OLD NORSE WORD ORDER AND INFORMATION STRUCTURE

by

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To my son

Birk

Preface:

This project was financed through a scholarship from the Research Council of Norway (Noregs forskingsråd, NFR) [project no. 107720/520]. I am grateful to the NFR for having given me the opportunity to carry out my research project on Old Norse syntax. I would also like to thank the Faculty of Arts at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and the Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature (INL) for help and support. Furthermore, I am grateful for the financial and moral support I got at ALLFORSK (The Arts and Science Research Foundation at NTNU) and Senter for etterutdanning (The Center for Continuing Education).

Originally I had planned to investigate only one syntactic phenomenon of Old Norse. Later, I wanted to find out more about Old Norse information structure. However, as I became familiar with the linguistic literature on Old Norse, I realized that any approach to Old Norse would be highly dependent on not only the theoretical framework, but also on the target group for the thesis. I could have chosen to write my thesis within what I call the *Norwegian (traditional) view* in chapter 1, or I could choose to write within what I call the *Icelandic (modern) view*. In my opinion, the scientific results of the Icelandic view are in many cases of much stronger explanatory value than the results of the Norwegian view. On the other hand, research on Old Norse in Norway is still strongly influenced by the traditional view and 'non-traditional' linguistic terms, such as *oblique subject*, are still not generally accepted in the Norwegian literature on Old Norse. Hence, one has to spend a great deal of energy on arguing for the modern view. As a consequence of the 'conflict' between the traditional and the modern view, this thesis is written within the modern view, whereas it has the traditional reader as its main target.

I would like to thank my main supervisor, professor Jan Terje Faarlund, for having challenged me to argue against the traditional view on many points. This was hardly the intention initially. But as time went by and the thesis took shape, my claims became more and more often in opposition to the traditional view and resulted in interesting discussions between Jan Terje and myself. Quite often I felt like a 'crusader' for the modern view, but I am glad I held out.

I also wish to thank my second supervisor, professor Jan Ragnar Hagland, first of all for his support on questions related to translation and interpretation of Old Norse data.

Thanks also to Joan Maling, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson and Tor Anders Åfarli for comments on the 1998 manuscript of my thesis.

All in all, carrying out research on Old Norse syntax has often been a rather 'lonesome' task. The combination of interest in Old Norse and interest in generative syntax and functional grammar is apparently very rare. There have not been very many people to discuss certain ideas and thoughts with and I often missed a 'soul mate'. I wish John Sundquist had come to Trondheim a little earlier, and I thank him for interesting discussions and comments on my work and my language. I also wish him good luck with his own project.

I also want to thank my research scholar colleagues at the Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature Berit Sandnes, Bodil Aurstad and Laila Sakshaug, first of all for the mental support, but also for comments on my work. Moreover, I want to apologize for constantly having bothered them by talking linguistics in lunch breaks and at all other possible occasions.

During my research, I often felt the lack of having closer contact with Icelandic speaking people. However, there are two Icelanders I want to thank for helping me out with some minor problems: Þorbjörg Hróarsdóttir and Hermundur Sigmundsson. Speaking of Icelanders, I also want to thank Jóhanna Barðdal for comments and moral support.

I have presented parts of my work on several occasions and in several contexts, and I want to thank everyone who has commented on any of my ideas or thoughts. Apart from those I have already mentioned I want to thank especially (in alphabetic order): Nicholas Asher, John Ole Askedal, Robyn Carston, Thorstein Fretheim, Jeanette Gundel, Alice Harris, Odd Einar Haugen, Knud Lambrecht, Endre Mørck, Randi Alice Nilsen, Christer Platzack, Hanne Siri Sund, Øystein Alexander Vangsnes, Deidre Wilson, and some anonymous referees.

Since English is not my native language, I asked Nancy Lea Eik-Nes to read my manuscript. I am very thankful for her comments on my language and her interest in my work.

Last but not least, I will thank my son Birk for reminding me of the fact that life does not only consist of Old Norse syntax. - The price was too high ...

Jens Haugan

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Abbreviations:

A/ACC = accusative
A.C.I. = accusativus cum infinitivo
ACT = active
ADV/ADVBL = adverb/adverbial
AP = adjective phrase
AGR/Agr = agreement
AUX/aux = auxiliary
BEN = Benefactive/Beneficiary
C = complementizer
COMPL = (predicate) complement
CP = complementizer phrase (clause)
D-structure = deep structure
D/DAT = dative
DET = determinator
DO = Direct Object
DOC = Double Object Construction
DP = determiner phrase
EMC = embedded clause with main clause word order
e = empty (position)
e-n = *einhvern* ACC ('somebody')
EPP = Extended Projection Principle
e-rr = *einnhverr* NOM ('somebody')
e-s= *einhvers* GEN ('somebody/something')
e-t = *eitthvert* ACC ('something')
e-u = *einhverju* DAT ('something')
e-m = *einhverjum* DAT ('somebody')
Engl. = English
EXP = Experiencer
EXPL = expletive
F = finite(ness)
FEM/f. = feminine
fn. = footnote
FOC = focus
G/GEN = genitive
GB = Government and Binding (Theory)
i, j, k ... = indexes
I[nfl] = inflection
IO = Indirect Object
IP = inflection phrase
ISc. = Insular Scandinavian
LF = Logical Form
LFG = Lexical-Functional Grammar
MASC/m. = masculine
MSc. = Mainland Scandinavian
n. = note
N/NOM = nominative
NEG = negation
NEUT/n. = neuter
NP = noun phrase
OBJ/O = object
p. = page
P/PREP = preposition
PASS = passive
PAT = Patient
p.c. = personal communication
pers. = person
PF = Phonological Form
PL = plural
PP = prepositional phrase
pres. = present (tense)
pret. = preterite (verb form)
PRT = particle
PRTCPL = participle
QP = quantifier phrase
REL = relative pronoun/word
REFL = reflexive
S = sentence/clause, cf. CP
S-structure = surface structure
S/SUBJ = subject
SA = sentence adverbial
SF = Stylistic Fronting
SG/sg. = singular
SPEC = specifier
T = tense
t = trace
th/TH = theta (θ) (role)
THM = Theme
TOP = topic
V = verb
Vfin = finite verb
Vinf = infinitive (non-finite) verb
VP = verb phrase

1 Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Foundation and Aims

The present work is a study of Old Norse word order and information structure. I am not the first one who has tried to take a closer look at Old Norse word order. To mention only a few of the earliest major works concentrating on word order in Old Norse prose, we must start way back at the end of the nineteenth century, e.g. Lund (1862) or Bernstein (1898). The most important (early) contribution to the study on Old Norse syntax is Nygaard's (1905) *Norrøn syntax*, which may still be considered a central piece of work in this particular linguistic field.

The earliest works on Old Norse syntax are first of all descriptive and they more or less lack theoretical foundation (at least compared to modern linguistic theories). With the work (on Old Danish syntax) of Diderichsen (1941), the description of Scandinavian syntax in general became more accurate. Diderichsen's topological model with so-called 'sentence fields' (see the discussion in 2.5) is still a useful tool when working with modern (Mainland) Scandinavian, however, in spite of its many limitations.[1]

The two most recent theses on Old Norse syntax that I am aware of are Christoffersen (1993a) and Kristoffersen (1996). The former is based on the Diderichsen tradition. The latter investigation of Old Norse is carried out within the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG).[2]

In the present thesis, one approach to the syntax of Old Norse will be the theory of *Government and Binding* (GB), based on Chomsky (1981) and subsequent works by Chomsky

[1] The topological model (the "sætningskema" - 'sentence scheme') is further developed in Diderichsen (1946). As I have pointed out in Haugan (1994:31, fn. 35), the 'idea' of a 'sentence scheme' or topological fields is much older, e.g. in German literature, cf. Herling (1821), Erdmann (1886), and Drach (1937). See also Höhle (1986).

[2] The most recent thesis on Old Norse (and Modern Icelandic) syntax is actually the doctoral dissertation by Þorbjörg Hróarsdóttir (1999) which is a study within the theory of minimalism. Since Hróarsdóttir's thesis was submitted after I had finished the main work on my own thesis, I have not discussed it here.

and many other linguists. I believe that some syntactic 'problems', such as the question whether Old Norse is configurational or not, or whether Old Norse is SVO, SOV or both, can be satisfactorily described and explained within the framework of Government and Binding. The conception of Scandinavian syntax in a generative perspective is based to a great extent on the work of Holmberg & Platzack (1995). The most recent development within GB theory, the so-called *Minimalist Program* (e.g. Chomsky 1992, 1993, 1995), will be given minimal attention in this work.[3]

In my discussion on Old Norse syntax, I will also make use of the theory of *thematic roles* (Fillmore 1968 and later work, Jackendoff 1972 and later work) to a somewhat greater extent than common within GB theory. The mapping between argument structure and the syntactic deep-structure plays an important role in my discussion on Old Norse syntax, and I will show that, for instance, the phenomenon of so-called oblique subjects in Old Norse can be best understood on the background of thematic hierarchies determining the projection of arguments into syntactic structures. The existence of thematic hierarchies combined with contextual demands may have a great effect on surface syntax (information structure), and I will therefore supplement the formal discussion on word order with a more functional discussion, first of all based on Lambrecht (1994).[4]

Since I have chosen to approach the syntax of Old Norse from several, partly rather different viewpoints, I have been forced to study a quite large amount of linguistic literature. However, since working with this kind of doctoral thesis is time limited there was also a time to stop reading. Still, the most central works relevant in a discussion on Old Norse syntax should at least

[3] This fact has, of course, serious implications for the analysis of clauses and sentences in this thesis. The discussion on SOV versus SVO in chapter 2, and the analysis of *Scrambling* in chapter 4, for instance, would be different if handled within the more recent developments of generative grammar. At the time when I started to work on my thesis, minimalism was a rather new theory, while 'traditional' Government and Binding theory (based on Chomsky 1981 and later work) was well established. I still consider 'traditional' GB theory to be a useful tool when trying to investigate human language. I hope that some of my findings in this work can be adopted to newer theories at some later point in time. For now, I have tried to 'update' some of the discussions in this thesis by adding footnotes and minor comments.

[4] While I will refer to a rather wide range of syntactic literature, many central and important works that deal with functional syntax and pragmatics will be lacking in the reference list. This is a consequence of the dominating syntactic profile of this thesis.

be mentioned in this dissertation. Due to the volume of my dissertation, on the other hand, I have chosen to discuss in more detail first of all those works or arguments that represent a different view than advocated by myself. In cases where I have considered a discussion more uncontroversial, I have usually only provided references to further discussions.

There are first of all two different 'traditions' within the study of Old Norse syntax. The 'traditional' (Norwegian) view is based on the works of Nygaard and others, with Jan Terje Faarlund (1990a and elsewhere) as the most important modern exponent. Within this tradition, Old Norse is a language fundamentally distinct from Modern Icelandic (and Modern Norwegian).[5] According to the 'traditionalists', Old Norse has only nominative subjects and is (most likely) considered non-configurational, however, having SVO as the most frequent surface word order. It must also be mentioned that in Norway GB theory has not been used extensively in the investigation of Old Norse syntax.

The other view, let us call it the 'modern' (Icelandic) view,[6] looks upon Old Norse and Modern Icelandic (roughly speaking) as variants of the same language. The most central exponents of this view are Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, Halldór Ármann Sigurðssson and Höskuldur Þráinsson.

Even though it is widely accepted that Modern Icelandic has so-called oblique subjects, according to the 'traditional' Norwegian view, Old Norse has no non-nominative subjects. While Modern Icelandic and Modern Norwegian have passive formation, it has been argued that Old Norse might not have (syntactic) passive formation. Modern Icelandic and Modern Norwegian are clearly configurational, but Old Norse is claimed to be non-configurational. The aim of this work is first of all to defend a 'modern view' of Old Norse. Some of the most

[5] Apart from the fact that Old Norse is the ancestor of both Modern Icelandic and Modern Norwegian.

[6] One could also call this view the 'generative' view.

central claims in this thesis may be formulated as:

1. Old Norse is a configurational language
2. Old Norse is a so-called SVO language, SVO being the (only) basic word order
3. Old Norse has so-called oblique subjects
4. Old Norse has passive formation
5. Old Norse has Scrambling

Those claims are first of all based on the hypothesis that the arguments of a clause are projected into deep structure syntax in accordance with a certain thematic role hierarchy. I assume that there is a deep structure argument configuration, and that this argument configuration yields an SVO word order by default. This default order is first of all due to syntactic demands, for instance, the demands of the Infl-projection.[7] So-called oblique subjects are a direct consequence of the thematic role hierarchy combined with the demand for a syntactic subject (EPP). Passive constructions, Scrambling (movement of non-subject material into the middle field), and also Topicalization, are devices that make it possible to adjust surface structure to pragmatic demands in case the default argument order and the contextually desired argument order do not correspond.

1.2 Old Norse vs. Old Icelandic - What is What?

[7] I.e. movement of the NP with the highest thematic role to Spec-IP (unless we have insertion of *pro*/PRO), and movement of the verb to I. Subsequently, the verb may move further to C (unless C is occupied by a complementizer), and the subject to Spec-CP (unless another phrase is topicalized).

By *Old Norse* I mean the language used in the written sources from Norway and Iceland from around 1050-1350.[8] The choice of the term is very much a political choice.[9] Icelanders usually refer to Old Norse as *Old Icelandic*, while Norwegian linguists use the term *Old Norse*. Old Norse is a much more neutral term, covering both Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian there being only minor syntactic differences between those two dialects.[10] The term Old Norse corresponds roughly to the term *Altnordisch* used in the German literature on Old Norse. However, the use of the term *Altnordisch* to refer to only Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian has also been criticized (e.g. Noreen 1923:1, fn. 1; Heusler 1967:7) since *Altnordisch* is supposed to cover all the medieval Nordic languages (Old Norwegian, Old Icelandic, Old Swedish, Old Danish); more accurate is the German term *Altwestnordisch* ('Old West Nordic').[11]

In Norway, the term *norrøn(t)*[12] is usually used when referring to Old Icelandic and Old Norwegian as one language. The terms *gammalislandsk* ('Old Icelandic') and *gammalnorsk* ('Old Norwegian') are used when referring specifically to one of the two dialects. As I have suggested elsewhere (Haugan 1996), *norrøn* (or possibly written as *norroen/norron* - or *norroena/norrona*) could be introduced as a neutral international term. According to Heusler (1967:7), the Old English corresponding word is *norþerne*, while the Old High German word is *nordrôni*, both meaning 'northern' (cf. Old Norse: *nor(ð)rœnn*). The word *nordrôni* no longer exists in Modern German; the meaning of *nordrôni* is now expressed by the word *nördlich*. Modern English, on the

[8] The upper time limit could also be set to 1400 (e.g. Sigurðsson 1993:247, fn.1) or even 1530, i.e. the reformation (e.g. Noreen 1923:1) . See also Rögnvaldsson (1996a:59). Some 'typical' Old Norse features such as examples of overt OV word order, referential null arguments, and the lack of an expletive subject could still be observed in Icelandic as late as 1850 (cf. Hróarsdóttir 1995, 1996a). Thus, from a syntactic viewpoint, it could be justified to draw the border between Old and Modern Icelandic around 1850. Old *Norse* would then no longer be an appropriate term to use, since the language in Norway by that time had changed quite radically.

[9] See for instance the discussion between the Icelander Stefán Snævarr (1992, 1993) and the Norwegian Lars Vikør (1992, 1993).

[10] See e.g. Benediktsson (1980), Nygaard (1894) or Venås (1971). The phonological differences were probably greater, cf. also Heusler (1967:7) who states that Old Icelandic had more in common with the dialects spoken in south-west Norway (Bergen, Stavanger), compared to the other regions (Austlandet, Trondheim). These dialectal difference, thus, only reflect the differences between the dialects in Norway as a whole. Since most people who moved to Iceland came from the south-west part of Norway, there must have been one dominating dialect in Iceland at that time.

[11] *Nordic* is used as a synonym of *North Germanic*, cf. Faarlund (1990a:10).

[12] The *-t* is the neuter ending of *norrøn*, cf. *norrønt språk*$_{\text{NEUT}}$ ('Old Norse language').

other hand, still has the word *northern* with the meaning "of, from or situated in the north" (Hornby 1995:788), thus, the direct descendent of *norþerne* cannot be used as a term for the Old Norse language, *norroen*, on the other hand, could be a suitable choice. However, since *Old Norse* and *Old Icelandic* are used with roughly the same meaning in the linguistic literature on historical syntax written in English, and since these terms seem to be established, a 'new' term *norroen(a)* would not be likely to survive very long. I have thus chosen not to use the 'term' *norroen(a)* in the present work. Nevertheless, to conclude this argumentation, I will point out the fact that, even though the adjective *norræn(n)* may be used to distinguish Norwegians from Icelanders as in, e.g.:[13]

(1) *Böðvar svaraði og kvað suma vera* ***íslenska*** *en suma* ***norræna*** (VaLjó 1836)
Bodvar answered and said some being Icelandic and some Norwegian
'Bodvar answered and said that some of them were Icelandic and some Norwegian'

the sagas refer to the language spoken in Iceland and Norway at that time as *norræna*, cf. the following example:[14]

(2) *Og er þeir komu fyrir þenna mann þá mælti hann*
and when they came before this man then said he

til þeirra á ***norrænu*** *og spyr hvaðan af löndum þeir*
to them on 'norroena' and asks where-from of land they

væru. Þeir sögðu að þeir væru flestir íslenskir (Eyrb 621)
be. They said that they were most Icelandic
'And when they came before this man he spoke to them in norroena and asked what land they came from. They said that most of them were Icelanders'

Thus, the sagas tell about Norwegians and Icelanders as different people, and there are also passages in the sagas telling about differences and arguments between Norwegians and

[13] Note that most of the Old Norse examples in this work have Modern Icelandic spelling - see the comments on the Old Norse text corpus in 1.3 below.

[14] From the ninth century, the Nordic dialects were also called *do,_nsk tunga* ('Danish tongue') (cf. e.g. Heusler 1967:7; Noreen 1923:3). This term dates probably back to the time when Danish and Norwegian vikings colonized England. The term is not used in my corpus, but there is actually one sentence that demonstrates that one was aware of the former language unity:

(i) *Ein var þá tunga á Englandi sem í Noregi og í Danmörku* (Gunnl 1175)
one was then tongue on England as in Norway and in Denmark
'At that time, the tongue was the same in England as in Norway and in Denmark'

Icelanders.[15] However, there is no example in my corpus that uses *íslenska/íslenzka* as a name for a separate language or dialect.

Although the possible international term *norroen(a)* will not play any further role in this thesis, scholars concerned with Old Norse might want to discuss this issue at another occasion. In this work, Old Norse is considered synonymous with Old Icelandic.

1.3 The Linguistic Data

[15] E.g. the following amusing passage from *Eyrbyggja saga*:

(i) *Þá kölluðu Austmenn af skipinu að Þorleifur skyldi matbúa og sögðu hann vera mjög íslenskan fyrir tómlæti sitt. Þá varð Þorleifi skapfátt og tók ketilinn en steypti niður grautinum Arnbjarnar og sneri á brott síðan. Arnbjörn sat eftir og hélt á þvörunni og laust með henni til Þorleifs og kom á hálsinn. Það var lítið högg en með því að grauturinn var heitur þá brann Þorleifur á hálsinum. Hann mælti: "Eigi skulu Noregsmenn að því hlæja, með því að við erum hér komnir tveir samlendir, að þeir þurfi að draga okkur í sundur sem hunda en minnast skal þessa þá er við erum á Íslandi." Arnbjörn svarar engu.* (Eyrb 585)
'Then the Norwegians shouted from the ship that Thorleif should get on with the cooking, and they said he were very Icelandic with regard to his slowness. Then Thorleif got angry and took the kettle and poured out Arnbjorn's porridge and went away. Arnbjorn was still holding the ladle and hit Thorleif on the neck. It was only a minor blow, but because the porridge was hot, Thorleif got burned on his neck. He said: "Since the two of us have come here from the same country (Iceland), the Norwegians shall not (get the opportunity to) laugh at this and drag us apart like (fighting) dogs, but I will remember this when we are (back) in Iceland". Arnbjorn did not answer.'

Most of the Old Norse examples used in this work have been collected from the CD-ROM edition *Íslendinga sögur* (1996), a concordance to the sagas of the Icelanders.[16]

Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1996a:60) points out that the editions on the CD-ROM are "not completely reliable as sources of syntactic evidence", but since Rögnvaldsson himself does not base any theoretical or empirical claims on only one or two examples, he finds it "extremely unlikely" that possible inaccuracies in these editions might affect any of his arguments.[17] In a few cases, especially in section 4.7, I will be dealing with constructions that are only rarely attested. I have chosen to discuss those constructions as 'authentic' examples even though this might be proved to be wrong by future research. I do not think that "possible inaccuracies" in the corpus have any crucial effect on the argumentation of this thesis as a whole.

The Old Norse texts are traditionally handled as if they represented one homogeneous language stage. In this work, no attempt will be made to try to detect possible variations or differences between the various texts or constructions.[18] To illustrate the traditional treatment of

[16] Such a concordance to a large corpus on Old Norse texts is of great value for the investigation of Old Norse, and I would like to take the opportunity to recognize the editors Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson, Bergljót S. Kristjánsdóttir, Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir and Örnólfur Thorsson for their great achievement.

[17] However, Rögnvaldsson (1996a:60, fn. 5) also refers to Sigurðsson (1985) for an illustration of changes made by editors of Old Norse texts.

[18] See Ottósson (1988) and Haugen (1990a) for introductions to Old Norse textual criticism. See also e.g. Penzl (1972) on Germanic in general.

the Old Norse text corpus, I will quote some comments of Rögnvaldsson (1996a:59):

> The term 'Old Icelandic' (or 'Old Norse') is usually taken to mean the language of the narrative prose texts written in Iceland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, none of these texts is found in the original; most of them are only preserved in manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth (and in a few cases sixteenth) centuries. This makes it extremely difficult to assess the validity of these texts as linguistic evidence, since it is often impossible to know whether a certain feature of the preserved text stems from the original or from the scribe of the preserved copy, or perhaps from the scribe of an intermediate link between the original and the preserved manuscript. It is well known that scribes often did not retain the spelling of the original when they made copies; instead, they used the spelling that they were used to. In many cases, two or more manuscripts of the same text are preserved, and usually they differ to a greater or lesser extent.
>
> However, it is usually assumed that the syntax of Old Icelandic did not change much in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Therefore, I feel justified in lumping together various narrative texts from these centuries and treating them as if they exhibit the same stage of language. In working with these texts, I have not noticed any significant syntactic differences between those that are assumed to be relatively old and preserved in older manuscripts, and those that are considered relatively young and are preserved in younger manuscripts. It is possible that future research will show that it is illegitimate to treat these texts as roughly contemporaneous; but in doing so, I follow the standard practice of traditional syntactic descriptions (see especially Nygaard 1905; Heusler 1967).

According to Modern Icelandic tradition, Old Norse texts are often published with Modern Icelandic spelling; this is also the case with the CD-ROM edition used in this thesis. When concerned with Old Norse syntax, one usually works with standardized texts, i.e. one uses editions either with 'Old Norse' spelling or with Modern Icelandic spelling. However, the spelling of Old Norse texts is not as homogeneous as most text editions may give the impression of. What is considered 'Old Norse spelling', is a standardized spelling as well. Furthermore, there may also be a few minor differences between the spelling standards used by different editors and grammarians. For instance, Nygaard (1905) uses the letters *j* and *v*, where Heusler (1967) uses *i* and *u* for the semi-vowels. Heusler additionally uses the letter *þ* ('thorn') medially, while this letter traditionally is represented by *ð* ('edd'), e.g. *kueþia* ('greeting') versus *kveðja*. In chapter 3, I will use the traditional Old Norse spelling when giving a short description of the Old Norse

inflection system.

The most important differences between the Old Norse spelling and the Modern Icelandic spelling used on the CD-ROM, are the following: use of the svarabhakti (anaptyctic) vowel *u* as in Modern Icelandic, e.g. *bátur* vs. Old Norse *bátr* ('boat'); the Old Norse letter *o,_,* being an u-umlaut of *a*, is replaced by the Icelandic *ö*, while the Old Norse *æ/ø,´* is replaced by the Icelandic *æ*; furthermore, word-final *t* or a *k* may be weakened to *ð* or *g*, respectively, e.g. *þat* > *það* ('that'), *ok* > *og* ('and'); also, Old Norse *á* may be represented by Modern Icelandic *o*, e.g. *vár* > *vor* ('spring'). Since this work is concerned with Old Norse syntax only, the kind of spelling that is used in the examples under discussion is irrelevant. In a few cases, I will also quote some 'unnormalized' Old Norse examples.

I do not expect Old Norse to be a language familiar to every linguist that may be interested in reading this work. Therefore, I will provide interlinear glosses and an idiomatic translation of each Old Norse sentence. Grammatical symbols are in most cases attached to the interlinear glosses (see the abbreviation list), e.g. *he*$_{\text{SUBJ}}$ *loves*$_{\text{V}}$ *linguistics*$_{\text{OBJ}}$. When there is a Modern English word that is etymologically related to an actual Old Norse word, I will use the related form as a gloss. For example, the Old Norse preposition *við* may be glossed *with* even when the actual contextual meaning has to be translated into *to, by* or another preposition (or no preposition at all), e.g.:

(3) *Bergþóra mælti við hann að ...* (Njála 164)
Bergthora said **with** him that ...
'Bergthora said **to** him that ...'

In some cases, the meaning of a related word may have changed radically. I do not, however, think that this will cause any problems for the understanding since there is also the idiomatic translation. The parentheses behind the Old Norse example refer to the source from which the example is taken. In most cases, this will be a saga from the CD-ROM which is abbreviated in accordance with the abbreviations used on the CD-ROM (see the list at the end of the thesis). The number refers to the actual 'page' on the CD-ROM. Unfortunately, it is not possible to use this reference to find an actual example in a standard edition of the Icelandic sagas (e.g. *Íslensk fornrit*). On the other hand, given the recent development - and advantages - when it comes to electronic data sources, the CD-ROM edition might become the new standard edition. When the parentheses contain a proper name, the example is taken from the linguistic literature on Old

Norse.

One problem when working with Old Norse is the fact that we are dealing with a so-called *dead language* (this is further discussed in section 4.1.3). To compensate for the lack of negative data, I will compare with Modern Icelandic data to a greater or lesser extent. In some cases, I may be criticized for not making a sharp enough distinction between Old Norse and Modern Icelandic. However, the Modern Icelandic examples are usually used as a starting point for a discussion about an Old Norse phenomenon, or they are used to illustrate possible and impossible grammatical structures.

In this thesis, Old Norse is handled as a very close predecessor of Modern Icelandic, the most important difference being that Old Norse allowed a variety of *Scrambling* phenomena, while this is limited to *Object Shift* in Modern Icelandic (see the discussion in 4.3.2.4 and elsewhere).[19] As for oblique subjects and passive formation, I do not assume that there are any structural differences between the two language stages. In addition to the Modern Icelandic data, I will also compare Old Norse with data from Modern Norwegian and in some cases with Modern German. I do not think that research on Old Norse can make much progress without comparing it with other languages. Since the modern Germanic languages have been quite successfully investigated within the linguistic literature, I have benefitted from the works of many other linguists.

This thesis is an attempt to combine theoretical elements from different linguistic theories in order to provide an analysis of Old Norse syntax capable of explaining the variety of word order phenomena that can be observed. Hopefully, some of my ideas about how to approach the investigation of Old Norse syntax will lead to some rethinking. In particular, I believe that *Scrambling* as a linguistic phenomenon should be investigated to a much greater extent than I was able to do in this work.

[19] Both Modern Icelandic and Old Norse have also so-called *Stylistic Fronting* (see the discussion in 4.7) which also may be considered a *Scrambling* phenomenon. This has not been investigated very much in this work. Stylistic Fronting seems to have been more frequent in Old Norse than it is in Modern Icelandic.

1.4 Organization

I have chosen to divide the thesis into two major parts. **Part 1** deals mainly with Old Norse word order from a 'technical' viewpoint (e.g. formal conditions for the establishment of syntactic structures), while **part 2** is a more functional approach (e.g. pragmatic/contextual conditions for the use and variation of certain syntactic structures). However, pragmatics and information structure will also play a role in the first part, just as the 'technical' aspect will be present in the second part.

In **chapter 2**, I will discuss Old Norse word order more generally first of all from a typological viewpoint. The central issue will be whether Old Norse can be said to have one or two basic word orders. I will claim that Old Norse has only one basic word order and that this word order is (S)VO, like the basic word order of all the modern Scandinavian languages. It will also be discussed whether Old Norse might be a so-called *non-configurational* language. I will argue that Old Norse is configurational.

In **chapter 3**, I will give a brief introduction of the grammatical features of Old Norse. Before discussing Old Norse within a generative and a functional framework, I would like to give the reader a little impression of Old Norse as a language with a rather rich agreement system. It could be argued that this chapter should have come first, or that it should have been put last as an appendix since it contains rather few discussions on the syntax of Old Norse. However, since Old Norse is not one of the most central research objects within linguistics, some readers may prefer a brief glance at the language under discussion. Also, I think that some of my claims in chapter 4 (e.g. about *Scrambling*) deserve further investigation within syntactic theory, and this brief introduction to Old Norse may serve as a starting point for other linguists. Readers familiar with Old Norse may skip this chapter.

Chapter 4 deals with Old Norse word order first of all in the light of syntactic tree structures and thematic roles. In this chapter, I will mainly be concerned with a definition of the Old Norse subject. I will claim that one should distinguish between *deep-structure subjects* and *surface-structure subjects*. The first category will normally always appear as a nominative subject, while the latter category may be an oblique (i.e. non-nominative) subject. Surface-structure subjects that are deep-structure objects are so-called *promoted* subjects. According to the theory outlined in chapter 4, promotion of arguments plays an important role in, e.g., passive

and ergative constructions. In my opinion, promotion of arguments neatly explains the existence of oblique subjects in Old Norse and Modern Icelandic. When discussing the position of arguments in the Old Norse clause, I will claim that Old Norse belongs to those languages that allow *Scrambling*, here understood as movement of, for instance, internal arguments or adjuncts from their base position to a position further to the left (except for Topicalization). Scrambling as a feature of Old Norse has been mentioned only now and then by other linguists to explain Old Norse word-order variety. In the present thesis, Scrambling as a phenomenon is crucial for the understanding of Old Norse word order variety. I will discuss aspects of Scrambling in some detail, but I think that further research on Scrambling in Old Norse is still required.

In **chapter 5**, I will give a survey of Old Norse information structure based on the results achieved in chapter 4 combined with the theory of Lambrecht (1994), i.e. first of all from a functional viewpoint. In this chapter I will concentrate only on some selected topics of Old Norse information structure. These topics will, however, provide some important, significant data and may also be a starting points for further discussion. The results of chapter 5 strengthen the claims made about the basic word order of Old Norse made in the chapters 2 and 4. The discussion in this chapter also shows that functional aspects should not be left aside when discussing word order properties of a given language.

PART 1:
WORD ORDER AND GRAMMAR

2 Old Norse Word Order

2.1 Preliminaries

According to Payne (1992a:2) explanatory factors behind word order variation are to be found in studies of how the mind grammaticizes forms, processes information, and speech act theory considerations of speakers' attempts to get their hearers to build one rather than another, mental representation of incoming information. Payne (ibid.) distinguishes three important domains: a **syntactic**, a **cognitive** and a **pragmatic** domain, and she points out that in all languages each domain is likely to make some contribution towards determining the surface order of sentence elements (although the relative contribution from each domain may vary from one language to another).

According to Payne, the *syntactic* domain may briefly be defined as "a description of order phenomena in terms of syntactic categories, particular morphosyntactic constructions, hierarchical structures and head-dependent relations, and grammatical relations" (1992a:2).

The *cognitive* domain deals with the relationship between order and mental process or constraints. Payne (ibid.) states that a cognitive account would, among other things, consider the relevance of limited focal attention, the current status of certain information in the mind of the speaker, and operations concerned with comprehension and integration of information into already-existing knowledge network or developing mental representation.

The relation between order and speaker-hearer actions would be explored by the *pragmatic* account. The speaker's choice of one word order rather than another can constitute a speech act

of "instruction" on the speaker's part, relative to how the hearer should integrate information into a mental, cognitive representation.

To begin with, my main concern will be the *syntactic* domain of language, keeping in mind that the order of words and phrases is, by definition, a syntactic phenomenon: it involves putting phrases together (*syn*) in certain allowable orders (*taxis*), and not in others (Payne 1992b:137).

2.2 Basic Word Order

For some time now, many linguists have assumed that it is possible to identify so-called *basic word orders* for a majority of the world's languages.[1] This basic word order, first of all the order of subject and object relative to the verb, combined with other facts of the language is considered a useful way of typologizing languages and a primary characteristic from which other features of a language can be predicted. According to Payne (1992a:1), this tradition of typologizing languages by their basic word order began in earnest with the work of Greenberg (1966), and has been continued by numerous scholars, notably Lehmann (1973), Vennemann and Harlow (1977), Malison and Blake (1981), Hawkins (1983), Nichols (1986), and Dryer (1988). Yet, Payne points out that there are some linguists who have started asking new questions about word order and typology of languages.

A different twist on the typology question was taken by Thompson (1978) (see also Payne 1990 and Payne 1992b), who suggested that the first typological division should be made between

- those languages in which main clause word order primarily correlates with pragmatic factors, and

[1] Mithun (1992) shows that not all languages have a syntactically defined word order, and her conclusion is that basic word order is not universal; see also Hale (1992). For a discussion on the 'value' of word order typology, see e.g. Comrie (1981:86ff.); see also Whaley (1997). Within the framework of minimalism, it is now assumed that there is only one basic word order, namely SVO, while all other possible word order patterns are derived from this basic order (cf. e.g. Kayne 1994).

- those languages in which order primarily correlates with grammatical relations or other syntactic factors.

Instead of just asking for some kind of basic word order, attention has been turning to the question of: "When there are several possible order patterns in a language, what is the communicative function of one, rather than another, order?" A third important question might then be: "What historical reanalysis gives rise to observed order patterns?"

Before making any statements about the information structure of a given language, in our case Old Norse, typologizing the language by its word order seems to be necessary; or at least useful to some degree. One should obviously expect different potentialities in the ordering of information in a so-called free-word-order language than in a language with a somehow restricted word order.

2.3 Is There Any Basic Word Order in Old Norse?

What, then, is the basic word order of Old Norse? Or maybe one should ask: is there any basic word order in Old Norse at all? Let us take a quick look at a short passage, that is, a continuous text sequence, from *Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings* (HávÍs 1332).

(1) a. *Hallgrímur hafði drepið báða þá er hann átti við og svo Torfi.*
Hallgrim had killed both those which he fought with and so Torfi
'Hallgrim had killed both of them he fought with, and also Torfi'

b. *Eyólfur hafði drepið annan þann er hann átti við.*
Eyolf had killed other this that he fought with
'Eyolf had killed the other one that he fought with'

c. *Þórir og Oddur höfðu drepið þrjá en eftir var einn.*
Thori and Odd had killed three and after/left was one
'Thorir and Odd had killed three, and one survived'

d. *Þorsteinn og Grímur höfðu fellda tvo en einn var eftir.*
Thorstein and Grim had felled two and one was after/left
'Thorstein and Grim had killed two, and one survived'

e. *Þórhallur hafði drepið þann er hann átti við.*
Thorhall had killed this that he fought with
'Thorhall had killed the one he fought with'

f. *Húskarl hafði eigi drepið þann er honum var ætlaður.*
countrylad had not killed this that him was meant
'The country lad had not killed the one who was meant for him'

This short passage of six sentences exhibits more or less the same sentence construction. Each of the main sentences contains a subject, an auxiliary, a transitive main verb and a more or less complex object. Within a thematic role hierarchy, the subject of each main sentence represents an 'Agent' role, while the object represents a 'Patient' role (see e.g. the discussion in section 4.2).

This first glance at Old Norse word order gives the impression of a typical SVO language (subject - verb - object).[2] This is also the impression of Bernstein (1898), responsible for one of the first major studies on Old Norse word order. Bernstein considers the order *subject - predicate* "**the normal order**" (1898:2):

> In accordance with the Germanic and Indo-European methods, the predominant mode of expressing the relation between agency and action, stripped of any modifiers, is in the simple affirmative clause: Subject + Predicate, which, for the sake of convenience, may be styled the "*Normal Order*".

For main sentences with other constituents than the subject in front, Bernstein formulates a rule which he calls the "**Old Norse law of inversion**" (1898:21):

> If at the beginning of the sentence there is a word or words, a phrase or phrases, a clause or clauses adverbial or objective in character, the predicate, of which these elements are locally and logically a part, follows immediately and in turn is followed by the subject.

[2] When discussing typology, the term *object* usually includes complements of the verb, verb particles, predicative phrases, adverbs modifying verbs (cf., e.g. Sigurðsson 1988a:10).

A rule, or 'law', like that is, of course, rather 'out of date' now.[3] Old Norse is, like all of the descendants of Old Scandinavian (Modern Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Swedish and Danish), what we would call a **V2 language** (see e.g. Holmberg & Platzack 1995), which means that the finite verb usually appears in second position in main clauses. The position preceding the finite verb consists of at most one constituent (Faarlund 1994:64). As I will discuss later, in a few cases 'parts of constituents' may also occur in the topic position of an Old Norse main clause;[4] this is a phenomenon of the so-called *discontinuous phrases*. The topic position can even be empty in main clauses, which in many cases is a consequence of the lack of an *expletive* or *dummy subject* in Old Norse. I will return to this phenomenon later, too.

In a way, one may say that the orders **S**VO and **S**OV, with the *subject* in the topic position, are first of all word orders determined by *information structure* since the first position is not primarily a subject position. Thus, the reason why the subject very often 'ends up' in the topic position is first of all *pragmatic*, not primarily *syntactic*.[5] However, in V1 sentences with a finite and a non-finite (main) verb, i.e. with an empty topic position, or when an adverbial phrase occupies the topic position, the subject would still be preceding the verb and the object(s) in both word order types. Therefore, the base position of the (main) verb and the object(s) is, in many ways, more important when discussing word order typology. For that reason, it is also common to speak of VO versus OV order. In my discussion, I will use SVO and SOV synonymously for VO and OV order respectively.

Marius Nygaard, in his frequently quoted *Norrøn Syntax* (1905), also considers the word order *subject - verb - object* the regular order, "naar ikke særlige hensyn gjør sig gjældende"

[3] However, when used in a functional framework: Faarlund (1985a:375f.). See also an earlier work (Sugioka & Faarlund 1980), where Scandinavian (and German) is treated as a verb initial language with a pragmatic determined obligatory topicalization rule.

[4] The term *topic position* is reserved for the *first position* in the sentence, that is, the position before the finite verb ([Spec, CP] in a GB model). Thus, it is syntactically defined. The use of the term *topic position* includes no statements about information structure, while the term *topic* alone may be used for a part of a sentence which carries 'given' information (cf. 'theme'); usually, or quite often, this information occurs in the *topic position* (see the chapter on information structure).

[5] I consider the syntactic topicalization rule an option determined by pragmatic demands. Syntactic demands only require the movement of one constituent into the topic position (in main sentences), the kind of constituent is (syntactically) more or less optional.

(1905:344), 'when no other considerations take effect'.

It is not very surprising that the placement of the subject in the topic position fits with the first of Greenberg's (1966:110) universals:

> 1. In declarative sentences with nominal subject and object, the dominant order is almost always one in which the subject precedes the object.

This has to do with the ordering of 'old' and 'new' information, where the subject of a sentence normally represents 'old' information and the object some kind of 'newer' information (Faarlund 1985a).[6]

It should be beyond any doubt that Old Norse is typologically a V2 language, cf. Rögnvaldsson (1995:5, note 2):

> Old Icelandic is a Verb-Second language just as Modern Icelandic; in a corpus which includes a great majority of the most important Old Icelandic texts [...], I have only found one sentence where the finite verb is in third position.

[6] However, see Tomlin & Rhodes (1992) for comments on a language with the *opposite* ordering of information: "In Ojibwa, thematic information comes later in a sentence or clause than non-thematic information" (Tomlin & Rhodes 1992:117). The unmarked word order for Ojibwa is considered VOS, that is, seemingly an inverted SOV order with an inverted information structure. See also Keenan (1978).

On the other hand, verb-second and the subject in the topic position in 'normal' word order, is not necessarily the same as SVO word order. Modern German, for instance, is a V2 language with the subject in the topic position as the most frequent word order (see e.g. Engel 1972), but it is also an SOV language (cf. Holmberg & Platzack 1995:45, fn. 3; Faarlund 1990a:61).[7]

All the modern Scandinavian languages, both of the insular and the mainland type (according to Haugen 1976:23, Faarlund 1990a:13, and Holmberg & Platzack's 1995:5 classification), are SVO languages (Holmberg & Platzack 1995:73).[8] This indicates that there must have been a great majority of sentences of this type at an older stage of these languages ('frequency', cf. Croft 1990:206; Greenberg 1966).[9] On the other hand, Braunmüller (1982:139) (quoted by Faarlund 1990a:20) claims that Ancient Nordic, the language stage before Old Norse, exhibits a basic word order SVO in 2/3 of all the inscriptions, while as much as one third of the inscriptions belong to the basic word order SOV - in Braunmüller's terminology, basic word order obviously means surface word order.[10]

Making statements about a basic word order in Ancient Nordic on the basis of, after all, relatively few inscriptions (at least compared to the rather large Old Norse corpus), may be difficult.[11] However, if we take the inscriptions as indicators of word order *frequency* and assume

[7] Holmberg & Platzack (1995:63), with regard to English and French, also show that SVO is not the same as V2.

[8] However, see Faarlund (1985a:389) who claims that "the Nordic languages have developed from SOV to SVO to VSO". See also Sugioka & Faarlund (1980:313). As we can see, different opinions on this question often depend on the theoretical presuppositions one adopts and how one defines 'basic word order' (cf. Payne 1992b:138). But note also Croft (1990:210): "SV order appears to be so dominant in the world's languages that V-initial order is rare and often alternates with SVO".

[9] See Faarlund (1983:154ff.; 1985a:366ff.; 1990a) for comments on word order change. See Whaley (1997:100ff.) for a discussion on frequency as a method for determining the basic word order of a given language. See Hróarsdóttir (1996a) for a different explanation of the word order change observed in Nordic.

[10] See, however, also Trask (1996:149) who makes the opposite claim:

> ... Northwest Germanic was still primarily an OV language. But it was not completely harmonic: it had prepositions rather than postpositions, adjectives generally followed their nouns, and genitives could either precede or follow their nouns, depending upon the type of noun. Moreover, a small proportion of sentences (less than 20 per cent) show SVO order. The impression we have is that of a formerly SOV language which is changing towards SVO order.

Note also that, according to Indriðason (1987) and Rögnvaldsson (1996a), 30-60% of all Old Norse clauses with one or more non-finite verbs show signs of OV order. Compare also to the findings of Hróarsdóttir (1995, 1996a).

[11] See Faarlund (1990a:20f.) for comments.

that there might have been an overweight of SVO (surface) word order in Ancient Nordic, while there was still (or maybe rather: while there was also) a considerable amount of SOV sentences, we may ask if this would be enough to develop a (relatively) 'clean' SVO word order in Old Norse (given the assumption that word order frequency may cause basic word order change).

Even if we like to pretend that there is something like an Old Norse language, we must be aware of the fact that an Old Norse corpus, as represented by the Icelandic sagas, may reflect, at least theoretically, the language stage(s) of several hundred years (cf. the discussion in 1.3). Many sagas have been copied several times over many centuries. The original saga text often got lost and new copies were made after another copy, or even different copies/fragments. As mentioned before, the sagas in the present day layout on the CD-ROM have been reconstructed, and the spelling has been adjusted, so that they all look (more or less) like Modern Icelandic texts. Adjustment of spelling has a long tradition in text copying (cf. also Rögnvaldsson 1996a:59). We can find the spelling of a more modern stage of Old Norse (mostly Old Icelandic) in almost every one of the transcriptions, but usually the copyists seemed not to have touched the word order.[12] A reason for this could be that there might have been one person who was reading the text while others were writing it down (e.g. when one had to make more than one copy of a text).

SOV is assumed to have been the predominant and unmarked word order in most of the oldest attested Indo-European languages (Faarlund 1983:155; 1990a:22), as well as in the Proto-Germanic languages (Lehmann 1972; Hopper 1975).[13] Ancient Nordic seems to have been in a position (at least the beginning) of a change from SOV to SVO (Faarlund 1983; 1990a),[14] while Modern Scandinavian, as mentioned, is clearly SVO. From this point of view, it would be most surprising if the Old Norse corpus exhibited only sentences with SVO surface word order. And in fact it does not.

[12] See, however, Sigurðsson (1985) for an illustration of changes made by editors of Old Norse (Old Icelandic) texts.

[13] See, however, the discussion in Sigurðsson (1988a:15ff.), e.g. (p. 17): "Thus, if we take it that [Sigurðsson's example] (24) is representative for Proto-Scandinavian up to, say, 500 A.D:, then Proto-Scandinavian was unique among old Germanic dialects in having SOV in main clauses"; (p. 18): "claiming that Proto-Germanic was 'SOV' takes more than just to say it. 'How much SOV' was it?"

[14] Cf. also Sigurðsson (1988a:1): "Old Icelandic probably exemplified a language that had recently undergone OV > VO".

2.4 Old Norse Word Order Variety

Rögnvaldsson (1996a) shows examples of VSO, SVO and SOV in Old Norse (see also Kossuth 1978a). We can disregard the VSO order at this point because there are no reasons to believe that Old Norse ever had VSO as its basic structure (Rögnvaldsson 1996a:57; see also Sigurðsson 1983).

About the following sentences (Rögnvaldsson 1996a:56):

(2) a. *Lytingur af Sámsstöðum* [$_{IP}$ *mun* [$_{VP}$ *hafa vegið hann*
Lyting of Samsstadir will have killed him

og bræður hans]].
and brothers his
'Lyting from Samsstadir will have killed him and his brothers'

b. *En ekki* [$_{IP}$ *mun eg* [$_{VP}$ *þenna mann séð hafa*]].
But not will I this man seen have
'But I believe I have not seen this man.'

c. *Þorgilsi* [$_{IP}$ *hafði* [$_{VP}$ *gefin verið öxi góð*]].
Thorgils (D) had given been axe good
'Thorgils had been given a good axe.'

d. *Ekki* [$_{IP}$ *vildi eg* [$_{VP}$ *þér mein hafa gert*] ...].
not would I you harm have done
'I wouldn´t want to do you any harm.'

Rögnvaldsson (ibid.) says that only the (a)-sentence, "with the word order *finite verb - auxiliary/modal verb - main verb - object*, could just as well be from Modern Icelandic; this is the only possible order of these elements in Modern Icelandic". Rögnvaldsson refers to this word order as **'pure' VO order**.

Sentences of the (b)-type, with the word *order finite verb - object - main verb - auxiliary/modal verb* are referred to as **'pure' OV order**.

The (c)- and (d)-type sentences are said to represent different types of **'mixed' word orders**. The (c)-type has the word order *finite verb - main verb - auxiliary verb - object*. Thus, the order of the two non-finite verbs is in accordance with an OV pattern, but the object is in a final position as in a VO language. The (d)-type, in contrast, has the word order *finite verb - object - auxiliary verb - main verb*, that is, the order of the non-finite verbs is consistent with a VO base, while the object precedes the non-finite verbs as in an OV language. Rögnvaldsson points out that

the types (a) - (c) are all very common, whereas the (d)-type is rare.

One may add that the type (b), with the order [*object - past participle*] - *infinitive*, seems to be most frequent with the modal verb *munu*; thus it is not "very common" in other constructions (see the discussion in chapter 4 and also 5.4). In this particular sentence, the past participle and the object seem to appear as one constituent, whereas this 'unit' never appears in the topic position. In the topic position, we find only the past participle alone.[15] I will return to this phenomenon later (section 4.7). The (b)-type looks obviously like a 'pure' OV type in the same way as, for instance, German:

(3) a. *Ich habe den Mann gesehen.*
I have [the man]$_{OBJ}$ seen$_{V}$
'I have seen the man.'

b. ... *daß ich den Manngesehen habe.*
... that I [the man]$_{OBJ}$ seen$_{V}$ have
'... that I have seen the man.'

c. *Ich mag den Mann gesehen haben.*
I may [the man]$_{OBJ}$ seen$_{V}$ have
'I may have seen the man.'

An Old Norse example of this type without a modal verb would be:

(4) ... *því að hann hafði það skip séð fyrr* ... (Egla 399)
... because that he had [that ship]$_{OBJ}$ seen$_{V}$ before
'... because he had seen that ship before ...'

[15] This is taken as an argument against a VP-constituent in Faarlund (1990a:86ff.; see also 1991). Note, however, that Modern Icelandic, unlike all the modern Mainland Scandinavian languages, does not have VP-fronting either (cf. Holmberg 1997:113, fn.39; Rögnvaldsson 1995:14. See, however, Zaenen 1985; and Holmberg & Platzack 1988:32).

Rögnvaldsson's (c)-type also requires a comment. The (c)-sentence is a passive construction. What is called an *object* in Rögnvaldsson's paper, is in fact a *nominative* phrase: *öxi góð*; this phrase agrees in case and number with the past participle *gefin*. Some linguists, for instance, Faarlund (1980, 1985a, 1985b, 1987a, 1988a, 1988b, 1990a, 1994) and Mørck (1992 1994, 1995) would consider a nominative NP of this kind the *subject*, no matter if it appears before or after the main verb (cf. the 'traditional' view mentioned in the discussion in 1.1). Rögnvaldsson's view presupposes *oblique* or *quirky subjects* and *nominative objects* of the Modern Icelandic type in Old Norse (cf. the 'modern' view; see e.g. Rögnvaldsson 1991, 1996b,c; Zaenen, Maling & Þráinsson 1990). I will return to the subject-object question and the analysis of passive when presenting a generative approach to Old Norse in chapter 4, especially in 4.3.3.1.[16]

For convenience, I have summed up the possible word orders, as distinguished by Rögnvaldsson, in the table below:

finite verb	auxiliary/modal verb	main verb	object	'pure' VO
finite verb	object	main verb	auxiliary/modal verb	'pure' OV
finite verb	main verb	auxiliary	object	'mixed' (OV + VO)
finite verb	object(s)	auxiliary	main verb	'mixed' (VO + OV)

Table 1: *Word order varieties in Old Norse*

To make the situation of the mixed word order types even more confusing, one may add some examples of sentences containing two objects, IO and DO,[17] where one or both of the objects may appear either before or after the main verb (see also Rögnvaldsson 1996a:61ff.):[18]

[16] The existence of transformational passive in Old Norse has been questioned by Dyvik (1980) - see also Kristoffersen (1994). Arguments against Dyvik are to be found in Benediktsson (1980). See also the discussions in Faarlund (1988b), Rögnvaldsson (1995:15f.) and Haugan (1998c).

[17] IO and DO meaning *Indirect* and *Direct* Object, referring to an object in the *dative* case and an object in the *accusative* case, respectively. The use of terms like Indirect and Direct Object in Old Norse may be questioned, but I will use these terms in accordance with common linguistic tradition (see chapter 4 for a discussion).

[18] Rögnvaldsson (1996a:63, fn. 7) chose to omit the patterns "where two objects are adjacent, but their order is reversed, such that the direct object precedes the indirect object. This is sometimes possible in Modern Icelandic (see Rögnvaldsson 1990[a]), and the situation appears to be similar in Old Icelandic".

(5) a. V- IO - DO:
... *þá* *skal* *eg* *sjálfur* *veita* *þeim* *lið* (Njála 269)
... then shall I myself $give_V$ $them_{IO}$ $help_{DO}$
'... then I shall help them myself'

b. V- DO - IO:
... *að* *eg* *skal* *hvergi* *í* *móti* *þér* *vera* *og*
... that I shall neither in opposition you be and

eigi *veita* *lið* *óvinum* *þínum* (Njála 266)
not $give_V$ $help_{DO}$ [enemies your]$_{IO}$
'that I shall neither be against you nor help your enemies'

c. IO - V - DO:
Gengur *Ásbjörn* *mót* *þeim* *og* *...* *og* *lætur*
goes Asbjorn towards them and ... and let

þeim *veita* *hjálpir* (Finnb 632)
$them_{IO}$ $give_V$ $help_{DO}$
'Asbjorn goes in their direction and ... and ordered to help them'

d. DO - V - IO:
Þá *mátt* *þú* *nú* *mikið lið* *veita* *Njáli* (Njála 275)
then may you now [much help]$_{DO}$ $give_V$ $Njal_{IO}$
'Then you may give Njal a lot of help now'

e. IO - DO - V:
Svo *þykir* *mér* *sem* *Þorsteinn* *vilji* *þér* *lið*
so seems me that Thorstein will you_{IO} $help_{DO}$

veita (Ölkof 2074)
$give_V$
'It seems to me that Thorstein will help you'

f. DO - IO - V:
Viltu *nokkurt* *liðsinni* *okkur* *veita?* (Hrafn 1404)[19]
will-you [some help]$_{DO}$ us_{IO} $give_V$
'Will you give us some help?'

These sentences demonstrate that all possible orders regarding the two objects can be found in Old Norse. In fact, when searching for word order variety in Old Norse, almost any order of elements behind the finite verb shows up. Rögnvaldsson (1996a:64) has listed up examples of each kind and made a list of existing and non-existing word order patterns. For convenience, I will repeat the list here, but skip the examples:

[19] A construction like this is lacking in Rögnvaldsson's (1996a:64) list (8), cf. (7) below.

(6) *Sentences with one non-finite verb and one object*[20]

a. (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{DO}
b. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - V_{main}

(7) *Sentences with one non-finite verb and two objects*

a. (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO}
b. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - V_{main} - NP_{DO}
c. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - NP_{IO}
d. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO} - V_{main}

(8) *Sentences with two non-finite verbs and one object*

a. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main} - NP_{DO}
b. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO} - V_{main}
c. (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO}
d. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main}
e. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$
f. * (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$

(9) *Sentences with two non-finite verbs and two objects*

a. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO}
b. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO} - V_{main} - NP_{DO}
c. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO} - V_{main}
d. (XP) - V_{fin} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - NP_{IO}
e. (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO}
f. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main} - NP_{DO}
g. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO} - V_{main}
h. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO}
i. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main}
j. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$
k. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - V_{main} - NP_{IO}
l. (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO} - V_{main}

[20] (XP) = initial phrase (optional); V_{fin} = finite verb; $V_{aux/mod}$ = auxiliary or modal (non-finite) verb; V_{main} = main (non-finite) verb; NP_{DO} = direct object; NP_{IO} = indirect object. The starred patterns are those that Rögnvaldsson has found no examples of. The possibility that the corpus contains isolated examples of (some of) the starred patterns can not be excluded, but according to Rögnvaldsson such examples would be extremely rare.

m. * (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO}
n. * (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{IO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{DO}
o. * (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{IO} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$
p. * (XP) - V_{fin} - V_{main} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$ - NP_{IO}
q. * (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{IO} - V_{main} - NP_{DO} - $V_{aux/mod}$
r. * (XP) - V_{fin} - NP_{DO} - V_{main} - NP_{IO} - $V_{aux/mod}$

According to Rögnvalddson only the (a)-patterns would be grammatical in Modern Icelandic.[21] Rögnvaldsson (1996a:65) also points out that the patterns that do exist are not all equally common. And, of course, why would Bernstein (1898), Nygaard (1905) and others consider Old Norse an SVO language, when the situation is as unclear as indicated by these discovered word order patterns?

2.5 Word Order Change from SOV to SVO

Consider Croft (1990:203):

> Languages do not occur in static or stable states. All languages exhibit some degree of grammatical variation, and they change over time - in fact, much synchronic variation represents language change in progress.

Now, imagine the situation in a language community drifting away from SOV in the direction of SVO. Consistent with the ***principle of diachronic change*** (Faarlund 1985a:367; see also Faarlund 1983:153, 1988a:24ff., and 1990a:47ff.: "principle of synchronic coexistence") which says:

> A change from F_p to F_q cannot take place unless F_p and F_q can coexist as alternatives in a language.

[21] Hróarsdóttir (1996a) offers an interesting explanation for some of the ungrammatical (or unattested) Old Norse examples. I will discuss this in chapter 4.

one would expect to find at least "remnants" of SOV word order (Faarlund 1990a), although the number should be decreasing in later texts.[22] A more explicit formulation of the principle of diachronic change is (Faarlund 1985a:367):

> If in a speech community whose language can be described at at least two distinct historical stages, L_l and L_n, a grammatical form F_p can be found in L_l and another grammatical form F_q in L_n, and if F_p and F_q are equivalent and no other equivalent form exists between them, then F_p and F_q must coexist at some stage L_m that lies between L_l and L_n or that overlaps one or both of them.

Having this in mind, it does not seem very surprising that Rögnvaldsson (1996a:65) notes that both patterns in (6) are frequent. The patterns in (6) are, after all, pretty simple constructions. Both patterns must have been common in Proto-Germanic and Ancient Nordic if those languages were SOV, and if there ever was an "old rule moving focus elements to the right" (Faarlund 1985a:374, 372f.; 1983:158f.; 1990a:55ff.).[23] When both constructions are frequent in Old Norse, and when they, in addition, are generated by the same speaker, then it is obvious that both constructions, at this stage, still seem to carry out somehow different pragmatic functions, cf. Faarlund (1985a:367):[24]

[22] One would, of course, have to define what one wants to call 'remnants of SOV'.

[23] Cf. also Croft (1990:62): "SVO was also a very common alternative order to both VSO (note Universal 6) and SOV (this is the nonrigid type)". See Harris (1992) and Harris & Campbell (1995:218ff.) for a critique of Faarlund's 'focus rule'.

[24] See chapter 5 for a discussion on pragmatic demands and information structure.

> Whenever two forms with the same meaning coexist, the speaker's choice of one over the other is pragmatically determined.

Faarlund (1985a:159; also 1990a:58) makes a fine picture of the process of word order change from SOV to SVO:

> As it becomes common to move a focused element to the end of the sentence, the language develops two possible utterance forms, SOV and SVO, related by a transformation that is sensitive to pragmatic factors telling the speaker whether or not to focus the object. Because the object (which in this context means any constituent other than the subject) is the most frequently focused sentence element, the SVO order will soon be conceived of as the unmarked form, and subsequently through restructuring it also becomes the underlying form. This is the end of SOV order.

If Old Norse has reached a situation of underlying SVO, a transformation is needed to get an SOV utterance. Faarlund (1985a:159) points out that

> if there is no good pragmatic reason, e.g., if the SOV order is not required by some principle of information structure, theme-rheme order or the like, then such a transformation will disappear from the grammar, and the SOV order will disappear from the language.

As we know, the SOV order has disappeared in all the Modern Scandinavian languages (with some stylistically restricted exceptions). So, when both constructions, SOV and SVO, coexist for some time, and when the default focus position is behind the verb, then there may be two possibilities for how to use a - at this stage still available - position before the verb: either we can move an element out of the focus position to make it less focused, or, however more unlikely, we can use the position to give an element a marked focus status. This I will try to examine further when looking at the information structure of Old Norse in chapter 5.

Let us return to the list of word order varieties, (6)-(9), in Old Norse. In a language community with a somehow not completely established SVO basic word order, one would, as mentioned, not be very surprised to find both SOV and SVO in simple constructions with only one non-finite verb and one object as in (6).

When Rögnvaldsson (1996a:65) notes that the patterns in (7b), (7c) and (7d) are rare, one

may imagine that a speaker with a perhaps not very 'safe' SVO basic word order might be able to *produce* these word order patterns, but this also suggests that this speaker might have more serious problems with *analyzing* such patterns within the 'new' SVO grammar. The (7d)-pattern, as the 'clean' SOV pattern it represents, would have been easier to generate and analyze.

When looking at the sentences in (8), we discover the same tendency. Rögnvaldsson finds that (8a), (8c) and (8e) are frequent. And, of course, these orders are much 'easier' to analyze: (8a) is 'clean' SVO, (8c) is a kind of SOV order with a focused object we could have found in Ancient Nordic; and (8e) is 'clean' SOV.[25]

The patterns in (9) are rare altogether, because sentences with two non-finite verbs and two objects are on the whole comparatively few (Rögnvaldsson 1996a:65). Here, (9a) is most common, and (9h) and (9j) also seem to be relatively common. The other existing patterns are very rare. And again (9a) is 'clean' SVO, (9h) is SOV with a 'focused' direct object, and (9j) is 'clean' SOV. Rögnvaldsson claims that the (9i)-pattern is also relatively common. But according to the regularities I have discussed here, this would seem more unlikely.

Disregarding the frequency, and only looking at the total amount of different word order patterns presented above, one may be tempted to claim, as does Faarlund (1990a:110), that Old Norse is a free-word-order language where "all syntactic evidence seems to indicate that Old Norse is a nonconfigurational language in the sense of Chomsky (1981) and Hale (1983)" (see also the conclusion in Kristoffersen 1996:61ff.). Faarlund (1990a:110) posits a schema which is meant to cover the great variety of Old Norse word order patterns:

(10) $S \rightarrow (XP) \quad V_{[+T]} \quad XP^*$

XP also includes non-finite verbs. This rule schema says that:

> the finite verb is preceded by at most one element of any category and is followed by any number of elements (including null) of any category. As in Warlpiri, discontinuous phrases occur when elements of the same category and of the same

[25] I would emphasize that this is a discussion on an imaginary situation, i.e. 'focused' is here used in accordance with Faarlund's description of language change. Since I will claim that Old Norse has a basic SVO order, I do not (in most cases) consider an object to the right as being focused.

case are inserted in different slots (Faarlund 1990a:110).

A similar suggestion, however, only in a footnote, was made by Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975:115, fn.), when discussing Old Norse word order within the "sætningsskema" ('sentence schema') introduced by Diderichsen (1946).[26] This schema divides a (Modern) Scandinavian sentence into three parts or 'fields': *Front*, *Middle* and *Final.*[27] The middle and the final field are introduced by the finite and the non-finite verb respectively. The Modern Norwegian version of this schema for main sentences, e.g. used in Lie (1976), looks like:

Forfelt 'Front field'	**Midtfelt** 'Middle field'			**Sluttfelt** 'Final field'		
	v(erb)	**n**(ominal)	**a**(dverb)	**V**(erb)	**N**(ominal)	**A**(dverb)

Table 2: *Sentence schema for Modern Norwegian* (Lie 1976)

To make Old Norse word order fit into this schema, Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975:115) choose "en variant av skjemaet som ikke angir rekkefølge og antall av nominale og adverbiale ledd i midtfelt og sluttfelt", that means, 'a variant of the schema which does not define the order of nominal and adverbial constituents in the middle and the final field':

Forfelt 'Front field'	**Midtfelt** 'Middle field'		**Sluttfelt** 'Final field'	
	v(erb)	Andre setningsledd 'other constituents'	**V**(erb)	Andre setningsledd 'other constituents'

Table 3: *Sentence schema for Old Norse* - 1 (Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975:115)

In a footnote, then, Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975:115, fn. 3) claim that it would be more correct to use a schema which does not distinguish between a middle and a final field, and they propose the following schema:

Forfelt 'Front field'	**Sluttfelt** 'Final field'	
	v(erb)	Andre ledd 'other constituents'

Table 4: *Sentence schema for Old Norse* - 2 (cf. Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975:115)

[26] As mentioned in 1.1, the *sætningsskema* was originally developed for Old Danish (Diderichsen 1941).

[27] Other English translations for these fields are, e.g.: *Fundament - Nexus Field - Content Field* (Faarlund 1989) and *Initial - Middle - End* (Faarlund 1995b, 1995c).

This schema is in fact the same as Faarlund's "rule schema for Old Norse sentences" (1990a:110): S → (XP) $V_{[+T]}$ XP*. In a table, this schema would look just the same:

Front	**Final**	
	verb	***other constituents***
(XP)	$V_{[+T]}$	XP*

Table 5: *Sentence schema for Old Norse* - 3 (cf. Faarlund 1990a:110)

Torp (1982:90) also considers it difficult to distinguish between middle and final field. Nevertheless, a schema like this does not state anything more about Old Norse word order than the fact that Old Norse is a V2 language, and for this kind of statement one does not need a sentence schema.[28] For the same reason, I will not discuss the different sentence schemata proposed in Christoffersen (1993a).

Even though Faarlund (1990a:100) considers Old Norse a free-word-order (non-configurational) language, where "rules cannot be given for the relative position of sentence elements", he finds that "on the basis of the voluminous extant material in the language, it is possible to establish a preferred or stylistically unmarked order of elements":[29]

> First of all, the sentence can be divided into two parts, the first part being what precedes the finite verb, and the second part the rest of the sentence. The first part, the topic part, consists of at most one constituent, and it can also be empty. The second part may again be divided in two, the first consisting of the finite verb, an NP which carries given information, usually in the nominative, any other unstressed personal pronouns, and any sentence adverbial; the last part of the sentence contains the nonfinite verb unless it is topicalized, nontopicalized NPs and adverbials. The position of the nonfinite verb is typically first in the final part of the sentence. (Faarlund 1990a:100)[30]

[28] See Dyvik's (1977:136ff.) opinion on Old Norse word order and the use of a sentence schema. For a history and developments of the sentence schema, see Heltoft & Andersen (1986).

[29] Cf. also: "Even Old Norse has of course what may be called a typical order, which is statistically predominant and stylistically unmarked" (Faarlund 1980:67). See also Christoffersen (1994:79): "I claim that the relative order of nominal constituents in the law of Magnus Lagabøter [an Old Norse law text] is fairly rigid".

[30] See also Faarlund (1994:65, 1995b:7, and 1995c:4), the latter with reference to Fourquet (1938) and Diderichsen (1941).

This unmarked word order in Old Norse is schematized in the spirit of Diderichsen (1946):[31]

FRONT	MIDDLE	FINAL
Topic	$V_{[+T]}$ $NP_{[N]}$ PRO SAdv	$V_{[-T]}$ NP* Adv*

Table 6: *The unmarked word order in Old Norse* (Faarlund 1990a:100)

[31] The asterisk means that a category may be represented more than once.

If allowing $NP_{[N]}$ and PRO to occur in the same field, this sentence schema would correspond to the common version of Diderichsen's model with the order: *Topic - v n a - V N A*, and we would end up with an almost 'clean' SVO word order like in Modern Scandinavian.[32] And even if there are some data which can be analyzed as evidence for non-configurationality, they can also be analyzed as some kind of 'speaker's confusion', in a wide sense, in connection with language change, or the 'coexistence of two different grammars' (see the discussion below). In chapter 4, however, I will argue that there is only one SVO grammar, and that this grammar allows movement of phrases into the middle field.

At this point, we have not quite answered the question about a/the basic word order in Old Norse to our satisfaction. However, the most attractive impression so far seems to be that Old Norse is underlyingly (S)VO, with "remnants" of (S)OV (cf. Faarlund 1985a:373; see also 1983:157). But how does this agree with the great variety of word orders? And not least, how does this agree with Faarlund's claim that Old Norse is a non-configurational language?

2.6 Is Old Norse a Configurational Language?

I will not discuss at great length whether Old Norse is configurational or not. The question of configurationality has been discussed in Faarlund (1990a, also 1988b, 1991, 1995a, 1995b) with some plausible arguments for non-configurationality. However, some of Faarlund's arguments have been questioned by e.g. Platzack (1991a) and Stockwell & King (1993); see also Christensen (1994). In addition, Rögnvaldsson (1995) has discussed the problem thoroughly and argued for configurationality in Old Norse. Kristoffersen (1996:61ff.), on the other hand, still does not seem to be convinced by Rögnvaldsson's arguments.

Furthermore, Stowell (1982) has even suggested that non-configurational languages do not, in fact, exist. According to Stockwell & King (1993:63), developments in X-bar theory (Farmer 1980), the projection of arguments into structural positions (Stowell 1983, 1989; Koopman & Sportiche 1990), and the assumption that sentences are projected from the lexicon are not

[32] Cf. Faarlund (1990a:52): "In Old Norse, the order VO is the only one in main sentences [...] and also the predominant one in subordinate clauses".

compatible with the notion of non-configurationality.[33] Concerning the discussion on configurationality versus non-configurationality, I would also like to quote Speas (1990:128):

> I will be assuming throughout that, as Hale (1985) has emphasized, "the phenomenon of free word order ... is *not* criterial for nonconfigurationality, and it never has been" (p. 2). The association of the phenomenon of free word order with nonconfigurationality is something of an historical accident, and so I will simply adopt the view expressed in the previous chapter that hierarchical relations in phrase structure are independent of linear precedence relations, and that linear precedence is irrelevant to questions of configurationality.

In this work, I will treat Old Norse as a configurational language in accordance with e.g. Holmberg & Platzack (1995).[34] Possible problems with that analysis will be discussed during the investigation of Old Norse in a generative framework in chapter 4.

But before leaving this topic, I will make a short digression to *Warlpiri*, a Central Australian language. Warlpiri happens to be mentioned by Faarlund when claiming that Old Norse is non-configurational (Faarlund 1990a:110; and 85f.). As discussed above, Faarlund (1990a:100) is able to put forward a proposal for the unmarked word order in Old Norse, even though he considers Old Norse a free-word-order language.[35] According to Hale (1992:64, also 1983, 1994), Warlpiri is a free-word-order language, but of "the type for which it makes little sense to speak of any particular basic order".[36] In Warlpiri, the subject, object, and verb of a transitive sentence may appear in any relative order in relation to another, as in the examples from 64):[37]

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[33] Moreover, non-configurationality is not compatible with the minimalist view, e.g. Kayne (1994).

[34] Even though Old Norse is not the main concern of Holmberg & Platzack (1995), Old Norse is treated like the other Insular Scandinavian languages, Modern Icelandic and Faroese. See chapter 4.

[35] This is, of course, no contradiction, cf. e.g. Mithun (1992).

[36] See, however, the discussion in Speas (1990:159ff.) based on Jelinek (1984) and Laughren (1986).

[37] Examples like these are possible in Modern Greek, too; cf. Philippaki-Warburton (1985:113). Also Selayarese, an Austronesian language of the Makassar group (Grimes & Grimes 1987), from Selayar Island, South Sulawesi Indonesia, exhibits all possible permutations of verb, subject, and object in its surface word order. Still, Finer (1994) claims that it is possible to discern the basic clausal structure of the language, which is VOS, "with a hierarchical asymmetry obtaining between subject and object, i.e. the language is 'configurational'; the verb and object form a constituent which is separate from the subject" (Finer 1994:153). A sample from Selayarese is:

(11) a. *Karnta-ngku ka yarla karla-mi.*
woman-$_{ERG}$ $_{PRES}$ yam dig-$_{NONPAST}$
'The/a woman is digging yams.'

b. *Yarla ka karla-mi karnta-ngku.*
c. *Karla-mi ka karnta-ngku yarla.*
d. *Yarla ka karnta-ngku karla-mi.*
e. *Karla-mi ka yarla karnta-ngku.*
f. *Karnta-ngku ka karla-mi yarla.*

Of course, we do not have any native speaker of Old Norse to provide us with a sample like that. But we can try to look for the corresponding transitive verb in Old Norse: *grafa* ('dig', 'bury'). When disregarding the option of an empty topic position like

(12) ... *og lét hann grafa hann hjá tóft nokkurri* ... (Flóam 745)[38]
... and _ let he$_{SUBJ}$ bury$_{Vinf}$ him$_{OBJ}$ at site some
'and he let bury him at some site'

and passive sentences like e.g.:

(13) ... *þá var þar grafinn kirkjugarður* (Egla 517)
... then was there dug churchyard
'... then a churchyard was built there'

which is a presentational construction with the 'logical' subject to the right (see the discussion in chapter 4), I find only two different word order patterns in the corpus:[39]

(14) a. *Hann lét* ***grafa hann*** *hjá tóftum nokkurum* ... (FlóaV 766)
he$_{SUBJ(i)}$ let bury$_{Vinf}$ him$_{OBJ(j)}$ at site some
'he let bury him at some site'

b. *Bárður fer þegartil og lætur* ***skurðgrafa*** ... (Krók 1529)
Bard$_{SUBJ}$ goes immediately to and let ditch$_{OBJ}$ dig$_{Vinf}$
'Bard goes there immediately and has a ditch dug ...'

(i) a. *la-alle-i doe iñjo i Baso?* (VOS)
3-take-3 money the h Baso?
'Baso? took the money.'

b. *i Baso? la-alle-i doe iñjo.* (SVO)
c. *doe iñjo la-alle(-i) i Baso?* (OVS)
d. *i Baso? doe iñjo la-alle.* (SOV)
e. *doe iñjo i Baso? la-alle-i.* (OSV)
f. *la-alle-i i Baso? doe iñjo.* (VSO)
(Finer 1994:155)

[38] The personal pronoun *hann* ('he') has the same form in the nominative as in the accusative (see chapter 3).

[39] Remember that the corpus consists of about 50 sagas, i.e. a quite large amount of text pages.

This is in accordance with (6); we find either (S)VO (=14a) or (S)OV (=14b). On the other hand, to complete the picture of word order variety in Old Norse, there is, of course, the possibility of *Topicalization*. When we do not find other types of word orders in connection with *grafa*, this may be due to pragmatic reasons.[40] Relying on our competence as 'professional readers' (Faarlund 1983:152), we can postulate a set of possible word orders with *grafa* (using 'classical' Old Norse spelling):

(15) a. *Bárðr lét grafa skurð.* ≈ Warlpiri (11f.)
Bard let dig ditch
'Bard let a ditch be dug'

b. *Bárðr lét skurð grafa.* ≈ Warlpiri (11a.)
c. *Skurð lét Bárðr grafa.* ≈ Warlpiri (11d.)
d. *Grafa lét Barðr skurð.* ≈ Warlpiri (11c.)
e. */? *Grafa lét skurð Barðr.* ≈ Warlpiri (11e.)
f. */? *Skurð lét grafa Bárðr.* ≈ Warlpiri (11a.)

Note that the last two word order patterns would not be possible in Modern German either:[41]

(16) a. * *Graben läßt einen Graben*$_{OBJ}$ *Bard*.[42]
b. * *Einen Graben*$_{OBJ}$ *läßt graben Bard*.

Modern German, as an SOV language, does not allow (15a).[43] Old Norse, exhibiting some 'remnants of SOV' (if we want to use that expression), allows (15a) and (15b).[44] Neither Modern

[40] (15c) and (15d) must be considered pragmatically highly 'marked'. This would explain why we do not find these types in the Old Norse corpus.

[41] German has earlier been considered a non-configurational language, but this view has changed after the work of Webelhuth (1985), Fanselow (1985; 1987) and others.

[42] To make this example less confusing, one can replace the object *Graben* by *Loch* ('hole').

[43] German also allows:

(i) [*Einen Graben graben*] *läßt Bard.*

whereas this order, as mentioned, is not possible in Old Norse - or, at least, it is not instanced:

(ii) ?/*[*Grafa skurð*] *lét Barður.*

Cf. Faarlund (1990a:86ff.) and Rögnvaldsson (1995:13f.).

[44] In chapter 4, I will argue that the Old Norse SOV order is due to *Scrambling*. Since German is a Scrambling language too, the fact that (15a) is not possible in Modern German, may seem a little strange. However, in Modern German, an SOV language with the verb at the end, Scrambling concerns the order of elements preceding the verb, e.g.:

German nor Old Norse, however, seems to deserve the label ‘free word-order language’ when compared with a language like Warlpiri.[45]

As ‘free word-order languages’ one should only count “purely discourse-determined” clause constituent order and sometimes also free noun-phrase constituent order (Croft 1990:62; cf. also Hale 1983; Heath 1986; Mithun 1992; Payne 1987).[46] Even though there is some (overt) mixture of SVO and SOV in Old Norse (besides some other minor phenomena), in my opinion, not only claiming a stylistically unmarked (basic) word order, but also treating Old Norse as a configurational language, can be justified “on the basis of the voluminous extant material in the language” (Faarlund 1990a:100).

While discussing transitive verbs and SVO/SOV variation, we can take a look at a sentence

(i)	*Bard*	*ließ*	*auf*	*dem*	*Friedhof*	*ein*	*Grab*	*graben.*
	Bard	let	[on	the	graveyard]$_{\text{ADVBL}}$	[a	grave]$_{\text{OBJ}}$	dig
(ii)	*Bard*	*ließ*	*ein*	*Grab*	*auf*	*dem*	*Friedhof*	*graben.*
	Bard	let	[a	grave]$_{\text{OBJ}}$	[on	the	graveyard]$_{\text{ADVBL}}$	dig

[45] Consider, for instance, also Whaley (1997:98):

> For many reasons, then, it becomes clear why Warlpiri might be best classified as a flexible constituent order language, just as it is clear that English has fixed order. It is much more problematic to determine a classification for languages that fall somewhere between the two extremes. At what point between the extremes does one consider a language to carry a flexible constituent order?

[46] See, however, Fanselow (1990:114) who claims:

> In a sense, the term “free word (constituent) order language” is misleading since there are no languages in which word order is really arbitrary. [footnote:] This seems to hold even for languages with extensive means of reordering like Dyribal or Warlpiri, cf. Dixon (1972) for the former language and Nash [1986] and the references cited therein for the latter.

where both orders appear side by side. Note the verbs *grafa* ('bury') and *setja* ('set', 'put up'):

(17) *Þar skuluð þér* ***mig grafa*** *og* ***setja krossa*** *að höfði mér* ... (GrænS 1103)
There shall you me_{OBJ} $bury_{V}$ and set_{V} $crosses_{OBJ}$ at head mine
'You shall bury me there and place crosses at my head'

In the case where the object appears before the main verb *grafa*, the object is a pronoun *mig*. This sentence might be a mixture of SOV and SVO (overtly it is of course), but it can also indicate that the pronoun is cliticized (cf. e.g. Faarlund 1994:65). However, cliticization is not an attractive solution as long as there is another 'light' pronoun preceding the actual word. Note also that in (14a) it is the pronoun that follows the main verb, while in (14b) it is the full NP that appears before the main verb. Can such variation be due to a 'mixed word order' or is Old Norse really a non-configurational language?

There is, of course, the possibility that Ancient Nordic might have been a non-configurational language, although I am not aware of any such discussion.[47] But when claiming that Old Norse is non-configurational, one probably also has to claim that its predecessor, Ancient Nordic, must have been non-configurational. A change from configurationality to non-configurationality would be extremely unlikely, I would think.

Faarlund (1995b:14) talks about "a general shift towards a more hierarchical or configurational sentence structure" in Nordic as in other Germanic and Romance languages of Western Europe. On the other hand, the only fact that seems to be generally accepted is that there has been a general shift from (S)OV to (S)VO in Nordic, maybe due to some 'focus rule' (Faarlund 1983:158; 1985a:372).[48] At some stage during this shift, there must have been

[47] However, this might be an implication of Faarlund (1987b, 1990b, forthcoming).

[48] See Harris (1992) and Harris & Campbell (1995:218ff.) for a discussion on Faarlund's "focus rule". See also Sigurðsson (1988a:21):

> Lightfoot (1979, p. 393) suggests that rightward movements of complements play an essential role when languages undergo a change from SOV to SVO. Two cross-linguistically well known processes of this kind are Heavy NP-Shift and Extraposition of sentential complements. There is no reason to doubt that these and other similar processes may stimulate a change in basic word order. They are clearly important sources of VO patterns in OV languages. But it seems unlikely to me that they ever constitute the "primary stimulus" of SOV > SVO. First, these processes have a rather limited range (typically applying to indefinite or heavy constituents only). Second, they are in fact rather atypical of OV languages as compared to VO languages. German, for instance, allows Heavy NP-Shift or 'leaking' more reluctantly than Modern Icelandic. Also, many SOV languages have a strict Verb-Final Constraint, allowing no processes of this kind (cf., e.g., Kuno 1973, p. 3; Dik 1978, p. 181).

Sigurðsson (ibid.) suggests that reordering of Infl and VP or *Infl-Shift* "must be a vitally important step in the development from SOV to SVO". See Hróarsdóttir (1996a) for a different explanation of the change from SOV to SVO.

coexisting word order patterns, most likely capable of covering different pragmatic fields (Faarlund 1983:154; 1985a:372). The language could at a given point in time, then, be considered (S)VO with the possibility of generating (S)OV word order as an option. But then, after some time, the OV pattern lost its 'value' and vanished.[49] The crucial stage would be the stage of 'confusion' we may imagine. A speaker of a 'pure' SVO language, who is still exposed to both SVO and SOV, with small or no pragmatic difference between the two patterns, might have problems analyzing the older form (cf. also Rögnvaldsson 1996a:67). What may be a VP constituent VO, turns out to appear both as VO and OV. The V, then, might have been analyzed as having focus, according to the 'focus rule'.[50] A possible interpretation of this phenomenon would be a movement rule regarding *heads* of constituents. At this stage, before all the 'remnants of SOV' have vanished, we can imagine other head categories 'moving around' creating even more confusion and leading to other changes. This could be an imaginable explanation of the occurence of discontinuous phrases in Old Norse. Faarlund (1990a:94ff.) takes this phenomenon as another indication of non-configurationality. Some examples of discontinuous phrases, quoted from Faarlund (1990a:95f.), may be:[51]

(18) *Væta var á mikil um daginn*
wetness-N wason great-N in day
'There was much rain during the day'

(19) *Góðan eigum vér konung*
good-A own we king-A
'We have a good king'

[49] This is in accordance with e.g. Croft (1990:62):
> Languages with basic SVO order are the least likely to have any alternative word orders; i.e. they are the language type that is most likely to have rigid declarative clause word-order.

[50] This is only a discussion on a possible reason for language change and does not imply that I myself find it very likely that the verb might have been considered focused in all OV structures at some point in time.

[51] See also Faarlund (1991).

(20) *En* *á* *þykkir* *mér* *vera* *skuggi* *no,_kkurr* *manninum*
but on seems me-D be shadowsome the-man-D
'But there seems to be a shadow over the man'

Prepositions, as shown by Faarlund (1995b), have had different domains even in Old Norse. They could be both bound prefixes and ordinary prepositions. When other 'heads are rolling', one could imagine the possibility of moving even ordinary prepositions and causing new reanalysis, as for instance the analysis of a moved preposistion as a verbal particle, which is the subject of Faarlund's paper (1995b) (see also Rögnvaldsson 1996a:15f.).

Of course, the separation of prepositions from their objects may be "the most remarkable kind of discontinuity in Old Norse" (Faarlund 1990a:97, also 1991), but Faarlund himself (ibid.) points out that "it is, of course, normal for prepositions to precede their objects immediately". Considering the "numerous exceptions", we must take this "as indicative of important syntactic phenomena in this language", as Faarlund (1990a:97) says, but we do not necessarily need to proclaim non-configurationality for that reason.[52] Old Norse still looks pretty much like for instance Modern Icelandic, except for some more liberal movement rules and some 'remnants of SOV word order' (see Rögnvaldsson 1995; Sigurðsson 1988a). In chapter 4, I will try to explain both OV patterns (see especially 4.3.2.4) and instances of discontinuous phrases (4.7) by movement opposed to base generation.

Another "typical feature of non-configurational languages" may be "the possibility of zero arguments, which we find in Old Norse" (Faarlund 1995b:13, see also 1990a:102ff.). I will return to this phenomenon later (4.6). A reference to Sigurðsson (1993) who handled this topic within a configurational analysis of Old Norse may be sufficient at this point.

Thus, like Rögnvaldsson (in an earlier draft of 1996a (=1992:8)), I would like to conclude: "even though we accept a distinction between configurational and non-configurational languages, Old Icelandic [= Old Norse] could not be counted among the latter". Chapter 4 will serve as a demonstration of the claim that Old Norse can be analyzed by means of binary branching structures.

[52] In fact, regarding PPs, Rögnvaldsson (1995:9) has made a count using five of the most common Old Norse prepositions, where it turned out that "in more than 99% of the cases, the preposition was adjacent to its complement". Rögnvaldsson also points out that many examples of the so-called discontinuous phrases involve *quantifier floating* or *quantifier stranding*.

2.7 Is Old Norse a 'Pure' VO Language?

As discussed above, Old Norse looks pretty much like an (S)VO language, even though there are some phenomena that might disturb the picture a little. Sigurðsson (1988a:1) finds that

> Old Icelandic had an extremely free word order in the VP, showing protypical VO and OV patterns as well as various mixed types. This raises the question whether Old Icelandic had any basic order of verbs and their complements, and, if so, how the other exemplified patterns related to the basic order.

Sigurðsson (1988a:11) also states that

> Old Icelandic did not conform regularly to any of the "pure" patterns demonstrated above. Instead, it showed an interesting mixing of OV and VO within VP. More accurately, it manifested both pure VO and pure OV within the VP as well as a mixing or a scrambling of the two.

When Sigurðsson (1988a) and Rögnvaldsson (1996a) use the terms "pure VO" or "pure OV" they refer to *surface* structure. However, since different kinds of word order patterns can be found in Old Norse, it may not make much sense to use the term "pure". On the other hand, if there is a distinction between languages that are left-branching and languages that are right-branching at deep structure, the term "pure" may be used when referring to the underlying basic word order of a given language - if there is a single basic word order. On that background, I will claim that Old Norse is a 'pure' VO language at deep structure. This will also be further investigated in chapter 4 and 5.

> Sigurðsson (1988a:15) mentions the three "obvious possibilities":
> First, the language could have been underlyingly VO like Modern Icelandic. Second, it could have been OV. Third, it is at least pre-theoretically possible that it had no basic order of constituents within the VP.

Sigurðsson (1988a) discusses those three possibilities and argues that a change from SOV to SVO due to reanalysis had taken place already in the earliest Icelandic texts. Thus, Old Norse (Old Icelandic) is said to be uniformly VO in deep structure. The different surface structures are, then, due to extensive leftward movement of non-finite verb forms, objects and adverbial/prepositional phrases (cf. Sigurðsson 1988a; see also Hróarsdóttir 1996a). The reanalysis from (S)OV to (S)VO

may be illustrated like:[53]

Grammar A:	>	Grammar B:
Basic OV		Basic VO
+ VO by transformations		+ OV by transformations
(V-to-I and rightward movement of 'O', e.g. Heavy NP-Shift)		(leftward movement of 'O')

(Sigurðsson 1988a:23)

Grammar B replaces Grammar A. See also the examples in Rögnvaldsson (1996a:66):

(21) OV-base: *Eg mun* [$_{VP}$ *manninn séð hafa*]
(Grammar A) I will man-the seen have

b. Derived: *Eg mun* [$_{VP}$ t_i t_j *hafa* *séð*$_j$ *manninn*$_i$]

(22) VO-base: *Eg mun* [$_{VP}$ *hafa séð hana*]
(Grammar B) I will have seen her

b. Derived: *Eg mun* [$_{VP}$ *hana*$_i$ *séð*$_j$ *hafa* t_j t_i]

Thus, each grammar would be able to generate both structures by applying movement rules.

Rögnvaldsson (1996a:67, fn. 10) points out that some of the movements proposed by Sigurðsson (1988a) would not be allowed given standard conditions on movement nowadays, e.g. the analysis of the order *main verb - auxiliary/modal verb - object* (Sigurðsson 1988a:27). Sigurðsson's analysis violates Realitivized Minimality (the main verb is moved over the auxiliary) and conditions on adjunction (the main verb is adjoined to the higher VP).[54] Rögnvaldsson (1996a:76; see also 1994-1995) chooses, instead, the "third alternative". Rögnvaldsson (ibid.) finds that

> variable word order may be best accounted for by assuming synchronic variation in phrase structure, instead of postulating one single basic word order and letting extensive movement rules account for the variation.

Such an approach has also been proposed for Old English (cf. Kroch's 1989 *Double Base*

[53] Of course, if all languages are SVO (cf. Kayne 1994), then there has never been any reanalysis related to direction of the head parameter. On the other hand, there has obviously (in some cases) been a change in surface structure from Old Norse to Modern Scandinavian which has to be explained somehow.

[54] However, see the analysis in Hróarsdóttir (1996a).

Hypothesis; Pintzuk 1991) and Yiddish (Santorini 1989, 1992). One may imagine that reanalysis was not complete, and speakers might have been able to generate sentences from both grammars. Thus, we would have a case similar to a language like Hungarian, as proposed by Holmberg & Platzack (1995:59), where [Spec, VP] can appear either to the left or to the right of V'.[55] If we assume that I can appear either to the left or to the right of IP in Old Norse, or if V could govern both to the left and to the right, we would, of course, be able to generate both OV and VO. On the other hand, an analysis like this seems rather unlikely for typological reasons (see below). Sigurðsson (1988a:15) also rejects the possibility of bidirectional government in Old Norse, among other things because it is not compatible with the parametric approach to government directionality. Furthermore, Sigurðsson (ibid.) states:

> it raises the question why verbs should have been able to govern bidirectionally in Old Icelandic as opposed to Modern Icelandic; appart from precisely the subject matter under discussion, word order in the VP, Icelandic verbal morpho-syntax (e.g., verbal agreement) has remained amazingly stable from old to modern times.

According to Rögnvaldsson (1996a:67, see also Indriðason 1987, Hróarsdóttir 1995, 1996a), OV orders were still used in Icelandic in approximately 30-50% of the sentences as late as the second half of the eighteenth century. Thus, as Rögnvaldsson (1996a:67) notes, "it seems rather unlikely that several generations of speakers using Grammar B would have continued using OV-sentences productively after reanalysis had taken place".[56] Rögnvaldsson (1996a:76) would consider it a "tough choice" if he were forced to choose either OV or VO as a base for all Old Norse sentences. Instead he assumes that Old Norse has, in fact, a variable base, i.e. two basic word orders at the same time. The 'easiest' way out of a choice between one or the other grammar is probably to choose both. On the other hand, there are many arguments against such an analysis. For instance, how should we analyze an example like:

[55] Hungarian has also been considered to be a non-configurational language, but reconsidered by e.g., Marácz (1989) and Speas (1990).

[56] Rögnvaldsson (1996a:68, fn. 10) also points out that an OV basic order would give plausible 'explanations' for much of the rightward movement compared with Modern Icelandic, while all the leftward movement after reanalysis could not be explained just as easily.

(23) *... og muntu henni gefa moturinn að bekkjargjöf* (Laxd 1602)
... and may-you her$_{IO}$ give kerchief-the$_{DO}$ [at bench-gift]$_{ADVBL}$
'... and you may give her the kerchief as a wedding present'

If we consider this (underlyingly) an OV sentence, both the direct object *moturinn* and the adverbial *að bekkjargjöf* are supposed to be extraposed, i.e. moved to the right; this would not be an attractive assumption. If it is (underlyingly) a VO sentence, the indirect object *henni* has been moved into the middle field. Either way, one has to assume transformations. An even "tougher" choice - for typological reasons - would be to analyze the following sentence:

(24) *Þá mátt þú nú mikið lið veita Njáli* (Njála 275)
then may you now [much help]$_{DO}$ give$_{V}$ Njal$_{IO}$
'Then you may give Njal a lot of help now'

In this example, there is an indirect object to the right, while the direct object is located to the left, i.e. in the middle field. Within an OV analysis, this sentence would have to be analyzed by referring to *Heavy NP Shift*, i.e. Extraposition of the indirect object. According to Dikken (1995:195), on the other hand:

> Indirect Objects in double object constructions consistently resist undergoing Heavy NP Shift, not just in English, but in other languages as well, as the following English and Norwegian examples (from Larson 1988:sect.3.2.) show:
> (25) a. *I gave a book my favourite uncle from Cleveland.
> b. *Vi har lånt en bok den hyggelige gutten du kjenner.
> we have lent a book the nice boy you know

Claiming an (S)VO base structure and movement of the direct object to the left would be a much more reasonable choice. Since all Modern Scandinavian languages are clearly SVO, and since those languages also allow variants of *Object Shift*, i.e. movement of an object to the left into the middle field (see 4.3.2.4), it is most reasonable to claim that Old Norse has SVO as its one and only basic word order. If Old Norse allowed leftward movement like the Modern Scandinavian languages, there was no 'need' for two basic word orders. Furthermore, it would not be possible to determine whether the speaker actually was using the one or the other grammar in certain constructions. Typologically I also find it rather dubious that Old Norse should allow Extraposition or Heavy NP Shift of indirect objects when this is not a common phenomenon in the Germanic languages at all. Leftward movement is, on the other hand, attested both in Scandinavian and German.

Sigurðsson (1988a:33) finds the variable base analysis "rather unappealing":

> we would not be able to come up with a principled explanation of the striking

differences of word order within the VP between Old and Modern Icelandic, nor of the fact that Icelandic has developed into a strict SVO language.

Along with Sigurðsson, the variable base analysis is also rejected by Hróarsdóttir (1996a). Hróarsdóttir chooses to adopt Kayne's (1994) anti-symmetry proposal by which all languages are claimed to be (S)VO or head-initial languages, i.e., by this approach, a double or variable base is not an alternative for theoretical reasons. Furthermore, Hróarsdóttir also states that "the data simply does not seem to demand such an analysis" (1996a:94; see also 113). Hróarsdóttir provides some promising analyses of Old(er) Icelandic overt (S)OV structures within a Minimalist framework (cf. e.g. section 4.3.2.4).

In chapter 4 and 5, I will make extensive use of data in order to show that Old Norse does not demand a double base analysis nor a non-configurational analysis. As I have discussed above, there are in addition also good arguments for rejecting the theory of a double base for typological reasons. Extrapositon of pronouns or indirect objects is, for instance, not common in the languages related to Old Norse. Leftward movement into the middle field is, on the other hand, attested in several Germanic languages. As long as one would claim that the modern Scandinavian languages have only one basic word order SVO, even though those languages also allow Object Shift, i.e leftward movement of objects (see 4.3.2.4), there should be no reason to claim that Old Norse has two basic word orders. In chapter 4, thus, I will analyze Old Norse as a 'pure' (S)VO language, meaning that all SOV surface structures are derived from SVO deep structures by leftward movement of the 'object' (i.e. a complement of the verb).

2.8 Conclusion

Rögnvaldsson (1996a:76), if forced to choose either OV or VO as a base for all Old Norse sentences, would consider this a tough choice - as a consequence he chooses both, i.e. a variable base. But on the basis of the discussion in the sections above, I will conclude here that it is most reasonable to analyze Old Norse as underlyingly SVO. This conclusion also supports the *general* opinion of Faarlund (1985a; 1990a). SVO is consistent with the intuition of most linguists who have studied Old Norse. Structures that look like 'remnants of SOV' may be explained by liberal movement rules allowing different kinds of phrases to be moved into the middle field. The choice between structures with or without such transformations seems, in most cases, to be pragmatically determined; this too is in accordance with Faarlund (1985a:367). In chapter 5, I will provide an extensive amount of data showing that accent placement seems to play an important role in the ordering of information in Old Norse. Thus, I do not assume that there are two basic word orders in Old Norse as supposed in Sigurðsson (1983) and Rögnvaldsson (1996a). Such an assumption was already rejected by Sigurðsson (1988a), and more recently by Hróarsdóttir (1996a).[57]

The discussion in this chapter has been based on a more 'traditional' view of language change, assuming that different types of basic word-order patterns may exist in different languages. Proto Germanic has commonly been considered SOV, while Ancient Nordic seemed to have been at the point of changing into SVO. Such descriptions are, of course, based on what one can observe in the surface structure of the language. Given the fact that SOV surface structure is more or less completely erased from the Modern Scandinavian grammar, Old Norse, at some point, must have reached a state of 'reanalysis', as, for instance, discussed in Sigurðsson (1988a). As Rögnvaldsson (1996a:66, fn. 9) points out: "if Kayne's (1994) anti-symmetry proposal is correct, then it follows that there never was any reanalysis". However, in the light of more modern theories, reanalysis can also be understood as a change of 'visibility' in surface structure. Thus, the (assumed) movement of complements in SVO languages is postponed until LF and is invisible in surface structure. If overt movement is due to *strong* versus *weak* features, then there

[57] Furthermore, if Kayne's (1994) universal SVO analysis is on the right track, assuming SVO as the one and only basic word order in Old Norse is definitely not very controversial.

might have been a period where it was difficult to determine those features, or they might have been optionally strong or weak (cf. Hróarsdóttir 1996a). In this case, one may indeed speak of unspecified parameters in Old Norse. And then one may say that reanalysis was not complete until around 1850 in Modern Icelandic (cf. Hróarsdóttir ibid.). For instance, take the phenomenon of discontinuous phrases; this and other variants of mixed word order types may give us reason to assume that there has been a period where it could have been difficult to fix the head parameter, as supposed by Rögnvaldsson (1996a). Thus, Old Norse may have looked like a mixture of SVO and SOV, and as a consequence we might have had some extent of discontinuity in phrase structure for some time, giving the impression of a non-configurational language. This phenomenon may be explained as some kind of 'speaker's confusion', that is, it might have been difficult to analyze competing structures and even worse to reach a state of fixed parameters. Thus, different/competing analyses might have caused quite liberal movement rules. However, the separate parts of discontinuous phrases are not placed at random, and they cannot appear just anywhere in the sentence either, like for instance the single words in the "free-word-order language" Warlpiri.[58] Thus, compared to languages like Warlpiri on the one hand and Modern Scandinavian on the other, Old Norse should not be considered non-configurational for the reason of discontinuous phrases. The existence of discontinuous phrases is supported by the Old Norse case and inflectional system which makes it possible to analyze the relation between the words in a sentence more or less independently of the order.[59] Modern Scandinavian allows quantifier floating and preposition stranding, but examples like (18) - (20), here repeated as (25) - (27):

(25) *Væta var á mikil um daginn*
wetness-N wason great-N in day
'There was much rain during the day'

(26) *Góðan eigum vér konung*
good-A own we king-A
'We have a good king'

[58] See for instance Lødrup (1983). As Lødrup shows, many cases of discontinuity may also be explained by deletion.

[59] This is also true for Warlpiri.

(27) *En* *á* *þykkir* *mér* *vera* *skuggi* *no,_kkurr* *manninum*
but on seems me-D be shadowsome the-man-D
'But there seems to be a shadow over the man'

are impossible in Modern Scandinavian, even though the case system of, for instance, Modern Icelandic has not changed much since Old Norse.[60] Modern Icelandic has fixed parameters, and it is strictly (S)VO,[61] just like the other modern Scandinavian languages.

The main purpose of this chapter has been to discuss if it is possible or appropriate to use the term *basic word order* in the description of Old Norse. Since it has been argued within the 'traditional' view that Old Norse might be non-configurational (Faarlund 1990a; also 1988b, 1991, 1995a, 1995b), or that there might be two alternative basic word orders (Rögnvaldsson 1996a),[62] this was a necessary discussion before stating anything more about Old Norse syntax.[63] If Old Norse really was a non-configurational language, we would expect word order to be determined by pragmatic factors only. This is in accordance with e.g. Thompson (1978) (see also Payne 1990 and Payne 1992b), who suggested that the first typological division should be made between:

- those languages in which main clause word order primarily correlates with pragmatic factors, and

[60] In Hróarsdóttir (1996a, 1996b) it is argued that the Modern Icelandic case system may have lost its function.

[61] Cf. also Andrews (1990:166): "Modern Icelandic is a SVO language with case marking NPs. There is considerable freedom of word order, but the basic word order is clear. There is no evidence for underlying SOV order, as there is in some Germanic languages".

[62] Rögnvaldsson is, of course, not a representative of the 'traditional' view, cf. the discussion in 1.1.

[63] If one wants to commit to Kayne's (1994) theory, on the other hand, the question of configurationality would be less interesting.

- those languages in which order primarily correlates with grammatical relations or other syntactic factors.

If Old Norse is a 'pure' SVO language (in deep structure), as I will assume, the order of the elements is first of all determined by the syntax, at least at the level of deep structure. Overt SOV structures would then be derived by movement. Since Old Norse also allows a variety of movement operations, I assume that those are determined by pragmatic factors which have to be examined further (see chapter 5). Typologically, however, I assume that Old Norse belongs to those languages in which word order primarily correlates with grammatical relations or other syntactic factors.

Before continuing the investigation of Old Norse, I will summarize the main points in this chapter:

1. Along with other linguists, I assume that it is possible to identify so-called basic word orders for the majority of the world's languages, among them Old Norse. The basic word order of Old Norse is, in my opinion, syntactically defined.

2. I assume that the basic word order of Old Norse is (S)VO; this is in accordance with most linguists who have studied Old Norse.

3. I take it that Old Norse is a configurational language.

Having discussed the basic word order of Old Norse, I will now take a short look at Old Norse grammar in general (chapter 3). The role of case and inflection may be considered important for the possibilities of word order and information structure. After this short presentation, I will discuss and suggest analyses for a variety of Old Norse syntactic structures within the theory of government and binding (chapter 4), which, finally, is extended by a more functional discussion (chapter 5).

3 Old Norse Grammar

3.1 Preliminaries

A discussion on word order and information structure would not make much sense without at least a short survey of the other grammatical features of a given language. The question of whether the language to be investigated is configurational or not (cf. chapter 2 above) may, for instance, be important to ask, because ±configurationality[1] would, of course, determine the variety of possible word order patterns and the structuring of information. After the discussion above, I consider Old Norse a **configurational** language of the **SVO** type; however, with the possibility of moving phrases into the middle field. Additionally, Old Norse may have null arguments. These phenomena are possible, among other things, because Old Norse exhibits a fairly rich system of agreement morphology as well as case morphology. Modern Icelandic is the only modern Germanic language comparable to Old Norse in this way.[2] The agreement system of Modern German, on the other hand, is relatively modest compared to Old Norse and Modern Icelandic.

The loss of agreement and case may have an effect on the variety of word order patterns in a given language, cf. the development from Old Norse to Modern Norwegian (e.g. Faarlund 1990a).[3] But word order patterns can be more restricted, even though the case and agreement

[1] If we choose to believe that there is something like a configurationality parameter (cf. the discussion in chapter 2).

[2] However, as Hróarsdóttir (1996b) argues, the Modern Icelandic case system may have lost its function.

[3] Of course, such a development can also be explained by referring to a change from a 'less' configurational - or non-

system survives, cf. Modern Icelandic.

I will concentrate on only a few typical features of the Old Norse inflectional system below. More thorough descriptions may be found in e.g. Andersen (1966), Ebel (1992), Faarlund (1994), Gordon (1957), Gutenbrunner (1951), Hanssen, Mundal & Skadberg (1975), Haugen (1990b, 1993), Heusler (1967), Høyland & Hellesnes (1970), Iversen (1972), Krause (1948), Larsen (1969), Munch & Unger (1847), Noreen (1923), Nygaard (1883), Ranke & Hoffmann (1988), Spurkland (1989), Valfells & Cathey (1981), Wessén (1958), Wimmer (1905) or Za_uska-Strömberg (1982).

The main purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate a selection of the rich agreement system in Old Norse. Modern Norwegian, in contrast, has lost many of these inflectional features. This indicates that a rich inflectional/agreement system also implies a certain degree of **redundancy**, i.e. some information may be expressed morphologically by several instances in a given sentence. This kind of redundancy makes, of course, a greater range of movement and deletion of arguments possible, which again may have consequences for the potential information structures of a given sentence. The chapter may also serve as a short introduction to the Old Norse language.

In the tables below, I will use the 'classical' Old Norse spelling (cf. 1.3) and not the Modern Icelandic spelling that is used in examples picked from the CD-ROM edition of the Old Norse sagas. The description of Old Norse in this chapter is pretty much in accordance with the 'traditional' view as it is found in most of the Old Norse grammars mentioned above. However, as said before, in the 'traditional' grammars, the term *subject* is reserved for nominative noun phrases only. In chapter 4, on the other hand, I will argue that this view should be revised since there are good reasons to assume that Old Norse also has non-nominative, i.e. *oblique*, subjects. In Modern Icelandic, the theory of oblique subjects has been accepted for quite a long time now (see e.g. the articles in Maling & Zaenen 1990). I will not discuss this issue in this chapter, but I will provide some comments now and then.

configurational - language to a 'more' configurational language.

3.2 Verbal Inflection in Old Norse

Relevant features of the verbal inflectional system may be the different *verb classes* in Old Norse and their relationship to *tense, person, number, gender, case* (in the participle forms), *voice* and *mood*. Since the different verb classes often have different inflectional endings, we might want to take a closer look at the verbal inflection in Old Norse.

3.2.1 Verb Classes

The Old Norse verb classes can be divided into (a) **strong** verb classes, (b) **weak** verb classes, (c) a few remnants of **reduplicative** verb classes, and (d) a limited number of so-called **preterite-present** verbs.

A. Strong Verbs

As in the other Germanic languages, there are verb classes in Old Norse which express the past tense through **ablaut alternations** instead of adding a dental suffix like weak verbs do. The strong verb classes can be divided into six different ablaut series. There is no need to explain the ablaut system here (see the list of Old Norse grammars); I will just give examples of the six classes. Traditionally, strong verbs are listed in the order *infinitive - past tense (indicative) singular - past tense (ind.) plural - past participle.*[4]

[4] The present singular forms regularly exhibit i-umlaut of the root vocal.

Class	Infinitive	Past tense sg.	Past tense pl.	Past participle
I	*bíta* ('bite')	*beit*	*bitu*[5]	*bitinn*[6]
II	*kjósa* ('choose')	*kaus*[7]	*kusu*	*kosinn*
III	*bresta* ('burst')	*brast*	*brustu*	*brostinn*
IV	*bera* ('bear', 'carry')	*bar*	*báru*	*borinn*
V	*gefa* ('give')	*gaf*	*gáfu*	*gefinn*
VI	*taka* ('take')	*tók*	*tóku*	*tekinn*[8]

Table 7: *Strong verb classes*

The past participle is an adjectival verb form which is also sensitive to **number**, **gender**, and **case** see below).[9] Of course, this kind of agreement provides a great extent of redundancy.

[5] In some grammars or dictionaries, e.g. Heggstad, Hødnebø & Simensen (1975), the past tense forms are put up as **1st person** sg. and **1st person** pl.: *beit - bitu**m*** (the Latin model). I will use the **3rd person** in accordance with the frequency in the corpus.

[6] The presentation of the past participle may also vary in different grammars. Haugen (1993) and Spurkland (1989), for instance, use the **neuter** singular form, while others use the **masculine** sg. form of the past participle. I will use the latter variant.

[7] I will disregard dialectal variations in the verbal inflections, i.e. variants like *køra/kera; kuru/køru/keru, korinn/kørinn/kerinn*. Instead, I use one 'standard' form (see Heggstad, Hødnebø & Simensen 1975).

[8] The regular ablaut for the past participle would be an *a*, like inn *fara - fór - fóru - farinn* ('go'). The *e* in *tekinn* is due to the velar i-umlaut caused by the *k*.

[9] Since this form may be 'adjectival', it also has nominal features, i.e. it may appear as a predicate complement. See chapter 4.3.3.4).

B. Weak Verbs

In Old Norse, weak verbs can be divided into three or four classes, depending on what criteria one wants to use for this division. The Proto-Germanic stem suffixes were _, *ija* and _. Verbs of the *ija*-class reacted differently to the i-umlaut according to the length of their root and the presence/absence of vowels like *a* and *u*. Thus, this class may be divided into two classes: *ija* and *ja* (cf. e.g. Iversen 1972). The main characteristic of weak verbs, however, is the **dental suffix** (-*d,-ð,-t*) in the past tense forms. The traditional order of listing the weak verb forms is: *infinitive - present tense (singular) - past tense (sg.) - past participle*. Here too, some grammarians use the 1st person singular, while others use the 3rd person singular. I will use the latter variant.

Class	Infinitive	Present tense	Past tense	Past participle
_-conjugation	*kasta* ('cast')	*kastar*	*kastaði*	*kastaðr*
ija-conjugation	*telja* ('tell')	*telr*	*taldi*	*taldr*
ja-conjugation	*dœma* ('judge')	*dœmir*	*dœmdi*	*dœmdr*
_-conjugation	*spara* ('spare')	*sparir*	*sparði*	*spar(a)t*

Table 8: *Weak verb classes*

C. Reduplicative Verbs

Reduplicative verbs look more like strong verbs with vowel alternations, despite the fact that there are only two ablaut stages: infinitive and past participle vs. past tense singular and plural. On the other hand, while strong verbs consist of only one syllable in the past tense singular, reduplicative verbs had two syllables in Ancient Nordic. The second syllable was a repetition of some morphological material in the first syllable.

Reduplication is no longer an active part of the grammar in Old Norse. Due to a great extent of syncopation in the period before the stage of Old Norse (500-700 A.D.), most of the reduplicative verbs do not show the reduplicated material any more. One example of the old system may be found in class V: *róa* ('row'), past tense: ***re**ri*.[10] Reduplicative verbs are listed like strong verbs: *infinitive - past tense sg. - past tense pl. - past participle*.

[10] In addition, the fifth class exhibits weak verb personal inflection.

Class	Infinitive	Past tense sg.	Past tense pl.	Past participle
I	*heita* (‘call’, ‘name’)	*hét*	*hétu*	*heitinn*
II	*auka* (‘increase’)	*jók*	*jóku*	*aukinn*
III	*falla* (‘fall’)	*fell*	*fellu*	*fallinn*
IV	*láta* (‘let’)	*lét*	*létu*	*látinn*
V	*róa* (‘row’)	*reri*	*reru*	*róinn*

Table 9: *Reduplicative verb classes*

D. Preterite-Present Verbs

Preterite-present verbs are a limited group of only ten verbs, most of them modal verbs. Their characteristic is the present tense form which looks like a strong past tense form, cf. the strong verb *bíta* (‘bite’) with the past tense *beit*, and the preterite-present verb *vita* (‘know’) with the present tense *veit*. The past tense, on the other hand, is formed by adding a dental suffix which is a characteristic of weak verbs. One can find ablaut alternations and both strong and weak personal inflections (the present tense forms are inflected like past tense strong verbs). The preterite-present verbs can be classified like strong verbs in accordance with the ablaut alternations (class II and VI are missing). Like in English, some of the verb forms may lack.[11] In a table, one will usually find both present tense singular and plural:

Class	Infinitive	Present tense sg.	Present tense pl.	Past tense sg.	Past participle
I	*vita* (‘know’)	*veit*	*vitu*	*vissi*	*vitat*
III	*kunna* (→’can’)	*kann*	*kunnu*	*kunni*	*kunnat*
IV	*skulle* (→’shall’)	*skal*	*skulu*	*skyldi*	---
V	*mega* (→’may’)	*má*	*megu*	*mátti*	---

Table 10: *Preterite-present verb classes*

[11] The arrow refers to the corresponding English word.

3.2.2 Tense

As shown in the tables above, the Old Norse tense system has an opposition of **past** tense and **non-past** tense, i.e. present tense.

Present tense can be used to express **present** time events, **past** time events or **future** events:

Present time events:

(1) *Gísli* ***fer*** *nú upp á fjallið er stendur hjá bæ hans*
Gisli goes$_{pres.}$ now up on mountain-the which stands$_{pres.}$ at farm his

og bindur sár sitt (GísL 929)
and binds$_{pres.}$ wound his
'Gisli climbs the mountain by his farm and dresses his wound'

Past time events:

(2) *Gunnar* ***fer*** *nú til þess er hann kom heim* (GunKe 1152)
Gunnar goes$_{pres.}$ now to this as he came$_{pret.}$ home
'Gunnar went then until he came home'

(3) *Geitir fór til skips og hitti Þóarin og* ***spyrr***
Geitir went$_{pret.}$ to ship and met$_{pret.}$ Thoarin and asks$_{pres.}$

ef hann ætlaði til Hofs (Vopnf 1997)
if he intended$_{pret.}$ to Hof
'Geitir went to the ship and met Thoarin and asked if he intended to go to Hof'

This use of present tense is also called *historical* present tense.

Future events:

(4) *... því að á morgun* ***er*** *jóladagur hinn fyrsti* (Grett 1105)
... this that on morning is$_{pres.}$ christmasday the first
'because tomorrow is (the first) Christmas Day'

(5) *... til þess eg* ***kem*** *hér á morgun* (Fljót 698)
... to this I come$_{pres.}$ here on morning
'until I come here tomorrow'

Present perfect is formed by combining a present tense form of *hafa* ('have') with the neuter form of the past participle of the main verb:

(6) *Það* ***hafa*** *menn og* ***sagt*** *að ...* (GísL 937)
this have men also said that
'People have also said that ...'

(7) *Sjá fundur* ***hefir*** *harður* ***verið*** (LjósC 1703)
this finding has hard been
'This meeting has been difficult'

In a few cases, the past participle may agree with the object:

(8) *Og nú hefi eg* ***sendan*** ***mann*** *af nýju suður* (Heið 1370)
and now have I $sent_{ACC}$ man_{ACC} of new south
'And I have now once more sent a man south'

In these cases, the verb *hafa* seems not to appear like a 'pure' auxiliary, but rather like an 'ordinary' transitive verb. Thus, the construction can be considered somewhat archaic.[12] On the other hand, the verb *vera* ('be) can be used with the past participle of some intransitive (or ergative) verbs, and in these cases the participle usually agrees with the object:

(9) *Þeir sjá þá að Bersi er* ***kominn*** *á skip Þorveigar* (Korm 1478)
they see then that $Bersi_{NOM}$ is $come_{NOM}$ on ship Thorveig's
'They see then that Bersi had entered Thorveig's ship'

Vera + the participle of a transitive verb usually expresses the passive (see below):

(10) *... ef Höskuldur er* ***drepinn*** (LjósC 1700)
... if $Hoskuld_{NOM}$ is $killed_{NOM}$
'if Hoskuld has been killed'

Past perfect or *pluperfect* is formed by combining a past tense form of *hafa* or *vera* and the past participle of the main verb:

(11) *En er hann* ***hafði*** ***verið*** *einn vetur á Íslandi ...* (Egla 416)
and as he had been one winter on Island
'And when he had stayed in Iceland for one winter ...'

(12) *Halldór* ***hafði*** ***sent*** *menn norður í Steingrímsfjörð* (Laxd 1649)
Halldor had sent men north in Steingrimsfjord
'Halldor had sent men north to Steingrimsfjord'

And, as a curiosity, an example with agreement on the participle:

(13) Gunnar ***hafði*** ***sendan*** *mann mágum sínum* (Njála 201)
Gunnar had $sent_{ACC}$ man_{ACC} brother-in-law his
'Gunnar had a man sent to his brother-in-law'

[12] For instance, there are only six cases of the form *sendan* (masc. sg. acc.) in the entire corpus (two of them in poems), while there are 83 instances of the past participle *sent*.

With *vera*:

(14) *Þormóður* *var* *þá* ***kominn*** *til* *skipsins* (Fóstb 836)
Thormod$_{NOM}$ was then come$_{NOM}$ to ship-the
'Thormod had by then come to the ship'

Future can be expressed by combining, for instance, the modal verb *munu* with the infinitive of the main verb:

(15) *Eg* ***mun*** *og* ***senda*** *mann* *í* *Ossabœ* (Njála 257)
I will also send man in Ossabo
'I will also send a man to Ossabo'

Future (with some modal content) can also be expressed by combining *skulu* (→'shall'), *vilja* (→'will/want'), *kunna* (→'can') or *verða* (→'become/will/shall') with the infinitive of the main verb:

(16) *Eg* ***skal*** ***hafa*** *líf* *hans* (Grett 1060)
I shall have life his
'I am going to kill him'

(17) *Um* *vorið* *segir* *Þorgils* *Ólafi* *að* *hann* ***vill*** ***fara*** *kaupferð*
in spring-the says Thorgils Olaf that he will go sales expedition

um sumarið (Flóam 737)
in sommer-the
'In the spring time, Thorgils tells Olaf that he will go/wants to go on a sales expedition in the summer'

(18) *... þar til er eg* ***kann*** *aftur* *að* ***koma*** (Kjaln 1450)
... there to as I can after to come
'... until I can come back/until I'm coming back'

(19) *... ella verður þú að þola harðindi og* ***verður*** *þó*
... or will you to stand hard-treatment and will still

satt *að* ***segja*** (Finnb 629)
true to say
'... or you will have to stand this hard treatment and it will still be true'

Note the saying:

(20) *Svo* *verður* *að* *vera* *sem* *vera* *vill* (Svarf 1816)
so become to be as be will
'It has to be as it has to be'

3.2.3 Person

Old Norse exhibits the following common, probably universal, three-way distinction: **first person** (the speaker), **second person** (the addressee) and **third person** (everyone and everything else), e.g.:

1st person	2nd person	3rd person
ek 'I'	*þú* 'you'	*hann, hon, þat* 'he, she, it'
vér 'we'	*(þ)ér* 'you'	*þeir, þær, þau* 'they' (masc., fem., neut.)

Table 11: *The person category in Old Norse*

In Old Norse, verb agreement is sensitive to these person features, with different types of verbs exhibiting different types of inflectional endings. The inflectional endings are added to the stem of the verb and, in the case of the weak verbs, the dental suffix, cf. the inflectional endings for the indicative:

	present tense			past tense	
	strong verbs, and weak verbs of the *ja*-class	weak verbs of the _-class	weak verbs of the *ija*- and the _-class	strong verbs	weak verbs
Sg. 1.	--	*a*	*i*	--	*a*
2.	*r*	*ar*	*ir*	*t*	*ir*
3.	*r*	*ar*	*ir*	--	*i*
Pl. 1.	*um*			*um*	
2.	*ið*			*uð*	
3.	*a*			*u*	

Table 12: *The personal inflection endings for the indicative in Old Norse*

E.g.:

Present tense					
	bíta 'bite'	*telja* 'tell'	*kalla* 'call'	*dœma* 'judge'	*spara* 'spare'
Sg. 1.	*bít*	*tel*	*kalla*	*dœmi*	*spari*

2.	*bítr*	*telr*	*kallar*	*dœmir*	*sparir*
3.	*bítr*	*telr*	*kallar*	*dœmir*	*sparir*
Pl. 1.	*bítum*	*teljum*[13]	*ko,_llum*[14]	*dœmum*	*spo,_rum*
2.	*bítuð*	*telið*	*kallið*	*dœmið*	*sparið*
3.	*bíta*	*telja*	*kalla*	*dœma*	*spara*

Table 13: *The personal inflection endings in the present tense indicative*

3.2.4 Number

As shown above, the verbal category is sensitive to **singular** and **plural**. The pronoun system, in addition, exhibits remnants of **dual** (see below).

3.2.5 Gender (Adjectival Inflection of the Verb)

The only verbal forms sensitive to gender are the **present participle** and the **past participle**. These are *adjectival* forms which may agree with the number, gender and case of a nominal phrase.

The ***present participle*** is formed by first adding the suffix *-and-* to the verbal stem and then adding the inflectional ending for the gender (and case), e.g. the verb *kalla* ('call') (divided by dashes for convenience):

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
kall-and-i (cf.: 'He is calling')	*kall-and-i* (cf.: 'She is calling')	*kall-and-a* (cf.: 'It is calling')

Table 14: *The Old Norse present participle and gender agreement*

[13] The semi vowel *j* appears before the vowels *a* and *u*, but not before *i*.

[14] The *o,_* is an u-umlaut of the short *a* (in Modern Icelandic, this umlaut appears as *ö*).

For instance:

(21) *Hann* *fór* ***kallandi*** *og* *kallaði* *á* *menn* *mína* (Njála 290)
he$_{MASC}$ went calling$_{MASC}$ and called on men mine
'He went out calling and called for my men'

The ***past participle*** is, as shown already, a little different for weak verbs and for strong verbs. Strong verbs add *-inn, -in* or *-it* to the stem, while weak verbs add *-r, -∅* (+ u-umlaut) or *-t* to the stem + the dental suffix[15], e.g. the strong verb *bíta* ('bite') and the weak verb *kalla* ('call'):

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
bitinn (cf.: He is bitten)	*bitin* (cf.: She is bitten)	*bitit* (cf.: It is bitten)
kallaðr (cf.: He is called ...)	*ko,_lluð* (cf.: She is called ...)	*kallat* (cf.: It is called ...)

Table 15: *The Old Norse past participle and gender agreement*

The present participle and the past participle behave like ordinary adjectives, thus, they are also sensitive to number and case. A demonstration of the combination of gender and number are the following examples:

(22) ***Hann*** *var* ***kallaður*** ***Björn*** *hinn hvíti* (Dropl 349)
he$_{MASC-SG}$ was called$_{MASC-SG}$ Bjorn$_{MASC-SG}$ the white[16]
'He was called the white Bjorn ('bear')'

(23) ***Hún*** *var* ***kölluð*** ***Þorbjörg*** *digra* (Fóstb 775)
she$_{FEM-SG}$ was called$_{FEM-SG}$ Thorbjorg$_{FEM-SG}$ huge
'She was called Thorbjorg the huge one'

[15] Actually, there is no great difference at all. There are in fact only three inflectional endings *-r, -∅* and *-t*. Added to *-in-* and assimilated, we then get: *-inn, -in* and *-it*.

[16] Only the nouns themselves are tagged, but DET and ADJ, like *hinn hvíti*, also agree in number, gender and case.

(24) ***Það*** *var síðan* ***kallað*** ***Þórsnes*** (Eyrb 539)
that$_{\text{NEUT-SG}}$ was since called $_{\text{NEUT-SG}}$ Thorsnes$_{\text{NEUT-SG}}$
'Since then it has been called Thorsnes'

(25) ***Þeir*** *voru* ***kallaðir*** ***Þórörnusynir*** (Egla 396)
they$_{\text{MASC-PL}}$ were called$_{\text{MASC-PL}}$ Thorорn's-sons$_{\text{MASC-PL}}$
'They were called the sons of Thororn'

(26) ***Þær*** *eru nú* ***kallaðar*** ***Bláskeggsár*** (Harð 1288)
they$_{\text{FEM-PL}}$ are now called$_{\text{FEM-PL}}$ Blaskegg's-rivers$_{\text{FEM-PL}}$
'They are now called the Blaskegg rivers'

(27) ***Þau*** ***spjót*** *voru* ***kölluð*** ***brynþvarar*** (Egla 434)
these spears$_{\text{NEUT-PL}}$ were called$_{\text{NEUT-PL}}$ coat-of-mail-borers$_{\text{NEUT-PL}}$
'These spears are called coat-of-mail-borers'

As we can see, both the subject, the past participle, and the predicate complement are marked for gender and number (and case).

The pronoun subjects in the examples above are, in fact, redundant and could easily be omitted in certain contexts.[17] From a syntactical point of view, this is no problem in a language like Old Norse. On the other hand, it is not really common to omit any phrase in this particular construction. An example might be:

(28) *Lengt var nafn hans og var kallaður Þorgrímur prúði* (Vígl 1960)
lengthened was name his and was [_] called$_{\text{MASC-NOM}}$ Thorgrim$_{\text{MASC-NOM}}$ pride$_{\text{MASC-NOM}}$
'His name was lengthened and he was called Thorgrim the gallant'

Of course, *Þorgrímur* could be considered the subject instead of the predicate complement which could be represented by the adjective *prúði* alone. On the other hand, a construction like this, with the subject following the past participle, would not be common in Old Norse, and the most obvious explanation would therefore be that the unstressed pronoun *hann* ('he'), which probably would not even have moved into the topic position, is omitted.

Another interesting example in this matter is the relative-clause-like construction (underlined) below. The relevant words are tagged for gender and case:

[17] By using pronouns, the subjects are, of course, already marked for some degree of redundancy.

(29) *Helgi gaf Bessa uxa tvo, fimm vetra gamla, gráir*
Helgi gave Bessi oxes two, five winters old, grey

báðir, og stóðhest rauðan og var kallaður
both, and brood horse$_{\text{MASC-ACC}}$ red$_{\text{MASC-ACC}}$ and was called$_{\text{MASC-NOM}}$

Heiðarauður og með merar þrjár (Fljót 700)
Moor-red$_{\text{MASC-NOM}}$ and with mares three
'Helgi gave Bessi two five year old oxen, which were both grey, and a brood horse, which was called Moor-red, together with three mares'

As an ordinary relative clause, e.g.:

(30) *... er var kallaður Heiðarauður,*
'... which was called Moor-red'

This example would be unproblematic. With the conjunction *og* ('and'), on the other hand, one gets an inserted main clause lacking a surface subject. The gender *masculine* provides enough morphological information to identify the omitted subject.[18] The only possible alternative candidate would be *Bessa*$_{\text{MASC-DAT}}$, but this interpretation would be rather unlikely.

Thus, gender agreement, together, with other morphological features, may be considered of great importance for the structuring of information in Old Norse.

3.2.6 Case (Adjectival Inflection of the Verb)

The inflectional endings for case, all genders, and for both numbers are in fact the same as the endings for ordinary adjectives:[19]

[18] In accordance with Huang's (1984) ***Generalized Control Rule***: Coindex an empty pronominal with the closest nominal element.

[19] The forms with no inflectional ending (-∅) exhibit u-umlaut; besides, u-umlaut is regularily caused by the ending

-u-

	Present participle			Past participle					
	M.	F.	N.	M.		F.		N.	
				strong	weak	strong	weak	strong	weak
Sg. NOM	*i*	*i*	*a*	*inn*	*r*	*in*	*-∅*	*it*	*t*
ACC	*a*	*i*	*a*	*inn*	*an*	*ina*	*a*	*it*	*t*
GEN	*a*	*i*	*a*	*ins*	*s*	*innar*	*rar*	*ins*	*s*
DAT	*a*	*i*	*a*	*inum*	*um*	*inni*	*ri*	*inu*	*u*
Pl. NOM	*i*	*i*	*i*	*inir*	*ir*	*inar*	*ar*	*in*	*-∅*
ACC	*i*	*i*	*i*	*ina*	*a*	*inar*	*ar*	*in*	*-∅*
GEN	*i*	*i*	*i*	*inna*	*ra*	*inna*	*ra*	*inna*	*ra*
DAT	*um*	*um*	*um*	*inum*	*um*	*inum*	*um*	*inum*	*um*

Table 16: *The Old Norse present and past participle and case agreement*

E.g.:

(31) ... *sjaldan vegur* ***sofandi*** ***maður*** *sigur* (Vopn 2003)
... seldom wins sleeping$_{NOM}$ man$_{NOM}$ victory
'... a sleeping man seldom gains the victory'

(32) ... *og ger ekki það fordæðuverk að drepa* ***sofanda*** ***mann*** (Vígl 1982)
... and do not that misdeed to kill sleeping$_{ACC}$ man$_{ACC}$
'... and do not commit the misdeed to kill a sleeping man'

Other examples, regarding the past participle, were given during the discussion of gender in the previous section.

Now, let us briefly return to passive/predicate complement constructions like the ones discussed in the section above. Usually, the past participle agrees with the subject, cf. (22)-(27), in number, gender, and case, e.g.:

(33) ... *að* ***hann*** *var* ***drepinn*** (Grett 960)
... that he$_{MASC-SG}$ was killed$_{MASC-SG}$
'... that he was killed'

(34) ... *ef* ***þeir*** *eru* ***drepnir*** (Njála 232)
... if they$_{MASC-PL}$ are killed$_{MASC-PL}$
'... if they are killed'

(35) ... *og voru* ***þau*** ***drepin*** *bæði* (ÞorSH 2061)
... and were they$_{NEUT-PL}$ killed$_{NEUT-PL}$ both$_{NEUT-PL}$
'... and they were both killed'

In this case, the participle can be analyzed as a subject predicate. The same applies when the participle has status as object predicate, as in:

(36)	*...*	*og*	*finnur*	***þá***	*við*	*Þingvað*	***drepna***	*og*	*hulda*	*með*
	...	and	finds	$them_{ACC\text{-}PL}$	at	Thingvad	$killed_{ACC\text{-}PL}$	and	$hidden_{ACC\text{-}PL}$	with

viðum (Reykd 1745)
wood
'... and finds them at Thingvad, killed and hidden with wood'

Used as an ordinary past participle (i.e. as a non-adjectival form), that means, with no nominal phrase to agree with, the verb is marked neuter:

(37)	*Og*	*hefir*	*Björn*	*nú*	***drepið***	*þrjá*	*menn*	*fyrir*	*Þórði* (BjHít 102)
	and	has	Bjorn	now	$killed_{NEUT}$	three	men_{MASC}	for	Thord

'and Bjorn has now killed three men for Thord'

Otherwise, as mentioned, the past participle agrees with the subject. This is also true when there is an NP subject predicate, as shown in for instance (25), here repeated as (38) (only the relevant morphological information is tagged):

(38)	***Þeir***	*voru*	***kallaðir***	*Þórörnusynir* (Egla 396)
	$they_{MASC\text{-}PL}$	were	$called_{MASC\text{-}PL}$	Thorорn's-$sons_{MASC\text{-}PL}$

'They were called the sons of Thororn'

On the other hand, there are a number of examples that do not adhere to this system:

(39)	*Þaðan*	*hljóp*	*hann*	*með*	*reykinum*	*í*	*gróf*	*nokkura*	*og*	*hvíldi*
	from-there	ran	he	with	smoke-the	in	$hollow_{FEM\text{-}DAT}$	$some_{FEM\text{-}DAT}$	and	rested

sig	*og*	*er*	***það***	*síðan*	*kölluð*	*Káragróf* (Njála 282)	
himself	and	is	$that_{NEU\text{-}NOM}$	since	$called_{FEM\text{-}NOM}$	Kari's-$grof_{FEM\text{-}NOM}$	

'He ran from there with the smoke in some hollow and rested; and since then, this (hollow) was called Kari's hollow'

(40)	*En*	***það***	*voru*	*kölluð*	*launvíg*	*en*	*eigi*	*morð ...* (GíslS 864)
	and	$that_{NEUT\text{-}SG}$	$were_{PL}$	$called_{NEUT\text{-}PL}$	$assassination_{NEU\text{-}PL}$	and	not	$murder_{NEUT\text{-}PL}$ ...

'And these incidents would be called assassinations and not murders ...'

(41)	***Þetta***	*er*	*kölluð*	*Einarsvarða*	*síðan* (Hrafn 1400)
	$this_{NEUT}$	is	$called_{FEM}$	Einar's-$cairn_{FEM}$	since

'Since then, this (cairn) was called Einar's cairn'

In the examples (39) - (41), neither the past participle nor the predicate complement agrees with the subject (bold face) in gender, or number, cf. (40). The only stable feature seems to be the case, which is nominative for all relevant phrases in these examples. Thus, the subject appears to be less 'important' in these clauses, not only from an information structural standpoint, but also from a syntactical/morphological standpoint. The past participle agrees with the closest noun

phrase,[20] which would also be the closest phrase from a logical point of view, cf. the 'SOV' variant:

(42) *Hún var* ***Þórdís*** ***kölluð*** (Vatn 1860)
she was Thordis called
'She was called Thordis'

Cf. also:

(43) *This is Thordis* vs. *This woman is (called) Thordis*

There are not many constructions without agreement between subject and past participle + predicative complement. Just for argument's sake, one might claim that this is an early occurrence of the expletive *þat/það* ('that'), cf. e.g. Modern Norwegian:[21]

(44) ***Det*** *blei kalla på kelnaren*
it_{EXPL} was called on waiter-the
'The waiter was called'

However, Old Norse has no expletive subject; thus, either there is no overt phrase at all (a), or the *það* is referential (b):

(45) a. *Var þá kallað að Íslendingar skyldu taka skip sitt* (Flóam 771)
was [_] then called that Icelanders should tak ship their
'It was then said that the Icelanders should take their ship'

b. ***Það*** *var kallað að hún væri vel mennt* (Fljót 680)
$that_i$ was called [that she be well brought up]$_i$
'It was said that she was well brought up'

But, if *það* has reference, it is a 'real' subject. *Þetta* in (41), for instance, must have reference. Besides, as mentioned before, Old Norse is assumed not to have a dummy subject. The oldest unequivocal examples of an expletive subject are, according to Rögnvaldsson (1996a:81, fn. 21),

[20] Note the similarity to Faarlund's finding about reflexivization: "reflexivization works more or less mechanically, reflexives having as their antecedent the most immediately preceding NP" (Faarlund 1980:68).

[21] The *þat/það* is, of course, not an expletive - see below.

found in stories that were translated from English around 1500. As late as in 1920, Icelandic grammarians meant that the expletive *það* should be avoided (e.g. Smári 1920:19; see also the discussion in Hróarsdóttir 1995, 1996a). Nevertheless, even though the expletive is still relatively rare in Modern Icelandic written prose, it is quite frequent in the spoken language (see Rögnvaldsson 1996a:81, 1995:24). Thus, it is imaginable (not very likely though) that there could have been an expletive *þat* in spoken Old Norse long before 1500, while 'trained' writers were trying to avoid it.

Compare (40) repeated as (46) with a Modern German translation (47):[22]

(46) *En* *það* *voru* *kölluð* *launvíg* *en* *eigi* *morð* ... (GíslS 864)
and that$_{NEU-SG}$ were$_{PL}$ called$_{NEU-PL}$ assassinations$_{NEU-PL}$ and not murders$_{NEU-PL}$ ...
'And these incidents would be called assassination(s) and not murder(s) ...'

(47) **Und* *es* *wurden* *Meuchelmorde* *und* *nicht* *Morde* *genannt* ...
and it$_{(SG)}$ were$_{PL}$ assassinations$_{PL}$ and not murders$_{PL}$ called ...

A sentence like this is, of course, ungrammatical. But if we add a regular subject in addition to the dummy *es*, we get:

(48) *Und* *es* *wurden* *diese* *Taten* *Meuchelmorde* *und* *nicht* *Morde*
and it$_{(SG)}$ were$_{PL}$ [these incidents]$_{PL}$ assassinations$_{PL}$ and not murders$_{PL}$

genannt ...
called ...
'And these incidents would be called assassination(s) and not murder(s) ...'

Thus, we can imagine that the 'real' subject may be omitted.[23] Another example that might be pointing in the direction of a dummy subject may be:

(49) *Þar* *er* *nú* *kallaðr* *Orustuhólmur* (Korm 1480)
there$_{ADV}$ is now called$_{MASC}$ Battle-holm$_{MASC}$
'This place is now called Battle holm'

The adverb *þar* is used as a dummy subject in, for instance, Modern Norwegian dialects (cf. English *there*). Thus, even if *þar* does not function as a dummy in this particular example,

[22] In Modern German, the past participle does not agree with a nominal phrase.

[23] In fact, in the example (40/46) *það* can also be said to refer directly to the following relative clause:

(i) *Og voru það þá kölluð launvíg en eigi morð* [*er menn létu vopn eftir í beninni standa*],

but *það* would still be singular while the verb is plural. Another explanation to this particular case would be to claim that the *það* is a somehow neutral placeholder, in the unmarked form 3rd p. sg. (Faarlund 1980:66). Without concrete content it might not trigger verb agreement in this case. Anyway, it would be a good starting point for an expletive.

examples like this might at least be the *model* for the use of dummy subjects.[24] Anyway, there is no 'proper' subject in this example.

Interestingly, there is a variant of (46) in another edition of *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, as seen in (50):

(50) *Og* *voru* ***það****þá* *kölluð* *launvíg* *en* *eigi*
and were$_{PL}$ that$_{NEU-SG}$ then$_{NEU-PL}$ called assassinations$_{NEU-PL}$ and not

morð (GísL 918)
murders$_{NEU-PL}$
'And these incidents would be called assassination(s) and not murder(s) ...'

Here the *það* appears in the ordinary subject position which is not possible for the expletive *það* in Modern Icelandic (see chapter 4). It would also be difficult to interpret *þetta* ('this') in (41), here repeated as (51), as an expletive:

(51) ***Þetta*** *er* *kölluð* *Einarsvarða* *síðan* (Hrafn 1400)
this$_{NEU}$ is called$_{FEM}$ Einar's-cairn$_{FEM}$ since
'Since then, this (cairn) is called Einar's cairn'

The discussion about a possible expletive may seem somewhat far-fetched in this context. However, the lack of agreement is interesting. On the other hand, many languages may use a neutral form, e.g. *það/þetta* (neuter sg.), to refer to a feminine or masculine noun phrase. Such use of the neuter demonstrative is, for instance, discussed in Leira (1992) for Modern Norwegian:

> Men det som anaforisk pronomen viser ikke bare til substantiv i nøytrum. Det kan referere til infinitiver, 'at'-setninger, adjektiv, og i det hele tatt til hvilken som helst størrelse som gjennom et pro-ord skal gjøre tjeneste som nominalledd. (Leira 1992:24)
> 'But *det* as an anaphoric pronoun does not only point to neuter nouns. *Det* may refer to infinitives, *that*-clauses, adjectives, and generally to whatever entity that, through a pro-word, shall serve as a nominal phrase'.

A Modern Norwegian example would be the following:

(52) *en* *båt!* *...* *Det* *er* *politibåten* (Leira 1992:25)
a boat! ... It is police boat-the

Leira (1992:25) notes that the anaphoric use of *det* is possible in combination with verbs like *be* or *become*, i.e. there is an identificational relation. An example like (39), repeated here as (53a),

[24] Cf. Faarlund (1990a:70ff.).

would, on the other hand, be somewhat odd in Modern Norwegian (53b):

(53) a. *Þaðan hljóp hann með reykinum í gróf nokkura og hvíldi*
from-there ran he with smoke-the in hollow$_{FEM\text{-}DAT}$some$_{FEM\text{-}DAT}$ and rested

sig og er ***það*** *síðan kölluð Káragróf* (Njála 282)
himself and is that$_{NEU\text{-}NOM}$ ever-since called$_{FEM\text{-}NOM}$ Kari's-hollow$_{FEM\text{-}NOM}$
'He ran from there with the smoke into some hollow and rested; and ever since then, this (hollow) was called Kari's hollow'

b. *#Derfrå sprang han med røyken til ei grøft*
from-threre ran he with smoke-the to a hollow$_{FEM}$

og kvilte seg, og det vert sidan kalla Kåregrøft(a)
and rested himself, and that$_{NEUT}$ is ever-since called Kåreditch-(the)$_{FEM}$

In this particular context, one should probably repeat the noun, e.g.:

(54) *... og (den) grøfta vert sidan kalla Kåregrøft(a)*
... and [(that) hollow-the] is ever-since called Kari's-hollow

Otherwise, one should use the personal pronoun (or possibly the demonstrative *den*):[25]

(55) *... og ho / (den) vert sidan kalla Kåregrøft(a)*
... and she$_{FEM}$ / (it$_{FEM}$) is ever-since called Kari's-hollow(-the)$_{FEM}$

The expletive may only appear together with a locative expression, e.g.

(56) *Det vart sidan kalla Kåregrøft(-a) der*
it was ever-since called Kari's-hollow(-the) there

In this case, *det* is not referential, and *Kåregrøft* denotes the place as a whole and not the hollow itself. In any case, Old Norse does not have an (overt) expletive subject (see the discussion in chapter 4.6 and elsewhere in chapter 4).

3.2.7 Voice

In Old Norse, one can distinguish between **active**, **passive**, and **mediopassive** (middle) constructions; the mediopassive is very close to **reflexive** constructions (see also chapter 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.3).

[25] The Modern Norwegian demonstrative *den* denotes both masculine and feminine referents, e.g. ***den*** *mannen* ('the man'), ***den*** *kvinna* ('the woman'), versus ***det*** *treet* ('the tree').

The Active-Passive Correlation

The distinction between *active* and *passive* in Old Norse is not unproblematic and has been the subject for discussion for quite a long time (see first of all the discussion between Dyvik 1980 and Benediktsson 1980; see also e.g. Barðdal 1997; Barnes 1968; Faarlund 1988b; Halbe 1963; Haugan 1998c; Kristoffersen 1994; Rindal 1997a/b; Rögnvaldsson 1995:15f.). I have already discussed examples with the verbs *kalla* ('call') and *drepa* ('kill'). Consider some more examples:

(57) *... og gaf eg honum það er þú kallar rænt* (HávÍs 1328)
... and gave I him that what you call stolen
'and I gave him that what you would call stolen'

This is an *active* sentence: in the relative clause, there are an Agent/nominative subject *þú* and a (raised) patient/accusative object *það* located in the matrix clause. A passive sentence can be formed with the past participle of the main verb, which is *kalla*, and the auxiliary *vera* ('be') or *verða* ('become'); the 'passive' of a sentence with *kalla* is usually formed with the auxiliary *vera*. Making our example look a little more neat:

(58) *þú kallar það rænt*
you$_{\text{SUBJ-NOM}}$ call that$_{\text{OBJ-ACC}}$ stolen

we expect a passive variant of this sentence to look somewhat like the following example:[26]

(59) *það er kallað rænt* (*af þér*)
this$_{\text{SUBJ-NOM}}$ is called stolen (by you)

The accusative *object* of the active sentence is expected to appear as the nominative *subject* of the corresponding passive sentence.[27] The *subject* of the active sentence can be omitted, or it can be expressed by an adverbial (Agent) phrase. I consider the use of an Agent phrase in the passive an option, even though it is scarcely used in Old Norse (see also the discussion on passive in chapter 4.3.3.1). The main purpose of passive constructions may be to focus more on the situation of the Patient and less on the 'logical' subject; therefore, the Agent phrase is usually omitted (at least in Old Norse). In fact, there are remarkably few examples of Agent phrases in Old Norse passive sentences compared to modern Germanic languages.

It is not very difficult to find a sentence which looks like the passive construction we

[26] The nominative and the accusative of *það* have the same form.

[27] Objects with lexical case, i.e. dative, genitive or lexical accusative, preserve their case even when they are promoted to subject; they become so-called *oblique* subjects. See the discussion in chapter 4.3.3.

expect, e.g.:

(60) ... *en skip það var kallað Íslendingur* (Svarf 1797)
... and ship that was called Icelander
'... and that ship was called Icelander'

Consider also two more examples with *drepa* ('kill'):

(61) a. *Hann drepur Svart þegar í stað* (Flóam 745)
he kills Svart immediately in place
'He kills Svart at once'

b. *Þengill bróður ykkar er drepinn* (Krók 1523)
[Thengil brother your]$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$ is killed$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$
'Your brother Thengil has been killed'

Sentences like these look convincingly like active-passive correlations. On the other hand, when looking back at all the examples with *kalla* ('call'), we note that the predicate complement acts like the past participle with regard to agreement with the subject. The past participle is inflected just like an ordinary adjective, thus, a sentence like (61b) looks not very different from sentences like the following:

(62) *Hann var sterkur að afli* (Egla 415)
he$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$ was strong$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$ at strength
'He was strong'

(63) *Hann var ríkur maðr* (HallM 1194)
he$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$ was [rich man]$_{\text{NOM-MASC-SG}}$
'He was a rich man'

Thus, it may be argued that:

> konstruksjoner med 'vera/verða' + perfektum partisipp må analyseres som vanlige predikativkonstruksjoner. [...] Dermed later ikke gammelnorsk til å ha noen kategori 'passiv'; bare noen konstruksjoner som i visse sammenhenger kan brukes som passive motstykker til andre konstruksjoner. (Dyvik 1980:105f.)
> 'constructions with *vera/verða* + past participle must be analyzed as regular predicate complement constructions. [...] Thus, Old Norse does not appear to have a *passiv* category; only a few constructions which in certain cases can be used as passive oppositions to other constructions.'

See Benediktsson (1980) for some good arguments against Dyvik's view.

Somewhat interesting is, at least, the great number of **stative** passive constructions in Old Norse. Dyvik (1980:25f) points out that the dynamic copula *verða* ('become') replaces the stative copula *vera* ('be') at a later stage in the same constructions. The verb *verða* is otherwise primarily used with a **future** content. Most examples with, for instance, *drepinn* ('killed') are

with *vera*, but there are also two examples (from the same text) with *verða* in the corpus:[28]

(64) *Þórir í Garði spyr nú hvar Grettir er niður kominn*
Thorir in Yard asks now where Grettir is down come

og vildi setja til eitthvert ráð að hann ***yrði*** *drepinn* (Grett 1040)
and will set to any means that he became killed
'Thorir Yard asks now where Grettir has come down and wants to take any steps to get him killed'

(65) *Setti Þórður nú mörg ráð til að Grettir* ***yrði*** *á burt komið*
sets Thord now many means to that Grettir became a-way come

eða drepinn ella (Grett 1047)
or killed else
'Thord take now many steps to make Grettir go away or otherwise get him killed'

In both examples, *verða* is used in the subjunctive and with a future and modal content. But both examples have also moved further away from the stative-like construction *vera drepinn* ('be killed'). Note that the constructions *Grettir er <u>niður</u> kominn* and *Grettir yrði <u>á burt</u> komið*, with the adverbs, differ from regular adjectival constructions (predicate complements) where we do not find this use of adverbs. Additionally, the past participle in (65), *komið*, does not agree with the subject, and thus cannot be an adjective.

There were only two single examples with *verða* and the past participle *drepinn*. Thus, normally the construction seems to be *vera drepinn*, which may seem **stative** in most cases. On the other hand, the same construction may seem **dynamic** in other contexts. Thus, there is actually no need for two different verbs to express the two different relations, as demonstrated by the following examples:

(66) *Var Þorkell leiddur út og drepinn* (Laxd 1618)
was Thorkel led out and killed
'Thorkel was led out and killed'

(67) *Þar var hann drepinn og grófu hann þar* (Flóam 772)
there was he killed and buried [they] him there
'He was/got killed there and they burried him at the same place'

[28] The form *yrði* is past subjunctive.

(68) *... og heitir þar síðan Valafall er hann var drepinn* (Korm 1494)
... and is-named there since Valafall where he was killed
'And the place where he was/got killed is called Valafall since then'

(69) *En ef ... þá munt þú drepinn vera her á landi* (Njála 209)
and if ... then will you killed be here on land
'And if ... then you will be/get killed in this country'

(70) *... og vil eg bjóða þér að lifa ef þú vilt,*
... and will I offer you to live if you will,

svo gerðir þú við mig, ella vera drepinn (Hrafn 1415)
so do you with me, or be killed
'... and I will let you live if you want to, in this case you do as I tell you to, or be/get killed'

(71) *Þá stökk Þorgeir norður á Strandir og var þar drepinn* (Harð 1288)
then ran Thorgeir north on Strand and was there killed
'Then Thorgeir ran away north to Strand and was/got killed there'

(72) *Veglágur fór upp á Skotland og gerðist þar mikill*
Veglag went up on Scotland and became there much

þjófur og var þar drepinn um síðir (Fóstb 807)
thief and was there killed at last
'Veglag went up to Scotland and there he became a great thief and was/got killed in the end'

(73) *... og muntu annaðhvort ger sekur eða drepinn* (VaLjó 1828)
... and will-youone-of-two done lawless or killed
'... and you will either be/get (sentenced) lawless or killed'

In the last example (73), we observe the use of the past participle of the verb *gera* ('do') with the adjective *sekur*; this definitely presupposes an Agent. While *sekur* is an adjective beyond any doubt, *drepinn* does not necessarily have to be considered an adjective. The form *ger* belongs to *sekur* alone; *vera* belonging to both *ger* and *drepinn* is omitted (omitting the *vera* (the infinitive) is quite common in Old Norse).[29] Thus, the sentence would look like the following:

(74) ... *og muntu annaðhvort* [*vera ger sekur*] *eða* [*vera drepinn*]

The connection to an Agent is also clear in:

(75) ... *að hann mundi drepa jarlinn þó að hann væri þegar drepinn* (HallÓ 1250)
... that he would kill earl-the though that he was just killed
'... that he would kill the jarl even though he just might have been killed'

[29] Cf. Nygaard (1905:25): "Infinitiv af *vera* udelades ofte etter *skulu, munu, mega*, samt i akk. med inf. [...] og i passive infinitivsformer". ('Infinitive of *vera* is often omitted after *skulu, munu, mega*, plus A.C.I. and in passive infinitive forms'). See also Nygaard (1878:266).

(76) *Og* *er* *hann* *kom* *að* *naustdyrunum* *leggur* *Refur* *spjótinu* *í* *gegnum*
and as he comes at boat-house doors lays Ref spear in through

hann. *Þorsteinn* *kallar* *í* *því* *og* *mælti:* *"*[...] *en* *eg*
him. Thorstein calls in this and says: "[...] and $I_{NOM\text{-}SG\text{-}(MASC)}$

er *lagður* *í* *gegnum."* (Krók 1523)
am $layed_{NOM\text{-}SG\text{-}MASC}$ in through."
'And when he comes to the doors of the boat-house, Ref puts his spear through him. Thorstein shouts then and says: "... and I am hit / bored through"'

And finally an example with an expressed Agent:

(77) *Þá* *var* *hann* *beðinn* *af* *vinum* *sínum* *að* *staðfestast*
then was $he_{NOM\text{-}SG\text{-}MASC}$ $begged_{NOM\text{-}SG\text{-}MASC}$ [of friends his]$_{AGENT}$ to settle

hér (BandK 27)
here
'Then his friends asked him to settle down here'

The examples above should make it clear that there is some kind of relation between sentences with Agent roles expressed as subjects and corresponding sentences where the Agent role is not expressed at all, or where it is expressed as a *by*-phrase, i.e. an adjunct. This relation may be called an **active-passive relation**. According to Faarlund (1988b) this relation is of a lexical kind rather than a transformational kind. The transformational part of the active-passive relation will be discussed in chapter 4, especially 4.3.3.1.

Reflexive Verb Forms and the Medio Passive

In addition to the personal pronouns, Old Norse has a reflexive pronoun with an accusative, genitive, and dative form. The same three variants are used in both singular, dual and plural: *sik/sig* (ACC), *sín* (GEN) *sér* (DAT), e.g.:

(78) *Hann ...* *tekur* *ofan* *hjálm* *og* *setur* *á* *höfuð* ***sér*** *og* *sverð*
he ... takes from-above helmet and sets on head his and sword

í *hönd* ***sér,*** *setur* *skjöld* *fyrir* ***sig*** (Fljót 704)
in hand his, sets shield before himself
'He takes a helmet from above and puts it on his head and takes a sword in his hand, and he places a shield in front of himself'

(79) *Hún* *bar* ***sig*** *þá* *lítt* *og* *grét* *allsárt* (Grett 1052)
she went-on herself then little and cried all-sorely
'Then she went on a little and cried painfully'

(80) *Þá* *signdu* *þau* ***sig*** *og* *sveininn* (Njála 281)
then signed they themselves and boy-the
'Then they made the sign of the cross over themselves and the boy'

(81) *Björgólfur* *kallar* *til* ***sín*** *Högna* *bónda* (Egla 374)
Bjorgolf calls to him Hogni farmer
'Bjorgolf calls for farmer Hogni'

The subject, i.e. the antecedent, can be also omitted:

(82) *Hvíldu* [_] ***sig*** *þar* *og* *eyki* ***sína*** (Egla 487)
rested$_{PL}$ [they] themselves there and horses their
'They and their horses took a rest there'

The reflexive pronoun may even appear before its 'antecedent':[30]

(83) *Þrem* *mörkum* *silfurs* *skal* ***sig*** *af* *hólmi* *leysa* ***sá*** *er* *sár*
three marks silver's shall him$_i$ of holm loosen he$_i$ that sore

verður *eða* *óvígur* (Svarf 1790)
becomes or unfit
'Anybody that gets wounded or unfit for fight has to pay three marks of silver to be redeemed from single combat'

Old Norse also exhibits separate 'reflexive' verb forms; verb forms which came into being by cliticization of the personal pronoun *mik*, reduced to *-mk* and the reflexive pronoun *sik*, reduced to *-sk*.[31] Thus, a verb like *kalla* may have its own inflection as a reflexive *kallask*, for instance in the present and past tense indicative:

[30] Cf. also:

(i) *Pictures of himself$_i$ don't bother John$_i$*. (Belletti & Rizzi 1988), quoted from Kuno & Takami (1993:155).

In the Old Norse example, the dative NP *þrem mörkum silfurs* has to be analyzed as an instrumental adverbial and not as the subject, i.e. not: *Three marks of silver shall redeem him who ...*, but: ***With** three marks of silver he who ... shall be redeemed ...* The subject is the phrase located to the right: *sá er sár verður eða óvígur*. Note that the right (dis-)located subject is rather complex. The 'normal' position of the subject is right in front of the reflexive *sig*. Thus, the Old Norse example is different from the English example (i) where *himself* is part of the subject, while the referential 'antecedent' follows the reflexive. In the Old Norse example, there is a 'potential' position before the reflexive, i.e. at least in deep structure the antecedent precedes the reflexive.

[31] Later *-sk* changed to *-st* or *-s*, e.g., *kallast* and *kallas* (Modern Icelandic only *-st*). A description of the historical development of st-verbs can be found in Anderson (1990:236ff.); see also, e.g. Noreen (1923:367ff.) or Nygaard (1905:154f.).

		Present tense	Past tense
Sg.	**1.**	*ko,_llumk*	*ko,_lluðumk*
	2.	*kallask*	*kallaðisk*
	3.	*kallask*	*kallaðisk*
Pl.	**1.**	*ko,_llumsk*	*ko,_lluðumsk*
	2.	*kallizk*[32]	*ko,_lluðuzk*
	3.	*kallask*	*ko,_lluðusk*

Table 17: *The inflection of Old Norse reflexive verbs*

Reflexive verb forms like these may have different functions, for instance, a **reflexive**, **reciprocal**, **inchoative** or **passive** and **medio passive** function, e.g.:

- **Reflexive** (the verbal action is pointed at the subject itself):

(84) *Þorbjörn klæðist nú skjótt og mælti ...* (Krók 1516)
Thorbjörn dressed-himself now quickly and said ...
'Thorbjörn got dressed quickly and said ...'

- **Reciprocal** (two or more persons or things have an effect on each other):

(85) *Og er þeir mættust þá mælti Gunnlaugur ...* (Gunnl 1190)
and when they met-each-other then said Gunnlaug ...
'And when they met Gunnlaug said ...'

- **Inchoative** (the subject is turning into another condition):

(86) *... því að hann mæddist mjög fyrir aldurs sakir* (Svarf 1815)
... because that he got-tired much for age's sake
'... because he got very tired because of his age'

- **Passive** (the subject is affected from outside and has a clearly objective role):

(87) *Á þessum þímum byggðist allur Breiðafjörður* (Eyrb 540)
on these times was-built all Breidafjord
'At this time the whole Breidafjord was built'

- **Medio passive** (the subject is both agentive and objective):

(88) *Einar bróðir hans lagðist niður og sofnaði* (LjósC 1692)
Einar, his brother, laid down and fell-asleep
'His brother Einar lay down and fell asleep'

Some 'technical' aspects of reflexive verb forms are discussed in chapter 4.3.3.3.

[32] The letter *z* stands for a dental + *s*. The dental is in this case *ð*.

3.2.8 Mood

The Old Norse modal system consists of **indicative** (declarative), **subjunctive** and **imperative**.

A. Indicative

The indicative may be called the 'unmarked' mood; it is used first of all to express what the speaker himself believes in, or remains neutral to, the assertion, i.e. the indicative is usually used for factual situations:

(89) *Það* ***var*** *norðanveður mikið* (Eyrb 611)
that was northern-weather much
'There was a strong north wind'

B. Subjunctive

The subjunctive is mainly used in two semantically different ways. The first use indicates the speaker's opinion of the assertion, if it for instance might be imaginable, possible or likely (usually called ***potential subjunctive***). The second use is to express the speaker's interest in the effect of the assertion. This applies to illocutions such as wishes, requests, invitations, commands, demands (usually called ***optative subjunctive***). Thus, the subjunctive in general is used for non-factual situations.

- **Potential**:

(90) *Það var sagt að þú* ***kynnir*** *ekki að hræðast* (Svarf 1790)
this is said that you could not to be-frightened
'It is said about you that you cannot be frightened'

(91) *... og spurði Hallfreður hver hann* ***væri*** (HallMV 1208)
... and asked Hallfred who he was
'and Hallfred asked him who he was'

(92) *"Ekki er það mín ætlan," sagði hann, "að svo* ***sé."*** (Gunnl 1167)
not is that my opinion, said he, that so be
'I don't think that it is like that'

- **Optative:**

(93) *Eigi vildi hann að hún* ***færi*** *til fundarins* (Harð 1287)
not wanted he that she went to meeting
'He did not want her to go to the meeting'

(94) *Vildi eg að vér* ***tækjum*** *upp leika og* ***væri*** *nú svo vel með*
will I that we took up games and be now so well with

oss sem þá er best hefir verið (GíslS 866)
us as then when best have been
'I want us to resume the games and I wish it would be as good between us as when it was at its best'

However, the distinction between potential and optative subjuntive is not always obvious:

(95) *"Það* ***væri*** *nú karlmannlegt," segir hann, "að þú* ***réðist*** *fyrstur*
that be now manly, says he, that you ride first

upp kleifarnar að Gísla og mundi þess lengi getið ef þú
up hills at Gisli and would this long told [be] if you

yrði *skaðamaður hans ..."* (GísL 950)
were harm-man his
'That would have been manly, he says, if you were the first to ride up the hills to Gisli, and that will be told about for a long time if you were Gisli's killer'

This is, of course, an imagined, i.e. unreal, situation. Thus, we may call this use of the subjunctive *potential*, although it is also clear that the speaker wants the listener to do as proposed, which we usually refer to as *optative*.

C. Imperative

Old Norse, unlike e.g. Modern English, has specific grammatical verb forms for the imperative. The different verb classes sometimes exhibit different endings in the singular, while the plural is the same for all verbs:

	strong verbs and weak *ja*-verbs	**weak _*n*-verbs**	**weak *ija*-verbs**	**weak _-verbs**
2nd pers. sg.	-	*a*	-	*i/-*
1st pers. pl./dualis **2nd pers. pl./dualis**	*um* *ið*			

Table 18: *The Old Norse imperative endings*

In Modern Scandinavian, the subject is normally omitted in imperative sentences, e.g. Modern Norwegian:

(96) *Gå* [-].
'Go!'

The subject may be expressed, but normally this would be to indicate *contrast*. Thus, an imperative sentence with a surface subject is normally considered marked in Modern Norwegian:

(97) *Gå **DU**! (**EG** har noko anna å gjere.*)
'**YOU** go! (**I** have something else to do.)'

On the other hand, in Old Norse, imperative sentences with a surface subject are rather normal without implying emphasis/contrast (see e.g. Nygaard 1905:8ff.):

(98) *Gakk **þú** út frændi!* (LjósA 1732)[33]
go you out friend
'Go out, kinsman'

(99) *Gangið **þér** með mér* (Njála 226)
go you with me
'(You) go with me!'

(100) *Göngum **vér** nú heim* (Njála 273)
go we now home
'Let us go home now!'

And, as a curiosity, some examples with the dual:

(101) *Gangið **þið** á fund hans* (Hrafn 1404)
go you-two on find his
'(The two of you,) go and find him!'

(102) *Göngum **við** nú fyrir konung* (Njála 127)
go we-two now for king
'Let us (two) step before the king!'

Nygaard (1905:8) states:

> Ved imperativ udelades ofte subjekt af 2den pers. ent. og flertal og fordetmeste subjekt af 1ste pers. flertal. Det gjør i regelen ingen forskel, om subjektet tilføies eller ikke, men skal personen særlig udhæves, sættes alltid pronomenet.
> 'In imperative sentences, a subject of the 2nd person sg. and pl., and in most case of the 1st person pl., is often omitted. Normally, there is no difference if the subject is added or not, but when a person is to have special emphasis, the pronoun is always used.'

There is no doubt that the subject (pronoun) is usually unstressed, because of the tendency to cliticize it. Compare the (a)-variants to the (b)-variants without cliticization; *þ* is reduced to *ð*:

(103) a. *seg**ðu** svo konungi að ...* (Egla 372)
say-you so king that ...
'Then tell the king that ...'

[33] The verb form *gakk* is an assimilated form of *gang*.

b. *Seg* ***þú*** *honum* *að ...* (GunKV 1146)
say you him that ...
'Tell him that ...'

(104) a. *Hafðu* *þetta* *nú ...* (GísL 946)
have-you this now
'Take this now ...'

b. *... haf* ***þú*** *nú* *allt* *saman ...* (LjósC 1681)
... have you now all together
'... you may take everything now ...'

Omitting the subject (pronoun) may perhaps be analyzed as a deletion of the same kind as other Old Norse empty argument constructions (cf. 4.6). Thus, imperative sentences with surface subjects are perhaps not formalized/grammaticalized in the same way in Old Norse as they are in Modern Scandinavian.

The imperative may not only express a command but also a request or a wish. Thus, the imperative may often be used with the same function as the subjunctive:

(105) *ver* *þú* *var* *um* *þig* (Njála 172)
be you aware of you
'be careful (about yourself)'

(106) *ver* *þú* *hvers* *mann* *níðingur* *ef* *þú* *þorir* *eigi* (Egla 445)
be you every man coward if you dare not
'you are a coward if you do not dare to'

(107) *haf* *þú* *mikla* *þökk* *fyrir* (Vopn 2002)
have you much thanks for
'I will thank you for that'

(108) *Kom* *heill* *og* *sæll* *frændi* (Njála 260)
come whole and happy friend
'Welcome, kinsman'

This will do as an outline of the most important features of the verbal inflection. I have also demonstrated elements of the adjectival inflection and will now take a short look at the nominal inflection system.

3.3 Nominal inflection in Old Norse

The nominal inflection is of major importance to the investigation of word order and information structure in Old Norse. The advanced case system, compared to, for instance, Modern English, or the Modern Mainland Scandinavian languages, allows different word order patterns that would still lead to unequivocal sentences, e.g.:

(109) a. *Maðrinn* *drap* *hestinn*
man-the$_{NOM\text{-}SUBJ}$ killed horse-the$_{ACC\text{-}OBJ}$

b. *Hestinn* *drap* *maðrinn*
horse-the$_{ACC\text{-}OBJ}$ killed man-the$_{NOM\text{-}SUBJ}$

Both sentences express the same semantic relation and there is no need to have recourse to, for instance, intonation to justify an object in the topic position for the reason of ambiguity. In the Modern Norwegian sentence:

(110) *Mannen* *drap* *hesten*
man-the killed horse-the

the default interpretation would be: *mannen* = subject and *hesten* = object. Under certain conditions, on the other hand, this sentence may express the relation of the *unmarked* word order:

(111) *Hesten* *drap* *mannen*
horse-the$_{SUBJ}$ killed man-the$_{OBJ}$

That means, in (110) *mannen* may very well be considered the object which is topicalized in order to get a special pragmatical effect like, for instance, **contrast**. Thus, a sentence like this is, in principle, ambiguous in many languages without case marking, e.g. in Modern Norwegian. But since a sentence is normally part of a broader context, this is usually not a problem.

3.3.1 Gender and stems

As shown above, the Old Norse gender category consists of the **masculine**, the **feminine**, and the **neuter**, e.g.

Masculine	Feminine	Neuter
bátr 'boat'	*dáð* 'deed'	*land* 'land'

Table 19: *The Old Norse gender category: nouns*

As we have seen, the gender of the subject determines the gender inflection of the past participle in predicate complement construction. Thus, gender is an inherent category for nouns, while participles, adjectives and determiners are inflected in accordance with a noun.

Within the gender categories, Old Norse nouns can be divided into different stem classes, each stem class exhibiting its own case endings. Consider e.g. the masculine paradigm:[34]

[34] Such a division is usually based on the Ancient Nordic stem endings which have mostly disappeared in Old Norse.

Masculine					
	a-stem	**i-stem**	**u-stem**	**an-stem**	**consonant-stem**
Sg. NOM	*bátr*	*gestr*	*bo,_llr*	*tími*	*fótr*
ACC	*bát*	*gest*	*bo,_ll*	*tíma*	*fót*
GEN	*báts*	*gests*	*ballar*	*tíma*	*fótar*
DAT	*báti*	*gest*	*belli*	*tíma*	*fæti*
Pl. NOM	*bátar*	*gestir*	*bellir*	*tímar*	*fætr*
ACC	*báta*	*gesti*	*bo,_llu*	*tíma*	*fætr*
GEN	*báta*	*gesta*	*balla*	*tíma*	*fóta*
DAT	*bátum*	*gestum*	*bo,_llum*	*tímum*	*fótum*
	‘boat’	‘guest’	‘ball’	‘time’	‘foot’

Table 20: *Old Norse masculine noun stems*

Likewise, feminine and neuter nouns may have different case inflection endings. The table of the masculine stems shall do as an illustration.

3.3.2 Number

As we have seen, Old Norse nouns have a **singular** and a **plural** form, e.g.:

	Masculine	**Feminine**	**Neuter**
Sg.	*bátr* ‘boat’	*dáð* ‘deed’	*land* ‘land’
Pl.	*bátar* ‘boats’	*dáðir* ‘deeds’	*lo,_nd* ‘lands’

Table 21: *The Old Norse number category: nouns*

In addition to the common system of singular and plural, the Old Norse pronoun system, also exhibits **dual** forms (cf. the examples in the section on imperative):

Singular	**Dual**	**Plural**
ek ‘I’	*vit* ‘both of us’	*vér* ‘we’
þú ‘you’	*(þ)it* ‘the two of you’	*(þ)ér* ‘you’

Table 22: *The number category in Old Norse*

3.3.3 Case

As shown under Gender and Stems, the different noun classes exhibit a variety of inflectional case endings in the **nominative**, **accusative**, **genitive** and **dative** singular and plural. These four cases descend from a larger number of Indo-European cases.

A. Dative

Especially the Old Norse dative case seems to demonstrate a combination of several functions of older cases. Thus, the **dative** may be used as:

- **original dative** (benefactive - referring to the recipient of an action):

(112) ... *og gefur Gísli* ***honum*** *kníf og belti* (GíslS 885)
... and gives Gisli him_{DAT} knife and belt
'... and Gisli gives him a knife and a belt'

- **instrumental** (referring to the instrument used in an action):

(113) ... *og ber hana* ***grjóti*** *í hel* (GíslS 872)
... and beat her $stone_{DAT}$ in Hell
'... and beats her to death with a stone'

- **ablative** (referring to the source of a movement):

(114) ... *að Hánefur hefir stolið frá honum* ***geldingunum*** (Reykd 1739)
... that Hanef has stolen from him castrated-horses-the_{DAT}
'... that Hanef has stolen the castrated stallions from him'

- **locative** (referring to the place in, on or at which an action takes place):

(115) Guðmundur segir: "Það skal og vera" og settist ***öðrum***
Gudmund says: "That shall also be" and sat [other

megin (LjósA 1732)
$side]_{DAT}$
'Gudmund says: "So shall also be", and sat down on the other side'

Locative dative also includes the 'place' in time:

(116) ... *að þau Helgi og Droplaug og Þorgils hefðu lengi*
... thatthey Helgi and Droplaug and Thorgils had long

*talað****einum degi*** (Dropl 354)
told [one $day]_{DAT}$
'... that Helgi, Droplaug and Thorgils had talked to each other for a long time one day'

B. Accusative

The **accusative** case is the typical case for the so-called 'direct' object, but the accusative may have other functions, such as the following:

- **direct object** (patient/theme):

(117) *Þar finnur Ólafur* ***spjót sitt*** (Laxd 1570)
there finds Olaf [spear his]$_{ACC}$
'There Olaf finds his spear"

- **measure** (in a few cases):

(118) *Hreinninn, er var* ***tvau rúm ok tuttugu*** (Iversen 1972:132)
Hreinn-the who was [two rooms and twenty]$_{ACC}$
'(The ship) Hreinn that had twenty-two rooms'

The same construction can also be found with the dative:

(119) (*skipit*) *var 30* ***rúmum*** (Heggstad, Hødnebø & Simensen 1975:349)
(ship-the) was thirty rooms$_{DAT}$
'The ship had thirty rooms'

- **local function** (together with verbs describing movement to express the way, the place or the direction):

(120) *... en hann fór* ***landveg*** *í Þrándheimi* (Egla 392)
... and he went land-way$_{ACC}$ in Trondheim
'... and he went over land to Trondheim'

- **temporal function**:

(121) *Hann hafði verið* ***langan tíma*** *vinur Ólafs pá* (Laxd 1619)
he had been [long time]$_{ACC}$ friend Olaf Pa
'He had been the friend of Olaf Pa/Peacock for a long time'

C. Genitive

Likewise, the **genitive** case has a number of different functions, the most important being the following:

- **possessive genitive**:

(122) *... að þar mundi vera Þorgerður dóttir* ***Egils*** (Laxd 1568)
... that there would be Thorgerd daughter Egil's$_{GEN}$
'... that Thorgerd, Egil's daughter, would be there'

Other types may be:

- **partitive genitive**:

(123) *Einn* ***þeirra*** *hét Böðvar* (Fóstb 820)
one of-them$_{GEN}$ was-called Bödvar
'The name of one of them was Bödvar'

- **objective genitive**:

(124) ... *og heldu þeir vestur um hafá vit* ***frænda***
... and held they west over sea on visit [friend

Bjarnar (Eyrb 538)
Björn]$_{GEN}$
'... and they went west across the sea to visit their relative Björn'

- **genitive specifying the kind**:

(125) *Eg hefi hér þrjár merkur* ***silfurs*** (Svarf 1818)
I have here three marks silver$_{GEN}$
'I have here three marks of silver'

- **genitive of description**:

(126) ... *því að Þórður er* ***mikils háttar*** *maður* (Þórð 2014)
... this that Thord is [much condition]$_{GEN}$ man
'because Thord is a man with many qualities'

- **genitive of definition**:

(127) ... *og svo að gerast* ***konungs*** *maður* (Egla 372)
... and so to become king's$_{GEN}$ man
'... to become a king's-man'

D. Nominative

The **nominative** case is primarily the case of the subject and the subject predicate.[35] Further examples should not be necessary. Nominative is furthermore also used corresponding to the **vocative** of, for instance, Latin:[36]

(128) *Þá situr þú,* ***Hermundur****, höfðingi mikill* (BandK 41)
then sit you, Hermund$_{NOM}$, chief great
'Sit down then, Hermund, great chief'

The nominative case can also be called the 'neutral' case, applying every time there is no element triggering another (lexical) case. Such 'elements', triggering oblique cases like accusative,

[35] In most cases, the subject is in the nominative. However, the subject may also be in an oblique case. To avoid the problem one could say: The nominative is first of all the case of an agentive/performative subject and possibly its predicate complement. See the discussion in 4.2 and elsewhere in chapter 4.

[36] Note that the case of the subject and the person addressed (vocative) are not necessarily the same. The Old Norse 'vocative' is always nominative, while the subject may have an oblique case, eg.:

(i) *Hvað hefir þig dreymt frændi?* (Njála 197)
What$_{(ACC-OBJ)}$ has you$_{SUBJ-ACC}$ dreamt, friend$_{VOC/NOM}$

(See also the previous footnote).

genitive and dative, may be **prepositions**:

(129) *Þangað fóru þeir* ***um*** *þing með allt sitt* (Harð 1280)
there went they [at thing$_{ACC}$]$_{PP}$ with all theirs
'There they went about the time of the thing/assembly with all their belongings'

(130) *Eg vil ríða* ***til*** *þings* (Njála 132)
I will ride [to thing$_{GEN}$]$_{PP}$
'I will ride to the thing'

(131) *Síðan ríða menn heim* ***af*** *þingi* (Njála 135)
since ride men home [off thing$_{DAT}$]$_{PP}$
'Later, the men ride home from the thing'

Case can also be triggered by **adjectives**:

(132) *Eg er nú átján vetra* ***gamall*** (Finnb 644)
I am now [eighteen winters]$_{GEN}$ old
'I am eighteen years old now'

(133) *Þórður var nokkuð* ***líkur*** *Gísla í ferðinni* (GísL 928)
Thord was somewhat alike Gisli$_{DAT}$ in behavior-the
'Thord behaved a little bit like Gisli'

Thus, case can be triggered by **a) function**, corresponding to separate cases in other languages, **b) prepositions**, and **c) adjectives**; other important case triggers, are of course, **d) verbs**. I will take a look at case triggered by verbs in connection with *valency*.

3.4 Valency

While, for instance, function or a preposition may subcategorize <u>one</u> argument/case, Old Norse verbs may be ***avalant*** (without any argument), ***monovalent*** (subcategorizing one argument), ***bivalent*** (two arguments), or even ***trivalent*** (three arguments):

A. Avalent:

(134) *Síðan* ***haustaði*** *og gaf þeim eigi byr* (LjósC 1709)
Since became-autumn and gave them not fair wind
'Then autumn came and they got no fair wind'

B. Monovalent:

With a **nominative** subject (intransitive):

(135) ***Gísli*** *gengur með honum* (GíslS 868)
'Gisli$_{NOM}$ goes with him'

With an **accusative** argument and no nominative argument:[37]

(136) *Bárður sagði að* ***hann*** *þyrsti mjög* (Egla 419)
Bard said that him$_{ACC}$ "thirsted" much
'Bard said that he was very thirsty'

With a **dative** argument and no nominative argument:[38]

(137) *Líkar* ***honum*** *nú vel* (BandM 18)
likes him$_{DAT}$ now well
'He feels well now'

The verb *líka*, and other monovalent verbs with oblique case, can also be bivalent:

(138) ***Honum*** *líkar* ***þetta*** *illa* (Flóam 761)[39]
him$_{DAT}$ likes this$_{NOM}$ ill
'He does not like this'

C. Bivalent:

With a **nominative** (subject) and an **accusative** object (transitive):

(139) *Síðan drap* ***hann*** ***þrælinn*** (Flóam 763)
since killed he$_{NOM}$ slave-the$_{ACC}$
'Later, he killed the slave'

[37] In 'tradional' descriptions, this is a so-called 'subjectless' construction. However, in chapter 4, the accusative argument will be analyzed as the subject.

[38] Cf. the previous footnote. Here, the dative would be the oblique subject in a generative description, cf. chapter 4.

[39] According to the analysis in chapter 4, the dative would still be the subject while the nominative argument is analyzed as an object.

With a **nominative** (subject) and a **dative** object:

(140) ***Hallfreður*** *hélt og* ***skipi sínu*** *til Niðaróss* (HallÓ 1231)
Hallfred$_{NOM}$ held also [ship his]$_{DAT}$ to Nidaros
'Hallfred also directed his ship to Nidaros'

With a **nominative** (subject) and a **genitive** object:

(141) ***Bessi Hávarsson*** *bað* ***hennar*** *og var hún honum gefin* (Dropl 348)
[Bessi Havar's-son]$_{NOM}$ begged hers$_{GEN}$ and was she him given
'Bessi Havarsson asked for her hand, and she was given to him'

In fact, there is also the possibility of **two accusative** arguments and no nominative:

(142) *... því að* ***oss*** *vantar* ***einn mann*** (HávÍs 1328)
... this that us$_{ACC}$ wants [one man]$_{ACC}$
'because we are lacking one man'

Moreover, a verb may subcategorize an **accusative** and a **genitive** argument and no nominative:

(143) *Eða* ***hvers*** *minnir* ***þig*** *um hversu mælt var með okkur?* (Laxd 1636)
or what$_{GEN}$ reminds you$_{ACC}$ about how said was with us?
'Or how do you remember our conversation?'

D. Trivalent:

With a **nominative** (subject) and an **accusative** and another **accusative** object:

(144) ... *en* ***Hallfreður*** *hjó* ***hann banahögg*** (HallMV 1210)
... and Hallfred$_{NOM}$ hewed him$_{ACC}$ death stroke$_{ACC}$
'... and Hallfred gave him the death stroke'

With a **nominative** (subject) and an **accusative** and a **dative** object ('direct' and 'indirect' object):

(145) ... *og gefur* ***Gísli honum kníf*** *og* ***belti*** (GíslS 885)
... and gives Gisli$_{NOM}$ him$_{DAT}$ [knife$_{ACC}$ and belt$_{ACC}$]$_{ACC}$
'... and Gisli gives him a knife and a belt'

There is also the possibility of having the relation 'thing' in the **dative** and the personal object in the **accusative**:

(146) *Leynt hefir* ***hann þessu alla menn*** (Laxd 1575)
hidden has he$_{NOM}$ this$_{DAT}$ [all men]$_{ACC}$
'He has not told this to anybody'

With a **nominative** (subject) and an **accusative** and a **genitive** object:

(147) Nú biður ***Vésteinn Gísla leyfis*** *að fara*
now begs Vestein$_{NOM}$ Gisli$_{ACC}$ allowance$_{GEN}$ to go

að hitta hann (GísL 911)
to find him
'Now Vestein asks Gisli's permission to go and find him'

With a **nominative** (subject) and an **dative** and a **genitive** object:

(148) ***Mér*** *léði* ***Leifur*** ***húsanna*** (GrænS 1107)
me$_{DAT}$ lent Leif$_{NOM}$ houses-the$_{GEN}$
'Leif lent me the houses'

In addition to case marked arguments, verbs may also have **clausal arguments**:

(149) *Þorkell biður hana* ***á brott fara*** (GísL 913)
Thorkel begs her [on way go]
'Thorkel asks her to go away'

(150) *Hann ætlar* ***að vísa oss á illmennu*** ***þessi*** (Flóam 756)
he intends [to show us on illmanthis]
'He intends to lead us to this evil man'

(151) *... ef Þórarinn vill* ***að þú farir*** (Grett 999)
... if Thorarin will [that you go]
'... if Thorarin wants you to go'

Thus, the valency of Old Norse verbs appears to be quite interesting. And, of course, a trivalent verb may be more interesting than a bivalent one because of the greater potential variation in information structure (surface argument distribution). On the other hand, an avalent verb might be interesting in other ways. I will now investigate Old Norse within a generative framework. In particular, I will discuss the definition of the subject in Old Norse. The subject definition has crucial implications for the analysis of Old Norse word order and information structure.