

# INTERESTING SYNTACTIC FEATURES IN ÖVDALIAN – A SHORT SURVEY

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This is a list of some Övdalian syntactic features that differ from Swedish and, in many cases, also from other Scandinavian languages. For every feature, we provide one or more authentic examples, and refer to published research (if existent).

## 1. Null subjects

### Referential subjects

The plural pronouns *wið* and *ið* ('we' and 'you') are omitted unless they are stressed. *Wið* can however only be omitted from pre-verbal position. See Rosenkvist (2006).

Mjotjē saurner um int **windið** brott ån. (Rosenkvist 2006:143)  
*milk-the turns-sour if not throw-2.pl away her*  
'The milk will turn sour, if **you** don't dispose of it'

Ar du twajð ferdugan dig nu so **bellum** go aut? (Olsson 1988)  
*have you washed ready refl. now so can-1.pl go out*  
'Are you done washing now so that **we** can go out?'

### Expletive subjects

As far as we know expletive subjects can only be omitted from SpecCP in a coordinated main clause (coordination by *og*).

**Og war såmårn**, an war dar aute.<sup>1</sup>  
*and was summer-the<sup>2</sup>, he was there out*  
'And **it** was summer, he was outside'

Another example of possible null expletive subject is shown below; it is unclear how the example should be analysed.

Farið dait so ir int eð (Levander 1909:93)  
*go-2.pl.imp there that is not that*  
'Go to the place where it is not'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished transcription of a recording (*Dialekter i Dalarna*, CD, 2004. Uppsala) kindly provided by Gunnar Nyström. Two male informants born 1906 and 1914, recorded 1976.

<sup>2</sup> See section 12: *Definiteness in non-definite contexts*

<sup>3</sup> The Swedish translation by Levander: 'Far dit där det inte är det'.

## 2. Verb raising and position of negations/adverbials

Verb raising occurs, but seems to vary between generations; there are also more than one position for negation. Generally, there is verb movement across negation in all types of subordinate clauses, but verb movement across other adverbials seems to be present only in the older generation. Both negation and adverbials can precede the subject. See Garbacz (2006).

Andes spuord mig wiso Äva/å **add it** kumið. (Westling p.c.)

*Andes asked me why Äva/she had not come*

'Andes wondered why Äva hadn't come'

Ittað-jär ir je buok so (**sakt/int**) ig (**sakt/int**) ar (**sakt/it**) lesið.

*this-here is a book which (actually/not) I (act./not) have (act./not) read*

'This is a book that I actually haven't read'

## 3. Multiple subjects

Multiple subjects occur in Övdalian, but unlike Dutch dialects (van Koppen 2005), they do not seem to have strong/weak forms.

**Du** ir sakt **du** uvendes duktin dalsk. (authentic example 2007)

*you are advl. you very good speak-Övdalian*

'you are actually very good at speaking Övdalian'

**Ig** ar **ig** sakt **ig** mjer i grytun. (Levander 1909:109)

*I have I advl. I more in pot-the*

'I have actually more in the pot'

**E'** lä fel **e'** bli nod wäsn - sos wanlit. (Larsson 1985:6)

*It will probably it be some trouble - as usual*

'There will probably be some trouble - as usual'

... so add **an** fel **an** weð min diem og. (informant born 1881)

*so had he probably he been with them too*

'so he had probably been with them too'

The multiple subjects seem to appear in clauses containing the adverbials *sakta* ('actually') or *fel* ('probably'), or the modal verb *lä* ('is probable'). Otherwise the syntactic properties are unknown.

#### 4. Long distance reflexives

An fikk då fel bital Lasuls–Lass so stjuo'sseð **sig** (Levander 1909:109)  
*he got then of course pay Lasuls–Lass that drove refl.*  
'Of course, he had then to pay Lasuls–Lass that gave him a lift'

This example is one of the few reported in Levander; the current status of long distance reflexives in Övdalian is unknown.

#### 5. Negative concord

The negation may occur with a negated argument, expressing a single semantic negation:

Ig ar **it** tjyöpt **ingg** byöker (Westling p.c.)  
*I have not bought no books–acc*  
'I haven't bought any books'

Furthermore, there is a negative polarity item (*noð*) that in some cases is obligatory with intransitive verbs:

An kam **it noð**. (Westling p.c.)  
*he came not NPI*  
'he didn't come'

See further Garbacz (2006).

#### 6. Stylistic fronting

According to Levander (1909:122), stylistic fronting is common in short relative clauses:

Dier djärå so, dier so **gamblest** iro.  
*they do so, they who oldest are*  
'So they do, they who are oldest'

Nyström & Sapir (2005:76) also provide some examples:

...eð **kwer** war.  
*that left was*  
'that which was left'

Oller so **ogų og neveð** åvå.  
*all who eyes and nose have*  
'all who have eyes and nose' (i.e, all humans)

## 7. Deletion of *at* ('that') and *te* (infinitival marker)

*At* and *te* are frequently omitted, also in contexts where they are required in Swedish.

**Itt ir ed guott wito** wen ed ir fer klauter an eld q ar eld... (Larsson 1985:91)

*not is it easy to know what it is for clothes he or she has either*

'It is not easy **to** know which kind of clothes he or she wears either'

**Eð war djärå två sig!** (Olsson 1988:9)

*it was hard-work wash refl.*

'It was hard work **to** wash oneself!'

Åkerberg (2004:151) notes that *at* "is most often left out".

An ärd å min uoss **uldum it far aut noð.** (Westling p.c.)

*he heard on with us should-1.pl not go out NPI*

'He asked us **that** we shouldn't go out'

## 8. Word order in coordinated clauses

Adverb/verb-word order and a deleted subject seems to be grammatical in the second conjunct, unlike Swedish. There is a recent dissertation about this phenomenon in Old Swedish: Magnusson (2007).

Upo so wis wa' dier oder stemdieltagerer uofö'biriedder og **itt had nod kum mout min.** (Larsson 1985:9)

*in that manner were the other participants unprepared and not had anything to come against with*

'In that manner the other participants were unprepared and hadn't any arguments'

Also V3-order with negative quantified objects is grammatical in the second conjunct.

Og indjin puostdag eð ir (Levander 1909:121)

*and no bank-day it is*

'And it is no bank day'

V1-order in second conjunct, although the subject is present – also in Magnusson (2007). Possible in Old Swedish, but not in Modern Swedish.

Og protestired dier so uld Duwall underrettas min fuosta bud, og **uld** dier fõ sjõ til at ly´ da. (Larsson 1985:12)  
*and protested they so should Duwall be-notified with first messenger, and should they get see-to-PL to obey´*  
'And if they protested, Duwall would be notified immediately, and then they should be forced to obey´

### 9. Verb and adjective controlled dative case

Quite a few verbs and adjectives need dative objects. See Åkerberg (2004:127ff).

Ulum byt **estum** (Åkerberg 2004:128)  
*shall-1pl change horses-DAT*  
'We shall change the horses´

Ulov glemd **uettum**. (Åkerberg 2004:77)  
*Ulov forgot gloves-DAT*  
'Ulov forgot the gloves´

An ar torgað **twem kallum**.  
*he has killed two-DAT men-DAT*  
'He has killed two men´

Du ir so laik **faðer dainum** (Åkerberg 2004:131)  
*you are so like father-DAT thine-DAT*  
'You look so much like your father´

Amm uort uoni **dyö-dar** nu (Åkerberg 2004:131)  
*have-1.PL become used to this-there-DAT now*  
'We have got used to it now´

However, Åkerberg's examples may be obsolete – the current status of verbs and adjectives followed by dative case in Övdalian is not known. Cf. also Dahl & Koptjevskaja-Tamm (2006).

### 10. Particle verbs with predicatives

Some (?) particle verbs have the order verb-particle-predicative adverbial:

Prestn såg **fuost aut lited rålos**... (Larsson 1985:17)  
*priest-the looked first out-PL little puzzled*  
'The priest at first looked a bit puzzled´

No further details are known; however, the verb *se ut* is known to display this word order also in other (northern) Swedish dialects.

## 11. Definite articles and determinative pronouns

Övdalian has a three gender system, and the personal pronouns also function as definite articles and as determinative pronouns. The word *den* does not exist in Övdalian.

Men Lass war it åw **enn** uppfattnindse, at sockenstemma uld wå nod  
stell dar... (Larsson 1985:19)

*but Lass was not of-PL her-acc. opinion that parish meeting should be  
a place where...*

'But Lass didn't have the opinion that the parish meeting should be a  
place where...'

Ar du skrievt **an**-dar lappin að mig? (Olsson 1988:11)

*have you written he there note-the for me*

'Have you written that note for me?'

## 12. Definiteness in non-definite contexts

In Övdalian, definite forms are more frequent than in other Swedish dialects, it seems.

Warum tungner tjööp **wineð** ettersos Anna older drokk **öleð**. (Westling  
p.c.)

*were-2.pl forced buy wine-the since Anna never drank beer-the*

'we had to buy **wine** since Anna never drinks **beer**'

Og war **såmårn**...<sup>4</sup>

*and was summer.the*

'and it was **summer**'

## 13. Non-definiteness in definite contexts

Övdalian can use non-definite form when Swedish uses the definite.

Warum dar um **nåt**<sup>5</sup> (Levander 1909:95)

*were.1.PL there around night*

'we were there during **the night**'

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<sup>4</sup> Unpublished transcription of a record (*Dialekter i Dalarna*, CD, 2004. Uppsala) kindly provided by Gunnar Nyström. The informants were born 1906 and 1914; recorded 1976.

<sup>5</sup> This expression may be lexicalized, see Steensland (2006:78).

#### 14. Movement of negative quantified objects to the position in front of the subject

There is a possibility to move negative quantified objects across subjects in Övdalian, both in main and subordinated clauses. The younger generation do not produce such sentences very frequently, it seems.

?<sup>ok</sup>Föðyö ar **int-noð** ig föståed (Werf p.c.)  
*therefore have nothing I understood*  
'That's why I haven't understood anything'

...dar **ingg peningg** ig ar (Levander 1909:122)  
*because no money I have*  
'...because I don't have any money'

#### 15. Object shift

Object shift is, to our best knowledge, impossible in Övdalian. Also subject shift seems to be restricted.

An såg **int mig** / \***mig int** (Westling p.c.)  
*he saw not me / me not*  
'He didn't see me'

#### 16. OV-order

There are examples of object-verb order in Övdalian, both with pronominal objects and also some with DP-objects (reported by Levander).

Du al då **eð få siå**                      OR                      Du al då **få eð siå** (Werf p.c.)  
*you shall then that get see*                      OR                      *you shall then get that see*  
'Then you'll see!'

Dier **kund** int iet ienda fil **finna** (Levander 1909:122)  
*they could not a only-one fout find*  
'They couldn't find any fout'

#### 17. Exclamatives

Unlike Swedish exclamatives, Övdalian can have V2 in *så*-exclamatives

So dum **ir** du! (Levander 1909:121)  
*så stupid are you*  
'You are so stupid!'

## 18. Generic form in non-generic context

Levander reports instances where the indefinite article is omitted in Övdalian:

so dar war int **strä** (Levander 1909:108)  
*så there was no straw*  
'There was not a straw.'

## 19. Number agreement

Coordinated substantives show plural verb inflection.

Du eld ig **ulum** fårå (Levander 1909:94)  
*you or I shall-1.pl go*  
'You or I shall go'

In case where the finite verb precedes the subject, the verb can also be inflected for singular form.

Naug **ar/amm** Andes og ig werið að Born (Levander 1909:94)  
*Certainly have-sg/1.pl Andes and I been at Borgen*  
'Andes and I have certainly been to Borgen'

The predicative doesn't have to agree with the subject if it precedes the subject. On the contrary, it must agree when it is placed after the subject.

Og so **stur/sturer ir/irå** Andes og Ulov (Levander 1909:94)  
*And so big-sg/pl is/are Andes and Ulov*  
'And Andes and Ulov are so big.'

Indjibuäsbjär og Bausbjär **irå/\*ir** gra'll **sniϕoieler/\*sniϕoiel** (Levander 1909:94)  
*Ingeborgsberget and Bausberget are/is completely covered-by-snow.pl/sg*  
'I. and B. are completely covered by snow.'

## 20. Genitive case

The genitive case is constructed on the dative case.

kallem	>	kallemes
man.DAT	>	man.GEN

The genitive suffix often occurs separately in written Övdalian.



landsöwdindsem **es** kurir (Larsson 1985)  
*county-governor-the.DAT GEN courier*  
'the courier of the county governor'

kunundsem **es** biwakninsexpert (Larsson 1985)  
*king-the.DAT GEN guard-expert*  
'the security expert of the king'

Genitive can also be expressed by postponed dative.

Ittað ir buordeð **Lassa** (Levander 1909:97)  
*this is table-the Lass-DAT*  
'this is Lassa's table'

Another possibility is to express genitive with the preposition *að*:

rovę að krippem (Steensland 2006:14)  
*ass-the at child-the.DAT*  
'the child's behind'

The frequency of these constructions and other circumstances concerning genitive case in current Övdalian is unknown.

When a nominal phrase is inflected for dative, the dative inflection is sometimes only visible on the last constituent of the phrase. This reminds about the Swedish 'gruppgenitiv' (group genitive).

...oller so add, eld add aft nod min **erdalinger**, **jemter** eld **noskum** te dsjäro (Larsson 1985:8)  
*all that had or had have something with Härjedals-NOM, Jämts-NOM or Norwegians-DAT to do*  
'everybody that have had something to do with people of Härjedalen, Jämtland or Norway.'

## 21. The 'vocative' case

Övdalian has a certain suffixless vocative form of some masculine and feminine proper names (which ends on -e, respectively -a, i.e. the old weak n-stems), as well as of the words for 'mother' and 'father'. The form is used in the same contexts as the vocative case is used in some languages (Levander 1909:24, 31, 36; Steensland p.c.).

	'Lars'	'Nils'	'Lina'	'mum'	'mum'	'dad'
NOM.	Lasse	Nisse	Lina	muna	mamma	pappa
ACC. <sup>6</sup>	(Lassa)	(Nissa)	Linu	munu	-	-
VOC.	Lass!	Niss!	Lin!	mun!	mam!	pap!

## 22. Varia

No double definiteness in superlative forms.

Andes ar stuttest **bruotje** (Levander 1909:108)  
*Andes has shortest trousers*  
 'Anders has the shortest trousers'

Adjectival usage of present participle.

naug ir eð **jätend** (Levander 1909:116f)  
*probably is this eating*  
 'Probably is it eatable'

ittað-jär watneð ir int **drikkend** (Levander 1909:116f)  
*this-here water.the is not drinking*  
 'This water is not drinkable'

Postadjectival indefinite articles can be traced in Övdalian (Delsing 1993:138ff):

Ed war iet iemmer ywyr at ferkaller war **so biswäl'lit iet släkte** (Larsson 1985)  
*It was a moaning over that ferrymen was-pl so difficult a race*  
 'There was moaning about that ferrymen were such a troublesome breed'

As in Old Swedish and some other Scandinavian languages there seems to be variation between the verbs *have* and *be* in their function as auxiliaries.

ig ir int **sovin** än (Levander 1909:117)  
*I am not slept yet*  
 'I haven't slept yet'

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<sup>6</sup> The accusative form of masculine proper names is not used in today's Övdalian. Also the accusative forms of feminine proper names are rare and the ending can vary between -o and -å. The nouns 'mamma' and 'pappa' are late Swedish borrowings and have therefore not had any accusative form ever (Steensland p.c.).

Subjunctive mood is expressed with the subjunctive form of *have* (*edd*) (Åkerberg 2004:125f):

Ig edd lesið  
*I had read*  
'I should read'

Ig edd ulað leso.  
*I had should read*  
'I should have read'

Ig edd ađ wilað måla.  
*I had at? wanted paint*<sup>7</sup>  
'I would have wanted to paint'

## Literature

Items marked with a star (\*) can be aquired from Ulum Dalska:  
<http://www.ehf.se/ulumdalska/pages/frames.html>

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<sup>7</sup> The exact meaning and etymology of *ađ* in this construction is unclear.