

- b. þeim var hrint. Quirky (DAT) passive
 them.D was.DFT pushed.DFT
 ‘They were pushed.’
- c. þeirra var leitað. Quirky (GEN) passive
 them.G was.DFT looked-for
 ‘They were looked for.’
- d. Henni voru gefnar **bækurnar**. DAT-NOM passive
 her.D were.3PL given.N.F.SG books.the. N.F.SG
 ‘She was given the books.’
- e. **Þær** voru gefnar bókasafninu. NOM-DAT passive
 they.N.F.SG were.3PL given.N.F.SG the library.D
 ‘They were given to the library.’
- f. Það var talað hátt. Imp pass (plain)
 it was.DFT talked.DFT loudly
 ‘There was loud talking / Someone spoke loudly.’
- g. Þá var talað hátt til þeirra. Imp P-pass
 then was.DFT talked.DFT loudly to them.G
 ‘They were then spoken to/addressed loudly.’
- h. Það var talað um að fara. Imp P-pass (+ infinitive)
 it was.DFT talked.DFT about to go
 ‘People talked about going.’
- i. Þá var talað um að ég færi. Imp P-pass (+ finite clause)
 then was.DFT talked.DFT about that I went
 ‘Then people talked about that I would/should go.’

These facts are well known and have been discussed and described by many (including Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson 1985, Sigurðsson 1989, Thráinsson 2007). The corresponding active sentences take various shapes, as sketched in (2), where the case correlations between the active and passive are highlighted in boldface, whereas the object controlled agreement in the DAT-NOM passive is indicated by underlining:

(2)	Passive	Corresponding active
a.	Nom_i V/AGR _i Pcpl/AGR _i <i>they were hit</i>	Nom _k V/AGR _k Acc_i <i>we hit them</i>
b.	Quirky_i V/DFT Pcpl/DFT <i>them was pushed</i>	Nom _k V/AGR _k Quirky_i <i>we pushed them</i>
c.	Dat_i <u>V/AGR_i</u> <u>Pcpl/AGR_i</u> <u>Nom_i</u> <i>her were given they</i>	Nom _k V/AGR _k Dat_i Acc_i <i>we gave her them</i>

d.	Nom_i	V/AGR _i	Pcpl/AGR _i	Dat	Nom _k	V/AGR _k	Dat _i	Acc_i
	<i>they</i>	<i>were</i>	<i>given</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>her</i>	<i>them</i>
e.	X	V/DFT	Pcpl/DFT	(P ...)	Nom _k	V/AGR _k	(PP ...)	
	<i>then</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>talked</i>	<i>(about ...)</i>	<i>we</i>	<i>talked</i>	<i>(about ...)</i>	

X = usually the expletive *það* ‘there, it’ or an adverbial, e.g. *þá* ‘then’

Note the following general patterns (partly stated in relational grammar terms for descriptive clarity only):

(3) *Passive generalizations*

- a. In all cases the active subject, NOM_k, is demoted.
- b. Agentive *af-* ‘by’ phrases are relatively rare, or at least much rarer and more marked than in English, often even unacceptable (especially in the impersonal passive).
- c. ‘First objects’ are (usually) promoted to subject and usually also A-moved, whereas ‘second’ (direct) objects in the double object construction usually remain unpromoted. In certain cases, though, direct objects can be promoted and A-moved across indirect ones, yielding a NOM-DAT pattern, as in (1e).
- d. Accusative objects in the active voice show the familiar ACC-to-NOM conversion,² even when they are not promoted to subject, as in the DAT-NOM passive. Dative and genitive case is always preserved in the (dynamic) passive, that is, promoted DAT objects show up as DAT passive subjects and promoted GEN objects show up as GEN passive subjects.
- e. In the absence of an object in the active voice there is no promotion, a subjectless impersonal passive showing up instead (the expletive *það* ‘there, it’ is just an optional placeholder, confined to the first position of finite clauses). In particular, Icelandic has no (dynamic) pseudo passive of the English type *They were spoken to*; thus, there is never any promotion out of PPs, a full PP subtype of the impersonal passive showing up instead, as in (1g).
- f. Both finite verb agreement and past participle agreement is with NOM only. Even in the DAT-NOM passive, the NOM object controls agreement, as in (1d). In the absence of a NOM argument, both the finite verb and the passive past participle show up in forms that are traditionally referred to as default forms, 3SG in finite verbs and NOM/ACC.NT.SG in participles. However, the approach pursued here

² I use the term ‘ACC-to-NOM conversion’ for expository convenience, but it is a slight misnomer. What is ‘converted’ is the clausal argument structure and not the morphological ACC feature (which is not assigned until in PF morphology, see further below and Sigurðsson 2009a).

suggests that some such forms should be analyzed as agreeing with silent expletive \varnothing -bundles.

The impersonal passive is very common and highly productive, basically applying to any intransitive unergative main verb, including verbs that take prepositional complements (*'then was run over/under/nearby/past/ahead of/with/along/out of it'*, etc.), transitive verbs when optionally intransitive (*'then was hunted/cooked/eaten every day'*, etc.), and also including even aspectual verbs like *vera* 'be' (progressive and durative, much like English *be V-ing*) and *fara* 'begin' (literally 'go, leave, travel') as well as many control verbs, like *reyna* 'try':

(4) *Impersonal passives of aspectual verbs and control verbs*

- a. Hér er **verið** að vinna.
here is been to work
'People are working here / There is ongoing work here.'
- b. Það var **farið** að vinna.
it was gone to work
'People began to work.'
- c. Þá var **reynt** að vinna.
then was tried to work
'Then, somebody tried to work.'

It is also worth noticing that the personal passives in (1a-d) have a 'less personal' subtype, in which the passivized subject is indefinite and does not raise to Spec,TP. This is illustrated in (5). The 'late' indefinite subjects are set in boldface:³

³ Depending on specificity, quantifier scope and other poorly understood factors indefinite subjects may also show up in several intermediate positions, above the basic object position but below the canonical subject position (Spec,TP). This *Subject Floating* is illustrated for a nominative indefinite subject in (i) (adapted from Sigurðsson 2003:253) but parallel facts pertain to quirky subjects. Bare indefinites and NPs modified by other quantifiers are somewhat differently constrained, but the type in (id), with the NP between two non-finite verb forms, is ungrammatical for all NP types.

(i) *Indefinite Subject Floating*

- a. Það mundu **einhverjir bátar** þá sennilega verða seldir
there would.3PL some boats.N.M then probably be sold.N.M.PL
á uppboðinu.
at auction.the
'Some boats would then probably be sold at the auction.'
- b. Það mundu þá **einhverjir bátar** sennilega verða seldir á uppboðinu.
- c. Það mundu þá sennilega **einhverjir bátar** verða seldir á uppboðinu.
- d. * Það mundu þá sennilega verða **einhverjir bátar** seldir á uppboðinu.

(5) *Indefinite passives*

- a. Þess vegna voru bara kosnar **konur** í stjórnina.
that for were.3PL only elected.N.F.PL women.N to board.the
'Therefore only women were elected to the board.'
- b. Það var bara boðið **konum** í veisluna.
there was.DFT only invited.DFT women.D to party.the
'Only women were invited to the party.'
- c. Þá var leitað **tveggja kvenna**.
then was.DFT looked-for.DFT two women.G
'Two women were then being looked for.'
- d. Það voru bara **tveim konum** gefnir þrír pennar.
there were.3PL only two women.D given N.M.PL three pens.N.M.PL
'Only two women were given three pens.'

From all these facts, it is evident that Icelandic passive morphology commonly combines with three phenomena that are absent from canonical NP-movement passives of the English type.

(6) *Common traits of Icelandic passives (absent from the English passive type)*

- a. Absent NP-movement
- b. Absent NOM
- c. Hence also absent agreement (agreement being contingent on structural case-marking)

2. The New Passive

The canonical NOM passive in Icelandic is similar to the regular English/Germanic type passive. Most importantly, as we just saw, it is subject to the familiar ACC-to-NOM conversion, a fact further illustrated in (7):

(7) *ACC-to-NOM conversion in the canonical passive*

- a. Strákarnir börðu **þá** í gær.
boys.the.N hit.3PL them.A.M in yesterday

-
- e. Það mundu þá sennilega verða seldir **einhverjir bátar** á uppboðinu.

Even some definite quantifier-containing NPs can raise to some of the intermediate positions, whereas pronominal subjects have to raise all the way to Spec,TP (see Thráinsson 2007:313ff).

- ‘The boys hit them yesterday.’
- b. **Þeir** voru barðir í gær.
 they.N.M were.3PL hit.N.M.PL in yesterday
 ‘They were hit yesterday.’

However, some speakers can also use a substandard passive type, in addition to the standard NOM passive in (7b). This additional type, commonly referred to as the *New Passive* (or the New Impersonal) is illustrated in (8), where the percent sign indicates that the construction is acceptable to only some speakers:

(8) *The New Passive*

- a. % Það var barið þá í gær.
 it was.DFT hit.DFT them.A.M in yesterday
 ‘They were hit yesterday.’
- b. % Í gær var (*það) barið þá.
 in yesterday was.DFT (*it) hit.DFT them.A.M
 ‘They were hit yesterday.’
- c. % Var (*það) barið þá í gær?
 was.DFT (*it) hit.DFT them.A.M in yesterday
 ‘Were they hit yesterday?’
- d. * Var þá barið í gær?
 was them.A.M hit in yesterday

Notice that expletive *það* is confined to clause initial position even in this substandard construction, that is, it is a placeholder of some sort and not a subject.

This construction has some seemingly striking properties:

(9) *Innovative properties of the New Passive*

- a. It has no NP-movement of (DAT, ACC or GEN) direct objects, cf. (8d),⁴

⁴ This does not extend to indirect objects of ditransitive verbs, at least not across the board. As pointed out by Árnadóttir & Sigurðsson (2008) and Jónsson (2009:303), raising of indirect objects is acceptable to some speakers of the New Passive variety, in at least some cases, yielding examples like (i):

- (i) %Var þeim ekki einu sinni sýnt íbúðina fyrst?
 was them.D not one time shown apartment.the.A first
 ‘Were they not even shown the apartment first?’

The corresponding standard Icelandic passive also raises the DAT indirect object and has exactly the same word order, but instead of a preserved ACC it has an agreement triggering NOM direct object (*sýnd íbúðin*

- b. it has no ACC-to-NOM conversion (seemingly violating Burzio's Generalization / the Sibling Correlation),
- c. hence it has no verb and participle agreement either

As we have seen, absent NP-movement and absent NOM-assignment are typical of common subtypes of the standard Icelandic passive. Here, these characteristics are found in the 'wrong type' of passives, but the ground for their spread is plausibly the extensive use of impersonal constructions in the language, including impersonal, indefinite and non-nominative passives (see also Kjartansson 1991, Thráinsson 2005:569ff).

Maling & Sigurjónsdóttir (2002), henceforth **M&S**, studied the geographical and social distribution of the New Passive in considerable detail. Their major results and conclusions can be summarized as follows:

(10) *Major conclusions and results of M&S*

- a. The construction is a recent innovation – the oldest attested examples are from the middle of the 20th century and it was first mentioned in the linguistic literature in the 1980's.⁵
- b. It was widely accepted by 15-16 years olds (in 1999-2000), while adults generally rejected it. In a written test (questionnaire), the acceptance ratio was commonly

'shown.N.F.SG apartment.the.N.F.SG'), cf. (1d) above. This suggests, first, that indirect objects are licensed in a different fashion than direct objects (DAT, ACC or GEN), say, by a secondary Voice head or an Appl(icative) head, as has been widely assumed (see e.g. Pylkkänen 2008, Schäfer 2008, and the references cited there). Second, it illustrates that non-nominatives sometimes undergo passive A-movement in the New Passive variety, thereby showing that case and passive A-movement are independent of each other, not only in standard Icelandic (as has long been known), but also in the New Passive variety. These facts tally well with the analysis pursued here, but, for reasons of space, I will not discuss the double object construction any further.

⁵ M&S (p. 129) also mention that the oldest person known to them to have expressed a New Passive clause was born in 1941, but I recently heard an example uttered by a (highly educated and eloquent) person born in 1903 (on a radio program from 1973, rebroadcasted by RÚV, Rás 1, 17 June, 2008):

- (i) en það hefur nú ekki verið leitað hennar.
 but it_{EXPL} has well not been looked-for it.G [a grave]
 'But, well, it has not been looked for.'

In standard Icelandic, in contrast, pronominal NPs must raise (regardless of case), see (3) above and the discussion in section 5.

For a historical change the New Passive is unusual in being more widespread in rural than in urban areas. Actually, it is not evident that it is a recent innovation, i.e., the fact that it was not discussed by linguists until in the 1980s might be coincidental or have social explanations that have nothing to do with the phenomenon itself. It might even have been a marginal, stigmatized phenomenon for centuries (even in Iceland, the language of adolescents and 'common persons' has not been generally 'visible' until recently). For the analytical purposes of this article, however, this is unimportant, so I will keep on referring to the phenomenon as the 'New' Passive.

around 50% for the adolescents (28-73%, depending on constructions, areas and social class),⁶ while it was commonly around 5% for the adults (1-9%). The construction was least commonly accepted in Inner-Reykjavik, which has the highest education level in the country.

- c. All speakers accept the standard NOM passive.⁷

M&S suggest that the construction is in the process of being reanalyzed as an active construction in the disguise of passive morphology, and hence that ‘passive’ is a misnomer. Under the *active analysis*, the structure of a New Passive clause would be roughly as sketched in (11) (see the slightly different presentation in M&S, p. 100):

(11) *The active analysis*

[CP ... [TP *pro*_{NOM} ... Voice [_{vP} ... *v*-V NP_{ACC/DAT/GEN}]]]

Extending the general approach of Kratzer (1996) and much related work, I assume that *any* predicate is embedded under some Voice head, matched by the *v* head of the predicate (and indirectly matched by the highest argument of the predicate, via *v*, see shortly). Voice is thus the lowest category in the T-system, from where it enters an Agree relation with the *v*-V complex.⁸ This assumption is of central significance for the analysis I will pursue, so I need to take a short detour here, in order to briefly explain it before I proceed discussing the active analysis.

Voice ‘regulates’ argument structure. It may be expletive, as for instance in anticausative structures (Schäfer 2008, see further below), but it is commonly ‘contentful’, licensing for instance an agent or an experiencer. Case-marking is closely tied to Voice and argument structure, simple predicates containing either no or only a single argument, most commonly NOM, monotransitive predicates adding one more argument and one more case (typically yielding NOM-ACC), ditransitives adding a third argument and commonly also a third case (yielding e.g. NOM-DAT-ACC). Voice itself may licence certain cases. Thus, agentive

⁶ Despite these high acceptance numbers, the New Passive is infrequent in writing, e.g. on the internet (and some of the examples nonetheless found there are actually from linguistic discussions about the construction). Googling (April 11 2009) gave 7 results for *var tekið hana* ‘was taken her/it.ACC’ as compared to 25.600 results for the standard *hún var tekin* ‘she/it.NOM was taken’.

⁷ It has not been studied whether there are any aspectual or functional differences between the standard passive and the New Passive.

⁸ In addition to the tense feature itself (‘plain’ T), the T-system minimally contains Mood, Person and other ϕ -heads, higher than ‘plain’ T, and Voice, lower than ‘plain’ T, see further section 5 (alternatively, Voice could be seen as the highest category in the *v*-system). For a number of slightly different approaches to Voice and *vP* structure, see e.g., Alexiadou et al. (2006), Pylkkänen (2008), Ramchand (2008), and, in particular Svenonius (2006) and Schäfer (2008), two works that have been important sources of inspiration for the approach I am pursuing.

Voice canonically licenses ergative case in ergative languages. More commonly, however, Voice licenses case only indirectly, via v heads. As will be discussed in section 4, there is evidence that different Voices alter the case licensing properties of v heads in different ways.⁹

In accord with mainstream minimalism, then, I conceive of C and T as cover terms or “surrogates for richer systems” (Chomsky 2000:143, n. 31, cf. also 2001:43, n. 8). I also follow Chomsky (2000, 2001), rather than e.g. Kratzer (1996), in assuming that the external argument is introduced into the v -system (and thereby into the clause) by little v . However, the external argument must in addition be linked to the T-system, and this is what Voice does, by entering an Agree relation with little v , hence an extended Agree relation (Agree chain) with the external argument, via little v (in line with the control theory in Landau 2004, 2008 and related work).¹⁰ Thus, the external argument is jointly licensed by the Voice- v ‘connection’. Subsequently, its θ -role gets an interpretation at the Conceptual-Intentional interface as an Agree chain, involving Voice, v and V.¹¹

The term ‘Voice’ is a cover term (much as ‘Aspect’ in Cinque 1999 and related work). Voice types, including the following ones, are mutually exclusive:

- Voice_{ACT/+AG} (in structures with agentive predicates)
- Voice_{ACT/-AG} (with nonagentive predicates)
- Voice_{PASS/+AG} (with passive agentive predicates)
- Voice_{PASS/-AG} (with passive nonagentive predicates)
- Voice_{PSYCH} (with psych predicates)
- Voice_{FATE} (with unaccusative predicates with a fate reading, like *drift*, *swamp*, etc.)
- Voice_{EXPL} (with anticausative predicates and regular unaccusatives)

The sense of these terms will become clearer as we proceed. There are more Voice type heads than just these, but these are the ones that matter for my present purposes.¹²

Now, let us return to the active analysis in (11). The presence of an arbitrary or expletive NOM *pro* in Spec,TP would explain the otherwise mysterious ACC preservation without any

⁹ However, more categories than just Voice can affect the case assignment properties of v -V, for instance negation in languages like Russian and Finnish.

¹⁰ Introducing the external argument into clausal structure and linking it to the T-system is distinct from its ‘final’ positional licensing, triggering NP-movement out of v P (see the discussion of NP-movement in section 5).

¹¹ Much as the T-system contains a number of heads, including Voice, the v -system arguably contains a number of heads (see for instance the theory in Ramchand 2008). V, in turn, includes the root and seemingly also some functional element or elements distinct from v . However, I refrain from going into further details here.

¹² Nonagentive passive predicates (like *be missed*) are few and atypical of the Icelandic passive (cf. Sigurðsson 1989, ch. 6). Many active transitive predicates take a non-agentive subject. Some such predicates (*acquire*, *experience*, ...) are arguably embedded under other Voice head types than Voice_{ACT/-AG} (Sigurðsson 2009a), but I put this aside here.

further ado, so that aspect of the analysis would seem to be rather attractive. In addition, it would account for the fact that the New Passive (of monotransitives) is exempted from A-movement, hence also from the Definiteness Effect (cf. M&S, p. 117f).

(12) *No A-movement to subject (hence no Definiteness Effect)*

- a. % Það hefur oft verið barið **mig**.
 it has.DFT often been hit.DFT me.A
 ‘I have often been beaten up.’
- b. * Það hefur **mig** oft verið barið.
 it has.DFT me.A often been hit.DFT

The active analysis was first tentatively suggested in Sigurðsson (1989:356), precisely for the reason that it would simply explain away the ACC preservation, henceforth *the accusative problem*. M&S develop further arguments in favor of the analysis, claiming that the New Passive shares the following properties with regular active clauses:

(13) *‘Activeness’ tests*

- a. Agentive *af*- ‘by’ phrases are disallowed
- b. Anaphoric binding is possible
- c. Control of subject-oriented adjuncts is possible
- d. The main verb may be unaccusative

As argued by Eythórsson (2008), however, the results of these tests are rather vague, indeed so vague that they do not sharply distinguish the New Passive from traditional passives, in particular the standard impersonal passive (agentive *af*- ‘by’ phrases, for instance, usually being awkward or unacceptable in the impersonal passive). I will not review Eythórsson’s arguments here, but they seem sound to me.¹³

It is very true, as argued by Maling (2006), that passive morphology does not necessarily entail ‘passive syntax’ (not any more than, say, past tense morphology always has to signal ‘past tense syntax’). However, showing that a construction partly passes the tests in (13) for some speakers does not amount to showing that it is ‘non-passive’.

Arguing that a construction ‘is passive’ or ‘non-passive’ is in fact not as innocent or simple as it might appear to be. ‘The passive’ is not a syntactic primitive (cf. Chomsky 1981 and much related work) but a complex of variably salient characteristics, such as non-finite passive morphology (commonly past participles), usually combined with a copula of some sort, a ‘missing’ agentive overt subject, a silent agentive θ -role, NP-movement from V-object

¹³ Jónsson (2009) presents some additional arguments against the active analysis. See also the fairly balanced discussion in Thráinsson (2007:273ff).

to subject or, more rarely, from P-object to subject (pseudo passives). Not a single one of these characteristics is exclusively found in constructions that are traditionally referred to as ‘passive’.

Similarly, ‘active’ is a term that is commonly used to refer to a complex of characteristics, but I believe it is fair to say that ‘active constructions’ prototypically involve a spelled out vP-external agentive or at least ‘active’ subject (usually in Spec,TP) and no hidden agentive θ -role. By excluding unaccusatives, unergatives and other predicates that do not take an argument acted upon by an active or agentive subject, one could also take transitivity to be a defining property of active constructions, at least in a narrow sense (cf. Trask 1993:5).

With the potential exception of transitivity (depending on how one understands that notion), the New Passive lacks the salient properties of ‘active constructions’, while having many of the common characteristics of ‘passives’. Thus, in addition to passive morphology, it has the hidden agent reading typical of the passive and disallows the suppressed agent to be lexicalized outside of vP. The hidden agent reading is evident in the translations in (8) and (12a) above, and, as seen in (14), the agent cannot be spelled out in Spec,TP, no matter how semantically vague it may be (as also pointed out by Eythórsson 2008):

(14) *No subject in Spec,TP*

- | | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| * Var | [_{TP} einhver/fólk/maður | [_{VP} barið | hana ...? |
| | was somebody/people/one | hit | her |

Moreover, subject control of secondary predicate agreement is excluded in the New Passive, (see also Jónsson 2009), whereas object controlled agreement is well-formed:

(15) *No subject control of secondary predicate agreement*

- a. % Var barið hana (*fullur)?
 was hit her.A drunk.N.M.SG¹⁴
 ‘Was she hit (by somebody who was drunk)?’
- b. % Var barið hana (fulla)?
 was hit her.A drunk.A.F.SG
 ‘Was she hit (when she was) drunk?’

In regular active clauses, on the other hand, the subject may control secondary predicate agreement, no less (or even rather) than the object:

¹⁴ Elements that agree with a covert subject commonly show up as masculine singular, see below on PRO infinitives and impersonal *pro* constructions.

(16) *Secondary predicate agreement in active constructions*

- a. Hann barði hana (fullur).
he hit her drunk.N.M.SG
'He hit her (when he was drunk)'
- b. Hann barði hana (fulla).
he hit her drunk.A.F.SG
'He hit her (when she was drunk)'

Much as in the New Passive, agent controlled agreement is impossible in the standard passive, whereas it is well-formed in active arbitrary PRO infinitives (showing that the reason why agreement is ill-formed in (15a) is independent of 'subject silence'). This is illustrated in (17).

(17) *Agent controlled agreement in standard passives vs. active PRO infinitives*

- a. Var hún barin (*fullur)?
was she hit drunk.N.M.SG
Intended: 'Was she hit (by somebody who was drunk)?'
- b. Að berja hana fullur var skammarlegt.
to hit her drunk.N.M.SG was shameful

All these facts suggest that the New Passive has more properties in common with the standard passive than with regular active predicates.

Icelandic has an active construction with arbitrary/generic *pro*, the so-called Impersonal Modal Construction, IMC (Sigurðsson 1989:163ff, Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009, see also e.g. Thráinsson 2007:311ff). As suggested in Sigurðsson (1989:356), this construction would seem to be structurally related to the New Passive, hence perhaps a model for it. However, a closer look reveals that the two constructions have different properties. Thus, IMC tolerates both an optional overt subject and *pro*-controlled agreement, as illustrated in (18):

(18) *The Impersonal Modal Construction, IMC*

- a. Má (maður) ekki vera hérna?
may (one) not be here
'Is it not allowed to be/stay here?'
- b. Má ekki vera hérna fullur?
may not be here drunk.N.M.SG
'Is it not allowed to be/stay here drunk?'

Even though the Icelandic impersonal *pro* is not just a null-version of impersonal *maður* 'you, one' (Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009), it normally triggers M.SG agreement, like *maður*.

In line with traditional generative approaches (Jaeggli 1986, Chomsky 1981 and much related work, cf. the discussion in Collins 2005), one can think of passives as being ‘defective’, such that the agentive θ -role is trapped inside vP , hence blocked from being lexicalized in Spec,TP. Assume that this is brought about by passive morphology, structures containing v - V_{PASS} in turn being merged with Voice_{PASS} (cf. Schäfer 2008).¹⁵ If so, (19) illustrates the core structure of passives in general (in Germanic and many other languages):

(19) *The passive analysis*

[CP ... [TP ... Voice_{PASS} ... [vP ... v - V_{PASS} ...]]]

‘To be passive’, then, is to have v - V_{PASS} morphology that matches Voice_{PASS} (under distant Agree), nothing more and nothing less. The New Passive shares these core properties with the canonical passive.

The vP internal agent role is partly active in syntax. Thus, it can bind an AdvP-internal anaphor, as illustrated in (20a) below. As seen in (20b), on the other hand, an argument that raises to subject cannot contain an anaphor. Both examples are representative of standard Icelandic (impersonal passive in (20a), NOM passive in (20b)):¹⁶

(20) *Binding*

- a. Eftir vinnu var bara farið heim til sín.
 after work was just gone home to self.REFL
 ‘After work you just went home (to your own place).’
- b. * Eftir vinnu voru bílarnir sínir bara keyrðir heim.
 after work were cars.N self’s.REFL.N just driven home

These facts follow, if the binding agent role is trapped within vP , hence able to bind vP -internal constituents, like *heim til sín* in (20a), but unable to bind NPs (like *bílarnir sínir* in (20b)) that have raised out of vP , to Spec,TP.¹⁷

¹⁵ There are several conceivable ways of technically implementing this basic idea. I assume a simple incorporation analysis, under which the participle suffix *is* the lexical representation of the external argument.

¹⁶ Only 39% of the adults accepted a similar example in M&S’ study (see p. 121). Their example is just plain *Það var farið heim til sín* ‘it was gone home to self’, which is also not really felicitous to my ears. The scene setting adverbial *eftir vinnu* ‘after work’ and the focalizer *bara* ‘only, just’ make the example in (20a) fully acceptable to me. – This is illustrative of how delicate judgments in impersonal constructions can be.

¹⁷ This is not an entirely innocent reasoning. It is based on the assumption that the AdvPs in question are c-commanded by the vP -internal agent role in a kind of a Larsonian VP-shell structure, rather than right-adjoined to vP . However, the assumption that the agent role is trapped vP internally in passives gains support from a number of facts, one of them being the fact discussed above that the agent role cannot control secondary predicates, such predicates being vP external, hence not c-commanded by the vP -internal agent.

This analysis suggests that (21) should be an acceptable New Passive sentence:

(21) *Binding in the New Passive*

%Eftir vinnu var bara keyrt bílana **sína** heim.
 after work was just driven car.A self's.REFL.A home

This prediction gets some support from M&S' results (see p. 120ff), but, as their results for binding were rather vague, the support is not as strong as one might have wished.

The suppressed or silent agent role can also control into infinitives (Sigurðsson 1989, Maling 2006), as illustrated in (22a,b).

(22) *Control*

- a. Það er dansað til að skemmta sér hér.
 it is danced for to amuse self.REFL. here
 'People dance in order to amuse themselves here.'
- b. Það er reynt að dansa hér.
 it is tried to dance here
 'People try/are trying to dance here.'
- c. *Það er reynt að vera dansað hér.
 it is tried to be danced here

As seen in (22c), however, the silent agent role of *vera dansað* 'be danced' cannot itself be controlled. Presumably, it is too low in the structure (trapped inside vP) and hence 'too far away', in some sense not formalized here, for being successfully probed by the controller (the silent matrix agent; see Holmberg 2005 on similar facts in Finnish impersonal constructions).

The 'half-active' status of the silent agent is further highlighted by examples like (23), with simultaneous overt subject binding and silent agent control:

(23) *Overt subject binding + silent agent control*

Hann₁ var handtekinn-[θ₂] heima hjá sér₁ til að PRO₂ hindra uppgöt.
 he was arrested home by self.REFL for to prevent riots
 'He was arrested in his home to prevent riots.'

In general, the silent agent can only be syntactically active in the (local) absence of a more prominent syntactic 'actor'. Thus, it can bind an anaphor in the impersonal passive, but not in the personal (A-movement) passive, because the latter has an overt (passivized) subject that is a more prominent 'actor' than the agent role. This is illustrated in (24):

(24) *Variable activity of the implicit agent*

- a. Eftir vinnu var bara keyrt-[θ_1] heim til sín₁.
 after work was just driven home to self.REFL
 ‘After work you just drove home
 (to your own place).’ (= the driver’s place)
- b. Eftir vinnu var **fólk**₂ bara keyrt-[θ_1] heim til sín_{2/*1}.
 after work was people just driven home to self.REFL
 ‘After work you were just driven home
 (to your own place).’ (≠ the driver’s place).

A simple comparison of the syntactic activity of the implicit agent in the personal passive and in the impersonal passive, including the New Passive, is thus bound to yield misleading results.

In short, it seems safe to conclude that the New Passive is a ‘passive construction’, sharing the properties in (19) with other passives in Icelandic. It follows that we need to develop some new understanding of the accusative problem and of the absence of A-movement in the New Passive. I will discuss the accusative problem and case-assignment in sections 3 and 4, turning to A-movement and phasehood in section 5. As it turns out, the analysis developed suggests that the New Passive is an unusually ‘active passive’ (much like the standard P-passive), blocking A-movement by ϕ -intervention.

3. The accusative problem

Eythórsson (2008) suggests that Burzio’s Generalization should be parameterized, such that accusative case can be parametrically assigned to objects independently of whether or not nominative case is also assigned.

Burzio’s Generalization is just that, a generalization. It is not a principle or a rule of grammar or grammars, hence not plausibly amenable to parametrization. However, the gist of Eythórsson’s suggestion can be interpreted such that some kind of an *independent ACC approach* is needed, which seems to be essentially correct (on the understanding that ACC assignment can in certain cases be available even when NOM is absent). If some version of such an approach is to be upheld, a number of problems that arise must be addressed and preferably solved, or else it is not clear that we are doing anything but restating the fact that the New Passive preserves ACC. I will briefly address some of these problems below.

First, accusative is not generally available or free as an independent ‘first case’. Consider the following examples:

(25) *ACC is not generally independent of NOM*

- a. Það stendur **maður**/*mann í dyrunum.
there stands man.N/*A in door.the
'There is a man standing in the door(way).'
- b. Það eru horfnir **peningar**. / *Það er horfið peninga.
there are.3PL. gone.N.M.PL money.N / *there is.DFT gone.DFT money.A
'Some money has disappeared.'
- c. Það er gaman að vera **kennari** / *kennara.
it is nice to be teacher.N / *A
'It is nice to be a teacher.'

Accusatives of this sort are unattested, also in the New Passive variety.

Unless further specified or constrained, the independent ACC approach predicts that NOM objects should generally shift to ACC in the New Passive variety, but that is not borne out either:¹⁸

(26) *NOM objects do not shift to ACC*

- a. Mér leiddist **hún**/*hana.
me.D bored sheN/*her.A
'I found her boring.'
- b. Henni mislíkaði **þessi hávaði**/*þennan hávaða.
her.D disliked this noise.N/*A
'She disliked this noise.'

A DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC shift of this sort is commonly observed in Faroese (Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003, Thráinsson et al. 2004:228ff), so it is clearly a possible change, but the fact that it has not been observed as a general trait of the New Passive variety suggests that the accusative problem does not have a solution or an explanation in terms of a *generally* applicable or available independent ACC approach. In other words, if such an approach is to be successful, it has to be restricted somehow, such that it becomes at least descriptively adequate for the New Passive variety.

Recall that the New Passive shares a number of properties with the standard impersonal P-passive (type '*it/then was talked to me*'). Postulating a silent preposition in the New Passive

¹⁸ A few examples of this sort have been found on the internet (Árnadóttir & Sigurðsson 2008), but they are not a general trait of the New Passive variety or of any other common variety of Icelandic, as far as I know. Googling the examples in (26a), April 14 2009, gave 63 results for the DAT-NOM pattern (*Mér leiddist hún*), but zero for the DAT-ACC pattern.

might thus seem to be a possible way to go here (as discussed in Barðdal & Molnár 2003). Such an empty P approach is sketched in (27).

(27) *The empty P approach*

- a. % Þá var beðið [_P Ø] mig að fara.
 then was asked me.A to go
 ‘Then I was asked to go.’
- b. % Það var sagt [_P Ø] mér að fara.
 it was told me.D to go
 ‘I was told to go.’

If one were to adopt an approach along these lines one would have to say that the empty P is like a particle in not assigning any case of its own, instead allowing ‘transmission’ of the V-case to the object.¹⁹ Simultaneously, however, the empty P would have to be like overt prepositions (but unlike particles) in exempting NPs from A-movement.

The empty P approach is seemingly attractive in that it would ‘automatically’ account for the ACC preservation in the New Passive, as the New Passive would simply be a subtype of the standard (dynamic/eventive) P-passive. Unfortunately, however, this approach suffers from much the same fundamental problems as a BG parametric approach, that is, it is unprincipled and also too inaccurate, hence descriptively inadequate. Basically, it is unclear why New Passive speakers should specifically insert an empty (non-case assigning) P in passives, and not, say, in regular unaccusatives (such as (25a,b) above). Also, as seen by English pseudo passives, Ps do not always block A-movement, that is, something more than just the presence of a P is in any case required to account for absent A-movement in the New Passive (see the discussion around (39) in section 5).

An adequate solution of the accusative problem has to somehow relate it to passive Voice. I will take a closer look at this issue in the next section. The analysis developed hypothesizes that ACC-to-NOM conversion involves ‘case-star deletion’ under Voice Agree, absent from the New Passive (much as from so-called psych and fate (un)accusatives in standard Icelandic). The A-movement issue, in turn, will be discussed in section 5, where I argue that the New Passive is indeed related to the standard P-passive, not by inserting a silent P but by inducing ϕ -intervention in a parallel fashion as overt Ps do in Icelandic and many other languages (as opposed to English).

¹⁹ As in *færa (til) ACC* ‘move (around) ACC’, where *til* is a non-case-assigning particle, distinct from the GEN assigning preposition *til* ‘to(wards)’, as in *færa ACC til GEN* ‘bring ACC to GEN’.

4. Voice, v and case

Adopting, by and large, mainstream minimalism (Chomsky 2000, 2001 and related work), the central properties of the core argumental case system in nominative-accusative languages can be simply described as follows, where the arrow reads as ‘assigns’ (in PF morphology):

(28) *The central NOM-ACC system*

- a. $v^* \rightarrow \text{ACC}$
- b. $v \rightarrow \emptyset$

In a similar vein, we may designate DAT assigning v heads as v^{**} . Designations of this sort are abstractions and they are also simplifications, as suggested by a number of facts, for instance the fact that grammar contains many types of e.g. accusatives and datives.²⁰ However, the exact nature of the differences between distinct accusatives or datives is largely unimportant in the present context, so I will not go into any further details here. For simplicity also, I will disregard GEN objects here. They can be understood as being assigned by yet another type of v , call it v^{***} , but I put the issue aside here. In addition, I disregard case agreement and all instances of case-marking of NPs (adverbial NPs etc.) that do not belong to the core argumental system (including subjects, V-objects and P-objects).

Transitive vPs are headed by an ACC assigning v^* (or DAT/GEN assigning $v^{**}(\cdot)$), whereas (NOM) passive vPs are headed by non-case (\emptyset) assigning plain v , like (most) unaccusatives and other ‘defective’ predicates. Plausibly, NP matching of v heads is a syntactic Agree relation ($v^* \leftrightarrow \text{NP}$, etc.), whereas case assignment rules like (28a,b) operate in post-syntactic (PF) morphology, where $v^* \leftrightarrow \text{NP}$ is interpreted as NP_{ACC} , whereas $v \leftrightarrow \text{NP}$ (a ‘null-case relation’) is interpreted as NP_{NOM} (Sigurðsson 2009a). If the finite verb successfully probes NOM in subsequent (PF) agreement morphology, finite verb agreement is triggered; otherwise, the finite verb shows up in 3SG (in Icelandic).

Given this approach, all case-marking of arguments is structural (cf. also Svenonius 2006) but it does not follow that it is always *predictable*. That is, I do not claim that idiosyncratic factors cannot affect argument case. Thus, even though an argument gets DAT in a structural configuration with $v^{**}\text{-V}_x$, the fact that the particular V_x in question matches v^{**} rather than e.g. v^* may be due to idiosyncratic factors, internal to V_x . I will not discuss such factors here, though (but see Sigurðsson 2009a for some observations).

²⁰ A non-exhaustive list for Icelandic includes DAT and ACC subjects of several sorts, DAT and ACC indirect objects, DAT and ACC direct objects, DAT and ACC P-objects, and several types of adverbial DAT and ACC NPs. Thus, as discussed in Sigurðsson (2009a), the overt case features cannot be assimilated with v^* , v^{**} , etc., instead being morphological interpretations of a number of disparate abstract syntactic relations (as underlined by the fact that non-argumental NPs are case-marked).

We are now in a position to briefly outline at least an initially plausible approach to case preservation and ‘case elimination’ in various kinds of constructions, including the standard passive and the New Passive. Suppose defective v is truly defective in the sense that it is not a lexical category, hence not available in any numeration, instead being derived in syntax from v^* and $v^{**}(*)$, by elimination of their case assigning property. Call this *case-star deletion*. As we saw in the introduction, the standard passive eliminates ACC ($v^* > v$), whereas it ‘keeps’ DAT (and GEN). Assume therefore that embedding a v -type head under $\text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}}$ leads to a single case-star deletion, but not to a double (or triple) case-star deletion. If so, a regular NOM passive has the structure in (29a), after single case-star deletion, whereas a DAT passive has the structure in (29b):

(29) *NOM vs. DAT passives*

- a. $[\text{CP} \dots [\text{TP} \dots \text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots [\dots v\text{-V}_{\text{PASS}} \text{NP} \dots]]]$ (i.e., $v\text{P}$)
 b. $[\text{CP} \dots [\text{TP} \dots \text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots [\dots v^{**}\text{-V}_{\text{PASS}} \text{NP} \dots]]]$ (i.e., $v^{**}\text{P}$)

Passive case preservation (of DAT) vs. case-star deletion in standard Icelandic and many other languages can thus be described as in (30), where the arrows indicate a matching (Agree) relation between Voice and v (cf. Landau 2004, 2008; in addition, external arguments match v , thereby indirectly or ‘transitively’ matching Voice, via v):

(30) *Passive case-star deletion vs. case preservation in standard Icelandic*

- a. $\text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots v^* \dots > \text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots v \dots$ (yields $\emptyset = \text{NOM}$ in PF)
 $\uparrow \quad \quad \uparrow$
 b. $\text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots v^{**} \dots > \text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}} \dots v^{**} \dots$ (yields DAT in PF)
 $\uparrow \quad \quad \uparrow$

Accordingly, the New Passive can be analyzed as lacking single case-star deletion under $\text{Voice}_{\text{PASS}}$ matching by v^* . The analysis thus captures the fact that the accusative problem is confined to passives. It also accommodates Burzio’s Generalization or the Sibling Correlation, SC, between NOM and ACC. As formulated in Sigurðsson (2003, 2006), SC is a generalization about morphological case externalization. Here (and in Sigurðsson 2009a), I extend the approach by analyzing the *syntactic* factors that yield SC in the externalization part of language.

Informally, SC says that ACC cannot be assigned unless NOM is also assigned to another argument of the same predicate. In the present approach, however, NOM is not a syntactically active feature or relation but a PF interpretation of non-case (\emptyset). Since v (v^* , v^{**} , ...) must be in an Agree relation with Voice, SC follows: Either the Voice- v ‘connection’ (Agree chain) jointly licenses an external argument and does not induce any case-star

deletion, yielding ACC on the internal argument and non-case (NOM) on the external argument – or the Voice-*v* chain does not license an external argument and induces case-star deletion, which yields only non-case = NOM. The rationale behind this is that whenever an ‘extra’ argument is not introduced there is no need to activate case (to distinguish between arguments), hence the case-star is simply deleted.

SC thus follows from the interaction of two factors or forces: +/- licensing of an external argument and +/- case-star deletion. Canonically, these factors coincide, yielding the SC phenomenon, in prototypical NOM-ACC_i vs. NOM_i alternations. Other constructions, however, including the New Passive, illustrate that the factors behind SC must be teased apart. See further shortly.

Since Voice regulates argument structure and since case distinctions commonly correlate with argument structure, a theory where Voice affects the case licensing properties of *v* heads is called for (cf. also Svenonius 2006). Notice, however, that the approach pursued here develops a framework within which case-star preservation vs. case-star deletion can be analyzed and generalized over, whereas it does not explain why these phenomena have a slightly different distribution in distinct varieties or dialects. That is to say, the approach makes the generalization that case-star deletion may take place under Voice ↔ *v* Agree, but it does not make exact predictions or claims as to which Voice heads trigger which case-star deletion processes in which language varieties, beyond the Icelandic varieties analyzed here. As will be discussed below, Voice heads that reduce the number of licensed arguments commonly trigger case-star deletion, but there are exceptions, illustrating that the correlation is a tendency rather than a principle.

The case-star deletion process in the standard passive is not an isolated phenomenon. Anticausative (‘middle’) *-st*-verbs and stative (adjectival) passives are like standard dynamic or eventive passives in never ‘preserving’ ACC. Moreover, they never preserve inherent case on themes either (see Zaenen & Maling 1984, Sigurðsson 1989, ch. 6, Thráinsson 2005, 2007:289ff). This is illustrated in (31):

(31) *Variable case preservation*

- | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| a. | Við lokuðum glugganum . | Active NOM-DAT _i |
| | we closed window.the.DAT | |
| b. | Glugganum var lokað þjösnalega. | Dynamic passive DAT _i |
| | window.the.DAT was closed brutally | |
| c. | Glugginn lokaðist. | Anticausative NOM _i |
| | window.the.NOM closed-ST | |
| | ‘The window closed.’ | |
| d. | Glugginn var lokaður í tvær vikur. | Stative passive NOM _i |
| | window.the.NOM was closed for two weeks | |

Anticausatives differ from stative passives in involving a process (the vP-internal Proc(ess) head in Ramchand 2008), while both imply a result (vP-internal Res(ult) in Ramchand 2008).²¹ In other respects, these predicate types are quite similar, both being incompatible with an agentive reading. Closely following Alexiadou et al. (2006) and Schäfer (2008), I assume that anticausative vPs are embedded under an expletive Voice head, Voice_{EXPL} (their external θ -role being non-contentful or expletive), and I hypothesize that this applies to stative passive vPs as well. If this is on the right track, we may conjecture that Voice_{EXPL} differs from Voice_{PASS} in triggering not only a single case-star deletion but a general case-star deletion ($v^{*(*)} > v$).²² In contrast to direct object datives, however, anticausatives do not eliminate benefactive indirect object datives (see Sigurðsson 1989:260, 270n, Thráinsson 2007:290f), a fact that tallies well with the widely adopted hypothesis (mentioned in fn. 4 above) that such datives are licensed in a different fashion than direct objects (DAT, ACC or GEN).

Plain unaccusatives, like *appear*, *die*, *disappear*, differ from anticausatives in never implying an initiator or causer, but they have otherwise much the same properties as anticausatives. I thus assume that although these predicate types have different vP-internal structures they are both embedded under Voice_{EXPL}. If so, and if Voice_{EXPL} triggers general case-star deletion, as suggested above, we expect general case-star deletion to take place, subjects of unaccusatives thus showing up in NOM rather than in ACC (or DAT or GEN). This prediction of the analysis is borne out in general, with two major types of quirky accusative exceptions: so-called *fate (un)accusatives* and *psych (un)accusatives*. This is (very briefly) illustrated in (32):

(32) *Regular unaccusatives vs. psych and fate (un)accusatives*

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------|
| a. | Það hurfu margir íbúar . | Regular unaccusatives |
| | there disappeared many residents.N | |
| | ‘Many (of the) residents disappeared.’ | |
| b. | Það langaði marga íbúa heim. | Psych (un)accusatives |
| | there longed many residents.A home | |
| | ‘Many (of the) residents wanted to go home.’ | |
| c. | Það rak marga íbúa að landi. | Fate (un)accusatives |
| | there drove many residents.A to land | |
| | ‘Many (of the) residents drifted ashore.’ | |

²¹ However, not all stative passives are resultative in the sense of Embick 2004, who makes a distinction between plain statives and resultative statives. As far as I can judge, the distinction is irrelevant in the present context.

²² Sporadically, GEN can be deleted ($v^{***} > v$), but I disregard this.

Icelandic psych predicates commonly take a nominative or a dative subject, whereas psych accusatives are relatively rare (Jónsson 2003). If psych predicates in general are embedded under Voice_{PSYCH}, we can interpret this fact as a tendency to avoid combining v^* (yielding ACC) with Voice_{PSYCH}.²³ This understanding gains support from the much discussed fact that psych accusatives tend to get replaced by psych datives in colloquial Icelandic ('Dative Sickness', see Eythórsson 2000, Thráinsson 2007:224 and the references there).

Fate accusatives have a get-passive fate reading of a sort, typical of predicates like *drift*, *swamp*, *get swept overboard*, etc. Most fate (un)accusative predicates have transitive and passive counterparts, as illustrated for *fylla* 'fill; swamp' in (33):

Transitive, passive, fate unaccusative triples

- | | | | |
|---------|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| (33) a. | Hún fyllti bátinn .
she filled boat.the.ACC
'She filled the boat (with some cargo).' | Transitive: | Nom- Acc_i |
| b. | Báturinn var fylltur.
boat.the.NOM was filled
'The boat was filled (with some cargo).' | Passive: | Nom_i |
| c. | Bátinn fyllti.
boat.the.ACC filled
'The boat swamped.' | (Un)accusative: | Acc_i |

The fate reading of fate unaccusative predicates is never shared by the 'same' predicate when either transitive or passive (cf. Ottósson 1988:147f). Thus, as seen in (33), the verb *fylla* and its passive participle *fyllt*- usually means simply 'fill' and 'filled', whereas it means 'swamp' when it is used as a fate (un)accusative verb. In all cases of this sort, the transitive and passive versions have much the same general, broad semantics as in English (and other related languages), whereas the fate (un)accusative version has a narrow, semi-idiomatic fate reading, absent from the transitive and the passive (Sigurðsson (2006:25).

The fate reading is (obviously) incompatible with agentivity. This fact is accommodated if Voice heads are in a complementary distribution, thus mutually exclusive, and if fate (un)accusative vPs are selected by Voice_{FATE}, hence inconsistent with e.g. active agentive Voice and passive agentive Voice, Voice_{ACT/+AG} and Voice_{PASS/+AG}. If so, many Voice_{FATE} (and Voice_{PSYCH}) heads in standard Icelandic differ from Voice_{PASS/+AG} and Voice_{EXPL} in not triggering any case-star deletion.²⁴ If this approach is on the right track, the logical conclusion

²³ There does not seem to be any deep reason behind this tendency; rather, it is a matter of language and construction specific ('parameterized') division of labor between the cases.

²⁴ Some unaccusative fate predicates undergo case-star deletion in standard Icelandic (thus taking a NOM subject, cf. Sigurðsson 2009a, n. 25), and, as mentioned above, the same applies to many unaccusative psych predicates. I will not discuss the 'irregularity' that arises from this variation, thereby simplifying the presentation of the

is that Voice_{PASS+AG} in the New Passive variety is like many Voice_{FATE} (and some Voice_{PSYCH}) heads in standard Icelandic in not triggering single case-star deletion, thereby ‘releasing’ ACC (which, however, undergoes A-movement in the fate and psych unaccusative constructions, as opposed to the New Passive, see below).

Associating the passive with a get-passive fate reading is natural: In both passive and fate (un)accusative predicates, a theme argument is not in control of the ongoing event or process. ‘Being an undergoer’ is thus a semantic factor which the ACC arguments in both types of predicates have in common. Nevertheless, fate accusatives often give way to NOM in colloquial Icelandic (see Eythórsson 2000), a tendency sometimes referred to as ‘Nominative Sickness’, NS. This change is thus orthogonal to the New Passive, going in the opposite direction. However, at least some (perhaps most) New Passive speakers are also ‘Nominative Sickness’ speakers, call them NewP/NS speakers. For these speakers, Voice_{EXPL} and Voice_{FATE} heads trigger single case-star deletion, as opposed to Voice_{ACT/+AG} and Voice_{PASS+AG}. The picture that emerges for speakers of standard Icelandic and for consistent NewP/NS speakers is thus the one sketched in (34).²⁵

(34) *Predicate types and case-star deletion*

		<i>Standard Ice</i>	<i>NewP/NS</i>
a.	Voice _{ACT/+AG} : agentive transitives	No deletion <i>we hit them.ACC</i>	No deletion <i>we hit them.ACC</i>
b.	Voice _{PASS/+AG} : agentive passives	$v^* > v$ (NOM) <i>they.NOM were hit</i>	No deletion <i>(it) was hit them.ACC</i>
c.	Voice _{FATE} : fate (un)accusatives	Often no deletion <i>them.ACC drifted</i>	$v^* > v$ (NOM) <i>they.NOM drifted</i>
d.	Voice _{EXPL} :	General deletion	General deletion
	anticausatives	<i>they.NOM closed-ST</i>	<i>they.NOM closed-ST</i>
	most unaccusatives	<i>they.NOM appeared</i>	<i>they.NOM appeared</i>
	stative passives	<i>they.NOM were broken</i>	<i>they.NOM were broken</i>

Many NS speakers are not NewP speakers, whereas I have not yet encountered or observed any NewP speakers that are not also NS speakers. The overlapping or covariation of these phenomena remains to be systematically investigated, though.

facts. Certain variation in case-marking (stemming from variation in case-star deletion) is seen throughout the history of Icelandic (and many other well-studied case languages).

²⁵ As indicated in (34d), regular unaccusatives take a NOM subject. This extends to certain (inflectionally) strong-weak pairs, where the unaccusative strong verb takes a NOM subject that corresponds to a DAT object of the transitive weak verb (type: ‘the ship.NOM sank[strong]’ vs. ‘they sank[weak] the ship.DAT’). However, there are also a number of unaccusatives that take a DAT subject. See further Zaenen & Maling (1984), Sigurðsson (1989, ch. 6.2) and Thráinsson (2007:298ff). The question of why such unaccusatives escape case-star deletion will not be discussed here.

By extending the case-star notation of Chomsky (2001), I have here developed a framework within which case variation can be analyzed and generalized over. There can be no question that the notation is useful, as suggested by the fact that it enables a coherent analysis of the New Passive in relation to other major case alternation phenomena, including:

- ACC-NOM conversion in the standard, dynamic passive
- ACC-NOM and DAT-NOM conversion in stative passives (in all varieties)
- ACC-NOM and DAT-NOM conversion in anticausatives and unaccusatives (in all varieties)
- ACC-preservation in many fate and psych (un)accusative constructions
vs. ‘NOM-sickness’

The analysis also highlights the fact that all the ‘ingredients’ of the New Passive are already there, in the standard language. One only needs to identify the relevant factors and realize that they interact in a slightly different manner in the New Passive variety than in the standard language, a typical minimalist endeavour (see further section 5).

Notation is not explanatory in itself. Linking case-star deletion to Voice and analyzing different case-star deletion processes as related phenomena is explanatory, but the case-star notation as such is not (not any more than traditional case labels, ACC, DAT, etc.). However, it raises the intriguing question of whether there is some ‘internal logic’ to it, for instance such that double case-star deletion (DAT > NOM) comes about in two separate single case-star deletions (DAT > ACC and then ACC > NOM). Another interesting issue is whether accusative predicative case (type *It is her*) in languages like English and the above mentioned DAT-NOM > DAT-ACC shift in Faroese can be analyzed in a (partly) parallel fashion as the New Passive, that is, as involving ‘lacking’ case-star deletion. A related question, is whether NOM-NOM constructions in languages like Turkish, Tamil and Japanese (see e.g. Enç 1991, Lehman 1993, Heycock & Doron 2003) can be conversely analyzed, as involving case-star deletion. Yet another question, raised by a reviewer, is whether there are any case-star adding processes – antipassives might be a case in point. I leave these and many related issues aside here. They are interesting, but beyond the scope of the present study.

5. On A-movement and phasehood

English differs from Icelandic in not having any inherent morphological cases, of course. However, if preposition ‘assignment’, *P-assignment*, is taken to be related to inherent case assignment by v^{**} , the English passive may perhaps be understood as involving general case-star deletion (leaving P itself intact), yielding both regular eventive passives (in the case of a single case-star deletion) and NOM pseudo passives like *She was much talked about*. Icelandic

has no eventive pseudo passives (cf. Maling & Zaenen 1985), whereas it has stative pseudo passives, where the preposition is incorporated into the participle.²⁶ These facts are illustrated in (35); the adverbial *þá* ‘then’ occupies Spec,CP, the canonical subject position thus being post-verbal (the V2-effect):

(35) *Impersonal P-passives vs. pseudo passives*

- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------------|
| a. | Þá var oft talað um Ólaf . | Eventive P-passive |
| | then was often talked about Olaf.A | |
| | ‘People then often talked about Olaf.’ | |
| b. | * Þá var Ólafur oft talaður um. | * Eventive NOM pseudo passive |
| | then was Olaf.N often talked about | |
| c. | * Þá var Ólaf oft talað um. | * Eventive ACC pseudo passive |
| | then was Olaf.A often talked about | |
| d. | Þá var Ólafur oft <u>um</u> talaður. | Stative NOM pseudo passive |
| | then was Olaf.N often about-talked | (with P-incorporation) |
| | ‘Then, Olaf was often a talked about person.’ | |

P-assignment does not always have any clear semantic correlates. Regardless of whether it has any such correlates or not, it has structural effects. The clearest effect in a language like Icelandic is that P-assignment exempts an NP from A-movement, hence also from the Definiteness Effect, **DE**, as illustrated in (36):²⁷

(36) *P-objects are exempted from A-movement/DE*

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------|
| a. | Þess vegna voru þeir kallaðir ____ | í viðtal. |
| | that for were they called | in interview |
| | ‘Therefore, they were called for an interview.’ | |
| b. | * Þess vegna voru ____ kallaðir þeir | í viðtal. |
| | that for were called they | in interview |
| c. | Þess vegna voru ____ kallaðir tveir umsækjendur | í viðtal. |
| | that for were called two applicants.N | in interview |
| | ‘Therefore, two applicants were called for an interview.’ | |
| d. | * Þess vegna var þá kallað <u>á</u> ____ | í viðtal. |
| | that for was them.A called on | in interview |
| e. | Þess vegna var ____ kallað <u>á</u> þá | í viðtal. |

²⁶ However, the formation of pseudo-passive participles is lexically restricted, available for only some V+P combinations.

²⁷ *Kallaðir* is the N.M.SG form of the participle (agreeing with a NOM subject), whereas *kallað* is its default N.SG form.

that for was called on them.A in interview
 ‘Therefore, they were called for an interview.’

A pronominal subject has to raise from the V-object position, as illustrated by the contrast between (36a) and (36b), whereas the indefinite subject in (36c) may show up as a complement of V. P-object NPs, on the other hand, are blocked from undergoing A-movement, as seen in (36d, e) (and (35b,c) above), and this holds true regardless of the definiteness of such NPs.²⁸

In contrast, inherent case-assignment does not exempt NPs from A-movement/DE, quirky subjects behaving much like nominative subjects with respect to A-movement, a well-known and a widely discussed fact (see Sigurðsson 1989, among many):

(37) *Inherent case does not exempt NPs from A-movement/DE*

- a. Þess vegna var þeim hjálpað.
 that for was.DFT them.D helped.DFT
 ‘Therefore, they were helped.’
- b. *Þess vegna var hjálpað þeim.
 that for was.DFT helped.DFT them.D

These facts pertain to standard Icelandic, whereas (37b) is grammatical in the New Passive variety. Interestingly, the facts in (36) also hold for NewP speakers. That is, all speakers of Icelandic, including all NewP speakers, accept the canonical NOM passive in examples like (36a) (M&S, p. 114), whereas examples like (36b), with a non-raised pronominal passive NOM subject are unattested in all known varieties of Icelandic. The same is true of other types of predicates that take a NOM subject, as partly shown in (25) above, and further illustrated in (38) for raising predicates, as in (38a), and regular unaccusatives, as in (38b):

(38) *NOM subjects are never exempted from A-movement/DE*

- a. **Hún** virtist lesa. / *Það virtist **hún** lesa.
 she.N seemed read / it seemed she read
- b. **Hún** hafði horfið. / *Það hafði horfið **hún**.
 she.N had disappeared / it had disappeared she.N

²⁸ The interaction of person, definiteness, quantification, heaviness and context in A-movement constructions is quite complex in Icelandic (see Thráinsson 2007:313ff). As mentioned in fn. 3, however, A-movement is always obligatory if the subject NP is a personal pronoun and commonly obligatory for other definite subject NPs (although there are some context-dependent exceptions from definite full NP-movement, as opposed to pronominal NP-movement).

It is thus *not* the case that DE is absent in the New Passive variety (as also pointed out by M&S). Instead, the generalizations that emerge are as stated in (39):

(39) <i>A-movement/DE in standard Icelandic and in the New Passive variety</i>		
	<i>Standard Ice</i>	<i>NewP speakers</i>
a. defective <i>v</i> predicates (NOM)	DE	DE
b. quirky predicates ²⁹	DE	DE
c. passive <i>v</i> *-predicates (ACC)	—	no A-movement
d. passive <i>v</i> ** -predicates (DAT)	DE	no A-movement
e. P-predicates	no A-movement	no A-movement

In other words, A-movement out of both P-predicates and passive *v**-predicates is blocked in the NewP variety, whereas it is only blocked out of P-predicates in standard Icelandic. One could thus say that passive *v**-predicates are A-movement barriers in only the NewP variety.

The facts summarized in (39) may seem puzzling, but they illustrate that predicates are variably strong islands with respect to A-movement. A-islands of this sort have commonly been accounted for in terms of case (Chomsky 1981 and much related work), that is to say, differently than A'-islands. However, the absence of A-movement in (39e) in standard Icelandic and in (39c, d, e) in the New Passive variety cannot be analyzed as a case ‘freezing’ or grounding effect, as all varieties of Icelandic have some quirky subjects, that is, all varieties apply A-movement to some case-marked NPs. A non-case based analysis is thus called for. Below, I will suggest an approach where A-islands are analyzed in a parallel fashion as A'-islands, in terms of minimality.

In mainstream minimalism as developed in Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2008), C and *v** are phase heads, as opposed to T and defective *v*. It does not seem very likely, though, that grammar contains some heads that can be fruitfully thought of or defined as a ‘100% phase head’ or a ‘0% phase head’. Rather, phasehood is a relative phenomenon, phase boundaries thus being variably strong.³⁰ CPs are ‘fuller’ or stronger phases than vPs, non-finite CPs are commonly weaker phases than finite CPs, and subjunctive CPs, in turn, are usually weaker as phases than indicative CPs, subjunctives for instance allowing ‘tense spreading’ (sequence of tenses), in violation of any non-relativized understanding of phases (and in violation of the Phase Impenetrability Condition, PIC, cf. Chomsky 2008). Without going into further details here, I contend that also vP phases are variably strong, and that (V-selected) prepositions

²⁹ E.g. psych accusative predicates and dative-taking experiencer predicates like *leiðast* ‘find boring’.

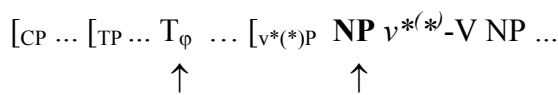
³⁰ Suggesting that spell-out sometimes must be delayed beyond vP- and CP-boundaries, thus applying to variably sized ‘chunks’. I will not discuss this any further here, though.

generally strengthen vPs as phases. The reason why that is so, I hypothesize, is that prepositions come with a ϕ -variable that may act as a ϕ -intervener.

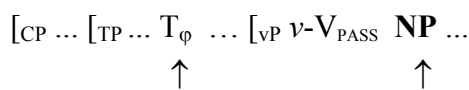
Plausibly, a phase contains ‘freezing’ or grounding (EPP type) left edge A-features.³¹ Such features of the C-system are analyzed as context-linking features in Sigurðsson (2009b) and related work, that is to say, as features that are matched by features of the T-system, thereby linking both temporal and pronominal TP-internal elements to the linguistic context of the CP-phase, thus controlling pronominal/temporal reference. Voice is lower in the T-system than ‘plain’ T itself, but the system also contains higher ϕ -heads (above ‘plain’ T) that must be matched by the subject as well. The most important of these is the Person head, **Pn** (see Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2008 and also e.g. Rezac 2008, Rizzi 2008).³² For simplicity, however, I will not distinguish between Pn and the other ϕ -heads, referring to them jointly as **T ϕ** .³³

Subjecthood (A-priority) is decided by matching of T ϕ under minimality. That is, T ϕ probes its c-commanding domain, entering an Agree relation with the closest possible ϕ -bundle, canonically an overt NP. In transitive constructions, the NP in Spec,vP is the closest candidate, thus winding up as the subject. In passive and other defective constructions, the V-object NP is closest. This is sketched in (40) and (41).³⁴

(40) *T ϕ -probing in transitive constructions*



(41) *T ϕ -probing in (NOM) passive constructions*



Subsequently, NOM or ‘null case’ subjects may trigger finite verb agreement in morphology.

Like T ϕ -probing, subsequent A-movement is subject to minimality, targeting the closest possible candidate for raising into the vicinity of T ϕ . Evidently, however, prepositions (in Icelandic) ‘protect’ or block NPs from being A-moved, both in impersonal active constructions, like (42a), and in impersonal P-passives, like (42b).

³¹ In addition to A'-features, more widely studied and better understood.

³² That is to say, subject person. I will not discuss object person here.

³³ Pn and Nr (number) are separate probes (Sigurðsson & Holmberg 2009), but I put this aside here.

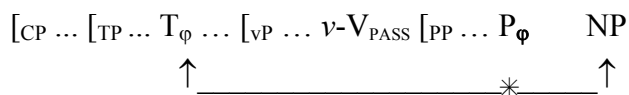
³⁴ Voice is present and active in the structures below, but, as it is not directly relevant in relation to the issues under discussion, it is not shown, for simplicity (the same applies to many other categories).

(42) *Prepositions ‘ground’ NPs (in Icelandic)*

- a. Nú slokknar á báðum kertunum.
 now goes-out.3SG on both candles.the.D
 ‘Now, both the candles go out.’
- b. Þess vegna var ekki talað við þá.
 that for was.3SG not talked with them.A
 ‘Therefore, people did not talk to them.’

T_ϕ -probing must thus be analyzed as never accessing P-objects in Icelandic eventive constructions (as opposed to stative passives).

Svenonius (e.g. 1996, 2007) has suggested that the extended projection of P includes a *p* head that takes part in argument licensing (on a par with *v* in *v*Ps). Suppose that *p* is a ϕ -variable (triggering overt P-agreement in languages like Irish). If so, a PP (or a *p*P) like *on the table* has, roughly, the structure [_{PP} on _{ϕ} the table], the clause *Mary sits on the table* having the control structure [_{Mary_i} sits [_{on _{ϕ -i}} the table]]. Given this, we can analyze the fact that T_ϕ never ‘reaches’ P-objects in Icelandic passives (type ‘*then was talked with him*’), as sketched in (43); for simplicity, I refer to the *p*-P complex as P:

(43) *T_ϕ cannot access P-objects in eventive passives (in Icelandic)*

It is perhaps not immediately obvious why this is the case – it does not extend to English, as evidenced by pseudo passives (nor does it extend to stative passives in Icelandic, a fact I will address shortly). Notice also that it is an A-phenomenon, not extending to A'-movement in Icelandic (i.e., *wh*-movement and topicalization commonly strand prepositions in Icelandic).

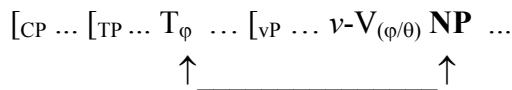
What seems to be going on here is this: As we have seen, expletive nulls are pervasively active in Icelandic grammar (see also Sigurðsson 1989, Thráinsson 2007:309ff, Sigurðsson & Egerland 2009), whereas English spells its expletives out as *it* or *there*. This very characteristic difference between the languages can be analysed in terms of ϕ -visibility: Expletive null ϕ -bundles are ϕ -visible in Icelandic (actively 3 person singular neuter) but ϕ -invisible in English. It follows that P_ϕ in (43) is the closest candidate for T_ϕ -probing, hence intervening between T_ϕ and the P-object. In English, on the other hand, only overt NPs are ϕ -visible, hence T_ϕ goes for the P-object, not ‘seeing’ the silent ϕ -bundle on P as an intervener.³⁵

³⁵ In a way, then, $v\text{-V}+p\text{-P}$ can be thought of as sometimes building a ϕ -barrier in a similar manner as C+I in the barrier approach of Chomsky (1986). I will not go into further analytical details here, though.

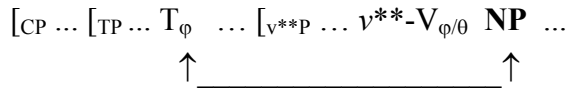
Following Jaeggli (1986) and much related work, I assume that passive morphology *is* the passivized subject, a bundle of θ and expletive ϕ -features, incorporated into the lexical V: V_{PASS} or $V_{\phi/\theta}$. Evidently, the passivized subject thereby becomes invisible to T_ϕ -probing, thus not blocking a matching relation between T_ϕ and a vP-internal NP.³⁶ The prepositional incorporation seen in stative pseudo passives like (35d) above seems to render the expletive ϕ -features of the incorporated P_ϕ invisible to T_ϕ -probing in a parallel fashion.

As stated in (39) above, A-movement applies out of defective v -predicates and quirky $v^{(*)}$ -predicates in both standard Icelandic and the New Passive variety, whereas it applies out of passive v^{**} -predicates in standard Icelandic but not out of passive $v^{(*)}$ -predicates in the New Passive variety. It would thus seem that (only) passive $v^{(*)}$ -predicates in the New Passive variety have some intervening property X that blocks T_ϕ from probing the V-object, that property being absent in defective v -predicates and quirky $v^{(*)}$ -predicates and also in standard Icelandic passive v^{**} -predicates. Assume that passive morphology incorporates only the external θ -role and not the expletive subject ϕ -features in passive $v^{(*)}$ -predicates in the New Passive variety. If so, the central differences between the two varieties can be analyzed as sketched in (44)-(46):

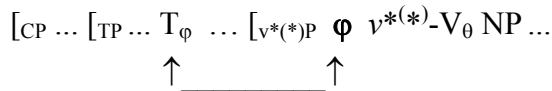
(44) *T_ϕ -probing in (passive and non-passive) defective NOM constructions (in both varieties)*



(45) *T_ϕ -probing in standard quirky passive constructions*



(46) *T_ϕ -probing in the New Passive*



In a sense, then, the New Passive is an unusually ‘active passive’, having a non-incorporated subject ϕ -bundle. However, as we have seen, the bundle does not seem to raise out of vP (or else we would expect it to e.g. control secondary predicate agreement, in examples like (15a) above). Notice also that T_ϕ -probing of expletive ϕ in the New Passive should yield 3SG verbal agreement in morphology, a prediction that is born out, as we have seen.

³⁶ The expletive features are also invisible to participle agreement.

In sum, it would seem that speakers of the New Passive have reanalyzed many passive vPs as being strong vP phases. That is, speakers of this variety of Icelandic interpret not only P-predicates but also many passive vPs as containing phase edge features that are sufficiently strong or visible to successfully match T_ϕ , thereby exempting or ‘protecting’ V-complements from entering a matching relation with T_ϕ , hence also blocking them from raising into the vicinity of T_ϕ (Spec,TP) – in contrast to subjects of quirky predicates, in both standard Icelandic and the New Passive variety. The New Passive is thus closely related to the highly frequent and productive impersonal P-passive (as suggested by Kjartansson 1991, cf. also Thráinsson 2005:569ff).

The T-system enters a special relation with the subject of the finite clause. The relation in question is commonly referred to as abstract ‘Case’ (cf. the ‘nexus’ notion in Jespersen 1924), but it is at least twofold, involving both Voice and T_ϕ (most importantly the Pn feature of the T_ϕ -complex).³⁷ In tandem with little v , Voice licenses the subject’s θ -role (its introduction and T-linking), and it often alters the case licensing properties of v , thereby affecting the subject’s case. T_ϕ in turn, licenses the subject’s ϕ -features in relation to the linguistic context (via silent edge features in the C-system). In addition, it commonly triggers A-movement into the vicinity of T_ϕ (Sigurðsson 2009a, 2009b and related work). It would thus seem that NPs enter syntax with layers of active or unvalued feature variables (α case, β person, etc.) that need to be valued in order for the NP to get fully licensed (cf. related ideas in e.g. Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002, Caha 2007). One way of thinking of NP-structure and NP-licensing is to assume that the highest NP-features are valued and thereby inactivated or ‘peeled off’ first or lowest in the clausal structure, the second highest NP-features being valued second lowest, and so on. If so, unvalued case is among the highest feature-variables in NP-structure, valued by v -features, whereas ϕ -variables are lower in NP-structure but valued higher in clausal structure, by T-features. I will not pursue these ideas here, though. What matters for our purposes is that an intervening ϕ -bundle at the vP phase edge blocks non-raised V-objects in the New Passive from matching T_ϕ , much as P_ϕ blocks (Icelandic) P-objects from doing so, and much as subjects also block objects from doing so in regular transitive constructions.

On the approach pursued here, thus, A-islands are accounted for in a parallel manner as A'-islands, in terms of relativized feature minimality.

³⁷ In contrast, it is not clear whether or how the tense feature of the T-system (‘plain’ T itself) is active in the nexus relation with the subject (a moot issue that I will not try to sort out here).

6. Conclusion

The New Passive has two properties that are not otherwise found in passives in Icelandic, or most other related languages: It has no A-movement (blocked by ϕ -intervention at the vP edge) and no case-star deletion (hence no ACC-to-NOM conversion). These exceptional properties have commonly been taken to be interrelated (an assumption shared by e.g. M&S and Eythórsson 2008). In the approach pursued here, however, they are independent of each other. Thus, many fate and some psych accusatives are exempted from ACC-to-NOM conversion in standard Icelandic, whereas they are subject to regular (unaccusative) A-movement, yielding ACC subjects. The fact that all varieties of Icelandic have DAT subjects further illustrates that A-movement is generally independent of case-marking. In addition, case-star deletion vs. the absence thereof is a general phenomenon, by no means limited to passive constructions.

This result is representative of much recent minimalist research into the nature of language variation. Complex surface patterns arise as a result of the interplay of a limited number of independent ‘small’ variables, such as *+/-case-star deletion* and *+/- ϕ -intervention*, in relation to a set of grammatical categories and processes, such as different Voice-type heads and θ/ϕ -incorporation into V. It seems unlikely, though, that these and other similar variables that are active in the grammars of individual languages are biologically wired in ‘ready-for-use’ parameters, stored in Universal Grammar (cf. the discussion in Chomsky 2005 and in e.g. Berwick & Chomsky 2008).

As discussed by M&S some other languages, including Polish and Ukrainian, have constructions that are similar to the Icelandic New Passive in some respects but also different from it (and from each other) in some other regards. It seems that *+/-case-star deletion* and *+/- ϕ -intervention* are at play in the Polish and Ukrainian constructions, but scrutinizing how exactly these factors interact with each other and with other variables in these languages (such as absent definiteness marking) would require detailed research that is beyond the scope of this article. Hopefully, future research will unearth more knowledge and deeper understanding of the factors at play in the various passive types across a substantial number of the world’s languages. In the meanwhile, it seems safe to conclude that the Icelandic New Passive is not an alien but a member of the passive family, albeit a somewhat odd one.

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