

FROM GESTURE TO ADVERBIAL – SWEDISH *DET* AS AN EXAMPLE OF LINGUISTIC POLYSEMY

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ABSTRACT. Every grammar of the Swedish language provides information concerning the unit *det*. The Swedish *det* can be used both pronominally and adnominally, fulfilling a wide range of functions in the language. However, in traditional grammar one does not pay attention to the links and mutual relations between the individual occurrences of this unit. Thus, within such a framework, the Swedish *det* can be treated as an extreme example of homonymy. Is that possible in language?

The main goal of this article is to show the semantic value of the unit *det* (in its nominal function) in contemporary Swedish, adopting the perspective of Cognitive Grammar. I shall try to prove that all uses of this unit are linked to each other semantically. Thus, the meaning ascribed to *det* constitutes a complex network of senses rooted in the prototype, which is a cognitive reference point within the category. The article can be interpreted in a wider context of the research concerning the use of units which are functionally “related” to the Swedish *det* in various languages, e.g. the English *it*, the German *es*, the Polish *to* etc.

INTRODUCTION

Every grammar of the Swedish language provides more or less precise information concerning various ways of using the unit *det* (see e.g. Thorell 1973; Teleman, Hellberg & Andersson 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). The Swedish *det* can be used both pronominally and adnominally. It may occur, among other things, as a neuter demonstrative pronoun, a third-person neuter pronoun, an anaphoric pronoun in the case of the so-called *impure text deixis*, – and, as linguists often put it, – as a meaningless, but nevertheless necessary element fulfilling the function of the subject or object in a number of different constructions. However, in traditional grammar one does not pay attention to the links and mutual re-

lations between the individual uses of this language unit. Thus, within such a framework, the Swedish *det* can be treated as an extreme example of homonymy in language.

The only study that postulates the existence of connections between particular occurrences of *det* is a book by Olson (1913). In the context of the study of *det* and related structures, this book is truly exceptional as it comes very close to the idea of the radial category promoted within the cognitive theory of language. Unfortunately, it seems to be forgotten as well.

The main goal of this article is to show the semantic value of the unit *det* in contemporary Swedish, adopting the perspective of Cognitive Grammar (CG) as described in Langacker (1987, 1991) and Lakoff (1987). The analysis of the linguistic material which I am going to present can be interpreted in a wider context of the research concerning the functioning of units which are “related” to the Swedish *det* in various languages; in other words, units which fulfill similar functions in these languages, e.g. the English *it*, the German *es*, the Polish *to* etc. (Brugmann 1922, 1925; Brandenstein 1928; Bolinger 1977; Chomsky 1982; Langacker 1991; Schultze & Tabakowska 1992; Tabakowska 1995; Smith 2002; Sokołowska 2002). However, what is interesting in this context is the fact that, compared to the above-mentioned units, the Swedish *det* seems to have the widest range of uses.

I shall concentrate only on pronominal uses of the Swedish *det*. I shall try to prove that they all are linked to each other and that they are cognitively motivated. Thus, the meaning ascribed to *det* constitutes a complex network of senses rooted in the prototype, which is a cognitive reference point within the category.

PROTOTYPE

According to Tabakowska (1995), the demonstrative pronoun should be seen as the category prototype for the Swedish *det* (Tabakowska 1995: 432). Considering the ample publications on the demonstrative pronoun in various languages (e.g. Data-Bukowska 2005; Mulder de 1996; Hanks 1992; Himmelmann 1996; Jodłowski 1973; Roberts 1993) we can ascribe to the prototypical *det* the following attributes:

- a. *det* gives the addressee a signal to distinguish a figure (an object) from the ground which the speakers share,
- b. *det* narrows down (to some extent) the range of the ground “containing” the figure,
- c. the ostensive gesture accompanying *det* introduces a further narrowing down of this ground *det* portrays the figure in a most schematic way (as a thing),
- d. *det* distinguishes the figure, which is a bounded concrete object,
- e. which is smaller than the ground and can be clearly distinguished from it,
- f. which is introduced into the addressee’s consciousness as a new element,
- g. *det* renders the object salient i.e. highlights it,
- h. *det* signals that the figure is distant from the conceptualizer,
- i. *det* can be stressed and contrast the figure with the other elements of a given category within the ground.

The very perception of the demonstrative, its sound or its written form, starts the demonstrative process (Mulder de 1996: 37). In this process the prototypical *det* functions on the one hand as a kind space builder and on the other hand as a highlighter of the object. However, as can be expected, the attributes, which I have listed above can be excluded or transformed in particular occurrences of this language unit in contemporary Swedish.

CATEGORY

Let us now examine some conceptualizations. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate instances of the category prototype. In (1) the speaker points to the objects in physical space, at the same time categorizing (naming) them explicitly. *Det* to the greatest extent resembles here its paralinguistic prototype i.e. pointing to an object with the finger. This instantiation of *det* reflects practically all the attributes of the prototype, except for two: it is not stressed and does not profile any contrast. However, these values can potentially be introduced into the conceptualization.

- (1) **Det** är en stol.¹
Det is a chair.
This (That/It – depends on the context) is a chair.

In the case of (2), the characteristics of the figure have changed. The object pointed to is not clearly distinguished from the ground.

- (2) Suddenly a terrible noise can be heard:
 Vad var **det**? (Olson 1913: 6)
 What was **det**?
 What was **that**?

Also in (3) the function of *det* is to indicate that the object referred to is to be found by making use of the immediately accessible context in which this language unit occurs. However, in this case *det* characterizes the figure in a wider extent than in (1) and (2). The object called for in this context – *ett pappersblock* ‘a (writing) pad’ – should be entitled to concrete neuter gender. The pronoun retains here the other attributes of the category prototype.

- (3) Ge mig **det**. [the speaker will get **ett** pappersblock ‘a (writing)pad’ near the addressee]
 Give me **det**. [the speaker will get a **NEUTER** (writing)pad near the addressee]
 Give me **that** / **it**. / Give **it** to me.

Also the use of *det* in (4) is clearly gender-dependent.

- (4) Vi bodde i **ett** rött hus då. Den sommaren var **det** nymålat.
 We lived in a **NEUTER** red house then. That summer was **det** freshly painted.
 We lived in a red house then. That summer **it** was freshly painted.

¹ Examples presented in this article mostly come from Teleman et al. (1999a, 1999c, 1999c).

The pronominal *det* used in contemporary Swedish in the way shown in example (4) is a very precise signal to the addressee. The weakly stressed, low-pitch pronoun directs his/her attention back in the text and narrows down a specific portion of the ground containing the object. The object which *det* designates is marked for the neuter gender and it enjoys the highest degree of cognitive salience in the participants' consciousness. Thus, the pronominal *det* in its anaphoric (or tracking) use does not introduce a new object into the universe of discourse but only retrieves an old and accessible one. Additionally, the highlighting of the object is here weakened. The main function of *det* is then not making the object salient for the addressee, but only recalling it in his/her memory (Olson 1913: 2).

Also no implication of contrast is present in this usage (Teleman et al. 1999a: 300). If necessary, this feature may be introduced into the conceptualization by putting more stress onto the pronoun. In such a case, the object is more clearly highlighted, and the similarity to the prototype of *det* is increased.

In traditional grammar *det* in (5) is treated as semantically empty expletive object (Teleman et al. 1999b: 301). From the point of view of CG, this occurrence of *det* shows similarity with *det* in (4) and (2).

- (5) Ta **det** lugnt!
 Take **det** easy!
 Take **it** easy!

Det is not co-referential here. However, the unit refers to a very unspecific [thing] in the addressee's consciousness. This [thing] is construed as the patient of the action expressed by the verb. Since recalling such an object is theoretically automatic it is connected with no particular cognitive effort on the addressee's part. Though the meaning of *det* is maximally schematic, from the point of view of CG, it is still a meaning and the reference described here can be treated as a kind of anaphor.

The next extension of the category is *det* referring to complex regions of conceptual content in discourse. See example (6). Lyons (1977: 668) calls this *impure text deixis*.

- (6) Tycker du om öl? Ja **det** gör jag. (*det* = tycker om öl)
 Do you like beer? Yes **det** do I. (*det* = like beer)
 Do you like beer? Yes I do.

Reference to regions of conceptual content which, as Krenn (1985: 93) puts it, "zum Gegenständen hypostatisiert werden", is also possible in the physical space surrounding the speakers. That is why the similarity between the occurrences of *det* in examples (6) and (2) is so obvious.

In (6) *det* is a verbal gesture, which establishes the frame of reference in which the object is to be found. However, this object does not originally exist in the universe of discourse. It is, as Himmelmann (1996: 224) puts it, to be "created at the very moment" when the pronoun is used. In this regard, the ob-

ject can be treated as new on the scene. “It is established in the ... discourse for the first time” (ibid.).

In this type of conceptualization, the prototypical relations between the figure and the ground are visibly modified. Though complex conceptual content is here formed as a [thing], this thing seems to be quite vague. Its boundaries are fuzzy. Thus, a clear distinction between the figure and the ground is here neutralized.

The phenomenon described in the grammar of Swedish as *initial dislokation* (Teleman et al. 1999c: 533) is clearly related to this category – example (7).

- (7) Om det blir regn, **det** är det ingen som vet.
*Whether it's going to rain, **det** is no one who knows.*
No one knows whether it's going to rain.

In the same way as in (6), the pronominal *det* can point to an object created in the following discourse segment – see example (8). However, the aspects of highlighting the object and creating this object as a new element in the universe of discourse are more clearly marked here.

- (8) Jag säger då **det**: XXX. (Olson 1913: 42)
*I'm saying then **det**: XXX.*
Then I'm saying this: XXX.

Let us now compare conceptualisations (9) and (7). In (9) *det* profiles an object designated by a clause. The object already exists in the addressee's consciousness (Teleman et al. 1999a: 287), so its status is similar to that in *impure text deixis*.

- (9) **Det att hon gråter** behöver inte betyda att hon är ledsen.
***Det just because she is crying** does not necessarily mean that she is sad.*
Just because she is crying does not necessarily mean that she is sad.

An interesting extension of the category is *det* used in the construction in (10). This construction shows some similarity to the conceptualizations in (9) and (8). However, in (10a) the ability of the unit to set up a ground where the figure is to be identified manifests itself more clearly, while the function of highlighting the object is weakened.

- (10a) **Det** ska bli trevligt att du kommer.
***Det** will be nice if you come.*
It will be nice if you come.
- (10b) *Att du kommer ska **det** bli trevligt.
 *If you come will **det** be nice.

Thorell (1973: 205) describes this kind of *det* as a preparatory subject, which prepares the ground for the subject proper, introduced at the end of the sentence. Teleman et al. (1999c: 53, 55) treat this kind of *det* as a semantically empty unit, which makes it possible to move the logical subject to the rhematic part of the sentence.

A characteristic feature of the conceptualization in (10a) is a specific order in which the information is introduced. From the cognitive perspective it should be seen as iconic. *Det* either appears here in the initial position or it occupies the place reserved in the Swedish sentence for the subject – (S) – only² (Teleman et al. 1999c: 36, 55). Immediately after *det* comes a verb which has a schematic meaning, e.g. *vara* ‘to be’ *bliva* ‘to become’, then an adjective *trevligt* ‘nice’ which shows congruence in neuter gender with the pronoun and introduces into the conceptualization the evaluative judgement of the speaker (Teleman et al. 1999c: 54). The object itself is mentioned as the last element in the linear structure of the sentence.

According to Smith (2002: 93), who discusses a similar kind of construction in German, we can characterize *det* in (10a) as a signal to the addressee to set up a ground, within which a figure is to be distinguished. The ground is created on the basis of the information provided by the adjective. In this way, “an abstract mental space” is set up in the universe of discourse (Smith 2002: 94).³ So, similarly to the prototype, *det* functions here as a kind of a space builder. Additionally, it is a signal to distinguish an object which is introduced into the scene as a new element.

An additional argument in favour of the description of the semantic content presented here is the fact that it is not possible in Swedish to begin the sentence with the logical subject and retain *det* in such a construction (Teleman et al. 1999c: 55) – example (10b). In other words, having already introduced the object into the scene, the speaker does not need to include within the conceptualization the unit building the space within which this object is to be delineated.

The unit *det* in (11a) may be seen as close in value to *det* in its cataphoric uses, illustrated by examples in (9) and (10). On the other hand, *det* in (11a) is clearly related to the pronoun in (4).

(11a) Men problemet är väl **det** att vi hittills har varit relativt skyddade.

But the problem is **det** that we until now have been relatively protected.

But the problem is that until now we've been relatively protected.

(11b) Men problemet är väl att vi hittills har varit relativt skyddade.

But the problem is that until now we've been relatively protected.

Det profiles the neuter gender of the Swedish noun *problem* ‘problem’. On the other hand, the unit serves to highlight this object in the universe of discourse. Removing *det* from the conceptualization would cancel this feature – (11b).

² What is meant here is the position no. 3 in the linear order of the main clause, after topic (the so-called FUNDAMENT) and the finite verb (FIN): 1FUNDAMENT. 2FIN. 3S. 4a. 5V. 6N. 7A.

³ Smith (2002: 93), discussing a similar type of construction in German, points out that the conventional way of introducing information presented here is cognitively motivated. The egocentric position of the speaker manifests itself in the fact that his/her evaluative judgement, which sets up the ground, appears in this conceptualization before the delineated object.

Let us now go back to example (1). A clear similarity to this instantiation of *det* is shown by *det* in (12). However, pointing to the object has been here transferred into the discourse space.

- (12) Vem är **det**? **Det** är Jan.
 Who is **det**? **Det** is Jan.
 Who is **it** / **this** / **that**? **It** / **This** / **That** is Jan.

The facultative use of *det* in (13) is also similar to these uses. However, the highlighting of the object seems to be more clearly marked within this conceptualization.

- (13) Den som blev glad, (**det**) var jag. (Olson 1913:33)
 The one who became happy, (**det**) was I.
 I was the one who became happy.

Det in the so-called *utbrytningskonstruktion* – example (14) – (Teleman et al. 1999c: 62-63) also shows a certain affinity with *det* in (13). This construction corresponds to the English cleft sentence.

- (14) **Det** var min chef som vann tävlingen.
Det was my boss who won the competition.
It was my boss who won the competition. (My boss was the one who won the competition.)

In this construction the pronominal *det* retains a central feature of the category prototype i.e. the signal for distinguishing a figure from the ground. However, this instantiation of *det* is not used to introduce a new object into the addressee's current attention, but it only retrieves the one of which s/he already has prior knowledge. So, the construction has certain features of anaphora. The function of further narrowing down the space containing the figure is fulfilled by the relative clause as a modifier. The clause substitutes the prototypical ostensive gesture which accompanies the pronoun.

This instantiation of *det* cannot be stressed and cannot profile contrast. However, these values are retained in the construction. The stress which falls on the expression denoting the figure causes the object to contrast with other elements of the category. In this way the object is also highlighted.

In the language of the media, this construction is often used to introduce a new piece of information to the addressee's consciousness, as in (15) (Teleman et al. 1999c: 517-518).

- (15) **Det** var idag på morgonen som EU:s ministerråd meddelade att man beslutat stå fast vid livsmedelssubventionerna.
Det was this morning the EU Council of Ministers announced the decision to continue subsidizing food.
It was this morning the EU Council of Ministers announced the decision to continue subsidizing food.

In such a situation, the similarity of the construction to the prototype is even more clearly visible, though some features of the prototype are here realized by other linguistic means.

The function of highlighting the object is significantly weakened in the existential presentational construction shown in (16a).

- (16a) **Det** stod en paraply i hörnet.
Det stood an umbrella in the corner.
There was an umbrella in the corner.
- (16b) ***Det** stod en paraply.
 ***Det** stood an umbrella.
 ***There** was an umbrella.
- (16c) **Där/Här** stod en paraply i hörnet.
There/Here stood an umbrella in the corner.
There was an umbrella in the corner.

In traditional grammar *det* in (16a) is treated as a semantically empty expletive unit, which serves the function of moving the logical subject – *en paraply* ‘an umbrella’ – to the rhematic part of the sentence (Teleman et al. 1999c: 53). Thus, the main function of this unit is to introduce a new element into the addressee’s consciousness. Additionally, this construction is also preferred when the speaker wants to give the receiver some information on the location of the object (Teleman et al. 1999b: 385).

The scene construal in (16a) is cognitively motivated. In order to introduce a new element into the scene, we give it a specific location within the events in the discourse. In such a situation it is good to prepare the ground for the addressee, and narrow down the space in which the object is to appear. So in the case of similar constructions in German, Smith (2002: 79) makes use of the camera metaphor. Before we concentrate on a chosen detail, we establish the ground, or as Smith puts it “we are taking a wide-angle perspective on a scene” (Smith 2002: 81). This in turn implies moving the conceptualizer away from the perceived scene. *Det* in the initial position in the sentence is a useful tool (means) to do that.

Det narrows down (to some extent) the range of the ground containing the figure. A further narrowing down of this ground is introduced by an obligatory adverbial,⁴ usually appearing at the end of the sentence (Teleman et al. 1999b: 390)⁵ – example (16b). This adverbial thus resembles the prototypical ostensive gesture accompanying the pronoun.

Treating this instantiation of *det* as a space builder is additionally justified by the fact that in such constructions in contemporary Swedish this type of *det* is often substituted by adverbs of place – *där* ‘there’ or *här* ‘here’ (Teleman et al. 1999c: 54, 63, 1999b: 391f.) – example (16c).

An important point I would like to make here is that a similar kind of constructions in German and English is described in Lankacker (1991) and Smith

⁴ The same function can be fulfilled by a relative clause, as in e.g. *Det är en karl (i telefonen) som söker dig* ‘There is a man (on the telephone) who is looking for you’ (Teleman et al. 1999c: 63).

⁵ It is possible to omit the adverbial if the spacial grounding of the event is clearly marked in the context (Teleman et al. 1999b: 391).

(2002) as *setting-subject constructions*. The notion of setting corresponds however to the term ‘ground’ used in this article.

So, what is it that differentiates the realizations of *det* in (14) i (16a)? Analyzing the meaning of *det* within the whole network category, we can conclude that this difference is connected with the effect of highlighting the object. In (16a) *det* does not render the object salient.

An interesting example, which comes from more colloquial Swedish, is given in (17).

- (17) **Det** kan ingen ge besked om sådant.
Det can nobody provide information on that sort of thing.
 Nobody (**here**) can provide information on that sort of thing.

From the point of view of traditional syntax, the initial *det* has no specific function in this sentence. In terms of CG, however, it serves to narrow down the ground which contains the event.

With these points in mind, let us now turn to conceptualizations collected in (18). In traditional grammar it is said that *det* in this type of construction – (18a) – is *platshållare* i.e. it ‘holds the place’ of a subject which is not explicitly mentioned in the clause (Teleman et al. 1999c: 53, 73f.).

- (18a) **Det** värker i benet.
Det hurts in my (your / his / her, etc.) leg.
 My leg hurts.

- (18b) Benet värker. (Teleman et al. 1999c: 53)
 My (your / his / her, etc.) leg hurts.
 My (your / his / her, etc.) leg hurts.

The subject holds the most prominent position in the clause and it always profiles the information that is the most cognitively salient in the given context and as such automatically accessible for the participants of the communicative process (Teleman et al. 1999c: 70). If in a specific situation there are no other objects that meet such requirements, *det* focuses the addressee’s attention on the information that is accessible to the speakers’ common experience. This condition is fulfilled by the ground, which is present in every act of perception. Thus, as in (17), *det* in (18a) introduces into the conceptualization the portion of space within which the event takes place. As Smith (2002: 77) observes, this ground becomes a figure here (is highlighted) and functions as a container for the event.

Commonly considered to be semantically empty, *det* turns out to be a significant means of imagery. Teleman et al. (1999c: 74) point out that the variant with *det* in (18a) implies that the event is temporary and accidental, while in the variant without *det* in (18b) what is profiled is a constant feature of the subject. Thus the event in the former construction requires some kind of general localizing in space and time. This is achieved by means of the unit *det*, which to a certain extent narrows down the scope of the space within the con-

ceptualization. The adverbial *i benet* ‘in my (your/his etc.) leg’ at the end of the utterance specifies it further. In the latter construction such grounding is not necessary, as the discussed object itself constitutes the location (container) for the event.

The ability of *det* to bring out the ground in the construed linguistic image manifests itself also in conceptualizations in which the passive voice is used. See examples in (19).

(19a) **Det** hölls tal och lades ner kransar.

Det were made speeches (PASSIVE) and were laid wreaths (PASSIVE).

There were speeches and people laid wreaths.

(19b) Tal hölls och kransar lades ner.

Speeches were made (PASSIVE) and were laid wreaths (PASSIVE).

There were speeches and people laid wreaths.

(19c) **Där/Här** hölls tal och lades ner kransar.

There/Here were made speeches (PASSIVE) and wreaths were laid (PASSIVE).

There were speeches and people laid wreaths.

In (19a) *det* enables us to make the ground more prominent. It serves as a reference point relative to which the event is located. It is also possible to locate the event in space in such a way by means of the adverbs *här* ‘here’ or *där* ‘there’, or another adverb which can potentially appear in place of *det* in this kind of conceptualization (Teleman et al. 1999c: 57, 372) – example (19c). The space-building function of *det* is even more clearly visible if the unit is removed from the conceptualization, which is potentially possible – (19b).

While (19a) gives the impression that the space in which the event takes place is an important part of the linguistic image, in (19b) the information concerning the location of the event is not even taken into consideration.

It should be pointed out that in this type of conceptualization *det* seems to realize yet another property of the prototype. It is generally agreed that passive voice is one of the means of construing less specific conceptual pictures. Higher schematicity of such an image manifests itself in the fact that in such conceptualizations certain information is omitted, e.g. the agent. In Swedish we can observe a certain interrelation between such a way of scene construal and using *det*.

Teleman et al. (1999c: 375) emphasize that passive sentences including *det* usually do not contain the agent. So, such conceptualizations are characterized by the above-mentioned lower specificity of the image. In cognitive terms, using *det* as the subject does not seem to be accidental in such situations. The prototypical *det* presupposes moving the object away from the conceptualizer, and consequently a viewpoint that naturally entails construing more schematic images.

Det in (20), (21), (22) shows some similarity to the constructions that have been discussed here.

- (20) **Det** ringer på dörren.
Det is ringing the doorbell.
Someone is ringing the doorbell.
- (21) **Det** susar i öronen.
Det is whistling in my (your, his, her, etc.) ears.
There's a whistling noise in my (your, his, her, etc.) ears.
- (22) **Det** regnar.
Det is raining.
It's raining.

These constructions also hide certain information. We do not know who rings the doorbell, who or what is whistling, raining etc. Thus, they serve to create more schematic conceptual pictures.

Analysing similar constructions in German, Smith (2002: 87ff.) emphasizes two factors. The German *es* – a unit related to the Swedish *det* – in a construction like *Es regnet* 'It's raining', profiles the ground, which in this case directly corresponds to the specific place in which the phenomenon occurs. On the other hand, the ground formed in this way is more directly involved in the event designated by the verb. Hence the term *facilitative es*, used in Smith's study (Smith 2002: 89).

To account for the meaning of *es* in constructions relating to the weather, Smith (2002) refers to the belief that there is a connection between the environment and its influence on the phenomenon of rain or hail in a specific, restricted area (see also Bolinger 1997). So *det* in (22) evokes the ground of the conceptualization or, as Smith (2002: 91) puts it, "a setting which facilitates weather phenomena".

Those remarks are accurate particularly in relation to weather phenomena. It must be pointed out, however, that the Swedish examples quoted here do not form a uniform category in respect of the presence of the ground as an element reinforcing the event. In some conceptualizations the static ground appears in the construed image – (22), while in others a presupposed [thing] which influences the profiled event. For instance, the agent can be specified, if necessary, for the action of ringing the doorbell in (20). However, such an agent will be more prototypical than in e.g. (21). *Det* designating the potential or hidden agent in the conceptualization will be more similar to the third-person neuter pronoun, even if this unit will not signal a definite object in the minds of the speakers.

The Swedish *det* (with all its conceptual base) is a perfect means to signal the sense which, as Langacker puts it, "is too unspecific to articulate" (Langacker 1991: 377). The unit, as the prototypical demonstrative pronoun in nominal function and as a personal pronoun, rarely serves the function of designating prototypical agentive subjects. This feature results from the fact that *det* is characterized by neuter gender, which in Swedish is associated mainly with collective nouns, substances and abstract concepts (Thorell 1973: 24). Such entities hardly ever function as agents. Nouns designating potential prototypical agents, e.g. people, animals etc., are very rarely marked for neuter gender (Teleman et al. 1999: 59).

Within the category of *det* in Swedish we should also distinguish the usage of the unit in a variety of set phrases, such as complex prepositions *för det att* or lexicalized phrases used in response to an utterance *Just det!* ‘Exactly!’. The meaning of *det* is not completely transparent in such instances. However, it can be intuitively suggested that it resembles the meaning of *det* in the so-called *impure text deixis*. Such uses of *det* are of course marginal, but still they are motivated within the category.

CONCLUSION

In this article I have aimed at describing the semantic value of the pronominal *det* in Swedish. I have pointed out the differences and similarities between the particular uses of this unit, trying to explain why these uses fall within the range of a single lexical form in contemporary Swedish. I hope that this short analysis has shown that:

- all occurrences of the Swedish *det* are meaningful
- the unit is polysemous
- the meanings ascribed to this unit should be treated as a complex network category, within which all instances reflect the properties of the prototype and are related to each other.

The chart below illustrates the extent to which the particular occurrences of *det* realize the attributes of the prototypical centre of the category:

No.	Example / Features, see p. 2	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
1.	Det är en stol.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+/-
2.	Vad var det ?	+	+	+/-	+			+	+	+	+/-
3.	Ge mig det . (ett pappersblock)	+	+			+	+	+	+	+	+/-
4.	Vi bodde i ett rött hus då. Den sommaren var det nymålat.	+	+			+/-	+				+/-
5.	Ta det lugnt!	+	+		+						+?
6.	Tycker du om öl? Ja, det gör jag.	+	+		+			+	+/-		+/-
7.	Om det blir regn, det är det ingen som vet.	+	+		+				+		.+
8.	Jag säger då det : XXX	+	+		+			+	+		+/-
9.	Det att hon gråter behöver inte betyda att hon är ledsen.	+	+		+				+/-		+/-
10.	Det ska bli trevligt att du kommer.	+	+		+			+	+/-		
11.	Men problemet är väl det att vi hittills har varit relativt skyddade.	+	+			+/-	+		+		+
12.	Vem är det ? Det är Jan.	+	+		+	+	+	+	+/-		

No.	Example / Features, see p. 2	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j
13.	Den som blev glad, (det) var jag.	+	+		+	+/-	+		+		+
14.	Det var <u>min</u> chef som vann tävlingen.	+/-	+	RELATIVE CLAUSE	+	+/-	+/-		+/-		
15.	Det var idag på morgonen som EU:s ministerråd meddelade att man beslutat stå fast vid livsmedelssubventionerna.	+/-	+	RELATIVE CLAUSE	+	+/-	+/-	+	+/-		
16.	Det stod ett paraply i hörnet.		+	ADVERBIAL						CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
17.	Det kan ingen ge besked om sådant.		+							CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
18.	Det värker i benet.		+	ADVERBIAL						CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
19.	Det hölls tal och lades ner kransar.		+							CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
20.	Det ringer på dörren.		+							CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
21.	Det susar i öronen.		+							CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
22.	Det regnar.		+							CONCEPTUAL DISTANCE	
23.	Just det !	+/-	+/-		+						

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