

From *big* to *much*
The grammaticalization of *mycken* i Swedish
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In my talk I will discuss number and countability in the history of Swedish. In Modern Swedish an countable noun seems to have a preferred number when occurring in mass contexts, for instance after the quantifier *mycket* (much).

(1)	mycket smör / mjölk	much butter / milk	mass sing.
(2)	mycket pengar / kläder	much money / clothes	mass plur.
(3)	mycket potatis / korv	much potato / sausage	count sing.
(4)	mycket rödbetor / morötter	much beats / carrots	count plur.

Mass nouns normally are inherently singular or plural, whereas count nouns have both forms, but prefer one of them in mass contexts. The choice is lexicalised to a high degree. I call this the *number preference*.

Quantifying elements like *mycket/litet* are originally adjectives meaning big and small/little, which have been grammaticalized into quantifiers in modern time, so the process can be studied in texts. As long as the two words are adjective, they show agreement in number and gender with the noun, but when they become quantifiers they become uninflected.

In my talk I will try to answer two diachronic questions.

- (5) When is the number preference introduced in Swedish.
- (6) When do *mycken* and *liten* grammaticalize into quantifiers.

Except for agreement facts, I will also discuss some differences with regard to scope for the quantifiers and the adjectives.