



NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

Infinitive constructions in Norwegian, in a comparative perspective

Lars Hellan and Dorothee Beermann,
NTNU, Trondheim, Norway
SWL6, Pavia, 10th of September 2014



NTNU – Trondheim
Norwegian University of
Science and Technology

In describing construction types

- *One should strive to build databases organized according to interesting search parameters*
- *The databases should be so detailed that only specialists of the languages involved can create them*
- *Both internal to a language and across languages, it will be good if the descriptions can relate to each other*
- *But there is a danger in attempting to create **monolithic** systems, because*
 - *that may require a conceptual and notational homogeneity beyond the present state of art*
 - *it may get too dependent on a single ‘mastermind’ who too easily becomes the ‘truck factor’.*



In describing construction types, thus

- the individual investigator should be able to work with concepts and notations that (s)he is comfortable with;*
- it should be possible to develop conceptual and notational **correspondence-tables**, in step with more and more languages and phenomena being treated;*
- the purposes behind the individual contributions may vary (for instance, it will be natural that some contributions are angled towards language teaching, others towards the building of translation manuals, etc.).*

In this spirit

we present an inventory of infinitival construction types in Norwegian, and indicate issues arising if one sets out to create a ‘corresponding’ inventory for German.

The Norwegian inventory is created by a linguist ‘head-deep’ into developing a computational HPSG grammar of Norwegian, while the German inventory has as an aim to aid in the teaching of German to Norwegian students (high school and university level).

The Norwegian inventory rests notationally on two systems, one suitable for a computational lexicon, and one suitable for ‘manual’ understanding of the construction types in question.

From about 300 construction types defined for the Norwegian computational lexicon, 48 concern infinitives in the sense that infinitival clauses carry grammatical functions relative to a ‘matrix’ verb. In the ‘manual’ system, these infinitive constructions are classified according to what differentiates between them, and this notational system is the one we use for comparison between the languages.

The ‘computational’ types are used in an online valency lexicon for Norwegian, so that the verbs instantiating each type can be seen.

When comparing Norwegian and German, it will some times be the case that the grammatical function carried by an infinitive in Norwegian is carried by a gerund in German. It's an interesting question whether the classification parameters are then otherwise equally relevant.

Even when the same construction type is present in both languages, a further interesting question will be whether translationally corresponding verbs can head the respective constructions.

In this paper we set the stage for an investigation of both of these issues, through giving a fairly detailed description of the Norwegian classification.



Parameters of classification

- Whether the infinitive is a 'bare' infinitive or preceded by the infinitive marker *å*;
- What is the *grammatical function* of the infinitive, either *subject*, *object*, *complement*, *secondary predicate* in a 'small clause' constellation, *extraposed*, or 'oblique', that is, governed by a preposition;
- Whether the infinitive is *controlled* or not, that is, having its logical subject interpreted as identical to an NP in the matrix clause, or not;
- *If* controlled, controlled by *what*, and whether through *Equi* or *Raising*.



Example: 'Object-controlled equi-infinitive':

v-ditr-obEqlobBareinf	GF: Vcomp Control + Controlled_by: Obj Control-type: Equi Bareinf +
Kari ber ham komme	
K. ask-PRES him come	
'Kari asks him to come'	



Abbreviations involving 'GF' ('grammatical function'):

GF: Extrapos-subj

The infinitive is in extraposed position, linked to subject position

GF: Extrapos-obj

The infinitive is in extraposed position, linked to object position

GF: P-gov

The infinitive is governed by preposition

GF: Vcomp

The infinitive is a complement of the matrix verb

GF: Subj

The infinitive is subject of the matrix verb

GF: Obj

The infinitive is object of the matrix verb

GF: SecPred

The infinitive is secondary predicate of the matrix verb



Search in MultiVal for v-ditr-obEqlobBareinf

MultiVal:

Introduction:

http://typecraft.org/tc2wiki/Multilingual_Verb_Valence_Lexicon

And the Webdemo itself:

http://regdili.idi.ntnu.no:8080/multilanguage_valence_demo/multivalence

These come up:

be_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ

la_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ



Search in MultiVal for 'NP+NP'

Multilanguage Valency Patterns, Version 1.2 - Mozilla Firefox

regdili.idi.ntnu.no:8080/multilanguage_valence_demo/multivalence

Multilanguage Valency Patterns

Version 1.2 (for further guidelines, see [Info](#))

Languages:
 Norwegian Ga Spanish

Search fields:

V-key: Syntactic Arguments:

Function: Situation: Aspect: Type:

Search Result

ga	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bi_53	NP+NP
ga	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bi_54	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bibeholde_tv	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bibringe_tv	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bifalle_tv	NP+NP
ga	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bijin_55	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bikke_tv	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bikte_tv	NP+NP
no	<input type="button" value="show"/>	bilegge_tv	NP+NP

Search result in MultiVal

Applications Places System Ihellan

Multilanguage Valency Patterns, Version 1.2 - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

regdili.idi.ntnu.no:8080/multilanguage_valence_demo/multivalence

Norwegian Ga Spanish

Search fields:

V-key Syntactic Arguments

Function Situation Aspect Type

Search Count Clear Download

Lexicon Instance

Language	no
Verb Id	kyle_detachposs
Syntactic Arguments	NP+NP+NP+PP
FCT	ditransWithOblique
SIT	quarternaryPossessorDetachment
Aspect	
Verb Type	v-ditrObl-oblPRTOFioB-PARTWHOLE_AFFECTING
Example of type	jeg kyler Ola ballen i ryggen
Orthography	< "kyle" >
Phon	
Engl-gloss	
Example	
Gloss	
Free-transl	

[Update Manager] Værvarel time for tim... Multilanguage Valency ...

Search in MultiVal for v-ditr-obEqlobInf

befale_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
egge_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
forby_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
forespeile_ditr-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
hjelppe_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
påby_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
pålegge_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
påtvinge_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
tilholde_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
tillate_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
tilrå_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
tilstede_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
unne_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
utrope_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ
vigse_obj-equi NP+NP+INF:equiOBJ



The 'oblique' infinitive (perhaps the infinitive most specific to Norwegian)

v-intrObl-oblEqSuInf- SUSTAINEDACTIVITY	GF: P-gov Control + Controlled_by: Subj Control-type: Equi Bareinf - Aspect: Activity
Ola driver med å skrive rapporter	
Ola keep-PRES with INF write reports	
'Ola is occupied writing reports'	

The oblique non-controlled infinitive (40 verbs)

v-intrObl-oblAbsinf	GF: P-gov Control - Bareinf -
De snakker om å reise til Mars	
they talk-PRES about to travel to Mars	
'they talk about travelling to Mars'	



'Non-control'

'Non-control' in a construction like the above is more explicit if one inserts a 'det' in front of the infinitive:

Vi snakket om *det* å reise til Mars

'We talked about it to travel to Mars'

In given contexts, without *det*, control may well be understood, as in:

Han snakket om å melde seg på (men jeg ser ikke navnet hans på listen)

He talked about to register (but I don't see his name on the list)

'Oblique' infinitive combined with particle:

v-intrPrtclObl-- oblRaisSulnf	GF: P-gov Control + Controlled_by: Subj Control-type: Rais Bareinf -
han ser ut til å sove	
he looks out to INF sleep	
'he appears to be sleeping'	



Infinitive as secondary predicate, with 'bare infinitive' and 'raising to object':

v-trScpr	GF: SecPred Control + Controlled_by: Obj Control-type: Rais Bareinf +
jeg ser ham ligge	
I see-PRES him lie	
'I see him lying'	



Infinitive as secondary predicate, with å:

v-trNrfScpr- obRefl_scSuNrg_sclnf	GF: SecPred Control + Controlled_by: Subj Control-type: Rais Bareinf -
han viser seg å være forutinntatt	
he show-PRES REFL INF be biased	
'he turns out to be biased'	



Infinitive as 'extraposed':

v-ditrExpnSu- obMeas_expnEqSulnf	GF: Extrapos-subj Control + Controlled_by: Obj Control-type: Equi Bareinf -
det tar meg to timer å gå dit	
it take-PRES me two hours INF go there	
'it takes me two hours to go there'	



'Non-control'

One can compare the above to

Det tar to timer å gå dit

'It takes two hours to go there'

which does not have an identified subject for *gå*. So it is reasonable to classify it as non-controlled.

Arguably, though, this is a construction with control, to the extent that the one it takes two hours *for* is necessarily the same as the logical subject of *gå*.

That leads into issues of implicit participants linked to non-valence-bound arguments, and so constitutes a greyish zone in the present classification.

Infinitive as 'extraposed':

v-trExpnOb-expnAbsinf	GF: Extrapos-obj Control - Bareinf -
vi umuliggjør det å komme	
we impossible-make-PRES it INF come	
'we make it impossible to come'	



How to generalize the approach

The classificatory frame format does not itself say that one is classifying an infinitive, so one can equally well classify gerunds in this system, and for languages using both construction types, of course indicate what classifies what.

The classification refers to grammatical functions, which seem well supported in the languages presently under consideration, but in principle one could equally well use a system based on A, P, S.

A good medium for conducting such inventory creation cross-linguistically and cooperatively is the online annotation and databasing tool TypeCraft, which offers an excellent format for morphological presentation, and a description field related to each example where the present tables can be provided.



TypeCraft is found at

<http://typecraft.org/>

A full working version of the present classification is linked from the site

http://typecraft.org/tc2wiki/Multilingual_Verb_Valence_Lexicon

Thank You!

