Abstract

Eriksson, Olof, olof.eriksson@lnu.se. Professor, School of Language and Literature, Linnaeus University, Sweden: “The so-called med-phrase from a contrastive perspective”. Språk och stil 20, 2010, pp. 51–80.

This article addresses a structure that is commonly known as the »med-phrase» (»with-phrase») in Swedish linguistic terminology. The study is an attempt to show that this phrase, although formally a prepositional phrase, is not functionally such a phrase. It is argued that its preposition is an exclusively grammatical element devoid of semantic content and that the phrase it introduces is syntactically an »absolute construction», incompatible with the adverbial function and distinguished only in form from its non-prepositional counterpart.

The article consists of three case studies, each dealing with a particular type of the med/with-phrase: (I) A man entered the room with a book in his hand; (II) I think it’s terrible with what happened at the World Trade Center; (III) Try looking at things from a new point of view just as you do with your writing. Apart from argumentation drawing on internal Swedish linguistic evidence, it adopts a contrastive perspective (Swedish-English-French-German) with the twofold purpose of supporting its findings as to the linguistic nature of the Swedish med-phrase and of looking into the existence of identical or similar constructions in the languages compared.

Keywords: prepositional phrase, med-phrase, nexal phrase, predicative, adverbial, nexus, proverb, proverbialization, Swedish.