Earlier and later - Time constructions in Swedish

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Former studies (Loenheim et al. 2016; Olofsson & Prentice 2020) have made the observation that semi-schematic time constructions in Swedish can be used be with typical time-denoting NPs, as *fem minuter* 'five minutes' and *en dag* 'one day' in (1), as well as productively with NPs that rarely denote time, as *fem låtar* 'five songs' and *fyra våfflor* 'four waffels' in (2).

(1) a. Fem minuter tidigare 'five minutes earlier'
    b. En dag senare   'one day later'

(2) a. Fem låtar tidigare   'five songs earlier'
    b. Fyra våfflor senare 'four waffels later'

The examples in (1–2) instantiates the [ANTAL TID *tidigare*] 'number/amount time earlier' construction and the [ANTAL TID *senare*] 'number/amount time later' construction, which are used to denote an event that occurs before or after a reference point in time. They have a structure with the adverbs *tidigare* 'earlier' and *senare* 'later' as lexically filled elements, and NUMBER/AMOUNT and TIME as open slots, which can be filled with more or less any numeral or other quantifying expression and temporal expression, respectively.

As mentioned, the constructions can be used productively to the extent that even lexical units that do not conventionally express time can be used, such as *låtar* 'songs' and *våfflor* 'waffels' in (2). The question, not fully investigated in former research, is, however, what the lexical variation in the constructions looks like and, not least, which semantic categories are used for productive use.

Productivity, which concerns the possibility of using a certain construction with new lexical items or an already known item with a new meaning or function, is often based on type frequency and hapax legomena as well as the semantic variation of such types (cf. Barðdal 2008; Olofsson 2018). In addition, context is often proposed to influence productivity (cf. Boas 2011).

In this paper, I will present an investigation of time constructions, such as the ones in (1–2), in a large corpus of twitter texts. Preliminary result shows, among other things, that the prominent semantic categories which the productive uses are based on are concepts typically prominent on social media platforms, such as food, drinks, workout and communication. Hence, I would argue that contextual relevance and social aspects influence productivity (cf. 'fashion' Plag 1999; 'genre' Bauer 2001; 'context' Boas 2011; Olofsson 2016; 'social/cultural influence' Guardamagna 2018; Höder, forthc.).

Keywords: time constructions, productivity, contextual relevance, corpus data, Swedish

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