Are there arguments for the subject analysis of Mainland Scandinavian presentational sentences?

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Abstract
The Mainland Scandinavian languages have a productive presentational construction with an expletive and an indefinite "logical subject". The topic of this paper is the syntactic function of the logical subject. In traditional grammar, it was considered a (kind of) grammatical subject. Askedal (1982) and Platzack (1983) argued that it is a grammatical object, and this is a common view in Scandinavian grammar. The purpose of the paper is to defend this analysis against attacks, and argue that there are no acceptable arguments that the logical subject is a grammatical subject.

1. Introduction[1]

The Mainland Scandinavian languages – Norwegian, Swedish and Danish – have a productive presentational construction. This construction includes an expletive, and an indefinite "logical subject" (which is a pre-theoretical term for the noun phrase following the verb in active and passive sentences). The verb can be unaccusative, unergative or passive. Examples (1)–(3) are Bokmål Norwegian, like many examples here.

(1) Det   har arbeidet en mann i hagen.
     EXPL has worked a   man   in garden.DEF
  'A man has worked in the garden.'
(2) Det   har forsvunnet en katt.
     EXPL has disappeared a   cat
  'A cat has disappeared.'
(3) Det   ble spist   pølser.
     EXPL was eaten sausages
  'Sausages were eaten.'

This construction has a number of fascinating properties that have been discussed within different frameworks through the years. The focus of this paper is the syntactic function of the logical subject – is it a grammatical subject or a grammatical object? There is no new account of the construction. My main goal is to defend the analysis of the logical subject as a grammatical object, which was proposed by Askedal (1982) and Platzack (1983). I will discuss some important arguments for the subject and the object analyses, argue that the arguments for the subject analysis do not work, and defend some arguments for the object analysis.

   One could ask if it is important what syntactic function is assumed for the logical subject. In LFG, it must be important, because of the role that syntactic functions play in the framework – rules for e.g. binding and unbounded dependencies make direct reference to syntactic functions.

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[1] For input and discussion, I would like to thank the audience at the LFG20 conference, especially Elisabet Engdahl and Annie Zaenen. Thanks are also due to the proceedings reviewers, and to Lars Hellan.

Mainland Scandinavian presentational sentences are sometimes discussed in the context of Icelandic presentational sentences, such as (4) from Thráinsson (2007:310).

(4) það   komu   fjórir   nemendur   í tímann   í gær.
    EXPL came.3PLUR four.NOM students.NOM in class.DEF in yesterday
  'Four students came to the class yesterday.'

There is a number of important grammatical differences between Icelandic and Mainland Scandinavian presentational sentences (see e.g. Platzack 1983). The standard analysis of the Icelandic construction takes the logical subject to be the grammatical subject (see Booth (2018) for an LFG perspective). The expletive is often seen as a kind of expletive topic, e.g. in Zaenen (1983) (but see Sells (2005) for a different view).

Section 2 presents the state of the art for the status of the logical subject. The grammatical properties of the expletive are discussed briefly in section 3. Section 4 goes deeper into the discussion of the logical subject, and argues for the object analysis. Section 5 discusses the question if all presentational sentences should have the same analysis. Presentational sentences in other languages are mentioned briefly in section 6. Section 7 discusses the problem of assuming agentive objects with unergative verbs, and section 8 gives a conclusion.

2. Subject or object?
For Mainland Scandinavian presentational sentences, a subject analysis is the older assumption. In traditional grammar, the logical subject has been called the "real" (*egentlig, reelt*) or "potential" (*potensielt*) subject (see e.g. Næs 1972:255, Vinje 1977:125).

A subject analysis is argued for in the Norwegian reference grammar, Faarlund et al. (1997:833–35) (for active sentences only), and the Swedish reference grammar, Teleman et al. (1999:384-406). There are also articles that argue for a subject analysis and/or against an object analysis within LFG: Börjars and Vincent (2005), Zaenen et al. (2017), and Hellan and Beermann (2020).

Börjars and Vincent (2005) assume that the expletive and the logical subject both map to subject in f-structure. The expletive has no PRED, and no other features that cannot unify with those of the logical subject. Its only reflex in f-structure is then a feature such as [EXPL +]. (Sells (2005) gives this kind of analysis for Icelandic.)

Zaenen et al. (2017) and Hellan and Beermann (2020) argue that both the expletive and the logical subject have subject properties. They are agnostic concerning the syntactic function of the logical subject, which they refer to as "pivot" and "presented" respectively.

The first object analysis of Norwegian presentational sentences was given by Askedal (1982, 1986), working within a typologically oriented framework. Platzack (1983) takes the same position for Swedish within a Government and Binding framework. He does not say directly that the logical subject is an object, but his analysis treats it as one. He shows that it is in the canonical object position in surface structure – this is a point that has not been challenged. He then argues that it has the same position in deep structure, where it gets an internal role from the verb. Platzack's analysis is reflected in several publications within Scandinavian Chomskyan grammar (e.g. Hestvik 1986, Christensen 1991, Åfarli 1992, Sveen 1996:116–26, Mikkelsen 2002, Åfarli and Eide 2003:226–37, Faarlund 2019:83).

Within LFG, an object analysis is assumed in Lødrup (1999, 2000) and Egebakken (2005). This is also the analysis that is implemented in the Norwegian XLE grammar (http://clarino.uib.no/iness/xle-web).

An object analysis can also be found in the Danish reference grammar, Hansen and Heltoft (2011). Applying the European structuralist distinction between content and expression, they say that the logical subject is at the same time a "content subject" and an "expression object" (Danish *indholdssubjekt* and *udtryksobjekt*) – see Hansen and Heltoft (2011:124, 304–306).

The question of a subject analysis or an object analysis might be more complicated than it seems. The presentational construction is possible with many unergative and unaccusative verbs, and with all relevant passive verbs. The question is then if all presentational sentences have the same syntactic structure, independently of their verb type, or if there are different structures for different verb classes. In traditional grammar, the underlying assumption seems to be that the structure is the same for all verb types. This is also the position taken here (see the discussion in section 5). When the syntactic function of the logical subject is discussed in section 4, possible differences between the verb classes will be mentioned. It turns out, however, that this difference is only directly relevant to one or two arguments discussed.

3. Properties of the expletive

Some arguments from Askedal (1982, 1986) and Platzack (1983) that the expletive has subject properties will be mentioned briefly.

It is uncontroversial that the expletive has c-structure properties of subjects. It has the same positions as other subjects in c-structure, preceding or following the finite verb, as in the Norwegian (1) and (5).

(5) I hele   dag har det   arbeidet en mann i hagen.
    in whole day has EXPL worked a   man in garden.DEF
  'A man has worked in the garden the whole day.'

The expletive has one clear f-structure property of subjects: It allows subject raising to subject and object, as in the Norwegian (6)–(7). This is a strong argument that the expletive must be an f-structure subject.

(6) Så pleier det å komme en nabo   innom med julesnop. (www)
    then uses EXPL to come   a   neighbor by   with christmas.candy
  'Then a neighbor usually drops by with Christmas candy.'
(7) Vi anser   det   å være en risiko for rømning. (www)
    we assume EXPL to be   a   risk   for escape
  'We assume there to be a risk of escape.'

There is also another phenomenon that is relevant – even if the last word on its treatment has not been said – namely the so-called surface anaphor *det* 'it/that' with auxiliaries, as in the Norwegian (8)–(9).

(8) (Har mynten   forsvunnet   i vannet?)   Ja, den har det.
      has coin.DEF disappeared in water.DEF yes it   has that
  '(Has the coin disappeared in the water?) Yes, it has.'
(9) (Har det   forsvunnet en mynt i vannet?)   Ja, det   har det.
      has EXPL disappeared a coin in water.DEF yes EXPL has that
  '(Has a coin disappeared in the water?) Yes, it has.'

The interpretation of the surface anaphor generally includes the verb and its selected arguments, except the subject (see example (8)). When a presentational sentence is pronominalized this way, the logical subject is included in the interpretation of the surface anaphor, while the expletive is the subject (see example (9)).

  In Danish and some Norwegian and Swedish dialects, the expletive is *der* 'there'. In other varieties of Norwegian and Swedish, the expletive is the 3. person singular neutral pronoun *det*. In varieties with agreeing participles, *det* can trigger the expected agreement, as in the Nynorsk Norwegian (10).

(10) Det er kome   nokre lokale regnbygar. (www)
     EXPL is come.SG.NEUT some   local   showers
  'Some local showers have occurred.'

This could be an argument that the expletive is an f-structure subject. There is, however, some variation in Mainland Scandinavian concerning agreement in presentational sentences. Some varieties allow agreement with the logical subject (Teleman et al. 1999:385, Börjars and Vincent 2005, Engdahl 2017). The singular neuter form triggered by the expletive could be seen as a default form, which is used when there is no agreement (Börjars and Vincent 2005). There seems to be no argument based on agreement, then, or at least no argument that applies to Mainland Scandinavian as a whole.

4. Properties of the logical subject

Transitivity restriction An important argument for the object analysis is the fact that the presentational construction is never possible with a transitive verb – or to be more exact: it is impossible to realize a logical object in a presentational sentence. This argument was discussed already by Askedal (1982) and Platzack (1983).[2] However, Börjars and Vincent (2005) dismiss this argument, saying ".. for verbs which are optionally transitive, the presentational focus construction is ruled out even when there is no object." However, this is not correct. Optionally transitive verbs behave as unergatives when they are without an object, and they can be used in presentational sentences, as expected. An example is the Swedish (11) (from Teleman et al.1999:400)

(11) Det äter många tjänstemän (..) på det här matstället.
    EXPL eats many civil.servants at this here restaurant.DEF
  'Many civil servants eat at this restaurant.'

Benefactive objects A fact that was mentioned already by Askedal (1982) and Platzack (1983) is that a presentational sentence can take a benefactive object in addition to the logical subject. Relevant verbs are two-place unaccusatives and passives of ditransitives, cf. the Norwegian examples (12) (from Hellan and Beermann 2020:82) and (13).

(12) Det ventet ministeren   dårlige nyheter.
    EXPL awaited minister.DEF bad   news
  'Bad news awaited the minister.'
(13) Det ble   overrakt meg en medalje.
    EXPL became presented me   a medal
  'I was presented with a medal.'

Some papers mention this kind of sentences as a semantically conditioned exception from the generalization that transitive verbs cannot occur in presentational sentences, and/or as a problem for the object analysis (Maling 1988:3, Bjerre and Bjerre 2008a:50, Zaenen et al. 2017:275–76, Engdahl et al. 2018, Hellan and Beermann 2020). However, there seems to be no kind of exception or problem here. A common assumption in Scandinavian grammar is that sentences such as (12) and (13) are double object constructions, with

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[2] Mainland Scandinavian actually has a transitive expletive construction – or rather had, because it is archaic in most varieties today (Christensen 1991, Håkansson 2017). This construction is grammatically different from the construction discussed in this paper, and shares properties with the Icelandic construction shown in (4) above. An important fact is that the expletive does not have subject properties – it is an expletive topic that can only occur in the first position of the sentence.

the benefactive object as what is called an indirect object in Scandinavian grammar, or OBJ_θ in LFG (e.g. Åfarli 1992:chap 6, Lødrup 1995, Mikkelsen 2002:12–15, Faarlund 2019:141–42). Note that the benefactive object is not affected by the definiteness restriction in (12) and (13), while the logical subject is indefinite, and couldn't be definite.

Presentational sentences with benefactive objects thus raise no problems for the object analysis. On the contrary, they provide an argument for this analysis, which gives the same syntactic pattern in active and passive presentational and non-presentational sentences: an indirect benefactive object (OBJ_θ) followed by a direct patient object (OBJ).

Börjars and Vincent (2005) dismiss this argument, pointing to information structural constraints on word order. It is clear, however, that the order indirect object (OBJ_θ) – direct object (OBJ) is normally fixed, independently of the sentence being active or passive, presentational or non-presentational (see e.g. Teleman 1999:304-307, 392).

Sentences with reflexives Hellan and Beermann (2020) argue against the object analysis on the basis of sentences in which the logical subject cooccurs with a simple reflexive. Their idea is that this reflexive is the object, which means that the logical subject cannot be. They give Norwegian examples such as (14)-(16) (Hellan and Beermann 2020:79, 81). In these sentences, the logical subject is preceded by a simple reflexive; in (15)-(16) there are also a particle and an adjectival resultative.

(14) Det setter seg   en katt på trappen.
     EXPL sets   REFL a cat   on stairs.DEF
  'A cat sits down on the stairs.'
(15) Det drakk seg   i   hjel et eksternt styremedlem.
     EXPL drank REFL to death an external board.member
  'An external board member drank himself to death.'
(16) Det hadde drukket seg   full   en nordlending.
     EXPL had   drunk   REFL drunk a   northerner
  'A northerner had drunk himself drunk.'

The idea that the simple reflexive is the object in (14)-(16) is problematic. The reflexive in (14) cannot be replaced by a non-reflexive; this is illustrated in (17) (from Hellan and Beermann 2020:80, note 18). On the other hand, the reflexive is in a position where an "empty" lexical reflexive can be realized, as shown in (18) with the inherently reflexive verb *smyge seg* 'sneak' (from Hellan and Beermann 2020:79, note 16).

(17) *Det setter meg en venn   på trappen.
      EXPL sets   me a   friend on stairs.DEF
  'A friend places me on the stairs.' [intended]

196

(18) Det smyger seg   en mann ut.
     EXPL sneaks REFL a   man   out
  'A man sneaks out.'

The assumption that non-substitutable reflexives can be objects is untraditional. Hellan and Beermann (2020) sketch a semantic approach. The traditional analysis of sentences such as (14) seems to be a more satisfactory alternative (Hellan 1988:108-113): The verb is detransitivized by an empty non-argument reflexive, which can be realized in a presentational sentence without creating a situation with two instances of OBJ.

   Examples (15) and (16) require a separate discussion. Example (16) with an adjectival resultative does not seem to represent an existing pattern – it is unacceptable to me and other linguists I have asked. Example (15) is special. The expression *i hjel* 'to death' is not an adjectival resultative like *full* 'drunk' in (16). It is a particle – a category whose properties are not really understood (Stensrud 2009:133–34). Again, the alternative traditional analysis is that the reflexive in (15) is an empty non-argument reflexive. Hellan (1988:121) gives the rather parallel presentational sentence in (19), saying that it is possible because the reflexive is not an argument.

(19) Det ligger seg ihjel   mange pasienter på det sykehuset.
     EXPL lie   REFL to.death many   patients on that hospital.DEF
  'Many patients lie themselves to death at that hospital.'

Binders An argument that has been used by several proponents of a subject analysis is based upon the fact that the logical subject can bind a reflexive (Faarlund et al. 1997:847, Börjars and Vincent 2005, Zaenen et al. 2017). Example (20) is Swedish (from Börjars and Vincent 2005).

(20) Det kom en man med sin   /*hans fru.
     EXPL came a man with REFL.POSS / his wife
  'There came a man with his (own) wife.'

Börjars and Vincent (2005) say: "Swedish has a reflexive determiner *sin*, which can only be bound by a subject and not by a direct object".
   However, objects can also bind reflexives in Scandinavian in some cases (not only when they are subjects in secondary predications). Teleman et al. (1999:340) give some acceptable Swedish examples, such as (21).

(21) Jag såg Per tillsammans med sin   fru.
     I   saw Per together   with REFL.POSS wife
  'I saw Per together with his wife.'

The option of object binders seems to be restricted in various ways, and intuitions vary. However, it is seen as a rather general option in e.g. Platzack (1998:222–23) on Swedish, Diderichsen (1937) on Danish, and Lødrup (2008) on Norwegian.

If the binding facts should make the basis of an argument for the subject analysis, the argument would have to be that the use of reflexives is obligatory with logical subjects, but not with regular objects. It would be difficult, however, to argue that reflexives are obligatory with logical subjects. Faarlund et al. (1997:847) say that logical subjects cannot bind reflexives in passive clauses. They compare the Nynorsk Norwegian (22) and (23).

(22) I dag kom det nokre studentar til meg pga.   karakterane
    sine/ *deira.
       in day came EXPL some students to me because.of grades.DEF
    their.REFL/their
   'Some students came to me today because of their grades.'
(23) Det vart stroki nokre studentar pga.   karakterane *sine/deira.
       EXPL was flunked some students because.of grades.DEF
    their.REFL/their
   'Some students were flunked because of their grades.'

Other speakers find the contrast (22)–(23) less sharp. Even so, it would be difficult to base an analysis upon the assumption that the reflexive is obligatory in (23). We see, then, that obligatory reflexives do not constitute an argument for a subject analysis – at least if the subject analysis applies to both active and passive sentences.

It must be admitted that an account of the difference between (22) and (23) is still missing when all presentational sentences are assumed to have the same analysis (see section 5). This is a part of a larger question – the general conditions for object binders are not known (see discussion in Lødrup (2008)).

(Pseudo)coordination Another argument that has been used by proponents of a subject analysis concerns subject ellipsis in coordination. The [correct] generalization is that subject ellipsis in the second sentence is possible only when the subject is identical to the subject of the first sentence (as in *He sings and dance*s). The idea is then that sentences with ellipsis such as the Swedish (24) (from Börjars and Vincent 2005) show that the logical subject is a grammatical subject.

(24) Det kom en man och *pro* pratade med mig.
       EXPL came a   man and   talked with me
   'There came a man and talked to me.'

Sentences similar to (24) have been used to argue for the subject analysis in Faarlund et al. (1997:834, 847), Börjars and Vincent (2005), Engdahl (2006:40–41), and Zaenen et al. (2017:274).

If accepted, this argument would only work for active sentences (Faarlund et al. 1997:847, Zaenen et al. 2017:277). Ellipsis is always impossible if the presentational sentence is passive, such as the Norwegian (25).

(25) Det ble   utnevnt   en mann *og *pro* begynte straks   arbeidet.
     EXPL became appointed a man   and   started immediately work.DEF
  'A man was appointed and started his work immediately.'

The fact that passive sentences behave differently creates a problem for Börjars and Vincent (2005), who use the coordination argument, while (at least implicitly) assuming the subject analysis for both actives and passives.

However, the real problem with the argument based on (24) is that it and similar examples used in the literature are not real coordinations. They are so-called pseudocoordinations, with rather different properties than real coordinations. Pseudocoordination is a construction that has fascinated Scandinavian grammarians for generations, from Jespersen (1895) to Lødrup (2019). Only a small number of verbs allow pseudocoordination. There are different analyses, but it is uncontroversial that pseudocoordination cannot be regular coordination. Many grammarians follow Jespersen (1895) and see it as a subordinating construction in which the second verb is 'an infinitive in disguise' (Jespersen's Danish original: *en forklædt infinitiv*). What (24) really shows is then control of a verbal complement. Most verbs that allow the presentational focus construction do not allow pseudocoordination, and they would be ungrammatical in sentences such as the Norwegian (26).

(26) Det   manglet en lyspære *og *pro* var umulig   å finne.
     EXPL lacked   a light.bulb and   was impossible to find
  'A light bulb was missing, and it was impossible to find.'

The pseudocoordination facts thus give an argument against a subject analysis – because it predicts that (25) and (26) should be grammatical.[3]

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[3] Elisabet Engdahl tells me that she finds the Swedish example (i) "pretty good" (pc).
(i) Det   spelade några svenska ishockeyspelare i   NHL och gjorde karriär.
     EXPL played some Swedish hockey players   in NHL and made   career
  'Some Swedish hockey players played in NHL and had a career.'
The verb in its first part does not allow pseudocoordination, so (i) must have the same structure as the unacceptable (26). Its Norwegian equivalent is somewhat better than (26), but not really acceptable to me and other linguists I have asked. What causes this difference from (26) is not known.

A new argument: Islandhood A subject is generally a strong syntactic island for unbounded dependencies, as shown in the Norwegian (27). A logical subject is like an object in not being an island, cf. (28).

(27) *Hvem tror du   et bilde   av _ står   på presidentens   bord?
       who   think you a picture of   stands on president.DEF.GEN table
   'Who do you think there is a picture of on the president's table?' [intended]
(28) Hvem tror   du det   står   et bilde av _ på presidentens   bord?
       who   think you EXPL stands a picture of   on president.DEF.GEN table
   'Who do you think there is a picture of on the president's table?'

This argument is important in LFG, where restrictions on unbounded dependencies are accounted for using syntactic functions.

A non–argument: Case Mainland Scandinavian – except some archaic dialects – has morphological case on personal pronouns only. Personal pronouns are usually not logical subjects, but it is possible to construct acceptable sentences. A Norwegian example is (29).

(29) Det var bare meg der.
       EXPL was only me   there
   'Only I was there.'

In Norwegian and Danish, a personal pronoun gets the accusative form when it is a logical subject. This has been used as an argument for object status from Askedal (1982). In Swedish, however, the personal pronoun gets the nominative form. The best analysis of these facts seems to be the one given in Mikkelsen (2002:11, note 14): A pronoun that is a logical subject has the default form, which is accusative in Norwegian and Danish, and nominative in Swedish. Morphological case gives no argument, then, or at least no argument that applies to Mainland Scandinavian as a whole.

Conclusion for part 4 I have tried to show that there are no acceptable arguments that the logical subject is a grammatical subject in presentational sentences. The subject function is taken by the expletive, which has to be the one and only f-structure subject to account for the fact that it allows subject raising to subject and object position (examples (6) and (7) above). There are several arguments that the logical subject is the f-structure object, including:
-This analysis accounts for the fact that a transitive verb can never realize its logical object argument in a presentational sentence.
-This analysis accounts for the fact that active and passive presentational sentences can show the same double object pattern as non-presentational sentences (see examples (12) and (13) above).

-This analysis accounts for the fact that the logical subject does not behave as a syntactic subject wrt subject ellipsis in coordinated sentences (see examples (25) and (26) above).

-This analysis accounts for the fact that the logical subject is not an island for unbounded dependencies (see example (28) above).

It must be admitted that some of the data used in the discussion are less than clear, especially the binding data. The data problems are not decisive for the argument, however.

5. Alternative analyses

The discussion above was based upon the assumption that all presentational sentences have the same analysis, with the logical subject as either a grammatical subject or a grammatical object. However, these are not the only possibilities. We will now have a look at a couple of alternative options.

Stensrud (2006) proposes that unergative presentationals are grammatically different from unaccusative and passive presentationals. Her point of departure is a difference between the groups: Unergative presentationals must normally contain a locative, while this is not necessary in unaccusative and passive presentationals (see examples (1)–(3) above). Building upon Hoekstra and Mulder (1990), she sees this locative as the predicate in a small clause with the logical subject as the small clause subject.

This is an interesting proposal. However, it does not seem to have any direct consequences for the syntactic function of the logical subject. In LFG, the small clause would have to be an XCOMP. The XCOMP subject would be functionally controlled by the logical subject of the presentational sentence – and the question if the logical subject is a grammatical subject or a grammatical object would still remain.

The picture becomes different if it is assumed that all presentational sentences with a PP have a small clause analysis.[4] This kind of analysis would have consequences for the treatment of reflexives bound by the logical subject, as in example (20) above (Elisabet Engdahl pc). If it is the small clause subject that is the binder of the reflexive, one could assume both that the logical subject is a grammatical object and that reflexives can only be bound by subjects.

Problems would remain, however. First, this account would require some strange small clauses. Consider the Nynorsk Norwegian (30), which is similar to example (22) above, but without the locative argument of 'come'.

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[4] Faarlund (2019:132–34) could be understood this way, but it is not clear to me if he wants to consider all PPs small clause predicates, and if not, which PPs.

(30) I   dag kom   det   nokre studentar pga.   karakterane sine/*deira.
   in   day came EXPL some students because.of grades.DEF
  their.REFL/their
  'Some students came today because of their grades.'

To account for the reflexive in the PP, it would be necessary to assume that the PP is the predicate of a small clause. This would be a strange small clause, however – it seems more natural to say that the PP is an adjunct in the main clause. Second, the small clause analysis would give the wrong result in passive sentences, such as (23) above, repeated as (31).

(31) Det vart stroki nokre studentar pga.   karakterane *sine/deira.
    EXPL was flunked some students because.of grades.DEF
  their.REFL/their
  'Some students were flunked because of their grades.'

The logical subject 'some students' would be a small clause subject. Subjects are normally obligatory binders, but this alleged small clause subject cannot bind a reflexive in (31), at least for many speakers.

   This problem with (31) raises a more general question, independently of small clauses. Proponents of a subject analysis take different positions concerning the treatment of passive presentational sentences. Some proponents of a subject analysis apply it to active sentences only, while passive sentences get an object analysis. It is not always clear in the literature what position is taken. Faarlund et al. (1997:846–47) argue explicitly that only active presentationals have a subject analysis. A difference between actives and passives is also claimed in Zaenen et al. (2017:277–78), and hinted at in Teleman et al. (1999:389).

   An argument against different analyses for active and passive sentences is given by examples such as the Norwegian (32). When an active and a passive verb are coordinated, a logical subject can be an argument for both verbs at the same time.

(32) Det kommer og sendes   nye e-poster hele   tiden. (www)
   EXPL comes   and send.PASS new e-mails whole time.DEF
 'New e-mails arrive and are sent all the time.'

There is also a more theoretical argument against assuming different analyses for actives and passives. It has been observed that there are no passive sentence types – passive verbs use the same syntactic patterns as active verbs (see e.g. Müller and Wechsler 2014). From a lexicalist point of view, it would be strange if there should be a pattern *expletive – verb – subject* limited to active sentences, and a pattern *expletive – verb – object* limited to passive sentences.

When one assumes that both active and passive sentences have the logical subject as a grammatical object, passive sentences do not seem to raise problems – apart from the unexplained fact that their objects are reluctant to act as binders for reflexives (cf. example (23)/(31) above).

6. Other languages

Some languages have a construction that could be compared to the Mainland Scandinavian presentational construction. However, they tend to be less productive, and they don't usually allow unergatives.

A case of a logical subject that is clearly a grammatical object can be found in German. In existential sentences with *es gibt* 'there is' (literally 'it gives'), the verb agrees with the expletive, and the logical subject takes the accusative case. These properties are shown in examples (33)–(34) (from Czinglar 2002:87, 88).

(33) In meinem Garten gibt   es   viele Gänseblümchen.
        in my   garden gives.3P.SG EXPL many daisies
    'There are many daisies in my garden.'
(34) Es   gibt einen   Apfelbaum in meinem Garten.
        EXPL gives an.ACC apple.tree in my   garden
    'There is an apple tree in my garden.'

In other cases, the analysis of presentational sentences raises problems (see e.g. Lødrup 1999). An example is the English *there* construction, which is given an object analysis in Bresnan (1982:72–80) (but this is not the focus of her discussion).

Impersonal passives can be found in many languages. What seems to be less common is the Mainland Scandinavian option of an impersonal passive with a direct object, as shown in examples (3), (13) and (23) above. Cases can be found, however, e.g. in Ukrainian (Lavine 2005).

It is especially difficult to find languages that have sentences with unergative verbs and agentive objects. The Bantu languages Sesotho and Setswana have a construction that seems to be relevant (Demuth and Mmusi 1997), as in (34). What is glossed "17.SUBJ" in (35) is the agreement morpheme for locative subjects. When there is no locative subject, it could be seen as an empty expletive.

(35) gó   -lema   ba-ñna. (Setswana, Demuth and Mmusi 1997)
        17.SUBJ-plough 2 -men
    There are men ploughing.'

Demuth and Mmusi (1997) never explicitly state that the nominal argument is an object. However, their Lexical Mapping Theory (LMT) analysis is

designed to give the logical subject as a grammatical object for the languages they discuss; they even modify LMT to get this result.

An interesting parallel to Mainland Scandinavian is French, which to some extent allows unergatives (as well as unaccusatives and passives) in a presentational construction with an expletive subject. An example is (36) (from Cummins 2000:238).

(36) Il   courait   deux enfants dans la salle.
     EXPL ran.3P.SG two children in   the room
   'Two children were running in the room.'

The discussion of this construction in French linguistics has been strikingly parallel to the corresponding Scandinavian discussion – without Scandinavian being mentioned. There are object analyses of the French construction, see e.g. Hulk (1989), Cummins (2000), and Creissels (2008) – the latter says that this is an old idea in French linguistics.

Alsina and Yang (2018) argue that Catalan also allows both unergatives and unaccusatives to realize their argument as an object.[5]

7. Theoretical challenges

Presentational sentences have been a traditional favorite in Scandinavian linguistics in various frameworks. Especially the nineteen eighties saw a lot of work on this topic. We will now give an overview of issues and possible solutions. There is nothing original here, and no new analysis.

One issue with presentational sentences is that an expletive subject is chosen over a referring subject. From a technical point of view, this can be implemented in LMT using a feature that requires realization as an object (called object preservation in Kibort (2007)), and/or a special rule that inserts an expletive subject (Lødrup 2011:151).

The motivation for object realization is obviously related to information structure. An old insight is that Mainland Scandinavian has strong topicality requirements on subjects, so indefinite arguments are better realized as objects. An attempt to implement this insight using Optimality Theory is Mikkelsen (2002), who says (simplified) that an expletive subject is better than an indefinite subject (see also Lødrup (1999), and Alsina and Yang (2018) on Catalan).

A difficult theoretical challenge is the fact that the presentational construction is allowed with most unergative verbs. This situation creates

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[5] The English locative inversion construction, as in (i), also allows unergatives to some extent (Bresnan 1994, Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995:chap 6). It is controversial, however, if the nominal argument is a subject or an object.
(i) On the third floor worked two young women called Maryanne Thomson and Ava Brent (Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995:224)

problems for all theories of thematic roles and syntactic functions. One of the most robust generalizations of linking theories is that agents are realized as subjects, and not as objects. In LMT, an agent gets the syntactic feature [-object].

The subject analysis of presentational sentences makes the linking problem disappear. This could be seen as an argument for the subject analysis, as in Börjars and Vincent (2005). However, the subject analysis has a corresponding problem: what is seen as a subject is uncontroversially in the canonical object position in a configurational language.

The object analysis has a real problem concerning the realization of an agent as an object. This has been discussed several times in Scandinavian grammar, as will be seen below.

It is of course easy to stipulate that unergatives can realize their agent role as an object. Some researchers simply say that unergatives have alternative lexical entries for realizing the agent as a subject and an object (e.g. Åfarli 1992:105, Åfarli and Eide 2003:235–36, Faarlund 2019:133).

It has been proposed that presentational sentences could be seen as a case of ergativity – in the classical, typological sense of the word – because the single argument of a one-place verb is treated in the same way as the patient argument of a two place verb (Askedal 1986, Creissels 2007 on French). This is an interesting idea, but it raises a question that has not been answered: how to integrate this ergative subpart into the grammar as a whole.

A traditional explanation that unergatives can realize their argument as an object is that there is deagentivization: their argument is not really an agent in the presentational construction, but rather a theme in some sense. (See e.g. Anward (1981), Platzack (1983:93–94), Maling (1987), Ekberg 1990 and Bjerre and Bjerre (2008b). Stensrud (2006) could also be placed in this group, as well as the treatment of unergatives in locative inversion in Bresnan (1994:90–92).)

Even if the deagentivization analysis has some intuitive appeal, it is not clear what deagentivization is. It would be more natural to see deagentivization as an effect of, and not as the cause of, the agent's object position. (For criticism, see Faarlund (1993), Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995:259).)

An explanation based upon deagentivization also suffers from a more general problem: There is no connection to other properties of Mainland Scandinavian. The explanation opens up a general option for unergatives to realize their argument as an object – it cannot account for the fact that this is exceptional in the world's languages. The same problem is found with other explanations that have been proposed.

Related to deagentivization are proposals that there is underspecification or neutralization between agent and patient when there is only one nominal argument in the sentence. This approach has been implemented in different ways in Falk (1989) and Lødrup (2000). This is also the approach to French

in Hulk (1989), and to Sesotho and Setswana in Demuth and Mmusi (1997). The account of Catalan in Alsina and Yang (2018) could also be placed in this group.

It has also been proposed that the linking of thematic roles and syntactic functions takes place unrestricted, with semantic interpretation taking place "afterwards". This is the approach to Norwegian in Faarlund (1993), Sveen (1996) and Jordet (2016), and to French in Cummings (2000).

Again, explanations in terms of underspecification or unrestricted linking open up a general option for agentive objects – they cannot explain their exceptionality. Optimality Theory could give a way of accounting for this. Lødrup (1999) and Mikkelsen (2002) give OT analyses of Scandinavian presentational sentences in which information structure has a part to play. Unfortunately, they are not satisfactory in this context. Lødrup's analysis has several weaknesses, which will not be discussed here. Mikkelsen's account of presentational sentences has nothing to say about agentive objects, because she does not really accept that they exist (Mikkelsen 2002:5, 65–67).[6]

An OT account of unergatives with objects would have to rank a constraint against agentive objects below a constraint against indefinite subjects (a modification of the proposal in Lødrup (1999)). This kind of approach would have the advantage that it establishes a connection between the option of unergatives with objects and another fact of the language. It would overgenerate, however, and additional machinery would be needed.

There seems to be no ideal solution to the problem of unergative verbs realizing their argument as an object. This problem came with the object analysis of presentational sentences. It was discussed intensively some time ago. We seem to have run of out of new ideas and new approaches, however, and there is not much written about this in the present millennium. What is clear is that there is a marked linking pattern, and this is maybe as far as we come for the time being.

8. Conclusion
The goal of this paper was to show that there are no acceptable arguments for the subject analysis of presentational sentences. Their logical subjects are grammatical objects. We have to live with the option of agentive objects – while a new and better account is overdue.

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[6] Alsina and Yang (2018) give a partly OT-based account of argument alternation with one-place verbs in Catalan, which cannot be transferred to Scandinavian in a simple way.

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