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**LANGUAGE TRANSFER IN THE PIED-PIPING
AND PREPOSITION STRANDING
CONSTRUCTIONS OF NATIVE FINNISH AND
SWEDISH SPEAKERS: A COMPARISON**

ABSTRACT

Henri Lammintausta: "Language Transfer in the Pied-Piping and Preposition Stranding Constructions of Native Finnish and Swedish Speakers: A Comparison"

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In the context of second language acquisition research, the influence of a learners' mother tongue in the acquisition of their target language has always been of substantial interest. This influence, called language transfer, can be either negative or positive. Most studies, especially those conducted on L1 speakers of Finnish, emphasize the errors Finns make in their English and the negative transfer effects the Finnish language has on the acquisition of English.

Thus, the purpose of this thesis is to search for facilitative effects (positive transfer) that Finnish as a native language may have on the acquisition of English. On a practical level, we will compare Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English in the way they utilize pied-piping and preposition stranding in their written English. As the Finnish language only pied-pipes and the Swedish language prefers preposition stranding, and as one of these structures (pied-piping) is considered more formal than the other, the chosen topic is fruitful for both searching for facilitation and for comparing these two L1 groups together. The data for our research was collected from the *International Corpus of Learner English*.

The findings of this study suggest that it is possible that the Finnish language produces facilitation in the production of pied-piping, and that the Finnish learner is at least as proficient as the Swedish learner in the context of pied-piping and preposition stranding in their written English.

Nonetheless, no generalizations can be made from the results of this study, due to its small scale and because of the difficulties of proving facilitation. In addition, studying spoken English could have produced more interesting results, as the production of speech is more spontaneous and less careful than that of writing. Future studies on the facilitative effects of Finnish language on the acquisition of English could focus on studying speech and be conducted on a larger scale.

Keywords: language transfer, positive transfer, L1-influence, pied-piping, preposition stranding

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Henri Lammintausta: "Language Transfer in the Pied-Piping and Preposition Stranding Constructions of Native Finnish and Swedish Speakers: A Comparison"

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Äidinkielen vaikutus kohdekielen omaksumiseen on ilmiö, joka on aina ollut merkittävän kiinnostuksen kohteena toisen kielen oppimisen tutkimusalalla. Tämä vaikutus, nimeltään äidinkielen siirtovaikutus, voi olla laadultaan negatiivista tai positiivista. Suuri osa tutkimuksista, jotka ovat keskittyneet suomen kieltä äidinkielenään puhuvien oppijoiden englannin kielen käytön tarkasteluun, ovat lähinnä korostaneet suomalaisten oppijoiden tekemiä virheitä sekä suomen kielen aiheuttamia negatiivisia siirtovaikutuksia englannin kielen oppimiselle.

Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on keskittyä tutkimaan nimenomaan niitä mahdollisia positiivisia siirtovaikutuksia, joita suomen kieli tuottaa englannin kielen oppimisen avuksi. Käytännön tasolla me vertailemme äidinkielenään suomea ja ruotsia puhuvia suomalaisia englannin kielen oppijoita siinä, kuinka he käyttävät kirjoittamansa englannin kielen relatiivilauseissa ns. pied-piping ja preposition stranding -rakenteita. Aiheen valinta on mieluinen positiivisen siirtovaikutuksen tutkimiselle ja kahden eri äidinkieltä puhuvan ryhmän vertailulle, koska suomen kielessä on mahdollista käyttää vain pied-piping-rakennetta, kun taas ruotsin kielen kohdalla ilmenee lähinnä vain preposition stranding-konstruktioita. Lisäksi pied-pipingia pidetään englannin kielessä muodollisempänä rakenteena, joten jos suomen kielestä on apua sen omaksumiselle, voidaan puhua positiivisen siirtovaikutuksen toteutumisesta. Tässä tutkimuksessa käytetty materiaali kerättiin *International Corpus of Learner English*-korpuksesta.

Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat suomen kielen tuottamien positiivisten siirtovaikutusten mahdollisen olemassaolon liittyen pied-pipingiin sekä sen, että suomea äidinkielenään puhuvat oppijat ovat tässä kontekstissa vähintään yhtä päteviä kuin ruotsin kielen puhujat.

Yleistyksiä ei kuitenkaan voida tehdä tutkimuksen pienen skaalan ja positiivisen siirtovaikutuksen todistamisen vaikeuden takia. Lisäksi puhutun englannin tutkiminen olisi saattanut olla hyödyllisempää johtuen puhekielen spontaaniudesta. Tulevaisuudessa suomen kielen positiivisista siirtovaikutuksista englannin kieleen tehtävät tutkimukset voisivat olla laajempia ja keskittyä ennemminkin puhutun kielen tutkimiseen.

Avainsanat: language transfer, positive transfer, L1-influence, pied-piping, preposition stranding

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck –ohjelmalla.

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1. Introduction

Ever since the 1960s, second language acquisition (or SLA) research has been a rapidly evolving field of enquiry (Ellis 1995, 1.). A generally accepted view within the field of SLA research is that achieving native-like proficiency in a second language is extremely difficult, if not impossible (Gass et al. 2013, 1). One of the main findings of SLA research is the theory of *interlanguage*. According to interlanguage theory, learners of a second language form a linguistic system that absorbs influences from both their native language (L1) and their second language (L2) (Ellis 2000, 33). In other words, the learners of a second language are attempting to discover resemblances between their native language and the target language (Ringbom 2007, 1), thus forming their learner language as a result.

Therefore, when learning a second language, the first language portrays a major role in its acquisition. The effect which the learner's first language has on the acquisition of their target language is called *language transfer*. Transfer, even in present research, is mostly considered to be an interfering effect where the learners' first language causes them to make errors in their target language production (Odlin 1989, 26). Nonetheless, Ringbom (2007, 41) argues that language transfer is, in fact, predominantly positive.

Albeit Ringbom's assertion of transfer being mostly facilitative, most research, especially in the context of studying native Finnish speaking learners of English, has been focusing on error analysis and negative transfer. Hence, the motivation for this study stems from the shortage of research conducted on the facilitative effects the Finnish language may have on the acquisition of English. Our research has its focus on *pied-piping* and *preposition stranding* in the context of relative clauses, and it compares the ways in which native Finnish and native Swedish speakers utilize these constructions. We chose our topic for three reasons. Firstly, comparing Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking learners in the niche linguistic area of

pied-piping and preposition stranding is beneficial due to the grammatical differences between Swedish and Finnish. The Swedish language mostly strands prepositions (Holmes and Hinchliffe 2020, 78), whereas the Finnish language only pied-pipes (Hakulinen et al 2005, 721-6). Secondly, as concerns learning English, Swedish speakers appear to have an advantage over Finnish speakers in every category except spelling (Ringbom 1987, 80-109). Thus, our purpose is to find evidence that in the case of pied-piping and preposition stranding, the Finnish language does facilitate towards pied-piping (the formal construct), as opposed to the Swedish language, which predominantly strands prepositions. Thirdly, as stated prior, there is a scarcity of research on the facilitative effects the Finnish language has on the acquisition of English.

Although it is debated whether language transfer affects linguistic sub-systems such as syntax and morphology (Meriläinen 2010, 18), Meriläinen (ibid.) detected transfer effects in the above-mentioned linguistic systems. This information is crucial to our hypotheses, as pied-piping and prepositions stranding are phenomena of syntax. We hypothesize that the Finnish language has a facilitative effect on learning pied-piping in English and that the native Finnish speaking learners of English perform as proficiently as the L1 speakers of Swedish in their choices of opting for pied-piping and preposition stranding.

The data for this study were collected from the *International Corpus of Learner English*. Certain query words were entered into the corpus to detect all occasions of pied-piping and preposition stranding in the written texts of both native Finnish speakers and native Swedish speakers. From these occurrences, only those where the writer could have opted for both pied-piping and preposition stranding were selected. It needs to be mentioned that all the participants in the study were native Finns. The analysis of the data involves counting all the occurrences of preposition stranding and pied-piping and marking the frequency and

distribution of each preposition appearing in the collected samples. From there, conclusions will be drawn as regards our hypotheses.

This bachelor's thesis is divided into six (6) chapters. This introduction will be followed by a literature review (section 2), which contains the essential theoretical background for our study, and the research questions. Section 3 will introduce the materials and methods used in our study. In Section 4, we provide an analysis of the collected data and search for evidence to answer our research questions and to prove our hypotheses correct. Subsequently, in section 5 we discuss our findings and their validity. Lastly, section 6 provides the final summary and conclusions.

2. Literature review

The essential theories of second language acquisition research e.g., *language transfer* and *interlanguage* will be discussed here. In addition, an overview of the history of SLA research from the 1940s to the present date is included, followed by a brief examination of transfer research in the Finnish environment.

Additionally, the characteristics of relative clauses in Finnish, Swedish, and English are compared, and a more comprehensive review as regards the previous research on pied-piping and preposition stranding is provided. The literature review section is concluded by a summary, which includes the hypothesis and the research questions for this study.

2.1. Language transfer

Language transfer, or L1 transfer, is the integration of native language elements into the acquisition of a second language. This L1 influence can be observed as both *negative* and *positive* transfer (Ellis 1995, 28-29; Ellis 2000, 51). Ellis (1995, 304) employs the terms *avoidance* and *over-use* and separates them from *negative transfer (errors)*. Ellis's (ibid.) reasoning for implying that avoidance and over-use are separate manifestations from negative

transfer is that they do not focus on error production. However, this distinction is debatable since it suggests that negative transfer as a term can only include cases of production errors. Although Ellis suggests that there is a difference between *transfer* (interference) and *intralingual processes* (comparable to language development processes of L1 acquisition) and that the occurrences of errors, avoidance, and over-use can be intralingual in nature (ibid., 302-306), they *can* also manifest themselves due to interference. Hence, we will acknowledge Odlin's (1989, 36-38) view on this subject due to its more consistent nature.

Odlin (ibid.) introduces terms such as 1) *underproduction*, 2) *overproduction*, 3) *production errors*, and 4) *misinterpretation* when discussing negative transfer. Learners may then either 1) avoid or under-use target language structures due to these structures not being frequent in their L1. For example, Finnish speakers of English tend to omit articles and prepositions because the Finnish language does not use articles and rarely uses prepositions (Ringbom 2007, 78). Learners may also opt to 2) overproduce TL structures; this often happens when they underproduce some other structures, or because of cultural differences (such as the over-use of apologies) (Odlin 1989, 36-38.). Negative transfer is typically equated with 3) production errors. As an example, a Finn making a literal translation of a Finnish language structure into English – e.g., using ‘what’ (‘mikä’) as a relative pronoun – is a production error. Learners can also 4) misinterpret TL structures based on their own native language. (ibid.).

More relevant to this study is *positive transfer*, or *facilitation*. Facilitation ensues when there are similarities between the native and target languages (ibid.). For example, if a learner's native and target languages share the same or similar rules governing the use of relative clauses, the facilitating effect makes it less difficult for them to learn how to utilize TL relative clause structures.

As Ringbom (1987, 58; 2007, 41) asserts, the focus of transfer studies has chiefly been on negative transfer and error analysis. This is problematic since there is evidence to suggest that cross-linguistic influence (language transfer) is primarily positive. Ringbom summarizes positive transfer as “the application of at least partially correct perceptions or assumptions of cross-linguistic similarity”. (2007, 41). This could be interpreted as Ringbom’s manner of saying that traditional error analysis has mistakenly assumed “partially correct perceptions” to be instances of negative transfer. Ringbom claims that error analysis is insufficient due to its fixation on grammatical errors (*ibid.*), and that “not all errors in learner language are due to transfer, and not all instances of transfer lead to errors” (Ringbom 1987, 69).

2.2. Interlanguage

The concept of interlanguage was conceived by Larry Selinker in 1972. The basis of the interlanguage theory is directly connected to the mentalist accounts of L1 acquisition. Interlanguage recognizes that “L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learner’s L1 but is also different from it and also from the target language”. (Ellis 2000, 33). In other words, L2 learners each possess an individual and unique language system, which absorbs influences from both their L1 and L2. The theory of interlanguage is an important concept in L2 acquisition research since it was the first attempt to understand and explain second language acquisition (Ellis 1995, 350). Overgeneralization and simplification are processes identified by the interlanguage theory (*ibid.*, 30).

2.3. A brief overview of the history of second language acquisition research

The study of second language acquisition can be divided into different historical “waves”. Behaviourist views dominated for two decades after the Second World War (Ellis 1995, 299). Behaviourism suggested that a learner’s native language greatly influences their L2 acquisition (*ibid.*, 43); in fact, Fries and Lado, who were the main figures behind Contrastive

Analysis Hypothesis, would go as far as to say that language learners have the assumption of L1 characteristics appearing similarly in their L2 (Thomas 2013, 30).

By the 1960s and 1970s, behaviourist theories were challenged and considered inadequate (Ellis 1994, 43; 2000, 32). Firstly, by Chomsky's "attack on behaviourism" (Ellis 1994, 43) and his theories on Universal Grammar, and secondly, by the L1 researchers' studies on mother tongue acquisition (*ibid.*). Contrastive Analysis was replaced by Error Analysis by the 1970s (*ibid.*, 47). CA was only concerned with fully formed languages, whereas EA presented the concept of 'learner language'; hence, EA supplied the proper methods for L2 acquisition research. (*ibid.*, 48). Error Analysis, however, has lost some of its acclaim. It is still used as a research method, but its methodological weaknesses for more comprehensive studies have been recognized and its usage is now restricted to studying specific and narrowed research questions. (*ibid.*, 69-70).

As EA was replacing CAH and behaviourist views were under scrutiny, another theoretical framework was needed for L2 acquisition research. By the 1970s, mentalist theories of L1 acquisition were emerging (Ellis 2000, 32). These mentalist (or minimalist) views proposed that the role of L1 in L2 acquisition is minimal; indeed, mentalists even asserted that L1 transfer is almost non-existent in some language structures (Ellis 1995, 342). Nevertheless, Odlin (1989, 23) identifies minimalism's own shortcomings as 1) its emphasis on error analysis and 2) its reliance on language universals. Errors (and the lack thereof) cannot be employed as the only evidence against transfer effects, and cross-linguistic influences, in fact, work together with "universal developmental sequences" (*ibid.*).

Current SLA research considers both behaviourist and mentalist accounts simplistic (Ellis 1995, 60). The focus is now directed towards analyzing why the differences between L1 and L2 occasionally result in transfer and at times they do not. Present theoretical framework

acknowledges the importance of language transfer, but the influence of L1 over L2 is approached differently than in the past. Transfer is perceived as a *cognitive process* in which L1 is actively utilized as a resource in the learners' interlanguage development. (Ellis 1995, 342-3).

2.4. Researching language transfer in the Finnish framework

Finland has two primary official languages: Finnish and Swedish. The closer two languages are to each other, the more substantial the facilitative effect of the L1 is (Ringbom 2007, 130). Hence, studies comparing Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English have shown that Swedish speakers have an advantage in learning English (*ibid.*, 57; Meriläinen 2010). Ringbom asserts that the Finnish learner of English has an “absence of positive transfer” (2007, 62), as native Swedish speakers appear to fare better in every category except spelling (Ringbom 1987, 80-109). Especially English articles and prepositions are considerable obstacles for the Finnish-speaking learner (Ringbom 2007, 78). Nonetheless, the effects of positive L1 transfer decrease in importance the higher the proficiency level is (Ringbom 2007, 57; Peltonen and Lintunen 2016, 230; Saurio 2014). Additionally, English proficiency in Finnish schools has improved greatly in the past two or three decades, and this has affected Finnish-speaking students the most (Ringbom 2007, 57).

2.5. Pied-piping and preposition stranding

This study has its focus on pied-piping and preposition stranding in the context of relative clauses. Therefore, an overview of the related terminology and past research is required prior to presenting our own inquiry.

2.5.1. Terminology

An example of the collected research data collected for this thesis will be used to explain pied-piping and preposition stranding:

(1) a. My suggestion to improve the knowledge in foreign languages is to change the system **in which** they are taught.

b. My suggestion to improve the knowledge in foreign languages is to change the system they are taught **in**.

As Hoffmann (2005, 258) explains, in (1a) the preposition *in* has been “pied-piped” i.e., it appears at the beginning of the clause together with the WH-relativizer *which*. In (1b), the preposition has been “stranded”, meaning it has moved to the end of the clause and it is lacking an adjoining NP complement.

There are some restrictions on whether pied-piping or preposition stranding can occur within a relative clause. Firstly, relative clauses introduced by the *zero* or *that* relativizers do not allow pied-piping, whereas relative clauses beginning with a WH-relativizer typically permit both. (ibid., 261). This is illustrated with another modified example drawn from our research data:

(2) a. The merits **that** a president should be selected on...

b. *The merits **on that** a president should be selected...

(3) a. The merits **(zero)** a president should be selected on...

b. *The merits **on (zero)** a president should be selected...

Secondly, non-finite relative clauses do not permit relativization with *that* (4ab) or allow preposition stranding with *wh-relativizers* (4cd):

(4) a. a philosophy **(zero)** to live by

b. *a philosophy **that** to live by

c. a philosophy by which to live

d. *a philosophy which to live by

Thirdly, the syntactic role of the prepositional phrase (i.e., whether the PP is an adjunct or a complement) also affects the way in which pied-piping and preposition stranding occur (ibid., 264). Whether PP adjuncts can be stranded or not is under debate (Klein 1993, 26-27).

Nonetheless, both Klein (ibid.) and Hoffmann (2005, 264-5) argue that adjunct PP's can in fact be stranded, although stranding is more prevalent in conjunction with PP complement constructions. The occurrence of pied-piping, then, in connection with a PP complement can appear as 'ungrammatical' as a stranded adjunct PP. In example (5), the PP complement has been stranded:

(5) It is not only the European Union these people should be afraid **of**.

And in example (6), the same complement has been pied-piped:

(6) ? It is not only the European Union **of which** these people should be afraid.

Although the latter sentence (6) can appear as less grammatical than the former (5) to many speakers of English, it is, nevertheless, a perfectly valid illustration of pied-piping.

2.5.2. Prior research on pied-piping and preposition stranding

The markedness theory in typological linguistics asserts that *unmarked* constructions are those which appear more commonly or 'naturally' in a language. It is regarded that learners acquire less marked structures prior to acquiring more marked structures. (Ellis 2000, 70). As concerns pied-piping and preposition stranding, PiP is regarded as the unmarked construction and PS as the marked one (Bardovi-Harlig 1987, 386-387).

Nevertheless, in studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, it was noted that PS is replacing PiP, and should thus be considered the norm (ibid.). Van Riemsdijk (1982) argued otherwise in his research and produced two principal reasons why PiP should be the unmarked form and PS the marked construction: 1) preposition stranding is rare in the languages of the world and

2) preposition stranding extracts the WH-element from the prepositional phrase, although most PP's cannot be extracted from. These views are problematic since it is proven that language learners employ PS *before* PiP, hence markedness theory's assumption of unmarked forms being learned first fails to apply in this context (Bardovi-Harlig 1987, 393; 400).

In fact, the occurrence of PiP is a lot less frequent than PS in the English language (ibid., 401-403), which produces more questions on the validity of PiP's unmarkedness. Why does PiP appear more rarely than PS and why is it learned after PS if it is the unmarked form?

Klein (1993, 23-4; 35) attempts to answer these questions. Their research concluded that neither should be regarded as more marked than the other, although evidence suggests that even English speakers consider PiP to be unnatural. As PS is more frequent than PiP, L2 learners tend to acquire it before PiP. Klein's (ibid.) assertion is that the most marked form is when both pied-piping and preposition stranding are regarded as viable for all sentences.

2.6. Relative clause characteristics of Finnish, Swedish, and English

In English, the relativizers *who*, *whom*, *whose*, and (*zero*) are associated with animate head nouns, whereas *that* and *which* relativizers correlate with inanimate head nouns (Biber and Quirk 1999, 610-612). In Finnish, a similar distinction is prevalent as well: *joka* is more common with animate heads, as compared to *mikä*, which is mainly used with inanimate head nouns. However, in written Finnish, *joka* is more common than *mikä* even in modifying inanimate nouns. *Kuka* (*who*) is occasionally used in spoken Finnish to refer to people, but it is highly informal. Finnish language, as compared to English and Swedish, does not allow for omitting the relativizer. (Hakulinen et al. 2005, 721-726; Karlsson 2008, 176-177). Swedish language commonly only uses *som* as a relativizer, except in formal contexts, where *vilken*, *vilket*, and *vilka* appear. Hence, in Swedish, there does not exist a relativizer solely applied to

modify animate head nouns, except for the formal genitive forms *vars* and *vilkas* (whose). (Holmes and Hinchliffe 2020, 78).

In the context of this study, the most crucial attributes Finnish and Swedish relative clauses have in comparison to English relativization are as follows:

- 1) The Finnish language only pied-pipes, the difference to the English language being the fact that the preposition appears after the relativizer, thus functioning as a postposition (Hakulinen et al 2005, 721-6).
- 2) The Swedish language only strands prepositions when employing the relativizer *som*, and it does not have a commonly used relativizer to modify animate head nouns. (Holmes and Hinchliffe 2020, 78)

The relevance of these two characteristics to this research will be discussed further in the summary.

2.7. Summary

We have discussed language transfer, the history of its research, and the Finnish context of transfer studies. Per the focus of this research, we examined pied-piping, preposition stranding, and compared the grammar of relative clause structures of English, Swedish, and Finnish.

In this study, we take preference towards Ringbom's ideas (as mentioned in section 2.1) of cross-linguistic influence, as our research acknowledges the facilitative effects Finnish and Swedish as native languages have on the ability to learn specific English language structures, and as there will be no attention paid towards error production.

As Meriläinen (2010), Nevanperä (2017), and Saurio (2014) have concluded in their research, native Finnish speakers may struggle with applying the correct relative pronouns, but on the

syntactic level, Finns should have no complications as regards the use of relative clauses. This is due to the similarities Finnish relative clause structures have with their English equivalents. Furthermore, as we already stated in section 2.3., 1) the advantage Swedish-speakers have over Finnish-speakers as concerns the effects of positive L1 transfer decrease in higher proficiency levels, and 2) the English proficiency among Finnish-speakers has improved significantly in the past two or three decades.

As the research data has been collected from the *International Corpus of Learner English*, which primarily contains essays from advanced (C1 and C2) learners, and as Finnish language pied-pipes, the hypotheses of our research are as such: when comparing pied-piping and preposition stranding between native Finnish and native Swedish speakers, the proficiency of Finnish speakers is equivalent to that of their Swedish-speaking counterparts, and that the Finnish language has a facilitative effect on learning pied-piping in English. Proficiency is measured in this study by comparing the number of times pied-piping is employed instead of preposition stranding. Although no definite conclusions can be inferred as regards the ‘markedness’ of each structure, pied-piping occurs less frequently than preposition stranding among L2 learners and it is only acquired after preposition stranding (Bardovi-Harlig 1987, 393-403). Additionally, pied-piping is associated with formal writing whereas preposition stranding generally coincides with the contexts of informal writing and speech (Biber and Quirk 1999, 107).

Thus, the research question(s) are:

- 1) In which ways does the utilization of pied-piping and preposition stranding differ between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English in their relative clauses?

- a. More specifically, how occasionally does the Finnish-speaking learner opt for pied-piping as compared to the Swedish-speaking learner?
- 2) Can evidence of facilitation (positive transfer) concerning the native Finnish speakers' usage of PiP constructions be inferred from the data gathered?

Although studies on language transfer of Finnish and Swedish as L1 and comparisons between native Finnish and Swedish speakers have been conducted in the past, the focus of previous research has primarily been on negative transfer and error analysis. Hence, when these two learner groups have been compared with each other, the stress has been on how Finnish speakers produce a significant number of errors in contrast to native Swedish speakers. Thusly, our study is justified by the scientific gap in the research of facilitative effects of Finnish as L1. Furthermore, as the English language proficiency within Finland has been steadily growing, new research is required to argue against the quintessential perspective that native Finnish speakers have a perpetual disadvantage in comparison to native Swedish speakers in acquiring English.

3. Methodology

This section introduces the materials collected for this study and the methodological approach that was used to analyze the data. Furthermore, we will discuss the motivations and justifications for both the selected method and the data collection strategy, which were employed in the attempt to provide answers to the research questions indicated in section 2.

3.1. Materials

The data for this study were collected from the *International Corpus of Learner English* during the autumn of 2020. The physical copy of the corpus was acquired by the Tampere University Library at our request, as there was no way to access it electronically and as Tampere University did not previously possess the corpus. The corpus contained 261 written

essays from learners with Finnish as their native language and 130 essays from Swedish-speaking learners. It is crucial to mention that all the sample essays were written by native Finns; thus, most Swedish-speaking learners in the corpus also spoke Finnish as a second language.

The data collection process went thusly: pied-piping and preposition stranding occurrences were searched individually for native Finnish and native Swedish speakers. Instances of pied-piping were searched with the query words <N> <PREP> *which* and <N> <PREP> *whom* (a search with the query words <N> <PREP> *who* was additionally conducted to cover all possible cases, but it yielded no results). These keys gave results of all occurrences of a preposition following a noun, followed by either *which* or *whom*. From these results, only those instances where the writer could have opted for preposition stranding as well were selected. Occurrences of preposition stranding were searched with the query words <PREP> *period*, <PREP> *comma*, and <PREP> <C>. These produced results of clauses ending with a preposition, either followed by a period, comma, or conjunction. Only the instances in which the writer could have also opted for pied-piping were selected.

3.2. Methods

The analysis of data collected from a learner corpus was chosen as the method for our research. The advantages and disadvantages for our chosen approach will be discussed below.

Utilizing learner corpora has multiple advantages. Firstly, collecting original data can be rather time-consuming. Secondly, corpora allow the researcher to analyze data that was obtained from spontaneous contexts, instead of relying on data produced in experimental situations. Although corpora are used similarly to more traditional techniques in SLA research, where researchers collect learner language data to analyze it and to test it against hypotheses considering IL, corpora usually contain significantly larger amounts of data to

collect from. For example, ICLE (which was used in this study) has 3.7 million words.

Nonetheless, there are some limitations to studying corpora. A researcher analyzing a corpus cannot affect the participant demographics within the corpus and must rely on data collected by other researchers. (Gass et al. 2013, 64).

As concerns the methodological approach to study our collected data, Jarvis (2000, 253-255) presents three methods that can be utilized to establish that language transfer has occurred: 1) comparing the differences in IL (interlanguage) performance of learners from two or more different L1 backgrounds, 2) comparing the similarities in IL performance of learners from the same L1 background, and 3) comparing the similarities between L1 and IL performance within learners from the same L1 background. Our chosen approach is that of 1), as we compare the IL performances of native Finnish and native Swedish speakers. However, Jarvis (*ibid.*, 257) further asserts that relying exclusively on only one of these methodological approaches is problematic, as it may lead the researcher to falsely assume that the existence of L1 transfer effects is evident even when it is not.

Hence, our approach has its benefits and drawbacks. The ICLE had quite a lot of data to collect from, and there were multiple options to narrow down the sample groups e.g., by age, gender, years of English studied in school, timed or untimed essays, etc. However, in the scope of a bachelor's thesis, we only chose to analyze two larger sample groups: every Finn who spoke Finnish as a native language, and every Finn who spoke Swedish as a native language. More accurate results could have been inferred if we compared learners of the same age, learners with the same amount of English studied in school, or if we compared between timed and untimed essays. Notwithstanding, the limitations of corpus research still must be accounted for: even if employing all the tools the corpus offered, it would still be impossible to ascertain the exact situations in which the data was collected for the corpus and the precise L2 or L1 history of each participant.

Another limitation is the fact that we have only compared the differences between IL performance of learners from two different L1 backgrounds. As mentioned before, although the method itself is acknowledged as a valid approach to examine L1 transfer, a researcher still needs to accompany it with the comparison of L2 or L1 performances within the same L1 groups to get more reliable results (Jarvis 2000, 257). However, the approach for this research was chosen keeping in mind the extent of a bachelor's thesis.

As concerns the ethicality of our research, data collection for our study can be said to have been ethical since the ICLE did not disclose any personal information of its participants.

4. Results

The findings of our research will be presented in this section, divided into three categories: 1) the occurrences of pied-piping with inanimate head nouns (as in, where the head noun is followed by the chosen preposition accompanied by the relativizer *which*), 2) the occurrences of pied-piping with animate head nouns (head noun followed by preposition accompanied by *whom*), and 3) the occurrences of preposition stranding.

The purpose of this study was to collect samples of situations where the writer could have opted for either PiP or PS but preferred one over the other, hence in the case of pied-piping we could only focus on WH-relativizers since *that/zero*-relativizers would have been ungrammatical (Hoffmann 2005, 261). *That/zero*-relativizers appearing with PS constructions were included, however, as those can be expressed with *which/whom* if transformed into PiP constructions. Non-finite relative clauses were not included as they do not permit PS with WH-relativizers. Since our interest is in relative clauses, only *which* and *whom* are represented here due to the other WH-relativizers occurring with WH-questions. As concerns PP adjuncts and complements, we have included occurrences of pied-piping and preposition

stranding some linguists might consider ungrammatical; in our data, PP adjuncts are occasionally stranded and PP complements are pied-piped.

The reason as to why we only collected excerpts where both PP and PiS are possible pertains to our hypothesis and research question. Our interest is in comparing two different L1 groups together in the way these groups choose between two constructs in their L2, and where one of these constructs (PiP) is considered both more challenging and more formal than the other (PS). Thus, if one wishes to compare the L2 proficiency between these two L1 groups, the approach chosen for this study has its merits. This approach, however, may also exclude a considerable amount of possibly advantageous quantitative data. Notwithstanding, as our research topic is considerably narrow, our data collection strategy should correspondingly be narrow.

All the instances of PiP and PS in our data are divided as such:

Native language	Pied-piping (which)	Pied-piping (whom)	Preposition stranding
Finnish (261 texts)	21	4	29
Swedish (130 texts)	17	0	16

Table 1: Distribution of pied-piping and preposition stranding between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English.

No individual sample sentences will be presented as all the research data can be found in Appendix 1. Rather, our analysis will be accompanied by charts containing the distribution and frequency of each type of preposition appearing with the PiP and PS constructions.

4.1. Instances of pied-piping (which)

The distribution and frequency of prepositions accompanying the relativizer *which* and the total occurrences of pied-piping (which) are presented in the following table:

Preposition preceding <i>which</i>	Finnish speakers (261 texts)	Swedish speakers (130 texts)
Against	1	0
By	1	1
For	2	0
From	2	1
In	9	8
Into	1	3
On	1	1
Over	0	1
Through	1	1
To	1	0
Under	0	1
Upon	1	0
With	1	0
Total occurrences	21	17

Table 2: Distribution and frequency of prepositions accompanying the relativizer 'which' and the total occurrences of pied-piping, divided between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English.

If observed superficially, the distinction between Finnish-speakers and Swedish-speakers does not appear to be that noticeable. However, one must acknowledge that the number of texts from L1 speakers of Finnish is twice the amount of the 130 texts from native speakers of Swedish. This would suggest that L1 speakers of Swedish utilize PiP more often than their fellow Finnish-speakers. Nonetheless, there are some remarks that can be made on the benefit of the L1 speaker of Finnish. Firstly, 11 of the 17 occurrences of PiP among the native speakers of Swedish include the prepositions *in* or *into*, leaving only six (6) other types of prepositions. Half of the 20 occurrences of PiP produced by L1 Finnish-speakers include *in/into*, with eight (8) other types of prepositions left. This would suggest that the native Finnish speakers' choices of prepositions when opting for PiP are more diverse compared to the L1 speakers of Swedish. Secondly, as the language distance between English and Finnish

must be taken into consideration, the native Finnish speakers fare rather well in their competence to utilize PiP constructs.

4.2. Instances of pied-piping (whom)

The distribution of pied-piping with the WH-relativizer *whom* is presented in the following chart:

Native language	Pied-piping (whom)
Finnish (261 texts)	4
Swedish (130 texts)	0

Table 3: Distribution of pied-piping (*whom*) between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English.

These results are the most distinctive ones in our research. It was interesting to notice how the native Swedish speakers did not produce any PiP constructions that modify animate head nouns. This may relate to the fact that the Swedish language does not use any specific relativizers in correlation with animate head nouns, except for the (formal) genitive forms *vars* and *vilkas* (Holmes and Hinchliffe 2020, 78). Although opting for PS instead of PiP in this context cannot be considered a ‘mistake’, this lack of a certain type of relativizer would suggest that the Swedish language transfers its preference for PS into the IL of native Swedish speakers. Finnish language, however, pied-pipes with every type of head noun, thus making the constructs of PREP + *whom* seem natural to its speakers.

4.2.1. Pied-piping and the prepositions *of* and *with*

Interestingly, the prepositions *with* and *of* rarely appeared in PiP constructions of either L1 group. In fact, *of* was prevalent in only one case of PiP, which was an *of whom*-clause written by a native Finnish speaker. *With* appeared only twice, once in a *witch which*-clause and once in a *with whom*-clause, both samples having been written by an L1 speaker of Finnish. This

study, however, cannot give an answer as to why these two prepositions rarely occurred in PiP constructions written by Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English. This could be something worth conducting research on in the future, nonetheless.

4.3. Instances of preposition stranding

The distribution and frequency of prepositions within the PS constructions and the total occurrences of PS are presented in the following table:

Preposition stranded	Finnish speakers (261 texts)	Swedish speakers (130 texts)
About	3	1
At	1	0
For	2	0
From	2	3
In	3	3
Into	1	1
Of	7	2
To	3	2
With	7	4
Total occurrences	29	16

Table 4: Distribution and frequency of prepositions within the PS constructions and the total occurrences of preposition-stranding, divided between Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English.

If we take into consideration the total sum of texts studied for each L1 group, it appears that the number of occasions in which L1 speakers of Swedish opted for PS instead of PiP is – relatively speaking – higher than that of the native Finnish speakers. Additionally, there is generally more variability in the use of different prepositions among the L1 speakers of Finnish, albeit in the appearance of the preposition *of*, which appears proportionately more often than in the PS constructions of native Swedish speakers. The preference of PS over PiP

in the case of native Swedish speakers may be explained by the most commonly appearing Swedish relativizer *som*, which only allows for PS.

5. Discussion of results

The purpose of our research was to study the differences between L1 speakers of Finnish and Swedish as concerns the manifestations of pied-piping and preposition stranding in their English writing. Additionally, we were investigating whether evidence of facilitation (positive transfer) would be discernible for the Finnish learner. The total amount of samples collected for this study was 87, and that number is divided as such: 42 occurrences of pied-piping (25 for Finnish speakers and 17 for Swedish speakers) and 45 occurrences of preposition stranding (29 for Finnish speakers and 16 for Swedish speakers). As the number of texts for the Swedish-speaking group was 130 (compared to the 251 texts written by the L1 Finnish speakers), it can be argued that both L1 groups used PiP and PS in an almost equivalent manner. Relatively speaking, however, native Swedish speakers employed PiP constructions moderately more often than their Finnish-speaking counterparts.

Nevertheless, if we bear in mind the language distance between English and Finnish, and the advantage Swedish-speakers have over Finnish-speakers as concerns learning English, it is possible to concur that facilitation has occurred in the native Finnish speakers' usage of pied-piping and that L1 speakers of Finnish are as proficient in this context as the native Swedish speakers. The facilitation, in this case, would be emanating from the fact that the Finnish language only pied-pipes due to its lack of prepositions. Our claim of L1 facilitation existing for the Finnish learner is supported further by the relatively similar number of pied-piping and preposition stranding occurrences in the writing of native Swedish speakers. As the Swedish speakers generated a similar amount of PS constructions (less formal and easier to produce than PiP) compared to the Finnish speakers, they cannot be considered more proficient in the

context of PiP and PS utilization. Furthermore, we concluded that the absence of pied-piping with *whom* for the native Swedish speaker and the existence of the same construct in the samples collected from native Finnish speakers is a sign of facilitation for the Finnish-speaker and the lack thereof for the Swedish-speaker.

It can be argued, then, that our hypotheses for this study were mostly proven right. However, there are some issues with the results that need to be addressed. Firstly, as the facilitative effects an L1 may have in acquiring an L2 decrease in higher proficiency levels, we cannot be certain whether the native Finnish speakers' similar performance to the native Swedish speakers in our research can be associated with positive transfer. Secondly, proving positive transfer is problematic since the focus is not on error production. Thus, to have any probability to produce accurate results, different L1 groups should be compared together and take into consideration language distances and the grammatical systems of each language. If the focus had been on errors instead of facilitation, we could have only compared Finnish with English and made assumptions of negative transfer based on that. In our context, it was crucial to take two L1 groups: a group with an advantage and a group with a general disadvantage in learning English. Comparing how the group with less facilitation (in most areas of the English language) fares against the group with more facilitation would then yield results.

As we concluded, in the niche linguistic area of PiP and PS, native Finnish speakers compared well with native Swedish speakers, which may suggest the existence of facilitation on the part of the Finnish-speaking learner. Nevertheless, the breadth of our study and the difficulties of discerning facilitation affect the interpretation of our results. Whether facilitation on behalf of the Finnish learner occurred or not, however, the results do point out the similar proficiency levels of the two studied learner groups.

6. Conclusion

The motivations behind this study were to ascertain whether the Finnish language produces facilitative effects on the acquisition of English and whether the native Finnish speaking learners of English would compare to L1 speakers of Swedish in their English proficiency. As this was a small-scale study, the chosen approach to examine the above-mentioned questions also had to be narrow. Thus, the investigation was limited to comparing the employment of pied-piping and preposition stranding in the English writing of native Finnish and native Swedish speakers. *The International Corpus of Learner English* was utilized to gather the data for this research.

The results of our study suggest that our hypotheses were at least partially proven correct. We concluded that our data provided evidence on the facilitative effect the Finnish language has on learning pied-piping in English and that the native Finnish speaking learners of English performed as proficiently as the L1 speakers of Swedish in their choices of opting for pied-piping and preposition stranding. Nevertheless, the small scale of our research amplifies the difficulty of proving the existence of positive transfer, and the high proficiency levels of both the studied L1 groups (their English primarily being on advanced C1 or C2 levels) may also negate any existing facilitative effects. Additionally, this study focused on written English, whereas studying spoken English could have produced more interesting results due to the more spontaneous and less careful nature of speech.

Thus, even if our study cannot prove facilitation, it reinforces Ringbom's (2007) and Jarvis's (2000) findings that the effects of positive L1 transfer decrease in importance in the higher proficiency levels, and that the differences of English fluency between native Finnish speakers and native Swedish speakers within Finland are not as extensive as is generally assumed. The possible explanation for this unexpected similarity in proficiency is the fact that

the Swedish-speaking population in Finland is familiar with the Finnish language as well (Jarvis 2000, 290).

Furthermore, this research hopefully assists in illuminating that transfer research conducted in the Finnish context does not always have to focus on negative transfer and error analysis. That the Finnish language has facilitative effects on the acquisition of English is a perspective through which research has not yet been conducted to a great extent. As this was a small-scale study, which was unable to provide any exhaustive answers, it would be interesting if more extensive research could be performed to produce more proof as concerns the facilitative effects of L1 Finnish on the acquisition of English. Additionally, this study did not include research on *null-prep*, as it was not possible to search for the occurrences of preposition omission within the ICLE. Researching null-prep in addition to pied-piping and preposition stranding in the context of native Finnish and Swedish speaking learners of English could prove fruitful in the future.

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Appendix 1: Data of the study

Finnish as a native language

Pied-piping with the relativizer *which*:

Television and films, for example, still need the written form as a basis **from which** an adaption for films, television series, news flashes, etc. is made

it does, however, provide the necessary background **to which** the different aspects of the discussion should be projected

Moreover, it is not only the language itself that has to be accepted but also the country **in which** it is spoken

Moreover, in many countries **in which** it has no official status, English is taught in schools and spoken as a foreign language

Many people may wonder why O.J. Simpson will not be executed after committing a crime **for which** the death penalty is generally administered

Marx would be astonished at the concrete way **in which** happiness is produced and sold - at great profit

only that they are being removed from those areas **in which** their use is not appropriate

a short training period does not prepare them for a real crisis situation **in which** professional soldiers could act more effectively

However, in some cases imprisonment can be considered as the only possible alternative, as in most cases **in which** a felony, for instance a murder, a rape or an assault, has been violently committed

There was a time when a person could anticipate living his life in the world **into which** he was born

The Americans have created a leading world power which has strong economic resources, but it has largely forgotten the basic principles **on which** the whole society was built on

the study 'Women and Men in the Nordic Countries' shows that there is not yet any area **in which** women and men are equal

The movement specified its aims for **which it** started to strive

It is this task **in which** the Liberation Movement has failed most

the husbandman who tilled his own acres, as the rock **upon which** the American republic must stand

Even though I had a viewphone **through which** I could see my employer or clients

but also serve as dictionaries **from which** words and terms are easy to search

the looks become more irrelevant and should therefore not be the basis **on which** the president is elected

who easily forget those values **by which** the president candidates should be judged

They are moulded by the society **in which** they were born

are the representatives of the real world **against which** the children have to be protected from

without even realizing it is the very same language **with which** I have spent years

Pied-piping with the relativizer *whom*:

the necessary action of keeping the order carried out by the friendly government **with whom** we trade"?

they can not put their feelings aside and be objective knowing that the other accused is a celebrity **of whom** they have already formed an impression

A good example is the experiment where each guard is appointed a few prisoners **to whom** he/she is supposed to pay special attention

There is a symbolic character in the film, a man **after whom** the whole film is named, a man who literally rolls a stone all the time

Preposition stranding:

toys and so forth is a question that we probably never get an answer **to**

It is not only the European Union these people should be afraid **of**

People being deliberately exterminated is a piece of news that even the yellow papers are interested **in**

to have a decent rest and do all those things you otherwise wouldn't have time **for**

Crime is not what is forbidden; crime is what violates the values people believe **in**

It is a language that a large part of people everywhere around the world have at least some sort of knowledge **of**

It would be quite impossible to decide on a language that everyone would approve **of**

but often people stay in the same social class as they were born **into**

People should be encouraged to think over the things they have read or heard **about**

This is one of the aspects the Women's Liberation Movement is aiming **at**

the question of free contraception and abortion is one of the most important issues that the Women's Liberation Movement has to fight **for**

this west situated further towards the western coast of the continent than this agrarian society we have been talking **about**

Most members of the highly technological society of today hardly realize that it is the much slandered farmers we owe our existence **to**

To put it short, it is associated with negative images, things and lifestyle people are still afraid **of**

Dare I say, most of the world's population - still lacks the basic elements that equality rises **from**

Because it will bring me money that will enable me to travel and do all the things I've dreamt **of**

So Cholly put the blame on the girl he was having sex **with**

reported having bought her daughter an album containing lyrics she did not want her daughter be exposed **to**

The question is who invented this beautiful animal that nature itself is afraid **of**

he wants to prove its existence to the nomad and the other Russian he had disputed **with**

By linking these individual associations and beliefs with the common history and experiences of the people we have grown up **with**

As stated, everything depends on the angle one is looking **from**

Dreams and fantasies are important to us, not only because of the pleasure they provide us **with**

It is a very efficient way to inform people about the projects the universities have been involved **with**

It is the future of our country that we are talking **about**

They follow the ideas they believe **in**

In brief, we are now offered some great opportunities that we should take notice **of**

Edward is very much in love with the daughter of the family he is staying **with** and would do anything for her, he can never have her

Jo finds a man she falls in love **with** and the end of the film supposes that she will get married

Swedish as a native language

Pied-piping with the relativizer *which*:

is there perhaps something wrong with the system **in which** they are taught?

My suggestion to improve the knowledge in foreign languages is to change the system **in which** they are taught

If an adult watches movies **in which** a lot of violence, shooting and killing take place

We are all part of the materialistic world and we have all accepted the rules **by which** it plays

traditions and lifestyle but also the nationality of our parents and the country **in which** we are born

the election was not decided until after the second round **in which** those two candidates who got the most votes in the first round competed

The merits **on which** a President should be elected varies with the presidential duties and responsibilities in the constitution of each country

It might even be that our universe is made up of such particles, the first starting a chain reaction **into which** more are dragged in

Our pattern of life is formed by our culture and our culture is the filter **through which** we perceive the world

The circumstances **into which** you are born can be decisive when it comes to character,

it is probably due to circumstances **over which** you had no control

The circumstances **into which** one is born have always been considered decisive

This is the way **in which** the modern world has been born and developed

The next step will be telephones with a monitor **in which** the person one is talking to can be seen

he exploits them and succeeds in creating a poem **in which** a general feeling of apocalypse and disaster is expressed

Hamlet's humour is sad as the melancholy **from which** his 'madness' is said to be derived (common belief in Shakespeare's time)

and there is no denying that the person still has broken against the rules **under which** our society is working

Preposition stranding:

The life of the rich people is something that the poor and homeless only can dream **of**

is that it does not combine very well with the social loneliness, and sickness, some people seem to suffer **from**

The individual of today's modern Western society is blessed with many things, which his great-grandfather could only dream **about**

Merete Mazzarella's argument that social pressure influences our behaviour, is one I can fully agree **with**

I am perfectly happy with the superior **on** and control I am being subject **to**

We are going to be forced to choose an education which we can afford; not one that we would be really interested **in**

However, not only my relatives were interested in my existence; so was the Finnish society I had been born **into**

but it is still vital to remember the vulnerability of the system we are now working **with**

When the imprisonment time is served, the person is released and returns to the situation he/she came **from**

One drawback can also be that even if the students can choose a subject they are interested **in**

Does membership in the EU necessarily imply that we have to adopt all the ways of life that we do not approve **of**

No matter how loving a home they are brought up **in**

People dared react and show contempt for government and politicians, while we today

whisper in silence behind the backs of those we disagree **with**

How are we to change anything in this society we are all more or less discontented **with**

Christmas is one of those celebrations (like for example birthdays) that you expect a lot **from**

Back then people were judged first by the cast or social class they belonged **to** and where they came from