



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

Hugvísindasvið

# **V2-imperatives in Modern High German and Old Norse**

*With a few remarks on the diachrony and closely related  
languages*

*Ritgerð til MA-prófs í almennum málvísindum*

**Felix Knuth**

**Ágúst 2013**

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**Leiðbeinandi: Þórhallur Eyþórsson**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the phenomenon of verb-second imperative clauses in Modern High German as well as in Old Norse.

While imperative clauses in the Germanic languages typically begin with a verb in imperative mood, both Old Norse and Modern High German feature some imperative clauses with regard to which this is not the case. These imperative clauses variously feature constituents such as a pronominal subject, an object noun phrase, an adjective or various other (and especially in the case of German, sometimes more complex) constituents as entities that may precede the imperative verb in an imperative clause.

First, it will be analysed in separate chapters which types of constituents are allowed in these clauses in Old Norse, before a short look on Modern Scandinavian and especially Modern Icelandic is taken. After this, the Modern High German situation will be demonstrated, upon which similarities and differences in the distribution of constituents preceding an imperative verb between Modern High German and Old Norse can be evaluated.

As will turn out, a special class of (most often verb-second) imperative clauses, namely imperatives in complement clauses (*that*-clauses), occurs in Old Norse as well as older West Germanic varieties, but is entirely absent from Modern High German. Because of the typological rarity of this kind of clause, a separate chapter will be dedicated to the discussion of this kind of construction in Old Norse as well as similar clauses in Old Saxon and Old High German.

After this, an attempt to explain the pragmatic contexts in which verb-second imperative main clauses occur is made, revealing significant similarities between the attested clauses of this kind in Old Norse and the situation in Modern High German.

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## 1. Introduction

Imperative sentences in the vast majority of (if not in all) Germanic languages typically begin with a verb (see e.g. Höskuldur Thráinsson (2007: 28) for Icelandic, Behaghel 1932: 39f. for Old, Middle and New High German, Faarlund (2004: 229) for Old Norse<sup>1</sup> and indirectly Áfarli 1997: 141f.<sup>2</sup> for Norwegian). This is a phenomenon that goes back at least to Proto-Germanic (see e.g. Hopper 1975: 48) has on occasion even been considered to be inherited from Proto-Indo-European, going back at least to Delbrück (1900: 83). Examples from three Germanic languages for this are given in (1.1):

- (1.1) a. Tagh thin seng och gack (Swedish, 1526)  
take.IMP your bed and go.IMP  
'Take your bed and go'
- b. Fahr nicht mit dem Auto (Modern Standard German)  
drive.IMP not with the.NEUT.DAT car  
'Don't go by car!'
- c. Far þú til bræðr-a min-na (Old Icelandic, 1150)  
go.imp you to brothers-GEN.PL my-GEN.PL  
'Go to my brothers!'

As such, imperative clauses in which the first element is not the imperative verb, constitute a special and relatively rare subclass of Germanic imperative clauses which is the topic of this thesis, mostly concentrating on Old(er) Icelandic and Modern German examples of this kind. A few examples of this phenomenon languages are given in (2), with the constituent preceding the imperative in bold and the imperative verb itself in italics:

- (1.2) a. Vnd wer dir den Mantel nimpt, **dem** were nicht auch den Rock. (German, 1545)  
and who you.DAT the coat takes, him.DAT deny.IMP not also the shirt.  
'And whoever takes the coat from you, don't deny him the shirt either.'

1 *Old Norse* is used in this thesis to cover all Old West Norse and Old East Norse varieties, i.e. Old Icelandic, Old Norwegian, Old Swedish and Old Danish (and Old Gutnish, but Gutnish examples do not occur), but Old Icelandic makes up the vast majority of Old Norse examples.

2 This follows from his generative analysis that the verb must have moved to the innermost peripheral position ("den innerste perifere posisjonen") in combination with the fact that the subject is typically not expressed ("subjektet er normalt ikkje uttrykt").

b. En **að vetri** *far*-ðu heim hingað á Fjón (Old Icelandic, 1260)

but at winter.DAT go.IMP-you home hither on Funen

'But in winter, come back home here on Funen'

c. ok för en jach far aff hymelandh komber thz alth

and before than I go from home.country comes this all

j mith waldh, än **tw** hagen *fölgh* mik om tw wilth

in my power but you Hagen follow.IMP me if you want

'and before I leave the homecountry, all this will come under my power, but you, Hagen, follow me if you want to.' (Swedish, 1500, Sagan om Didrik av Bern, Kap. 305)

In chapter 2, data for Old Norse, first and foremost for Old Icelandic will be presented. A few remarks on the Modern North Germanic languages will be made in chapter 3, upon which the situation in Modern High German will be shown in chapter 4 with a few syntactical comparisons to Old Norse. Chapter 5 will then cover subclause imperatives, before chapter 6 tries to characterise mainclause imperatives in terms of their pragmatic function.

Much of chapter 2 and parts of chapter 6 draw significantly from a term paper I wrote in a course on historical syntax taught by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson in the spring semester of 2012.

## 1.1. A few remarks on the approach

### 1.1.1. Choice of sources

When analysing a phenomenon in the field of historical syntax, certain precautions have to be taken in order to reach correct conclusions about the actual syntax of an ancient language.

Much of the oldest corpus in the different Germanic languages consists of poetry. In Old Icelandic, the oldest preserved manuscripts are from the late 12th century (see e.g. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 1998: 318), but many of the poems that have been preserved are several centuries older than that. With regard to Old Saxon for instance, it has to be said that the vast majority of its material (the *Heliand* and the *Genesis*) are poetry and much

of the sparse prose consists of registers and short religious texts.

Criticism of using poetry for word order phenomena has been voiced going back at least to Behaghel (1932: VII) who writes in the preface to his book on German historical word order:

"With regard to determining the facts, I first and foremost had to rely on instances of prose in this volume. It is hardly comprehensible that e.g. Pollak managed to rely on examples from alliterative poetry in discussions about the positioning of the genitive."<sup>3</sup> In a similar vein, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1998: 318f.) criticises taking alliterative poetry such as the Edda poems and the Old English *Beowulf* at face value when it comes to analysing syntax and especially with regard to the analysis of word order, writing that with regard to *Beowulf*, the alliteration may well have had an influence on the word order.

In this thesis, two types of phenomena will be discussed. The topic of the thesis, namely the V2 imperatives, are obviously a simple word order phenomenon in declarative sentences, and it is easy to imagine the influence of poetry requirements (both alliterative and metrical considerations) with regard to preposing a constituent before an imperative verb. As such poetry will not be considered in these instances, even though this results in a severe reduction of the material that is available for analysis.

With regard to subordinate imperatives, which, as will be shown, often occur with a preverbal subject, which is the reason why they are covered in this thesis, the effect of poetry has to be analysed carefully, but the state of this construction is different in so far as the syntactic breach of using such a construction without its being grammatical in at least some other register of the language, is much larger than a mere violation of word order, which is e.g. shown by the fact that most languages allow for word order changes whereas using the imperative in otherwise ungrammatical subclauses can hardly be licensed by poetry at least in the languages which I can evaluate well enough in that regard.

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3 "Bei der Feststellung der Tatsachen mußte ich in diesem Bande in allererster Linie von den Erscheinungen der Prosa ausgehen. Es ist schwer verständlich, daß z. B. Pollak es fertig gebracht hat, bei Erörterungen über die Stellung des Genitivs sich auf Beispiele aus der Alliterationsdichtung zu berufen." (translation mine).

### 1.1.2. Only second person (singular) imperatives

Virtually all of the Old Norse examples presented in this thesis are singular imperatives. The reason for this lies in the fact that Old Norse features syncretism in the 2nd person plural with regard to the imperative, the indicative and the subjunctive. To avoid any confusion with regard to potential declaratives, I follow Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: Footnote 3) in just using singular imperatives.

With regard to German, I nearly totally ignore third-person imperatives of the kind *Hilf mir doch einer* 'Someone help me'. This is to simplify the comparison between Old Norse and Modern High German for the purposes of this discussion, although it would be interesting to see whether these imperatives feature the same restrictions and classes of V2-imperatives that 2nd person imperatives do.

## 2. The V2-imperative data in Old and Middle Norse

This chapter will present V2 imperatives in Old and Middle Norse. The largest part of this chapter is concerned with West Norse, specifically Icelandic with regard to which the relevant data from the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus (IcePaHC), a digital corpus for analysing syntactic phenomena throughout the history of Icelandic, is presented. Furthermore, this data is compared to Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's (2000) findings on the topic.

### 2.1. West Norse

#### 2.1.1. *þú* in first position in main clauses.

First, the instances of *þú* preceding the imperative verb were examined within IcePaHC, using the following search mask:

(2.1) ([2]NP-SBJ precedes [1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI) AND  
([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister [2]NP-SBJ)

The first parameter line represents a subject preceding an imperative verb of any kind ("regular verbs", *vera* 'to be', *gera* 'to do', *hafa* 'have', modal verbs, and *verða* 'to become'), while the second line represents the necessity that the subject actually belongs to the imperative verb, rather than being the subject of another clause. The parameters do not make sure that the subject is in fact a second person singular subject or a second person subject at all, and a more complex parameter set accounting for these issues would have been used, if it had not become clear that the results with regard to this kind of imperative construction are very problematic due to incorrect parsings in the IcePaHC database.

Of the 18 results that this search yielded, only 5 were valid examples of *þú* preceding an imperative verb. In addition to the examples not excluded by the search parameters, there were misparsed examples such as *Þeir sem nærstaddir voru, spurðu að því hann*

*gjörði svo* 'Those who were near, asked why he did that' in which the potential imperative verb *spurðu* 'asked', is clearly an indicative form.

In light of these results, another approach was used. The unparsed editions of the texts provided by IcePaHC were analysed by a program using the data of BÍN (Beygingarlýsing íslensk nútímamáls) which provides inflectional data for most inflected words occurring in the contemporary Icelandic language. The program displayed every sentence in which *þú* was directly followed by a word that could possibly be parsed as a second person singular imperative in the modern language, with the exception of *ert* which can be the imperative of *erta* 'to irritate, provoke', which was excluded because *ert* most typically is the very frequent second singular indicative of *vera* 'to be'. These sentences then had to be reviewed manually in order to evaluate whether the word forms in question really were imperatives.

This kind of search yielded 11 sentences with *þú* preceding an imperative verb at least once, among them all five correct examples found with IcePaHC using the search parameters described above. It must be noted, however, that there can be instances of this construction not captured by this approach, e.g. if the imperative verb in question does not occur in the BÍN listing, because a verb or an imperative form has fallen out of use, or cases of a vocative or a relative clause following the personal pronoun, but preceding the imperative verb, in the database<sup>4</sup>. I found one such example by coincidence (example (2.2g) below).

There is a total of 6 instances in which the subject *þú* directly precedes an imperative verb in main clauses, listed here in chronological order:

- (2.2) a. En **þú** *ver* (you be) hvers mann níðingur ef þú þorir eigi. (1250, Theta Fragment)  
b. en **þú** *hygg* (you consider) að því vandlega, attú mæl til hversvetna illa þess er þú beiðir hann og ver djarfmæltur í alla staði. (1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)  
c. en **þú** *hygg* (you consider) að því vandlega, attú flý eigi undan, þó að liðið sé að þér gert, og halt upp bardaga við þá, þó að liðsmunur sé nokkur.  
(1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to this, I searched manually for *attú* which occurs a handful of times in the corpus, but the only instances of *-tú* constituting a subject of an imperative had already been found (examples (3b) and (3c)) because of another instance of this kind of construction in the same sentence

- d. Nú skal setjast niður en **þú** seg (you say) frá tíðindum.  
(1310, Grettis saga Ásmundssonar)
- e. heldur vil eg segja upp sættina, en **þú** sit (you sit) fyrir svörunum.  
(1450, Bandamanna saga)
- f. Lifandi guð, **þú** lít (you look) þar á. (1611, Okur)
- g. "En **þú** Sveinn," segir hann, "far svo nú með öllu sem eg gef ráð til"  
(1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)

Due to the paucity of examples, the loss of this construction cannot be measured statistically.

In his article about the V2-imperative in Icelandic, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 80) writes that the latest examples of this kind he could find (due to a lack of appropriate texts from later times) were from Oddur Gottskálksson's translations of the New Testament (1540). As such, example (2.2f) seems to be younger than the examples found by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000). However, he (personal communication) pointed out to me that this example might exhibit alliteration (*lifandi ~ lít*) and not actually represent a prose example, and indeed it turns out that this sentence represents the first line of an old psalm (cf. Páll Eggert Ólason 1924: 128).

All examples Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 72) (as well as Falk & Torp (1900) who he cites) found, are preceded by *en*, indicating that this kind of construction is of contrastive nature. The distribution of this construction after the conjunction *en* is corroborated by the sparse examples in the IcePaHC corpus, if one excludes the youngest example found in the IcePaHC corpus which does not begin with *en*, but should be discarded for the present purpose, because it cannot be considered a prose example.

### 2.1.2. Imperatives in subclauses

A special kind of imperative construction are imperative verbs that occur in subclauses. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 76f.) reports that the subject always precedes the imperative verb in such instances (see, however, the two Old Norwegian examples

below), and as such, the method used for finding imperatives after *þú* in main clauses as outlined above, also yielded cases in which an imperative occurs in a subclause. Again, the results are listed here in chronological order:

- (2.3) a. en þú hygg að því vandlega, **attú mæl** (you speak) hversvetna illa þess er þú beiðir hann og **ver** (be) djarfmæltur í alla staði. (1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)
- b. en þú hygg að því vandlega, **attú flý** (that you flee) eigi undan, þó að liðið sé að þér gert, og halt upp bardaga við þá, þó að liðsmunur sé nokkur.  
(1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)
- c. Nú mun eg það mæla, segir Egill, er eg hugði að eg mundi aldrei tala, að **þú lúk** heill munni í sundur því að það var mér spáð að eg mundi ellidauður verða en mér þykir því betur er fyrr taka tröll við þér. (1350, Bandamanna saga)
- d. Ger nú fyrir mína bæn að **þú lát** (you let) þau hingað koma en eg skal veita þér það er þú biður mig. (1350, Finnboga saga ramma)
- e. Þóttú hafir Finnbogi farið með flærð og hégóma þá vara þig að **þú ger** (you do) ekki meyjunni til miska. (1350, Finnboga saga ramma)
- f. Nú mun eg það mæla er eg ætlaði að frestast mundi að **þú lúk** heill munni í sundur. (1450, Bandamanna saga)
- g. Eg vil það til skilja að **þú sjá** ráð fyrir Sigurði, syni mínum, og látir hann vera fylgdarmanninn þinn. (1650, Illuga saga Tagldarbana)

In addition to these examples, there is another example from 1450 (Bandamanna saga) that does not constitute a valid indicative in the modern language, but semantically it is unlikely for this sentence to actually be an imperative, and is probably best considered a variant indicative:

- (2.4) Aldrei koma svo margir göfgir menn til þín að það viti hvað í honum býr nema þú einn, enda er það kunnigt öðrum mönnum að **þú renn** þegar er svartleggjan kemur á loft en eg þori að veita vinum mínum lið.  
[...] because it is well-known to other men **that you run** when [...]

Excluding this example, there are 7 sentences in which an imperative occurs in a

subclause, and the results are similar to the results with regard to main clauses in which an imperative verb occurs after the subject *þú*..

The low amount of examples found, makes it entirely impossible to get an idea of the exact development of the subclause imperatives. The date of their disappearance in Icelandic can be pushed forward by about one century, when compared to the most recent examples found in Oddur Gottskálksson's translations of the New Testament from 1540 by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000).

Another interesting fact relates to the fact that the youngest example found has two verbs in it, namely the imperative *sjá* and the subjunctive *látir*. This kind of co-ordination with two different moods was not seen in any other example found, see e.g. example (2.3a) and a sentence such as *en þú gakk og boða Guðs ríki* 'but you go and preach the kingdom of God' (Oddur Gottskálksson's translation of the New Testament - this example not contained in IcePaHC). It is interesting that this occurs in the youngest example of all examples found, however, the amount of coordinated imperative verbs in subclauses is too low in order to allow for a definite evaluation of this fact.

As will be discussed in section (5.1) below, there are at least two instances of imperative verbs in subordinate clauses in the Old Norwegian *Olafs saga hins helga* in which no subject occurs before the verb. While I cannot exclude the existence of such clauses in IcePaHC, a simple search mask *C iPrecedes VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI* (i.e. complementiser immediately precedes imperative verb), only yielded one result in which the imperative verb is parenthetically intertwined into a clause introduced by *því að* 'because':

- (2.5) [...] og sér alla mína vegu. Því að, sjá, ekki er svo eitt orð á minni tungu  
and see all my ways because see.IMP not is so one word on my tongue  
að þú vitir það ekki, drottinn, allt saman (1593, Eintal)  
that you know it not lord all together  
'[...] and see all my ways, because - see - there is not one word on my tongue  
that you would not know it, Lord, nevertheless.'

### 2.1.3. Objects in first position

Another kind of element that occurs, albeit rarely, in the first position of an imperative sentence, are objects. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (personal communication) did not find any examples for this. Because it is virtually impossible to write a program that finds objects before imperative verbs (since, unlike the subjects in imperatives, they are not restricted to a single word or a particularly specific set of words), there was no other choice than to use the parsed data of IcePaHC, in spite of the fact that it is entirely possible that instances of this construction that may be in the database could not be found because of sentences that are not parsed correctly in the database.

The search mask that was used in order to find sentences with this kind of construction is shown in (2.6).

(2.6) ([2]NP-OB\* iPrecedes [1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI) AND  
([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister [2]NP-OB\*)

The search mask resembles the one initially used for subjects as shown in (2.1) closely. The first line describes that the search will only bring up sentences in which an object immediately precedes an imperative verb, while the second line restricts the results to such sentences where the objects are actually governed by the respective imperative verb (as opposed to objects actually belonging to a sentence-initial subclause).

This search yielded four results, of which only two actually were instances of sentences in which an object preceded a singular imperative verb. The results are shown in (2.7)

- (2.7) a. **brauð vort hversdagslegt** *gef-ðu* oss í dag (1150, Hómilífubók: 715)  
bread our daily give-you us today  
'Give us today our daily bread.'
- b. **Skömm** *haf-ðu* Alanus (1450, Ectors saga: 852)  
shame have-you Alanus

Of these two examples, the first one is obviously a line occurring in the Lord's Prayer,

and in the Hómiliubók, the Latin line *panem nostrum cotidianum da nobis hodie* precedes the Icelandic translation immediately, which probably indicates that this is not meant to be natural Icelandic, rather than a literal translation of the Latin original.

The other example seems to be a valid example of the construction, however, and so does the following example from Oddur Gottskálksson's bible translation (1540), more precisely from the Gospel of Luke, which is not part of the IcePaHC database:

- (2.8) Og hver þig biður, þeim gef, og hver hann tekur burt hvað þitt er,  
and who you.ACC asks, them.DAT give.IMP and who he takes away what yours is  
það heimt eigi aftur  
that demand.IMP not back.  
'Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods  
ask them not again' (King James Bible, Luke 6:30)

The examples seem to show that, in spite of their apparent rarity, it was possible to use an object before the imperative verb in older Icelandic.

#### 2.1.4. Adverbials and prepositional phrases in first position

The last search attempt was done to find adverbials and prepositional phrases in initial position, although two adjectives were found as well (see section 2.5 below). Adverbials and PPs were grouped together because of their similar syntactic and semantic properties when PPs are not verbal arguments, as well as the fact that some adverbials such as *því* 'thus, therefore' are found with the PP\*-, but not with the AD\*-restrictions. Four different search masks were used in order to find examples of this kind, but only the ones used for finding adverbials and adjectives are shown here, as the ones used for PPs only differ in having both instances of *[2]AD\** replaced by *[2]PP\** :

- (2.9) a. ([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister [2]AD\*) AND  
([2]AD\* Precedes [1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI) AND  
([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister [3]NP-SBJ) AND  
([3]NP-SBJ Doms \*-þú)  
b. ([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister [2]AD\*) AND

(([2]AD\* Precedes [1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI) AND  
([1]VBI|BEI|DOI|HVI|MDI|RDI HasSister ![3]NP-SBJ)

Both search masks' first two lines are identical. The first line makes sure that the adverbial/adjective, respectively the PP, is in the same clause as the imperative verb, while the second line makes sure that the sentences in question fulfill the requirement of the adverbial/adjective/PP preceding the imperative verb.

The reason for the existence of the other lines in (2.9) is twofold: On the one hand, the parsing seems to be significantly better at least with regard to the adverbial construction when compared to the constructions discussed in sections 2.1 to 2.3 - at least the ratio of false positives seems to be significantly lower -, on the other hand, the frequency of adverbs occurring before the imperative verb, is significantly higher, leading to more examples found.

As this kind of query also finds second person plural imperatives and hortatives and the number of this kind of results grew immensely, the additional lines in (2.9a) and (2.9b) were added. In (9a), the third line makes sure that the imperative verb has an overt subject while the fourth line makes sure that this subject is a form of *þú*, i.e. a second person subject, excluding overt subjects of hortatives, such as *vér* and *við*. The third line in (2.9b) makes sure that no overt subject of the imperative verb exists at all in the sentences that the search finds.

The search mask in (2.9a) yielded 49 results, while (2.9b) yielded 70 results. With regard to PPs, the equivalent to (2.9a) yielded 33, and the equivalent (2.9b) yielded 54 results.

It is, however, problematic to interpret these raw data statistically, especially with regard to the adverbials, in part because a word such as *heldur* 'but, rather', considered an adverb in the data of IcePaHC, should probably not be seen as an adverb, rather than a conjunction in the given context, in part because of other parsing mistakes and the fact that some second plural/dual imperatives are not excluded from the search, but mainly because several of the examples are still grammatical in Modern Icelandic (at least with regard to the positioning of the imperative verb and the preceding element(s)), as outlined before with regard to *þá*. Instances of these issues are exemplified by the

examples in (2.10):

- (2.10) a. heldur leys þú oss frá illu (1150, Hómilfubók: 742)  
rather deliver.IMP you us from evil  
'rather deliver us from evil'
- b. og ef það fæst eigi af honum, þá (1260, Jónsvíkinga saga: 1227)  
and if it receive.MED not from him, then  
bjót-tú honum bardaga, [...]  
offer.IMP-you him battle  
'and if it cannot be received from him, then offer him a battle'

A number of examples of the relevant kind that would be ungrammatical in Modern Icelandic can be found in (2.11). (2.11a) through (2.11e) are examples found by the search masks for adverbials, while the rest are examples of PPs preceding the imperative verb:

- (2.11) a. En **nú** bið þú (now pray you) litla stund, því að skjótt munt þú til mín koma .  
(1350, Mörtu saga og Maríu Magdalenu: 730 )
- b. Og **svo** sjáðu (so see you) lítillæti vort í augliti heilagra manna.  
(1450, Júðitarbók: 154)
- c. Og **nú** - Drottinn - lít þú (now look you) á þeirra heitingar.  
(1540, John, NT Odds Gottskálkssonar: 239.181)
- d. **Sömuleiðis** unn þú (likewise grant you) mér að eg jafnan keppist eftir réttlætinu, guðrækninni, kærleikinum, þolinmæðinni og lítillætinu.  
(1593, Eintal: 348)
- e. **Svo** kom (so come) með mér (1628, Reisubók séra Ólafs Egilssonar: 551)
- f. En **að vetri** farðu (in the winter travel) heim hingað á Fjón  
(1260, Jónsvíkinga saga: 1209)
- g. **Því** ger (therefore do) skjótt eftir mínum ráðum  
(1475, Miðaldaævintýri: 873)
- h. **Fyrir því** gjör (therefore do) iðran fyrir þessa þína illsku.  
(1540, Acts, NT Odds Gottskálkssonar: 254.461)

- i. **Þar fyrir lát** (therefore let) það fyrir þínu augliti falið  
(1630, Gerhard / Hugvekjur: 291)
- j. **Af mínum heimuglegum og óvitanlegum syndum frelsa** þú (From my secret  
and unknown sins free you) mig, drottinn. (1630, Gerhard / Hugvekjur: 27)

The youngest examples found (2.11e, i, j) are from around 1630, presenting a similar timeframe of disappearance as do the imperatives in subclauses.

#### 2.1.5. Adjectives in first position

The last kind of element that was found to precede an imperative verb - with the search masks outlined above for adverbs -, were two predicative resultative adjectives, one from 1525 (Georgius saga: 379) and one from 1630 (Gerhard / Hugvekjur: 285):

- (2.12) a. og **örugga** *gjör* mína staðfestu með þinni mildri miskunn til þín  
and secure.ACC make.IMP my.ACC determination.ACC with your gentle mercy to you  
'and assure my determination to you with your gentle mercy'
- b. **hólpinn** *gjör* þú mig, sem fram fyrir þig kem fordæmdur  
saved.ACC make.IMP you me.ACC who before you come condemned.PART  
'make me, who comes before you condemned, save'

In both instances, the adjective in first position agrees with the predicate's - in both cases *gjör* - direct object in case, number and gender (although only the case is indicated in the glossing) and expresses the object's state that results from the predicate. Because of the rarity of examples, it is, however, impossible to conclude that it was impossible to use other adjectives in this position. With respect to other adjectives in this position, it has to be noted that the Modern Icelandic greeting expression *sæl(l) vertu*, lit. 'blessed be you', looks like an instance of this kind of construction. There were, however, only two<sup>5</sup> examples of this expression in the IcePaHC corpus that I found by means of the search masks presented here, both from the 19th century.

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5 In fact, only one of those two examples was a singular example. The other one was the plural or formal equivalent *sælir verið þér*.

## 2.2. East Norse

With regard to East Norse, Falk & Torp (1900: 289) maintain for older Danish that a subject occurs more frequently in initial position in an imperative clause than in Old Norwegian. The comparison with regard to the other Old Norse varieties and clause-initial subjects is somewhat problematic though, as they write that in older Danish, "this is particularly the case in the folk songs"<sup>6</sup>, which probably make use of constructions that would be ungrammatical or use sentences that would be unacceptable in the given pragmatic context in the normal language, and the only prose example Falk & Torp (ibid.) present (*thu kynd hannum* 'you kindle him') is Middle Danish from about 1500.

In a similar vein, Wessén (1970) writes about Old Swedish: "The subject is used especially when it is supposed to be emphasised, which is why it is stressed in such cases. Examples: Tw gör aff thenna, huat tu gither! Giffuen I them at äta! Using an **unstressed** *du* or *I* ('you') subject together with an imperative in addition to that, is characteristic of the folk song style: Tw älska frihet mer än gull! Tw tak tik wel til wara! [...]"<sup>7</sup> (underlining of subject pronouns in the imperative examples mine).

Given this wording, it seems that Wessén distinguishes between presence and absence of the subject pronoun and stressed and unstressed pronouns, but not between the preverbal and the postverbal positioning. The problem with the examples he presents is similar to the ones presented by Falk & Torp (1900: 289) for Danish, because of the six examples where the subject pronoun precedes the imperative verb, five are examples for the folk song style, and the sixth one *Tw gör aff thenna huat tu gither!* 'Do with him what you like' is from the Erikskrönikan, a rhymed chronicle from the first half of the 14th century, which makes it difficult to assess the actual status of such an example in non-poetical Swedish of that time.

However, there are a couple of other examples of imperatives being preceded by a subject pronoun in Middle Swedish:

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6 "Især er dette tilfælde i folkeviserne" (translation mine)

7 "Besonders wird das Subjekt dann gesetzt, wenn es hervorgehoben werden soll, weshalb es in solchen Fällen auch starktonig ist. Beispiele [...] Beim Imperativ darüber hinaus noch ein **unbetontes** *du* oder *I* ('Ihr') als Subjekt zu setzen, ist für den Volksliederstil kennzeichnend: [...]" (translation mine)

- (2.13) a. *men tu gack bort och förkunna gudz rike* (Swedish, 1526, Thet nyia testamentit)  
but you go.IMP away and preach.IMP god.GEN kingdom  
'but you go and preach the kingdom of God'
- b. *ok för en jach far aff hymelandh komber thz alth*  
and before than I go from home.country comes this all
- j mith waldh, än tw haghen fölg mik om tw wilth*  
in my power but you Hagen follow.IMP me if you want  
'and before I leave the homecountry, all this will come under my power, but you, Hagen, follow me if you want to.' (1500, Sagan om Didrik av Bern, Kap. 305)

These two examples, too, have the conjunctions *men*, respectively *än*, both meaning 'but', at the beginning of the clause. A lack of editions of Old and Middle Swedish texts on my part and the fact that it is easier to find the combination *en/men + du* (and all its Old/Middle Swedish spelling variants) than the combination *du + imperative verb* in texts when performing a manual search on a computer, made it impossible for me to check whether there might be examples where something else precedes the expression meaning *you + imperative*.

In addition to these examples with a subject preceding the imperative verb, there are objects preceding the imperative verb in a couple of biblical verses (in Luke, chapter 9) of which the last one corresponds to the Icelandic examples in (2.8):

- (2.14) *Then tigh slåår på thet ena kinbenet / them holt och det andra till /*  
whoever you hits on the one cheek.DEF him hold.IMP also the other to
- och then tigh fråtagher mantelen honom förholt ecke heller kyortelen*  
and whoever you takes.away coat.DEF him deny.IMP not either shirt.DEF  
'And whoever hits you on the one cheek, offer also the other to him.
- And the one who takes away the coat from you, don't deny him the shirt either'*  
(1526, Thet nyia testamentit)

### 3. V2-imperatives in modern North Germanic

In this chapter, a short look on the situation of V2-imperatives in the modern North Germanic languages will be taken. As with the Old Norse varieties, most of the discussion will pertain to Icelandic.

#### 3.1. Chronological results

##### 3.1.1. Icelandic

In Modern Icelandic, it is mostly impossible to use V2-imperatives (see the discussion in Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2000) with few exceptions that will be considered below.

While the paucity of examples does not allow for a detailed analysis of the development of the loss of V2-imperatives, a couple of interesting results can be drawn from the available data. One of these results pertains to the fact that all kinds of V2-imperatives seem to have disappeared in a similar timeframe:

(3.1)	Type	Last occurrence
	Subject first (main clauses)	1540
	Imperative in subclauses	1650
	Object first (just 2 examples)	1540
	Adv/PP first	1630
	Adj first (just 2 examples)	1630

The last occurrence of all kinds of V2-imperatives is in the timeframe between the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 17th century. Be aware of the fact that these dates are not certain as there may be still undiscovered examples from slightly later points of time. As such, this seems to support Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's (2000: 80) idea that the loss of V2-imperatives in main clauses and the loss of imperatives in subclauses are related, and that there was in fact only one change in the language.

In addition to the loss of these constructions and although I did not perform a

detailed analysis of the numbers, it seems that the number of V2-imperatives rises in the 15th and 16th century, especially with regard to the Adv/PP type before vanishing shortly after that. In addition to that, it has to be noted that both sentences in which the object occupies the preverbal position of an imperative sentence - excluding the literal translation *brauð vort hversdagslegt gefðu oss í dag* from 1150 - are from the 15th and 16th century, and the two sentences in which an adjective occupies the initial position are from the 16th and the 17th century respectively.

This does not necessarily indicate a language change, but could be related to the fact that the increasing number of translations leads to a more frequent occurrence of Icelandic constructions, otherwise used rarely in writing, as an influence from foreign texts, or in an attempt to match the original text's structure more closely.

Even if an influence from translations is taken into account, this does not necessarily mean that the rarity of the Icelandic examples indicates that the sentences in question were awkward or ungrammatical and only came to be because of foreign influence - it is quite likely that they were just unlikely to appear in writing, given the already low amount of *þú*-subjects preceding an imperative verb. Without making sure that all relevant examples have been parsed in the corpus correctly, all conclusions should, however, be handled with extreme care.

### 3.1.2. Other North Germanic languages

I do not have any specific idea about the chronological development in the other North Germanic languages. It seems, however, that all of them largely lost their ability to prepose a constituent before the imperative verb:

In addition to a quite frequent possible kind of a V2-imperative clause that also occurs in Modern Icelandic, namely an imperative clause introduced by *tá* or *so* 'then' when preceded by a possibly left-dislocated subclause, I was able to find one other candidate for a V2 imperative example in the Faroese Parsed Historical Corpus (FarPaHC), with the oldest text being from the 19th century, that is maybe introduced by the adverb *nú* 'now', obscured by a vocative between the adverb and the imperative verb:

- (3.2) a. Men táíð tú fastar, **tá** *salva* Hödd títt (1823, Gospel of Matthew)  
'But when you are feasting, **then** *anoint* your head.'  
b. Og **nú**, Harri, *lit* at hóttum teirra. (1928, Acts)  
'And **now**, Lord, *look* at their threats.'

In Modern Swedish and Modern Norwegian, there is generally no possibility for a preverbal constituent (see Rosengren 1993: 7 for Swedish and Åfarli 1997: 141 for Norwegian). However, in Norwegian it is possible for the negation *ikkje/ikke* to precede an imperative verb:

- (3.3) **Ikkje** *gløym* fuglane i vinter  
'Do **not** *forget* the birds in winter'

In addition to this, adverbs such as *berre/bare/bara* 'just' can occur in first position in both Swedish and Norwegian, resembling a phenomenon, described in section 3.2. below, that is also seen in Modern Icelandic by which adverbs that can also precede the verbal predicate in declarative clauses, can do the same in imperative clauses. One example from Swedish and Norwegian and for an imperative and a declarative clause each is presented here (all examples found online):

- (3.4) a. **Bara** *säg* att du inte vill (Swedish)  
'**Just** *say* that you don't want (to)'  
a'. **Berre** *hugs* å gjere det før du sovnar (Norwegian)  
'**Just** *remember* to do it before you fall asleep.'  
b. Han **bara** *slutade* ha kontakt till mig. (Swedish)  
'He **just** *stopped* having contact to me.'  
b'. Eg **berre** *lurar* på kvifor eg ikkje har sett dette patentet før. (Norwegian)  
'I **just** *wonder* why I haven't seen this patent previously.'

With regard to the date at which V2-imperatives ceased to exist in the three languages,

the only thing that can be said is that given the Swedish examples from the 16th century presented in Section 2.6, this is the *terminus post quem* with regard to the general disappearance of the V2-imperatives in Swedish. For Faroese and Norwegian it will probably be much more difficult to establish these dates. Norwegian texts between the end of the Old Norse period and the 19th century are very rare and Faroese texts for this period are virtually non-existent, because of the very prevalent use of Danish, the V2-imperative situation in which I have not been able to analyse in detail.

### 3.2. "V3"-adverbs in first position in Modern Icelandic

In Modern Icelandic, only few adverbs can be used in first position, such as the ones shown in (3.5):

- (3.5) a. Vinsamlegast svara-ðu eftirfarandi spurning-um.  
friendly reply.IMP-you following question-DAT.PL  
'Please reply to the following questions.'
- b. Bara seg-ðu mér hvert þú vil-t fá það sent.  
just say.IMP-you me whereto you want-2SG.PRES get it sent.NEUT  
'Just tell me where you want to have it sent.'
- c. Endilega seg-ðu mér hvort þú kem-ur.  
by.all.means say.IMP-you me.DAT whether you come-2SG.PRES  
'By all means tell me whether you will come.'

These example sentences superficially look similar to the phenomenon of adverbials preceding the imperative verb in the older Icelandic examples, but in addition to the fact that only a very limited amount of adverbs (and no other word classes or phrases) are able to occupy that first position, two other indicators speak against these examples' being of a similar nature as the examples from Old Icelandic above.

The first concerns the fact that a *þá* 'then', after an conditional clause, can precede such an adverb which in turn would mean that the imperative verb in these sentences is in fact in third position (not counting the *ef*-clause, see section 3.3 below for more on this kind of construction), an order historically unattested in Icelandic imperative sentences. An example for this, found on a key, is given in (3.6):

- (3.6) Ef þú var-st að finn-a mig, þá vinsamlega send-u mig til: [póstfang]  
if you be.PAST-2ND.SG to find-INF me.ACC, then please send.IMP-you me.ACC to [address]  
'If you just found me, then please send me to: [address]'

The second and more important indicator -- as it delivers an analysis for the placement of the adverbs in the sentences given in (3.5) and (3.6) -- is the presence of adverbs in Icelandic which can precede the finite verb in indicative clauses which are sometimes termed V3-adverbs according to Höskuldur Thráinsson (2007: 38), because their presence "pushes" the finite verb from its usual V2- into a V3-position in declarative clauses, as is shown in the following example (taken from Höskuldur Thráinsson 2007: 39):

- (3.7) Jón bara/einfaldlega/kannski/náttúrulega/sennilega lýkur þessu einhvern dag-inn  
John just/ simply/ maybe/ naturally/probably finishes this.DAT one day-DEF.ACC  
'John will just/simply/maybe/naturally/probably finish this one day.'

In fact, the same adverbs that were used in the imperative clauses in (3.5), can be used as V3-adverbs in indicative clauses, which clearly shows that the positioning of this kind of adverbs is directly dependent on the positioning of the finite verb which they precede, but does not depend on illocutionary force:

- (3.8) a. Hún vinsamlegast bað okkur að far-a.  
she friendly ask.PAST us to go-INF  
'She kindly asked us to leave.'  
b. Hann bara vil-di fá svar  
he just want-1SG.PAST get.INF answer.ACC  
'He just wanted to get an answer.'

As such, the examples given above do not present any kind of word order that is particular to imperatives in Modern Icelandic, and "V3"-adverbs will not be covered here in further detail.

### 3.3. Two further possible V2-imperative constructions

Apart from "V3"-adverbs, two types of sentences are attested in Icelandic which feature a preverbal element. The first kind of construction is the greeting *sæll* (masc.)/*sæl* (fem.) *vertu* 'hello' in which the imperative *vertu* 'be!' is preceded by the adjective *sæl(l)* 'happy, blessed'. This is only possible with the adjective *sæl(l)* and *blessaður/blessuð*, however, giving the construction the character of a fixed expression which is not indicative of the existence of V2- imperatives in Icelandic. This construction may in fact represent a remnant of the old V2-imperative construction. However, the oldest examples in the Icelandic Parsed Historical Corpus (IcePaHC) are from the 19th century, long after the last occurrence of a V2-imperative. I was not able to find out whether there might be earlier examples of this greeting.

The other kind of example are examples in which *þá* 'then' precedes the imperative verb. In these examples, the *þá* is most often preceded by a conditional clause. However, there are several other kinds of clauses that can precede the *þá* (all examples presented here were found online):

- (3.9) a. Ef þú vilt nánari upplýsingar, þá skrifa-ðu endilega aftur.  
If you want further information then write.IMP-YOU absolutely again  
'If you want further information, then just write again.'
- b. Hvað þetta varðar, þá endilega hafið samband með tölvupósti.  
What this concerns then absolutely have-IMP.PL contact with e-mail  
'When it comes to this, just contact (me/us) via e-mail.'
- c. Þótt það sé kannski skrítið að segja svona, þá ver-tu  
although it be.SUBJ perhaps strange to say so then be.IMP-you  
fljót að fá þér aðra kisu  
quick to get you.DAT other cat  
'Although it is perhaps strange to say such a thing, be quick to get yourself another cat.'

These cases might, in contrast to the greeting *sæll(l) vertu*, represent a relatively productive V2-imperative construction in Icelandic, if *þá* is seen as a resumptive element of a left-dislocated adverbial clause. Against this interpretation, Eiríkur

Rögnvaldsson (personal communication) suggests that such examples, as well as corresponding declarative examples, do not constitute V2-sentences, as different kinds of adverbials can precede *þá* in such cases, many of which are not directly compatible with the reading 'then' of the adverb *þá*. See the following sentences (found online):

- (3.10) a. Fyrir ykkur hin sem hafið ekki séð þá mynd, þá getið þið séð hana hér.  
for you.ACC.PL others who have not seen that picture then can you.PL seen it here  
'For those others of you who haven't seen that picture, you can see it here.'
- b. Klukkan tólf, þá pöntuðum við okkur miða til Íslands.  
clock twelve then ordered we us ticket to Iceland  
'At twelve o'clock, we ordered tickets for us to Iceland.'
- c. Eins og allt annað í þessum bíl þá fer allt á sinn upprunalega stað.  
just like everything other in this car then goes everything on its original place  
'Just like everything else in this car, everything goes into its original place.'

These examples do, however, not necessarily exclude the possibility that *þá* can also function as a resumptive pro-adverb in which case it does not have to be limited to the meaning 'then', but can continue all kinds of left-dislocated adverbial elements. This analysis would allow for the declarative examples presented here to be "regular" sentences of Icelandic which do not violate the V2-constraint. In that case, the imperative sentences in (3.9) might be V2-imperatives even contemporarily.

Whichever analysis one prefers for Modern Icelandic, it is obvious that this kind of construction is a remnant of V2-imperatives in which a resumptive element is the first element of the clause and that the construction probably has survived because of its high frequency of occurrence, especially because of the conditional clauses (and maybe also temporal clauses, etc.) which frequently occur in imperative sentences as a restriction as to under what circumstances an order is to be fulfilled or a piece of advice is to be taken into account.

## 4. V2 imperatives in Modern High German

### 4.1. "Simple" constituents in first position

Similar to Old Norse, Modern High German allows for initial positioning of many different kinds of constituents, and in fact, it seems to resemble the array of constituents (or constituent groups) that can occur preverbally in declaratives as well. First, examples of the types of V2 imperatives that have already been introduced for Old Norse in the previous section will be given here. For the sake of comparison, Old Norse sentences and their translations are sometimes presented here<sup>8</sup>:

*Subject first:*

- (4.1)a. Nú skal setjast niður en **þú** seg frá tíðindum (Old Icelandic)  
'Now it should be sat down, and **you** say from the news.'
- a'. Nun lasst uns hinsetzen, und **du** erzähl dann, was passiert ist. (German)  
'Now let's sit down, and **you** tell then what happened.'
- b. Lát þá dauðu grafa sína hinu dauðu, en **þú** gakk og boða Guðs ríki  
'Let the dead bury their dead, but **you** go and preach God's kingdom'  
(Icelandic, NT Odds)
- b'. Lass die Toten ihre Toten begraben; **du aber** geh hin und verkündige das Reich Gottes. (German, Lutherbibel 1984)  
'Let the dead bury their dead; **but you** go and preach the kingdom of God'

*Object first:*

- c. Og hver þig biður, **þeim** gef, og hver hann tekur burt hvað þitt er, **það** heimt eigi aftur. (Icelandic, NT Odds)  
'And who asks you, (unto) **him** give, and whoever takes away what is yours, **that** do not demand back.'
- c'. Und wer dich bittet, **dem** gib, und was dir gehört und jemand nimmt, **das** fordere nicht zurück.

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8 The German translation is intended to be natural rather than literal, which explains the differences between the wordings of the sentences. This, however, does not have any effect on the crucial initial parts of the imperative sentences.

'And who asks you, (unto) **him** give, and what belongs to you and someone takes it, **that** do not demand back.'

- d. Kartoffeln kannst du auf jeden Fall mitbringen, aber **so viel Pizza wie letztes Mal** kauf auf keinen Fall.

'Potatoes you certainly can bring along with you, but don't buy **as much Pizza as last time** in any case.'

*Adjective first:*

- e. Styrk þú öll mín skilningsvit svo að eg meg þig ávallt lofa og **örugga** *gjör* mína staðfestu með þinni mildri miskunn til þín.

'Strengthen all of my senses, so that I will always laud you, and *make* **strong** my determination with your mild mercy to you.'

- e'. ?Kräftige meine Sinne, auf dass ich dich stets loben werde, und **stark** *make* mit deiner milden Barmherzigkeit auch meinen Glauben an dich.

'Strengthen my senses, so that I will always laud you, and also *make* **strong** my belief in you by means of your mild mercy.'

- f. **Rot** *male* nur diejenigen Wände an, die die meisten Gäste nicht zu sehen kriegen.

'Just *paint* those walls **red** that most guests don't get to see.'

However, there is also a number of more complex cases in which Old Norse and Modern High German are less comparable. This will be discussed in the following sections of chapter 4.

#### 4.2. Infinitives and infinitives with other constituents in first position

In contrast to the attested examples in Old Norse, a verbal predicate can occur in the first position, with the imperative verb being *tu* 'do', and sometimes other constituents can be in the first position together with it. Consider the following examples (first element of the imperative sentence in bold, stress in capitals):

- (4.2) a. Du kannst jetzt Fernseh gucken, und **schlafen** TU dann um acht.  
you can now television watch.INF and sleep.INF do.IMP then at eight  
'You can watch TV now, and then go to sleep at eight o'clock.'
- b. Du kannst gucken, ob du herausfindest, was der so geschrieben hat, aber  
you can see whether you find.out what he so written has but  
**dich zum jetzigen Zeitpunkt mit ihm anlegen** TU auf keinen Fall!  
yourself at.the current point.of.time with him mess.INF do.IMP on no case  
'You can see whether you find out what he has written, but in no case get into  
a fight with him at this current point of time.'

These two sentences contain instances of *do*-support in which the predicate occurs in infinitive and precedes the imperative *tu*.

First it has to be said that *do*-support is restricted to very few contexts in contemporary standard German. Langer (2001: 6f.) writes that the "distribution [of *tun*] as an auxiliary is restricted to one particular type of focus structure, viz. Verb-topicalization where the lexical verb occupies the topic or theme position of the sentence and the auxiliary *tun* is used as a 'neutral' option to satisfy the independent requirement to realize a finite verb in the V2 position of the sentence".

However, this is not restricted to bare infinitives, and both the sentence in (4.2b) and the declarative sentence corresponding to it, with *tust du* (i.e. 2nd person singular indicative verb and the subject pronoun *du*) instead of the imperative *tu* are perfectly grammatical. It would be tempting to analyse this kind of fronting as VP fronting of sorts, but the situation seems to be more complex than that. Consider the following indicative sentences ((4.3a) taken from Ruhnau (2011: 13, his (21a)); (4.3c) taken from Diedrichsen 2008: 215, her (25a)):

- (4.3) a. Das Auto kaputtgegangen ist John noch nie.  
the.nom car.NOM break.down.PSTP is John(DAT) yet never  
'It has never happened to John that his car broke down.'
- b. Das Auto kaputtgehen tu-t (dem) John einmal monatlich.  
the.NOM car.NOM break.down.INF do-3sg the.DAT John once monthly  
'It happens once a month that the car breaks down on John.'
- c. Kinder Fußball gespielt haben hier noch nie.  
child.PL.NOM football play.PSTP have.3PL.PRES here yet never

'It never happened here that children played.'

- d. Kinder Fußball spielen tun hier so gut wie nie.  
child.PL.NOM football play.INF do.3PL.PRES here as good as never  
'It hardly ever happens that children play football here.'

These sentences can hardly be transformed into corresponding imperative sentences, as that would entail using either *du/ihr/Sie* 'you' as the subjects and replacing the NPs by pronouns in the declarative sentences already does not yield grammatical sentences, or the third person imperative construction, which involves using the singular imperative form with a third person subject would have to be used, but it only allows a very narrow set of subjects<sup>9</sup>.

However, given the similarity of what can occur in the first position in imperative and in declarative sentences (some of which will be shown below), it seems reasonable that it should be tried to account for these preverbal elements in imperatives and declaratives by one mechanism, in which case assuming VP fronting is not sufficient to explain some of the fronted constituent groups that occur. As Diedrichsen (2008: 218) writes, however, that fronting of multiple constituents (in declarative clauses) "is only possible when all of the fronted elements [...] are either within the actual focus domain or completely excluded from it".

Old Norse seems not to feature any such imperatives, although *do*-support does occur occasionally. In his thesis on *do*-support in Old Icelandic, Heimir Freyr Viðarsson (2009: 17) mentions that he found a single dubious example of *do*-support in imperatives, namely *Görum því ekki at dvelja* 'Let us as such not remain (longer)', from the 17th century. Apart from the dubious status of this first person plural adhortative as an imperative sentence, *görum* '(we) do', is the first element of the sentence, and as such cannot be a candidate for a V2 imperative in any case.

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9 see e.g. Rosengren (1993: 4) who writes that only quantor expressions can occur in sentences such as *Versuch es jeder noch einmal* 'Everybody try (imperative) it once again', but some speakers also accept other NPs that are interpreted quantor-like at least in the given context, such as *ein Arzt* 'a doctor' in a sentence such as *Hilf doch mal bitte ein Arzt* 'A doctor help (imperative) please.'

#### 4.3. Complement clauses as the first element

In addition to having an infinite verb in the first position and multiple fronted constituents, both infinitival complement clauses as well as *dass*-clauses (*that*-clauses) can appear in the first position of an imperative sentence:

(4.3) a. **Unter Alkoholeinfluss fahrend von der Polizei erwischt zu werden,**

under alcohol.influence driving by the police caught to be.INF

lass dir eine Lehre sein!

let.IMP you a teaching be.INF!

'Let being caught by the police while driving under the influence be a lesson to you.'

b. (Die Position des Mondes am Himmel ist nicht so wichtig, aber)

the position the.GEN moon.GEN on.the sky is not so important but

**dass die Sonne im Osten aufgeht,** merke dir genau.

that the sun in.the east rise.3SG.PRES keep.in.mind.IMP REFL exactly

'(The position of the moon in the sky isn't that important, but) keep in mind exactly that the sun rises in the east.'

This, too, parallels the situation in declarative clauses where sentences such as *Unter Alkoholeinfluss fahrend von der Polizei erwischt zu werden, sollte jedem eine Lehre sein* 'Being caught by the police while driving under the influence should be a lesson to everyone.' and *Dass die Sonne im Osten aufgeht, weiß doch jedes Kind* 'Every child knows that the sun rises in the east.' are easily conceivable.

I am not aware of any such sentences in Old Norse and was not able to find any in the IcePaHC corpus, but besides the low amount of V2-imperatives in general which in itself could explain the absence of such sentences from not exceedingly huge corpora, one has to take another fact into account:

In comparison to German, Old Norse prefers extraposition of such subordinate clauses such as in sentence (4.4) below. As Falk and Torp (1900: 316) write: "Overensstemmende med det grammatiske forhold vil saaledes f. eks. en objektiv sætning (at-sætning eller spørgesætning) til den styrende sætning almindelig indtage objektets plads, d. v. s. følge efter [...]. En subjektiv bisætning skulde paa samme maade

indtage subjektets plads, d. v. s. staa foran den prædikative hovedsætning. I oldnorsk er det ikke tilfældet: en saadan sætning følger altid efter sit prædikat, oftest paa forhand antydet ved et demonstrativ"<sup>10</sup>. While their views with regard to how the grammatical relations and word order can and should interact may be outdated, the observation that such clauses do come after their matrix clause's predicate in Old Norse, remains valid. Consider the following sentence with an object *at*<sup>11</sup>-clause:

(4.4) *Því skulum vér trúa, að Guð, Drottinn vor, var borinn hingað í heim bæði Guð og maður*

'This we shall believe, (namely) that God, our Lord, was brought hither into the world as both God and man' (Hómilfubók, 1150).

This kind of structure can be imitated in German in a sentence such as *Dies sollen wir glauben: (nämlich) dass Gott, unser Herr, sowohl als Gott wie als Mensch hierhin in die Welt gebracht wurde.*, but this sounds very clumsy, and omitting the pronoun *dies* and using either the subject *wir* or the *dass*-clause in first position is much preferable. This factor causes that Old Norse imperative sentences with complement clauses in the first position will probably prove exceedingly rare, if they exist at all.

#### 4.4. Summary

Having had a look at all the evidence, there seem to be some differences with regard to which kinds of elements can precede an imperative verb in both Old Norse and German, and the possible constructions in German seem to be a superset of what is possible in Old Norse, in that regard. In addition to noun phrases, prepositional phrases, adverbs and adjectives, German allows for complement clauses to occur in this position, as well as verbs, in which case the sentence exhibits *do*-support as the imperative verb

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10 "According to the grammatical relation, an object clause (at-clause or interrogative clause), for example, will as such generally take the object's position with respect to the reigning sentence, i.e. follow it [...]. A subject subclause should in the same way take the subject's place, i.e. precede the predicated main clause. In Old Norwegian this is not the case: Such a sentence always follows after its predicate, most often beforehand indicated by a demonstrative." (translation mine)

11 That the example sentence features *að* rather than *at* is an artefact of the modernised Icelandic spelling of the example sentence's source.

has to be *tu* 'do!', and under certain circumstances, German can even feature multiple constituents at the beginning of an imperative sentence.

Crucially, however, it seems that both German and Old Norse seem to allow exactly those elements in the first position of an imperative sentence that are also allowed in regular declaratives and are compatible with an imperative sentence (i.e. a complex subject NP is not possible), and that both languages feature very similar restrictions under which the usage of such sentences is possible, as the Old Norse sentences can typically be translated to German with the equivalent of the crucial pre-verbal element in place.

## 5. Imperatives in subordinate complement clauses

This section addresses subclause imperatives which constitute special phenomenon that occurs in Old Norse, Old Saxon and remnants of which can also be seen in Old and Middle High German. In the first two subsections, data from Old Norse and from West Germanic is presented respectively. Then, the question whether the (Old Norse) subclause imperatives really constitute subclause imperatives or merely instances of direct speech with a complementiser shall be addressed, before the final subsection has a short look at the historical dimension of the construction and possibly comparable constructions in other languages.

### 5.1. Subclause imperatives in Old Norse

In several varieties of Old Norse, subclause imperatives are attested (Middle Swedish examples from Wessén (1970: 155), Old Danish example from Falk and Torp (1900: 192)):

- (5.1) a. En þú hygg að því vandlega, attú flý eigi undan, þó að liðið  
but you consider.IMP to this carefully that-you flee.IMP not away though that troop-DEF  
sé að þér gert, og halt upp bardaga við þá, þó að liðsmunur sé nokkur.  
be.SUB to you made and hold.IMP up fights with them though that troop.difference be.SUB certain  
'But consider carefully that you don't flee, although the troop is against you,  
and fight against them, although the difference in troop strength is significant.'  
(Old Icelandic, 1260, Jónsvíkinga saga)
- b. Ger nú fyrir mína bæn að þú lát þau hingað kom-a en eg  
do.IMP now for my request that you let.IMP them hither come-INF and I  
skal veit-a þér það er þú bið-ur mig.  
shall grant-INF you.DAT it which you ask-2ND.PRES me.acc  
'Now do on my request that you let them come here, and I shall grant you  
what you ask from me.'  
(Old Icelandic, 1350, Finnboga saga ramma)
- c. Skip, jak byudhir thik widh Gudz ordh ... at thu kom hit  
ship I command you with god.GEN word that you come.IMP hither  
oc föör oss ofwir watn-it (Middle Swedish, Siälinna Tröst, 15th century)

and lead.IMP us over water-DEF

'Ship, I command you with the word of God that you come here and lead us over the water.'

- d. Jak bidhir thik, at thu, mildasta iomfru, bidh for mik oc hielp mik at faa j  
I ask you that you dearest virgin pray.IMP for me and help.IMP me to get in  
hymerike roo. (Middle Swedish, Siälinna Tröst, 15th century)

heaven peace

'I ask you, that you, dearest virgin, pray for me and help me to get peace in heaven.'

- e. oc iæk swær thek, at thu gijf mek sten-en. (Old Danish)

and I swear you that you give.IMP me stone-DEF

'And I swear you that you give me the stone.'

All these examples in (5.1) (and in fact all of the Icelandic examples I am aware of) feature the subject *þú* before the imperative verb (compare Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 77) who writes that this is a general characteristic of this kind of construction). This is noteworthy because, as has been shown for Old Icelandic, the preposed subject only occurs in pragmatically marked (most often contrastive) situations when it comes to mainclause imperatives. However, there are no obvious comparable restrictions with regard to the embedded imperatives.

Having said that the imperative in subclauses typically feature the subject *þú* before the verb, there are at least two examples from 13th century Old Norwegian<sup>12</sup> of an imperative in a subclause in which no subject *þú* precedes the imperative verb (Olafs Saga Hins Helga: 98 and 32) which, if considered valid sentences, stand in contrast to Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's (2000: 77) claim for Old Icelandic that a subject *þú* always precedes an imperative verb when it occurs in a subclause:

- (5.2) Ger sva væl, hærre, at tak þat rað, er bazt hæver oc sømelegazt er [...]

do.IMP so well lord that take.IMP that decision that best suits and excellent.SUP is

'Please, lord, take the decision which suits best and is most excellent.'

- b. En ef þu oc kœmr þangat, þa man þer væl fagnat, oc ef rað-s er

but if you also come there then will you.DAT well welcome.PSTP and if advice-GEN is

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12 The manuscript clearly shows Old Norwegian (more specifically: Trondheim) traits and was written down by an Old Norwegian scribe, but the editors of the text edition used here state that the original was probably written around 1200 in Iceland (1982 edition, p. 20).

við þic læitat, þa gef þat rað at lægg bællt-it um hana.  
with you.ACC seek.PSTP then give.IMP that advice that put.IMP belt-DEF around her.ACC  
'And if you come there, you will be welcomed well, and if advice is sought  
from you, then give the advice that you put the belt around her.'

As the manuscript is most likely (see footnote below) only a copy from the original text and copies do not always reproduce the original faithfully lexically, it is impossible to say from a single example whether this sentence represents the original, is some kind of scribal error (i.e. an ungrammatical sentence) by the first or a later scribe who copied the text or is a (conscious or unconscious) adaptation of an Icelandic sentence that may probably show an early syntactical dialect difference between Icelandic and Norwegian<sup>13</sup>. More attention will be paid to this sentence below.

Another characteristic of subclause imperatives is that the matrix clause of the subclause imperatives very frequently contains either an imperative itself or a verb of demanding/requesting/asking, although in contrast to what Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000) claims, this is not a universal feature of this type of imperative sentence, as the following example, which features the verb *mæla* 'say' in the matrix clause, shows:

- (5.3) a. "Nú mun eg það mæla," segir Egill, "er eg hug-ði að eg mundi aldrei tala, að  
now will I this say says Egill which I think-PAST that I would never speak that  
þú lúk heill munni í sundur"  
you close whole mouth apart  
"Now I will say this," says Egill, "which I thought I would never say, (namely)  
that you open your mouth as a good sign<sup>14</sup>."

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13 What can probably be excluded is a mistake on part of the editors. Apart from the 1982 edition mainly used here, the 1922 edition, which the 1982 edition is partially based on, contains these sentences with differences only in punctuation and minor orthography aspects. The same can be said for the 1849 edition, with the exception that it does not include the first instance of *oc* (the fourth word) of example (b) which obviously does not affect the subclause imperative verb.

14 This translation of the phrase which is somewhat cryptic and hard to translate exactly, which makes sense in the context in which it is uttered, is based on Heusler (1897: 94) who gives "dass du zum guten zeichen deinen mund auftuest! (= dass deine worte glück haben, in erfüllung gehen)" as the translation of *at þú lúk heill munne í sundr*.

## 5.2. Subclause imperatives in West Germanic

### 5.2.1. Old Saxon

Imperatives in subclauses are not only found in North Germanic. Behaghel (1876: 52) presents the following two second person singular Old Saxon examples from the Heliand, in addition to a couple of other sentences with other (in some cases less unambiguous) number and person markers ((5.4a) cited according to the 1903 edition, verses 2990-2993):

- (5.4) a. Nu biddiu ik thi, [...] that thu sie sô arma êgrohtfullo uuamscaðon biuueri.  
now ask I you that you her the poor mercifully evildoer defend.IMP  
'Now I ask you [...] that you defend her, the poor, mercifully from the evildoer.'
- b. êwa gibiudid, that thu man ni slah ni mênes ni sweri  
law demands that you man not slay.IMP not false.oath not swear.IMP  
'The law demands that you neither kill a man nor swear a false oath.'

In spite of the fact that that these examples come from the Heliand, which is a poetical work, these examples should most likely be considered actual examples of imperatives occurring in subclauses. This conclusion is based on two points of fact:

First, the type of construction employed in these sentences is very specific. These two sentences do not pose simple examples of word order phenomena which frequently occur in order to maintain metre or other aspects of lyrical form. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's skepticism (1998: 319) (justified for certain kinds of syntactic analysis, such as word order phenomena) with regard to the usage of poetry as a valid source for syntactically acceptable constructions, does hardly apply here. Given the typological rarity of such an imperative construction and taking into account the fact that closely related languages exhibit a very similar phenomenon, it seems more plausible to explain the constructions as related than maintaining that imperatives in subordinated clauses developed independently in Old Norse (and to a more limited extent in Old High German, see below) and that the Heliand's author stretches the grammar way beyond what is typically possible, in order to use the imperative in a subclause.

Second, changing the imperative *slah* to a second person singular indicative form *slahis* or *slehis* in the verse *that thu man ni slah / ni mênes ni sweri* would not affect the (relevant) number of stressed syllables or the alliteration pattern, and in the case of the imperative *sweri*, a corresponding change would not affect the syllable count or the distribution of stressed and unstressed syllables at all.

Of course, it cannot be excluded that the author of the Heliand consciously chose an archaic wording or a construction that was meant to pertain to a higher register than the regular colloquial language in which it may not have existed any longer when the Heliand was written (or maybe it had never existed in a lower register). However, while it is difficult to reconstruct these aspects, there is a clear point for assuming that some kind of imperative construction in a subclause, very similar to the corresponding Old Norse construction in that it occurs in complement clauses (*that*-clauses), did indeed exist in Old Saxon.

### 5.2.2. High German

As already hinted at above, a variant of the construction also occurs in Old High German sentences, which has been noted going back at least to Grimm (1852). For this construction, which he (ibid.) compares to a construction of the imperative aorist occurring in Ancient Greek subordinate clauses, he presents three examples of the Old High German period,

For early Middle High German, Magdalena Kaufmann (2012: 204) presents two examples with the imperative form *tuo* of the verb *tuon* 'do':

- (5.5) a. ich râte dir, waz du tuo  
I advise you what you do.IMP  
'I give you advice what you should do'
- b. ich sage dir, herre, wie du tuo  
I tell you mylord how you do.IMP  
'I tell you how to act, Mylord'

Apart from the fact that the subclause imperative construction, which Kaufmann

(ibid.), following Erdmann (1886), probably correctly considers a "fossilized construction" in Middle High German, occurs only with the verb *tuon*, there is one other crucial difference which sets apart the Middle High German examples from the Old Norse and Old Saxon examples. This difference lies in the fact that in Old Norse and Old Saxon, imperatives in subclauses only occur after *at* resp. *dat* 'that', while the two Middle High German examples presented here, occur after the pronouns *waz* 'what' and *wie* 'how'. This is also true for all Middle High German examples shown by Grimm (1852: 145). All of these occur after the pronouns *waz* and *wie*, while none of them occurs after *daz* 'that'.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the occurrences of *tuo* in Middle High German subclauses found by Grimm (1852) are in a position where they rhyme with a word in another line (p. 145). He (ibid.) argues that these examples nevertheless are grammatical constructions of the language that have not merely stretched the grammar in order to fulfill the restrictions imposed by the poetical nature of the text. In light of the comparative evidence from the Old High German stage which more closely resembles the situation found in Old Norse and Old Saxon (see below), it seems reasonable to conclude that the construction was a valid construction of Old and Middle High German. As with the situation in Old Saxon, it is possible that the construction was merely limited to a high register or an archaism.

### 5.3. Subclause imperatives or direct speech with a complementiser?

In the literature, different opinions have been voiced as to whether the clauses in which the imperative verbs which have been termed *subclause imperatives* here, should be considered real subordinate clauses or instances of direct speech simply introduced by a complementiser. As the vast majority of examples comes from Old Norse and examples in the other languages are rare, except for the fossilized construction with *tuon* in Old and Middle High German which seems to have quite different properties from the construction in Old Norse and Old Saxon, the following discussion is mostly limited to the Old Norse examples.

Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's (2000: 80) ideas about the change that made V2 imperatives

(including subclause imperatives) in Icelandic (largely) impossible, implicitly include the idea that subordinate clauses containing imperatives actually are subordinate clauses. Platzack's (2004) account within a minimalist framework of this phenomenon does so explicitly.

With regard to Old Saxon, the opinion that imperatives in subclauses constitute examples of direct speech, is voiced by Behaghel (1876: 52) who writes that "we have to accept imperative clauses in all these cases, which have lost their independence only to the extent that a verb of speaking precedes them, corresponding to the Greek *ὅτι*, which very often merely has the meaning of our modern quotation marks"<sup>15</sup>. With regard to the different varieties of Old Norse, Wurff (2004: 37ff.) presents a very similar (albeit much more detailed) analysis, the individual claims of which need to be addressed here.

The first of his claims is that "an examination of the [Old Norse] examples shows that the embedded clauses can in fact all be interpreted that way. That they also allow an interpretation as indirect speech [...], is due to the fact that the second (and first) person referents in the reporting clause and the reported clause are the same: the *you* and *I* of the reporting clause are the same people as the *you* and *I* of the quotation. If the reported [sic!] clause had contained a third person subject and/or object, this would not have been the case" (p. 38).

As an example for this, he presents (5.6) (his 60):

(5.6) He asked her, "Don't abandon me."

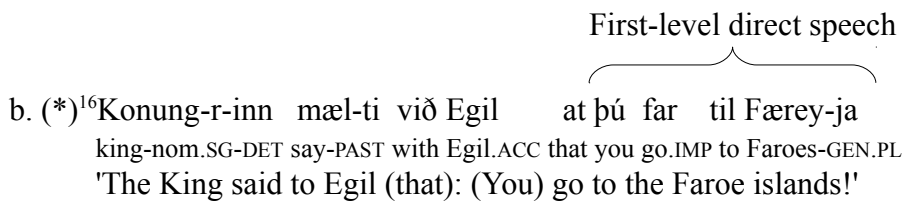
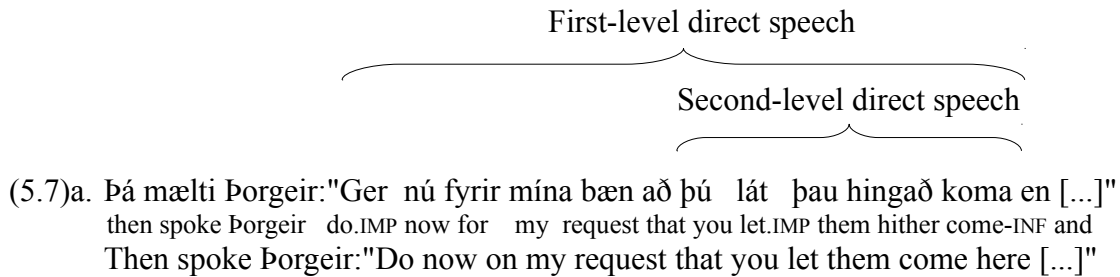
However, examples of this kind with the complementiser *at* are (to my knowledge) not attested in Old Norse. This is not a trivial statement and the lack of attestation of such sentences can hardly be ascribed to pure chance, as they are statistically much more likely to occur than the attested subclause imperatives:

If we were to assume that the Wurff's analysis of the attested sentences in Old Norse is correct, then all attested examples would be *second-level direct speech*, in the sense

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15 "Wir haben also hier überall Imperativsätze anzuerkennen, die nur soweit ihre Selbstständigkeit verloren haben, dass ein Verbum dicendi vor sie getreten ist, entsprechend dem griechischen *ὅτι*, das sehr oft bloss die Geltung unserer modernen Anführungszeichen hat." (translation mine)

that the "matrix" clause containing a first person subject and an imperative or frequently a verb of demanding, asking, recommending etc. is itself an instance of direct speech with the subclause imperatives being an instance of direct speech within direct speech, as the following figure exemplifies:



Subclause imperatives in first level direct speech such as (b) seem not to be attested. Although I have not performed a detailed analysis of how frequently imperatives generally occur in Old Norse in comparison to the embedded construction at hand, first-level direct speech is obviously much more frequent than second-level direct speech -- as every sentence that contains an instance of the latter also contains an instance of the former, but not vice versa -- and sentences such as (5.7b), the likes of which Wurff (2004) seems to have had in mind when construing (5.6).

Wurff's (2004: 38) statement that the subclause imperatives which Platzek (2004) analyses "allow an interpretation as indirect speech [...], is due to the fact that the second (and first) person referents in the reporting clause and the reported clause are the same" might give crucial insight here. The fact that it is true for all attested examples, whereas examples such as (5.7b) would be much more likely to occur if this kind of construction was an instance of direct speech, show that the a speech situation in which

<sup>16</sup> It is obviously not possible to evaluate whether this sentence really was ungrammatical which is why I use (\*) in order to signify that a comparable sentence is not attested to my knowledge, although one would expect it to occur if the structure was grammatical and of a similar nature as the attested subclause imperatives.

at least the second (but probably also the first) person referent is identical, is probably a necessary condition for subclause imperatives, rather than an epiphenomenon of attestation. In a narration, the only way to fulfill this condition is the usage of direct speech in the matrix clause, which explains why all subclause imperatives occur in places where they would have to be interpreted as second level direct speech, if they indeed were an instance of direct speech with a complementiser.

Another point Wurff (2004) addresses is the fact that all Old Norse subclause imperatives (with the exception of the two Old Norwegian examples in (5.2)), the existence of which Wurff (2004) could probably not know about) are preceded by the second person subject *þú* 'you', which, as will be investigated in chapter 6, is a rather rare and pragmatically restricted word order in imperative main clauses. The way Wurff (2004: 39) maintains his analysis that imperatives after *at þú* are in fact main clause imperatives, in spite of the apparent rarity of such a word order in regular main clauses, is by assuming that "there is a shift from indirect to direct reporting [...] since this [i.e. the pronoun *þú*] as it were provides a pivot between indirect and direct speech, being compatible with both".

It is difficult to reconcile this statement with his assumption that unattested sentences such as (5.7b) should have existed in Old Norse. In such a sentence, *þú* 'you' could not be indirect speech, and using a third person pronoun, such as *hann* 'he' or *hon* 'she', which would be the other possible option, cannot be interpreted as direct speech.

Furthermore, Wurff (ibid.) mentions two other points in this context. First, it can happen in Old Norse texts that direct speech is introduced by a complementiser. Heusler (1921: 196) writes for example that "sometimes only the conjunction *at* remains from indirect speech"<sup>17</sup>. Second, there are many examples of 'spontaneous shifts' from indirect to direct speech. Consider the following examples for the two phenomena (taken from Heusler (ibid.)):

- (5.8) a. nú mæl-te Barþe, at þér haf-ep drenglega af þesso við mik  
now speak-PAST Barði that you.PL. have-2ND.PL decently of this.DAT with me.ACC  
'Now Barði said that "you prove yourself decent in this matter with regard to me.'"

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17 "Zuweilen bleibt von der mittelbaren Rede nur die Konjunktion *at* übrig." (translation mine)

- b. hon kua-zk haf-a vil-ia þá ena nýjo, "þá er ek læt vitia"  
she say-MED have-INF want-INF these the new as I let send  
'She said that she wanted to have the new ones "if I send for them.'"

- c. Gísle baþ þá far-a norþr [...] ok ber-a honom "kueþi-o mina"  
Gísli ask.PAST them.ACC go-INF north and bear-INF him.DAT greeting-ACC my.FEM.ACC.SG  
'Gísli asked them to go north [...] and bring him "my greeting.'"

At first glance, these examples might seem similar to the subclause imperative sentences in terms of the change of direct to indirect speech which Wurff (2004) postulates for Old Norse. However, there is an important difference which makes the interpretation of subclause imperatives as direct speech comparable to the examples in (5.8) very unlikely. When looking at examples of the types in (5.8), it becomes obvious that there are no "pivots" at the points where the mode of narration changes from indirect to direct speech.

In example (a), the sentence (superficially) syntactically most similar to the subclause imperatives, the subject of the subordinate clause *þér* 'you' can only be interpreted as direct speech and not as indirect speech, and as such is no evidence for the existence of a pivot that licenses a switch between those two modes of narration. More strikingly, example (c) shows the two verbal arguments *honom* 'him' in indirect speech and *kueþio mina* 'my greeting' in direct speech licensed by the same predicate *bera*, next to each other. There seems to be no pivot or anything else that licenses or explains the change from indirect to direct speech.

If the attested Old Norse examples were to be analysed as direct speech, then one would expect the absence of the subject *þú* or the occurrence of *þú* (respectively its enclitic variants) after the imperative verb, which are the two pragmatically unmarked options in Old Norse main clause imperatives. One of the two Old Norwegian examples given in (5.2) which lack the occurrence of *þú* before the imperative verb, repeated here as (5.9), is of this kind and could perhaps be considered an example of complementiser introducing direct speech (although it would still constitute second level direct speech and would probably also stand separate from the example given in (5.11)):

- (5.9) Ger sva væl, hærri, at tak þat rað, er balt hæver oc sœmelegast er [...]  
do.IMP so well lord that take.IMP that decision that best suits and excellent.SUP is  
'Please, lord, take the decision which suits best and is most excellent.'

Finally, the idea that all the other examples of subclause imperatives only constitute examples of direct speech are hard to reconcile with one Icelandic and the other Old Norwegian example which lacks the subject *þú*. First, the Old Icelandic example:

- (5.10) En það vil eg til skil-ja að þú sjá ráð fyrir Sigurð-i, syn-i mínum,  
But that want I prescribe-INF that you see.IMP advice for Sigurður-DAT son-DAT my  
og lát-ir hann ver-a fylgdarmann þinn.  
and let-2ND.SBJ him.ACC be-INF companion.ACC your.ACC  
'I want to prescribe that you look after Sigurður, my son, and let him be your companion.'

This example contains an imperative phrase and a subjunctive phrase coordinated within the embedded *at*-clause. To save Wurff's (2004) analysis, it would be necessary to assume that the narration changes from indirect speech to second-level direct speech at *að þú*, only to change back to indirect speech at *og látir*.

The second Old Norwegian example lacking the subject *þú* in the subordinate clause, if accepted as a valid example and of the same nature as the examples with *þú*, does not contain morphosyntactic, but semantic problems with his analysis:

- (5.11) En ef þu oc kœmr þangat, þa man þer væl fagnat, oc ef rað-s er  
but if you also come there then will you.DAT well welcome.PSTP and if advice-GEN is  
við þic læitat, þa gef þat rað at lægg bællt-it um hana.  
with you.ACC seek.PSTP then give.IMP that advice that put.IMP belt-DEF around her.ACC  
'And if you come there, you will be welcomed well, and if advice is sought  
from you, then give the advice that you put the belt around her.'

The question that needs to be asked with regard to this sentence, is who the imperative is addressed to. Under Wurff's (2004) analysis, the imperative *lægg* would be addressed

to the person(s) who the addressee is supposed to give advice to ('Give the advice: "Put the belt around her"'), whereas under a subclause analysis, the addressee himself is the subject of the imperative verb.

The sentence shows only a weak preference in itself in favour of a subclause reading, because of the passive construction in the conditional clause, it remains entirely unclear who the imperative should be addressed to, if it was addressed to someone else than the addressee of this sentence.

The context in which the sentence occurs (on page 32 in the 1982 edition) is a long monologue with instructions for the addressee, most of which are imperative sentences, and commands addressed to others do not occur a single time in this monologue. The belt that is made reference to in the sentence, is yet to be acquired by the addressee by means of fulfilling the instructions given to him.

While these factors cannot fully exclude a main clause reading, it would not fit the style and content of the rest of the speech, and as such, the imperative should be understood as being addressed at the addressee, which in fact the translators of the bilingual 1982 (p. 33) edition do ("Wenn man dich fragt, dann gib deinen Rat und lege den Gürtel um sie.")<sup>18</sup>. In order to allow the reader of this thesis to make an opinion of his/her own with regard to the sentence, the whole Old Norwegian monologue as well as a rough English translation is given in Appendix.

#### 5.4. Summary of the state in the old Germanic languages

To sum up the discussion in this subsection, the fact that all subclause imperatives I am aware of occur with direct speech in the matrix clause which indicates that some kind of identity of the addressee of the matrix clause and the imperative subclause seems to be necessary, the fact that the interpretation of subclause imperatives as direct speech would require a very special syntactic construction because of the subject *þú* preceding the imperative verb in nearly all examples, which is otherwise not attested in "spontaneous" switching from indirect to direct speech and the fact that there is an example that coordinates an imperative predicate with a subjunctive predicate in a

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix for the whole section of this text including a translation.

subclause, clearly point to the construction being a real subclause, rather than direct speech with a complementiser. The only exception to this presented here may be an example that lacks the subject *þú* that is otherwise specific for this construction. Although it is not certain, it does seem possible that this single example is an instance of direct speech introduced by a complementiser.

While the relatively low amount of examples does not allow for a very safe analysis of the data, my tentative analysis looks as follows:

The Old Norse and the Old Saxon examples probably represent the original state of the construction in Germanic. Imperatives could occur in subclauses in the old Germanic languages in complement clauses introduced by the complementiser *at*, *dat* 'that', when the verb in the matrix clause semantically indicated some kind of demand or wish. In High German, this development of this construction seems to have undergone two steps. In the first step, the construction was restricted to the verb *tuon* 'do' (and the prefixed variant *gituon*), but as in Old Saxon and in Old Norse occurred after *daz* 'that'. In a later step, subclause imperatives then occurred after *wie* 'how' and *waz* 'what'.

Semantically, the Old Norse, Old Saxon and Old High German examples all share the property that they can be interpreted as a performative speech act. Kaufmann (2012: 206f.) distinguishes between the type of imperative that has an imperative verb in the matrix clause and the type that has an indicative verb in the matrix clause and writes that the matrix clause in the former class only serves as an introduction which does not contribute to the semantics of the sentence. The latter group is, according to her (p. 207) "exactly parallel to more standard cases of explicit performatives, which require likewise that speaker and addressee are the same in reporting and reported context".

## 5.5. Comparison with other languages

The opinion that imperatives cannot be embedded at all has sometimes been expressed in the literature (cf. e.g. Rosengren 1993: 9). However, there have been a couple of other languages for which the existence of subclause imperatives has been claimed, and a couple of examples shall be presented here.

Among the languages for which the existence of subordinate imperatives has been

claimed, are Modern High German and Modern English. With regard to Modern High German, Kaufmann (2012: 209ff.) makes the case that the following sentences contain instances of embedded imperative clauses in Modern High German (her (37), (38) and (41)):

- (5.12) a. Ich hab dir gestern zwar gesagt, geh da heute hin, aber inzwischen glaub ich  
I have you yesterday PART told go.IMP there today PART but by-now believe I  
nicht mehr, dass das eine gute Idee wäre.  
not anymore that that a good idea be.SBJ.PST  
'(True,) I told you yesterday that you should go there today, but by now I'm  
not convinced anymore that that would be a good idea.'
- b. Hans hat dir doch gestern schon gesagt, ruf meinen Vater an.  
Hans has you PART yesterday already say.PSTP call.IMP my father VPART  
'Hans already told you yesterday that you should call my father.'
- c. Wo hab ich gestern gesagt stell den Blumentopf hin?  
where have I yesterday say.PSTP put.IMP the flower.pot VPART  
'Where did I tell you yesterday to put the flower pot?'

Kaufmann's (2011) analysis mostly pertains to the semantics of imperative clauses, and the reasons for her to analyse (5.12a) and (5.12b) as embedded lie in the shifting of parameters. If *geh da heute hin* 'go there today' was direct speech, then the day *heute* 'today' would refer to the day the imperative was originally uttered, in this case *gestern* 'yesterday' because of the specification in the matrix clause (p. 209). However, this is not the case. Rather, it refers to the day of the utterance of the sentence in (a). Furthermore, the imperative is not valid any longer, in the sense that the speaker does not want the addressee to act on the imperative any longer.

Sentence (b) shows that there may be shifting in terms of the speaker (p. 209f.). In direct speech, *meinen Vater* 'my father' would have to refer to Hans' father, Hans being the subject of the *verbum dicendi* in the matrix clause. Instead, the possessive refers to the speaker uttering (b).

Furthermore, sentence (c) is considered by Kaufmann (2012) to be an instance of embedding of an imperative clause into a question. While of course the verb *sagen* 'say' licenses the embedded proposition that the flower pot should be put somewhere

semantically, sentences of this kind pose their own problems syntactically, as is evidenced by the position of the finite verb *hab* 'have', which would typically not be able to assume a V2-position in the middle of a subclause. For an analysis that treats the first element of similar sentences (without imperatives, however) in Danish as syntactically belonging to the main clause, see Jensen (2000).

Crnič & Trinh (2011) make claims for English that are similar to the ones that Kaufmann (2012) makes for German and present sentences such as *When I visited Beijing University, every professor<sub>i</sub> said buy his<sub>i</sub> book* (their (7c)) and *Who did John say call at three?* (their (7d)), which they say most speakers find grammatical (p. 3).

Grimm (1852: 144) already remarked on the similarity between an Ancient Greek construction in which the imperative occurs and the Old High German and Middle High German construction. The examples he provides, two of which are presented here (Latin transcription mine), are all rather restricted, as they occur after the verb *oistha* '(you) know' and the imperative forms are all aorist (rather than present) forms:

- (5.13) a. *oisth' hōs poiē-son?*  
know.2ND.SG how do-2ND.IMP.SG.AOR  
'Do you know how you should act?'
- b. *oisth' oun ho dra-son?*  
know.2ND.SG so what do-2ND.IMP.SG.AOR  
'Do you know what you should do?'

With regard to the fact that Grimm (1852) wanted to show (albeit probably consciously carefully worded) a syntactic similarity in a similar way that the phonological and morphological connection between German and Ancient Greek had been proven, by presenting this construction in the two languages, it has to be said that establishing the Germanic and the Greek constructions as syntactically "cognate" seems highly dubious, given the differences in both form (i.e. that the Germanic construction only occurs in *that*-clauses, while the Greek construction never occurs there), and function (the Germanic construction represents a performative speech act whereas the Greek construction occurs in questions only). In fact, reconstructing any kind of construction that specifically occurs in subclauses, is problematic, as the amount of hypotaxis was

probably very low in Proto-Indo-European and the early variants of the developing branches and languages (see, for example, the discussion in Lehmann 1980).

## 6. An information structure analysis

### 6.1. Lambrecht's framework and imperatives

Given that the vast majority of mainclause imperatives in the Germanic languages is verb-initial, it is not very surprising that the acceptability of V2-imperatives is subject to information structural conditions. As will be shown here, the conditions under which V2 imperatives are acceptable are very similar in Modern High German and Old(er) Icelandic. The information structural framework used here is based on Lambrecht (1994 and 2000) which needs some adaptation for the use on imperative sentences.

First, Lambrecht's (1994) notions of pragmatic presupposition and assertion (both p. 52, his (2.12)) as well as focus (p. 213, his (5.4)) will be given here, the last of which will be needed in the discussion below and makes reference to the former two:

- (6.1) a. PRAGMATIC PRESUPPOSITION: The set of propositions lexicogrammatically evoked in a sentence which the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted at the time the sentence is uttered.
- b. PRAGMATIC ASSERTION: The proposition expressed by a sentence which the hearer is expected to know or take for granted as a result of hearing the sentence uttered.
- c. FOCUS: The semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition.

The notion of pragmatic assertion as given by Lambrecht is primarily meant for declarative clauses rather than imperative clauses, but there is no problem applying it on imperative clauses by assuming that propositions expressed by imperative clauses contain some kind of "imperativic semantic content".

This statement is intentionally left vague, as the semantics of imperative clauses is very complex (see e.g. Kaufmann (2012) for a recent work on the topic and especially

her interpretation of imperatives as graded modals, pp. 72ff.), and I do not make the claim that there are no instances in which declarative clauses come very close to expressing or actually do the same proposition as do corresponding imperative clauses, in which case the aforementioned "imperative semantic content" is not absent from the propositions conveyed by the imperative clauses, but the corresponding declaratives convey a similar kind of content.

Some examples, however, show such content clearly, in that it contributes to the acceptability of an imperative clause where the corresponding declarative would not be acceptable. Consider the following dialogue:

- (6.2)a. Was soll ich machen? Mir ist langweilig.  
what shall.1SG do me.DAT is bored  
'What should I do? I am bored.'
- b.# Du lies-t ein **Buch**.  
you read-2SG.IND a book
- b' # Du soll-st ein **Buch** les-en.  
you shall-2SG.IND a book read-INF
- b" Lies ein **Buch**!  
read.IMP a book

Neither the plain declarative in (b) nor the reply in (b'), which actually makes use of the same modal verb *sollen* as does the question in (a), are pragmatically acceptable replies to the question<sup>19</sup> because, while they can be construed as commands under certain circumstances when read with the correct intonation, they cannot convey the meaning of making a suggestion which is presupposed due to the context generated by (a), whereas the imperative sentence (b") can convey this meaning.

Lambrecht (2000) distinguishes three kinds of focus structure categories, namely predicate focus, sentence focus and argument focus, and I argue that the difference between argument and predicate focus can be applied to imperative clauses as well, whereas sentence focus in Lambrecht's sense is not a possible option in imperatives, as I will show in the following sections.

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<sup>19</sup> This is under the assumption that there is no further relevant context to this dialogue. For example *Du sollst ein Buch lesen* (, *habe ich dir letzters schon gesagt*) 'Read a book (I told you so recently already)' can be an appropriate reply if the two people have had a similar dialogue before.

### 6.1.1. Predicate focus

Predicate focus is defined by him (p. 615) as "expressing a pragmatically structured proposition in which the subject is the topic (hence within the presupposition) and in which the predicate expresses new information about this topic. The focus domain is the predicate phrase (or part of it)". He adds that 'subject' in this definition "is to be understood in a semantic sense: it refers either to the single argument of an intransitive predicate [...] or to the more agentive of the two arguments of a transitive predicate".

The example in (6.2b") above would be an instance of predicate focus. The question in (6.2a) establishes the speaker and the existence of some kind of modality expressed by the verb *sollen* with regard to the speaker as available for comment and asks for the rest of the proposition to be filled out by the person replying. The reply (6.2b") fulfills this request by providing a complete proposition. The only thing "lexicogrammatically evoked" in this sentence that "the speaker assumes the hearer already knows or is ready to take for granted", to cite Lambrecht's presupposition definition given above, is the "modality"<sup>20</sup> represented by *sollen* in the question and resumed by the choice of the second person singular imperative in the reply.

The focus of this statement, i.e. the difference between the assertion and the presupposition, then is *to read a book*, whereas the grammatical choice of the imperative marker represents the presupposition.

### 6.1.2. Narrow focus

The second kind of focus structure is what Lambrecht (1994, 2000) calls *argument focus*, but following Van Valin (2005: 71), I will use Lambrecht's older terminology *narrow focus*, as any single constituent and not just arguments can be in narrow focus. This type of focus structure is in fact the least problematic to apply to imperative

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<sup>20</sup> Making use of the imperative is not the same as making use of modality. Their semantic scopes of illocutionary force and modality within a sentence are quite different, also reflected, for example, in word order and affix ordering across the world's languages (see Van Valin 2005: 8-11, for example). This, however, does not play a role with regard to the pragmatic reasons for the usage of the imperative as analysed here.

sentences and does not require any kind of special adaptation. The following examples show different constituents in narrow focus in German (with context):

- (6.3) a. A: Ich kann die Decke nicht auf den Tisch legen. Hier ist kein Platz mehr.  
I can the blanket not on the table put here is no space more  
B: Leg die Decke doch auf den BODEN!  
put.IMP the blanket PART onto the floor  
'A: I can't put the blanket on the table. There is no space left.  
B: Just put the blanket on the FLOOR then!'
- b. Bring mir eine BREZEL vom Bäcker mit, keinen Kuchen!  
get.IMP me a pretzel from.the baker PART no cake  
'Bring me a PRETZEL from the bakery, not a cake!'
- c. A: Irgendjemand muss mal die Küche sauber machen.  
someone must time the kitchen clean make  
B: Mach DU doch die Küche sauber.  
make.IMP you PART the kitchen clean  
'A: Someone has to clean the kitchen.  
B: YOU clean the kitchen then!'
- d. A: Wem soll ich das Buch geben?  
who shall I the book give  
B: Gib HANS das Buch!  
give.IMP Hans the book  
'A: Who should I give the book?  
B: Give HANS the book'

### 6.1.3. Sentence-focus

The third and final kind of focus category Lambrecht discusses is the so-called sentence focus construction. It is defined by Lambrecht (2000: 617) as "[s]entence structure formally marked as expressing a pragmatically structured proposition in which both the subject and the predicate are in focus. The focus domain is the sentence, minus any topical non-subject arguments". In a very simple case, a sentence in sentence focus might be the reply to a question such as *What happened?* (see e.g. example (5.12) in Lambrecht (1994: 223), but in the context of a question such as *Why did Mary not come*

*to work today?*, the reply *Her husband had an accident* would also constitute an example of sentence focus, because neither the husband nor the fact that someone had an accident is presupposed.

There is a certain group of imperative sentences that do not fulfill the predicate focus definition. Consider the following two examples:

- (6.4) a. *Á einn tíma kom ein rödd ofan af himni og sagði til hans:* (Icelandic, 1525  
on one time came one voice above from sky and said to him  
"Erasme, stat-tu upp og gakk inn aftur í þinn stað." Erasmus)  
Erasmus stand.IMP-you up and go.IMP into again in your place  
'Once, a voice came from the sky above and said to him: "Erasmus, stand up and go to your (home)place again.'"  
b. (Said to a person who cannot see/is not aware of the speaker:)  
Geh aus dem Weg! / Gehen Sie aus dem Weg! (German)  
'Go out of the way!' (formal / informal)

These sentences do not qualify as representing predicate focus, because the subject cannot be the topic, as is required by the predicate focus definition. There is no discourse situation until the sentences in questions are uttered. The sentences cannot be understood as being about the addressee.

However, trying to interpret these sentences as being in sentence focus also runs into problems:

Lambrecht (2000: 618) writes that "[a]n important constraint on SF [i.e. sentence focus] sentence is that their subject argument must be coded lexically, i.e. that it cannot appear in pronominal or null form. [...] [S]ince the referents of pronouns are necessarily activated or 'discourse old' [...], the information status of pronominal subjects is incompatible with the 'all-new' status of the proposition expressed by a SF sentence'. In a similar vein, Van Valin (2005: 73), building on a number of authors including Lambrecht (1994), writes: "[I]t is impossible for a focal referent to be realized as zero."

From this would follow that sentences with a first or second sentence singular subject, which only occur with pronouns as their subjects and especially sentences with null subjects, cannot occur in sentence focus, which in turn entails that (2nd person)

imperatives cannot occur in sentence focus.

Furthermore, Lambrecht (2000: 617) assumes that all sentences in sentence focus have an intransitive predicate that is not agentive. The reason for the different assessment of intransitive and transitive sentences in this context comes from observations that transitive sentences in sentence focus contexts behave in ways identical to transitive sentences in predicate focus context in terms of how they are marked in both languages that mark these different clause types by means of prosody such as English as well as languages that mark them syntactically (620ff.). This is clearly not the case for imperatives.

Something else that needs to be mentioned is that declaratives can also be used this way, although it is significantly more marked. The comment *Sie können aber schnell laufen* 'Now you (formal) can run fast' pronounced with a sharply falling intonation is absolutely acceptable when said to a person without any previous discourse context and possibly to a person one does not know at all. Besides the intonation, a frequent marker in German declaratives of this kind is the use of discourse particles such as *aber* or *ja*.

I will leave the question as to how to best analyse these sentences in terms of information structure open, but will refer to imperatives of this kind by the name of *interaction-initial imperative sentences* from here on, which not only presupposes the absence of a previous discourse situation, but also the absence of previous nonlinguistic interaction.

After having given this short overview over Lambrecht's (1994, 2000) terminology, next I will try to classify the German and Old Norse V2-imperatives according to their information structural properties.

## 6.2. Interaction-initial imperative sentences

Interaction-initial imperative sentences seem not to allow for anything but the imperative verb to occur in first position in German, and to my knowledge, no V2-imperative sentence in such a pragmatic environment is attested for Old Norse. While this may not be overly surprising, given that there is no previous discourse context and as such no reason to use a pragmatically marked construction that somehow

puts what seems to be special emphasis on a single constituent, there is one aspect with regard to which this is worth mentioning:

In German, a semantically not particularly prominent adverb *jetzt* or *nun* (literally 'now', but without very specific meaning in these contexts), can very often easily precede the imperative verb in other contexts and where it occurs, it can easily be omitted without a significant change in meaning. *nú* in the same position in Old Norse seems to be of a very similar nature. However, this kind of *jetzt* and *nun* in German cannot easily occur in a discourse-initial imperative sentence. They may occur, however, in contexts in which only non-linguistic interaction happened before the utterance of such an imperative sentence, even if only the speaker would assume that such an interaction has happened:

- (6.5) a.(Context: Speaker walks behind addressee, a child, who constantly stops walking for a second before beginning to walk again. The speaker is annoyed by this, but the addressee is not aware of the speaker behind him and the speaker does not have the possibility to pass the addressee:)

Jetzt bleib doch nicht immer stehen!  
now remain.IMP DISC-PART not always stand.INF  
'Now don't always stop walking!'

- b. (Context: A museum. The addressee has a look at images, but does not notice some of the images on the right hand side. The speaker observes this from a distance of a couple of meters distance, thinking that the addressee should actually notice those images:)

Nun sehen Sie sich mal die Bilder da rechts an!  
now see.IMP you REFL time the images there right on  
'Now have (formal) a look at the images to the right hand side.'

However, in such a context, this sentence may make an overly emphatic impression and might be met with surprise. Whether the sentence should be classified as pragmatically

acceptable from the addressee's point of view in those situations is dubious because of the different pragmatic status of the objects and actions referred to in such sentences in the mind of the speaker as opposed to the mind of the addressee, which is mirrored in the surprise or an interpretation of strong emphasis in the mind of the latter.

In other words, the problem lies in the fact that the speaker "interacted" with the addressee before uttering the sentence, while for the addressee, no noticeable interaction has happened to this point and the usage of a sentence that implicates previous interaction between the two participants of the speech situation, is pragmatically unacceptable from the addressee's point of view.

The Old Norse examples with *nú* in first position that I examined resemble German in the regard that they do not occur in a interaction-initial context.

For the sake of completeness, a couple of examples from German, in which the supposed context is a command addressed to a person who is not aware of the speaker('s existence) before the utterance, are given here:

- (6.6) a. #Du steh nicht so blöd im Weg rum!  
you stand.IMP not so stupid in.the way around  
a'. Steh nicht so blöd im Weg rum!  
'(You) don't just stand there so stupidly!'
- b. #Den Hund nimm da weg!  
the dog take.IMP there away  
b'. Nimm den Hund da weg!  
'Take the dog away from there!'
- c. #An der Kreuzung seien Sie vorsichtig!  
at the intersection be.IMP.FORM you careful  
c'. Seien Sie an der Kreuzung vorsichtig!  
'Be (formal) careful at the intersection!'

### 6.3. The preverbal element in narrow focus

An easy way to produce linguistic context to test for focushood is by means of a

question-answer test in which the element the focushood of which is supposed to be determined is replaced by an interrogative constituent<sup>21</sup> in a question (see Lambrecht 1994: 297). Comrie (1989: 62) (whose 1981 edition of the book Lambrecht (ibid.) cites) provides the following examples for such tests ((a) and (b) correspond to Lambrecht's notion of narrow focus, while (c) and (d) correspond to the notions of predicate and sentence focus respectively):

- |                        |    |                             |
|------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| (6.7) a. Who saw Bill? | -- | John saw Bill/him.          |
| b. Who did Bill see?   | -- | Bill/he saw John.           |
| c. What did Bill do?   | -- | Bill/he went straight home. |
| d. What happened?      | -- | Bill went straight home.    |

When creating such example questions for imperatives, one obviously runs into the problem that the questions cannot be as similar to the answers as they are for the declarative clause presented here, because the (second person) imperatives given as an answer in a question-answer test will require a question in the first person which in turn means that positing the question in imperative itself is excluded.

As such, the best approximation seems to be using modal verbs that can imply obligation, such as *should*, and their correspondences in the respective languages. It can, however, not be excluded that this approach will yield artefacts not present in such tests for declaratives, such as false negatives, i.e. sentences that are unacceptable in the given context only because of the imperative's incompatibility with the presupposition established by the modal in question.

The following example shows question-answer tests for German imperatives with a modal in the question in which the interrogative constituent's correspondence in the reply consists of one constituent, i.e. fulfills the requirement for asking for a constituent in narrow focus. These examples also include the declarative sentences that correspond to the question and make use of a modal.

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21 I use the term *interrogative constituent* instead of (e.g. Lambrecht's (1994)) *WH-constituent* or similar terms because the interrogatives of the languages that are investigated here do not begin in *wh* -- in spite of its frequent use also for languages whose interrogatives do not begin with this letter sequence.

The results here are based on 7 German native speakers' assessments who received these sentences in a randomised order and who used various linear scales (such as a numeric rating from 1-5 or 1-10 or "acceptable", "somewhat acceptable", "not acceptable" which in turn was presented by a ranking from 1-3) to indicate the acceptability of the sentences in the given context. I transformed these to a 0-based system and calculated the acceptability as a fraction (e.g. a rating of 1/5 would become  $0/4=0$  and a rating of 7/10 would become  $6/9=0.\bar{6}$ ) of which I took the average. An acceptability of 0.5 to below 0.75 is represented with ? here, an acceptability of 0.25 to below 0.5 with ?? and an acceptability of below 0.25 with #<sup>22</sup> and the exact values are given to the right:

(6.8) *subject:*

- a. Q: Wer soll sein Zimmer aufräumen?  
who shall his room tidy.up.INF  
'Who shall tidy up his room?'
- a1. A: ? Du räum dein Zimmer auf! (0.63)  
you tidy.IMP your room up
- a2. A: # Räum dein Zimmer auf! (0.07)
- a3. A: ?? Räum du dein Zimmer auf! (0.38)
- a4. A: Du sollst dein Zimmer aufräumen ! (1.00)  
you shall your room tidy.up.INF  
'It is you who is supposed to tidy up your room!'/You tidy up your room!'

*object:*

- b. Q: Wen soll ich heute zum Klavierunterricht bringen?  
who shall I today to.the piano.lessons bring.INF  
'Who am I supposed to take to their piano lessons today?'
- b1. A: ? Lea und Johann bring heute zum Klavierunterricht! (0.58)  
Lea and Johann bring.IMP today to.the piano.lessons
- b2. A: Bring heute Lea und Johann zum Klavierunterricht! (0.90)
- b3. A: Lea und Johann sollst du heute zum Klavierunterricht bringen! (0.98)  
Lea and Johann shall you today to.the piano.lessons bring.INF  
'It is Lea and Johann who you are supposed to bring to their piano lessons today!'

---

22 Originally, it was not intended to assign acceptability values to these sentences, which is why the scales used by the individual informants differ so much.

'Bring *Lea and Johann* to their piano lessons today'

*adverbial/PP:*

- c. Q: Wann soll ich Lea und Johann heute zum Klavierunterricht bringen?  
when shall I Lea and Johann today to.the piano.lessons bring.INF

'When I am supposed to take Lea and Johann to their piano lessons today?'

- c1. A: ?? Um 18 Uhr bring Lea und Johann heute zum Klavierunterricht! (0.49)  
at 18 o'clock bring.IMP Lea and Johann today to.the piano.lessons

- c2. A: Um 18 Uhr sollst du Lea und Johann heute zum Klavierunterricht bringen!  
(0.96)

'Bring Lea and Johann to their piano lessons today *at 6 p.m.*'

- d. Q: Wo soll ich morgen einkaufen gehen?

where shall I tomorrow shop.INF go.INF

'Where am I supposed to go shopping tomorrow?'

- d1. A: ?? Im Gemüseladen geh morgen einkaufen. (0.48)

in.the vegetable.store go.IMP tomorrow shop.INF

- d2. A: Geh morgen im Gemüseladen einkaufen. (0.96)

- d3. A: Im Gemüseladen sollst du morgen einkaufen gehen. (1.00)

'Go shopping in the vegetable store tomorrow!'

*adjective:*

- e. Q: In welcher Farbe soll ich die Tür lackieren?

in which colour shall I the door paint.INF

'In which colour am I supposed to paint the door?'

- e1. A: ?? *Rot* lackier die Tür! (0.42)

red paint.IMP the door

- e2. A: Lackier die Tür *rot*! (1.00)

- e3. A: *Rot* sollst du die Tür lackieren! (0.83)

'Paint the door *red*!' / 'You are supposed to paint the door *red*.'

*verb:*

- f. Q: Was soll ich mit dem Buch machen?

what shall I with the book do.INF

'What am I supposed to do with the book?'

- |     |  |        |
|-----|--|--------|
| f1. | A: ?? Verkaufen tu      das Buch!                                      | (0.25) |
|     | sell.INF      do.IMP the book  |        |
| f2. | A: Verkauf das Buch!   | (0.93) |
|     | sell.IMP the book  |        |
| f3. | A: Verkaufen sollst du das Buch!                                       | (0.91) |
|     | sell.INF shall you the book  |        |
|     | ' <i>Sell</i> the book!' / 'You are supposed to <i>sell</i> the book!' |        |

Not surprisingly, the declarative sentences which imitate the structure of the question most closely, generally yield the best acceptability. However, the replies (6.8b2), (6.8d2), (6.8e2) and (6.8f2) show that imperatives can also make really good replies to questions which involve in the modal *sollen*. That the imperative reply (6.8a3) fares worst is hardly surprising. As has been discussed before and as, for example, Van Valin (2005: 73) writes, constituents marked as zero cannot occur in focus contexts, and as such a subjectless imperative as the answer to a question that represents an inquiry as to who the subject is, can certainly not be considered an appropriate reply to the question.

The V2-imperatives with the fronted focus constituents all yield results that are marked with either one or two question marks. However, a closer look reveals that, with the exception of example (6.8f1), they all score acceptability values of  $\approx 0.42$  to  $\approx 0.63$ .

Should such values be confirmed in larger groups of speakers, then there is a remarkable consistency among German native speakers in that these sentences generally are all **marginally** acceptable, but would most likely not be the sentence of choice for a native speaker to utter in this pragmatic situation.

With regard to the only V2-imperative example that scored below the frame of  $\approx 0.42$  to  $\approx 0.63$ , i.e. (6.8f1) which has an average acceptability of  $\approx 0.25$ , it has to be mentioned that this example of trying to focus the verbal predicate contains *do*-support. While, as has been discussed, and Langer (2001: 7) mentions, Standard German actually features the auxiliary *tun* 'do' in the function of occupying the position of the finite verb when the predicative verb occurs in a topicalised or focalised initial position, this primarily holds true for the indicative. Acceptability for other constructions differs widely depending on dialect (p. 8) and probably idiolect (especially in regions where the

classical dialects of the region are in the process of vanishing or have widely vanished).

Given that four individuals gave these examples an acceptability value of 0, while the others assigned values to these examples that lie in the normal range of their values given to V2-imperatives, individual differences in acceptability of *do*-support seems to be a plausible explanation for the differing values of acceptability of this outlier.

With regard to Old Norse, the preverbal adjective *örugga* in the sentence *Styrk þú öll mín skilningsvit svo að eg megi þig ávallt lofa og örugga gjör mína staðfestu með þinni mildri miskunn til þín* 'Strengthen all of my senses, so that I will always laud you, and make **strong** my determination with your mild mercy to you.' may be a case of narrow focus preceding the imperative verb. If this categorisation is correct, it would also explain the slight awkwardness of the German correspondence (4.1e'). Other than that, no Old Norse sentence I investigated with context was a candidate for a narrow focus interpretation, but their existence can certainly not be ruled out on the basis of so few examples.

#### 6.4. The preverbal element as a contrastive topic

Falk & Torp (1900: 289) and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 72) note that subject-initial imperative sentences in Old(er) Icelandic are always introduced by the coordinating conjunction *en* 'and, but'. As was outlined in section 2.1.1, there was a single example (*Lifandi guð, þú lit þar á*) in the IcePaHC corpus, with regard to which this was not the case, but which is dismissed for the purposes of this discussion as it most likely stems from a psalm and as such does not constitute a prose example.

The fact that all examples of *þú* preceding the imperative verb in main clauses are introduced by *en* 'and, but' may point to the fact that this kind of construction is connected to certain patterns of information structure (cf. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2000: 13) and especially to contrastiveness. Alternatively, one could argue for a syntactic constraint, giving rise to a special situation of *en* with regard to subject-first imperatives.

It is the case that the so-called narrative inversion which entails verb-first word order occurs regularly after *ok* 'and' in Old Norse while it hardly ever appears after *en* for

which Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1994: 117) reports two incidents of narrative inversion out of 426 sentences introduced by *en*. The semantics of the two conjunctions and the implicatures resulting from the semantics probably play a crucial role in this regard (119ff.).

For the imperative sentences, two pieces of evidence point to the word order choice not just being dependent on the choice of the lexical item in these cases, but rather as being dependent on the information structure *ok* and *en* are associated with.

First, as example (6.9c) below shows, not all Old Norse/Middle Icelandic examples feature the subject *þú* before the imperative verb. Other constituents, such as a PP, can also occur in these contexts.

Second, these Icelandic V2-imperatives find correspondent examples in German, and in the case of German, there are two different conjunctions, namely *aber* 'but' and *und* 'and' which, depending on the context, make the better translation of Icelandic *en*. (For an article that discusses how to best translate different usages of *en* in Modern Icelandic (much of which seems to hold true for Old Icelandic as well) to German, see Weiss (2002)).

German, unlike Icelandic, does not feature narrative inversion and given the striking similarity between the Icelandic and the German examples of the V2-imperatives, this piece of evidence favours a pragmatically determined reading of the Icelandic results over a purely lexical reading of the Icelandic V2-imperatives.

Consider the following data:

- (6.9) a. Nú skal setjast niður en **þú** seg frá tíðindum (Old Icelandic)  
'Now it should be sat down, and **you** say from the news.'
- a'. Nun lasst uns hinsetzen, und **du** *erzähl* dann, was es Neues gibt. (German)  
'Now let's sit down, and **you** tell then what news there are'
- b. Lát þá dauðu grafa sína hinu dauðu, en **þú** *gakk* og boða Guðs ríki  
'Let the dead bury their dead, but **you** go and preach God's kingdom'  
(Icelandic, NT Odds)
- b'. Lass die Toten ihre Toten begraben; **du aber** *geh* hin und verkündige das Reich Gottes. (German, Lutherbibel 1984)

'Let the dead bury their dead; **but you** go and preach the kingdom of God'

- c. Nú skaltu fara í friði fyrir mér hvert er þú vilt vetrarlangt en **að sumri** far þú út til Íslands því að þar [...]  
(s. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson: 6)  
(Grettis saga Ásmundssonar)

- c'. Meinetwegen kannst du jetzt den ganzen Winter lang in Frieden dorthin fahren, wo auch immer du hinwillst, aber **im Sommer** fahre hinaus nach Island, denn dort [...]

'Now you shall travel in peace for my sake wherever you want for all winter, but in summer travel to Iceland because [...]

While all the Icelandic examples feature *en*, the German correspondences (b') and (c') feature *aber*, whereas the sentence in (a') features *und*. Furthermore, (b') features the conjunction *aber* after the pronoun *du*, however this is not of concern, because such word orders can easily occur in declarative clauses as well (e.g. *Er aber ging in die Synagoge und redete mit den Juden* 'but he went into the synagogue and talked to the Jews' (Lutherbibel 1984: Apostelgeschichte 18: 1)) and especially because the positions of *du* and *aber* can be swapped without problems or major semantic change so long as *du* remains stressed.

As was already hinted at, the usage of *en* in all of the Icelandic examples, but also the frequent usage of *aber* in the corresponding German sentences may point to contrastiveness being relevant in the context of these examples. Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (1981: 12) even writes that "maybe one can look at it in the way that *og* does not have an independent meaning, it is = &; and that once can write *en* as & + [+CONTRAST]"<sup>23</sup>. Although Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (ibid.) also makes reference to implicatures, the pragmatic nature of the usage of *en* is emphasised even more by Halldór Ármann Sigurðsson (1991: 120) who writes after a short semantic discussion:

"This special position of *en*-sentences which causes that narrative inversion is not used in them has now been described from a "pure" semantic viewpoint and has been put into relation with the meaning of the conjunction itself. This, however, is without doubt a simplification. The choice between *og* and *en* is often not governed by the

23 "E. t. v. má líta svo á að *og* hafi enga sjálfstæða merkingu, sé = &; en *en* megi tákna sem & + [+ANDSTÆÐA]" (translation mine)

meaning of these words themselves nor the meaning of the sentences which they connect, but rather by pragmatic and functional aspects, i.e. ideas of the speaker about the environment, the expectations of his addressee (presuppositions [...]) and the information content of what he has to say."<sup>24</sup>

Having a look then at potential candidate analyses for a pragmatic analysis of these V2-imperatives within Lambrecht's (1994, 2000) framework, there are two obvious potential candidates, namely *contrastive focus* and *contrastive topic*. In this context, it has to be mentioned that Lambrecht (1994: 290) rejects a formal notion of contrastiveness based on counterexamples, but "suggest[s] that the impression of contrastiveness which we receive when we hear such sentences arises from particular inferences which we draw on the basis of given conversational contexts".

He goes on to cite Bolinger (1961: 87) who writes that "[i]n a broad sense, every semantic peak is contrastive. Clearly in *Let's have a picnic*, coming as a suggestion out of the blue, there is no specific contrast with dinner party, but there is a contrast between picnicking and anything else the group might do. As the alternatives are narrowed down, we get closer to what we think of as contrastive accent".

Although Lambrecht (1984) rejects contrastiveness as an absolute category, especially as he is concerned with constructions of information structure as represented in grammar (see p. 290 for his rejection of contrastiveness as a category of grammar), examples of what might be considered prototypical contrastive foci are then presented in (6.10), taken from Lambrecht (1994: 286 and 288) (small capitals denote prosodic stress according to his notation):

- (6.10) a. Among John, Mary, and Tom, who is the oldest? TOM is the oldest.  
b. YOU are the murderer.

When inspecting these sentences with regard to their status as being contrastive foci

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24 "Þeirri sérstöðu *en*-setninga sem veldur því að í þeim er frásagnarumröðun ekki beitt hefur nú verið lýst frá "hreinu" merkingarlegu (semantic) sjónarmiði og hefur verið miðuð við merkingu sjálfrar tengingarinnar. En þetta er þó vafalaust einföldun. Val á milli *og* og *en* stjórnað nefnilega oft hvorki af merkingu þeirra sjálfra né merkingu setninganna sem þær tengja heldur af pragmatískum og fúnksjónalískum atriðum, þ.e. hugmyndum talandans um umheiminn, væntingar viðmælanada síns (presuppositions, [...]) og upplýsingagildi þess sem hann hefur að segja." (translation mine)

(rather than contrastive topics as discussed below), it is helpful to have in mind that the definition of focus is "[t]he semantic component of a pragmatically structured proposition whereby the assertion differs from the presupposition". In example (a), it is (needless to say) presupposed that one of the three people in question is the oldest, and the question asks as to which member of the given set fulfills this condition.

The assertion of the reply, then, differs from the presupposition only in specifying the member of the set that actually is the oldest. The reply is contrastive in so far as it compares Tom to the other two members of the set.

Example (6.10b) is an example that is an appropriate example of a contrastive focus in a context where the speaker had a different person in mind with regard to the question as to who is the murderer. In this case, it is obviously presupposed that there was a murderer, but the identity of the murderer is contrasted with a person that was suspected to be the murderer previously<sup>25</sup>.

With regard to contrastive topics, Lambrecht (1994: 291) gives the following example,

(6.11) I saw Mary and John yesterday. SHE says HELLO, but HE'S still ANGRY at you.

upon which he explains that "[i]n this sentence, the accented pronouns in the two clauses code two active topic referents which are contrasted with one another." When having the definition of focus in mind, then it becomes clear that Mary and John, referenced by pronouns, are not part of the difference between the assertion and the presupposition, as they have been introduced in the previous sentence. These two sentences feature predicate focus.

That *she* and *he* are topics rather than foci is also evidenced by the so-called *as-for* test. According to Lambrecht (1994: 152), *as-for* can never introduce a focus expression and can in fact "ONLY be used in [a] topic-establishing function." This also holds serves as a good test for the examples in this section. The reply *Tom is the oldest* with narrow

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25 As Lambrecht (1994) does not assume a grammatical (including prosody) notion of *contrastiveness*, it cannot be presumed that the sentences *TOM is the oldest* and *YOU are the murderer* can only be read as having contrastive foci in all circumstances, but the contexts given here would strongly favour a focus reading on the contrastive end of the spectrum.

focus on *Tom* to the question *Among John, Mary and Tom, who is the oldest?* is a very good reply, whereas *#As for Tom, he is the oldest* would be entirely unacceptable as reply to this question.

Similarly, with regard to the sentence in (6.10b) above, the following statement is entirely unacceptable with a context where *you* is in focus:

(6.12) CATHERINE is not the murderer. *#As for you, YOU are the murderer*

On the other hand, *I saw Mary and John yesterday. SHE says hello, but as for John, HE is still angry*, involving a contrastive topic, is quite acceptable<sup>26</sup>.

Examining the sentence (4.1b) *Lát þá dauðu grafa sína hinu dauðu, en þú gakk og boða Guðs ríki* and the corresponding sentence in German, both of which feature the imperative verb in second position, the context is as follows (King James Bible, Luke 9: 59-60): *And he (=Jesus) said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, **Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.***

When having a look at the relevant imperative, translated in the King James Bible as *go thou* with a postverbal subject, it is obvious that a focus reading for the subject in *but go thou and preach the kingdom of God* is excluded.

The person Jesus is speaking to names about the action he wants to do first, namely to (go and) bury his father. Jesus' reply splits up this sentence into two components, namely the predicate phrase and the subject, so that in the first part of his reply, *burying the(ir) dead*<sup>27</sup> (with *the dead* being a set of entities to which the father the addressee mentioned belongs) can, by virtue of being presupposed, not be in focus, whereas the

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26 While all English native speakers that I asked thought of the sentence as being much more acceptable than the sentence involving a contrastive focus, an American remarked that it sounds "British", other speakers felt that the sentence would be more appropriate for the written language or thought of it as a bit outdated. A possible explanation for this might be that John already is a topic (it is quite obvious, at least, that he will be a topic as soon as the sentence begins with *SHE says hello*), and as such a "topic-establishing function", as Lambrecht calls it, may feel unnecessary. According to my personal and at least one other native speaker's judgment, the corresponding German expression *Ich habe gestern Mary und John gesehen. SIE hat begrüßt, aber was John angeht, (D)ER ist noch wütend auf dich* with *was ... angeht* as a replacement of *as for* is just fine.

27 Obviously, the sentence *Let the dead bury their dead* is not supposed to be understood literally. However, the interpretation as a metaphor does not alter the information structure of the literal meaning of the sentence.

fact that it is *the dead* who are supposed to do this, is the information given in the assertion by which it differs from the presupposition and as such fulfills Lambrecht's focus definition.

Then, Jesus turns to the other entity referred to in his interlocutor's sentence, namely the interlocutor himself and assigns to him a task that is different from the one he had in mind. This is clearly an instance of predicate focus, with a topical subject that contrasts both the semantic subject *the dead* of the predicate *bury* in the previous sentence as well as the assignment of this subject to the task of going and preaching the kingdom of God, rather than burying the father.

That the analysis of the preverbal imperative subject *þú* in Middle Icelandic as well as *du* in Modern High German as being a topic, rather than a focus, is correct, is also shown by the *as-for* test, which for English consists of the acceptability of the sentence *Let the dead bury their dead, but as for you, you go and preach the kingdom of God*<sup>28</sup>. The German sentence *Lass die Toten ihre Toten begraben, aber was dich anbetrifft, du gehe hinaus und verkünde das Reich Gottes* with *was ... anbetrifft* instead of *as for* (see Lambrecht 1994: 182 on these constructions in different languages) is equally acceptable.

When looking at example (6.9c) which does not feature a subject pronoun before the imperative verb, but the adverbial *að sumri* 'in summer', which is shown to be a topic by a sentence such as *Meinetwegen kannst du jetzt den ganzen Winter lang in Frieden dorthin fahren, wo auch immer du hinwillst, aber, was den Sommer angeht, (da) fahre hinaus nach Island*. 'Now you shall travel in peace for my sake wherever you want for all winter, but as for the summer, (then) travel to Iceland'. The reason why this is licensed as a topic, even though the summer was not under active discussion in this context, is probably because of the mention of *vetrarlangt* 'for the length of the winter', the notion *að sumri* contrasts with, in the previous clause, and as such establishes the set of seasons as a valid topic.

More problematic is a case such as *nú skal setjast niður en þú seg frá tíðindum* (6.9a)

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28 I do not have any intuitions on the English sentence myself, but three native speakers confirmed its acceptability in the given context. Also, *burying the dead* (for syntactic reasons, *their dead* is excluded in a left-dislocated *as-for*-phrase) could be confirmed to be a topic by the *as-for* test (*As for burying the dead, let the dead do it ...*), but one native speaker was skeptical of having two *as-for* phrases in the sentence simultaneously.

'Now it shall be said down and you tell from the news.', although it is not entirely impossible to construe this sentence as having a contrastive topic, especially if one follows Bolinger (1961) in not positing any absolute notion of contrastiveness, if it is assumed that the impersonal first clause's (before *en*) topic are the people this indirect command is directed at. In German, this kind of construction is impossible because of the lack of forms directly corresponding to the Icelandic mediopassive, and as such the German approximation in (6.9a) actually explicitly specifies a subject *wir* 'we'.

The imperative subject passes a slightly altered *as for*-test (or rather *was ... anbetrifft*-test) which makes reference to "us all" and "you especially", where the modification is probably necessary because the addressee is an element of the set that is referred to by *wir* 'we' in the German translation:

- (6.13) Was uns alle anbetrifft, so lasst uns hinsetzen, und was dich ganz speziell  
what us all concerns so let us sit.down.inf and what you quite special  
anbetrifft, **du** erzähl uns, was es Neues gibt.  
concerns you tell.imp us what it new gives  
'As for us all, let's sit down, and as for you specially tell us what news there  
are.'

Finally, sentences such as *En nú bið þú litla stund, því að skjótt munt þú til mín koma* 'but now pray for a short while, because you shall soon come to me' should, however, probably not be interpreted as a case of a contrastive topic preceding an imperative verb, in spite of such sentences being introduced by *en*. This is because the context does not provide any kind of indication that *nú* 'now' actually explicitly contrasts with some other point of time. It is more likely that this example should be grouped together with other V2-imperative sentences that begin with *nú* and the German examples that begin with *jetzt*, *nun* 'now'.

## 6.5. The first element as a resumptive element

This group of V2-imperatives is related to the V2-imperatives discussed in the previous

section in which the preverbal element consisted of a contrastive topic. It consists of a pronoun that resumes a detached constituent.

First, have a look at some of the data:

(6.14) a. # dem **wehre** auch nicht den Rock<sup>29</sup>

'Don't deny him the shirt either'

a'. Wer dir den Mantel nimmt, dem **wehre** auch nicht den Rock.

'Whoever takes your coat, don't deny him the shirt, either.'

a". Und wer dich bittet, dem gib.

'And whoever asks you, give unto him.'

a"". Og hver þig biður, þeim gef.

'And whoever asks you, give unto them.'

b. Wenn du Christus bist, dann/so sage uns das ganz offen.

b'. Ef þú ert Kristur, þá seg oss það berlega. (John, NT Odds G.: 209.874)

'If you are Christ, then tell us openly.'

In these examples, there is a left-dislocated element and the resumptive element precedes the imperative verb. The construction is very similar to the topic-establishing *as-for* construction that was used in the previous section in order to test for topichood of the contrastive elements, and in fact, all the examples can be rewritten with *was ... anbetrifft* in German (including some minor syntactic, but no pragmatic or significant semantic changes):

(6.15) a. Was denjenigen anbetrifft, der dir den Mantel nimmt, **dem** *wehre* auch nicht den Rock.

'As for the one who takes the coat from you, don't *deny* **him** the shirt, either.'

b. Und was denjenigen anbetrifft, der dich bittet, **dem** *gib*.

'And as for the one who asks you, *give* **unto him**.'

c. Was den Fall anbetrifft, dass du Christus bist, **so** *sage* uns das ganz offen.

'As for the case that you are Christ, **then** *tell* us openly.'

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<sup>29</sup> The sentence is pragmatically unacceptable without further context.

It would seem then, that the left-dislocated element in such sentences has a topic-establishing function similar to the *as-for* construction, with the preverbal element of the imperative resuming this left-dislocated phrase.

What requires some more explanation, is that it may be possible that sentences such as *ef það fæst ekki af honum, þá bjóttu honum bardaga* 'if it cannot be received from him, then offer him a battle' can be considered to be of this kind in Older Icelandic, even though they seem to be more restricted in Modern Icelandic. First, it has to be noted that there are sentences involving *þá* after some kind of seemingly left-detached element, that definitely do not belong to this group of imperative sentences because there is another resumptive pronoun referring to the left-detached element, as e.g. in *hvað þú gjörir, þá gjör það snart* 'what(ever) you do, do it soon' (John, NT Odds Gottskálkssonar: 217.1131), in which *hvað þú gjörir* is clearly referred to by *það*, and as such *þá* is of a different kind.

There is evidence however that the construction with *ef* 'if' differs in nature from its Modern Icelandic equivalent, because there are sentences in which *þá* precedes the imperative verb, in spite of the *ef*-clause occurring at the end of the sentence which is impossible in Modern Icelandic (Example (6.16b) taken from Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000: 83), ultimately from *Harðar saga og Hólmverja*):

- (6.16) a. "Dann/so verlobe Guðríður Högnadóttir mit mir," sagt Grímur, "wenn du willst, dass ich bei dir bin."  
b. "*Þá* bið þú Guðríðar Högnadóttur til handa mér," segir Grímur, "*ef* þú vilt að eg sé hjá þér".  
"Then propose Guðríður Högnadóttir to me," says Grímur, "if you want that I be with you."

Since right-dislocations are generally possible in Icelandic and German, and sentences such as (6.16) are possible in both German and older stages of Icelandic, it seems like a possible, though not necessary, interpretation that *þá* under certain circumstances was a resumptive element that was able to refer to certain kinds of clauses and maybe

adverbials, and that imperative sentences having this kind of *þá* in first position share a similar explanation to the ones in (6.14).

#### 6.6. "Unspecific" adverbs in first position

As a final kind of elements that can be in the first position of a V2-imperative main clause, there is a group of adverbs that seem to be semantically unspecific (see Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson 2000: 10). The adverb involved most often is *nú* 'now', although other adverbs are involved at times. An example of this is shown in (6.17, Icelandic example taken from *ibid.*):

(6.17) a. Nun/jetzt/so nimm meinen Rat diesbezüglich an, und bleibe nicht länger hier,  
als ich es empfehle.

b. Nú haf þú ráð mitt um þetta og ver hér eigi lengur en eg legg ráð til.

'Now take my advice about this, and don't be here longer than I recommend.'

Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (*ibid.*) puts forward a possible explanation that *nú* might rather be an imperative operator than a regular adverb because it seems to lack any semantic specificity, and does unlike the usual usage of *nú* not have any temporal meaning. With regard to German, in which the usage of *nun* 'now', *jetzt* 'now' and, perhaps somewhat more rarely, *so* 'so' display similar usage patterns.

As pointed out in section 6.2, sentences with such an adverb cannot occur in interaction-initial contexts. Also, all Icelandic examples found by Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson (2000) as well by me, seem to have some kind of context in which this kind of imperative occurs, although contextless imperatives may be rare in written language. In German, the usage of such an adverb before the imperative verb can also often signify emphasis or annoyance, as also the examples in (6.5) show.

Trying to characterise these examples semantically or pragmatically in further detail than that seems to be more difficult. As Axel (2007: 60) writes with regard to Old High German, but is true for other Germanic varieties as well, given that the usage is extremely similar: "The sentence-typing of the particle *nū* is not fully clear. [...] It is

possible that the use of *nū* in OHG imperatives goes back to the Old Germanic emphatic *nū*, which also survived in exclamative, interjection-like expressions such as OHG *wola-nu*, [...] Old English *heo-nu*, Old Saxon *si-nu*, and Old Norse *hana nū*".

## 6.7. Summary

In this chapter, V2-imperatives were categorised with regard to different information structure patterns. In both Old Norse and Modern High German, there are many examples which can be categorised as a contrastive topic or as a resumptive element of a topicalising left-dislocated element.

On the other hand, narrow focus elements yield only mediocre acceptability as initial elements in V2-imperative sentences in German, while no definite conclusions for Old Norse can be drawn, with one likely example existing, but the other types of constituents being seemingly more frequent.

The reason for a sentence-initial non-temporal *nun/jetzt* 'now' in German and *nú* 'now' in Old Norse still remains somewhat obscure, but it could be shown that this type of constituent cannot occur without context. Maybe a weak association between sentence-initial topics, which of course need to be accessible within the context, and the non-allowance of *now*-type adverbs without any context can be drawn.

## 7. Conclusion and outlook

This thesis presented V2-imperatives from different Germanic languages, compared their syntactic make-up and tried to account for the ones in Old Norse and Modern High German by means of a pragmatic analysis.

An interesting result is that the Modern North Germanic languages typically allow for V2-imperatives either in mainclauses or in subclauses, with few, almost exclusively adverbial exceptions, whereas their ancestor varieties featured such sentences of very different kinds. Why this may be the case and whether it is a coincidence that the construction was lost in both Continental and Insular North Germanic was not analysed here, but aspects such as the loss of the OV-worder that are also shared by all North Germanic languages come to mind, although it is not obvious why these two aspects should be related.

With regard to subordinate imperatives, the question has to be raised what the nature of the imperative is. It may seem radical to say that the imperative is only an inflectional category just like indicative and subjunctive which can occur in different illocutions, namely declaratives and questions, but maybe it is necessary to draw some kind of distinction between the imperative in a morphological sense and commands as an illocutionary force, which might also be expressed by non-imperatives, such as e.g. an infinitive (e.g. German *Nicht schlafen!* 'Don't sleep!') or just an indicative. This question is not only raised because of embedded imperatives in complement clauses, but also because of imperative verbs in interrogative sentences, as Kaufmann (2012) shows.

Finally, the information structure of mainclause V2-imperatives seems to be similar in Old Norse and Modern High German. I do not claim to have found all possible pragmatic contexts in which such preverbal constituents can occur, but for German it can be said that contrastive topics and resumptive elements are much preferable over simple focused constituents in this context, and the same seems, with caution because of the low number of attested Old Norse examples of this construction, to hold true for Old Norse as well.

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## Appendix

A part of *Olafs saga hins helga* (1982: 32, translation partially based on the German translation provided by the edition), providing context for a potentially ambiguous subclause imperative (in bold):

Rane het maðr, hann var lænndr maðr. Hann dræymdi, at maðr kom at hanum í guðvæviarskikciu oc skarlazkyrtli, laðe bunum, oc gullring a hændi oc gyrðr sværði. "Vaker þu, Rane?" sagðe hann. En hann kvaz vaka. "Næi", sagðe hinn, "æigi er þat, en sva man vera, sem þu vaker. Her er komenn Olafr konongr digri, oc villda ec, at þu færer sændifor mina. Oc þic væl ec til þess, at briota haug minn, þann er a Gæirstaðum er. Oc man þer æigi mikit firir værða, ef þu fær minum raðom fram. Þu skallt hua með þer ælldfære oc as oc snære, oc brægð um asenn oc sök sva inn i haugenn. Þar mantu sia mann æinn með slicum bunaðe, sem ec hævi. Gacc at hanum oc tak af hanum ringenn oc skikciuna oc sværdet. Þar mantu oc sia marga menn a tvær hændr hanum. Far oræddr, þa man þic ækci til saka. En siðan þa hog af hanum hauuðet, oc man þer þat auðvællt. En ef þu brægðr af þesso, þa mantu viti a þer taka. En ælligar man þer til giævo snuazt, ef þu fær minum raðom fram. En aðr en þu gerer þetta, þa sprætt af hanum bælltinu oc knivinum. Nu er þu hævir þetta gort, þa man þer mund or hauginum a braut, oc þat væit ec, at þer man væl lyða.

Siðan skaltu snua a Upplond upp til Guðbranz kulu. Þat er þar til mærkis, at Asta, dotter hans, er siuk við barne oc æigi lettare orðen, oc er hann sialvr hugsuokr ivir hænne. Hava oc aller ut ifra harm um hænnar harmung, sia ækci rað, þat er lyðir. Haralldr grænske lætr Asto hæim fara til faður sins oc let fylgia hænne þangat oc hafðe veret ræiðr miokc harðla. Sit nu ryggr hvartvæggia oc við harme. En ef þu oc kæmr þangat, þa man þer væl fagnat, oc ef raðs er vj þic læitat, þa gef þat rað **at lægg bælltit um hana**. En mik vænter, at þat lyði. Sæg, at þu villt þa ambun firir hua, at þu raðer, hvat manm er geva skal svæininum."

A man was called Rani, he was a Lendmann. He dreamt that a man came to him in a coat made of valuable cloth and a braided scarlet robe and a gold ring on his hand and

equipped with a sword. "Are you awake, Rani?", he said. And he said that he was awake. "No", said the other man, "that is not the case, but it may appear as if you are awake. Olaf the fat has come, and I want that you travel according to my request. And I choose you to break open my hill which is located in Gjerstad. And it will not be much for you today, if you follow my advice. You shall have with you a source of fire and a pole and a rope and put it around the pole and then enter the hill. There you will see a man in such a gear as I have. Go to him and take the ring off of him and the coat and the sword. On his side you will also see many men. Travel without fear, then nothing will happen to you. And after this, cut off his head, and this will be easy for you. But if you do not stick to this, then you will draw punishment onto you. But it will turn out to your benefit, if you act according to my suggestions. But before you do this, take of him the belt and the knife. Now when you have done this, then you will have to leave the hill, and I know that you will succeed.

After this, you shall go to Oppland, to Gudbrand Kula. There you will notice that Asta, his daughter, is in labour and has not born her child yet, and he himself is worried about her. Also, everyone around her is distressed about her pain and does not see any suggestion which will help. Harald Grenske had sent Asta back to her father and had been very angry. But if you come there, you will be welcomed well, and if advice is thought from you, then give the advice that **you put the belt around her**. And I suspect that it will help. Say that you want to decide which name should be given to the boy in reward."