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## SHORT COMMUNICATION

# Scandinavian gender and pancake sentences: A reply to Hans-Olav Enger

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In a recent *NJL* article (Enger 2013), Hans-Olav Enger argues against some analyses of gender and ‘pancake sentences’, in particular against Josefsson (2009). In this short contribution, I will discuss what I take to be misunderstandings in Enger (2013). In addition I will discuss some data not included in Enger’s (2013) analysis, which I will show to be crucial for the comparison between the different analyses proposed.

**Keywords** common gender, countable, formal gender, non-countable, neuter, pancake sentences, semantic gender

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### 1. ONE GENDER SYSTEM OR TWO?

The main idea of Enger (2004), on which he bases his later criticism of Josefsson (2009), is that there is only one gender system in Mainland Scandinavian (henceforth MSc), and that this system is semantic in nature. The main claim of Josefsson (2009), see also Josefsson (2006, 2010, 2012b, 2013, 2014), originally based on a proposal in Teleman (1987), is that there are two gender systems or gender dimensions in Swedish (and probably also in the other MSc languages). The systems or dimensions can be termed FORMAL (or syntactic) GENDER and SEMANTIC GENDER. These two systems are independent, but they interact closely. Importantly, Josefsson (2009) does not argue, which is implied in Enger (2013:282), that formal gender is a system for nouns, whereas semantic gender operates within the pronominal domain. Things are more complex, as I will touch upon here. (For reasons of space the reader is referred to the references above for a more comprehensive discussion.) Following Josefsson’s system, nouns have formal gender (which I take to be uncontroversial), but when we consider pronouns, there are pronouns that express formal gender and pronouns that express semantic gender. In what follows, I sketch the basic properties of the two systems.

Swedish has two formal genders, common gender and neuter; the formal gender is inherent to a nominal root or to a derivational suffix.<sup>1</sup> For example, *tiger* ‘tiger’

and *stol* ‘chair’ are common gender nouns, and *lejon* ‘lion’ and *bord* ‘table’ are neuter nouns. A given noun’s formal gender is marked on the definite determiner, as shown in (1).<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. tiger-n (*tiger-C.DEF*) ‘the tiger’; stol-en (*chair-C.DEF*) ‘the chair’  
 b. lejon-et (*lion-N.DEF*) ‘the lion’; bord-et (*table-N.DEF*) ‘the table’

We may refer to the noun phrases *tigern* and *lejonet* by a personal pronoun that picks up the formal gender of the noun. In addition, a predicative adjective agrees with the formal gender of the subject:

- (2) a. Titta på tigern! Den är vacker!  
*look.IMP at tiger.C.DEF 3.SG.C be.PRS beautiful.C*  
 ‘Look at the tiger. It is beautiful!’  
 b. Titta på lejonet! Det är vacker-t!  
*look.IMP at lion.N.DEF 3.SG.N be.PRS beautiful-N*  
 ‘Look at the lion! It is beautiful!’

Drawing on Bosch (1983, 1986, 1988), I will call pronouns that refer back to linguistic entities (typically noun phrases or pronouns) *Syn*-pronouns (an abbreviation for ‘syntactic pronouns’). Consequently, *den* and *det* in (2) are *Syn*-pronouns, since they refer back to the noun phrases *tiger* and *lejonet*, respectively. Bosch mentions explicitly that *Syn*-pronouns, in his terminology called *S*-pronouns, can be thought of as akin to agreement; see Bosch (1983:215). (Pronouns that refer to non-linguistic entities, for example deictic pronouns, are termed *Ref*-pronouns in Josefsson (2013, 2014). Bosch refers to such pronouns as *R*-pronouns.<sup>3</sup>)

Semantic gender is the gender that reflects properties of a referent, as viewed by a beholder. Let us consider a noun such as *hund* ‘dog’, which is a common (C) gender noun, as witnessed by the form of the definite article, *hund-en* (*dog-C.DEF*) ‘the dog’. We may talk about this animal in different ways:

- (3) a. Titta på hunden! Hon är vacker.  
*look.IMP at dog.C.DEF 3.SG.FEM is beautiful*  
 ‘Look at the dog! She is beautiful!’  
 b. Titta på hunden! Han är vacker.  
*look.IMP at dog.C.DEF 3.SG.MASC is beautiful*  
 ‘Look at the dog! He is beautiful!’  
 c. Titta på hunden! Den är vacker.  
*look.IMP at dog.C.DEF 3.SG.C is beautiful*  
 ‘Look at the dog! It is beautiful!’  
 d. Hund? Det låg över hela körbanan efter krocken.  
*dog(C) 3.N lay over whole lane.DEF after crash.def*  
 ‘Dog? It/dog flesh was all over the lane after the crash.’

If it is possible to use all four personal pronouns *hon*, *han*, *den*, and *det* in (3) to refer back to ‘dog’, it is clearly not appropriate to refer to these pronouns as instances of agreement with the noun *hund*. The very term agreement implies morphosyntactic ‘sameness’ between a feature of a controller and a target. If there is no restriction as to the feature content of the controller, the term agreement is devoid of content. A better way of describing the relation between the pronouns and their antecedents in (3) is as follows: If speakers know that a dog is female or male (and also think of dogs in terms of being basically animate/humanlike) they tend to use the pronouns *hon* ‘she’ or *han* ‘he’. With a ‘ground’ reading, as in (3d), the neuter pronoun *det* can be used.<sup>4</sup> The pronouns do not express agreement with the noun *hund* in any of these cases; the choice of pronoun expresses the view that the speaker takes on the referent that is talked about – these pronouns are therefore *Ref*-pronouns. However, the use of *den* in (3c) is slightly more complicated. In this context it could either be a *Syn*-pronoun parallel to (2a), or it could be an *Ref*-pronoun, where *den* refers to a bounded discourse entity, in essence similar to (4a) below.<sup>5,6</sup>

It has been a corner-stone of Corbett’s work that pronouns are expressions of agreement relations (Corbett 2006:21–22), a view that Enger (2013:280) claims to support. However, under the analysis presented in Josefsson (2012b, 2013, 2014), examples such as those in (3) do not lend support to this way of thinking. The pronouns *den* and *det* in (2a) and (2b) are indeed akin to agreement, but not *hon*, *han* and *det* in (3a), (3b), and (3d). The choice between *den* (3.SG.C) and *det* (3.N) in (2a–b) is due to the formal gender of a noun in the preceding clause, but this is not the case for *hon* ‘he’ and *han* ‘he’. (For a detailed argumentation showing that the pronouns *han* ‘he’ and *hon* ‘she’ lack a formal gender in Swedish, and also that nouns do not carry morphosyntactic features, such as feminine and masculine, see Josefsson 2010:2100f.)

Deictic pronouns provide an even stronger argument that we have to differentiate between pronouns that refer to linguistic entities (*Syn*-pronouns), typically noun phrases and pronouns, and pronouns that refer directly to discourse referents (*Ref*-pronouns). Recall that *den* and *det* can be used as *Syn*-pronouns (see (2a) and (2b)). However, *den* and *det* can be used in a purely deictic way too, common gender *den* making reference to a bounded entity of some sort, neuter *det* being a default alternative. Both (4a) and (4b) below can be used as out-of-the-blue utterances, without the speaker knowing the appropriate denomination of the referent that is praised:

- (4) a. Den var vacker!  
       3.SG.C be.PST beautiful.C  
       ‘It was beautiful!’
- b. Det var vacker-t!  
       3.N be.PST beautiful-N  
       ‘It was beautiful!’

In view of examples such as those in (1)–(4), it is not at all clear why Enger (2013:283) argues against the splitting of gender into ‘one semantic and one non-semantic part’. It is obviously true that a pronoun in some cases conveys semantic information, but in other cases it does not do so. At the very least, the pronouns *hon* ‘she’, *han* ‘he’, and *det* ‘it’ in (3) and *den* and *det* in (4) tell us something about the semantics of the referent, whereas the distinction between the common gender *den* in (2a) and the neuter *det* in (2b) has no semantic significance. As far as I am aware, it is impossible to come up with any reasonable semantic distinction that would motivate the use of *den* as an anaphoric pronoun for *stolen* ‘the chair’ whereas *det* is used for *bordet* ‘the table’. The tendency that inanimate and substance entities are often neuter does not help us at all to explain this difference.

In addition to the preceding discussion, it is necessary to point out that Josefsson (2009) does not claim that formal gender, viewed as a system, is completely ‘asemantic’, as implied by Enger (2013:283). What Josefsson (2009:40) claims is that formal gender is arbitrary in the sense that the formal gender of a noun is not predictable from its meaning; ‘there is simply no element of meaning shared by all neuter nouns’. The fact that *tiger* ‘tiger’ and *stol* ‘chair’ are common gender nouns, whereas *lejon* ‘lion’ and *bord* ‘table’ are neuter are not isolated exceptions. There are tendencies, of course, that countables and/or animates are often common gender, whereas non-countables and/or inanimates are often neuter; this was pointed out already in Josefsson (1997, 1998) and mentioned also in Josefsson (2009:66). To the best of my knowledge, no one has denied that such a typicality relation holds. How to characterize the relation between the tendencies above and the semantic gender system, as expressed in personal and deictic pronouns, is an interesting problem that remains to be solved. However, simply stating that neuter as a formal gender of nouns and neuter on pronominal *det* (3.N) ‘it’ is the same does not seem to me to shed any light on the problem.

Enger (2013:282) ascribes to Josefsson (2009) the view that agreement on predicative adjectives could not carry semantic information. This is not correct; on the contrary, Josefsson (2009:38) makes the following claim:

It should be stressed that I do not reject the idea that agreement in neuter is semantic in nature *per se*. . . . With the solution that I propose, the semantics of the subject depends on the feature content of the subject, and this content is mirrored by the feature makeup of the predicative adjective – in the way agreement generally works in the grammar; agreement is thus also ‘semantic’ in the proposed analysis.

Josefsson’s system does not require the extra device that Enger (2013:276ff.) advocates: purely referential, but not morpho-syntactic agreement. This question will be discussed in more detail below.

Part of the discussion below will revolve around the construction sometimes referred to as ‘pancake sentences’. In short, pancake sentences are sentences in which there appears to be disagreement between the subject and a predicative adjective, where such an adjective occurs in the neuter form, completely independently of the gender and number on the noun phrase in the subject position. Three Swedish examples are given here in (5).

- (5) a. Snö är vit-t.  
*snow(C) be.PRS white-N*  
 ‘Snow is white.’
- b. Pannkakor är läcker-t.  
*pancake(C).PL be.PRS delicious-N*  
 ‘Pancakes are delicious./Eating pancakes is delicious.’
- c. Context: One cannibal to the other:  
 Henne med senap och ketchup vore läcker-t.  
*her with mustard(C) and ketchup(C) would.be.CONJ delicious-N*  
 ‘To eat/have her together with mustard and ketchup would be delicious.’

The main point of the solutions presented in Josefsson (2009, 2010, 2013, 2014) is that neuter agreement on a predicative adjective in such pancake sentences is triggered by a null version of the pronoun *det* (3.N) assumed to head the subject XP, which, in turn, can be an NP, vP or a Small Clause). Crucially, this null *det* lacks a number feature, as do the corresponding overt instances of *det* in MSc. (One of the main points in Josefsson’s above-mentioned analyses is that the feature content corresponding to non-countability is the radical absence of number.) The absence of a number feature corresponds morphologically to predicative agreement in the neuter, to the semantic interpretation of the subject as a non-countable entity, and to the blocking of canonical agreement. Naturally, it is impossible to prove that a null element is present in a structure, but judging from other construction types it is argued that this null *det* does exist in MSc. A corresponding overt *det* is possible in some varieties of MSc, for instance, in Jutlandic, and also spoken Danish, but not in Swedish; further discussion of pancake sentences follows in the next sections.

Enger (2013:282) claims that the solution proposed in Josefsson (2009) implies that neuter on the predicative adjective in the three examples below have different motivations, which would weaken Josefsson’s position. (The sentences in (6) are the Swedish equivalents of Enger’s sentences. Further, note that (6a) is a pancake sentence.)

- (6) a. Vodka är sun-t.  
*vodka(C) be.PRS healthy-N*  
 ‘It’s healthy to have vodka.’

- b. Vodka, det dricker Peter.  
*vodka(C) 3.N drink.PRS Peter*  
 ‘Peter drinks vodka.’
- c. Vodka är gott att dricka.  
*vodka(C) be.PRS good.N to drink.INF*  
 ‘It’s good to drink vodka.’

As a matter of fact, examples, such as (6b), the doubling of a clause-initial element with a *det* that appears not to agree with the preceding DP, are not discussed at all in Josefsson (2009), so the question of their analysis does not arise in that paper. However, the construction is discussed at length in Josefsson (2010, 2012a), where it is argued that the source for neuter on *sun-t* (healthy-N) ‘healthy’ in (6a) and *det* (3.N) ‘it’ in (6b) is the same: The proposed null version of neuter *det*, assumed to head the subject noun phrase in (6a), [ $\emptyset_{det}$  *vodka*], has the same feature content and interpretation as the overt *det* in (6b). In other words, neuter agreement on the adjective in (6a) has exactly the same motivation as the use of *det* in (6b). Importantly though, the syntactic structures in (6a) and (6b) are not identical. Following Eide (2011), I assume that the left dislocated element *vodka* in (6b) is located in a separate clausal domain, whereas the suggested null version of *det* in (6a) heads the noun phrase in the subject XP. (See Eide 2011 for arguments regarding *det* in (6b).) Consequently, the subject *det* in (6b) triggers agreement on a predicative adjective in a canonical way in sentences such as *Vodka, det är stark-t* (vodka(C), 3.N is strong-N) ‘Vodka is strong’ – the left dislocated element *vodka* does not trigger agreement at all. The construction in (6c) is not discussed in Josefsson (2009) either. However, this does not lend support to Enger’s (2013) criticism. The adjective in (6c) agrees with the overt infinitival phrase which (like clauses in general) is assumed to lack a number feature); the NP *vodka* is extracted from the infinitival phrase and fronted to a sentence-initial position – in other words, this is an instance of *tough-raising*.<sup>7</sup> It should be pointed out that an expletive *det* (3.N) ‘it’ can be optionally inserted in the subject position in (6c), yielding *Vodka är det gott att dricka* (vodka is EXPL.N good.N to drink) ‘It is good to drink vodka’. This paper is not the proper place for discussing whether the subject position in (6c) is radically empty or contains a null expletive neuter *det*; the reader is referred to Falk (1987, 1993:270) and Engdahl (2010) for more discussion about this type of construction. It is fully possible that an expletive *det* is intimately related to other uses of *det*, but the question is complex. The only point I want to make is that a sweeping generalization, with a claim that there is but one gender system, without a detailed discussion concerning the different construction types does not automatically make an analysis stronger.

To conclude so far, we can say that personal pronouns cannot generally be viewed as exponents of agreement relations. Some pronouns, used in some contexts, refer back to noun phrases, and we could very well think of them as akin to agreement. The gender of the pronoun does not carry any semantic information in these cases.

In other instances, a pronoun refers to a discourse entity – such pronouns are not agreement-like. In the latter case, common gender *den* is used to refer to countable entities and neuter *det* to non-countables, regardless of any noun that is conventionally used for the referents in question. In my view this shows that there are indeed two gender dimensions.

## 2. AGREEMENT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE NP

Enger (2013:287) implies that Josefsson (2009) argues that agreement inside the NP/DP is ‘asemantic’; this is either a misconception or a misreading. On the contrary, Josefsson (2006, 2009, 2010, 2013, 2014) argues that there is a ‘high’ position within the functional domain of the noun – thus inside the NP/DP – that may host pronouns expressing semantic gender. The formal gender of the noun, on the other hand, is inherent to the root; formal gender is arbitrary in the sense that it is not predictable from the meaning of the noun. The formal gender of the noun is used in the spell-out of definiteness, which is why we get *den vita mjölk-en* (DEF.C white.DEF milk-C.DEF) ‘the white milk’, and thus common gender occurs even on a noun that so clearly denotes a substance. The pre-nominal position in the functional domain of the noun, hosting what I have identified as a semantic gender marker (Josefsson 2006, 2009:39) or classifier (Josefsson 2013:34ff.; 2014), explains why we find *Mjölk är vit-t* (milk(C) be.PRS white.N) ‘Milk is white’ – where ‘milk’ has a clear non-countable meaning – and not *\*Mjölk är vit* (milk(C) be.PRS white.C). (As shown above, I assume that the subject in *Mjölk är vitt* is headed by a null version of neuter *det*.)

First of all, evidence that a position for ‘gender markers’ or ‘classifiers’ does exist comes from the possibility of adding *han* ‘he’ and *hon* ‘she’ before a definite DP; *han* and *hon* are assumed to be expressions of semantic gender. (See Josefsson 1999 for a detailed discussion on this construction type.)

- (7) a. *han den nye vaktmästare-n*  
*he C.DEF new.DEF.MASC janitor-C.DEF*  
 ‘the new janitor’, ‘this new janitor’
- b. *hon professor-n*  
*she professor-C.DEF*  
 ‘she/the professor’

There is nothing in the noun *vaktmästare* ‘janitor’ or *professor* ‘professor’ that would motivate the use of *han* ‘he’ instead of *hon* ‘she’ or vice versa; these pronouns ‘reflect properties of the referent, as viewed by a beholder’, as formulated above.<sup>8</sup> Enger (2013:296) points out that the gender marker slot in question could not exist in Norwegian, since Norwegian does not have this particular construction (*hon/han* + pre-nominal determiner). However, in Norwegian, ‘gender markers’ are possible

too, but without the prenominal determiner: *ho nye professoren* (3.SG.FEM new.DEF professor.DEF) ‘she/the new professor’, and also *ho professoren* (without an adjective) – like in Swedish.<sup>9,10</sup> This shows that the slot in question is there in Norwegian too.

Secondly, one of the most important points in Josefsson (2013:76ff.; 2014) is that there is another indication of a prenominal position in the functional sequence of the noun where semantic gender is expressed. However, this may not be so clear in Swedish as in other varieties of Mainland Scandinavian. What Josefsson refers to here is the use of the prenominal element *det*, which is obligatory in West Jutlandic, with a substance reading, as in *det mælk* (N milk) ‘milk’, and also found in East Jutlandic in the same type of construction. This construction type seems to be creeping into spoken standard Danish too, regardless of the formal gender of the head noun, according to Arboe (2009), who reports expressions such as *det regn* (N rain(C)) ‘rain’ and *det musik* (N music(C)) ‘music’, as heard on Danish radio. This use of neuter *det* is definitely semantic, and the *det* in question also clearly a part of the noun phrase. The pronouns *hon* ‘she’ and *han* ‘he’ in (7) presumably occupy the same position as *det* in *det mælk* (N milk(C)) ‘milk’, *det regn* (N rain(C)), and *det musik* (N music(C)) ‘music’.<sup>11</sup> What I have claimed is that Swedish, and presumably also Norwegian, has a null version of *det* in basically the same position as *han* ‘he’ and *hon* ‘she’ in (7), as well as *det* in *det mælk*, with the same meaning as an overt *det*, and also triggering agreement on the predicative, just like an overt *det*. Unfortunately, this null element cannot be seen, thus cannot be observed empirically, which is what Enger (2013:296) asks for. In addition, Swedish (and maybe also Norwegian) has overt non-pronominal classifiers or a classifier-like element. In these cases, the classifiers, not the head nouns, trigger agreement on predicative adjectives, as the examples below in (8) show:

- (8) a.   Ämne-t            senap            är            gul-t/\*gul-Ø  
           substance-N.DEF   mustard(C)   be-PRS   yellow-N/yellow.C  
           ‘Mustard, the substance, is yellow.’
- b.   Metall-en       bly            är            vit/\*vit-t  
           metal-C.DEF   lead(N)     be.PRS   white.C/white-N  
           ‘Lead, the metal, is white.’

Turning to pancake sentences, again, for obvious reasons, it is impossible to provide empirical proof of the existence of a null *det* heading the subject, for instance in pancake sentences, such as (5) above, for convenience repeated here:

- (5) a.   Snö            är            vit-t.  
           snow(C)   be.PRS   white-N  
           ‘Snow is white.’



- b. Pannkakor är läcker-t.  
*pancake(C).PL be.PRS delicious-N*  
 ‘Pancakes are delicious./It’s delicious to eat pancakes.’
- c. Context: One cannibal to the other:  
 Henne med senap och ketchup vore läcker-t.  
*her with mustard(C) and ketchup(C) would.be.CONJ delicious-N*  
 ‘To eat her together with mustard and ketchup would be delicious.’

However, the idea that there is a null element, a null version of *det* in (5), would provide an explanation for the semantic interpretation, for the observed agreement patterns, and for the blocking of canonical agreement on a predicative adjective. Note, too, that there seems to be complimentary distribution when it comes to the expression of neuter gender on pancake sentences. According to Ringgaard (1971:31), there is no agreement on adjectives in West Jutlandic. However, as pointed out, the dialect allows for a neuter *det* (or another neuter element, such as *noget* ‘some’) to precede the head noun. In Swedish there is no overt *det*, but instead there is agreement on the adjective. The different sites for the overt expression of gender are illustrated in (9a) and (9b):<sup>12</sup>

- (9) a. ‘de ‘mjælk æ ‘suker (Thy, West Jutland)  
*N milk be.PRS sour*  
 ‘That milk is sour.’
- b. Mjölök är sur-t. (Swedish)  
*milk(C) be.PRS sour-N*  
 ‘Milk is sour.’

Intuitively, it makes sense that gender can be marked either on the subject or on the predicative, or in both places; different varieties of MSc makes different choices for different configurations. (This would work much like definiteness, where Swedish has double marking of definiteness on nouns, whereas Danish has single marking.)

Swedish does not have the *det* + noun construction, but, interestingly enough, the possibility of using neuter *något* (some.N) + noun, also with common gender nouns, such as those in (10).<sup>13</sup> The examples below are from the Internet:

- (10) a. något snö  
*some.N snow(C)*  
 ‘around 1 cm of snow’
- b. nu har jag aldrig något mjölök i kaffet  
*now have I never some.N milk(C) in coffe.N.DEF*  
 ‘Nowadays I never take milk in my coffee.’



According to Enger (2013:289–290), the figure in (11), taken together with the conclusion that the subject of pancake sentences are nouns with a low degree of individuation, explains the apparent ‘disagreement’ in pancake sentences. In his 2013 paper, the author refrains from commenting on the fact that not all subjects of pancake sentences can be analyzed as simple nouns/noun phrases. As pointed out in Josefsson (2006, 2009, 2013, 2014), the possibility of adding adverbial modifiers to these ‘noun phrase subjects’ is what motivates Teleman, Hellberg & Andersson (1999, vol. 3:702f.) to treat pancake sentences as biphrasal clause equivalents (‘tvåledad nominal satsförkortning’).<sup>15</sup> In order to show that the subject of pancake sentences is or could be larger than a simple noun phrase, let us first consider the fact that Mainland Scandinavian is a V2 language. The reason why the sentences in (12), which are not pancake sentences, are ungrammatical is presumably that they violate the V2 criterion:<sup>16</sup>

- (12) a. \*[Två älskare] [varje kväll] haffa-de-s av polisen.  
*two lover.C.PL each night catch-PST-PASS by police.DEF*  
 Intended meaning: ‘Two lovers were caught by the police each night.’
- b. \*[Pannkak-or] [på morgonen] åt vi igår.  
*pancake(C)-PL on morning.C.DEF eat.PST we yesterday*  
 Intended meaning: ‘Yesterday we had pancakes in the morning.’

The corresponding pancake sentences are impeccable:

- (13) a. [Två älskare] [varje kväll] är omoralisk-t.  
*two lover.C.PL each night be.PRS immoral-N*  
 ‘To have two lovers each night is immoral.’
- b. [Pannkak-or] [på morgonen] är trevlig-t.  
*pancake(C)-PL on morning.C.DEF be.PRS nice-N*  
 ‘To have pancakes in the morning is nice.’

The possibility of having what indisputably are adverbial modifiers in the subject of pancake sentences, as shown in (13), indicates that the subject, at least in these two examples, has some kind of clausal properties and, consequently, is larger than would seem at first glance. The most straightforward solution would be to assume that the two preverbal constituents in (13) are embedded in a larger structure, in certain ways akin to VP-topicalization. As the translation shows, the subjects have a propositional interpretation: ‘to have two lovers every night’ for (13a) and ‘to have pancakes in the morning’ for (13b). It is not a coincidence that the translation contains the light verb HAVE; this is frequently the case for pancake sentences. In fact, this ‘*ha*’ meaning is presumably what lies behind the somewhat cryptic formulation in Enger (2013:280) that Josefsson (2009) assumes that ‘many of the problems may be solved by using Butt’s (2003, 2010) concept of “light verbs”’.<sup>17</sup>

More evidence that the subject of pancake sentences can be larger than would seem at first glance is that such a subject may contain reflexives, as in (14).

- (14) Fest för sina närmaste vid födelsedagar är självklar-t.  
*party.C to REFL.PL closest at birthdays be.PRS natural-N*  
 ‘To have a party for one’s family at birthdays is natural.’

Assuming that reflexives have to be bound by some kind of subject (for example *pro*, PRO, a trace, or an operator), we may conclude that the subject of pancake sentence can be clausal in some sense, at least in some of the cases, and that it may contain a notion of a subject. Note too that it is possible to have what looks like a small clause as subjects, as in (15), repeated from (5c) above:

- (15) Context: One cannibal to the other:  
 Henne med senap och ketchup vore läcker-t.  
*her with mustard(c) and ketchup(c) would.be delicious-N*  
 ‘To have/eat her with mustard and ketchup would be delicious.’  
 → The subject has a propositional reading: ‘to have X with Y’.

The pronoun *henne* ‘her’ in (15) is in the accusative case. As opposed to Danish and English, it is never possible to have accusative case pronouns as subjects in Swedish. This too indicates that the subject is larger than we see, and that it may contain some kind of non-overt case assigner. A subject, such as the one in (15), is particularly problematic to the approach in Enger (2013), which states that the subjects of pancake sentences are nouns with a low degree of individuation (page 292). *Henne* is a pronoun, and thus, according to Josefsson (2006:1363), devoid of formal gender features; it is not common gender, but definitely not neuter either. Furthermore, *henne* is both specific and definite – it is hard to see how it could be interpreted as having low degree of individuation, or, as Enger (2013:290) puts it: ‘Nouns that have a very general meaning trigger “pancake agreement”’.<sup>18</sup>

The data that indicate that the subject of pancake sentences may have clausal properties is discussed at length in Josefsson (2006, 2009, 2012b, 2013, 2014), but Enger (2013) chooses not to include such data in his analysis. It clearly shows, however, that one of Enger’s (2013) conclusions – that the subjects of pancake sentences are nouns denoting an entity with low degree of individuation – cannot explain the full set of data.

Finally, a note on Corbett’s Agreement Hierarchy. Enger (2013) claims that this hierarchy explains the odd agreement on pancake sentences. What he calls referential (or semantic) agreement (page 290) will ‘rise monotonically towards the right [of the scale in (11)]’ (see Corbett 2006:207). There is no reason to doubt Corbett’s observation from a typological ‘helicopter’ perspective, or from a diachronic perspective. However, it is hard to understand how this would explain the

agreement pattern on pancake sentences. Josefsson (2009) suggests that predicative agreement is a relation that holds between a subject and an adjective. Agreement is morpho-syntactic, which means that agreement on the adjective reflects the features of its subject. In such a framework, there is only one way for agreement to end up on the predicative adjective. The ‘cost’ of this analysis is the assumption of a null *det*, which Josefsson (2013:60ff.; 2014) suggests is a classifier, in all relevant aspects similar to other classifiers in (7), (8), and (10) above. Enger (2013) rejects the idea of the null *det*, but the cost of his analysis is that he has to assume two ways in which agreement may appear on an adjective, first of all by morpho-syntactic agreement in the canonical way (agreement sharing between a subject and a predicative adjective), and secondly by semantics being transformed into morpho-syntactic features, which determines overt agreement. Which of the analyses that best captures the data is a question that can be discussed, but Occam’s razor would seem to argue against the solution proposed in Enger (2013).<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main idea of Enger (2013:292) is that the subject of pancake sentences is a noun with a low degree of individuation, and that this is why agreement in neuter is triggered. However, such a solution disregards evidence showing that pancake sentences can in some sense be clausal, even have small clause subjects consisting of a personal pronoun in the accusative case, such as *henne* ‘her’ and a PP in (15). The semantic notion of low degree of individuation in Enger (2013) is captured in Josefsson (2009, 2013, 2014) by the assumption that the assumed null *det*, heading the subject of pancake sentences, lacks a number feature, just like the corresponding overt version of *det*. The same holds for clauses. The semantic interpretation of the absence of number is non-countability.

Enger (2013:294f.) dismisses a ‘light verb analysis’. Importantly though, the core meaning of the ‘light verb analysis’ is that the noun/noun phrase is generally interpreted as an object of the light verb HAVE, used in a general and broad sense. A restricted set of other interpretations are available – corresponding roughly to the set of light verbs that have been suggested independently. A light verb analysis would account for the accusative case on ‘small clause’ subjects of pancake sentences, which would otherwise be hard to account for under Enger’s (2013) analysis.

Enger (2013:283) assumes that Corbett’s Agreement Hierarchy (Corbett 2006:207) can explain the properties of pancake sentences. In my view, the Agreement Hierarchy has nothing to say about pancake sentences *per se*. It seems to me that the point of disagreement first of all boils down to the question of the justification of postulating null elements, in this case a null version of *det* heading the subject of pancake sentences. The virtue of allowing this is that it restricts predicate agreement

to a morpho-syntactic relation between a nominal element in the subject position and a predicative adjective. The cost is the assumption of a null element. The virtue of the approach in Enger (2013) is of course that we can do without a null *det*. However, the cost is that we need to assume two ways in which agreement features may end up on a predicate adjective: by morpho-syntactic agreement in the canonical way, namely subject–adjective agreement, which we need to assume in any case, and by so-called referential agreement, that is a referent in the world of discourse (the real world or the linguistic discourse) is interpreted in terms of morphosyntactic features that end up on the predicative adjective.

To clarify my point, let us consider the following situation: A person spots something undefined in front of her, which causes her to utter *Det var ful-t!* (3.N be.PRS ugly-N) ‘It’s ugly!’. The choice of the neuter pronoun *det* ‘it’ cannot be motivated by any agreement process – there is nothing with which *det* can agree morpho-syntactically. *Det* in this use is a pronoun with deictic reference; it is the default pronoun that we use when we talk about unspecified referents in the world, in particular when we do not want to assign them cognitive boundaries. The choice of the adjectival form *ful-t* ‘ugly’, on the other hand, is due to an agreement process; let us call it subject–adjective agreement. And in the case of pancake sentences it is obviously not the morpho-syntactic features of the overt noun phrase that give rise to t-agreement, but something else. All accounts of pancake sentences require some mechanism that blocks canonical agreement. Even in the theory proposed in Enger (2013), nouns such as *pannkakor* ‘pancakes’ should have gender and number. In many cases ‘ordinary agreement’ with the overt noun phrase in the subject position is simply not possible, so what is the blocker? For instance, why is *\*?Pannkakor är god-a* (pancake(C).PL be.PRS good-PL) out, or at least bad, whereas *Hundvalpar är söt-a* (puppy(C)-PL be.PRS pretty-PL) ‘Puppies are pretty’ is impeccable. The same applies to *\*Tiger-n är brun-t* (tiger(C)-C.DEF be.PRS brown-N) with the intended generic meaning ‘The tiger is brown’ (compare *Tiger-n är brun-Ø* (tiger(C)-C.DEF be.PRS brown-C) ‘The tiger is brown’). And why is *\*Tigr-ar är brun-t* (tiger(C)-C.PL be.PRS brown-N) not possible either? (This sentence should be compared to the well-formed example *Tigr-ar är brun-a* (tiger(C)-C.PL be.PRS brown-PL) ‘Tigers are brown’.) It is difficult to understand in what sense *hundvalpar* ‘puppies’, *tigern* ‘the tiger’, or *tigrar* ‘tigers, used in a generic sense, should be more individuated, and therefore resisting t-agreement, than *pannkakor* ‘pancakes’. There has to be something more than just degree of individuation and Corbett’s Agreement hierarchy at play here.

In light of the argumentation given above, I suggest that we abandon Corbett’s (2006) idea of analyzing pronouns in general as instances of agreement. Some pronoun occurrences and pronoun–antecedent relations could indeed be thought of in such terms, in particular *den* and *det* in (2a) and (2b) above, but not the pronouns *han*, *hon* and *det* in (3), and definitely not *den* and *det* used as demonstrative pronouns, as in (4a) and (4b). In fact, my position could be stated even more strongly: The idea

that pronouns in general are always instances of agreement has turned out to be a straightjacket when it comes to our understanding of this category, and only if we remove it, will we be able to achieve a more profound understanding of gender and pronouns – and pancake sentences.

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## NOTES

1. In addition there are of course principles for the assignment of formal gender to new nouns. Such principles may be phonological or semantic in nature. The issue of the assignment of formal gender to new nouns is complex and interesting, but has little bearing on the points I make in this paper; what is important is that, as a rule, a particular noun has a certain gender that is stored in the mental lexicon of speakers.
2. The following abbreviations will be used in this paper: 3 = third person, C = common gender, CONJ = conjunctive, DEF = definite, EXPL = expletive, FEM = feminine, IMP = imperative, INDF = indefinite, INF = infinitive, INFL = inflection, MASC = masculine, N = neuter, PASS = passive, PL = plural, PRS = present tense, PST = past tense, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular.
3. The reason why Josefsson (2012a,b, 2013, 2014) avoids the term R-pronouns, and, consequently also S-pronouns, is that the term R-pronouns nowadays usually refers to a different phenomenon, namely pronouns such as German *da-r-über* (there-R-over) ‘over it’, investigated, for instance, by Van Riemsdijk (1978).
4. The notion of ‘ground reading’ refers to the idea of a Universal Grinder, see Pelletier (1975, 1991) and Jackendoff (1992).
5. See Josefsson (2006:1363) for explicit argumentation that *han* ‘he’ and *hon* ‘she’ lack a formal gender feature.
6. The intuition behind the suggestions that *den* could be a *Ref*-pronoun is that *den* can be used for thing-like entities, regardless of the formal gender of the noun that is

usually/conventionally used for the entity in question, at least in Swedish and Danish. See Dahl (1999:111) and Hansen & Heltoft (2011, vol 2:456ff.), for similar conclusions.

7. Example (6c) is presumably an instance of *tough*-raising; to provide a general account of this notoriously difficult construction is not a trivial task. However, we may conclude that *tough*-raising sometimes trigger adjectival agreement, sometimes not:

- (i) Serietidning-ar är lätt att läsa.  
*comic.book(C)-PL be.PRS easy.N to read.INF*  
 'It is easy to read comic books'
- (ii) Serietidning-ar är lätt-a att läsa.  
*comic.book(C)-PL be.PRS easy-PL to read.INF*  
 'Comic books are easy to read.'

My preliminary view is that the noun phrase *serietidningar* 'comic books' in (i) is extracted and moved from the lower clause to the subject position of the upper clause, in other words a case of *tough*-raising. The intuition behind this is that the infinitival phrase is the argument of the adjective, not the noun phrase *serietidningar*, which, however, is the syntactic subject of the clause. In (ii) the noun phrase *serietidningar* 'comic books' appears to have raised from its position within the infinitival phrase, via Spec AP, continuing to the subject position of the clause. The intuition behind this is that *serietidningar* is an argument, the object, of *läsa* 'read', as well as an argument (subject) of the adjective *lätt* 'easy'. The different syntactic derivations are reflected in the subtle differences in meaning that hold between (i) and (ii), as shown in the idiomatic translation.

For a more substantial discussion of *tough*-raising in Swedish, see Klingvall (2011), and the references cited therein.

8. There are additional discourse functions associated with this construction, but they are not crucial for the points I make here.
9. Thanks to Marit Julien for helping me with the Norwegian data.
10. The fact that certain varieties of Norwegian do not need (and hence do not allow) a pronominal determiner when the noun phrase contains an adjective is presumably because *han* (3.SG.MASC) 'he, it' and *hon* (3.SG.FEM) 'she, it' in these varieties have a formal gender, hence formal gender does not need to be expressed by a separate lexical item. The fact that Swedish requires two lexical items in a context where the Norwegian varieties in question can do with one does not have any bearing on the proposed analysis.
11. The conclusion that *han* and *hon* belong to the same noun phrase as their head nouns *vaktmästaren* and *professorn* in (7) is supported by the fact that there is another use of *han* and *hon* + NP, with an intonational break, indicated in writing by a comma: *han, den nye vaktmästare-n* 'he, that is the new janitor', and *hon, professor-n* 'she, that is the professor', where the noun phrases *den nye vaktmästaren* and *professorn* add parenthetical information, and also constitute phonological phrases on their own; traditional grammar would term them 'independent appositions' (*lösa appositioner*). The prosodic differences between the two constructions are easily perceived by native speakers. In my view, it should be fairly uncontroversial to argue that we are dealing with two different construction types here, one consisting of one noun phrase (when there is no prosodic break) and one with two noun phrases (when there is a prosodic break).
12. Thanks to Viggo Sørensen for helping me with (9a).
13. Thanks to Lars-Olof Delsing for bringing these data to my attention.



14. See also Olsen (1987), who suggests that agreeing adjectives in German allow for a head noun to be left out in NPs/DPs, in examples such as *der Große* (DEF.SG.MASC big.INFL) ‘the big one’, whereas the lack of adjectival agreement, for example in English, makes the realization of an overt head noun obligatory, compare *the big \*(one)*. Swedish would presumably be like German in this respect. The question is complicated, however, since there are languages without adjectival agreement, but where a head noun nevertheless can be left out. In a similar way there are languages with no subject–verb agreement, but where a subject can be left unrealized, for example Chinese. The question will not be pursued in this paper.

For a summary of Olsen’s analysis, see Olsen (1988:343). Thanks to the editor, Sten Vikner, for bringing this data to my attention.

15. The restriction to two parts in the subject of examples, such as (13) falls out from the present analysis without further assumptions; the subjects in (13) consist of a null *det*, taking a vP as its complement. Within the vP, only the object and content adverbials may be overtly realized.
16. Hansen (1971:23–24) provides a parallel Danish example:

- (i) En bil efter moms-forhøjelsen bliver alt for dyr-t.  
*C.INDF car(C) after vat-raising.C.DEF become.PRS far too expensive-N*  
 ‘To get a car after the raising of the VAT will be too expensive.’

17. Other readings are available though, which motivate Josefsson to assume that other light verbs can be involved, for instance in (i) below:

- (i) För höga betyg är farlig-t.  
*too high.PL grade.PL be.PRS dangerous-N*  
 ‘It is demoralizing to get/give to high grades.’

The example in (i) is ambiguous and has two readings, one with the light verb GET and one with GIVE.

18. A question that arises from examples such as the one in (15) is why the DP in a small clause subject of a pancake sentence may contain a definite and specific pronoun. Josefsson (2012a) addresses this issue, claiming that the ban of definite and specific subjects in pancake sentences in general relates to absence of tense and finiteness in the subject XP. (This holds for pancake sentences in examples, such as (5a) and (5b).) Speaking in generative terms, the subject of (5b) is a vP, but there is no TP or CP. Judging from the fact that small clauses can have a time reference of their own, Josefsson assumes that a small clause has a TP of its own, but crucially no CP, and no NegP. This TP licenses a specific/definite DP. See Josefsson (2012a:126f.) for more discussion.
19. We would arrive at the same result if we were to assess the economy of the analyses in terms of agreement rules (Enger 2004:19). Here Enger appeals to Anderson (1992), stating that ‘agreement is what is produced by agreement rules’; Enger’s analysis of pancake sentences requires two rules, Josefsson’s (2009) analysis only requires one rule. It is not self-evident that a solution appealing to one rule is superior to a solution that requires two; my point is merely that an assessment in terms of economy is not a trivial matter.

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