

On the polyfunctionality of WHICH in Övdalian

Øystein A. Vangsnes, CASTL/NORMS, University of Tromsø

The Övdalian lexical item *ukin* is cognate with English *which* and Scandinavian (*h*)*vilken*, and like its cognates it can be used (i) as a *wh*-determiner, i.e. to query for a token. But in addition to this *ukin* has a range of other uses: it has (ii) a predicative use (corresponding to English *what ... like*), (iii) a adnominal modifier use (corresponding to English *what kind of*), (iv) a pronominal use in which it queries for human referents (i.e. corresponding to English *who*), and (v) in its neuter form, *ukað*, it can be used to introduce yes/no-questions, both matrix and embedded ones. This range of syntactic functions is illustrated by the examples in (1) to (5).

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| (1) | Ukin | bil | ir | denn? | (determiner use) | | | | | |
| | WHICH.M.SG.NOM | car | is | yours | | | | | | |
| | ‘Which car is yours?’ | | | | | | | | | |
| (2) | Ukū | sir | å | aut? | (predicative use) | | | | | |
| | WHICH.F.SG.NOM | looks | she | out | | | | | | |
| | ‘What does she look like?’ | | | | | | | | | |
| (3) | Ukan | bil | ar | du? | (modifier use) | | | | | |
| | WHICH.M.SG.NOM | car | have | you | | | | | | |
| | ‘What car do you have?’ | | | | | | | | | |
| (4) | Ukan al | du | råk | i Stokkol? | (pronominal use) | | | | | |
| | WHICH shall | you | meet | in Stockholm | | | | | | |
| | ‘Who will you meet in Stockholm?’ | | | | | | | | | |
| (5) | Ukað | ir | du | träť | (eld)? | (question particle use) | | | | |
| | WHICH are | you | tired | or | | | | | | |
| | ‘Are you tired?’ | | | | | | | | | |
| (6) | Ig | wet | it | ukað | å | ir | ungg | eld | gåmål. | |
| | I | know | not | WHICH | she | is | young | or | old | |
| | ‘I don’t know if she is young or old.’ | | | | | | | | | |

These matters were investigated during the NORMS fieldwork in Älvdalen in 2007. Not unexpectedly, for most of the query types there exist alternative ways of forming them, but although there are some factual uncertainties pertaining to the modifier use of *ukin*, there is no doubt that this lexical item is quite a polyfunctional element in the grammar of Övdalian. This is a fair statement even though *ukin* cannot be used as a relativizer, the way English *which* can, and neither as manner *how*, the way several adnominal *wh*-items can in other Scandinavian varieties.

In this talk I will pick up on two issues that arise from the behavior of *ukin*. First, from a comparative perspective it is interesting to discuss whether the spread of syntactic functions related to *ukin* follows a certain pattern, i.e. whether the syntactic uses form a conceptual/semantic continuum. Second, I will discuss how to account for the status of *ukin* within the grammar, and I will basically suggest a solution which draws heavily on the use of (lexical) features.