Seem and *appear* and their Norwegian verbal counterparts: a cross-register contrastive study

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The meanings of verbs such as *seem* and *appear* combine features of evidentiality with epistemic modality (e.g. Aijmer 2009, Lampert 2011). The verbs occur in a variety of constructions, such as copular, as in (1), catenative, as in (2) and extraposition, as in (3). The examples come from the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC), and the accompanying translations show Norwegian verbs in similar constructions.

(1) He *seems disgruntled* about her reticence. (ABR1)
Han *virker irritert* over hennes tilbakeholdenhet.

(2) But none of my questioners *seems to have* any teeth. (FW1)
Men ingen av mine utspørrere *synes å ha* noen tenner.

(3) …more and more *it seemed that* two peoples lived in England, not one … (DL1)
…*det så mer ut til at* det bodde to folk i England, ikke ett.

The study is based on the fiction part of the ENPC compared to academic prose from the KIAP corpus (*Kulturell identitet i akademisk prosa;* Fløttum et al. 2006), which is a comparable corpus of published academic articles in English, Norwegian and French from different disciplines. For my purposes only English and Norwegian linguistics will be used. The research questions are as follows:

- What are the frequencies, patterns and meanings of *seem, appear* and their correspondences *virke, synes* and *se ut* in Norwegian and English fiction and academic prose?
  ('Pattern' applies to the syntactic patterns of the verb phrases (e.g. *seem + to*-infinitive, *seem* + adjective phrase, *seem + that*-clause or *as if*-clause) as well as their co-occurrence with a dummy subject and/or an experiencer phrase.)
- How do these patterns and their meanings compare across lexical items, languages and registers?

The study uses the ENPC primarily as a comparable corpus of original fiction texts, but considers the translation correspondences as a source of information on parallelisms between the different expressions. The translation paradigm of *seem* established in Johansson (2001) is considered a viable *tertium comparationis* for my study even though the mutual correspondence (Altenberg 1999) of the expressions was not calculated.

Findings include a register difference in both languages as regards the overall frequencies of SEEM-verbs. Furthermore, the lexemes *appear* and *synes* have a strong preference for the academic register. It is also shown that the lexemes are not equally open to all the syntactic constructions possible with SEEM-verbs, and the Norwegian verbs differ more in this regard than the English ones.

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Corpora

ENPC – English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus: https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/services/knowledge-resources/omc/enpc/

KIAP – Cultural Identity in Academic Prose: http://www.uib.no/fremmedsprak/23107/kiap-korpuset