

Hyphens as material substitutes in Danish conjunctive phrases

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This paper investigates a Danish phrase type that occurs frequently in both speech and writing, yet is rarely discussed in the grammar literature. The phrase type under investigation is the elliptical conjunctive phrase, i.e. *kalve- og svinekød*, *søn- og helligdage* and *haveborde og -stole* (lit. 'calf- and pigmeat', 'Sun- and holidays' and 'gardentables and -chairs'). In written form, the elided constituent is indicated with a suspensive hyphen (*vikarbindestreg*, VB), whereas in spoken language, it is indicated by phonetic means. In the first part of the paper, we propose a typology of Danish VB phrases and show that certain types of phrases are systematically ambiguous. In the second part, we discuss the VB phrase from both a phonetic and a language-technology perspective. Finally, we show that several other Germanic languages have conjunctive phrases that structurally and semantically strongly resemble the Danish VB phrase.

KEYWORDS: orthography; lexicography; punctuation; language technology; coordination; ellipsis; ambiguity