Investigating embedded V2 and/or V-to-I in Faroese

Caroline Heycock∗, Zakaris Hansen∗†, Antonella Sorace∗
∗University of Edinburgh, †Fróðskaparsetur Føroya

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1 Questions about Faroese

1.1 Does Faroese still have V-to-I?


(1) Hetta er bókin, sum Birita (ikki) hevur (ikki) lisið.
This is the book that Birita (NEG) has (NEG) read

What is not so clear is how far along in this process of change the language has got.

1.2 Does Faroese have general or restricted V2?

(2) a. Jón harmar að þessa bók skuli ég hafa lesið. (Icelandic)
   John regrets that this book shall I have read
   John regrets that I have read this book.

b. *Johan beklager at denne bog har jeg læst. (Danish, Vikner 1994)
   John regrets that this book have I read
   John regrets that I have read this book.

The question of whether Faroese is like Icelandic in this respect has received much less attention in the literature (but see Petersen et al. 1998, p. 320).

1.3 What is/are the nature of the variation?

Is V-to-I part of the competence grammar(s) of contemporary speakers of Faroese?
If some speakers are varying between two grammars, what exactly are those grammars?

2 Setting about looking for answers

Particular problems of gradience and variability in the data.
2.1 Comparison of frequency in text

2.1.1 Word order in different types of clauses in Faroese

A summary of Thráinsson’s data from a number of texts produced by different speakers born in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the additional data from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, translated by a speaker born in 1941.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of clause</th>
<th>Number of authors, grouped by date of birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3, pre-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Frequency of different orders of finite verb and adverb in different types of embedded clauses in some 19th & 20th century texts. From Thráinsson 2003, p. 176

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of clause</th>
<th>V-Neg</th>
<th>Neg-V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+bridge v comp</td>
<td>21 (75%)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bridge v comp</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj comp</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv clause</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind qu</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not categorised</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34 (34%)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: V-Neg and Neg-V order in subordinate clauses in Harry Potter og Vitramannasteinurin, excluding *because* clauses

The strength of support that this gives for V-to-I in the youngest group depends partly on the availability of V2 in nonbridge verb complements (and also the status of the adverbial clauses).

The very high rate of of the V-Neg order in bridge verb complements is striking: 77% (33/43) for the speakers born after 1940 in this small sample.
2.1.2 Comparison with Danish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of clause</th>
<th>Faroese</th>
<th>Danish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V-Neg</td>
<td>Neg-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+bridge v comp</td>
<td>21 (75%)</td>
<td>7 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bridge v comp</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>4 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj comp</td>
<td>1 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
<td>2 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adv clause</td>
<td>1 (6%)</td>
<td>15 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind qu</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>27 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not categorised</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>3 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>34 (34%)</td>
<td>66 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: V-Neg and Neg-V order in subordinate clauses, excluding *because* clauses, in Faroese and Danish translations of the same text

2.1.3 Getting an independent measure for embedded V2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of clause</th>
<th>Faroese</th>
<th>Danish</th>
<th>Icelandic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>101 (18%)</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>109 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+bridge v comp</td>
<td>6 (11%)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-bridge v comp</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Word order in Faroese, Danish (and Icelandic)

We can use the ratio of non-subject initial orders in main clauses, together with the number of non-subject initial orders in bridge-verb complements, to estimate the number of complements to bridge verbs that are instances of V2. How do these estimates compare with the frequencies of V-Neg order in these clauses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge verb complements</th>
<th>Faroese</th>
<th>Danish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V2 (estimated)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb-Neg order</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Word order in bridge verb complements
So: thinking of the questions that we started with:

- We have some direct evidence from texts for the persistence of V-to-I in Faroese, namely the occurrence of V-Neg orders in adverbial clauses in Thráinsson’s data for the youngest speakers.

- We also have some indirect evidence, namely the high frequency of this order in bridge verb complements.

- As we don’t know whether V2 is possible in Faroese in the complements to non-bridge verbs, we don’t know whether the cases of V-Neg order in this environment are attributable to V2 or to V-to-I.

2.2 Grammaticality judgments

2.2.1 Pilot study 1: Negation in different types of clause

Magnitude Estimation to get at grammaticality judgments.

24 native speakers from Tórshavn and Suðuroy.

9 different conditions: two crossed variables each with 3 values. Three different clause types: complement to a bridge verb, complement to a nonbridge verb, and relative. In each of these types three different possibilities with respect to negation: no negation at all, negation before the verb, and the verb before negation:

(3) Gunnar helt, at Julius (ikki) fôr (ikki) at siga nei.
   Gunnar thinks that Julius (NEG) will (NEG) INF say no
   Gunnar thinks that Julius will (not) say no.

(4) Tey harmast um, at hann (ikki) fekk (ikki) brævið.
   they regret that he (NEG) got (NEG) the letter
   They regret that he (didn’t) got the letter.

(5) Okkurt hendi hasa náttina, sum han (ikki) hevði (ikki) væntað.
   something happened that night that he (NEG) had (NEG) expected
   Something happened that night that he had (not) expected.

In looking at the results, we can compare a “control” case for each clause type—a complement to a bridge verb, a complement to a nonbridge verb, and a relative clause—in which there is no negation, with the two related clauses with negation in each of the two possible placements:
Note however that even the “bad” cases are significantly better than straightforwardly ungrammatical sentences:

(6) *Hon rætti hana tallerkin, íð hevði borðinum staðið á leingi.  
    she reached her the plate that had the table stood on long  
    She handed her the plate that had stood on the table for a long time.

(7) *Julius visti nakað um Stefan, sum honum vildi hann fortelja.  
    Julius knew something about Stefan that him wanted he tell  
    Julius knew something about Stefan that he wanted to tell him.
2.2.2 Pilot study 2: Negatives, adverbs, and embedded V2

A more direct approach to the question of whether Faroese allows “general embedded V2,” or more specifically V2 in non-bridge verb complements: (very) recent pilot carried out by Zakaris Hansen. 17 subjects of different ages (5 18/19, 8 between 34 and 46, 4 in their early 70s).

As well as “true” fillers (13 grammatical, 13 ungrammatical), they were asked for judgments on two sets of sentences types. The first set consisted of four different types of clauses, with both subject-initial and non-subject initial orders: main clauses, clauses occurring as the complement to a bridge verb (siga say), to a nonbridge verb (harmast regret, viðganga, játta admit), and to a verb introducing an indirect question, spyrja (ask). There were three different lexicalisations of each of these eight conditions.

(8) Matrix clause
   a. Sjúrður og Pætur komu seint til arbeiðis í morgun.
      Sjúrður and Peter came late to work this morning
      Sjúrður and Peter were late for work this morning.
   b. Í dag komu bæði stjórin og varastjórin seint til arbeiðis.
      today came both the director and the vice director late to work
      Today both the director and vice director were late for work.

(9) Bridge verb complement
   a. Liv segði, at hon kom seint til arbeiðis í gjár.
      Liv said that she came late to work yesterday
      Liv said that she was late for work yesterday.
   b. Beinir segði, at í morgin kemur hann seint til arbeiðis.
      Beinir said that tomorrow comes he late to work
      Beinir said that tomorrow he would be late for work.

(10) Non-bridge verb complement
    a. Ása harmaðist, at hon kom so seint til arbeiðis í morgun.
       Ása regretted that she came so late to work this morning
       Ása regretted that she was so late for work this morning.
    b. Lærlingurin harmaðist, at í morgun kom hann ov seint til arbeiðis.
       the trainee regretted that this morning came he too late to work
       The trainee regretted that this morning he came too late to work.

(11) Indirect question
    a. Vikarurin spurdi, um næmingarnir koma seint í skúla hvønn dag.
       the substitute teacher asked if the pupils come late to school every day
       The substitute teacher asked if the pupils are late for school every day.
    b. Venjarin spurdi, um altíð koma spælararnir ov seint til venjing
       the coach asked if always come the players too late for training
       The coach asked if the players always come too late for training.

Similarly to before, we get the best understanding of the relative acceptability of the nonsubject initial orders by examining the difference between the judgments on this order (the (b) examples above) and the judgments on the subject-initial order (the (a) examples).
A second question: does Faroese behave like the Regional Northern Norwegian dialects reported in Bentzen 2005, 2006, Hróarsdóttir et al. 2006?

In the same experiment, a set of sentences containing the negative *ikki*, a “high” sentential adverb *kanska* (maybe), and a “low” adverb *ofta* (often); in each case there were two variants, one with the verb before the adverb/negation, and one with it after. Again there were three different lexicalisations of each case. Also, for comparison, there was one case without either adverb or negation.

(12) Hetta er bókin, sum Birita hevur lisið.
    this is the book that Birita has read
    This is the book that Birita has read.

(13) Negation
    a. Hetta er brævið, sum Elin ikki hevur lisið.
       this is the letter that Elin NEG has read
       This is the letter that Elin hasn’t read.
    b. Hatta er filmurin, sum Hanus hevur ikki sæð.
       that is the film that Hanus has NEG seen
       That is the film that Hanus has not seen.

(14) “Low” adverb
    a. Hatta er sangurin, sum Eivør ofta hevur sungið.
       that is the song that Eivør often has sung
       That is the song that Eivør has often sung.
    b. Hetta er lagið, sum Teitur hevur ofta spælt.
       this is the melody that Teitur has often played
       This is the melody that Teitur has often played.
(15) “High” adverb
a. Hatta er blaðið, sum Óluva kanska hevur lisið.
That is the magazine/paper that Óluva maybe has read
That is the magazine/paper that Óluva has maybe read.
b. Hetta er myndin, sum Tróndur hevur kanska málað.
This is the picture that Tróndur has maybe painted
This is the picture that Tróndur has maybe painted.

Again, we can look at the difference between the two conditions, with the different adverbs.

We need an analysis of the variance!
What are the poles of the alternation in Faroese? Hróarsdóttir et al. 2006:

- In Icelandic, the verb must precede negation not only in finite clauses, but also in control infinitives:

  (16) Hon reyndi að koma ekki alltaf á réttum tíma í skólann.
  
  She tried to come not always on right time in school
  
  She tried to not always be on time at school.

- In Icelandic, even for speakers who in certain circumstances allow the verb to follow negation in a subordinate clause, it must either precede or follow all adverbs and negation:

  (17) Hann spurði hvort hún (*hafi) ekki (*hafi) sennilega (*hafi) oft (*hafi) sungið
  
  He asked whether she (has) NEG (has) probably (has) often (has) sung
  
  falskt.
  
  He asked whether she has not probably often sung out of tune.

Faroese:

(18) Hon royndi (ikki) at visa honum (*ikki), at hon var ill.
  
  she tried (NEG) to show him (*NEG) that she was angry
  
  She tried not to show him that she was angry.

(19) Katrin ívast, um hann (hevur) ikki (hevur) møguliga (?hevur) ofta (hevur) sungið
  
  Katrin wonders if he (has) NEG (has) possibly (?has) often (has) sung
  
  sängin.
  
  the song
  
  Katrin wonders if he has not possibly often sung the song.

3 Closing remarks

- There is at least preliminary evidence that Faroese speakers allow V2 quite freely in the complement to non-bridge verbs.

- More work needs to be done to determine the grammar of V-to-I for contemporary speakers of Faroese.

- In Faroese the ordering of the verb with respect to negation in a finite and in a nonfinite clause appear to be distinct phenomena, in contrast to what has been claimed for Icelandic.
References


