
±Object shift and *es/das*: Form and position of pronominal objects with non-nominal antecedents in Norwegian and German

Kristine Bentzen (joint work with Merete Anderssen)

UiT – The Arctic University of Norway

kristine.bentzen@uit.no

This paper explores parallels between the placement of pronominal objects with non-nominal antecedents in Norwegian, and the use of pronouns *es* (it) and *das* (that) in German. In Norwegian, while pronominal objects with non-nominal antecedents generally do not shift across adverbs, this is not the case when these elements refer to a *continuing topic* in the discourse. This is reminiscent of a pattern observed in German. However, this is not related to object scrambling, but rather to the *form* of the pronominal element referring to a clausal antecedent. In German, *das* is generally used to refer back to non-nominal antecedents, however, *es* is also sometimes available. In this study, we find parallels between the use of OS and *es*, on the one hand, and lack of OS and *das*, on the other. Based on judgements of dialogues, we propose that –OS/*das* is preferred when referring to a proposition that is not yet established as part of the common ground. In contrast, when referring to a proposition that *is* part of the common ground in the discourse OS/*es* is preferred. This ties in nicely with previous research on Norwegian OS, as in order for a proposition to constitute a continuing topic in the discourse, it has to be established as part of the interlocutors' common ground.