

The Swedish modal particle *nog*. A contrastive analysis.

Karin Aijmer, University of Gothenburg

Abstract

The article investigates the meaning and functions of the Swedish modal particle *nog* on the basis of its cross-linguistic correspondences in the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC). *Nog* was more frequent in original texts than in sources reflecting the fact that modal particles are used abundantly in Swedish conversations. *Nog* does not have an obvious correspondence in English as indicated by the fact that it has been rendered by many different lexical items and constructions. Moreover omission is a frequent strategy. The translations show that *nog* has two different core uses depending on position and stress. In medial position *nog* means both probability and (almost) certainty. When *nog* corresponds to an expression of certainty it can come to imply an element of self-assurance. Medial *nog* is also used to modify mental verbs (*jag vet nog* 'I know *nog*') especially in response utterances. An important function of the uses of *nog* in medial position is downtoning an opinion or an utterance which might be offensive to the hearer unless mitigated. *Nog* is also used deontically with reference to what ought to be done. The deontic meaning is particularly clear when *nog* is used with a modal auxiliary to give advice. *Nog*, when initial, involves emphasis or contradictory assumptions (contrastive *nog*). Contrasting opinions account for example for the translations of a sentence with initial *nog* by a negative interrogative sentence (or a declarative sentence with a tag question). Another function of the initial *nog* is to prepare the hearer for an objection in a following *but*-clause.

1. Introduction

Modal particles are found only in a few languages. They are notoriously difficult to analyse because of their multifunctionality and context-boundness. The angle chosen in the present study is a contrastive approach to the study of modal particles. The aim is to study the meaning and functions of the Swedish modal particle *nog* on the basis of its cross-linguistic correspondences in the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC). Translations have probably always been used informally by the linguist to establish what a lexical element means in a context. In the present study this approach is generalized to large amounts of translation texts in two languages. We can therefore test hypotheses about what these meanings are based on the linguist's own intuitions or bilingual corpus data. The translations provide a 'rich' picture of the variability of

Aijmer, Karin. 2016. "The Swedish modal particle *nog*. A contrastive analysis." *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 15(3):149-170.

the modal particles which can be the basis for describing their polysemy and multifunctionality.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 defines modal particles (in general) and describes how they differ from modal adverbs and discourse markers. Section 3 deals with previous work on *nog*, and Section 4 describes the design of the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus and the contrastive method. Section 5 presents some quantitative results of the contrastive analysis. Section 6 discusses the functions of *nog* and how we should describe the lexical meaning of the particle. Section 7 provides a summary and conclusion.

2. Defining modal particles

Modal particles are abundant in German (see e.g. Diewald 2013, Waltreit 2001) and are also found in Swedish (Aijmer 1996, Aijmer 2015), Danish (Davidsen-Nielsen 1996), and Norwegian (Fretheim 1981, Borthen and Knudsen 2014).

As a group of words they have certain formal and functional characteristics distinguishing them both from modal adverbs and from discourse particles (see e.g. Diewald 2006, 2013, Waltreit 2001). Let us consider what (some of) these features are:

Formal features

Morphologically modal particles are ‘particles’; they are ‘non-inflected monosyllabic units that have segmental status and can be isolated as such’ (Diewald 2007: 409). This distinguishes them from modal adverbs such as *probably*. Modal particles (unlike modal adverbs) are integrated in the sentence and have a fixed position in the so-called middle position after the finite verb.

The prototypical position of *nog* after the finite verb is illustrated in example (1):

- (1) Men det var nog bara prat.
‘But that was ‘nog’ only talk

Nog can also be found in initial position. However, it is still integrated in the utterance and it has a different function from the medial *nog*:

- (2) Nog är jag starkare än du
'Nog' am I stronger than you.

Prosodic features

Modal particles are generally unstressed unlike modal adverbs (e.g. Diewald 2013). *Nog* presents special problems since it can also be sentence-initial and stressed.

Functional features

Generally speaking, modal particles express pragmatic meaning related to the attitude of the speaker and the hearer (Cuenca 2013: 195). However, depending on the context and their lexical meaning they have extended their meanings in different directions.

Stylistic features

Modal particles are found in spoken language rather than in writing which suggests that they have interactional functions in speech (Lindström 2008: 96).

Modal particles are difficult to distinguish from discourse markers. Both modal particles and discourse markers are for example used by the speaker to take up different positionings or stances in the interaction. A topical area in linguistics over the years has therefore been the intersection between modal particles and discourse markers and whether it is possible to draw a line between the two types (see Degand et al. 2013:1). This issue has been discussed from both formal and functional perspectives. Syntactically modal particles are defined by their position inside the utterance. However, there is little agreement about the functional definition of modal particles.

Vaskó and Fretheim (1997), for example, define modal particles with regard to their context-adjusting function. In the typical case an illocutionary act modified by a particle 'contains information which the speaker feels that the hearer will not access easily without the speaker's intervention' (p. 253). ... 'Regardless of the speech act performed, the speaker's purpose is to make the hearer aware of a particular assumption, or set of assumptions, entertained by the speaker, which the speaker wishes the hearer to accept and to avail himself (sic) of during the conversation' (p. 254). With *nog* the speaker's idea is for example to tell

the hearer to base his/her interpretation on what is likely or probable. Another reason may be to hedge or soften an assertion which may be experienced as brusque.

- (3) Men det var nog bara prat. (KE1)
But that was probably just talk.

Discourse markers such as *actually*, *well*, and *in fact* are distinguished from modal particles both formally and functionally. They may appear utterance-initially (outside the clause). They typically have functions relating to the sequential organization of discourse for example to mark frames and boundaries in the discourse.

3. Previous research on *nog*

According to *the Swedish Academy Grammar* (SAG) (Teleman et al. 1999: 117), the Swedish modal particle *nog* (referred to as a modal sentence adverbial in their terminology) has two ‘relatively clearly distinct’ senses. In the first sense *nog* indicates that the speaker judges the contents of the declarative sentence to be probable (the speaker assumes that...)¹

- (4) Dom vill nog hellre ha Tant Grön, Tant Brun eller något spännande.
They prefer ‘nog’ Aunt Green, Aunt Brown or something exciting.

Unlike *väl* (which is hearer-oriented and similar to a tag question) the particle *nog* (in medial position) does not appeal to the hearer for confirmation and is not used in interrogative sentences.

In the second sense *nog* is said to strengthen a speech act. *Nog* guarantees the truth of statements about things which the speaker him/herself is in the position to judge (e.g. reports about perceptions or mental states) or expresses the speaker’s commitment to carrying out the action in promises or threats.

¹ The examples in this section are from Teleman et al. (1999: 117-118).

- (5a) Jag tycker nog i alla fall som Ulf att det är straffbart.
I think 'nog' anyhow like Ulf that it is punishable.

The following utterances illustrate *nog* with the function of a promise (5b) or a threat (5c):

- (5b) Jag kan nog både sjunga och spela må ni tro.
I can 'nog' both play and sing you know.

- (5c) Jag ska nog ge dig, din skurk.
I will 'nog' kick your butt, you scoundrel.

Nog is reinforcing especially in initial position. In this position the first sense of *nog* (as a probability marker) is not possible:

- (6) Nog förvånar det mig litet att jag fick för pappa och mamma.
'Nog' surprises it me a little that I was allowed to by my father and mother.

If the utterance with *nog* is used about something the hearer knows better than the speaker, *nog* can have the function of a question or hearer appeal:

- (7) Nog kan jag väl få låna din cykel?
'Nog' can I borrow 'väl' the bicycle from you?

The reinforcing *nog* is sometimes similar to an adversative adverbial with concessive meaning ('admittedly'):

- (8) Nog vill jag komma ur det här, men jag kan inte.
'Nog' want I to get out of this, but I cannot.

Teleman et al (1999) propose a number of meanings and functions that *nog* can have in Swedish. By using a parallel corpus where Swedish is one of the compared languages we can check if the functions which have been distinguished have their own translation. The translations can also show meanings or contextual effects of a modal particle which are difficult to discover on the basis of a single language.

4. Material and method

Modal particles are restricted to certain languages. However the function of modal particles can also be translated into languages which do not have modal particles such as English (Waltereit 2001). *Nog* does not have a fixed meaning making it possible to translate it ‘uniformly’ but has a large repertoire of different meanings depending on the context. The use of translations as evidence for a certain meaning and as a source for contrastive analysis is nothing new. Linguists have often referred to *nog* as ‘tests’ for different meanings. The method used here is to study the meanings of the modal particle systematically in a corpus of translations.

Parallel corpora for cross-linguistic research of linguistic elements with their translations into the other language have now been available for several decades (see Johansson 2007 for some research based on parallel corpora). They have been a particularly valuable resource to study phenomena in spoken language which do not have a uniform meaning in all contexts (see e.g. the overview in Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg 2011 of contrastive corpus studies of pragmatic markers). Studies of Swedish modal particles include Aijmer (1996) and Aijmer (2015) on Swedish *väl*.

The English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC) contains original texts in English and Swedish with their translations into the other language, altogether 2.8 million words representing both fiction and non-fiction (see Altenberg and Aijmer 2000).² The parallel corpus can be used in several ways to establish similarities and differences between languages and to support or modify results based on research on monolingual corpora. Since the ESPC is a bidirectional corpus we can study both the English translations of *nog* in Swedish originals and the English ‘sources’ of *nog* in the translated texts. I have used the fiction part of the corpus only (about 1.5 million words) since this is the closest correspondence to speech.

² A description of the corpus is also available at <http://www.sprak.gu.se/english/research/research-activities/corpus-linguistics/corpora-at-the-dll/espc/>.

5. The correspondences of *nog* in the ESPC

In this section I will look at the correspondences of *nog* in the fiction part of the ESPC. Altogether there were 142 examples in the translations from Swedish into English. *Nog* was more frequent in original texts than in sources reflecting the fact that modal particles have important discourse functions in the interaction. See Table 1 where the correspondences have been ordered by (total) frequency:

Table 1: Translations and sources of *nog* in the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus

Correspondence	SO→ET	ST←EO	Total
Ø	75 (52.8%)	18 (23.1%)	93 (42.3%)
<i>probably</i>	24 (16.9%)	3 (3.8%)	27 (12.3%)
<i>I suppose</i>	5	3	8
<i>will</i>	3	4	7
<i>of course</i>	6	-	6
<i>I guess</i>	3	3	6
<i>surely</i>	1	5	6
<i>I think</i>	1	5	6
<i>no doubt</i>	5	-	5
<i>must</i>	5	-	5
<i>certainly</i>	4	1	5
<i>I am sure</i>	3	-	3
tag question	1	2	3
<i>might</i>	-	3	3
<i>really</i>	3	-	3
<i>seem to</i>	2	-	2
<i>might well</i>	1	1	2
<i>sure</i> (adverb)	-	2	2
<i>I'm afraid</i>	-	2	2
emphatic <i>do</i> ,	-	1	1
emphatic <i>is</i>	-	1	1
<i>I must say</i>	-	1	1
<i>I dare say</i>	-	1	1
<i>I should think</i>	-	1	1
<i>I reckon</i>	-	1	1
<i>I expect</i>	-	1	1
<i>I suppose...surely</i>	-	1	1
<i>that he is</i>	-	1	1
<i>obviously</i>	-	1	1
<i>would</i>	-	1	1
<i>may</i>	-	1	1
<i>sure enough</i>	-	1	1
negative interrogative question	-	1	1
<i>you'd better</i>	-	1	1
<i>I'd better</i>	-	1	1
<i>just gotta</i>	-	1	1
<i>anyway</i>	-	1	1
<i>in fact</i>	-	1	1
<i>exactly</i>	-	1	1
<i>by the look of them</i>	-	1	1
<i>my advice is</i>	-	1	1
other	1	4	5
Total	142	78	220

Nog has been rendered by many different lexical expressions or constructions. Altogether there were 40 different variants (including zero) only 9 of which were shared by translations and sources. *Of course*, *no doubt* and *must* were frequent in English translations but not in sources. *Surely* and *I think* were the most frequent variants in sources but they occurred only once in translations.

Omission was the most frequent strategy. In 42.3% of the examples *nog* has either been deleted in English translations or added in the Swedish ones. The translator looks for a correspondence that seems to fit the context or omits *nog* (a zero translation) if the particle is not thought to be important for the message conveyed. *Probably* was the most frequent correspondence (after omission). It was more frequent in English translations than in sources. This suggests that the translator has overused *probably* because of its formal and semantic similarity with *nog*.

The translation paradigm provides us with a messy picture of what *nog* means in different contexts. *Nog* does not seem to have a single meaning but a variety of different functions reflecting its frequency and importance in spoken language. Moreover the English correspondences fall into different word classes (see Table 2). It has been suggested that modal particles (in German) correspond to non-integrated 'formulas' (discourse markers) in English (Fillmore 1984). However in my data the only discourse markers were *anyway* and *in fact* (both occurring only once). The most frequent type of correspondence was instead a modal adverb. The functions of *nog* are also similar to those associated with 'modal tags' such as *I think*, *I suppose* expressing a degree of certainty (cf. de Haan 2006: 38 for the term 'modal tag'). *Nog* can also correspond to a modal auxiliary (in particular *will* and *must*). On the other hand *nog* was rarely translated with a tag question.

Table 2: Word class correspondences of *nog* in English

Modal adverb	probably, of course, surely, no doubt, certainly, really, sure, obviously, just (gotta)	53
Modal tag	I think, I guess, I should think, I suppose, I'm sure, I'm afraid, I must say, I dare say, I expect	30
Modal auxiliary	must, will, might, might well, may, would, could; would rather, had better	17
Tag questions	e.g. isn't it, wouldn't I	3
Discourse marker	in fact, anyway	2
Modal verb	seem	2
Other modal expressions	e.g. my advice is, by the look of them, that he is, negative interrogative sentence	5

6. Functions of *nog*

Modal particles are multifunctional and context-bound. They therefore raise a number of questions about semantics and pragmatics. Do they have one meaning or should we account for their multifunctionality in a polysemous approach? *Nog* signals in principle that the speaker has sufficient grounds for the truth of the utterance whether this involves that something is probable or true (Borgstam 1977; Lindström 2008:98). It follows that *nog* is subjective or speaker-oriented (Teleman et al 1999; Fretheim 1981). There is no appeal to the hearer or someone who knows better but the speaker takes full responsibility for his/her attitudes and actions.

Nog seems to be associated with different core aspects depending on its position and the presence of stress. The following discussion is therefore organized in two parts: the first examines unstressed *nog* placed medially and the second example where stressed *nog* is placed initially.

6.1 *Nog* in medial position

6.1.1. *Nog* indicating probability

The translation with *probably* signals that *nog* expresses a high degree of certainty (probability):

- (10) — Men det är nog bara ljummet, sa Pretorius. (ARP1)³
"Yes, but it 's probably got rather cold," said Pretorius. (ARP1T)

The speaker makes a fairly confident statement about the temperature of the coffee.

In (11) *nog* interacts with *I suspect* in the main clause. The translator has used *probably*:

- (11) - Då misstänker jag att hon nog kommer att bli överraskad. (HM1)
"Then I suspect she 'll probably be surprised." (HM1T)

The probability meaning seems to be the most frequent one of *nog* in translations into British English. The meaning can also be expressed by other means than *probably*.

No doubt expresses probability rather than certainty and has the same meaning as *probably*. According to Quirk et al. (1985: 623) 'it in fact implies some doubt and is synonymous with "very probably"':

- (12) De skulle nog klara sitt husköp. (HM2)
They would no doubt cope with buying their house. (HM2T)

Probability can also be expressed by a modal auxiliary (13). *Will* as a translation indicates that the speaker has sufficient knowledge of the facts to judge that something is true:

- (13) Jojo, tänkte fastern. Julgransplundringen är nog snart över om de fortsätter på det här viset. (ARP1)
"Oh, yes," thought Auntie, "presents under the Christmas tree will soon be a thing of the past if this goes on. (ARP1T)

In (14) the translation with *must* suggests that the speaker has enough background information for inferring that 'he is about fifty':

- (14) Han är nog omkring femtio — fast han ser yngre ut, tänker jag och ser in i hans blick. (MS1)

³ For information about the text codes, see Altenberg and Aijmer (2000).

He must be around fifty but looks younger, I think, and look into his eyes. (MS1T)

In (15) *nog* refers to the facts or circumstances on the basis of which the speaker makes a judgement. The translator has used 'by the look of them':

- (15) Lögnen kom av sig själv och de accepterade den utan vidare. Ingen av dem sa någonting efter det. Valerie satt och stirrade på deras kortklippta grå nackar och förarens åldersfläckiga händer på ratten. De är nog systrar, tänkte hon. (PDJ1T)
The lie came easily to her and was as easily accepted. Nothing more was said by any of them. She sat looking at the backs of the two grey, cropped heads, watching the driver's age-speckled hands on the wheel. Sisters, she thought, by the look of them. (PDJ1)

6.1.2. *Nog as a downtoner*

The speaker may also use *nog* for reasons having to do with politeness. When *nog* has been translated by a modal tag such as *I suppose, I guess, I dare say, I should think* its function is to soften or tone down the illocutionary force or more generally the speaker's commitment to what is said:

- (16) Sen är jag nog inte lätt att umgås med eftersom jag till stora delar består av sällskapliga gäster i det där hotellet jag talade om. (RJ1)
And I suppose I 'm not that easy to get on with because I 've got this hotel full of guests that I mentioned earlier. (RJ1T)

In (17) the speaker has used *I'm afraid* apologizing for not being able to answer the question. The translator's *nog* makes the answer less abrupt than the corresponding utterance without a modal particle.

- (17) "I 'm afraid I ca n't answer that, Mr Orloff," said Cooper honestly. (MW1)
"Jag kan nog inte svara på den frågan, herr Orloff", sade Cooper ärligt. (MW1T)

In the examples quoted *nog* is associated with softening an illocutionary act. The same sentence without *nog* would sound impositive and brusque and threaten the hearer's negative face (the hearer's want to have his/her freedom of action unimpeded) (Brown and Levinson 1978).

6.1.2 *Nog indicating certainty*

In (18) *nog* seems to suggest 'complete certainty' as indicated by the translator's *certainly* (Aijmer 2002):

- (18) Det var nog kallare ute än det verkade. Röken bolmade ur skorstenarna och slog ner. Det blåste och röken svepte i vita slöjor förbi hennes fönster. (MG1)

It certainly was colder outside than it seemed. It was windy, and the smoke from the chimneys swept by her window in white veils. The sun broke through the clouds, gilding the veils of smoke. (MG1T)

However, when *nog* is translated as 'certainly' or another expression of certainty the reason may also be that the speaker needs some reassurance that the grounds for judging something to be true are sufficient (cf. Solberg 1990: 55 who considers one of the most important elements of the Norwegian particle *nok* (cognate with Swedish *nog*) to be that the speaker tries to prove to herself that something is the case). In (19) the translator has used 'I'm sure' to express the speaker's confident prediction or self-assurance that something will be the case. This interpretation is further strengthened by the addition of an explanation for the speaker's (un)certainty (H B may be glad to spend some time chatting since she is alone).

- (19) Fast om söndagarna tog hon sig ändå för det mesta åt Storholmträsk, Gammlundström brukade skjutsa henne, han sade: jag får nog en kaffetår av Hanna Burvall, hon kan vara glad att få prata bort en stund, hon är ju som ensammen. (TL1)

Though on most Sundays she got herself to Storholmsträsk. Old Lundström used to drive her there, he said: "I 'm sure I 'll get a cup of coffee from Hanna Burvall. She may be glad to spend some time chatting. She is as it were alone. (TL1T)

6.1.3 Emotional and subjective uses

As the Swedish Academy Grammar (Teleman et al. 1999) has pointed out, *nog* has subjective or affective uses in addition to the hedging or strengthening (epistemic) meaning. *Nog* is for example used as a modifier of the verb in subjective statements (statements about the speaker's own perceptions, needs or mental states).

In (20) the equivalent in English is the emphatic *do*:

- (20) So you see, I do need a consciousness-raising group after all.
(MD1)

Du ser att jag behöver nog gå i gruppterapi i alla fall. (MD1T)

However *nog* has often been omitted by the translator after verbs expressing a subjective opinion or mental state (*tror jag nog* 'think I nog', *jag märkte nog* 'I noticed nog', *jag vet nog* 'I know nog'). In (21) *I know* has been regarded as sufficient in the English translation:

- (21) Jag vet nog att man måste jobba för Ödet. (RJ1)
I know you have to work for Fate. (RJ1T)

In (22) and (23) *nog* has been added in the Swedish translations after *tycka* and *tro* to make the Swedish text more idiomatic:

- (22) "I think you 'd best," he said. "What would your name be?" (SG1)
"Ja, det tycker nog jag också", sade han. "Hur var ert namn?"
(SG1T)

Tror jag nog can be regarded as an idiomatic expression which is typically used in response utterances.

- (23) Do you think you can find it?"
"Got a tongue in my head," he said, peering at the maze of roads.
"Reckon so." (DF1)
Tror du att du kan hitta den?"
"Kan ju fråga mig fram", sa han och kikade på villervallan av vägar.
"Tror jag nog." (DF1T)

Nog is needed to tone down a too blunt subjective statement. English has no explicit correspondence in such cases.

6.1.4 *Nog with deontic uses*

Nog can be interpreted as deontic in combination with a deontic modal auxiliary. The 'deontic *nog*' expresses the speaker's attitude towards a possible action with regard to whether it is appropriate or morally right (cf. Palmer 1986: 120). In (15) the source text has *had better* 'a comparative modal' (van der Auwera et al 2013) used to express advice given by the speaker to the hearer (the hearer should do something or it is 'best' for the hearer to do something). The translator has used *få nog* ('may nog', 'must nog'):

- (24) You 'd better keep my dinner warm." (DL1)
Du får nog hålla maten varm." (DL1T)

(*Ni*) *ska* ('you shall') combines with *nog* and is (also) used to give advice (the speaker judges an action to be the best one). The source text has 'my advice is':

- (25) "I 'll see what I can find out for you back at the lab, but my advice is, do n't hold your breath. (MW1)
"Jag ska se vad jag kan hitta åt er när jag kommer till labbet, men ni ska nog inte ha för stora förhoppningar. (MW1T)

In (26) *nog* is a part of the Swedish modal idiom *det är bäst att* ('it is best that'). The source text has *it's time* (you did something):

- (26) "You 're raving ever so slightly, darling, and it 's time you went home." (RDA1)
Det är nog bäst att du går hem." (RDA1T)

In (27) the English original has *just gotta*. *Nog* as a translation of *just* emphasizes what ought to be done:

- (27) "Sometimes, you just gotta stay there and teach him how to go through the bad and good of whatever comes." (GN1)
 Någon gång blir du nog tvungen att stanna kvar och lära honom att ta ont och gott som det kommer. " (GN1T)

6.1.5 *Nog with the meaning of a promise or a threat*

Nog can signal that the utterance should be taken as a threat (*jag ska nog* 'I shall nog'). The particle reinforces (or mitigates) the speaker's attitude (the speaker commits herself to a future action). In the English translation *nog* has been omitted:

- (28) "Ät gröt, om du kan tugga den, och lämna vildoxarna åt mej", sa Mattis.
 "Dem ska jag nog bli färdig med när tiden är inne." (AL1)
 "Eat your porridge, if you can chew it, and leave wild bulls to me," said Matt. "I 'll deal with them when the time comes." (AL1T)

I'm going to get you in the English original text is typically a threat. In the Swedish translation *nog* conveys the speaker's emotional stance:

- (29) — I'm going to get you, I told Edward Swanwick. (RDO1)
 — Du ska nog få igen, sa jag till Edward Swanwick. (RDO1T)

Nog is associated with promises in the idiomatic expression *det är/blir... bra*. The translator has used *be going to* to express the speaker's emotional involvement in the activity and its effects on the hearer. The speaker offers the hearer comfort and reassurance that things will be all right.

- (30) — Det blir nog bra ska du se. (GT1)
 "It 's going to be all right, you 'll see." (GT1T)

6.2 *Nog in initial position*

Roughly 17% of the examples of *nog* had initial position. In initial position *nog* was always stressed. The translation with *really* makes it clear that it can mean emphasis:

- (31) Åjo, nog är det ganska tyst och tomt på landet nu för tiden.
(SC1)
"Oh yes, it really is silent and empty in the country nowadays.
(SC1T)

In (32) *certainly* is used in the source text and the translator has used *nog*. *Certainly* is not neutral but implies an appeal for confirmation:

- (32) He had no idea when she had given that dress up, but certainly it was years and years ago. (AT1)
Han hade ingen aning om när hon hade gjort sig av med den där klänningen, men nog var det för flera år sedan.(AT1T)

Both *väl* and *nog* can be used to appeal to the hearer for positive feedback but in different ways. Telemann et al (1999: 116) describe the meaning of *väl* as follows, 'In conversation a declarative sentence with *väl* can be used as a careful question, an appeal to the hearer for agreement' (translation KA)'. The initial *nog* on the other hand is a convenient way of introducing 'contradictory assumptions' without being explicit about which these assumptions are.

Further evidence for the hearer-oriented function of initial *nog* is found in (33) where the English source text contains a negative interrogative sentence. These interrogatives are special in being biased towards a particular interpretation of the answer to the question. According to Biber et al (1999: 1114), 'negative interrogatives challenge a negative expectation that has been assumed to exist in the context, and thus indicate the speaker's inclination towards a positive response':

- (33) She would open the front door and smell home. She would pass through the rooms where she 'd been so happy all these years. (Had n't she been happy?) She would find the cat stretched out on the couch, long and lazy and languid, and she 'd settle on the cushion next to her and think, How could I have left?
(AT1)
Hon skulle öppna dörren och känna att det luktade hemma. Hon skulle gå genom de rum där hon hade varit så lycklig alla dessa år. (Nog hade hon väl varit lycklig?) Hon skulle få se katten ligga utsträckt på dyschan, lång och lat och dåsig, och hon skulle

sätta sig bredvid den och tänka: Hur kunde jag ge mig iväg härifrån? (AT1T)

Both *nog* and *väl* have the function to appeal to the hearer for (positive) feedback. *Nog* conveys that the speaker tries to convince herself that she had been happy at the same time as she is invoking the scenario of not being happy. *Nog* (but not *väl*) can also convey emotions such as resignation or reluctant admission ('she should have been happy shouldn't she') associated with what ought to be the case.

Nog can also correspond to a tag question in English. The sentence with a tag question presupposes a positive response. In (34) the speaker appeals to the hearer to share her assumption that it would be interesting to study the parents (to find out why they forced their daughters to marry to preserve their respectability).

- (34) It 's interesting, is n't it, to observe the parents. It would be quite wrong to say that they sold their daughter to preserve their respectability; they would n't have done that. (RDA1)
Men nog är det intressant att studera föräldrarna. Det skulle vara helt fel att säga att de sålde sin dotter för att bevara hedern, det hade de aldrig gjort. (RDA1T)

In (35) the English original contains *surely*. The translation with (*nog*) *borde* ('should', 'ought to') is evidence that the question has a deontic bias: the senator should have protested a little more:

- (35) SURELY THE SENATOR might have argued a little more, said the Daimon Maimas. (RDA1)
— NOG BORDE VÄL senatorn ha protesterat lite mer, sa daimon Maimas (RDA1T)

Another context-bound meaning of *nog* is concessive as indicated by translations such as *of course*, *obviously*. In (36) the clause containing *nog* is followed by a *but*-clause which foregrounds a more convincing argument so that the first clause gets a concessive function ('admittedly'):

(36) *Nog kunde hon springa som en räv och nog visste hon skogens alla gömmen, men vittorna kom envist efter henne, och hon hörde deras gälla skrik:* (AL1)

Of course she could run like a fox, and of course she knew every hiding place in the forest, *but* the harpies pursued her stubbornly, and she heard their strident cries, "Ho, ho, pretty little human, blood will run now, ho, ho!" (AL1T)

To sum up, *nog* in initial position has translations signalling meanings such as emphasis (*really*), contradictory assumptions and hearer appeal (*certainly, surely*, negative interrogatives, tag question) or concessive meaning (*of course*). In the hearer-appealing function it could have deontic implications about what ought to be the case. Some possible contextual effects of using *nog* are resignation and reluctance to accept that something is the case.

7. Conclusion

The key to the use of *nog* seems to be that the speaker assumes sole responsibility for the truth of his/her utterances, attitudes and opinions, and actions. This is compatible with the general meaning that the speaker has sufficient for judging that something is true. However, *nog* does not have a single meaning but seems to be what Norén and Linell (2006: 12) refer to as 'relatively polysemous'.

Probability was one of the most frequent meanings of *nog* in medial position. *Nog* can also mean (almost) certainty. When *nog* corresponded to *certainly* or *I am sure* the speaker looks for reassurance that the grounds for judging something to be true are sufficient.

An important factor accounting for the uses of *nog* in medial position is politeness. *Nog* does not express certainty but functions as a 'downtoner' softening an opinion or an utterance which might be offensive to the hearer unless mitigated. *Nog* was also used in combinations with mental verbs such as *jag vet nog* (I know 'nog') or *jag tycker nog* (I think 'nog') especially in response utterances with a softening effect. *Nog* had no correspondence in English in such cases.

The translations with a deontic modal auxiliary (e.g. *had better*) have indicated another semantic element in the analysis of *nog*; i.e. 'what ought to be the case' or 'what you have to do' according to some moral principle. The deontic meaning was particularly clear when *nog* was used

with modal auxiliaries to give advice, recommendations or suggestions (e.g. *du ska nog* ‘you shall nog’; compare also *det är nog bäst* ‘it is nog best’).

Nog was also found in ‘commissive’ speech acts such as threats and promises. The speaker takes upon him/herself to carry out an action which is either favourable or unfavourable to the hearer.

Nog, when initial, often involved contradictory assumptions. Contrasting opinions account for example for the translations of a sentence with initial *nog* by a negative interrogative sentence (or a declarative sentence with a tag question). The meaning of *nog* comes close to *väl* (‘I suppose’) and hearer-appeal. The initial *nog* can also be emphatic or used concessively to prepare the hearer for an objection in a following *but*-clause.

Modal particles need to be studied both in monolingual corpora and contrastively. The study of *nog* on the basis of the English-Swedish Parallel corpus has shown that the contrastive perspective can enrich analyses based on a single language only. However we need to study many more modal particles (and groups of modal particles) in different language pairs to get a better picture of how languages structure a particular pragmatic-semantic field both by means of modal particles and in other ways.

References

- Aijmer, K. 1996. Swedish modal particles in a contrastive perspective. *Language Sciences* 18(1-2): 393-427.
- Aijmer, K. 2002. Modal adverbs of certainty and uncertainty in an English-Swedish perspective. In Hasselgård, H., Johansson, S., Behrens, B. and C. Fabricius-Hansen (eds), *Information structure in a cross-linguistic perspective*. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi. 97-112.
- Aijmer, K. 2015. The Swedish modal particle *väl* in a contrastive perspective. In Aijmer, K. and H. Hasselgård (eds), *Cross-linguistic studies at the interface between lexis and grammar*. Special issue of *Nordic Journal of English Studies* 14(1): 174-200.
- Aijmer, K. and A.-M. Simon-Vandenberg 2011. Pragmatic markers. In Zienkowski, J., Östman, J.-O. and J. Verschueren (eds), *Discursive Pragmatics*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 223-247

- Altenberg, B. and K. Aijmer. 2001. The English-Swedish Parallel Corpus: A resource for contrastive research and translation studies. In Mair, C. and M. Hundt (eds), *Corpus linguistics and linguistic theory. Papers from the 20th International Conference on English Language Research on Computerized Corpora (ICAME 20) Freiburg im Breisgau 1999*, 15-33. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Rodopi.
- Biber, D., S. Johansson, G. Leech, S. Conrad and E. Finegan. 1999. *The Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Borgstam, S. 1977. Nog är tillräckligt. *Nysvenska studier* 57: 217-226.
- Borthen, K. and Knudsen, C. S. 2014. Semantiske og pragmatiske aspekter vedt trykklett visst. *Norsk Lingvistisk Tidsskrift* 31:360-411.
- Brown, P. and S. Levinson. 1978. Universals in language usage. Politeness phenomena. In Goody, E. (ed.), *Questions and politeness: Strategies in social interaction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 56-310.
- Cuenca, M. J. 2013. The fuzzy boundaries between discourse marking and modal marking. In Degand, L., B. Cornillie and P. Pietandrea (eds), *Discourse markers and modal particles. Categorization and description*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 191-216.
- Davidsen-Nielsen, N. 1996. Discourse particles in Danish, In Engberg-Pedersen, E., Fortescue, M., Harder, P., Heltoft, L. and L. Falster-Jacobsen (eds), *Content, expression and structure. Studies in Danish functional grammar*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 283-314.
- Degand, L., B. Cornillie and P. Pietandrea (eds). 2013. Modal particles and discourse markers: Two sides of the same coin. In Degand, L., Cornillie, B., and P. Pietandrea (eds), *Discourse markers and modal particles. Categorization and description*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 1-18.
- Diewald, G. 2006. Discourse particles and modal particles as grammatical elements. In Fischer, K. (ed.), *Approaches to discourse particles*. Amsterdam: Elsevier. 403-425.
- Diewald, G. 2013. 'Same same but different' —Modal particles, discourse markers and the art (and purpose) of categorization. In Degand, L., Cornillie, B., and P. Pietandrea (eds), *Discourse markers*

- and modal particles. *Categorization and description*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 19-45.
- Fillmore, C. 1984. Remarks on contrastive pragmatics. In Fisiak, J. *Contrastive linguistics*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 120-141.
- Fretheim, T. 1981. 'Ego'-dempere og 'alter'-dempere. *Maal og Minne*, 86-100.
- de Haan, F. 2005. Typological approaches to modality. In Frawley, W. (ed.) with the assistance of Eschenroeder, R.; Mills, S.; Nguyen, T. *The expression of modality*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 27-69.
- Johansson, S. 2007. *Seeing through multilingual corpora. On the use of corpora in contrastive studies*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Lindström, J. 2008. *Tur och ordning. Introduktion till svensk samtalsgrammatik*. Stockholm: Norstedts akademiska förlag.
- Norén, K. and P. Linell. 2006. Meningspotentialer i den språkliga praktiken. Meddelanden från Institutionen för svenska språket (MISS). Göteborgs universitet.
- Palmer, F.R. 1986. *Mood and modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quirk, R., S. Greenbaum, G. Leech and J. Svartvik. 1985. *A comprehensive grammar of English*. London: Longman.
- Solberg, T.K. 1990. *Modalpartikler i norsk*. Hovedoppgave ved Avdeling for nordisk språk og litteratur. Institutt for nordistikk og litteraturvitenskap. Universitetet i Oslo.
- Teleman, U., S. Hellberg and E. Andersson. 1999. *Svenska Akademiens grammatik*. Band 4. Stockholm: Norstedt.
- van der Auwera, J., D. Noël and A. Van linden. 2013. *Had better, 'd better and better: diachronic and transatlantic variation*". In Marín-Arrese, J.I., M. Carretero, J. Arús Hita and J. van der Auwera (eds), *English modality: core, periphery and evidentiality*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 119-153.
- Vaskó, I. and T. Fretheim. 2007. Some central pragmatic functions of the Norwegian particles *altså* and *nemlig*. In Swan, T. and O.J. Westvik (eds), *Modality in Germanic languages. Historical and comparative perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 233-292.

170 *Karin Aijmer*

Waltereit, R. 2001. Modal particles and their functional equivalents: A speech-act-theoretic approach. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33: 1391-1417.