Spring Cleaning of Verb Movement in Norwegian and Icelandic

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1 Introduction

▷ Aim:

- Clean up in the domain of verb movement in Scandinavian by taking a closer look at Icelandic and Regional Northern Norwegian (ReNN).

▷ The question is:

- Is there any evidence for independent V-to-I movement in Icelandic and Regional Northern Norwegian?

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' for Icelandic and 'yes' for ReNN (contrary to standard assumptions).

(1) **Old observations:**

a. Jeg vet [hvorfor Hedda {*kjøper} **ofte** {kjøper} sko]. Norwegian
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes

b. Ég veit [af hverju Hedda {kaupir} **oft** {*kaupir} skó]. Icelandic
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes
'I know why Hedda often buys shoes.'

▷ 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.
- Norwegian does **not** display independent V-to-I movement in embedded clauses.

(2) **New observations:**
(Bentzen 2005; to appear; Angantýsson 2001; Hrafnbjargarson 2004a;b)[1]

a. Jeg vet [hvorfor Hedda {kjøper} **ofte** {kjøper} sko]. ReNN
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes

b. 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.'

▷ Our claim:

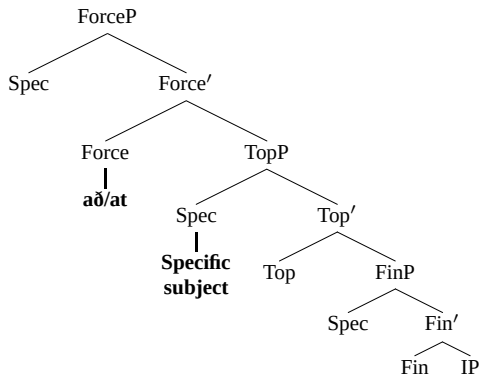
- Neither ReNN nor Icelandic display **obligatory** independent V-to-I movement.

▷ Hypotheses:

1. Regional Northern Norwegian displays **optional** independent V-to-I movement.
2. Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement.

2 The basic structure of the Scandinavian clause

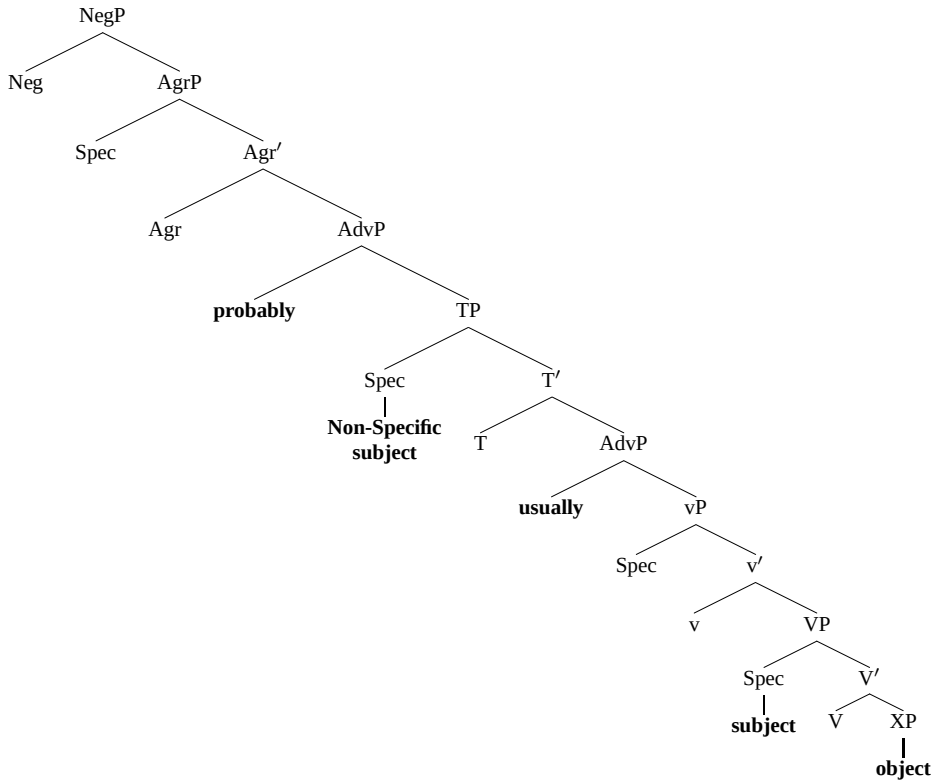
(3) **The Scandinavian CP domain:**



▷ We adopt the split-CP domain proposed in Holmberg and Platzack (2005) (cf. also Hrafnbjargarson 2006), building on Rizzi (1997).
▷ TopP is responsible for a specific reading of the subject (cf. the strong reading of Milsark 1977).

[1] See also Iversen (1918) for similar observations of Northern Norwegian spoken in Tromsø.

(4) **The Scandinavian IP:**



▷ TP is responsible for a non-specific reading of the subject (cf. the weak reading of Milsark 1977).[2]
▷ NegP > AgrP > High Adv(s) > TP > Low Adv(s)

3 Non-V2 contexts

▷ Is there any evidence for independent V-to-I movement in Icelandic and Regional Northern Norwegian?

▷ Contexts where topicalization is impossible in the Scandinavian languages include:

(5) **Embedded questions:**
*Jeg vet [hvorfor **sko** kjøper Hedda ofte]. ReNN
I know why shoes buys Hedda often

(6) **Relative clauses:**
*De [som **på kino** går ofte] trenger ikke TV. ReNN
those that on cinema go often need not TV

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

3.1 Regional Northern Norwegian

▷ Finite clauses (Bentzen 2005; to appear):

(7) **Verb movement past lower/higher adverbs is optional in finite non-V2 clauses:**

a. Jeg vet [hvorfor Hedda {kjøper} **ofte** {kjøper} sko]. ReNN
I know why Hedda buys often buys shoes

b. De [som {går} **ofte** {går} på kino] trenger ikke TV.
those that go often go on cinema need not TV

c. ... ettersom noen studenter {leverer} **vanligvis** {leverer} oppgaven
as some students hand.in usually hand.in assignment.the
'... as some students usually handed in the assignment.'

d. ... ettersom noen studenter {leverer} **sannsynligvis** {leverer} oppgaven
as some students hand.in probably hand.in assignment.the
'... as some students probably hand in the assignment.'

(8) **Verb movement is impossible past negation in finite non-V2 clauses:**
... ettersom noen studenter {*leverer} **ikke** {leverer} regelmessig oppgaven
as some students hand.in not hand.in regularly assignment.the
'... as some students don't hand in the assignment regularly.'

▷ Non-finite clauses:

(9) **ECM infinitives – optional verb movement past adverbs:**
Jeg mistenkte han for å {ha} **allerede** {ha} sett den filmen.
I suspected him for to have already have seen that film.the
'I suspected him of already having seen that film.'

(10) **ECM infinitives – no verb movement past negation:**
Jeg mistenkte han for å {*ha} **ikke** {ha} sett den filmen.
I suspected him for to have not have seen that film.the
'I suspected him of not having seen that film.'

(11) **Control infinitives – optional verb movement past adverbs:**
Hun prøvde å {komme} **oftere** {komme} tidsnok på skolen.
she tried to come often.er come in.time on school.the
'She tried to be in time for school more often.'

(12) **Control infinitives – no verb movement past negation:**
Hun prøvde å {*komme} **ikke** {komme} for seint på skolen.
she tried to come not come too late on school.the
'She tried to not be to late for school.'

Hypothesis 1 supported
Regional Northern Norwegian displays **optional** independent V-to-I movement.

▷ Analysis (Bentzen 2006):

- The relevant verb movement in ReNN is movement of a remnant vP containing only the verb to the IP domain.
- Available target positions for the remnant vP are Spec,TP and Spec,AgrP.
- EPP-features are checked off in Spec,TP by either the subject, or the remnant vP containing only the verb (cf. Mahajan 2003, Biberauer 2003).

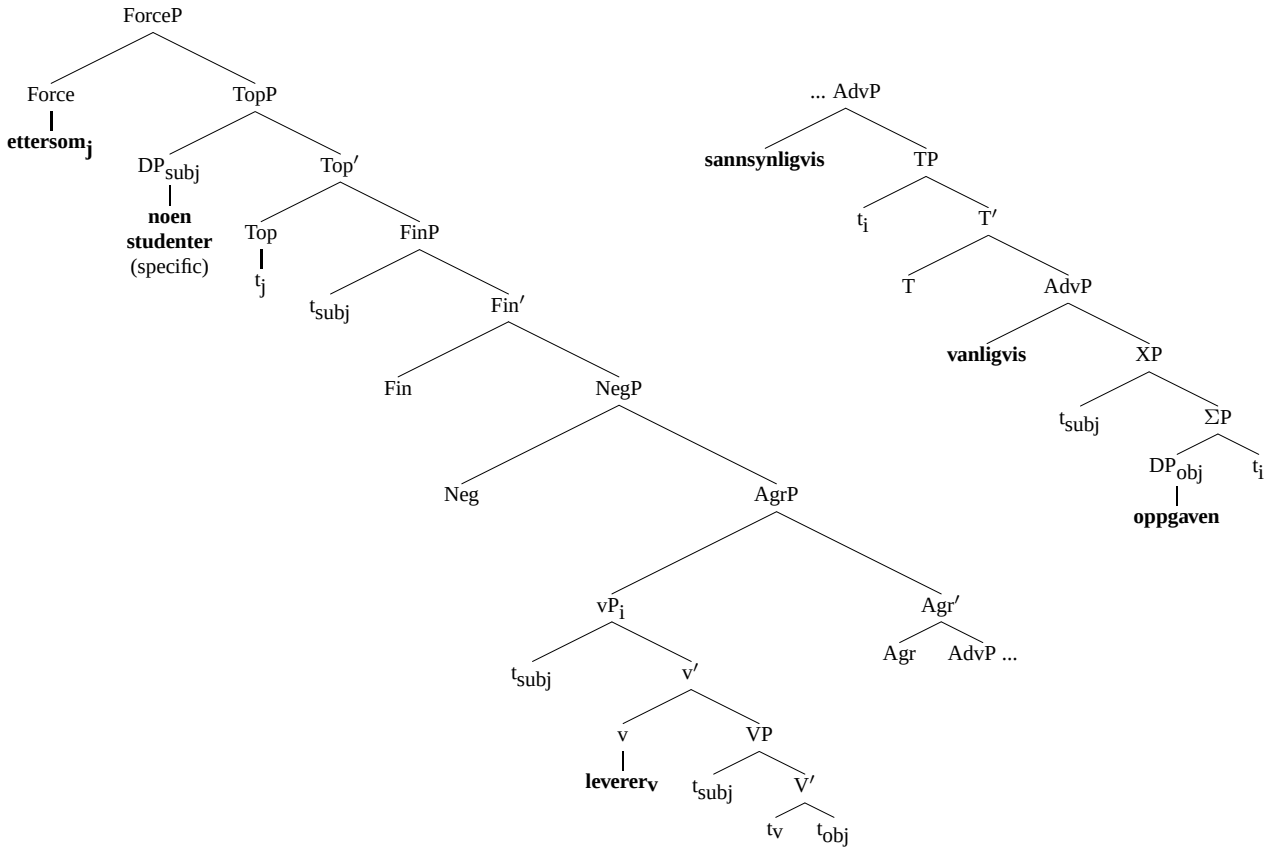
▷ Predictions:

1. The verb may intervene between higher and lower adverbs.
2. Verb movement should force a specific interpretation of the subject.

▷ Predictions 1 and 2 are borne out:

(13) **Intervening verb between adverbs/Only specific subject reading available:**
... ettersom noen studenter **sannsynligvis** leverer **vanligvis** oppgaven
as some students probably hand.in usually assignment.the
i. '... as some specific students probably usually hand in the assignment.'
ii. *'... as some students or other probably usually hand in the assignment.'

(14) **Optional verb movement to the IP domain in ReNN non-V2 contexts:**



3.2 Icelandic

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

(15) **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; Hrafnbjargarson 2004a;b):

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

(16) **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.'

(17) **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 ReNN non-V2 contexts?

▷ 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.

(18) **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.'

(19) **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.'

(20) **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.'

(21) **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?

▷ Hypothesis 2 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. (22)).
2. The position of the verb in non-finite clauses (cf. (23)-(28)).

(22) **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 it was not the case that she probably often had sung in the shower.'

▷ Control infinitives follow the expected pattern:[3]

(23) **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.'

[3]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.

(24) **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.'

▷ ECM infinitives:

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

(25) **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

(26) **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:

(27) **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.'

(28) **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.'

Hypothesis 2 supported Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement, verb movement is always to the CP domain.

▷ Analysis:

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

[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:

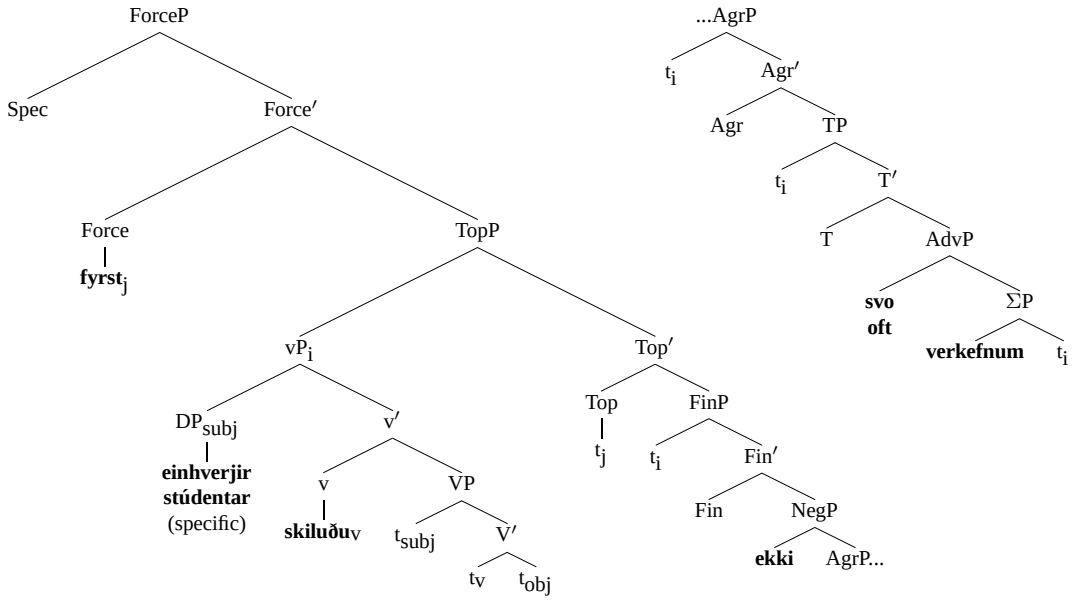
- Verb movement should not force a specific subject reading, as the subject is pied-piped along when the vP moves through Spec,TP.

▷ Borne out:

(29) **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 specific students did not hand in assignments so often.'
ii. '... as some students or other did not hand in assignments so often.'

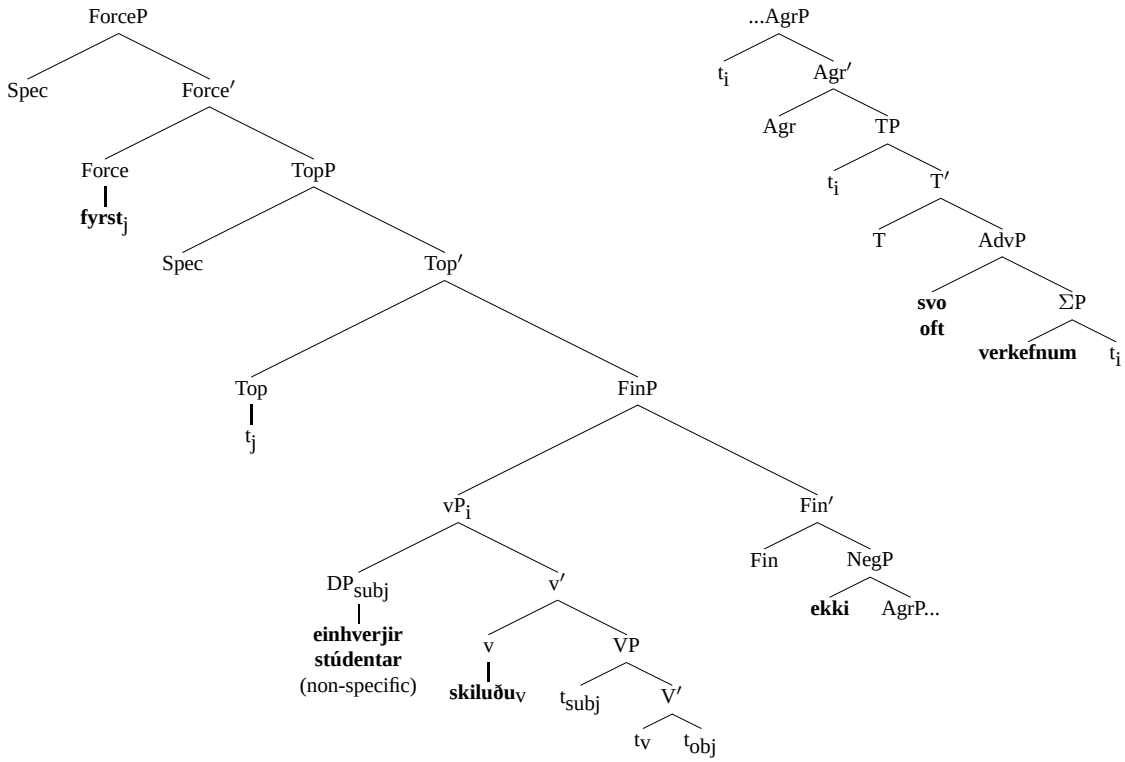
▷ In Spec,TopP the subject receives a specific reading, see (30).

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



▷ In Spec,FinP the subject retains its non-specific reading, as illustrated in (31):

(31) **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?

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

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

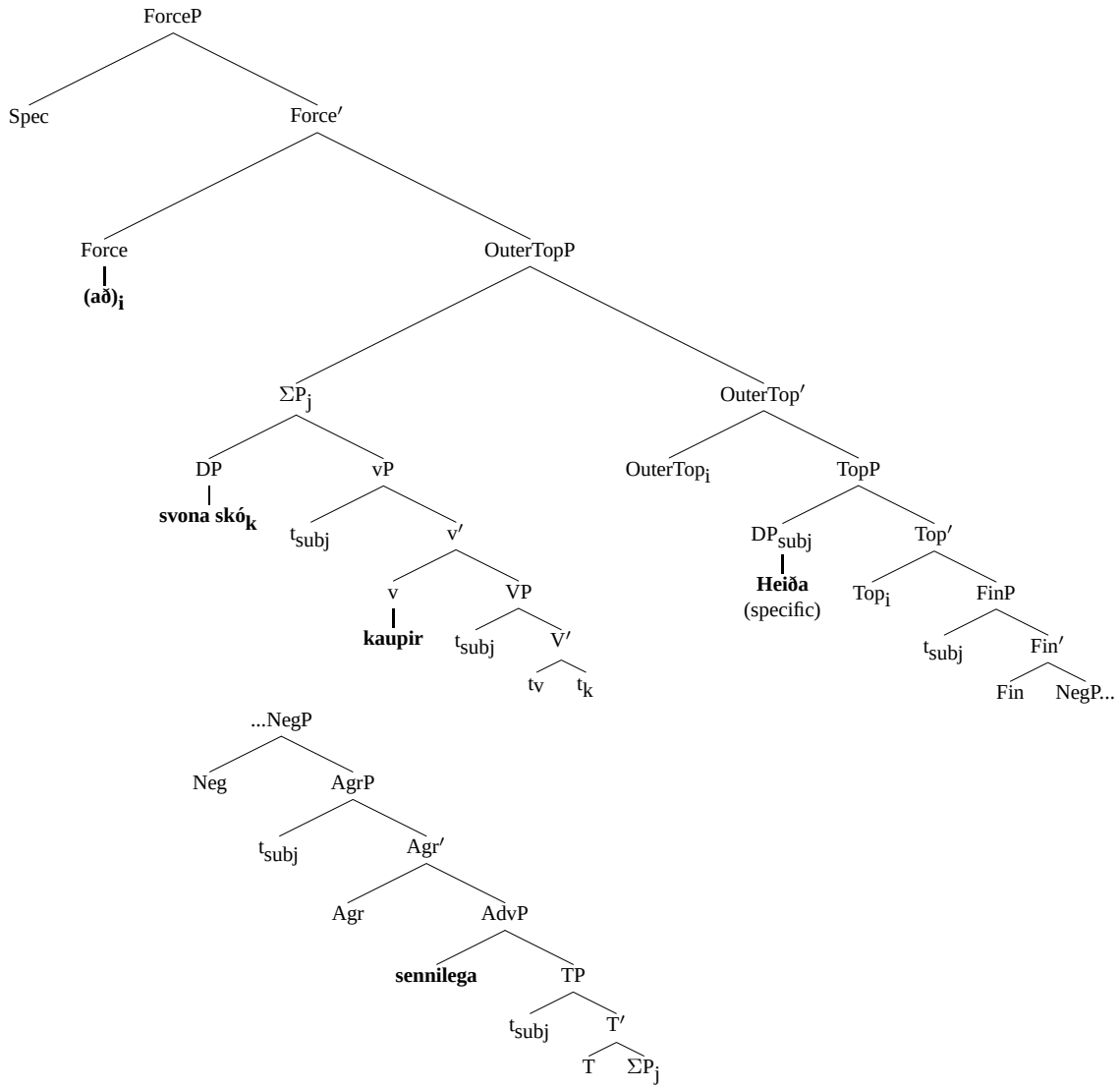
versus:

(34) **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 [$_{\Sigma P}$ Subject Verb] (cf. (30) and (31)).
- OuterTopP licenses a remnant [$_{\Sigma P}$ Specifier Verb] (cf. (35)).

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



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

(36) **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.'

(37) **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.'

5 Summary

▷ Hypotheses 1 and 2:

1. Regional Northern Norwegian displays **optional** independent V-to-I movement.
2. Icelandic does **not** display independent V-to-I movement, verb movement is to the CP domain.

▷ Evidence in favor of hypothesis 1:

- ReNN verbs may cross both higher and lower adverbs, but not negation.
- ReNN verbs may intervene between higher and lower adverbs.

▷ Evidence in favor of hypothesis 2:

- 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.

▷ Remnant vP movement comes in two types:

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

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