The Icelandic Preposition *hjá* 'at': Its Role in Canonical Intransitive Sentences[1]

Toshiko Yamaguchi
University of Malaya

Abstract

This paper seeks to explain the roles that the preposition hjá *plays in canonical intransitive sentences in Icelandic. According to Hopper and Thompson's (1980) transitivity hypothesis, this type of intransitive sentence is characterised by the expression of an event that contains a participant affected by that event. The Icelandic intransitive sentence designates a change of state, agentivity, and a resultant state. The third meaning is particularly important as it expresses a situation that is not necessarily part of the meaning of the predicate but rather evoked by the speaker's real-world knowledge. The addition of* hjá *makes the intransitive sentence more transitive because it gives rise to an additional participant. The key to understanding the unique behaviour of* hjá *is to decode its semantic and pragmatic, or conceptual, properties. The entire issue ultimately comes down to two fundamental questions: how do we perceive the world and how is it coded in a language?*

Keywords: *hjá*, Icelandic, intransitive sentence, perception, semantics, pragmatics

1.   Introduction

According to Hopper and Thompson (1980) in their epoch-making paper, the canonical intransitive sentence is characterised by two components: first, it expresses a one-participant event; second, this participant is typically affected by the event (e.g., it undergoes a change of state) (see also Kittilä, 2002; Næss, 2007). A sentence such as *The vase broke* (see (5b)), which contains the so-called unaccusative verb *break,* is a representative example. Because it typically expresses a change of state, this type of sentence is also known as an inchoative sentence (Haspelmath, 1993; Levin and Rappaport Hovav, 1995). In this paper, I will use these two notions interchangeably. Within the framework of the transitivity hypothesis proposed by Hopper and Thompson (1980), canonical and noncanonical intransitive sentences are defined by the number of participants and/or the degree of the semantic properties shared by each participant (i.e., A for Agent and O for Object). That is to say, in (1), the Icelandic sentence (a) is more intransitive than (b) due to the fact that the former has only one participant, whereas the latter has two. Note that (2) is higher in transitivity than (1) since it has two participants, one of which is an agent (i.e.,

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Gunnar) who is kinesic, volitional, and affirmative in an act of recounting (p. 252).

(1) a. Sagan   útskýrðist.
   novel.the.NOM.SG explain.3SG.PAST
   'The novel was recounted.'

  b. Sagan   útskýrðist **hjá** **Gunnari**.
   novel.the.NOM.SG explain.3SG.PAST at Gunnar.DAT
   'The novel was explained by Gunnar.' (see 19b, 35a)

(2) Gunnar   útskýrði   söguna.
   Gunnar.NOM explain.3SG.PAST novel.the.ACC.SG
   'Gunnar recounted the novel.'

The hallmark of the transitivity hypothesis is that transitive and intransitive sentences form a continuum and that this continuum is viewed as gradual with respect to how "an activity is 'carried-over' or 'transferred' from an agent to a patient" (single quotation marks in original) (Hopper & Thompson, 1980, p. 251). This gradualness is shown by the strong, medium, or weak involvement or affectedness of O and is designated in its morphosyntax. To take well-known English examples, O (the wall) is more affected in (3a) than it is in (3b) (p. 262):

(3) a. We sprayed the wall with paint.

  b. We sprayed paint on the wall.

The examples in (4) demonstrate the equivalents of (3) in Hungarian; they make use of the morphology of O (*fal*-RA versus *fal*-AT) to express the different degrees of affectedness of the wall (Hopper & Thompson, 1980, p. 262, (35)).

(4) a. János festék-et fújt a fal-ra.
       paint-OBJ sprayed the wall-on
   'Janos sprayed paint on the wall.'

  b. János fefújta a fal-at festék-kel.
       sprayed the wall-ACC paint-with
   'Janos sprayed the wall with paint.'

The Icelandic examples in (1) and (2) differ significantly from those in (3) and (4) precisely because the higher transitivity conveyed by (1b) is signaled by the addition of the personal noun *Gunnar*, which appears in a prepositional phrase headed by *hjá*, but not by the morphology of O. Although the exact meaning of this third-party agent depends on the context of the situation, its shared function is to partake in the event either indirectly or supplementarily (see Section 5 for more details). In point of fact, the principle of Hopper and Thompson's

transitivity hypothesis is basically semantic; it is not intended to account for this pragmatic agent. The question of why such an agent comes into play is therefore left unanswered.

Another area of study in relation to transitivity is predicate decomposition, as represented by Levin and Rappaport Hovav's work (1995; 2005). The advantage of this approach apparently lies in the fact that the intransitive sentence can be observed without reliance on gradualness through a direct contrast with its alternative transitive sentence. An oft-cited example is the alternation of an ambitransitive verb such as *break*.

(5) a.   The child broke the vase.

b.   The vase broke.

By proposing decompositional representations, as shown in (6), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) claim that the difference between (5a) and (5b) is that while the former makes the agent overtly explicit, the latter does not, although it is implied covertly.

(6) a.   [DO (child)] CAUSE [BECOME [STATE broken (vase)]]

b.   [BECOME [STATE [broken (vase)]]

As Jacobsen (2007) maintains with respect to his Japanese data, there are numerous counterexamples for these representations. For example, an intransitive sentence can arise without the external intervention of an implicit agent; in other words, the so-called spontaneous event (e.g., *mieru* 'can be seen' in Japanese) can happen independently of an external force. To summarise his claim for the benefit of this discussion, the decompositional approach is problematic because the representation of the intransitive is integrated as part of the transitive (cf. Miller and Johnson-Laird, 1976, p. 469 for a similar observation). *The child* in (5a) is considered to be the causer in an externally caused event, while such an external causer is absent in (6b), although it is underlyingly effective. In other words, the intransitive event part remains unchanged in both representations. The sole difference is whether the external causer is explicit or implicit. The meaning expressed by (6b) is thus regarded as a derivative of (6a). As we have briefly seen above, the intransitive in Icelandic, which permits the third-party agent, does not concur with this approach. The reason for this is clear: the representation for the intransitive is unable to welcome this pragmatically invited agent.

The purpose of this paper is to explain what the addition of the preposition *hjá* means for the study of transitivity. While I share the view that the presence of different intransitive sentences in Icelandic may support the prototypical structure, as the transitivity hypothesis predicts, in the sense that these sentences demonstrate a core-periphery continuum caused by the transference of an activity from an agent to a patient, I take the position that the motivation for the

rise of intransitive sentences may not necessarily pertain to this structure. I contend that the motivation derives from two assumptions. First, *contrary to* the general consensus among scholars (Haspelmath, 1993; Jacobsen, 2007, p. 30), the Icelandic intransitive sentence is not always a telic change-of-state event; rather, it expresses a resultant state that emerges as a consequence of the accomplishment of the event denoted by the predicate (Section 3). Pragmatically, the resultant state can also include an atelic situation of an independent event that is inferred from the given context of a situation (Section 4). Second, the functions assigned to *hjá* are the extensions of its locative meaning 'at the side of', which is the primary meaning assigned to *hjá* as a preposition (Section 2). These extensions, *hjá*'s primary meaning, and the speaker's perceptual abilities are shown to be anchored to each other (Section 5). In my conclusion (Section 6), I draw attention to three issues. Firstly, that the realisation of the co-existence of semantics and pragmatics is the key to decoding *hjá*'s behaviour. Secondly, that this coexistence proves that the way we perceive or construe the world makes semantics and pragmatics form a continuum and, what is more, the way it is coded in a language underpins the formation of meaning. Thirdly, I briefly discuss the idea that the behaviour of *hjá* does not fully comply with current cognitive theories, although the involvement of cognitive activities is conspicuous.

2.   The Semantics of *hjá*

The preposition *hjá* was originally a noun referring to 'people in the household.' This nominal was later extended to acquire the prepositional meaning 'at the side of,' 'close to,' or 'with' (Magnússon, 1989, p. 331). This locative meaning, which accentuates the closeness of people, is still reflected in the meaning of *hjá* in present-day Icelandic. The difference between (7a) and (7b), in which the synonymous preposition *með* appears, is that the former implies that *Jón* is at his girlfriend's place and that they are therefore close to each other, whereas the latter merely expresses the togetherness of *Jón* and his girlfriend and does not inform us about the place that brings them together. Note that the place mentioned in (7a) may be an apartment or a house that belongs to, or is closely connected to, his girlfriend. The key issue is that the person that co-occurs with *hjá* reveals his or her attachment to the place. In the case of (8), John's girlfriend may be working in the library. The exact nature of this attachment is ultimately decided by the context of the situation. When *hjá* is replaced by *með*, this implication disappears.

(7) a.   Jón   er   **hjá   kærustunni**.
          John.NOM   is   at   girlfriend.the.DAT.SG
          'John is with his girlfriend.'

     b.   Jón   er   með   kærustunni.
          John.NOM   is   with   girlfriend.the.DAT.SG
          'John is with his girlfriend.'

(8) Jón   er   **hjá kærustunni**   í   bókasafninu.
John.NOM   is   at   girlfriend.the.DAT.SG   in   library.the.DAT.SG
'John is with his girlfriend in the library.'

Another point worthy of mention is the fact that what exactly *hjá* refers to depends on whether the entity it modifies is an animate or an inanimate entity. In the former case, it highlights the internal space of a place. As observed above, (7a) implies that John and his girlfriend reside in her apartment (or house). When *hjá* co-occurs with an inanimate entity such as a library, as in (9a), it merely denotes someone's close location to that entity (i.e., John met his girlfriend near the library). If John met his girlfriend in the library (i.e., inside it), another preposition, *í,* is used, as exemplified by (9b). Note that *hjá* phrases in intransitive examples, such as those presented in Sections 3 to 5, always contain an animate entity.

(9) a. Jón   hitti   kærustuna   **hjá bókasafninu**.
       John.NOM   meet.SG.PAST   girlfriend.the.ACC.SG.   at   library.the.DAT SG
       'Jón met his girlfriend near the library.'

     b. Jón   hitti   kærustuna   í   bókasafninu.
       John.NOM   meet.SG.PAST   girlfriend.the.ACC.SG   in   library.the.DAT SG
       'Jón met his girlfriend in the library.'

This short exploration of *hjá* is important to the interpretation of *hjá* that occurs in the intransitive sentence by virtue of the fact that the meaning component of 'being inside someone's place' is the vital resource for the extensions of *hjá* (Section 5).

3. Properties of the Icelandic Canonical Intransitive Sentence

Recall that a canonical intransitive sentence contains a participant that is affected by the denoted event (Section 1). 'Affectedness' is a gradual concept, and the degree of affectedness differs in individual examples. This section demonstrates that there are essentially three semantic properties of the Icelandic canonical intransitive sentence: 'change of state' (3.1), 'agentivity' (3.2), and 'resultant state' (3.3). The point highlighted here is that a change of state should be conceptually separated from a resultant state (the situation that results from an event denoted by the predicate). For the sake of clarity, examples are given together with their transitive counterparts.

3.1. *Change of State*

Transitive verbs such as *brjóta* 'break' or *beygja* 'bend' that lexically encode the meaning of a change of state can have an intransitive counterpart that also expresses a change of state. What is denoted in (10b) and (11b) is a change from being unbroken/unbent to being broken/bent.

(10) a.　Jón　　　　braut　　　　　gluggann.
　　　　　Jón.NOM　　break.3SG.PAST　　window.the.ACC.SG
　　　　　'Jón broke the window.'

　　　b.　Glugginn　　　　　　brotnaði.
　　　　　window.the.NOM.SG　　break.3SG.PAST
　　　　　'The window broke.'

(11) a.　Pétur　　　　beygði　　　　stafinn.
　　　　　Pétur.NOM　　bend.3SG.PAST　　stick.the.ACC.SG
　　　　　'Pétur bent the stick.'

　　　b.　Stafurinn　　　　　bognaði.
　　　　　stick.the.NOM.SG　　bend.3SG.PAST
　　　　　'The stick bent.'

3.2.　　Agentivity

Agentivity can be examined through the use of an instrumental phrase. As early as Fillmore (2003 [1970]), linguists have been aware that English can allow an inanimate entity such as an instrument to be the subject of a transitive construction. The reason for this use of an instrument is that the instrument (e.g., a key) can replace the agent because it is manipulated by the agent. An interesting fact in Icelandic is that although an instrument does not appear in a subject position of a transitive construction, as shown in (12b) and (13b), the presence of an instrument saves the grammaticality of an intransitive construction, as shown in (12d) and (13d). This behaviour can be accounted for by the nature of cutting and peeling, since these activities cannot, by definition, be accomplished without the use of a knife. This indicates that the use of an instrument is deemed to be an integral part of an activity, thus pointing to the involvement of an agent. The instrument serves as what Schlesinger (1995, pp. 63-4) calls a 'tool', in the sense that it 'performs an activity in its entirety.' Without using a knife, the activity of cutting would not be implementable.

(12) a.　Bakarinn　　　　skar　　　　brauðið.
　　　　　baker.the.NOM.SG　　cut.3SG.PAST　　bread.the.ACC.SG
　　　　　'The baker cut the bread.'

　　　b.　*Hnífurinn　　　　skar　　　　brauðið.
　　　　　knife.the.NOM.SG　　cut.3SG.PAST　　bread.the.ACC.SG
　　　　　'The knife cut the bread.'

　　　c.　*Brauðið　　　　skarst.
　　　　　bread.the.NOM.SG　　cut.3sg.PAST
　　　　　'The bread cut.'

d. Brauðið skarst með hnífnum.
bread.the.NOM.SG cut.3SG.PAST with knife.the.DAT.SG
'The bread was cut with the knife.'

e. Brauðið skarst vel með hnífnum.
bread.the.NOM.SG cut.3SG.PAST well with knife.the.DAT.SG
'The bread was cut well with the knife.'

(13) a. Jóa skrællaði eplið.
Jóa.NOM peel.3SG.PAST apple.the.ACC.SG
'Jóa peeled the apple.'

b. *Hnífurinn skrællaði eplið.
knife.the.NOM.SG peel.3SG.PAST apple.the.ACC.SG
'The knife peeled the apple *hjá*'s

c. *Eplið skrællaðist.
apple.the.NOM.SG peel.3SG.PAST
'The apple was peeled.'

d. Eplið skrællaðist með hnífnum.
apple.the.NOM.SG peel.3SG.PAST with knife.the.DAT.SG
'The apple was peeled with the knife.'

e. Eplið skrællaðist vel með hnífnum.
apple.the.NOM.SG peel.3SG.PAST well with knife.the.DAT.SG
'The apple was peeled well with the knife.'

Exactly the same behaviour is observed with the verb *ryksuga* 'vacuum', as shown in (14d) and (14e):

(14) a. Strákurinn ryksugaði gólfið.
boy.the.NOM.SG vacuum.3SG.PAST floor.the.ACC.SG
'The boy vacuumed the floor.'

b. *Ryksugan ryksugaði gólfið.
vacuum.cleaner.the.NOM.SG vacuum3SG.PAST floor.the.ACC.SG
'The vacuum cleaner vacuumed the floor.'

c. *Gólfið ryksugaðist.
floor.the.NOM.SG vacuum.3SG.PAST
'The floor was vacuumed.'

d. Gólfið ryksugaðist með ryksugunni.
floor.the.NOM.SG vacuum.3SG.PAST with vacuum.cleaner.the.DAT.SG
'The floor was vacuumed with the vacuum cleaner.'

e. Gólfið   ryksugaðist   vel   með
   floor.the.NOM.SG   vacuum.3SG.PAST   well with
   ryksugunni.
   vacuum.cleaner.the.DAT.SG
   'The floor was vacuumed well with the vacuum cleaner.'

An interesting fact is that, as shown in (12e), (13e), and (14e), the sentence sounds even more natural when the manner adverbial *vel* 'well' is added. Since this adverbial verbalises the state of an entity in conjunction with the accomplishment of an activity, this grammaticality judgment confirms that Icelandic intransitives express the resultant state, the notion I will now address.

3.3.   Resultant State

An intriguing fact in the Icelandic language is that agent-oriented verbs can participate in the alternation (see Section 3.2). The key explanation I intend to provide here is that the intransitive sentence serves as a resultative and not merely as a change of state. To define what a resultative is, I adopt Nedjalkov and Jaxontov's definition (1988, p. 6), which states that the resultative expresses a state that arises as a result of a previous event. This definition stands in contrast to that of the stative, which expresses the natural or primary states of things without providing any hints as to their origin. In this paper, I use the expression 'resultant state' in place of 'resultative' in order to make it explicit that resultative is a state or a situation that occurs or takes place obligatorily after the completion of a previous event. Consider the examples with *borða* 'eat' and *þvo* 'wash', as shown in (15) and (16). The scenarios that both (15b) and (16b) depict are states arising from events that have previously occurred. The former refers to an empty plate that exists on a table as a result of someone having eaten the cake. The latter refers to a carpet which was previously dirty and is now stretched out fresh on the floor after having been washed.

(15) a. Anna   borðaði   kökuna.
        Anna.NOM.SG   eat.3SG.PAST   cake.the.ACC.SG
        'Anna ate the cake.'

     b. Kakan   borðaðist.
        Cake.the.NOM.SG   eat.3SG.PAST
        'The cake was eaten.'

(16) a. Móðirin   þvoði   teppið.
        mother.the.NOM.SG   wash.3SG.PAST   carpet.the.AC.SG
        'The mother washed the carpet.'

     b. Teppið   þvoðist.
        carpet.the.NOM.SG   wash.3SG.PAST
        'The carpet was washed.'

Haspelmath (1993, p. 94) suggests the condition under which causative/inchoative alternation occurs. Strikingly, this generalisation centres on the lexical semantics of the predicate:

(17) A verb meaning that refers to a change of state […] may appear in an inchoative/causative alternation unless the verb contains agent-oriented meaning components or other highly specific meaning components that make the spontaneous occurrence of the event extremely unlikely.

The behaviour of *borða* 'eat' and *þvo* 'wash' runs counter to this generalisation in two respects. First, these verbs are not change-of-state verbs. Second, they contain an agent-oriented meaning component. I propose that this observed incongruence can be resolved if we separate the resultant state from the change of state by treating them as two independent semantic categories. The reason for the lack of consideration of result in its own right may ultimately lie in the general trend in the linguistics literature. As Gorlach (2004, p. 47) rightly claims, the notion of result has been applied intuitively and peripherally in studies on grammatical phenomena. She goes on to say that result has often been merged with the perfective aspect or the passive voice and has therefore failed to enjoy independent status. For example, Levin and Rappaport Hovav (2005, p. 2) maintain that the passive voice (as in *The window was broken*) allows for both eventive and stative readings. The fact that the concept of result does not surface in Haspelmath's generalisation might be explained by the fact that result is seen as being merged into change of state. Against this background, it is worth mentioning Frawley (1992, p. 183), who does distinguish resultant state (18b) from change of state (18a).

(18) a. My circumstances changed.
      b. My circumstances changed into a nightmare.

As illustrated in (5), intransitive verbs in English, such as *break*, may express a situation such as that denoted by (18a), whereas Icelandic intransitive verbs, such as *borða* 'eat' and *þvo* 'wash', may express situations such as that denoted by (18b). It is important to note here that the semantic scope of the resultant state is not circumscribed by the lexical semantics of the verb as it includes the speaker's world knowledge. Consider example (19), which is representative in this respect:

(19) a. Jón   útskýrði   söguna.
          John.NOM   explain.3SG.PAST   novel.the.ACC.SG
          'John recounted the novel.'

b. Sagan   útskýrðist   **hjá**   **Jóni**.
novel.the.NOM.SG   explain.3SG.PAST   at   John.DAT.SG
'The novel was recounted and that benefited John.'
'John gave supplementary information about the novel.'

                                                    (see 1b, 35a)

The apparent anomaly here is related to the fact that the message conveyed in (19b) includes a person who is not personally the narrator of the novel but a third party who is committed indirectly to the act of recounting. There are two resultant-state interpretations. The most preferred interpretation is that the recounting of the novel enables the listener (i.e., John) to understand the novel better than someone else (not John) had done before. This is a beneficiary reading, as I propose below in section 5.3. The minor interpretation is that John, and not the person who recounts the novel, explains one or two subtopics related to the content of the novel and this helps people to understand the novel better than someone else (not John) had done before. It is evident that both interpretations go beyond the lexical meaning of telling a story; rather, they both have a bearing on the speaker's knowledge of what telling a story can involve. Importantly, this involvement is not free of constraint: the speaker's knowledge about an ongoing activity is filtered through the 'location' or 'spatial closeness' with which the participant is correlated (Section 5.2).

4. Further Evidence for the Distinction between Change of State and Resultant State

This section will provide another piece of evidence that supports the distinction between change of state and resultant state described in Section 3. The verbs under consideration are *opna* and *loka*. These verbs have two different intransitive forms: lexical and morphological. As shown in (20) and (24), transitive sentences accept two different types of direct object: (20) has *bíóinu* 'cinema' and *dyrunum* 'door', while (24) has *flöskuna* 'bottle' and *verslunina* 'shop'. However, as shown by the (un)grammaticality of both (21) to (23) and (25) to (27), when these sentences alternate with intransitives, the choice between grammaticality and ungrammaticality depends on which direct object is taken as the subject.

(20)   Jón   **lokaði**   bíóinu/dyrunum.
         John.NOM   close.3SG.PAST   cinema.the.DAT.SG/door.the.DAT.PL
         'John closed the cinema/the door.'

(21)   Bíóið   **lokaði**.
         cinema.the.NOM.SG   close.3SG.PAST
         'The cinema closed.'

(22)   *Dyrnar   **lokuðu**.
         door.the.NOM.PL   close.3PL.PAST
         'The door closed.'

(23) Dyrnar   **lokuðust**.
      door.the.NOM.PL   close.3PL.PAST
      'The door closed.'

(24) Jón   **opnaði**   flöskuna/verslunina.
      Jón.NOM   open.3SG.PAST   bottle.the.ACC.SG/shop.the.ACC.SG
      'John opened the bottle/shop.'

(25) Verslunin   **opnaði**.
      shop.the.NOM.SG   open.3SG.PAST
      'The shop opened.'

(26) *Flaskan   **opnaði**.
      bottle.the.NOM.SG open.3SG.PAST
      'The bottle opened.'

(27) Flaskan   **opnaðist**.
      bottle.the.NOM.SG open.3SG.PAST
      'The bottle opened.'

I suggest that intransitives with the suffix *-st* express change of state, whereas lexical intransitives express resultant state. This distinction can be proven by authentic data accessed from the internet on 15 August, 2010. Sentence (28) describes how someone can feel calm and think reasonably when he closes his eyes. The journalist who is reporting in (29) has in mind an event in which the Mayor of Reykjavík demonstrated the way he catches fish during his formal opening of a river. This opening implies the consequent activities that are deemed to be more important. It is clear that the blog-writer in (28) is concerned with his psychological change of state, while the journalist in (29) is more interested in the use of the river as an institution (i.e., resultant state). Sentence (30) is another example from the internet (15 August, 2010) where only *lokaði* is acceptable. In this example, the market is regarded as a financial institution which closed without making any profits on that day. The reason *lokaðist* is infelicitous here is due to our ability to infer that, even after the market's closure (change of state), the unsuccessful day's business will affect the people who run the market (resultant state). Interestingly, as shown by (23) and (27) above, *lokaðist* would only be felicitous when the subject is 'door' or 'bottle', the reason being that, in these examples, the speaker's interest is merely in the change from one state to the other, not the situation that may result from it.

(28) Hjarta   hans **opnaðist**/*opnaði** þegar hann   lokaði
      heart.NOM   his   open.3SG.PAST   when   he.nom close.3SG.PAST
      augunum
      eye.the.DAT.PL
      'His heart opened when he closed the eyes.'

(29) Hinn   nýi   borgarstjóri   Reykjavíkur   **opnaði**/*opnaðist**
      the   new   mayor.NOM.SG   Reykjavík.GEN open.3SG.PAST
      Elliðaárnar   að   morgni   20.   Júní   2010   með
      Elliða- rivers.the.ACC.PL   in   morning.DAT.SG 20ᵗʰ   June   2010   with
      hefðbundnum   hætti.
      traditional   way.DAT.SG
      'The new Mayor of Reykjavík opened the Elliða Rivers in
      traditional style on the morning of 20 June, 2010.'

(30) Markaðurinn   **lokaði**/*lokaðist**   í   mínus   í dag
      market.the.NOM.SG close.3SG.PAST   in   minus   today
      'The market closed with a minus (deficit) today.'

5. *Hjá* in Intransitive Sentences

The preposition *hjá* imparts six different interpretations when it appears in an intransitive sentence. An interesting fact is that these meanings are predictable from the original locative meaning of *hjá*, 'at someone's place.' When *hjá* modifies a person, it refers to the space that this person either lives in or is associated with or where he/she is involved in doing some action (e.g., his/her routine or daily work). The use of *hjá* should not be confused with the use of another preposition, *af* 'by', that occurs in the passive. As shown in (31b), while *af* is compatible with the passive, it is not compatible with the intransitive. As shown in (32b), however, there is one case where *af* can replace *hjá* in an intransitive sentence. Example (32a) describes a situation in which Gunnar paid the invoice personally. Although *af* can appear in (32b), the meaning is not the same as that of the passive: (32b) means that Gunnar was not involved directly in the payment of the invoice, but did it indirectly (e.g., he may have asked his secretary to make the payment). The interchangeability of *af* and *hjá* in (32b) shows the continuum between passive and intransitive in Icelandic, but this paper will not deal any further with this topic.

(31) a. Sagan   var   útskýrð   **af**   **Einari**.
          novel.the.NOM.SG   be.3SG.PAST explained by   Einar.DAT
          'The novel was recounted by Einar.'

      b. *Sagan   útskýrðist   af   Einari.
          novel.the.NOM   explain.3SG.PAST   at   Einar.DAT

(32) a. Reikningurinn   var   greiddur   **af**   **Gunnari**.
          invoice.the.NOM.SG was   paid   by   Gunnar.DAT
          'The invoiced was paid by Gunnar.'

      b. Reikningurinn   greiddist   **af/hjá**   **Gunnari.**
          invoice.the.NOM.SG pay.3SG.PAST   by/at   Gunnar.DAT
          'The invoice was paid by Gunnar.'

5.1. Involuntary Participant

When the agent is non-volitional or secondary to the event, it can appear in the *hjá* phrase. Although both (33a) and (33b) can express a spontaneous event (without the *hjá* phrase) in the sense that we do not know exactly who is responsible for the denoted activity, spontaneity is not cognate with the 'non-presence' of an agent, as has often been stated in the literature (see Haspelmath's generalisation, as shown in (17)).

(33) a. Glugginn   brotnaði   **hjá**   **Jóni**.
       window.the.NOM.SG   break.3SG.PAST   at   John.DAT
       'Jón broke the window accidentally.'

    b. Stafurinn   bognaði   **hjá**   **Pétri**.
       stick.the.NOM.SG   bend.3SG.PAST   at   Peter.DAT
       'Peter bent the stick accidentally.'

5.2. Third-Party Participant

In both examples (34a) and (34b) below, neither Einar nor Gunnar partakes directly in the event denoted by the verb. The relevant information is the place where Einar and Gunnar are. They may do what is useful for the act of disciplining or taming. The locative meaning can be extended to mean the third party's indirect commitment to the canonical event. The reason for this extension is probably that a location with a person residing in it provides us with the knowledge that he can either experience or manipulate things that are connected to that region. In other words, once a geographical region is conceived as being inhabited, it includes the speaker's subjective experiences.[2]

(34) a. Börnin   öguðust   hjá   Einari
       child.the.NOM.PL   discipline.3PL.PAST   at   Einar.DAT
       'The children were disciplined at Einar's place.'

    b. Hesturinn   tamdist   **hjá**   **Gunnari**
       horse.the.NOM.SG   tame.3SG.PAST   at   Gunnar.DAT
       'The horse was tamed at Gunnar's place/through the activity of Gunnar.'

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[2] The relation between physical place and its subjectification is aptly described by Johnstone (2010: 10):

> […] the physical aspects of place are always mediated by subjective experience. We experience a house not as a set of geographical coordinates or a particular arrangement of building materials or furniture, but as a set of smells, sounds, scenes and emotions that are shaped by repeated ways of interacting with houses. We "inhabit" a house, making it our own, by experiencing and/or manipulating it in a variety of ways – walking through it, touching the walls, looking out the window, turning the water on and off, rearranging the furniture, maybe even writing a poem about it.

5.3. Beneficiary Participant

The person who occurs with *hjá* receives benefit from the event denoted by the predicate. Telling the story (35a) and solving the problem (35b) benefit the speaker, who is indicated by the first person (see 1b, 19b).

(35) a. Sagan   útskýrðist   **hjá**   **mér**.
        novel.the.NOM   explain.3SG.PAST   at   me.DAT
        'The novel was recounted and that benefited me.'

    b. Vandamálið   leystist   **hjá**   **mér**
        problem.the.Nom   solve.3SG.PAST   at   me.DAT
        'The problem was solved and that benefited me.'

5.4. Adversative Participant

The case exemplified by (36) is opposite to that in (35). The person in the *hjá* phrase is disadvantaged by the conduct of an event denoted by the predicate.

(36) a. Vasinn   brotnaði   **hjá**   **mér**.
        vase.the.NOM.SG   break.3SG.PAST   at   me.DAT
        'It was a big problem for me that the vase got broken.'

    b. Bíóið   lokaði   **hjá**   **mér**.
        cinema.the.NOM.SG   close.3SG.PAST   at   me.DAT
        'It was a big problem for me that the cinema closed.'

5.5. Possessor

The *hjá* phrase adds the element of a possessor who possesses the noun in the subject position. Unlike the examples in section 5.6, it does not have a locative interpretation.

(37) a. Kýrin   mjólkaðist   **hjá**   **bóndanum**.
        cow.the.NOM.SG   milk.3SG.PAST   at   farmer.the.DAT.SG
        'The farmer's cow gave some milk.'

    b. Jurtirnar   vökvuðust   **hjá**   **Pétri**.
        plant.the.NOM.PL   water.3PL.PAST   at   Peter.DAT.SG
        'Peter's plants were given water.'

5.6. Location

The interpretation shown below is identical to the original meaning of *hjá*. Like other examples shown above, John is not involved in the denoted event directly. What happens is that it is at John's place (it might be his house or office) that the dead pig is found. The sentence does not say that the killing occurred at his place, although this possibility cannot be excluded.

(38) a. Svínið   drapst   **hjá**   **Jóni**.
          pig.the.NOM.SG   kill.3SG.PAST   at   John.DAT
          'The pig was found dead at John's place.'

      b. Verslunin   opnaði   **hjá**   **Jóni**.
          shop.the.NOM.SG open.3SG.PAST   at   John.DAT
          'The shop opened at John's house.'

6.   Conclusion

The examples provided in Sections 2 to 5 have demonstrated that Icelandic canonical intransitive sentences are characterised by two major traits. First, the sentence encodes the meaning of the resultant state, the content of which can range widely. It can range from situations that refer to a result that is naturally expected from the previous event expressed by the predicate (examples (15) and (16)) or to an entirely independent event that is inferred from the given context of a situation (example (28)). Second, by virtue of its original function as a locative preposition, the *hjá* phrase adds an extra participant to vary or enrich the semantics of the intransitive sentence. I tentatively stated that the case of *hjá* amounts to the subjectification of a geographical place. The reason *hjá* does all of these jobs efficiently is explained by the fact that the meaning of the intransitive sentence is not circumscribed by the semantics of the predicate argument structure. However, as a consequence of this, it encroaches on the sphere of pragmatics which allows the resultant state to be an independent meaning component. Thus, my discussions have shown that the way to gain a crucial insight into the behaviour of *hjá* in the Icelandic canonical intransitive sentence is to capture how the coexistence of semantics and pragmatics operates and how it is coded in the language.

To move the issue a step further, the co-existence of these two linguistic sub-disciplines shows, in a current context, the roles of our perceptual or, more specifically, our cognitive (i.e., mental) activities. Recently, increasingly popular theories (e.g., Goldberg's Construction Grammar (1995, 2006) and Langacker's Cognitive Grammar (1991, 2008)) have in fact rejected a strict division between semantics and pragmatics and have highlighted the link between language and cognition. Langacker (1991, p. 2), who talks about conceptualisation, urges us, in a provocative fashion, to "characterise the types of cognitive events whose occurrence constitutes a given mental experience" in order to prove a basic axiom in his theory, namely that "[m]eaning is equated with conceptualisation" (p. 2). Likewise, Goldberg (1995, p. 4) explicitly claims that there exists a construction, a pairing between form and meaning, that is not predictable from the construction's component parts. As she explains (2006, p. 5-9), construction appears to emerge independently of the meaning of the predicate. The claim made by Goldberg is attractive in that it can be applicable to the presence of the resultant state in Icelandic intransitive sentences. However, despite this initial plausibility, one may ask how it is possible to distinguish between two pairs of verbs, such as *opna* and *opnast* or *loka* and *lokast* (Section 4), which should have the same argument structure, even though only lexical forms express the

resultant state, while morphological forms express the change of state. One may also ask whether what is designated as 'the speaker's real-world knowledge' in this paper is synonymous to the more technical term 'frame semantic meaning' (Goldberg 2006, p. 39), which specifies participant roles which may or may not fill the argument structure slots.

Langacker's (1991, pp. 229-234; cf. 2008) cognitive exploration of canonical transitive and absolute intransitive sentences (the latter being equivalent to the terms 'canonical' or 'inchoative' as used in this paper) takes it for granted that force is transferred from an agent to a patient. This agrees with the statement made by Hopper and Thompson (1980). Following Langacker's framework, *hjá* as an adverbial modifier should ideally fall under what he calls a 'setting' in a sentence such as <u>*In Oregon, David caught a large brown trout*</u>. Langacker states that such a setting can function as a profiled/prominent participant without losing its original semantic property, as in <u>*Oregon lies between California and Washington*</u> (English examples have been shortened slightly by the author). The point made here is that a geographical region can be promoted to become a participant when the speaker conceives it as being prominent in his/her mental world. The question one can pose is whether the behaviour of the *hjá* phrase, which designates a geographical region, should be treated in the same way as Langacker's examples. As we have seen in (19), however, the referent in the *hjá* phrase as a participant and as a setting impart two different conceptual meanings. Replacing 'setting' with 'participant' is thus impossible. That is to say, it is not evident that profiling, Langacker's cognitive construct, is meaningful to *hjá*. The following question arises: Would the transmission of force or profiling be the essential 'cognitive events' on the basis of which the conceptual diversity exhibited by *hjá* can be accounted for?

As I admit the need for further in-depth research to locate *hjá* correctly in these theories, the conclusion of this paper remains descriptive and pretheoretical: What speakers of Icelandic actually do is to incorporate their perception of the world into linguistic forms (1) in the way that the language permits them to do so and (2) in a multi-faceted manner with restrictions imposed on them by the lexical meaning of the predicate and the *hjá* phrase and the clausal meaning of the sentence.

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About the Author

Toshiko Yamaguchi (PhD in linguistics) taught at the National University of Singapore and is currently senior lecturer at the University of Malaya. Her books and articles encompass wide areas of linguistics and applied linguistics. Her current research interests are transitivity, semantic change and functional/cognitive approaches to natural language.