



Icelandic A, B, C, D ...?

Or: How Long is the Icelandic Alphabet?

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Outline

- Early claims about “GV2” and “LV2” languages
- Ideas about variation and dialect split: Icelandic A, B, C ...
- Important questions raised by the overview
- Relevant results from IceDiaSyn
- How long is the Icelandic alphabet?



Early claims about “GV2” and “LV2” languages



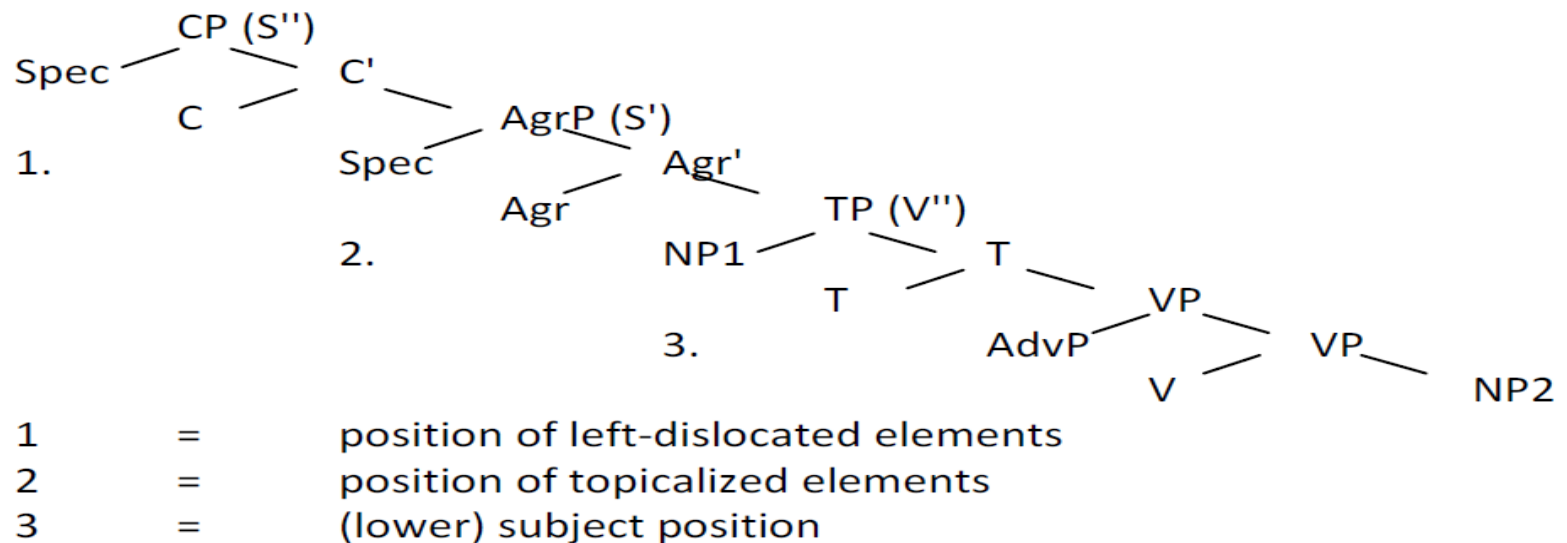
Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990 (R&T)

Relevant claims made by R&T:

- There are **two IP-internal “subject positions”** in Icelandic (corresponding to SpecAgrP and SpecTP in later systems?).
- The higher of these is not restricted to subjects. Hence fronting of subjects and non-subjects can be IP-internal (to SpecAgrP?).
- If a non-subject is fronted, the subject is in a lower position (i.e. in SpecTP?) but the (finite) verb will precede it (being in Agr?).
- Hence the (finite) verb is inside IP in all types of embedded clauses in Icelandic (no CP-recursion).
- Hence there should be **no syntactic reason** not to expect Embedded Topicalization (ET) in all types of embedded clauses, but ET might clash with **discourse properties** (or semantic properties) of certain types of embedded clauses.

R&T, 2

The basic structure assumed by R&T (“translated”):



Í fyrra að þá las Jón ekki
 bókina
last year that then read John not
the book

‘Last year John didn’t read the book.’



R&T, 3

Some (partly controversial) claims by R&T:

ET is fine in non-bridge verb* complements in Icelandic:

- (1) a. Jón **efast um** [að á morgun fari María snemma á fætur] (non-assert.)
J. doubts that tomorrow go Mary early up
b. Jón **harmar** [að þessa bók skuli ég hafa lesið] (emotive factive)
J. regrets that this book shall I have read
'John regrets that I read this book.'

But bad in Mainland Scandinavian (MSc), e.g. Swedish:

- (2) a. *Jon tvivlar på [att i morgon går Maria upp tidigt] (Sw)
John doubts that tomorrow goes Mary up early
b. *John ångrar [att den här boken läste han]
John regrets that this here book read he

(probably discussed in Ásgrímur Angantýsson's talk this morning!)

*It has been pointed out that the distinction *bridge verb/non-bridge verb* is not accurate enough in this context and that terms like *non-assertive verbs* and *emotive factives* would be more appropriate here (cf. e.g. Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund 2009 w. refs., cf. also Angantýsson 2011)

25. Februar 2011

R&T, 4

Intermezzo about Stylistic Fronting (SF) are ET:

- (3) a. Ég vona [að *e* verði rætt um þennan atburð á fundinum]
I hope that will-be talked about this incident at the meeting
b. Ég vona [að **rætt** verði ___ um þennan atburð á fundinum] **SF**
c. Ég vona [að **um þennan atburð** verði rætt ___ á fundinum] **ET?**

A question: How do you distinguish between Top. and SF?

Three possibilities (cf. Thráinsson 2007:369ff.):

- If there is a **subject gap**, then the fronting is an instance of SF.
- If the fronted element is a **maximal projection**, then the fronting is an instance of Topicalization. (SF fronts heads?)
- If the fronting has a **focusing effect**, then it is an instance of Topicalization.

See also the discussion in Maling 1980, Jónsson 1991, Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund 2009, Holmberg 2010, Angantýsson 2011.

R&T, 5

SF and ET: Some extraction contrasts:

- (4) a. **Á fundinum** vona ég [að **rætt** verði ___ um þennan atburð ___] **SF**
at the meeting hope I that discussed will-be about this incident
b. ??**Á fundinum** vona ég [að **um þennan atburð** verði rætt ___] **ET?**
- (5) *Jóni_i vona ég [að **þessa bók**_j láni einhver e_i e_j] (from R&T)
John(D) hope I that this book(A) lend somebody
- (6) a. Ég veit [að **Maríu**_i lofaði Ólafur e_i þessum hring] **ET**
I know that Mary(D) promised Olaf(N) this ring(D)
b. ?***Þessum hring**_j veit ég [að **Maríu**_i lofaði Ólafur e_i e_j] **ET**
this ring(D) know I that Mary(D) promised Olaf(N)

For general discussion of extraction out of Scandinavian V2-clauses see Hrafnbjargarson et al. 2010

Iatridou and Kroch 1992 (I&K)

More examples of ET (mostly from Thráinsson, p.c.)

In embedded questions (bad in MSc):

- (7) a. ?Enginn veit [hvort í **ferðinni** ætluðu þeir að skjóta hreindýr eða refi ____]
nobody knows whether on the trip intended they to shoot reindeer or fox
- b. ?Stína gat ekki munað [hvar **veskinu**_i hefði hún týnt e_i]
Stína could not remember where the purse had she lost
- c. Ég spurði [hvar **henni**_i hefðu flestir aðdáendur gefið e_i blóm]
I asked where her had most admirers given flowers

Also note the following instance of extraction, which I&K say Thráinsson finds acceptable (extraction out of comparable clauses said to be OK in Yiddish):

- (8) **Hvaða blað**_i sagði hún [að **á morgnana** gæti hún bara rennt yfir ei]
which paper said she that in the morning could she only skim over
en [**á kvöldin** reyndi hún að lesa ei vandlega]?
but in the evening tried she to read carefully

I&K's conclusion: ET in Icelandic (and Yiddish) does not depend on CP-recursion (but in MSc it does).



Sten Vikner 1995

Argued that ET in all Germanic languages involved movement to SpecCP (and hence necessarily CP-recursion if there is a complementizer around), but claimed that some Germanic languages were “**general embedded V2**” (**GV2**, Icelandic and Yiddish) whereas others are “**limited embedded V2**” (**LV2**, e.g. Swedish).



Ideas about the Icelandic dialect split: A, B, C ...



Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson (JGJ, 1996)

Considers the following examples from Magnússon (1990), involving **ET in adverbial clauses** (M's judgments):

- (9) a. Ég ætla ekki að flytja til Reykjavíkur [nema **jörðina**_i geti ég selt e_i]
I intend not to move to Reykjavík unless the farm can I sell
- b. [Fyrst **hurðina**_i getum við ekki opnað e_i] verðum við að brjóta gluggann.
since the door can we not open must we to break the window
 'We must break the window since we cannot open the door.'
- c. ?Skúli ætlar að taka sér langt frí [þegar **ritgerðinni** verður hann búinn að skila]
Skuli intends to take self long break when the paper is he finished to turn in
 'Skúli intends to take a long break when he has turned in the paper.'

JGJ finds all of these ungrammatical, as well as most of the examples cited above from R&T and I&K (e.g. ET).

His famous conclusion is on the next slide!



JGU, 2

JGU's proposal (1996:39): Icelandic A and Icelandic B

For me, these examples are all equally bad. It seems then that there are basically two dialects with respect to embedded topicalization in Icelandic. Speakers of the more liberal dialect, which I will call dialect A, allow topicalization quite freely in embedded clauses apart from temporal clauses.²⁵ By contrast, speakers of the more conservative dialect (henceforth, dialect B) allow embedded topicalization only in the complements of bridge verb.

²⁵ Here we ignore (for the time being) embedded clauses that contain a trace, e.g. relative clauses and embedded questions. Not surprisingly, Magnússon (1990:104-7,110-12) finds topicalization degraded in such clauses.

Hans-Martin Gärtner (HMG, 2003)

- Adopts Vikner's GV2 vs. LV2 distinction.
- Points out that if the LV2-properties of MSc are related to the absence of an (Icelandic-type) *Agr*-feature, as suggested by Holmberg and Platzack (H&P, 1995), then it is unclear why Icelandic B should be an LV2-language (hence his “how Icelandic can you be ...”).
- Wants to argue that Icelandic A is not as much an GV2 as previously assumed (and hence not as different from Icel. B).
- Points out several semantic and discourse factors that may influence the acceptability of ET — and how these might be related to particular matrix verbs or types of adverbial clauses.

Note:

This is in spirit rather close to the claim made by R&T, namely that there should (in GV2) not be any **syntactic** reason for ET not to be acceptable (nor embedded narrative V1).



HMG, 2

Sentence pairs alluded to by HMG but not presented (refers to Sigurðsson 1990:327; see also Thráinsson 2007:404–406):

- (10) a. Ég hef ekki áhyggjur af þessu [af því að hann **hefur** aldrei séð Maríu]
I have not worries of this because he has(ind.) never seen Mary
'I am not worried by this, because he has never seen Mary.'
= not p, because q
- b. Ég hef ekki áhyggjur af þessu [af því að hann **hafi** aldrei séð Maríu]
have (sbjnt) = not (p, because q)
- (11) a. Ég hef ekki áhyggjur af þessu [af því að **Maríu_i** **hefur** hann aldrei séð e_i]
I have not worries of this because Mary has(ind.) he never seen
'I am not worried by this, because he has never seen Mary.'
- b. Ég hef ekki áhyggjur af þessu [af því að **Maríu_i** **hafi** hann aldrei séð e_i]
because Mary have (sbjnt) he never seen

Not a clear contrast for me (an infamous speaker of Icelandic A), and as before the readings depend completely on the indicative/subjunctive distinction (pace Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund 2009:35).



Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund 2009 (H&W09)

Make a similar point as HMG in that they want to argue that IcelA “has some LV2 properties”. More generally they maintain (2009:22) that:

- “there are no strict GV2 languages ... Languages can be “more” or “less” V2 though ... We hypothesize that all V2 languages display LV2 features, that is to say, they all display main/embedded asymmetries when scrutinized.”

Actually, this is not too different from what R&T said — they (i.e. “we”) just said that whatever main/embedded asymmetries may be found are not syntactic.



H&W09, 2

H&W09 claim that IcelB is “more V2 than Swedish”, i.e. allows V2 in more environments (modified expls.):

- (10) a. Hann sá eftir því [að í gær skyldi hann ekki hafa horft á myndina]
he regretted it that yesterday should he not have watched the movie
‘He regretted it that he hadn’t watched the movie yesterday.’
- b. *Han ågrade [att igår hade han inted tagit sig tid att se filmen] SW
he regretted that yesterday had he not taken SELF time to watch the movie

Nevertheless, they report on **considerable variation within Icelandic** w.r.t. ET, referring to previous work of theirs with their colleagues (Wiklund et al. 2009), cf. the following slides.



H&W09, 3

Wiklund et al. (2009) consulted six Icelandic speaking linguists (H&W09 only talk about five) asking for judgments of ET in different types of *that*-complements, using the classification suggested by Hooper and Thompson (1973):

A, strongly assertive: *say, claim*

B, weakly assertive: *believe, think*

C, non-assertive: *deny, doubt*

D, factive: *regret, be sad about*

E, semi-factive: *discover, understand*

The speakers basically accepted all examples of ET in complements of verbs of the classes A, B and E, whereas there was considerable variation w.r.t. the complements of verbs of classes C (non-assertive) and D (factive) as shown in the partial table on the next slide (recall Ásgrímur's talk this morning).

H&W09, 4

Variation in ET in Icelandic as reported in Wiklund et al. (2009):

Table 3
Topicalization of non-subjects in Icelandic.

		1	2	3	4	5	6
Class C	<i>efast um</i> 'doubt'	*	*	?	✓	✓	✓
	<i>neita</i> 'deny'	?	✓	*	✓	Ø	✓
	<i>vera ekki sammála um</i> 'not agree'	*	*	*	*	✓	✓
	<i>vera ekki viss um</i> 'not be sure about'	*	*	*	✓	?	?
Class D	<i>furða sig á</i> 'be surprised'	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓
	<i>sjá eftir</i> 'regret'	*	*	*	*	Ø	✓
	<i>vera ánægður með</i> 'be content with'	*	?	?	✓	?	✓
	<i>vera leiður yfir</i> 'be sad about'	?	?	*	✓	Ø	✓
	<i>vera stoltur yfir</i> 'be proud of'	?	✓	✓	✓	Ø	✓

Comments:

- Everybody except speaker 1 finds some example natural here.
- Nobody completely rejects all examples.
- Speaker 6 accepts virtually everything and speaker 5 rejects nothing.
- Although speakers 1 and 3 give fairly similar judgments, there is considerable inter-speaker variation here (mean judgments ranging from 1,56 to 2,89 (if * = 1, ? = 2, checkmark = 3)).

Could we say that speakers 1, 2, 3 speak IcelB and 4, 5 and 6 IcelA?



H&W09, 5

Some additional claims by H&W09:

- Maybe IcelA does not exist.

The arguments they present include the following:

- All speakers dislike some instances of ET, e.g. ET in (some) indirect questions and some types of adverbial clauses (e.g. temporal clauses) **(probably true, cf. e.g. Ásgrímur's talk)**
- Even the most liberal informants reject **argument fronting** in complements of non-assertive verbs like *efast um* 'doubt', i.e. they reject examples like the following (as opposed to (1a) above):

- (11) Jón efast um [að **pennan mann** hafi María hitt]
John doubts that this man(A) has Mary(N) met
(not true, cf. Ásgrímur's talk and below)



Hrafnbjargarson and Wiklund 2010 (H&W10)

Want to replace the label GV2 by xV2 (*extended V2*) since they believe there are no “general” V2 languages although there are “extended” ones, like Icelandic.

Some relevant points:

- By “Icelandic xV2” H&W10 apparently mean (former) IcelB since they are not really considering IcelA (having claimed in H&W09 that IcelB is the more representative variant of Icelandic)
- xV2 is characterized by the possibility of fronting **spatio-temporal adjuncts** (*stage topics, frame-setting adverbials*), cf. (1a) above (repeated here, * in MSc):

- (1) a. Jón **efast um** [að á morgun fari María snemma á fætur]
J. doubts that tomorrow go Mary early up



H&W10, 2

Some relevant points, 2:

- H&W10 want to classify **Faroese as an xV2** language too (together with Yiddish) and refer to Heycock, Sorace and Hansen (2010) for support.
- Based on this, they want to relate xV2 to an AGR-based parameter in the sense of Holmberg (2010, which is a revision of the parametric approach in Holmberg and Platzack 1995) — and thus to verb movement (although not to I but to a C-position). (A bit problematic w.r.t. Faroese, as they point out, if V-placement in embedded clauses in Faroese is as in Danish, as Heycock, Sorace and Hansen (2010) maintain, cf. below, or even if V_{fin} in situ is just the default order, as found in FarDiaSyn.)

H&W10, 3

An aside on Adv-Vf orders in Icelandic:

Thráinsson 2010) postulates an exceptional adverb placement analysis for the Adv-V word order. This analysis both undermines evidence for V-to-I movement (if adverbs have multiple adjunction sites) and requires additional stipulations for languages like Kashmiri, as Holmberg (this volume, Section 4.2) (H&W10:60)

Prediction by the “higher adverb analysis”:

- If the “medial” adverb exceptionally preceding V_{fin} in Icelandic is actually exceptionally high, then one might expect to find another medial adverb in its usual position (semantics permitting) and this seems to be borne out:

- (12) a. Þetta eru greiðslur [sem við getum **ekki** / **ekki** getum staðið við]
these are payments that we can not / not can stand with
‘These are payments that we cannot make.’
- b. Þetta eru greiðslur [sem við **ekki** getum **alltaf** staðið við]
these are payments that we not can always stand with
‘These are payments that we cannot always make.’



Heycock, Sorace and Hansen 2010 (HSH)

Compare judgments of ET (and V-to-I) in Icelandic, Faroese and (standard) Danish.

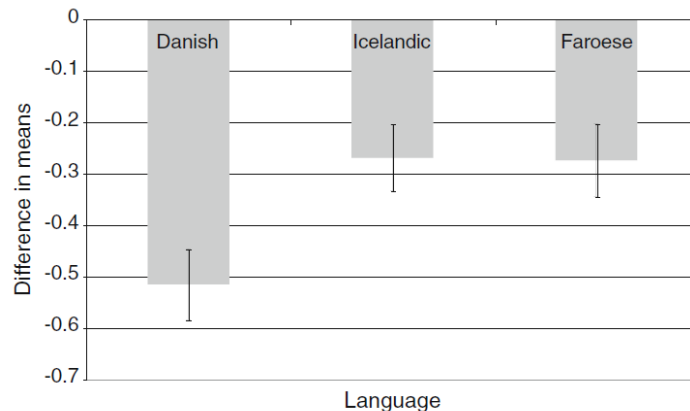
Some relevant points:

- A relatively **large number of subjects** (mean age around 40): Icelandic **35** (14m, 21f), Faroese **47** (23m, 24f), Danish **32** (12m, 20f).
- **Systematic comparison** of a large number of sentences (51+26) of various types: complements of **bridge verbs** (strongly assertive 'say') and **two types of non-bridge verbs** (factive 'regret', 'admit'; non-assertive 'doubt', 'deny') and **indirect questions**.
- Used **magnitude estimation** (the subjects set their own scale for comparing the sentences) rather than choice between three or more predefined classes.
- All instances of ET involved **fronting of adjuncts**, not arguments.

HSH, 2

Some results:

- There was **no significant difference between Icelandic and Faroese** in the acceptability patterns of ET but Danish differed significantly from both. Cf. also Ásgrímur's data earlier today:



	Icel.	Far.
Embedded Topicalization		
<i>that</i> -clauses with predicates of types A, B and E	+/-	+
<i>that</i> -clauses with predicates of types C and D	-/+	-
Indirect questions	-	-
Adverbial clauses		-
Relative clauses	-	-

Table 11: An overview of the acceptability of Embedded Topicalization different types of embedded clauses in Icelandic, Faroese, Ö

A graph from HSH

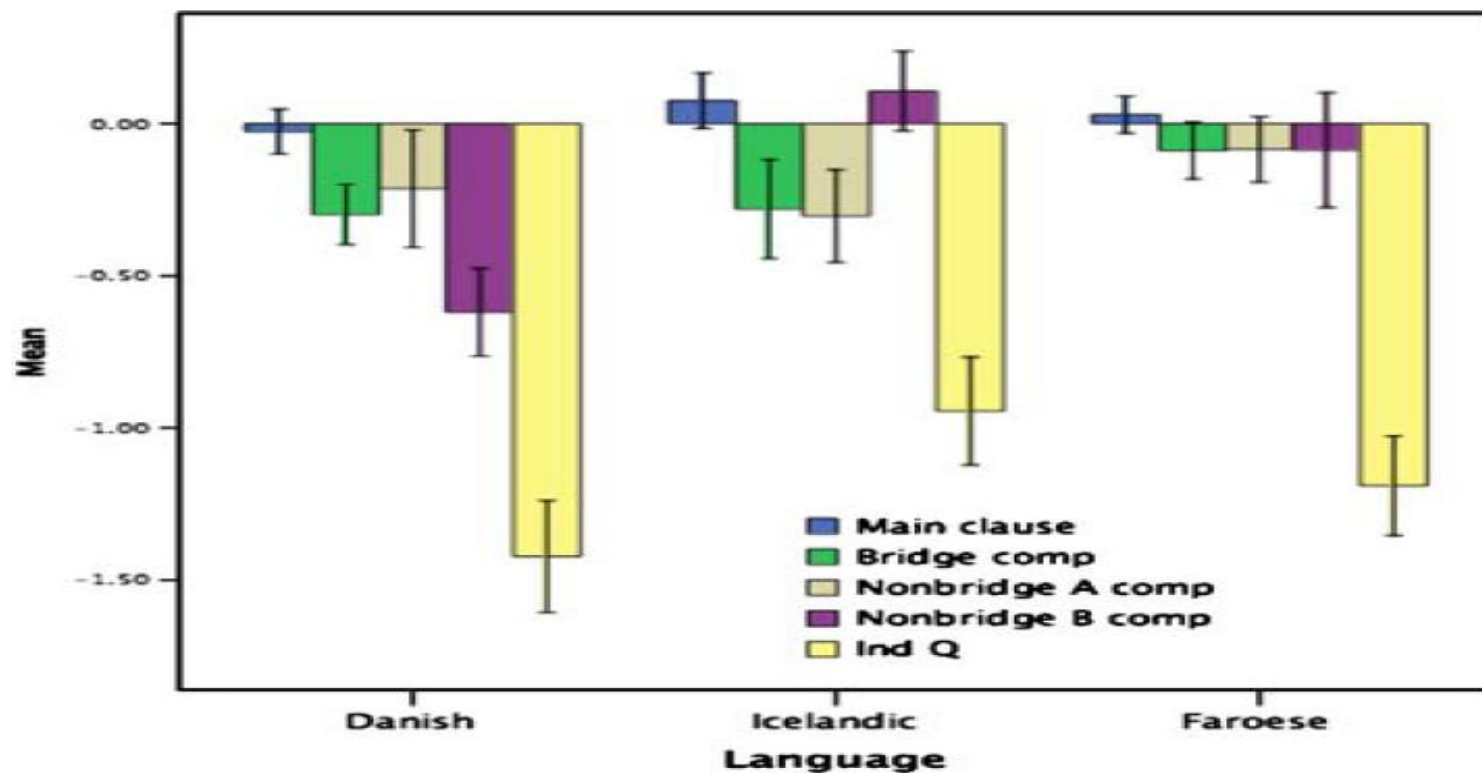
Partial table from Ásgrímur's talk
(Ásgrímur's examples typically had ET of arguments)

Some results, 2.

- There was no significant difference between Faroese and Danish w.r.t. (embedded) V-to-I. [Unexpected w.r.t. FarDiaSyn]
- V-to-I in Faroese was less acceptable across negation than other adverbs. [In FarDiaSyn we found no such effect.]
- In Icelandic and Faroese there was no significant difference in the acceptability of ET in complements of non-assertive verbs ('doubt' ...) and main clause Top. [see discussion below]
- ET in indirect questions was least appreciated by all and in Faroese it was **the only kind of ET** that was found to be significantly worse than main clause Top. (see graph on next slide).

HSH, 4

Judgments of Topicalization in different clause types in Danish, Icelandic and Faroese:

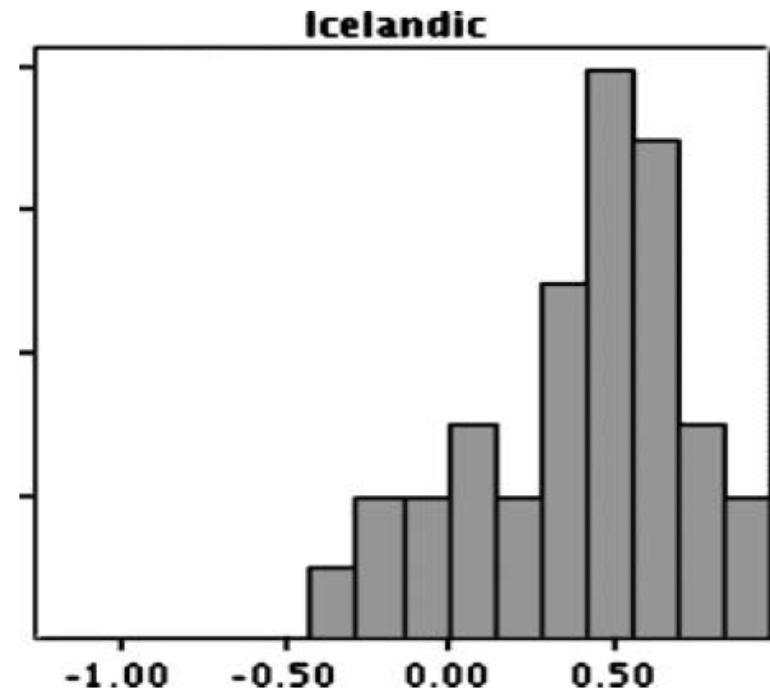


HSH, 5

Some results, 3:

- Although there is considerable variation in the judgments of the Icelandic speakers w.r.t. ET, there is **no evidence for a clear IcelA vs. IcelB split**:

Fig. 6 Distribution of judgments of adjunct-initial order in the complements to *doubt*, *deny*, and *be proud*





Important questions raised by the overview



Questions

A basic question lingering in the preceding overview:

- What is the **nature** of the observed ET variation in Icelandic?

More specifically:

- Is the variation **age-dependent** ? (to some extent, cf. Ásgrímur's talk)
- Is it **dependent on clause type**? (to some extent, but the picture is not as clear as often assumed, cf. Ásgrímur's talk and HSH's paper)
- To what extent is it dependent on **argument/adjunct** distinction?
(cf. H&W10 and HSH)
- Is there any evidence for a **dialect split** (IcelA, IcelB ...)?
(HSH suggested that there isn't)

More generally:

- What can we learn about **variation in general** (and its relation to parameters, linguistic change, etc.) by studies like IceDiaSyn?



Relevant results from IceDiaSyn

(**IceDiaSyn** and **FarDiaSyn** are subprojects of the **ScanDiaSyn** network and partially supported by **NORMS**. Thanks to our Scandinavian colleagues, especially in Tromsø, and to the Icelandic Research Fund!)



A brief description of the project

A few points on our methodology:

Most of our data have been elicited by using written questionnaires. To get reliable results using questionnaires it is important to take certain methodological precautions (cf. e.g. Schütze 1996 (ch. 5), Cornips and Poletto 2005):

- make sure everybody get the **same instructions** (preferably read them aloud)
- **explain the grading scale** by giving illustrative examples
- **vary the order** of the test sentences (e.g., reverse for half of the subjects)
- **test different constructions** in each overview and **include fillers**
- **vary the tasks** (absolute judgments, relative judgments, fill-ins ...)
- **include a break** in long sessions to prevent excessive fatigue and boredom
- **include context sentences** to get all subjects thinking of similar contexts
- **try to use natural sounding examples** (short, plausible, lexically neutral ...)
- test **multiple examples** of each construction to minimize unwanted effects
- try to make the contrasting variants maximally close to **minimal pairs**
- test **different types of speakers** (age groups, locations ...)
- throw out data from **“unreliable speakers”** (e.g. “language specialists”)
- get speakers to **report on their own intuition** (cf. Henry 1995, 2005a,b)



A brief description, 2

The format of typical questions on the questionnaire (the English glosses were not included!):

Settu X í viðeigandi dálk:

'Put an X in the appropriate column.'

Já	=	Eðlileg setning. Svona get ég vel sagt.
yes		'Natural sentence. I could easily say this.'
?	=	Vafasöm setning. Ég myndi varla segja svona.
?		'Doubtful sentence. I would hardly say this.'
Nei	=	Ótæk setning. Svona get ég ekki sagt.
no		'Unacceptable sentence. I could not say this.'

		já	?	nei	Athugasemdir
T2100	<i>Þingmaðurinn heimsótti kjósendur.</i> Hann spurði hvort að þeir alltaf hefðu búið í kjördæminu.				

There were typically over 100 questions of various kinds in each survey (including fillers), mixed with other tasks. We made three different surveys over a period of some three years and there were over 700 participants in each survey in Iceland (2 x 200+ in FarDiaSyn).

A brief description, 3

Our results indicate that the methodology worked because:

- The **variation is systematic** (differences between clause types, age groups and (in a few cases) regions, etc.) and not random.
- All **generations seem reliable** (e.g., it's not the case that the youngest generation “accepts everything”).
- The **subjects answer honestly** in general and don't seem worried by any kind of prescriptivism or the like (there is very little awareness of most of the variants investigated anyway).
- Comparison of **different tasks** confirms reliability of judgments.
- Comparison with **corpora** confirms reliability of judgments.
- Comparison with **interviews** confirms reliability of judgments.
- Comparison with **other studies** can sometimes serve as a confirmation, although there are also certain discrepancies (cf. above and below) ...

(cf. e.g. Thráinsson 2010b)

Some (additional) IceDiaSyn data

ET in *that*-complements: Correlation with age:

Pred. type	Examples	15	20–25	40–45	65–70	r	p
A	Hann sagði að þjóðsönginn gæti hann ekki sungið. <i>he said that the national anthem could he not sing</i>	16,4	36,3	55,4	69,1	–.415	.000
B	Hann hélt að þá mynd hefðum við ekki séð. <i>he thought that that movied had we not seen</i>	25,4	36,9	62,5	67,1	–.366	.000
C	Ég efast samt um að þennan mann hafi hún hitt. <i>I doubt however that this man has she met</i>	28,4	37,6	58,9	55,8	–.255	.000
D	Ráðherrann harmar að það mál skuli þeir ekki hafa rætt <i>the minister regrets that that matter shall they not have discussed</i>	26,6	31,8	34,1	40,0	–.073	.053
E	Ég veit þó að til Aþenu hefur hún aldrei komið. <i>I know however that to Athens has she never come</i>	19,9	52,5	76,2	86,7	–.515	.000
E	Hann uppgötvaði að þá bók hafði hann ekki lesið. <i>he discovered that that book had he not read</i>	43,7	64,8	81,5	84,7	–.323	.000

Table 1: Evaluation of ET in *that*- complements by different age groups

Comment:

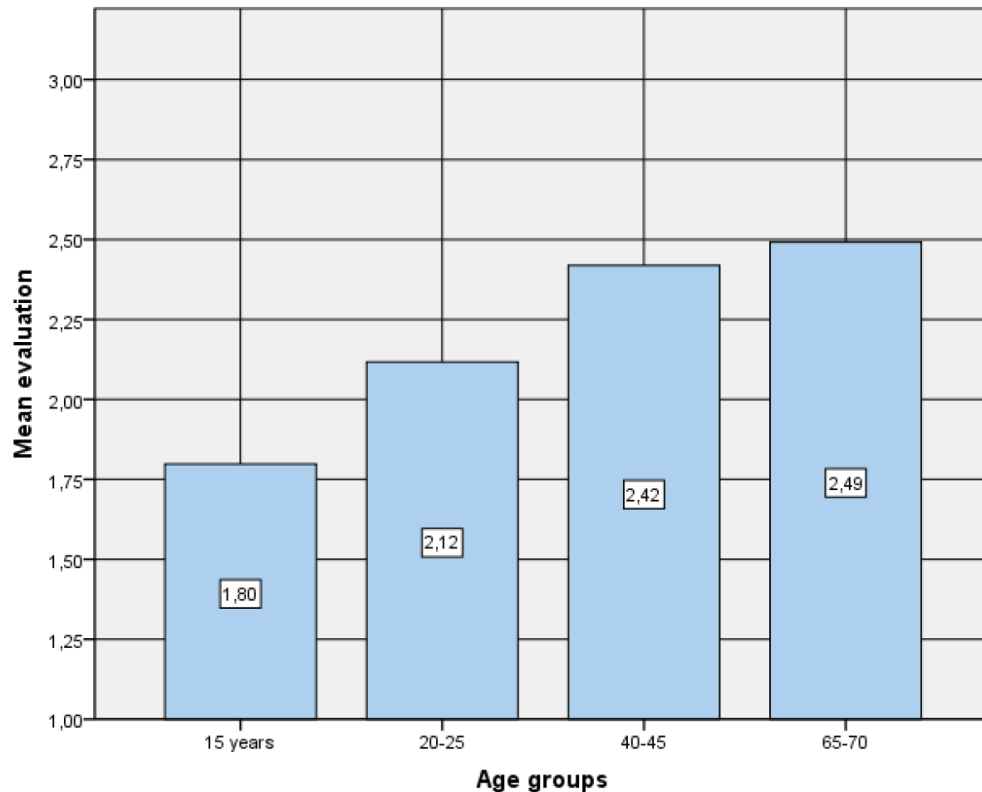
Significant correlation with age for the most part (cf. Ásgrímur's talk)



IceDiaSyn, 2

ET in *that*-complements and age, 2

Figure 1:
ET in all *that*-
complements
(mean evaluation
by the different
age groups).
 $r = .466$
 $p = .000$



IceDiaSyn, 3

ET in *that*-complements: Ordering by acceptability

Pred. class	Front elem	Example	yes	?	no	=	N
E	arg	Hann uppgötvaði að pá bók hafði hann ekki lesið. <i>he discovered that that book had he not read</i>	67,4	16,2	16,4	100	709
E	adj	Ég veit þó að til Aþenu hefur hún aldrei komið. <i>I know however that to Athens has she never come</i>	56,8	19,1	24,1	100	711
B	arg	Hann hélt að pá mynd hefðum við ekki séð. <i>he thought that that movied had we not seen</i>	46,6	23,5	29,9	100	712
C	arg	Ég efast samt um að þennan mann hafi hún hitt. <i>I doubt however that this man has she met</i>	44,2	23,0	32,8	100	710
A	arg	Hann sagði að þjóðsönginn gæti hann ekki sungið. <i>he said that the national anthem could he not sing</i>	42,8	23,3	33,9	100	713
D	arg	Ráðherrann harmar að það mál skuli þeir ekki hafa rætt. <i>the minister regrets that that matter shall they not have discussed</i>	32,8	23,1	44,1	100	710

Table 2: Evaluation of ET in *that*-complements, ordered by acceptability (all subjects)

Comments:

- No clear argument/adjunct distinction here (but only one adjunct expl.)
- Positive evaluation of ET under a C-type predicate a bit unexpected, but similar to the findings by HSH (non-distinct from the A-type predicate)

IceDiaSyn, 4

ET in indirect questions and relative clauses:

Type	Example	yes	?	no	=	N
IndQ	Ég spurði hann hverja í gær hefði hann hitt. <i>I asked him who yesterday had he met</i>	2,4	5,5	91,1	100	712
IndQ	Ég veit þó ekki hvort til Rómar hefur hún komið. <i>I know however not whether to Rome has she come</i>	2,1	8,6	89,3	100	713
Rel obj.gap	Þetta er strákurinn sem í París hitti ég síðast. <i>this is the boy tht in Paris met I last</i>	2,5	3,9	93,5	100	712
Rel subj.gap	Þeir sem erfiðustu ákvarðanirnar tóku voru ekki öfundsverðir. <i>those that most-diffiult decisions made were not enviable</i>	59,2	20,3	20,5	100	711
Rel subj.gap	Þeir sem erfiðustu verkin höfðu unnið hættu þó fyrr. <i>those that most-difficult works had done quit though earlier</i>	41,7	26,6	31,7	100	710

Table 3: Evaluation of ET in indirect questions and relative clauses

Comment:

Terrible — except for the ones with a subject gap (the SF-candidates)

IceDiaSyn, 5

Clear cases of SF (*Stylistic Fronting*):

Type	Example	yes	?	no	=	N
Late subj.	Allir vissu þó að stolið hafði verið skjávörpum. <i>all knew though that stolen had been projectors</i>	40,1	27,9	32,0	100	710
IndQ	Hún spurði hvort rætt hefði verið við Helgu. <i>she asked whether spoken had been to Helga</i>	78,1	12,6	9,3	100	712
Rel	Það er frumvarp sem lagt hefur verið fram á Alþingi. <i>that is bill which put has been forward in parliament</i>	85,0	9,0	6,0	100	712
Rel	Þetta er eitt af þeim vandamálum sem upp hafa komið. <i>this is one of the problems that up have come</i>	78,3	12,2	9,4	100	711

Table 4: Evaluation of SF in different clause types

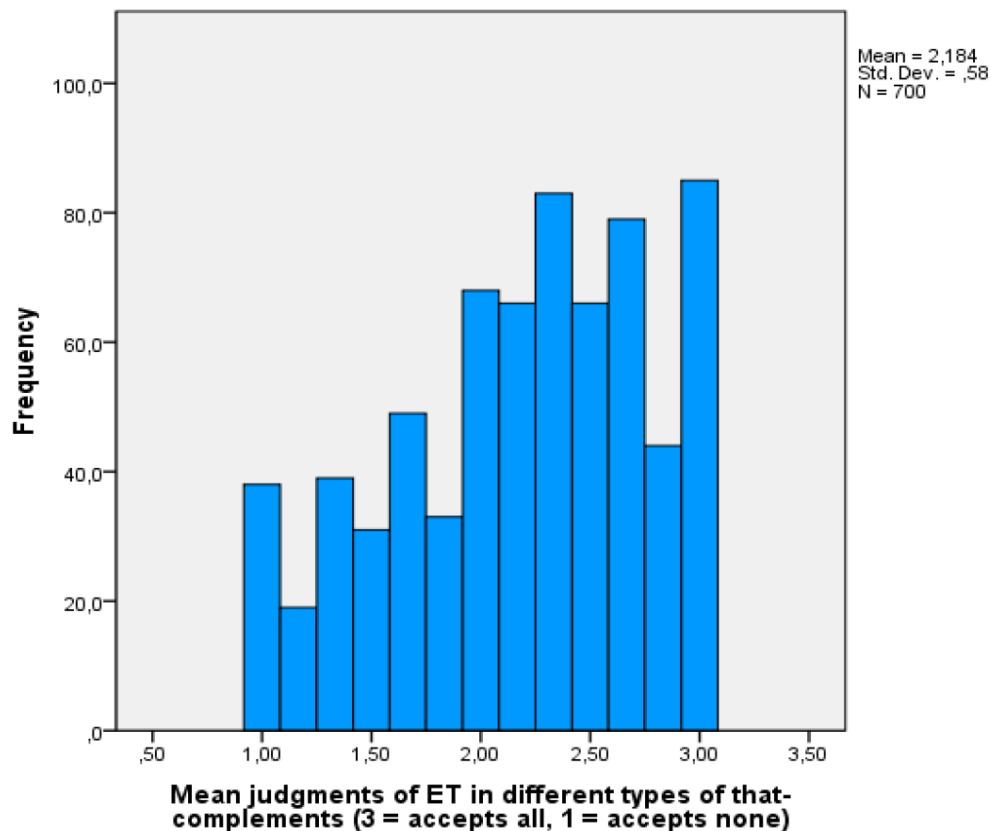
Comment:

Typically more highly rated than the XP-fronting

IceDiaSyn, 6

Evidence for a dialect split?

Figure 2:
No evidence for
a bimodal
distribution here



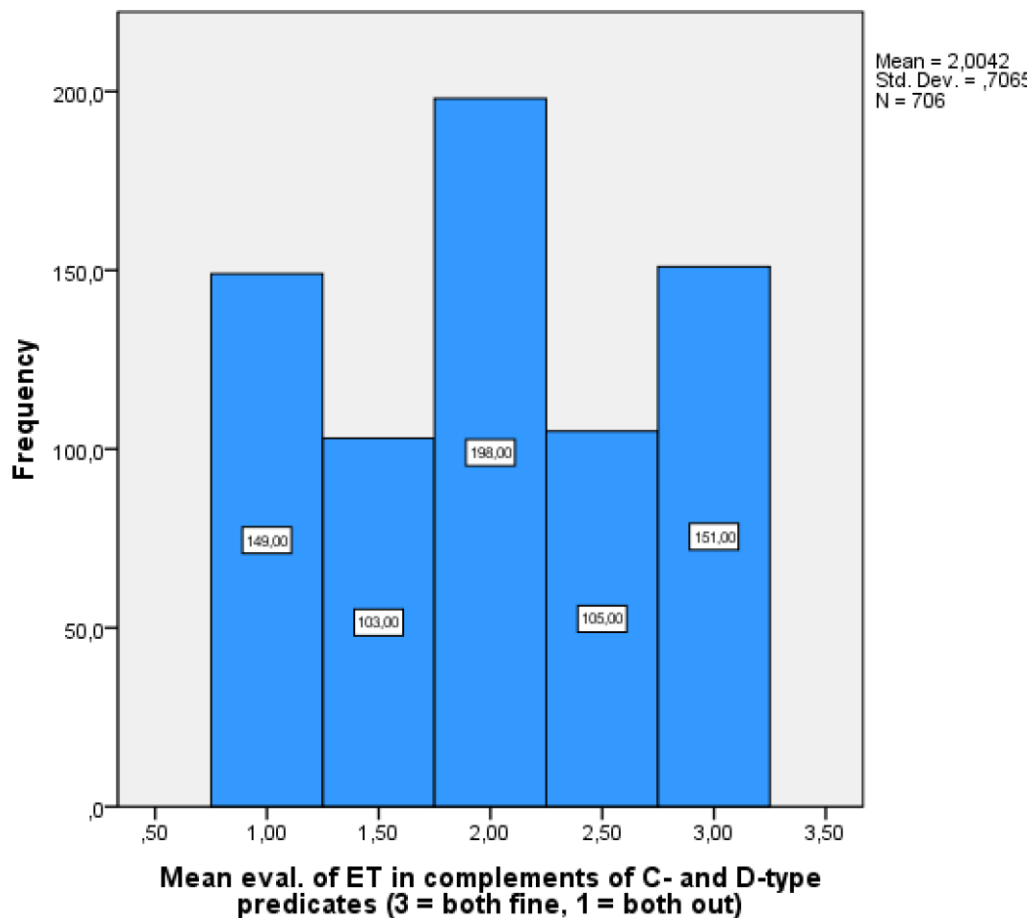
IceDiaSyn, 6

Evidence for a dialect split, 2:

Figure 3:

This cannot be said
to be bimodal either.

Is this Icelandic A, B, C, D
and E?





How long is the Icelandic alphabet?

25. Februar 2011

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Höskuldur Thráinsson: Icelandic A,B,C,D ...?

42





Some converging results

Several large, but different, overviews indicate that upon closer inspection variation is not as neat as we would like it to be: intra-speaker variation is much more common than we typically pretend. Examples:

- The ET data just presented (cf. also HSH's results) (**judgments**)
- Subject case marking in Icelandic and Faroese (cf. Jónsson and Eythórsson 2007, Thráinsson 2010b). (**judgments and production (fill-ins)**)
- V-to-I in Faroese (cf. HSH, Thráinsson 2001, Thráinsson et al. 2004) (**judgments and production**)
- Various phonological variables in Icelandic (cf. Guðfinnsson 1946, Árnason and Thráinsson 2003). (**production**)



... and this means?

The extensive intra-speaker variation just mentioned could mean different things:

- variation that we thought was parametric is not parametric at all
- our notion of parameters as having binary values that are learned early on is too simplistic — it may take a long time to acquire the “correct” parametric values, especially in an environment with (disturbing) variation (cf. recent work by Yang (e.g. 2010 w. refs.) and Kroch’s ideas of competing grammars (e.g. 2001 w.refs.))
- maybe the notion of parameters is overrated and we should concentrate more on (restricted) rules (cf. Newmeyer 2004)



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