

UNACCUSATIVE, PASSIVE, AND QUIRKY CASE

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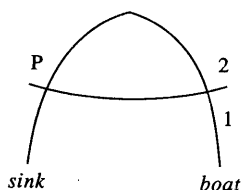
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In this article, we develop an explicit representation for the more complicated case-marking mechanisms in Icelandic, and, in particular, for the interaction between idiosyncratic case and default case marking.¹ In so doing, we are led to question two assumptions that are frequently made in current syntactic theory. The first such assumption is the unaccusative hypothesis, which distinguishes two kinds of intransitive verbs: unergative and unaccusative. As first proposed within RG (Perlmutter, 1978), unaccusative verbs such as those in (1) have an initial stratum like that shown in (2), where the verb's sole argument is a 2 (direct object).

- (1) a. *The boat sank.*
b. *The man died.*

(2)



For Italian this analysis has been developed by Rosen (1980), and in different frameworks by Burzio (1981) and Baker (1983). Perlmutter (1978) also proposed the same analysis for other languages, such as Dutch.

Under the RG analysis, then, both a passive and an unaccusative clause have a 2-to-1 advancement arc. We assume that the morphological effects, if any, of a particular arc are always the same, regardless of the rest of the stratal representation. Hence, the passive morphology must be due to the demotion of the 1, and not to any promotion of a 2, since the passive morphology does not appear in unaccusatives. But *essere* selection in Italian is due to the fact that the representation contains an arc that is both a 1- and a 2-arc ("double attachment").

It is not clear to us whether RG still claims that all languages have unaccusative verbs. Certainly, this was the initial claim of Perlmutter (1978), but the observation that unaccusativity cannot be determined semantically (Rosen, 1982) implies that it is possible to conceive of a language in which the distinction plays no role. However, by the criteria given in RG, Icelandic cannot be such a language. None of the possible unaccusative verbs, for example, the intransitive verb *sökkva* 'sink', passivize, even though the language freely allows for impersonal passives of (unergative) intransitives.

The second assumption we question is that quirky case-marked subjects are always underlying objects that get their case marking in object position. This assumption is made most clearly within GB (e.g., by Marantz, 1981). It is a necessary assumption within GB theory because the subject position itself cannot be assigned quirky case. The analysis of quirky case-marked subjects in GB, then, must proceed along the same lines as the analysis of all unaccusative verbs in RG, but in GB theory this analysis would not have to be extended to unaccusatives with normal nominative subjects.

1. SOME RELEVANT FEATURES OF LFG

We first present the case-marking facts of Icelandic within an LFG framework and then show why the type of approach proposed cannot be adapted to RG. The general organization of lexical items that we are assuming is given in (3). Note that there are two levels of representation, one containing only the θ -roles in a verb's lexical entry, and another level that includes the mappings of θ -roles onto grammatical functions. Each level has its own lexical rules, and its own principles for assigning case, shown in (5) below. In addition to giving the basic argument structure of the lexical item, the level of θ -representation contains θ -rules: rules that relate forms that differ in valency or polyadicity, that is, in the number of arguments or θ -roles associated with a lexical form.

(3) General Organization of Lexical Entries

A. θ -representation: $V \langle \theta_1, \theta_2, \dots \rangle$ *hit* \langle Agent, Theme \rangle θ -rules: *increase* \langle Theme $\rangle \Leftrightarrow$ *increase* \langle Agent, Theme \rangle B. Association Conventions (mapping between θ -roles and GFs)

1. Initial associations

- a. If the lexical entry of a verb contains only one θ -role, it is assigned to SUBJ; if there are two, they are assigned to SUBJ and OBJ; if there are three, they are assigned to SUBJ, OBJ, and 2OBJ. (*Universal*)
- b. Agents are lined to SUBJ. (*Universal*)
- c. Lexically case-marked Themes are assigned to the lowest available grammatical function, where availability is determined by the polyadicity of the verb. (*Language specific*)

2. Reassociation rules (e.g., passive)

We assume that θ -rules must be distinguished from the rules that associate or reassociate thematic roles with grammatical functions. Note for example the well-known contrast between unaccusatives and passives with respect to the presence of an Agent argument.

(4) a. *Bátnum hvolfdi.*

the-boat capsized

b.* *Bátnum hvolfdi viljandi.* (Unaccusative)

the-boat capsized on-purpose

c. *Bátnum var hvolft viljandi.* (Passive)

the-boat was capsized on-purpose

The ungrammaticality of (4b) suggests that there is no Agent present at any level of representation.

Universal association principles act as elsewhere conditions, applying after the language-specific conditions and after the assignment of semantically restricted GFs. We assume that there is a universal hierarchy of GFs: SUBJ > OBJ > 2OBJ. The only reassociation rule that we need to consider here is passive, which deletes the OBJ-function and reassociates the argument associated with the SUBJ-function to the "by-function." An automatic consequence of this formulation of passive is that the argument initially associated with the OBJ-function will reassociate with the SUBJ-function.

We assume that each component of the lexicon has its own case-marking conventions, applying at the end. There are three different types of case marking in Icelandic: semantic case marking, which we do not discuss here since it does not apply to verbal arguments; lexical or idiosyncratic case marking; and default case marking. Although our terminology may differ, these are the same three

types of case distinguished, for example, in Hjelmslev, and more recently in a GB framework in Babby (1980) and Freidin and Babby (1984).

- (5) a. Semantic case marking (e.g., accusatives of time)
- b. Idiosyncratic case marking
 - e.g., *bjarga* 'to rescue', takes a DAT theme
 - sakna* 'to miss', takes a GEN Theme
- c. Default case marking
 - (1) assign NOM to the highest available NP
 - (2) assign ACC to the next highest available NP

Since idiosyncratic case marking is an idiosyncratic property of lexical items, it applies at the end of the θ -component. Default case marking, in contrast, is sensitive to surface grammatical relations and hence applies after all association conventions and reassociation rules. "Highest available NP" means, of those NPs that have not yet been assigned case, the NP that bears the highest GF.

It is clear that this general scheme owes a lot to the work of Anderson (1977) and Wasow (1977), to Ostler (1979) and Marantz (1981), and to Amritavalli (1980), Rappaport (1983), and Levin (1985). We do not have the time here to spell out the importance of these various contributions.

The lexical forms created in this way will, together with the PS-rules of the grammar, give rise to the F-structures. Before turning to the facts about case marking, let us illustrate how some of the relevant features of this system work. Given the initial association principles in (3B), the mapping between θ -roles and GFs is determined by the polyadicity of the verb. We point out here two consequences: First, with the exception of no-argument verbs (e.g., weather verbs), all verbs in Icelandic have a grammatical subject. Thus, we do not find forms of the type illustrated in (6), where the verb's sole argument is a Theme mapped onto the OBJ-function, and where dummy *það* has been inserted to keep the verb in second position.

- (6) a.**Það sökk báturinn.*
 there sank the-boat
- b.**Eg taldi (það) hafa sokkið báturinn.*
 I believed (there) to-have sunk the-boat.

Second, if we consider verbs that can be either simple transitive or ditransitive, then whether the Theme can passivize or not will depend on the polyadicity of the verb. This is illustrated in (7), where the verb *óska* 'to wish' takes an obligatory Theme argument, but an optional Goal.

- (7) a. *Þú hefur óskað þess.* (Transitive)
 you have wished this (GEN)

- b. *Ég tel þess hafa verið óskað.*
I believe this to-have been wished
- c. *Þú hefur óskað henni þess.* (Ditransitive)
you have wished her (DAT) this (GEN)
- d. *Ég tel henni hafa verið óskað þess.*
I believe her to-have been wished this
- e. *Ég tel þess hafa verið óskað henni.*
I believe this to-have been wished her

Since the Theme is marked idiosyncratically for GEN case, it is assigned to the lowest available GF, which in the ditransitive form is 2OBJ, but in the simple transitive form is OBJ. The generalization is that for verbs that can be either transitive or ditransitive, some argument always bears the OBJ-function.

2. AN ACCOUNT OF ICELANDIC CASE MARKING

Let us now look at some of the case marking facts of Modern Icelandic and show how they are accounted for in this framework.

2.1 Regular or Default Case Marking

For “normal” verbs, Icelandic has the unremarkable case-assignment pattern illustrated in (8), where SUBJs are nominative, and OBJs are accusative.

- (8) a. *Höskuldur sannfærði hana.*
Höskuldur (NOM) convinced her (ACC)
‘Höskuldur convinced her.’
- b. *Hún var sannfærð af Höskuldi.*
she (NOM) was convinced by Höskuldur (DAT)
‘She was convinced by Höskuldur.’

This follows immediately from the default case mechanism defined above in (5c).

2.2. Idiosyncratic Case and Passive

The main fact to notice is that idiosyncratic case is preserved under passivization, as illustrated in (9).

- (9) a. *Skipstjórinn sökti skipinu.*
the-captain (NOM) sank the-ship (DAT)
‘The captain sank the ship.’

- b. *Skipinu* *var sökkt af skipstjóranum.*
 the-ship (DAT) was sunk by the-captain (NOM)
 'The ship was sunk by the captain.'

Zaenen, Maling, and Thráinsson (this volume: 100–106) summarize the multiple arguments for subjecthood in Icelandic. These tests show that *skipinu* 'the ship' is indeed the grammatical subject in (9b), despite it not being nominative. We account for the case marking by assuming that idiosyncratic case marking takes place at a level that precedes passive, namely, at the end of the θ -component, and that, like all case marking, idiosyncratic case marking is preserved once it is assigned. Note that this pattern of case preservation contradicts the claims made in certain versions of GB theory to the effect that passive morphology "absorbs" case.

3. CASE AND UNACCUSATIVES

Let us now turn to the forms that are the main topic of this paper, namely, case marking in unaccusative verbs. Given the general organization of lexical entries shown in (3), we could, in principle, get two different types of case-marking patterns with respect to pairs of verbs such as the intransitive and transitive versions of *increase*. Either we assume that both versions reflect a single underlying lexical entry, with an optional Agent argument, or we assume that we have two different lexical entries, related by a redundancy rule. In the first case, we would expect to get case preservation in these pairs, just as in passive, since we are dealing with a single lexical item. In the second case, however, we would expect to get different cases for the different related forms, since they would be separate lexical entries.

It turns out that we do indeed get both case-marking patterns. We can distinguish the following types of unaccusative verb pairs according to their case-marking patterns. In the first type, the case marking on both the transitive and intransitive forms is due to default case-marking procedures, that is, we find nominative SUBJs and accusative OBJs. This pattern is illustrated in (10).

- (10) a. *Verkamennirnir* *breikkuðu veginn.*
 the-workers (NOM) widened the road (ACC)
 'The workers widened the road.'
- b. *Vegurinn* *breikkaði.*
 the-road (NOM) widened
 'The road widened.'

3.1. Unaccusatives and Quirky Case

There is another pattern, however, where idiosyncratic case marking on the Theme is preserved in the unaccusative form. This pattern is illustrated in (11).

- (11) a. *Flugfélagið fækkaði ferðunum um þriðjung.*
 the-airline decreased the-trips (DAT) by one-third
 'The airline decreased the number of trips by one-third.'
 b. *Ferðunum fækkaði um þriðjung.*
 the-trips (DAT) decreased by one-third
 'The number of trips decreased by one-third.'

Here, the idiosyncratic case marking has applied to both transitive and intransitive (unaccusative) forms; moreover, we find the same idiosyncratic case assigned to the same thematic role, Theme. There are, however, verb pairs where the idiosyncratic case marking on the Theme is not preserved in the corresponding unaccusative form. This is illustrated in (12).

- (12) a. *Skipstjórinn sökk skipinu.*
 the-captain (NOM) sank the-ship (DAT)
 'The captain sank the ship.'
 b. *Skipið sökk.*
 the-ship (NOM) sank
 'The ship sank.'

Here, idiosyncratic case marking has applied to only one of the related verb forms, that is, the object of the transitive verb; default case marking has applied to the subject of the unaccusative form.

We assume the following difference in θ -representation for these two types of related verb pairs:

- (13) a. *fækka* \langle (Agent), Theme \rangle
 'decrease' DAT
sökkva \langle Agent, Theme $\rangle \Leftrightarrow$ *sökkva* \langle Theme \rangle
 'sink' DAT 'sink'

At first blush, it might seem a bit strange to associate an optional Agent with a verb such as *fækka* 'to decrease', and then assert that this Agent does not get any semantic representation in the unaccusative form. But notice that the mapping between thematic roles and GFs that we have defined assumes no representation of the Agent on the GF level, and hence not in the F-structure, on which the semantic representation is calculated. Furthermore, as shown by the contrast in (4) above, the Agent argument is in fact unavailable for control of purpose phrases in the unaccusative form.

The above examples show that unaccusative verbs in Icelandic may or may not preserve idiosyncratic case marking. The distinction between case-preserving unaccusative verbs and non-case-preserving ones does not seem to be predictable on semantic grounds. Some examples of each class are given in (14), grouped according to the case marking on the Theme.

(14) a.

Case-preserving Verb Pairs

ACC: *bera* 'carry', *bíta* 'bite', *blása* 'blow', *bresta* 'lack', *brjóta* 'break', *fylla* 'fill', *gára* 'ripple', *hefja* 'begin', *hrekja* 'drift', *hreyfa* 'move', *hvessa* 'sharpen', *kitla* 'tickle', *kreppa* 'bend', *kæfa* 'put, go down', *leiða* 'lead', *lengja* 'lengthen', *leysa* 'loosen', *lægja* 'lower', *minna* 'remind', *reka* 'drive, drift', *reiða* 'brandish', *vanta* 'lack'

DAT: *aflétta* 'lift', *demba* 'spill', *ffölga* 'increase', *fækka* 'decrease', *gera* 'do', *gjósa* 'erupt', *haga* 'arrange', *halla* 'slant', *háttá* 'arrange', *hlaða* 'accumulate', *hvolfa* 'capsize', *kopa* 'stunt', *kyngja* 'swallow', *létta* 'lighten', *linna* 'stop', *ljósta* 'slap', *ljúka* 'finish', *ógna* 'fear', *ofbjóða* 'shock', *seinka* 'delay'

GEN: *kenna* 'feel', *njóta* (við) 'enjoy', *missa* (við) 'lose'

b.

Non-case-preserving Verb Pairs

ACC/NOM: *bakka* 'back up', *breikka* 'widen', *byrja* 'begin', *dýpka* 'deepen', *enda* 'end', *gleikka* 'widen', *grynna* 'make/become shallow', *hækka* 'raise', *keyra* 'drive', *lækka* 'lower', *ljókka* 'make/become ugly', *mjókka* 'narrow', *minnka* 'make/become smaller', *malla* 'simmer', *prýkka* 'make/become pretty', *stækka* 'enlarge'

DAT/NOM: *aka* 'drive', *dilla* 'way', *dingla* 'wag', *drúpa* 'droop', *flagga* 'fly a flag', *fljúga* 'fly', *geisla* 'radiate', *halda áfram* 'continue', *hringja* 'ring', *hringla* 'jingle', *hætta* 'stop', *loka* 'close', *puðra* 'blow'

GEN/NOM: *gróa* 'heal'

Inspection does not reveal clear semantic criteria that would allow us to predict whether unaccusative verbs will be case preserving. There is, however, a partial morphological criterion: for case-preserving verb pairs, the inflectional paradigms of the transitive verb and the intransitive verb are the same. This morphological identity supports our claim that they are one and the same verb, that is, a single lexical entry. However, this is not true for non-case-preserving verb pairs. Although the paradigms accidentally may be the same, in the typical case the two verbs are morphologically different. This is illustrated for the verb's principal parts in (15).

(15)

Intransitive verb

sökkva, *sökk*, *sokkið* 'sink'
stökkva, *stökk*, *stokkið* 'jump'
sleppa, *slapp*, *sloppið* 'escape'
týnast, *týndist*, *týnast* 'lose'

Transitive verb

sökkva, *sökkti*, *sökkt*
stökkva, *stökti*, *stökt*
sleppa, *slepti*, *slept*
týna, *týndi*, *týnt*

Note that all middle voice forms in *-st* fall into the second class: they are derived verbs, morphologically distinct from their transitive counterparts, and hence do not preserve idiosyncratic case.

3.2. Quirky Accusative Case Marking

The comparison between the unaccusative intransitives and the passive forms reveals an interesting gap in the account presented thus far: What happens if the Theme is assigned accusative case? The examples in (16) illustrate the class of unaccusative verbs with accusative SUBJs.²

- (16) a. *Stormurinn blés strompinn af húsinu.*
 the-storm (NOM) blew the-chimney (ACC) off the-house.
 'The storm blew the chimney off the house.'
- b. *Strompinn blés af húsinu.* (Unaccusative)
 the-chimney (ACC) blew off the-house
 'The chimney blew off the house.'
- c. *Strompurinn var blásinn af húsinu.* (Passive)
 the-chimney (NOM) was blown off the-house
 'The chimney was blown off the house.'

Sentence (16b) shows that there is underlying idiosyncratic accusative case marking. Remember, however, that no passive form ever shows case preservation of accusatives, as illustrated in (16c). This is a gap in the case-marking patterns that we have thus far not explained.

Let us first draw attention to the fact that one cannot account for the pattern illustrated in (16) by assuming that passive morphology absorbs accusative case. Zaenen *et al.* (this volume: 95–136) demonstrates at length that in Icelandic passive does not absorb case, in general. In view of the examples just given, however, it might be tempting to propose that passive at least absorbs accusative case. This suggestion would not, however, account for the fact that idiosyncratic accusative is preserved under "raising-to-object" and subsequent passivization. This fact is illustrated in (17), where the unaccusative verb *brjóta* 'break' assigns accusative case to its SUBJ.

- (17) a. *Bátana hefur brotið í spón.*
 the-boats (ACC) has broken in pieces
 'The boats have broken into pieces.'
- b. *Allir telja bátana hafa brotið í spón.*
 all believe the-boats (ACC) to-have broken in pieces
 'Everybody believes the boats to have broken into pieces.'
- c. *Bátana er talið hafa brotið í spón.*
 the-boats (ACC) is believed to-have broken in pieces
 'The boats are believed to have broken into pieces.'

This is to be contrasted with objects assigned accusative case by the default case-marking principles. Such accusatives are never preserved under passive, as illustrated in (18c).

- (18) a. *Krakkarnir hafa brotið bátana í spón.*
 the-kids (NOM) have broken the-boats (ACC) in pieces
 'The kids have broken the boats into pieces.'
 b. *Allir telja krakkana hafa brotið bátana í spón.*
 all believe the-kids (ACC) to-have broken the-boats into pieces
 'Everybody believes the kids to have broken the boats into pieces.'
 c. *Krakkarnir eru taldir hafa brotið bátana í spón.*
 the-kids (NOM) are believed to-have broken the-boats into pieces
 'The kids are believed to have broken the boats into pieces.'

The generalization is clear: only idiosyncratic accusative case is preserved under passive. Before proposing an account of this fact, we discuss the role of quirky case marking.

3.3. θ -roles and Quirky Case

There is a generalization that apparently is not captured by the representation of unaccusative verb pairs developed here: there are apparently no morphologically related verbs with two different idiosyncratic cases assigned to the same thematic role. For instance, there are no cases where the intransitive verb has a dative subject while the transitive verb takes a genitive object, given, of course, that the NPs in question clearly bear the same thematic role.

We assume that idiosyncratic case marking is assigned only once for all the forms derived from a common stem, and that the only option left open for the different forms derived from a common stem is whether or not to assign idiosyncratic case. This is presumably related to the fact that idiosyncratic case marking reflects thematic roles. Hence we will state the following principle:

- (19) For a set of morphologically related verbs, a given thematic role can only be expressed by one idiosyncratic case.

If one looks at idiosyncratic case marking as a way of encoding thematic roles, it is reasonable that for each verb stem a given thematic role can only be encoded with one idiosyncratic case. It is preferable, of course, to state more interesting generalizations about the relation between θ -roles and the specific quirky cases (see, e.g., Andrews, 1982:463), but the Icelandic case system may be in flux in this respect, and synchronically there may well not be any interesting generalizations to capture. If we compare the examples from Andrews (1982) given in (20), for instance, we see that the same thematic role is encoded in two different quirky cases for semantically very similar verbs.

- (20) a. *Mig velgir við setningafræði.*
 me (ACC) am-nauseated by syntax
 'I am nauseated by syntax.'
 b. *Mér býður við setningafræði.*
 me (DAT) am-nauseated by syntax
 'I am nauseated by syntax.'

The instability of the system is exemplified by what Icelandic grammarians call "dative sickness," namely, a tendency to use only dative as the case for quirky subjects. For the moment, then, we have no additional insights about this but simply assume the principle given above in (19). Note, however, that in order to state principle (19), one needs a concept of "related verb," and this concept is available only if one assumes something like our level of the θ -component.

4. A FEATURE ANALYSIS OF CASE

Let us return to the contrast illustrated in (16). We need to account for the fact that a Theme can surface as an accusative SUBJ only in the unaccusative form and not in the passive. What seems to be happening is that because accusative is the normal default case for OBJs, the idiosyncratic accusative case marking somehow does not get registered in OBJ position, and hence it is not preserved or carried over to the SUBJ of the passive form when reassociation applies. We therefore propose a revision of our original case-marking scheme to account for this intuition.

Following Jakobson's (1971) analysis of Russian case, let us regard cases as feature bundles. While a determination of the exact feature matrices would require more study, we can assume that both DAT and GEN have a feature OBL ("oblique") in common; ACC case would have a negative value for this OBL feature, but a positive value for the feature OBJ. Nominative case is clearly neither OBJ nor OBL. This leads to the following (possible partial) matrices:

- (21) GEN +OBL, -OBJ
 DAT +OBL, +OBJ
 ACC -OBL, +OBJ
 NOM -OBL, -OBJ

Let us assume that only case features are assigned in the θ -component. When the thematic arguments with, *le cas échéant*, their case features are mapped onto GFs, the features will be spelled out as full-fledged case assignment only when their value is *marked* with respect to the function that they are assigned to. We propose the following markedness convention:

- (22) Case features are marked when they are idiosyncratically assigned to a GF that they do not agree with in name.

Thus the case feature [+ OBL] is always marked because there is no grammatical function that is simply "oblique"; since the plus value is marked, then the minus value for this feature is unmarked. The feature [+ OBJ] is marked on SUBJs, because it does not agree with it in name, but it is not marked on OBJs because there it does agree. The feature [- OBJ] is, of course, marked on an OBJ but not marked on a SUBJ. We then adopt the following principle (23), which we assume is not used exclusively for Icelandic case marking.

- (23) Only marked values of case features get realized.

The way this proposal works for the OBJ-function is shown in (24).

(24) Function Case Features		
OBJ	+OBJ, -OBL	no realization
OBJ	+OBJ, +OBL	one marked value → spell out DAT
OBJ	-OBJ, +OBL	two marked values → spell out GEN
OBJ	-OBJ, -OBL	one marked value → spell out NOM

Any of the positive values of the features will clash with the SUBJ function, thereby causing the (quirky) case to appear. The only possible assignment of a quirky case to a SUBJ that would disappear is the [- OBJ, - OBL] of nominative case; this is intuitively the correct result. Note we are assuming that the feature [+ OBJ] agrees with both OBJ- and 2OBJ-functions. Under this account, the case features will be spelled out as full-fledged case at the level of GF, whereas only the case features themselves are assigned at the thematic level.

This case-feature analysis makes the correct predictions about the interaction between lexical idiosyncratic case and raising. As illustrated in (18b), if we embed a verb that takes a nominative subject under a raising verb, then this NP will show up in the accusative case in the raising construction. Since the accusative case is due to default case marking, it cannot be preserved under passive because there will be no case assignment to preserve at the time reassociation applies. Idiosyncratic accusative, in contrast, will be preserved because it will already have been assigned. The contrast shows that there is nothing special about idiosyncratic accusatives as compared to idiosyncratic datives or genitives. The only time idiosyncratic accusatives act differently is when one tries to assign them to underlying OBJs. The representation that we have developed here captures exactly that aspect.

With this revision, then, our account of case marking handles the various patterns of case marking on unaccusative verbs. It does so by assuming that the relation between an unaccusative intransitive verb and a related transitive verb is different from the relation between a passive form and an active form, and fur-

thermore, that unaccusative verbs do not undergo a rule of 2-to-1 advancement. In this respect our analysis of unaccusatives is very different from the analysis proposed within Relational Grammar.

5. IMPERSONAL PASSIVES

The unaccusative hypothesis was in part formulated to explain the fact that unaccusative verbs do not have impersonal passives. As outlined above, we consider passive to be a reassociation of thematic roles with GFs. In impersonal passives, the only reassociation to consider is that of the verb's sole argument. As the facts discussed in the RG literature suggest, this reassociation is only possible when the argument is a volitional Agent. Our statement of passive as a reassociation rule allows us to state this condition on impersonal passives without recourse to "global" mechanisms. The information about thematic roles and about initial associations is available at the level where the reassociation takes place, and hence we can simply state that reassociation is only allowed when the argument is an Agent.

Note that the notion of Agent should not be interpreted here as a philosophical notion but rather as a linguistic one. We are referring to all the verbal arguments that act as Agents, for example, for the rules of derivational morphology. To give an example based on English, an Agent is that argument denoted by the rule that adds the agentive suffix *-er* to a verb. Thus, the verb *work* has an Agent argument because one can say "worker," but the verb *see* also has an Agent, since one also can say "seer." The verb *astonish*, however, has no Agent because there is no "astonisher." This distinction must be worked out in terms of classes of verbs rather than individual lexical items, since there may be accidental gaps in the lexicon.

6. CONCLUSION

We have argued that unaccusative advancement and passive must be two different types of rules, and that the subject of an unaccusative verb is not an underlying object. We capture the similarities between the objects of transitive verbs and the subjects of unaccusative ones by assuming that both are Themes. This allows us to state case-marking principles that account for the differences in behavior between unaccusatives and passives. Under the RG analysis, however, unaccusative subjects go through a stage where they are objects. At that stage, the

same case-realization principles will apply that apply in the derivation of passives, and the differences between the two can no longer be accounted for. As far as we can see, the only way out of this dilemma is to assume that the unaccusative verbs that do not preserve case are not related at all to transitive verbs. The problem within the RG framework is that one must posit either a relationship that is too strong in that it predicts the same case marking or else no relationship at all. This choice leaves totally unexplained and unexpected the fact that there are no quirky accusative objects that are preserved under passive. A similar problem is encountered by proponents of GB who want to account for all idiosyncratic case marking by assuming that it is assigned in object position.

We conclude by mentioning three important differences between our analysis of unaccusatives and the RG analysis. First, we do not assume that all rules affecting argument structure should be stated in terms of the same primitives, but rather that there are thematic rules and rules that work on GFs. This rule typology dates back at least to Anderson (1977) and Wasow (1980). This type of rule typology makes some testable predictions about possible morphological rules in Icelandic. If rules of derivational morphology take thematic roles as their input rather than GFs, as argued for English nominalizations by Amritavalli (1980) and Rappaport (1983), for example, then such rules should not refer to combinations of Agents and unaccusative subjects. In a RG framework, however, such rules could be interspersed with rules such as passive. Second, we avoid global statements or representations in which all information is available at all levels. Note that a subdivision into different rule types makes little sense if such globality is allowed. Third, we assume that there are not any obligatory lexical rules. We consider it to be a drawback of the RG analysis that unaccusative advancement is obligatory even where there is not the slightest evidence of surface forms in which the Theme is OBJ. Note that it is unlikely that this obligatoriness could be reduced to a requirement for grammatical subjects in Icelandic. Even if sentences need surface subjects, it is not clear what would prevent us from assuming a visible or invisible dummy subject, but in fact the dummy subject cannot be used in unaccusative constructions, as illustrated in (6).

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NOTES

¹ We want to emphasize that our use of the term *idiosyncratic* case in this article is not meant to preclude the possibility that such case marking may sometimes, or perhaps even typically, be predictable from the thematic role a given argument bears; for example, Goals are often marked dative. See Yip, Maling, and Jackendoff (1987) for discussion. The syntactic behavior of such NPs is to the best of our knowledge the same whether the case is thematically predictable or truly idiosyncratic.

² As far as we know, Bernóðusson (1982) was the first to point out the existence of such verbs.

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