

Tracing the origins of resumption in Swedish

Modern Swedish is a strict Verb-Second language. However, the language regularly displays Verb-Third strings when an adverbial particle is inserted between a fronted adverbial and the finite verb (*adverbial resumption*) (1).

- (1) *Ändå så finns det där hatet där ute*
 still SÅ exist that there hatred.DEF there out
 ‘Still, there is such a hatred out there.’ (Bloggmix 2005)

This paper will provide a detailed account of the evolution of adverbial resumption through the history of the Swedish language, focusing on the resumptive particles *så* ‘so’, and *då* (2). The main difference between the two is that *då* must follow an element that conveys time, while there are no restrictions on the use of *så*. In Meklenborg’s terms, *så* is a generalized resumptive, while *då* is specialized (Meklenborg, 2020). *Så* is by far the more common (see *inter alia* Elmquist (1945); Ekerot (1998); Nordström (2010)).

Using the Korp corpus (Borin et al., 2012), we find that in Early Old Swedish, resumption is very common. It becomes less frequent in the following centuries, before surging in the 18th century.

- (2) *hauir bondæn alt synir . tha takær han ey mer æn*
 have farmer.DEF already sons . tha take.PRS he NEG more than
en sun
 a son
 ‘If the farmer already has sons, then he will not take more than one son’
 (SL, 1203–1212)

Whereas resumption with *så* is the most prominent structure in Modern Swedish, the structure was marginal in Old Swedish. The dominating resumptive element in the earliest period of the Swedish language was *þa* ‘then’ (= *då*). Out of 3976 cases where a fronted CP is followed by a resumptive in Early Old Swedish, the resumptive is *þa* in 3969 cases, while only 7 cases contain the resumptive *swa* (= *så*). Resumption with *swa* is restricted to contexts where the initial CP conveys a condition or a comparison. *Swa* is therefore a specialized resumptive during this period.

In the 16th century, the picture changes completely. Out of 190 cases of fronted CP + resumptive, the resumptive is *så* in 162 cases. In the next centuries, the ratio of resumption with *då* drops further. Looking at the semantics of the fronted adverbial constituent, we find that resumption with *då* gets more and more restricted, while these resumption with *så* becomes more widespread. We can, in other words trace the evolution into specialized and generalized resumptives.

References

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