

Definiteness and Norwegian pronouns

NORMS Workshop on Determination, Tromsø, 18th-19th March 2009

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Despite the quantity of research done into Norwegian personal pronouns, they remain a fascinating object of study. They can occur 1) obligatorially or optionally as PREPROPRIAL ARTICLES before names (Delsing, 1993, Longobardi, 1994); 2) as DETERMINERS (Faarlund et al., 1997), for example the PSYCHOLOGICALLY DISTAL DEMONSTRATIVES of the Oslo dialect (Johannessen, 2006, 2008, etc), contrasting with other, spatially oriented demonstratives; and 3) they can be MODIFIED BY PPs (Hestvik, 1992, Faarlund et al., 1997) and RELATIVE CLAUSES (Faarlund et al., 1997, Vik and Killingbergtrø, 2002); to name but some of the more interesting uses.

Hestvik (1992) uses this last point to argue that pronouns in Norwegian are Ns and not NPs, and can therefore be modified. However, the approach taken by Faarlund et al (1997) seems even more straightforward. There it is argued that this last use of pronouns, ie those are modified by a relative clause or a prepositional phrase, should (also) be considered determiners, since, among other things, they have no object form (compare *de/dem* and *han/ham* in these cases: *Jeg så dem/de mennene* 'I saw them/those men' and *Jeg så ham/han mannen* 'I saw him/ that man').

In addition, while pronouns are often considered to have specific reference (Lødrup, 1982, Johannessen, 2008, Strahan, 2008, among others), determiners generally speaking have non-specific reference (Faarlund et al., 1997). This is illustrated in the Norwegian Reference Grammar with [*han* + relative clause] and [*den* + relative clause] examples which highlight this contrast. However, it has also been noted that the construction [*han* + relative clause] may also have non-specific reference, eg Vik and Killingbergtrø's (2002: 1426) entry on *han* in the Norsk Ordbok *Han som ikkje vil høyra, får føla* 'He who won't listen, can feel' (cited in Johannessen, 2008: 70, fn).

In Strahan (2008), I suggested a lexical account of the pronoun demonstrative (ie Johannessen's *psychologically distal demonstrative* and not Delsing's *prepropral article*). This account attempted to explain two notable facts. Firstly, that the pronoun demonstrative in phrases like *han mannen* always has a specific referent, in all of the Scandinavian languages that have this construction, (ie Norwegian, Danish, non-Standard Swedish and possibly Icelandic). Secondly, that in all of the Scandinavian languages that have this construction, the accompanying noun must be definite, whether the variety is a double-definiteness variety (Norwegian, non-Standard Swedish) or not (Norwegian, Danish, Icelandic). In this account, all pronouns are lexically specified as [+SPECIFIC]. However, in light of examples like that pointed out by Vik and Killingbergtrø, this account cannot be entirely accurate.

Continuing my original Lexical-Functional Grammar analysis, and following Andrews (2008), I assume that the functional-structure, fed by the lexicon, is only an intermediary level of structure, upon which semantic assembly instructions act. Using Glue language, I propose a rule which results in pronoun demonstratives being interpreted as specific only when they occur with an NP in the syntax. In other cases, the interpretation of specificity is left for a later level of processing.

References

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