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Ta og ro deg ned noen hakk: on pseudocoordination with the verb *ta* 'take' in a grammaticalization perspective

Kjell Ivar Vannebo

The present paper deals with the construction *ta og/och V* 'take and V' in the Nordic languages. After a brief overview of pseudocoordinations of the type 'V₁ and V₂', the use and meaning of the *ta*-construction is discussed, with special emphasis on Modern Norwegian. It is argued that the subject of the activity expressed by V₂ must normally have an agentive role, and that the construction has an intentional and initiating meaning. After having established the meaning of the modern construction, the historical development of the construction is discussed. On the basis of Old Norse examples, it is argued that the *ta*-construction has developed out of paratactically combined sentences where *ta* has been desemantized, and has come to function as a kind of auxiliary. However, this development must, at least partly, have taken place at a very early stage. A hypothesis that the *ta*-construction has been borrowed from Greek is rejected.

Keywords grammaticalization, historical development, semantics, syntax

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1. ON PSEUDOCOORDINATION IN THE NORDIC LANGUAGES

The main issue of this paper is to discuss the historical development of the *ta*-construction. The construction has been described as a result of a grammaticalization process, but very little has been done to prove when and how this process has taken place.

In order to discuss the status and development of the construction in more detail, I shall first give an overview of the syntactic and semantic characteristics which may be said to constitute the *ta*-construction as a separate grammatical construction in Modern Norwegian and then, in the second part of the paper, I shall try to demonstrate – by use of examples from Old Norse – how the construction has developed. To begin with, however, I shall give a short presentation of similar constructions in the Nordic languages.

In the Nordic languages there are a lot of constructions with two verbs, the first functioning as a kind of auxiliary and the second as a main verb. The verbs

are connected by the conjunction *og/och* ‘and’, and on the surface level the verbs apparently seem to be coordinated (through a paratactic relation), whereas at a deeper level of representation the second verb is subordinated (through a hypotactic relation). These constructions are therefore commonly referred to as instances of PSEUDOCOORDINATION (see e.g. Josefsson 1991, Tonne 2001).¹

Different types of these constructions are illustrated by the following examples:

- (1) Gutten sitter og leser.
boy-DEF sits and reads
 ‘The boy is reading.’

To this group belong constructions with positional verbs like *sitte* ‘sit’, *ligge* ‘lie’ and *stå* ‘stand’ with aspectual meaning.

In (2a) we find constructions with ‘to be’ + main verb, and (2b) consists of constructions with a motion verb + main verb. The constructions in (2a) and (2b) may be said to express a ‘distant locative’, cf. NRG:536f..

- (2) a. Han er og bader.
he is and swims
 ‘He is out swimming.’
 b. De gikk og kjøpte is.
they went and bought ice-cream
 ‘They went/ left to buy ice cream.’

In addition comes a third type (type 3), which is illustrated above, in the title of this article:

- (3) Ta og ro deg ned noen hakk. (Lindell, *Drømmefangeren*, 1999)
take and cool yourself down a bit
 ‘Just cool it a bit.’

This last type will be the subject of this article, but first I would like to sum up some syntactic and semantic characteristics of pseudocoordinations in general as compared with true coordinations.

Comparing, for instance, the sentence in (1) with the sentence *Gutten skriver og leser* ‘The boy writes and reads’, we notice that the relation between the two is different. This becomes manifest by the processes of negation and interrogation, and by the mutual position of the verbs:

- (4) a. *Gutten skriver ikke og leser. – Gutten sitter ikke og leser.²
boy-DEF writes not and reads – boy-DEF sits not and reads
 Gutten skriver og leser ikke. – *Gutten sitter og leser ikke.
boy-DEF writes and reads not – boy-DEF sits and reads not

- b. *Skriver gutten og leser? – Sitter gutten og leser?
writes boy-DEF and reads? – *sits boy-DEF and reads?*
 Skriver og leser gutten? – *Sitter og leser gutten?
writes and reads boy-DEF – *sits and reads boy-DEF*
- c. Gutten leser og skriver. – *Gutten leser og sitter.
boy-DEF reads and writes – *boy-DEF reads and sits*
 Gutten skriver og leser. – Gutten sitter og leser.
boy-DEF writes and reads – *boy-DEF sits and reads*

Furthermore, pseudocoordinations differ from true (or simple) coordinations by allowing the complement of the main verb to be topicalized: *Boka sitter gutten og leser_* 'the book sits the boy and reads _'. Such topicalization is not allowed by true coordinations:

- (5) *Boka skriver gutten og leser _.
book-DEF writes boy-DEF and reads _

This is a consequence of the fact that the last conjunct of a true coordination constitutes a syntactic island, which is not the case with pseudocoordinations (cf. Culicover & Jackendoff 1997:209, Platzack 1999:94). Moreover, an expletive *det* 'it' may be used in pseudocoordinations of the first type, whereas this is impossible in true coordinations (cf. Faarlund 1992:60):

- (6) a. Det sitter en gutt og leser.
it sits a boy and reads
- b. *Det leser og skriver en gutt.
it reads and writes a boy

Nor is the use of expletive *det* possible in pseudocoordinations of type 3:

- (7) a. *Det tok en mann og ringte henne.
it took a man and called her
- b. *Det tok en gutt og åpnet døra.
it took a boy and opened door-DEF-SING

The latter is one of many examples showing that although we may speak of pseudocoordinations as a group, there are also syntactic differences within this group.³

Pseudocoordinations differ from true coordinations not only syntactically but also semantically. With pseudocoordinations it is not a question of two separate and equal activities; the first (= introductory) verb has bleached and has got a more generalized meaning, and it serves first and foremost to emphasize a certain aspect of the meaning which is expressed by the following main verb. For an analytical approach, there will be two problems – first, to determine the meanings which

are being expressed by the different pseudocoordinations in their present use and, secondly, to determine to what extent – and, if possible, also WHEN – the introductory verbs may be assumed to have lost their original lexical meaning in the process of being integrated into a grammaticalized, syntactic construction. The first is of course in principle a synchronic and the second a diachronic approach. But in addition there is also a problem of a contrastive kind. Whereas pseudocoordinations with *og/och* constitute a characteristic syntactic feature of the Nordic languages, they seem to be almost non-existent in many other languages, e.g. in closely related languages like English and German. As for the *ta*-construction, however, it is also found in many languages outside the Germanic group (cf. section 5). This raises the question whether the diachronic development of this particular construction in the Nordic languages might be seen as a result of influence from languages outside the Germanic family – and, if so, from which languages – or whether we are faced with a polyglottic phenomenon, i.e. a parallel development within different languages or language groups. In what follows I will try to throw some light on all three problems.

2. THE USE OF THE *TA*-CONSTRUCTION IN MODERN NORWEGIAN

It may be stated at the outset that the use of the *ta*-construction seems to be fairly uniform in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. According to Icelandic dictionaries and my informants, it does not, however, exist in Modern Icelandic (cf. note 17). Where the construction is treated in Nordic dictionaries, it is said that above all it belongs to familiar or colloquial usage (cf. Guttu: *Norsk illustrert ordbok* 1993, *Ordbog over det danske sprog*, 1919–56, Östergren och Zetterholm: *Nusvensk ordbok*, 1919–72). At first, I shall give some examples to illustrate the use of the construction in Norwegian literary language. Examples (8) and (9) are from Ibsen, and they are here compared with authoritative English translations, where the *ta*-construction is not used.

- (8) ... så er det bedst, at jeg ta'r og binder Dem da.
so is it best that I take and bind you then
 (Ibsen XIII, Når vi døde vågner:274)

'Then it would be best for me to tie you up.'

(Transl. by Rolf Fjelde in

Ibsen: The Complete Major Prose Plays, New York 1978:1083)

'Then, I'd better take you and tie you up.'

(Transl. by James Mc Farlane, *Oxford Ibsen*, Oxford UP, London 1961,
 vol. 8:298)

- (9) Jeg syntes det var fornøjetigt, når du tog og legte med mig,
I thought it was fun when you took and played with me

ligesom de syntes det var fornøjetligt, når jeg tog og legte med dem.
as they thought it was fun when I took and played with them
 (Ibsen VIII, *Et dukkehjem*:358)

'I thought it was fun when you played with me, just as they thought it fun when I played with them.' (Fjelde NY 1978:191)

'I thought it was fun when you came and played with me, just as they thought it was fun when I went and played with them.' (Mc Farlane, *Oxford Ibsen*, vol. 5:281)

(Cf. also Bernhard Schulze's German translation of *Nora* in Bibliothek der Weltliteratur, Berlin 1987: 'Ich fand es amüsant, wenn du mit mir spieltest, so wie es den Kindern Spass machte, wenn ich mit ihnen spielte.')

It is typical that the construction is found in Ibsen's later plays, which are characterized by what the author himself referred to as 'a true, realistic language'.⁴ Ibsen was familiar with the construction from spoken Norwegian, and so he used it in his dialogues. The same has later been done by authors like Hamsun, Bojer and Vesaas:

(10) Ta nu og gjør det av! (Hamsun, *August* I:44)
take now and do it off
 'Just do it!'

(11) Ta og kast'n overbord! (Bojer, *Den siste viking*:74)
take and throw-him overboard
 'Throw him overboard!'

(12) Vi får berre ta og bera henne opp. (Vesaas, *Vårnatt*:61)
we get only take and carry her up
 'We will have to carry her upstairs.'

In Olav Duun's novels, the *ta*-construction is frequently used in dialogues as well as in reported speech and quoted interior monologues:⁵

(13) Du får ta og gå heim. (Duun, *Menneske og maktene*)
you must take and go home

(14) Ja ha, sa Per Anders, og no kan du ta og leie inn kyrne dine
yes said Per Anders and now can you take and lead in cows-DEF your
 att... Og no tek du eit kristelig avskil med dotra di,
again and now take you a christian leave with daughter-DEF your
 du må pinade akte deg så eg ikkje tek og vanlagar
you must damned mind yourself so I not take and deform
 kroppen din! (Duun, *Juvingar*:15)
body-DEF your

'Well, Per Anders said, and now you may lead your cows in again... And now you take a christian leave of your daughter, you should be damned careful that I don't deform your body.'

- (15) Ein kunde rive seg laus med ein kvass liten rykk. Så tok ein og
you could tear yourself away with a sudden little jerk then took you and
 gjekk fram i bygda og kom bort der, imillom alle dei andre.
went in to village-DEF and disappeared there among all the others
 (Duun, *I eventyre*:177)
 ‘You could tear yourself away with a sudden jerk. Then you went into the
 village, and disappeared among all the others.’
- (16) Ho fekk ta og snakke med han, for elles kom det einkvan annan
she got take and speak to him because if not came it someone else
 og gjorde det ...
and did it (Duun, *I eventyre*:177)
 ‘She had to speak to him, because if not someone else would do it.’
- (17) Ja, no tok han og gjekk sin veg; han stod ikkje her lenger.
yes now took he and went his way he stood not here longer
 (Duun, *I eventyre*:230)
 ‘Yes, now he went away; he would not stand here any longer.’

And by present-day authors of criminal stories we find examples like:

- (18) Ta forresten og vekk Georg, ellers har vi det gående i hele
take by the way and wake George otherwise have we it going in whole
 natt igjen.
night again (Lindell, *Slangebæreren* 1996:65)
 ‘By the way, wake up George, or we shall have a terrible night again.’
- (19) Ta og ro deg ned noen hakk!
take and cool yourself down a bit (Lindell, *Drømmefangeren* 1999:216)
 ‘Just cool it a bit!’
- (20) Ta og ring’n og fortell hva som har hendt.
take and call-him and tell what that has happened
 (Lindell, *Drømmefangeren* 1999:218)
 ‘Call him and tell what has happened.’
- (21) I hvert fall tar jeg og ringer først, for å sjekke om hun svarer, sa
in any case take I and call first to check if she answers said
 Gurvin.
Gurvin (Fossum, *Den som frykter ulven* 1997:27)
 ‘In any case, I’ll call her first to check if she answers, Gurvin said.’

The examples (19) and (20) are from passages with several features of colloquial language. Examples of authentic oral language are given in (22).

- (22) a. men så straks så tok han vært'n å spurte åm icke han
but then at once so took he landlord-DEF and asked if not he
 ville fl+øtta ner i en lit'n lit'n hybellæilighet i 2føsjte etasje
would move down in a small small bachelor flat on ground floor
 (TAUS A43/1221–23)
 'but then at once the landlord came and asked if he would please move
 downstairs' (Transl. in Wiggen 1981:38)
- b. å dærme så tokk jæ å ga henne en årtli et par årtlie
and with-that then took I and gave her a real a couple of real
 sjlag
blows (TAUS A02/ 401)
 'and with that I gave her a real – a couple of real – blows'
- c. så tok henner å lirka begge fl+ett'ne mine neri
then took her and wriggled both plait-DEF my down in
 den dærre skol+epult'n.
this school desk-DEF (TAUS A43)
 'then she took and wriggled both my plaits down in the school desk.'

But although the *ta*-construction is frequently used in spoken language and in written language rendering direct speech, it is also used in ordinary authorial descriptions of past time occurrences ((23a, b) from Norwegian, (23c) from Swedish):

- (23) a. Han tok og dempet høytaleren.
he took and lowered loud speaker-DEF
 (The Oslo Corpus. SK/ErAn/01)
- b. Odin vart heit om øresnippane, tok og tømte huva midt
Odin got hot around earlobes-DEF took and emptied cap-DEF right
 framfor dem...
in front of them (Duun, *I eventyre*:177)
 'Odin coloured up, and emptied the cap right in front of them.'
- c. Men så tog människan och gick in vid teatern.
but then took person-DEF and went in with theatre-DEF
 (Östergren och Zetterholm vol. VIII, col. 2)
 'But then this person joined the theatre.'

3. THE MEANING OF THE *TA*-CONSTRUCTION

In order to determine the meaning of the construction, we shall first call the attention to some restrictions on the use of *ta* in such constructions. The fact is that *ta* cannot be used in combination with all types of main verbs. The following sentences are all

ungrammatical in Norwegian:

- (24) a. *Lyset tok og sluknet.
light-DEF took and went-out
- b. *Veien tok og svingte.
road-DEF took and bended
- c. *Vinden tok og økte i styrke.
wind-DEF took and increased in force
- d. *Det tok og regnet hele dagen.
it took and rained whole day-DEF
- e. *Hun tok og følte at det var galt.
she took and felt that it was wrong
- f. *Jeg tar ofte og drømmer om det.
I take often and dream of it
- g. *Ta og sov godt.
take and sleep well
- h. *Hun tok og ble påkjørt.
she took and was hit by a car

The mainverbs (V_2 s) in (24) presuppose different semantic roles of the subject, but they all have in common that the activity expressed by the verb phrase is non-agentive. The condition for the use of *ta* seems to be that the subject of the activity expressed by V_2 must normally have an agent role.⁶ This is the case in the a-examples in (25)–(27), which are contrasted with the b-examples, without *ta*.

- (25) a. Vi tok og solgte huset.
we took and sold house-DEF
- b. Vi solgte huset.
we sold house-DEF
- (26) a. Jeg tok og leste boka.
I took and read book-DEF
- b. Jeg leste boka.
I read book-DEF
- (27) a. Hun tok og ringte til henne.
she took and called to her
 ‘She called her.’
- b. Hun ringte til henne.
she called to her

The use of *ta* in such constructions has been referred to as expletive or pleonastic by some scholars (for references, cf. Coseriu 1966:36), but in my opinion it may scarcely be doubted that the use of the *ta*-construction in the a-examples gives a special meaning to these sentences, which is lacking in the b-sentences. The difference in

meaning seems to be that the b-variants give a 'neutral' or an 'objective' description of the activity taking place, whereas in the a-variants it is emphasized that the activity came about as a consequence of a conscious DECISION or a particular INTENTION on the part of the subject referent. And it is usually the question of a momentary start of the activity, cf. also SAG, where it is said that the Swedish *ta*-construction expresses 'igångsättande av agentiv action . . . med en biton av plötslighet och spontanitet' ('the beginning of an agentive action . . . with an undertone of suddenness and spontaneity', SAG 4. 1999:907).

That the momentary meaning is associated with the verb *ta*, and not with V_2 , is evident from the fact that this meaning is also found in durative verb phrases as in (26), and not only in momentary verb phrases as in (25) and (27). The momentary meaning of the construction as a whole has the effect that, although the verb *ta* in itself may be combined both with verb phrases and adverbials denoting an ongoing or a slow activity, as in example (28), the *ta*- construction may not be used in the sentences in (29) (cf. Ekberg 1993b:130).

- (28) a. Han holdt på med å ta fra henne boka da jeg kom inn.
he held on with to take from her book-DEF when I came in
 'He was taking the book from her when I entered.'
- b. Han tok sakte boka fram.
he took slowly book-DEF out
 'He took the book slowly out.'
- (29) a. *Han holdt på med å ta og spørre henne da jeg kom inn.
he held on with to take and ask her when I came in
 'He was occupied with starting to ask her when I entered.'
- b. *Han tok sakte og spurte henne.
he took slowly and asked her
 'He slowly asked her.'

On the basis of the examples presented so far, we may speak of the phrases with *ta* as compound constructions not only syntactically, but also semantically. This means that the construction as a whole constitutes the predicate of the sentence, and that there is only one possible subject role for the construction as such. When *ta* forms part of the construction, we may assume that the subject role of *ta* is transferred to the role inventory that already exists at V_2 , and that the agentive aspect of V_2 is strengthened.

In some exceptional cases, however, the *ta*-construction may be used with a non-agentive verb as a main verb:

- (30) Hva om hun ganske enkelt tok og forsvant?
what if she quite simply took and disappeared
 'What if she quite simply disappeared?'

- (31) a. Ta og forsvinn!
 take and disappear
 ‘Just go and disappear!’
- b. Ta og kom hit!
 take and come here
 ‘Just come here!’

Unaccusative verbs like *forsvinne* ‘disappear’ and *komme* ‘come’ do not normally allow an agent role, but if the subject refers to a person, there are some contexts where even non-agentive verbs may get an active meaning of will (cf. Zaenen 1993), and in such cases *ta* strengthens the intentional aspect of the activity. The *ta*-construction may thus be used to express a planned and intentional activity, as in (30), or a directive, as in (31a, b). Therefore, a Norwegian soccer coach could also use the construction with *falle* ‘fall’ as a main verb when discussing so-called ‘filming’ (simulation) on the football ground, e.g. *Tar du og faller innenfor 16-meteren, er du garantert straffe!* (‘If you take and fall within the penalty area, you are guaranteed a penalty!’; NRK-tv 09.05.02), although *falle* is normally classified as a non-agentive verb with no intentional meaning.⁷

In her description of Swedish, Lena Ekberg distinguishes between two grammatical functions of the *ta*-construction: one aspectual (or Aktionsart-function) and one expressive (Ekberg 1993b:131f.). According to Ekberg, the aspectual function is most transparent in sentences where V_2 denotes an unlimited process. This may be illustrated by the following Norwegian examples:

- (32) a. Han tok og svømte/leste/spiste.
 he took and swam read ate
- b. Han svømte/leste/spiste.
 he swam read ate

In (32b) the activity is unlimited, whereas (32a) indicates a momentary activity which is a result of the initiatory meaning of the *ta*-construction. However, if V_2 denotes a limited process, we shall also have distinct aspectual readings, but in a somewhat different way:

- (33) a. Han tok og leste ei bok i går.
 he took and read a book yesterday
- b. Han leste ei bok i går.
 he read a book yesterday

In (33a) the focus – besides being on the accomplishment of the activity – is also on the moment of initiation. The aspectual difference between the two sentences becomes evident from cases where it is focused on a specific moment of time for the

activity expressed by V_2 :

- (34) a. Han tok og leste ei bok da det begynte å regne.
he took and read a book when it started to rain
 b. Han leste ei bok da det begynte å regne.
he read a book when it started to rain

In (34a) he started to read at the moment the rain began, whereas the normal interpretation of (34b) will be that he was already reading when the rain started. Whereas the activity in the matrix sentence must be interpreted as unlimited in (34b), it is limited – and clearly intentional – in (34a).

Because of its initiatory meaning, the *ta*-construction may not be used in predicates with prepositional phrases, denoting an ongoing activity:

- (35) a. Hun skrev på en roman.
she wrote on a novel
 'She was writing a novel.'
 b. *Hun tok og skrev på en roman.
she took and wrote on a novel
 c. Hun skrev brev i flere timer.
she wrote letters for several hours
 'She was writing letters for hours.'
 d. *Hun tok og skrev brev i flere timer.
she took and wrote letters for several hours

The *ta*-construction seems, however, to be acceptable in Norwegian with aspectual predicates, denoting the beginning, continuation or the ending of an activity in examples like (36).

- (36) a. Skal vi ta og begynne?
shall we take and begin
 b. De tok og fortsatte.
they took and continued
 c. Vi får vel ta og slutte for i dag.
we should probably take and stop for today

The use of *ta* with these predicates may be said to underline the intentional meaning of the sentences, thus adding a somewhat different meaning from what would be the case if only the main verbs were used as predicates.

Whereas the aspectual meaning of the *ta*-construction is connected with the momentary initiation of the activity, the EXPRESSIVE function is attached to the agent of the activity. Ekberg says that

The agent (the one who takes the initiative) of the activity is highlighted – whether the activity has got an inherent agent or not. The condition for this

kind of emphasis on the agent seems, however, to be that the speaker must be familiar with the situation being described or, more precisely, that the speaker views the situation from the perspective of the subject of *ta och V* ('take and V') (Ekberg 1993b:129).

This argumentation means that the syntactic construction is seen in a discourse perspective, and that certain aspects of the speech act situation will also be of importance for the use of the construction.

Let us have a look at three Swedish examples from Ekberg (1993b), which reveal interesting, contextual restrictions on the use of the construction:

- (37) ??Jag såg ett ungt par som tog och gifte sig i lördags.
I saw a young couple which took and married REFL on Saturday

What is odd about this example is, on the one hand, that the use of the *ta*-construction implies that the speaker is familiar with the situation, and that he sees the activity from the perspective of the marrying couple, whereas, on the other hand, it is signalled by the use of an indefinite noun phrase that the couple is totally unknown to the speaker.

- (38) ??Vem tog och skrev brevet till dig?
who took and wrote letter-DEF to you

When this sentence is considered unacceptable, it is because the speaker asks for the identity of a person who is, at the same time, presupposed to be known to her or him.

- (39) ??Han tar och går nu.
he takes and goes now

The *ta*-construction may hardly be used in the present tense combined with a third person subject. Ekberg explains this restriction by assuming that the subjective perspective, which seems to characterize the *ta*-construction, will be more natural in first and second – rather than third – person descriptions, and when used to describe situations which already have taken place.⁸ Consequently, all three examples, (37)–(39), seem to indicate that an important prerequisite for the use of the *ta*-construction is that the speaker/writer sees the activity from the perspective of the '*ta* og V'-subject. This involves a kind of identification or 'contact' between the speaker/writer and the agent of V_2 . With first person subjects the identity will be complete, and in directive speech acts as well as in imperatives with implied second person subjects (cf. examples (3), (10), (11), (18)–(20), (31)) and in some modal constructions with second person subject (cf. examples (13), (14), (16)), there will be direct contact between the speaker/writer and the subject of the *ta*-construction. They are in a concrete 'opplevingsfelleskap' (experiential community), to use a term from Rommetveit (1972:48). And very often the *ta*-construction is used, as shown by the

examples from Olav Duun above, in a context where the speaker/writer 'enters' the mental world of the agent in an attempt at creating an illusion of a more or less total amalgamation, like the situation described in example (15).

To take the perspective of 'the subject of *ta* and V' means – in Ekberg's cognitive description – that the speaker, by using the *ta*-construction, has established a 'mental contact' with the subject of the activity, which makes it possible to emphasize the intentionality of the subject (Ekberg 1993b:132). This may be illustrated by the examples of quoted interior monologues from Duun (cf. examples (13)–(17) above). But the same intentional meaning is also present elsewhere, when the construction is used. The result is that the *ta*-construction may generally be said to have a 'subjective' or an 'expressive' meaning in contrast to the corresponding sentences without *ta*, which have a more unmarked, 'objective' or 'neutral' meaning.

4. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSTRUCTION

As mentioned above, the *ta*-construction belongs to a larger group of pseudocoordinations in Norwegian, Danish and Swedish, i.e. constructions where there apparently seems to be a paratactic relation between V_1 and V_2 , but where the relation in fact is hypotactic. Therefore, it may be natural to consider these coordinations as examples of a more general development from parataxis to hypotaxis, which many scholars also think has taken place at a clause level, and which has been held to be among the typical examples of grammaticalization (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993:167ff.).⁹

As for the *ta*-construction in particular, it was noted in section 3 that it has certain grammatical functions, and that the introductory verb *ta* has lost its original lexical content and attained a more general meaning through bleaching. This kind of semantic development in the form of bleaching or desemanticization is, as pointed out by e.g. Sweetser (1988), Hopper & Traugott (1993) and Abraham (2001), characteristic of a grammaticalization process. *Ta* has lost its lexical meaning of 'to grasp' or 'to seize' in a concrete, physical sense, and has instead become a grammatical element with an intentional meaning, but during this process it has still kept some of its original meaning components. This development from a concrete to a more abstract meaning has led many scholars to speak of a METAPHORICAL expansion of the meaning of the verb (cf. Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994:283).¹⁰ Terms like 'bleaching' or 'desemanticization' are in themselves metaphors for the process which has taken place. This process should not, however, be looked upon as a semantic loss, but rather as a shift or a redistribution of meaning (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993:87f.).

When *ta* goes through this development, it has been interpreted as the result of a reanalysis, and one of the criteria showing that a reanalysis has taken place is that *ta* can be used in contexts where it should not be expected, for instance, in combination

with the same lexeme, as in English when *be going to* is combined with *to go*: *I am going to go to London* (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993:3). Similar expressions with *ta* are used in (40) (overheard spoken language) and in (41) (from Danish):

- (40) a. Skal vi ta og ta et ekstra tau under her?
shall we take and take one extra rope under here
- b. De tok og tok ut motoren.
they took and took out motor-DEF
- c. Jeg synes vi skal ta og ta oss sammen.
I think we should take and take ourselves together
 'I think we should pull ourselves together.'
- d. Så tok han og tok ut kontakten.
then took he and took out plug-DEF-SING
- (41) Vil Du øjeblikkelig ta og ta det grisseri væk fra disken.
will you at once take and take this mess away from counter-DEF
 (Chans. BK. 47, ODS:581)

A similar extension of the context where the desemantized *ta* may be used is also manifest in the examples already given in (30), (31) and (32a), *Hva om hun ganske enkelt tok og forsvant?*, *Ta og forsvinn!*, *Ta og kom hit!* and *Han tok og svømte*, where the content of V_2 is incompatible with the postulated original lexical meaning of V_1 .¹¹

Ta also belongs to a type of verbs which have proved to be candidates for grammaticalization processes in many languages. Generally, these are frequent verbs, and as for *ta*, it has been registered as the 11th most frequent verb in New Norwegian according to Vestbøstad (1989),¹² and according to Heggstad (1982), it is number 41 among all words in Norwegian. Many of the most frequent verbs are auxiliaries or quasi-auxiliaries. In Hopper & Traugott (1993) verbs representing some intermediate stage between a full verb and an auxiliary are referred to as 'vector verbs' (after Hook 1974, 1991). A vector verb is 'a quasi-auxiliary which is finite and therefore carries markers of tense, aspect and mood. Semantically, it adds nuances of aspect, direction, and benefaction to the clause. The compound verb as a whole may occur with true auxiliaries indicating grammatical distinctions of tense, person and number' (Hopper & Traugott 1993:109). As for the combination of the *ta*-construction with true auxiliaries, consider the examples (12)–(14) above. Among the verbs mentioned as vector verbs in modern Indo-Aryan languages are the equivalents of 'go', 'give' and 'take', all of which belong to the most frequently used verbs in the Nordic languages also, in addition to the true auxiliaries. Verbs like 'give' and 'take' denote possessive relations, and belong to a group of verbs which have been referred to as core or nuclear verbs (cf. Carter 1987, Viberg 1992). These verbs are not only frequent, but they are also among the most basic and unmarked verbs not only in European but in

many non-European languages as well. And their basic character makes them natural candidates for a grammaticalization process.¹³ Because of its more general content, *ta* is therefore a far better candidate for grammaticalization than its hyponyms *gripe* 'grasp, seize' and *fange* 'catch'. And as in many other grammaticalization processes marking a transition from a lexical to a grammatical word, there has also been – in addition to the semantic development – a reduction of phonological form (cf. Bybee & Pagliuca 1985:59f.) as Old Norse *taka* has been shortened to *ta* (cf. the parallel development of the auxiliary *hafa* > *ha* 'have').¹⁴

With basis in the criteria mentioned above, it seems natural to look upon the development of the *ta*-construction as a grammaticalization process. And it is described in this way by e.g. Ekberg (1993a, b), but neither she nor other scholars have tried to support the development by historical documentation. It seems natural, however, to postulate a development where a) two paratactically combined sentences with a common object of the verbs in both sentences are reduced to one sentence, and b) where the verb (*taka*) in the first sentence develops into an auxiliary, whereas the verb in the second sentence constitutes the main verb, and a potential object will function as a complement to the whole verbal phrase. The starting point for this development might have been sentences like (42):

- (42) Konungr bað taka hann ok leiða út. (OH 116.31)
king ordered take him and lead out
 'The king ordered (them) to take and lead him out.'

In addition to such sentences, with an object after *taka* and a deleted object after the second verb,¹⁵ there are also constructions in Old Norse where the object is realized only after the second verb:

- (43) a. Þá tók Skrýmir ok leysti nestbaggá sinn.
then took Skrýmir and untied bag his (Sn.-Edda:46)
 b. takið ok haldið henni.
take and hold her (Njála129.52)
 c. Hjalti tók ok varðveitti helming fjárens enn Gissurr sumt
Hjalti took and looked after half money-DEF and Gissurr a little
 (Njála123.119)
 d. Þá tóku þeir ok brendu hekluna.
then took they and burned cloak-DEF (Fms, Sverres saga 106.16)

(43a–d) may still be read as paratactic constructions. We should note that the following sentence parallel to (43d) is found in the Flateyjar book:

- (43) d'. Þá tóku þeir hekluna ok brendu.
then took they cloak-DEF and burned (Flb 571)

And a bit further in the context of (43a) we find the sentence *en Þórr tók nestbaggann ok skal leysa* 'and Þórr took the cloak and shall untie', which, of course, may also

support a paratactic reading of (43a). But sentences like (43a–d), with no object after V_1 , have probably facilitated the transition to a hypotactic reading.

That such a reading is possible in these examples, is strengthened by the fact that there are several examples already in classical Old Norse showing that *taka* has become semantically bleached and syntactically has begun to function as a kind of auxiliary:

- (44) a. En þa toc clemens. oc talþe me goþom vilia trv réTa.
and then took Clemens and preached with good will faith right
 (AM 645 4^{to} 68.23)
 ‘And then Clemens preached with good will the right faith.’
- b. Þa tok sa maðr oc bió þæim alla pascavist.
then took the man and arranged (for) them all Easter maintenance
 (HMS I 274.7, Brandanus saga. 13th century)
- c. Þvi næst tóku þeir ok gerðu sér net.
there after took they and made themselves nets (Sn-Edda, 60–61)
 ‘Afterwards they prepared fishing nets.’
- d. Taka þeir nú ok brenna hvsin.
take they now and burn houses-DEF (Hauksbók 224.35)
 ‘Now they burn the houses.’
- e. Ófeigr tekr ok þver sér i þesso vatne.
Ófeigr takes and washes himself in this water (Biskupasögur I:451)
- f. Tók konungr þá ok batt sár sinna manna.
took king then and bandaged wounds his men-GEN
 (Hrólf s. 64.26)
 ‘The king then bandaged the wounds of his men.’
- g. Tóku þá ok røru ollum skipunum forstreymis.
took then and rowed all ships-DEF downstream (Hkr.II, 17.17)
 ‘Then they took and rowed all the ships downstream.’
- h. Taka nú ok herja Nordymbraland.
take now and ravage Northumberland (Qrvar-Odds saga 45.11)

In these examples all the objects are complements of V_2 or the combination of V_1 and V_2 – not to V_1 . In some cases, however, *taka* is also combined with a main verb with no object:

- (45) a. Tók hann þá ok herjaði bæði utanlands ok innanlands, ok gerði
took he then and ravaged both abroad and at home and did
 hit mesta hervirki, drap mart manna ok rænti víða.
the most damage killed many men and plundered widely
 (Hkr III. 144.11)

'Then he ravaged both abroad and at home, and did much damage, killed many men and plundered widely around.'

- b. Tækr nú ok hæriar um skane ok siolannd.
takes now and ravages in Skåne and Zealand (Olafs saga Delag. 59.25)
 'He now ravages in Skåne and Zealand.'¹⁶

From these examples it becomes evident that pseudocoordination with *ta* must have developed as a specific syntactic construction already in Old Norse. Comparing different texts, we will see that there is a variation between writers as to whether constructions with or without *taka* as an auxiliary are used:

- (46) En þeir vildu eigi atleggja, ok tóku ok rðu(?)ru enn undan.
and they would not go alongside and took and rowed once more away
 (Fms, Sverres saga 383.18)
 'And they would not go alongside, and rowed away again.'

In the parallel texts:

- (47) a. en þeir villdo æigi atleggja ok Rero jnn wnnan.
and they would not go alongside and rowed once more away
 (Skb 81a. 214)
 b. enn þeir villdu eigi at leggja ok reru vndan.
and they would not go alongside and rowed away (Flb 676)
 c. en þeir villdu æigi beriaz ok uiku undan.
and they would not fight and retreated (Esp 409.34)

So far we have seen that the syntactic construction with *ta* as an auxiliary is used in Old Norse. Has, then, the semantic development reached the same stage in Old Norse as in Modern Norwegian? That *taka* must have developed a fairly different meaning from the postulated basic meaning of 'to grasp' or 'to seize' very early is probably shown by example (48):

- (48) Verit nu buner við at taka oc gripa Jesum.
be now prepared to take and seize Jesus (HMS II 3.20)

This example may be comparable to the modern examples in (40) and (41), but it may also be the case that the two verbs in (48) should be read paratactically, as an example of stylistically motivated variation. It is, of course, difficult to find examples in older written sources of oral usage like (40) and (41). But the following example in a diploma from the year 1431, where Jon, bishop in Hólar, sues a priest for a lot of grievances, may be a proof of this kind of oral usage. One of the bishop's complaints

is rendered in (49):

- (49) *jtem firir þa settu sauk at þu tok(t) oc fangader sæm ræningia*
item for the sixth count that you took and captured as robber
Ragnfridæ Gautadottur uora frendkonu heima a Holum oc byrgder
Ragnfrid Gautadottur our female relative home at Hole and locked
hana med sinom syni tolf vetra gomblum bædi samman mestu
her with her son twelve winters old both together almost
klædlaus j miklu frostæ oc kulda
without clothes in great frost and cold

(DN, b. XX:67. Here quoted from the electronic edition.)

‘Item for the sixth count that you (came and) captured as a robber Ragnfrid Gaute’s daughter, our female relative, at home at Hole, and locked her up with her 12-year-old son (and) both he and she almost without clothes in hard frost and cold . . .’

The accusations are presented in direct speech, and the use of the *ta*-construction emphasizes the expressive style of the prosecutor as well as the intentional aspect behind the crime which has been committed. Using a term from modern forensic language we may say that the prosecutor – by using the *ta*-construction – emphasizes that the crime has been committed ‘deliberately’.¹⁷

That *taka* occurred with a bleached meaning in pseudocoordinations in Old Norse already is not all that remarkable, taking into consideration that this verb was used in a more abstract sense in other contexts as well. In this connection, however, it is of special interest that *taka* might be used with a verbal noun as object in expressions like *taka flótta* ‘take flight’, *taka róðr* ‘take (go for) a row’ (cf. *tóku þeir enn snertiróðr* ‘they took another quick row’ in *Gylfaginning* in *Sn.-Edda*). Semantically there is a close connection between the construction with *taka* + verb and *taka* + verbal noun. Besides, *taka* was used as an auxiliary in Old Norse, Old Swedish and Old Danish in yet another syntactic construction to express ingressive meaning: *taka at yrkja* ‘begin to write poetry’, *taka at syngja* ‘begin to sing’, etc.¹⁸ In both constructions there is an introductory, desemanticized *taka*.

At this point, one might tentatively suggest that the pseudocoordinations with *ta* may have developed from the ingressive construction with *taka* + infinitive. In *Ordbog over det danske Sprog* [Dictionary of the Danish language] it is assumed that the construction *Tag lige og vent her et Øjeblik* ‘just take and wait (for) a moment’ may have a double origin:

partly developed from cases where a common object to the two coordinated verbs . . . is placed after the verbs [cf. examples (43a–d) above], partly through a transformation of *tage* ‘take’ with a following infinitive (especially in cases where *tage* is also an infinitive: *du skulde tage at (og)*

skynde dig 'you should take to (and) hurry up') or – where the infinitive and the imperative forms are identical: *tag at (og) gaa din vej* 'take to (and) go your way' (*Ordbog over det danske Sprog*, vol. XXIII, col. 580).

There are several arguments against the last explanation, some of which are mentioned by Holm (1958). First, pseudocoordinations with *og* apparently exist in the oldest Nordic sources, so consequently it is difficult to maintain – given this material – that the infinitive construction should be primary and the coordination construction secondary in a chronological perspective. Secondly, there is usually a difference in meaning between the two constructions; and thirdly, the constructions differ as far as their subject potential is concerned. Whereas the pseudocoordinations are normally used with a V_2 claiming an agentive subject role, the infinitive constructions may also be used with other roles (cf. examples like *Kistufialar tóco at braka* 'The chest boards took (began) to creak' (Hom 194:34), *Þá tók veðrit at vaxa* 'Then the weather took (began) to grow' (Hkr II. 185.20), *ok tók sólin at skina* 'and the sun took (began) to shine' (Tristr. saga:30)).¹⁹

Thus, when the construction with *taka* + infinitive has been mentioned here, it is not because I am of the opinion that this construction should be considered the origin of the pseudocoordinations with *taka*, but because both constructions show that *taka* has been desemanticized and has come to function as a kind of auxiliary already in the oldest texts preserved in the Nordic languages.

5. A RESULT OF SYNTACTIC BORROWING?

Being unable to prove that the construction has developed through a grammaticalization process from the older to the modern stages of the Nordic languages, and being aware that constructions with *ta* are also used in several languages outside the Nordic region, it may be natural to ask if the construction was borrowed by the Nordic languages at a very early stage. A hypothesis that the construction is a result of syntactic influence from languages outside the Germanic family was launched by Eugenio Coseriu (Coseriu 1966).

As well as reviewing the previous research, Coseriu discusses the spread, meaning and historical development of the construction. He points out that the construction is well documented in many different languages, and whereas some scholars are of the opinion that the construction should be regarded as a further development and a borrowing from northern European languages (especially Finno-Ugrian ones), from east European languages or from Balkan languages (a syntactic 'balkanism'), others maintain that the development is due to a separate and independent development within each language area. Coseriu himself is of the opinion that there is a connection between the various occurrences, and his hypothesis is

that the construction has spread from a central area, which must have been ‘das Altgriechische, genauer vielleicht die griechische Koine der ersten Jahrhunderte unserer Zeitrechnung’ (Coseriu 1966:50). A spread from the oldest Nordic languages or from Church Slavonic is considered out of the question: ‘Eine Ausstrahlung vom Altnordischen oder vom Altkirchenslawischen, wo die Wendung zu älterer Zeit belegt ist, hätte nicht in beiden Richtungen bis zu Sprachen wie dem Albanischen, Neugriechischen, Spanischen und Portugiesischen vordringen können’ (loc. cit.). That Greek was the centre for the spread of the construction is – according to Coseriu – supported not only by the central position of the Greek language in Europe, and by the fact that the construction is well documented in Middle Greek texts, but also by internal linguistic facts (for instance, that paratactic constructions expressing aspectual relations have developed in New Greek, in Albanian as well as in the Romance languages). Moreover, Coseriu argues that his hypothesis is supported by the fact that some of the characteristics of the construction (the use of ‘take’, the paratactic verb connection and the aspectual meaning) may be explained by assuming an internal development in Greek.

I shall not consider a possible influence from Greek on the Romance and east European languages concerning aspect in general or the *ta*-construction in particular. However, Coseriu’s hypothesis that pseudocoordinations with *ta* in the Nordic languages are syntactic borrowings from Greek is one that I have serious doubts about. As pointed out above, we may very well suppose an internal development of the construction in the Nordic languages (although this development must have taken place before the period we have access to in the oldest sources). If it were a syntactic borrowing from Greek, it is difficult to see why the construction should be more frequent in the Nordic languages than, for instance, in English or German.²⁰ And how can it be explained that a construction which is generally considered to be ‘umgangssprachlich’ and ‘volkstümlich’, has spread from Greek to THE VERNACULARS in a lot of countries? This kind of diffusion would presuppose a close contact between Greek and the Nordic languages. To my knowledge, there are no proofs of such a contact between the two language communities, neither generally nor more specifically in the form of other syntactic influences from Greek on the Nordic languages. Finally, there is a more general objection to Coseriu’s hypothesis: all borrowing-hypotheses inevitably end up with a first language, the source, where the phenomenon to be explained must be ascribed to ‘internal linguistic facts’. But if so, why couldn’t these ‘facts’ be operative in other languages as well?

As opposed to the hypothesis of a diffusion from one centre, one should rather think of parallel developments within different languages. This view, in Nordic historical linguistics, is presented by Gösta Holm:

A parallel development of a syntactic phenomenon in different dialects or languages is, moreover, not that strange or unique. Just the syntax of

the auxiliaries in different languages, not only in the Nordic ones, gives many proofs of this kind of development. In different and widely scattered countries, we may find that verbs which are etymologically identical, related or which express the same meaning have become auxiliaries with a very similar use, through – as it seems – language specific developments (Holm 1958:156).

A further argument for this view is the fact that various equivalents of the verb *ta* have come to function as a grammatical unit in languages outside the Indo-European family. This applies, for example, to serial verb constructions with *ba* in Chinese, where *ba* originally was a verb with the meaning 'take', but which by the 7th–9th centuries could be analysed as a verb, partly reanalysed as a preposition marking the object case in the sentence. This implied – as in the Nordic languages – that two originally coordinated sentences merged into one (cf. Li & Thompson (1976:485), quoted in Hopper & Traugott (1993:27)). A similar development is also found by serial verbs in West African languages. Carol Lord has documented that in Gã (a Benue-Kwa language of West Africa), the accusative marker *kε* has developed out of a former serial verb like 'take'. Here we have also witnessed a development from a serial verb construction (with *kε* as the first verb) which has fused into one sentence, but in this case with *kε* as a case marker, and not as an auxiliary verb (Lord 1982, quoted in Hopper & Traugott 1993:90).

Thus, we see that verb combinations like those with *ta* as an introductory verb in the Nordic languages have existed in widely different languages, between which there may hardly have been any contact or any kind of direct influence. The grammaticalization process may certainly end up with different results, but the interesting fact is that in all these as well as other cases *ta* (or its equivalents) is the object of this process. And the development seems to have taken place with no proof or plausible indication of borrowing or any other direct influence between languages.

6. SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this paper I have discussed pseudocoordinations with *ta* in a grammaticalization perspective. I have argued that the hypotactic *ta*-construction has developed out of two paratactically combined sentences where the object functioned as complement to the verbs in both sentences, but where *ta* as V_1 gradually has been desemanticized, and has come to function as a kind of auxiliary verb with intentional and initiating meaning. Examples like *Þvi næst tóku þeir ok gerðu sér net* 'Afterwards they took and prepared fishing nets' demonstrate that the construction must have existed already in Old Norse.

In conclusion it may be in order to comment on some general points concerning grammaticalization and syntactic development. According to Hopper & Traugott (1993), grammaticalization may be studied in two perspectives: a diachronic one and a synchronic one. In the latter case, grammaticalization is seen as a syntactic, discourse pragmatic phenomenon which may be studied 'from the point of view of fluid patterns of language use' (Hopper & Traugott 1993:2). In the introductory part of this article the *ta*-construction was described in such a perspective. The purpose was just to describe the syntactic structure and the meaning of the construction with a basis in modern language use. But every grammaticalization is primarily a historical process, and so it was required not only to postulate a possible development with a basis in the synchronic data, but also to try to establish a possible development with a basis in available historical data. Such diachronic studies of the development of grammatical phenomena have been carried out (cf. Hopper & Traugott 1993:111f.), but not as far as the *ta*-construction in the Nordic languages is concerned. Trying to uncover the development of the *ta*-construction, it soon turned out, however, that this development must have belonged to a very early stage in the history of the Nordic languages, and that it was not the question of a gradual, 'unidirectional' development from a paratactic to a hypotactic construction, which might be traced from the oldest periods down to our days. This is in accordance with an observation made by Carl Ivar Ståhle in his excellent study of old Nordic forensic language:

The moment when several of the syntactic features – for instance, different degrees of hypotaxis, which for different reasons are regarded as younger – really were an innovation in the language is in many cases probably long before the time of the oldest written records (Ståhle 1958:122).

But the previous account has also demonstrated that even though the pseudocoordination with *ta* may be said to have existed as a separate syntactic construction in the oldest texts known in the Nordic languages, verbal connections with *ta*, where *ta* has preserved its original function as a main verb, and where the relation between V_1 and V_2 is still paratactic, have continued to exist over the centuries. The development of a hypotactic auxiliary construction does not necessarily imply that the paratactic relation, which we have postulated as a pre-stage for the *ta*-construction, falls into disuse. Grammaticalized constructions may, as also noted by Bybee, Perkins & Pagulica (1991:26) and Harris & Campbell (1995:93), preserve features of their earlier lexical meaning. It is even possible that older and younger stages of a syntactic development – and perhaps more often than what seems to be the case with phonological and morphological changes – may coexist over a very long span of time. Incidentally, this was also pointed out by

Ståhle in 1958:

In contrast to the majority of sound and form changes, syntactic changes, however, do not imply that a newly developed construction makes an older one superfluous – old and new syntactic phenomena are living side by side, and are put to use in various degrees, depending on what the speaker or author wants to express, or on his sense of style (Ståhle 1958:121f.).

Finally, one may ask whether the development of the *ta*-construction has taken place haphazardly or whether it can be seen as a result of a more systematic linguistic change. Questions like these are not easy to answer. I have, however, argued elsewhere that the aspectual constructions with positional verbs like *sitte* 'sit', *ligge* 'lie' and *stå* 'stand' have become far more common in Modern Norwegian than in Old Norse, and suggested that this development may be ascribed to 'increasing feeling for verbal aspect' (cf. Vannebo 1969:84ff.). Maybe the diachronic development of the *ta*-construction should be looked upon in a similar way, although it seems to have developed at an earlier stage than the construction with the positional verbs. The *ta*-construction has also become more frequent, and the intentional and initiating meanings of the construction seem to have been strengthened over the years. Perhaps we could say then that the grammaticalization process which has resulted in the development of various pseudocoordinations in the Nordic languages has been motivated by an 'increased need' to express a greater range of aspectual meanings as well as other semantic nuances.

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NOTES

1. In Faarlund (1992:60) these constructions are referred to as 'quasiparatactic constructions'. For a discussion of the terms 'simple coordination', 'pseudocoordination', 'simple subordination' and 'pseudo-subordination', cf. Sadock & Yuasa 2002.

2. This is the rule in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and Faroese. In Modern Icelandic, where the *ta*-construction does not exist (cf. section 2), it seems, however, impossible to negate the introductory verb in pseudocoordinations.
3. For an overview of such differences, cf. Lødrup 2000. Contrary to other introductory verbs, *ta* is a transitive verb. For discussion of pseudocoordinations in Norwegian, see also Jørgensen 2000, Tonne (2001:74ff.).
4. In a letter from 1883 Ibsen wrote: 'During the last 7–8 years I have scarcely written a single verse, but I have practised the far more difficult art: to write in the simple and true language of reality'. In addition to the two plays mentioned in the text already, the construction is also used in two of Hilde's lines in *The Masterbuilder* (1892): *De tog og kyssed mig, bygmester Solness* 'You took and kissed me, masterbuilder Solness' (XII:60), *At De tog og slog armene om mig?* 'That you took and embraced me?' (XII:61).
5. The term 'quoted interior monologue' is from Cohn (1978:13).
6. The Nordic *ta*-construction differs in this respect from constructions with *imti* 'take' in Lithuanian, which usually indicate that the activity 'is sudden and unexpected' (Eglė Išganaitytė, p. c.) and which also may be used with a subject in a non-agentive role: *Ima ir atsidaro durys* 'The door takes (suddenly) and opens'; cf. also *Eme jo protas ir prassszvito* 'Nahm sein Verstand und blitzte auf' (Coseriu 1966:14).
7. Cf. Tonne (2001:114, note 44), where sentences like *Han tok og falt* 'he took and fell' are considered unacceptable in Norwegian. (NRK-tv = Norwegian TV station.) However, in Sveen (1996:57), it is said that *falle* 'fall' may express a 'wilful act'.
8. As pointed out by an anonymous NJL referee, examples like (39) may be used in a narrative context with reference to an activity which has taken place, cf. also the Old Norse examples (44d, e, h).
9. The so-called 'Parataxis-Hypothesis' (cf. Harris & Campbell 1995:282) has played an important role in diachronic studies. There may, however, be good reasons to differentiate between different variants of this hypothesis, among other things, on the basis of whether the development takes place between two verbal constituents of a single clause ('clause fusion') or between clauses in compound sentences. Harris & Campbell are themselves critical of the use of the Parataxis Hypothesis as an explanation in the latter case (cf. their discussion in chapter 10, pp. 282ff.).
10. In a discussion of modality, Heine (1995:37ff.) says that there are two 'models' for describing the transition from a concrete lexical to an abstract grammatical meaning. According to the first, the grammaticalization process is interpreted as metaphorical expansion, and according to the last, as context-based reinterpretation. In addition, bleaching is mentioned as a third 'model' (note 12, p. 48). As for the *ta*-construction, all three interpretations seem to be relevant for a description of the development which has taken place. The various interpretations need not, however, be considered as 'models' in a stricter scientific sense.
11. Cf. Ramat (1987:14), who says that the verb *take* in corresponding constructions 'has no lexical meaning at all but gives, on the contrary, expression to the unitarian character of the action'.
12. The most frequent verbs are: 1 *vera* 'to be', 2 *ha* 'have', 3 *verta/ bli* 'become', 4 *kunna* 'can', 5 *få* 'get', 6 *skulla* 'shall', 7 *vilja* 'will', 8 *koma* 'come', 9 *seia* 'say', 10 *gå* 'go', 11 *ta* 'take', 12 *sjå* 'see', 13 *mätta* 'must', 14 *gjera* 'do', 15 *stå* 'stand', 16 *gi* 'give'.

13. For basic-level categories and basic-level actions like 'grasping', cf. Lakoff & Johnson (1999:26ff.).
14. According to the common view, *taka* was shortened to *ta* at the beginning of the 14th century, and this reduction probably took place before the quantity shift. In Modern Norwegian this verb usually appears in the short form *ta*, as for instance in all Eastern dialects (in addition to forms developed according to the principle of vowel balance, like *tåkå*), cf. Garmann (1999:158f.). But a parallel reduction has also taken place with some other verbs, e.g. *draga* 'draw, pull' > *dra*, *gefa* 'give' > *gje*. And it should be noticed that *taka* has undergone the same reduction in its lexical as well as auxiliary use.
15. Deletion of a common object in the last of two (or more) coordinated sentences is frequent in Old Norse, cf. examples like *siðan fluttu þeir Þorgils likit upp með ánni ok grófu þar niðr* 'Afterwards they moved the corpse of Þorgil up along the river and buried it there' (Hkr.II.511.14).
16. These, as well as many other examples, are taken from the material in Holm (1958).
17. The bishop's letter is, on the whole, written in a very direct and oral style. Thus, it is an excellent illustration of the oral syntax which may be found in parts of the diplomas from the Middle Ages, cf. Knudsen 1967. The *ta*-construction is found in (49) as well as in other examples from Old Icelandic. It is, therefore, surprising that the construction does not seem to exist in Modern Icelandic.
18. This construction is closely described in Holm (1958).
19. The merging of the two constructions has partly been motivated by the phonetic merging of *ok* 'and' and *at* 'to'. Holm thinks that the importance of the phonetic merging for the development of the new constructions has been exaggerated. Among his arguments, he mentions that Icelandic, where there is no merging of *ok* and *at*, has several coordination constructions, and that coordination was usual in the Nordic languages long before a merging of *ok* and *at* may have taken place (Holm 1958:231). For an argumentation against a development from a hypotactic to a paratactic construction, see also Coseriu (1966:47f.).
20. The construction seems to be almost unknown in English and German (cf. the translations of examples (8), (9) and (22a) above). Coseriu quotes the example *She took and died* from American English (Coseriu 1966:17). In his book on Castilian syntax, Keniston compares Spanish *tomar y* with the English expression *He took and did it*, but there is no further documentation of the English construction (Keniston 1937:467). As for the Germanic languages, Coseriu says that the construction is used in Swedish, Danish and English – i.e. in American English – besides Old Norse (Coseriu 1966:32).

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(in alphabetical order according to text abbreviations)

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- Esp *Eirspennil*. AM 47 fol., ed. by Den norske historiske kildekriftskommission ved Finnur Jónsson. Kristiania, 1916.
- Flb *Flateyjarbók. En Samling av norske Konge-Sagaer* [ed. by G. Vigfússon & C. R. Unger] 1–3. [Sverres saga = II. 533–701]. Kristiania, 1860–68.
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- Hkr *Heimskringla* udg. ved Finnur Jónsson. B. I–IV. Copenhagen, 1893–1900.
- HMS *Heilagra manna sögur. Fortællinger og legender om Hellige mænd og kvinder*, ed. by C. R. Unger I–II, Kristiania, 1877.
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