

Possessive expressions in Danish and Swedish in a diachronic and synchronic perspective

Possession is one of the most universal relations expressed by languages of the world. There are many possible types of relations and meanings that such a general term as possession encompasses, for example ownership in the most prototypical sense of possession, but also such relations like part-whole relationship (*the roof of the house*), kinship (*my mother*) or more vague relations of control (*my project*). To express possession one uses certain grammatical tools, such as possessive pronouns, case, prepositions, syntactic functions, etc.

In the Scandinavian languages studied in the project, i.e. Swedish and Danish, possession is expressed by means of one of the following possessive constructions: 1) *s*-genitive, 2) prepositional phrases, 3) possessive pronouns, 4) reflexive possessive pronouns and 5) definite article. From a historical point of view, there are still some questions left unanswered regarding the development of these constructions and the interplay between them. For instance, when did prepositional phrases come into use in possessive expressions and in which contexts? Why do we use *s*-genitive in some cases (e.g. sv. *Annas bok* ‘Anna’s book’), but prepositions in other cases (e.g. sv. *priset på bensin* ‘the price of petrol’)? Are there any differences in the use of possessive expressions between Danish and Swedish, two very closely related languages, in the course of their development?

The aim of the research project is to study the use and distribution of the possessive expressions in Swedish and Danish from the first instances of written texts (ca 1200 AD) until the contemporary times. An important part of the research is to examine the variation of possessive constructions and different factors that may tell us why a particular construction is preferred in a given context. In the project a general focus will be put on the different meanings of the relation of possession, e.g. the opposition of the concept of OWNERSHIP and the concept of LOCATION in possessive expressions.