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Contents

On the internal and external syntax of adverbial clauses in Faroese: causal and temporal clauses	1
<i>Ásgrímur Angantýsson & Caroline Heycock</i>	
Split and double infinitives in Icelandic	26
<i>Jóhannes Gíslí Jónsson</i>	
Non-subject initial clauses and the left periphery in Icelandic: A distributional approach	41
<i>Elena Callegari & Ásgrímur Angantýsson</i>	

On the internal and external syntax of adverbial clauses in Faroese: causal and temporal clauses*

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Abstract

Recent and current research into the syntax of adverbial clauses has been investigating their external syntax (in particular where they attach to their host clause), their internal syntax (in particular whether or not they exhibit certain “root phenomena,” including V2), and how these two aspects may be connected. This paper investigates how some of these issues play out in causal and temporal adverbial clauses in Faroese. We draw on existing work on causal clauses in Icelandic, and demonstrate that Faroese also exhibits a correlation between attachment site, type of causal interpretation, and the possibility of argument fronting within the adverbial clause. We then turn to temporal clauses to investigate the hypothesis that the constraints on argument fronting are due to A'-movement within the adverbial clause. We show that there is positive evidence for the existence of such A'-movement only in a subset of temporal clauses (extending observations that have been made for other languages), posing a challenge for the intervention account of this restriction in adverbial clauses.

1 Introduction

There is a growing body of research into the syntax of adverbial clauses, which has been investigating both the external and the internal syntax. Questions that arise for the former include in particular where exactly adverbial clauses occur within the structure of their matrix clause, and what—if any—the semantic and/or pragmatic consequences of different attachment sites are. Questions that arise for the latter have tended to focus on the reasons for the distribution of “root” and “non-root” phenomena in adverbial clauses. As is typical, our understanding of these issues has been increasing with research into crosslinguistic similarities and differences.

In this paper, we aim to contribute to this enterprise by investigating these issues as they present in the syntax of Faroese. As this language has been less comprehensively described than a number of the other Germanic languages, we begin in Section 2 with a brief overview of some of the main types of adverbial clauses in Faroese. We show how the distribution of restrictions

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on argument fronting in this language supports at least a two-way distinction between Central Adverbial Clauses (CACs) and Peripheral Adverbial Clauses (PACs), as in Haegeman (2012). In Section 3 we then focus on one type of causal adverbial clause introduced by *av-tí-at*. We show that consideration of a wider range of data—including, importantly, differences in interpretation—requires a three-way rather than two-way distinction between types of causal adverbials, as argued also for Icelandic in Angantýsson and Jędrzejowski (2023), drawing on Haegeman (2010, 2012) and Frey (2016).

One of the syntactic diagnostics that we discuss in Sections 2 and 3, and that has been much relied on in distinguishing between the different types of adverbial clauses, is the (un)availability of argument fronting. Drawing in particular on the analysis of temporal adverbial clauses going back to Geis (1970), Larson (1983), according to which these adverbial clauses are relatives, derived by *A'*-movement, Haegeman has argued that the blocking of argument fronting in central adverbials is an intervention effect. In Section 4 we investigate this question in the Faroese data, looking in more detail at some of the subtypes of temporal clauses and probing their similarity to relatives.

Finally, in Section 5 we summarise the results from Sections 3 and 4, including the questions that they raise when taken together, particularly concerning the analysis of restrictions on root phenomena—including argument fronting—as intervention effects.

2 A short overview of adverbial clause types in Faroese

According to Haegeman’s (2012) typology, central adverbial clauses are those that disallow argument fronting in English while some permit adjunct fronting. Peripheral adverbial clauses on the other hand allow both argument and adjunct fronting. Table 1 illustrates these two adverbial clause types.

In this section we experiment with argument fronting in various types of CACs and PACs in Faroese. For a similar overview of fronting in adverbial clauses in Icelandic, see Angantýsson and Jonas (2016, 2020). Let us first consider argument fronting in **temporal central adverbial clauses** introduced by *áðrenn* ‘before’ (1) and *tá ið* ‘when’ (2), compared with such fronting in a **contrastive peripheral adverbial clause** introduced by *meðan* ‘while’ (3):

- (1) a. Eg las aðru bók hennara **áðrenn** eg las ta fyrstu.
 I read second book her before I finished the first one
 ‘I read her second book before I finished the first one.’
- b. *Eg las aðru bók hennara **áðrenn** ta fyrstu endaði eg.
 I read second book her before the first one finished I
Literally: ‘I read her second book before the first one, I finished.’

Table 1: Adverbial clause types, based on (Haegeman 2012:p. 163, Table 4)

CACs		PACs	
<i>before/after/until</i>	(event time)	—	
<i>when</i>	(event time)	<i>when</i>	(contrast)
<i>since</i>	(event time)	<i>since</i>	(premise/cause)
<i>while</i>	(event time)	<i>while</i>	(concessive)
<i>if</i>	(event condition)	<i>if</i>	(conditional assertion)
—		<i>although</i>	(concessive)
—		<i>whereas</i>	(concessive)
<i>so that</i>	(purpose)	<i>so that</i>	(result)
<i>because</i>	(event cause/reason)	<i>because</i>	(rationale)

- (2) a. **Tá ið** hon byrjaði at skriva sínar vanligu greinar aftur helt eg at hon fór at
 when she began to write her regular columns again thought I that she would
 verða nógðari.
 be happier
 ‘When she started to write her regular columns again, I thought she would be happier.’
- b. ?**Tá ið** sínar vanligu greinar byrjaði hon at skriva aftur helt eg at hon fór at
 when her regular columns began she to write again thought I that she would
 verða nógðari.
 be happier
Literally: When her regular columns she started to write again, I thought she would be
 happier
- (3) a. Studentarnir bílögdu nýggj eintøk **meðan** teir høvdu tey gomlu lættliga kunnað
 students.the ordered new copies while they had the old.ones easily could
 brúkt.
 used
 ‘The students ordered new copies while they could easily had used the old ones.’
- b. Studentarnir bílögdu nýggj eintøk **meðan** tey gomlu høvdu teir lættliga kunnað
 students.the ordered new copies while the old.ones had they easily could
 brúkt.
 used
Literally: ‘The students ordered new copies, while the old ones they could easily have
 used.’

The central temporal adverbials (CACs) in (1b) and (2b) disallow or degrade argument fronting. On the other hand, argument fronting in the clause introduced by *meðan* ‘while’ in (3b) is fully grammatical. On the basis of the interpretation, this clause is a peripheral adverbial clause (PAC). At least on its most salient reading, it does not specify the time during which the event in the main clause took place, but has a “concessive” reading; it makes a statement that is intended to contrast with the one in the main clause. The fact that it allows argument fronting is therefore consistent with Haegeman’s typology.

In (4) we have **conditional** *um*-clauses of two types: an **event conditional** (CAC) in (4a), and a **conditional assertion** (PAC) in (4b). In the event conditional, as expected, argument fronting is not possible. It improves in the conditional assertion, although it is not perfect, at least not this particular example.

- (4) a. **Um** tú dumpar til hesa próvtøkuna klárar tú ikki skeiðið.
if you fail on this exam finish you not course.the
‘If you fail this exam you can’t finish the course.’
- b. ***Um** til hesa próvtøkuna tú dumpar kanst tú ikki klára skeiðið.
if on this exam you fail, can you not finish course.the
Literally: If this exam you fail, you can’t finish the course.
- c. ?**Um** til hesa serstöku próvtøku dumpar Haraldur, hví skuldi hann tá hildið fram?
if on this special exam fails Harald, why would he then go on
Literally: If this special exam Harald fails, why should he continue?

The **concessive** adverbial clauses in (5) allow argument fronting very easily, and so do the (intended) **purpose** clauses in (6) and the **result** clause in (7):

- (5) a. Eg las ikki aðru bók hennara lidna **tó at** fyrstu bókina dámði mér
I read not second book her finished although first book.the pleased me
væl.
well
‘Literally: I didn’t finish her second book although the first book, I really enjoyed.’
- b. Elin segði at bókin sum heild var heldur keðilig **hóast** einstakar kapitlar
Elin said that book.the in whole was rather boring although some chapters
kundi hon avgjört hugsað sær at lisið aftur.
could she well think herself to read again
Literally: ‘Elin said that the book as a whole was rather boring although some selected chapters she could imagine herself reading again.’
- (6) a. Eg las aðru bók hennara gjølla **so at** eg kundi skilja ta fyrstu
I read second book her carefully so that I could understand the first one
ordiliga.
properly
‘I read her second book carefully so that I could understand the first one properly.’

- b. Eg las aðru bók hennara gjølla **so at** ta fyrstu kundi eg skilja
 I read second book her carefully so that the first one could I understand
 ordiliga.
 properly
Literally: I read her second book carefully so that the first one I could understand
 properly.

- (7) Eg misti samband við studentaskúlavinir mínar **so at** fæstu teirra sá eg aftur.
 I lost contact with college friends my so that fewest of them saw I again
Literally: 'I lost contact with my college friends, so that most of them I didn't see again.'

Overall, there is a clear contrast between central and peripheral clauses with respect to the possibility of argument fronting. The apparent exception is the acceptability of fronting in the purpose clause (6b) which should be a CAC in Haegeman's typology. Similar facts hold true for Icelandic (see Angantýsson and Jonas 2016). This may be because the example can actually be interpreted as a result clause, rather than purpose. That seems a possible parse of the sentence in English, and according to one of our language consultants this holds true for Faroese as well (Annika Simonsen, p.c.).

3 Causal clauses

3.1 Different interpretations of causal clauses in Faroese

According to Sweetser, causal clauses can be interpreted on three cognitive levels (Sweetser 1990:p. 77, ex. 1a–c):

- (8) a. John came back because he loved her.
 b. John loved her, because he came back.
 c. What are you doing tonight, because there's a good movie on.

In the content or eventuality domain (8a) the proposition embedded in the causal clause is interpreted as a fact causing another fact (eventuality-related causal clause = **ERC**). In the epistemic domain (8b), the speaker specifies the reason for why he or she thinks the matrix clause is true (evidential causal clause = **EC**). Finally, the speech act causal clause in (8c) reveals the motivation for why the speaker is performing a speech act; it gives the cause of the speech act associated with the matrix clause (speech act related causal clause = **SAR**).

Based on Angantýsson and Jedrzejowski's (2023) analysis of *af-því-að*-clauses in Icelandic we adopt the following two main hypotheses regarding the status of causal *av-tí-at*-clauses in Faroese:

H1: Semantically, *av-tí-at*-clauses can be interpreted as eventuality related (ERC), evidential (EC) and speech act related (SAR) causal clauses.

H2: Syntactically, *av-tí-at*-clauses can be analyzed as

- (a) central adverbial clauses (interpreted as ERCS throughout),
- (b) peripheral adverbial clauses (interpreted as ERCs or as ECs),
- (c) disintegrated adverbial clauses (not restricted to any particular semantic interpretation).

Bringing together H1 and H2, we argue that

- *av-tí-at*-clauses are not restricted to any particular semantic interpretation
- they can attach—depending on their interpretation—at three distinct structural heights with regard to the host clause: i) Tense Phrase (TP), ii) Judge Phrase (JP), and iii) Act Phrase (AP)
- they can only be eventuality related if they attach at the TP level, whereas higher merge positions allow additional interpretations: epistemic or/and speech act related.

According to our consultants, *av-tí-at*-clauses in Faroese can be employed as all of ERCs, ECs and SARs, but note the obligatory absence of *av* in the SAR in (9c).¹ The initial categorisation of these three clauses is made on the basis of their interpretations. In (9a) the causal clause is eventuality-related (ERC): it gives the reason for the event denoted by the main clause to have taken place. In (9b) the causal clause is evidential (EC): it gives evidence supporting the truth of the statement in the main clause. In (9c) the causal clause is speech-act related (SAR): it gives the motivation for speech act corresponding to the clause it modifies (e.g. in this case it explains why the speaker is asking the question).

- (9)
- a. Jón kom aftur, (av) tí at hann elskaði hana
Jón came back because he loved her
'Jón came back because he loved her.'
 - b. Jón elskaði hana, (av) tí at hann kom aftur.
Jón loved her because he came back
'John loved her, because he came back.'
 - c. Hvat gert tú í kvøld, (*av) tí at tað er ein góður filmur í biografnum.
what do you tonight because there is a good film in the cinema
'What are you doing tonight, because there's a good film on at the cinema?'

Examples (9a–c) are exactly comparable to (8a–c) in English, strongly supporting H1.

¹As far as we are aware, *at* is optional in all three types of these causal clauses in Faroese; we don't note this specifically in the examples.

3.2 The external syntax of *av-tí-at*-clauses in Faroese

Frey (2016) discusses four syntactic tests for the degree of integration of *weil* ‘because’ clauses in German:

- (i) binding
- (ii) prefield position
- (iii) embeddability (attachment to a *that*-clause)
- (iv) V-to-C movement in the subordinate clause.

We discuss these in turn. In relation to the fourth test, we explore the possibility of the exceptional *V_{fin}-Adv* order in subordinate clauses. Since *subject – finite verb (V_{fin}) – sentence adverb*, which is the default word order in main clauses, is quite difficult in non-V2 contexts in modern Faroese, we hypothesize that this word order will be most acceptable in SARs (presumably most similar to main clauses), less so in ECs (more embedded than SARs) and least acceptable in ERCs.

The first test concerns quantifier relations in Faroese *av-tí-at*-clauses and the distinction between ERCs (eventuality related), on the one hand, and ECs (epistemic) and SARs (speech-act related), on the other. It is a well-established observation that a quantifier can bind an agreeing pronoun occurring in the subordinate clause iff the quantifier c-commands the pronoun. In consequence, if causal clauses attach at different structural heights, they are expected to differ with regard to binding. This expectation is borne out in Faroese, as the following data illustrate:²

- (10) a. Næstan hvør einasti luttakari_i var bleikur (av) tí at hann_i var bangin.
 nearly every single participant was pale because he was afraid
 ‘Nearly every single participant_i was pale because he_i was afraid.’
- b. *Næstan hvør einasti luttakari_i má vera sjúkur, (av) tí at hann_i er bleikur.
 nearly every single participant must be sick because he is pale
Intended: ‘Nearly every single participant_i must be sick, because he_i is pale.’
- c. *Næstan hvør einasti luttakari_i er sjúkur, (av) tí at tú altíð ert so áhugaður í
 nearly every single participant is sick because you always are so interested in
 honum_i.
 him
Intended: ‘Nearly every single participant is sick, since you are always so interested
 in him_i.’

²We translate *av tí at* as *since* in the examples where it introduces a speech-act related (SAR) causal clause, as in English it can be difficult to get this interpretation with *because*. Recall that in this interpretation, the adverbial clause gives the reason for the speech act (typically, where the main clause is a statement, this means that the SAR causal adverbial is explaining why the speaker thinks their statement is relevant to their interlocutor).

Thus, Faroese, like German and Icelandic, allows variable binding into the ERC, as in (10a), while the EC, (10b), and the SAR, (10c), disallow such binding.

The second test regards the prefield position of the matrix clause and the special status of speech act related causal clauses (SARs) as opposed to the two other clause types:

- (11) a. (Av) tí at hon er sjúk, er Maria ógvuliga bleik.
because she is sick is Maria very pale.
Because she is so sick, Maria is very pale.
- b. (Av) tí at hon er so bleik, man Maria vera sjúk.
because she is so pale must Maria be ill
'Because she is so pale, Maria must be ill.'
- c. *(Av) tí at tú altíð ert so áhugaður í henni, er Maria sjúk.
because you always are so interested in her is Maria sick
Intended: 'Since you are always so interested in her, Maria is ill.'

Both the ERC in (11a) and the EC in (11b) can easily occupy the prefield position of the matrix clause, but the SAR in (11c) cannot be a part of the matrix clause. Again, this is the same pattern as in Icelandic.

The **third** test also concerns the special status of speech act related causal clauses (SARs):

- (12) a. Petur segði Mariu, [_{CP} at hon var so bleik, [_{CP} (av) tí at hon var so bangin]].
Petur told Maria that she was so pale because she was so frightened.
'Petur told Maria that she was so pale because she was so frightened.'
- b. Petur segði Mariu, [_{CP} at hon mundi vera sjúk, [_{CP} (av) tí at hon var so bleik]].
Petur told Maria that she must be sick because she was so pale
'Petur told Maria that she must be sick, because she was so pale.'
- c. *Petur segði Mariu, [_{CP} at Fríðrik var argur, [_{CP} (av) tí at hon altíð var so
Petur told Maria that Fríðrik was annoyed because she always was so
áhugað í honum]].
excited for him
'Petur told Maria that Fríðrik was annoyed, since she always was so excited to see
him'

As in German and Icelandic, SARs in Faroese—contrary to the other two types—cannot be **embedded** along with a selected *that*-clause.

The **fourth** test concerns the relative order of the finite verb and a sentence adverb like negation in different types of causal clauses in Faroese (in all cases, the default order would be *adverb–finite verb*).

- (13) a. ?Jón spyr og spyr, [_{CP} (av) tí at hann veit ikki].
Jón asks and asks because he knows NEG
'Jón asks and asks because he doesn't know.'

- b. ?Jón man vita alt um málið, [_{CP} (av) tí at hann spyr ekki].
 Jón must know everything about case.the because he asks NEG
 ‘Jón must know everything about the case, because he doesn’t ask.’
- c. Ætlar tú einsamallur í biograf, [_{CP} (*av) tí at tú spurði ekki, um eg vildi
 intend you alone to cinema because you asked NEG if I wanted
 koma við].
 come.INF with
 ‘Are you going to the cinema on your own, because you didn’t ask if I wanted to come
 along?’

“Icelandic-like” *Vfin*–Adv order of this type is difficult or impossible in non-V2 contexts. The prediction that this order should be easiest to get in disintegrated adverbial clauses like (13c) is borne out. The epistemic adverbial clause in (13b) is somewhat degraded and the same holds true for the eventually related one in (13a). Thus, apparently, we have an additional test providing fine-grained distinctions between adverbial clauses in an asymmetrical V2 languages like Faroese, i.e. central/peripheral clauses on the one hand and disintegrated clauses on the other hand.³

Based on we have seen so far, we can recapitulate our observations as in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected properties of causal *av-tí-at*-clauses in Faroese

	causal clause type	binding	prefield position	embeddability	<i>Vfin</i> –Adv order
1.	eventuality related	+	+	+	-
2.	epistemic	-	+	+	?/+
3.	speech act related	-	-	-	+

Following and extending the analysis of adverbial clauses developed by Haegeman (2003, 2010, 2012), Frey (2016, 2023) proposes to analyze the three different causal clauses along the lines of Table 3.

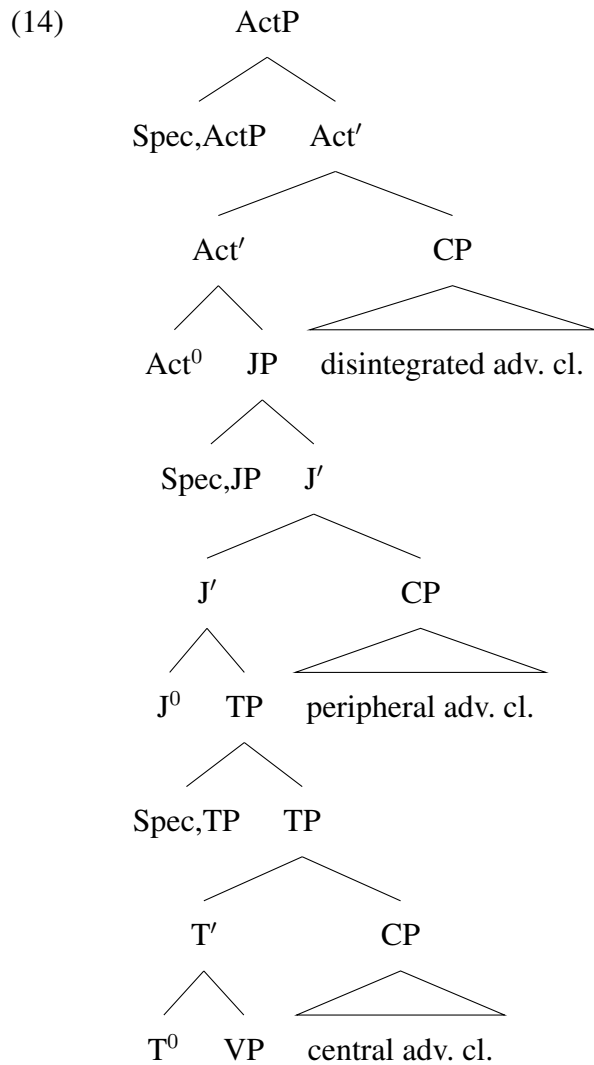
Whereas **central** adverbial clauses are claimed to depend on the illocutionary force of the matrix clause, be part of it and attach at the **TP** level, **peripheral** adverbial clauses are associated with the high functional projection **ForceP/JP** and possess their own illocutionary force. Disintegrated adverbial clauses always have independent illocutionary force, are not part of the syntactic structure of the host clause, are true orphans in the sense of Haegeman (2009), and combine with the matrix clause by establishing a rhetorical discourse relation.

These ideas, together with the proposals in Krifka (2023), lead to the prediction that speech act-related causal clauses (SARs) should attach as ActP modifiers, epistemic causal clauses (ECs) as JP or ActP modifiers, and eventuality-related causal clauses (ERCs) as TP, JP, or ActP modifiers:

³It should be noted that there is some evidence that *Vfin*–Adv order may be more acceptable in causal clauses in Faroese than might be expected. See Heycock et al. (2012) for data and discussion.

Table 3: Causal clauses, their syntactic status and possible interpretations in Frey (2016, 2023)

	adverbial clause type	possible interpretation	attachment height	
			Frey (2016)	Frey (2023)
1.	central adverbial	content	TP	TP
2.	peripheral adverbial	content, epistemic	ForceP	JP
3.	disintegrated dependent	content, epistemic, speech act related	outside the matrix clause structure	outside the matrix clause structure



If causal clauses are base-generated in the dedicated functional projections, they are expected to

host adverbial modifiers associated with the particular functional projections. Angantýsson and Jedrzejowski (2023) argue that this prediction is borne out in Icelandic. This needs to be tested for Faroese as well but it is beyond the scope of this article.

3.3 Causal ‘*av tí at*’ clauses: conclusion

In this section, we investigated the syntax of causal clauses in Faroese introduced by the morphologically complex complementizer(s) (*av*) *tí at*. Semantically, we showed that *av-tí-at*-clauses are not restricted to any particular causal interpretation in terms of Sweetser’s (1990) classification, with the exception that *av* is obligatorily absent in speech-act related causal clauses (SARs). Correspondingly, *av-tí-at*-clauses can give rise to a content, an epistemic or a speech act related interpretation, which are encoded in the grammar and do not come about just via pragmatic reasoning. Syntactically, *av-tí-at*-clauses can be analyzed as central, peripheral or disintegrated adverbial clauses, attaching at three distinct structural heights: TP, JP and ActP.

4 Temporal clauses

In contrast to causal adverbial clauses, the background assumption in the current literature concerning the 3-way distinction discussed above is that temporal adverbial clauses are always **central** adverbials (CACs). While (!) certain conjunctions that can introduce temporal adverbials can also have epistemic or speech-act related interpretations, when they do, the adverbial clause no longer gets a temporal interpretation. Cases in Faroese (as in related languages) include *meðan* ‘while’ and *síðan* ‘since.’

As noted above, one diagnostic for CACs is that they do not allow argument fronting. As Haegeman (2009) has documented for the corresponding sentences with English *while*, it is particularly striking that such fronting is possible when *meðan* is used in a non-temporal sense (introducing a peripheral adverbial clause (PAC)) but blocked when in its temporal sense. We repeat the earlier examples of Faroese temporal clauses here, showing their resistance to argument fronting:

- (15) a. Eg las aðru bók hennara **áðrenn** eg las ta fyrstu.
 I read second book her before I finished the first one
 I read her second book before I finished the first one.
- b. *Eg las aðru bók hennara **áðrenn** ta fyrstu endaði eg.
 I read second book her before the first one finished I
 Literally: ‘I read her second book before the first one, I finished.’

- (16) a. **Tá ið** hon byrjaði at skriva sínar vanligu greinar aftur helt eg at hon fór at
when she began to write her regular columns again thought I that she would
verða nøgdari.
be more happy
'When she started to write her regular columns again, I thought she would be happier.'
- b. ?**Tá ið** sínar vanligu greinar byrjaði hon at skriva aftur helt eg at hon fór at
when her regular columns began she to write again thought I that she would
verða nøgdari.
be more happy
Literally: 'When her regular columns she started to write again, I thought she would
be happier.'

The ungrammaticality or marginal status of the examples of fronting in (15b) and (16b) contrasts with the grammaticality of such fronting in a PAC such as we see in (17), where *meðan* 'while' can be interpreted in a non-temporal sense:

- (17) a. Studentarnir bíløgdu nýggj eintøk **meðan** teir høvdu tey gomlu lættliga kunnað
students.the ordered new copies while they had the old.ones easily could
brúkt.
used
'The students ordered new copies while they could easily had used the old ones.'
- b. Studentarnir bíløgdu nýggj eintøk **meðan** tey gomlu høvdu teir lættliga kunnað
students.the ordered new copies while the old.ones had they easily could
brúkt.
used
Literally: 'The students ordered new copies, while the old ones they could easily have
used.'

Of course this gives rise to the question of why the diagnostic works. That is, why is fronting of an argument blocked in a CAC? One strand of argumentation here is inspired specifically by already existing analyses of the internal structure of temporal adverbial clauses.

Since the seminal dissertation of Geis (1970), and subsequent work by Larson (1983), it has been very widely agreed in the syntactic literature that English *when*-adverbial clauses are essentially free relatives, formed by A'-movement of *when* as a temporal operator. Some of the strongest motivation for this is Geis's observation that such clauses can be ambiguous, in a way that such an analysis predicts, given the possibility of cyclic A' movement:

- (18) Jo arrived when I said that she would arrive.
Ambiguous between
Jo arrived when_i [I said t_i [she would arrive]] (Jo arrived as I spoke)
Jo arrived when [I said [she would arrive t_i]] (Jo arrived according to my projection)

Further, and crucially, the “low” reading that is derived by movement from an embedded clause is blocked by syntactic islands, again as expected if A' movement is involved. Thus (19) is unambiguous, contrasting with (18), because in (19) the low reading would require there to have been A' movement from within *the claim she would arrive*, but this is a complex NP island which is expected to block such movement.

- (19) Jo arrived when I made the claim she would arrive.
Unambiguous: Jo arrived as I made the claim

Although temporal clauses introduced by *before* and *after* do not have the surface form of free relatives, they show the same ambiguity, and the same island effects, and therefore have been analysed also as involving A' movement, in this case of a null operator of some kind:

- (20) Jo arrived before/after I said she would arrive
Ambiguous between
 Jo arrived before/after \emptyset_i [I said t_i [she would arrive]]
 (Jo arrived before/after I spoke)
 Jo arrived before/after \emptyset_i [I said [she would arrive t_i]]
 (Jo arrived before/after the time that I had projected)

- (21) Jo arrived before/after I made the claim she would arrive.
Unambiguous: Jo arrived before/after I made the claim.

The involvement of A'-movement in these clauses was used in Haegeman (2009, 2010)—and much work following her lead—as an explanation for why these clauses do not allow for topicalization of arguments (and some other types of movement). Any such movement would create an **INTERVENTION EFFECT**, preventing the movement of the temporal operator. As discussed in Heycock (2017), this is an elegant account of the ungrammaticality of topicalization in temporal clauses which relies almost entirely on widely accepted and independently motivated proposals (the involvement of A' movement in temporal clause construction and in topicalization, and the existence of intervention effects on A'-movement).

However, the fact that English *when*, *before*, and *after* temporal clauses involve A' movement does not entail that the same is necessarily true for all temporal clauses, whether in English or in other languages. And indeed a growing collection of papers have argued that some temporal adverbial clauses in other languages may fail to show evidence of A'-movement. In most of the cases discussed, there is a contrast within the language: i.e. some temporal clauses may allow “low” readings while others do not. See e.g. Lipták (2005) and Ürögdi (2009) on Hungarian, Stephens (2006) on Norwegian, Oda and Tatsumi (2017) on Japanese, Yip (2021) on Cantonese, Yip and

Chen (2022) on Mandarin.

This then is one question that we have been beginning to probe within Faroese: namely, what evidence do we find in Faroese concerning the **internal** structure of temporal adverbials, and does that correlate with their resistance to argument fronting?

4.1 Overview of Faroese temporal adverbial clauses

Given that there is limited availability of documentation on the syntax of Faroese, we begin with an overview of some of the most common elements introducing temporal adverbial clauses in Faroese. Unless indicated otherwise, all take finite complements. For further exemplification, see Thráinsson et al. 2012:318–319, from which some of the following examples are taken.

tá (ið) ‘when’

- (22) Jón flutti til Reykjavíkar, **tá (ið)** hann var 10 ára gamal.
 Jón moved to Reykjavik when that he was 10 years old
 ‘Jón moved to Reykjavik when he was 10 years old.’

nú (ið) ‘now that’

- (23) **Nú ið** hann sær hana, minnist hann alt aftur.
 now that he sees her remembers he everything again
 ‘Now that he sees her, he remembers everything again.’ [Thráinsson et al. 2012:318⁴]

*áðrenn (at)*⁵ ‘before’

- (24) Eg ætlaði at rudda, **áðrenn** gestirnir koma.
 I intended to clean.up before guests.the arrive
 ‘I intended to clean up before the guests arrived’

innan ‘before’

- (25) Eg verði liðugur, **innan** tú kemur.
 I become ready before you arrive
 ‘I will be done (ready) before you arrive’ [Thráinsson et al. 2012:319]

fyr enn ‘until’ (note that *fyr enn* is always a Negative Polarity Item; it cannot be used to translate English *until* in positive contexts, as for example in *I was here until she arrived*)

⁴This example is translated in Thráinsson et al. (2012) as ‘When he sees her, he remembers everything again,’ but *nú ið* seems to be closer to ‘now that’ in its interpretation, which retains at least some of the deictic interpretation of *nú* ‘now’. Thus, while it could be translated as ‘when’ in this example, it is impossible if the event in the adverbial clause has not actually taken place (e.g. it could not be used to translate ‘when’ in a sentence like ‘Please say hello when you see her.’)

⁵The inclusion of *at* may be more common in spoken than in written Faroese (Hjalmar Petersen, pc.)

- (26) Einki er liðugt **fyrir enn** alt er liðugt.
 nothing is completed until everything is completed
 ‘Nothing is completed until everything is completed.’

eftir (at) ‘after’ (note that, unlike *innan* or *áðrenn* ‘before’, *eftir* can select either a finite or an infinitival clause)

- (27) a. Tær tosaðu leingi saman, **eftir (at)** hann fór.
 they talked long together after that he left
 ‘They talked together for a long time after he left.’
- b. **Eftir at** hava ligið í Skopun mestsum allan dagin við tekniskum breki, kundi Teistin umsíður klokkan 17.30 loysa og fara í sigling aftur.
 Teistin around o’clock 17.30 untie and go to sailing again
 ‘After having lain in Skopun all day with a technical fault, at around 17.30 Teistin could set sail again.’

frá tí at ‘since’

- (28) Nógv er broytt, **frá tí at** handilin var stovnaður.
 much is changed since business.the was founded
 ‘Much has changed since the business was founded.’

síðan ‘since’

- (29) Eg havi einki hoyrt frá honum, **síðan** hann fór.
 I have nothing heard from him since he left
 ‘I haven’t heard anything from him since he left.’

(best/beint/alt fyri eitt) sum ‘(just) as’

- (30) a. **Sum** tíðin gongur, skiftir fokus so líðandi frá bjargingararbeiði til...
 as time.the goes shifts focus so gradually from rescue.work to
 ‘As time passes, focus shifts from the work of rescue to ...’
- b. Han ringdi **beint sum** vit skuldu seta okkum til borðs.
 he rang just as we should set us to table
 ‘He phoned just as we were about to eat.’

*meðan (ið)*⁶ ‘while’

- (31) Lærarin fyrireikaði seg, **meðan** næmingarnir ikki vóru í húsinum.
 the.teacher prepared self while students.the not were in building.the
 ‘The teacher got ready while the students were not in the building.’

⁶The variant with *ið* is more typical of the spoken than the written language; there is no discernible difference in meaning (Hjalmar Petersen, pc.).

til ‘until’

- (32) Teir gingu áfram, **til** teir komu at ánni.
 they walked onward until they came to river.the
 ‘They walked on until they came to the river.’

ferð ‘time, occasion’

- (33) a. Eg bleiv dýggjvátur **ta ferðina** eg fór til Glasgow utan regnjakka.
 I became soaked that time I went to Glasgow without raincoat.
 ‘I got soaked the time I went to Glasgow without a raincoat.’
 b. Hon rennur yvir til hurðina, **hvørja ferð** hurðarklokkann ringir.
 she runs over to door.the, every time doorbell.the rings
 ‘She runs to the door every time/whenever the doorbell rings.’

A number of these clause-introducing “conjunctions” are also prepositions that can combine with DPs: this is true at least for *áðrenn* ‘before,’ *eftir* ‘after,’ *innan* ‘before,’ *meðan* ‘while, during,’ *síðan* ‘since,’ *til* ‘until.’ *Fyrr enn* ‘until’ is formally a comparative form, again it can occur also with DPs. Some also appear without complements, functioning as adverbs: at least *síðan* ‘since’, *áðrenn* ‘before,’ *meðan* ‘while, in the meantime,’ *eftir* ‘after(wards)’

4.2 Internal syntax of temporal adverbial clauses

4.2.1 Background: temporal clauses formed by A'-movement of a temporal operator

As mentioned above, Haegeman (2009, 2010) has argued that the ungrammaticality of argument fronting (and by extension *Vfin*–Adv order) in temporal—and other—central adverbial clauses (CACs) is an intervention effect: the A'-movement involved in argument fronting / V2 blocks the movement of the temporal operator. A problematic case for this view (acknowledged in Haegeman 2009) is that of temporal *while* clauses in English. These disallow fronting of arguments, but also do not allow for the “low” readings that are found in *when/before/after* clauses (i.e. they show no evidence for A'-movement of an operator). Thus although (34b) is grammatical on the non-temporal PAC reading, it cannot have the “low” temporal reading (I met her during the time of her purported stay in Paris) that is available in the minimally contrasting *when*-adverbial in (34a).

- (34) a. I met her in London when the police claim she was in Paris
 b. I met her in London while the police claim she was in Paris.

We can then ask how Faroese fits into this picture? Do we find similar evidence for A' movement in some or all temporal clauses? If we do, do we also find similar disconnects between the diagnostics for CAC status and evidence for A' movement within the adverbial clauses?

4.2.2 Faroese temporal clauses with the form of relatives

Some Faroese temporal clauses appear to have the syntax of headed relatives, where the head is itself a time adverbial. This is the case for *tá* (*ið*), and *nú* (*ið*): *tá* appears elsewhere as an adverb meaning ‘then’, *nú* as ‘now’, and *ið* seems to be a complementiser mainly limited to relative clauses (and embedded interrogatives). Unsurprisingly, then, we find the same kind of ambiguity in *tá* (*ið*) time adverbials as has been found in such clauses in other languages, so (35) can mean either that he left at the time of speaking, or the projected time of leaving.

- (35) Hann fór, **tá** (**ið**) eg segði, hann skuldi fara.
 he left when (that) I said he should leave
 ‘He left when I said he should leave’

Note that *meðan* ‘while’—which, as mentioned above, in Faroese can also be used without modification as a temporal adverb—can also optionally be followed by *ið*, thus suggesting that it may also be followed by a relative clause. *Meðan* in its temporal use does not allow argument fronting, as shown in (36):

- (36) *Maria gekk til tímar **meðan** TÍNA bók brúktu tey men ikki meðan MÍN varð brúkt.
 Mary went to classes while your book used they but not while mine was used
Literally: ‘Mary went to classes while your book they used, but not while mine was used.’

Nevertheless, it seems that *meðan* even in its temporal use does not allow long-distance readings, like English temporal *while*, and contrasting with *tá* (*ið*) ‘when’ (Hjalmar Petersen, pc.). See for example the contrast between the (a) and (b) examples in (37)–(38)

- (37) a. Eg var í sjónleikarahúsinum, **tá** (**ið**) løgreglan sigur, morðið hendi.
 I was in theatre.the when (that) police.the says murder.the happened
 ‘I was in the theatre when the police say that the murder happened.’
Can mean: ‘I was in the theatre at the time that the police claim was the time of the murder.’
- b. Eg var í sjónleikarahúsinum, **meðan** (**ið**) løgreglan sigur, morðið hendi.
 I was in theatre.the while (that) police.the says murder.the happened
 ‘I was in the theatre while the police say that the murder happened.’
Cannot mean: ‘I was in the theatre at the time that the police claim was the time of the murder.’

- (38) a. Eg sá ikki Mariu í Berlin, **tá (ið)** hon sigur, at hon var har.
 I saw NEG Maria in Berlin when (that) she says that she was there
 ‘I didn’t see Maria in Berlin when she says that she was there.’
Can mean: ‘I didn’t see Maria in Berlin at the time that she claims was the time of her visit there.’
- b. Eg sá ikki Mariu í Berlin, **meðan (ið)** hon sigur, at hon var har.
 I saw NEG Maria in Berlin while (that) she says that she was there
 ‘I didn’t see Maria in Berlin while she says that she was there.’
Cannot mean: ‘I didn’t see Maria in Berlin during the time that she claims was the time of her visit there.’

As discussed above, in English also, temporal *while* clauses disallow ‘embedded root phenomena’ like other CACs, but do not allow long-distance readings, suggesting that their derivation does not involve *A'* movement. In Faroese the disconnect is even more remarkable, in that, as far as we can tell as this point, both the type of complementizer and the blocking of argument fronting suggest the involvement of *A'*-movement, making the absence of long-distance readings now doubly mysterious.

Temporal clauses with *ferð* ‘time, occasion’ also seem to have the form of relative clauses. These will be discussed separately in Section 4.2.5 below.

4.2.3 Temporal clauses introduced by *sum*

Temporal clauses may also be introduced by *sum*, possibly best translated as ‘as.’ Outside of temporal clauses, *sum* can appear in relatives as in (39a), alternating with *ið*, but it also occurs in a range of other constructions with a range of other meanings, including simulatives (Treis and Vanhove 2017; Massala 2023) as in (39b):

- (39) a. ... vátir og kaldir regndropar, sum ísa klæðini
 wet and cold raindrops that freeze clothes
 ‘... wet and cold raindrops that cover your clothes with ice’
- b. Hann rann, sum hann var óður
 he ran as he was mad
 ‘He ran like a madman.’ [Sprotin]

It can introduce what appear to be relatives headed by some word with a temporal reference, although it is hard to know whether here the *sum* clause is modifying *dagin* ‘day’ or is an independent adverbial clause:

- (40) ein dagin, sum teir vóru úti á havi, kom stormur inn
 one day as/that they were out at sea came storm in
 ‘One day, while they were out on the open sea, a storm broke.’ (Sprotin)

In the absence of a noun to modify, *sum* can introduce temporal adverbials, either on its own or in combination with *best*, *beint*, or *alt fyri eitt* as in the examples given above in (30). It is not clear what the internal syntax of such cases should be. Preliminary evidence suggests that operator movement is involved. For example, (41) is possible in the given scenario (Hjalmar P. Petersen, p.c.). This is a “long distance” reading presumably due to A'-movement in the temporal clause:

- (41) *Situation*: Two people working at the parliament are discussing the arrangements for the arrival of King Charles III. They were told he would arrive at exactly 3 o'clock. The manager wants the worker to open the door at exactly that time. The manager can say:

Tú skuldi latið portrini upp **beint sum** tað varð sagt okkum, at Karl kongur
 you should open the door up just as it was told us that Charles king
 skuldi koma.
 should come
 'Open the door just when we were told that King Charles will arrive.'

Similarly, (42) can have the reading that King Charles arrived just at the time predicted, again implying A'-movement of some operator from the embedded clause.

- (42) Karl kongur kom beint sum tú hevði sagt mær, hann skuldi koma.
 Charles king came just as you had told me he should come
 'King Charles arrived exactly when you had told me he would arrive.'

4.2.4 Faroese *áðrenn* 'before' and *eftir* 'after' temporal clauses

Temporal clauses introduced by *áðrenn* (*at*) 'before' and *eftir* (*at*) 'after' do not include anything that has the outward form of a relative; they seem to consist of a declarative clause, optionally introduced by the declarative complementizer *at*, following a preposition. However, they too show evidence of A' movement.

- (43) a. Hon kom **áðrenn** tú segði mær, hon skuldi koma.
 she came before you told me she should come
 'She arrived before you told me she would arrive.'
Faroese sentence is ambiguous, just as the English translation
- b. Hann kom, **eftir at** tú segði, hann skuldi koma
 he came after that you said he should come
 'He arrived after you said he would arrive.'
Faroese sentence is ambiguous, just as the English translation

As has been argued for English (see for example Larson 1990), it is possible to propose the movement of a silent operator here (and possibly also the existence of a silent nominal head—although this would make it surprising that the complementizer *ið* is not possible in these cases). We expect

argument fronting also to be blocked, and this appears to be the case, as evidenced by (1b) above, repeated here as (44):

- (44) *Eg las aðru bók hennara **áðrenn** ta fyrstu endaði eg.
 I read second book her before the first one finished I
Literally: ‘I read her second book before the first one, I finished.’

In Faroese, as noted above, *eftir*—but not *áðrenn*—can be followed by an **infinitival** clause (a similar pattern obtains for their equivalents in Icelandic). On our current evidence, here too the long-distance readings that are the hallmark of A'-movement are possible. Thus, in the following context, both (45a) and (45b) are possible responses:

- (45) *Situation:* Jógvan and Anna need to catch a plane. Jógvan spoke to Anna the previous night, and told her that he would pick her up from her house at 6 am. But in fact he arrived an hour late (at 7am), and they missed the flight. Afterwards Anna’s friend is talking to her and asks ‘So did Jógvan get to your house when he promised?’ Anna can answer:
- a. Nei! Hann kom **ein tíma eftir** hann segdi, hann skuldi koma.
 no he came one hour after he said he would come
 ‘No! he arrived an hour after he said he would come!’
 - b. Nei! Hann kom **ein tíma eftir** at hava sagt, hann skuldi koma.
 no he came one hour after to have said he would come
 No! he arrived an hour after he said (*lit: to have said*) he would come!’

The possibility of a ‘low’ reading with the infinitival temporal clause is perhaps not surprising, given that infinitival clauses in Germanic can often host operator movement. It is however worth noticing a contrast between this case and that of English “clausal gerund” complements to *before*, *after*, and *when*, which, as Johnson (1988) pointed out, exclude long-distance readings. That is, in the context given above, English (46) is anomalous as it can only mean that Jógvan arrived an hour after his conversation with Anna the previous night:

- (46) #No! He arrived an hour after saying he would come!

4.2.5 Quantified temporal clauses and event reference

In order to express a quantified temporal like *whenever*, Faroese makes use of *ferð* ‘time, occasion:’

- (47) Hon rennur yvir til hurðina, hvørja ferð hurðaklokkann ringir.
 she runs over to door.the every time doorbell.the rings
 ‘She runs to the door every time / whenever the doorbell rings.’

Such temporals can also appear unquantified, to refer to a specific time:

- (48) Eg bleiv dýggjvátur ta ferðina eg fór til Glasgow utan regnjakka.
 I got soaked that time.the I went to Glasgow without raincoat
 ‘I got soaked the time I went to Glasgow without a raincoat.’

Typically there is no complementizer or relativizer of any kind following *ferð*, but it is possible, although much less common, with *ið*.⁷ Thus it is reasonable to think that the structure here is again a relative clause modifying the noun *ferð*. Consistently with this, such expressions can also occur in argument positions:

- (49) Minnist tú ta ferðina vit fóru at spamera og tað byrjaði at oysregna?
 remember you that time.the we went to walk and it began to pour
 ‘Do you remember the time we went for a walk and it began to pour?’

Although the dictionary *Sprotin* gives ‘at that time, in those days’ as a possible translation of *tá ferð(ina)*, as far as we can tell, this is not quite correct. For example, it cannot be used to translate (50). Our current hypothesis is that *ferð* has to refer to an event, rather than directly to a time interval, as suggested in Hall & Caponigro 2010 for one reading of English *time*.

- (50) It was 1995. At that time, no one had a mobile phone.

- (51) Tað var í 1995. {Tá / #Ta ferð(ina)} hevði eingin fartelesfon.
 it was in 1995 then that time had no one mobile.phone
 ‘It was 1995. At that time no one had a mobile phone.’

While English can use *time* in this context (but only with a preposition—a bare NP adverb it is also infelicitous here, see Hall and Caponigro 2010) as well as in those in (47)–(49), Faroese is not unusual within the European languages in using a distinct noun when referring to events (cf. French *fois*, Spanish *vez*). In Heycock (2023) it is argued that this is part of a larger picture suggesting that there are syntactic as well as semantic (and lexical!) grounds for distinguishing between temporal expressions that denote time intervals and those that denote events. Rothstein (1995), in the course of a semantic analysis of the quantificational structure of English examples like *The dog barks every time the bell rings*, points out that the time adverbials in such examples, while having the form of relatives, seem to lack the ambiguities/long-distance readings that we have seen are associated with A'-movement. Similar cases have however never been explored (to our knowledge) in any language other than English. While clear test cases are hard to construct, it appears that in Faroese also these ‘event relatives’ are unambiguous, lacking long-distance readings.

Thus, for example, English (52b) is unambiguous, contrasting minimally with (52a)

⁷In some cases it is natural to introduce the clause after *ferð* with *at*. One of our consultants informed us that this would for example be natural in the example in (47), but would be excluded in (48), which instead would be possible with *sum* or *ið* (Annika Simonsen, pc.). This contrast remains to be explored.

- (52) a. We will look out for her on every day when she says she may visit.
 (i) We will look out for her on every day on which she makes an announcement about visiting *or*
 (ii) We will look out for her on every day that she specifies as a potential visiting day
- b. We will look out for her every time she says she may visit.
 (i) We will look out for her on every occasion on which she makes an announcement about visiting

The Faroese example with *ferð* appears to be unambiguous, like (52b) (Hjalmar P. Petersen, Annika Simonsen, p.c.):

- (53) Vit skulu hava eyga við henni hvørja ferð, (ið) hon sigur (frá), at hon kemur á vitjan.
 we should have eye on her every time that she says out that she comes on visit
 ‘We will look out for her every time she says she may visit.’
- (i) We will look out for her on every occasion on which she makes an announcement about visiting

So in an even more striking case than we saw with *meðan*, these examples with *ferð* show that temporal adverbial clauses that seem to have the form of relative clauses nevertheless may not allow long-distance movement of the hypothesized temporal operator.

5 Conclusions and directions for research

In this paper we have presented and analysed aspects of the external and internal syntax of adverbial clauses in Faroese. In our consideration of the external syntax, we have focussed on causal adverbial clauses, as this is a category which has been argued to attach at different heights, with related differences in interpretation. In our discussion of the internal syntax, on the other hand, we have focussed on temporal clauses, as—we argue—these present interesting challenges for accounts of restrictions on the left periphery of such adverbial clauses.

Beginning with issues relating to the subclassification of adverbial clauses and the relation between this and attachment position, we have argued that the syntax and semantics of **causal** *av-tí-at* adverbial clauses in Faroese motivates a three-way distinction (as was also the case for Icelandic) between eventuality related (ERC), evidential (EC) and speech act related (SAR) causal clauses. Relatedly, there are at least three distinct attachment sites for causal adverbial clauses, but there is not a one-to-one mapping between attachment site and interpretation. That is, there seems to be no restriction on how **high** the different types of causal clause can attach, but for each there is a *lower* limit. In contrast to Icelandic, where forms with and without the cognate of *av* seem to be in free variation, in Faroese *av* is excluded from speech act related (SAR) causal clauses.

Consistent with earlier results from other languages, ERCs in particular block argument fronting and—but apparently to a lesser extent—*Vfin*–Adv orders.

Turning to temporal clauses, we saw that these are similar in this respect, consistent with the assumption that they attach low. We then focussed on the question of how this restriction on argument fronting might be related to the internal syntax of such clauses. We demonstrated that at least some temporal clauses in Faroese show evidence of A'-movement, i.e. ambiguities arising from the different possible launching sites of movement. These kind of data have been at the heart of the “intervention” theory for limits on the distribution of some kinds of embedded root phenomena, in particular argument fronting and (in modern Faroese) *Vfin*–Adv orders). However, we showed that temporal *meðan* ‘while’ and *ferð* ‘time, occasion’ clauses seem to give rise to the same restrictions on argument fronting, but lack evidence for A'-movement.

This then gives rise to (at least) three questions to pursue in further research. First, what is the exact syntactic structure of temporal adverbial clauses in Faroese that allow long-distance A'-movement? What accounts for the distribution of the different complementisers (?) involved? Second, what is the syntactic structure of temporal adverbial clauses—in Faroese and in other languages—that appear not to allow long-distance A'-movement? And finally, if such temporal clauses do not in fact involve movement, does this undermine the intervention account of why argument fronting (among other phenomena) is blocked in central adverbial clauses (as was already argued on the basis of English *while* clauses in Sawada & Larson 2012). If so, what can replace (or supplement) it?

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Split and double infinitives in Icelandic

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Abstract A corpus study of *að*-infinitives in Icelandic reveals important data that have so far gone unnoticed in the theoretical literature. The study shows that Icelandic allows *split infinitives*, as some adverbs may occupy a position between the infinitival marker *að* and the infinitive verb in T. Roughly the same set of adverbs can also occur between two copies of the infinitive marker. This construction, which I will refer to as *double infinitives*, seems to be incredibly rare cross-linguistically although it has been reported for Norwegian (Faarlund 2015) and English (van Gelderen 2004). These data call for an analysis where the infinitive marker in Icelandic is first-merged in a low complementizer position (FinP) and moves to a higher complementizer position (ForceP), across an adverb left-adjoined to FinP. This yields the order *að* + adverb + *að* (double infinitives) if the lower copy of the infinitive marker is spelled out; however, if the lower copy is deleted, the resulting order is *að* + adverb + infinitive verb (split infinitives). This suggests that infinitival clauses can project a ForceP just like finite clauses, despite recent claims to the contrary (Satik 2022). Still, *að*-infinitives in Icelandic are structurally deficient compared to finite clauses as they show no evidence of any information-structural heads (such as Topic and WhP) in the left periphery.

1 Introduction

Infinitive markers show remarkable variation across the Scandinavian languages and this has been discussed in the generative literature since the early eighties (see Platzack 1983, Thráinsson 1993 and Christensen 2007 among others). Thus, the infinitive marker precedes negation in Icelandic and Swedish but follows negation in Danish and Faroese (Thráinsson et al. 2012:310-312). Norwegian (bookmål) is unique here in allowing both options (Faarlund 2019:248-249). In addition, the infinitive verb precedes the negation in Icelandic but follows the negation in Swedish and Norwegian.

Given the variation described above, each Scandinavian language must be carefully examined to determine the status of the infinitive marker in that language. In this paper, I will contribute to this goal by reviewing new data on the structural position of the infinitival marker *að* in Icelandic and the placement of what I will call high adverbs, i.e. adverbs that may precede the infinitival verb in *að*-infinitives as well as the inflected verb in finite clauses. I will argue below that the infinitive marker undergoes movement from Fin-to-Force, leaving a copy that is phonetically realized in double infinitives, whereas high adverbs left-adjoin to FinP. I will also discuss related phenomena in finite embedded clauses to see to what extent this analysis is applicable beyond infinitive clauses.

2 The status of the infinitive marker

As shown in (1) and (2) below, the infinitival marker *að* in Icelandic is homophonous with the complementizer *að* used in *that*-clauses:

- (1) Sigga reyndi að laga sjónvarpið
Sigga tried to fix television.the
'Sigga tried to fix the television.'
- (2) Einhver heldur að sjónvarpið sé bilað
somebody thinks that television.the is broken
'Somebody thinks that the television is broken.'

In view of this, it is not surprising that a popular analysis of the infinitival marker *að* in Icelandic holds that *að* is a complementizer in C (Platzack 1986, Sigurðsson 1989:52-56 and Johnson and Vikner 1994¹). The C-analysis of the infinitive marker *að* is not uncontroversial (Thráinsson 1993), but data from splitting and doubling in *að*-infinitives discussed in sections 3 and 4 strongly suggest that the C-analysis is basically correct, but with the important modification that the infinitive marker moves within the left periphery.

Another argument for the C-analysis is that the infinitive verb clearly undergoes verb raising to T (Thráinsson 1984, 1986), even if non-finite T is not associated with any inflectional features. This is shown by the fact that the infinitive precedes medial adverbs, including the negation:²

- (3a) Ég reyndi að ónáða ekki nágrannana
I tried to disturb not neighbours.the
'I tried not to disturb the neighbours.'
- (3b) *Ég reyndi að ekki ónáða nágrannana
I tried to not disturb neighbours.the

Since the infinitive marker *að* precedes the infinitive verb in T, it is natural to assume that *að* is in C. Importantly, the claim that *að* and the infinitive verb occupy two different positions makes it possible to account for cases where high adverbs intervene between the two elements (but see section 3 for further discussion).

As a consequence of V-to-T in *að*-infinitives, they behave like finite clauses in Icelandic with respect to Object Shift (Thráinsson 1993). Thus, Object Shift is possible with full DP objects but obligatory with unstressed pronouns if there is no auxiliary in the infinitival clause:

- (4a) Ég reyndi að gleyma ekki fundinum/*því
I tried to forget not meeting.the.DAT/it.DAT
'I tried not to forget the meeting/it.'
- (4b) Ég reyndi að gleyma **fundinum/því** ekki
I tried to forget meeting.the.DAT/it.DAT not

¹ Strictly speaking, Johnson and Vikner (1994) assume that *að* is in a higher C in a CP-recursion structure where the lower C is the landing site for the infinitive verb.

² Christensen (2007) gives an example similar to (2b) which he does not mark in any way but there is no doubt in my mind that examples where the negation precedes the infinite verb are ungrammatical. The corpus data reported here also show that examples of this kind are highly infrequent (see section 3).

A third argument for the C-analysis is that *að* is excluded from infinitives that are standardly assumed to be TPs rather than CPs, i.e. raising infinitives and ECM-infinitives:

- (5a) Tveir umsækjendur virtust (*að) vera óhæfir
two.NOM applicants.NOM seemed to be unqualified
'Two applicants seemed to be unqualified.'
- (5b) Nefndin taldi tvo umsækjendur (*að) vera óhæfa
committee.the believed two.ACC applicants.ACC to be unqualified
'The committee believed two applicants to be unqualified.'

Note that *að*-infinitives include not only control complements, as in (1), (3) and (4), since they can also be complements of modal and aspectual predicates. As discussed by Sigurðsson (1989:71-76), aspectual complements in Icelandic behave syntactically like CPs and thus pattern with control complements whereas modal complements with the infinitive marker *að* seem to be IPs. This means that the C-analysis may not be applicable to modal complements in Icelandic and the same applies to the analysis of split and double infinitives outlined in section 5 below.

3 Split infinitives

The term *split infinitive* is familiar from Modern English where it refers to the word order infinitive marker (*to*) - adverb - infinitive verb, which is possible with a wide array of adverbs. This is exemplified in (6) where the adverbs *seriously*, *suddenly* and *even* intervene between the infinitive marker and the infinitive verb.

- (6a) She ought to **seriously** consider her position
(6b) For me to **suddenly** resign my job is unthinkable
(6c) He wasn't able to **even** move his fingers
(Quirk et al. 1985:496)

In view of the obligatory verb raising in *að*-infinitives shown in (3), one might expect split infinitives to be excluded in Icelandic. However, searches in the Risamálheild Corpus (Barkarson et al. 2022) show that this is not quite correct. As discussed in more detail in section 3, split infinitives are possible in Icelandic with a small set of adverbs. Importantly, this class is largely equivalent to the class of adverbs that may intervene between two copies of the infinitive marker (see section 4) and precede the inflected verb in finite clauses (see 5.3 below). Adverbs in the last class are sometimes referred to as *V3 adverbs* (Thráinsson 2010, Angantýsson et al. 2023) but I will refer to the first class as *splitting adverbs*. As already stated, adverbs that belong to all three classes will be referred to as *high adverbs*.

Some representative examples of split infinitives from the Risamálheild Corpus (henceforth, RC) are shown in (7) below. It should be noted that all examples from RC in this paper are fully grammatical in my judgment unless otherwise noted.

- (7a) þegar hann er búinn að **nánast** útiloka annað
 when he is finished to almost exclude other...
 ‘when he has almost excluded other options...’ (Það skelfur - Endurminningar)
- (7b) Er hægt að **bara** brjótast inn í tölvupóst hjá fólki?
 is possible to just break into e-mail by people
 ‘Is it possible to just break into people’s e-mail?’ (Gleraugun hans Góa)
- (7c) Það er ekkert rangt við það að **hérna** teikna skopmyndir...
 there is nothing wrong with it to here draw caricatures
 ‘There is nothing wrong with drawing caricatures...’ (Bylgjan)
- (7d) Lögreglan hefur beðið fólk um að **vinsamlegast** leggja bílum...
 police.the has asked people about to kindly park cars
 ‘The police has asked people to kindly park (their) cars...’ (Fréttablaðið.is)
- (7e) við erum öll mikilvægir hlekkir í því að **virkeyga** bæta lífsgæði
 we are all important links in it to really improve life.quality
 ‘We are all important links in really improving the quality of life.’ (Bylgjan)
- (7f) Þú ert búinn að **fokking** skemma lífið mitt
 you are finished to fucking destroy life.the my
 ‘You have fucking destroyed my life’ (Héraðsdómstólar)

A majority of the examples of split infinitives that I have found in the RC come from media interviews. These include examples from radio stations (*Bylgjan* and *Rás 1 og 2*) as well as TV news (*Sjónvarpsfréttir RÚV*). Still, split infinitives are by no means limited to informal spoken language, especially if the splitting adverb is frequently used in more formal registers.

Table 1 lists the 29 most common adverbs found in splitting position in the RC.³ As this table shows, the discourse particle *bara* ‘just’ is by far the most frequently used splitting adverb in Icelandic, followed by *fokking* ‘fucking’, *svona* ‘so’, *hérna* ‘here’ and *hreinlega* ‘simply’. It is very hard to find a common semantic denominator for all these adverbs but most of them are probably best classified as focusing or intensifying adverbs. It is probably also quite telling that a clear majority of these adverbs resist topicalization; the ones that can be topicalized include *kannski* ‘maybe’, *mögulega* ‘possibly’ and *jafnvel* ‘even’. This is clearly reminiscent of V3 adverbs in Swedish (see Brandtler 2020 and references cited there) but this connection will not be explored here.

³ One of the 30 most frequent adverbs is the negation *ekki* (with 935 examples). It is left out here because the cases with negation in splitting position are less than 1% of all cases where negation is on either side of the infinitive verb. Note also that the numbers in Table 1 take into account various misspellings of individual adverbs.

Table 1	Splitting adverb	Number of examples
	bara ‘just’	3766
	fokking ‘fucking’	1685
	svona ‘so’	1288
	hérna ‘here’	1132
	hreinlega ‘simply’	985
	einfaldlega ‘simply’	610
	virðilega ‘really’	605
	kannski ‘maybe’	474
	nánast ‘almost’	438
	gjörðsamlega ‘completely’	348
	vinsamlegast ‘kindly’	318
	einmitt ‘exactly’	267
	mögulega ‘possibly’	246
	bókstaflega ‘literally’	239
	beinlínis ‘directly’	228
	allavega ‘at least’	228
	jafnvel ‘even’	236
	endilega ‘by all means’	189
	raunverulega ‘truly’	188
	hugsanlega ‘possibly’	175
	aðeins ‘only’	127
	sko ‘look, you know’	123
	líka ‘also’	95
	algjörlega ‘totally’	75
	loksins ‘finally’	75
	fyrirfram ‘in advance’	72
	endanlega ‘finally’	70
	næstum ‘almost’	68
	vísvitandi ‘deliberately’	66

The translations provided here should not be taken too literally because some of the adverbs are very difficult to translate, especially the discourse particles *hérna*, *svona*, *bara* and *sko*. To take *hérna* as an example, it appears that this word is mainly used to indicate hesitation or uncertainty when used as a splitting adverb. This is shown by the fact that there are 220 examples in the RC where *hérna* is followed by a comma in splitting position. Examples of this kind are found when the search string targets two words between the infinitive marker and the infinitive verb but these examples are not included in the number for *hérna* in Table 1.

Note that Table 1 only shows the total number of splitting orders for each adverb in the RC. In most cases, these orders are a small percentage of all relevant cases, i.e. splitting orders and orders where the adverb immediately follows the infinitive verb, but this requires further investigation.

For convenience, I will use the term *adverb* here not only to include single words but also PPs that have a similar function as adverbs as well as stacked adverbs. Examples of this kind are easy to find in splitting position in the RC:

- (8a) að hlaupa svona hratt án þess að í **rauninni** klára hlaupið
to run so fast without to in reality finish run.the
'to run so fast without really finishing the run' (ruv.is)
- (8b) að May hefði gert mistök með því að **til dæmis** sniðganga kappræður
that May had made mistake by it to for example avoid debates
'that May had made a mistake by avoiding debates' (Fréttablaðið.is)
- (8c) Er raunhæft... að **bara hreinlega** lifa bíllausum lífstíl?
is realistic to just simply live carless lifestyle
'Is it realistic...to just simply live a carless lifestyle?' (Sjónvarpsfréttir RÚV)
- (8d) Þá fórum við að **hérna svona** sjá fyrstu merki um þetta
then began we to here so see first signs of this
'then we started to see the first signs of this' (Rás 1 og 2)

It is also possible to place high adverbs right after the infinitive verb in *að*-infinitives. This is illustrated in (9):

- (9a) Er hægt að brjótast **bara** inn í tölvupóst hjá fólki?
is possible to break just into e-mail by people
'Is it possible to just break into people's e-mail?'
- (9b) við erum öll mikilvægir hlekkir í því að bæta **virðilega** lífsgæði
we are all important links in it to improve really life.quality
'We are all important links in really improving the quality of life.'
- (9c) ...að hlaupa svona hratt án þess að klára í **rauninni** hlaupið
...to run so fast without to finish in reality the.run
'...to run so fast without really finishing the run'
- (9d) Er raunhæft... að lifa **bara hreinlega** bíllausum lífstíl?
is realistic... to live just simply carless lifestyle
'Is it realistic...to simply live a carless lifestyle?'

In some cases, the relative order of adverb and the infinitive verb affects scope. For instance, the PP *til dæmis* in (8b) has scope over the whole VP *sniðganga kappræður*. By contrast, placing *til dæmis* after the verb yields the interpretation where *til dæmis* only scopes over the object *kappræður*. Thus, the splitting order in (8b) is not really an alternative to the order where the PP follows the infinitive.

4 Double infinitives

In the RC, there are various examples of doubling of the infinitive marker *að* although this is at least 20 times less common than splitting in *að*-infinitives. There is also a difference in the status of these two constructions as doubling is clearly more colloquial than splitting. The reason for this may be linked to the fact that doubling involves the phonetic realization of a

lower copy of the infinitive marker and this is clearly exceptional since lower copies are generally not spelled out. Some examples of doubling from the RC are shown in (10):

- (10a) mæli með **að** einmitt (**að**) flytja eitthvert annað en til London
 recommend to exactly to move somewhere else than to London
 ‘[I] recommend moving somewhere else than to London’ (Bland.is)
- (10b) sá fyrri er... **að** einfaldlega (**að**) hækka launin
 the former is to simply to raise salaries.the
 ‘the former [option] is to simply raise the salaries’ (Morgunblaðið)
- (10c) mig langar **að** bara (**að**) deila með ykkur gleði minni
 me wants to just to share with you joy my
 ‘I want to just share my joy with you’ (Bland.is)
- (10d) að sumir bara þurfi **að** hreinlega (**að**) læra að fyrirgefa
 that some just need to simply to learn to forgive
 ‘...that some people just need to simply learn to forgive’ (Málefni.com)
- (10e) Ég bað eiganda **að** vinsamlegast (**að**) fara með hundinn út
 I asked owner to kindly to go with dog.the out
 ‘I asked the owner to kindly take the dog out’ (Bland.is)
- (10f) Ég var **að** svona (**að**) kíkja á dómana sem lögin hans fá
 I was to so to look at reviews.the which songs.the his receive
 ‘I was sort of looking at the reviews that his songs have received’ (Hugi.is)

As shown by the brackets, the second copy of the infinitive marker can be deleted in all these examples, thereby creating a split infinitive.⁴ Conversely, in all the examples of split infinitives in (7) and (8) above, a second copy of the infinitive marker can be added. The following examples should be contrasted with (7a), (7f) and (8c):

- (11a) þegar hann er búinn **að** nánast **að** útiloka annað
 when he is finished to almost to exclude other...
- (11b) að þetta komi til með **að** jafnvel **að** lengja kreppuna
 that this leads to even to extend crisis.the
- (11c) Er raunhæft... **að** bara hreinlega **að** lifa bíllausum lífstíl?
 is realistic to just simply to live carless lifestyle

It seems that both split and double infinitives involve the same class of adverbs. With adverbs outside of this class, both splitting and doubling are excluded, or at least highly marginal:

⁴ The first copy of the infinitive marker in (11) can also be left out but this would unambiguously indicate that the relevant adverb has a matrix reading as part of the matrix clause. Since this possibility is irrelevant for our purposes, it will be ignored in examples (12) and (13) as well.

- (12a) *Sumir eru þekktir fyrir **að** yfirleitt (**að**) mæta á réttum tíma
 some are known for to usually to show.up on right time
 ‘Some people are know for usually show up on time’
- (12b) *Ég reyni **að** aldrei (**að**) horfa á sjónvarpið
 I try to never to look on television.the
 ‘I try to never watch TV’
- (12c) *Henni tókst **að** auðveldlega (**að**) skora mark
 her managed to easily to score goal
 ‘She managed to easily score a goal’

As expected, doubling is like splitting in allowing more than one word to follow the first infinitive marker:

- (13a) svo ég ætla **að** bara samt (**að**) svara
 so I intend to just still to reply
 ‘so I am still just going to reply’ (Bland.is)
- (13b) svona senda... sem **að** við þurfum **að** í rauninni (**að**) úrelða
 such transmitters which that we need to in reality to phase.out
 ‘such transmitters...which we need in fact to phase out’ (Sjónvarpsfréttir RÚV)
- (13c) Hér ætlum við **að** sem sagt (**að**) ræsa vélina
 here intend we to as said to start machine.the
 ‘Here we will start the machine as we already said’ (Rás 1 og 2)

Despite the strong similarities between split and double infinitives, there are some differences with respect to the frequency of individual adverbs following the first infinitive marker. Thus, the most common adverb in double infinitives is *bara* ‘just’ (148 examples), followed by *líka* ‘also’ (42), *helst* ‘preferably’ (38), *endilega* ‘by all means’ (29), *hreinlega* ‘simply’ (29), *kannski* ‘maybe’ (26) and *virðilega* ‘really’ (24). However, since all these numbers are very low it is difficult to make any sense of this contrast. Moreover, the two constructions may have slightly different pragmatics but I will leave this as a matter for future investigation.

As a final note in this section, there are some examples of doubling in the RC where the adverb between the two infinitive markers belongs semantically to the matrix clauses. This is shown in (14):

- (14a) Ég er **að** fara (**að**) út **að** skokka
 I am to go to out to jog
 ‘I am going out to jog’ (Twitter)
- (14b) mig langar (**að**) rosalega **að** sjá einhverjar myndir
 me wants to extremely to see some pictures
 ‘I really want to see some pictures’ (Bland.is)

- (14c) þetta hlýtur (að) auðvitað að þekkjast hér eins og annars staðar
 this must to certainly to be.known here as other places
 ‘This must be known here as elsewhere’ (Bland.is)

I find all of these examples ungrammatical. Thus, it is not surprising that in these examples, it would be impossible to create a split infinitive by deleting the second infinitive marker. By contrast, the first infinitive marker can be deleted, signalling that the relevant adverb must be part of the matrix clause.

5 Theoretical implications

This section divides into three parts. First, a structural analysis unifying split and double infinitives in Icelandic is presented in 5.1. This is followed in 5.2 by a discussion of complementizer doubling (recomplementation) in finite clauses in Icelandic and how this phenomenon compares to the analysis of double infinitives outlined in 5.1. Finally, V3 adverbs in subject-initial finite clauses are briefly discussed in 5.3 and what they may tell us about the placement of high adverbs.

5.1 Structural analysis

The data discussed in sections 3 and 4 give us good reasons to assume that split and double infinitives should be given essentially the same syntactic analysis as informally shown in (15):

- (15a) *að* - adverb - infinitive (split infinitives)
 (15b) *að* - adverb - *að* - infinitive (double infinitives)

On this view, the only syntactic difference between the two constructions is that the lower copy of the infinitive marker *að* is visible in double infinitives but not in split infinitives. The detailed syntactic structure that I would like to propose for split and double infinitives in Icelandic is shown in (16):

- (16) [ForceP [Force' *að* [FinP ADV [FinP [Fin' <*að*> [TP PRO [T' infinitive...]]]]]]]]

This analysis entails that the infinitive marker *að* is first-merged in Fin and then moved to Force. This movement reflects the standard view within cartography that FinP and ForceP are the main components of the complementizer system. Apparently, ForceP is not associated with any illocutionary act in this case. Instead, it has a purely syntactic function as the connecting point with the matrix clause as it is accessible to selection by the matrix predicate.

The Fin-to-Force movement takes place in both split and double infinitives but the lower copy of the infinitive marker, marked by angle brackets in (15), is only phonetically realized in the latter construction. This is very similar to Faarlund's (2015) analysis of double infinitives in Norwegian except that he assumes movement of the infinitive marker from T to C. This would not be possible in Icelandic where the infinitive verb moves to T as we have already noted. Double infinitives have also been reported for English by van Gelderen (2004:244), who

also takes them to indicate movement of the infinitive marker without deletion of the lower copy.

Apart from the lower copy of the infinitive marker, everything else is the same in split and double infinitives in Icelandic as the adjuncts following the highest copy of the infinitive marker are left-adjoined to FinP, and the infinitive verb moves to T. Evidence for verb movement in split and double infinitives comes from examples where the verb preceded clause-medial adverbs like negation:

- (17) Er raunhæft **að** hreinlega (**að**) borða ekki sykur?
 is realistic to simply to eat not sugar
 ‘Is it realistic to simply not eat sugar?’

The analysis I have proposed in (16) is naturally extended to infinitives where no adverbial follows the highest infinitive marker, i.e. simple cases like (18):

- (18) Er raunhæft að borða ekki sykur?
 is realistic to eat not sugar
 ‘Is it realistic to not eat sugar?’

According to my analysis, *að*-infinitives in Icelandic have a more articulated structure in the left periphery than in previous analyses. The crucial claim is that *að*-infinitives can project a ForceP just like finite clauses, despite recent claims to the contrary (Satk 2022).

Still, *að*-infinitives are structurally deficient compared to embedded finite clause in that there are only two projections in the left periphery, FinP and Force. As shown by Thráinsson (1993), topicalization is excluded in *að*-infinitives, whether the topicalized precedes or follows the infinitive marker. This is in clear contrast to *that*-clauses, which allow topicalization to a position following the complementizer *að*:

- (19a) Jón lofaði { *þetta } að { þetta } myndi hann aldrei gera
 John promised this that this would he never do
 ‘John promised that he would never do this’

- (19a) Jón lofaði { *þetta } að { *þetta } gera aldrei
 John promised this that this do never

This suggests that *að*-infinitives, unlike *that*-clauses in Icelandic, do not have any Spec,Topic as a landing site for topicalized phrases. Moreover, since Icelandic does not have *wh*-infinitives, as shown in (20) below, *að*-infinitives also lack projections hosting *wh*-phrases (e.g. WhP or IntP).

- (20) *Þú veist hvað að gera
 you know what to do
 ‘You know what to do’

Satk (2022) takes the contrast in (19a) and (19b) to show that infinitival *að* is a low complementizer in Fin whereas finite *að* is a high complementizer in Force. The underlying

assumption here seems to be that the presence of Force entails the possibility of a lower projection in the left periphery, such as TopicP. By contrast, my analysis postulates that ForceP and FinP are the only available projections in the left periphery of Icelandic *að*-infinitives. I do not see this as a theoretical problem because one can e.g. think of this as a result of a restriction where non-finite Force is only able to select FinP as a complement. Moreover, very similar ideas about reduced clauses have been discussed in the literature; see e.g. Heageman's (2006) proposal about the left periphery of central adverbial clauses.

5.2 Recomplementation in finite clauses

In contrast to infinitival markers, it is fairly standard to assume that finite complementizers undergo Fin-to-Force movement (Rizzi 1997, Ledgeway 2005 and Demonte and Fernández-Soriano 2009 and much subsequent work). Perhaps the clearest evidence for complementizer movement within the left periphery comes from complementizer doubling in finite clauses, a phenomenon also known as recomplementation. In this construction, which is common in the Romance languages, a left-dislocated element is sandwiched between two copies of the complementizer in *that*-clauses, as in the following example from the RC:⁵

- (21) Við teljum **að** þessi skýrsla **að** hún verði mjög gagnleg
 we believe that this report that it will.be very useful
 'We believe that this report, it will be very useful' (Rás 1 og 2)

As far as I know, recomplementation has not been reported for Icelandic in previous literature. The reason may be that this is a colloquial construction that is easy to miss, just like split and double infinitives.

Interestingly, Icelandic also has recomplementation with high adverbs in the left periphery. This is shown in (22):

- (22a) Ég vona **að** bara (**að**) ég fái einhverja aðstoð
 I hope that just that I get some assistance
 'I hope that I just get some assistance' (Bland.is)
- (22b) Ég held **að** kannski (**að**) brotunum sem slíkum hafi ekki fjölgað
 I think that maybe that offences.the as such have not increased
 'I think that the the number of the offences per se has not increased' (Rás 1 og 2)
- (22c) Það var samdóma álit fólks **að** hérna (**að**) þetta væru vonbrigði
 it was unified view of.people that here that this was disappointment
 'Everyone agreed that this was disappointing' (Sjónvarpsfréttir RÚV)
- (22d) Mér finnst mikilvægt **að** einmitt **að** við skoðum málið heildstætt
 me finds important that precisely that we review case.the holistically
 'I think it is important that we review the case comprehensively' (Rás 1 og 2)

⁵ Note that there are no brackets arounds the lower copy of the complementizer because its presence is strongly preferred in this case. The same applies to examples (23) and (24) below.

Interestingly, searches in the RC indicate that this type of doubling is much less common than doubling in *að*-infinitives even though both constructions seem to call for the same structural analysis.

For examples like (21) and (22), it seems fairly straightforward to assume that the finite complementizer *að* undergoes Fin-to-Force movement just like the infinitive marker in *að*-infinitives. By moving to Force, the higher copy of the complementizer will inevitably precede left-dislocated elements (in Spec,Topic) and adverbs left-adjoined to FinP. However, it is possible to construct examples of left-dislocated objects where the lower copy of the complementizer is clearly in a head position above FinP:

- (23) ?Við teljum **að** þessa skýrslu **að** hana muni forstjórinn lesa
 we believe that this.ACC report.ACC that it.ACC will director.the read
 ‘We believe that the director will read this report’

In this somewhat deviant example, it looks like the complementizer realizes a Topic head preceding the fronted pronoun *hana* (in Spec,Fin) as well as the finite verb *muni* (in Fin).⁶ This contrasts with the example in (21), which has a left-dislocated subject and sounds completely natural. In fact, I have been unable to find any examples with embedded left-dislocated objects in the RC, whether the resumptive pronoun moves to the left periphery, as in (23), or stays in situ, as in (24):

- (24) ?Við teljum **að** þessa skýrslu **að** forstjórinn muni lesa hana
 we believe that this.ACC report.ACC that director.the will read it.ACC
 ‘We believe that the director will read this report’

Since (24) is consistent with a Fin-to-Force movement of the complementizer, unlike (23), it seems that the problem with both examples is due to left-dislocation of an embedded object rather than the placement of the lower complementizer. Thus, we can conclude that embedded finite clauses do not provide clear evidence for Fin-to-Force movement of the complementizer *að*. However, the apparent topic marking of the complementizer in finite clauses in examples of left-dislocation should not undermine my analysis of double infinitives since they cannot have any TopicP in the left periphery.

5.3 V3 adverbs

As discussed by many authors (see Angantýsson, Nowenstein and Thráinsson 2023 and references cited there), Icelandic allows violations of the V2 constraint if a clause-initial subject is followed by a high adverb.⁷ Some representative examples of this are shown in (25):

⁶ For another case where the functional element *að* is higher than FinP but lower than Force, see Jónsson’s (2019) discussion of the XP-*há* construction in Icelandic.

⁷ As noted by Thráinsson (2010), V3 orders are also possible in Icelandic after topicalized phrases. However, since this is much less studied than V3 in subject-initial clauses, and probably much less common as well, I will focus on subject-initial clauses here.

- (25a) Það **bara** hlýtur einhver að vita þetta
 there just must someone to know this
 ‘Somebody must know this’
- (25b) Ég **hreinlega** man það ekki
 I simply remember it not
 ‘I simply don’t remember it’
- (25c) Svona hegðun **beinlínis** vinnur gegn okkar markmiðum
 such behavior directly works against our goals
 ‘Such behavior goes directly against our goals’
- (25d) Þú **kannski** lætur okkur vita
 you maybe let us know

Although the class of V3 adverbs in Icelandic has never been studied extensively, it is clear that some adverbs sound quite natural in V3 clauses, e.g. the adverbs exemplified above, whereas other adverbs do not. In fact, some of the adverbs listed in Table 1 fall into this latter class, at least in my judgment, e.g. *vinsamlegast* ‘kindly’, *endanlega* ‘finally’ and *einmitt* ‘exactly’. Thus, it appears that V3 adverbs cannot be completely conflated with splitting adverbs (or doubling adverbs). Still, the similarities are so strong that it is very tempting to give V3 adverbs the same syntactic analysis as splitting and doubling adverbs by assuming that they are left-adjoined to FinP. This view calls for subject movement from Spec,T to some higher position above FinP, presumably Spec,Topic, but the finite verb would presumably stop in Fin. This is not implausible for a V2 language for Icelandic, although examples with a non-topic in first position, as in (25a), would be a problem.⁸ An even bigger problem, though, is that V3 adverbs freely occur in all kinds of embedded clauses, including clauses where topicalization is more or less excluded.⁹ This is exemplified in (26) below:

- (26a) ...þótt ég **hreinlega** muni það ekki
 ...although I simply remember it not
 ‘although I simply cannot remember it’
- (26b) ...því svona hegðun **beinlínis** vinnur gegn okkar markmiðum
 ...because such behavior directly works against our goals
 ‘because such behavior goes directly against our goals’
- (26c) ...spurning sem María **bara** getur ekki svarað
 ...question which Mary just can not answer
 ‘a question that Mary simply cannot answer’

Thus, it appears that we must adopt the structurally simplest analysis here, according to which a clause-initial subject is always in Spec,T and the finite verb in T. On this analysis, the high

⁸ Julien (2018) also notes this as a problem for her analysis of V3 orders in finite clauses in Norwegian and Swedish, which is similar to the analysis discussed here.

⁹ See Angantýsson (2011) for an in-depth discussion of embedded topicalization in Icelandic.

adverbs between the subject and the finite verb are presumably left-adjoined to T'. The problem with this analysis, however, is that it makes it very hard to make sense of the syntactic position of high adverbs in Icelandic since they appear to have two rather different adjunction sites. This issue will not be solved here but I would like to refer the reader to Julien (2018), Lundquist (2018) and Brandtler (2020) for a discussion of V3 adverbs in Swedish and Norwegian that is highly relevant for our concerns.

6 Conclusions

On the basis of novel data from split and double infinitives in Icelandic, I have argued that *að*-infinitives involve Fin-to-Force movement of the infinitive marker *að* and high adverbs following the infinitive marker in Force are left-adjoined to FinP. In this position, these adverbs will precede a phonetically realized lower copy of the infinitive marker in Fin in double infinitives. It is unclear, however, how far this approach can be pursued with respect to complementizer doubling in finite clauses as well as the placement of V3 adverbs.

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Non-subject initial clauses and the left periphery in Icelandic: A distributional approach

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Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of preverbal constituent placement in Icelandic V2 sentences, with a focus on the frequency and positioning of various non-subject elements in the preverbal slot. Our findings indicate that in Icelandic matrix V2 clauses, a DP is positioned preverbally in 68% of cases, with subject DPs accounting for 90% of these instances. Conversely, AdvPs and PPs are found in the preverbal slot in 19% and 10% of our analyzed examples, respectively. Notably, when temporal or locative adverbs are present, they are more likely than the subject to appear as the preverbal element, highlighting a significant tendency in topicalization patterns. Our results suggest that the preverbal position in Icelandic V2 clauses is not just an optimal site for the realization of frame-setting expressions, but rather the preferred one, especially for temporal and locative frames. This trend is predominantly observed in main clauses, in contrast to embedded clauses where fronting of such elements is considerably less prevalent.

1 Introduction

Icelandic, as a ‘core V2 language’ in Holmberg’s (2015) terms, allows not only the subject in the first position of both matrix and embedded clauses, but also various other elements, usually immediately followed by the finite verb (for a recent overview, see Angantýsson 2020). In (1)–(4) we give examples of common types of non-subject-initial V2 clauses in Icelandic, along with some attempts to front particles and past participles (from Thráinsson 2007: 260–261):

- (1) a. *Ég hef aldrei hitt Harald.*
I have never met Harold
b. **Harald** hef ég aldrei hitt _____. (NP)
Harold have I never met
- (2) a. *Haraldur hefur ekki búið á Akureyri.*
Haraldur has not lived in Akureyri
b. **Á Akureyri** hefur Haraldur ekki búið. (PP)
in Akureyri has Harold not lived
c. **EKKI** hefur Haraldur ____ búið á Akureyri. (adverb)
not has Harold lived in Akureyri
- (3) a. *Strákarnir hafa tekið bækurnar upp.*
boys-the have taken books-the up
b. ***Upp** hafa strákarnir tekið bækurnar. (particle)
up have boys-the taken books-the
- (4) a. *Strákarnir hafa lesið bækurnar.*
boys-the have read(past part.) books-the
b. **?*Lesið** hafa strákarnir bækurnar. (past participle)
read (pp.) have boys-the books-the

Interestingly, particles and past participles cannot be fronted, as examples (3b) and (4b) show. On the assumption that fronting of this type involves movement to a specifier position, and that specifier positions only allow maximal projections, the logical conclusion is that heads cannot be fronted to this preverbal position. According to Jónsson (1996:42–43) and Angantýsson (2020), sentence-initial adjunct elements as in (2b) and (2c) are more common than fronted argument topics as in (1b). Angantýsson, Nowenstein and Thráinsson (2023) also argue that the first element in non-subject initial V3 matrix clauses in Icelandic is most typically an adjunct and not an argument, more specifically a ‘frame-setter’ in terms of time, place or condition.

Examples like (1-4) should be distinguished from (5), which features a resumptive pronoun for the sentence-initial constituent, as in (5):

- (5) Presturinn, María sá hann í bænum í gær.
 the.priest María saw him in town yesterday
 ‘The priest, Mary saw him downtown yesterday.’

(Thráinsson 2007: 358)

Following much existing literature on Icelandic (Thráinsson 1975, 1979; Thráinsson et al. 2007; Maling 1980), we refer to structures where a resumptive pronominal element is present, as in (5), as *left dislocation*, and to structures where no resumptive element is present (1-4) as *topicalization*. Before we proceed with the rest of the discussion, it is important to recognize the potential for a terminological tangle: in other languages, for instance those in the Romance subgroup, the term *topicalization* is rather often used to describe the opposite type of structure: left dislocation accompanied by a resumptive element (see for example Rizzi 1997). To prevent confusion, we will thus refer to examples like (1-4) as examples of *Icelandic topicalization*, to be distinguished from *Romance Topicalization*.

In this paper, we present new results from a corpus-based study regarding the frequencies of various first-position elements in Icelandic matrix and embedded V2 clauses. We are particularly interested in determining which types of non-subject constituents appear most often in preverbal position, whether there are specific phrases that occur particularly often, and in exploring the implications of these findings for understanding the role of the preverbal position in Icelandic V2 clauses.

This article is structured as follows. We start (Section 2) by investigating the absolute frequencies of different types of preverbal constituents in Icelandic V2 clauses; we then delve into specific constituent classes to assess the likelihood of different phrase types appearing before the subject. In Section 3, we zoom in on specific classes of elements to identify phrases that are frequently topicalized in Icelandic. In Section 4, we discuss our findings and relate our results to the concept of *framing topic*. The paper concludes with Section 5, where we summarize our key insights and explore potential avenues for future research.

2 Results from Corpus Study

To determine which constituents appear in sentence-initial position in Icelandic, we performed a corpus study using the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus, *IcePaHC* (Wallenberg et al. 2011; Rögnvaldsson et al. 2011, 2012; Rögnvaldsson et al. 2012). The *IcePaHC* encompasses a wide range of Icelandic texts spanning from the 12th to the 21st century, covering diverse genres

including scientific, legal, religious, narrative, and biographical writings. This extensive chronological and genre-based variety in the IcePaHC enables an in-depth analysis of the occurrence of specific linguistic structures over various centuries and genres. The IcePaHC can be searched using the PaCQL (*Parsed Corpus Query Language*, Ingason 2016) through the freely available online platform treebankstudio.org.

We started our analysis by running a query to determine which constituent types are most likely to occupy the preverbal position in Icelandic matrix clauses. The findings from this initial query are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Prevalence of different constituents in sentence-initial position, in descending order.*

Type of Constituent	Occurrences in IcePaHC	Percentage
DPs	16861 ¹	68.3%
AdvPs	4673	18.9%
PPs	2412 ²	9.8%
CPs	418	1.7%
Negation	234	0.9%
AdjPs	107	0.4%
Total	24705	100%

As shown in Table 1, DPs are the most common type of preverbal constituent, constituting 68.3% of occurrences. Adverbial phrases follow with 19% of cases, while prepositional phrases account for 9.8% of all analyzed examples. Negation and CPs are relatively less frequent, making up 0.9% and 1.7% respectively. AdjPs are the least prevalent at 0.4%.

Two key facts emerge: first, although DPs are the most frequently topicalized constituents, the topicalization of other constituent types is not insignificant, accounting for 31.7% of all instances in our study. Second, among these non-nominal constituents, AdvPs are particularly prominent in preverbal positions. This underscores their substantial role in the patterns of topicalization within Icelandic sentence structures.

Table 2 zooms in on the most frequent functions of preverbal DPs in Icelandic matrix V2 clauses:

¹ The queries we used to obtain these figures can be found at <https://shorturl.at/jnpuG>

² Note that we conducted a manual review of instances featuring topicalized PP configurations. This was necessary to accurately distinguish them from fronted adverbial clauses, which, in certain specific configurations involving conjunctions like 'ef' (if), 'meðan' (while), and 'þegar' (when) and others, are tagged in the same way as fronted PP constructions.

Table 2. Prevalence of different DP types in sentence-initial position, in descending order.

Type of DP	Occurrences in IcePaHC	Percentage of all preverbal DPs
Subject DPs (tag: NP-SBJ)	15067	89.4%
Direct object (tag: NP-OB1)	653	3.9%
Temporal DPs (tag: NP-TMP)	379	2.3%
Other tags	762	4.5%

We see that out of the 16861 examples featuring a DP as the preverbal constituent, almost 90% of occurrences are instances of sentential subjects. This means that the sentential subject occurs preverbally in around 61% of all examples reviewed in this study. Differently put, approximately six out of ten of all V2 matrix sentences feature the subject DP as the preverbal element. Following subject DPs, we find accusative objects (see Callegari & Ingason 2021 for a detailed study of the frequency of different types of topicalized objects in Icelandic), and temporal DPs such as *yesterday*.

Although tables such as Table 1 and 2 provide valuable insights into the absolute distribution of various elements in the preverbal position, their scope is somewhat limited. For instance, a table like 2 does not consider the total number of sentences analyzed that contain a temporal DP, regardless of its position. Consequently, the observation that 2% of all sentences with a preverbal DP feature a temporal DP in the initial position has limited interpretive value. To further understand the significance of different elements in the context of Icelandic topicalization, we then looked *within* the different classes. For example, to better understand the prevalence of temporal DPs in topicalization structures, we looked at all V2 sentences containing both the subject *and* a temporal DP, and calculated which proportion of these examples featured the subject in preverbal position, and which featured the temporal DP in preverbal position. This methodology was similarly applied to other class pairings.

The results are presented below. We show results for both matrix and embedded clauses; a preliminary discussion of the results is then provided in subsection 2.7.

2.1 Fronted adverbs

We begin by looking at the larger constituent classes, starting with adverbial phrases. Some example sentences for V2 constructions with an adverb in preverbal position are provided in (6-7) (adverb is underlined):

- (6) Auðvitað átti hún ekki að heyra þetta.
of course should she not to hear this
‘Of course she shouldn’t hear this.’
- (7) Sýnilega hafði það fengið á hana.
Obviously had that affected on her
‘Obviously it had distressed her.’

Table 3 then illustrates the percentage of all clauses containing an AdvP where the AdvP appears preverbally, for both matrix and embedded clauses.

Table 3. *Word order in V2 clauses containing an adverb*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportions
Total		8340	
Matrix	Adverb appears preverbally	4673	56%
Matrix	Subject appears preverbally	3667	44%
Total		3729	
Embedded	Adverb appears preverbally	698	19%
Embedded	Subject appears preverbally	3031	81%

2.2 Prepositional Phrases

Example sentences for V2 constructions with a PP in preverbal position (fronted PP is underlined):

- (8) Á alþingi lögðu biskuparnir báðir og fleiri af fyrimönnum sig til að friðþægja Hallgrím.
 at althingi, put bishops-the both and more of the leaders themselves forth to appease Hallgrímur
 ‘At the General Assembly, both the bishops and more of the leaders did their best to appease Hallgrímur.’
- (9) Eftir það fóru allir heim.
 after that went all home
 ‘After that, everybody went home.’

Table 4. *Word order in V2 clauses containing a PP*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportions
Total		8912	
Matrix	PP in preverbal position	2411	27%
Matrix	Subject in preverbal position	6501	73%

Total		8235	
Embedded	PP in preverbal position	474	6%
Embedded	Subject in preverbal position	7761	94%

2.3 Negation

Example sentences for V2 constructions with the negation in preverbal position (negation is underlined):

- (10) Ekki var það skemmtilegt eða smekklegt.
not was that entertaining or tasteful.
'It was neither entertaining nor tasteful.'
- (11) Ekki geta allir farið í pípulagnir.
not can all go in plumbing
'Plumbing is not for everybody.'

Table 5. *Word order in V2 clauses containing a negation*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportions
Total		833	
Matrix	Negation in preverbal position	234	28%
Matrix	Subject in preverbal position	599	72%
Total		1543	
Embedded	Negation in preverbal position	245	16%
Embedded	Subject in preverbal position	1289	84%

2.4 Temporal DPs

The IcePaHc was tagged using a customized version of the Penn Treebank tag set that was adapted to suit the specific linguistic features of Old and Modern Icelandic. The Penn tag set includes unique tags for temporal DPs such as *yesterday*, and for locative and temporal adverbs, facilitating targeted analysis of the frequency and placement of these specific categories. In this subsection, we thus investigate temporal DPs, while in the next subsections, we look at locative and temporal adverbs.

Example sentences of V2 constructions with a temporal DP in preverbal position (temporal DP is underlined):

- (12) Dag einn fann íbúinn að honum líkaði ekki veggfóðrið lengur.
day one found resident-the that he liked not wallpaper-the anymore
'One day the resident realized that he didn't like the wallpaper anymore.'
- (13) Stundum bauð hann efnaðasta bóndanum í sveitinni með sér.
sometimes invited he wealthiest farmer-the in countryside-the with him
'Sometimes he invited the wealthiest farmer in the countryside with him.'

Table 6. *Word order in V2 clauses containing a temporal DP*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportion
Total		694	
Matrix	Temporal DP in preverbal position	369	53%
Matrix	Subject in preverbal position	325	47%
Total		207	
Embedded	Temporal DP in preverbal position	34	16%
Embedded	Subject in preverbal position	173	84%

2.5 Locative AdvPs

Example sentences of V2 constructions with a locative AdvP in preverbal position (temporal adverb is underlined):

- (14) Þar kom Illugi Þorvaldsson með átjándra manna.
there came Illugi Þorvaldsson with eighteenth man
'There came Illugi Þorvaldsson along with eighteen other men.'
- (15) Hér virðist mér hver blómknappurinn öðrum hýrari.
here seems me each flower bud other gayer
'Here each flower bud seems even more beautiful than the next.'

Table 7. *Word order in V2 clauses containing a locative adverb*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportions
Total		917	
Matrix	Locative adverb appears preverbally	561	61%

Matrix	Subject appears preverbally	356	39%
Total		605	
Embedded	Locative adverb appears preverbally	154	25%
Embedded	Subject appears preverbally	451	75%

2.6 Temporal AdvPs

Example sentences of V2 constructions with a temporal adverb in preverbal position (the temporal AdvP is underlined):

(16) Of förum við öll saman í hádeginu.
 often go we all together in lunch
 ‘Often we go all together for lunch.’

(17) Síðan fór hún fram í stofuna
 then went she forth in living room
 ‘Then she went to the living room.’

Table 8. *Word order in V2 clauses containing a temporal adverb*

Type of clause	Condition	Number	Proportions
Total		4750	
Matrix	Temporal adverb appears preverbally	3002	63%
Matrix	Subject appears preverbally	1748	37%
Total		1203	
Embedded	Temporal adverb appears preverbally	263	22%
Embedded	Subject appears preverbally	940	78%

2.7 Interim Conclusion for Section 2

We discovered an intriguing trend: in matrix clauses, temporal DPs, temporal adverbs and locative adverbs are even more likely than the subject to appear preverbally. Specifically, in 53% of matrix V2 sentences containing a temporal DP, this DP is positioned preverbally, and similarly, 61% of matrix V2 sentences with a locative adverb place the adverb as the leftmost element. Finally, in 63% of matrix V2 clauses featuring a temporal adverb, it is the temporal adverb that appears before the verb.

Interestingly, this pattern is distinctly associated with matrix clauses. In embedded clauses, the preference for fronting temporal DPs, and locative and temporal adverbs is not as pronounced. Here, only 16% of sentences with a temporal DP, 25% of sentences with a locative adverb and 22% of sentences with a temporal adverb deviate from having the subject as the leftmost element.

On the contrary, negation and PPs do not exhibit a higher likelihood than the subject to be positioned preverbally in matrix clauses, showing a tendency of 28% and 27% respectively. However, PPs in matrix clauses still demonstrate a higher propensity for preverbal placement compared to those in embedded clauses, where only 6% of PPs are fronted. The same trend is observed for negation (28% vs. 16%).

For each of these constituent types, we thus observe a noticeable impact of the clause being a matrix clause on the likelihood that an element other than the subject appears in the preverbal position. These findings align with insights from previous research, such as Heycock's 2006 study, which builds on the work of Emonds (1970) and Hooper and Thompson (1973), highlighting the significance of certain adverbial adjuncts and interjections, especially in relation to speaker attitude in matrix clauses, in the context of root phenomena. We will revisit this discussion in Section 4.

3 Zooming in on Frequently Topicalized Expressions

To gain an even clearer understanding of Icelandic topicalization, we manually inspected key classes of constituents, to determine if any particular phrases are topicalized often. Note that this analysis was confined to matrix clauses, since these are significantly quicker to review manually.

3.1 Topicalized Temporal DPs

About 45% of the examples involve relatively few phrases, which are detailed in Table 9:

Table 9. Common combinations of topicalized temporal DPs and their frequency

Type of Phrase	Example	Number of occurrences
Anno ... (= year ...)	(18) <u>Anno 1564</u> kom Guðbrandur út hingað ... year 1564 came Guðbrandur out here 'Guðbrandur came back in 1564.'	28
Stundum	(19) <u>Stundum</u> fóru þau inn í herbergi Bjarna.	27

(= sometimes)	sometimes went they into bedroom Bjarni (gen.) 'Sometimes they went into Bjarni's bedroom.'	
Þann (dem.pron.)	(20) <u>Þann dag</u> hugsaði ég mjög minn gang. that day thought I intensively my action 'That day, I considered carefully how I should proceed.'	24
Einn dag(inn) (= one day)	(21) <u>Einn dag</u> var gott veður. one day was good weather 'One day the weather was good.'	21
Eitt sinn (= one time)	(22) <u>Eitt sinn</u> var veður hvasst og frjósandi. one time was weather stormy and freezing 'One time, the weather was stormy and cold.'	19
Annan dag(inn) (= (the) another day)	(23) <u>Annan dag</u> fóru þeir til leiks báðir bræður. another day went they to game both brothers 'Another day, both of the brothers went to play.'	14
Daginn eftir (= the day after)	(24) <u>Daginn eftir</u> messaði séra Jónsteinn. day-the after massed reverend Jónsteinn 'The day after, Jónsteinn the Reverend performed a Christian service.'	12
Næsta/næstu (= next)	(25) <u>Næsta sunnudag</u> eftir var veðrið yndislegt. next sunday after was weather-the lovely 'The next Sunday, the weather was lovely.'	11
Einu sinni (= on(c)e (upon a) time)	(26) <u>Einu sinni</u> var ég þó kominn á einhvern skrið. one time was I though come to some speed 'One time things were going better for me.'	10

3.2 Adverbial Clauses

78% of all fronted adverbial clauses are temporal in nature:

Table 10. Categories of topicalized adverbial clauses and their frequency

Type	Example	Number of occurrences
<i>Temporal</i>		
Þegar (= when)	(27) Þegar læknirinn kom lá Grímur rænu- when the doctor came lied Grímur aware-	152

	<p>og meðvitundarlaus. and consciousless 'When the doctor arrived, Grímur was lying unconscious.'</p>	
Meðan (= while)	<p>(28) Meðan á ræðunni stóð átti Þórður fullt í fangi með while on speech-the continued had Þórður difficulties að verjast hlátri og sýnast alvarlegur. to defend laughter and acting serious. 'While the speech was ongoing, Þórður had hard time not to laugh and pretending to be serious.'</p>	21
Sem (= when)	<p>(29) Sem Gunnar heyrði þetta gengur hann sem hraðast when Gunnar heard this walks he as fastest frá þeim til manna sinna. from them to men his 'When Gunnar hears this, he walks as fast as he can from them to his companions.'</p>	20
Á meðan (= while)	<p>(30) Á meðan Bylgja leitar að náttkjólnum segir hún frá on while Bylgja looks for her nightgown tell she about áhyggjum sínum í vinnunni. worries her at work 'While Bylgja is looking for her nightgown she tells about her worries at work.'</p>	15
Er (= when)	<p>(31) Er ég hitti hann fyrst féll mér afar vel við manninn. when I met him first liked I very well with man-the 'When I first met him, I liked him very well.'</p>	10
Síðan (= when)	<p>(32) Síðan þeir voru búnir reru þeir brott. when they were ready rowed they away 'When they were ready they rowed away.'</p>	3
<i>Conditional</i>		
Ef (=if)	<p>(33) Ef hann svaraði þá var fjandinn laus í kotinu. if he replied then devil-the was loose in the cottage 'If he replied, everything went crazy on the farm.'</p>	26
V1 conditionals	<p>(34) Fyndist honum sig vanta svefn bætti hann úr því með found he himself lack sleep compensated from that with ofurlitlum miðdegisblundi. a tiny noon time nap 'If he needed more sleep he fixed it with a quick nap in the noon.'</p>	18
<i>Causal</i>		

Af því að (= because)	(35) Af því að hann hafði verið í hegningarhúsinu var because he had been in jail-the was he ekki trúandi fyrir því að vaka yfir vörunum! not trustworthy for that to wake over products-the 'Since he had been in the jail he wasn't regarded as reliable for taking care of the products.'	4
<i>Concessive</i>		
Þótt, þó (að) (although)	(36) Þó ég væri skelfingu lostinn rauk ég til. though I was horror shocked jumped I to 'Although I was terrified I reacted quickly.'	13

3.3 Topicalized Adverbs

3238 out of 4673 (69%) examples involve the following words/phrases:

Table 11. Frequently topicalized adverbs and their frequency.

Phrase	Example	Occurrences
Þá (= then)	(37) Þá vaknar hann. then wakes he 'Then he wakes up.'	1363
Nú (= now)	(38) Nú kemur kóngur með sína menn. now comes king with his-refl. men 'Now the king arrives with his men.'	596
Síðan (= then)	(39) Síðan gengur hann af stað. then walks he from place 'Then he departs.'	532
Svo (= so, then)	(40) Svo liðu nokkrir dagar. then passed some days 'Then several days passed by.'	342
Heldur (= rather, instead)	(41) Heldur sótti hann tvo stóla inn í eldhús. instead got he two chairs into kitchen-the 'Instead he picked up two chairs in the kitchen.'	111
Þó (= though, still)	(42) Þó grunaði hann það. still suspected he that 'He still suspected that.'	85
Enda (= and, what's more, since)	(43) Enda drekk ég ekki what's more drink I not 'And, therefore I don't drink.'	71

Enn (= still)	(44) Enn var á honum sami gamli sauðarsvipurinn. still was on him same old sheep look 'He still had the same old silly look.'	35
Aldrei (= never)	(45) Aldrei hafði hann tekið eftir því. never had he taken after that 'Never had he noticed that.'	31
Samt (= nevertheless, still)	(46) Samt lofaði hann að mæta þar. still promised he to attend there 'Still he promised to show up there.'	31
Því næst (= next after that)	(47) Því næst vaknaði hann. that next woke he 'Then he woke up.'	24
Kannski (= maybe)	(48) Kannski komst hún ekki í síma. maybe made it she not to phone 'May she couldn't access a phone.'	17

3.4 Topicalized PPs

The most frequently topicalized expression is *eftir það*, which is temporal in nature:

Table 12. *Frequently Topicalized PPs, broken down by type.*

Type	Example	Number of occurrences
<i>Temporal</i>		
Eftir það (= after that)	(49) Eftir það fór Daði burt. after that went Daði away 'After that Daði left.'	182
Á þessu(m) (= on this)	(50) Á þessu sumri kom út herra Hrafn Oddsson. on this summer came out mister Hrafn Oddsson 'This summer Hrafn Oddsson came home.'	45
Þar með (= thereupon)	(51) Þar með komst ég yfir ána. thereupon made it I over river-the 'Thereupon I managed to cross the river.'	26

Hér með (= here/now from)	(52) Hér með leysti prestur hann af öllum sínum here with released priest him from all his-refl. syndum. sins 'Hereby the priest released him from all his sins.'	21 ³
Í þessu(m) (= in this)	(53) Í þessu komu menn Reginbalds alvopnaðir. in this came men Reginbald's fully armed 'At this moment, the men of Reginbald came fully armed.'	18
<i>Causal</i>		
Af því (= from that)	(54) Af því er maklega haldinn drottinsdagurinn from that is deservedly held gods day sjöundi hver. seventh each 'Therefore the lord's day is celebrated deservably each seventh day.'	47
<i>Other</i>		
Í þessu(m) (= in this)	(55) Í þessum tilgangi skapaði guð sólina in this purpose created god sun-the og himintunglin. and stars 'In this purpose, god created the sun and the stars'	22

Other phrases that appear more than a couple of times in the corpus are *um kvöldið* (= in the evening, 9 times), *auk þess(ara)* (= in addition, 9 times), *að sönnu* (=indeed, 8), *að vísu* (= although, 8), *um haustið* (=in the autumn, 7), *aftur á móti* (5), *á endanum* (=in the end, 5).

3.5 Interim Conclusion for Section 3

The results for adverbial clauses are particularly interesting in that they reveal a significant prevalence of temporal adverbial clauses in the preverbal position, totaling 221 instances. This is particularly striking if we compare the results for temporal adverbial clauses to those for conditional clauses, which amount to only 44 examples. Thus, temporal clauses appear five times more often than conditional ones in the sentence-initial position.

This disparity cannot simply be due to a higher general occurrence of temporal clauses in Icelandic. Examining the most common phrase in each category, as per Pind et al. (1991: 620),

³ The expression *hér með* with a meaning other than temporal (e.g. *Hér með fylgdu tvær tunnur víns*) appears only twice out of 22 examples.

we find that the conjunction *þegar* ('when') in Icelandic occurs 1,877 times per 100,000 words, while *ef* ('if') occurs 798 times in the same word count. Although *þegar* is twice as common as *ef*, this does not fully account for the fivefold higher frequency of temporal adverbial clauses using *þegar* compared to conditional clauses introduced by *ef*.

Regarding prepositional phrases that are fronted, *eftir það*, a phrase with a temporal meaning, emerges as the most recurrent. Closely following this are *á þess..* with a temporal interpretation. This supports the findings presented earlier in this paper: phrases expressing temporal information are quite often fronted to the sentence-initial position in Icelandic.

Furthermore, it turns out that several of the fronted adverbial phrases are either (high) conjunctive adverbs like *enda*, *heldur*, *samt*, *svo*, *þó* or evidential (lower) sentence adverbs as *kannski*, *vissulega*, *sennilega*, *eiginlega* (Cinque 1997; see also discussions on the conjunctive properties of *enda* in Rögnvaldsson 1987 and on the relative order of various sentence adverbs in Icelandic, with a comparison to Faroese, in Angantýsson & Jónsson 2021). Supposedly, the preverbal position is the preferred one for some of the higher adverbs, at least *enda*.

Before we delve into the Discussion section, let us quickly summarize key facts that emerged from our analysis so far:

- **Subject as Most Common Preverbal Element:** Around 61% of matrix V2 clauses feature a subject DP as the preverbal element.
- **Sentence-Initial Non-DP Constituents:** Following DPs, the most frequent constituents found in preverbal position are, in descending order, adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases.
- **Fronted Temporal DPs:** Though sentences with a topicalized temporal DP represent only 1.5% of all instances of V2 matrix clauses examined in this study, when a temporal DP is present in the sentence, it appears as the preverbal constituent in 53% of cases.
- **Temporal and Locative Adverbs:** Similar to temporal DPs, if a locative or temporal adverb is included in a matrix clause, this is almost twice more likely than the subject to occupy the preverbal position. Note also that in 64% of all matrix clauses where an adverb appears preverbally, the adverb is a temporal adverb.
- **Main-Clause Phenomenon:** This tendency of temporal DPs, temporal and locative adverbs to precede the subject is mainly observed in main clauses. If we look at embedded clauses, a temporal DP or temporal/locative adverb is no longer more likely than the subject to appear as the preverbal constituent.
- **Adverbial Clauses in Sentence-Initial Position:** The vast majority of topicalized adverbial clauses appearing in a matrix sentence express a temporal relation (when/while/since adverbial clauses).
- **Fronted Types of PPs in IcePaHc:** The IcePaHc corpus reveals that the most frequently fronted prepositional phrase expresses a temporal meaning.

4 Discussion

Over the course of this paper, we have reviewed a number of constructions where a constituent other than the subject has been fronted to a preverbal position. We have seen that a variety of different constituents can fill this position in Icelandic, including adverbs, adverbial clauses,

PPs and the negation.

Many of the constituents which occupy the preverbal position of Icelandic V2 clauses can hardly be described as aboutness or sentence topics in the sense of Krifka (2007):

- (56) The topic constituent identifies the entity or set of entities under which the information expressed in the comment constituent should be stored in the CG content.
(Krifka 2007:31)

Krifka's definition becomes clear when comparing sentences like (57a) and (57b):

- (57) a. [Aristotle Onassis]_{Topic} [married Jacqueline Kennedy]_{Comment}
b. [Jacqueline Kennedy]_{Topic} [married Aristotle Onasses]_{Comment}

Both examples express the same proposition but they differ in that (57a) should be stored as information about Aristotle Onassis, whereas (57b) should be stored as information about Jacqueline Kennedy (see Krifka 2007: 30 and references there).

Consider however example (22), featuring a fronted temporal DP, which we repeat below as (58).

- (58) Eitt sinn var veður hvasst og frjósandi.
One time was weather stormy and freezing
'One time, the weather was stormy and cold'

In (58), it is implausible to suggest that the temporal DP specifies the entity or the file card under which the information in the comment should be stored: the sentence is about the weather, not about the temporal frame "one time", as one can hardly interpret this as an entity about which something is being predicated.

Topicalized constituents in Icelandic also do not appear to be necessarily given in the sense of Krifka (2007). Consider Krifka's definition of discourse-givenness:

- (59) A feature X of an expression α is a Givenness feature if X indicates whether the denotation of α is present in the CG or not, and/or indicates the degree to which it is present in the immediate CG. (Krifka 2007: 27).

Anaphoric expressions like personal pronouns, clitics, demonstratives and definite/indefinite articles have givenness features as part of their lexical representation. Other phenomena that refer to givenness are "grammatical devices such as deaccentuation, ordering and deletion that can mark arbitrary constituents as given" (Krifka 2007: 27). Ordering is known to play a role in givenness marking (for discussions on object shift and particle shift in the Scandinavian languages and in general, see Thráinsson 2007: 138–145 and references there):

- (60) a. Bill showed the boy a girl.
b. ?Bill showed a boy the girl.
c. Bill showed the girl to a boy.

(Krifka 2007: 28-29)

These examples show that in a double object construction, it is more natural for new information to follow given, or old information.

However, fronted temporal DPs such as “in the year 1564” may introduce entirely new information. In fact, in examples like (61-62), the topicalized temporal DP need not have been already introduced in the discourse for the resulting utterance to be felicitous:

- (61) Anno 1564 kom Guðbrandur út hingað aftur á kongsskipinu í Seylunni
In the year 1564, Guðbrandur came out here again on the king's ship in Seylun
- (62) Anno 1605 giftist hann Sigríði dóttur Björns Benediktssonar og Elínar Pálsdóttur
In 1605, he married Sigríða, daughter of Björn Benediktsson and Elínar Pálsdóttir

To describe the function of topicalized expressions like the ones reviewed in this section, the notion of *framing topic* seems more apt.

The concept of *frame-setting topic* was first introduced by Chafe in 1976, who provides some examples from Mandarin Chinese. Accordingly, Chafe describes these types of topics as ‘Chinese style’ topics. Chafe’s Chinese-style topics do not have a relation of aboutness with the rest of the sentence, do not introduce a topic shift and do not express any contrastive relation. According to Chafe, rather, what these topics do is “limit the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain”(Chafe 1976:50). The author also argues that frame-setters set “a spatial, temporal, or individual frame work within which the main predication holds” (Chafe 1976:50). Chafe suggests their function is similar to that of some constituents having an adverbial function in English, such as for example the PP in (63):

- (63) In Dwinelle Hall people are always getting lost.

(Chafe 1976:51)

Building on Chafe's idea, Lambrecht (1996) identifies scene-setting as one of the functions topics can have in a sentence. For example, in a sentence like (64):

- (64) After the children went to school, he had to clean the house and go shopping for the party

(Lambrecht 1996:121)

according to Lambrecht, the sentence-initial temporal clause “After the children went to school” provides a temporal background that frames the context for the actions described in the matrix clause. The adverbial clause thus functions as a “‘scene-setting’ topic for the matrix clause” (Lambrecht 1996: 125).

Krifka (2008) specifically distinguishes frame-setters from sentence topics (Reinhart 1981), noting that frame-setters do not constitute the ‘file-card’ (Karttunen 1976; Heim 1982) describing what the sentence is about. Instead, frame-setters select a frame from a set of alternatives, limiting the scope of the truth-value expressed by the topic’s comment. Thus, according to Krifka, a sentence like (65):

(65) Healthwise / As for his health, he is fine

(Krifka 2008: 269)

should “not be entered under a file card about the health situation” (p. 269).

Krifka presents the argument that frame setters are invariably focused elements, as they select from among various frames and assert that the proposition is applicable within this chosen frame. He suggests that when alternative frames are not under consideration or relevant in that specific context, there is no necessity for an explicit frame setter. Krifka further relates frame-setters to Contrastive Topics (C-Topics), noting how both types of topics are relevant for Common Ground management.

The concept of *frame-setting* is further explored in Carella (2015), who refers to frame-setting topics as “limiting topics” (LTs). This terminology is based on the idea that frame setters play a 'limiting' function. Specifically, they serve to limit the validity of the primary assertion (or comment) to a specific and clearly delineated context. This context is established by the topic itself, which represents the frame.

Similarly to Krifka, Carella assumes that frames are interpreted contrastively. Thus in (65), the frame ‘as for his health’ creates a subfolder in the file-card corresponding to the sentence-topic -corresponding to the subject “he” in (65)-, in which the information expressed by the sentence is stored. This allows a potential speaker to convey different, possibly opposite information with respect to another contextually relevant frame or ‘subfolder’, e.g. “healthwise he is doing okay, but money-wise he is not”.

Carella investigates the occurrence of frame-setting topics in natural conversations by manually inspecting the Bonvino corpus, a group of original Italian audio tracks and related transcriptions, where different speakers talk about different topics.

The results, detailed in her findings, reveal a distinct pattern in the usage of frame-setting topics. Temporal frames emerged as the most commonly used, constituting approximately 56.93% of occurrences. Locative frames were the next most frequent, accounting for 22.27%, followed by domain frames at 20.79%. In terms of specific constituent types employed for frame-setting, PPs were predominant, making up over half of the instances (51.48%). AdvPs were also significant at 25.24%, while DPs were less common, observed in 12.87% of cases. Additionally, various types of adverbial clauses such as Temporal, Modal, and Limitative CPs were used, but to a much lesser extent, with Temporal CPs at 9.40%, and both Modal and Limitative CPs at just 0.49% each.

Carella’s results are particularly interesting because we notice patterns similar to the ones he observed in our own study, despite the fact that we are working on a different language group. In our study, we also noticed the relevance of temporal expressions in capturing the role of sentence-initial non-DP constituents in Icelandic: out of all examples of fronted PPs in our corpus, the type of recurring PP with the highest number of occurrences is *eftir það*, which expresses a temporal relation between the clause for which it functions as a frame and some antecedent sentence. Out of all examples of fronted adverbial clauses in matrix sentences, temporal adverbial clauses were by far the most common in our corpus. We also saw that, when a temporal DP is present, this is more likely than the subject to appear as the leftmost, preverbal element. Finally, we saw that temporal adverbs make up the majority of all matrix examples

featuring a topicalized adverb. These findings are reflected in Carella’s corpus results: in the Bonvino corpus, the majority (57%) of frame-setting topics express a temporal meaning. In the Bonvino corpus, the second most prevalent category of frame-setting topics is locative frame setters, accounting for 22%. This observation also aligns with our findings: recall how we observed that, whenever a locative adverb is present in a matrix clause, it is more likely than the subject to appear preverbally.

What our results, and their comparison to the Carella study, reveal is that the preverbal position in Icelandic is a preferred site for the realization of frame-setters, which are used to provide a generally temporal, but also frequently locative frame within which the rest of the clause is interpreted. In fact, based on the in-class results for temporal and locative expressions detailed in section 3, one could even argue that the preverbal position in Icelandic V2 clauses is not simply an optimal site for the realization of such frame-setting expressions, but it is *the* preferred site: clearly, frame-setting expressions are preferably preverbal.

At the same time, this is clearly only the case in main clauses only, given that expressions that are generally fronted in matrix clauses, such as temporal and locative constituents, are no longer more likely to be fronted in embedded clauses; this is somewhat reminiscent of English Preposing, which is also a type of operation more readily available in matrix clauses.

Observations that are still in need of an explanation are the occurrence of negation in preverbal position (1% of total occurrences), and the fact that adjectives are fronted in only 0.4% of all examples. It seems that at least some adjectives could be interpreted in the ‘file-card’ sense (e.g. “Handsome he is, but rich he is not”), making it unclear why adjectives are fronted so infrequently in our corpus. The opposite problem is observed with negation: negation does not seem to qualify as either a sentence topic or a framing topic, so it is unexpected that it should be fronted at all. Not only is negation fronted in Icelandic, it is also fronted in 28% of all V2 matrix clauses containing a negation, a percentage that is significantly higher than what found in Brandtler and Hakonsson (2014), who explored negative preposing in Swedish. In their study, they observed that clause-initial negation reached a peak of approximately 8% of the total occurrences of negation during the Old Swedish period.

5 Concluding remarks

This paper provided detailed quantitative insights into the tendencies of constituent placement in Icelandic V2 sentences. Specifically, we have identified and quantified the frequency of various non-subject constituents appearing in preverbal positions, giving more insights into the process of Icelandic topicalization and the type of constituents that are generally fronted through this process.

We have observed that Icelandic topicalization mostly fronts adverbs, PPs and direct objects. Particularly remarkable, we believe, is the observation that if a temporal or locative adverb appears in a matrix clause, it is more likely than the subject to appear as the preverbal element. This is even though in absolute terms, the subject is six times more likely than any other element to appear in preverbal position in matrix clauses at least.

Our results suggest that the preverbal position of Icelandic matrix clauses is a preferred site for expressing the realization of expressions which are to be interpreted as the frame within

which the rest of the sentence is interpreted. The alignment of our findings with existing literature on frame-setting topics in other languages not only corroborates these concepts but also broadens their application to Icelandic.

In the future, we would like to investigate the potential for contrastivity of frame-setting expressions. Recall that both Krifka (2007) and Carella (2015) assume that frames are interpreted contrastively. For example, Krifka suggests that an explicit frame setter is only necessary when there is either an implicit or explicit contrast with another frame. However, while it is easy to see how expressions like “Anno 1564” in example (62) can be interpreted as contrastive, the frame against which an expression like “eitt sinn” (=one time) in (59) is being contrasted is less obvious. Therefore, we would like to run acceptability judgment studies to gauge the role and saliency of contrastivity in the realization of frame-setting topics in Icelandic. For example, we would like to investigate whether an alternative frame is always salient, making a sentence continuation with a different frame seem particularly natural, or whether contrastivity is often merely “dormient” (i.e., possible but not explicitly or necessarily active in all contexts that feature a frame-setter).

It should also be kept in mind that our analysis is based on written texts from a wide time range. A systematic comparison of different styles and genres would be desirable as well as further insights from spoken modern Icelandic.

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80 *December [2007]*

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81 *[June 2008]*

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82 *December [2008]*

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84 *[December 2009]*

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David Petersson: Embedded V2 does not exist in Swedish
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Anna-Lena Wiklund: May the force be with you: A reply from the 5th floor

85 *[June 2010]*

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86 *[December 2010]*

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87 [June 2011]

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88 [December 2011]

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89 [June 2012]

Eva Engels: Wh-phrases and NEG-phrases in clauses and nominals.

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90 [December 2012]

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91 [December 2013]

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92 [June 2014]

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93 [December 2014]

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95 [December 2015]

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 Ásgrímur Angantýsson & Dianne Jonas: On the syntax of adverbial clauses in Icelandic

97 [December 2016]

- Hans-Martin Gärtner: A note on the Rich Agreement Hypothesis and varieties of "Embedded V2"
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98 [June 2017]

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103 [December 2019]

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105 [June 2021]

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107 [December 2022]

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108 [June 2023]

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