

Verb movement and Negation in Scandinavian *a contemporary study of variability in change*



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Variability and change in Faroese

- Why look at Faroese?
- Don't we already know what the situation is?
 - Language output
 - Judgments
- What further progress have we made?
- What else can we hope to find out?



The issue: does Faroese still have V-to-I?

That is the book that Elin has not read

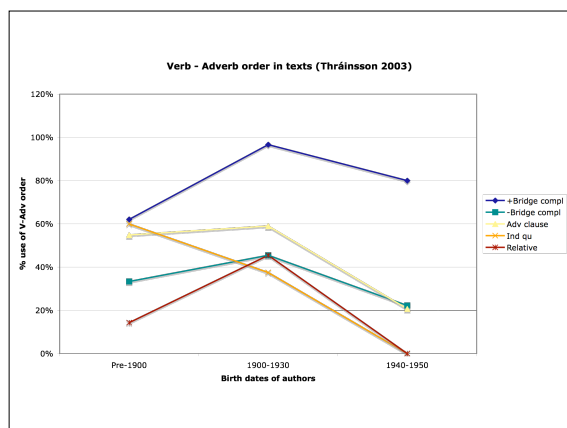
Icelandic:
 Þetta er bréfið sem Elin (hefur) **ekki** (*hefur) lesið

Danish:
 Dette er brevet, som Tove (*har) **ikke** (har) læst

Faroese:
 Hetta er brævið, sum Elin (hefur) **ikki** (hefur) lesið

Don't we already know what the situation is?

- Jonas 1996: two dialects, Faroese 1 and Faroese 2, one variable and one invariant
- Vikner 1995: V-to-I is no longer part of the internal grammar of modern Faroese speakers
- Petersen 2000: For speakers born after 1980 at least, Faroese "has in general lost V-to-I movement" (the old orders are however recognised as "belonging to written Faroese")
- Thráinsson 2003: Faroese speakers learn that there are two possible structures (IP is or is not split into Agr and Tense)



Verb-Adverb order in texts

(from Thráinsson 2003)

Clause type	Number of authors, grouped by year of birth							
	3, pre-1900		5, 1900-1939		3, 1940-1950		Total	
	V-Adv	Adv-V	V-Adv	Adv-V	V-Adv	Adv-V	V-Adv	Adv-V
+Bridge	18(62%)	11	29(97%)	1	12(80%)	3	59(80%)	15
-Bridge	4(33%)	8	10(45%)	12	2(22%)	7	16(37%)	27
Adv clause	17(55%)	14	36(59%)	25	6(21%)	23	59(49%)	62
Ind qu	3(60%)	2	3(38%)	5	0(0%)	2	6(40%)	9
Relative	1(14%)	6	5(45%)	6	0(0%)	7	6(24%)	19

Judgment data

Thráinsson 2003, Petersen 2000

	V-Adv			Adv-V		
	✓	?	*	✓	?	*
+bridge compl	34%	33%	33%	75%	21%	4%
	66%	7%	26%	92%	0%	8%
-bridge compl	14%	41%	45%	82%	14%	4%
	25%	6%	69%	98%	0%	2%
Relative	5%	31%	64%	81%	17%	2%
	3%	0%	97%	100%	0%	0%
Indirect question	5%	32%	63%	74%	21%	5%
	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%
Adverbial clause	39%	37%	24%	81%	17%	2%

Using Magnitude Estimation

- Subjects assign a number:
 - to an initial sentence to reflect their judgment of its acceptability
 - to each successive sentence to indicate proportional acceptability relative to the first (or to the previous sentence)
- This is different from traditional methods for gathering judgments in these respects:
 - Judgments are explicitly proportional and relative
 - There is no imposed scale: no absolute endpoints, and no fixed degree of discrimination
- These differences result in an interval scale that allows for the use of parametric statistics

Subjects

- In order to give ourselves known reference points, we ran the same experiment in 3 different versions: Icelandic and Danish as well as Faroese
- All versions were run using WebExp; Danish and Icelandic over the web, and Faroese in person by Zakaris Hansen.
 - 32 Danish subjects
 - 35 Icelandic subjects
 - 47 Faroese subjects
 - (split into two dialect groups of 25 and 22)

Are all "adverbs" equal?

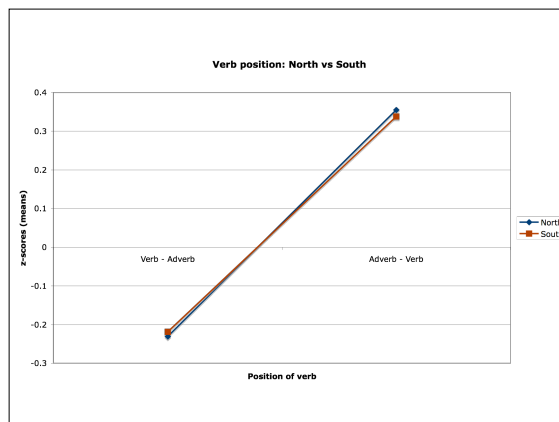
- Bentzen 2007: In Regional Northern Norwegian, finite verbs may optionally precede various adverbs, but may **not** precede negation.
 - ... ettersom nån studenta (levere) sannslylgvis (levere)
as some students hand in probably hand in
oppgaven
the work
 - ... ettersom nån studenta (*leverte) ikki (leverte)
as some students handed in neg handed in
oppgaven
the assignment

Examples

- Adverb: Negation Order: V-Adv
Hatta er filmurin, sum Hanus **hefur** **ikki** sæð
That is film-def that Hanus has neg seen
- Adverb: Negation Order: Adv-V
Hetta er brævið, sum Elin **ikki** **hefur** lisið
That is letter-def that Elin neg has read
- Adverb: Low Adv Order: V-Adv
Hetta er lagið, sum Teitur **hefur** **ofta** spælt
That is piece-the that Teitur has often played
- Adverb: Low Adv Order: Adv-V
Hatta er sangurin, sum Eivor **ofta** **hefur** sungið
That is song-def that Eivor often has sung

Faroese 1 vs Faroese 2: geographic?

- In Jonas 1996 it is argued that there are two distinct “dialects” in Faroese:
 - **Faroese 1**, which optionally allows V-to-I
 - **Faroese 2**, which does not allow V-to-I
- Jonas suggests that these two dialects may correlate both with age and with dialect area: Faroese 1 more common in the southern islands, and among older speakers.
- We investigated the geographic dialect suggestion by collecting data from 25 subjects from Tórshavn (North) and 22 subjects from Suðuroy (South). Subjects were, as much as possible, matched for age.

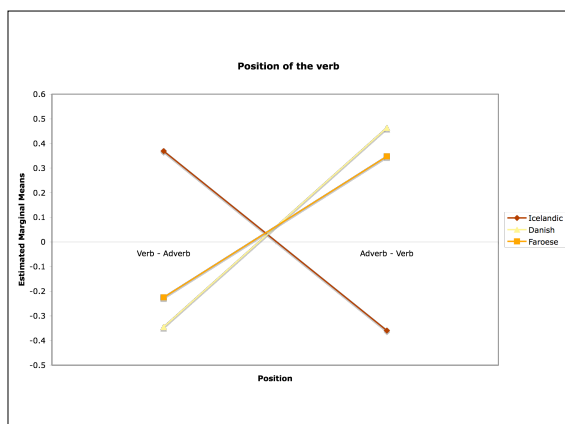


No geographic dialect difference

- The main effect of dialect group was not significant.
- There was no significant interaction between language group and position of verb, or between language group and type of adverb.
- We did not find any evidence for a geographic dialect difference with respect to V-to-I in our subjects.

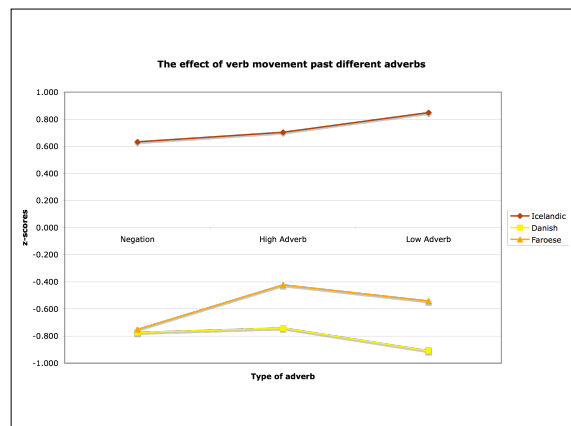
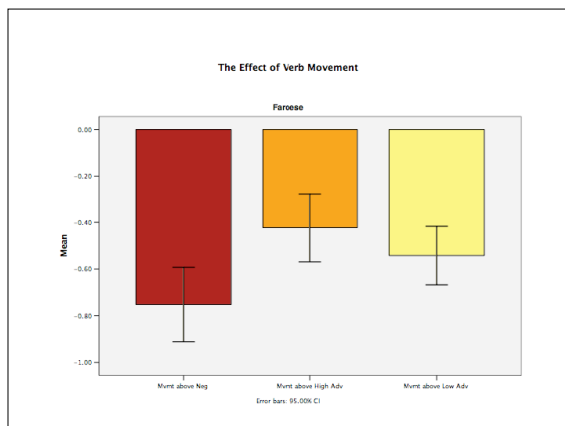
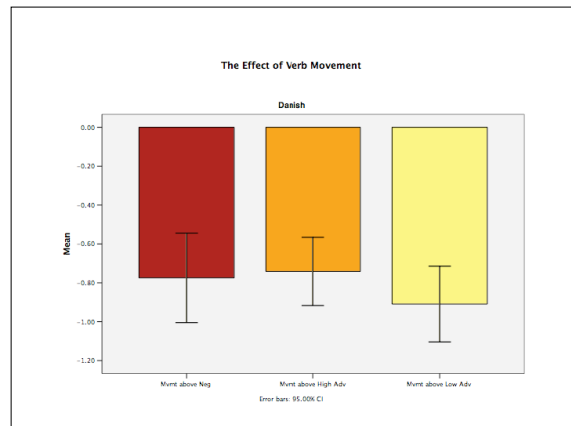
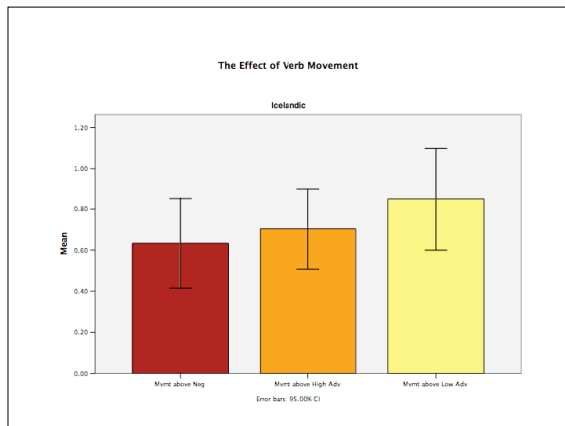
Comparing Verb/Adverb orders

- There is a significant interaction between language and order of the verb with respect to Negation/Adverb.
- I.e. the effect of the different orders is different, depending on the language...



Comparing Verb/Adverb orders

- To see where there is any difference between the different adverbs in terms of whether or not the verb can move past them, we can look at the **difference** between the **Verb-Adverb** and **Adverb-Verb** orders with respect to each of the three adverbs
- We’d expect no difference between verb movement over the three adverbs in **Icelandic** (all should be good) and in **Danish** (all should be bad)
- If **Faroese** is just intermediate between Icelandic and Danish, we’d also expect no effect of the different adverb types here.



Comparing Verb/Adverb orders

- Our Faroese subjects dispreferred the order Finite Verb - Negation in an unambiguously non-V2 context to the same extent that the Danish subjects did.
- However, our Faroese subjects found Verb-Adverb orders better than Verb-Negation orders (this effect was found neither in Danish nor in Icelandic).
- To the extent that IP-internal verb movement is still grammatical in Faroese, for some speakers it may be to an intermediate position.

Comparing Verb/Adverb orders

Icelandic (Wiklund et al 2007):
 Hann spurði hvort ...
he asked whether
 hún (hefði) ekki (* hefði) sennilega (* hefði) oft (% hefði)
she had neg had probably had often had
 sungið falskt
sung out of tune

Faroese:
 Katrin ivast, um...
Katrin doubts if
 hann (hefur) ikki (hefur) møguliga (?hefur) ofta (hefur)
he has neg has possibly has often has
 sungið sangin.
sung the song

Does embedded V2 mask V-to-I?

- Icelandic has been argued to exhibit "generalized embedded V2"—thus providing children with a reduced set of environments for observing V-to-I. But there is considerable disagreement over the extent of this phenomenon.
- Does Faroese also allow embedded V2 in an extended set of contexts? Or is this also changing?

How “generalized” is V2 in Faroese?

We looked at the effect of two variables and their interaction (2 within-subjects variables, 2 and 5 levels):

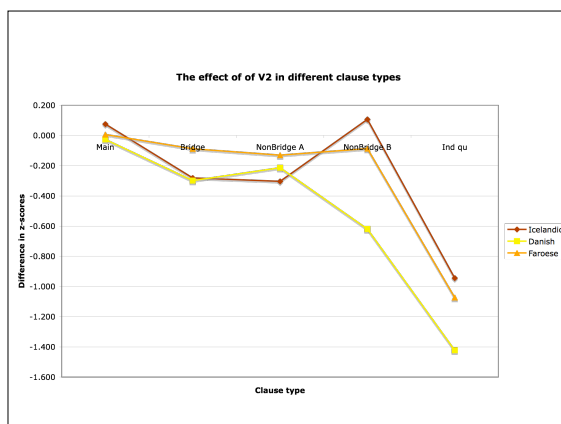
- Order
 - Subject-Initial
 - Adjunct-Initial
- Clause type
 - Main clause
 - “Bridge verb” complement
 - Nonbridge verb A complement (*regret, admit*)
 - Nonbridge verb B complement (*deny, doubt, be proud*)
 - Indirect question

Examples

- Clause Type: Bridge Order: Subject-Initial
Lív segði, at hon kom seint til arbeiðis í gjár
Lív said that she came late to work yesterday
- Clause Type: Bridge Order: Adjunct-Initial
Beinir segði, at í morgin kemur hann seint til arbeiðis
Beinir said that tomorrow comes he late to work
- Clause Type: NonBridge B Order: Subject-Initial
Sámal noktaði, at hann hevði verið alla náttina á barrini í fleiri forum
Sámal denied that he had been all night in bar-def frequently
- Clause Type: NonBridge B Order: Adjunct-Initial
Einar noktaði, at í fleiri forum hevði hann drukkið alla náttina á barrini
Einar deniedthat frequently had he drunk all night in bar-def

Looking at the effect of V2

- Each condition (combination of values for each variable) had three sentences exemplifying it: their scores were averaged together for each subject
- The best measure of the effect of V2 is to look at the **difference** between the Subject-Initial and Adjunct-Initial order, for each clause type:



The effect of V2: Danish

- In Danish there was a significant difference between the effect of V2 in a main clause and after the second category of “nonbridge” verbs (*deny, doubt, be proud*).
- There was however no significant difference between the effect of V2 in a main clause and after the first category of “nonbridge” verbs (*regret, admit*).
- Taken together, this suggests that for this language Vikner’s original categorisation of “bridge” verbs for V2 is not correct; instead these results are more consistent with the proposals in Bentzen et al (2007) or Julien (2007).

The effect of V2: Faroese and Icelandic

- In Faroese and Icelandic, however, there is no significant difference between the effect of V2 in a main clause and after the second category of “nonbridge” verbs.
- This suggests that V2 in these languages targets a different projection than in Danish (and the other mainland Scandinavian languages?)
- It appears that no verb taking a propositional complement provides an environment where V2 is excluded (and evidence for V-to-I is unambiguous)

Conclusions

- There is no evidence for a **difference between dialect areas** with respect to V-to-I in Faroese.
- Moving the verb higher than **Negation** is as dispreferred in Faroese as it is in Danish. This suggests that the loss of V-to-I is very far advanced in Faroese.
- To the extent that Faroese speakers allow IP-internal verb movement, the movement may target intermediate positions (in contrast to Icelandic, as well as to Danish).
- We have some new evidence that Icelandic and Faroese both allow **V2** in more contexts than Danish.

What else can we hope to find out?

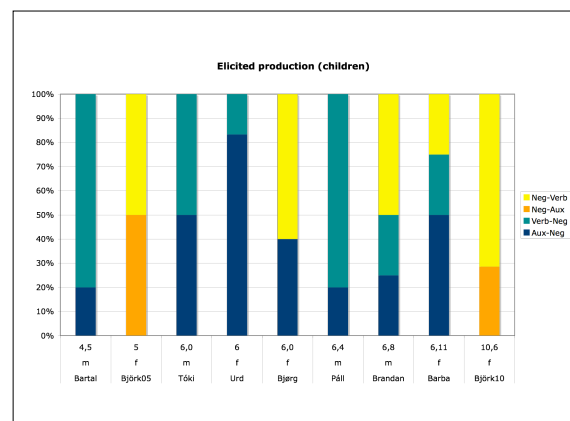
- Are there generational differences still detectable?
- Do other phenomena correlate with Verb-Adverb orders?
- How do preliterate children behave?

How is verb movement acquired?

- Because it has been reported that at least some adult Faroese speakers optionally allow V-to-I (even though so far we have found that it is significantly dispreferred), we wanted to investigate whether the V-to-I option arises late, after extensive contact with the written variety.
- As part of this, we will be gathering data from children of pre-school age.
- So far we have pilot data from 9 children, aged between 4,5 and 10,6, from a guided elicitation task.
- We are also collecting child-directed input samples from some of the children’s families.

How is verb movement acquired?

- To our surprise, we have found so far that **many of the pre-school children produce the Verb - Negation order in indirect questions** (the test context).
- As Westergaard & Bentzen 2007 found for two children speaking Regional Northern Norwegian, who showed a similar pattern, these children are not simply taking indirect questions to have the syntax of main clause questions (with V-to-C), since they never invert the verb past the subject in these contexts.



A Neg-Verb example

INV: Nilli, minnst tú, hvør tað er? Tað er tann litla apan, ha? Hon hjálpir Pippi at baka siropskakar, sært tú? Men hesturin sleppur ikki at hjálpa til, tí at hann býr úti á altanini, hann tímir ikki at vera inni. Tað minnst vit, men heldur tú, at Gudny minnst hví? Hví, hví sleppur hesturin ikki at hjálpa til? Spyr Gudny! Minnst tú, hví...

CHILD: Minnst tú, hví hesturin **ikki sleppur** inn?
remember you why the horse neg is-allowed in

A slip up by the investigator, but...

INV: Ja, hesturin tímir ikki at vera inni...heldur tú, *yes the horse likes neg to be in think you heldur tú at mamma minnst hví...hví hesturin think you that mum remembers why.. the horse **ikki tímir** at vera inni? Spyr hana: mamma, not likes to be inside ask her mum minnst tú... remember you...*

CHILD: ... um hesturin **tímdi ikki** at vera inni?
if the horse liked neg to be inside

For more information

<http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/~heycock/faroese-project.shtml>