

Stylistic fronting as remnant movement

In this paper, I discuss a peculiar movement type found in Icelandic, known since Maling's (1980) seminal work as *stylistic fronting* (SF), which shifts a postverbal constituent to the left of the finite verb. SF poses nontrivial problems for syntactic theory, as it appears to contradict a number of widely-held theoretical assumptions (see Holmberg 2006 for a survey); in particular, it appears to move heads (adverbs, participles, particles) into a specifier position (Spec-T), which in addition should be occupied by a trace/copy. SF only applies in clauses with a "subject gap" (basically, embedded clauses with relativized/extracted subjects and impersonal constructions); it is semantically vacuous, optional and (for the most part) in complementary distribution with expletive-insertion. I will show that my account can derive all of these properties while relying on a minimal set of assumptions. Previously, SF in Icelandic has been analyzed as head movement (Jónsson 1991), as a subcase of topicalization (Rögnavaldsson & Thráinsson 1990), or as movement of phonological features (Holmberg 2000). I argue that these approaches are empirically and conceptually problematic and propose instead to analyze SF as EPP-driven phrasal A-movement of a (potentially remnant) XP to Spec-T. This novel approach to Icelandic SF not only allows for a unified treatment of its various manifestations but is also shown to make a number of desirable predictions concerning the observed properties and restrictions. Thus, SF turns out to be yet another phenomenon in Germanic syntax for which a remnant-movement analysis proves superior to alternative accounts.