

# CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	9
<b>1 Introduction</b>	11
1.1 Introduction to Morphological Case in Icelandic	11
1.2 Theories of Case	14
1.2 Hypothesis and Goals	16
1.3 Methods	18
1.5 Disposition	19
<b>PART I</b>	21
<b>2 Construction Grammar and the Usage-Based Model</b>	21
2.1 Introduction	21
2.2 Background	21
2.3 Basic Assumptions	22
2.4 Network Models	26
2.5 Radical Construction Grammar	29
2.6 The Usage-based Model	30
2.7 Morphological Case	33
2.8 Summary	39
<b>3 Syntactic and Semantic Analysis</b>	41
3.1 Introduction	41
3.2 Syntactic Overview	41
3.2.1 The Syntactic Analysis	41
3.2.2 Morphological Case and Syntactic Functions	51
3.2.2.1 Nominative	51
3.2.2.2 Accusative	51
3.2.2.3 Dative	53
3.2.2.4 Genitive	54
3.2.2.5 Summary	56
3.3 Semantic Overview	57

## *CASE IN ICELANDIC*

3.3.1 The Semantic Analysis	57
3.3.2 Morphological Case and Thematic Roles	65
3.3.2.1 Nominative	65
3.3.2.2 Accusative	67
3.3.2.3 Dative	69
3.3.2.4 Genitive	70
3.3.2.5 Summary	72
<b>4 Statistical Distribution of Case in Modern Icelandic</b>	<b>75</b>
4.1 Introduction	75
4.2 The Investigation	75
4.2.1 The Corpus	76
4.2.2 The Tagging of the Texts	78
4.2.3 Grammatical Analysis	79
4.2.4 Comparison with Older Studies	80
4.3 Frequencies	85
4.3.1 Morphological Case and Syntactic Functions	86
4.3.2 Morphological Case and Thematic Roles	91
4.3.3 Syntactic Functions and Thematic Roles	95
4.3.4 Morphological Case, Syntactic Functions and Thematic Roles	100
4.3.5 Conclusions	102
4.4 Summary	107
<b>5 Productivity of the Cases</b>	<b>109</b>
5.1 Introduction	109
5.2 The Icelandic Data	109
5.2.1 A Sample of New Icelandic Verbs	109
5.2.2 Icelandic Schematic Constructions	112
5.3 The Findings	117
5.3.1 General Conclusions	118
5.3.2 Predictions of Different Theories on Productivity	119
5.3.3 The Argument Structure of Novel Verbs	130
5.3.3.1 Cluster Attraction	130
5.3.3.2 Isolate Attraction	131
5.3.3.3 Argument Structure Borrowing	132
5.3.4 Case	134
5.3.4.1 The Novel Usage of the Dative Case	134
5.3.4.1.1 Dative Subjects	134

## *CASE IN ICELANDIC*

5.3.4.1.2 Dative Objects	137
5.3.4.2 The Novel Usage of the Accusative Case	139
5.3.4.3 A Choice of Accusative or Dative	141
5.4 Summary	142
<b>6 Other Functions of Case Morphology</b>	<b>145</b>
6.1 Introduction	145
6.2 Case as a Lexical Device	146
6.3 Human vs. Non-human	148
6.4 Equality vs. Non-equality	149
6.5 Directed vs. Undirected Motion	151
6.6 Dative of Movement/Transfer	151
6.7 The Nominative vs. the Dative Passive	156
6.8 The Nominative vs. the Dative Ergative	157
6.9 The Semantics of the Syntactic Cases	158
6.10 Summary	160
<b>PART II</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>7 Case in Old Icelandic and the Development of Case in the Germanic Languages</b>	<b>163</b>
7.1 Introduction	163
7.2 The Investigation	163
7.2.1 The Text Material	164
7.2.2 The Tagging of the Texts	166
7.2.3 The Vocabulary	167
7.2.4 The Morphological Analysis	167
7.2.5 The Syntactic Analysis	168
7.3 Frequencies	174
7.3.1 Morphological Case and Word Category	174
7.3.2 Morphological Case and Syntactic Functions	178
7.3.3 Morphological Case and Thematic Roles	183
7.3.4 Syntactic Functions and Thematic Roles	184
7.3.5 Morphological Case, Syntactic Functions and Thematic Roles	186
7.3.6 Conclusions	188
7.4 Theories on the Development of Case	188
7.4.1 Synthetic to Analytic	189
7.4.2 Case and Word Order	191



## Acknowledgements

I begin by thanking my supervisor, Christer Platzack, for his support, friendship, linguistic discussions, comments on various versions of the dissertation, and his endless interest in my work. I thank you, Christer, for not giving up on me when I was most defiant in my own search for theoretical independence. I also thank my co-supervisor, Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson at the University of Iceland, for discussions and comments on the dissertation, and linguistic support over the years.

In addition, I am indebted to the following people who have read and commented on the work presented in this book, or parts of it: Adele Goldberg, Bill Croft, Halldór Á. Sigurðsson, Joan Maling, Jóhannes G. Jónsson, Kendra Willson, Lars-Olof Delsing, Ute Bohnacker, Vigfús Geirdal, Willem Hollmann, Þórhallur Eyþórsson, and the audiences of various seminars and conferences around the world where I have presented earlier versions of this work. In particular, I thank Lars-Olof for detailed comments and various suggestions to improve this book.

I have been fortunate that both my statistical consultant and my English language consultant speak Icelandic. That has been a great asset. I hereby thank Anders Holtsberg for statistical consultation and Alan Crozier for correcting my English.

I feel grateful to everybody in the Department of Scandinavian Languages at Lund University. Without you I would not be here today. Of my colleagues in Lund I feel especially in debt to Adriana Ojeda-F, Gunlög Josefsson, Halldór Á. Sigurðsson, Lars-Johan Ekerot, Lillemor Santesson, Ute Bohnacker and Valéria Molnár for support. My thanks also go to all my other colleagues in Lund, and the friends I have made there over the years, too numerous to mention here.

I am also greatly indebted to my colleagues in the NOS-H project "Focus Structure, Word Order and Thematic Structure", running from 1995-2000. I thank Valéria Molnár (Sweden), Lars Heltoft (Denmark), Jorunn Hetland (Norway), and Marja Järventausta (Finland) for our joyful meetings over the years and for support and friendship. In particular, I thank Valéria Molnár for her encouragement.

I have spent this last year of dissertation writing in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Manchester. I am immensely grateful to the department for having welcomed me as a Visiting Research Fellow and providing me with work environment and all facilities. Thank you, Kersti, for that and for helping me with all kinds of practical matters. I am grateful to everybody at the department, in particular my room-mates

## CASE IN ICELANDIC

Erika Chisarik, Ioanna Sitaridou, Katrin Hietam, Rob O'Connor and Sandra Paoli for their social and emotional support. Thank you, Rob, for always having the time to answer all my questions. I also want to thank the secretary, Carolyn Cook for her friendliness and interest. For particularly stimulating linguistic discussions and support, I thank my friends in the cognitive collective: Bill Croft, Chiaki Taoka, Maike Nielsen, Willem Hollmann and Violeta Sotirova. For special friendship I thank Willem and Vito. My deepest gratitude also goes to Tolli and Rósa for everything they have done for me during this year in Manchester. I thank you, Tolli, for all our stimulating linguistic discussions. These have been a real pleasure.

My doctoral studies have been funded with generous graduate student fellowships from Lund University, RANNÍS (The Icelandic Research Council) and STINT (The Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education). I have also received research grants from NOS-H (The Nordic Research Councils for the Humanities), the Crafoord Foundation, and Gunvor och Josef Anérs stiftelse, for various parts of the doctoral project. My grandmother, Sesselja G. Barðdal, contributed financially to the final stretch of the dissertation writing. The following funding bodies have made smaller contributions: Dept. of Scandinavian Languages, Fil dr. Uno Otterstedts fond, Knut och Alice Wallenbergs stiftelse, Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund, Landshövding Per Westlings minnesfond, Letterstedtska föreningen and Syskonen Anna Cecilia och Otto Sigfrid Granmarks stipendiefond. Had it not been for this funding my doctoral studies would not have been completed.

When compiling the text corpora used in the research presented in Chapters 4 and 7, I gained access to the private libraries of some of my fellow Icelanders in Lund and Manchester: Árni Sverrisson, Guðrún Valsdóttir, Haukur Viggósson, Hrefna Róbertsdóttir, Ragnar Ásmundsson, Rannveig Ólafsdóttir, Steingrímur Jónsson, Vigfús Geirdal and Þórhallur Eypórsson. I thank them and their families.

I am very grateful to Ulla Holmström and her family in Veberöd for having provided me with childcare when I desperately needed it, over a period of many years. My deepest thanks go to them. I am also immensely grateful to my family in Iceland for their support, especially to my grandmother, Sesselja G. Barðdal, to whom I dedicate this book. Last but not least, I thank my son, Hörður, whom I love the most, for his endless patience towards an ever-working mum.

Manchester and Lund, June 2001  
Jóhanna Barðdal