THE SWEDISH PREPOSITIONS PÅ AND I FOLLOWED BY MEASURE PHRASES

Christer Platzack

1.

Among the different ways to express the duration of an event or action, Swedish can use the prepositions i and på followed by a measure phrase (MP). These adverbial phrases have different meanings. Thus, i x tid 'for x time' is used as an answer to the question "How long?", whereas på x tid 'in x time' answers the question "In how long time?" In this paper, I will take this difference of meaning as the starting point for an investigation of one of the meaning differences between the prepositions på and i. This investigation will show that it is no coincidence that we use MPs preceded by precisely the preposition i to express the first mentioned meaning, the preposition på to express the second one.

The adverbial phrases mentioned have different distributions. Thus, i x tid 'for x time' occurs in sentences like (1) and (2), where we cannot use på x tid 'in x time':

(1) Katten låg på mattan i 10 minuter
'The cat lay on the mat for 10 minutes'[1)]

(2) Kalle drog vagnen i 10 minuter
'Kalle pulled the cart for 10 minutes'

On the other hand, på x tid, but not i x tid, can be used in sentences like (3):

(3) Kalle skrev brevet på 10 minuter
'Kalle wrote the letter in 10 minutes'

The sentences (1)-(3) express different Aktionsarten. In the terminology of Vendler (1967), we have a State in (1), an Activity in (2), and an Accomplishment in (3). In each of these cases, what is described by the sentence has an extension in time, the duration of which is

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1) The Swedish examples are accompanied by more or less literal English translations.

expressed by the measure phrase of the adverbial.[2] However, (3) differs from (1) and (2) in one important respect: if we disregard the durational adverbials of (1)-(3), sentence (3) still expresses a temporally bounded event, whereas sentences (1) and (2) express states or events which are temporally unbounded. In these cases, the notion of a bounded state or event depends wholly on the adverbial.

In other words, the difference in use between the two adverbial expressions seems to be that på x tid must be attached to a temporally bounded concept, which is expressed whether or not we add the durational adverbial, whereas the addition of i x tid creates an interval of time, during which the state or event described by the verb takes place.

2.

The theoretical framework for this investigation is given in Jackendoff (1972, 1974, 1975, 1976). In these works, Jackendoff presents a linguistic theory where the level of semantic interpretation is related by a system of rules to the syntactic form of the language. We can distinguish three main phases in the process of interpreting semantic information:

a) Autonomous syntax: a phase during which deep structures are formed and transformed into surface structures. The deep structures are rather shallow; thus, for instance, active and passive sentences have different deep structures (cf Bresnan (1977)). According to the theory, all rules that are function-dependent are eliminated from the syntactic component.

b) Functional semantics: a phase during which the deep-structural representations are translated into semantic representations. The crucial part of this work is provided for in the lexicon. This contains a set of lexical functional structures, which provide a direct mapping between the logical argument structures of words and the syntactic patterns in which they appear.

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2) A closer account of these adverbials is given by Andersson (1977, chapter 2).

c) Symbolic-logical representation: a phase during which the semantic representations are translated into formal logic.

The phase of greatest interest to us here will be the second one. In his outline of this phase, Jackendoff (1976) makes a distinction between two different ways of combining semantic markers: restrictive modification and functional composition. Restrictive modification means that a semantic marker M1 is combined with another marker M2 to form a new marker M3 that picks out a more restricted class of referents than does M1. An example of this is the addition of an adjective to a noun. Given the semantic markers HORSE and RED (these representations in capital letters are intended as shorthand for sets of more primitive semantic markers), the meaning of red horse is represented as $\begin{bmatrix}\text{HORSE}\\ \text{RED}\end{bmatrix}$.

Functional composition is chiefly used in the description of verbs. These are analyzed as semantic functions, the arguments of which are filled with the semantic representations of the deep structure subject, object, adverbials of valency, etc. Jackendoff (1976) presents five semantic functions, two of which will interest us here. The following description is built partly on Jackendoff (1976), partly on Platzack (in preparation).

Verbs which describe the location of an object relative some other object are represented as $\text{BE}^{t}(x,y)$, where x is the located object, y the location, and t is a temporal marker, which represents an interval of time. This interval of time is further related to the moment of speech, as shown in Platzack (1976). Some examples of sentences analyzed with the BE-function are given in (4). Compare (1) above.

(4)a The cat lay on the mat — BE^{t}(THE CAT, THE MAT)

b The girl was angry — BE^{t}(THE GIRL, ANGRY)

Verbs which describe the movement of an object or substance from one place to another are represented as $\text{GO}^{t}(x,y,z)$, where x is the moving object, y the Source of the locomotion, and z the Goal of the locomotion. Consider the examples of (5), and compare with (3):

(5)a The boy walked from Lund to Malmoe GO^{t}(THE BOY,LUND,MALMOE)

b The boy grew fat GO^{t}(THE BOY,x,FAT)

The Source and the Goal are temporally related to t, the temporal marker of the GO-function. Thus, the function which represents (5)a expresses a) the presupposition that the boy is in Lund at a time before t, b) the assertion that the boy is passing over different places, which are neither Lund nor Malmoe, at a time interval which includes t, and c) the implication that the boy is in Malmoe at a time after t. For similar treatments, cf Fabricius-Hansen (1975, 23) and Dowty (1977, 48).

As we can see from the examples (4)b and (5)b, the theory presented is localistic in its approach, i.e., it adheres to the hypothesis that spatial expressions are more basic than various kinds of non-spatial expressions. Cf Lyons (1977, 718 ff) and the references given there. To distinguish between the various degrees of concreteness, Jackendoff introduces restrictive modifiers on the semantic functions. This is not relevant here.

In Platzack (in preparation), the different types of Aktionsarten are described within the theoretical framework outlined above. Elaborating a suggestion by Teleman (1969, 37), I introduce a restrictive modifier [±DIVIDUA], and attach it to the semantic marker GO. This modifier also distinguishes between uncountable and countable nouns. The GO-functions of (5) are considered [-DIVIDUA], whereas the GO-functions of (6) are considered [+DIVIDUA]:

(6)a The boy was running $GO^{t}_{[+\text{DIVIDUA}]}$(THE BOY, x, y)

b The boy grew fatter $GO^{t}_{\substack{[+\text{DIVIDUA}]\\[\text{FATTER}]}}$(THE BOY, x, y)

A GO-function marked [+DIVIDUA] has properties which partially differ from those of a GO-function marked [-DIVIDUA]. For instance, the function of (6)a just asserts that the boy passes over different places during an interval of time which includes t. Compare the properties of a GO-function marked [-DIVIDUA], mentioned above in connection with example (5).

Let me finish this theoretical section with an indication of

the relation between [±DIVIDUA]-marked GO-functions, and uncountable/countable nouns. The difference between (7)a and b is described as a difference between a GO-function marked [+DIVIDUA] in the case of (7)a, [-DIVIDUA] in the case of (7)b. This marking is a consequence of the presence of brev in (7)a, which is [+DIVIDUA], and brevet in (7)b, which is [-DIVIDUA]:

(7)a Kalle skrev brev
'Kalle wrote letters'

b Kalle skrev brevet
'Kalle wrote the letter'

For further information of these things, cf Platzack (in preparation).

3.

After this digression, we are at last in a position to return to our main theme, the description of i + MP and på + MP. Let us first notice that only i x tid can be combined with (7)a, only på x tid with (7)b. (The reader should notice that I will disregard iterativity and generic meanings altogether in this paper.) The difference between [±DIVIDUA] thus seems to play a crucial role for the distribution of these adverbials.

As noticed in connection with examples (2) and (3) above, adverbials of the type i x tid are found in sentences which express an activity, but not in sentences which express an accomplishment. This is just the opposite of what holds true for adverbials of the type på x tid. Now, consider the examples (5) and (6), where (5) expresses accomplishments and (6) activities (or processes). We can expand the Swedish equivalents of (5) with på x tid, and the Swedish equivalents of (6) with i x tid, but not the other way around. Furthermore, the examples of (5) have GO-functions marked [-DIVIDUA], the examples of (6) GO-functions marked [+DIVIDUA]. Thus, it seems to be a proper description to claim that på x tid demands a [-DIVIDUA]-marked GO-function, i x tid a [+DIVIDUA]-marked one, or a BE-function.

Jackendoff (1972, 69 ff) discusses the description of sentences with various kinds of adverbials. Adverbials of manner, time, and degree are dealt with on page 70 f. According to Jackendoff, the

semantic representation of such adverbials "can be attached as additional specification on the function corresponding to the verb, without changing the number or method of incorporation of strictly subcategorized arguments [...] The semantic structure can be represented roughly as $[^{f}_{ADV}](NP^{1},\ldots,NP^{n})$."

Thus, following Jackendoff, I will propose the following projection rules for i + MP and på + MP, rules which are considered triggered by the meaning of i and på, respectively:

a) When we have i + MP, the MP restrictively modifies a GO-function marked [+DIVIDUA], or a BE-function.
b) When we have på + MP, the MP restrictively modifies a GO-function marked [-DIVIDUA].[3]

Examples of the description of sentences with på + MP and i + MP are given in (8):

(8)a Pojken gick från Lund till Malmö på tre timmar
'The boy walked from Lund to Malmoe in three hours'

$$\begin{bmatrix} GO^{t} \\ -DIVIDUA \\ 3\ TIMMAR \end{bmatrix} (POJKEN, LUND, MALMÖ)$$

b Pojken blev tjockare i fyra månader
'The boy grew fatter for four months'

$$\begin{bmatrix} GO^{t} \\ +DIVIDUA \\ TJOCKARE \\ 4\ MÅNADER \end{bmatrix} (POJKEN, x, y)$$

Thus, (8)a asserts that the interval of time, during which the boy is passing over the distance between Lund and Malmoe, is 3 hours, whereas (8)b asserts that the interval of time during which the boy grew fatter is 4 months.

To be able to claim that it is no coincidence that i + MP and på + MP show different meanings and distributions, we have to prove that the differences found with regard to the use of these phrases as time adverbials show up when other uses are considered, too. If

3) Verkuyl (1976, 490) proposes a different projection rule for durational-measuring adverbials. However, as he does not give any real arguments for his position, and furthermore does not seem to be aware of the fact that Jackendoff has proposed a rule for these adverbials, I will leave his attempt out of account here.

we can do that, it should be possible for us to represent i and på in the lexicon in such a way that the lexical representations provide for the differences in behaviour.

Let us start with a look at adverbials of place, in this case adverbials which measure a distance. Consider the sentences of (9), where we have verbs of motion:

(9)a Han kröp {*på / i} 30 meter
'He crawled PREP 30 metres'

b De promenerade {*på / i} fem kilometer
'They walked PREP five kilometres'

Ordinary verbs of motion are represented as in (6), as long as the Source and the Goal are not mentioned. Thus, the GO-function is marked [+DIVIDUA], and the absence of any på + MP adverbial is just what we should expect, given the description above. On the other hand, the description allows for an adverbial with i + MP, and such adverbials are indeed found.

However, meanings similar to those of i + MP in (9) can be expressed by a construction Noun + på + MP:

(10)a Han kröp en sträcka på 30 meter
'He crawled a distance PREP 30 metres'

b De promenerade en sträcka på fem kilometer
'They walked a distance PREP five kilometres'

The phrase på + MP is here used as an attribute of [-DIVIDUA]-marked nouns. Thus, what was covered in the case of på x tid is here made overt: the expression på + MP presupposes the existence of a quantity to be measured.

The difference between i and på is obvious from these examples. The preposition på relates an MP to an overtly expressed countable noun, or to a covered (but existentially presupposed) conception of a quantity, and the whole construction is then related to the verb. On the other hand, i relates the MP directly to the verb, the meaning of which is delimited according to the meaning of MP.

Let us now turn to other cases where i/på + MP are used attributively. Due to our description, we should expect på + MP with countable nouns, i + MP with uncountable ones. This distribution

also turns up in (11) and (12):

(11)a ett belopp{*i / på} 30 kronor
'an amount PREP 30 crowns'

b en vätskemängd {*i / på} två liter
'an amount of liquid PREP two litres'

c en smörklump {*i / på} tolv gram
'a lump of butter PREP twelve grams'

(12)a Flygning{i / *på} tre timmar kan vara tröttande
'Flying PREP three hours can be tiring'

b Löpning{i / *på} femton kilometer är farligt för hälsan
'Running PREP fifteen kilometres is dangerous for the health'

c Arbete {i / *på} fem dagar är allt vad jag kan hoppas på
'Work PREP five days is all I can hope for'

Whereas the nouns of (11) are typical countables, and thus [-DIVIDUA], the nouns of (12) are used as uncountables, thus they are marked [+DIVIDUA]. Hence, the distribution of i + MP and på + MP adheres to the prediction.

The head nouns of (12), used in a [-DIVIDUA] sense, take attributes of the type på + MP, not i + MP, just as predicted:

(13)a Det var en flygning {*i / på} fem timmar till Rom
'There was a flight PREP five hours to Rome'

b Löpningen {*i / på} fem kilometer gick över myrmark
'The run PREP five kilometres passed over swampy ground'

As we can see from (12) and (13), the Swedish nouns flygning and löpning translate differently into English, depending on their use as [+DIVIDUA] or [-DIVIDUA].

However, Swedish can also use the derivatives flygande and löpande when the [+DIVIDUA] sense is aimed at. Loman (1962, 17) agrees with Noreen (1904, 449) that nouns like flygande have a durative sense, whereas nouns like flygning usually express something completed, individual. Thus, as expected, the forms on -ande are preferred

together with i + MP:

(14) Detta flygande {i / *på} tre timmar är tröttande
'This flying PREP three hours is tiring'

(15) Denna flygning {?i / på} tre timmar är tröttande
'This flight PREP three hours is tiring'

According to what I have said above, the noun flygande in (14) should be considered [+DIVIDUA]. At first sight, it could be surprising to find a noun of this type after a demonstrative pronoun. However, as Teleman (1969, 72) has shown, the noun after a demonstrative pronoun is often interpreted in such a way.

4.

In the examples considered thus far, we have seen that attributes with på + MP are attached to [-DIVIDUA]-marked nouns, attributes with i + MP to [+DIVIDUA]-marked nouns. This distribution is in line with the description proposed. However, the phrases i + MP and på + MP differ in other respects, which do not seem to have anything to do with the [±DIVIDUA] distinction. Consider the examples of (16) and (17):

(16) *Detta flygande är i tio minuter
'This flying is PREP ten minutes'

(17) Denna flygning är på tio minuter
'This flight is PREP ten minutes'

As we can see from (16), we cannot paraphrase detta flygande i tio minuter with a sentence where the prepositional phrase is used as a predicate complement to the verb vara 'be'. However, such a paraphrase is acceptable in the case of denna flygning på tre timmar, as can be seen from (17).

What is the reason for the distribution shown in (16) and (17)? Let us first notice that i tio minuter in (16) behaves like a manner adverbial: such adverbials cannot occur as predicate complements to nouns like flygande either, though they do occur as attributes:

(18)a *Detta flygande är {snabbt / långsamt}
'This flying is {fast / slow}'

b Detta {snabba / långsamma} flygande
'This {fast / slow} flying'

Other kinds of adverbials, which are not represented as restrictive modifiers of the semantic functions (consider Jackendoff (1972, chapter 3)), can be used as predicate complements:

(19) Detta flygande är {förfärligt / uppiggande}

'This flying is {dreadful / stimulating}'

This is not the place to try to give a complete answer to the question of why restrictive modifiers of the type discussed above cannot be used as predicate complements to a noun like flygande. To do so would entail a thorough description of the lexical relations between verbs and verbal nouns. However, I will point out an interesting fact in this connection, which should be taken into consideration when we try to give a unifying description of these relations. In his account of the Swedish adjectives, Noreen (1904, 511 ff) distinguishes two semantic classes, and these are called Classifying adjectives and Characterizing adjectives by Teleman (n.d., 76 ff). For instance, we have a classifying adjective in manligt arbete 'men's work', and a characterizing adjective in ett tungt arbete 'a hard job'. Classifying adjectives function as descriptions, which name some relatively permanent trait possessed by the entity under consideration. A significant change in the character of the entity will result if the description is altered. On the other hand, characterizing adjectives denote conditions in which an entity finds itself and which are subject to change without there being any essential alteration of the entity. According to this description, i + MP, used attributively, seems to be like the classifying adjectives, whereas på + MP is similar to the characterizing adjectives. This is further underlined by the fact that characterizing adjectives, but not classifying ones, can be used as predicative complements:

(20)a Arbetet var tungt
'The work was hard'

b *Arbetet var manligt
'The work was men's'

Thus, it seems to be the case that the MP of a i + MP construction is more intimately connected with the meaning of the modified concep-

tion than is the MP of a på + MP construction. This conception of intimacy seems to be a (latent) property of the preposition i also when it is followed by other types of phrases than MP. Consider, for instance, the following minimal pairs:

(21) a en staty i brons — en staty av brons
'a statue in bronze' 'a statue of bronze'

b stövlar i läder — stövlar av läder
'boots in leather' 'boots of leather'

(22) en lektion i engelska — en lektion på engelska
'a lesson in English' 'a lesson [given] in English'
='an English lesson'

In these cases, the PPs of the examples to the right can be used as predicate complements, whereas this is not the case with the PPs of the left column. The NPs of the i-constructions also seem to be more closely connected with their head words than the NPs of other constructions. Informally, the expressions en staty i brons, stövlar i läder, and en lektion i engelska can be explained through the notion of the complement of i and the modified concept together forming a dimensional unit, a dimensional whole, different from what each is separately. The complement of i and the modified concept together are seen as perpetually united.

The difference between the examples of the left and right column of (21) and (22) could be described as a difference in how the meaning of the complement of the preposition is connected with the meaning of the modified expression. Consider once again the examples of (21). Statues, as well as boots, are made out of something, i.e., the notion of making something out of a material plays a crucial role for the meaning of words like staty and stövlar. When such words are combined with i + NP, where NP represents some kind of material, the meaning of this NP amalgamates with the notion of material in the description of the modified word. This amalgamation is brought about by the meaning of i. On the other hand, when such words are combined with av + NP, where NP represents some kind of material, the NP just modifies the head word, it does not amalgamate with it.

If the NP of an i + NP construction does not represent a meaning which can amalgamate with a part of the meaning of the modified word,

we get a construction where i + NP can be used as a predicate complement:

(23) Statyn i parken — 'The statue in the park'
Statyn är i parken — 'The statue is in the park'

Thus, in such a case, i + NP behaves like a characterizing attribute, not as a classifying one.

A similar difference between classifying and characterizing attributes seems to be involved in a group of examples, where both i + MP and på + MP can be used attributively:

(24)a ett skådespel {i / på} fem akter
'a drama PREP five acts'

b ett epos {i / på} tolv sånger
'an epic PREP twelve books'

c ett uppslagsverk {i / på} tjugo band
'a dictionary PREP twenty volumes'

Notice that the cases with i behave like NPs with classifying adjectives, whereas the corresponding cases with på behave like NPs with characterizing adjectives:

(25)a Detta skådespel är {*i / på} tre akter
'This drama is PREP three acts'

b Eposet är {*i / på} tolv sånger
'The epic is PREP twelve books'

c Mitt uppslagsverk är {*i / på} tjugo band
'My dictionary is PREP twenty volumes'

The different behaviour of i + MP and på + MP in these cases should be expected, given the discussion above. The concepts of acts, books, and volumes are inherent properties of dramas, epics, and lexicons, respectively, and they are therefore apt to amalgamate with the meanings of their head words, given that they are attached to them with the preposition i.

I will end this survey with the mention of two more differences

between attributively used i + MP and på + MP. First, consider what happens if we pluralize the head noun:

(26) Två skådespel{?i / på} fem akter kan jag väl stå ut med

'Two dramas PREP five acts I probably can endure'

With på + MP, the interpretation will be that we are talking about two dramas, each of which has five acts. In the case of i + MP, the interpretation seems to be that the two dramas together have five acts. Consequently, we cannot extend the phrase i + MP with an expression which says that each of the dramas has five acts:

(27) Två skådespel{*i / på} fem akter var kan jag väl stå ut med

'Two dramas PREP five acts each I probably can endure'

Thus, the quantifier attached to the head noun seems to be included in the scope of the quantifier of the MP of the i-construction, whereas we have the opposite situation in the case of på + MP. I will not enter upon an attempt to explain this fact here, as such an attempt would presuppose a detailed study of the description of quantifier scope. Let me just mention that none of the 13 principles for regulating the correspondence between semantic and syntactic structure, presented by Andersson (1977, chapter 7), seems to be capable to account for the given facts.

Let us finally consider examples like (28):

(28)a Ett skådespel i fem akter, som var {långtråkigt / långtråkiga}

'A drama PREP five acts, which {was / were} boring'

b Ett skådespel på fem akter, som var {långtråkigt / *långtråkiga}

'A drama PREP five acts, which {was / were} boring'

As these examples indicate, a relative clause attached to a noun + på + MP construction cannot modify the MP, just the total NP. Such a restriction is not found with i + MP. A possible explanation could have something to do with the fact that the prepositions i and på exert different kinds of influence on their complements.

This difference is easy to discern when the complement is a concrete noun. Lindén (1918) points out that the use of på + NP seems to force us to view 3-dimensional NPs as 2-dimensional ones. We can compare examples like på byrån - i byrån 'on/in the drawer', på gräset - i gräset 'on/in the grass', etc. Also, compare the following discussion by Waugh (1975, 12):

> Just as meaning is a categorization or a classification imposed on extra-linguistic reality, so the various prepositions categorize and classify their object in different ways, even though the object may remain the same. Thus, although the table in à la table 'at the table', sur la table 'on the table', dans la table 'in the table' [...] etc. may objectively remain the same, it is viewed differently. The table as a table - i.e., in terms of its lexical meaning - will remain invariant; the lexical content is not changed. What changes is precisely our view of it, given the prepositional relationship into which it is integrated.

The complement of på seems to lack a dimension also in non-concrete cases. For instance, the word kronor 'crowns' in an example like (11)a, ett belopp på 30 kronor 'an amount of 30 crowns', is just considered as a unit of measurement. Thus, we cannot attach an adjective which qualifies kronor as a thing. Whereas blanka kronor 'bright crowns' is an acceptable NP, referring to the quality of some coins, we cannot say *ett belopp på 30 blanka kronor, where kronor refers to a unit of measurement.

Furthermore, we can expand the complements of på in many of the cases given in this paper with nouns which express extensions of some kind, whereas this usually is not possible with the complements of i. Consider the examples of (29):

(29)a Ett skådespel {*i / på} fem akters längd (Compare 24)

b Ett epos {*i / på} tolv sångers längd (Compare 24)

c Ett uppslagsverk {*i / på} tjugo volymers omfång (Compare 24)

d En vätskemängd på två liters rymd (Compare 11)

e En smörklump på 12 grams vikt (Compare 11)

f *Han kröp i 30 meters längd (Compare 9)

g Han kröp en sträcka på 30 meters längd (Compare 10)

The only exceptions seem to be the cases where the phrases with i and på have temporal meanings.

Examples like those of (28)b and (29) could be given an explanation if we assume that på forces us to disregard the full lexical meaning of its complement. The plausibility of this explanation is further underlined by examples like that of (30), collected from Pettersson (1976):

(30) Min gård är på 12 hektar, vilket är för lite för moderna maskiner
'My farm is PREP 12 hectare, which is too little for modern machines'

The relative pronoun vilken in this example does not agree in form with its correlate. According to Pettersson, this indicates that the correlate does not have its full meaning here. Thus, once again, we have an example of the change of view brought about by the preposition på.

5.

To sum up, it seems to be the case that the differences between durational adverbials like i x tid and på x tid are mirrored in other uses of i + MP and på + MP. I have argued for a description where the occurrence of i brings about a restrictive modification of a BE-function, or a GO-function marked [+DIVIDUA], by the MP, whereas the occurrence of på leads to a case where MP restrictively modifies a GO-function, marked [-DIVIDUA]. Furthermore, whereas the MP of a på-construction seems to be attached to the modified concept as a characterizing attribute, the MP of an i-construction seems to amalgamate with the modified concept to form a new entity; i.e., it functions as a classifying attribute.

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