Icelandic V-to-I Movement Reconsidered

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1 Introduction

▷ Aim:

- Take a closer look at V-to-I movement in Icelandic.

▷ The question is:

- Is there any evidence for independent V-to-I movement in Icelandic?

  Independent V-to-I movement$_{Def}$
  Displacement of the verb to the inflectional domain independently of V2 (displacement of the verb to the second position).

▷ Our answer is 'no' (contrary to standard assumptions).

▷ Standard assumptions (see e.g. Vikner 1995, Rohrbacher 1999, Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998, Bobaljik 2002):

- Icelandic displays **obligatory** independent V-to-I movement in embedded clauses.

(1) **Old observations:**
Ég veit [af hverju Hedda {kaupir} **oft** {*kaupir} skó].
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes
'I know why Hedda often buys shoes.'

▷ Our claim:

- Icelandic does not display **obligatory** independent V-to-I movement.

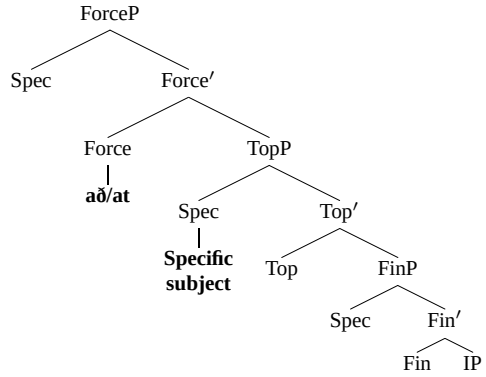
(2) **New observations** (see Angantýsson 2001):
Ég veit [af hverju Hedda {kaupir} **oft** {kaupir} skó]. Icelandic$_{var}$
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes
'I know why Hedda often buys shoes.'

▷ Hypothesis:

- Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement.

2 The basic structure of the Scandinavian clause (cf. also Wiklund et al. 2006)

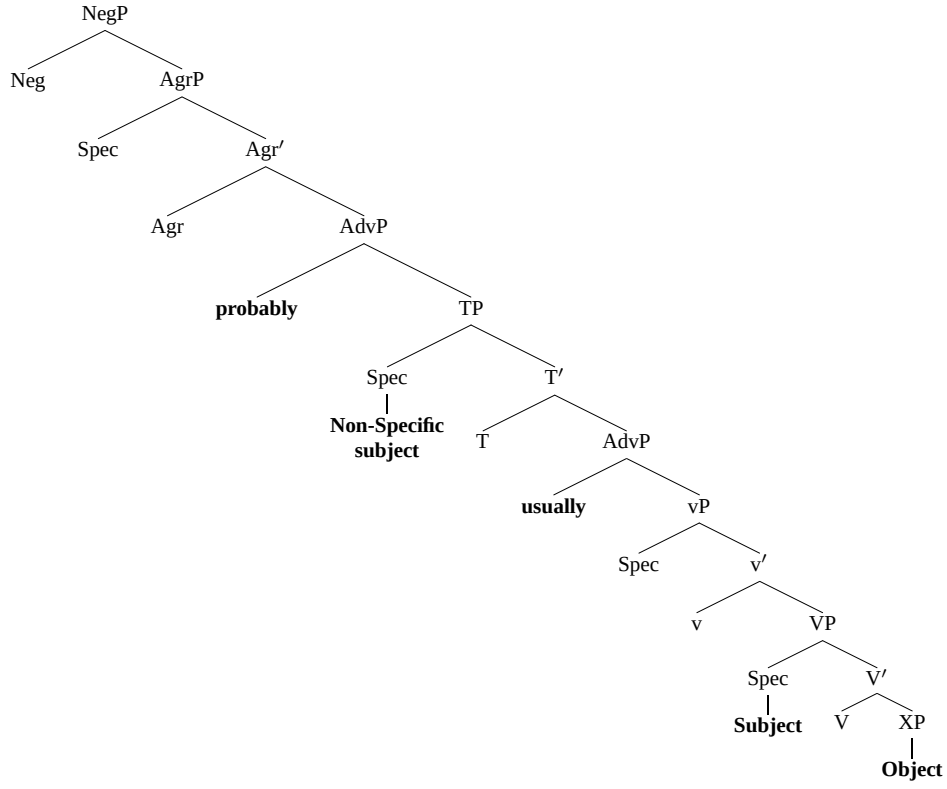
(3) **The Scandinavian CP domain:**



▷ We adopt the split-CP domain proposed in Holmberg and Platzack (2005) (cf. also Hrafnbjargarson 2006; 2004a;b), building on Rizzi (1997).

▷ TopP is responsible for a specific reading of the subject (cf. the strong reading of Milsark 1977).

(4) **The Scandinavian IP:**



▷ TP is responsible for a non-specific reading of the subject (cf. the weak reading of Milsark 1977).[1]

▷ NegP > AgrP > High Adv(s) > TP > Low Adv(s)

[1] See Nilsen (1997) and Svenonius (2002) on the distribution of strong and weak subjects with respect to adverbs.

3 Non-V2 contexts

▷ Recall the standard assumption: Icelandic has obligatory V-to-I in all embedded clauses.
▷ This is indeed the case in some embedded clauses:

(5) **Embedded question - obligatory V-to-I movement:**

a. Hann spurði [hvort að hún **hafi alltaf** sungið í sturtunni].
he asked whether that she had always sung in shower.the

b. *Hann spurði [hvort að hún **alltaf hafi** sungið í sturtunni].
he asked whether that she always had sung in shower.the
'He asked whether she had always sung in the shower.'

▷ The standard assumption has been challenged (Angantýsson 2001):

- Icelandic has optional verb movement in certain non-V2 contexts.

(6) **Embedded questions** (Angantýsson 2001):

a. Ég veit [hvaða mynd Jón **hefur ekki** séð].
I know which film Jón has not seen

b. Ég veit [hvaða mynd Jón **ekki hefur** séð].
I know which film Jón not has seen
'I know which film Jón has not seen.'

(7) **Relative clauses** (Angantýsson 2001):

a. Ég veit um eina bók [sem Jón **hefur ekki** lesið].
I know of one book that Jón has not read

b. Ég veit um eina bók [sem Jón **ekki hefur** lesið].
I know of one book that Jón not has read
'I know of one book that Jón has not read.'

▷ Is this optional verb movement the same as the optional verb movement found in Regional Northern Norwegian (ReNN) non-V2 contexts, discussed in Bentzen (2006; to appear) and Wiklund et al. (2006)?

▷ Gunnar Hrafn's observation: Verb movement in Icelandic interacts with the complementizer *að*.

- When *að* is present, verb movement is obligatory.
- When *að* is absent, verb movement is optional.

(8) **Embedded question – optional verb movement:**
Hann spurði hvort hún {hafi} **alltaf** {hafi} sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether she had always had sung in shower.the
'He asked whether she always had sung in the shower.'

(9) **Embedded question with *að* – obligatory verb movement:**
Hann spurði hvort að hún {hafi} **alltaf** {*hafi} sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether that she had always had sung in shower.the
'He asked whether she always had sung in the shower.'

(10) **Clauses introduced by *sem* – optional verb movement:**
Það var í sturtunni sem hún {hafði} **alltaf** {hafði} sungið.
it was in shower.the that she had always had sung
'The place where she had always been singing was in the shower.'

(11) **Clauses introduced by *sem* with *að* – obligatory verb movement:**
Það var í sturtunni sem að hún {hafði} **alltaf** {*hafði} sungið.
it was in shower.the that that she had always had sung
'The place where she had always been singing was in the shower.'

▷ Question:

- Why should the presence of *að* trigger verb movement to the inflectional domain?

▷ Our hypothesis revised:

- Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement, verb movement is to the CP domain.

▷ Two additional pieces of evidence suggesting that verb movement is to the CP domain:

1. The relative order of verbs and adverbs/negation (cf. (12)).
2. The position of the verb in non-finite clauses (cf. (13)-(18)).

(12) **The landing site of verb movement is above negation:**

a. Hann spurði hvort hún **hafi** ekki sennilega oft sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether she had not probably often sung in shower.the

b. *Hann spurði hvort hún ekki **hafi** sennilega oft sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether she not had probably often sung in shower.the

c. *Hann spurði hvort hún ekki sennilega **hafi** oft sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether she not probably had often sung in shower.the

d. Hann spurði hvort hún ekki sennilega oft **hafi** sungið í sturtunni.
he asked whether she not probably often had sung in shower.the
'He asked whether she had not probably often sung in the shower.'

▷ Control infinitives follow the expected pattern:[2]

(13) **Control infinitives – *að* obligatory:**
Hún reyndi *(**að**) koma ekki alltaf á réttum tíma í skólann.
she tried to come not always on right time in school.the
'She tried to not always be on time in school.'

(14) **Control infinitives – verb movement obligatory:**
Hún reyndi að {koma} **ekki** {*koma} **alltaf** {*koma} á réttum tíma í skólann.
she tried to come not come always come on right time in school.the
'She tried to not always be on time in school.'

[2]That control infinitives involve verb movement to the CP domain, rather than to the IP domain, has already been suggested by Johnson and Vikner (1994), see also Holmberg and Platzack (2005). Contrary to their assumptions, we suggest that *all* verb movement in Icelandic is to the CP domain.

▷ ECM infinitives:

- The CP domain is absent (see e.g. Hiroyuki 2001, Adger 2003):

(15) **ECM infinitives – topicalization not possible:**

a. Hann taldi hana syngja í sturtunni **með hárri raust**.
he believed her sing in shower.the with high voice
'He believed her to be singing in the shower in a loud voice.'

b. *Hann taldi **með hárri raust** syngja hana í sturtunni.
he believed with high voice sing her in shower.the

(16) **ECM infinitives – *að* not possible:**

*Hann taldi {**að**} hana {**að**} syngja í sturtunni.
he believed to her to sing in shower.the

- The IP domain is present (Hrafnbjargarson 2004a). The prediction that the verb should follow all adverbs as well as negation in ECM infinitives is borne out:[3]

(17) **ECM infinitives – no verb movement past negation (narrow scope):**
Ég taldi hann {*hafa} **ekki** {hafa} hent einhverjum bókum.
I believed him have not have thrown away some books
'I believed him not to have thrown away some books.'

(18) **ECM infinitives – no verb movement past adverbs (narrow scope):**
Hann taldi hana {*syngja} **alltaf** {syngja} í sturtunni.
he believed her sing always sing in shower.the
'He believed her to always be singing in the shower.'

Our hypothesis supported Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement, verb movement is always to the CP domain.

▷ Analysis (cf. also Wiklund et al. 2006):

- Verb movement in Icelandic is movement of a remnant vP containing a specifier and the verb to the CP domain (based on the account of verb movement in V2 clauses proposed by Nilsen 2003 and Müller 2004).

- Note:
Remnant vP movement to the IP domain: [$_{vP}$ t_{Subj} Verb]
Remnant vP movement to the CP domain: [$_{vP}$ Specifier Verb][4]

[3] That the adverb is in the embedded clause is evidenced by the relative order of indefinite objects (which do not undergo Object Shift) and the adverb. As can be seen in example (i), the adverb follows the indefinite object, a word order that could not have been achieved by Object Shift:

(i) Við teljum þingmenn ekki lesa bækur á hverjum degi.
we consider MPs not read books on each day
'We consider MPs to not read books every day.'

[4] The specifier is always the subject in non-V2 contexts.

- Available target positions for the remnant vP are Spec,FinP and Spec,TopP.
- EPP-features are checked off by the remnant vP (containing the subject and the verb) moving through Spec,TP.

▷ Prediction:

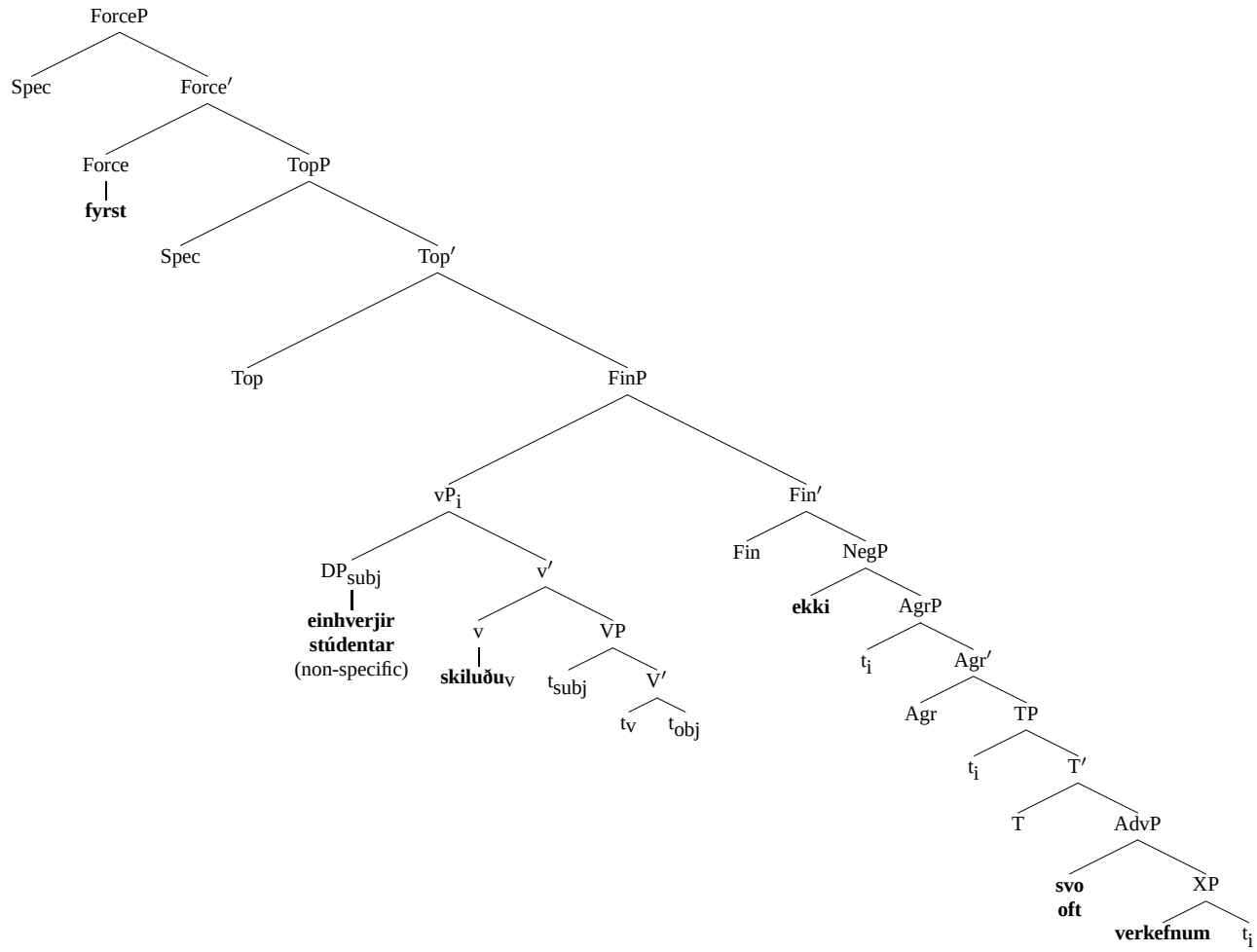
- Verb movement should not affect subject reading (as opposed to ReNN, cf also Wiklund et al. 2006; Bentzen 2006) since both subject reading positions, Spec,TP and Spec,TopP, are available to the subject.

▷ Borne out:

(19) **Both a specific and non-specific subject reading is available:**
... fyrst **einhverjir stúdentar** skiluðu ekki svo oft verkefnum.
as some students handed.in not so often assignments.the
i. '... as some students or other did not hand in assignments so often.'
ii. '... as some specific students did not hand in assignments so often.'

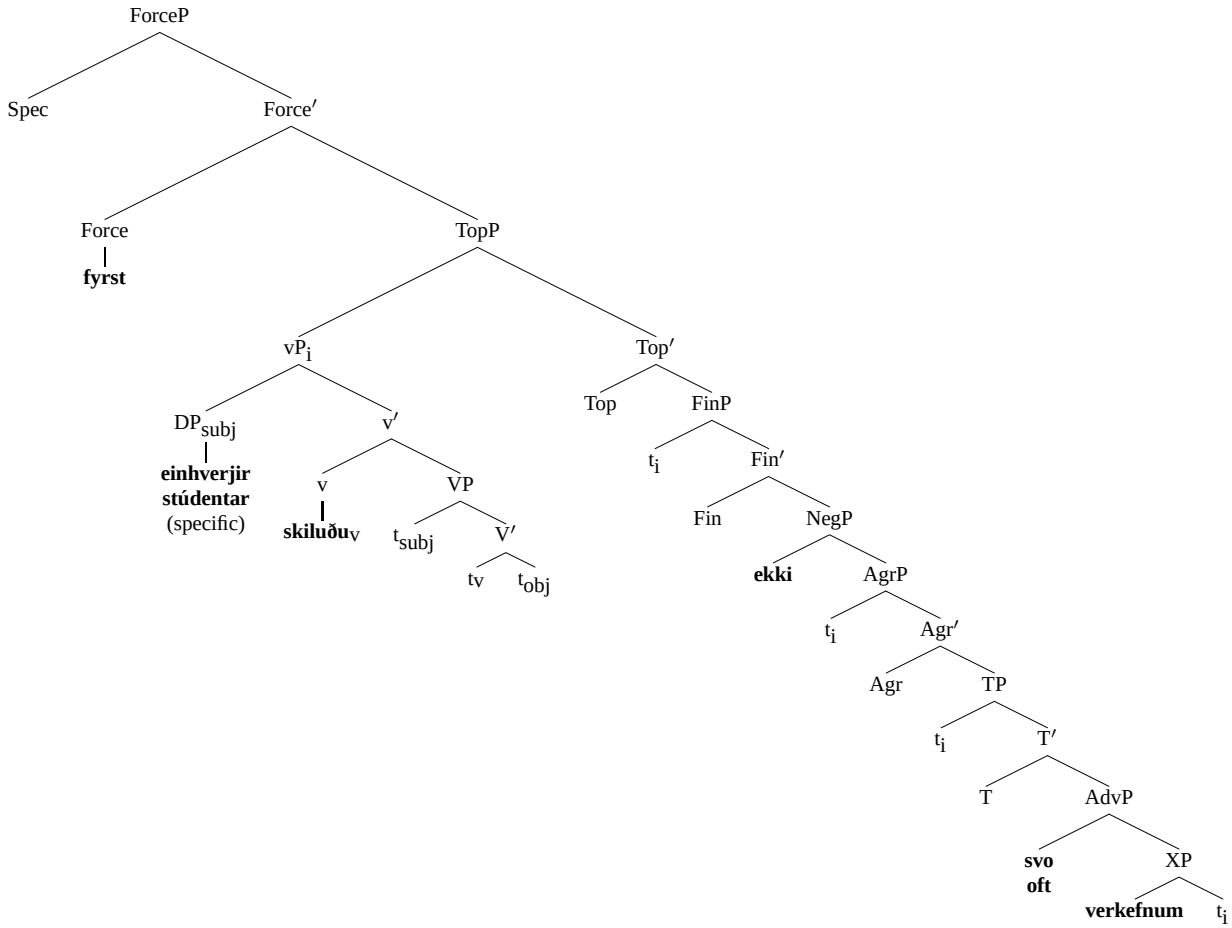
▷ In Spec,FinP the subject retains its non-specific reading, as illustrated in (20):

(20) **Optional verb movement to the CP domain in Icelandic non-V2 contexts I:**



▷ In Spec,TopP the subject receives a specific reading, see (21).

(21) **Optional verb movement to the CP domain in Icelandic non-V2 contexts II:**



4 Verb second

▷ Given that Icelandic has verb movement to the CP domain in both V2 and so-called non-V2 contexts, how does our analysis capture the difference between these two contexts?

(22) **Main clauses – topicalization possible:**
Svona skó kaupir Heiða sennilega.
such shoes buys Heiða probably

(23) **Embedded V2 – topicalization possible:**
Ég veit [að **svona skó** kaupir Heiða sennilega].
I know that such shoes buys Heiða probably

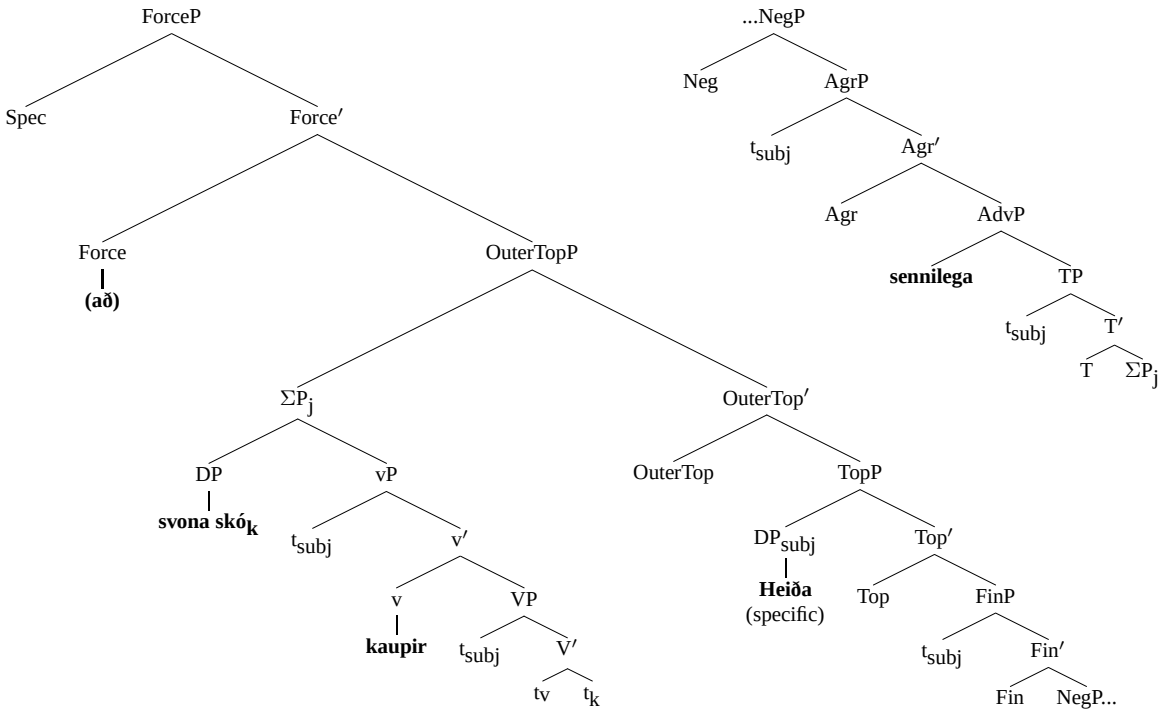
Versus:

(24) **Embedded question – topicalization impossible:**
*Ég spurði [af hverju **svona skó** kaupir Heiða sennilega].
I asked why such shoes buys Heiða probably

▷ Proposal:

- V2-clauses differ from non-V2-clauses in containing an additional TopP, OuterTopP.
- TopP and FinP license a remnant [$_{vP}$ Subject Verb] (cf. (21) and (20)).
- OuterTopP licenses a remnant [$_{\Sigma P}$ Specifier Verb] (cf. (25)).

(25) **Non-subject initial V2 clauses:**



▷ As predicted, a specific subject reading is available in the presence of a topicalized object:

(26) **Topicalized object and non-specific subject reading:**
Þessa skó keyptu víst **tveir málfræðingar**.
these shoes bought apparently two linguists
‘Two [non-specific] linguists apparently bought these shoes.’

(27) **Topicalized object and specific subject reading:**
Þessa skó keyptu **tveir málfræðingar** víst.
these shoes bought two linguists apparently
‘Two [specific] linguists apparently bought these shoes.’

5 Summary

▷ Our hypothesis:

- Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement, verb movement is to the CP domain.

▷ Evidence in favor of our hypothesis:

- Icelandic verb movement interacts with the complementizer *að*.
- Verb movement has to cross *all* adverbs, as well as negation in Icelandic.
- ECM infinitives, although containing an IP domain, do not display verb movement.

▷ Verb movement in Icelandic is not the same verb movement as the one found in ReNN.

- Verbs cannot intervene between adverbs, which is possible in ReNN.
- Verbs do not move in ECM infinitives, which is possible in ReNN.
- Verb movement does not effect subject interpretation, which is the case in ReNN.

▷ Remnant vP movement comes in two types:

1. To the IP domain (ReNN): $[_{vP}\ t_{Subj}$ Verb]
2. To the CP domain (Icelandic): $[_{\Sigma P}$ Specifier Verb]

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