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Seem and *Appear* and Their Norwegian Verbal Counterparts: A Cross-Register Contrastive Study

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ABSTRACT

Verbs such as *seem* and *appear* combine features of evidential meaning with epistemic modality. This study takes a corpus-based, contrastive view of such verbs in Norwegian and English. It investigates the frequencies, patterns and meanings of *seem*, *appear* and their Norwegian correspondences *virke*, *synes* and *se ut* in English fiction and academic prose. Both similarities and differences are found across languages and registers. *Appear* and *synes* are clearly more frequent in academic prose and can therefore be characterised as more formal. Of all the verbs investigated, *seem* has the greatest syntactic flexibility. The Norwegian verbs show more syntactic variation across lexemes than the English verbs do. The English verbs are arguably more grammaticalised in their evidential meanings: they occur more regularly with catenative function, and are also complemented directly by NPs and nominal clauses rather than by PPs and adverbial clauses, which is often the pattern of the Norwegian verbs.

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1. Introduction

The meanings of verbs such as *seem* and *appear* combine features of evidentiality with epistemic modality.¹ That is, such verbs can indicate the source of the information presented and/or the speaker's degree of certainty about it.² The verbs occur in a variety of constructions, such as copular, catenative, and extraposition, as shown in (1–3), respectively. The examples come from the English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC), and the accompanying translations contain Norwegian verbs in analogous constructions.

- (1) He *seems disgruntled* about her reticence. (ABR1)
Han *virker irritert* over hennes tilbakeholdenhet. (ABR1T)
- (2) But none of my questioners *seems to have* any teeth. (FW1)
Men ingen av mine utspørrere *synes å ha* noen tenner. (FW1T)

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¹E.g., Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality”; Lampert, “SEEM: Evidential, Epistemic or What Else?”; Mortelmans, “*Seem*-type Verbs in Dutch and German.”

²Aikhenvald, “Evidentiality: The Framework.”

- (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. (DL1T)

Seem has been studied in contrast with Norwegian and Swedish by Johansson and Aijmer, who used the ENPC and the English-Swedish Parallel Corpus (ESPC), respectively. Both studies identify a wide range of translation correspondences. However, Johansson and Aijmer studied Norwegian and Swedish expressions only in contexts where they occurred as translations or sources of *seem*.³ This study adds an investigation of the Norwegian lemmas *virke*, *synes* and *se ut (til)*, which were selected because of their frequent correspondence with *seem* in Johansson's study.⁴ The translations in examples (1–3) show all three. The investigation also includes *appear*, due to its close similarity with *seem*: for example, *seem* and *appear* occur in each other's definitions in the *Macmillan Dictionary*, they are discussed together with *be*, but separate from other copulas, in *The Longman Grammar*,⁵ and they are often juxtaposed in scholarly studies.⁶ In the following, *seem*, *appear*, *virke*, *synes* and *se ut (til)* will be referred to collectively as SEEM-verbs.

Evidentiality is not a grammatically obligatory category in English and Norwegian; there is no "closed grammatical system of evidentials" in either language.⁷ Instead the source of information can be expressed by other means, e.g., modal verbs, speech reports, and "lexical expressions of perception, opinion, belief".⁸ While acknowledging the lack of a grammatical system of evidentiality in English (and Swedish), Aijmer argues that "*seem* is on its way to becoming grammaticalized in certain structures".⁹ Aijmer's observations on *seem* beginning to resemble an epistemic modal¹⁰ can give an interesting perspective on this investigation of SEEM-verbs, as it is possible that this process will be visible to different extents across lexical items and grammatical constructions.

Johansson and Aijmer¹¹ noticed differences between fiction and non-fiction in their corpora as to the frequency of *seem* and to some extent its translation patterns. This paper therefore looks for register differences in the use of SEEM-verbs. However, the non-fiction part of the ENPC/ESPC is too heterogeneous to be considered a register.¹² Therefore, the fiction part of the ENPC will instead be compared to academic prose from the KIAP corpus, more specifically linguistics articles in English and Norwegian (see Section 3). The study also discusses the interplay of construction type with meaning.¹³ The research questions are as follows:

³Johansson, "The English Verb *Seem*"; Aijmer, "*Seem* and Evidentiality."

⁴Johansson, "The English Verb *Seem*," 230.

⁵Biber *et al.*, *Longman Grammar*, 446.

⁶E.g., Seppänen and Herriman, "Extraposed Subjects"; Fetzer, "Foregrounding Evidentiality."

⁷See Aikhenvald, "Evidentiality: The Framework," 4.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Aijmer, "*Seem* and Evidentiality," 64.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Johansson, "The English Verb *Seem*"; Aijmer, "*Seem* and Evidentiality."

¹²For the inventory of texts, see Johansson, *Seeing through Multilingual Corpora*, 334 ff.

¹³E.g., Aijmer, "*Seem* and Evidentiality"; Usonienė and Šinkūnienė, "A Cross-linguistic Look."

- What are the frequencies, patterns and meanings of SEEM-verbs in Norwegian and English fiction and academic prose?¹⁴
- How do these patterns and their meanings compare across lexical items, languages and registers?
- To what extent are the English and Norwegian SEEM-verbs translated into each other?

To answer the questions, this article first reviews previous studies of SEEM-verbs (Section 2) before detailing the material and methods used in Section 3. The contrastive corpus analysis is presented in Section 4, which discusses the lexicogrammatical features of SEEM-verbs in original texts in English and Norwegian fiction and linguistics writing. Section 5 studies the translations of SEEM-verbs found in ENPC fiction to find out how the English and Norwegian patterns correspond to each other in translation. Finally, Section 6 offers a summary of the findings and some concluding remarks.

2. Previous Research

2.1. Monolingual Descriptions of SEEM-verbs in Reference Grammars and Dictionaries

Quirk et al. describe *seem* and *appear* as “current copular verbs”.¹⁵ These verbs assign a current attribute to the subject in contrast to “resulting copulas” such as *become*, which assign a resulting attribute brought about by the event described by the verb.¹⁶ Biber et al. divide the class of current copular verbs into sensory and non-sensory ones.¹⁷ Sensory copular verbs include *look*, *feel* and *sound*, while *seem* and *appear* are non-sensory.¹⁸ *Seem* is more common than *appear*, but the two verbs are said to have similar uses.¹⁹ SEEM-verbs occur in a variety of syntactic patterns, i.e., with a predicative complement in the form of a noun phrase or an adjective phrase, with an infinitival complement, or with an obligatory adverbial.²⁰ In addition, they appear with the dummy subject *it* and an extraposed infinitive or *that*-clause. Quirk et al. label this “obligatory extraposition” as there is no corresponding non-extraposed construction,²¹ as demonstrated in (4). The paraphrase in (5) is similar, but the clause after *seems* is a comparative clause rather than a nominal one. Quirk et al. do not regard this construction as extraposition, but rather as “complementation by an adjunct”.²² The comparative clause may start with *as if*, *as though*, or *like*; however, the variant with *like* is considered non-standard.²³

(4) It seems that you are mistaken/*That you are mistaken seems.²⁴

(5) It seems as if / as though / like you are mistaken.

¹⁴“Pattern” applies to the syntactic patterns of the verb phrases (Section 3.2) as well as their co-occurrence with a dummy subject and/or an experiencer phrase.

¹⁵Quirk et al., *Comprehensive Grammar*, 1171 ff.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 742.

¹⁷Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*, 436.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 436, 439.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 441.

²⁰Huddleston and Pullum, *Cambridge Grammar*, 251, 263; Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*, 436.

²¹Quirk et al., *Comprehensive Grammar*, 1392.

²²*Ibid.*, 1175.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Quirk et al., *Comprehensive Grammar*, 1183.

(6) ... it seems clear that this is a class 2 suffix. (engling50)²⁵

A less problematic case of extraposition is shown in (6), which has a predicative complement before the extraposed *that*-clause. Finally, all the “verbs of seeming license a *to* phrase where the oblique NP expresses the experiencer”.²⁶ Thus, for example *to me* can be added after the verb in (4) and (5) and after the predicative in (6).

Example (7) – paraphrased from (4) – has a referential subject before *seem* and an infinitive after it. Huddleston & Pullum regard this as a raised subject construction and a catenative use of *seem*.²⁷ The term *catenative* is also used in this study, but slightly more liberally, i.e., whenever the SEEM-verb is used as a quasi-auxiliary for a following infinitive that carries the main lexical content of the verb phrase and without assuming any “underlying” construction.²⁸

(7) You seem to be mistaken.

The Norwegian SEEM-verbs are given as each other’s synonyms in dictionaries (e.g., the entries for *synes* and *virke*, sense 7 in *Det Norske Akademis Ordbok* [the Norwegian Academy’s Dictionary], *NAOB*), and occur in the same type of patterns as the English ones. However, a few differences should be noted. According to Faarlund et al., the Norwegian verbs are not generally complemented directly by a noun phrase: a preposition is needed, thus making the verb intransitive, as in (8), where the Norwegian translation has the preposition *som* (“like”), without which the sentence would have been unacceptable.²⁹

(8) ... she seemed a hyperactive restless woman ... (RR1)
 ... hun virket som en hyperaktiv, rastløs kvinne ... (RR1T)
 “... she seemed like a hyperactive, restless woman ...”³⁰

Similarly, *virke* is unlikely to be followed directly by a nominal clause, but instead takes an adverbial complement with the complex conjunction *som om* (“as if”). However, *virke* can occur with an extraposed *at*-clause (“that-clause”) after an adjectival complement (see further Section 4.3.2). The catenative function of *virke* is characterised in *NAOB* as a recent development. In the case of *se ut*, extraposition as well as the catenative function requires the preposition *til* “to”, before the complementiser *at* “that” or the infinitive marker *å*,³¹ thus making the verb phrasal-prepositional, as shown in (9). Like Johansson,³² I regard *se ut til* as a variant of *se ut*.

²⁵Examples with the tags “engling” or “noling” come from the KIAP corpus (see Section 3.1). The number at the end of the tag identifies the text.

²⁶Huddleston and Pullum, *Cambridge Grammar*, 263.

²⁷Ibid: 1194.

²⁸See also Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*.”

²⁹Faarlund et al., *Norsk referansegrammatikk*.

³⁰Examples from the ENPC are given with the original first. The Norwegian version is followed by a Norwegian word-by-word translation unless the structures of the original and translation in the corpus are equivalent. Three dots indicate that the example has been shortened.

³¹Faarlund et al., *Norsk referansegrammatikk*, 747.

³²Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*.”

- (9) Hans frykt for menneskene ser ut til å vokse. (KH1)
 “His fear of people seems to_{PREP} to_{INF} grow”
 ... his distrust of human beings appeared to grow ... (KH1T)

Synes occurs with complements and with dummy subjects, according to *NAOB*, and can combine with an experiencer NP, although this use is marked as “literary”. The combination of *synes* + NP complement is probably archaic: the dictionary examples are all over 100 years old.

2.2. Monolingual Studies of SEEM-verbs

Some studies of SEEM-verbs are primarily concerned with syntax, e.g., Seppänen and Seppänen & Herriman,³³ which discuss the status of the complements taken by these verbs. A major thrust of the latter study is that *it seems that* ... is not a case of extraposition, but of an empty subject *it* with a *that*-clause as an internal complement of the verb.³⁴ An argument in favour of this reanalysis is the possibility of using the complementisers *as if*, *as though* and *like*. Other studies, e.g., Lampert, focus on the semantics of *seem* as a marker of epistemic modality and evidentiality which can have both factive and fictive interpretations.³⁵ As explained by Mortelmans, “*seem*-type verbs ... can either refer to an impression with emanates from the sentence subject and is perceived by a particular viewer or they can be interpreted as coding an inference to which the speaker is somehow committed”.³⁶

The fact that apparently synonymous verbs may differ as to the patterns they enter into and their degree of grammaticalisation is highlighted by Vliegen’s study of the Dutch SEEM-verbs *blijken*, *lijken* and *scheijnen*.³⁷ Nevertheless, Fetzer argues that the linguistic contexts of *seem* and *appear* “are almost identical” in her academic discourse data although *seem* is more likely than *appear* to occur with agentive grammatical subjects.³⁸ Fetzer finds a lot of variation as to the verbs that complement *seem* and *appear* but does not offer any frequencies.³⁹

Two constructional patterns of *seem* and *appear* are described by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, i.e., complementation by *as if*, *as though* and *like*, and the development and use of so-called *like*-parentheticals.⁴⁰ López-Couso and Méndez-Naya view *as if/though* and *like* as grammaticalized declarative complementisers (similar to *that*) rather than comparative subordinators, which is their origin.⁴¹ For this study, the most relevant syntactic functions of such clauses are (extraposed) subject and predicative. The extraposition pattern (*It*) *seems* + comparative complementiser + subject clause is

³³Seppänen, “The Syntax of *Seem*”; Seppänen and Herriman, “Extraposed Subjects.”

³⁴Seppänen and Herriman, “Extraposed Subjects,” 57.

³⁵Lampert, “SEEM: Evidential, Epistemic or What Else?”

³⁶Mortelmans, “Seem-type Verbs in Dutch and German,” 127.

³⁷Vliegen, “Evidentiality”. See also Mortelmans, “Seem-type Verbs in Dutch and German,” 145. The *Cambridge Dutch-English Dictionary* gives the following translations of the verbs: *blijken* ‘turn out (to be)’, ‘prove (to be)’, ‘emerge’; *lijken* ‘appear’, ‘look like’, ‘resemble’; *scheijnen* ‘seem’, ‘appear’, ‘shine’.

³⁸Fetzer, “Foregrounding Evidentiality,” 342, 343.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 342.

⁴⁰López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*”; López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “From Clause to Pragmatic Marker.”

⁴¹López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*,” 173, 177.

most common with *look* and *seem*, but is also found with *appear*, *feel* and *sound*.⁴² By predicative function they mean the pattern of *She seems as if/as though/like* + complement clause.⁴³ The predicates selecting *as if/though* and *like* complements (e.g., *look*, *seem*, *appear*) are taken to convey propositional attitude, combining epistemic modality with “inferences gained from evidence”.⁴⁴ Like Biber et al., López-Couso and Méndez-Naya find that *as if* greatly outnumbers *as though*.⁴⁵ All three complementisers are more typical of spoken than of written English, and *like* is less common in British English than in North American varieties, where it “has expanded beyond the domain of informality and has lost its original stigmatized character”.⁴⁶ López-Couso and Méndez-Naya observe that the epistemic predicates with complement clauses may have parenthetical counterparts whose syntactic structure is incomplete, as in *Petrarch*, *it seems, may have considered ...*⁴⁷ Such parentheticals, which are common with *seem* and *appear*, usually appear in the form *it V*, sometimes supplemented with an experimenter phrase. Two other patterns are *so it seems/appears (to me)* and the so-called *like*-parenthetical *it seems/looks like*, where the dummy subject may be deleted. The latter type is most characteristic of speech and written representations of dialogue.⁴⁸ It is argued that *like*-parentheticals are undergoing grammaticalisation towards adverb-like pragmatic markers.⁴⁹

Studying evidential and epistemic stance strategies in scientific communication, Hidalgo-Downing finds that evidential markers (including *seem* and *appear*) are significantly more frequent in popular science articles than in expert-to-expert articles within biology/biomedicine.⁵⁰ This is linked to the popular science writers’ need “to express explicitly the source of knowledge and information in order to legitimize claims of authority and to mark explicitly their stance”.⁵¹

2.3. Contrastive Studies of SEEM-verbs

As noted above, *seem* has been studied in contrast with Norwegian and Swedish by Johansson and Aijmer.⁵² Both studies identify a wide range of translation correspondences, the most frequent of which are lexical verbs (although e.g., adverbs and modal particles also occur). The most common Norwegian lexical verb correspondences are *virke*, *se ut* and *synes*.⁵³ *Seem* is used more in original than in translated English, and more in fiction than in non-fiction.⁵⁴ Johansson identifies three main patterns of *seem*: catenative (with following infinitive), copular verb (with following predicative), and *seem* with clausal complement and the dummy subject *it*.⁵⁵ The latter group includes

⁴²Ibid., 180.

⁴³Ibid., 182.

⁴⁴Ibid., 183.

⁴⁵López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*,” 179, 185.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “From Clause to Pragmatic Marker,” 39.

⁴⁸Ibid., 41, 46.

⁴⁹Ibid., 56.

⁵⁰Hidalgo-Downing, “Evidential and Epistemic Stance Strategies,” 237.

⁵¹Ibid., 246.

⁵²Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*”; Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality.”

⁵³Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*,” 230.

⁵⁴Ibid., 223.

⁵⁵Ibid., 224–226.

complementation by *that*-clauses and comparative clauses as well as parenthetical comment clauses, but notably not extraposition patterns containing a predicative phrase. Catenative *seem* is the most common pattern, followed by patterns with a dummy subject. Johansson's cross-linguistic comparison includes only those Norwegian constructions that occur as a translation or source of *seem*.⁵⁶ Patterns with a dummy subject are more frequent in Norwegian than in English. So are expressed experiencer phrases, which in Johansson's case include experiencer subjects, for example when *it seems (to me)* corresponds to *jeg tror* ("I think"). Catenative constructions are more frequent in English than in Norwegian, while comparative constructions with *like, as if, som (om)* are more common in Norwegian.⁵⁷

Aijmer discusses *seem* as a marker of evidentiality, arguing that different *seem*-constructions may have individual interpersonal meanings. For example, *seem to* is the most grammaticalized construction type, and thereby "closest to a modal auxiliary although it also refers to the evidential source".⁵⁸ *It seems that* may have the same meaning as *seem to*, but is also a subjective or intersubjective marker (depending on whether the *that*-clause conveys new or shared information) and an indicator of perception.⁵⁹ Translations of *seem* support the interpretations of the various *seem*-constructions. Like Johansson, Aijmer finds *seem*-constructions to be less frequent in non-fiction than in fiction and attributes this to the use of *seem* in (reported) speech.⁶⁰

Bolstad's MA thesis investigates the meanings, syntactic patterns and translations of *seem* and *appear* followed by an infinitive or a *that*-clause, based on the ENPC.⁶¹ Like Johansson and Aijmer, Bolstad studies Norwegian mainly through correspondences of *seem/appear*, although the application of Dyvik's semantic mirror method produces (back-)translation paradigms of some of the Norwegian correspondences.⁶² Bolstad finds that *seem* and *appear* typically express evidentiality and/or epistemic modality, while their main pragmatic functions are hedging and epistemic stance.⁶³ She argues that *appear* is more evidential than *seem*, while *seem* is more epistemic, and closer to a modal, than *appear*.⁶⁴

The translation perspective is reversed in Viberg's study, which discusses Swedish phenomenon-based perception verbs, e.g., *se ut*, and their translations into other languages. The phenomenon is typically the subject while the experiencer is optional.⁶⁵ As a phenomenon-based perception verb, *se ut* it is often translated into English *seem* or *appear*.⁶⁶ If vision is clearly implied, *look* may be preferred, since *seem* "leaves open what kind of evidence the assumption is based on".⁶⁷

⁵⁶Ibid., 224.

⁵⁷Ibid., 228.

⁵⁸Aijmer, "Seem and Evidentiality," 74.

⁵⁹Ibid., 76 f.

⁶⁰Ibid., 74.

⁶¹Bolstad, "They Seem to be Alike."

⁶²Dyvik, "A Translational Basis for Semantics"; Bolstad, "They Seem to be Alike," 53.

⁶³Bolstad, "They Seem to be Alike," 72.

⁶⁴Ibid., 91.

⁶⁵Viberg, "Phenomenon-based Perception Verbs," 18.

⁶⁶Typical German and French translations are *scheinen/wirken* and *paraître/sembler*, see Viberg, "Phenomenon-based Perception Verbs," 31.

⁶⁷Ibid., 30.

Vold studies academic hedges in linguistics and medicine articles from the KIAP corpus. *Seem* and *appear* and Norwegian *synes* and *se ut* are members of a set of items that can function as hedges. There is little quantitative difference between English and Norwegian in the use of academic hedges, but the English verbs are “almost entirely restricted to the linguistics papers” while the Norwegian verbs show less disciplinary difference.⁶⁸

Usonienė & Šinkūnienė study *seem* in contrast with Lithuanian. Among a great number of correspondences, the most frequent one is the verb *atrodyti*, which resembles *seem* in both meaning and syntactic patterning.⁶⁹ Other correspondences include mental perception verbs and stance adverbials, ranging from “purely epistemic to purely evidential meanings”, as well as a high number of zero correspondences.⁷⁰ The variety of correspondences is taken to indicate that *seem* is more grammaticalized than its closest correspondences in other languages.⁷¹ *Seem* complemented by an infinitive clause is more frequent than the copular use of the verb while the types of correspondences are relatively similar between the two patterns of use.⁷² A look at Polish and Russian translations of *seem* corroborates the general picture from the English-Lithuanian study. The high proportion of zero correspondences is believed to indicate a cultural difference in (in-)directness between speakers of the respective languages.

Malá discusses Czech translation counterparts of *seem* and *appear* together with *look*, *sound*, *feel*, *taste* and *smell* as “epistemic/sensory-perception” copulas. Because Czech has fewer copular verbs than English, translation correspondences are varied. Epistemic/sensory perception copulas typically correspond to an “intransitive lexical verb which ascribes some quality to the subject (a quality verb) or, less frequently, a verb of sensory perception or cognition”.⁷³ Epistemic/sensory-perception copulas are underused in English translations from Czech, which is linked to the different ways of expressing epistemic modality in Czech.⁷⁴ The verbs are mainly discussed as a group, with little attention to the individual patterns of e.g., *seem* and *appear*.

A relevant contrastive study, although it does not include English, is Mortelmans’s comparison of Dutch *lijken* (“appear, look like”) and *schijnen* (“seem, appear, shine”) to German *scheinen* (“seem, appear, shine”). Mortelmans finds a correlation between the scope and the degree of speaker subjectivity of the verbs and the types of constructions they enter into. Wide-scope evidentials with scope over a proposition are “more evidential” than e.g., the copular use with scope only over a predicative phrase.⁷⁵ The construction types can be placed on a cline (copula < infinitive < wide-scope) associated with different types of evidential meaning and degrees of subjectivity, suggesting a synchronous pattern of grammaticalisation.⁷⁶ Dutch *lijken* strongly prefers the copula function and is thereby less grammaticalized than *schijnen*, which in turn is more

⁶⁸Vold, “Epistemic Modality Markers,” 83, 76.

⁶⁹Usonienė and Šinkūnienė, “A Cross-linguistic Look,” 292 f.

⁷⁰Ibid., 312.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., 296, 300.

⁷³Malá, “Translation Counterparts as Markers of Meaning,” 176.

⁷⁴Ibid., 185.

⁷⁵Mortelmans, “Seem-type Verbs in Dutch and German”, 135.

⁷⁶Ibid., 145.

grammaticalised in Belgian than in Netherlandic Dutch. German *scheinen* is found at a stage in-between *lijken* and Netherlandic *schijnen* since it has copular and catenative, but not wide-scope functions.⁷⁷

2.4. Summary and Hypotheses

The above review of studies of SEEM-verbs reveals some disagreements about the analysis of the patterns in which they occur. The classification used in this study is presented in Section 3.2 below. The previous studies testify to the great range of meanings and lexicogrammatical patterns of *seem* and *appear*. SEEM-verbs are also sensitive to register, as evidenced by the studies that included this perspective. The contrastive studies highlight the multifunctionality of these verbs through the great variation in translation correspondences in all the languages reported on. However, it is interesting to note that SEEM-verbs in languages other than English appear to have much in common with *seem* and *appear* as regards their multifunctionality as well as degrees of grammaticalisation. Lexical items with basically similar dictionary definitions, such as *seem/appear* and *blijken/lijken/schijnen*, are shown to have different syntactic potentials and preferences, which is interesting both for the cross-linguistic analysis that follows in Section 4 and the study of translation correspondences between English and Norwegian in Section 5. It may thus be expected that the English and Norwegian SEEM-verbs will differ in frequency in general, and that they will have different frequency profiles in the two registers investigated. Furthermore, it can be expected that the lexical items will differ with regard to the patterns they occur in, so that not all the patterns presented in Section 2.1 will be attested for all the SEEM-verbs.

3. Material and Method

3.1. Corpora and Retrieval

This study uses two corpora of English and Norwegian. The English-Norwegian Parallel Corpus (ENPC) is a bidirectional translation corpus consisting of fiction and non-fiction texts in English and Norwegian.⁷⁸ Only the fiction part will be used in this study. The KIAP corpus, whose acronym stems from the Norwegian name of the project Cultural Identity in Academic Prose,⁷⁹ is a comparable corpus of peer-reviewed academic journal articles in English, Norwegian and French within the disciplines economics, linguistics and medicine. The writers are presumed to be native speakers of the respective languages.⁸⁰ This study uses only English and Norwegian linguistics.

Table 1 shows the size and composition of the corpora. Since the ENPC is used mainly as a comparable corpus, translated texts are not shown in the table. The word counts have been performed with WordSmith⁸¹ on plain text files because the sizes of the individual files are not available from the search interfaces used (see 3.1) but are necessary in order

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Johansson, *Seeing through Multilingual Corpora*, 10 ff.

⁷⁹Kulturell identitet i akademisk prosa; Fløttum et al., *Academic Voices*.

⁸⁰Fløttum et al., *Academic Voices*, 7.

⁸¹Scott, WordSmith.

Table 1. Corpus overview.

	No of words	No of texts	Mean text length	St.dev.
English fiction original	419,449	30	13,981.63	1,342
Norwegian fiction original	407,835	30	13,594.50	1,578
KIAP-ling-EN	622,151	50	12,443.02	5,195
KIAP-ling-NO	359,512	50	7,190.24	2,864

to study the dispersion of the SEEM-verbs. The totals per corpus differ from those given on the ENPC website⁸² and in Fløttum et al.⁸³ In the case of the ENPC, the difference is probably due to exclusion/inclusion of various mark-up, while for KIAP it reflects the fact that Fløttum et al.'s counts include only what they refer to as “body words”, a distinction that cannot be made from the raw text files.

The material was retrieved by searching for all inflectional forms of *seem*, *appear*, *virke*, *synes*, *se ut* in ENPC fiction and KIAP, using the interfaces Glossa and Corpuscle, respectively.⁸⁴ Up to four words were permitted between the lemma *se* and the particle *ut*. All the lexemes except *seem* have uses other than the relevant constructions, e.g., intransitive *appear* (“occur”), *virke* meaning “work”, *se ut* as a free combination of verb and preposition (e.g., *se ut av vinduet* = “look out of the window”), and *synes* meaning “think”, in which case the subject is an experiencer (e.g., *Hun synes det er leit* = “she thinks it is sad”). These were removed following manual analysis of the concordance lines.

3.2. Classificatory Framework

The SEEM-verbs have been grouped into three main categories based on their complementation patterns: copular, catenative and intransitive. The copular pattern is one where the SEEM-verb is complemented by a predicative. It may occur with and without a dummy subject and thus comprises instances of extraposition; see examples (1), (3), (6) and (8) above. In some extraposition constructions, the extraposed clause follows the SEEM-verb directly, as in (3) and (4). These are termed *bare extraposition* below (Section 4.3.2). The term is in line with e.g., Quirk et al., but in contrast to Seppänen & Herriman. However, the analysis presented by Seppänen & Herriman justifies the inclusion of this type in the copular category, since they view the *that*-clause as an internal complement of the verb in the absence of another predicative phrase.⁸⁵ In contrast, *full extraposition*, as in (6), contains a predicative phrase in addition to the extraposed clause. Three examples of *there*-existentials with *seem* were merged with the copular category. The catenative group covers cases where the SEEM-verb is complemented by an infinitive as in (2) and (9) above. In this case the SEEM-verb is functionally similar to an epistemic modal auxiliary, albeit not syntactically.⁸⁶ An intransitive SEEM-verb may have no complementation at all, especially in parenthetical clauses as in *A perfectly proper alliance, it appeared*. Intransitive SEEM-verbs may further be complemented by a prepositional

⁸²<https://www.hf.uio.no/ilos/english/services/knowledge-resources/omc/sub-corpora/>.

⁸³Fløttum et al., *Academic Voices*, 7.

⁸⁴<https://tekstlab.uio.no/glossa2/omc4>; <https://clarino.uib.no/korpuskel/>.

⁸⁵Seppänen and Herriman, “Extraposed Subjects,” 40.

⁸⁶Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality”; Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*,” 232.

phrase (e.g., *they seemed like rivals*), a comparative clause with *like*, *as if/though* and the corresponding *som*, *som om* (*it seemed like they were rivals*), or by an adverb phrase, e.g., *det virker slik / it seems so*.

3.3. Tertium Comparationis

The basis for the comparisons in this study lies partly in dictionary data: the lexemes are often used in each other's definitions and cited as each other's synonyms in monolingual dictionaries and given as each other's translations in bilingual dictionaries (e.g., at ordnett.no). The translation paradigm of *seem* established by Johansson⁸⁷ is also considered a viable *tertium comparationis* for this study even though the mutual correspondence⁸⁸ of the expressions was not calculated (see Section 5). Furthermore, the syntactic patterns of the Norwegian and English SEEM-verbs can be described in similar terms according to dictionaries and reference grammars (see Section 2.1). Finally, the English and Norwegian corpora were compiled according to the same criteria and are therefore considered comparable.

4. Corpus Analysis

The selected sets of lexemes do not form an exhaustive list of evidential verbs in either language, so there cannot be any proper quantitative cross-linguistic comparison.⁸⁹ However, both intra-lingual cross-register comparisons and qualitative cross-linguistic comparisons should be defensible with the material used. These are presented below.

4.1. Overall Frequencies

Table 2 shows the overall frequencies of the SEEM-verbs in ENPC fiction and KIAP-ling. The frequencies of each verb in fiction and linguistics have been compared by means of a log likelihood test, which evaluates the amount of evidence against the null hypothesis, i.e., that the SEEM-verbs should be equally frequent in both registers.⁹⁰ *Seem* proves to be considerably more frequent than *appear* in both registers, but the difference is greater in fiction. In Norwegian, *se ut* is the most frequent lexeme in both registers. *Virke* and *synes* have different ranks in the two registers, and *synes* is much more frequent in linguistics than in fiction. The register difference is significant for all the lemmas except *se ut*.⁹¹ In the case of *seem* and *virke*, the frequencies are higher in fiction than in linguistics, while *appear* and *synes* are more frequent in linguistics. This suggests that *se ut* is neutral between these two registers while *seem* and *virke* are less formal and *appear* and *synes* are more formal, assuming that fiction represents a more colloquial style.

The normalised mean frequencies per text of the individual SEEM-verbs are displayed in Table 3. Besides corroborating the group-level frequencies presented in Table 2, it

⁸⁷Johansson, "The English Verb *Seem*."

⁸⁸Altenberg, "Adverbial Connectors."

⁸⁹A known omission is Norwegian *late til*, which occurs as a translation of *seem* and *appear* in the ENPC but is rare in Norwegian originals (22 cases in ENPC fiction and three in KIAP-NO). It was therefore not included.

⁹⁰Brezina, *Statistics in Corpus Linguistics*, 123.

⁹¹The log likelihood test was performed with Paul Rayson's calculator at <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>.

Table 2. SEEM-verbs across languages and registers.

	<i>seem</i>		<i>appear</i>		<i>virke</i>		<i>se ut</i>		<i>synes</i>	
	<i>N</i>	/100 k	<i>N</i>	/100 k	<i>N</i>	/100 k	<i>N</i>	/100 k	<i>N</i>	/100 k
Fiction	388	92.5	32	7.63	142	34.82	198	48.55	9	2.21
Linguistics	448	72.1	252	40.5	88	24.48	202	56.19	118	32.82
LL	12.93		117.96		6.90		2.13		125.32	
<i>p</i> -value	$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.0001$		$p < 0.01$		$p > 0.05$		$p < 0.0001$	

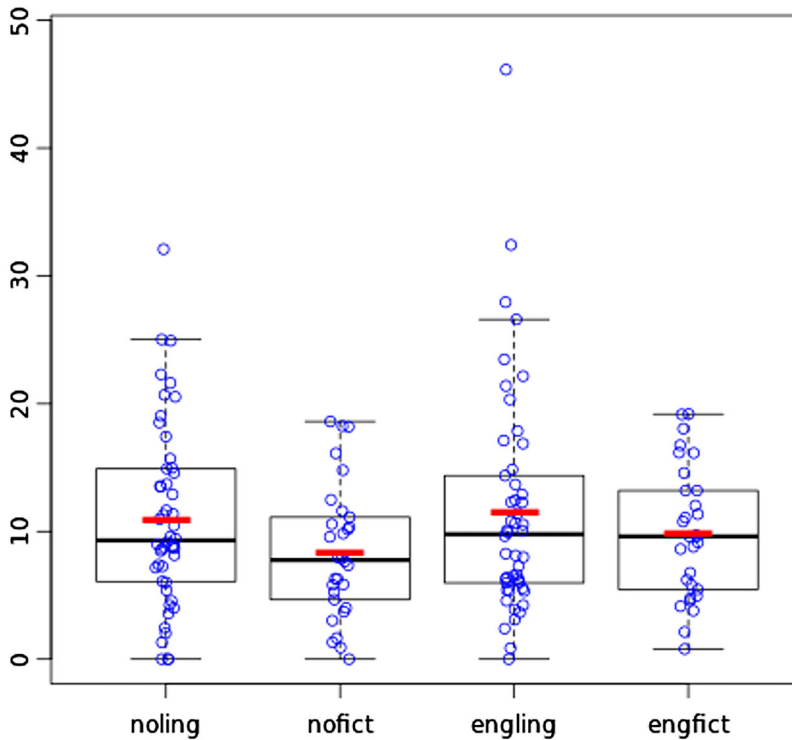
Raw frequencies and frequencies per 100,000 (100 k) words.

Table 3. Mean frequencies of each SEEM-verb per text (per 10,000 words) and standard deviations.

	Fiction		Linguistics	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
<i>seem</i>	9.15	4.83	7.08	6.37
<i>appear</i>	0.74	0.62	4.41	5.44
<i>virke</i>	3.38	3.44	2.65	3.65
<i>synes</i>	0.22	0.39	3.34	4.92
<i>se ut</i>	4.75	3.18	5.02	4.97

shows that there is considerable individual variation in the use of all the lemmas. The standard deviation values are generally greater in linguistics than in fiction.

The dispersion of SEEM-verbs across corpus files is shown in Figure 1. The median frequency is higher in Norwegian linguistics than in Norwegian fiction, but similar between

**Figure 1.** The dispersion of SEEM-verbs across languages and registers (frequencies per 10,000 words).

Note: The box plot was made with *Lancaster Stats Tools Online* at <http://corpora.lancs.ac.uk/stats/toolbox.php>, see Brezina, *Statistics in Corpus Linguistics*.

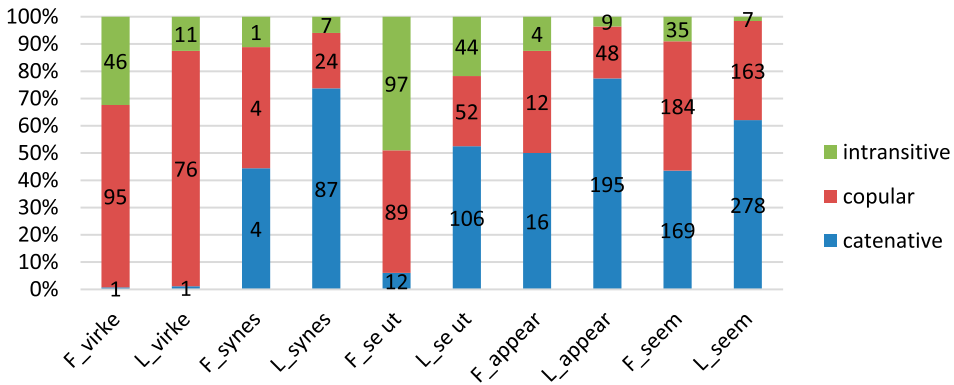


Figure 2. Transitivity of English and Norwegian SEEM-verbs.

the English registers. Like Table 3, the plot shows that there is great individual variation in the use of SEEM-verbs. Frequencies (per 10,000 words) range from 0 (in one English and three Norwegian linguistics papers and one Norwegian fiction text) to 32 in Norwegian linguistics and 46 in English linguistics. The maximum frequencies in Norwegian and English fiction are 18.5 and 19, respectively. The conclusions from Figure 1 are that SEEM-verbs are more frequent and more varied in linguistics than in fiction in both languages and that the register difference seems greater in Norwegian than in English.

4.2. Distribution of Construction Types in English and Norwegian

As detailed above, all the SEEM-verbs enter into several patterns.⁹² In this analysis the patterns have been sorted into the main categories *catenative*, *copular* and *intransitive* (see Section 3.2). Figure 2 shows the distribution of the patterns across fiction (F) and linguistics (L).

The patterns of Norwegian SEEM-verbs differ more across lemmas than across registers. For *virke*, the copular pattern is clearly most frequent. Intransitives are in second place, though with a larger proportion in fiction than in linguistics. The catenative function is marginal with *virke*, occurring only once in either register. By contrast, the catenative use dominates for *synes*, especially in linguistics with 73.5% of the instances. Fiction has so few instances of *synes* that the distribution across patterns is easily due to chance, but the intransitive use is the least frequent one, as in linguistics. *Se ut* is most frequently a catenative in linguistics, while in fiction this is the least frequent use. Intransitive *se ut* is slightly more common than the copular use in fiction, while in linguistics, it is the other way round.

The two English lemmas differ across registers but have strikingly similar patterns of use within each register. The copular function is slightly less common with *appear* than with *seem*, accompanied by a correspondingly greater proportion of catenative uses. Intransitives are infrequent with both verbs. The copular function is proportionally much more frequent in fiction than in linguistics, where the catenative function dominates.

⁹²See also Johansson, "The English Verb *Seem*"; Aijmer, "*Seem* and Evidentiality."

4.3. Copular Uses

Copular uses of the *seem*-verbs include patterns with and without an extraposed subject. Section 4.3.1 discusses patterns with predicatives, and Section 4.3.2 those with an extraposed subject.

4.3.1. SEEM-verb + Predicative

As noted in Section 2.2, the predicative complement of SEEM -verbs can be realised by an adjective phrase (AdjP) in both English and Norwegian, but by a noun phrase (NP) only in English, according to reference grammars. The present material does not contradict this. Figure 3 shows the numbers and percentages of complementation patterns for each verb in both fiction (F) and linguistics (L).

The most common complement type for all the verbs in both languages is that of a predicative AdjP (without dummy *it*), as in (10) and (11).⁹³ In the case of *virke* this pattern is completely dominant in fiction, but less so in linguistics. For *se ut*, only adjectival predicatives are attested. Complements realised by an NP occur only with *seem*, as in (12), thus indicating a slight syntactic difference between *seem* and *appear*.

- (10) Mary Rowe's condition seemed *irreversible*. (AH1)
 (11) Men han virket *litt uvillig*. (KF2)
 "But he seemed a little unwilling."
 But he seemed none too keen. (KF2T)
 (12) At first blush, the study of English punctuation might seem *a confined, even esoteric topic* ... (engling30)

According to Aijmer copular *seem* conveys "some modal qualification" based on inference from perceptual evidence.⁹⁴ Such perceptual evidence is present in (10) and (11), though in (12) the inference is rather "based on general conceptual information".⁹⁵ *Virke* is etymologically not associated with perception, so it may evoke impressions of how things work rather than what they look like. However, it clearly conveys the same type of meaning as *seem* in example (11). *Se ut*, on the other hand, more explicitly implies visual perception, as evidenced by its frequent translation into *look* (see Section 5).

The combination of the dummy subject *it/det* plus predicative complement (and an extraposed subject) is more common in linguistics than in fiction in both languages. Copular *virke* and *synes* occur regularly in this pattern, which is considerably less frequent with *se ut*. See example (13) for an illustration. In English, extraposition after a predicative is also rare in fiction, and *appear* occurs with *it* and predicative only in linguistics. Notably, the material offers no instances of the combination of dummy subject and NP as predicative complement in either language.

- (13) Det *virker åpenbart at dette er et spørsmål som ikke kan besvares* ... (noling28)
 "It seems obvious that this is a question which cannot be answered ..."⁹⁶

⁹³See also Biber *et al.*, *Longman Grammar*, 436.

⁹⁴Aijmer, "Seem and Evidentiality," 82.

⁹⁵Viberg, "Phenomenon-based Perception Verbs," 33.

⁹⁶Examples from KIAP-NO have been translated fairly literally by the present author.

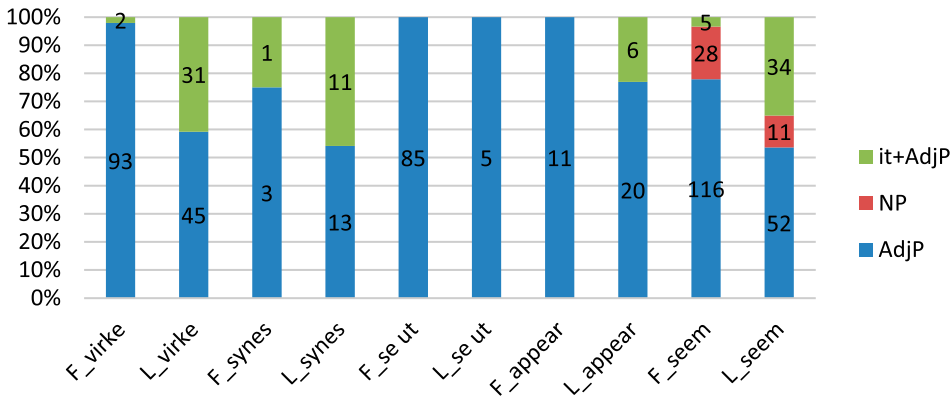


Figure 3. Patterns of copular SEEM-verbs with predicative complement.

4.3.2. SEEM-verb with Extraposed Subject

There are two patterns of SEEM-verbs with a dummy *it/det* and an extraposed subject clause. The extraposition constructions can involve an intervening predicative phrase (*full* extraposition), as described above, or they can be *bare*, i.e., the extraposed subject follows the verb directly (“obligatory extraposition”).⁹⁷ Figure 4 shows the distribution of both patterns. The numbers of full extraposition (*it* + AdjP) are repeated from Figure 3 for easy comparison with the bare structure. The raw numbers indicate that extraposition is more characteristic of linguistics than of fiction.⁹⁸

The Norwegian SEEM-verbs have a clear division of labour between the extraposition patterns: *virke* and *synes* occur only with full extraposition, as in (14), and *se ut* only with bare extraposition, as in (15).⁹⁹ As the example shows, this use of *se ut* requires the addition of the preposition *til* (“to”).

- (14) Det *virker* også rimelig å anta at vi husker best det vi oftest hører. (noling05)
 “It seems also reasonable to assume that we remember best what we most often hear.”
- (15) Det *ser ut til* at flere barn lærer to språk i tospråklige familier nå enn i 1982/83. (noling33)
 “It seems that more children learn two languages in bilingual families now than in 1982/83.”

The extraposed subject clause in Norwegian may be an *at*-clause (“that-clause”) or an infinitive clause. Infinitives are twice as common as *at* with *virke* and *synes* but are not found with *se ut til*, which indicates that bare extraposition favours *at*-clauses. All the extraposed clauses after *se ut til*, retain the complementiser *at*, since *at* is close to obligatory after a preposition.¹⁰⁰ *At* is also retained in all uses of extraposed *at*-clauses with *virke* and *synes*.

⁹⁷Quirk et al., *Comprehensive Grammar*, 1392.

⁹⁸See also Biber et al., *Longman Grammar*, 674; Herriman, “The Function of Extraposition,” 221.

⁹⁹However, the Norwegian Newspaper Corpus gives examples of *se ut* with full extraposition, e.g., *Det ser kanskje rart ut at saken avsluttes slik* (BT, 2018). “It looks perhaps odd out that the case ends like this.”

¹⁰⁰Faarlund et al., *Norsk referansegrammatikk*, 988.

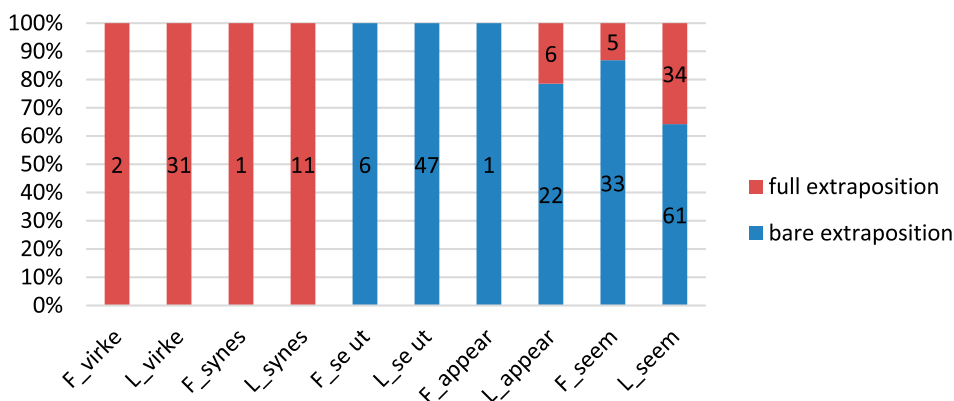


Figure 4. Patterns of extraposition across SEEM-verbs (proportional distribution and raw numbers).

The extraposed subject after *seem* and *appear* is a nominal *that*-clause in all cases of bare extraposition constructions. In sentences with full extraposition, however, the extraposed subject may be an infinitive clause, as in (16).

(16) It therefore *seems natural to look* for a direct, and even causal, link between semantic and phonetic reduction ... (engling31)

That-deletion occurs with bare extraposition in both registers, but only after *seem*. It is more common in fiction than in linguistics; see (17). With full extraposition, *that* is always retained in both registers, as in (18).

(17) Her father was a dealer in second-hand cars and *it seemed he* did pretty well at it. (RD1)

(18) It *seems unlikely that* this can be explained by any cultural or pragmatic effects. (engling09)

Compared to extraposition with *be/være*, extraposition with a SEEM-verb always prefaces the proposition in the extraposed clause with the speakers' "own comment on the value or validity of what they are about to say", thus foregrounding (or "thematizing") the speaker's evaluation.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Herriman concludes that one of the functions of extraposition is "to make the attitudinal meaning into the perspective from which the content of the extraposed clause is interpreted."¹⁰² In the case of bare extraposition, the SEEM-verb alone adds modal qualification to the extraposed proposition, as in (17). With full extraposition, the modal qualification is more likely to apply to the predicative, as in (16) and (18), where the speaker evaluates the following propositional content as *natural* and *unlikely*, respectively.

4.4. Catenative Uses

The catenative function is overall the most common one for both *seem* and *appear* although copular *seem* is slightly more common than catenative *seem* in fiction (see Figure 2).

¹⁰¹Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, 156.

¹⁰²Herriman, "The Function of Extraposition," 223.

The Norwegian verbs differ more across both lexemes and registers. *Virke* has catenative function only once in either register.¹⁰³ *Se ut* rarely has catenative function in fiction (6% of the total) while in linguistics, 52% of the occurrences of *se ut* are catenatives. As in the case of extraposition, the catenative use takes the form of *se ut til*; see (19).

- (19) Dette *ser ut til å være* nokså normalt i mellomnorsk ... (noling22)
 “This looks out to to be fairly normal in Middle Norwegian ...”

Synes frequently has catenative function, especially in linguistics (87 out of 118 = 73.7%). The constructional variation across the Norwegian lexemes, and to some extent registers, may be part of the reason for Johansson’s claim that “English catenative constructions are strikingly more common than the corresponding syntactic choice in Norwegian”.¹⁰⁴ This is indeed true of *virke* and of *se ut* in fiction, but not at all of *se ut* and *synes* in linguistics: thus the picture is more nuanced than what has been found previously.

Table 4 lists the most frequent lexical verbs to follow a catenative SEEM-verb. Only recurrent lexemes have been included except in the case of *virke*, where no verb recurs in either register. Instances of auxiliary *have* and *be* following a SEEM-verb have been ignored, so in (20), the recorded lexical verb is *broaden*.

- (20) ... the linguistic character of email *seems to be broadening*. (engling30)

The most frequent lexical verb by far is *be/være* in both languages and registers and across SEEM-verbs. This is curious in view of the fact that the SEEM-verbs can function as copular verbs without the addition of *be*. However, as shown in Section 4.3, the copular SEEM-verbs do not occur freely with all types of predicative complements. Thus the combination of catenative SEEM-verb and copular *be/være* offers a way of combining the evidential meaning of the SEEM-verb with a more flexible copular pattern. For example, in contrast to copular *appear* (Figure 3), *appear to be* may be complemented by an NP, as in (21). The same is seen with *synes* and *se ut (til)*, as in (22). Example (23) shows yet another construction that was not found with copular *se ut (til)*, namely extraposition after a predicative phrase. The use of catenative SEEM-verbs before *be/være* is thus a way of adding evidential meaning to a wider range of copular constructions.

- (21) In addition, a nonspatial meaning *appears to be part of the interpretation*. (engling17)
 (22) Men selv om kanonitet *synes å være en meget viktig faktor*, ... (noling48)
 “But even if canonicity seems to be a very important factor ...”
 (23) Det *ser ut til å vere* ei utbreidd oppfatning at morfologi handlar om morfar – og allomorfar og morfem. (noling04)
 “It seems to be a widespread belief that morphology is about morphs – and allomorphs and morphemes.”

¹⁰³A search for *virker å* (“seems to”) in the Norwegian Newspaper Corpus suggests that catenative *virke* has increased since about 2000.

¹⁰⁴Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*,” 228.

Table 4. The most frequent lexical verbs following catenative SEEM-verbs (raw numbers).

	Fiction	N	Linguistics	N
<i>seem</i>	be	28	be	102
	have	8	have	12
	know, lose, take	4	require	7
<i>appear</i>	be	5	be	108
	–		have	11
<i>virke</i>	være (“be”)	1	være (“be”)	1
<i>synes</i>	være (“be”)	2	være (“be”)	45
	–		ha (“have”)	6
	–		ligge (“lie”)	3
<i>se ut</i>	være (“be”)	7	være (“be”)	52
	bli (“become”)	2	ha (“have”)	6
	–		stemme (“fit, tally”)	3

According to Aijmer, the catenative use of *seem* is the most grammaticalized, and *seem to* may be regarded as a non-prototypical member of the paradigm of modal auxiliaries.¹⁰⁵ The same view is expressed by Usonienė & Šinkūnienė: *seem to* is modal and expresses “the speaker’s assessment of the propositional content”.¹⁰⁶ Overall, the catenative use of SEEM-verbs appears very similar in English and Norwegian: the catenative gives epistemic-evidential meaning to the predicate at the same time as it provides a syntactically more flexible construction than a copular SEEM-verb would do.

4.5. Intransitive Uses

The patterns categorised as intransitive are a mixed bag. Complementation by an adverb or a PP are relatively analogous to the copular + predicative pattern, see (24), while complementation by a comparative clause is similar to extraposition; see (25). Instances of zero complementation, by contrast, are elliptical structures that are parenthetically inserted and might be expanded to either a copular or a catenative verb phrase;¹⁰⁷ see (26), which is agnate to “It seems that complementizers can ...”

(24) Å finstemme et flygel er et stort og vanskelig nøyaktighetsarbeid, men for Spot *virket det som en lek*. (EFH1)

To tune a grand piano is a difficult, lengthy, and precise task, but to Spot *it seemed like a game*. (EFH1T)

(25) Det *synes som om* Lyons ikke skiller klart nok mellom logiske og syntaktiske strukturer, ... (noling41)

“It *seems as if* Lyons does not distinguish clearly enough between logical and syntactic structures ...”

(26) Complementisers can, *it seems*, also become verbs, ... (engling31)

Figure 5 shows the distribution of intransitive uses of SEEM-verbs across lexemes, registers and languages. The cross-linguistic difference is clearer here than has been the case

¹⁰⁵Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality,” 85.

¹⁰⁶Usonienė and Šinkūnienė, “A Cross-linguistic Look,” 282.

¹⁰⁷López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “From Clause to Pragmatic Marker.”

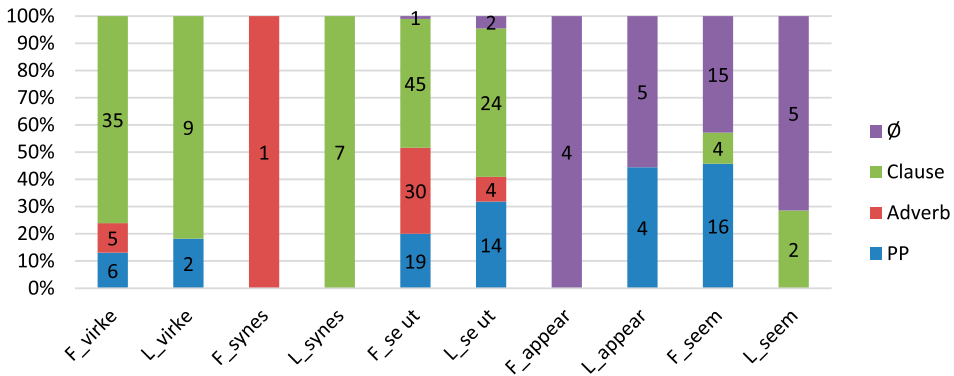


Figure 5. Intransitive uses of SEEM-verbs (percentages and raw numbers).

for the other uses of SEEM-verbs, especially as regards zero complementation, which is salient in English but rare in Norwegian. The overall numbers of intransitive SEEM-verb constructions are higher in Norwegian, as is also clear from Figure 2 above, and the greatest contributors to this are *virke* and *se ut* in fiction and *se ut* in linguistics.

PP complementation of the SEEM-verb is most common with *seem* (in fiction) and *se ut*. The prepositions typically used are Norwegian *som* and English *like*, both illustrated by (27). The informal flavour of *like* may explain why it is absent from the linguistics material. Some of the cases of both *seem* and *se ut* + PP are very close to being non-evidential, with the visual perception meaning of “look like”.¹⁰⁸ This is a plausible interpretation of (27), which has still been taken to imply some degree of interpretation or evaluation.¹⁰⁹ The same verb in (28) is more clearly evidential, as visual perception is not involved.

(27) Egget blir senere funnet igjen i buksene til en mann som ved første blikk *ser ut som en banditt*, og da er egget knust. (LSC1)

The egg is later discovered in the trousers of a man who at first sight *looks like a bandit*, and then the egg is broken. (LSC1T)

(28) Dette kunne *se ut som* et argument for avledning. (noling24)

“This might look like an argument for derivation.”

Complementation by an adverb (phrase) was found only in Norwegian (original) texts, but as (29) shows, the pattern occurs in English translations. The adverbs typically found in this pattern are *sånn/slik* (“thus, so”) and the interrogative *hvordan* (“how”).

(29) *Slik* har det i alle høve *sett ut* for meg, ... (KFL1)

“Thus [in this way] has it in any case appeared to me”

In any case, this is *how it has appeared* to me ... (KFL1T)

The use of a SEEM-verb plus a comparative clause offers an opportunity to hedge the content of the dependent clause similarly to a bare extraposition construction, for

¹⁰⁸Viberg, “Phenomenon-based Perception Verbs,” 32.

¹⁰⁹See Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality,” 72.

example in (17) above; see further Section 4.7. Complementation by a *som* (*om*) “as if” clause, as in (25), is the most common pattern for *virke* and (linguistics) *synes*. This should be seen in connection with the total absence of bare extraposition with these verbs (Figure 4). However, the pattern of intransitive SEEM-verb with a comparative clause was not found with *appear* and is rare with *seem*. This may be due to the written medium: López-Couso & Méndez-Naya argue that “the minor declarative complementizers *as if*, *as though*, and *like* are more closely associated with the spoken language”.¹¹⁰ Both linguistics instances and three of the fiction instances have *as if*, as in (30), while the fourth fiction instance has *as though*. The conjunction *like*, described by Quirk et al. (1985) as non-standard, does not occur in the data. *Seem as if* in (30) appears to imply visual perception, as noted for *seem* + PP above.¹¹¹ This is also the case for *se ut* (*til*), but not to the same extent for *virke*, as in (31) where visual perception need not be involved.

- (30) It *seemed as if* the whole world was there. (BO1)
 (31) Det *virket som om* Lien var forberedt på spørsmålet. (EG2)
 “It seemed as if Lien was prepared for the question.”
 Lessner seemed to have been expecting the question. (EG2T)
 (32) She and the policemen had come through it, *it seemed*, and let it swing shut behind them. (DF1)

Zero complementation, or parenthetical use, is found with both *seem* and *appear*, but only with *se ut* (*til*) in Norwegian. English parentheticals most commonly occur in clause-medial position, as in (26) above, but are also found clause-finally, as in (32). In both cases the parenthetical functions as a comment clause, adding an element of epistemic/evidential meaning to the utterance in the same way as a stance adverbial does.¹¹²

4.6. Experiencer Phrases

All the SEEM-verbs can occur with an experiencer phrase. The experiencer phrase is typically a PP with *to* in English and *for* in Norwegian, as illustrated in (33) and (34).

- (33) It seemed *to her* to be too white, too soft, too spotty. (FW1)
 Hun syntes den var for hvit, for bløt, med for mange føflekker. (FW1T)
 “She thought it was too white ...”
 (34) *For den som ser tinga litt på avstand, utanfrå*, verkar likskapen meir påfallande enn skilnaden. (noling03)
 “For those who see things from a distance, from the outside, seems the similarity more striking than the difference.”

Experiencer phrases occur in all the syntactic patterns of SEEM-verbs. In Norwegian, the experiencer PP typically occurs in clause-initial or clause-final position, while English more often uses medial position (after the SEEM-verb), but clause-initial and

¹¹⁰López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*,” 189.

¹¹¹López-Couso and Méndez-Naya suggest that *seem that* involves more speaker commitment to the embedded proposition than *seem as if*; “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*,” 188.

¹¹²Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality”, 79; López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “From Clause to Pragmatic Marker,” 56.

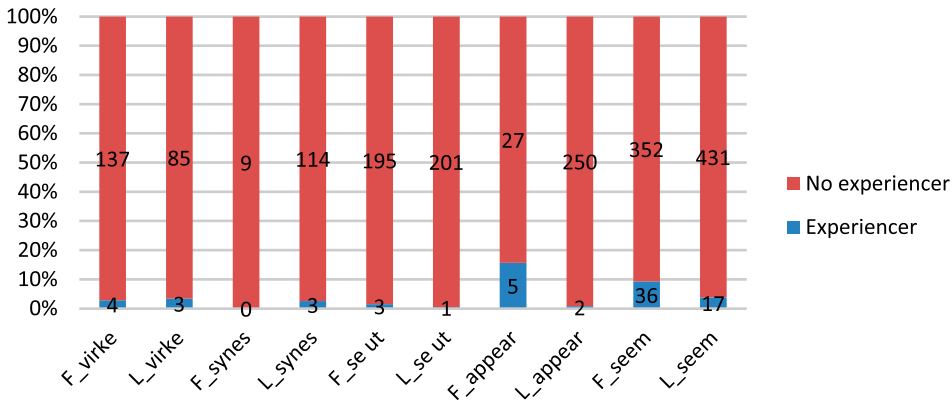


Figure 6. Explicit experienter phrase with SEEM-verbs (percentages and raw numbers).

clause-final position are also used in both languages. In principle, *synes* may have an experienter object (NAOB, entry for *synes*), but this use is not attested in the present material. Overall, experienter phrases are rare, occurring in 0–4% of the cases except in English fiction where experienter phrases accompany *appear* in 15.6% of the cases (5 of 32) and *seem* in 9.3% of the cases (36 of 388) (Figure 6).

The present data appear to contradict Johansson’s finding that “experienters are more commonly expressed in Norwegian than in English”.¹¹³ However, although Johansson used the ENPC, his Norwegian data consist entirely of sources and translations of *seem*-constructions, in which experienters expressed as subjects (of a mental verb, as in (33) above) and objects have also been counted, unlike the analysis presented here.¹¹⁴

5. Translation Correspondences in the ENPC

This section discusses translation correspondences in the fiction material only, since KIAP does not contain translations. Table 5 shows the most frequent lexical correspondences of the SEEM-verbs.

The SEEM-verbs studied here generally turn up as translations of each other, with two noteworthy additions: English *look* and Norwegian *late til*. *Late til* reaches the top three translations only of *appear*, but also occurs 21 times with *seem*. It is semantically and constructionally similar to *se ut til*, appearing in catenative and bare extraposition patterns, but notably not as a copula. *Look* is the most frequent correspondence of *se ut*, underlining the visual perception meaning of both lexemes.¹¹⁵ However, *look* also corresponds to *virke*, which is not really a perception verb, but can occur as an evidential in contexts where visual perception is plausible, as in (35).

- (35) Det *virket som om* piken hadde ligget i solen i tre uker ... (OEL1)
 “It looked as though the girl had lain in the sun for three weeks ...”
 The girl *looked as though* she had been lying in the sun for three weeks ... (OELIT)

¹¹³Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*,” 228.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 235.

¹¹⁵See also Viberg, “Phenomenon-Based Perception Verbs,” 31.

Table 5. Frequent lexical correspondences of the SEEM-verbs in fiction (raw numbers).

source	<i>virke</i>	<i>synes</i>	<i>se ut</i>	<i>appear</i>	<i>seem</i>
Top three translations	<i>seem</i> 69	<i>seem</i> 4	<i>look</i> 49	<i>late til</i> 4	<i>virke</i> 126
	<i>look</i> 22		<i>seem</i> 15	<i>se ut</i> 4	<i>se ut</i> 40
	<i>appear</i> 18		<i>appear</i> 7	<i>synes</i> 3	<i>synes</i> 34
				<i>virke</i> 3	

(36) When Ted first met her, out in Gambia, *she seemed* to represent an unfamiliar world, ... (MD1)

Da Ted møtte henne første gang i Gambia, *syntes han* hun representerte en fremmed verden ... (MD1T)

“When Ted met her first time in Gambia, thought he she represented an unfamiliar world.”

The correspondences in Table 5 mask the fact that *synes* is polysemous between a mental verb with an experiencer subject (meaning “think”/“be of the opinion”) and an evidential SEEM-verb. In fact, the mental *synes* accounts for 17 of the translations of *seem* and all three of *appear*, as in (36), where catenative *seem* has been rendered by mental *synes*. Both *se ut* and *synes* can have catenative function (Section 4.4). However, the visual perception meaning of *se ut* may have excluded this alternative, and catenative *synes*, which is infrequent in fiction, may have been discarded for stylistic reasons. Incidentally, mental *synes* also occurs as a correspondence of *seem* and *appear* with explicit experiencer phrases, in which case the experiencer becomes the subject of *synes*, as in (33) above.

Due to the nature of their material, Johansson and Aijmer¹¹⁶ could not calculate mutual correspondence (MC), i.e., the extent to which two items occur as each other’s translations.¹¹⁷ Table 6 presents the MC calculations of *seem* and *appear* vs. *virke* and *se ut*. *Synes* was ignored due to its low frequencies in originals and its polysemy in translations.

The apparently most similar pair of lexemes is *seem/virke*. However, even this pair does not have a very high MC value. This is probably due to syntactic differences between these verbs. First, *virke* hardly ever occurs with catenative function, while this a frequent use of *seem* (Figures 2 and 3). Thus, whenever *virke* is used as a translation of catenative *seem*, as it is in 27 cases, its function is not catenative, as illustrated by (37) below, where *virke* is intransitive.

(37) That *seemed to be* the appropriate thing to do. (AB1)

Det virket som det beste hun kunne gjøre. (AB1T)

“That seemed like the best she could do.”

Seem and *virke* also differ with regard to their use in the bare extraposition construction (Section 4.3.2), and the intransitive use is more common with *virke* than with *seem* (Figure 2). Thus, the only pattern where *seem* and *virke* appear unproblematic as each

¹¹⁶Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*”; Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality.”

¹¹⁷Altenberg, “Adverbial Connectors.”

Table 6. Mutual correspondence of four pairs of lexemes.

	English – Norwegian	Norwegian – English	MC value
<i>seem</i> – <i>virke</i>	126 of 388 = 32.5%	69 of 142 = 48.6%	36.8%
<i>appear</i> – <i>virke</i>	3 of 32 = 9.4%	18 of 142 = 12.7%	12.1%
<i>seem</i> – <i>se ut</i>	40 of 388 = 10.3%	17 of 198 = 8.6%	9.7%
<i>appear</i> – <i>se ut</i>	4 of 32 = 12.5%	7 of 198 = 3.5%	4.8%

other's translations is as a copula with adjective complement, which is very frequent in both languages (Figure 3).

The three remaining pairs have rather low MC values. This may be partly due to the generally low frequency of *appear* in fiction (Tables 2 and 3), which makes it an unlikely choice in translating Norwegian SEEM-verbs. Furthermore, no favourite translation of *appear* emerges from Table 5, which lists four correspondences with similar frequencies.¹¹⁸

The degree of mutual correspondence shown in Table 6 takes account only of the lexemes used, not the constructions in which they occur. Table 7 shows the extent to which the lexicogrammatical patterns of SEEM-verbs are retained in translation.¹¹⁹ That is, it shows the number and percentage of congruent correspondences within each category,¹²⁰ for example that 37.5% of catenative *appear* are translated into a Norwegian catenative (irrespective of lexical realisation). Congruent correspondences occur where e.g., a copular construction is rendered as such in the translation. Within the intransitive category, the translation of a clausal complement into a PP, or vice versa, is regarded as non-congruent. *Synes* has not been considered here because of its very low frequency in ENPC originals.

The lexeme with the lowest overall percentage of congruent correspondence is *seem*. This may be linked to the syntactic flexibility of this verb, which is unmatched by its Norwegian counterparts (see Table 8 below). Table 7 highlights the fact that the catenative function is rare for the Norwegian SEEM-verbs. This is probably also a reason for the low percentages of congruent translations of *seem* and *appear*. Regarding the copular pattern of *seem*, complementation by an AdjP produces the greatest proportion of congruent correspondences (60%), while complementation by an NP and bare extraposition are rarely translated congruently. The most frequent types of non-congruent translations of copular *seem* and *appear* include intransitive uses (e.g., *virke som* “seem like”) and the mental *synes* (“think”). A common solution to the problem of the “untranslatable” pattern *seem* + NP into Norwegian is given in (38), where the NP has been included in a PP with *som* (“like”). Other solutions include copular *være*, either without evidential qualification or with a modal particle.

- (38) ... she *seemed* a hyperactive restless woman ... (RR1)
 ... hun *virket som en* hyperaktiv, rastløs kvinne ... (RR1T)
 “ ... she seemed like a hyperactive, restless woman ... ”

¹¹⁸The translations of *appear* in ENPC non-fiction are equally diverse: only *virke* and *se ut* are recurrent.

¹¹⁹The numbers differ substantially from Bolstad's due to the material used and the operationalization of the concept of congruence (Bolstad, “They Seem to be Alike,” 53).

¹²⁰Johansson, *Seeing through Multilingual Corpora*, 25.

Table 7. Congruence of lexicogrammatical categories.

	Catenative		Copular		Intransitive		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<i>appear</i>	6 of 16	37.5	10 of 12	83.3	3 of 4	75.0	19 of 32	59.4
<i>seem</i>	43 of 169	25.4	82 of 185	44.3	14 of 35	40.0	138 of 388	35.6
<i>se ut</i>	7 of 12	58.3	76 of 91	83.5	71 of 95	74.7	154 of 198	77.8
<i>virke</i>	0 of 1	–	72 of 94	76.6	28 of 46	60.9	100 of 141	70.9

Table 8. Syntactic patterns of English and Norwegian SEEM-verbs.

	Catenative	Copular + AdjP	Copular + NP	Full extraposition	Bare extraposition	Intransitive
<i>seem</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>appear</i>	+	+	(-)	+	+	+
<i>virke</i>	(+)	+	-	+	-	+
<i>se ut (til)</i>	+	+	-	(-)	+	+
<i>synes</i>	+	+	-	+	-	+

The translations of copular and intransitive Norwegian SEEM-verbs are congruent to a greater extent than *seem* and *appear*. A possible explanation is again the greater flexibility of the English SEEM-verbs: the Norwegian SEEM-verbs do not enter into any pattern that does not occur with *seem* and *appear*. The pattern *seem as if/like* is more common in English translations than in source texts, echoing the more common Norwegian *som (om)* after the SEEM-verb and boosting the number of congruent translations, as illustrated in (39).

(39) *Det virket som om* han var flau, eller kanskje bedrøvet. (OEL1)

It seemed as if he were embarrassed, or possibly depressed. (OEL1T)

The similarity between extraposition with a *that*-clause and clausal expansion by means of an adverbial clause (e.g., *it seems that/it seems as if*) was remarked on in Section 4.5. Many instances of *it seems that* are translated by an intransitive SEEM-verb plus an adverbial clause in Norwegian, as in (40). The opposite pattern is also found, i.e., a Norwegian intransitive SEEM-verb with adverbial clause complementation is translated into an English extraposition construction.

(40) ... but *it seemed that* he had the gift. (AB1)

... men *det virket som* han hadde talent. (AB1T)

“... but it seemed as if he had talent.”

6. Summary and Concluding Remarks

The contrastive analysis presented above has shown that the use of SEEM-verbs differs across languages, registers, and lexemes. *Appear* and *synes* are both more characteristic of linguistics than of fiction. *Seem* and *virke* are more common in fiction than in linguistics, while *se ut (til)* occurs equally in both registers. The syntactic patterns of *seem* and *appear* are generally very similar, although the frequencies of each pattern differ between

fiction and linguistics. The Norwegian SEEM-verbs, by contrast, show more lexical variation in their patterning: *virke* is predominantly copular in both registers. The catenative use of *synes* and *se ut* is frequent in linguistics, but rather rare in fiction. Intransitive patterns are more common in Norwegian than in English.

Extrapolation is more frequent with the English than the Norwegian SEEM-verbs. However, the intransitive use with a clausal complement is similar to extrapolation,¹²¹ and this type is much more frequent in Norwegian than in English (Figure 5). The translation study revealed cases of correspondence between Norwegian comparative clauses and English extrapolation, but also that Norwegian comparative clauses are often carried over to English translations, thus causing some degree of “shining through” of the source language.

Table 8 gives a schematic overview of the syntactic patterns that are available for each of the SEEM-verbs investigated here. Only two patterns occur with all the SEEM-verbs, copular + AdjP and intransitive, while the catenative pattern is common with all the lexemes except *virke*, for which it is marginal. The catenative use reflects a high degree of grammaticalisation;¹²² i.e., the verbs can be said to approach auxiliary function. However, there is a difference in degree between the English and the Norwegian verbs: *seem* and *appear* both precede the infinitive marker directly. This is also the case with Norwegian *synes*, but the catenative use of *se ut* requires the addition of the preposition *til*, making the infinitive complement oblique. The catenative function of SEEM-verbs is thus less grammaticalized in Norwegian than in English. It was noted above that catenative *virke* may be on the increase, which will make it even more similar to *seem*. It would therefore be worthwhile to conduct a further study of *virke* in more recent material than what is represented in KIAP and the ENPC, and preferably also in more registers.

The copular + AdjP pattern is frequent with all the lexemes. In contrast, the copular + NP pattern is practically restricted to *seem*. However, *appear* + NP is easy to find elsewhere, so it has been marked with a bracketed minus in Table 8. The copular pattern that involves (full) extrapolation is found with all the lexemes except *se ut*, though again, the bracketed minus means that the pattern can be attested elsewhere. Bare extrapolation, by contrast, is not a viable pattern for *synes* and *virke* – this pattern is realised in Norwegian only by *se ut til* and some verb lexemes not investigated here except as translation correspondences of *seem/appear*, e.g., *late til*. *Seem* and *appear* occur with both types of extrapolation, but the bare variant is more common throughout.

Intransitive patterns involving complementation by an adjunct are more common in Norwegian than in English. In Section 4.5 it was suggested that this is linked to the lesser availability of the SEEM-verb + NP pattern and bare extrapolation in Norwegian, where *som (om)* “like, as if/though” allows NPs and *at*-clauses to occur as oblique complements of the SEEM-verb. The pattern with zero complementation in parenthetical clauses, on the other hand, is more common with *seem* and *appear*.

Of the English verbs, *seem* has the greatest syntactic flexibility: it occurs in all the patterns including copular + NP and is frequent in both registers. This flexibility indicates that *seem* is highly grammaticalized both as a copula and as a catenative.¹²³ Apart

¹²¹Recall that they were grouped together in Johansson, “The English Verb *Seem*”; López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, “On the Use of *as if*, *as though* and *like*.”

¹²²Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality,” 85.

¹²³See also Aijmer, “*Seem* and Evidentiality”; Usonienė and Šinkūnienė, “A Cross-linguistic Look.”

from the copula + NP pattern, *appear* is similarly grammaticalized, but more restricted stylistically. Among the Norwegian verbs, *synes* is more grammaticalized than the other SEEM-verbs, but its use is practically restricted to the linguistics register. It thus emerges as a more formal lexeme than the other Norwegian SEEM-verbs.

The catenative SEEM-verbs are most commonly followed by *be/være* as a main verb. This combination – in comparison with the copular uses of SEEM-verbs – is one that highlights the epistemic/evidential meaning of the catenative at the same time as *be/være* offers a more flexible copular construction as regards complementation.

This study has shown that Norwegian and English SEEM-verbs have uses and meanings that vary across lexemes and register in both languages. However, the survey is obviously not exhaustive. The translation correspondences highlighted some lexemes that might have been included, in particular *look* and *late til*. Other types of phenomenon-based perception verbs, such as *sound* (and the Norwegian *høres ut*), can also have evidential uses.¹²⁴ Further expressions of evidentiality include modals, adverbials and discourse particles. All of these may provide interesting complements to this study.

The SEEM-verbs investigated here are more frequent in linguistics. This can probably be linked to the concept of academic hedging, marking the predicate as evidential.¹²⁵ However, it is possible that fiction relies more on other means of expressing evidential meaning; thus it will be premature to draw conclusions about the overall pervasiveness of evidential markers in the two registers under study. Just like all languages have a variety of means to express source of knowledge, belief and disbelief,¹²⁶ registers will also differ as to the type of information that is expressed in them and the ways in which that information is presented. The register variation is therefore worth pursuing in future studies of evidential expressions such as SEEM-verbs.

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¹²⁴Malá, "Translation Counterparts as Markers of Meaning"; López-Couso and Méndez-Naya, "From Clause to Pragmatic Marker"; Viberg, "Phenomenon-Based Perception Verbs."

¹²⁵Fetzer, "Foregrounding Evidentiality"; Vold, "Epistemic Modality Markers."

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