

The Infinitival Marker across Scandinavian

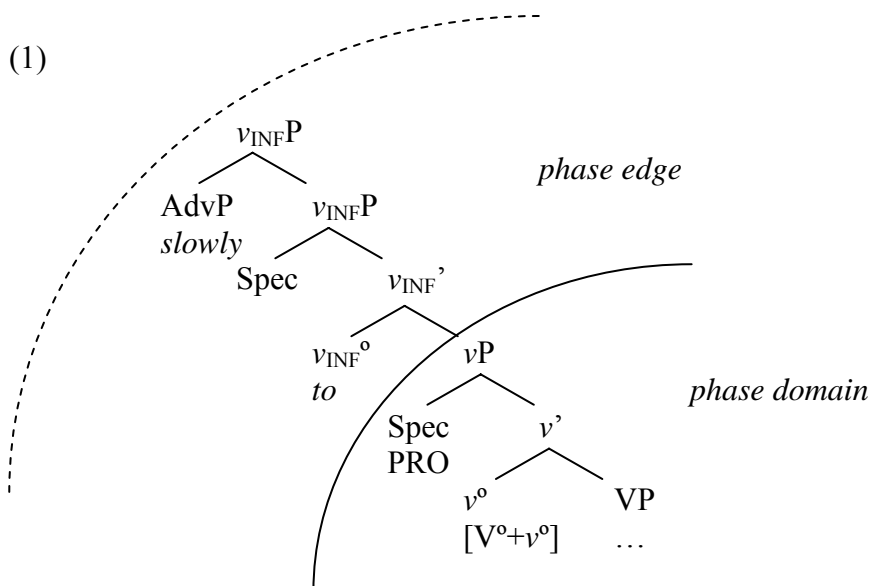
Abstract:

In this paper I argue that the base-position of the infinitive marker is fixed. It is inserted as the top-most head in the VP-domain. The cross-linguistic variation in the syntactic distribution of the infinitive marker can be accounted for by assuming that it undergoes head movement. This movement is optional in Danish, English, Norwegian, and Early Modern Danish and is triggered by scope. In Faroese, Icelandic, and Swedish, on the other hand, it is triggered by φ -feature checking on Fin° . In Icelandic and Swedish these φ -features are strong and induce obligatory $v^\circ \rightarrow \text{Fin}^\circ$ movement, whereas they are weak in Faroese and do not induce $v^\circ \rightarrow \text{Fin}^\circ$ movement.

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1 Base-position of the Infinitive Marker

Within the VP-domain, $V^\circ \rightarrow v^\circ$ movement is obligatory. I assume the infinitive marker to be merged as the functional head v_{INF}° above $v\text{P}$ (and auxiliary VP-shells) but below TP as it may follow VP-adverbials:



Assuming the framework of *Derivation by Phase* (Chomsky 2001, 2004), $v_{\text{INF}}\text{P}$ is the strong phase boundary. Under the *Phase Impenetrability Condition* (PIC), a $v_{\text{INF}}\text{P}$ external probe cannot see beyond v_{INF}° .

Analyzing the base-position of *to* as a functional verbal head v_{INF}° carrying the [Inf] feature captures the facts that (a) the infinitive marker is verbal and (b) [Inf(itive)] is a functional category rather than a lexical one: it's an extended projection of the lexical verb. The latter is supported by the fact that in many languages (e.g. French, Latin, Polish, and Hebrew) the infinitive marker is realized as inflection on the verb.

I assume the projection immediately above NegP to be Fin(iteness)P, not TP which is situated between NegP and the VP-domain. As tense is dependent on finiteness (+Fin \rightarrow +/-Past, -Fin \rightarrow 0Past), it makes sense to assume that TP is selected by the head carrying the [Fin] feature. Thus, [+/-Fin(ite)] on Fin° is distinct from [+/-Inf(inive)] and the clausal hierarchy is as follows:

(2) [CP [FinP [Adv [NegP [TP [Adv [$v_{\text{inf}}\text{P}$ [$v\text{P}$ [VP]]]]]]]]]]]]

2 Optional Movement

In **Danish**, though having the infinitive marker *at* in situ is clearly the unmarked option, it may optionally move to T° where it precedes left-adjoined VP-adverbials like *ofte* 'often', as in (3)b. It can not move to Fin° as it can not precede negation, cf. (3)c (at least this is very marked and significantly worse than (3)b):

(3) Da. Vi overtalte dem til ...
 We persuaded them to

a.	ikke	ofte	<u>at</u>	<u>prøve</u>	igen	(<i>at</i> in situ)
b.	ikke	<u>at</u>	ofte	<u>prøve</u>	igen	($v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow T^{\circ}$)
c.	?? <u>at</u>	ikke	ofte	<u>prøve</u>	igen	($v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$)
	<i>to not</i>	<i>often</i>		<i>try</i>	<i>again</i>	

According to Falk & Torp (1900: 300), in **Early Modern Danish** (EMD) the infinitive marker often precedes negation and other adverbials. In other words, Early Modern Danish has optional movement to Fin° (their examples only illustrate VP-adverbials):

(4) EMD: at **lettelige** foracte
to easily despise (1575, Anders Sørensen Vedel, Falk & Torp 1900: 300)

Interestingly, both the infinitive marker and the verb may precede adverbials in EMD, an option also found in Modern Icelandic (I return to Icelandic below):

(5) EMD: sagde sig nu at skulle **icke** lade hannem vere der lenger
said SELF now to should not let him be there longer
 (1574-1597, Bishop Jens Nielsen, *Visitatsbog*, Falk & Torp 1900: 299)

English *to* optionally undergoes $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow T^{\circ}$ to precede VP-adverbials, as in (6)b, and optionally $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$ to precede negation, as in (6)c (cf. Greenbaum & Quirk 1990:162, Radford 1997: 29; see also Gelderen 2004: 237-248).¹

(6) En: It could be dangerous

- a. **not** **fully** to understand the gravity of the situation...
- b. **not** to **fully** understand the gravity of the situation...
- c. to **not** **fully** understand the gravity of the situation...

Like English, **Norwegian** has optional $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow T^{\circ}$, cf. (7) and (8), as well as optional $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$, cf. (9) and (10).²

(7) No: Bjørn Eidsvåg hadde bestemt seg for **ikkje** å gje konsertar i sommar
Bjørn Eidsvåg had decided SELF for not to give concerts in summer
 “B.E. had decided not to give concerts in the summer.” (Bergens Tidende)

(8) No: Det var meininga å **ikkje** lyse ut nokon ny anbods
It was intention.the to not announce PRT any new tender-
konkurransen
competition (Bergens Tidende)

(9) No: Dette er eit betre utgangspunkt enn **berre** å seia at ...
This is a better starting-point than just to say that
 (Bergens Tidende)

(10) No: Annleis vil det vere om dei har halde på med å **berre** slå
Different will it be of they have held on with to just hit
 “It would have been different if they had just kept hitting.” (Lokalaviser)

3 No Movement

In **Faroese**, the infinitival marker never moves to Fin° as it cannot precede negation or sentential adverbials:

(11) Fa: a. Hon hevur lovað **ikki** at gera tað aftur
 b. *Hon hevur lovað at **ikki** gera tað aftur
She has promised to not do that again (Zakaris Hansen, p.c.)

I have not been able to establish whether VP-adverbials are allowed to intervene between *at* and the infinitive verb in Faroese (and neither Lockwood 2002 nor Thráinsson et al. 2004 discuss

¹ In spoken English, the intermediate copies of *to* may also be pronounced, cf. Gelderen (2004: 239).

² All Norwegian examples are from the Nynorsk part of the Oslo Corpus of Tagged Norwegian Texts, University of Oslo, <http://www.hf.uio.no/tekstlab/>.

it). I shall assume it not to be the case and leave the question for future research. In Faroese, then, the infinitival marker never moves out of v_{INF}° .

4 Obligatory Movement

In **Swedish**, the infinitive marker *att* obligatorily precedes negation (Holmes & Hinchliffe 2003: 476) and therefore there is obligatory $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$:

(12) Sw: Vi uppmanade dem att **aldrig** göra om det
We encouraged them to never do again it
 (Holmes & Hinchliffe 2003: 476)

(13) Sw: För att **inte** tala om alla dessa kvinnor
For to not talk about all these women
 (Title of a 1964 screenplay by Ingmar Bergman)

In **Icelandic**, there are two possible movements of the infinitive marker *að*: alone or together with the verb (judgements due to Gunnar Hrafn Hrafnbjargarson, p.c.). As (14)d show, *að* may move to Fin° where it precedes negation (contrary to what is claimed by Holmberg 2000: 456, footnote 12). (14)b shows that *að* can not move to T° between sentential negation and the VP-adverbial and stay there, and (14)c shows that *að* for some reason can not cross two adverbials. As the difference between (14)c and d also shows, VP-adverbials are normally right-adjoined. The markedness of (14)a, is due to either (i) double stylistic fronting (of *ekki* and *strax*), (ii) *strax* is not right-adjoined, or (iii) *að* in situ.

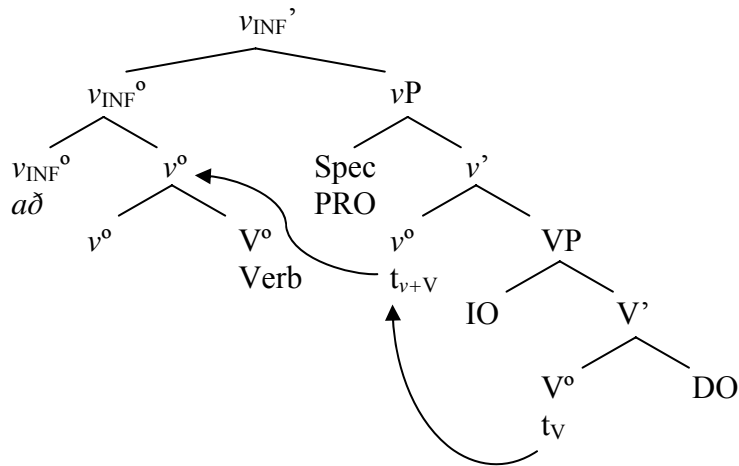
(14) Ic: Það væri vitlaust
It would.be stupid

a. ? **ekki** **strax** að lesa þessa bók
 b. * **ekki** að **strax** lesa þessa bók
 c. *að **ekki** **strax** lesa þessa bók
 d. að **ekki** lesa þessa bók **strax**
to not read this book immediately

The second (and unmarked) type of movement is the one in (15)a and b where the infinitive verb has moved to adjoin to *að* with subsequent movement to Fin° of this complex head [*að*+*[v+V]*], illustrated in (16). Note that with [*að*+*[v+V]*] movement, *strax* can be either left or right-adjoined:

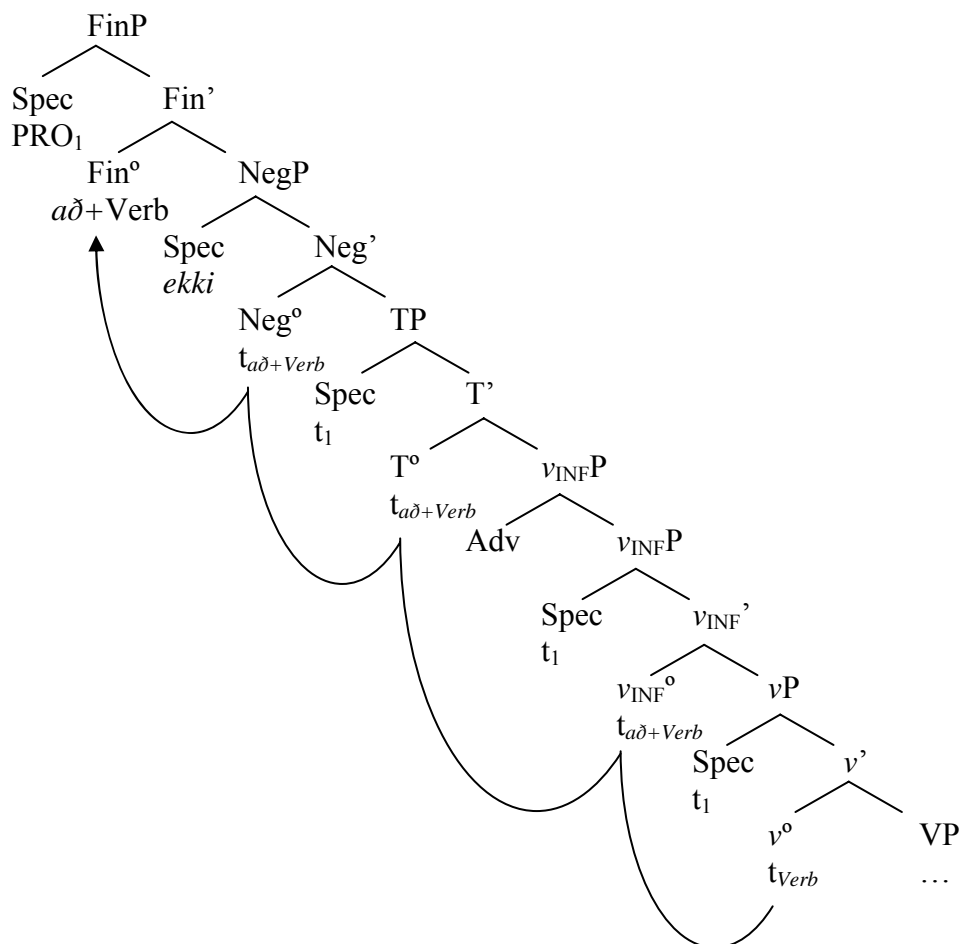
(15) Ic: a. Það væri vitlaust að lesa **ekki strax** þessa bók
 b. Það væri vitlaust að lesa **ekki** þessa bók **strax**
It would.be stupid to read not this book immediately

(16) Icelandic $V^{\circ} \rightarrow v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ}$ incorporation:



Thus, movement to Fin° is obligatory: either by *að* alone (as in Swedish), or as the complex head $[\text{a}\check{\text{d}}+[\text{v}+\text{V}]]$ (as in Early Modern Danish):

(17) Ic:



The analysis of Johnson & Vikner (1998) admittedly also wrongly predicts control infinitives to be extraction islands. They argue that *að* is base-generated in the higher C° in a recursive CP-domain and that PRO is topicalized to avoid government by the infinitive verb, which they argue is moved to the lower C°, cf. the example in (23). Thus, they have to make additional stipulations. The present analysis does not make such a prediction as [*að*+*v*+*V*] moves to C°, cf. the structure in (24) (whatever the status of government in contemporary linguistic theory, the facts remain):

- (23) Ic: Hvernig₁ lofaði Pétur Jóni ...
 How promised Peter.NOM Jón.DAT

[_{CP} *að* [_{CP} PRO *fara* [_{IP} *til* London á morgun t₁]]]?
 to go to London tomorrow

(Johnson & Vikner 1998: 31, (78b))

- (24) Ic: Hvernig₁ lofaði Pétur Jóni ...
 How promised Peter.NOM Jón.DAT

[_{CP} t₁ C° [_{FinP} PRO [_{Fin°} *að fara*] *til* London á morgun t₁]]]?
 to go to London tomorrow

The possibility of moving [*at*+*v*+*V*] in Early Modern Danish and [*að*+*v*+*V*] in Icelandic seems to correlate with / be licensed by V°→Fin° (“V°-to-I°”) movement. Among the modern Scandinavian languages, only Icelandic has V°→Fin° movement while Danish lost it sometime between 1300 and 1700. The movement of the infinitive marker alone is clearly not subject to such licensing condition.

5 Summary

The following table is a summary of the distribution of the infinitive marker (recall that negation and sentential adverbials are merged between Fin° and T°, and ‘VP-adverbials’ are merged between T° and *v*_{INF}°):

- (25) Variation in the position of the infinitive marker:

	Fa: <i>at</i>	Da: <i>at</i>	EMD: <i>at</i> , En: <i>to</i> , No: <i>å</i>	Ic: <i>að</i> , Sw: <i>att</i>	EMD: <i>at</i> +Verb Ic: <i>að</i> +Verb
Fin°	x	x	✓	✓	✓
T°	x	✓	✓	x	x
<i>v</i>_{INF}°	✓	✓	✓	x	x

The base-position of the infinitive marker is the same cross-linguistically, namely in the functional projection *v*_{INF}P at the top of the VP-domain. This is different from what is assumed elsewhere (but see also Ernst 1992: 129 and Pullum 1982: 197; see Christensen 2005 for a discussion of these and other proposals).

Contrary to what is argued by Johnson & Vikner (1998), Icelandic infinitive verbs do not move on their own as V°s (they argue that the verb moves through Fin° to C°). The infinitive marker

að attracts and incorporates the infinitive verbs prior to movement to Fin° . For this reason the verb is able to escape the νP phase in Icelandic as opposed to the other languages in question. In the next section I shall argue that **the complex head [*að*+ $[\nu+\text{V}]$], not the infinitive verb, is able to check ϕ -features.**

In Icelandic ECM constructions (non-control infinitives), there is no infinitival *að* and therefore no movement to Fin° as the infinitival verb itself cannot check the features on Fin° . I have presented data that show that ECM constructions may have a NegP which makes it possible to positively identify the structural position of the verb.

The analysis presented here correctly predicts that control infinitives are not extraction islands, cf. (24), which the analysis in Johnson & Vikner (1998) predicts them to be.

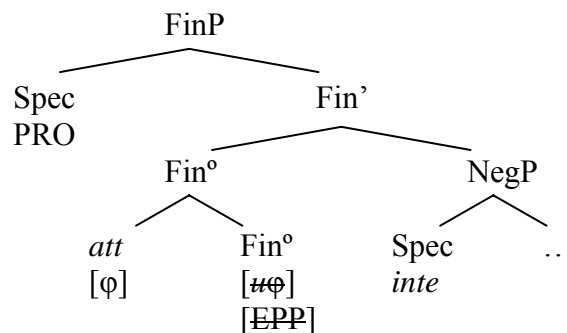
6 Triggers for Movement

In control infinitives, PRO checks EPP on Fin° . I suggest that the infinitive marker may check ϕ -features on Fin° . This is clear with Swedish *att* and Icelandic *að* which obligatorily move to Fin° . This explains why the infinitive marker is obligatory in control infinitives.

(26) Features checked by PRO and the infinitive marker (version 1):

PRO	Infinitive marker
EPP	Inf, ϕ

(27) Sw:



According to Chomsky (2001: 6), “structural case is not a feature of the probes (T, ν), but is assigned a value under agreement then removed by Spell-Out from the narrow syntax.” In line with this, I assume that if and only if Fin° assigns/licenses/valuates (nominative) Case, Fin° has ϕ -features:

(28) **Iff Fin° valuates Case, Fin° has ϕ -features**

That means that Fin° has no ϕ -features in ECM constructions (and Icelandic DAT-ACC clauses which I ignore here, but see Hrafnbjargarson 2004).

In **ECM constructions**, the subject DP moves to check EPP on Fin° . There are no (strong unvalued) ϕ -features on Fin° , and Icelandic *að* like Swedish *att* are not attracted to Fin° and therefore, by economy, cannot move to Fin° , cf. (29)a and b.

- (29) Ic: a. *Pétur taldi [að Maríu **ekki** hafa vaskað upp diskana] (ECM)
 b. *Pétur taldi [Maríu að **ekki** hafa vaskað upp diskana]
 c. *Pétur taldi [Maríu **ekki** að hafa vaskað upp diskana]
 d. Pétur taldi [Maríu **ekki** hafa vaskað upp diskana]
Peter believed Mary not (to) have washed up dishes.the

In Christensen (2005) I argue that there are two types of infinitive, one [+Inf] and one [-Inf], with and without overt marker, respectively (and with different syntactic properties cross-linguistically). The reason why the infinitive marker is never allowed in ECM, not even in its base-position, as in (29)c, is that ECM verbs select [-Inf] clauses.

In **raising constructions**, the raising subject DP checks ϕ and EPP on both the embedded Fin^o and the matrix Fin^o. Again, *að/att* would not be able to check ϕ and is therefore not licensed.

- (30) Ic: a. *Hann virtist [að **ekki** tala fullkomna íslensku] (Raising)
 b. Hann virtist [**ekki** tala fullkomna íslensku]
 c. *Hann virtist [að tala **ekki** fullkomna íslensku]
He seemed to speak not perfect Icelandic

Danish *at*, English *to*, and Norwegian *å* are obligatory in both ECM and Raising constructions:

- (31) Da: a. Jeg anser [ham for ikke at være kompetent] (ECM)
 b. *Jeg anser [ham for ikke være kompetent]
I consider him for not to be competent

- (32) Da: a. Hun synes [at tale flydende dansk] (Raising)
 b. *Hun synes [tale flydende dansk]
She seems to speak fluent Danish

An exception to the rule is ECM under **perception verbs** which do not license the infinitive marker in the Germanic languages: Perception verbs select complements with a [-Inf] feature.

- (33) a. Da: Jeg hørte [hende (*at) spille klaver]
 b. En: I heard [her (*to) play the piano]
 c. Ic: Ég heyrði [hana (*að) leika á píanó]

The distribution of the infinitive marker is summarized in the table in (34) below (see also Beukema & den Dikken 1989: 66-67):

(34) Distribution of the infinitive marker:

Infinitive marker	Control infinitives	ECM	Raising
Danish <i>at</i>	✓	✓	✓
English <i>to</i>	✓	✓	✓
Norwegian <i>å</i>	✓	✓	✓
Icelandic <i>að</i> / <i>að</i> +Verb	✓	✗	✗
Swedish <i>att</i>	✓	✗	✗
Faroese <i>at</i>	✓	✗	✗

But why, then, are Danish *at*, English *to*, and Norwegian *å* obligatory in ECM and Raising (leaving Faroese aside for the moment)?

If it is assumed that there is a (lexical) difference in the properties of PRO and the infinitive marker, the observed variation in (25) above follows: In Icelandic and Swedish, the infinitive marker checks the φ -features (obligatory $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$ movement), while in Danish, English, and Norwegian this is done by PRO (optional $v_{\text{INF}}^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$).³

(35) Features checked by PRO and the infinitive marker (version 2):

	PRO	Infinitive marker
Ic <i>að</i> +Verb, Sw <i>att</i>	EPP	Inf, φ
Da <i>at</i> , En <i>to</i> , No <i>å</i>	EPP, φ	Inf

As mentioned in section 4 above, the movement of the Icelandic *að* without the infinitival verb is marked (movement of [*að*+*v*+*V*]) is preferred). The feature distribution in (35) provides us with a possible explanation for this markedness. Not moving *að* is marked because the φ -features on Fin° remain unchecked. Moving *að* alone to check the φ -features on Fin° is marked because the infinitival verb is ‘stranded’, or rather *að* has failed to incorporate it.

I propose that **the optionality of movement** of Danish *at*, English *to*, and Norwegian *å* has to do with **scope**, (e.g. whether the infinitive scopes over negation or vice versa) and/or **information structure** (focus and presupposition), **not** feature checking. The adverbials cannot move (assuming that XP movement is driven by EPP, movement to adjunction is out), but the infinitive marker, being a head, can. In this way, the scope-taking elements are XPs (demanding that certain other elements, including heads, be in their domain) rather than heads (cf. also Chomsky 2001: 37 who argues that head movement falls within the phonological component).

Swedish *att* has lost its ability to incorporate while Icelandic *að* and Early Modern Danish *at* has retained this ability. This indicates that it might be licensed by $V^{\circ} \rightarrow \text{Fin}^{\circ}$ movement (the exact connection between the two remains to be explained). I propose that incorporation is triggered by an uninterpretable feature [+Incorp] on the infinitive marker (there are thus two versions of *að*, one [+Incorp] and one [-Incorp]).

(36) Features (on or) checked by PRO and the infinitive marker (version 3):

	PRO	Infinitive marker
Ic <i>að</i>	EPP	Inf, +Incorp, φ
Sw <i>att</i>	EPP	Inf, -Incorp, φ
Da <i>at</i> , En <i>to</i> , No <i>å</i>	EPP, φ	Inf, -Incorp

If it is true that Faroese *at* does not leave v_{INF}° , it is an interesting ‘intermediate’ candidate. As shown in (34), it patterns with its Swedish and Icelandic counterparts, as *at* is not licensed in ECM and Raising constructions but obligatory in control infinitives (examples from Lockwood 2002: 138-139; see also Thráinsson et al. 2004):

- (37) Fa: a. Hon ynskti sær [PRO at verða jarðað í Borðoy]
 b. *Hon ynskti sær [PRO verða jarðað í Borðoy]
She wished SELF to be buried in Borðoy
 “She wished to be buried in Borðoy.”

³ I leave to future research to answer the question why Icelandic and Swedish PRO can not check φ -features. However, assuming Icelandic to reflect earlier diachronic stages, a possible answer may be that PRO in the other Scandinavian languages is (or has been) getting stronger (by reanalysis) and is taking over checking of φ -features from the infinitive marker, reducing the number of moving elements by one.

- (38) Fa: a. *Nú haldi eg [meg at hava prátað nóg nógv] (ECM)
 b. Nú haldi eg [meg hava prátað nóg nógv]
Now think I me to have talked quite enough
 “Now I think I’ve talked quite enough.”

- (39) Fa: a. *Mær tókti [at hóma býir við føgrum marmorborgum] (Raising)
 b. Mær tókti [hóma býir við føgrum marmorborgum]
I seemed to remember cities with beautiful marble-palaces

In **control infinitives**, the infinitive marker stays in v_{INF}° because it can not check ϕ on Fin° (and possibly because scope does not influence the surface string). The question is why it is blocked in ECM and Raising. I propose that Faroese is like Icelandic and Swedish, such that **at checks ϕ in control infinitives ‘covertly’ and PRO checks EPP, and it is blocked in ECM and Raising because Fin° has no ϕ -features**. In control infinitives, Fin° probes for a ϕ -match and *at* in v_{INF}° is available because it is already at the phase edge. In other words, instead of Fin° attracting *at* as in Icelandic and Swedish, Fin° and *at* enter into **long-distance agreement**. If correct, there is thus a difference in strength of the ϕ -features on Fin° :

- (40) Features (on or) checked by PRO and the infinitive marker (final version):

	PRO	Infinitive marker	Fin° [ϕ]
Ic <i>að</i>	EPP	Inf, +Incorp, ϕ	Strong
Sw <i>att</i>	EPP	Inf, –Incorp, ϕ	Strong
Fa <i>at</i>	EPP	Inf, –Incorp, ϕ	Weak
Da <i>at</i> , En <i>to</i> , No <i>å</i>	EPP, ϕ	Inf, –Incorp	Strong

7 Conclusions

The cross-linguistics as well as language-specific distribution of the infinitive marker shows that a position is needed between VP-adverbials and v° , namely the lowest possible position the infinitive marker can occupy: its base-position v_{INF}° . This leads to a more articulated VP-domain consisting of (at least) $v_{INF}P$, vP , and VP.

The variation can be accounted for by assuming movement of the infinitive marker, either to T° or to Fin° , apart from the option of having the infinitive marker remain in situ. Movement to Fin° in Faroese, Icelandic and Swedish is triggered by ϕ -feature checking. The ϕ -features on Fin° are strong in Icelandic and Swedish and $v_{INF}^{\circ} \rightarrow Fin^{\circ}$ movement is obligatory while they are weak in Faroese where movement does not apply.

Icelandic has an incorporating version of the infinitive marker that attracts the infinitive verb and carries it along to Fin° .

Optional movement on the infinitive marker in Danish, English, and Norwegian is triggered by scope, while the ϕ -features on Fin° are checked by PRO.

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