MICHAEL BARNES. *Faroese Language Studies.*
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Reviewed by HELGE SANDØY

Faroese seems to have come into focus in Germanic and general linguistics only during the last decades. Icelandic has been of special interest for a longer period because of its archaic syntactic and morphological properties; Faroese, however, characterized by similarities to both Icelandic and Scandinavian, may prove to shed new light on typological issues and historical changes.

Michael Barnes is certainly the linguist who has studied Faroese syntax most thoroughly from the perspective of grammatical theory. In the 1980s and 1990s he published extensively and with insight in various journals (23 articles to be precise). *Faroese Language Studies* is a composite volume where he presents eight of his grammatical works in addition to one on language history. Some of the articles have been slightly revised for this edition.

The only article with a different, non-grammatical approach is the last one, 'Reconstructing language: the view from the Faroes', where the essence is a comparison of the Norwegian and the Faroese language situations. V. U. Hammershaimb's re-establishing of an Old Norse orthography for modern Faroese is a parallel to Ivar Aasen's more complex project of constructing a common denominator for the variety of dialects of modern Norwegian. Despite the many similarities between the language situations of the two countries, there were fundamentally different conditions for both the codification and the sociolinguistic process of gaining approval. Barnes points out the wider range of dialect variation in Norwegian and the fact that the urban elite in Norway spoke 'Danish with Norwegian pronunciation'. Obviously, these contrasts caused different lines of development in the subsequent language history of the two countries. Barnes formulates an interesting historical and sociolinguistic hypothesis that Aasen's approach might have worked in the Faroes, whereas Hammershaimb's reliance on Old Norse as a model would not have been a realistic option in Norway.

A phonological topic is examined in the second article: 'A note on Faroese /θ/ > /h/', in which the author sums up relevant data on the

characteristic change *þ* > *h* in Faroese pronouns and words/names starting with *Þór-*. Referring to parallel changes in other languages, Barnes concurs with Bo Ralph's opinion that this is a regular but rare phonological change.

The bulk of the articles concern syntax. The first work of this volume is called 'The semantics and morphological case government of the Faroese preposition *fyri*'. To predict which case is triggered by this preposition is a real challenge for all learners of Faroese, an experience that Barnes took as his point of departure for his study. From 38 texts he collected a large database of sentences with *fyri*, and his analysis leads to a division of the usage of the preposition into twelve semantic categories triggering the accusative and ten the dative. From this rather ample set of neat groupings he suggests by subsuming those governing the dative under the more abstract notion of 'two things in a fixed position, the one in front of the other' (p. 49), and the accusative categories under 'a form of motion' (p. 32).

These two last 'hyper' categories seem reasonable and help us to discern a pattern in the overwhelming battery of categories. One problem, of which Barnes is fully aware, is the level of abstraction, as it can be problematic to derive the many concrete semantic categories from the two abstract ones. However, this work helped me greatly to gain a better understanding of the apparent Faroese 'case chaos'. This article is an impressive and comprehensive piece of empirical work.

As to details, it surprised me that Barnes prefers to analyse *fyri* as governing the nominative in structures like *Hvat er hatta fyri pakki?* 'What is this for parcel?/What sort of parcel is this?' (p. 13). It could have been worth discussing whether alternative analyses might be better and simpler. My suggestion is that *hvat fyri* is a compound interrogative in phrases like *hvat fyri pakki*, and consequently *fyri* neither functions as a preposition nor governs any case. The phrase is a subject complement and therefore in the nominative in the above sentence, and *pakki* is the head of the complement. This analysis gains support from the fact that the parallel phrase is in the accusative when it has a direct object function:

Hvat fyri pakka keypti tú? 'What sort of parcel did you buy?'

As a consequence of this alternative analysis, there is no 'three-case

preposition' in Faroese (p. 13). In a subject complement, there is in Faroese (as in Norwegian) a strong tendency to split the phrase and the interrogative, so that both *Hvat fyri pakki er hatta?* and *Hvat er hatta fyri pakki?* are acceptable. This is not so for *hvat fyri* in the object position. To my mind this alternative analysis would also explain more easily another example Barnes presents in a follow-up to his discussion.

One additional minor remark: To me, the Norwegian sentence *Jon blei ferdig før eg* 'Jon was finished before I [was]' (p. 40), which is contrasted to a parallel but unacceptable Faroese sentence, is ungrammatical.

The eighth article in the volume is a parallel to the *fyri* analysis; here the preposition *við* is considered. Barnes' first work on prepositions was published in 1977, and in 1994 he revisited the topic for a more thorough analysis. Here, too, he exploits a corpus and has assigned all the occurrences to twelve semantic categories, ten of which trigger the dative and two the accusative.

In his exposition Barnes presents a convincing grouping that is even more clear-cut than the one in his work on *fyri*. The definitions of the categories also seem explicit, except in the Connective category triggering the dative and the Directional category triggering the accusative. The definitions of these two are more obscure, and the categories give the impression of being residual categories. The author does not ignore this complexity; because of some unpredictable instances of case governing he resorts to saying on p. 219 'analysis is complicated by the fact that the choice between dative and accusative seems to some extent to be historically based' – i.e. outside the semantic analysis of the current stage of the language.

This work will certainly be of great help to future textbooks on Faroese. The point of departure of several discussions is the only textbook published in English, namely W. B. Lockwood's *An introduction to Modern Faroese* (1955). Article no. 6 concerning the semantics of the modal auxiliary *munna* is a sharp attack on Lockwood's exposition, which is hardly more than an unsuccessful attempt to find adequate English translations (Lockwood: 'may, can, I suppose'). Barnes' contribution to the semantic analysis of this auxiliary verb is that *munna* in declarative sentences expresses the speaker's uncertainty 'about what he is affirming or denying' (p. 178). In negative questions the uncertainty concerns the negation.

In conditionals the main verb may be either the infinitive or the supine, and the same is the case for *hava* 'have'. Because of the Faroese double supine construction, three similar constructions are then possible when the auxiliary verb is in the past: *mundi* + supine, *mundi hava* + supine, and *mundi havt* + supine. There is no clear-cut semantic distinction between these three constructions. Barnes discerns, on the other hand, a two-way semantic distinction in other modal auxiliaries, e.g. *kundi* 'could' and *skuldi* 'should', i.e. a tense marker + uncertainty on the one hand and a counter-factual conditional on the other (p. 183). In the case of *kundi fingið* both are valid (= 'could get/could have got') whereas in *kundi hava / havt fingið* only the counter-factual meaning applies, i.e. 'could have got'. For me it is hard to see any ambiguity in *kundi fingið* in this respect. I find it unambiguously counter-factual. Only in *kundi* + inf. is there a possibility of the act being factual, corresponding to 'could get'. I would prefer an analysis where the three alternatives with the supine on the one hand (*kundi fingið / kundi hava / havt fingið*) unambiguously express the counter-factual situation, and the one alternative with the infinitive on the other hand (i.e. *kundi fáa*) has the function of being a tense-marker and is unmarked for the question of factuality. The only contrast of meaning is then between the supine and the infinitive after the modal auxiliary.

The syntactic behaviour of the reflexive pronoun *seg / sær / sín* is a fuzzy area to investigate, and Barnes ventures to do so in article 3. Government and Binding-grammarians have shown great interest in this pronoun in the Nordic languages, and Barnes' aim is to throw light on Faroese data relevant to this grammatical discussion. In the first part (section 2.2) Barnes gives an analysis of *seg* vs. *seg sjálvan*, i.e. the simple and the complex reflexives. He demonstrates three patterns of usage, one where the complex reflexive is obligatory, a second where it is optional and a third where it is excluded, i.e. where only *seg* can be used. His conclusion is that the contrast between the two reflexives mainly has the pragmatic function of disambiguating where there are two possible antecedents in the sentence:

(27) Pætur$_i$ fortaldi Mikkjali um seg sjálvan$_i$/*seg$_i$
'Pætur told Mikkjal about REFL self/REFL'

A characteristic of the Nordic languages is that the reflexive may have object antecedents within simple sentences, cf.

(53) Martin sá Jógvan við nýggju súklu síni
'Martin saw Jógvan with new bike REFL POSS'

In section 2.3 Barnes interprets these occurrences as underlying potential subjecthood, and he demonstrates how such sentences with either *síni* or *hansara* are ambiguous in several instances because of the two possible antecedents.

In this work Barnes does not use a database. He has constructed experimental sentences and asked native speakers to evaluate their acceptability and interpretations. His report from his 'fieldwork' on p. 85-86 is of special interest as he there shows how the informants' reaction depends on the order in which sentences have been presented to them, i.e. on the patterns the informants' attention has already been drawn to. These insights into the listener's interpretation process are of theoretical interest, as evaluation of acceptability represents the usual empirical testing-ground for linguistic hypotheses. However, Barnes himself does not conclude more categorically than to say that it is not clear to him 'how watertight theories [...] can be built on these kinds of data' (p. 86). This kind of methodological reflection deserves the attention of grammarians.

In other more complex structures there may be two competing subjects, i.e. in both infinitive constructions and in clauses. Here, too, ambiguity may arise. Within simple sentences and clauses reflexivisation is obligatory, whereas 'long reflexivisation' or 'non-clause bounded reflexivisation' are optional. An interesting observation is that a first or second person pronoun intervening between a potential antecedent and the reflexive makes informants reject the use of *seg / sær* (p. 95):

(101) ??Kollfirðingurin$_i$ lovaði mær$_j$ sín$_i$ besta seyð, um eg$_j$ vildi hjálpa sær$_i$
'The man from Kollafjørður promised me REFL POSS best sheep if I would help REFL'

In his conclusion Barnes suggests that non-clause bounded reflexivisation is a parallel to the subjunctive in Icelandic and German: it is a means of indicating a change in viewpoint from the original speaker to another, because the typical usage of non-clause bounded

reflexivisation is in indirect speech, and then it applies even beyond the syntactic scope of single sentences (p. 99). This is an interesting suggestion on Barnes' part, but he does develop it further in the present work.

This is another impressive, systematic and thorough piece of work. The author does not make any absolute or theoretical claims about rules; on the other hand, he clearly demonstrates the difficulties with clear-cut rules and confident assertions, and also illustrates how this syntactic phenomenon is more than syntax. It is conditioned by pragmatics.

In his fourth work Barnes once more taps into a current grammatical debate. This time it concerns the question: what is a subject in a case language such as Faroese? This has already been analysed and discussed with regard to Icelandic by other grammarians, and it is obvious that neither nominative in the noun phrase nor verb agreement is a necessary condition of subjecthood, cf. constructions like *mær dámar mjólkina* 'I like the milk'. An interesting criterion is the obligatory reflexivisation where there is a co-reference to the subject, and this is valid irrespective of which case the subject has:

(17) Kjartani$_i$ dámar væl nýggja bil sín$_i$/hansara*$_{i/0}$
'Kjartan (D) likes well new (A) REFL POSS (A)/his'

When the antecedent is an object, reflexivisation is not obligatory; however, it is possible where the object has an obvious character of underlying subject:

(21) Vit$_i$ tveittu handan gamla$_j$ úr kamari sínum$_j$/hansara$_{j/0}$
'We (N) threw that old [fellow] (A) from room (D) REFL POSS (D)/his'

Barnes then goes through several criteria that demonstrate how a subject, irrespective of its case behaves differently from e.g. topicalised objects. He explores some of Höskuldur Þráinsson's tests on Icelandic, e.g. on the preservation of idiosyncratic case marking. When tested on co-ordinated clauses oblique nominals as subject may be omitted under identity with another nominative subject in some sentences, in others not, and in yet other examples informants disagree

on whether omission is acceptable, as in (77) where the dative subject is omitted:

(77) ?Hann fór til Íslands í summar og ___ dámdi tað væl
'He (N) went to Iceland (G) this summer and ___ (D) liked it (A) well'

Barnes thus concludes that there is no general tendency in Faroese to preserve idiosyncratic case marking.

In part 4 of this article, Barnes illustrates the modern Faroese tendency to mark preverbal nominals as subjects by using the nominative and postverbal nominals as objects by using the accusative. This is an interesting aspect where in current usage and informants' reaction we can observe historical layers of the language. Whereas at one stage of the process all Experiencer subjects became dative (ON *mig vantar* > modern Faroese *mær vantar* 'I lack'), all the relevant verbs may now occur with a nominative subject as an alternative in one syntactic construction or another (p. 132).

These changes are parts of a drift towards a mainland Scandinavian type of syntactic structure, and Barnes several times underlines the influence from Danish. If, however, this drift is a matter of change in the 'deep' grammatical principles governing the syntactic structure, it is not obvious that this is merely a feature of language contact, it may be as much a question of reorganising the language structure, a process that certainly commenced before our modern society with its intense language contact. To some extent this question is touched on by referring to Holmberg & Platzack's theory of 'the null-subject parameter' (p. 133), and Barnes suggests on p. 137 'that Faroese is now at roughly the same stage of development as seventeenth-century Swedish'. Barnes does not elaborate further on what the triggering factor is for such an internal syntactic drift.

Often the author presents interesting test data with imprecise references to the number of informants by using the indefinite quantifiers 'many' and 'some', and nowhere with a more accurate indication of number than 'queried by a couple of informants and condemned by the rest' (p. 124). The interested reader is curious about the exact figures.

Word order in subordinate clauses has been one of the most pop-

ular topics among GB grammarians during the last two decades. Barnes joins in this scholarly dispute in his fifth article, especially by referring to Platzack (1986) as a useful basis or point of departure. In this article, the author thus exploits the drawing of tree-structures to illustrate the discussion of movements and empty positions. The subject position is the first to the right of Comp and the finite verb occupies the second. When a subject is for some reason lacking, extracted or postponed, the empty subject position must – normally! – be filled by some element from the right of the finite verb (= 'stylistic inversion', p. 155):

Kjartan sat heima, meðan hini fóru í kirkjuna
'Kjartan sat at home while the others went to the church'
*Kjartan sat heima, meðan ___ varð farið í kirkjuna
(23) Kjartan sat heima, meðan farið varð í kirkjuna.
'Kjartan sat at home while gone was (i.e. people went) to the church' (subjectless passive)

Elements in Comp – most frequently *at*, *sum* and *ið* – may be freely deleted; however, a recoverability condition (p. 149) gives the appropriate restriction that elements with semantic content shall not be deleted, and if the structure after a deletion is ambiguous, the deletion is prohibited, for instance, when *sum* is removed in (17):

(17) *Tað er áhugavert at tosa við tey búgva í hesum avstongda bygdalagi.
*'It is interesting to talk to those live in this isolated community'

Here the juxtaposition of *tey* and *búgva* will cause uncertainty because it can be interpreted as the beginning (i.e. the subject + finite verb) of a following clause. Likewise we understand that **Hon spurdi áfatt var* *'She asked wrong was' is unrecoverable because the missing subordinator *hvat* has semantic content.

If, on the other hand, the empty subject position is filled, an empty COMP does not prevent the listener from recovering the appropriate structure:

(19) Tað er áhugavert at tosa við tey, í hesum avstongda bygdalagi búgva.
'It is interesting to talk to those in this isolated community live'

A competing word order in subordinate clauses is the so-called verb-third order, which seems to be fairly new in Faroese, cf. (2).

(2) Tey nýttu fleiri orð, sum hon ikki hevði hoyrt fyrr
'They used several words which she not had heard before'

Barnes presents this word order briefly in section 2.3 and discusses whether the surface structure in some clauses reflects the new word-order pattern of Faroese (section 2.3) or not. In some clauses it is not possible to decide whether the surface structure reflects verb-third order or stylistic inversion:

(35) Í Føroya søgu setti lív hansara spor, sum ___ aldri skulu/ sum aldri skulu kámast burtur.
'In Faroe's history placed life his tracks (i.e. his life left traces) which never shall (i.e. shall never) fade away'

Barnes indicates both that this ambiguity 'is likely to have helped' the acceptance of the new verb-third order into the language, and that the very origin of this word-order in mainland Scandinavian, as well may be sought in an earlier, more regular use of stylistic inversion (p. 157).

In a separate section he discusses the difficulty in distinguishing between stylistic inversion and topicalisation. This is in opposition to Joan Maling's (1980) discussion of parallel constructions in Icelandic. Barnes' point is that her definitions and criteria for 'stress-topicalisation' are too vague since the existence of emphasis will be lacking 'any objective evidence' (p. 162), and the simplest and safest course is to assume that a subject gap triggers stylistic inversion. In clauses where this is the case, there is 'no pressing reason to assume topicalisation' (p. 166). This conclusion applies e.g. to

(51) Eg skilti ikki, at so illa stóð til hjá teimum
'I realised not that so badly stood to with them (i.e. I didn't realise that things were so bad with them)'

This thorough article is very informative about characteristic Faroese syntactic features, and is moreover of great importance not least because the analysis is parallel to analyses of Icelandic (Maling's 1980 and Eiríkur Rögnvaldsson's 1982) and to some extent of mainland Scandinavian. Thus the article is not only central to syntactic theory, but is also a very useful contribution to the historical description of the Nordic languages in general.

One minor detail: Christensen's (1986) claim referred to on p. 167, that all negatives should obligatorily precede the finite verb in subordinate clauses in Norwegian, is doubtful. I would guess that *som hadde ingen pengar* 'who had no money' is as frequent as *som ingen pengar hadde*.

Article 7 'Faroese syntax: achievements, goals and problems' is an overview and could have functioned as an introduction to the other syntactic articles in this volume. This applies first and foremost to the earlier part of the article, which comments on and evaluates works on Faroese syntax. The latter half is undoubtedly the most important as it represents an elegant overview and criticism of a central aspect of a GB discussion initiated by Holmberg & Platzack's criteria in 1988 which suggested grouping Faroese together with Icelandic as 'Insular Scandinavian' as opposed to 'Mainland Scandinavian'. The criteria are sixteen syntactic features, all dependent on two principal characteristics: subject-verb agreement and morphological case. Barnes demonstrates that Holmberg & Platzack have founded their claim on insufficient knowledge of Faroese. More important, however, is Barnes' well-documented account illustrating the fact that Faroese seems to be moving in the direction of a 'mainland' type of Scandinavian in most of the dependent features, whereas the two core characteristics (agreement and case) are stable. In accordance with the theory one would expect this to happen in the opposite order, i.e. that the two core features would change first and then lead to change in the dependemt features. Faroese thus constitutes a counter-example to the theory, and Barnes' exposition is in fact devastating for it.

Barnes has preferred to present his works in chronological order, with the result that quite specific grammatical issues dominate from the very beginning, and the overview articles represent the 'coda' of the volume. For a reader unfamiliar with the Faroese language the two last articles could be useful as an introduction. Moreover, the articles

on the two prepositions could with advantage be connected, now they encircle the other grammatical topics. However, these are minor objections. Michael Barnes' studies are of considerable importance to Germanic linguistics, and this book is certainly a most valuable collection of grammatical works on the Faroese language, a *sine qua non* for more advanced students of Faroese. Barnes formulates his aims very modestly, he typically wants 'to shed light on'. He never makes general theoretical pronouncements. However, most of his works have a theoretical point of departure, and his articles are very often relevant to some ongoing general discussion.

Nordisk institutt
Universitetet i Bergen
Sydnesplassen 7
N-5007 Bergen

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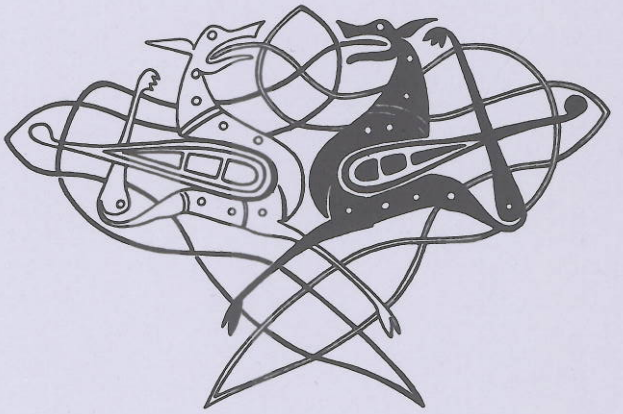

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