

Sin and *deres* with plural antecedents in KorpusDK

KATRINE ROSENDAL EHLERS

The Danish possessive reflexive *sin* (*sit, sine*) has primarily been used with singular antecedents for at least 800 years. A speaker may say that *She drove home in sin car* but *Karen and Per drove home in sin deres car*. The non-reflexive third person plural possessive *deres* is usually used instead of *sin* when the subject antecedent is plural. It is, however, not uncommon to find *sin* used with plural antecedents in modern Danish, also in more formal contexts. In this study, I investigate the occurrence of *sin* with plural antecedents in KorpusDK. The study builds on a manual read-through of approximately 55,000 corpus sentences, and almost every instance of *sin* with plural antecedents in KorpusDK is included in the study. The study finds that *sin* does occur with plural antecedents in this reasonably formal written corpus, although *deres* is still the most frequent form. I compare the use of *sin* with plural antecedents with the standard forms, *deres* with plural antecedents and *sin* with singular antecedents. The use of *sin* with plural antecedents is clearly different from the standard forms in regard to e.g. animacy and distributivity. I conclude that *sin* with plural antecedents is a systematically conditioned variant in the corpus and not “just” an agreement error.

KEYWORDS: possessive reflexives; KorpusDK; animacy; number; distributivity