

How to connect an utterance: Strategies for cohesive dialogues in Scandinavian

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Many syntacticians consider preposing to an utterance initial position be a marked option in the grammar which has to be licensed by some discourse function, as in the case of questions (1) or so-called topicalization (2).

- (1) What did she say?
- (2) That/*it I don't like. (I'd rather have some ...)

In English, topicalized constituents are normally stressed and invoke a notion of contrast; an unstressed personal pronoun is not felicitous. In the mainland Scandinavian languages, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, preposing of unstressed pronouns is quite common as a way to connect an utterance to the preceding context, as illustrated by the Swedish example in (3).

- (3) A: *Var är cykeln?*
where is bike-DEF
'Where is the bike?'

B: *Den ställde jag i garaget.*
it put I in garage-DEF.
'I put it in the garage.'

In order to find out when this type of preposing is used in dialogue, Filippa Lindahl and I carried out a search in the Nordic Dialect Corpus, a 2.5 million word corpus of spontaneous conversations Johannessen et al. (2009). In my talk I will present some common strategies that we found and discuss their relevance for both syntactic theory and spoken dialogue systems.

Johannessen, J. B., Priestley, J., Hagen, K., Åfarli, T. A., and Vangsnes, Ø. A. (2009). The nordic dialect corpus-an advanced research tool. In Jokinen, K. and Bick, E., editors, *Proceedings of the 17th Nordic conference of computational linguistics NODALIDA 2009. NEALT proceedings series*, volume 4, pages 73–80.