The functions of subjectless declarative main clauses in spoken Swedish

1. Introduction

In modern Swedish, in which verb forms do not express agreement in number or person, subject expression and V2 word order is the general pattern. Subjectless declarative main clauses do nonetheless occur to some extent in present-day Swedish, as they do in English, which is also a V2 language. The Swedish Academy Grammar (SAG 4:964) points out that (pronominal) subjects in clause-initial position may be omitted in declarative main clauses in spoken and informal written language, if the subjects are redundant in the context (cf. Quirk et al. 1985:895ff.; Biber et al. 1999:157f., 1104f. on English). In written language, occurrences can typically be found in short announcements such as advertisements, signs and headlines (SAG 4:692f.), as well as in diaries, letters and messages of different kinds, e.g. *Sänder en hälsning från ett härligt semesterparadis* '(I am) Sending a greeting from a wonderful holiday paradise' (Wendt 2006:284). The unexpressed subject is often the expletive *det* 'it', as in *Finns så mycket som kan spela in där* '(There) Is so much that can play a role in that' (SAG 4:965). Deictic or anaphoric subjects may also be left unexpressed, as in *Kommer strax* 'Be there in a minute', *Han låter ansiktet svartna ... Går barfota ... Bryr sig inte om .... Har ofta ...* 'He lets his face turn dark ... Walks barefoot ... Does not care about ... Has often ...' (SAG 4:692f.). As Mörnsjö (2002) and Lindström & Karlsson (2005) have shown, subjectless clauses also occur in spoken Swedish, as in *Ja, var man festar... Börjar alltid med en liten förfest oftast* 'Yes, where do you party? Starts always with a little warm-up mostly' (Mörnsjö 2002:182).

However, Mörnsjö and Lindström & Karlsson analyze subjectless declarative main clauses as part of the more general V1 pattern in Swedish, in which different constituents in clause-initial position may be left unexpressed, for example *Ø Kan vi göra* '(That) can we do' (Mörnsjö 2002:58). V1 clauses deviate from the basic XVS word order in Swedish, where X stands for the clausal base or topic constituent that generally has to be filled in declarative main clauses. When a clausal constituent is placed in the topic position, the position of the constituent in the clause that follows the base is empty (Lindström & Karlsson 2005:98ff.), cf. *Ni får (-) kaffe snart* 'You will get coffee soon', *Kaffe får ni (-) snart* 'Coffee you will get soon, *Snart får ni kaffe (-)* 'Soon you will get coffee.' According to Mörnsjö (2002:80), declaratives with an empty clausal base typically develop the discourse either by topic progression or linear thematic progression, e.g. *Och här har vi en bild. Kommer från Karin i Sollentuna* 'And here we have a picture. Comes from Karin in Sollentuna.' She, however, also notes that V1 clauses with a missing element "often appear in (quick) answers to questions [...] or comments to a previous utterance" (p. 82). In a similar fashion, Lindström & Karlsson (2005:125) note that "[q]uite often the effect of V1 is as if something was said in a passing, even in a laconic manner […]". They conclude that V1 declaratives of different types form a communicative resource which provides a method of "constructing sequential discourse cohesion by, in an explicitly structural sense, building on a prior utterance by the same speaker or another speaker" (p. 125). V1 clauses can therefore be described as event-dependent or appended (p. 101).

Lindström & Karlsson (2005:104) do not assume that there is any functional difference between V1 clauses with or without subjects, and they note as well that "one or other variant may be statistically more typical of certain discourse environments (perhaps conditioned by the subject matter)". Oh (2005, 2006), who has studied zero anaphora in conversational data in English, however, shows that clauses without subjects tend to be used in certain types of contexts in English, for example when a prior TCU is resumed after a parenthetical insert, when a second saying is expressed due to a lack of response after the first saying, when the sequentiality of events is highlighted in a story and when

disalignment is being avoided. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore in what types of communicative situations subjectless clauses occur in Swedish conversations, how they relate to the preceding and following discourse and what functions they have. Like Oh, I focus on conversational data only.

The framework I work within is Interactional Linguistics (see e.g. Couper-Kuhlen & Selting, 2001; Lindström, 2006). My data consist of a collection of 77 occurrences from two different corpora of spoken Swedish. In section 2, I present an overview of the occurrences in the data. The use and function of subjectless clauses in situated contexts are analyzed in section 3. The paper ends with a summary and conclusions in section 4.

2. Data and overview of occurrences

In order to analyze the recurrent pattern of subjectless declarative main clauses in spoken Swedish, I have collected occurrences from conversations in the corpora of the projects *Grammar in Conversation: A Study of Swedish* (GRIS) and *The Language and Music Worlds of High School Students* (GSM). The GRIS corpus includes various types of conversations, e.g. everyday conversations, focus group discussions, TV discussions and different types of institutional conversations. The GSM corpus consists of 25 group discussions with high school students on music styles and attitudes to music based on music samples played to the participants in the situation. The discussions with 2–5 participants are moderated by a researcher, but she keeps a low profile throughout and lets the students discuss in a lively manner. Three randomly chosen discussions from the GSM corpus have been included in the data[1].

The data consist of approximately 4,5 hours (278 min.) of speech in total. Table 1 shows an overview of the conversations and the number of occurrences found in each. As the figures show, subjectless declarative main clauses do not form a particularly frequent phenomenon in Swedish conversations. The relative

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[1] The first discussions in the Word-file with all the transcriptions were included in the data (one discussion was left out due to problems with the sound file).

frequency per minute varies between 0.13 in the focus group and family discussions and 0.47 in the music program.

Table 1. Conversations and number of occurrences in the data.

Conversation	Length	Occurrences	Occ./min.
GRIS:SÅINF (coffee party)	32 min.	10	0.31
GRIS:USAMGRAM (coffee party)	30 min.	8	0.27
GRIS:Wallenberg (family discussion)	30 min.	4	0.13
GRIS:L TEMA K: GML 4 (focus group)	31 min.	4	0.13
GRIS:Tryck till (music program on TV)	30 min.	14	0.47
GSM:1 (discussion on music)	33 min.	8	0.24
GSM:10 (discussion on music)	51 min.	15	0.30
GSM:25 (discussion on music)	41 min.	14	0.34
Total	278 min.	77	0.28

Table 2 shows what the subjects of the clauses in the data would be if expressed. Since verbs do not convey number or person in present-day Swedish, this information must be inferred from the context. In 26 cases the subject would, if expressed, be the first person singular pronoun *jag* 'I', in two cases the first person plural pronoun *vi* 'we', and in two cases the second person singular *du* 'you'. Third person subjects are the most frequent type of unexpressed subjects in the data. In five of the 46 cases, the subject would be the indefinite pronoun *man* 'one', and in 12 cases the expletive pronoun *det* 'it'[2]. There are 29 unexpressed third person subjects that fall into 'other types,' 21 of which are singular referents.

Table 2. Types of unexpressed subjects in the data.

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[2] By expletive *det* I refer to cases where the syntactic function of *det* would be to hold the place of the subject e.g. in clauses where a meaningful component (such as an indefinite NP) is postposed (cf. example 1) and in clauses with verbs that take *det* as a formal or "dummy" subject (cf. example 3).

Subject	Occurrences
1 person singular (*jag* 'I')	26
1 person plural (*vi* 'we')	2
2 person singular (*du* 'you')	2
2 person plural (*ni* 'you)	0
3 person singular: expletive *det* 'it'	12
3 person singular: *man* 'one'	5
3 person singular: other cases	21
3 person plural	6
3 person singular/plural	2
Unclear cases	1
Total	77

Subjectless clauses that involve both animate and inanimate referents can be found in the data. In 47 cases, the subject would, if expressed, be animate. In 12 of the remaining 30 cases, the subject would be the expletive *det* 'it, there', e.g. *finns väl ingen kossa som* '(there) is no cow that'. There are, however, 18 clauses which involve other types of inanimate third person referents, e.g. *förtjänar inte å va på nån lista °nånstans°* '(the video) does not deserve to be on any list'.

The verbs in the subjectless clauses are of various kinds, e.g. existential verbs (*ä: ju faktist de.* 'is actually that'); mental verbs (*tror inte att de va han.* 'do not think it was him'); perceptual verbs (*lyssnar på:: hemma tror ja* 'listen to at home I think'); auxiliary verbs (*>får säja< att: ja inte kan läsa °nånting°* 'have to say that I cannot read anything'); motion verbs (*går som en våg* 'goes like a wave'); state verbs (*sov gladeligen två timmar.* 'slept for two hours'); and action verbs (*mixar mixar techno å beatles* 'mixing mixing techno and Beatles').

The subjectless clauses in the data form comments on the situation or something said in the situation; elaborations; final points or evaluations; and brief responses to, for example, requests, questions and evaluations. Occurrences in narrative contexts, in which the subjectless clauses track the

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referent expressed by the subject in the preceding clause (Himmelmann 1996), are rare in the data. Since animacy, number and person do not play a crucial role for the use of subjectless clauses, explanations have to be searched for in the communicative context of the clauses. In the following sections, I will explore the communicative contexts of subjectless clauses in detail.

3. Functions in interaction

As pointed out above, the occurrences of the subjectless clauses in my data can be divided into four types based on the interactional contexts in which they occur: comments on the situation (section 3.1.), elaborations (3.2.), final points or evaluations (3.3.), and brief responses (3.4.). The categories in some cases overlap each other and should not be seen as mutually exclusive but rather as closely related. For the sake of textual clarity, I will, however, present and analyze examples of the four types separately below.

3.1. Comments on the situation

Eleven occurrences of subjectless clauses in my data occur in comments on the physical situation or something said in the preceding discourse. Example (1) shows an occurrence from the GSM corpus with discussions about music and music styles. In the example, the high school students are evaluating an excerpt of classical music that the researcher has played for them (lines 1, 3). While they are doing this, one or some of the participants are clicking with pens that the researcher has given them.

(1)   CLICKING SOUNDS. (GSM:25; F = researcher, GM1–4 = male high school students)
```
1    GM1: [men inga rytm-     ] i s- musiken   alltså=
           but  no   rhythm-      in s- music:DEF  DPRT
           'but no rhythm in the music'
2         [((pen clicking))   ]
3    GM2: =näej
           DPRT
           'no'
4         (1.0)
```

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5 → GM3: kommer bli  en  väldi   massa knäppande på [bandet        ]
           will:FIN be:INF a:NN huge:ADV lot  clicking   on  tape:DEF
           'will be a lot of clicking on the tape'
6                                                    [((pen clicking))]
7     (0.5)
8   GM?: *a:+a+a*
           DPRT
           'yes'
9     [((laughter))              ]
10  GM?: [*kan   du (lära   mej)*]
           can:FIN you  teach:INF I:OBJ
           'can you teach me'
11  F:   de     ä   [jättefiffigt å dela   ut] såna  här pennor
           it:EXPL be:FIN giant+smart.N to deal:INF out such:PL here pens
           'it's really smart to distribute pens like this'
12                   [((laughter))          ]
13  F:   ((giggling)) mm eh
14  GM2: alla   lägger undan dom
           everyone put:FIN away  they:OBJ
           'let's everyone put them away'
15       (2.0)
16  F:   ja hör   va   ni    säjer  ändå
           I  hear:FIN what you:PL say:FIN anyway
           'I hear what you say still'
17       (0.8)
18  F:   okej ska   vi vända   på
           okay shall:FIN we turn:INF on
           'okay shall we turn the'
19       (0.6)
20  F:   nej de vi har   ju  en   låt  kvar här
           no  it we have:FIN DPRT one:NN song left  here
           'but no it we have one song left here'
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In line 5, one of the high school students (GM3) makes a remark about the clicking sounds that the pens are producing. When he does this, he uses a subjectless declarative main clause: *kommer bli en väldi massa knäppande på bandet* 'will be a lot of clicking on the tape'. This remark does not relate to the preceding discourse. Rather GM3 comments on the effects of a non-verbal activity in the situation: since one or more participants are clicking with their pens, there will be a lot of clicking sounds on the researcher's tape. GM3 does not elaborate further on the matter himself. In line 10, however, another student asks one of the students who has been clicking with his pen whether he can teach him how to do this. In line 11, the researcher ironically concludes that it is really smart to give the participants pens. In line 14, GM2 then suggests that

everyone should put their pens away. Following a 2.0 second long pause, the researcher says that she hears what the students say despite the noise. This contribution is followed by another pause, after which the researcher takes the turn again herself and suggests that they should move on in the discussion (lines 18–20).

The comment expressed with a subjectless clause in example (1) forms a direct reaction to something in the physical setting of the conversation. Since the clause does not build upon something previously said, it does not construct sequential cohesion which, according to Lindström & Karlsson (2005), is typical of V1 clauses more generally. Nonetheless, the subjectless clause in example (1) is event-dependent or appended since it comments on an on-going non-verbal activity. The comment also expresses a conclusion, which is a rare function for the comments on non-verbal activities in the data.

Conversely, all the examples of the other subtype of comments on the situation, that is, comments on something said in the preceding discourse, do express conclusions of some kind. One of these occurrences is shown in (2) below. In the example, which is from one of the everyday conversations in the GRIS corpus, one of the women (M) participating in the conversation talks about how her child always cries for mom (line 1: *ma:mma*), rather than for dad.

```
(2)    "MOM, MOM" (GRIS:USAMGRAM; M, H, L = around 30 year old women)
1    M:    hh å   så  hör    man de (0.2) ↑ma:mma↑ (0.2)
            and then hear:FIN one it:N         mom
            'and then you hear it: "mom"'
2          ↑mamm[a↑? ((disguised voice))
            mom
            '"mom"'
3    H:          [˚hhh (.hh hh)˚
4    L:    men e[h,
            but
            'but eh'
5    H:          [˚(.hh)˚
6          (0.6)
7    M:    .h[hhh
8    L:      [f(ör) honom betyder säkert in[te:¿
              for   he:OBJ mean:FIN surely   not
              'for him means surely not'
9    M:                                      [hm:?
10         (0.8)
11   L:    mamma eller,
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                 mom    or
                 'mom or'
12               (0.6)
13    L:   [just: ↑dej↑    utan de  e      liksom allmänt den här,
            just    you:OBJ or    it:N be:FIN DPRT    generally this.NN
            'just you but it is like generally this'
14    M:   [nä:¿
            DPRT
            'no'
15→   M:   (får)    säja    de   t- ti [Sten som en   tröst.
            have:FIN say:INF that:N t- to  Sten as   a:NN consolation
            'have to say that to Sten to comfort him'
16    L:                                [(    )
17               (0.6)
18    L:   mm: .hh att han s(h)er(h) Sten som en   mamma¿
                 that he  see:FIN     Sten as  a:NN mother
                 'that he sees Sten as a mother'
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After lines 1–2, when M says that her child always says "mom, mom", participant L takes the floor and points out that *mamma* 'mom' may have a wider meaning for M's child than 'mother' (lines 4–13). In line 15, M responds to this by saying that she has to say this to Sten, her husband, to console him. She presents her response with a subjectless declarative main clause: *(får) säja de t- ti [Sten som en tröst,* 'have to say that to Sten to comfort him'.

In example (2) M does not comment on a non-verbal activity when she uses a subjectless clause. Rather, she draws a conclusion about what she will have to do based on what another speaker has just said. Her contribution thus expresses a reaction to a preceding contribution. As in example (1), the clause is directly dependent on a previous event, in this case a verbal event. M does not elaborate the topic of the comment further herself. Her utterance could be seen as partly self-directed and thus topic-closing implicative. In line 18, L elaborates M's comment by spelling out explicitly what M should say to her husband. L's contribution could, however, also be seen as an explication of her previous turn in line 13 (that M's son calls all caretakers "mom"). In the context following the sequence shown in the example, M goes on to talk about how her dad experienced the same thing as her husband. This does not relate directly to the comment in line 15. Rather, it elaborates the phenomenon discussed before the comment, that children typically cry for "mom".

The comments with subjectless clauses in examples (1) and (2) are clearly dependent on and second-positioned in relation to preceding events in the situation or discourse. They express reactions to something that has just occurred or been said, and this makes them responsive in the sense discussed by e.g. Linell (2009:106), who points out that grammatical constructions may encode sequential dependencies such as for example responsiveness. At the same time, the clauses are contributions that deal with activities not directly related to the activity in the preceding discourse. The function of the clauses in the examples seems to be to mark cohesion with the on-going situation or discourse in situations where some kind of change of perspective takes place in the conversation. In the following section, I will look closer at cases in which the subjectless clauses occur in elaborations of an on-going activity.

3.2. Elaboration

The largest group of subjectless clauses in the data (29 in total) can be characterized as elaborations of different kinds, that is, as utterances which specify or rephrase something said (Halliday 1986:203ff.). Example (3) shows an occurrence from the TV program on music videos in the GRIS corpus. Jo, who is a visiting guest in the program, is describing what you should do if you want to look vulnerable in a sexy way in music videos.

(3) VULNERABLE AND SEXY (GRIS:TRYCK TILL; M = moderator of the TV program, Jo = female guest)
```
1    Jo:  [...] [då e      re    s]å här om man e=
                then be:FIN it:EXPL like this  if  one be:FIN
                'then it is like this if you are'
2    ?:          [(he he)         ]
3    Jo:  =↑tje:j↑ (.) så ska      man ha      blåjeans och
           girl          so shall:FIN one have:INF blue+jeans and
           'a woman, then you should be wearing blue jeans and'
4         en  stor   herrskjorta, gärna    vit     då. .hh
           a:NN big:NN  men's shirt    preferably white:NN DPRT
           'a big men's shirt, preferably a white one'
5         [eh å  så-] så  i- eh ungefär i samma=
               and then  then in    about    in same
               'and then then in about in the same'
6    M?:  [ he he   ]
```

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7 → Jo:  =pose i ett fönster >å  ska     gärna
         pose  in a:N  window   and shall:FIN preferably
         'pose in a window and should preferably'
8 →       regna<, .hh när  man e     kille då [...]
          rain:INF       when one be:FIN guy    then
          'be raining, when you are guy then...'
```

In lines 3 and 4, Jo describes the clothing one should wear to look vulnerable and sexy, and in lines 5 and 7 the pose one should have (standing in a window). Having said this, she adds that it should preferably be raining. This elaboration of the description is presented in the form of a subjectless clause: *å ska gärna regna* 'and should preferably be raining' (lines 7–8). The TCU which the clause forms is uttered with a faster speed than the preceding and following TCUs in Jo's multi-unit turn (marked with > < in the transcript). The clause starts with the co-coordinating conjunction *å* 'and' and is followed by an in-breath, after which Jo starts to describe how men are also portrayed as vulnerable and sexy in music videos.

The subjectless clause in lines 7–8 in example (3) appears as a quick parenthetical addition before moving on to the next phase of the on-going description. It does not refer to the same subject as the preceding clauses. In lines 1–4, Jo uses a clause with the indefinite pronoun *man* 'one' in the subject position, and in lines 5–7 a construction without a subject or a finite verb (*så i-eh ungefär i samma pose i ett fönster* 'and then in about in the same pose in a window'). If a subject were used in lines 5–7, it would be *man* 'one' as in lines 1–4. In the subjectless clause in lines 7–8, the subject would be the expletive *det* 'it' (*å det ska gärna regna* 'and it should preferably be raining').

As in examples (1) and (2), the subjectless clause in example (3) is dependent on the preceding discourse. In this case, the clause expands an on-going description. It is explicitly appended to the preceding discourse with the conjunction *å* 'and'. Nonetheless, it is a clearly parenthetical contribution which breaks with the preceding discourse in some sense. This is underlined by the fact that the subjectless clause is uttered faster than the other TCUs in the turn, that it is followed by an inbreath and that the unexpressed subject is not the same as the subjects in the preceding and following clauses. As in examples (1)

and (2), the function of the subjectless clause seems to be to maintain cohesion in a situation in which a change of perspective takes place.

Example (4) from one of the group discussions about music and music styles in the GSM corpus shows a different case of elaboration with a subjectless clause. In the example, the high school students in the data are talking about the Swedish pop group Kent.

```
(4)    KENT (GSM:10; F = researcher, EK1–3 = female high school students)
1    EK3: a:   verk- man känner  verkligen igen den    typen    av
          DPRT real- one know:FIN really        VPRT that:NN type:DEF of
          'yes, real- you really recognize this kind of'
2         [mu][sik]
          music
          'music'
3    EK2: [a]
           DPRT
           'yes'
4    EK1:    [mm ]
5         (0.9)
6    EK2: de e    la  m- mest  engelsk (0.6) musik egentligen
          it:N be:FIN DPRT m- mostly English:NN    music  actually
          'it's mostly English music actually'
7    EK?: a
          DPRT
          'yes'
8    EK3: a:   egentli[gen   ]
          DPRT actually
          'well actually'
9  → EK2:         [kommer] la:  först från England
                  come:FIN DPRT first   from  England
                  'comes originally from England'
10        (0.8)
11   EK1: a:   iallafall så där pop å   sånt [(0.2)] kommer   mycke
          DPRT at least  DPRT   pop and such:N         come:FIN much
          'yes, at least pop and the like often come'
12        därifrån
          from there
          'from there'
13   EK?:                          [mm   ]
14   EK1: (.hh) så de   e    kul att de     kommer  svenska    band
                so it:EXPL be:FIN fun that it:EXPL come:FIN Swedish:PL  bands
                'so it's fun that there are Swedish bands'
15        (0.5) också
                also
                also'
```

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In line 1, EK3 says that you really recognize the music type in question (that is, music of the kind Kent plays). In line 6, EK2 elaborates on this by specifying that music of this kind is actually English. She is backed up by one of the other participants who says *a:* 'yes' in line 7. EK3 could be on her way to formulating a modification of EK2's specification when she says *a: egentligen* 'yes actually' in line 8. Overlapping EK3, EK2 takes the turn back in line 9 and specifies that the music originally comes from England. The specification, which rephrases EK2's contribution in line 6, has the form of a subjectless clause: *kommer la: först från England* 'comes originally from England'. The turn is followed by a 0.8 second long pause, after which a third speaker, EK1, says that at least a fair amount of pop music comes from England. Having said this EK1 returns to the main topic in the sequence, the Swedish group Kent, and points out that it is nice when there are also Swedish bands that represent the music style in question (lines 14–15).

The subjectless clause in example (4) is also clearly appended to the preceding discourse since it specifies something that the speaker has said herself in a preceding turn. In addition to this it relates directly to the on-going topic of "this type of music" (line 1–2). If expressed, the subject would most likely be the same as in line 6, that is, *de(t)* 'it (neuter)'. It could, however, also be *den* 'it (non-neuter)', which would refer to "this type of music" in EK3's turn in lines 1–2. In any case, the subjectless clause in example (4) is more integrated in the discourse than the clauses in the other examples discussed so far. EK2's elaboration with a subjectless clause in line 9 could, however, also be seen as a reaction to the response *a: egentligen* 'well actually' by EK3 in line 8, which suggests that EK3 is on her way to modifying EK2's contribution in line 6. By elaborating her previous turn EK2 seems to try to avoid disalignment by EK3. The clause is second-positioned both in relation to EK2's own previous contribution and EK3's preceding contribution. Rather than maintaining cohesion despite a change in perspective as in examples (1)–(3) the function of the subjectless clause in example (4) thus seems to be to mark cohesion with a non-adjacent preceding turn.

To summarize, the subjectless clauses discussed in this section function as devices for maintaining cohesion in situations when some kind of break occurs, for example when additional information is added parenthetically or as a continuation of one's own turn. In the following section, I will look at subjectless clauses which express final points or evaluations.

3.3. Final points and evaluations

Fifteen of the subjectless clauses in my data occur at the ends of turns or longer stretches of talk in what could be characterized as final points or evaluations. Example (5) shows a case in which the speaker herself makes a final point in a short narrative she is telling about herself. The example is from one of the everyday conversations in the GRIS corpus. The elderly women in the data are discussing bad weather, in particular heavy rain. Before the extract starts they have been talking about thunderstorms.

(5)   I WAS SO DROWSY. (GRIS:SÅINF; B, D = elderly women)
```
1    D:   nä ( ) (ja) va      helslö           hela dan      igår     altså
          DPRT    I   be:FIN whole+drowsy:NN whole day:DEF yesterday DPRT
          'I was so drowsy the whole day yesterday'
2         så att när ja kom          hem  då, (.) ja hade
          so that when I  come:FIN.PST home DPRT    I   have:FIN.PST
          'so when I came home, I had been'
3         vart   ute   då   gick    ja å  la              mej,
          be:SUP outside then go:FIN.PST I  and lie down:FIN.PST I:OBJ
          'been outside, then I took a nap'
4  →     (0.6) sov         gladeligen två timmar.
                sleep:FIN.PST gladly        two hours
          'slept just like that for two hours'
5    B:   man blir      så slö.    ja tror    vä::dret   e
          one become:FIN so drowsy:NN I  think:FIN weather:DEF be:FIN
          'you become so drowsy. I think the weather is'
6         hopplöst,=
          hopeless:N
          'hopeless'
```

In line 1, D first says that she was really tired the whole day before the conversation took place. She continues by saying that she took a nap when she came home (lines 2–3). In the middle of this contribution, she makes a

parenthetical insertion and says that she had been outside. At the beginning of line 4, she makes a 0.6 second long pause and then tells the whole point of the story: she slept for two hours. The point is presented as a subjectless clause: *sov gladeligen två timmar* 'slept for two hours'. As in many other examples discussed above, the speaker using the subjectless clause in example (5) does not elaborate on the matter expressed within the clause. Rather, it is another speaker who briefly elaborates on it. After the extract shown, the women in the conversation return to the general topic of bad and rainy weather, which they had been discussing before the extract.

The subjectless clause in example (5) differs from the other clauses discussed so far in that it expresses the whole point of a story. At the same time, it can be seen as a comment on something in the preceding discourse: D explicates the point of how tired she was due to the thunderstorms. She thus seems to confirm an allusion (Schegloff, 1996) that she has made herself in lines 1–3. As in the other examples discussed in the paper, the subjectless clause occurs after a break; the clause is preceded by a pause in the beginning of line 4. The speaker does not continue talking about the topic of her story after line 4, which underlines the impression that the clause is being used to express a brief addition to something already said. In a similar fashion, the function of the subjectless clause in example (5) seems to be the maintaining of cohesion. A similarity to some of the examples of zero anaphora in English analyzed by Oh (2006) could possibly be discerned as well. Oh (2006:832), who refers to Kim (1994), notes that zero anaphora can be used to "highlight the sequentiality of the events being described, especially in the climax of the story". When two actions are presented as if they were in direct continuity with each other, a story can be made more interesting (Oh 2006: 834f.).

The other type of subjectless clauses that occur at the end of turns or longer stretches of talk consists of evaluations or interpretations of something said. Example (6) shows a typical occurrence from one of the discussions about music and music styles in the GSM corpus. The example shows the final turns of a sequence dealing with a song by 2 Unlimited, which the high scool students

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characterize as Euro techno. Earlier during the conversation they were discussing a song by the Beatles.

(6)　EURO TECHNO (GSM:10; F = researcher, MM2–3 = male high school students)
```
1    MM2: [...] man måste   ju   gilla  de  för  de   gör   man ju
             one  must:FIN DPRT like:INF it:N cause it:N do:FIN one  DPRT
             'you have to like it cause you do that'
2         man gillar [de inte ]
          one like:FIN   it:N not'
          'you do not like it'
3    MM3:          [man blir]   ju  lurad     samtidigt
                    one become:FIN DPRT deceive:PP  simultaneously
                    'you are deceived at the same time'
4         .hh de     e
             it:EXPL be:FIN
             'it is'
5         (1.1)
6 →  F:   håller kanske inte i längden  riktigt
          last:FIN perhaps not   in length:DEF quite
          'does not quite last in the long run'
7    MM2: näej
          DPRT
          'no'
8    F:   °som Beatles° .hh
          like  Beatles
          'like the Beatles'
9    MM3: °som Beatles°
          like  Beatles
          'like the Beatles'
10        (1.1)
11   F:   a:  vi har ( ) den här sista  låten   också då
          DPRT we have:FIN this:NN  last:DEF song:DEF also   DPRT
          'yes, we have this last song also then'
```

　　Before the extract shown in example (6), the researcher concludes that the students do not seem too fond of the music style that 2 Unlimited represents. In lines 1–4, two of the participants in the discussion are responding to this. In line 6, the researcher puts forth an evaluation: *håller kanske inte i längden riktigt* 'does not quite last in the long run'. This evaluation has the form of a subjectless clause. MM2 directly aligns with the researcher (line 7: *näej* 'no'). When the researcher has added the increment *som Beatles* 'like the Beatles' in line 8, MM3 also aligns with the researcher by repeating what she has said in the increment (line 9). MM3's response is followed by a 1.1 second long pause

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after which the researcher suggests they move on with the agenda and discuss the next song (line 11).

In example (6), the subjectless clause occurs at the end of a larger stretch of talk, which contains a discussion about a particular type of music that the high school students are supposed to comment on. Before moving on to the next song, the researcher presents an evaluation that summarizes the thoughts put forth by the students in the preceding discourse. The clause thus has a somewhat similar topic-closing implicative function as the subjectless clause in example (2). The researcher seems to be confirming the ambivalence expressed by MM2 and MM3 in lines 1–4 by reformulating their thoughts (rather than her own). Instead of expressing a new contribution, the subjectless clause in line 6 explicates something already conveyed (implicitly) in the preceding discourse. The example is similar to one of the functions of zero anaphora in English which Oh (2006:835ff.) has found, that is, it expresses something on behalf of other speakers in order to claim understanding with them and avoid disalignment (cf. Oh 2006:838ff.).

The subjectless clause in example (6) is dependent on the preceding discourse in that it expresses a reaction or addition to something that has occurred or has been said. Like the subjectless clauses in examples (3)–(5), it adds an elaboration or explication of something said.

The common feature of examples (5) and (6) is that the subjectless clauses make explicit information that has already been implicitly conveyed. In the last section of the empirical part of this paper, I will look at occurrences where the primary function of the subjectless clauses seems to be to quickly respond to a request or similar, or to confirm or not confirm something put forth by the preceding speaker(s). In these examples, the subjectless clauses do not add or elaborate, but rather response briefly and confirm (or not confirm).

3.4.   Brief responses

Twenty-two occurrences in my data consist of responses that do not provide comments from another angle or form elaborations or additions to something

said like the subjectless clauses analyzed in examples (1)–(6). The subjectless clauses in these cases constitute brief and quick responses to something said, either in the form of a short answer to a question, request or evaluation, a confirmation or non-confirmation of something said, or the second pair-part of an adjacency pair such as greeting–thanking. Example (7) shows an utterance in which the speaker responds to a request by using a subjectless clause. The example is from the family discussion in the GRIS corpus. U, who is the mother, is asking her children S and V questions about school while she is cooking dinner.

(7)   MATH TEACHER? (GRIS:Wallenberg; U = mother, S = daughter, V = son)

```
1    U:   vem ska      du  ha     i ↑matt:e då
          who shall:FIN you have:INF in  math    DPRT
          'who do you have in math then'
2         de    ska     [du läsa.
          that:N shall:FIN you study:INF
          'you have to take that'
3    S:                 [K N: står   de.=
                         K N  say:FIN  it:EXPL
                         'it says K N'
4    U:   = K: N:¿
5 →  S:   vet     inte vem de    e,
          know:FIN not  who that:N be:FIN
          'don't know who that is'
6         (1.8)
7    U:   Kent [Nilsson el-
          Kent  Nilsson   o-
          'Kent Nilsson o-'
8    V:        [de  va      nån      som va      bra:.
                that.N be:FIN.PST someone:NN who be:FIN.PST good
                'that was somebody good'
```

In line 1, U asks S who her math teacher will be. S, who seems to be looking at a paper, answers that it says *K N* (line 3). In line 4, U repeats the initials mentioned by S with a slightly raising prosodic contour and thus puts forth a request to S to provide more information. S responds by using a subjectless clause and saying *vet inte vem de e* 'don't know who that is' (line 5). Following a 1.8 second long pause, U then suggests that it could be *Kent Nilsson* to which S' brother responds that this person is good (lines 7–8). In the context following

the extract shown in example (7), S, however, repeats her response that she does not know who K N is.

The subjectless clause in example (7) is, more than any occurrences discussed above, clearly dependent on the preceding context, since it expresses a direct answer to a request in the preceding turn (line 4: *K: N:¿*). It is an excellent example of the quick answers that Mörnsjö (2002:82) sees as typical for V1 clauses with a missing element (see section 1). The clause also signals the type of "lack of personal involvement, reluctance to co-operate (as regards a topic proffer) or sometimes even a confrontation with the other interactant," which Lindström & Karlsson (2005:112) point out as being one feature of the type of V1 clauses they call "response utterances." S quite clearly does not want to elaborate on the matter discussed (cf. the pause in line 6). As in most of the examples discussed in the paper, it is rather the other speakers in the situation that elaborate on the topic in question.

The phrase *vet inte* 'know not' has most likely been lexicalized and is used routinely in answers of the type illustrated in example (7), in which the speaker is unable or unwilling to answer a question put forth and seems fairly uninterested in the topic. As seen in most of the examples analyzed in this paper, subjectless clauses are generally used by speakers when they want to add something quickly without elaborating on the matter further. What the subjectless clause in example (7) seems to be doing is drawing on this typical feature as a resource: the speaker provides a brief and quick answer as a response to the preceding request but does not contribute to elaborating the topic further.

Another typical case of brief responses in the data are subjectless clauses that primarily confirm or do not confirm something said by the preceding speaker, for example an evaluation. In many of these cases, the speaker using a subjectless clause repeats the wording of the preceding speaker. An example of this is shown in (8). This is taken from the same sequence from the group discussion in the GSM corpus that example (4) is taken from. In the sequence, the participants are discussing music played by the Swedish pop group Kent.

```
(8)   MESSY SOUND. (GSM:10; F = researcher, EK1–3 = female high school students)
1     EK1: å    de   låter   ganska rörigt så   egentligen=
             and  it:N  sound:FIN rather  messy:N DPRT  actually
             'and it sounds rather messy actually'
2  →  EK2: =a::  kan    låta    lite rörigt °så    ibland°
             DPRT can:FIN sound:INF little  messy:N  like that sometimes
             'yes, can sound a little bit messy like that sometimes'
3     EK1: °.hja°
             DPRT
             'yes'
4          (1.2)
           ((giggling))
5  ?       *va bra* .hh
            how good
            'great'
6     F:   mm äh vi går  till nästa
                    we go:FIN to    next
            'mm eh, we go to the next one'
```

Like example (6), example (8) occurs at the end of a longer stretch of talk when the participants have been discussing a particular song and music style for quite some time already. In line 1, EK1 says that the music style discussed actually sounds quite messy. EK2 responds to this directly in line 2 when she aligns herself with EK1's evaluation by using almost the same wording as EK1. Whereas EK1 has said that the music *sounds rather messy*, EK2 tones down the evaluation and says that it *can sound a little messy*. When she does this, she uses a subjectless clause: *=a:: kan låta lite rörigt °så ibland°* 'yes, can sound a little bit messy like that sometimes' (line 2).

Like all the other examples discussed in this paper, the subjectless clause in example (8) is clearly dependent on the preceding discourse. In this case, the new clause structurally recycles the clause in the preceding turn to which it responds. As in most of the other examples, the clause does not lead to any further elaboration by the speaker. It only leads to minimal responses by the other participants in the discussion and some laughter. After these responses, the researcher moves on to the next song (line 6).

By repeating EK1's words in example (8), EK2 shows alignment with EK1. The subjectless clause underlines her alignment by signaling that she is relating directly to EK1's preceding turn. Like in example (7), the function of the subjectless clause seems to be to quickly and briefly react to something said by

presenting a minimal contribution to the topic. The clauses in both examples are clearly second-positioned since they respond directly to a request or evaluation put forth in the preceding turn. The responsive character of the clauses in examples (7) and (8) is thus strong. More than any of the other subjectless clauses discussed in this paper the clauses in examples (7) and (8) seem to function as responses without the introduction of new topical substance.

4. Conclusions

As shown in section 3, subjectless clauses clearly form a communicative resource in Swedish conversations. My point of departure in the analysis was the four types of contexts in which the subjectless clauses were found to occur in my data: comments on the situation or preceding discourse (11 occurrences), elaborations (29 occurrences), final points or evaluations (15 occurrences) and brief responses (22 occurrences). In the closer analysis of a number of occurrences in their situated contexts, it became clear that the primary function of the clauses is to react or comment on something said before or something salient that has taken place in the physical setting of the conversation. As well, the comments presented by subjectless clauses are short. In none of the cases analyzed in this paper does the speaker elaborate further on the point made in the comment. In all the cases the subjectless clauses are clearly dependent on the preceding discourse or situation, in that they explicate, elaborate or answer something just said or done. The responsive character of the subjectless clauses is salient. As shown in section 3.4, some subjectless clauses seem to have the function of presenting something as only responsive, with the purpose of avoiding making a new or further contribution to a topic. Another important and related aspect of the subjectless clauses is to maintain cohesion with the preceding discourse or situation. In many of the occurrences discussed, the subjectless clauses are used in situations where some kind of (short) break or change of perspective takes place, and this creates a need to mark the cohesion explicitly.

The common feature of the subjectless clauses in the conversational data I have studied thus seems to be to maintain cohesion in the conversation or situation and to avoid bringing in new topical substance. This is accomplished through the following functions of the clauses: commenting on something salient in the situation (example 1); drawing a conclusion based on the preceding discourse (example 2); making a point implicitly conveyed explicit (example 5); providing additional background parenthetically (example 3); aligning with other speakers by repeating or explicating what they have said (examples 6, 8); avoiding disalignment (4); and providing a minimal response to a request or question (example 7). Some of these functions, in particular aligning with other speakers, show some interesting similarities with some of the occurrences of zero anaphora in English conversations discussed by Oh (2005, 2006).

Lindström & Karlsson (2005), who have studied V1 clauses more generally conclude that V1 clauses give the impression that a communicative project is being continued. This is clearly also the case with the clauses analyzed in this paper. However, as shown in the analysis the speakers using subjectless clauses try to avoid contributing with (too much) topical substance. The point made by Lindström & Karlsson (2005:112) that responses typically consist of "less material than a conceivable syntactic full form response," also holds for the subjectless clauses in this paper. Subjectless clauses seem to be an established conversational practice in Swedish for responding, reacting or adding to something said or done in a way that maintains discourse cohesion and/or does not change the topic in a significant way.

Acknowledgements

Appendix A. Data

GSM = The corpus of group discussions with teenagers made available within the project *Gymnasisters språk- och musikvärldar* (The Language and Music Worlds of High School Students). Department of music sciences and Department of Swedish, University of Gothenburg.

GRIS = The kernel corpus of Swedish conversations made available within the project *Samtalsspråkets grammatik* (Grammar in conversation: A Study of Swedish). See http://www.tema.liu.se/tema-k/gris/.

Appendix B. Transcription symbols

[	point when overlapping talk begins
]	point when overlapping talk stops
=	single continuous utterance or two "latching" utterances
.	falling intonation contour
,	continuing intonation contour
?	rising intonation contour
¿	somewhat rising intonation contour
↑	sudden prosodic up-step
word	emphasis
wo:rd	lengthening of the sound
wo+ord	legato pronunciation
>word<	compressed or rushed talk
ºwordº	quiet or soft voice
(word)	uncertain transcription
( )	talk not discernible
wo-	audible cut-off
.word	word pronounced with an audible inhalation
hh	audible exhalation
.hh	audible inhalation
(.)	silence shorter than 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	silence measured in tenths of a second

((laughs))   transcriber's comments

word   pronounced with laughing voice

?:   uncertain speaker identification

Appendix C. Glossing abbreviations

DEF   definite

DPRT   discourse particle

EXPL   expletive

FIN   finite verb

INF   infinite verb

N   neuter

NN   non-neuter

OBJ   object form

PL   plural

PP   past participle

PST   past

SG   singular

SUP   supine

VPRT   verb particle

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Vitae

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