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# The Swedish *så*-construction, a new point of departure

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## ABSTRACT

The following article treats the Swedish *så*-construction (involving the so-called “adjunctive” *så*). The *så*-construction consists of a first element, which is typically an adjunct, followed by *så* ‘so’, and an inverted declarative clause. It is argued that adjunctive *så* is a head word, more precisely a relational predicate that introduces a new point of departure in the discourse, by relating the proposition in its complement, the figure, to the constituent in its specifier, the ground. It is noted that the notion of a new point of departure should partially be kept apart from notions such as given information and topic, which are typically expressed by nominal constituents such as subject and object, and which cannot be constructed with *så*. Note, however, that when the subject or object referent also functions as the new point of departure, it can be marked as such by paraphrases such as *beträffande X* ‘as regards X’, which in fact are constructed with adjunctive *så*. Since the *så*-construction furthermore blocks topicalization of the subject or object, it is argued that the *så*-phrase is a variant of Rizzi’s (1997, 2004) Topic Phrase, sharing some of its features. Other analyses of the *så*-construction are refuted. It is argued that adjunctive *så* cannot be analysed as a resumptive adverb, since it can also occur after free predicatives and prepositional objects. Nor can it be analysed as an expletive in the preverbal position, holding the place for fronted constituents, since the first element can also be a valency-bound constituent (prepositional object or bound adverbial) which is moved there.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Outline

The article consists of 5 sections. The first one contains this outline and an account of the data used, whereas the second section is a description and demarcation of the phenomenon. The article then continues by presenting and evaluating previous analyses of adjunctive *så*, and relating these to the new data obtained. The article culminates with the presentation of the new analysis in section 4 and ends with a conclusion in section 5.

### 1.2. Data

The *så*-construction is largely confined to colloquial language, which means that it can only marginally be found in a news corpus such as *Språkbankens konkordanser*. Therefore, the investigation has particularly used the *Göteborg Spoken*

*Language Corpus (GSLC)*<sup>1</sup>, a corpus of spoken Swedish from various different speech situations. The examples cited in the text are presented in the same form as in GSLC, i.e. according to their transcription conventions for spoken Swedish<sup>2</sup>, rather than according to the standard orthography for written Swedish.

In addition, *Google.se* has been used to search for a few marginal constructions, in accordance with Keller et al.'s (2002) findings that searches for marginal constructions on *Google.com* yield frequency results that are fully comparable to the *British National Corpus* (BNC). Firstly, the large amount of data overshadows the fact that *Google.com* is uncontrolled and contains a lot of corrupt material. Secondly, Keller et al. (2002) found that there is a positive correlation between acceptability and frequency, so that the more marginal the construction, the larger the corpus needs to be. In fact, for highly marginal constructions they even found a larger correlation with acceptability tests on *Google.com* than on BNC.

In order to avoid corrupt data, each hit on *Google.se* has been controlled. One criterion has been that it must have been produced by a native Swedish speaker. Furthermore, chat forums have been avoided, since these are full of writing mistakes. Moreover, when an example from *Google.se* is presented, the actual link is given, so that it can be checked independently. In order to further ascertain the grammaticality of certain marginal constructions, an additional inquiry has been carried out on 11 students at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund. All were native Swedish speakers.

## 2. Description and demarcation of adjunctive *så*

Adjunctive *så* is found in inverted declarative clauses. The first element in the *så* construction is typically an adjunct which,

comments the utterance by stating under what circumstances something is done, or holds, or when it takes place, or whom or what it concerns etc. (SAOB<sup>3</sup>: S, 15835; translation by the present author)

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<sup>1</sup> The author is grateful to Hans Vappula for getting access to the corpus.

<sup>2</sup> { } are used to insert letters in the standard form that are not pronounced. / indicates a pause. \$ indicates speaker. < > are used to insert a comment. The homophonous *och* 'and' and *att* 'to' are transcribed as *å0* and *å1*, respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Svenska Akademiens ordbok ('The Swedish Academy Dictionary').

SAG<sup>4</sup> (IV, 694ff) demonstrates that *så* can be inserted after most kinds of adjuncts in clause initial position in Swedish:

- (1) a. Och *sen så* frös jag in det  
and then so froze I in it  
'And then I froze it in' (Temporal adverb; SAG: IV, 694)
- b. *När strömmen kommer så* sätter vi ändå inte på den  
when the.power comes so turn we still not on it  
'When the power comes back, we still don't turn it on'  
(Temporal clause; SAG: IV, 694)
- c. *Om vägen till konsumtionssamhället är svår, så* är vägen till ett  
if the.road to the.consumer.society is difficult so is the.road to a  
öppnare samhälle ännu mycket svårare  
more.open society even more difficult  
'If the road to the consumer society is difficult, the road to a more open  
society is even more so.' (Conditional clause; SAG: IV, 694)
- d. *Be honom slå sig ner, så* kommer jag strax.  
ask him seat REFL down så come I soon  
'Ask him to sit down and I will be there soon'  
(Imperative clause; SAOB: S, 15835)
- e. Men *något överraskande så* beslöt istället landssekretariatet att  
but somewhat surprisingly so decided instead the.county.secretariat to  
bordlägga frågan  
table the.question  
'But somewhat surprising, the county secretariat instead decided to table  
the question' (Clause adverbial; SAG: IV, 964)

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<sup>4</sup> Svenska Akademiens grammatik ('The Swedish Academy Grammar').

- f. *I alla fall så bryr vi oss inte om det*  
 in all cases so care we us not about it  
 ‘At any rate, we don’t care about it’ (Speech act adverbial; SAG: IV, 694)
- g. *Vips så stack vargen.*  
 swish so pushed.off the.wolf  
 ‘Hey presto and the wolf was gone!’ (Interjection; SAOB: S, 15835)
- h. *Alldeles ensam med henne så vågade han ingenting*  
 All alone with her so dared he nothing  
 ‘All alone with her, he didn’t dare to do anything’  
 (Free predicative; SAG: IV, 694)
- i. *Alla, så skulle de gå på festen*  
 all so should they go on the.party  
 ‘They were all determined to go to the party’  
 (Quantifier; SAOB: S, 15835)
- j. *Det enda småbarn skriker för så är det tandvärk.*  
 the only small.children scream about so is it toothache  
 ‘The only thing small children scream about is toothache’  
 (Free topic; SAOB: S, 15835)

After most bound constituents, however, *så* is ungrammatical (except in Finland Swedish; see below), as illustrated by the following constructed examples:

- (2) a. *Vem (\*så) gjorde det?*  
 who so did it  
 ‘Who did it?’ (Wh-subject)
- b. *Vad (\*så) gjorde du?*  
 what so did you  
 ‘What did you do?’ (Wh-object)

- c. *Jag (\*så)* gjorde det.  
 I so did it  
 'I did it' (Subject)
- d. *Nyckeln (\*så)* lade jag på bordet.  
 the.key so put I on the.table  
 'I put the key on the table' (Object)
- e. *Lärare (\*så)* var hon endast ett år.  
 teacher so was she only a year  
 'She was only a teacher for a year' (Predicative noun)
- f. *Dum (\*så)* är han i alla fall inte.  
 stupid so is he in all cases not  
 'He's not stupid, at any rate' (Predicative adjective)
- g. *Upp (\*så)* åkte priserna  
 up so went the.prices  
 'Up went the prices' (Particle)
- h. *Frågade hur man mådde (\*så)* gjorde han väl aldrig  
 asked how you felt so did he i.guess never  
 'I guess he never asked you how you feel' (Verb phrase)

Since adjunctive *så* occurs after adjuncts and not bound constituents, SAG (II, 670) analyses it as a boundary marker between an adjunct and the rest of the clause.

The adjunctive use of *så* is in fact only one of several related uses of the word *så* 'so' in Swedish. SAOB (S, 15835) and partly also SAG (II, 670) consider adjunctive *så* to be a special variant of the clause-initial conclusive and consecutive *så* 'then, now' particularly found in coordinate constructions:

- (3) a. Det gick en tid, och *så* skulle han resa igen.  
 it passed a time and so should he travel again  
 'Some time passed, and then he was going away again' (SAOB: S, 15835)

- b. Det är vackra saker, men *så* kostar de också mycket.  
 they are beautiful things but so cost they also much  
 ‘These are very beautiful things, but then again, they cost a lot.’  
 (SAOB: S15835)
- c. *Så* ska även du lämna oss!  
 so shall also you leave us  
 ‘And now even you are leaving us!’ (SAG: II, 670)
- d. Jag kan ju läsa utomlands...Eller *så* läser jag turism här i Sverige.  
 I can PART study abroad or so study I tourism here in Sweden  
 ‘I can of course study abroad...or else I’ll study tourism here in Sweden’  
 (SAOB: S, 15835)
- e. Först det ena, *så* det andra  
 first the one so the other  
 ‘First the one, then the other’ (SAOB: S15835)

In these cases, *så* indicates that

the discussed [i.e. the proposition following *så*] takes place, or holds in or after the situation, or under the circumstance that has been described before *så* [i.e. in the first conjunct], or in the situation etc. where the utterance is made, often also denoting a certain intensification, roughly synonymous with ‘now’, ‘then’ (SAOB: S, 15835; translation by the present author)

According to SAOB (S, 15835), the common denominator between adjunctive *så* and clause-initial conclusive and consecutive *så* is that they are all unstressed and have a ”weakened lexical meaning, indicating connections between elements in utterances or between conceived elements” (translation by the present author).

It is true that clause-initial conclusive and consecutive *så* only have little semantic content. However, they clearly have more semantic content than adjunctive *så*, which even lacks the conclusive and consecutive meanings. Note that

the former can be replaced with adverbs such as ‘then’, ‘now’, depending on the context:

- (4) a. Det gick en tid, och *sen* skulle han resa igen.  
 it passed a time and then should he travel again  
 ‘Some time passed, and then he was going away again’
- b. Det är vackra saker, men *nu* kostar de också mycket.  
 they are beautiful things but now cost they also much  
 ‘These are beautiful things, but then again, they cost a lot.’
- c. *Nu* ska även du lämna oss!  
 now shall even you leave us  
 ‘And now even you are leaving us!’
- d. Jag kan ju läsa utomlands. . . Eller *också* läser jag turism här i  
 I can PART study abroad or also study I tourism here in  
 Sverige.  
 Sweden  
 ‘I can of course study abroad...or else I’ll study tourism here in Sweden.’
- e. Först det ena, *sen* det andra  
 first the one then the other  
 ‘First the one, then the other’

Adjunctive *så*, on the other hand, often cannot be replaced with other adverbs (without changing the essential meaning). It is altogether a grammatical word:

- (5) a. Och *sen* (??*då*) frös jag in det  
 and then then froze I in it  
 ‘And then I froze it in’



- b. *Men något överraskande (\*då)* beslöt istället  
 but somewhat surprisingly then decided instead  
 landssekretariatet att bordlägga frågan  
 the.county.secretariat to table the.question  
 'But somewhat surprisingly, the county secretariat decided to table the  
 question'
- c. *I alla fall (\*då)* bryr vi oss inte om det  
 in all cases then care we us not about it  
 'At any rate, we don't care about it'
- d. *Alla, (\*då/\*nu)* skulle de gå på festen  
 all then/now should they go on the.party  
 'They all were determined to go to the party'
- e. *Det enda småbarn skriker för (\*då/\*nu)* är det tandvärk.  
 the only small.children scream about then now is it toothache  
 'The only thing small children scream about is toothache'

Yet another function of the lexeme *så* that both overlaps with adjunctive *så* and  
 conclusive adverbial *så* is *så* as a conclusive conjunction (SAOB: S, 15835):

- (6) Det är vackert väder, *så* ni följer väl med?  
 it is beautiful weather so you come PART PART  
 'It is such a nice weather, so you are coming with us right?'

According to SAOB (S, 15835) and SAG (II, 670), adjunctive *så* can also, like  
 conjunctive *så*, precede certain full clauses, namely imperative clauses, content  
 questions, exclamatives, and declarative clauses introduced by negation, the as-  
 sumptive particle *nog* 'surely', or, marginally, other oblique constituents:

- (7) a. Vad rätt regeringen än har gjort, *så* inte är det vädret.  
 what right the.government ever has done so not is it the.weather  
 'Whatever the government has done right, it isn't the weather.'  
 (SAOB: S, 15835)

- b. Om jag än skall svälta ihjäl här, så nog skall jag bli kvar till det  
if I even shall starve to death here, so surely shall I be left to the  
sista.  
last  
'Even if I shall starve to death here, I will surely remain to the last.'  
(SAOB: S15835)
- c. ?Vad som än händer så stugan behåller jag  
what that ever happens so the house keep I  
'Whatever happens, I will keep the house.' (SAG: IV, 455)
- d. För all del, men även om du tror det, så tala inte om det för dom.  
for all part but even if you think it so tell not PART it for them  
'By all means, but even if you think so, don't tell them' (SAOB: S15835)
- e. Om Riggins...stuckit till Indianapolis för att träffa en karl där, så varför  
if Riggins gone off to Indianapolis for to meet a guy there so why  
dök den där karln aldrig upp i så fall?  
showed that there guy never up in so case  
'If Riggins has gone off to Indianapolis to meet a guy there, why didn't  
that guy show up in that case?' (SAOB: S, 15835)
- f. Hur som helst (så) har du hört det senaste?  
how as ever so have you heard the latest  
'Anyway, have you heard the latest news?' (SAG: IV, 454)
- g. Lär Ni ut sådant beteende . . . i skolan, så ve och fasa.  
teach you PART such behaviour in the school, so woe and dread  
'Are you teaching that kind of behaviour in school, horrible!'  
(SAOB: S, 15835)

It could be argued, however, that these are in fact coordinate constructions involving the conclusive conjunction *så*, rather than adjunctive *så*-constructions. First, *så* has a conclusive meaning in these examples. Second, it is more

stressed, and there is a clear pause between the adjunct and *så*. Third, the adjunct can be placed clause finally, leaving *så* as the clause initial constituent, revealing that it, unlike adjunctive *så*, can stand by itself (i.e. as a conclusive conjunction):

- (8) a. *Så* inte är det vädret, vad rätt regeringen än har gjort.  
 so not is it the.weather what right the.government ever has done  
 ‘So it isn’t the weather, whatever the government has done right,’
- b. *Så* nog skall jag bli kvar till det sista, om jag än skall svälta ihjäl  
 so surely shall I be left to the last if I even shall starve to.death  
 här.  
 here  
 ‘So I will surely remain to the last, even if I shall starve to death here’
- c. *Så* stugan behåller jag, vad som än händer.  
 so the.house keep I what that ever happens  
 ‘So I will keep the house, whatever happens.’
- d. *Så* tala inte om det för dom, även om du tror det.  
 so tell not PART it for them even if you think it  
 ‘So don’t tell them, even if you think so’
- e. *Så* varför dök den där karln aldrig upp i så fall, om Riggins...  
 so why showed that there guy never up in so case if Riggins  
 stuckit till Indianapolis för att träffa en karl där?  
 gone.off to Indianapolis for to meet a guy there  
 ‘So why didn’t that guy show up in that case, if Riggins has gone off to  
 Indianapolis to meet a guy there’

To conclude, there are strong reasons for keeping adjunctive *så* apart from both conclusive-consecutive adverbial *så* and consecutive conjunctive *så*. The rest of the article focuses on adjunctive *så* in the *så*-construction, putting aside other related uses of the lexeme *så*.

### 3. Previous analyses of adjunctive *så*

In the previous section, adjunctive *så* was briefly described and delimited from other related uses of the word *så*. In this section, previous analyses of adjunctive *så* will be presented and evaluated.

Traditionally, adjunctive *så* has been analysed as a resumptive adverb that receives its meaning from the first element, which then functions as an antecedent. This analysis places adjunctive *så* on the side of another resumptive adverb in Swedish, *då* 'then'. The analysis works rather well when adjunctive *så* follows circumstance adverbials:

(9) a. Och *sen så* frös jag in det  
and then so froze I in it  
'And then I froze it in'

b. *När strömmen kommer så* sätter vi ändå inte på den  
when the.power comes so turn we still not on it  
'When the power comes back, we still don't turn it on'

However, adjunctive *så* can hardly be classified as a resumptive adverb when it follows quantifiers, free predicatives, free topics, and clause adverbials. Firstly, quantifiers, free predicatives, and free topics are not adverbial constituents. Secondly, these constituents, including the clause adverbials, are not the kind that otherwise bind anaphors (see (5b-e) above).

In fact, there are fundamental differences between resumptive *då* and adjunctive *så* even after circumstance adverbials. In contrast to resumptive *då*, adjunctive *så* cannot be stressed, and there is no pause between the first element and *så*. Furthermore, resumptive *då* can itself be constructed with adjunctive *så* (examples from GSLC):

- (10) a. nä men om ja{g} ska få de{t} här från ditt arbetspaket // *då så*  
 no but if I shall get it here from your work.package then so  
 jobbar ja{g} efter [...] processbeskrivningar  
 work I after process.descriptions  
 'No, but if I am to get this off your work package, I will work according to the process descriptions'
- b. f{ö}resten en gång nä{r} ja{g} å0 < sofia > va{r} ute å0  
 by.the.way one time when I and Sofia were out and  
 plocka{de} svamp [...] *då så e{h}* / var hon gick före mej på  
 picked mushrooms then so ehh was she walked before me on  
 stigen då [...] så / i var hon nära å1 trampa på/ i nå{g}ra  
 the.path then so in was she close to step on in some  
 kantareller  
 chanterelles  
 'By the way, once when Sofia and I were out picking mushrooms, she walked in front of me on the path, she almost stepped on some chanterelles'

Crucially, the reverse is not true. Resumptive *då* cannot follow adjunctive *så* (except in Finland Swedish; Sollid & Eide 2007: 17):

- (11) a. om jag ska få det här från ditt arbetspaket *så (\*då)* jobbar jag  
 if I shall get this here from your work.package so then work I  
 efter processbeskrivningar  
 after process.descriptions  
 'if I am to get this off your work package, I will work according to the process descriptions'
- b. när jag och Sofia var ute och plockade svamp *så (\*då)* var  
 when I and Sofia were out and picked mushrooms so then was  
 hon nära att trampa på några kantareller  
 she close to step on some chanterelles  
 'When Sofia and I were out picking mushrooms, she almost stepped on some chanterelles'

Another previous analysis of adjunctive *så* (and conclusive-consecutive adverbial *så*) is as an expletive in the preverbal position, as proposed by Ekeröth (1988: 57ff; translation by the present author):

an expletive first constituent in the following clause, that is to say a grammatical morpheme of the same type as the expletive subject *det*. Both morphemes are unstressed, lack semantic content and function as support to the word order.

One strong argument for analysing adjunctive *så* as an expletive is, as was shown above, the fact that the first element is typically an adjunct (except in Finland Swedish; see below). Since adjuncts are semantically and functionally not part of the clause nucleus, it would be reasonable to assume that they are adjoined to the clause, and that the preverbal position is reserved for bound constituents or expletives. Interestingly, when an adjunct is turned into a *wh*-word, it is more difficult to insert an adjunctive *så*. A search on GSLC on “*därför så*” ‘because’ yielded 53 hits that were *så*-constructions, whereas a search on ”*varför så*” ‘why’ yielded none. Since *wh*-words determine that the clause should be interpreted as a question, they can be assumed to be more incorporated in the clause than their non-*wh*-counterparts.

On the other hand, the situation is not so straightforward that *så* *only* occurs after adjuncts. SAG (IV, 695) notes that adjunctive *så* can also marginally be inserted after bound adverbials:

- (12) a. *Där så* har jag aldrig bott.  
           there so have I   never lived  
           ‘I have never lived there.’
- b. *I det här fönstret så* skulle man kunna ställa pelargonian.  
           in this here window so should one   can   place the.geranium  
           ‘In this window, one could place the geranium.’

More examples from GSLC:

- (13) a. *i sverige så har de{t} väl {i}nte försigått mer än typ*  
 in Sweden so has it I.guess not been.going.on more than about  
 hundra år  
 hundred years  
 ‘In Sweden I guess it hasn’t been going on for more than about a hundred years’
- b. *{p}å våra våra fackföreningsmöten så har vi {j}u roml allra*  
 on our our union.meetings so have we PART the most  
 livli{g}aste debatter  
 lively debates  
 ‘On our union meetings we have, as you know, the liveliest debates’
- c. *i den så finns de{t} ett litet avsnitt som heter [...] how to*  
 inside it so is there a small passage which is.called  
 think about artificial languages  
 ‘Inside of it, there is a short passage called how to think about artificial languages.’

This phenomenon is much more widespread in Finland Swedish, where *så* can even be inserted after bound nominal constituents (SAG IV, 695):

- (14) a. *Den informationen så når alla kategorier.*  
 that information so reaches all categories.  
 ‘That information reaches all categories.’
- b. *Det följande steget i utvecklingen mot en mer öppen*  
 the following step in.the.development towards a more open  
*högskola så kan man notera.*  
 college so can one note  
 ‘One can note the following step in the development towards more open colleges.’

In particular, *så* is common in Finland Swedish after noun phrases containing relative constructions (Sollid & Eide 2007:16ff):

- (15) *Å kly:varin såom vi hissa opp så linda ront fuö:sta:je.*  
 and the.sail that we raised up so twined around the.front.mast'  
 'The sail that we raised twined itself around the front mast.'

It is not the case, however, that *så* is completely confined to complex noun phrases; it can even occur after proper names in Finland Swedish (Sollid & Eide 2007: 16):

- (16) *Maria så förstår inte*  
 Maria so understands not  
 'Maria don't understand'

Although it is ungrammatical in Standard Swedish to insert *så* after nominal arguments, it appears to be acceptable to insert *så* after certain prepositional objects and other prepositional complements:

- (17) a. *På den här pilen så har man sågat av alla grenarna*  
 on this here willow so has one sawn off all the.branches  
 'On this willow, one has cut off all the branches' (SAG: IV, 694)
- b. *utan de{t} så har vi överhuvudtaget väldi{g}t svårt att överleva*  
 without it so have we altogether very hard to survive  
 va  
 right  
 'Without it, it would be difficult for us to survive at all, right'  
 (GSLC)
- c. *å0 ur dom så plockade ja{g} dom som va{r} av / i*  
 and from these so picked I those who were of in  
 förhållandevis bäst kvalite  
 comparatively best quality  
 'and from these, I picked those of comparatively good quality' (GSLC)



In particular, one can find many examples of *så* after experiencer prepositional objects in GSLC:

- (18) a. *för mej så* känns de{t} som om de{t} viktigaste de{t} e0  
 for me so feels it as if the most.important it is  
 jämförelse över tiden  
 comparison over time  
 'To me it feels like the comparison over time is the most important one' (GSLC)
- b. *för mej så* handlar de{t} om om // att man e{h} ska inte bara ha  
 for me so is it about about that one eeh shall not just have  
 tillgång till saker utan framför allt tillgång att kunna bestämma själv  
 access to things but above all access to be.able decide oneself  
 'To me it's not just about having access to things but, above all, being able to decide for oneself.' (GSLC)

*Google.se* further contains many examples of *så* following other prepositional objects with animate referents:

- (19) a. *Till mig så* sa han bland annat att den här dokumentärfilmen  
 to me so said he among other.things that this here documentary  
 hade varit ett avgörande.  
 had been a decisive.factor  
 'To me he said, among other things, that this documentary had been a decisive factor'  
 (*Aftonbladet* 2001-06-25. "Arklöv erkänner polismorden":  
<http://www.aftonbladet.se/nyheter/article26315.ab>; many similar hits)
- b. *Av oss så* får ni 10% rabatt vid fönsterbyte  
 from us so get you 10% discount at change.of.windows  
 'From us you will get a 10% discount when you change windows'  
 (*Länsförsäkringar Gävleborg*. "Inbjudan":  
<http://www.lanshem.se/upload/bobutik/24/file/INBJUDAN%20Mingel.pdf>; many similar hits)

In order to test the acceptability of *så* constructions with first elements that are prepositional objects and the like, an inquiry was carried out on 11 students at the Centre for Languages and Literature. All were native Swedish speakers. Tested were also constructions with free predicatives, quantifiers, and even certain objects. The students were asked to rate the examples on a four-grade scale from ungrammatical (\*) to dubious (??) to slightly marked (?) to completely acceptable (OK). In order to calculate a mean value for each example, the four grades were given the numbers 0 to 3, 0 being ungrammatical, 3 completely acceptable etc.:

Table 1. *Grammaticality test of så-constructions with prepositional objects, free predicatives, quantifiers, and objects*

| <b>Examples</b>   | <b>Mean value</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| <p><i>för mej så</i> känns det som om det viktigaste är jämförelse<br/> for me so feels it as if the most.important is the.comparison<br/> över tiden<br/> over time<br/> 'To me it feels like the comparison over time is the most important one'</p>  | 2,6               |
| <p><i>Till mig så</i> sa han bland annat att den här dokumentär-<br/> to me so said he among other.things that this here documentary<br/> filmen hade varit ett avgörande.<br/> had been a decisive.factor<br/> 'To me he said, among other things, that this documentary had been a decisive factor'</p> | 2,1               |
| <p><i>Utan det så</i> har vi överhuvudtaget väldigt svårt att överleva<br/> without it so have we altogether very hard to survive<br/> 'Without it, it would be difficult for us to survive at all'</p>   | 2,9               |
| <p><i>Alla, så</i> skulle de gå på festen.<br/> all so should they go on the.party<br/> 'They were all determined to go to the party'</p>   | 1,0               |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <i>Alldeles ensam med henne så vågade han ingenting</i><br>all alone with her so dared he nothing<br>‘All alone with her he didn’t dare to do anything’   | 2,6 |
| Hon är trevlig mot min lillasyster, men <i>mig så</i> slår hon bara.<br>she is nice to my little.sister but me so hit she only<br>‘She is nice to my little sister, but me she is just hitting all the time’  | 1,5 |
| Du går in på ”profil”, och sedan ”konto” och <i>resten så</i><br>you go in on profile and then account and the.rest so<br>fattar du själv<br>understand you self<br>‘You go to “profile”, and then to “account” and the rest you’ll un-<br>derstand yourself’ | 1,5 |

As can be seen from the results, the constructions with prepositional objects and free predicatives score the highest and can be considered grammatical, whereas the construction with the quantifier score the lowest (1) and cannot be considered grammatical. Interestingly, the constructions with objects (including the quantitative noun *resten* ‘the rest’) receive the median score 1,5 and not the lowest score, as one would expect. Indeed, for some informants, they were even rated as completely acceptable.

Thus, it is not true that the *så*-construction is completely confined to adjuncts in Standard Swedish. Certain complements, prepositional objects and adverbials in particular, can also be constructed with *så*. It is true that many of these prepositional objects are not obligatory but rather optional. Nevertheless, they are clearly more integrated in the clause nucleus than adjuncts, since the choice of preposition is not free, but governed by the valency of the predicate. These facts are arguments against the idea that the first element is adjoined to the clause and that *så* is an expletive in the preverbal position. Rather, it seems that the position to the left of *så* is a clause-internal one to which certain bound constituents can be *moved*.

#### 4. A new point of departure

In the previous section, it was concluded that adjunctive *så* cannot be analysed as either a resumptive adverb or an expletive in the preverbal position. In this section, it will instead be argued that adjunctive *så* is a head word, more pre-

cisely a relational predicate that introduces a new point of departure in the discourse, by relating the proposition in its complement, the figure, to the constituent in its specifier, the ground. Since the notion of a new point of departure partly overlaps with the notion of topic, and since the *så*-construction furthermore blocks topicalization of the subject or object, it is argued that the *så*-phrase is a variant of Rizzi's (1997, 2004) Topic Phrase, sharing some of its features.

One very general function that can be ascribed to adjunctive *så* is connecting element. Recall that SAOB (S, 15835) states that adjunctive *så* (and consecutive-conclusive adverbial *så*) indicates connections between elements in utterances or between conceived elements. One way of rephrasing this is to say that adjunctive *så* is a *relational predicate*, like verbs and prepositions are (Langacker 1987). Like verbs and prepositions, adjunctive *så* can be thought to be a head word in a phrase which selects a complement, the rest of the clause, and links this to a specifier, the first element. The specifier can either be filled by a bound constituent that moves there or an adjunct that is directly inserted there. More precisely, adjunctive *så* can be said to relate the proposition as a trajectory/figure to the first element as a landmark/ground. The first element is a landmark/ground in the sense that it provides a new reference point, or point of departure for the utterance. The new point of departure can, among other things, be the following (*p* = proposition):

- a different point of view      *För min del så...* 'For my part...'
- a different kind of assertion *Ärligt talat så...* 'To be honest...'
- a resumption                    *Hur som helst så...* 'In any case...'
- an additional comment        *Förövrigt så...* 'Apart from that...'
- a particular condition        *Om p så...* 'If *p*...'
- a particular circumstance    *Eftersom p så...* 'since *p*...'
- a particular time point        *När p så...* 'When *p*...'

The prototypical new point of departure is the conditional protasis, which states that the proposition in the apodosis only holds under the condition expressed in the protasis. Notably, this clause is also the prototypical first element of the *så*-construction, the only element which is completely permitted to be constructed with adjunctive *så* in formal Swedish.

In a sense, the term *theme* would suit the first element of the *så*-construction, if one, like Halliday (1985: 36ff), takes theme to be the “point of departure for what the speaker is going to say”. According to Halliday (1985), this applies to the first element in a sentence, including adverbial constituents. There are, however, certain problems with both the term theme and Halliday’s (1985) definition of it. First, the term theme usually refers to given information and the notion of topic, what the sentence is about. Both these notions are applicable to initial subjects and objects, but typically not to initial adverbial constituents. In fact, in a sentence with an initial adverbial constituent, e.g. a conditional protasis, this constituent is the new point of departure, whereas some other constituent, typically the subject, is the given information and what the sentence is about. Arguably, therefore, these notions should, at least partially, be kept apart.

The separation of the notions new point of departure and theme would explain why core arguments such as subjects and objects cannot be constructed with adjunctive *så* (except in Finland Swedish). These are typically given topics. Note further that when prepositional objects are constructed with *så*, these are not given topics:

- (20) *Till mig så* sa han bland annat att den här dokumentärfilmen  
 to me so said he among other things that this here documentary  
 hade varit ett avgörande.  
 had been a decisive factor  
 ‘To me he said, among other things, that this documentary had been a decisive factor’

The utterance in (20) is not about the fronted prepositional object (*till mig*), but about the subject (*han*). Rather, the prepositional object presents a new point of departure and is contrasted with other points of departure in the discourse (it is implied that the subject may have acted differently in relation to other referents).

As was said above, Finland Swedish has a more wide use of adjunctive *så*<sup>5</sup>. It can also occur after subjects and objects. It seems, however, that these are typi-

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<sup>5</sup> Sollid & Eide (2007: 20ff) suggest that the difference in distribution between Finland Swedish and Standard Swedish *så* may be due to influence from the Finnish clause-initial connecting particle *ni*. *Ni* is also a spoken language phenomenon and occurs after heavy noun

cally *new* sentence topics, and hence, new points of departure, as can be seen in the following example from Sollid & Eide (2007: 17):

- (21) Jag sa nog i fjol att vi köpte ett hus men då, *Mervi som bor i Skata också så* sade, rättade mig alltid och sade ”fyra”.  
 I said PRT last year that we bought a house but then Mervi who lives in Skata too so said corrected me always and said four  
 ‘I said last year that we bought a house, but then Mervi, who lives in Skata too, said ... always corrected me and said “four”.’

Note that (21) is an adversative coordinate construction where the new sentence topic in the second main clause (*Mervi som bor i Skata också*) – which is constructed with *så* – is contrasted with the old sentence topic of the first main clause (*jag*) – which is not constructed with *så*. Indeed, relative constructions, which are particularly often constructed with *så* in Finland Swedish, are used to identify or add information about a referent, functions which are fully compatible with the notion of a new point of departure, but not to a given topic.

Although subjects and objects that function as new topics cannot be constructed with *så* in Standard Swedish, new-topic paraphrases such as *beträffande X*, *vad X beträffar*, *angående X*, *rörande X* ‘as for, as regards, in regard to’ in fact tend to be so in spoken Swedish (accompanied by a resumptive pronoun functioning as the actual subject or object in the clause):

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phrases, subordinate clauses and textual satellites (digressions from the main story line). According to Vilkuna (1997: 65), it is used,

in contexts where it is important to signal that the turn is being continued, either following heavy phrases or when an earlier line of discourse is resumed after a side sequence.

At least the resumption of an earlier line of discourse after a side sequence is reminiscent of a new point of departure. It is also interesting to note that in written language, V2 is used in these contexts instead of *ni*. This clearly suggests that *ni*, like *så*, lexicalizes a clause-internal functional category of the verb.

- (22) a. *Vad 1300-talseuropéerna* *beträffar så* hade de  
 what the.Europeans.of.the.fourteenth.century concern so had they  
 oturen att befinna sig i början på den drygt  
 the.misfortune to be REFL in the.begining on the roughly  
 femhundraåriga kyliga klimatperiod som - med ett lite  
 five.hundred.year.long cool climate.period which with a somewhat  
 missvisande namn - brukar kallas "den lilla istiden".  
 misleading name is.used.to be.called the little ice.age  
 'As regards the Europeans of the fourteenth century, they had the mis-  
 fortune of being at the beginning of the five hundred year long cold  
 climate period, which – a little misleading – is usually called the little  
 ice age. (Språkbankens konkordanser; many similar hits)
- b. ja *beträffande den här linjen så* tror ja{g} att  
 yes as.regards this here line so think I that  
 huvudansvaret här kommer att vara på < lars gunnar  
 the.main.responsibility here will to be on Lars Gunnar  
 andersson >å0 < per lindblad >  
 Andersson and Per Lindblad  
 'Well, in regard to this succession, I think the main responsibility will  
 lie on Lars-Gunnar Andersson and Per Lindblad.'  
 (GSLC; many similar hits)

Note that this is highly reminiscent of topic constructions in languages such as Japanese and Chinese (Saeed 2003: 200ff). The Japanese topic marker *wa* can in fact be paraphrased as 'as for' and can be used to *change topics*. The only restriction is that the new topic must somehow be available in the discourse (Akiyama 2002: 41):

- (23) *Nihonjin wa, hashi o tsukaimasu*  
 Japanese TOP chopsticks OBJ use  
 'As for the Japanese, they use chopsticks'

Interestingly, *wa*, like adjunctive *så*, can also occur after constituents expressing adverbial notions:

- 24) *Hachiji ni wa asagohan o tabemashita*  
 8.o'clock at TOP breakfast OBJ ate  
 'Speaking of 8 o'clock, I ate breakfast then'

The function of this kind of topic can be said to set "a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds" (Chafe 1976: 50). This definition is fully applicable to the first element of the *så*-construction.

In the light of the discussion above, it would be appealing to classify adjunctive *så* as a new-topic marker. Interestingly, Sollid & Eide (2007: 21) arrive at a somewhat similar conclusion in regard to adjunctive *så* in Standard Norwegian. The analysis of *så* as a new-topic marker would also, at least partially, fit with Rizzi's (1997, 2004) proposed Topic Phrase within the framework of Generative Grammar. According to Rizzi (1997, 2004), the Topic Phrase is an integral part of the clause, and the function of its head is to relate the rest of the clause, the comment (in itself a full proposition), to the topic in its specifier. In some languages, the actual topic marker is null; in others (e.g. Japanese), it is overt.

As was said above, however, the term topic, new or given, is often used in a sense that is not fully applicable to the first element of the *så*-construction. Sentence topics are often classified as what the utterance is "about" (Saeed 2003: 201), which would apply well to the first element in sentences such as (22a) and (b) above, on the one hand, but not so well to circumstance adverbials, on the other. As was said above, the conditional construction is not about the condition expressed in the protasis, but rather about some constituent in the apodosis. Therefore, the more narrow term 'new point of departure' is to be preferred.

Although the term topic is not fully applicable to the first element in the *så*-construction, the fact that Finland Swedish permits subjects and objects to be constructed with *så* and Standard Swedish has new-topic paraphrases constructed with *så* nevertheless indicates that the *så*- and the topic-construction are to some extent related. Arguably, the common denominator between the two notions is that a new topic is also a new point of departure. Therefore, it could be argued that the *så*-phrase is a variant of Rizzi's (1997, 2004) Topic Phrase, sharing some of its features. A syntactic indication that the *så*-phrase is a variant of the Topic Phrase is the fact that the *så*-construction and the topicalized sub-



ject/object construction are in complementary distribution; adjunctive *så* is always followed by an inverted clause, rather than a topicalized constituent<sup>6</sup>.

Another construction which is in complementary distribution with both the *så*- and the topic construction in Swedish is the focus-fronting one. To some extent, it might appear to be the case that the notion of focus is also, albeit in a completely different way, related to the notion of a new point of departure, in the sense that the focus is typically *new* information (rheme). However, the notion of a new point of departure should not be confused with the notion of new information, as the new point of departure can often be recovered somehow from the context (as in Japanese). This is made evident from the fact that the first element of the *så*-construction is often in the definite form, whereas the rheme is typically in the indefinite form. Moreover, the focus is typically also the most *important* information, which the new point of departure never is. Furthermore, as opposed to the new point of departure, the focal element often carries the main stress. Arguably, these differences explain why certain other fronted constituents cannot be constructed with *så*. The canonical focus-fronting construction is the *wh*-question. As was shown in (2a) and (b), *wh*-subjects and objects cannot be constructed with *så*. It might be argued that this is due to the fact that *wh*-subjects and objects are bound noun phrases. On the other hand, it was also noted in section 3 that when an adjunct is turned into a *wh*-word, it cannot be constructed with *så* any more either. Arguably, the same happens when a fronted prepositional object is turned into focus (25b):

- (25) a. *Till mig så sa han bland annat att den här dokumentärfilmen*  
to me so said he among other.things that this here documentary  
hade varit ett avgörande.  
had been a decisive.factor  
'To me he said, among other things, that this documentary had been a  
decisive factor'

---

<sup>6</sup> According to Rizzi (1997, 2004), fronted arguments either move to the Topic Phrase and become topics, or to the Focus Phrase, and become foci. The verb is generally assumed to move to the lower position Finiteness in declarative clauses in V2-languages like Swedish (see e.g. Roberts 2004).

- b. *Till MIG ??så* sa han det, inte till dig.  
 to me so said he it not to you  
 ‘To ME he said it, not to you.’

Other examples of focus-fronting elements are verb phrases and particles. As was shown in (2g) and (h), these cannot be constructed with *så* either.

To conclude, adjunctive *så* can be seen as a head word in a phrase that introduces a new point of departure in the discourse, as opposed to given topics and foci. Arguably, this phrase can also be assumed to exist when *så* is left out, since the clause initial constituent still has the function of a new point of departure (as opposed to given topics and foci).

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the proposed analysis of adjunctive *så* as a head word cannot be extended to resumptive *då*. As was shown in 3, resumptive *då* is more stressed than adjunctive *så*, can be separated from the first constituent by a pause, carries more lexical content, and can only occur after circumstance adverbials. These are all indications that *då* is an anaphor in relation to the first constituent, rather than a head word that selects it. Similar to constructions with resumptive personal pronouns following dislocated nouns in the Swedish left periphery, the co-indexed first element of the resumptive *då*-construction should best be seen as being adjoined to the clause.

## 5. Conclusion

This paper has treated Swedish adjunctive *så* in the *så*-construction and argued that it is a relational predicate that introduces a new point of departure in the discourse by relating the proposition in its complement to the constituent in its specifier. The prototypical point of departure is the conditional protasis, which states under what conditions the apodsis holds. This is also the prototypical first element in the *så*-construction. It has been concluded that the notion of a new point of departure should partially be kept apart from notions such as given information and topic, which are typically expressed by nominal constituents such as subjects and objects, and which cannot be constructed with adjunctive *så*. There is, however, an interesting overlap between the topic and the first element in the *så*-construction. When there is a change in sentence topics, this can be indicated by a new-topic paraphrase, which is in fact typically constructed with adjunctive *så*. Other analyses of the *så*-construction have been refuted. It has

been argued that adjunctive *så* cannot be analysed as a resumptive adverb, since it can also occur after free predicatives and prepositional objects. Nor can it be analysed as an expletive in the preverbal position, since certain complements can move to the position to the left of adjunctive *så*. Rather, the *så*-construction should be seen as a variant of Rizzi's (1997, 2004) Topic Phrase, sharing some of its features.

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