Swedish Appellativized Forenames in Compounds – A Lexicographic Approach –

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Abstract
The aim of this article is to present a survey of lexical characteristics manifested by contemporary Swedish appellativized forenames, i.e. first names used as common nouns. More specifically, we take a closer look at appellativized forenames that occupy final position in compounds (e.g. *skinnknutte* lit. "leather+knutte", i.e. "biker"; cf. the first name *Knut(te)*). We examine their semantic properties and provide examples of entry words from monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. The study of the lexical characteristics of appellativized forenames is of interest because it focuses on words in a grey area between dictionary and grammar, paving the way for a more systematic and consistent treatment of such words.

1 Introduction

Appellativized forenames (henceforth AFs), i.e. first names used as common nouns, are an integral part of the Swedish language since, theoretically, all Swedish forenames can be appellativized whenever a de-individualized use of proper nouns is intended. In contrast to proper nouns, appellativized nouns make up a class of referents which share some common properties. The altered, de-individualized referential meaning of the noun, in combination with one or more formal features that characterize Swedish common nouns, is a sign that appellativization has taken place. Among the formal features, the following are relevant: co-occurrence with determiners, marking of number, ease of entering into compounds, and spelling with a lower-case initial letter (Teleman et al. 1999, vol. 2: 122-124). Due to appellativization, the forenames become legitimate candidates as entry words in dictionaries which conventionally exclude proper noun entries.

The AFs discussed in this paper are derived from common Swedish forenames, such as *Knutte*, *Petter* and *Lisa*. These AFs can be found in different types of grammatical constructions, ranging from simplex words (*knutte* "male person with a particular interest in something") through compounds (*muskelknutte* "muscle man", *viktigpetter* "smart Aleck", "Jack-in-office") to phrasal expressions (*spela allan* "play the tough guy", "show off") (cf. Häcki Buhofer 1995). The use of forenames in these constructions makes both native speakers and foreign language learners reflect on why these names are used in this particular way. Who is *knutte* and why does this particular forename recur in so many different compounds?

The main aim of this article is to make a synchronic survey of lexical characteristics manifested by Swedish AFs occurring in compounds. More specifically, we analyse compounds with AFs in final position (e.g. *skinnknutte* lit. "leather+knutte", i.e. "biker"), as they capture the essence of appellativization to a greater extent than compounds with AFs in initial attributive position (e.g. *katrinplommon* lit. "katrin+plum", i.e. "prune"; cf. *Katrine/Catherine*).

The study of the lexical characteristics of appellativized forenames is no doubt of lexicographic relevance (cf. Farø 2003; Helleland 1992; Svensén 2004). Firstly, it focuses on words in a grey area between dictionary and grammar, also promoting a more systematic and consistent treatment of compound AFs. Secondly, internal cross-referencing in dictionaries can be improved by taking a bird's eye view of this group of nouns. Thirdly, such an overview can support lexicographers in their choice and description of relevant AF entries, which will also benefit dictionary users.

In this study we consider 15 different forenames which are the basis for derivation of more than 100 different types of more or less lexicalized AF compounds. The core of the investigated AFs and AF compounds comes from the lexical database that underlies the dictionary *Svensk ordbok utgiven av Svenska Akademien,* to be published by the Swedish Academy (the extended and updated version of the *Nationalencyklopedins ordbok* database) and the electronic versions of *Norstedts stora engelska ordbok*, which includes Swedish-English and English-Swedish dictionaries published by Norstedts Publishing House. The use as well as the productivity of the AFs and AF compounds has been examined in Swedish text corpora.

The paper is organized in the following way. Section 2 deals with lexical characteristics of the examined AF compounds. In section 3, we look at descriptions of AFs and AF compounds in monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. The conclusions in section 4 sum up the results of the study.

2 Lexical characteristics of the investigated AF compounds

The AF compounds investigated reveal a number of common features characteristic of their lexical behaviour, which we discuss and exemplify in the following.

(i) Forenames that form the head of the AF compounds are in most cases based on a colloquial variant of a Swedish forename. For example, the forms *-knutte* and *-kalle* are derived from the male names *Knut* and *Karl, -lisa* and *-maja* from the female names *Elisabet(h)* and *Maria*. The male forenames outnumber the female ones. Furthermore, in this type of compound the prehead is generally a root morpheme or word with negative connotations, like *kladd-* ("sticky") in *kladdmaja, skryt-* ("boast") in *skrytmåns* (cf. *Jack-the-lad*) and *strul-* ("bothersome") in *strulpelle*. Even if the prehead happens to be relatively neutral, e.g. *kultur-* ("culture") in *kulturknutte*, the compound as such usually alludes to some negative traits. The resulting style is informal with a negative ring to it. However, this somewhat derogatory tone does not preclude the possibility of using these compounds in an affectionate manner.

(ii) Many of the investigated AFs are very productive. We will take a look at some of them, starting with the already introduced form *-knutte*, which, in a more detailed analysis, can be said to refer to a person with a certain narrow-minded interest as indicated by the pre-

head of the compound. As the range of interests is almost unlimited, the first component can alternate, which contributes to the productivity of this AF. Searching for such compounds in the text corpora has resulted in over 30 different prehead components. Many of these compounds are not listed in dictionaries, mainly because they are either spur-of-the-moment formations or/and have transparent meaning if the extended meaning of -*knutte* is assumed to be known, e.g *dataknutte* (lit. "computer"+"knutte") and *finansknutte* (lit. "financial"+ "knutte"). The head -*pelle* is another AF that builds compounds referring to a male person in general. In text corpora there are about 20 different prehead components that combine with this head, e.g. *snackepelle* (lit. "talkative"+"pelle") and *velpelle* (lit. "shilly-shally"+"pelle"). They are built in analogy to *snuskpelle*, which is defined in the dictionary as "boy or young male who is dirty, filthy or sleazy". Among the head components that are productive, there are also some with reference to females, e.g. -*maja* or -*lisa*.

(iii) A survey of the collected AF compounds focused on the types of semantic relations holding between the components has resulted in three main classes of semantic types (cf. typologies concerning the semantics of Swedish noun compounds in Teleman 1972: 37-43; Järborg 2003: 33-39; Josefsson 2005: 83-90). The first type is of a descriptive kind and emphasizes some salient features of the person referred to. It can be paraphrased by a predicative construction: X is considered to be Y, where X is the head of the compound and Y is the preceding component. Compounds like *latmaja* (lit. "lazy"+"maja") represent this type. In some cases, it can be difficult to paraphrase them, as it is not possible to decide whether the initial root morpheme is a noun, an adjective or a verb, since the root morpheme may be identical for the words in question. For example, take *grinolle*: is it a male person who tends to cry a lot or a male person who is overly critical and negative? The second type of compound is less transparent than the first one, as one has to find an implicit verb that captures the type of action undertaken by X (the head) that also involves Y (the prehead). For example, *bollkalle* (lit. "ball"+"kalle", i.e. "ball boy/girl") is a person who picks up balls during a tennis match, etc., and *galapetter* (lit. "gala"+"petter", i.e. "society columnist") is a person who goes to and reports from gala performances. The third type of compound defines a relation in which X (the head) stands for a container and Y (the prehead) specifies its content, e.g. *sopmaja* (lit. "waste"+"maja", i.e. "waste bin") and *kaffepetter* (lit. "coffee"+"petter", i.e. "coffee pot"). In contrast to the first type, this one is not very productive. As indicated by the examples, some AFs can occur in at least two of the compound types described above. This applies to, among others, -*maja* and -*petter*, but also to -*pelle* and -*lisa*, which may give rise to some difficulties as to their interpretation.

(iv) The examined AFs refer either to persons or objects. Among those referring to persons, one can distinguish those which allude to persons with a specific gender feature, male (e.g. -*måns*) or female (e.g. -*fia*), and those which are gender neutral (e.g. -*kalle*). However, the gender neutral reference has come about relatively recently. Since the set of physical, psychological and social properties captured by AF compounds is partly alike for males and females, comparable variants can be found among them, such as *grinolle* (lit. "whining"/"sour"+"olle"), referring to a male person, and *piplisa* (lit. "squeaky"+"lisa"), referring to a female one. The AF compounds referring to objects coincide with the container-content type already mentioned.

3 Appellativized forenames in dictionaries
3.1 Swedish monolingual dictionaries

Swedish monolingual dictionaries such as *Norstedts Svenska ordbok* (1999) and *Nationalencyklopedins ordbok* (1995; henceforth NEO) include both AF compounds and AFs as entry words. The listed AF entries have been selected according to their productivity and degree of lexicalization. The overall structural presentation of AF entries in these two dictionaries is similar, except for information on etymology, which is included only in NEO. To illustrate the types of information provided for AF compounds, we give some selected data on what is said about *trasmaja* and *bollkalle* in these dictionaries:

(1)   **trasmaja** subst. *trasmajan trasmajor*
       • kvinna klädd i trasor ⟨vard.⟩
       HIST.: sedan 1923 till *trasa* och personnamnet *Maja*

(2)   **bollkalle** subst. *bollkallen bollkallar*
       • bollpojke
       HIST.: sedan 1930 till *boll* och personnamnet *Kalle*

In the examples above, both compounds are classified as nouns and their morphological description includes information on definite and plural forms. This information is followed by a definition. In the case of *trasmaja*, there is also a comment on the style of the word, namely colloquial. Etymological information is given at the end of the entry. It includes dates for the first occurrence of the compound, a link to the prehead and a reference to the forename.

As far as the description of compound heads, e.g -*maja* and -*kalle*, is concerned, they include the above mentioned types of information:

(3)   **-maja** substantivisk slutled -*majan -major*
       • (med subst. el. adj. som förled) kvinna eller flicka med viss motbjudande benägenhet att klä sig, bete sig e.d. vilket anges av förleden <vard.; ngt åld.>: *latmaja; sladdermaja; slarvmaja; trasmaja*
       HIST.: sedan ca 1800; till personnamnet *Maja*

(4)   **-kalle** substantivisk slutled -*kallen -kallar*
       • (beteckning på) pojke vanl. med viss uppgift <vard.>: *bollkalle; hoppilandkalle*
       HIST.: sedan ca 1900; till personnamnet *Kalle*

In addition, the entry for -*maja* provides explicit information on its combinatory properties, i.e. that the prehead can be a noun or adjective. It also includes a representative list of AF compounds, namely *latmaja* (lit. "lazy"+"maja"), *sladdermaja* (lit. "gossip"+"maja"), *slarvmaja* (lit. "careless"+"maja") and *trasmaja* (lit. "rag"+"maja", i.e. "ragbag"). It should

be noted that all the morphological examples given under *-maja*, except for *trasmaja*, are considered to be relatively transparent and so are not listed as separate entries in the dictionaries discussed. The AF compounds *bollkalle* and *hoppilandkalle* ("person who jumps ashore to moor the boat"), listed as morphological examples under the entry *-kalle*, are less transparent and thus included as entries in the dictionary.

3.2 *Bilingual dictionaries: Norstedts Swedish-English and English-Swedish dictionaries*

AF compounds may also be viewed from a contrastive perspective by looking at their translational equivalents as provided in bilingual dictionaries. The first question that comes to mind is whether similar AF constructions can be found in the target language and, if so, what the equivalent forenames are. According to *Norstedts stora engelska ordbok* (which includes both a Swedish-English and English-Swedish dictionary), the overwhelming majority of the Swedish AF expressions do not have equivalents that include a forename. This can be illustrated by *viktigpetter* from Norstedts Swedish-English dictionary:

(5)   **viktigpetter** *s* vard. pompous (conceited) ass (fool)

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in the English-Swedish dictionary there are AF entries which have *viktigpetter* as a possible translational equivalent:

(6)   **smart-alec[k]** *s* vard. viktigpetter, stropp, besserwisser

(7)   **Jack-in-office** pl. (*Jacks-in-office*) *s* paragrafryttare; liten struntviktig byråkrat, viktigpetter

In these examples, the English expressions *smart Aleck* and *Jack-in-office* have three equivalents each, among others *viktigpetter*. Apparently, there are English expressions with appellativized forenames which mean the same as the Swedish noun. The question is why the corresponding English AFs have not been used as translational equivalents to the entry *viktigpetter* in the Swedish-English dictionary. Furthermore, beside those cases, the compound *viktigpetter* is proposed as a possible equivalent to nine other (more or less appropriate) English nouns entries in Norstedts English-Swedish dictionary, e.g. *bighead, bumble* or *turkey cock*. To sum up, there is a certain discrepancy in the number of equivalents supplied for this notion in the dictionaries mentioned. In order to get all the relevant information about *viktigpetter* and similar AFs, as well as their equivalents, one has to access an electronic version of the dictionary and perform a text search.

In this section, we have commented on AFs given as entries in a few bilingual dictionaries, but there are some non-transparent AF compounds which are not included in them. The question is what selection principles have governed their choice of entry words and whether these principles are clear to dictionary users. The same basis for selection in both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries might be a step in the right direction in this regard.

4 Conclusions

This article deals with the issue of how to represent Swedish AF compounds in monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. It shows that a prior examination of lexical properties of the AF compounds is a prerequisite for the systematic description of entries in monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. There are many properties shared by AFs which need to be explicitly described in a monolingual dictionary entry, such as colloquial form, informal style, productivity, types of semantic relations underlying a compound entry word, etc. The formal description of the entries is no less important, as it manifests the differences between proper nouns and their appellativized forms, as well as the combinatory properties of AFs. All these lexical properties are also relevant for defining the set of criteria used for selection of AF entries in both monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. It is desirable that these criteria should be explicit and clear-cut from a theoretical and a practical point of view, thus saving users the trouble of unnecessary look-ups.

The unnecessary look-ups could also be reduced if the internal cross-reference system was more elaborate. In the first place, the relations should be established between the AF compounds (e.g. *trasmaja*) and their heads (e.g. *-maja*), where more information on particular groups of AF compounds could be found.

We are fully aware that the printed versions of dictionaries impose certain limitations on the presentation of entries and the cross-reference system. These limitations can be overcome in electronic versions, in which an intelligent cross-reference system in combination with hypertext makes navigation in the dictionary more user-friendly. Since the problem of space in electronic media is negligible, it is possible that the criteria for selection of AFs and also for inclusion of encyclopaedic information on forenames in electronic dictionaries should be revised.

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