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Simultaneous Acquisition of L2 and L3 -
Vocabulary Proficiency in Swedish and English
among Newly Arrived Upper Secondary
Students in Sweden

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Abstract

This study investigates whether there is a correlation between vocabulary proficiency in English and vocabulary proficiency in Swedish among newly arrived upper secondary students in Sweden. The focus lies here on the students' passive vocabulary. The methods being used in this study are a vocabulary test investigating the students' vocabulary proficiency in English and Swedish as well as a survey determining the students' personal and educational background. Due to issues of validity and reliability, the findings of this study are not conclusive. Nevertheless, this study indicates that there is reason to believe that acquiring two second languages simultaneously at upper secondary school level can be challenging for newly arrived students which opens up for further research into that matter.

Keywords

SLA, TLA, ESOL, translanguaging, newly arrived students, Swedish upper secondary schools, vocabulary test, simultaneous acquisition of L2 and L3

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1 Introduction

Throughout the course of rising refugee numbers all over the world, Sweden has faced a significant increase in immigrants seeking a safe place after fleeing from war and destruction. Numbers of so-called newly arrived students¹ have been constantly increasing since 2017. A study by the Swedish Council of Education found that compared to 2017 there were 19% more newly arrived students registered in Swedish schools in 2018 (Skolverket 2018). Especially young people came to the country, often without any family members - and they are still coming. According to the Swedish Education Act, newly arrived students have the right to undergo and fulfill a basic school career in order to enable them to make a decent living in the country (Skollagen ch. 29, paragraph 2-3). As a means to properly introduce these students into the Swedish educational system, they are often put into introductory classes where they undergo a number of placement tests in order to assess their knowledge. Newly arrived students often lack previous education in the English language. On the other hand, English is the first foreign language to be acquired in Sweden, meaning that Swedish students at upper secondary schools (year 10-12) are at quite a high level in their acquisition process. English is also one of twelve subjects that students need to pass in order to move on to the next level in their school career. Since these students are meant to learn Swedish and English at the same time, it is often hard for them to focus on both languages. In most cases, Swedish is prioritized since it is also used in daily communication with other students, teachers and authorities. This essay investigates whether there is a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish. The correlation is investigated by testing the students' vocabulary knowledge in both English and Swedish in order to compare both with each other and find out whether there is a correlation. The focus lies on passive vocabulary².

¹ “nyanlända” - definition of that term can be found in 1.2.1

² Passive vocabulary refers to that kind of vocabulary that learners understand in receptive parts of communication (e.g. written and oral).

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this essay is to investigate whether there is a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish among newly arrived students in Sweden. This paper seeks to find a correlation in proficiency of English and Swedish among newly arrived students, testing the students' passive vocabulary knowledge in both languages and thus investigating a potential correlation. Research questions to be used and answered in this essay are the following:

- Is there a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish in newly arrived upper secondary students?
- Is there a correlation between vocabulary proficiency and years lived in Sweden
- Is there a correlation between vocabulary proficiency and the length of education in English?
- Is there a correlation between vocabulary proficiency and gender?

1.2 Background

In the course of the Arabic spring and the rise of ISIS, the world has seen increasing numbers of refugees, seeking a safe haven from all the misery they had been forced to endure. It is rather seldom that entire families arrive together. Instead, the Western World has been faced with individuals with very differing backgrounds and often children or minors who had to leave their families behind. Sweden was (and still is) one of the countries to welcome most refugees in comparison to other countries in Europe. Together with Germany, Sweden opened up its borders to a huge number of refugees. In 2016 alone, there were 163,000 immigrants registered in Sweden, which was about eight percent of the total population of nine million people in 2016 (SCB 2019). Obviously, this had to be followed by severe consequences not only for the country and its inhabitants and officials, but also for the refugees themselves. Housing, medical care and education are only a few of many issues to be mentioned here.

This essay focuses on educational consequences that followed with the flow of refugees. While Sweden managed to improve its results in the latest PISA study (Skolverket 2019), it is still facing many issues that come with the position of being one of the top countries to open up for refugees. Sweden managed to be in the 9th position in the international comparison in 2018. In earlier PISA studies, Sweden happened to show decreasing results in all three categories³, but finally, the country managed to improve its results. 2012 was yet the worst year for Sweden in

³ The categories are the following: Reading, Mathematics, Science.

terms of PISA results. This is true for all three categories that are tested in the PISA test. Nevertheless, the results from 2018 also show that there are still large differences between students born in Sweden and students with immigration background (Skolverket 2019).

A study by the Swedish Council for Education (2020) presents the numbers of newly arrived students since 2008 (Skolverket 2020). Hereby, the focus is on students with unknown backgrounds, meaning that their backgrounds had not yet been identified at the time the studies were conducted. According to the study, numbers of newly arrived students have been consistently rising and only the individuals with unknown backgrounds have shown a decrease in numbers which can be explained by the fact that officials are more prepared now to find out the individuals' background (for example by being aided by interpreters).

1.2.1 Swedish Education Act

According to the Swedish Education Act, individuals who arrive in Sweden and are registered (folkbokförd) have the right to all education available in the country (Skollagen chapter 4, paragraph 1a). Newly arrived students are to be introduced to the Swedish school system as soon as possible after their arrival, but no later than one month after their arrival (though it has to be noted that "arrival" is not thoroughly defined) (Skollagen ch. 12, pgr. 14). The individual's home municipality is responsible for the students' successful introduction into the Swedish educational system (Skollagen ch. 8, pgr. 12). What school year the student will be registered in is decided according to individual tests and investigations into the student's age, background as well as previous education and knowledge to make sure that the student is placed correctly. It is the school's principal who makes the final decision and that decision cannot be changed afterwards. It is also noteworthy that the initial investigation is the only one to be made which means that if a student moves to another school for some reason there will not be another investigation.

Other issues occur when students turn 18 within the course of their educational career in Sweden. According to the Swedish Education Act, students only have the right to proceed with an education at Swedish upper secondary school level (year 10-12) if they have started a so-called introductory program before they turn 18 (Skollagen ch. 29, pgr. 2-5). If a student fails to fulfill the requirements for year 9 of Swedish high school (which is when Swedish compulsory education ends) the student has the right to finish the studies and fulfill the requirements within two years (Skollagen ch. 7, pgr. 13, 15-16). Students who are seeking asylum do only possess the right to proceed with an education at upper secondary school level if they have started their education before their 18th birthday.

The term “newly arrived students” (in Swedish *nyanlända*) is, according to the Swedish Education Act, defined as being born in a country other than Sweden, having both parents live in a country other than Sweden and having arrived in Sweden within the last four years (Skolverket 2018). Students only appear in statistics if they are registered (folkbokförd) which means that those individuals who have arrived in Sweden but have not been registered yet, do not appear in these statistics.

The introductory programs in Swedish upper secondary schools are meant to enable the students to proceed with a so-called national program which is a general program at the Swedish upper secondary school level that enables the students to either continue at a Swedish university or to find work instead. The only requirement for introductory programs is that the students have to study full-time which means 23 hours per week. An individual study plan is set up in the beginning of the student’s educational career in Sweden in order to set goals and define how the student can achieve them. This enables the students, the teachers, the principal and other involved officials to follow the plan and help the students to be successful with their education (Skolverket 2020).

1.2.2 Definition of Key Terms

At this point in the essay it is helpful to briefly look at the concepts of second language acquisition (SLA), third language acquisition (TLA), English for learners of other languages (ESOL) as well as translanguaging. These concepts play a vital role in understanding the processes that the target group students are undergoing while having to acquire not only one but two languages simultaneously and at comparable levels as their peers.

Second language acquisition (or SLA) refers to the concept of studying a second language. It is seen as a subdiscipline of applied linguistics and its central concept is the so-called *interlanguage* which is a step between the learner’s first language (L1) and the target language (L2). The idea behind *interlanguage* is that the acquisition of a new language does not happen without the learner’s first language being a major influence to the target language. According to this theory, errors often occur because the L1 influences the learner’s use of the L2 (Ellis 1997). Krashen found that there are five stages in acquiring a second language: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency and, finally, advanced fluency (Krashen 1982). Learning a second language differs significantly from acquiring one’s mother tongue during childhood since childrens’ brains are still developing and since the learner’s first language functions as orientation during the acquisition process. Another significant difference between mother tongue acquisition and second language acquisition is the usual lack of native

pronunciation in the latter (Schmid 2014). The acquisition of a second language is also highly influenced by the other languages a learner already knows which leads to the phenomenon called language transfer. Language transfer often occurs when learners feel that there is a similarity between a feature of the target language and any of the previous acquired languages (Lightbown & Spada 2006: 93-96). According to Krashen, the most important factor which influences the acquisition process of a language appears to be the input (Krashen 1982).

When it comes to the target group of this study it is important to note that the students acquire Swedish not only through classroom instruction and input. Since the students are subject to the language in real communicative situations on a daily basis the input is not only higher but also of a different, more realistic quality. English on the other hand remains mostly a formal classroom language, even though it is also used frequently to help the students communicate what they cannot articulate yet in Swedish. Additionally, English also functions as a communicative means in interactions with their peers. All in all though, Swedish remains the more prioritized language for the target group.

Another concept important in this essay is ESOL or English for learners of other languages, which itself can be counted as a subdiscipline of SLA. The focus of ESOL lies on the English language as a lingua franca as well as the learners of it. The concept is most valuable in countries where English is taught as the first second language at schools, such as is the case in countries like Germany or Sweden (or any European country which is not English-speaking, for that matter) (Harklau 1994). A difference has to be made at this point between English taught within English-speaking countries and outside of English-speaking countries. In this essay, the focus lies on English taught outside of English-speaking countries, since English is not the official language in Sweden. Within the field of ESOL, research often deals with difficulties for learners, such as pronunciation, grammar or vocabulary as well as varieties of English and different systems of simplified English. There are also studies on social challenges such as class placement, dropout rates, as well as social benefits and peer tutoring for ESL students. According to a contrastive analysis approach, most difficulties in acquiring English appear due to the degree to which the learner's mother tongue (L1) differs from the English language (Celce-Murcia 2001). Likewise, learners of English are found to often produce certain types of errors that result from the influence of their L1 (which is defined as L1 transfer or language interference).

The term translanguaging refers to the concept of using several different languages at the same time in classroom contexts. The concept was already used in a study on bilingualism in schools in Wales by Cen Williams in 1996. Through translanguaging, humans are able to use all the language resources available to make themselves understood in a communicative process. In

classroom contexts, the concept can help teachers communicate with students whose mother tongue is different from the country's standard language and thus enables teachers to communicate with students, even if they both do not share a common language on a higher level of proficiency (Svensson 2018). Translanguaging is seen as a dynamic process that occurs when speakers who speak more than one language handle complex demands by strategically using features of multiple languages (Garcia 2009). The phenomenon of translanguaging involves issues in several areas of language acquisition such as production, communication and the function of language. In educational settings, the process of translanguaging can be controlled by teachers and students and translanguaging is said to promote a deeper understanding of a subject. Including translanguaging in the classroom does not require the teacher to be bilingual but to be a co-learner, meaning that they need to be open to acquire the language varieties of their students. In the context of this study, it is important to see translanguaging as a means for more effective communication between the target group students and their teachers since they often do not speak their students' mother tongue. Thus it is important for all parties concerned to find a way to communicate with each other.

While Second Language Acquisition has already been taken up here, it is also necessary to take a look at the concept of Third Language Acquisition (TLA) since the focus of this essay lies on the simultaneous acquisition of English and Swedish, where both languages act as second and third language, depending on the individual's educational background⁴. For a long time, TLA has been considered the same as SLA, that is any language that is not acquired as a mother tongue or first language has been considered a second language. But more recent studies have found that there is indeed a difference between SLA and TLA. Mainly, the difference lies in the fact that the second language that was acquired by a learner and the subsequent bilingualism of that learner have a major effect on the acquisition of the third language (Jessner 2006: 13). TLA is according to Jessner a more complex process than SLA since it "require[s] different skills of the learner" (Jessner 2006: 14). Jessner describes four different acquisition orders in TLA: the three languages are acquired simultaneously; they are acquired consecutively; two languages are acquired simultaneously after acquiring L1; two languages are acquired simultaneously before acquiring L3 (Jessner 2006: 16). The participants of this study acquired their L1 first, and then some of them acquired L2 (English) and L3 (Swedish) simultaneously, whereas others had already acquired English before they came to Sweden and thus had acquired all three languages consecutively. Jessner also points out that the acquisition process can be interrupted by learning

⁴ Some students did already acquire English before coming to Sweden whereas others did not. Therefore, it is not possible to generalise which of the two languages is L2 and which is L3.

another language and then restarted again (Jessner 2006: 16). This situation is likely to be found in many of the newly arrived students in Sweden since they had already started to acquire English but the process was interrupted by learning Swedish. Another point to be mentioned here is that the acquisition process can happen in a naturalistic context or in a formal one or in a combination of them (Jessner 2006: 16). In case of the newly arrived students to be studied in this essay, the acquisition of L2 and L3 are situated both in formal and naturalistic contexts.

2 Literature Review

At this point of the essay it is important to take a look at previous research that has been conducted on the topic. Firstly, there will be studies presented that focus solely on Sweden and newly arrived students. In a second step, the focus will lie on international studies, focusing on the (simultaneous) acquisition of L2 and L3.

In a study on newly arrived students' language acquisition and proficiency, Engblom and Fallberg (2018) come to the conclusion that it is important to translate key words for the students and that the concept of translanguaging is essential. The students themselves preferred to receive as much input as possible, especially oral input, in order to hear how the words are supposed to be pronounced. Furthermore, the study shows that social interaction is rather crucial for the students' success in acquiring a new language. Translanguaging has shown to be a very successful means to explain concepts and ideas to students at a point where they are not yet proficient enough in the target language. English is then often used as a transfer language but this obviously requires previous knowledge in English (which is not always given).

In another Swedish study by Aho (2018) on language introductory programs in Swedish high schools, the author concludes that students in these programs are rather heterogeneous as they all have different backgrounds when it comes to previous education. The study shows that Swedish becomes an obstacle for the students because it is important to them to acquire the language successfully and on a professional level in a rather short time since they depend on that language on an everyday basis.

In a study on newly arrived students and their success in Swedish high schools (Sharif 2017) the author finds that the interviewed students all agreed that learning Swedish was the most important goal to be achieved within the frame of their educational career. The students were also anxious about whether they would be able to acquire Swedish on a fluent level before turning 20. This reflects the fact that language is seen as a social phenomenon that is bound to the individual's social background (Sharif 2017: 134). What Sharif means there is that language

cannot be seen as an isolated entity, it is a social construct and it lives and thrives through social interactions.

In their study on translanguaging used by newly arrived students, Gupta & Dahlberg (2018) found that the interest in translanguaging and other multilingual practices in the Swedish school system increased over the last five years. Translanguaging is used increasingly in Swedish classrooms and this trend does not seem to cease, according to this study. On the contrary, the study shows that more and more teachers in Swedish classrooms make use of that tool in order to be able to better communicate with their students. Since Swedish often is not sufficient enough to communicate with the students, teachers take advantage of other languages as well.

In another study that investigated a trial to integrate more hours for the acquisition of Swedish, Westling et al. (2016) come to the conclusion that newly arrived students in general would benefit from a longer period of attending the introductory program in order to give them a chance to acquire Swedish at a proper level. The authors also come to the conclusion that there is a significant lack of properly educated teachers to teach Swedish as a second language to the newly arrived students. Furthermore, the authors conclude that the extra hours offered to the newly arrived students were appreciated by all sides involved.

Finally, a study on the language introductory program at Swedish upper secondary schools and community colleges (Fejes et al. 2018) found that there is a frustration in the students caused by inflexible solutions and stigmatisation. According to this study, this frustration is generated by the organization of the language introductory program as it has to be accomplished as a sideline to ordinary school practice. The study concludes that students often fail in achieving their educational goals due to this frustration and that the introductory program needs to be revised in order to be more flexible.

Internationally seen, the focus of research that is related to this essay has been on the acquisition of L2 and L3. In an essay from 2010 Ulrike Gut argues that “learning a third language (L3) is fundamentally different from learning a second language (L2)” (Gut 2010: 19). According to Gut, L3 acquisition is different from L2 acquisition since the learners have already acquired a second language and thus have “gained conscious linguistic knowledge and language-learning experience” (Gut 2010: 19). As Gut specifies it, L3 learners are already bilingual since they have two languages in their minds (Gut 2010: 19). In the study she investigates cross-linguistic influence on vowel reduction as well as speech rhythm that are both produced by trilingual speakers. The results show that, when compared to native speakers, the L3 learners produced distinct phonological differences.

Another study on cross-linguistic influence (Tremblay 2006) found that L2 has more influence on L3 for learners who were more exposed to their L2. The learner's proficiency in their L2 seems to have an effect on frequency of the L2 intruding the learner's L3 communication. The study also shows that L2 exposure has an influence on the ability to use L2 acquisition knowledge during the acquisition process of L3. Furthermore, Tremblay states that it is not only the learner's L1 that has an impact on any second or third language to be acquired. Even the learner's L2 has shown to have an impact on the languages that are acquired consecutively (Tremblay 2006: 109). According to Tremblay, there have been various factors identified that determine the influence of L1 and L2 on a learner's L3, but there is "still no clear understanding of the importance each factor has in the acquisition process" (Tremblay 2006: 109).

Hammerberg (2009) argues that there is a rather complex number of factors that influence the activation of L1 and L2 during communication processes in a learner's L3. The study confirms the fundamental distinction between "an instrumental and a supplier role"⁵ (Hammerberg 2009: 126), meaning that the activation of these roles "are determined on different grounds" (Hammerberg 2009: 126). According to Hammerberg, there seems to be a connection between the type of bilingualism (early vs late) and the acquisition of additional languages as an adult (Hammerberg 2009: 126).

Finally, in a study on the role of the L2 on TLA, Bardel & Falk (2007) argue that there is a qualitative difference between SLA and TLA. They found in their study that "syntactic structures are more easily transferred from L2 than from L1 in the initial state of L3 acquisition" (Bardel & Falk 2007: 495). Their data support the idea that "the L2 status factor is stronger than the typology factor in L3 acquisition" (Bardel & Falk 2007: 480). The study also shows that typological proximity "seems to favour transfer from L2 to L3, but not from L1 to L3" (Bardel & Falk 2007: 480).

3 Method and Material

In order to find conclusive results that can answer the research questions of this essay and since there was no database that fit the hypothesis, the data used and analyzed in this essay had to be collected in advance and by the author of this essay. The aim of this essay is to find out whether

⁵ Hammerberg defines supplier role as the L2 that is activated parallelly to L3 interlanguage and which is underlying the production of L3 and L1. The instrumental role is according to Hammerberg the L1 which is kept separate from L3 and which functions mainly metalinguistically.

there is a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish among newly arrived upper secondary students in Sweden, where the focus lies on their passive vocabulary. In order to show a correlation of proficiency in English and Swedish, a target group of 32 students was given a vocabulary test which tested the students' proficiency in both English and Swedish. The vocabulary test also included a survey asking about the students' background, investigating their age and country of origin as well as educational background (especially in terms of English and Swedish as school subjects).

3.1 Material (Target Group, School, Teachers)

The target group of this study was a group of 32 students between the age of 15 and 19 who had been in Sweden for only a short amount of time (between one and three years) and who participated in the introductory course at a Swedish upper secondary school (year 10-12). They were asked how long they had been studying Swedish and English respectively and what their mother tongue is. This aimed to find out whether there is a correlation between certain mother tongues and language proficiency in Swedish and English. The process of data collection was aided by the help of the students' teacher and mother tongue assistant in order to help them understand what was asked in the survey. The students were also informed that the survey was not included in their grading in any form in order to not cause any unnecessary stress and in order to prevent cheating which would have compromised the results. It is also important to mention that students who did not have sufficient knowledge of Swedish were excluded from this study since the initial survey was in Swedish only⁶. In the following sections, the results of the survey will be presented in order to give the reader an overview of the participants of the study.

Briefly summarized⁷, the majority of the participants were 16 and 18 years old and there were more male than female participants. Most students had English as a school subject for less than one year. Likewise, the majority had English as a subject in Sweden for less than a year. Most of the participants had English as a subject before they came to Sweden. The majority of the students had Swedish for more than one year. When it comes to the students' personal backgrounds, the majority answered that they came from Syria and Afghanistan. Most of the students have been in Sweden for more than three years and Arabic is the mother tongue spoken by the majority of participants. In figure 1 the individuals are presented with their respective background in order to give the reader a complete overview about the group.

⁶ Even the student's teachers recommended that the initial survey should be in Swedish as the students would otherwise have problems to understand.

⁷ The detailed results including figures of the survey can be found in the appendix.

age	gender	English as subject	English in Sweden	English before Sweden	Swedish as subject	country of origin	stay in Sweden	mother tongue
18	male	2-3 years	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	2-3 years	Arabic
18	male	less than 1 year	more than 1 year	no	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	more than 3 years	Persian
16	male	less than 1 year	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	less than 3 years	Persian
16	female	more than 3 years	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Kurdistan	more than 3 years	Kurdish
16	male	2-3 years	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year		less than 1 year	
19	male	more than 3 years	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Thailand	2-3 years	Thai
19	male	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Thailand	2-3 years	Thai
17	male	less than 1 year	mindre än 1 år	no	less than 1 year	Argentina	less than 1 year	Spanish
17	male	more than 3 years	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	2-3 years	Arabic
18	male	more than 1 year	less than 1 year	no	more than 1 year	Iran	less than 3 years	Persian
18	female	more than 1 year	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Thailand	2-3 years	Thai
18	female	more than 1 year	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Romania	more than 3 years	Romanian
19	female	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	no	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	less than 1 year	Persian
17	female	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	more than 1 year	Persian
17	female	more than 3 years	2-3 years	yes	more than 1 year	Irak	more than 3 years	Arabic
16	female	2-3 years	2-3 years	no	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 3 years	Arabic
16	female	2-3 years	less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	2-3 years	Arabic
16	female	more than 3 years	more than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 3 years	Arabic
18	male	more than 3 years	more than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 3 years	Arabic
18	do not want to say	less than 1 year	more than 1 year	no	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	more than 3 years	Persian

19	female	2-3 years	2-3 years	no	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	more than 3 years	Persian
17	male	2-3 years	2-3 years	no	more than 1 year	Afghanistan	more than 3 years	Persian
16	male	2-3 years	2-3 years	no	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 3 years	Arabic
16	male	more than 3 years	less than 1 year	yes	less than 1 year	Romania	less than 1 year	Hungarian
16	male	more than 3 years	less than 1 year	yes	less than 1 year	Sudan	less than 1 year	Arabic
16	male	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	no	more than 1 year		2-3 years	Arabic
16	female	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	no	less than 1 year	Thailand	less than 1 year	Thai
16	male	more than 3 years	less than 1 year	yes	less than 1 year	United Arab Emirates	less than 1 year	Arabic
16	female		less than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 3 years	Arabic
17	do not want to say	more than 3 years	less than 1 year	yes	less than 1 year	Italy	less than 1 year	Italian
18	male	less than 1 year	more than 1 year	yes	more than 1 year	Syria	more than 1 year	Kurdish
18	male	less than 1 year	less than 1 year	no	more than 1 year	Somalia	more than 1 year	Somali

Figure 1: Overview of the individuals' answers in the survey, presenting their background.

3.2 Data

The survey and vocabulary test were accomplished on the students' own computers with Google Forms which made the analysis of the data easier and more accessible. An issue that occurred though, was that some students did not refrain from using Google Translate while answering the vocabulary test (both the teacher and the researcher had to constantly remind the participants not to use translation tools). Another issue is that not all participants answered the whole survey and vocabulary test. These issues will be taken into account later in the analysis and are to be addressed in 3.4 where validity and reliability of the method will be discussed.

3.2.1 Survey and Vocabulary Test

An initial set of questions aims at the background of the students, such as age, gender, country of origin and proficiency in both Swedish and English. The second part is the vocabulary test, in which the first 20 questions targeted the students' proficiency in English and the other 20

questions aimed at the students' proficiency in Swedish. In order to make the test more accessible and easier to understand, the students were given multiple choice questions (even in the initial survey). The language proficiency questions were also designed with an increasing level of difficulty.

The complete survey and vocabulary test can be found in the appendix. It is divided into three parts: the initial survey with questions on the student's background, the vocabulary test in English and lastly, the vocabulary test in Swedish. This division was also made on Google Forms in order to help the students with overview and understanding. The link to the survey on Google Forms which the students got at school can also be found in the references. Both the survey and the vocabulary test were compiled by the author of this essay. The questions in the English vocabulary test were taken from the VST test⁸ based on a study by Nation & Beglar (2007), whereas the questions in the Swedish vocabulary tests were designed on the basis of the 1000 most common Swedish words⁹.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Reliability implies that the results of a study are consistent, meaning that the results should be the same when doing the same test several times. Validity refers to the concept of a study testing what it is supposed to test. A test that is valid is also reliable, but a test that is reliable is not necessarily valid. Internal validity refers to how well a test is actually measuring what it is supposed to measure. External validity on the other hand means that a test can be generalized (Drost 2011).

As already mentioned in 3.2, there have been issues with validity and reliability of the data collected since the students took the survey on their laptops and were thus able to use translation tools online, such as Google Translate. Obviously, this has to be taken into account while analyzing the data, although it also needs to be mentioned that both the teachers and the author of this essay constantly reminded the students that they should refrain from using these tools because that would have had negative impacts on the results of the study. In the survey itself it is also mentioned that using translation tools would distort the study's results. Nevertheless, cheating did occur and therefore the validity and reliability of this study are not given, making it impossible to come to any conclusive findings within the frame of this study.

⁸ Link to the VST test: <https://www.lex tutor.ca/tests/vst/>

⁹ The words can be found here:

https://larare.at/svenska/moment/lingvistik/vanligaste_orden_i_svenska_spraket.html

Another issue to be discussed at this point is the number of participants in the study. Since only 32 students participated in the survey this study cannot be counted as reliable when it comes to researching this issue. It is nevertheless a topic that should be investigated in further research since the stream of refugees does not cease to stop and it is important for the newly arrived students to be able to fulfill their education.

A third point to be taken up here is an issue on question 10 in the first part of the Swedish vocabulary test. The participants were to fill in the missing word in a given sentence, choosing from multiple choice answers. The sentence was “Många äldre känner sig rätt så _____ i dagens samhälle.” and the multiple choice answers were as following: a) peppade, b) bekväma, c) ensamma, d) roliga. The problem with this question was that more than one answer (being b) and c)) were to be counted as correct. That is why both answers were counted as correct later.

Lastly, there was a question on how long the students have had Swedish as a subject at school, but the given answers (more or less than one year) do not give sufficient enough information about the students' background which is why the question on the students' stay in Sweden is more conclusive in that matter.

4 Results and Discussion

At this point in the essay the data will be presented and analyzed, in line with the essay's aim and research question. The aim of this essay was to investigate whether there is a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish among newly arrived upper secondary students in Sweden, focusing on their passive vocabulary. To test this and collect conclusive findings, a group of newly arrived students were given a survey and vocabulary test, testing their vocabulary proficiency in both English and Swedish.

4.1 Results

Counting the correct answers in both English and Swedish vocabulary tests and comparing these, the result indicates that there is no correlation between the proficiency in English and Swedish.

As the results indicate, there is no correlation to be found, as it can be seen in figure 2. The graph shows a slight upwards line indicating the correlation, but it is not significant and thus it is not to be interpreted as a positive correlation.

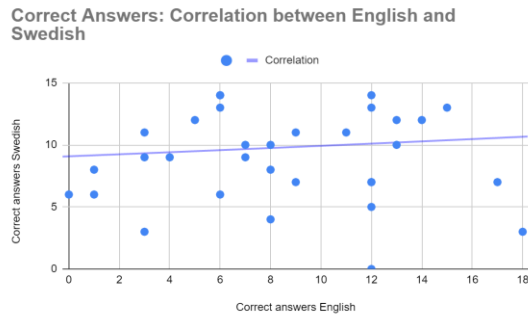


Figure 2: Correlation between English and Swedish, as tested in vocabulary tests.

As seen in figure 3, the best result in English is 18 points, and the worst is 0. In Swedish, the best result is 15 and the worst is 0. Eleven students scored better in English than Swedish, 16 students scored better in Swedish and four students reached the same result in both English and Swedish. This indicates that the students are generally better in Swedish than English but that the best score in English was higher than the best score in Swedish.

CORRECT: ENGLISH	CORRECT: SWEDISH
8	8
1	8
3	11
9	7
12	8
7	10
6	6
12	7
6	14
4	9
9	11
12	13
3	9
7	9
6	15
6	13
13	10
13	12
14	12
11	11
12	14
8	10
15	13
17	7
12	0
1	6
3	3
18	3
0	6
8	4
5	12
12	5

Figure 3: Test results (correct answers) in comparison.

4.1.1 Individual Results and Questions in Focus

Looking at the individual test results, it became clear that those who had English as a subject before they came to Sweden obviously scored high in the English part of the vocabulary test. The same conclusion can be stated vice versa: those who did not have English as a subject before coming to Sweden also scored low in the English test. When it comes to the Swedish part of the vocabulary test, high results were achieved by those who had been in Sweden for more than three years and who had Swedish as a subject for more than one year. Low results in Swedish were achieved by those who had Swedish as a subject for less than one year.

Looking specifically at mother tongues, there can be some conclusions drawn on whether the mother tongue of the participants had any influence on which second language was stronger or easier to be acquired. For example, participants with Arabic as their mother tongue either scored high in English or in Swedish, a few even scored high in both. Participants with Dari as their mother tongue in comparison scored lower in general (in both languages) than their peers with Arabic as their mother tongue and they all got a higher score in Swedish than in English.

Another interesting aspect to look at in the results is gender. The female participants scored better in Swedish than in English, whereas it was only three female students who did better in English and eight female students who did better in Swedish. One female participant scored the same result in both languages. Best female result was 14 in Swedish. The male participants on the other hand scored equally in English and Swedish, meaning that eight of the male participants got a higher result in Swedish and nine of them got a higher result in English. Three male participants scored the same result in both languages. The best male result is 18 in English. In comparison, it was more male participants (nine) who scored the highest results.

Comparing the length of studies in English as a school subject, it can be said that some of the participants who had English as a school subject for 2-3 years scored higher than the ones who had English for a shorter period, but that is not true for all of them. Some also scored lower, even though they had been studying English for a longer period.

When it comes to individual questions it turned out that the easiest ones (with the most right answers) in the English part were *time*, *poor* and *see* and in Swedish they were *kör*, *skor* and *ringa*. The hardest questions (with the least number of right answers) were *candid*, *compound* and *patience* in English and *berikande*, *ytterligare* and *springer* in Swedish.

4.2 Interpretation

The correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish being non-existent, the results indicate that the learners' proficiency in Swedish has no

impact on their proficiency in English. This being said, it has to be noted that this study is too small to come to any meaningful conclusions. Another point to mark out here as well are the issues of cheating and reliability and validity of this study, making the findings inconclusive.

4.3 Discussion

Since this study is unreliable due to the cheating issue, it has to be stated that there could not be found any conclusive findings within the frame of this paper. On the other hand, it can be argued that there still is an issue with newly arrived students being forced to acquire both Swedish and English simultaneously which opens up for further research on the topic. There needs to be more data collected without the possibility of jeopardising the results by cheating as it was the case in this study. The study suggests that there is no correlation between the proficiency in English and Swedish. What should be pointed out here though is also the fact that a correlation does not necessarily indicate a causation, thus it cannot conclusively be stated, that learning Swedish automatically increases or decreases the learners' proficiency in English. Again, this topic needs to be investigated further. Other influences that have not been taken into account in this paper are for example aptitude, class or differences in urban and rural schools.

When it comes to previous research it can be stated that the results of this study are too inconclusive and unreliable to clearly state that they do or do not reflect previous findings on that matter. What can be stated though is the fact that the length of studies in either language clearly has an influence on the students' language proficiency. It is not clear what role the distinct mother tongues of the students play and this should be considered and analyzed more deeply. There is also room for further discussion on whether it plays a role in the acquisition process that the L2 and L3 are rather similar to each other since they belong to the same language family. What would also be interesting to find out is whether age or gender play a role in the learners' language proficiency. Finally, when it comes to the aim of this paper of finding out whether there is a correlation between the language proficiency in the learners' L2 and L3, the results do not point out any correlation.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether there is a correlation between the vocabulary proficiency in English and the vocabulary proficiency in Swedish among newly arrived upper secondary students in Sweden, where the focus was on the student's passive vocabulary. The method of the study was a vocabulary test which tested both the proficiency in English and

Swedish, thus giving the possibility to find a possible correlation of proficiency in the two languages. The results showed that there is no correlation, since the results are being inconclusive due to cheating. This also takes into account the fact that the study only included 32 participants and thus it is not a reliable one when it comes to quantity.

In conclusion, it can be said that this study cannot indicate whether there is a positive or negative correlation between the two languages and thus it is impossible to draw any conclusions at this point. This study is a very small one and cannot be seen or counted as conclusive or reliable in the matter. The validity and reliability of this study is also questionable since some students did not refrain from cheating by using translation tools. It is also important to state again that correlation does not necessarily mean causation, meaning that Swedish does not necessarily have to have a positive or negative impact on the learners' acquisition process of the English language and vice versa. Last but not least, this study still addresses the topic and the problematic situation of newly arrived students and indicates that the matter should be researched and investigated further.

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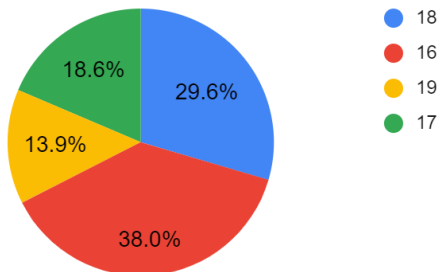
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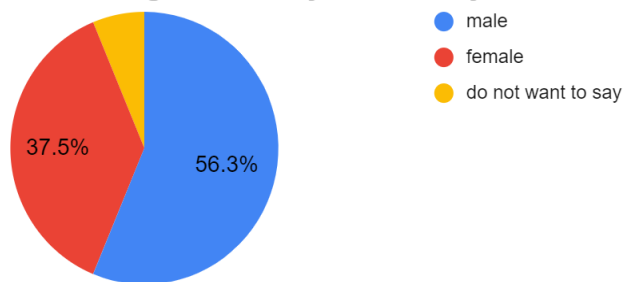
Appendix

A Survey (figures)

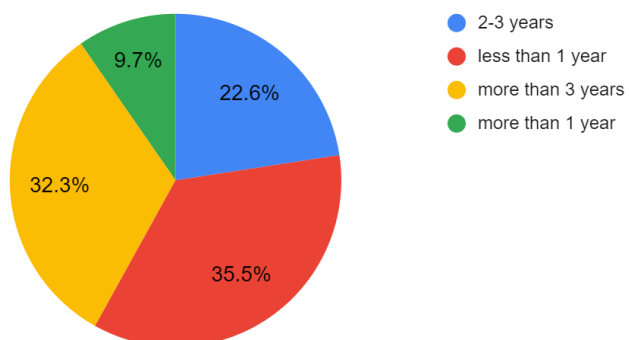
Question 1: How old are you?



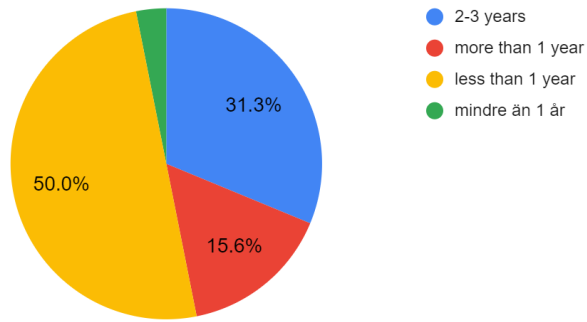
Question 2: What gender do you identify as?



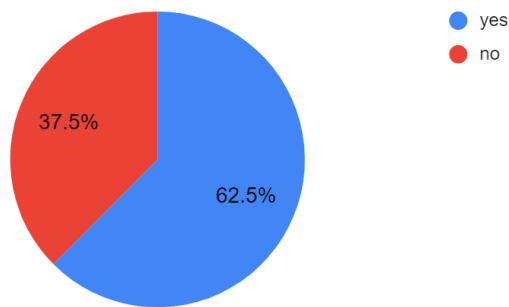
Question 3: How long did you have English as a subject at school?



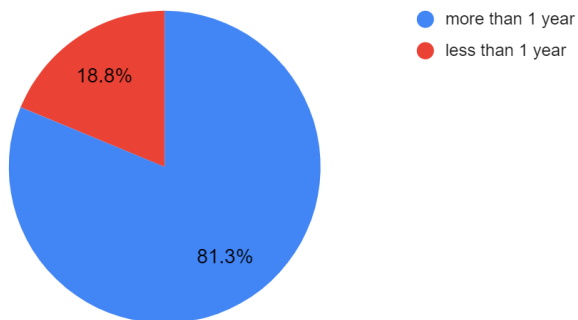
Question 4: How long did you have English as a subject in Sweden?



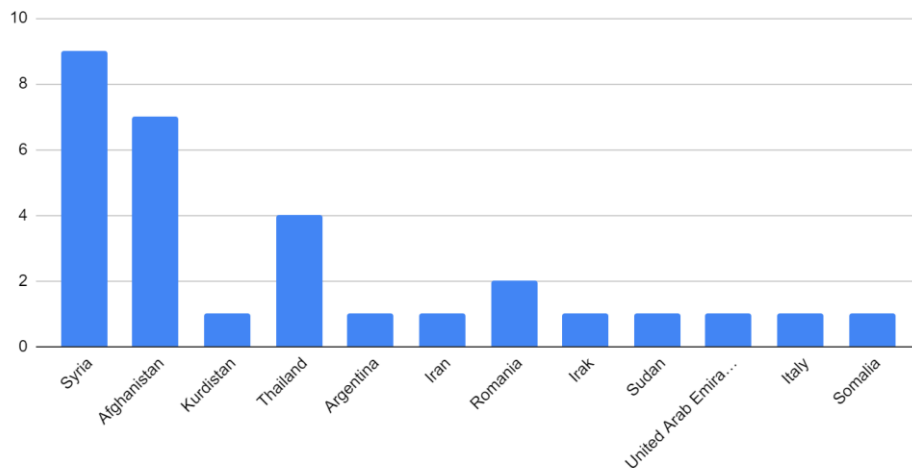
Question 5: Did you have English as a subject before you came to Sweden?



Question 6: How long did you have Swedish as a subject at school?

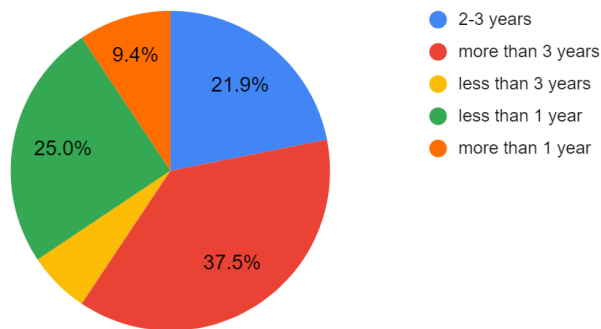


Question 7: Are you from another country than Sweden? If yes, which?

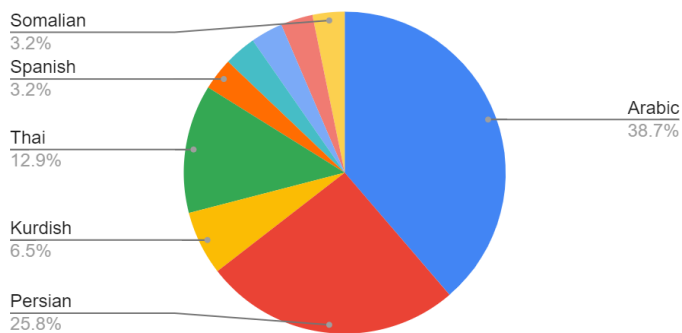


Count of Are you from another country than Sweden? If yes, which?

Question 8: If yes, how long have you been in Sweden?



Question 9: Do you have another mother tongue than Swedish? If yes, which?



B Survey and Vocabulary Test

Vocabulary Test/Enkät

Det här glosförhöret framläggs och används bara i vetenskapligt syfte vilket innebär att det varken kommer ha någon betydelse för ditt betyg eller att informationen som anges här kommer publiceras i annat syfte än vetenskapligt analys i form av en C uppsats. Var god och besvara även de inledande frågor, då detta är viktigt för att kunna genomföra analysen. Tack för din hjälp och medverkande! P.S.: Det är viktigt att du inte fuskar då detta kommer förfalska resultaten av analysen.

PART I: survey

1. Hur gammal är du?
 - 16
 - 17
 - 18
 - 19
 - 20
 - äldre

2. Vilket kön har du? Med kön menas här könsidentitet, alltså det kön du själv känner dig som.
 - kvinnlig
 - manlig
 - annat
 - vill inte säga
3. Hur länge har du haft Engelska som undervisningsämne?
 - mindre än 1 år
 - längre än 1 år
 - 2-3 år
 - 3 år eller mer

4. Hur länge har du läst Engelska i Sverige?
 - mindre än 1 år
 - mer än 1 år
 - 2-3 år

5. Har du läst Engelska innan du kom till Sverige?
 - ja
 - nej

6. Hur länge har du läst Svenska?
 - mindre än 1 år
 - längre än 1 år

7. Kommer du från ett annat land än Sverige? Om ja, vilket?
 - nej
 - ja, _____

8. Om ja hur länge har du bott i Sverige nu?
 - mindre än 1 år
 - längre än 1 år
 - 2-3 år
 - längre än 3 år

9. Har du ett annat modersmål än svenska? Om ja, vilket?
 - nej

□ ja, _____

PART II: English

Choose the correct answer. Circle the letter a-d with the closest meaning to the key word in the question.

1. SEE: They **saw** it.
a. cut b. waited for c. looked at d. started
2. TIME: They have a lot of **time**.
a. money b. food c. hours d. friends
3. PERIOD: It was a difficult **period**.
a. question b. time c. thing to do d. book
4. FIGURE: Is this the right **figure**?
a. answer b. place c. time d. number
5. POOR: We are **poor**.
a. have no money b. feel happy c. are very interested d. do not like to work hard
6. MAINTAIN: Can they **maintain** it?
a. keep it as it is b. make it larger c. get a better one than it d. get it
7. STONE: He sat on a **stone**.
a. hard thing b. kind of chair c. soft thing on the floor d. part of a tree
8. UPSET: I am **upset**.
a. tired b. famous c. rich d. unhappy
9. DRAWER: The **drawer** was empty.
a. sliding box b. place where cars are kept c. cupboard to keep things cold d. animal house
10. PATIENCE: He has no **patience**.
a. will not wait happily b. has no free time c. has no faith d. does not know what is fair
11. SOLDIER: He is a **soldier**.
a. person in a business b. student c. person who uses metal d. person in the army
12. RESTORE: It has been **restored**.
a. said again b. given to a different person c. given a lower price d. made like new again
13. JUG: He was holding a **jug**.
a. A container for pouring liquids b. an informal discussion c. A soft cap d. A weapon that explodes
14. SCRUB: He is **scrubbing** it.
a. cutting shallow lines into it b. repairing it c. rubbing it hard to clean it d. drawing simple pictures of it
15. DINOSAUR: The children were pretending to be **dinosaurs**.
a. robbers who work at sea b. very small creatures with human form but with wings c. large creatures with wings that breathe fire d. animals that lived a long time ago
16. COMPOUND: They made a new **compound**.
a. agreement b. thing made of two or more parts c. group of people forming a business d. guess based on past experience
17. LATTER: I agree with the **latter**.
a. man from the church b. reason given c. last one d. answer

18. CANDID: Please be **candid**.

a. be careful b. show sympathy c. show fairness to both sides d. say what you really think

19. TUMMY: Look at my **tummy**.

a. cloth to cover the head b. stomach c. small furry animal d. thumb

20. QUIZ: We made a **quiz**.

a. thing to hold arrows b. serious mistake c. set of questions d. box for birds to make nests in

PART III: Swedish

I den här delen följer frågor som testar dina kunskaper på svenska. Detta för att kunna jämföra kunskaperna på Engelska och Svenska.

Nedan saknas ett ord som du ska fylla i. Välj ett av alternativen och sätt ett kryss på ordet som du tycker passar bäst i luckan.

1. Han _____ mycket fort med bilen.

a) kör b) går c) ritar d) sover

2. Hon _____ in i det kalla vattnet.

a) hoppas b) undrar c) springer d) simmar

3. Flickan har inga _____ på sina fötter.

a) bollar b) skor c) väskor d) tavlor

4. På skolan finns en hög _____, eleverna når ofta toppresultat.

a) bok b) ram c) lampa d) standard

5. Du kan bygga ditt argument på denna _____ och utveckla detta till en fullständig diskussion om ämnet.

a) bas b) maska c) väderlek d) försäkring

6. Vi träffas på _____ ikväll och firar din födelsedag. Det blir kull!

a) kyrkogården b) dagisen c) krogen d) läkarhuset

7. I uppgiften ska det rätta alternativet _____ in av eleven.

a) ringas b) upprepas c) kramas d) försvagas

8. Kan du _____ mig senare? Jag kan inte svara just nu.

a) kyssa b) ringa c) berätta d) skydda

9. Prata nu i _____ så att du hörs ordentligt och i hela salen.

a) mikrofonen b) högtalaren c) väskan d) huset

10. Många äldre känner sig rätt så _____ i dagens samhälle.

a) peppade b) bekväma c) ensamma d) roliga

I följande uppgift ska du hitta synonym (dvs ett ord som motsvarar det sökta ordet gällande dess betydelse) för det efterfrågade ordet. Sätt ett kryss på det rätta alternativet.

1. **besviken**

a) nöjd b) belåten c) tillfreds d) ledsen

2. **ungefär**

a) precis b) exakt c) sisådär d) oberoende

3. ytterligare

- a) dessutom b) mindre c) ytliga d) uppenbarligen

4. egentligen

- a) kanske b) faktiskt c) huvudsakligen d) egoistisk

5. ordförande

- a) ordbok b) deltagare c) talesman d) talare

6. berikande

- a) tråkigt b) riktandes c) beräkande d) lärorik

7. naturligtvis

- a) givetvis b) givande c) naturnära d) tveksam

8. ångest

- a) ångra b) ångerfull c) rädsla d) glädje

9. igenom

- a) över b) under c) medan d) därför

10. åtminstone

- a) minst b) återigen c) aldrig d) mindre