

# V1 declaratives and verb-raising in Icelandic

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PROLOGUE. This article was published 1990 in *Modern Icelandic Syntax*, Syntax and Semantics 24, ed. by Joan Maling and Annie Zaenen, 41–69. San Diego, Academic Press. Some minor editing revisions (but no content changes) have been made. The article was largely based on a thesis written in Icelandic in 1983 (*Um frásagnarumröðun og grundvallarorðaröð í forníslensku* ‘On Narrative Inversion and Basic Word Order in Old Icelandic’), published 1994 by Institute of Linguistics, Reykjavik (179 pages). Due to the Icelandic parsed historical corpus (IcePaHC), there is a recent upsurge of interest in Icelandic historical syntax, so I decided to put some work into making this old article electronically accessible.

Electronic corpora are rapidly changing the landscape of linguistics. Often, of course, for the better, but there are also some pitfalls on the new highways. Inevitably, and understandably, IcePaHC contains some errors; for example, it tags some instances of topic drop and of nonreferential *pro* as referential *pro* (see Sigurðsson 2018, n. 5; ‘Topicality in Icelandic: Null arguments and Narrative Inversion’, accessible on Lingbuzz). V1 declaratives are another tricky area; as I show in this article, subtypes of such declaratives must be distinguished, largely depending on subject topicality, and it is not easy to detect this without careful reading of the texts. Another important issue is that V1 declaratives are genre related in both Old and Modern Icelandic; when comparing the frequency and use of such declaratives in different historical periods, it is crucial that one compare comparable texts. Nothing replaces them.

## 1 Introduction\*

In this article, I describe and discuss some aspects of a rather peculiar word order type in Icelandic, verb-initial (V1) declaratives, as in (1):

- (1) Kom Ólafur seint heim.  
came Olaf late home  
‘Olaf came home late.’

With the exception of Yiddish, V1 declaratives are not found in other (standard) Germanic languages.<sup>1</sup>

The present article has both a descriptive and an analytic aim. Icelandic is a straightforward SVO language with the well-known Germanic verb-second (V2) property. The option of having verb-initial order in declarative clauses in such a language is of general typological interest. Therefore, I present a broad description of the phenomenon.

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\*This article grew out of a paper presented at the Third Workshop on Scandinavian Syntax and Theory of Grammar, Copenhagen 1984, and an intermediate version published 1985 in *Working Papers in Scandinavian Syntax*. For comments on earlier versions and fruitful discussions, I am grateful to Elisabet Engdahl, Anders Holmberg, Joan Maling, Christer Platzack, Ellen Prince, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, Höskuldur Thráinsson, and Annie Zaenen.

<sup>1</sup>But V1 declaratives seem to have been a rather general trait of Old Germanic languages (see, e.g., Alving 1916). Occasionally, it is also found in (*og*- ‘and’ clauses in) Faroese, and in dialects of modern Continental Germanic (see, e.g., Holm 1967: 96; Lie 1976: 34 f.; Dahlbäck and Vamling 1983).

The second purpose of this article is to account coherently for the fact that one subtype of declarative V1 in Icelandic, the so-called Narrative Inversion (henceforth NI), exemplified in (1) above, is confined to main clauses. The same is true of NI in Yiddish.<sup>2</sup> This aspect of declarative V1 is particularly interesting since Icelandic, like Yiddish, does not obviously have any other clear-cut root phenomena in declarative clauses (see Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson 1990).

NI-clauses have a topical subject. Other V1 declaratives either have an overt nontopical subject or no overt subject, cf. (2) and (3):<sup>3</sup>

- (2) Höfðu því komið margir gestir um nóttina.  
 had thus come many guests in the night  
 ‘Thus, many guests had arrived in the night.’

- (3) Var oft komið seint heim.  
 was often come late home  
 ‘People/We (etc.) came often home late.’

As opposed to NI, these types are not confined to main clauses. Note that the VXS order in (2) is very typical of nontopical subjects, whereas NI-clauses normally have VS order. I discuss this in section 3.3.

The central analytic claim of this article is that NI-clauses essentially involve double verb-raising, verb-to-INFL (V-to-I) and INFL-to-COMP (I-to-C), as V1 and V2 phenomena in Germanic languages generally seem to involve. In contrast, other V1 declaratives can be derived by single verb-raising (V-to-I) and nonlexicalization of the subject position (Icelandic having nonreferential subject *pro*). As we shall see, this contrast accounts for the root versus nonroot behavior of the declarative V1 types.

I proceed as follows: Section 2 briefly sketches how V1 declaratives relate to the

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<sup>2</sup>This was pointed out to me by Ellen Prince (in comments on an earlier version of this paper). See also Diesing (1987). NI seems to be the only type of V1 declaratives in Yiddish.

<sup>3</sup>As is well known (cf. Maling and Zaenen 1978; Zaenen 1983, 1985), subject-extraction applies extremely freely in Icelandic complement clauses, yielding subordinate V1 orders like (i) and (ii), for instance:

- (i) Hver<sub>i</sub> heldur þú að Ólafur segi [að t<sub>i</sub> komi á morgun].  
 who think you that Olaf says that comes tomorrow
- (ii) Maðurinn<sub>i</sub> sem<sub>i</sub> Ólafur segir [að t<sub>i</sub> komi á morgun] ...  
 man-the who Olaf says that comes tomorrow

Since verb-initial order cannot, of course, be derived this way in main clauses, I am not concerned here with this type (thus, I never refer to it by the labels “V1 declaratives” and “declarative V1”). Verb-initial orders that are due to topic drop (Sigurðsson 1989, Ch. 5.2) are not taken into account either.

Germanic verb-second phenomenon and to normal subject-initial order in Icelandic. In section 3, I describe the status of declarative V1 in Icelandic, that is, its somewhat special functional properties, its frequency and textual distribution, and its typological status in comparison with other declarative word order types. Section 4 presents evidence that NI is a root phenomenon, whereas other V1 declaratives are found in subordinate as well as main clauses. In section 5, I argue that this asymmetric distribution of the V1 types can be accounted for if NI crucially involves I-to-C. In section 6, I consider whether this analysis should be extended to V2 main clauses in Icelandic, suggesting that normal subject-initial main clause declaratives do not apply I-to-C. Finally, section 7 reflects on the question why NI is found in Icelandic and Yiddish as opposed to other (standard) Germanic languages.

## 2 Germanic V2 and declarative V1

As is well known, main clauses that are not subject-initial normally have the word order properties summarized in (4) below in Germanic V2 languages, where “XP” stands for any phrasal category ([+WH] in constituent questions), “V” denotes the finite verb, and “S” is an overt subject:

- |     |    |   |    |   |   |
|-----|----|---|----|---|---|
| (4) | a. | Declaratives and constituent-questions: | XP | V | S |
|     | b. | Yes/no-questions and imperatives:       |    | V | S |

This is Germanic V2. Its crucial characteristic is the presubject position of the finite verb, traditionally known as subject-verb inversion.

Within GB, a widely adopted analysis of Germanic V2 is the double verb-raising approach outlined in Chomsky (1986a: 28, 68 ff.).<sup>4</sup> It involves two basic assumptions: (1) the sentence-initial XP-position is the landing site of operators (fronted by WH-movement or declarative preposing) and (2) the finite verb undergoes verb-raising in all finite clauses. In normal subordinate clauses, it only moves once, from VP to INFL, where it amalgamates with the inflectional features of INFL. Thus, V-to-I replaces the traditional affix hopping.<sup>5</sup> In main clauses, in contrast, the finite verb acquires its first or second position by moving again, by I-to-C. In the X-bar theory pursued by Chomsky (1986a), then, a V2 main clause such as (5) below has roughly the S-structure sketched in (6). Basically, the same analysis applies to V2 phenomena in English; for expository purposes, I distinguish between verb traces (“v”) and other

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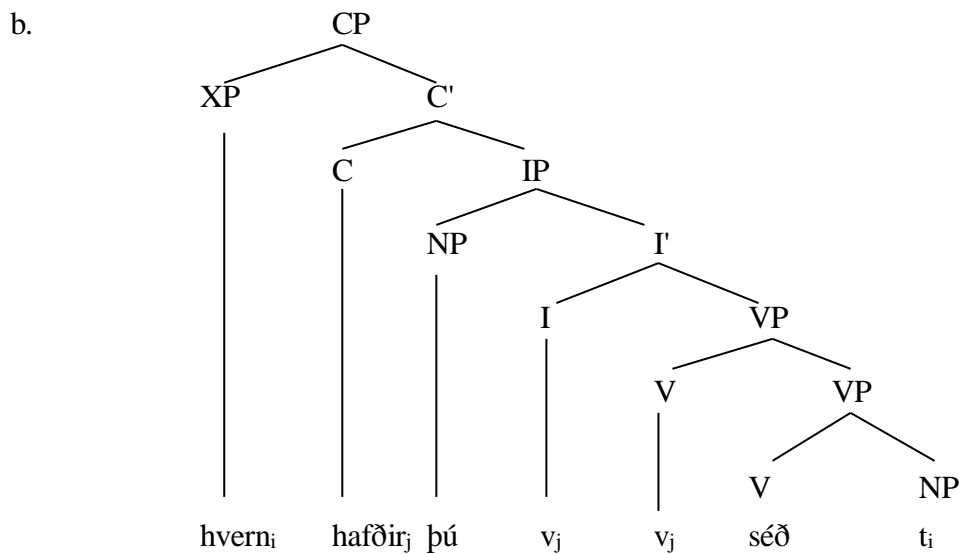
<sup>4</sup>This approach has been developed by many linguists, for example Bierwisch (1963: 111), Koster (1975), den Besten (1977, 1983), Holmberg (1983, 1986), Platzack (1983a, 1986), and Travis (1984).

<sup>5</sup>For English clauses with no auxiliary or modal, though, a process of the Affix Hopping-type is reintroduced in Chomsky (1988), the illicit trace of INFL/AGR being remedied by a subsequent LF raising of the finite verb-complex.

traces (“t”):

- (5) Hvern hafðir þú séð?  
 whom had you seen  
 ‘Whom had you seen?’

- (6) a. [CP hvern<sub>i</sub> [C' hafðir<sub>j</sub> [IP þú [I' v<sub>j</sub> [VP v<sub>j</sub> [VP séð t<sub>i</sub> ]]]]]]  
           whom      had      you                                seen



The initial XP-position is [SPEC, CP], and the subject position is [SPEC, IP]. C(OMP) and I(NFL) are the heads of the clausal categories CP (=S'/S") and IP (=S), respectively. For further details, see Chomsky (1986a).

Subject-initial main-clause declaratives in Germanic V2 languages are often taken to involve I-to-C and lexicalization of the XP-position by subject preposing. This is pursued for Icelandic in, for example, Platzack (1983a, 1986), Holmberg (1986), and Sigurðsson (1986). However, while this analysis is plausible for German and Dutch and should arguably be extended to the mainland Scandinavian languages (see Holmberg 1986: 108 ff.), there is little evidence that it applies to Icelandic (or Yiddish) (see Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson 1990). Adapting Travis's (1984: 114 ff.) analysis of Yiddish to Icelandic, I therefore assume that Icelandic SV main clause declaratives normally involve neither I-to-C nor XP-movement. If that is correct, Icelandic main clauses may either be CPs or bare IPs.

Icelandic usually strictly observes Germanic V2.<sup>6</sup> Compare (7) and (8) to the description in

<sup>6</sup>In all Scandinavian languages, however, there are some exceptions to V2 in main clauses; compare Icelandic in (ia) and Swedish in (ib):

- (i) a. Hann bara hló að mér.

(4) above:

- (7) a. Þá **fór** hann til Íslands.  
then went he to Iceland  
'Then he went to Iceland.'
- b. Hvert **fór** hann þá?  
where went he then  
'Where did he then go?'
- c. **Fór** hann þá til Íslands?  
went he then to Iceland  
'Did he then go to Iceland?'
- (8) a. \*Þá hann **fór** til Íslands.  
then he went to Iceland
- b. \*Hvert þá **fór** hann?  
where then went he

In the light of this, the option of having verb-initial order in Icelandic main clause declaratives is perhaps somewhat surprising. However, such clauses do not obviously constitute any immediate problem for the double verb-raising approach to Germanic V2. Plausibly, their V1 order is derived in a similar manner as V1 order in questions and commands, that is, by not lexicalizing the clause-initial specifier position (see, e.g., Platzack 1985). In CPs with a verbal COMP, the position in question is [SPEC, CP] (the initial XP-position), but in IPs, it is [SPEC, IP], that is, the subject position. In section 5, I suggest that NI-clauses are crucially CPs with a verbal COMP, derived by I-to-C and nonlexicalization of [SPEC, CP], whereas other V1 declaratives can be derived simply by not lexicalizing the subject position.

### 3 The status of declarative V1 in Icelandic

#### 3.1 Functional preliminaries

V1 in declarative main clauses in Icelandic, especially Old Icelandic, has been widely discussed

- 
- he just laughed at me  
'He just laughed at me.'
- b. Han bara skrattade át mig.  
he just laughed at me

For discussion of this colloquial type in Icelandic, see Thráinsson (1986) and Sigurðsson (1986).

in Scandinavian linguistics for a long time.<sup>7</sup> There is general agreement in the extensive literature on the construction that it has a special functional or stylistic flavor. In addition, it is largely confined to certain literary genres (Sigurðsson 1983). Some necessary background information on these aspects follows.

As the label would seem to indicate, NI (involving a topical subject) is more typical of narrations than other V1 declaratives. However, this is perhaps only a reflection of the fact that topical subjects are typical of most narratives. Declarative V1 orders in main clauses are, in general, prompted by strong discourse cohesion (or continuity, see Kossuth 1981). Accordingly, they cannot initiate the discourse and are most common in particularly cohesive texts, such as modern memoirs of various sorts, narrative letters and diaries, some argumentative texts, many folktales, and most of the Old Icelandic sagas.

Without detailing the functional semantics of declarative V1, we can note that *discourse cohesion* is a rather unspecific and broad term. It seems to involve various factors, such as presupposition, maintained situation, consequence, explanation, and even cause.<sup>8</sup> For NI, a high degree of subject-topicality is important, as pointed out by some authors (e.g., Kossuth 1980: 134; 1981: 97). Thus, in a count I have made in four Icelandic narratives, it turned out that VS order is more common in main clauses with first- (and second-) person pronoun subjects, than in sentences with third-person pronoun subjects, for which, in turn, VS is significantly more frequent than in sentences with full NP subjects. The results of this count are summarized in Table I.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Braune (1894), Bernstein (1897), Nygaard (1900, 1906), Hallberg (1965), Rieger (1968), Kossuth (1978a, 1978b, 1980, 1981), Sigurðsson (1983), Platzack (1985), and Thráinsson (1984, 1986).

<sup>8</sup>Narrative Inversion seems to have somewhat different functions in Yiddish and Icelandic. In comments on an earlier version of this article, Ellen Prince says: “What V1 seems to be doing in Yiddish is presenting the proposition as a CONSEQUENCE of the previous proposition”, and a similar description is given in Diesing (1987). This is also common in Icelandic V1 declaratives (of all sorts), but somewhat surprisingly, none of Diesing’s (1987) and Prince’s Yiddish examples of this has a felicitous counterpart in Icelandic. Compare Yiddish in (i) (from Prince’s comments) to Icelandic in (ii):

(i) Ick bin do, iz er dortn.  
 I am here is he there  
 ‘I am here, so he is there.’ (Or equivalent)

(ii) ?? Ég er hér, er hann þar.  
 I am here is he there

Presumably, the topic shift in (ii) is at least partly responsible for its awkwardness (cf. Kossuth 1981: 97), but I cannot pursue this matter here.

<sup>9</sup>The count was made in Old as well as Modern Icelandic texts, that is, in *Brennu-Njáls saga* (30–69, 80–107) and *Saga Ólafs konungs hins helga* (51–100), preserved in manuscripts from the 14th century, and the Modern Icelandic *Úr byggðum Borgarfjarðar* (87–113) and *Ágrip af ævisögu* (95–130). The count showed the same tendency in all excerpts. Bibliographical information on texts used in this and other counts reported on here is found

TABLE I  
NUMBER AND RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE ORDERS VS AND SV  
IN ICELANDIC NARRATIVE TEXTS ACCORDING TO SUBJECT TYPE:\*

Order	<u>Subject NP Type</u>			Total
	1p (and 2p) pron	3p pron	Full NPs	
VS	96	119	73	288
SV	109	411	653	1173
VS:SV	1:1.1	1:3.5	1:9	1:4.1

\*VXS not included in VS order; only nonconjoined declarative main clauses were used in the distributional counts.

These results lend support to the intuition that declarative V1 is prompted by strong discourse cohesion; it seems clear that subject topicality, hence subject pronominalization, is typical of cohesive discourse. For another strong indication that discourse cohesion matters, see Table III in section 4.

It is not surprising that different ways of initiating the clause have different functional effects or correlates. However, a closer inquiry into the nature of these matters is outside the scope of this study.

### *3.2 Declarative V1 in Old versus Modern Icelandic*

Declarative V1 is typical of many of the best known Old Icelandic texts. Narrative texts do not take such a central position in the modern literature. Accordingly, declarative V1 is a much more characteristic feature of the preserved Old Icelandic texts than of Modern Icelandic prose in general. Moreover, declarative V1 is quite rare in the spoken language. Because of its cohesive function in continuous discourse, declarative V1 is infelicitous in discourse types of spoken language, such as conversations and short statements.<sup>10</sup> This seems to have lead some linguists

in a special text list at the end of the article.

<sup>10</sup>In contrast, (indicative) V1 exclamations are a typical (and a common) trait of spoken Icelandic:

- (i) Hringir síminn!  
rings telephone-the  
'Ah, there the telephone rings!'

V1 is also common in spoken as well as written Icelandic in optative main clause subjunctives, especially in curses such as (ii):

- (ii) Fari hann til helvítis!  
may-go he to hell  
'He can go to hell!'

Along with V1 questions and commands, however, these types are not my concern here.

who are not native speakers of Icelandic to believe that declarative V1 is extinct in the language.<sup>11</sup>

But there is no doubt whatsoever that declarative V1 is perfectly grammatical in Modern Icelandic. It is, for example, quite common in casual newspaper narrative, such as the sports news. Simply stating this, however, is perhaps not very informative. Because of the special function and distribution of declarative V1, a comparison of its use in Old and Modern Icelandic texts is called for. In a study of the construction (Sigurðsson 1983), I counted word order types in miscellaneous Old Icelandic excerpts. The results of this count and of a count I have made in several Modern Icelandic narratives (for the orders SV and V(X)S in nonconjoined main clauses) are summarized in Table II:<sup>12</sup>

TABLE II  
THE NUMBER AND RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE ORDERS  
V(X)S AND SV IN NON-CONJOINED MAIN CLAUSES  
IN MODERN ICELANDIC (MICE) AND OLD ICELANDIC (OICE) TEXTS

<u>Order</u>	<u>MIce</u>	<u>OIce</u>
V(X)S	270	507
SV	516	1598
V(X)S:SV	1:1.9	1:3.2
Range of V(X)S:SV	1:1.6–1:2.71	1.3–1:13.6

These and numerous other observations (see Sigurðsson 1983: 123 ff.) do not indicate any basic changes in the status of declarative V(X)S. It should be mentioned, however, that Icelandic has undergone two changes from old(er) to modern times that have narrowed the domain of V1 declaratives. First, Old(er) Icelandic had referential as well as nonreferential subject *pro* (Hjartardóttir 1987), whereas only the latter type is allowed in Modern Icelandic.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, subjectless declarative V1 is only found for nonreferential *pro* in the modern language (see section 3.3). Second, a new (optional) method of lexicalizing the initial XP-position in some declaratives has been introduced, namely, insertion of expletive *það* (cf. section 3.3).

<sup>11</sup>For example, Haiman (1974: 93, 99), Kossuth (1978a), Zaenen (1983: 492; 1985), Maling and Zaenen (1981).

<sup>12</sup>The range figures give the highest versus the lowest average frequencies of V1 according to texts. The excerpts used are as follows: Modern: *Úr byggðum Borgarfjarðar* (87–113), *Af sjónarhóli* (69–88) and *Ágrip af ævisögu* (95–130). Old (cf. Sigurðsson 1983: 9 ff., n. 30; 154): *The First Grammatical Treatise*, *The Manuscript Sthm. Perg. 15 4<sup>o</sup>* (7r24–19v30), *Morkinskinna* (71–129), *Saga Ólafs konungs hins helga* (50,15–134,11), *Sturlungu saga* (317,21–370,27), *Brennu-Njálssaga* (30–77,17), *Árna saga biskups* (10,18–17,26 and 26,17–34,24 [=AM 220 VI fol]; 42,16–50,12, 65,14–74,11 and 145,2–152,3 [=AM 122b fol]).

<sup>13</sup>The one exception is referential *pro* in imperatives (plural imperatives inflect for person and number in Icelandic, see Sigurðsson 1989: 134 f.).



### 3.3 V1 in Icelandic declarative word order typology

With respect of function and distribution in discourse, declarative V1 is clearly a marked construction. But syntactically, it is a subtype of main-clause declaratives that are not subject initial. This is obviously an important fact, so I illustrate it in some detail below. First, I demonstrate that declarative V1 is compatible with all subject types in Icelandic, and then I show that overt subjects observe much the same positional constraints in all nonsubject-initial main-clause declaratives.

Nonsubject-initial main-clause declaratives in Icelandic fall into three major classes, depending on whether and how the initial specifier position of the clause is lexicalized. The possibilities are summarized in (9):

- (9) a. *það* V ...  
b. XP V ...  
c. Ø V ...

*Það* is the expletive element mentioned at the end of section 3.2, usually glossed by English ‘there’ or ‘it’; “XP” stands for a preposed constituent, and “Ø” denotes that the initial specifier position is nonlexicalized.

The reason why I distinguish *það*-clauses as a special class and analyze them as not being subject-initial is that *það* is inserted directly into the XP-position, that is, it is not a structural subject, as argued in Thráinsson (1979).<sup>14</sup> *Það* differs from expletives that are inserted into the subject position (such as English *there*) in being compatible with transitives.<sup>15</sup> This is illustrated in (10); I do not gloss *það*:

- (10) a. *Það lásu margir þessa bók.*  
          read many this book  
          ‘Many people read this book.’  
b. *Það hafa bara lesið þessa bók nokkrir gagnrýnendur.*  
          have only read this book several critics  
          ‘Only several critics have read this book.’

The *það*-type in (9a) is defective in the sense that *það* is incompatible with topical subjects. Compare (11) and (12); “[e]” denotes a nonlexical subject position, whereas “[t]” is the trace of

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<sup>14</sup>This claim has been accepted and elaborated by many others, for example, Zaenen (1983, 1985), Platzack (1983b), Rögnvaldsson (1984a), and Sigurðsson (1989).

<sup>15</sup>Cf., for example, Thráinsson (1979), Platzack (1983a,b), Rögnvaldsson (1984b), and Sigurðsson (1989, Ch. 6.3). In (11b) below, we see another consequence of *það* being inserted into the XP-position, namely, that its insertion does not block NP-movement (since the two processes have different target positions, the XP-position and the subject position).

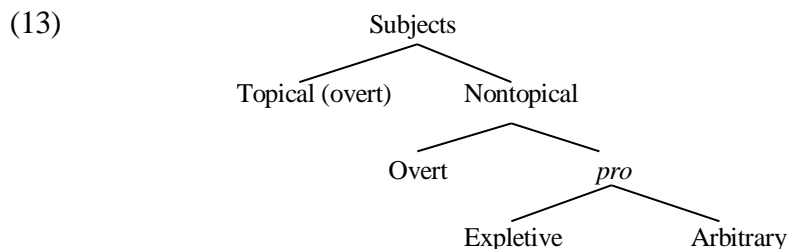
an NP-moved subject; I assume an ergative or an unaccusative analysis of verbs such as *koma* ‘come, arrive’ and *vera* ‘be’ in (15) below; that is, the logical subject is a D-structure object.<sup>16</sup>

- (11) a. *Það eru [e] komnir gestir hingað.*  
           are arrived guests here  
       b. *Það eru gestir komnir [t] hingað.*  
           are guests arrived here  
           ‘Some guests have arrived.’

- (12) a. \**Það eru [e] komnir gestirnir hingað.*  
           are arrived guests-the here  
       b. \**Það eru gestirnir komnir [t] hingað.*  
           are guests-the arrived here

In cases such as (11a), the object stays in its VP-internal base position, and the subject position contains expletive *pro* (and not a trace of a postposed subject). Although I do not indicate it in (11a), *pro* and the logical subject are coindexed (Sigurðsson 1989: 305 ff.), thus forming an expletive-argument chain in the sense of Chomsky (1986b: 131 ff.).

Icelandic subjects can be classified as shown in (13):



Other Germanic semi-*pro*-drop languages do not seem to have arbitrary subject *pro*, that is, subject *pro* that bears a  $\theta$ -role. With the exception of the topicality effect on *það*-insertion, the word order types in (9) are free to combine with all the subject types in (13).<sup>17</sup> This is illustrated

<sup>16</sup>Cf. Perlmutter (1978), Hoextra (1984), Burzio (1986), and, on Icelandic, Platzack (1983b) Maling (1988), and Sigurðsson (1989).

<sup>17</sup>Similar effects on expletive insertion (and NP-movement) in related languages are known as the Definiteness Effect (cf. Safir 1985). Of course, there is extensive overlap of topicality and definiteness in Germanic languages, but as shown by Rögnvaldsson (1984b), there is evidence that topicality is the relevant factor, at least in Icelandic. In Sigurðsson (1989: 296 ff.), it is suggested that the blocking effects of subject-topicality on *það*-insertion can be explained in terms of Principle C of the binding theory. The basic idea is that *það* must bind the subject position (whether the latter is lexicalized or not) but cannot do so properly (i.e. without violating Principle C) if the clause contains a topical subject. As also argued in Sigurðsson (1989: 297 ff.) nontopical NPs do not seem to bear a truly referential index. Similar ideas are pursued in Safir (1985).

in (14)–(17) below:

### Topical subject

- (14) a. \**Það hafði hann / Ólafur / maðurinn ekki enn lesið bókina.*  *það V*  
           had he / Olaf / man-the not still read book-the  
       b. *Bókina hafði hann / Ólafur / maðurinn ekki enn lesið.*  *XP V*  
           book-the had he / Olaf / man-the not still read  
           ‘He/Olaf/The man had still not read the book.’  
       c. *Hafði hann / Ólafur / maðurinn ekki enn lesið bókina.*  *Ø V*  
           had he / Olaf / man-the not still read book-the.

### Overt nontopical subject (coindexed with expletive subject *pro*)

- (15) a. *Það voru [e] oft langar umræður á fundunum.*  *það V*  
           were often long discussions at meetings-the  
           ‘There were often long discussions at the meetings.’  
       b. *Á fundunum voru [e] oft langar umræður.*  *XP V*  
           at meetings-the were often long discussions  
       c. *Voru [e] oft langar umræður á fundunum.*  *Ø V*  
           were often long discussions at meetings-the

### Expletive *pro* (no overt subject)

- (16) a. *Það rignir [e] því sennilega mikið á morgun.*  *það V*  
           rains thus probably much tomorrow  
           ‘Thus, it will probably rain much tomorrow.’  
       b. *Á morgun rignir [e] því sennilega mikið.*  *XP V*  
           tomorrow rains thus probably much  
       c. *Rignir [e] því sennilega mikið á morgun.*  *Ø V*  
           rains thus probably much tomorrow

### Arbitrary *pro* (no overt subject)

- (17) a. *Það má [e] því skila bókinni seinna.*  *það V*  
           may thus return book-the later  
           ‘One/People/We/You (etc.) may thus return the book later.’  
       b. *Bókinni má [e] því skila seinna.*  *XP V*  
           book-the may thus return later

- c. Má [e] því skila bókinni seinna. Ø V  
 may thus return book-the later

Possibly, V1 main clause declaratives that do not have a topical subject should be analyzed as bare IPs, with a preverbal subject position (cf. my analysis of embedded V1 in section 5). However, I assume that all V1 main clauses are CPs.

All subject types, then, are compatible with declarative V1. Moreover, overt subjects behave much the same in all nonsubject-initial declaratives. Thus, postverbal topical subjects usually show up immediately after the finite verb, irrespective of whether or how the initial specifier position is lexicalized. Two interacting factors are responsible for this. First, ergative and passive NP-movement applies obligatorily to topical NPs, whereas it is only optional for nontopical NPs.<sup>18</sup> Compare (18)–(19) to (11) above.<sup>19</sup>

- (18) a. Um kvöldið var **hann** ekki enn kominn [t] hingað. XP V  
 in evening-the was he not still arrived here  
 ‘He had still not arrived in the evening.’  
 b. \*Um kvöldið var [e] ekki enn kominn **hann** hingað.
- (19) a. Var **hann** ekki enn kominn [t] hingað um kvöldið. Ø V  
 was he not still come here in evening-the  
 ‘He had still not arrived in the evening.’  
 b. \*Var [e] ekki enn kominn **hann** hingað um kvöldið.

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<sup>18</sup>However, there are cases such as (i) and (ii):

- (i) Í gær kom ekki Ólafur.  
 yesterday came not Olaf  
 ‘Yesterday, it was Olaf that did not come.’
- (ii) Kom nú Ólafur og ...  
 came now Olaf and  
 ‘Then/Now, Olaf came and ...’

In cases of this sort, the subject is not really topical, i.e. it neither is discourse-old information nor pragmatically given. The string intervening between the finite verb and the subject is always a sentence adverb (or a cluster of sentence adverbs), and the subject must not be an unstressed pronoun. Possibly, the sentence adverb cliticizes onto the finite verb and moves along with it by I-to-C, but I cannot not pursue the matter here.

<sup>19</sup>In Sigurðsson (1988) and (1989: 227 ff., 303 ff.), it is argued that the Definiteness Effect (i.e., the topicality effect) on NP-movement should be explained in terms of a principle (the Subject-command Condition) that requires that objects be commanded by a subject or coindexed with the subject position (nonraising or mere coindexing being blocked for topical NPs by Principle C of the binding theory).

Second, it is impossible to postpose topical subjects, and again, it does not matter whether or how the initial specifier position is lexicalized. This is illustrated in (20)-(21) for a transitive verb:

- (20) a. Bókina hafði hann ekki enn lesið. XP V  
 book-the had he not still read  
 ‘He had still not read the book.’  
 b. \*Bókina hafði [t] ekki hann enn lesið.  
 c. \*Bókina hafði [t] ekki enn lesið hann.
- (21) a. Hafði hann ekki enn lesið bókina. Ø V  
 had he not still read the book  
 ‘He had still not read the book.’  
 b. \*Hafði [t] ekki hann enn lesið bókina.  
 c. \*Hafði [t] ekki enn lesið bókina hann.

In contrast, overt nontopical subjects have an extreme positional freedom in Icelandic. First, ergative and passive nontopical subjects may either move to the subject position by optional NP-movement, as in (11b), or stay in their VP-internal base position, as in (11a) and (15). Second, postposing applies to (many) nontopical subjects of all sorts of verbs (cf. Rögnvaldsson 1982, 1984b). This is illustrated for a transitive subject in (22)–(24):<sup>20</sup>

- (22) a. Það hafa einhverjir stúdentar sennilega [stolið smjörinu]. það V  
 have some students probably stolen butter-the  
 ‘Some students have probably stolen the butter.’  
 b. Það hafa [t] sennilega einhverjir stúdentar [stolið smjörinu].  
 c. \*Það hafa [t] sennilega [stolið einhverjir stúdentar smjörinu].  
 d. Það hafa [t] sennilega [stolið smjörinu] einhverjir stúdentar.
- (23) a. Sennilega hafa einhverjir stúdentar [stolið smjörinu]. XP V  
 probably have some students stolen butter-the  
 ‘Some students have probably stolen the butter.’  
 b. \*Sennilega hafa [t] [stolið einhverjir stúdentar smjörinu].  
 c. Sennilega hafa [t] [stolið smjörinu] einhverjir stúdentar.

<sup>20</sup>Transitive subjects differ from ergative (and passive) subjects in never being able to occur VP-internally, that is, they must never occur in the Case domain of a lexical case assigner (see Sigurðsson (1989: 303) and references cited therein). In contrast, many ergative subjects get Case from a lexical case assigner (and may stay in the domain of the case assigner if they are nontopical).

- (24) a. Hafa **einhverjir stúdentar** sennilega [stolið smjörinu]. Ø V  
 have some students probably stolen butter-the  
 ‘Some students have probably stolen the butter.’  
 b. Hafa [t] sennilega **einhverjir stúdentar** [stolið smjörinu].  
 c. \*Hafa [t] sennilega [stolið **einhverjir stúdentar** smjörinu].  
 d. Hafa [t] sennilega [stolið smjörinu] **einhverjir stúdentar**.

As in the case of topical subjects, it does not matter whether the initial specifier position is lexicalized: in each case, V1 declaratives display basically the same possibilities as compatible nonsubject-initial V2 declaratives.

Owing to its functional properties, declarative V1 is awkward or even infelicitous in many contexts where some V2 order is the natural option. Syntactically, however, the only relevant difference between V1 main clause declaratives and other nonsubject-initial main clause declaratives seems to be that the former do not lexicalize the clause-initial specifier position.

#### 4 The syntactic distribution of declarative V1

One of the most interesting aspects of declarative V1 is its distribution in conjoined versus non-conjoined clauses in Modern as well as Old Icelandic. The word order counts on which Table II above is based shed some light on this matter. First, consider the results for Old Icelandic *ok*- ‘and’ and *en*- ‘but’ clauses, summarized in Table III:<sup>21</sup>

TABLE III

NUMBER AND RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE ORDERS  
 V(X)S AND SV AFTER *OK* AND *EN* IN OLD ICELANDIC TEXTS

Order	After <i>ok</i>	After <i>en</i>
V(X)S	699	2
SV	84	426
V(X)S:SV	8.3:1	1:213

In a compatible (but a much less extensive) count in Modern Icelandic narratives, I found

<sup>21</sup>Table III is based on the same excerpts as the Old Icelandic part of Table II above (see n. 12), except that I added two excerpts: Egils saga Skallagrímssonar (201–230 and 323–344) and Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar (1–6,25 and 26,26–45,21) (Sigurðsson 1983: 156, n. 5).

roughly the same distributional patterning.<sup>22</sup>

These results give support to the general belief that declarative V1 is prompted by discourse cohesion (see also Platzack 1985): as a clause-coordinator, *ok* (and Mice *og*) is, of course, typical of discourse cohesion, whereas *en* is typical of some kind of contrast between the clauses it conjoins.

The figures in Table III, then, shed some light on the optimal functional circumstances of declarative V1, but they do not add much to our understanding of its syntactic properties. In this respect, my results for subordinate clauses, summarized in Table IV, are more telling:<sup>23</sup>

TABLE IV  
NUMBER AND RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE ORDERS  
V(X)S AND SV IN SUBORDINATE CLAUSES INTRODUCED BY  
AN OVERT COMPLEMENTIZER IN MODERN ICELANDIC (MICE) AND OLD ICELANDIC (OICE) TEXTS

Order	Mice	OIce
V(X)S	2	23
SV	540	2965
V(X)S:SV	1:270	1:129

Since V(X)S was frequent in declarative main clauses in the same excerpts (cf. Table II), these results are rather striking, but they are also slightly misleading because Table IV includes various types of subordinate clauses that are not entirely comparable with declarative main clauses. However, in declarative complement clauses (introduced by *at* ‘that’ in OIce, *að* ‘that’ in Mice), I found seven examples of V(X)S, two in Mice and five in OIce. None of the seven clauses has a topical subject, for example:

- (25) Ek sa ... at scino við .XII. spíot  
I saw that flashed 12 spears  
‘I saw ... that there were 12 spears flashing.’  
(*Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*: 344)

Of course, word order statistics only bear on performance. Nevertheless, my statistic comparison of main and subordinate clauses seems to reflect at least one rather interesting linguistic fact: NI is confined to main clauses, whereas other V1 declaratives are not. Thus, we

<sup>22</sup>This count is reported on in Sigurðsson (1983: 129). No example of V(X)S was found after *en*, but in *og*-clauses, V(X)S:SV was 105:19 = 5.5:1.

<sup>23</sup>The data base of Table IV is the same as of Table II, except that I added the same two Old Icelandic excerpts as to Table III (cf. notes 12 and 21).

find the following facts for declarative *að*- ‘that’ clauses in Modern Icelandic:

### Topical subject

- (26) a. \*Ég vissi ekki að færu **skipin** til Grænlands.  
I knew not that went ships-the to Greenland  
b. \*Því er sennilegt að verði **rigningin** mikil á morgun.  
thus is likely that will-be rain-the heavy tomorrow

### Overt nontopical subject

- (27) a. Ég vissi ekki að færu **svona mörg skip** til Grænlands.  
I knew not that went so many ships to Greenland  
‘I did not know that so many ships went to Greenland.’  
b. Því er sennilegt að verði **mikil rigning** á morgun.  
thus is likely that will-be heavy rain tomorrow  
‘Thus, it is likely that there will be heavy rain tomorrow.’

### No overt subject

- (28) a. Ég vissi ekki að ætti að fara **svona oft** til Grænlands.  
I knew not that should to go so often to Greenland  
‘I did not know that one should go so often to Greenland.’  
b. Því er sennilegt að rigni **meira** á morgun.  
thus is likely that rains heavier tomorrow  
‘Thus, it is likely that it will rain heavier tomorrow.’

In (28a), *pro* is arbitrary, whereas it is expletive in (28b).

The same facts are found in various other types of subordinate clauses in Modern Icelandic, such as some embedded interrogatives, cf. (29) and (30):

- (29) a. \*Ég veit ekki hvers vegna kemur **María**.  
I know not why comes Mary  
b. Ég veit ekki hvers vegna kemur **enginn póstur**.  
I know not why comes no mail  
‘I do not know why no mail comes.’  
c. Ég veit ekki hvers vegna kemur ekki að þessu.  
I know not why comes not to this  
‘I do not know why it does not come to this.’



- (30) a. \*Hann spurði hvort væri **hún** í bænum.  
           he asked whether were she in town-the  
       b. Hann spurði hvort væri **eitthvert hótél** í bænum.  
           he asked whether were any hotel in town-the  
           ‘He asked whether there was any hotel in the town.’  
       c. Hann spurði hvort væri hægt að fá bjór.  
           he asked whether were possible to get beer  
           ‘He asked whether it was possible to get beer.’

Compatible facts are found in most adverbial adjuncts, cf. (31) and (32):

- (31) a. \*Við förum þegar kemur **María**.  
           we will-go when comes Mary  
       b. Við förum þegar kemur **gott veður**.  
           we will-go when comes nice weather  
           ‘We will go when the weather is nicer.’  
       c. Við förum þegar hættir að rigna.  
           we will-go when stops to rain  
           ‘We will go when it stops raining.’  
       d. Við förum þegar á að fara.  
           we will-go when shall to go  
           ‘We will go when one is (expected) to go.’

- (32) a. \*Við förum ef kemur **María**.  
           We will-go if comes Mary  
       b. Við förum ef kemur **eitthvert fólk**.  
           we will-go if comes some people.SG  
           ‘We will leave if any people come here.’  
       c. Við förum ef rignir ekki mikið.  
           we will-go if rains not much  
           ‘We will go if it does not rain much.’

There is thus no question about the general ungrammaticality of embedded Narrative Inversion. In contrast, embedded V1 with an overt nontopical subject has variable acceptance, as we will see soon.

Zaenen (1983, 1985) suggests that V1 and *það*-initial order are in a complementary distribution in subordinate clauses: insertion of expletive *það* is always out in binding domains, she claims, that is, the domain between a binder and a bindee (e.g., a WH-phrase and its trace).

Conversely, Zaenen argues, embedded V1 is grammatical in binding domains only.

But the facts are much more complex than this, as pointed out by Rögnvaldsson (1984a); see also Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson (1990). The grammatical function of the bound element is crucial: *það* is totally impossible if the bindee is a subject, whereas it is regularly much better if the bindee has some other function (see also Rögnvaldsson 1984a: 9, 20).<sup>24</sup> Consider the following examples, where “[t]” denotes the bindee:

- (33)      *Ég veit ekki ...*  
               I    know not  
               ‘I do not know’
- a.    *hver (\*\*það) [t] talaði við Ólaf.*  
       who                    talked with Olaf  
       ‘who spoke to Olaf.’
- b.    *hvern (?það) var talað við [t].*  
       whom                was talked with  
       ‘who was spoken to.’
- c.    *hvenær (það) var talað við Ólaf [t].*  
       when                was talked with Olaf  
       ‘when Olaf was spoken to.’

- (34) *Þetta er maður ...*  
       this is a man  
       ‘This is a man’
- a.    *\*\*sem það [t] elskar margar konur.*  
       who                loves many women
- b.    *??sem það elska [t] margar konur.*  
       who                love many women  
       ‘who many women love.’
- c.    *?sem það eru margar konur hrifnar af [t].*  
       who                are many women fascinated of  
       ‘who many women are in love with.’

Whatever the explanation of these facts may be, there is clearly no complementary distribution of V1 and *það*-insertion. Thus, *það* would be grammatical in all the grammatical V1 examples in (27)–(32) above (cf. also the optionality of *það* in (33c)). Conversely, both *það*-insertion and V1 are out in subordinate clauses that have an overt topical subject, irrespective of binding. Moreover, there are binding domains where *það* is preferred over V1 and non-binding domains

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<sup>24</sup>Recall (from n. 17) that *það* must bind a subject position.

where the reverse is true. This is illustrated in (35) (involving long distance binding of a reflexive, though it should be noted that Zaenen does not take reflexive binding into account) and (36):

- (35) Jón<sub>i</sub> segir að ??(það) hafi einhver barið sig<sub>i</sub>.  
 John says that has someone hit SELF  
 ‘John says that someone hit him.’

- (36) María brosti svo að (?það) sást í tennurnar.  
 Mary smiled so that saw in teeth-the  
 ‘Mary smiled so that her teeth flashed.’

However, the clear-cut root versus non-root dichotomy between NI and other V1 declaratives is not the only constraining factor with respect to embedded V1. While subjectless V1 occurs rather freely in most or all types of subordinate clauses, V1 with an overt nontopical subject is more heavily constrained in embedded clauses than in main clauses. Thus, it is hard to come up with perfectly acceptable examples of embedded V1 with overt nontopical subjects of a transitive or an unergative intransitive main verb. Consider the facts in (37)–(40) below; “[t]” is the trace of a postposed subject, but “[e]” is expletive *pro*:

### Transitive Main Verb

- (37) ?Ólafur spurði hvort [t]<sub>i</sub> kysu hann [margar konur]<sub>i</sub>.  
 Olaf asked whether voted-for him many women  
 ‘Olaf asked whether many women voted for him.’

### Intransitive Unergative Main Verb

- (38) ?Ólafur spurði hvort [t]<sub>i</sub> hefðu hringt [margar konur]<sub>i</sub>.  
 Olaf asked whether had telephoned many women  
 ‘Olaf asked whether many women had telephoned.’

### Passive Main Verb

- (39) Ólafur spurði hvort [e]<sub>i</sub> hefðu verið kosnar [margar konur]<sub>i</sub>.  
 Olaf asked whether had been elected many women  
 ‘Olaf asked whether many women had been elected.’

## Ergative main verb

- (40) Ólafur spurði hvort [e]<sub>i</sub> hefðu komið [margir gestir]<sub>i</sub>.  
Olaf asked whether had arrived many guests  
'Olaf asked whether many guests had arrived.'

It thus seems to be the case that subject-postposing renders embedded V1 questionable, whereas nonapplication of ergative/passive NP-movement does not. This might be only a reflection of the fact that the former phenomenon is usually more marked than the latter in main clauses, both, in turn, being more marked in subordinate clauses than in main clauses. Other factors also interact with this effect. Embedded V1 is for example often more awkward in indicatives than in subjunctives (as pointed out to me by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson). In addition, it perhaps matters that declarative V1 does not have the same cohesive function in subordinate clauses as in main clauses.

I cannot detail here the complex and elusive factors responsible for the limited range of V1 with an overt nontopical subject in embedded clauses. What matters for our purposes is the strict root behavior of Narrative Inversion as opposed to other V1 declaratives.

## 5 The root behavior of Germanic V1–V2 and Icelandic NI

V2 and V1 phenomena in Germanic languages typically involve an inversion of an overt subject and the finite verb, either general subject-verb inversion (SVI) or English subject-auxiliary inversion (SAI). As is well known, these phenomena are largely confined to main clauses.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the obvious hypothesis is that NI is derived by the same strategy as SVI and SAI structures in the Germanic languages, in general, whereas other V1 declaratives do not, or, at least, do not necessarily share this same derivational process.

In the double verb-raising approach outlined in section 2, the finite verb acquires its pre-subject position in SVI and SAI structures by I-to-C. In normal subordinate clauses, COMP is occupied by a lexical complementizer. It follows that I-to-C cannot apply, SVI and SAI thus being blocked in most subordinate clauses. Accordingly, we get the well-known word order asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses, typical of Germanic languages. Consider the German examples in (41); “v” denotes the trace left behind by I-to-C:

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<sup>25</sup>Cf., for example, Emonds (1976) on English, and den Besten (1977, 1983) and Platzack (1986) on the Germanic V2 languages. All Germanic languages have some more specific inversion constructions, left aside here (conditional inversion, English subject-simple verb inversion, etc.).

- (41) a. Gestern **hat**<sub>i</sub> er den Brief geschrieben v<sub>i</sub>.  
 yesterday has he the letter written  
 ‘Yesterday he wrote the letter.’  
 b. ... daß er den Brief geschrieben **hat**.  
 that he the letter written has  
 ... ‘that he wrote the letter.’

English word order asymmetries of this sort also seem to be due to application versus nonapplication of I-to-C. Consider (42) and (43):

- (42) a. **Has**<sub>i</sub> John v<sub>i</sub> written the letter?  
 b. ... whether John **has** written the letter.
- (43) a. What **has**<sub>i</sub> John v<sub>i</sub> written?  
 b. ... what John **has** written.

Now, consider the derivation of V1 in subordinate clauses (leaving subject-extraction aside). In the approach outlined in section 2, normal subordinate clauses in Icelandic (and, e.g., English) have the constituent order (complementizer-)[NP-INFL-VP]. In a nonreferential null-subject language like Icelandic, it should therefore be possible to derive embedded V1 orders by generating nonreferential *pro* (arbitrary or expletive) in the subject position. As we saw in the last section, this is borne out: Icelandic has embedded V1 declaratives with nonreferential *pro* in the subject position, either independent or coindexed with an overt nontopical ergative or passive subject. As we would expect, Old(er) Icelandic also had embedded clauses with referential *pro* in the subject position (see, e.g., Hjartardóttir 1987). There are several reasons why NI cannot be derived in embedded clauses. First, topical subjects must not be postposed, as pointed out in section 3.3. Second, topical ergative and passive subjects must always raise to the subject position by NP-movement (cf. section 3.3). Third, of course, V1 cannot be derived by I-to-C if COMP is occupied by a lexical complementizer.

In sum, we have a coherent account of the asymmetric distribution of declarative V1 types in Icelandic if NI clauses are crucially derived by I-to-C, whereas other V1 declaratives can be derived (at least in subordinate clauses) simply by generating nonreferential *pro* in the subject position.

## 6 On the generality of double verb-raising in Icelandic

The preceding analysis of NI-clauses raises the question of the extent to which other V1 and V2 main clauses in Icelandic are derived by I-to-C. Since the matter is complex, I can only consider

some of its most central aspects in the following comments.

Word order asymmetries as in (41) and (42)–(43) above are the standard evidence that V1 and V2 phenomena in the Germanic languages are derived by I-to-C. In English, Yiddish and Icelandic, however, no general asymmetry of this sort is found in *subject-initial declaratives*. Compare the Swedish in (44), showing the general situation in Mainland Scandinavian, to the Icelandic in (45):

- (44) a. Han **hade** fortfarande inte läst boken.  
           he    had    still           not read book-the  
           ‘He had still not read the book.’  
       b. ... att han fortfarande inte **hade** läst boken.  
           that he   still           not had   read book-the  
           ‘... that he had still not read the book.’
- (45) a. Hann **hafði** ekki enn lesið bókina.  
           he    had   not   yet read book-the  
           ‘He had still not read the book.’  
       b. ... að hann **hafði** ekki enn lesið bókina.  
           that he   had   not   yet read book-the  
           ‘... that he had still not read the book.’

Since this is the case, it seems questionable whether anything is gained by analyzing normal subject-initial main-clause declaratives in Icelandic as CPs, applying I-to-C and subject preposing to [SPEC, CP].<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, by appealing to “economy of derivation and representation” (Chomsky 1988), we can argue that Icelandic SV main clause declaratives are bare IPs, at least normally, involving no subject fronting and only single verb-raising (V-to-I), along the lines pursued by Travis (1984) for Yiddish.

Rögnvaldsson and Thráinsson (1990) approach this problem from a somewhat different viewpoint (henceforth, R&T). In their analysis, I-to-C is an exceptional strategy in Icelandic, all V2 main clauses in the language being derived by single verb-raising (see also Rögnvaldsson 1987). In order to accomplish this, R&T suggest that subject-initial clauses, main and subordinate, are like clauses involving preposing of a nonsubject in being derived by XP-movement. This gives the general constituent order in (46), where the post-INFL subject NP is either [SPEC, VP] or a VP-adjunct.

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<sup>26</sup>I say “normal” because there are reasons to believe that SV main clause declaratives are CPs when the subject is an operator (cf. section 7, and Sigurðsson 1989: 146 ff.). Here, it should also be mentioned that Mainland Scandinavian order is often found in adverbial and relative clauses in Icelandic (see, e.g., Sigurðsson 1989: 44 f.).

(46) (complementizer-)[XP-INFL-NP-VP]

In an analysis along these lines, the sentences in (45) would have roughly the structures in (47):

- (47) a. [IP hann<sub>i</sub> [I' hafði<sub>j</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> ... [VP v<sub>j</sub> [VP lesið bókina]]]]]  
 b. [CP að [IP hann<sub>i</sub> [I' hafði<sub>j</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> ... [VP v<sub>j</sub> [VP lesið bókina]]]]]]]

Clauses involving preposing of a nonsubject are analyzed in a parallel manner:

- (48) [IP bókina<sub>i</sub> [I' hafði<sub>j</sub> [VP hann ... [VP v<sub>j</sub> [VP lesið t<sub>i</sub>]]]]]  
 book-the.ACC had he.NOM read

This requires some revisions of GB Case Theory, since INFL must be able to assign nominative to the VP-contained subject and blocked from assigning nominative to [SPEC, IP], but this is a theory-dependent problem that is not our concern. What matters here is that the root behavior of NI is compatible with R&T's approach, given the assumption that NI clauses have an extra COMP-node, which is not present in normal V2 main clauses. In this account, NI has much the same structure and derivation as non-conjoined V1 conditionals like (49) below (cf. R&T's analysis of these):<sup>27</sup>

- (49) a. Hafi hann ekki skilað bókinni á morgun, sæki ég hana.  
 has he not returned book-the tomorrow get I it  
 'If he hasn't returned the book tomorrow, I'll get it myself.'  
 b. [CP hafi<sub>j</sub> [IP hann<sub>i</sub> [I' v<sub>j</sub> [VP t<sub>i</sub> ... [VP v<sub>j</sub> [VP skilað bókinni]]]]]]]

Thus, we have two rather different analyses of subject-verb inversion constructions in Icelandic that seem to account equally well for the peculiar distribution of V1 declaratives in the language: a CP-analysis of all SVI structures (involving double verb-raising), and a general IP-analysis of SVI augmented by a CP-analysis of certain specific SVI structures.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup>The verb shows up in the subjunctive in V1 conditionals. R&T suggest that this could be taken as an indication of subordination in some sense, but something more specific must be involved, since there are many cases of main clause subjunctives and embedded indicatives (see Sigurðsson 1990; also, see n. 32 below).

<sup>28</sup>R&T suggest that NI involves single verb-raising and nonlexicalization of [XP, IP], but if this were the case, we would not expect its root behavior. R&T are, of course, aware of this problem, but they propose that the root behavior of NI is due to its special functional properties. Intuitively, it seems plausible that certain functional acts are normally infelicitous in subordinate clauses, and, quite possibly, some semantic factors are partly responsible for the limited range of declarative V1 in subordinate clauses. However, it is unclear why such factors should not render embedding of all declarative VS types equally infelicitous. Moreover, the argument is double-edged: if embedded NI is grammatical in the sense that its derivation does not violate any principles of grammar (or syntax), one would expect it to be available for some functional purposes (different from those of NI in main clauses) that

Both approaches face some problems that remain to be solved in a satisfactory manner. Thus, neither approach offers any obvious account of the fact that embedded preposing is usually out if the embedded clause has an overt topical subject, with the exception of many *að*- ‘that’ clauses, but applies extremely freely in the absence of an overt topical subject. Consider the contrast between (50)–(51) and (52); (51) and (52b–c) involve the so-called stylistic fronting of a participle (cf. Maling (1980); and R&T):<sup>29</sup>

- (50) a. *María sagði að til Ameríku færi Jón aldrei.*  
 Mary said that to America would-go John never  
 ‘Mary said that John would never go to America.’  
 b. \**María spurði hvort til Ameríku færi Jón aldrei.*  
 Mary asked whether to America went John never  
 c. \**María vissi ekki hvenær til Ameríku færi Jón.*  
 Mary knew not when to America would-go John  
 d. \**María varð glöð ef til Ameríku fór Jón.*  
 Mary became glad if to America went John

- (51) a. ?\**María segir að farið hafi Jón.*  
 Mary says that gone has John  
 b. \**María spyr hvort farið hafi Jón.*  
 Mary asks whether gone has John  
 c. \**María veit ekki hvenær farið hefur Jón.*  
 Mary knows not when gone has John  
 d. \**María verður glöð ef farið hefur Jón.*  
 Mary will-be glad if gone has John

- (52) a. *Þegar til Ameríku er farið ...*  
 when to America is gone  
 ‘When one goes to America ...’  
 b. *María spurði hvenær farið hefði verið til Ameríku.*  
 Mary asked when gone had been to America  
 ‘Mary asked when one (people, etc.) had gone to America.’  
 c. *Ef taldar eru allar undantekningar ...*  
 if counted are all exceptions  
 ‘If all exceptions are counted ...’

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are unquestionably felicitous in embedded clauses.

<sup>29</sup>There is some speaker variation as to the grammaticality of certain cases of preposing in embedded clauses, but I believe my judgements reflect the general situation.



Platzack (1987a) suggests that the preposed elements end up in the (post-COMP) subject position in cases such as (52), but as pointed out by R&T, allowing the subject position to be filled by a nonargument is dubious, especially when it contains a trace of an extracted subject, cf. (53):

- (53) a. Þetta er rannsókn sem **gerð** verður í Háskólanum.  
 this is an inquiry that made will-be in university-the  
 ‘This is an inquiry that will be made at the university.’  
 b. Ég veit ekki hver **gert** hefur þessa rannsókn.  
 I know not who made has this inquiry  
 ‘I do not know who has made this inquiry.’

However, the analysis of cases such as (52b–c) and (53) (and similar cases in main clauses) as involving movement of the verbal head to a clause-initial specifier position is problematic too (cf. Chomsky 1986a: 71).

Turning our attention to interrogatives, we find much the same word order asymmetry between main and subordinate clauses in Icelandic as in English. Consider (54)–(55):

- (54) a. **Hefur** Jón skrifað bréfið?  
 has John written letter-the  
 ‘Has John written the letter?’  
 b. ... hvort Jón **hefur** skrifað bréfið.  
 whether John has written letter-the  
 ‘... whether John has written the letter.’  
 (55) a. Hvað **hefur** Jón skrifað?  
 what has John written  
 ‘What has Joh written.’  
 b. ... hvað Jón **hefur** skrifað.  
 what John has written  
 ‘... what John has written.’

As argued by R&T, however, these facts are compatible with their single verb-raising approach (on the assumptions that their XP-position is lacking in (54a), as opposed to (54b), and that WH-phrases end up in COMP in embedded interrogatives in Icelandic). Nevertheless, Icelandic has some constructions that indicate that V1 and V2 questions in the language are derived by double verb-raising (cf. Sigurðsson 1986). One of these involves the common question word *aetli*, meaning roughly ‘I wonder’, ‘do you suppose/know?’, which seems to be a main clause

complementizer, much like German *ob* ‘whether’, ‘I wonder’ in cases such as (56a):

- (56) a. **Ob** Peter nicht gekommen **ist**?  
wonder Peter not arrived is  
b. **Ist** Peter nicht gekommen?  
is Peter not arrived  
‘Has Peter not arrived.’

Consider the Icelandic examples in (57) and (58):

- (57) a. **Ætli** Pétur **hafi** ekki lesið bókina?  
wonder Peter has.3SG.SUBJ not read book-the  
‘Do you suppose Peter hasn’t read the book?’  
b. **Hefur** Pétur ekki lesið bókina?  
has.3SG.IND Peter not read book-the  
‘Has Peter not read the book?’
- (58) a. Hvaða bók **ætli** Pétur **hafi** ekki lesið?  
which book wonder Peter has.3SG.SUBJ not read  
‘I wonder which book Peter has not read.’  
b. Hvaða bók **hefur** Pétur ekki lesið?  
which book has3SG.IND Peter not read  
‘Which book has Peter not read?’

Being inflected and in front of the sentence negation, the auxiliary *hafa* ‘have’ must have raised to INFL in the *ætli*-sentences. Nonetheless, it is postsecond. This is accounted for if Icelandic main-clause questions are derived by I-to-C, except when it is blocked by the presence of *ætli* in COMP.<sup>30</sup>

A more thorough discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, let me sum up in a somewhat tentative manner: Normal main-clause interrogatives in Icelandic seem to be CPs, derived by I-to-C. Plausibly, this extends to declarative subject-verb inversion constructions with a topical subject, including NI, whereas it seems promising to analyze most subject-initial main-clause declaratives as bare IPs. Finally, however, a satisfactory analysis of preposing in clauses that do not contain a topical subject remains to be developed.

<sup>30</sup>In R&T’s single verb-raising approach, on the other hand, the *ætli*-questions would have a different structure from other main-clause interrogatives (presumably a CP, involving double XP-movement of *wh*-phrases). Main clause complementizers of the *ætli*-type (blocking I-to-C) are found in other Scandinavian languages (Swedish *måne*, etc.).

## 6. Concluding remarks

In this article, I have described and discussed various aspects of verb-initial declaratives in Icelandic. Most important, I have argued that the so-called Narrative Inversion is a subject-verb inversion construction of the general Germanic type, involving double verb-raising (V-to-I and I-to-C). This accounts for the fact that NI is a root phenomenon, whereas other V1 declaratives are found in subordinate as well as main clauses.

Obviously, many problems remain unresolved in the double verb-raising analysis of V1 and V2 phenomena in Germanic (and other) languages. Descriptively, the analysis is appealing, but a really convincing explanation of I-to-C has not yet been developed. Hence, there is also no clear account of the different distribution of V1 and V2 phenomena in different languages. Most important, a coherent explanation of the fact that such phenomena have a more limited distribution in English than in other Germanic languages remains to be developed. Another mysterious fact is that NI has largely become obsolete in Germanic languages, except in Icelandic and Yiddish.<sup>31</sup> It is tempting to relate this to the fact that there is no general word order asymmetry between declarative subject-initial main and subordinate clauses in Icelandic and Yiddish, as was also the case in all Old Scandinavian languages (cf. Larsson 1931). However, the nature of the relation in question, if there is a relation, is not obvious – and if nothing more were involved, we would expect English to have NI.

It is hardly a coincidence either that I-to-C is largely confined to questions and preposing of negated constituents in English. On the assumption that V1 questions have a [+WH] null-operator in [SPEC, CP], this would seem to suggest that there is some inherent relation between hosting operators in [Spec, CP] and raising of [+Tense] to Comp, possibly such that the scope or the binding of the operator must be transmitted by a [+Tense] element that m-commands or governs it.<sup>32</sup> It is unclear why I-to-C in syntax proper (i.e. not LF) is largely limited to constructions with operators that are marked [+WH] or [+Neg] in English, but if this is on the right track, it indicates that NI-clauses in Icelandic and Yiddish have a null-operator in [SPEC, CP], responsible for their special functional semantics (cf. Diesing 1987 on Yiddish).

These ideas are obviously rather speculative, but it seems to me that they can provide a basis for further research on the nature of verb-raising.

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<sup>31</sup>I do not know of any serious attempt to explain this fact, but some reflections on the matter are found in Platzack (1987b). Platzack suggests that the grammaticality of NI in Icelandic and Yiddish is due to person/number agreement of the finite verb in these languages (as opposed to Mainland Scandinavian). However, this would seem to predict that German should have NI. It is also incompatible with the fact, discussed by Platzack (1987b), that NI is found in some Swedish dialects.

<sup>32</sup>For similar considerations, see Travis (1984: 135 ff.). In some cases, the tensed verb seems to merge with a null-operator in COMP. This is presumably what happens in V1 conditionals in the Germanic V2 languages, cf. example (49) above.

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