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# Mood in Icelandic

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## 1. Introduction

Icelandic is spoken by most of the 300.000 inhabitants of Iceland (2005) and some thousands of Western Icelanders in Canada and USA. It enjoys a strong status as a national and a cultural language, with a rich literary heritage, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Historically, Icelandic is Indo-European, Germanic, North Germanic (Nordic, Scandinavian), West Scandinavian. Its closest relatives are Faroese and West Norwegian varieties. In comparison with Mainland Scandinavian and most West Germanic varieties, Icelandic is a conservative language that has preserved most of the morphological complexity of Old Norse. Phonologically, Icelandic has undergone numerous radical changes. The syntax is still similar to Old Norse syntax, although it has changed more than the morphology.

## 2. Verbal categories

### 2.1 An overview

The categories in the Icelandic verb inflection system are the following:

- Person 1, 2, 3
- Number singular, plural
- Finite tense present, past
- Non-finite categories infinitive, present participle, past participle
- Finite mood imperative, indicative, subjunctive (and optative)
- “Middle” *-st* formation (most commonly forming anticausative verbs)

In addition, Icelandic has periphrastic expressions (with auxiliary verbs) for:

- Tense, voice, aspect, modality

Voice includes passives (personal and impersonal) and causative and anticausative (or “middle”) constructions that will not be discussed here (but see Sigurðsson 1989, Thráinsson 2007).

## 2.2 Inflection

Tense/mood and person/number markers show considerable allomorphy, yielding inflectional classes. Traditional grammar distinguishes between 4 classes of *weak verbs* and 6 or 7 classes of *strong verbs*. In addition, there are ten or eleven so-called *preterite-present verbs*. Some examples illustrating the classification are given in (1). The PST PTCP form given is the most common N.SG.NOM/ACC form, sometimes referred to as the “supine”:

## (1) Verb classification

	INF	1SG.PRES	1SG.PRET	1PL.PRET	PST PTCP
W1	vekja ‘wake up’	vek	vak-t-i	vök-t-um	vak-ið
W2	gera ‘do’	ger-i	ger-ð-i	ger-ð-um	ger-t
W3	þola ‘endure’	þol-i	þol-d-i	þol-d-um	þol-að
	hafa ‘have’	hef	haf-ð-i	höf-ð-um	haf-t
W4	leita ‘search’	leit-a	leit-að-i	leit-uð-um	leit-að
S1	líta ‘look’	lít	leit	lit-um	lit-ið
S2	bjóða ‘offer’	býð	bauð	buð-um	boð-ið
S3	verða ‘be(come)’	verð	varð	urð-um	orð-ið
S4	bera ‘carry’	ber	bar	bár-um	bor-ið
S5	gefa ‘give’	gef	gaf	gáf-um	gef-ið
	vera ‘be’	er	var	vor-um	ver-ið
S6	taka ‘take’	tek	tók	tók-um	tek-ið
S7	láta ‘let’	læt	lét	lét-um	lát-ið
PrPr	þurfa ‘need’	þarf	þurft-i	þurft-um	þurf-t

*Hafa* ‘have’ and *vera* ‘be’, are usually classified as a W3 and an S5 verb, respectively, but both inflect irregularly. Numerous other verbs also inflect more or less irregularly.

The present and past tense inflection is illustrated for the weak verb *leita* ‘search’ (W4) in (2) and for the strong verb *taka* ‘take’ (S6) in (3):

(2) Present and Past of the weak verb *leita* ‘search’

		PRESENT TENSE		PAST TENSE	
		<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>
SG	1	leit-a	leit-i	leit-að-i	leit-að-i
	2	leit-ar	leit-ir	leit-að-ir	leit-að-ir
	3	leit-ar	leit-i	leit-að-i	leit-að-i
PL	1	leit-um	leit-um	leit-uð-um	leit-uð-um
	2	leit-ið	leit-ið	leit-uð-uð	leit-uð-uð
	3	leit-a	leit-i	leit-uð-u	leit-uð-u

(3) Present and Past of the strong verb *taka* ‘take

		PRESENT TENSE		PAST TENSE	
		<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>
SG	1	tek	tak-i	tók	tæk-i
	2	tek-ur	tak-ir	tók-st	tæk-ir
	3	tek-ur	tak-i	tók	tæk-i
PL	1	tök-um	tök-um	tök-um	tæk-j-um
	2	tak-ið	tak-ið	tók-uð	tæk-j-uð
	3	tak-a	tak-i	tók-u	tæk-j-u

As seen, tense is a higher ranked category in the inflectional paradigm than mood, the whole present tense being based on the infinitival root, whereas the past has a different base, formed with a suffix, /leit-að/, or Ablaut, /tók-/.<sup>1</sup> In addition, past participles inflect for case (NOM, ACC, DAT, GEN), number (SG, PL) and gender (M, F, N).

## 2.3 Auxiliary verbs

Like many other languages, Icelandic has four major types of auxiliaries:

- (4) a. MODAL AUXILIARIES: *eiga* ‘have to, have the obligation to’, *etc.*  
 b. TEMPORAL AUXILIARIES: *hafa* ‘have’ (perfect), *munu* ‘will’ (future)  
 c. ASPECTUAL AUXILIARIES: *fara* ‘go to, begin to’, *etc.*  
 d. COPULAR AUXILIARIES: *vera* ‘be’, *verða* ‘become, get, will be’ (future)

One lexical verb (e.g., *verða*) may ‘serve’ in more than one of these categories. In addition to these simple cases, Icelandic has many temporal/aspectual “complexes” such as *vera búinn* ‘have; be done’, to be described shortly.

The copula *vera* ‘be’ is the basic passive auxiliary, used both in past and present tense. In future tense it is replaced by *verða* ‘will be’ in both copular and passive constructions:

- (5) a. Hann **verður** áreiðanlega ríkur.  
 he will\_be surely rich  
 ‘He will surely be(come) rich.’  
 b. Hún **verður** víst kosin í stjórnina.  
 she will\_be allegedly elected to board.the  
 ‘They say she will be elected to the board.’

<sup>1</sup> The *e* in the singular present indicative of *taka* and the *æ* in the past subjunctive arise through two of several *i*-mutation processes in the language, *a* > *e* (/tak-/ > /tek-/), and *ó* > *æ* (/tók-/ > /tæk-/), respectively. The *ö* in first person plural *tökum* is formed by *u*-mutation, *a* > *ö* (/tak-/ > /tök-/). The alteration -að- / -uð- in (2) also arises through *u*-mutation (*a* > *u* in unstressed syllables).

## 2.4 Imperatives and exhortatives

Most main verbs have 2SG IMPERATIVES as well as 1PL and 2PL EXHORTATIVES. The singular imperatives have a special form, derived from the infinitive form (of most verbs) by truncating the infinitive *-a*-marker (with W4 verbs as the main exception). Plural exhortatives are homophonous with 1PL and 2PL indicatives/subjunctives:

## (6) Imperatives (SG) and exhortatives (PL)

		W1	W2	W3	W4	S1	S6
		vekja	gera	þola	leita	líta	taka
		‘wake up’	‘do’	‘endure’	‘search’	‘look’	‘take’
SG	2	vek	ger	þol	leita	lít	tak
PL	1	vekj-um	ger-um	þol-um	leit-um	lít-um	tök-um
	2	vek-ið	ger-ið	þol-ið	leit-ið	lít-ið	tak-ið

The expression of the subject in imperative and exhortative clauses is quite variable. The possibilities are illustrated in (7); the most neutral colloquial forms are underlined, whereas the stars indicate absent, ungrammatical options:

(7)		2SG.IMP	1PL.HORT	2PL.HORT
a.	a null subject	tak	<u>tökum</u>	takið
b.	a full clitic	<u>tak-tu</u>	*	<u>takið-i</u>
c.	a full pronoun	?tak þú	*	?takið þið
d.	a heavy pronoun	tak ÞÚ	*	takið ÞIÐ
f.	a cut clitic + a heavy pronoun	tak-t ÞÚ	*	*

The bare null-subject imperative (*tak*, etc.) is largely confined to biblical and poetic language, and the heavy pronouns are contrastively focalized. Examples with the underlined, common forms are given in (8):

(8)	<u>Taktu</u> / <u>Tökum</u> / <u>Takiði</u>	þátt í þessu.
	take-you / take.1PL / take.2PL_you	part in this
	‘Take part in this.’ / ‘Let’s take part in this.’ / ‘Take part in this (, you guys).’	

Some verbs do not easily form imperatives/exhortatives, either for phonological reasons (the singular imperative) or for semantic reasons (both the singular imperative and the plural exhortatives).

Negative infinitives with imperative or pleading force are common in Icelandic (as in many other languages):

(9)	Ekki taka þátt í þessu!
	not take.INF part in this
	‘Do not take part in this!’

## 2.5 Participles and infinitives

The PRESENT PARTICIPLE is formed with an *-andi* suffix. It is indeclinable, but it has several syntactic functions: verbal (passive or middle as well as active), adjectival and adverbial (in addition there are declinable deverbal nouns in *-andi*). The most central one is the active verbal function illustrated in (10):

- (10) Þarna kemur hún **hlaupandi**.  
 there comes she running  
 ‘There she comes running.’

The present participle is “present” or *unshifted* in the sense that it always has a temporal reading that is simultaneous with the temporal reading of some other predicate (such as *kemur* in (10)).

The central syntactic functions of the PAST PARTICIPLE are:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A. An indeclinable active, perfect participle  | Cf. Engl. <i>have <u>gone</u>, <u>broken</u></i> |
| B. An inflected active, perfect participle     | Cf. Engl. <i>be <u>gone</u></i>                  |
| C. An inflected verbal, passive participle     | Cf. Engl. <i>be <u>broken</u></i> (by sby)       |
| D. An inflected adjectival, passive participle | Cf. Engl. (be) <i><u>broken</u></i>              |

The active participles are used in perfect constructions, as in (11):

- (11) a. Hún hefur oft **farið** til Reykjavíkur.  
 she has often gone.NOM/ACC.N.SG to Reykjavik  
 b. Hún er **farin** til Reykjavíkur.  
 she is gone.NOM.F.SG to Reykjavik

The temporal properties of these constructions are similar as in English, and will be discussed in the next subsection. As for the participle itself, it seems to always be –FUTURE, relative to some temporal reference point (reference time). The fact that it is often used about past events stems from the pragmatic inference that –FUTURE events are likely to have taken place in the past.<sup>2</sup>

INFINITIVES commonly have a simultaneous reading, but they may also refer to future eventualities (Stowell 1982, etc.). Thus the infinitive in (12a) describes an event, *reading a*

<sup>2</sup> In one peculiar case the active past participle would seem to have the same temporal reading as infinitives, –PAST, namely, when it is a complement of the modal *geta* ‘can, be able to’. This modal might introduce a complex temporal structure that is partly silent or truncated, but I will not pursue the issue here.

*book*, that lies in the future, relative to the *hoping* event of the main clause. As seen in (12b), a +PAST reading is excluded:

- (12) a. Í gærðag vonaðist hún til að lesa bókina  
 in yersterday hoped she for to read book.the  
 á\_morgun.  
 tomorrow  
 ‘Yesterday, she hoped to read the book tomorrow.’
- b. \* Í morgun sá hún eftir að lesa bókina í  
 in morning saw she after to read book.the in  
 gærðag.  
 yesterday  
 Intended: ‘\*This morning she regretted to read the book yesterday.’

Thus, it seems that infinitives are basically –PAST. In sum:

- (13) a. Present participles: Unshifted  
 b. Past participles: –FUTURE  
 c. Infinitives: –PAST

Two modal verbs, *munu* ‘will’ and *skulu* ‘shall’, are exceptional in having special, morphologically past (but semantically non-past) infinitival forms, *mundu/myndu* and *skyldu*, sometimes used in formal language in raising or Exceptional Case Marking constructions (Accusative or Nominative with an Infinitive), taken by verbs like *telja* ‘believe, consider’ *virðast* ‘seem’ and *segjast* ‘say oneself’ in the past tense. That is, *munu* and *skulu* can show TENSE AGREEMENT even in certain infinitives. This is illustrated for present infinitive *munu* vs. past infinitive *mundu* in (14):

- (14) a. Hún segist **munu** koma.  
 she says-herself will.INF come  
 ‘She says that she will come.’
- b. Hún sagðist **mundu** koma.  
 she said-herself would.INF come  
 ‘She said that she would come.’

Tense agreement copies the morphological tense of a matrix clause into its subordinate clause, without also copying its tense semantics. I will discuss tense agreement further in relation to the subjunctive, in section 3.

## 2.6 The (indicative) tense system

As in many other languages, the past and present tenses in Icelandic can be analyzed simply as +/-PAST. Icelandic does not have an inflectional future tense, but, as already mentioned, it has future auxiliaries, the copula *verða* ‘will be’ and the formal *munu* ‘will’ (which is more commonly used as an evidentiality (inference/hearsay) modal). In addition, Icelandic has developed a complex future auxiliary, *koma til með að* + infinitive, literally ‘come towards

with *to*’, meaning simply ‘will’. However, expressing future time with the simple present is also an available strategy for many verbs.<sup>3</sup>

As commonly in other languages, the simple present tense gets several non-past readings, including PRESENT, FUTURE, GENERIC and HABITUAL/ITERATIVE. Each of these readings are facilitated or disambiguated by various factors, including adverbial modification and the verb’s aktionsart (internal aspect). The present time reading is natural for the temporal auxiliaries *hafa* ‘have’ and *vera* ‘be’ and for stative and durative verbs like *liggja* ‘lie’, *sitja* ‘sit’, *sofa* ‘sleep’, but for most dynamic verbs the present time reading has to be expressed with the PROGRESSIVE *vera að* + infinitive construction. In English, the gerund (*be* + *V-ing*) is commonly used for the same purpose:

- (15) Hún er að mála (núna).  
 she is to paint now  
 ‘She is painting (now).’

Icelandic has three distinct PERFECT constructions, exemplified in (16) (the subject *Ólafur* is NOM.M.SG and hence *búinn* in (16b) and *kominn* in (16c) are NOM.M.SG forms):

- (16) a. Ólafur **hefur** komið hingað. *hafa* + uninflected PTCP  
 Olaf has come to\_here  
 ‘Olaf has come here (at some time).’  
 b. Ólafur **er búinn** að koma hingað. *vera* + agreeing  
 Olaf is finished to come to\_here *búinn að* + INF  
 ‘Olaf has come here (already).’  
 c. Ólafur **er** kominn hingað. *vera* + agreeing PTCP  
 Olaf is come to\_here  
 ‘Olaf has come here (and he is still here).’

The *hafa* perfect is most commonly EXISTENTIAL, as in (16a), the *vera búinn að* perfect is RESULTATIVE, whereas the agreeing participle perfect is STATIVE (on the first two notions, see, e.g., Kiparsky 2002, and, with respect to Icelandic, Jónsson 1992).<sup>4</sup> These notions are not very precise or pertinent (in a sense, all perfects are resultative, to mention just one caveat). The existential perfect is unbounded (generic, non-specified), whereas the resultative and stative perfects are situation bounded. In all cases, the perfect behaves as predicted by the so-called extended now theory, i.e., it locates an eventuality in a time span that reaches

<sup>3</sup> English *will* and *be going to* commonly translate as *ætla* ‘intend, plan’. However, the future interpretation of *ætla* is derivative of its subject oriented modality (intentions and plans cannot be carried out but in the future). That is, its meaning is not purely or primarily temporal.

<sup>4</sup> The *hafa* perfect may also express inferential evidentiality (in a similar way as described for Mainland Scandinavian in Rothstein 2006, cf. Thráinsson 2007:12).



from the event time (E) to the speech time or the time of utterance (S) (see below on these notions). While the existential perfect only indicates that an eventuality has pertained at some time within this time span, the so-called universal perfect expresses that the eventuality holds for all subintervals of this period.<sup>5</sup>

The stative perfect describes an event or a process that results in a changed state that pertains at a time point X (reference time). Thus, as indicated, the sentence in (16c) necessarily implies that ‘Olaf is still here’ (as a result of his arrival). Adding a clause like ‘but he isn’t here now’ inevitably leads to a contradiction. The stative perfect is limited to motion verbs, like *fara* ‘go’ and *koma* ‘come, arrive’, and other intransitive verbs that denote a change of state, like *detta* ‘fall’, *deyja* ‘die’, *drukna* ‘drown’, *hverfa* ‘disappear’. English has a stative perfect with the verb *go* (not discussed by Kiparsky 2002) as in *She is gone to England* (so she isn’t here now). Compare: *She has gone to England* (on some occasion(s), but she might be back now).

The other two perfects are compatible with most main verbs. The resultative perfect is spreading in the language (the oldest attested examples are from the 17<sup>th</sup> century). It is the unmarked alternative for easily separable eventualities (but its domain is expanding, see Wide 2002), and the eventuality is situation bounded, that is, linked to a specific situation. Accordingly, it is either recent or relevant with respect to the reference time. In contrast to the stative perfect, however, the *vera búinn að* perfect does not necessarily imply a still holding change of state, as the following contrast illustrates:

- (17) a. Ólafur **er búinn að bíða** hér í fjóra tíma og  
 Olaf is finished to wait here in four hours and  
 bíður hér enn.  
 waits here still  
 ‘Olaf has been waiting here for four hours, and he is still waiting here.’
- b.\* Ólafur **er kominn** hingað og kemur hingað enn.  
 Olaf is come to\_here and comes to\_here still

Progressive and perfect constructions illustrate that the tense system is twofold, consisting of a finite and a non-finite part. The *non-finite part* relates event time, E, to reference time R, yielding a relation between the two,  $E \leftrightarrow R$ , that can have an unshifted value, a –PAST value, as in infinitives, or a –FUTURE value, as in past participles. The *finite part* relates the resulting relation,  $E \leftrightarrow R$  (or E/R), with the speech time, S, yielding a second order relation,  $S \leftrightarrow (E \leftrightarrow R)$ , or  $S \leftrightarrow (E/R)$ , most commonly having a +PAST, –PAST or a +FUTURE value. Using English glosses, the tense system can thus be described as in (18):

<sup>5</sup> The universal reading is compatible with both the *hafa* perfect and the *vera búinn að* perfect (although there are cases where only the *vera búinn að* perfect yields an unambiguously universal reading, including the reference time). In spite of its prominence in the perfect tense literature, the distinction between the universal and non-universal readings is not an inherent property of the perfect construction as such.

## (18) The tense system of Icelandic

	<u>Finite T</u>	<u>Non-finite T</u>	<i>English glosses</i>
	S ↔ (E/R)	E ↔ R	
<i>Construction:</i>			
Past (simple):	+PAST	Unshifted	she <u>was</u> here
Present (simple):	–PAST	Unshifted	she <u>is</u> here
Future (simple):	+FUTURE	Unshifted	she <u>will-be</u> here
Past progressive:	+PAST	–PAST	she <u>was</u> to paint (≈ ‘painting’)
Present progressive:	–PAST	–PAST	she <u>is</u> to paint (≈ ‘painting’)
Future progressive:	+FUTURE	–PAST	she <u>will-be</u> to paint (≈ ‘painting’)
Past perfect:	+PAST	– FUTURE	she <u>was finished</u> to paint / <u>had</u> painted
Present perfect:	–PAST	– FUTURE	she <u>is finished</u> to paint / <u>has</u> painted
Future perfect:	+FUTURE	– FUTURE	she <u>will-be finished</u> to paint / <u>will have</u> painted

This is a novel analysis (to the best of my knowledge), although it is based on the classical Reichenbachian understanding of tense (see Reichenbach 1947, Giorgi & Pianesi 1997, Cinque 1999, Julien 2001, among many). For further discussion, see Sigurðsson (2008).

### 3. The subjunctive

#### 3.1 Morphology

Reconsider the finite inflection illustrated in (2) – (3) above. There is considerable syncretism in the endings, but it is reasonable to assume the following analysis of the basic order of the grammatical markers **T**(ense), **M**(ood), **N**(umbe)r, and **P**(erso)n, shown for the strong verb *taka* ‘take’ in (19) (see Sigurðsson 2001):

(19)	<i>Root</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Nr</i>	<i>Pn</i>		
a.	tak	(tók)	-	u	m	>	<i>tókum</i> (PST.IND.1PL) ‘took’
b.	tak	(tók)	i	u	m	>	<i>tækjum</i> (PST.SBJV.1PL) ‘would take’

The subjunctive *-i-* marker triggers *i*-mutation (/tók/ → /tæk/) and palatalizes preceding /k/ (and /g/), yielding *kj* (and *gj*) in spelling (when directly in front of an *-a* or *-u*).

In addition to the inflectional past subjunctive, Icelandic has periphrastic subjunctives with the past subjunctive forms of the modal *munu* ‘will’. Compare the simple subjunctive in (20a) with the periphrastic one in (20b):<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The past subjunctive forms of *skulu* ‘shall’ can also build a periphrastic subjunctive, but it adds subject or speaker oriented modality (often voluntariness/advice) that is absent in other subjunctives (this is

- (20) a. Ég **færi** ef hún bæði mig.  
I went.SBJV if she asked.SBJV me
- b. Ég **mundi fara** ef hún bæði mig.  
I would.SBJV go if she asked.SBJV me  
'I would go if she asked me.'

The periphrastic subjunctive would be somewhat less natural in the conditional *ef*- 'if' clause.

The copula *vera* 'be, stay' has not only an indicative and a subjunctive paradigm in the present tense but also an OPTATIVE one (often used as an exhortative in the 2nd person and in the 1st person plural):

- (21) Present tense of *vera* 'be, stay'

		<i>Indicative</i>	<i>Subjunctive</i>	<i>Optative</i>
SG	1	er	sé	ver-i
	2	er-t	sér-t	ver-ir
	3	er	sé	ver-i
PL	1	er-um	sé-um	ver-um
	2	er-uð	sé-uð	ver-ið
	3	er-u	sé-u	ver-i

Morphologically, the optative is formed in the same way as regular subjunctives, whereas the subjunctive forms, *sé*, etc., are highly irregular.

All other verbs in the language use the present subjunctive to express the optative:

- (22) a. **Fari** hann og **veri!**  
go.SBJV he [to place X] and be.OPT (i.e. stay) [there]  
'May he be damned / go to hell!'
- b. Guð **sé** oss næstur!  
God be.SBJV us next  
'May God be with us.'
- c. Lengi **lifi** kóngurinn!  
long live.SBJV king.the  
'Long live the King!'

As seen in (22b), even the verb *vera* 'be, stay' can use subjunctive forms as optatives. The division of labor between its present subjunctive and optative forms is largely idiosyncratic.

### 3.2 Main clause subjunctives

As just illustrated, subjunctives are used as MAIN CLAUSE OPTATIVES. That seems to be the only main clause type that is compatible with the *present* subjunctive. Present subjunctives are also used in certain other independent clauses, with a subordinate form, as in (23):

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another phenomenon than the *skulu*-subjunctives in complements of true factives, described in section 3.3 below).

- (23) a. Að hún **skuli** segja þetta!  
 the she shall.SBJV say this  
 ‘[It is incredible/remarkable] That she says this!’
- b. Kannski (að) hún **komi** hingað.  
 maybe (that) she comes.SBJV here  
 ‘[It] May be [that] she will come here.’

As seen in (20) above, *past* subjunctives are used in counterfactual sentences, not only in the (protasis) conditional clause, but also in the (apodosis) main clause. In addition, past subjunctive modals are commonly used in declarative main clauses, as in (24) (similarly: *mætti* ‘might’, *kynni* ‘could’, *gæti* ‘could’, *þyrfti* ‘should, would need to’, and [dative taking] *bæri* ‘ought to’):

- (24) Hún **ætti** að fara.  
 she ought.SBJV to go  
 ‘She should go (in my opinion).’

In main clauses of this sort the past subjunctive modal expresses speaker valuation (as indicated in (24)). They can thus be analyzed as being combined with a silent conditional clause, containing, roughly: ‘If I were to spell out my opinion’.

Most of these modals, as well as *vilja* ‘want’, can also be used in polite questions that have either the force of a mild request, as in (25), or a modest suggestion, as in (26):

- (25) a. **Vildirðu** rétta mér sykurrinn?  
 would.SBJV\_you hand me sugar.the  
 ‘Would you be so kind as to hand me the sugar?’
- b. **Gætirðu** gefið mér eld?  
 could.SBJV\_you give me fire  
 ‘Could you please give me light?’
- (26) a. **Ættirðu** ekki að fara?  
 ought.SBJV\_you not go  
 ‘Don’t you think you should go?’
- b. **Gætirðu** ekki gert þetta fyrir mig?  
 could.SBJV\_you not do this for me  
 ‘Don’t you think you could do this for me?’

The suggestion type in (26) commonly contains the negation.

### 3.3 Embedded subjunctives: their use and meaning

The subjunctive is largely a subordinate clause phenomenon. Subordinate clauses are commonly divided into NOMINAL CLAUSES (or argument clauses), RELATIVE CLAUSES, and

ADVERBIAL CLAUSES. The distribution of the indicative and the subjunctive across these clause types is roughly as follows:

- (27) a. Nominal clauses (declarative or interrogative): IND or SBJV, depending on properties in superordinate clause(s)  
 b. Adverbial clauses: IND or SBJV, depending on either the connective that introduces the clause or on properties in superordinate clause(s)  
 c. Relative clauses: mostly IND, but SBJV is also possible, depending on properties in superordinate clause(s)

The most important factor that correlates with mood selection in nominal clauses is the semantics of the matrix predicate that contains the clause (as a subordinate argument). Following Thráinsson (1976, 1990, 2005, 2007, based on Kiparsky & Kiparsky 1970, see also Sigurðsson 1990), it is useful to make the following classification, for both predicates and nominals that take a clausal arguments (like *the idea that ...*). I illustrate this with only a few examples:

- (28) a. (Semi-)Factives: *discover, know, see; be obvious; the fact, the truth*  
 b. Non-factives: *believe, hope, say, think; be thinkable; the idea, the lie*  
 c. True factives: *deplore, embrace, regret, rejoice; be fun, be deplorable*

Items belonging to the first class are called factives or semi-factives because they commonly presuppose the truth of their complement clauses. In contrast, non-factives do not presuppose the truthfulness of their complements whereas true factives always do. True factives are also called emotive factives.

We can now state the following descriptive approximations:

- (29) a. Factives usually take an indicative complement, e.g., 3P *brosir* ‘smiles’  
 b. Non-factives usually take a subjunctive complement, e.g., 3P *brosi*  
 c. True factives usually take a subjunctive with *skulu* + INF, e.g., 3P *skuli brosa*

This is illustrated for factives in (30), non-factives in (31) and for true factives in (32):

Factives, taking INDICATIVES:

- (30) a. Ég veit að tunglið  
 I know that moon.the  
**brosir**/\*brosi/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.IND/\*smiles.SBJV/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘I know that the moon smiles.’  
 b. Það er augljóst að tunglið  
 it is obvious that moon.the  
**brosir**/\*brosi/\*skulibrosa.  
 smiles.IND/\*smiles.SBJV/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘It is obvious that the moon smiles’

- c. Ég tala um þá staðreynd að tunglið  
 I talk about the fact that moon.the  
**brosir**/\*brosi/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.IND/\*smiles.SBJV/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘I talk about the fact that the moon smiles’

Non-factives, taking SUBJUNCTIVES:

- (31) a. Ég vona að tunglið  
 I hope that moon.the  
**brosi**/\*brosir/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.SBJV/\*smiles.IND/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘I hope the moon smiles.’
- b. Það er líklegt að tunglið  
 it is likely that moon.the  
**brosi**/\*brosir/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.SBJV/\*smiles.IND/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘It is likely that the moon smiles.’
- c. Ég tala um þá hugmynd að tunglið  
 I talk about the idea that moon.the  
**brosi**/\*brosir/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.SBJV/\*smiles.IND/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘I am talking about the idea that the moon smiles.’

True-factives, taking *SKULU*-SUBJUNCTIVES:

- (32) a. Ég harma að tunglið  
 I regret that moon.the  
**skuli brosa**/\*brosi/?brosir.<sup>7</sup>  
 shall.SBJV smile/\*smiles.SBJV/?smiles.IND  
 ‘I regret that the moon smiles’
- b. Það er gaman að tunglið  
 it is fun that moon.the  
**skuli brosa**/\*brosi/?brosir.  
 shall.SBJV smile/\*smiles.SBJV/?smiles.IND  
 ‘It is fun that the moon smiles.’

<sup>7</sup> True factives can be interpreted as taking a silent factive NP, like *the fact*, the silent NP in turn heading the complement clause:

- (i) a. I regret (~~the fact~~) that the moon smiles  
 b. (~~The fact~~) that the moon smiles is fun.

On a reading where a silent factive NP is semantically present, the complement may at least marginally be indicative (but the fact that this does not yield a perfectly grammatical result suggests that some kind of a grammaticalization of the mood selection has taken place).

Even though factivity seems to be an important criterion for mood selection, it is evident from these facts that something more is involved. Thus, clausal arguments of true factives must take the form of a periphrastic *skulu*-subjunctive, in spite of always being factive.

In the classification of predicates developed by Hooper (1975, see also Giorgi & Pianesi 1997:196), true factives are *non-assertive*, whereas semi-factives are *assertive*. Given that distinction, we can state the following generalizations:

- (33) a. FACTIVE ASSERTIONS usually require the indicative  
 b. FACTIVE NON-ASSERTIONS usually require a *skulu*-subjunctive  
 c. NON-FACTIVES usually require a plain subjunctive – this includes clauses that pertain to *another possible world* (of desires, dreams, etc.), as in main clause optatives and in counterfactual conditionals

*Valuation* (by either the subject or the speaker) is the central factor that leads to non-factivity and/or non-assertion, thus triggering subjunctive marking, in accordance with (33b) and (33c). All these generalizations come close to holding true across the board, but there are also facts that are not easily accommodated by them, as we will now see.

Most adverbial clauses are indicative, but three types of adverbial connectives usually require a subjunctive complement:

- (34) a. The negative conditional *nema* ‘unless, except’  
 b. Purposives like *til að* ‘in order to’, *svo að* ‘so that’, etc.  
 c. Concessives like *þó að* ‘although’ (lit. ‘though that’), etc.

Both conditional and purposive connectives introduce clauses that pertain not to our real world but to another possible world, so they would be expected to be subjunctive, given the generalization in (33c). Unexpectedly, however, the positive conditional *ef* ‘if’ usually requires the indicative, at least in the standard language (some speakers accept or prefer the subjunctive, but this is not indicated):

- (35) a. Ég fer ekki þangað ef Ólafur er/\*sé þar.  
 I go not to\_there if Olaf is.IND/\*SBJV there  
 ‘I am not going there if Olaf is there.’  
 b. Ég fer ekki þangað nema Ólafur sé/\*er þar.  
 I go not to\_there unless Olaf is.SBJV/\*IND there  
 ‘I am not going there unless Olaf is there.’

Given the otherwise valid generalizations in (33), it is also unexpected that concessive connectives select the plain subjunctive, as illustrated in (36):

- (36) Ólafur er óánægður þó að tunglið  
 Olaf is discontent though that moon.the  
**brosi**/\*brosir/\*skuli brosa.  
 smiles.SBJV/\*smiles.IND/\*shall.SBJV smile  
 ‘Olaf is discontent although the moon smiles.’

Concessive clauses are factive (as for instance seen by the fact that adding the statement ‘but it does not smile’ to (36) would lead to anomaly). They are arguably non-assertive, though. Given the generalization in (33b), one would thus expect them to have a *skulu*-subjunctive, contrary to fact. Possibly, mood-selection is lexically “frozen” for certain elements, including concessives and conditional *ef* ‘if’,<sup>8</sup> the otherwise general mood selection processes thus being blocked. It seems likely, though, that something more is involved, but I will not pursue the issue further.

Mood selection is *not* governed by lexical predicates in any straightforward manner. This is seen by the fact that it can be affected by a variety of factors, like tense, evidentiality, negation and person (of a matrix subject). Thus, for instance, factive *vita* ‘know’ usually takes only indicative complements in the present tense, (37), but in the past it may also take a subjunctive complement, (38b):

- (37) Jón veit að María kemur/\*komi heim.  
 John knows that Mary comes.IND/\*SBJV home  
 ‘John knows that Mary comes/will come home.’

- (38) a. Jón vissi að María kom heim.  
 John knew that Mary came.IND home  
 ‘John knew that Mary came home.’  
 (i.e., ‘John knew about the fact that Mary came home’)
- b. Jón vissi að María kæmi heim.  
 John knew that Mary came.SBJV home  
 ‘John knew that Mary would come home.’  
 (i.e., ‘John was confident that Mary would come home’)

In (38a), the speaker simply reports the *past eventuality* of John having known about Mary’s homecoming. In (38b), on the other hand, the speaker reports on John’s *past state of mind*, that is, on his past confidence that Mary comes home (usually in the future, relative to John’s moment of confidence). The latter phenomenon is known as (subject’s) POINT OF VIEW (see, e.g., Thráinsson 1976, Sigurðsson 1990).

Like other factives the verb *sjá* ‘see’ normally takes only indicative complements, as in (39):

- (39) Ólafur sér að þú ert/\*sért mikilvægur.  
 Olaf sees that you are.IND/\*SBJV important  
 ‘Olaf sees/realizes (the fact) that you are important.’

<sup>8</sup> Similarly as case-selection is “frozen” for many prepositions.



When *negated*, however, *sjá* may also take a subjunctive complement, as illustrated in (40b):

- (40) a. Ólafur sér ekki að þú **ert** mikilvægur.  
 Olaf sees not that you are.IND important  
 ‘Olaf does not see/realize (the fact) that you are important.’  
 b. Ólafur sér ekki að þú **sért** mikilvægur.  
 Olaf sees not that you are.SBJV important  
 ‘Olaf cannot see that you should be important.’

This extends to stage level factives like *taka eftir* ‘notice’ and *átta sig á* ‘realize’, as opposed to individual level factives like (present tense) *vita* ‘know’.

By using the indicative, as for instance in (40a), the speaker is making a factive assertion about (what he or she considers to be) the real world: ‘(It is a fact in the real world that) you are important, but Olaf doesn’t see/realize it.’ Accordingly, *first person* matrix subjects are excluded in this context, as illustrated in (41a):

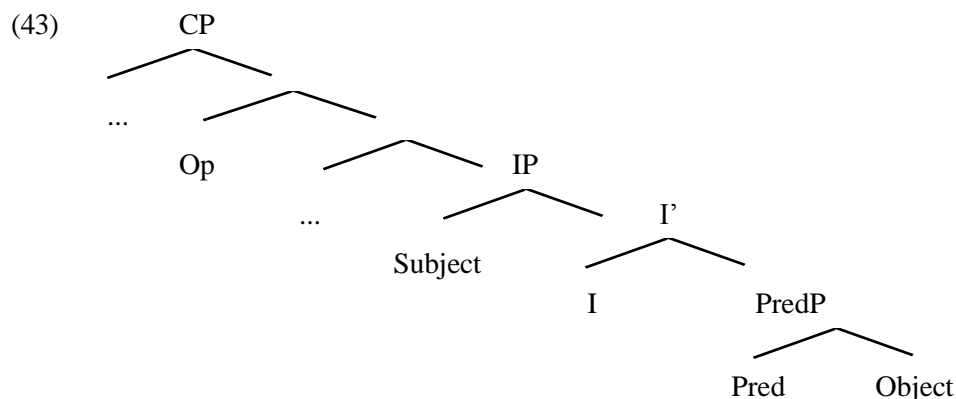
- (41) a. \*Ég sé ekki að þú **ert** mikilvægur.  
 I see not that you are.IND important  
 b. Ég sé ekki að þú **sért** mikilvægur.  
 I see not that you are.SBJV important  
 ‘I cannot see that you should be important.’

By claiming that it is a fact that ‘you are important’, and by also claiming he or she does *not* realize this, the speaker inevitably contradicts himself or herself in (41a). No such contradiction arises in (41b), where the speaker does not take any responsibility for the truthfulness of the predication ‘you are important’. The speaker seems to always take TRUTHFULNESS RESPONSIBILITY in indicatives (even when he or she is lying – false truthfulness responsibility is the essence of a lie).

The moods have more or less the same distribution in subject clauses as in complement clauses. Accordingly, clausal subjects are indicative if the matrix predicate is factive, subjunctive if it is non-factive, and a *skulu*-subjunctive if the matrix predicate is a true factive:

- (42) a. [Að jörðin **er** flöt] er staðreynd.  
 that earth.the is.IND flat is fact  
 ‘That the earth is flat is a fact.’  
 b. [Að jörðin **sé** flöt] er bara vitleysa.  
 that earth.the is.SBJV flat is just nonsense  
 ‘That the earth is flat is just nonsense.’  
 c. [Að jörðin **skuli vera** flöt] er hörmulegt.  
 that earth.the shall.SBJV be flat is deplorable  
 ‘That the earth is flat is deplorable.’

The subject c-commands its predicate but not vice versa. This can be described as follows (where there is “room” for several head features in the CP-domain, in the spirit of Rizzi 1997, Sigurðsson 2004 and many others):



As seen, the predicate c-commands its object, whereas the subject is not in its scope (this is also true, even if the subject is generated in Spec,Pred). Thus, it cannot be the case that the predicate controls or decides the mood of a subject clause under c-command, i.e., the mood must be decided in some different manner. As various other factors than predicates affect mood selection, as we have seen, the mood is not in fact decided by any single lexical item. Rather, it seems to be decided by a non-lexical feature that takes scope over all the elements involved, including both the subject and its predicate. The feature in question is evidently SPEAKER TRUTHFULNESS RESPONSIBILITY, indicated simply as **Op**(erator) in the CP-domain in (43). As seen, it takes scope over the subject as well as the predicate, yielding an *Op-Subject-Predicate* “chain”, where both the subject *and* the predicate must be compatible with the requirements of Op. In the more common case of a clausal object, the matrix Op scopes over its subject and its predicate, which in turn scopes over Op in the subordinate CP domain as well as over the subordinate subject and predicate, yielding an *Op-Subject-Predicate-[<sub>CP</sub> Op-Subject-Predicate]* “chain”. Given this understanding, it is not surprising that even the *matrix* subject has to be compatible with the *subordinate* clause mood, as shown in (41) above.

Verbs of expression and thinking, such as *say*, *maintain*, *write*, *think* (*verba dicendi*, in a slightly extended sense) usually require a subjunctive complement, as illustrated in (44):

- (44) a. Ólafur fullyrðir að tunglið brosi/\*brosir  
 Olaf maintains that moon.the smiles.SBJV/\*IND  
 á laugardögum.  
 on Saturdays
- b. Ólafur heldur að tunglið brosi/\*brosir  
 Olaf thinks that moon.the smiles.SBJV/\*IND  
 á laugardögum.  
 on Saturdays

It follows that Icelandic always uses the subjunctive in INDIRECT SPEECH (as opposed to represented speech and thought, see Sigurðsson 1990). In this respect, Modern Icelandic differs from Romance languages, which commonly have indicative in *verba dicendi* complements (see, e.g., Giorgi & Pianesi 1997:215), and also from Old Norse (Nygaard 1906:284ff), which shows considerable mood optionality in complements of this sort. In Modern Icelandic, the most important factor that triggers subjunctive marking in these complements is that the speaker does not take *responsibility* for their truthfulness, whereas their *actual truthfulness* (according to the speaker) seems to be more important in Romance languages and to play a certain role in Old Norse too. In other words, the Modern Icelandic speaker makes the matrix *subject* responsible for the subordinate clause proposition, hence the subjunctive (with absent speaker truthfulness responsibility). However, if the matrix subject refers to the speaker himself/herself, then the speaker can take the truthfulness responsibility and the indicative is possible, as in (45):

- (45) Ég fullyrði að tunglið brosi/brosir á laugardögum.  
I maintain that moon.the smiles.SBJV/IND on Saturdays

By using the indicative the speaker asserts that the moon smiles on Saturdays ('I hereby maintain that it is a fact that the moon smiles on Saturdays'), whereas he or she only tells about his or her claim to this effect when using the subjunctive.<sup>9</sup>

The domain of a subjunctive taking predicate or structure can extend across clause boundaries, a phenomenon known as the DOMINO EFFECT (Thráinsson 1976), yielding unbroken "chains" of subjunctives, as illustrated in (46b, c):

- (46) a. Sandra *fer* alltaf þegar Pétur *kemur*.  
Sandra leaves.IND always when Peter arrives.IND  
b. Hún segir að Sandra **fari** þegar Pétur  
she says.IND that Sandra leaves.SBJV when Peter  
**komi**.  
arrives.SBJV  
c. Hún segir að þetta sé konan  
she says.IND that this is.SBJV woman.the  
sem **fari** þegar Pétur **komi**.  
who leaves.SBJV when Peter arrives.SBJV

There are no distance limits to this effect, as illustrated in (47), where the square brackets indicate finite clause boundaries:

- (47) Mary says.IND [that this **is**.SBJV the woman [who always **leaves**.SBJV [when Peter **arrives**.SBJV [because she **gets**.SBJV angry by hearing him say to the neighbour [that he **wishes**.SBJV [that she **move**.SBJV [so that his sister **can**.SBJV get the apartment [in order for their mother **be-able**.SBJV to move in [so that she **will**.SBJV not have to live in the village [which **is**.SBJV a very dull place to live in, [because ... etc., etc.

<sup>9</sup> The difference between these readings becomes clearer when an adverbial like *often* is added, in which case only the subjunctive is possible: *I often maintain that the moon smiles.SBJV/\*IND on Saturdays*. By adding *often* the speaker makes it clear that he or she is not making a statement for which he or she takes truthfulness responsibility "here and now".

The whole passage reports or reflects the point of view of the matrix subject *Mary*. As soon as the speaker “interrupts” with his or her own truthfulness responsibility in an intervening clause, the “subjunctive spell” is broken.

The fact that mood selection is based on the Speaker’s Truthfulness Responsibility and reflects a contrast between the speaker’s and the subject’s point of view shows that the “speaker” is an active category, not only in semantics but also in syntax (see Sigurðsson 2004, Bianchi 2006).

### 3.4 Tense interpretation in subordinate clauses

Embedded indicatives are TENSE INDEPENDENT of their matrix clauses. This is illustrated in (48) – (49):

- (48) a. Ólafur veit að María **er/var** hérna.  
 Olaf knows that Mary is/was.IND here
- b. Ólafur veit að María **hefur/hafði** verið hérna.  
 Olaf knows that Mary has/had.IND been here
- (49) a. Ólafur vissi að María **er/var** hérna.  
 Olaf knew that Mary is/was.IND here
- b. Ólafur vissi að María **hefur/hafði** verið hérna.  
 Olaf knew that Mary has/had.IND been here

There are some caveats here that I will not discuss (most importantly, semantic properties of many matrix predicates (aspect/aktionsart, etc.) limit the tense freedom in the subordinate clause).

When the matrix clause and the subordinate indicative clause have the same tense, as in *Olaf knew that Mary was here*, the unmarked reading of the embedded indicative is simultaneous with the matrix tense. However, a shifted reading is also possible and can be forced, as in (50) (see Enç 1987, among many):

- (50) Í morgun uppgötvaði Ólafur að María **fór**  
 in morning discovered Olaf that Mary went.IND  
 í gær.  
 in yesterday  
 ‘This morning Olaf discovered that Mary went/left yesterday.’

Thus, embedded indicatives are basically tense independent of their matrix clauses.

Embedded subjunctives, in contrast, are tense dependent (see also Landau 2004:819ff). Consider (51):

- (51) Ólafur hélt að María **færi**.  
 Olaf thought that Mary went.SBJV  
 ‘Olaf thought that Mary was going/would go.’

Crucially, the preterite subjunctive cannot have a past reading, i.e., (51) cannot mean that Mary left before the moment of Olaf’s thinking (whereas the indicative in (50) does mean

that Mary left before Olaf's discovery). That is, the temporal reading of embedded preterite subjunctives is *not* +PAST but –PAST with respect to the past event time (of Olaf's thinking) in the matrix clause, hence its simultaneous and/or future interpretation, seen in the English translation. This is further evidenced by the contrast in (52):

- (52) a. Í morgun hélt Ólafur að María **færi** í kvöld.  
 in morning thought Olaf that Mary went.SBJV tonight  
 'This morning Olaf believed that Mary would go tonight.'
- b. \*Í morgun hélt Ólafur að María **færi**  
 in morning thought Olaf that Mary went.SBJV  
 í gær.  
 in yesterday  
 Intended: '\*This morning Olaf believed that Mary would go yesterday.'

Subjunctives, past and present, share their basic –PAST reading with the simple present tense in indicatives and with infinitives. Thus, some matrix predicates that require a non-indicative complement clause can select either a subjunctive or an infinitive clause, as illustrated in (53) (where future reading of the –PAST complement is the natural one, due to the semantics of the matrix predicate):<sup>10</sup>

- (53) a. Ólafur vonaðist til að hann **ynni** leikinn.  
 Olaf hoped for that he won.SBJV game.the  
 'Olaf hoped that he would win the game.'
- b. Ólafur vonaðist til að **vinna** leikinn.  
 Olaf hoped for to win.INF game.the  
 'Olaf hoped to win the game.'

Icelandic adheres rather strictly to TENSE AGREEMENT in subjunctive argument clauses (see Anderson 1986, Sigurðsson 1990):

- (54) TENSE AGREEMENT (sequence of tense, see below):  
 An embedded subjunctive clause copies a tense value from its matrix clause.

This is illustrated in (55):

- (55) a. Ólafur heldur að María **fari**/\*færi.  
 Olaf thinks that Mary goes.PRES.SBJV/\*PST.SBJV
- b. Ólafur hélt að María **færi**/\*fari  
 Olaf thought that Mary went.PST.SBJV/\*PRES.SBJV  
 'Olaf thought that Mary was going/would go.'

There are however also cases where the temporal value copied is not simultaneous with the reference time (i.e., the morphological tense) of the matrix clause but only with its *event time* (cf. Sigurðsson 1990: 315f), as in (56):

<sup>10</sup> However, there are also cases where the matrix predicate must opt for either a subjunctive or an indicative complement.

- (56) a. Ólafur hefur líklega haldið að María **fari**.  
 Olaf has probably thought that Mary go.PRES.SBJV  
 ‘Olaf (has) probably thought that Mary goes/will go.’
- b. Ólafur hefur líklega haldið að María **faeri**.  
 Olaf has probably thought that Mary went.PST.SBJV  
 ‘Olaf (has) probably thought that Mary goes/would go.’

Both the present and the past subjunctives have the usual –PAST reading of embedded subjunctives. In (56a), *Mary’s going* is –PAST relative to the present reference time of the matrix clause, expressed by *hefur* ‘has’, but in (56b), it is –PAST relative to the past event time of Olaf’s thinking, expressed by the past participle *haldið* ‘thought’.

Much as in infinitives, the only way to express a true, shifted past tense in an embedded subjunctive is to use the perfect, as in (57b):

- (57) a. Anna sagði að Eiríkur **talaði** á fundinum.  
 Anna said that Eric spoke.SBJV at meeting.the  
 ‘Anna said that Eric was speaking/would speak at the meeting.’
- b. Anna sagði að Eiríkur **hefði talað** á fundinum.  
 Anna said that Eric had.SBJV spoken at meeting.the  
 ‘Anna said that Eric spoke/had spoken at the meeting.’

Embedded clauses have a *conceived speech time* (sometimes referred to as perspective time, cf. Kiparsky 2002). Tense dependent clauses set their conceived speech time as *simultaneous with either the event time or (more commonly) the reference time in a superordinate clause*. This is sketched for (57a) in (58), where the conceived embedded speech time,  $S^2$ , has been set simultaneous with the past event and reference time of the matrix clause,  $E^1/R^1$ :

- |      |            |           |           |           |         |               |
|------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| (58) | spoke E    |           | that      | said A    |         | (speaker NOW) |
|      | $E^2 \leq$ | $R^2 =$   | $S^2 =$   | $E^1 =$   | $R^1 >$ | $S^1$         |
|      | –past      | unshifted | unshifted | unshifted | +past   |               |

As a result, *Eiríkur’s speaking* has a –PAST reading with respect to *Anna’s past saying*. The preterite form *talaði* arises by (uninterpretable) agreement in post-syntactic morphology, where the subordinate verb copies morphological preterite from the matrix verb. This is the essence of the widely discussed SEQUENCE OF TENSE phenomenon, SOT (*pace* Enç 1987). Most embedded indicatives, in contrast, set their conceived speech time as simultaneous with the basic speaker NOW, independently of their matrix clause, thus not showing any sequence of tense phenomena.

Non-SOT languages like Japanese and Hebrew (Ogihara 1996, Sharvit 2003), and split SOT languages like Russian (Comrie 1986, etc.), do not apply Tense Agreement in argument clauses like the one in (57a), instead using the simple present tense, type */Anna said that Eiríkur speaks.PRES.IND at the meeting/*. The tense interpretation of such clauses is however the same as in subjunctives like (57a). These languages simply lack formal (uninterpretable) Tense Agreement in argument clauses of this sort.

In (43) above, it was suggested that the CP-domain of the clause may contain one or more silent operators. *Speaker Truthfulness Responsibility* seems to be one of these operators, controlling mood selection. *Speech time*, real or conceived, is another important CP operator or feature, evidently bound by the Speaker Truthfulness Responsibility operator.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described and analyzed the Icelandic mood system in relation to the verbal system in general, in particular its tense properties. Section 2 describes the non-subjunctive parts of the verbal system, including an overview of the verbal categories (2.1) and of the finite verb inflection (2.2), a brief description of the auxiliary system (2.3) and of imperatives (2.4), a discussion of participles and infinitives (2.5), and an analysis of the indicative tense system (2.6). Section 3 discusses the major aspects of the subjunctive mood, that is, its morphology (3.1), subjunctives in main clauses (3.2), the use and the meaning of the subjunctive in embedded clauses (3.3), and tense interpretation in subordinate clauses (3.4).

A fundamental difference between subjunctives and most indicatives is that subjunctive clauses are tense dependent in the sense that their event time does not relate to the “real” speech time, S, but to a *conceived speech time* (sometimes referred to as perspective time). Thus, by lacking finite tense linking to S (much like infinitives), subjunctives lack the twofold tense system sketched for indicatives in (18). In embedded subjunctives, the conceived speech time is set as being simultaneous with either the event time or (more commonly) the reference time in the immediate matrix clause. In main clause subjunctives the conceived speech time is understood to be simultaneous with a hypothetical eventuality, defined in (a spelled out or a silent) conditional clause. Hence, “past” subjunctives do not have a past event time but a ~~non-~~*past conceived speech time* (and reference time, which in subjunctives is set as simultaneous with the conceived speech time).\*

The semantic primitive that controls both mood selection and speech time setting in Icelandic is the Speaker’s Truthfulness Responsibility. Clauses that are the Speaker’s Truthfulness Responsibility are typically indicative, with an independent speaker anchored speech time. Clauses that are not the Speaker’s Truthfulness Responsibility are most commonly subjunctive (or infinitive), with a conceived speech time that is not the speaker’s. It is thus evident that the *speaker* is an active category, not only in semantics but also in syntax.<sup>11</sup>

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\* **A correction:** Regrettably, there is an unfortunate typo in this sentence in the printed version of the article. As indicated here, the negative prefix *non-* should be struck, that is, it should be “*a past conceived speech time*” (and not “*a non-past conceived speech time*”). It is the event time that is non-past in (non-perfect) subjunctives (as discussed in relation to (51)–(57) above).

<sup>11</sup> That is, “the speaker” in the LOGOPHORIC AGENT sense, defined in Sigurðsson (2004).

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