

Having the edge: a new perspective on pseudo-coordination in Danish and Afrikaans*

Theresa Biberauer
University of Cambridge
Stellenbosch University

Sten Vikner
Aarhus Universitet

1 Introduction

The current state of our knowledge of how speakers of many languages communicate effectively despite often failing to produce the VP-component of the clauses they utter owes a lot to the work of Kyle Johnson: gapping and VP ellipses of different kinds facilitate a constrained set of interpretations in the languages that permit them; yet not every language supplies its speakers with this apparently economical option. In this short paper, we would like to focus on another V(P)-related phenomenon that does not occur in all languages, but that might in some ways seem to be the inverse of those that Kyle has probed so extensively over the years: verbal pseudo-coordination.

As (1) shows, verbal pseudo-coordination (PC) structures at first sight seem to feature too many rather than too few lexical verbs:

- (1) a. They **went and submitted** the paper late! *English*
b. Desværre **gik de hen og glemte** tidsfristen! *Danish*
unfortunately went they over and forgot deadline.DET
'Unfortunately, they went and forgot the deadline.'
c. Hulle **loop (en) vertel** ons dit is grammatikaal! *Afrikaans*
they walk and tell us it is grammatical
'They go and tell us it's grammatical
(when that was **really** not what we wanted to hear)!'

As these examples show, PC involves apparent coordination, which, however, fails to exhibit the symmetrical properties associated with coordination more generally (see among others [Johannessen 1998](#), [Munn 1993](#), [Haspelmath 2007](#)). More

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auxiliary-like). Furthermore, while V_1 can certainly add meanings prototypically associated with auxiliary elements — e.g., aspectual meanings such as those to be discussed in Section 2.1 below — it need not do so; consider the examples in (1–3) above. What V_1 does consistently add to structures in which it occurs, however, is a lively colloquial flavour, and, in a subset of cases, an unambiguously speaker-coloured perspective on the event/state of affairs being reported; hence the liberal use of exclamation marks in our examples thus far.

Several recurring themes in Kyle’s career suggest to us that some preliminary new thoughts on the formal make-up of PC-structures as these manifest in Afrikaans and Danish might appeal to him. Firstly, there is the integration challenge: Kyle’s work on so-called *Andrews Amalgams* (Lakoff 1974, Johnson 2013) — *Kyle advised [[I don’t know how many] students]* — and on multi-dominance structures more generally tackles this challenge which arises in relation to apparently “extra” material head-on. Secondly, the PC-structures give the impression of requiring an analysis which appeals to *renumeration* or layered derivation of the kind to the best of our knowledge first advocated by Kyle in Johnson 2002 (see also Zwart 2011 for a particular working out of this general idea). Thirdly, PC can give rise to some rather unusual V_2 structures in Afrikaans — so-called *quirky* V_2 :

- (4) a. Sy het die maraton in rekordtyd **loop staan en wen!** *Afrikaans*
she have the marathon in record-time walk stand and win
‘She went and won the marathon in record time!’
- b. **Loop staan en wen** sy toe wragtig die maraton in rekordtyd?!
walk stand and win she then really the marathon in record.time
‘Did she really then go and win the marathon in record time?!’

As the examples show, these structures involve a seemingly quite excessive amount of verbal material fronting to what appears to be the C-position. *Staan* ‘stand’ is one of Afrikaans’ four V_1 verbs — alongside *lê* ‘lie’, *sit* ‘sit’, and *loop* ‘walk’, the latter distinct from the initial V in the verb-string in (4) (see Section 2.1 below); thus the verb-cluster in (4) features a light motion verb plus PC-structure, all of which seems to be located in the V_2 slot. Unusual V_2 has, of course, also featured in Kyle’s research, with Sten being his partner in crime on that occasion (Johnson & Vikner 1994).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 will briefly introduce key aspects of the phenomenon in Danish and Afrikaans; Section 3 outlines the key components of a novel analysis, appealing to Kyle’s past work; and Section 4 is the conclusion.

2 The empirical facts

2.1 PC and aspect

PC is often connected to the realization of aspect (see, among others, [Lødrup 2002](#), [de Vos 2005](#), [Ross in progress](#)), a property that is also evident in Afrikaans and Danish. Consider first the contrast between (5) and (6)–(7):

- | | | | | |
|-----|----|--|---------------------|------------------|
| (5) | a. | We look at Kyle. He smiles . | SIMPLE PRESENT | <i>English</i> |
| | b. | We look at Kyle. He is smiling . | PRESENT PROGRESSIVE | |
| (6) | a. | Vi ser på Kyle. Han smiler . | SIMPLE PRESENT | <i>Danish</i> |
| | | we look at Kyle he smiles | | |
| | | ‘We look at Kyle. He smiles.’ | | |
| | b. | Vi ser på Kyle. Han sidder og smiler . | PC | |
| | | we look at Kyle he sits and smiles | | |
| | | ‘We look at Kyle. He is (sitting and) smiling.’ | | |
| (7) | a. | Ons kyk vir Kyle. Hy glimlag . | SIMPLE PRESENT | <i>Afrikaans</i> |
| | | we look for Kyle he smiles | | |
| | | ‘We look at Kyle. He smiles.’ | | |
| | b. | Ons kyk vir Kyle. Hy sit en glimlag . | PC | |
| | | we look for Kyle he sits and smiles | | |
| | | ‘We look at Kyle. He is (sitting and) smiling.’ | | |

The English pattern in (5) demonstrates a difference between the simple present and the present progressive that can also be replicated — via slightly different grammatical contrasts and not necessarily in the same tenses — in other languages (see, for example, [Vikner & Vikner 1997](#): 267–268). In (5a), Kyle only started smiling when we looked, whereas in (5b), the smiling was already underway at the point at which our looking was initiated. In (6)–(7), we see that the simple present (a) is ambiguous between these two readings in both Danish and Afrikaans, whereas the PC structure (b) necessarily takes the overlapping reading that is also unambiguously expressed by the English progressive. PC-structures in both languages, then, can evidently be harnessed to realize progressive aspect. Strikingly, both languages additionally have other aspect-marking structures at their disposal ([Lundskær-Nielsen & Holmes 2011](#): 115, [Breed 2012, 2017](#)), with PC — or, more accurately, the V_1 -component of PC — not representing the most grammaticalized of these.

The extent to which V_1 is grammaticalized is of central relevance to our discussion, so we turn next to this matter. The fact that all of the V_1 s in both Danish and Afrikaans *can* still contribute their original lexical semantics to the PC-structures they form part of constitutes the first indication that V_1 in both Danish and Afrikaans is a minimally grammaticalized element; contrast the highly bleached

semantic contribution of auxiliaries-proper, and the more general fact that semantic bleaching is an “early” component in the grammaticalization processes (see among others Hopper & Traugott 2003, Traugott & Trousdale 2010). Danish features both postural and directional V₁s (see Kjeldahl 2010 for detailed discussion), while the Afrikaans V₁ inventory encompasses the 3 posture verbs and *loop* ‘walk’, as indicated in Section 1. Although Danish/Afrikaans *gå/loop* ‘walk’, *stå/staan* ‘stand’ and *sidde/sit* ‘sit’ in particular need not contribute their literal meaning to structures in which they occur (see again (4), and the discussion in Breed 2017), this meaning is still available in PC-structures. Further, the non-omissibility of the coordinator element also points to V₁ being less grammaticalized than the kinds of light verbs that may serve aspectual functions in other languages; *come*- and *go*-based aspectual verbs, which combine with lexical verbs without coordination or other linking elements, are a case in point here (see Devos & Van der Wal 2014, and consider also Afrikaans *loop* ‘walk’ in (4)). In this connection, Biberauer (2017) highlights the need to distinguish between the *en*-requiring *loop* ‘walk’ that surfaces in PC-structures and the *en*-less *loop* which patterns with Afrikaans’ other motion light verbs, *kom* ‘come’ and *gaan* ‘go’. As (8) shows, the latter class can combine with PC V₁ *loop* ((8a); cf. also (4) above) and other V₁s (8b):

- (8) a. Hy **gaan loop en vertel** die studente hulle punte. *Afrikaans*
 he go walk and tell the students their marks
 ‘He goes and tells the students their marks (walking optional).’
 b. Hy **gaan/kom/loop sit en lag** oor sy onwaarskynlike analise.
 he go/come/walk sit and laugh over his unlikely analysis
 ‘He goes and sits down to laugh about his unlikely analysis.’

The kind of andative aspect expressed by these light motion verbs is known to be low in the Cinque hierarchy (see among others Cardinaletti & Giusti 2001, and de Vos 2001). PC V₁ must therefore be even lower in the clausal structure, if PC-structures are monoclausal. And that they are indeed monoclausal becomes clear if we consider standard monoclausality diagnostics (see Ross *in progress* for general discussion of the application of monoclausality diagnostics to PC-structures). V₁ and V₂ cannot be independently negated, for example:

- (9) a. ...fordi han **ikke** sad og smilede.
 ...because he not sat and smiled
 ‘...because he wasn’t smiling.’
 Cannot mean ‘he was smiling but not sitting.’
 b. *...fordi han sad og **ikke** smilede.
 ...because he sat and not smiled

Furthermore, [Kjeldahl \(2010: 74ff\)](#) demonstrates that V_1 cannot be combined with anything other than a lexical V_2 (i.e., a V in traditional terms) and that the inflection possibilities of this V_2 are severely restricted: in Danish, it has to have the same morphological form as V_1 ; and in Afrikaans, it, like V_1 , is necessarily bare. This is true even in cases where one would expect an inflected form, as in (4) above; (3c) is repeated below as (10a), while (10b) and (10c) demonstrate what regular V -inflection for the relevant verbs in a past-marked sentence would look like:

- (10) a. Hulle **het** sowaar **(*ge)loop en** sê dis grammatikaal!*Afrikaans*
 they have so.true.MP walk and say it's grammatical
 'They actually went and said it's grammatical!'
- b. Hulle het sowaar ***(ge)loop!**
 they have so.true.MP walk.PART
 'They actually walked away/left!'
- c. Hulle het sowaar so ***(ge)sê!**
 they have so.true.MP so say.PART
 'They have actually gone and said that!'

Further evidence that Afrikaans V_1 s occupy very low positions in a monoclausal structure comes from the fact that:

- (11) (i) they are (optionally) able to undergo quirky V_2 (see (4) above), V_2 being unambiguously a single-clause phenomenon (although not necessarily one restricted to finite clauses, as [Johnson & Vikner \(1994\)](#) show).
- (ii) they can undergo predicate-doubling of the kind illustrated in (11); predicate-doubling in Afrikaans is clause-bounded, as [Biberauer \(2012\)](#) shows.
- (12) a. **Sing SING hy!** *Afrikaans*
 sing sing he
 'As for singing, he really sings!/He'll sing no matter what you try to tell him!'
- b. **Staan en teëstribbel** sal hulle maar **staan en teëstribbel!**
 stand and against.argue will they but.MP stand and against.argue
 'They will just always raise objections (no matter what!).'

[Kjeldahl \(2010: 74–80\)](#), similarly, argues at length both for the low placement of V_1 (see above) and for the monoclausality of Danish PC-structures. These are therefore also the structural conclusions with which we will proceed here.

2.2 PC and speaker perspective

An aspect of PC-structures that was noted early (see Schmerling 1975, Carden & Pesetsky 1977) and that has recently become a focus of interest in the PC-literature more generally (see Ross 2016 for discussion and references) is their affinity for speaker-perspective-related meanings. The speaker “colouring” that (a subset of) these structures readily seem to attract, already noted in Section 1, is further illustrated in (12) below (see also (1c), (3c), (4) and (8) featuring V_1 *loop* ‘walk’ above):

- (13) a. Det **gik hen og regnede** på hendes bryllupsdag!
Danish went over and rained on her wedding-day
‘It went and rained on her wedding day!’ (Kjeldahl 2010: 57)
- b. Dit het **loop/(gaan) staan** en reën op haar troudag! *Afrikaans*
it has walk/gone stand and rain on her wedding-day
‘It went and rained on her wedding day!’

Crucial in relation to these structures is the observation that they very systematically harness lexical items with built-in deictic components. In Danish the itive (i.e., motion away from speaker) verb *gå* ‘go’ combines with the anti-indexical (Roßdeutscher 2009) *hen* ‘over’. The use in Afrikaans of inherently non-directional V_1 s *loop* ‘walk’ and *staan* ‘stand’ at first sight undermines this generalization, but here it is important to note two things: firstly, that *loop*+V combinations are strongly if not obligatorily associated with itive motion, presumably on account of the frequent use of *en*-less *loop* (see Section 2.1 above) in imperatives, where it serves as a more emphatic/“colourful” counterpart of *gaan* ‘go’ and contrasts with *kom* ‘come’; and secondly, that *staan* most naturally occurs with light motion-verb *gaan* in these cases, i.e., with the same itive verb as in Danish. We return to the significance of these deixis-centric considerations in Section 3 below.

A second aspect of the speaker-orientation aspect of Danish and Afrikaans PCs that is relevant to our concerns is the naturalness with which modal and perspectival particles occur in these structures. Consider Afrikaans *sowaar* ‘so true’ in (3)/(10) and *wragtig* ‘really’ in (4b), and also elements like *immers* ‘after all’ and *vir jou* ‘for you’, and, in Danish, *minsandten* ‘indeed’, *sørme* ‘sure, indeed’, *desværre* ‘unfortunately’, and *heldigvis* ‘luckily’. While these elements are unquestionably optional, like other modifiers, it is worth noting that native-speakers systematically agree that PC-structures sound maximally natural in their presence. This is a point to which we will return below.

3 The outlines of an analysis

As noted at the outset, our purpose in this section is a fairly modest one, namely to outline the key components of a novel analysis of Danish and Afrikaans PC-structures, which capitalizes both on certain recent theoretical developments and on insights from Kyle's own work.

Our starting point is phase theory (Chomsky 2001 and following), and the Lexical Array-based approach to structure-building it assumes, i.e., every phasal domain is defined by a Lexical Array (LA). In line with Marantz (2007), we assume that the phase-by-phase derivation typically assumed for clausal and nominal (and other sub-clausal) phrases also has a word-level counterpart. One aspect of this assumption is that it becomes crucial, on the one hand, to assume a root-based approach to lexical categories, and, on the other, to distinguish “verbalizing” *v* from the valency-altering *v* that has been associated with various diathesis- and aspect-related “flavours” in recent years (see D’Alessandro et al. 2017 for overview discussion). Another key aspect is that we might expect renumeration (Johnson 2003), or the return of already-constructed tree-structures to a later LA, where it will once again be part of the input for further derivation. Following, among others, Harwood (2015), Wurmbrand (2013) and Bošković (2014), we additionally adopt the view that phase size is defined relative to the elements in the relevant LAs: a phase has a “maximum size”, defined by the structurally highest element that may be part of a given LA, but completion of a phase does not depend on merger of that element; instead, a phase is complete whenever the last (and thus structurally highest) element is removed from the LA. Finally, and very importantly in view of the properties of Danish and Afrikaans PC-structures, we harness the evidence that has been accruing in recent years that discourse — or, more specifically, speaker–hearer-oriented — domains may be found not just in the left-peripheral domain of the clause and the nominal, but at phase edges more generally (see among others Poletto 2012, Cognola 2013, Wiltschko 2014, 2017, Biberauer in press).

With these ingredients in place, let us reconsider the PC-structures that are our main focus of interest. Central to our proposed analysis is the idea that the “pseudo” component of PC-structures rests on the use of *og* and *en* in Danish and Afrikaans respectively as “edge markers” associated with V_2 . More specifically, we assume that PC-structures differ from their non-PC lexical-verb-containing counterparts in being the product of a derivation in which the LA associated with the lexical verb (=V) contains not just the root of V_2 (e.g., $\sqrt{\text{REGN}}/\sqrt{\text{REËN}}$ ‘rain’ in (12a,b) above) and verbalizing *v*, as would usually be the case, but also *og/en*. Upon completion of the V-level phase, the *og-V/en-V* structure is renumerrated into the LA defining the lower clausal domain, i.e., *vP*. This LA, in turn, contains, in addition to potential argument DPs and modifiers, a further renumerrated V, namely V_1 , the

minimally grammaticalized light verb that appears to be coordinated with V_2 in PC-structures. In the absence of more grammaticalized light verbs (see below), we assume it to be merged at the edge of the vP -domain, thus closing off the phase (recall the “dynamic” approach to phases outlined above). Being structurally higher and clearly distinct from V_2 in structures of this kind, this V_1 will always undergo Verb-Second in the usual Germanic manner. This is the correct prediction for Danish, and also for “non-quirky” V_2 structures in Afrikaans, which exist alongside those discussed above. Additionally, the fact that V_2 is merged at the edge of the vP -phase leads us to expect that it may, over time, accrue specifically speaker-oriented meanings — which may then be formalized via grammaticalization — of the sort more generally found at the vP -edge.² This is particularly expected to be the case where a V_1 starts off with a semantics which includes deictic components. That Danish *gå hen* ‘go over’ and Afrikaans *loop* ‘walk’ are so commonly found in speaker-coloured PC-structures therefore follows very naturally on this view.

And the same is true for Afrikaans *gaan* ‘go’, which very commonly combines with non-deictic V_1 s like *staan* ‘stand’ and *sit* ‘sit’ to realize unambiguously speaker-coloured PCs. In this case, the presence of *gaan* in the vP LA will mean that the vP -phase is not complete once the relevant V_1 has been merged at what could otherwise have been the edge of this phasal domain. Instead, *gaan* is merged at the vP -edge, thereby creating a deictic edge which is, as before, very naturally interpreted as reflecting speaker perspective.

Finally, a further empirical observation that becomes less puzzling in light of the peripheral activation at issue here is that mentioned at the end of Section 2.2., relating to the not-quite-optional perspectival particles found in PC-structures. If our proposal here is on the right track, we would expect such elements to be particularly natural/frequent owing to the fact that PC-structures necessarily activate the left periphery of the lower clausal phase.

One striking property of the PC-structures that has not yet been accounted for is the obligatory formal identity of V_1 and V_2 . Here we appeal to the Late Insertion assumptions that are central to the Distributed Morphology approach within which the words-as-phases approach is grounded (Halle & Marantz 1993 and following). More specifically, we propose that V_2 -adjoined *and* blocks assignment of an independent inflectional form, as would be usual in structures containing finite lexical Vs. In other words, the presence of the directly V-adjoined coordinator precludes

² We remain agnostic here as to whether these additional speaker-oriented meanings are actually grammaticalized, i.e., formally represented in featural form, or whether they arise from a combination of their phrase-structural position and implicature. It may in fact be the case that some more highly grammaticalized V_1 s encode grammaticalized speaker-relevant properties — with their original lexical meaning having become bleached — whereas other, less grammaticalized V_1 s rely on implicatures.

retrieval of the relevant lexical V, allowing access only to the relevant root. In addition to its blocking function, we would also expect the coordinator to serve its usual syncategorematic function of signaling the combination of two categorially identical elements. This, we argue, is what produces the obligatory formal identity between V₁ and V₂.

So far, then, we have accounted for Danish and Afrikaans PC-structures that exhibit the expected Germanic V2 pattern. The same account will clearly not explain the quirky V2 patterns that surface in Afrikaans, however. A striking aspect of the grammar of Afrikaans is the extent to which its light-verb inventory has expanded relative to what is available in Dutch (see among others [Ponelis 1993](#), [de Vos 2001, 2005](#), [Biberauer 2017](#)). [de Vos \(2001\)](#) investigates the combinatorial options of the non-*have* and be verbs that may combine lexical Vs, and derives essentially the hierarchy in (13) (see also [de Vos 2005](#): 118):

- (14) ...Mod_{Necessity} > Mod_{Ability} > ... *hoor/sien*_{Perception} > *gaan*_{Ingressive} > *stop/ophou*_{Terminative} > *laat*_{Permissive} > *aanhou*_{Continuative} > *bly*_{Durative} > *probeer*_{Conative} > *laat*_{Causative} > *begin*_{Inchoative} > *kom* > *loop*_{Andative}/*leer* > *help*_{Benefactive} > *loop*_{PC} > *staan*_{PC} > *sit*_{PC}/*lê*_{PC} > Lexical V

Particularly relevant for our purposes is the already noted fact that Afrikaans PC V₁s occupy a very low position in the clausal spine (see Section 2.1 above). We have also seen that PC V₁s can combine with other very low verbs, e.g., andatives like *kom* ‘come’ and *loop* ‘walk’ (cf. (8) above). The fact that andative-plus-V₁ combinations always exhibit the andative-V₁ order shown in (8) and never the reverse makes it clear that the V₁s in these structures cannot be merged at the edge of the lower clausal phase, as proposed for the Danish and Afrikaans PC-structures discussed until this point: andatives are clearly vP-internal; thus V₁-merger at the edge of vP would produce the unattested V₁-andative order (**staan loop/kom* ‘stand walk/come’ instead of *loop/kom staan* ‘walk/come stand’, i.e., ‘come and stand’). If V₁, however, has the option of merging either at the vP-edge or at the edge of the word-level V-phase, the linearization facts fall out straightforwardly, and we also have the means to make sense of Afrikaans’ unique quirky V₂ option. Let us see how that is the case.

Firstly, assume that V₂ is verbalized and merged with *en*, as before. Instead of the word-level verb-phase being complete at this point, however, a higher phase is constructed on top of the one that is, by assumption, common to all root-verbalization derivations. The LA associated with the higher phase contains the root of the relevant V₁ and a verbalizer. Since there is no (c-)selection relationship between the output of the first word-level verb-phase (the V, *en*-V₂) and either of the elements contained in the higher LA, either could in principle be the first to merge with the

existing structure. Given the apparently generalized nature of what Richards (2010) calls the *Distinctness Requirement* in human language, however, it should not in fact be possible to select the verbalizer first. This means that a converging — or, at least, interface-legible — derivation will necessarily involve merger of the root of V_1 prior to merger of the verbalizer, whereafter the entire word-level V will be renumerated, and ultimately spelled out. Since the verbalizer sits at the very edge of this phasal-V structure, the entire structure “counts” from the perspective of higher clausal probes as a single V; and this, then, is the source of the quirky V_2 effects.

What we see, therefore, is that Afrikaans appears to permit two distinct kinds of PC-structure: (i) a ν P-phase-level structure where V_1 is merged at or very near the edge of the ν P-domain, which is a PC-option that is also available in Danish, and (ii) a V-phase-level structure where V_1 is merged at the edge of a word-level phasal structure. It is tempting to view the innovation of this parallel structure as yet another reflection of the fractal-like system that is natural language syntax.

4 Conclusion

We began this paper by highlighting the fact that verbal pseudo-coordination appears to involve an excess of verbal material. As our programmatic discussion has hopefully shown, the consequences of merging this verbal abundance are no less intriguing and potentially significant for our understanding of natural-language syntax and its interfaces than the silence Kyle Johnson has shed so much light on.

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