

Object Positions

The Functional Approach

Tavs Bjerre & Henrik Jørgensen

Aarhus Universitet Nov. 8th, 2005

Plan for the lecture

- The conventional concept of object
- The formal and the functional approach
- Object positions in Danish
- Objects and the text
- Subjects in object positions
- Revising the content field

Objects

- Traditional concept: nominal complement of a transitive verb
- Conventional assumptions of the semantic content: 'UNDERGOER', 'PATIENT'
- More advanced semantic approach: involved in the action without being able to command it ("E-rôle", cp. Peter Widell)

Objects

Reservations:

- Many such semantic entities are not objects in a syntactic sense
- Some kinds of objects may not belong to this sphere of semantics

The functional approach

Our approach is functional, because:

- We investigate how objects are handled on the textual level
- We assume that sense relations are fundamental to the structuring of the language

The functional approach

- We use the Diderichsen sentence model as our point of departure for reasoning
- This is useful because the model is well-known in a Scandinavian context and easy to handle
- However there is no deeper commitment in this. Any schematism could do, and on occasions we handle our analysis with other means

Where to find objects in Danish?

Funda- ment- felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt			
F	v	n	a	V	N	A	EP	
<i>så</i>	<i>kunde</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>ikke</i>	<i>sige</i>	<i>noget</i>	<i>den dag</i>		
o		o			o		o	

Definite and indefinite objects:

Pronominal objects:

- Within the space of normal perception
- Given referents

E.g. *den, han, hun, mig*

[it, he, she, me]

Definite and indefinite objects:

Nominal objects:

- Within the text so far
- Given referents

E.g. *sætningsskemaet, objektet*

[‘the sentence model’, ‘the object’]

Definite and indefinite objects:

Nominal objects:

- Belonging to the actual context of communication
- Given referents

E.g. *bordet, stolen*

[‘the desk’ & ‘the chair’ in this room]

Definite and indefinite objects:

Nominal objects:

- Belonging to a shared cultural background
- Given referents

E.g. *Århus. Europa*

Definite and indefinite objects:

Nominal objects:

- Belonging to the stock of identifiable referents
- New referents

E.g. *et glas, en flaske*

[‘a glass’, ‘a bottle’ with reference to the reception afterwards]

Definite and indefinite objects

Indefinite form	Mental stock: possible subject	<i>Et glas, en flaske</i>
Definite form	Cultural background: real subjects	<i>Århus, Europa</i>
	Actual background: actual subjects	<i>Bordet, stolen</i>
	Mentioned background:	<i>Sætningen, objektet</i>
Pronominal form	Area of attention: Given subjects	<i>den, han, hun</i>

Objects in relation to the text

We may distinguish 5 types of objects in this functional relation:

- Unstressed pronominal objects
- Definite nominal objects
- Indefinite nominal objects
- Sentential objects
- Objects in Fundamentfelt position

Pronominal objects

Fundament-felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt		
F	v	n	a	V	N	A	EP
<i>så</i>	<i>sagde</i>	<i>han det ikke</i>				<i>den dag</i>	
		o					

Definite nominal objects

Fundament-felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt			
F	v	n	a	V	N	A	EP	
<i>så</i>	<i>kunde</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>ikke</i>	<i>sige</i>	<i>noget</i>	<i>den</i>	<i>dag</i>	
					o			

Indefinite nominal objects

Funda -ment- felt	Neksusfelt			Indholdsfelt			
F	V	n	a	V	N	A	EP
<i>så</i>	<i>kunde</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>ikke</i>	<i>sige</i>	<i>noget</i>	<i>den dag</i>	
					o		

Sentential objects

Fundament-felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt			
F	v	n	a	V	N	A	EP	
<i>så</i>	<i>kunde</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>ikke</i>	<i>sige</i>	<i>den</i>	<i>hvor han</i>		
					<i>dag</i>	<i>var</i>	o	

Objects in 'Fundamentfelt'

Funda- ment- felt	Neksusfelt				Indholdsfelt			
F	v	n	a	V	N	A	EP	
<i>Det</i>	<i>kunde</i>	<i>han</i>	<i>ikke</i>	<i>sige</i>		<i>den</i>	<i>dag</i>	
o								

The Object and the Verb stem

- Objects occur regularly after the main verb stem (VO syntax)

Note:

- Unstressed pronouns cannot precede the main verb stem (cp. slide)
- Only exception: Fundament position

The Object and the Verb stem

- Objects occur regularly after the main verb stem (VO syntax)
- The more contextually bound, the closer to the verb
- The more contextually unbound, the more removed from the verb

Subjects (?) in object positions

- *Der var altid øller i køleskabet*
(There were always beers in the fridge)
- *Der har engang stået en statue af Lenin i Hørsholm*
(Once there was a statue of Lenin in Hørsholm)
- *Der må stå et vindue åbent et sted*
(There must be an open window somewhere)

Subjects (?) in object positions

Fundament	Neksusfelt			Indholdsfelt		
F	v	n	a	V	N	A
<i>Der</i>	<i>var</i>		<i>altid</i>		<i>øller</i>	<i>i k.</i>
<i>Der</i>	<i>har</i>	<i>en-</i>	<i>stået</i>		<i>en</i>	<i>i</i>
		<i>gang</i>			<i>Lenin-</i>	<i>Hørs-</i>
					<i>statue</i>	<i>holm</i>
<i>Der</i>	<i>må</i>		<i>stå</i>		<i>et</i>	<i>åbent</i>
					<i>vin-</i>	<i>et</i>
					<i>due</i>	<i>sted</i>

Subjects (?) in object positions

- Such subjects are attached to intransitive verbs
- When downright definite they may occur in the true subject position:

Øllen stod i køleskabet

*Dengang havde Leninstatuen stået i Hørsholm i ti
år*

Vinduet står åbent

Subjects (?) in object positions

- When downright definite they may occur in the true subject position:

Øllen stod i køleskabet

*Dengang havde Leninstatuen stået i
Hørsholm i ti år*

Vinduet står åbent

Subjects (?) in object positions

Conditions on such subjects:

- They are contextually unbound
- If they are definite or pronominal, they must represent new information in the closer context

Subjects (?) in object positions

Conditions on normal subjects:

- They are contextually bound
- If they are indefinite, they must represent specimens that may be deduced from the context

Subjects (?) in object positions

- Der var så meget at se nede ved åen.
Somme tider stak **en fisk** hovedet op over vandfladen, men skyndte sig at dykke ned igen, da den fik øje på de tre venner. **En frø** sad på en sten i vandkanten, og da de nærmede sig, sprang den i vandet og skyndte sig væk. (Benny Andersen)

Subjects (?) in object position

If the verb is transitive, situations with such 'pragmatically indefinite' subjects give rise to clefts:

- *Der var en dreng der slog mig*
(A boy hit me)
- *Der var ti tog der kom for sent i går*
(Ten trains were late yesterday)

Subjects (?) in object position

- The subject slot in these constructions is filled with the expletive *der*, mostly thought to be a local adverb
- However *der* may be left out so that the subject position remains open:

Subjects (?) in object position

*På hotel Prinsen har gennem årene boet
mange interessante gæster*

[At the Hotel Prinsen has over the years
stayed many interesting guests]

*På min fars skrivebord lå gennem alle årene
firmaets hovedbog*

[On my father's desk lay all the years the
main account book of the firm]

Subjects (?) in object position

Some theoretical questions arise from this:

- Are the apparent subjects in object slots really subjects, or should they rather be described as some kind of object?

Subjects (?) in object position

Some theoretical questions arise from this:

- Are the apparent subjects in object slots really subjects, or should they rather be described as some kind of object?
- If these constructions are taken into account, contextual boundness and unboundness teams up with resp. 'being subject' and 'being object'. With what consequences?

Subjects (?) in object position

More problems:

- What are the rules for *der*-insertion really?
Stylistics or grammar?

Subjects (?) in object position

More problems:

- What are the rules for *der*-insertion really?
Stylistics or grammar?
- What is the difference between existential
constructions and additional statements
("tilføjelsesudsagn")?

Revising the Content Field

Distinguishing between:

- objects
- co-predicates
- adverbials

Adverbial

Diderichsen's definition:

- Clause element which is neither verbal, nominal nor subject or object complement
- Clause element expressing less important circumstances

F vna	V	N	A
Peter løb 'Peter ran'			ud i haven out into garden-the'
Peter tænkte 'Peter thought'			på at rejse on to travel'
Hans drak 'Hans drank'	Otto	Otto	under bordet under table-the'
Situationen kom 'Situation-the came'			under kontrol under control'

Præpositionsforbindelser regnes også for
adverbialer

Galberg Jacobsen & Skyum-Nielsen: Dansk Sprog, 1996, p. 78

'Prepositional phrases are also considered
adverbials'

Adverbial

Certain 'adverbials' behave differently from other adverbials wrt.:

- Coordination
- Agreement
- Topology
- Prosody

Coordination

A subclass of 'adverbials' may be coordinated with complements:

Han var rask, oppe og i god bedring
'He was well, up and in good recovery'

Agreement

Certain 'adverbials' agree with subject or object:

*Det lille barn var blevet **til en voksen mand***

'The little child had become (to) a grown man'

*De små børn var blevet **til voksne mænd***

'The small children had become (to) grown men'

Topology

Unlike other adverbials this subclass of 'adverbials' never occurs in the 'a' slot:

*Peter havde **ude i skoven** gået sig en lang tur*

'Peter had out in wood-the walked himself a good long walk'

Peter var **ud i skoven gået*

'Peter had out into wood-the walked'

Topology

Unlike other 'adverbials' this subclass of 'adverbial' cannot be left behind if the material in V and N are moved to F:

Topology

Hun havde skubbet Peter ud af værelset

'She had pushed Peter out of room-the'

**Skubbet Peter havde hun ud af værelset*

Hun havde skubbet Peter ude på gangen

'She had pushed Peter out on corridor-the'

Skubbet Peter havde hun ude på gangen

Unit accentuation

These 'adverbials' often give rise to unit accentuation:

Peter ^ogik 'ud i haven

Peter walked out into garden-the

Peter 'gik 'ude i haven

Peter walked out in garden-the

Conclusion

These 'adverbials' are not adverbials but co-predicates contributing to the core meaning of the clause

Often (though not always) they describe a result state

Semantics

Peter løb ud i skoven

'Peter ran out into wood-the'

Paraphrase:

Peter ran and this resulted in Peter being in
the wood

Semantics

Peter løb ud i skoven

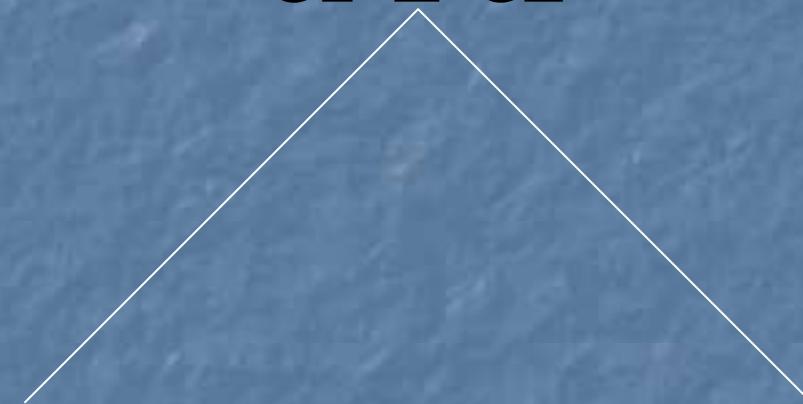
$$e_1 \leq e_2$$

e1

run(peter)

e2

in(peter,wood)



Semantics

Peter løb Ole træt

$$e_1 \leq e_2$$

e1

run(peter)

e2

tired(ole)



Semantics

Peter spiste sin mor ud af huset

$$e_1 \leq e_2$$

e1

eat(peter,y)

e2

out-of(mother,house)

Hansen 1970

Ks F V S L a1 Oi Od	P	a3	Adv	a2
Men sender du aldrig pengene 'But send you never money-the'			tilbage back	mere? anymore'
Gør de straks båden 'Make they immidiately boat-the'	klar? ready'			
Skilte han så uret 'Took he then clock-the'		omhyggeligt carefully	ad apart	i går? yesterday'
De valgte jo Jensen 'They elected as you know Jensen'		enstemmigt unanimously	ind (in)	denne gang this time'

Heltoft 1993 & 1999

	MA	P	BA	FA
Han er blevet 'He had become	tidligt early	senil senile'		
Vil de så rejse 'Will they then travel		ud? out'		
Du har været 'You have been	for længe too long	rektor headmaster'		
De ville bare gå 'They would just go		tur (for a) walk'		

Heltoft 1993 & 1999

	MA	P	BA	FA
Ali Baba fik syet ham 'Ali Baba had sown him	smukt beautifully	sammen up	af en skomager by a shemaker'	
Hun har gjort tæppet 'She had made carpet-the	omhyggeligt carefully	færdigt finished	i hånden by hand'	
De har ikke afhørt chefen They have not interrogated boss-the	grundigt thoroughly		om samtalen about conversation-the	
Sagen er jo blevet 'Matter-the has as you know been	meget bevidst very deliberately	trukket dragged	i langdrag out'	

PPs like *af en skomager* and *i hånden* can occur in the 'a' slot:

A.B. fik **af en skomager** syet ham smukt sammen

Hun har **i hånden** gjort tæppet færdigt

Cannot precede other elements in BA:

Sagen er jo meget bevidst blevet trukket i
langdrag **af myndighederne**

*Sagen er jo meget bevidst blevet trukket **af**
myndighederne i langdrag

This type of PP should therefore be classified as adverbial.

As it must precede time and place adverbials it can be placed first in FA or given a special slot in front of FA.

The other PPs cannot be placed i 'a':

- *De har *om samtalen* afhørt chefen
- *Sagen er *i langdrag* blevet trukket

And they should therefore not be regarded as adverbials

Om samtalen is a prepositional object
which means that *samtalen* denotes an
argument

I langdrag is part of the predicate

Proposal

	O₁	MA	P	O₂	A
A.B. fik syet	ham	smukt	sammen		af en skomager
Hun har gjort	tæppet	omhyggeligt	færdigt		i hånden
Han er blevet		tidligt	senil		
Sagen er jo blevet		meget bevidst	trukket i langdrag		
De har ikke afhørt	chefen	grundigt	om	samtalen	

Proposal

	O₁	MA	P	O₂	A
Hun havde skubbet 'She had pushed'	Peter Peter	hurtigt fast	ud af out of	værelset room-the	i går yesterday'
Elmander havde fået 'Elmander had had'		hurtigt fast	kontrol over control over	bolden ball-the'	
*Elmander havde fået	kontrol	hurtigt	over	bolden	
Elmander havde fået 'Elmander had had'	bolden ball-the	hurtigt fast	under kontrol under control'		
Brøndby havde løbet 'Brøndby had run'	AGF AGF	hurtigt fast	træt tired'		

Future work

- The sentence model vs. trees
- How are various complex predicates licensed:
 - Resultatives
 - Support verb constructions
 - Constructions with auxiliaries
- Argument structure, thematic roles
- Information structure

References

- Diderichsen, P. (1957). Elementær Dansk Grammatik. 2nd edition.
København: Gyldendal.
- Galberg Jacobsen, H. and P. Skyum-Nielsen (1996). Dansk Sprog. En
Grundbog. København: Schønberg.
- Hansen, E. (1970). Sætningsskema og verbalskemaer. NyS Nydanske
Studier & Almen komunikationsteori 2, 116-37.
- Heltoft, L. (1987). The pragmatic syntax of Danish der-constructions.
In Lilius, Pirkko & Maija Saari (eds.): The Nordic Languages and
Modern Linguistics 6, 177-192.
- Heltoft, L. (1993). Revision af indholdsfeltet. In M. Kunøe and
E.V.Larsen (eds.), 4. Møde om Udforskningen af Dansk Sprog, 119-
133. Aarhus Universitet.

References

- Heltoft, L (1999). Hierarki og rækkefølge – skandinavisk ledstilling i funktionel grammatisk betydning. In P. A. Jensen and P. Skadhauge (eds.), *Sætningsskemaet i generativ grammatik*, 31-62. Syddansk Universitet – Kolding.
- Nordentoft, A. M. (1970). Hovedtræk af dansk grammatik. Syntaks. København: Gyldendal.
- Oxenvad, Erik 1934: "Om nogle upersonlige Konstruktioner i Dansk". *Studier tilegnede Verner Dahlérup*. Aarhus & København.
- Togeby, Ole 2003: *Fungerer denne sætning?* København: Gad.
- Widell, Peter 1996: "Aspektuelle verbalklasser og semantiske roller - Den dobbelte aspektkalkule". Schack Rasmussen: *Semantiske Roller = Odense Working Papers in Language and Communication* No. 10, May 1996.