German, Dutch and Icelandic
- so similar and yet so different[1]

1. THE PROBLEM:

When one compares the Germanic languages as regards the availability of certain constructions such as impersonal passives, transitive expletive constructions (TECs) and impersonal psych-verb constructions, German, Dutch and Icelandic look very similar.

Table 1:

	German	Dutch	Icelandic
Impersonal passives	✓ use of Expl depends on position	✓ use of Expl depends on position	✓ use of Expl depends on position
TECs	✓	✓	✓
Impersonal psych-verb constructions	✓	no data	✓

On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that despite these similarities the three languages vary wrt to the obligatoriness/optionality of the expletive or quasi-argument, the position of this expletive or quasi-argument and whether the construction displays a definiteness effect (DE).

Impersonal passives:

<blockquote>

(1)   a.   **Es**   wurde getanzt.   (German)
Expl was   danced
"There was dancing."/"People were dancing."

b.   ... daß getanzt wurde.
... that danced was
"... that there was dancing."/"... that people were dancing."

c.   Gestern   wurde getanzt.
yesterday was   danced
"Yesterday, there was dancing."/"Yesterday, people were dancing."

(2)   a.   **Er**   wordt gedanst.   (Dutch)
Expl was   danced

</blockquote>

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[1] I'd like to thank Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson and Hans Kamp for their kind help as regards native speakers' intuitions.

b. ...dat (**er**) wordt gedanst/gedanst wordt.
    ...that (Expl) was danced/danced was

c. Op het schip wordt (**er**) gedanst.
    on the ship was (Expl) danced
    "On the ship, there was dancing."/"On the ship, people were dancing."

d. ....dat op het schip (***er**) wordt gedanst/gedanst wordt.
    ....that on the ship (*Expl) was danced/danced was
    "...that on the ship, there was dancing"

(3) a. (**það**) var dansað.   (Icelandic)
         (*Expl*) *was danced*

     b. ...að **það** hafi verið dansað (í gær).
         ...that Expl has been danced (yesterday)

     b'. [?]...að í gær   hafi verið dansað.
          ...that yesterday has been danced

     c. [?]Í gær   var dansað.
         yesterday was danced

Transitive Expletive Constructions (TECs):

(4) **Es** haben einige Kinder Spinat gegessen.   (German)
     Expl have several children spinach eaten
     "Several children have eaten spinach."

(5) **Er** hat iemand een appel gegeten.   (Dutch)
     Expl has someone an apple eaten   (Bobaljik&Jonas 1996, [16c])
     "Someone has eaten an apple."

(6) **það** hafa margir jólasveinar borðað búðing.   (Icelandic)
     Expl have many X-mas trolls eaten pudding   (Bobaljik&Jonas 1996, [16a])
     "Many Christmas trolls have eaten pudding."

Impersonal psych-verb constructions:

(7) a. Mich friert (**'s**).   (German)
         me freezes (it)
         "I feel cold."

     b. ...weil   (**'s**) mich friert.
         ...because (it) me   freezes
         "...because I feel cold."

(8)   no data for Dutch

(9)   a.   Mig <u>kelur</u>.   (Icelandic)
               me "freezes"[2]
               "I feel cold."

        b.   ...af því   mig <u>kelur.</u>
               ...because me "freezes"
               "...because I feel cold."

I will account for this cross-linguistic variation by means of:
• the amount of structure involved
• lexical realisation of a head by Merge or Move (Roberts & Roussou 1998, Roberts 2000)
• movement of DP to SpecTP to check Nom vs movement of (remnant) vP to SpecTP (in the
  spirit of Kayne 1998)
• short V-movement to little v or V-movement to T

2. WEATHER VERBS:

In German, *es* is obligatory in constructions that feature a weather verb, whereas in Icelandic
það only shows up in sentence-initial position or immediately following a complementiser.

(10)   a.   **Es** <u>regnet</u>.   (German)
               it rains

        b.   ...daß **es** (gestern)   <u>geregnet</u> <u>hat</u>.
               ...that it (yesterday) rained   has
               "...that it rained (yesterday)."

        c.   Gestern   <u>hat</u> **es** <u>geregnet</u>.
               yesterday has it rained
               "Yesterday, it rained."

(11)   a.   **það** <u>rigndi</u> (í gær).   (Icelandic)
               Expl rained (yesterday)
               "It rained (yesterday)."

        b.   ...að   **það** <u>hafi</u> <u>rignt</u> (í gær).
               ...that Expl has rained (yesterday)
               "...that it rained (yesterday)."

        c.   Í gær   <u>rigndi</u>.
               yesterday rained
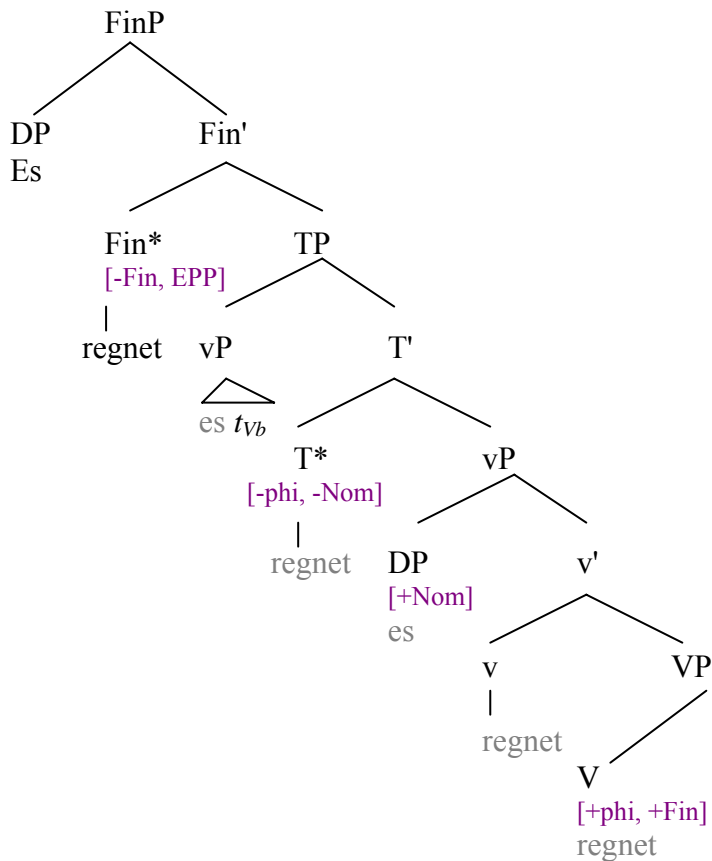   "Yesterday, it rained."

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[2] *Kala* does not exactly mean "freeze", but to lose the feeling in your body because having been in the cold for
too long (Hrafnbjargarson, p.c.)

The derivations[3]:

(10)   a.   Es regnet.   (German)

- merge quasi-argument *es* in SpecvP
- move V (which has moved to v before due to look-ahead) to T to check phi-features
- move remnant vP to SpecTP where *es* checks [Nom]
- move V to Fin to check [Fin]
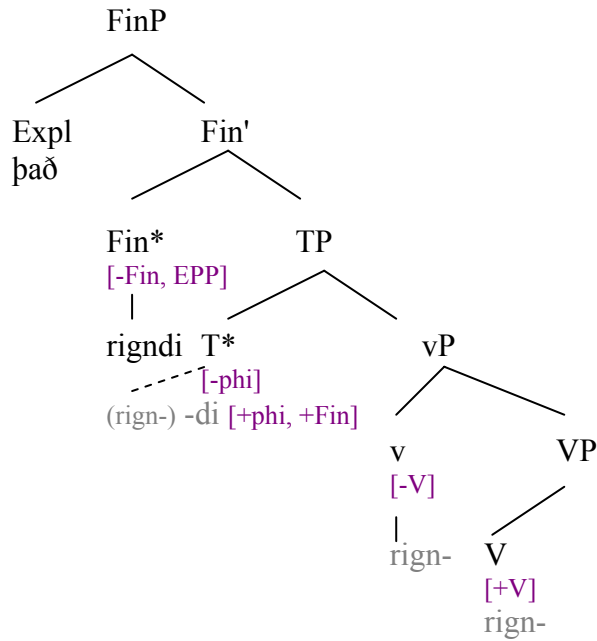- move *es* to SpecFinP to check the EPP-feature

```
                FinP
              /      \
            DP        Fin'
            Es       /    \
                  Fin*     TP
              [-Fin, EPP]  /  \
                  |      vP    T'
               regnet   /\    /  \
                     es t_Vb T*    vP
                          [-phi, -Nom]  / \
                               |      DP    v'
                            regnet  [+Nom] /  \
                                     es   v    VP
                                          |   /
                                       regnet V
                                          [+phi, +Fin]
                                           regnet
```

(11)   a.   það rigndi.   (Icelandic)

- merge V-stem *rign-*
- move *rign-* to v to check [V]
- merge verbal affix *–di* in T, phi-features are checked
- raise V-stem to T to bind verbal morphology
- move V to Fin to check [Fin]
- merge expletive *það* in SpecFinP to check the EPP-feature

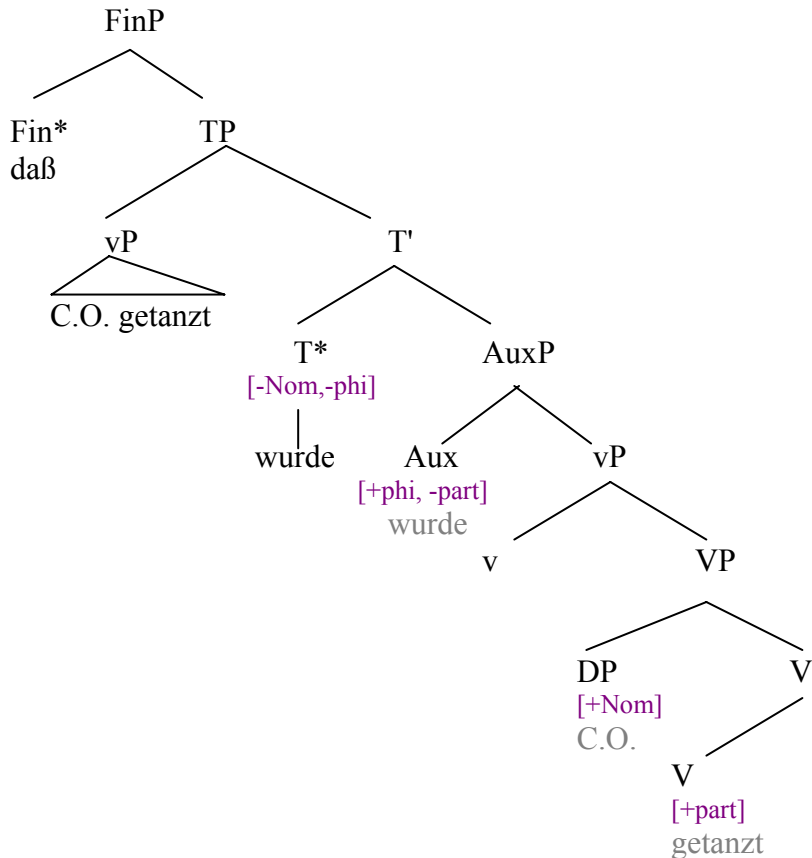[3] In the derivations I only give the relevant steps.

```
                    FinP
                   /    \
              Expl        Fin'
              það        /   \
                     Fin*      TP
                 [-Fin, EPP]  /  \
                    |        /    \
                 rigndi  T*        vP
                 ----- [-phi]     /  \
               (rign-) -di       /    \
                    [+phi, +Fin] v      VP
                               [-V]    / \
                                |     /   \
                              rign-  V
                                   [+V]
                                   rign-
```

German	Icelandic

• *es* is a quasi-argument (10c)
   => *es* is merged in SpecvP
 • V- (or Aux-) movement to T
   => SpecTP has to be filled
   => *es* moves to SpecTP
 	
 • complementiser is merged in Fin
	• *það* is an expletive (11c)
	   => *það* is merged in SpecFinP
	 • verbal affix merged in T
	   => SpecTP is not required
	   => verb stem raising to T to bind affix
	     ($\neq$ V-movement)
	 • embedded V2 with an obligatory
	   complementiser (11b)
	     => complementiser is merged in Force

3. IMPERSONAL PASSIVES:

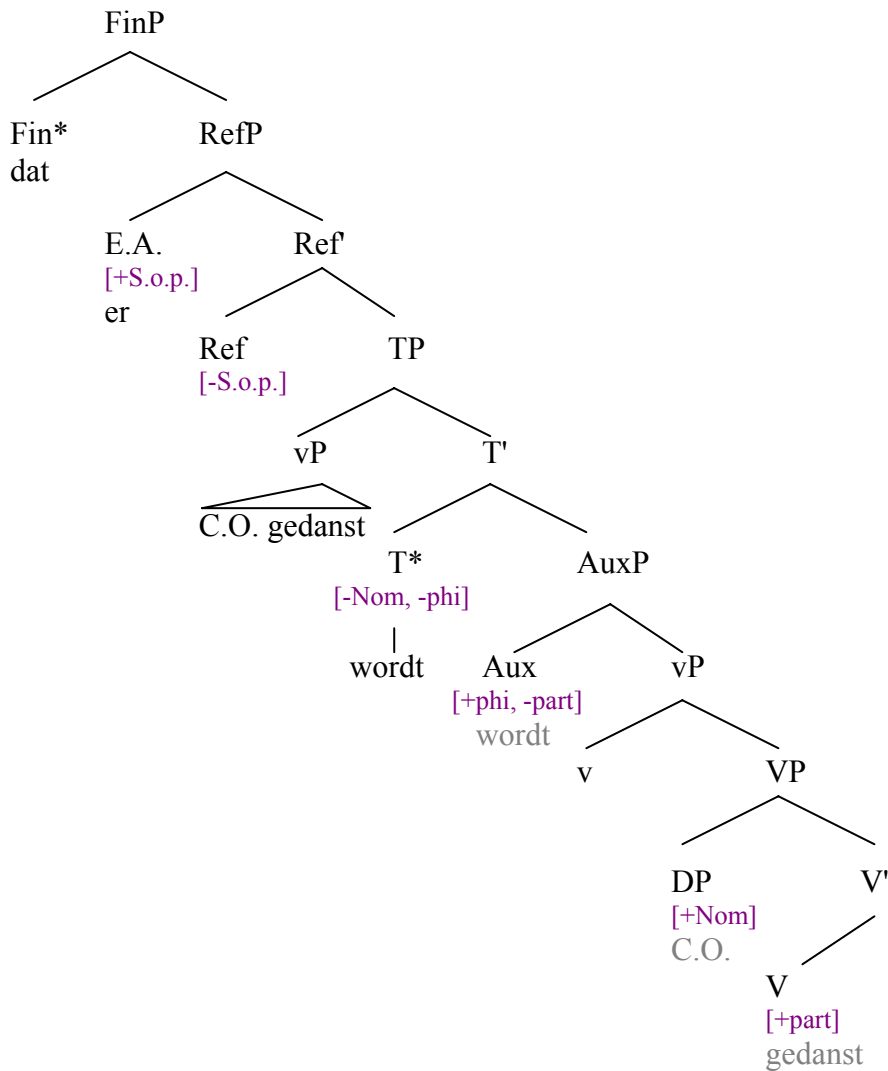(1)   b.   ... daß getanzt wurde.   (German)

• merge an abstract cognate object in SpecVP
• move the auxiliary *wurde* to T and check phi-features
• move the complete vP to SpecTP. The C.O. checks [Nom] and *getanzt* checks [part].
• merge complementiser *daß* in Fin

```
                    FinP
                   /    \
              Fin*       TP
              daß       /  \
                      vP      T'
                     /  \    /  \
              C.O. getanzt  T*      AuxP
                          [-Nom,-phi]   /  \
                             |        Aux    vP
                           wurde   [+phi, -part]  /  \
                                    wurde        v    VP
                                                     /  \
                                                   DP    V'
                                                 [+Nom]    \
                                                  C.O.      V
                                                         [+part]
                                                         getanzt
```

(2)   b.   …dat (er) gedanst wordt   (Dutch)

(i) If *er* is not present we get exactly the same derivation as in German.
     The interpretation of the clause would roughly be that "all the people at the party were dancing".

(ii) *Er* does not only feature as a pure expletive but can also have an effect on the semantics of the sentence which then refers to a non-specific group of people (≠ the complete set). In the latter case I take *er* to be the realisation of an optional event argument.
     The interpretation of (2b) with *er* would roughly be that "some of the people at the party were dancing".

• merge an abstract cognate object in SpecVP
• move the auxiliary *wordt* to T and check phi-features
• move the complete vP to SpecTP. The C.O. checks [Nom] and *gedanst* checks [part].
• merge event argument (E.A.) *er* as subject-of-predication in SpecRefP (cf. Kiss 1996, Cardinaletti 2002)
     Cardinaletti (2002) suggests that in thetic sentences (answers to "what happened?") we have a location-goal argument (which can be null) in a position higher than the position of indefinite subjects
     => (a) accounts for the fact that the implicit agent is interpreted as a non-specific group of people if *er* is present; (b) *er* is derived from a locative demonstrative
• merge complementiser *dat* in Fin

```
                    FinP
                   /    \
              Fin*       RefP
              dat       /    \
                    E.A.      Ref'
                  [+S.o.p.]  /    \
                    er    Ref      TP
                       [-S.o.p.]  /   \
                              vP       T'
                             /  \     /   \
                      C.O. gedanst  T*      AuxP
                                [-Nom, -phi]  /    \
                                    |       Aux      vP
                                  wordt   [+phi, -part] /  \
                                          wordt       v      VP
                                                          /     \
                                                       DP        V'
                                                     [+Nom]        \
                                                      C.O.          V
                                                               [+part]
                                                               gedanst
```

(3)   b.   ...að það hafi verið dansað (í gær).   (Icelandic)

- merge an abstract cognate object in SpecVP
- move the verb stem of the lexical verb ("dance") to v where it is probably associated with participial morphology.
  If V-movement stops in v (i.e. does not proceed to T), movement of vP is impossible and only constituents of vP can move.
- merge finite morphology in T (phi-features get checked)
- raise the verb stem of "have" to T to bind verbal morphology
- move the C.O. to SpecTP to check [Nom][4]
- move *hafi* to Fin to check [Fin] (=> embedded V2!)
- merge expletive *það* in SpecFinP to satisfy Fin's EPP-feature
- merge complementiser *að* in Force

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[4] If non-referential cognate objects have to be licensed *in situ* as is pointed out by Cabredo Hofherr (2000), it might also be the case that the C.O. does not move to SpecTP (as an affix is merged in T, SpecTP need not be filled) and [Nom] is checked by whatever mechanism allows for nominative objects in Dat-Nom constructions (further research is required here).

Some remarks on the other Icelandic examples of impersonal passives:

(3)   b'.   [?]...að í gær hafi verið dansað.

Although Icelandic has embedded V2, (3b') is marginal because topicalisation of a PP is only marginally available – even in main clauses as can be seen in (3c).
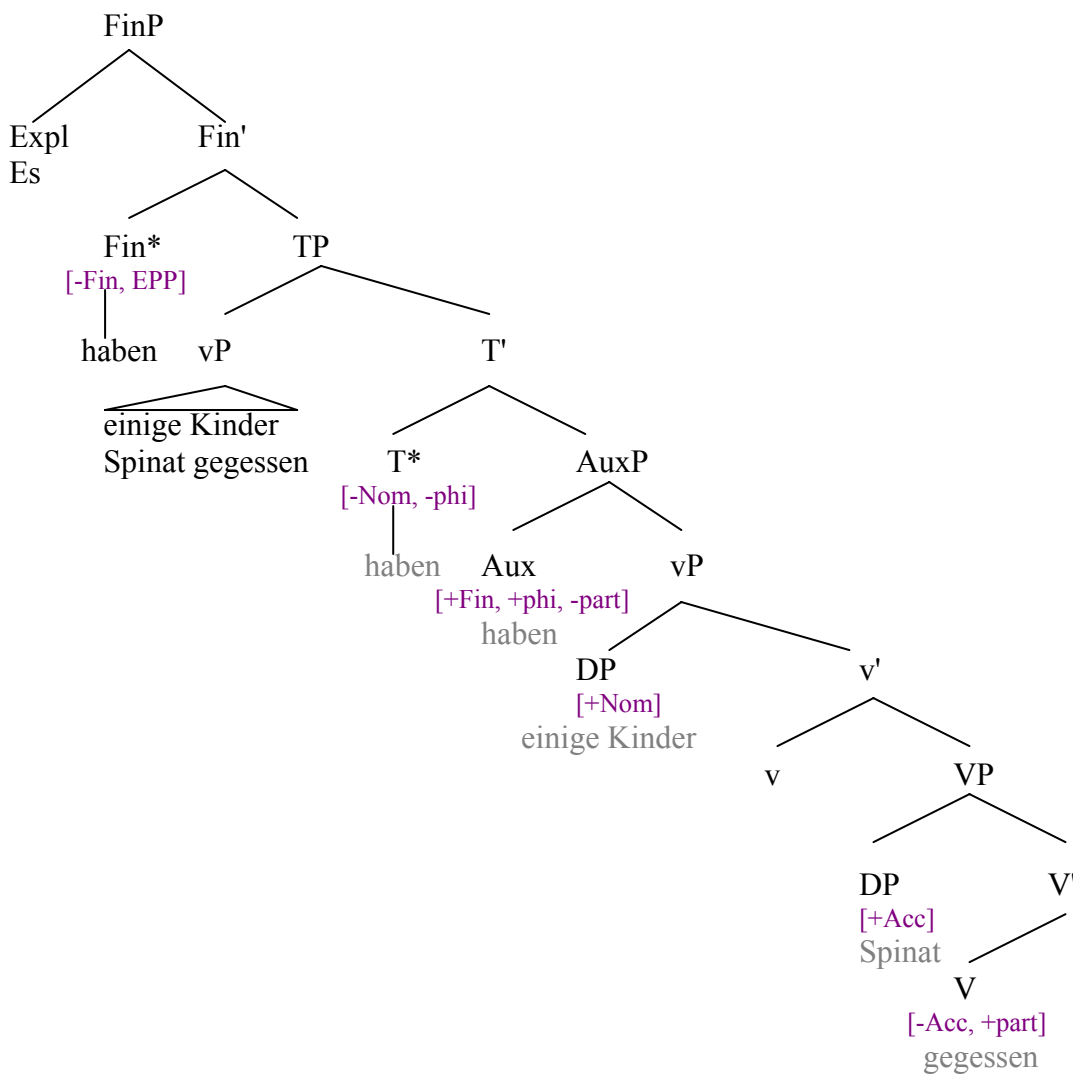
(3)   c.   [?]Í gær var dansað.

Icelandic allows for V1 narratives much more easily than German. That's why the expletive in (3a) is optional.

(3)   a.   (það) var dansað.

4. TRANSITIVE EXPLETIVE CONSTRUCTIONS (TECs):

(4)   Es haben einige Kinder Spinat gegessen.   (German)

• merge the object DP *Spinat* in SpecVP
• merge the subject DP *einige Kinder* in SpecvP
• move Aux *haben* from Aux to T to check phi-features
• move the complete vP to SpecTP to check [Nom] and [part]
[• If the subject is definite as in (4'), move the subject DP to SpecRefP.

(4')   Es   haben   die Kinder   ihre   Hausaufgaben gemacht.
       Expl have-pl the children their homework   done
       "The children have done their homework."]

• move *haben* to Fin (via Ref if we have a definite subject) to check [Fin]
• merge *es* in SpecFinP to check the EPP

(5)   Er hat iemand een appel gegeten.   (Dutch)
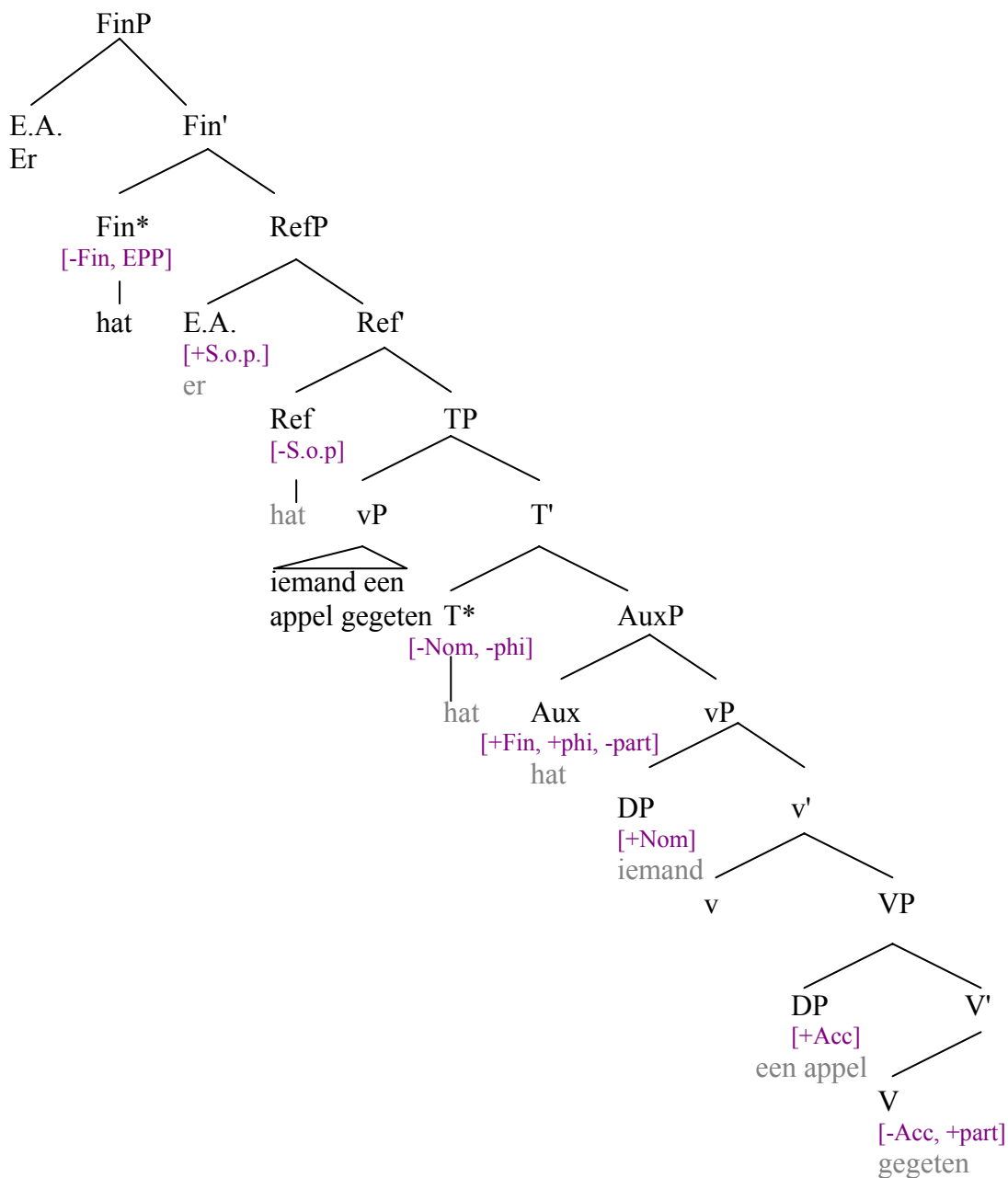
- merge object DP *een appel* in SpecVP
- merge subject DP *iemand* in SpecvP
- move Aux *hat* from Aux to T to check phi-features
- move the complete vP to SpecTP to check [Nom] and [part]
- merge event argument *er* in SpecRefP as a subject-of-predication
  => "indefiniteness" of the event described
  => "novelty" of the situation and of the arguments of the verb => DE
- move *hat* to Fin (has to have gone through Ref due to look-ahead & HMC) to check [Fin]
- move *er* to SpecFinP to satisfy the EPP

(6)   það hafa margir jólasveinar borðað búðing.   (Icelandic)

FinP
├── Expl
│   það
└── Fin'
    ├── Fin*
    │   [-Fin, EPP]
    │   hafa
    └── TP
        ├── DP
        │   margir
        │   jólasveinar
        └── T'
            ├── T*
            │   [-Nom, -phi]
            │   (haf-) -a [+phi, +Fin]
            └── AuxP
                ├── Aux
                │   haf-
                └── vP
                    ├── DP
                    │   [+Nom]
                    │   margir jólasveinar
                    └── v'
                        ├── v
                        │   -að
                        │   borð-
                        └── VP
                            ├── DP
                            │   [+Acc]
                            │   búðing
                            └── V'
                                └── V
                                    [-Acc]
                                    borð-
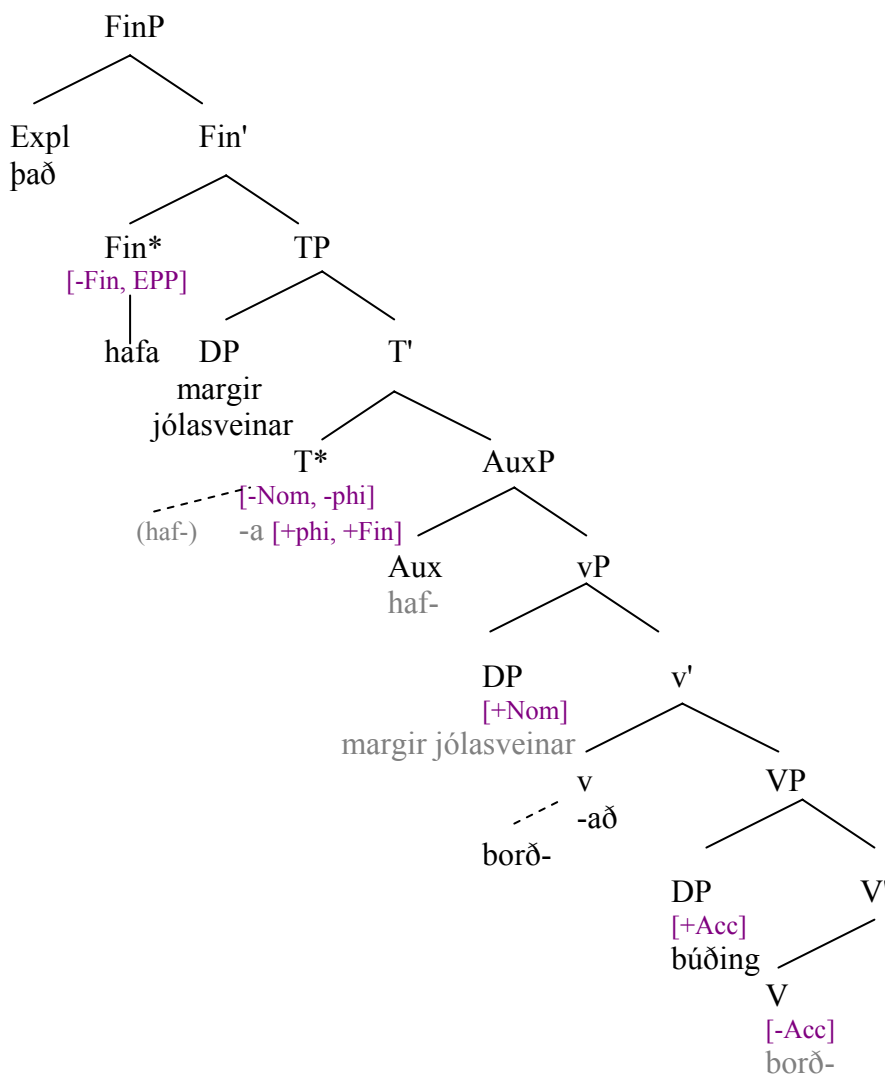
- merge V-stem of "eat" in V
- merge object DP *búðing* in SpecVP
- move V-stem to v (probably to pick up participial morphology)
  => this short V-movement makes vP-movement impossible
- merge subject DP *margir jólasveinar* in SpecvP
- merge stem of the auxiliary "have" in Aux

- merge finite morphology in T (phi-features get checked)
- raise Aux-stem to T to bind the affix
- move subject DP to SpecTP to check [Nom]

Assuming that the negation *ekki* marks the left edge of vP the ungrammaticality of sentences like (12) shows that vP-movement is not possible if V has just moved to v.

(12)   * það   hafa   margir stúdentar lesið bækur Chomskys ekki.
          Expl have-pl many   students   read books Chomsky's not
          "Many students have not read Chomsky's books."

- move finite auxiliary *hafa* to Fin to check [Fin]
- merge expletive *það* in SpecFinP to satisfy the EPP

Problem:
I cannot account for the fact that Icelandic TECs display a definiteness effect (DE), as illustrated in (13) and (14).

(13)   það   hafa   margir stúdentar (ekki) lesið bækur Chomskys.
          Expl have-pl many   students (not) read books Chomsky's
          "Many students have (not) read Chomsky's books."

(14)   * það   hafa   stúdentarnir aldrei lesið bækur eftir Chomsky.
          Expl have-pl the-students never read books by   Chomsky
          "The studens have never read any books by Chomsky."

Maybe definite subjects do not only have to move to SpecRefP but to SpecFinP in Icelandic.
(a) This requirement might be correlated with the possibility of having dative subjects.
(b) This requirement would also explain why it is hard to put PPs like *í gær* in sentence-initial position.
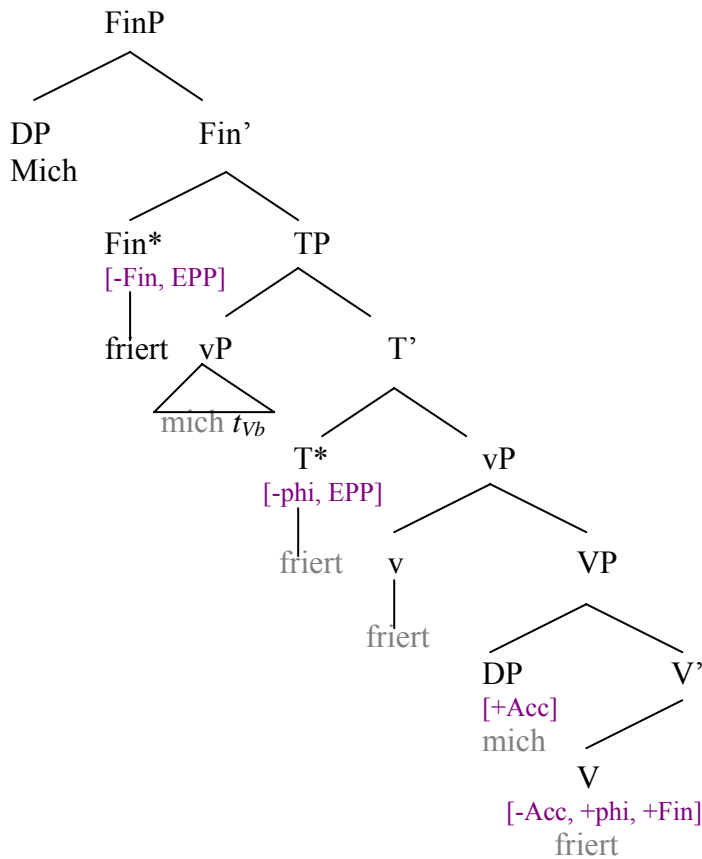
If this assumption is right, the fact that we cannot get definite subjects in TECs in Icelandic is due to the presence of *það* in SpecFinP which blocks movement of the subject to this position.

5. IMPERSONAL PSYCH-VERB CONSTRUCTIONS:

(7)   a.   Mich friert.[5]   (German)
(9)   a.   Mig kelur.   (Icelandic)

- T is not necessarily associated with a [-Nom]-feature
- either vP moves to SpecTP and checks the EPP on T (German) or T is realised by verbal morphology (Icelandic)
- in main clauses the experiencer argument moves to SpecFinP.

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[5] This analysis only refers to the variants without an *es* in German. I take *es* to be a quasi-argument – so if it is present it is merged in SpecvP and carries a [+Nom]-feature which it checks against T.

```
                FinP
              /      \
           DP          Fin'
          Mich        /    \
                   Fin*      TP
                 [-Fin, EPP]  /   \
                   |        vP     T'
                 friert   /  \    /   \
                        mich t_Vb  T*      vP
                              [-phi, EPP]  /  \
                                 |        v     VP
                               friert     |    /   \
                                       friert DP      V'
                                            [+Acc]    \
                                            mich       V
                                                  [-Acc, +phi, +Fin]
                                                       friert
```

- merge experiencer in SpecVP
- move finite lexical verb *friert* via v (HMC) to T and check phi-features
- move remnant vP to SpecTP to check the EPP
- move *friert* to Fin to check [Fin]
- move experiencer DP to SpecFinP to satisfy the EPP

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APPENDIX – MY ASSUMPTIONS:

My work is based on the minimalist framework (Chomsky 1995, 1999) but I extend the number of functional projections following the cartographic approach (Cardinaletti 2002, Rizzi 2002) which proposes a specialisation of functional categories wrt features.

Clause structure:
C-system:	(Force) (Top) (Foc) (Fin)
I-system:	(Ref) (Top) (Foc) T (Aux)
V-system:	v, V

– I assume a Split-CP, following Rizzi (1997).
– Brackets indicate optionality. However, the optionality of Fin is different from the optionality of the other heads. The presence or absence of Force, Top, Foc and Ref depends on semantic, interpretational, discourse-related needs, whereas presence or absence of Fin is basically a question of which language you look at (e.g.: Fin is obligatory in V2 languages while in English it is present in residual V2 constructions only).
– RefP stands for "ReferencePhrase". Definite subjects have to go into SpecRefP. (Kiss 1996, Koopman & Szabolcsi 2000)
– Scrambling is analysed as movement to TopP and FocP in the I-system.
– vP is obligatory. However, vP does not have a Spec if the verb is passive or unaccusative.
– I assume that the internal argument DP (=> direct object or derived subject) is merged in SpecVP (Hale & Keyser 1993, Roberts 2000)
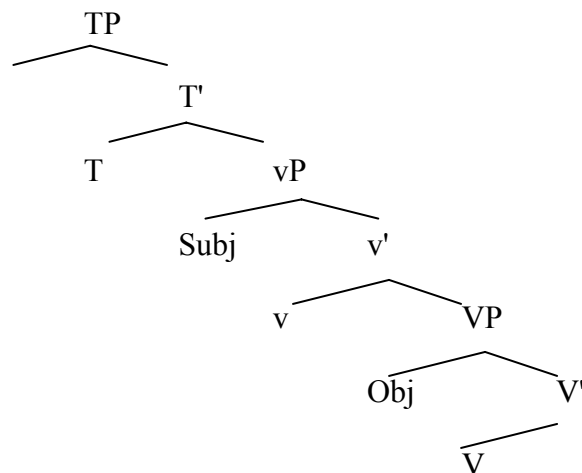
Checking:
• Lexical elements are associated with features which they have to check against matching features in the functional domain.
• All checking is done in head-head or Spec-head relations (looking into Spec is possible, cf. Müller 2001, 2002).
• Long-distance agree is not possible, except for checking of verbal phi-features in languages with poor verbal morphology.
• All features (except for EPP) come in a [+]- and in a [–]-version and checking means that we have to end up with a +/– pair. Neither version can survive on its own and failure to check a feature will make the derivation crash.
• If a feature on a head A is checked by movement of a head B (and not by MERGE), A's specifier has to be filled/A has to have an EPP-feature.