INVERSION IN EMBEDDED CLAUSES IN MODERN ICELANDIC

JOAN MALING

Program in Linguistics and Cognitive Science
Center for Complex Systems
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081

West order in Icelandic prose is quite free, especially in main clauses. Although the most usual, or unmarked, word order in declarative sentences is subject + finite verb + . . . , almost any sentence constituent can be found in sentence-initial position. I call this phenomenon—the fronting of stressed elements of the predicate to sentence-initial position—topicalisation.1 Whatever the discourse function of topicalization may be, there is an obvious syntactic consequence: the finite verb must then be moved into second position through inversion with the subject noun phrase (NP), if any. I refer to this general feature of Icelandic word order as the verb-second constraint (V2).

In this article I will discuss in detail the syntactic and morphological implications of V2. I will show that word order in V2 clauses is a natural consequence of the word order in the corresponding NP. This study is organized as follows. In section 1, I argue for a general principle of what counts as second position, particularly in questions and relative clauses. In section 2, I look at examples of inversion and argue for a distinction between two kinds of fronting processes, topicalization and another kind of movement referred to as stylistic fronting. I argue that stylistic fronting, unlike topicalization, applies only in clauses containing a subject gap, and that this kind of fronting can therefore be viewed as a generalization of V2 to clauses that would otherwise begin with the finite verb. In section 3, this subject gap condition on stylistic fronting is shown to provide an argument for the existence of oblique subjects.


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Finally, in section 4, various conditions on what can precede the finite verb are discussed, including conditions on the use of the dummy jet, and on the occurrence of unfilled subject gaps.

1. DEFINING SECOND POSITION

Topicalization in main clauses in Icelandic is fairly common. One study of Icelandic word order, Kesvaeth (1978), reported that, on the average, 20% of declarative sentences in Modern Icelandic prose begin with an element other than the subject. Topicalization in embedded clauses is much less frequent. However, it is by no means true that only subjects can precede the finite verb in embedded clauses, as has often been asserted. An example of topicalization in an embedded clause is given in (1); the topicalized object NP is in boldface type.

(1) Sigga Ólina remembered well after it, that Brynjólf had often and many times been able to get Brynjólf (as a husband).

(Gestur Palsson, "Tilhagadil," Ch. 5)

Note that the finite verb is in second position in the embedded clause, as indicated by the numbering. V2 applies equally to both main and embedded clauses in Icelandic. First position for the finite verb (V1) is typically reserved for main clauses, namely, for direct questions, imperatives, and the so-called narrative style characteristic of Icelandic. In embedded clauses, the finite verb comes first in conditional sentences without the conjunction of. Ignoring such conditionals, let us explore the hypothesis that V2 holds without exception in embedded clauses in Icelandic.

Of course, in order to determine the position of the finite verb, we need to know where the embedded clause begins: what counts as first position? Consider the examples in (2).

(2) a. Þeir séga, at anna hafi ekki læði hokina.
they said that grandma had not read the book.

(b) Æg viri olth; hvert hinn karni eda ekki.
I know either whether he would come or not

(b) Þeir viri, hver anna hafi hiti í bænum.
they knew whom grandma had met in town
Inversion in Embedded Clauses

\[1\] 
\[2\] 
\[3\] 
\[4\] 

a. Ber ir gissa, hver gis gis gissan.
the man who (NOM) went was gone
They knew who had gone.

b. Måttur, sem farar vari var faran heim, hefur Pétur.
the man that gone was gone home is-named Peter
'The man who had gone home is named Peter.'

Haugen does not give an example of a comparable relative clause, but he would presumably count the position of the finite verb as indicated in (3b). Note that the finite verb is counted as being in third position if the past participle has been inverted.

It is precisely for these cases that I propose a change from the traditional treatment of word order, even in the cases of subjectless sentences the finite verb should be counted as being in second position, as illustrated in (4):
If the past participle is fronted, then it counts as filling first position; if it is not fronted, then the first position of the embedded clause will be considered empty, as indicated by the dash. In either case, the finite verb is in second position. The same is true of an embedded clause with a simple past tense verb as given in (4): the subject NP has been relativized, leaving first position in the relative clause empty, and the finite verb kom ‘come’ is in second position. The relative particle sem is not counted as subject.

What I am suggesting, then, is that sentences such as those in (4) are simply another type of subjectless sentence. There are two advantages of this analysis over the traditional way of determining second position. First, it provides a uniform treatment of conjunctions, including interrogative pronouns and the relative particles they never count as filling first position but are always considered to be outside the clause boundaries. Second, this analysis allows the simplest possible description of the conditions under which various inverted word orders are possible in embedded clauses. This is the topic of the next section.

2. FRONTING IN EMBEDDED CLAUSES

In addition to the topicalization of stressed elements of the predicate, there is another type of fronting that is extremely common in embedded clauses and that is characteristic of Icelandic (and Faroese) as opposed to the other Scandinavian languages. This kind of fronting, which I refer to as stylistic fronting, is illustrated by the examples in (5)–(7). These examples were taken at random from two short stories by Gestur Pásson (1970), “Tíhugallit” and “Hans Vognen,” but all are typical of the inverted word orders one finds in Icelandic prose. The examples have been divided into three categories, according to whether the embedded clause begins with (1) a past participle, (2) an adjective, or (3) some adverb. Especially typical of the third category are negative adverbs such as ekkemark

(5) a. fenum mérri stendis sanna, hvít sagt var um hann.
   him (DAT) might stand on same what said was about him.
   ‘It might be all the same to him what was said about him.’
   (“Tíhugallit,” Ch. 5)

b. og hann leiti efa viu at hann... karni ekkir heim,
   and he would let them know that he... would come not home,
   eini og ríklega lafti verði
   one and quite a lot could been
   as planned had been.
   ‘and he would let them know that he wouldn’t be coming home as had
   been planned’
   (“Tíhugallit,” Ch. 1)
c. Hún hent á vína ranka trésmóti í hamun, sem þrygt hafðu
she pointed to various old    carpenters in town    that begun had
mod engum eftum.
    mod engum eftum.
    with nothing.
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 1)

(5) a. slánir raudali þar vìsna sínna nокkaði þarna ov venguðeg var.
he hummed then tune his somewhat louder than usual was
"Then he hummed his tune somewhat louder than usual."
    ("Tilhagalif")

b. Engum datt í hug, að vört varri að rénya til að lýsna
no one (DAT) fell to mind that worth was to try    to know
him
    "It didn't occur to anyone that it was worth trying to get to know him."
    ("Thans Veggar")

c. því voru að tala um ... hønd hijgt hafði venvi.
    they were to talk about    what possible had been
    "They were talking about what had been possible."
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 1)

(7) a. og nú eignum víð að víta ... hvort ekkj fnest metra
and now ought we to know    whether not finds more
stolen-goon on the-boy
    'and now we are supposed to find out whether any more stolen goods
    can be found where the boy lives.'
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 4)

b. Hún hafði á þornun sínu stærku munn, sem aldrei hafði byggt hval.
    She looked at this big strong man that never had been
    'She looked at this big, strong man who had never changed his mind
    because of a woman.'
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 1)

c. og Sveinn fyrir smið og smiði að ... muna eftir sólum, sam
    and Svein began little and little to    remember all that
    fraum hafði verið,
    "These all that had gone
    'and little by little Svein began to remember all that had happened.'
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 6)

d. Það gætri enginn sagt með vísu, að svo hafði verið.
    then could no-one say with certainty, that so had been
    'That no one could say with certainty that it had been that way.'
    ("Tilhagalif," Ch. 5)
2.1. Topicalization versus Stylistic Fronting

A preliminary dichotomy between topicalization and stylistic fronting is given in (8) below. The distinction between the two fronting processes is sometimes a fuzzy one, particularly when it comes to the fronting of adverbials (see section 4.2), and needs to be investigated further. Note the postverbal position of aAM in (2a), however, which illustrates that adverbials do not generally precede the finite verb in embedded clauses in Icelandic, as opposed to the other Scandinavian languages.

(8) **Topicalization**
- Applies to object NPs, PPs, etc.
- Emphasis or focus on fronted constituent
- Uncertainty in embedded Ss
- Judgments vary on fronting in relatives, questions, etc.
- Unbounded
- Subject gap not required

**Stylistic Inversion**
- Applies to past participles, adjectives, some adverbs, particles, etc.
- Emphasis or focus on fronted constituent not necessarily present
- Common in embedded Ss
- Accepted by all speakers
- Clause bounded
- Subject gap required

The most obvious difference between the two fronting processes lies in the frequency of occurrence. As noted above, topicalization in embedded clauses is quite unusual. The sentence given in (1) was the only example I found in approximately seventy-five pages of text, whereas the examples in (5–7) are but a small sample of the stylistic fronting extant within the same corpus. Furthermore, the fronting of object NPs within question and relative clauses is unacceptable for most speakers, whereas stylistic fronting is accepted by all speakers in the same environments (see section 5.1). Only topicalization can move a constituent outside of the clause in which it originates. Finally, there is a condition on the application of stylistic fronting that topicalization does not share; this condition is stated in (6).

(9) **STYLISTIC FRONTING** in an embedded clause is possible only if there is a subject gap in that clause. Note the presence of the subject *hans* in the example of topicalization given in (1). In contrast, the examples in (5–7) all contain embedded clauses that are
some sense subjectless. I hypothesize that it is precisely this property that makes stylistic fronting possible. The generalization gives in (9) can only be stated, of course, if the relative particle sem and interrogative pronouns are not themselves counted as subjects.

2.2. Evidence for the Subject-Gap Condition

Subject gaps can be created in one of three ways in Icelandic: (1) through extraction of the subject NP by unbounded transformational rules such as relativization, question formation, comparative clause formation, topicalization, and clefting; (2) through use of impersonal passives or lexically impersonal predicates; and (3) through indefinite NP postponing. The latter two cases of subject gaps can easily be recognized by the obligatory occurrence of had in initial position if the sentence is used as a main-clause declarative. Let me emphasize here that my use of the term subject gap for these impersonal constructions is not meant to attribute subject status to the dummy had.

In this section, data are given in support of the subject-gap condition on stylistic fronting stated in (9). The three types of subject gaps are considered in turn.

2.2.1. Subject Ex extractions

Many of the examples of stylistic fronting in (5)–(7) are instances of subject extraction. Three examples are repeated here for the reader’s convenience, together with the normal, uninversed word order. In the (a) versions of the sentences, stylistic fronting has served to fill the subject gap of the (b) versions, indicated by a dash, which would otherwise remain empty.

(10) a. Honum matsti stóða á sana, hvíð sagt var í um hann. (=5a)
   b. Honum mætti stóða á sana, hvíð — sagt var í um hann.

(11) a. Há hentí á myndi rokku triumf í honum, sem byggð hafst í enga efnam. (=5c)
   b. Há hentí á myndi rokku triurin í honum, sem — hafst byggð í engu efnam.

(12) a. Sveinur för að munna eftir illu, sem frá hafst farið. (cf. 7c)
   b. Sveinur för að munna eftir illu, sec — hafst farið frá.

However, if the subject NP had not been extracted from the embedded clause, that is, if some other NP had been questioned or relativized, then stylistic fronting would be unacceptable. This is illustrated by the examples in (13)–(15), which all have definite subjects.
2.2.2. Impersonal Constructions

The same contrasts can be found in impersonal constructions. Stylistic fronting is possible in the impersonal (subjectless) passive uses of a verb, but not in the corresponding personal uses of the same verb in the active voice with expressed subject NP. This is illustrated by the contrasts in (16)–(18).

(16) a. Í auð var hvert út ríma þegar kominn var þaungla.
   It was stopped to rain when arrived was neither
   ‘It had stopped raining when they arrived there.’

b. Í auð var hvert út ríma þegar kominn var riðan þaungla.
   It was stopped to rain when arrived was the bus neither
   ‘It had stopped raining when the bus arrived there.’

(17) a. Í hútur fór út ríma þegar fæði var af stað.
   It began to rain when was gone from place
   ‘It began to rain when we left.’

b. Í hútur fór út ríma þegar fæði var hvarfí him.
   It began to rain when was the child home
   ‘It began to rain when the child had gone home.’

(18) a. Verðhólgan varð verð en húði hafvíverði við.
   Inflation became worse than expected had been PRT
   ‘Inflation was worse than had been expected.

b. Verðhólgan varð verð en húði hafví ekkústþýðin við.
   Inflation became worse than expected had the government PRT
   ‘Inflation was worse than the government had expected.’
The ungrammatical (6) versions all have definite subjects, whereas the grammatical (a) versions are subjectless impersonal passives.

The same point can be made for predicate adjectives such as *hástar* 'possible' or *verjulegt* 'usual', which occur with dummy subject *fjöld* but which often invert with the copula, instead. This type of fronting in embedded clauses was illustrated in (6). In general, these copular predicates are lexically impersonal and do not have corresponding personal uses. However, there is a personal construction with prepositional preceding an infinitive complement, which is illustrated in (19); this construction cannot take quantifying predicators.

(19) a. Hann er íllegur til að koma.
    he is likely (must) to come
b. Hann er íllegur til að koma,
    she is likely (must) to come

With such personal copular predicates, stylistic fronting is possible only if the subject NP has been elided; this is illustrated by the contrasts in (20).

(20) a. Hann er eitt sem ekki er íllegur til að koma
    he is the only one that not is likely to come
b. *Hann spyrði hörvu ekki vort hérri íllegur til að koma.
    she asked whether not was he likely to come
    *She asked whether not was he likely to come.
c. *Hann spyrði hörvu íllegur vors hann til að koma.
    she asked whether likely was he to come
    *She asked whether likely was he to come.

The ungrammatical sentences in (20b–c) have definite subjects in the embedded clause, whereas in the grammatical sentence (20a), the subject NP has been relativized.

2.2.3. *Indefinite*-NP Postposing

Icelandic has a rule of indefiniteness-NP postposing that is much more general than in English counterpart, there-insertion (Thorlindsson, 1979, Ch. 7). The contrast in (21) shows that the rule is sensitive to the definiteness of the subject NP. In main-clause declaratives, the resulting subject gap must be filled.

(21) a. *Hæft eru fremmstirir í bænum.
    there are the-carpenters in town
b. Hæft eru stórbir verandir í bænum.
    there are some carpenters in town

This contrast is reflected in the acceptability of stylistic fronting in embedded clauses.
(22) a. *Hún hentir á herin þar sem þyngi hjálpa réðumáðurin með
    she pointed to-the-town where that begun had the-carpenters with
    engin efnum og orði hinsfrægr síðar.
    no material and become world-famous later

b. Hún hentir á herin þar sem þyngi hjálpa nokkrar réðumáðurin
    she pointed to-the-town where that begun had some carpenters
    með engin efnum og orði hinsfrægr síðar,
    with no material and become world-famous later

Additional examples of indefinite-NP postposing are given in (23) and (24).

(23) Dað eru margir frægr islendingar fæðir í þessum bœ.

There are many famous Icelanders born in this town

'Many famous Icelanders were born in this town.'

(24) a. Þetta er hærin þar sem margir frægr islendingar eru fæðir.
    this is the-town where many famous Icelanders are born

    'This is the town where many famous Icelanders were born.'

b. Þetta er hærin þar sem þeir eru margir frægr
    this is the-town where they are many most-famous men
    þeir.

    'This is the town where many of the most famous men of the nation
    were born.'

Indefinite-NP postposing creates a subject gap that makes stylistic fronting of the
adjective fæðir (nom-masc-pl) in (24b) possible. Note that stylistic fronting is
possible in (24b), even though for many speakers jafn-insertion is not possible,
as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (25).3

(25) *Þetta er hærin þar sem þeir eru margir frægr islendingar fæðir.
    this is the-town where there are many famous Icelanders born

The contrast between (24b) and (25) shows clearly that indefinite-NP postposing
is independent of jafn-insertion in Icelandic. Other examples are given in
(26)–(27).

(26) a. Dað eru ekki til drauga,
    there are not P ghosts

b. Dað sem ekki er til eru drauga,
    that which not is P are ghosts
    'What doesn’t exist is ghosts.'

c. *Dað sem það er ekki til eru drauga,
    that which there is not P are ghosts

(27) a. Þetta er nokkur sem ekki er hægt að sêra við.
    this is something that not is possible to fix PRT
    'This is something that can’t be fixed.'
b. *Þyggja er nokkja, sem það er ekki hugt alt sem við.
   this is something that it is not possible to fix.
   PRD

Where það-insertion is impossible in declarative sentences because indefinite-NP postponing cannot apply, I predict that stylistic fronting is impossible for the same reason, namely, there is no subject gap to be filled. This prediction is borne out, as illustrated in (28).

(28) a. *það skrifill Helgi breiðh. 
   these write Helgi the letter
b. *Þýggja ald ekki skrífið helgis breiða. 
   I think that not wrote Helgi the letter
c. *Þýggja breiða, sem ekki skrifill Helgi. 
   this is the letter that not wrote Helgi

d. *Þýggja er breiðh, sem skrifill befir Helgi þessvar. 
   this is the letter that written has Helgi person

2.3. An Accessibility Hierarchy

Section 2.2 provided evidence for the hypothesis stated in (9) that stylistic fronting serves to fill subject gaps created by independently motivated rules of Icelandic syntax. We have seen that subject gaps can be filled by past participles, predicate adjectives, verbal particles, and adverbs such as ekkir 'not'. The obvious question is what happens if the embedded clause contains more than one of these elements. Stylistic fronting seems to be governed by the following accessibility hierarchy.

(29) ekkir > predicate adjective > past participle > verbal particle

Consider the contrast illustrated in (30):

(30) a. þeir voru alltað um hvøó hugt helfi veit. (=6c)
   they were to talk about what possible had been.
   'They were talking about what had been possible.'
b. þeir voru alltaðum hvøó vörti hvøó hugt.
   they were talking about what had been possible

Data in support of the hierarchy in (29) are given in examples (31)–(36).

(31) a. *þetta er glapamannarinn sem ekkir nefur verðar dæmandar.
   this is the criminal that not had been convicted
   dæmandar befir ekkir verð.
   c. *þetta er glapamannarinn sem ekkir nefur verðar dæmandar.

(32) a. hvíll fór allt rénna, þegar
   it went to rain when
   þeit var að borgu.
   finished was to eat
b. ekkir var hvíll að borgu.
   c. *hvíll var ekkir að borgu.
3. OBLIQUE SUBJECTS

Icelandic has many verbs that appear to have oblique (i.e., non-nominate) subjects; the NP that precedes the finite verb in the stylistically unmarked word order is not in the nominative case. Some examples of such verbs are given in (37):

(37) a. Még vantur skó.
    me (ACC) lacks shoes (ACC)
    'I lack shoes.'
  b. Mér nágir tvær bokar.
    me (DAT) suffice two books (NOM)
    'Two books is enough for me.'
  c. Hér í nágir tvær bokar.
    there (DAT) suffices two books (NOM)
    'Two books is enough for them.'

Thórsteinsson (1979, Ch. 7) argues at length that these preverbal NPs should be analyzed as subjects rather than as preposed objects, despite their non-nominate
case marking, even when the postverbal NP is nominative as in (37b–c). The argument is straightforward: such preverbal oblique NPs behave syntactically like subjects. In particular, they behave like subjects with respect to the subject-verb inversion resulting from topicalization, and also with respect to the narrative verb-first order found in main clauses.

The subject-gap condition on stylistic fronting in embedded clauses provides yet another argument for the subjecthood of these NPs. If verbs that take preverbal oblique NPs occur in embedded clauses, then stylistic fronting is unacceptable if the oblique NP is overtly present. This fact is illustrated by the following contrasts:

(38) a. *Han bennt a mándina sem hana hófsta langað all selja.
   she pointed to the picture that she (ACC) had bought to sell
   b. Han bennt a mándina, sem langað hófsta hana all selja.

(39) a. *Han beinti a maninnin sem henni sýnti ekki vit.
   she pointed to the man that she (DAT) got along not with
   b. *Han beinti a maninnin, sem ekki sýnti henni vit.
   c. *Han beinti a maninnin, sem sýnti sýnti henni vit.

If the preverbal oblique NPs in (38b) and (39a), namely, hana and henni, are analyzed as subjects, then the unacceptability of stylistic fronting follows from the subject-gap condition stated in (9). If they are not analyzed as subjects, then we cannot attribute the unacceptability of the (b) versions to the presence of a subject NP, and the generalization expressed in (9) is lost. Note that it is, in principle, possible to invert such preverbal oblique NPs with the finite verb to form questions, or if topicalization has been applied, as illustrated in (40).12

(40) I gær lengað hana til Ócnlands, í dag langer hana
    yesterday bought she (ACC) (to go) to Greenland, today longs she
    til Ócnland, og hver veit, hvort hana langer á morgun.
    to Holland and who knows what she (will) long for tomorrow
    'Yesterday she wanted to go to Greenland, today she wants to go to Hol-
    land, and who knows what she’ll want tomorrow.'

The conclusion that icelandic does indeed have oblique subjects seems in-

4. WHAT CAN PRECEDE THE FINITE VERB?

In this section I discuss two problems related to V2 and the question of what can precede the finite verb in Modern Icelandic prose. In section 4.1 it is hypothe-
ized that the finite verb appears to be in first position in an embedded claus
only if that clause contains a subject gap. Conditions on the filling of subject gaps with dummy had are discussed. Section 4.2 notes some problems with respect to the application of topocalicization in embedded clauses.

4.1. Constraints on Filling Subject Gaps

In section 2 it was suggested that the function of stylistic fronting is to fill various kinds of subject gaps in order to satisfy V2. In this section, we look more generally at the treatment of subject gaps in Modern Icelandic prose, and at apparent exceptions to V2. In particular, when is it possible for an embedded clause (other than a conditional clause) to begin with the finite verb?

Subject extraction by unbounded transformational rules such as relativization often creates embedded clauses in which the finite verb appears to be in first position; examples have been given in (46a) and (106b)-(126b). Impersonal constructions can also give rise to apparent mismatches of verb-first order. This is illustrated for impersonal passives by the example in (41):

(41) Hann spurti hvar ... varð unnið ekki vinnig fagna.
    he asked where was still driven left side
    'He asked where people still drove on the left side of the road.'

Verbs-first order is not possible, however, if a subject NP is present, as shown by the contrast in (42):

(42) a. *Petta er handritið sem hann skriftið aftir.
    this is the manuscript that he copied from
    'This is the manuscript that he copied from.'

Such contrasts suggest the following hypothesis:

(43) The finite verb will appear to be in first position in an embedded clause only if the clause contains a subject gap.

The subject-gap hypothesis stated above allows us to maintain the claim that V2 applies to embedded clauses without exception, but it forces us to rephrase the question of exceptions to V2 in the following way: how are subject gaps treated in Icelandic syntax?146

The data presented in section 2 suggest that subject gaps can always be filled by stylistic fronting. But can they be filled in other ways, and when can they be left empty? It is well known that dummy had is often used to begin subjectless sentences. In main-clause declaratives, had occurs in sentence-initial position if and only if nothing has been fronted. The same is true of embedded declaratives, as shown by the contrast in (44):

(44) a. Íg veið an það er ekki vinstu megin í Þráðafellinu.
    I know that there is driven left side in Australia
    'I know that people still drive on the left in Australia.'

b. *Íg veið all ... er ekki vinstu megin í Þráðafellinu; Þráðafellinu.

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It is clear that subject gaps in declaratives must be filled in order to satisfy V2, either by stylistic fronting or by past-insertion, if nothing has been topicalized. (Let me emphasize again that I am not attributing subject status to either kind of filler.)

However, there are other clause types that do allow subject gaps to remain unfilled. This seems to be generally true of clauses that inherently contain gaps, for example, relatives, questions, and comparatives, although the gap that leads to apparent verb-first order need not be the result of subject extraction, as was illustrated in (41). An example for relative clauses is given in (45).

(45) Breftland er eina landið þar sem þurðar væru enn þá ekki vinstra megin.
British is only country where it is still driven left side

"Britain is the only country where people still drive on the left."

In such clauses, subject gaps due to impersonal constructions can be filled by stylistic fronting, but many speakers do not accept past-insertion (cf. section 2.2.3), as illustrated in (46a)-(47):

(46a) Hann spurti hvar ekki væru efnahá vinstra megin.
he asked where driven was still left side

"He asked where people still drove on the left."

(46b) *Hann spurti hvar þau væru efnahá ekki vinstra megin.

Similarly, for comparative clauses:

(47a) Breftland er eina landið þar sem ekki er efnahá vinstra megin.
British is only country where driven is still left side

"Britain is the only country where people still drive on the left."

(47b) *Breftland er eina landið þar sem þau er efnahá ekki vinstra megin.

While there is considerable variation among speakers as to the acceptability of past in such contexts, it is clear that past can never be used to fill a subject gap created by an extraction rule, as noted by Malling and Zemlian (this volume: 383–407). This is illustrated by the contrast in (49):

(49a) Hver heldar lægrægslan af ... hafi frumð glepion!
who think the-police that has committed the-crime

"Who do the police think committed the crime?"

(49b) *Hver heldar lægrægslan af þau hafi frumð glepion!
This completes a brief sketch of word order in embedded clauses in modern Icelandic prose. It has been argued that V2 is an extremely general principle of word order in Icelandic, and that almost all apparent exceptions to embedded clauses should be analyzed as instances of unfilled subject gaps. Stylistic fronting was shown to bring subjectless sentences of various kinds into surface conformity with V2.

4.2. Constraints on Topicalization

I conclude by mentioning briefly some negative conditions on the application of topicalization in embedded clauses. In section 2 it was noted that topicalization is much more restricted in embedded clauses than it is in main clauses, and that grammaticality judgments often vary greatly from speaker to speaker. The situation is particularly complicated with respect to the fronting of adverbs. Not all adverbs are equally acceptable in initial position, nor are even different uses of the same adverb equally acceptable. Consider the simple contrast illustrated in (50): 1

(50)  a. Hann *fólk still* sem vandilega hafni *verð* umhverfr.
   he found a chair that had been carved carefully
   "He found a chair that had been carved carefully."

   b. Hann *fólk mynd* sem vandilega hafni *verð* falin.
   he found a picture that carefully had been hidden
   "He found a picture that had been carefully hidden."

   c. Hann *fólk list* sem vandilega hafni *verð* reyni að þegna
   he found a sentence that carefully had been tried to be silent
   "He found a sentence that they had carefully tried not to mention."

   It is unclear whether it is sufficient to distinguish between manner and modal uses of adverbs.

   These problems with adverbs serve to point out that the distinction between topicalization and stylistic fronting is sometimes a fuzzy one. In general, stylistic fronting is a more local process involving elements of the verbal complex, and lacks the emphatic feel of topicalization. Fronting of verbal arguments, especially NPs, carries clause boundaries and is considerably more restricted than stylistic fronting, especially in clauses such as relatives or embedded questions that already contain a gap. Extraction out of topicalized sentences generally produces sentences of very low acceptability, as noted for Icelandic by Zaanen and Malin (1977) and Thróðísson (1979:372). The definiteness and heaviness of the fronted NP seems to affect acceptability, suggesting that only presupposed NPs may be fronted in embedded clauses. Consider the contrast illustrated below:
(51) a. Þetta er hundlættir sem mínkinn drap.
   this is the-dog that the-mink (ACC) killed
   ‘This is the dog that killed the mink.’

   b. *Þetta er hundlættir sem mínka drapur.
      this is the-dog that minks (ACC) kills
      ‘This is the dog that kills minks.’

(52) a. Þetta er mæturinn sem smáðvægurra skrifur.
    this is the-man that the-short-story (ACC) wrote
    ‘This is the man that wrote the short story.’

   b. *Þetta er mæturinn sem smáðvægur skrif.
      this is the-man that short-stories write
      ‘This is the man that writes short stories.’

(53) a. Hún benti á tréinnlaða sem háugýggin hófðu smáðvægur.
    she pointed to the-carpenters that the-furniture had made

   b. *Hún benti á tréinnlaða sem háugýggin vóru smáðvægur.
      furniture had made
      ‘The furniture that had been made.’

   c. Hún benti á tréinnlaða sem ár ekki hófðu smáðvægur vándið en öðrir
      of oak had made bad but cheap
      furniture

Verbal complements such as locatives can sometimes be fronted, as illustrated by the acceptability of (54), whereas predicate nominals cannot be fronted in relatives, as illustrated in (55) (although they can be fronted in ad ‘that’-clauses).

(54) Hún fann stóll sem hver hafði stað.
    he found a chair that here had stood
    ‘He found a chair that had stood here.’

(55) *Húnna er leonan sem Íslandið var kósin.
    there is the-woman who president Iceland (GEN) was elected
    ‘There is the woman who was elected President of Iceland.’

Whatever the conditions on topicalization may be, note that all of these embedded clauses freely allow stylistic fronting of a past participle when it occurs:

(56) a. Þetta er hundlættir sem drepti hefur fann mínka.
    this is the-dog that killed has five minks
    ‘This is the dog that has killed five minks.’

   b. Þetta er hundlættir sem skrifði hefur margar smáðvægur.
      this is the-man that written has many short-stories

   c. Hún benti á tréinnlaða sem smáðvægur hófðu vándið en öður
      she pointed to the-carpenter that made had bad but cheap
      furniture
      ‘She pointed to the carpenter who had made bad but cheap furniture.’
d. Prisma er komin sem fram í norðri Islands.

there is the woman *that* elected was president Iceland (GIE?)

'There is the woman who was elected President of Iceland.'

These differences support the distinction drawn in section 2 between the two fronting processes, topicalization and stylistic fronting.

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This article was written during the summer of 1980, and appeared later the same year in *Frontiers* (vol. 32, pp. 175-190). It is reprinted here with two changes: the addition of English glosses for the Icelandic examples, and (except in the title) of a change of terminology from the original "stylistic fronting" to the more appropriate "topicalization." With hindsight, I feel that the statement made in the very first sentence—that Icelandic word order is "quite free"—is misleading; in fact, the apparent freedom vis à vis English is almost entirely realized in the choice of phrases that can occur in sentence-initial position. For references to the more recent literature on Icelandic word order, see Peruglia and Thomsen (this volume: 1-40).

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NOTES

1 The term "topicalization" may be somewhat of a misnomer, but it has become standard usage in the transformational literature. It is unclear if the discourse function of topicalization is related to the topic-comment distinction; moreover, different languages may have the same syntactic construction to different terms. For some discussion of the discourse function of topicalization in Icelandic, see Thomsen (1979: 64-66).

2 See Maling and Zecchin (1978, and this volume: 383-407) for discussion of the consequences of this fact for the derived constituent structure of questions and topicalization.

3 Although V2 is the general rule in embedded clauses, there are some examples of the finite verb in second position as the result of an adjective in second position, a possibility noted by Heggelund (1959) in his exhaustive study of verb positions. Some examples are given in (i), with the adverbs in boldface type.
Inversion in Embedded Clauses

(i) a. eins os hana varð réttár... all hana dag eg dag varð í luku.
   just as he became
   that he now and then became luck
   ("Hamn Vegger")

b. vegar éig láksun áan lápi
   when I finally found the time

c. vegur éig áatini hanni
   when I last met him

d. vegur méy alli éins dau i has ad
   when to me suddenly occurred that
   Note that Icelandic is unlike the other Scandinavian languages in not the negative adverb eiði does not occur in second position in embedded clauses, a sentence such as (ii) is felt to be a Danicism.

(ii) *þédi alli éig ekkli hefdi sumri hann
although I just had found him

(ii) Second position for adverbs seems to have the effect of emphasis, but not all adverbs or adverbial PPs can occur in this position. Note the contrast in (iii):

(iii) biegur ég
   when I
   { fyrir Sigg... 'long ago'
          "finally"
          "on the weekend"
          "for the first time"
       ”met him”
   *met Sigg... 'with Sigg

But what clauses of adverbs can occur in second position remains to be determined. (For further discussion, see Røgnvaldsson and Thoralson, this volume: 3-40.)

k. Scourfield (1978) observes that an average of 6.9% (with a range of 1.14 percent) of embedded clauses begin with nonsubjects, as opposed to 20% of main clauses. Unfortunately, the two kinds of inversion are lumped together in her study, making it difficult to evaluate the significance of the different frequencies, which may or may not be entirely attributable to the markedness of topicalization in embedded clauses.

q. Sec, e.g., Baker (1973) for an introduction to the basic properties of topicalization and clitic. Some properties of these transformations in Icelandic are discussed in Thoralson (1979). Indirect-st-PP posposing in the Icelandic equivalent of these-insertion in English. For a discussion of subjectless constructions in Icelandic, see Thoralson (1979, Ch. 7).

r. For a discussion of the role of definiteness of his, see Andrews (this volume: 165-185). Maling and Zwent (this volume: 363-400), and Thoralson (1979, ch. 7).

s. I have used only definite subject NPs in these examples in order to rule out the possibility of indirect-PP posposing, which also creates subject gaps; see section 3.2.2.

t. In transformational terms, Icelandic lacks a subject-to-subject raising construction with copular predicates. In English syntax, subject-to-subject raising relays pairs of sentences such as (i) and (ii):

(i) It is not likely that George will be elected.
(ii) George is not likely to be elected.
In (5) the copular predicate be (5a) takes a dummy subject it and a that-clause complement, whereas (5b) takes an ordinary NP subject and an infinitival complement. The subject of the that-clause complement in (5a) corresponds to the subject of the copular predicate in (5b). See Thalassinos (1979: 39ff.).

I found considerable variation among speakers as to the acceptability of jad in such contexts. Most speakers reject jad in the starred examples in (25)–(27), but others find it quite acceptable, especially in their own relatives and in their own as opposed to written style. Use of jad is undoubtedly on the increase.

These examples were brought to my attention by Helgi Bergisson; the vacuillation in number agreement is noted by Björn Guðmundsson (1958: 46, Att. 1).

Note that this difference provides further support for the distinction between topicalization and stylistic fronting.

Yet another argument that preverbal oblique NPs are actually subjects rather than possess objects comes from the variety of possible infinitival phrases. Consider the following:

(i) Ad vasta skó
   *Ad mí skó
   **Ad vasta mí skó
   "To lack shoes"
   "To lack her"
   "To lack me"
   "To lack me shoes"
   "is awful"

(ii) Ad nargis eir bakar
    *Ad nargis eir
    **Ad nargis ín eir bakar
    "To suffice two books"
    "To suffice them"
    "To suffice them two books"
    "in horror"

Assuming that infinitival phrases are simply subjectless clauses, then, regardless of whether they are base generated as such (e.g., as VP) and their subjects supplied interpretively, or whether they are generated as all sentences with subjects that are transformationally deleted; the contrasts illustrated in (i)–(ii) support the analysis of preverbal oblique NPs as subjects. Infinitival phrases containing an inverted subject NP, while at the same time missing a topicalized object NP, are not even "remotely plausible," as noted by Thalassinos (1979: 469) for infinitives produced to EQU. He makes a similar argument for the subjecthood of these preverbal oblique NPs.

But see n. 4.

This generalization is Annie Zannezi. See Zarett (1980) for a more detailed discussion of the environments in which apparent verb first order are possible. (For a different point of view, see Sigurðsson, this volume; 41–69.) This contrast was brought to my attention by Kristján Árnason.

These observations are Kristján Árnason's.

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