

# OBLIQUE SUBJECTS: A COMMON GERMANIC INHERITANCE

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We argue that subject-like obliques of the impersonal construction show behavioral properties of syntactic subjects in Old Germanic, contrary to standard assumptions (Cole et al. 1980). Subject tests, including control infinitives, reveal that subject-like obliques in Old and Early Middle English, Old Swedish, and Old Norse-Icelandic exhibit behavioral properties of subjects, as they do in Modern Icelandic and Faroese. We also present new data from Modern German, illustrating the same syntactic behavior of corresponding arguments in that language. Thus, we conclude that subject-like obliques exhibit behavioral properties of syntactic subjects from the earliest attested Germanic period onwards. Our findings contradict the standard view that these arguments were objects, which gradually acquired subject properties. We show that data from Gothic intended to support the standard view has been misinterpreted. Given the validity of our findings there are no grounds for reconstructing a stage at which subject-like obliques were objects in Germanic.\*

1. INTRODUCTION. Our goal in this article is to show that the nonnominative subject-like oblique of impersonal predicates (1) and dative passives (2) behaves syntactically as a subject in Germanic. We refer to this radical hypothesis as the OBLIQUE SUBJECT hypothesis. There is a consensus in the linguistic community that Modern Icelandic and Faroese exhibit oblique subjects, exemplified by the dative *mér* in 1a and 2a.<sup>1</sup>

- (1) a. **Mér** er kalt. (Icelandic)  
me.DAT is cold
- b. **Mir** ist kalt. (German)  
me.DAT is cold  
'I'm freezing.'
- (2) a. **Mér** var hjálpað. (Icelandic)  
me.DAT was helped
- b. **Mir** wurde geholfen. (German)  
me.DAT was helped  
'I was helped.'

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<sup>1</sup> We use the following abbreviations in glossing our examples: DAT: dative, GEN: genitive, ACC: accusative, NOM: nominative, OBL: oblique, SG: singular, PL: plural, INF: infinitive, REFL: reflexive, REL: relative pronoun, EXPL: expletive, PRO: unexpressed argument in a control infinitive, and Ø: unexpressed argument in a second conjunct.

In contrast, however, it is a standard view that the corresponding dative arguments in German (1b and 2b) are syntactic objects. This view is based on the assumption that subject-like obliques do not behave as ‘canonical’ subjects, but is NOT based on a comparison with objects (see Barðdal 2000a, 2002, 2006). These subject-like obliques have also been labeled LOGICAL SUBJECTS in the literature (see e.g. Helbig & Buscha 1988:58, 395 and Rivero 2004) because of their subject-like behavior in a grammar, where LOGICAL SUBJECT does not have to coincide with SYNTACTIC SUBJECT.

We present counterevidence to the standard view of German, showing that subject-like obliques pattern with indisputable subjects. Our main evidence involves control infinitives containing impersonal predicates and dative passives. We also discuss control infinitives in Old Norse-Icelandic, Old Swedish, and Early Middle English, in support of our analysis that subject-like obliques behave as syntactic subjects already in Old Germanic. This conclusion invalidates the hypothesis proposed in the influential Cole et al. 1980, according to which nonsubject arguments can gradually acquire subject properties in the course of time (henceforth the OBJECT-TO-SUBJECT hypothesis). Because this article is still cited as authoritative in current research (e.g. Mørck 1994:187, Allen 1995:153, Croft 2001:155–59, Faarlund 2001a:103, 131–32, Haspelmath 2001:75–79, Foreman 2004:15), we feel that a critical evaluation of its main claims is called for.

We offer a brief outline of the object-to-subject analysis, before we continue with a discussion of the subject concept and how it has evolved within the field of linguistics during the last decades. We argue that our definition of subject holds from the earliest stage of Germanic up to the present. A discussion of subject-like obliques in the various Germanic languages (starting with Gothic, followed by Modern Icelandic, Old Norse-Icelandic, Modern Faroese, and a consideration of data from Old Swedish and different stages of English) precedes a new analysis of the syntactic status of subject-like obliques in German. We present novel evidence in favor of their subject status. A comparison of the alleged syntactic differences in the behavior of impersonal predicates and dative passives in Icelandic and German allows us to show that these differences either simply do not exist or do not support the nonsubject analysis for German. We conclude with a demonstration that the historical changes, which Cole et al. 1980 posits for language families other than Germanic, do not exemplify an object-to-subject development and thus do not sustain the object-to-subject analysis. Therefore, there are no grounds for reconstructing a stage at which subject-like obliques were objects in Germanic or in any other language that we know of.

**2. THE OBJECT-TO-SUBJECT HYPOTHESIS.** Cole and colleagues (1980) examine the development of subjecthood of nonsubject arguments in a crosslinguistic perspective. In particular, they investigate Germanic, Polynesian, and Georgian historically. They claim that nonsubject arguments can gradually acquire subject properties over the course of time and that this takes place in stages in a specific order.<sup>2</sup> The subject properties they discuss are given in 3.

- (3) a. Nominative case
- b. Subject-verb agreement
- c. Reflexivization
- d. Conjunction reduction

<sup>2</sup> Cole and colleagues consistently label these arguments OBLIQUE EXPERIENCERS but we use the term SUBJECT-LIKE OBLIQUE since it is not a given that the arguments in question are all experiencers. In Icelandic, predicates selecting for oblique subjects belong to a variety of semantic fields and are not confined to experience-based predicates (Jónsson 1997–98, Barðdal 2001a:59ff., 103, 2004).

- e. Control infinitives
- f. Subject-to-object raising
- g. Subject-to-subject raising

Cole and colleagues follow Keenan’s 1976 classification in dividing subject properties into coding properties and behavioral properties. They regard nominative case and subject-verb agreement as coding properties and the remaining properties as behavioral.

One of the main hypotheses presented in Cole et al. 1980 is that behavioral subject properties are acquired historically prior to coding subject properties. This means that nonsubject arguments first start behaving as syntactic subjects before they show up occurring in nominative case and controlling subject-verb agreement. Cole and colleagues propose three historical stages in the development. They place Proto-Germanic at the first stage (A) with the obliques of the impersonal construction showing neither behavioral nor coding properties of syntactic subjects. They reconstruct this stage on the basis of data from Gothic (fourth century AD) and Modern High German. At the second stage (B), represented by Modern Icelandic, Old Swedish (1300–1550 AD), and Old English (900–1100 AD), the same arguments have acquired behavioral, but not coding, properties. Classical Old Norse-Icelandic (1200–1400 AD) is assumed to be located at an intermediate stage between stages A and B, because subject-like obliques in that language show some behavioral properties of subjects but fewer than in Modern Icelandic. At the third and final stage (C) these arguments, which already behave syntactically as subjects, have acquired coding properties such as nominative case and control of subject-verb agreement. In Germanic, this stage is represented by Modern English and Mainland Scandinavian. Modern Faroese, however, does not consistently exhibit nominative coding, as considerable variation between nominative and oblique case marking of these arguments can be found. This suggests that Modern Faroese is in a transitional period between B and C. Cole and colleagues predict that the acquisition of subject properties cannot take place in any other order, that is, object arguments do not first acquire nominative case, for instance, and then only later start behaving syntactically as subjects. We summarize the assumptions of Cole et al. 1980:720–30 in Table 1.

A	A → B	B	B → C	C
PGmc.	Old No-Icel.	Mod. Icel.	Mod. Far.	Mod. Sw.
Goth.		Old Sw.		Mod. Engl.
Mod. HG		Old Engl.		

TABLE 1. Stages in the development of subject properties of objects, according to the object-to-subject hypothesis.

We agree with Cole and colleagues that there has been a change from B to C in Germanic, but we do not consider it to be a part of a larger diachronic development by which object arguments acquire subject properties. We dispute the hypothesis that there has been a development from stage A to B in Germanic, and thus we reject the whole concept of acquisition of subject properties by objects. As we show in the course of this article, the assertion that Proto-Germanic instantiates stage A is unfounded. Hence, the evidence Cole and colleagues provide does not suffice to substantiate their claim of a development from stage A to B in the languages they investigate.

The presentation of the Gothic and Modern High German data by Cole and colleagues is an oversimplification of facts, since they do not present the whole range of data relevant to their question but only a small subset of it (see §4 below). For Modern High German, their claims conform to standard assumptions that hold that subject-like obliques of the impersonal construction in this language are objects. This view is partly

based on a comparison with Modern Icelandic and partly on the traditional axiomatic assumption that there is a one-to-one correspondence between nominative case and subjecthood. Modern Icelandic is renowned for having oblique subjects and nominative objects and a comparison of corresponding constructions in German has confirmed that subject-like obliques do not behave syntactically in the same way as in Icelandic. They have thus been regarded as objects (Cole et al. 1980, Zaenen et al. 1985:476–81, Sigurðsson 1989:350–51, 1991:329, 1992:17–19). But there are data in German that have not figured at all in the literature so far (except in recent working papers of ours), suggesting that the difference between Icelandic and German is not as extensive as hitherto assumed (Barðdal 2002, 2006, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003b, 2005). We review these data, and present additional evidence from German, in §9.

We return to the ideas of Cole and colleagues in §10. We show that facts of Georgian and the Polynesian languages, which they brought into the discussion, do not support the object-to-subject hypothesis either. We address the general methodological issue of what kind of foundation is required in historical linguistics as a basis for reconstruction. We turn first to our definition of subject.

**3. THE CONCEPT OF SUBJECT.** The concept of subject has been a matter of intense investigation during the last few decades, starting with Keenan (1976) and his contemporaries.<sup>3</sup> Before that, no attempts had been made to pinpoint the universal properties of subjects. Keenan discusses the behavior of arguments in a variety of languages and suggests a number of properties as characteristic for the universal subject. These properties are naturally divided into, at least, coding properties and behavioral properties, of which morphological case, subject-verb agreement, and position are coding properties, while controlling reflexivization and omission on identity in second conjuncts and in controlled infinitives count as behavioral properties.

In recent years, however, there has been a change in focus from universal properties of subjects to language-specific properties of subjects. It is thus doubtful whether a universal concept of subject can be maintained because of typological differences between languages and the great variety of constructions relevant to this concept. The main behavioral subject tests common to the Germanic languages are:

- (4) a. Control infinitives (PRO)
- b. Conjunction reduction
- c. Reflexivization

Certain other tests have also been applied in the individual languages. In English, Icelandic, Faroese, and Mainland Scandinavian, these include syntactic position, raising to object, and raising to subject. These are not applicable in German, however, since raising to object and syntactic position do not distinguish between subjects and objects. Some have argued that raising to subject should not be regarded as a subject property in German since constructions involving raising-to-subject verbs can occur with adverbials, nominative subjects, and subject-like obliques in clause-initial position (Reis 1982:192). (See, however, the discussion of position and intonation, and raising to subject in §10 below and in Barðdal 2002, 2006). Among the behavioral subject properties, control infinitives have been regarded as one of the most reliable subject tests for

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the development of the subject concept within generative grammar in particular and a comparison with other modern theoretical frameworks, see McCloskey 1997.

many languages (Falk 1995:203, Rögnvaldsson 1996:49–51, Moore & Perlmutter 2000, Faarlund 2001a, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:456–73). In particular, Falk (1995:203), in her discussion of impersonal predicates in Modern Icelandic, states that (our translation of the Swedish original) ‘The property which in my opinion is the most conclusive evidence for the subject status of subject-like obliques is their ability to be the unexpressed argument in control infinitives’. To clarify, control constructions involve infinitive clauses (a.k.a. PRO-infinitives), in which the subject of the nonfinite verb is left unexpressed on identity with the subject of the matrix clause.<sup>4</sup>

- (5) a. John promised — not **to repeat** himself.<sup>5</sup> (English)  
 b. Jóhannes lofaði að — **endurtaka** sig ekki.  
    Jóhannes.NOM promised to PRO.NOM repeat.INF self.REFL not  
    (Icelandic)  
 c. Johannes versprach, — sich nicht **zu wiederholen**  
    Johannes.NOM promised PRO.NOM self.REFL not to repeat.INF  
    (German)

The verb ‘repeat’, in English, Icelandic, and German, can select for a subcategorization frame containing two arguments, a nominative subject and a reflexive accusative object. In 5 the nominative subject of the lower verb ‘repeat’ has been left unexpressed on identity with the nominative subject of the matrix verb ‘promise’. In contrast, the reflexive object cannot be omitted in control infinitives despite the fact that it refers back to the subject of both the infinitive clause and the matrix clause in all three languages.

- (6) a. \*John promised — not to repeat —. (English)  
 b. \*Jóhannes lofaði að — endurtaka — ekki. (Icelandic)  
 c. \*Johannes versprach, — — nicht zu wiederholen. (German)

Syntactic subjects are also left unexpressed in nonantecedent control infinitives, in which case their reference is retrievable on the basis of the context.

- (7) a. It is boring — to repeat oneself. (English)  
 b. Það er leiðinlegt að — endurtaka sig. (Icelandic)  
 c. Es ist langweilig, — sich zu wiederholen. (German)

These examples show that the omission of a verb’s core argument in control infinitives does not apply to objects but only to subjects, and is thus a clear-cut subject property. In the discussion below, we focus on control infinitives because of their uncontroversial status as a valid subject test.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Jackendoff & Culicover 2003 for a detailed description of control in English, Kristofersen’s work on control infinitives in Old-Norse Icelandic (1996), Lyngfelt’s work on Swedish (2002), and Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005 for a comparative analysis of control constructions in Icelandic, Faroese, and German.

<sup>5</sup> In this article we consistently gloss the unexpressed argument of control infinitives as PRO in the glossing line. This is a purely descriptive label that serves only to distinguish unexpressed subjects of control infinitives from omitted subjects of second conjuncts, which we gloss as Ø. Whether PRO or some other technical device best accounts for the unexpressed subject in control infinitives is irrelevant to the discussion in this article. Thus, PRO.NOM stands for a nominative argument that has been left unexpressed and PRO.DAT for a dative argument left unexpressed. The exact location of the underlined empty slot in our examples is motivated by the position the corresponding argument would have in a finite clause. Observe, further, that in infinitive clauses the position of the infinitive marker varies from one Germanic language to another relative to this slot, preceding it in Icelandic, following it in English and German (Thráinsson 1998).

As seen in 5–7, ‘repeat’ can select for two arguments in English, Icelandic, and German, that is, for the subcategorization frame in 8.

- The argument that passes all of the subject tests in all three languages is the leftmost argument of the argument structure, that is, the one that we label ARG1. This is the first argument in an ordinary active declarative clause with neutral word order in Germanic. The rightmost argument, here labeled ARG2, behaves as a syntactic object in that it cannot be left unexpressed in control infinitives, and it is also the second argument in an ordinary active declarative clause with neutral word order in Germanic.

The same description holds for two-place predicates with a causal conceptual structure of the type 'bother' in all three languages. Examples of simple sentences are given in 9 and of corresponding control infinitives in 10.

- As is evident from 10 it is the leftmost stimulus argument of 'bother' in 9 that corresponds to the unexpressed argument in control infinitives in all three languages, while the rightmost argument, which typically refers to humans, is overtly expressed. The argument structure or subcategorization frame of 'bother' in English, Icelandic, and German is shown in 11.

- It is the first argument, ARG1, that behaves syntactically as a subject, since it can be left unexpressed in control infinitives, while the second argument, ARG2, behaves as an object, exactly as with ‘repeat’ above. In other words, all generalizations made

across the subject tests will be valid only for ARG1 and not for ARG2. Thus, ARG1 is a syntactic subject in English, Icelandic, and German.

Consider now the argument structure of the verb 'like' in English and Icelandic.

- (12) a. *like* [ARG1, ARG2]  
 b. *líka* [ARG1<sub>[dat]</sub>, ARG2<sub>[nom]</sub>]

The verb 'like' differs from 'bother' in that its leftmost argument is the experiencer argument, while its rightmost or second argument denotes the 'liked entity'. This is a consequence of a difference in the causal conceptual structure of these predicates and in the force-dynamic relations between the participants of the event (see Croft 1998, 2000, Barðdal 2001b). Because 'bother' is causative while 'like' is stative, their leftmost arguments, that is, ARG1, will denote different kinds of semantic entities, a stimulus with 'bother' but an experiencer with 'like'. The leftmost argument, ARG1 of 'like', however, behaves syntactically as a subject in both English and Icelandic, in spite of being in nominative case in English but dative case in Icelandic (see examples 17b and 18b below of 'like' in control infinitives in Icelandic). What is more, the nominative ARG2 behaves syntactically as an object in Icelandic (Bernóðusson 1982:37–41, Zaenen et al. 1985:447ff., Sigurðsson 1990–91:39–42, Jónsson 1996:144–58, Barðdal 2001a: 45–46, 2001b). Therefore, ARG1 of the verb 'like' is a syntactic subject in both English and Icelandic despite the difference in case marking in the two languages.

For German, however, the standard view is that ARG1 is the syntactic subject for all predicates except impersonal predicates and dative passives. One-place predicates/sentence types of the kind shown in 1 and 2 above have been regarded either as subjectless (Dal 1966:166–68, Abramov 1967, Helbig & Buscha 1988:52, Wegener 2001) or as containing a null (pro) subject (Grewendorf 1989:145–64, Cardinaletti 1990, Haider 1991, Sigurðsson 1992:17–22, Vikner 1995, Schütze 1997, Haeberli 2002). For two-place Dat-Nom predicates such as 'like', however, the nominative ARG2 has generally been viewed as the syntactic subject (Helbig & Buscha 1988:51, Bayer 2004: 25ff., Wunderlich 2006).<sup>6</sup> The last approach amounts to defining the nominative as the syntactic subject, and the syntactic subject as being case-marked as nominative. Such a view has also been implicitly or explicitly adopted for the Old Germanic languages (van der Gaaf 1904, Jespersen 1927, Keenan 1976, Butler 1977, Lightfoot 1979, Cole et al. 1980, Fischer & van der Leek 1983, van den Berg 1985, Faarlund 1990, 2001a, 2004, Mørck 1992, 1994, Kristoffersen 1994, 1996, Falk 1995, 1997, Fischer et al. 2000, Asgedal 2001, Haspelmath 2001, Croft 2001).

When we discuss ARG1 as being the leftmost argument of the argument structure of a particular predicate, we are not making reference to a thematic hierarchy of the sort suggested, for example, in Jackendoff 1972, Grimshaw 1990, or Dowty 1991, in which thematic roles are located in a particular ranking order relative to the hierarchy. On the contrary, we take the event structure of each verb and the force-dynamic relations between the participants of the event to be crucial for argument linking. That is, it is

<sup>6</sup> To be more precise, Wunderlich (2006) defines the subject as equivalent to the highest ranked argument of the argument frame, except with Dat-Nom predicates. For those he takes the subject concept to be derived from both argument ranking and morphological case, as evident from this statement: 'The generalization made in this proposal is the claim that the notions of HIGH[est argument] and NOM[inative case] are sufficient to replace the undifferentiated notion of (underlying) subject' (Wunderlich 2006:6). On our approach, however, the subject concept can be reduced solely to argument structure in both Icelandic and German, also for Dat-Nom predicates. The relevant data are presented in §7 and discussed further in §9. The existence of alternating predicates is crucial for the correct interpretation of these data and hence for our understanding of the subject concept.

the order of the arguments RELATIVE TO EACH OTHER, and not relative to any postulated thematic hierarchy, that determines the argument linking of each predicate (cf. Croft 1998, 2000, Fillmore & Kay 1993, here cited by Croft 1998). The core of our subject concept can be summarized as in 13.

- (13) The subject of a predicate is the leftmost argument of its subcategorization frame, here labeled ARG1. The internal order of the arguments is in turn determined by the causal conceptual structure of the predicate and the force-dynamic relations between the participants of the event denoted by each predicate.

On this approach, argument linking, and thus the internal order of the two arguments in a subcategorization frame, and the so-called thematic roles or participant roles are derivatives of event type, conceptual structure of predicates, and the force-dynamic relations between the participants. As derivatives they need not be particularly specified, given a proper and accurate analysis of conceptual structure (Croft 1998, Barðdal 2001b,c).<sup>7</sup> As our argumentation does not hinge on the nature of this analytical machinery, we refer the reader to Croft 1998 and 2000 for a proper explication and illustration.

Nevertheless, our operational definition of subject as the leftmost argument of a predicate's argument frame or subcategorization frame is compatible with all approaches to argument linking in which the leftmost argument of the subcategorization frame is, directly or indirectly, assigned subject status. This property is, in our opinion, the empirical core of subjecthood which all theoretical frameworks need to account for in one way or another (exactly as all theoretical frameworks need to account for the data discussed below, in particular the control infinitives). Thus, we do not attribute subject properties to any particular functional/structural position in the formal representation of the sentence as in classical government-binding (GB) and related theories, nor to the matching of a bundle of interpretable phi- or EPP-features as in the minimalism framework, nor to any specific ranking constraints as in optimality-theoretic theories. Our purpose here, which is more in line with the aims of basic descriptive theories than the aims of explanatory formal theories (in the sense of Dixon 1997:128–38, Haspelmath 2004, and Dryer 2006), has led us to the sufficient operational definition of the subject as being the leftmost argument of a predicate's argument-structure construction or subcategorization frame. How exactly this is interpreted and implemented technically into the various current theoretical frameworks is outside the scope of this article.

In the remainder of this article, we investigate the hypothesis in 13 for Germanic and we conclude that ARG1 is the syntactic subject in all of the Modern Germanic languages, including Modern High German, as well as in the Old Germanic languages. Thus, we argue that the alleged difference in grammatical relations between Modern

<sup>7</sup> In fact, there are examples in Icelandic of 'agentive' performance verbs with dative subjects for which the case marking of the subject is motivated, not by the thematic role of the subject, but by the speaker's attitude towards the content of the proposition (Barðdal 2004:119–25).

- (i) **Honum** vinnst vel.  
he.DAT works well  
'He is doing a good job.'

In such cases, the thematic role of the subject is in direct contrast with its case marking, which in turn shows that analyses based solely on thematic roles can be incorrect.



Icelandic and Faroese, on the one hand, and Modern High German and Old Germanic, on the other, does not exist.<sup>8</sup>

**4. GOTHIC.** Gothic is the earliest attested Germanic language, aside from runic inscriptions. It is more or less documented only in a virtual word-for-word translation of parts of the Greek Bible (mostly the New Testament) dating from the late fourth century AD. Since the text is a translation it is not very suitable for syntactic research, although certain systematic deviations from the Greek text have long been noted by scholars (Eythórsson 1995:18). Cole and colleagues (1980) argue that the dative of the impersonal construction in Gothic, that is, the dative that corresponds to what became a (oblique or nominative) subject in the Modern Germanic languages, lacks both behavioral and coding properties of subjects. They give the following examples to illustrate this (1980:721).

- (14) *inuþ-þis usdaudjam . . . waila — galeikan imma.*<sup>9</sup>  
 because-of.this strive.1PL well PRO.NOM please.INF him.DAT  
 ‘Because of this we strive to please him well.’ (II Corinthians 5:9)
- (15) *hvaiwa skuluþ gaggan jah — galeikan guda*  
 how should.2PL go.INF and please.INF god.DAT  
 ‘how you should live and please God’ (I Thessalonians 4:1)

Example 14 contains a control infinitive with the verb *galeikan* ‘please, like’, and 15 is intended to exemplify conjunction reduction. Cole and colleagues point out that in these examples the nominative, not the dative, is left unexpressed. Therefore, the nominative exhibits behavioral properties of subjects, while the dative behaves as an object. On their interpretation, these examples show that the obliques corresponding to those that later came to behave as subjects in Germanic did not behave as such in the earliest period.

This analysis is problematic in several respects. First, 15 is not an example of two conjoined clauses but of two conjoined VPs; thus, not only is the subject missing but also the finite verb. Next, both Gothic examples contain the verb *galeikan*, which can occur with various argument structures. We have scrutinized the Gothic corpus using a concordance (Snædal 1998) and found that in the whole Gothic Bible *galeikan* (as well as the unprefixed *leikan* and the compound *fauragaleikan* ‘like/please before’) occurs with at least three argument structures, listed in Table 2.

<i>N</i>	ARG. STR.	GLOSS
13	Nom-Dat	‘be pleasing to, please’
7	Dat-(PP)	‘like’
3	Nom-(PP)	‘like’
3	ambiguous	

TABLE 2. Argument frames of Gothic *galeikan*.

Cole and colleagues translate *galeikan* as ‘please’ in all of their examples. There is no doubt that Gothic *galeikan* and its Old Germanic cognates could mean ‘please’.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a formalization of this approach, we refer the interested reader to Barðdal 2006, where facts of Icelandic and German are discussed and formalized within the framework of radical construction grammar (see Croft 2001).

<sup>9</sup> All emphasis in examples taken from the literature is ours.

<sup>10</sup> The cognates of *galeikan* existed at least in Old English, Old Saxon, Old High German, Old Norse-Icelandic, older Faroese, and still exist in Modern Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, English, and some Mainland Scandinavian dialects.

But this verb could also have the meaning ‘like’ as it still does in Modern English, Modern Icelandic, Modern Faroese, and Modern Norwegian. Fischer and van der Leek (1983:352) argue for Old English that *lician* means ‘please’ when the stimulus argument precedes the experiencer, but ‘like’ when the experiencer precedes the stimulus. Our investigation reveals an analogous situation in Gothic. *Galeikan* renders at least three different predicates in the Greek original: *areskein* ‘please’, *dokein* ‘seem/find (good)’, and *eudokein* ‘be pleased with’. In 16, the Greek *eudokein* ‘be pleased with’ is translated into Gothic as *galeikan*.

- (16) in þisei    **mis**    **galeikaip**    in siukeim,    in anamahtim, in naupim,  
       in this.REL me.DAT is.pleased.with in sicknesses in reproaches in miseries  
       in wrekeim,    in þreihslam faur Xristu  
       in persecutions in distresses for Christ  
       ‘that is why I like sickness, reproach, misery, persecution, and distress,  
       for the sake of Christ’ or ‘that is why I find consolation in sickness,  
       reproach, misery, persecution, and distress, for the sake of Christ’

(II Corinthians 12:10)

These facts show beyond doubt that *galeikan* could mean ‘like’ as well as ‘please’. Our examination of the Gothic corpus reveals that in ten out of twenty-six instances *galeikan* means ‘like’. In seven of these ten, *galeikan* takes a dative subject-like experiencer and in three examples it takes a nominative experiencer subject. In only two occurrences does *galeikan* mean ‘please’ and in eleven occurrences it means ‘be pleasing to’. In all thirteen cases, *galeikan* takes a nominative stimulus preceding a dative experiencer (see Table 2). In effect there are two different verbs *galeikan*: the personal one meaning ‘please’, selecting for a Nom-Dat frame, and the impersonal one meaning ‘like’, selecting for a Dat only or a Dat-PP. The third *galeikan*, meaning ‘like’, selecting for a Nom-(PP) frame, is presumably a personal variant of the second *galeikan*. Thus, the differences in argument structure of *galeikan* correspond with the different meanings of *galeikan* in the examples from the Gothic corpus (see also discussion in §§7 and 9 below of alternating predicates).

In the whole Gothic corpus there are only four examples of *galeikan* in a control infinitive. They all involve the Nom-Dat argument frame, meaning that the nominative is the unexpressed argument of the infinitive, while the dative is the expressed argument and therefore behaves as a canonical object. But in all of these examples *galeikan* in fact means ‘be pleasing to, please’ and not ‘like’. Therefore, the construction in 14–15 above discussed by Cole and colleagues is not the impersonal one at all, but *galeikan* used as a personal predicate, meaning ‘please’. It involves not a Dat-Nom but a Nom-Dat argument-structure construction. The data that bear on this issue, however, involve the impersonal *galeikan*, with the meaning ‘like’, and a potential Dat-Nom construction. Cole and colleagues present no such examples in their discussion.

In the Gothic material, therefore, the examples of impersonal *galeikan* are few in number and not of the right kind to illustrate the syntactic behavior of the oblique. Moreover, the Gothic Bible is only sixty-eight thousand words of running text, a fairly small corpus. Interestingly, an independently compiled corpus of Modern Icelandic, which happens to be forty thousand words (Barðdal 2001a), does not contain a single example of an oblique subject being unexpressed in a control infinitive. This indicates that the frequency of impersonal predicates embedded under control verbs is low in Modern Icelandic, the language that (along with Faroese) is generally taken to provide the ultimate proof of the existence of oblique subjects, and therefore that a much larger

corpus is required to detect them. The lack of examples of such control infinitives in Gothic is expected, given the low frequency of such structures crosslinguistically, and therefore cannot, in and of itself, be taken as supporting a nonsubject analysis of subject-like obliques in Gothic.

5. ICELANDIC. Modern Icelandic is well known for subject-like obliques showing behavioral properties of syntactic subjects (Andrews 1976, Thráinsson 1979, Zaenen et al. 1985, Sigurðsson 1989 and subsequent work, Jónsson 1996, Barðdal 2001b, among others). Oblique subjects, therefore, pass the same syntactic tests as nominative subjects. We emphasize that oblique subjects in Icelandic do not exhibit the coding properties traditionally associated with syntactic subjects, such as morphological case and subject-verb agreement. It is self-evident that oblique subjects are not case-marked as nominative, but not equally clear that they do not control subject-verb agreement. Research on Modern Icelandic, however, has shown that verb agreement correlates with nominative case and not with behavioral subject properties (Sigurðsson 1990–91, 1996, and subsequent work, Hrafnbjargarson 2001). Therefore, we consider both nominative case and subject-verb agreement to be irrelevant to the discussion of behavioral properties of subjects. (We return to this matter in §9.2.)

Oblique subjects in Modern Icelandic behave as nominative subjects with regard to the ability to be left unexpressed in control infinitives.

- (17) a. Ég geri bara það sem mér er sagt að — **gera**.<sup>11</sup>  
 I.NOM do only it.ACC which me.DAT is told to PRO.NOM do.INF  
 ‘I just do what I am told to do.’ (gribba.blogspot.com)
- b. ekki það sem mér er sagt að — **líka** vel við.  
 not it.ACC which me.DAT is told to PRO.DAT like.INF well with  
 ‘not what I am told to like’  
 (www.dordingull.com/hardkjarni/dalkurinn/haukurd/dalkurinn03-auglysingar.html)
- (18) a. Hvað fær okkur til að — **gera** þetta?  
 what makes us.ACC for to PRO.NOM do.INF this  
 ‘What makes us do this?’ (www.anna.is/weblog/arc/2002\_06.html)
- b. Hvað fær okkur til að — **líka** ekki fólk?  
 what makes us.ACC for to PRO.DAT like.INF not people.the.NOM  
 í kringum okkur?  
 in round us  
 ‘What is it that makes us not like the people around us?’  
 (kaffi.blogspot.com/2002\_11\_01\_kaffi\_archive.html)

In 17a and 18a the nominative subject of the lower verb *gera* ‘do’ is left unexpressed on identity with the dative subject of the subject control predicate *vera sagt* ‘be told to’ (17), and the accusative object of the object control predicate *fá til að* ‘make’ (18). The same is true for the dative subject of *líka* ‘like’ in 17b and 18b. In other words, the dative subject of *líka* can be left unexpressed in control infinitives in Icelandic, exactly as ordinary nominative subjects.

<sup>11</sup> All attested examples, unless otherwise referred to, are taken from publicly available texts on the World Wide Web and are consistently cited as such with a reference to their URL location (without http://). We have particularly examined the sites from which our Icelandic examples originate, in order to verify that they are formulated by native speakers of Icelandic. Icelandic is, in contrast to English, for instance, not in wide use as a second language.

Conclusive evidence showing that unexpressed subjects in control infinitives correspond to subject-like obliques involves the syntax of floating quantifiers (Sigurðsson 1991). In Icelandic a floating quantifier agrees in case with the argument it modifies. In 19 the subject is in the dative case, including its modifying quantifier *öllum* 'all'.

- (19) *Þeim líkaði öllum illa í skólanum.*  
 they.DAT liked all.DAT badly in school.the  
 'They all disliked school.'

In the control infinitive in 20 only the dative floating quantifier *öllum* 'all' is found in the sentence while the dative subject *þeim* 'they' is left unexpressed on identity with the nominative subject of the matrix clause.

- (20) *Hvað ætlið þið að gera til að — líka ekki öllum svona*  
 what intend you.PL.NOM to do.INF for to PRO.DAT like.INF not all.DAT such  
*illa í skólanum?*  
 badly in school.the  
 'What are you going to do in order for all of you not to dislike school so much?'

The fact that the floating quantifier is in the dative case in the infinitive clause shows that the missing argument that it modifies is also in the dative case. Notice, therefore, that even though the morphological case of the unexpressed subject of the control infinitives of *líka* in 17b and 18b is not overt and therefore not directly observable as a dative, the important subject property in control infinitives is not whether an unexpressed subject is 'invisibly' case-marked. The important property lies in the empirical fact that the argument of *líka* that is left unexpressed corresponds to the dative of *líka* in an ordinary finite clause and not to the nominative (recall the discussion around examples 5–7 above). The case marking of the floating quantifier shows, once and for all, that the unexpressed argument in control infinitives corresponds to the dative subject argument of the equivalent finite clause. Moreover, the nominative of the finite *líka* in Icelandic behaves as an object in that it cannot be left unexpressed in control infinitives but has to be overt as in 18b. In addition, oblique subjects in Icelandic pass not only the control test, but also all of the other behavioral subject tests in Icelandic. For a more thorough discussion and more examples, we refer interested readers to the publications cited above.

The facts of Modern Icelandic speak for themselves. For Old Norse-Icelandic, however, there is an ongoing debate in the literature on the syntactic status of subject-like obliques (see the references in Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a). Space limitations prevent us from repeating the whole array of arguments brought forth in this debate but we note in passing that raising to subject, raising to object, syntactic position, and long-distance reflexivization all support our oblique subject hypothesis. However, the clinching argument for the existence of oblique subjects involves their omission in control infinitives. Unambiguous examples of this kind are attested in Old Norse-Icelandic. Examples 21a–c were reported by Rögnvaldsson (1996), while 21d–f were found by Barðdal and Eythórsson (2003a:458–59), here given with normalized Old Norse spelling.

- (21) a. *Þorgils kvaðsk — leiðask þarvístin.*  
 Thorgils.NOM said PRO.DAT be.bored.INF there.staying.the.NOM  
 'Thorgils said that he was bored staying there.'  
 b. *Þórður kvaðsk — þykkja tvennir kostir til.*  
 Thorður.NOM said PRO.DAT feel.INF two choices.NOM to  
 'Thórður said that he felt that there were two alternatives.'

- c. Hrafn kvaðsk — **sýnask** at haldinn væri.  
 Hrafn.NOM said PRO.DAT feel.INF that held were  
 'Hrafn said that he felt that it should be kept.'
- d. Hðskuldr kvaðsk — þat mikit **þykkja** ef þau  
 Hðskuldur.NOM said PRO.DAT it.NOM much.NOM seem.INF if they  
 skulu skilja . . .  
 shall depart.INF  
 'Hðskuldur said that it concerned him greatly if they should depart . . .'
- e. Indriði kveðsk eigi — svá á **lítask** . . .  
 Indriði.NOM says not PRO.DAT so on seem.INF  
 'Indriði says that he does not think . . .'
- f. Þiðrandi kvaðsk — **gruna** hversu . . .  
 Þiðrandi.NOM said PRO.ACC suspect.INF how  
 'Þiðrandi said that he suspected how . . .'

In Modern Icelandic most control verbs select for an infinitive introduced by *að* 'to'. As argued by Anderson (1990:264–67), however, there is a small group of control verbs that do not involve *að*. These are all *st*-verbs, including *kveðast* 'say (of oneself)' which corresponds to Old Norse-Icelandic *kveðask* in 21 (Rögnvaldsson 1996:61, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:457–58). The control infinitives in 21 are *leiðask* 'be bored', *þykkja* 'feel, seem', *sýnask* 'seem, appear', and *lítask á* 'think', all of which select for a subject-like dative, and *gruna* 'suspect', which takes a subject-like accusative. Again we stress that it is irrelevant here if we assume a technical description in which the unexpressed subject is 'invisibly' case-marked, since the subject behavior here lies in an argument's ABILITY TO BE LEFT UNEXPRESSED, as opposed to being obligatorily overt (see the discussion of exx. 5–7 above). In all of the examples in 21, the unexpressed argument of the infinitive corresponds to a subject-like oblique of the finite *leiðask* 'be bored', *þykkja* 'feel, seem', *sýnask* 'seem, appear', *lítask á* 'think', and *gruna* 'suspect', while the object-like nominative cannot be left unexpressed (see 21a,b,d). Moreover, these impersonal predicates consistently occur with a subject-like oblique experiencer and not with a nominative experiencer in the history of Icelandic (cf. Halldórsson 1982), with the exception of *gruna* 'suspect' in 21f, which occurs with a nominative experiencer in certain well-defined syntactic environments and idiomatic expressions, not at issue here.

It has, however, been suggested that *kveðask* 'say (of oneself)' in Old Norse-Icelandic is a subject-to-object raising verb and not a control verb (Faarlund 2001a:127–29), and that the *-sk* element of the verb is a cliticized oblique reflexive pronoun. On such an account, the dative of the lower verbs in 21a–e, and the accusative in 21f, would be 'raised to object' and cliticized as *-sk* to the matrix verb. A subject-to-object raising analysis, if maintainable, would still support our oblique subject hypothesis, as only 'subjects' of subject-to-object raising infinitives can show up as 'objects' of the matrix verb (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:461). A subject-to-object raising analysis is, however, untenable on formal grounds (Ottósson 1992, Rögnvaldsson 1996, Barðdal 2000b: 39, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:460–62). Although *-sk* has its historical origins in the accusative reflexive pronoun *sik* 'oneself', it is clearly a derivational suffix and not a clitic pronoun with these verbs in Old Norse-Icelandic (Ottósson 1992:66–69, 88–90). The same is true of Modern Icelandic, where the corresponding suffix is *-st* and the reflexive pronoun is *sig*. The suffix status of the element *-sk/-st* is evident from the

fact that the unsuffixed verb *kveða* ‘say’ selects for an accusative object and an object predicate, agreeing in number, gender, and case with this object, whereas *kveðask* (Mod. Icel. *kveðast*) ‘say (of oneself)’ selects for a subject predicate, agreeing in number, gender, and case with the nominative subject. This is shown in 22 (using Modern Icelandic forms for the sake of argument).

- (22) a. Hann kvaðst heita Njáll. (subject predicate)  
           he.NOM said be.called.INF Njáll.NOM  
           ‘He said that he was called Njáll.’  
       b. Hann kvað sig heita Njál. (object predicate)  
           he.NOM said self.ACC be.called.INF Njáll.ACC  
           ‘He said that he was called Njáll.’

If *kveðask/kveðast* were a subject-to-object raising verb, the alleged object predicate should turn up in accusative case, agreeing in number, gender, and case with the suffix *-sk/-st*, exactly as it agrees with the reflexive pronoun ‘oneself’ in 22b.

- (23) \*Hann kvaðst heita Njál.  
           he.NOM said be.called.INF Njáll.ACC

This syntactic structure, however, is nonexistent in Modern Icelandic and unattested in Old Norse-Icelandic (Kjartan G. Ottósson, p.c.). Instead, all examples of *kveðask* in Old Norse-Icelandic and *kveðast* in Modern Icelandic involve subject predicates as in 22a. Therefore, the examples in 21 have to be analyzed as control infinitives and not raising-to-object infinitives (see also Faarlund 2004:149–50 for Old Norse-Icelandic examples with *nefna* ‘call’ and *nefnask* ‘be called’, which show that *nefnask* takes a subject predicate but *nefna* an object predicate, as they still do in Modern Icelandic).<sup>12</sup>

The reader may object that the examples of subject-like obliques being unexpressed in control infinitives are quite few, and that if this were a structural property of Old Norse-Icelandic we would expect it to be more pervasive in the texts. The force of this objection, however, is not as strong as it might seem because predicates selecting for oblique subjects are also extremely rare in control constructions in Modern Icelandic (see Rögnvaldsson 1996:50, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:461, and the discussion in §4 above), yet they are accepted by native speakers. It wasn’t until after the dawn of the World Wide Web that it became possible, without great effort, to find such examples in written Modern Icelandic. Therefore, the fact that a particular structure is rare is not equal to its being unacceptable or nonexistent. In addition to the influence of Cole et al. 1980, the reason that earlier scholars claimed that the category of syntactic subject was gradually acquired in the history of Norwegian and/or Icelandic was either that they did not know of the examples in 21 (cf. Mørck 1992, 1994) or knew of only a small subset of them (Faarlund 2001a). Therefore, if there is any difference between Modern Icelandic and Old Norse-Icelandic with respect to control infinitives of imper-

<sup>12</sup> It seems, however, that *kveðask* ‘say (of oneself)’ could occasionally occur as a raising-to-subject verb in Old Norse-Icelandic texts, as is evident from the fact that its subject sometimes shows up in the dative case when the infinitive contains impersonal predicates selecting for subject-like datives (Rögnvaldsson 1996:62–63). Such occurrences have also been documented in Modern Icelandic texts with the synonymous verb *segjast* ‘say (of oneself)’ (see Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:452–54, 2005). A referee questions the validity of the examples in 21 since *kveðask* is an evidential verb (‘logophoric’ in the referee’s terminology) and they are known to develop idiosyncratic properties. While it is true that evidentials sometimes develop idiosyncratic properties, as we discuss at some length in Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:452–54 in relation to *kveðask*, it is unclear that this applies to the examples in 21. Besides, even though the behavior of *kveðask* as a control verb would be idiosyncratic in the sense that it is unexpected in this function, it still does not undermine the quality of the sentences in 21 as examples of control infinitives.

sonal predicates and dative passives, the difference would seem to be quantitative and not qualitative. As demonstrated in Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:458–62, all of the examples in 21 are philologically and linguistically certain.<sup>13</sup> Therefore they must be considered as valid evidence for control infinitives in Old Norse-Icelandic.

In sum, there is evidence that subject-like obliques in Old Norse-Icelandic exhibit behavioral subject properties in the sense of Keenan 1976. Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a shows that not only do these subject-like obliques behave as syntactic subjects with respect to control infinitives, but in other respects as well (see also Rögnvaldsson 1995, 1996, Haugan 1998, Barðdal 2000b). Thus, there is no demonstrable STRUCTURAL difference between Old Norse-Icelandic and Modern Icelandic with respect to impersonal predicates and dative passives, which again corroborates our oblique subject hypothesis.<sup>14</sup>

**6. FAROESE.** Faroese, a close relative of Icelandic, is another modern Germanic language in which subject-like obliques display all behavioral properties of subjects. The subject status of subject-like obliques in Faroese was first established by Barnes in 1986.

It should be noted, however, that there is a strong tendency to substitute nominative for oblique case on subjects in contemporary Faroese (Barnes 1986, Eythórsson 2001, 2002, Jonas 2002, Petersen 2002, Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003, Thráinsson et al. 2004, Jónsson & Eythórsson 2005). In the terminology used by Cole and colleagues, Faroese is currently undergoing a change from stage B to stage C. The verb *dáma* ‘like’, for instance, was originally constructed with a dative subject in Faroese, but nowadays usually occurs with a nominative subject (Barnes 1986:33).

- (24) a. **Mær** dámar væl hasa bókina.  
           me.DAT likes well that book.the.ACC  
           ‘I like that book.’  
       b. **Eg** dámi væl hasa bókina.  
           I.NOM like well this book.the.ACC  
           ‘I like that book.’

Nevertheless, there are still a few verbs that have resisted this change and can occur only with an oblique, and not with a nominative, experiencer subject in the language of most speakers. *Lysta* ‘want’ and *vanta* ‘lack’ are two such verbs. The examples in 25 are drawn from Petersen 2002:64; we constructed those in 26 on the basis of statements in Petersen 2002:69.

- (25) a. **Meg/mær** lystir at vita . . .  
           me.ACC/DAT wants to know  
           ‘I want to know . . .’  
       b. **\*Eg** lysti at vita . . .  
           I.NOM want to know

<sup>13</sup> We thank Guðvarður Már Guðmundsson at the Árni Magnússon Institute and Heimir Freyr Viðarsson at the University of Iceland for checking the examples in 21d–f against the original manuscripts.

<sup>14</sup> Some of the subject tests used in Modern Icelandic, such as clause-bound reflexivization and conjunction reduction, do not apply in Old Norse-Icelandic since, in that period, these tests do not distinguish between the subject and the object (Bernóðsson 1982, Sigurðsson 1983, Faarlund 1990, 2001a, Rögnvaldsson 1991, 1996, Mørck 1992, Kristoffersen 1994, Barðdal 2000b, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a). This means only that the number of subject tests for Old Norse-Icelandic is lower than for Modern Icelandic. As we pointed out above, subject-like obliques already show all behavioral properties characteristic of syntactic subjects in Old Norse-Icelandic.

- (26) a. **Mær** vantar pengar.  
 me.DAT lacks money.ACC  
 'I am short of money.'  
 b. \***Eg** vanti pengar.  
 I.NOM lack money.ACC

In recent work, however, Eythórsson and Jónsson (2003:215–16) show that *lysta* has started occurring sporadically with a nominative subject in Faroese. The control infinitives in 27 and 28 were, however, formulated by speakers who consistently use these verbs with an oblique subject and not with a nominative subject. These examples show that it is the oblique subjects of *lysta* and *vanta* in 25a and 26a that are left unexpressed in control infinitives in Faroese.

- (27) Tað **at** — **lysta** at vita sum mest, er ein jaligur  
 it to PRO.ACC/DAT want.INF to know.INF as most is a positive  
 eginleiki hjá fólki.<sup>15</sup>  
 quality with people  
 'Wanting to know as much as possible is a positive quality in people.'  
 (28) Tað **at** — **vanta** pengar, er ikki gott.  
 it to PRO.DAT lack money.ACC is not good  
 'Being short of money is not good.'

Examples of this kind confirm the validity of the oblique subject hypothesis for Modern Faroese, exactly as for Modern Icelandic and Old Norse-Icelandic.

**7. OLD SWEDISH.** It is undisputed that subject-like obliques in Modern Icelandic and Faroese exhibit all behavioral properties of subjects. This raises the question of the diachrony of oblique subjects in Germanic. As discussed above, there is compelling evidence for oblique subjects in Old Norse-Icelandic, though the evidence for Gothic is inconclusive because of the small corpus size and its limitations. Other Old Germanic languages may be more revealing in this respect. Indeed, there are examples from Old Swedish which contain control infinitives of impersonal predicates (Falk 1997:25).

- (29) a. Os duger ey — ther æptir **langa**. (c. 1450)  
 us.OBL suffices not PRO.OBL there after long.INF  
 'It is useless for us to long for that.'  
 b. Huat hiælper idher — ther æptir **langa**. (c. 1400)  
 what helps you.OBL PRO.OBL there after long.INF  
 'Is it of any help to you to long for that?'

The examples in 29 contain the verb *langa* 'want, long for', which selects for a subject-like oblique in Old Swedish. Both sentences date from about 1400–1450, at which point the morphological accusative and dative had already merged (Delsing 1991, 1995). These examples show that *langa* could occur in control infinitives in Old Swedish, and thus that the subject-like oblique is the unexpressed argument, a property confined to subjects. Examples of *langa* occurring with a nominative subject did not show up until later in the history of Swedish, and became common only during the seventeenth century (Falk 1997:26). Therefore, the unexpressed argument of the control infinitives in 29 corresponds to the subject-like oblique of the finite *langa* and does not correspond to a nominative. The oblique *os* 'us' in preverbal position in 29a is selected by the control verb *duga* 'suffice'; this example therefore cannot be taken to involve subject-to-subject raising but must be analyzed as a control infinitive.

<sup>15</sup> We thank Hjalmar P. Petersen and Zakaris S. Hansen for providing these examples.



Falk (1997:26) does not assume that subject-like obliques in Old Swedish were syntactic subjects on the basis of examples like 30, in which the nominative of the verb *thäkkias* 'consent to' is the unexpressed argument of a control infinitive, and not the dative of this verb.

- (30) Vm han      astunda    at —      **thäkkias**      minom son och mik.  
       if    he.NOM practices to PRO.NOM consent.to.INF my.OBL son and me.OBL  
       'If he practices consenting to my son and me.'

However, there are data showing that *thäkkias* 'consent to' could be used both personally and impersonally in Old Scandinavian, including Old Swedish (Barðdal 2000b: 42). The sentence in 30 would be typical for the personal use of *thäkkias* and is thus irrelevant in this debate. In this way, 30 is comparable to the Gothic examples of *galeikan* in 14 and 15 above.

We emphasize that in certain dialects of Germanic impersonal predicates exist that can occur in two opposite argument frames (see Bernóðsson 1982:37–38, Zaenen et al. 1985:469, Jónsson 1997–98:14–15, and Barðdal 2001b for Modern Icelandic, and Barnes 1986:37 for Faroese). It is crucial to the discussion of the syntactic behavior of subject-like obliques in the history of Germanic that we recognize the existence of such predicates. These ALTERNATING PREDICATES can occur as both Dat-Nom verbs and Nom-Dat verbs (see Barðdal 2001b for a thorough study of the syntax and semantics of this verb class in Modern Icelandic). The following examples of the predicate *falla í geð* 'like, be to (sb's) liking, please' from Modern Icelandic illustrate this alternation.

- (31) a. Hefur **þér**              fallið **þetta**      vel í geð?  
       has    you.SG.DAT fallen this.NOM well in liking  
       'Did you like that?'  
       b. Hefur **þetta**      fallið **þér**              vel í geð?  
       has    this.NOM fallen you.SG.DAT well in liking  
       'Has this been to your liking?'

When the predicate *falla í geð* 'like, be to (sb's) liking, please' occurs in the Dat-Nom construction the dative argument behaves as a subject, but when it occurs in the Nom-Dat construction the nominative argument is the subject. In accordance with the subject properties discussed in Andrews 1976, Thráinsson 1979, Zaenen et al. 1985, Sigurðsson 1989, and Jónsson 1996, Barðdal 2001b:49–53 uses nine behavioral subject properties to demonstrate that either argument behaves as a syntactic subject with respect to all the behavioral properties. The nine properties are listed in 32.

- (32) a. First position in declarative clauses  
       b. First position in subordinate clauses  
       c. Subject-verb inversion in questions and topicalizations  
       d. Clause-bound reflexivization  
       e. Long-distance reflexivization  
       f. Subject-to-object raising  
       g. Subject-to-subject raising  
       h. Conjunction reduction  
       i. Control infinitives

As shown in 31, the dative in 31a and the nominative in 31b both invert with the verb in direct questions, thereby behaving as syntactic subjects. The opposite is also true: the nominative in 31a and the dative in 31b both occur in a position following the main verb, thereby behaving as syntactic objects. We do not review any more of the evidence presented in Barðdal 2001b, but take it to be sufficient to add to the

discussion attested examples of control infinitives containing *falla í geð*. The examples in 33 illustrate clearly that the subject, be it the nominative stimulus or the dative experiencer, is left unexpressed in control infinitives in Icelandic.

- (33) a. að maður þurfi að vera haldinn þrælslund til að —  
 that one.NOM needs to be held severe.servility for to PRO.DAT  
**falla í geð** slík fásinna.  
 fall.INF in liking such craziness.NOM  
 ‘that one needs to be equipped with severe servility to like such craziness’  
 (lb.icemed.is/web/2001/6?ArticleID=905)
- b. Umræður um þrætuefni geta verið erfiðar vegna löngunar  
 discussions about disputes can be difficult because.of longing  
 til að — **falla** félögunum í geð . . .  
 for to PRO.NOM fall.INF friends.the.DAT in liking  
 ‘Discussions about disputes can be difficult [among teenagers] because of their need to be to their peers’ liking . . .’  
 (www.pjus.is/trigger/HA/Salfr-thydingar1-6.doc)

Observe that the unexpressed argument of the control infinitive in 33a corresponds to the dative experiencer argument in 31a, while the nominative stimulus is obligatorily expressed by the argument *slík fásinna* ‘such craziness’. In contrast, the unexpressed argument of the control infinitive in 33b corresponds to the nominative stimulus argument in 31b, while the dative experiencer is obligatorily expressed by the argument *félögunum* ‘the peers’.

Barðdal 2001b argues that alternating predicates of this type are accurately accounted for in a construction-based grammar, in which independent case and argument frames are regarded as constructions of their own. On such an analysis, there is only one lexical predicate *falla í geð* in Icelandic which can, however, occur in two different, but related, argument-structure constructions, that is, the Dat-Nom frame and the Nom-Dat frame, due to the bidirectional stative (or inchoative, for some other predicates) conceptual structure of the event denoted. On such an analysis, the dative of the Dat-Nom frame is ARG1 in our terminology, while the nominative is ARG1 when the verb occurs with the Nom-Dat frame.

The compositional predicate *falla í geð* is by no means the only one in Modern Icelandic that behaves in this way. Barðdal 2001b:54–55 counts at least 111 such predicates, showing that they are not in any way marginal in Icelandic, but rather a substantial part of the grammar. The Dat-Nom construction is also productive to some degree in Icelandic with compositional predicates containing the verb *vera* ‘be’ and an adjective (Jónsson 1997–98:35, Barðdal 2006–7). The mild productivity of the construction has been documented in German as well (Wegener 2001). A large subset, if not a majority, of these compositional predicates in Icelandic are of the alternating type (see 38a,c below for examples of the Nom-Dat construction).

Alternating predicates, however, are not found only in Modern Icelandic and Faroese. Allen (1995:112–17) argues, quite convincingly in our opinion, that alternating predicates also existed in the history of English.<sup>16</sup> The same argument has been made for the history of the Mainland Scandinavian languages (Barðdal 1998). We have also come across predicates that show characteristics of alternation, in both Old Norse-

<sup>16</sup> Allen (1995:114) lists the following predicates as alternating verbs in Old/Middle English: *eglian* ‘bother, ail’, *gelician* ‘like’, *hreowan* ‘pity’, *lapan* ‘loathe’, *lician* ‘like’, *losian* ‘lose, be lost’, *mislician* ‘dislike’, *ofhreowan* ‘pity’, *oflician* ‘dislike’, *ofhyncan* ‘regret’, *hyncan* ‘think, seem’.

Icelandic texts and the Gothic Bible. Thus, alternating verbs seem to be a common Germanic feature, already present in Old Germanic. Given their existence, historical research on the impersonal construction must take into consideration the possibility that the verbs under investigation may be of this alternating type. Therefore, the fact that the nominative can be left unexpressed in control infinitives does not, in and of itself, entail that the dative cannot be omitted in such constructions in other cases. Only when it has been established that the relevant predicate is not of the alternating type can such a conclusion be drawn. We suggest, moreover, in §9.3 that Dat-Nom predicates in German are alternating predicates.

**8. OLD AND EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH.** The claim that Old English subject-like obliques behave as syntactic subjects is not new (Harris 1973, Elmer 1981, von Seeffranz-Montag 1982, 1984, Allen 1986, 1995, 1996, Lightfoot 1999, Barðdal 2000b, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a, Hrafnbjargarson 2004). Allen 1995 provides a thorough discussion of the syntax of the impersonal construction in Old and Early Middle English and concludes that subject-like obliques pattern with nominative subjects and not with unambiguous objects. In addition to syntactic position, which is suggestive of subject status, Allen also discusses conjunction reduction, for her the most conclusive subject test for Old English. Conjunction reduction measures an argument's ability to control the omission of a subject in a second conjunct. Consider example 34.

- (34) and hine        genesodon gelome **eawfæste menn**        and —        be his  
       and him.ACC visited        often    pious        people.NOM and Ø.NOM by his  
       lare        heora lif    gerihtlæhton  
       instruction their    life rectified  
       ‘and pious people often visited him, and rectified their life by his instruc-  
       tion’ (Allen 1995:56)

In 34 the nominative subject of the second conjunct is omitted on identity with the nominative subject of the first conjunct. In 80% of cases where both subjects are nominative, the second nominative is omitted. Nominative subjects in second conjuncts can occasionally be left unexpressed on identity with an unambiguous object in a preceding clause. Such omissions take place in 1% of all possible cases. Thus, there is a sharp difference in the percentages of omission of nominatives in second conjuncts, depending on whether the controller is the subject (80%) or the object (1%) of the preceding clause. Allen (1995:54–56) further asserts that neither the topicality of the referent nor the relative order of the arguments plays any role in controlling the omission of subjects in second conjuncts.

Nominative subjects of second conjuncts can also be left unexpressed on identity with a subject-like oblique in the preceding clause.

- (35) þa    lyste    **hi**        þaes        & —        hine    genam.  
       then desired her.ACC that.GEN & Ø.NOM it.ACC took  
       ‘Then she desired that and took it.’ (Allen 1995:112)

If there is a subject-like oblique in the first conjunct, omission of the nominative subject of the second conjunct occurs in 50 to 60% of the cases. It is thus clear that the statistics for subject-like obliques are much closer to the statistics for nominative subjects than for unambiguous objects. On the basis of this statistical argument Allen (1995:112–15) concludes that subject-like obliques are in fact syntactic subjects in Old English.

The reader could now object that 50 to 60% omissions is significantly lower than 80%. But the relevant factors that block the potential omission of nominative subjects

in 20% of all conjoined nominative clauses have not been identified. It is therefore impossible to know to what extent these factors may be at work in conjoined clauses where nominative subjects are NOT left unexpressed on identity with a subject-like oblique in the first conjunct. In other words, it is impossible to know whether the constraining factors are GENERALLY more extensive when the potential controller is a subject-like oblique or whether the constraining factors are only COINCIDENTALLY more extensive in such cases. And examples with subject-like obliques in first conjuncts are relatively few, whereas the ones involving nominative subjects run into the hundreds. Given the low number of subject-like obliques in first conjuncts, it is not surprising that the percentages are not identical.

The most conclusive subject test Allen (1995) discusses for Old English is conjunction reduction. A further argument favoring the oblique subject hypothesis for earlier stages of English involves control infinitives. The evidence comes from Early Middle English and includes the following sentences (Cole et al. 1980:729–30, von Seeffranz-Montag 1982:133–34).

- (36) a. Good is, quap Iosef, **to** — **dremen** of win. (c. 1250)  
           good is said Iosef to PRO.OBL dream.INF of wine  
           ‘It is good, said Joseph, to dream of wine.’  
       b. Him burp **to** — **liken** well his lif. (c. 1275)  
           him.OBL ought to PRO.OBL like.INF well his life  
           ‘He ought to like his life well.’

In 36a the subject-like oblique of the impersonal predicate *dremen* ‘dream’ is the unexpressed argument of the infinitive clause, and in 36b the same holds for the subject-like oblique of *liken* ‘like’. Observe that the unexpressed subject-like oblique in 36a is not controlled by a nominative of any matrix verb but its reference is generic and retrievable as such from the context. The matrix verb in 36b is the modal *biren* ‘be obliged’ which itself selects for a subject-like oblique, on the basis of which the subject-like oblique of the lower verb is left unexpressed.<sup>17</sup> This example is thus comparable to the Old Swedish one, 29a. Moreover, these control infinitives date from a period before both *dremen* and *liken* started occurring with a nominative experiencer subject (Cole et al. 1980:729, Allen 1986:381). Thus, the examples with *dremen* and *liken* are unlikely to involve an unexpressed nominative subject but must involve a subject-like oblique.

For dative passives, Allen argues that the subject-like dative is not a syntactic subject with passives of ditransitive verbs, since a nominative subject in a second conjunct is never left unexpressed on identity with a subject-like dative in a first conjunct (1995: 52–54). It thus seems that there is a difference between impersonal predicates and dative passives in Old English with respect to the syntactic behavior of the subject-like oblique, a difference not found, for instance, in Modern Icelandic (see Zaenen et al. 1985). Allen, however, also reports that when the argument structure of a passive sentence is Dat-S(entence) or Dat-PP, and not Dat-Nom, the subject-like dative can control omission of a nominative subject in a second conjunct (1995:54, n. 34, 116–17). These data show that there is conflicting evidence on the behavioral properties of subject-like obliques of passives in Old English. As we discuss below (§9.2), this situation is analogous to agreement variation with ditransitive dative passives in Modern Icelandic.

<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of, and an argumentation against, a monoclausal analysis for 36b, see Barðdal & Eythórrsson 2005.

The object-to-subject analysis has recently been adopted by Croft (2001:155–59) who argues that experiencer verbs in the history of English develop in cycles. Croft does not question the account presented in Cole et al. 1980 of the Gothic and Modern High German data and even takes that analysis one step further. He argues that there are experiencer verbs in Modern English that are at stage A, showing that English has started a new cycle. These predicates are exemplified in the sentences in 37 (Croft 2001:159).

- (37) a. The performers **were** barely **visible** to the ticket holders in the second gallery.  
 b. It **seems** to me that you should move it a couple of feet to the left.  
 c. The news of their engagement **was** already **known** to everyone.

Croft claims that these predicates have emerged in Modern English, where the experiencer is, or has become, an oblique. This construction, however, has parallels in other Germanic languages, for example, Icelandic and German. The fact that the construction is partly filled with cognate lexical items, and partly with synonymous lexical items, in these three languages suggests that it did not arise independently in each but is a common Germanic inheritance. Consider the following examples from Modern Icelandic.

- (38) a. Það **er** mér **sýnilegt**.  
 it.NOM is me.DAT visible  
 'It is visible to me.'  
 b. Það **sæmir** mér.  
 it.NOM is.proper me.DAT  
 'It is suitable for me.'  
 c. Það **er** mér **kunnugt**.  
 it.NOM is me.DAT known  
 'It is known to me.'

Examples 38a and 38c involve the verb *vera* 'be' together with an adjective, while the verb in 38b, *sæma* 'be proper', is cognate to English *seem*.<sup>18</sup>

All of the predicates in 38 are of the alternating type, discussed in the previous section, in which either argument behaves as a subject and the other as an object, depending on the argument structure (see the list in Barðdal 2001b:54–55). In English, then, the original Dat-Nom construction has fallen into disuse (or changed to Nom-Acc, as with *like*), while the other equally original Nom-Dat construction has developed into a Nom-PP construction (see Barðdal 1998 for a discussion of a similar development in the history of Mainland Scandinavian). This is certainly an interesting development but not in any way comparable to objects changing into subjects, as predicted by the object-to-subject hypothesis. Simply because an object has been replaced by an 'oblique' (or a PP in this case), it does not follow that this oblique is of the same kind

<sup>18</sup> Harris and Campbell (1995:88–89) argue that *seem* was in the process of undergoing a change from dative experiencer (object) to nominative experiencer (subject) verb in Middle English, but that this development was reversed and the dative experiencer maintained its morphological case in a postverbal position, later becoming a PP like other postverbal dative experiencers. But given the fact that Icelandic *sæma*, the cognate of *seem*, is an alternating verb (Barðdal 2001b:54–55), it is more reasonable to assume that both constructions existed from early on (i.e. Nom(stim)-Dat(exp) and Dat(exp)-Nom(stim)) and that the experiencer-first construction was subject to nominative substitution (see §10) before it fell into disuse, whereas the stimulus-first construction was maintained in English. Thus, Harris and Campbell's analysis, which involves argument swapping and then its reversal, need not be invoked, since all that happened was a short-lasting effect of nominative substitution on the experiencer-first construction before it was lost with *seem*.

as oblique (or nonnominative) subjects that later acquired nominative case. Moreover, even though a new starting point for a possible cycle may have been reached it is not a given that a new cycle will ever begin. As far as we are aware, there are no indications of any subject behavior of, for instance, the argument *the ticket holders* in the oblique (PP) in ex. 37a in Modern English.

To summarize, we have shown that there are structures in Old and Early Middle English that favor the oblique subject hypothesis over the object-to-subject hypothesis.

**9. GERMAN.** There is a consensus in the linguistic community that subject-like obliques of impersonal predicates and dative passives are not syntactic subjects in Modern High German as they are in Icelandic and Faroese (Cole et al. 1980, Reis 1982, Zaenen et al. 1985, Sigurðsson 1989, 1992, 2002a, Fischer & Blaszczak 2001, Haspelmath 2001, Fanselow 2002, Stepanov 2003, Bayer 2004, Haider 2005, Wunderlich 2006). The data presented in the literature to support this analysis mostly involve conjunction reduction and control infinitives. The following examples are from Cole et al. 1980:727–28.

- (39) a. **Uns** wird von der Polizei geholfen. (passive)  
 us.DAT be(comes) by the police helped  
 ‘We are helped by the police.’  
 b. **Wir** werden von der Polizei gesehen. (passive)  
 we.NOM be(come) by the police seen  
 ‘We are seen by the police.’  
 (40) a. \***Wir** möchten — von der Polizei **geholfen werden**. (control)  
 we.NOM want PRO.DAT by the police helped be(come).INF  
 Intended: ‘We want to be helped by the police.’  
 b. **Wir** möchten nicht — von der Polizei **gesehen werden**. (control)  
 we.NOM want not PRO.NOM by the police seen  
 be(come).INF  
 ‘We do not want to be seen by the police.’

These examples show that a dative object of an active sentence retains its dative case in the passive form (39a). This dative, however, cannot be left unexpressed in a control infinitive (40a), whereas the nominative of *gesehen werden* ‘be seen’ (39b) is omitted (40b).

Likewise, in 41a the subject-like oblique of *gefallen* ‘please, like’ cannot be left unexpressed in a control infinitive, while 41b shows that the nominative is left unexpressed.

- (41) a. \***Ich** versuchte, — diese Damen **zu gefallen**.<sup>19</sup> (control)  
 I.NOM tried PRO.DAT these ladies.NOM to ge.fall.INF  
 Intended: ‘I tried to like these ladies.’  
 b. **Diese Damen** versuchten, — mir **zu gefallen**. (control)  
 these ladies.NOM tried PRO.NOM me.DAT to ge.fall.INF  
 ‘These ladies tried to be liked by me.’

Finally, the examples in 42 show that the nominative of *verhaftet werden* ‘be arrested’ can be omitted in second conjuncts on identity with a nominative in the first conjunct,

<sup>19</sup> Since the meaning of German *gefallen* seems to stretch from ‘please’ to ‘be to (sb’s) liking’ to ‘like’ we have chosen to gloss it as ‘ge.fall’ but give the appropriate English translation in the third line.

whereas such omission of the dative of *geholfen werden* 'be helped' is considered ungrammatical.<sup>20</sup>

- (42) a. Er kam und — wurde verhaftet. (conjunction reduction)  
 he.NOM came and Ø.NOM be(came) arrested  
 'He came and was arrested.'
- b. \*Er kam und — wurde geholfen. (conjunction reduction)  
 he.NOM came and Ø.DAT be(came) helped  
*Intended:* 'He came and was helped.'

The data in 40–42 have been taken to show beyond doubt that subject-like obliques are not syntactic subjects in German, that is, that they exhibit neither behavioral nor coding properties of subjects.

**9.1. EVIDENCE FOR SUBJECT STATUS.** In recent work comparing Icelandic and German, the nonsubject analysis of subject-like obliques has been rejected for German on the basis of examples showing that subject-like obliques behave as syntactic subjects with respect to binding properties, omission in second conjuncts, and control infinitives (Barðdal 2002:72–78, 2006, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003b, 2005). We now discuss these properties and present data that are incompatible with a nonsubject analysis of subject-like obliques in German but support a subject analysis.

REFLEXIVIZATION: Von See Franz-Montag (1982:167), Haspelmath (2001:71), Barðdal (2002:72, 2006), and Stepanov (2003:6) show that subject-like obliques can control reflexivization in German. Sentences from the years 1643 (43a), 1822 (43b), and 1992 (43c) illustrate this.

- (43) a. **Mir** grauet vor **mir selbst**.  
 me.DAT shudders for me self  
 'I have a horror of myself.'  
 (www.pinselpark.de/literatur/g/gryphius/mirgrauet.html)
- b. **Ihn** ekelt vor **sich selbst**;  
 him.ACC disgusts for self self  
 'He feels disgusted by himself;' (www.herzattacke.de/dateien/hat/hat4-89.pdf)
- c. und was man für Angst hat und wie es **einem** graust vor  
 and what one for fear has and how it one.DAT shudders for  
**sich selber**  
 self self  
 'and how afraid you are and how horrified you are by (the idea of)  
 yourself' (www.andrip.de/kind/gutacht/2423gean.rtf)

These examples show that the ability of the subject-like oblique to control reflexivization is not new in German, but has existed for centuries.

Some linguists have claimed that the subject property of reflexivization in Modern German has to do with whether an argument can control reflexivization of another direct argument as opposed to a PP; that is, only subjects can control reflexivization of a direct argument, while objects can also control reflexivization into a PP (see e.g. Haider 2005:26). If this claim were right, it would be impossible to show that subject-

<sup>20</sup> To avoid being caught up in a debate on the relation between (un)grammaticality and (un)acceptability, we consistently refer to (un)acceptability in the remainder of this article, except when we report on the grammaticality judgments discussed by other scholars in the existing literature.

like obliques in German display this property, since the only two-place impersonal predicates in Modern German are Dat-Nom predicates, and a nominative form is of course consistently lacking in the paradigm of reflexive pronouns. Therefore, although the behavior of the subject-like obliques in 43 is compatible with a subject analysis, such examples would not count as conclusive evidence.

This claim, however, is at odds with the facts, since for many German speakers there is an asymmetry in the binding properties of subjects and objects with respect to PPs (see Barðdal 2006). Example 44a illustrates that an object can bind either an anaphor or a reflexive pronoun, while example 44b shows that for the same speakers a subject can bind only a reflexive and not an anaphor.

- (44) a. Ich gab ihm<sub>i</sub> die Fotos von ihm<sub>i</sub>/sich<sub>i</sub>. (object binding)  
 I.NOM gave him.DAT the.ACC photos of him/himself.REFL  
 'I gave him the photos of himself.'  
 b. Er<sub>i</sub> nahm die Fotos von \*ihm<sub>i</sub>/sich<sub>i</sub>. (subject binding)  
 he.NOM took the.ACC photos of him/himself.REFL  
 'He took the photos of himself.'

Moreover, subject-like obliques in German behave like subjects in that they can bind only reflexives and not anaphors.

- (45) Ihm<sub>i</sub> mißfallen die Fotos von \*ihm<sub>i</sub>/sich<sub>i</sub>. (subject binding)  
 him.DAT dislikes the.NOM photos of him/himself.REFL  
 'He dislikes the photos of himself.'

This asymmetry in the binding properties of subjects and objects is found for those German speakers who do not allow subjects to bind anaphors (see Kiss 2003:163, n. 6 on speaker variation with anaphoric binding of subjects in German). Hence, subject-like obliques in German behave as nominative subjects, and not as objects, with regard to the ability to control reflexives.

CONJUNCTION REDUCTION: Following von Seeffranz-Montag (1982:167), Barðdal (2002:72–73) and Barðdal and Eythórsson (2003b:2–3) argue that conjunction reduction is sensitive not only to grammatical relations but also to morphological case. They present examples showing that subject-like accusatives/datives can be omitted in conjoined clauses if they are coreferential with another subject-like accusative/dative in the first conjunct, as in 46.

- (46) a. Ich kam nach Hause und — ging sofort ins Bett.  
 I.NOM came to home and Ø.NOM went immediately to bed  
 'I came home and went to bed straight away.' (nominative)  
 b. Mich hungert nach Süßigkeiten und — dürstet nach  
 me.ACC hungers for sweets and Ø.ACC thirsts for  
 Flüssigkeiten. (accusative)  
 liquids  
 'I have a craving for sweets and liquid.'  
 c. Mir wird's schlecht und — graut's vor der Zukunft. (dative)  
 me.DAT is.(i)t bad and Ø.DAT fear.(i)t for the future  
 'I feel sick and fear for the future.'

In 46a both *kommen* 'come' and *gehen* 'go' take a nominative subject. In 46b *hungern* 'hunger' and *dürsten* 'thirst' both select for a subject-like accusative. And, in 46c both *schlecht sein* 'be sick' and *grauen* 'fear' select for a subject-like dative. These examples therefore show that the subject-like oblique, accusative or dative, of impersonal predi-



cates in German can be omitted in conjunction reduction on identity with another subject-like oblique bearing the same morphological case.

Moreover, for German, a nominative can be omitted only on identity with another nominative, an accusative only on identity with another accusative, and so on.

- (47) a. \***Ihm** war kalt und — zog sich einen Pulli an.  
 him.DAT was cold and Ø.NOM drew himself a sweater on  
*Intended:* 'He was freezing and put on a sweater.'
- b. \***Ihm** hungert nach Brot, aber — gefällt nicht das  
 him.ACC hungers for bread but Ø.DAT *ge.falls* not this  
 schreckliche Brot, daß es im Gefängnis gibt.  
 horrible bread that it in prison exists  
*Intended:* 'He longs for bread but doesn't like the horrible bread they have in prison.'

Examples 46–47 may lead one to conclude that conjunction reduction is sensitive only to morphological case and not to grammatical relations. However, a subject-like oblique in dative case cannot be omitted on identity with a dative object in a first conjunct (48a), a dative object cannot be omitted on identity with a subject-like dative in a first conjunct (48b), and a dative object cannot be omitted on identity with another dative object in a first conjunct (48c).

- (48) a. \***Sie** droht **mir<sub>i</sub>**, und — <sub>i</sub> gefällt es nicht.  
 she.NOM threatens me.DAT and Ø.DAT *ge.falls* it not  
*Intended:* 'She threatens me and (I) dislike that.'
- b. \***Mir<sub>i</sub>** gefällt es nicht, aber sie droht — <sub>i</sub>.  
 me.DAT *ge.falls* it not but she.NOM threatens Ø.DAT  
*Intended:* 'I don't like it but she threatens (me).'
- c. \***Sie** will **mir<sub>i</sub>** nicht helfen und stattdessen droht sie  
 she.NOM will me.DAT not help and instead threatens she.NOM  
 — <sub>i</sub>.  
 Ø.DAT  
*Intended:* 'She doesn't want to help me and threatens (me) instead.'

Examples 46–48 illustrate that conjunction reduction in German is sensitive to grammatical relations and singles out the subject, not the object. These examples also show that the subject of the second conjunct must carry the same morphological case as the subject of the first conjunct. Thus, subject-like obliques pattern with unambiguous subjects and not with unambiguous objects.

Similar facts have, indeed, been reported for Faroese. Barnes (1986:29–31) observes that a subset of Faroese speakers accepts conjunction reduction only on identity with a subject in the same morphological case, while for other speakers case-marking identity is not a requirement. In Icelandic, where case-marking identity is not required either, omission on non-case-marking identity has in fact been frowned on by prescriptivists (Hálfdanarson 1984:9) and is considered awkward by at least some Icelandic speakers (Kjartan G. Ottósson, p.c.). These restrictions on conjunction reduction of subject-like obliques may be due to the relative infrequency of impersonal predicates, in particular in German, where they are gradually falling into disuse and exist more or less only as fixed set phrases (von Seefranz-Montag 1982:200, 1984:541). As Barðdal pointed out (2000b:46), given the fossilization of impersonal predicates in German, their lack of syntactic flexibility is expected (see also the discussion in n. 28).

(49) **Ihm<sub>i</sub>** hat kein Rat geholfen und — **i** wird keiner  
him.DAT has no advice.NOM helped and Ø.DAT will no.one.NOM  
schaden können.  
hurt can  
‘No advice has helped him and no one will be able to harm (him).’

(50) a. In den Wald ging **der** Jäger<sub>i</sub> und —<sub>i</sub> schoss  
into the woods walked the.NOM hunter and Ø.NOM shot  
einen Hasen.  
a hare  
'The hunter walked into the woods and shot a hare.'

b. \*Im Zoo schauderte **mir**<sub>i</sub> vor Bären und —<sub>i</sub> würde auch im  
in.the zoo shuddered me.DAT at bears and Ø.DAT would also in  
Wald davor schaudern.  
woods at.that shudder  
*Intended:* 'I shuddered at bears in the zoo and would also shudder at  
them in the woods.'

While we have no reason to question the grammaticality judgment of the sentence in 50b, we still take issue with Haider on this matter, arguing that his fronted-object drop account is problematic in at least three respects. First, we can present examples that show that ordinary subject-like obliques in German can be left unexpressed on identity with inverted subject-like obliques, a behavior that according to Haider is confined to subjects.

- (51) a. Deswegen hungert **mich**<sub>i</sub> nach Süßigkeiten und —<sub>i</sub> dürstet  
because.of.that hungers me.ACC for sweets and Ø.ACC thirsts  
nach Flüssigkeiten.  
for liquids  
'Because of that I have a craving for sweets and a longing for liquid.'

- b. . . . und dadurch wurde **mir**<sub>i</sub> plötzlich so übel aber  
 and due.to.that be(came) me.DAT all.of.a.sudden so sick but  
 — <sub>i</sub> begann glücklicherweise nicht zu schwindeln.  
 Ø.DAT started luckily not to feel.dizzy  
 ‘. . . and because of all this I started feeling so sick but fortunately (I)  
 didn’t feel dizzy.’

These examples demonstrate that it is not as clear as Haider claims that subject-like obliques cannot be left unexpressed on identity with inverted subject-like obliques in German. There may, however, be some restrictions on such omissions, as indicated by the infelicitousness of 50b. This, however, is a matter for further study.

Second, there are examples in German that show that an inverted nominative subject does not always control omission of a nominative subject in a second conjunct. Consider 52.

- (52) \*Mir gefällt **der** **Peter**<sub>i</sub> nicht und — <sub>i</sub> ist damit zufrieden.  
 me.DAT ge.falls the.NOM Peter not and Ø.NOM is with.that happy  
*Intended:* ‘Peter doesn’t please me and (he) is happy with that.’

Here the alleged nominative subject occurs in an inverted position in the first conjunct, yet its coreferential nominative subject in the second conjunct cannot be omitted. This is unexpected if the nominative really is the syntactic subject of the first conjunct. But if we assume that the subject-like dative is in fact the syntactic subject in 52 and not the nominative, the ungrammaticality is anticipated: a nominative of a conjoined clause cannot be left unexpressed on identity with a noncoreferential dative subject in a preceding clause, nor on identity with a coreferential nominative object. Thus, on a subject analysis of subject-like obliques in German examples of this type are expected to be ungrammatical, while on Haider’s fronted-object account, with its nominative-subject analysis for *gefallen*, they are left unexplained.

Finally, Haider’s analysis predicts that fronted unambiguous dative objects in second conjuncts can be omitted if they are coreferential with a subject-like dative in first conjuncts since the latter must be fronted objects. As its corollary, Haider’s analysis also predicts that subject-like obliques in second conjuncts can be omitted if they are coreferential with a fronted unambiguous dative object. These predictions, however, are far from borne out.

- (53) a. \*Mir<sub>i</sub> gefällt die Frau nicht und — <sub>i</sub> droht sie.  
 me.DAT ge.falls the woman.NOM not and Ø.DAT threatens she.NOM  
*Intended:* ‘The woman doesn’t please me and she threatens (me).’  
 b. \*Mir<sub>i</sub> droht die Frau und — <sub>i</sub> gefällt sie nicht.  
 me.DAT threatens the.NOM woman and Ø.DAT ge.falls she.NOM not  
*Intended:* ‘The woman threatens me and she displeases (me).’

In 53a a fronted unambiguous dative object of *drohen* ‘threaten’ cannot be left unexpressed in a second conjunct on identity with a subject-like oblique in the first conjunct, even though the subject-like oblique is clause-initial. Similarly, the subject-like oblique in 53b cannot be left unexpressed on identity with a fronted unambiguous object. If the subject-like obliques in 53 were fronted objects they should be able to control omission of dative objects in second conjuncts (53a) and be left unexpressed in second conjuncts on identity with such fronted dative objects in first conjuncts (53b). That they cannot seriously undermines the analysis that they are fronted objects, and hence the object analysis of subject-like obliques in German.

In conclusion, our examination of the criticism offered by Haider has shown that it does not disprove our subject analysis of subject-like obliques in German.

**CONTROL INFINITIVES:** We now turn to control constructions and the ability of subject-like obliques to be left unexpressed in control infinitives. As 40a and 41a showed, impersonal predicates and dative passives embedded under control verbs are regarded as ungrammatical in German. This assumption is the basis for the standard analysis that subject-like obliques are objects in German but subjects in Icelandic. However, the translational equivalent of the German example in 41a is also unacceptable in Icelandic, despite the fact that subject-like obliques show behavioral properties of subjects in that language. For convenience we repeat 41a as 54a, together with the comparable Icelandic sentence (54b).

- (54) a. \*Ich versuchte, — diese Damen **zu gefallen.** (German)  
           I.NOM tried        PRO.DAT these ladies.NOM to *ge.fall*.INF  
       b. \*Ég reyndi **að** — **falla** þessar konur **í geð.**  
           I.NOM tried to PRO.DAT fall.INF these women.NOM in liking  
           *Intended: 'I tried to like these women'.* (Icelandic)

The impersonal predicate *falla (í geð)* 'like, be to (sb's) liking, please' (lit. 'fall in liking') is the Icelandic cognate of German (*ge*)*fallen*. As discussed in Barðdal 2001b and in §7 above, *falla í geð* is an alternating predicate which can be realized either with a Dat-Nom or a Nom-Dat argument frame. The reason 54b is unacceptable in Icelandic is that the matrix verb *reyna* 'try', with its strong semantic component of intentionality, in fact forces a 'please'-reading on its controlled infinitive and excludes the 'like'-reading. In other words, the matrix verb *reyna* 'try' can select only for the Nom-Dat case frame of *falla í geð* and not the Dat-Nom frame. This means that control infinitives with *falla í geð* and *gefallen*, embedded under the matrix verb 'try', are acceptable in Icelandic and German only if the unexpressed argument is the nominative and the expressed argument is the dative.<sup>21</sup>

- (55) a. Ich versuchte, — diesen Damen **zu gefallen.** (German)  
           I.NOM tried        PRO.NOM these ladies.DAT to *ge.fall*.INF  
       b. Ég reyndi **að** — **falla** þessum konum **í geð.**  
           I.NOM tried to PRO.NOM fall.INF these women.DAT in liking  
           'I tried to please these women.' (Icelandic)

Consider also the different translations of the verbs *gefallen* and *falla í geð*, which in 55 are rendered as 'please', but in 54 (from Cole et al. 1980) as 'like'. In light of this discussion it emerges that German sentences such as 41a (54a) are not of the right kind to show that impersonal predicates cannot embed under control verbs, since they are expected to be unacceptable on other grounds anyway (for arguments for our analysis that the Dat-Nom predicate *gefallen* in German is an alternating predicate, see §§9.2 and 9.3).

<sup>21</sup> It must be emphasized that the unexpressed subject of the infinitive selected by 'try' in Germanic is always coreferential with the subject of the matrix 'try', as opposed to, for instance, in Greek where the unexpressed subject does not have to have the same reference as the matrix subject (Joseph 2002). This of course correlates with a difference in meaning, not found here.

Regarding dative passives of the type in 40a (repeated below as 56a), Cole and colleagues (1980:730) remark in a footnote that such examples may be accepted by speakers of Austrian German. There is thus conflicting evidence on the acceptability of such examples. Observe, moreover, that the translational equivalent of this example is not acceptable in Icelandic either (56b).

- (56) a. <sup>(\*)</sup>Wir möchten — von der Polizei **geholfen werden**.  
 we.NOM want PRO.DAT by the police helped be(come).INF  
 (control)
- b. \*Við viljum — vera **hjálpað** af lögreglunni. (control)  
 we.NOM want PRO.DAT be.INF helped by police.the  
*Intended:* 'We want to be helped by the police.'

With a matrix predicate like *vilja* 'want', the dative passive *vera hjálpað* 'be helped' normally occurs in an ordinary *að* 'that'-clause (57a), or the nonpassive *hjálpa* 'help' can be embedded under the raising verb *láta* 'let' (57b), or the compositional predicate *fá hjálp* 'get help' can be used instead (57c). Each of these are therefore more idiomatic Icelandic than 56b.

- (57) a. Við viljum að okkur sé hjálpað.  
 we.NOM want that us.DAT is helped
- b. Við viljum láta hjálpa okkur.  
 we.NOM want let.INF help.INF us.DAT
- c. Við viljum fá hjálp.  
 we.NOM want get.INF help.ACC  
 'We want to get help.'

Wunderlich (2006) also discusses the ungrammaticality of impersonal predicates and dative passives in control infinitives in German, including the following example.

- (58) \*Ihr gelang es, — nicht **gefolgt zu werden**.  
 she.DAT managed it PRO.DAT not followed to be(come).INF  
*Intended:* 'She managed not to be followed.'

The translational equivalent of this German sentence would, however, be infelicitous, that is, incorrect and nonidiomatic, in Icelandic as well.

- (59) \*Henni tókst að — vera ekki fylgt.  
 she.DAT managed to PRO.DAT be.INF not followed

These examples clearly show that the embedding of impersonal predicates and dative passives under control verbs is by no means as unrestricted in Icelandic as it may appear from the earlier literature on the topic (see also Jónsson 2000:76–77, Barðdal 2002: 87–90, 2006, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005:16–20). In fact, the example most widely cited in the literature as evidence that impersonal predicates and dative passives can embed under control verbs in Modern Icelandic contains the matrix predicate *vonast til* 'hope for' and the infinitive of the dative passive *ver(ð)a hjálpað* 'be(come) helped' (the grammaticality judgment is not ours but the one found in the literature).

- (60) <sup>(OK)</sup> Ég vonast til að — ver(ð)a hjálpað.  
 I.NOM hope for to PRO.DAT be(come) helped  
*Intended:* 'I hope to be helped.'

In our opinion this example is not very natural in Icelandic and certainly not as acceptable as *vonast til* 'hope for' followed by the finite variant of *mér var hjálpað* in

an ordinary subordinate ‘that’-clause (also observed by Thráinsson 1979:470). We have searched Icelandic websites for *vonast til* cooccurring with *ver(ð)a hjálpað* ‘be(come) helped’ and have, indeed, found seven instances. All turned out to be constructed examples from linguistic papers, published electronically, which do not represent real Icelandic language use. A closer investigation of the matrix predicate *vonast til* on Icelandic web sites reveals that impersonal predicates and dative passives do not seem to embed at all under this verb. This is in keeping with the discussion above that the possibility of embedding impersonal predicates and dative passives under control predicates is not as unconstrained as it may appear to be, to judge from the existing literature on oblique subjects in Modern Icelandic. We thus believe that the current view of control infinitives of impersonal predicates and dative passives in Icelandic as being completely unconstrained is too simplistic and that more research is needed to uncover the restrictions that are clearly found on this construction in Icelandic (see the data discussed in Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005:16–20).

Returning to German, control infinitives of impersonal predicates and dative passives in naturally occurring language use have recently been reported on in German (Barðdal 2002, 2006, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003b, 2005). Barðdal 2002 presents a list of at least twelve predicate types, with several instances of some types. We have encountered even more examples in our research, of which 61 and 62 are the oldest ones.<sup>22</sup>

- (61) Überdem, wenn man über den Kreis der Erfahrung hinaus ist, so ist  
besides if one about the sphere the experience over is so is  
man sicher, — durch Erfahrung nicht **widersprochen zu**  
one sure PRO.DAT through experience not contradicted to  
**werden.**  
be(come).INF

‘Besides, if one is beyond the sphere of experience, one can be certain not to be contradicted by experience.’

([gutenberg.spiegel.de/kant/krva/krva003.htm](http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/kant/krva/krva003.htm); 1781)

- (62) . . . das ist so verächtlich, daß man das Auge davon abwenden muß,  
this is so disgusting that one the eye away turn must  
**um — nicht übel zu werden.**  
in.order PRO.DAT not sick to be(come).INF  
‘. . . that is so despicable that one has to look away in order not to feel sick.’  
([www.jung-stilling-archiv.de/WerlderLeiden.htm](http://www.jung-stilling-archiv.de/WerlderLeiden.htm); 1789)

In 61 the unexpressed argument of the passive *nicht widersprochen zu werden* ‘not to be contradicted’ corresponds to the dative object of *widersprechen* ‘contradict’ in the active form. This example is from Immanuel Kant’s earlier edition of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* ‘Critique of pure reason’, which dates back to 1781. The unexpressed argument of the impersonal *um nicht übel zu werden* ‘in order not to feel sick’ in 62

<sup>22</sup> The examples in 61–62 and 65–69 have been controversial; they have sometimes evoked fiercely negative reactions from German linguists when presented out of context. As we discuss further below, we tested for acceptability by presenting the examples in their fuller contexts to native German speakers, and each of them was deemed fully acceptable by some subset of the population. For ease of reading, we present only the relevant portions in these examples, but the fuller context is given in Appendix A and can be found at the URLs provided. We would encourage German speakers to read the examples in context in Appendix A so as to avoid a negative first impression.

corresponds to the subject-like dative that *übel sein* 'feel sick' otherwise selects for in ordinary finite clauses. This latter example is from the 1789 'Rede über den Werth der Leiden' ('Lecture on the significance of suffering') of Prof. Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (an academic and scientist holding positions in Kaiserslautern, Heidelberg, and Marburg in Germany)

Against our interpretation of these examples, it could be argued that Kant and Jung-Stilling may not necessarily have used the dative passive, *widersprochen werden*, and the impersonal, *übel werden*, with a subject-like dative but a nominative, and thus that the unexpressed arguments in the control infinitives in 61 and 62 correspond to a nominative subject and not a subject-like dative. There is a certain degree of variation between dative and nominative in Modern German (see our discussion in §10), but all examples of finite uses of these predicates that we have encountered in Kant's and Jung-Stilling's texts are with a subject-like dative. We give an example of each in 63 and 64.

- (63) **Ihnen** ist aber nicht ohne Grund von anderen **widersprochen**  
 you.SG.DAT is but not without reason by others contradicted  
**worden** . . .  
 be(come).INF  
 'You are not being contradicted by others without a reason . . .'  
 (gutenberg.spiegel.de/kant/kuk/Druckversion\_kukp421.htm; 1790)
- (64) daß **der Frauen** von dem vielen und ungewohnten Essen  
 that the.DAT woman.DAT by the much and uncommon food  
**etwas übel geworden**  
 sick be(come) somewhat  
 'that the woman felt somewhat sick because of the large amount of rare food'  
 (www.buecherquelle.com/jungstil/stjugend/stjugen4.htm; 1777)

These examples clearly demonstrate that the unexpressed arguments in the control infinitives in 61–62 correspond to a subject-like dative and not a nominative.

These early occurrences of impersonal predicates and dative passives embedded under control verbs suggest that such control infinitives may have existed for at least a couple of centuries in the German language if not longer. It is therefore expected that this syntactic behavior may be found in Modern German as well. Consider examples 65–68.

- (65) Mitglied bei uns zu sein bedeutet aber auch, das Gefühl zu  
 member with us to be means but also the feeling to  
 haben, — **geholfen zu werden**.  
 have PRO.DAT helped to be(come).INF  
 'To be a member also means that one has the feeling of being helped.'  
 (www.tg-net.de/fig-vw/mitglied01.html; 2003)
- (66) Haben wir Deutschen etwa keine weggeworfenen Serien, die es  
 have we Germans somewhat no away.thrown series which it  
 wert wären, — wiederverwertet und nostalgisch  
 worthy were PRO.DAT reused and nostalgically  
**gehuldigt zu werden?**  
 embraced to be(come).INF  
 'Don't we Germans have any comic series down the drain that are worthy of being put to good use again and embraced nostalgically?'  
 (www.bei-gertrud.de/ok/klw\_9618.html; 1996)

- (67) Wer sich nicht an die gesetzlich vorgeschriebenen Regeln hält, riskiert,  
 who self not in the lawfully prescribed rules holds risks  
 keine Lohnfortzahlung zu bekommen oder evtl. — gar  
 none continued.pay to receive or perhaps PRO.DAT only  
**gekündigt zu werden.**  
 sacked to be(come).INF  
 ‘Those who do not adhere to the rules proscribed by the law run the risk  
 of not receiving continued salary or maybe even of being dismissed.’  
 (www.ra-kassing.de/arbeit/krankht/krankalg.htm; 1999)
- (68) Ein Recht für geistig wie körperlich behinderte Frauen, — nur  
 a right for mentally as physically disabled women PRO.DAT only  
 von Frauen bei intimen Handlungen **assistiert zu werden,** gibt  
 by women at private activities assisted to be(come).INF is  
 es in der Bundesrepublik . . . nicht.  
 there in the Federal.Republic . . . not.  
 ‘A right for mentally and physically disabled women to be only assisted  
 by women when engaged in private activities does not exist . . . in Ger-  
 many.’  
 (www.freitag.de/2002/45/02450402.php; 2002)

In these examples the unexpressed argument of *geholfen zu werden* ‘be helped’, *gehuldt zu werden* ‘be embraced’, *gekündigt zu werden* ‘be sacked’, and *assistiert zu werden* ‘be assisted’ corresponds to the subject-like dative of the finite variants of these passive predicates.<sup>23</sup> It thus seems clear that this subject-like dative is the unexpressed argument of the control infinitives in 65–68 and not a potential nominative of any kind, which in turn shows that the subject-like dative behaves syntactically as a subject and not as an object. These examples are only a subset of the examples we found during our research. We have documented more predicate types than the six above, and several examples of some of the types (see also the appendix in Barðdal 2002).

Haider (2005:27–28) argues, in response to Barðdal 2002, that examples like that in 65 of *geholfen zu werden* ‘be helped’ occurring in control infinitives are not true examples of dative passives but correspond to nominative passives of the type *Sie wird geholfen* ‘she was helped’. Such examples, Haider claims, started occurring in the late 1990s as part of a striking advertising campaign in German media. But our oldest example of *geholfen zu werden* dates from 1949, long before this advertising campaign ever saw the light of day (see also Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005).

- (69) Wer den Herrgott verleumdete, ist es nicht wert, — **geholfen**  
 who the God slanders is it not worthy PRO.DAT helped  
**zu werden.**  
 to be(come).INF  
 ‘He who slanders the Lord is not worthy of being helped.’  
 (www.martinus.at/info/sekten/brunogroeningfreundeskreis.html; 1949)

<sup>23</sup> An anonymous referee claims that *kündigen* selects for an accusative object in German and not a dative object. According to our German dictionary, however, it takes a dative. Setting aside the possibility of a choice in the case marking of the object of *kündigen*, the following example from the same website as ex. 67 shows that at least this speaker uses *kündigen* with a dative.

- (i) noch kein Grund für den Arbeitgeber, **dem** Arbeitnehmer zu kündigen  
 still no reason for the.ACC employer the.DAT employee to sack  
 ‘still no reason for the employer to sack the employee’



This passage, from well-known German writer and healer Bruno Gröning, was written during the middle of the twentieth century. Although dative and accusative may have merged in some German dialects, the following renowned quote, also from Gröning, shows that he used the passive *geholfen werden* 'be helped' consistently with a subject-like dative.

- (70) Wer es wert ist, dass **ihm** geholfen wird, **dem**  
 who it worthy is that him.DAT helped becomes him.DAT  
 wird geholfen.  
 becomes helped  
 'He who is worthy of being helped will be helped.'

(www.lichtpfad.net/start/groening.htm)

Thus it seems clear that the unexpressed argument of the control infinitive in 69 must correspond to a subject-like dative and not a nominative, and hence that in at least some of our examples the unexpressed argument corresponds to a subject-like dative and not a nominative.<sup>24</sup>

Several of our German discussants, when presented with some of our examples OUT OF CONTEXT, have judged them 'not good German'. Some have even suggested that these must surely be 'performance errors'. This accords with the fact that the German examples 40a and 41a above have been regarded as ungrammatical in German, but it in turn raises the general question of how to distinguish between performance errors and marginally acceptable data, that is, data that are both infrequent and not uniformly accepted (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005). We have already noted that not all examples of control infinitives of impersonal predicates and dative passives are equally good in Icelandic either. It would therefore not come as a surprise if the same were true for German.

To determine how to distinguish between performance errors and marginally acceptable data, we made a systematic investigation with native speakers to verify the acceptability of our examples. Using a questionnaire survey containing a subset of our data, we present our examples IN CONTEXT and we ask the participants (i) whether the text represents idiomatic German, (ii) what they feel about the infinitive in question, and (iii) whether this verb assigns a dative in their language or not (see Appendix B).<sup>25</sup> In

<sup>24</sup> Another passive construction in German, the so-called *bekommen/kriegen*-passive (see e.g. Leirbukt 1997), corresponds closely to the English *get*-passive in meaning. In this construction the verbs *bekommen* or *kriegen* 'get' maintain their property of assigning nominative to their subject, even when they select for a dative object verb as a complement.

(i) Fritz hat **widersprochen** bekommen. (Leirbukt 1997:161)  
 Fritz.NOM has contradicted gotten  
 'Fritz got contradicted.'

In this example, the dative object of the active *widersprechen* 'contradict' corresponds to the nominative subject of *bekommen* 'get'. In other words, *bekommen* does not behave as a passive auxiliary but more as a main verb, maintaining its nominative on the 'promoted' argument instead of showing up with the dative of *widersprechen*, as would be expected. This may suggest a biclausal structure, not a monoclausal one as with ordinary passive constructions. Irrespective of whether examples of this kind are analyzed as mono- or biclausal, it does not change the fact that the dative of *widersprechen* is left unexpressed on identity with the nominative of *bekommen*. Although our argument does not rest on examples like this, they certainly support our subject analysis for subject-like obliques in German.

<sup>25</sup> The questionnaire survey was carried out in parallel for this research and the work presented in Barðdal 2006, but the latter compares the behavior of the impersonal construction across subject criteria that are assumed valid for both Icelandic and German. We refer the interested reader to that paper, which contains a more detailed statistical discussion than the one here.

order to avoid priming effects, either positive or negative, each participant was given only three examples. The survey was carried out simultaneously in four German-speaking cities—Vienna, Bochum, Jena, and Saarbrücken—and the participants were all university students. Table 3 summarizes the statistics for the acceptability of the control infinitives discussed above. Answers that were incomplete for questions (ii) and (iii) were omitted from our statistics.

EX		GOOD/OK		STRANGE		BAD/WRONG		TOTAL	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
61	widersprochen zu werden	6	21.4	5	17.9	17	60.7	28	100
65	geholffen zu werden	4	12.5	2	6.3	26	81.2	32	100
66	gehuldigt zu werden	16	64.0	1	4.0	8	32.0	25	100
67	gekündigt zu werden	19	86.5	2	9.0	1	4.5	22	100
68	assistiert zu werden	11	34.4	5	15.6	16	50.0	32	100
69	geholffen zu werden	9	36.0	5	20.0	11	44.0	25	100
	TOTAL	65	39.3	20	12.3	79	48.4	164	100

TABLE 3. Native-speaker judgments of attested examples of control infinitives in German.

The figures in Table 3 show that our documented examples are judged fully acceptable by a subset of the German population, with considerable variation for each example. On average, approximately 40% of the judgments are positive, while a little less than 50% are negative. The acceptability rates range from 12.5 to 85.7% for different examples, and are highly significant ( $p < 0.000$ ), including the difference between the two examples of *geholffen werden* ( $p < 0.014$ ). This suggests that it is not lexical factors that are at issue here but rather some semantic or pragmatic factors (see Barðdal 2006 for a more detailed examination of this question including statistics). Table 3 gives acceptability judgments only for those German speakers who claim that they use these verbs with a dative.

Though all of our survey participants are university students and native speakers of German, they differ in academic background, majoring in either English or German. As Table 4 shows, there is a clear difference in the acceptability rates between these two groups of students.

	GOOD/OK		STRANGE		BAD/WRONG		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	35	50.0	12	17.1	23	32.9	70	100
German	30	31.9	8	8.5	56	59.6	94	100
TOTAL	65	39.6	20	12.2	79	48.2	164	100

TABLE 4. Acceptability judgments across field of study at university.

The German majors are much less accepting of our examples than the English majors, liking about 32% and rejecting about 60%. The English majors, in contrast, accept 50% and reject only 33%. Again, these differences are highly significant ( $p < 0.003$ ).

But these differences may be caused by the experimental situation; the students of German were being asked about matters relating to their course of study—the German language—and the questionnaire was distributed by their academic instructor. The students of English, in contrast, were not being asked about their specialty. Thus, the experimental setting may have caused the German majors to be considerably stricter in their judgments than is required by prescriptive standards of German. The differences in acceptability might also reflect the students' academic training and possibly more exposure to German prescriptivism. The English majors were beginners attending

classes on English language, literature, and culture, while the German majors were more advanced students in German linguistics.<sup>26</sup>

In fact, the same type of questionnaire survey with examples of impersonal predicates embedded under control verbs, carried out among Icelandic students at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík, reveals that not all attested examples are judged equally well-formed by native Icelandic speakers (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005, Barðdal 2005). In the Icelandic questionnaire, which is parallel to the German one, three quite marginal examples are presented to students majoring in either Icelandic or English. The judgments range from 6.5 to 57.1% being judged acceptable. These acceptability judgments are unexpectedly low given that Modern Icelandic is the language that has always been presented as having oblique subjects, an assumption that in turn is based on the unrefuted grammaticality of examples of this type in the earlier literature. Moreover, when the acceptability rates are divided across the participants' major at the university, the same correlation appears as for the German-speaking students. The students majoring in Icelandic are much stricter in their acceptability judgments than those majoring in English, although they were all native speakers of Icelandic.

Since most of our examples come from the World Wide Web the reader might question their validity. But we have included only examples that we feel reasonably sure are formulated by native German speakers and our survey has confirmed that all of our source texts represent idiomatic German. Furthermore, several of our examples were composed by academics, creative writers, journalists, and other such literate members of the German population. They can all be considered professional writers, who presumably use careful revision and proofreading techniques. The examples they provide, then, can hardly be disqualified as either bad German or performance errors. Nevertheless, we are well aware that these kinds of structures are only marginally possible in the German language and as such they are very rare, verging on the edge of acceptability (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2005). But as research on linguistic corpora has shown, there is a positive correlation between acceptability and frequency in actual language use (Keller et al. 2002, Keller & Lapata 2003). This means that the more marginal the construction, the less frequent it is; hence the larger the corpus needed to find instantiations. Keller et al. 2002 and Keller & Lapata 2003 have shown that in cases of extremely rare, and marginally accepted, lexical and syntactic combinations, the largest existing corpora are not large enough. Only through the resources of the World Wide Web can such data sparseness be overcome. Keller and colleagues (2002: 3–4) estimate that the English part of the web is approximately 330 to 980 times larger than the British National Corpus (and it has doubtless grown considerably since their estimate). They also show that despite the fact that the web is both nonstratified and uncontrolled, because of its enormous size, it is still the best source for research on

<sup>26</sup> A referee points out (i) that it is possible that impersonal predicates and dative passives in German are 'subjectless', and that subject-like obliques in that language are neither subjects nor objects, and (ii) that we ignore the typological differences between the two languages—Icelandic is a VO-language, German is an OV-language. The problem with the analysis in (i) is that it predicts that the subject-like oblique could be the EXPRESSED ARGUMENT in control infinitives, and as we show in 84 in §9.2, such sentences are unacceptable in German. Our examples of reflexivization and control would moreover be left unexplained on such an account, that is, our examples of control infinitives that are accepted by native speakers who use the relevant predicates with a dative and not a nominative. In fact, such examples are not only left unexplained, but they also constitute a counterexample against such an analysis. With respect to the point in (ii), see our criticism of the ideas in Bayer 2004 and Haider 2005 in n. 28 below.

rare and marginally acceptable constructions. One must of course document that the data and the websites stem from native speakers, as we have done.

Why should control infinitives of impersonal predicates and dative passives be only marginally possible in German when there are fewer restrictions on their occurrence in Icelandic? We believe that this difference resides in the elliptical structures in the two languages (Barðdal 2002:85ff., 2006, Barðdal & Eythórssón 2005). It is possible to construct unacceptable examples of control infinitives of impersonal predicates in Icelandic, which suggests that the difference between Icelandic and German is perhaps not categorical but gradient. For Faroese not all constructed examples of control infinitives involving impersonal predicates and dative passives are judged acceptable by all Faroese speakers, even though such examples are readily found in written texts (Barnes 1986:26–27). Therefore, we argue, this difference between Icelandic and German does not have to do with grammatical relations at all, but with the fact that subject ellipsis in German is restricted to nominative subjects for most speakers. Impersonal predicates and dative passives do not meet the morphological criteria for occurring in control infinitives because of a mismatch in morphological case.<sup>27</sup> Although such control infinitives can be found in German, as in 61–62 and 65–69, many speakers do not consider them good. This analysis is supported by the fact that those survey participants who gave a reason for not accepting the control infinitives claimed that it was because the relevant predicates select for a dative in their language and not a nominative.<sup>28</sup>

The German data presented in this section are entirely inconsistent with an object analysis of subject-like obliques in German, which is unexpected on the standard view that these are syntactic objects. On the contrary, we argue, subject-like obliques pattern with syntactic subjects with regard to their ability to obligatorily bind reflexives and to be left unexpressed in second conjuncts and control infinitives. As we have repeatedly emphasized above, this syntactic behavior is unanimously taken to be confined to subjects and does not exist for objects. Our data thus severely undermine the validity of the object-to-subject hypothesis and support the oblique subject hypothesis for German.

<sup>27</sup> A similar analysis, also based on case morphology, has been suggested as an explanation for the ungrammaticality of certain control infinitives in Russian (Perlmutter & Moore 2002).

<sup>28</sup> An alternative analysis of the general unacceptability of impersonal predicates and dative passives in control infinitives is suggested by Ackema (2002), who argues that only predicates that show agreement in person and number with the subject can embed under control predicates and not predicates agreeing with the subject only in number. Bayer (2004) and Haider (2005), though, claim that only VO-languages can have oblique subjects and OV-languages cannot. This analysis makes a disturbing prediction about Old Germanic languages like Old Norse-Icelandic and Old English that exhibit both OV and VO word order, namely that subject-like obliques in VO-sentences in earlier periods of Germanic are syntactic subjects, while corresponding obliques in OV-sentences are syntactic objects. Stepanov (2003) postulates that unexpressed arguments in control infinitives in Icelandic are lexical elements but German unexpressed arguments are not. It remains unclear why and how that should have any bearing on this issue. Fanselow (2002) and Wunderlich (2006) propose analyses that rely on morphological case as opposed to grammatical relations. Fanselow suggests that the difference between Icelandic and German lies in different structural positions, while Wunderlich offers no motivation for why the preference between his argument-ranking constraints and case constraints should differ in Icelandic and German. Barðdal (2002:80ff., 2006), however, suggests a radical construction grammar analysis and a usage-based explanation that takes into account the fact that the type frequency of impersonal predicates and dative passives is approximately seven times higher in Icelandic than in German. These constructions should therefore be more entrenched and thus maintain a stronger position in the grammar of Icelandic than in German, where impersonal predicates and dative passives are lower in both type and token frequency, and their status is thus more like that of idiom-like relics with the impoverished syntactic freedom known to accompany such expressions (Fillmore et al. 1988).

**9.2. ALLEGED EVIDENCE AGAINST SUBJECT STATUS.** Before we conclude the German section of this article, we must discuss two additional properties of German impersonal constructions that have been taken to support the nonsubject status of subject-like obliques in that language. The first property is the agreement of the verb with the nominative argument in Dat-Nom constructions, and the second is the cooccurrence of expletive *es* 'it/there' and a subject-like oblique with impersonal predicates and dative passives in German. In both respects, Modern German differs from Modern Icelandic.

**AGREEMENT:** As originally observed by Sigurðsson (2002b and earlier work), Icelandic and German differ with respect to nominative agreement found with Dat-Nom predicates. This difference has been taken to support the nonsubject analysis for subject-like datives in German. In this section we argue that Sigurðsson's comparison is unfounded since it involves Dat-Nom constructions in Icelandic but the topicalization of alternating Nom-Dat constructions in German (see also §9.3 below). Such alternating Dat-Nom/Nom-Dat constructions also exist in Icelandic, in which case the agreement facts are exactly parallel to those of German.

Consider the Icelandic (71) and German (72) examples from Sigurðsson 2002b:125, 127.

- (71) a. Honum myndu alltaf líka þeir.  
 him.DAT would.3PL always like they.NOM  
 'He would always like them.'
- b. \*Honum mynduð alltaf líka þið.  
 him.DAT would.2PL always like you.PL.NOM
- c. \*Honum myndum alltaf líka við.  
 him.DAT would.1PL always like we.NOM
- (72) a. Ihm würden sie immer gefallen.  
 him.DAT would.3PL they.NOM always *ge.fall*  
 'He would always like them.'
- b. Ihm würdet ihr immer gefallen.  
 him.DAT would.2PL you.PL.NOM always *ge.fall*  
 'He would always like you.'
- c. Ihm würden wir immer gefallen.  
 him.DAT would.1PL we.NOM always *ge.fall*  
 'He would always like us.'

In the German examples in 72 the verb agrees with the nominative in first, second, and third person, but it agrees with the nominative only in third person in Icelandic (71a), not in first and second (71b-c). This difference has been taken to support the analysis that the subject-like dative is a syntactic subject in Icelandic but not in German. We agree that the dative is the behavioral subject in the Icelandic examples though not in the German ones. But we disagree that these facts show beyond doubt that the nominative in German is the behavioral subject at all times.

Consider the following Icelandic examples, which differ from 71 only in that they contain the third person singular nonagreeing form of the finite verb.

- (73) a. Honum myndi/myndu alltaf líka þeir.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/3PL always like they.NOM  
 'He would always like them.'
- b. Honum ??myndi/\*mynduð alltaf líka þið.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/2PL always like you.PL.NOM

- c. Honum ??myndi/\*myndum alltaf líka við.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/1PL always like we.NOM

The double question marks in 73b-c indicate that examples of *líka* 'like' are only slightly less ill-formed without nominative agreement than with it (also noted by Sigurðsson 2002b:117). This suggests that nominative agreement is not entirely to blame for the unacceptability of 71b-c. To shed some light on what else is at issue here, let us compare these examples with compatible examples of another Dat-Nom predicate, namely *falla* (*í geð*) 'like, be to sb's liking, please', the Icelandic cognate of German (*ge*)*fallen*.

- (74) a. Honum ??hefur/hafa fallið þeir í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/3PL fallen they.NOM in liking  
 'He has liked them.' or 'They have been to his liking.'  
 b. Honum ??hefur/\*hafið fallið þið í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/2PL fallen you.PL.NOM in liking  
 c. Honum ??hefur/\*höfum fallið við í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/1PL fallen we.NOM in liking

As evident from 74, the verb *falla* (*í geð*) is more or less as unacceptable as *líka*, both with first and second person nominative agreement and without it. However, since *falla* (*í geð*) in Icelandic is an alternating predicate (see §7), it can occur in the Nom-Dat construction, the argument-structure construction that alternates with the Dat-Nom construction. On such an argument-structure realization, nominative agreement is not only possible but also mandatory.

- (75) a. Honum \*hefur/hafa þeir fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/3PL they.NOM fallen in liking  
 'He has liked them.' or 'They have been to his liking.'  
 b. Honum \*hefur/hafið þið fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/2PL you.PL.NOM fallen in liking  
 c. Honum \*hefur/höfum við fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT has.3SG/1PL we.NOM fallen in liking

In 74 the nominative occurs in the object position immediately following the nonfinite verb while the dative occupies the preverbal subject position. This is the unmarked word order with auxiliaries in Icelandic. In contrast, in the inversion construction, with some other constituent occurring preverbally, the behavioral subject inverts with the finite verb and thus occurs between the two verbs. This is the situation in 75: the nominative occurs between the two verbs while the dative has been topicalized to preverbal position. This analysis is further supported by the fact that the intonation pattern of 75 differs from that in 73 and 74. This is shown in 76, which is identical to 75 except that the preverbal dative, indicated by boldfaced capitals, carries nuclear stress, as typical of topicalized arguments that are in focus (see Angantýsson 2003 on sentential stress and intonation in Icelandic).

- (76) a. **HONUM** hafa þeir fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT have.3PL they.NOM fallen in liking  
 'They have been to his liking.'  
 b. **HONUM** hafið þið fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT have.2PL you.PL.NOM fallen in liking  
 'You have been to his liking.'

- c. **HONUM** höfum við fallið í geð.  
 him.DAT have.1PL we.NOM fallen in liking  
 'We have been to his liking.'

The linear Dat-Nom word order is therefore available to *falla* (*í geð*) only if the preverbal dative bears nuclear stress, as a focused topicalized argument. This word-order pattern, however, is unavailable to *líka* 'like', both with and without nuclear stress on the dative.

- (77) a. \*Honum/**HONUM** myndi/myndu þeir alltaf líka.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/3PL they.NOM always like  
 b. \*Honum/**HONUM** myndi/mynduð þið alltaf líka.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/2PL you.PL.NOM always like  
 c. \*Honum/**HONUM** myndi/myndum við alltaf líka.  
 him.DAT would.3SG/1PL we.NOM always like

The fact that the nominative cannot occur between the two verbs in 77 confirms the long-established analysis that the dative is the behavioral subject with *líka* while the nominative is the behavioral object. The verb *líka* in Icelandic can thus occur only in one argument-structure construction, the Dat-Nom, while *falla* (*í geð*) 'like, be to sb's liking, please' can occur in either the Dat-Nom or the Nom-Dat construction, as shown in §7. We remind the reader that either argument of alternating predicates can be left unexpressed in control infinitives in Icelandic, as already shown in 33, repeated here for convenience.

- (33) a. að maður þurfi að vera haldinn þrælsund til að — **falla í geð** slík fásinna.  
 b. Umræður um þrætni geta verið erfiðar vegna löngunar til að — **falla** félögunum í geð . . .

Then again, on an alternating-predicate analysis for *falla* (*í geð*) one would expect both 74, the Dat-Nom construction, and 75, the Nom-Dat construction, to be felicitous. Such an expectation, however, is not borne out: 74b-c are unacceptable and the examples in 75 are as unacceptable as the examples of *líka* in 77, both with and without nuclear stress on the preverbal argument.

- (78) a. \*Þeir/**ÞEIR** hefur/hafa honum fallið í geð.  
 they.NOM has.3SG/3PL him.DAT fallen in liking  
 b. \*Þið/**ÞIÐ** hefur/hafið honum fallið í geð.  
 you.PL.NOM has.3SG/2PL him.DAT fallen in liking  
 c. \*Við/**VIÐ** hefur/höfum honum fallið í geð.  
 we.NOM has.3SG/1PL him.DAT fallen in liking

The unacceptability of these examples does not necessarily show that the same restrictions on agreement hold for *falla* (*í geð*) and *líka* in Icelandic, but rather that the alternating predicate *falla* (*í geð*) does not have access to the Dat-Nom construction when its nominative is a first or second person pronoun. In other words, there is a prohibition against nominative objects in first and second person in Icelandic. That prohibition is the reason for *líka*'s unacceptability with a first or second person pronoun, not the agreement restrictions. This is supported by the fact that sentences with the nonagreeing form of the finite auxiliary with *líka* are only slightly better than the ones without it (73). It is also supported by the acceptability contrast found for *falla* (*í geð*) with nominative agreement, as being felicitous when the nominative is the subject in (topicalizations of the) Nom-Dat construction (75) but as infelicitous when the nominative is the object in the (nontopicalized variant of the) Dat-Nom construction (74). In other words, the examples in 71b-c and 74b-c are not unacceptable in Icelandic because

of the nominative agreement but because of the ILLEGITIMATE OBJECT STATUS of the pronominal nominative.

Moreover, the German examples 72b-c are acceptable only if the preverbal dative carries nuclear stress, as expected of topicalized arguments in sentence focus.<sup>29</sup>

- (79) a. Ihm würden sie gefallen.<sup>30</sup>  
 him.DAT would.3PL they.NOM *ge.fall*  
 ‘He would like them.’ or ‘They would be to his liking.’  
 b. **IHM** würdet ihr gefallen.  
 him.DAT would.2PL you.PL.NOM *ge.fall*  
 ‘You would be to his liking.’  
 c. **IHM** würden wir gefallen.  
 him.DAT would.1PL we.NOM *ge.fall*  
 ‘We would be to his liking.’

Example 79a, however, with a third person pronominal nominative, does not require the dative to receive nuclear stress, only the examples in which the nominative is first or second person, although nuclear stress in 79a is not excluded. The structure in 79a, without nuclear stress, corresponds to the Icelandic 74a where the nominative is the behavioral object and follows the nonfinite verb, while 79a, with nuclear stress, corresponds to the Icelandic example 75a where the nominative behaves as a subject and occurs between the two verbs.

Observe, moreover, that the German examples 72b-c should be translated as ‘please, be to sb’s liking’, as we have done in 79b-c, rather than as ‘like’, since they are topicalizations of the Nom-Dat construction, exactly as the corresponding Icelandic examples with *falla* (*í geð*) in 76. Our comparison of *líka*, *falla* (*í geð*), and *gefallen* is summarized in Table 5.

DAT-NOM neutral word order			
	<i>líka</i>	<i>falla</i> ( <i>í geð</i> )	<i>gefallen</i>
	Dat-Aux-V-Nom	Dat-Aux-V-Nom	Dat-Aux-Nom-V
3rd	OK	OK	OK
2nd	*	*	*
1st	*	*	*
NOM-DAT with a topicalized dative, yielding linear Dat-Nom word order			
	<i>líka</i>	<i>falla</i> ( <i>í geð</i> )	<i>gefallen</i>
	DAT-Aux-Nom-V	DAT-Aux-Nom-V	DAT-Aux-Nom-V
3rd	*	OK	OK
2nd	*	OK	OK
1st	*	OK	OK

TABLE 5. Word order and verb agreement with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person pronominal nominatives.

The upper half of Table 5 shows that the structures with first and second person nominative are unacceptable with all three verbs, with no nuclear stress on the preverbal dative. These represent the neutral Dat-Nom construction. In contrast, the lower half

<sup>29</sup> These facts about first and second person pronouns as against third person in Dat-Nom/Nom-Dat constructions in German were brought to our attention by Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson and confirmed by our native speaker informants.

<sup>30</sup> Examples 74–79 are given here without any sentential adverb (as opposed to exx. 71–73), in order to limit the possibilities in the placement of the nuclear stress to the two arguments of *líka*, *falla* (*í geð*), and *gefallen*, that is, the dative or the nominative. As exx. 79b-c demonstrate, the nuclear stress has to fall on the preverbal third person dative, and cannot be on the interverbal first or second person nominative, an intonation contour that is typical for topicalizations.



shows that the same examples, with nuclear stress, are grammatical with *falla í geð* and *gefallen* but not with *líka*. This confirms that *falla (í geð)* and *gefallen* have access only to the Nom-Dat construction when the nominative is first or second person but not to the Dat-Nom construction. Therefore, *falla (í geð)* and *gefallen* can occur in the topicalization variant of the Nom-Dat construction, which yields linear Dat-Nom word order. The verb *líka*, however, does not have access to the Nom-Dat frame, hence all examples of *líka* in the lower rows are unacceptable. In sum, we have shown that the alternating predicate *falla (í geð)* behaves exactly as *gefallen* in German and that irrespective of its occurring in the Dat-Nom or the Nom-Dat frame the verb always agrees with the nominative.

A comparison like the original one above between 71 and 72 is unwarranted because it involves the neutral Dat-Nom word order of *líka* in Icelandic (the upper leftmost column in Table 5) and the topicalized word order of Nom-Dat *gefallen* in German (the lower rightmost column). Obviously, the verb *gefallen* agrees with the nominative in first and second person since it is the nominative that is the behavioral subject here, exactly as with *falla (í geð)* in Icelandic. In order for Sigurðsson's comparison to be valid it needs to involve Dat-Nom in both languages, not Dat-Nom in Icelandic and a topicalization of the Nom-Dat construction in German.

The final question is why there should be this restriction on nominative first and second person objects with Dat-Nom verbs in Icelandic and German. Cennamo (2004: 79–80) points out that a first or second person object can be prohibited from the ordinary argument-structure construction of some languages and hence that other constructions available in these languages must be used instead; she discusses several instances.

(i) In Pashto the O argument occurs in the direct case if it is a noun or a third person pronoun, while if it is a first or second person pronoun it receives oblique case (cited from Lazard 1994:170).

(ii) In some Amerindian languages a pronominal O argument in first or second person, cooccurring with a full NP subject or a third person pronominal subject, can occur only in the inverse construction (cited from Klaiman 1991:161–226).

(iii) In Menó-Mené Sasak (Indonesia) the passive voice must be employed under these circumstances (cited from Musgrave 2000:49–50).

These typological facts of the behavior of first and second person pronominal O arguments match the behavior of first and second person pronominal nominatives of *gefallen* in German and *falla (í geð)* in Icelandic, thus supporting our claim that the Icelandic examples with *líka* in 71b-c and *falla (í geð)* in 74b-c are not unacceptable because of agreement restrictions but rather because of first and second person pronominal nominatives' reluctance to occur as objects. The split of first and second person from third person is well known from the typological literature, found in various constructions and categories in different languages. The restriction on agreement, however, is found only with object agreement and not subject agreement (Siewierska 2004:150).

To summarize, 72b-c are acceptable in German because they are topicalizations of the Nom-Dat argument-structure construction. In contrast, the Icelandic examples 71b-c, which are instances of the neutral Dat-Nom argument-structure construction, are unacceptable because of a prohibition on first and second person pronominal nominatives as objects. This prohibition is also found in German, illustrated by the fact that 72b-c are acceptable only when they have the intonation contour typical of topicalizations, as shown in 79b-c. Thus, the agreement contrast between the Dat-Nom verb *líka* in Icelandic and a topicalization of the Nom-Dat alternant of *gefallen* in German observed by

Sigurðsson is irrelevant to the question of the syntactic status of subject-like obliques; it is based on a comparison of entities that are not directly comparable. No contrast arises if the Nom-Dat alternant of *gefallen* is compared with the Nom-Dat alternant of *falla í geð*. The latter verb agrees with the nominative in both Nom-Dat and Dat-Nom constructions in Icelandic (also observed by Sigurðsson 1990–91:41 for Dat-Nom/Nom-Dat alternating passives in Icelandic), exactly as in the case of *gefallen* in German.<sup>31</sup> Nominative agreement is thus found with alternating predicates, irrespective of the fact that either the nominative or the dative argument can be left unexpressed in control infinitives. This fact shows, once again, that coding properties such as nominative case and verb agreement do not necessarily coincide with behavioral properties of syntactic subjects. As a result, the differences in agreement between Icelandic and German do not contradict our oblique subject hypothesis for Germanic.

EXPLETIVES: Finally, we turn to a brief comparison of expletives with impersonal constructions in Icelandic and German. The fact that German *es* can optionally cooccur with the dative *mir* in the impersonal predicate in 80 below, while *það* in Icelandic cannot cooccur with the dative *mér* (see also ex. 83), has been taken to support the claim that subject-like obliques in German are not syntactic subjects while their Icelandic counterparts are (Sigurðsson 1989:351, 2002b:124–25, Haeberli 2002:291).

- (80) a. **Es** ist **mir** kalt.  
       b. \***Það** er **mér** kalt.  
           it.EXPL is me.DAT cold  
           *Intended:* ‘I’m freezing.’

This is not a valid comparison, however, since only indefinite arguments can occur with *það* in Icelandic while the same is not true, or at least not to the same extent, for German. Indefinite oblique subjects in Icelandic can occur with *það* while definite subjects cannot (Sigurðsson 1989, Vangsnes 1995, Haeberli 2002).

- (81) **Það** er **einhverjum stráku**m kalt.  
       it.EXPL is some.DAT boys.DAT cold  
       ‘Some boys are freezing.’

In German, in contrast, *es* can occur with definite subjects, including pronominal subjects, as in 82, although such occurrence is rare and restricted by pragmatic factors which are neither well studied nor well understood at present (Haeberli 2002:270ff., Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003b:11–13).

- (82) a. **Es** fahren **wir** noch extra im Sommer wegen ...  
       it.EXPL travel we.NOM probably extra in.the summer because  
       ‘We’ll probably do some extra travel in the summer because ...’  
       (ess-stoerungen.argh-it.de/showtopic.php?threadid=363)

<sup>31</sup> Sigurðsson (1990–91:41) observes that with alternating Dat-Nom/Nom-Dat passives in Icelandic the verb always agrees with the nominative. But if the dative passive is either Dat-S or Dat-PP and not Dat-Nom, the verb shows default third person singular form. This situation is parallel to that with omission on identity in second conjuncts in Old English, as reported by Allen (1995), discussed in §8 above, and is expected on the assumption that Dat-Nom passives in Old English are alternating predicates (as shown in Zaenen et al. 1985 to be the case in Modern Icelandic). In dative passives, exactly as with *falla í geð* and *gefallen*, the nominative can, under certain circumstances, take precedence over the dative with respect to some of the subject properties.

- b. **Es** kommt **er** fast gar nicht mehr.  
 it.EXPL comes he.NOM almost at.all not more  
 'He doesn't come at all anymore.'  
 (springfield-shopper.de/php/epiguide/epiguide.php?show=7G05)
- c. **Es** wurden **wir** alle noch nach Hause geliefert.  
 it.EXPL were we.NOM all still to home delivered  
 'We were all brought home.'  
 (www.melle-teich.de/u-06.htm)

Therefore, the optional occurrence of *es* with subject-like obliques in clause-initial position in German does not in itself provide an argument for a different syntactic status for subject-like obliques in the two languages (as also observed by Stepanov 2003:21–22).

Further, in intermediate or inverted position in German *es* can occur optionally with impersonal predicates, following the finite verb or a complementizer, while *það* is unacceptable in inverted position with impersonal predicates in Icelandic.

- (83) a. **Mir** ist (**es**) kalt.  
 me.DAT is it.EXPL cold
- b. **Mér/Einhverjum strákum** er (**\*það**) kalt.  
 me.DAT/some.DAT boys.DAT is it.EXPL cold

If *es* were the syntactic subject in German one would expect it to invert consistently with subject-like obliques. The optionality of *es* in both initial and inverted positions in German is aberrant. Also, the type without *es*, that is, *mir ist kalt*, is historically earlier (Abraham 1993) and is still by far the more common of the two (5,150 vs. 155 instances in our latest search on German websites). This may suggest an ongoing change involving two competing constructions. With weather verbs, however, *es* is obligatory in inverted position while it is unacceptable with impersonal passives. The behavior of *es* in the various impersonal constructions in German is therefore far from uniform.

To be sure, one can claim, as has been done in the literature, that *mir ist kalt* without *es* contains a null (pro) subject, which alternatively may be spelled out as *es*. This hypothesis, however, is theory-dependent insofar as it presupposes the assumption of null arguments. Such an assumption was commonly made in GB theory, but in the minimalism framework the status of null elements is considered problematic (Sigurðsson 2002b:124–25). In addition, even in a theory allowing null arguments, the problem of the alternation between *es* and zero, in both initial and inverted position, is hard to account for, especially given that German is not a pro-drop language (see Bayer 2004: 5, Haider 2005:28–30). Moreover, since we have presented evidence suggesting that German has oblique subjects, we are not forced to posit a null element in *mir ist kalt*, but are confident in analyzing the subject-like oblique here as a syntactic subject.

We then face the question of how to analyze the optional *es* with *mir ist kalt*. If *es* were the subject of this predicate, one would expect it to have the ability to be the unexpressed argument in control infinitives. Such a prediction, however, is not borne out.

- (84) a. \***Es** ist nicht gut, — mir **kalt zu sein**.  
 it.EXPL is not good PRO.EXPL me.DAT cold to be.INF  
 Intended: 'It is not good to feel cold.'
- b. \***Es** ist mir übel, ohne — mir **kalt zu sein**.  
 it.EXPL is me.DAT sick without PRO.EXPL me.DAT cold to be.INF  
 Intended: 'I feel sick without feeling cold.'

The examples in 84 show unmistakably that the subject-like dative of the infinitive *kalt zu sein* 'feel cold' cannot be the EXPRESSED argument of control infinitives in

German, which is unexpected on an object analysis (see the discussion in §3). These facts also show that *es* in *es ist mir kalt* does not correspond to the unexpressed subject. Thus, *es* does not behave as a syntactic subject, nor does the subject-like oblique *mir* behave as a syntactic object in German.

We believe, moreover, that any analysis of *es* with impersonal predicates must be coherent with the analysis of *es* with pronominal nominative subjects, as in 82 above. Such an analysis is suggested in Smith 2002. Smith argues that *es* represents a highly polysemous category of various types of scene-setters, of which *es ist mir kalt* denotes a construal where the subject-like dative is conceived of as an affected entity, while *es* signifies the source or the energy affecting this entity. For the nominative personal construction, *ich bin kalt* 'I'm cold (on the outside)', such a construal would not be expected since *ich bin kalt* is not an experiencer predicate nor does the nominative case marking of the subject denote affectedness. Hence, one would not, and quite rightfully so, expect structures like *es bin ich kalt* to exist in German. An alternative analysis is suggested by von Steffens-Montag (1982:186–89) who argues that German has developed in the direction that all finite sentences must have a nominative subject, hence the *es*-insertion, and that this change is independent of the subject status of subject-like obliques, which she in fact analyzes as syntactic subjects.

To summarize, we have shown that the distribution of *es* in impersonal constructions does not provide positive evidence for the assumption that subject-like obliques in German are to be analyzed differently from their counterparts in Icelandic. Hence, the differences in expletive constructions between Icelandic and German do not contradict our oblique subject hypothesis for Germanic.

**9.3. ALTERNATING PREDICATES IN GERMAN.** As a premise for our oblique subject hypothesis, we have argued for a definition of the subject concept in Germanic that takes the subject to be the leftmost argument of a verb's subcategorization frame or argument-structure construction (see 13 above). This is not a controversial claim for any of the Germanic languages except Modern German, where the subject-like dative of Dat-Nom predicates is uncontroversially regarded as ARG1, although it is not taken to be a subject. Both Bayer (2004) and Wunderlich (2006) take this position (EXTERNAL ARGUMENT VS. HIGHEST-RANKED ARGUMENT in their terminology). Fanselow (2002), Stepanov (2003), and Haider (2005) also observed that the subject-like dative does not take on behavioral properties of objects, but these scholars still maintain that the subject-like dative is not a behavioral subject in German. Apart from the alleged lack of omissibility in conjunction reduction and control infinitives, which we have now shown to be wrong, the main reason for this is the fact that the nominative (ARG2) can take on the behavioral properties of subjects, such as being the unexpressed argument in certain control infinitives. One such example is found with the verb *gefallen* in 55a, in which the matrix control verb, however, semantically targets the nominative and not the dative.

Furthermore, we have shown that the Icelandic cognate of *gefallen*, that is, *falla í geð*, is an alternating predicate that can occur in two opposite argument frames, the Dat-Nom and the Nom-Dat frame (see §§7, 9.1, and 9.2). When *falla í geð* instantiates the Dat-Nom frame, the dative shows the subject properties while the nominative behaves as an object. When *falla í geð* occurs in the Nom-Dat frame it is the nominative that behaves syntactically as a subject while the dative takes on the object behavior. In our model this means that either the dative or the nominative can be ARG1, although not at the same time. An examination of the behavior of *gefallen* in German in fact

accords with the hypothesis that it too may be an alternating predicate. If Dat-Nom predicates in German are alternating predicates, the subject behavior of the dative with regard to some of the subject tests is explained, and the subject behavior of the nominative with regard to other subject tests is also explained. The dative's preference for clause-initial position in the sentence (except of course when the nominative is first or second person) and its ability to be raised to subject and to be omitted in second conjuncts are behaviors found for ordinary nominative subjects in German. The fact that the nominative takes precedence over the dative when it is in first or second person and in certain kinds of control constructions is compatible with a subject analysis of the nominative. We thus argue that Dat-Nom predicates in German are alternating predicates, exactly like *falla í geð* in Icelandic, and on such an analysis, the subject behavior of the nominative is expected and does not constitute an argument against a subject analysis of the dative in German. Alternating predicates are attested in Modern Icelandic (Barðdal 2001b) and Modern Faroese (Barnes 1986) and have been argued to exist in Old English (Allen 1995) and in the history of the Scandinavian languages (Barðdal 1998). Alternating predicates may thus be a phenomenon whose historical origins go back to an early stage common to the Germanic languages. In this light, the supposition of alternating predicates in German is supported by the comparative evidence, the implication being that German preserves this archaic feature exactly like other related languages with Dat-Nom predicates and subject-like obliques.

To conclude, we have shown in the course of this article that our subject hypothesis in 13 above, in which the leftmost argument of a predicate's argument frame behaves syntactically as a subject, is borne out for the Germanic languages. It is this argument that is left unexpressed in control infinitives in Modern Faroese, Icelandic, German, Old Norse-Icelandic, Old Swedish, and Early Middle English. This means that subject-like obliques are indeed syntactic subjects, and predicates with only one oblique argument are not subjectless in Germanic, nor necessarily in any other language either. The facts of alternating Dat-Nom predicates in German also fall out naturally from our subject hypothesis in 13. Whether this hypothesis holds for a broader range of languages remains to be unveiled.

**10. OBJECT-TO-SUBJECT HYPOTHESIS VS. OBLIQUE SUBJECT HYPOTHESIS.** Cole et al. 1980 proposes three historical stages in the development from object status to subject status (see §2 above), which must occur in a specific order: at stage A nonsubject arguments display no subject properties at all, at stage B these arguments have acquired some behavioral subject properties, and at stage C they have acquired coding subject properties such as nominative case and subject-verb agreement. As Cole and colleagues emphasize, their analysis predicts that behavioral subject properties are acquired historically before coding subject properties. But there is extensive evidence for subject-like obliques of the impersonal construction changing into nominatives throughout the history of the German language. This change has been attested since the earliest German period and is well documented in traditional grammar books (e.g. Dal 1966:168–70; see also von Seeffranz-Montag 1982:158–201, 1984, Smith 1994, 1996). There is also variation in Gothic between dative and nominative with impersonal predicates and passives (Cole et al. 1980:722, n. 9, Smith 1994, 1996:230–31). On the object-to-subject analysis, therefore, subject-like obliques in German and Gothic would seem to have developed directly from stage A to C without an intermediate stage B. To us these facts suggest that subject-like obliques in German and Gothic are at stage B. A development from oblique case marking to nominative of subject-like obliques is

documented in the history of all the Germanic languages to a varying extent, a change that has been labeled NOMINATIVE SICKNESS or NOMINATIVE SUBSTITUTION (Smith 1994, 1996, von Seeffranz-Montag 1982, 1984, Mørck 1994, Allen 1995, Falk 1995, 1997, Neeleman & Weerman 1999, Faarlund 1990, 2001a, Barðdal 1998, 2001a, 2004, Eythórsson 2001, 2002, Petersen 2002, Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a, Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003, Hrafnbjargarson 2004, Jónsson & Eythórsson 2005).

Nominative substitution involves generalization of the high type frequency, default nominative as subject case at the expense of the low type frequency, semantically restricted pattern of oblique case on subjects (see Barðdal 2001a:33–39, 196–208, Eythórsson 2001, 2002). This change is unexpected in languages supposedly at stage A, like German and Gothic. By contrast, nominative substitution is easily comprehensible assuming that subject-like obliques in German and Gothic are in fact behavioral subjects (and thus involve a development from B to C, in the terminology in Cole et al. 1980).

The position of an argument in a sentence is often included among subject tests (Keenan 1976:324), and in Germanic this is usually the clause-initial position and the subject-verb inverted position. Cole and colleagues discuss the position of subject-like obliques only in a footnote (1980:720, n. 3), and it is not clear whether they regard it to be a coding or a behavioral property. In any case, subject-like obliques occur in these positions in Modern High German, without any signs of the intonation contour typical for topicalized arguments, exactly like ordinary nominative subjects (Haspelmath 2001:68–69, Fanselow 2002, Bayer 2004, Barðdal 2006, Wunderlich 2006). Subject-to-subject raising is also regarded as a subject test by Cole and colleagues (1980:729), who, however, fail to mention that subject-like obliques in German pass this test (von Seeffranz-Montag 1982, McKay 1985, Barðdal 2002, 2006, among others). Both position and subject-to-subject raising are problematic for the object-to-subject analysis and constitute an argument for the assumption that Modern High German is at least at stage B and not stage A. In sum, there is no evidence for a development from stage A to B in Germanic, and thus no support for the assumption that Germanic ever was at stage A. What is more, there is also positive evidence that subject-like obliques in German behave as syntactic subjects with regard to reflexivization, conjunction reduction, and control infinitives, as we just demonstrated in the preceding section.

We have, thereby, shown that the arguments for reconstructing a stage A as a part of a general development of objects to subjects in Germanic are unfounded. The facts of Germanic, however, are entirely consistent with the oblique subject account and can be summarized as in Table 6.

A	A → B	B	B → C	C
		Mod. Icel.	Mod. Far.	Mod. Sw.
		Old No-Icel.	Mod. HG	Mod. Engl.
			Old Sw.	
			Old Engl.	

TABLE 6. Subject properties of subject-like obliques in Germanic.

We have not included Gothic in Table 6 because the data are inconclusive, contrary to claims in Cole et al. 1980 that Gothic was at stage A (although the nominative substitution found in Gothic certainly speaks for subject status of subject-like obliques in that language). In the other Old Germanic languages, however, subject-like obliques exhibit behavioral properties of syntactic subjects. Throughout history, oblique case on subjects has been replaced by nominative case in all of the Germanic languages, to

a varying degree (nominative substitution). While the variation in Icelandic is rather insignificant, it is much more substantial in both Modern Faroese and German (Eythórsson & Jónsson 2003, Barðdal 2004, Jónsson & Eythórsson 2005). In the history of the Mainland Scandinavian languages and English, nominative was also generalized as a subject case (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:465–69 and the references cited therein). To summarize, Old Norse-Icelandic and Modern Icelandic are at stage B, Old English and Old Swedish, as well as Modern Faroese and Modern High German, are located at an intermediate stage between B and C, while Modern Swedish and Modern English are at stage C.

Returning to the object-to-subject hypothesis, Cole and colleagues present data not only from Germanic but also from Polynesian and Georgian, but there is nothing to suggest that there was ever a stage A in the history of Georgian, as they admit in a footnote (1980:741, n. 27). For Polynesian, there are transitive sentences in some languages of this family, Tongan and Samoan, which have been argued to have developed from a passive construction. This development has been reconstructed on the basis of Maori, a Polynesian language considered to have preserved the earlier system (Chung 1976). If this analysis is correct, a change has taken place from a nominative-accusative structure to an ergative-absolutive structure of the language. Therefore, this is not an example of a change from stage A to B, or from objecthood to subjecthood, as Cole and colleagues argue, but a completely different kind of change, not comparable at all to the situation in either Germanic or Georgian. Also, there is nothing that suggests a change from stage B to C in Polynesian.

Recently, scholars have questioned the alleged change from nominative-accusative to ergative-absolutive through a reanalysis of the passive construction, especially for Indo-Aryan languages (Peterson 1998, Butt 2001). And there is an ongoing debate about whether Proto-Polynesian was ergative or accusative. Chung (1976) and others take Proto-Polynesian to be originally an accusative language; another group of scholars claim it was originally ergative (see in particular Kikusawa 2002, where it is argued that Proto Central Pacific was ergative). In fact, this now seems to be the standard view among linguists working on Polynesian. It follows from this that any claims by Cole and colleagues about the alleged development in Polynesian languages from stage A to stage B are at best controversial, but in all likelihood it was the exact converse of what they maintain.

Haspelmath (2001:78–79) reports on changes in Maltese, which he takes to support the object-to-subject hypothesis. The data he presents, however, involve a change only from dative to nominative on subjects (i.e. nominative substitution), thus supporting only a change from stage B to stage C. He presents no evidence of oblique subjects ever behaving as objects in older Maltese. Elsewhere, Haspelmath and Caruana (2000) give a more detailed description of Maltese, and they show that in the modern language different classes of experiencer predicates display subject behavior to different degrees. The historical development they argue for, as supporting the object-to-subject hypothesis, is based on reconstructions and not on attested historical data. These reconstructions, in turn, assume a one-to-one correspondence between case marking and syntactic functions. They offer no historical evidence from earlier Maltese to show that the oblique experiencers once behaved as syntactic objects; therefore, there is no evidence for stage A in Maltese, either. The facts of Georgian and Maltese are summarized in Table 7.

A	A → B	B	B → C	C
		Georgian		
			Maltese	

TABLE 7. Subject properties of subject-like obliques in Georgian and Maltese.

We have not included the Polynesian languages in Table 7; we believe that the changes that have taken place in that language family are of a completely different nature than Cole and colleagues' stages A, B, and C. The Polynesian languages presumably developed from ergative-absolutive to nominative-accusative, a change that involves the whole structure of the language and not one specific construction as in the case of Germanic. The schema is not intended either to capture examples of accusative case being reanalyzed as nominative case, concomitant with a functional reanalysis of one construction to another, as conjectured for Greek by Joseph (1981). We conclude that there is no empirical evidence whatsoever for assuming a stage A on the basis of the languages discussed by Cole and colleagues and Haspelmath; thus we reject the whole concept of an acquisition of subject status by objects. Rather, we argue that subject-like obliques were syntactic subjects in Germanic all along, as predicted by the oblique subject hypothesis.

This of course raises the more general question of whether stage A is a universal impossibility in language. We are not predisposed to say that development from A to B is theoretically impossible, nor are we ready to accept the opposite claim without proper documentation. As a general methodological principle, one should not assume change unless the basis for such an assumption is safe, and we show here that this is far from certain for the development of impersonal predicates. Given that subject-like obliques exhibit behavioral properties of syntactic subjects in the old and modern Germanic languages, including Modern High German, the simplest hypothesis is that this was in fact also the case at their earliest (prehistoric) stages. In other words, the behavioral properties of subject-like obliques have been preserved over a long period in the different Germanic languages. This fact shows that linguistic change is not necessarily the default variable in historical linguistics, but that linguistic stability is equally possible, and perhaps even a grossly underestimated variable (Barðdal & Eythórsson 2003a:464–65, Janda & Joseph 2003:65–66, Nichols 2003).

Cole and his colleagues proposed no motivation for the alleged change from stage A to stage B. This is all the more remarkable since such a change would involve a major shift in grammatical function of the categories involved and would seem to demand an explanation. Haspelmath (2001:78–79) does propose a motivation for this type of change. He claims that stimulus-experiencer constructions, where the nominative stimulus is the subject and the dative experiencer the object (Nom-Dat), can gradually change in such a way that the dative experiencer is increasingly placed in topic (clause-initial) position, whereas the nominative stimulus is placed in the nontopical position, either clause-internally or clause-finally. The reason for fronting the experiencer would be its animacy, and through this process, Haspelmath argues, the dative experiencer is assimilated to subject, becoming first a dative subject, which later changes into a nominative.

There are at least three problems with Haspelmath's account. First, it is far from certain that there has been any change from stimulus-experiencer constructions (Nom-Dat) to experiencer-stimulus constructions (Dat-Nom) in Germanic, since it is equally plausible that both constructions coexisted from early on. The second and most serious problem with this account is that it does not explain the existence of Acc-Acc, Acc-Gen, and Dat-Gen argument frames in Germanic, in which the nontopical stimulus is not nominative; thus the case frame cannot be derived from a nominative stimulus construction. Moreover, some Dat-Nom verbs in Modern Icelandic selected for a Dat-Gen frame in Old Norse-Icelandic (Barðdal 2001a:195, 197–98), a change that has also been documented in the history of German (von Seeffranz-Montag 1982:189–201).



For Acc-Acc, Acc-Gen, and Dat-Gen at least, there is no reason to assume that any swapping of arguments has taken place; this too undermines the validity of the swapping analysis as a general motivation for the existence of oblique subjects. It is not impossible of course that the Dat-Nom construction, in particular, has developed from the Nom-Dat construction, as Haspelmath suggests. But given the existence of Acc-Acc, Acc-Gen, and Dat-Gen in Germanic, one would ultimately prefer an analysis that offers a unified account of the existence of all oblique-subject constructions, not just the Dat-Nom. The third problem with Haspelmath's account is that, taken literally, his analysis would seem to predict either that German has developed directly from stage A to stage C without an intermediate stage B, or that subject-like obliques are syntactic subjects in Modern German, in contrast to the standard view that they are objects in that language. This last conclusion would not necessarily be the one Haspelmath intended, but it would of course be in accord with our view that subject-like obliques are syntactic subjects in German, exactly as in the other Germanic languages in which they occur.

Nevertheless, the existence of alternating predicates in Germanic explains three incongruities. First, it explains the fact that the nominative stimulus is left unexpressed in the Gothic and Old Swedish examples introduced as an argument against an oblique subject analysis (§§4 and 7). Second, it explains why certain experiencer predicates in the history of English may appear to have developed in cycles, or have their arguments swapped, when in fact they have not (§8). Finally, the existence of alternating predicates explains the discrepancy in the syntactic behavior of German *gefallen* (§9) and other Dat-Nom predicates in a way that is consistent with what we know about alternating predicates in both Modern Icelandic and Faroese. Thus, knowledge of alternating predicates is crucial for a correct understanding of the syntactic behavior of verbs like *gefallen*, which hitherto has been a serious anomaly in German linguistics.

To conclude on a more general note, one may ask why the object-to-subject hypothesis should have been proposed. We believe it has its roots in the generative view that oblique subjects are base-generated, or underlying, objects (Keenan 1976, Reis 1982, Cowper 1988, Sigurðsson 1989, 1990–91, 1991, Fanselow 1992, Falk 1995, Harris & Campbell 1995, Jónsson 1996, Moore & Perlmutter 2000). This idea can, in turn, be traced to the notion within traditional Latin grammar that the subject of a sentence is by definition in nominative case, and conversely, that (nonpredicative) nominatives are subjects. If one does not accept this as an axiom, however, it is a moot point to claim that oblique subjects must have developed from objects. Approaching the problem without preconceived ideas about the correspondence between grammatical relations and morphological case, one is not necessarily led to the conclusion that oblique subjects in the world's languages must be derived, or underlying, objects. There are numerous languages in which a subset of subjects has oblique case marking (see various articles in Aikhenvald et al. 2001), for instance, Russian (Moore & Perlmutter 2000), South Asian languages (Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Dardic, Tibeto-Burman, and Munda; Masica 1976, Verma & Mohanan 1990, Steever 1998, Bickel 2004), and Native American languages (Hermon 1985). A synchronic analysis of these languages need not appeal to a reconstructed historical development but may well take as its point of departure the semantics of the morphological cases in these languages. Oblique case marking expresses AFFECTEDNESS to a much higher degree than the nominative and it shares this meaning with prototypical objects of transitive predicates (Langacker 1991:409–13, Smith 2001, Barðdal 2004:111–12). Therefore, the (grammatical) semantics of the oblique case marking coincides with the (lexical) semantics of impersonal predicates,

which are either experiencer predicates or low-transitive predicates in general. Such an analysis thus provides a synchronic motivation for the nonnominative case marking of oblique subjects. Hence, there is no *a priori* reason to assume that the case marking of oblique subjects is 'noncanonical' or in some way not representative of an original state of affairs.

**11. SUMMARY.** We have argued here against the object-to-subject analysis put forth in Cole et al. 1980, an analysis that assumes that nonsubject arguments can gradually acquire subject properties in the course of time, and that this takes place in a specific order. Cole and colleagues' main arguments come from the history of Germanic, though they also discuss Polynesian and Georgian. In opposition to the object-to-subject hypothesis, we proposed the oblique subject hypothesis, in which subject-like obliques exhibit behavioral properties of subjects already in Old Germanic. We offered data from Old Norse-Icelandic, Old Swedish, and Early Middle English of subject-like obliques' being the unexpressed argument of control infinitives, a property generally considered to be confined to subjects. We presented novel evidence from Modern German in support of the oblique subject hypothesis, against the standard view that subject-like obliques are syntactic objects in that language. Our data show that impersonal predicates and dative passives must bind reflexives, can be omitted in second conjuncts, can embed under control verbs in German, and thus that subject-like obliques behave syntactically as subjects, exactly as in Modern Icelandic and Faroese. We also discussed the alleged differences between German and Icelandic with respect to subject-verb agreement and the distribution of expletives, which have hitherto been taken to support the nonsubject status of subject-like obliques in German. We demonstrated that for subject-verb agreement these differences do not exist, and for expletives they are not fundamental. Finally, we argued that Dat-Nom predicates in German show behavioral characteristics of alternating predicates, which are also found in both Modern Icelandic and Faroese.

In sum, there is no evidence whatsoever for assuming that subject-like obliques ever were at stage A in the history of Germanic, either in Gothic, or in German. Nor is there evidence of stage A in the history of Georgian or Polynesian, or any other language we know of. A fundamental principle of historical linguistics is that one should not reconstruct prehistorical stages that may be at odds with what is known about language in general and about language development. The oblique subject analysis is superior to the object-to-subject analysis because it does not need to invoke a mechanism to explain a change from objecthood to subjecthood, but instead assumes that no change has taken place in Icelandic, Faroese, and German, where oblique subjects have been preserved. In the remaining Germanic languages, oblique subjects have changed into nominative subjects. The recognition of alternating predicates in Modern Icelandic and Faroese is, however, crucial for a correct assessment of the syntactic structure of the Dat-Nom construction in the history of Germanic, seriously undermining the traditional analysis that a swapping of arguments has taken place within the argument frames of these predicates.

Many languages exhibit an impersonal construction like the one discussed in this article, like Latin, for example, and other old Indo-European languages, as well as many non-Indo-European languages. While, on the one hand, it cannot be assumed *a priori* that all languages with impersonal predicates have oblique subjects, on the other hand, the syntactic properties of subject-like obliques in the languages that exhibit impersonal predicates cannot be assigned object status either without a proper investigation of the relevant facts.

## APPENDIX A: EXPANDED CONTEXT OF SELECTED EXAMPLES

- (61) Denn ein Teil dieser Erkenntnisse, die mathematischen, ist im alten Besitze der Zuverlässigkeit, und gibt dadurch eine günstige Erwartung auch für andere, ob diese gleich von ganz verschiedener Natur sein mögen. Überdem, wenn man über den Kreis der Erfahrung hinaus ist, *so ist man sicher, durch Erfahrung nicht widersprochen zu werden*. Der Reiz, seine Erkenntnisse zu erweitern, ist so groß, daß man nur durch einen klaren Widerspruch, auf den man stößt, in seinem Fortschritte aufgehalten werden kann.

‘Because a part of this knowledge, the mathematical one, has always possessed reliability, and by means of this it provides a favorable expectation for others, even though these may be of a quite different nature. Besides, if one is beyond the sphere of experience, *one can be certain not to be contradicted by experience*. The incentive to expand one’s knowledge is so great that one can only be stopped in one’s progress by a clear contradiction which one comes up against.’

(gutenberg.spiegel.de/kant/krva/krva003.htm)

- (62) Hier sind wir noch halb sinnlich, und es ist äusserst naturwidrig, hier alles verleugnen wollen, was Gott dem physischen Menschen zum Labsal und zur Erfrischung hie und da am Pfade unserer Wallfarth aufgetischt hat: aber den Lebensweg darum pilgern, um an diesen Erquickungsorten zu schmausen, *das ist so verächtlich, daß man das Auge davon abwenden muß, um nicht übel zu werden*. Warte des Leibes, doch so, daß er . . .

‘Here we are still half sensuous, and it is very much against nature to abstain from everything here that the Lord has served the physical person for comfort and refreshment here and there on the path of our pilgrimage: but to take a pilgrimage on the path of life in order to feast at these rest places *that is so despicable that one has to look away in order not to feel sick*. Wait for the body, but in such a way that it . . .’

(www.jung-stilling-archiv.de/WertderLeiden.htm)

- (65) Was bedeutet es für mich, Mitglied zu sein? Mitglied bei uns zu sein bedeutet, sich in unserer Gemeinschaft wohlfühlen. *Mitglied bei uns zu sein bedeutet aber auch, das Gefühl zu haben, geholfen zu werden*. Mitglied bei uns zu sein bedeutet, jemandem zu helfen . . .

‘What does it mean for me to be a member? To be a member of our [club] means that one feels at ease in our community. *To be a member also means that one has the feeling of being helped*.

To be a member means to help somebody . . .’ (www.tg-net.de/ig-vw/mitglied01.html)

- (66) Der ewig läufige Richard Kimble, der dicke Captain Kirk, der fledermäusige Flatterheini Batman—sie alle kamen zurück. Sogar den ollen Zossen Black Beauty ließ man letztes noch einmal ein paar Pferdeäpfel auf die Leinwand abseilen, bevor er zu seiner letzten Autogrammstunde in die Freibank trabte. Aber warum klappt das TV-Recycling ei[g]entlich nur im Ausland? ‘Mission: Impossible’ wird ein Mega-Hit auf der ganzen Welt—aber wo bleibt zum Beispiel ‘MS-Franziska—Der Film’? Oder ‘Manni, der Libero, returns’? *Haben wir Deutschen etwa keine weggeworfenen Serien, die es wert wären, wiederverwertet und nostalgisch gehuldigt zu werden?*

‘Richard Kimble, constantly in heat, the fat Captain Kirk, the bat-like flibbertigibbet Batman—they all returned. They even had the old hackney Black Beauty drop some dung one last time on the movie screen recently, before it trotted to its last autograph session at the shambles. But why does TV recycling only work abroad? ‘Mission: Impossible’ has become a worldwide mega-hit—but where, for example, is ‘MS-Franziska—the Movie’? Or ‘Manni, the Fullback, returns’? *Don’t we Germans have any comic series down the drain that are worthy of being put to good use again and embraced nostalgically?*’

(www.bei-gertrud.de/ok/klw\_9618.html)

- (67) Für viele ist es außerordentlich lästig, daß sie, wenn sie krank sind, noch zusätzliche Pflichten gegenüber ihrem Arbeitgeber haben. Trotzdem sollte man diese Pflichten unbedingt erfüllen, damit man keine Rechtsnachteile erleidet. *Wer sich nicht an die gesetzlich vorgeschriebenen Regeln hält, riskiert, keine Lohnfortzahlung zu bekommen oder evtl. gar gekündigt zu werden*.

‘For many it is extremely troublesome that despite their sick leave they still have further obligations to their employer. Nevertheless, one should under all circumstances meet these obligations in order to avoid any legal disadvantages. *Those who do not adhere to the rules proscribed by the law run the risk of not receiving continued salary or maybe even of being dismissed.*’

(www.ra-kassing.de/arbeit/krankht/krankalg.htm)

- (68) Die Betroffenen bauen fast immer ein Vertrauensverhältnis zu ihren Betreuern auf. Potenzielle Täter nutzen das freundschaftliche Verhältnis häufig aus, um gezielt die Bedürfnisse des behinderten Menschen auszuforschen. Je größer die Abhängigkeit, umso größer ist die Gefährdung. Wie soll

man Berührungen auch vermeiden, wenn auch die intimsten Handlungen nicht alleine bewerkstelligt werden können? *Ein Recht für geistig wie körperlich behinderte Frauen, nur von Frauen bei intimen Handlungen assistiert zu werden*, gibt es in der Bundesrepublik . . . nicht.

'These people almost always build up a relationship of trust with their carers. Potential offenders often take advantage of this friendly relationship with the specific aim to learn about the needs of the disabled person. The greater the dependency, the greater the threat. How is one supposed to avoid contact, if even the most personal activities cannot be performed in privacy? *A right for mentally and physically disabled women to be only assisted by women* when engaged in private activities does not exist . . . in Germany.' (www.freitag.de/2002/45/02450402.php)

- (69) 'Ich bin nichts, der Herrgott ist alles. Ich will weder Geld noch Gold, was ich will und kann, ist, allen Menschen helfen und heilen. *Wer den Herrgott verleumdete, ist es nicht wert, geholfen zu werden.*' Das schrieb Bruno Gröning (1906–1959) im Jahr 1949 über sich selbst. Er sah sich als Vermittler göttlicher Botschaften, durch die er heilen könne.

'“I am nothing, the Lord is everything. I desire neither riches nor gold. What I want and am capable of is to help and heal all people. *He who slanders the Lord is not worthy of being helped.*” This is what Bruno Gröning (1906–1959) wrote about himself in the year 1949. He saw himself as the messenger of divine tidings through which he could heal people.'

(www.martinus.at/info/sekten/brunogroeningfreundeskreis.html)

#### APPENDIX B: THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY.

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Please read the following text and answer the questions below.

1. Nicht nur die Strukturen der Justiz, auch der Behindertenalltag selbst begünstigt die Täter. Häufig ist die gesamte Alltagsbewältigung behinderter Menschen auf Assistenz angewiesen, vom Aufstehen, Waschen, Anziehen über Essen und Bewegen. Die Betroffenen bauen fast immer ein Vertrauensverhältnis zu ihren Betreuern auf. Potenzielle Täter nutzen das freundschaftliche Verhältnis häufig aus, um gezielt die Bedürfnisse des behinderten Menschen auszuforschen. Je größer die Abhängigkeit, umso größer ist die Gefährdung. Wie soll man Berührungen auch vermeiden, wenn auch die intimsten Handlungen nicht alleine bewerkstelligt werden können?

Ein Recht für geistig wie körperlich behinderte Frauen, nur von Frauen bei intimen Handlungen assistiert zu werden, gibt es in der Bundesrepublik, in der allein 500.000 geistig Behinderte leben, nicht. Laut einer Entscheidung des Verwaltungsgerichts Berlin von 1998 ist die Pflege von Frauen durch männliches Pflegepersonal, einschließlich der Intimpflege, zumutbar. Dies entspräche 'dem gegenwärtigen Pflegestandard in der Bundesrepublik'.

Does the text in 1 represent idiomatic German? \_\_\_\_ How do you feel about the infinitive with 'assistieren' in lines 8–9? \_\_\_\_ Does 'assistieren' take a dative in your language? \_\_\_\_ Does that affect your answer, if so how? \_\_\_\_ (Please use the back of this sheet to elaborate on your answer if you need to!)

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