

# Scandinavian Dialect Syntax

## Routes to knowledge

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The purpose of this paper is to display how exiting a field of study syntactic variation across the Scandinavian dialect continuum is for linguistic theory. At the same time, we will show that the little we do know about this variation appears to be just the tip of the iceberg—as in most dialectological traditions the focus of study for the native Nordicist tradition has been in phonetics, phonology, morphology, and lexis. Therefore part of the talk will be concerned with presenting how the project *Scandinavian Dialect Syntax 2005-2008* will seek to chart the syntactic variation across the dialects of Scandinavia by combining current research questions of theoretical syntax with careful empirical methods developed for the study of linguistic variation.

An area of grammar where we already have quite extensive knowledge about cross-Scandinavian syntactic variation is the noun phrase, and we will discuss some issues relating to definiteness marking. Other issues that we will touch upon concern V-to-I movement, Object Shift, complementation, subject/verb inversion (V2), question formation etc. We will also show that the process of dialect levelling has been extensive in many parts of Scandinavia, and that for some of the most deviating phenomena it is just a matter of decades before speaker judgments will not be available anymore, and hence that action is urgently called for to document these grammars before they disappear.