This paper suggests a unified analysis of mainland Scandinavian pronominal object shift and Icelandic full NP shift, the latter a phenomenon that has been compared to scrambling in German. Building on an analysis of the impact of givenness on object placement in Scandinavian languages, I propose an approach where constraints involving different pragmatic factors interact, but are ranked lower than syntactic constraints on for example verb placement.

Ever since Holmberg (1986) it has been well known that object shift is subject to both structural and pragmatic constraints. For instance, the lexical verb must be in the V2 position for an object to be licensed in a position preceding the negation, i.e. shifted, see example (1).

(1) a. Jag såg henne inte. / *Jag har henne inte sett. [SWEDISH]
   I saw her not / I have her not seen
   ‘I didn’t see her.’ / ‘I have not seen her.’
b. Jón las bækurnar ekki. / *Jón hefur bækurnar ekki lesið. [ICELANDIC]
   Jón read the books not / Jón have the books not read
   ‘Jón didn’t read the books.’ / ‘Jón has not read the books.’

The constraint on pronominal object shift most commonly discussed in previous studies is that only “non-stressed” pronominal objects shift, whereas pronouns with contrast interpretation and hence – in speech – contrastive stress must appear following the negation, i.e. in situ, see the Danish example in (2) (where capital letters mark contrast intonation).

(2) a. *Jeg så HENDE ikke, men jeg så den ANDEN pige. [DANISH]
   I saw her not, but I saw the other girl
   ‘I didn’t see HER, but I saw the other girl.’
b. Jeg så ikke HENDE, men jeg så den ANDEN pige. [DANISH]
   I saw not her but I saw the other girl
   ‘I didn’t see HER, but I saw the OTHER girl.’

This information dynamical restriction has given rise to analyses of object shift suggesting that an unstressed pronoun “escapes” from a focus domain (cf. Holmberg 1999:23). Shifting non-contrasted pronouns is considered to be obligatory in standard Danish and in Icelandic, but more optional in for example Swedish.

Nevertheless, recent studies have shown that this pragmatic restriction on pronominal object shift does not explain all the word order variation where pronominal objects are involved (Andréasson 2008; 2009; 2010). Non-contrasted pronominal complements with sentence/VP antecedents, see example (3), appear in situ to a greater extent than those with NP antecedents, both in Swedish and, more surprisingly, in Danish, see example (4).

(3) a. Jag tror inte det. [SWEDISH]
   I think not that
   ‘I don’t think so.’
b. Jag kan inte det. [SWEDISH]
   I can not that
   ‘I can’t.’

(4) a. Hvorfor tror hun ikke det? [DANISH]
   why think she not that
   ‘Why doesn’t she think so?’
b. Tror du ikke det? [DANISH]
   think you not that
   ‘Don’t you think so?’

This difference in distribution is not related to the dichotomy contrast vs. non-contrast, but to a difference in cognitive status (cf. Gundel et al 1993; Gundel et al 2003) between on the one hand pronouns with NP antecedents and pronominal complements of factive verbs, and on the other hand pronominal complements of non-factive verbs. The former are at the highest level of givenness (Gundel et al’s in focus) and are licensed in the shifted position both in Swedish and in Danish. The latter are normally not at the highest level (activated and below), and thus may not shift, see (5).
This analysis holds also for Icelandic full NP shift. In Icelandic the dividing line between shifted and in situ placement goes further down on the givenness scale, between definite (identifiable) and non-definite (referential) full NPs, see (6). The fact that Icelandic is even more restrictive than Danish, in not allowing non-contrasted object pronouns in situ, also supports this claim.

(6) in focus > activated > familiar > identifiable > referential > identifiable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>Swedish/Danish</th>
<th>Icelandic</th>
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<td>SHIFTED</td>
<td>IN SITU</td>
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An optimality theoretic analysis of these facts is discussed where constraints on givenness are ranked to express a universal tendency for elements with a higher level of givenness to appear more to the left in a domain, than elements of lower levels. These constraints are ranked in relation to other pragmatic and semantic constraints, and to syntactic constraints on word order. The differences between Mainland North Germanic and Icelandic – i.e. between pronominal and full object shift – may be illustrated by differences in ranking.

Finally, another finding is discussed that suggests that a joint analysis of full NP object shift and pronominal object shift, namely the fact that contrast on another element in the clause overrides the effect of givenness on object placement, irrespective of the type of object. This phenomenon was noted already by Diesing (1997) for Icelandic NP objects, see (7). Interestingly, this holds also for Swedish and Danish pronominal objects. Contrast on another element affects the word order so that objects with lower cognitive status shift.

(7) Ég les bækur ekki . . .
    I read books not
    ‘I don’t READ books (, but only BUY them).’ (Diesing 1997:412)

Selected references