

On Mood Shift and Narrow V2 in Icelandic

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Following Jónsson (1996:39; cf. Vikner 1995,fn.7), I will assume that it makes sense to distinguish – perhaps as extreme ends on a scale (Hrafnbjargarson & Wiklund 2009) – two varieties of Icelandic, which differ wrt licensing environments for dependent (aka embedded) V2. Icelandic A has what I will call "broad V2" (BV2) in that its speakers accept dependent (non-subject initial) V2 in, among others, environments like the complement of "non-assertive" predicates like *doubt*, (1) (Rögnvaldsson & Thráinsson 1990:23), and *not expect* (Angantýsson 2011:123) and initial adjunct clauses like (2) (Magnússon 1990).

(1) *Jón efast um [að [á morgun fari María snemma á fætur]]*
"John doubts that Mary will get up early tomorrow"

(2) *[Fyrst [hurðina getum við ekki opnað]]* verðum við að brjóta gluggan
"Since we can't open the door, we must break the window."

Icelandic B patterns with Mainland Scandinavian (cf., e.g., Andersson 1975; Vikner 1995) and German (cf., e.g., Reis 1997), in disallowing such cases. It thus has "narrow V2" (NV2).

Based on evidence provided, among others, by Angantýsson (2011:120) and Óladóttir (2011), I will assume that the BV2/NV2 divide is a symptom of an ongoing – presumably age related – reorganization of the distribution and function of verbal moods in Icelandic. Thus, note that in all the "controversial" BV2 examples, it is verbal mood that independently signals the speaker's stance toward the information conveyed. In (1) and (2), for example, subjunctive *fari* and indicative *getum* mark that the speaker isn't/is committed to the proposition the verb is part of. That mood marking in Icelandic is an alternative to disambiguation via dependent V2 is already clear from cases like (3), discussed by Sigurðsson (1990:327), here viewed in the light of the familiar German pattern in (4)(cf. Wegener 1993).

(3) *Jón fór ekki af því að hann var/væri reiður*

(4) a. *Hans ist nicht gegangen, [weil er verärgert war]*
"John didn't leave because he was angry"

b. *Hans ist nicht gegangen, [weil [er war verärgert]]*
"John didn't leave, and that's because he was angry"

As the translations show, V2 inside the adjunct clause conveys the speaker's commitment to having been angry. This is what indicative *var* does in Icelandic. Verb-final order in German, (4b), is ambiguous between this reading and a construal where being angry is not the reason for having left. The latter, which implies lack of speaker commitment, is what subjunctive *væri* in Icelandic signals unambiguously. The claim of this presentation will be that verbal mood in Icelandic A can outrank V2 as marker of speaker (non-)commitment, which surfaces as the extended distribution of dependent V2 clauses, i.e., BV2.

Traditionally, the shift from BV2 in Old Norse to NV2 in Mainland Scandinavian has been linked to loss of V°-to-I° (Vikner 1995:161) closely related to loss of "rich" agreement (Agr in I°)(Holmberg & Platzack 1995:3.4). Since this does not seem to be an option in accounting for the shift from Icelandic A to Icelandic B – data from Angantýsson (2011:188f.) suggests that it is the Icelandic BV2 speakers who allow some "medial" Adv-V_{fin} orders – it will be assumed here that we are dealing with a shift in the grammatical status of verbal mood. The following provides a rough sketch of how to implement this.

(5) specifies assumptions made for both Icelandic A and B.

- (5) a. [+ V°-to-I°] b. optional CP-recursion
c. V°-to-C° is triggered by C° carrying the feature ILL
(ILL determines an illocution type {ASS, ERO, DIR, OPT, ...})

(6) states the crucial difference between Icelandic A and Icelandic B.

- (6) a. I° of Icelandic A contains a "dominant" mood feature M
- b. I° of Icelandic B contains a "non-dominant" mood feature M

(7) states two crucial properties of "dominant" mood.

- (7) a. When moved to C° (with V_{fin}), M optionally overwrites ILL
- b. Without "ILL-support," M in C requires external licensing

As a result of (5)–(7), we can derive the desired patterns: without V°-to-C°, we get standard (subject-initial, V°-in-I°) subordinate clauses. With V°-to-C° there are the three cases in (8). "Main Clause Derivative Interpretation" (MCDI) (cf. Holmberg & Platzack 1995:86) is a shorthand for whatever is common to the function of clauses with illocutionary force (potential) in isolation and in dependent position.

- (8) a. ILL / M: +MCDI (Icelandic B) = NV2
- b. ILL / M: +MCDI (Icelandic A) } = BV2
- c. --- / M: -MCDI (Icelandic A) }

CPs carrying ILL are the familiar root or dependent root clauses. CPs carrying just M are the "quirky" root-like dependent V2 clauses of Icelandic A like (1).

Building on work by Truckenbrodt (2006a; 2006b) and Lohnstein (2000), precise principles for the interaction of ILL and M/M can be formulated. Thus, root subjunctives will usually restrict the illocution type to DIR or OPT. In addition to making these rules explicit, the presentation will explore consequences of making richer assumptions about the clausal left periphery and the licensing of "main clause phenomena" (cf., e.g., Haegeman 2012). Likewise I will speculate on the influence of a shift from dominant to non-dominant verbal mood in the development of Mainland Scandinavian NV2 in the light of recent work by Nordström (2011). In particular, the possibility of restricting possession of M to individual auxiliaries or modals has the potential of accounting for NV2/BV2-hybrids (Hrafnbjargarson 2008) and linking up to the "bigger picture" (Lühr 1994).

References

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