

Expletives and Clause Structure

Syntactic Change in Icelandic

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Hannah Booth

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

Contents

List of Tables	7
List of Abbreviations	10
1 Introduction	18
1.1 Continuity and change in Icelandic	18
1.2 Study aims	20
1.3 Data sources	21
1.3.1 The IcePaHC corpus	21
1.3.2 Additional texts	27
2 Lexical Functional Grammar	29
2.1 The parallel architecture of LFG	30
2.1.1 C-structure	30
2.1.2 F-structure	32
2.1.3 A-structure	34
2.2 Mapping principles	36
2.2.1 Mapping between c-structure and f-structure	36
2.2.2 Mapping between a-structure and f-structure	40
2.3 Modelling passive and impersonal constructions	44
2.3.1 Passivization	46
2.3.2 Impersonalization	48
2.4 Clausal arguments and functions	49
2.4.1 Clausal SUBJS and OBJs	50
2.4.2 A unification account	52
2.5 Expletives in LFG	55
2.5.1 Expletives as non-thematic arguments	56

2.5.2	Positionally restricted expletives	56
2.6	Summary	57
3	Analyses of modern Icelandic clause structure	59
3.1	Verb-second and the structure of the clause	59
3.1.1	The single-movement approach	61
3.1.2	The uniform double-movement approach	63
3.1.3	The split double-movement approach	65
3.1.4	Sells (2001, 2005) – an LFG account	67
3.1.5	A revised LFG account	70
3.2	Verb-first declaratives	74
3.2.1	Types of V1 declarative	74
3.2.2	Analyses of V1 declaratives	75
3.3	Subject properties	76
3.3.1	Coding properties	76
3.3.2	Behavioural properties	78
3.4	Subject positions and information structure	81
3.4.1	Topical subjects	81
3.4.2	Non-topical subjects	81
3.5	Summary	82
4	The structure of the clause in Old Icelandic	84
4.1	Background	84
4.1.1	Verb position	85
4.1.2	Topicality and the prefinite position	89
4.1.3	Subject positions	92
4.1.4	The configurationality debate	93
4.1.5	Summary	96
4.2	Methodology	97
4.2.1	Data collection	97
4.2.2	Operationalisation of properties	99
4.3	Verb position	104
4.3.1	Sentence-initial conjunctions and verb position	104
4.3.2	Types of V1 declarative	106

4.3.3	Narrative inversion V1 and genre	107
4.4	The prefinite position	108
4.4.1	XP-fronting	108
4.4.2	X-fronting	111
4.5	The positional distribution of subjects	117
4.5.1	Topical subjects	118
4.5.2	Heavy subjects	119
4.6	Old Icelandic clause structure: an LFG account	120
4.7	Summary	122
5	The expletive <i>það</i>	125
5.1	Types of expletive construction	127
5.1.1	Subjectless constructions	129
5.1.2	Presentational constructions	132
5.1.3	Extraction constructions	137
5.2	Properties of expletive <i>það</i> in present-day Icelandic	140
5.2.1	Positional distribution	140
5.2.2	Information-structural role	142
5.2.3	Expletive <i>það</i> is not a subject	142
5.2.4	The status of the quasi-argument category in Icelandic	147
5.3	Expletive <i>það</i> in diachrony: previous accounts	148
5.3.1	Status in Old Icelandic	149
5.3.2	Later development	150
5.4	Summary	152
6	Clausal arguments and cataphoric <i>það</i>	153
6.1	Methodology	154
6.1.1	Data collection	154
6.1.2	Data manipulation	160
6.2	Clausal subjects	160
6.2.1	Cataphoric subject <i>það</i> in earlier Icelandic	161
6.2.2	A change in progress	165
6.3	Clausal objects	169
6.3.1	Positional distribution of cataphoric ‘object’ <i>það</i>	171

6.3.2	A topic position placeholder in early Icelandic	174
6.4	Structurally ambiguous clausal arguments	179
6.4.1	Two possible analyses	180
6.4.2	The status of cataphoric <i>það</i>	184
6.5	Summary	186
7	The development of expletive <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions	188
7.1	Types of subjectlessness in modern Icelandic	188
7.1.1	Inherently subjectless predicates	191
7.1.2	Morphologically active predicates	192
7.1.3	Morphologically passive intransitive predicates	195
7.1.4	Morphologically passive transitive predicates	201
7.1.5	Summary	207
7.2	Methodology	208
7.2.1	Data collection	208
7.2.2	Data manipulation	210
7.3	Subjectless constructions in Old Icelandic	211
7.3.1	Syntactic properties	211
7.3.2	The status of <i>það</i>	232
7.3.3	Summary	241
7.4	The spread of the expletive	241
7.4.1	Say-type predicates as a bridging context	242
7.4.2	Generalisation to all types of predicate	244
7.5	Summary	246
8	The development of expletive <i>það</i> in presentational constructions	247
8.1	Properties of presentational constructions	247
8.1.1	Structural configuration	249
8.1.2	The pivot is a subject	249
8.1.3	The subject is non-topical	252
8.1.4	<i>There</i> -type expletive	253
8.1.5	Summary	254
8.2	Methodology	254
8.2.1	Data collection	254

8.2.2	Data manipulation	257
8.3	Presentational constructions in Old Icelandic	257
8.3.1	V1 presentationals	258
8.3.2	Subject-initial presentationals	262
8.3.3	<i>par</i> -initial presentationals	269
8.3.4	Summary	275
8.4	The rise of expletive <i>það</i>	276
8.4.1	Two expletives in competition	276
8.4.2	Icelandic and English: diverging paths	283
8.5	Summary	283
9	Conclusion	286
9.1	Summary of findings	286
9.2	Three related developments	289
9.3	The drift towards prefinite expletives	289
A	Corpus information and search queries	292
A.1	IcePaHC texts and time periods	293
A.2	CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 4	298
A.3	CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 6	308
A.4	CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 7	309
A.5	CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 8	309
	Bibliography	310

Word count: 71,318

List of Tables

1.1	IcePaHC time periods (overview)	24
1.2	IcePaHC time periods by genre	25
1.3	Translation texts in IcePaHC	26
1.4	Additional texts beyond IcePaHC	27
2.1	Decomposition of grammatical functions into features	41
2.2	Passivization versus impersonalization	45
4.1	Old Icelandic texts in IcePaHC	99
4.2	Verb position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350	106
4.3	V1 declaratives (MCs) across 4 contexts in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	107
4.4	A sample of narrative and non-narrative texts in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	107
4.5	Frequency of narrative inversion V1 by genre in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	108
4.6	Functions which occupy the prefinite position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350	109
4.7	Head categories which occupy the prefinite position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350	114
4.8	X-fronting in matrix declaratives by subject property, IcePaHC 1150-1350	116
4.9	Positional distribution of subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	117
4.10	Positional distribution of topical subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	119
4.11	Positional distribution of heavy subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	119
5.1	Two levels of classification for expletive construction types	128
5.2	Subjectless constructions, micro-categories by features	129

5.3	Presentational constructions, micro-categories by features	132
5.4	Extraction constructions, micro-categories by features	137
5.5	Frequency of expletive <i>það</i> in letters by authors born 1730-1870, (Hróarsdóttir 1998: 114)	151
6.1	Cataphoric <i>það</i> contexts in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	159
6.2	Cataphoric <i>það</i> contexts in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220- 1250	160
6.3	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in constructions with a clausal SUBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1750	162
6.4	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in constructions with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1750	162
6.5	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in V1 declaratives with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1750	163
6.6	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in constructions with a clausal SUBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	166
6.7	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in V1 declaratives with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	166
6.8	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in constructions with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	167
6.9	Proportion of prefinite <i>það</i> in personal constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	172
6.10	Proportion of prefinite <i>það</i> in impersonal constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	173
6.11	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in personal constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	174
6.12	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in impersonal constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	174
6.13	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in HAPPEN constructions in IcePaHC, 1150- 2008	179
6.14	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in scene-setting constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	179
6.15	Two analyses for ‘It is said that...’ construction type	182

6.16	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in ambiguous clausal argument constructions with topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	185
6.17	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in ambiguous clausal argument constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	186
7.1	Diagnosing the Icelandic impersonal passive construction	200
7.2	Subjectless constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	210
7.3	Subjectless constructions in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220-1250	210
7.4	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	233
7.5	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	234
7.6	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	234
7.7	Frequency of postfinite <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1350	235
7.8	Frequency of <i>það</i> (pre- and postfinite) in constructions with inherently subjectless predicates in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350	236
7.9	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	242
8.1	Presentational constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2208	256
8.2	Presentational constructions in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220-1250	257
8.3	Subject position in V1 presentational constructions in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350	260
8.4	Subject position in V2 presentational constructions with topicalization in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350	261
8.5	Frequency of prefinite <i>það</i> in presentational constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008	279
A.1	IcePaHC time periods (detailed)	297

List of Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
ADJ	adjunct
CATPH	cataphoric
COMP	complementiser
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DU	dual
EXPL	expletive
FEM	feminine
GDF	grammaticalised discourse function
GEN	genitive
GF	grammatical function
INF	infinitive
MASC	masculine
MID	middle
NEG	negation
NOM	nominative
NT	neuter
NUM	number
OBJ	primary object
OBJ	secondary object
OBL	oblique
PASS	passive
PERS	person
PL	plural

PRS	present
PST	past
PTCL	particle
PTCP	participle
REFL	reflexive
REL	relativizer
RSMP	resumptive
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
SUBJ	subject
SUPL	superlative

Abstract

This thesis examines the historical development of the expletive *það* in Icelandic, from the earliest texts to the present day. This development is set against the backdrop of Icelandic clause structure, with particular attention to verb-second, information structure and the left periphery. The study combines corpus linguistic data and quantitative techniques with theoretical analysis, conducted within Lexical Functional Grammar.

I show that Icelandic underwent three syntactic developments in the period 1750-present and argue that these all reflect one overall change: the establishment of *það* as a structural placeholder for the topic position (the clause-initial prefinite position). I claim that *það* functions as a topic position placeholder in the earliest attested stage of Icelandic (1150-1350), but is restricted to a specific context: topicless subjectless constructions with a clausal object, where *það* has cataphoric reference. The three changes in the period 1750-present represent the establishment of this topic position placeholder in new contexts: (1) *það* generalises to all types of topicless subjectless construction, beyond those with a clausal object; (2) *það* emerges in presentational constructions (which inherently lack a topic), out-competing the earlier expletive form *þar*; (3) in cataphoric contexts with a clausal subject, *það* begins to transition from subject to topic position placeholder.

The majority of these contexts exhibit at least a short period in which *það* – or alternatively *þar* – behaves like a subject. Icelandic thus exhibits the emergence of a topic position placeholder expletive from an earlier subject-like element. This shift towards prefinite expletives, which sets Icelandic apart from e.g. Mainland Scandinavian, happens relatively late in the diachrony (1750-present). Moreover, the Icelandic development challenges the standard claim in the literature on Germanic expletives, which assumes that subject expletives emerge from prefinite expletives.

Declaration

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Dedication

For Catherine Booth

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Continuity and change in Icelandic

Behind the present-day Icelandic language lies a rich literary tradition; a wealth of extant texts offers a more or less unbroken attestation spanning ten centuries. Traditionally, the diachrony of Icelandic has been characterised as one of striking stability, at least with respect to morphosyntax.¹ In the wider Germanic context, Icelandic is standardly acknowledged to be the most conservative language and it is certainly true that the language has not undergone some of the stark changes observed in, for example, English and Mainland Scandinavian; present-day Icelandic has retained a complex morphological case system which is overtly marked on various nominal categories (nouns, pronouns, adjectives, determiners), three genders, as well as rich distinctions in the verbal morphology for person, number, tense and mood. Furthermore, Icelandic has not undergone certain diachronic developments characteristic for Germanic in general, such as the innovation of an indefinite article.

Nevertheless, various morphosyntactic changes have been observed for Icelandic, some of the most salient being:

1. A reduced freedom in word order (Rögnvaldsson 1995), which has been interpreted as increased ‘configurationality’ (Booth et al. 2017).
2. A decrease in the frequency of verb-first declaratives (Butt et al. 2014; Sigurðsson 1990).

¹Dramatic changes in the phonology of Icelandic are generally acknowledged (e.g. Árnason 2011; Benediktsson 1959).

3. A shift from OV/VO word order variation to (almost) exclusively VO order (Hróarsdóttir 1998).
4. A change whereby referential arguments – both subjects and objects – can be unexpressed in earlier Icelandic and become obligatorily overt in later stages (Kinn et al. 2016; Rögnvaldsson 1996; Sigurðsson 1993).
5. An increase in predicates which take dative arguments as their subject, ‘dative sickness’ (Barðdal 2011; Schätzle et al. 2015).
6. The emergence of expletives (Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016; Hróarsdóttir 1998; Rögnvaldsson 2002).
7. A decrease in the frequency of Stylistic Fronting, broadly, the fronting of elements which cannot usually be fronted (e.g. negation, nonfinite verbs, verbal particles) (Hróarsdóttir 1998; Rögnvaldsson 1996).
8. The emergence of the ‘New Impersonal/Passive’ construction (Eythórsson 2008; Ingason et al. 2013; Kjartansson 1991; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002).
9. The emergence of new modal constructions with aspectual meaning, e.g. *vera að* (progressive); *vera búinn að* (perfective) (Rögnvaldsson & Helgadóttir 2011).

Given the traditional emphasis on the *lack* of morphosyntactic change in Icelandic, it is unsurprising that many of these historical developments remain relatively understudied. Moreover, pre-existing diachronic studies on Icelandic typically compare data from the present-day language with that from the earliest attested stage (‘Old Icelandic’, c.1150-1350).² Such studies thus cannot capture the diachronic detail of the intervening centuries. This thesis makes use of recent advancements in historical corpus linguistics in order to shed new light on the diachrony of Icelandic morphosyntax. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I will use corpus linguistic methodologies to show that a number of syntactic changes in Icelandic in fact happen relatively late in the diachrony, in the period 1750-2008.

²Notable exceptions are Hróarsdóttir (1998) and Hróarsdóttir (2000) which examine syntactic change in the 19th century and 15th–19th centuries respectively.

1.2 Study aims

This thesis investigates syntactic change in Icelandic, specifically the rise of expletives. The overarching research questions which I address are:

1. At what point in the diachrony did expletive *það* emerge in the various contexts in which it occurs in present-day Icelandic?
2. Was expletive *það* always positionally restricted to the clause-initial position, as it is in present-day Icelandic?
3. Was *þar* ‘there’ ever available as an expletive in Icelandic, and if so, when did it cease to become available by the present day?
4. How does a cataphorically referential *það* in constructions with a clausal argument behave diachronically, and does it play a role in the development of expletive *það*?

In order to address these questions, I will need to consider aspects of Icelandic clause structure, specifically:

1. Verb-second.
2. Different types of verb-first declarative.
3. The information structural organisation of the clause.
4. The properties and positional distribution of subjects.

I restrict all investigations to matrix clauses, though I will cite embedded clause examples where relevant.

As the research questions show, I look at a number of individual changes and at their interaction. This is a novel approach, as the interaction between individual morphosyntactic changes in Icelandic has scarcely been explored to date.³ In terms of methodology, I combine large-scale corpus-based quantitative techniques with a more traditional qualitative approach, in recognition of the fact that numbers can say a lot, but are not everything. In particular, the corpus I make use of has certain limitations, as I discuss in section 1.3.1. I hope to demonstrate the potential that a combined study of this kind can offer in the pursuit of a better understanding of the nature of syntactic change.

³Exceptions are Rögnvaldsson (1996), Hróarsdóttir (1998) and Booth et al. (2017).

1.3 Data sources

The historical linguist inevitably relies on written texts from the past, and most diachronic studies are therefore at the mercy of those texts which have fortunately survived. Of course, such texts are an incomplete record of the language of the past and in this context historical linguistics has been described as ‘...the art of making the best use of bad data...’ (Labov 1994: 11). Rediscovered manuscripts surface only very occasionally, and thus any chance of a dramatic change in the available data is unlikely. However, it is possible to refine the methodology which one applies to this ‘bad data’. In recent decades, historical corpora – large-scale annotated datasets compiled from multiple texts – have emerged as an exciting new tool in this context. Such corpora present a wealth of fresh opportunities for empirical research, as I discuss in section 1.3.1 in relation to the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus (‘IcePaHC’, Wallenberg et al. 2011).

The ‘bad data’ issue not only manifests itself in relation to the paucity of the data, but is compounded by the issue of data uncertainty. For Icelandic, this uncertainty is especially pertinent in the context of early texts. For the most part, the ‘original’ versions of these texts no longer survive today; rather, the extant material often stems from later copies in manuscripts from the 13th–15th centuries and beyond. This poses major challenges for the accurate dating of such texts and, in turn, for pinpointing a change or innovation to a specific decade or century. Even if dated, it is often impossible to tell whether a particular linguistic feature reflects the language of the ‘original’ text, or is a feature specific to the time at which the scribe produced the copy. In light of these issues, one should be cautious when using these early texts as evidence of nuanced diachronic micro-developments. There is no doubt that such texts are valuable testaments to the language of their time, though are best considered with a sensible degree of caution.

1.3.1 The IcePaHC corpus

In this study, I make extensive use of the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus (‘IcePaHC’, Wallenberg et al. 2011).⁴ IcePaHC is an incredibly valuable resource for research on syntactic change in Icelandic. The corpus contains approximately 1,000,000 words

⁴For further details on IcePaHC, see Rögnvaldsson et al. (2012).

taken from 61 individual text extracts.⁵ These texts span ten centuries – from the mid-twelfth century to the present-day – and thereby cover all attested stages of the language. The corpus thus allows one to conduct investigations which examine diachronic detail across the centuries which many previous studies contrasting Old Icelandic with present-day Icelandic data could not address. In sections 1.3.1.1-1.3.1.4, I outline the key details and issues concerning IcePaHC.⁶

1.3.1.1 The IcePaHC annotation scheme

The IcePaHC annotation scheme follows the treebank format established for historical English at the University of Pennsylvania.⁷ All content is lemmatised, tagged according to part-of-speech and syntactically annotated for constituent structure, with additional tagging for certain grammatical functions (e.g. subject, object). IcePaHC uses the same basic labelled bracketing scheme as the Penn treebank style and is therefore compatible with the CorpusSearch query language (Randall 2000, 2005). The syntactic annotation is not intended to reflect a particular analysis, but is designed to make it easy to search for certain structures. All texts are normalised to modern Icelandic orthography, regardless of their date. Throughout this thesis, I retain the normalised orthography for all IcePaHC data. The sentence in (1) is represented in IcePaHC as (2); cf. the more conventional tree diagram in (3).

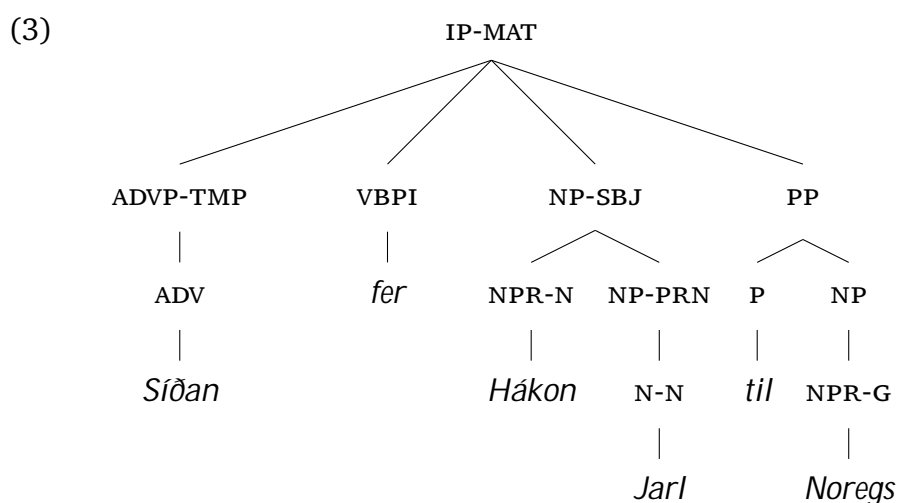
- (1) Síðan fer Hákon jarl til Noregs.
then go.PRS Hákon Earl to Norway
‘Then Earl Hákon travels to Norway.’ (1260, Jomsvikingar.597)

⁵Some of the extracts are in fact taken from the same text; see Appendix A.1 for details.

⁶Unless otherwise stated, all examples in this thesis are from IcePaHC and are referenced in the form: Year, Text.UniqueID.

⁷See Marcus et al. (1993); Taylor et al. (2003); Kroch & Taylor (2000); Kroch et al. (2004); Santorini (2010).

(2) ((IP-MAT (ADVP-TMP (ADV Síðan-síðan))
 (VBPI fer-fara)
 (NP-SBJ (NPR-N Hákon-hákon)
 (NP-PRN (N-N jarl -jarl)))
 (PP (P til-til)
 (NP (NPR-G Noregs-noregur)))
 (. .-.))
 (ID 1260. JOMSVI KINGAR. NAR-SAG, . 597))



1.3.1.2 A periodisation scheme for IcePaHC

Traditionally, the attested diachrony of Icelandic has been carved up into two broad periods, the point of transition being the first translation of the New Testament into Icelandic in 1540 (Thráinsson 1994: 142):⁸

1. Pre-1540: ‘Old Icelandic’
2. Post-1540: ‘Modern Icelandic’

There is also a strong tradition which associates the label ‘Old Icelandic’ with a more restricted time period, namely those years in which the Icelandic sagas were first written down, the so-called ‘Classical Old Norse/Icelandic period’ (c.1150-1350). This more restricted definition of Old Icelandic is what I assume throughout this study.

⁸See also Faarlund (1994: 38): ‘Old Scandinavian’ (pre-15th century) and ‘Modern Scandinavian’ (post-15th century).

Throughout this thesis, I refer to a five-part periodisation of the IcePaHC diachrony (1150-2008), see Table 1.1. More detail is given in Appendix A.1.

Period	Number of texts	Total word count
1150-1350	15	234,276
1351-1550	13	168,764
1551-1750	14	198,770
1751-1900	11	145,539
1900-2008	8	155,406

Table 1.1: IcePaHC time periods (overview)

Periodising the diachrony of any language always involves a certain level of compromise. The periodisation in Table 1.1 has been chosen with the aim of satisfying two requirements as fully as possible:

1. Periods are of approximately equal length.
2. Periods also take into account extralinguistic historical developments, e.g. the Reformation (mid-16th century).

The five time periods each comprise a roughly comparable number of texts and number of words, thus making for a fair comparison. Binning the data in this way has the advantage of abstracting away from the fact that the individual texts in IcePaHC are not evenly distributed across time. On the one hand, there are certain mini-periods where a number of texts cluster, and on the other, there are time gaps which have only very sparse representation in the corpus. The significance of these issues is reduced by adopting the periodisation in Table 1.1.

1.3.1.3 The genres in IcePaHC

Another important issue is genre. Broadly speaking, the texts in IcePaHC span five genres:

1. Narrative texts, of which:
 - (a) Narrative sagas
 - (b) Fiction (novels, short stories)

2. Religious texts, of which:
 - (a) Religious sagas
 - (b) Bible translation
 - (c) Sermons
3. Biographical texts
4. Scientific texts
5. Legal texts

However, the five genres are not equally well-represented across the various centuries, or indeed across the time periods outlined in Table 1.1. The simple fact is that one is not fortunate enough to have extant texts from all genres for all ten centuries. Across my established time periods, certain genres are thus over-represented and others under-represented. In Table 1.2, I show how the five broad genres are distributed across each time period in terms of total word count.

Period	Narrative	Religious	Biography	Science	Law
1150-1350	153,574	71,166	0	4,022	5,514
1351-1550	129,168	39,596	0	0	0
1551-1750	60,463	89,120	49,187	0	0
1751-1900	104,056	18,014	20,405	3,064	0
1901-2008	136,128	19,278	0	0	0
All periods	583,389	327,174	69,592	7,086	5,514

Table 1.2: IcePaHC time periods by genre

Table 1.2 shows that there is a strong bias towards narrative texts overall in the corpus. Narrative and religious texts are attested across all periods, while biography, science and law are only sparsely represented in one or two periods. Such imbalances in genre are unavoidable when working with IcePaHC; I bear these issues in mind in the analysis of the findings of this study.

1.3.1.4 Translation texts in IcePaHC

Some texts in IcePaHC are translations or retellings of source texts in other languages. The use of such texts is problematic for syntactic research, since it is possible that some features in these texts are influenced by the structures present in

the source language. It is thus hard to determine whether a feature represents a genuine language-internal innovation/change, or is due to external influence from another language. I show which texts could potentially exhibit at least some external influence in Table 1.3. Note that certain time periods do not contain any such texts, while others – in particular 1351-1550 and 1551-1750 – feature many. I bear this in mind when it comes to assessing the diachronic development; any results which stand out for the periods 1351-1550 and 1551-1750 will be treated with appropriate caution.

Period	Text	Source language
1150-1350	Alexander	Latin
	Homiliubok	Latin
	Marta	Latin? ⁹
1351-1550	Judit	Latin
	Aevintyri	English
	Erasmus	Low German
	Georgius	Low German
	Ntacts	High German
	Ntjohn	High German
1551-1750	Eintal	High German
	Gerhard	High German
	Indiafari	High German
	Vidalin	High German/Danish
	Klim	Latin
1751-1900	N/A	N/A
1901-2008	N/A	N/A

Table 1.3: Translation texts in IcePaHC

Not all of these texts are translations *per se*. For example, the IcePaHC documentation points out that *Indiafari* (1661) reports the speech of German-speaking soldiers, and that there is also some German influence in the language of the narration.¹⁰ This, and the other texts in Table 1.3, pose an unavoidable limitation of

⁹A Latin source text is likely, though unknown.

¹⁰<https://github.com/antonkarl/icecorpus/blob/master/info/1661.indiafari.bio-tra.info> [last ac-

the corpus, which there is little scope to address in this study.

1.3.1.5 Summary

To summarise, although there are certain issues which follow from the choice of texts in IcePaHC, the advantages offered by the syntactic annotation far outweigh such issues. There is no doubt that the corpus provides a valuable basis for an empirical quantitative study of historical Icelandic syntax. Moreover, I will compensate for some of the compromises inherent in a large-scale corpus-based study with complementary manual investigations of texts beyond IcePaHC, as detailed in section 1.3.2.

1.3.2 Additional texts

One of the most obvious drawbacks of IcePaHC is that the corpus represents a mere sample of the wealth of attested historical Icelandic texts. As such, at certain points in the study it will be necessary to go beyond IcePaHC for further empirical observations. In such contexts, I expand the study with additional texts from the Old Icelandic period (1150-1350). All additional texts I refer to are taken from the online text repository *Icelandic Netútgáfan* and are as listed in Table 1.4.¹¹ Examples from these texts are referenced: Year.Text.Chapter.UniqueID.

Text	ID	Year	Genre	Word Count
<i>Eiríks saga rauða</i>	Eirik	c.1250	Íslendingasaga	7,938
<i>Grænlandinga saga</i>	Græn	c.1250	Íslendingasaga	6,063
<i>Gylfaginning</i>	Gylfa	c.1220	Learned Prose	17,730
All texts				31,731

Table 1.4: Additional texts beyond IcePaHC

The choice of texts in Table 1.4 is motivated by a number of factors. Firstly, all three are predominantly prose texts, though also feature sparse sections of verse. Since this is a syntactic study where poetic data is problematic, I ignore any verse

cessed 31.07.2018].

¹¹*Icelandic Netútgáfan* can be accessed at: <https://www.snerpa.is/net/index.html> [last accessed 31.07.2018].

sections when collecting data from these texts. Secondly, all three texts are generally considered vernacular compositions, thus avoiding any issues which arise with translation texts (see section 1.3.1.4).

All three texts are accessible in an electronic version via *Icelandic Netútgáfan*, which provides a solid basis for manipulating the data. In terms of word count, the three texts together are more or less evenly distributed across the two genres, *Íslendingasögur* and Learned Prose, reducing the chance that any results are skewed by a genre effect. *Eirik* and *Græn* together constitute the ‘Vinland sagas’, and are assumed to be independent texts which each offer an account of the Norse voyages to North America (‘Vinland’), as well as the settlement of Greenland. Given the content of these two texts, one expects them to feature frequent descriptions of the surroundings, which should offer fertile ground for presentational constructions which are a key focus of the study (Chapter 8). *Gylfa* is a mythological text which recounts the creation of the word and describes it in detail; it too is expected to feature a higher than average frequency of presentational constructions.

Where additional Old Icelandic material is required – beyond the texts in IcePaHC and Table 1.4 – I draw on citations listed in the *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog (ONP)*, a historical dictionary which covers early Icelandic texts (1150-1540).¹² Where relevant, I cite examples for present-day Icelandic from *Mörkuð íslensk málheild (MÍM)*, a morphosyntactically tagged corpus of contemporary Icelandic (2006-2010) (for details, see Helgadóttir et al. 2012).¹³

¹²*Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog*. [Dictionary of Old Norse Prose.] (n.d.) University of Copenhagen, <https://onp.ku.dk> [last accessed 31.07.2018].

¹³*Mörkuð íslensk málheild*. [The Tagged Icelandic Corpus.] (n.d.) Sigrún Helgadóttir, editor. The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, <http://malfong.is> [last accessed 31.07.2018].

Chapter 2

Lexical Functional Grammar

The formal analysis of this study is conducted within Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG). Icelandic syntax has been heavily researched from the perspective of mainstream generative grammar, i.e. Government & Binding theory and its successors (e.g. Sigurðsson 1989; Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990; Jónsson 1996; Thráinsson 2007; Wood 2015).¹ There is also research on Icelandic which is relevant to this thesis within LFG (e.g. Zaenen et al. 1990; Sells 2001, 2005). I discuss previous analyses of Icelandic clause structure from these two backgrounds in Chapter 3. The focus of this chapter is to outline the key aspects of LFG which are relevant to this thesis. In section 2.1, I introduce the ‘parallel architecture’ model of grammar which LFG assumes. Section 2.2 outlines how the different dimensions of linguistic information within this model are related to each other via mapping principles. Section 2.3 shows how a particular version of LFG’s (Lexical) Mapping Theory can be used to model passive and impersonal constructions which will be studied in this thesis.² In section 2.4, I outline an LFG approach to constructions with a clausal argument which will be another focus of the study. Section 2.5 shows how different types of expletive can be formalised in LFG. Section 2.6 summarises the chapter.

¹It is a little tricky to know what to call the framework which has developed from Government & Binding theory and Principles & Parameters through to the Minimalist Program. Throughout this thesis, I will refer to these models under the label ‘mainstream generative grammar’.

²The original term was Lexical Mapping Theory, but the ‘lexical’ element is now often dropped, in line with the observation that monoclausal syntactic structures can be associated with constructions consisting of more than one word (e.g. Alsina 1996; Butt 1995).

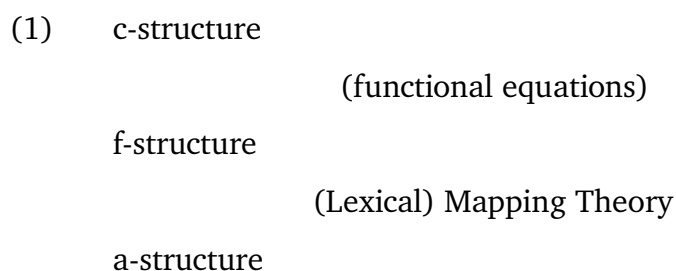
2.1 The parallel architecture of LFG

LFG assumes a ‘parallel architecture’ model of grammar; different types of linguistic information are represented in independent but interacting dimensions. The three major dimensions which are relevant to this study are:³

1. c-structure (‘constituent structure’)
2. f-structure (‘functional structure’)
3. a-structure (‘argument structure’)

Each dimension differs in terms of formal representation and must satisfy certain constraints, as I detail in sections 2.1.1-2.1.3.

The various dimensions are related to one another via mapping principles: (expressed by functional equations) maps between c-structure and f-structure, and (Lexical) Mapping Theory maps between f-structure and a-structure. C-structure is thus related to a-structure via f-structure, see (1).



I discuss these two relations in section 2.2.

2.1.1 C-structure

C-structure is represented as a tree diagram which encodes information about category and constituency. With respect to category, there are lexical categories (e.g. N, V, P) and functional categories (e.g. C and I). The functional category which will be relevant to this thesis is I, which I discuss in section 3.1 in relation to verb-second in Icelandic. LFG allows for both endocentric (headed) and exocentric (headless) phrases, and c-structure trees are not exclusively binary-branching. Endocentric

³Other dimensions which have been recognised within LFG include s(ematic)-structure, p(honological)-structure and m(orphological)-structure); see Asudeh & Toivonen (2009) for an overview.

phrases follow a version of the X schema (see Bresnan et al. 2015: 101-4). An endocentric phrase may lack an internal c-structure head and have an ‘extended head’ by the principle of Endocentricity (Bresnan et al. 2015: 138). That is, an endocentric phrase may be headed by a c-commanding head of its extended projection.⁴ Exocentric phrases lack a c-structure head and are flat structures expanded from a non-projecting category.⁵ The clause-level exocentric category relevant to this thesis is S (Bresnan et al. 2015: 112-5). Languages may mix endocentric and exocentric structures (see Bresnan et al. 2015: 118-19), and the various possibilities can be visualised as a ‘configurationality scale’, which ranges from radically configurational languages whose structure is exclusively endocentric to radically non-configurational languages with exclusively exocentric structures (Nordlinger 1998: 49; see also Bresnan et al. 2015: 119 ‘endocentricity scale’). Languages which mix exocentric and endocentric organisation occupy an intermediate position on the configurationality scale.⁶

LFG assumes no movement of constituents. Phenomena which are standardly accounted for via movement in certain other generative frameworks are handled in LFG via other means; for instance, via functional co-heads for so-called ‘head movement’ phenomena (e.g. verb-second, see sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5), or via changes in mapping correspondences, e.g. between arguments and grammatical functions for passivization, as I show in section 2.3.1.

Any c-structure is assumed to be constrained by the principle of Lexical Integrity, see (2) (Bresnan et al. 2015: 92).

(2) **Lexical Integrity**

Morphologically complete words are leaves of the c-structure tree and each leaf corresponds to one and only one c-structure node.

Another principle relevant to c-structure is Economy of Expression, see (3), which involves a non-standard interpretation of X theory (Bresnan et al. 2015: 90).

⁴I show how this principle can be applied to Icelandic verb-second clauses with a single finite verb in section 3.1.

⁵Exocentric phrases, while lacking a c-structure head, will tend to have an f-structure head.

⁶To be clear on terminology, in this thesis I assume that endocentricity is a property of phrases; any phrase can be either endocentric or exocentric. Configurationality is a property of languages, and is a matter of degrees based on how endocentric or exocentric a language’s phrase structure is.

(3) **Economy of Expression**⁷

All syntactic phrase structure nodes are optional and are not used unless required by independent principles (completeness, coherence, semantic expressivity).

C-structures are determined entirely on syntactic grounds, e.g. on the basis of constituency tests and word order. Hence, c-structures are expected to vary cross-linguistically ('principle of variability', see Bresnan et al. 2015: 41-2).

2.1.2 **F-structure**

F-structures are formalised as attribute-value matrices which consist of an unordered set of attribute- (or feature-)value pairs. Three types of feature can be identified by the type of value they take:

1. Grammatical functions (GFS) and grammaticalised discourse functions (GDFS) take an f-structure as their value; see below for this distinction.
2. Grammatical features (e.g. TENSE and CASE) take atomic values.
3. PRED, which is a pointer into the semantics of a predicate, takes a semantic form as its value, and which captures the argument(s) (if any) a predicate requires in terms of grammatical function.

The grammatical functions comprise the 'core functions' SUBJ, OBJ and OBJ (associated with the central participants of the eventuality expressed by the verb) and the 'noncore functions' OBL, COMP, XCOMP. OBJ is an abbreviation for secondary objects; OBL abbreviates multiple oblique functions. COMP and XCOMP are functions assigned to different types of clausal complement, as I discuss in section 2.4.

The grammaticalised discourse functions are TOPIC, FOCUS and SUBJ.⁸ These are the most salient functions in discourse and are typically associated with a particular c-structure position. TOPIC and FOCUS must be identified with, or anaphorically linked to, a grammatical function. Thus, in order to be a TOPIC or a FOCUS, a constituent must also have some other grammatical function.

⁷The status of Economy of Expression has however been questioned by Dalrymple et al. (2015).

⁸SUBJ is thus both a grammatical function and a grammaticalised discourse function.

An example f-structure is shown for the Icelandic sentence in (4) in (5).

- (4) *María sparkaði boltanum.*
María.NOM kick.PST ball.DAT.DEF
 ‘María kicked the ball.’

(5)

PRED	‘KICK < SUBJ, OBJ >’
TENSE	PAST
SUBJ	PRED ‘MARÍA’
	CASE NOM
OBJ	PRED ‘BALL’
	CASE DAT
	DEF +

Functional information associated with a particular lexical item is assumed to be stored in that item’s lexical entry. So the lexical entry for the verb *sparkaði* ‘kicked’ in (4) would contain the equations in (6).

- (6) *sparkaði* V (PRED) = ‘KICK <SUBJ, OBJ>’
 (TENSE) = PAST

F-structures must satisfy certain wellformedness conditions, see (7)-(9) (Bresnan et al. 2015: 45, 62-3).

(7) **Completeness**

Every function designated by a PRED must be present in the f-structure of that PRED.

(8) **Coherence**

The value of every argument function in an f-structure must be designated by a PRED.

(9) **Uniqueness**

Every attribute has a unique value.

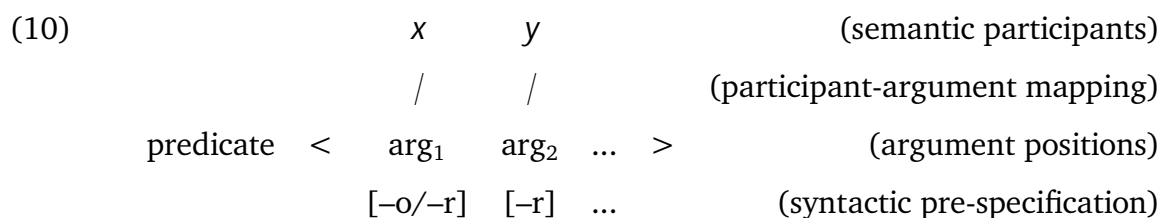
There is also the Extended Coherence Condition by which not only argument functions but all syntactic functions must be appropriately integrated into the f-structure (see Bresnan & Mchombo 1987: 746; Bresnan et al. 2015: 62-3). A nonargument

function, e.g. adjunct (ADJ), is integrated if it bears an appropriate relation to a PRED. A grammaticalised discourse function, e.g. TOPIC, is integrated if it is functionally identified with or anaphorically linked to an integrated function.

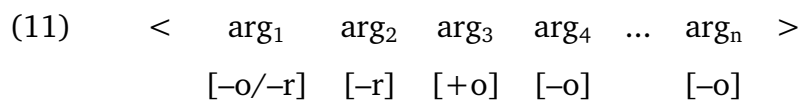
Unlike c-structures, which are assumed to vary cross-linguistically (see section 2.1.1), f-structures are largely invariant across languages ('principle of universality', Bresnan et al. 2015: 42).

2.1.3 A-structure

A-structure represents information about both the syntactic arguments required by a predicate and the semantic participants which the semantics of a predicate entails. I adopt the view of a-structure assumed by Kibort (e.g. Kibort 2007, 2014; Kibort & Maling 2015), developed as part of her revision of (Lexical) Mapping theory. I discuss Kibort's Mapping Theory in section 2.2; here I outline the a-structure model which is assumed within it. The Kibortian view of a-structure is shown in (10). It consists of two levels of information: an 'argument position' level and a 'semantic participant' level.



The argument position level is the core component of a-structure. At this level, any predicate has access to the universal subcategorisation frame in (11), from which it selects certain arguments (Kibort & Maling 2015: 152).



(11) represents information about the relative syntactic prominence of the arguments of a predicate; these argument positions have a fixed order for the purpose of mapping as I explain in section 2.2, but a predicate can in principle select any combination of them. In the a-structure for a particular predicate, the angled brackets contain the argument positions selected by that predicate, see (10). In this thesis,

I only deal with arg_1 and arg_2 .⁹ Each argument position in (11) is associated with an intrinsic syntactic classification in terms of the binary features [\pm r(estricted)] and [\pm o(bjective)]. This serves to specify what type of grammatical function each argument position can be mapped to, as I discuss in detail in section 2.2.2.

Argument positions are in turn linked with semantic participants, which are expressed in terms of thematic roles. In (10), x represents a semantic participant which has the most proto-agentive properties, and y represents a semantic participant with the most proto-patientive properties (Kibort 2008, see also Dowty 1991 on thematic proto-roles). I will use x and y in this way in mappings which are generalisations over multiple predicates. Most versions of (Lexical) Mapping Theory assume a fixed hierarchy of thematic roles, which determines the ordering of arguments for the purpose of mapping ('Thematic Hierarchy', e.g. Bresnan et al. 2015: 329). By contrast, in Kibort's model the argument positions have a fixed order, and there is a flexibility in the way in which the semantic participants can align with the available argument positions.¹⁰ This correspondence is handled by participant-to-argument mapping, which follows certain rules. In this thesis, I only deal with arg_1 and arg_2 , for which the rules in (12) are relevant (Kibort 2014).

(12) **Rules for participant-to-argument mapping**

- a. The first argument position (arg_1) is associated with the participant of whom the event is predicated.
- b. If the predicate has any other dependents, the most prominent semantic complement of the predicate maps onto the second argument position (arg_2).

The representation of semantic participants and argument positions at separate levels contrasts with the original version of (Lexical) Mapping Theory (e.g. Bresnan & Kanerva 1989; Bresnan & Zaenen 1990), where these two strands of

⁹It is not clear what determines which arguments are selected when non-consecutive arguments are selected but this is not a problem for this study, since I only deal with arg_1 and arg_2 .

¹⁰Kibort & Maling (2015) still assume the Thematic Hierarchy as a default ordering of semantic participants; the point is that this can be altered under certain conditions.

information are fused into one level.¹¹ Argument positions have been similarly characterised as an intermediate level between semantic participants and grammatical functions elsewhere (Ackerman & Moore 2001: 48; Falk 2001: 101-5). For discussion and evidence in favour of this decision, see Kibort (2007).

2.2 Mapping principles

As mentioned in section 2.1, the various dimensions assumed within LFG's parallel architecture model of grammar are related to one another via mapping principles. In this section, I outline how the mapping between c- and f-structure, and the mapping between a- and f-structure, are formalised.

2.2.1 Mapping between c-structure and f-structure

It has already been shown in section 2.1 that information about grammatical functions is captured in LFG at f-structure, that is, independent of information about category and constituency (captured at c-structure). The mapping from c-structure to f-structure has the mathematical property of monotonicity, that is, information already present is preserved and cannot be taken away; information can only be added (see Bresnan et al. 2015: 43, 73-76). As noted in section 2.1, while f-structures are largely invariant cross-linguistically, c-structures differ considerably from language to language. This in turn means that the mapping between (largely invariant) f-structures and (variant) c-structures will differ between languages.

In formal terms, the relation between c-structure and f-structure is expressed by a mapping function, σ . The details concerning σ are not relevant to this study, and so I will explain how mapping between c-structure and f-structure works in less formal terms. I will use the English data in (13) for simplicity. I provide annotated c-structures for Icelandic in section 3.1.5, where I outline my assumptions for Icelandic clause structure.

(13) Maria kicked the ball.

Functional information for a sentence like (13) comes from two sources: from

¹¹A dissociation of argument positions and thematic roles was however implicit in early LFG (see Bresnan 1982: 6).

lexical entries, e.g. (14)-(17), and from phrase structure rules which are annotated with functional information, e.g. (18)-(22).¹²

(14) *Maria* N (PRED) = 'MARIA'

(15) *kicked* V (PRED) = 'KICK <SUBJ, OBJ>
(TENSE) = PAST

(16) *the* D (DEF) = +

(17) *ball* N (PRED) = 'BALL'
(NUM) = SG

(18) IP – NP I
(SUBJ) = =

(19) I – I VP
= =

(20) VP – V NP
= (OBJ) =

(21) NP – D N
= =

(22) N – N
=

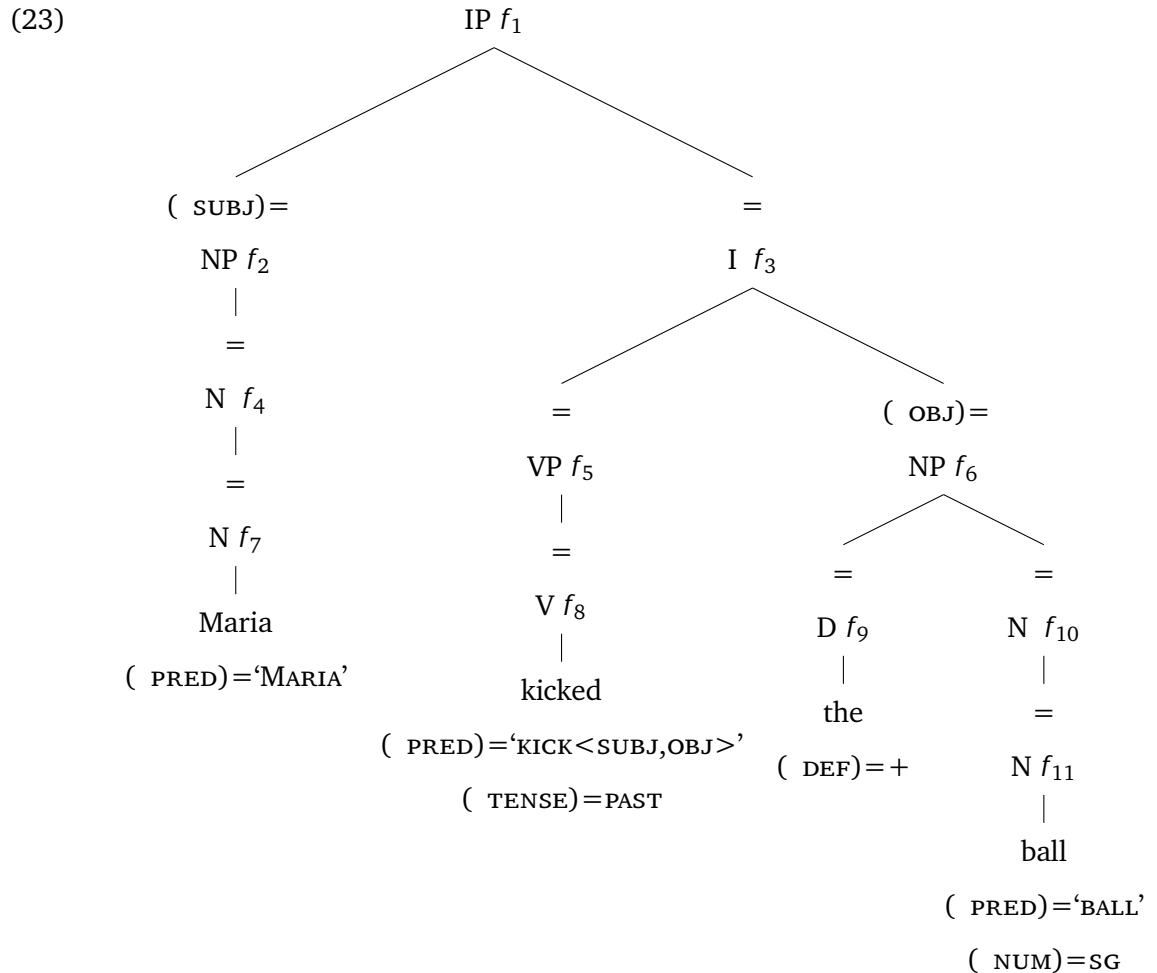
The phrase structure rules in (18)-(22) build the c-structure tree with local functional annotations in (23), and the information from the lexical entries feeds into the functional annotations on the terminal nodes of the tree.¹³ Each node in the c-structure tree in (23) is associated with an unknown f-structure via indexation (f_1 , f_2 etc.). and are metavariables over f-structure variables (f_1 , f_2 etc.) and serve to relate every node in the c-structure to its corresponding f-structure. denotes the f-structure corresponding to that node itself ('my f-structure'), and denotes the

¹²(18)-(22) are a simplified set of phrase-structure rules for English relevant to the example in (13).

Throughout this thesis, I label noun phrases as NP. I exclusively examine clause-level phenomena and so the internal structure of the noun phrase and the NP versus DP debate is not relevant.

¹³Since only finite auxiliaries can occupy I in English, and (13) has no finite auxiliary, the I node in (23) is absent by Economy of Expression (see (3) above); the finite lexical verb occupies V.

f-structure corresponding to that node's mother node ('my mother's f-structure'). Multiple c-structure nodes may correspond to the same f-structure, in which case they are annotated as = : this indicates that the functional information associated with a given node is the same as the functional information associated with that node's mother node.



The f-structure metavariables and in the equations annotated on the c-structure tree in (23) can be instantiated, i.e. replaced with the index given to the f-structure which the arrow refers to. This gives the functional equations in (24)-(39), which together form the f-description of the sentence.

(24) $(f_1 \text{ SUBJ}) = f_2$

(25) $f_1 = f_3$

(26) $f_2 = f_4$

(27) $f_4 = f_7$

- (28) $(f_7 \text{ PRED}) = \text{'MARIA'}$
- (29) $f_3 = f_5$
- (30) $f_5 = f_8$
- (31) $(f_8 \text{ PRED}) = \text{'KICK<SUBJ,OBJ>'}$
- (32) $(f_8 \text{ TENSE}) = \text{PAST}$
- (33) $(f_3 \text{ OBJ}) = f_6$
- (34) $f_6 = f_9$
- (35) $(f_9 \text{ DEF}) = +$
- (36) $f_6 = f_{10}$
- (37) $f_{10} = f_{11}$
- (38) $(f_{11} \text{ PRED}) = \text{'BALL'}$
- (39) $(f_{11} \text{ NUM}) = \text{SG}$

It is now possible to build the f-structure defined by the f-description in (24)-(39), shown in (40).

- (40)
- | | |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRED | 'KICK <SUBJ, OBJ>' |
| TENSE | PAST |
| SUBJ | PRED 'MARIA'
$f_2 f_4 f_7$ |
| | PRED 'BALL' |
| OBJ | NUM SG |
| | DEF +
$f_6 f_9 f_{10} f_{11} f_1 f_3 f_5 f_8$ |

There are general principles which are assumed to hold of the mapping between c-structure and f-structure in relation to lexical and functional categories, 'principles of structure-function association'. Those relevant to this thesis are provided in (41) (Bresnan et al. 2015: 105).

- (41) **Principles of structure-function association**
- a. C-structure heads are f-structure heads.

- b. Complements of functional categories are f-structure co-heads.
- c. Specifiers of functional categories are the grammaticalised discourse functions (TOPIC, FOCUS, SUBJ). Complements of lexical categories are the non-discourse argument functions (e.g. OBJ, OBJ OBL).

These principles will be important in section 3.1.5, where I outline an LFG analysis for Icelandic clause structure and verb-second.

The fact that information about category/constituency and information about grammatical functions are formalised in separate dimensions, and related to one another via mapping correspondences means that the LFG view of subjecthood differs radically from certain other generative approaches to grammar, where functions are always structurally defined. LFG assumes that c-structure does not necessarily play a role in subject identification. The formalism of LFG can capture both strongly configurational languages like English – where structural position (at c-structure) plays a significant role in encoding grammatical functions – as well as less configurational languages – where grammatical functions are less likely to be associated with certain structural positions but are encoded via other morphosyntactic means (e.g. case or agreement marking). LFG thus adopts the view that the properties by which subjects can be identified will vary cross-linguistically. I outline the morphosyntactic properties by which subjects can be identified in Icelandic in section 3.3. Of course, some of these morphosyntactic properties may happen to concern structural position; the crucial point is that these subject properties often go *beyond* the exclusively structural.

2.2.2 Mapping between a-structure and f-structure

In section 2.1, it was shown that the information about grammatical functions captured at f-structure occurs in a separate dimension to information about argument positions and semantic participants, which is captured at a-structure. The correspondence between a-structure and f-structure in LFG is handled by (Lexical) Mapping Theory; this aims to capture generalisations in the correspondence between arguments and grammatical functions. This correspondence was originally formalised as ‘Lexical Mapping Theory’ (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989, Bresnan 1990; see also Bresnan 2001; Bresnan et al. 2015). Various revisions of the original Lexical

Mapping Theory have since been proposed. Kibort has extensively developed this area of LFG, primarily in relation to data from passive and impersonal constructions in Polish (e.g. Kibort 2007, 2014; Kibort & Maling 2015). This particular version is referred to as ‘Mapping Theory’, a convention I follow. Kibort’s Mapping Theory was developed with a view to accounting for various construction types which are problematic for earlier versions of Lexical Mapping Theory, in particular certain passive and impersonal constructions. Since the historical Icelandic data which is the focus of this thesis throws up many issues similar to those handled by Kibort, I draw on Kibort’s Mapping Theory, particularly in Chapter 7 in relation to Icelandic subjectless constructions. Here, I outline the major aspects of Mapping Theory which are relevant to this thesis. In section 2.3, I show how Mapping Theory can be used to model passive and impersonal constructions in LFG.

Central to Mapping Theory is the observation that there are restrictions on the possible grammatical functions with which an individual argument can be associated (e.g. Bresnan & Kanerva 1989). It was already shown in section 2.1.3 that argument positions at a-structure are associated with an intrinsic syntactic classification in terms of the binary features $[\pm r(\text{restricted})]$ and $[\pm o(\text{bjective})]$. This draws on the decomposition of grammatical functions into features shown in Table 2.1 (Bresnan & Kanerva 1989: 24). The $[\pm r]$ feature captures whether or not a grammatical function is restricted in terms of which thematic roles can be associated with it; the $[\pm o]$ feature captures whether or not a grammatical function is object-like.

	$[-r]$	$[+r]$
$[-o]$	SUBJ	OBL
$[+o]$	OBJ	OBJ

Table 2.1: Decomposition of grammatical functions into features

Note that in Table 2.1, each grammatical function is defined by a combination of two values for the respective features $[\pm o]$ and $[\pm r]$. In the universal subcategorisation frame in (11), repeated here in (42), each argument position is associated with a value for just one of the features, $[\pm o]$ or $[\pm r]$, and is thus syntactically underspecified. Arg_1 is specified as either $[-o]$ or $[-r]$, depending on the predicate type: for transitive and unergative verbs, arg_1 is associated with $[-o]$; for unaccusative verbs, arg_1 is associated with $[-r]$. Throughout, I only show the feature that

is relevant for the particular predicate under discussion. For conciseness, I will use ‘intransitive’ to mean unergative intransitive, and when referring to unaccusative intransitives I will make this explicit.

$$(42) \quad < \quad \text{arg}_1 \quad \text{arg}_2 \quad \text{arg}_3 \quad \text{arg}_4 \quad \dots \quad \text{arg}_n \quad >$$

$$\quad \quad \quad [-o/-r] \quad [-r] \quad [+o] \quad [-o] \quad \quad \quad [-o]$$

This syntactic underspecification captures the fact that there is not a one-to-one mapping between arguments and grammatical functions, thus making it possible to define the ‘natural classes’ of grammatical function in (43) (see Bresnan & Kanerva 1989: 25).

$$(43) \quad \quad \quad [-r] = \text{SUBJ, OBJ} \quad [-o] = \text{SUBJ, OBL}$$

$$\quad \quad \quad [+r] = \text{OBJ, OBL} \quad [+o] = \text{OBJ, OBJ}$$

When arg_1 is specified as $[-o]$ (transitives/unergatives), it can in principle map to either SUBJ or OBL . When arg_1 is specified as $[-r]$ (unaccusatives), it can in principle map to either SUBJ or OBJ, as can arg_2 ($[-r]$).

For mapping arguments at a-structure to grammatical functions at f-structure, a Mapping Principle is proposed which draws on the ordering of arguments in (42), as well as the intrinsic classification of grammatical functions in Table 2.1. The Mapping Principle is shown in (44) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 153).¹⁴ Mapping arguments to grammatical functions also follows the ‘Subject Default’ in (45), which similarly draws on the ordering of arguments in (42) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 153).

(44) **Mapping Principle**

The ordered arguments are mapped to the available functions compatible with their intrinsic marking.

(45) **Subject Default**

The first argument compatible with the SUBJ function is mapped to SUBJ.

When applied to a transitive predicate which takes two arguments – in all cases

¹⁴In earlier versions, the Mapping Principle in (44) also drew on the so-called ‘markedness hierarchy of grammatical functions’ which follows from the decomposition of grammatical functions by the features $[\pm o]$ and $[\pm r]$. Kibort’s more recent work does not relate to the markedness hierarchy of grammatical functions, but rather to the Subject Default in (45) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 153).

in this thesis arg_1 and arg_2 – the Mapping Principle and Subject Default result in the mapping in (46) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 154). Arg_1 is specified as $[-o]$ so could in principle map to SUBJ or OBL by the Mapping Principle in (44), but the application of the Subject Default in (45) means that it must map to SUBJ . Arg_2 is specified as $[-r]$ and so could in principle map to SUBJ or OBJ , but since arg_1 maps to SUBJ by the Subject Default, arg_2 cannot also map to SUBJ since this would violate functional uniqueness as a condition on f-structure (see (9) above).

(46)		x	y
		/	/
	transitive (default)	<	arg_1 arg_2 >
		$[-o]$	$[-r]$
		/	/
		SUBJ	OBJ

When applied to an intransitive (unergative) predicate which takes only one argument, arg_1 , the Mapping Principle and Subject Default result in the mapping in (47) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 154).

(47)		x
		/
	intransitive (default)	< arg_1 >
		$[-o]$
		/
		SUBJ

Argument-function correspondences like (46) and (47) can be considered the default mappings for transitive predicates (which take arg_1 and arg_2) and intransitive predicates (which take arg_1) respectively, without the application of any valency-changing operation. Throughout, I use the term ‘default SUBJ argument’ to refer to the argument at a-structure which by default maps to SUBJ in the argument-function mapping, e.g. arg_1 in (46) and (47). As I show in section 2.3, passivization is a valency-changing operation which alters this default mapping between arguments and functions, while impersonalization – understood on the terms outlined below – is valency-preserving and does not affect the default mapping.

Kibort's revised version of Mapping Theory has consequences for the status of the Subject Condition, see (48), which is generally assumed to be a constraint on f-structure (Bresnan et al. 2015: 334).¹⁵

(48) **Subject Condition**

Every predicator must have a subject.

Kibort (2007) argues that her revised version of Mapping Theory renders the Subject Condition redundant, since the provision of the subject in relevant contexts is ensured by the Mapping Principle (44) and the Subject Default (45). As such, Kibort abandons the Subject Condition. Furthermore, assuming the Mapping principle and the Subject Default and abandoning the Subject Condition makes it possible to account for 'inherently subjectless' predicates, as I show in section 7.1.1 in relation to Icelandic. In such contexts, there is no argument available which is compatible with the SUBJ function.

Regardless of the status of the subject at f-structure, a construction may lack an overt constituent at c-structure which is assigned the SUBJ function. I will refer to such constructions as 'subjectless'; hence 'subjectless' is to be equated with 'subjectless at c-structure'. As I show in Chapters 5 and 7, Icelandic exhibits a wide variety of construction types which qualify as subjectless on these terms. Certain types of subjectless construction have a SUBJ present at f-structure, while others do not. In section 2.3, I show how Kibort's Mapping Theory can be used to model such a difference.

2.3 Modelling passive and impersonal constructions

I will distinguish between passive and impersonal constructions in this study, in line with work on data from a range of languages (e.g. Blevins 2003; Kibort 2006; Kibort & Maling 2015; Maling 1993; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, 2015). The essential difference between passivization and impersonalization concerns whether or not the default mapping between arguments and grammatical functions as-

¹⁵The Subject Condition is originally attributed to Baker (1983). It has been debated as to whether the Subject Condition should be considered a universal or not (see e.g. Alsina 1996: 20; Bresnan & Kanerva 1989: 28; Bresnan & Zaenen 1990: 51, footnote 10).

sumed in (46)/(47) is altered. Passivization alters this default mapping, while impersonalization does not alter the mapping. Both passivization and impersonalization have an effect on the status of the default SUBJ argument as defined in section 2.2.2 above. Passivization demotes the default SUBJ argument to an oblique (OBL); it is no longer a SUBJ in the argument-function mapping. Impersonalization, by contrast, preserves the default SUBJ argument in the argument-function mapping, but suppresses its overt realisation at c-structure. I summarise this distinction in Table 2.2.

Passivization	Impersonalization
Change in default mapping	No change in default mapping
Demotion of default SUBJ argument	Suppression of default SUBJ argument
Default SUBJ argument now an OBL	Default SUBJ argument remains a SUBJ

Table 2.2: Passivization versus impersonalization

As I discuss in detail in Chapter 7, there are certain contexts – such as constructions with morphologically passive intransitive predicates – which are ambiguous with respect to whether the default SUBJ argument has been demoted (via passivization) or merely suppressed (via impersonalization), since both passivisation and impersonalization result in the same form at c-structure. Various criteria have been proposed in order to assess the status of the default SUBJ argument in such contexts (e.g. Blevins 2003; Kibort & Maling 2015; Maling 1993; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, 2015). The basic premise is that in an intransitive passive construction where the default SUBJ argument has been demoted to an OBL and is no longer a SUBJ in the argument-function mapping, there is no syntactically operational SUBJ at f-structure to act as an antecedent for e.g. reflexivization.¹⁶ However, in an impersonal intransitive construction where the default SUBJ argument is merely suppressed at c-structure and remains a SUBJ in the argument-function mapping, this SUBJ at f-structure is syntactically operational as an antecedent. I discuss these criteria in relation to Icelandic data in Chapter 7.

There is not necessarily a one-to-one mapping between a construction’s morphological status as active/passive and its syntactic status as active/passive. In this study, I employ the distinction ‘morphologically active’ versus ‘morphologically pas-

¹⁶I discuss subject properties, including acting as an antecedent for e.g. reflexives in section 3.3.

sive' based exclusively on the morphology of the verb. By contrast, the distinction 'syntactically active' versus 'syntactically passive' refers to the status of the default SUBJ argument in the argument-function mapping. In line with the distinction in Table 2.2, a syntactically active impersonal construction is one in which the default SUBJ argument is merely suppressed at c-structure and remains a SUBJ in the mapping, whereas a syntactically passive construction is one in which the default SUBJ argument is demoted to an OBL and is no longer a SUBJ in the mapping.¹⁷ As I show in Chapter 7, a morphologically passive construction in Icelandic may be either syntactically passive or syntactically active.

2.3.1 Passivization

As already mentioned, passivization is an operation which results in a change in the default mapping between arguments and grammatical functions. In Mapping Theory, passivization is understood as comprising two components: demotion and promotion. The default SUBJ is demoted and maps to the OBL function; if a second argument is present, then this argument has the opportunity to be promoted and to map to the SUBJ function.

The Mapping Principle introduced above in (44) matches the ordered argument positions in (11) with grammatical functions, beginning from the least restricted argument position, arg_1 ($[-o/-r]$). Adding a restriction to a less restricted argument therefore changes how the Mapping Principle applies, and in turn disrupts the default mapping between arguments and functions. When a transitive predicate is passivized, the highest argument (already specified as $[-o]$) receives additional specification that it must map onto a grammatical function which is also $[+r]$; the combination $[-o, +r]$ results in specifying an OBL (see Table 2.1 above). In terms of the promotion component, the second argument (arg_2) remains specified as $[-r]$ and is mapped onto SUBJ (i.e. promoted) in accordance with the Subject Default (45). Compare the default mapping for a transitive in (46) with the mapping for a passivized transitive with promotion of the second argument to SUBJ in (49).

¹⁷This use of 'syntactically active/passive' is borrowed from research on the Icelandic New Impersonal/Passive construction (e.g. Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002).

(49)	x	y	
	/	/	
transitive (promotional passive)	<	arg ₁	arg ₂ >
		[-o]	[-r]
		[+r]	
	/	/	
	OBL	SUBJ	

Of the two components, demotion is given priority over promotion. Support for the primacy of demotion comes from the fact that intransitive predicates – which select only one argument and thus have no second argument to promote to *SUBJ* – can be passivized in a range of languages, including Icelandic as I discuss in Chapter 7. The output of a passivized intransitive predicate is by principle a subjectless construction, i.e. one which lacks an overt constituent at c-structure which maps to the *SUBJ* function (see section 2.2.1). The mapping for a passivized (unergative) intransitive is given in (50); compare the mapping for a default intransitive in (47) above.

(50)	x	
	/	
intransitive (passive)	<	arg ₁ >
		[-o]
		[+r]
	/	
	OBL	

Following from the primacy of the demotion component of passivization, Mapping Theory also allows for non-promotional transitive passives, which have the mapping in (51) (Kibort & Maling 2015: 156). In a non-promotional passive, the first argument is still demoted to an *OBL*, as in the straightforward promotional passive in (49). The point of difference is that in the non-promotional passive, the second argument is additionally specified as [+o] and is thus ‘blocked’ from being promoted to *SUBJ*; it is forced to remain an *OBJ*. There is no argument compatible with the *SUBJ* function (which is [-o,-r]) and so the construction lacks a subject at

both c-structure and f-structure.

(51)	x	y		
	/	/		
transitive (non-promotional passive)	<	arg ₁	arg ₂	>
		[-o]	[-r]	
		[+r]	[+o]	
		/	/	
		OBL	OBJ	

2.3.2 Impersonalization

While passivization results in a change in the mapping between arguments and grammatical functions, impersonalization involves no change in the argument-function mapping. The only change is in the mapping to c-structure, where the default SUBJ argument is suppressed at c-structure. Impersonal constructions therefore qualify as subjectless on the terms adopted here. The suppression of an argument in LFG can be understood as ‘Do not map an argument to c-structure’ and can be notated as in (52) (Kibort 2004: 372).¹⁸

(52)	< arg _n >
	/
	∅

Impersonalization has no effect on the mapping relations between arguments and grammatical functions; these remain the same as that of the default equivalent. Impersonalization of a transitive predicate thus results in the mapping in (53); compare the mapping for a default transitive predicate in (46) above.

¹⁸More recent versions of Kibort’s Mapping Theory do not use ∅ in the mapping to express the suppression of the SUBJ, but rely on underspecified features and PRO as the PRED value of the SUBJ at f-structure to capture this. This nuance is not relevant to my study; I use ∅ in the mapping for impersonals for maximum clarity throughout.

(53)	x	y
	/	/
transitive (impersonal)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >
	[-o]	[-r]
	/	/
	SUBJ	OBJ
	∅	

Impersonalization of an intransitive predicate results in the mapping in (54); compare the mapping for a default intransitive predicate in (47) above. I discuss the Icelandic data that exemplifies this possibility in Chapter 7.

(54)	x
	/
intransitive (impersonal)	< arg ₁ >
	[-o]
	/
	SUBJ
	∅

2.4 Clausal arguments and functions

Clausal arguments have attracted a good deal of attention in LFG research to date (e.g. Alsina et al. 2005; Berman 2003; Berman et al. 1998; Dalrymple 2001; Ramhöj 2015, 2016; Zaenen & Engdahl 1994; Zimmermann 2015). This thesis will discuss Icelandic constructions where a cataphorically referential element *það* (CATPH) co-occurs with a clausal argument, e.g. (55) and (56).

(55) Og það er ótrúlegt [hvað þeir eru áhrifamiklir]...
 and CATPH be.PRS unbelievable how they be.PRS influential
 ‘And it is unbelievable how influential they are...’ (1985, Margsaga.625)

(56) Það veit ég [að þér leið ekki alltaf vel þegar
 CATPH know.PRS I.NOM COMP you.DAT feel.PST NEG always well when
 þú varst lítill drengur]...
 you be.PST little boy
 ‘I know that you did not always feel well when you were a little boy...’

(2008, Mamma.841)

2.4.1 Clausal SUBJS and OBJs

The syntactic status of the embedded clause in constructions like (55) in modern Icelandic has been discussed by Thráinsson (1979), as I review in detail in Chapter 6. Crucially, there is evidence that the embedded clause can occur in the canonical subject position, e.g. (57).¹⁹

- (57) [Að Jón tali sjálfur við kennarann] er langbest.
COMP Jón talk.PRS.SBJV self with teacher.DEF be.PRS best
'That Jón himself talks with the teacher is best.' (Thráinsson 1979: 31)

As outlined in section 2.2.1, in LFG subjects are not exclusively defined on the basis of structural position. Thus the framework allows for a clausal argument like that in (55) to be assigned the SUBJ function, just like the clausal argument in (57), even though the former does not occur in the canonical subject position. Throughout this study, I assume that in both (55) and (57), the embedded clause is a clausal argument which is assigned the SUBJ function. I extend this analysis to constructions like (58) which have a nonfinite clausal argument.

- (58) Það er hægt [að nota kjarnorkuna]...
EXPL be.PRS possible to use.INF nuclear-power.DEF
'It is possible to use the nuclear power...' (1985, Sagan.1354)

Constructions like (58) with a nonfinite clausal argument which maps to the SUBJ function are comparatively infrequent in my data, so I focus the discussion on constructions with a finite clausal subject like (55).

The type of grammatical function assigned to clausal complements like that in (56) is a key point of debate in LFG. This thesis deals with constructions with a closed clausal complement, which has its own subject which is not functionally controlled, e.g. (59).²⁰

¹⁹I outline my understanding of subject positions in Icelandic in Chapter 3.

²⁰I do not discuss constructions with a clausal complement which involves functional control and which is assumed to have the function xCOMP (see Butt et al. 1999: 51-55):

(i) I want [to go to Hexham].

(59) She knows [that I like my hometown].

The traditional view is that closed clausal complements as in (59) are assigned the COMP function (e.g. Bresnan et al. 2015: 99), that is, a grammatical function distinct from OBJ. This separate COMP function is motivated by observed differences in syntactic behaviour between noun phrase objects and clausal complements. However, a number of authors have challenged this assumption. Alsina et al. (2005) argue that all clausal complements are assigned the OBJ function cross-linguistically, and thus do away with the grammatical function COMP altogether. Dalrymple & Lødrup (2000), meanwhile, argue that clausal complements can be assigned either the COMP or the OBJ function. In their proposal, there are some languages in which all clausal complements bear the same grammatical function (COMP or OBJ), and some ‘mixed’ languages in which clausal complements bear either the COMP or OBJ function, depending on requirements of the matrix predicate. Following Thráinsson (1979), Dalrymple & Lødrup (2000) claim that in Icelandic all complement clauses are assigned the OBJ function, i.e. that it is a language of the first type. A key piece of evidence that Icelandic clausal complements like that in (56) have object status is the fact that they can be promoted to subject under passivization, e.g. (60).²¹

(60) [Að jörðin er hnöttót] er vitað.
COMP earth.DEF be.PRS round be.PRS know.PASS.PTCP
‘That the Earth is round is known.’ (Thráinsson 1979: 90)

I follow this analysis and thus assume that clausal complements in Icelandic, e.g. (56), are assigned the OBJ function.²² For a sentence like (56), I therefore assume the default mapping in (61), where the clausal argument (arg_2 , Theme) maps to the OBJ function.

²¹I discuss morphologically passive transitives like (60) in section 6.4, where I argue that such constructions are syntactically ambiguous with the respect to the grammatical function assigned to the clausal argument.

²²A different proposal is put forward by Zaenen & Engdahl (1994), who maintain that clausal complements are assigned the COMP function, which is equated with the function OBL_{prop} , that is, an oblique function which is thematically restricted to the role of Proposition.

(61)		Experiencer	Theme	
		/	/	
	<	arg ₁	arg ₂	>
		[-o]	[-r]	
		/	/	
		SUBJ	OBJ	

2.4.2 A unification account

In both (55) and (56), the clausal argument co-occurs with a cataphorically referential *það* in the matrix clause. I discuss such constructions in detail in Chapter 6. Here, I outline the LFG analysis which I assume for such constructions. Parallel constructions have been discussed by Berman et al. (1998) and Berman (1998, 2003) for present-day German, and by Ramhöj (2015, 2016) for early English. There are essentially three possible ways to account for constructions like (55) and (56); all three assume that the clausal argument has a PRED feature; they differ in terms of whether *það* is assumed to have a PRED feature or not:

1. *það* has no PRED feature, and is a non-thematic argument (see Kaplan & Zanen 1989 for the standard LFG account of English ‘extraposition-*it*').²³
2. *það* optionally introduces its PRED feature: when *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument, it does not introduce a PRED feature, since this would clash with the PRED value contributed by the clausal argument (see Andrews 1990b on clitic doubling in Spanish).²⁴
3. *það* introduces one aspect of the PRED feature (introduces a variable) and the clausal argument introduces another aspect (specifies a semantic restriction on this variable) (see Berman et al. 1998 on German constructions where *es* co-occurs with a clausal argument).

I follow Berman et al. (1998) and assume the third type of analysis for Icelandic constructions like (55) and (56), where *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument. Berman et al. (1998) propose that clausal arguments which co-occur with a pronominal *es* in German like in (62) contribute to the same argument slot of

²³I show how non-thematic arguments can be formalised within LFG in section 2.5.

²⁴See also Kuhn (1999, 2001) for a similar account of split noun phrase constructions in German.

the matrix verb; both the information contributed by the pronominal *es* and that contributed by the clausal argument unify under the same grammatical function at f-structure.²⁵

- (62) Hans hat **es** bedauert, [daß er gelogen hat].
 Hans have.PRS it regret.PST.PTCP COMP he.NOM lie.PST.PTCP have.PRS
 ‘Hans has regretted it that he has lied.’ (Berman et al. 1998: 3)

Two distinct appearances of the same grammatical function within a single f-structure are ruled out in LFG by the functional uniqueness condition on f-structure (see (9) above, as well as Kaplan & Bresnan 1995: 37). This requires that every attribute in an f-structure can have at most one value. Thus, a grammatical function attribute such as SUBJ or OBJ must have a unique value. The functional uniqueness condition also requires that a PRED feature has at most one value. Furthermore, PRED values in LFG are assumed to be instantiated symbols, i.e. semantically distinct from any other symbol (see Kaplan & Bresnan 1995: 77).

As mentioned, the unification analysis proposed by Berman et al. (1998) for constructions like (62) assumes that both *es* and the clausal argument contribute information towards the PRED feature of the same grammatical function. Thus, assuming that two c-structure constituents contribute to the same PRED feature requires that their PRED values be compatible. Berman et al. (1998: 10) satisfy this requirement by assuming a distinction between two types of information which can contribute to PRED (Berman et al. 1998: 10):

1. The introduction of a variable: [PRED ‘...’].
2. The specification of a semantic relation restricting this value, embedded under a feature RESTR: [RESTR [PRED ‘...’]]

Usually, these two parts are contributed by the same c-structure constituent and

²⁵One way in which my analysis differs from that of Berman et al. (1998) is that I assume that *það* has cataphoric reference to the clausal argument. For German, Berman et al. (1998) assume that *es* is not cataphorically bound by the clausal argument but introduces an anaphoric proposition referent, i.e. requires a true antecedent from elsewhere, such as a shared belief between speaker and hearer. This is in line with their claim that *es* in German serves to mark the clausal argument as a topic (i.e. shared knowledge), as I discuss in Chapter 6. As I show in Chapter 6, the clausal argument in Icelandic typically expresses discourse-new information (hence is not a topic), and so a cataphoric analysis for *það* is more appropriate.

hence collapsed as a single [PRED ‘...’]. In the case of constructions like (62), however, it is assumed that the two parts are contributed by different c-structure constituents: *es* is assumed to introduce the variable, in the form of a canonical PRED value [PRED ‘pro’]; the clausal argument is assumed to introduce the semantic restriction [RESTR [PRED ‘...’]]. This allows for an analysis which is compatible with functional uniqueness. In other words, a grammatical function can be realised in more than one c-structure position by independent constituents, provided the PRED values of those constituents are compatible in terms of instantiation. Constructions where *es* co-occurs with a clausal argument are one such case.

I apply the unification account by Berman et al. (1998) for Icelandic constructions like (55) and (56), where a cataphorically referential *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument. In constructions like (55), I assume that both *það* and the clausal argument map to the SUBJ function and unify at f-structure, see (63). *það* introduces the variable [PRED ‘pro’] and has default PERS, NUM and GENDER features (3SG.NT), since the clausal argument it is co-referential with has no PERS, NUM and GENDER features. The clausal argument introduces a semantic restriction on this variable [PRED ‘how influential they are’], embedded under the RESTR feature.

(63)

PRED	‘be<SUBJ,PREDLINK>’	
	RESTR	PRED ‘how influential they are’
	PRED	‘pro’
SUBJ	PERS	3
	NUM	SG
	GENDER	NT
	CASE	NOM
PREDLINK	PRED	‘unbelievable’

For Icelandic copular constructions, I assume that the copular complement is assigned the PREDLINK function (Butt et al. 1999: 69-70); for discussion see also Dalrymple et al. (2004). This captures the assumption that copular *be* gives its complement a SUBJ argument to which to ‘link’ that complement’s semantics. Thus the PREDLINK in (63) indicates that there is a subject of which a certain property (PRED ‘unbelievable’) is predicated.

In constructions like (56), I assume that both *það* and the clausal argument

map to the OBJ function and unify at f-structure, again with *það* introducing the variable [PRED ‘pro’] and the clausal argument introducing the semantic restriction [RESTR [PRED ‘that you did not always feel...’]], see (64).

(64)

PRED	‘know<SUBJ,OBJ>’	
	PRED	‘pro’
	PERS	3
SUBJ	NUM	SG
	CASE	NOM
	RESTR	PRED ‘that you did not always feel...’
	PRED	‘pro’
	PERS	3
OBJ	NUM	SG
	GENDER	NT
	CASE	ACC

In (55), I assume that cataphoric *það* is marked for nominative case, as is prototypical for subjects of copular verbs. In (56), I assume that cataphoric *það* is marked for accusative case, as is typical for the object of the predicate *vita* (‘know’). Although *það* is formally ambiguous and could be nominative or accusative, support for the fact that it inflects for case comes from examples with predicates which assign the formally distinct genitive case to their object, e.g. *geta* ‘guess’ in (65), where cataphoric *það* is marked for genitive marking (*þess*).

- (65) En þess get ég fyrst [að þú sért maður
but CATPH.GEN GUESS.PRS I.NOM first COMP you.NOM be.PRS.SBJV man
íslenskur]...
Icelandic
‘But I guess that you are an Icelandic man...’ (1275, Morkin.1564)

2.5 Expletives in LFG

The Icelandic expletive *það* in (66) – that is, *það* which is neither cataphorically nor anaphorically referential – is a key focus of this study.²⁶

²⁶I outline the key properties of expletive *það* in Chapter 5.

- (66) **Það** var dansað í gær.
 EXPL be.PST dance.PASS.PTCP yesterday
 ‘It was danced yesterday.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 266)

In comparison to mainstream generative grammar, expletive elements have received relatively little attention in LFG.²⁷ In this section, I show how two different types of expletive can be formalised within LFG.

2.5.1 Expletives as non-thematic arguments

An expletive lacks semantics, and in LFG this can be captured as having no PRED but relevant agreement features (see Asudeh & Toivonen 2009). This works for a language like English which has predicates which take a non-thematic SUBJ, such as the weather verb *rain* in (67). In such cases, the expletive is represented at f-structure. The f-structure for the sentence in (67) is shown in (68). In the first line, the verb *rain* takes a subject which is non-thematic, as shown by the fact that SUBJ occurs outside the angle brackets. The f-structure for the SUBJ function lacks a PRED feature in accordance with the fact that it is an expletive, has person and number features and is specified as having the form *it* (as opposed to the form *there*).²⁸

- (67) It rained.

(68)

PRED	'rain < > SUBJ'		
TENSE	PAST		
	PERS	3	
SUBJ	NUM	SG	
	FORM	IT	

2.5.2 Positionally restricted expletives

Unlike the English expletive *it* in (67), the Icelandic expletive *það* does not qualify as a subject; it does not invert with the verb in topicalization contexts, as Icelandic

²⁷LFG research which deals explicitly with expletives includes Börjars & Vincent (2005) on Swedish and Sells (2005) on Icelandic.

²⁸I discuss *it*-type versus *there*-type expletives in Chapter 5.

subjects do; compare (69-a) with (69-b) which lacks an expletive.²⁹

- (69) a. **Það** rigndi í gær.
EXPL rain.PST.3.SG yesterday
'It rained yesterday.'
- b. Í gær rigndi (*það).
yesterday rain.PST.3SG *EXPL
'Yesterday it rained.'

I will refer to the positionally restricted type of expletive in (69-a) as a 'prefinite expletive', distinct from the English 'subject expletive' in (67). Lødrup (2011: 174-5) states that there is no motivation for prefinite expletives like Icelandic *það* ('expletive topics' in his terms) to be represented at f-structure; they are not assigned a grammatical function, nor a grammaticalised discourse function. Expletive *það* in contexts like (69) is merely a structural placeholder for the topic position; since it has no meaningful content, it cannot be considered a 'topic' in any information-structural sense, despite the fact that 'expletive topic' has emerged as a common label for such items in the literature (e.g. Faarlund 1990: 63). I discuss this issue in detail in section 5.2. Nor does the expletive have any grammatical features; the agreement marking on the verb in (69-a) (3SG) can be considered as failure to agree. 3SG is the default agreement marking in Icelandic; cf. (69-b), where the verb also has 3SG marking, despite the fact that there is no *það*.

In sum, there is no motivation for the prefinite expletive in (69-a) to have representation at f-structure. It is thus an unusual case of an element which is present at c-structure but which has no representation at f-structure (for discussion, see Lødrup 2011). I follow this formalisation for *það* in contexts like (69), where it qualifies as a prefinite expletive.

2.6 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the parallel architecture model of grammar assumed within LFG in section 2.1, and how different types of linguistic information are formalised at c-structure (category and constituency), f-structure (grammatical func-

²⁹I outline key properties of Icelandic subjects in section 3.3. Sells (2005) analyses expletive *það* in his LFG account as a SUBJ. I discuss his proposal and show why I disagree for contexts like (69) in sections 3.1.4 and 5.2.3.

tions, grammaticalised discourse functions and grammatical features) and at a-structure (argument positions and semantic participants). I showed how these three dimensions are related to each other in section 2.2, introducing functional annotations as a way to map between c-structure and f-structure, and Kibort's Mapping Theory as a way to map between a-structure and f-structure. I also discussed how subjecthood is understood in LFG, specifically that subjects are not necessarily encoded in terms of structural position but rather via a range of morphosyntactic properties which differ cross-linguistically. I introduced 'subjectless' as a term for constructions which lack a constituent at c-structure which is assigned the SUBJ function. In section 2.3, I showed how Kibort's Mapping Theory is a useful approach for modelling the difference between passivization and impersonalization as two distinct types of operation which can be applied to a predicate. Section 2.4 introduced an LFG approach to constructions with a clausal argument, specifically which grammatical function is assigned to the clausal argument and how a unification analysis can be applied to Icelandic constructions where a cataphoric *það* and a clausal argument co-occur. Finally, in section 2.5 I showed how different types of expletive – subject expletives and prefinite expletives – can be formalised within LFG.

Chapter 3

Analyses of modern Icelandic clause structure

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the major generative analyses of modern Icelandic clause structure which have been proposed to date, and outline my own assumptions which I adopt throughout this study. Section 3.1 discusses the various analyses which have been put forward to capture the verb-second constraint in Icelandic. In section 3.2, I discuss contexts in which verb-first order is permitted in matrix declaratives. Section 3.3 outlines the key morphosyntactic properties which distinguish subjects in Icelandic. Section 3.4 discusses the interaction between the position of the subject and topicality. Section 3.5 summarises the main points of the discussion.

3.1 Verb-second and the structure of the clause

A defining characteristic of Icelandic clause structure is the verb-second (V2) constraint. The V2 constraint means that there can be maximally one constituent in the clause-initial prefinite position and thus results in structures like those in (1). (1-a) is a subject-initial construction. In (1-b), a non-subject argument (OBJ) is topicalized to the prefinite position and the subject occupies a position immediately after the finite verb. The subject behaves in the same way in (1-c), where an adjunct (ADJ) is topicalized. In all three sentences, the finite verb occurs in second position.

- (1) a. Hún **lagaði** kaffi í eldhúsinu. (SUBJ-V-XP)
 she.NOM make.PST coffee.ACC in kitchen.DAT.DEF
 ‘She made coffee in the kitchen’.
- b. Kaffi **lagaði** hún í eldhúsinu. (OBJ-V-SUBJ)
 coffee.ACC make.PST she.NOM in kitchen.DAT.DEF
 ‘She made coffee in the kitchen’.
- c. [Í eldhúsinu] **lagaði** hún kaffi. (ADJ-V-SUBJ)
 in kitchen.DAT.DEF make.PST she.NOM coffee.ACC
 ‘She made coffee in the kitchen’.

Icelandic is commonly characterised as a ‘general embedded V2’ language, referring to the fact that V2 is not restricted to matrix clauses, but also freely occurs in embedded clauses (see e.g. Vikner 1995: 65). Examples are provided in (2)-(3) (taken from Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990: 23). I show the embedded clause in square brackets and the finite verb in bold. In (2), the prefinite position in the embedded clause is occupied by a non-subject argument (OBJ); in (3), an adjunct occupies the prefinite position.

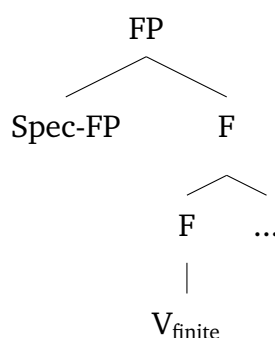
- (2) Jón harmar [að þessa bók **skuli** ég hafa
 Jón.NOM regret.PRS COMP DEM.ACC book.ACC shall I.NOM have.INF
 lesið].
 read.PST.PTCP
 ‘Jón regrets that I have read this book.’
- (3) Jón efast um [að á morgun **fari** Maríu
 Jón.NOM doubt.PRS PTCL COMP tomorrow get.PRS.SBJV María.NOM
 snemma á fætur].
 early up
 ‘Jón doubts that María will get up early tomorrow.’

In this respect, Icelandic differs from Mainland Scandinavian languages, where V2 can occur in embedded clauses, but only in a restricted set of contexts (‘limited embedded V2’, Vikner 1995: 65). Nevertheless, a number of authors have cast doubt on the status of Icelandic as a general embedded V2 language; see Walkden & Booth (forthcoming) and further references there. Since this study focuses primarily on matrix clause phenomena, I do not consider this matter any further.

The majority of work on Icelandic syntax has been conducted within the framework of mainstream generative grammar. In this context, V2 is broadly characterised in the following way; see the generalisation in (4):

1. The finite verb (V_{finite}) occupies the head (F) of some functional projection (FP).¹
2. Maximally one constituent can occur in the Specifier position of the same functional projection (Spec-FP).
3. This Specifier position is associated with certain information-structural properties.

(4)



Two main issues which have been debated with respect to V2 are:

1. What type of FP does the finite verb head, i.e. how far does it move?
2. Do topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occupy the same structural position or not?

In terms of the treatment of these two issues, mainstream generative accounts of Icelandic V2 fall into three main camps, which I refer to as follows:

1. The single-movement approach (e.g. Rögnavaldsson & Thráinsson 1990).
2. The uniform double-movement approach (e.g. Sigurðsson 1989: 10-11).
3. The split double-movement approach (e.g. Sigurðsson 1990).

In addition, Sells (2001, 2005) has developed an LFG account for Icelandic clause structure which I mainly adopt, with some revisions. I discuss this in section 3.1.4.

3.1.1 The single-movement approach

The single-movement approach (e.g. Rögnavaldsson & Thráinsson 1990) assumes the following for V2 matrix clauses:

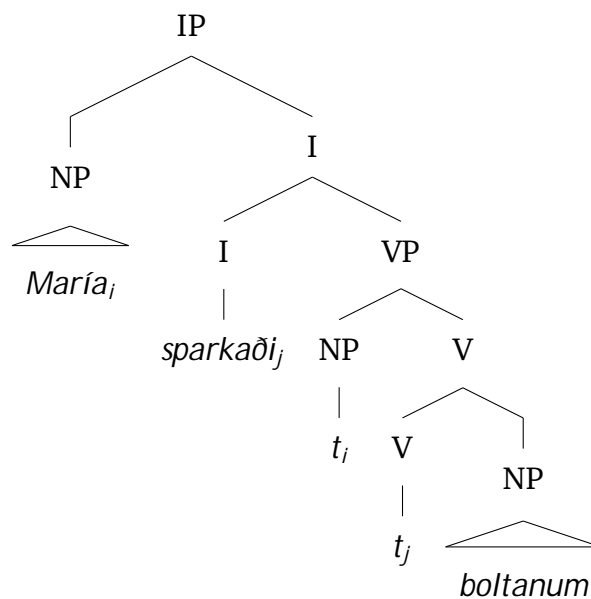
1. The finite verb moves to I (i.e. heads IP).

¹I use FP as a generalisation over the functional projections IP and CP, since authors differ in which one they assume.

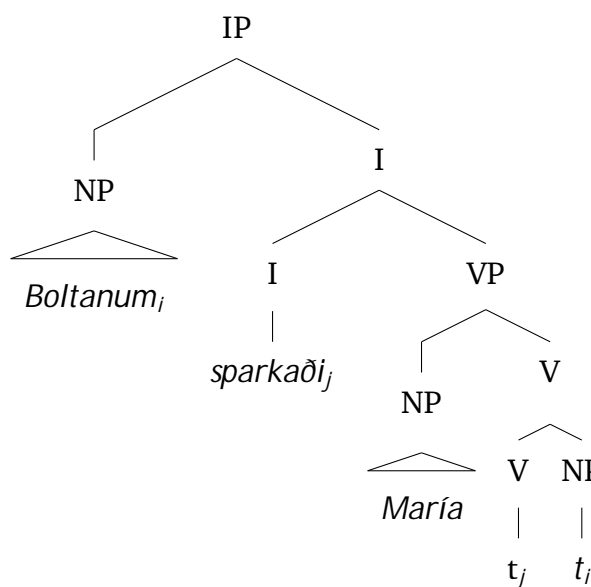
2. Topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occupy the same structural position (Spec-IP).

The finite verb is assumed to move once from V to I (hence *single-movement* approach). The same structure is assumed for both subject-initial, e.g. (5) and non-subject-initial matrix clauses, e.g. (6). The clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is a topic position, and topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occur here. Subjects originate inside the VP ('VP-internal subject hypothesis', e.g. Koopman & Sportiche 1988; Burton & Grimshaw 1992). Throughout this section, I use the sentence given in Chapter 2, example (4) to demonstrate the assumed structures.

(5)

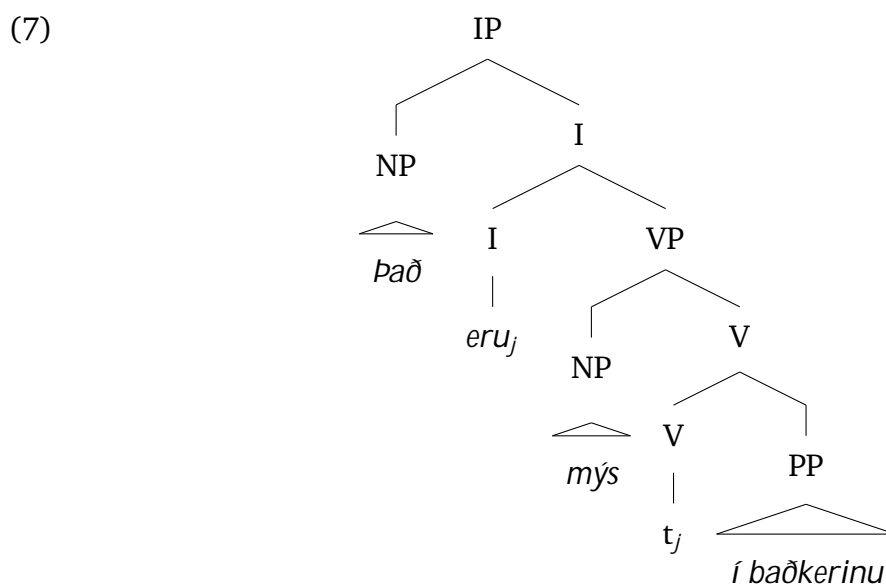


(6)



In sentences with a clause-initial expletive *pað*, it is assumed that the expletive is base-generated in Spec-IP, i.e. the same position which hosts topical subjects and

topicalized non-subjects. This is shown in (7), which demonstrates the assumed structure for the presentational construction in (8). The fact that the same position is assumed to host both expletive *það* and topicalized constituents accounts for the fact that the clause-initial expletive and topicalization cannot co-occur in the same sentence.² The finite verb moves to I and the postfinite subject noun phrase (*mýs*) remains within the VP.³



- (8) *Það eru mýs í baðkerinu.*
 EXPL be.PRS mice.NOM in bathtub.DAT.DEF
 ‘There are mice in the bathtub.’

3.1.2 The uniform double-movement approach

The uniform double-movement approach to Germanic V2 (e.g. Besten 1983 and discussed for Icelandic by Sigurðsson 1989: 10-11) assumes the following for V2 matrix clauses:

1. The finite verb moves to C (i.e. heads CP).
2. Topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occupy the same structural position (Spec-CP).

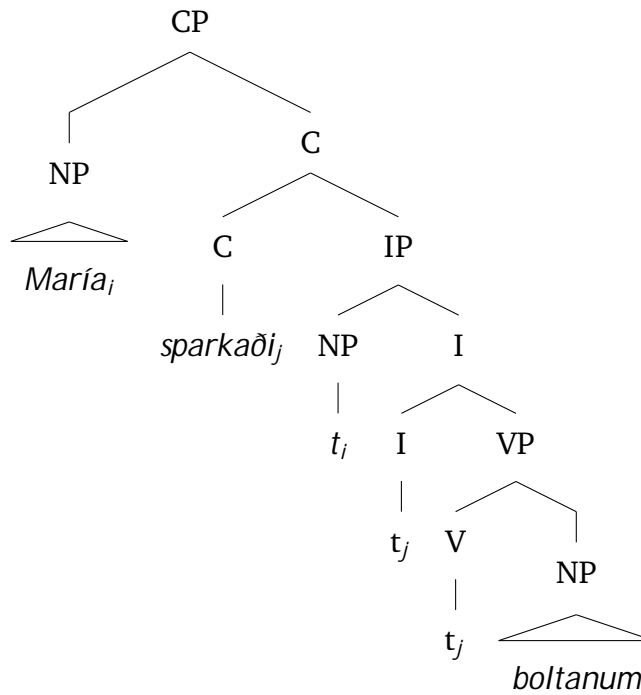
The finite verb is assumed to move twice from V to I to C (hence *double*-movement approach). The same structure is assumed for both subject-initial, e.g. (9) and

²I discuss the positional distribution of expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic in section 5.2.1.

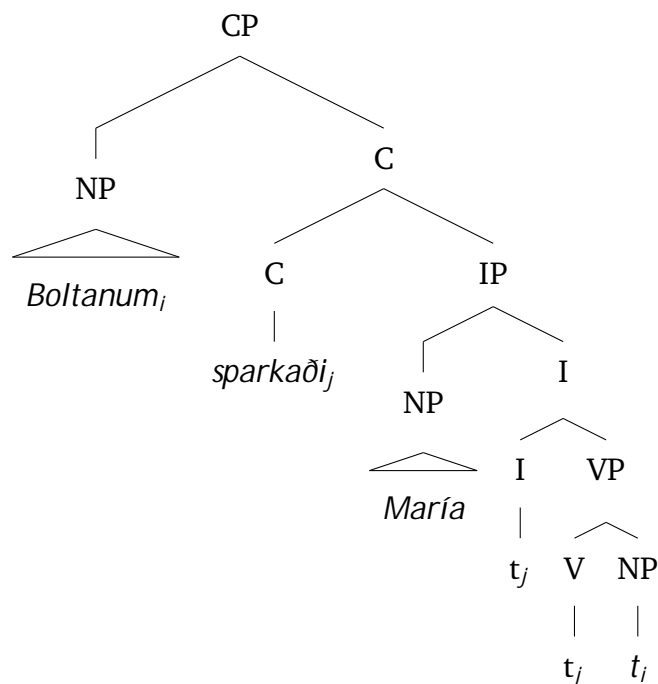
³I discuss the status of the postfinite noun phrase in presentational constructions as a subject in section 8.1.

non-subject-initial matrix clauses, e.g. (10) (hence *uniform* double-movement approach). In contrast to the single-movement approach, the uniform double-movement account assumes that the clause-initial position in which topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occur is not Spec-IP but Spec-CP (assuming verb movement to C). The canonical subject position is Spec-IP, although subjects when topicalized also occur in Spec-CP in subject-initial matrix declaratives, as in (9).

(9)



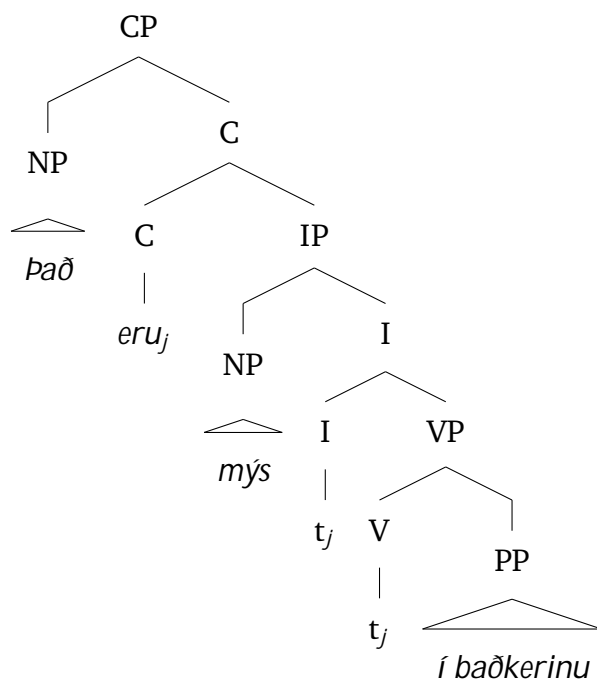
(10)



Spec-CP is also the position in which the expletive *pađ* occurs, e.g. (11); this accounts for the fact that topicalization and expletive *pađ* do not co-occur. The

postfinite subject noun phrase *mýs* occupies Spec-IP, assumed to be the canonical subject position.

(11)



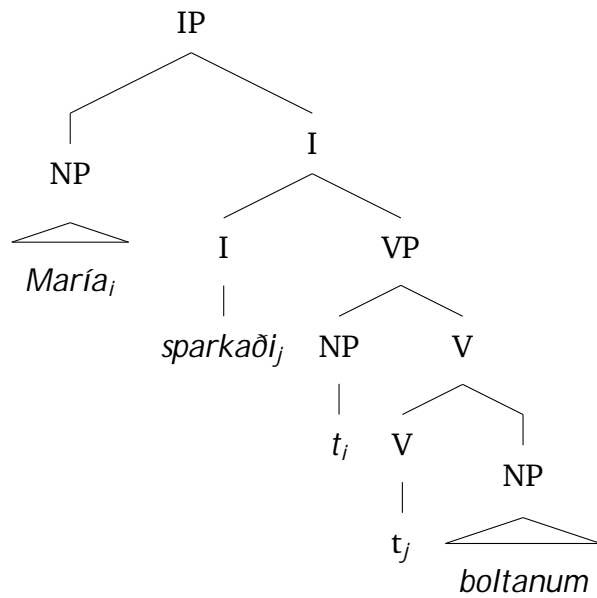
3.1.3 The split double-movement approach

A revised view of the classic double-movement approach was developed by Travis (1984, 1991) and Zwart (1991, 1993) for Germanic, and has been adopted for Icelandic (e.g. Sigurðsson 1990). This analysis assumes the following for V2 matrix declaratives:

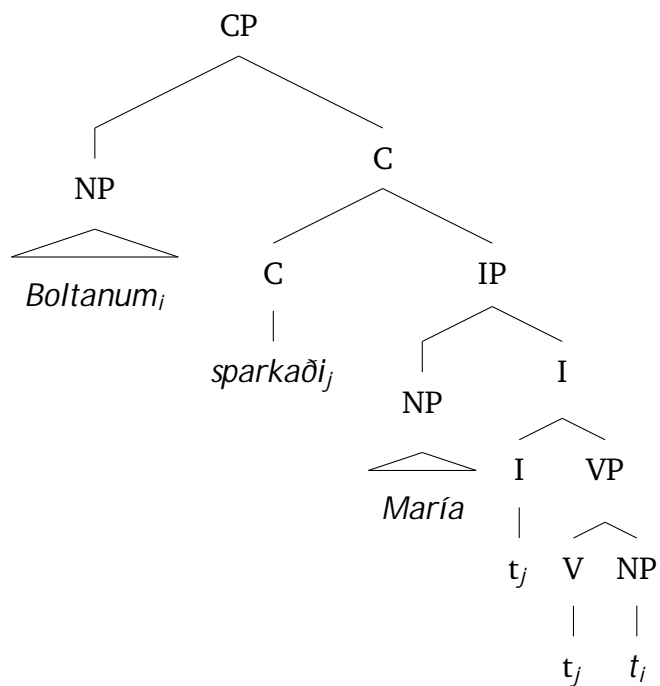
1. The finite verb moves to either I (i.e. heads IP) or C (i.e. heads CP), depending on the function of the clause-initial prefinite constituent.
2. Topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occupy distinct structural positions:
 - (a) Topical subjects occupy Spec-IP, assuming V-to-I movement, e.g. (12).
 - (b) Topicalized non-subjects occupy Spec-CP, assuming V-to-C movement, e.g. (13).

Since double-movement (V-to-I-to-C) is only assumed in non-subject-initial matrix V2 clauses, and single-movement (V-to-I) is assumed in subject-initial matrix V2 clauses, I refer to this approach as the *split* double-movement approach.

(12)

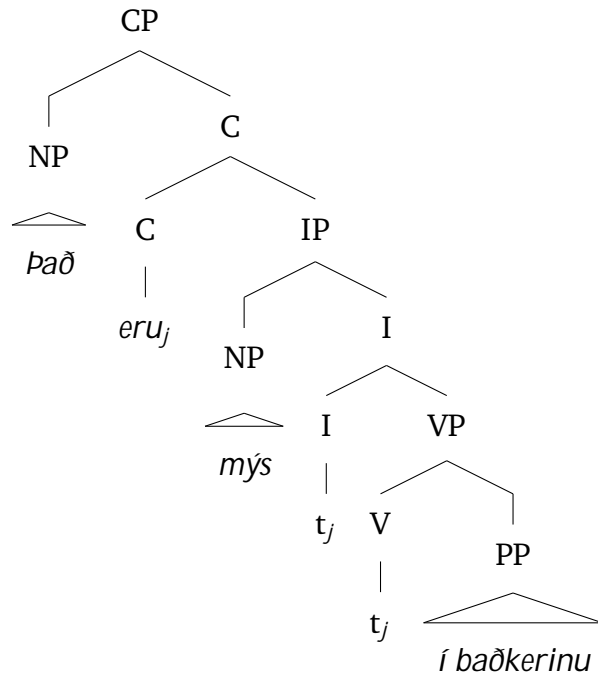


(13)



As in the *uniform* double-movement approach, in the *split* double movement-approach matrix declaratives with a clause-initial expletive *pađ* are assumed to be CPs, e.g. (14). The finite verb moves to C and expletive *pađ* occupies Spec-CP, i.e. the same position in which topicalized non-subjects occur, see (13).

(14)



3.1.4 Sells (2001, 2005) – an LFG account

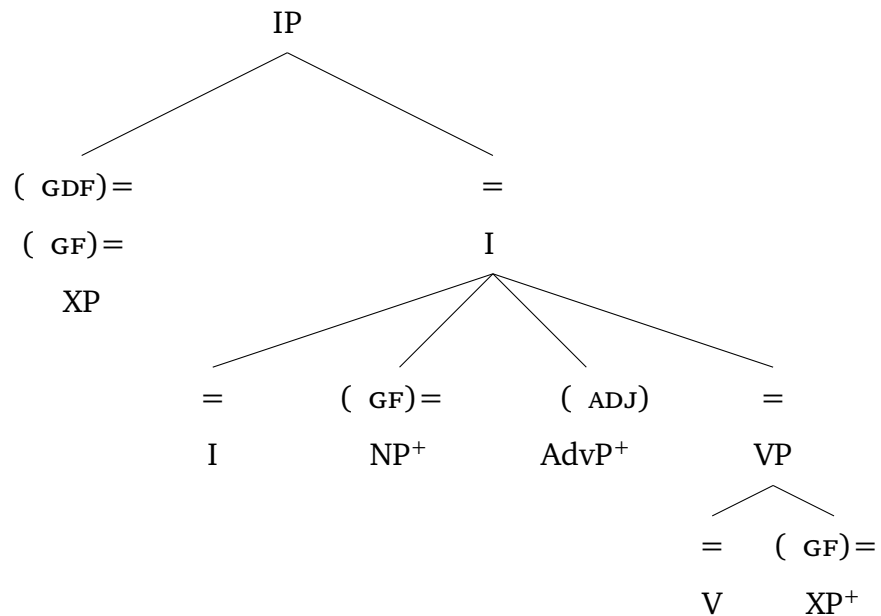
An LFG approach to modern Icelandic clause structure has been developed by Sells (2001, 2005). Sells follows certain premises from the mainstream generative analysis of V2 in Yiddish – another Germanic language with general embedded V2 – by Diesing (1990) and puts forward a notionally similar account to the single-movement approach of Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson (1990) which assumes the following:

1. The finite verb occupies I (i.e. heads IP).
2. Topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occupy the same structural position (Spec-IP).

Sells (2001: 191) gives the overall structural possibilities in Icelandic as shown in (15).⁴

⁴See section 2.2.1, where I discuss annotated c-structure trees in LFG.

(15)



The annotated c-structure in (15) captures the fact that the clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is associated with a discourse function; it can host any grammaticalised discourse function (GDF), i.e. a SUBJ or any other grammatical function (GF) which has a GDF (TOPIC or FOCUS).⁵ Within I, various arguments and adjuncts may appear. Specifically, any grammatical function (GF) not associated with a discourse function may occur, as well as any number of adjuncts (ADJ).⁶ I will refer to this area following I and preceding the VP as the ‘midfield’. The relative linear order of arguments and adjuncts in the midfield is somewhat free, and according to Sells is determined by optimality theoretic constraints (Sells 2005: see).⁷

In sentences which have both an auxiliary (in I) and a second nonfinite lexical verb, the nonfinite verb heads the VP (in V). According to Sells, any grammatical function (GF) not associated with a discourse function may also occur within VP. I and VP are f-structure co-heads, meaning that their functional information is unified (see section 2.2.1, ‘principles of structure-function association’). The structure in (15) follows another principle of structure-function association introduced in

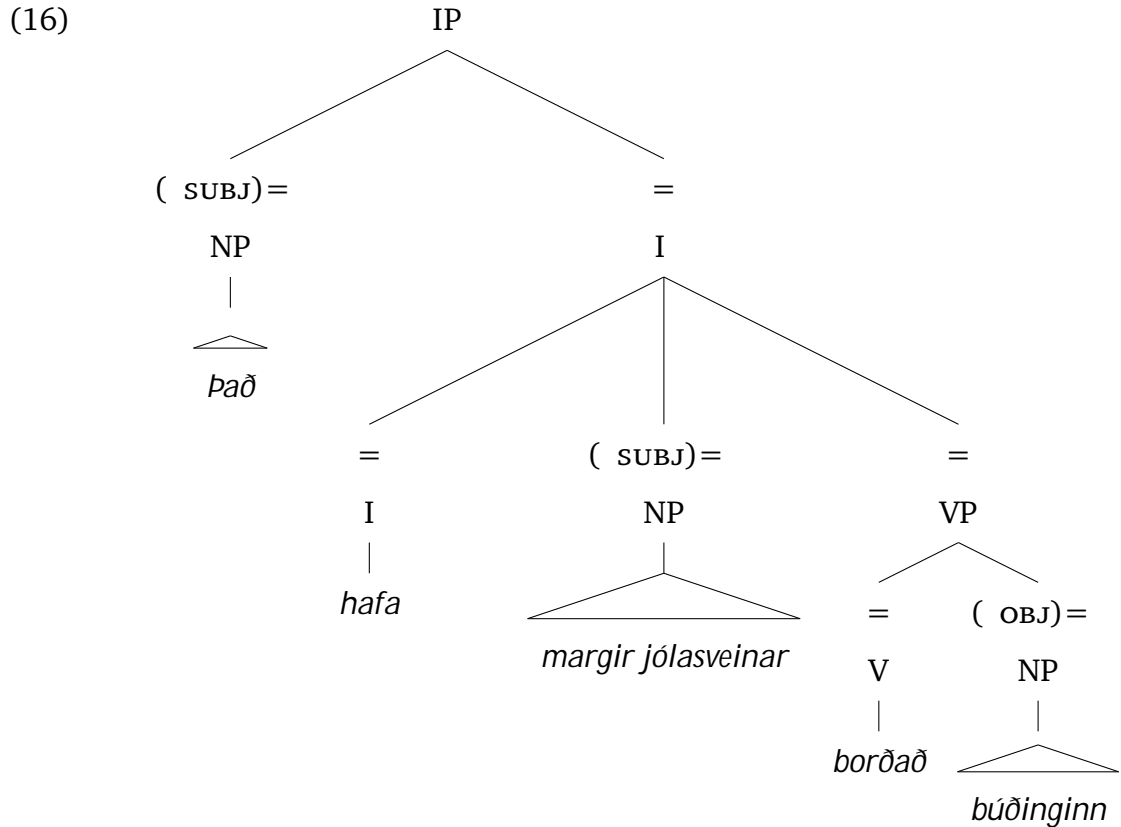
⁵See section 2.1.2 for grammatical functions versus grammaticalised discourse functions.

⁶ADJ is annotated as a set-valued feature (see Bresnan et al. 2015: 70-1). (ADJ) can be read as: ‘ is an element of a set of f-structures which is the value of ADJ’. This allows for any number of adjuncts while avoiding a violation of functional uniqueness (see section 2.1.2).

⁷Sells’ proposal for Icelandic in (15) is similar to the tree proposed for Swedish by Börjars et al. (2003: 49), in that both have a flat midfield in which arguments and adjuncts can appear, and whose linear order is subject to optimality theoretic constraints.

section 2.2.1, which states that specifiers of functional categories (here in Spec-IP) are the grammaticalised discourse functions (GDFS: TOPIC, FOCUS, SUBJ).

Sells (2001: 192) provides a c-structure tree for Icelandic transitive active presentational constructions with a clause-initial expletive *það* and a postfinite subject noun phrase which I show here in (16).⁸ I provide the gloss in (17).



- (17) Það hafa margir jólasveinar borðað
 EXPL have.PRS many.NOM Christmas-trolls.NOM eat.PST.PTCP
 búiðinginn.
 pudding.ACC.DEF
 ‘Many Christmas trolls have eaten the pudding.’

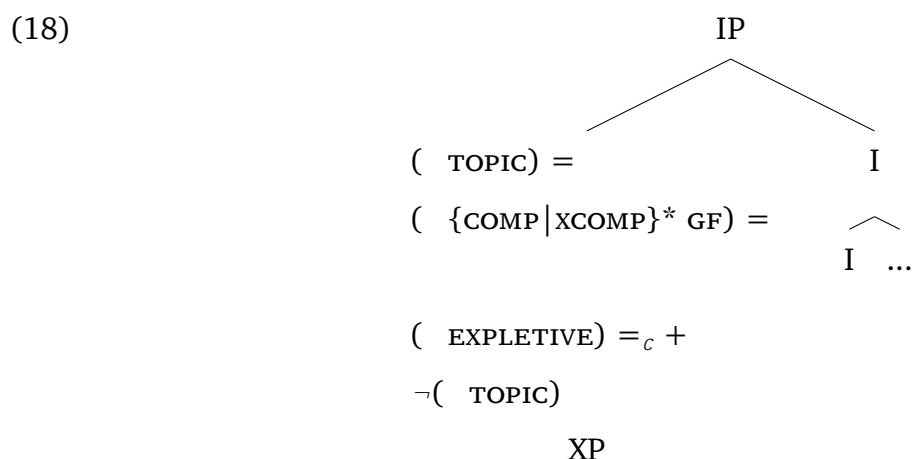
The phrase structure shown in (16) assumes that the clause-initial expletive *það* occurs in Spec-IP, i.e. the same position in which topical subjects and topicalized non-subjects occur. Contrary to standard accounts of Icelandic, Sells argues that expletive *það* is a SUBJ and unifies at f-structure with a thematic subject lower in c-structure – in this instance *margir jólasveinar*. As an expletive, Sells assumes that

⁸See section 5.1.2.2 for discussion of transitive active presentational constructions. I show evidence that the postfinite noun phrase in Icelandic presentational constructions qualifies as a subject in section 8.1.

clause-initial *það* cannot bear a discourse function, despite the fact that this position is associated with a discourse function in general, see (15). Both the expletive and the noun phrase *margir jólasveinar* map to the SUBJ function, though only the noun phrase has a PRED feature; there are no other clashing features, so there is no violation of functional uniqueness (see section 2.1.2). I return to Sells’ proposal that expletive *það* is a subject and show why I disagree in section 5.2.3.

3.1.5 A revised LFG account

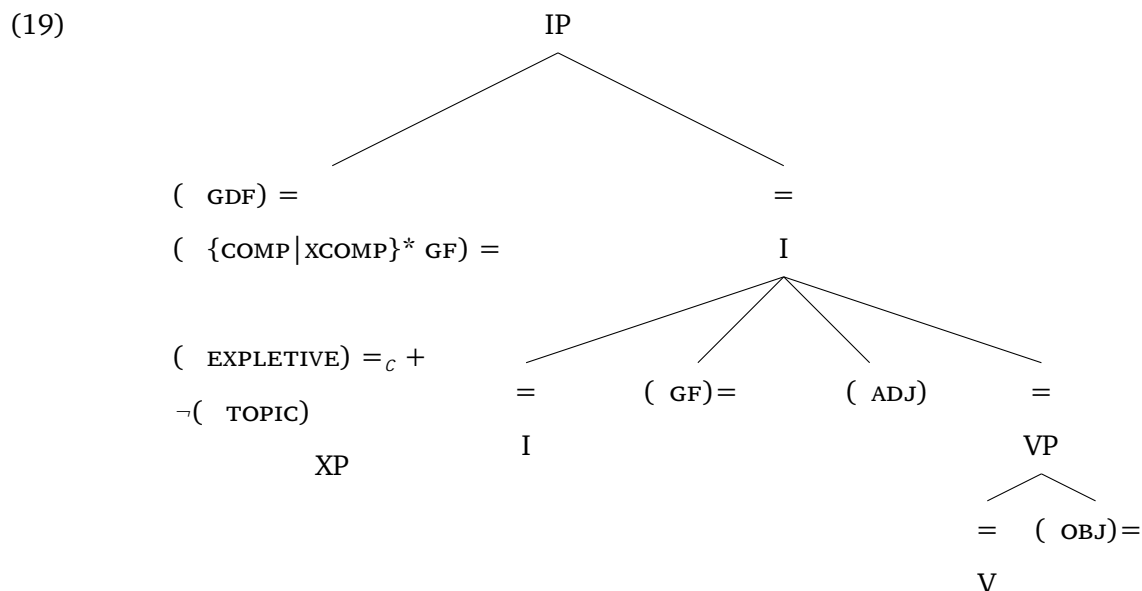
A revised LFG account of Icelandic clause structure is proposed by Booth et al. (2017), who focus on the left periphery. Like Sells, this revised account assumes that V2 clauses are IPs with the finite verb in I, and that the clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is associated with a discourse function (specifically TOPIC). Unlike Sells, Booth et al. (2017) do not assume that expletive *það* is a subject but is rather a structural placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position in sentences which lack a topic. I will show arguments for why expletive *það* is not a subject in section 5.2.3. As such, Booth et al. (2017) propose the possibilities shown in (18) for the Spec-IP position.



The first equation in (18) states that the clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is a topic position which can host topical subjects, but also other topical grammatical functions. The second equation annotated on the Spec-IP position captures the fact that this position can alternatively host an expletive, provided the clause lacks a topic.

I assume this revised LFG account for the left periphery of modern Icelandic throughout this study (with one minor revision, see below) and give (19) as the

overall structural possibilities for V2 matrix declaratives. I draw on the account by Sells (2001, 2005) for the internal structure within I, see (15) above. All nodes are subject to the principle of Economy of Expression, i.e. are optional unless required by independent principles (see section 2.1.1).

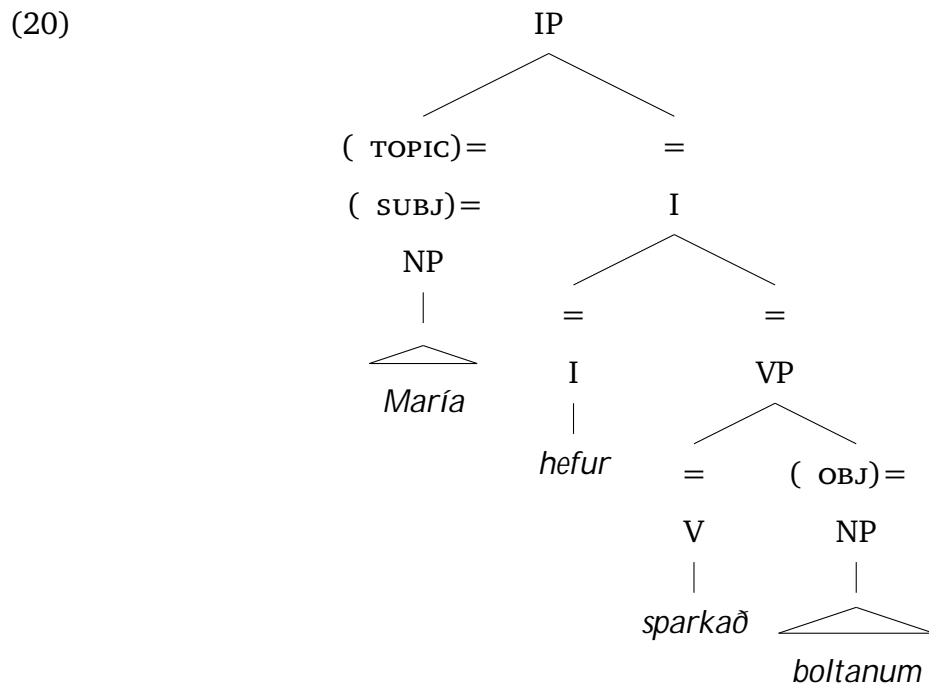


Unlike the tree proposed by Booth et al. (2017) in (18), in (19) Spec-IP is characterised as a position which is associated with any grammaticalised discourse function (GDF), not specifically TOPIC. This allows for the possibility of a prefinite focal constituent, which I discuss for Old Icelandic and furnish with examples from my investigation in Chapters 4 and 8. I ignore the possibility for Stylistic Fronting, by which a category which cannot typically undergo fronting (e.g. nonfinite verbs, verbal particles, negation) occupies Spec-IP, without any information structural effects (see e.g. Maling 1990). As I discuss in section 4.4.2, Stylistic Fronting is still not well understood, and so I leave the matter for future research.

Spec-IP aside, another way in which (19) differs in comparison to Sells' tree in (15) is that the complement of V within VP in my tree is specified as an OBJ. In Sell's tree in (15), the complement of V is annotated as (GF) =, and can thus in principle host any grammatical function which does not have a discourse function, including SUBJ. If it were a SUBJ, the structure in (15) would imply that the SUBJ and the verb in V form a constituent. I assume that this is not a sensible analysis for Icelandic and so I constrain the complement of V to be an OBJ.⁹

⁹Subject-final matrix declaratives are possible in Icelandic, as I discuss in section 3.4, but for simplicity I do not include this possibility on the tree in (15). I just acknowledge that a clause-final

In sentences with an auxiliary verb and a nonfinite lexical verb, the auxiliary heads IP (in I) and the nonfinite lexical verb heads the VP (in V), see (20). The GDF annotation in (19) has been resolved to TOPIC and the GF annotation to SUBJ here; I leave out the full complexity of Spec-IP for simplicity.

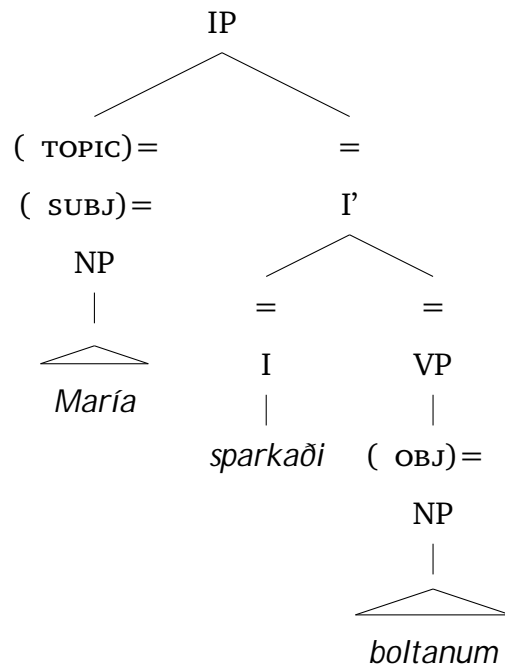


In sentences which have a single finite verb which occupies the head of the functional projection (IP), the internal head of the VP (V) is absent by the principle of Economy of Expression e.g. (21).¹⁰

subject would not occupy the complement position within the VP.

¹⁰I introduced Economy of Expression in section 2.1.1.

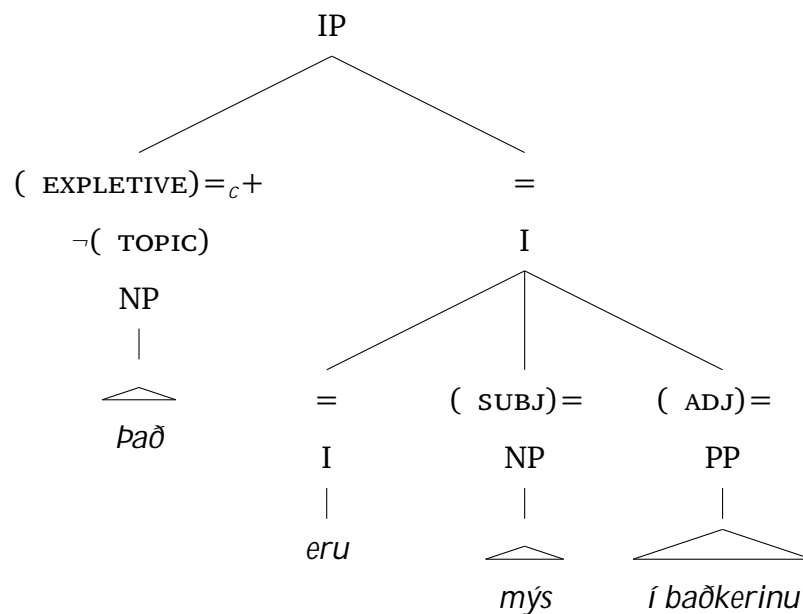
(21)



Since VP is an endocentric phrase, it requires a c-structure head. Despite VP lacking an internal head (V), the principle of Endocentricity (Bresnan et al. 2015: 138) allows the VP to have an ‘extended head’ (see section 2.1.1. So the VP in (21) satisfies Endocentricity by having I as its extended c-structure head.

I assume that presentational constructions with a clause-initial expletive and a postfinite subject have the structure in (22). I discuss the structure of Icelandic presentational constructions further in section 8.1.

(22)



3.2 Verb-first declaratives

Despite the fact that Icelandic is a V2 language, it also exhibits various exceptions to the V2 constraint. Modern Icelandic still allows for verb-first (V1) order in matrix declaratives (Platzack 1985; Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990; Sigurðsson 1990), which are generally typical for older stages of Germanic (see e.g. Hinterhölzl & Petrova 2010). In this section, I discuss analyses of V1 matrix declaratives and propose a classification schema for different subtypes which I refer to later in the study.

3.2.1 Types of V1 declarative

In this thesis, I distinguish between three types of V1 declarative:

1. Narrative inversion V1, e.g. (23).¹¹
2. Subjectless V1, e.g. (24).
3. Presentational V1, e.g. (25).

(23) **Keyptu** þeir sér verzlunarleyfi...
buy.PST they.NOM REFL.DAT trade-license
‘They bought themselves a trade license...’ (1907, Leysing.1024)

(24) **Var** oft komið seint heim.
be.PST often come.PASS.PTCP late home
‘People often came home late.’ (Sigurðsson 1990: 42)

(25) **Höfðu** því komið margir gestir um nóttina.
have.PST thus come.PST.PTCP many.NOM guests.NOM about night.DEF
‘Thus, many guests had arrived in the night.’ (Sigurðsson 1990: 42)

Narrative inversion V1 is distinguished by the fact that there is a topical subject – typically a pronominal noun phrase – present in the immediately postfinite position. The V1 construction in (24) is subjectless (i.e. a lacks an a constituent at c-structure which maps to the SUBJ function, see section 2.2.2). The presentational V1 construction in (25) is distinguished by the fact that a discourse-new (non-topical) subject is present in postfinite position.

¹¹The ‘narrative’ label for this type of declarative V1 stems from the fact that the phenomenon has been observed to be most typical of narrative texts (Platzack 1985; Sigurðsson 1990). I explore whether this claim holds for Old Icelandic in section 4.3.3.

Narrative inversion V1 thus has a topic which occurs outside of the canonical topic position in Icelandic (the clause-initial prefinite position, or Spec-IP, see section 3.1). The narrative inversion type in (23) can therefore be generalised as (26).

(26) V - TOPIC ... (narrative inversion V1)

By contrast, both subjectless V1 (24) and presentational V1 (25) lack a topic, i.e. present ‘all-new’ information and can therefore be generalised as (27).

(27) V - all new (subjectless/presentational V1)

An alternative to subjectless and presentational V1 constructions is for the expletive *það* to occupy the clause-initial prefinite position, rendering V2 sentences, see (28).

(28) EXPL - V - all new (subjectless/presentational V2)

As I argue in section 5.2, in such contexts expletive *það* is a structural placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position, which is a topic position in Icelandic. I discuss the diachronic development whereby expletive *það* emerges as a structural placeholder for the topic position in subjectless and presentational constructions in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively. Here, I focus on analyses of the three types of V1 presently introduced.

3.2.2 Analyses of V1 declaratives

Since Icelandic is a V2 language in which topical constituents typically occupy the clause-initial prefinite position, narrative inversion V1 (26) is assumed to be a pragmatically marked construction (Sigurðsson 1990). The most widely adopted account for narrative inversion V1 is discourse-orientated, in line with the observation that such sentences cannot initiate discourse (Sigurðsson 1990). The main idea is that the verb is given more discourse prominence than the topic, possibly to create a sense of narrative continuity. One such account is presented by Franco (2008), who adapts a previous account by Mörnjö (2002) for V1 declaratives in present-day Swedish to Icelandic. She presents a cartographic approach which

argues that just like conditional, interrogative and imperative clauses, narrative inversion clauses do not allow for topicalization of a constituent to the clause-initial prefinite position.

The possibility for V1 declaratives in topicless constructions (i.e. subjectless and presentational constructions) is more straightforward; since there is no topic, the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position may either be empty, rendering a V1 sentence, see (27), or occupied by the expletive *það* as a structural placeholder for that position, rendering a V2 sentence, see (28).

3.3 Subject properties

A good deal of research has highlighted that Icelandic subjects cannot be exclusively defined on the basis of structural position, nor on the basis of case assignment alone (e.g. Andrews 1990a; Barðal 2002; Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003b; Barðdal 2006; Rögnvaldsson 1996; Thráinsson 2007; Zaenen et al. 1990). In this section, I give an overview of the key properties which distinguish subjects in Icelandic, many of which I make use of in the study. I follow Keenan (1976) in distinguishing between ‘coding’ versus ‘behavioural’ subject properties (see Zaenen et al. 2017 on Icelandic). I contrast examples where subjects satisfy a particular test with examples where non-subject elements - typically topicalized objects - do not. Unless otherwise stated, examples come from the discussion in Thráinsson (2007: 147-50).

3.3.1 Coding properties

Coding subject properties are those which are visible at c-structure and include:

1. Position
2. Agreement morphology
3. Case marking

As mentioned, the relationship between case and grammatical functions in Icelandic is complex, and cannot be used exclusively to define the subject. Case marking is thus not an explicit coding subject property in Icelandic.

3.3.1.1 Position

As a Germanic V2 language, subjects in Icelandic are identifiable by the following positional distribution:

1. Subject-verb inversion in yes/no-interrogatives, e.g. (29).
2. Subject-verb inversion in clauses with non-subject fronting, e.g. (30).

- (29) a. **Álfurinn** hefur étið ostinn.
elf.NOM.DEF have.PRS eat.PST.PTCP cheese.ACC.DEF
'The elf has eaten the cheese.'
- b. Hefur **álfurinn** étið ostinn?
have.PRS elf.NOM.DEF eat.PST.PTCP cheese.ACC.DEF
'Has the elf eaten the cheese?'
- c. **Át** **alfurinn** ostinn?
eat.PST elf.NOM.DEF cheese.ACC.DEF
'Did the elf eat the cheese?'
- (30) a. **Álfurinn** át allan ostinn í gær.
elf.NOM.DEF eat.PST all.ACC cheese.ACC.DEF yesterday
'The elf ate all the cheese yesterday.'
- b. [Í gær] át **álfurinn** allan ostinn.
yesterday eat.PST elf.NOM.DEF all.ACC cheese.ACC.DEF
'Yesterday the elf ate all the cheese.'

By contrast, topicalized objects which occupy the clause-initial prefinite position do not behave in this way in yes/no-interrogatives, e.g. (31), nor in clauses with non-subject fronting, e.g. (32).

- (31) a. **Ostinn** hefur álfurinn étið.
cheese.ACC.DEF have.PRS elf.NOM.DEF eat.PST.PTCP
'The elf has eaten the cheese.'
- b. *Hefur **ostinn** étið álfurinn?
have.PRS cheese.ACC.DEF eat.PST.PTCP elf.NOM.DEF
Intended: 'Has the elf eaten the cheese?'
- (32) a. **Ostinn** hefur álfurinn étið í gær.
cheese.ACC.DEF have.PRS elf.NOM.DEF eat.PST.PTCP yesterday
'The elf has eaten the cheese yesterday.'
- b. *Í gær hefur **ostinn** álfurinn étið.
yesterday have.PRS cheese.ACC.DEF elf.NOM.DEF eat.PST.PTCP
Intended: 'Yesterday the elf has eaten the cheese.'

3.3.1.2 Agreement morphology

Icelandic subjects show agreement in number with the verb, e.g. (33) (my examples).

- (33) a. **Álfurinn** elskar ost.
elf.NOM.SG.DEF love.PRS.SG cheese.ACC.SG
'The elf loves cheese.'
- b. **Álfarnir** elska ost
elf.NOM.PL.DEF love.PRS.PL cheese.ACC.SG
'The elves love cheese.'

The verb does not show agreement with topicalized objects, e.g. (34) (my examples).

- (34) a. **Pönnukökuna** elskar álfurinn.
pancake.ACC.SG.DEF love.PRS.SG elf.NOM.SG.DEF
'The elf loves the pancake.'
- b. **Pönnukökurnar** elskar álfurinn.
pancake.ACC.PL.DEF love.PRS.SG elf.NOM.SG.DEF
'The elf loves the pancakes.'
- c. ***Pönnukökurnar** elska álfurinn.
pancake.ACC.PL.DEF love.PRS.PL elf.NOM.SG.DEF
Intended: 'The elf loves the pancakes.'

3.3.2 Behavioural properties

Behavioural subject properties are not present at c-structure by default but show up when clauses are manipulated and include:

1. Reflexivization.
2. Functional control in infinitival complements.
3. Ellipsis in second conjuncts.
4. Raising.

3.3.2.1 Reflexivization

Icelandic subjects obligatorily control reflexives, e.g. the reflexive possessive *sin* 'one's own', and cannot be co-indexed with the ordinary non-reflexive possessive *hans/hennar*, e.g. (35) (Zaenen et al. 1990: 449).

- (35) a. **Sigga_i** barði mig með dúkkunni **sinni_i**.
 Sigga.NOM hit.PST I.ACC with doll.DAT.DEF her-OWN.DAT
 ‘Sigga hit me with her (own) doll.’
- b. ***Sigga_i** barði mig með dúkkunni **hennar_i**.
 Sigga.NOM hit.PST I.ACC with doll.DAT.DEF her.DAT
 Intended: ‘Sigga hit me with her (own) doll.’

Objects cannot serve as the antecedent for a reflexive, e.g. (36) (Zaenen et al. 1990: 449).

- (36) a. ***Ég** barði **Siggu_i** með dúkkunni **sinni_i**.
 I.NOM hit.PST Sigga.ACC with doll.DAT.DEF her-OWN.DAT
 Intended: ‘I hit Sigga with her (own) doll’.
- b. **Ég** barði **Siggu_i** með dúkkunni **hennar_i**.
 I.NOM hit.PST Sigga.ACC with doll.DAT.DEF her.DAT
 ‘I hit Sigga with her (own) doll’.

3.3.2.2 Functional control in infinitival complements

Another property which distinguishes subjects from non-subjects is that only subjects can be functionally controlled in infinitival complements, e.g. (37-b). In (37-b), the subject of the infinitival complement is functionally controlled by the subject of the matrix clause (*María*).

- (37) a. **María** hitti forsetann á kaffihúsi.
 María.NOM meet.PST president.ACC.DEF on coffee-house
 ‘María met the president at a coffee house.’
- b. **María** vonaðist til að hitta forsetann á
 María.NOM hope.PST PTCL to meet.INF president.ACC.DEF on
 kaffihúsi.
 coffee-house
 ‘María hoped to meet the president at a coffee house.’

This is possible regardless of whether the controller is a subject itself, as in (37-b) or an object, as in (38-b) (my example).

- (38) a. **María** hitti forsetann á kaffihúsi.
 María.NOM meet.PST president.ACC.DEF on coffee-house
 ‘María met the president at a coffee house.’
- b. **María** sannfærði **forsetann** um að hitta
 María.NOM convince.PST president.ACC.DEF PTCL to meet.INF

hana á kaffihúsi
 she.ACC on coffee-house
 ‘María convinced the president to meet her at the coffee house.’

3.3.2.3 Ellipsis in second conjuncts

In Icelandic, the subject can be omitted in the second of two coordinated clauses (‘second conjunct’), provided it is co-referential with the subject in the first clause, e.g. (39).

- (39) **Álfurinn** stal ostinum og bauð bræðrum
 elf.NOM.DEF steal.PST cheese.DAT.DEF and invite.PST brothers.DAT
 sínum í mat.
 REFL.DAT in dinner
 ‘The elf stole the cheese and he invited his brothers to dinner.’

An object cannot be omitted in a second conjunct, even when it is co-referential with an object in the first clause, e.g. (40) (a modified example from Thráinsson 2007: 149).¹²

- (40) *Ég hitti **álfinn** og ég bauð í mat.
 I.NOM meet.PST elf.ACC.DEF and I.NOM invite.PST in dinner
 Intended: ‘I met the elf and I invited him to dinner.’

3.3.2.4 Raising

Subjects can be ‘raised’ to object position with verbs such as *telja* (believe), i.e. in ‘Exceptional Case Marking’ constructions, e.g. (41). The raised subject is marked for non-nominative case, as lexically governed by the verb in the higher clause. The verb in the lower clause is in the infinitive form.

- (41) a. **Álfurinn** hefur stolið ostinum.
 elf.NOM.DEF have.PRS steal.PST.PTCP cheese.DAT.DEF
 ‘The elf has stolen the cheese.’
 b. Ég tel **álfinn** hafa stolið
 I.NOM believe.PRS elf.ACC.DEF have.INF steal.PST.PTCP
 ostinum.
 cheese.DAT.DEF
 ‘I believe the elf to have stolen the cheese.’

¹²Objects could however be unexpressed in such contexts in Old Icelandic (see, e.g. Sigurðsson 1993).

This type of raising construction is not possible with topicalized objects, e.g. (42-b).

- (42) a. **Ostinum** hefur álfurinn stolið.
cheese.DAT.DEF have.PRS elf.NOM.DEF steal.PST.PTCP
'The elf has stolen the cheese.'
- b. *Ég tel **ostinn/ostinum** hafa álfurinn
I.NOM believe.PRS ACC.DEF/cheese.DAT.DEF have.INF elf.NOM.DEF
stolið.
steal.PST.PTCP
Intended: 'I believe the elf to have stolen the cheese.'

3.4 Subject positions and information structure

Throughout this study, I distinguish between 'topical subjects' which are discourse-old and 'non-topical subjects' which are discourse-new.¹³ As I show in this section, the positional distribution of the subject is sensitive to its information-structural properties.

3.4.1 Topical subjects

As noted in section 3.1, the majority of mainstream generative analyses of present-day Icelandic clause structure capture the fact that topical subjects prototypically occupy the clause-initial prefinite position in matrix declaratives (Spec-IP assuming that the verb moves to I; Spec-CP assuming that the verb moves to C). This is in line with the assumption that this position is a topic position. Since subjects are often topics, I will refer to this position as the 'canonical subject position'.

There are however exceptions to this generalisation for topical subjects. For instance, it was shown in section 3.2 that topical subjects can occur in the immediately postfinite position in the narrative inversion V1 construction.

3.4.2 Non-topical subjects

Non-topical subjects are dispreferred in the clause-initial prefinite position, since this position is associated with topical subjects, e.g. (43), judged questionable by Thráinsson (2007: 323).

¹³This two-way information structural distinction is, of course, a simplification but will suffice for the purposes of this study.

- (43) ?**Mús** hefir verið í baðkerinu.
 mouse.NOM have.PRS be.PST.PTCP in bathtub.DEF
 Intended: ‘A mouse has been in the bathtub.’

Non-topical subjects thus typically occur after the finite verb, where a number of subject positions are available, e.g. (44) (Hrafnbjargarson 2004: 27-8).

- (44) a. Það hafa **einhverjir óvitar** sennilega brotið
 EXPL have.INF some.NOM idiots.NOM probably break.PST.PTCP
 rúðuna.
 window.ACC.DEF
 ‘Some idiots have probably broken the window.’
- b. Það hafa sennilega **einhverjir óvitar** brotið
 EXPL have.INF probably some.NOM idiots.NOM break.PST.PTCP
 rúðuna.
 window.ACC.DEF
 ‘Some idiots have probably broken the window.’
- c. Það hafa sennilega brotið rúðuna
 EXPL have.INF probably break.PST.PTCP window.ACC.DEF
einhverjir óvitar.
 some.NOM idiots.NOM
 ‘Some idiots have probably broken the window.’

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed previous accounts of modern Icelandic clause structure and outlined certain assumptions which I assume throughout this thesis. In section 3.1, I provided an overview of the major generative analyses which have been proposed to date for Icelandic V2. I also outlined an LFG account of Icelandic clause structure which will be assumed throughout this study, whereby matrix declaratives are IPs with the verb in I, and the clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is an information-structurally privileged position in which topical constituents occur, or the expletive *það* in topicless sentences.

In section 3.2, I discussed V1 declaratives and outlined a classification schema which recognises three subtypes, which are distinguished on the basis of the status of the subject of the clause:

1. Narrative inversion V1
2. Subjectless V1
3. Presentational V1

Section 3.3 established the key morphosyntactic properties which distinguish subjects from other types of grammatical function in Icelandic. Finally, section 3.4 briefly discussed the interaction between subject position and information structure, which I explore in detail in Chapters 4 and 8.

Chapter 4

The structure of the clause in Old Icelandic

In this section, I examine the clause structure of Old Icelandic (1150-1350). I conduct a series of corpus-based investigations examining verb position, the functional characterisation of the prefinite position and the positional distribution of different types of subject. Based on the corpus findings, I propose an analysis for the clause structure of Old Icelandic, and discuss how this contrasts with previous analyses of modern Icelandic clause structure, as summarised in Chapter 3. Where relevant, I also refer to previous accounts of early Germanic clause structure more broadly, beyond Icelandic. The structure is as follows: in section 4.1, I review the major findings from previous studies on Old Icelandic clause structure. Section 4.2 outlines the methodology relevant to the various corpus studies presented in this chapter. In section 4.3, I investigate verb position. Section 4.4 examines various ways of filling the clause-initial prefinite position in V2 sentences. Section 4.5 investigates the positional distribution of subjects with respect to topicality and syntactic weight. In section 4.6, I propose an LFG account for Old Icelandic clause structure. Section 4.7 summarises the chapter.

4.1 Background

Research on the syntax of Old Norse/Icelandic has a long tradition reaching back to the 19th century, and many of the early philological works are still valuable descriptive resources (e.g. Åkerlund 1935; Bernstein 1897; Freeman 1937; Heusler 1950;

Lund 1862; Nygaard 1865, 1900, 1905; Sturtevant 1940; Wisén 1865).¹ More recent generative research on Old Norse/Icelandic clause structure includes: Eythórs-son 1995; Faarlund 2004; Haugan 2000; Hróarsdóttir 2000; Lander & Haegeman 2014; Platzack 1985; Rögnvaldsson 1995; Thráinsson 2013. In this section, I review the major claims in the literature with respect to Old Norse/Icelandic clause structure, alongside the key points of debate.

4.1.1 Verb position

It is widely acknowledged that Old Icelandic already exhibits the verb-second constraint, which maximally allows one constituent in the clause-initial prefinite position (see e.g. Christoffersen 1980; Eythórs-son 1995: 189; Faarlund 2004: 191; Haugan 2000: 18; Rögnvaldsson 1995). Compare the sentence pairs in (1) and (2); in each pair, the first sentence shows a subject-initial construction and the second sentence shows a construction with a topicalized non-subject in the clause-initial position, the verb in second position, and the subject in the immediately postfinite position.²

- (1) a. Þórhallur **reið** til þings hvert sumar.
 Þórhallur.NOM ride.PST to assembly each summer
 ‘Þórhallur rode to the assembly each summer.’ (1310, Grettir.1766)
- b. [Þetta sumar] **reið** herra Árni biskup fyrir
 DEM.ACC summer.ACC ride.PST lord.NOM Árni.NOM bishop.NOM for
 norðan Sólheimajökul...
 north Sólheimajökull

¹‘Old Norse’ is sometimes used as an umbrella term in work which draws on both Old Norwegian and Old Icelandic sources (e.g. Faarlund 2004). Much of what is claimed for ‘Old Norse’ in this context extends to Old Icelandic. I use the term ‘Old Norse/Icelandic’ in relation to this hybrid data for the period.

²Old Icelandic also exhibits V2 in embedded clauses:

- (i) ...hvort sem hlut **áttu** í meiri menn eða minni.
 whether COMP part.ACC own.PST in greater men.NOM or lesser
 ‘...whether greater or lesser men had a part in it.’ (1210, Thorlakur.360)

Nevertheless, the extent to which early Icelandic can be considered a ‘general embedded V2 language’ in the terms of Vikner (1995: 65) (i.e. one which freely allows V2 in all types of embedded clause) has been recently questioned (Walkden & Booth forthcoming). Since this thesis focuses on the syntax of matrix clauses, I leave the issue of embedded V2 aside.

‘This summer Lord Bishop Árni rode to the north of Sólheimajökull...’
(1325, Arni.167)

- (2) a. Hann **átti** konu unga og fríða.
he.NOM own.PST woman.ACC young.ACC and beautiful.ACC
‘He was married to a young and beautiful woman.’
(1310, Grettir.312)
- b. Hana **átti** Gamli Þórhallsson Vínlendings.
she.ACC own.PST Gamli Þórhallsson.NOM Vínlendingur.GEN
‘To her was married Gamli Þórhallsson of the Vínlendingur.’
(1310, Grettir.15)

Verb-second in Old Icelandic was identified as early as Heusler (1950: 169), who states that the finite verb never appears later than the second position. Verb-third (V3) word order is not found in Old Norse/Icelandic (Faarlund 1994: 64; Rögnvaldsson 1995). Kossuth (1978a: 450) claims that ADV-SUBJ-V order of the type which is permitted in present-day Icelandic, where certain sentence adverbs occupy the clause-initial position, are ‘not grammatical in Old Icelandic’. These claims are confirmed by a quantitative study of the early texts in IcePaHC by Walkden (2014: 74-5), who found that instances of V3 or V-later (later than third position) are very rare, and that all involve left-dislocation, apposition or the Latin item *sicut* ‘therefore’ functioning as a conjunction in the clause-initial position. Most revealingly, no examples of XP-SUBJ-V order were found, thereby supporting the V2 characterisation.

It has been widely observed that verb-first (V1) order is frequent in Old Icelandic (e.g. Booth et al. 2017; Butt et al. 2014; Christoffersen 1980: 119-20; Faarlund 2004: 192-3; Kossuth 1978a; Nygaard 1900: 219; Platzack 1985; Rieger 1968; Sigurðsson 1990; Walkden 2014: 93). More specifically, V1 is exhibited in declarative sentences, i.e. beyond the typical contexts for V1 in modern Germanic such as yes/no-interrogatives and imperatives. As I show in section 4.3.2, V1 declaratives in Old Icelandic fall into three main subtypes with respect to the status of the subject. Firstly, Old Icelandic exhibits subjectless constructions which are V1 structures, e.g. (3) and (4).³ In present-day Icelandic, the expletive *það*

³I define subjectless constructions as any construction which lacks a constituent at c-structure which maps to the SUBJ function, (see section 2.2.2). This includes constructions with weather predicates, e.g. (3), which are inherently subjectless (i.e. select no subject argument at all), as well

typically occupies the clause-initial position in such constructions rendering a V2 structure, but is absent in Old Icelandic, rendering a V1 sentence.

- (3) **Tekur** nú að hausta.
 begin.PRS now to become-autumn.INF
 ‘It now starts to become autumn.’ (1310, Grettir.48)
- (4) **Var** þá hleypt suður til Reykja...
 be.PST then run.PASS.PTCP south to Reykir
 ‘It was run south to Reykir...’ (1250, Sturlunga.406.624)

Secondly, there are presentational constructions with a postfinite subject which constitutes discourse-new information, e.g. (5)-(6). The subject typically occurs in a later postfinite position, with one or more constituents intervening between the verb and the subject, as in (5). It is however possible for the discourse-new subject to occur in the immediately postfinite position, as in (6). Again, in present-day Icelandic, the expletive *það* typically occupies the clause-initial prefinite position in such contexts, but in Old Icelandic expletive *það* is absent, rendering a V1 structure.⁴

- (5) **Eru** nú hér með oss margir tígnir menn og
 be.PRS now here with we.ACC many.NOM noble.NOM men.NOM and
 góðir drengir...
 good.NOM boys.NOM
 ‘There are now here with us many noble men and good boys...’
 (1275, Morkin.401)
- (6) **Varð** nokkurt fjártjón en allir menn héldust.
 become.PST some.NOM money-loss.NOM but all men lose.PST.MID
 ‘There was some loss of money but all men were lost.’ (1325, Arni.499)

Thirdly, there are V1 constructions which have a subject which is topical but which does not occur in the clause-initial (i.e. topic) position, but instead in the immediately postfinite position. I show an example in (7), where I provide the preceding context. This is the ‘narrative inversion’ construction which I introduced in section 3.2 in relation to modern Icelandic. The difference between narrative inversion constructions like (7) and V1 presentationals like (6) – which both have

as impersonal passives, e.g. (4). See Chapter 7 for discussion of the syntactic properties of such constructions.

⁴I discuss Old Icelandic V1 presentationals in detail in section 8.3.1.

an immediately postfinite subject – concerns information structure: in the narrative inversion type the subject is topical, while in the V1 presentational type the subject is discourse-new (i.e. non-topical).

- (7) Auðun tekur nú að auka sína ferð slíkt er hann
 Auðun begin.PRS now to prolong.INF his-own journey such as he.NOM
 má. Þórir hann þá eigi að stefna til gatnanna.
 may dare.PRS he.NOM then NEG to go.INF to paths.DEF
 ‘Auðun now beings to prolong his journey such as he may. He then dares
 not make for the paths.’ (1250, Sturlunga.445.2015)

I refer to these three types of V1 construction as ‘subjectless V1’ for the type in (3)-(4), see (8), ‘presentational V1’ for the type in (5)-(6), see (9) and ‘narrative inversion V1’ for the type in (7), see (10).

- (8) V – XP ... (subjectless V1)
 (9) V – (XP) – SUBJ_{nontopic} ... (presentational V1)
 (10) V – SUBJ_{topic} ... (narrative inversion V1)

Since subjectless and presentational V1 constructions are treated later in the thesis (Chapters 7 and 8 respectively), I focus here on the narrative inversion type.

The narrative inversion construction has been the subject of a good deal of research. I have already reviewed previous accounts for modern Icelandic in section 3.2, where such constructions are assumed to be a strategy to create strong discourse cohesion in narrative texts (e.g. Sigurðsson 1990). This discourse-related account was originally proposed in relation to Old Icelandic data by Platzack (1985), who observed that V1 declaratives are more frequent in narrative texts than other text types. This was confirmed by a study of the early texts in IcePaHC by Walkden (2014: 93), who found that saga (i.e. narrative) texts exhibit higher percentages of V1 in matrix clauses.

Kossuth (1978b) observes that V-SUBJ_{topic} order does not initiate new paragraphs, indicating that V-SUBJ_{topic} order indeed signals discourse continuous narrative, with no change in event participants (see also Kossuth 1980: 134). Kossuth (1978a: 447-8) also make a diachronic claim with respect to V1 as a structure marking discourse continuity. She proposes that standalone V-SUBJ_{topic} order was the original strategy for marking discourse continuity, but that already by the ear-

liest Icelandic texts the conjunction *ok* ('and') begins to take over this function in discourse continuous contexts, where earlier only V-SUBJ_{topic} was permitted. Kossuth claims that the use of V-SUBJ_{topic} order to mark discourse continuity thus became redundant, and is still in the process of being lost. What is relevant to the study presented in this chapter is that, according to Kossuth, both V-SUBJ_{topic} and *Ok*-V-SUBJ_{topic} word order serve to indicate discourse continuity/no change in topic in Old Icelandic. I explore this further in section 4.3.1.

4.1.2 Topicality and the prefinite position

In a Germanic V2 language, there is typically a close relationship between the prefinite position and topicality (see, e.g. Holmberg 2015). In section 3.1, I outlined the general assumption that the prefinite position in present-day Icelandic can be characterised as an information-structurally privileged position which is associated with topical constituents. It is also assumed that the prefinite position in Old Icelandic is a topic position (e.g. Faarlund 2004: 231; Kossuth 1978a: 455). According to Faarlund (2004: 232-3), virtually any category can be 'topicalized' to this position in declaratives, including subjects, adverbials, negation, verbal complements, predicate complements and preposition complements. The examples in (11) and (12) shows topicalization of a verbal complement.

- (11) Rannveig hét önnur dóttir Ásmundar. **Hana** átti
 Rannveig be-called.PST other daughter Ásmundur.GEN she.ACC own.PST
 Gamli Þórhallsson Vínlendings.
 Gamli Þórhallsson.NOM Vínlendingur.GEN
 'The other daughter of Ásmundur was called Rannveig. To her was married
 Gamli Þórhallsson of the Vínlendingur.' (1310, Grettir.15)
- (12) Hrafn Oddsson er átti Þuríði dóttur Sturlu
 Hrafn Oddsson REL own.PST Þuríður daughter Sturla.GEN
 Sighvatssonar og þá bjó í Stafaholti stóð og mjög
 Sighvatsson.GEN and then live.PST in Stafaholt stand.PST also much
 í móti biskupi um kirknamálin. **Honum** hafði herra
 against bishop about church-cause he.DAT have.PST lord.NOM
 Magnús kóngur skipað hálf Ísland.
 Magnús.NOM king.NOM assign.PST.PTCP half Iceland
 'Hrafn Oddsson, who was married to Þuríður, daughter of Sturla Sighvatsson, stood very much against the bishop in relation to the church cause. To him the Lord King Magnús had assigned half of Iceland.' (1325, Arni.233)

An XP can also be extracted from an embedded clause to occupy the topic position in the matrix clause, e.g. (13) (Faarlund 2004: 233).⁵

- (13) [Þau orð] bað Ásta at vit skyldim
 DEM.ACC words.ACC ask.PST Ásta.NOM COMP we.DU.NOM should
 bera þér
 bring.INF you.DAT
 ‘Ásta asked us to bring you these words.’ (Hkr II.44.8)

The observation that the clause-initial prefinite position typically hosts topical constituents in Old Icelandic is in line with the information-structural account of early Germanic clause structure proposed by Hinterhölzl & Petrova (2010), whereby the verb is assumed to serve as an information-structural boundary, separating topic (prefinite) and comment (postfinite); see also Booth et al. (2017) who adopt this account for early Icelandic.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that the clause-initial prefinite position is not exclusively associated with topics in Old Icelandic. Firstly, it has been observed that non-topical subjects which are indefinite and carry new information may also occur in this position, e.g. (14)-(16) (Faarlund 2004: 199). I examine such constructions in detail in section 8.3.2, where I argue that prefinite non-topical subjects are typically newly introduced referents which will be prominent in the subsequent discourse (‘topics-to-be’, which are initially focal elements).

- (14) **Maðr** hét Þorgils.
 man.NOM be-called.PST Þorgils.NOM
 ‘There was a man called Þorgils.’ (Laxd 173.16)
- (15) **Björn** er þar ok á því landi.
 bear.NOM be.PRS there also on DEM land
 ‘There is also a bear in that land.’ (Kgs 30.10)
- (16) **Kastali** var fyrir vestan sundit.
 castle.NOM be.PST before west strait.DEF
 ‘There was a castle to the west of the strait.’ (Hkr II.9.3)

Secondly, sentences with a non-subject constituent in the clause-initial position which is not an actual topic are relatively frequent in Old Icelandic, e.g. (17)-(18) (Faarlund 2004: 235). Both examples are instances where a head is fronted, leav-

⁵For all examples from Faarlund (2004), I retain the text reference provided by Faarlund.

ing behind its dependent(s). (18) has a sentence-initial conjunction; as I show below, such structures are frequent in Old Icelandic and I assume that the conjunction is outside the clause boundary, i.e. the finite verb in (18) is still in the second position.

(17) **Sjá** má ek þik
 see.INF may I.NOM you.ACC
 ‘I can see you.’ (Laxd 125.19)

(18) Ok **af** hefir þú mik ráðit **brekvísi** við
 and PTCL have.PRS you.NOM I.ACC advise.PST.PTCP importunity.DAT with
 þik.
 you.ACC
 ‘And you have taught me not to be importunate with you.’ (Laxd 98.14)

I treat examples like (17) and (18) as ‘X-fronting’, i.e. a fronting operation which fronts heads (e.g. negation, nonfinite verb forms, verbal particles) with no obvious information-structural effect (see Maling 1990: ‘Stylistic Fronting’ in modern Icelandic). I discuss X-fronting in Old Icelandic in section 4.4.2.

The third type of word order where the clause-initial prefinite position is occupied by a constituent which is not specifically a topic is in examples like (19)-(21). Here, a clause-initial adverb serves to link the introduced sentence to the preceding context (‘discourse adverb’).⁶ Each of the examples has a topical pronominal subject which is not in the topic position but is later in the clause.

(19) **Síðan** reif hann upp viðuna.
 then tear.PST he.NOM up masts.DEF
 ‘Then he tore up the masts.’ (1310, Grettir.507)

(20) **Þá** hafði hann hálf annað hundrað skipa.
 then have.PST he.NOM half other hundred ships.GEN
 ‘Then he had half of another hundred ships.’ (1275, Morkin.268)

(21) **Nú** leggja þeir snekkjuna fram hjá skipinu.
 now lay.PRS they.NOM swift-ship.DEF forth by ship.DEF
 ‘Now they set the swift sailing ship by the ship.’ (1275, Morkin.1646)

Examples like (19)-(20) are in line with observations elsewhere in early Germanic that the clause-initial prefinite position frequently hosts constituents which

⁶Such adverbs have been labelled ‘narrative operators’ (e.g. Los 2012) or alternatively ‘discourse adverbs’ (e.g. Kemenade & Westergaard 2012). I adopt the label ‘discourse adverb’.

are ‘discourse-linking’. It has been shown that clause-initial discourse adverbs typically mark a sequence of foregrounded successive actions or events which do not overlap temporally: see, e.g. Foster (1975); Enkvist & Wårvik (1987); Wårvik (2011); Trips & Fuß (2009); Los (2012) on Old English, Betten (1987) on Old High German and Klein (1994) on Gothic. One thus assumes that V2 sentences with clause-initial discourse adverbs fulfil a similar function as the narrative inversion V1 construction discussed in section 4.1.1, namely to create a sense of narrative cohesion in reported sequences of events. On this assumption, sentences like (19)-(21) are compatible with the information-structural account given for Old Icelandic clause structure outlined above, whereby the verb serves as a boundary separating topic and comment. As discourse-old constituents, topics are linked to the preceding context and therefore – when occurring in the clause-initial position – serve to create narrative cohesion in linking the sentence they introduce to the preceding discourse; clause-initial discourse adverbs are just an alternative way of achieving this.

4.1.3 Subject positions

It is generally acknowledged that Old Icelandic exhibits a relatively ‘free’ word order – at least compared to present-day Icelandic (Rögnvaldsson 1995; Booth et al. 2017). One aspect of this so-called ‘freedom’ concerns the position of the subject; it has been claimed that there is no unique subject position in Old Icelandic (Faarlund 2004: 194). Certain generalisations can, however, be made. Firstly, it has already been mentioned that word order in Old Icelandic is sensitive to information structure (section 4.1.1). This extends to subjects, where an interaction has been observed between the position of the subject and its information structural status. Topical subjects typically occupy the clause-initial prefinite position. Subjects which constitute discourse-new information tend to occur late, e.g. the late subject in (22) which introduces a new character to the discourse (Faarlund 2004: 196).

- (22) Hana hafði átt fyrir Þóroddr sonr
 she.ACC have.PST own.PST.PTCP before Þóroddr.NOM son.NOM
Tungu-Odds.
 Tungu-Oddr.GEN
 ‘To her had previously been married Þóroddr, Tungu-Oddr’s son.’

(Gunnl 2.4)

This extends to indefinite non-specific subjects, which can never be discourse-old and tend to occur in postfinite position, e.g. (23) (Faarlund 2004: 195).

- (23) Mundu þat **sumir menn** mæla í mínu landi.
would DEM.ACC some.NOM men.NOM say.INF in my land
'Some people would say so in my country.'

(Finnb 19.5)

Nevertheless, certain exceptions to this assumed information-structural organisation of the clause were highlighted in sections 4.1.1-4.1.2. It was shown that topical subjects can occupy the immediately postfinite position in the narrative inversion V1 construction, e.g. (7) and that discourse-new subjects can sometimes occur in the clause-initial prefinite position, e.g. (14)-(16).

There is also an interaction between the position of the subject and its syntactic weight: heavy (i.e. long or complex) subjects tend to occur at the end of the sentence, e.g. (24) (Faarlund 2004: 196).

- (24) ...þá váru komnir til Orms **marginn menn** ór
then be.PST come.PST.PTCP to Ormur many.NOM men.NOM our
bygðinni, er hann hafði orð sent.
district.DEF REL he.NOM have.PST word send.PST.PTCP
'...then to Ormur had come many men from the district whom he had sent for.' (Hkr I.348.19)

I examine the positional distribution of various types of subject in Old Icelandic in detail in section 4.5.

4.1.4 The configurationality debate

A key point of discussion in the literature on Old Icelandic clause structure has been to what extent Old Icelandic can be considered a configurational language, as debated by Faarlund (1990) and Rögnvaldsson (1995). This debate followed from a body of research which proposed that a typological distinction exists between configurational and non-configurational languages (e.g. Hale et al. 1980; Chomsky 1981; Hale 1982, 1983). The labels 'configurational' and 'non-configurational' are used with varying implications in the literature. As I introduced in section 2.1.1,

the standard view within LFG is that a language can be situated on a scale of configurationality, depending on how its c-structure is organised: at one end of the scale, a radically configurational language will have a c-structure which is exclusively endocentric; at the other end, a radically non-configurational language will exhibit exclusively exocentric organisation. In this view, configurationality is a matter of degrees and languages which mix both endocentric and exocentric organisation at c-structure occupy an intermediate position on the scale.⁷ As I discuss below, the types of evidence used to claim a language's status with respect to configurationality ranges a great deal. For this study, I assume that this status can be determined on the basis of constituency tests which indicate endocentric organisation or lack thereof.

Faarlund (1990: 82-110) was the first to raise the issue of configurationality with respect to the history of the Scandinavian languages. He claimed that present-day Norwegian is configurational, but Old Norse/Icelandic was non-configurational. Faarlund associates non-configurationality with evidence for lack of constituency (specifically concerning the VP), but also with a number of additional properties which do not strictly concern constituency. Firstly, Faarlund uses three standard constituency tests to argue that Old Norse/Icelandic had no VP constituent:

1. Absence of VP-fronting.
2. Absence of VP-clefting.
3. Absence of VP-pronominalisation.

He also provides examples of discontinuous phrasal constituents, specifically noun phrases and PPs, which he claims indicates non-configurationality, e.g. (25) (Faarlund 1990: 95).

- (25) En þeir ríðu síðan brøðr til skips.
 and DEM.NOM ride.PST then brothers.NOM to ship
 'And then the brothers rode to the ship.' (Njál's saga)

The examples of discontinuous phrasal constituents which Faarlund provides are exclusively noun phrases and PPs. Thus such examples may constitute evidence for

⁷For evidence against a clear-cut typological distinction between configurational and non-configurational languages, see Klavans (1982); Grafstein (1986); Rögnvaldsson (1995); Taylor (1988); Webelhuth (1984).

the lack of a noun phrase or PP constituent, but cannot be used to argue for the presence or absence of a VP constituent, i.e. the status of Old Norse/Icelandic at clause-level with respect to configurationality.

Two further properties which do not directly relate to constituency but which Faarlund claims indicates non-configurationality are:

1. The possibility of null arguments, e.g. (26) where the object of the second conjunct (the harp) is unexpressed.
2. The absence of expletive elements.⁸

(26) Honum var fengin leynilega harpa ok sló
 he.DAT be.PST receive.PASS.PTCP secretly harp.NOM and strike.PST
 hann með tánum.
 he.NOM with toes.DEF
 ‘He was secretly given a harp, and he played it with his toes.’
 (Faarlund 1990: 104; Heimskringla)

Faarlund’s non-configurationality claim for Old Norse/Icelandic has been criticised (Platzack 1991; Stockwell & King 1995; Rögnvaldsson 1995). Particularly strong criticism comes from Rögnvaldsson (1995: 10), who finds evidence that it was possible to pronominalise the VP, one of the criteria for VP constituenthood, e.g. (27).

(27) Þórir **hvarf** **aptr** ok gørði **þat** at ráði Þorgils.
 Þórir go.PST back and do.PST DEM at advice Þorgils.GEN
 ‘Þórir went back because Þorgils advised him to do so.’
 (Þorsteins saga hvíta)

Nevertheless, Rögnvaldsson (1995: 10) also observes that discontinuous VPs are attested in Old Icelandic, which points towards VP constituenthood not being valid, and in turn non-configurationality at clause-level. He gives examples of a fronted nonfinite verb with its complement left behind, shown in (28) (‘X-fronting’, see (17)-(18) above and section 4.4.2 below).

(28) **Gefa** vil ek þer fyrst klæði.
 give.INF will I.NOM you.DAT first clothes.ACC
 ‘First I will give you some clothes.’ (Droplaugarsona saga, p.158)

⁸I discuss the standard claim that Old Icelandic had no expletive in section 5.3.1.

Moreover, he claims that there is no attestation in Old Icelandic of sentences where the whole VP (both the verb and its complement) is topicalized to the clause-initial prefinite position, which would be solid evidence for a VP constituent. The lack of VP-fronting is interesting, since virtually any other phrasal constituent can occupy the clause-initial prefinite position, as I show in section 4.4.1. In sum, the attestation of examples like (28) and the absence of examples with VP-fronting thus supports Faarlund's claim that Old Icelandic had no VP constituent.

I do not accept Faarlund's arguments for the non-configurationality of Old Norse/Icelandic which are not directly related to constituency (null arguments and the absence of expletives), since this does not concern endocentricity. Moreover, as I show in Chapters 7 and 8, there is evidence that *það* was available as an expletive in certain contexts already in Old Icelandic. Excluding such arguments, the status of Old Icelandic on the configurationality scale rests solely on the status of VP constituenthood. As I have discussed above, the various constituency tests point in different directions here. On the one hand, the lack of VP-fronting and VP-clefting, as well as the attestation of structures where the verb is fronted leaving its complement behind, point towards there being no VP constituent. However, the examples of VP-pronominalisation indicate constituenthood. This is just one type of constituency test, however, and so on balance, it seems reasonable to assume that Old Icelandic had no VP. I discuss this assumption further in section 4.6, where I propose my own c-structure for the clause structure of Old Icelandic.

4.1.5 Summary

The key aspects of Old Icelandic clause structure which have been established in this background section are:

1. Old Icelandic uncontroversially exhibits the V2 constraint.
2. V3 or V-later order is virtually unattested.
3. V1 order is relatively frequent, and is strikingly exhibited in declarative sentences. Declarative V1 sentences can be classified into three subtypes:
 - (a) Subjectless V1: V – XP ...
 - (b) Presentational V1: V – (XP) – SUBJ_{nontopic} ...
 - (c) Narrative inversion V1: V – SUBJ_{topic} ...

4. The narrative inversion V1 type typically occurs in narrative sequences as a device to create discourse cohesion.
5. The clause-initial prefinite position is standardly characterised as a topic position, though there are certain exceptions to this:
 - (a) Non-topical constituents can occur in the clause-initial prefinite position (discourse-new subjects, X-fronting, discourse adverbs).
 - (b) Topical subjects can occur in the immediately postfinite subject position (narrative inversion V1).
6. Old Icelandic exhibits relative freedom with respect to the positional distribution of subjects, though information structure (topicality) and syntactic weight are key factors conditioning subject position.
 - (a) Topical subjects typically occur in the clause-initial prefinite position, whereas non-topical subjects occur later in the clause (i.e. in postfinite positions).
 - (b) Heavy (i.e. long or complex) subjects tend to occur later in the clause.
7. The evidence provided by Faarlund (1990) and (Rögnvaldsson 1995) on balance points towards the conclusion that Old Norse/Icelandic did not have a VP constituent. As I discuss below in section 4.6, the overall status of Old Icelandic with respect to configurationality is altogether more complex.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Data collection

I limit this part of the study to IcePaHC texts from the period 1150-1350, which is an approximation of the Classical ‘Old Icelandic’ period (see section 1.3.1.2). I exclude embedded clauses and focus on matrix clauses exclusively, in line with the overall focus of this thesis. I also exclude reporting clauses, e.g. (29), as well as second conjuncts, e.g. (30).

- (29) "Vil-tu að Atli fari fyrir þig?" **sagði**
 wish.PRS-you.NOM COMP Atli.NOM go.PRS.SBJV before you.ACC say.PST
Þorkell.
 Þorkell.NOM
 ‘"Do you wish Atli to go in front of you?" said Þorkell’ (1310, Grettir.212)

- (30) Eftir það ganga þeir í kirkju allir Órækju
 after DEM go.PRS they.NOM in church.ACC all.NOM Órækja.GEN
 menn [og leysir biskup þá alla menn úr
 menn.NOM and loosen.PRS bishop.NOM then all.ACC men.ACC out
banni].
 ban.DEM
 ‘After that all Órækja’s men go into the church and the Bishop then frees
 all men of the ban.’ (1250, Sturlunga.449.2198)

I collect the data relevant to my research questions via automated CorpusSearch queries; the search queries are detailed in Appendix A.2. Here, I outline how I operationalise the various properties relevant to the research questions.

I distinguish between clauses which are introduced by a conjunction (*og* ‘and’, *en* ‘but’, *eða* ‘or’), henceforth ‘CC’, e.g. (31) and those which are not, henceforth ‘MC’, e.g. (32). This distinction between CCs and MCs is motivated by previous studies of early Germanic which have found word order to behave differently in the two environments, e.g. Bech (2001: 86-93) and Zimmermann (2014) on early English.

- (31) **Og** nú leggur hann ör á streng. (CC)
 and now lay.PRS he.NOM arrow.ACC on bow-string.DAT
 ‘And now he lays an arrow on the bow string.’ (1260, Jomsvikingar.1316)
- (32) Hann hnykkir upp steininum. (MC)
 he.NOM pull.PRS up stone.DAT.DEF
 ‘He pulled up the stone.’ (1350, Finnbogi.661.2069)

This produces a dataset of 13,156 matrix declaratives which forms the basis of study in this chapter, see Table 4.1.

Text	Year	Word Count	CCs	MCs	Total
Firstgrammar	1150	4,022	12	120	132
Homiliubok	1150	35,534	243	1,323	1,566
Jartein	1210	9,899	171	264	435
Thorlakur	1210	9,983	81	271	352
Sturlunga	1250	20,683	145	1,313	1,458
Thetubrot	1250	3,154	45	143	188
Jomsvikingar	1260	18,901	323	472	795
Gragas	1270	5,514	34	176	210
Morkin	1275	20,925	250	1,058	1,308
Alexander	1300	20,856	405	769	1,174
Grettir	1310	18,158	73	1,448	1,521
Arni	1325	19,067	93	668	761
BandamennM	1350	11,410	71	790	861
Finnbogi	1350	20,420	114	1,587	1,701
Marta	1350	15,750	164	530	694
All texts		234,276	2,224	10,932	13,156

Table 4.1: Old Icelandic texts in IcePaHC

4.2.2 Operationalisation of properties

Many of the syntactic properties investigated in this chapter are fuzzy concepts (e.g. ‘topical’/‘non-topical’) which require operationalisation for a quantitative corpus-based investigation of this kind. Here, I outline the decisions I have made in this context, taking into account the IcePaHC annotation. The precise search queries are provided in Appendix A.2.

4.2.2.1 Verb-second and verb-first

First, I outline what I count as V1 and V2 order in the investigation of verb position presented in section 4.3. I assume that sentence-initial conjunctions in CCs like (31) are outside the clause and so I do not count these for the purpose of verb position. Other elements which I assume are outside the clause and do not count are vocative noun phrases, e.g. (33), interjections, e.g. (34) and left-dislocated phrases, e.g.

(35). In left-dislocation structures like (35) with a resumptive pronoun, I assume that the left-dislocated constituent is outside the clause boundary, and that the resumptive pronoun *hann* occupies the clause-initial position, satisfying V2.

- (33) **Herra**, eigi vilda ég þetta gera.
 lord NEG wish.PST I.NOM DEM.ACC do.INF
 ‘Lord, I did not wish to do this.’ (1275, Morkin.1149)
- (34) **Óho** bræður mínir, Hvað gerðuð þér mér?
 oh brothers my what do.PST you.NOM I.DAT
 ‘Oh, my brothers, what did you do to me?’ (1350, Marta.772)
- (35) [**Auðun, er fyrr var nefndur**], Hann var
 Auðun REL earlier be.PST name.PASS.PTCP he.NOM.RSMP be.PST
 þeirra nokkurum vetrum eldri.
 they.GEN some.DAT winters.DAT older
 ‘Auðun, who was named earlier, he was some winters older than them.’
 (1310, Grettir.168)

There are also various types of ‘empty’ subjects which IcePaHC tags for, but which I do not count for the purposes of verb position. These include constructions which are subjectless via pronoun incorporation (‘pro-drop’), e.g. the second sentence in (36) and subjectless constructions which would have a clause-initial expletive in present-day Icelandic, e.g. (37).⁹

- (36) Konungur svarar: "Ég sé ráð fyr mér en þú fyr
 king answer.PRS I.NOM see advice for I.DAT and you.NOM for
 þér." Snýr síðan inn í stofuna...
 you.DAT turn.PRS.3SG then in in sitting-room.DEF
 ‘The King replies: "I see advice for me and you for yourself." Then he turns
 into the living room...’ (1275, Morkin.186)
- (37) Tekur nú að hausta.
 begin.PRS now to become-autumn.INF
 ‘It now begins to become autumn.’ (1310, Grettir.48)

Constituents which do count for the purposes of determining V1 versus V2 order are thus any X(P) which is neither an ‘empty’ subject, nor an element which stands outside the clause (conjunction, vocative noun phrase, interjection or left-dislocated

⁹IcePaHC tags expletive *það* as a subject and so in contexts like (37), the prefinite position is occupied by a ‘null expletive subject’ (*exp*). As I show in section 5.2.3, I do not analyse expletive *það* as a subject but as a structural placeholder for a certain position.

phrase).

In the investigation of verb position in MCs versus CCs presented in section 4.3.1, I exclusively examine sentences which have either a pronominal subject (NP-SBJ* i DomsOnly PRO*) or a subject which is a lexical noun phrase (NP-SBJ* i Doms N-* | NS-*). This excludes subjectless and presentational constructions which are likely to show particularly high frequencies of V1 order. I examine the frequency of V1 subjectless and presentational constructions in section 4.3.2.

4.2.2.2 Types of V1 declarative

I will investigate three major types of V1 construction in Old Icelandic (see section 4.3.2):

1. Subjectless V1, of which:¹⁰
 - (a) Pronoun incorporation V1
 - (b) Genuinely subjectless V1
2. Presentational V1
3. Narrative inversion V1

I operationalise pronoun incorporation V1 as any construction which has the order *PRO*-V in the IcePaHC annotation, e.g. (38).

(38) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ *pro*)
(VBPI Snýr-snúa)
(ADVP-TMP (ADV síðan-síðan))
(PP (RP inn-inn)
(P í-í)
(NP (N-A stofuna-stofa))))
(ID 1275. MORKIN. NAR-HIS, .186))

Genuinely subjectless V1 I operationalise as any construction which IcePaHC annotates as *exp*-V, where the *exp* is not co-indexed with anything, e.g. (39). This spans a range of construction types which I discuss in detail in Chapter 7. For

¹⁰A subjectless construction I define as any clause which lacks a constituent at c-structure which maps to the SUBJ function (see section 2.2.1).

the purposes of this chapter, genuinely subjectless V1 can be understood as any subjectless V1 construction which does not involve pronoun incorporation.

- (39) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ *exp*)
 (BEDI Var-vera)
 (ADVP-TMP (ADV nú-nú))
 (ADJP (ADJ-N kyrrt-kyrr))
 (PP (P um-um)
 (NP (N-A hríð-hríð))))))
 (ID 1350. BANDAMENNM. NAR-SAG, . 286))

Presentational V1 constructions can be captured in IcePaHC by searching for constructions with the order *exp*-V, where the *exp* is co-indexed with a postfinite noun phrase which is a discourse-new referent, e.g. (40).

- (40) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ-1 *exp*)
 (BEDI Var-vera)
 (NP-1 (Q-N fátt-fár)
 (NP-POS (NS-G manna-maður))))
 (ADVP-LOC (ADV hei ma-hei ma))
 (1350. FINNBOGI . NAR-SAG, 655. 1696))

Narrative inversion V1 constructions have an immediately postfinite topical subject. IcePaHC does not tag for information structure, and so there is no way to isolate all topical subjects via search query. However, one can capture a significant subset of the total topical subjects by searching for subject noun phrases which exclusively contain a pronoun (NP-SBJ* i DomsOnly PRO*); exclusively pronominal subjects will typically be discourse-old, i.e. topics. I operationalise narrative inversion V1 as any construction which has the order V-PRO, e.g. (41).

- (41) ((IP-MAT (BEDI Var-vera)
 (NP-SBJ (PRO-N hann-hann))
 (ADVP-LOC (ADV þar-þar))
 (NP-MSR (NUM-A þrjár-þrjár) (NS-A nætur-nótt))))
 (ID 1310. GRETTIR. NAR-SAG, . 201))

4.2.2.3 The prefinite position

IcePaHC tags for certain grammatical functions (e.g. subjects, objects and adjuncts) and so it is possible to isolate these categories in the investigation of the XP-fronting presented in section 4.4.1. I exclude instances where a cataphorically referential *pað* occupies the prefinite position in a construction with a clausal argument; these constructions are examined in Chapter 6.

4.2.2.4 Subject types and position

In the investigation of subject positions in section 4.5, I examine two specific types of subject:

1. Topical subjects.
2. Syntactically ‘heavy’ subjects.

As mentioned in section 4.2.2.2, IcePaHC does not tag for information structure, and so it is only possible to isolate a subset of topical subjects, specifically those which are noun phrases which exclusively contain a pronoun (NP-SBJ* i DomsOnly PRO*). This approximation is what I use for ‘topical subjects’ for the investigation of subject position.

I operationalise as a syntactically ‘heavy’ subject any subject which contains at least 5 words (NP-SBJ* domsWords > 5). This includes heavy noun phrase subjects like (42), but excludes clausal subjects, since these are not tagged as NP-SBJ* in IcePaHC; I discuss constructions with a clausal subject in section 6.2.

With respect to the structural position of the subject, I make a three-way distinction:

1. The clause-initial prefinite position: SUBJ – V.
2. The immediately postfinite position: V – SUBJ.
3. A later than immediately postfinite position (‘later postfinite’):
V – XP – (...) – SUBJ.

(42) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ (ONE-N Ei nn-ei nn)
 (ADJ-N útl endur-útl endur)
 (N-N maður-maður)
 (, , -,)
 (CP-REL (WNP-1 0)
 (C er-er)
 (IP-SUB (NP-SBJ *T*-1)
 (RP út-út)
 (HVDI hafði -hafa)
 (VBN komi ð-koma)
 (NP-TMP (D-A þetta-þessi)
 (N-A sumar-sumar))))))
 (, , -,)
 (HVDI hafði -hafa)
 (NP-OB1 (Q-A mi ki ð-mi ki II) (N-A mei n-mei n))
 (. . - .))
 (ID 1210. JARTEIN. REL-SAG, . 141))

4.3 Verb position

With respect to the position of the verb in Old Icelandic matrix declaratives, I examine the following:

1. Whether there is an interaction between the presence/absence of a sentence-initial conjunction (*ok* ‘and’, *en* ‘but’, *eða* ‘or’) and the position of the finite verb.
2. The frequency of various subtypes of V1 declarative.
3. Whether the narrative inversion V1 construction (V-SUBJ_{topic}) is more frequent in narrative texts than non-narrative texts, as claimed in the literature (e.g. Platzack 1985).

4.3.1 Sentence-initial conjunctions and verb position

First, I investigate whether the presence/absence of a sentence-initial conjunction interacts with verb position. This particular investigation is motivated by previous

studies of early Germanic which have found differences in word order in the two environments, e.g. Bech (2001: 86-93) and Zimmermann (2014) on early English. An interaction has also been claimed for Old Norse/Icelandic: Faarlund (2004: 191-2) states that when the conjunction *ok/og* ‘and’ introduces a matrix clause, it is ‘usually’ followed by the finite verb, citing the example in (43).

- (43) Ok **sá** allir dyrð guðs koma
 and see.PST all.NOM glory.ACC god.GEN come.INF
 ‘And they all saw the glory of God coming.’ (Hóm 95,17)

Faarlund (2004: 231, footnote 6) notes that the high frequency of sentences like (43) – where the verb immediately follows the sentence-initial conjunction *ok/og* – has been used to support the analysis of *ok/og* as an adverb occupying the topic position in such contexts. Indeed, the form *ok/og* occurs in Old Icelandic in contexts where it is unambiguously an adverb (‘also’) and not a conjunction, e.g. (44).

- (44) Þar komu **og** margir inn úr Vesturhópi og Vatnsnesi...
 there come.PST also many in out Vesturhópi and Vatnsnes
 ‘Many also came in there from Vesturhópi and Vatnsnes...’
 (1310, Grettir.161)

I return to the status of sentence-initial *ok/og* in sentences like (43) below.

The IcePaHC findings show that V1 order is more frequent in MCs (with no sentence-initial conjunction) than in CCs (with a sentence-initial conjunction), see Table 4.2. Moreover, the IcePaHC findings challenge Faarlund’s claim that V1 order is dominant in sentences introduced by *ok/og* ‘and’. The results in Table 4.2 show that V1 is in fact relatively infrequent (8.2%) in CCs, and is more frequent in MCs (20.1%).¹¹

One possible explanation for the observation that V1 is less frequent in CCs than in MCs is connected to the assumption that V1 order is motivated as a discourse cohesion strategy in narrative sequences, as discussed in section 4.1.1. I assume that sentence-initial conjunctions in CCs also help to create discourse cohesion. These assumptions lead me to suggest that the lower frequency of V1 in

¹¹Throughout this thesis, I conduct χ^2 -tests to examine whether an individual value deviates significantly from the mean value across the whole dataset in the table ($p < 0.05^*$, $p < 0.01^{**}$, $p < 0.001^{***}$).

Clause type	V1	V2	Total	%V1	2
MC	1183	4704	5887	20.1%	***
CC	82	921	1003	8.2%	***
Both types	1265	5625	6890	18.4%	

Table 4.2: Verb position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350

CCs can be accounted for by the fact that, in such contexts, the sentence-initial conjunction already serves to create discourse cohesion, and V1 order is thus less strongly motivated. By contrast, in MCs which lack a sentence-initial conjunction, V1 order is more strongly motivated for this purpose.

4.3.2 Types of V1 declarative

As already noted, the fact that V1 order is possible in matrix declaratives in both Old and modern Icelandic has attracted a good deal of attention; see section 4.1.1 in relation to Old Icelandic, and section 3.2 for modern Icelandic. It has been widely claimed that V1 order was more frequent in Old Icelandic than in modern Icelandic (e.g. Sigurðsson 1990), and recent corpus-based investigations of IcePaHC support such claims (Butt et al. 2014; Booth et al. 2017). However, the distribution of V1 declaratives across the different types of V1 outlined in section 4.1.1 has not been investigated. In this section, I examine the distribution of V1 declaratives in Old Icelandic across the subtypes detailed in section 4.2.2.2. To limit this part of the study to a manageable scope, I examine MCs exclusively, setting CCs aside.

The IcePaHC findings reveal that only a small percentage of V1 matrix declaratives in Old Icelandic belong to the pronoun incorporation, genuinely subjectless and presentational types; the vast majority (84.4%) in fact belong to the narrative inversion type, see Table 4.3.

V1 Type	Count	%
Pronoun incorporation V1	55	5.7%
Genuinely subjectless V1	82	8.5%
Presentational V1	13	1.3%
Narrative inversion V1	813	84.4%
All types	963	100.0%

Table 4.3: V1 declaratives (MCs) across 4 contexts in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

4.3.3 Narrative inversion V1 and genre

So far, it has been assumed that the narrative inversion V1 construction (V-SUBJ_{topic}) is discourse-motivated as a strategy for creating cohesion in narrative sequences (see section 4.1.1). In order to assess whether this assumption is correct, I examine whether narrative inversion V1 is indeed more frequent in narrative texts than in other text types. I compare a sample of the three non-narrative texts in IcePaHC with a sample of three narrative saga texts, see Table 4.4.¹²

Type	Text	Word count
Non-narrative	<i>Firstgrammar</i>	45,070
	<i>Homiliubok</i>	
	<i>Gragas</i>	
Narrative	<i>Jomsvikingar</i>	48,469
	<i>Grettir</i>	
	<i>BandamennM</i>	

Table 4.4: A sample of narrative and non-narrative texts in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

I compare the proportion of narrative inversion V1 (V-SUBJ_{topic}) to the proportion of V2 sentences with a topical subject in the clause-initial prefinite position (SUBJ_{topic}-V). This allows me to assess the strength of preference for the narrative inversion construction for each group of texts, as an alternative to the unmarked SUBJ_{topic}-V order. As before, I operationalise topical subjects to be any subject noun phrase which exclusively contains a single pronoun (see section 4.2.2.2).

¹²The dataset is limited to three texts for each group because there are only three non-narrative texts in IcePaHC for the period 1150-1350.

The IcePaHC results show that there is no difference in the frequency of narrative inversion V1 between non-narrative and narrative texts, see Table 4.5.¹³

Genre	V - SUBJ _{TOPIC}	SUBJ _{topic} - V	Total	% V - SUBJ _{TOPIC}	²
Non-narrative	79	136	215	36.7%	ns
Narrative	229	384	613	37.4%	ns
Both types	308	520	828	37.2%	

Table 4.5: Frequency of narrative inversion V1 by genre in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

If these texts are representative, then the findings challenge the standard view discussed in section 4.1.1 that narrative inversion V1 is a construction specific to Old Icelandic narrative texts. The IcePaHC results instead show that the construction is equally frequent in non-narrative texts from the period.

4.4 The prefinite position

It was shown in section 4.3.1 that V2 is dominant in both MCs and CCs in Old Icelandic, though V1 is attested in both types. In this section, I examine the nature of the prefinite position in V2 sentences in Old Icelandic, with specific focus on two research questions:

1. Phrasal categories of which function can occupy the clause-initial prefinite position ('XP-fronting')?
2. Under which conditions can non-phrasal categories be fronted in Old Icelandic ('X-fronting')?

I examine MCs exclusively, in order to make the investigation of manageable scope. Together, these investigations will shed light on what categories could satisfy V2 in Old Icelandic.

4.4.1 XP-fronting

It has been claimed that the prefinite position in Old Icelandic V2 sentences can be occupied by any phrasal category, and that the choice of prefinite constituent

¹³'ns' marks a value which does not significantly deviate from the mean value across both types.

depends on information-structural factors (Faarlund 2004: 231). As already mentioned in section 4.1.2, the prefinite constituent typically hosts topical constituents, but elements which are not specifically topical – including discourse-new subjects and discourse adverbs – can also occupy this position. I examine all instances of XP-fronting in MCs in the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350, with specific attention on the function of the fronted XP.

The IcePaHC results show that subjects are the most common function to appear in the prefinite position (61.7%), see Table 4.6. This is in line with the assumption that the prefinite position is a topic position, since subjects are often topical. Adjuncts are also relatively common in the prefinite position (34.7%); one expects a lot of these instances to feature discourse adverbs in the prefinite position, as a way to link the introduced sentence to the preceding context (see section 4.1.2). These findings support previous claims that the most common categories in the prefinite position in Old Norse/Icelandic are subjects and adjuncts (Faarlund 2004: 232).

Prefinite category	Count	%¹⁴
Any subject	4,308	61.7%
– Pronominal subject	1,432	(20.5%)
– Lexical subject	2,876	(41.2%)
Any object	253	3.6%
– Pronominal direct object	56	(0.8%)
– Lexical direct object	181	(2.6%)
– Pronominal indirect object	7	(0.1%)
– Lexical indirect object	9	(0.1%)
Any adjunct	2424	34.7%
Total	6985	100.0%

Table 4.6: Functions which occupy the prefinite position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350

¹⁴All percentages – including those of the subtypes in brackets – are calculated as percentages of the total 6985 sentences.

I show examples of each category in the prefinite position in (45)-(49).

- (45) **Hann** var vinsæll maður.
 he.NOM be.PST popular man
 ‘He was a popular man.’ (1310, Grettir.3) (pronominal subject)
- (46) [**Mál hans**] var þá óskýrt.
 case.NOM he.GEN be.PST then unclear
 ‘His case was then unclear.’ (1250, Sturlunga.421.1084) (lexical subject)
- (47) **Það** þolir hann eigi.
 DEM.ACC bear.PRS he.NOM NEG
 ‘He does not bear that.’ (1350, Finnbogi.651.1475) (direct object)
- (48) **Ragnhildi** gaf hann [gullhring er stóð mörk,
 Ragnhildur.DAT give.PST he.NOM gold-ring.ACC REL weigh.PST mark
 belt og skikkju góða, hina bestu gripi].
 belt.ACC and coat.ACC good.ACC DEM.ACC best.ACC riches.ACC
 ‘To Ragnhildur he gave a gold ring which weighed one mark, a belt and a
 good coat, the best riches.’ (1350, Finnbogi.647.1224) (indirect object)
- (49) [**Eftir það**] skildu þeir.
 after DEM.ACC part.PST they.NOM
 ‘After that, they parted.’ (1310, Grettir.2034) (adjunct)

The example in (48) – which has an indirect object in the prefinite position – has a heavy direct object (containing 5+ words) which is late, shown in square brackets. However, only 4/16 examples with a fronted indirect object have a direct object which is heavy. The remaining 12 examples have a direct object which is not heavy (i.e. contains 1-4 words), e.g. (50)-(51).

- (50) Þá helgum vér Guði musteri í hjörtum órum ...
 then hallow.PRS we.NOM god.DAT temple.ACC in hearts our
Níu englasveitum helgum vér [musteri] ...
 nine.DAT host-angels.DAT hallow.PRS we.NOM temple.ACC
 ‘Then we hallow to God a temple in our hearts... To nine host angels we
 hallow a temple...’ (1150, Homiliubok.885)
- (51) Hrafn Oddsson ... stóð og mjög í móti biskupi um
 Hrafn Oddsson stand.PST also very against bishop about
 kirknamálin. **Honum** hafði herra Magnús kóngur
 church-cause.DEF he.DAT have.PST lord.NOM Magnús.NOM king.NOM
 skipað [hálf Ísland].
 assign.PST.PTCP half.ACC Iceland.ACC
 ‘Hrafn Oddsson ... was also very much against the bishop concerning the

church question. To him the Lord King Magnús had assigned half of Iceland.’ (1325, Arni.233)

Examples like (50) and (51) are indication that it is not necessarily a heavy direct object which motivates the fronting of the indirect object, but that fronting of indirect objects can be information-structurally motivated. In (50), *níu englasveitum* (‘to nine angels’) is contrastive with *guði* (‘to god’), the indirect object of the preceding sentence. In (51), *honum* is a topic, since it refers back to Hrafn Oddsson who has just been introduced in the preceding sentence.

4.4.2 X-fronting

As mentioned in section 4.1.2, non-phrasal categories can occupy the clause-initial prefinite position in Old Icelandic, e.g. (17)-(18) above. I refer to this as ‘X-fronting’, i.e. fronting of a head (X) rather than a phrase (XP). In some cases, the difference between a head and a phrase may be ambiguous, namely in contexts where a phrase consists of just one word and there is no complement which could be visibly left behind. This issue is too complex to address here, and so I just consider any clause where the fronted category is one of those typically associated with the phenomenon (e.g. Maling 1990): a nonfinite verb (infinitive or participle) e.g. (52), a verbal particle, e.g. (18) above, negation, e.g. (53) or a predicative adjective, e.g. (54).

- (52) a. **Tjölduð** var stofan.
hang-with-cloth.PASS.PTCP be.PST sitting-room.NOM.DEF
‘The sitting room was hung with cloth.’ (1250, Sturlunga.427.1283)
- b. **Mælt** hefi eg það.
say.PST.PTCP have.PRS.SBJV I.NOM DEM.ACC
‘I may have said that.’ (1250, Sturlunga.398.348)
- c. **Vakanda** er öllum trúföstum...
wake.PRS.PTCP be.PRS all.DAT faithful.DAT
‘All faithful ones are waking.’ (1150, Homiliubok.1481)
- (53) **Ekki** var hann höfðingi en þó skilríkur bóndi.
NEG be.PST he.NOM chieftain but though honest farmer
‘He was not a chieftain but nevertheless an honest farmer.’
(1310, Grettir.1761)

- (54) **Síðklæddur** var hann, svo að...
 wearing-long-clothes be.PST he.NOM SO COMP
 ‘He was wearing long clothes, such that...’ (1300, Alexander.271)

Examples of X-fronting have been discussed under the heading of ‘Stylistic Fronting’ (SF) with respect to present-day Icelandic.¹⁵ Maling (1990) was the first generative treatment of SF, and the phenomenon has since received a good deal of attention in research on present-day Icelandic syntax.¹⁶ Despite many recent contributions, however, a general consensus on the precise scope and nature of SF remains elusive. In the simplest descriptive terms, SF refers to a phenomenon whereby various non-subject categories which cannot usually be fronted – typically heads without their complements – occur in the prefinite position under certain circumstances. The ‘stylistic’ label refers to the fact that SF is optional, subject to stylistic variation within the language of individual speakers.

Of course, a sentence may feature more than one of the categories which can standardly undergo SF. In such contexts, the choice of category to undergo SF was formalised by Maling (1990) as the ‘Accessibility Hierarchy’, see (55). In contexts in which there is more than one category which can plausibly undergo SF, the category highest in the hierarchy (i.e. furthest to the left) will be the fronted element.

- (55) **The Accessibility Hierarchy:**
ekki (= NEG) > predicative adjective > past participle/verbal particle

The conditions under which SF occurs have also received a good deal of attention. Maling (1990) claimed that SF only occurs in clauses where there is a ‘subject gap’. Clauses which can be considered to have a subject gap in this context are of three broad types:

1. Clauses where the subject has been extracted by some syntactic process, for instance relativisation in relative clauses, e.g. (56).

¹⁵Maling (1990) argued in the original account that fronting of phrasal categories does not count as SF, though Holmberg (2000: 448-9) has since argued that NPs and PPs can undergo SF (see also Hrafnbjargarson 2004; Ott 2009). This debate is not relevant to this study and so I do not consider it further.

¹⁶The original label in Maling (1990) was ‘Stylistic Inversion’, but the phenomenon is now widely known as ‘Stylistic Fronting’.

2. Clauses which have a ‘late’ subject, e.g. those with ‘indefinite NP-postposing’, e.g. (57).
3. Clauses which are genuinely subjectless, e.g. impersonal passives, as in (58).¹⁷

(56) Þetta er mál sem **rætt** hefur
 DEM.NOM be.PRS issue.NOM REL discuss.PASS.PTCP have.PRS
 verið.
 be.PST.PTCP
 ‘This is the issue which has been discussed.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 353)

(57) Ég hélt að **kysst** hefðu hana margir
 I.NOM think.PST COMP kiss.PST.PTCP have.PST she.ACC many.NOM
 stúdentar.
 students.NOM
 ‘I thought that many students had kissed her.’
 (Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990: 27)

(58) Þegar **komið** var til Reykjavíkur...
 when come.PASS.PTCP be.PST to Reykjavík
 ‘When one arrived in Reykjavík...’ (Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990: 25)

While most accounts of SF focus on embedded clauses exclusively, it is clear that the phenomenon can apply in matrix clauses too, e.g. (59)-(60) (Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990: 27).

(59) **Fram** hefur komið að...
 forth have.PRS come.PST.PTCP COMP
 ‘It has come out that...’

(60) **Képyt** hafa þessa bók margir stúdentar.
 buy.PST.PTCP have.PRS DEM.ACC. book.ACC many.NOM students.NOM
 ‘Many students have bought this book.’

Despite the extensive literature on Stylistic Fronting in present-day Icelandic, the phenomenon has rarely been discussed from a historical perspective. In this part of the study, I examine instances of X-fronting in matrix declaratives in Old Icelandic which could qualify as Stylistic Fronting in the standard use of the term (e.g. Maling 1990). I examine MCs exclusively to make the investigation manageable. Questions which I address are:

¹⁷See Chapters 5 and 7 for discussion of subjectless constructions in Icelandic.

1. Which categories could undergo X-fronting?
2. Does Maling’s Accessibility Hierarchy hold for X-fronting examples in Old Icelandic?
3. In which contexts does X-fronting typically occur with respect to the status of the subject?

The IcePaHC results reveal that negation is by far the most commonly fronted category (60.6%), see Table 4.7. Fronting of nonfinite verbs, verbal particles and predicative adjectives is also attested.

Prefinite category	Count	%¹⁸
Nonfinite verb	55	14.6%
– Infinitive	30	(8.0%)
– Past participle	11	(2.9%)
– Passive participle	13	(3.5%)
– Present participle	1	(0.3%)
Verbal particle	17	4.5%
Negation	228	60.6%
Predicative adjective	76	20.2%
Total	376	100.0%

Table 4.7: Head categories which occupy the prefinite position in IcePaHC matrix declaratives, 1150-1350

In the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed for modern Icelandic by Maling (1990), negation is the highest ranked category, see (55) above. The prediction is that, in contexts where negation is just one of multiple categories in the clause which could in principle undergo X-fronting (alongside, e.g. a participle or predicative adjective), negation will be the fronted element. This could account for why negation is the most frequently fronted category – but only if this part of the Accessibility Hierarchy holds for Old Icelandic.

A closer look at the data in Table 4.7 shows support for the position of negation highest in an Accessibility Hierarchy for X-fronting in Old Icelandic. Firstly, in all examples where the fronted category is something other than negation, not one

¹⁸All percentages – including those for subtypes in brackets – are calculated as percentages of the total 376 sentences.

example features negation later in the clause. Secondly, many of the examples where negation is the fronted category feature other categories later in the clause which are also candidates for X-fronting, e.g. (61)-(65).

- (61) **Ekki** vildi Kengála **bíta** nema baksins.
 NEG wish.PST Kengála bite.INF except back.DEF
 ‘Kengála did not want to bite anything except the back.’
 (1310, Grettir.102)
- (62) **Ekki** hafði Þorfinnur þá **spurt** til víkinganna.
 NEG have.PST Þorfinnur then ask.PST.PTCP to Vikings.DEF
 ‘Þorfinnur had not then asked to the Vikings.’ (1310, Grettir.840)
- (63) **Eigi** var **sparað** gull við þau.
 NEG be.PST spare.PASS.PTCP gold with they.ACC
 ‘Gold was not spared with them.’ (1300, Alexander.678)
- (64) **Eigi** munum við það **af** ráða.
 NEG will WE.NOM DEM.ACC PTCL resolve.INF
 ‘We will not resolve that.’ (1350, Finnbogi.649.1345)
- (65) **Ekki** er eg **vanur** við verkstjórn...
 NEG be.PRS I.NOM accustomed with work-surpervision
 ‘I am not used to supervising work.’ (1325, Arni.723)

In sum, the IcePaHC findings indicate that the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed for Stylistic Fronting in modern Icelandic holds for X-fronting in Old Icelandic, at least with respect to the status of negation as the highest ranked category. This in turn can account for the observation that negation is the most frequent category to occupy the prefinite position (Table 4.7). The accessibility ranking of other categories in Old Icelandic I leave for future research.

Next, I examine the examples of X-fronting in Table 4.7 with respect to subject properties. As already noted, Maling (1990) claims for modern Icelandic that Stylistic Fronting can only apply in clauses which have a ‘subject gap’. I investigate whether this syntactic restriction holds for X-fronting in Old Icelandic. I operationalise the possible subject properties into four categories:¹⁹

1. Subject present in the immediately postfinite position (X-V-SUBJ).
2. Subject present in a later postfinite position (X-V-XP-(...)-SUBJ).

¹⁹A key subject gap context in standard accounts of Stylistic Fronting are relative clauses. However, my study focuses on matrix clauses and so relative clauses are not a relevant environment.

3. Subjectless construction via pronoun incorporation.
4. Genuinely subjectless construction (i.e. does not involve pronoun incorporation).

The corpus findings show that the vast majority of examples with X-fronting in fact have a subject in the immediately postfinite position (78.6%), see Table 4.8. I show examples in (66)-(67). This is striking, since it goes against the claim for modern Icelandic where X-fronting is only possible in clauses with a subject gap.

Subject property	Hits	%
X-V-SUBJ	283	78.6%
X-V-XP-(...)-SUBJ	34	9.4%
Pronoun incorporation	8	2.2%
Genuinely subjectless	35	9.7%
All	360²⁰	100.0%

Table 4.8: X-fronting in matrix declaratives by subject property, IcePaHC 1150-1350

- (66) **Mælt** hefi eg það.
 say.PST.PTCP have.PRS.SBJV I.NOM DEM.ACC
 ‘I may have said that.’ (1250, Sturlunga.398.348)
- (67) **Fátalaður** er hann til.
 of-few-words be.PRS he.NOM PTCL
 ‘He is a man of few words.’ (1350, BandamennM.349)

In fact, only a minority of examples can be considered to have a ‘subject gap’, either by the late position of the subject, e.g. (68), via pronoun incorporation, e.g. (69), or as a genuinely subjectless construction, e.g. (70).

- (68) **Tekin** var og úr Görðum skemma góð.
 take.PASS.PTCP be.PST also out Garðar storehouse.NOM good.NOM
 ‘A good storehouse was also taken from Garðar.’ (1250, Sturlunga.393.167)
- (69) **Ekki** em því mjög vanur..
 NEG be.PRS.1SG DEM.DAT very accustomed
 ‘I am not very accustomed to that...’ (1275, Morkin.1596)

²⁰There are 16 examples missing here from the sample in Table 4.7 (376); it is likely that these are erroneous examples with respect to how the subject property is tagged.

- (70) "Eigi skal höggva", sagði Snorri.
 NEG shall strike.INF say.PST Snorri
 ‘ "One should not strike", said Snorri.’ (1250, Sturlunga.440.1781)

4.5 The positional distribution of subjects

As highlighted in section 4.1.3, it is widely acknowledged that subjects can occur in a variety of structural positions in Old Icelandic (e.g. Faarlund 2004: 194). This has been linked to the claim that Old Icelandic was less strongly configurational than in present-day Icelandic, i.e. that in Old Icelandic the association between particular grammatical functions and certain structural positions was weaker (see Booth et al. 2017). I examine all subjects with nominative case marking in matrix clauses in the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350 with respect to positional distribution. I examine MCs exclusively, setting CCs aside. I exclude subjects with non-nominative case marking, since the status of non-nominative subjects in Old Icelandic is debated (see, e.g. Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a; Schätzle et al. 2015).²¹

The corpus findings show that there is a roughly equal distribution between prefinite subjects and postfinite subjects overall, see Table 4.9. This confirms the finding by Booth et al. (2017) in a comparable IcePaHC study. Of the postfinite subjects, immediately postfinite subjects are common (46.3%), while later postfinite subjects are comparatively rare (3.4%).

Subject position	Hits	%
Prefinite	4,293	50.3%
Immediately postfinite	3,955	46.3%
Later postfinite	293	3.4%
All	8,541	100.0%

Table 4.9: Positional distribution of subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

In the rest of this section, I examine the interaction between subject position and two properties of the subject:

²¹Booth et al. (2017) examine the position of subjects in early Icelandic, also taking into account dative subjects.

1. Topicality
2. Syntactic weight

4.5.1 Topical subjects

In section 4.4.1, it was firmly established that the clause-initial prefinite position in V2 matrix declaratives in Old Icelandic typically hosts topical constituents, which are very often subjects, e.g. (71).

- (71) *Ásmundur hærulangur setti bú að Bjargi, mikið og*
Ásmundur long-hair set-up.PST household at Bjarg, great and
reisulegt, og hafði mann margt með sér. Hann var vinsæll
imposing and have.PST many-people with REFL he.NOM be.PST popular
maður.
man
 ‘Ásmundur Long-Hair set up a farmstead at Bjarg, great and imposing, and had many people with him. He was a popular man.’ (1310, Grettir.3)

However, I also showed that Old Icelandic exhibits a V1 construction in which a topical subject occupies the immediately postfinite position (‘narrative inversion’), e.g. (72) (see section 4.3.2).

- (72) *Auðun tekur nú að auka sína ferð slíkt er hann*
Auðun begin.PRS now to prolong.INF his-own journey such as he.NOM
má. Þórir hann þá eigi að stefna til gatnanna.
may dare.PRS he.NOM then NEG to go.INF to paths.DEF
 ‘Auðun now beings to prolong his journey such as he may. He then dares not make for the paths.’ (1250, Sturlunga.445.2015)

It thus appears that there are at least two positions available to topical subjects: the clause-initial prefinite position in a V2 sentence, and the immediately postfinite position in a V1 sentence.

I investigate the positional distribution of topical subjects in matrix declaratives in the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350.²² The corpus findings show that topical subjects are virtually restricted to either the prefinite or immediately postfinite position, see Table 4.10. Topical subjects are more likely to occur in the immediately postfinite

²²I examine the positional distribution of non-topical (i.e. discourse-new) subjects in Old Icelandic in the study of presentational constructions in section 8.3.

position (59.4%) than subjects overall (46.3%), cf. Table 4.9 above.

Subject position	Hits	%
Prefinite	1,383	40.5%
Immediately postfinite	2,028	59.4%
Later postfinite	2	0.1%
All	3,413	100.0%

Table 4.10: Positional distribution of topical subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

4.5.2 Heavy subjects

In section 4.1.3, it was noted that there is an interaction between the position of the subject in Old Icelandic and its syntactic weight: heavy subjects (which I operationalise as those consisting of 5+ words) tend to occur at the end of the sentence (Faarlund 2004: 196). I assess this claim via an investigation of the positional distribution of heavy subjects in the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350.

The corpus findings show that heavy subjects occur most frequently in the immediately postfinite position, see Table 4.11. Heavy subjects are less frequently prefinite (26.6%) than subjects overall (50.3%), cf. Table 4.9 above. This tendency supports previous claims that heavy subjects are dispreferred in the prefinite position.

Subject position	Hits	%
Prefinite	69	26.6%
Immediately postfinite	107	41.3%
Later postfinite	83	32.0%
All	259	100.0%

Table 4.11: Positional distribution of heavy subjects in matrix declaratives in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

However, it is striking that heavy subjects occur more frequently in the immediately postfinite position than in a later postfinite position. This challenges Faarlund's claim that heavy subjects typically occur in a clause-final position. This indicates that it is not just weight which determines the position of the subject, but

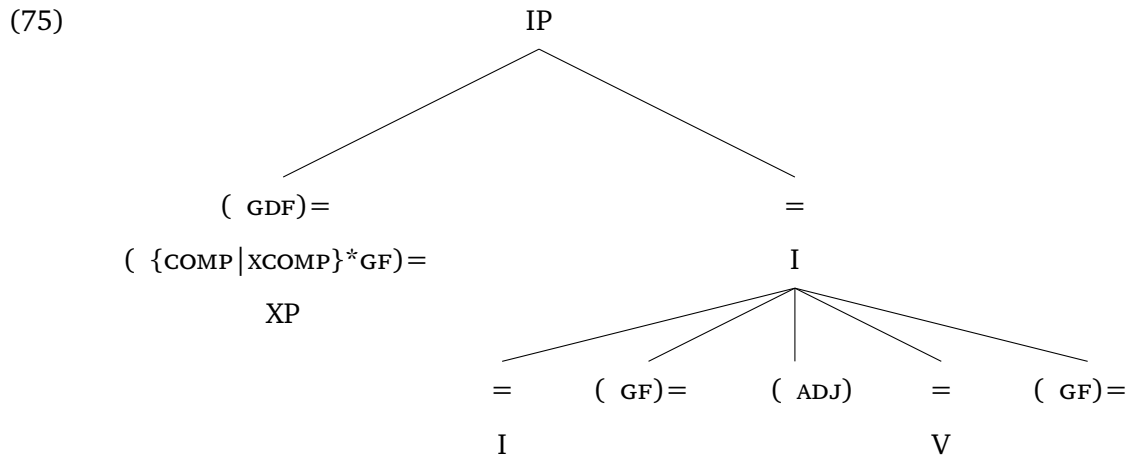
that there is/are some other factor(s) at play. A closer examination of the examples with a heavy subject in a later postfinite position reveals that such examples are typically presentational constructions, whose subject is discourse-new, e.g. (73) and (74).

- (73) *Á þessi stefnu stóð upp [einn ríkur maður, sá
on DEM meeting stand.PST up one.NOM rich.NOM man.NOM DEM.NOM
er Aeschines hét]...*
REL Aeschines be-called.PST
'At this meeting a rich man stood up, the one who was called Aeschines...'
(1300, Alexander.161)
- (74) *Þar var þá með hirð Haralds konungs [Ragnhildr,
there be.PST then with company Haraldur.GEN king.GEN Ragnhildr.NOM
dóttir Magnúss konungs góða, kvenna
daughter.NOM Magnús.GEN king.GEN good.GEN woman.NOM
fríðust og vitrust].*
beautiful.SUPL and wise.SUPL
'There was then with King Haraldur's company Ragnhildr, daughter of
good King Magnús, a most beautiful and most wise woman.'
(1275, Morkin.569)

Thus it seems reasonable to assume that the placement of a heavy subject in clause-final position is information structurally motivated. I explore the properties of presentational constructions in Old Icelandic in detail in section 8.3.

4.6 Old Icelandic clause structure: an LFG account

In light of the corpus findings presented in this chapter, I propose (75) as the maximal structural possibilities for V2 matrix declaratives in Old Icelandic.



In sections 4.3 and 4.4, I showed that Old Icelandic is clearly a verb-second language, with a fixed structural position for finiteness and a position associated with a discourse function. An endocentrically organised functional projection (IP) is therefore motivated. Matrix declaratives are headed by I, the position of the finite verb, and Spec-IP is the position associated with a grammaticalised discourse function (GDF), as per the principles of structure-function association (see section 2.2.1). Spec-IP can thus be occupied by any information-structurally privileged constituent.²³ In this way, Spec-IP in (75) is the same as in the c-structure I proposed for present-day Icelandic in section 3.1.5. However, a notable difference for Spec-IP in (75) compared to the c-structure for present-day Icelandic is that there is no annotation which allows an expletive to occupy Spec-IP in sentences which lack a topic. This accounts for the fact that topicless sentences (e.g. presentational constructions) in Old Icelandic are typically V1 structures where the prefinite position is unoccupied, as I discussed in section 4.1.1.

Similar to the analysis of present-day Icelandic proposed in section 3.1.5, in the tree for Old Icelandic in (75) the internal structure of I is flat and various arguments and adjuncts may appear here. As in present-day-Icelandic, I assume that the linear order of the daughters of I is flexible and subject to certain constraints, the detail of which is beyond the scope of this study. However, whereas in present-day Icelandic I contains an endocentric VP, in (75) there is no VP; V does not form a constituent with its complement(s). This is in line with the evidence from Faarlund (1990) and Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson (1990) discussed in section 4.1.4 which, on balance, points toward there being no VP constituent in Old Icelandic. Moreover, since there

²³I do not incorporate X-fronting as discussed in section 4.4.2 into the tree in (75), since more research is needed to understand the phenomenon in Old Icelandic.

is no endocentric VP, V is not a c-structure head, and its object is not restricted to a specific complement position. This is in line with the fact that VP-internal word order is known to have been flexible in Old Icelandic, with both OV and VO orders attested (Rögnvaldsson 1996; Hróarsdóttir 1998). The lack of an endocentric VP constituent allows for this flexibility. By present-day Icelandic, VP-internal word order becomes fixed to VO. The change from no VP in (75) to an endocentric VP in the present-day Icelandic tree in section 3.1.5 captures this change.

Having proposed a c-structure for Old Icelandic matrix declaratives, I now return to the issue of configurationality discussed in section 4.1.4. The structure in (75) states that Old Icelandic had an endocentric functional projection (IP) headed by I, the position where finiteness occurs, and that the specifier position of this functional projection (IP) is associated with a discourse function (TOPIC). In this respect, Old Icelandic is similar to present-day Icelandic and can be considered at least somewhat configurational, exhibiting some level of endocentric organisation. However, at the same time (75) lacks an endocentric lexical VP projection, unlike present-day Icelandic, which has a VP.

On the basis of this combination – the presence of an endocentric functional projection and the absence of an endocentric VP – one can claim that Old Icelandic was certainly less strongly configurational than present-day Icelandic, specifically concerning the domain after the finite verb. However, given the presence of an endocentric functional projection, one can firmly reject Faarlund's (1990) claim that Old Icelandic was non-configurational; in terms of the typological configurationality scale mentioned in section 2.1.1, Old Icelandic is relatively configurational.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I presented the findings from various corpus-based investigations of Old Icelandic clause structure. In section 4.3, I showed that the presence/absence of a sentence-initial conjunction interacts with verb position: in sentences introduced by a conjunction (CCs), V2 was more frequently attested, at the expense of V1. One possible explanation was given for this observation, namely that V1 order in declaratives is often employed as a discourse-cohesion strategy (narrative inversion V1). The use of a sentence-initial conjunction is another strategy for this. As such, I suggested that the lower frequency of V1 in CCs is because its motivation

as a discourse cohesion strategy is less strong in such contexts, given the presence of a sentence-initial conjunction which serves the same purpose. With respect to V1 in general, it was shown that only a small fraction of the V1 declaratives in IcePaHC involve pronoun incorporation, are genuinely subjectless or are presentational constructions. The vast majority are in fact of the narrative inversion V1 type. Strikingly, it was observed in section 4.3.3 that narrative inversion V1 is no more frequent in narrative than non-narrative texts, contra the standard claim in the literature.

I also examined the nature of the clause-initial prefinite position in Old Icelandic V1 declaratives. It was confirmed that subjects and adjuncts are the most commonly prefinite functions (section 4.4.1). I also examined V2 sentences where the clause-initial prefinite position is occupied by a non-phrasal category (section 4.4.2), which are at least superficially similar to the Stylistic Fronting phenomenon in modern Icelandic. The corpus findings showed that by far the most frequently fronted non-phrasal category is negation. This observation I related to the Accessibility Hierarchy proposed for Stylistic Fronting in modern Icelandic (Maling 1990). Moreover, it was shown that the position of negation as the highest ranked category in the hierarchy holds for Old Icelandic sentences with X-fronting. Strikingly, many of the examples of X-fronting were observed to have a subject in the immediately postfinite position. This contrasts with standard accounts of Stylistic Fronting in modern Icelandic, which state that the operation is only possible in clauses which have a 'subject gap' (i.e. have a late subject or no subject at c-structure).

In section 4.5, I examined the positional distribution of subjects. It was observed that subjects overall occur just as frequently in postfinite position as in the prefinite position in Old Icelandic, in line with a comparable finding by Booth et al. (2017). It was shown that topical subjects are more likely to occur in either the prefinite or immediately prefinite position, in line with the assumption that the prefinite position is a topic position, and the fact that the narrative inversion V1 construction allows for immediately postfinite topical subjects. Syntactically heavy subjects were shown to most frequently occur in postfinite position, in line with previous claims regarding the interaction between word order and syntactic weight. However, heavy subjects were observed to occur more frequently in the immediately postfinite position than in a later postfinite position, contra previous claims that heavy subjects occur most frequently in clause-final position. It was suggested

that, besides syntactic weight, the information-structural properties of heavy subjects are an important factor in their preferred position.

In section 4.6, I proposed an annotated c-structure tree for the structure of the clause in Old Icelandic. This structure has a functional projection (IP) – in line with the fact that Old Icelandic is a verb-second language with a fixed structural position for the finite verb and an established topic position – but lacks an endocentric VP, in contrast to present-day Icelandic. Based on these assumptions, I outlined my own stance on the configurational debate, claiming that Old Icelandic is relatively configurational from a typological perspective, but somewhat less configurational than present-day Icelandic (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Chapter 5

The expletive *það*

In this study, I differentiate between three types of *það*:

1. Anaphoric *það*, e.g. (1).
2. Cataphoric *það*, e.g. (2).
3. Expletive *það*, e.g. (3).

(1) [Þetta andlit]_i, ég hafði einhvern tíma séð það_i
DEM.ACC face.ACC I.NOM have.PST one time see.PST.PTCP DEM.ACC
áður...
before
‘This face, I had seen it before one time...’ (2008, Ofsi.258)

(2) Það_i veit ég [að þér leið ekki alltaf vel þegar
EXPL know.PRS I.NOM COMP you.DAT feel.PST NEG always well when
þú varst lítill drengur]_i.
you.NOM be.PST little boy
‘I know it that you did not always feel well when you were a little boy.’
(2008, Mamma.841)

(3) Það var dansað í gær.
EXPL be.PST dance.PASS.PTCP yesterday
‘It was danced yesterday.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 266)

Assuming this three-way distinction, I classify any *það* which is neither anaphorically nor cataphorically referential as ‘expletive’.

Besides referentiality, another property which sets expletive *það* apart is the fact that the expletive does not inflect for case, whereas both anaphoric *það* and cataphoric *það* do; see section 2.4.2 for an example of cataphoric *það* with genitive case marking (*þess*). This study is concerned with cataphoric and expletive *það*. I

discuss cataphoric *það* in Chapter 6. In this chapter, I outline the key properties of expletive *það*.

The development of expletives is a diachronic phenomenon which Icelandic shares with the rest of Germanic. Expletives are well attested across all present-day Germanic languages; for an overall survey, see Vikner (1995). Unlike certain Germanic languages, e.g. English, Dutch and Danish, the standard assumption is that Icelandic has one main form which functions as an expletive, *það*, formally identical to the 3SG.NT referential pronoun/demonstrative, see (1) and (2) above. This is illustrated in the Icelandic sentences in (4) and their English equivalents in (5).

- (4) a. **Það** fór að skyggja.
EXPL begin.PST to become-dusk.INF
'It began to become dusk.' (1907, Leysing.1461)
- b. **Það** var töluverður snjór yfir öllu.
EXPL be.PST considerable.NOM snow.NOM over everything
'There was a considerable amount of snow over everything.'
(2008, Ofsi.772)
- (5) a. **It** began to get dark.
- b. **There** was a considerable amount of snow over everything.

The examples in (5) demonstrate the systematic distribution in English of the *it*-type and *there*-type expletive in weather predicate and presentational constructions respectively, two select expletive contexts. By contrast, in the Icelandic data in (4) there is no such distinction in form, and *það* appears in both weather predicate and presentational constructions.¹

Nevertheless, there is in fact a second form which can serve as an expletive in present-day Icelandic: *hann*, formally identical to the 3SG.MASC personal pronoun.² Expletive *hann* typically appears as an alternative to *það* in weather predicate constructions (Barðdal 2015; Eythórssón & Sigurðardóttir 2016), e.g. (6).

¹As I show in Chapter 8, these construction-specific patterns of *it*-type and *there*-type expletives in Icelandic and English apply specifically to the present-day languages; in earlier stages, the situation is more complicated.

²Eythórssón & Sigurðardóttir (2016) claim that *hann* is not a 'true expletive' but rather a 'quasi-argument' (i.e. a non-referential argument). I discuss this distinction in section 5.2.4.

- (6) a. Jörð er allhvít á Suðurnesjum og **hann** snjóar enn.
 earth be.PRS all-white on Suðurnes and EXPL snow.PRS still
 ‘The ground is completely white at Suðurness and still it snows.’
 (Víkurfrettir, 16. Nóvember 2012)³
- b. **Hann** rignir og rignir á Suðurlandi.
 EXPL rain.PRS and rain.PRS on Suðurland
 ‘It rains and rains in Suðurland.’
 (Dagblaðið Vísir, 144. tölublað, 28.06.1983)⁴

This study focuses on the historical development of expletive *það*. Where relevant, I also draw comparisons between *það* and *hann*.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: in section 5.1, I outline my classification schema for the types of expletive construction in which *það* occurs, with respect to present-day Icelandic as well as older stages of the language. In section 5.2, I discuss certain properties exhibited by expletive *það*. Finally, in section 5.3 I review the status of expletive *það* in the history of Icelandic according to previous studies. Section 5.4 summarises the main points of the chapter.

5.1 Types of expletive construction

It is well known that Icelandic exhibits a particularly diverse range of construction types which can feature expletive *það* (for an overview, see Thráinsson 2007: 310-12). In this section, I outline my classification schema for these expletive construction types. This involves different distinctions than those employed by Thráinsson (2007: 310-12), and takes into account data from both present-day and historical Icelandic. I include all construction types in which *það* is plausibly expletive in the basic sense outlined at the beginning of this chapter. As such, my classification includes certain construction types which other authors do not analyse as an expletive context.

I treat the classification of expletive constructions on two levels, on the basis of primarily structural features. Firstly, at a macro-level, I distinguish between three broad types of expletive construction:

³<http://m.vf.is/frettir/alhvit-jord-og-snjoar-enn/1621> [last accessed 06.08.2018].

⁴http://timarit.is/view_page_init.jsp?issId=189415&lang=4 [last accessed 06.08.2018].

1. Subjectless constructions.
2. Presentational constructions.
3. Extraction constructions.

Subjectless constructions are identifiable by their lack of a constituent at c-structure which maps to the *SUBJ* function (see section 2.2.1). Presentational constructions are those which have a postfinite non-topical noun phrase which maps to the *SUBJ* function.⁵ Extraction constructions are those where a constituent has been extracted from an embedded clause to occupy a position in a matrix clause with *það* and a copular verb.

At the micro-level, I implement a finer-grained classification which recognises eleven construction types in which an expletive *það* can appear. I reconcile this micro-level classification with the three macro-categories as outlined in Table 5.1. Each macro-category captures a number of micro-categories which are identifiable by the presence/absence of a further set of features. The micro-categories within each of the three macro-categories are detailed in sections 5.1.1-5.1.3.

Macro-category	Micro-category
Subjectless construction	Morphologically active Morphologically passive Adjectival
Presentational construction	Existential Transitive active Transitive passive Unergative Unaccusative Middle
Extraction construction	Cleft Scene-setting

Table 5.1: Two levels of classification for expletive construction types

⁵I show evidence for the status of the postfinite noun phrase in Icelandic presentational constructions as a subject in section 8.1.2.

5.1.1 Subjectless constructions

As already mentioned, the subjectless macro-category is distinguished by the absence of a constituent at c-structure which maps to the *SUBJ* function. Within this, I recognise three micro-categories which are distinguished on the basis of predicate type, as outlined in Table 5.2. The syntactic properties of these types of subjectless construction are discussed in detail in Chapter 7; here I provide a descriptive outline of the various types.

Micro-category	Predicate		
	active morphology	passive morphology	adjectival
Morphologically active	+	-	-
Morphologically passive	-	+	-
Adjectival	-	-	+

Table 5.2: Subjectless constructions, micro-categories by features

5.1.1.1 Morphologically active subjectless constructions

The first subjectless micro-category which I recognise comprises constructions whose predicate has active morphology, e.g. (7)-(10). The finite verb consistently has default 3SG marking. As I show in section 5.2.3, *það* does not qualify as a subject in these contexts.

- (7) **Það** var að vora.
EXPL be.PST.3SG to become-spring.INF
'It was becoming spring.' (2008, Mamma.1066)
- (8) **Það** á að spara með þessu.
EXPL ought.3SG to save.INF with DEM
'One ought to be sparing with this.' (1985, Margsgaga.232)
- (9) **Það** er nú að segja frá Hrafn.
EXPL be.PRS.3SG now to say.INF from Hrafn
'One is now to speak of Hrafn.' (1350, Finnbogi.1394)

- (10) **Það** er varla talandi við hann.
 EXPL be.PRS.3SG hardly talk.PRS.PTCP with him
 ‘One can hardly talk to him.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 310)

This micro-category groups predicates with reference to the weather or season like that in (7) with other morphologically active predicates, e.g. (8)-(10). This goes against many studies which isolate weather predicates as a distinct category which license ‘quasi-arguments’, i.e. a special type of non-referential argument. I discuss the notion of quasi-arguments in section 5.2.4, where I argue for rejection of the category in relation to Icelandic *það*.

The construction in (8) features two verbs: a modal auxiliary and a main verb. ‘Impersonal modal’ is a commonly used label for such constructions (Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009; Thráinsson 2007). Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009) claim that the following modals participate in this type of construction as predicates of the higher clause with respect to modern Icelandic.

1. *þurfa*, ‘be necessary to’
2. *mega*, ‘have permission to’
3. *eiga*, ‘have the obligation to’
4. *verða*, ‘have to’
5. *skulu*, ‘have to’;
6. *bera*, ‘have the moral obligation to’
7. *vera*, ‘have to’

The construction in (9) features a modal expression – *vera að* + infinitive – and is particularly frequent in older stages of Icelandic. I refer to this type as the ‘periphrastic modal’ construction.

The construction in (10) is a further type of subjectless construction which involves modality. The main verb is in present participle form and this construction is thus commonly referred to as the ‘impersonal present participle’ construction (e.g. Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009; Thráinsson 2007). For early discussion of the construction, see Sigurðsson (1989: 162-3). Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009) note that the impersonal present participle construction involves a modal evaluation of a hypothetical event, i.e. a speaker judgement that something is or is not possible.

5.1.1.2 Morphologically passive subjectless constructions

The second subjectless micro-category which I recognise comprises constructions whose predicate has passive morphology, e.g. (11)-(12). The passive auxiliary consistently has default 3SG marking and the passive participle has default SG.NT marking.

- (11) **Það** var dansað alla nóttina.
EXPL be.PST.3SG dance.PASS.PTCP.SG.NT all night.DEF
'It was danced all night.' (Thráinsson 2007: 266)
- (12) **Það** var lamið stúlkuna í klessu.
EXPL be.PST.3SG beat.PASS.PTCP.SG.NT girl.ACC.SG.DEF in mess
'The girl was badly beaten up.' (Thráinsson 2007: 274-7)

The difference between (11) and (12) concerns the absence of a postfinite non-nominative argument in (11) and the presence of one in (12). Since treatment by Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002), the construction type in (12) has prompted much debate in the literature and is referred to as the 'New Impersonal' (Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002) or the 'New Passive' (Eythórsson 2008; Jónsson 2009). For the sake of neutrality, I refer to this construction type as the 'New Impersonal/Passive' throughout. It is reckoned to be a development which has emerged over the course of the last fifty years approximately (see Thráinsson 2007: 273-4).

As mentioned in section 2.3, a morphologically passive predicate may be syntactically active (via impersonalization) or passive (via passivization). I explore the syntactic status of morphologically passive subjectless constructions like (11)-(12) in Chapter 7.

5.1.1.3 Adjectival subjectless constructions

The third subjectless micro-category which I recognise are constructions which feature an adjectival predicate, e.g. (13). The copular verb has default 3SG marking, and the adjective has default SG.NT marking.

- (13) **Það** er allt svo hljótt í morgunblænum.
EXPL be.PRS.3SG all so quiet.SG.NT in morning-atmosphere
'It is all so quiet in the morning atmosphere.' (2008, Mamma.1735)

For some authors, constructions like (13) qualify as a 'quasi-argument' context,

although as mentioned, the quasi-argument category is not one I recognise myself for Icelandic *það* (see section 5.2.4 for discussion).

5.1.2 Presentational constructions

The unifying feature of presentational constructions at the macro-level is the presence of a postfinite non-topical noun phrase which maps to the *SUBJ* function. I discuss the properties of these constructions – including evidence for the status of the postfinite noun phrase as a subject – in Chapter 8. Here, I outline the various micro-categories which I recognise as presentational constructions, as summarised in Table 5.3.

Micro-category	Predicate					
	copular	transitive active	transitive passive	unergative	unaccusative	middle
Existential	+	-	-	-	-	-
Transitive active	-	+	-	-	-	-
Transitive passive	-	-	+	-	-	-
Unergative	-	-	-	+	-	-
Unaccusative	-	-	-	-	+	-
Middle	-	-	-	-	-	+

Table 5.3: Presentational constructions, micro-categories by features

5.1.2.1 Existential presentational constructions

The existential construction type is distinguished from the other presentational micro-categories by the fact that its predicate features a copular verb (*vera* ‘be’; *verða* ‘become’), e.g. (14). I show the postfinite noun phrase in square brackets.

- (14) **Það** var [töluverður snjór] yfir öllu.
 EXPL be.PST.SG considerable.NOM.SG snow.NOM.SG over everything
 ‘There was a considerable amount of snow over everything.’
 (2008, Ofsi.772)

Such constructions are conventionally referred to as ‘existential’ and/or ‘presentational’ constructions. The two terms are often used interchangeably, but I make a distinction. I apply the ‘existential’ label specifically to constructions like (14) whose predicate features a copular verb (*vera* ‘be’/*verða* ‘become’) and which expresses a proposition about the existence of something or the presence of something in a particular context (for a comparable definition of existentials, see Bentley et al. 2015: 1-2; McNally 2011: 1830). ‘Presentational’, meanwhile, is a broader label for constructions with any predicate which ‘present’ a discourse-new referent and which do not necessarily express a proposition about existence.⁶ On these terms, existentials are a subtype of presentational, alongside other subtypes, e.g. those in (15) (discussed below).

- (15) a. **Það** komu nokkrir vopnaðir menn af
 EXPL come.PST.PL some.NOM.PL armed.NOM.PL man.NOM.PL from
 næstu bæjum...
 next farms
 ‘There came some armed men from the nearby farms...’ (2008, Ofsi.634)
- b. **Það** rísu upp [tveir nýir kaupmenn].
 EXPL stand.PST.PL up two.NOM new.NOM.PL merchant.NOM.PL
 ‘There stood up two new merchants.’ (1888, Grimur.126)

Non-existential presentational constructions like those in (15) are treated as separate micro-categories according to the specific argument-structural properties of the predicate: see sections 5.1.2.2-5.1.2.6 for details.

It should be pointed out that Icelandic also exhibits presentational constructions where the postfinite subject noun phrase is not a discourse-new referent which will be taken up in the following context but is weakly referring, e.g. (16).

- (16) **Það** kæmi bara [tóm þvæla].
 EXPL come.PST.SBJV.SG only empty.NOM.SG nonsense.NOM.SG
 ‘Only empty nonsense would come.’ (2008, Mamma.754)

Structurally, examples like (16) still qualify as presentational constructions on the definition given above, since they have a postfinite non-topical noun phrase which maps to the SUBJ function.

⁶This is the same distinction between existentials and presentationals as that drawn for English in Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 1390).

5.1.2.2 Transitive active presentational constructions

The transitive active presentational type comprises constructions like (17).

- (17) **Það** hafði reyndar [enginn lifandi maður] í
 EXPL have.PST.SG in fact none.NOM.SG living.NOM.SG man.NOM.SG in
 þeim sóknum séð Bjarna.
 DEM parish see.PST.PTCP Bjarni.ACC
 ‘In fact no living man in that parish had seen Bjarni.’
 (1888, Vordraumur.38)

Such constructions are commonly referred to in the literature as ‘Transitive Expletive Constructions’ (TECs); see Vangsnes (2002: 44-5) for discussion. Due to the fact that expletive *það* occurs with transitive verbs in both the active and passive, I make the active/passive distinction explicit at the micro-level; see section 5.1.2.3 for the passive variety.

The grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions like (17) sets Icelandic apart from Mainland Scandinavian; such constructions are ungrammatical in Norwegian, Swedish and Danish (as well as English), cf. (18) and (19) (Maling 1988: 168).

- (18) **Það** borðaði [maður] búðing.
 EXPL eat.PST man.NOM pudding.ACC
 ‘A man ate a pudding.’ (Icelandic)
- (19) ***Det** åt [en man] en pudding.
 EXPL eat.PST a man a pudding
 Intended: ‘A man ate a pudding.’ (Swedish)

Transitive active presentational constructions are however possible in German and Dutch, e.g. (20) and (21) respectively (my examples).

- (20) **Es** hat [jemand] mein Fahrrad gestohlen.
 EXPL have.PRS somebody.NOM my.ACC bike.ACC steal.PST.PTCP
 ‘Someone has stolen my bike.’ (German)
- (21) **Er** heeft [iemand] mijn fiets gestolen.
 EXPL have.PRS somebody my bike steal.PST.PTCP
 ‘Someone has stolen my bike.’ (Dutch)

The grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions has been used to make claims about expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic with respect to

its non-subject status, as I discuss in section 5.2.3.

5.1.2.3 Transitive passive presentational constructions

Expletive *það* also occurs in presentational constructions where the predicate is a transitive passive verb, e.g. (22).

- (22) **Það** voru gerðir út [hlaupastrákar].
EXPL be.PST.PL send.PASS.PTCP.PL out running-boy.NOM.PL
'Running boys were sent out.' (2008, Ofsi.556)

I refer to this type as the transitive passive presentational construction.⁷ Due to this being a passivized construction, the postfinite subject noun phrase bears a proto-patientive thematic role (e.g. Patient/Theme, see section 2.1.3).

Transitive passive presentational constructions look structurally similar to – but are distinct from – the New Impersonal/Passive construction discussed under section 5.1.1.2 and shown again here in (23).

- (23) **Það** var lamið [stúlkuna] í klessu.
EXPL be.PST.SG beat.PASS.PTCP girl.ACC.SG.DEF in mess
'The girl was badly beaten up.' (Thráinsson 2007: 274-7)

In the New Impersonal/Passive, the postfinite noun phrase preserves its original case marking as an object (here accusative) and can have a definite interpretation; in the transitive passive presentational construction in (22), the postfinite noun phrase cannot typically have a definite interpretation and is marked for the same case as it would have in the canonical subject position (in this context nominative).

5.1.2.4 Unergative presentational constructions

Expletive *það* also occurs in presentational constructions where the predicate is an unergative verb, e.g. (24).

- (24) **Það** rísu upp [tveir nýir kaupmenn].
EXPL stand.PST.PL up two.NOM new.NOM.PL merchant.NOM.PL
'Two new merchants stood up.' (1888, Grimur.126)

⁷Thráinsson (2007: 273-4) labels these constructions 'passive intransitives', but in my view it is more appropriate to treat them as transitive constructions which have been passivized, hence my label 'transitive passive'.

5.1.2.5 Unaccusative presentational constructions

There are also presentational constructions with expletive *það* where the predicate is an unaccusative verb, e.g. (25). Unaccusative verbs typically take a Theme argument as their subject, and as such the postfinite subject noun phrase here is a Theme rather than an Agent.

- (25) **Það** komu nokkrir vopnaðir menn af næstu
EXPL come.PST.PL some.NOM.PL armed.NOM.PL man.NOM.PL from next
bæjum...
farms
'There came some armed men from the nearby farms...' (2008, Ofsi.634)

5.1.2.6 Middle presentational constructions

The final presentational micro-category features a predicate which is a middle verb in *-st*, e.g. (26).⁸

- (26) **Það** sáust [loftsjónir].
EXPL see.PST.PL.MID sky-vision.NOM.PL
'Sky visions were seen.' (1882, Torfhildur.137.1943)

The difference between middles and passives in Icelandic concerns the status of the Agent argument. In both types of construction, the Agent has been demoted; the difference is that in passives it can be mentioned via an additional prepositional agentive *by*-phrase, but in middles it cannot, e.g. (27)-(29) (Thráinsson 2007: 289). (27) shows an active sentence; (28) is the passive equivalent with an optional *by*-phrase, and (29) is the middle construction where the *by*-phrase is ruled out.

- (27) Útlendingar veiddu laxana í Laxá.
foreigners catch.PST salmon.DEF in Lax-river
'Foreigners caught the salmon in the Lax River.' (active)
- (28) Laxarnir voru veiddir í Laxá (af útlendingum).
salmon.DEF be.PST catch.PASS.PTCP in Lax-river by foreigners
'The salmon were caught in the Lax River (by foreigners).' (passive)

⁸Not all verbs in *-st* qualify as 'true' middles. The *-st* suffix can also mark verbs of reflexive or reciprocal meaning: e.g. *klæðast* 'dress oneself'; *bítast* 'bite each other'. I restrict this category to verbs which are truly middles.

- (29) Laxarnir veiddust í Laxá (*af útlendingum).
 salmon.DEF catch.PST.MID in Lax-river by foreigners
 ‘The salmon were caught in the Lax River.’ (middle)

5.1.3 Extraction constructions

The extraction macro-category is distinguished by the fact that *það* occurs in a copular construction with *vera* ‘be’ and an XP which has been extracted from an embedded clause. The macro-category captures two micro-categories: one type can be considered the traditional cleft construction; the other type is what I label as the scene-setting construction. The two micro-categories are distinguished by an information-structural property, specifically whether the extracted XP is focused or not, see Table 5.4.

Micro-category	Extracted XP is focused
Cleft construction	+
Scene-setting construction	–

Table 5.4: Extraction constructions, micro-categories by features

The development of cleft constructions in Icelandic is beyond the scope of this thesis, which focuses on subjectless and presentational constructions. However, the scene-setting type is relevant to the investigation presented in Chapter 6 and so I discuss it there.

5.1.3.1 Cleft constructions

An example of the cleft construction type is shown in (30).⁹ The matrix clause predicate features a copular verb *vera* ‘be’ and an XP which has been extracted from the embedded clause, cf. the non-clefted equivalent in (31). In present-day Icelandic, the embedded clause is typically introduced by *sem*, though in the historical data *sem*, *er*, and *að* are all possible.

⁹ Unlike other Germanic languages such as English and German, Icelandic does not exhibit pseudo-clefts (*wh*-clefts), which are ungrammatical:

(30) "Pabbi minn er verkamaður", hló Bylgja, "það er
 dad my be.PRS labourer laugh.PST Bylgja EXPL be.PRS
 [pabbi þinn] sem er heildsali".
 dad.NOM your.NOM REL be.PRS wholesaler.NOM
 'My dad is a labourer', laughed Bylgja, 'it is your dad who is a wholesaler.'
 ' (1985, Sagan.126)

(31) [Pabbi þinn] er heildsali.
 dad.NOM your.NOM be.PRS wholesaler.NOM
 'Your dad is a wholesaler.'

5.1.3.2 Scene-setting constructions

The second extraction micro-category which I recognise are constructions where – as in cleft constructions – an XP is extracted from an embedded clause to occur in a matrix clause with a copular predicate and expletive *það*. Unlike the cleft construction just discussed, in this type the extracted XP does not bear focus; rather it qualifies in information-structural terms as a scene-setter. I provide an example in (32), alongside the non-extracted equivalent which I construct in (33).

(32) Það var [einn morgun snemma] að Grettir kom til
 EXPL be.PST one.ACC morning.ACC early COMP Grettir came.PST to
 hrossahúss.
 stable
 'It was early one morning that Grettir came to a stable.' (1310, Grettir.89)

(33) Grettir kom til hrossahúss [einn morgun snemma].
 Grettir came.PST to stable one.ACC morning.ACC early
 'Grettir came to a stable early one morning.'

This construction has been previously mentioned by Rögnvaldsson (2002), who considers this type alongside constructions with cataphoric *það* and a clausal

(i) *Hvað María sá var trjádrumbur.
 what María see.PST be.PST log.NOM
 Intended: 'What María saw was a log.' (Thráinsson 2007: 359).

Constructions like (ii) are however grammatical, and loosely correspond to pseudo-clefts exhibited in English and German. This type has been referred to as '*það*-relatives' (Thráinsson 1979: 76).

(ii) Það sem María sá var lítið lamb.
 EXPL REL María see.PST be.PST little lamb
 'What María saw was a little lamb.' (Thráinsson 2007: 359).

argument, see (2) above. I disagree with this implied grouping, since in constructions like (32) the embedded clause does not qualify as a thematic argument of the matrix clause predicate. I instead classify constructions like (32) as a subtype of extraction constructions, alongside cleft constructions (30). This is in line with an analysis proposed by Faarlund (2004: 255), who describes constructions like (34) as a type of cleft construction used to express non-specific time reference.

- (34) þat var eitt haust at hvalr kom út á Vatnsnes
 that was one autumn that whale came out on Vatnsnes
 ‘It happened one autumn that a whale appeared out at Vatnsnes’
 (Korm 206)

So far, I have shown how the scene-setting construction type can be distinguished from cleft constructions and constructions with cataphoric *það* and a clausal argument. A third plausible analysis is that (32) is an existential construction, in which *það* occurs together with a postfinite subject noun phrase in the first clause, in combination with a second adverbial clause extension, an analysis shown in (35).

- (35) Það var [einn morgun] snemma að Grettir kom til
 EXPL be.PST one.ACC morning.ACC early COMP Grettir came.PST to
 hrossahúss.
 stable
 ‘There was one morning early on when Grettir come to a stable.’
 (1310, Grettir.89)

The existential analysis fails on a number of fronts, however. Firstly, the postfinite noun phrase in the matrix clause – *einn morgun* – is marked for accusative case, as is expected for noun phrases functioning as temporal adverbials. If this were an existential construction, one would expect the postfinite noun phrase to be marked for nominative case, since this is the case in which subjects of nominal predicates appear.¹⁰ Secondly, if it were an existential construction in which the embedded clause functions as an adverbial extension, it is not clear why the embedded clause should be introduced by the complementiser *að* rather than an adverbial subordinator such as *þegar* ‘when’, as is consistent for adverbial clauses more generally, e.g. (36), which shows an adverbial clause introduced by *þegar* ‘when’.

¹⁰The properties of existential constructions are outlined in section 5.1.2.1 and discussed in detail in section 8.1.

- (36) Um morguninn [þegar lýsa tók] var mönnum
 about morning.ACC.DEF when get-light.INF begin.PST be.PST men.DAT
 saman stefnt um eyna.
 together summon.PASS.PTCP about island.ACC
 ‘In the morning, when it began to get light, men were summoned together
 from across the island.’ (1310, Grettir.823)

In sum, I have shown that while the example in (32) shows certain superficial similarities with cleft constructions, constructions with a clausal argument, and existential constructions, there is considerable evidence to support my choice to treat this as an independent category.

5.2 Properties of expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic

In this section, I outline various special properties exhibited by expletive *það*. In section 5.2.1, I discuss the positional distribution of the expletive. In section 5.2.2, I discuss its information-structural role. In section 5.2.3, I show that expletive *það* does not qualify as a subject. In section 5.2.4, I discuss the notion of quasi-argument and why I reject it for Icelandic in this study.

5.2.1 Positional distribution

The positional distribution of expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic has received a good deal of attention in generative literature (Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016; Holmberg 2000; Jónsson 1996; Maling 1988; Ottósson 1989; Platzack 1983; Rögnvaldsson 1983, 2002; Sells 2005; Sigurðsson 2007; Thráinsson 2007; Vikner 1995). It is well known that, unlike anaphoric *það* (see (1) above), expletive *það* is positionally restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position.¹¹ In sentences where the clause-initial prefinite position is occupied by a non-subject constituent, there is no *það*, e.g. (37-a), even when a clause-initial prefinite expletive occurs in the same construction with no fronting, e.g. (37-b).

¹¹Note that this restricted positional distribution does not apply to expletive *hann*, which can occur in postfinite position when another constituent is fronted to the prefinite position, thus behaving more like a prototypical subject in its positional distribution (see Barðdal 2015; Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016; Vikner 1995):

- (37) a. Í gær var (*það) dansað.
 yesterday be.PST (*EXPL) dance.PASS.PTCP
 ‘Yesterday it was danced.’
- b. Það var dansað í gær.
 EXPL be.PST dance.PASS.PTCP yesterday
 ‘It was danced yesterday.’

This positional restriction on expletive *það* also holds in yes/no-interrogatives which are V1 structures, e.g. (38) with no expletive.¹²

- (38) Var (*það) dansað í gær?
 be.PST (*EXPL) dance.PASS.PTCP yesterday
 ‘Was it danced yesterday?’

As I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the clause-initial prefinite position in Icelandic (Spec-IP) is associated with a discourse function, and can be characterised as a topic position. It is thus surprising that expletive *það* occurs in this position; as a non-referential element, *það* cannot be a topic. I return to what motivates the occurrence of *það* in this position in section 5.2.2 below, and explore the issue further from a diachronic perspective in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Theoretical accounts of Icelandic clause structure differ in terms of the structural position which the clause-initial expletive is assumed to occupy. As mentioned in section 3.1, many accounts interpret the fact that expletive *það* and topicalization cannot co-occur as evidence that expletive *það* and topicalized constituents occupy the same structural position. Thus, in the single-movement approach of Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson (1990) (see section 3.1.1), expletive *það* occupies Spec-IP, just like topicalized constituents.¹³ In both the uniform and split double-movement

- (i) Þá fór hann loksins að rigna.
 then begin.PST EXPL at last to rain.INF
 ‘Then at last it began to rain.’

¹²The expletive is however not positionally restricted in this way in cleft constructions:

- (i) Var það í ruslaföttuni sem nemendurnir fundu smjörið?
 be.PST EXPL in rubbish-bin.DEF REL students.DEF find.PST butter.DEF
 ‘Was it in the rubbish bin that the students found the butter?’

Since cleft constructions are not a focus of this thesis, I do not consider this further.

¹³Other authors who have proposed that expletive *það* occurs in Spec-IP rather than Spec-CP are

approach (e.g. Sigurðsson 1989 and Sigurðsson 1990 respectively; sections 3.1.2-3.1.3), expletive *það* and topicalized constituents occupy Spec-CP.

In the LFG account by Sells (2005) (section 3.1.4), the expletive is assumed to occupy Spec-IP, which in this view is both a topic position and the canonical subject position. The structure assumed for expletive-initial and topic-initial matrix clauses is thus the same as in the single-movement approach by Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson (1990). Positing that the expletive occurs in the canonical subject position is in line with Sells' claim that it bears the *SUBJ* function. Like Sells, I assume that Icelandic matrix clauses are rooted in I, and that both topicalized constituents – including topical subjects – and expletive *það* occupy IP (see section 3.1.5). However, as I discuss in detail in section 5.2.3, I do not agree with Sells that expletive *það* is a subject; it is not assigned a grammatical function but is a structural placeholder for Spec-IP (the topic position) in sentences which lack a topic.

5.2.2 Information-structural role

Assuming that the clause-initial prefinite position in Icelandic is a topic position, it has been claimed that expletive *það* – which is restricted to this position – serves an information-structural function in signalling a V2 sentence which lacks a topic (Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990: 29, Zaenen 1983, Sells 2005). In a notionally similar account, Sigurðsson (2007: 145) claims that the clause-initial expletive cannot be associated with a discourse function and that it signals that the proposition contains either a participant (i.e. argument) which is 'speech event *ABSENT*' (i.e. discourse-new) or that it contains no 'speech event *PRESENT*' (i.e. discourse-old) participant. In this account, the expletive is thus essentially also characterised as a signaller of a topicless sentence. I explore this information-structural role of *það* in the history of Icelandic in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

5.2.3 Expletive *það* is not a subject

The status of expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic with respect to subjecthood has been widely discussed in generative literature (e.g. Thráinsson 1979: 480-1; Platzack 1983; Maling 1988; Sells 2005; Sigurðsson 2007). Three types of

Ottósson (1989) and Jónsson (1996).

behaviour have been used to argue for and against the status of expletive *það* as a subject:

1. The positional distribution of expletive *það*.
2. The grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions with expletive *það*.
3. The possibility for expletive *það* to undergo ‘raising’.

I review the various analyses of *það* which have been proposed on the basis of these three types of behaviour, and propose my own analysis.

In section 5.2.1, I showed that expletive *það* is restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position. The restricted distribution of expletive *það* sets Icelandic apart from Mainland Scandinavian languages such as Swedish, where the expletive *det* is not positionally restricted. In Swedish, the expletive appears in the immediately postfinite position in sentences with topicalization, e.g. (40), and also in yes/no-interrogatives which are V1 sentences, e.g. (41), thus behaving like a prototypical subject in a Germanic V2 language.

(39) **Det** dansades i går.
EXPL dance.PST.PASS yesterday
‘It was danced yesterday.’

(40) I går dansades **det**.
yesterday dance.PST.PASS EXPL
‘Yesterday it was danced.’

(41) Dansades **det** i går?
dance.PST.PASS EXPL yesterday
‘Was it danced yesterday?’

This contrast has been cited on many occasions to support the claim that Swedish expletive *det* qualifies as a subject, whereas Icelandic expletive *það* does not; see section 3.3.1.1, where I showed how Icelandic subjects invert with the verb in topicalization contexts and yes/no-interrogatives. An early account is Thráinsson (1979: 480-1), who claims on the basis of this evidence that the Icelandic expletive does not qualify as a subject but is instead a ‘surface adjustment particle’ which serves to satisfy V2. Other authors who use the restricted positional distribution of expletive *það* to claim that it is not a subject are Platzack (1983), Maling (1988) and Sigurðsson (2007).

The German expletive *es* which occurs in presentational constructions and impersonal passives is similarly restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position and has also been claimed to be a placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position, rather than a subject (e.g. Berman 2003: 65, Theiler & Bouma 2012). Moreover, Theiler & Bouma (2012) claim that expletive *es* in such contexts serves to signal a topicless sentence, i.e. the same function that is standardly claimed for expletive *það* in Icelandic (see section 5.2.2).

The second type of evidence which has been used to support the view that expletive *það* is not a subject is the grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions with *það* in present-day Icelandic (see section 5.1.2.2). Platzack (1983) argued that the grammaticality/ungrammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions in a language follows from the status of the expletive as a subject/non-subject. This rests on the assumption that both Swedish and Icelandic have a unique subject position. Transitive active presentational constructions have both an expletive and a postfinite noun phrase which qualifies as a logical subject (i.e. is the argument with the most prominent thematic role, see Bresnan et al. 2015: 330). Platzack's claim is that transitive active presentational constructions are only grammatical in a language whose expletive does not qualify as a subject, since then the unique subject position is available for the logical subject. By contrast, in languages whose expletive is a subject, the expletive occupies the subject position and so there is no position available to the logical subject; transitive active presentational constructions are thus ruled out. On the basis of data like (42) (taken from Maling 1988: 168), it follows in this view that Icelandic *það* does not qualify as a subject, whereas Swedish *det* does.¹⁴

- (42) a. **Það** borðaði maður þúðing.
 EXPL eat.PST man.NOM pudding.ACC
 'A man ate a pudding.' (Icelandic)
- b. ***Det** åt en man en pudding.
 EXPL eat.PST a man a pudding
 Intended: 'A man ate a pudding.' (Swedish)

Although I do not assume that Icelandic has a unique subject position, and that subjects can occupy Spec-IP or occur within I (see section 3.1.5), I still interpret

¹⁴For further discussion of this idea, see Maling (1988).

the grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions in Icelandic as evidence that expletive *það* is not subject. This rests on the claim that the postfinite noun phrase ('logical subject') in Icelandic presentational constructions qualifies as a syntactic subject, as argued by Zaenen et al. (2017) and discussed in section 8.1. Assuming that the postfinite noun phrase in a construction like (42-a) is a *SUBJ*, the clause-initial expletive cannot also be a *SUBJ*, since this would violate functional uniqueness, which does not allow two distinct appearances of the same grammatical function in a single f-structure (see section 2.1.2).

The two behavioural properties discussed so far – positional distribution and the grammaticality of transitive active presentational constructions with expletive *það* – point towards the same conclusion: that Icelandic expletive *það* is not a subject, whereas Swedish expletive *det* is. For the third behavioural property relevant to this discussion – the possibility for expletive *það* to undergo raising – the data and previous interpretations are less clear-cut. In section 3.3.2.4, it was shown that Icelandic subjects can be raised, unlike non-subjects. As such, if expletive *það* can be raised, then this would support its status as a subject.

Thráinsson (1979: 481-2) states that it is possible for some speakers to raise *það* in subject-to-object raising constructions, e.g. (43)-(46), though the presence of *það* is not obligatory in such contexts.¹⁵

- (43) Jón telur (það) hafa rignt.
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL have.INF rain.PST.PTCP
 'Jón believes it to have rained.'
- (44) Jón telur (það) vera mýs í baðkerinu.
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL be.INF mice.NOM in bathtub.DEF
 'Jón believes there to be mice in the bathtub.'
- (45) Jón telur (það) hafa verið dansað á skipinu.
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL have.INF be.PST.PTCP dance.PASS.PTCP on ship.DEF
 'Jón believes there to have been dancing on the ship.'
- (46) Jón telur (það) vera líklegt að María sé fifl.
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL be.INF likely COMP María be.PRS.SBJV fool
 'Jón believes it to be likely that María is a fool.'

¹⁵Other examples where expletive *það* can undergo subject-to-object raising are provided by Andrews (1990a: 173); see also Platzack (1983) for discussion.

Thráinsson (1979: 481) claims that many speakers prefer no expletive in constructions like (43)-(46), and uses this to make a diachronic claim that the type with the expletive represents an innovation. This leads him to suggest that a change is underway in modern Icelandic concerning the function of *það*, namely that it is changing from a positionally restricted prefinite expletive ('surface adjustment particle' in his terms) to a subject. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I will show why this diachronic claim is not supported by the historical Icelandic data.

In contrast to the possibility of expletive *það* to undergo raising in constructions with intransitive predicates as in (43)-(46), subject-to-object raising structures with transitive predicates are bad, with or without the expletive, as shown in (47) (Thráinsson 1979: 482).

- (47) a. *Jón telur **það** hafa einhver étið
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL have.INF someone.NOM eat.PST.PTCP
 hákarlinn.
 shark.DEF
 Intended: 'Jón believes there has someone eaten the shark.'
- b. *Jón telur hafa einhver étið hákarlinn.
 Jón believe.PRS have.INF someone.NOM eat.PST.PTCP shark.DEF
 Intended: 'Jón believes there has someone eaten the shark.'

Overall, the data indicates that raising structures with *það* are acceptable for at least some speakers of Icelandic with intransitive predicates, but not with transitive predicates.

In sum, two of the three types of evidence – positional distribution and transitive active presentational constructions – indicate that expletive *það* does not qualify as a subject. The main evidence which has been used to claim that the expletive is a subject is the possibility for it to undergo raising. However, as shown above, the expletive can only be raised in certain contexts – e.g. with intransitive predicates – and even in those contexts it is optional. The evidence in favour of subject status is thus relatively weak, in comparison with the evidence against subject status. Throughout this study, I assume that expletive *það* is not a subject in present-day Icelandic. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, I show how the possibility for *það* to undergo raising in certain contexts in present-day Icelandic can be accounted for as a reflex of its at least partial subject status in earlier stages of the language.

5.2.4 The status of the quasi-argument category in Icelandic

‘Quasi-arguments’ represent a special category of subject which has become widely assumed in mainstream generative grammar since its first introduction by Chomsky (1981: 324-7). The category has been suggested for Icelandic in relation to expletive *það*, e.g. Vikner (1995: 224-7), and so merits discussion here. For those authors who recognise this category, quasi-arguments are defined as distinct from (true) expletives. Throughout this discussion, where reference to this distinction is made I will refer to ‘true expletives’ in contrast to ‘quasi-arguments’. As consistent with the wider thesis, I employ ‘expletive’ as an umbrella term for what such authors refer to as ‘true expletives’ and ‘quasi-arguments’.

Chomsky (1981: 324-7) proposed the existence of a distinct category of subject he termed ‘quasi-arguments’, on the basis of two properties: argumenthood and referentiality. In the most neutral terms, quasi-arguments can be characterised as subjects which occur with certain predicates in a non-canonical argument-structural relationship. Chomsky proposed that quasi-arguments are subjects which are non-referential ([–referential]), though nonetheless have argument status ([+argumental]). Quasi-arguments can thus be located in a three-way classification of subject types:

1. Prototypical subjects which are [+argumental, +referential].
2. True expletive subjects which are [–argumental, –referential].
3. Quasi-argumental subjects which are [+ argumental, –referential]

Weather verb constructions represent the classic quasi-argumental context, and the claim that the subject of weather verbs is a quasi-argument recurs throughout much of the literature subsequent to Chomsky (1981) (e.g. Hoekstra 1983; Bennis 1986; Rizzi 1986: 528-9; Vikner 1995: 224). It also underpins the theoretical premises adopted by Falk (1993: 67) in her study of non-referential subjects in the history of Swedish.

As already mentioned, the category of quasi-argument is often adopted for present-day Icelandic in relation to expletive *það* in constructions with weather predicates (henceforth ‘weather-*það*’), e.g. Vikner (1995: 224-7). However, it has been observed that Icelandic weather-*það* exhibits messy behaviour with respect to the various tests by which quasi-arguments are typically identified (e.g. Mohr 2005: 176-8; Vikner 1995: 226-7). Moreover, positing a quasi-argumental *það*

in Icelandic contradicts the assumption that expletive *það* does not qualify as a subject – of any kind. I showed evidence for the claim that expletive *það* is not a subject in present-day Icelandic in section 5.2.3; there I argued that it is not assigned a grammatical function at all but is rather a structural placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position in sentences which lack a topic. In this view, expletive *það* is an element which is present at c-structure, but is absent at f-structure; I showed how this type of expletive can be modelled in LFG in section 2.5.2. Since expletive *það* is not a subject, I reject the claim that it qualifies as a quasi-argument in certain contexts.

5.3 Expletive *það* in diachrony: previous accounts

Relatively little has been said about the status of expletive *það* in earlier stages of Icelandic, and even less about the exact development whereby it emerged in the various construction types outlined for present-day Icelandic in section 5.1. Three previous studies on the Icelandic development exist: Hróarsdóttir (1998), Rögnvaldsson (2002) and Viðarsson (2009). In addition, Faarlund (1990) investigates the status of expletives in Old Norse/Icelandic and later stages of Norwegian and his study is thus relevant for the early Icelandic diachrony. Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir (2016) also comment on the historical status of expletive *það* in their survey of the argument structure of weather verbs in the history of Icelandic. I review the findings of these studies in this section.

A key limitation of the previous studies is that they are restricted to certain centuries, particular genres of text and/or certain constructions types, and therefore offer a snapshot of the full diachronic development. Moreover, for methodological reasons these studies only count the number of sentences which feature the expletive, without taking into account the overall number of contexts in which the expletive could occur, including those where it is absent. As I outline in sections 7.2 and 8.2, the IcePaHC annotation scheme allows me to take this extra level of information into account, and in turn, to assess the actual strength of preference for the expletive.

5.3.1 Status in Old Icelandic

Expletive *það* is generally considered to be a relatively recent development in the history of Icelandic. Unlike anaphoric *það* and cataphoric *það*, expletive *það* is claimed to be overwhelmingly absent in older stages of the language (e.g. Eythórs-son 2008; Faarlund 1990: 66).¹⁶ A particularly comprehensive account regarding the historical development of expletive *það* is Rögnvaldsson (2002). This study presents an investigation which looks at 16,583 instances of the lexical form *það* (including anaphorical, cataphoric and expletive types) in a corpus of major Old Icelandic narrative texts. Among these instances, Rögnvaldsson finds no examples of *það* in many of the classic expletive contexts known from present-day Icelandic, thus supporting the claim that it is absent in Old Icelandic; *það* is observed to be wholly absent in weather-verb constructions, existential constructions and impersonal passives.

Rögnvaldsson (2002: 20-1) does however find that expletive *það* is already attested in Old Icelandic in what I call the scene-setting construction type (see section 5.1.3.2). Some of his examples are shown in (48).

- (48) a. **Það** var einn dag [er Gunnar gekk frá Lögberg].
EXPL be.PST one day COMP Gunnar go.PST from Law-rock
'It was one day that Gunnar went from the law rock.'
- b. **Það** var eitt vor [er Þorvaldur fór til Arnarfjaðar með
EXPL be.PST one spring COMP Þorvaldur go.PST to Arnarfjörður with
fjölmenni].
many-men
'It was one spring that Þorvaldur went to Arnarfjörður with many men.'
- c. **Það** var eitt sumar [er Agni konungur fór með her
EXPL be.PST one summer COMP Agni king go.PST with army
sinn á Finnland, gekk þar upp og herjaði].
his-own on Finland, go.PST there up and raid.PST
'It was one summer that King Agni went with his army in Finland, travelled up there and raided.'

Rögnvaldsson notes that in this type of construction in Old Icelandic, *það* is almost exclusively restricted to the clause-initial position; only two examples to the contrary are cited. It is this observation which is his strongest evidence for analysing

¹⁶I assess the historical status of cataphoric *það* in Chapter 6.

það in this type of construction as an expletive.

In sum, according to the previous literature expletive *það* was absent in Old Icelandic with the exception of the scene-setting construction type, where it was already frequently attested. I test this claim in Chapters 7 and 8 against data from IcePaHC, as well as from supplementary texts from the period.

5.3.2 Later development

Rögnvaldsson (2002) also traces the development of expletive *það* through later stages of Icelandic. His findings show that other construction types with expletive *það* only appear in c.1500. According to him, the oldest unambiguous examples of the expletive occur in existential and impersonal passive constructions. The earliest attested examples of expletive *það* in weather-verb constructions occur in the first Icelandic translation of The New Testament (dated 1540), though such examples are surprisingly rare in later texts from the 17th and 18th centuries. Overall, Rögnvaldsson hypothesises a historical development whereby expletive *það* is gradually extended to other contexts on the model of its early appearance in the scene-setting construction type. I argue for my own account for how *það* spread through the grammar to new construction types in Chapter 7.

Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir (2016: 102) make a striking claim on the basis of Rögnvaldsson's historical findings. On the basis of the fact that the earliest examples of expletive *það* are found in 16th century translation texts based on English sources, and that very few examples at all occur in the 17th and 18th centuries, they claim it 'likely that the filler *það* found its way into Icelandic due to foreign influence'. This seems like a rather bold leap, and is an unlikely conclusion for a number of reasons.¹⁷ Firstly, expletive *það* was not wholly absent before this point. As discussed above, *það* was already frequent in the scene-setting construction type in Old Icelandic. The later appearance of *það* in other construction types does not, therefore, represent an innovation in the language. The development of expletives in other Germanic languages has indeed been accounted for as an exclusively language-internal development, e.g. Falk (1993) for Swedish. As such, one does not necessarily require a language-external account for the rise of *það* and an analysis in terms of spread within the language seems more plausible. Secondly,

¹⁷A similar contact explanation was discussed and ultimately refuted by Viðarsson (2009: 11).

typological evidence shows that structural borrowings occur relatively rarely and typically require intense contact between speaker populations (e.g. Thomason & Kaufman 1988), circumstances not documented for this period. It is possible that contact did play some role in the Icelandic development, but if this is the case it seems more likely that this merely encouraged the spread of *það* to new contexts.

The status of expletive *það* in later stages of Icelandic has been investigated by Hróarsdóttir (1998), who examines various syntactic changes in 19th century texts, including the rise of expletive *það*. Hróarsdóttir examines the frequency of expletive *það* in the language of 70 letter writers born between 1730 and 1870. The choice of informal letters as a dataset – reckoned to be closer to spoken language in style than for instance narrative or religious texts – is motivated by claims that the use of the expletive is more frequent in spoken than written Icelandic (Magnússon 1990: 128). I repeat the findings by Hróarsdóttir (1998) in Table 5.5. Note that Hróarsdóttir examines subjectless and presentational constructions exclusively, thereby excluding instances of *það* in extraction constructions, including the scene-setting type (see section 5.1.3.2).

Year of birth	1730	1750	1770	1790	1810	1830	1850
	-1750	-1770	-1790	-1810	-1830	-1850	-1870
Matrix clauses	1	0	3	4	15	15	13
Embedded clauses	2	0	2	1	5	3	4
All clauses	3	0	5	5	20	18	17

Table 5.5: Frequency of expletive *það* in letters by authors born 1730-1870, (Hróarsdóttir 1998: 114)

Hróarsdóttir’s findings indicate an increase in the expletive in the language of authors born as of 1810, which directly follows the loss of OV order which she observes in authors born in 1790. The expletive is overall more frequently present in matrix than in embedded clauses. Additionally, Hróarsdóttir (1998: 115) investigates letters from two authors born in the earlier period of 1710-1730 and finds no examples of expletive *það*. She notes that the first instances of the expletive which she observes as of 1730 coincides with the beginning of the decrease in OV order. In addition to the letters, Hróarsdóttir (1998: 119-23) also investigates the status of the expletive in magazines issued in the period 1796-1849. 84 examples of the

expletive are found in total, the earliest in 1832. Again, the expletive is observed to be more frequent in main clauses than embedded clauses (65 versus 19 respectively). She also states that the examples from both datasets indicate that, at this stage, expletive *það* was restricted to the clause-initial position, as in present-day Icelandic. Her overall datasets (68 examples and 84 examples respectively) are however relatively small, and do not take into account contexts where the expletive could potentially occur, but is absent. In the corpus investigations presented in Chapters 7 and 8, I test these results against more extensive data from IcePaHC.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the key properties of expletive *það*. In section 5.1, I outlined my two-level classification scheme for expletive constructions, which draws on data from both present-day and historical Icelandic, and recognises three micro-categories: subjectless constructions, presentational constructions and extraction constructions. In section 5.2, I discussed the positional distribution of expletive *það* and how this has been interpreted theoretically. I also argued for the view that the expletive serves an information-structural function in signalling a topicless sentence, and showed why expletive *það* does not qualify as a subject – at least in present-day Icelandic. In line with the claim that expletive *það* is not a subject, I rejected the notion of ‘quasi-argument’ in relation to *það*. In section 5.3, I summarised previous claims in the literature in relation to the historical status of expletive *það*. The established view is that the first instances of expletive *það* outside of scene-setting constructions appear in the 16th century, though occurrences in the 17th and 18th centuries are surprisingly rare. It is not until the 19th century that the frequency of expletive *það* increases by any significance. These findings serve as the point of departure for the corpus-based investigations presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

Chapter 6

Clausal arguments and cataphoric

það

It is well known that cataphoric *það* is robustly attested in Old Icelandic in constructions with a clausal argument ('extraposition', see Faarlund 1990; Rögnvaldsson 2002).¹ This applies to both constructions with a clausal subject, e.g. (1)-(2) and those with a clausal object, e.g. (3)-(4).

- (1) **Það**_{*i*} var rétt [að spakur engill boðaði Guð borinn spökum
CATPH be.PST right COMP wise angel proclaim.PST God born wise.DAT
Gyðingum]_{*i*}.
Jews.DAT
'It was right that a wise angel proclaimed God born to wise Jews.'
(1150, Homiliubok.1319)
- (2) **Það**_{*i*} er orðtak [að kona verði vör þess
CATPH be.PRS saying COMP woman become.PRS.SBJV aware DEM.GEN
er hún verður vís]_{*i*}.
when she.NOM become.PRS wise
'It is a saying that a woman becomes aware of this when she becomes wise.'
(1220, Gylfa.35.3)
- (3) **Það**_{*i*} vil eg yður vita láta, [að slíkt fullting
CATPH wish.PRS I.NOM you.DAT know.INF let.INF COMP such.ACC help.ACC
veitti skurðarskírni í gegn upphafssynd sem vatsskírni]_{*i*}.
grant.PRS circumcision.NOM against original-sin.DAT as baptism.NOM
'I wish to let you know it, that circumcision grants you similar help against

¹The standard term in the literature on Icelandic syntax for sentences like (1)-(4) is 'extraposition' (e.g. Thráinsson 1979). This label implies movement, however, and so I prefer to refer to these as 'constructions with a clausal argument'.

original sin as baptism.’ (1150, Hombiliubok.1235)

- (4) **Það**_i vildi ég [að þú ræddir ekki um]_i.
CATPH wish.PST I.NOM COMP you.NOM talk.PST NEG about
‘I wished it that you didn’t talk about it.’ (1275, Morkin.1280)

In constructions like (1)-(4), *það* cataphorically refers to the clausal argument. As such, I refer to *það* in these contexts as ‘cataphoric *það*’ (CATPH), as distinct from anaphoric *það* (DEM) and expletive *það* (EXPL), see Chapter 5.

In this chapter, I investigate the properties of constructions like (1)-(4) in the history of Icelandic (1150-2008), which allows me to establish the role of cataphoric *það* in such contexts. Throughout, I assume the unification analysis outlined in section 2.4.2, whereby cataphoric *það* and the clausal argument contribute to the same argument slot of the matrix verb, unifying at f-structure under the same grammatical function. The structure of the chapter is as follows: section 6.1 outlines the corpus methodology relevant to this part of the study. In section 6.2, I investigate the diachronic status of cataphoric *það* in constructions like (1) and (2) with a clausal argument which maps to the SUBJ function. Section 6.3 examines the status of cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal argument which maps to the OBJ function, e.g. (3) and (4). In section 6.4, I examine the status of cataphoric *það* in a particular construction type which I argue is structurally ambiguous with respect to the grammatical function which is assigned to the clausal argument. Section 6.5 summarises the key findings for constructions with clausal arguments and cataphoric *það*.

6.1 Methodology

6.1.1 Data collection

The IcePaHC treatment of constructions with a clausal argument and cataphoric *það* is not consistent; in order to capture all examples, a variety of search queries are required. I give the detailed CorpusSearch queries in Appendix A.3. There are three ways in which constructions with cataphoric *það* are annotated in IcePaHC. Firstly, in constructions where cataphoric *það* co-occurs with a clausal subject, cataphoric *það* is tagged as an expletive (ES) which is co-indexed with the clausal subject; see (5), which is the IcePaHC representation for the sentence in (6).

- (5) (IP-MAT-SPE (NP-SBJ-1 (ES það-það))
 (BEPI er-vera)
 (NP-PRD (N-N ráð-ráð))
 (NP-VOC (N-N húsfreyja-húsfreyja))
 (IP-INF-SPE-1 (TO að-að)
 (VB taka-taka)
 (ADVP (ADV vel-vel))
 (PP (P við-við)
 (NP (NS-D gestum-gestur))))))
 (. . . .))
 (1310. GRETTIR. NAR-SAG, . 658))
- (6) **Það_i** er ráð húsfreyja [að taka vel við
 CATPH be.PRS advice.NOM housewife.NOM to receive.INF well with
gestum]_i.
 guests.DAT
 ‘It is advice, housewife, to receive guests well.’ (1310, Grettir.658)

Parallel constructions which lack cataphoric *það* in the matrix clause are tagged for the absence of an expletive (*exp*), as in (7) (glossed in (8)).

- (7) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ-1 *exp*)
 (BEPI er-vera) (ADVP (ADVS best-vel)) (CP-THT-1 (C að-að)
 (IP-SUB (NP-SBJ (PRO-N þið-þú))
 (VBPI reynið-reyna)
 (NEG ekki-ekki)
 (PP (P með-með)
 (NP (PRO-D ykkur-þú))))
 (. . . .))
 (" "-"))))
 (ID 1310. GRETTIR. NAR-SAG, . 1930))
- (8) Er best [að þið reynið ekki með ykkur]_i.
 be.PRS best COMP you.NOM experience.PRS NEG with you.ACC
 ‘It is best that you do not experience it yourself.’ (1310, Grettir.1930)

Secondly, in constructions where cataphoric *það* co-occurs with a clausal object and where the matrix clause is subjectless in my terms (section 2.2.1), cataphoric

það is tagged as an expletive (ES) which is co-indexed with the clausal object. This is illustrated in (9), which is the IcePaHC representation for the sentence in (10). Since IcePaHC treats cataphoric *það* in such contexts as an expletive, and in turn all expletives as subjects, cataphoric *það* in (9) is annotated as a subject (NP-SBJ). This is contra my analysis, in which *það* is assigned the same grammatical function as the clausal argument (here object).

- (9) ((IP-MAT (CONJ En-en)
 (NP-SBJ-1 (ES það-það))
 (BEPI er-vera)
 (IP-INF (TO að-að)
 (VB segj a-segj a)
 (PP (P frá-frá)
 (NP (NPR-D Haral di -haral dur)
 (NP-PRN (N-D konungi -konungur))))))
 (CP-THT-1 (C að-að)
 (IP-SUB (NP-SBJ (PRO-N hann-hann))
 (HVPI hefi r-hafa)
 (NP-OB1 (N-A þi ng-þi ng))
 (PP (P of-of)
 (NP (N-A morgi n\$morgunn)
 (D-A \$i nn-hi nn))))))
 (. , - ,))
 (ID 1275. MORKI N. NAR-HI S, . 867))

- (10) En **það**, er að segja frá Haraldur konungi [**að hann**
 but CATPH be.PRS to say.INF from Haraldur king COMP he.NOM
hefir þing of morgininn].
 have.PRS assembly of morning.DEF
 ‘But it is to say of King Haraldur that he holds an assembly in the morning.’
 (1275, Morkin.867)

(11) shows the IcePaHC annotation for the subjectless construction in (12), which has a clausal object but lacks cataphoric *það* in the matrix clause.

- (11) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ-1 *exp*)
 (ADVP (ADV Svo-svo))
 (VBPI segi r-segj a)
 (PP (P í-í)
 (NP (NPR-D upprei starsögu-upprei starsaga)))
 (, , - ,))
 (CP-THT-1 (C að-að)
 (IP-SUB (PP (P í-í)
 (NP (N-D upphafi -upphaf)))
 (VBDI skapaði -skapa)
 (NP-SBJ (NPR-N Guð-guð))
 (NP-OB1 (N-A hi mi n-hi mi nn) (CONJ og-og)
 (N-A jörð-jörð))))))
 (, , , - , ,))
 (ID 1150. HOMILIUBOK. REL-SER, . 516))

- (12) Svo segir í uppreistarsögu, [að í upphafi skapaði Guð
 so say.PRS in creation-story COMP in beginning create.PST God
himin og jörð]_i.
 heaven and earth
 ‘So it says in the creation story that in the beginning God created heaven
 and earth.’ (1150, Homiliubok.516)

Thirdly, in constructions where cataphoric *það* co-occurs with a clausal object and where the matrix clause is not subjectless, cataphoric *það* is not tagged as an expletive but as a referential pronoun (PRO), and *|CH* (‘Insert Constituent Here’) is used as a way to capture the fact that *það* is related to the clausal object, see (13), glossed in (14).

- (13) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ (PRO-N Hún-hún))
 (VBDI sá-sj á)
 (NP-OB1 (PRO-A það-það)
 (CP-THT-PRN *ICH*-1))
 (NEG ekki -ekki)
 (PP (P fyrir-fyrir)
 (NP (PRO-D sér-sig)))
 (CP-THT-PRN-1 (C að-að)
 (IP-SUB (NP-SBJ (PRO-N við-ég))
 (MDDS myndum-munu)
 (MD geta-geta)
 (VBN átt-ei ga)
 (NP-OB1 (N-A samleið-
 samleið))))))
 (ID 2008. MAMMA. NAR-FIC, . 1099))

- (14) Hún sá það_i ekki fyrir sér [að við myndum
 she.NOM see.PST CATPH NEG for REFL COMP we.NOM could
 geta átt samleið]_j.
 be-able.INF own.PST.PTCP same-way
 ‘She did not see it for herself that we could have something in common.’
 (2008, Mamma.1099)

Parallel constructions which lack cataphoric *það* are not tagged for the absence of *það*, see the IcePaHC representation in (15) for the sentence (16). Such constructions therefore require a different search query; see Appendix A.3 for details.

- (15) ((IP-MAT (VBPI Sé-sj á)
 (NP-SBJ (PRO-N eg-ég))
 (CP-THT (C að-að)
 (IP-SUB (ADVP-TMP (ADV nú-nú))
 (BEPI er-vera)
 (NP-SBJ (NP-POS (PRO-N þitt-þinn))
 (N-N skapadægur-skapadægur))
 (VBN komið-koma)))
 (. . -.))

(ID 1450. ECTORSSAGA. NAR-SAG, . 405))

- (16) Sé eg [að nú er þitt skapadægur komið].
see.PRS I.NOM COMP now be.PRS your fated-day come.PST.PTCP
'I see that your fated day has now come.' (1450, Ectors saga.405)

I isolate all three constructions types in IcePaHC (matrix clauses only) by way of automatic CorpusSearch queries; see Appendix A.3 for details. Note that the third type in (13)-(16) were collected at a later stage and will only feature in part of my analysis. For this type, I restrict the data to constructions which feature three predicates in order to make the manual tagging manageable: *segja* 'say', *vita* 'know', *sjá* 'see'.

The IcePaHC data for the earliest period ('Old Icelandic', 1150-1350) is supplemented with manually collected data from the three additional texts discussed in section 1.3.2. I examined each sentence in the texts, highlighting any instance of a construction with a clausal argument and a potential for cataphoric *það*, along the lines of the IcePaHC examples in (5)-(12). This makes for a fair comparison between the supplementary data and the IcePaHC data.

I imported the collected examples into a database and manually examined each example, removing any which did not qualify as a cataphoric *það* context on the terms outlined in this section. The total examples collected from IcePaHC and the supplementary Old Icelandic texts via this process are shown in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

Time period	Total cataphoric <i>það</i> contexts
1150-1350	378
1351-1550	163
1551-1750	183
1751-1900	172
1901-2008	227
All periods	1123

Table 6.1: Cataphoric *það* contexts in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Text	Total cataphoric <i>það</i> contexts
<i>Eirik</i>	27
<i>Græn</i>	17
<i>Gylfa</i>	70
All texts	114

Table 6.2: Cataphoric *það* contexts in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220-1250

6.1.2 Data manipulation

All examples in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 were tagged manually for additional properties which are relevant to the study aims. The IcePaHC data was already coded for the presence/absence of the expletive via the search queries. The supplementary data was manually tagged for whether the expletive is present or absent. Both the IcePaHC and supplementary datasets were also tagged for the following properties:

1. Verb position: V1; V2.
2. Position of cataphoric *það* if present: prefinite; postfinite.
3. Grammatical function of the clausal argument: SUBJ; OBJ; ambiguous.²

6.2 Clausal subjects

In this section, I investigate the diachronic status of cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal subject. This covers constructions with adjectival matrix clause predicates, e.g. (1), repeated here in (17), as well as those with nominal matrix clause predicates, e.g. (2), repeated here in (18). As I argued in section 2.4.2, in such contexts, both *það* and the clausal argument map to the SUBJ function.

- (17) **Það**_{*j*} var rétt [að spakur engill boðaði Guð borinn
 CATPH be.PST right COMP wise angel proclaim.PST God born
 spökum Gyðingum]_{*j*}.
 wise.DAT Jews.DAT
 ‘It was right that a wise angel proclaimed God born to wise Jews.’
 (1150, Homiliubok.1319)

²I discuss structurally ambiguous constructions with a clausal argument in section 6.4.

- (18) **Það**_i er orðtak [að kona verði vör þess
 CATPH be.PRS saying COMP woman become.PRS.SBJV aware DEM.GEN
 er hún verður vís]_i.
 when she.NOM become.PRS wise
 ‘It is a saying that a woman becomes aware of this when she becomes
 wise.’ (1220, Gylfa.35.3)

The occurrence of clausal subjects in the sentence-initial position is dispreferred: Faarlund (2004: 240) states that clausal subjects in Old Icelandic are generally ‘right-adjoined to VP’, i.e. occur in sentence-final position. The thorough descriptive grammar of Old Norse/Icelandic by Nygaard (1905: 252-3) has numerous examples of sentences with clausal subjects, though not one is in the initial position. With respect to modern Icelandic, Thráinsson (1979: 90-1) states that sentences with clausal subjects which are *that*-clauses or *wh*-clauses in the initial position are acceptable, e.g. (19), although the late (in his terms ‘extraposed’) variety ‘may sound somewhat more natural’.

- (19) [Að Jón tali sjálfur við kennarann] er langbest.
 COMP Jón talk.PRS.SBJV self with teacher.DEF be.PRS best
 ‘That Jón himself talks with the teacher is best.’ (Thráinsson 1979: 31)

I assume that the preference for clausal subjects to be late in the sentence is connected with syntactic weight; it has been widely observed that ‘heavier’ (i.e. longer) constituents are dispreferred early in the sentence, in comparison with ‘lighter’ (i.e. shorter) constituents (e.g. Hawkins 1992).

6.2.1 Cataphoric subject *það* in earlier Icelandic

I will first argue that, in earlier stages of Icelandic (1150-1750), cataphoric *það* in constructions like (17) and (18) is assigned the SUBJ function. Evidence for this comes from the observed positional distribution of cataphoric *það* in such contexts, whereby *það* behaves as a subject in three respects:³

1. In clauses with a topicalized XP in the clause-initial position, *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position (subject-verb inversion).
2. In yes/no-interrogatives which are V1 sentences, *það* also occurs in the immediately postfinite position (subject-verb inversion).

³See section 3.3.1.1, where I discuss the positional distribution of Icelandic subjects.

3. *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position in V1 declaratives which have the same discourse properties as V1 declaratives in which prototypical topical subjects occur in the immediately postfinite position (narrative inversion, see sections 3.2 and 4.1.1).

The first piece of evidence which supports the subject status of cataphoric *það* comes from contexts where a topicalized XP occupies the sentence-initial position. In the data prior to 1750, the dominant pattern is for *það* to be present in the immediately postfinite position in such contexts, thus behaving like a subject, e.g. (20).

- (20) Satt er **það**_i [að mikið afbragð er Grettir annarra
true be.PRS CATPH COMP great paragon be.PRS Grettir other.GEN
manna]_i...
men.GEN
'It is true that Grettir is a great paragon of other men...'
(1310, Grettir.1695)

The IcePaHC data show that a postfinite *það* is overwhelmingly present in such contexts in the data for 1150-1750 (81.8% of instances), see Table 6.3.⁴

Time period	XP-V- <i>það</i>	XP-V-XP	Total	% XP-V- <i>það</i>
1150-1750	27	6	33	81.8%

Table 6.3: Frequency of postfinite *það* in constructions with a clausal *SUBJ* and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1750

The frequency of postfinite *það* in topicalization contexts (81.8%) is roughly comparable with the frequency at which *það* occurs in the clause-initial prefinite position in sentences without topicalization (86.4%), see Table 6.4.

Time period	<i>það</i> -V-XP	V-XP	Total	% <i>það</i> -V-XP
1150-1750	89	14	103	86.4%

Table 6.4: Frequency of prefinite *það* in constructions with a clausal *SUBJ* in IcePaHC, 1150-1750

⁴Here I collapse the first three of my five IcePaHC periods into one larger period (pre-1750), since all three periods show a similar behaviour with respect to *það*.

The second piece of positional evidence which supports the subject status of cataphoric *það* is the fact that it occurs in the immediately postfinite position in yes/no-interrogatives, another key property of Icelandic subjects. I show an early example in (21).

- (21) Er **það**_i satt, Halli, [að þú hefir eigi hefnt
 be.PRS CATPH true Halli COMP you.NOM have.PRS NEG avenge.PST
 föður þíns]_i?
 father your
 ‘Is it true, Halli, that you have not avenged your father?’
 (1275, Morkin.1203)

Yes/no-interrogatives which feature clausal subjects are very rare in my data; I have only found a single example and in this example a postfinite *það* is present, shown in (21). Of course, this does not rule out the possibility that yes/no-interrogatives could also occur without *það*, but the example in (21) is at least clear evidence that it was possible for a postfinite *það* to occur in such contexts.

The third piece of positional evidence which supports the subject status of cataphoric *það* comes from sentences like (22), which are V1 declaratives where *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position.

- (22) Og er **það**_i mitt ráð [að þér farið upp á húsin]_i.
 and be.PRS CATPH my advice COMP you travel.PRS up to house.DEF
 ‘And it is my advice that you travel up to the house.’
 (1250, Sturlunga.415.836)

In the IcePaHC data for 1150-1750, a postfinite cataphoric *það* is present in 78.1% of instances in such contexts, see Table 6.5.

Time period	V- <i>það</i>	V-XP	Total	% V- <i>það</i>
1150-1750	50	14	64	78.1%

Table 6.5: Frequency of postfinite *það* in V1 declaratives with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1750

In sections 3.2 and 4.1.1, I discussed V1 declaratives like (23), which have a topical subject in the immediately postfinite position (narrative inversion V1).

- (23) Þórir **hann** þá eigi að stefna til gatnanna.
 dare.PRS he.NOM then NEG to go.INF to paths.DEF
 ‘He then dares not make for the paths.’ (1250, Sturlunga.445.2015)

As I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the standard assumption is that constructions like (23) are connected with strong discourse cohesion and cannot initiate a new discourse (Sigurðsson 1990). The main idea is that in V1 sentences of the type in (23), the verb is given more discourse prominence than the topic, and that this marked word order creates a sense of narrative continuity.

I examine the 50 examples of declarative V1 sentences like (22) which have the structure V-*það* to see if they exhibit any of the properties associated with the narrative inversion V1 type in (23). Strikingly, virtually all of the 50 sentences have features which indicate that they have temporal, spatial or logical relation to the preceding discourse:

1. All 50 occur in narrative texts which typically report a chronological sequence of events.
2. None of the 50 occur at the beginning of a new discourse (i.e. paragraph or chapter).
3. 36/50 occur in the middle of a section of direct speech, i.e. a continuous discourse.
4. 47/50 have a connective element present which relates back to the preceding context, e.g. *og* ‘and’, *en* ‘but’, *og* ‘also’, *þá* ‘then’, *næst* ‘next’.

Moreover, many of the 50 have at least two of these features present, as shown in the examples in (24)-(25). Note that (24) also features a prefinite cataphoric *það* (*það*-V) in the preceding sentence.

- (24) "Það er og satt [að ...]. Og er **það**_i til marks [að
 CATPH be.PRS also true that and be.PRS CATPH to note COMP
 þú átt bolla þann er Matsæll heitir]_i."
 you.NOM eat.PST bowl DEM REL meat-lucky be-called.PRS
 ‘"It is also true that... And it is to note that you ate the bowl which is called
 meat luck."’ (1350, BandamennM.1068)
- (25) Þá gekk fram Valbert og mælti “eigi skil eg því
 then go.PST forth Valbert and say.PST NEG understand.PRS I.NOM why
 þér lofið þenna mann. Er **það**_i nær og sannara [að
 you.NOM praise.PRS DEM man be.BE CATPH near also truer COMP

hann hefir engva hæversku numið],...
 he.NOM have.PRS none courtesy seize.PST.PTCP
 ‘Then Valbert went forth and said: "I do not understand why you praise
 this man. It is also nearer the truth that he has not seized courtesy..."’
 (1450, Ectorssaga.1699)

In sum, the contexts in which the *V-það* type occurs share many properties with the narrative inversion construction with a postfinite prototypical topical subject. I interpret this as indication that cataphoric *það* in *V-það* declaratives is a subject.

6.2.2 A change in progress

Having shown that cataphoric *það* behaves like a subject in constructions with a clausal subject in earlier Icelandic (pre-1750), I now argue for a diachronic change whereby cataphoric *það* begins to lose its subject status in later stages of Icelandic (post-1750). I will claim that this change is still in progress in the present-day language, where cataphoric *það* is on its way to becoming a placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position, i.e. the same function that expletive *það* serves in subjectless and presentational constructions (see section 5.2). I evidence this diachronic claim with the observation that – in the IcePaHC data for 1751-2008 – *það* is increasingly dispreferred in two contexts where it is unambiguously a subject:

1. In the immediately postfinite position in sentences with topicalization.
2. In the immediately postfinite position in V1 declaratives.

Firstly, the IcePaHC findings indicate that there is a decrease in the frequency at which *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position in sentences with topicalization, see Table 6.6.⁵ By the modern period (1901-2008), *það* is only present in 38.9% of instances. In other words, as of 1751 cataphoric *það* becomes less frequent in a context where it behaves unambiguously like a subject.

⁵Recall that ‘ns’ marks a value which does not deviate significantly from the mean value across the whole dataset, here the entire corpus.

Time period	XP-V- <i>pað</i>	XP-V-XP	Total	% XP-V- <i>pað</i>	²
1150-1750	27	6	33	81.8%	*
1751-1900	5	4	9	55.6%	ns
1901-2008	7	11	18	38.9%	***
All periods	39	21	60	65.0%	

Table 6.6: Frequency of postfinite *pað* in constructions with a clausal *SUBJ* and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Secondly, the frequency at which *pað* occurs in the immediately postfinite position in V1 declaratives also decreases in the data as of 1751, see Table 6.7. In section 6.2.1, it was shown that the *V-pað* type shows similar properties to the narrative inversion construction which occurs with a postfinite prototypical topical subject. This was used as evidence to support the fact that *pað* in *V-pað* contexts also qualifies as a subject. On this assumption, I interpret the results in Table 6.7 as a decrease in *pað* in another context in which it is unambiguously a subject.

Time period	V- <i>pað</i>	V-XP	Total	% V- <i>pað</i>	²
1150-1750	50	14	64	78.1%	**
1751-1900	6	8	14	42.9%	ns
1901-2008	1	13	14	7.1%	***
All periods	57	35	92	62.0%	

Table 6.7: Frequency of postfinite *pað* in V1 declaratives with a clausal *SUBJ* in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Though the overall numbers are small, the decrease in *pað* in V1 declaratives (*V-pað*) strikingly coincides with the decrease in postfinite *pað* in topicalization contexts (*XP-V-pað*), cf. Tables 6.6 and 6.7. The two sets of results therefore show an approximately simultaneous decrease in *pað* – as of 1751 – in two contexts in which it is unambiguously a subject. It is not possible to investigate the positional distribution of *pað* in yes/no-interrogatives diachronically, since yes/no-interrogatives with a clausal subject occur very infrequently in the corpus (see (21) for a rare example in which a postfinite *pað* is present.)

The evidence which I have presented here supports my claim that cataphoric *pað* which occurs in constructions with a clausal subject is assigned the *SUBJ* func-

tion in earlier Icelandic, but as of 1751 begins to lose its subject status. Moreover, compared to the general decrease in postfinite cataphoric *það* in contexts where it is an unambiguous subject (postfinite position), clause-initial prefinite cataphoric *það* – which is ambiguously either a subject or a structural placeholder – does not undergo a decrease, see Table 6.8. The stable status of prefinite cataphoric *það* is in line with my diachronic proposal; cataphoric *það* is losing its subject status and is transitioning towards becoming a placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position.

Time period	<i>Það</i> -V-XP	V-XP	Total	% <i>Það</i> -V-XP	²
1150-1750	89	14	103	86.4%	ns
1751-1900	41	8	49	83.7%	ns
1901-2008	72	13	85	84.7%	ns
All periods	202	35	237	85.2%	

Table 6.8: Frequency of prefinite *það* in constructions with a clausal SUBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

The diachronic account I have sketched here is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, my proposal whereby cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal subject is a SUBJ in older Icelandic but later begins to lose this status offers an explanation for the synchronic status of cataphoric *það* in this context in modern Icelandic. There, it has been observed that cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal subject exhibits a mixed positional distribution, whereby its occurrence in positions in which it is unambiguously a subject (i.e. postfinite position) is possible, but dispreferred (Rögnvaldsson 2002; Thráinsson 1979, 2007). Rögnvaldsson (2002) highlights the acceptability of all three variants in (26); in topicalization contexts, it is both acceptable for *það* to be absent, e.g. (26-b), or present in postfinite position, e.g. (26-c). According to Rögnvaldsson, the type without *það* (26-b) is more common than the ‘exceptional’ type with a postfinite *það* (26-c).

- (26) a. **Það** er ótrúlegt [að enginn hafi
 CATPH be.PRS unbelievable COMP no-one have.PRS.SBJV
 tekið eftir þessu.
 notice.PST.PTCP PTCL DEM
 ‘It is unbelievable that no-one has noticed this.’
- b. Ótrúlegt er [að enginn hafi tekið
 unbelievable be.PRS COMP no-one have.PRS.SBJV notice.PST.PTCP

eftir þessu.

PTCL DEM

‘It is unbelievable that no-one has noticed this.’

- c. Ótrúlegt er það [að enginn hafi
unbelievable be.PRS CATPH COMP no-one have.PRS.SBJV
tekið eftir þessu.
notice.PST.PTCP PTCL DEM
‘It is unbelievable that no one has noticed this.’

Standard accounts assume that postfinite *það* in contexts like (26-c) is a referential pronoun, while prefinite *það* can be either an expletive or a referential pronoun (as first proposed by Thráinsson 1979). Furthermore, as I discussed in section 5.2, Thráinsson (1979: 481) interprets the synchronic observation whereby it is possible for some speakers to ‘raise’ *það* as evidence for the fact that cataphoric *það* is developing from a placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position (‘surface adjustment particle’ in his terms) into a subject. Here, I have proposed an alternative account, claiming that cataphoric *það* exhibits mixed subject properties in the modern language as a reflex of its older status as a subject. The diachronic account assumes a change for cataphoric *það* in the opposite direction: from subject to clause-initial prefinite position placeholder.

Secondly, from a broader cross-Germanic perspective, my diachronic account for cataphoric *það* goes against standard accounts for the emergence of expletives in Germanic, which can be summarised as the Prefinite First Hypothesis, see (27).⁶

(27) The Prefinite First Hypothesis

Prefinite expletive – subject expletive

The Prefinite First Hypothesis states that the general pathway whereby expletives emerge in Germanic is that positionally restricted expletives first appear in the clause-initial prefinite position, and only later generalise to all positions and thereby reach subject expletive status. In line with this assumed trend, it has been claimed that the initial rise of expletives in Germanic is conditioned by structural considerations concerning verb-second (i.e. as a strategy to occupy the clause-initial prefi-

⁶See Breivik (1983), Ingham (2001) on English; Lenerz (1985) on German, but see Axel (2007) for counterevidence; Falk (1993) on Swedish; Faarlund (1990) on Norwegian, but see Kinn (2016) for counterevidence; more general overviews are Haiman (1974), Richards & Biberauer (2005), Silva-Villar (1996).

nite position), rather than by functional subject-related considerations (Richards & Biberauer 2005). The account which I have sketched here for the development of cataphoric *það* in Icelandic challenges the Prefinite First Hypothesis. I have shown that cataphoric *það* had subject status prior to 1750, and only relatively late in the diachrony (post-1750) began to lose its subject status, transitioning towards becoming a structural placeholder for the prefinite position (i.e. a prefinite expletive). The proposed change thus operates in the opposite direction to the Prefinite First Hypothesis: a prefinite expletive emerges from a subject element.

6.3 Clausal objects

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, cataphoric *það* is also attested in the earliest Icelandic texts in constructions with a clausal argument which maps to the OBJ function. This applies to constructions whose predicate is a transitive verb which can take a clausal object, such as *vita*, ‘know’ and *vilja*, ‘wish’, as shown in (28) and (29) respectively (repeated from (3) and (4) above).

(28) **Það**_i vil eg yður vita láta, [að slíkt fullting
 CATPH wish.PRS I.NOM YOU.DAT KNOW.INF let.INF COMP SUCH.ACC help.ACC
 veitti skurðarskírni í gegn upphafssynd sem vatsskírni]_i.
 grant.PRS circumcision.NOM against original-sin.DAT as baptism.NOM
 ‘I wish to let you know it, that circumcision grants you similar help against
 original sin as baptism.’ (1150, Hombiliubok.1235)

(29) **Það**_i vildi ég [að þú ræddir ekki um]_i.
 CATPH wish.PST I.NOM COMP YOU.NOM talk.PST NEG about
 ‘I wished it that you didn’t talk about it.’ (1275, Morkin.1280)

As I outlined in section 2.4.2, in sentences like (28) and (29) I assume that both cataphoric *það* and the clausal argument map to the OBJ function, unifying at f-structure.

Both (28) and (29) feature a prototypical subject in the matrix clause. I will henceforth refer to such constructions as the ‘personal type’. I also examine constructions like (30)-(32), which have a cataphoric *það* and a clausal object, but no subject in the matrix clause – at least not at c-structure. This applies to the impersonal modal construction, e.g. (30), the impersonal present participle construction, e.g. (31), and a construction whose predicate is the modal expression *vera að* +

infinitive, e.g. (32); see section 5.1.1 for discussion.

- (30) En það_i má segja [að enginn hefur sá séð
but CATPH may say.INF COMP no-one.NOM have.PRS such see.PST.PTCP
ógurlegar sjónir]_i...
horrible.ACC visions.ACC
'One can say that no-one has seen such horrible visions...'
(1220, Gylfa.48.6)
- (31) En það_i er vitanda, [að þá gofgum vér réttlega
but CATPH be.PRS know.PRS.PTCP COMP then honour.PRS we rightly
postula guðs alla]_i...
apostles god.GEN all...
'But one is to know that we then rightly honour all of God's apostles...'
(1150, Homiliubok.304)
- (32) En það_i er að segja frá Hermóði [að hann reið
but CATPH be.PRS to say.INF from Hermóður.DAT COMP he.NOM ride.PST
níu nætur dökkva dala og djúpa]_i...
nine nights.ACC dark.GEN dales.GEN and deep.GEN
'But one is to say of Hermóður that he rode for nine nights through dark
and deep dales...' (1250, Gylfa.49.15)

Again, I assume that cataphoric *það* and the clausal argument both map to the OBJ function in constructions like (30)-(32). I will argue for the syntactic status of these constructions as impersonal constructions with a subject suppressed at c-structure though present at f-structure using Kibort's Mapping Theory in Chapter 7.

The construction type in (31) appears most frequently in the *Homiliubok* text. This text is known to have a Latin background, though the exact nature of this connection remains unclear (for discussion, see Weenen 1993). Weenen (1993: 183) discusses constructions like (31) under 'Latin constructions'. She gives the Latin in (33-a) as the parallel construction for (33-b).⁷

- (33) a. Sed quærendum nobis est...
but seek.PASS.PTCP we.DAT be.PRS
'But we are to seek...'
- b. En þess er oss leitanda að...
but CATPH.GEN be.PRS we.DAT seek.PRS.PTCP COMP
'But we are to seek that...'

⁷Thanks to Tarrin Wills (p.c.) for pointing this out.

Strikingly, although there is no cataphoric pronoun in the Latin original (33-a), cataphoric *það* (*þess*) is present in the Icelandic translation in (33-b). This indicates that the use of cataphoric *það* in such contexts was a robust feature of Old Icelandic, and was employed even in constructions based on a source construction with no such cataphoric pronoun.

The *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* ('ONP', see section 1.3.2) lists similar examples with the Latin parallel, e.g. (34)-(35).

- (34) a. sciendum est...
 know.PASS.PTCP be.PRS
 'It is to be known...'
- b. En **það** er vitanda að...
 but CATPH be.PRS know.PRS.PTCP COMP
 'But it is to be known that...' (Hóm677 59²⁰)⁸
- (35) a. sciendum nobis est...
 know.PASS.PTCP we.DAT be.PRS
 'We are to know...'
- b. En **það** er oss vitanda að...
 but CATPH be.PRS we.DAT know.PRS.PTCP COMP
 'But it is to be known that...' (Hóm677 73¹⁹)⁹

6.3.1 Positional distribution of cataphoric 'object' *það*

The examples given so far in (28)-(35) have all had cataphoric 'object' *það* in the clause-initial prefinite position.¹⁰ The positional distribution of cataphoric *það* in these contexts has not been examined to date. I investigate the positional distribution of cataphoric 'object' *það* in my historical data, since this will shed light on its actual role.

I first compare the proportion of examples which have cataphoric *það* in the clause-initial prefinite position, e.g. (36), with those which lack *það* in this position and are V1 structures, e.g. (37).

⁸<http://onpweb.nfi.sc.ku.dk/webart/v/vi/88016731326cartpnfr.htm> [last accessed 31.07.2018].

⁹<http://onpweb.nfi.sc.ku.dk/webart/v/vi/88016731327cartpnfr.htm> [last accessed 31.07.2018].

¹⁰I refer to cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal object as an 'object' since – as I show in this section – *það* does not always behave like a prototypical object in such contexts with respect to positional distribution. I use the 'object' label as a convenient way to distinguish this type of cataphoric *það* from that discussed in section 6.2.

- (36) **Það**_i vildi ég [að þú ræddir ekki um]_j.
 CATPH wish.PST I.NOM COMP you.NOM talk.PST NEG about
 ‘I wished that you didn’t talk about it.’ (1275, Morkin.1280)
- (37) Sagði hann meðal annars [að þetta væri hið síðasta sinn
 say.PST he among other COMP DEM be.PST.SBJV DEF last time
 er þau sæist]...
 COMP they see.PST.SBJV.REFL
 ‘He said among other things that this would be the last time that they
 would see each other..’ (1675, Modars.76)

This allows me to assess the strength of preference for cataphoric ‘object’ *það* in such contexts throughout the history of Icelandic. I compare the results for the personal type, e.g. (28)-(29) above, to the impersonal type, e.g. (30)-(32) above.

The results for the personal type indicate that prefinite *það* is attested at an average rate of 24.6% across all periods, see Table 6.9. None of the individual time periods deviate significantly from this average. The results for the impersonal type show that prefinite *það* is attested at a higher frequency overall than in the personal type, at an average of 56.7% across all periods, see Table 6.10. However, the dataset for the impersonal type is smaller than for the personal type and so the results here are more tentative. Like the personal type, the status of prefinite *það* is stable diachronically in the impersonal type, with no individual period deviating significantly from the overall average.

Time period	<i>Það</i> -V-SUBJ	V-SUBJ	Total	% <i>Það</i> -V-SUBJ	²
1150-1350	18	50	68	26.5%	ns
1351-1550	12	43	55	21.8%	ns
1551-1750	7	22	29	24.1%	ns
1751-1900	10	28	38	26.3%	ns
1901-2008	1	4	5	20.0%	ns
All periods	48	147	195	24.6%	

Table 6.9: Proportion of prefinite *það* in personal constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Time period	<i>Það</i> -V-	V-	Total	% <i>Það</i> -V-	²
1150-1350	12	11	23	52.2%	ns
1351-1550	5	6	11	45.5%	ns
1551-1750	5	3	8	62.5%	ns
1751-1900	7	2	9	77.8%	ns
1901-2008	5	4	9	55.6%	ns
All periods	34	26	60	56.7%	

Table 6.10: Proportion of prefinite *það* in impersonal constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

By contrast, in sentences where a topicalized XP occupies the clause-initial prefinite position, cataphoric ‘object’ *það* occurs very infrequently; the dominant pattern is for there to be no *það*. Compare (38) with a clause-initial prefinite *það*, with (39) which has no *það*, comparable constructions from the same text.

- (38) **Það** er nú að segja frá Alexandro konungi, [að hann
 CATPH be.PRS now to say.INF from Alexander king COMP he.NOM
 hefir lagst til svefns].
 have.PRS go.PST to sleep
 ‘One can now say of King Alexander that he has gone to sleep.’
 (1300, Alexander.1380)

- (39) Nú er að segja frá Alexandro, [að, hvar sem hann fer,
 now be.PRS to say.INF from Alexander COMP wherever he.NOM go.PRS
 þá...].
 RSMP
 ‘Now one can say of Alexander that, wherever he goes, then....’
 (1300, Alexander.396)

The IcePaHC findings confirm that postfinite cataphoric *það* is very infrequent across the diachrony in both the personal type (3.7%), see Table 6.11 and the impersonal type (4.7%), see Table 6.12.

Time period	XP-V... <i>það</i>	XP-V...	Total	% XP-V... <i>það</i>	²
1150-1350	1	61	62	1.6%	ns
1351-1550	5	56	61	8.2%	ns
1551-1750	1	43	44	2.3%	ns
1751-1900	1	29	30	3.3%	ns
1901-2008	0	18	18	0.0%	ns
All periods	8	207	215	3.7%	

Table 6.11: Frequency of postfinite *það* in personal constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Time period	XP-V... <i>það</i>	XP-V...	Total	% XP-V... <i>það</i>	²
1150-1350	1	50	51	2.0%	ns
1351-1550	2	21	23	8.7%	ns
1551-1750	2	31	33	6.1%	ns
1751-1900	1	5	6	16.7%	ns
1901-2008	0	15	17	0.0%	ns
All periods	6	122	128	4.7%	

Table 6.12: Frequency of postfinite *það* in impersonal constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

The results in Tables 6.9-6.12 thus indicate that cataphoric ‘object’ *það* is virtually restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position in all stages of Icelandic, i.e. does not behave like a prototypical object. In the next section, I offer an information-structural account for this observation.

6.3.2 A topic position placeholder in early Icelandic

In section 5.2, it was shown that expletive *það* in present-day Icelandic subjectless and presentational constructions is restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position and is assumed to be a structural placeholder for this position, which in Icelandic is a topic position. In this section, I show that the positional distribution of cataphoric ‘object’ *það* in historical Icelandic – whereby it is restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position – can be accounted for assuming it too serves as a topic position placeholder.

Thráinsson (1979: 221) discusses contexts in modern Icelandic where *það* occupies the clause-initial prefinite position in a sentence with a clausal object ('object extraposition' in his terms), giving the example in (40).

- (40) **Það** veit ég [að María er löngu farin].
 CATPH know.PRS I.NOM COMP María.NOM be.PRS long gone
 'I know that María is long gone.'

Thráinsson claims that clause-initial *það* in such contexts is a topic, modified by the clausal argument. Due to the semantic relation between *það* and the clausal argument, such an analysis relies on the fact that the clausal argument expresses discourse-old information, i.e. is also a topic.

In German constructions where a pronoun (*es*) co-occurs with a clausal argument (as discussed in section 2.4.2), it is standardly assumed that the pronoun marks the clausal argument as a topic (see Berman et al. 1998 and further references there). This is based on evidence like (41), where the clausal argument uncontroversially expresses discourse-new information and *es* is ruled out in the matrix clause.

- (41) Du, letzte Neuigkeit: Weißst du (***es**) schon, daß Emma ein Kind
 hey latest news know you (it) already that Emma a child
 kriegt?
 gets
 'Hey! This is the latest news: Do you know that Emma is having a baby?'
 (Reis 1977: 195, as cited in Berman et al. 1998: 5)

However, the Icelandic situation is different. Contra Thráinsson's analysis, in constructions where a clause-initial *það* co-occurs with a clausal object in my dataset, the clausal object typically expresses discourse-new information, and therefore cannot be a topic, e.g. (42)-(43). As such, unlike German *es*, Icelandic *það* does not serve to mark the clausal argument as a topic but is instead a topic-position placeholder in a sentence which lacks a topic.

- (42) Síðan helt Haraldur konungur flotanum suður til
 then sail.PST Haraldur.NOM king.NOM fleets.DAT.DEF south to
 Englands. Og **það**_i segja menn, þá er konungur lá í
 England and CATPH say.PRS men.NOM when king.NOM lie.PST in
 höfn einni, [að kona ein kom ofan af landi
 harbour one COMP woman.NOM one.NOM come.PST down from land

og á björgin fram, er voru við höfnina, og kvað vísu];:...
 and on cliffs.DEF forth REL be.PST by harbour.DEF and say.PST verse
 ‘Then King Haraldur sailed with his fleets south to England. And men say
 that when the king lay in a harbour, that a woman came down from the
 land and onto the cliffs, which were by the harbour, and said a verse:...’
 (1275, Morkin.1924)

- (43) Síðan gekk Finnbogi út á skútuna og þótti Álfur
 then go.PST Finnbogi.NOM out on cutter.DEF and seem.PST Álfur.DAT
 niður ganga við skútan og mælti: "Það, sé eg á
 down go.INF by cutter.DEF and say.PST CATPH see.PST I.NOM on
 húðfati þínu [að eigi mun þér silfurfátt verða til
 hammock your COMP NEG will you.NOM silver-poor become.INF to
 laukunnar þá er þú kemur til Hákonar jarls]."
 hot-springs.DEF when you.NOM come.PRS to Hákon Earl
 ‘Then Finnbogi went out on the cutter and Álfur seemed to go down by
 the cutter and said: "I see by your hammock that you will not become poor
 in silver when you come to Earl Hákon."’ (1350, Finnbogi.639.799)

Parallel examples exist for the impersonal type, where the embedded clause simi-
 larly constitutes discourse-new information, e.g. (44)-(45).

- (44) Og fyrir þá sök heitir hún svo, að hún fellur
 and for DEM sake be-called.PST she.NOM so COMP she.NOM fall.PRS
 strítt, og fer svo skjótt til að jafna sem ið flugskjóta
 strong and go.PRS so swiftly to to make-equal.INF as DEM very-swift
 dýr það, er tigris heitir. Það, er skjótast að segja
 beast DEM REL Tigris be-called.PRS CATPH be.PRS quickest to say.INF
 frá för Alexandri, [að hann sækir fund Darii].
 from journey Alexander COMP he.NOM seek.PRS meeting Darius
 ‘And for that sake she is so called, that she falls strong and travels so swiftly
 to be equal to that very swift creature which is called the Tigris. One can
 say quickest of Alexander’s journey, that he seeks a meeting with Darius...’
 (1300, Alexander.1113)
- (45) En að Lögbergi um morguninn stendur Oddur upp og
 and at law-rock about morning.DEF stand.PRS Oddur.NOM up and
 talar hátt: "Hér varð maður sekur í nótt er
 speak.PRS loudly here become.PST man outlawed in night REL
 Óspakur heitir í Norðlendingadómi um víg Vala. En
 Óspakur be-called.PRS in Norðlendingadómur about battle Vali.GEN but
 það, er að segja til sektarmarka hans [að hann
 CATPH be.PRS to say.INF to outlaw-characteristics he.GEN COMP he.NOM

er mikill vexti og karlmannlegur]_i.
 be.PRS great size and manly
 ‘And at the law rock one morning Oddur stands up and speaks loudly:
 "Here in the night a man was outlawed who is called Óspakur in Norðlendingadómur for Vali’s battle. But one can say for his outlaw characteristics that he is of a great size and manly.” (1350, BandamennM.575)

The analysis presented here is in line with the information-structural account of Old Icelandic clause structure I proposed in Chapter 4, whereby the verb serves as a boundary separating topic (prefinite) from comment (postfinite), see (46).

(46) TOPIC - V - COMMENT

The data in (42)-(45) are constructions which lack a topic and have a cataphoric *það* in the clause-initial prefinite position, see (47).

(47) *það* - V - all new

As such, cataphoric *það* appears to be a structural placeholder for the topic position when there is no appropriate constituent to occupy that position.

This information-structural account is also in line with the observation made in section 6.3.1 – that cataphoric ‘object’ *það* is (virtually) ruled out in constructions where a topicalized constituent occupies the clause-initial prefinite position, see (48); since there is already a topic in the topic position, *það* as a structural placeholder for this position is unmotivated.

(48) TOPIC - V ... (**það*)

Moreover, besides constructions with a clausal object, there are two more construction types in Old Icelandic where *það* occupies the clause-initial position and co-occurs with an embedded clause, namely those with a predicate which loosely translates as ‘happen’ (henceforth ‘HAPPEN’ type), e.g. (49) and scene-setting constructions, e.g. (50).¹¹ In such contexts, it is plausible that the clause-initial *það* has cataphoric reference to the embedded clause, though I do not rule out the possibility that it is an expletive.

¹¹See section 5.1.3.2 for discussion of the scene-setting construction type.

- (49) Í þenna tíma var uppgangur þeirra fóstbræðra sem mestur, in DEM time be.PST fame DEM foster-brothers as greatest, Þorgeirs Hávarssonar og Þormóðar Kolbrúnarskálds. Þeir áttu Þorgeir Hávarsson and Þormóðar Kolbrúnarskálds they own.PST ferju og létu víða verða til drepð og þóttu ekki ferry and let.PST widely become.INF PTCL hit and seem.PST NEG miklir jafnaðarmenn. **Það** bar til á einu sumri [að great equal-matches CATPH happen.PST PTCL on one summer COMP þorgils Máksson fann hval á Almenningum]. Þorgils Máksson find.PST whale on Almenningur
'At that time, the fame of those foster brothers, Þorgeir Hávarsson and Þormóðr Kolbrúnarskáld, was at its greatest. They had a ferry and let it become widely hit and they seemed no great equal match. It happened one summer that Þorgils Máksson found a whale at Almenningur.'
(1310, Grettir.1297)
- (50) Alanus gekk til kóns og kvaddi hann hæverskliga. Alanus.NOM go.PST to king and greet.PST he.ACC politely Kóngur bauð honum með sér að vera. Og þekktist hann king.NOM ask.PST he.DAT with REFL to be.INF and accept.PST he.NOM það og var hann þar um hríð. **Það** var eina DEM and be.PST he.NOM there about while CAPTH be.PST one.ACC nótt [að Alanus lá hjá Lukíus]. night.ACC COMP Alanus lie.PST by Lukíus
'Alanus went to the King and greeted him politely. The King asked him to stay with him. He accepted this and was there for a while. It was one night that Alanus lay with Lúkius.' (1450, Ectorsaga.820)

Both (49) and (50) are structurally similar to the examples in (42)-(45) above, in the sense that they all feature an embedded clause which constitutes discourse-new information. I therefore extend my analysis of the examples in (42)-(45) to constructions like (49) and (50), whereby *það* functions as a placeholder for the topic position in topicless sentences.

The IcePaHC results for the HAPPEN and scene-setting constructions confirm that in both types, *það* is strongly attested in the clause-initial prefinite position. In the HAPPEN type, *það* is present at an average frequency of 61.8% across all periods, see Table 6.13. In the scene-setting type, it is present in all instances (49/49), see Table 6.14. Examples of these two construction types with a topicalized XP in the clause-initial prefinite position are very rare in my data, and so it is not possible to test the possibility for a postfinite *það* to occur in such contexts.

Time period	<i>það</i> -V-XP	V-XP	Total	% <i>það</i> -V-XP	²
1150-1350	29	13	42	69.0%	ns
1351-1550	18	10	28	64.3%	ns
1551-1750	10	12	22	45.5%	ns
1751-1900	9	8	17	52.9%	ns
1901-2008	10	4	14	71.4%	ns
All periods	76	47	123	61.8%	

Table 6.13: Frequency of prefinite *það* in HAPPEN constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Time period	<i>það</i> -V-XP	V-XP	Total	% <i>það</i> -V-XP	²
1150-1350	16	0	16	100.0%	N/A
1351-1550	17	0	17	100.0%	N/A
1551-1750	8	0	8	100.0%	N/A
1751-1900	8	0	8	100.0%	N/A
1901-2008	0	0	0	N/A%	N/A
All periods	49	0	49	100.0%	

Table 6.14: Frequency of prefinite *það* in scene-setting constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

In sum, I have accounted for the positional restriction on cataphoric ‘object’ *það* by assuming that *það* functions as a structural placeholder for the topic position in such contexts, which are topicless sentences. Moreover, I have suggested that *það* also functions as a topic position placeholder in two further construction types – the HAPPEN and scene-setting constructions – which are ‘all new’ and thus lack a topic. This is interesting, since it shows that topic position placeholder *það* – generally assumed to be a relatively recent phenomenon in subjectless and presentational constructions – in fact has a long history in Icelandic, and is already solidly attested in the contexts discussed here in Old Icelandic.

6.4 Structurally ambiguous clausal arguments

So far, I have shown that there are two types of cataphoric *það* which were already established at an early stage of Icelandic:

1. Cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal subject which – at least in older Icelandic (pre-1750) – qualifies as a subject.
2. Cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal object, which I argued functions as a structural placeholder for the topic position in topicless sentences.

I now introduce a third type of construction where cataphoric *það* and a clausal argument co-occur in Old Icelandic, e.g. (51). The predicate in such contexts is a passive transitive which can take a clausal complement, e.g. *segja* ‘say’ (henceforth ‘say-type predicate’).

- (51) **Það**_{*i*} er sagt [að Bárður bóndi átti
 CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP Bárður farmer own.PST
 sætur]_{*i*}.
 mountain-pastures
 (1350, Finnbogi.636.641)¹²

I argue that constructions like (51) are structurally ambiguous with respect to the grammatical function which is assigned to the clausal argument.

6.4.1 Two possible analyses

I argue that constructions like (51) allow for two possible analyses:

1. As a promotional passive construction, in which the clausal argument maps to SUBJ.
2. As a syntactically active impersonal construction, in which the clausal arguments maps to OBJ.

This difference draws on the distinction between passivization and impersonalization outlined in section 2.3, and can be modelled with Kibort’s Mapping Theory within LFG, as introduced in section 2.2.2.

A transitive predicate like *segja* ‘say’ in (51) takes two arguments: *arg*₁, Agent and *arg*₂, Theme. The default argument-function mapping for a say-type predicate is as in (52).

¹²Given the structural ambiguity which I argue for constructions like (51), I omit an idiomatic translation for such examples.

(52)		Agent	Theme			
		/	/			
	say (default)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >			
		[-o]	[-r]			
		/	/			
		SUBJ	OBJ			

As outlined in section 2.3, I assume that the difference between passivization and impersonalization concerns the status of the mapping between arguments and functions. Passivization is an operation which alters the default mapping, and involves a demotion and – prototypically at least – also a promotion component.¹³ Thus, when a transitive predicate like *segja* ‘say’ is passivized, the result is the mapping in (53). The first argument (arg₁, Agent) – which by default maps to SUBJ – is demoted to an OBL. The second clausal argument (arg₂, Theme) – which by default maps to OBJ – is promoted to SUBJ.¹⁴

(53)		Agent	Theme			
		/	/			
	say (promotional passive)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >			
		[-o]	[-r]			
		[+r]				
		/	/			
		OBL	SUBJ			

By contrast, impersonalization is an operation which does not alter the default mapping between arguments and functions. The default mapping in (52) thus remains the same when a say-type predicate undergoes impersonalization, see (54). The first argument (arg₁, Agent) still maps to SUBJ and the second clausal argument (arg₂, Theme) still maps to OBJ. The only difference between a default

¹³See section 2.3.1, where I also discuss the possibility of non-promotional passives of transitive predicates, with demotion of the default SUBJ argument and preservation of the second argument as an OBJ.

¹⁴I do not consider the possibility that the construction in (51) is a non-promotional passive here, since it does not alter the two possibilities for cataphoric *það*. I discuss this possibility in section 7.1.4 in the context of subjectless constructions.

say-type predicate and an impersonal say-type predicate concerns the status of the SUBJ at c-structure. In the default, the SUBJ is present at c-structure, while in the impersonal the SUBJ is suppressed, i.e. not realised at c-structure. The result of impersonalization is thus a ‘subjectless’ construction.

(54)

	Agent	Theme	
	/	/	
say (impersonal)	< arg ₁	arg ₂	>
	[-o]	[-r]	
	/	/	
	SUBJ	OBJ	
	∅		

These two different analyses for constructions like (51) in turn have consequences for the analysis of cataphoric *pað* in such contexts. In section 2.4.2, I proposed an analysis for constructions where cataphoric *pað* co-occurs with a clausal argument, whereby *pað* and the clausal argument unify under the same grammatical function at f-structure. I extend this analysis to the ambiguous construction type in (51). Thus, in the passive analysis in (53) – where the clausal argument is promoted to SUBJ – cataphoric *pað* is also assigned the SUBJ function. By contrast, in the impersonal analysis in (54) – where the clausal argument is preserved as an OBJ – cataphoric *pað* is assigned the OBJ function. I summarise this proposal in Table 6.15.

Analysis	Clausal argument	Cataphoric <i>pað</i>
Passive	SUBJ	SUBJ
Impersonal	OBJ	OBJ

Table 6.15: Two analyses for ‘It is said that...’ construction type

In the next section, I show that the corpus findings for the positional distribution of cataphoric *pað* in this construction type support the availability of these two analyses.

The structural ambiguity of constructions like (51) has been acknowledged elsewhere for other Germanic languages. Berman (2003: 162-4) presents an LFG analysis of parallel constructions in German with the predicate *gesagt*, the passive

verb of *sagen* ‘say’, which also takes two arguments – an Agent and a Theme – which by default map to SUBJ and OBJ respectively. Berman argues that, in such constructions, the Theme straightforwardly maps to SUBJ if it is a DP. If the Theme is clausal – as in the example in (51) – then it can map to either SUBJ or OBJ, as formalised using a different version of Lexical Mapping Theory in (55) (Berman 2003: 162).

(55)	gesagt	<	agent	theme	>
			[–o]	[–r]	
				[NOM]	

			SUBJ (DP)		
			SUBJ/OBJ (CP)		

Bennis (1986: 108) points out that in Dutch constructions with passive transitives which take a clausal complement, both *het* (*it*-type expletive) and *er* (*there*-type expletive) are possible, e.g. (56) (examples taken from Vikner 1995: 299).

- (56) a. **Het** wordt gezegd [dat Jan ziek is].
 it is said that Jan ill is
- b. **Er** wordt gezegd [dat Jan ziek is].
 there is said that Jan ill is

Working in a rather different theoretical framework, in examples with *het* like (56-a) Bennis assumes that *het* is base-generated in the object position (i.e. within the VP) and is ‘moved’ into the subject position; the embedded clause is assumed to be in an adjoined position, see (57-a). In examples with *er* like (56-b), Bennis assumes that the embedded clause occupies the object position; *er* is base-generated in the subject position.¹⁵ This difference is in turn related to the claim that *het* has argument status (i.e. is a non-referential argument, a so-called ‘quasi-argument’) while *er* does not (i.e. is a non-referential non-argument, a ‘true expletive’).¹⁶ On this assumption, the argument *het* can be base-generated in the object position where it receives a thematic role, whereas the non-argument *er* can be base-generated in the subject position of a passive, since this position does not assign a thematic role.

¹⁵The bracketed structures in (57) come from Vikner (1995: 229).

¹⁶I discussed quasi-arguments versus true expletives in section 5.2.4.

- (57) a. [CP Het_i wordt [IP t_i [VP t_i gezegd [CP dat Jan ziek is]]]]
 b. [CP Er_i wordt [IP t_i [VP gezegd [CP dat Jan ziek is]]]]

What is relevant to my analysis is the fact that in (57-a), the clause-initial element originates as an object modified by the embedded clause and is moved into the subject position, in which case it is lexicalized as *het*. In (57-b), the clause-initial element originates as a subject, in which case it is lexicalized as *er*. The consequences of Bennis' analysis for non-referential *het* and *er* are therefore notionally similar to my proposal that cataphoric *það* can be either a SUBJ or OBJ in structurally ambiguous constructions like (51).

Vikner (1995: 233-4; 242-6) also discusses constructions with passive verbs which take a clausal complement in Danish, noting that both *det* (*it*-type expletive) and *der* (*there*-type expletive) are possible, e.g. (58).

- (58) a. **Det** blev sagt [at du ville komme].
 it was said that you would come
 (Vikner 1995: 244)
 b. **Der** blev sagt [at du ville komme].
 there was said that you would come
 (Vikner 1995: 242)

The second analysis which I have proposed for constructions like (51) assumes that a morphologically passive construction is a syntactically active impersonal construction with a suppressed subject. As I discuss in detail in Chapter 7, there is a precedent for such constructions in Icelandic. Other authors who have argued that certain morphologically passive constructions are syntactically active impersonals are Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009) for impersonal passives and Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002) for the New Impersonal/Passive, although the latter analysis remains disputed (Eythórsson 2008; Jónsson 2009). I discuss these analyses in detail in Chapter 7.

6.4.2 The status of cataphoric *það*

So far, I have argued that in structurally ambiguous constructions like (59), cataphoric *það* can be either a SUBJ or an OBJ, depending on whether the construction is analysed as a passive with promotion of the clausal argument to SUBJ, or an

impersonal with preservation of the clausal argument as an OBJ.

- (59) Það_i er sagt [að Bárður bóndi átti
 CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP Bárður farmer own.PST
 sætur]_i.
 mountain-pastures
 (1350, Finnbogi.636.641)

In section 6.2, I showed that in earlier stages of Icelandic cataphoric ‘subject’ *það* in constructions with a clausal subject frequently occurs in both pre- and postfinite position, as expected of an Icelandic subject. Meanwhile, in section 6.3 I showed that cataphoric ‘object’ *það* is virtually restricted to the prefinite position where it serves as a topic position placeholder, and is scarcely attested in postfinite position.

With these findings in mind, the positional distribution of cataphoric *það* in the ambiguous construction types in (59) supports the availability of the two analyses I have proposed. While the overall number of examples of the ambiguous clausal argument construction type in IcePaHC is small, the results indicate that cataphoric *það* in this context occupies an intermediate position between ‘subject’ *það* and ‘object’ *það*, with respect to its frequency in postfinite position. In section 6.2, cataphoric ‘subject’ *það* was observed at an average frequency of 65.0% in postfinite position. By contrast, in section 6.3, ‘object’ *það* was observed to be virtually unattested in postfinite position (3.7%; 4.7% in personal and impersonals respectively). Cataphoric *það* in the ambiguous type occurs in the postfinite position at an average frequency of 32.6%, i.e. not as frequent as ‘subject’ *það* but more frequent than ‘object’ *það*, see Table 6.16.

Time period	XP-V- <i>það</i>	XP-V-XP	Total	% XP-V- <i>það</i>	²
1150-1350	9	16	25	36.0%	ns
1351-1550	2	2	4	50.0%	ns
1551-1750	3	4	7	42.9%	ns
1751-1900	1	3	4	25.0%	ns
1901-2008	0	6	6	0.0%	ns
All periods	15	31	46	32.6%	

Table 6.16: Frequency of postfinite *það* in ambiguous clausal argument constructions with topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

I interpret this intermediate result as supporting my proposal that in these ambiguous contexts, *það* can be a *SUBJ* (in the passive analysis) – in which case it is preferred in postfinite position – or an *OBJ* (in the impersonal analysis) – in which case it is dispreferred in postfinite position, in line with the positional restriction observed for cataphoric ‘object’ *það* in general.

The corpus findings also reveal that cataphoric *það* occurs very frequently in the prefinite position in the ambiguous construction type, see Table 6.17.

Time period	<i>það</i> -V-XP	V-XP	Total	% <i>það</i> -V-XP	²
1150-1350	33	5	38	86.8%	ns
1351-1550	5	4	9	55.6%	ns
1551-1750	6	3	9	66.7%	ns
1751-1900	5	0	5	100.0%	ns
1901-2008	1	0	1	100.0%	ns
All periods	50	12	62	80.6%	

Table 6.17: Frequency of prefinite *það* in ambiguous clausal argument constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

This finding is in line with the proposal made in this section; regardless of whether *það* is analysed as a *SUBJ* or an *OBJ* in such contexts, it is expected to be frequently present in the prefinite position on the basis of the results for constructions with an unambiguous clausal subject and those with an unambiguous clausal object (sections 6.2 and 6.3 respectively).

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have shown that there are two types of cataphoric *það* which are established in earlier Icelandic (pre-1750):

1. A cataphoric *það* which shares the *SUBJ* function with a clausal argument and behaves like a subject (section 6.2).
2. A cataphoric *það* which shares the *OBJ* function with a clausal argument and behaves like a structural placeholder for the topic position in topicless sentences (section 6.3).

I showed in section 6.2 that ‘subject’ cataphoric *það* undergoes a change as of c.1751, whereby it begins to lose its subject status and transitions towards becoming a structural placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position; the corpus findings indicate that this change is still ongoing in present-day Icelandic.

Finally, in section 6.4 I claimed that a certain type of construction with cataphoric *það* and a clausal argument – specifically with a passive transitive say-type predicate – allows for two analyses which I modelled with Kibort’s Mapping Theory:

1. A promotional passive construction with a clausal *SUBJ*.
2. A syntactically active impersonal construction with a clausal *OBJ*.

The two different analyses in turn resulted in two different analyses for cataphoric *það* – which can either map to *SUBJ* in the promotional passive analysis or to *OBJ* in the impersonal analysis. This dual possibility for cataphoric *það* was supported by the observed positional distribution of cataphoric *það* in such contexts.

Chapter 7

The development of expletive *það* in subjectless constructions

In this chapter, I examine the historical emergence of expletive *það* in various types of subjectless construction in Icelandic. Section 7.1 discusses the different ways in which a clause can be subjectless in Icelandic, which I model with Kibort's Mapping Theory (see section 2.2.1). Section 7.2 outlines the relevant methodology for the investigations presented in this chapter. Section 7.3 examines the properties of various types of subjectless construction in Old Icelandic, with particular attention to the status of *það*. Section 7.4 presents a diachronic account for the development whereby *það* spread to the full range of subjectless constructions in later stages of Icelandic. Section 7.5 summarises the chapter.

7.1 Types of subjectlessness in modern Icelandic

In Chapter 2, I introduced 'subjectless' as a label for any construction which lacks a constituent at c-structure which maps to the SUBJ function. I also showed that a construction can be subjectless in different ways and, in particular, how Kibort's Mapping Theory can be used to model the difference between constructions which are subjectless via passivization (demotion of default SUBJ argument), and those which are subjectless via impersonalization (suppression of default SUBJ argument). Icelandic exhibits a number of construction types which qualify as subjectless by this definition (see also section 5.1.1). The various types are exemplified in (1)-(7). Note that the clause-initial *það* in (2)-(7) does not qualify as a subject, as

I argued in section 5.2.3.

- (1) Komum til London í gær. Sáum.PST...
 come.PST.1PL to London yesterday see.PST.1PL
 ‘We came to London yesterday. We saw...’ (Thráinsson 2007: 477)
- (2) Það var að vora.
 EXPL be.PST.3SG to become-spring.INF
 ‘It was becoming spring.’ (2008, Mamma.1066)
- (3) Það má ekki ganga á grasinu.
 EXPL may.PRS.3SG NEG go.INF on GRASS.DEF
 ‘One is not allowed to walk on the grass.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 310)
- (4) Það er varla talandi við hann.
 EXPL be.PRS.3SG hardly talk.PRS.PTCP with him
 ‘One can hardly talk to him.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 310)
- (5) Það var dansað alla nóttina.
 EXPL be.PST.3SG dance.PASS.PTCP all night.DEF
 ‘There was dancing all night.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 266)
- (6) Það var lamið stúlkuna í klessu.
 EXPL be.PST.3SG beat.PASS.PTCP girl.ACC.SG.DEF in mess
 ‘The girl was badly beaten up.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 275)
- (7) Það er mælt, [að þeir fóstbræður
 CATPH be.PRS.3SG say.PASS.PTCP COMP they.NOM foster-brothers
 hefði ærið traust á jötningnum Surt í Surtshellir]...
 have.PST.SBJV sufficient trust on giant.DEF Surtur in Surtshellir
 ‘It is said that those foster brothers had sufficient trust in the giant Surtur
 in Surtshellir...’ (1830, Hellismenn.187)

(1) lacks a subject at c-structure but the subject is recoverable by number and person marking on the verb (‘pronoun incorporation’, see Bresnan et al. 2015: 151). (2) is subjectless due to the fact that the predicate does not select a subject argument in the first place. This is what I will refer to as an ‘inherently subjectless’ predicate; such predicates are prototypically those with reference to weather or the passing of time. (3) and (4) each have a morphologically active predicate whose main verb usually selects a subject argument: *ganga* ‘go’ and *tala* ‘talk’ respectively. In (3) and (4), however, there is no subject present at c-structure. The examples in (5)-(7) have morphologically passive predicates. The predicate in (5) is a morphologically passive intransitive. As I showed with Mapping Theory in section 2.2.2, intransitive predicates select only one argument which maps to SUBJ by default.

If this single argument is either demoted to an oblique in the argument-function mapping (via passivization) or suppressed at c-structure (via impersonalization), the result at c-structure is in both cases a subjectless construction like (5).

In (6) and (7), the predicate is a morphologically passive transitive. Transitive predicates select two arguments: one maps by default to *SUBJ* and one maps by default to *OBJ* (see section 2.2.2). If a transitive predicate is passivized, the default *SUBJ* argument is demoted and the default *OBJ* argument can be promoted to *SUBJ*. However, as I will show in this chapter, there is reason to assume that constructions like (6) and (7) allow for an analysis whereby the default *OBJ* argument is not promoted to *SUBJ* but is preserved as an *OBJ*. The construction may be a non-promotional passive where the default *SUBJ* argument is demoted to an *OBL*, or an active impersonal construction where the default *SUBJ* argument remains a *SUBJ* but is suppressed at c-structure; either way the result at c-structure is a subjectless construction.¹

In all the examples apart from (1), the finite verb has default 3SG marking. The examples also show that subjectless constructions in Icelandic can have either morphologically active predicates, e.g. (2)-(4) or morphologically passive predicates, e.g. (5)-(7). As I introduced in section 2.3, there is not necessarily a one-to-one mapping between a construction's morphological status as active/passive and its syntactic status as active/passive. As I show in this chapter, a morphologically passive construction in Icelandic may be either syntactically passive or syntactically active.

All types but (1) are contexts in which *það* typically appears in the clause-initial prefinite position, at least in modern Icelandic. Since my main focus is on the development of *það*, I will not discuss the first type (pronoun incorporation), since expletive *það* does not occur in this context. In the remaining subjectless contexts

¹ Icelandic also exhibits a third type of construction with a morphologically passive transitive predicate and expletive *það*, the transitive passive presentational construction (see section 5.1.2.3):

- (i) Það voru gerðir út hlaupastrákar.
 EXPL be.PST.PL send.PASS.PTCP.PL out running-boy.NOM.PL
 'Running boys were sent out.' (2008, Ofsi.556)

As I show in section 8.1, there is good reason to analyse the postfinite noun phrase in such constructions as a subject. I therefore exclude such constructions from this discussion of subjectless constructions.

in (2)-(7) in which *það* can appear, I examine the source of the subjectlessness in each of these contexts in closer detail, using Kibort's Mapping Theory to model different types of subjectlessness.

7.1.1 Inherently subjectless predicates

Firstly, there are 'inherently subjectless' predicates which do not select a subject argument at all. Predicates with reference to the weather and the passing of time are prototypical examples, e.g. (8)-(9).

(8) En *það* var heitt þarna inni.
but EXPL be.PST hot there inside
'But it was hot inside there.' (1985, Margsaga.835)

(9) *Það* var að vora.
EXPL be.PST to become-spring.INF
'It was becoming spring.' (2008, Mamma.1066)

This inherently subjectless type contrasts with other types of subjectless construction in Icelandic, whose subjectlessness is not inherent but is rather the result of some operation (e.g. passivization or impersonalization, as discussed below).

The standard view of Icelandic weather verbs is that they do not select any argument at all and are thus inherently subjectless ('no argument predicates', e.g. Sigurðsson 1989: 315; Thráinsson 2007: 267). This view has however been contested by Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir (2016), who argue that Icelandic weather verbs select a quasi-argument as their subject (i.e. a non-referential argument), in line with a theoretical assumption adopted in a different framework to the one I use here. As I argued in section 5.2.4, I do not consider weather-*það* as a quasi-argument, instead assuming that it is not a subject of any kind but a structural placeholder which has no representation at f-structure. Accordingly, I follow the standard view that weather predicates are inherently subjectless.

The argument structure of inherently subjectless predicates like those in (8) and (9) lacks any argument to map to subject. In section 2.2.2, I introduced the fact that Kibort's revised version of Mapping Theory renders the Subject Condition – an f-structure constraint which states that every verbal predicate must have a SUBJ – redundant. As such, inherently subjectless predicates are possible within the Kibortian view of a-structure, and can be modelled as an empty argument frame,

see (10) (cf. Kibort 2006: 303-4, ‘inherently impersonal predicates’).²

(10) inherently subjectless predicate < >

7.1.2 Morphologically active predicates

The second subjectless context which I discuss are constructions with morphologically active predicates, e.g. (11) and (12). (11) is the impersonal modal construction; (12) is the impersonal present participle construction (see section 5.1.1.1).

(11) Það má ekki ganga á grasinu.
EXPL may NEG go.INF ON GRASS.DEF
‘One is not allowed to walk on the grass.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 310)

(12) Það er varla talandi við hann.
EXPL be.PRS hardly talk.PRS.PTCP with him
‘One can hardly talk to him.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 310)

Unlike the examples discussed in section 7.1.1, the predicates in (11) and (12) are not inherently subjectless. The predicate *ganga* ‘go’ in (11) is intransitive and takes one argument (arg_1 , Agent) which by default maps to SUBJ. I show the default mapping for *ganga* in a construction like (13) in (14).

(13) Þau ganga rösklega burt...
they.NOM go.PRS bravely away
‘They go away bravely...’ (Mím, BAEKUR-BOM)

(14)

		Agent	
		/	
	ganga (default)	< arg_1 >	
		[-o]	
		/	
		SUBJ	

The predicate of (12), *tala* ‘talk’, is most commonly intransitive as in (15), in

²Unlike Kibort, I restrict use of the term ‘impersonal’ to constructions which are subjectless via the specific operation of ‘impersonalization’ (suppression of the default SUBJ argument at c-structure); hence my use of the alternative label ‘inherently *subjectless* predicate’.

which case it takes one argument (arg_1 , Agent) which by default maps to SUBJ, as shown in (16).

- (15) Þú talar eins og argasti rasisti, mamma...
 you.NOM talk.PRS like land-locked racist, mum
 ‘You talk like a land-locked racist, Mum...’ (Mím, BAEKUR-B1K)

- (16)
- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| | | Agent | |
| | | / | |
| tala (intransitive; default) | < | arg_1 | > |
| | | [-o] | |
| | | / | |
| | | SUBJ | |

Tala can also be transitive as in (17), in which case it takes two arguments (arg_1 , Agent; arg_2 , Theme) which by default map to SUBJ and OBJ respectively, as shown in (18).

- (17) Hann talar öll tungumál...
 he.NOM talk.PRS all.ACC languages.ACC
 ‘He speaks all languages...’ (Mím, BAEKUR-B2M)

- (18)
- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|----------------|---|
| | | Agent | Theme | |
| | | / | / | |
| tala (transitive; default) | < | arg_1 | arg_2 | > |
| | | [-o] | [-r] | |
| | | / | / | |
| | | SUBJ | OBJ | |

What is the status of the subject in (11) and (12)? Despite the fact that constructions like (11) and (12) lack a constituent at c-structure which maps to SUBJ, there is evidence that the default agentive SUBJ argument is preserved in the argument-function mapping and is present at f-structure, though suppressed at c-structure via impersonalization. This analysis is notionally similar – though theoretically rather different – to that proposed by Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009) within mainstream generative grammar, who claim that constructions like (11) and (12) have an ‘impersonal null subject’. Evidence which Sigurðsson & Egerland

(2009) provide for this claim includes the fact that such constructions are possible with verbs which require a subject controller, e.g. *reyna*, ‘try’ in (19).

- (19) Það má reyna að opna dyrnar.
 EXPL may try.INF to open.INF doors.DEF
 ‘One can try to open the doors.’ (Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009: 169)

As shown in section 2.3.2, the result of impersonalization is a construction in which the default mapping between grammatical functions and arguments is preserved; the only change is that the realisation of the subject is suppressed at c-structure. I show the mapping for (11) and (12) as subjectless impersonal constructions in (20) and (21) respectively, assuming that *tala* in (12) is intransitive.

- (20)
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Agent |
| | / |
| ganga (impersonal) | < arg ₁ > |
| | [-o] |
| | / |
| | SUBJ |
| | ∅ |

- (21)
- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Agent |
| | / |
| tala (intransitive; impersonal) | < arg ₁ > |
| | [-o] |
| | / |
| | SUBJ |
| | ∅ |

This type of subjectless construction is discussed by Kibort (2006: 296-302) in relation to Polish data (‘morpholexical impersonals’). In the Icelandic context, I refer to this specific type of construction whose source of subjectlessness is impersonalization as ‘morphologically active impersonals’.

7.1.3 Morphologically passive intransitive predicates

The subjectless construction types discussed so far have all had predicates with active morphology. The subjectless constructions which will be discussed in the rest of this section have a morphologically passive predicate. As highlighted in section 2.3, a morphologically passive construction need not necessarily be syntactically passive (i.e. involve demotion of the default *SUBJ* argument to an *OBL*); it may also be syntactically active (i.e. preserve the default *SUBJ* argument in the argument-function mapping, but suppress its realisation at c-structure via impersonalization). As will be shown in the rest of this section, there is good evidence that certain morphologically passive constructions in Icelandic allow for a syntactically active impersonal analysis.

Firstly, I discuss constructions which have a morphologically passive intransitive predicate, e.g. (22). Such constructions are standardly referred to as ‘impersonal passives’. For sake of continuity, I will use this term here to refer nominally to constructions with morphologically passive intransitive predicates like (22); this is not a statement on the syntactic status of such constructions as either passive or impersonal and syntactically active, a complex issue which I discuss below.

- (22) Það var dansað alla nóttina.
EXPL be.PST dance.PASS.PTCP all night.DEF
‘It was danced all night.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 266)

To begin with, I assume that the construction in (22) is not just morphologically passive, but is also syntactically passive, and pairs with the active counterpart in (23).

- (23) Fólk dansaði alla nóttina.
people.NOM dance.PST all night.DEF
‘People danced all night.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 266)

Since an intransitive predicate like *dansa* takes only one argument (*arg*₁, Agent) which by default maps to *SUBJ*, the output of passivization (which demotes the default *SUBJ* to an *OBL*) is a subjectless construction; there is no second argument which could be promoted to *SUBJ*. This is shown in the mappings in (24) and (25).

- (24)
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Agent |
| | / |
| dansa (default) | < arg ₁ > |
| | [-o] |
| | / |
| | SUBJ |
- (25)
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| | Agent |
| | / |
| dansa (passive) | < arg ₁ > |
| | [-o] |
| | [+r] |
| | / |
| | OBL |

Assuming that (22) is syntactically passive and has the mapping in (25), the default SUBJ argument is demoted to an OBL and is no longer as SUBJ in the argument-function mapping. Since no argument maps to SUBJ, there is no SUBJ present at f-structure. This is in line with the traditional view on Germanic impersonal passives, as noted by Kibort & Maling (2015: 149).

However, recent research has highlighted a good deal of evidence which indicates that constructions like (22) in modern Icelandic allow for an analysis where a SUBJ is present at f-structure (e.g. Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, 2015; Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009). There are various criteria which can indicate the status of the SUBJ at f-structure in contexts like impersonal passives, which lack a subject at c-structure (see also Blevins 2003; Kibort 2006; Kibort & Maling 2015; Maling 1993; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002, 2015). The various criteria test whether phenomena which require a syntactically operational SUBJ at f-structure as an antecedent – such as reflexives and subject-orientated adjuncts – are grammatical in the relevant context.

The nationwide survey of Icelandic by Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002) found that about half of adult speakers accepted impersonal passives with subject-bound reflexives and subject-orientated adjuncts, i.e. two phenomena which require an f-structure SUBJ as an antecedent. I show an example of an impersonal passive with a subject-bound reflexive in (26) (Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009: 170).

- (26) Eftir vinnu var bara farið heim til sín.
 after work be.PST just go.PASS.PTCP home to REFL
 ‘After work, one just went home (to one’s own place).’

I provide an example with a subject-orientated adjunct in (27) (Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002: 125). This example features an unaccusative predicate, *koma* ‘come’. Since unaccusative predicates cannot usually be passivized (e.g. Perlmutter 1978), I interpret this as further support for the syntactically active impersonal analysis. I discuss the mapping for impersonal unaccusative predicates below.

- (27) Það var komið skellihlæjandi í tímann.
 EXPL be.PRS come.PASS.PTCP laughing-out-loud in class.DEF
 ‘People came into the class laughing out loud.’

Moreover, the study by Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002) found there to be a correlation in this context: the more subject-orientated adjuncts were accepted, the more simple reflexives were accepted.³

Some speakers of modern Icelandic can form impersonal passives with reflexive verbs according to Eythórsson (2008), who provides the examples in (28) (taken from Sigurðsson 1989: 355).⁴

- (28) a. Það var lekið sér allan daginn.
 EXPL be.PST play.PASS.PTCP REFL all day.DEF
 ‘People played all day.’
 b. Það var baðað sig á laugardögum.
 EXPL be.PST bathe.PASS.PTCP REFL ON saturdays
 ‘People took a bath on Saturdays.’

Impersonal passives are also grammatical in which a covert SUBJ controls into an infinitival clause, as pointed out by Sigurðsson (2011: 159), see (29).

- (29) a. Það er dansað til að skemmta sér hér.
 EXPL be.PRS dance.PASS.PTCP to to amuse.INF REFL here
 ‘People dance in order to amuse themselves here.’

³At the same time, Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002) also found that there were speakers who did not allow for bound reflexives, nor for subject-orientated adjuncts in impersonal passives, suggesting that the active impersonal analysis is unavailable for some speakers.

⁴Sigurðsson (1989: 355) marks the examples in (28) with a question mark, though Eythórsson disagrees with this judgement.

- b. Það er reynt að dansa hér.
 EXPL be.PRS try.PASS.PTCP to dance.INF here
 ‘People try to dance here.’

Other evidence which supports a syntactically active impersonal analysis for constructions like (22) concerns properties of the construction which are usually not possible for syntactically passive constructions. As already mentioned, it is standardly acknowledged that it is not possible to form syntactic passives with predicates which take a non-agentive subject argument, e.g. unaccusative predicates. As mentioned in section 2.2.2, arg_1 is usually specified as $[-o]$ for transitive and unergative predicates, but is specified as $[-r]$ for unaccusative predicates. Thus the default mapping for an unaccusative predicate is as in (30).

(30)	y	
	/	
unaccusative (default)	$< \text{arg}_1 >$	
	$[-r]$	
	/	
	SUBJ	

Since arg_1 – which by default maps to SUBJ – is specified as $[-r]$, it cannot be downgraded to an oblique (which is $[-o, +r]$), since adding $[+r]$ to an element already specified as $[-r]$ would violate monotonicity (see section 2.2.1). This accounts for the fact that syntactic passives of unaccusatives are generally ruled out (e.g. Perlmutter 1978).

Consequently, if constructions like (22) only allow for a syntactically passive analysis and not for a syntactically active analysis, they should not be possible with predicates which take a non-agentive subject. The status of Icelandic impersonal passives with respect to this diagnostic is however not clear-cut. On the one hand, Thráinsson (2007: 267) highlights that impersonal passives are ruled out with weather predicates (which take no argument at all, see section 7.1.1), predicates which take oblique subjects in the active (oblique subjects are never Agents), true middles (which have no Agent) and certain unaccusative predicates (which typically take a Theme argument). On the other hand, impersonal passives are possible with certain other unaccusative predicates. Eythórsson (2008: 188) cites *koma*

'come', *fara* 'go', *detta* 'fall', *hverfa* 'disappear' and *vera* 'be' as examples of unaccusatives which are possible in impersonal passives, see (31).

- (31) Það var komið (farið, verið...)
 EXPL be.PST arrive.PASS.PTCP go.PASS.PTCP be.PASS.PTCP
 'People arrived (went, were...)'

Since syntactic passives of unaccusative predicates are ruled out for the reasons just outlined, I assume that constructions like (31) are syntactically active impersonals and have the mapping in (32).

- (32)
- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | y |
| | / |
| unaccusative (impersonal) | < arg_1 > |
| | [-r] |
| | / |
| | SUBJ |
| | ∅ |

The grammaticality of constructions like (31) is thus strong evidence that a syntactically active impersonal analysis is available for Icelandic impersonal passives.

Another piece of evidence in favour of the syntactically active impersonal analysis with suppression of the default SUBJ argument is the fact that it is not possible for there to be an agentive *by*-phrase in impersonal passive constructions, as is generally acknowledged, see (33) (Thráinsson 2007: 270).⁵

- (33) Það var dansað alla nóttina (*af fólkinu).
 EXPL be.PST dance.PASS.PTCP all night by people.DAT.DEF
 Intended: 'It was danced all night by the people.'

Since passivization demotes the default SUBJ argument (prototypically Agent) to an oblique, it is possible to reintroduce this Agent in the form of a *by*-phrase. Impersonalization, however, merely suppresses the default SUBJ argument at c-structure; it remains a SUBJ at f-structure and thus it is not possible to reintroduce it via a *by*-phrase. Due to the fact that an agentive *by*-phrase is ungrammatical in imper-

⁵See also Sigurðsson (1989: 322).

sonal passives, such constructions thus pattern with active impersonal rather than syntactically passive constructions.

I review the status of Icelandic impersonal passives with respect to the diagnostic criteria for passivization and impersonalization outlined above. The evidence as discussed above is summarised in Table 7.1.

Diagnostic	Passive (demoted default SUBJ)	Impersonal (suppressed default SUBJ)	Icelandic impersonal passive
Reflexive	–	+	+/-
Subject-orientated adjunct	–	+	+/-
Unaccusative predicate	–	+	+/-
Agentive <i>by</i> -phrase	+	–	–

Table 7.1: Diagnosing the Icelandic impersonal passive construction

On the basis of this evidence for present-day Icelandic, it seems reasonable to assume that impersonal passive constructions like (22) – i.e. morphologically passive constructions with intransitive predicates – allow for a syntactically active analysis where the default SUBJ argument is preserved in the argument-function mapping though suppressed at c-structure (via impersonalization). Under the syntactically active impersonal analysis, the construction in (22) would thus have the mapping in (34); cf. the mapping for the syntactically passive analysis of (22) in (25).

(34)		Agent
		/
	dansa (impersonal)	< arg ₁ >
		[-o]
		/
		SUBJ
		∅

While the mapping relations assumed for (22) differ between the passivization and impersonalization analyses, the two operations result in identical c-structures; in the absence of a second argument to promote to SUBJ, the difference between

demoting the default SUBJ argument (passivization) and suppressing the default SUBJ argument (impersonalization) is not visible at c-structure, since both result in a subjectless construction. The difference between passivization and impersonalization in constructions with intransitive predicates is thus structurally ambiguous, but can be teased apart via the various criteria discussed above, which indicate the status of the default SUBJ argument at f-structure and in the argument-function mapping. In section 7.3, I investigate these possibilities for superficially similar constructions in Old Icelandic.

7.1.4 Morphologically passive transitive predicates

The final type of subjectless construction which I discuss features a transitive predicate with passive morphology and one non-agentive argument at c-structure, and allows for an analysis in which this argument is not promoted to SUBJ. This category of subjectlessness comprises two construction types, shown here in (35) and (36). I show the non-agentive argument in each case in bold. I gloss *það* in (36) as CATPH rather than EXPL, since *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument which it cataphorically refers to (see Chapter 6).

(35) *Það* var lamið **stúlkuna** í klessu.
 EXPL be.PST.SG beat.PASS.PTCP.SG.NT girl.ACC.SG.DEF in mess
 ‘The girl was badly beaten up.’ (Thráinsson 2007: 274-7)

(36) *Það* er mælt, [**að þeir fóstbræður**
 CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP they.NOM foster-brothers
hefði ærið traust á jötninum Surt í Surtshelli]...
 have.PST.SBJV sufficient trust on giant.DEF Surtur in Surtshellir
 ‘It is said that those foster brothers had sufficient trust in the giant Surtur in Surtshellir..’ (1830, Hellismenn.187)

I introduced the construction type in (35) in section 5.1.1.2 as the New Impersonal/Passive construction. The non-agentive argument is a postfinite noun phrase which has non-nominative marking. In such constructions, the postfinite noun phrase can be definite, as in (35). The passive participle does not agree with the postfinite noun phrase but is instead marked for default number and gender (SG.NT). These properties distinguish the type in (35) from transitive passive presentational constructions like (37), in which the postfinite noun phrase argument

has nominative case marking, cannot typically be definite and shows agreement with the passive participle (see section 5.1.2.3).

- (37) Það voru gerðir út hlaupastrákar.
 EXPL be.PST.PL send.PASS.PTCP.PL out running-boy.NOM.PL
 ‘Running boys were sent out.’ (2008, Ofsi.556)

As mentioned in section 5.1.2.3, this construction has sparked much debate in the literature and has been labelled the ‘New Impersonal’ (Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2002) or alternatively the ‘New Passive’ (e.g. Eythórsson 2008; Jónsson 2009). These analyses agree on the fact that the non-nominative argument is an object. The point of debate concerns the status of the subject. Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002) claim that the New Impersonal/Passive is a syntactically active impersonal construction with suppression of the default SUBJ argument (see also Maling 2006; Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir 2015). I show the default mapping for a transitive predicate like *lemja* ‘beat’ which takes two arguments (arg_1 , Agent; arg_2 , Patient) in (38). The mapping for the active impersonal analysis of the construction in (35) is shown in (39).

- | | | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| (38) | | Agent | Patient |
| | | / | / |
| | lemja (default) | < arg_1 | arg_2 > |
| | | [-o] | [-r] |
| | | / | / |
| | | SUBJ | OBJ |

- | | | | |
|------|--------------------|-------------|-----------|
| (39) | | Agent | Patient |
| | | / | / |
| | lemja (impersonal) | < arg_1 | arg_2 > |
| | | [-o] | [-r] |
| | | / | / |
| | | SUBJ | OBJ |
| | | \emptyset | |

The alternative view claims that the New Impersonal/Passive in (35) is a syntactically passive construction with the non-nominative argument preserved as an object (Eythórsson 2008; Jónsson 2009). In Mapping Theory this is modelled as a non-promotional passive which involves demotion of the default SUBJ argument to an OBL, but no promotion of the second argument to SUBJ. This analysis is shown in (40); cf. the mapping for a straightforward promotional passive in (41).⁶

(40)	Agent	Patient	
	/	/	
lemja (non-promotional passive)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >	
	[-o]	[-r]	
	[+r]		
	/	/	
	OBL	OBJ	
(41)	Agent	Patient	
	/	/	
lemja (promotional passive)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >	
	[-o]	[-r]	
	[+r]	[+o]	
	/	/	
	OBL	SUBJ	

The second subtype of a plausibly subjectless construction with a morphologically passive transitive predicate features a say-type predicate and a clausal argument which by default maps to OBJ, e.g. (42), repeated from (36). Unlike the New Impersonal/Passive construction in (35), the construction type in (42) has not received much attention in the Icelandic-specific literature.

(42)	Það er mælt,	[að þeir fóstbræður	
	CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP they.NOM foster-brothers		
	hefði ærið traust á jötninum Surt í Surtshelli]...		
	have.PST.SBJV sufficient trust on giant.DEF Surtur in Surtshellir		
	‘It is said that those foster brothers had sufficient trust in the giant Surtur in Surtshellir...’ (1830, Hellismenn.187)		

⁶I showed how non-promotional passives can be modelled with Mapping Theory in section 2.3.1.

I discussed constructions like (42) in section 6.4 as a context where cataphoric *pað* co-occurs with a clausal argument. There, I argued that such constructions are structurally ambiguous with respect to the grammatical function which is assigned to the clausal argument (and hence to *pað*, assuming that cataphoric *pað* and the clausal argument map to the same grammatical function). I claimed that two analyses were possible; cf. the default mapping in (43) for transitive *mæla* ‘say’ which takes two arguments (arg₁, Agent; arg₂, Theme):

1. A promotional passive where the default SUBJ argument is demoted to OBL and the clausal argument promoted to SUBJ, see (44).
2. As a syntactically active impersonal, in which the default SUBJ argument is preserved in the mapping – though suppressed at c-structure – and the clausal argument is preserved as OBJ, see (45).

(43)			Agent	Theme		
			/	/		
	mæla (default)	<	arg ₁	arg ₂	>	
			[-o]	[-r]		
			/	/		
			SUBJ	OBJ		

(44)			Agent	Theme		
			/	/		
	mæla (promotional passive)	<	arg ₁	arg ₂	>	
			[-o]	[-r]		
			[+r]			
			/	/		
			OBL	SUBJ		

(45)		Agent	Theme	
		/	/	
	mæla (impersonal)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >	
		[-o]	[-r]	
		/	/	
		SUBJ	OBJ	
		∅		

In the promotional passive analysis in (44), the construction in (42) does not qualify as subjectless, since the clausal argument (arg₂, Theme) has been promoted to SUBJ. Following my assumption that cataphoric *það* and the clausal argument contribute to the same argument slot of the matrix verb, in this view both *það* and the clausal argument are assigned the SUBJ function. In section 6.4, I showed evidence to support the availability of an analysis where both *það* and the clausal argument map to SUBJ in such contexts – at least in earlier Icelandic. It was shown that *það* sometimes behaves like a subject with respect to positional distribution, occurring in the immediately postfinite position in topicalization contexts (46) and yes/no-interrogatives (47).

- (46) Og nú er **það**_i sagt [að Haraldur gráfeldur
and now be.PRS CATPH say.PASS.PTCP COMP Haraldur grey-cloak
konungur fellur þar...]_i
king fall.PRS there
'And now it is said that King Haraldur Grey-cloak falls there...'
(1260, Jomsvikingar.490)

- (47) Eða man **það**_i jafnan skulu ætlað vera, [að eg
or will CATPH equally shall intend.PASS.PTCP be.INF COMP I.NOM
sjá son ins versta manns Neptanabi]_i ?
see.PRS.SBJV SON DEM.GEN worst.GEN man.GEN Neptanabi
'Or should it equally be intended that I should see the son of the worst
man Neptanabi?' (1300, Alexander.28)

Secondly, it was shown in section 2.4.1 that the clausal argument can appear in the canonical subject position in such constructions, e.g. (48).⁷

⁷I discussed subject positions in Icelandic in section 3.4.

- (48) [Að jörðin er hnöttót] er vitað.
 COMP earth.DEF be.PRS round be.PRS know.PASS.PTCP
 ‘That the Earth is round is known.’ (Thráinsson 1979: 90)

The analysis which is relevant in the context of this chapter is the active impersonal analysis shown in (45), whereby the clausal argument is preserved as an OBJ. Under this analysis, both *það* and the clausal argument map to OBJ; the result is thus a subjectless construction.

In light of the discussion of the New Impersonal/Passive above – which has been argued to be a non-promotional passive with demotion of the default SUBJ argument to an OBL and preservation of the second argument as OBJ (40) – there is a third possible analysis for constructions like (42): a non-promotional passive. In this analysis, the default SUBJ argument is demoted to an OBL but the clausal argument (*arg₂*, Theme) is preserved as OBJ, see (49).

(49)		Agent	Theme	
		/	/	
	mæla (non-promotional passive)	< arg ₁	arg ₂ >	
		[-o]	[-r]	
		[+r]	[+o]	
		/	/	
		OBL	OBJ	

As in the active impersonal analysis in (45), in the non-promotional analysis constructions like (42) also qualify as subjectless. In both analyses, the clausal argument (*arg₂*, Theme) remains an OBJ and is not promoted to SUBJ, though for different reasons. In the active impersonal analysis which involves no change in the argument-function mapping, the default SUBJ argument still maps to SUBJ and functional uniqueness thus ‘blocks’ *arg₂* from being promoted to SUBJ. In the non-promotional passive analysis, *arg₂* receives the additional classification [+o] which prevents it from mapping to SUBJ. The difference between the two analyses instead concerns the status of the default SUBJ argument in the mapping – whether it is demoted to an OBL via passivization or preserved in the mapping and suppressed at c-structure via impersonalization.

In this respect, the construction in (42) shows parallels with the ‘New Impersonal/Passive’ construction discussed above, see (35). Both are syntactically am-

biguous and allow for either a non-promotional passive analysis with a demoted default *SUBJ* argument or an active impersonal analysis with a suppressed default *SUBJ* argument. Constructions like (42) are however different from the New Passive/Impersonal, in allowing for an additional promotional passive analysis where the second argument (arg_2) is promoted to *SUBJ*, see (44). I follow the standard view that a promotional passive analysis is not available for the New Impersonal/Passive construction and that the postfinite noun phrase in such constructions consistently maps to *OBJ*, regardless of the assumed status of the default *SUBJ* argument, see (39) and (40).

7.1.5 Summary

In line with recent literature on passives and impersonals and using Kibort's Mapping Theory to model the difference between these distinct operations, I have discussed three major sources of subjectlessness in Icelandic:

1. Constructions with inherently subjectless predicates (e.g. weather predicates), which do not select a subject argument at all.
2. Syntactically active impersonal constructions whose default subject argument is suppressed via impersonalization.
3. Syntactically passive constructions whose default subject argument is demoted to an oblique and there is no promotion of a second argument to subject, for one of two reasons:
 - (a) The passivized predicate is intransitive and so there is no second argument to promote to subject.
 - (b) The passivized predicate is transitive, but the second argument is preserved as an object and not promoted to subject (non-promotional passive).

I showed that the difference between impersonalization and passivization is not always visible at c-structure. While there are constructions with morphologically active predicates which are unambiguously impersonal constructions where the default *SUBJ* argument is preserved in the argument-function mapping but suppressed at c-structure, there are also constructions which are ambiguous with respect to the status of the default *SUBJ* argument. The ambiguous construction types

discussed here were certain morphologically passive constructions:

1. Constructions with morphologically passive intransitive predicates (‘impersonal passives’).
2. Constructions with morphologically passive transitive predicates, specifically:
 - (a) Morphologically passive transitives with a non-nominative noun phrase argument (‘New Impersonal/Passive’).
 - (b) Morphologically passive transitive say-type predicates with a clausal argument.

7.2 Methodology

7.2.1 Data collection

The subjectless constructions outlined in section 7.1 can be captured in IcePaHC by isolating sentences which are tagged with an expletive (ES) or lacking an expletive (*exp*), and where the expletive tag is not co-indexed with another constituent in the clause. The lack of co-indexation on the expletive distinguishes subjectless constructions from clausal argument constructions – where *það* is co-indexed with the clausal argument (section 6.1) – and from presentational constructions – where *það* is co-indexed with the postfinite subject noun phrase (section 8.2). (50) shows the IcePaHC representation for the subjectless construction with an inherently subjectless predicate and *það* in (51).

- (50) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ (ES það-það))
 (VBDI gli traði -gli tra)
 (PP (P á-á)
 (NP (NS-A hj arnfanni r\$-hj arnfönn) (D-A \$nar-hi nn)))
 (, , - ,)
 (1902. FOSSAR. NAR-FIC, . 909))
- (51) **Það** glitraði á hjarnfannirnar..
 EXPL glitter.PST on snow-crusts.DAT.DEF
 ‘It glittered on the crusts of snow.’ (1902, Fossar.909)

(52) is the IcePaHC representation of the subjectless construction in (53), which is an ‘impersonal passive’ and lacks the expletive.

(52) ((IP-MAT (IP-MAT-1 (NP-SBJ *exp*)
 (BEDI Var-vera)
 (VAN hl aupi ð-hl aupa)
 (PP (P eftir-eftir)
 (NP (PRO-D þeim-það))))))
 (1250. STURLUNGA. NAR-SAG, 444. 1974))

(53) Var hlaupið eftir þeim
 be.PST run.PASS.PTCP after they.DAT
 ‘It was run after them.’ (1250, Sturlunga.444.1974)

I also include V2 subjectless constructions with topicalization, which IcePaHC tags for an ‘absent’ expletive (*exp*), see (54) and (55). The expletive ought never to occur in such contexts, since it is restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position (see section 5.2.1). However, I include such examples in my overall dataset, since they are an important consideration when examining the positional distribution of *það*.

(54) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ *exp*)
 (ADVP-LOC (ADV þar-þar))
 (BEDI var-vera)
 (ADJP (ADJ-N reimt-rei mdur) (ADV mjög-mjög)))
 (ID 1310. GRETTIR. NAR-SAG, . 1762))

(55) Þar var reimt mjög.
 there be.PST haunted very
 ‘It was very haunted there.’ (1310, Grettir.1762)

I isolate all subjectless constructions in IcePaHC (matrix clauses only) by way of automatic CorpusSearch queries; see Appendix A.4 for details.

I supplement the IcePaHC data for the earliest period (Old Icelandic, 1150-1350) with manually collected data from the three additional texts introduced in section 1.3.2. For this I examined each sentence in the three texts, highlighting any instance of a subjectless construction which qualifies as an ‘expletive context’ (i.e. with or without *það*) in line with the IcePaHC policy outlined above; this makes for a fair comparison between the supplementary data and the IcePaHC data.

I imported all collected examples into a database and manually went through

all examples, removing any which did not qualify as one of the types of subjectless construction outlined in 7.1. The total subjectless constructions collected from IcePaHC and the supplementary Old Icelandic texts via this process are shown in Tables 7.2 and 7.3.

Time period	Total subjectless constructions
1150-1350	441
1351-1550	273
1551-1750	192
1751-1900	220
1901-2008	250
All periods	1376

Table 7.2: Subjectless constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

Text	Total subjectless constructions
<i>Eirik</i>	35
<i>Græn</i>	30
<i>Gylfa</i>	59
All texts	124

Table 7.3: Subjectless constructions in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220-1250

7.2.2 Data manipulation

I manually tagged all examples in Tables 7.2 and 7.3 for additional properties which are relevant to the research questions. The IcePaHC data was already coded for the presence/absence of the expletive via the search queries. The supplementary data was manually tagged for whether the expletive is present or absent. Additionally, both the IcePaHC and supplementary datasets were tagged for the following properties:

1. Predicate type: inherently subjectless; morphologically active; morphologically passive intransitive; morphologically passive transitive; unaccusative.
2. Verb position: V1; V2.
3. Position of the expletive if present: prefinite; postfinite.
4. Clausal OBJ: present; absent.

7.3 Subjectless constructions in Old Icelandic

In the traditional literature on Old Norse/Icelandic, a range of constructions types have been labelled as lacking an overt subject, i.e. having subjectless status. Here, I discuss the status of these construction types in line with the classification of subjectlessness types outlined in section 7.1. I also review the status of *það* in the various subjectless contexts at this early stage of Icelandic, which will pave the way for a diachronic account in section 7.4 which charts the rise of the expletive in later stages of Icelandic.

7.3.1 Syntactic properties

7.3.1.1 Inherently subjectless predicates

Firstly, there are those predicates which do not select a subject argument in the first place (inherently subjectless predicates, see section 7.1.1). In Old Icelandic, this class of predicate comprises the following subtypes (see Nygaard 1905: 15; Kossuth 1978a: 451; Faarlund 2004: 217-9; Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016: 96).

1. Verbs which denote a process which is independent of an Agent's interference or intention, specifically those with reference to:⁸
 - (a) Weather, e.g. (56).
 - (b) Passing of time, e.g. (57).
 - (c) Natural events, e.g. (58).

⁸ Faarlund (2004: 220) also notes that certain regular transitive or intransitive verbs, 'may be used in such a way that there is no agent involved and no role assigned to an external argument' (i.e. a subject argument). Again, these verbs typically have reference to weather, natural events or sensory impressions:

(d) Sensory impressions, e.g. (59).

(e) The general situation, e.g. (60).

2. Adjectival predicates, e.g. (61).

- (56) Tók þá að fjúka.
begin.PST then to drift-snow.INF
'It then began to drift snow.' (1310, Grettir.1856)
- (57) Tekur nú að hausta.
begin.PRS now to become-autumn.INF
'It now starts to become autumn.' (1310, Grettir.48)
- (58) Fjarar nú undan skipinu.
ebb.PRS now from-under ship.DEF
'It now ebbs from under the ship.' (Laxd 42.1, Faarlund 2004: 217)
- (59) svo að dunar í skóginum.
so COMP resound.PRS in forest.DEF
'...so that it resounded in the forest.' (1220, Gylfa.45.11)
- (60) a. Konungur svarar: "Eg get að svo muni vel vera".
king answer.PRS I.NOM guess.PRS COMP so may well be.INF
'The king replies: "I guess that things may well be so."' (1250, Eirik5.7)
- b. Varð eigi að með þeim Þorgeiri að því sinni.
become.PST NEG PTCL with they.DAT Þorgeir.DAT at DEM time
'Things came to nothing between Þorgeir and them this time.'
(1310, Grettir.1425)
- c. ... og fór þá allvel með þeim.
and go.PST then all-well with they.DAT
'...and things went very well for them.' (1250, Sturlunga.395.254)
- (61) a. En er hann sér að skammt var til sævar..
but when he.NOM see.PRS COMP short-distance be.PST to sea
'But when he sees that it is not far to the sea...' (1220, Gylfa.50.3)
- b. Síðan varð hljótt og tvist..
then became.PST quiet and hushed
'Then it became quiet and hushed...' (1275, Morkin.1384)
-
- (i) a. þá gerði myrkt af nátt
then make.PST dark,NT.ACC of night
'Then it got dark at night' (Eg 141.14)
- b. mart berr nú fyrir augu mér
much.NT.ACC carry.PRS now before eyes.ACC I.DAT
'Many things are now brought before my eyes' (Nj 153.12)

- c. Og var nú nær miðri nótt.
and be.PST now nearly middle night
'And it was now nearly midnight.' (1300, Alexander.1155)

As I showed in section 7.1.1, inherently subjectless predicates like those in (56)-(61) can be represented in Kibortian a-structure as an empty argument frame; there are no arguments to map (see (10) above).

7.3.1.2 Morphologically active predicates

Old Icelandic also exhibits subjectless constructions which have a morphologically active predicate and for which there is evidence that the default SUBJ argument is suppressed at c-structure, but is preserved in the argument-function mapping and is thus syntactically operational at f-structure ('impersonalization', see section 7.1.2). The relevant construction types are those with the following predicates (see Nygaard 1905: 13-4 and Faarlund 2004: 220-1):⁹

1. Verbs of saying and perception, especially *segja* 'say', *geta* 'report', *sjá* 'see' and *heyra* 'hear', e.g. (62).
2. Modal verbs with a following infinitive, specifically: *skulu* 'shall', *mega* 'may', *verða* 'have to', *þurfa* 'need' (impersonal modal), e.g. (63).
3. The modal expression *vera að* with a following infinitive (periphrastic modal) e.g. (64).
4. Predicates which feature a form of the verb *vera* 'be' and a main verb in present participle form (impersonal present participle), e.g. (65).¹⁰

- (62) Svo **segir** í uppreistarsögu, [að í upphafi skapaði Guð
so say.PRS in creation-story COMP in beginning create.PST God
himin og jörð]...
heaven and earth
'So it says in the creation story that in the beginning God created Heaven
and Earth....' (1150, Homiliubok.516)

⁹Nygaard (1905: 13-4) states that an indefinite agentive person can be 'understood' as a subject with certain verb classes: 'En ubestemt handlende person underforstaaes navnlig some subjekt'.

¹⁰Nygaard (1905: 244-5) has a small entry on the 'passive meaning' (*passiv betydning*) of the present participle, stating that constructions like (65) have a modal meaning, e.g. obligation, necessity, possibility (*for at betegne, at en handling bør, maa, kan ske (er tilbørlig, nødvendig, mulig)*).

- (63) En svo sterkur sem hann er, þá má eigi sjá hann.
 but as strong as he.NOM be.PRS RSMP may NEG see.INF he.ACC
 ‘But as strong as he is, one cannot see him.’ (1220, Gylfa.18.1)
- (64) Nú er at verja sik.
 now be.PRS to defend REFL.ACC
 ‘Now one is to defend oneself’ (Nj 121.23; Faarlund 2004: 219)
- (65) Eigi er virðandi ásjónir manna í
 NEG be.PRS consider.PRS.PTCP countenances.ACC men.GEN in
 dómum, heldr sökina.
 judgements.DAT rather case.ACC.DEF
 ‘One should not consider people’s looks when judging them, but rather the
 case.’ (Hóm 20.25; Faarlund 2004: 219)

In (62)-(65), the main verb is transitive; impersonalization thus results in the mapping in (66); the default SUBJ argument (arg_1) still maps to SUBJ but is suppressed at c-structure and the second argument (arg_2) is preserved as OBJ. The example of the *vera að* + infinitive construction type in (64) features the reflexive pronoun *sik*, which is further evidence for the fact that the default SUBJ argument is merely suppressed and remains syntactically operational at f-structure, since the reflexive requires an f-structure SUBJ as its antecedent (see section 3.3.2.1).

- (66)
- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-------------|-----------|
| | x | | y |
| | / | | / |
| transitive (impersonal) | < | arg_1 | arg_2 > |
| | | [-o] | [-r] |
| | | / | / |
| | | SUBJ | OBJ |
| | | \emptyset | |

Morphologically active impersonal constructions also occur with intransitive predicates, e.g. the impersonal modal constructions in (67) and (68), though these are rarer than impersonal actives with transitive predicates. The constructions in (67) and (68) have the mapping in (69).

- (67) ... og má þar ekki stórskipum fara...
 and may there NEG big-ships.DAT travel.INF
 ‘...and one cannot travel there with big ships...’
 (Hrk II.10.1; Faarlund 2004: 220-1)

(68) ... svo þungt að eigi skyldi undir mega fara.
 so heavy COMP NEG should under be-able.INF go.INF
 ‘...so heavy that one should not be able to go under it.’ (1220, Gylfa.43.3)

(69) Agent
 /
 fara (impersonal) < arg₁ >
 [-o]
 /
 SUBJ
 Ø

Some evidence has already been shown which indicates that these construction types still retain the default SUBJ argument in the mapping and is hence available as a syntactic antecedent at f-structure for e.g. reflexives, as in (64) above. Another example with a reflexive is shown in (70).

(70) Og skal þá sérhvort greina...
 and shall.3SG then REFL-each.SG.NT tell.INF...
 ‘And then one ought to tell separately...’ (1150, Homiliubok.122)

Furthermore, there are also examples which occur with a reflexive main verb which similarly requires an f-structure SUBJ as its antecedent, e.g. (71)-(75).

(71) ... og mátti þá eigi lengi svo fram flytjast öll misseri...
 and could then NEG long so forth flit.INF.REFL all seasons...
 ‘...and one could then no longer flit forth in all seasons...’
 (1210, Thorlakur.216)

(72) Þorsteinn segir: "Þetta er mér mest ólíð, því að nú
 Þorsteinn.NOM say.PRS DEM.NOM be.PRS I.DAT most awful because now
 myndi yfir hylmast elligar, en nú mun eigi
 could PTCL conceal.INF.REFL otherwise but now will NEG
 leynast mega..."
 conceal.INF.REFL be-able.INF
 ‘Þorsteinn says: "This is most awful for me, because now one would have
 been able to conceal oneself otherwise, but now one will not be able to
 hide oneself..."’ (1275, Morkin.1832)

(73) Skal af því víst á daginn berjast...
 shall therefore certainly on day.DEF fight.INF.REFL
 ‘One shall therefore certainly fight on the day...’ (1300, Alexander.1358)

- (74) Þorfinnur mælti þá: "Nú skal **setjast** niður..."
 Þorfinnur.NOM say.PTS then now shall sit.INF.REFL down
 'Þorfinnur then said: "Now one shall sit down..."' (1310, Grettir.863)
- (75) En skal nú eigi **spyrjast** láta alls.
 and shall now NEG ask.INF.REFL let.INF all.GEN
 'And one should now not let oneself ask about everything.'
 (1350, Bandamenn.839)

In addition, there are instances where the suppressed SUBJ appears to control a subject-orientated adjunct, e.g. (76) and (77).

- (76) ...þá skal **vandvirklega** að grafa...
 then shall.3SG painstakingly to dig.INF...
 '...then one ought to dig painstakingly...' (1150, Homiliubok.1443)
- (77) ...og má eigi [**einum munni**] allt senn segja.
 and may.3SG NEG one.DAT mouth.DAT all at once say.INF...
 '...and one cannot say everything at once with one mouth.'
 (1260, Jomsvikingar,.875)

In some instances, there is the possibility that the subjectless construction is a personal construction with a 3SG subject which is covert and recoverable by 3SG marking on the verb (pronoun incorporation, see (1) above). This is an alternative analysis to that which I have sketched so far, where the construction is impersonal, has an underspecified suppressed SUBJ, and the verb has 3SG marking by default, not via pronoun incorporation.¹¹ The suppressed SUBJ in an impersonal construction is present at f-structure, though underspecified, bearing no person and number features, see (78) (Kibort 2006: 299).

- (78)
- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| | PRED | 'PRO' |
| SUBJ | | |
| | HUMAN | + |
| ... | | |

If a subjectless construction with a morphological active predicate is analysed as subjectless via pronoun incorporation rather than impersonalization, the verb is assumed to contribute a pronominal PRED value for the SUBJ, as well as person and

¹¹Kibort (2006) discusses the difference between 'pro-drop' (i.e. pronoun incorporation) and impersonalization as sources of subjectless with respect to Polish.

number features, in this case 3SG. So, for a sentence like (79), the lexical entry for *segir* would be (80), and the f-structure for the SUBJ would be (81).

(79) Svo **segir** í uppreistarsögu, [að í upphafi skapaði Guð
 so say.PRS.3SG in creation-story COMP in beginning create.PST God
 himin og jörð]...
 heaven and earth
 ‘So it says in the creation story that in the beginning God created Heaven
 and Earth...’ (1150, Homiliubok.516)

(80) *segir* (PRED) = ‘SAY < SUBJ,OBJ >’
 (TENSE) = PRES
 (SUBJ NUM) = SG
 (SUBJ PERS) = 3
 (SUBJ PRED) = ‘PRO’

(81)

	PRED	‘PRO’
SUBJ	NUM	SG
	PERS	3

...

In present-day Icelandic, it is possible to lexicalise the underspecified subject of an impersonal construction as *maður* ‘man’ (3SG), resulting in an impersonal construction which is not subjectless, e.g. (82). According to Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009: 160), the use of *maður* as a generic pronoun is a ‘relatively recent phenomenon’ and one can thus assume that it was not a feature of Old Icelandic.

(82) Fyrst beygir **maður** til hægri.
 first turn.PRS.3SG man.NOM to right
 ‘First one turns to the right.’ (Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009: 159)

In older examples like (79), one could argue that the construction is subjectless via pronoun incorporation; the underspecified subject *maður* is recoverable via the verbal agreement marking and is not expressed at c-structure. I have not found any instances of impersonal *maður* in my Old Icelandic data, in line with the claim by Sigurðsson & Egerland (2009: 160) that it only occurs in later stages of the language. However, there are several examples in Old Icelandic of what looks like an impersonal *menn* (3PL) as a subject, e.g. (83).

- (83) Það segja **menn** að skelmaðkurinn smjúgi eigi það
 CATPH say.PRS.3PL men COMP ship-worm bore.PRS.SBJV NEG DEM
 tré er seltjörunni er brætt.
 tree REL seal-tar.DAT.DEF be.PRS smear.PASS.PTCP
 ‘Men say that the ship-worm will not bore into the wood which is smeared
 with the seal-tar.’ (1270, Eirik.13)

If constructions like (79) with 3SG marking on the verb are subjectless via pronoun incorporation of an impersonal *maður*, then one would expect the same to be possible for the impersonal *menn* (3PL) in (83) and to find subjectless examples like (84) with pronoun incorporation.

- (84) Það_i segja [að...]_i.
 CATPH say.PRS.3PL COMP
 ‘Men say that...’

However, to my knowledge subjectless constructions with 3PL marking on the verb which have an interpretable underspecified agent like (84) do not occur in Old Icelandic. As such, I tentatively conclude that subjectless constructions with 3SG marking on the verb like (79) are not a case of pronoun incorporation, but are the result of a distinct impersonalization operation which suppresses the default SUBJ argument.

At any rate, the difference between (underspecified) pronoun incorporation and subject suppression via impersonalization in this context is rather subtle. Ultimately, this difference will not heavily impact upon my diachronic account of subjectless constructions which focuses on the distinction between impersonalization and passivization, so I do not explore this further here.

I now examine the impersonal present participle construction in detail, since this type shows some interesting properties in Old Icelandic. I repeat the example from (65) in (85).

- (85) Eigi er **virðandi** ásjónir manna í
 NEG be.PRS.3SG consider.PRS.PTCP countenances.ACC men.GEN in
 dómum, heldr sökina.
 judgements.DAT rather case.ACC.DEF
 ‘It is not to consider people’s looks in judgements, but rather the case.’
 (Hóm 20.25; Faarlund 2004: 219)

Faarlund (2004: 133-4) argues that this construction type featuring a present par-

ticiple was first a syntactially passive construction used to translate the Latin gerundive ('is to be Xed...'), i.e. involved promotion of the second argument (the default OBJ) to SUBJ, e.g. (86). Note that in (86), the finite verb in each case agrees in number with the second argument (the promoted SUBJ), shown in bold. These arguments also have nominative case marking, which further supports the claim that they have been promoted to SUBJ. Analysed as a syntactically passive construction, the sentence in (86) has the mapping in (87).

- (86) [Hverir hlutir] elskandi eru fyr sœmdar
 which.NOM parts.NOM love.PRS.PTCP be.PRS.3PL for decency.GEN
 sakar ok góðrar meðferðar eða [hverir hlutir]
 sakes.ACC and good conduct.GEN or which.NOM parts.NOM
 hatandi eru fyrir úsœmdar sakar.
 hate.PRS.PTCP be.PRS.3PL for indecency.GEN sakes.ACC
 'which things are to be loved because of their decency and good conduct
 or which things are to be hated because of indecency.'
 (Kgs 43.38; Faarlund 2004: 133)

- (87)
- | | Experiencer | Theme |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | / | / |
| elska/hata (promotional passive) | < arg ₁ | arg ₂ > |
| | [-o] | [-r] |
| | [+r] | |
| | / | / |
| | OBL | SUBJ |

According to Faarlund, the present participle construction type in (85) was first used in Icelandic as in (86), i.e. as a promotional passive construction with the mapping in (87). In this analysis, (86) is thus an example of a morphologically active construction which is syntactically passive. Faarlund (2004: 133-4) claims that the construction later 'changed into a subjectless construction where the complement of the participle remains a complement', (i.e. where the second argument is not promoted to SUBJ but is preserved as an OBJ). Note that in (85), the arguments of the verb *ásjónir manna* and *sökina* have accusative rather than nominative case marking, and the finite verb does not agree with them in number but instead has default 3SG marking. This is consistent with an impersonal analysis with a suppressed default SUBJ argument and no change affecting the default argument-

function mapping. In other words, Faarlund posits a change for this construction type whereby an originally syntactically passive construction (86)/(87) is reanalysed as a syntactically active impersonal construction (85), with the mapping in (88).

(88)		Experiencer	Theme
		/	/
	elska/hata (impersonal) <	arg ₁	arg ₂ >
		[-o]	[-r]
		/	/
		SUBJ	OBJ
		∅	

In my Old Icelandic data, there are further examples of this construction type which appear to be syntactically passive with promotion of the second argument to SUBJ, e.g. (89)-(90). As promotional passives, these examples represent the older version of the present participle construction in Faarlund’s diachronic account.

(89) Og er [þessi grein] haldandi í milli peccatum
 and be.PRS DEM.NOM distinction.NOM hold.PRS.PTCP between Peccatum
 og delictum, að delictum verður ... en peccatum er...
 and Delictum COMP Delictum become.PRS but Peccatum be.PRS
 ‘And this distinction is to be held between Peccatum and Delictum, that
 Delictum becomes... and Peccatum is...’ (1350, Marta.107)

(90) Mikils er virðandi [miskunn Guðs], er hann
 great.GEN be.PRS rate.PRS.PTCP mercy.NOM God.GEN when he.NOM
 veitir oss framar en vér kynnim biðja.
 grant.PRS we.DAT further than we.NOM know.PRS.SBJV pray.INF
 ‘God’s mercy is to be rated highly when he grants us more than we may
 know how to pray for.’ (1150, Homiliubok.2043)

At the same time, there are examples of the present participle construction like (91)-(95), where the Theme argument is clausal. In these examples, the status of the construction as syntactically active or passive is ambiguous. They could be syntactically passive with promotion of the second (clausal) argument to SUBJ, see the mapping in (87). Alternatively, they could be syntactically active with the clausal argument preserved as an OBJ, see the mapping in (88). Notice that *það* in the

matrix clause is optional, cf. (93) with no *það*. Since *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument in these examples, I analyse *það* as cataphoric rather than expletive. I discuss the status of *það* in such contexts further in section 7.3.2.

- (91) En *það_i* er vitanda, [að þá gofgum vér réttlega
but CATPH be.PRS know.PRS.PTCP COMP then honour.PRS we rightly
postula guðs alla]_i...
apostles god.GEN all...
'It is to be known that we then rightly honour all of God's apostles...'
(1150, Homiliubok.304)
- (92) Er *það_i* trúanda [að þær hafi þar
be.PRS CATPH believe.PRS.PTCP COMP they.NOM have.PRS.SBJV there
verið í skóla skírlífis og annarra mannkosta...]_i
be.PST.PTCP in school chaste.GEN and other.GEN good-qualities.GEN
'And it is to be believed that they have been in the school of the chaste and
of other good qualities...' (1350, Marta.619)
- (93) Og eigi er efanda [að af þessi syndugu konu sagði
and NEG be.PRS doubt.PRS.PTCP COMP of DEM sinful woman say.PST
Lúkas að...]
Lúkas COMP
'And it is not to be doubted that of this sinful woman Lúkas said that...'
(1350, Marta.444)
- (94) En er *það_i* vitanda [að því lét Jesús hann
but be.PRS CATPH know.PRS.PTCP COMP next let.PST Jesús he.NOM
deyja mega að hann mætti hann upp reisa]_i.
die.INF be-able.INF COMP he.NOM could he.ACC up raise.INF
'And it is to be known that next he let Jesus be able to die so that he could
resurrect him.' (1350, Marta.252)
- (95) En *það_i* er merkjanda, [er Dominus vildi á krossi
but CATPH be.PRS observe.PRS.PTCP COMP lord wish.PST on cross
deyja...]_i
die.INF
'And it is to be observed that the Lord wished to die on the cross...'
(1150, Homiliubok.1682)

Despite the syntactic ambiguity of these constructions, there are various pieces of evidence which point towards the active impersonal analysis, with preservation of the clausal argument as an OBJ. Firstly, in such constructions the present participle consistently ends in *-anda*. This contrasts with the earlier examples in (85)-

(90), where the present participle ending was consistently *-andi*. In present-day Icelandic, the present participle is indeclinable and ends in *-andi* in all cases (Sigurðsson 2010: 37). The data here however indicate that, in Old Icelandic, the present participle was declinable; most likely, *-andi* was marked for nominative and *-anda* for non-nominative, based on similar declensional patterns in Icelandic.¹² If (91)-(95) are promotional passives in which the clausal argument maps to SUBJ, one would expect the present participle to have nominative marking (*-andi*) as in the examples in (85)-(90) above. Instead, the fact that the present participle ends in non-nominative *-anda* is consistent with an analysis whereby the clausal argument is preserved as an OBJ.

The matrix predicates in (91)-(95) are all verbs which take an accusative argument as their object. A second piece of evidence which suggests that these examples are not straightforward promotional passives comes from examples where the matrix predicate is a verb which takes a genitive argument as its object, e.g. *leita* ‘seek’ in (96).

- (96) Þess_i er fyrst leitanda, [fyr því sjá dagur er
 CATPH.GEN be.PRS first seek.PRS.PTCP why DEM day be.PRS
 haldinn...]_i
 hold.PASS.PTCP
 ‘It is first to be sought, why that day is held...’ (1150, Homiliubok.513)

In this example, cataphoric *það* – which I assume maps to the same grammatical function as the clausal argument – has genitive case marking (*þess*), in line with it being assigned the OBJ function. Since the clausal argument is also assigned the OBJ function, this goes against the promotional passive analysis where the clausal argument would be a SUBJ. This can be extended to the earlier construction with matrix predicates which take an accusative argument as their object in (91)-(95). In such examples, one cannot tell whether cataphoric *það* is marked for nominative case (as a SUBJ) or accusative case (as an OBJ), since these are identical in form for

¹²Present participles functioning as nouns (*sofandi* ‘sleeping’) in modern Icelandic are declined as follows:

NOM.SG	sofandi
ACC.SG	sofanda
DAT.SG	sofanda
GEN.SG	sofanda

the neuter pronoun *það*.¹³

A third piece of evidence against the promotional passive analysis of this construction comes from examples like (97)-(99), which feature a dative Experiencer argument in the matrix clause.

- (97) *Það_i er oss merkjanda, [er Jóan sá nöfn*
CATPH be.PRS WE.DAT observe.PRS.PTCP COMP Jóan see.PST names
þeirra postula ritin yfir hliðum innar himnesku
DEM.GEN apostles.GEN write.PASS.PTCP over sides inside heavenly
Jerúsalem]_i.
Jerusalem
'We are to observe that Jóan saw the names of those apostles written over
the walls inside the heavenly Jerusalem.' (1150, Homiliubok.348)
- (98) *En oss er vitanda, [hversu hver maður mátti teljast*
but WE.DAT be.PRS know.PRS.PTCP how each man could refuse.INF
of allan heim...].
of all home
'But we are to know how each man could refuse the whole home...'
(1150, Homiliubok.1006)
- (99) *En þess_i er oss leitanda ... [er engill vitraðist*
but CATPH.GEN be.PRS WE.DAT seek.PRS.PTCP that angel appear.PST
á Gyðingalandi féhirðum...]
in Jews-land shepherds.DAT
'But we are to seek that an angel appeared in the land of the Jews to
shepherds...'
(1150, Homiliubok.1317)

I propose that in these examples, the Experiencer argument (arg_1) maps to SUBJ; Experiencer subjects with dative case marking are a feature of Icelandic (see e.g. Schätzle et al. 2015). In this view, the clausal argument (arg_2 , Theme) and cataphoric *það* map to OBJ, as in (100).

¹³Anaphoric and cataphoric *það* decline as follows:

NOM.SG		það
ACC.SG		það
DAT.SG		því
GEN.SG		þess

(100)		Experiencer	Theme	
		/	/	
	vita	<	arg ₁	arg ₂
			[-o]	[-r]
			/	/
			SUBJ	OBJ

On this analysis, the examples in (97)-(99) are the personal counterparts to the impersonal constructions in (91)-(96) above.

7.3.1.3 Morphologically passive intransitive predicates

Subjectless constructions with morphologically passive intransitive predicates ('impersonal passives') are robustly attested in Old Icelandic, e.g. (101).

(101)	Var	þá	hleypt	suður til Reykja...
	be.PST.3SG	then	run.PASS.PTCP.SG.NT	south to Reykir
	'It was then ran south to Reykir..' (1250, Sturlunga.406.624)			

The example in (101) is morphologically passive but its syntactic status as either a passive or an active impersonal is ambiguous. In section 7.1.3, I showed how this syntactic difference is not visible at c-structure for impersonal passives. There are thus two possible analyses for constructions like (101):

1. It is syntactically passive, in which the default SUBJ argument is demoted to OBL (passivization) and there is no second argument to promote to SUBJ.
2. It is syntactically active, in which the default SUBJ argument is suppressed at c-structure (impersonalization) but is preserved in the argument-function mapping.

I have already shown in section 7.1.3 that there is evidence that the active impersonal analysis is available to at least certain speakers of present-day Icelandic for constructions like (101). I now survey the evidence for and against the passivization and impersonalization analyses in Old Icelandic.

Firstly, however, one has to rule out the possibility that constructions like (101) are morphologically active perfects rather than morphologically passive. The Old Icelandic passive is formed by the copular verb *vera* 'be' or *verða* 'become' and a

passive participle. In straightforward promotional passives with transitive predicates, the passive participle agrees in gender, number and case with the promoted subject, and the verb agrees in number with this subject, e.g. (102).

- (102) Síðan voru þeir færðir í
 then be.PST.PL they.MASC.PL.NOM bring.PASS.PTCP.MASC.PL.NOM in
 flæðarurð eina og dysjaðir þar.
 rock certain and bury.PASS.PTCP.MASC.PL.NOM there
 ‘Then they were brought to a certain rock and buried there.’
 (1310, Grettir.827)

However, in constructions where there is no second argument to promote to subject (i.e. in constructions with intransitive predicates), the passive participle has default marking (NT.SG.NOM), and likewise the verb (3SG), e.g. (103) (Faarlund 2004: 132).

- (103) ok var farit eftir Þórði presti
 and be.PST.3SG gone.NT.SG.NOM after Thord.DAT priest.DAT
 ‘...and it was sent for Thord the priest.’ (Band 71.26)

Examples like (103) are, on first sight, ambiguous and could be morphologically passive or a morphologically active perfect construction (see Faarlund 2004: 132). The verb *fara* can take *vera* ‘be’ as an auxiliary to form an active construction in the perfect as an alternative to the more general perfect auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’. This is possible with verbs of transition or motion, as found in other Germanic languages (cf. archaic English *he is come/he is arrived*). This means that in an example like (103), the auxiliary *vera* could either be a passive auxiliary or a perfect auxiliary, in this case specifically a past form of the perfect auxiliary, since it is in the past form *var* ‘was’.

In my Old Icelandic data there are a number of ambiguous examples like (103) where the auxiliary *vera* occurs together with a participle of a verb of motion, e.g. (104)-(108). In principle, the participle in these examples could be either a passive or perfect auxiliary.

- (104) Hið sama kveld var farið eftir Steinþóri og á
 DEM same evening be.PST go.PTCP after Steinþór.DAT and on
 leit líka.
 search.ACC also
 ‘The same evening it was gone after Steinþór and searched.’

(1210, Jarlein.801)

- (105) Er þá farið eftir presti í Síðumúla og er hann
be.PRS then go.PTCP after priest.DAT in Síðumúli and when he.NOM
kemur þá mátti Hermundur ekki mæla og var prestur
come.PRS then could Hermundur NEG speak.INF and be.PST priest
þar hjá honum.
there by he.DAT
'It is then gone after the priest in Síðumúli and when he comes then
Hermundur could not speak and the priest was then by him.'

(1350, BandamennM,.1171)

- (106) Þessu næst var komið eftir henni af öðrum bæ og
DEM next be.PST come.PTCP after she.DAT from other town and
fór hún þá þangað.
go.PST she.NOM then thither
'Next it was come after her from the other town and she then went
thither.' (1250, Eirik, 4.17)

- (107) Var svo gjörla eftir farið að allir menn fóru
be.PST so fully after go.PTCP COMP all.NOM men.NOM went.PST
þeir er herfærir þóttu vera.
DEM.NOM REL army-able seem.PST be.INF
'It was followed so fully that all those men who were thought able to fight
went.' (1250, Sturlunga.409.761)

- (108) Var þá farið til tíða en þá drifu menn
be.PST then go.PTCP to divine-service and then rush.PST men
Órækju að allan daginn.
Órækja.GEN to all day.DEF
'It was then gone to the divine service and then Órækja's men rushed
about the whole day. (1250, Sturlunga.442.1875)

The context of these constructions disambiguates these examples and indicates that they are morphologically passive, and not morphologically active perfect constructions. Firstly, taking the verb *vera* as a past form of the perfect auxiliary in many of these instances renders some very unusual tense sequencing. It is true that tense sequencing is relatively fluid in Old Icelandic texts, but this fluidity usually involves mismatches between the present and the simple past. The past perfect is used to express an event which has occurred before another event or action in the past which is being described. In (106), for instance, the past perfect analysis is highly questionable, since the temporal adverb *næst* 'next' occurs in the same

clause. The past perfect analysis ('Next people had come for her from the other town and she went thither') is therefore infelicitous.

Furthermore, in the example in (109), two main verbs share the auxiliary *vera* 'be', the second being the verb of motion *fara* 'go'. The first main verb, *taka* 'take', forms a promotional passive in which the second argument (*Loki*) is promoted to subject. The morphologically active past perfect analysis for *var...farið* is further ruled out, since *taka* is not a verb of motion and so can take only *hafa* 'have' as a perfect auxiliary. Again, in such an example, the analysis of *vera...farið* as a past perfect would give an infelicitous interpretation ('Now Loki was taken without quarter and one had gone with him into some caves.').

- (109) Nú var Loki tekinn griðalaus og farið með
 now be.PST Loki.NOM take.PTCP quarter-less and go.PASS.PTCP with
 hann í helli nokkurn.
 he.ACC in cave certain
 'Now Loki was taken without quarter and it was gone with him into a
 certain cave.' (1220, Gylfa.50.5)

Another piece of evidence which rules out the morphologically active perfect analysis of such constructions comes from similar examples like (110) and (111) which also feature two main verbs. These also feature the auxiliary *vera* 'be' and a verb of movement or transition, but the auxiliary is shared with a second participle which is not a verb of movement or transition (*sagt* < *segja*), 'say'. In both instances, *sagt* must be a passive participle, since *segja* can only take *hafa* 'have' as a perfect auxiliary, not *vera* 'be'.

- (110) Var þá hleypt suður til Reykja og sagt
 be.PST then run.PASS.PTCP south to Reykir and say.PASS.PTCP
 Gissuri [að menn Sturlu voru í Geirshólmi og
 Gissur.DAT COMP men.NOM Sturla.GEN be.PST in Geirshólm and
 mundu ræna um alla sveit niðri þar].
 would plunder.INF about all district down there
 'People then ran south to Reykir and told Gissur that Sturla's men were
 at Geirshólm and would plunder around all the district down there.'
 (1250, Sturlunga.406.624)

- (111) Var hlaupið eftir þeim og sagt [að menn
 be.PST run.PASS.PTCP after they.DAT and say.PASS.PTCP COMP men.NOM
 urðu við öngar mannaferðir varir].
 become.PST with no.ACC passages.ACC aware

‘One ran after them and told them that men became aware of no passages.’ (1250, Sturlunga.444.1974)

So far, I have shown that there is good evidence to assume that the examples above are indeed morphologically passive intransitives, not morphologically active perfective constructions. The next step is to investigate the syntactic status of such constructions: are they syntactically passive or syntactically active impersonals?

Evidence in support of the active impersonal analysis in which the *SUBJ* is merely suppressed at c-structure, is preserved in the mapping and thus present as a *SUBJ* at f-structure comes from examples like (112) and (113). These feature a subject-orientated adjunct, which requires an f-structure *SUBJ* as its antecedent.

(112) Var síðan leitað **vandlega**.
be.PST.3SG then search.PASS.PTCP carefully
‘One then searched carefully.’ (1210, Jarstein.537)

(113) Eigi er nú **fróðlega** spurt.
NEG be.PRS.3SG now sensibly ask.PASS.PTCP
‘One has not asked sensibly now.’ (1220, Gylfa.13.1)

Beyond these scarce examples, evidence for and against the two analyses (passivization and impersonalization) as per the diagnostic criteria outlined in section 7.1 is not available, since the number of examples of this particular construction type in my Old Icelandic data is small (22 instances). Eythórsson (2008: 189) states that he has not been able to find any cases of the impersonal passive construction with reflexive verbs in Old Icelandic (which would indicate impersonalization with a suppressed *SUBJ*). He states that this possibility ‘seems to be an innovation of Modern Icelandic which is increasingly gaining ground.’ Beyond the evidence cited in (112)-(113) which supports the active impersonal analysis, the availability of the passive/impersonal analyses for impersonal passives in Old Icelandic remains unclear.

7.3.1.4 Morphologically passive transitive predicates

The final subjectless context which I discuss comprises constructions with a transitive predicate which has passive morphology. Like present-day Icelandic, Old Icelandic exhibits various types of (plausibly) subjectless construction with a morpho-

logically passive transitive predicate. In my Old Icelandic data, there are three such subtypes:

1. Constructions with a morphologically passive transitive predicate and an oblique argument in the form of a postfinite PP, e.g. (114).
2. Constructions with a morphologically passive transitive predicate and a clausal argument, e.g. (115).
3. Constructions with a morphologically passive transitive predicate which occur with the adverb *svo* ‘so’, e.g. (116).

(114) Var þá talað um sættir...
 be.PST then tell.PASS.PTCP about agreements
 ‘It was then told about some agreements...’ (1250, Sturlunga.449.2190)

(115) Það er sagt [að Bárður bóndi átti
 CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP Bárður farmer own.PST
 sætur].
 mountain-pastures
 (1350, Finnbogi.636.641)¹⁴

(116) Og svo var gert.
 and so be.PST done.PASS.PTCP
 ‘And so was done.’ (1250, Græn.3.11)

There is evidence that the first subtype in (114) can have an active impersonal analysis in Old Icelandic, in which the default SUBJ argument is preserved in the argument-function mapping. Specifically, there are examples in which the predicate is a reflexive verb, e.g. (117).

(117) Er nú búist til veislu og skortir eigi góð
 be.PRS now prepare.PASS.PTCP.REFL to feast and lack.PRS NEG good
 tilföng og nóg.
 supplies and enough
 ‘People now prepare themselves for the feast and there is no shortage of good and adequate supplies.’ (1350, BandamennM.1139)

Assuming that the reflexive morphology on the predicate *búast til* ‘prepare oneself for’ must be subject-bound, it requires an f-structure SUBJ as its antecedent.

Another interesting example of this construction type is shown in (118).

¹⁴As in section 6.4, I do not give an idiomatic translation for this construction type due to its structural ambiguity.

- (118) Þá var til farið að **PRO** höggva bjargið af
 then be.PST PTCL begin.PASS.PTCP to strike.INF rock.DEF by
uxanum og verið að mikinn hluta dags.
 oxen.DEF and be.PASS.PTCP to great parts.GEN day.GEN
 ‘Then it was begun to strike the rock by the oxen and was so for great
 parts of the day.’ (1210, Jarstein.510)

The example in (118) has what appears to be an agentive *by*-phrase present (*af uxanum*), which would indicate that the default SUBJ argument has been demoted to an OBL (passivization). On the basis of the diagnostic criteria outlined in Table 7.1 above, the possibility that the example in (118) is an impersonal construction with a suppressed default SUBJ argument ought to be ruled out by the presence of the *by*-phrase. One possibility, however, is that *af uxanum* is not an agentive *by*-phrase but is instead an instrumental ‘by means of the oxen’. Assuming it is instrumental rather than agentive results in an analysis which does not indicate a passive construction.

The second subtype of subjectless construction with a morphologically passive transitive predicate features a clausal argument, e.g. (119), repeated from (115).

- (119) Það er sagt [að Bárður bóndi átti
 CATPH be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP Bárður farmer own.PST
sætur].
 mountain-pastures
 (1350, Finnbogi.636.641)

I examined the properties of such constructions in section 6.4. There, it was shown that the structural ambiguity of such constructions allows for two analyses:

1. A promotional passive, in which the clausal argument and *það* both map to the SUBJ function.
2. An active impersonal, in which the clausal argument and *það* both map to the OBJ function

In section 7.1, I also introduced a third possibility: that constructions like (119) are non-promotional passives in which the default SUBJ argument is demoted to OBL, but the clausal argument is not promoted to SUBJ and still maps to the OBJ function, along with *það*.

The third subtype of subjectless construction with morphologically passive transitive predicates which I discuss are those which occur with *svO* ‘so’. These

are relatively common in Old Icelandic, e.g. (120), repeated from (116).

- (120) Og **svø** var gert.
and so be.PST done.PASS.PTCP
'And so was done.' (1250, Græn.3.11)

Falk (1993: 209-15) discusses passive constructions with the adverb *så* 'so' in historical Swedish, e.g. (121)-(123) (Falk 1993: 210). She argues that *så* in such contexts is an 'adverbial pronoun' which receives referential content from the preceding context.

- (121) att **så** skulle bliffua bestelt
that so should be arranged
(Swart:132)
- (122) om **så** af konungen är vordit svaradt
if so by king.DEF is been answered
(Gyllenhielm:280)
- (123) när **så** behöfdes
when so was-needed
(Tungel:169)

A closer examination of the contexts in which Old Icelandic constructions like (120) typically occur suggests that such constructions should not be considered subjectless, but rather that *svø* should be analysed as a referential subject which is interchangeable with a referential pronoun (e.g. *þetta*, 'this') which has either anaphoric or cataphoric reference. I show the following examples, where in (124) *svø* appears to have anaphoric reference to the preceding context, and (125), in which *svø* appears to have cataphoric reference to the following cited verse.

- (124) ...þá biður Alexander konungur, að þeir skyli grafa
then ask.PRS Alexander king COMP they.NOM shall.SBJV dig.INF
díki og setja þar í innan herbúðir sínar. Og **svø** var
ditch and set.INF there in inside camps their-own and so be.PST
nú gert.
now do.PASS.PTCP
'...then King Alexander requests that they should dig a ditch and set up
their camps in it. And this was now done.' (1300, Alexander.1328)
- (125) **Svo** er sagt í Völuspá: [verse section...]
so be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP in Völuspá
'This is said in Völuspá: [verse section...]' (Gylfa.51.13)

Falk (1993: 211) also highlights contexts where *sá* has a similar function to the non-referential subject *det*, in that it anticipates a following embedded *att*-clause, e.g. (126)-(127).

(126) och bleeff **sá** dömdt att...
and was so judged that
(Petri:196)

(127) om **sá** skiede, att...
if so happened that...
(Brahe:19)

Falk argues that *sá* in contexts like (126)-(127) receives its referential content from the following embedded *att*-clause. There are parallel examples in Old Icelandic, e.g. (128)-(129). In such examples, *svo* appears to be an alternative to cataphoric *það* in comparable constructions, cf. (119) above.

(128) **Svo**_{*i*} er sagt, þá er keisari leggur skip sín til
so be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP when emperor lay.PRS ship his-own to
lægis, [að þeir mæta skipaliði nokkuru]_{*i*} ...
anchor COMP they meet.PRS naval-force certain
'It is said, when the emperor lays his ship to anchor, that they meet a
certain naval force.' (1260, Jomsvikingar.668)

(129) Og **svo**_{*i*} er sagt [að af ættinni verður sá einn
and so be.PRS say.PASS.PTCP COMP of line.DEF become.PRS DEM one
máttkastur er kallaður er Mánagarmur]_{*i*}.
mighty REL call.PASS.PTCP be.PRS Moongarm
'And it is said that from this clan will come a most mighty one called
Moongarm.' (Gylfa.12.3)

7.3.2 The status of *það*

7.3.2.1 Constructions with and without a clausal argument

Regarding the status of *það*, I have already shown in section 6.3 that cataphoric *það* occurs in the clause-initial prefinite position in subjectless constructions like (130), which have a clausal argument which maps to the OBJ function, see Table 7.4 for the findings for Old Icelandic. Since I am only concerned with the Old Icelandic period here, I only examine the data for 1150-1350. I examine subjectless constructions in later periods in section 7.4.

- (130) **Það**_i er nú að segja frá Alexandro konungi, [að hann
 CATPH be.PRS now to say.INF from Alexander king COMP he.NOM
 hefir lagst til svefns]_i.
 have.PRS go.PST.PTCP to sleep
 ‘It is now to say of King Alexander that he has gone to sleep.’
 (1300, Alexander.1380)

Time period	Það-V-	V-	Total	% Það-V-
1150-1350	12	11	23	52.2%

Table 7.4: Frequency of prefinite *það* in subjectless constructions with a clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

Moreover, it was shown that cataphoric *það* is positionally restricted in such contexts, being virtually unattested in constructions with topicalization, e.g. (131), see Table 7.5.

- (131) Nú er að segja frá Alexandro, [að, hvar sem hann fer,
 now be.PRS to say.INF from Alexander COMP wherever he.NOM go.PRS
 þá...].
 RSMP
 ‘Now it is to say of Alexander that, wherever he goes, then....’
 (1300, Alexander.396)

Time period	XP-V...það	XP-V...	Total	% XP-V...það
1150-1350	1	50	51	2.0%

Table 7.5: Frequency of postfinite *það* in subjectless constructions with a clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

By contrast, in subjectless constructions which lack a clausal argument, *það* is virtually unattested in all positions. This applies specifically to subjectless constructions which have a morphologically active predicate and a suppressed SUBJ and those which have a morphologically passive predicate; I consider constructions with an inherently subjectless predicate (e.g. weather predicate) separately.

The IcePaHC results for this specific set of subjectless constructions which lack a clausal argument show that *það* occurs only twice across the various structural configurations, see Tables 7.6 and 7.7. Most striking is the fact that the *það*-V-XP pattern is virtually unattested in constructions which lack a clausal object (just 2/80 instances), the dominant pattern being for there to be no *það* in such contexts (V-XP) (Table 7.6). This contrasts starkly with the status of the *það*-V-XP pattern previously observed for subjectless constructions with a clausal object (12/23 instances, see Table 7.4 above). *það* is wholly absent in examples with a topicalized XP (Table 7.7).

Time period	það-V-	V-	Total	% það-V-
1150-1350	2	80	82	2.4%

Table 7.6: Frequency of prefinite *það* in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

Time period	XP-V... <i>það</i>	XP-V...	Total	% XP-V... <i>það</i>
1150-1350	0	89	89	0.0%

Table 7.7: Frequency of postfinite *það* in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ and topicalization in IcePaHC, 1150-1350

I show the two examples in which *það* is present in the clause-initial prefinite position in (132) and (133).

- (132) **Það** er mælt um sakir þær allar sem hér eru
 CATPH be.PRS speak.PASS.PTCP about things DEM all REL here be.PRS
 taldar, um frumhlaup og um sár og um
 tell.PASS.PTCP about personal-assault and about wound and about
 víg og lagalöstu alla... En ef maður drepur
 manslaughter and law-evasions all and if man.NOM kill.PRS
 mann, og er það stefnusök...
 man.ACC and be.PRS DEM citation-case
 ‘This is said about all those things which are told here, about personal
 assault and about injury and about manslaughter and all evasions of the
 law... And if a man kills another man, and it is a citation case...’
 (1270, Gragas.334)¹⁵

- (133) **Það** er nú að segja frá Hrafn. Hann kom á Eyri
 CATPH be.PRS NOW to say.INF from Hrafn he.NOM come.PST to Eyri
 og...
 and
 ‘This is now to say of Hrafn: He came to Eyri and...’
 (1350, Finnbogi.1394)¹⁶

Both of these exceptional examples with *það* have a say-type predicate: *mæla* ‘speak’ in (132) and *segja* ‘say’ in (133). Say-type predicates are transitive predicates which optionally take a clausal complement, i.e. are precisely the predicates which participate in subjectless constructions with a clausal object where cataphoric *það* is already robustly attested in Old Icelandic, see (130) above. Thus the examples in (132) and (133) are evidence that *það* can already appear in Old Icelandic in subjectless constructions with say-type predicates which lack a clausal

¹⁵This sentence introduces a new chapter, and so one can rule out the possibility that the clause-initial *það* has anaphoric reference to something in the preceding context.

¹⁶This example initiates a new discourse and so it is reasonable to rule out the possibility that *það* is anaphorically referential.

argument, i.e. in contexts where *það* cannot ‘share’ a grammatical function. Although I assume that *það* is not assigned a grammatical function in (132) and (133) – due to the absence of a clausal argument – it is still a possibility that *það* is cataphorically referential in these contexts, just with reference across the sentence boundary. I return to this issue in section 7.4.

7.3.2.2 Constructions with inherently subjectless predicates

The standard claim is that the expletive is wholly absent in constructions with an inherently subjectless predicate of the types recognised here in Old Icelandic, though such claims are typically made on the basis of data for weather verb constructions alone. Rögnvaldsson (2002) found that the earliest attested examples of expletive *það* in weather verb constructions occur in the first Icelandic translation of the New Testament (dated 1540). Eythórrsson & Sigurðardóttir (2016) claim that ‘quasi-argumental’ *það* (i.e. the non-referential argument of weather verbs) is covert (i.e. absent at c-structure) in Old Icelandic.

Both the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350 and my supplementary Old Icelandic data show that *það* is indeed overwhelmingly absent in constructions with inherently subjectless predicates, see Table 7.8. Out of a total 176 examples, *það* is present in just nine instances (5.1%).

Dataset	<i>það</i>	No <i>það</i>	Total	% <i>það</i>
IcePaHC (1150-1350)	4	126	130	3.1%
Supplementary (1220-1270)	5	41	46	10.9%
Combined	9	167	176	5.1%

Table 7.8: Frequency of *það* (pre- and postfinite) in constructions with inherently subjectless predicates in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350

Nevertheless, the nine examples with *það* go against previous claims that *það* was wholly absent at this early stage of Icelandic. Firstly, there are six examples where *það* occurs in the clause-initial prefinite position (*það*-V). I show these examples in (134)-(138).¹⁷

¹⁷Note that the example in (135) contains two instances of *það*.

- (134) Og enn er fram líða stundir ber svo til að
 and still when forth pass.PRS hours happen.PRS so PTCL COMP
 maður gengur inn á Svölustöðum og í hús það er Már hvílir í.
 man go.PRS in on Svölustaðir and in house DEM REL Már rests in
Það var snemma um morgun.
 ? was early about morning
 ‘And still when some hours pass it happens so that a man goes into Svölus-
 taðir and into that house which Már resides in. **That/It** was early in the
 morning.’ (1350, BandamennM.1196)
- (135) Þá segir Egill: "...Og mun eg eigi að þessu telja því að
 then say.PRS Egill and will I.NOM NEG at DEM tell.INF because
 eru þeir sumir í málinu er eg ann vel
 be.PRS they.NOM some in affair.DEF REL I.NOM love.PRS well
 svívirðingar af og mest æsa málið, svo sem er
 disgraces of and mostly excite.PRS affair.DEF, so as be.PRS
 Styrmir eða Þórarinn og Hermundur." Ófeigur mælti: "**Það** mun
 Styrmir or Þórarinn and Hermundur Ófeigur say.PST ? will
 fara sem betur er, en það mun fara sem maklegt er
 go.INF as better be.PRS but ? will go.INF as proper be.PRS
 að þeir munu fá margs manns ámæli af þessu."
 COMP they.NOM will get.INF many.GEN man.GEN blame of DEM
 ‘Then says Egill: "...And I will not tell of this, because there are some
 of them in the affair who I love well for their disgraces and they mostly
 excite the affair, like Styrmir or Þórarinn and Hermundur." Ófeigur said:
 "**That/It** will go for the better, but **that/it** will go as is proper, that they
 will get the blame of many a man for this." ’ (1350, BandamennM.756-
 757)
- (136) Eiríkur svarar: "Þér þiggið vel og góðmannlega. Nú
 Eiríkur answer.PRS you.NOM receive.PRS well and like-good-man now
 leikur mér það eigi í hug að á yður
 play.PRS I.DAT EXPL NEG in mind COMP on you.DAT
 hallist um vor viðskipti. Hitt er heldur að
 turn-against.PRS.SBJV about our exchange DEM be.PRS rather COMP
 mér þykir illt ef að er spurt að þér
 I.DAT find.PRS badly if PTCL be.PRS ask.PASS.PTCP COMP you.NOM
 hafið engi jól verri haft en þessi er nú koma
 have.PRS no yule worse have.PST.PTCP than DEM REL NOW COME.INF
 í hönd." Karlsefni svarar: "**Það** mun ekki á þá leið."
 in hand. Karlsefni answer.PRS ? will NEG on DEM way.
 ‘Eiríkur answered, "You have also accepted with gratitude and respect,
 and I don’t feel that your contributions to our exchange have been lack-
 ing in any way. But I’ll regret it if word gets round that you’ve spent

here a Yuletide as lean as the one now approaching." Karlsefni answered, "That/It will not go that way." ' (1250, Eirik.7.9)

- (137) Hár segir: "Eigi kanntu deili á Sleipni og eigi High say.PRS NEG know.PRS-you details on Sleipnir and NEG veistu atburði af hverju hann kom. En það mun know.PRS-you circumstances of how he.NOM come.PST but DEM will þér þykja frásagnar vert. Það var snemma í you.DAT seem.INF reports worthwhile? be.PST early in öndverða byggð goðanna, þá er goðin höfðu beginning settlement gods.GEN.DEF when gods.DEF have.PST sett Miðgarð og gert Valhöll, þá kom build.PST.PTCP Miðgarð and make.PST.PTCP Valhöll then come.PST þar smiður nokkur og bauð að gera þeim borg á there smith some and offer.PST to make.INF they.DAT fortress on þrem misserum..." three seasons...
 'High said: "You do not know details of Sleipnir and you do not know the circumstances of how he came to be. But that you will find worthy of report. That/It/This was early in the beginning of gods' settlement, when the gods had built Miðgarð and made Valhöll, then there came there a certain builder and offered to build them a fortress in three seasons..." ' (1220, Gylfa.42.1)

- (138) Þeir fóru þá í brott og norður aftur og þóttust sjá they go.PST then away and northwards back and seem.PST see.INF Einfætingaland. Vildu þeir þá eigi lengur hætta liði one-legged-land wish.PST they.NOM then NEG long threaten.INF life sínu. Þeir ætluðu öll ein fjöll, þau er í Hópi their-own they.NOM perceive.PST all one mountains DEM REL in Hóp voru og þessi er nú fundu þeir, og það stæðist be.PST and DEM REL now find.PST they.NOM and EXPL stood.PST.SBJV mjög svo á og væri jafnlangt úr Straumfirði beggja very so on and be.PST.SBJV equally-far out Straumfjörður both vegna.
 'They then went away and back northwards and they thought they saw the Land of the One-Legged. Then they did not wish to put their lives in danger any longer. They perceived all mountains to be one range – those which were in Hóp and those which they now found – and it corresponded very so and both these places were equally far away from Straumfjörður.' (1250, Eirik.12.3)

In (134)-(136), it is difficult to determine whether *það* is an expletive or a pronoun with anaphoric reference to something in the preceding context; I leave both possibilities open. Similarly, in (137), it is hard to determine whether *það* is an expletive or a pronoun with anaphoric reference to something in the preceding context. Alternatively, *það* in (137) could also be cataphoric, with reference to the event reported later in the sentence (cf. (132) and (133) above). In (138), I rule out the possibility that *það* is an anaphorically referential pronoun, since there is nothing in the preceding context which could be a possible antecedent.¹⁸

Secondly, there are two examples which are V1 declaratives in which *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position (V-*það*), e.g. (139)-(140).

(139) Þar kemur er haustar og stærir sjóinn. Og
 ? come.PRS COMP become-autumn.PRS and swell.PRS sea.DEF and
 einn tíma ber þá úr hafi og að landi. Var það síð dags.
 one time carry.PRS then out sea and to land be.PRS ? late day.GEN
 ‘It comes to be that it becomes autumn and the sea swells. And one time
 it came out of the sea and onto the land. **That/It** was late in the day.’
 (1350, Finnbogi.635.548)

(140) Síðan gengu menn að vísindakonunni og frétti hver eftir því
 then go.PST men to wise-woman.DEF and ask.PST each after DEM
 sem mest forvitni var á. Var hún og góð af frásögnum.
 REL most curious be.PST on be.PST she..NOM also good of reports
 Gekk það og lítt í tauma er hún sagði.
 go.PST ? also scarcely in non-fulfilment REL she.NOM say.PST
 ‘Then men when to the wise woman and each asked after that which
 they were most curious about. She was also full of reports. And **it/this**
 scarcely didn’t come to fulfilment, that which she said.’ (1250, Eirik.4.16)

In (139), the status of *það* as an expletive or an anaphorically referential pronoun is ambiguous.¹⁹ In (140), I rule out the possibility that *það* is anaphorically referential, since there is no obvious antecedent in the preceding context to which it could refer. *það* in (140) could however be cataphoric, with reference to ‘that which she said’ later in the sentence.

Thirdly, there is one example where *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite

¹⁸A possible antecedent for *það* in (138) could be the neuter *fjöll* which occurs in the preceding context; but *fjöll* is plural and so its anaphor would be *þau* (NT.PL) not *það* (NT.SG).

¹⁹I discuss *þar* ‘there’ as a plausible expletive in contexts like (139) in Old Icelandic in section 8.1.

position in a construction with topicalization, e.g. (141).

- (141) Þá mælti Jafnhár: "Fyrr var það mörgum öldum en jörð
then say.PST Just-as-high before was ? many ages than earth
var sköpuð er Niflheimur var gjör...
be.PST create.PASS.PTCP COMP Niflheimur be.PST make.PASS.PTCP
'Then spoke Just-as-High: 'It/This was many ages before the earth was
created that Niflheimur was made...' (1220, Gylfa.4.3)

The sentence in (141) initiates a new discourse and so the possibility that *það* is a pronoun with anaphoric reference to the preceding context is ruled out. It is however ambiguous whether *það* here is expletive or cataphoric, with reference to 'that Niflheimur was made' later in the sentence.

Beyond the data for matrix clauses (see Table 7.8 above), there is also at least one instance of *það* in an embedded clause with an inherently subjectless predicate in this period, shown in (142). Here *það* appears to qualify as an expletive, being neither anaphoric or cataphoric.

- (142) Og eftir það þóttist hann heyra brest svo mikinn að
and after DEM seem.PST he.NOM hear.INF crash so big COMP
hann hugði að heyra mundi um alla Danmörk, og
he.NOM think.PST COMP hear.INF could about all Denmark and
sá hann að það varð af sjóvarganginum, er
see.PST he.NOM COMP EXPL become.PST of sea-swell.DAT.DEF when
hann gekk að landinu.
he.NOM go.PST to land.DEF
'And after that he seemed to hear such a big crash that he thought it
would be able to heard across all of Denmark, and he saw that it came
to pass a sea swell when he went to the land.' (1260, Jomsvikingar.144)

In sum, the combined Old Icelandic datasets indicate that while *það* is overwhelmingly absent in constructions with an inherently subjectless predicate, there are some scarce examples in which a plausibly expletive *það* occurs. If one accepts an expletive analysis, then such examples challenge standard claims that the expletive was wholly absent in constructions with inherently subjectless predicates in Old Icelandic (Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016; Faarlund 1990; Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990), see section 5.3.1. A number of examples were shown where *það* could possibly be cataphoric, referring forward to an event reported in the subsequent context. As a cataphoric context, such examples are similar to constructions

where cataphoric *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument, which I showed in Chapter 6 are robustly attested in Old Icelandic.

7.3.3 Summary

In this discussion of various types of subjectless construction in Old Icelandic, I have shown that there are morphologically active constructions with certain predicates which are subjectless via impersonalization and have a default *SUBJ* argument which is suppressed at c-structure, but present as a *SUBJ* at f-structure. I have also shown that there are subjectless constructions with a morphologically passive intransitive predicate, and have shown evidence that such constructions at least allow for a syntactically active impersonal analysis. In addition, I discussed three types of construction with a morphologically passive transitive predicate. Again, I provided evidence which indicates that such constructions to some extent allow for a syntactically active impersonal analysis.

In contrast to present-day Icelandic, it was shown that a non-anaphoric *það* is overwhelmingly absent in Old Icelandic subjectless constructions, with three exceptions:

1. In constructions with transitive say-type predicates, where *það* has cataphoric reference to a clausal argument.
2. In constructions with transitive say-type predicates, even when no clausal argument is present, but where *það* plausibly has cataphoric reference across a sentence boundary.
3. In constructions with inherently subjectless predicates, where *það* can be often analysed as cataphoric, having reference to an event reported later in the sentence.

7.4 The spread of the expletive

I now examine the development by which *það* emerges in all types of subjectless construction in later stages of Icelandic. I will argue for a diachronic account whereby *það* spreads to all topicless subjectless contexts on the model of a more restricted set of subjectless contexts where cataphoric *það* is present in Old Icelandic. I will claim that constructions with a say-type predicate – a transitive predicate

which can take a clausal complement – serve as a ‘bridging context’ (e.g. Heine 2002) in facilitating this spread.²⁰

7.4.1 Say-type predicates as a bridging context

In section 7.3, I showed that there are some exceptional instances of subjectless constructions which lack a clausal object in which a prefinite *það* is already attested in Old Icelandic, specifically those with say-type predicates, see (132) and (133) above. I now show the corpus findings for the status of prefinite *það* in subjectless constructions which lack a clausal object across all time periods in IcePaHC (1150-2008), see Table 7.9. The findings reveal that *það* remains very infrequent in the data prior to 1901, as of which there is a highly significant increase.

Time period	<i>það</i> -V-	V-	Total	% <i>það</i> -V-	²
1150-1350	2	80	82	2.4%	**
1351-1550	1	47	48	2.1%	*
1551-1750	0	24	24	0.0%	ns
1751-1900	3	32	35	8.6%	ns
1901-2008	24	7	31	77.4%	***
All periods	30	190	220	13.6%	

Table 7.9: Frequency of prefinite *það* in subjectless constructions with no clausal OBJ in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

The two examples with *það* from 1150-1350 (Old Icelandic) were those with say-type predicates, shown in (132) and (133) above. Here, I argued that *það* could be analysed as cataphorically referential across a sentence boundary. The single example from 1351-1550, shown in (143), also features a say-type predicate, in which *það* is plausibly cataphoric across a sentence boundary.

²⁰I exclude inherently subjectless constructions (see section 7.3.2.2) from this part of the investigation and leave the subsequent development of *það* in such contexts for future research.

- (143) **Það** er nú sagt af einum ríkum manni og
 CATPH be.PRS NOW say.PASS.PTCP of one rich man and
 mikilhæfum og nökkuð framferðugur til veraldliga hluta sem
 talented and somewhat ready to worldly things REL
 eg hirði eigi frá að segja... Hann tók sótt
 I.NOM care.PRS NEG from to say.INF he.NOM take.PST sickness
 hættliga.
 dangerous
 ‘This is now said of one rich and talented man and somewhat readily
 to worldly things which I care not to report.... He took dangerously ill.’
 (1475, *Ævintyri*.477)²¹

One of the three examples with *það* from the period 1751-1900 also features a say-type predicate, shown in (144). The other two examples from 1751-1900 are impersonal modals which feature other types of predicate, shown in (145) and (146). For these three examples, an expletive analysis seems more appropriate, since there is nothing in the subsequent context to which *það* could plausibly cataphorically refer. These examples can be taken to indicate that *það* had already begun to generalise to subjectless constructions with all types of predicate – beyond those with the say-type – by the 19th century; I explore this generalisation process further in the next section.

- (144) Þessi fregn flaug um allan bæinn og **það** var ekki
 DEM news fly.PST about all town.DEF and EXPL be.PST NEG
 talað um annað en Hans og dauða hans.
 tell.PASS.PTCP about other than Hans and death his
 ‘This news flew around the whole town and one did not tell of anything
 other than Hans and his death.’ (1883, *Voggur*.87)
- (145) **Það** mætti eitthvað verða úr því...
 EXPL might something become.INF out DEM
 ‘There might become something from this...’ (1850, *Piltur*.1398)
- (146) **Það** þurfti ekki að vitja um Hans...
 EXPL need.PST NEG to check.INF about Hans
 ‘It is not necessary to check up on Hans...’ (1883, *Voggur*.81)

I suggest that the early examples of *það* in (132)-(143) are indication that subjectless constructions with say-type predicates and no clausal object serve as a bridging context in facilitating the spread of *það* to subjectless construction with

²¹This sentence initiates a new chapter.

all types of predicate, e.g. (145)-(146). Even with no clausal object present, the say-type predicates in (132)-(143) still allow for *það* to serve its original function as a cataphorically referential element. The only difference is that in the ‘innovative’ contexts in (132)-(143), this cataphoric reference no longer operates within the sentence to a clausal object, but rather across a sentence-boundary, to the following sentence. While *það* is still cataphoric in (132)-(143), it is no longer assigned a grammatical function, since there is no clausal object present. In this sense, contexts like (132)-(143) – where *það* is cataphoric but not assigned a grammatical function – serve as an intermediate bridging context between the more well established context with the clausal argument in (130), where *það* is both cataphoric and assigned a grammatical function, and the later type in (145)-(146), where *það* is neither cataphoric nor assigned a grammatical function. I explore the last stage of this process – generalisation to contexts like (145) and (146) – in section 7.4.2.

7.4.2 Generalisation to all types of predicate

The corpus findings presented in Table 7.9 indicate a dramatic increase in *það* in subjectless constructions which lack a clausal object as of 1901. I show examples from the IcePaHC data for 1901-2008 in (147)-(151), in which an expletive *það* occurs with a wide range of predicates.

- (147) ... **það** var barið; Geimundur og Snjólaug komu
EXPL be.PST knock.PASS.PTCP Geimundur and Snjólaug come.PST
 jafnsnemma til dyranna...
same-time to doors.DEF
 ‘...someone knocked; Geimundur and Snjólaug came to the door at the same time...’ (1902, Fossar.1623)
- (148) **Það** má reyna að telja einhverjum öðrum en mér trú um
EXPL may try.INF to tell.INF someone other than me truth about
 það.
DEM
 ‘One may try to tell someone other than me the truth about that.’
 (1908, Ofurefli.1638)
- (149) **Það** á að spara með þessu.
EXPL ought to save.INF with DEM
 ‘One ought to be sparing with this.’ (1985, Marg saga.232)

- (150) Og **það** þarf að draga skipin úr sjó á haustum
 and EXPL need.PRS to pull.INF ships.DEF out sea in autumns
 ‘And one needs to pull the ships in out of the sea in autumn...’
 (2008, Ofsi.390)
- (151) ...og **það** á aldrei að hafa hrædda menn í forystu fyrir
 and EXPL ought never to have.INF afraid men in leadership for
 neinu.
 nothing
 ‘And one ought never to have men who are afraid in the lead for anything.’
 (2008, Ofsi.732)

I interpret these observations as indication that, as of c.1901, *það* generalises to subjectless constructions with any type of predicate, beyond the say-type predicates which feature in the earlier intermediate bridging context (see (132)-(143) above). Examples like (147)-(151) represent the third and final stage in the historical development by which *það* becomes established in the clause-initial prefinite position in all topicless subjectless constructions, see (152).²²

(152) **Development of clause-initial *það* in subjectless constructions**

1. *það* present in subjectless constructions with say-type predicates, where it has cataphoric reference to a clausal object and is assigned a grammatical function.
2. *það* present in:
 - (a) Subjectless constructions with say-type predicates, where it has cataphoric reference across a sentence boundary but is not assigned a grammatical function.
 - (b) Constructions with inherently subjectless predicates where it is cataphoric across a sentence boundary but is not assigned a grammatical function.
3. *það* present in subjectless construction with all types of predicates, including those where it does not have cataphoric reference nor is assigned a grammatical function.

²²Between stages 2 and 3 in (152), the spread of *það* is likely to have proceeded via lexical diffusion, but the IcePaHC data lacks the necessary detail to show this.

7.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed three different ways in which a construction can be subjectless in Icelandic (section 7.1), which I modelled using Kibort's Mapping Theory:

1. Constructions with inherently subjectless predicates, which do not select any argument at all.
2. Constructions which are subjectless via passivization, in which the default *SUBJ* argument is demoted to *OBL* and there is no promotion of a second argument to *SUBJ*.
3. Constructions which are subjectless via impersonalization, in which the default *SUBJ* argument is preserved as a *SUBJ* in the argument-function mapping, but is suppressed at c-structure.

I also showed that there is not necessarily a one-to-one mapping between the morphological status of a construction (as morphologically passive or active) and its syntactic status (as syntactically passive or active impersonal).

In section 7.3, I showed that Old Icelandic exhibits morphologically active constructions which involve suppression of the default *SUBJ* argument, i.e. are subjectless via impersonalization. I also provided evidence to indicate that there are morphologically passive constructions in Old Icelandic which allow for a syntactically active impersonal analysis. It was shown that *það* is often absent in subjectless constructions at this early stage, though is typically present in cataphoric contexts, where *það* is often assigned a grammatical function.

In section 7.4, I presented a diachronic account for the development whereby *það* emerged in the clause-initial prefinite position in all types of subjectless construction by the 20th century. This diachronic account recognised three distinct stages, in which constructions with say-type predicates serves as an intermediate bridging context. Moreover, this development is partially reliant on the syntactic ambiguity of constructions with passive transitive say-type predicates, which allow for both a syntactically passive and syntactically active impersonal analysis (as shown in section 6.4).

Chapter 8

The development of expletive *það* in presentational constructions

In this chapter, I examine the emergence of expletive *það* in presentational constructions in the history of Icelandic. In section 8.1, I discuss some key properties of presentational constructions. Section 8.2 outlines the methodology for the corpus study presented in the rest of the chapter. In section 8.3, I discuss presentational constructions in Old Icelandic. Section 8.4 charts the rise of expletive *það* in presentational constructions in later stages of the language. Section 8.5 summarises the chapter.

8.1 Properties of presentational constructions

It is generally acknowledged that declarative sentences fall into three types of information-structural category (e.g. Andrews 1985):¹

1. Topic-comment.
2. Presupposition-focus.
3. Thetic.

A sentence with a topic-comment articulation provides further information (comment) about a referent which is already known to the hearer (topic). A sentence with a presupposition-focus articulation presents new information about a situation which the speaker presumes the hearer to be aware of (presupposition), and

¹See also Lambrecht (2000): predicate-focus (topic-comment); argument-focus (presupposition-focus); sentence-focus (thetic).

this new information is given information-structural prominence in the sentence (is focused). Thetic sentences are those which have neither a topic-comment nor a presupposition-focus articulation. Presentational constructions are one subtype of this thetic category. Throughout this study, I adopt a definition of presentational constructions as any construction which expresses the existence or arrival on the scene of a discourse-new entity. Presentational constructions are the focus of this chapter; I do not concern myself with other types of thetic sentence.

Presentational constructions have been widely discussed in the literature; for a bibliographic overview, see McNally (2016). Accounts range from those which focus on syntactic properties (e.g. Bentley et al. 2013; Deal 2009; Freeze 2001; Hazout 2004; Hartmann 2008; Williams 2006), pragmatic/information-structural properties (e.g. Abbott 1993; Beaver et al. 2005; Breivik 2003; Lambrecht 2000) and semantic properties (e.g. Carnie & Harley 2005; Francez 2009; Keenan 2003; Kim 1996; McNally 2011; Moltmann 2013). There are also several contributions on presentational constructions in Scandinavian specifically (Askedal 1986; Börjars & Vincent 2005; Christensen 1991; Håkansson 2017; Lødrup 1999; Maling 1988; Mikkelsen 2002; Platzack 1983; Sveen 1996; Vangsnes 2002; Vikner 1995; Zaenen et al. 2017).

I distinguish between two subtypes of presentational construction: those which express the existence of a discourse-new entity, typically in a specified location, e.g. (1) and those which express an event in which a discourse-new entity participates, e.g. (2). I borrow terms from Sasse (1987) and refer to the former type as ‘entity-central’ presentational constructions and the latter type as ‘event-central’ presentational constructions (see Lambrecht 2000). Throughout this chapter, I show the discourse-new entity in bold.

- (1) Það var **töluverður** **snjór** yfir öllu. (‘entity-central’)
 EXPL be.PST considerable.NOM snow.NOM over everything
 ‘There was a considerable amount of snow over everything.’ (2008, Ofsi.772)
- (2) Það rísu upp **tveir** **nýir** **kaupmenn**. (‘event-central’)
 EXPL stand.PST up two.NOM new.NOM merchant.NOM
 ‘There stood up two new merchants.’ (1888, Grimur.126)

In Icelandic, entity-central presentational constructions have *vera* ‘be’ as the predicate, e.g. (1). Event-central presentational constructions are possible with a wide

range of lexical verbs as the predicate, e.g. (2); see section 5.1.2 for a classification of presentational constructions by predicate type.

8.1.1 Structural configuration

In present-day Icelandic, presentational constructions prototypically have the structure shown in (3).

(3) EXPL – V – NP – (XP)

There is a noun phrase in postfinite position which expresses the discourse-new entity. For now, I refer to this postfinite noun phrase as the ‘pivot’, following Zaenen et al. (2017) (see also Milsark 1974; Beaver et al. 2005).² As Zaenen et al. (2017) show, and as I discuss in section 8.1.2, there is good evidence that the pivot in present-day Icelandic presentational constructions has subject status. The clause-initial prefinite position is typically occupied by the expletive *það*, rendering a V2 structure, see (1)-(2). In older stages of the language the expletive is often absent, rendering a V1 structure, as I discuss in section 8.3. A clause-final XP is often present which expresses a specific location in which the discourse-new referent is situated, particularly in entity-central constructions like (1).

8.1.2 The pivot is a subject

Zaenen et al. (2017) present convincing evidence that the pivot in presentational constructions in present-day Icelandic qualifies as a subject, despite the fact that it is not in the canonical subject position (see section 3.4 for discussion of Icelandic subject positions). As I discuss in section 8.1.3, the position of the pivot is conditioned by information-structural factors, the pivot being discourse-new, i.e. non-topical. Nevertheless, the pivot does exhibit other prototypical subject properties. In section 3.3, I outlined coding versus behavioural subject properties in Icelandic. Firstly, with respect to coding properties, in presentational constructions the finite verb shows number agreement with the pivot, e.g. (4).

²An alternative term for the postfinite noun phrase which is common in mainstream generative grammar is ‘associate of the expletive’ (e.g. Vangsnes 2002; Thráinsson 2007).

- (4) a. Það var **töluverður** **snjór** yfir öllu.
 EXPL be.PST.SG considerable.NOM.SG snow.NOM.SG over everything
 ‘There was a considerable amount of snow over everything.’
 (2008, Ofsi.772)
- b. Það voru **tíu áburðarhestar og tveir menn** með;
 EXPL be.PST.PL ten horse.NOM.PL and two.NOM men.NOM.PL with
 Gunnar og Geirmundur.
 Gunnar and Geirmundur
 ‘There were ten horses and two men with them; Gunnar and Geir-
 mundur.’ (1902, Fossar.1396)

Secondly, the pivot also behaves like a prototypical subject with respect to case marking, another coding property. The relationship between case marking and grammatical functions in Icelandic is complex, since certain predicates take a non-nominative argument as their subject, as widely discussed in the literature (e.g. Zaenen et al. 1990). In presentational constructions with predicates which take a nominative argument as their subject, the pivot retains nominative case marking, as in (4). In presentational constructions with predicates which take non-nominative arguments as their subject, the pivot appears in the same case as it would have in the canonical subject position. Thus, verbs such as *reka* ‘drive’ which take an accusative argument as their subject appear with an accusative pivot in presentational constructions, e.g. (5) (Zaenen et al. 2017: 263).

- (5) a. **Nokkra hvali** hefur rekið á land í nótt.
 several.ACC whales.ACC have.PRS driven.PST.PTCP to land in night
 ‘Several whales have stranded overnight.’
- b. Það hefur rekið **nokkra hvali** á land í
 EXPL have.PRS driven.PST.PTCP several.ACC whales.ACC to land in
 nótt.
 night
 ‘Several whales have stranded overnight.’

Zaenen et al. (2017) also provide evidence that pivots in Icelandic presentational constructions control reflexives, a key behavioural property of subjects, e.g. (6) and (7) (Zaenen et al. 2017: 264).

- (6) Það hafa **fjórir stúdentar** týnt hjólunum sínum.
 EXPL have.PRS four.NOM students.NOM lose.PST.PTCP bikes.DEF their-own
 ‘Four students have lost their bikes.’

- (7) Það hafa komið **margin** **furðufuglar** hingað
 EXPL have.PRS come.PST.PTCP many.NOM strange-fellows.NOM hither
 í dag með einkennilegar uppfinningar **sínar**.
 today with peculiar inventions their-own
 ‘Many strange fellows have come here today with their peculiar inventions.’

Another behavioural property of subjects which is exhibited by pivots according to Zaenen et al. (2017) concerns subject ellipsis. Icelandic subjects can be elided in the second of two conjunct clauses. There are examples in which a pivot can be coordinated with a subjectless clause, e.g. (8) (Zaenen et al. 2017: 265).³

- (8) Það hafa komið **margin** **furðufuglar** hingað
 EXPL have.PRS come.PST.PTCP many.NOM strange-fellows.NOM hither
 í dag og farið í kröfugönguna.
 today and go.PST.PTCP in demonstration.DEF
 ‘Many strange fellows have come here today and gone to the demonstration.’

Zaenen et al. (2017: 266) also provide some evidence which indicates that pivots can undergo raising, another behavioural subject property. They argue that the pivot in the example in (9) has undergone subject-to-object raising, and subject-to-subject raising in the passive in (10), though the latter is deemed less good.⁴

- (9) Jón telur (*það) hafa verið **hesta** í
 Jón believe.PRS EXPL have.INF be.PST.PTCP horses.ACC in
 kirkjugarðinum.
 churchyard.DEF
 ‘John believes there to have been horses in the churchyard.’

- (10) ?Það voru **hestar** taldir vera í kirkjugarðinum
 EXPL be.PST horses.NOM believe.PST.PTCP be.INF in churchyard.DEF
 Intended: ‘There were horses believed to be in the churchyard.’

On balance, the evidence supports the claim that the pivot qualifies as a subject. Accordingly, I henceforth refer to the postfinite noun phrase as ‘subject’. This is contra much of the literature on Scandinavian presentational constructions, where it has often been claimed that the postfinite noun phrase is an object (e.g. Askedal

³Zaenen et al. (2017) acknowledge that examples like (8) might qualify as ‘pseudo-coordination’ (e.g. Lødrup 2002) but point out that the fact that pivots can be elided in such contexts – while objects cannot – supports their claim that pivots are more subject-like than object-like.

⁴Zaenen et al. (2017) assume a raising analysis for these constructions, but acknowledge that their analysis seems to be ‘very much in flux’ and refer to discussion in Thráinsson (2007: 452-8).

1986; Lødrup 1999; Mikkelsen 2002; Platzack 1983; Sveen 1996; Vikner 1995).⁵ As I show in section 8.1.3, certain ‘object-like’ properties of the subject which have led to such claims – in particular structural position – in fact follow from the fact that the subject in presentational constructions is non-topical.

8.1.3 The subject is non-topical

As already mentioned, the subject in presentational constructions expresses the discourse-new (i.e. non-topical) referent which the sentence introduces. A constellation of properties in presentational construction are connected with the status of the subject as a non-topic.⁶ The first of these properties concerns structural position. As outlined in Chapter 3, the clause-initial prefinite position (Spec-IP) is a topic position in Icelandic. This topic position is also the canonical subject position, since subjects are often topics. In presentational constructions, the non-topical subject does not fit the information-structural profile of Spec-IP. As such, it is heavily dispreferred in this position. (11) is judged questionable by Thráinsson (2007: 323), whereas the corresponding construction in (12) with a postfinite subject is straightforwardly grammatical.

(11) ?**Mús** hefir verið í baðkerinu.
 mouse.NOM have.PRS be.PST.PTCP in bath-tub.DEF
 Intended: ‘A mouse has been in the bathtub.’

(12) Það hefir verið **mús** í baðkerinu.
 EXPL have.PRS be.PST.PTCP mouse.NOM in bath-tub.DEF
 ‘There has been a mouse in the bathtub.’

The second property of presentational constructions which is connected to the non-topicality of the subject is the typical presence of the clause-initial expletive in present-day Icelandic, as in (12). As I showed in section 5.2, expletive *það* is restricted to this position in topicless sentences, and signals that the sentence lacks a topic.

The fact that the subject of a presentational construction is non-topical means that it will always be a full lexical NP; the subject cannot be pronominal, since pronominal arguments are discourse-old. As a non-topic, the subject will also

⁵However, Börjars & Vincent (2005) argue for the subject status of the pivot in Swedish.

⁶See also Lambrecht (2000: 624): ‘detopicalization’ of the subject in presentational constructions.

struggle to be definite, since definite referents are typically discourse-old. As such, presentational constructions in which the subject has definite marking are usually ruled out, cf. the grammaticality of (13-a) with the ungrammaticality of (13-b) (examples from Vangsnes 2002: 46).

- (13) a. *Það hafa verið nokkrir kettir í eldhúsinu.*
 EXPL have.PRS be.PST.PTCP some cats in kitchen.DEF
 ‘There have been some cats in the kitchen.’
- b. **Það hefur verið kötturinn í eldhúsinu.*
 EXPL have.PRS be.PST.PTCP cat.DEF in kitchen.DEF
 Intended: ‘There has been the cat in the kitchen.’

This restriction is commonly referred to as the ‘Definiteness Effect’, and has been extensively discussed for English (e.g. Milsark 1977; Abbott 1993; Keenan 2003; Beaver et al. 2005; Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 1397-1401) and for Icelandic specifically by Vangsnes (2002).

All the same, some exceptions to the Definiteness Effect have been noted in Icelandic. (14-a) is grammatical, despite the fact that the subject has definite marking. Similarly (14-b) – where the subject is modified by a demonstrative *þessi* – is grammatical.

- (14) a. *Það skín alltaf blessuð sólin.*
 EXPL shine.PRS always blessed sun.DEF
 ‘There shines always the blessed sun.’ (Rögnvaldsson 1984: 365)
- b. *Það var komin þessi líka gullfallega stelpa í
 EXPL be.PST come.PST.PTCP DEM PTCL gold-beautiful girl in
 party. DEF
 party. DEF
 ‘There had come this really good-looking girl to the party.’*
 (Vangsnes 2002: 66)

8.1.4 *There*-type expletive

Another property of presentational constructions concerns the choice of expletive in such contexts. As mentioned in Chapter 5, in languages like English which have both the *it*-type and *there*-type expletive, only the *there*-type is possible in presentational constructions, at least in present-day English. As I discuss in section 8.3, in earlier stages of English both the *it*-type and *there*-type expletive are possible

in presentational constructions. Since present-day Icelandic does not exhibit the *it/there* distinction, the expletive *það* occurs in presentational constructions, as it does in weather predicate constructions which, in English, are an *it*-type context (see Chapter 5, examples (5) and (4)).⁷

8.1.5 Summary

In sum, I adopt a classification schema which recognises two subtypes of presentational construction:

1. ‘Entity-central’: expresses the existence of a discourse-new referent.
2. ‘Event-central’: expresses an event which involves a discourse-new referent.

I have discussed key properties which presentational constructions exhibit:

1. EXPL-V-NP-(XP) as the prototypical structural configuration.
2. The pivot qualifies as a subject.
3. The subject is non-topical.
4. The availability of a *there*-type expletive.

8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 Data collection

In order to capture what I define as presentational constructions in IcePaHC, I isolate any sentence which is tagged with an expletive (ES) or as lacking an expletive (*exp*) and features a postfinite noun phrase which is co-indexed with the expletive. The IcePaHC representation in (15) shows the presentational construction in (16) which features an expletive.

⁷*Hann* (‘he’) can appear as an alternative to *það* in Icelandic weather predicate constructions, see Chapter 5.

(15) ((IP-MAT-SPE (NP-SBJ-1 (ES það-það))
 (BEDI var-vera)
 (NP-1 (N-N ljós-ljós))
 (PP (P í-í)
 (NP (N-D sjoppu\$-sjoppa) (D-D \$nni -hi nn))))
 (1985. MARGSAGA. NAR-FIC, . 1375)))

(16) **Það** var **ljós** í sjoppunni.
 EXPL be.PST light.NOM in shop.DAT.DEF
 ‘There was a light in the shop.’ (1985, Margsgaga.1375)

(17) shows the IcePaHC annotation for the V1 presentational construction in (18), which lacks an expletive.

(17) ((IP-MAT (NP-SBJ-1 *exp*)
 (BEDI Var-vera)
 (NP-1 (Q-N fátt-fár)
 (NP-POS (NS-G manna-maður)))
 (ADVP-LOC (ADV heima-heima))
 (1350. FINNBOGI . NAR-SAG, 655. 1696))

(18) Var **fátt** **manna** heima.
 be.PST fewness.NOM men.GEN at-home
 ‘There were few men at home.’ (1350, Finnbogi.655.1696)

IcePaHC also tags for an ‘absent’ expletive (*exp*) in V2 presentational constructions with topicalization. In present-day Icelandic, it is unlikely that expletive *það* would appear in such contexts, since expletive *það* is restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position (see section 5.2.1). An IcePaHC example is shown in (19) for the sentence in (20). I include such examples in my overall dataset, since they are an important consideration when examining the positional distribution of the expletive in earlier stages of the language, which has not been investigated to date.

- (19) ((IP-MAT-SPE (NP-SBJ-1 *exp*)
 (ADVP-LOC (ADV þarna-þarna))
 (PP (P á-á)
 (NP (D-D þessu-þessi)(N-D skri fborði -skri fborð)))
 (BEPI er-vera)
 (NP-1 (NPR-N RITVÉL-ri tvél))))
 (. , - ,))
 (ID 1985. SAGAN. NAR-FIC, . 32))

- (20) Þarna á þessu skrifborði er ritvél.
 there on DEM desk.DAT be.PRS typewriter.NOM
 ‘There, on this desk, is a typewriter.’ (1985, Sagan.32)

I isolate all examples of the types in (15)-(20) in IcePaHC (matrix clauses only) via automatic CorpusSearch queries; see Appendix A.5 for details.

For the earliest Old Icelandic period (1150-1350), I supplement the IcePaHC data with examples which I manually collect from the three additional texts detailed in section 1.3.2. I follow the IcePaHC practice on expletives and ‘absent’ expletives outlined above when manually tagging the data. This makes for a fair comparison between the supplementary data and the IcePaHC data.

I import all collected examples into a database and manually examine all examples, removing any which do not qualify as a presentational construction in the terms outlined in section 8.1. The total presentational constructions collected from IcePaHC and the supplementary Old Icelandic texts via this process are shown in Tables 8.1 and 8.2.

Time period	Total presentational constructions
1150-1350	90
1351-1550	88
1551-1750	93
1751-1900	100
1901-2008	135
All periods	506

Table 8.1: Presentational constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2208

Text	Total presentational constructions
<i>Eirik</i>	44
<i>Græn</i>	38
<i>Gylfa</i>	66
All texts	148

Table 8.2: Presentational constructions in supplementary Old Icelandic data, 1220-1250

8.2.2 Data manipulation

Once collected, I manually tag each example for additional properties which are relevant to the study. For the IcePaHC data, the status of the expletive (present or absent) was already captured at the point of data collection. I tag the manually collected data from the supplementary Old Icelandic texts for whether the expletive is present or absent. I also tag both datasets for the following properties:

1. Predicate type: copular; transitive active; transitive passive; unergative; unaccusative.
2. Verb position: V1; V2.
3. Position of the expletive if present: prefinite; postfinite.
4. Position of the postfinite noun phrase (subject): immediately postfinite; later postfinite.

As elsewhere, I operationalise the label ‘immediately postfinite’ to cases where no constituent intervenes between the finite verb and the subject, and ‘later postfinite’ to cases where there is at least one intervening constituent between the finite verb and the subject.

8.3 Presentational constructions in Old Icelandic

I now investigate the status of presentational constructions in Old Icelandic. I examine both entity-central and event-central presentational constructions, see (1) and (2) above. I investigate the properties of such constructions in comparison with those which were established for present-day Icelandic in section 8.1.

8.3.1 V1 presentationals

As discussed in Chapter 4, it is generally assumed that in Old Icelandic the position preceding the finite verb in matrix sentences was already an established topic position; it was observed there that discourse-new subjects tend to occur late in the sentence. In line with this preference, the canonical structural configuration for presentational constructions in Old Icelandic is for the discourse-new referent to be in postfinite position, e.g. (21)-(28). I show below that the discourse-new referent qualifies as a subject, as in present-day Icelandic presentational constructions. The dominant pattern at this early stage of the language is for there to be no clause-initial expletive, rendering V1 sentences.

- (21) Eru nú hér með oss **margir tignir**
be.PRS.PL now here with we.ACC many.NOM.PL noble.NOM.PL
menn og góðir drengir...
man.NOM.PL and good.NOM.PL boy.NOM.PL
'There are now here with us many noble men and good boys...'
(1275, Morkin.401)
- (22) Voru og **tuttugu hundruð** í búfé...
be.PST.PL also twenty hundred.NOM.PL in livestock
'There were twenty hundreds among the livestock...' (1325, Arni.688)
- (23) Grettir fór nú norður í Voga og var þar **allmikið fjölmenni**.
Grettir go.PST now north in Vogi and be.PST.SG there all-great.NOM.SG
crowd.NOM.SG
'Grettir now travelled northwards into Vogi and there was there a very great crowd.' (1310, Grettir.896)
- (24) Var **fátt manna** heima.
be.PST.SG fewness.NOM.SG men.GEN at-home
'There were few men at home.' (1350, Finnbogi.655.1696)
- (25) Þrútnar kviðurinn á henni, og eru að henni
grow.PRS womb.NOM.DEF on she.DAT and be.PST.PL at she.DAT
hitar miklir og þorstar.
heat.NOM.PL great.NOM.PL and thirst.NOM.PL
'Her womb grows, and there are for her great heats and thirsts.'
(1275, Morkin.10)

All of the examples in (21)-(25) express the existence of a discourse-new referent, i.e. are entity-central presentational constructions (see section 8.1). Old

Icelandic also exhibits V1 presentationals which are event-central, e.g. (26)-(29).

- (26) Réðust til ferðar með honum þrír tígir
 undertake.PST.PL to journey with he.DAT three.NOM.PL tens.NOM.PL
manna.
 men.GEN
 ‘There undertook the journey with him three tens of men.’
 (1250, Eirik.3.12)
- (27) Þá urðu þeir varir við Skrælingja og fór þar
 then become.PST they.NOM aware with natives and go.PST.SG there
 úr skógi fram mikill flokkur manna.
 out forest forth great.NOM.SG crowd.NOM.SG men.GEN
 ‘Then they became aware of some natives and there went forth out of the
 forest there a great crowd of men.’ (1250, Græn.6.6)
- (28) Varð þá hversvetna í leitað síðan þess er í
 become.PST then everywhere in search.PASS.PTCP since DEM.GEN REL in
 hug kom og kom þó eigi gerð í mungát...
 mind come.PST and come.PST though NEG yeast.NOM in ale
 ‘People then searched everywhere after it came into their mind but there
 came no yeast in the ale.’ (1210, Jarstein.208)
- (29) Þá bar skugga í dyrin og gekk þar inn
 then fall.PST shadow in doors.DEF and go.PST.SG there in
kona í svörtum námkyrtli...
 woman.NOM.SG in black tunic
 ‘Then a shadow fell upon the doorway and there went in there a woman
 in a black tunic...’ (1250, Græn.6.10)

The Old Icelandic examples in (21)-(29) exhibit many of the properties which were shown for present-day Icelandic presentational constructions in section 8.1. Most crucially, the pivot expresses a discourse-new referent, a crucial property of presentational constructions. Secondly the pivot qualifies as a subject, as in present-day Icelandic. In each example, the finite verb shows number agreement with the pivot. The pivot also bears the same case marking as it would have were it in the canonical subject position; in all of the examples this is nominative case marking, since all predicates featured take a nominative argument as their subject. I have not been able to find any examples in my data in which the pivot exhibits one of the behavioural subject properties (obligatory control of reflexives, subject ellipsis, raising), but absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. In sum, I do not find

reason to assume that the pivots in the examples (21)-(29) are not subjects.

As in present-day Icelandic, the subject in Old Icelandic V1 presentational constructions like (21)-(29) occurs in postfinite position. The preference for non-topical subjects to occur in postfinite position has been observed elsewhere in early Germanic (e.g. Hinterhölzl & Petrova 2010, 2011; Petrova 2011; Petrova & Rinke 2014). Such accounts assume that the postfinite position of the subject in such contexts is a formal correlate of its encoding as a non-topic, in a language where the verb serves as an information-structural boundary separating topic and comment; see Chapter 4 for further discussion, as well as Booth et al. (2017) who adopt this account for early Icelandic.

In the majority of the V1 presentational constructions in my Old Icelandic data, the subject occurs not in the immediately postfinite position but in a later postfinite position, with typically one constituent intervening between the the finite verb and the subject, see the generalisation in (30) and Table 8.3 for the corpus findings. Most often, the intervening XP is a discourse-linking adverb ('DA'), such as *þar* (31) 'there', *nú* 'now' (32) or *þá* 'then' (33).

(30) V – XP – SUBJ_{nontopic} (presentational V1)

Dataset	V-SUBJ	V-XP-SUBJ	Total	%V-SUBJ
IcePaHC (1150-1350)	14	25	39	35.9%
Supplementary (1220-1270)	14	35	49	28.6%
Combined	28	60	88	31.8%

Table 8.3: Subject position in V1 presentational constructions in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350

- (31) Voru þar tvö skip í búnaði.
 be.PST there two.NOM ships.NOM in preparations
 'There were two ships in the preparations.' (1250, Sturlunga.408.710)
- (32) Verður nú mannfall ógurligt.
 become.PRS now man-loss.NOM terrible.NOM
 'There now comes to be a terrible loss of men.' (1480, Jarlmann.381)
- (33) Kom þá veður á móti þeim.
 come.PST then wind.NOM towards they.DAT
 'There then came wind towards them.' (1250, Eirik.9.2)

Nevertheless, examples with an immediately postfinite subject do occur, e.g. (34)-(36).⁸

- (34) Varð **nokkurt fjártjón** en allir menn héldust.
become.PST some.NOM money-loss.NOM but all men lose.PST.MID
‘There was some loss of money but all men were lost.’ (1325, Arni.499)
- (35) En voru **margin margir fátækir menn** við ána...
but be.PRS many.NOM poor.NOM men.NOM by river.DEF
‘But there were many poor men by the river...’ (1210, Jarrein.807)
- (36) Vex **viðarteinungur einn** fyrir vestan Valhöll
grow.PRS tree-shoot.NOM certain.NOM for west Valhöll
‘There grows a certain tree shoot to the west of Valhöll.’ (1220, Gylfa.49.5)

The discourse-new subject does however commonly occupy the immediately postfinite position in presentational sentences with topicalization (‘V2 presentationals’), see the schema in (37). I show the corpus findings for subject position in this context in Table 8.4. In V2 presentationals with topicalization, the subject occurs much more frequently in the immediately postfinite position than in the V1 presentational type, cf. Table 8.3. I show examples of the V2 type in (38)-(39).

- (37) XP- V - SUBJ_{nontopic} (presentational V2)

Dataset	XP-V-SUBJ	XP-V-XP-SUBJ	Total	%XP-V-SUBJ
IcePaHC (1150-1350)	37	14	51	72.5%
Supplementary (1220-1270)	48	51	99	48.5%
Combined	85	65	150	56.7%

Table 8.4: Subject position in V2 presentational constructions with topicalization in Old Icelandic, 1150-1350

⁸As well as (35), *Jarrein* also features a similar presentational construction which has the subject in the clause-initial prefinite position:

- (i) En **fátækir menn** voru við ána...
but poor.NOM men.NOM be.PST by river.DEF
‘But there were poor men by the river...’ (1210, Jarrein.755)

I discuss such examples and show that they represent a wider trend for subject-initial presentational constructions in Old Icelandic in section 8.3.2.

- (38) Þar stendur **salur einn fagir** undir askinum við
 there stand.PRS hall.NOM certain.NOM beautiful.NOM under ash.DEF by
 brunninn.
 fountain.DEF
 ‘There stands there a beautiful hall beneath the ash near the fountain.’
 (1220, Gylfa.15.4)
- (39) Nú var **umræða mikil** um Vínlandsför Leifs.
 now be.PST discussion.NOM great.NOM about Vínland-voyage Leifur.GEN
 ‘Now there was great discussion about Leifur’s voyage to Vínland.’
 (1250, Græn.3.10)

8.3.2 Subject-initial presentationals

In section 8.3.1, I showed that the dominant pattern for presentational constructions in Old Icelandic is for the subject to occur in a postfinite position. This follows from the fact that the subject of a presentational construction is non-topical; it is thus dispreferred in the clause-initial prefinite position, since this is a position associated with topical constituents in Old Icelandic (see section 4.6).

Nevertheless, not all presentational constructions in Old Icelandic show the subject in a postfinite position. There are also presentational constructions with the subject in the clause-initial prefinite position, e.g. (40)-(42) (examples from Faarlund 2004: 199). I will refer to such constructions as ‘subject-initial presentationals’.

- (40) **Maðr** hét Þorgils.
 man.NOM be-called.PST Þorgils.NOM
 ‘There was a man called Þorgils.’ (Laxd 173.16)⁹
- (41) **Björn** er þar ok á því landi.
 bear.NOM be.PRS there also on DEM land
 ‘There is also a bear in that land.’ (Kgs 30.10)
- (42) **Kastali** var fyrir vestan sundit.
 castle.NOM be.PST before west strait.DEF
 ‘There was a castle to the west of the strait.’ (Hkr II.9.3)

The examples in (40)-(42) are evidence that the clause-initial prefinite position in Old Icelandic is not exclusively a topic position, but can also host non-topical constituents which are strongly dispreferred in this position in present-day Icelandic

⁹This example initiates a new chapter.

(see section 8.1). At the same time, it was shown in section 8.3.1 that there are frequent examples where the subject occurs in postfinite position in Old Icelandic V1 presentational constructions, see Table 8.3 above. The question, then, is how to account for sentences like (40)-(42) with a non-topical subject in the initial position when this position is usually associated with topical constituents.

Subject-initial presentational constructions are not included in my original dataset (see section 8.2), since they are not tagged as an expletive context in IcePaHC. Moreover, since there is no annotation for information structure in the corpus, there is no way to isolate such sentences automatically. This part of the study thus requires an additional manually collected dataset. I use a single Old Icelandic text from the supplementary dataset (*Eirik*) and examine sentences which feature a discourse-new subject in the initial position.

Firstly, there are subject-initial sentences which have the same function as (40), namely introducing a new character to the narrative. This single text exhibits a number of subject-initial examples which have the form *Maður hét X...* ('A man was called X...'), e.g. (43)-(46).

- (43) **Maður** hét Þorvarður.
 man.NOM be-called.PST Þorvarður.NOM
 'There was a man called Þorvarður.' (1250, Eirik.8)¹⁰
- (44) **Maður** hét Bjarni Grímólfsson,
 man.NOM be-called.PST Bjarni.NOM Grímólfsson.NOM
 breiðfirskur maður.
 of-breiðfjörður.NOM man.NOM
 'There was a man called Bjarni Grímólfsson who was from Breiðfjörður.'
 (1250, Eirik.7)¹¹
- (45) **Maður** hét Ormur er bjó að Arnarstapa.
 man.NOM be-called.PST Ormur.NOM REL live.PST at Arnarstapi
 'There was a man called Ormur who lived at Arnarstapi.' (1250, Eirik.3)¹²

¹⁰This sentence initiates a new discourse.

¹¹This sentence initiates a new discourse.

¹²This sentence initiates a new discourse.

- (46) **Maður** hét Þorfinnur karlsefni, son
 man.NOM be-called.PST Þorfinnur.NOM karlsefni.NOM, son.NOM
 Þórðar hesthöfða, er bjó norður í Reyninesi í
 Þórður.GEN horse-head.GEN REL live.PST north in Reynines in
 Skagafirði er nú er kallað.
 Skagafjörður REL now be.PRS call.PASS.PTCP
 ‘There was a man called Þorfinnur Karlsefni, son of Þórður Horse-head,
 who lived in the north at a place now called Reynines in Skagafjörður.’
 (1250, Eirik.7)¹³

All the examples in (43)-(46) have the predicate *heita* ‘be called’ and are thus a naming construction. These examples are each situated at the beginning of a new discourse section (which corresponds to a new paragraph or chapter in the modern edition). Furthermore, in a published English translation of the text, all of the examples are translated as presentational constructions (*‘There was a man called...’*), as indicated in the idiomatic translations provided for each example above.¹⁴

There are other subject-initial presentational constructions in *Eirik* which are naming constructions, e.g. (47)-(49). Here, the discourse-new subject combines with a distal demonstrative *sá/sú* (MASC/FEM), and is then further modified by a relative clause which provides the name of the introduced character. All three examples locate the new character at a previously mentioned location, as is typical for entity-central presentational constructions (see section 8.1).

- (47) **Sá maður** bjó á Herjólfnesi er Þorkell
 DEM.NOM man.NOM live.PST at Herjólfnes REL Þorkell.NOM
 hét.
 be-called.PST
 ‘That man lived at Herjólfnes who was called Þorkell.’ (1250, Eirik.3)
- (48) **Sú kona** var þar í byggð er Þorbjörg
 DEM.NOM woman.NOM be.PST there in district REL Þorbjörg.NOM
 hét.
 be-called.PST
 ‘That woman lived there in the district who was called Þorbjörg.’
 (1250, Eirik.4)

¹³This sentence begins a new chapter.

¹⁴The translation I refer to is that by Keneva Kunz in: *Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection/Preface* by Jane Smiley; Introduction by Robert Kellogg – London Penguin 2001.

- (49) Þorsteinn átti bú í Vestribyggð á bæ þeim er
 Þorsteinn.NOM own.PST farm in western-settlement at place DEM REFL
 í Lýsufirði heitir. Sá maður átti þar helming í
 in Lýsufjörður be-called.PRS DEM man.NOM own.PST there half-share in
 búi er Þorsteinn hét.
 farm REL Þorsteinn.NOM be-called.PST
 ‘Þorsteinn had a farm and livestock in the western settlement at a place
 called Lýsufjörður. That man owned there a half-share in this farm who
 was (also) called Þorsteinn.’ (1250, Eirik.6)

In these examples, the distal demonstrative is used in combination with a relative clause which provides identification of the referent. As such, the distal demonstrative can be analysed as having cataphoric reference to the individual identified later in the sentence. Similar examples in Old English with the demonstrative *se* are discussed by Breban (2012: 277) as ‘definite first mention noun phrases with restrictive relative clauses’; see also Vincent (1997) on a similar use of the demonstrative *ille* in late Latin.

What is special about the subject in (43)-(49) which allows it to occur in the clause-initial prefinite position, which is usually reserved for topical constituents? One property which the examples in (43)-(46) share is that the subject expresses a discourse-prominent individual who will be taken up in the subsequent action, i.e. a ‘topic-to-be’. This is consistent with the observation that subject-initial constructions of this type appear to be confined to the beginning of new discourse sections, i.e. initiate new paragraphs or chapters. As topics-to-be, one can characterise these subjects as initially focal elements which are motivated to occur in the prefinite position, since this is an information-structurally privileged position in Old Icelandic (see 4.6).

Moreover, the special subject-initial structural configuration shown in (43)-(49) appears to be exclusively reserved for the introduction of characters who are truly discourse-new. Sentences which further specify characters who have already been introduced have a different structural configuration, e.g. (50)-(51). Both examples are V1 sentences with a topical subject in postfinite position, i.e. belong to the narrative inversion V1 type (see section 4.1.1).

- (50) ...og þá gaf konungur honum tvo menn skoska. Hét
 and then give.PST king.NOM he.DAT two people scottish be-called.PST

karlmaðurinn Haki en **konan** Hekja.
 man.NOM.DEF Haki.NOM and woman.NOM.DEF Hekja.NOM
 ‘...and then the king gave him two Scots. The man was called Haki and the woman Hekja.’ (1250, Eirik.8)

- (51) Þeir sögðu að **konungar** stjórnðu Skrælingjalandi.
 they.NOM say.PST COMP kings.NOM rule.PST natives-land
 Hét **annar** þeirra Avaldamon en **annar**
 be-called.PST other.NOM they.GEN Avaldamon.NOM and other.NOM
 hét Valdidida.
 be-called.PST Valdidida.NOM
 ‘They said that kings ruled the land of the natives; one of them was called Avaldamon and the other Valdidida.’ (1250, Eirik.12)

So far, I have examined subject-initial presentationals which are naming constructions which introduce a new character to the narrative. On the basis of such examples, one might assume that the naming construction is a special type of construction, whose non-canonical word order has been grammaticalised for this specific discourse function. However, there are also examples of subject-initial presentationals which are not naming constructions, as in the examples from Faarlund (2004: 199), repeated here in (52)-(53). In these examples the discourse-new subject is not a human character, but rather a bear and a castle respectively. Such examples indicate that subject-initial presentationals in Old Icelandic extend beyond the specific naming construction type in (43)-(49).

- (52) **Björn** er þar ok á því landi ok er hvitr ok
 bear.NOM be.PRS there also on DEM land and be.PRS white and
 ætla menn at hann fœðez á því landi því at hann
 think.PRS men COMP he.NOM be-born.PST on this land because he.NOM
 hefir alt aðra náttúru en svarter birnir er i skogum ganga...
 have.PRS all other nature than black bears REL in forest go.INF
 ‘There is also a bear in that land and it is white and men think that he was born in this land because he has a completely different nature to the black bears which roam in the forest...’ (Kgs 30.10)
- (53) Þá fór Ólafur konungur út til Stokksunda og komst þar
 then go.PRS Ólafur king out til Stokksund and manage.PST there
 eigi út. **Kastali** var fyrir austan sundið en her manns
 NEG out castle.NOM be.PST before west strait.DEF and host man.GEN
 fyrir sunnan.
 before south
 ‘Then King Ólafur went out to Stokksund and didn’t manage to get out

there. There was a castle to the west of the strait and a host of men to the south.’ (Hkr II.9.3)

As before, in (52) the discourse-new subject also has discourse prominence in the subsequent narrative, i.e. is a topic-to-be. In (53), however, the discourse-new subject *kastali* is not taken up in the subsequent discourse and thus cannot be considered a topic-to-be. I leave exploration of such examples which do not fit the topic-to-be account for future research.

From the data discussed so far, one can say that there is at least one context in which a discourse-new subject can occur in the clause-initial prefinite position: in sentences where the discourse-new subject is discourse-prominent in the sense that it is central to the subsequent action. The generalisation which arises for Old Icelandic is thus that the clause-initial prefinite position can host any constituent which is discourse-prominent – either because it has been established in the preceding context (is a topic) or, in the subject-initial presentational constructions discussed here, because it will be taken up in the subsequent action (is a topic-to-be which is initially focal).

This account – whereby subject-initial presentational constructions are a strategy used for the discourse management of participants – is similar to analyses of definite marking in early English (Epstein 2011; Breban 2012). Epstein (2011) examines the use of *se* in the Old English text *Beowulf* and claims that *se* serves a range of discourse functions. One such function is to introduce discourse-new referents who have a prominent role in the subsequent narrative. A clear example is the first mention of the demon Grendel, a core character in *Beowulf*, shown in (54) (taken from Breban 2012: 277).

- (54) Ðā **se ellengæst** earfoðlice þrāge gepolode, sē þe in
then *se* powerful-demon hard grievance bore that-one who in
þystrum bād
darkness abode
‘Then that powerful demon, a prowler through the dark, nursed a hard
grievance’ (*Beowulf*, Klaeber 86-7)

The idea that *se* serves a presentative function in such contexts, introducing highly important referents for the first time, is taken up and developed by Breban (2012).

This account of Old English *se* is interesting, as the type of context in which

se is employed in this function is similar to the context in which subject-initial presentationals were observed in Old Icelandic above. The two languages thus appear to employ different strategies to the same end. In Old English, the use of *se* – which is usually reserved for identifiable referents – signals an important discourse-new referent. In Old Icelandic, discourse-new subjects typically occur in postfinite position; placing a discourse-new subject in the clause-initial prefinite position is thus a marked word order, reserved as a strategy to signal prominent discourse-new subjects. The discourse-new subject can also combine with a distal demonstrative in sentences which feature a relative clause which serves to specify the individual, as I showed above in (47)-(49).

A further observation of the subject-initial presentationals discussed in this section, is that – with the exception of (53) – the discourse-new subject is either a human (43)-(49) or an animal (52). I relate this observation to the so-called ‘Animacy Hierarchy’ (e.g. Silverstein 1976; Yamamoto 1999), one version of which is shown in (55).

(55) ANIMATE-HUMAN > ANIMATE-NONHUMAN > NON-ANIMATE-NONHUMAN

It has been shown that a range of grammatical phenomena are conditioned by this hierarchy, in the sense that they apply to higher-ranked categories before lower-ranked categories. The Animacy Hierarchy is relevant to this discussion of subject-initial presentationals since, as mentioned, the vast majority of examples involve an ANIMATE-HUMAN subject (43)-(49), or an ANIMATE-NONHUMAN subject (52). Indeed, there are further examples of subject-initial presentationals in the *Eirik* text whose subject is ANIMATE-NONHUMAN, e.g. (56)-(57).

(56) **Melrakkar** voru þar **margir**.
foxes.NOM be.PST there many.NOM
‘There were many foxes there.’ (1250, Eirik.8)

(57) **Fugl** var þar **svo margur** að trautt mátti fæti
bird.NOM be.PST there so much.NOM COMP scarcely could foot.DAT
niður koma í milli eggjanna.
down come in between eggs.DEF
‘There were so many birds there that they could hardly walk without stepping on eggs.’ (1250, Eirik.8)

In sum, I tentatively conclude from this small-scale survey that the discourse-

prominence and animacy of the subject are relevant properties which interact with the possibility for subject-initial presentational constructions in Old Icelandic.

8.3.3 *Þar*-initial presentationals

In section 8.1, I pointed out that in languages which exhibit both the *it*-type and *there*-type expletive (e.g. present-day English), only the *there*-type occurs in presentational constructions. As mentioned already, present-day Icelandic has only the *it*-type expletive *það*, formally identical to the 3SG.NT referential pronoun/demonstrative. *Þar*, formally identical to the locative adverb ‘there’, is ruled out in presentational constructions.¹⁵ Old Icelandic frequently exhibits presentational constructions in which *þar* occurs in the clause-initial position, e.g. (58)-(61).

(58) **Þar** var suðurmaður einn í ferð er Tyrkir
 there be.PST south-man.NOM one.NOM in company.DAT REL Tyrkir.NOM
 hét.
 be-called.PST
 ‘There was one man from the South in the company who was called Tyrkir.’
 (1250, Græn.2.4)

(59) **Þar** var mikill fjöldi dýra á skógi með öllu
 there be.PST great.NOM crowd.NOM animals.GEN in forest.DAT with all
 móti.
 shape
 ‘There was a great crowd of animals in the forest of all shapes.’
 (1250, Eirik.10.2)

(60) **Þar** var á útidýr og sterkur lás fyrir.
 there be.PST on outer-doors also strong.NOM lock.NOM before
 ‘There was on the outer doors also a strong lock.’

¹⁵Of course, *þar*-initial presentational constructions in present-day Icelandic are not ruled out when *þar* is the referential locative adverb (‘there’) rather than the expletive:

- (i) Skelfingu lostinn fálmaði ég í kófið á þeim stað þar sem ég
 terror struck fumble.PST I.NOM in thick-snow.DEF on DEM place where I.NOM
 hélt að ég hefði látið hann frá mér. Ég
 think.PST COMP I.NOM have.PST.SBJV let-go.PST.PTCP he.ACC from I.DAT I.NOM
 greip í tómt, þar var ekkert nema leðja.
 grasp.PST in emptiness there be.PST nothing.NOM except mud
 ‘Struck by terror, I fumbled in the thick snow on the spot where I thought I had let him
 go. I missed the boat, there was nothing there except mud.’ (1985, Margsaga.1070)

(1310, Grettir.721)

- (61) **Þar** var og með konungi Skjálgur Erlingsson,
there be.PST also with king Skjálgur.NOM Erlingsson.NOM
Þórólfur Mostrarskegg...
Þórólfur.NOM Mostrarskegg.NOM
'There was also with the king Skjálgur Erlingsson and Þórólfur Mostrarskegg.'
(1275, Morkin.352)

I now consider the status of the sentence-initial *þar* in (58)-(61). In these examples, there is no specified location in the preceding context to which *þar* can have anaphoric reference. However, each example does have a location explicitly specified later in the clause. It is possible to consider the status of such examples in the context of a grammaticalization pathway which has been proposed for the evolution of locative *there/þær* to expletive *there/þær* in English presentational constructions (e.g. Breivik 1989; Pfenninger 2009, 2013). Three stages are generally recognised on the pathway; examples and highlighting for each stage are taken from Pfenninger (2013: 52):

1. *þær* occurs in contexts where it is clearly locative and refers back to a location specified in the preceding context, e.g. (62).
2. *þær* occurs in contexts where it still refers back to a location specified in the preceding context but a second locative is added later in the sentence, thus rendering *þær* as a locative redundant. *þær* undergoes desemanticization, e.g. (63).
3. Having lost its locative meaning, *þær* starts to appear in contexts in which it cannot refer back to a location specified in the previous context, e.g. (64).

- (62) hlūdne **in healle**; þær wæs / hearpan swēg, swutol sang scopes
'loud in the hall; there was the sound of harps, the clear song of a singer'
(*Beowulf*, 33 86-90)

- (63) Nealles næs geweoldum wrymhordan cræft / sylfes willum se ðe him sare
gesceod / ac for þreanedlan þeof nathwylces hæleða bearna heteswengeas
fleoh / **ærnesþearfe** ond **ðaér inne** weall / secg synbysig sóna onwa-
cade / þæt gean ðam gyste gryrebrogga stod hwæðre fyrensceapen / se
fær begeat / sincfæt sóhte; **þær** wæs swylcra fela / **in ðam eorðsele**
ærgestreona

‘He was not at all in control of the skill of the worm-hoard, of his own desire, he who sorely injured him, because of dire-distress, a thief of I know not which sons of men fled hostile blows, in need of **a hall** and **there within** raged, a man haunted by guilt, immediately watched over; then against the stranger stood horror and terror; nevertheless upon the wicked one poured peril. He sought treasure-gold, **there** was many such, **in that earth-hall**, ancient treasures’ (*Beowulf*, 161 2224-2237)

- (64) Ic þæs bēames mæg ēaþe for eorlum æþelu secgan; **þær** wæs hlin ond āc
 ond se hearda Īw ond de fealwa holden
 ‘I can easily tell the origins of the tree for the noblemen; there was maple
 and oak and bitter yew and the dark holly’
 (*Riddles from the Exeter Book*, 239 7-10)

The Old Icelandic examples in (58)-(61) can be seen to represent an intermediate stage between stages 2 and 3 on this grammaticalisation pathway: *þar* is not anaphorically referential but there is still a locative present later in the sentence. I have not found any straightforward examples of stage 3 in my data – i.e. *þar*-initial presentational constructions where *þar* is not anaphorically referential, nor is there a later locative. As such, it seems reasonable to conclude that *þar* was at least somewhat on its way to developing into an expletive element in presentational contexts in Old Icelandic. This goes against standard accounts in two ways. Firstly, it is widely assumed that Old Icelandic had no expletive in presentational constructions (see section 5.3). Secondly, the possibility that *þar* was available as an expletive in Icelandic presentational constructions historically is not considered in this literature.

While there is evidence that *þar* is at least somewhat established as an expletive in entity-central presentational constructions like (58)-(61) in Old Icelandic, I have not found any examples of event-central presentational constructions in which the initial-position is occupied by a *þar* which does not refer back to a location in the previous context. This suggests that *þar* was only available in entity-central presentational constructions in Old Icelandic, not in event-central presentational constructions. This is perhaps unsurprising, since the entity-central type typically has a location specified in the clause (see section 8.1), i.e. is a suitable context for the grammaticalization development outlined above.

One further context in Old Icelandic in which a clause-initial *þar* is a plausible expletive is in constructions like (65)-(67), which were discussed in Chapter 6 in connection with cataphoric *það* and in Chapter 7 as subjectless constructions.

- (65) Þá var Pálnatóki eigi kominn, og leið á daginn
 then be.PST Pálnatóki NEG come.PST.PTCP and draw.PST on day.DEF
 mjög, og þar kómur [að menn gingu til drykkju um
 much and there come.PRS COMP men go.PST to drink about
 kveldið]...
 evening.DEF
 ‘Then Pálnatóki had not come, and the day drew swiftly on, and there
 came to be that men turned to drinking in the evening...’
 (1260, Jomsvikingar.1419)
- (66) Þeir bræður voru íslenskir að kyni og úr Austfjörðum. Þar er
 DEM brothers be.PST icelandic at kin and out-of East-Fjords there is
 nú til að taka [að Freydís Eiríksdóttir gerði
 now to to report.INF COMP Freydís.NOM Eiríksdóttir.NOM make.PST
 ferð sína heiman úr Görðum]...
 journey.ACC her-own home out Garðar.DAT
 ‘These brothers were Icelandic by kin and from the East Fjords. There
 is now to report that Freydís Eiríksdóttir made her journey home from
 Garðar...’ (1250, Græn, 7.3)
- (67) Gunnbjörn brá sverði og hjó til Jökuls og klauf allan
 Gunnbjörn draw.PST sword and strike.PST to Jökull and cleave.PST all
 skjöldinn öðrum megin mundriða. Jökull varð ekki
 shield.DEF other side handle.GEN Jökull become.PST NEG
 sár. Þar er til að taka [sem Finnbogi er
 wound.PASS.PTCP there be.PRS to to report.INF COMP Finnbogi be.PRS
 heima að Borg].
 at-home at Borg
 ‘Gunnbjörn drew his sword and struck Jökull and cleaved the whole shield
 on the other side on the handle. Jökull was not wounded. There is now to
 report that Finnbogi is at home at Borg.’ (1350, Finnbogi.663.2178)

It seems reasonable to rule out the possibility that *þar* in these examples is a referential locative adverb. Firstly, there is no clear location in the preceding context which *þar* could have anaphoric reference to. In both (66) and (67), for instance, the *þar*-initial sentence introduces a shift in location from the preceding sentence. Furthermore, there are a number of comparable examples featuring *þar* which introduce a new chapter, e.g. (68)-(69). The example in (69), for instance,

introduces a new chapter in which there is an abrupt change of location from the preceding chapter, and the action returns to a different character not included in the action of the previous chapter, Kári. Note that these examples have a topicalised XP in the initial position (*nú* ‘now’); *þar* occurs in the immediately postfinite position, thus behaving like a subject.

- (68) Nú er þar til máls að taka er þeir eru
 now be.PRS there to matter to take.INF as they.NOM be.PRS
 feðgar, Haraldur og Gormur konungur, [að þeir
 father-and-son Haraldur og Gormur king COMP they.NOM
 urðu ósamþykkir þegar er Haraldur hafði nokkurn kraft
 become.PST un-agreeing when Haraldur have.PST some power
 aldursins].
 age.GEN.DEF
 ‘Now there is to report, as they are father and son, Haraldur and King
 Gormur, that they came to a disagreement when Haraldur had a certain
 power of the age.’ (1260, Jomsvikingar.311)
- (69) Nú er þar til máls at taka, at Kári er. Hann
 now be.PRS there to matter to take.INF COMP Kári be.PRS he.NOM
 fór ór grófinni þar til, er hann moetti Bárði...
 go.PST out hollow.DEF until he.NOM meet.PST Bárði...
 ‘Now there is to report about Kári. He went out of the hollow until he met
 Barði.’ (NjM 33912 [c1330-1370])¹⁶

The occurrence of *þar* in contexts like (65)-(69) appears to pattern with the occurrence of cataphoric *það* in comparable subjectless constructions which were discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, e.g. (70). This example introduces a new paragraph in which the action switches to a new character (Hermóður), following a report of the burning of Baldur in the previous discourse.

- (70) En það_i er að segja frá Hermóði [að hann reið
 but CATPH be.PRS to say.INF from Hermóður.DAT COMP he.NOM ride.PST
 níu nætur dökkva dala og djúpa]_i...
 nine nights.ACC dark.GEN dales.GEN and deep.GEN
 ‘But it is to say of Hermóður that he rode for nine nights through dark and
 deep dales...’ (1250, Gylfa.49.15)

The similarity between constructions like (65)-(69) with a sentence-initial *þar* and

¹⁶Reference from *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* (‘Dictionary of Old Norse prose’), <https://onp.ku.dk>.

those like (70) with a sentence-initial *það* is striking, and lends further support to my claim that *þar* is not only a locative adverb at this stage.

If one accepts this expletive analysis of *þar*, then there appears to be a difference in positional distribution between *þar* and *það* in such contexts. In section 6.3, it was shown that cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal OBJ like (70) is almost exclusively restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position; virtually no instances of cataphoric *það* were found in such contexts in postfinite position when another constituent is topicalized (XP-V-CATPH). By contrast, *þar* freely occurs in the postfinite position in contexts with topicalization, e.g. (68)-(69) above and (71)-(74) below. In other words, while *það* was shown to serve as a placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite position in these contexts, *þar* in comparable contexts behaves like a subject.

- (71) Og nú kemur **þar** misserum [er jarl fer heiman
and now come.PRS there 12-months.DAT COMP earl go.PST from-home
með föruneyti sitt]...
with company his-own
'And now there comes to be within 12 months that the Earl sets out from
home with his company...' (1260, Jomsvikingar.208)¹⁷
- (72) Nú er **þar** til að taka [að Ófeigur karl gengur upp á
now be.PRS there to to report.INF COMP Ófeigur chap go.PRS up on
völluna og til dómanna, kemur að Norðlendingadómi og
meadow.DEF and to court.DEF, come.PRS to Norðlending-court and
spyr hvað þar fari fram málum manna].
ask.PRS what there go.PRS.SBJV forth cases men.GEN
'Now there is to report that a chap called Ófeigur goes up on the meadows
and to the court, comes to the Norðlending court and asks whether men's
cases were appearing there.' (1350, BandamennM.503)¹⁸
- (73) Nú er **þar** til að taka [að Ragnhildur konungsdóttir
now be.PRS there to to report.INF COMP Ragnhildur king's-daughter
fer til Sveins konungs, og tekur hann við henni báðum
go.PRS to Sveinn king and take.PRS he.NOM with she.ACC both.DAT
höndum].
hands.DAT
'Now there is to report that Ragnhildur the King's daughter goes to King
Sveinn and he welcomes her with both hands.' (1275, Morkin.730)

¹⁷This sentence initiates a new paragraph.

¹⁸This sentence initiates a new chapter.

- (74) Nú er þar til að taka að Grettir Ásmundarson sat
 Now be.PRS there to to take.INF COMP Grettir Ásmundarson sit.PST
 heima að Bjargi um haustið síðan þeir Víga-Barði
 at-home at Bjarg about autumn.DEF since they.NOM Víga-Barði
 skildu á Þóreyjargnúpi.
 part.PST on Þóreyjargnúpur
 ‘Now there is to report that Grettir Ásmundarson sat at home at Bjarg for
 the autumn, since he and Víga-Barði parted at Þóreyjargnúpur.’
 (1310, Grettir.2000)¹⁹

Interestingly, the two predicates which feature in the examples with *þar* so far – *koma* in the sense of ‘happen’ and *vera til að taka* ‘report’ – do not occur with *það* at all. Though there are a relatively small number of examples in my data for 1150-1350 overall, all examples feature either *þar*, as in the examples above, or, in rare cases, no *þar* or *það* at all, e.g. (75).

- (75) Kom þá svo [að herra Loðinn bauð biskupi á
 come.PST then so COMP lord.NOM Loðinn.NOM invite.PST bishop on
 Eyrasand og veitti fagra veislu.
 Eyrasand and give.PST handsome feast
 ‘There then came to pass that Lord Loðinn invited the Bishop to Eyrasand
 and held a handsome feast.’ (1325, Arni.1001)

In sum, there is evidence that *þar* can in some contexts be analysed as cataphoric. Moreover, in certain Old Icelandic presentational constructions, it appears to have been available as an expletive. I discuss the subsequent fate of *þar* and the rise of *það* in presentational constructions in later stages of Icelandic in section 8.4.

8.3.4 Summary

In the study of Old Icelandic presentational constructions presented in this section, I have shown that the dominant pattern for presentational constructions at this early stage was for the discourse-new subject to occupy a postfinite position. I also showed that in certain exceptional contexts, presentational constructions are grammatical where the discourse-new subject occupies the clause-initial prefinite position. This is possible when the subject is discourse-prominent in the sense

¹⁹This sentence initiates a new chapter.

that it is central to the subsequent action in the narrative (a topic-to-be). I also discussed *þar*-initial presentational constructions. I showed that there is reason to assume that *þar* was already partly established as an expletive in such contexts, at a time when *það* was unavailable as an expletive in presentational constructions. This is in line with stages of historical Germanic beyond Icelandic, which exhibit *it*-type versus *there*-type expletives. The availability of these two options challenges previous accounts of the diachrony of expletives in Icelandic, which neglect the availability of *þar* as an expletive.

8.4 The rise of expletive *það*

8.4.1 Two expletives in competition

In section 8.3.3, I argued that *þar* ('there') was available as an expletive in Old Icelandic presentational constructions. However, in present-day Icelandic *þar* is ruled out as an expletive in presentational constructions, where only *það* ('it') is grammatical as an expletive. One can thus posit a change which occurs at some point between Old Icelandic and the present-day, whereby *þar* ceases to become available as an expletive in presentational constructions, in favour of *það*. I now examine this development in detail.

In section 8.3.3, I showed examples of Old Icelandic presentational constructions in which a clause-initial *þar* does not refer back to a location specified in the preceding context. Also in later stages, there are examples where *þar* is plausibly expletive, e.g. (76)-(83). In these examples, *þar* does not appear to be restricted to the clause-initial position.

- (76) **Þar** var ein hella stór á vellinum.
 there be.PST one.NOM rock-slab.NOM big.NOM on field.DEF
 'There was a certin big slab of rock in the field.' (1400, Gunnar.679)
- (77) Talaði Víglundur það einn tíma að hann vildi að
 tell.PST Víglundur CATPH one time COMP he.NOM wish.PST COMP
 þau byndu sína ást með fastmælum en Ketilríður
 they.NOM bind.PRS.SBJV his-own love with fast-talk but Ketilríður
 gaf sér fátt að: "Eru **þar**," segir hún, "margir
 give.PST REFL few at be.PRS there say.PRS she.NOM many.NOM
 hlutir í móti."
 things.NOM against

‘Víglandur said one time that he wished that they would seal their love with an engagement but Ketilríður took coldly to this: "There are", she says, "many things against that."’ (1400, Viglundur.539)

- (78) Þeir voru c þúsunda að tölu og var þar engi
 they.NOM be.PST circa thousand at count and be.PST there none.NOM
 mennskur maður í.
 human.NOM man.NOM in
 ‘They were circa one thousand in number and there was no human being among them.’ (1450, Vilhjalmur.93.1896)
- (79) Gekk hann í móti sínum fóstbróður með allmikilli gleði, og
 go.PST he.NOM against his-own foster-brother with all-great joy and
 var þar allmikill fagnafundur..
 be.PST there all-great.NOM joyful-meeting.NOM
 ‘He went towards his foster brother with great joy and there was a greatly joyful meeting...’ (1480, Jarlmann.569)
- (80) Þar var gnægð grjóts og viður hér og þar
 there be.PST abundance.NOM stone.GEN and wood.NOM here and there
 við sjávarströndina með björgunum.
 with sea-beach.DEF with cliffs.DEF
 ‘There was an abundance of stone and some wood here and there by the beach with the cliffs.’ (1650, Illugi.563)
- (81) Þar bjó í Kaupinhafn einn slátrari sá er
 there live.PST in Copenhagen one.NOM butcher.NOM DEM.NOM REL
 Kristján hét, einn velríkur maður.
 Kristján be-called.PST one well-rich man
 ‘There lived in Copenhagen one butcher called Kristján, a very rich man.’
 (1661, Indiafari.35.258)
- (82) Og hann segir með Davíð: Þar er ekkert heilt á
 and he.NOM say.PRS with Davíð there is nothing.NOM healthy.NOM on
 mínu holdi fyrir þinni ógnan, þar er enginn friður í mínum
 my flesh for your menaces there is none.NOM peace.NOM in my
 beinum fyrir mínum syndum...
 bones for my sins
 ‘And he says with Davíð: There is nothing healthy on my flesh for your menaces, there is no peace in my bones for my sins...’ (1720, Vidalin.1029)
- (83) Jesús sagði til faríseanna: Þar var einn ríkur
 Jesus say.PST to Pharisees.DEM there be.PST one.NOM rich.NOM
 mann, sem klæddist pelli og purpura...
 man.NOM REL clothe.PST.MID costly-material.DAT and purple.DAT
 ‘Jesus said to the Pharisees: There was one rich man, who was clothed

with costly materials in purple...’ (1720, Vidalin.291)

Another context where *þar* was shown to be partly established in Old Icelandic in section 8.3.3 was in subjectless constructions with the predicate *vera til að taka* ‘be able to report’. Similar examples with *þar* occur in later periods (i.e. as of 1350), e.g. (84)-(86). The latest example with *þar* in my data is from 1661, shown in (86).

- (84) Nú er **þar** til að taka [sem þeir bræður, Jökull og Einar,
now be.PRS there to to report.INF COMP DEM brothers Jökull and Einar
gerðust mjög óspakir í héraðinu].
become.PST very unquiet in district.DEF
‘Now there is to report that those brothers, Jökull and Einar, grew very
unquiet in the district.’ (1400, Viglundur.364)²⁰
- (85) En nú er **þar** til að taka [að Lukíus vaknar ei með
but now be.PRS there to to report.INF COMP Lukíus awake.PRS NEG with
góðan hug er hann finnur Alanus í burtu]...
good mind when he.NOM find.PRS Alanus away
‘But there is to report that Lukíus awakes in no good frame of mind when
he finds Alanus gone...’ (1450, Ectorssaga.839)
- (86) Nú er **þar** frá að segja [að skútumaðurinn vaknar]...
now be.PRS there from to say.INF COMP ship-man.DEF awake.PRS
‘Now there is to say that the shipman awakes...’ (1661.Indiafari.52.726)

It is noteworthy that, besides (86), there is a comparable example from the very same text in which *það* is present, instead of *þar*, shown in (87).

- (87) Nú er **það**_i til máls að taka [að þessir tveir vínsveinar
now be.PRS CATPH to matter to report.INF COMP DEM two wine-boys
tóku þennan skútumann ofan í þann vínkjallara...]_i
take.PST DEM craftsman down in DEM wine-cellar
‘Now it is to report that these two wine boys took this craftsman down into
the cellar...’ (1661, Indiafari.57.854)

The example in (87) is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it indicates that by at least 1661 *það* has generalised from its occurrence in certain types of construction with a clausal argument in Old Icelandic (e.g. (70) above; see Chapter 6 for discussion) to constructions with the predicate *vera til (máls) að taka* ‘report’, which in earlier stages of the language only permitted *þar*, e.g. (84)-(85). Secondly, the fact

²⁰This sentence initiates a new chapter.

that *það* occurs in the immediately postfinite position in (87) is striking in comparison with the positional distribution of cataphoric *það* shown for similar contexts in section 6.3. There it was shown that cataphoric *það* in constructions like (87) with a clausal object is strongly dispreferred in postfinite position. By comparison, it was shown in section 8.3.3 that *þar* in such contexts occurs in both the clause-initial and immediately postfinite position in Old Icelandic. The example from 1661 in (87) with a postfinite *það* thus indicates that not only has *það* extended to the domain of *þar* in such contexts but that, possibly via this generalisation, has also been extended to occur in a new structural position in which it was previously ruled out.

I now set aside presentational constructions with a plausibly expletive *þar* and focus on the emergence of expletive *það* in such contexts. I compare the proportion of V2 examples with a clause-initial *það* to the proportion of V1 examples with no expletive across the full IcePaHC diachrony, see Table 8.5. The corpus results confirm that expletive *það* is wholly absent in Old Icelandic (1150-1350), where V1 presentationals are dominant, in line with the discussion in section 8.3. The first examples with a clause-initial *það* occur in the period 1351-1550, shown in (88)-(92).

Period	<i>það</i> -V	V-	Total	% <i>það</i> -V	2
1150-1350	0	39	39	0.0%	***
1351-1550	5	33	38	13.2%	***
1551-1750	4	21	25	16.0%	***
1751-1900	35	19	54	64.8%	ns
1901-2008	86	5	91	94.5%	***
All periods	130	117	247	52.6%	

Table 8.5: Frequency of prefinite *það* in presentational constructions in IcePaHC, 1150-2008

- (88) **Það** var einn ríkur maður, að hann
 EXPL be.PST.SG one.NOM.SG rich.NOM.SG man.NOM.SG COMP he.NOM
 trúði ei rétt eftir því sem honum bar..
 believe.PST NEG rightly after DEM REL he.DAT deserve.PST
 ‘There was one rich man, that he did not rightly believe in that which he
 deserved...’ (1475, *Ævintyri*.175)²¹

²¹This sentence begins a new chapter, and so one can rule out the possibility that *það* has anaphoric

- (89) **Það** var einn mann í Englandi, sem fleiri
 EXPL be.PST.SG one.NOM.SG man.NOM.SG in England.DAT as many
 aðrir þó frá þessum verði nú sagt heldur en
 others though from DEM become.PRS now say.PST.PTCP rather than
 frá öðrum...
 from others
 ‘There was one man in England, as many others though from this become
 now said rather than from others...’ (1475, *Ævintyri*.458)²²
- (90) **Það** var einn kvinna er fastaði við brauð
 EXPL be.PST.SG one.NOM.SG woman.NOM.SG REL fast.PST with bread
 og vatn fyrir Marju messu Magdalena.
 and water for María.GEN mass Magdalena
 ‘There was one woman who fasted with bread and water for Mary Mag-
 dalene’s mass.’ (1475, *Ævintyri*.17)²³
- (91) Þar voru og rómverskir og júðar og þeir sem kallaðir
 there be.PST also Romans and Jews and DEM REL call.PASS.PTCP
 voru proseliti, en það voru þeir sem snúist höfðu frá
 be.PST proseliti but DEM be.PST DEM REL turn.PST.PTCP have.PST from
 heiðnum siðum og til júðverskra hluta. **Það** voru og
 heathen customs and to jewish things EXPL be.PST.PL also
 [þeir er sum ritning kalla Gethinn], en það eru
 they.NOM.PL REL some writings call.PRS Gethinn but DEM be.PRS
 grikkir og þeir af Arbíen.
 greeks and they from Arabia.
 ‘There were also Romans and Jews and those who were called Proseliti
 but that was those who had turned from heathen customs to Jewish ways.
 There were also those whom certain writings call Gething, but that is
 Greeks and those from Arabia.’ (1525, *Georgius*.694)
- (92) Og kenna þeim ráð að þeir skulu dýrka
 and teach.INF them advice COMP they should celebrate.INF
 afguði dumba og daufa og trúa á þá með allri
 transgressions dumb and deaf and believe.INF on DEM with all
 vegsemd. En **það** er þó ekki til reyndar nema
 honour but EXPL be.PRS.SG though nothing.NOM.SG in fact except
 djöflar og er ég einn af þeim en ekki guð.
 devils and be.PRS I.NOM one of them but NEG god
 ‘And to teach them the advice that they should celebrate dumb and deaf
 transgressions and believe in that with complete honour. But there is noth-

reference to something in the preceding discourse.

²²This sentence also begins a new chapter.

²³This sentence also begins a new chapter..

ing in fact except devils, and I am one of them but not God.’

(1525, *Georgius*.912)

There are also four examples with the expletive in the middle period (1551-1750), shown in (93)-(96).

- (93) Ei minnist ég múrshæðina, en víst meina ég
NEG remember.PRS I.NOM wall-height.DEF but certainly think.PRS I.NOM
það fimmtán faðma hæð vera. Það eru margir
DEM fifteen fathoms.GEN height be.INF EXPL be.PRS.PL many.NOM.PL
kimar niður við sjómálið...
bilges.NOM.PL down by high-waterline.DEF
‘I do not remember the wall height, but I certainly think it to be fifteen
fathoms in height. There are many bilges down by the high waterline.’
(1661, *Indiafari*.73.1287)

- (94) Hvað er nú framar? Þú ert forsmáður, líður órétt,
what be.PRS now further you.NOM be.PRS manager pass.PRS injustice
enginn vill kannast við þig, það er
no-one wish.PRS reckon.INF with you.ACC EXPL be.PRS.SG
ekki nýtt í heiminum.
nothing.NOM.SG new.NOM.SG in world.DEF
‘What more is there? You are the manager, you pass injustice, no-one
wishes to reckon with you, there is nothing new in the world.’
(1720, *Vidalin*.603)

The earliest examples with expletive *það* are attested in texts which have some influence from a source language: *Ævintýri* is a translation from English, *Georgius* from Low German, *Indiafari* has been claimed to have some influence from German, and *Vidalin* possible influence from German and Danish (see section 1.3.1.4 for discussion).²⁴ As such, the first examples of presentational constructions with expletive *það* which are attested in exclusively native Icelandic compositions are the two remaining examples in 1551-1750, shown here in (95) and (96).

²⁴Similar observations have led to the claim that the emergence of expletive *það* is a contact-induced change (Eythórsson & Sigurðardóttir 2016). As I argued in section 5.3, however, I reject the possibility that the rise of *það* is exclusively due to contact for a number of reasons.

- (95) Þar með gjörði hún so að inna: Það vekjast upp
 there with make.PST she.NOM so to tell.INF EXPL awake.PRS.PL.MID up
 harmar í hjarta mínu, er ég hlýt frá að
 sorrow.NOM.PL in heart my COMP I.NOM be-obliged.PRS PTCL to
 skýra sorg þeirri sem mér hefur tilfallið.
 explain.INF sorrow DEM REL I.DAT have.PRS befall.PST.PTCP
 ‘Therewith she went to tell the following: there awakens sorrow in my
 heart that I am obliged to explain the sorrow which has befallen me.’
 (1675, Armann.113.775)
- (96) En síðan tóku þeir að smádirfast, báðu þeir
 but then take.PST they.NOM to small-dare.INF, ask.PST they.NOM
 kónginn um Viðey, það væri einn klén
 king.DEF about Viðey EXPL be.PST.SBJV.SG one.NOM little.NOM.SG
 hestahólmi, svo sem vera mætti fyrir eina tvo hesta eða
 horseholm.NOM.SG, such as be.INF might for one two horses or
 þrjá.
 three
 ‘But then they started to be slight daring, they asked the king about Viðey,
 there would be one small horseholm, such as could be for one, two or
 three horses.’ (1680, Skalholt.127)

The data in (88)-(96) show that *það* was already available as an expletive in presentational constructions in the period 1475-1680. This period approximately coincides with the examples of presentational constructions in which a plausibly expletive *þar* occurs (1400-1720), e.g. (76)-(83) above. One can thus posit a period of at least two centuries in which both *þar* and *það* are available as expletives in presentational constructions, where *þar* dates back to an earlier stage and *það* represents a more recent innovation.

The latest example I have found of a plausibly expletive *þar* in a presentational construction is from 1720, shown in (83) above. It is around this time (c.1750) that the frequency of expletive *það* begins to increase, see Table 8.5. I interpret these two observations as indication that *það* becomes the dominant expletive form in presentational constructions (at the expense of *þar*) at around this time. The corpus findings also show an increase in expletive *það* as of 1901, and the result here is statistically highly significant. By the modern period (1901-2008), expletive *það* is virtually obligatory in the clause-initial prefinite position, occurring at a frequency of 94.5%; by this point the possibility of V1 presentationals – which were the dominant pattern in Old Icelandic – is heavily dispreferred.

8.4.2 Icelandic and English: diverging paths

Cases of competition between two expletive forms have been observed elsewhere in historical Germanic, beyond Icelandic, though sometimes with the change moving in the opposite direction from ‘it’ to ‘there’. In German, for instance, Pfenninger (2009) claims that *thâr* (‘there’) is established as an expletive in presentational constructions in Old High German, and Light (2015) makes a similar claim for *da* (‘there’) in Early New High German. Such examples overlap with a period in which presentational *es* (‘it’) is already attested (Lenerz 1985). In Middle Dano-Norwegian, both *det* (‘it’) and *der* (‘there’) are attested in presentational constructions (see Faarlund 1990: 70-2; Kinn 2011); most present-day dialects of Norwegian only allow *det* (‘it’) (Kinn 2011: footnote 2).

One case of expletives in competition which has been particularly well documented is early English (e.g. Breivik 1983: 257-9, 324; Denison 1993: 97; Pfenninger 2009: 54-56). The extensive study of presentational constructions by Breivik (1983) found that, up to 1550, both *there* and *it* are attested, though the instances of *there* vastly outnumber those of *it*. In present-day English, only presentational *there* is permitted. Comparing the findings for English with those for Icelandic presented in this chapter, one is faced with a situation of diverging paths. Both languages exhibit an earlier stage where both the *there*-type and *it*-type expletive are attested, but the two languages show different developments in later stages. English undergoes a change whereby the availability of the *it*-type is lost, in favour of the *there*-type, whereas in Icelandic I have shown that the *there*-type subsequently loses out to the *it*-type. This comparison raises an interesting question, namely what was/were the determining factors(s) which lead English and Icelandic to develop differently. I discuss this in Chapter 9, where I consider the interaction between the various changes shown in this thesis.

8.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed presentational construction in the history of Icelandic. In section 8.1, I showed the key properties that presentational constructions exhibit in present-day Icelandic:

1. EXPL-V-NP-(XP) as the prototypical structural configuration.

2. The postfinite noun phrase ('pivot') qualifies as a subject.
3. The subject is non-topical.
4. The availability of a *there*-type expletive.

In section 8.3, I discussed three types of presentational construction which Old Icelandic exhibits: V1 presentationals, subject-initial presentationals and *þar*-initial presentationals. I showed that V1 presentationals with a postfinite subject fit in which the information-structural account of Old Icelandic clause structure presented in Chapter 4, whereby the verb is a boundary separating topic (prefinite) and comment (postfinite); as discourse-new elements, subjects of presentational constructions are dispreferred in the prefinite topic position.

I showed in section 8.3 that in certain exceptional contexts, presentational constructions are grammatical in Old Icelandic where the discourse-new subject occupies the clause-initial prefinite position. This is a marked word order reserved for the introduction of discourse-new subjects which are prominent in the subsequent narrative (topics-to-be, which are initially foci). This strategy was compared with recent accounts of Old English, which claim that the demonstrative/definite marker *se* was used for the same presentative discourse function.

Finally in section 8.3, I discussed *þar*-initial presentational constructions, which are a feature of Old Icelandic. I showed that there is reason to assume that *þar* was already partly established as an expletive in such contexts. This is in line with other (historical) Germanic languages which exhibit competition between *it*-type and *there*-type expletives in the same construction type. The availability of these two options challenges previous accounts of the diachrony of expletives in Icelandic, which neglect the availability of *þar* as an expletive.

In section 8.4, I examined the status of *þar* and *það* as expletives in presentational constructions in later stages of Icelandic, i.e. as of 1350. I showed that examples with a plausibly expletive *þar* are attested relatively late in the diachrony, until at least c.1750, thereby overlapping with the earliest examples of presentational constructions with expletive *það* (1475-1680). The corpus findings showed that expletive *það* increases dramatically in frequency as of c.1750.

In section 8.4, I located this finding for Icelandic within the broader context of historic Germanic, where cases of competition between different expletive forms (*it*-type versus *there*-type) in presentational constructions have also been observed.

In particular, I highlighted a comparison with English, which, like Icelandic, exhibits both the *it*-type and *there*-type in earlier stages, but shows a different subsequent development with the loss of the *it*-type in favour of the *there*-type, which contrasts with the rise of the *it*-type in Icelandic.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

In this chapter, I summarise the key findings of this thesis and argue for overarching claims regarding the history of Icelandic which arise from these findings. I also highlight areas which could benefit from further research in future.

9.1 Summary of findings

As stated in section 1.2, this thesis was intended to address the following research questions:

1. At what point in the diachrony did expletive *það* emerge in the various contexts in which it occurs in present-day Icelandic?
2. Was expletive *það* always positionally restricted to the clause-initial position, as it is in present-day Icelandic?
3. Was *þar* ‘there’ ever available as an expletive in Icelandic, and if so, when did it cease to become available by the present day?
4. How does a cataphorically referential *það* in constructions with a clausal argument behave diachronically, and does it play a role in the development of expletive *það*?

In relation to Question 1, I proposed a timeline for the emergence of *það* in the two major contexts in which it occurs in present-day Icelandic: (1) topicless subjectless constructions; (2) presentational constructions, which inherently lack a topic. In Chapter 7, I showed that the first instances of *það* in topicless subjectless constructions already appear in the earliest attested stage of Icelandic (‘Old Icelandic’, 1150-1350), but are limited to contexts where *það* is plausibly cataphoric.

For one particular cataphoric context – topicless subjectless constructions with a clausal object – I showed that *það* is overwhelmingly restricted to the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position and thus behaves like a structural placeholder for the topic position (Chapter 6). Similar examples where *það* is plausibly cataphoric are attested in later periods too (1350-1750). On the basis of the IcePaHC data for 1751-2008, I proposed that during this period *það* generalised in its function as a topic position placeholder to all topicless subjectless constructions, extending to contexts in which it can no longer have cataphoric reference (i.e. is an expletive). By the modern period (1901-2008), *það* is overwhelmingly present in the clause-initial prefinite position in all topicless subjectless constructions, regardless of predicate type.

With respect to the emergence of *það* presentational constructions, in Chapter 8 I showed that the earliest examples of presentational constructions with an expletive *það* occur in the IcePaHC data for 1475-1550, though the dominant pattern in this period – and in the data prior to 1751 more generally – is for *það* to be absent. In the data for 1751-2008, a significant increase in the expletive was observed. As observed for topicless subjectless constructions, by the modern period (1901-2008) a clause-initial *það* is overwhelmingly present in presentational constructions, which by definition lack a topic.

Concerning Question 2, I showed that *það* is overwhelmingly restricted to the clause-initial prefinite position in subjectless and presentational constructions in all stages of historical Icelandic, as in present-day Icelandic (Chapters 7 and 8). This positional restriction holds regardless of whether *það* is cataphoric (e.g. in constructions with a clausal argument) or expletive (e.g. in subjectless constructions which are not a cataphoric context; presentational constructions).

I addressed Question 3 in Chapter 8. I examined *þar*-initial presentational constructions in Old Icelandic (1150-1350) and showed that there is reason to assume that *þar* was somewhat established as an expletive in such contexts at this time. This contrasts with the situation concerning expletive *það*, which was observed to be wholly unattested in presentational constructions in the IcePaHC data for 1150-1350. I showed that presentational constructions with a plausibly expletive *þar* are attested as late as 1750, after which expletive *þar* is no longer attested. Interestingly, *þar* was observed to occur in both pre- and postfinite position, thereby contrasting with the behaviour of positionally restricted *það*. Icelandic thus exhibits

a period (1475-1680 according to the IcePaHC data) in which both *þar* ('there') and *það* ('it') are available as an expletive in presentational constructions; *þar* represents the older form of expletive and *það* represents the innovative form, which ultimately takes over at the expense of *þar*. I related this part of the study to other cases of competition between expletive forms in historical stages of Germanic, in particular that which has been discussed for the history of English.

Question 4 was addressed in Chapters 6 and 7. As already mentioned, a cataphorically referential *það* was shown to be established in constructions with a clausal object as early as Old Icelandic (1150-1350) and throughout the diachrony (Chapter 6). The observation that this type of *það* typically occurs in the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position in sentences which lack a topic led me to claim that *það* functions as a topic position placeholder in such contexts. In Chapter 7, I argued that the occurrence of *það* as a topic position placeholder in these restricted cataphoric contexts played a role in the later development of expletive *það* in non-cataphoric contexts. Specifically, I proposed a diachronic account whereby *það* generalises in this function as a topic position placeholder to all topicless subjectless constructions, with say-type predicates acting as a bridging context in facilitating this spread.

In a different type of cataphoric context – constructions with a clausal subject – *það* was shown to behave like a subject in the IcePaHC data prior to 1751, occurring in both the clause-initial prefinite and the immediately postfinite position (Chapter 6). I also showed that cataphoric *það* decreases in frequency in the immediately postfinite position in such contexts in the post-1751 data, but remains stable in the clause-initial prefinite position. This led me to propose a change for this type of cataphoric *það*, whereby it begins to lose its subject status and transitions towards becoming a structural placeholder for the clause-initial prefinite (topic) position. This change can be seen in the IcePaHC data for 1751-2008 and is plausibly ongoing. I also examined a third type of context where cataphoric *það* co-occurs with a clausal argument throughout the diachrony: constructions with a passive transitive say-type predicate, which I claimed were structurally ambiguous and allow for two analyses (passive; impersonal) (Chapter 6). I argued that the mixed positional distribution of cataphoric *það* in such contexts supports the availability of these two analyses.

9.2 Three related developments

In this study, I have shown that Icelandic underwent three syntactic developments in the period 1751-2008. The first of these developments is that *það* generalised in its function as a topic position placeholder to all topicless subjectless constructions, on the model of its earlier occurrence in a more restricted set of cataphoric contexts with a clausal argument (Chapter 7). The second development is that *það* increased in frequency in presentational constructions as a signaller of a topicless construction, winning out over the alternative form *þar* ('there') (Chapter 8). The third development involved cataphoric *það* in constructions with a clausal subject, which began to lose its subject status in this period, transitioning towards becoming a positionally restricted topic position placeholder, i.e. the same function as *það* in subjectless and presentational constructions (Chapter 6).

I argue that it is no coincidence that these three changes coincide chronologically in the diachrony of Icelandic. Rather, I interpret these three developments as representing one overall change – the establishment of *það* as a topic position placeholder – occurring across three broad construction types (constructions with a clausal argument; subjectless constructions; presentational constructions). As I showed in Chapters 7 and 8, in earlier stages of Icelandic the topic position was typically unoccupied in topicless subjectless and presentational sentences (V1). For these two contexts, the IcePaHC data for 1751-2008 shows the establishment of clause-initial *það* in such contexts and, by the modern period (1901-2008), topicless V1 constructions are the exception rather than the norm. Strikingly, the growing establishment of this topic position placeholder coincides with the change involving cataphoric 'subject' *það*, which also develops towards becoming a topic position placeholder. This overall claim for Icelandic thus supports a model of language change which recognises that syntactic developments in different contexts which share overlapping features can propel each other.

9.3 The drift towards prefinite expletives

As summarised above, this thesis examined three broad types of construction which are potential contexts for expletive/cataphoric *það* in the history of Icelandic:

1. Constructions with a clausal argument (Chapter 6).
2. Subjectless constructions (Chapter 7).
3. Presentational constructions (Chapter 8).

I showed that in all three of these contexts, there was at least a short period in which *það* – or an alternative form *þar* – behaved like a subject, occurring in both pre- and postfinite position. In Chapter 6, I showed that cataphoric *það* behaves solidly like a subject in constructions with a clausal subject in earlier stages of Icelandic (pre-1750), and argued that the data for 1751-2008 shows its transition towards becoming a positionally restricted placeholder for the topic position. I claimed that this change is still in progress today, which accounts for the optionality of a postfinite *það* in constructions with a clausal subject which has been previously observed for modern Icelandic (e.g. Thráinsson 1979). The corpus study of subjectless constructions presented in Chapter 7 revealed that there are scant examples of postfinite *það* in subjectless constructions in periods up to 1900, though such instances are so infrequent that it is fair to say that *það* is overwhelmingly restricted to the prefinite position in such contexts. In Chapter 8, I claimed that *þar* is already somewhat established as an expletive in presentational constructions in earlier Icelandic (1150-1750), and occurs in both pre- and postfinite position, thus behaving like a subject. By contrast, *það* – which emerges later as the expletive form in presentationals – is virtually restricted to the prefinite position.

All three contexts thus exhibit the emergence of a prefinite topic position placeholder expletive from an earlier subject-like element. This observation is interesting in a wider Germanic context, since the move towards prefinite expletives sets Icelandic apart from the mainland Scandinavian languages, in which subject expletives have become firmly established by the present-day (see Falk 1993 on Swedish; Vikner 1995: 185 on Danish; Faarlund 1990: 66-8 on Norwegian). As I discussed in Chapter 5, this present-day contrast between Icelandic and Mainland Scandinavian is well known. However, the novel historical Icelandic data presented in this thesis indicates that Icelandic could in principle have gone the other way, since the various relevant construction types all allow for a subject-like element at some point in the diachrony. As I have shown, in most cases the shift towards positionally restricted expletives happens relatively late in the nine centuries of attested Icelandic, and can be seen in the IcePaHC data for 1751-2008. This raises the question as to

why Icelandic diverged from Mainland Scandinavian and shifted away from the possibility of subject expletives; I leave exploration of this issue for future research.

The drift towards prefinite expletives which I have shown for Icelandic is further interesting, since it challenges a widely held assumption in the literature on Germanic expletives, which I formalised as the Prefinite First Hypothesis in Chapter 6, repeated here in (1).

(1) **The Prefinite First Hypothesis**

Prefinite expletive – subject expletive

The historical data for all three construction types presented in this thesis – constructions with a clausal argument, subjectless constructions and presentational constructions – show that the solidification of the positional restriction on *það* is in fact relatively recent, and follows from earlier stages where subject-like elements are attested. The Icelandic data thus poses a major challenge for the Prefinite First Hypothesis and, together with other recent studies which pose similar problems (e.g. Axel (2007) on German; Kinn (2016) on Norwegian), indicates that the standard cross-Germanic generalisation should be revisited, particularly in light of the empirical opportunities offered by the current availability of historical syntactic corpora for many Germanic languages.

Appendix A

Corpus information and search queries

A.1 IcePaHC texts and time periods

Period	Text	Corpus ID	Year ¹	Genre	Word count
1150-1350	Fyrsta málfræðiritgerðin	Firstgrammar	1150	Science	4,022
	Íslensk hómilíubók	Homiliubok	1150	Sermon	35,534
	Jarteinabók	Jartein	1210	Religious saga	9,899
	Þorláks saga helga	Thorlakur	1210	Religious saga	9,983
	Íslendinga saga	Sturlunga	1250	Narrative saga	20,683
	Þetubrot Egils Sögu	Thetubrot	1250	Narrative saga	3,154
	Jómsvíkinga saga	Jomsvikingar	1260	Narrative saga	18,901
	Grágás	Gragas	1270	Law	5,514
	Morkinskinna	Morkin	1275	Narrative history	20,925
	Alexanders saga	Alexander	1300	Narrative saga	20,856
	Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar	Grettir	1310	Narrative saga	18,158
	Árna saga biskups	Arni	1325	Narrative saga	19,067
	Bandamanna saga (Möðruvallabók)	BandamennM	1350	Narrative saga	11,410
	Finnboga saga ramma	Finnbogi	1350	Narrative saga	20,420

¹Year is given as per IcePaHC documentation; for earlier texts this will often be an approximation.

	Mörtu saga og Maríu Magdalenu	Marta	1350	Religious saga	15,750
1351-1550	Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls (1)	Gunnar	1400	Narrative saga	7,559
	Gunnars saga Keldugnúpsfífls (2)	Gunnar2	1400	Narrative saga	2,911
	Víglundar saga	Viglundar	1400	Narrative saga	12,061
	Bandamanna saga (Konungsbók)	Bandamenn	1450	Narrative saga	9,645
	Ectors saga	Ectorssaga	1450	Narrative fiction	19,757
	Júðitarbók	Judit	1450	Bible translation	5,945
	Vilhjálmss saga Sjóðs	Vilhjalmur	1450	Narrative saga	21,550
	Miðaldaævintýri	Aevintyri	1475	Narrative religious	15,965
	Jarlmanns saga og Hermanns	Jarlmann	1480	Narrative saga	12,573
	Erasmus saga (Reykjahólabók)	Erasmus	1525	Narrative saga	7,844
	Georgíus saga (Reykjahólabók)	Georgius	1525	Narrative religious	19,348
	Nýja Testamenti Odds Gottskálkssonar (Acts)	NTActs	1540	Bible translation	15,104
	Nýja Testamenti Odds Gottskálkssonar (John)	NTJohn	1540	Bible translation	18,547

1551-1750	Eintal sálarinnar við sjálfa sig	Eintal	1593	Religious	21,475
	Okur: Hvörninn það er fyrirboðið og bannað í guðsorði	Okur	1611	Religious	14,182
	Reisubók séra Ólafs Egilssonar	Olafuregils	1628	Biography	15,386
	Fimmtíu heilagar hugvekjur Meditationes sacrae	Gerhard	1630	Religious	12,043
	Illuga saga Tagldarbana	Illugi	1650	Narrative saga	18,042
	Píslarsaga séra Jóns Magnússonar	Píslarsaga	1659	Biography	9,478
	Reisubók Jóns Ólafssonar Indíafara	Indíafari	1661	Biography	21,318
	Söguþáttur af Ármanni og Þorsteini gála	Armann	1675	Narrative fiction	10,103
	Um ætt Magnúsar Jónssonar	Magnus	1675	Biography	3,005
	Móðars þáttur	Modars	1675	Narrative fiction	3,520
	Sögu-þáttur um Skálholts biskupa fyrir og um siðaskiptin	Skalholt	1680	Narrative religious	9,087
	Vídalínspostilla	Vidalin	1720	Sermon	20,905
	Biskupasögur Jóns prófasts Halldórssonar í Hítardal	Biskupasogur	1725	Narrative religious	20,515
Nikulás Klím	Klim	1745	Fiction	19,711	

1751-1900	Fimmbraedra saga	Fimmbraedra	1790	Narrative saga	16,921
	Ævisaga síra Jóns Steingrímssonar	Jonsteingrims	1791	Biography	20,405
	Hellismanna saga	Hellismenn	1830	Narrative saga	12,709
	Um eðli og uppruna jarðarinnar	Jonasedli	1835	Science	3,064
	Piltur og stúlka	Piltur	1850	Fiction	16,122
	Fimtíu hugvekjur út af þínu og dauða Drottins vors Jesú Krists	Hugvekjur	1859	Sermon	18,014
	Sagan af Heljarlóðarorrustu	Orrusta	1861	Fiction	17,917
	Brynjólfur Sveinsson biskup	Torfhildur	1882	Fiction	22,321
	Hans Vöggur	Voggur	1883	Fiction	1,803
	Grímur kaupmaður deyr	Grimur	1888	Fiction	6,506
Vordraumur	Vordraumur	1888	Fiction	9,757	
1901-2008	Upp við fossa	Fossar	1902	Fiction	18,078
	Leysing: kaupstaðarsaga frá síðustu áratugum nítjándu aldar	Leysing	1907	Fiction	18,566
	Ofurefli	Ofurefli	1908	Fiction	17,733
	Árin og eilífðin. Prédikanir eftir Harald Níelsson	Arin	1920	Sermon	19,278
	Margsaga	Margsaga	1985	Fiction	21,018

Sagan öll	Sagan	1985	Fiction	20,037
Segðu mömmu að mér líði vel - saga um ástir	Mamma	2008	Fiction	20,923
Ofsi	Ofsi	2008	Fiction	19,773

Table A.1: IcePaHC time periods (detailed)

A.2 CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 4

- Matrix clauses with a sentence-initial conjunction (CCs):

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst CONJ)
AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*)

- Matrix clauses with no sentence-initial conjunction (MCs):

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst !CONJ)

- MCs (pronominal SUBJ), V1 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*)
AND (NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|
HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- MCs (pronominal SUBJ), V2 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst !CONJ|
NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*|NP-SBJ*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- CCs (pronominal *subJ*), V1 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst CONJ) AND
(CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2 NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- CCs, (pronominal *subJ*), V2 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsNumber 2 !NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*|NP-SBJ*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1

iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2 NP-SBJ*)
 AND (NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- MCs (noun phrase *SUBJ*), V1 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
 NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 iDomsNumber 2 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|
 RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

- MCs (noun phrase *SUBJ*), V2 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 iDomsFirst !CONJ|NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*|NP-SBJ*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

- CCs (noun phrase *SUBJ*), V1 order:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND

(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

- **CCs, (noun phrase SUBJ), V2 order:**

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsNumber 2 !NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*|NP-SBJ*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst CONJ) AND (CONJ iDoms Og-*|En-*|Eða-*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2 NP-SBJ*)
AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms N-*)

- **Pronoun incorporation V1:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms pro) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)

- **Genuinely subjectless V1:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst NP-SBJ) AND (NP-SBJ iDoms exp) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)

- **Presentational V1**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst NP-SBJ-1) AND (NP-SBJ-1 iDoms *exp*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-1)

- **Narrative inversion V1**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2 NP-SBJ*)
AND (NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- **Sentences with SUBJ_{topic}-V order:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO*)

- **Prefinite subjects:**

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
(NP-SBJ* iDomsOnly PRO-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2

VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms NPR-*|NPRS-*|N-*|NS-*|SUCH-*|Q-*|NUM-*|NP-*|NP|
 ONE-*|FW|OTHER-*|OTHERS-*)

- **Prefinite objects:**

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-OB1*) AND
 (NP-OB1* iDomsOnly PRO-*)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-OB1*) AND
 (NP-OB1* iDoms NPR-*|NPRS-*|N-*|NS-*|SUCH-*|Q-*|NUM-*|NP-*|NP|
 ONE-*|FW|OTHER-*|OTHERS-*)

Query 3: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-OB2*) AND
 (NP-OB2* iDomsOnly PRO-*)

Query 4: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-OB2*) AND
 (NP-OB2* iDoms NPR-*|NPRS-*|N-*|NS-*|SUCH-*|Q-*|NUM-*|NP-*|NP|
 ONE-*|FW|OTHER-*|OTHERS-*)

- **Prefinite adverbials:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
 ADVP*|NP-ADV*|NP-ADT*|NP-TMP*|NP-MSR*|PP*|CP*-ADV*)

- Prefinite nonfinite verbs:

Node: IP*

Query 1: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD) AND (VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD
 i Precedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|
 HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|
 IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i DomsFirst !CONJ)

Query 2: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|
 MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 i Doms VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*) AND (VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*
 i Precedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|
 HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|
 IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i DomsFirst !CONJ)

Query 3: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|
 MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*) AND (VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*
 i Precedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|
 HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|
 IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i DomsFirst !CONJ)

Query 4: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VAG|BAG|HAG) AND (VAG|BAG|HAG i Precedes
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|
 MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 i DomsFirst !CONJ)

- **Prefinite verbal particles:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms RP) AND (RP iPrecedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|
 BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|
 RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst
 !CONJ)

- **Prefinite negation:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NEG) AND (NEG iPrecedes
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst !CONJ)

- **Prefinite predicative adjective:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms ADJP) AND (ADJP iPrecedes
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst !CONJ)

- **X-fronting, X-V-SUBJ:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
 MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|

IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|
RDN*|VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP) AND
(VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|
HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP i Precedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|
BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i DomsFirst
!CONJ) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* i Doms !*pro*|*arb*|*con*|*exp*) AND
(VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD* i Precedes NP-SBJ*)

- **X-fronting, X-V-XP-(...)-SUBJ:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|
VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP) AND
(VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*|
VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP i Precedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|
DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i DomsFirst
!CONJ) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
i Doms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* i Doms !pro|arb|con|exp) AND
(VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD* i Precedes !NP-SBJ*)

- **X-fronting, pronoun incorporation:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms
VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|
MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
IP-MAT-SPE-1 i Doms VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|
VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP) AND
(VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|

HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP iPrecedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|
 BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|
 RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 iDomsFirst !CONJ) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms *pro*|*arb*|*con*)

- **X-fronting, genuinely subjectless:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms
 VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|
 MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*) AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|
 IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|
 VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP) AND
 (VB|BE|DO|HV|MD|RD|VBN*|BEN*|DON*|HVN*|RDN*|VAN*|BAN*|DAN*|
 HAN*|VAG|BAG|HAG|RP|NEG|ADJP iPrecedes VBI|VBP*|VBD*|BEI|BEP*|
 BED*|DOI|DOP*|DOD*|HVI|HVP*|HVD*|MDI|MDP*|MDD*|RDI|RDP*|RDD*)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst !CONJ)
 AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms *exp*)

- **Prefinite subjects:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsFirst NP-SBJ*) AND
 (NP-SBJ* iDoms *-N)

- **Immediately postfinite subjects:**

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
 VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*) AND
 (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3 NP-SBJ*)
 AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms *-N)

- Later postfinite subjects:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1
iDomsFirst !CONJ|NP-VOC*|INTJ*|*-LFD*|NP-SBJ*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 2
VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*)
AND (IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDoms NP-SBJ*) AND
(IP-MAT|IP-MAT-1|IP-MAT-SPE|IP-MAT-SPE-1 iDomsNumber 3 !NP-SBJ*)
AND (VBP*|VBD*|BEP*|BED*|DOP*|DOD*|HVP*|HVD*|MDP*|MDD*|RDP*|RDD*
precedes NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* iDoms *-N)

A.3 CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 6

- Constructions with a clausal subject and cataphoric *pað*/

subjectless constructions with a clausal object and cataphoric *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* iDoms NP-SBJ-1) AND (NP-SBJ-1 iDoms ES) AND
(ES iDoms *-pað|*-pað) AND (IP-MAT* iDoms CP-* -1|IP-* -1)

- Constructions with a clausal subject and no cataphoric *pað*/

subjectless constructions with a clausal object and no cataphoric *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* iDoms NP-SBJ-1) AND (NP-SBJ-1 iDoms *exp*) AND
(IP-MAT* iDoms CP-* -1|IP-* -1)

- Non-subjectless constructions with a clausal object and cataphoric *pað*
(predicates *segja*, *vita*, *sjá*):

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* iDoms NP-OB1*) AND (NP-OB1* iDoms PRO-N|PRO-A)
AND (NP-OB1* iDoms CP-THT*) AND (CP-THT* iDoms ICH*) AND
(IP-MAT* iDoms VB*) AND (VB* iDoms *-segja|*-vita|*-sjá)

- Non-subjectless constructions with a clausal object and no cataphoric *pað* (predicates *segja, vita, sjá*):

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* i Doms CP-THT*) AND (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-SBJ*) AND (NP-SBJ* i Doms !ES|*exp*|*con*|*pro*|*arb*) AND (IP-MAT* i Doms VB*) AND (VB* i Doms *-segj a|*-vi ta|*-sj á)

A.4 CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 7

- Subjectless constructions with *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-SBJ) AND (NP-SBJ i Doms ES) AND (ES i Doms *-pað|*-pað)

- Subjectless constructions with no *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-SBJ) AND (NP-SBJ i Doms *exp*)

A.5 CorpusSearch queries for Chapter 8

- Presentational constructions with *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-SBJ-1) AND (NP-SBJ-1 i Doms ES) AND (ES i Doms *-pað|*-pað) AND (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-1)

- Presentational constructions with no *pað*:

Node: IP*

Query: (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-SBJ-1) AND (NP-SBJ-1 i Doms *exp*) AND (IP-MAT* i Doms NP-1)

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