Preposition stranding versus pied-piping: Negative Shift of prepositional complements in dialects of Faroese

Eva Engels
University of Oslo

Sentential negation must be licensed outside VP in Scandinavian, necessitating leftward movement of negative phrases, Negative Shift (henceforth NegS). The data I collected during the NORMS dialect workshop in the Faroe Islands August 2008 display a peculiarity as regards NegS of a prepositional complement. NegS across the preposition was judged acceptable in the presence of a main verb in situ, (1). In contrast, if the main verb had undergone finite verb movement, NegS of the prepositional complement was subject to dialectal and inter-speaker variation as regards preposition stranding, (2)a, and pied-piping, (2)b. (Inter-speaker variation is represented by "%" below; M=Miðvágur, Tv=Tvøroyri, S=Sandur, K=Klaksvik, T=Tórshavn, F=Fuglafjørður.)

(1)

a. Í dag hevur Petur ongan tosað við ____.
M/Tv/S/K/T/F

b. Í dag hevur Petur við ongan tosað ______.
*M/*Tv/*S/*K/*T/*F

today has Peter with nobody spoken

(2)

a. Í gjár tosaði Petur ongan við ____.
M/*Tv/*S/*K/*T/*F

b. Í gjár tosaði Petur við ongan ________.
*M/*Tv/*S/*K/%T/%F

yesterday spoke Peter with nobody

The talk aims at accounting for the variation as to NegS of a prepositional complement in the presence/absence of a verb in situ within Fox & Pesetsky's (2003, 2005) cyclic linearization model. Under this approach, non-string-vacuous movement must proceed through intermediate positions at the left edges of Spell-out domains. As a consequence, the observed variation as to NegS stranding the preposition can be captured by differences in the availability of these left-edge positions. Pied-piping will be regarded as a last resort strategy, only accessible – if possible at all – in case the negative complement cannot license [+NEG] on its own due to the unavailability of the relevant left-edge position.
