

Pseudocoordinations as single-event constructions

Pseudocoordination is a construction that is quite frequent in the Mainland Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish), and most research on pseudocoordination has focused on Germanic languages, although such constructions can be found in many languages around the world (Ross 2016). Early research was mostly concentrated on constructions involving posture verbs, like SITTE 'sit'.

Hun sitter og leser dikt

she sit.PRS and read.PRS poems

'She's (sitting) reading poems'

Observing that this construction contributes to the expression of aspectuality, it was found that only a handful of first verbs are used to that effect. It is well known that posture verbs and basic motion verbs are common grammaticalization sources of auxiliaries, and this became part of the standard understanding of pseudocoordinations. A number of properties distinguishing these constructions from canonical coordinations were identified. From there, a widespread belief has grown that constructions with these properties involve a closed class of first verbs and aspectual grammaticalization (see e.g. Gjersøe 2016).

However, research has also gathered mounting evidence that there are number of constructional variants of pseudocoordination which have the characteristic properties, and that the paradigm of first verbs is not really small. See for instance Telemann et al. (1999), Hesse (2009), and Hansen & Heltoft (2011). Telemann et al.'s list is instructive, but even more first-verb classes have been mentioned in the literature:

- verbs of location: (a) posture verbs; (b) verbs of atelic motion meaning ; (c) the verb for 'be (in a place)'. Kinn (2018) finds a large number of first verbs accompanied by atelicizing adverbials.
- verbs of telic motion meaning 'come', 'go/walk', 'drive', 'run', 'crawl', etc. For expressions with a directional adverbial, Hansen & Heltoft (2011) say that there are no restrictions.
- phasal verbs, verbs of trying, hurrying, remembering etc.
- verbs introducing expressions of politeness
- verbs denoting the channel of a communicative act

In this talk, I discuss critically the constructional characteristics used as criteria to identify pseudocoordination. These include:

- stress placement
- restrictions on expressions of temporal relations
- anaphorical reference between the coordinands
- coordinand order
- the inflectional forms of the verbs
- coordinators, focus adverbs, and negation
- violation of the «Coordinate Structure Constraint»
- placement of subjects and sentence adverbials

Several of the criteria are clearly insufficient, and some may arguably not be necessary. Most of them do, however, support the (far from new) idea that pseudocoordination is a construction used to conceptualize two subevents as one complex single event.

It will further be shown that – when the relevant criteria are applied – the inventory of constructional variants of pseudocoordination is still a good deal larger than what has been acknowledged in the literature. This, in turn, requires us to rethink the relation between pseudocoordination and first-verb grammaticalization, which was central in early research on posture verb pseudocoordination, but has turned out to be a property of only a fraction of the constructional variants. Pseudocoordination does not fundamentally have much to do with grammaticalization, but some types are prone to become grammaticalization sources.

References

- Gjersøe, Siri. 2016. Sharing properties of pseudo-coordination in Norwegian. Katja Barnickel et al. (eds.), *Replicative processes in grammar (Linguistische Arbeitsberichte 93)*, 351–376. Leipzig: Universität Leipzig.
- Hansen, Erik & Lars Heltoft. 2011. *Grammatik over det danske sprog*. København: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab.
- Hesse, Andrea. 2009. *Zur Grammatikalisierung der Pseudokoordination im Norwegischen und in den anderen skandinavischen Sprachen*. Tübingen: Francke.
- Kinn, Torodd. 2018. Pseudocoordination in Norwegian. Degrees of grammaticalization and constructional variants. Evie Coussé, Peter Andersson & Joel Olofsson (eds.), *Grammaticalization meets Construction Grammar*, 75–106. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ross, Daniel. 2016. Between coordination and subordination: Typological, structural and diachronic perspectives on pseudocoordination. Fernanda Pratas, Sandra Pereira & Clara Pinto (eds.), *Coordination and subordination*, 209–243. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Teleman, Ulf, Staffan Hellberg, Erik Andersson. 1999. *Svenska Akademiens grammatik*. Stockholm: Svenska Akademien.