Abstract

Julien, Marit, marit.julien@nordlund.lu.se, Associate Professor, Dept. of Scandinavian Languages, Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University, Sweden: “Plus(s) at(t) in Scandinavian – a minimal matrix”. Språk och stil 19, 2009, pp. 124–141.

The word plus(s) can function as a conjunction in Scandinavian. It can coordinate, for example, embedded clauses introduced by the subordinator at(t). However, one can also find examples of clauses introduced by plus(s) at(t) although not preceded by another at(t)-clause. These constructions, which represent a relatively new development in Scandinavian, are semantically similar to coordinations containing two embedded clauses: in either case two propositions are coordinated. Syntactically, however, they are different. This paper argues that the whole plus(s) at(t)-construction is a main clause where plus(s) represents the matrix clause while the subordinator that follows introduces an ordinary embedded clause. It also appears to be the case that other elements in addition to plus(s) can function as one-word matrix clauses. Some of these elements would normally be analysed as interjections; others are verb-like while still others are adjectives. In addition, the conjunction men ‘but’ appears to be able to have this function. A quality that all the minimal matrix clauses have in common is that they are related to the illocutionary force of the utterance. For some of the minimal matrix elements, it can be shown that they spell out only a small part of the matrix clause, as adverbials can be added. For other elements, like plus(s) and men, it is unclear whether they represent clauses that have a full clause structure or clauses that are truly minimal even syntactically.

Keywords: coordination, conjunction, subordinator, plus, embedded clause, matrix clause, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic.