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Pseudo-coordinations in Faroese*

Caroline Heycock & Hjalmar P. Petersen

In this article we describe the system of pseudo-coordinations in Faroese—
 coordinations in the verbal system in which the second conjunct appears in fact to be
 subordinated to the first—in the light of previous discussions of this phenomenon in
 Scandinavian. We discuss pseudo-coordinations—mainly, but not exclusively, with
 verbs of posture in the first conjunct—that have an aspectual interpretation (e.g “sit
 and …”); and also pseudo-coordinations where the second conjunct alternates with an
 infinitive clause (e.g. “try and …”). We conclude with an overview of the distribution
 of pseudo-coordinations in Germanic, and offer some suggestions as to how they may
 have arisen in Faroese.

**Keywords:** syntactic change without word-order change; language contact; pseudo-
 coordination; subordination; hendiadys; absentives.

1. Introduction

In common with the Mainland Scandinavian languages, but unlike Icelandic
 (Josefsson 1991, Wiklund 1996), Faroese has a rich system of what have
 been termed pseudo-coordinations, a term that in the Scandinavian context
 probably goes back to Teleman (1974). In this article we will attempt to
 give a description of the phenomenon in modern Faroese (FA), to compare
 it with pseudo-coordination as it has been described and analyzed in
 particular in Mainland Scandinavian, and to provide some speculations as to
 the origins of the construction(s) within Faroese.

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 two anonymous reviewers, whose comments on an initial version led to significant
 improvements. All errors of fact and interpretation however remain the
 responsibility of the authors.
2. **What are pseudo-coordinations?**

The pseudo-coordination that we discuss here (sometimes also referred to in the literature as verbal/clausal hendiadys) has the apparent form of “ordinary” coordination in the verbal system, but with a number of distinct syntactic and semantic features. These will be discussed in more detail in the course of this article, but as a first summary we can take the following:

1. The tense/aspect of the verbs in the conjuncts (which we will refer to as V1 and V2) must match; in ordinary coordination this is not required.
2. The second conjunct never has an overt subject.
3. “Asymmetric” extraction is possible from the second conjunct, in apparent violation of the Ross’s (1967) Coordinate Structure Constraint.
4. The two conjuncts are not perceived as being informationally equivalent; the initial verb may be “bleached” of at least some aspect of its independent meaning. Thus, for example, a verb with a positional meaning like ‘sit’ or ‘stand’ as V1 no longer entails this bodily position but carries instead an aspectual meaning.

To illustrate: (1) below is potentially ambiguous between ordinary coordination and pseudo-coordination. The ordinary meaning entails that Jógván is seated, and eating fish. Read as a pseudo-coordination, there is no entailment that Jógván is actually sitting, just that he is engaged in the act of eating fish (the semantic bleaching of V1 mentioned in point 4 above).
‘Jógvan is sitting and eating fish’ or ‘Jógvan is eating fish.’

If we change the aspect of one of the conjuncts, as in (2a), the sentence remains grammatical; but as it is now unambiguously a case of ordinary coordination, it unambiguously entails that Jógvan is sitting. The same effect obtains if we give the second conjunct an overt subject, as in (2b). Conversely, extraction of a wh-phrase from the second conjunct, as in (2c), is only compatible with the pseudo-coordination reading, so this example does not have the entailment that Jógvan is sitting.

(2) a. Jógvan situr og hevur etið fisk.
   Jógvan-N sit-PRESG and have-PRESG eaten-SUPER
   ‘Jógvan is sitting and has eaten fish.’

   b. Jógvan situr og hann etur fisk.
      Jógvan-N sit-PRESG and he-N eat-PRESG fish-A
      ‘Jógvan is sitting and he is eating fish’

   c. Hvat situr Jógvan og etur e?
      what sit-PRESG Jógvan-N and eat-PRESG
      ‘What is Jógvan eating?’
We can initially distinguish two main types of pseudo-coordination in Faroese. In the first type, the interpretation of the construction is principally aspectual. Thus the examples in (3) all express some type of progressive or durative aspect.¹ The first example is from the FADAC database, which consists of data from spoken FA (For more on the FADAC database, see Section 3 and Petersen 2010: 55ff).²

(3) a. Eg **standi** og **hugsí** um Lenu.  
I-N stand-PRS1SG and think-PRS1SG about Lena-A  
‘I am thinking about Lena.’ (FADAC)

b. … hann hoyrir í útvappinum, at ein bilur  
he-N hear-PRS3SG in radio-DEF-D that a car-N  
á Eysturoynni **liggur** og **koyrir** við  
on Eysturoy-DEF-D lie-PRS3SG and drive-PRS3SG with  
fullari ferð á skeivari síðu.  
full speed-D on wrong side-D  
‘He hears on the radio that a car on Eysturoy is driving at full speed on the wrong side of the road.’

¹ In this article we will gloss over the distinction between these two types of aspect. See Hesse (2009, 2011) for more detailed discussion of the aspectual interpretation of pseudo-coordinations in Faroese, and also Barnes & Weyhe (1994: 211) and Thráinsson et al. (2004: 74).

² From now on, all examples are in Faroese unless indicated otherwise.
This is the type which Wiklund 1996 refers to as “Pseudocoordination A (PCA).” Pseudo-coordinations of this type are also found in all the Mainland Scandinavian languages (Danish, Swedish and Norwegian). This suggests a convergence area within the Scandinavian languages consisting of Mainland Scandinavian and Faroese (Petersen 2010: 116), an issue that we will return to in Section 5.

Pseudo-coordinations are also found in Afrikaans, English, Low German and North High German dialects (Höder 2009).

(4) a. Ik bün bi un feul. (Low German)
    I-N be-PRS1SG at and wipe-PRS1SG
    ‘I am wiping the floor’ (Höder 2011: 177)

b. Denn geht er bei und repariert das.
    then go-PRS3SG he-N at and repair-PRS3SG it-A
    (North High German (dialect))
    ‘Then he proceeds to repair it’. (Höder 2011:177)

That is, while pseudo-coordinations are found in Faroese and the languages just mentioned, they are not found in standard German, Dutch3 (Höder 2009), or Icelandic (Josefsson 1991, Wiklund 1996).

3 They are however found in Middle Dutch (Le Roux 1923, Robbers 1997, Robertge 1994, de Vos 2005).
In contrast to this first type of pseudo-coordination, in the second type, which Wiklund (1996) refers to as “Pseudo-coordination B (PCB),” there is alternation with infinitival complementation.

(5) a. **Royn** **at selja** húsini!

   try-IMPSG to sell-INF house-DEF-A-PL

   ‘Try to sell the house!’

b. **Royn** **og sel** húsini!


   ‘Try and sell the house!’

As can be seen from the translation, English also has this type of coordination with *try* (see Hommerberg & Tottie 2007 and references therein). Within Scandinavian, Wiklund cites examples from spoken
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Swedish (although she says only that these are allowed by “speakers of some dialects”) and seems to indicate that it is also possible in some Northern Norwegian dialects, but not in Danish, although her discussion is not entirely clear on this point (Wiklund 1996: 31ff).

Besides pröva ‘try,’ Wiklund cites Swedish fortsätta ‘continue,’ börja ‘begin,’ sluta ‘stop,’ skynda sig ‘hurry,’ se till ‘make sure,’ komma ihåg ‘remember,’ glömma ‘forget’ and politeness phrases such as varasnáll ‘be kind/please’ and vara så god ‘be so good/help yourself’ as verbs that can appear as V1 in PCB in Swedish.

3. On the hunt for pseudo-coordination in Faroese

3.1 Sources

Our principal data come from the FADAC (Faroese-Danish Corpus) database at SFB 538: Multilingualism at the University of Hamburg, with some supplement from the corpuseye online tagged corpus, and the spraakbanken corpus.

The Faroese part of the FADAC database consists of informal interviews with a number of native Faroese speakers from three generations: 16-21, 40-50 and 70+. The speakers—divided between male and female—come from different dialect areas within the Faroe Islands. The data were
originally collected for work on Faroese-Danish bilingualism but can obviously also be used for different research purposes, as is done here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Young (16–20)</th>
<th>Mid (40–50)</th>
<th>Old (70+)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig2.** Faroese speakers in the FADAC database.

The *corpuseye* corpus (http://corp.hum.sdu.dk/cqp.fo.html) consists of the text from issues of the newspaper *Sosialurin* from 2004 (approximately 112,000 words), and a selection of texts from the Faroese edition of Wikipedia (approximately 94,000 words). The texts are tagged for part-of-speech. The *spraakbanken* corpus (http://spraakbanken.gu.se) consists of all the issues of the newspaper *Dimmaleetting* from 1998; it does not have part-of-speech tagging.

We also searched through volumes I-IV of *FøroyaKvæði/Corpus carminum Faeroensium*, which is a collection of Faroese ballads. The language in these ballads represents older Faroese, although it is hard to date the language with any accuracy, as these ballads, first written down in the second half of the 18th and in the 19th century, are part of an oral tradition. We obtained the ballads in electronic format from *Føroyamálsdeildin* (The Institute for Faroese, part of *Fróðskaparsætur*,
University of the Faroe Islands), Tórshavn. The total word count in volumes I–IV is 683,869

Finally, as a supplement to this, we have used Google to search the internet; searching for e.g. *standi og ‘stand-PRS1SG’site:fo*. We have also where necessary constructed examples. Where Faroese examples and judgments are given without other attribution these are due to the Faroese-speaking author of this article, HPP, and other native speakers we have consulted.

A summary of the pseudo-coordinations that we found in the FADAC database, the two corpora, and *Føroyakvæði* is given in the Appendix.

### 3.2 Diagnostics

As the discussion in Section 2 suggests, while there are cases where we can determine whether a given coordination is a case of ordinary coordination or a pseudo-coordination, many examples that occur in texts or dialogues cannot be unequivocally assigned to one or the other type. Further, it has been argued in a study of pseudo-coordinations in English and Afrikaans by de Vos (2005) that as well as distinguishing between pseudo-coordinations that alternate with infinitive subordinations and those that do not, it is necessary to distinguish between subtypes within PCA which have distinct syntactic properties both inter- and intra-linguistically. In particular, de Vos
argues that while both (6a) and (6b) below are pseudo-coordinations in English, they have different syntactic properties.⁴

(6)  a.  He went and bought a whole stack of books.
   b.  He went to the bookshop and bought a whole stack of books.

We discuss a number of the diagnostics most relevant for Faroese below.

3.2.1 Non-inversibility of conjuncts

It is a minimal (necessary, but not sufficient) condition for a coordination to qualify as a pseudo-coordination that the two conjuncts cannot appear in the inverse order without a significant change in meaning: (7a,b) are not equivalent. In contrast, ordinary coordination in at least some cases will allow the two conjuncts to appear in the opposite order, as shown in (8a,b)

(7)  a.  Hann situr og lesur.
   he-N sit-PRS3SG and read-PRS3SG
   ‘He is reading’.
   b.  Hann lesur og situr.
   he-N read-PRS3SG and sit-PRS3SG

---

⁴ De Vos refers to the construction in (6a) as Contiguous Coordination (ConCo) and that in (6b) as Scene-setting Coordination (SceCo). On the other hand, writing about pseudo-coordination within Scandinavian, Hesse (2011: 148) is unequivocal in excluding any case with a locative adjunct in the first conjunct from the category of pseudo-coordination
‘He reads and sits’.

(8)  
  a. Hann etur og drekkur.
      He-N eat-PRS3SG and drink-PRS3SG
      ‘He eats and drinks.’
  b. Hann drekkur og etur.
      he-N drink-PRS3SG and eat-PRS3SG
      ‘He drinks and eats’.

There are of course cases of ordinary coordination where temporal ordering is implied, as in (9), so that there is a significant change of meaning when the conjuncts appear in the opposite order.

(9)  
  a. She shot him and she was imprisoned. ≠
  b. She was imprisoned and she shot him.

Notice however that such cases involve actions that are read as occurring in sequence. In the case of Faroese pseudo-coordinations, the two conjuncts cannot be exchanged even though no temporal sequencing is implied.

3.2.2 Extraction

As mentioned earlier, pseudo-coordination allows for asymmetric extraction out of the second conjunct, in apparent violation of the coordinate structure constraint and the “Across-the-Board” [ATB] constraint (Ross 1967,
Williams 1978). This contrasts with canonical cases of symmetric coordination. Extraction from a pseudo-coordination in Faroese was illustrated in (1)/(2c) above, repeated here as (10a,b); the contrasting pattern with ordinary coordination is illustrated in (11)

(10) a. Jógván situr og etur fisk.
Jógván-N sit-PRS3SG and eat-PRS3SG fish-A
‘Jógván is sitting and eating fish’ or ‘Jógván is eating fish.’

b. Hvat situr Jógván og etur e?
what sit-PRS3SG Jógván-N and eat-PRS3SG
‘What is Jógván eating?’

Jógván-N talk-PRS3SG and eat-PRS3SG fish-A
‘Jógván is talking and eating fish’

b. * Hvat tosar Jógván og etur e?
what talk-PRS3SG Jógván-N and eat-PRS3SG
Intended: ‘What is Jógván talking and eating?’

Not only arguments, but also adjuncts can be extracted; of course in the case of adjuncts it is more difficult to determine the extraction site, but (12) has
an interpretation where what is being asked about is the carefulness of reading, not of sitting:5

(12) Hvussu vandalíga situr hann (har) og lesur
    how carefully sit-PRS3SG he-N (there) and read-
    PRS3SG
    bókina?
    book-DEF-A

    ‘How carefully is he reading the book (there)?’

Again, as has been much discussed for English, there are a number of exceptions to these constraints on extraction, so this diagnostic must also be treated with caution (cf. Wiklund 1996, de Vos 2005).

3.2.3 Negation, yes/no questions

In aspectual pseudo-coordinations (PCA), negation appears in the first conjunct, but negates the whole complex:

(13) Jógvan situr ikki og hyggur
    Jógvan-N sit-PRS3SG NEG and look-PRS3SG
    út gjøgnun vindeygað
    out through window-DEF-A

    ‘Jógvan isn’t looking out of the window’.

5For readers familiar with De Vos’s work on pseudo-coordination in English and Afrikaans, it may be of interest that in Faroese it appears that the inclusion of a locative in the first conjunct does not block this type of extraction.
Compare the ordinary coordination, as illustrated in (14). If only the first verb appears before negation, the second verb does not fall within its scope.

(14) Jógvăn  dagdroymir  ikki og hyggur

Jógvăn-N daydream-PRS3SG NEG and look-PRS3SG
út  gjøgnun  vindeygað
out  through  window-DEF-A

‘Jógvăn isn’t daydreaming and/but (he) looks out of the window.’

Similarly, a yes/no question is formed, questioning the whole complex, by moving only the first verb in the pseudo-coordination to first position, as in (15a). Movement of both finite verbs is excluded, as illustrated in (15b).

(15) a. Situr  Jógvăn  og  lesur?
sit-PRS3SG  Jógvăn-N   and  read-PRS3SG

‘Is Jógvăn reading?’

b. * Situr  og  lesur  Jógvăn?
sit-PRS3SG  and  read-PRS3SG  Jógvăn-N

Intended: Is Jógvăn reading?
In ordinary coordination, on the other hand, both options are possible:

(16) a. Lesur Jógván og skrivar?
    read-PRS3SG Jógván-N and write-PRS3SG
    ‘Does Jógván read and write?’

b. Lesur og skrivar Jógván?
    read-PRS3SG and write-PRS3SG Jógván-N
    ‘Does Jógván read and write?’

3.2.4 Presentational focus

Faroese allows a “presentational focus” construction where the initial position is occupied by an expletive and the subject appears post-verbally. Thus alongside (17a) we find also (17b):

(17) a. Ein drongur lesur.
    A boy-N read-PRS3SG
    ‘A boy reads’

b. Tað lesur ein drongur.
    It-N read-PRS3SG a boy-N
    ‘There is a boy reading’.

As discussed extensively in Lødrup (2002) with respect to Norwegian, ordinary coordination cannot co-occur with this construction in Faroese in the way illustrated in (18); but pseudo-coordination can, as shown in (19):
(18) a. Ein drongur lesur og skrivar.
    a boy-N read-PRS3SG and write-PRS3SG
    ‘A boy reads and writes.’

b. * Tað lesur ein drongur og skrivar.
    It-N read-PRS3SG a boy-N and write-PRS3SG
    Intended: ‘There is a boy reading and writing.’

(19) a. Ein drongur situr og skrivar.
    a boy-N sit-PRS3SG and write-PRS3SG
    ‘A boy is writing.’

b. Tað situr ein drongur og skrivar.
    it-N sit-PRS3SG a boy-N and write-PRS3SG
    ‘There is a boy writing.’

3.2.5 Semantic bleaching of V1

De Vos(2005) points out that in English, pseudo-comparatives with go as V1 and no intervening material between the verbs show no restrictions on the subject imposed by go itself; it is also clear that in this construction go has lost any meaning of change of location.

(20) a. It went and rained on us.

b. He lay down, and in seconds he had gone and fallen asleep!
This semantic bleaching, and concomitant transparency to subject selection, can therefore be used as a diagnostic for the particular construction, and is one reason that de Vos distinguishes between two types of pseudo-coordination in English. This bleaching may be a matter of degree, however; Lødrup states that the locational verbs that participate in pseudo-comparatives in Norwegian retain at least some aspects of their “literal” meaning at the same time as expressing durative or progressive aspect (Lødrup 2002: 122, and see also Hesse 2009, 2011). We return to semantic bleaching in section 4.

3.2.6 Failure of distributivity

Presumably in consequence of the different semantic contribution of the two verbs in a pseudo-coordination, overt markers of distributivity like both cannot occur in pseudo-coordinations. Hence (21a), which in the absence of bæði (both) is most naturally read as a pseudo-coordination, contrasts with (21b), an ordinary coordination.

(21) a. # Hon bæði situr og bindur.
     she-N both sit-PRS3SG and knit-PRS3SG
     Literally: She both sits and knits

b. Hon bæði drekkur og roykir.
she-N both drinks-PRS3SG and smokes-PRS3SG

‘She both drinks and smokes’.

4. Characteristics of pseudo-coordination in Faroese

4.1 Pseudo-coordination with aspectual meaning (PCA)

Lødrup’s 2002 paper is the most detailed recent discussion of pseudo-coordination in Scandinavian easily available, and so to put Faroese in the context of the mainland Scandinavian languages, we largely follow his grouping and order of presentation here.

4.1.1 Positional verbs

As in the other Scandinavian languages, Faroese makes use of positional verbs to express progressive/durative aspect (Henriksen 2000: 45). Consider for example (22a.b), and compare also the examples in (3a,b) above.6

(22) a. …ikki at tala um, tá tey liggja
    …not to talk-INF about, when they-N lie-PRSPL
    og koyra sunnudagskoyring…
    and drive-PRSPL Sunday-driving-A

6 The sentence in (22b) is from the FADAC database. Here a man of the older generation talks about an old trawler. The sentence is difficult to translate; the lexical meaning of tufla is to ‘walk clumsily.’ The informant refers to the fact that the ship is old, and difficult to sail in the icy waters of Greenland.
‘…Not to mention when they are driving [their] Sunday trips’

(kvinna.fo. 16.01.09; accessed 21.10.10)

b. Harra Gud í himmalinum situr, teir

Lord God-N in heaven-DEF-D sit-PRS3SG they-

liggja og tufla og tufla…

lie-PRSPL and stumble-PRSPL and stumble-PRSPL

‘Good Lord(N) in heaven, they sail so clumsily.’

(FADAC)

An example like (22a) also shows that liggja is more bleached of its lexical meaning than Lødrup reports for the positional verbs in Norwegian pseudo-coordinations. Liggja does not retain its literal meaning here; it would be completely infelicitous to say in this context tey liggja ‘they lie’ of the participants in the action described.

Semantic bleaching is also very obvious in (23), from the FADAC database. The informant is not standing when she utters (23), on the contrary she is sitting down with her cup of coffee.

(23) Eg standi og hugsi um Lenu.

I-N stand-PRS1SG and think-PRS1SG about Lena-A

‘I am thinking about Lena.’ (FADAC)
The verb *sita* ‘to sit’ when in a pseudo-coordination may retain at least some aspects of its lexical meaning. This is very clear in (24a), where the author says that she thinks that it is impolite that people who visit her just sit down and sent text messages. The meaning of *sita* ‘to sit’ in (24b) is also, if not totally bleached, then at least blurred, so to say. The sentence is about how people outside the capital are waiting for two more tunnels to be built. It is used figuratively, as it is not necessarily the case that these people are sitting while they wait for the government to make a decision.

(24) a. …at fólk, sum eg havi á vitjan
    ...that people-N that I-N have-PRS1SG on visit-D
    *sita* og *sms’a*.
    sit-PRSPL and text-PRSPL
    ‘...That visiting people are texting.’
    (kvinna.fo 18.01.05; accessed 22.02.11)

b. So, fyri at gleða tey mongu fólkini,
    so for to please-INF the many people-DEF-A
    ið spent *sita* og *bíða* eftir
    that excitedly sit-PRSPL and wait-PRSPL for
    avgerðini um holini bæði...
    decision-DEF-D about tunnels-DEF-A both-A
‘So, in order to please those people who excitedly sit and wait for the decision concerning the two tunnels…’

(Planet.portal.fo 25.6.08; accessed 22.02.11)

According to Vannebo (2003: 166) pseudo-coordinations in group 1 express an aspectual meaning; FA does not differ from the Mainland Scandinavian languages in this, as *liggja og* ‘lie and,’ *sita og* ‘sit and,’ and *standa og* ‘stand and’ express progressive/durative aspect, while *ganga og* ‘go and’ expresses iterative aspect. On this, see Henriksen (2000: 45). The progressive/durative meaning is also expressed by *vera og* ‘be and,’ about which we will say more below. For a further discussion of the aspectual meaning of these constructions and how it arises, see Hesse (2009, 2011).

In addition to stative positional verbs, Lødrup discusses the use of verbs of assuming a position as pseudo-coordinations. We have however not found any clear example of this kind of case in the Faroese sources we have searched; (25) is a potential example, but it is not at all clear that there is any semantic bleaching of *seta seg* ‘sit down.’

(25)  
Eg trúgví neyvan at eitt djór

I-N believe-PRS1SG hardly that an animal-N

fer at seta seg og filosofera
go-PRT3SG to sit-PRT INF REFL and philosophise-PRT INF
um moralir og etikkir.

about morals-NOM and ethics-NOM

‘I hardly believe that an animal is going to sit down and
philosophize about morals and ethics’.

(gaming.fo 7.2.10; accessed 24.02.11)

4.1.2 Verbs of motion

The Faroese verb of motion that most clearly occurs as V1 in pseudo-coordinations is ganga ‘to go, to walk.’ As discussed in (Henriksen 2000: 45), from which (26) is taken, ganga in a pseudo-coordination expresses iterative aspect, as indicated by the translation. (27) is a further example from an internet forum.

(26) Hann gangur og argar fólk.

he-N go-PRT3SG and tease-PRT3SG people-A

‘He is always teasing people’. (Henriksen 2000: 45(5))

(27) Hvat skal eg gera … havi eini sokallaða

what shall-PRT1SG I-N do-PRT INF have a so-called

vinkonu sum gangur og lýgar

girlfriend-A that go-PRT3SG and lie-PRT3SG

um meg […] Hon gangur og sigur,

about me-N NOM she-N go-PRT3SG and say-PRT3SG
at  eg  havi  havt  ein annan […]
that  I-N  have-PRS1SG have-SUP another-A

‘What shall I do? I have a so-called girlfriend who keeps
lying about me […] she keeps saying that I have had another’

(kvinna.fo 8.8.08; accessed 20.2.11)

4.1.3 Vera (be)

Two examples of the use of vera in pseudo-coordinations are given in (28):

(28) a. Teir vôru  og  drógu  lunda.
they  be-PSTPL  and  draw-PSTPL  puffins-A

‘They were catching puffins, by pulling them out of the
holes/nests’

(Henriksen 2000: 45)

b. …tíð  eg  var  og  bygði
…when I(N)  be-PST1SG  and  build-PST1SG
hospitalíð  í  60-inum.
hospital-DEF-A  in  sixties-D

‘…when I was [among the people] who built the hospital in
the sixties’.

(FADAC)

Note that it is possible to include a locative adjunct in either the first or the
second conjunct (although the preference seems to be for the first):
As noted earlier, Hesse (2011) asserts that if the first conjunct contains a locative adjunct, the coordination cannot be taken to be a pseudo-coordination. Note, however, that (29a) does not seem to differ markedly in interpretation from (29b), and, further, allows extraction—even of adjuncts—from the second conjunct:

(30) a. {Hvat/Hvussu seriøst} er hann í Danmark og lesur,
what/how hard be-PRS3SG he-N in Denmark and study-PRS3SG

‘{What/How hard} is he studying in Denmark?’

We therefore rather follow Lødrup in concluding that even if V1 is modified by a locative adjunct the whole construction can be a pseudo-coordination.
Bertinetto et al 2000, Ebert 2000, Vogel 2007, have argued that Faroese pseudo-comparatives with V1 vera ‘be’ are, or can be used as absentives. This term seems to originate with de Groot 2000, who uses it to refer to the “grammatical expression of absence” (p. 695). Lockwood points out that (31) would be a typical sign on an office door (Lockwood 1977: 140), a context cited by de Groot as typical for an absentive.

(31) **Eri og fái mær millummála.**

be-PRS1SG and get-PRS1SG me-D tea-A

Verði skjótur aftur.

become-PRS1SGsoon back.

‘Gone for tea. Will be back soon.’

Of course, the fact that vera og can be used in a context in which the referent of the subject is clearly absent does not mean that the construction itself encodes that meaning, it might only be compatible with it. More significant is that in a number of circumstances vera og cannot be used if the referent of the subject is co-present with the speaker. For example, in the context of a phone inquiry as to whether Rúnar has gone to work, Rúnar’s wife can reply using use *standa og mála* ‘stands and paints,’ but not *er og mála* ‘is and paints,’ if she is in the same room as Rúnar as she speaks; the latter would convey that Rúnar was somewhere else.
De Groot says of the absentive that it encodes the information that the referent of the subject is absent from the “deictic centre;” is involved in an activity; will be absent for a predictable time; and will return (pp. 695,697). Any characterization of Faroese in these terms will require a careful definition of how the “deictic centre” is determined, however. Thus, de Groot (2000) and Abraham (2009) claim that, by definition, absentives cannot be used of people who are in the presence of the speaker, and cannot be used of 1st person subjects in the present tense (with present rather than future meaning). But neither restriction holds absolutely of the use of *vera og* in Faroese. Thus a speaker can introduce herself as follows:

(33) Halló. Eg eiti Carolineúr Skotlandi.
hello I-N name-PRS1SG Caroline from Scotland-D.

Eg eri og vitji Hjalmar.
I-N be-PRS1SG and visit-PRS1SG Hjalmar

‘Hi. I’m Caroline from Scotland. I’m visiting Hjalmar.'
It seems that what licenses the use of *vera og* in this kind of situation is the lexical entailment of *vitja* ‘visit’ that the referent of the subject is absent from their usual home. Here however we do not have space to go into the semantics of the Faroese *vera og* construction in more detail, or to investigate whether or not uses like (33) above are also found for “absentives” in the other languages for which they have been proposed.

4.1.4 Taka ‘take’

The occurrence of the verb ‘take’ in pseudo-coordination in Scandinavian is described in detail in Vannebo (2003). The example in (34a) is from Henriksen (2000: 45); (34b) is from colloquial speech, and (34c) is from the FADAC database, where a woman is explaining how they used to play hide-and-seek when they were children.

(34) a. Hann tók og bardi hann av.
he-N take-PST3SG and beat-PST3SG him-A off
‘He beat him senseless’. (Henriksen 2002: 45)

b. Eg taki og selji bilin, vissi
I-N take-PRS1SG and sell-PRS1SG car-DEF-A if

eg ikki fái hatta arbeiðið
I-N NEG get that job-A
‘I am going to sell the car, if I don’t get that job’.

c. Altso mann tekur og so rennur

you see one-N take-PRS3SG and so run-PRS3SG

undan.

away

‘You see, one simply runs away’. (FADAC)

The aspectual meaning of the *taka* construction in the Mainland Scandinavian languages is connected with sudden initiation of the activity (SAG 1999: 907; Vannebo 2003: 173; this is also the case in FA, as shown in (34c).

As a final note in this section, FA does not have any pseudo-coordinations corresponding to the “purely aspectual” Norwegian cases (Lødrup 2002): *drive på ‘carry on’, holdepå ‘carry on’ and vereåt ‘be to’.*

4.2 *Pseudo-coordination that alternates with infinitival complementation*

The most central exemplar of this type of pseudo-coordination in Faroese is *royna og ‘try and,’* as introduced above in (5b), repeated here as (35)

(35) **Royn og sel húsini!**

try-IMPSG and sell-IMPSG house-DEF-A
‘Try and sell the house.’

Faroese has also borrowed another verb with a similar meaning from Danish, *prøva* ‘try’. The example in (36) is from the FADAC database:

(36) Hvat veitst tú um
what know-PRS2SG you-N about

Sjálvstýrisflokkin? *Prøva* og *fortel!*
independence-party-DEF-A Try-IMPSG and tell-IMPSG

‘What do you know about the Independence Party? Try and explain!’ (FADAC)

In contrast to the wide variety of cases discussed for Swedish in section 2 above, in Faroese for example *halda áfram* ‘continue,’ *byrja’start,’ and *støgga* ‘stop’ cannot function as the V1 in a pseudo-coordination, but rather must be followed by an infinitive:

(37) Hann *helduráfram/byrjar/støggar* at lesa bókina.
he-N continue/begin/stop-PRS3SG to read-INF book-DEF-A

‘He {continues/begins/stops} {to read/reading} the book.’
It is certainly possible to find such verbs as in the first conjunct of a coordination, as in (38), but these are all read as “ordinary” coordinations. The activity that is stopped, continued or started is not necessarily the one denoted by the second verb—as would be the case if these were pseudo-coordinations—rather some other activity, understood from context, is stopped/continued/started.\(^7\)

(38). \[\begin{array}{c}
\text{Hann steðgar/helduráfram/byrjar og} \\
\text{he-N stop /continue /begin-PRS3SG and} \\
\text{lesur bókina.}
\end{array}\]

\text{read-PRS3SG book-DEF-A}

‘He stops/continues/begins and reads the book.’

In distinction to the aspectual type of pseudo-coordination, both royna og and prøva og appear to be limited to the imperative and the infinitive. See the examples in (35) and (36) above, and the following:\(^8\)

\(^7\)For some speakers halda uppat ‘stop’ can be V1 in a PCB, although it appears not to be considered standard. An informant during fieldwork in the Faroes in 2008 volunteered that she had heard Halt uppat og skríggja ‘Stop shouting (Literally: stop and shout) although she herself was dubious as to how “correct” it was. The Faroese author of this article does not use this construction, and we have not yet been able to find out whether, for those who do, it is subject to the same distributional constraints as we find for royna/prøva.

\(^8\)Some speakers—perhaps a minority—marginally accept 3rd person plural verbs in the present, where the inflection is identical to the infinitive. For such speakers there is a contrast between (40) and (ia). The example in (ib) is from the internet:

(i) \[\begin{array}{c}
\text{a % Tey royna/prøva og lesa bókina.} \\
\text{they-N try-PRSPL and read-PRSPL book-DEF-A}
\end{array}\]
(39) a. **Royn/prøva og les bókina!**
try-IMPSG and read-IMPSG book-DEF-A
‘Try and read the book!’

b. **Royníðið/prøvið og lesið bókina!**
try-IMPPL and read-IMPPL book-DEF-A
‘Try and read the book!’

c. **Tú mást royna/prøva og lesa bókina.**
You must-PRS2SG try-INF and read-INF book-DEF-A
‘You must try and read the book.’

(40) * **Hann roynir/prøvar og lesur bókina.**
he-N try-PRS3SG and read-PRS3SG book-DEF-A
Intended: ‘He tries to read the book.’

‘They try and read the book.’

b. **Starvsfólk og avvarðandi royna og gera sótt allarbesta**
workers-N and relatives-N try-PRSPL and do-PRSPL their best
‘Workers and relatives try and do their best.’

In English, the constraints on *try and* are parallel to those on *go+verb* and *come+verb* (*You should go talk to him; Come talk to me!*). In that in English the constraint appears to be purely (surface) morphological: both V1 and V2 have to be bare stem forms: this includes the imperative and the infinitive, but also any present tense form other than 3rd singular (*Try and be patient! You should try and be patient. They generally try and be patient. *He tries and is patient. *I tried and was patient*). It is striking that the constraints in Faroese are very similar—the cases that are excluded are those in which there is past tense morphology or person/number morphology that is distinct from the infinitive (see the footnote above for the questionable status of present tense plural forms). But in Faroese this generalization cannot be stated in terms of bare stem forms, since the plural imperative in Faroese shows distinct suffixal morphology, as illustrated in (39b), and the infinitive is not identical to the bare stem in verbs other than those of Class 1 (inf. at kalla ‘to call’ Imp. kalla! ‘call’).

In these restrictions, the distribution of pseudo-coordinations with *royna* as V1 is different from Mainland Scandinavian; as reported in Wiklund (1996:33), in Swedish at least *pröva* ‘try’ can occur in a pseudocomparative in tensed and supine forms as well as in the imperative.9

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9 These restrictions in Faroese might suggest an effect of contact with English; however Björkman 2009 cites Modern Greek and Marsalese that show a similar phenomenon in the related ‘go/come + verb’ construction, so it seems that this kind of restriction may arise independently; this remains to be explored.
As with the aspectual type of pseudo-coordination, this type also can be negated by negating the first verb:

(41) **Royn ikki og sel húsini!**  
    try-IMPS NEG and sell-IMPSG house-def-A  
    ‘Don’t try to sell the house!’

Strikingly, negation in this position can also easily be interpreted as taking scope only over the second verb. For example, the example in (42) can be interpreted with this narrow scope for negation, as shown by the translation:

(42) **Royn ikki og blív ov sein!**  
    try-IMPSG NEG and become-IMPSG too late  
    ‘Try not to be too late!’

It is tempting to conclude from this that *og* must be within the second conjunct, possibly occupying the same position as the infinitive marker, since it in general in FA the negative marker precedes *at* in infinitives. However, it has been noted (Hommerberg & Tottie 2007:56) that *contra* the discussion in Horn (1989: 323), *try* can act as a ‘Neg-Raiser.’ That is, there are cases in English of a negation that is syntactically associated with *try*.
nevertheless semantically scoping only over the embedded verb. (43a,b) are two attested examples from Hommerberg & Tottie (2007).\(^{10}\)

(43)  

a. I don’t try and let things bother me.  
b. Looking at her made him so sick, he didn’t try to think about what he was doing.

Given the possibility that *royna* ‘try’ might also be a Neg-Raising verb, the negative marker *ikki* in (42) may be in the matrix even when interpreted with low scope, and hence does not allow us to conclude anything about the position of *og*. That this may be the explanation is suggested by the fact that negation may also follow the second verb, as in (31a). The order in (31b) is also possible; presumably this is to be linked to the emergence of negative imperatives with the order *Negation–Imperative* (see Petersen 2010).

(44)  

a. **Royn og ger ikki nakað býtt!**  
   try-IMPSG and do-IMPSG NEG anything-A stupid  
   ‘Try not to do anything stupid!’

b. **Royn og ikki ger nakað býtt!**  
   try-IMPSG and NEG do-IMPSG anything-A stupid

\(^{10}\) For the British-English speaking author of this article, however, these examples are completely unacceptable; Hommerberg & Tottie (2007) suggest that the spread of Neg-Raising to *try* may be a recent development.
‘Try not to do anything stupid!’

5. The origin of pseudo-coordinations in FA, grammaticalization

Are the pseudo-coordinations we find in FA borrowed or the result of an internal change only? Vannebo (2003) expresses the opinion that the *ta* ‘take’-constructions in Scandinavian are the result of an internal change, and that these started already at an early stage. Petersen (2010) briefly discusses pseudo-coordinations in FA, and he argues that as FA lacks the *vera ad* ‘be at’ construction in IC, which expresses the progressive aspect, speakers have borrowed the pseudo-coordination construction from DA. This holds for at least the positional verbs *standen* ‘stand’, and *liggja* ‘lie,’ and for *vera* ‘be.’ Danish *gang* ‘go,’ on the other hand, has a distant locative interpretation, different to the Faroese iterative interpretation of pseudo-coordinations with *gang*. Support for a northern convergence area is given in Höder (2011), where he shows that these constructions are found not only in NO, DA and SW, but also in Low German and non standard variants of High North German (see Figure 1 above). This suggests a spread that might have started with the Hansa, and we may thus tentatively conclude that at least the constructions in question in FA are borrowed from DA, especially since they are not found in IC and thus are not likely to have been inherited.
While we find potential instances of pseudo-coordination in the language of the ballads, we have not found any clear examples of semantic bleaching of the V1. This means that the borrowed V1 + og + V2 construction may have been adapted to a pre-existing structure in Faroese: a case of syntactic borrowing with no word order change.

6. Conclusion

Pseudo-coordinations do not express two equal events, in contrast to “normal” coordinations. Instead, in one type we find semantic bleaching of the first verb, so that it functions more like an auxiliary; that is, it gives rise to an aspectual meaning (Vannebo 2003, Hesse 2009, 2011). Bleaching is of course one of the characteristics Heine & Kuteva (2005: 80) set up as an indicator of grammaticalization, that is, what they call desemanticization, or loss of meaning content.

In Faroese pseudo-coordinations, we find semantic bleaching with standa ‘to stand’, sita ‘to sit’, liggja ‘to lie’ and ganga ‘to walk’, vera og

\[\text{An example with sita og ‘sit and’ is from CCF 73 Aa; note that there is no evidence of semantic bleaching of sita ‘to sit’.}\]

(i) Elvar situr og klæðir seg, eina morgun stund …
Elvar-N sit-3PSG and dress-3PSG self-A, one morning hour-A
‘Elvar is dressing himself early one morning’.
‘be and’ taka og ‘take and,’ but not with koma og ‘come and,’ or fara og ‘go and.’ The latter two are not discussed in this article.

In this article we have discussed two different instances of pseudo-coordination in Faroese: one (PCA) in which the construction is used to convey a number of different aspectual meanings, and in which the initial verb is largely bleached of its original meaning, and one (PCB) in which the pseudo-coordination alternates with an infinitive-embedding construction—in this case the initial verb (typically roynaprøva ‘try’) does not undergo any change of meaning. We have speculated that at least the first of these types has been borrowed into Faroese from Danish, and that the use of the positional verbs and vera ‘be’ has the same function in Faroese as the vera adó progressive construction has in Icelandic. While we have described a number of the syntactic properties of these pseudo-coordinations, we have not here given a syntactic analysis: we hope to do so in future work.

References


Björkman, B. 2009. The syntax of syncretism. Talk given at the 20th meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 20), MIT.


Appendix

In the tables below we set out the numbers of examples of pseudo-coordinations that we found in the FADAC database, the two corpora that we consulted (corpuseye and spraakbanken), and the ballads in volumes I-IV of FøroyaKvæði/Corpus carminum Faeroensium

**FADAC database**

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<td>to lie'</td>
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<td>ganga</td>
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<td>to walk</td>
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<td>to go'</td>
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**Corpuseye/spraakbanken:**

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**Ballads:**

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