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**SWEDISH-ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TRANSFER IN UPPER SECONDARY
SCHOOL STUDENTS' WRITTEN ENGLISH**
An error analysis

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Sara Kerke: Swedish-English Language Transfer in Upper Secondary School
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Tässä sivuainetutkielmassa tarkastelen kielisaarekkeella asuvien ruotsinkielisten lukio-opiskelijoiden kirjoitettua englannin kieltä. Tutkielma on yleinen katsaus yleisimpiin kielellisiin virheisiin, jotka saattavat olla seuraus kielellisestä interferenssistä. Tutkielman materiaali koostuu ainoastaan kahdestakymmenestä viidestä tekstistä, joten yleispätevää tulosta tämä tutkielma ei anna ruotsinkielisten kielisaarekenuorten englannin kielen käytöstä.

Tutkielman teoreettinen viitekehys käsittelee pääasiassa monikielisyteen liittyviä teemoja sekä kielelliseen interferenssiin liittyviä käsitteitä. Monikielisuuden monimuotoisuutta käsittelemäni antaakseni taustaa sille, mikä tutkimukseen osallistuneiden nuorten kielitodellisuus on ja miten heidän arkensa kielet toimivat keskenään. Lisäksi taustaa monikielisyydelle on annettava, jotta tutkielman yhtä keskeisimpiä käsitteitä, interferenssiä, voidaan käsitellä. Teoreettisen viitekehysten lopuksi esittelen myös analyysin pohjan luovat virhetyypit – kieliopilliset virheet sekä lainakäännökset.

Opiskelijoiden kirjoittamien tekstien pohjalta selvitän virheanalyysin avulla, mitä virheitä yleisesti esiintyy ja onko niiden mahdollinen syy ruotsin ja englannin välinen kielellinen interferenssi. Analysoitava materiaali koostuu opiskelijoiden kirjoittamista neljään eri teemaan pohjautuvista lyhyistä kirjoitelmista.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että suurimman osan kirjoitelmissa esiintyneiden virheiden taustalla on jonkin ruotsinkielisen rakenteen tai sanan suora kääntäminen englannin kielelle. Tämä osoittaa siis, että kielellinen interferenssi on opiskelijoiden kielenkäytössä läsnä. Eniten virheitä esiintyi prepositioiden käytössä, mikä saattaa johtua siitä, ettei oikean preposition valintaan ole ruotsin tai englannin kielessä tarkkoja kieliopillisia sääntöjä. Osa virheistä ovat rajatapauksia virheen ja esimerkiksi muodollisuuden välillä – jokin tietty rakenne tai sana voi olla käypä puhekielessä muttei muodollisessa kirjakielessä.

Avainsanat: monikielisyys, kaksikielisyys, interferenssi, virheanalyysi
Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck -ohjelmalla.

ABSTRACT

Sara Kerke: Swedish-English Language Transfer in Upper Secondary School Students' Written English

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In this minor thesis I examine Swedish-speaking upper secondary school students' written English. The thesis is an overview of the most common occurring errors, which may be a result of language transfer or interference. The material for this thesis consists of only 25 papers written by the participants and therefore the result of my study is not a general or accurate view of English language-use by Swedish-speaking upper secondary school students.

The theoretical background for this thesis consists mainly of themes concerning bilingualism and multilingualism. Another central theme in the theory-section is language transfer and interference. The main reason for explaining bilingualism and multilingualism in the theory-section is to give the reader an understanding of the participants' everyday language setting and how their two or multiple languages work together. Discussing bilingualism is also crucial in order to give a background to a further explanation of language transfer and interference. In the later part of the theory-section I present the types of error, grammatical errors and loan translations, which form a base for the later analysis.

Through an error analysis I determine what types of error occur in the participant's texts and through detection of errors I am able to determine if the errors are a result of language transfer or not. The analyzed material consisted of short papers written by the students on four different topics.

The results of this thesis show that the reason for most of the occurring errors was transferring a Swedish word or phrase into English. This means that language interference, in fact, occurs in the student's use of English. Errors in preposition-use were the most common and this could be due to a lack of formal grammatical rules for preposition-use in both Swedish and English. Some of the errors are not as clear as others, since some could be considered an error in only the given context and not in general. Some errors could also be considered errors only in formal writing and not in spoken language, for example.

Key words: multilingualism, bilingualism, language transfer, error analysis

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin OriginalityCheck service.

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1 Introduction

When learning a second language (L2), one often relies on prior knowledge of a known language to support the learning (Ringbom 2007: 1). A language learner might for instance use a linguistic structure in their first language (L1) and transfer it into the target language as it is and expect it to function correctly. In this study I will examine how Swedish-speaking Finns as L2 English learners transfer their L1 to their L2. Through an error analysis I will give an overview on what types of error occur and the whole study will be based on the following research questions:

1. What types of error occur in the students' written English?
2. Which types of error are most common?
3. Which patterns in the students' L1 has led to errors in the L2?

I will start by presenting the theoretical framework for the study. Central concepts, such as *second language acquisition*, *bilingualism*, and *language interference* will be given definitions in chapter 2, sections 2.1–3. Following the theory and background I will thoroughly present my research method, error analysis, and the material for this study in chapter 3, sections 3.1 and 3.2. Chapter 4 will present the analysis of the material and I will proceed to conclude and discuss my findings in chapter 5.

2 Theory and background

In this chapter I will briefly present the central concepts in my study. In section 2.1 I will give a brief presentation to what *second language acquisition* is. The following section, 2.2, will focus on the theory of *bilingualism*, in order to support the theory behind *language interference*, which will be presented in section 2.3. The last section, 2.4, is dedicated to previous studies. In this section I will briefly present previous findings on language transfer.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

One needs to fully understand the difference between mother tongue, or first language, second language and foreign language in order to understand second language acquisition. Mother tongue is the language a person speaks as their first language (L1). It is the language they learn first, when they as young children start using speech for communication purposes. One's mother tongue is the language one usually knows best. A second language (L2) is, as named, a language beside one's mother tongue that is learned after, or in some instances simultaneously with, the first language but that is present and used within the same country (Cook 2016:14). A foreign language, though, is a language used outside one's home country (Cook 2016: 14) and is usually not learned until one's first language is fully developed. In most countries, children are being taught at least one foreign language during their time in secondary school.

Rod Ellis (2000: 3) defines "L2 acquisition" as "[...] the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom[...]". Unlike the term 'second' language acquisition, the language that is being learned does not have to be the second language after one's mother tongue. It can be any language that is being learned after one's mother tongue (Ellis 2000: 3).

When discussing language in SLA research, one needs to make a distinction between different types of language use. There are two terms used to describe use of the L2. Firstly, *learner language*, that is the language, either spoken or written, produced by a second language learner. Secondly, *target language*, which is the language that is being learned. Furthermore, when discussing the process of language understanding the term *input* is crucial. In order to learn a language one needs to, in some way, be exposed to the target language, and input is, as explained by Ellis (2000: 5) “[...] the samples of language to which a learner is exposed to”.

2.2 Language Interference

A person’s first language can, in many instances, support the acquisition of a second language. However, one’s first language can also, when its vocabulary and grammar differ from that of the second language, hinder learning the correct vocabulary and grammar of the second language (Cook 2016: 17). A language learner often relies on *language transfer* in the early stages of language learning and as described, *language transfer* can work to either support or hinder acquiring a second language.

Language transfer can be divided into two different categories: *positive transfer* and *negative transfer* (Ellis 2000: 51). *Positive transfer* is the type of language transfer that supports learning an L2 (Ringbom 2007: 30–31), hence similarities in both the L1 and L2. However, when L1 transfer results in errors in the L2 it is called *negative transfer*, which is synonymous to *language interference*. We will have a closer look on how transferring L1 patterns to L2 in section 3.1 when I present my research method, error analysis.

2.3 Bilingualism

When discussing interference, it is crucial to also have an understanding of what bilingualism is. Bilingualism can be explained in different ways depending on the bilingual’s use of their

two languages. When a bilingual person is able to switch between their two languages with ease depending on the environment and context in which the language is used, and is fluent in both languages, the person has *coordinative bilingualism* (Rozenčvejšg 2017: 5). However, a similar kind of bilingualism, *balanced bilingualism*, is explained by Mahootian (2020: 6) as “[...] the ability to read and write in both languages, to have native-like command of both languages and keeping the two languages separate and unmixed”. These two definitions do not differ much from each other significantly but should still be kept separate, since Mahootian’s (2020) description also mentions keeping the languages “separate and unmixed”, which again is not present in the definition of *coordinative bilingualism*.

A term also presented by Mahootian (2020: 16) is *achieved bilingualism*, which is a crucial term regarding my study. *Achieved bilingualism* is reached when an individual has learned a second language after the first apart from learning two languages simultaneously. All second language users do not have *achieved bilingualism*, however, since it requires a certain level of competence in the second language. A *second language learner*, as described in section 2.1, is not an *achieved bilingual* since their language competence is still developing, and they have not necessarily reached a competence in the language that allows them to fluently use the target language. Most of the participants in this study, though, have studied English as a foreign language for almost a decade, which allows them to be regarded as *achieved bilinguals* due to their ability to use the English language fluently. I would define an *achieved bilingual* in a simplified way as follows (after Mahootian’s (2020: 16) description):

A person...

- a) who has learned the target language after their mother tongue.
- b) who has learned the language through formal education.
- c) whose second language is a language usually associated with higher status because of the possibilities it gives in for example in an international career.

2.4 Swedish-Finnish bilinguals' use of English

In my study, the participants are Swedish-Finnish bilinguals, which means that English is in fact the third language they use quite frequently. In linguistics, the term third language (L3) is used, but can in fact not be implemented as a definition of what English represents for the participants in my study. The reason being almost all of the participants have learned Swedish and Finnish simultaneously, which means that both represent their L1 and English their L2. It is important to make this distinction when discussing the patterns that an individual relies on when acquiring a new, foreign, language.

Although the participants are not L3 learners of English they have knowledge in two languages as a base for their acquisition of further languages. Håkan Ringbom (2011: 19–24) reinforces the theory which shows that foreign language learners often rely on prior knowledge of other languages when acquiring a new one. Ringbom (ibid.) also indicates that speakers of two languages have patterns in both forming the prior knowledge which can then be implemented in learning a further language. Which language an individual then uses when learning a new language he states “[...] greatly depends on psychotypology”. This means that one will rely on the language that lies closer to the target language when examining for example grammatical structures.

2.5 Grammatical Errors in Foreign Language Learning (FLL)

Since error analysis is a central method in second language acquisition (SLA) research, and also the method I chose for my study I will in this short section shift the focus onto grammatical errors in SLA and FLL. Grammatical errors are also the main type of error I will focus on in my analysis.

As I discussed in the previous section, based on Ringbom's (2011) article, a person learning a new language often relies on patterns in previously known languages to implement

in the target language. When the previously known language is not similar enough with the target language, errors occur when producing the target language both written and spoken. Why this happens quite often is explained well by Judit Kormos (2013: 281) in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Second Language Acquisition*:

In L1 production, rules are assumed to be automatized and to be part of the encoding systems (Levelt, 1999). In contrast, for L2 speakers many of the phrase- and clause-building rules might not function automatically and might be stored in the form of factual (declarative) knowledge (Ullman, 2001).

Further, Kormos (2013: 281–282) explains the connection between transferring L1 grammatical structures into L2 grammar and the frequent occurrence of errors. Errors occur when the L2 for example inflects lexemes according to gender while this type of inflection does not occur in the L1. This type of difference between the L1 and L2, though, is not of interest in my study, since neither Swedish, Finnish, nor English nouns are gender categorised. Another pattern that Kormos (ibid.) mentions is clause structure and the errors that are a result of transferring L1 clause structures into the L2. A speaker can automatically form clauses in their L1, but often relies on that automatization to form clauses in the L2 as well even though the rules for clause structure is different between the two languages. In my study, *errors in clause structure* is in fact one of the error types that occurred in the material and therefore it is relevant to mention in this section as well.

To summarise both Ringbom's (2011) and Kormos's (2013) findings on transferring patterns in the L1 into an L2, it is safe to say that *any* grammatical pattern in the L2 that differs from that of the L1 can result in an error due to the strong reliance of the L1 patterns when learning an L2.

2.6 Loan Translations

As stated in previous sections, L2 learners often rely on the knowledge of their L1 when producing the target language, both written and spoken. This also applies on a lexical level. Ringbom (2007: 61–73) presents L1 transfer to L2 as *item transfer*, which is explained as *items* that are transferred from one to the other language. One could understand *items* as words or lexemes, but Ringbom states that *item transfer* also regards phoneme transfer, grammatical transfer, and pragmatic transfer. Regarding this study, though I will be focusing on lexical transfer in the instances when a L2 learner uses a lexeme in their L1 and directly translates that into their L2, since one of the errors I will examine are *loan translations* (definition below).

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) defines a loan translation as “a word or expression in a language that is a translation of a word or expression in another language”. Instead of the English word *loan translation*, the French-derived word *calque* can be used as a synonymous term. What is not evident in the OALD definition is that loan translations are not necessarily translated by using the right words in the target language to express the meaning of something. For example, a person who is an L2 learner of English and whose L1 is Swedish might use the word *parking place* when referring to a ‘car park’, because ‘parking place’ is a direct translation from the Swedish word *parkeringsplats*.

2.7 Previous studies

There are a number of studies in multiple languages showing that language transfer is an existing phenomenon. Studies show that in the first stages of L2 learning the learner tends to transfer patterns from their L1 into their L2 until they have enough knowledge of the L2 to be able to correct transfer-based errors as they go (e. g. Cook 2016; Kormos 2013; Ringbom 2007).

There has, though, been a shift in how researchers view language transfer and interference as the level of competence that a language learner strives for has changed. In the mid 1900s researchers saw language transfer only as something negative, therefore the expression *interference*. It was a common thought that the L1 only interfered with the L2 instead of seeing the L1 as supporting the learning of an L2 as researchers such as Cook (2016) and De Angelis & Dewaele (2011) advocate today.

Prior to the 21st century language teaching was also aiming for native-like competence, but the aim for L2 learning and teaching has changed significantly lately (Cook 2016: 177–181). In the national curriculum for secondary school education in Finland, the section that presents the goals for teaching of English does not once mention native-like competence. Instead, the curriculum mentions goals that relate to everyday use of the language and striving to have skills to use the language in “[...] different social situations or communities” (OPH 2014: 349–351 [my translation]).

3 Research method and material

In this chapter I will present my research method, error analysis, in section 3.1. Following that, in section 3.2, I will present the material that will be analysed in this study.

3.1 Error Analysis

Alongside contrastive analysis error analysis is a method mainly used in second language acquisition research (Cook 2016: 6). One of the aims in error analysis is to detect errors in L2 that are a result of L1 interference. Pointing out errors that a language learner makes can be seen as an unpleasant way of supporting the learning process. However, error analysis can in fact be a helpful tool for both the teacher and the learner when trying to reach a certain level of competence in an L2.

Corder (1981) presents two aspects on error analysis, the *theoretical* and the *practical* aspect. The theoretical aspect “[...] is part of the methodology of investigating the language learning process” and the practical aspect “[...] is its function in guiding the remedial action we must take to correct an unsatisfactory state of affairs for learner or teacher” (ibid.: 45). Ellis (2000: 15) further explains that it is important for a language teacher to be aware of the errors a learner makes in order to further explain *why* they are made. This will help with understanding the language learner’s way of producing an L2 and therefore will help the teacher know what features to focus on when teaching. For the language learner, errors made can, in fact, support learning when they “self-correct the errors they make” (ibid.). Detecting the errors in a language learner’s spoken or written language, though, is only the first phase of a four-phase analysis. Ellis (2000: 15–20) divides the error analysis process into the following four phases:

1. **Identifying errors:** Studying produced language by a language learner to detect features that are not considered as correct in the target language.

2. **Describing errors:** Dividing the detected errors into categories to support showing for example which errors occur most frequently.
3. **Explaining errors:** As named, the task at this phase of the error analysis is to explain why the errors have occurred, in SLA research namely, what pattern in L1 can be the reason for L2 errors.
4. **Error evaluation:** Evaluating if some errors are “more serious” than others in order to be able to focus on the more serious ones when the errors are corrected.

In this study I will give an overview of what type of mainly grammatical errors the participants make. One section will focus on loan translations. My analysis will follow the given structure but only phases 2–4 are presented in the actual analysis since detecting the errors is already done prior to writing the analysis. Also, the material (the texts) as a whole are not attached to this thesis. I will only present extracts including the errors in the actual analysis.

3.2 Material and Participants

The material for this study consists of papers written by upper secondary school, year one and year two, L2 English learners whose first language is Swedish. Some of the students’ stronger language may be Finnish, due to the unique language-island setting, but Swedish will still, in this study, be considered their first language because they study in a school in which the teaching language is Swedish.

The papers were written as a part of the formal in-class teaching, but they were not corrected by the teacher before I studied them. The students did not have access to a dictionary when writing the paper and also, I did not give one specific subject the papers had to be written on. Instead, I gave the students four different subject alternatives from which they had the liberty of choosing one to write their paper on. The subjects were:

1. *Why I chose to study in upper secondary school*
2. *My dream job or occupation*
3. *My dream travel destination*
4. *My hobby*

I advised the teacher that the students should be informed about their papers being a part of a study, but that they were not to receive any information about what part of their language would be studied, since this might have resulted in a greater degree of carefulness when writing and therefore, I will not get an idea of the students' authentic and spontaneous language-use.

In total, I studied 25 papers and all of the given topics were represented. Most papers were written on the student's dream occupation and least on a dream travel destination. Many chose to write about why they chose to study in upper secondary school and only a couple of students wrote about their hobby. The use of vocabulary was affected by the choice of topic and that also lead to certain errors occurring more frequently among the papers on the same topic. This will be looked into closer in the chapter on the analysis (4).

4 Analysis

In this chapter I will present the analysis of my material, 25 different texts in total, written by students in year one and year two of upper secondary school. The chapter is divided into different sections according to the different types of errors that occurred in the material. Every section follows the same structure – first, I present the most frequently occurred errors, then I present a table that shows the occurrences of the different errors, and before presenting the next type of error I will summarise each section with a short discussion. The tables that are presented in the following sections (4.1–4.6) will include the errors that occurred, either lexemes or expressions, what type of error they represent, the number of occurrences, the Swedish equivalent, and the correct or preferred English lexeme or expression. To support the analysis, I have compiled a set of all the full sentences or phrases containing the errors in an appendix at the end of the thesis (Appendix 1). In the appendix the occurred errors will be listed according to the chapter number in the analysis (4.1–4.6).

4.1 Verb Errors

Out of the 25 texts analysed, ten included verb errors. In total, the texts included three different types of verb errors – the wrong choice of a verb, the wrong choice of an expression including a verb, and an error in verb tense. Eight out of the total of ten errors involved choosing an inaccurate lexeme for the context. The remaining two types of error, choosing the wrong verb expression and an error in verb tense, occurred only once each.

The most frequently occurring error was choosing a wrong English verb when expressing an action (examples 1, 2 4, 5, and 7). Because two of the four subjects for the participants to choose from were writing about their dream occupation and writing about why

they chose to study in upper secondary school, many participants wrote something about studying at a certain level. A significant number of the participants chose to use the expression *go to* when writing about attending a higher level of education (example 1). In this instance the participant was to use the verb expression *study at* or the verb *attend*. In spoken Swedish you can use the expression *gå på gymnasium* or *gå på universitet*. However, the spoken language expressions are not viable in written Swedish, but since the participants' first language is Swedish the spoken language expressions can affect how they produce expressions in different languages as well.

What should be noted in this section is that example 6, using *go through* instead of *study* for studying some particular theme within a subject is also listed in the table for loan translations (section 4.6, example 2). Namely, the choice of the wrong verb has resulted in the expression becoming a loan translation since it is a direct translation from Swedish.

The next most frequently occurring verb error occurred in the texts about the participants' dream occupations. Many of the participants wrote *I have always wanted to be *occupation** (example 2) when the most viable option in a similar situation would be *I have always wanted to become *occupation**. This, in itself, is not an actual error in grammar, but considering the age of the participants in this study, it is an error in logic. If the participants were older and already at a working age, choosing the word *be* would be accepted, but since they are still adolescents, they cannot wish to have a certain profession at the time being. In Swedish, the equivalent would be *bli*, though, it directly translates into the English word *become*. In the instance of choosing *be* instead of *become* I think the pronunciation of the Swedish word [bli:] could be a possible reason for choosing *be*, hence the similarity in pronunciation between the two languages.

Table 1 – Verb Errors

Example	Verb or expression	Type of error	Amount	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>go to</i>	Choice of lexeme	3	gå på	study at/attend
2.	<i>be</i>	Choice of lexeme	2	bli	become
3.	<i>to work</i>	Verb tense	1	att arbeta	working
4.	<i>give</i>	Choice of lexeme	1	ge	provide
5.	<i>stay</i>	Choice of lexeme	1	förbli	remain
6.	<i>go through</i>	Choice of expression	1	gå igenom	study
7.	<i>needs</i>	Choice of lexeme	1	kräver	requires
Total:	7				

To conclude, the most frequently occurring error in verb-use is simply the choice of lexeme. Both in English and Swedish, there are multiple lexemes that carry similar meanings, but choosing the right one requires careful attention to the context. Also, choosing the wrong lexeme can, especially with bilingual students, be a result of interference between the languages. As in the examples, many of the lexemes were just directly translated from Swedish to English which resulted in a synonymous lexeme in the English language, although one that is not viable in the given context.

4.2 Omission or Inclusion of an English Article

Five of the 25 texts included errors relating to the use of the English articles *a/an*, and *the*. The types of error can be divided into two categories – completely omitting an article and including one when one should not be included. Further, the categories can be divided into four sub-categories – omitting or including the definite article and omitting or including an indefinite

article. The only error that occurred twice was omitting the definite article. All the remaining types of error occurred only once and none of the same expressions occurred multiple times.

I will start by explaining the only error that occurred twice, that is omitting the definite article. The two example expressions (examples 1 and 5) in which the omissions occurred went as follows: *second-year prom* instead of *the second-year prom* and *after I finish army* instead of *after I finish the army*. In Swedish you can refer to the second-year prom without the definite suffix *-en* for the noun *dans*, whereas you need the definite article *de* for the plural genitive noun *gamlas*. Since the Swedish expression is not directly translatable into English, the same lexemes cannot be used in the English equivalent for *de gamlas dans*. A direct lexeme-by-lexeme translation to the Swedish expression would be *the old's dance* and therefore the emphasis is on who is dancing rather than the actual dance, hence the definite article before the adjective.

In only one instance a participant had omitted an indefinite article in the expression *a chemist or engineer* (example 2) in the sentence *My dream job would be a chemist or engineer*. The Swedish equivalent to the phrase would be *kemist eller ingenjör* without any articles preceding the occupation nouns. This could be a reason for omitting the indefinite article in English but does not explain why one article is included and one is omitted.

Also, in one instance a participant had added the definite article in the English phrase *For the most of my life* (example 3). This phenomenon can explicitly be explained by comparing the used English phrase with the Swedish equivalent. Due to an adjective preceding the definite noun *delen*, the phrase *Under den största delen av mitt liv* includes the Swedish definite article *den* which in English translates into *the*. In the example phrase though, the definite article could have been included if the participant would have added *part* into their phrase resulting in the exact equivalent to the Swedish phrase – *For the most part of my life*.

Although, choosing not to use the lexeme *part* in the phrase the definite article should be omitted.

In one of the texts a participant had added an indefinite article in the phrase *a somewhat of an idea* (example 4). In this phrase the latter indefinite article *an* is in its right place, but the indefinite article preceding the adverb *somewhat* should be omitted. When comparing the English example phrase (4) with the Swedish equivalent *en någorlunda idé* a certain pattern is detectable. The Swedish phrase starts with the indefinite article *en* which in the participant's instance most likely has been directly translated into English resulting in the use of the unnecessary indefinite article.

The last example (5) includes an omission of the definite English article before the noun *army*. Omitting the definite article cannot be simply explained because the definite suffix *-n* is included in the Swedish equivalent *armén*. Yet, there is not a separate article present in the Swedish phrase that would guide the student to use one in English as well. Therefore, this error cannot simply be explained as language interference since the definite form exists in both languages, only in Swedish the separate article does not.

Table 2 - Omission or Inclusion of an English Article

Number of the example	Example expression	Type of error	Amount	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>second year prom</i>	Omitting the definite article	1	de gamlas dans	the second-year prom
2.	<i>a chemist or engineer</i>	Omitting an indefinite article	1	kemist eller ingenjör	a chemist or an engineer
3.	<i>For the most of my life</i>	Adding the definite article	1	Under den största delen av mitt liv	For most of my life/For the most part of my life

4.	<i>a somewhat of an idea</i>	Adding an indefinite article	1	en någorlunda idé	somewhat of an idea
5.	<i>after I finish army</i>	Omitting the definite article	1	efter att jag avslutar armén	after I finish the army
Total:	5				

In conclusion, my analysis shows that in many instances adding or omitting an English article when this should not occur is often a result of language interference from Swedish. Though, marking definite or indefinite forms of nouns in Swedish is not only done by using articles. In Swedish only adding a definite suffix to the noun makes the noun as a whole definite. So, a second language user of English could in fact be translating a Swedish phrase directly and for instance omit a definite article in English, although the Swedish noun includes the definite suffix. The only thing misleading the L2 user is the non-existence of the Swedish definite article that in English is *the*.

4.3 Preposition Errors

In this section I will look into the errors made when choosing an English preposition. Nine texts out of the 25 analysed included an error in preposition use. Differences in the reasons for choosing an inaccurate English preposition did occur and only one out of the nine preposition errors, was in fact one that could be regarded as a result of Swedish interference (example 5). In the table below (table 3) I have divided the errors into three categories – *preposition interference*, *inaccurate preposition*, and *unnecessary preposition*. An error has been categorised as *preposition interference* when it is a direct translation from a Swedish preposition in a similar context to an English preposition. In total there were six instances out of nine in which a participant had used an inaccurate preposition. The two remaining examples

from the texts, which represent the error type *unnecessary preposition*, showed that the participants had used a preposition when one is not required.

Because all of the preposition errors were made only once and no significant pattern in preposition use could be detected throughout the material, I am not going to look into the specific examples (1–9) in this section. However, I am going to take a closer look at example 5, *a dream to me (to become something)*, which is a result of preposition interference. The reason for why I am examining this example closer is that the Swedish preposition *för* lies very close to another preposition *till*, which by Swedish L1 users is often mixed up. This difficulty in separating the two Swedish prepositions can lead to a translation of *för* into two possible prepositions in English, those being *to* and *for*. Albeit only the context in Swedish can dictate which preposition should be used, since the meanings lie so close to each other between both prepositions.

Table 3 - Preposition errors

Number of example	Example expression	Type of error	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>a few times in a winter</i>	Unnecessary preposition	några gånger om vintern	a few times a winter
2.	<i>favorite detectives from TV</i>	Inaccurate preposition	favoritdetektiver i/på TV	favorite detectives on TV
3.	<i>doing something for a profession</i>	Inaccurate preposition	att göra något som (sitt) yrke	doing something as a profession
4.	<i>a big responsibility from one (person)</i>	Inaccurate preposition	ett stort ansvar för en (person)	a big responsibility for one (person)
5.	<i>a dream to me (to become something)</i>	Indirect preposition interference	en dröm för mig (att bli)	a dream for me (to become something)
6.	<i>a spark to this occupation</i>	Inaccurate preposition	en gnista för detta yrke	a spark for this occupation

7.	<i>the benefits on your future job</i>	Inaccurate preposition	fördelarna med ditt framtida yrke	the benefits of your future job
8.	<i>I decided to come and study to upper secondary school</i>	Inaccurate preposition	Jag bestämde mig för att studera på gymnasium	I decided to study in upper secondary school
9.	<i>Where no one else has been on</i>	Unnecessary preposition	Där ingen annan har varit	Where no one else has been
Total:	9			

To conclude, I'd like to note that although only one of the occurred errors were a result of language interference, preposition errors were quite common among the texts. In two examples (1 and 9), though, a participant has added an unnecessary preposition. The addition of prepositions where they should not exist in English as a second language (ESL) has been studied broadly and presented by e. g. Sebastian Hoffmann (2018). In Hoffmann's study, he mainly focuses on unnecessary preposition-use in prepositional verbs and neither of the examples (1 and 9) in this study represent prepositional verbs. Hoffmann's study does, though, give valuable information on difficulties in mastering preposition-use among users of ESL.

One possible explanation for difficulties in preposition-use for users of ESL could be the lack of any rules in preposition-use in Swedish (Bolander 2012: 136; Reuter 2014: 107). Learning to use the right preposition in the right context is simply a matter of learning specific prepositional phrases by heart and knowing which preposition to use in which context. Also, English does not either have set rules for which preposition to use in which context. Of course, in both languages, prepositions are divided into meaning categories (SAG2 1999: 684–685; Carter & McCarthy 2006: 462–469), but this alone does not answer the question of which specific preposition in the category to use in a specific context. The hesitance in the use of the Swedish prepositions can then be transferred into bilinguals' English language-use as well.

4.4 Pronoun Errors

When I analysed the material, I came across a number of errors in pronoun use. Four texts out of the 25 analysed included some type of error in pronoun use. The errors are categorised according to which type of pronoun the participant failed to use.

In the first example (1), the participant has chosen to use the interrogative pronoun *what* instead of the relative pronoun *which*, which would point to the noun *upper secondary school*. Both pronouns have separate equivalents in Swedish – *what* translates into *vad* and *which* translates into either *vilket/-n* or *vilka*. In this example the right pronoun for the context would have been *which*, since the option of schools was limited to a few specific ones instead of all possible schools. In English, this is the difference between the use of *what* and *which* – if there are many options behind the noun you use *what* but if there is a limited number of options, you use *which*. Further, the example sentence does not start with the interrogative pronoun *what*, which would make it a question.

The second example (2) shows that the participant has used a word from a completely different word class instead of a pronoun when one would be required. The participant has chosen to use the adverb *how* instead of the interrogative pronoun *what* in a phrase that describes what something is like. The pronoun *hurdant* in the Swedish equivalent to the phrase would directly translate into *what* in Swedish. Though, when translating the pronoun *what* into Swedish there are multiple options and what guides the translation is the context. A direct translation, without the context, would be *vad*. Furthermore, what could have influenced the participants choice of the adverb *how* is that the Swedish pronoun *hurdant* includes *hur-* in the earlier part of the lexeme, which also is an adverb in Swedish that would translate into *how* in English.

The participant who produced example 3, *It was always just ideas...* has used a pronoun of the right type, namely a personal pronoun, but used an inaccurate one. In the given phrase,

the pronoun should point to the plural noun *ideas*. *It*, therefore, is a pronoun that can only point to a singular noun. The correct pronoun in the phrase would be *they*, since it is the replacement for plural nouns. The Swedish pronoun *de* is directly translatable into *they*, which shows that the incorrect use of a pronoun in example 3 is not a result of Swedish interference.

In the last example (4) the participant has chosen to use the pronoun *that* in a non-restrictive relative clause, expressing that they like the fact that they will study lots of physics and mathematics. In this case using the pronoun would then point to the whole preceding phrase and not only the presented school subjects. In this example the participant should then have chosen to use the pronoun *which* to express that they like it when they get to study both subjects, since *that* is not used with non-restrictive relative clauses.

Table 4 - Pronoun errors

Number of example	Example expression	Type of error	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>The real choice was deciding what upper secondary school...</i>	Relative pronoun	Det egentliga valet var vilket gymnasium...	The real choice was which upper secondary school...
2.	<i>how it is like to be</i>	Interrogative pronoun	hurdant det är att vara	what it is like being
3.	<i>It was always just ideas...</i>	Personal pronoun	De var alltid bara idéer...	They were always just ideas...
4.	<i>a lot of physics and mathematics that I like</i>	Relative pronoun	mycket fysik och matematik vilket jag gillar	a lot of physics and mathematics, which I like
Total:	4			

In conclusion, for a Swedish-English achieved bilingual using the correct pronouns in English can be difficult since there are only a few instances where you can translate a Swedish pronoun into English without taking the context into consideration. *The Cambridge Grammar of English*

also explains the interpretation of meaning of different pronouns as depending “[...] heavily on the context in which they [pronouns] occur” (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 375). This also applies to the pronoun-use in Swedish. Therefore, I can conclude that transferring the use of a pronoun directly from one language to the other is virtually impossible.

Also, pronouns are a word-class that includes many different words to choose from in both languages with extensive explanations to their meanings (Carter & McCarthy 2006: 375–393; SAG2 1999: 238–243). Due to the complexity of the grammar of pronouns in both languages it can lead to difficulties in using English pronouns sufficiently.

4.5 Errors in Word Order

Alongside the errors in English article use, word order errors showed recurring patterns in English phrases which were a result of Swedish interference. All the examples (1–4) in table 5 are a result of a Swedish phrase that has been directly translated into English. This has resulted in an inaccurate word order in the English phrases.

One significant difference between word order in Swedish and English is when a sentence in Swedish begins with a subordinate clause the subject-verb order is inverted in the main clause (SAG4 1999: 5–8). This is not the case in English. This obvious difference, however, does not explain the errors in the given examples below.

In example one the participant has followed the Swedish pattern when using an auxiliary verb. In Swedish the subject is placed in between the auxiliary verb and the main verb when an adverbial is placed first in a sentence (example 1. *har biologi varit*), whereas in English the auxiliary and main verb are not separated in a similar instance (example 1. *biology has been*).

Exactly the same error for the same reasons is also presented in example 2. The clause starts with an adverbial followed by a two-word verb, namely an auxiliary and a main verb

(*would + be* and *skulle + vara*). In the Swedish clause, the subject should be placed in between the auxiliary and the main verb, whereas in English the verbs are to be placed back-to-back. Example 3 shows a similar error, since the student has in that example placed the subject in between the auxiliary and the main verb, as they would do in Swedish. But what in fact is the case in example 3 is that the student has done a word-for-word translation of the Swedish equivalent and assumed that the same word order is acceptable in English as in Swedish, though it in fact results in an error.

In example four, however, the clause elements in the English extract are as follows: *you* = subject, *have* = verb (predicate) and *always* = adverb. The same elements in Swedish exist as the following words: *du* (subject), *har* (predicate) and *alltid* (adverbial). In a main clause in Swedish, the adverbial should be placed after the predicate (*har alltid*), whereas in English the same rule does not apply. The corrected example shows that the English mid-position adverb, in fact, is placed before the predicate (*always have*).

Table 5 - Errors in word order

Number of error	Example expression	Type of error	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>In high school has biology been...</i>	Swedish interference	På gymnasiet har biologi varit	In high school, biology has been...
2.	<i>...there would it be too hard to study</i>	Swedish interference	där skulle det vara för svårt att studera	it would be too hard to study there
3.	<i>get well along with</i>	Swedish interference	komma bra överens med	to get along well with
4.	<i>you have always something to work on</i>	Swedish interference	du har alltid något att förbättra	you always have something to work on
Total:	5			

Clause structure, as well as many other patterns of the L1, is also shown to be transferred to the L2 by language learners (Kormos 2012: 281–282). Since word order in English and

Swedish differ from each other, the analysis shows how recurring patterns of similar errors in word order are made by the participants. Examples 1–3 are all of the same type, namely word order when an auxiliary verb is present. In many languages, word order rules differ. Therefore, errors in word order are not uncommon among L2 learners. The patterns in one's L1 are possibly one of the hardest to break, since building sentences is one of the most fundamental skills in one's L1.

4.5 Loan translations

Loan translations, or calques, did not occur that frequently in the texts. In fact, only four genuine calques could be detected. Out of the four calques one (example 2) is also listed in the table for verb errors (table 1), but because the expression is a direct word-for-word translation from Swedish, I have considered it a calque as well.

Two of the calques (examples 1 and 4) were represented by a single lexeme, whereas the two remaining ones (examples 2 and 3) can be considered calque expressions that consist of more than one lexeme. Though I only detected two lexeme calques, they have something in common, namely they are both compound words. In example one, *teacher job*, the participant has translated the Swedish word *lärar-* in the closed compound *läraryrket* (teacher + job) to create the English equivalent resulting in a calque. The second lexeme calque (example 4) is an open compound in English and a closed compound in Swedish. The Swedish lexeme consists of *polis*, which translates into *police*, and *skola*, which translates into *school*. Though the police academy is a higher level of education, in Swedish it is commonly called a school. The reason being that the formal name for the educational institution is *polisyrkeshögskola*, which would translate directly into *police school of applied sciences*. The Swedish name for police academy is rather long and that is why *polis skola* is mostly used. The lexeme *academy* does exist in Swedish but is not used when referring to a school of applied sciences.

Examples 2 and 3 represent errors in multiple-word expressions. The first example (2) was presented but not discussed in section 4.1, therefore I am going to give the expression an explanation in this section. When one expresses that some subject is studied or revised in Swedish, the expression *gå igenom*, can be used. The expression is often used in school context, were you study and revise different units in a subject. In example 2 the participant has used the Swedish expression in an otherwise word-for-word translation for *studying the human body*, which results in an error that changes the meaning of the phrase completely. The English translation gives the reader the impression that one will physically move through the human body, which was not meant in the text. The phenomenon is similar in example 3. When using the expression *to be in good shape*, you often refer to a person's physical shape. But when discussing economics, as in the text, you would preferably use *good* or *bad* to describe the state of your economy, since it is not a person.

Table 6 - Loan translations

Number of example	Example expression	Swedish equivalent	Correction
1.	<i>teacher job</i>	läraryrke	teaching job
2.	<i>we were going through the human body (in biology)</i>	vi gick igenom människokroppen	we were studying the human body
3.	<i>your economics is in good shape</i>	din ekonomi är i skick	you have a good economy
4.	<i>police school</i>	polisskola	police academy
Total:	4		

The analysis shows that calques are, in fact, not that common in Swedish L2 users' written English. In the modern world, English has become a widely used language in everyday life for children and adolescents as well as adults around the world. The increased use of media and therefore access to global content online has resulted in better overall competence in the English language and especially a wider and more versatile vocabulary among young English

L2 users. All of this is a result of increased *input* (see section 2.1). Although my study is small-scale the analysis of the calques underlines this phenomenon exactly.

5 Conclusions

Before I give a closer presentation of the conclusions of my study, I will repeat my research questions. Then I will present my conclusions according to my research questions.

1. What types of error occur in the students' written English?
2. Which types of error are most common?
3. Which patterns in the students' L1 has led to errors in the L2?

Concerning the first question, the analysis showed that the main types of error that I could detect in the students' written English were: verb errors, errors in English articles, preposition errors, pronoun errors, errors in word order and the use of calques. All of the categories included errors that are a result of L1 interference, but there were errors of other origin as well. This shows that not all errors made by L2 learners of English are a result of transferring L1 knowledge or patterns into the L2.

The answer to my second research question was rather obvious. The category that showed most errors was preposition errors (4.3) with a total of nine errors. Therefore, I can make the conclusion that mastering the use of prepositions in English as an L2 is not an easy task for language learners. In the case of my study where the participants were L1 users of Swedish there might be a reasonable explanation to why prepositions are difficult to master – the non-existence of formal grammatical rules for preposition-use in both Swedish and English. Which types of error are the most common in Swedish-speaking L2 learners of English over all cannot specifically be shown in this study due to it being a rather brief look into the use of English by Swedish L1 users.

As explained when answering the first research question, many of the occurred errors were in fact a result of L1 interference, and there were only a few instances in which multiple

students had made similar errors. When more than one student had made a similar interference error, I consider it a pattern. As an answer to the third research question, I have come to the conclusion that the most obvious and logical pattern shown in my study was the errors that occurred in word order. In that category the case of verb-subject inversion in Swedish but not in English was the reason for an occurring pattern in the students' errors. Since the inversion is automatically done when they mentally produce their L1, this easily transfers into the L2 if the competence in the L2 has not reached a certain level.

The results of my study underline the findings made by e. g. Cook (2016), Kormos (2012) and Ringbom (2007) that an L2 learner uses patterns from the L1 when producing the L2 in the process of learning. My analysis shows that the cause for errors by most of the participants was relying on the knowledge from the L1 and transferring it into the L2 to produce written language.

Since I only studied 25 texts, the results do not give a broad look into the student's actual use of the English language. An error analysis would usually require more material in order to give a truthful and reliable result. Although I was lacking in material and therefore very few errors occurred, I was able to, as earlier concluded, detect some patterns in the student's use of Swedish and English alongside each other. As a further research idea, I could gather more material and only focus on one type of error in order to give a more detailed and reliable result on the actual reason for occurring errors.

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Appendix 1

4.1 Verb Errors

Example 1. *go to (study at/attend)* – “The most important reason for choosing upper secondary school, for me was that I wanted to go to university when I graduate.”

Example 2. *be (become)* – *I wanted to be a pilot because I love to travel and to visit different countries.*

Example 3. *to work (working)* – “I like to work with different chemicals and with fancy equipment.”

Example 4. *give (provide)* – “My primary goal was to become a doctor and that profession requires theoretical studies that upper secondary school gives.”

Example 5. *stay (remain)* – “We have talked about that with [name] and [name] but I don’t know if it’s just going to stay as wishful thinking because of our future studies...”

Example 6. *go through (study)* – “Especially in high school have biology subject been so much interesting, because we were going through the human body.”

Example 7. *needs (requires)* – “Playing hockey for a profession needs you to be at your best every single game...”

4.2 Omission or Inclusion of English Article

Example 1. *second year prom (the second-year prom)* – “These include second year prom and other things we did together as a class.”

Example 2. *a chemist or engineer (a chemist or an engineer)* – “My dream job would be a chemist or engineer.”

Example 3. *For the most of my life (For most of my life/For the most part of my life)* – “For the most of my life I have never had a dream job or something I want to be.”

Example 4. *a somewhat of an idea (somewhat of an idea)* – “I only have a somewhat of an idea.”

Example 5. *after I finish army (after I finish the army)* – “...apply to police school in Hervanta after I finish army.”

4.3 Preposition Errors

Example 1. *a few times in a winter (a few times a winter)* – “We visit some ski resort in Lampland a few times in a winter with my family...”

Example 2. *favorite detectives from TV (favorite detectives on TV)* – “...or you can go on the field and experience the action like your favorite detectives from TV.”

Example 3. *doing something for a profession (doing something as a profession)* – “Playing hockey for a profession needs you to be at your best every single game...”

Example 4. *a big responsibility from one person (a big responsibility for one person)* – “The job itself is fairly easy, but requires a lot of responsibility from one.”

Example 5. *a dream to me (a dream for me)* – “A dream to me would be seeing New York during Christmas time.”

Example 6. *a spark to this occupation (a spark for this occupation)* – “In upper secondary school I got the idea and the spark to this occupation.”

Example 7. *the benefits on your future job (the benefits of your future job)* – “It is able to teach you whatever you might think of like music, history and health, that you not might have benefits on you future job, but in life generally.”

Example 8. *I decided to come and study to upper secondary school (I decided to study in upper secondary school)* – “I decided to come study to upper secondary school because I couldn’t even imagine myself in any other type of school or job...”

Example 9. *Where no one else has been on (Where no one else has been)* – “We do freeride snowboarding and find our own routes somewhere in the forest with lots of snow and where no one else has been on.”

4.4 Pronoun Errors

Example 1. *The real choice was deciding what upper secondary school... (The real choice was which upper secondary school...)* – “The real choice was deciding what upper secondary school I would apply for.”

Example 2. *how it is like to be (what it is like being)* – “Before I started to listen to crime podcasts and got to know about how it is to be a criminalist...”

Example 3. *It was always just ideas (They were always just ideas)* – “It was always just ideas that flew away in a couple of months or even weeks.”

Example 4. *a lot of physics and mathematics that I like (a lot of physics and mathematics, which I like)* – “I have also thought about the job of an engineer because the studies contain a lot of physics and mathematics that I like and I have studied those too.”

4.5 Errors in Word Order

Example 1. *In high school has biology been (In high school biology has been)* – “Especially in high school have biology subject been so much interesting...”

Example 2. *...there would it be too hard to study (it would be too hard to study there)* – “...I was a hundred percent sure that there would it be too hard to study...”

Example 3. *get well along with (get along well with)* – “I like kids and I get well along with them.”

Example 4. *you have always something to work on (you always have something to work on)* – “I like it because it’s challenging and you have always something to work on.”

4.6 Loan Translations

Example 1. *teacher job (teaching job)* – “So many people have told me that the teacher job would suit me perfectly...”

Example 2. *we were going through the human body in biology (we were studying the human body)* – “Especially in high school have biology subject been so much interesting, because we were going through the human body.”

Example 3. *your economics are in good shape (you have a good economy)* – “...but after I retire it would be a nice thing to know your economics is in good shape...”

Example 4. *police school (police academy)* – “...I would join the army after high school and apply to police school in Hervanta...”