0. Introduction

Aims: To look at two rightward movement rules of Icelandic syntax: Indefinite NP Postposing (INPP) and Heavy NP Shift (HNPS).

(1)a. Maður er í dyrnum
    A man is in the doorway

b. Pað er maður í dyrnum
    There is a man in the doorway

(2)a. Æg gaf gamla manninum sem æg hitti á spíálanum bókina
    I gave the old man whom I met at the hospital the book

b. Æg gaf bókina gamla manninum sem æg hitti á spíálanum
    I gave the book (to) the old man whom I met at the hospital

1. Form

1.1 INPP and There-insertion

INPP "is the Icelandic equivalent of There-insertion in English" (Maling 1980:181n). But There-insertion applies to a limited number of verbs, whereas INPP applies to all sorts of verbs, transitive as well as intransitive.

(3)a. Mægt fólk kom í veisluna
    Many people came to the party

b. Pað kom mægt fólk í veisluna
    There came many people to the party

(4)a. Einhverjir strákar brutu gluggann
    Some boys broke the window

b. Pað brutu einhverjir strákar gluggann
    There broke some boys the window
The dummy *hæ* is not needed (and in fact impossible) when something else than the subject is fronted:

(5) í veisluna (*hæ), kon (*hæ) margt fólk
To the party (*there) came (*there) many people

The "landing site" of the subject can be at various places in the predicate:

(6)a Gamall maður hefur konið hingað í dag
An old man has come here today

b *hæ* hefur gamall maður konið hingað í dag

c *hæ* hefur konið gamall maður hingað í dag

d *hæ* hefur konið hingað gamall maður í dag

e *hæ* hefur konið hingað í dag gamall maður

Instead of inserting *hæ*, the place adverbial hingað or the PP í dag could be fronted in each of the sentences (6)b-e:

(7)a Hingað hefur konið gamall maður í dag
Here has come an old man today

b í dag hefur konið hingað gamall maður
Today has come here an old man

"Indefiniteness" conditions must be observed:

(8)a *hæ* hefur konið gamli maðurinn hingað í dag
There has come the old man here today

b *hingað* hefur konið gamli maðurinn í dag
Here has come the old man today

Postposing of objects appears to be governed by the same principles:

(9)a Eg sá einhverð man þarna í gar
I saw some man there yesterday

b *eg* sá þarna í gar einhverð man
I saw there yesterday some man
I saw there yesterday John

1.2 Arguments for a movement rule

Bresnan’s (1982) claim: There-insertion is not a movement rule, and the "extra" NP is not the subject, but rather an object. Inapplicable in Icelandic for several reasons:

(i) doubling of all subcategorization frames;
(ii) many new phrase-structure rules;
(iii) troubles with Ss like (7);
(iv) the "extra" NP obligatorily triggers reflexivization.

Bresnan’s main arguments against a movement rule: In certain dialects of English the number of be depends on the first conjunct in an immediately following coordinate structure:

(10) There \( \{ \text{were} \} \) a man and three women here

(11) \( \{ \text{A man and three women} \} \{ \text{was} \} \) here

(12) There \( \{ \text{was} \} \) three women (and a man) here

A paradox in rule ordering is bound to appear, Bresnan states. The situation in Icelandic:

(13) Pað \( \{ \text{?komu (pl.)} \} \) karlmaður og þrjár konur hingað

There came (sg. preferred) a man and three women here

(14) þrjár konur og karlmaður \( \{ \text{kom (sg.)} \} \) hingað

Three women and a man came (pl.) here

Number agreement with a predicate NP in the nominative:

(15) Detta (sg.) \( \{ \text{er (sg.)} \} \) hestar (pl.)

This are horses

1.3 Postposing of subjects by HNPS

Postal (1974): The rule does not move subjects:

(16)a All of the men who recovered from mononucleosis are happy
b *Are happy all of the men who recovered from mononucleosis

(17) a Maðurinn sem ætlað að vera við bíllinn er kominn
    The man who is going to repair the car has come

b *Er kominn maðurinn sem ætlað að vera við bíllinn
    Has come the man who is going to repair the car

d Pað er kominn maðurinn sem ætlað að vera við bíllinn
    There has come the man who is going to repair the car

2. Function

2.1 Conditions on postposed NPs

Definite NPs: Personal pronouns, proper names, NPs having a definite article. Compare (1) b, (3) b and (4) b with (18) - (20):

(18) a Hann er í dyrunum
    He is in the doorway

b *Pað er hann í dyrunum
    There is he in the doorway

Pað er maður í dyrunum
    There is a man in the doorway

(19) a Jón kom í veisluna
    John came to the party

b *Pað kom Jón í veisluna
    There came John to the party

Pað kom margt fólk í veisluna
    There came many people to the party

(20) a Strákarnir brutu gluggann
    The boys broke the window

b *Pað brutu strákarnir gluggann
    There broke the boys the window

Pað brutu einhverjir strákar gluggann
    There broke some boys the window

2.2 Why indefiniteness?

Apparent counterexamples:

(21) Pað var trosfullur salurinn þegar sýningin hófst
    There was full (of people) the theatre when the performance started

(22) Pað festist rútan á leiðinni norður
    There got stuck the bus on the way north
(23) Dað er horfinn allur snjóriðn
There has disappeared all the snow

(24) Dað skín alltaf sólin
There shines always the sun

Given (or old) information is that knowledge which the speaker assumes to be in the consciousness of the addressee at the time of the utterance. So-called new information is what the speaker assumes he is introducing into the addressee's consciousness by what he says. (Chafe 1976:30)

2.3 Postposing of new information

Proposal: Let us put new instead of indefinite in the characterization of NPs that can be postposed. Hence, formal features such as presence or absence of a definite article can no longer be used to predict which NPs can be postposed.

(25) Dað er kominn hingað til okkar í stúdñið Jón Jónsson, og ...
There has come here to us in the studio John Johnson, and ...

Most "heavy" NPs which get postposed contain either a PP or an S, which serves to identify or explain the content of the head NP:

(26) Ég mætti konunni í gráa húsini í morgun
I met the woman (who lives) in the grey house this morning

(27) Jón hjálpaði gamla karlinum sem öllum þykir vetum
John helped the old man who everybody is fond of

3. Conclusion

Both formal and functional factors must be considered when we describe the conditions on rightward movement in Icelandic.

References:
Bresnan, Joan. 1982. The Passive in Lexical Theory. J. Bresnan (ed.): The Mental Representation of Grammatical Relations, pp. 3-86.