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The change that never happened: the story of oblique subjects[1]

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This paper contributes to an ongoing debate on the syntactic status of oblique subject-like NPs in the 'impersonal' construction (of the type *me-thinks*) in Old Germanic. The debate is caused by the lack of canonical subject case marking in such NPs. It has been argued that these NPs are syntactic objects, but we provide evidence for their subject status, as in Modern Icelandic and Faroese. Thus, we argue that the syntactic status of the oblique subject-like NPs has not changed at all from object status to subject status, contra standard claims in the literature. Our evidence stems from Old Icelandic, but the analysis has implications for the other old Germanic languages as well. However, a change from non-canonical to canonical subject case marking ('Nominative Sickness') has affected all the Germanic languages to a varying degree.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, non-nominative logical subject arguments of 'impersonal' predicates (henceforth, oblique subject-like NPs) are regarded as syntactic objects in Old Germanic (van der Gaaf 1904; Jespersen 1927; Cole, Harbert, Hermon & Sridhar 1980). More recently, the syntactic status of these NPs has been a matter of debate. It has been argued that they are in fact syntactic subjects, as in Modern Icelandic, in spite of the oblique case marking (Harris 1973; Elmer 1981; von Seefranz-Montag 1983, 1984; Allen 1986, 1995, 1996). This radical claim has caused a wave of reaction, demanding better evidence for the analysis of the oblique subject-like NPs as subjects (Butler 1977;

Smith 1994, 1996; Faarlund 1990). In the past few years the main focus of the debate has been on North Germanic, with Rögnvaldsson (1995, 1996a) and Barðdal (1997, 1998, 2000a, b) bringing fresh arguments for the subject status of oblique subject-like NPs in Old Scandinavian. These last contributions, in turn, have instigated Faarlund (2001a) and Askedal (2001) to argue that there are no structures that call for an oblique subject analysis in Old Scandinavian, and that the existence of this phenomenon in Modern Icelandic and Faroese must therefore be due to a later development. The goal of this paper is, first, to examine the arguments of these scholars and to refute them, and secondly, to show that oblique subject-like NPs in Old Scandinavian are to be analysed as syntactic subjects.

We begin with a short discussion of the subject properties of Modern Icelandic. We then present the main arguments brought forth by Faarlund against the subject status of oblique subject-like NPs in Old Icelandic and other Old Scandinavian languages. This argumentation involves the syntactic position of the NPs corresponding to subjects and objects in the modern languages, long distance reflexivisation, subject-to-object raising, subject-to-subject raising and PRO-infinitives. In all these cases we show that the data favour an analysis according to which oblique subject-like NPs are syntactic subjects. We demonstrate that the alleged structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic that Faarlund and Askedal postulate does not exist. Finally, we present our own analysis of oblique subject-like NPs in the history of the Scandinavian languages. We conclude that no major change has happened in Icelandic regarding oblique subjects, while they have been lost in Mainland Scandinavian due to generalisation of nominative as the most frequent subject case ('Nominative Sickness').

2. MODERN ICELANDIC

An intriguing property of Modern Icelandic and Faroese vis-à-vis Mainland Scandinavian and the other Germanic languages is that syntactic subjects do not always occur in nominative case. Rather, subjects of some verbs are case-marked as accusative, dative or genitive. The examples in (1) are from Modern Icelandic (MIc).

(1) (a) Hún   sér   víkinginn.   (MIc)
        she.NOM sees Viking-the.ACC
        'She sees the Viking.'
    (b) Hana   langar í   brennivín.
        she.ACC longs in schnapps.ACC
        'She wants schnapps.'
    (c) Henni   líkar þessi   víkingur.
        she.DAT likes this.NOM Viking.NOM
        'She likes this Viking.'

(d) Hennar missti við.
    she.GEN missed with
    'She was missing.' or: 'She passed away.'

It has been shown that the initial oblique subject-like NPs in (1b–d) pass all indisputable subjecthood tests in Modern Icelandic. This means that nominative case and agreement are excluded as subject properties in this language (and in Faroese). The main subject tests in Modern Icelandic are assumed to be the following:

(2) (a) Syntactic position
    (b) Conjunction reduction
    (c) Clause-bounded reflexivisation
    (d) Long distance reflexivisation
    (e) Subject-to-object raising ('AcI' or ECM constructions)
    (f) Subject-to-subject raising
    (g) PRO-infinitives (control infinitives or 'Equi-NP deletion')

The examples in (3) illustrate that the dative argument of *líka* 'like' behaves syntactically in the same way as the nominative argument of *sjá* 'see' in Modern Icelandic.

(3) (a) Ég   geri ráð fyrir að ___   sjá   þennan víking. (MIc)
    I.NOM assume   to PRO.NOM see.INF this.ACC Viking.ACC
    'I assume that I will see this Viking.'
    (b) Ég   geri ráð fyrir að ___   líka   þessi   víkingur.
    I.NOM assume   to PRO.DAT like.INF this.NOM Viking.NOM
    'I assume that I will like this Viking.'

As is evident, both the dative of *líka* 'like' and the nominative of *sjá* 'see' are the unexpressed argument (labelled PRO) of the infinitive of the control predicate *gera ráð fyrir* 'assume'. Thus, these oblique subject-like NPs are syntactic subjects in Modern Icelandic. The ability to be the unexpressed argument in control infinitives has been considered the most conclusive of all subject tests (see section 3.5 below). The subjecthood of oblique subject-like NPs in Modern Icelandic was first established by Andrews (1976), and has since then been extensively discussed by various scholars, for example, Thráinsson (1979), Zaenen, Maling & Thráinsson (1985), Sigurðsson (1989, 1992, 1996), Jónsson (1996) and Barðdal (2001). Similar arguments have been presented by Barnes (1986) for Faroese. We refer the interested reader to these publications for more details and examples.

3. OLD ICELANDIC

'Impersonal' constructions comparable to those in (1b–d) existed in Old Icelandic and the other Old Germanic languages. The examples below show this for Old Icelandic (OIc), Old Swedish (OSw), Old English (OE), Middle

High German (MHG) and Gothic (Goth), in all of which the verb 'seem' occurs with a non-nominative experiencer:[2]

(4) og **þótti**   honum sem fóstra   sínum   mundi mein
     and seemed him.DAT as   foster-father self.DAT would harm
     að verða   (OIc)[3]
     to become
     'and it seemed to him as if his foster father would be harmed'
                     (Ljósvetninga saga, p. 1681; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 64)

(5) thy   **thykker** os   thet vnder   væra   (OSw)
     therefore seems   us.OBL   it   wonder be
     'Therefore it seems to us to be a wonder.'
                                            (c. AD 1400–50; Falk 1997: 13)

(6) ða   ælcum   men   **ðuhte** genog on ðære
     when each.DAT man.DAT seemed enough on the
     eorðan wæstum   (OE)
     earth's fruit
     'When the fruits of the earth seemed enough to each man.'
     or: 'When each man considered the fruits of the earth enough.'
                                                     (Allen 1995: 70)

(7) mich   **dunket**   (MHG)
     me.ACC seems
     'It seems to me.' or: 'I think so.'   (von Seefranz-Montag 1983: 161)

(8) **þugkeiþ** im   auk ei   in filuwaurdein seinai
     seems   them.DAT also that in much-talking their
     andhausjaindau   (Goth)
     hear.PASS
     'It seems to them also that they are heard because they talk much.'
                                            (c. AD 380; Smith 1996: 230)

In this paper we focus on Old Icelandic data, but we emphasise that our argumentation may have relevance for the other Old Germanic languages as well.

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[2] Gothic is attested in a translation of the Greek Bible from c. AD 380. The Old English period ends around 1100. Middle High German ranges from c. 1050–1500. Old Icelandic is attested in texts from the 12th to the 14th century, and Old Swedish texts date from c. 1300 to 1550.

[3] In the Old Icelandic examples we use the Modern Icelandic spelling regardless of the spelling used in the sources quoted, as is common practice, especially in Iceland. This is a legitimate alternative to the 'standard Old Icelandic orthography', which is based on a normalising convention by 19th-century philologists and does not always accurately reflect the spelling in the manuscripts. Crucially, which spelling convention one follows does not have any bearing on syntactic issues. The page numbers accompanying the examples from Old Icelandic sagas refer to those in the edition by Halldórsson, Torfason, Tómasson & Thorsson (1985–86).

The question arises what the syntactic status of the oblique subject-like NPs in such constructions was at the earlier stages. There are two opposite views on this matter. On the one hand, it has been argued that the oblique subject-like NPs were in fact syntactic subjects already in Old Germanic (Allen 1986, 1995 for Old English; von Seefranz-Montag 1983, 1984 for Old English and Old High German; Bernódusson 1982; Rögnvaldsson 1991, 1995, 1996a; Maling 1998 and Haugan 1998, 2001 for Old Norse-Icelandic; and Barðdal 1997, 1998, 2000a, b for Old Scandinavian/ Germanic in general). On the other hand, several linguists have brought forth arguments against this view, claiming that the oblique subject-like NPs in the 'impersonal' constructions do not call for an analysis as subjects (Sigurðsson 1983; Faarlund 1990, 2001a; Mørck 1992, 1994; Kristoffersen 1991, 1994, 1996; Askedal 2001 for Old Norse-Icelandic; and Falk 1995, 1997 for Old Swedish).

The most recent contributions to this debate are those of Faarlund (2001a) and Askedal (2001). They have proposed that oblique subjects are a modern phenomenon within Germanic, specific to Icelandic and Faroese. These scholars argue that Old Icelandic did not have a syntactic subject or object, and thus that it was a 'non-configurational' language. Rather, the category of subject evolved gradually in the history of the Germanic languages, and eventually the oblique subject-like NPs gained subject properties in Icelandic and Faroese. In Mainland Scandinavian, however, these oblique subject-like NPs lost their case and so became nominative subjects. Moreover, Faarlund and Askedal assume that there has been a development from a 'synthetic' to an 'analytic' language type in Scandinavian, including Icelandic. We dispute this and show in what follows that the arguments put forward by the proponents of the latter view are unfounded. We argue that these oblique subject-like NPs were syntactic subjects at the earlier stages of all the Scandinavian languages.

Faarlund (2001a) claims that Old Icelandic had several structures, non-existent in Modern Icelandic, which clearly prove that the subject category in Old Icelandic was different from that in the modern language. He argues that the NPs identifiable as subjects and objects in the modern Scandinavian languages were not identifiable as such at the older stages. For the modern languages he assumes that there is a canonical subject position, SpecIP, in which objects cannot occur, whereas in Old Icelandic the corresponding position was not restricted to subjects. It is implicit in this argumentation that the categories of subject and object did not exist at the earlier stages in the form they do today.

We show, however, that the Old Icelandic structures discussed by Faarlund still exist in Modern Icelandic, despite claims to the contrary. Thus, we demonstrate that the NPs identifiable as subjects and objects in the modern languages have not altered their syntactic behaviour in the course of time. We conclude from this that Old Icelandic must have had a subject category

exactly like Modern Icelandic. Furthermore, Faarlund argues that it is not necessary to invoke an analysis in which oblique subject-like NPs are considered syntactic subjects since it is always possible to give a different account of the relevant structures. We claim, however, that one should not assume a different analysis for corresponding structures at different stages of the same language unless there is evidence for such an analysis. In our view, such evidence is lacking. Moreover, there are structures in Old Icelandic that call for an analysis of oblique subject-like NPs as syntactic subjects. It follows that in Old Scandinavian both nominative and oblique subject-like NPs should be analysed as syntactic subjects.

It is generally agreed upon that two of the main subject tests in Modern Icelandic, conjunction reduction and clause-bounded reflexivisation, are not applicable in Old Icelandic. It has been a matter of debate whether the remaining subject tests apply to Old Icelandic, i.e. syntactic position, long distance reflexivisation, subject-to-object raising, subject-to-subject raising and PRO-infinitives. We now begin our systematic examination of the data relevant to this debate.

3.1 Syntactic position

In Old and Modern Icelandic the finite verb occurs in second position in both main and embedded clauses. On the other hand, Old Icelandic had both OV and VO order in the VP, while the word order has been fixed as VO in Modern Icelandic since the 19th century, except with negative and quantified objects (Rögnvaldsson 1995, 1996b; Hróarsdóttir 1996, 2000). This is one of the main structural differences between Old and Modern Icelandic. In addition, discontinuous phrases have become more restricted in Modern Icelandic than in Old Icelandic (Rögnvaldsson 1995: 8–11). The common claim that word order in Modern Icelandic is more 'fixed' than in the older language is only true to a certain extent.

Specifically for subjects, the distributional properties that have been used as criteria to distinguish them from objects are the following: first, subjects typically occur in initial position in declarative main clauses and following the complementiser in embedded clauses, and secondly, they invert with the finite verb in questions and topicalisations. This is true for Modern Icelandic, and Old Icelandic does not seem to be different in this respect.

However, Faarlund's (2001a) premise is that there has been a change in word order from Old to Modern Icelandic (apart from the loss of OV). In particular, Faarlund claims that in Old Icelandic objects can occur in a position which in Modern Icelandic is designated for subjects only, identifying this position as SpecIP. He gives the following examples of objects occurring between the finite verb and the subject in main clauses (Faarlund 2001a: 117–118, 121–122).

(9) (a) Mundu **það** sumir menn mæla í mínu landi. (OIc)
     would it.ACC some men.NOM say in my country
     'Some men would say so in my country.' (Finnboga saga, p. 633)

  (b) Þá skal **sínum húsum** hver ráða[4]
     then shall self's houses.DAT each.NOM rule
     'Then each shall decide over his own house.'

                     (The Law of Magnús lagabætir)

In embedded clauses an object (or another kind of complement) can occur between the complementiser and the finite verb (Faarlund 2001a: 122).

(10) (a) að **þessa jörð** hefi ég haft (OIc)
     that this land.ACC have I.NOM had
     'that I have owned this land' (The Law of Magnús lagabætir)

  (b) og er **þeim** gaf byr
     and when them.DAT gave wind
     'and when they had sailing wind' (Gunnlaugs saga, p. 1173)

  (c) að **fallnir** væri búðarveggir hans
     that fallen.NOM.PL were booth walls his
     'that the walls of his booth had fallen down'

                     (Gunnlaugs saga, p. 1167)

On the basis of this evidence Faarlund argues that in Old Icelandic objects could occur in SpecIP, claiming that this position is not confined to subjects as is the case at later stages of the language.

    This argument is invalid, however, since these structures all exist in Modern Icelandic. Consider first the Old Icelandic example in (9a), in which an object occurs between the finite verb and the subject. It is crucial in this connection that the object is a pronoun and the subject an indefinite quantified NP. The Modern Icelandic example in (11) shows that a pronominal object can occur between the finite verb and an indefinite subject.[5]

(11) Mótmæltu **því** sumir menn á fundinum. (MIc)
     objected it.DAT some men.NOM at meeting-the
     'Some men objected to it at the meeting.'

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[4] The examples from the Law of Magnús lagabætir in (9b) and (10a) are cited from Faarlund (2001a: 118, 121–122), who does not provide page numbers.

[5] In Modern Icelandic indefinite subjects can occur further to the right in the clause than definite subjects, and this may reflect a difference in the structural position of definite and indefinite subjects (Ottósson 1989; Bobaljik & Jonas 1996). Impressionistically, Old Icelandic is similar to Modern Icelandic in this respect, but further investigation is needed to establish this.

Thus, there is no reason to assume that there is a structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic as to the position of pronominal objects in sentences with indefinite quantified subjects.[6]

The other example Faarlund gives to illustrate the occurrence of an object in SpecIP is (9b) above. Notice, however, that this example contains the distributive pronoun *sinn hver* (*hvor*) 'each – own', involving the reflexive possessive pronoun *sinn* 'self's, own', and the indefinite pronoun *hver* 'each' (*hvor* 'each of two'), which still occurs in 'standard' Modern Icelandic. This complex pronoun displays certain idiosyncratic syntactic properties in that the '*sinn*-part' can either precede, as in (12a), or follow, (12b–c), the '*hver*-part' in the linear order.[7]

(12) (a) Þá   mun fara **sína leiðina**   hver.   (MIc)
         then will go   self's way-the.ACC each.NOM
         'Then each will go his own way.'

    (b) ?Þá   mun fara hver   **sína leið**.
         then will go   each.NOM self's way.ACC
         'Then each will go his own way.'

    (c) Þá   mun hver   fara **sína leið**.
         then will each.NOM go   self's way.ACC
         'Then each will go his own way.'

It should be noted that many speakers of Modern Icelandic prefer a different form, *sitthver* (*sitthvor*) 'each – own', in which the pronoun and the reflexive possessive have been 'univerbated'.

(13) Þá   munu þeir   fara **sitthverja leiðina**.   (MIc)
     then will they.NOM go   each   way-the.ACC
     'Then each will go his own way.'

There is thus a dialectal difference within Modern Icelandic ('Icelandic A' *sinn hver* vs. 'Icelandic B' *sitthver*). Crucially, however, the pattern in (9b) is still used by a number of speakers of Icelandic, especially in the written

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[6] The Old Icelandic example in (9a) has an archaic flavour in Modern Icelandic. There are two principal reasons for this: first, the verb *mæla* 'speak, say' is nowadays stylistically marked, and secondly, verb-initial declarative main clauses (Narrative Inversion) are rather uncommon in everyday spoken language, occurring mostly in narrative contexts, for example sports news (Sigurðsson 1990). The verb *mótmæla* 'object to' is not stylistically marked, which is why we use it in the Modern Icelandic example in (11). Although somewhat stilted due to its verb-initial order, this sentence is grammatical, embedded in a larger narrative context. What is important in this connection, however, is that in Modern Icelandic a pronominal object can easily occur between the finite verb and the subject in main clauses.

[7] In some cases there is a semantic difference between the two word order patterns, the former involving distributive meaning and the latter possessive meaning (Cleasby & Vigfusson 1957: 529). A certain definiteness effect can also be detected in Modern Icelandic, as indicated in the examples in (12), where the '*hver*-part' is preceded by a definite '*sinn*-part' (12a), but followed by an indefinite one (12b–c).

language, showing that there has not been any structural change with regard to this construction. Moreover, the syntax of the distributive pronoun is special in that the object (the '*sinn*-part') can occur in a position where objects do not normally occur. This means that examples from Old Icelandic containing this distributive pronoun cannot be used as evidence for objects occurring in SpecIP.

It might be suggested that the above facts cast doubt on the validity of syntactic position as a subject property in Old and Modern Icelandic. This assumption would be incorrect, however, since subjects and objects are not in free variation at either stage of the language. Examples like (9a–b), (11) and (12a) clearly show that pronominal objects and the distributive pronoun *sinn hver* can occur in positions where full NP objects cannot normally occur. Crucially, there is no such restriction on the occurrence of (potential) subjects; therefore, position can be used to distinguish between subjects and objects in both Old and Modern Icelandic as long as the functional restrictions accompanying each position are taken into account.

Regarding the word order patterns in the embedded clauses in (10) above, Old Icelandic is different from Modern Icelandic, according to Faarlund, in that objects can occur between the complementiser and a finite verb. Topicalisation, however, is quite common in certain types of embedded clauses in Modern Icelandic (Magnússon 1990), especially *að*- ('that') clauses, as in (14), matching the Old Icelandic example in (10a).

(14) að **þessa ritgerð**   hafðirðu skrifað með ærinni
     that this   thesis.ACC had-you written with much
     fyrirhöfn   (MIc)
     trouble
     'that you had written this thesis with much trouble'

The Old Icelandic example in (10b) is identical to the Modern Icelandic one in (15), involving an oblique subject.[8] While the status of the oblique subject-like NP is debated, there does not seem to be any structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic as regards its syntactic position.[9]

(15) og þegar **þeim**   gaf byr   (MIc)
     and when them.DAT gave wind
     'and when they had sailing wind'

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[8] The conjunction *þegar* 'when' in (15) is more common in the modern language than the synonymous *er* in (10b), which has become rather formal/archaic.

[9] Rögnvaldsson (1991: 375–377), however, observes that oblique subject-like NPs occur immediately following the finite verb in Old Icelandic more often than in Modern Icelandic. Since this is also found for the nominative subject of many other verbs of the same semantic class, it presumably reflects a difference between Old and Modern Icelandic in general and not a difference in the behaviour of the oblique subject-like NPs as opposed to nominative subjects.

Finally, the example in (10c) above involves Stylistic Fronting of a past participle. As is well known, Stylistic Fronting is still common in certain registers of Modern Icelandic (Maling 1980; Jónsson 1991; Holmberg 2000). The example in (16) illustrates Stylistic Fronting in Modern Icelandic:

(16) að **komnir** væru einhverjir stúdentar (MIc)
that come.NOM.PL were some students
'that some students had come'

In Modern Icelandic Stylistic Fronting competes with *það* ('it') insertion, exemplified in (17), targeting the same syntactic position. Again, no structural change has occurred, but rather a new construction has emerged in early Modern Icelandic which is an alternative to Stylistic Fronting (Rögnvaldsson 1995: 6–8).

(17) að **það** væru komnir einhverjir stúdentar (MIc)
that it were come.NOM.PL some students
'that some students had come'

In summary, Faarlund (2001a) argues that Old Icelandic had word order patterns, non-existent in Modern Icelandic, which supposedly prove that there was not a distinctive subject category at the earlier stage. We have shown, however, that these word orders are still possible in Modern Icelandic, despite claims to the contrary. It would seem to follow from Faarlund's claims that since, as he argues, Old Icelandic does not exhibit a syntactically defined subject category, Modern Icelandic should not do so either. Such an assumption would be highly controversial.

3.2 *Long distance reflexivisation*

In long distance reflexivisation (LDR) a reflexive pronoun refers back to an antecedent in a preceding clause. Since it is the subject that is the antecedent, and not the object, LDR is considered a diagnostic for subjecthood in Modern Icelandic. LDR can also be found in Old Icelandic, mostly involving nominative subjects. Three examples of oblique subject-like NPs functioning as antecedents for LDR in Old Icelandic have been reported in the literature, including the example in (18) (Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 64).

(18) og þótti **honum** [sem fóstra **sínum** mundi mein
and seemed him.DAT as foster-father self.DAT would harm
að verða] (OIc)
to become
'and it seemed to him as if his foster father would be harmed'

(Ljósvetninga saga, p. 1681)

Crucially, however, unambiguous objects are never antecedents for LDR in Old Icelandic. Thus, although the evidence is scarce, it does not support the hypothesis that the oblique subject-like NPs were objects in Old Icelandic. Rather, the facts suggest that they were indeed subjects, as in the modern language.

The scarcity of the examples raises an important issue about the amount of linguistic data needed to draw conclusions from. Fortunately, for research on Old Icelandic, the amount of text material available to us is far more copious than for the other Old Scandinavian languages. Obviously, the more material there is the lower the chances are that lack of documented constructions is due to lack of text material, and the higher the chances are that the data really are representative of Old Icelandic. The data on LDR in Old Icelandic show that oblique subject-like NPs pattern with unambiguous subjects rather than with unambiguous objects.

3.3 *Subject-to-object raising*

In Old Icelandic oblique subject-like NPs maintain their oblique case in subject-to-object raising constructions (a.k.a. ECM or AcI) (Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 60).

(19) (a) Gunnar sagði **sér** það vera nær skapi. (OIc)
        Gunnar.NOM said self.DAT it.NOM be near mood
        'Gunnar said that this was more to his liking.'
                        (Brennu-Njáls saga, p. 159)

   (b) Þórður … kvað **Þorgeiri** mjög missýnast.
        Thórður.NOM said Thorgeir.DAT much see-wrongly
        'Thórður said that Thorgeir was much mistaken.'
                        (Ljósvetninga saga, p. 1657)

Faarlund (2001a: 124) remarks that if the oblique subject-like NPs were subjects they should show up as accusative in this construction (consistently labelled AcI by him). This claim is simply wrong. Oblique (dative and genitive) subjects in Modern Icelandic maintain their oblique case in this construction and do not show up as accusative; hence it is expected that they should also maintain their oblique case in Old Icelandic in the equivalent construction. This fact is therefore not an argument against their subjecthood. Rather, it supports the assumption that the difference between Old and Modern Icelandic is minimal.

Faarlund (2001a: 126) further claims that the preverbal position in AcI constructions is not a unique subject position in Old Icelandic, since other elements, such as adverbs and direct objects, can precede

the infinitive:

(20) (a) þá   hugði   hann   [þar   mundu   fara   Hákon
       then thought he.NOM there   would.INF go.INF Hákon
       jarl][10]   (OIc)
       earl.ACC
       'Then he thought that Earl Hákon might be going there.'
                    (Heimskringla, Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar, p. 199)
    (b) hugðist   hann   [konung   mundu   mýkja   mega]
       thought   he.NOM king.ACC would.INF soften.INF may.INF
       'He thought he might soften the king.'
                    (Heimskringla, Haralds saga Sigurðssonar, p. 647)

This claim, however, is irrelevant. In Modern Icelandic non-subjects can also occur preverbally in subject-to-object raising constructions. Accordingly, there is no fundamental difference between Old and Modern Icelandic in this respect. The preverbal elements in the examples below involve an adverb (21a), a verbal particle (21b), and a direct object (21c).

(21) (a) Hún   taldi   [þar   hafa   farið   einhverja
       she.NOM thought there have.INF gone   some
       stúdenta].   (MIc)
       students.ACC
       'She thought that some students might have been going there.'
    (b) Lögreglan   sagði   [fram   hafa   komið   nýjar
       police-the.NOM said   forward have.INF come   new
       upplýsingar   í   málinu].
       information.ACC in   case-the
       'The police said that new information had emerged in the case.'
    (c) Gagnrýnandinn taldi   [greinina   mega   endurbæta].
       critic-the.NOM   thought article-the.ACC may.INF   improve.INF
       'The critic thought that the article could be improved.'

Thus, the occurrence of a word or a phrase in preverbal position in infinitival clauses cannot be used as an argument for any particular syntactic status of oblique subject-like NPs in the relevant constructions, either in Old or in Modern Icelandic.

   In addition, the only example Faarlund presents which has a full NP object as a preposed element, given in (20b) above, involves the modal auxiliary *mega* 'may'. In Modern Icelandic, however, *mega* can occur with preposed material when used impersonally, as in (22).

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[10] The examples from Heimskringla are taken from the edition by Kristjánsdóttir, Halldórsson, Torfason & Thorsson (1991).

(22) (a) **Af þessu** má   ráða …   (MIc)
        of this   may.3SG infer.INF
        'From this it can be inferred …'

   (b) **Þessa athugasemd** má   líta   á   sem merki um …
        this   comment.ACC may.3SG look.INF on as   sign   of
        'This comment may be regarded as evidence for …'

Thus, it seems that the idiosyncratic word order properties of *mega* are found
in both Old and Modern Icelandic. Note that the preposed object *greinina*
'the article' in (21c) occurs with *mega*, exactly like *konung* 'king' in the
Old Icelandic example in (20b). Sequences containing the modal auxiliary
mega do not therefore constitute evidence for the assumption that there is
a structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic.

   What is more important in this context is the fact that in Modern Icelandic
oblique subjects do not occur to the right of the infinitive in subject-to-object
raising constructions. Therefore, while the example in (23a) is grammatical,
the one in (23b), with the oblique subject to the right of the infinitive, is not.

(23) (a) Sveinn taldi   **henni**   leiðast.   (MIc)
        Sveinn assumed her.DAT   be-bored.INF
        'Sveinn assumed that she was bored.'

   (b) *Sveinn taldi   leiðast   **henni**.
        Sveinn assumed be-bored.INF her.DAT

Likewise, there do not seem to be any examples in Old Icelandic in which an
oblique subject-like NP occurs to the right of the infinitive in subject-
to-object raising constructions, as would be expected if they were objects
(cf. Maling 1998: 221–222). It also seems that this absence of data is not a
question of a gap, but is systematic, as we will discuss in more detail in
section 4 below. This fact strongly suggests that oblique subject-like NPs are
subjects in Old Icelandic.

   To sum up, in both Old and Modern Icelandic oblique subject-like NPs
maintain their oblique case in subject-to-object raising constructions. Non-
subjects can precede the infinitive in such constructions, showing that the
preverbal position is not exclusively a subject position. However, the oblique
subject-like NPs do not occur to the right of the infinitive in Old and Modern
Icelandic, which corroborates the hypothesis that they are in fact syntactic
subjects.[11]

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[11] There is, however, a group of Dat-Nom verbs in Modern Icelandic (and Modern Faroese,
    see Barnes 1986) which behave in such a way that both of their arguments can exhibit
    subject properties, although not simultaneously (Bernódusson 1982, Barðdal 2001). Irre-
    spective of whether the dative or the nominative is pre- or postverbal, the preverbal argu-
    ment behaves as a subject and the postverbal argument as an object:

   (i) **Mér**   myndi henta   **bókin**.
       me.DAT   would suit.INF book-the.NOM
       'The book would suit me.'

3.4 *Subject-to-subject raising*

In subject-to-subject raising constructions the subject of the infinitival (lower) clause behaves syntactically as the subject of the matrix clause. Consider the following examples from Modern Icelandic:

(24) (a) **Sveinn**   virðist þola   illa   hávaðann.   (MIc)
        Sveinn.NOM seems tolerate.INF badly noise-the.ACC
        'Sveinn seems to tolerate the noise badly.'

    (b) **Sveini**   virðist leiðast   hávaðinn.
        Sveinn.DAT seems be-bored.INF noise-the.NOM
        'Sveinn seems to be annoyed by the noise.'

In (24a) the nominative argument of *þola* 'tolerate' occurs as the subject of *virðast* 'seem', and in (24b) the same is true of the dative argument of *leiðast* 'be bored'. The object of the lower verb, however, cannot occur as the subject of *virðast* 'seem':

(25) (a) *Hávaðann   virðist þola   illa   Sveinn.
        noise-the.ACC seems tolerate.INF badly Sveinn.NOM

    (b) *Hávaðinn   virðist leiðast   Sveini.
        noise-the.NOM seems be-bored.INF Sveinn.DAT

Therefore, the property of occurring as the subject of such a raising verb is confined to the subject of the lower clause and does not apply to the object.

We now turn to subject-to-subject raising in Old Icelandic. It should be pointed out that the typical raising verbs in Modern Icelandic, *virðast* and *sýnast* 'seem, appear', seem to behave differently in Old Icelandic than in Modern Icelandic (Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 62). However, as argued by Rögnvaldsson (1995: 17, 1996a: 62), the verbs *kveðast* 'say (of oneself)' and *látast* 'imply, pretend' show characteristics of raising verbs in Old Icelandic. With these verbs, oblique subject-like NPs of the lower clause appear in the matrix subject position, like nominative subjects:

(26) (a) **Árna**   kvaðst það illt þykja.   (OIc)
        Árni.DAT said it bad seem.INF
        'Árni said that he found it bad.'

                    (Svínfellinga saga, p. 565; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 63)

   (ii) **Bókin**   myndi henta   **mér**.
        book-the.NOM would suit.INF me.DAT
        'The book would suit me.'

   It has been argued that such alternating verbs also existed in Old Scandinavian (Barðdal 1997, 1998, 2000a) and Old English (Allen 1995, 1996). If so, it would be expected that either argument of such verbs could occur on either side of the infinitive in subject-to-object raising constructions at the older stages of Germanic. In addition, it should be pointed out that heavy and indefinite subjects may occur to the right of the non-finite verb (cf. fn. 5 above). Therefore, if oblique subject-like NPs occur in this position at all, they should be either heavy or indefinite (or both).

(b) **Honum** kveðst vel á lítast.
   him.DAT says well on seem.INF
   'He says that he likes it.'   (Sneglu-Halla þáttur, p. 2230)

(c) **Þeim**   kvaðst svo að   hyggjast …
   them.DAT said so about think.INF
   'They said that it appeared to them so about it …'
                                           (Fljótsdæla saga, p. 684)

(d) Lést **honum** og það   mestu þykja skipta.
   implied him.DAT also it.NOM most seem.INF matter.INF
   'He implied that this also mattered the most.'
                       (Íslendinga saga, p. 374; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 63)

Faarlund (2001a: 106) discusses the example in (26a) and suggests that it is a contamination of two constructions, namely *Árni kvaðst* 'Árni said', with a nominative subject, and *Árna þykir* 'Árni thinks', with a dative subject-like NP. However, no evidence is presented for this 'contamination' analysis, rendering it difficult to take seriously. Also, examples like (26) are fairly common in Old Icelandic texts, which is an argument against the 'contamination' analysis. Furthermore, it seems that such an analysis would also speak for the subject status of oblique subject-like NPs, since usually contamination is taken to involve two elements belonging to the same category (subject) and not two different categories (subject vs. object). Therefore, even on a 'contamination' account, it would be more plausible to assume that oblique subject-like NPs in Old Icelandic were syntactic subjects rather than objects.

Faarlund (2001a: 106) questions the analysis of *kveðast* as a subject-to-subject raising verb for the following three reasons: first, it more often occurs as an AcI (subject-to-object raising) verb than as a subject-to-subject raising verb;[12] secondly, it is not a subject-to-subject raising verb in Modern Icelandic; and thirdly, oblique subjects are usually not agents, and therefore would not be expected to occur with a verb meaning 'say'. These objections, however, do not invalidate the analysis of *kveðast* as a subject-to-subject raising verb. As to the first objection, there are verbs in Modern Icelandic that involve either raising to subject or raising to object, for example *virðast* 'seem, appear':

(27) (a) **Sveinn**   virðist vera leiður.   (MIc)
     Sveinn.NOM seems be.INF sad
     'Sveinn seems to be sad.'

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[12] In section 3.5 below we will argue that, except in the cases when *kveðast* is a subject-to-subject raising verb, it is a control verb rather than an AcI (subject-to-object raising) verb, contrary to Faarlund's analysis. However, we agree with Faarlund that the non-reflexive *kveða* is an AcI verb, and we will provide arguments in 3.5 that *kveða* and *kveðast* are two distinct verbs.

(b) Mér   virðist **Sveinn**   vera leiður.
    me.DAT seems Sveinn.NOM be.INF sad
    'It seems to me that Sveinn is sad.'

In this light, it is entirely possible that in Old Icelandic *kveðast* could occur in two constructions as well. Secondly, the fact that *kveðast* appears not to be a subject-to-subject raising verb in Modern Icelandic does not preclude that it could behave in that way in Old Icelandic. Consider, for example, *virðast* and *sýnast* 'seem, appear', which seem to behave differently in Modern Icelandic than in Old Icelandic, as mentioned above.

Moreover, on the basis of a questionnaire directed to seventeen speakers of Icelandic, Andrews (1990: 206) established that sentences with *segjast* 'say (of oneself)' as a raising verb with a dative subject predicate were judged better than sentences in which *segjast* was treated as a control verb with the same dative subject predicate. Interestingly, the judgements were the opposite when the lower predicate was an accusative subject predicate. These findings show that *segjast* is not excluded from being a subject-to-subject raising verb in Modern Icelandic. We have, indeed, found such examples:

(28) og mér   var heitt í andlitinu, ásamt því að vera
     and me.DAT was hot in face-the with it to be.INF
     með náladofa[.]   **Faraldi**   sagðist líða   svipað
     with pins-and-needles Faraldur.DAT said   feel.INF similarly
     'and my face was hot and I felt numb. Faraldur said he felt the
     same way'   (www.f4x4.is/vefspjall/tradur.asp?t = 372)

The fact that *segjast* can behave as a subject-to-subject raising verb in Modern Icelandic shows that such a behaviour cannot be ruled out for its synonym *kveðast* in Old Icelandic. Evidently, more research is needed on this topic.

Finally, while we agree with Faarlund that it might seem 'strange' to have an oblique subject with a verb meaning 'say', such cases nevertheless exist in Modern Icelandic, for example with the verbs *talast*, *mælast* and *segjast* (all meaning 'say, speak'). Barðdal (2003) counts at least 25 such predicates in Icelandic, including simple verbs and various collocations, all activating a meaning 'say, speak' (cf. also Jónsson 1998).

(29) (a) **Sveini**   talaðist vel á fundinum.   (MIc)
         Sveinn.DAT said   well on meeting-the
         'Sveinn spoke well at the meeting.'
     (b) **Sveini**   mæltist þannig.
         Sveinn.DAT said   thus
         'Sveinn spoke in such a way.'
     (c) **Sveini**   sagðist svo frá   þessum atburðum ...
         Sveinn.DAT said   so about these events
         'Sveinn told about these events in the following way ...'

It is interesting in this context that *kveðast*, *segjast* and *látast* are verbs of evidentiality, and these are subjective in the sense that they denote the awareness or the belief of the speaker (cf. Traugott 1989). In Modern Icelandic evidential predicates are typically verbs like *virðast* 'seem', *sýnast* 'seem', *heyrast* '(think to) hear' and *þykja* 'seem, feel', which all select for oblique subjects. It has been observed that, cross-linguistically, verbs of evidentiality often select for oblique subject-like NPs (Anderson 1986; Onishi 2001: 31–33). To quote Anderson (1986: 275): '[a] marker of experiencer role used on a noun, often a special kind of dative case, may have evidential implications'. Anderson also notes that verbs of evidentiality are not the main predicate of their clauses, 'but are rather a specification added to a factual claim ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE' (Anderson 1986: 274 [emphasis original]). This explains their property of being subject-to-subject raising predicates.

Returning to verbs of evidentiality in Icelandic, it appears that both *virðast* and *sýnast* could only occur as subject-to-object raising verbs in Old Icelandic, and not as subject-to-subject raising verbs. It therefore seems that the inventory of the class of evidential predicates behaving as subject-to-subject raising verbs has changed from Old to Modern Icelandic: *kveðast* and *látast* are not subject-to-subject raising verbs anymore (at least for most speakers), whereas both *virðast* and *sýnast* seem to have developed such usage. The verb *segjast* can also behave as a subject-to-subject raising verb in Modern Icelandic. Thus, the only difference between Old and Modern Icelandic here is that the inventory of the class of evidential predicates behaving as subject-to-subject raising verbs has changed.

Analysing *kveðast* as an AcI verb, as Faarlund proposes, is highly problematic, however. On the assumption that the element *-st* in *kveðast* in (26) above is a clitic form of the dative pronominal argument of *þykja* 'seem, feel', *lítast* 'seem' and *hyggjast* 'think', it would seem to follow that the dative argument would occur twice in these examples: as a preverbal dative of the matrix verb *kveðast* and as a clitic attaching to this verb. Thus, taking Faarlund's account to its logical conclusion, these sentences would instantiate both subject-to-subject raising and subject-to-object raising of the same dative argument. We do not know of any parallel for such an analysis.

Alternatively, the examples in (26) could be analysed as involving control verbs. In this case *kveðast* and *látast* would select for dative subject-like NPs, similarly to the modal verb *bera* 'be obliged', which selects for a dative subject-like NP in Old Icelandic (and a dative subject in Modern Icelandic). On such an analysis the oblique subject-like NPs of the lower verbs, coreferential with the oblique subject-like NPs of the matrix verbs, are left unexpressed. Accordingly, the examples in (26) would be of the kind generally considered to constitute the ultimate proof for the subject status of oblique subject-like NPs (see section 3.5 below). What speaks against such an analysis, and for the subject-to-subject raising analysis, is the fact that

kveðast and *látast* do not always occur with a preverbal dative but only when the lower verb is a dative-selecting verb.

In summary, the examples in this section clearly illustrate that oblique subject-like NPs behave like subjects in Old Icelandic as in Modern Icelandic, and not like objects.

3.5 *Control infinitives*

The ability to be realised as the unexpressed argument (PRO) of infinitives is a property confined to subjects. Most commonly, control infinitives are used to illustrate this, as in the example in (30), from Modern Icelandic. The control verb *vonast til* 'hope, expect' takes an infinitival clause introduced by *að* 'to' with the verb *leiðast* 'be bored, annoyed', which selects for a dative subject.

(30) Sveinn   vonast til að ___   leiðast   ekki
     Sveinn.NOM hopes for to PRO.DAT be-bored.INF not
     krakkarnir.   (MIc)
     kids-the.NOM
     'Sveinn hopes not to be annoyed by the kids.'

There is a consensus in the literature that the infinitival clause contains a subject omitted under identity with the subject of the matrix control verb. The examples in (31a–b) contain the verb *raka sig* 'shave oneself', which selects for a nominative subject and a reflexive accusative object. As (31b) shows, with the control verb *lofa* 'promise' the subject of the infinitive is unexpressed (PRO).

(31) (a) Sveinn   rakar sig   ekki.   (MIc)
         Sveinn.NOM shaves himself.ACC not
         'Sveinn does not shave.'
     (b) Sveinn   lofaði að ___   raka   sig   ekki.
         Sveinn.NOM promised to PRO.NOM shave.INF himself.ACC not
         'Sveinn promised not to shave.'

Syntactic objects, on the other hand, cannot be omitted as arguments of infinitives. As is illustrated in (32), the reflexive accusative object in (31) cannot be left unexpressed in an infinitival clause selected for by a control verb, in spite of being coreferential with both the matrix subject and the subject of the infinitive.

(32) (a) *Sveinn   lofaði að hann raka   ___   ekki.
          Sveinn.NOM promised to he.NOM shave.INF PRO.ACC not
     (b) *Sveinn   lofaði að ___   raka   ___   ekki.
          Sveinn.NOM promised to PRO.NOM shave.INF PRO.ACC not

Thus, the ability of an argument to be omitted with a control infinitive is a clear-cut subject property.

The largest and best-known type of control verbs in Modern Icelandic is represented by verbs like *vonast til* 'hope, expect' and *lofa* 'promise', shown in the examples above, which select for a PRO-infinitival clause introduced by *að* 'to'. There is, however, another, smaller group of control verbs which do not involve *að* (Anderson 1990: 264–267; Andrews 1990; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 61). The members of this group are all *st*-verbs ('middles'), including *kveðast* and *segjast*, both meaning 'say (of oneself)', *látast* 'imply, pretend' and *þykjast* 'pretend'. Anderson (1990: 266) argues, convincingly in our view, that these verbs select for a PRO-infinitive in Modern Icelandic. The following examples with *kveðast* show infinitives of a nominative subject verb, on the one hand, (33a), and an oblique (accusative) subject verb, on the other, (33b):

(33) (a) Sveinn   kvaðst aldrei ___   hafa   étið
         Sveinn.NOM said   never PRO.NOM have.INF eaten
         hákarl.   (MIc)
         shark.ACC
         'Sveinn said that he had never eaten shark.'
     (b) Sveinn   kvaðst aldrei ___   hafa   vantað peninga.
         Sveinn.NOM said   never PRO.ACC have.INF lacked money.ACC
         'Sveinn said that he had never lacked money.'

In both of these sentences the matrix subject, *Sveinn*, is in nominative case. Therefore, the nominative and accusative subjects of the lower verbs have been omitted under identity with the subject of the matrix verb.

It might be suggested, however, that the *st*-verbs involve subject-to-object raising (AcI or ECM). Among standard counterarguments to this claim is the fact that these predicates do not show the same kind of case agreement as those of subject-to-object raising non-*st*-verbs (Ottósson 1992: 68; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 61).

(34) (a) Hann   kvaðst ___   heita   Sveinn.   (MIc)
         he.NOM said   PRO.NOM be-called.INF Sveinn.NOM
         'He said that he was called Sveinn.'
     (b) Hann   kvað sig   heita   Svein.
         he.NOM said self.ACC be-called.INF Svein.ACC
         'He said that he was called Sveinn.'

In (34a) the verb *kveðast* 'say (of oneself)' selects for a subject predicate in the nominative which agrees in number, gender and case with the subject. In (34b), on the other hand, *kveða* 'say' selects for an object *sig* 'oneself' and an object predicate in the accusative, agreeing in number, gender and case with the object. These examples show that the *st*-verbs and their non-*st* pendants must be distinguished from one another since they select for

different kinds of predicates. In (34a) *kveðast* is a control verb, while *kveða* in (34b) is a subject-to-object raising verb.

In summary, we concur with Anderson (1990: 265–266) that the verbs *kveðast* and *segjast* 'say (of oneself)', as well as *látast* 'imply, pretend' and *þykjast* 'pretend', select for a PRO-infinitive in Modern Icelandic.

Potential examples of oblique subject-like NPs as the unexpressed argument of control infinitives in Old Icelandic only involve *kveðast* 'say (of oneself)' (Rögnvaldsson 1995: 17, 1996a: 60). As was shown in (26a–c) above (section 3.4), *kveðast* could occur as a subject-to-subject raising verb as well, and is thus comparable to *segjast* in Modern Icelandic. In the constructions in (35), however, *kveðast* cannot be of the raising type since its subject NP is nominative, and not oblique, as would be expected given that the verbs in the infinitival clauses take an oblique subject-like NP. Thus, the verbs *leiðast* 'be bored', *þykja* 'seem, feel', *sýnast* 'seem, feel' and *lítast* (*á*) 'seem, appear to' (35a–e) select for a dative subject-like NP, and *gruna* 'suspect' (35f) selects for an accusative subject-like NP.[13]

(35) (a) Þorgils   kvaðst   ___   leiðast
        Thorgils.NOM said   PRO.DAT be-bored.INF
        þarvistin.   (OIc)
        there-staying-the.NOM
        'Thorgils said that he was bored by staying there.'
                  (Flóamanna saga, p. 750; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 60)
    (b) Þórður   kvaðst   ___   þykja tvennir kostir   til.
        Thórður.NOM said   PRO.DAT feel.INF two   choices.NOM to
        'Thórður said that he felt that two alternatives existed.'
                  (Þorgils saga skarða, p. 620; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 60)
    (c) Hrafn   kvaðst   ___   sýnast að   haldinn væri.
        Hrafn.NOM said   PRO.DAT feel.INF that held   be
        'Hrafn said that he felt that guard should be kept.'
                (Hrafns saga Sveinbjarnarsonar, p. 242; Rögnvaldsson 1996a: 60)
    (d) Höskuldur   kvaðst   ___   það   mikið   þykja
        Höskuldur.NOM said   PRO.DAT it.NOM much.NOM seem.INF
        ef þau skulu skilja …
        if they shall depart.INF
        'Höskuldur said that it concerned him greatly if they should depart …'   (Laxdæla saga, p. 1542)

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[13] The examples in (35a–c) were first presented in Rögnvaldsson (1995: 17, 1996a: 60), while we found the examples in (35d–f) during our research. Note that although *gruna* 'suspect' is attested with both nominative subjects and accusative subject-like NPs, in this particular text it consistently takes the accusative.

(e) Indriði   kveðst eigi ___   svo á   lítast …
    Indriði.NOM says   not PRO.DAT so   on seem.INF
    'Indriði says that he does not think …'

                  (Þorsteins þáttur Síðu-Hallssonar, p. 2289)

(f) Þiðrandi   kvaðst ___   gruna   hversu …
    Þiðrandi.NOM said   PRO.ACC suspect.INF how
    'Þiðrandi said that he suspected how …'

                  (Gunnars þáttur Þiðrandabana, p. 2138)

In his discussion Faarlund (2001a: 128) acknowledges that sentences such as these 'present strong evidence in support of oblique subjects in Old Icelandic'. He attempts, however, to diminish the weight of these examples by making the first two philologically suspect. Thus, Faarlund (2001a: 128–129) claims that the example in (35a), from Flóamanna saga, is not Old Icelandic but stems from a manuscript from the 17th century (held at Árni Magnússon Institute in Iceland, designated AM 515, 4t°), and therefore proves nothing about Old Icelandic. We do not have any information on this 17th-century manuscript. What is certain, however, is that the example in (35a) occurs in the manuscript AM 445 b, 4t°, which dates from the end of the 14th century or the beginning of the 15th century and is considered by philologists today to be more original than the main version of Flóamanna saga (Sverrir Tómasson, p.c.). This example therefore represents genuine Old Icelandic. Furthermore, Faarlund assumes that example (35b) involves contamination of two structures. He states:

> When this sentence [*mér þykja tvennir kostir til* 'I feel that there are two alternatives'] was embedded under *kvað* ['said'], the writer 'forgot' to express the experiencer of *þykja* ['find'] as a nominative agent of *kveða* ['say'], and at the same time he 'forgot' to change the nominative *tvennir kostir* ['two alternatives'] into the accusative. (Faarlund 2001a: 129)

Notice that the author mentioned in this quote is not a scribe copying a text from a manuscript, but a native speaker formulating a sentence. Thus, Faarlund is here suggesting that the author 'forgot' what was grammatical and what was ungrammatical in his/her language, implying that speakers all of a sudden start speaking ungrammatically because they have 'forgotten' the rules of their language. In our view, such an assumption is untenable.

In addition to the two examples we have just discussed, namely those in (35a–b), there are at least four more examples of oblique subject-like NPs as PRO, given in (35c–f), and these have not been called into question so far. We conclude that in the six examples in (35) above the verb *kveðast* 'say (of oneself)' is used as a control verb, with the subject of the infinitive omitted under identity with the subject of the matrix verb. Since the ability to occur as PRO is confined to subjects, such examples are regarded by many scholars

as the most conclusive evidence for the subjecthood of an NP (see, for instance, Falk 1995: 203; Moore & Perlmutter 2000).

We now turn to another aspect of Faarlund's account. He claims that, although the example in (35c) is genuine Old Icelandic, it does not involve a control infinitive, but subject-to-object raising (AcI).[14] He analyses the element -st (originally -sk in Old Icelandic) of kveðast as a cliticised reflexive pronoun, and kveðast itself as a subject-to-object raising verb. As mentioned above in connection with analogous Modern Icelandic facts, such an analysis of st-verbs is doubtful. Although it is correct that the element -st is historically a pronominal clitic, deriving from the reflexive pronoun sik (Modern Icelandic sig) 'self', it has been shown that already in Old Icelandic it was a derivational suffix and not a pronoun (Ottósson 1992: 68–69, Eythórsson 1995: 231–244).

In this context it may be instructive to consider again the Modern Icelandic examples in (34), repeated here for convenience, which would be the same in Old Icelandic.

(34) (a) Hann kvaðst ___   heita   Sveinn.   (MIc)
         he.NOM said   PRO.NOM be-called.INF Sveinn.NOM
         'He said that he was called Sveinn.'
     (b) Hann kvað sig   heita   Svein.
         he.NOM said self.ACC be-called.INF Svein.ACC
         'He said that he was called Sveinn.'

Recall that in (34b) kveða is a subject-to-object raising verb; the nominative subject of heita 'be called' in the lower clause occurs in accusative case, and so does the predicative noun, as is expected with an object predicate. In (34a), on the other hand, kveðast behaves as a control verb, taking an infinitive together with a noun in nominative case, as is expected with a subject predicate. However, if the element -st were a clitic, the case of the predicative noun should not be affected, yielding structures like the following:

(36) *Hann   kvaðst heita   Svein.
         he.NOM said   be-called.INF Sveinn.ACC

The fact that such examples are ungrammatical in Modern Icelandic and unattested in Old Icelandic (Kjartan Ottosson, p.c.) further corroborates the analysis developed in this section of kveða and kveðast as two distinct verbs.

Now Faarlund discusses these two constructions and points out that the fact that the pronoun sig never occurs with kveðast is an argument for his claim that -st is in fact a clitic form of sig. This argument is only valid if kveða and kveðast are expected to select for the same kind of small clause. On our analysis, however, the non-occurrence of sig together with kveðast can be

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[14] Since the examples in (35d–f) have not been presented in the literature before, they are of course not included in Faarlund's (2001a) discussion.

accounted for in a straightforward way: it is a consequence of the fact that *kveðast* selects for a subject predicate and *kveða* for an object predicate. We would not expect objects to turn up in a subject predicate.

Moreover, even if the sentences in (35) were examples of AcI, as Faarlund claims, that would nevertheless support our point that oblique subject-like NPs are subjects, and not the analysis within which they are objects, since the object of the lower verb, in AcI constructions in general, never occurs as the object of the matrix verb. If this were the case, the examples in (35) above would instantiate 'object-to-object raising', a non-existent grammatical phenomenon. Faarlund himself seems to realise this flaw in his argumentation, as the following quote suggests:

> I would consider them [i.e., sentences like (35c)] as early evidence of an incipient development towards the Modern Icelandic structure, rather than proof of oblique subjects in Old Icelandic. (Faarlund 2001a: 131)

It is not clear from Faarlund's discussion when an occurrence in a control infinitive can be regarded as evidence for the subjecthood of oblique subject-like NPs and when it should be taken as evidence for an 'incipient development towards the Modern Icelandic structure'. This is particularly problematic given that the structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic is minimal, as we have shown in this paper. It also remains unclear to us when in the history of Icelandic the change that Faarlund (2001a: 131–132) postulates is supposed to have taken place. We return to this issue in section 5 below.

It may now be objected that the examples we have presented of oblique subject-like NPs being unexpressed in PRO-infinitives are quite few, and that if this really was a structural property of Old Icelandic we would expect it to be more pervasive in the texts. The force of this objection, however, is not as strong as it might seem because impersonal predicates embedded under control constructions are also extremely rare in Modern Icelandic, as pointed out by Rögnvaldsson (1996a: 50). In fact, the scarcity of the actual examples is disproportional to the huge amount of attention this construction has received in the syntactic literature.

As a further objection to our analysis, it might be claimed that we cannot be certain that unexpressed arguments of control infinitives in Old Icelandic were never objects, i.e. that Old Icelandic had object PRO. While it is difficult to argue against the existence of unattested data, the fact remains that no unambiguous cases of this kind have been reported in Old Icelandic. Needless to say, object PRO does not exist in Modern Icelandic, nor in any related languages we know of.

Our conclusion is that the examples in (35) above should be analysed as containing control infinitives and not subject-to-object raising. Thus, they are conclusive evidence that oblique subject-like NPs were syntactic subjects in Icelandic already during the Middle Ages. This means that, in addition to

being a subject-to-subject raising verb, *kveðast* 'say, speak' could also be a control verb in Old Icelandic. This is parallel to the situation with *segjast* 'say (of oneself)' in Modern Icelandic. On the other hand, *kveðast* is not an AcI (subject-to-object raising) verb since synchronically the element *-st* is a derivational suffix on the matrix verb, and not a clitic form of the pronominal subject of the lower clause.

3.6 *Control infinitives in other Old Germanic languages*

It may be briefly noted here that constructions involving impersonal predicates embedded under control infinitives are also found in other medieval Germanic languages. The following examples are from Old Swedish (Falk 1997: 25) and Early Middle English (EME; von Seefranz-Montag 1983: 133–134):

(37) (a) os duger ey [ther æptir ____   langa]   (OSw)
        us suffices not there after PRO.OBL long.INF
        'It is useless for us to long for that.' (c. 1400)

   (b) huat hiælper idher [ther æptir ____   langa]?
        what helps   you   there after PRO.OBL long.INF
        'Is it of any help to you to long for that?' (c. 1400)

(38) (a) him burþ   [to ____   liken   well his lif].   (EME)
        him should to PRO.OBL like.INF well his life
        'He should like his life well.' (c. 1275)

   (b) good is, quaþ Joseph, [to ____   dremen   of win].
        good is, said Joseph to PRO.OBL dream.INF of wine
        'It is good, said Joseph, to dream of wine.' (c. 1250)

The Old Swedish examples, containing *langa* 'long for' in infinitive form, are from a period before this verb began occurring with nominative (Falk 1997: 26). The Early Middle English examples are also documented before the oblique subject-like NP of both *liken* 'like' and *dremen* 'dream' changed into nominative (Cole et al. 1980: 729; Allen 1986: 381). Therefore, the unexpressed argument of the infinitives of Old Swedish *langa* and Early Middle English *liken* and *dremen* must be an oblique subject-like NP.[15]

As already mentioned, the occurrence of oblique subject-like NPs as the unexpressed argument (PRO) of control infinitives is generally taken to be the most reliable evidence for their subjecthood. In addition, further arguments for the subject status of oblique subject-like NPs in Old Germanic

[15] Falk's (1997) analysis differs from ours in that she does not assume that oblique subject-like NPs in Old Swedish were syntactic subjects, in spite of the examples in (37). She does, however, assume that the nominative argument in Dat-Nom constructions was a syntactic object in Old Swedish (Falk 1997: 40).

have been presented by Allen (1986, 1995, 1996) for Old English, and Barðdal (1997, 2000a) for Old Scandinavian. Allen's argument involves conjunction reduction, whereas Barðdal discusses control, subject-to-subject raising and subject-to-object raising. Specifically for Old English, Allen's data show that conjunction reduction is a conclusive subject test in this language. There is a difference between unambiguous subjects and objects regarding conjunction reduction, oblique subject-like NPs patterning with subjects rather than objects (Allen 1986, 1995, 1996).

Thus, it seems that oblique subjects are not a phenomenon that has arisen in the modern West Nordic languages, Icelandic and Faroese, as has been, explicitly or implicitly, assumed by various scholars (Cole et al. 1980; Kristoffersen 1991, 1994, 1996; Mørck 1992; Falk 1995, 1997; Askedal 2001; Faarlund 2001a). Rather, Icelandic and Faroese may preserve a property which has been lost in the other modern Germanic languages. These findings suggest that the status of oblique subject-like NPs in Old Germanic, and more generally in other archaic Indo-European languages, needs to be re-considered (cf. Eythórsson & Barðdal 2003).

4. CONCLUSION

We have examined the evidence for oblique subjects in Modern Icelandic and compared it with similar data from Old Icelandic. We have found that the evidence for the subjecthood of oblique subject-like NPs is no less conclusive in Old Icelandic than in Modern Icelandic. Moreover, analysing oblique subject-like NPs as objects makes certain predictions about their syntactic behaviour which are not borne out.

On an 'object analysis' it is expected that oblique subject-like NPs could occur immediately following non-finite verbs, since Old Icelandic has VO orders as well as OV orders. We pointed out in section 3.3 above that to our knowledge no such examples are found in Old Icelandic. It must be borne in mind that subject-to-object raising is not the only environment with non-finite verbs. In fact, auxiliaries, subject-to-subject raising verbs and control verbs also occur with non-finite verbs. Thus, all structures involving non-finite clauses of some kind constitute the right syntactic environment for the occurrence of oblique subject-like NPs immediately following the non-finite verb. No examples of this kind are attested in Old Icelandic, however, as far as we have been able to ascertain. This is confirmed by the following quotation from Rögnvaldsson (1991):

I have looked at thousands of sentences with an auxiliary verb in the Sagas, and I have not found a single case where inverted oblique subject-like NPs follow the main verb; they always immediately follow the finite verb. (Rögnvaldsson 1991: 374)

It therefore seems that the lack of data is not a question of a gap, but rather constitutes systematic absence. Thus, it supports our claim that oblique subject-like NPs did not occur to the right of non-finite verbs in Old Icelandic because they are, in fact, subjects and not objects.

We have also systematically investigated the empirical basis for claiming that there is a fundamental structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic regarding the position of subjects and objects, and found that there is no basis for such a claim. The position termed SpecIP is not restricted to subjects in Modern Icelandic, as Faarlund seems to assume. Thus, the structural difference between Old and Modern Icelandic is minimal. Moreover, we have proposed that oblique subjects may have been a general property of the Old Germanic languages, and presented evidence in favour of such an analysis.

In addition to the structural similarity between Old and Modern Icelandic, the bulk of the Old Icelandic vocabulary still exists in the modern language (see Kvaran 1996: 46–47; Rögnvaldsson 1997). It is, however, not our intention to claim that Old and Modern Icelandic are the 'same' language. There are certain differences between the two stages that we are fully aware of. An informal estimate, however, is that the difference between Old and Modern Icelandic may amount to the difference between Early Modern English and Modern English, or between Early Modern Swedish and Modern Swedish. In light of this, any claim that Old Icelandic does not have a syntactic subject category, as Faarlund (2001a) and Askedal (2001) argue, has implications for the analysis of Modern Icelandic. The assumption that there is not a syntactic subject in Modern Icelandic would be indefensible, in our view.

At the beginning of his paper Faarlund addresses the question whether an oblique-subject analysis is strictly necessary, or whether an analysis of Old Icelandic can equally well do without it. Even though this might seem like a theoretically motivated question, assuming that oblique subjects are cross-linguistically rare, we disagree with Faarlund on his basic epistemological assumptions. It is not possible, in our view, to study the structure of Old Icelandic and ignore its tight relation to Modern Icelandic. On Faarlund's analysis, we would have to assume that an invisible change had occurred in the history of Icelandic (and Faroese), a change that cannot be motivated by the data. In our opinion, a coherent linguistic analysis of Old and Modern Icelandic should not be disfavoured because of typological considerations.

On the basis of the alleged cross-linguistic rarity of oblique subjects, the evidence for the subjecthood of oblique subject-like NPs has been exposed to more stringent standards than the evidence for nominative subjects (see Barðdal 2000b). It is worth emphasising, however, that oblique subjects have been argued for in a variety of languages (cf. Aikhenvald, Dixon & Onishi 2001), for instance Russian (Moore & Perlmutter 2000), South Asian languages (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Dardic, Tibeto-Burman and Munda;

cf. Masica 1976; Verma & Mohanan 1990; Steever 1998; Bickel 2001) and Native American languages (Hermon 1985). Thus, it would seem that oblique subjects are not 'such a rare species in the grammatical jungle' as Faarlund (2001a: 131) and others have claimed.

To sum up, we conclude, first, that the arguments against the 'subject analysis' presented so far are either irrelevant or invalid, and thus that there are no arguments against it. Secondly, the predictions that follow from the 'object analysis' are not borne out. Finally, there are structures in Old Icelandic, and indeed in Old Germanic in general, that call for a 'subject analysis'. Only by assuming that oblique subject-like NPs are subjects can we provide a coherent account both of these structures in the older languages, and also of the relation between Old and Modern Icelandic. The predictions that follow from the 'subject analysis' are all borne out. If oblique subject-like NPs are syntactic subjects, they are expected to immediately precede the finite verb in declarative main clauses, and to invert with the verb when some other constituent occurs in first position, as indeed they do. They also regularly occupy initial position in subordinate clauses. Moreover, oblique subject-like NPs are antecedents of reflexives across clause boundaries. They occur as the subject in subject-to-subject raising constructions, and as objects in subject-to-object raising constructions. They function as the unexpressed argument in control constructions. Finally, oblique subject-like NPs do not occur to the right of non-finite verbs. In all these respects they pattern exactly with ordinary nominative subjects and not with objects.

5. The evolution of subjects

The mainstream analysis of the development of 'impersonal' constructions in Germanic assumes that their demise was caused by the loss of morphological case. This analysis was first proposed by van der Gaaf (1904) and Jespersen (1927) for English, and later repackaged in generative terms by Lightfoot (1979, 1999). It has also been invoked by Neeleman & Weerman (1999: 82) for Dutch, and Faarlund (2001a) and Askedal (2001) for Scandinavian. In the following we review Faarlund's arguments that the loss of morphological case affected the case marking of syntactic functions in Scandinavian. We reject his analysis and put forth our own.

Faarlund (2001a) assumes a change from Old to Modern Scandinavian which runs as follows: Old Scandinavian was a language with no fixed subject position since the arguments corresponding to subjects in the modern languages were not restricted to SpecIP; thus, it was non-configurational. Moreover, SpecIP could also host arguments corresponding to objects in the modern languages. In the course of time a reanalysis took place: SpecIP became restricted to subjects in all the languages. This change caused oblique subject-like NPs in Icelandic (and Faroese) to become oblique subjects. On the other hand, morphological case was lost in Mainland Scandinavian,

thereby causing oblique subject-like NPs to become 'regular' (nominative) subjects. 'As a consequence, pronouns, which still maintained their case inflection, changed to the nominative' (Faarlund 2001a: 131–132). The analysis can be sketched as follows:

1. Old Scandinavian:	SpecIP for XPs
Reanalysis:	SpecIP for subjects
2a. Modern Mainland Scandinavian:	Case marking lost (obl. > nom.)
2b. Modern Icelandic (Faroese):	Case marking retained (obl. > subj.)

Table 1
The development of subjects in Scandinavian, according
to Faarlund (2001a)

There are at least four problems with this account. First, it is not clear what triggers the reanalysis Faarlund postulates, or what status it should have in the history of Scandinavian. It seems that this reanalysis is only posited on the basis of the data it is supposed to account for, and thus it is not independently motivated. In our view, it is more adequate to regard this change as involving loss of the already infrequent structures in which non-subjects occur in SpecIP. Thereby, on our account the 'reanalysis' must be a consequence of a language change and not the motivation for it.

Secondly, it is assumed that the loss of case marking on nouns causes oblique subject-like NPs to become subjects. Then, because they are subjects, the oblique pronouns corresponding to the oblique subject-like nouns also start occurring in the nominative case. However, if a reanalysis has already taken place so that SpecIP has become an unambiguous subject position, then oblique subject-like NPs must have been reanalysed as syntactic subjects already before the breakdown of the morphological case system. Thereby, the loss of morphological case cannot be the reason for the alleged change in the syntactic status of oblique subject-like NPs.

Thirdly, on this account it is expected that oblique pronouns change their case into nominative immediately when morphological case is lost, causing oblique subject-like NPs to become 'regular' subjects. Otherwise, Faarlund and others are forced to assume that when the logical subject is a full NP it is a syntactic subject, whereas when the logical subject occurs as a pronoun it is a syntactic object. Thus, on such an account the syntactic analysis of an NP hinges upon its lexical-category membership.

Moreover, this change from oblique to nominative on pronouns has been shown to be gradual, starting long before the loss of morphological case and being completed centuries later. In Swedish, for instance, morphological case was lost around 1400 (see Delsing 1991, 1995; Falk 1997), while the last examples of oblique subject-like pronouns with impersonal predicates disappeared during the 17th century and oblique pronouns with ditransitive

passives were lost as late as the 19th century (Falk 1997: 163–168). Moreover, a change from oblique subject-like NPs in 'impersonal' constructions to nominative NPs is also known from Icelandic, Faroese and German, where morphological case has been preserved for centuries (Halldórsson 1982; von Seefranz-Montag 1983, 1984; Barnes 1986; Smith 1994; Eythórsson 2000, 2002). The change whereby oblique subject-like NPs become nominative is sometimes labelled 'Nominative Sickness', and can be understood as a generalisation of the most frequent subject case.[16] An example from Modern Icelandic is given in (39), containing the verb *dreyma* 'dream', which standardly occurs with an accusative experiencer. This example is taken from a newspaper article from 1971.

(39) Þeir   dreyma   samt.   (MIc)
     they.NOM dream.3PL   nevertheless
     'Nevertheless they dream.'   (Halldórsson 1982: 169)

'Nominative Sickness' affecting accusative experiencers is marginal in Icelandic, but it has gained ground in contemporary Faroese, where the number of verbs taking oblique subjects has been significantly reduced (see Eythórsson 2000, 2002, 2003). Furthermore, this type of change has been quite pervasive throughout the history of German (von Seefranz-Montag 1983, 1984; Smith 1994, 1996). On the basis of the evidence from Swedish, Icelandic, Faroese and German we feel that the idea that 'impersonal' constructions become 'personal' due to the loss of morphological case should be discarded once and for all.

The fourth problem with Faarlund's analysis is that the changes in structure from Old to Modern Icelandic that he postulates have simply not taken place, as our examination in this paper has revealed.

Turning now to our analysis, we propose that the development in Scandinavian was as follows: Old Scandinavian was a configurational language, with a discernible subject category, exactly like Modern Icelandic. The syntactic subject typically occurred in a position which may be given the descriptive label SpecIP, but could also occur in other slots in the sentence. Elements of other syntactic statuses could also occupy SpecIP. Since this is the same situation as in Modern Icelandic, no change can be said to have taken place, except for instances of 'Nominative Sickness' which have been documented in the history of Icelandic (Halldórsson 1982; Eythórsson 2000, 2002). In Modern Icelandic accusative theme subjects (e.g. with verbs like *reka* 'drift') in particular tend to become nominative; accusative experiencer

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[16] The term 'Nominative Sickness' was coined by analogy with the better-known 'Dative Sickness', which affects accusative subjects of experiencer verbs in Modern Icelandic and is frowned upon by language purists. In Eythórsson (2000, 2002) it is argued that 'Nominative Sickness', involving a change from lexical to structural case, is structurally conditioned, but 'Dative Sickness', involving a change from one lexical case (accusative) to another (dative) within the class of experiencers, is semantically conditioned.

subjects, however, show a significantly stronger tendency to become dative (by 'Dative Sickness') rather than nominative, although the latter also occurs, as in (39) above. 'Dative Sickness' seems to have gained ground in Icelandic by the mid-19th century, whereas 'Nominative Sickness' is sporadically attested already in Old Icelandic, affecting all kinds of oblique (both accusative and dative) subject-like NPs, including experiencers (for details and references, cf. Eythórsson 2000, 2002).

In Mainland Scandinavian, on the other hand, the structures involving the occurrence of non-subjects in SpecIP fell into disuse, meaning that SpecIP has became a position for subjects only. The change from oblique to nominative subjects should ultimately be regarded as a result of 'Nominative Sickness', and not of the loss of morphological case. Thus, in Icelandic this change has never become more than only partial, affecting only some oblique subjects, whereas in Mainland Scandinavian it has been completed, eliminating oblique subjects completely. Our analysis can be sketched as follows:

1. Old Scandinavian:	SpecIP for XPs
2a. Modern Icelandic:	SpecIP for XPs
	'Nominative Sickness' (partial)
2b. Modern Mainland Scandinavian:	SpecIP for subj.
	Case marking lost
	'Nominative Sickness' (complete)

Table 2
The development of subjects in Scandinavian: the present account

One advantage of our account, as opposed to Faarlund's, is that we are not forced to assume a reanalysis which cannot be independently motivated.

Finally, both Faarlund and Askedal assume that the Scandinavian languages, including Icelandic, have developed from a synthetic to an analytic language type. We take issue with them on this matter. It has been independently established that the assumption of a development from a synthetic period of a language to an analytic period is an oversimplification (see Schwegler 1990). Rather, in languages allegedly developing from a synthetic to an analytic type, both synthetic and analytic structures can emerge. Thereby, the distinction between analyticity and syntheticity is only useful as a descriptive tool to portray constructions as being either synthetic, and thus morphological, or analytic, and thus periphrastic (Schwegler 1990; Vincent 1997).

6. SUMMARY

In this paper we have presented various arguments against the claim made by Faarlund and Askedal that Old Scandinavian did not exhibit oblique

subjects. Faarlund's main goal is to argue that there are no structures in Old Scandinavian that call for an oblique subject analysis, hence it should not be invoked. We have disputed this and demonstrated that the relevant syntactic difference between Old and Modern Icelandic is minimal. Thus, an adequate description of Old Icelandic has to take into consideration its tight relation to Modern Icelandic and give a coherent account of the development from the early stage to the modern language.

Furthermore, we have shown that all putative counterexamples and counterarguments brought forth against the oblique subject account are either irrelevant or invalid. We have also established that the analysis of oblique subject-like NPs as objects makes certain predictions which are not borne out. Most importantly, the fact that oblique subject-like NPs figure as the unexpressed argument of PRO-infinitives makes it necessary to invoke an analysis according to which oblique subject-like NPs are syntactic subjects. These facts have implications for the analysis of oblique subject-like NPs in the 'impersonal' construction in the other Old Germanic languages. In light of our results, a revision is necessary of the traditional view that oblique subjects are a modern phenomenon in Germanic.

Finally, we have argued against the hypothesis that 'impersonal' constructions became 'personal' due to the loss of morphological case in Scandinavian and English. We propose that this change was ultimately brought about by 'Nominative Sickness', a process which has affected all the Germanic languages to a varying degree, including those which have preserved their case system.

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