

Reinforcement of similative demonstratives in Norwegian

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This talk presents a corpus-based analysis of deictically contrastive similative demonstratives in Norwegian, specifically focusing on *sånn her(re)* ‘[lit.] such here’ and *sånn der(re)* ‘[lit.] such there’. These complex demonstratives compete paradigmatically with simple demonstratives like *sånn* and *slik*, which can be translated as ‘a kind of’, ‘that kind of’ or ‘such’. They are used in various syntactic positions: as adverbials (*jeg skriver sånn her* ‘I write like this’), as adnominal modifiers (*en sånn der vannkanon* ‘one of those water cannons’), or pronominally (*han har sånne der på taket* ‘he has those (things) on the roof’).

The study aims to investigate the use of deictically contrastive, complex similative demonstratives, and to discuss what distinguishes them from simple demonstratives based on a distinctive collexeme analysis of data from the Norwegian part of the Nordic Dialect Corpus (Johannessen et al., 2009). By analyzing which types of nouns are attracted to simple and complex similarity demonstratives, the aim is to uncover subtle semantic differences between the two constructions. The development of the deictically contrastive demonstrative variants through locative reinforcement is explored in the context of cyclic reinforcement and compared to the reinforcement cycle of non-similative demonstratives (*den her* ‘that here’ / *den der* ‘that there’, cf. Vindenes, 2018). A central research question concerns the motivation for reinforcement and extent to which the new contrastive similative demonstratives have been grammaticalized and are part of cyclic renewal.

When *sånn* ‘such’ is reinforced by the locatives *her* ‘here’ or *der* ‘there’, the basic deictic meaning is emphasized, and a distinction between the proximal and distal meaning in exophoric use is formed:

- (1) *En sånn der bil har jeg og.*
 a such there car.INDEF have I too
 ‘I have a car like/similar to that one.’

Additionally, the complex similative demonstratives have developed new discourse functions such as referent identification, recognitional use and approximative function through grammaticalization (some of these functions have been described by Lie, 2008, and Johannessen, 2012). When used endophorically, as in example (2) below, the contrast between the proximal and distal variants of the similative demonstrative becomes desemanticized.

- (2) *Der brukte vi å ha sånn her renn før da*
 there used we to have such here race.INDEF before then
 ‘Over there we used to have this race.’ (Nordic Dialect Corpus)

Moreover, contexts in which *der* and *her* are not interchangeable (i.e., when used exophorically) are found to be the same ones that do not allow extended *derre*-intensifiers. Consequently, *sånn der N* is more polysemous than *sånn derre N*, with the latter being specialized for non-exophoric uses, specifically for introducing new referents and for marking solidarity between speaker and hearer.

The development of deictically contrastive similative demonstratives is hypothesized to be based on analogy with reinforced non-similative demonstratives (*den her* ‘that here’ / *den der* ‘that there’). However, although *den her(re)/der(re)* (and especially the dialectal variant *herre boka*, [lit. here book], ‘this book’) is arguably an instance of cyclic renewal, the same cannot be said about *sånn her(re)/der(re)* since *her(re)/der(re)* ‘here/there’ cannot replace *sånn* ‘such’. Despite this, the mechanisms underlying the reinforcement of similative and non-similative demonstratives are similar, raising the question of what can be considered ‘renewal’ in cyclic change. Specifically, whether the concept of renewal should be restricted to ‘new form – old meaning’ or whether it should include ‘additional form – additional meaning(s)’.

References

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