the(D)
   ‘Two men kept the house in shape.’
   
   b. *Tveir menn heðu við því.
   two men held with it(D)
   
   c. Tveir menn heðu því við.
   two men held it(D) with
   ‘Two men kept the house/it in shape.’
   
   d. *Við húsinu heðu 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 syndu foreldraða þórnum 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) obligatory 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 constrastive 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 to ´ku upp pakkann/pakkann upp.
     they took up parcel-the(A)/parcel-the(A) up
     ‘They opened the parcel.’

     b. Þeir to ´ku *upp hann/hann upp.
     they took *up it(A)/it(A) up
     ‘They opened it.’

     c. *Upp pakkann tôku ðeir.
     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)  
        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., Áfarli 1985; Holmberg 1986:166, 200; Svenonius 1996b; Holmberg and Platzack 1995:203; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:247–8):

(3.118) a. Jeg skrev *nummeret/*det. I wrote *number-the/*it (Da)
    b. Jeg skrev nummeret/det op. *I wrote the number/*it down.’
    c. Hann gjørdi snørið/*tað. upp snørið/*tað. (Fa)
        he made fishing-line-the/*it up ‘He wound up the fishing line.’
    d. Hann gjørdi snørið/*tað. upp. fishing-line-the/*it up ‘He wound the fishing line/*it up.’
    e. Han spiste opp tørrfisken/*den. opp. (No)
        he ate dryfish-the/*it up ‘He ate the dried fish/*it up.’
    f. Hann spiste tørrfisken/*den opp. ‘He ate the dried fish/*it up.’
    g. Hon kastade ut Johan/honom. (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.):

\[(3.119)\]
\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{NP-particle order} & \text{heavy NPs} & \text{indef. NPs} & \text{quantified NPs} & \text{def. NPs} \\
? & (?) & (+) & +
\end{array}
\]

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)
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
a. \ ?\text{Stelpan bar [allar stóru töskurnar sem við komum með úr frínu] inn.} \\
& \text{girl-the carried all big bags-the that we brought from vacation-the in} \\
& \text{‘The girl carried all the big bags that we brought from the vacation in.’}
\end{array}
\]

b. Stelpan bar inn [allar stóru töskurnar sem við komum með úr frínu]

(3.121)
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
a. \ (?)\text{Stelpan bar töskur inn.} \\
& \text{girl-the carried bags in} \\
& \text{‘The girl carried bags in.’}
\end{array}
\]

b. Stelpan bar inn töskur.

(3.122)
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
a. \ (+)\text{Stelpan bar nokkrar töskur inn.} \\
& \text{girl-the carried some bags in} \\
& \text{‘The girl carried some bags in.’}
\end{array}
\]

b. Stelpan bar inn nokkrar töskur.

(3.123)
\[
\begin{array}{ll}
a. \ +\text{Stelpan bar töskurnar inn.} \\
& \text{girl-the carried bags-the in} \\
& \text{‘The girl carried the bags in.’}
\end{array}
\]

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)\textsuperscript{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.  \hspace{.5cm} (No)
\hspace{.5cm} we shall pick girls-the up
\hspace{.5cm} ‘We are picking the girls up.’
\hspace{.5cm} b. Vi skal plukke opp jentene.

(3.125) A: ‘How will Ingrid and Turid get here?’
B: a. Vi skal plukke jentene opp.  \hspace{.5cm} (No)
\hspace{.5cm} we shall pick girls-the up
\hspace{.5cm} ‘We are picking the girls up.’
\hspace{.5cm} b. (?)Vi skal plukke opp jentene.

(3.126) A: ‘Who have you picked up?’
B: a. (?)Vi har plukket jentene opp.  \hspace{.5cm} (No)
\hspace{.5cm} we have picked girls-the up
\hspace{.5cm} ‘We have picked the girls up.’
\hspace{.5cm} 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 kjösa Siggu og Maju í nefndina?
\hspace{.5cm} ‘How can we have Sigga and Maja elected to the committee?’
\hspace{.5cm} well, we offer the girls forth
\hspace{.5cm} ‘Well, we will propose the girls.’
\hspace{.5cm} b. ?*Nú, við bjóðum fram stelpurnar.

\textsuperscript{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 Røgnvaldsson 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:
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:

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):

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:

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.  
   ‘An elf has eaten the cheese.’

b. Það át einhver álfur ost/ostinn.  
   ‘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:

(4.6) a. Haraldur, rakaði *hann, /son *hansi.  
   Haroldi (N) shaved *him, / son *his,  
   ‘I brought Harold his beer.’

b. Ég færði Haraldí bjurinn hansí.  
   ‘The elf told me that you were afraid of him.’

4.1.1.5 Antecedents of long-distance reflexives

**Subjects** can serve as antecedents for long-distance reflexives whereas objects cannot:

(4.7) a. Álfurinn, sagði mér [að þú værir hræddur við sigí].  
   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, [að þú værir hræddur við sigí].  
   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.
4.1.1.7 Subject-to-object raising

Verbs like telja, álita 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 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 stolið álfurinn.
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

\[ b. \] Maríai vonaðist til [að PRO,] 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. *Forsetinni vonaðist til [að PRO 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)
   ‘To the president I think that Mary has given the book.’

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).
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.)

‘They have sent her the money.’

5 It is possible that regular passivization of the experiencer verbs *heyr* ‘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 *finnast* ‘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)
Note in particular that, although the dative goal (herri ‘her’) shows up in the subject position here, the theme is now marked nominative and triggers number agreement on the finite auxiliary havea ‘have’ and case, number and agreement on the past participle sent ‘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 herri ‘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 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 sofið í __ .

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 sofið í þessu rúmi.
   there has (never) been slept in this bed(D)

b. þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofið í __ .
   this bed(D) has (never) been slept in

c. Í þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofið __ .
   in this bed(D) has (never) been slept

d. Aldrei hefur __ verið sofið 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 sofið 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. First, nominative also marks left-dislocated NPs, appellatives and some objects in the active:

(4.24)

a. María, ég veit ekki hver þjálapaði henni. (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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject case:</th>
<th>Object case:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mod. Ic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>&lt; 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

   ‘Who is this? It’s me.’
   who is this it is I(N/*A/*D/*G)

b. María og ég/*mig/*mér/*mín fórum á námskeiðið.
   ‘Mary and I(N/*A/*D/*G) went to course-the’
   Mary and I(N/*A/*D/*G) went to course-the

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 is genius(N)’
   Mary(N) is genius(N)

b. Hún var kosin forseti.
   ‘She was elected president(N)’
   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):
I believe Mary to be a genius.

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:

Mary is believed to be a genius.

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. 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.):

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 frumlagsigildi (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 setningafraði.

   me(D) loathes against syntax(D)

   ‘Syntax makes me sick.’

c. **Peim** líður vel.

   them(D) feels good

   ‘They feel fine.’

(4.32) **Genitive subjects**

a. **Stórhríðarinnar** 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

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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 Gíslí 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 Gíslason 2003:150–1), others are more productive (cf. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:202ff.; Jóhannes Gíslason 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JGJ-98</th>
<th>JGJ-03</th>
<th>JB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) accusative subjects:</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. dative subjects:</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. genitive subjects:</td>
<td>(not listed)</td>
<td>(not listed)</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 fyrr 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 skóloanum.
   girls-the(D) bored in school-the(D)
   ‘The girls were bored in school.’

   → Leiddist stelpunum í skóloanum?
   bored girls-the(D) in school-the(D)
   ‘Did the girls get bored in school?’
Second, when some non-subject is preposed, the oblique subjects invert with the finite verb:

(4.36) a. Í gær vantaði hana peninga. 
    yesterday lacked her(A) money 
    ‘Yesterday she needed money.’

b. Þá var mansins 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.) me(D) always bored me(D) 

This suggests that the nominative NP cannot be the subject of this predicate.¹⁰

¹⁰ As discovered by Helgi Bernödusson 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 géi ‘like’ (see also Zaenen et al. 1985:469; Smith 1996; Kiparsky 1997:484–5; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001a; Thórhallur 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 setningafráði. 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, vantar peningana *hennar, / sínar, hert(A) lacks money(A) her *nonrefl./refl. ‘She lacks(needs) money.’

b. Honum, býður við spegilmynd *hans, / sinni, him(D) loathes against reflection(D) his *nonrefl./refl. ‘His (own) reflection makes him sick.’

c. Manninum, var hjálpað heim til *hans, /sín, 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** grunar [að þú elskir sig],
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 álítum** **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

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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, búast við [að PRO, 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.’

to drift to shore on desert-island could be exciting
‘To drift ashore on a desert island could be exciting.’

c. Stelpurnar, 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 stórhríðarinnar 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 Árman 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):

(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

    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:

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.
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 Árman 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. $4 \times 4$) 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):

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{NN} & \text{AN} & \text{DN} & \text{GN} \\
\text{NA} & \text{AA} & *\text{DA} & *\text{GA} \\
\text{ND} & *\text{AD} & *\text{DD} & *\text{GD} \\
\text{NG} & \text{AG} & *\text{DG} & *\text{GG}
\end{array}
\]

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 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 constuctions with the copula ‘be’, as mentioned above (see the discussion around (4.26)). It is of course ‘common’ but arguably of a different nature then 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)
   ‘Mary is a doctor.’

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)
   ‘She is called Mary.’

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 verða ‘be’ in (4.28)–(4.29) above, and it can also be demonstrated for heita ‘be-called’:

(4.50)
a. Þeir telja hana heita Mariú.
   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 hún 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). 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 læknir 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 læknirinn 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’). 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 lækninn.
   Harold(N) played doctor-the(A)
   ‘Harold played the (role of the) doctor.’

b. Þeir telja Harald leika lækninn.
   they(N) believe Harold(A) play doctor-the(A)
   ‘They believe Harold to play the doctor.’

c. Haraldur er talinn leika lækninn.
   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.
The initial accusative NPs seem to behave like subjects, however, as shown by the direct question ‘inversion’, for instance:

(4.52) a. Hana hefur líklega sótt syfja.
    her(A) has probably sought sleepiness(N)
    ‘She has probably become sleepy.’

b. Þig hefur aldrei íðrað þess.
    you(A) has never regretted that(G)
    ‘You have never regretted that.’

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):

(4.53) a. Hefur hana aldrei sótt syfja?
      has her(A) never sought sleepiness(N)
      ‘Has she never become sleepy?’

b. Hefur þig aldrei íðrað þess?
      have you(A) never regretted that(G)
      ‘Have you never regretted that?’

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:

(4.54) 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.’

(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):
172 Case, agreement, relations and roles

(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. Íg 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 Gísli Jónsson 1997–1998):

(4.60) a. Hana vant 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 × 4 × 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 Gíslason Jónsson 2000b:73; see also Kress 1982:210ff.; Maling 2001:459, 2002b:44ff.; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:327ff.; Jóhannes Gíslason Jónsson 2005a:404–5). Note that the subject is always nominative:

(4.62)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>case combination:</th>
<th>typical verbs:</th>
<th>estimated number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NDA</td>
<td>gefa ‘give’</td>
<td>&gt; 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAD</td>
<td>sveipta ‘deprive’</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDG</td>
<td>óska ‘wish’</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDD</td>
<td>lofa ‘promise’</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAG</td>
<td>spyrja ‘ask’</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAA</td>
<td>kosta ‘cost’</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 gave Haraldi the book.
   ‘Mary gave Harold the book.’

b. Hann showed the boys the boat.
   ‘He showed the boys the boat.’

c. Harold sent me some cheese.
   ‘Harold sent me (some) cheese.’

d. They faxed me the contract.
   ‘They faxed me the contract.’

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)  

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)


(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 sôpa gólfið ‘sweep the floor(A)’ vs. sôpa rykinu undir teppið ‘sweep the dust(D) under the carpet’.
the indirect one? There is apparently no reason to expect that. First, monotransitive 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.  

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 NAD patterns described above. Similarly, the prepositional variant is less formal in some other instances when such a variant exists:

\[(4.66)\]

\[\begin{align*}
a. & \text{ Þeir leyndu sannleikanum fyrir henni.} \\
& \text{they(N) concealed truth-the(D) from her(D)} \\
& \text{‘They concealed the truth from her.’} \\

b. & \text{Dómararnir rændu sigrinum frá þeim.} \\
& \text{referees-the robbed victory-the(D) from them(D)} \\
& \text{‘The referees snatched the victory from them/robbed them of the victory.’} \\
\end{align*}\]

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):

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.
They decorated the car with flags.

Not surprisingly, in this example it is the second object that alternates with a prepositional phrase:

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 Gíslis Jónsson 2005a:405):

I wish you luck.

Harold refused Gudmundur’s marriage proposal. (i.e. to H’s daughter)

They didn’t do him justice in their discussion.

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 Gíslis Jónsson 2000b:80, 2005a:405):

They asked her many questions.
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. Jarðskjalftinn olli þeim miklu tjóni.
   earthquake(N) caused them(D) much damage(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 míni.
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 Einarsrson 1945:106ff.; Jón G. Friðjónsson 1986; Kress 1982:224ff.; Halldór Árman Sigurðsson 2003:230ff.):

\[(4.75)\]

Accusative with prepositions:

a. Ég talaði við Harald.
I spoke to Harold(A)

b. Við fórum í skólan.
we went to school-the(A)
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.’

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 skólan ‘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 skólan ‘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):

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 datives but in several instances no prepositional alternatives exist (sometimes at least because the expression is fixed):

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.
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. The main difference between structural case 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 sofið.
   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 → A → N) whereas lexical case marking remains unchanged (D throughout):

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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 Gíslason and Thórhallur 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.
a. Við teljum [þá hafa sofið]. (ECM: N → 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 remains)
   ‘They are believed have slept’
   ‘They are believed to have slept.’

d. Þeim er talið hafa leiðst. (passive of an ECM: D remains)
   ‘They are believed have bored’
   ‘They are believed to have been bored.’

This can also been illustrated for structural vs. lexical case marking of objects like the ones in (4.86):

(4.86)  a. Þeir hafa étið 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.
        fish-the(N) has been eaten
        (passive: A → N)

b. Fiskinum hefur verið hent.
        fish-the(D) has been discarded
        (passive: D remains)

c. Við teljum fiskinn hafa verið étinn. (ECM of passive: N → 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)
   'the fish is believed to have been eaten.'

f. Fiskinum er talið hafa verið hent. (pass. of pass. ECM: D remains)
   '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 irreducibly, 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? Æg/*mig.  (Ic)  
b. Hvør er heitta? Æg/*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) they waited for him.

b. Teir takkaðu honum. → Honum varð takkað.  (case preserved)  
they thanked him(D) they thanked him.

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)  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>lexical case tier: D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mér me(D)</td>
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<tr>
<td>líkar likes</td>
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<tr>
<td>mjólkína milk-the</td>
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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, *mjólkína* ‘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.

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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.
Halldóðr 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; Halldóðr 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). But whatever the proper analysis,

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.):

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<tr>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>a. Mig me(A) brestur fails kjark. courage(A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>b. Mennina men-the(A) þraut ran-out-of mat. food(A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>c. Mig me(A) vantar lacks hníf. knife(A)</td>
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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):

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>a. Mér me(D) brestur fails kjarkur/kjark. courage(N/?A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>b. Honum him(D) þraut ran-out-of þróttur/*þrótt. strength(N/?A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>c. Mér me(D) vantar lacks *hnífur/ñíf. knife(*N/A)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
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

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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 Gisli Jónsson 1997–1998, 2003, 2005a:380ff.; Maling 2002a, b; Jóhanna Barðdal 2001b; Jóhannes Gisli Jónsson and Thórhallur 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):
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.’

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 hvolfði) 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):

\[(4.101)\]

\[a. \text{ NP is } \text{nominative} \text{ if governed by AGR}\]

\[b. \text{ NP is } \text{objective} \text{ if governed by a transitive V}\]

\[c. \text{ NP is } \text{oblique} \text{ if governed by P}\]

\[d. \text{ NP is } \text{genitive} \text{ inside NPs}\]

\[e. \text{ NP is } \text{inherently Case marked} \text{ as determined by properties of its } [\text{–N}] \text{ governor}\]

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
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:

\[(4.102) \ [NP_e] \text{ var barinn } \text{Haraldur} \rightarrow \text{Haraldur, var barinn } \text{t\i.}
\]

was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit

To capture the fact that the subject of a passive sentence like \text{Haraldur var barinn} ‘Harold was hit’ has the same thematic role that the object of a
corresponding active sentence would have (e.g. \text{Einhver barði Harald}
‘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):

\[(4.103) \ *\text{Það var barinn Haraldur.}
\]

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 \text{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 \text{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).\footnote{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 exple-
tive 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 imme-
diately 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):}
Case, agreement, relations and roles

(4.104)  a. [NP  e] var hjálpað Haraldi → Haraldí var hjálpað t₁.
          was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit

   b. *Það var hjálpað Haraldi.³⁵
       there was helped Harold(D)

   c. [NP  e] var saknað Haraldar → Haraldarí var saknað t₁.
       was hit Harold Harold(N) was hit

   d. *Það var saknað Haraldar.

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 strák hjálpað þar.
      there was some boy(D) helped there

   d. Það var hjálpað einhverjum strák 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.

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
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 Gíslí 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). 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

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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):

\[(4.108) \text{agent, experiencer, instrument, object, source, goal, place, time}\]

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 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 argument 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 Þjartar G. Óttósson 1988; for a more rigorous definition of thematic roles, see Ladusaw and Dowty 1987.
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 causes 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.
If one considers the possible thematic roles of the subjects, it turns out that there are certain restrictions and regularities.  

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).  

First, in the following examples the nominative subject is arguably a theme:

None of these subjects pass standard tests for agenthood, such as being able to occur in clauses where the predicate has adverbial modification meaning

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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.


(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 Gisli 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**):

   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 Gíslason 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 Gíslason 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 Gíslason (1997–1998) lists thirty-seven verbs taking accusative experiencer subjects and divides them further into semantic classes, such as verbs of emotion (*langa* ‘want’, *vanta* ‘need’), bodily sensation (*svima* ‘feel dizzy’) and thinking/perception (*minna* ‘(seem to) remember’). 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.
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:

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 \textit{vera} ‘be’ and \textit{verða} ‘become’. He divides these into various semantic classes, including verbs of emotion (\textit{bjoða við} ‘be nauseated by’, \textit{sárna} ‘be hurt by’), bodily sensations (\textit{hlýna} ‘get warm’), thinking and perceiving (\textit{misheyrast} ‘mishear’). The verb \textit{mælast} (\textit{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.\footnote{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. \textit{vel} ‘well’. Thus \textit{Honum mælitist} is out whereas \textit{Honum mælitist vellekki vellpokkalega} . . . ‘He happened to speak well/not well/prettly 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 Gíslí 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)  

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. Mér áskotnaðist gamall bíll.} & & \text{me(D) lucked-onto old car(N)} \\
\text{b. Henni bauðst starf hjá Íslenskri erfðagreiningu.} & & \text{her(D) was-offered job(N) at Icelandic Genetics} \\
\text{c. Peim fæddist dóttir í gær.} & & \text{them(D) was-born daughter(N) yesterday} \\
\text{d. Dér stendur þetta ekki lengur til boða.} & & \text{you(D) stands this not longer to offer} \\
\end{align*}\]

‘They got a daughter yesterday.’

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)  

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. Nemendum hefur fjölgað.} & & \text{students(Dpl.) has(sg.) gotten-more-numerous} \\
\text{b. Stríðinu lauk eftir 30 ár.} & & \text{war-the(D) ended after 30 years} \\
\text{c. Bátnum hvolfdi í briminu.} & & \text{boat-the(D) capsized in breakers-the} \\
\text{d. Flakinu skolaði á land.} & & \text{wreck-the(D) flowed to shore} \\
\end{align*}\]

‘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 \(áskotnast\) ‘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 Hörskuldur Thráinsson 2005:323):

(4.123) subject case  agent exper. goal source theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>nominative</th>
<th>accusative</th>
<th>dative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agent</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exper.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>source</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theme</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown here, the thematic roles of instrument and location have not figured in the discussion so far. 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 Gísli 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. **Einhver** hreyfði stóllinn. / **Stóllinn** 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’, *fjúka* ‘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 Gísli Jónsson 2003:145):

(4.127) a. **Tillöguna** dagaði uppi.51  
   proposal-the(A) dawnd 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. **Peir** open bankann kl. 9. / **Bankinn** open bank at 9
   they(N) open bank-the(A) at 9 bank-the(N) opens at 9

b. **Peir** close 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 Gisli Jónsson 2005a:383ff.):

   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 börnín / 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 bíllinn.
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. Húsvörðurinn sópaði salinn.
janitor-the(N) swept hall-the(A)

b. María hlóð vörðuna.
Mary(N) built cairn-the(A)

c. Haraldur eyðilagði bíllinn.
Harold(N) ruined car-the(A)

d. Ég þekki Harald.
I know Harold(A)
The verbs of the ‘fill, load’-type will be returned to 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

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

   *Hann keyrði þessa leið bílinn.
   he drove this route(A) 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. Húnn 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):

         throw-acc(N) threw shot-the(D)  
  b. Strákurinn henti ruslini.  
         boy-the(N) threw-away garbage-the(D)  
  c. Stelpan spárkaði 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.):

         we(N) helped Harold(D)  
  b. Þyrlan bjargaði ferðamanninum.  
         helicopter-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 Hóskuldur Thráinsson 2005:332):  

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{direct object} & \text{theme} & \text{exper.} & \text{goal} & \text{location} \\
\hline
\text{accusative} & + & + & + & + \\
\text{dative} & + & + & + & + \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

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.  

Consider first the following pairs (cf., e.g., Maling 2002b:71ff.; Svenonius 2002b:212–13; Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson 2005a:384):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a. Húsvörðurinn sópaði salinn/ruslinu.} \\
\text{janitor-the(N) swept hall-the(A)/trash-the(D)} \\
\text{b. Haraldur mokaði tröppurnar/snjónum.} \\
\text{Harold shovelled steps(A)/snow-the(D)} \\
\text{c. Óli skaut fuglinn/kúlunni.} \\
\text{Oli(N) shot bird-the(A)/bullet-the(D)} \\
\text{d. Þeir smöluðu heiðina/fénu.} \\
\text{they ‘shepherded’ heath-the(A)/sheep-the(D)} \\
\text{‘They rid the heath of sheep/rounded up the sheep.’} \\
\text{e. Hún jós bátinn/vatninu.} \\
\text{she bailed boat-the(A)/water-the(D)} \\
\text{‘She bailed the boat/scooped the water out of the boat.’}
\end{align*}
\]

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:

b. Some verbs taking accusative object themes:

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:

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. Ëg greiddi barninu/hárið. I(N) combed child-the(D)/hair-the(A)
   b. Við kembdum hestinum/ullina. we(N) combed horse-the(D)/wool-the(A)
   c. Kristín þurkaði barninu/handklæðið. Kristin(N) dried child-the(D)/towel-the(A)
   d. Hún strauk kettinum/steininn. she(N) patted cat-the(D)/rock-the(A)
   e. Hann þvoði barninu/bílinn. he(N) washed 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):

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 Bernóðusson 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)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Hún</th>
<th>aðstöðaði</th>
<th>Harald.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>she(N)</td>
<td>helped</td>
<td>Harold(A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Við</td>
<td>hjálpuðum</td>
<td>Haraldi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we(N)</td>
<td>helped</td>
<td>Harold(D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Hjúkrunarkonan</td>
<td>hjúkraði</td>
<td>sjúklingnum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurse-the(N)</td>
<td>nursed</td>
<td>patient-the(D)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But unless there is a clear semantic difference between aðstöða ‘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 gefa ‘give’ segja ‘tell’
NAD svipta ‘deprive’ leyna ‘conceal’
NDG öska ‘wish’ synja ‘deny’
NDD lofa ‘promise’ skila ‘return’
NAG spyrja ‘ask’ krefja ‘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 Gíslason 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.  
   ‘Harold feels no gratitude towards her for this.’

b. María gat sér gott orð í skólanum.  
   ‘Mary earned herself a good reputation in school.’

c. Atburðurinn átti sér stað á skólalóðinni.  
   ‘The incident took place on the school grounds.’

d. Hún kenndi sér einskis meins.  
   ‘She felt no pain.’

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 in a ditransitive construction order 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-(Vf)-(Vnf)-IO-DO languages (where Vf and Vnf 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). Note, however, that it may sometimes be difficult to distinguish non-argument NPs (e.g. instrumentals) from arguments. This means that

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 Gíslason 2000b:78ff.). This holds for all the case patterns where the IO is marked dative (i.e. NDA, NDD, NDG):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(4.152) a. } & \text{Við gáfum Jóni bókina.} \\
& \text{we(N) gave John(D) book-the(A)} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Hún sendi Haraldi Óst.} \\
& \text{she(N) sent Harold(D) cheese(A)} \\
\text{c. } & \text{Nefndin úthlutaði henni þessari íbúð.} \\
& \text{board-the(N) assigned her(D) this apartment(D)} \\
\text{d. } & \text{Við óskum þeim alls góðs.} \\
& \text{we(N) wish them(D) all good(G)}
\end{align*}
\]

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 Gíslason Jónsson (2000b:78), this role is ‘typically found with verbs of creation (including verbs of cooking), selection or acquisition’. Jóhannes Gíslason 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 Gíslason Jónsson 2000b:79, 2005a:376; Maling 2002b:51–52; Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:334):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(4.153) a. } & \text{Þeir fundu henni nýtt starf.} \\
& \text{they(N) found her(D) new(A) job(A)} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Samningurinn opnar fyrirtækinu nýja möguleika.} \\
& \text{contract-the opens company-the(D) new(A) possibilities(A)} \\
\text{c. } & \text{Bærinn reisti skáldinu minnisvarða.} \\
& \text{town-the(N) erected poet-the(D) monument(A)} \\
\text{d. } & \text{Þetta tæki auðveldar okkur stórfin.} \\
& \text{this tool(N) facilitates us(D) jobs-the(A)}
\end{align*}
\]
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 Gíslis Jónsson 2000b:79):

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 Gíslis 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. Deir spurðu manninn frétta.
    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):

    thieves-the(N) robbed her(A) all-possession-the(D)
    ‘The thieves robbed her of everything.’

b. Lögreglan sviptir marga öksuskírteininu.
    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 Gíslis 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 samlögðu sig nýju þjóðfélagi.  
immigrants(N) adapted REFL(A) new society(D)  
‘The immigrants adapted to a new society.’

c. Hún gifti son sinn riðri 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 Gíslis 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 meirallfi.  
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 Gíslís 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):

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{indirect object} & \text{theme} & \text{goal} & \text{(recipient benefact.)} & \text{source} & \text{location} \\
\text{accusative} & + & + & + & + & + \\
\text{dative} & + & + & + & + & + \\
\end{array}
\]

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) Vinnumennir hloðu vagninn með heyi.

‘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 nóttrar í holdið. (Fa)
   me(A) shudders in flesh-the
   ‘I shudder.’

   b. Meg órdi tað íkki.
   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 íkki.
   me(A) suspected(sg.) / we(N) suspected(pl.) this not
   ‘I/We didn’t suspect this.’

   c. Meg vardi einki ílt.
   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.
   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.):
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):

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).
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):

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 **örrinni** (Dsg.) (Ic)
   skjóta **pílina** (Asg.) (Fa)
   shoot arrow-the

c. æla/spúa **innýflunum** (Dpl.) (Ic)
   spýggja **invölirnar** (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. *hjóda* ‘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. 2004:260, 430 – see also Henriksen 2000:66).

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Norse</th>
<th>Mod. Ic.</th>
<th>Mod. Fa.</th>
<th>Faroese examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N-D-A</td>
<td>N-D-A</td>
<td>N-D-A</td>
<td><em>bjóða</em> ‘offer’, <em>geva</em> ‘give’, <em>senda</em> ‘send’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>N-D-PP</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-D-D</td>
<td>N-D-D</td>
<td>N-D-A</td>
<td><em>lova</em> ‘promise’, <em>valda</em> ‘cause’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>N-A-PP</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-D-G</td>
<td>N-D-G</td>
<td>N-D-A</td>
<td><em>ynskja</em> ‘wish’, <em>unna</em> ‘wish, grant’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):
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)  

Similarly, it seems that structural accusative has sometimes replaced lexical genitive in Faroese but not (yet) in Icelandic. In some instances a PP can appear in either language instead of a genitive argument in a ditransitive structure:

(4.177)  

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.

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.
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. ?Íg bakaði mōmmu 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) Eg 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
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)  
Ég 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)  
Ég seldi henni bókina / bókina til hennara.  (Fa)  
Jag sålde henne boken / boken till henne.  (Sw)  
I sold her the book / the book to her

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):
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 verb 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

For a discussion of agreement (and non-agreement) between coordinated subjects and the finite verb, see Jón G. Friðjónsson 1990–1991.
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 ...)

Some theoretical and comparative issues

(4.184) a. Þetta høfum líklega verið við.
   this(Nsg.n.) have(1pl.) probably been we(1pl.)

b. Mér hafa allt af 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.)

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

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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.
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 bókin.
   ‘I like the book.’

   b. *Mér líkar María.

   c. Mér líkar við Mariú
      ‘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 Gíslason 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

    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 hafið leiðst þið.
    her(Dsg.f.) have(2pl.) bored you(N2pl.)
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). 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. 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 over-ride 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):

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):

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

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70 There are lexical restrictions on dative experiencers of this kind. Thus one can have mér er klitt/lit/lli/llóglit . . . ‘I feel cold/warm/hot/sick/nauseated . . .’ but not *Mér er blauttraktlstirt . . . 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 stirður.
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 corres-
ponding 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.
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

   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 Árman Sigurðsson 1996:32):

(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.

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.’
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 hafið/*hefur verið gefnar konunginum.  
you(N2pl.f.) have(2pl.) been given(Npl.f.) king-the(Dsg.)  
‘You have been given to the king.’

b. Við höfum/*hefur verið gefnar konunginum.  
we(N 1pl.f.) have(1pl.) been given(Npl.f.) 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):

(4.200) a. Hafið/*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.)
Teir seldu bóndanum tríggjar kýr.

Farmer-the(Dsg.m.) three(Apl.f.) cows(Apl.f.) were(3pl.) sold(Npl.f.)

Tríggjar kýr blivu seldar bóndanum.

Three(Npl.f.) cows(Npl.f.) were(3pl.) sold(Npl.f.) farmer-the(Dsg.m.)

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):

*Bóndanum varð selt eina kúgv.

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.

‘They are gone.’

b. Þeir hafa farið illa með hana.

‘They have treated her badly.’

c. Teir eru farnir.

‘They are gone.’

d. Teir hava farið illa við henni.

‘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. Ég 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’

b. *Ég held hann sé farinn illa með hana í mörg ár. (Ic)
   ‘I think he(Nsg.m.) is gone(Nsg.m.) badly for 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)
   ‘They have often been beaten up.’

b. Teir eru ofta blivnir avsmurdir. (Fa)
   ‘They have often been smeared off.’

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 Árman 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):
**Some theoretical and comparative issues**

(4.207)

a. Huset **er høgt**. (No)
   house-the(sg.n.) **is high**.(sg.n.)

b. Den färksa sullen **var god**. (Sw)
   the fresh herring(sg.c.) **was good**.(sg.c.)

c. Tronge bukser **er populært**. (No)
   tight pants(pl.) **is popular**.(sg.n.)

d. Färsk sill **är gott**. (Sw)
   fresh herring(sg.c.) **is good**.(sg.n.)

e. Rygning **er skadeligt**. (Da)
   smoking(sg.c.) **is harmful**.(sg.n.)

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 **er rejst**. (Da)
   he/they **are gone/have left**

b. Gjestene **er kommet**. (No.bo.)
   guests(pl.) **is arrived**.(sg.n.)

c. Gjestene **er komne**. (No.ny.)
   guests(pl.) **is arrived**.(pl.)

d. Brevet **är kommet**. (Sw)
   letter-the(sg.n.) **is arrived**.(sg.n.)

e. Breven **är komna**. (Sw)
   letters-the(pl.) **is arrived**.(pl.)

f. Han/De **bliver dømt**. (Da)
   he/they **are judged**

g. Han/De **ble bedt**. (No.bo.)
   he/they was **asked**

h. Tre böcker **blev skrivna**. (Sw)
   three books(pl.) **were written**.(pl.)

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.
   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 tre böcker.⁷⁵
   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 *kome/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 agree-
ment 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
fomalizing the agreement process, trying to restrict it to Spec-Head

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²⁴ 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

²⁵ 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 Árman 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 Árman 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 passivization\(^1\) 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 (\textit{pace} Van Valin 1991): nominative objects only occur with verbs

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\(^1\) In this chapter (and elsewhere) the term \textit{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 \ldots). Thus the sentence in the text means: ‘Although \textit{the construction of a passive structure in Icelandic} is not restricted to verbs \ldots’
taking dative experiencer subjects whereas the best candidates for passivization are verbs taking agentic 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:

\[(5.2)\]

\[\begin{array}{llll}
\text{a. Varnarliðið} & \text{hrakti} & \text{óvininn} & \text{á brott. (agent subj.)} \\
\text{defence-force-the(Nsg.)} & \text{drove} & \text{enemy-the(A)} & \text{away} \\
\text{b. Stórhríðin} & \text{hrakti} & \text{kindurnar} & \text{í sjóinn. (causer/effector subj.)} \\
\text{blizzard-the(Nsg)} & \text{drove} & \text{sheep-the(A)} & \text{into ocean-the} \\
\end{array}\]

\(^2\) 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):

\[(i)\]

\[\begin{array}{llll}
\text{a. ergative} & = \text{NP1 in a [NP1 V NP2] structure} \\
\text{b. unergative} & = \text{NP1 in a [NP1 V] structure} \\
\text{c. accusative} & = \text{NP2 in a [NP1 V NP2] structure} \\
\text{d. unaccusative} & = \text{NP1 in a [V NP1] structure} \\
\end{array}\]

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.
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 hröktust 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.
The mother woke the boy up at seven.

b. Drengurinn var vakinn klukkan sjö (af móðurinni).

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.

b. *Drengurinn var vakinn af jarðskjalftanum.

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 jarðskjalftann ‘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 causes (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 static 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(Nsg.) 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)
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  filaði  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  filaðir  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 filaðir 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 filaðir í botn af Haraldí. The following is probably even better (Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, p.c.):

(5.12) Þetta  var  náttúrulega  filað  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:
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).  
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 kreffast ‘demand’ in 5.1.2 below.
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 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(N) took-care-of child-the(A)
   ‘They 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

   → *Greiðslun/Málið var ábyrgst.
   payment-the(N)/case-the(N) was guaranteed

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’)

(5.16) a. Þau önnuðust barnið.
   they(N) took-care-of child-the(A)
   ‘The took care of the child.’

   → *Barnið var annast.
   child-the(N) was taken-care-of

b. Þeir ábyrgjast greiðsluna/málið.
   they(N) guarantee payment-the(A)/case-the

   → *Greiðslun/Málið var ábyrgst.
   payment-the(N)/case-the(N) was guaranteed

(5.17) a. Allir fundu jarðskjálftann.
   everybody(Npl.) felt earthquake-the(Asg.)

   b. *Jarðskjalftinn 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.
   polar-bear-the(Nsg.m.) was seen(Nsg.m.) yesterday
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:

Footnote 6 (cont.)

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 …
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):

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{agent} & \text{causer} & \text{theme} & \text{exper.} & \text{goal} \\
opassivization & + & - & - & +/- & - \\
\text{passes with agentive } & (+) & - & - & - & - \\
\end{array}
\]

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):
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:

One might, however, suggest that the reason why one cannot form passives with lika ‘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 leiddast ‘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 Haraldi).
    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 leiddast ‘be bored by’ might be expected on agreement grounds alone:

(5.27) a. Öllum leiddast þessir hundar.
    everybody(Dpl.) are-bored-by(pl.) these dogs(Npl.m.)
    ‘Everybody finds these dogs boring.’

b. *Þessir hundar eru leiddist/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 passi-
vize, there are considerable restrictions on the passivization of -st-verbs. It
may have something to do with the the role of the -st-suffix in some

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 -stverbs 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 jätast ‘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 fila ‘dig, like’ mentioned above – although it is probably somewhat worse:

(5.31) a. Allir fila 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 filaðir (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 Bernóðusson (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/become this position(Nsg.f.) well
    b. Pessi staða hefur hentað/hæft/passað/sæmt honum vel. this position(Nsg.f.) has 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 lika ‘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 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

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 correspond-
ing 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 sofið 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 immedi-
ately 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 sofið í?*
    has this bed(Dsg.n.) been slept in

    d. *Ég tel **Þessu rúmi** hafa verið sofið 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 sofið í þessu rúmi.
    there has (never) been slept in this bed(D)

       b. Í þessu rúmi hefur (aldrei) verið sofið __ .
           in this bed(D) has (never) been slept

       c. Aldrei hefur __ verið sofið 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 verkefnunum.
           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’:
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. Verkefnunum 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 verkefnunum verið skipt niður?
has(sg.) tasks-the(Dpl.n.) been divided down
‘Have the tasks been divided up?’
b. Ég tel verkefnunum 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 Maling1984, 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 hálkumni 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:

\[ Í\text{ ger} \text{ rigndí mikið.} \]

\[ \text{yesterday rained much} \]

\[ \rightarrow *\text{Pað} \text{ var rignt mikið í ger.} \]

\[ \text{there was rained(Nsg.n.) much yesterday} \]

b. Predicates taking oblique subjects in the active (since these are never agents):

\[ \text{Mann svimaðí í hitanum.} \]

\[ \text{one felt-dizzy in heat-the(D)} \]

\[ \rightarrow *\text{Pað} \text{ var svimað í hitanum.} \]

\[ \text{there was felt-dizzy in heat-the} \]

c. The unaccusative (ergative) member of a transitive – unaccusative pair, since the unaccusative member does not have an agent:

\[ \text{Þeir stækkuðu garðinn.} \]

\[ \text{they(N) enlarged garden-the(A)} \]

\[ \rightarrow \text{Garðurinn stækkaði} \]

\[ \text{garden-the(N) grew-bigger} \]

\[ \rightarrow *\text{Pað} \text{ var stækkað.} \]

\[ \text{there was grown-bigger} \]

d. True middles (cf. below), since these do not have any agent:

\[ \text{Dyrnar opnuðust} \]

\[ \text{door-the(N) opened} \]

\[ \rightarrow *\text{Pað} \text{ var opnast.} \]

\[ \text{there was opened} \]

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 dáð 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):\footnote{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/ hústað/pissað/ælt, 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 framsetir,}
(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 bölvæð.  
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 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.
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 bókin, lit. ‘There was discussed a book.’ Similarly, (5.54b) would be fine if bókinni was indefinite: það var hælt bókinni, 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) intran- sitive 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 gólfínu 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)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] Einhver nemandi mun hafa verið í bókasafninu.  
    some student(Nsg.m.) will have been in library-the
  \item[(b)] Einhver nemandi hefur verið tekinn í bókasafninu.  
    some student(Nsg.m.) has been taken(Nsg.m.) in library-the
  \item[(c)] Einhverjum nemanda hefur verið hjálpað í bókasafninu.  
    some student(Dsg.m.) has been helped(Nsg.n.) in library-the
\end{itemize}

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)  
\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] Það mun einhver nemandi hafa verið í bókasafninu.  
    there will some student(Nsg.m.) have been in library-the
  \item[(b)] Það hefur einhver nemandi verið tekinn í bókasafninu.  
    there has some student(Nsg.m.) been taken(Nsg.m.) in library-the
  \item[(c)] Það hefur einhverjum nemanda verið hjálpað í bókasafninu.  
    there has some student(Dsg.m.) been helped(Nsg.n.) in library-the
\end{itemize}

(5.58) Not between a non-finite auxiliary and a non-finite verb:
\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] *Það mun hafa einhver nemandi verið í bókasafninu.  
  \item[(b)] *Það hefur verið einhver nemandi tekinn í bókasafninu.  
  \item[(c)] *Það hefur verið einhverjum nemanda hjálpað í bókasafninu.  
\end{itemize}

(5.59) After an intransitive or passive main verb:
\begin{itemize}
  \item[(a)] Það mun hafa verið einhver nemandi í bókasafninu.  
    there will have been some student(Nsg.m.) in library-the
  \item[(b)] Það hefur verið tekinn einhver nemandi í bókasafninu.  
    there has been taken some student(Nsg.m.) in library-the
  \item[(c)] Það hefur verið hjálpað einhverjum nemanda í bókasafninu.  
    there has been helped some student(Dsg.m.) in library-the
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 hじlpaδ (af kennaranum).
   some student was helped (by teacher-the)

→ Paδ var hじlpaδ 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. Paδ var mikiδ talaδ um einhverjum bёkur í þættinum.
   there was much talked about some books in programme-the
   ‘Some books were talked about a lot in the programme.’

b. Paδ var mikiδ talaδ um þessar bёkur í þættinum.
   there was much talked about these books in programme-the
   ‘These books were talked about a lot in the programme.’

c. (?*Paδ var mikiδ hёlt einhverjum mёlfraδbёkömk í þættinum.
   there was much praised some linguistics-books(Dpl.) in programme-the

d. *Paδ var mikiδ hёlt þessum bёkömk 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 Passive 14 has been studied in considerable detail by Maling and Sigрδur Sigурjёnsдёttir (see, e.g., Sigрδur Sigурjёnsдёttir

13 As Halldор Ёrmann Sigурдsson 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)
   Paδ voru bara gefin út fjёgur leyfi af menntamалarдёунeytinу nйnа.
   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, Sigрδur Sigурjёnsдёttir 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 Bernóðusson 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/Einhverrar 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/einhverrar 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
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NePa</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Það var barið stráð.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>case, agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was hit(n.sg.) boy(Asg.m.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Það var barið barn.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was hit(n.sg.) child(N/Asg.n.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Það var hjálpað manni.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was helped(n.sg.) man(Dsg.m.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Það var barið stráðinn.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>case, agree, def.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was hit(n.sg.) the boy(Asg.m.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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?
there beaten the girl in mess
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 *strákimn* ‘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):

\[(5.66) \quad \text{*Tá hefur komið Ólafur of seint í skólann í dag.}\]
\[\quad \text{there has come Olaf(Nsg.m.) too late to school-the today}\]

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):

\[(5.67)\]
\[a. \quad \text{*Tá hefur komið strákur of seint í skólann í dag.}\]
\[\quad \text{there has come boy too late to school-the today}\]
\[b. \quad \text{Tá hafði komið einver strákur of seint í þennan dag.}\]
\[\quad \text{there had come some boy(NSg.m.) too late to school that day(A)}\]

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):

\[(5.68)\]
\[\quad [\text{IP } e \quad [\text{ Aux } [\text{ VP V NP}]]]\]
\[\quad \text{the following two analyses suggest themselves:}\]
\[a. \quad \text{This is a passive construction, which implies that the subject position is not assigned}\]
\[\quad \text{any thematic role and the overt NP is a formal subject.}\]
\[b. \quad \text{This is an active construction with a phonologically null subject position which is}\]
\[\quad \text{assigned a thematic role by the main verb and overt NP is an object.}\]

These different analyses make different predictions about the formal and
functional properties of this construction as shown here:
a. Under a standard passive hypothesis we might expect the following:\textsuperscript{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)\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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?

\textsuperscript{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 ticket(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:

\[(5.70)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad *\text{Var } \text{stúlkuna} \quad \text{lamið} \quad \text{í klessu?} \\
& \quad \text{was } \text{girl-the(Asg.f.)} \quad \text{beaten} \quad \text{in mess} \\
\text{b.} & \quad *\text{Eftir matinn var } \text{mig} \quad \text{beðið} \quad \text{að vaska upp.} \\
& \quad \text{after meal-the was } \text{me(Asg.)} \quad \text{asked} \quad \text{to wash up}
\end{align*}
\]

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):

\[(5.71)\]
\[
\begin{align*}
& \quad ?*\text{Það var skoðað bílinn af bifvélavirkjanum.} \\
& \quad \text{there was examined(Nsg.n.) car-the(Asg.m.) by mechanic-the(Dsg.m.)}
\end{align*}
\]

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 innan dyra út af óveðrinu. (82%)
   there was kept refl. in doors because of bad-weather-the
b. *Það var hjálpað hverjum óðrum. (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 shave REFL
   ‘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. 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 líði (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.
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 tímann.
    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 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Það var dött í hálkunni…</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there was fallen on the ice…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. verbal morphology</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. position and role of the associate NP</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. agentive af-phrase</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. binding of reflexives</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. subject-oriented adjuncts (participles)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. extension of impersonal actives</td>
<td>?</td>
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</table>

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 Gisli 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 Gisli 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. Víníð helltist 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 klæð-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 klæð-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 settust for setstu)
legg-st-tu →legg-ðu-st ‘lie down’ (giving leggðust for leggstu)

This is probably rather rare, although it has not been investigated systematically.
(5.85) a. lenda: það var ekki lendandi á flugvellinum.
   ‘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 flugvellinum.
   ‘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 minnast þess lengi.
   people will remember that(Gsg.n.) long

d. Þess verður lengi minnast.
   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:
5.1.5.2 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 Gísli Jónsson 2005a:402ff.):

(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 Gísli 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):

(a) verbs expressing a reflexive or a reciprocal relationship:
   klaða ‘dress’  –  klaðast ‘dress oneself’
   bíta ‘bite’  –  bíast ‘bite each other’
(b) verbs expressing a passive or inchoative relationship:
   opin ‘open (tr.)’  –  opinast ‘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)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>transitive</th>
<th>intransitive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>non-<code>st</code>-verb</td>
<td><code>-st</code>-verb</td>
<td>homophonous</td>
<td><code>-na</code>-verb</td>
<td>strong verb</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>auka ‘increase’</td>
<td>aukast ‘increase’</td>
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<tr>
<td>breyta ‘change’</td>
<td>breytast ‘change’</td>
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<tr>
<td>dreifa ‘spread’</td>
<td>dreifast ‘spread’</td>
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<tr>
<td>finna ‘find’</td>
<td>finnast ‘be found’</td>
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<tr>
<td>loka ‘close’</td>
<td>lokast ‘close’</td>
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<td>loka ‘close’</td>
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<tr>
<td>opna ‘open’</td>
<td>opnast ‘open’</td>
<td>opna ‘open’</td>
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<tr>
<td>snúa ‘turn’</td>
<td>snúast ‘turn’</td>
<td>snúa ‘turn’</td>
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<tr>
<td>hækka ‘raise’</td>
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<td>hækka ‘rise’</td>
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<tr>
<td>byrja ‘begin’</td>
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<td>byrja ‘begin’</td>
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<tr>
<td>hvolfa ‘turn over’</td>
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<td>hvolfa ‘capsize’</td>
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<tr>
<td>dýpka ‘deepen’</td>
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<td>dýpka ‘deepen’</td>
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<tr>
<td>beygja ‘bend’</td>
<td>beygjast ‘bend’</td>
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<td>bogna ‘bend’</td>
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<tr>
<td>brjóta ‘break’</td>
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<td>broma ‘break’</td>
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<tr>
<td>rifa ‘tear’</td>
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<td>rifna ‘tear’</td>
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<tr>
<td>losa ‘loosen’</td>
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<td>losa ‘loosen’</td>
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<tr>
<td>velta ‘roll’</td>
<td>veltast ‘roll’</td>
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<td>velta ‘roll’</td>
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<tr>
<td>skella ‘clash’</td>
<td>skellast ‘clash’</td>
<td>skella ‘clash’</td>
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<tr>
<td>sökkva ‘sink’</td>
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<td>sökkva ‘sink’</td>
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<tr>
<td>sleppa ‘let lose’</td>
<td></td>
<td>sleppa ‘escape’</td>
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</table>

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 Valfells 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. Mjólin helltist niður.
   milk-the(N) spilled down
   ‘The milk spilled.’
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.):
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:
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 Gíslason 2005a:405–6):

(5.102)


Jóhannes Gíslason (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?
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):
   hrasa ‘stumble’, hristast ‘shake’ …

b. Intransitive inchoative verbs that involve a change of state:
   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’, *hefjast* ‘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’, *hrístast* ‘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’,
   *öska* ‘yell’ . . .

c. Predicates describing animal sounds:

d. Certain (normally involuntary) bodily processes:

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

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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.  

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 of the chapter).

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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.’
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** fjölgadi/fækkaði.
    teachers(D) got-more/less-numerous

c. Þeir hvolfdu **bátum**.
    they(N) capsized boat-the(D)
d. Bátum hvolfdi.\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{align*}
\text{(5.117) a. } & \text{Þeir breikkuðu veginn.} \\
& \text{they(N) widened road-the(A)} \\
\text{b. Vegurinn breikkaði.} \\
& \text{road-the(N) widened} \\
\text{c. Við byrjuðum leikinn klukkan sjö.} \\
& \text{we(N) began game-the(A) clock seven} \\
\text{d. Leikurinn byrjaði klukkan sjö.} \\
& \text{game-the(N) began clock seven} \\
\text{e. Þau dýpkuðu/grynnkuðu/mjókkuðu/víkkuðu skurðinn.} \\
& \text{they(N) deepened/made shallower/narrower/wider ditch-the(A)} \\
\text{f. Skurðurinn dýpkáði/grynkaði/mjókkaði/víkkaði.} \\
& \text{ditch-the(N) deepened/got shallower/narrower/wider.}
\end{align*}

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

\textsuperscript{26} Intransitive hvolf in can be used with a nominative subject in the stative sense of ‘lying upside down’:

(i) Báturinn hvolfir í fjörunni.
boat-the(N) lies-upside-down in beach-the
‘The boat is lying upside down on the beach.’

(5.118) a. Þau óku bílnum hratt.  
    they(N) drove car-the(D) fast

b. Bíllinn/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/Steinimum valt niður brekkuna. (strong verb)  
    stone-the(N/*D) rolled down slope-the
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. setti seg ‘sat self’)  
b. Teir berjast altið. they fight always (reciprocal meaning, lit. ‘they hit each other …’)  
c. Oyggin 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):
Regular passives are formed with the auxiliaries \textit{verða} ‘be, become’ and \textit{blı´va} ‘be, become’. They are apparently equivalent in most respects (except that \textit{blı´va} is presumably a loanword from Danish and hence possibly more colloquial). In addition, the auxiliary \textit{vera} ‘be’ is sometimes used to form the passive.\textsuperscript{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):\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{align}
(5.123) \quad a. \quad & \text{Teir takkaðu honum.} \quad \text{they thanked him(D)} \\
& \text{Honum bleiv takkað.} \quad \text{him(D) was thanked(sup.)} \\
& *\text{Hann bleiv takkaður.} \quad \text{he(N) was thanked(sup.)}
\end{align}

\textsuperscript{27} Because there is no [ð] in Faroese although \textit{ð} is used in the spelling, many forms of \textit{vera} ‘be’ and \textit{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’).

\textsuperscript{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.
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 brúdleyp.
    they invited her(D/*A) in wedding
    ‘They invited her to a wedding.’

    b. *Henni bleiv boðið í brúdleyp.
        her(D) was invited(sup.) in wedding

    c. Hon bleiv boðin í brúdleyp.
        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 uppaftur á turt.
    they helped him(D/*A) back on dry (land)
    ‘They helped him back on dry land.’

    b. *Honum varð hjálpt uppaftur á turt.
        him(D) was helped(sup.) back on dry

    c. Hann varð hjálptur uppaftur 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 altíð.
    they praised her(D/*A) always

    b. *Henni varð altíð róst.
        her(D) was always praised(sup.)

    c. Hon varð altíð 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. Hóskuldur 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. Kúgvin 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 kúgvin.
      farmer-the(D) was sold(Nsg.f.) cow-the(Nsg.f.)
      ‘The farmer was sold a cow.’

   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. Tilfarið 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.
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):

\[(5.132)\quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } \ast \text{Bóndanum varð selt } & \text{eina kúgv.} \\
& \text{farmer-the was sold(sg.n.) a cow(Asg.f.)}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{b. } \ast \text{Gentuni bleiv givið } & \text{eina teldu.} \\
& \text{girl-the(D) was given(sg.n.) a computer(Asg.f.)}
\end{align*}\]

This fact has not figured prominently in the theoretical discussion so far (but see the comments in section 4.2.6 above).

\[30\text{ One of the examples cited by Barnes (1986b) is an exception to this. He maintains that his informants preferred the b-variant to the a-variant below:}\]

\[(i)\quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } \ast \text{Honum varð ynskt ein } & \text{góð } \text{ferð.} \\
& \text{him(D) was wished a good journey(N)}
\end{align*}\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{b. } \ast \text{Honum varð ynskt eine } & \text{góða } \text{ferð.} \\
& \text{him(D) was wished a good journey(A)}
\end{align*}\]

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:

\[(i)\quad \begin{align*}
\ast \text{Ein góð ferð varð } & \text{ynskt honum.} \\
& \text{a good journey(N) was wished him(D)}
\end{align*}\]

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):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(5.133)} & \quad \text{a. Politiet} & \text{fjernede} & \text{cyclerne.} & \text{(Da)} \\
& \text{the police} & \text{removed} & \text{the bicycles} & \\
\text{b. Cyclerne} & \text{fjernedes} & \text{(af politiet).} & \text{(by the police)} & \\
& \text{the bicycles} & \text{were-removed} & & \\
\text{c. Svigerfaren} & \text{eier} & \text{huset.} & \text{(No)} & \\
& \text{the father-in-law} & \text{owns} & \text{the house} & \\
\text{d. Huset} & \text{eies} & \text{(av svigerfaren).} & \text{(by the father-in-law)} & \\
& \text{the house} & \text{is-owned} & & \\
\text{e. En expertgrupp} & \text{utarbetade} & \text{rapporten.} & \text{(Sw)} & \\
& \text{an expert-group} & \text{prepared} & \text{the report} & \\
\text{f. Rapporten} & \text{utarbetades} & \text{(av en expertgrupp).} & \text{(by an expert-group)} & \\
& \text{the report} & \text{was-prepared} & & \\
\end{align*}
\]

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):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(5.134)} & \quad \text{a. Dörren} & \text{öppnades} & \text{av vaktmestaren.} & \text{ passive) (Sw)} \\
& \text{the door} & \text{was-opened} & \text{by the janitor} & \\
\text{b. Dörren} & \text{öppnades} & \text{utan att någon öppnade den.} & \text{ (middle)} & \\
& \text{the door} & \text{opened} & \text{without anybody opening it} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

Consider also the following Norwegian examples (see Faarlund et al. 1997:511):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{öppnades} & \text{av vaktmestaren.} & \text{(Sw)} \\
\text{was-opened} & \text{by the janitor} & \\
\text{utan att någon öppnade den.} & \text{ without anybody opening it} & \\
\text{opened} & & \\
\end{align*}
\]

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).
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 *bits*. (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 Hinchcliffe 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 var 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):
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 1995; Jonas 1996; 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). 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.; Postal and Pullum 1988 – see also the discussion in Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:167–70 and Eiríkur Þorsteinnsson 1990:371ff. and references cited there).

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 Þorsteinnsson 1990:371ff. and references cited there).
Different types of expletive constructions

(6.1) Existential constructions:

a. Það eru mýs í baðkerinu.
   there are mice in bathtub-the

b. Það búa tröll í fjöllunum.
   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 þrír laxar í fyrra.
   there were-caught three salmons last year

b. Það hafa skemmst einhver þök í stórhríðinni.
   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 hlæjandi að þessu.
   there is not laughing at this
   ‘This is no laughing matter.’

b. það er varla talandi við hann.
   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 hvessa 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].
   it is likely that moon-the be(subjunct.) of cheese

b. það getur valdið útbrotum [að liggja í sólbæði].
   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 bathtub-the

b. Komu (*það) fjórir nemendur í tímann 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 miðnætts?
   was (*there) danced to midnight

e. Voru (*það) dregnir út þrfr vinningar?
   were (*there) drawn out three prizes

f. Veiddust (*það) þrír laxar í fyrra?
   were-caught (*there) three salmons last year

g. Beit (*það) maður hund á réttardansleiknum?
   bit (*there) man dog at roundup-dance-the

h. Er (*það) ekki hlæjandi 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 Rógnvaldsson 2002 and Höskuldur Thráinsson 2005:588ff.):

(i) a. Pað [að bensínið er dýrt] skiptir engu máli en...
   it [that the gas is expensive] makes no difference but...

b. Skiptir pað engu máli [að bensínið er dýrt]?
   makes it no difference that the gas is expensive
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:

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
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 aldreí ‘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 aldreí ‘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 haði alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. (top position)
   some cat/cat-the had always been in kitchen-the

b. Í eldhúsinu haði (?)einhver köttur/kötturinn alltaf verið. (can. subj. pos.)
   in kitchen-the had some cat/cat-the always been

c. Það haði einhver köttur/*kötturinn alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. (higher interm.)
   there had some cat/*cat-the always been in kitchen-the

d. Það haði alltaf einhver köttur/*kötturinn verið í eldhúsinu. (lower interm.)
   there had always some cat/*cat-the been in kitchen-the

e. Það haði 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. 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). 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). But if a lower intermediate position is

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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.

‘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.

b. Það hafði aldrei neinn köttur verið í eldhúsinu.

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 composi-
tional 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
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 Gíslason Jónsson 1996:185–6).
Different types of expletive constructions

(6.19)

| a. bare indefinites               | köttur ‘cat’       |
| b. modified indefinites           | svartur köttur ‘black cat’ |
| c. plain definite NPs             | kötturinn ‘the cat’ |
| d. generic NPs (with individual-level predicates) | kettir ‘cats’ |
| e. universally quantified NPs without the definite article | allir kettir ‘all cats’, sérhver köttur ‘every cat’ |
| f. universally quantified NPs with the definite article | allir kettirnir ‘all the cats’ |
| g. (existentially) quantified NPs | einhver köttur ‘some cat’ |
| h. partitive NPs                  | einn af köttunum ‘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. ?Pað hefur köttur alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. | there has cat always been in kitchen-the |
| b. Pað hefur svartur köttur alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. | there has black cat always been in kitchen-the |
| c. *Pað hafa kettir alltaf verið gáfaðir eins lengi og menn muna. | there have cats always been smart as long as people remember |
| d. *Pað hefur kötturinn alltaf verið í eldhúsinu. | there has cat-the always been in kitchen-the |

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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. *Pað eru fiðluleikarar gáfaðir (svo þetta gengur ekki). (so this won’t work)
| there are violinists smart |
| b. ?Pað eru fiðluleikarar veikir (svo þetta gengur ekki). (so this won’t work)
| there are violinists sick |

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.
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 Gísli 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 *máður* ‘man’ we get the following minimal pair, where the stressed MADUR must mean ‘a man’ because the generic pronoun is always unstressed:

(6.23) Það hefur ?MADUR/*máður 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. Vangsnes 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 Vangsnes 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 Vangsnes 2002a:50 – the first example is his):

(i) a. *Það* eru fiðluleikarar þreyttir á tónleikunum.  
there are violinists tired at concert-the

b. *Það* voru fiðluleikarar veikir á tónleikunum núna.  
there were violinists sick at concert-the now

c. *Það* voru tveir fiðluleikarar veikir á tónleikunum.  
there were two violinists sick at concert-the

d. *Það* voru tveir fiðluleikarar gáfaðir á tónleikunum.  
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 kettir*ni*r* ‘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 Gíslí 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 Gíslí 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 hefur alltaf kettir verið gáfaðir eins lengi og menn muna.*  
there has 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 hefur alltaf allir kettir verið í eldhúsinu.*  
there has always all cats been in kitchen-the

f. *Það hefur alltaf allir kettirnir verið í eldhúsinu.*  
there has 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 *kóttur* í eldhúsinu.

\(b. \) Það hefur *alltaf* verið *svartur kóttur* í eldhúsinu.

e. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *kettir* gáfaðir eins lengi og menn muna.

c. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *kettir* í eldhúsinu.

d. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *kótturinn* í eldhúsinu.

e. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *einhver kóttur* í eldhúsinu.

f. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *allir kettir* í eldhúsinu.

g. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *einhver kóttur* í eldhúsinu.

h. *Það hafa alltaf verið* *einn af köttunum* í eldhúsinu.

Here the judgements indicate two differences very clearly: first, the bare indefinite NP *kóttur* ‘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).\(^\text{13}\) 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 allt alf verið allir kettirnir í eldhúsinu.
   there have always been all cats-the in kitchen-the

I do not have any account of this.
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:

(6.31)  

a. *Það eru ekki allir smokkarnir prófaðir af RFSU.*

\[
\text{there are not all condoms tested by RFSU.}
\]

‘It is not the case that all the condoms are tested by RFSU.’

b. *Það eru ekki allir smokkar prófaðir af RFSU.*

\[
\text{there are not all condoms tested by RFSU.}
\]

‘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

(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 entitities with uniquely identifying descriptions’ discussed by Jóhannes are reminiscent of some of the examples originally pointed out by Eiríkur Rógnvaldsson (1982a, 1984a). Some of his examples are given below (with some additions):

(6.39) a. Það er alltaf fyrir hendi só 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 bað 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. 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 Rógnvaldsson 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. *Ég fór þegar það voru 20 mýs í baðkerinu.  
   I left when það were 20 mice in bathtub-the

(6.42) a. Ég fór þegar það voru 20 mýs í baðkerinu.  
   I left when það 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:

Vikner (1995a:186) proposes in fact that það is generated in SpecIP (for case assignment purposes) but then obligatorily moved to SpecCP.
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:

(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?
‘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?
‘I wonder if John will be interviewed tomorrow.’

b. *Ætli á morgun verði talað við Jón?
‘I wonder if tomorrow will-be(subjunct.) spoken to John 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).
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 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.

   ‘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 . . . /*Pað fram hefur . . . /*Fram hefur það . . . /*Pað 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 Gísli Jónsson 1991; Hóskuldur 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.  Pað var þá sem það voru einhverjir kettir reknir út.
        it was then that there were some cats driven out

        b.  Pað 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. *Pað var þá sem út voru einhverjir kettir reknir.
        it was then that out were some cats driven
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. VPComp) 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

Í dag hafa verið nokkrir kettir/*allir kettirnir í eldhúsinu.

today have been some cats/*all the cats in kitchen-the

‘Today some cats/all the cats have been in the kitchen.’

c. 

d. 

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 einhverjar kettir ‘some cats’, just as it would in a particle construction like the following:

(i) 

Pað 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.
eldhúsínú ‘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 eldhúsínú hafa nokkrir kettir/allir kettírnir verið í dag.
in kitchen-the have some cats/all cats-the been today

b. Í eldhúsínú hafa verið nokkrir kettír/*allir kettírnír 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 Gíslí 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 German outside Insular Scandinavian: as Vikner (1995a) describes in detail, for instance, transitive expletives are also found in German.
The copula and (other) unaccusative verbs: generally accepted:

(a) Tað eru mýs í baðikarinum.
   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.’

Other intransitive verbs: generally accepted:

Tað dansaði eitt par í havanum í gjárkvøldið.
   there danced a pair in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
   ‘A couple danced in the garden yesterday evening.’

Impersonal passives: generally accepted:

Tað bleiv dansað í havanum í gjárkvøldið.
   there was danced in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
   ‘People danced in the garden yesterday evening.’

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.’

Expletive passives: quite generally accepted:

Tað blivu nógv hús keypt í Fuglafirði í fjór.
   there were many houses bought in Fuglafjørður in last-year
   ‘Many houses were bought in Fuglafjørður last year.’

Weather verbs: generally accepted:

Tað regnar ofta í Havn.
   it rains frequently in Tórshavn
   ‘It frequently rains in Tórshavn.’

Extraposition constructions (predicates taking finite or non-finite clausal subjects): generally accepted:

(a) Tað er lítið skilagott [at koyra við summardekkum 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 gjárkvøldið.
   in garden-the was (there) much danced in yesterday-evening-the

d. Í Fuglafirði blivu (tað) keypt nógv hús.
   in Fuglafjørður were (there) bought many houses

e. Í Havn regnar (tað) ofta.
   in Tórshavn rains (it) often

f. Er (tað) skilagott [at koyra við summardekkum 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; Vangsnes 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.’
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):

\[\text{(6.64)}\]
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Det har} \quad \text{ein katt} \quad \text{vore} \quad \text{på} \quad \text{kjøkenet.} \quad \text{(No)} \\
& \quad \text{there has} \quad \text{a cat} \quad \text{been} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{kitchen-the}
\end{align*}
\begin{align*}
\text{b.} & \quad \text{Det har} \quad \text{vore} \quad \text{ein katt} \quad \text{på} \quad \text{kjøkenet.} \\
& \quad \text{there has} \quad \text{been} \quad \text{a cat} \quad \text{in} \quad \text{kitchen-the}
\end{align*}
\begin{align*}
\text{c.} & \quad \text{Der er} \quad \text{en dreng} \quad \text{kommet.} \quad \text{(Da)} \\
& \quad \text{there is} \quad \text{a boy} \quad \text{come}
\end{align*}
\begin{align*}
\text{d.} & \quad \text{Der er} \quad \text{kommet} \quad \text{en dreng.} \\
& \quad \text{there is} \quad \text{come} \quad \text{a boy}
\end{align*}

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):
Different types of expletive constructions

(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 baðkarinnum.  
   there have some mice been in bathtub-the
   ‘There have been some mice in the bathtub.’

b. Tað hava verið **nakrar mýs** í baðkarinnum.  
   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 Fuglafjörður
   ‘Many houses were bought in Fuglafjörður.’

f. Tað blivu keypt **nógv hús** í Fuglafirði.  
   there were bought many houses in Fuglafjörður
   ‘Many houses were bought in Fuglafjörður.’

g. Tað hevur **eitt par** dansað í havanum í gjárkvöldið.  
   there has a pair danced in garden-the in yesterday-evening-the
   ‘A couple have danced in the garden last night.’

h. *Tað hevur dansað **eitt par** í havanum í gjárkvöldið.  
   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.
Some theoretical and comparative issues

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 Hóskuldur 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 puellam amat. (SOV, Lat)
     a.’ Drengurinn stúlkuna elskar. (*SOV, Ic)

     b. Puer amat puellam. (SVO, Lat)
     b.’ Drengurinn elskar stúlkuna. (SVO, Ic)

     c. Puellam amat. (OSV, Lat)
     c.’ *Stúlkuna drengurinn elskar. (*OSV, Ic)
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 fann þjóf í húsinu.  
   police-the(N) found thief(A) in building-the  
   ‘The police found a thief in the building.’

b. Þjóf fann lögreglan í húsinu.  
   thief(A) found police-the(N) in building-the

c. Þjófinn fann lögreglan í húsinu.  
   thief-the(A) found police-the(N) 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:
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  
→ ?*Lesa 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.
      read(past part.) were books-the up to pieces.
      (passive participle fronted)

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 Sigrún(A).
   I have never spoken to Sigrun(A)

b. Sigrún(A) hef ég aldrei talað við __.
   have I never spoken __
   (preposition stranded)

c. Við Sigrún(A) hef ég aldrei talað __.
   to Sigrun(A) have I never spoken __
   (PP fronted)

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 talaðíðu við __?
   with whom(A) spoke-you with
   ‘Who did you talk to?’

b. *Við Maríu talaði ég við __.
   to Mary(A) spoke I __

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?)) 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.
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.
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. *[Lesa 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 \textit{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:
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 \( \text{það} \) although ‘expletive insertion’ and SF often seem to have similar effects (see, e.g., Friðrik Magnússon 1990; Jóhannes Gíslí 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):

\[
\begin{align*}
(7.31) & \quad a. & \text{Þetta er mál sem } \text{það} & \text{hefur verið rætt.} \\
& & \text{this is issue that } & \text{has been discussed} \\
& b. & \text{Þetta er mál sem } \text{það} & \text{hefur ekki verið rætt.} \\
& & \text{this is issue that } & \text{not has been discussed} \\
& c. & \text{Þetta er mál sem } \text{það} & \text{hefur komið upp.} \\
& & \text{this is issue that } & \text{come forth}
\end{align*}
\]

The same is usually true of gaps created by \( w/h \)-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). 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 Hóskuldur 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)):

There are some instances of passable examples of overt expletive það in relativization and *wh*-extraction contexts (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Hóskuldur 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topicalization</th>
<th>Stylistic Fronting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. applies to:</td>
<td>NPs, PPs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. emphasis on fronted constituent:</td>
<td>common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. application in embedded clauses:</td>
<td>uncommon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. application in relative clauses and wh-clauses:</td>
<td>questionable (at best)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. boundedness:</td>
<td>unbounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. gap requirement:</td>
<td>does not require a ‘subject gap’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(7.39)

a. Different constituents moved:

Top: **þennan 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 *þennan 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 HöskuldurThráinsson 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 fjólf 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. Dessi 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. DESSUM 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, Olafur 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 *litið 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 *litið lamb* in constructions like (7.45b) depending on their ‘source’, that is, accusative vs. nominative. Since *litið lamb* is neuter we cannot tell, but once we select a different noun, we see that both possibilities exist (for most speakers at least):  

(7.48)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(7.48a)</th>
<th>(7.48b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Það var *litið 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)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(7.49a)</th>
<th>(7.49b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. María sá *litið 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:

(7.50)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(7.50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
    Mary saw little dog that Mary saw |

10 This is of some comparative interest since both variants are also found in Faroese (cf. Petersen 1999; Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:198).
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; Eirikur 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:

\[
\text{Nokkrir málfræðingar} \quad \text{höfðu verið í heita pottinum.} \\
\text{some linguists had been in hot tub-the}
\]

\[
\rightarrow \text{Það} \quad \text{höfðu verið nokkrir málfræðingar} \quad \text{í heita pottinum.} \\
\text{there had been some linguists in hot tub-the}
\]

(7.52) Heavy NP Shift:

\[
\text{Ég sá nokkra málfræðinga með ráðstefnumöppur í strætó.} \\
\text{I saw some linguists with conference-folders in bus}
\]

‘I saw some linguists with conference folders in the bus.’

\[
\rightarrow \text{Ég sá __ í strætó nokkra málfræðinga með ráðstefnumöppur.} \\
\text{I saw in bus some linguists with conference-folders}
\]

Note that the following is also bad:

(i) *Þar [sem nemendumir fundu smjörið] var í ruslafötunni.

\[
\text{there that students-the found butter-the was in garbage-can-the}
\]

although *par sem often corresponds to English where.
Extraposition:

a. \( [\text{CP Að Halldór missti af strætó}] \) olli vandræðum.
   that Halldor missed of bus caused troubles
   \( \rightarrow \text{Pað} \) olli vandræðum \( [\text{CP að Halldór missti af strætó}] \)
   It caused troubles that Halldor missed of bus
   ‘It caused problems that Halldor missed the bus.’

b. \( [\text{CP Að reykja sígarettur}] \) er hættulegt.
   to smoke(inf.)cigarettes is dangerous
   \( \rightarrow \text{Pað} \) er hættulegt \( [\text{CP að reykja sígarettur}] \)
   it is dangerous to smoke cigarettes

Extraposition out of NP:

a. \( [\text{NP Maðurinn [CP sem hringdi í gærkvöldi]}] \) 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.’
   \( \rightarrow [\text{NP Maðurinn _]} \) 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. \( [\text{NP Ritdómur [PP um nýjustu bók Chomskys]}] \) mun birtast í næsta hefti.
   review about newest book Chomsky’s will appear in next issue
   \( \rightarrow [\text{NP Ritdómur _]} \) 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. \( [\text{NP Sú staðreynd [CP að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt]}] \) er merkileg.
   that fact(f.) that earth-the shall be round is interesting(f.)
   ‘The fact that the earth is round is interesting.’
   \( \rightarrow f. [\text{NP Sú staðreynd _]} \) 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. \( [\text{NP Pað [CP að jörðin skuli vera hnöttótt]}] \) er merkilegt.
   that(n.) that earth-the shall be round is interesting(n.)
   ‘The fact that the earth is round is interesting.’
   \( \rightarrow [\text{NP Pað _]} \) 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 \textit{pað} here is not the expletive \textit{pað} but rather a
referential \textit{pað} which is not restricted to clause-initial position.
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 málfæðingar 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. Páð höfðu verið nokkrir málfæðingar 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. Páð höfðu verið í strætó nokkrir málfæðingar 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. Páð höfðu verið málfæðingar í strætó.
there had been linguists in bus

b. Páð höfðu verið í strætó málfæðingar.
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 málfæðinga í strætó.
I saw linguists in bus

‘I saw linguists in the bus.’

b. Ég sá _ í strætó málfæðinga.
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. Pá olli vandræðum [CP að Halldór missi af strætó] then caused troubles that Halldór missed of bus ‘Then it caused problems that Halldor missed the bus.’

b. Er hættulegt [CP að reykja sigarettur]? 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:

then caused that Halldór missed of bus troubles

b. *Er [CP að reykja sigarettur] 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 hafí bordað 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 hafí bordað hákarlinn]] er líklegt, en …  
   ‘It is likely that John has eaten shark-the is likely but …

b. [NP það __ ] er líklegt [CP að Jón hafí bordað hákarlinn], en …  
   ‘It is likely that John has eaten shark-the 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 hafí bordað 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.
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]?

‘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 extrapoosed 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, María. (Right Dislocation)

‘I don’t know her at all, Mary (that is).’

b. María, ég þekki hana ekkert. (Left Dislocation)

‘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 Gísli Jónsson 1991; Holmberg and Platzack 1995; Poole 1992, 1996; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1993). 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

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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.
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:

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):

    up have boys-the taken these potatoes

    b. ?*Lesa* munu strákarnir ___ einhverjar bækur.
    read(inf.) will boys-the ___ some books

    c. ?*Lesið* hafa strákarnir ___ flestar bækurnar.
    read(sup.) have boys-the ___ most books-the

    d. ?*Lesnar* voru bækurnar ___ upp til agna í fyrra.
    read(past part.) were books-the ___ up to pieces 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. *Pessar 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 strákarnir 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). 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.
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 pað ‘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 counter-examples 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. Dessari 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. Hóskuldur Thráinsson 1993 – see also Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir 1989 and Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson 1989:57–9 and the discussion in section 8.2.5 below):

\[(7.79)\]
\[
a. \ \text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *lofaði [að lesa allar bækurnar].} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that promised to read all books-the}
\]

\[
b. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *lesa lofaði [að __ allar bækurnar].} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that read promised to all books-the}
\]

\[
c. \ \text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *vildi [lesa allar bækurnar].} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that wanted read all books-the}
\]

\[
d. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *lesa vildi [ __ allar bækurnar].} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that read wanted all books-the}
\]

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:

\[(7.80)\]
\[
a. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem allar bækurnar *reyndi að lesa __ .} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that all books-the tried to read}
\]

‘This is the man that tried to read all the books.’

\[
b. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem allar bækurnar *vildi [ lesa __ .} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that all books-the wanted read}
\]

‘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:

\[(7.81)\]
\[
a. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *það reyndi að lesa allar bækurnar.} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that there tried to read all books-the}
\]

\[
b. \ *\text{Þetta er maðurinn sem *það vildi lesa allar bækurnar.} \\
this \ \text{is man-the that there wanted read all books-the}
\]

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 coin-
dexed 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, [sem það höfðu margar konur lesið t].
  this was book that there had many women read
b. Þetta var bók, [sem það voru margar konur hrfíanar af t].
  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, heldurðu [að það hafi flestir drukkið ti í partíinu]?
  which sort think-you that there have most-people drunk in party-the
b. Hvaða tegund, heldurðu [að það hafi verið drukkið mest af ti 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 ærw j lupinj (Sw, 16th century)

   that boiled are in lupin

   ‘... that are boiled in lupin.’

c. oc alt thet hin hører til er dræpet hauer __ (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 thet som skrifvit staar __ (Middle Da)

   then remembered him that which written stands

   ‘Then he remembered what is written.’
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 Hóskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:298–9; see also Barnes 1987, 1992):

(7.87) Filling subject gaps of subjectless verbs:

a. Vit spæla ikki fótþólt, tá ið ílla __ regnar __.
   we play not football when badly rains

b. Vit spæla ikki fótþólt, tá ið tað __ regnar ílla.
   we play not football when it rains badly

c. ?Vit spæla ikki fótþólt, tá ið __ regnar ílla.
   ‘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 there 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 __, var systir hansara.
   woman-the that home went was sister his

b. *Konan, sum tað __, var systir hansara.
   woman-the that there went home was sister his

c. Konan, sum __, var systir hansara.
   woman-the that went home was sister his
   ‘The woman that went home was his sister.’
Filling a subject gap in an indirect question:

a. Hann sá, hvör inn kom __.
   he saw who in came

b. *Hann sá hvör tað kom inn.
   he saw who there came in

c. Hann sá hvör __ 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

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:

a. *Regnar illa. (Fa)
   rains badly

b. *Hava verið mýs har.
   have been mice there

Although ‘yes/no’-questions are, of course, ‘exceptions’ to this – i.e., the sentences in (7.91) could be questions of that kind.

18
Although (7.92b) may be less than perfect, it is not completely out.\footnote{As Barnes (1987) points out, it is often easier to front negative objects, even if they are clearly maximal projections:}

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):

\begin{enumerate}
\item Hetta er nakað, sum neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd. (Fa)
\item Hetta er nakað, sum neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd.
\item Hetta er nakað, sum vanligt er neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd.
\item Hetta er nakað, sum vanligt er neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd.
\item Hetta er nakað, sum vanligt er neyvan er vanligt úti á bygd.
\end{enumerate}

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

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ein nál, ið onga tøðu hevur . . .
\item Ein nál, ið onga tøðu hevur . . .
\end{enumerate}

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:

\[(7.94) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Hetta has hardly been usual} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Vanligt has this hardly been}
\end{align*}
\]

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):

\[(7.95) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Those who have been in Denmark . . .} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Those who had met in Denmark . . .} \\
\text{c. } & \text{Those who have been in Denmark . . .} \\
\text{d. } & \text{Those who have been in Denmark . . .}
\end{align*}
\]

Similar examples can also be found in Icelandic (cf., e.g., Jóhannes Gisli 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:
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 __ icke hava verið í Danmark. (Fa)
   those that not have been in Denmark

b. *Tey sum í Danmark icke hava verið __ …
   those that in Denmark not have been

c. *Tey sum í Danmark hava icke verið __ …
   those that in Denmark have not been

d. Í Danmark havi eg icke verið __.
   in Denmark have I not been
   ‘I have not been in Denmark.’

(7.98) a. Þeir sem __ hafa ekki verið í Danmörku …
   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)
    ?Eg held að _ hafi ekk 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 ekk verið mýs í baðkerinu. (Ic)
    I think that there have not been mice in bathtub-the

c. Eg haldi, at íkki hava _ verið mýs í baðikarinum. (Fa)
    Ég held að ekk verið mýs í baðkerinu. (Ic)
    I think that not have been mice in bathtub-the

d. *Eg haldi, at verið hava íkki _ mýs í baðikarinum. (Fa)
    *Ég held að verið hafi ekk mýs í baðkerinu. (Ic)
    I think that been have not mice in bathtub-the

e. Eg haldi, at í baðikarinum hava íkki verið mýs _. (Fa)
    Ég held að í baðkerinu hafi ekk verið mýs _. (Ic)
    I think that in bathtub-the have not been mice

These examples show the following:

\[ (7.100) \]

a. 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).

b. This kind of subject gap can be ‘filled’ (or ‘neutralized’) by an overt expletive, by fronting a head and by fronting a maximal projection.

c. 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 íkki hava verið mýs í baðikarinum.
    I think that there not have been mice in bathtub-the

b. Eg haldi at í baðikarinum íkki 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:

\[(7.76)\]
\[
a. \text{Pað hafði ekki komið fram í umræðunum [að . . .]. (Ic)}
\]
\[
\text{It had not come forth in discussions-the that}
\]
\[
\text{‘It had not become clear that . . .’}
\]
\[
b. \text{Ekki hafði __ komið fram í umræðunum [að . . .].}
\]
\[
\text{not had come forth that in discussions-the that}
\]
\[
c. \text{Fram hafði ekki komið __ í umræðunum [að . . .].}
\]
\[
\text{forth had not come in discussions-the that}
\]
\[
d. \text{Í umræðunum hafði ekki komið fram __ [að . . .].}
\]
\[
\text{in discussions-the had not come forth that}
\]

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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{vera} ‘be’, counts as equally short (cf. Barnes 1987, section 2.7):

\begin{align*}
(7.101) & \quad a. \text{Tey, sum } \_ \text{ hava verið í Danmark } \ldots \text{(Fa)} \\
& \quad \text{those that have been in Denmark} \\
& \quad b. \text{Tey, sum verið } \_ \text{ í Danmark } \ldots \\
& \quad \text{those that been have in Denmark} \\
& \quad c. \text{Tey, sum í Danmark } \_ \text{ hava verið } \ldots \\
& \quad \text{those that in Denmark have been} \\
& \text{‘Those who have been in Denmark ’}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(7.102) & \quad a. \text{Hon spurdi, hvat } \_ \text{ hevði verið vanligt úti á bygd. } \text{(Fa)} \\
& \quad \text{she asked what had been usual out on village} \\
& \quad b. \text{Hon spurdi, hvat verið hevði } \_ \text{ vanligt úti á bygd. } \\
& \quad \text{she asked what been had usual out on village} \\
& \quad c. \text{Hon spurdi, hvat vanligt hevði verið } \_ \text{ úti á bygd. } \\
& \quad \text{she asked what usual had been out on village}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
(7.103) & \quad a. \text{Tað er hon, ið } \_ \text{ hevur fingið skyldina. } \text{(Fa)} \\
& \quad \text{it is she that has received blame-the} \\
& \quad b. \text{Tað er hon, ið fingið hevur } \_ \text{ skyldina. } \\
& \quad \text{it is she that received has blame-the} \\
& \quad c. \text{Tað er hon, ið skyldina hevur fingið } \_ . \\
& \quad \text{it is she that blame-the has received} \\
& \text{‘It is she who has received the blame.’}
\end{align*}

\textsuperscript{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 Róngvaldsson and Hóskuldur 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; Hóskuldur Thráinsson 1993).

c. SF moves elements to a ‘functional projection right above IP’ (Boskovic 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., Hóskuldur 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 __ hafði verið smyglað inn.
    he showed me bottles the 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 __ hófðu 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 hófðu __ 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 flóskurnar sem smyglad haði 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 smyglad ‘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 smyglad ‘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 haði __ 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 haði __ í bókinni var satt.
   c. *Allt sem hann í bókinni haði 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 . . .

‘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 **Mária** 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 **Máriú** 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. Þeiri sjá stúlkuna og þeim, /e/, finnst hún álitleg.  
        they(N) see(pl.) girl-the and them(D)/e find(sg.) she attractive

        b. Þeim, líkar maturinn og þeir, /e/, 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, kaupa matinn og þeir, borða hann einir.
   they(N) buy food-the and they(N) eat it alone(N)

b. Þeir, kaupa matinn og e, borða(pl.) hann einir.
   they(N) buy food-the and e eat(pl.) it alone(N)

c. Þeir, kaupa matinn og þeim, líkar hann einum/*einir.
   they(N) buy food-the and them(D) likes(sg.) it alone(D/*N)

d. Þeir, kaupa matinn og e, 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, keyptu matinn og þeir/e, borðuðu hann síðan.
   they bought food-the and they/e ate it then

b. Þeir keyptu matinn og síðan borðuðu þeir,/*e, 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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>indicative (ind.)</th>
<th>subjunctive (sbj.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pres.</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1sg.</td>
<td>hef</td>
<td>hafði</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 -</td>
<td>hefur</td>
<td>hafðir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>hefur</td>
<td>hafði</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pl.</td>
<td>höfum</td>
<td>höfðum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 -</td>
<td>hafði</td>
<td>höfðuð</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 -</td>
<td>hafa</td>
<td>höfðu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.):

(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)  
\[
\text{Ég færi ef ég gæti (en ég get það ekki).}
\]
\[
\text{I go(past.sbj.) if I could(past.sbj.) but I can it not}
\]
\[
\text{‘I would go if I could (but I can’t).’}
\]

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.  
\[
\text{Jón segir [að þú tækir blöðin ef . . .].}
\]
\[
\text{John says(pres.) that you took(past subj.) papers-the if}
\]
\[
\text{‘John says that you would take the papers if . . .’}
\]

b.  
\[
\text{Jón segir [að þú hefðir tekið blöðin ef . . .].}
\]
\[
\text{John says(pres.) that you had(past sbj.) taken papers-the if}
\]
\[
\text{‘John says that you would have taken the papers if . . .’}
\]

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.  
\[
\text{*Jón sagði [að þú takir blöðin].}
\]
\[
\text{John said(past) that you take(pres.sbj.) papers-the}
\]

b.  
\[
\text{*Jón sagði [að þú hafir tekið blöðin].}
\]
\[
\text{John said(past) that you have(pres.sbj.) taken papers-the}
\]

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.  
\[
\text{Hann spyr [hvort Jón taki bækurnar].}
\]
\[
\text{he asks if John take(pres.sbj.) books-the}
\]
\[
\text{‘He asks if John takes the books.’}
\]

b.  
\[
\text{Hann spyr [hvort Jón hafi tekið bækurnar].}
\]
\[
\text{he asks if John have(pres.sbj.) taken books-the}
\]
\[
\text{‘He asks if John has taken the books.’}
\]
c. Hann spurði [hvort Jón tæki bækurnar].  
He asked if John took books-

‘He asked if John took/would take the books.’

d. Hann spurði [hvort Jón hefði tekið bækurnar].  
He asked if John had taken books-

‘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 flót].  
John thinks that earth/the *is(ind.)/be(sbj.) flat

b. Jón veit [að jörðin er/*/sé flót].  
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; StefánEinarrson 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 fréttta ‘hear, learn’ are among them, in certain contexts at least (others include sýna fram á ‘prove’, sanna ‘prove’, viðurkenna ‘admit’, áttia 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)  
John heard that Mary had(ind.) come home but she came not  

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 *haðið/heðið 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 erð danskur].  
I hear that you are(ind.) Danish  
‘I (can) hear that you are Danish.’  

b. Ég heyri [að þú séð 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)  
Marína segir [að Jón viði [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:

\[2\] Some speakers can have indicative complements with harma ‘regret’.
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:

John regrets that Mary shall(*ind./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).

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:

María vissi [að þú komst heim].

‘Mary knew that you came home.’

María vissi [að þú kæmir heim].

‘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’:

Forsætisráðherrann harmaði [að fólkið 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/hörмуlegt/hræðilegt ‘be sad/regrettable/terrible, also show the same selection of mood. As usual, these clausal subjects are normally extraposed:

Pað er sorglegt/hörмуlegt/hræðilegt [að fólkið 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.):

   John sees that you are(ind./*subj.) best
   ‘John sees (realizes) that you are the best.’

   John sees not that you are(ind.) best
   ‘John doesn’t see (i.e. realize) that you are in fact the best.’

   John 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 ekkí [að þú *ert] bestur.
   I know not that you are(ind.) best
   ‘I didn’t know that you are (in fact) the 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 ekkí [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 ekkí [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 . . .’
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) Íg 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)

a. 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.’

b. 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.’

c. Ólafur beið eftir [að Helga kæmi].
Olaf waited for that Helga came(sbj.)
‘Olaf waited for Helga to come.’

d. Jón langar til [að María komi hingað].
John wants for that Mary come(sbj.) here
‘John wants Mary to come here.’
e. Lögreglan kenndi Ólafí 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. Pað 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. Pað hefur mikil áhrif á þetta [hver verður kosinn forseti].
   it has great influence on this who will-be elected president

   ‘Whichever 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 adverbal) 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./subj.) 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 reïður].  
   John left because he was(ind./*sbj.) 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].
\[\text{What am I to do if he is(ind.) not home}\]
\[\text{‘What am I supposed to do in case he is not at home?’}\]

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].
\[\text{what am I to do if he be(sbj) not home}\]
\[\text{‘What am I supposed to do in case he is not at home?’}\]

---

\(^6\) 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 kemust 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
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 [hvæn 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/hvæn/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 [med *sem* María fór __ í gær].
    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. Bandaríkjamáðurinn, sem reyndar er fæddur á Englandi, verður hér í vetur.
    American-the that actually was 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 [med hværjum María fór __ í gær].
    this is man-the 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 whose brother?’  

b. Êg veit ekki [bróðir hvers hann er __ ].  
‘I don’t know whose brother he is.’  

c. *Ôg veit ekki [hvers hann er bróðir __ ].  
‘I don’t know 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). 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. *Petta er maðurinn [systur *sem* ég hitti __ í gær].
‘This is the man-the sister that I met yesterday’

c. *Petta er maðurinn [sem ég hitti systur __ í gær].
‘This is the man-the sister that I met yesterday’

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 hélst [(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.
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 hélst [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 mòmmu [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 léysa 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 [léysa deiluna].
   bishop-the wants solve problem-the
   ‘The bishop wants to solve the problem.’
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 býla 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.'
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)

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13 The more common variant of this is the following:

(i) Það er auðvelt [að þrif a 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 álít 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 þorskinn].
   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.’
Complements of sensory verbs:

a. Við heyrðum [kettina læðast upp stigann].
   we heard cats-the(A) sneak up stairs-the

b. Ég sá [lögguna sveifla kylfunni].
   I saw cop-the(A) swing bat-the

c. Hún fann [kjóllinn 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:

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.’

Nominative with infinitive (with middles of sensory verbs):

a. Honum heyrðust [kettírniir læðast upp stigann].
   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 [kjóllínn 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:

properties of the (sometimes invisible) infinitival subject
agreement phenomena
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):
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’:

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.
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. \([\text{PRO}_{\text{arb}} \text{ synda yfir Ermarsund}]\) getur verið hættulegt.
   
   to swim across the English Channel can be dangerous

b. Maríai reyndi \([\text{PRO}_{i} \text{ synda yfir Ermarsund}]\).
   
   Mary tried to swim across the English Channel

c. María skipaði Jónið \([\text{PRO}_{i} \text{ synda yfir Ermarsund}]\).
   
   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. \([\text{PRO}_{\text{arb}} \text{ raka sig}_{\text{arb}}]\) er leiðinlegt.
   
   to shave REFL is boring

b. \(*\text{Égi reyndi} \([\text{PRO}_{i} \text{ raka sig}_{i}]\).\)
   
   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):

\[(i)\]

\([\text{PRO}_{\text{arb}} \text{ vera of ungur/ung}]\) getur verið erfitt.

\(\text{to be too young(m./f.) can be difficult}\)
In the a-example we have the third person reflexive form sig with an arbitrary reference (coindexed with, or bound by, the PROarb 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 vonta til
    Mary(Nsg.f.) hopes for
    [að PRO vanta ekki eina í tíma].
    to lack not alone(Asg.f.) in class
    ‘Mary hopes not to be missing alone from class.’

b. Haraldur kvíðir fyrir
    Harold(Nsg.m.) is-apprehensive about
    [að PRO 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
    teacher-the ordered John
    [að PRO vanta aldrei aftur einan í tíma].
    to lack never again alone(Asg.m.) in class
    ‘The teacher ordered John not to 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, kvöða 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 Hóskuldur 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. Íg 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. Íg **skipaði honum** \(_i\) [að PRO\(_i\) fara einn/(?)/eimun 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 Hóskuldur 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 eini 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., Hóskuldur Thráinsson 1979:301). Prepositional control verbs like *vonast til* ‘hope for’, *kvöða 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.’

b. **Það er leiðinlegt** [að PRO vera vísað einum á dyr].
   ‘It is sad to be shown alone(D) to door.’

In the latter example the PRO corresponds to the dative passive subject in *Honum var vísað á dyr* ‘Him(D) was shown the door.’
Haraldur is apprehensive about being thrown alone in dungeon.

Kennarinn ordered Jóni to lack never again alone 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. Maríai lofaði lesa ekki __ bókina.
Mary promised to read not book-the

b. Maríai lofaði lesa bókina ekki __ __.
Mary promised to read book-the not

‘Mary promised not to read the book.’

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’, *megg* ‘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 kóm 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 *geta*ð lesið bókina.
   Mary has could(sup.) read(sup.) book-the
   ‘Mary may have read the book.’ (epistemic)
   ‘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 tefti* ‘He may have played chess’ vs. *Hann hefur kunnað að teftla* ‘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.
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 heimsökn.
    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 snjóoa 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 kölña á kvöldin.
   it will often get-cooler in evening-the
   ‘It often tends to cool off in the evening.’ (epistemic, probability)

f. Þið munud 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:
    it tried to rain yesterday

    b. *Pað 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-
Pað, for
instance. One such verb is áforma ‘intend’, which can be contrasted with ætla
‘intend’:

(8.79)

a. Pað ætlar [að rigna á morgun].
    it intends to rain tomorrow
    ‘It will probably rain tomorrow.’ (epistemic, probability)

b. *Pað 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 auxil-
liaries). 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

(8.80)

a. Skörin færist 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.’
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. Haraldi 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. Haraldi 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)

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

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 ekki/aldrei fisk].  
  | you ought/need to eat not/never fish  
| c.  | þú átt/þarft ekki/aldrei fisk].  
  | you ought/need to eat not/never 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 kunni ekki [að opna lássinn].  
  | thief-the knew not to open lock-the  
  | ‘The thief didn’t know how to open the lock.’  
| b.  | þjófurinn kunni ekki lássinn].  
  | thief-the knew to ruin lock-the  
  | ‘The thief knew how not to ruin the lock.’  
| c.  | þjófurinn kunni ekki lássinn].  
  | 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].  
  | 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’:
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-að 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):

(8.87) a. Þig mun aldrei [vanta peninga].
you will never lack money
b. *Þig mun [vanta aldrei peninga].
you will lack never money

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:

(8.88) byrja ‘begin’, fara ‘begin’, hætta ‘stop’, taka ‘begin’, vera ‘be’
(i.e. progressive), vera búinn ‘be finished, be done, have’

(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 hvessa 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 lónu].*
there was stopped to hunt whales for long
‘People stopped hunting whales long ago.’

d. *Það var tekið [að hvessa 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 búið [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.’
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
    ‘People intended to paint the house.’

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.’
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 þrífa ‘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. ?Pessi dýkur er auðveldur að þrifja hann.
this cloth is very easy to clean it

b. ?Hinrik var erfiður að búa með honum.
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:

(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 Halldóð Ármann Sigurðsson 1981 – *e indicates ungrammatical omission as before):

(8.100) a. Ég kom [til (þess) að þú getir 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 Gíslí 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]].

b. Þetta eru börn [sem lesa munu [ __ þessar bækur]].

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:
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 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) ?Lesa 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).

(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/*e lesa __].
these are kids-the that books-the needed/could to read

‘These are the kids that began to read/were reading the books.’

c. Þetta eru börnin sem __ byrjuðu/voru [að lesa bækurnar].
these are kids-the that began/were to read books-the

d. Þetta eru börnin sem bækurnar byrjuðu/voru [að/*e 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/*e 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 væra frambærilega].
   we believe candidates-the(A) be pretty good
   ‘We believe the candidates to be pretty good.’

b. Complements of causative verbs:
   Þeir 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 látta ‘make, let’ and possibly some synonyms. The third involves a number of sensory verbs like sjá ‘see’, heyra ‘hear’, finna ‘feel’.

24 Kress (1982:246) includes bidja ‘ask’ in this class. This does not seem to be correct. The verb bidja appears to be a ditransitive (object) control verb much like skipa ‘order’. The main difference is that bidja 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 bidja, which is probably the reason why Kress includes it in his discussion of AcI verbs. Example: Hann baðði 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 áhlustadaði 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 argument. One of these properties is that it ‘undergoes’ passivization. Then an interesting agreement pattern is found (cf. Höskuldur Thráinsson 1979:360ff.; Andrews 1982b; Andrews 1982b; Andrews 1982b; Andrews 1982b; Andrews 1982b; 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 álít [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 álítin [vera talin [vera rík]].
   she(Nsg.f.) is considered(Nsg.f.) believe(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 ad-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 Árman Sigurðsson 1989:95–100):

(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):

(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:
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:

\[(8.116)\]
\[
a. \text{Hestarnir virtust } [\text{vera feitir}]. \\
\text{horses(Npl.m.) seemed(pl.) be fat(Npl.m.)} \\
b. \text{Hún taldi } [\text{hestana virðast } [\text{vera feita}]]. \\
\text{she believed horses-the(Apl.m.) seem(inf.) be fat(Apl.m.)}
\]

The raising verbs in question include \textit{virðast ‘seem’, sýnast ‘seem’, reynast ‘prove’, hýkja ‘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.):

\[(8.117)\]
\[
a. \text{Bíllinn sýndist } [\text{vera í lagi}]. \\
\text{car-the(N) looked be in order} \\
\text{‘The car seemed to be in order.’} \\
b. \text{Sýndist bíllinn } [\text{vera í lagi}]. \\
\text{seemed car-the(N) be in order} \\
\text{‘Did the car seem to be in order?’}
\]
c. Henni síndist [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 nágranni].
   me(D) proved Harold be good neighbour
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 Árman Sigurðsson cites the following examples in this connection (1989:85; see also Johnson and Vikner 1994:70):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{María hafði virst [lesa bókina].} \\
& \quad \text{Mary had seemed read book-the} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{*María hafði virst [sennilega lesa bókina].} \\
& \quad \text{Mary had seemed probably read book-the} \\
\text{c.} & \quad \text{*María hafði virst [lesa sennilega __ bókina].} \\
& \quad \text{Mary had seemed read probably __ book-the} \\
\text{d.} & \quad \text{*María hafði virst [lesa bókina sennilega __].} \\
& \quad \text{Mary had seemed read book-the probably} \\
\end{align*}
\]

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/?e 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/?e jörðin er rund. (Fa)
  Columbus proved that earth-the is round
\[
b.\] De spådde at/*e prisene ville stige. (No)
  they predicted that prices-the would rise
\[
c.\] Han hävdade att/?e 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/*e han arbejdede hårdt. (Da)
  they said to him that he worked hard
\[
b.\] Vita skalt tú, at/?e 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/*e 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/*e han skulle komma hem. (Sw)
  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 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 \textit{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’

c. De pratade om att/*e du skulle komma. (Sw)
   ‘They talked about that you would come’

The same is true of \textit{that}-clauses that are complements of nouns:

(8.126)

a. Den tanken at/*e prisene kommer til å stige, er forferdeleg. (No)
   ‘The thought that the prices will rise is terrible.’

b. Den omständigheten att/*e han aldrig visar seg, retar kamratarna. (Sw)
   ‘The fact that he never shows up annoys his friends.’

Fourth, the complementizer is obligatory if the \textit{that}-clause is in subject position:

(8.127)

a. At/*e jørðin er fløt, 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 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 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): 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* muni einhverntíma verða gert. (Ic)
   this hope we that will sometime to be done
   ‘This we hope will be done at some point.’

b. Hetta i vóna vit *at/*e *t* fer onkuntíð at verða gjört. (Fa)
   this book know I that will interest you
   ‘This book I know will interest you.’

c. Denne boka við *at/*e *t* 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):

\[(8.130)\]

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Det er ham, som/*e } \underline{\text{__}} \text{ har set mig.} \quad \text{ (Da)}\\
& \text{it is him that } \underline{\text{has seen me}}\\
\text{b. } & \text{Det er ham, som/e } \underline{\text{jeg}} \text{ har set } \underline{\text{__}}.\\
& \text{it is him that } \underline{\text{I have seen}}\\
\text{c. } & \text{Her er den boka som/*e } \underline{\text{__}} \text{ handlar om Kongen. } \quad \text{ (No)}\\
& \text{here is the book-the that } \underline{\text{is about king-the}}\\
\text{d. } & \text{Her er den boka som/e } \underline{\text{eg kjøpte } \underline{\text{__}} } \text{i går.}\\
& \text{here is the book-the that } \underline{\text{I bought yesterday}}\\
\text{e. } & \text{Bilen som/*e } \underline{\text{__}} \text{ står där er mycket vacker. } \quad \text{ (Sw)}\\
& \text{car-the that stands there is very beautiful}\\
\text{f. } & \text{Bilen som/e } \underline{\text{vi mötte } \underline{\text{__}} } \text{ er mycket vacker.}\\
& \text{car-the that we met is very beautiful}
\end{align*}\]

It is apparently bad to leave out the complementizer of a non-restrictive relative clause:

\[(8.131)\]

\[\text{Den här bilen, som/*e jag aldrig har sett förut, er vacker. } \quad \text{ (Sw)}\]
\text{This here car which I never have seen before is beautiful}\\
\text{‘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):
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:55ff.):
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):\(^{32}\)

\[(8.134)\]

\[\begin{align*}
   &a. \text{Ég veit ekki hver } ^{*}_{\text{sem/e }} \text{__ kemur.} & \text{(Ic)} \\
   &\quad \text{Ég veit íkki hvør íð/e } \text{__ kemur.} & \text{(Fa)} \\
   &\quad \text{I know not who(N) that comes} \\
   &\quad \text{‘I don’t know who will come.’} \\
   &b. \text{Ég veit ekki hvøn } ^{*}_{\text{sem/e }} \text{hann hefur } \text{sød } \text{__ .} & \text{(Ic)} \\
   &\quad \text{Ég veit íkki, hvønn íð/e } \text{hann hevur } \text{sæd } \text{__ .} & \text{(Fa)} \\
   &\quad \text{I know not who(A) that he has seen} \\
   &\quad \text{‘I don’t know who he has seen.’}
\end{align*}\]

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):

\[(\text{i})\]

\[\begin{align*}
   &a. \text{gete þier þann kalek druckit Huern } \text{at } \text{eg mun drecka } \text{__ .} \\
   &\quad \text{can you that chalice drink which(A) that I will drink} \\
   &\quad \text{b. hókull hvør } \text{eð } \text{var gefinn } \text{...} \\
   &\quad \text{cloak which(N) that was given}
\end{align*}\]

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).
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(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

(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 aldrí eta graut]. (No)
e. De lovade inte [att aldrig åta gröt]. (Sw)

‘They promised not (never) to (never) eat (never) 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), Sigriður 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 götuna. (Fa)
he saw her run over across street-the

d. Hon laet 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/*henne 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 byggja.  (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:
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.  

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):

(i) a. I believe Harold myself to be a spy.

Ég tel Harald sjálfur vera njósna.  (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).
Although the facts just observed are very convincing and indicate that OS can indeed apply to the accusative in the AcI 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

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 Árman Sigurðsson has pointed out (2003), the accusative argument can also occur later in the sentence:

(i) Ég taldi hafa verið selda einherja bát. 
I believed have been sold some boats

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., Hóskuldur 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. Hóskuldur 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 þóttuna vera skemmtilegana.
   him(D) found girl-the(A) be interesting(A)

c. Honum tókti [gentan vera stuttlig].
   him(D) found girl-the(N) be interesting(N)

   d. Honum tóktuna 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.; Hóskuldur 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 verit sjúkur]. (Fa)
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 

        Peter 
        is said 
    [góður]. 
    good

b. *Peter siges

        Peter 
        is-said
    [flink]. 
    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 hevur 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)  

\begin{verbatim}
\begin{tabular}{lll}
  (8.152) & a. & H\text{ann} & man & detta/*dött. \\
            &     & he      & will(pres.) & fall(inf./*sup.) \\
  b. & V\text{it} & eigu & at fara/*farið. \\
      & we  & ought(pres.) & to go(inf./*sup.) \\
\end{tabular}
\end{verbatim}

This completes our review of Scandinavian infinitives. As the reader will have seen, there are intriguing similarities and differences to be accounted for.
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, rakaði hann, Egil shaved him
   b. Egill, rakaði sig, Egil shaved REFL
      ‘Egil shaved himself.’
   c. Egill, tók bókina hans, Egil took book his(non-refl.)
      ‘Egil took his book.’ (= somebody else’s)
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, /þær, /þaur, rökuðu þáu/j /þær*ú/j /þaur*ú/j.
they(pl.m./f./n.) shaved them(pl.m./f./n.)
‘They shaved them.’
d. Þeir, /þær, /þaur, rökuðu sigú/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 sín, on the other hand, inflects like the non-reflexive
possessives *mín* ‘my’ and *pín* ‘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)

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<tr>
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<th>non-possessive reflexive</th>
<th>possessive reflexive</th>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
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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, vantar bókina sín i/*j*/hans*i/j.  Egil(A) needs book his(refl.)/his(non-refl.)  
‘Egil needs his book.’

b. Henni, þykir bróðir sinni/*r*/hennar*i/j leiðinlegur.  
‘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.
Pronouns, reflexives and empty categories

(9.6) a. Ég sendi Ólafi í 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’, lekna ‘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, /sjálfr 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 leknaði ?*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:
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) Honum /*Séri 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; Sigriður Sigurjónsdóttir 1992; Sigriður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992; Reuland and Sigriður 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):  

(9.12) a. Haraldur mismælti sig/*sjálfan sigi.
      Harold misspoke REFL/self REFL
      ‘Harold misspoke.’

b. María skammaðist sín/*sjálfar sín.
   Mary was-ashamed-of REFL/self REFL
   ‘Mary was ashamed of herself.’

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:

\[
\text{Jóni heldur [að ég hafi logið að sér]}. \\
\text{John thinks that I have(sbj.) lied to REFL(D)}
\]

‘John thinks that I lied to him.’

b. Subordinate non-nom. refl. subject coref. with a matrix subject:

\[
\text{Jóni segir [að sig langi til að eignast bíl]}. \\
\text{John says that REFL(A) long(sbj.) for to get car}
\]

‘John says that he wants to get a car.’

c. Subordinate poss. refl. in object pos. coref. to a non-nominative matrix subject:

\[
\text{Jóni finnst [að þú hafir svikið föður sín]}. \\
\text{John(D) feels that you have(sbj.) betrayed father(A) his(refl.A)}
\]

‘John feels that you have betrayed his father.’

d. Subordinate possessive refl. in subject pos. coref. to a matrix subject:

\[
\text{Jóni segir [að bókin sín verði til sölu á morgun]}. \\
\text{John says that book-the(N) his(refl.N) will-be for sale tomorrow}
\]

‘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 Árman 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. Jóni veit [að María elskar sig]. \\
\text{John knows that Mary loves(ind.) REFL}

‘John knows that Mary loves him.’

b. *Jóni veit ekki [að María elskar sig]. \\
\text{John knows not that Mary loves(ind.) REFL}

‘John knows that Mary does not love him.’
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):\(^4\)

\[
Jóni heldur \ [að þú hatir sig i /hanni].
\]

‘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):

\[
Jóni heldur \ [að þú hatir sig i /hanni].
\]

‘John believes that you hate him.’

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):

\[
Er \ Hanni \ [að{} pilturinn \ var \ kominn í höggfæri \ við{} sig, . . .].
\]

‘When he saw that the boy was within hitting-reach of REFL . . .’

\[
Kaupmenni \ sögðu \ [að{} sér, \ væri \ ekki \ . . .].
\]

‘The merchants said that they were not . . .’

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):

\[
Jóni heldur \ [að þú hatir sig/hann].
\]

‘John believes that you hate(sbj.) REFL/him’

\[
\text{(i)}
\]

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):
(9.15)  a. Aðeins Jóni telur [að María elski sig].
        only John believes that Mary loves REFL

        b. Aðeins Jóni telur [að María elski hann].
        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 para-
phrased 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. *Jóni kemur ekki [nema þú bjóðir sér].
        John comes[ind.] not unless you invite(sbj.) REFL

        b. *Maríai heimsækir þig [þótt þú hatir sig].
        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. Enginni telur að María elski sig.
        nobody believes that Mary loves REFL

        b. ?Enginni telur að María elski hann.
        nobody believes that Mary loves him
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. Jóni segir [að Maríai telji [að þú hatir sigi/j]].
John says that Mary believe(sbj.) that you love(sbj.) REFL
‘John says that Mary believes that you love him/her.’

b. Jóni segir [að Maríai telji [að Haraldur vilji [að þú heimsækja sigi/j/k]].]
John says that Mary believe(sbj.) that Harold want(sbj.) 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 hanni komi ekk[ [nema þú bjódir *sér]].]
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 Maríai heimsæki þig [þótt þú hatir *sigrí/hanum]].
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:
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],] er [að sig/*j vanti hæfileika].

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],] er [að *sig/*j vantar hæfileika].

Helga’s problem is that she lacks talent.

b. Ég held [að [vandamál [Helgu],] sé 

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 [Helguᵢ]]j varð *sérᵢ/henniᵢ til skammar.  
opinion Helga’s(G) became *REFL(D)/her(D) to shame  
‘Helga’s opinion was a shame for her.’

   b. [Vandamál [Helguᵢ]]j minnir okkur stöðugt á sigᵢ/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. Jónᵢ krafðist þess [að við hugsuðum stöðugt um sigⱼ].  
John demanded it that we thought(sbj) constantly about REFL  
‘John demanded that we would constantly think about him.’

   b. *Þetta vandamál,krafðist þess [að við hugsuðum stöðugt um sigⱼ].  
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 minnir okkur stöðugt á sigᵢ.  
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. Jónᵢ hélt margar ræður en [ég hlustaði ekki á *sig₁/hanni₁].  
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. Jónᵢ geti haldið margar ræður en [ég kysi *sig₂/hanniᵢ 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 um efnahagsmálin, aðrar fjölluðu um trúmál eða fjölskyldumál.

‘John said that he held(sbj.) many speeches some were(sbj.) about economics, others dealt with religion or family values. Yet 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 *sigi/hanni.

‘. . . Yet I never go to listen to *REFL/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 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. *Jón₁ segir [að eðg hati sjálfan sig₁].
        John says that I hate(sbj.) self REFL

        b. *Strákarnirᵢ segja [að eðg hafi svikið hvor annanᵢ].
           boys-the say that I have(sbj.) betrayed each other

        c. Strákarnirᵢ sviku hvor annanᵢ.
           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 behav-
ior of Icelandic reflexives inside infinitival complements is similar to that of
their English counterparts:

(9.31)  a. Íg bað Jón₁ [að PRO₁ raka sig₁].
        I asked John to shave REFL
        ‘I asked John to shave himself.’

        b. *Íg₁ lofaði Jóniᵢ [að PROᵢ raka sigᵢ].
           I promised John to shave REFL

        c. Íg tel [Maríu₁ hata sjálfa sigᵢ].
           I believe Mary hate self REFL
           ‘I believe Mary to hate herself.’

In the a-example we have the simple reflexive sig₁, 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 antece-
dent since it is controlled by a 1st person pronoun and the 3rd person reflexive
sigᵢ 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. Íeirᵢᵢ hata hver annanᵢ.
    they  hate  each other

        b. Íeirᵢᵢ hata hvor annanᵢ.
reflexives, as we have already seen. In the c-example we have the complex reflexive sjálvann 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 Marvel (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. Péturum bað Jónum [að PROj raka sig].
Peter asked John for to shave(inf.) REFL
‘Peter asked John to shave him/himself.’

b. Anna telur [þig hafa svikið sig].
Anne believes you(A) have betrayed REFL
‘Anne believes you to have betrayed her.’

(9.33) *Égi lofaði Önnu [að PROi hjálpa *sérj/hennij].
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 Maria
   ‘Jose knows that he saw Maria.’

   b. *Jón veit að e sá María. (Ic)
   J. knows that e saw Maria

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 . . .
   ‘Woke up early. Shaved myself and . . .’

   ‘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 sóum 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 Thóra 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, kaupa matinn og þeir, leði borða hann einir.
   they(Npl.) buy food-the and they(Npl.)e 3pl. eat(3pl.) it alone(Npl.)

b. Þeir, kaupa matinn og þeim, leði líkar hann einum/*einir.
   they(Npl.) buy food-the and them(D)/e 3sg. 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 Hel/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 drekkjð bjór!  
you(pl./le) 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):

(9.45)
Null objects in elliptical constructions:

a. Íg elska þig, og dái þig/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$.  
   I love you and admire you/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$

b. Íg hjálpáði honum$\textsubscript{i}$ á fætur og fylgdi honum$\textsubscript{i}$/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ heim til sín.  
   I helped him on feet and followed him/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ home to REFL  
   ‘I helped him to his feet and accompanied him home.’

c. Hann$\textsubscript{i}$ hjálpáði mér á fætur og íg fylgdi honum$\textsubscript{i}$/*\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ heim til sín$\textsubscript{i}$.  
   he helped me on feet and I followed him/*/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ home to REFL  
   ‘He helped me to my feet and I accompanied him home.’

d. Íg tók bókina$\textsubscript{i}$ og færði hana$\textsubscript{i}$/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ eiganda sínum$\textsubscript{i}$.  
   I took book-the and brought it/\textit{e}$\textsubscript{i}$ 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

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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 bórðu hann\textit{le}.  
    they hit him(A) and beat him(A)$\textit{le}$

b. Þeir hæddu hann og óg núðu honum$\textsubscript{*}/\textit{e}$.  
    they mocked him(A) and threatened him(D)$\textsubscript{*}/\textit{e}$

---
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 á fætur og fylgdi þér heim til *sín/hans.
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 drekka dökkan bjór og e þykir e 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):.
Weather constructions:

a.  *pað* rigndi mikið í Reykjavík þá.
   ‘Then it rained a lot in Reykjavík.’

b.  þá rigndi *pað/e* mikið í Reykjavík.
   ‘Then it rained it/e much in Reykjavík.’

c.  Rigndi *pað/e* mikið í Reykjavík þá?
   ‘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.’

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 bensíníð er dýrt] hefur aldrei skipt neinu máli.
   that the gas is expensive has never made any difference

b.  *pað* hefur aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensíníð er dýrt],
   it has never made any difference that the gas is expensive

c.  Hefur *pað/e* aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensíníð 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 *pað/e* aldrei skipt neinu máli [að bensíníð 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.  

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.

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9 I am staring 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 dýrτ] skiptir engu máli.  
it [that gas-the is expensive] makes no difference.

(b)  Skiptir það [að bensínið er dýrτ] engu máli?  
makes it that gas-the is expensive no difference

(c)  Skiptir það engu máli [að bensínið er dýrτ]?  
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.):

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. anaphors} &= \text{NPs that must be bound within a particular (local) domain} \\
\text{b. pronominals} &= \text{NPs that must not be bound within a particular (local) domain} \\
\text{c. R-expressions} &= \text{NPs that must not be bound at all}
\end{align*}\]

The terms ‘bound’ and ‘free’ can then be defined roughly as follows:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. If an element is coreferential (coindexed) with a c-commanding (constituent-commanding) element, then it is bound by that element.} \\
\text{b. An element which is not bound is free.}
\end{align*}\]

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):

\[X \text{ c-commands } Y \text{ if the next branching node above } X \text{ is also above } Y.\]

Since the definition refers to a ‘branching node’, the concept is best visualized with the help of a tree diagram:

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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 a 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):

9.2.2 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

(9.56)  
a. XL  
    X  
    Y  
    YL  
    ZL  
b. WL  
    X  
    YL  
    W  
    ZL

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.

\[(9.58)\] 
\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Jens vaskede sig/*hami.} & \text{(Da)} \\
& \text{Jens washed REFL/him} \\
& \text{‘Jens washed himself.’} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Jens snakker ofte med *sig/*sig selv.} \\
& \text{Jens speaks often to REFL/REFL self} \\
& \text{‘Jens often speaks to himself.’} \\
\text{c. } & \text{Jens vaskede sin/*hans bil.} \\
& \text{Jens washed refl-poss/*non-refl. poss car} \\
& \text{‘Jens washed his car.’}
\end{align*}\]

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.\(^\text{11}\) 

The similarity continues when we look at reflexives inside infinitival complements (see e.g. Vikner 1985):\(^\text{12}\)

\[(9.59)\] 
\[\begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Peder bad Jens om [PRO at barbere sig].} & \text{(Da)} \\
& \text{Peter asked Jens for to shave REFL} \\
& \text{‘Peter asked Jens to shave him/himself.’} \\
\text{b. } & \text{Anne hørte [mig snakke med om sig].} \\
& \text{Anne heard me(A) talk(inf.) with you about REFL} \\
& \text{‘Anne heard me talk to you about her.’}
\end{align*}\]

\(^\text{11}\) 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:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{(i) } & \text{Drengene vaskede *sin/*deres bil.} \\
& \text{boys-the washed *refl. poss./non-refl. poss car} \\
& \text{‘The boys washed their car.’}
\end{align*}\]

There is apparently some tendency to adopt this system in Faroese too (see, e.g., Höskuldur Thráinsson et al. 2004:327n.: tey... sigga... teirra kara 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’).

\(^\text{12}\) 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\textsubscript{i} lovede Anne\textsubscript{j} [PRO\textsubscript{j} at hjælpe *sig\textsubscript{j} /hende\textsubscript{j}].
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, bað Hjalmar\textsubscript{j} [PRO\textsubscript{j} raka sær\textsubscript{j}].
Jogvan asked Hjalmar to shave REFL(D)
‘Jogvan asked Hjalmar to shave him/himself.’
b. Eg\textsubscript{i} lovaði Jógvani\textsubscript{j} [PRO\textsubscript{j} at hjálpa *sær\textsubscript{j} /honum\textsubscript{j}].
I promised Jógvani to help *REFL/him
‘I promised Jógvani 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, bað okkur\textsubscript{j} [að PRO\textsubscript{j} hjálpa honum\textsubscript{j}]. (Ic)
Peter asked us to help him
b. Susan, bad mig\textsubscript{i} om [PRO\textsubscript{j} at ringe til hende\textsubscript{j}]. (Da)
Susan asked me for to call to her
‘Susan asked me to call her.’
c. Jógvan, bað meg\textsubscript{j} [PRO\textsubscript{j} hjálpa honum\textsubscript{j}]. (Fa)
Jogvan asked me to help him
‘Jogvan asked me to help him.’
d. Jon, bad oss\textsubscript{j} [PRO\textsubscript{j} hjelpe ham\textsubscript{j}]. (No)
John asked us to help him
‘John asked us to help him.’
e. Hon, bad mig\textsubscript{i} [PRO\textsubscript{j} klippa henne\textsubscript{j}]. (Sw)
she asked me to 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.):

\[ \text{(9.63)} \]
\begin{align*}
  a. & \quad \text{Jensi sagde [at jeg havde svigtet sig].} \quad \text{(Da)} \\
  b. & \quad \text{Jógvani segði [at eg hevði svikið segi].} \quad \text{(Fa)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{'Jógvan said that I had betrayed him.'}
\end{align*}

\[ \text{(9.64)} \]
\begin{align*}
  \text{hanni vildi ekki leypa frá sínari ábyrgð, tá ið hann siði.} \quad \text{(Fa)}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{He would not run away from responsibility, now that he was come so far with Sigrid.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{Hon hevði meiri krav upp á segi enn hin.}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{She had more right to him (refl.) than the other [girl had].'}
\end{align*}

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.):

\[ \text{(9.65)} \]
\begin{align*}
  \text{The Faroese LDRs cannot have object antecedents:}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{Eg fortaldi Hjalmari [at Guðrun elskaði *segi/hann siði].}
\end{align*}

\begin{align*}
  \text{I told Hjalmar that Guðrun loved *REFL/him}
\end{align*}
Faroese LDRs typically do not ‘refer out of’ non-complement clauses:

a. Hjalmari hitti kvinnuna [sum vitjaði *segi/hanni i fjór].
   Hjalmar met woman-the that visited *REFL/him last year

b. Marjuni kemur [um tú ringir til *síni/hennara].
   Marjun comes if you call to *REFL/her
   ‘Marjun comes if you call her.’

If non-complement clauses are embedded under verbs of saying and believing in Faroese, an LDR can ‘refer out of’ them:

Marjun, sigur [at hon kemur [um tú ringir til síni]].
Marjun says that she comes if you call to REFL

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):

Jógvani sigur [at tú elskar *seg sjálvan / segi /hanni].
Jogvan says that you love *REFL self/REFL/him
   ‘Jogvan 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, [að þú hefðir svikið *sigi/hanni].
   I told John that you had(sbj.) betrayed *REFL/him
   ‘I told John that you had betrayed him.’

b. Jóni, var sagt [að þú hefðir svikið ?*sigi/hanni].
   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 trú um [að *sigi /hanni vantaði hæfileika].
   ‘I made John believe that he lacked talent.’

b. Jóni var talin trú um [að ?sigi /hanni vantaði hæfileika].
   ‘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)

   ‘John heard that you had called but you had not called’

   ‘John heard that you had 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. Jóni heyrði [að þú hafðir hringt til *sín i /hansi].
    John heard that you had(ind.) called to *REFL/him
    ‘John heard that you had called him.’

b. Jóni heyrði [að þú hefðir hringt til sín i /hansi].
    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, regner ikke med [at sitt, forslag vil . . .].
    government-the reckons not with that refl.poss proposal will
    ‘The government doesn’t expect that its proposal will . . .’

b. Kjell . . . er spent på [hva legen j sier om fingerskaden sin].
    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, vil [sine, 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, trodde [hun, 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 Gisli 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 Hóskuldur 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 Hóskuldur 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. 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)  

\[ \begin{align*}
    \text{a.} & \quad \text{Jóni neydi migj til [að PRO} j \text{ svara } \text{sérj } / \text{*honumj].} \\
    & \text{‘John forced me for to respond to REFL/*him} \\
    & \text{‘John forced me to respond to him’} \\
    \text{b.} & \quad [\text{Skoðun Jónsi}] \text{k neyddi migj til [að PRO} j \text{ svara } \text{*sérj } / \text{honumj].} \\
    & \text{opinion John’s forced me for to respond to *REFL/him} \\
    & \text{‘John’s opinion forced me to respond to him.’}
\end{align*} \]

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

\[ \text{14 The basic idea would then be that subjunctive clauses are not ‘independently} \\
\text{tensed’ since they typically copy the tense of their matrix clause (the tense agree-} \\
\text{ment or ‘sequence of tenses’ discussed in section 8.1.2 above).} \]
need to be syntactically bound (see, e.g., Hellan 1991b; Anderson 1986; Höskuldur Thráinsson 1991, 1992; Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1990b; Sigriður Sigurjónsdóttir and Hyams 1992; Reuland and Sigriður 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 Sigriður 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 einverjuin ‘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 likes jokes about him,
       b. Max saw a gun near him,
       c. *Max relies on him.

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:

\[(9.80) \ a. \ *Jóni₁ \ līka \ brandarar \ um \ hann₁.\]
John likes jokes about him
b. *Jón₁, sá byssu nálægt honum₁.
John saw gun near him
c. *Jón₁, treystir á hann₁.
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.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) 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 Mariu höfðuðu 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.’
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:

\begin{align*}
9.81a. & \quad *Jóni \text{ elskar } hanni. \\
& \quad \text{John} \text{ loves } \text{him} \\
9.81b. & \quad *Jóni \text{ elskar } \text{sigi}. \\
& \quad \text{John} \text{ loves } \text{REFL} \\
9.81c. & \quad Jóni \text{ elskar } sjálfan sigi. \\
& \quad \text{John} \text{ loves } \text{self REFL}
\end{align*}

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. According to R&R’s story, the verb elsa ‘love’ is not lexically reflexive. If its arguments arecodigoexed 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

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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)

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 . . . bíllinn hans (lit. ‘car-the his’) and . . . bíllinn þeirra (lit. ‘car-the their’). This does not affect the argumentation.
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., Signirður 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.

‘Well, one is just shaving oneself.’

b. Svo var bara drifið sig á ball.

‘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:
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; Þóra Björg Hjartardóttir 1993:110; Halldór Árman Sigurðsson 1989:145ff.).

(9.89)

Elliptical subjects in coordinate structures:

a. Þeim i líkaði maturinn og þeir i /e/ komu aftur daginn eftir.
   ‘They liked the food and (they) came back the next day.’
b. Þeim í líkaði maturinn og daginn eftir komu þeir í aftur.
   ‘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 comple-
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, hjálp svo að e, verðum leystir . . .

‘give us help so that will-be freed’

b. Hann heggur sverðin, og e, kom í þvertréð . . .

‘He hits with the sword and it hits the beam . . .’

c. Það var róið til þeirra, og e, voru fiskimenn . . .

‘People rowed out to them and it turned out that they were fishermen . . .’

d. Hann þrífur hornin . . . og e, eigast lengi við . . .

‘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)

Please note that Icelandic authors are listed under their first name.

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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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