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On variation in Faroese verb placement

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Abstract:

In this paper, we present and discuss results from an investigation of verb placement in modern Faroese in which we collected data from speakers from a number of different dialect areas in the Faroe Islands. Altogether we interviewed 54 informants (age 15 – 67, 29 women and 25 men). Therefore, our study not only investigates the geographical variation claimed to be present in Faroese with respect to verb placement, but also gender and age variation. Our results indicate that verb movement in non-V2 contexts is no longer commonly available to the speakers of Faroese. Our results also suggest that verb movement across adverbs like *often* and *already* tends to be more acceptable than movement across negation and other adverbs like *never* and *undoubtedly*. Furthermore, movement of finite auxiliaries generally receives a slightly higher score than movement of finite main verbs. Our results do not show any differences in the judgements of speakers below and above the age of 25. Contrary to Jonas (1996), we find that speakers in the North are, if anything, more likely to accept verb movement than speakers in the South.

1. Introduction

The feature of Faroese which has attracted perhaps the most attention from syntacticians in the last two decades is the variability in the order of finite verb and negation in subordinate clauses (Lockwood 1977, Barnes 1992, Vikner 1995, Jonas 1996, Bobaljik & Thráinsson 1998, Petersen 2000, Thráinsson 2003, Heycock & Sorace to appear, among others). The general assumption has been that Faroese is in the process of moving from a system like that of modern Icelandic, in which the verb always appears in a "high", pre-negation, pre-medial-adverb position, to a system like that of modern Danish, where (in the absence of V2) the verb always appears below negation and all medial adverbs. This phenomenon in Faroese has the potential to shed further light on the question of syntactic variability, and more specifically, it is an interesting case for theories concerning the driver for verb movement.

In Jonas (1996), it is suggested that as far as the pre-negation position for the finite verb in subordinate clauses is concerned, there are two dialects of Faroese. These are Faroese 1, in which the verb appears optionally above or below negation, and Faroese 2, which in the relevant

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respect has a grammar like that of modern Danish, with the verb invariably appearing below negation. Jonas argues that use of one dialect or the other correlates with age (Faroese 1 being restricted to older speakers), but she also suggests that there is a geographical component, with speakers in the southern islands (Sandoy and Suðuroy) being more likely to use Faroese 1 than speakers from further north. In the light of the claim that high placement for the finite verb correlates with "rich" verbal agreement, this dialectal distribution would in fact be surprising, since although it is not evident from the written form of the language, as the result of phonological mergers of unstressed vowels, the dialect of Suðuroy (one of the southern dialects mentioned by Jonas) has retained fewer distinctions than some of the northern dialects (Weyhe 1996, Thráinsson 2003).

In this paper, we report on an investigation of verb placement in modern Faroese in which we collected data from speakers from a number of different dialect areas in the Faroe Islands. In a study of 45 speakers from Tórshavn and Suðuroy, Heycock et al. (2008a,b, 2009) found no dialectal variation in the placement of the finite verb in subordinate clauses. In this paper, in addition to speakers from these two areas, we present and discuss also data from speakers from the southern island Sandoy, the western island of Vágar, and from Eysturoy and Borðoy in the north-east. As well as considering additional dialect areas, we go beyond previous work in investigating the position of finite verbs in more detail. Building on the work of Bentzen (2005, 2007) and Wiklund et al. (2007) on Regional Northern Norwegian, in which it is demonstrated that in this dialect, the finite verb may precede (most) medial adverbs but cannot precede negation, Heycock et al. 2009 report on a study showing that modern Faroese speakers also distinguish between negation on the one hand and the two adverbs *kanska* (maybe) and *ofta* (often) on the other — in both cases the adverb-verb order is preferred but this preference is stronger for negation than for the two adverbs. In this paper, we pursue the question of the exact location of the verb by comparing judgments with a wider range of adverbs (including the negative marker *ikki*, *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly,' *ongantíð* 'never,' *aldrin* 'never,' and *ofta* 'often') and we show that our results suggest not only a distinction between the negative marker and other adverbs, but also between a number of these other adverbs. We also compare the behaviour of main verbs, modals, and the perfective auxiliary, which have been argued to show different movement properties in the speech of young children acquiring Swedish (Håkansson & Collberg 1994, but for a different view see Waldmann 2008). Thus, the data we present here make it clear that it is no longer possible to attempt to account for the pattern in Faroese in terms of variability in a binary system,

with or without V-to-I, instead there seem to be a range of "intermediate" movements; this clearly has implications not only for Faroese but for our understanding of "verb movement" more generally.

2. Methodology of data collection

The grammatical phenomenon addressed in this paper concerns the position of the finite verb with respect to adverbs and negation in non-V2 contexts. We tested the position of the finite verb in relation to several kinds of adverbs and with various kinds of finite verbs: main verbs, the perfective auxiliary, and modal auxiliaries. The tested adverbs and adverbials are listed in (1).

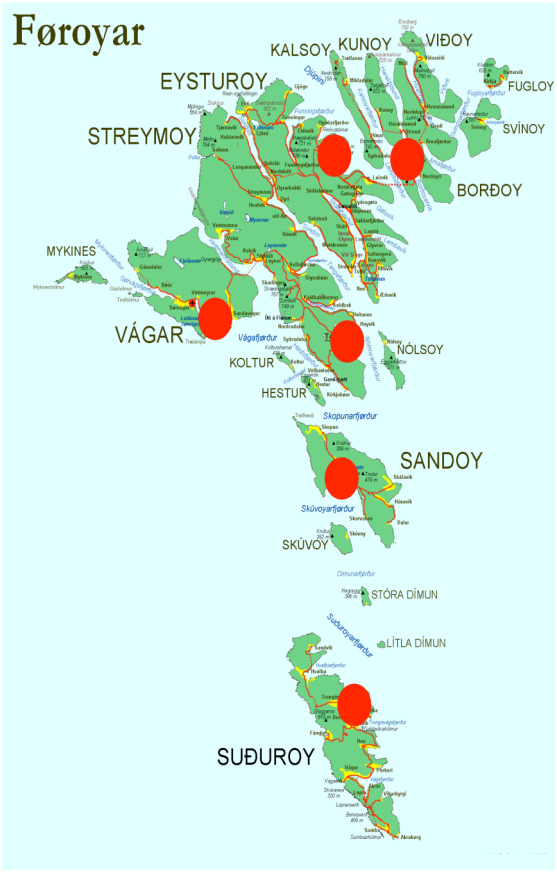
(1)

aldrin	'never'
allarhelst	'most probably'
altíð	'always'
beinanvegin	'immediately'
ein dag	'one day'
eina ferð	'once'
helst	'probably'
ikki	'not'
ivaleyst	'undoubtedly'
longu	'already'
møguliga	'possibly'
oftari	'more often'
ongantíð	'never'
onkuntíð	'sometimes'
so ofta	'so often'
tíverri	'unfortunately'
vist	'certainly'

The order of verb and adverb was tested in embedded *wh*-questions, relative clauses, and infinitival clauses.[1] These clause types were chosen to avoid any embedded V2 contexts. Embedded V2 is known to appear in Faroese in *that*-clauses introduced by a main clause with certain predicates (cf. Thráinsson et al. 2004: 297 ff, Wiklund et al. 2008, and Heycock et al. 2009) and for that reason, we did not test any *that*-clauses during the investigation (for this the reader is referred to Angantýsson's contribution to the current volume).

[1] Since many of our informants judged infinitival clauses with an adverbial as ungrammatical, preferring instead to place the adverbial in the matrix clause, we do not discuss our results for infinitival clauses in this paper.

The data for this paper were collected during the 5th NORMS dialect workshop on Faroese which took place in August 2008 in the Faroe Islands.[2] Data were collected at the following six locations (indicated by the red dots on the map to the right): Tórshavn (Streymoy), Fuglafjørður (Eysturoy), Klaksvík (Borðoy), Tvøroyri (Suðuroy), Sandur (Sandoy), and in Miðvágur (Vágar). We have thus covered all the most important dialect measurement points in the Faroes. This is important for the phenomenon we are investigating, as it has been claimed that differences in verb placement in embedded clauses in Faroese are subject to geographical variation.



Altogether we interviewed 54 informants aged between 15 and 67 years old (29 women and 25 men). Our study therefore also covers gender and age variation. We have divided the informants into two age groups: Group 1 with informants aged 25 or younger (i.e. informants born in 1983 and later), and Group 2 with informants aged 26 or older (i.e. informants born in 1982 or earlier). The number of informants at every location and the number of subjects in every age group are summarized below.[3]

Table 1: The number of informants across locations and age groups.

	T	**F**	**K**	**Tv**	**S**	**M**	**Total**
Group 1 (-> 25)	4	2	7	2	5	4	**24**
Group 2 (26 ->)	2	6	3	7	5	7	**30**
Total	**6**	**8**	**10**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**54**

[2] http://norms.uit.no/index.php?page=foroyar

[3] In Table 1, and throughout the below tables, the following abbreviations will be used for geographical locations: T = Tórshavn, F = Fuglafjørður, K = Klaksvík, Tv = Tvøroyri, S = Sandur, and M = Miðvágur.

The data presented in Table 1 show that there are at least two informants in each age group at all locations. The numbers of informants in the two age groups are also fairly close. The data were collected by elicitation of grammaticality judgements. A set of prepared sentences was presented to the informants, and they were asked to judge their grammaticality.[4] Elicitation of grammaticality judgements is of course a standard method particularly among generative grammarians; nevertheless, it has been criticized. In his book on the empirical base of linguistics, Schütze (1996: 3) contends that grammaticality judgements are not sufficient as the only method of obtaining data.[5] Nevertheless, he also mentions four "key reasons" for using the method of grammaticality judgements: (1) the possibility of examining sentences that occur very rarely in corpora or in speech; (2) the possibility of obtaining negative information, i.e. information on which patterns are not grammatical in a particular language; (3) the possibility of distinguishing between e.g. unfinished utterances and finished utterances (such possibility is much more restricted in a corpus); (4) the possibility of minimizing the impact of communicative and representational language functions (Schütze 1996: 2 ff). For our examination of verb placement in embedded clauses in Faroese, the most important reasons for choosing the elicitation method were (1) and (2) above. Firstly, embedded clauses of one of the types that excludes V2 and that, in addition, contain a medial adverb or negation are not very frequent. Searching for a combination of a certain complementizer, a certain adverb, a certain verb and, let's say, a DP-subject turns out to yield very few tokens even in a very big corpus. The string: relative complementizer – DP-subject – the adverb *ofte* ('often') and any finite verb gives only five hits in the *bokmål* part of The Oslo Corpus of Tagged Norwegian Texts that contains about 18.5 million words.[6] And further, there are no comparable large scale corpus resources for Faroese.[7] Secondly, the possibility of obtaining

[4] The informants were instructed that the grammaticality of an utterance does not refer to whether the sentence is correct in the sense of the prescriptive grammar of a language, but whether the sentence is possible and natural to utter for a native-speaker of a language.

[5] One of the important arguments against relying on grammaticality judgements is that it may lead to a situation in which a linguist is constructing "grammars of linguistic intuitions or judgements, which need not be identical with grammars of the competence underlying production or comprehension" (Schütze 1996: 4 and references therein).

[6] URL: http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/norsk/bokmaal/english.html.

[7] The only currently available text corpus of Faroese contains one year's issues of the newspaper *Dimmalætting* (see http://spraakbanken.gu.se/FTS/). An additional Faroese

negative evidence has also been important for us: as linguists interested in the internal grammars of speakers of the language, it is crucial to be able to distinguish between a construction that is not attested because it is rare, hard to process, or pragmatically restricted (for example), and one that is not attested because it is ungrammatical.

For a successful elicitation of data, a number of precautions have to be taken according to Schütze (1996: 187). First of all, he argues that the number of subjects in a linguistic study must be sufficient, both for statistical reasons and for reasons of avoiding distortion of the results with atypical speakers. Then, possible dialectal variation and factors as gender, age, education, etc. need to be controlled for. The subjects that are consulted during the examination must be able to judge reliably. Another "basic precaution" that Schütze (1996: 183 ff) proposes concerns the preparation and presentation of the material: e.g. the order of the sentences presented, an equal number of sentences that are expected to be judged as grammatical and as ungrammatical, semantic well-formedness of the sentences, the choice of common words, presenting a context in which the examples will appear, avoidance of sentences that are difficult to process and using closely matched sentences in cases where very small differences between sentences are to be examined (as is the case in this study). In our preparations, we tried to follow Schütze's (1996) guidelines as much as possible. However, practical and logistic considerations dictated some departure from them in some points: in particular, sentences were not presented with contexts, and the order of presentation of the sentences was not randomized between informants.

For the investigation, we prepared questionnaires with the help of Faroese colleagues, to make sure that the sentences were idiomatic (cf. above). There were two different questionnaires, which overlapped extensively in the topic area presented here. In the one case where the same informant completed both questionnaires, we have only used the results from one of them. The sentences were presented to the informants one at a time in written form. In most cases, they were asked to first read the sentence aloud and then judge it, but in some cases the investigator read the sentence in Faroese and then obtained a judgement from the informant. The informants were asked to judge the sentences according to a five-point scale (from 1 to 5), where 1 corresponds to the judgment: 'the sentence does not reflect the prevailing language in use (one would never say this)', whereas 5 corresponds to the judgment: 'the sentence reflects completely to

(spoken language) corpus is being prepared at the University of Oslo as part of the Nordic Dialect Corpus (http://www.tekstlab.uio.no/nota/scandiasyn/index.html).

the prevailing language in use (one would normally say this)'. In our discussion we consider sentences with scores 4-5 as accepted, sentences with score 3 as marginal, and sentences with score 1-2 as rejected. While judging the examples, the informants were also encouraged to think aloud. Before going through the sentences, they got instructions on how the interview was going to proceed and on what they were expected to do (the instruction were given in the majority of cases in line with Schütze 1996: 186-194). The language of discussion was in the majority of cases Norwegian, Danish or Swedish, but sometimes also Faroese, Icelandic and English (depending on the which one the informants mastered and which they were comfortable using). Each informant was asked to judge between 76 and 114 sentences.[8] The number of sentences that were to be judged may seem quite high, especially in light of the claims of Schütze (1996: 193) and that of Carden (1976: 8), who both point out that asking for too many judgements at a time may influence the results.[9] This is because the subject may become bored and/or fatigued after a longer time and she or he will consequently not pay attention to the differences between the sentences asked. As an alternative to long sessions, Schütze (1996: 193) proposes short sessions. Since we had no possibility of setting up multiple sessions with the same speaker during the NORMS workshop, we tried to be attentive to any signs of informants not paying attention, being bored, etc. In some cases we chose to end the session before the whole set of sentences had been judged, and consequently, we removed these informants' answers from the database. The obtained judgements were filed in digital form, together with all the sentences used: they constitute the database for the present paper.

In the following section, we will present and discuss the results of our survey and address the issue of potential generational and geographic variation.

3. Results

3.1 The overall picture

Let us first look at the results from our survey across locations and ages. Tables 2 and 3 give the results for the word order V-Adv/Neg with various

[8] Depending on the investigator and due to the fact that even other syntactic phenomena, not only verb movement, were checked at the same time.

[9] Especially when the judgements concern similar constructions.

types of verbs and adverbs in embedded *wh*-questions and relative clauses. Here as in all subsequent tables, we report the median score for the sentence type. As both of the tables show, the acceptance rate of the word order V-Adv/Neg is not very high. For embedded questions (Table 2) the only context where most speakers accepted this word order involves a finite perfective auxiliary preceding the adverb *longu* 'already.' In addition, main verbs preceding *so ofta* 'so often' and *møguliga/vist* 'probably/certainly'[10], perfective auxiliaries preceding *ongantíð* 'never,' and modal auxiliaries preceding *so ofta* 'so often,' *(allar)helst* 'probably,' and *altíð* 'always' are marginally accepted. However, main verbs preceding *ongantíð*, perfective auxiliaries preceding *(allar)helst*, and all kinds of verbs preceding negation are generally rejected by our informants.

Table 2: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in embedded* wh-*questions.*[11]

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**Median of the 29 responses)**
Embedded *wh*-question	Main verb	*so ofta*	3
		ongantíð	1
		møguliga/vist	3
		ikki	1
	Perfective auxiliary	*longu*	**4**
		ongantíð	3
		(allar)helst	2
		ikki	2
	Modal auxiliary	*so ofta*	3
		altíð	3
		(allar)helst	3
		ikki	2

Similarly, in relative clauses (Table 3), movement of a main verb or a modal auxiliary across *ofta* 'often' is generally accepted. Movement of auxiliaries across other adverbs, such as *onkuntíð* 'sometimes,' *ongantíð* 'never,' and *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly' is most of the time marginal, whereas movement of main verbs across other adverbs, as well as movement of any kind of verb across negation is mostly rejected by the informants.

[10] Informants could choose which of these adverbs they preferred in this sentence.

Table 3: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in relative clauses.*

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**Median of the 31 responses**
Relative clause	Main verb	*ofta*	**4**
		onkuntíð	3
		aldrin	2
		ongantíð	2
		ivaleyst	1
		ikki	1
	Perfective auxiliary	*ofta*	**4**
		eina ferð	3
		onkuntíð	3
		aldrin	3
		ongantíð	3
		ivaleyst	3
		ikki	2
	Modal auxiliary	*ofta*	3
		ein dag	3
		aldrin	3
		ongantíð	3
		ivaleyst	3
		ikki	3

It should be pointed out that in both these clause types, the corresponding sentences with the order Adv/Neg-V received much higher scores (mostly 4 or 5), indicating that our results are not an effect of the test sentences being particularly awkward or complicated.

The overall scores for the word order V-Adv/Neg suggest that verb movement in non-V2 contexts is not commonly available to the speakers of Faroese anymore. However, the results display some gradability in the acceptance of verb movement. First of all, verb movement across negation is almost always rejected in both clause types, as illustrated in examples (2)-(3). Note that we adopt the convention of representing sentences with a median score of 1-2 as judged ungrammatical ("*"), those with a median of 3 as marginal ("?"), and those with a median of 4-5 as grammatical (no diacritic):

(2) *Hon fortaldi mær hví Ása **etur** ikki blóðpylsu.
she told me why Ása eats not blood.sausage

(3) *Tað er nakað sum hann **hevur** ikki gjørt.
this is something that he has not done

Furthermore, movement across adverbs like *often* and *already* tends to be more acceptable than movement across other adverbs like *never* and *undoubtedly*, which is only marginally accepted overall. This is illustrated in examples (4)-(7).

(4) *Veitst tú hví Anna **drekkur** ongantíð mjólk um morgunin?
know you why Anna drinks never milk about morning.the

(5) ? Tað er tann einasta bókin sum eg **havi** aldrin lisið.
this is the only bok.the that I have never read.
'This is the only book that I have never read.'

(6) ?Jógvan skilir ikki hví Kjartan **vaskar** so ofta hansara bil.
Jógvan understands not why Kjartan washes so often his car
'Jógvan does not understand why Kjartan so often washes his car.'

(7) Tað er tann einasta bókin sum eg **havi** ofta lisið.
this is the only bok.the that I have often read
'This is the only book that I have read often.'

A third observation is that the word order pattern V-Adv generally receives a slightly higher score with finite auxiliaries than with finite main verbs. This is illustrated in (8)-(9), where the median score for (8) was 1, whereas the median score for (9) was 3.

(8) *Veitst tú hví Anna **drekkur** ongantíð mjólk um morgunin?
know you why Anna drinks never milk in morning.the
'Do you know why Anna never drinks milk in the morning?'

(9) ?Tey undraðust hví Anna **hevði** ongantíð drukkið kaffi.
they wondered why Anna had never drunk coffee
'They wondered why Anna had never drunk coffee.'

When looking at the figures in Tables 2 and 3, one gets the impression that verb movement in non-V2 contexts is hardly a grammatical feature in Faroese anymore. However, these tables conceal another important result of our survey, namely that there is a lot of variation between the informants. Some speakers are very resistant to accept verb movement in general, others accept it most of the time, while yet others display preferences and tendencies similar to those found in the overall picture.

There are several relevant variables that might be responsible for this intraspeaker variation. In the next section we will address geography and age as potential influential factors.

3.2 Generational and regional variation

To find out whether older speakers are more likely to accept the word order V-Adv than younger speakers, we divided the speakers that we tested into two age groups (above and below age 25). Let us first look at embedded *wh*-questions. As Table 4 shows, there is little variation between the two age groups with respect to the scores for verb movement. although in the

three cases of discrepancies between the groups, the slightly higher score is found in the older group.

Table 4: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in embedded* wh*-questions across age groups.*

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**Gr. 1: ◊ 25**	**Gr. 2: 26 ◊**
Embedded *wh*-question	Main verb	*so ofta*	3	3
		ongantíð	1	1
		møguliga	3	3
		ikki	1	2
	Perfective auxiliary	*longu*	**4**	**4**
		ongantíð	2	3
		allarhelst	2	2
		ikki	2	2
	Modal auxiliary	*so ofta*	3	3
		altíð	3	3
		helst	3	3
		ikki	1	2

Turning to relative clauses, the distribution of verb movement across ages is at first glance different. As can be seen from Table 5, the speakers in the younger age group are if anything more willing to accept verb movement than the speakers in the older group. This is a somewhat surprising result, given all the findings in the literature pointing to non-V2 verb movement disappearing in Faroese. However, it is possible that this result might be an artefact of the slightly uneven distribution of speakers of different ages and geographic backgrounds in our informant group. That is, due to the limitations of the field work situation we were unable to guarantee that we had an even distribution of ages over all the different locations. As we will see in more detail below, the two locations where verb movement is accepted the most are Klaksvík and Fuglafjørður. Here verb movement in general got the highest scores across age groups. As it turned out in Klaksvík we were only able to test verb movement in relative clauses with speakers in the younger group; no speakers in the older age group were tested for this clause type at this location. This might have contributed to a high overall score for verb movement in the younger age group. Furthermore, in Fulgafjørdur, where verb movement also generally received a high score, two of the four speakers tested in the older group more or less consistently rejected any kind of verb movement, which lowered the overall score for this age group in this location considerably. If we consider these two speakers to be potential outliers, and therefore leave out their judgments the overall age difference is no longer so striking with respect to verb movement in relative clauses.

Our results thus suggest that there may be no difference in the judgements of speakers below and above 25, but a larger and

geographically more evenly distributed sample would be needed to confirm this.

Table 5: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in relative clauses across age groups.*

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**Gr. 1: ◊ 25**	**Gr. 2: 26 ◊**
Relative clause	Main verb	*ofta*	**5**	**4**
		onkuntíð	**4**	3
		aldrin	2	1
		ongantíð	3	1
		ivaleyst	2	1
		ikki	2	1
	Perfective auxiliary	*ofta*	**4**	3
		eina ferð	**4**	2
		onkuntíð	**4**	3
		aldrin	**4**	2
		ongantíð	3	2
		ivaleyst	3	2
		ikki	2	1
	Modal auxiliary	*ofta*	3	3
		ein dag	3	2
		aldrin	**4**	3
		ongantíð	3	2
		ivaleyst	3	1
		ikki	3	1

Now let us turn to the question of regional variation. Recall from the introduction that Jonas (1996) claimed that there is dialectal variation in Faroese with respect to verb placement in embedded clauses; she proposed that the dialect difference was partly generational, but she also suggested somewhat tentatively that "Faroese 1", the dialect in which verb movement in embedded clauses was possible, might be the dialect of the Southern islands Sandoy and Suðuroy, and "Faroese 2", the dialect in which verb movement is impossible, the dialect of the northern islands and Tórshavn (Jonas 1996: 103). A more recent study by Heycock et al. (2009), however, did not find such regional variation when comparing speakers from Suðuroy to speakers from Tórshavn. Note, though, that Jonas only considered verb placement with respect to negation; Heycock et al considered in addition two adverbs, *kanska* and *ofta*. In the overall scores in Tables 2 and 3, the order V-Neg is basically always rejected, so one would not expect a lot of regional variation concerning this pattern.

Tables 6 and 7 show the results of our survey broken down by location. As can be seen from these two tables, the patterns at the individual locations to some extent mirror the overall pattern:

(i) Verb movement across negation is rejected most of the time,
(ii) verb movement across adverbs like *ofta* 'often' and *longu* 'already' (and *onkuntíð* 'sometimes') is accepted more often than verb movement across other adverbs like *ongantíð* 'never' and *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly', and
(iii) verb movement of auxiliaries is more acceptable than movement of main verbs.

In addition, these tables suggest that there is regional variation across the Faroe Islands with respect to verb movement in embedded non-V2 contexts. The word order V-Adv is more widely accepted for both embedded *wh*-questions and relative clauses in Klaksvík and Fuglafjørður in the North East than in the other locations. Speakers from Sandur, Tórshavn, and Miðvágur are the most reluctant to accept verb movement. Clearly this contrasts with Jonas' suggestion as to the geographic distribution of the variants; contrary to her, we find that speakers in the Northern islands Eysturoy (Fuglafjørður) and Borðoy (Klaksvík) are more likely to accept verb movement than speakers in the South. Notably, in Sandur on the Southern island Sandoy, which was one of the areas that Jonas proposed might be associated with high acceptance and use of verb movement, we hardly find any acceptance of verb movement at all.

Table 6: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in embedded* wh*-questions across regions.*

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**T**	**F**	**K**	**Tv**	**S**	**M**
Embedded *wh*-question	Main verb	*so ofta*	**4**	**4**	**5**	**5**	2	2
		ongantíð	1	3	1	3	1	1
		møguliga	2	**4**	**4**	3	1	3
		ikki	2	3	2	1	1	2
	Perfective auxiliary	*longu*	2	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**
		ongantíð	1	**4**	2	3	3	**4**
		allarhelst	1	3	1	2	2	2
		ikki	2	3	3	3	2	2
	Modal auxiliary	*so ofta*	2	3	**5**	**5**	1	3
		altíð	1	**5**	**4**	3	2	3
		helst	2	**5**	**4**	3	2	3
		ikki	2	**4**	1	1	1	3

Table 7: Acceptance of the pattern V–Adv/Neg *in relative clauses across regions.*

Clause type	**Verb type**	**Adverb**	**T**	**F**	**K**	**Tv**	**S**	**M**
Relative clause	Main verb	*ofta*	**4**	**4**	**5**	**4**	3	**4**
		onkuntíð	3	**4**	**4**	**4**	2	3
		aldrin	2	2	3	2	1	1
		ongantíð	2	3	2	3	1	3
		ivaleyst	1	2	2	2	1	3
		ikki	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Perfective auxiliary	*ofta*	3	**4**	**4**	**4**	2	3
		eina ferð	2	3	**4**	3	3	3
		onkuntíð	2	3	**5**	**4**	3	**4**
		aldrin	2	3	**4**	2	3	2
		ongantíð	3	3	**4**	3	2	2
		ivaleyst	2	**4**	3	2	2	3
		ikki	2	2	2	1	2	1
	Modal auxiliary	*ofta*	**4**	**4**	**4**	2	1	3
		ein dag	2	**4**	**4**	3	2	3
		aldrin	3	**5**	**5**	**4**	2	3
		ongantíð	3	**5**	**5**	3	2	2
		ivaleyst	3	3	**4**	2	2	**4**
		ikki	**4**	3	3	3	2	1

Given that our age distribution across locations is somewhat uneven, it is possible that the age factor might be involved in this apparent regional variation. Considering the results for embedded *wh*-questions, a relevant issue is that in both Fuglafjørður and Klaksvík, the majority of informants for the embedded *wh*-questions belong to the older age group (3 in group 2 vs. 1 in group 1). This is also true for the informants for relative clauses in Fuglafjørdur (4 in group 2 vs. 2 in group 1). The apparent regional variation between Fuglafjørdur and Klaksvík, and the other locations, might therefore rather be a result of older speakers allowing more verb movement than younger speakers. However, as mentioned above, in the survey of relative clauses, all the informants from Klaksvík belong to the younger age group but still, the score for verb movement in this clause type is quite high in this location. Furthermore, the older speakers are in the majority in all locations except Tórshavn in the survey on embedded *wh*-questions, whereas in the relative clause survey, the younger speakers are in the majority in most locations (except Fuglafjørður and Tvøroyri). So if age were the only relevant factor for acceptance rates, one would expect verb movement in embedded *wh*-questions to receive higher scores than verb movement in relative clauses. This is not the pattern we see. The variation across locations is very similar in both clause types, suggesting that there really is regional variation that is not simply an effect of the age of the informants at the various locations.

4. General discussion

As we see from the results in the previous section, verb movement in embedded non-V2 contexts is no longer a consistent feature of modern day Faroese. In both the clause types investigated, verb movement across negation is rejected by most of our informants. This is true regardless of which type of verb is involved—main verbs, perfective auxiliaries, or modal auxiliaries. Recall from the introduction that it has been claimed that Faroese currently is undergoing a syntactic change from an Icelandic type of grammar with consistent verb movement across negation in non-V2 contexts to a Mainland Scandinavian grammar lacking such a movement. Thráinsson (2003: 176) found that whereas authors born before 1940 would employ verb movement across negation 53% of the time, authors born after 1940 used this word order only 17% of the time. Similarly, data in Heycock and Sorace (to appear) from one written text (by an author born in 1941) shows a lack of the order V-Neg in relative clauses and in embedded questions. Our findings certainly corroborate the claim that Faroese has been changing with respect to this syntactic phenomena. Moreover, our data in fact suggest that the change from the order V-Neg to the order Neg-V has been completed, as hardly any of our informants accepted this word order. In the history of Scandinavian languages, this is a well-known change, which took place in the Mainland Scandinavian languages several hundred years ago (cf. Platzack 1988, Falk 1993, Sundquist 2002, and Hrafnbjargarson 2004 among many others). Today, most varieties of Mainland Scandinavian do not display any verb movement at all outside of V2 clauses.

However, as the results also show, the loss of the V-Neg order does not mean that there is no verb movement at all in embedded non-V2 contexts in Faroese. As was demonstrated in the previous section, many of our informants accept verb movement across various adverbs. The order V-Adv is generally accepted by our informants in embedded questions and relative clauses containing the adverbs *ofta* 'often,' *longu* 'already'. Younger speakers (but not the older group) also seem relatively likely to accept this word order in relative clauses containing the adverb *onkuntíð* 'sometimes'. Movement across other adverbs, such as *ongantíð* 'never,' *aldrin* 'never,' *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly,' and *(allar)helst* 'probably' is only marginally accepted by certain speakers, and rejected by the majority of our informants. This pattern of course resembles neither Faroese as it used to be, nor modern Mainland Scandinavian. Still this new pattern in Faroese is not an isolated case. In fact, the Faroese pattern is very similar to the type of verb movement reported for certain dialects of Mainland Scandinavian. In various Northern Norwegian dialects (Regional Northern

Norwegian and the dialect of Tromsø), the word order V-Adv is found in several types of non-V2 contexts, such as adverbial clauses, embedded questions, relative clauses, and infinitives (see Bentzen 2003, 2005, 2007a,b, and Wiklund et al. 2007). As in Faroese, verb movement across negation is rejected in these contexts, but movement across *often* and *already* is an option.[12] Furthermore, verb movement tends to be more restricted across various other adverbs, *never* and *always* in particular. This is illustrated with examples from Regional Northern Norwegian below.[13]

(10) *Vi kjøpte pizza ettersom han Gøran **ville** ikke spise pølse. ReNN
we bought pizza as he Gøran would not eat hot.dogs

(11) Ho ruinerte sæ ettersom ho **kjøpte** så ofte nye klær.
she ruined REFL as she bought so often new clothes
'She drove herself to economic ruin as she so often bought new clothes.'

(12) *Vi måtte kjøpe saft ettersom ho Anna **drakk** aldri melk.
we had.to buy lemonade as she Anna drank never milk

The same distribution has also been found in the Fenno-Swedish dialect of Kronoby, which is frequently cited in the literature as an example of a Mainland Scandinavian dialect with verb movement in embedded clauses. This claim was made on the basis of only a few examples (see Platzack & Holmberg 1989, cf. also Vikner 1995 and Alexiadou & Fanselow 2001), but the observations were confirmed by NORMS fieldwork in Northern Ostrobothnia[14] in 2006 (Bentzen to appear). Just as Northern Norwegian, Northern Ostrobothnian does not allow verb movement across negation and certain adverbs, such as *never* in non-V2 contexts, but it does allow movement across certain other adverbs, such as *often*, see (13)-(15).

(13) *Ja veit fövaa Göran **itär** int korv. NOb
I know for.what Göran eats not hot.dogs

(14) *Ja minns fövaa Anna **drakk** alder mjölk.
I remember for.what Anna drank not milk

[12] As stated above, we do not have reliable evidence from this study concerning the placement of infinitives in Faroese.

[13] Regional Northern Norwegian corresponds to various dialects spoken in Northern Norway, reaching from (at least) as far south as the Salten region to Alta in the North. However, it crucially excludes the dialect spoken in the city of Tromsø, see Bentzen 2007a.

[14] Kronoby is one of the villages in the Northern Ostrobothnia area in Finland.

(15) On föstoo int fövaa an **vila** så tökält tjööp nyy biil.
she understood not for.what he wanted so often buy new car
'She did not understand why he wanted to by a new car so often.'

There are thus clear parallels between the above examples from Regional Northern Norwegian and Northern Ostrobothnian and the verb movement patterns found in our Faroese data. Although Faroese has lost the verb movement pattern found in Icelandic, it nevertheless displays a verb movement pattern that is also attested in other Scandinavian varieties.

There is another parallel between the patterns found in Faroese, Regional Northern Norwegian, and Northern Ostrobothnian. We have already seen that verb movement in all three cases is sensitive to the same types of adverbs. But as was we saw in the previous section, the availability of verb movement in Faroese is also affected by the type of verb involved. In the cases where the order V-Adv in general is reported to only be marginally accepted, the acceptance rate is often higher for this word order with finite auxiliary verbs than with finite main verbs. For example, in the case of verb movement across *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly,' movement of a modal or the perfective auxiliary is accepted by some informants, whereas movement of a main verb across this adverb is more or less consistently rejected. Furthermore, we also see indications that modal auxiliaries are more likely to move than the perfective auxiliary. Movement of a modal across adverbs such as *aldrin* 'never' and *(allar)helst* 'probably' tend to be more acceptable than movement of a finite main verb or the perfective auxiliary across these adverbs. This tendency is also seen with respect to verb movement across negation. To the extent that any of our informants at all allow the V-Neg word order, this order more or less always involves a modal auxiliary. This correlation between acceptance of verb movement and various verb types is also found in Regional Northern Norwegian and Northern Ostrobothnian. Verb movement in general tends to be more acceptable when involving auxiliaries than when involving main verbs, and in cases where verb movement is only marginally accepted, these cases mostly involve perfective auxiliaries or (more commonly) modal auxiliaries.

Restrictions on verb movement depending on verb types are seen in other contexts too. One obvious example is English, which used to have verb movement of all verb types across negation and adverbs, but today only allows this with perfective and modal auxiliaries (and the copula).[15]

[15] Sundquist (2002: 250) shows that the earliest examples of finite verb to the right of sentential adverbs in Old Swedish are attested in subordinate clauses with a pronominal subject. In Oevdalian, one finds a clear dispreferance for verbs preceding a sentential

Moreover, in language acquisition we also see a similar phenomenon. Håkansson & Collberg (1994) have shown that Swedish speaking children at a certain stage tend to over-generalize main clause verb movement into embedded clauses (see also Westergaard & Bentzen 2007 for similar observations in Northern Norwegian child language). In the current context it is interesting to note that the Swedish children in Håkansson and Collberg's study are found to over-generalize this word order pattern much more with finite auxiliaries than with finite main verbs (but see Waldmann 2008 for opposing findings). On the path to the target language (without verb movement in embedded clauses), non-target verb movement of modal auxiliaries is reported to be the most resistent pattern.

A final question to be addressed in this paper is why this change in embedded verb placement is currently taking place in Faroese. In the previous literature on the loss of V-to-I movement in Scandinavian languages, this phenomenon is often linked to the loss of verbal inflection (cf. Vikner 1995 and Rohrbacher 1999 among others). The strongest claim has been that all and only languages with sufficiently rich verbal morphology have verb movement that is independent of V2. Consequently, the loss of sufficiently rich verbal morphology will lead to the loss of non-V2 verb movement. With respect to the Mainland Scandinavian languages that have lost non-V2 verb movement, we know that the loss of verbal morphology took place a couple of centuries before verb movement was lost. Danish, for instance, had lost almost all person morphology by ca. 1350, whereas verb movement is found in Danish texts written in the beginning of the 17th century or even later (see e.g. Sundquist 2003 and Hrafnbjargarson 2004). Thus, one could argue for a correlation between the two changes. However, the fact that the loss of verb movement lags behind the loss of morphology with a couple of centuries is potentially problematic. For a diachronic perspective, it may seem unsurprising that the syntactic effect of lost morphology is attested 150-200 years later, but from the point of view of language acquisition, this is somewhat questionable. An underlying assumption in this approach to syntactic change is that morphology triggers movement. If this were the case, one would need to account for what triggered verb movement for the children acquiring Scandinavian in those centuries when verbal morphology was lost, but non-V2 verb movement was still a feature of the languages. In the case of modern day Faroese, verbal inflection is fairly poor; many of the varieties have for instance lost the distiction between singular and plural in

adverbs in clauses with a DP-subject (Garbacz 2008: 110). Angantýsson (2007) also reports on restrictions involving lack of verb movement and subject type in Icelandic.

the past tense of the regular verbs. Again, the loss of verb movement seems to lag behind the loss of verbal morphology, suggesting that there are other triggers for, or mechanisms behind verb movement in the modern language and our findings do not seem to point to the direction that varieties with less inflectional morphology have less verb movement or vice versa that varieties with more verb inflection display more verb movement.

Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998 propose that there is a one-way correlation only between richness of agreement morphology and verb movement, and they argue that this makes sense of the observed time-lag between the loss of agreement morphology and the loss of verb movement. Bentzen (to appear) proposes an account of non-V2 verb movement in ReNN not based on verbal morphology as a trigger for movement. This analysis argues that verb movement, rather than being the result of the verb being triggered to (head) move, is a side-effect of subject movement driven by predication licensing (or the EPP). Based on the observation that subjects may occur in various positions in the IP domain, it is suggested that predication is flexible and may be associated with various projections in this domain. Furthermore, the analysis proposes that the subject may (optionally) piedpipe the whole vP when moving to a specificer position to license predication. Such vP-piedpiping yields the effect of verb movement (cf. also Biberauer and Richards 2006). This analysis is based on a correlation between flexible subject placement and flexible verb placement in ReNN. Whether or not this analysis can be extended to the Faroese data at hand will have to be left for future research.

5. Concluding remarks

In this paper, we have presented and discussed the results from our investigation of verb placement in modern Faroese. Our data, which come from interviews with 54 informants, aged 15 – 67, indicate that the acceptance rate of the word order V-Adv/Neg is not very high in contemporary Faroese. Nevertheless, we see a difference in the acceptability of this word order depending on which type of adverb the verb has moved across and which type of verb moves:

(i) Verb movement across negation is generally rejected,
(ii) verb movement across adverbs like *ofta* ‘often’ and *longu* ‘already’ (and *onkuntíð* ‘sometimes’) is accepted more often than verb movement across other adverbs like *ongantíð* ‘never’ and *ivaleyst* ‘undoubtedly’, and
(iii) verb movement of auxiliaries is more acceptable than movement of main verbs.

In this respect, Faroese seems to be situated between the two extremes on the Scandinavian dialect contiuum, i.e. Icelandic, which usuallly displays verb movement across negation and sentence medial adverbs, and Danish, which never displays verb movement across negation or sentence medial adverbs, independent of V2. Faroese is however not the only Scandinavian variety to display the above pattern. Very similar patterns have been found and reported on in Regional Northern Norwegian and Kronoby Swedish; this pattern is analysed in Bentzen (to appear, 2007a,b) and Wiklund et al. (2007); we have left open here the possibility that the same analysis might be extendable to Faroese.

For embedded questions, the only context where most speakers accepted the V-Adv word order involves a finite perfective auxiliary preceding the adverb *longu* 'already.' In addition, main verbs preceding *so ofta* 'so often' and *møguliga/vist* 'probably/certainly', perfective auxiliaries preceding *ongantíð* 'never,' and modal auxiliaries preceding *so ofta* 'so often,' *(allar)helst* 'probably,' and *altíð* 'always' are marginally accepted. Main verbs preceding *ongantíð*, perfective auxiliaries preceding *(allar)helst*, and all kinds of verbs preceding negation are generally rejected by our informants. Similarly, in relative clauses, movement of a main verb or a modal auxiliary across *ofta* 'often' is generally accepted. Movement of auxiliaries across other adverbs, such as *onkuntíð* 'sometimes,' *ongantíð* 'never,' and *ivaleyst* 'undoubtedly' is most of the time marginal, whereas movement of main verbs across other adverbs, as well as movement of any kind of verb across negation is mostly rejected by the informants. Our results cannot be viewed as an effect of the test sentences being awkward or complicated as the corresponding sentences with the order Adv/Neg-V received much higher scores. In our results, we see little variation between the two age groups with respect to the scores for verb movement, but a larger and geographically more evenly distributed sample would be needed to confirm this.

Turning to geographical variation, we found that the word order V-Adv is more widely accepted for both embedded *wh*-questions and relative clauses in Klaksvík and Fuglafjørður in the North East than in the other locations. Speakers from Sandur, Tórshavn, and Miðvágur are the most reluctant to accept verb movement. These results reveal a pattern that is different from that reported in Jonas (1996) who suggested that the Southern varieties were the ones associated with verb movement as opposed to the Northern varieties which according to her do not display verb movement. Although our age distribution across locations is somewhat uneven, we see that the variation across locations is very similar in the two relevant clause types that we tested, suggesting that there really

is regional variation and that our results are not simply an effect of the age of the informants at the various locations.

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