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Thematic constraints on presentational sentences in Icelandic and Swedish

1. Introduction

Word order in the Scandinavian languages has received a lot of attention in the last forty years or so, see e.g. Thráinsson (1979, 2007), Holmberg and Platzack (1995), Maling and Zaenen (1990) and Vikner (1995).[1] In this article we focus on presentational sentences in Icelandic and Swedish with the aim of comparing how thematic roles and clause structure interact in these languages. By presentational sentences we mean sentences that assert, or deny, the existence of a referent or present a hitherto unmentioned referent in a situation.[2] Presentational sentences typically have an expletive early in the sentence and an indefinite DP later. We will refer to this indefinite DP as the **pivot**.[3] One Icelandic and one Swedish example, taken from Platzack (1983), are shown in (1) and (2).[4]

[1] This is a revised and extended version of Engdahl, Maling, Sigurðsson and Zaenen (2018). We are grateful to the audiences at Grammar in Focus, February 2018 in Lund, the 11th Nordic Dialectologist conference, August 2018 in Reykjavík and the Grammar Seminar in Lund in February 2019 for comments and suggestions, especially to Lars-Olof Delsing, Cecilia Falk, Gunlög Josefsson, David Petersson, Jóhannes Gísli Jónsson and Øystein Vangsnes. We thank Einar Freyr Sigurðsson, Höskuldur Thráinsson, Sigríður Magnúsdóttir and Sigríður Sigurjónsdóttir for help with the Icelandic data and Peter Andersson, Maia Andréasson, Kristian Blensenius, Linnéa Bäckström, Benjamin Lyngfelt, Erik Petzell and Henrik Rosenkvist for help with the Swedish data. In addition to native speakers' judgments we have searched in the large text corpora Risamálheildin (2019) and Korp for relevant data. This version has benefitted significantly from comments by two anonymous reviewers and from the detailed comments and editorial suggestions made by Einar Freyr Sigurðsson.

[2] Other terms for presentational sentences are *existential sentences* and *there-insertion constructions*, see e.g. Milsark (1974) and Sundman (1980).

[3] In the examples, pivots are shown in bold. Other English terms for pivots are *logical subject* and *associate (of the expletive)*. In Swedish, e.g. Teleman et al. (1999), they are called *egentligt subjekt* 'real subject'. A similar term *eiginlegt frumlag* is used in Icelandic whereas the Norwegian reference grammar, Faarlund et al. (1997), uses the term *potensielt subjekt* 'potential subject'. The extent to which pivots have subject properties is discussed in Zaenen et al. (2017).

[4] The following abbreviations are used: ACC = accusative, AGT = Agent, DAT = dative,

(1) Það eru **mýs** í baðkerinu. (Ice.)
EXPL are mice in bathtub.DEF
'There are mice in the bathtub.'

(2) Det sitter **en** **fågel** på taket. (Swe.)
EXPL sits a bird on roof.DEF
'There is a bird on the roof.'

The reason for concentrating on presentational sentences is that they provide a good testing ground for investigating how thematic roles influence the preferred word order in various ways. By comparing Icelandic, where the expletive *það* can be shown to be generated in initial position, outside the core clause, and Swedish, where the expletive *det* is generated inside the core clause, we can show how this structural difference affects the word order options in both languages. Despite these structural differences, we find systematic similarities when it comes to which thematic roles can be realized in which positions. In section 2 we summarize the main differences between the languages and outline Platzack's (1983) account, which we dub the standard account. We also point out two facts that are unexplained on the standard account and which both have to do with transitive verbs. In section 3 we pursue the idea that it is the argument structure that is relevant and introduce Platzack's (2010) argument structure with associated thematic roles. We give an overview of the interaction between roles and positions and propose that pivots in the VP obey similar constraints in the two languages. In section 4 we look at the positioning of negated pivots and in section 5 we discuss three related constructions where the languages differ.

2. Two well-known differences

Presentational sentences in Icelandic and Swedish share certain fundamental properties but there are some well-known differences having to do with where pivots may appear and whether they can be agents of transitive verbs. In Icelandic the pivot can appear either in the VP (3a) or (in several positions) in the higher IP domain (3b,c) (examples from Thráinsson 2007:314).

DEF = definite, DFT = default, EXP = Experiencer, EXPL = expletive, GEN = genitive, NOM = nominative, PASS = passive, PERF = Performer, PL = plural, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular.

(3) a. Það hafði alltaf verið **einhver köttur** í eldhúsinu. (Ice.)
EXPL had always been some.NOM cat.NOM in kitchen.DEF
'There had always been a cat in the kitchen.'
b. Það hafði alltaf **einhver köttur** verið í eldhúsinu.
EXPL had always some.NOM cat.NOM been in kitchen.DEF
c. Það hafði **einhver köttur** alltaf verið í eldhúsinu.
EXPL had some.NOM cat.NOM always been in kitchen.DEF

In Swedish, only the position inside the VP is generally available for pivots (except for negated pivots, discussed in section 4).

(4) a. Det har varit **en katt** i köket. (Swe.)
EXPL has been a cat in kitchen.DEF
'There has been a cat in the kitchen.'
b. *Det har **en katt** varit i köket.
EXPL has a cat been in kitchen.DEF

In Icelandic, IP-pivots with agentive transitive verbs are possible, see (5).[5] The corresponding Swedish example in (6) is impossible.

(5) Það hafa **einhverjir stúdentar** stungið smjörinu í vasann.
EXPL have some students put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF
'Some students have put the butter in their pockets.'
(6) *Det har **några studenter** stoppat smöret i fickan.
EXPL has some students put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF

In this article we are mainly concerned with differences between pivots inside the VP, which we refer to as VP-pivots, and pivots in the IP, which we refer to as IP-pivots. For this reason we consistently use examples with auxiliaries or modal verbs in order to show the different pivot positions since it is not possible to distinguish them when there is only a main verb in second position, as in (1) and (2). Furthermore, we are mainly looking at examples with indefinite pivots as they are the only ones that can appear both in the VP and in the IP (see Sigurðsson 2000, Vangsnes 2002 and Thráinsson 2007 for detailed discussion about other types of

[5] This famous example first occurred in print in Platzack (1983) but is due to Höskuldur Thráinsson who heard it in the teachers' coffee room in Árnagarður. Icelandic Transitive Expletive Constructions have been widely discussed in the generative literature, see in particular Bobaljik and Jonas (1996). See also Håkansson (2017) for a comparison with Swedish.

DPs which may appear as IP-pivots in Icelandic).[6] We note that presentational sentences are very sensitive to context. They tend to require locative or temporal anchors and are often better with modal or inferential particles. Nevertheless we sometimes use simple constructed examples to bring out a distinction, for ease of comparison.

2.1 The standard account

Platzack (1983) accounted for both these differences, that is that only Icelandic allows IP-pivots and transitive verbs, by assuming that the expletives are generated in different positions in the two languages. The Icelandic expletive is assumed to be generated initially, in Spec,CP, and the Swedish expletive in Spec,IP or Spec,VP (see e.g. Sigurðsson 1991, 2000, Christensen 1991, Vikner 1995, Vangsnes 2002, Thráinsson 2007 and Platzack 2010).[7] Support for this account comes from the fact that the Icelandic presentational expletive *það* only appears in Spec,CP, not sentence-internally, in the IP, whereas the Swedish *det* is normally required in Spec,IP and consequently blocks pivots from appearing there.

(7) Hefur (*það) verið **einhver köttur** í eldhúsinu? (Ice.)
has EXPL been some cat in kitchen.DEF
'Has there been a cat in the kitchen?'

(8) Har *(det) varit **en katt** i köket? (Swe.)
has EXPL been some cat in kitchen.DEF
'Has there been a cat in the kitchen?'

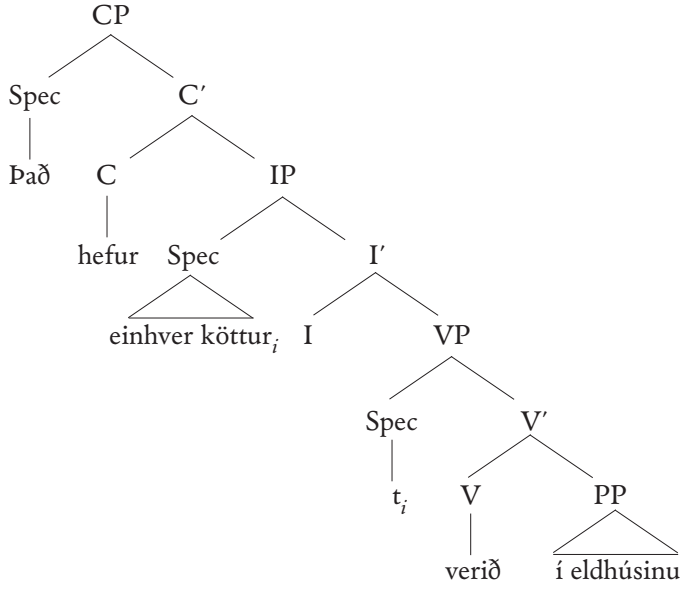
The simplified trees in (9) and (10) illustrate this.[8] In the Icelandic tree, the expletive *það* is generated in Spec,CP and the pivot *einhver köttur* 'some cat' is first generated in Spec,VP and then raised to Spec,IP.

[6] Some northern Swedish dialects allow morphologically definite pivots but they are interpreted as indefinite, see Delsing (2003) and Dahl (2015).

[7] Without further assumptions, Platzack's analysis cannot account for the use of expletive *það* in embedded clauses. See Sigurðsson (2010) for a more articulate analysis in terms of feature matching which assumes that expletive *það* is in the low C-domain (i.e., not in the high C-domain) in both main and subordinate clauses.

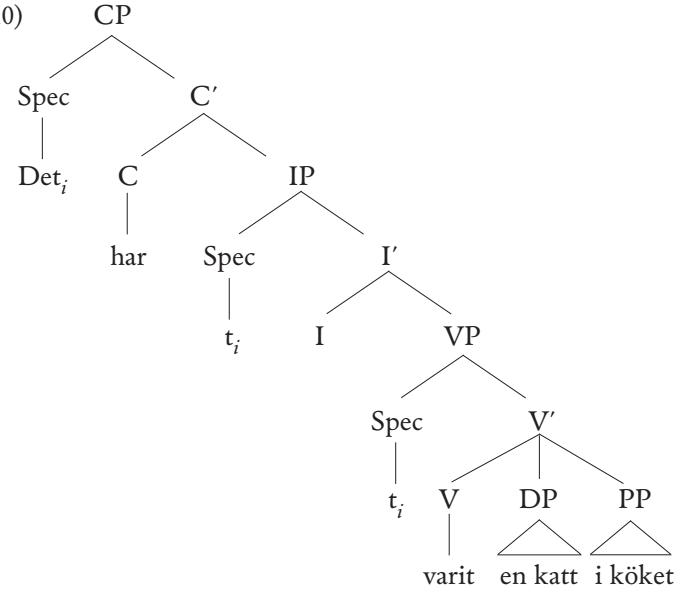
[8] We leave out the raising of the auxiliary to C and the internal structure of the VP in these simplified trees. See the tree in (15) for the full VP structure.

(9)



In the Swedish tree, the expletive *det* is generated in Spec,VP and then raised, first to Spec,IP and then to Spec,CP.

(10)



The evidence for assuming that the expletive in Swedish is generated in Spec,VP comes from data like (11) where the expletive is required in an untensed small clause. In Icelandic the expletive is ungrammatical for some but not all speakers (see discussion in Thráinsson 1979:357, 446, 481f. and Sigurðsson 2010:172, n. 23).

(11) Vi såg *(det) komma **några barn** på vägen. (Swe.)
we saw EXPL come some children on road.DEF
'We saw some children come on the road.'

(12) Við sáum (*það) koma **nokkur börn** eftir veginum. (Ice.)
we saw EXPL come some children along road.DEF
'We saw some children come on the road.'

2.2 Two problems

Even if the standard account outlined in the previous section does handle these two differences between Icelandic and Swedish, there are certain facts that remain unexplained. First, although pivots are possible with agentive transitive verbs in Icelandic, as shown in (5), they have to be IP-pivots and cannot appear inside the VP.[9]

(13)a. *Það munu hafa **einhverjir stúdentar** stungið smjörinu í vasann.
EXPL will have some students put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF
b. *Það hafa stungið smjörinu **einhverjir stúdentar** í vasann.
EXPL have put butter.DEF some students in pocket.DEF
c. Það hafa stungið smjörinu í vasann **einhverjir stúdentar**.
EXPL have put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF some students

(13a,b), where the pivot appears in the VP, are impossible. (13c) is acceptable but presumably involves extraposition of *einhverjir stúdentar* outside the VP. The standard account does not explain why the pivot cannot remain in the VP, where it is generated according to (9).

Second, although Swedish does not allow pivots with agentive transitive verbs, as shown in (6), pivots with non-agentive transitive verbs are possible, as noted in Platzack (1983) and Maling (1988), provided they appear in the VP.

(14)a. Det hade hänt henne **något konstigt** igår. (Swe.)
EXPL had happened her something strange yesterday
'Something strange had happened to her yesterday.'

[9] The additional auxiliary verb in (13a) is needed in order to show that the pivot cannot appear in Spec,VP, see Thráinsson (2007:56) and Sigurðsson (2019:594ff.).

b. *Det hade **något** **konstigt** hänt henne igår.
EXPL had something strange happened her yesterday

For both these unexplained facts, the notion of agentivity plays a role and we now look closer at thematic constraints on pivots.

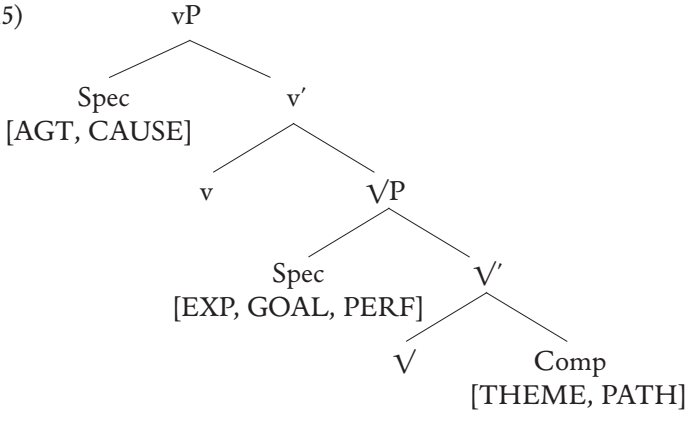
3. Thematic roles and argument positions

In this section we discuss how the thematic role of a DP affects its ability to be realized as a pivot. We find that the same thematic restrictions apply to VP-pivots in Icelandic and Swedish, and that some pivots which are unavailable in the VP are possible as IP-pivots in Icelandic but not in Swedish.

3.1 Platzack's (2010) argument structure

Presentational sentences provide an interesting test case for the theory of grammar outlined in Platzack (2010). Platzack proposes that syntactic structures come with information about which thematic roles are associated with different positions in the tree. He assumes a basic structure with a Root phrase (√P), dominated by vP, as shown in (15) (2010:175).[10] Families of thematic roles are linked to complement and specifier positions in the tree, as indicated (for abbreviations see note 4).

(15)



[10] A shorter English version is found in Platzack (2009).

On Platzack's minimalist account, arguments are (first) merged in these positions and then, in non-presentational sentences, moved further up in order to check various features. In presentational sentences the pivot remains in the position where it was first merged. The root also raises to v, but that does not affect the relative order of the role positions, see (14a) for example. In non-presentational sentences, the highest argument is normally raised to a Spec position in IP and then, in declarative main clauses, further raised to Spec,CP. Presentational sentences in Swedish arise when an expletive is merged in Spec,vP, the position reserved for Agents of transitive verbs, and then raised. Consequently, no Agent can be merged there and we do not find any transitive presentational sentences. For Icelandic, where the expletive is assumed to be merged in Spec,CP, Agents can be merged in Spec,vP and then raise to become IP-pivots. But this does not explain why Agents have to raise in Icelandic.

In the next sections we look in more detail at what thematic roles can be associated with pivots in the two languages and discuss how this constrains the possible positions for pivots with respect to the structure in (15). We continue to use the terms IP-pivot and VP-pivot although the latter is really a vP-pivot. We start by looking at presentational sentences with Theme pivots, which is also the unmarked case.[11]

3.2 Theme pivots

Presentational sentences often have verbs that express existence, appearance and disappearance. These verbs take a single argument which is a Theme and are often referred to as *unaccusative*.[12]

(16) Det hade visst försvunnit **ett brev** från skrivbordet. (Swe.)
EXPL had apparently disappeared a letter from desk.DEF
'A letter had apparently disappeared from the desk.'

(17) Það hafði víst horfið **bréf** af skrifborðinu. (Ice.)
EXPL had apparently disappeared letter from desk.DEF
'A letter had apparently disappeared from the desk.'

[11] Sundman (1980), Askedal (1986) and Sveen (1996) look at what types of verbs are used in presentational sentences in Norwegian and Swedish. Ekberg (1990) looks at theta roles, more specifically at the locative argument that is often present. Here we concentrate on the thematic role of the pivot, limiting ourselves to the most common ones. Engdahl et al. (2020) investigate in addition Cause, Instrument and Stimulus in Swedish.

[12] See Perlmutter (1978), Burzio (1986) and Thráinsson (2007:250 n. 2).

In Icelandic, the pivot has the same case as it has as an ordinary subject (see e.g. Zaenen et al. 1985 and Sigurðsson 1989). The verb *sökkva* 'sink' takes a nominative subject and the pivot is also nominative, as shown in (18), whereas the verb *reka* 'drift, strand' takes an accusative subject in the standard language, as shown in (19). As expected, the verb agrees with the nominative pivot, but not with the oblique (Zaenen et al. 1985).

(18)a. Bátarnir höfðu sokkið. (Ice.)
boats.NOM.PL.DEF had.PL sunk
'The boats had sunk.'

b. Það höfðu sokkið **margir bátar**.
EXPL had.PL sunk many.NOM boats.NOM
'Many boats had sunk.'

(19)a. Nokkra hvali hefur rekið á land í nótt. (Ice.)
several.PL.ACC whales.PL.ACC has.SG drifted to land in night
'Several whales have stranded overnight.'

b. Það hefur rekið **nokkra hvali** á land í nótt.
EXPL has.SG drifted several.PL.ACC whales.PL.ACC to land in night

In modern Swedish, nouns are not case marked so it is harder to tell what the case of the pivot is. In those few cases where case is realized, the pivot has nominative case.[13] In some Ovansiljan varieties, the distinction between nominative and accusative is still upheld and the pivot is in the nominative as shown in the following example from Orsa, taken from Ringmar and Olander (2018) (see also Ringmar and Olander 2020).

(20) a. E kum **je kulla** dar. (Swe.)
EXPL comes a.NOM girl.NOM there
'There comes a girl there.'

b. I sjår jena kullu dar.
I see a.ACC girl.ACC there
'I see a girl there.'

Most verbs that take a Theme pivot are intransitive but there are some non-agentive transitive verbs which allow Theme pivots, as shown in (14). An additional example is given in (21).

(21) a. Det kunde vänta barnen **något trevligt** när de kom hem.
EXPL could await children.DEF something nice when they came home
'Something nice could be waiting for the children when they came home.'

[13] See e.g. Teleman et al. (1999:Vol. 3, 387) and Zaenen et al. (2017:268).

b. *Det kunde vänta **något trevligt** barnen när de kom hem.
EXPL could await something nice children.DEF when they came home

We assume that the Theme pivot is generated as complement to *vänta* 'await' and that *barnen* 'the children' is an Experiencer, generated in the specifier of the Root phrase.[14] Note that only the order predicted by the tree in (15) is possible.

Similar examples with an animate Experiencer and a Theme pivot in the Root phrase are possible in Icelandic, see (22). The Theme pivot can also appear in the IP, see (22b), but not the Experiencer, see (22c). This has to do with the verb *bíða* 'await', see section 3.3.

(22) a. Það gat beðið barnanna **eitthvað skemmtilegt** á kvöldin. (Ice.)
EXPL could awaited children.GEN.DEF something nice.NOM on evening.DEF
'Something nice could be waiting for the children in the evening.'
b. Það gat **eitthvað skemmtilegt** beðið barnanna á kvöldin.
EXPL could something nice.NOM awaited children.GEN.DEF on evening.DEF
c. *Það gat barnanna beðið **eitthvað skemmtilegt** á kvöldin.
EXPL could children.GEN.DEF awaited something nice.NOM on evening.DEF
d. ??Það gat beðið barnanna á kvöldin **eitthvað skemmtilegt**.
EXPL could awaited children.GEN.DEF on evening.DEF something nice.NOM

It is thus possible to have more than one argument in the Root phrase in active presentational sentences in both Swedish and Icelandic, provided that one of the arguments is a Theme pivot. Note that the version with the Theme argument following an adverbial, see (22d), which would be a case of indefinite NP postposing, is noticeably less acceptable.

In Swedish there is a clear difference between (23a), where the inanimate pivot *en tanke* 'a thought' is interpreted as a Theme, and the ungrammatical (23b), where the animate *en police* 'a policeman' is understood as an Agent. (23b) cannot be generated given the structure in (15) since Agents are merged in Spec,vP and would exclude the expletive subject.

(23) a. Det hade slagit henne **en tanke**. (Swe.)
EXPL had struck her a thought
'A thought had struck her.'
b. *Det hade slagit henne **en polis**.
EXPL had hit her a policeman

[14] A reviewer questions the label Experiencer for *barnen* 'the children' but this is motivated by the fact that only animate arguments are possible here. The English verb *await*, used in the translation, is different in that it typically takes an inanimate argument, as in *That request is still awaiting FDA action*, adapted from a *Wall Street Journal* example.

In Icelandic, a Theme VP-pivot is fine, see (24a), as is an Agent IP-pivot, see (24b). Some people find (24c) acceptable which suggests that they analyze it as involving extraposition of an agentive IP-pivot.

(24) a. Það hafði slegið hana **óhugur**. (Ice.)
EXPL had struck her dejection
'Dejection had struck her.'
b. Það hafði **einhver lögreglumaður** slegið hana.
EXPL had some policeman hit her
'Some police officer had hit her.'
c. (?)Það hafði slegið hana **einhver lögreglumaður**.
EXPL had hit her some policeman
'Some police officer had hit her.'

When the verb is passivized and no Agent is realized, Theme pivots of agentive transitive verbs are possible in Swedish.

(25) a. Det har visst druckits **mycket öl** vid det här bordet.
EXPL has apparently drunk.PASS much beer at this table.DEF
'A lot of beer has apparently been drunk at this table.'
b. Det har definitivt stoppats **pengar** i fickan.
EXPL has definitely put.PASS money in pocket.DEF
'Someone has definitely put money in their pocket.'

Similarly in Icelandic. As in (18), the verb agrees with the nominative pivot in (26a), but not with the dative plural pivot in (26b) where it has the default neuter form, compare (19).

(26) a. Það hefur víst verið drukkinn **mikill bjór** við þetta borð. (Ice.)
EXPL has apparently been drunk.NOM much.NOM beer.NOM at this table
'A lot of beer has apparently been drunk at this table.'
b. Það hefur áreiðanlega verið stungið **peningum** í vasann hér.
EXPL has definitely been put.DFT money.PL.DAT in pocket.DEF here
'Someone has definitely put money in their pocket here.'

3.3 Experiencer pivots

We saw in (21) and (22) that it is possible to have Experiencers in presentational sentences with Theme pivots, but, as pointed out in Maling (1988), Experiencers are infelicitous as pivots in Swedish, see (27a). Note that when the verb *frysa* 'freeze' is construed with an inanimate Theme argument, this may be a pivot, see (27b).

(27) a. *Det har frusit **några barn** i lägret. (Swe.)
EXPL have frozen some children in camp.DEF
Intended: 'Some children have felt cold in the camp.'
b. Det har frusit **några vattenledningar** i källaren.
EXPL have frozen some water.pipes in basement
'Some water pipes have frozen in the basement.'

For Icelandic, the generalization seems to be that Experiencer IP-pivots are preferred over VP-pivots, both with adjectives, as in (28), and with verbs, as in (29) (examples from Maling 1988:184f.).[15]

(28) a. Það hefur **mörgum börnum** verið kalt. (Ice.)
EXPL has many.DAT children.DAT been cold
'Many children have felt cold.'
b. ?*Það hefur verið **mörgum börnum** kalt.
EXPL has been many.DAT children.DAT cold

(29) a. Það hafa **margir lögreglumenn** óttast þetta. (Ice.)
EXPL have many.NOM policemen.NOM feared this
'Many policemen have feared this.'
b. *Það hafa óttast **margir lögreglumenn** þetta.
EXPL have feared many.NOM policemen.NOM this

Note that the restriction pertains to Experiencer pivots. As we have already seen, it is possible to have a presentational sentence with a VP-internal Experiencer as long as there is a Theme pivot, as shown in (21) for Swedish and in (22) for Icelandic. Similar examples with the non-agentive verbs *hända* and *henda* 'happen' are shown in (30) and (31). If we make the Theme argument definite, thereby trying to force a reading where the indefinite Experiencer is interpreted as the pivot, the result is

[15] Testing whether the contrast in (27) arises in Icelandic turns out to be complicated by the fact that the change of thematic roles tends to go together with a change in case. For example, the Experiencer pivot in (i) is dative whereas the Theme pivot in (ii) is nominative.

(i) Það hafði hitnað **nokkrum börnum** í sólskininu það mikið að þau urðu veik. (Ice.)
EXPL had heated some.DAT children.DAT in sunshine.DEF so much that they became ill
'Some children had got so warm in the sunshine that they became ill.'

(ii) Það höfðu hitnað **nokkrar vatnsleiðslur** það mikið að ekki var hægt að snerta þær. (Ice.)
EXPL had heated some.NOM water.pipes.NOM so much that not was possible to touch them
'Some water pipes had got so warm that it wasn't possible to touch them.'

Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson finds (ii) with a Theme pivot slightly less unnatural than (i) but thinks both examples are stilted and better with IP-pivots.

ungrammatical in both languages. Note also that only the Theme argument can be raised to become an ordinary subject.

(30) a. Det har hänt henne **något** **konstigt**. (Swe.)
EXPL has happened her something strange
'Something strange has happened to her.'
b. *Det har hänt **många** detta.
EXPL has happened many this
c. Detta har hänt många.
this has happened many
'This has happened to many people.'
d. *Många har hänt detta.
many has happened this

(31) a. Það hefur hent hana **eitthvað** **skrýtið**. (Ice.)
EXPL has happened her.ACC something.NOM strange
'Something strange has happened to her.'
b. *Það hefur hent **marga** **menn** þetta.
EXPL has happened many.ACC men.ACC this
Intended: 'Many people have experienced this.'
c. Þetta hefur hent marga menn.
this has happened many.ACC men.ACC
'This has happened to many people.'
d. *Marga menn hefur hent þetta.
many.ACC men.ACC has happened this
e. *Það hefur **marga** **menn** hent þetta.
EXPL has many.ACC men.ACC happened this

In Icelandic the version with an Experiencer IP-pivot (31e) is also ungrammatical, unlike (28)–(29). This shows a further restriction on pivots, namely that only the argument that is realized as subject in an ordinary, non-presentational sentence is felicitous as a pivot. Which argument this is does not follow from the argument structure in (15) but has to be determined for each verb, as shown in Maling (1988). With the verb *henda* 'happen', only the Theme can be raised to subject; (31d) is ungrammatical. The same holds for the verb *bíða* 'await' in (22). With the verb *óttast* 'fear' only the Experiencer can be raised to subject and be realized as an IP-pivot, see (29a).[16]

[16] The symmetric DAT-NOM/NOM-DAT verbs discussed in Wood and Sigurðsson (2014) are also relevant to this observation.

3.4 Goal pivots

Goal arguments are not acceptable as pivots at all in Swedish and in Icelandic only as IP-pivots, as shown in Maling (1988). The pattern is clear with transaction verbs with a Recipient, a subclass of Goal arguments, see the Swedish example in (32) and the Icelandic minimal pair in (33).

(32) *Det hade mottagit **en** **student** priset. (Swe.)
EXPL had received a student prize.DEF

(33)a. Það hefur **stúdent** fengið verðlaunin. (Ice.)
EXPL has student.NOM received prize.ACC.DEF
'A student has received the prize.'
b. *Það hefur fengið **stúdent** verðlaunin.
EXPL has received student.NOM prize.ACC.DEF

Passive versions of ditransitive verbs have two arguments in the vP. In Swedish, only the version where the Theme argument is the pivot is grammatical; (34b) with an indefinite Goal pivot is ungrammatical.

(34)a. Det hade tilldelats studenten **ett** **pris**. (Swe.)
EXPL had award.PASS student.DEF a prize
'The student had been awarded a prize.'
b. *Det hade tilldelats **en** **student** priset.
EXPL had award.PASS a student prize.DEF

In Icelandic, realizing the Goal argument as an IP-pivot is acceptable and generally preferred. Some speakers find Goal pivots in the vP unacceptable whereas other speakers find them questionable.[17]

(35)a. Það var bara **þrem** **strákum** úthlutað verðlaununum.
EXPL was only three.DAT boys.DAT awarded prize.DAT.DEF
'Only three boys were awarded the prize.'
b. */?Það var bara úthlutað **þrem** **strákum** verðlaununum.
EXPL was only awarded three.DAT boys.DAT prize.DAT.DEF

Goals/Recipients with transaction verbs hence behave like Experiencers; they are not possible as pivots in Swedish and only unquestionably acceptable as IP-pivots in Icelandic. Maling (1988) found a similar pattern with

[17] The Icelandic facts are actually more complicated since the dative case on the Goal or Recipient means that the verb does not agree with the pivot. This may affect the acceptability for some speakers, see Sigurðsson and Holmberg (2008), Preminger (2014:221) and E.F. Sigurðsson (2017:395f.).

the Icelandic verbs *hjálpa* 'help' and *þakka* 'thank' which have been analyzed as taking a Goal argument. However, there is variation with these verbs. Some speakers accept VP-pivots in addition to IP-pivots (see, for examples, Thráinsson 2007:271f.).

(36) a. Það var **gömlum manni** hjálpað yfir götuna. (Ice.)
EXPL was old.DAT man.DAT helped across street.DEF
'An old man was helped across the street.'
b. ok/?*Það var hjálpað **gömlum manni** yfir götuna.
EXPL was helped old.DAT man.DAT across street.DEF

Platzack (2005) suggests that an affected Goal can be reanalyzed as a Patient, that is an affected Theme. This could explain the variation with these verbs (cf. Maling 2001). The cognate Swedish verb *hjälpa* is fine with a pivot.

(37) Det var kö för det hade hjälpts **en andfamilj** över gatan.
EXPL was queue because EXPL had help.PASS a duck.family over street.DEF
'There was a queue because a duck family had been helped across the street.'

3.5 Performer pivots

We next turn to intransitive verbs of motion and position which are commonly used in presentational sentences in both Icelandic and Swedish. In Icelandic (38) the pivot can appear either in the VP or in the IP whereas Swedish (39) only allows the pivot to be in the VP, as expected.

(38) a. Það hafa víst hlaupið **einhverjir strákar** á veginum.
EXPL have apparently run some boys on road.DEF
'Some boys have apparently run on the road.'
b. Það hafa víst **einhverjir strákar** hlaupið á veginum.
EXPL have apparently some boys run on road.DEF

(39) a. Det har sprungit **några pojkar** på vägen.
EXPL have run some boys on road.DEF
'Some boys have run on the road.'
b. *Det har **några pojkar** sprungit på vägen.
EXPL have some boys run on road.DEF

Many researchers have assumed that the argument which undergoes the motion is a Theme, but Platzack (2010), following Christensen (2010), assumes that it carries a different role, which we refer to as *Performer*.[18]

[18] Christensen (2010) and Platzack (2010) refer to this role as *Materialitet*. We follow Sigurðsson (1989:320ff.) and call it *Performer*.

(40) **Performer:** the actant who carries out the action or the movement or assumes the position that the verb refers to, e.g. *springa*, *hlaupa* 'run', *sitta*, *sitja* 'sit', *stå*, *standa* 'stand' and *sjunga*, *syngja* 'sing'.

Performers are generated in the specifier of the Root phrase, not as complements. Evidence for this comes from looking at predication. A verb can be predicated of its complement, that is a Theme or a Path argument, but not of its specifier, that is a Performer. Compare the Swedish verbs *försvinna* 'disappear', which takes a single Theme argument, and *springa* 'run', which takes both a Performer and a Path argument but can only be predicated of the Path, not of the Performer.

(41) a. ett försvunnet brev (Swe.)
a disappeared letter
b. en sprungen sträcka
a run distance
c. *en sprungen pojke
a run boy

Similarly in Icelandic:

(42) a. horfið bréf (Ice.)
disappeared letter
b. hlaupin vegalengd
run distance
c. *hlaupnir strákar
run boys

Both the Performer and the Path argument may be present in a sentence if the Performer is raised and realized as an ordinary subject, see (43a). Somewhat unexpectedly the presentational version in (43b) is ungrammatical.

(43) a. Några pojkar har sprungit tio kilometer. (Swe.)
some boys have run ten kilometers
'Some boys have run ten kilometers.'
b. *Det har sprungit **några pojkar** tio kilometer.
EXPL have run some boys ten kilometers

In Icelandic a Performer may appear as an IP-pivot, but not as a VP-pivot in this case.

(44) a. Einhverjir strákar hafa hlaupið tíu kílómetra. (Ice.)
some boys have run ten kilometers
'Some boys have run ten kilometers.'
b. Það hafa víst **einhverjir strákar** hlaupið tíu kílómetra.
EXPL have apparently some boys run ten kilometers
'Apparently some boys have run ten kilometers.'
c. *Það hafa víst hlaupið **einhverjir strákar** tíu kílómetra.
EXPL have apparently run some boys ten kilometers

Given the argument structure in (15), one might expect (43b) and (44c) to be possible, contrary to fact, since there are two argument positions available in the vP and examples like (21a) and (22a) show that there may be more than one argument in the vP in presentational sentences. The crucial difference is that in the grammatical examples, the pivot is a Theme and in addition appears as the last argument in the vP.

We find a similar pattern in presentational sentences with cognate objects, which, following Platzack, we take to be generated as Theme complements of the root. A verb like *sjunga*, *syngja* 'sing' can be predicated of this argument, but not of the Performer, as shown by the predication test in (45) and (46).

(45) a. en sjungen sång (Swe.)
a sung song
b. *en sjungen kvinna
a sung woman

(46) a. sunginn sálmur (Ice.)
sung psalm
b. *sungin kona
sung woman

In an ordinary sentence both Performer and Theme may be realized (47a), but not in a presentational sentence (47b). A locative adjunct may be present, as shown in (47c).

(47) a. Kvinnorna hade sjungit psalmer i kyrkan. (Swe.)
women.DEF had sung psalms in church.DEF
'The women had sung psalms in the church.'
b. *Det hade sjungit **några kvinnor** psalmer i kyrkan.
EXPL had sung some women psalms in church.DEF

c. Det hade sjungit **några kvinnor** i kyrkan.
EXPL had sung some women in church.DEF
'Some women had sung in the church.'

As before, Icelandic allows Performers to appear as IP-pivots, but not as VP-pivots, if the Theme argument is expressed.

(48) a. Konurnar höfðu sungið sálma í kirkjunni. (Ice.)
women.DEF had sung psalms in church.DEF
'The women had sung psalms in the church.'

b. Það höfðu víst **einhverjar konur** sungið sálma í kirkjunni.
EXPLhad apparently some women sung psalms in church.DEF
'Apparently some women had sung psalms in the church.'

c. *Það höfðu víst sungið **einhverjar konur** sálma í kirkjunni.
EXPL had apparently sung some women psalms in church.DEF

d. Það höfðu víst sungið **einhverjar konur** í kirkjunni.
EXPL had apparently sung some women in church.DEF
'Some women had apparently sung in the church.'

In both Swedish and Icelandic, Path arguments are possible as pivots when the verb is passive, like the Theme arguments shown in (25) and (26) (see Zaenen et al. 1985:474f. and Sigurðsson 2006:18f.).

(49) Det har sprungits minst **tio kilometer** varje dag. (Swe.)
EXPL has run.PASS at.least ten kilometers every day
'People have run at least ten kilometers every day.'

(50) Það hafa verið hlaupnir minnst **tíu kílómetrar** á hverjum degi. (Ice.)
EXPL have been run at.least ten kilometers every day

The data surveyed so far show that both Icelandic and Swedish allow pivots to co-occur with other arguments in the vP but only if the pivot is the last DP argument in the RootP. For Theme and Path pivots, which are merged as complements to the root, this is the normal position. Performer pivots may be followed by locative PP adjuncts, as shown in (47c) and (48d), but not by Path or Theme arguments. We have already seen that the same restriction applies to Experiencer and Goal pivots; they are infelicitous if there is an overt Theme.

3.6 Distinguishing Performers from Agents

We have seen that there are reasons to distinguish Performers from Themes, as Platzack does in (15). We now turn to some evidence for distinguishing Performers from Agents. Recall that Platzack reserves the role Agent for the

highest argument of agentive transitive verbs. As we saw in section 2, Agent pivots with active transitive verbs are possible in Icelandic, but not in Swedish, compare (51) and (52), repeated from (5) and (6). In Icelandic, such Agents can only appear as IP-pivots (or as extraposed as in (13c)).

(51) Það hafa **einhverjir stúdentar** stungið smjörinu í vasann.
EXPL have some students put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF
'Some students have put the butter in their pockets.'

(52) *Det har **några studenter** stoppat smöret i fickan.
EXPL have some students put butter.DEF in pocket.DEF

This is very clear for obligatory transitive verbs like *stinga*, *stoppa* 'put' which require an overt object, as in the examples in (51) and (52). But what about optionally transitive verbs like *ringa* 'phone' in Swedish and *vinna* 'work' in Icelandic?[19]

(53) a. Eva har ringt. (Swe.)
Eva has phoned
b. Eva har ringt ett samtal.
Eva has phoned a call
'Eva has made a phone call.'
c. Det har ringt **någon** i dag.
EXPL has phoned somebody today
'Somebody has phoned today.'
d. *Det har ringt **någon** ett samtal i dag.
EXPL has phoned somebody a call today
Intended: 'Someone has made a call today.'

(54) a. Margt fólk hefur unnið hér. (Ice.)
a.lot.of people has worked here
b. Margt fólk hefur unnið gott starf.
a.lot.of people has worked good job
'Many people have done a good job.'
c. Það hefur **margt fólk** unnið gott starf.
EXPL has a.lot.of people worked good job
'Many people have done a good job.'
d. *Það hefur unnið **margt fólk** gott starf.
EXPL has worked a.lot.of people good job

[19] We thank Einar Freyr Sigurðsson for prompting us to clarify this point.

We see that only the version without overt object is possible in Swedish, see (53c), and only the version with an IP-pivot is possible in Icelandic, see (54c). This raises the question if the relevant factor is whether there is an overt Theme object or not (as suggested in Platzack 1983), or which thematic role the pivot has; Agent if merged in Spec,vP or Performer if merged in Spec,RootP. There are several indications that pivots that are merged as Performers are interpreted differently from Agents regardless of the transitivity factor. We first exemplify these indications for Swedish and then give similar Icelandic examples.

When used intransitively, the single argument of verbs like *ringa* 'phone' and *vinna* 'work' is merged as an external argument in a specifier. These verbs are often referred to as *unergative*.[20] A distinguishing property of the Scandinavian languages is that most unergative verbs can be used in presentational sentences, see e.g. Sveen (1996:74ff.) and Lødrup (1999:207). However, the presentational versions differ from the ordinary sentences in certain ways which shed more light on the distinction between Agents and Performers. In an ordinary sentence the intransitive verb *arbeta* 'work' in Swedish has clear agentive properties; the subject argument can, for instance, be modified by a subject-oriented adverb. This suggests that it is first merged as an Agent in Spec,vP and then raised to Spec,CP.

(55) Många studenter hade motvilligt arbetat hela veckoslutet.
many students had reluctantly worked whole weekend.DEF
'Many students had reluctantly worked all weekend.'

The presentational version in (56a) is fine, but not the version with the subject-oriented adverb, as noted by Anward (1981) and discussed in Teleman et al. (1999:Vol. 3, 400f.) and Zaenen et al. (2017).

(56) a. Det hade arbetat **många studenter** hela veckoslutet. (Swe.)
EXPL had worked many students whole weekend.DEF
'Many students had worked all weekend.'

b. ?*Det hade motvilligt arbetat **många studenter** hela veckoslutet.
EXPL had reluctantly worked many students whole weekend.DEF
'Many students had worked all weekend.'

c. ?*Det hade arbetat **många studenter** motvilligt hela veckoslutet.
EXPL had worked many students reluctantly whole weekend.DEF

Given our assumption that the expletive is merged in Spec,vP in Swedish, the pivot cannot be merged there, but since (56a) is grammatical, we

[20] For the terminology, see the pedagogical note in Thráinsson (2007:250).

assume that the pivot is merged in Spec,RootP, as a Performer. The thematic role of the pivot *många studenter* is then not determined solely by the verb *arbeta* but also by the syntactic position where it is merged. In presentational sentences, sole arguments of verbs that in isolation are considered to be agentive, can be merged in Spec,RootP. The interesting fact is that in that position the argument loses (some of) its agentive properties. Its characteristics are thus not determined by the verb it is an argument of but by the presentational construction itself, unlike the pivots of motion and position verbs discussed in section 3.5. (57) shows a similar pattern; when the subject is merged in Spec,vP and raised to Spec,IP and Spec,CP, it is possible to add a degree modifier *mycket* 'a lot' as in (57a), but not to the presentational version where the pivot remains in the RootP.

(57) a. Studenterna har arbetat mycket hela terminen. (Swe.)
students.DEF have worked a.lot whole term.DEF
'The students have worked a lot the whole term.'

b. *Det har arbetat mycket **några studenter** hela terminen.
EXPL have worked a.lot some students whole term.DEF

c. *Det har arbetat **några studenter** mycket hela terminen.
EXPL have worked some students a.lot whole term.DEF

Another construction which requires some agentivity on the part of the subject is the resultative which is formed by adding a reflexive and a predicative adjective. This is fine with an ordinary subject, but not in a presentational sentence.[21]

(58) a. Studenterna hade arbetat sig trötta. (Swe.)
students.DEF had worked REFL tired.PL
'The students had worked so that they were tired.'

b. *Det hade arbetat sig **några studenter** trötta.
EXPL had worked REFL some students tired.PL

[21] Thanks to Einar Freyr Sigurðsson for alerting us to this type. Note that verbs with inherent reflexive pronouns are possible in presentational sentences with Performer pivots, as shown in (i):

(i) Det hade satt sig **några barn** på trappan. (Swe.)
EXPL had sat REFL some children on staircase.DEF
'Some children had sat down on the stairs.'

The reflexive *sig* here is a non-argument, as can be seen from the English translation, and hence does not have a distinct role from the Performer.

The picture that emerges is that agentive properties that are fine with ordinary raised subjects are not found with VP-pivots in Swedish. We have shown this with unergative verbs, but it also applies to the verbs of motion discussed in section 3.5.

Turning now to Icelandic, we recall that it is possible to merge an Agent pivot in Spec,vP since the expletive is merged elsewhere. Nevertheless agentive pivots of transitive verbs have to be raised to IP, see (13a), (51) and (54c). With unergative verbs, there is a clear preference for IP-pivots when the agentivity is emphasized through an adverb or a modifier.

(59) a. Það hefur unnið **margt fólk** hér. (Ice.)
EXPL has worked a.lot.of people here
'Many people have worked here.'
b. Það hefur **margt fólk** unnið hér gegn vilja sínum.
EXPL has a.lot.of people worked here against will their.REFL
'Many people have worked here reluctantly.'
c. ?Það hefur unnið **margt fólk** hér gegn vilja sínum.
EXPL has worked a.lot.of people here against will their.REFL

(60) a. Það hefur **margt fólk** unnið mikið hér. (Ice.)
EXPL has a.lot.of people worked a.lot here
'Many people have worked a lot here.'
b. ?Það hefur unnið **margt fólk** mikið hér.
EXPL has worked a.lot.of people a.lot here

(61) a. Það hafa **margir verkamenn** unnið sig þreytta hér. (Ice.)
EXPL have many workers worked REFL tired.PL here
'Many workers have worked so that they got tired here.'
b. *Það hafa unnið **margir verkamenn** sig þreytta hér.
EXPL have worked many workers REFL tired.PL here

Although it is possible to merge an agentive pivot in Spec,vP in Icelandic, it cannot stay there if there is an overt Theme, in which case it has to raise to IP. Arguments of unergative verbs and verbs of motion are also preferably realized as IP-pivots when subject-oriented adverbs or modifiers are added.

As we have seen, the way unergative verbs are used in presentational sentences in the two languages is very similar, despite the different structural options. In Swedish, a pivot of an unergative verb cannot be merged in Spec,vP — the position where Agents are merged — but it can be merged as a Performer who carries out the action. In Icelandic, a pivot of

an unergative can be merged in Spec,vP, but it tends to raise to IP when the agentivity is emphasized. In both languages, presentational sentences with VP-pivots are typically used to introduce and locate a situation or a scene as a whole, without drawing attention to the intentions, attitudes or degree of involvement of the pivot. This situation must in addition be perceivable in some way, as pointed out by Sveen (1996:86ff.), Åfarli (1992:89) and Lødrup (1999:207).

3.7 Summary

Our investigation has shown that the same thematic restrictions apply to VP-pivots in Icelandic and Swedish. Theme, Path and Performer pivots are in general possible whereas Experiencers and Goals are infelicitous, generally in Swedish and with some marked exceptions in Icelandic. Since Swedish only allows VP-pivots, this means that some intended messages cannot be expressed as presentational sentences, see e.g. (27a) and (32). In Icelandic, which has the option of IP-pivots, the corresponding sentences are acceptable with IP-pivots, see (28a) and (33).

Another generalization that holds for both languages is that a VP-pivot has to be the last argument in the vP. We have seen this in examples like (30) and (31), where there is more than one DP in the vP, but only the versions with Theme pivots are acceptable. We find the same pattern with Performer pivots which cannot be followed by a Path argument, see (43b) and (44c), or a cognate Theme argument, see (47b) and (48c), while it is possible for the Performer argument to be followed by an adjunct, see (43a), (44b), (47c) and (48d). The restriction that VP-pivots have to be the last argument in the vP also explains why we do not find Goal pivots in the vP since these verbs also take a Theme as their final argument. The same explanation applies to two-place Experiencer taking verbs like *hända*, *henda* 'happen' but does not explain why Experiencer pivots with intransitive verbs are impossible in Swedish, see (27a), or why IP-pivots are preferred in Icelandic, see (28a).

At present we do not have an explanation for the restriction that a VP-pivot has to be the last argument in the vP. We suspect that this may in some way reflect the information structure of presentational sentences. In both Swedish and Icelandic, the last argument in the vP often carries the main sentence accent, especially in utterances with wide focus (Dehé 2009, Riad 2014). Presentational sentences typically involve wide focus and the main accent thus normally falls on the pivot.

4. Negated pivots

So far we have mainly looked at the roles and positions of VP-pivots. In this section we look closer at negated pivots which may be realized as IP-pivots in both Icelandic and Swedish.

4.1 Incorporated negation

Although the option of realizing pivots in the IP is not normally used in Swedish, there is one type of pivot that *has* to appear in the IP, viz. pivots with incorporated negation (see e.g. Ljunggren 1926, Wallin 1936, Platzack 1983, Christensen 1991 and Engels 2010).

(62) a. Det har **ingen** varit här. (Swe.)
EXPL has nobody been here
'Nobody has been here.' (Wallin 1936:368)
b. *Det har varit **ingen** här.
EXPL has been nobody here

In this respect, negated IP-pivots are similar to objects with incorporated negation which also have to be placed in the IP, preceding any non-finite verb (see e.g. Christensen 1986, Engels 2012 and Engdahl 2017).

(63) a. Jag har ingenting sagt. (Swe.)
I have nothing said
'I haven't said anything.'
b. *Jag har sagt ingenting.
I have said nothing

Also in Icelandic, pivots with incorporated negation such as *enginn* 'nobody' are restricted to appear in the IP, as are negated objects, see (64) and (65).[22]

(64) a. Það hefur **enginn** verið hér. (Ice.)
EXPL has nobody been here
'Nobody has been here.'
b. *Það hefur verið **enginn** hér.
EXPL has been nobody here

(65) a. Ég hef ekkert sagt. (Ice.)
I have nothing said
'I haven't said anything.'

[22] Thráinsson (2007:82ff.) refers to the type in (65) as *Negative Scrambling*.

b. *Ég hef sagt ekkert.
I have said nothing

Even if DPs with incorporated negation have to appear in the IP in Swedish, this does not mean that Experiencer or Goal pivots are possible when they are negated. As we have seen in sections 3.5 and 3.6, these are unavailable as pivots in Swedish. The negated versions with IP-pivots are equally bad, whereas negated Theme and Performer pivots are possible.

(66) a. *Det har **inga barn** frusit i lägret. EXP
EXPL have no children frozen in camp.DEF
b. *Det har **ingen** mottagit priset. GOAL
EXPL has nobody received prize.DEF
c. Det har **inget trevligt** hänt mig på länge. THEME
EXPL has nothing nice happened me on long
'Nothing nice has happened to me for a long time.'
d. Det har **ingen** arbetat här på många år. PERF
EXPL has nobody worked here on many years
'Nobody has worked here for many years.'

This shows that the thematic role restrictions on pivots we find in Swedish are in some sense more fundamental; they apply to pivots regardless of whether they are realized in the VP or the IP. In Icelandic, on the other hand, pivots which cannot be realized in the VP because of thematic restrictions, are commonly felicitous in IP.

Pivots with incorporated negations appear low in the IP, right before the vP. Engels (2010) assumes that they are merged in the specifier position of NegP, a projection just above vP. The data in (67) and (68) show that they follow other sentential adverbs.

(67) a. Det har visst **ingen** kommit än. (Swe.)
EXPL has apparently nobody come yet
'Apparently nobody has come yet.'
b. *Det har **ingen** visst kommit än.
EXPL has nobody apparently come yet

(68) a. Það hefur víst **enginn** komið enn. (Ice.)
EXPL has apparently nobody come yet
'Apparently nobody has come yet.'
b. *Það hefur **enginn** víst komið enn.
EXPL has nobody apparently come yet

Even if presentational sentences with negated IP-pivots like (62a) and (67a) are found in contemporary Swedish, it is more common to find sentences with a negation or a negative adverb like *aldrig* 'never' in the IP and a polarity-sensitive item like *någon* 'anybody' in the VP, as shown in (69a). Note that *någon* is infelicitous in the IP, see (69b).[23]

(69) a. Det har inte varit **någon** här. (Swe.)
EXPL has not been anybody here
'Nobody has been here.'
b. *Det har inte **någon** varit här.
EXPL has not anybody been here

In Swedish, *någon* is ambiguous between being a negative or positive polarity item, corresponding to 'anybody' or 'somebody'. The cognate *nokkur* in Icelandic is also ambiguous, with the meaning 'any' in the scope of negation, whereas *neinn* is only a negative polarity item.[24]

(70) a. Það hefur ekki verið **nokkur maður** hér. (Ice.)
EXPL has not been any person here
'Nobody has been here.'
b. Það hefur ekki **nokkur maður** verið hér.
EXPL has not any person been here
c. *Það mun ekki hafa **nokkur maður** verið hér.
EXPL will not have any person been here

(71) a. Það hefur ekki verið **neinn** hér. (Ice.)
EXPL has not been anybody here
'Nobody has been here.'
b. Það hefur ekki **neinn** verið hér.
EXPL has not anybody been here

[23] Engels assumes that the Spec,NegP position for incorporated items was available in the Mainland Scandinavian languages around 1900 (Engels 2010:126ff.). If this were true, we would expect negated IP-pivots to be more frequent in older texts than in contemporary texts. However, corpus searches in the historical materials for Swedish in Korp (1.3 billion words) show that such examples were not more common in those texts than in contemporary texts. Rather it seems that placing negated pivots and objects in the IP has remained an option in the language, from old Swedish until now, to some extent governed by stylistic factors. According to Engels (2012), Danish is similar to Swedish, but Norwegian has more or less lost this option.

[24] Positive 'somebody' may also be expressed by *einhver*. See Axelsdóttir (2018) for an overview of the respective use conditions.

c. *Það mun ekki hafa **neinn** verið hér.
EXPL will not have anybody been here

In Swedish, only the post-verbal pivot is acceptable, see (69a). In Icelandic, *nokkur* and *neinn* can also follow the negation in the IP, see (70b) and (71b). The Spec,vP position is generally not available, see (70c) and (71c), but is possible for narrowly focussed arguments, see Sigurðsson (2019:598f.).

If negated pivots occur in a special Spec,NegP position also in Icelandic, one might expect them to be able to co-occur with an IP-pivot, but, as Christensen (1991) and Engels (2010) note, this is not possible for many speakers, see (72c), adapted from Christensen (1991:156f.).

(72) a. Jón hefur engar bækur keypt. (Ice.)
Jón has no books bought
'Jón hasn't bought any books.'
b. Það hefur víst **einhver málfræðingur** keypt bókina.
EXPL has apparently some linguist bought book.DEF
c. */?Það hefur víst **einhver málfræðingur** engar bækur keypt.
EXPL has apparently some linguist no books bought

Some Icelandic speakers find (72c) quite acceptable and there may be some interaction with focus since negation is focus sensitive. Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson, who finds (72c) ungrammatical finds (73a), where the pivot is modified by *bara* 'only', better. Adding *alls* 'at all', as in (73b), has a similar effect.[25]

(73) a. ??Það hefur víst bara **einn málfræðingur** engar bækur keypt.
EXPL has apparently only one linguist no books bought
'Apparently only one linguist bought no books.'
b. ??Það hefur víst **einn málfræðingur** alls engar bækur keypt.
EXPL has apparently one linguist at.all no books bought
'Apparently one linguist bought no books at all.'
c. *Það hefur víst bara **einn málfræðingur** ekki neinar bækur keypt.
EXPL has apparently only one linguist not any books bought
d. Það hefur víst bara **einn málfræðingur** ekki keypt neinar bækur.
EXPL has apparently only one linguist not bought no books
'Apparently only one linguist bought no books.'

Note that it is not possible to have a negated object follow *ekki* if it precedes the non-finite verb, as in (73c), whereas it is fine after the verb, see (73d).

[25] This example was suggested by Einar Freyr Sigurðsson.

4.2 A difference between main and subordinate clauses

As we have seen, the Swedish expletive *det* may appear in IP, see (8). More precisely, it can appear immediately after a finite verb in C in matrix clauses, but not in other subject positions. In (74a) we see that a proper name subject can appear either after the finite verb, after a sentential adverb or after the negation but an unstressed pronoun can only appear directly after the finite verb (Teleman et al. 1999:Vol. 4, 19). This also applies to expletives in Swedish, as shown in the presentational sentence in (74c).[26]

(74) a. Igår hade Eva antagligen (Eva) inte (Eva) varit där. (Swe.)
yesterday had Eva probably Eva not Eva been there
'Yesterday, Eva probably hadn't been there.'

b. Igår hade hon antagligen (*hon) inte (*hon) varit där.
yesterday had she probably she not she been there
'Yesterday, she probably hadn't been there.'

c. Igår hade det antagligen (*det) inte (*det) varit **någon** där.
yesterday had EXPL probably EXPL not EXPL been anybody there
'Yesterday, there had probably not been anybody there.'

Given that expletives can only appear in immediate post-finite position in the Swedish IP-domain, we would expect examples like the ones in (75) to be fine. In actual fact they are quite bad with overt expletives, as pointed out in Engels (2010).

(75) a. Har (?*det) **ingen** kommit än? (Swe.)
has EXPL nobody come yet
'Has nobody come yet?'

b. Idag har (?*det) tyvärr **ingen** kommit än.
today has EXPL unfortunately nobody come yet
'Today unfortunately nobody has come yet.'

Engels (2010) compares subject positions in Faroese with Mainland Scandinavian. On her analysis, subjects in the IP have to be locally licensed through D-feature checking by a finite verb (Engels 2010:114ff.). On her

[26] See Sigurðsson (2000, 2019), Svenonius (2002) and Thráinsson (2007) for discussion about possible subject positions and see Lundquist et al. (2019) for a presentation of the Nordic Word Order Database where production data from 250 speakers of North Germanic, including Icelandic and Swedish, have been collected. The variable *Subject Shift* is particularly relevant.

account, the reason that (75) is bad is that the expletive blocks the D-feature checking of the pivot by the finite verb in C, i.e. a kind of intervention effect. We will not take a stand here on whether this is a plausible analysis, but we note that there is no intervention effect in subordinate sentences where the finite verb is not in C. Interestingly, attested examples with overt expletives and negated IP-pivots in most cases involve subordinate clauses. Some of these examples are from older novels, but they are also found in recent newspapers and in blogs.[27]

(76) Här talade dräng och husbonde och matmor och piga (Swe.)
here spoke farmhand and farmer and mistress and servant
med varandra, som om det **ingen skillnad** fanns mellan dem.
with each.other as if EXPL no difference existed between them
(Lagerlöf 1911:173)

(77) Synd vore om det **inga visningar** blev. (Swe.)
pity were if EXPL no showings became
'It would be a pity if there were no showings.' (GP1994)

(78) Till det ska också läggas de 2,5 miljoner arbetslösa som slutat
to it shall also add.PASS the 2.5 million unemployed that stopped
söka arbete eftersom det **inga** finns att få.
look work since EXPL no.PL exist to get
'To this should be added the 2.5 million unemployed who have stopped looking for jobs since none are to be had.' (Blogmix10)

We conclude that there is a hitherto unnoticed difference between main and subordinate clauses in Swedish with respect to expletive subjects. In this connection it is appropriate to point to a similarity with Icelandic. As we have already seen in (7), *það* is not acceptable in the position immediately following the finite verb in main clauses. However, in subordinate clauses, where C is filled by a complementizer, *það* is possible, as extensively demonstrated by Magnússon (1990) and further discussed by, for example, Vangsnes (2002:47f.), Thráinsson (2007:51, 327ff.) and Sigurðsson (2010:182f.). When there is a *wh*-operator in the Spec,CP position, *það* is even preferred, see (79c); the version without *það* is grammatical but somewhat marked.

[27] The examples were found in Språkbanken, the Swedish Language Bank, using the search interface Korp. GP stands for the Swedish newspaper *Göteborgs-Posten* and Blogmix is a collection of informal blog texts.

(79) a. Ég man ekki hvort (það) hefur verið **einhver köttur** í eldhúsinu. (Ice.)
I remember not if EXPL has been some cat in kitchen.DEF
'I don't remember if there has been a cat in the kitchen.'

b. Ég held að (það) verði **ball** í skólanum á morgun.
I think that EXPL will.be dance in school.DEF tomorrow
'I think that there will be a dance in the school tomorrow.'

c. Ég man ekki hvenær (það) voru síðast **mýs** í baðkerinu.
I remember not when EXPL were last mice in bathtub.DEF
'I don't remember when there were last mice in the bathtub.'

It thus seems that in both Swedish and Icelandic, overt expletives in IP are sensitive to whether or not there is a finite verb in C. Other researchers have found that this factor also affects extraction possibilities, see Bentzen et al. (2007) and Lindahl (2017). Vikner (2017) and Nyvad et al. (2017) argue that it is necessary to make a distinction between CP, with a verbal C, and cP with a complementizer head in Germanic verb second languages.

4.3 Summary

In this section we have shown that it is not the case that IP-pivots are not found in Swedish; they are the only option when the pivot contains an incorporated negation. However, this does not offset the restriction against Experiencer and Goal pivots, as shown in (66). It seems plausible that negated pivots are realized low in the IP-domain in both languages, possibly in Spec,NegP, as suggested by Engels (2010). For some speakers, positive IP-pivots cannot co-occur with negated objects in the IP-domain in Icelandic, see (72c), although this may be affected by focus. Our survey of the distribution of negated pivots has also revealed that there is a difference between main and subordinate clauses with respect to expletive *det* in Swedish, similar to the better known difference regarding *það* in Icelandic main and subordinate clauses.

5. Distinguishing presentational sentences

In the introduction we gave an admittedly not very precise definition of presentational sentences, viz. sentences that assert, or deny, the existence of a referent or present a hitherto unmentioned referent in a situation. Despite its vagueness, we think that this captures the gist of the construction (see e.g. Sundman 1980, Sveen 1996 and Teleman et al. 1999:Vol. 3,

402ff.). In this section we bring up three types of constructions which resemble presentational sentences in that they have an expletive in Spec,CP and a potential pivot but which differ from the examples we have seen so far in certain respects (see previous discussion in Rögnvaldsson 1984, Sigurðsson 1989:294f., Jónsson 2000 and Thráinsson 2007:317ff.).

5.1 Presentational clefts

In Swedish and Norwegian it is sometimes difficult to distinguish presentational sentences from clefted sentences since the expletive *det* is used in both constructions.[28] Consequently a sentence like (80), discussed in Sundman (1980), is ambiguous between a cleft and a presentational sentence where the pivot is modified by a relative clause.[29]

(80) Det är en kråka som sitter på taket. (Swe.)
EXPL is a crow that sits on roof.DEF
'The bird that is sitting on the roof is a crow.' (cleft interpretation)
'There is a crow sitting on the roof.' (presentational interpretation)

On the cleft interpretation, the information in the relative clause is presented as presupposed whereas on the presentational reading the relative clause conveys new information. Which interpretation is intended is influenced by intonation and can only be determined in context, as Søfteland (2014:91ff.) has shown. She calls examples like (80) *presenteringsutbryting* 'presentational cleft'. An example like (81a), uttered by someone who has noticed footprints on the floor, is most likely intended as a presentational utterance.[30]

(81) a. Det är **någon** som har varit här. (Swe.)
EXPL is someone that has been here
'Someone has been here.'
b. Det är kvinnan som har varit här.
EXPL is woman.DEF that has been here
'It is the woman who has been here.'

[28] The issue does not arise in Danish which, like English, uses two different elements, *det* 'it' in clefts and *der* 'there' in presentational sentences.

[29] In addition there is a third reading 'That is a crow sitting on the roof' where *det* is deictic, hence referential.

[30] Faarlund (2019:158) calls a similar example an *existential sentence*.

The pivot in a presentational cleft is always indefinite. With a definite DP (81b), only the cleft reading is available.

Icelandic also uses *það* in both presentational sentences and cleft constructions but apparently does not use the presentational cleft construction the same way as in Swedish. The Icelandic version in (82a) is not interpreted as the presentational (82b); instead *einhver* tends to get a specific reading in (82a), as would be natural in a cleft.

(82) a. Það er einhver sem hefur verið hér. (Ice.)
EXPL is someone that has been here
'It is a specific person who has been here.'
b. Það hefur **einhver** verið hér.
EXPL has someone been here
'Someone has been here.'

The *það* used in Icelandic clefts is also different. Contrary to what we have seen in presentational sentences, *það* in clefts is obligatory in the post-finite position.

(83) a. Það var Chomsky sem skrifaði Syntactic Structures. (Ice.)
EXPL was Chomsky that wrote Syntactic Structures
'It was Chomsky who wrote Syntactic Structures.'
b. Var *(það) Chomsky sem skrifaði Syntactic Structures?
was EXPL Chomsky that wrote Syntactic Structures

Presentational clefts turn out to be relevant when we now look at some of the Swedish transitive expletive constructions, discussed in Håkansson (2017).[31]

(84) a. Det kan **ingen** göra den saken bättre än han. (Swe.)
EXPL can nobody do that thing.DEF better than he
'Nobody can do that better than him.' (Wallin 1936:368)
b. Det köper inte **många** sina kläder så billigt som hon.
EXPL buys not many their.REFL clothes as cheaply as she
'Not many people buy their clothes as cheaply as she does.'
(Ljunggren 1926:351f.)

These examples, like many of the ones Håkansson has found, have negated subjects and resemble the examples with negated IP-pivots in section

[31] Transitive expletive constructions have been discussed by several Scandinavian linguists. See Håkansson (2017) for references to previous work.

4.1. However, there we only had examples with intransitive verbs. The verbs *göra* 'do, make' and *köpa* 'buy' in (84) are agentive and should not appear in Swedish presentationals on Platzack's account, where Agents and expletives are in complementary distribution in Spec,vP, see (15). In order to account for examples like these, Håkansson suggests that Swedish also has had the option of merging an expletive directly in the C-domain, like Icelandic. This is supported by the observation that in most of the older examples he discusses, the expletive appears initially. Examples like (84) are not found in modern standard Swedish; instead one would use a presentational cleft.

(85) a. Det finns **ingen** som kan göra den saken bättre än han.
EXPL exists nobody that can do that thing.DEF better than he
'There is nobody who can do that better than him.'

b. Det är inte **många** som köper sina kläder så billigt som hon.
EXPL are not many that buy their.REFL clothes as cheaply as she
'There aren't many people who buy their clothes as cheaply as she does.'

5.2 Expressive constructions in Swedish

Another common type in Håkansson's Swedish data is shown in (86a), from the Nordic Dialect Corpus (NDC).

(86) a. nej sa jag, det ska jag inte köpa någon bil. (Swe.)
no said I EXPL shall I not buy any car
'No, said I, I will definitely not buy a car.'

b. Därför ska (*det) jag inte köpa någon bil.
therefore shall EXPL I not buy any car
'Therefore I won't buy a car.'

On Håkansson's analysis, examples such as (86a) involve an expletive topic *det*, merged in Spec,CP, just like Icelandic *það*. (86b) shows that it cannot appear in post-finite position.[32] However, this type of sentence with *það* and a pronominal subject is ungrammatical in Icelandic.

[32] A reviewer suggests that (86a) could involve an anticipating *det* and a right-dislocated VP. Compare the left-dislocated version *Köpa någon bil, det ska jag inte*. The dislocated construction is not uncommon in spoken Swedish (see Lindahl and Engdahl submitted) but it is not a plausible analysis for (86a) as becomes clear when one listens to the utterance. The soundfiles for NDC are easily accessible at ⟨http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html⟩.

(87) *Það ætla ég ekki að kaupa neinn bíl. (Ice.)
EXPL shall I not to buy any car

Note furthermore that (86a) has expressive force which is lost in (86b). Additional examples are shown in (88) and (89).

(88)a. Det ska ingen jävel slå mina barn. (Swe.)
EXPL shall no devil hit my children
'No bastard shall be allowed to hit my children.' (Engels 2010:126)
b. *Idag ska det ingen jävel slå mina barn.
today shall EXPL no devil hit my children

(89) Det satt han alltid med fötterna på bordet. (Swe.)
EXPL sat he always with feet.DEF on table.DEF
'He used to sit with his feet on the table.' (Hulthén 1944:45)

According to Hulthén, one can infer from (89) that the speaker did not approve of this habit. We believe that these examples are instances of a special construction that is used to express strong feelings, often in combination with swear words. Hulthén (1944) comments that (89) is not part of his (southern) Swedish and that it is non-standard. The origin of this construction is unknown to us.

5.3 "Trapped" subjects in Icelandic

In Icelandic we find examples with initial *það* and a definite DP in the vP, often following an adjective. The term *trapped subject* is used by Sigurðsson (2019) to convey that the definite subject has to stay in the vP and cannot raise to IP or CP. The following examples are taken from Sigurðsson (2019) but we have added some prosodic markings to bring out the relevant reading.[33]

(90)a. Það er KALdur ofninn. (Ice.)
EXPL is cold radiator.DEF
'The RAdiator is cold.'
b. Það er BÚin mjólkin.
EXPL is finished milk.DEF
'The MILK has run out.'

[33] Sigurðsson (2019) contains a lot more data and considers various analyses.

As Sigurðsson shows, such sentences are all-focus utterances, often used to state a new fact in the current situation. They cannot be used if the radiator or the milk has already been mentioned, in which case one would use the versions in (91) where the definite subject is understood as the topic of the utterance. Note that in Icelandic the main stress in the all-focus utterances in (90) falls on the predicate, whereas in English it falls on the subject. On the topic-predicate interpretation the main stress falls on the predicate in both Icelandic and English.[34]

(91) a. Ofninn er KALdur. (Ice.)
radiator.DEF is cold
'The radiator is COLD.'
b. Mjólkin er BÚin.
milk.DEF is finished
'The milk has run OUT.'

In Swedish, a definite subject in an all-focus utterance cannot appear in the vP. Instead it appears initially or in the post-finite position and carries the main sentence stress, as in English.

(92) a. *Det är kallt elementet. (Swe.)
EXPL is cold radiator.DEF
b. EleMENtet är kallt.
radiator.DEF is cold
'The RAdiator is cold.'
c. Är eleMENtet kallt?
is radiator.DEF cold
'Is the RAdiator cold?'
d. Elementet är KALLT.
radiator.DEF is cold
'The radiator is COLD.'

With respect to these all-focus utterances, it thus seems that Icelandic and Swedish use different strategies. The unusual trapped subject construction in Icelandic requires definite subject DPs to stay in the vP, whereas Swedish relies on intonational contrasts. When it comes to certain temporal expressions, both Icelandic and Swedish allow for definite DPs in the vP as well as in the IP; they are not "trapped" in the vP.

[34] When the subject is a contrastive topic, the stress may also fall on it.

(93) a. Það er liðinn hálfur dagurinn. (Ice.)
EXPL is gone half day.DEF
'Half the day is gone.'
b. Það er hálfur dagurinn liðinn.
EXPL is half day.DEF gone

(94) a. Det kunde gå hela eftermiddagen. (Swe.)
EXPL could go whole afternoon.DEF
'The whole afternoon could pass.'
b. Det kunde hela eftermiddagen gå.
EXPL could whole afternoon.DEF go (NDC)

It is debatable whether the examples presented in section 5.3 should be considered as presentational sentences. In some sense they introduce a new situation with a so far unmentioned referent, but unlike the data discussed in sections 1–4, they do not assert or deny the existence of this referent. Rather, they express a new fact involving a referent which is normally available and which hence can be referred to by a definite DP. We have chosen not to identify the definite DPs as pivots (they are not in bold) and think of these types as different kinds of impersonal constructions.

5.4 Summary

In this section we briefly discussed three constructions where Icelandic and Swedish differ. We think that the presentational clefts used in Swedish are bona fide presentational sentences and that they provide a useful strategy for overcoming the restriction on transitive verbs in presentational sentences in that language. They are apparently not used in Icelandic to the same extent, but then Icelandic has the option of IP-pivots for Agents of transitive verbs. The expressive construction is probably not a presentational sentence given that we find pronominal subjects in this type. Finally the examples with trapped definite DPs in Icelandic are not presentationals but another way of making a situation dependent all-focus utterance.

There is another interesting type, discussed briefly in Engdahl et al. (2018) in connection with example (95) from Rögnvaldsson (1984:365) (see also Sigurðsson 1989:295f., 2010 and Thráinsson 2007:324ff.).

(95) A: Hvað kom fyrir? (Ice.)
what came for
'What happened?'
B: Það festist **rútan** á leiðinni norður.
EXPL got.stuck bus.DEF on way.DEF north
'The bus that goes north got stuck.'

This, we believe, is a presentational construction but it is contextually restricted. (95) is only possible if it is common knowledge that only one bus runs that way and the bus has not been mentioned in the context. There are, however, more restrictions on this type than on other presentational sentences in Icelandic. It is hardly used with transitive verbs and it is degraded with IP-pivots. More research is clearly required on the interaction between definiteness and pivothood in Icelandic.

6. Concluding remarks

In this article we have carried out a comparison of presentational sentences in Icelandic and Swedish, looking in particular at the behaviour of VP-pivots and IP-pivots. With reference to the argument structure proposed in Platzack (2010) we have established that there are similar restrictions on roles and positions for VP-pivots in both languages. Only Themes, Paths and Performers may appear as VP-pivots. A Theme pivot may co-occur with other DPs, but only if it is the last DP argument in the vP. We speculate that this restriction may reflect the information structural function of presentational sentences, namely to introduce a new, often focussed, referent, but further investigations, including phonological ones, are required. The thematic restrictions we have discussed also motivate taking a fresh look at the mapping between thematic roles and case marking in Icelandic, previously discussed in, for example, Zaenen et al. (1985), Maling (2001), Jónsson (2003, 2005) and Sigurðsson (2012a,b).

IP-pivots are only generally available in Icelandic where they are the preferred option for Agents, Experiencers, Goals and Performers with agentive properties. One consequence of this is that we find presentational sentences in Icelandic which cannot be expressed as presentationals in Swedish. Negated IP-pivots can be found in older Swedish and are still possible which, we believe, is a consequence of the tendency for negated object DPs to raise to IP, as shown in (63). An interesting finding is that

negated IP-pivots in Swedish are restricted to Themes, Paths and Performers.

We have been able to establish these patterns by systematically using data where it is possible to distinguish IP-pivots from VP-pivots, that is sentences with auxiliary verbs and/or verbal particles. Note, however, that most of the spontaneous occurrences of presentational sentences have a single finite verb in which case the difference between IP- and VP-pivots is blurred.

CORPORA

Korp. ⟨https://spraakbanken.gu.se/korp/⟩.
NDC = Nordic Dialect Corpus. ⟨http://tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/⟩.
Risamálheildin [The Icelandic Gigaword Corpus]. 2019. ⟨malheildir.arnastofnun.is⟩.

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ÚTDRÁTTUR

‘Merkingarlegar hömlur í tilvistarsetningum í íslensku og sænsku’

Lykilorð: tilvistarsetningar, *það*-innskot, íslenska, sænska, merkingarhlutverk, eiginleg frumlög

Þessi grein fjallar um tilvistarsetningar í íslensku og sænsku, þ.e.a.s. setningar með gervifrumlagi eða lepp (*það*, *det*) framarlega eða fremst og eiginlegu frumlagi síðar í setningunni, eins og *Það eru* ***mýs*** *í baðkerinu*, þar sem eiginlega frumlagið er feitletrað. Það sem fyrst og fremst er tekið til athugunar er staða eiginlega frumlagsins. Í sænsku getur eiginlega frumlagið yfirleitt aðeins staðið inni í sagnliðnum en ekki utan eða framan við hann: *Det har varit* ***en katt*** *i köket* ‘Það hefur verið köttur í eldhúsinu’ en ekki **Det har* ***en katt*** *varit i köket*. Í íslensku getur eiginlega frumlagið hins vegar ekki aðeins verið inni í sagnliðnum, *Það hefur verið* ***einhver köttur*** *í eldhúsinu*, heldur líka framar í setningunni, á milli persónubeygðu sagnarinnar og sagnliðarins, *Það hefur* ***einhver köttur*** *verið í eldhúsinu*. Þar að auki er sá munur á málunum að tilvistarsetningar geta innihaldið áhrifssögn í íslensku en ekki í sænsku (og raunar ekki heldur í mörgum skyldum málum, að ensku meðtalinni): *Það hafa* ***margir stúdentar*** *lesið bókina* en ekki **Det har* ***många studenter*** *läst boken*. Sameiginlegt báðum málunum (og mörgum öðrum málum) er að eiginlega frumlagið verður yfirleitt að vera óákveðið: *Það hafa verið* ***mýs*** *í baðkerinu* en ekki **Það hafa verið* ***mýsnar*** *í baðkerinu*.

Í greininni eru íslenskar og sænskar tilvistarsetningar athugaðar nánar í ljósi kenningar Platzacks (2010) um tengsl setningarlegrar stöðu rökliða og merkingarhlutverka þeirra. Athugunin leiðir m.a. í ljós að staða eiginlega frumlagsins innan sagnliðarins er í aðalatriðum háð sömu skilyrðum í íslensku og sænsku. Það sem er einna athyglisverðast er að yfirleitt getur aðeins verið einn röklíður (eiginlega frumlagið) innan sagnliðarins en að þar er þó sú undantekning á að röklíðirnir geta verið tveir að því tilskildu að eiginlega frumlagið sé þema *og* fari á eftir andlaginu: *Það gat beðið barnanna* ***eitthvað skemmtilegt*** *á kvöldin* en ekki **Það gat beðið* ***eitthvað skemmtilegt*** *barnanna á kvöldin*. Þetta er einkennileg hamla og sérlegt að hún skuli gilda í báðum málunum.

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