Språkdidaktik
Researching Language Teaching and Learning
Eva Lindgren and Janet Enever (Eds)

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SPRÅKDIDAKTIK: RESEARCHING LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING
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Foreword

It is a pleasure to provide a Foreword for this timely and interesting new volume, Språkdidaktik: Researching language teaching and learning, edited by Eva Lindgren and Janet Enever. This collection of chapters makes an important contribution in that it offers fresh perspectives and new theoretical models for language education research in Sweden. A primary, and important, aim is to raise readers’ awareness of the need to bridge what may be seen as longstanding gaps between research, theory and practice in the language educational context.

A number of important themes present themselves to readers of this collection. First, is the emphasis on the fundamental role of language in education, mediating as it does all educational endeavours no matter what the disciplinary area under focus, but particularly so in the teaching of languages. Moreover, the teaching of any disciplinary subject requires the integration of language with multiple political, social and contextual elements related to why, how, where and when it is taught. A second theme is the growing presence and impact of language policy in the context of the expanding linguistic diversity of European countries, where debates around medium of instruction are becoming ever more complex and where diverse home languages intersect with language(s) of instruction. A further theme is the juxtaposition of teachers and learners within these diverse contexts, and the nature of the interactions among them that will create affordances for learning. Here again, language, and the nature and quality of language that mediates instruction with its potential to facilitate or impede learning, becomes paramount.

In such an environment, questions of how research, theory and practice can be productively aligned present new challenges. How do language classrooms respond to policy imperatives and what resonances are created between macro and micro manifestations of policy? What kinds of research, drawing from which paradigmatic and epistemological bases, will best facilitate teacher knowledge and practice? How can research respond to new and diverse cultural and linguistic learning needs and experiences? Where should language education research take place and who should be included in the conduct of research that impacts on classrooms? How is language learning, mediated as it is through language, experienced and understood? What kinds of methodological practices can be said to most effectively support language learning? From what theories of language should language education derive its educational practices? Within these pages readers will find a wealth of responses to such questions from the Swedish scholars, who have collaborated to create this collection. Their research provides insightful and thought-provoking accounts that offer an invaluable resource for scholars wishing to pursue similar lines of enquiry.

Anne Burns

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INTRODUCTION

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF SPRÅKIDAKTIK IN SWEDEN TODAY

Eva Lindgren & Janet Enever

Language is the primary tool human beings use for thinking, communicating and learning. Through language people develop their identity, express their feelings and thoughts, and understand how others feel and think. Rich and varied language is important in being able to understand and function in a society where different cultures, outlooks on life, generations and language all interact (National Agency for Education, 2011: 83).

In this sense, language variety is perceived as an essential part of human capital necessary both for survival and well-being in today’s world, a world in which the heightened interconnectivity of digital technologies prioritises the importance of communicative skills in both synchronous and asynchronous global interactions.

While learning languages may be a complex process, nonetheless, children seem to accomplish this rather effortlessly in the context of the immediate family by listening, imitating, trying out sounds, words and phrases, and by getting constant feedback from people in the environment. In contrast, in a more formal context, such as the classroom in an institutional setting, an older child or adult might struggle harder when developing a new language. The central role of the teacher in supporting and facilitating a process of guiding the learner to becoming an independent user of the language is a highly skilled operation.

The aims of this book

Our central purpose in compiling this book is to contribute to bridging the perceived gap between research and practice within the field of language education. In focusing on the relationship between research and practice we draw on a range of disciplines that are not commonly integrated. In so doing, we present new material in the area of teaching and learning languages including empirical studies and reviews of research. We hope it will contribute to the discussion and definition of the relatively new research area of language didactics in Sweden.

In particular, the inclusion of research related to the range of language education courses responds to the increasing priority given to languages in education policy by European institutions such as the European Policy Division, the Council of Europe and the European Commission. This reflects an inclusive national language policy in Sweden, positioning Swedish as the national language, together with five national minority languages, support for languages spoken in the home and state-funded Swedish as a second language provision for all recently arrived migrants. This comprehensive support for linguistic diversity at policy
level is reflected in many of the papers included in this publication which provide empirical evidence of policy implementation in educational contexts. As such, this book will serve as an agenda for the kinds of school-based research which are now perceived as a high priority in Sweden and more generally across northern Europe.

Language education in Northern Europe

Historically, education studies in general have held a relatively low status position in the academic hierarchies of Sweden and many other European countries and within this, language education has been perceived as a minor player. As a result, language education in Sweden is a significantly under-researched area of study. In contrast to this situation, since the Lisbon Strategy (2000) the perceived importance of languages and language policy has rapidly risen, leading to initiatives in many European countries such as lowering the start age of foreign language learning and providing increased funding for minority language support, together with a substantial rise in the collection of statistical data which has facilitated comparisons across Europe. These trends place a heavy responsibility on national and regional education providers, together with university scholars, for ensuring that teachers are well-supported in their knowledge and expertise in the field, particularly in a context of rapidly expanding migrant communities throughout Europe.

In an emerging education policy space across Europe where Sweden is situated within the Nordic group of countries, the region is often regarded as displaying excellence in multilingualism. However, recent European survey language data illustrated the complexity of achieving effective learning of multiple languages in school context (SurveyLang, 2012). While Swedish 15-year-olds achieved the highest rankings in English, their performances in the most popular second foreign language (Spanish) was the lowest in Europe (p.90). Nonetheless, Sweden’s national language policy can be regarded as one of the most radical in Europe today. The most recent policy (2011) aims to provide support for home languages (both minority and migrant languages), state provision of Swedish as a second language and the positioning of English as a core curriculum subject from early childhood (i.e. not a foreign language). From a policy perspective Sweden reflects a comprehensive response to current European language policy recommendations which formulate a target for all European citizens to become fluent in their home language, plus two additional languages (known as the 1 + 2 formula).

During the past few years active debate about the quality of education has occurred in many European countries. In Sweden this has resulted in a revised national curriculum for schools and new requirements for the curriculum in teacher education at university. In addition, the Government assigned considerable funds for the research training of teachers, with the aim of connecting teaching practices with current research more effectively. In particular these new directions included a strong emphasis on individual school subjects and their teaching. The term ‘ämnesdidaktik’, subject didactics, is frequently used referring to research-based knowledge of the teaching and learning of subject matter or subject content. In the field of languages the term ‘språkdidaktik’, teaching and learning of languages, is generally used. As a result of the new curricula, research on the teaching and learning of individual subject areas
has come into focus and considerable funds are assigned to this area of research. However, in research on the teaching and learning of languages there is still a lack of consensus as to what theoretical perspectives and methodologies could, or even should, be included. In this volume we pick up on the debate around the teaching and learning of languages, and propose an inclusive perspective drawing on a range of theoretical understandings and interpretations. Before we propose a tentative model of the research area along with theoretical and methodological applications, we will describe how we have come to understand the dynamic concept of ‘språkdidaktik’.

Understanding språkdidaktik – Language didactics

The term ‘språkdidaktik’ includes two elements: the specific subject matter språk (language) and the general didaktik (teaching and learning). We refer to languages mainly as spoken and signed languages but also acknowledge the fact that spoken and written interaction and expression is frequently accompanied by gestures, visuals and sounds/music.

In the Swedish context, the general concept of didaktik comes from the German word ‘Didaktik’ and includes “both questions that are connected with conditions for teaching and its implementation and questions that consider a particular individual’s learning in more or less formalised environments” (Nationalencyklopedin, authors’ translation). More specifically, Jank and Meyer (1991) have defined a set of questions that have come to guide didactic research as well as education: what is taught, why and how is it taught, who is learning, with whom, where and through what medium, and who decides what to learn.

The concept of ‘didaktik’ is thus wider than the Anglophone understanding of ‘didactics’ as teaching methodology and instruction. Henceforth we will use the English spelling of the word, didactics, but in reference to the wider meaning of teaching and learning in formal and informal contexts.

Didactics can be divided into specific areas of education, such as educational levels or disciplines. There is research in pre-school didactics, higher education didactics and subject didactics in for example Mathematics, Science or Languages. Subject didactics thus incorporates both knowledge of the subject matter itself and the didactics that apply to it. Grossman, Schoenfeld and Lee (2005: 208) suggested six broad questions that bring together subject matter knowledge with knowledge of subject didactics or, as they refer to it, pedagogical content knowledge:

1. How do we define subject matter?

2. What are the different purposes for teaching the subject matter in public schools?

3. What do understanding or performance look like with regard to this subject matter?

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1 Original Swedish quote: “Didaktikens områden rör således både frågor som kopplas till undervisningens förutsättningar och genomförande och till frågor som rör den enskilde individens lärande i olika mer eller mindre formaliserade miljöer.”
4. What are the primary curricula available to teach the subject matter?

5. How do teachers assess students understanding and performance within a subject matter domain?

6. What are the practices that characterize the teaching of particular content?

Different subjects or areas would yield different answers to these questions depending on their particular circumstances. In the language classroom, for example, the specifics of the language at hand, the context, provision of material, language use outside the classroom, individual differences etc. would be aspects to take into consideration. A recent publication on language didactics by Tornberg, Malmqvist and Valfridsson (2009) has reflected this broad perspective. Here they discuss how (foreign) language didactics research has taken a turn from a main focus on the development of language skills and teaching methods to a stronger focus on issues of meaning making, dialogue, participation and democracy, including a wide variety of theoretical perspectives. Similarly Boström, Damber and Ivarsson (2010) point to the multidisciplinary and pragmatic character of language didactics that integrates perspectives of both research and practice. This broader perspective is also reflected in the field of Swedish didactics (Swedish as a mother tongue) where linguistics and literature are integrated with didactics. Questions that relate to Swedish on different levels in the educational system, and questions of general language and literacy development are in focus, often together with perspectives of language, identity, culture and meaning-making.

A holistic view

Historically there has been a division between Swedish didactics and didactics related to other languages, originating from classifications in the curriculum for primary and secondary education. However, recognising how much of language teaching and learning takes place throughout life outside formalised education, in multilingual homes and through digital media we suggest that language in relation to research in language didactics is rather defined as mother tongue/s and any additional language/s learnt in or outside a formalised context.

In Figure 1 we have made an attempt to summarise our understanding of research in the field of language didactics in a holistic three-layered model. The focus of attention is language and language use in different situations and contexts connected with learning and development (c.f. Liberg, 2009). In the top layer the three main actors in language didactics are represented as different but intersecting circles: the learner, the mentor and the context. The learner is any individual who is learning a language and this circle includes aspects of identity, attitudes, motivation, individual differences, experiences, cognitive makeup etc. The mentor can be a teacher, a parent, a caretaker, a friend or anyone who takes on the role of teaching or instructing. The context is any context where learning takes place, for example, school, home, after-school activities or the Internet, including people that are present in that context.

Underpinning the actors are the two layers of languages and language use. Languages represent the solid foundation of any research in language didactics and are defined widely in the
model as mother tongue/s and/or any additional language/s at any level and in any context. This includes various definitions of languages, as first, second, third, foreign, majority and minority etc., depending on purpose and perspective of a particular research study. Language use, represented by the mid-layer is understood as language being either produced or perceived through oracy, literacy or signs, most often as a means of interacting with others.

The three layers of the model intersect in different ways forming spaces for investigation. A common research area in language didactics is the centre of the top layer where all three actors meet and use/learn language/s, for example in the classroom or in the home. However, language didactics, as defined by the model, allows for a variety of research areas. In the learner circle we can place research on individual differences in learners, and linguistic analyses of learner language as produced in speech or writing. In the intersection between context and mentor, research on how teachers implement policy documents in the language classroom can be placed, and the intersection between learner and mentor may include research about the interaction between teachers and students during literacy activities. Research about informal learning of languages could be described as occurring in the intersection of learner and context, or within the central part where learner, mentor and context meet. These are just a few of the many possible examples of how research in the field of language didactics can be understood.

Needless to say, the model encompasses a truly wide perspective on learning. Studies in language didactics thus draw on a variety of theories, from psycholinguistic/cognitive, sociocultural to cognitive, theoretical and applied linguistics, education and philosophy. Research methods include linguistic analyses, ethnographic approaches, questionnaires, experiments, and recently also mixed methods.
This volume
In this volume we present some examples of research in the field of language didactics in (Northern) Sweden. The chapters illustrate different aspects of language didactic research and aim to explore, critique, review and reflect on

- The role of the teacher in the multimedia language classroom
- Approaches to research on language learning and research-based practice
- The impact of language policy on classroom practices (minority/majority languages)
- Contexts for language learning
- Supporting learner language development
- Global perspectives on language education

Part I includes six discussion papers. The first three reflect the holistic nature of language didactics including methodology, literature and Computer assisted language learning (CALL). Following this, two chapters discuss the application of linguistic theory to the language classroom and the section is concluded with some insights from policy across multiple contexts.

Part II presents six empirical papers starting with three related to oracy and classroom interaction with adult learners learning an additional language. The second group of papers includes three studies of literacy, one where text talk is in focus, one studying writing in classroom contexts and a final study focussing on writing in a third language. Below are short summaries of chapter themes

Part 1: Discussion papers
In Chapter 1 Parvin Gheitasi and Eva Lindgren introduce the reader to the benefits of drawing on a mixed method framework for research in language classrooms. They discuss various approaches to mixed methods and illustrate these with examples from research studies.

In Chapter 2 Anette Svensson provides a historical overview of Literature Teaching and Learning focusing on the development of the field from the modernist era to current issues in the field. Modernist and post-modernist influences are placed in a chronological perspective and function as a background for a closer look at Literature teaching and learning in the Swedish context today.

In Chapter 3 Mats Deutschmann and Mai Trang Vu give an overview of theories, methods and current practice in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), discussing their implications for language teaching. The chapter offers a starting point for discussion on the implications of CALL for practitioners in the field of language teaching.
In Chapter 4 Marlene Johansson Falk asks how linguistic theory can influence good practice in language classrooms. Through a focus on the teaching and learning of the English prepositions *in* and *on* from a Swedish L2 perspective she argues that the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics provides useful didactic information for practice in second language teaching and learning.

In Chapter 5 Mikael Vinka, Christian Waldmann, David Kroik and Kirk Sullivan consider the creation of corpora in the Saami language and how these can be used to support minority language education in pre-school. Using examples both from the CHILDES database and from South Saami they illustrate how corpora may support the development of culturally relevant teaching materials.

In Chapter 6 Sergej Ivanov, Mats Deutschmann and Janet Enever address contemporary language questions in three, quite different contexts: Language status in schools in the Seychelles; curriculum development in Russia; and early foreign language policy in Europe. Together, these examples raise many questions related to language-in-education policy.

Part II: Empirical papers

In Chapter 7 Bosse Thorén adopts a very personal stance to explore his interest in phonology, from beginnings as an unqualified teacher of Swedish as a second language for adults, through later experiences as a teacher educator and researcher. This chapter gives an insight into his developing didactic strategies, together with findings concerning prosodic details.

In Chapter 8 Gun Lystedt discusses the development of international students’ oral language skills in the Swedish classroom. Using an approach which aims to develop students’ communicative language skills through the discussion of recent newspaper articles, the potential for creating authentic social interaction through small group tasks is discussed.

In Chapter 9 Anita Malmqvist and Ingela Valfridsson explore how thinking is mediated in learning situations, through the lens of a first semester university course in German where students are engaged in talking about texts in small groups. The investigation interrogates the nature of the group as a resource for learning in relation both to group interaction and task type.

In Chapter 10 Monica Egelström and Ulla Damber look at language and literacy development across the curriculum in Swedish compulsory schools. They focus particularly on the function of text talk and dialogues for vocabulary growth, literacy and language development in the pre-school and primary years.

In Chapter 11 Carin Jonsson and Berit Lundgren describe and analyse teachers’ literacy discourse in the classroom and students’ learning. They draw on data from two studies conducted in the middle years of schooling in Sweden during 2012. The paper discusses problems and possibilities related literacy development, focusing on themes of access, domination, diversity and design.
In Chapter 12 Yvonne Knospe, Anita Malmqvist and Ingela Valfridsson interrogate writing theory in relation to empirical evidence from two studies of foreign language writing produced by L3 learners. The first study considers the production of understandable written output in the early stages of learning, whilst the second analyses learner texts to identify meaning-making strategies.

References


Part I
Discussion Papers
I

BROADENING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: MIXED METHODS

Parvin Gheitasi & Eva Lindgren

In this chapter we acknowledge that language learning is a process that is not only situated within an individual learner but also in the immediate and wider social context. An individual learner’s cognitive make-up (Whalen & Menard, 1995) is blended in interactions with family members, peers and teachers, with exposure to the language in the linguistic landscape, with culture, and with language policy. Traditionally, studies of language learning have investigated only one of these perspectives at a time, such as the cognitive or socio-cultural, cultural or political. In this chapter we discuss a way of mixing theoretical and methodological starting points, the mixed methods approach, that allows researchers and practitioners to provide a more holistic understanding of processes that underlie language learning. Such approaches may contribute to the development of teaching that takes the individual learner and their contextual situation into account in the language classroom.

We will start by presenting an overview of different research methods and the rationale behind them, before moving on to the issues regarding the emergence and the characteristics of mixed method approach. Finally the implications of this approach for the language classroom will be discussed through examples of studies we have conducted in which mixed methods were used.

Background

Research on second language acquisition (SLA) has previously mainly taken a cognitivist approach. Recently though, Ortega (2011) argued that globalisation, digital media, post-colonialism and new ethnicities put SLA in a new contextual frame that calls for new and wider theoretical perspectives. As a consequence, methodologies for the study of language development inside or outside the classroom need to be re-explored and mixed method has emerged as one way to approach issues that are found in the intersection between for example cognitive, individual, social and contextual perspectives.

Research projects have an internal logic that keeps the theory, questions and method together. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) described a logical framework of research as including three phases. The first phase relates to the type of project, which could be exploratory without a priori hypotheses and/or confirmatory with a priori hypotheses. The second phase relates to the type of data collection that would follow on the decisions made in the first phase, and the third phase considers data analysis and interpretation. The type of data do not dictate the type of analysis, which means that it is possible to convert qualitative data into numbers for quantitative analysis, or for quantitative data to be analysed qualitatively (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).
Research paradigms
The notion of paradigms is influential both when selecting which research questions to ask and which methods to employ to find their answers. Brannen (2005) argues that positioning oneself paradigmatically is one of the first tasks a researcher should undertake, as methodological choices are underpinned by philosophical assumptions. Paradigmatic approaches to research encompass different assumptions about the nature of knowledge (ontology) and the means of generating it (epistemology). Creswell (2008) states that when planning a study, researchers need to think through “the philosophical worldview assumptions that they bring to the study, the strategy of inquiry that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice” (p.5).

The concept of ‘paradigm’ has been interpreted differently in the literature. Patton (1982) defines paradigms as the model of thinking for design, measure, analysis, and “personal involvement” in research, while other researchers (eg. Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009 p.84, Guba and Lincoln 1994 p.105) describe paradigms as “worldviews” and beliefs regarding the nature of truth, knowledge, and values. Lincoln (1990) elaborates on the concept and discusses paradigms as alternate worldviews with widespread effects on every aspect of a research investigation, and Morgan (2007) describes paradigms as “shared beliefs among members of a speciality area” (p. 52) that impacts on the knowledge pursued by researchers and their interpretation of the collected data. The relation between paradigms as worldviews and research methods has often led researchers into selecting either quantitative or qualitative methodologies for their studies.

A quantitative approach to research is connected to a positivist perspective and underpinned by the notion that knowledge should be based on facts that are observable by our senses. Quantifiable data about, for example people (age, gender, income, profession etc.) is transformed into a numerical format and analysed using statistical methodologies. Since this approach can be used with large samples, the results can give a broad understanding of the issue at hand. Quantitative data can be obtained via, for example, tests, designed tasks, questionnaires or national registers. Questions that can be posed to quantitative data include the effect of different factors (e.g. socio-economic, L1 proficiency) on a target variable (e.g. FL proficiency as measured through an oral or written task), the development of a certain skill over time, or causal relationships between events.

Qualitative research springs from constructivism/relativism and the view that social phenomena and their meanings are constructed by the people who use them. Qualitative research takes an enquiry-based approach and aims to explore, understand and discover, for example, why certain events occur in a language classroom. Data can be collected through, for example, interviews, observations or documents. The data obtained in qualitative research is often in the form of written documents, transcriptions of interviews or observations, or visual in the form of video recordings or photos. The analysis focuses on description and thematic interpretation.

Along with the advantages that these two approaches bring to the field of research there are several shortcomings. Dörnyei (2007) states that the quantitative method is weak in finding
the subjective variety of issues in research. Since this approach brings limited exploratory capacity, it may fail to uncover reasons behind particular observations. Regarding the qualitative approach, lack of real means of assessment can lead to uncertain results, which may be affected by the researcher’s personal bias. Hence the issues of validity or reliability may become major criticisms for this approach. Thus, researchers face the challenge of how to achieve more comprehensive and reliable results despite methodological shortcomings.

A third paradigm
Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) see the emergence of mixed methods as a ‘third paradigm’, with quantitative and qualitative approaches being the first two paradigms. They propose that mixed methods represent a worldview of its own that can be distinguished from the positivist perspective of quantitative research, on the one hand, and the constructivist perspective of qualitative research on the other. This approach has been called pragmatic theory (Creswell, 2003; Tashakori and Teddlie, 1998).

According to Creswell (2003) pragmatist researchers connect a selection of approaches to the purpose and nature of the research questions at hand; they believe in “whatever philosophical and/or methodological approach works for the particular research problem under study” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. 5). Pragmatist research studies are generally multi-purpose and a “what works” approach enables researchers to avoid a focus on an exclusively quantitative or qualitative approach. Creswell and Plano Clark (2006) further support this argument when they note how most choices of taking a quantitative or qualitative approach are based on what is best suited to the purpose and belief of a design and methodology rather than a philosophical commitment.

Mixed methods
The mixed method approach has emerged from the pragmatic paradigm as a response to the limitations of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell 2003, see Riazi & Candlin, 2014 for a critical review). The idea behind mixed methods has been that by combining quantitative and qualitative methods researchers can make the most of the strengths of each approach and compensate for their weaknesses.

Concerning the philosophical assumptions and the methods of enquiry of the mixed methods approach, Creswell and Plano Clark (2006) argue that this research design holds a methodology which involves philosophical assumptions that guide the data collection and analysis through the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in different phases of the research process, with the principal hypothesis that mixing the two approaches of quantitative and qualitative provides a better understanding of the research problems. In addition, mixed method designs enable researchers to deal simultaneously with both the confirmatory and exploratory questions. Going beyond the limitations of a single approach it could also provide more comprehensive answers to research questions (Teddlie and Tashakori, 2003). A mixed methods approach is expected to create reliable explanations through triangulation and result in "well validated and substantial findings" (Creswell, 2003,
In support of the mixed method approach to research Caracelli & Greene (1997) state that, “the underlying rationale for mixed-method inquiry is to understand more fully, to generate deeper and broader insights, to develop important knowledge claims that respect a wider range of interests and perspectives” (p. 7).

Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) identified five purposes for adopting mixed methods design strategies: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, and expansion.

**Triangulation** increases validity of the research. It involves the investigation of the same phenomena with the aid of multiple methods, which counteract biases. For instance, combining a qualitative interview and a quantitative questionnaire to evaluate language users’ perceptions and experiences may lead to well validated findings about the teaching methods. Similarly Denzin (1978) argues that triangulation can be a way of maximizing the internal and external validity of the research using multiple methods. In this way, the shortcomings of one method will be reduced by the strength of another method.

**Complementarity** increases research validity and “interpretability”. It evaluates “overlapping, and also different facets of a phenomenon” (Greene, Caracelli and Graham, 1989, p. 258). Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques reveals different aspects of the research area that complement each other. Thus, the use of mixed methods can create a deeper understanding.

**Development** also increases research validity. Mixed methods use the “results from one method to help develop or inform the other method” (Ibid, p. 259). For instance, in a mixed method research, the quantitative data, in the form of a questionnaire can be used in the development of in-depth interview questions.

**Initiation** increases the depth and scope of the outcomes and clarifications. It is concerned with the intentional analysis of inconsistent qualitative and quantitative results. Mixed methods pursue the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives and the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.

**Expansion** increases the scope of the research. It consists of several features to “extend the breadth and range of the study” (Ibid, p. 259). Quantitative and qualitative methods are used to assess different elements within the same study, leading to expansion of the project. Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) identify expansion as a design option, which provides the most flexibility of all the five purposes.

Riazi and Candlin (2014) point out that regardless of strategy, mixed methods research poses challenges. “One such challenge […], concerns the level of theorising and conceptualising of the research problem so that different layers and various dimensions of the issue in question can be studied and integrated by means of an MMR [mixed methods research] framework.” (p. 161)
Designs for mixing the methods
In mixed method research, the process of mixing methods can occur in different ways with various levels of both qualitative and quantitative features. The “mixing” might be a concurrent or sequential use of different methods, or integration of different methods in a single analysis (Caracelli & Greene, 1997). Creswell (2003) distinguishes between the sequential explanatory implementation and sequential exploratory implementation of mixed methods.

In explanatory sequential studies, researchers gather and analyse quantitative data, then move on to collect qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results, and finally interpretations are based on quantitative and qualitative methods.

In exploratory sequential research, qualitative data is collected to explore an issue after which quantitative data is gathered to provide an explanation of the relationship found in the qualitative data. One further alternative approach is when researchers collect qualitative and quantitative data in parallel studies and then synthesise the results of the separate analyses. This approach is called the “parallel database variant” of the “convergent design” for mixed method studies (Creswell and Clark, 2010, p. 80).

There is a debate as to what a mixed method study entails. According to the definition of “methods” by Creswell (2006), a mixed-methods study should include a mix of both data collection and data analysis. A study in which only one type of data is collected but both types of data analysis are used, would, according to Cresswell, not be defined as mixed methods. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003), however would consider such a study as a study with mixed data analysis.

Mixed method approach in research on teaching and learning
Yin (2006) posed that, as a tool to explore complex systems (such as the classroom), mixed methods could make a significant contribution to educational research, investigating both processes and outcomes. Indeed, implementing research strategies that lend themselves to broad scopes of understanding has become a justification for favouring the application of mixed method approach in applied linguistics research (Dörnyei 2007), in which, for instance, a qualitative approach can help to uncover processes while the outcomes can be measured through quantitative analysis.

In a reflection on mixed methods in the field of applied linguistics, Hashemi (2012) identified some of the functions and applications of the approach. He recognized the concurrent triangulations practical for multilevel discourse analysis, needs analysis and program evaluation. Sequential explanatory designs may be appropriate for studies where qualitative explanation of quantitative findings is required. In this approach, the quantitative data is collected and analysed first and in the next stage the qualitative data is collected and analysed to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Ivankova et al. 2006). The analysis of the quantitative data provides a general understanding of the research problem while the qualitative data explains and clarifies the statistical results in more depth (Creswell, 2003). In contrast to the exploratory design, sequential exploratory designs can be applied to expand
a qualitative study through exploring it quantitatively, and be used for example, to validate measurement instruments such as questionnaires (Hashemi, 2012). For instance a researcher may collect qualitative stories about teachers’ experiences with a new curriculum and analyse the stories to identify the problems, strategies, and consequences that teachers are faced with. Considering the emerging categories as variables, the researcher can then move on to develop a quantitative instrument and use it to assess the overall prevalence of the identified variables for a large number of teachers.

In their critical literature review of mixed methods research in language teaching and learning research, Riazi and Candlin (2014) found that “researchers seem to have taken the position that adding another component (either qualitative or quantitative) to their study could work to strengthen it, but without effecting any systematic integration” (p. 167). They conclude that mixed methods research provides valuable knowledge to the field of language teaching and learning but also that there is a need for a research space where the paradigm can develop (ibid.).

Pedagogical implications of mixed methods research
In this section we present and discuss the implications of two research studies in which we used mixed methods to study complex issues in language education.

Supporting teachers’ self efficacy to improve feedback
Teachers are constantly under pressure. They have to balance demands from society, curriculum, colleagues and parents with the daily needs of the learners in front of them. Teachers are expected to cover a vast range of subject areas as well as adequate general and subject specific methodologies of teaching and learning. Every teacher regardless of level of education is also expected to provide continuous formative assessment and feedback to students in order for them to develop in accordance with their individual needs. This is not always an easy task and without support, teachers may lose any sense of self-efficacy, which in turn may impact negatively on the learner.

In a study of adult foreign language learners Rahimi and Gheitasi (2010) investigated how teachers’ belief in their ability to bring a change might affect their feedback to learners’ writing. The mixed methods approach was used in both the data collection process and the data analysis. The required data was gathered through different sources, including a questionnaire, which measured the sense of efficacy of the teachers in a numerical format (Quantitative data) by for example asking about how much the teachers perceived they could get through to the most difficult students or how much they could control disruptive behaviour in the classroom. Written feedback provided by teachers on learners’ writing formed the basis for qualitative analysis in which teachers’ feedback points, (an error corrected/underlined, or any type of written comment by the teacher) were analysed. Finally, quantitative data in the form of grades on pre and post-tests were used as indicators of the effect of teachers’ feedback.

During the analysis of the data, statistical analysis (quantitative approach) was used to compare the results of the pre-test and post-test. Also, in order to find the relationship between the
teachers’ sense of efficacy and the frequency of their feedback on different dimensions of the writing texts, a quantitative approach was used. The qualitative approach was used for the in depth analysis of feedback given to the students by the teachers in order to interpret the way in which teachers provided feedback with regard to their self efficacy belief. The results showed that "...the teachers with a higher sense of efficacy used more encouraging comments in comparison to teachers with a low sense of efficacy. And in the case of criticism, teachers with a high sense of efficacy used more respectful phrases such as 'please', that mitigate the critics on the shortcomings..." (p. 1937).

In this study the mixed methods approach enabled us to understand how specific feedback could relate to teachers’ sense of efficacy. Knowing that there is a relationship between the two may put some pressure on school leadership to provide teachers with continuous in-service training in order for them to develop in different areas relating to the subject matter or to teaching and learning methodology. A working environment that includes focused discussion and reflection among colleagues may also contribute to teachers developing and maintaining high levels of self-efficacy.

Bringing the out-of-school context into the classroom
Language learning opportunities for young people in Sweden and in many parts of Europe have changed quite radically with the impact of digital media. The influence of English is massive through TV, film, games, the Internet and music, leading to some children picking up a substantial amount of English out-of-school that they bring into school. This situation can place new demands on the language teacher both when teaching English, and when teaching other foreign languages.

Within the framework of a large European project, ELLiE (www.ellieresearch.eu), mixed methods were used to “investigate factors related to children’s out of school context, such as contact with the foreign language digital media and parents’ education and use of the foreign language at work” (Muñoz and Lindgren, 2011: 103). Data from around 700 learners was collected from multiple sources: learners’ proficiency tests in reading and listening, a questionnaire for parents, and a smaller number of interviews with teachers and learners. The data was analysed using both statistical methodologies and thematic interview analyses.

In the parents’ questionnaires we asked about parents’ education and whether they used the foreign language professionally, and about their children’s type and time of exposure to English including digital media as well as face-to-face contacts. The reading and listening tests were administered in the classroom and included eight reading items and 32 listening items. Data from the questionnaires and the tests were analysed statistically for the impact of out-of-school factors on results of the reading and listening tests. Results showed that length of exposure, i.e. number of hours per week, had the strongest impact, followed by parents’ use of the foreign language professionally (see also Lindgren and Muñoz, 2013). The thematic analysis of the interviews with the teachers and with the learners confirmed the statistical results and added another dimension to them. Some teachers discussed how children’s use of digital media enhanced motivation and enriched vocabulary. Others pointed out how they had noted that even though children developed vocabulary through digital media, this
vocabulary was somewhat restricted to domains of, for example, computer gaming. Children told us about their motivation for learning languages and how useful it can be to know languages when going abroad both with their families and once they themselves become adults. They also talked about how it made them proud to be able to help family members who did not know English, and how their parents’ also thought learning languages was important.

This mixed-methods study provided some insight into the direct effect out-of-school factors have on learning foreign languages, as well as insights into children’s and teachers’ reasoning about the out-of-school context. We found that exposure and parents are important factors for young learners’ foreign language development, and that both parents and children are motivated to learn languages. We also found that there is great variation in children’s opportunities to receive exposure outside school, which can be due to parents’ opportunities to travel abroad on holiday, willingness to let young children use digital media, or guide their children’s use of digital media. The challenges for the language teacher may lie in ways on the one hand to compensate children who receive little exposure, and on the other hand to broaden the language horizon of those who get a lot of exposure in restricted domains.

Conclusion
Providing an overview of the different research methods with regard to their philosophies, this paper has set out to offer a broader view of the fundamental principles of mixed method research and how to apply them to classroom research and practice. From a research perspective, mixing methods provides an opportunity to move beyond traditional approaches to second language acquisition/learning and thereby receive a broader understanding of the interplay between learners and their context.

The ultimate goal for any researcher in the field of language teaching and learning should be to improve teaching and learning of languages in classrooms. For any teacher, the classroom situation is complex, and it requires short and long-term planning as well as constant and rapid decision-making drawing on knowledge about children’s cognition, their immediate context of peers and family, the curriculum etc. Implementation of mixed method research may be particularly useful for teachers as it, too, takes the complexity of any teaching and learning situation as its starting point.

References


Literature teaching and learning – a part of language teaching and learning?

Is literature teaching and learning a part of language teaching and learning? This question can be answered with both yes and no, which is why this is a complicated question - one that gives rise to a historic overview of the field. (Comparative) literature in the language subjects (e.g. Swedish, English, Spanish, French, German) taught in the Swedish education system, is often used as a means to learn the language, its grammar, structure and form. However, literature (fiction) may also be used as a form of art with educational values besides the linguistic aspect. When literature is used for language proficiency, it is connected to the theoretical and methodical research field of language teaching and learning. However, when literature is used for cultural studies or when it is used as a form of art, literature teaching and learning can be seen as separated from language teaching and learning. This division is necessary in order to establish the relationship between literature teaching and learning and language teaching and learning, but in a teaching situation, the various purposes for using literature are often combined. Literature teaching and learning may thus be considered as a relevant part of language teaching and learning despite its double affiliation.

In Sweden, all aspects of language learning are divided into sub-categories such as: grammar, language history, phonetics, cultural studies and literature. Whilst comparative literature is viewed as an academic subject on its own, it is also a school subject forming part of the broad subject area of Swedish. Except for the subjects of Comparative Literature and Swedish, all other language subjects at university level have combined the linguistic and literary topics. With this in mind, this historic overview places general literature teaching and learning and the subject of Swedish at the centre of the discussion.

Literature teaching and learning is a fairly new field of research in Swedish academia. The two parts that make up this research field, comparative literature and pedagogy, are, however, much older, since they became university subjects in the beginning of the 20th century. Comparative Literature is placed academically in the humanities, while pedagogy is placed in the social sciences, so there is a question of belonging that lies within the subject of literature teaching and learning itself.

In 1977, the teacher education programme in Sweden became university-based and the subject of education science was divided into two parts: a general part in education science and a specific part in subject method, a part that was later developed into subject didactics (or subject teaching and learning) (Degerman, 2012: 65-66). Similarly, the school subject of Swedish has gone through various changes since its establishment in the middle of the 19th century, and during these changes, one can see that it has been treated as a language subject.
to a greater or lesser extent supported by the study of literature rather than a literature and education subject (Thavenius, 1999: 8). Even if the topics that make up the subject area of Swedish have shifted over time, literature, comparative literature, or the study of fictional texts, has in one way or another been part of the subject area of Swedish and thus been included in the study of other languages which may be taught in Swedish schools. Literature teaching and learning focuses on the teaching of comparative literature in Swedish and other languages taught in the school or at university level. As such, Degerman (2012) argues that it is highly connected to the teaching and/or classroom situation.

This chapter aims to give a historic overview of the field of literature teaching and learning with a primary focus on the subject of Swedish and a secondary focus on other languages as related areas of study. First, the theoretical influences on this academic research field will be presented. Second, a Swedish contribution to the field of literature teaching and learning will be emphasised. Third, postmodern theoretical influences on the field will be explored. Finally, the three aspects of current issues in the field of literature teaching and learning, the teaching of literature, text selection and multimodal texts, will be discussed.

Theoretical influences on literature teaching and learning

This historical overview of the field of literature teaching and learning begins with the modernist era, the time at the end of the 19th century when a focus in society at large was placed on people’s abilities to create, improve and alter their surroundings through experiments, science and technology. An aim of research at this time was to promote progress and reach a high level of awareness in the development process.

During this time, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), the Russian philosopher, prominent in developmental psychology, cognition research and pedagogy, formed ideas that have been very influential in the field of teaching and learning in general. Quite differently from Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who was a leading biologist, researcher in pedagogy and founder of the genetic epistemology, Vygotsky promoted a socio-cultural learning perspective. While Piaget discussed the child’s cognitive development as biologically determined and emphasised the significance of not accelerating the development stages during which the child acquires knowledge, but instead adapting exercises to the stage where it is situated (Mays, 1997: 7), Vygotsky focused on the social context in which a child is brought up and discussed what impact the surrounding people have on a child’s development. Instead of regarding intellect as dependent on strictly biological influences, a child’s development is carried out in relation to other people (for example, parents and teachers) (Vygotsky, 1998: 203). The socio-cultural perspective of a child’s learning process is as relevant to literature teaching and learning as it is to any didactic research field.

From Vygotsky’s ideas and research, a wave of socio-cultural and constructivist research ideas followed in the United States and Europe that also reached Sweden (Arfwedson, 2006: 7). As a theoretical movement, constructivism aims to explain how knowledge is constructed. Originating in cognitive psychology and biology, it focuses on the significance of experience, since new knowledge is constructed when information comes into contact with existing
knowledge (Murphy, 1997). Constructivism has not only influenced literature teaching and learning, but rather the more general field of teaching and learning in which literature teaching and learning is a part.

Another big influence that more specifically has had an effect on the research field of literature teaching and learning is new criticism, a theoretical approach inspired from the natural sciences that was developed in the 1920s-1950s (Arfwedson, 2006: 19). This approach aimed to exclude historic and cultural contexts as well as features such as readers’ responses and authors’ intentions. An effect that new criticism has contributed to the fields of comparative literature and literature teaching and learning is the method of close-reading, the intense and careful study of the text (Arfwedson, 2006: 19). Another effect of new criticism is the view that form, style and literary technique, contribute to the meaning of the texts. It is a formalist theory that can also be related to the Russian formalist tradition focusing on specialist areas such as narratology, semiotics, and style (Arfwedson, 2006: 19).

One of the biggest influences in the field of literature teaching and learning is reader-response theory, which focuses predominantly on the reader’s role in and experiences of the reading process (Norling, 2009: 37). Using this perspective, the reader is seen as the interpreter of the text in which he or she creates his or her own story or performance (Norling, 2009: 37). What the text means to the reader is of more significance than what the writer could have meant by writing it (Norling, 2009: 37). This acceptance of the reader’s agency opposes the formalist, new criticism theory where the reader’s role is disregarded in favour of the text; only that which is found within the text should be used to create meaning. Instead, reader-response theory brings in the psychology of the reader as a significant contributor to the meaning-making process (Norling, 2009: 37).

There are several researchers who have been influential within the field of reader-response theories, but this overview will focus on two of the most influential, Louise Rosenblatt (1904-2005) and Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007), and their impact on the field of literature teaching and learning. Rosenblatt (1995: xvi) sees reading as a transaction between reader and text and states that each transaction is unique:

The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text. (Rosenblatt 1995:30)

Meaning is not found either in the text or the reader separately, but in the dynamic interaction between the two (Rosenblatt, 1995: xvi). Her biggest contribution to the reader-response theory is found in her seminal text Literature as Exploration published in 1938, in which she uses the illustration of a continuum from aesthetic reading (reading solely for pleasure) to efferent reading (reading solely for meaning) in which all reading transactions can be placed (Rosenblatt, 1995: 292-94). She argues that the reader brings his or her individual background, knowledge, expectations and context into these transactions and claims that
‘any interpretation is an event occurring at a particular time in a particular social or cultural context’ (Rosenblatt, 1995: 295). This contextualising view is a key aspect that is brought out in reader-response theory. Several of the reader-response theorists, Rosenblatt included, focus on how fictional texts are taught in schools and how, in that pedagogic context, the reader is often exchanged for the position of the student (Arfwedson, 2006: 20). Thus, reader-response theory uses the socio-cultural perspective of learning established by Vygotsky.

Iser (1987) also draws upon the relationship between reader and text as he emphasizes specific features in the text that force the reader to draw certain conclusions or steer his or her attention in certain directions. He emphasizes how ‘empty spaces’, gaps or ellipses are features where the reader is forced to develop strategies or interpretations and to add elements to the text (Arfwedson, 2006: 20). The realisations the reader experiences are thus determined by the context (Van Imschoot, 2005). Besides focussing on the actual reader, Iser argues that the text itself provides an implied reader, a literary position that exists in the contact between (con) text and reader (Van Imschoot, 2005). As such, the implied reader is a hypothetical, and/or ideal reader whom the text addresses. These reader-response theories by Iser and Rosenblatt have had a huge impact on the teaching of (comparative) literature and thus also on the broad field literature teaching and learning.

A Swedish contribution to the field of literature teaching and learning

Significant for research in the field of literature teaching and learning in Sweden and abroad is Pedagogiska gruppen at Lund university where Lars-Göran Malmgren was an active member. The group, which was very successful in their work on language and literature education, was founded in the late 1970s at a time when the university subject of didactics became recognised as a distinct discipline, when fenomenography gained in influence in pedagogical research, and when the teacher education programme was integrated into the universities (Degerman, 2012: 91). The group’s ambition has been to provide research that is useful for teachers, and since their research is often very close to the learning process, the school context, the classroom situation, the teacher’s role, the student’s role, the teacher education programme, teacher trainers, and other associated areas, their approach to literature teaching and learning is closely connected to teaching methods and learning theories (Arfwedson, 2006: 7). In Sweden, the research field of literature teaching and learning has sprung out of a dichotomy between the two theoretical fields of literature pedagogy [litteraturpedagogik] and literature science [litteraturvetenskap] (Degerman, 2012: 92). Hence, the dualism between theory and practice is a corner stone in the new literature teaching and learning field developed in Sweden during the 1980s.

Postmodern theoretical influences on literature teaching and learning

The postmodern era represents a time when the impossibility of total objectivity in scientific theories and methods is accepted and the idea of absolute truths and objectivity is criticised (Best & Kellner, 1991: 1). Postmodern theories focus on how theories and methods cannot be separated from their contexts and the researcher’s own persona (including such aspects as their ideas, ideals and positioning). As a result, there is a different focus in the field of literature
teaching and learning based on postmodernist influences. Given that postmodern theories now question new criticism as well as reader-response theories, there is a new interest for the socio-cultural contexts in which the reader is situated. Hargreaves (1994: 262), a researcher in education, discusses the changes brought by the postmodern society and its effects on literature teaching and learning, taking the position of teachers as a point of departure: “The rules of the world are changing. It is time for the rules of teaching and teachers’ work to change with them”. Postmodern influences in general as well as in the literature teaching and learning field are not only a questioning of absolute values and a critique of previous and contemporary research, but also a combination of literary theory with cognitive theory, anthropology or discourse analysis, a focus on deconstruction and gender, and a closer focus on practical teaching and learning situations (Best & Kellner, 1991).

The questioning of, and new interest in, reader-response theories make them the focus of many theorists working with literature teaching and learning today. Two currently highly influential scholars in the field of literature teaching and learning who focus on reader-response in their analyses of the reading process are Kathleen McCormick and Judith A. Langer. McCormick has made significant contributions to the research field primarily through her book *The Culture of Reading and the Teaching of English* published in 1994, where she focuses on the context in which a reading takes place. She argues: ‘Reading is never just an individual, subjective experience’ (McCormick, 1994: 69). Reading is an interactive activity and her interactive model of reading stresses that “both the readers and text contribute to the reading process” and “both texts and readers are themselves ideologically situated” (McCormick, 1994: 69). McCormick further discusses two aspects that she describes as literary ideology, meaning everything that relates to the text, and general ideology, meaning all other non-literary matters (McCormick, 1994: 70). She refers to a text’s appropriation of ideology as its repertoire. Hence, a text’s literary repertoire includes such aspects as, for example: form, plot, characterization, and metrical pattern (McCormick, 1994: 70). The general repertoire, then, includes aspects such as the dominant moral ideas, values, religious beliefs and so on that are found in the text (McCormick, 1994: 70). These repertoires are not only connected to the text, but also to the reader. Readers appropriate their own repertoires that are literary, for example, assumptions and beliefs about literature, their previous literary experiences, their strategies for reading literary texts, or wider perspectives, such as their attitudes about gender and race, or their religious beliefs (McCormick, 1994: 71). Hence, both the text’s and the reader’s contexts are part of the reading process.

In her book *Envisioning Literature: Literary Understanding and Literature Instruction* published in 1995, Langer focuses on the reader’s experiences of the text and claims that it is necessary to engage with the text and create an image of it. Her theories on how readers gradually create meaning and understanding as well as how teachers can promote this development have contributed significantly to the field of literature teaching and learning. She sees the reading and meaning-making processes as containing the following four stances: Stance 1: ‘Being Out and Stepping into an Envisionment’, which focuses on learning to read and understand texts (Langer, 1995: 16). Stance 2: ‘Being In and Moving Through an Envisionment’, correlating with a deeper and more developed understanding in which ‘we are immersed in our text-worlds’ (Langer, 1995: 17), and where personal experiences as well as the text and its context
are used to develop a person’s thoughts or views and to generate new ideas (Langer, 1995: 17). Stance 3: ‘Stepping out and Rethinking What One Knows’. In this stance, the readers use their developed understanding in relation to their own and others’ knowledge and experiences. Hence, the readers relate the fictional worlds to their own lives (Langer, 1995: 17). Stance 4: ‘Stepping Out and Objectifying the Experience’, in which a person is distanced from their own perceptions and is thus able to reflect on them. This phase further represents the ability to objectify (and analyse) one’s understanding and the reading experience as well as the fictional work in question (Langer, 1995: 18). The reader’s analytical competence is thus developed and becoming increasingly sophisticated when appropriating these stances.

Since the postmodern era, cultural changes that have taken place in the world have had an effect on the field of literature teaching and learning, which can be seen particularly in influences from fields such as postcolonialism and gender studies. There has been a debate regarding which fictional texts and which authors should be represented in literature subjects and which attitudes should be raised in the various texts that are used (Molloy, 2002: 76-86). Discussions of fictional texts have taken a cultural turn in that they provide a foundation for discussions of cultural subjects based on race, ethnicity, and gender; which world-views, aspects of human lives, stories, and writers are portrayed, given space and discussed in the classroom. Furthermore, there is a focus on whether the selection of fictional texts is directed towards boys or girls, how this is achieved, as well as what ethnicity and/or gender stereotypes they illustrate (Molloy, 2002: 76-86).

The modernist era saw an expansion of the field of literature teaching and learning that shifted focus away from the text itself to the social context in which the text was used. The socio-cultural context was at the centre of attention while constructivism, new criticism and reader-response theories were used to analyse learning processes. The postmodern era brought changes to the field of literature teaching and learning that reflect the on-going changes in society. For example, the reader’s and the text’s contexts are considered to be a part of the reading process and there is a view that readers gradually create meaning. Other examples are the political changes in society where postcolonialism and gender studies place various aspects of power at the centre of attention. These power aspects have had a big influence on literature teaching and learning.

Current issues: The teaching of literature
The influences that have shaped the field of literature teaching and learning into the field it is today are many. Looking at contemporary aspects of this field, there are three areas that will be highlighted further in this section: the function of (comparative) literature, the importance of text selection and the widening of the text concepts due to the growing number of multimodal texts.

Narratives are significant contributors when it comes to giving shape and meaning in daily lives and experiences as confirmed by researchers such as Jameson (1991); Bruner (2002); and Nussbaum (2010). Consequently, people need to ‘read stories, create stories, analyse stories. Understand their aesthetic nature, gain a sense of how they are used, discuss them
Bruner claims (2002: 61, author's translation). In addition to meaning-making processes, narratives are significant for identity-construction processes as they contribute to the readers' ability to relate to other people, places and contexts (Bamberg, 2010: 9). Literature is not only significant for people's understanding of the world, but also for their communicative competence. Hence, the literature topics taught in the subject area of Swedish and the study of other languages in school are expected to develop the students' cultural awareness as well as language competence.

Current issues: Text selection

The ways in which fictional texts are read have varied throughout the years, as have the reasons for teaching (comparative) literature in school (Molloy, 2002: 25). Some historical functions served by the teaching of (comparative) literature which also continue today include, for example, illustrating the logic of a narrative structure, increasing reading pleasure, providing a moral example, inspiring personal growth, and exemplifying existential and social experiences (Thavenius, 1991: 38; Molloy, 2002: 24). Hence, which texts a teacher chooses to include in the literary education is particularly important. The selection of texts used in literary studies may be based on whether the main reason for using fictional texts is to teach language competence, cultural competence or literary competence. All three components are considered to be a part of (comparative) literature, but it is not always possible or desirable to maintain an equally high focus on all three parts at the same time. Here, I will emphasise two aspects that may influence a teacher's selection of texts, namely, the question of choosing texts that represent high or popular literature, and the reader/student's demand for recognition.

Whether the literary education should focus on high literature, such as the classics (which the students may be less likely to read in their spare time) or popular literature, such as youth novels and fantasy (which the students read in their spare time and therefore are familiar with) is a popular discussion in the field of literature teaching and learning (Svensson 2014b). This discussion questions which texts “should be” part of our cultural heritage and which literary values the fictional texts provide (Molloy, 2002: 26). These issues are not static, but change over time.

The selection of fictional texts that are used in the classrooms have a normative function as they illustrate which texts are considered worth reading:

The school has, in other words, taken part in the creation and mediation of norms of reading fictional texts and attitudes towards them. The education system has deemed some easy to read whilst others are avoided or rejected. Through the selection of fictional texts and the content subsequently chosen it has provided students with an image, or more correctly with several images, of history and society which signal what is to be regarded as important and what is not. (Thavenius, 1991: 38, author's translation)

In addition to the above, the teachers who select the texts used in the education process are affected by time and place. What, how and why literature is taught may depend on their
backgrounds as students, their experience of teacher education, or on the syllabus and other steering documents.

Arguably, it is the school’s responsibility to introduce young readers to the classics, since they do have the value of being part of a cultural heritage. When the students are familiar with the classics, perhaps they become motivated to continue reading them outside of school (Calvino 1991: 6). It is, however, equally important to read popular fiction (Norling, 2009: 36), because it is also part of a cultural heritage, but even more so, it is part of what is referred to as ‘experience literature’, in which the reader can recognise themselves and may be able to relate to the content matter provided.

When applying reader-response theories to a classroom situation, it is the student’s experiences and their reactions to the texts they read that are the main focus (Arfwedson, 2006: 20). An experience-based view on literature teaching and learning, in which the student should be able to recognise his or her own experiences in a text, was most evident in Sweden during the 1970s, and, as a consequence, novels by, for example, Lagerlöf, Strindberg, Moberg, Golding and Steinbeck, that were previously read at secondary school, were exchanged for youth literature focusing on subjects such as: alienation, the first sexual experience, criminal gangs, and drinking – themes that the students were expected to recognise (Arfwedson, 2006: 20). Identification with themes in the text is central to the didactic approach provided by Malmgren and Pedagogiska gruppen (Degerman, 2012: 97). Malmgren (1986) explains this view: ‘Those readers who can identify with themes in the text find it easier to accept and interpret these themes’ (p. 110, author’s translation). The ability to identify with the text thus helps develop the student’s literary competence. Both Malmgren and Pedagogiska gruppen introduced social constructivist and reader-response theories to the Swedish field of literature teaching and learning, and historically, can be identified as having had a great influence on approaches to the field of didactics in relation to the subject of Swedish (Degerman, 2012: 103). One negative effect of placing the students’ experiences in focus and replacing classical texts with youth literature and popular literature, however, is that the resulting literary education received may be more limited. For someone who is not used to reading the classics the task may prove difficult and such readers may also find them more difficult to identify with. As a result, the cultural heritage received through reading, analysing, and discussing fictional texts may be marginalised at a collective level.

Current issues: Multimodal texts

One of the main concerns today in the field of literature teaching and learning is the question of what kinds of texts are incorporated into the concept of fictional texts. Narratives, stories and storytelling, are powerful tools with which people are educated and cultural traditions are maintained. There are numerous ways in which people encounter stories today, for example, printed texts (e.g. novels, short stories, poems, plays, comic books/manga), visual texts (e.g. movies, TV-series, plays, fan-film, paintings and photos), audio texts (e.g. audiobooks, live music performances, recorded music) and electronic texts (e.g. novels, fan fiction and computer games). These categories are overlapping and it is very common that a text belongs to more than one of these categories and is multimodal in a variety of ways.
In the current steering documents for the upper secondary school in Sweden, *Gy11* (Skolverket, 2011b) it is explicitly stated that fictional texts should be a part of the subject area of Swedish and of English, but this guidance is less explicitly stated and not applicable for all subjects and/or levels. In the previous steering documents for the upper secondary school, *Lpf 94* (Skolverket, 1994), the concept of ‘the wider text’ was first introduced to the Swedish educational context. As a consequence, multimodal texts were added to the established category of printed texts (Skolverket, 2011a). In the year 2000, this wider concept of text was further emphasised in all school subjects. These modifications in the Swedish educational system aimed to respond to the changes in contemporary society where texts in various media forms were becoming increasingly influential for students (Skolverket, 2011a). In the most recent steering document, *Gy11* (Skolverket, 2011b) the ‘wider text concept’ has been replaced by the general word ‘text’ as it is specified that students should use fictional and non-fictional texts of various kinds and of various media forms to learn about their surroundings, their peers and about themselves (Skolverket, 2011b: 60, author’s translation). Hence, there is a clear instruction that students studying Swedish as a school subject should encounter narratives through various media forms. Written language and literature now compete with new media and the multicultural society has changed the conditions for schools and for education in general (Thavenius, 1999: 7). How this specific change will manifest itself is not yet clear, but the influence of multimodal texts is increasing in several educational contexts just as in the language subjects.

In September 2012, the Swedish government presented the report *Läsandets kultur* (SOU, 2012:65 [The Culture of Reading]). This report reviewed the status of fictional texts and (comparative) literature in Sweden today and also identified the most significant developing trends. The results presented in the report show that the reading competence and reading habits among the younger generation are declining (SOU, 2012:11). There are also big gaps between the reading habits of people belonging to various socio-economic groups. One reported effect of the decline in reading competence is the increase in the number of young people, particularly boys, having difficulty in understanding and comprehending written text (SOU 2012:11). In a study conducted with teachers at upper secondary school level, it is revealed that their biggest concern when teaching literature is the students’ resistance to and inexperience in reading fictional texts (Svensson, 2014a). Another cause of the decline in reading habits might be the fact that much time is spent on using multimodal texts, such as films, TV and computer games as well as TV series and blogs (Svensson, 2014b). So, while their reading abilities are declining, they might be developing other means of acquiring texts in a wider concept, incorporating activities such as watching movies or playing computer or console games. In the report, the term ‘reading’ apparently refers predominantly to the reading of printed fictional texts and is not used in its wider meaning. Nevertheless, the question of how to motivate students to read novels or longer printed fictional texts remains a big issue for teachers today.

In conclusion, as an initial attempt to speculate on possible future trends, I would like to address three trends that appear likely to become focal areas in the research field of literature teaching and learning in the future. First, it seems possible that the widened text concept will be even further stretched in the future; not only by adding new, multimodal, text and media
forms, but also in the fusion between fictional and non-fictional texts. Blogs, reality-shows, and other (life) narratives exist in-between these two fields and it is safe to assume that this fusion between fact and fiction will be in focus for literature teaching and learning in the future.

Second, the problem, as many teachers see it, with students not reading fictional texts in their recreational time is already a significant part of literature teaching and learning and will most likely continue to be so. The traditional idea of ‘reading’ and the values of reading, especially in connection with literary competence will probably be a widely discussed area in this field in the future.

Third, the focus on literary knowledge and competence is likely to continue in the future, probably in connection with discussions of a literary work’s context and the emphasis on cultural aspects connected with fictional texts. This trend is reflected in the decision by Langer (2011) to re-publish her ideas about envisionment with a particular focus on knowledge in Envisioning Knowledge: Building Literacy in the Academic Disciplines. Although her focus in this book is on academic literacy across the disciplines and not on fictional text, she adds here to the four stances discussed above, yet another level in Stance 5: ‘Going Beyond’ (Langer, 2011: 56). This stance points towards contextualisation and aims to open up the reading experience to a world beyond the fictional text. With this approach in mind, I think that the merging of other research areas, for example, in social sciences and natural sciences, and the field of comparative literature expands this field towards ‘new’ areas, such as, global ethics, glocalization, cognitivism, literary Darwinism etc. which is likely to affect the area of literature teaching and learning in the future.

It is difficult, but also exciting, to speculate on future trends, and I see a need for further discussions on the role of literature teaching and learning in the language subjects, in particular regarding its connection to language teaching and learning.

References


Introduction
Over the past three decades computers have come to play an increasingly important role in language education. The traditional view among Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) educators of the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education as simply a means to an end is being challenged (Warschauer, 2005), and there is an increasing acknowledgement of the idea that ICT not only mediates human activity, but also transforms it, and as such, its use in education is gaining a merit of its own. This is particularly the case in language education, where Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) is becoming an integral part of language learning on all levels, and is thereby also changing teaching practice as well as the views of what language learning should be all about.

Set in this context this chapter gives an overview of some of the major developments that CALL has undergone since its emergence in the mid-1970s and discusses some of the implications for language teaching. The chapter is divided into the following parts. First A Brief Review of CALL describes the overall development phases of CALL since the 1970s-1980s, which mirror both the state of the technology and the current views on language learning. Then The socio-cultural view of (language) learning in the context of CALL – Theory and practice introduces theoretical frameworks and how they are integrated in learning designs. Next, Integration of CALL-methods in current language teaching attempts to critically evaluate national policies and educational strategies on ICT in language education in schools and universities in Sweden and elsewhere. We exemplify this through methods, tasks and tools being used in our own university environment in the Department of language studies at Umeå University. Finally, Conclusions and implications sums up the chapter and discusses its implications for the field of language teaching.

A brief review of computer assisted language learning
With its rapid development over the past 25 years, CALL has been characterized by many as a complex and dynamic field (Hubbard 2009, O’Dowd 2007, Ohlrogge and Lee 2008). As pointed out by Hubbard (2009), it is the constant changes in technology that make it necessary for CALL knowledge and skills to be continuously renewed, and with the amazing transformation in the ways in which technology has been incorporated in language learning and teaching, CALL has come to embrace a broader definition.
Early definitions of CALL simply involved ‘any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language’ (Beatty 2003: 7). In more recent years attempts have been made to better capture the nature of the field. Hubbard (2009), for example questions this definition by raising two questions of what we mean by ‘computer’ and what we mean by ‘improve’. He argues that ‘computer’ should include not only the desktop and laptop devices but also the connecting network and other devices such as PDAs, mp3 players, mobile phones, electronic whiteboards and other digital equipment. To the second question of what ‘improve’ entails, Hubbard maintains that CALL now improves not only the learning, but also teacher productivity, teacher development, materials development and methods of language assessment. While the examples that Hubbard provides may not hold true anymore at the time of writing – a time of large scale, global Internet access, with constant developments of interactive, creative Web 2.0 tools and platforms, with interactive white boards, widespread social networks, mobile technologies, and online games (Dudeney and Hockly 2012) – his extensive view of CALL remains valid, considering the even more diverse and significant impacts these changes have provided in language teaching and learning.

Seeing CALL in this sense, it is closely linked with e-learning, a field that ‘designates the intersection of education, teaching, and learning with information and communication technologies’ (Friesen 2009: 4). For example, the word CALL has been used extensively in the Handbook of Research on E-Learning Methodologies for Language Acquisition (Marriott & Torres, 2009). It is thus important to emphasise that CALL does not simply involve the employment of technologies in language learning but it does support, and help transform, language education in different ways. Conole and Oliver (2007) stress this point when they differentiate e-learning from ICT in that e-learning represents the broader domain of development and research activities on technology application in education, while ICT merely refers to the technologies themselves. Indeed, CALL should be seen beyond being ‘technology-enhanced language learning’ (Dudeney & Hockly 2012). Empirical studies have shown that CALL does not only successfully support second/foreign language instruction (Grgurovic, Chapelle, & Shelley 2013), but technology impacts on the subject matter itself with computer-mediated-communication varieties of English emerging (Jarvis 2013). Jarvis (2013) proposes Mobile Assisted Language Use (MALU) as the new framework that goes beyond CALL. As MALU enables both conscious learning using tutorial packages and unconscious acquisition through accessing and transmitting information in English, it can be the starting point for the emergence of ‘an educational theory which cannot be separated from technology’ (Jarvis 2013: 199).

CALL theory and conceptualizations
In the triangle of theory, research, and practice of a domain of inquiry, it is theory that serves as the underpinning for the other two. In the field of CALL, researchers use theories to widen, refine, or build on, existing knowledge, while developers and teachers use theories to be informed of their practice (Levy & Stockwell 2006). However, CALL has traditionally been criticized for lacking a theoretical rationale for its design, development, and practice, and has been accused of being explicitly ‘technology driven’, thus missing a shared perspective of the education community (Underwood 2004). Some maintain that an increased technological sophistication does not correlate to increased pedagogical effectiveness (Hubbard 2009;
This, and the acknowledged need for a theory for CALL (Garrett 1991) have brought about a number of conceptualizations and theoretical frameworks in an attempt to explain and document CALL. Two of the most cited views are those by Bax (2003) and Warschauer (2000). By classifying CALL into phases and approaches they have not only provided a critical chronological examination of CALL, but also covered other attempts to describe and understand CALL theoretical underpinnings.

Warschauer's and Bax's phases of CALL
Warschauer (1996); Warschauer and Healey (1998) and Warschauer (2000) interpret and analyse CALL development into three phases, which are referred to as Behaviouristic/Structural CALL, Communicative CALL, and Integrative CALL. It should be noted that ‘phases’ do not mean historical phases with precisely contained timelines, but rather they are shifting paradigms (Warschauer and Healey 1998). Warschauer and Healey suggest that we are now in the paradigm of Integrative CALL, which is based on a socio-cognitive view of language learning.

Bax (2003) provides a critical review of Warschauer’s conceptualization of the development of CALL, and offers his own analysis consisting of three approaches: Restricted CALL, Open CALL, and Integrated CALL. He suggests that we are currently using the Open CALL, but we should aim for Integrated CALL, a phase where the field has reached a normalization stage and technology is ‘invisible’ as it becomes part of everyday life. Bax’s proposal of the three approaches of CALL is summarized in Table 1 on the next page (for the complete outline, see Bax 2003:21).

It seems that although adopting different terminology for different phases of CALL development, both authors have succeeded in describing the development of CALL in terms of its various theoretical underpinnings that connect with language learning and teaching approaches. These can be put under three overarching perspectives of behaviourist, cognitive and socio-cultural approaches. The theories provided are various, ranging from cognitive linguistics, psycholinguistics, to sociolinguistics. Since its emergence in the mid-1970s, CALL has thus moved its focus from ‘drill and kill’ behaviourist methods, through individual cognitive learning models, where the computer primarily was used as a tool to organise and structure knowledge, to current models of more interactive and collaborative learning from within classroom confines to the more widespread outside world.

Looking at the development of CALL over the past years one can thus see how it mirrors not only technological development but also developments in the view of how learning takes place. Early use of technology in language education tended to follow a behaviourist learning framework based on the ‘stimulus/response/feedback paradigm’ and the computer tools used tended to be simple game-like tasks where the learner was rewarded for correct answers (Davies et al, 2011). Later, technology served to enhance individual cognitive learning. The computer functioned as tutor and a tool (Levy, 1997), presenting vocabulary, structures and stimulation, while at the same time providing correction, and monitoring learner progress (Davies, 1992).
The introduction of Web 2.0 and CMC has shifted the focus from ‘learners interaction with computers to interaction with other humans via the computer’ (Kern and Warschauer, 2000: 11). Authentic social contexts and learners’ language skill integration are emphasized through the use of the Internet and CMC (Warschauer and Healey 1998). These socio-cultural perspectives of language learning have had a significant impact on the nature of language education including the field of CALL. Now the content of the interaction and the discourse of the community are those values which are prioritised together with language learning:

The current paradigm of integrative CALL is based on a socio-cognitive view of language learning. From this viewpoint, learning a second or foreign language involves apprenticing into new discourse communities. The purpose of interaction is seen as helping students enter these new communities and familiarize themselves with new genres and discourses. Thus the content of the interaction and the nature of the community are extremely important. It is no longer sufficient to engage in communication merely to practice language skills. (Warschauer, 2000:10).

The use of technology in language education is thus evolving from a separate innovation to a naturalized, normalized state of affairs, which is transforming not only language teaching, but also language itself. Bax (2003) likens this process to other technical inventions such as

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<th>Approach</th>
<th>Restricted CALL</th>
<th>Open CALL</th>
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<td>Language system</td>
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<td>Integrated system &amp; skills</td>
<td>Mixed skills &amp; system</td>
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<th>Type of task</th>
<th>Closed drills</th>
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<th>CMC</th>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>WP (Web presence/Internet)</td>
<td>e-mail &amp; others, according to needs</td>
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<th>Type of student activity</th>
<th>Text reconstruction</th>
<th>Interacting with the computer</th>
<th>Frequent interaction with other students</th>
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<td>Answering closed questions</td>
<td>Minimal interaction with other students</td>
<td>Occasional interaction with other students</td>
<td>Some interaction with computer through the lesson</td>
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<th>Type of feedback</th>
<th>Correct/incorrect</th>
<th>Focus of linguistic skills development</th>
<th>Interpreting, evaluating, commenting, stimulating thought</th>
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<th>Position in curriculum</th>
<th>Not integrated – optional extra</th>
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<th>Tool for learning</th>
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<td>Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs</td>
<td>Technology precedes syllabus and learner needs</td>
<td>Normalised integrated into syllabus, adapted to learner needs</td>
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<td>Needs and context analysis precedes technology decisions</td>
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the pen and the book. In this sense, CALL can be understood if it is placed in its broader historical, social, and cultural contexts (Warschauer, 2005). Teachers make use of technology to realise their teaching beliefs and principles, and with modern CALL students are learning both language and technology, which influence their academic aspirations, career goals, and the development and expression of their culture and identity (Warschauer, 2005).

The socio-cultural view of (language) learning in the context of CALL – Theory and practice

Core Concepts
The socio-cultural view of (language) learning as first described by Vygotsky (1981) is currently the dominant learning paradigm in CALL research and learning designs. Warschauer (2005:42) summarises three core aspects of Vygotsky’s theories that lie at the heart of such designs: Mediation, social learning and genetic analysis.

Mediation refers to the idea that tools or signs mediate all human activity. The tools or signs, however, are not merely seen as an intermediary bridge between the intended action and the actual outcome, facilitating action that could essentially have occurred without them. Instead they are an integral part of a complex symbiosis where the intermediaries actually alter the mental processes, modify human actions and thus open up for new possibilities. In CALL, this is of particular importance. Not only is the focus of the learning activity, i.e. language, arguably the most important tool we have at our disposal in any learning process, but in addition, technological tools also have an impact on how we use this language. In the words of Warschauer (2005:42): ‘we do not now have a traditional form of writing plus the computer, but rather we have entirely new forms of writing that need to be taught in their own right’. One very obvious example of this is the range of new genres that are emerging in the wake of digitalisation, including: chat language, the ‘Twitter feed’, the blog genre and other similar developments.

Social learning, according to Vygotsky (1978), is a dialectical process where learning takes place when problem-solving experiences are shared with someone else. It is only after this initial social process, where language is seen as the primary tool, that the learner internalises the knowledge. A key concept here is the idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD): ‘the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers’ (Vygotsky, 1978:86). In this view of learning, learners’ interactions with surrounding cultures and social agents, such as more competent peers, contribute significantly to their intellectual development and take the learner further than what could be achieved in isolation. In accordance with this theoretical framework, a large proportion of current CALL learning designs are based on collaborative models, where CMC is used to bring language learners together in order to develop their target language skills, often using a tandem design whereby one group are L1 users who can act as capable peers for the L2 group. Such designs are often based on tasks drawing on
common interests of the involved learner groups, thereby creating authentic communicative situations in the target language (for examples, see below).

*Genetic or developmental analysis*, a third major component of the Vygotskian perspective, refers to the need to analyse mental functioning to its origins – the immediate, historical, social and genetic contexts in which it unfolds. Levels here include the immediate context of the event (*microgenesis*), the developmental processes of the individual (*ontogenesis*), the cultural and historical context as well as the phylogenetic context, i.e. in the context of the developmental history of the species Homo sapiens, such as our predisposition to use tools and our ability to achieve complex thinking using symbolic signs. We can only make sense of a learning process in this greater context. For example, in a CALL context, this suggests that we can only understand the types of motivation and attitudes, for example, that students have toward working with ICT if we understand its impact on the particular communicative event (*microgenesis*), the individual’s attitudes and previous experiences of the technological tools being used (*ontogenesis*), the role of ICT in today’s economy and society, as well as its influence on the very nature of human behaviour (Warschauer 2005:43).

**Methodological applications in relation to the core concepts**

In order to illustrate more clearly how the principles of socio-cultural learning are realised in various CALL designs, we will now give some concrete examples of a method, tasks and some tools that are being used in language education at Umeå University, Sweden. Here we will pay particular attention to how the method, task designs and technological tools are justified in relation to the three core aspects listed above.

**Telecollaboration**

Given the substantial potential that Web 2.0 tools offer in bringing learners together and in response to the complex demands, such as language skills, intercultural communicative competence and digital literacy, that today’s world puts on second language learners, institutions are increasingly adopting models of Telecollaboration in their language courses (Guth & Helm 2010). According to Belz’s definition (2003:68), Telecollaboration takes place when ‘[…] internationally-dispersed learners in parallel language classes use Internet communication tools […] in order to support social interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchange’. In institutional contexts, such exchanges are often set up as structured tasks with ‘the aim of developing both language and intercultural communicative competence’ (Guth & Helm. 2010:14), and with the added benefit of introducing students to the tools of modern CMC. Guth and Helm (2010:10) summarise these three objectives in Figure 1.

The focus on tools in Telecollaboration entails more than a mere interest in the technology at hand, but is rather a recognition of the fact that new Web 2.0 tools call for new literacies (see section on mediation above). According to Steele and Cheater (2008) these include a number of online literacy skills, such as networking skills, collaborative skills, creative skills and critical skills that go beyond what has traditionally been associated with literacy.
The model also has a strong element of social learning, invariably involving collaborative designs, which bring learners together in order to develop both their language skills and intercultural competence. Such designs often involve so-called tandem language learning, which is based on mutual authentic language exchanges between the learner groups, where ideally, each partner group are native speakers of the other group’s target language. Participants will take on roles both as learners and ‘more capable peers’ during the course of a task, and the learning experience typically also involves cultural elements.

According to Guth and Helm (2010:71) modern telecollaboration ‘situates itself within a globalized context where the concepts of language and culture differ from those associated with national identity’ and take place in an online context ‘where individuals may have multiple identities’ that go beyond ethnic and national definitions. In this sense, telecollaboration can be seen as a mirror of society at large, where globalization and online cultures are blurring traditional national boundaries and are creating new identities as well as new ways of communicating these (see section on Genetic or developmental analysis above).

Examples of CALL at Umeå university

A concrete example of what telecollaboration may look like is the course Modern Latin America, which is part of the undergraduate program in Spanish at Umeå University. The course concept originated from a frustration with the lack of updated course literature on the complex historical, political and cultural situation that exists in Latin America. Teachers felt that students received a very skewed view of the situation in Latin America, a view heavily tainted by popular media’s partiality in reporting almost solely on disasters and problems. With the aid of so-called Flex-funding (a strategic effort by Umeå University to promote flexible and innovative learning models), a tandem course concept was developed in collaboration with students from Universidad Surcolombiana, Colombia, studying an English course with focus on European culture and society. The aim was to give the students a chance to practice their Spanish/English with near-/native speakers, and also to increase their intercultural awareness. An added ambition was to allow students to familiarise themselves with a number of modern Web 2.0 tools and how they could be used in language learning.
The course was organised around four themes: Men and Women, Religion, education, and a theme of your own choice. Students on both sides of the Atlantic were paired up in order to conduct discussions on the themes using real-time voice in a web tool of their own choice (most students chose Skype for this purpose). The one-hour sessions were organised so that the pair first spoke in English, during which the Swedish students acted as expert peers in dialogue focussed on Europe, after which the language of communication switched to Spanish and the Colombian students took on the roles of experts on matters related to Colombia and Latin America. In this example, both groups of participants thus alternate between the roles of ‘more capable peers’ and learners helping each other to breach the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978:86).

After each meeting, students were asked to summarise their conversations in a wiki tool (PBworks), which allowed for collaborative construction of text that could be read by all course participants. The summaries were written in the target languages (Spanish and English) and participants would help each other to ensure that the quality of the text was satisfactory. The wiki was also interactive, allowing other course participants to comment in a separate comment field.

Another example of a slightly different application of the Telecollaborative model is the flex-funded project Gender-Bending in Virtual Space run by the subject group in English Studies at Umeå University. In this project we connected students of sociolinguistics from various parts of the world to discuss and experience gender and language issues from different cultural standpoints. The tool used was a so-called 3D virtual world (Second Life), where the participants could interact with the environment and each other through avatars, digital projections of the ‘self’, which can be shaped by the user thus allowing for new creative ways of projecting ‘identity’. The software also supports various modes of communication including real-time public and private voice and chat, as well as note cards which can be sent to groups of users (for further descriptions of the environment and how it supports Telecollaboration see Wang, Deutschmann and Steinvall, 2013). In this project, apart from getting the students to practice their English in an international context, we also wanted to raise students’ awareness of the mechanisms of gender construction through experiments where the students could assume identities of the opposite sex using voice-morphing (manipulating the voice digitally to a lower or higher pitch) and avatar construction (see Deutschmann, Steinvall and Lagerström, 2011 for further descriptions).

The two courses, which have both been very well received by students, illustrate many of the theoretical principles discussed above. Firstly, with regard to mediation, the affordances (defined as the quality of an object, or an environment, which allows an individual to perform an action) of the tools used do not only allow students to develop their language skills, but also open up new dimensions for communication, thereby placing new demands on the students. Speaking in Skype, as in example one, means paying particular attention to turn-taking rules, and the added availability of chat often means that students have to use speech and writing simultaneously. Further, the language used in the chat is often full of abbreviations, which the uninitiated user may not be familiar with. The wiki tool used in the first example, places new demands on students’ ability to collaborate when co-constructing...
texts and Second Life, used in example two opens, up new dimensions for communication as public, synchronous verbal voice and text modes are combined with private alternatives and asynchronous modes of communication. In addition, as used in our project design in example two, the tools allow the voice quality to be manipulated so that a male student can sound like a female and the communication is further affected by non-verbal signals such as the morphology of the avatar (for further discussions of modes of communication in Second Life see Wigham and Chanier, 2013).

Secondly, the social element is evident in both of the designs. It is in fact the students themselves that contribute to the content of the courses and learn from each other. The teacher’s role is more about providing the framework, the scaffolding, for the learning to take place. Finally, with regard to Genetic or developmental analysis, the task activities are firmly situated in today’s communicative culture thereby preparing the students to ‘communicate, collaborate, create and negotiate, effectively in multilingual, multicultural global networks’ (Guth and Helm, 2010:72).

Integration of CALL-methods in current language teaching practice
While the applications of ICT in socio-cultural learning designs and methods described in the first two parts reflect the current practice among the research community and a limited number of innovative educators, they are far from the norms of the everyday language teaching in schools and universities today. We have, as Bax (2003) points out, still not reached a normalisation stage where technology is integrated into the syllabuses and is adapted to learner needs.

CALL in schools
Looking at the Swedish school situation, there seems to be a general lack of central strategies for integrating ICT in teaching methods, and while there are many sporadic references to the use of ‘digital tools’ in the policy documents and curricula for the different levels, the recent report on IT-use and IT-competence in schools from the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2013a) points to several shortcomings in the pedagogic integration of ICT in teaching as a whole and language teaching in particular. For example, there seems to be a great need for professional training among teachers and three out of ten teachers express a ‘great need’ for further training in basic computer skills. About 50 per cent feel they need more competence in how to use the computer as a pedagogic tool (Skolverket, 2013a).

Data from this report also show that the use of computers in many subjects is sporadic and often restricted to writing and searching for information on the Internet or producing presentations. The use of computers in the actual teaching situations seems to be relatively limited. With specific reference to language teaching, some examples that illustrate this include: 15 per cent of pre-school school teachers report that they use computers to stimulate an interest in writing; in elementary schools, 39 per cent of the teachers report using computers regularly in their teaching of Swedish as a subject area and for English this figure is 20 per cent. According to Peter Karlberg, Education councillor responsible for IT in schools, ‘much
remains to be done before the use of digital tools really will help to improve education in many school subjects’. (Skolverket, 2013b).

Moreover, the survey reports on great gaps in strategies for dealing with the more complex skills and issues associated with digital literacy. Such skills include the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information (Erstad, 2010); the ability ‘to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms’ (Jenkins, 2009); social skills such as digital communication, collaborative skills, and cross-cultural skills (Warschauer and Matuchniak, 2010; Erstad, 2010).

Similar situations are reported from other parts of the world. Cox (2013), for example, lists a number of ‘shortcomings’ in the British system, where some of the more alarming ones include teacher and student engagement with e-learning being limited to a small range of IT technologies. Cox also talks about a growing digital and cognitive divide across communities, and even within schools, impacting upon IT use and experiences. He concludes that although ‘policymakers recognize the importance of e-learning, there are widespread misconceptions about its potential to enhance student learning’ (2013:17). There is still arguably a focus on the tools themselves rather than on pedagogical frameworks for integrating the affordances that the tools offer in order to achieve specific learning goals.

CALL in university education
Since the early 1990s, the development of CALL in the university sector has primarily been driven by the needs dictated by distance education, in turn a result of universities striving to reach new markets of students in an ever more competitive market. Distance education, primarily in the form of e-learning, today contributes to a substantial chunk of many universities’ revenues. In Sweden, for example, the number of students studying online between the years 2002 and 2008 doubled and in 2011 this group made up roughly 20 per cent of the student population. The trends are similar in other parts of the world and in the U.S, for example, approximately 30 per cent study online (Högskoleverket 2011:11-12).

Spurred on in the early 1990s by what Langum (2013) describes as an almost idealistic belief in online learning’s potential to liberate the mind through the development of knowledge transfer, e-learning (and thus even CALL) developed rapidly, both technically and pedagogically (Langum 2013: xv). In the early 21st century many universities in Sweden started offering language courses over the Internet for economic reasons. In her report on digital language teaching Gagnestam (2010b) lists only five of the 25 investigated universities as not having specific strategies and/or projects for developing digital tools and methods in language teaching.

While many of these universities have developed innovative and holistic models based on the current principles of CALL such as social learning as well as student-centred and communicative approaches (Deutschmann, 2013; Beers Fägersten, 2013; Zhao, 2013), there is great discrepancy between the strategic efforts of different institutions and departments. On the whole, developments seem to be spurred on by a few individual enthusiasts, while the majority of university teachers feel that they do not have enough time to fully explore
the potential of digital tools in language teaching. Further, the use of digital technologies in language education is still largely limited to distance e-learning and not integrated in regular campus courses (Gagnestam 2010a: 52).

As for the use of Web 2.0 tools and modern social media in language education, the use is still very limited, with a handful of universities reporting on progress in this field (Högskoleverket 2011: 66). Recent developments in the university sector, such as the emergence of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), reduced state funding for courses in the humanities resulting in Internet courses being seen as cash cows, and aborted efforts to encourage collaboration between universities (by the dismantling of NSHU in 2008, for example) risk reducing what once was a strong movement in language education towards collaborative models based on socio-cultural principles to what Langum (2013:vv) calls the “McDonaldization” of higher education, where students are increasingly left to their own devices without structured peer or teacher support and where the Internet simply serves as a storage place for ‘set menus’ of video streams and documents which students can choose from.

Discussion
Over the past decade, many researchers have pointed to the potential value of informal language learning that takes place outside institutional settings through digital social media such as multi-player on-line games, Youtube, Facebook, discussion forums and blogs (Gee 2003, 2004; Sefton-Green, 2005; Stutzman, 2005; Carr and Oliver, 2009; Selwyn, 2007a, 2007b, 2011). Social software of these types are well adapted for communication and community building, leading to the establishment of online social network communities where ‘democratic forms of self-expression and interaction between users’ is taking place on a global scale (Selwyn 2007a:3). The Web 2.0 revolution thus presents new exciting possibilities for language learning, particularly English, which is being used as a lingua franca for almost all online communication in an unprecedented manner outside the classroom. Indeed, several studies indicate that extra-mural use of Internet is a key factor in improving language skills (Lindgren and Munoz, 2013; Sundqvist, 2009). This also seems to hold true for more formal learning, and Grgurovic et al’s (2013) meta-analysis of 37 studies from 1970-2006 indicates that language instruction supported by technology was more efficient than traditional teaching methods with CALL groups outperforming the non-CALL groups. As shown in our case examples from Umeå, it is possible to integrate tools such as Skype, virtual worlds and wiki-tools into formal courses. Further, as shown by our examples, informed use of such tools can successfully answer to specific formal learning goals as well as socio-cultural learning methods. Another specific example of this is Canto, Jauregi, and van den Bergh’s study (2013), which compares language performance between treatment groups who collaborated with native speakers using Second Life and Adobe Connect and control groups who did not have opportunities to work with native speakers in traditional classrooms. The results show that the increase in the treatment groups’ oral proficiency was significantly higher than that in the control groups’ (Canto et al., 2013: 112). Important to note in this context that it is not possible to say whether it is the ICT-tools themselves or the possibilities that they afford that lead to the enhanced learning.
Using modern CALL frameworks such as Web 2.0 resources and telecollaborative methods in the formal classroom thus addresses several major challenges related to institutional second language learning situations such as the provision of opportunities to practice the source language in authentic settings, creating interest and motivation for using the foreign language and the creation of tasks with subject relevance to the students. CALL models also answer to many of the criteria of the student-centred social learning models that increasingly form the theoretical base for many national and international learning policies.

In spite of the obvious benefits of Web 2.0 environments in promoting language learning, educational institutions have been slow to embrace their potential. Introducing new technologies into the language classroom is not unproblematic and Bigum and Rowan (2008:249) argue that technology introduction in a school setting is more often than not a question of finding useful things to do with the technology rather than employing it to solve real problems. According to the authors, this is a result of trying to fit the technology to the classroom curriculum rather than paying attention to how the technology is used outside the classroom. The result is often that communication technology use in the classroom is inauthentic and fails to engage. According to Selwyn (2011:1) ‘much of the controversy surrounding the (non)use of digital technology in schools stems from a tension between the informalised nature of many digital practices and the rather more formal aims and activities of educators and educational institutions’; although free communication with native speaking peers may develop language skills, it may be difficult to match the acquired language skills against set goals listed in a syllabus.

Conclusions and implications

In this chapter we have discussed the major developments in the CALL field since its emergence in the mid-1970s. We have shown how it increasingly is based on socio-cultural models, where Web 2.0 tools and CMC are opening up the world to language learners giving them access to communities and contexts that go far beyond the reach of the classroom. In so doing, these technologies are transforming language learning and even language itself with new forms such as ‘chat slang’ emerging.

Fully integrating collaborative methods where language learners from around the world are brought together in authentic communication using computers in formal language teaching in schools and universities, however, is proving challenging. Given the obvious educational potential of Web 2.0 and social media, and the increasingly important part they are playing in our daily lives, there is thus a need for realistic efforts to ‘reconcile the formalities of the industrial-era school with the challenges of digital technology’ (Selwyn 2011:1). There seems to be a clear case for Prensky’s (2001) argument that the digital immigrants should take on the perspective of the natives and make use of their knowledge in order to improve the educational system. Arguably, this is one of the great challenges facing language teachers, university lecturers and policy makers in the years to come. Moreover, further research is needed to develop and evaluate methods for integrating the use of CMC in formal language education. We need to be able to more specifically measure the potential benefits of such methods and also evaluate what the potential pitfalls are.
References


4

LINGUISTIC THEORY AND GOOD PRACTICE: HOW COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS COULD INFLUENCE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH PREPOSITIONS

Marlene Johansson Falck

Abstract
How can we make the teaching and learning of grammar more interesting? How do we get away from rote learning to more efficient learning situations? How can we provide learners with a more holistic view of language, its speakers, and their contexts? These are questions that language teachers regularly seek to answer, but typically struggle with. In this chapter, I focus on the teaching and learning of the English prepositions in and on from a Swedish L2 perspective. It is argued that the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics provides useful didactic information for practice in second language teaching and learning.

Introduction
Learning how to use the prepositions of a second language (L2) is notably hard (see e.g. Morimoto and Loewen, 2007). Not only are prepositions short, unstressed and perceptually weak (see Field, 2008: 5), they are highly frequent items that have developed a multitude of senses (see Morimoto and Loewen, 2007; Tyler & Evans, 2003/7) that may be hard for the L2 learner to navigate between.

In this chapter, I focus on the English prepositions in and on from a Swedish L2 perspective. More specifically, I discuss how cognitive linguistics (CL) might inform the teaching and learning of usage-patterns including temporal in and on-instances for Swedish L2 speakers of English. Although English and Swedish are closely related languages, and the basic meanings of in and on and their Swedish equivalents i and på are more or less the same (in/i is connected with inclusion and on/på with contact and support), English in and on and their Swedish equivalents appear to have lived quite different lives and developed quite different usage patterns. Some of the usage patterns involving temporal instances of these prepositions are indeed shared between the languages. Patterns that are correct in one of these two languages (e.g. uses of the Swedish phrase på sommaren (on the summer) where speakers of English would say in the summer), however, would typically be incorrect if translated literally into the other language (Johansson Falck, 2015). Given the many differences between the languages with respect to these patterns, Swedish L2 learners of English may potentially be influenced not only by difficulties related to the high frequencies and short, weak and unstressed qualities of prepositions in general, but also by negative transfer, i.e. cross-linguistic influence resulting in mistakes (see Odlin, 1989: 26) from their L1. Practice focussing on these specific issues may thus have several types of challenge to deal with.
Challenges connected with the teaching and learning of patterns involving L2 prepositions, however, are by no means new. Accordingly, several types of strategies have been used to deal with issues such as these. Traditional attempts from the 1960s and 1970s include practice influenced by theories of transformational-generative grammar (Chomsky, 1965, 1966) and pedagogical grammars (e.g. Saporta, 1966, 1973) adhering to the view that language is an isolated system that operates under its own and typically arbitrary set of rules. According to this view, language is rule-governed behaviour and L2 acquisition equal to “mastering the rules and memorizing the exceptions” (Tyler, 2012: 4).

The early 1970s then saw a pragmatic turn initiated by scholars such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969), and Grice (1975). This was largely a reaction to Chomsky’s treatment of language as a system disconnected from general cognitive processes. Their focus on pragmatics and the interplay between form and function in communication influenced practice in second language a great deal, and brought about a focus on authentic language materials and interactive learning materials as well a substantially reduced interest in explicit grammar teaching (see De Rycker and De Knop, 2009: 33).

The pragmatic turn has largely increased the efficiency in language teaching and learning but has generally lacked a theoretical framework that supports all aspects of this process (see De Rycker and De Knop, 2009: 33). In particular, teachers adopting a pragmatic approach have lacked a theoretical framework that takes into account aspects pertaining to language use (see De Rycker and De Knop, 2009: 33; Tyler 2012: 5). Although communicative, task-based approaches have indeed meant a shift from explicit learning (i.e. learning based on explicit teaching) to implicit learning (i.e. “learning through rich input, meaning negotiation, and pushed output” (Tyler, 2012: 4)) language teachers adopting a communicative approach have continued to offer explanations for the grammar in the L2, and these have typically been based on traditional theories (see Tyler, 2012: 4), which do not typically take usage patterns into account.

In a CL view, language is symbolic and reflects thought (Langacker, e.g. 1987, 2002). Far from being seen as an isolated entity divided into a number of compartmentalized subsystems (i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax, the lexicon, semantics, and an additional layer of pragmatics), language is considered “an integral part of human cognition” (Langacker, 1987: 12). Moreover, meaning is considered central to language rather than separate from syntax and other aspects of language. Crucially, not only lexical items are used to communicate meaning, so is grammar. Both the lexicon and the grammar are considered meaningful, symbolic structures that pair semantic structures with phonological ones (Langacker, 1987: 11). A given speaker’s choice of one type of construction instead of another is thus not a choice between different ways of expressing the same underlying structure (cf. Chomsky, 1957), but one that is motivated by how well specific constructions match the meaning that a given speaker wants to express, and/or his or her specific perspective or focus of attention at a given point in time. For instance, speakers that say He sent a letter to Susan emphasize “the path traversed by the letter with Susan as goal” (Langacker, 1987: 39), and speakers who say He sent Susan a letter “the resulting state in which Susan possesses the letter” (Langacker, 1987: 39). CL then, does not consider grammar to be a mere set of rules for combining words and
sentences, but a means for cognitively organizing one’s experience with language (see Bybee, 2008: 216).

From the view that language goes back to speakers’ attempts to construe intended meaning, it also follows that language is motivated and usage-based. Moreover, given that language always occurs in a context of use and is shaped by usage, usage events are crucial for shaping and getting to know language (Bybee, 2006). From usage-events we abstract conventional units and create “a vast network of phonological, semantic and pragmatic associations that range over what has traditionally been designated as lexicon and grammar” (Bybee, 2008: 216-217; cf. Langacker, 1987: 3). Language, however, is not only motivated by our experiences of language use, but also by our embodied experiences of, and interactions with, the world around us (see Gibbs, 2006: 174-180). Meaning, on a CL account, is embodied and inextricably linked to our understanding of the world around us as we know it.

In recent years, the pedagogical implications of CL have been observed by a large number of scholars (see e.g. Pütz, Niemeier and Dirven, 2001a and b; Achard and Niemeier, 2004; Boers and Lindstromberg, 2006; Robinson and Ellis, 2008; Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008a; Ellis and Cadierno, 2009). Moreover, a growing body of studies has reported experimental evidence and observational results in linguistics areas such as grammar (e.g. Lindstromberg and Boers, 2005 Niemeier and Reif, 2008; Tyler, Mueller and Ho, 2010), vocabulary, phraseology and metaphor (e.g. Kövecses and Szabó, 1996; Boers, 2000; Boers and Lindstromberg, 2008b; Verspoor and Lowie, 2003; Csábi, 2004; Beréndi et al. 2008) showing that theoretical constructs can provide useful didactic information and good models for second language teaching and learning.

In this chapter, I discuss how CL might inform practice in second language for Swedish L2 speakers of English. My discussion is based on previous corpus linguistic analyses of English in and on instances and their Swedish equivalents i and på in talk about temporal concepts. My main aim is to show how CL might be used to relate seemingly arbitrary patterns in language (i.e. the grammatical patterns of temporal in and on, and i and på) not only to one another, but also to people’s embodied experiences of the world around them, and how these patterns, in turn, may be used to inform L2 practice. I will do so partly by giving a brief background to how temporal concepts are generally structured by means of spatial ones, and partly by discussing how the specific usage patterns of temporal in and on might be explained on a CL account. First, however, an alternative teaching proposal will be briefly considered.

Grammar-based ways of explaining temporal in and on to Swedish L2 learners of English

Explicit teaching of how to use the patterns of temporal in and on has involved teaching the rules provided by grammar books intended for Swedish L2 learners. In turn, as is coherent with theories treating language as an isolated system that operates under its own rules (Chomsky 1965, 1966), grammar books used for this specific audience have tended to state the rules rather than explaining them in relation to systematic ways of thinking about things in the world around us. Svartvik and Sager (1996), for instance, state that on is used about days (e.g. on Sunday, on August 18 and on next Monday) and in the phrase on
one occasion (Svartvik and Sager, 1996: 409). In, on the other hand, is used in reference to “a period of time” [my translation] (e.g. in (the) summer, in the nineteenth century, in August, in six weeks, and in less than four minutes), a part of a day (e.g. in the afternoon and in the evening) and in negative clauses like I haven’t seen him in years (Svartvik and Sager, 1996: 409). Simply memorizing rules, however, may be both hard if these are not explained in relation to something that learners can relate to and use as scaffolding for the patterns they are supposed to learn. Moreover, given the imprecise quality of some of the labels (Why are August and less than four minutes labelled periods of time when Sunday is not? And why do speakers of English say at night if in is generally used together with phrases referring to parts of days?) L2 learners may find it hard to know when a given rule should be applied.

Thinking of temporal in and on constructions in terms of spatial scenes
In a CL view, using linguistic constructions does not merely involve doing something with language. It involves conceptualizing (i.e. cognitively processing, see Langacker, 1987: 5) the meaning construed by the specific constructions involved. A construction then, corresponds to a specific conceptualization, which it structures in its own specific way (cf. the above comparison between He sent a letter to Susan and He sent Susan a letter). Experimental evidence for this view comes from studies showing that “real bodily action is at the root of meaning conveyed by language” (Glenberg and Kaschak, 2002: 563, see also Gibbs, 2006: 174-180), from ones showing that understanding meaning is intimately connected with people mentally simulating the meaning construed (Gibbs and Matlock, 2008), and from ones showing that talking about specific actions (e.g. grasping and kicking) activate the same neural assemblies as actually performing the actions mentioned (for a review see Gibbs, 2006).

As is coherent with the view that constructions structure conceptualizations, Tyler (2012: 133) assumes that prepositions designate relations between elements which are conceived as constituting abstract spatial scenes. Prepositions, she argues, “provide the primary system for describing spatial relations” (Tyler, 2012: 133) and then moves on to explain the senses of spatial in, on and at to L2 learners of English by means of visuals. She reports on two experimental studies in which she successfully taught the spatial meanings of these prepositions by illustrating and describing the patterns in terms of spatial scenes. Her studies show that participants who had received CL-based instruction were significantly better at “appropriately interpret[ing] and distinguish[ing] the uses of the targeted prepositions” (Tyler, 2012: 165). Fourteen professional English translators whose L1 was Italian participated in the first study (Tyler, Mueller and Ho 2010a). Participants had all studied English for more than 10 years, and were enrolled in a short-term program at a US university. Despite their already being highly advanced learners of English, they “demonstrated significant gains after receiving only two hours of instruction” (Tyler, 2012: 165). Sixty-three adult English learners (aged 18-25), and enrolled in a university in Hanoi, Vietnam participated in the other (Tyler, 2012: 160-164). Half the number of these received cognitive instruction similar to the one given to the participants in the first study. The other half received a traditional approach to the prepositions. The results show that although the two groups performed equally well on pre-tests, and both groups achieved significant gains after instruction, the cognitive group made significantly greater gains than the traditional one. In other words, not only highly advanced L2 learners who were trained to be analytical and had a high level of metalinguistic
awareness gained from cognitive instruction, so did less advanced L2 learners whose native language was very different from English.

Similarly, Verspoor and Lowie (2003) and Csábi (2004) show that L2 learning of extended meanings is significantly facilitated if learners are made aware of the basic spatial meaning of a word (e.g. Verspoor and Lowie, 2003; Csábi, 2004). Seventy-eight Dutch L2 learners of English from three classes at two Dutch schools participated in Verspoor and Lowie’s (2003) study. Participants had all learned English for at least three years and were enrolled in pre-university courses. The study shows that learners who were provided with a core sense of polysemous words become better at guessing and remembering the figurative meaning of these words than did those who were provided with nonliteral cues or with no cues at all (Verspoor and Lowie, 2003: 547). In Csábi’s (2004) experiment the meaning of the verbs *hold* and *keep* was taught to fifty-two eight graders who were all L1 speakers of Hungarian. The learners were divided into two groups; one that received cognitive linguistic explanations of polysemous networks and motivations for the sense extensions, and a second group that was introduced to a number of English sentences with different meanings of these specific verbs, and then asked to translate the sentences into Hungarian. The results showed improvement from pre test to post test for both groups. The cognitive group, however, outscored the group which had received instruction based on a grammar/translation approach to language learning.

Similar to these studies, temporal *in* and *on* instances may also be thought of as constructions that structure conceptualizations in specific ways, and the relationships that they are part of as abstract spatial scenes. Temporal relations, however, are quite abstract and may not be possible to think and talk about in a structured way unless we use our experiences of other more concrete and/or delineated concepts. One such domain of experiences is that of spatial relationships.

As has been attested by numerous studies of a broad range of languages all over the world (see e.g. Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Evans, 2004; Núñez and Sweetser 2006; Radden, 2003) and by a wealth of experimental evidence (see e.g. Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002; Casasanto and Boroditsky, 2008; Núñez and Sweetser, 2006) the domains of TIME and SPACE are closely linked. Accordingly, based on the patterns observed in English, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) propose an entire system of conceptual metaphors that structures speakers’ understandings of TIME by means of their experiences of SPACE. In this system, speakers conceive of the present as being at their present location, of the past as being behind them, and of the future as being ahead of them (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 140). This way of structuring TIME by means of SPACE is reflected in English sentences such as *That’s all behind us now.* [---] *We’re looking ahead to the future. He has a great future in front of him* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 140), but has also been observed in a number of languages all over the world (Radden, 2003). In this system, fixed durations of time such as those referred to in the temporal *in* and *on* instances discussed here, are cast as bounded regions of space. Temporal *in* instances are conceptualized as containers (see Lakoff and Johnson, 1999: 153), and temporal *on* instances as supporting surfaces (used with *on*, see Lindstromberg, 2010: 51). Moreover, we may use these spatiotemporal locations to locate the things that we do and the things that we experience
in time. This appears to be the function that both temporal *in* and *on* instances and their Swedish equivalents *i* and *på* instances primarily serve (Johansson Falck, under review b).

A CL account of temporal *in* and *on*

Several studies done within the framework of CL have focused on English prepositions (e.g. Brugman, 1981; Lakoff, 1987; Lindstromberg, 1998/2010; Tyler and Evans, 2003/7, and Bączkowska, 2011), and some of these specifically on temporal *in* and *on* (e.g. Bączkowska, 2011, and Lindstromberg, 1998/2010). The most comprehensive explanations of these specific uses are offered by Lindstromberg (1998/2010). As is coherent with the attested link between TIME and SPACE, Lindstromberg explains the patterns of temporal *in* and *on* in terms of how their basic spatial meanings construe temporal relationships in terms of spatial ones. *In*, which in its basic spatial sense is used together with a landmark that has an interior and a boundary (Lindstromberg, 2010: 31), is typically used with temporal landmarks that represent “a time which is long enough for us to be able to think of it as a frame or space that something can be in” (Lindstromberg, 2010: 77). Examples would be *in the Stone Age, in the last century, in 2015, in winter, and in March*. Fixed durations of time that are longer than a couple of days are virtually always used with *in* (Lindstromberg, 2010: 77). The preposition *on*, on the other hand, is typically used together with medium sized units of time. Examples are *on Friday and on the day that* (Lindstromberg, 2010: 69). These uses can be compared with uses of *at*, which tend to be about “(almost) invisibly small and point-like” units of time (Lindstromberg, 2010: 70). Examples of these include *at that moment, at 10.30, at noon, and at dusk*. By being based on a match between the constructions and the quality of the concepts involved, Linstromberg’s explanations offer a principled way of thinking about the patterns of temporal *in* and *on* that is systematically linked to our experiences of spatial relationships. Although the size of the unit of time landmarks may not explain all temporal *in, on* and *at* uses, knowledge about these tendencies could potentially help the learner make qualified guesses with regard to using these specific prepositions in a correct way. Units of time that are longer than a day are quite likely to be cast as rooms (used with *in*), those that are shorter than a day tend to be used with *at*, and those that are about a day long with *on* (cf. Johansson Falck, 2015) (Picture 1).

Some of the patterns of temporal *in* and *on* instances discussed by Lindstromberg may indeed be stated in terms of grammatical rules alone (e.g. *on* is used about days and in the phrase *on an occasion* (Svartvik, 1996)). Explanations that do not consider the ways in which the basic spatial meaning of *in/on* might have motivated these specific temporal instances, however, do not provide a systematic way of thinking about these patterns. Unlike grammar rules that simply state when to use specific types of temporal phrases, explanations that go back to spatial information provide L2 learners with scaffoldings that they can relate to no matter their own language background. Given that these scaffoldings are rooted in our understanding of the world around us, they appear highly useful both for structuring new lexical information and for memorizing patterns.

![Picture 1](image-url)
My own analysis of a random set of temporal *in* and *on* instances from the British National Corpus (BNC) supports Lindstromberg’s claim that instances such as these are largely explicable in terms of spatial relationships in general, and in terms of the size of the landmarks involved in particular. 56.8 per cent (48.4-65.3) of temporal *in* instances are used together with longer units of time such as centuries, years, months, and weeks, and 77.6 per cent (70.6-84.7) of *on* instances are used in talk about days. 43.2 per cent (51.6-34.7) of the remaining *in* instances and 22.4 per cent (29.4-15.3) of *on* appears related to other ways of thinking about temporal relationships in terms of spatial ones (for a discussion of these see Johansson Falck, 2015).

Some of the *on* instances that are not explicable in terms of the size of a unit of time landmark appear related to the relationship between foundations, or grounds, and the things that they support. Similar to the ways in which these are typically located underneath the object that they support, temporal concepts referred to as bases are located underneath the actions connected with them (we do things e.g. *on a daily, biennial, or 2-3 year basis*).

Some of the temporal *in* instances that do not appear related to the size of the unit of time landmark appear related to a tendency to construe abstract concepts such as *future* and *advance* as rooms or containers. By thinking of them in this way, it becomes possible for us to furnish them with people, events, activities and processes taking place in them when we, for example, do and experience things *in the future*, or *in advance*. Explanations such as these (for a more detailed discussion of spatiotemporal *in* and *on* instances see Johansson Falck, 2015), may not be as general as those related to the size of the unit of time landmarks involved. Still similar to these, they allow the learner to think about temporal relationships in terms of spatial ones, and the patterns to be both be illustrated and visualized.

Temporal *in* and *on* from a Swedish L2 perspective

Not only the patterns of the L2, however, influence L2 learning, so do those of the learners’ first language (L1) (Odlin, 1989). Given the similarities between English and Swedish (Johansson Falck, under review a), Swedish L2 learners may find it fairly easy to learn to associate large size and temporal abstract nouns with container-like relationships (those construed with *in*), and days with contact/support relationships (those construed with *on*). All these patterns are reflected in Swedish too, for example, speakers of Swedish also do things *på torsdag* (*on Thursday*), *i januari* (*in January*), and *i pausen* (*in the break*). Swedish L2 learners, however, need to be careful not to use English *on* constructions too often. As is coherent with a Swedish tendency to do things on things, for example: *titta på någonting* (*look on something instead of look at*), units of time are often cast this way in Swedish. For example: Swedes do things *gång på gång* (*time on time instead of time after time*). Moreover, Swedish construes units of time as objects/supporting surfaces to communicate how long a given temporal unit lasts, for example: *ett samtal på fem minuter* (*a talk on five minutes instead of saying for five minutes*); how long it will take before a given result has been reached, for example: *hon är här på en kvart* (*she is here on a quarter instead of in 15 minutes*); how much time has passed...
since something happened, for example: *har inte träffats på 5 minuter* (has/have not met/seen each other on 5 minutes instead of *in 5 minutes*), and to state when something typically happens, for example: *på eftermiddagarna (on the afternoons)* instead of *in the afternoons* (see Johansson Falck, under review a). Some of these patterns exist in English too. However, a major difference between the languages is that the tendency to talk about units of time as if they were objects upon which we do things appears much less restricted in Swedish than in English. In turn, the differences in how widely applicable this way of thinking about time is in the two languages means that L1 speakers of Swedish, as a result of negative transfer, run the risk of overusing temporal on constructions when speaking English.

Discussion
The CL view that language is symbolic and reflects thought has several implications for L2 teaching and learning. Not only does it highlight the fact that language is a tool for expressing meaning, it offers an exciting way for teachers and learners to think about the L2 and its speakers. Given that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between language and thought (cf. Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 231-232, Johansson Falck, 2005: 21-22) and that different languages solve the issue of filling the gap between language and thought in different ways, learning an L2 means getting to know how meaning can also be construed, if seen from another perspective. Accordingly, L2 learning may be seen not simply as a matter of conquering a foreign system with a number of peculiar rules, or as a way of learning through rich input, but as a way of getting a glimpse of another perspective on reality that is intimately connected with the speakers of an L2, with their cultures, and with their worlds.

In this chapter, I focussed on some temporal *in* and *on* instances, and how these could be explained in terms of the specific scenes that these instances construe. When applied to practice in the language classroom explanations such as these could easily be turned into various types of visuals (e.g. iconic or schematic images), and the illustrations discussed in relation to the specific scenes that they construe. Achard (2008), for example, reports on having successfully taught syntactic constructions by asking learners to consider how constructions structure specific scenes. In this way, constructions might get easier to imagine, easier to remember and easier to relate to one’s own experiences.

Moreover, teaching temporal instances of prepositions based on explanations that relate time to the basic spatial meaning of the prepositions promises to have a positive effect on learning. Several studies show that making learners aware of the basic spatial meaning of a word significantly facilitates their learning of extended meanings (e.g. Verspoor and Lowie, 2003; Csábi, 2004).

Conclusion
This chapter focussed on a CL analysis of temporal *in* and *on* instances and how these might be explained in terms of a match between form and meaning. It was argued that the theoretical framework of cognitive linguistics provides useful didactic information for practice in second language teaching and learning. By considering how constructions might have been motivated not only by people’s experiences of language, but also by their experiences of
the world around them CL offers a way of thinking about language that learners can relate to regardless of their language background. Moreover, it offers a principled way of thinking about language that may be used for making the teaching and learning of L2 constructions more systematic.

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References


DEVELOPING A SPOKEN CORPUS FOR SOUTH SAAMI LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Introduction
Over the past 20 years Corpus Linguistics has increasingly been used to support language teaching and learning by providing exposure to authentic language (Chambers, 2007). In the context of minority and indigenous language teaching and learning, Boyce (2006) argues that modern spoken language corpora provide a means of overcoming limited language exposure for both the first and second language speaker. Granger, Kraif, Ponton, Antoniadis and Zampa (2007) pointed out “native corpora give no indication of what is difficult for learners” (p. 253) suggesting a need for learner corpora as a complement to native speaker corpora and that learner corpora have the potential to support curriculum design for second language education, and to inform language revitalization initiatives and educational practices. In this chapter we discuss and illustrate the issues associated with developing a spoken first and second language corpus for the Scandinavian minority language South Saami, and we suggest ways in which it could be used to support South Saami language education.

To set the scene, we begin this chapter by overviewing the Saami languages and specifically the South Saami situation to provide the reader with an understanding of the context in which we are developing a modern spoken language corpus, before overviewing the on-going Saami corpus development projects that have explicit educational objectives. Thereafter, we consider the specific challenges the South Saami context poses for the development of a spoken South Saami language corpus. In the final part of this chapter, we discuss how this corpus could be used to inform language teaching and learning.

Background
The Saami languages constitute a branch of the Finno-Ugric languages. There are nine living Saami languages according to UNESCO (http://www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas/en/atlasmap.html). Three (Ter, Pite, and Ume) are critically endangered with circa 10, 20, and 20 speakers, respectively. Five (Kildin, Skolt, Inari, Lule and South) are severely endangered with circa 800, 300, 400, 2000 and 500 speakers, respectively. One (North) is defined as definitely endangered with circa 30 000 speakers.

Although the Saami languages are closely related and commonly perceived to be mutually intelligible, they differ in several non-trivial linguistic aspects. For example, the phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic distinctions between North and South Saami are so sharp (e.g. Sammallahti 1998; Vinka in press) that these languages cannot be considered minor mutually intelligible regional variants of each other (see example 1 and 2).
(1) Mon borren dávja márffi (North Saami)
    I eat often sausage
(2) Manne damhtaj goervem byengkapdim (South Saami)
    I often sausage eat

South Saami is spoken in central Norway and Sweden across an area that stretches approximately 600 kilometres from north to south and 300 kilometres from east to west. Rasmussen and Nolan (2011) estimated that the language has up to 1000 speakers of which half may be second language learners. This results in a low speaker density, which aggravates the frail situation of the language (Grenoble & Whaley 2006).

Although the future of South Saami may seem bleak, there are indications that the intergenerational transfer has developed benevolently (Sametinget 2012). This development is a consequence of a strong and active language revitalization movement that has emerged over the past two decades (Todal 2007). In lieu of these positive tendencies, the language is extremely frail, and in order to ensure that coming generations speak South Saami, massive efforts are required in several areas.

South Saami gained legal recognition in Sweden in 2009, when the Bill on National Minorities and Minority Languages was passed (SFS 2009:724). This law grants among other things, the right for Saami children to attend Saami-speaking kindergarten. However, this law is silent on matters pertaining to the formal educational system, which is regulated by Skollagen (SFS 2010:800) and Skolförordningen (SFS 2011:185). According to Skollagen, Saami children have the right to receive language classes. However, the Law only specifies that such classes are extra-curricular, and leaves it open to local authorities to decide whether or not to grant classes (for instance SFS 2010:800 10Kap, §7). Furthermore, the legal minimum language exposure is 45 minutes per week, which is not sufficient to achieve proficiency in a language (Svonni 1993, 2008).

Matters are further aggravated by Skolförordningen (SFS 2011:185) which in effect prohibits the establishment of revitalization programs based on full and partial immersion methods. Skolförordningen (SFS 2011:185 9Kap, 12§) states that language of instruction may be a language other than Swedish up to 50 percent of the instruction. This explicitly bans full immersion which have proven to be extremely successful (Grenoble & Whaley 2006). While bilingual instruction may take place, it is however conditioned by the requirement that it takes place during a transition period that results in 100 percent instruction in Swedish (SFS 2011:185 9Kap, 12§). Hence long-term partial immersion is also illegal. In short, the Swedish educational system is governed by laws that enforce an explicit assimilation policy, and thus stands in sharp contrast to Norway and Finland, where immersion models in the formal educational system are legal (Finlands regering 1998; Justisdepartementet 1998).

The everyday use of South Saami is limited even in the core area with the language mostly spoken within the homes of South Saami families. The use in the public domain is in essence non-existent. The spoken South Saami in the one radio programme broadcast each week in South Saami is, adjusting for musical content, approximately 6–7 minutes long.
Given the context we have described, there are in addition to the challenges faced by all minority languages specific challenges for South Saami language teaching and learning. One such challenge is the shortage of teaching materials such as authentic texts and recordings, and linguistically informed dictionaries and grammar books. Such materials can be developed using a corpus of spoken language, which can be used to develop linguistically informed teaching and learning materials based on authentic contemporary language use and pronunciation. The challenges associated with the South Saami situation affect the process of constructing a corpus of spoken South Saami, and delimit the ways in which such a corpus can and should inform the development of new language teaching and learning materials. We illuminate these challenges by first considering on-going North and Lule Saami spoken language corpus development projects that have explicit educational objectives before turning to the specific challenges facing the development and use of a corpus of contemporary spoken South Saami.

Saami language corpora
In the Saami context, there are currently a few on-going projects developing written and spoken language corpora with explicit educational objectives. The written language corpora being developed at the Centre for Saami language technology (Giellatekno) at Tromsø University (http://giellatekno.uit.no/) together with Divvun (a project and working group initiated by the Norwegian Saami Parliament in 2005 http://divvn.no/) are the most well known. Giellatekno is working on building written corpora for several of the Saami languages. The corpora have, among other things, been used to develop computer-based tools for supporting the languages (e.g. machine translation, spellcheckers, and digital dictionaries). One example of a pedagogical tool that has been developed at Giellatekno (in cooperation with Aajege and Gielejarnge, two language centres located in Røros in Norway and Östersund/Tärnaby in Sweden) is OAHPA!, a language learning program for North Saami and South Saami. Its focus is on grammar and vocabulary and it is particularly useful for second language learners regardless of age and language proficiency. OAHPA! can also be used by first language learners, for example, to develop writing and vocabulary skills.

One current major spoken language corpus project for the Saami languages is DASAGO, Davvisámi mánnáid giellaovdáneapmi (‘North Sami child language acquisition’) that is developing a corpus of contemporary spoken North Saami (https://castl.uit.no/index.php/acquisition/dasago). One part of the project is to document mono- and bilingual first language acquisition of North Saami, and to develop a corpus of spontaneous North Saami child language acquisition and adult child-directed speech. The child-directed speech will provide valuable information about the quality and quantity of North Saami input that the children receive. This is important for understanding how mono- and bilingual children learn North Saami. Outside the North Saami core area there is large variation with respect to the amount of North Saami input that children receive; most children acquire North Saami and at least one other national language (Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, and/or Swedish). Children who receive a limited North Saami input and have Saami as their weaker language are at a risk of language delay in North Saami. Høier (2007) showed that children with a
Saami language as their weaker language may face difficulties when learning to read their Saami language.

However, with appropriate, informed linguistic training input-related language delays can be overcome. This requires an understanding of the monolingual as well as bilingual development of modern spoken North Saami, something that the DASAGO corpus will support. The DASAGO project aims to develop language pedagogical strategies to compensate for the scarcity of North Saami input and to better support the language development of children with Saami as their weaker language. Such strategies will be useful for day-care centres and for schools.

In this overview of existing and under-construction Saami Language Corpora we have demonstrated how it is possible to create corpora for indigenous languages and that these corpus projects have language teaching and learning applications that support the maintenance and revitalization of the languages. In the remainder of this chapter we consider the development of a spoken language corpus for South Saami that is a minority language with fewer speakers and that therefore poses greater challenges for corpus construction and use in the language teaching and learning context.

The creation of a corpus on spoken South Saami
The process of creating spoken language corpora that are of relevance for education is complex. Drawing on the experiences of creating the abovementioned corpora, we explore the complexities of spoken minority language corpus creation through an ongoing project. Building a corpus of spoken language involves procedures such as collecting spontaneous speech and transcribing it. These procedures need to be performed in such a way that the corpus becomes usable for the intended user. The corpus has educational objectives and will be developed to inform South Saami language teaching and learning at all language proficiency levels across the entire educational system, and to provide a base for linguistic research into the language and its language revitalization. Educationally, it is important to have knowledge about the target language as well as about the learner language. To provide a picture of both the target language and the learner language, the corpus will include spontaneous speech from strong first language speakers (L1 speakers) as well as from second language learners (L2 speakers).

In the South Saami context, the low number of speakers, the even lower number of L1 speakers, and the weak intergenerational transfer of the language pose major difficulties for the collection of spoken language. Today, many South Saami speakers are L2 speakers and have learnt the language in school settings. Swedish, Norwegian, and/or North Saami influence these speakers’ South Saami in other ways than these languages influence the L1 speaker’s South Saami. As Mæhlum (2007) pointed out all linguistic aspects of South Saami (pronunciation, lexicon, morphology, syntax) have been affected by the national languages, Swedish and Norwegian, and North Saami.
For language teaching and learning it is important to understand the language learning process. We, therefore, acknowledge following Granger et al. (2007), the contribution that speech from L2 learners will make to a corpus on spoken South Saami. Spontaneous speech from L2 learners is an important resource for understanding the process of learning South Saami. The corpus will reveal, for example, typical errors, learning paths, learning strategies, and transfer effects. The revealed features will play an important role in developing learner-corpus-informed language teaching and learning tools and materials such as “dictionaries, grammars, textbooks, CALL programs — that address learners’ attested difficulties” (p. 253) of relevance for educational and pedagogical strategies in schools and universities.

These L2 difficulties illustrate why it is important to find strong L1 users and utilize their native intuitions about contemporary South Saami when developing teaching and learning materials. However, the scarcity of such strong L1 users makes collecting authentic L1 speech difficult. The problem identifying strong L1 users also creates difficulties for producing descriptions of the linguistic aspects of the contemporary target language that are important for designing relevant teaching and learning materials. The accuracy of these descriptions is important as inaccurate linguistic descriptions can misinform educational and revitalization policies and strategies, and result in incorrect teaching and learning materials, pedagogical strategies, course contents and the spread of incorrect knowledge in and about the language.

Although collecting spontaneous speech from strong L1 speakers poses a difficulty in the case of South Saami, the collection procedure is only a minor phase in building a corpus of spoken language. The most time-consuming phase in building a spoken language corpus is the transcribing and tagging of the audio recordings. The norms of the written language present an apparent bias when transcribing speech. A known pitfall is that transcribers tend to map the language form of the speaker onto a standard written form when there is no real correspondence (overnormalization). The less proficient the transcriber is in the language, the greater the risk is for such overnormalization.

For example, if a speaker says ajja tuhtj ‘grandfather thinks’, a transcriber may instead transcribe the standard written form aajja tuhtjie ‘grandfather thinks’. The transcriber’s overnormalizing misses valuable information about a common phonological deletion in spontaneous spoken South Saami. The transcriber fails to note the deletion of the word final -ie in tuhtjie, that occurs in sixth conjugation verbs (Bergsland 1994). Further, the transcriber misses that a stressed vowel that appears in a closed syllable shortens in the spoken language (a- in ajja), even though it is spelt as if it were a long vowel (aa- in aajja).

It is paramount that these inaccurate transcriptions do not occur because knowledge about common phonological deletions/reductions in spontaneous speech, and typical learner errors and learning paths are valuable when designing curricula for language courses and when constructing teaching and learning materials.

To deal with the bias of the written language norms when transforming speech into written text it is important that the transcribing process is guided by standardized transcription conventions. One such format is CHAT (Codes for the Human Analysis of Transcripts) that
is a standardized transcription and coding scheme developed as part of the CHILDES (Child Language Data Exchange System) project (MacWhinney 2000; http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/). CHAT was designed to increase the reliability of transcriptions, and it is widely used in child language acquisition research, and has also been used in the development of spoken learner corpora such as the French Learner Language Oral Corpora (Myles & Mitchell, http://www.flloc.soton.ac.uk/) and Spanish Learner Language Oral Corpora (http://www.sploc.soton.ac.uk). CHAT allows phonetic transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), the indication of nonstandard lexical forms, as well as the linking of audio to the transcripts. As South Saami is an understudied language and little is written about the phonological processes in spontaneous speech, there is a pedagogical benefit in including phonetic transcriptions in the corpus. This will highlight the differences between written and spoken South Saami, and contribute to the understanding and teaching of pronunciation in fluent speech in a way that existing teaching and learning materials cannot.

CHAT is fully compatible with a range of programs such as Phon (http://www.phon.ca/) and Praat (www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/). Phon is particularly valuable for the phonetic transcribing of spontaneous speech, as it enables multiple blind transcriptions, which can be compared to the original sound source, and thus eliminate many of the pitfalls that accompany the transcription process. Both Phon and Praat allow users to conduct phonological and phonetic analyses of data transcribed in CHAT. Further, the CHAT system also includes CLAN (Computerized Language ANalysis) programs, which provides tools for a wide range of automatic searches and detailed phonological, morphological and syntactic analyses of transcripts in the CHAT format. Such tools can be useful not only for teachers but also for students at all levels when using a corpus on spoken South Saami.

Discussion and conclusions
The importance of developing a corpus of spoken South Saami that will inform language teaching and learning becomes apparent when summarizing the language situation in the following eight points:

1. Few South Saami speakers/learners are as competent in South Saami as in the national languages
2. Those who use South Saami daily have problems raising their proficiency level
3. South Saami speakers/learners have to actively search for opportunities to use the language
4. There is little literature for speakers/learners to read in South Saami
5. The range of South Saami medium television and radio programmes verges on the non-existent
6. The growth and strength of their national language competence is supported in everyday life.

7. The growth and strength of their South Saami is not supported in everyday life.

8. The speakers/learners need to maintain their commitment to South Saami to maintain and improve their written and spoken language proficiency.

Carter and McCarthy (1988) among others have pointed out that language learners ought to learn the language as it is actually used by native speakers. It is thus important that any modern spoken corpus is used to test existing descriptions against authentic current language use and assists in the development of state-of-the-art linguistic descriptions. These descriptions can counter the overconfidence some language users have in standard grammars and pronunciation rules that encourage them to change their way of talking away from the contemporary to what they believe to be “correct” as stated in grammar and pronunciation guides that do not describe contemporary language use. Such descriptions can readily be tested against a modern spoken language corpus of authentic data, and revised descriptions can inform the development of contemporary teaching and learning materials. Further in a teaching and learning context, all descriptions can easily be illustrated with authentic modern examples taken from the corpus.

Language learner pronunciation is frequently affected by orthographic representations and spelling rules. Although this is a general problem in many language learning situations, e.g. the classroom, the poverty of readily available authentic language input for the South Saami learner increases the impact of orthographic representation on pronunciation and, in particular, the learning of phonological processes. For example, the South Saami word rööpses ‘red’ /røps/ is frequently incorrectly pronounced by language learners as /røːpsVs/. This is caused by pronouncing all graphemes in the written word including the ‘e’ and by following the taught South Saami spelling rule that a double written vowel is always pronounced as a long vowel resulting in /øː/ rather than the short vowel /ø/. In the absence of access to authentic modern spoken input and the near-absence of South Saami in radio and TV news programmes or other media a modern spoken corpus can help this situation in at least two ways. One, as is often the case, spelling rules are not transparent and a simple spelling rule can often obscure a more complex rule. This is evidenced in our preliminary corpus of South Saami in which it is clear that long vowels only occur in stressed open syllables. Hence, the teacher and the learner need to be aware that the simple rule that a double written vowel represents a long vowel needs to be modified to the more complex rule: a double written vowel represents a long vowel only when the syllable is stressed and open. Two, having access to authentic modern spoken South Saami recordings can support the learner’s acquisition of pronunciation and reduce the dependence on orthographic representation.

Access to authentic spoken material also provides the teacher and the learner opportunities to work at linguistic levels above the word. A learner with advanced grammatical and lexical knowledge, yet little advanced interaction with native speakers can lack knowledge about discourse particles and their uses. A modern spoken corpus would provide valuable insights.
into the use of discourse particles in contemporary South Saami. Together this will assist in improving authenticity of teaching and learning for natural interaction.

In our work, we actively use the recorded data for state-of-the-art linguistic descriptions to inform teaching and learning materials for the lexicon and beyond, and to provide authentic examples of the spoken language. We anticipate that the biggest contribution of a modern spoken South Saami language corpus is attitudinal. The teaching of the language is a core element of language revitalization and this can be supported by having a state-of-art linguistic description of the language, informed teaching materials, and contemporary authentic examples of the spoken language from both first and second language speakers of the language. The resultant teaching and learning materials we anticipate will make the language learning experience effective and enjoyable and thus produce strong advocates for revitalization.

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RESEARCHING LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICIES: EVIDENCE FROM THE SEYCHELLES, RUSSIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Sergej Ivanov, Mats Deutschmann & Janet Enever

Introduction
In this chapter, we consider how the shaping of language policy occurs as an outcome of language planning in three distinctive policy contexts: status planning in the Seychelles, national literacy planning as evidenced by policy documentation in secondary school policies in Russia and soft policy measures for foreign language learning in European Union countries.

Spolsky (2004) proposes that three components of language policy can be identified in any speech community:

- language practices – the languages that a speech community selects as part of its linguistic repertoire and the ways in which these are used;
- language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs the speech community has about languages and their use;
- specific efforts made to modify or influence the practices of the speech community.

In the three examples of language policy discussed here we consider all three elements, drawing out evidence of the dimensions of power that may be employed in the formulation of language policy (Lukes, 2005) and considering the societal implications such decisions may have.

Language planning and language policy as a field of academic research emerged in the late 1950s as former colonial regions of the world began to establish themselves as independent nations. Kaplan et al (2000: 2) report that as the perceived need for a common language of education grew, so the field of language planning and policy became established. More recent research has explored many areas of policy at macro, meso and micro levels, fully acknowledging the complexity of the social context and the symbolic value of languages in the process of policy-making and implementation. With the growth of the research field a number of sub-divisions have evolved. For the purposes of this chapter we will adopt the terminology established by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) in identifying these sub-divisions of language planning, briefly summarised from Liddicoat (2013: 2):
• **Status planning** – language planning activities related to the selection of languages to perform particular functions in a society and the varieties of languages which will be used.

• **Corpus planning** – language planning activities relating to the form of a language.

• **Prestige or image planning** – language planning activities relating to the ways in which particular language or language varieties are perceived and valued by a community.

• **Language-in-education or acquisition planning** – language planning activities relating to the teaching and learning of languages (including literacy development), especially at school.

As global economic forces in the twenty-first century have accentuated the interconnectedness of nations, so the pressure to adapt to increased educational mobility and competition has continued to grow. Varied policy responses to such forces have included: the adoption of new language policies which may in turn lead to restoration of a prior policy paradigm (see case 1); emerging evidence of contradictions between the curriculum objectives and their means (see case 2); national policy formulated in the context of a regional educational market (see case 3). In the following sections we do not attempt to comprehensively cover the field, rather, we bring together some studies recently conducted by the authors, as illustrative of language-in-education policy in three quite different contexts: the Seychelles, Russia and the European Union. Drawing on distinctive theoretical paradigms, we explore (1) issues of language status and prestige in the post-colonial educational context of the Seychelles from a historical perspective, (2) conceptions of criticality as an aspect of literacy development in the educational policy for Russian upper-secondary schools and their potential consequences, and (3) political macro strategies currently shaping early foreign language policy and its implementation in European primary schools.

**Case 1: Language policies in the Seychelles**

As Cameron (2006: 141) points out, ‘language is not simply a vehicle for other ideological processes but is itself shaped by ideological processes’. This is particularly evident in many post-colonial nations, which had to start anew and faced great challenges with respect to language planning at the end of the colonial era. Such challenges included the selection of national languages as well as language-in-education planning in systems that were previously built on those of the former colonial powers. This case, based largely on interview data collected in November, 2012 (extensive interview conducted with Seychelles Senior Curriculum Development officer Elva Gedeon), offers an example of the politics of language and its impact on education systems in one nation, the Seychelles, a small island-nation off the east coast of Africa. In 1982, Seychelles was the first Creole-speaking nation in the world to introduce a Creole language in schools (Siegel 2005: 144), yet more than thirty years later Seychellois Creole, or Seselwa (hereafter referred to as SC) is still struggling to compete with French and English. Here we explore some of the reasons for this. Although a very specific example, this analysis reveals the presence of Spolsky’s (2004) three components of language
policy, supporting Kaplan’s (2002) assertion that the need for language planning was one outcome of a post-colonial era for newly independent states.

Background
A key to the current language situation in the Seychelles is its historical past. The Seychelles has no native indigenous population and was uninhabited until 1770, when the French established a small settlement (Scarr, 2000). By 1815, the population had reached 7000, largely (85-90%) made up of African slaves governed by a relatively small group of French land owners (Scarr, 2000; Fleischmann, 2008). Strategies of ‘deculturation’, whereby all African languages and cultural expressions were suppressed (Chaudenson 2001: 91), led to the emergence of SC, a French-based Creole closely related to those of Mauritius and Rodriguez. By 1815, when the Seychelles became a British colony, SC had become firmly established as the language of everyday communication.

The British presence was mainly restricted to the administrative sphere, where English also was the official language. French kept its role in religious practices and high culture, areas controlled by the francophone elite of colonial descent, the so-called Grands Blancs (Bollée 1993: 88). During the entire colonial period, SC remained a low status language confined to informal discourse, existing only in spoken form.

In education, French remained the medium of instruction until the 1940s, when the church-owned schools were replaced by more formal and organized arrangements, based on the English system and language (Fleischmann 2008: 74). SC was completely banned from education: ‘Creole was out of the question. We were punished if we spoke Creole in class’ (Gedeon, 2012). A prerequisite for access to positions of power among the general SC-speaking population (94% according to Momou, 2004: 46) was thus mastery of English, and to a lesser extent French.

Establishment of Seychellois Creole (SC)
After independence in 1976, the elevation of SC to the status of a language was not given, even among its native speakers: “The dominant group, […] , had managed to persuade the Creole-speakers that their speech was so inferior in status as to be a non-language ‘ (D’Offay, 1980: 268). This topic was also a politically loaded issue since the promotion of SC was initially closely associated with the Seychelles People’s Progressive Front (SPPF), who seized power in 1977.

After intensive efforts of prestige and status planning (Liddicoat, 2013: 2), however, the status of SC gradually improved and began its journey towards becoming an official language with a role in education. This was by no means an easy undertaking and involved substantial corpus planning (Haugen 1966); there was no written standard, no orthography, no formalised grammar and no written literature.

The implementation of SC in education, as a medium of instruction and a subject in its own right, involved intensive processes of language-in-education planning (see Fleischmann 2008: 58-67 for further details of this process). In more practical terms, curricula and learning
materials had to be constructed and teachers had to be trained to use SC as medium of instruction. According to Elva Gedeon, who was closely involved in this process, this mammoth task took less than a year to accomplish, and in January 1982 Seychelles became the first Creole-speaking nation in the world to implement Creole as a medium of instruction in education.

SC in education

There were two primary reasons for promoting SC in education according Elva Gedeon. Firstly, it was an important part of ‘the development of the Seychellois identity’. Secondly, there were good pedagogical reasons for implementing SC: ‘when the child learns the basic concepts in his own language he will succeed better’ (Gedeon, 2012). With these aims in mind, SC was thus written into the curriculum as medium of instruction from primary 1-4 and was also taught as a separate subject until primary 6. SC thus formed part of a trilingual policy where English still remained the main medium of instruction from primary 5 and French was taught as a foreign language from primary 1 (Purvis, 2004; Campling, Confiance & Purvis, 2011).

Data evidence showed that the strategy of initially instructing children in their mother tongue had many positive effects; in comparisons of the last classes to be taught in English and the first taught under the new system, the latter outscored the former in almost every subject, including French and the sciences, and also performed equally well in English (Bickerton, 1990: 48). In addition, literacy rates among 15-24 year olds went up from 57.3% in 1971 to 84.2% by 1987 (Campling, Confiance & Purvis, 2011: 51).

Setbacks and challenges

SC’s role in education and elsewhere has, however, suffered setbacks in recent years. Following concerns raised by the Language Policy Review Committee (LPRC) report in 1994, SC’s role as medium of instruction was reduced to the first two years of schooling in 1996. One of the justifications for this, according to Elva Gedeon, was that policy makers maintained that increased exposure to English in popular media meant that children were better equipped to handle an earlier switch to English. This supports Siegel’s claims that a programme of literacy in a Pidgin or Creole in post-colonial countries is transitional and ‘not an end in itself but rather […] a means of acquiring literacy in the European official language(s), which is used for higher education and government […]’ (2005: 149). Indeed, in our interview, Elva Gedeon stressed the importance of English in administration, in economic transactions and in the tourism industry, something that is also supported by the findings of Laversuch (2008).

There were further reasons for the limitations of SC in education. For example, teachers reported finding the transition from one medium of instruction to another challenging, claiming that they had to ‘re-teach’ children basic concepts in primary 5 as they had failed to grasp these in English. Although Elva Gedeon expressed doubts as to the accuracy of these arguments, the transition period is still reported as challenging by a number of primary school teachers (teachers’ evidence gathered during a preparatory workshop). Teachers complained about an overloaded curriculum which made it difficult to prepare the children adequately for the language-shift (Deutschmann, 2012).
students towards SC probably also contribute to its low status (Fleischmann, 2008: 130), arguably a consequence of the continued reliance on the British GCSE system in upper secondary education. Elva Gedeon also lists lack of resources (for example, for the production of learning materials) as another primary obstacle for further promoting SC in school.

Analysis of current situation
In spite of the concerted efforts to raise the status of SC and to further its position in Seychelles society, SC is still struggling to find its place in the current trilingual language policy. Laversuch (2008) gives a number of socioeconomic reasons for this, such as a continued strong Franco/Anglo presence in banking and finance, resulting in English, and to a lesser extent French, being the languages used in documentation of official transactions. SC has not found its role in such domains, and while most Seychellois are proud of their language ‘they will subconsciously associate development with French and English’ (Mahoune 2000:n.p). SC has also yet to find its role in government administration, a result of colonial tradition according to Choppy (2002:17).

The current state of affairs is a balancing act where either recessive or expansive cycles could be the outcome (Bossong, 1980): On the one hand, lack of efforts in prestige and status planning could give further fuel to those that claim that SC is unfit for official purposes, resulting in further limitations to the domains where it is used, ultimately, in a worst case scenario, leaving SC in no better position than that which it had during the pre-independence period. On the other hand, continued and expanded efforts in promoting SC could mean that it grows in status and becomes acknowledged, alongside English and French, as fit for use in official domains such as administration and business, thereby motivating its promotion in education to higher levels.

What the costs and benefits of either model are is impossible to say. Wolff cautions that any developments need to be considered in the ‘inescapable context of globalisation’ (2006: 33). On the other hand, much research carried out in Sub-Saharan Africa speaks for the promotion of bi- or tri-lingual policies in all stages of primary, secondary and tertiary education in order to maximise the quality of education by learning through a familiar language, and thereby allowing for maximal social mobility and full democratic participation (Wolff 2011: 101-2).

In conclusion, the decisions and undertakings facing the Seychelles in the coming years are complex, but by no means unique. It is yet another example of the challenges facing language policy makers in the post-colonial world as they struggle to ‘achieve socioeconomic empowerment without sacrificing their socio-cultural endowment’ (Laversuch 2008: 390).

Case 2: Criticality in language-in-education policy in Russian upper-secondary school
In this section, we shift our attention from an island country in the Indian Ocean to a country that covers a substantial part of Europe and Asia to take a sample from the language policy in the Russian upper-secondary education.
School is a stage where the younger generation scores points in their quest to climb the social ladder. The rules of the quest are defined in the national curriculum and other educational policy documents by the older generation that has power to decide what valid knowledge is and control over how it is acquired. In Goodlad’s conceptualisation (1979: 61) these are formal curricula whose core features are sanctioned and available in written form. In Russia, upper-secondary school is the last stage of compulsory education, after which young people may progress to higher education or move into paid employment. One of the competences, viewed as crucial to their further success, is criticality (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki, 2012). Regarding criticality as being incorporated into literacy, the focus of this section is on language-in-education planning (Liddicoat, 2013: 2). Here, we explore what framework is provided for the development of Russian upper-secondary students’ criticality and ask what conceptions of criticality are promoted within the formal curricula. This task is undertaken with a heightened awareness of linguistic choices (Englund, 2011) that are evident in the policy documents arguing how these choices might influence the pedagogical practice. The conceptions of criticality will be clarified in the light of interpretations contained in previous and future policy documents.

Lundgren (2011: 17) claims that curriculum is ‘the basic principles for cultural and social reproduction’, for which pedagogic practice is a fundamental social context (Bernstein, 2000: 3). The notion of control is translated into the pedagogic practice as framing, which was initially understood as anything that sets certain time and space limits for pedagogic practices at school (Dahlöf, 1969: 60). Later, it was used as an explanatory concept, which constrains and directs the pedagogic practice (Kallós and Lundgren, 1979: 30). In current curriculum theory, frames serve not to predict why exactly something has happened but to foresee what cannot happen in the given circumstances (Lindblad, Linde and Naeslund, 1999: 100). This limitation is attributed to the socially constructed nature of the pedagogic practice, i.e. what frames for pedagogic practice exist is a consequence of what is constructed as the frames by the people involved. Jarl & Rönnberg (2010: 89) argue that the frames are first interpreted in the classroom. In this way pedagogic practice is seen as a result of transactions between the educational actors rather than subordination of the ‘lower’ classroom level to the ‘higher’ policy level. Although this might be true, the language use in the formal curricula is assumed to contribute to the actual pedagogic practice, as Goodlad (1979: 26) pointed out: ‘[T]here probably is more linearity than many teachers would like and less than some legislators might prefer’.

According to the federal law, eleven-year education is compulsory in Russia until the age of 18 (Federalny zakon “Ob obrazovanii v Rossii” Federatsii”, 2012: 201-202). After nine years of schooling, students have to choose either an upper-secondary stream or a vocational stream, both of which qualify students for tertiary education. The latest national curriculum for upper-secondary education was passed in 2012 and has been gradually implemented from the academic year 2013/2014. However, schools may continue to follow the 2004 curriculum until 2020. The relatively long period of transition offers schools time to reconsider their approaches in the design of pedagogic practice. However, it also brings about a significant change when different conceptions of criticality compete and exist simultaneously. A comparative analysis of these two curricula for upper-secondary school offers the potential to
reveal shifts in conceptions of criticality and the degree of significance placed on them. This analysis is achieved through searching for words containing the root ‘krit’ (from Russian for ‘critical’) and interpreting their status in these two documents.

In the preamble to the older curriculum, criticality is not mentioned as an objective but referred to as a generic learning skill in information and communication activities and worded as ‘critical assessment of reliability of acquired information’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004c: 9). Similarly, the latest curriculum stipulates criticality as a generic learning skill, worded as a skill to ‘critically assess and interpret information from various sources’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012: 6 [author’s translation]). However, being a critical thinker is also stated as an objective of personality development and considered as a feature of an upper-secondary student’s profile (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya i nauki RF, 2012: 3). This indicates a wider application of criticality, which transcends the school environment and enters the space of everyday life. Further, it is conceived not only as an external skill that upper-secondary students should master but also as an inner characteristic of their nature. The placement of this conception in the preamble signals that working with students’ criticality development should permeate all school subjects. Although the wider application of criticality is evident in the 2004 curriculum in some subject syllabi, the status of criticality appears lower as it is linked more directly to the subject, rather than being positioned as an overarching objective. In curriculum theory terms, the framing in the latest curriculum facilitates students’ criticality development in all subjects, whereas the framing in the older curriculum makes it significantly less possible in many subjects. As the more detailed new course syllabi are not yet available, let us consider how criticality is further interpreted at the subject level in the 2004 curriculum.

Bearing in mind that every teacher is a teacher of literacy and that many content area educators are still grappling with the inclusion of literacy development as an essential part of their respective subjects (Draper, 2002), we draw on the example of history to illustrate how language-in-education planning may impact on the realities of pedagogic practice across the curriculum. In upper-secondary school, history is a compulsory subject where criticality is referred to at the subject level. The language use in the history classroom is likely to be particularly interesting as teachers and students engage in building a legitimate picture of the national and international past, situating their country in the world context, negotiating and constructing a national identity. The policy constraints on what should be occurring in the history classroom are investigated here to consider what kinds of criticality might be promoted.

As with any other subject, history can be taken as a basic or advanced course. The course description in the curriculum consists of teaching objectives, an obligatory minimum content, and learning outcomes. In addition, there is a separate history syllabus for each course that states the total number of teaching hours, distributed amongst the prescribed topics, leaving about 14% of the teaching hours in reserve. The reserve is earmarked for the variable part of the syllabus ‘to adopt uniquely designed approaches, use various teaching forms and implement modern teaching methods and pedagogical technologies’ (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004a; [author’s translation]). At the basic level, the reserve is 10 hours per
year (Ibid.). In practice, these are often used to compensate for the lessons that are cancelled as a result of public holidays and/or frequent annual occasions when school is closed for quarantine due to high incidence of infectious diseases, for instance flu, among the students. The reality of these interruptions may well be a crucial condition preventing teachers from working with anything more than the obligatory minimum content, which is effectively a long list of topics that focuses on the knowledge to be acquired. Given that criticality is regarded as a skill in the curriculum, this might make it extraneous to the pedagogic practice. Further, a striking difference between the basic and advanced courses is that the former does not list criticality as a teaching objective but only as a learning outcome. According to the syllabus, an upper-secondary student should be able (1) to critically analyse the historical source for its authorship and aims, the time of creation and its circumstances; (2) to use the skills of historical analysis to critically perceive the social information in everyday life. At the advanced level, criticality is referred as a teaching objective, conceived as developing the ability to understand the historical context of current events and processes and critically analyse them to form an opinion on the world and to relate it to existing worldviews. In addition to the learning outcomes for the basic course, students are also supposed to critically consider the reliability of the source and critically understand the societal processes and situations (Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004c: 114, 128-129). It can be seen then, that the advanced syllabus indicates a more complex conception of criticality, which emphasises its application to contemporary phenomena, assessment of reliability of information, and a scaffolding role of criticality in shaping students’ worldviews. Provided that criticality is both a teaching objective and a learning outcome at the advanced level, this presupposes that considerable time should be devoted to its development in the history classroom. Nonetheless, similarly to the basic syllabus, most of teaching hours are already assigned to cover the prescribed topics of what appears to be a strongly knowledge-oriented curriculum (see Ministerstvo obrazovaniya RF, 2004b).

A further contributing factor to the framing of students’ criticality development in the history classroom is the structure of the unified state exam, which provides a bigger picture of the constraints on the pedagogic practice. Taking this exam is an admission requirement for those students who would like to pursue their academic careers in the socio-political field. The design of the exam gives a clear indication that only knowledge is to be tested, with the likely washback effect of moving criticality further down on the priority list for teachers and students.

The analysis of the formal curricula has revealed a contradiction between the aims of education and its structure in relation to Russian upper-secondary students’ literacy development in regard to criticality. Although criticality is stipulated as a teaching objective and learning outcome in at least some subjects, the framing factors of the 2004 knowledge-oriented curriculum such as time distribution, criticality conception as a skill, and ways of controlling the learning outcomes may hinder the potential for pedagogic practice to be rich in examples of criticality development. Many schools might find it necessary to allocate their local extra time resources to achieve this objective. However, how much time and effort would be devoted to this, if any at all given that schools’ accountability rests heavily upon the results of the state unified exams, might be entirely arbitrary. Some careful language-in-education
planning needs to be in place to facilitate the incorporation of literacy development in all subjects and to encourage content area teachers to engage in a quest for criticality.

Case 3: European foreign language policy and primary implementation

In this section we adopt a wider, regional perspective to explore the mechanisms developed by the current 28 member countries of the European Union (EU) to encourage convergences of language-in-education policy in the early (primary) phase of compulsory education.

In discussing questions of foreign languages in Europe it is important to recognise firstly that ideologies of language continue to be very evident in Europe today – a region where the concept of a national standard language has been employed to define and re-define the boundaries of kingdoms and nation states since the Middle Ages (Swaan, 2007: 3). Blommaert and Rampton (2011: 3) report on a growing body of research which draws on an ethnographic framework for evidence of changing ideologies of language, moving away from concepts of boundedness. They propose that named languages such as English or German are ‘ideological constructions historically tied to the emergence of the nation-state’ (op cit, 2011: 4); nonetheless, the ideology of boundedness has consistently gained a central position in much of European policy-making since the advent of an increased focus on languages introduced by the Lisbon Strategy (European Parliament, 2000).

The Lisbon Strategy established a goal for Europe of becoming ‘the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world’ (European Parliament, 2000: 5). Within this framework we can identify a step change in the transfer of policy between the member states, under the auspices of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). This procedure increasingly operated as a key governance strategy for the promotion of multilingualism as an essential tool for future economic success through the production of recommendations, opinions, reports, joint communications, statistical indicators and action plans, employing these tools of soft policy for influencing policy makers at national level. One of the first soft policy influences on languages in the first phase of schooling was the Action Plan 2004-6 Commission of the European Communities (2003) which recommended that ‘member states should move towards ensuring that foreign language learning at primary school is effective’ (Commission of the European Communities, 2003: 7). This was followed by a number of guides for language teacher education and language policy. In 2007 a new funding stream of 7 billion euros for language projects and research was established (Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13), confirming the increasing prioritisation of languages policy in the EU. Alongside this, statistical reports of the provision of languages in education have been published every three years (Eurydice Key Data Series, 2012) and, subsequently, the first European survey on language competencies. Surveylang. (European Commission, 2012). A common thread revealed by the indicators in these documents has been the increasingly earlier start to foreign languages (FLs) which has become almost the norm in Europe today. Eurydice Key Data Series (2012: 27) reports that, ‘(b)etween 1993/94 and 2010/11, only nine countries or regions within countries did not lower the starting age for the compulsory learning of a foreign language by all students’.
The production of this plethora of reports, indicators and recommendations has been achieved through a process of coordinated networking meetings, exchange of data, development of shared projects and other similar initiatives. Whilst such mechanisms cannot always hope to be of relevance to all countries, given the somewhat different constructions of national education systems, nonetheless there is evidence of convergence in some areas of education policy. In the following section we will discuss key findings from a study of early language learning in Europe (ELLiE 2006-10) as one example of how European funding has been employed in the development of networks, reports and indices which may contribute to increased convergence in language policy across Europe.

The ELLiE study was set up to explore the implementation of early FL learning across a range of European contexts. The transnational and longitudinal nature of the study allowed the research team to investigate what ordinary state primary schools could realistically achieve over time in various contexts, drawing on a study sample of 1400 children, their parents, teachers, and school principals. An initial scoping year was partially funded by the British Council, with a further three years of funding received from the European Commission (Lifelong Learning Programme, 2007-13). The conditions of the European research grant required the development of indicators to provide guidance on how to address ‘weaknesses in preschools and in obligatory education concerning acquisition of key competences’ (European Commission, 2006: 19). Here we draw on illustrative examples from the ELLiE study, representing four of the main decision areas in policy-making: start age and language choice decisions, teacher education provision and language aims.

**Start age and language choice**

Of the seven ELLiE country contexts, four had national policies requiring the introduction of the first FL from age six or seven (Italy, Spain, Croatia and Poland). England also planned to make the first FL compulsory from September 2014, whilst Sweden maintains a flexible policy, allowing schools to introduce the first FL at any point between six and ten years, with a requirement for a total number of teaching hours by the end of grade 4. Increasingly, Swedish schools are introducing the first FL from either grades 1 or 2. Interestingly, the Netherlands has the latest compulsory start age – ten years – however, in this context exposure to English outside the classroom has resulted in one of the highest levels of fluency in Europe.

Overwhelmingly, schools in each of the ELLiE countries (excepting England) have chosen to introduce English first. National policies however often offer a choice of languages. For example: Poland specifies that English, German, French or Russian may be taught in grades 1-3, but approximately 93% of schools choose English (ELLiE team, 2010). In the Swedish national curriculum the primary school syllabus talks of the three core subjects of Swedish, Maths and English, later listing modern languages for study from the age of twelve. This wording appears to position English as serving the function of a basic skill rather than a FL. In England, the choice is more difficult as many languages vie for positions of most value to native speakers of English. Finally, in 2014, a decision was taken to allow schools to freely choose which language should be introduced. Given the above evidence, it could now be argued that the goal of overcoming weaknesses in key competences by the introduction of an earlier start to FLs has simply led to more English, earlier, in many parts of Europe.
Teacher education provision

Evidence from the ELLiE study indicates that qualified teacher supply in FLs for this age group is inadequate in most countries. There is little agreement on the most appropriate teacher model for FLs for this age group. Countries, regions and individual schools are uncertain whether a specialist FL teacher (who may teach children from 6-12 years) is more appropriate, or a primary class teacher with additional expertise in teaching the FL to this age group. Consequently, pre-service courses differ in the priority given to FL fluency and methodology knowledge, whilst in-service courses are reportedly insufficiently available in many of the ELLiE countries. From the seven-country sample, only Croatia had made it a requirement that all primary teachers should attend regular in-service courses for teaching FLs. This finding partly reflects the different traditions of teacher education across Europe. However, it also provides evidence of the extent to which policy makers may or may not perceive an early start to FLs as an important priority within their broader education policy remit.

Language aims

Policy statements across the seven ELLiE countries are remarkably similar with regard to anticipated language outcomes. The six countries with full EU membership during the period of the ELLiE study drew on the framework of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to identify expected outcomes of A1, A1+ or A2 levels of language achievement. Croatia (an applicant country for EU membership at the time of the study) similarly referred to the A1 level, whilst also emphasising an age-appropriate view of language learning during the primary phase of schooling, identifying goals, ‘based on a multisensory and holistic approach and grounded in situation-based oral communication’ (Republika Hrvatska.Ministarstvo znanosti, obrazovanja i športa, 2010: 85).

Evidence from classrooms across the ELLiE country contexts indicated quite substantial variations in response to the stated language aims. Frequently, lesson observations revealed broader educational aims not focusing on language goals alone. Teacher interviews in England, Sweden and the Netherlands confirmed that there was little or no tradition of using commercially produced language courses with this age group in these countries, whilst in Spain, Italy, Poland and Croatia coursebooks were frequently used from Grade 1 or 2. Where coursebook-based lessons were conducted by a specialist language teacher a clear language focus was observable, whilst lessons conducted by a generalist primary teacher, drawing on a range of self-selected teaching materials, sometimes resulted in a more broadly educational approach to language teaching.

Linked to the above, the use of the CEFR descriptors as a reference for this age group has been questioned. Linguists have expressed concerns as to their appropriacy (Little 2007:651; Edelenbos et al, 2006: 65), arguing that they fail to capture the true nature of learning at this phase. Longitudinal evidence from the ELLiE study indicated the erratic, sometimes recursive and non-linear nature of children's language learning (Enever, forthcoming) – a feature that the CEFR descriptors is wholly unable to reflect. In this respect, then, the appeal of an incremental set of descriptors appears to have led to unquestioning convergence in
Europe, thus failing to provide well-informed, age-appropriate guidance on which teachers can base their curriculum planning.

The three central themes of language-in-education policy discussed here appear to have been nudged towards convergence with the tools of the OMC to varying extents. Changes in start age policy and language choice decisions have responded both to the influence of comparative data publication, reports from expert groups highlighting the potential benefits of early language learning and to a similar, widespread trend across Asia. Together, these factors have precipitated unprecedented reform of primary curricula throughout Europe. In similar fashion, national policy statements on expected language outcomes by the end of primary school are now very much in agreement throughout Europe. The CEFR has provided a convenient set of descriptors for arriving at this convergence, with little challenge to their appropriateness so far. Evidence from the ELLiE study suggests there remains much to be done in terms of in-service support for teachers in coping with this reform. It will require a substantial allocation of funding by individual nation states if this is to be addressed. In the current economic situation in many parts of Europe it seems unlikely that this will occur in the immediate future.

Discussion

The policy cases introduced in this chapter are illustrative of the diversity of the contemporary field of study. All three reflect patterns of change in language policies that can be found across the world today.

The debate over language status in a small island community is today affected by the growth of digital technologies and the heightened global interconnectivity that has resulted. In this changed world the societal benefits of maintaining a cohesive community through the vehicle of a shared tradition of language may no longer seem so relevant to some, as the advantages to be gained through membership of a globally powerful community, interacting through the vehicle of a widely spoken language. In this instance we can observe what Schattschneider (1960) described as ‘the mobilization of bias’ occurring as influential members of the local community promote ‘a set of predominant values, beliefs, rituals and institutional procedures (rules of the game) for the benefit of certain persons and groups at the expense of others (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 43). Further research will be needed to assess the exact dimensions of power that currently operate to limit SC as the medium of instruction to just the first two years of primary schooling in the Seychelles today.

The application of curriculum theory tools to policy documentation for the Russian upper-secondary school has revealed how language-in-education-planning may help shape the pedagogic practice. This, in turn, may affect development of a young person’s individual sense of identity in more or less desirable ways. Thus, we can again see how the rules of the game (Bachrach and Baratz, op. cit.) are played out in the formation of policy through the covert agenda setting that has allowed a particular selection of conceptions of criticality to be included in the curriculum and other conceptions to be excluded. Further research will be needed to evaluate the extent to which this policy documentation actually impacts on
classroom practices, learning outcomes and the shaping of young people’s understanding of concepts of criticality and its potential impact on their developing personal identities.

The study of the soft policy features of contemporary national education policy-making in EU member countries reflects a more three-dimensional view of power operating overtly, covertly and latently to control the political agenda, prevent certain issues being discussed and to legitimate particular policy choices over others (Lukes, 2005: 133). In the study of this phenomenon we see a step change in approaches to national language-in-education policy making which has become possible only as a result of the agreement of EU member countries to move beyond a purely economic union, aiming to learn from each other through the mechanisms of meetings, joint projects and expert advisory groups rather than formulating national policy in the isolation of national consultative bodies. In such a complex network of relationships it becomes increasingly difficult to identify where power lies and who is best placed to utilize such power. It is under such circumstances that the potential for the exercise of latent (invisible) power becomes more possible and we find the hegemony of dominant discourse operates to allow dissent and yet prevent, or at least limit, any real change in direction. So, for example, whilst the relevance of the CEFR descriptors for evaluating young children’s achievements in FL learning is quite widely questioned, various modified forms of these descriptors are now proving to be influential even beyond Europe. So it is that the OMC in Europe has facilitated the growth of supranational mechanisms that seem likely to further extend their spheres of influence globally, assuming EU member states are able to move forward from the current economic instabilities and find new ways of ensuring some degree of economic union.

Conclusions
The study of language policy inevitably brings the researcher into contact with ideologies of language within specific communities. Reaching an understanding of how a particular ideology contributes to the maintenance, stability and continuing evolution of language in the community is a vital part of the research process. We hope that in this chapter we have introduced some aspects of that process and inspired the reader to explore the field further and contribute new insights.

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Part II
Empirical Papers
This chapter describes a journey from a tentative teaching practice, via experience, through didactic wrestling with linguistic theory, back to a more conscious and qualified teaching practice. The chapter will be of interest to any teacher teaching pronunciation, and in particular to those who work in the field of Swedish as a second language. The terms first language and second language will henceforth be referred to as L1 and L2 respectively. It should also be noted that younger L2 learners often achieve a native-like pronunciation with very little or no instruction and that this chapter mainly draws on experiences and research based on adult learners. A quote from Bannert (1984:7) expresses a central issue in the chapter:

Many attempts have been made to improve pronunciation when learning a foreign language, and in these attempts linguistic correctness has been the guiding principle. It seems however, that hardly any consideration has been given to the native listener’s problems of understanding foreign accent.

In the late 1970s I was a young linguist student in need of extra money. I found extra work as a teacher of Swedish to adult immigrants. At the time many refugees from Chile populated the courses and soon there would be students coming from Iran and other parts of the world. I had some university credits in general linguistics and phonetics and felt rather comfortable with the theoretical part of the job but a bit anxious, or rather frightened to death, about facing a group of students. I was also a victim of a primitive perspective on learning, saying that “what you know explicitly, you can perform linguistically”, which led me to explain a lot to my students. I realized however that my students spoke (mostly) neither Swedish nor English and everything that was to be conveyed to the students had to be somehow illustrated by tables, pictures or by oral examples. Anyway, most of my students stayed patiently in the classroom and experiences could be accumulated. Moreover, due to my prior linguistic studies, my manager put me in charge of an evening course in Swedish pronunciation with adult intermediate/advanced students.

Against this background I will now focus on the teaching of pronunciation. My pronunciation teaching was at first a mixture of associating speech sounds with the correct letters of the alphabet and making the students understand how the shape of the tongue divided the pharyngeal and oral cavities into three main parts, giving resonance to specific parts of the complex sound wave of the voice, thus giving the specific timbre to each vowel sound. I realize that the latter teaching objective may explain a slight decline in the number of
students in the evening course. My teaching was more a matter of ‘advanced acoustics’ than useful communication skills.

I focused on correcting the students’ erroneous pronunciations of single words: vowel quality, consonant quality, reduced consonant clusters, stress patterns, length patterns in vowels and tonal word accents. I had no tools or plans when it came to phrases or sentences, and no idea as to the priority of one or other phonetic property. The job was interesting but I lacked a comprehensive grasp of the subject and a strategy for teaching a functional pronunciation. There was a strong focus on correcting small details that were assumed to be crucial to the degree of foreign accent with an implicit goal of eliminating the phonetic traces of the students’ L1. For some students it even became an explicit goal. One student, who was a native speaker of Swedish from Finland, told me at the beginning of the course that she wanted to get rid of her accent even though she spoke a dialect that most native speakers of Swedish perceive as beautiful and easier to understand than many other Swedish dialects.

A new book
In 1979 my manager handed me a book that – according to him – seemed to be relevant for the teaching of pronunciation and asked me to have a look at it. The title was Svensk prosodi i praktiken (Swedish Prosody in practice) (Kjellin 1978) and the message of the book can briefly be described as the prosody of a language (the intonation and speech rhythm) being a more important factor than separate sound segments for the reception of intelligible and listener friendly L2 pronunciation. Kjellin describes Swedish speech rhythm and intonation in a simplified and pedagogical way. For example, he illustrates and exaggerates the phonetic feature of segment duration by spelling a long sound – vowel or consonant – with 3-5 repetitions of one letter (in certain figures up to 22 repetitions). Everything is written in a non-academic language intended to appeal to both learners and teachers. I read the book and tried the method, following the instructions to the letter in the remainder of my evening class and I was overwhelmed. How could these people go from having a strong foreign accent to sounding near native within minutes? This chapter is an attempt to address this issue.

The potential of prosody
Since the focus on speech prosody, with few or no corrections of segmental errors, resulted in such a substantial improvement of my impression of most students’ pronunciation, I concluded that improved prosody contributed more to the overall impression of pronunciation than did corrected qualities of separate vowels and consonants. It is somehow logical, since prosody spans over longer sequences than vowels and consonants, and a prosodic approach is the only way to account for longer stretches of speech. However, it seemed that an improved rhythm and intonation could even mask segmental errors. Kjellin (ibid.) compared prosody to the carrier wave of radio or TV transmission; a superimposed structure that renders the speech a pattern that complies with the expectations of the receiving device, in this case the native listener.
One of Kjellin’s contributions was to summarize the rhythmical system of Swedish in the phrase: *All-la starr-ka staaa-velser måss-te vara långng-nga*, *(all strong syllables must be long)* (Kjellin, 1978: 28). Most readers might suspect that the quotation does not comply with normal spelling rules. The suspicion is correct and this deviation is significant. The word *all-la*, normally spelled *alla*, has one <l> too many and a hyphen between the second and the third <l> (letter within <> signifies a grapheme. This indicates extra length in the /l/ sound and it also marks the syllable boundary. It could be interpreted as the /l/-sound being very long, most of it belonging to the first syllable but then it continues and constitutes the onset of the second syllable. *Starr-ka* (strong/stressed) has double <rr> indicating that the /r/-sound is long but does not continue into the second syllable, the latter starting in a /kl/. *Staaa-velser* (syllables) tells us that /a/ is very long and that the total duration belongs to the first syllable. This can be compared to *all-la* where the /l/-sound has the same phonological length as /al/, but stretches over a syllable boundary. *Måss-te* (*must*) follows the pattern of *starr-ka* and *långng-nga* (*long*) follows the pattern of *all-la*. The phrase *all strong syllables must be long*, also reminds the reader/learner that the increased syllable length sometimes lies in the consonant and sometimes in the vowel. The unconventional spelling tells the reader that the long sounds are longer than expected. Many readers of different languages may have encountered double vowels and/or consonants, but probably not triple ones.

The phrase can be compared to various descriptions I had encountered earlier, both in text books for immigrants and during my studies of phonetics, that could be summarized as: Stressed syllables have either a long vowel followed by short consonant or a short vowel followed by a long consonant, long and short vowels differ in timbre and in writing a short vowel is often followed by double consonant. If we compare this with Kjellin’s phrase *All-la starr-ka*… we can speculate which one might be perceived by learners as more user-friendly.

In his short slogan Kjellin has ignored the spectral (timbre) differences between long and short vowel allophones, which in turn may indicate that he does not consider this feature very important. Whether it is or not, we know from e.g. Reuter (1982) who showed that the variety of Swedish spoken in Finland has minor or no such spectral differences between long and short vowel allophones. We also know that the spectral differences between long and short vowel allophones are manifested differently in different regions, and sometimes may even be non-existent. One of my own studies (Thorén 2003) also shows that, when testing native listeners’ perception of quantity categories, duration in vowels and consonants can overrule the spectral differences. One detail that made Kjellin’s method so successful probably relates to the merging of the quantity contrast with the signaling of stress. The complementary consonant length – short after long vowel and long after short vowel – has been known for centuries but almost totally neglected in pronunciation teaching. It has been shown by researchers such as Hadding-Koch & Abramson (1964) and Behne et al. (1998) that post-vocalic consonant duration alone cannot change the native listeners’ perception of the quantity category, but that it probably regulates the total length of stressed syllables.

What about intonation? Swedish has two categories of tonal word accents, generally known as accent 1 (acute) and accent 2 (grave). They are signaled mainly by the timing of pitch falls and rises in relation to the stressed syllable of the word. Kjellin’s book offers a set of rules for pitch movements and these were included in my first attempts to teach according to the
book. The pitch rules elegantly connected syllables, words and phrases and described for example, how a pitch fall could signal either accent 2 or utterance boundary. After some time spent developing my teaching according to temporal and tonal rules I found that the tonal patterns were harder for the immigrant students to master than the temporal features. I also found the pitch rules somewhat complicated and not always in agreement with my intuition. I also noticed that the students tended to overuse accent 2 if they learned it at all. Just to make things easier for me and for the students, I started to teach prosody leaving tonal patterns to be imitated according to each student's best ability. I found that I was just as pleased with the students' pronunciation when I taught rhythm only. After a few years and out of pure inspiration I wrote *Betoningshandboken* (Thorén 1988/1994) (*The handbook of Swedish stress patterns*) a thin booklet of 25 pages, that was basically a rewrite of Kjellin's rules for stress and length. A few years later I was able to attend a master's course in phonetics at Umeå University where I came across the doctoral thesis of Bruce (1977). He had investigated the tonal patterns of Swedish at much the same time as Kjellin had published his book and I found that Kjellin had defined too many pith rises. I also realized that cutting down on pitch rises was not enough to match Bruce's description. In order to describe pitch movements in Swedish it seems necessary to include four levels of prominence (stress): unstressed, secondary stress, accentuation and focus. In addition to this you have to deal with 4-5 different regional basic word-accent patterns. However, to handle the stress patterns and the quantity distinction (i.e. the speech rhythm), one needs only to distinguish unstressed syllables and words from stressed syllables and words, and to lengthen one segment in each stressed syllable. Language teachers and learners need robust descriptions and I was eager to find out more about my simplified temporal approach.

Learning more about what I was doing
In autumn 2001 I was accepted as a doctoral student at Stockholm University and given great freedom in what to investigate. My plan was to look deeper into the simplified prosodic model, evaluating it and hopefully find an explanation for the perceived success of 'rhythm only' as a strategy for teaching Swedish pronunciation. Kjellin's slogan *All-la starr-ka staavelser mäss-te vara långng-nga* (Kjellin 1978: 28) comprises two prosodic contrasts: stress (strong syllables) and quantity (long sounds). The word stress contrast, or the possibility of contrasting word stress patterns (a feature which also occurs in English in such words as ‘record-re’cord) is not explicitly present in the slogan, but nevertheless implied by the rule. The quantity contrast is not directly present in the slogan, but is implied by the urge to make the proper sounds very long. English is sometimes said to have a quantity contrast and sometimes not. It can however be illustrated by the contrasting words beat-bit, which, depending on the English variety, is manifested either mainly by duration or mainly by timbre in the vowel. Swedish quantity is mainly signaled by duration (Hadding-Koch & Abramson, 1964; Tranmüller & Bigestans, 1988; Behne et al. 1997; Thorén, 2003). The novel idea that Kjellin introduced was to combine two prosodic contrasts and give them a joint rule that would not focus on the possibility of contrasting meanings, but rather to give the utterance a proper rhythm by means of proper length allocation. If learners follow the rule for rhythm, or just imitate it properly, they will signal the proper stress and quantity pattern without knowing it, or without having to know it.
Through previous research (e.g. Fant & Kruckenberg 1994) and my own experiments during my PhD education I learned that both the stress- and the quantity contrasts depend on duration in sounds and syllables to a greater degree than what had previously been presented in textbooks. Stress was often described as signaled by intensity and tone (or just ‘stress’ presupposing that its manifestation would be obvious or trivial), and quantity was often described as signaled by vowel length and spectral (timbre) differences between long and short vowel allophone. Consonant length, for example, was an exotic and unfamiliar concept to many practitioners.

Furthermore I learned that Swedish dialects often differ in spectral and tonal features at the same time as they share the same temporal features. The realisation that, for example, vowel quality in long and short vowel allophones differs substantially between regional varieties while the temporal relations between long and short vowels and consonants are more similar over the speech community, including Finland-Swedish was an important new piece of evidence. The realisation and distribution of accent 1 and 2 is, as mentioned above, also a feature that differs across dialects while stress allocation and the compulsory lengthening of stressed syllables is present in all varieties. There are however remnants of short stressed syllables in certain parts of Dalarna (a province in mid-west Sweden), in South Sweden and in the variety of Swedish spoken in Finland.

The reader may consider that it was a clever move to combine stress and quantity in one rule, but we should ask whether we really know that these features are important for communication. Apart from anecdotal evidence about changed stress allocation, Bannert (1987) showed that a foreign accented utterance with distorted stress allocation was often misinterpreted by native Swedish listeners and then more accurately interpreted after the stress pattern had been corrected by means of speech synthesis. Gårding (1979:13) described what is assumed to happen when the native Swedish listener is confronted with a word that has a distorted stress pattern:

How about [ɕɔːlɛːrɛ] (instead of [ɕɛłɛːrə] ‘cellar’)? The word loses its identity. The listener searches for a similar word, i.e. a word with the same stress pattern, rummages around in the brain-lexicon, but finds no correspondence/equivalence. As you see (Gårding refers here to an illustrative table) it is supposed to mean källare ‘cellar’ (author’s translation, italic emphasis by original author).

At a later stage I read Jenkins (2002) and liked her ideas about a Lingua Franca Core, suggesting there are some phonetic features that are more crucial than others for promoting mutual intelligibility among the world’s millions of native and non-native speakers of English. I felt I was about to find features of Swedish pronunciation that were more or less independent of dialect and aiming at rendering foreign accented Swedish intelligible rather than erasing traces of the learners’ mother tongue. Swedish is not a world language like English, but the idea of core features is a relevant concept, since immigrants from China and Poland may live in northern, western or southern Sweden and can all benefit from learning linguistic features that are shared by all native Swedish varieties.
It should be noted however that the findings and simplifications concerning Swedish as a second language discussed here, are not automatically valid for other languages, or rather I know they might be valid for Norwegian and partly for Icelandic, while a language such as Chinese is substantially more dependent on correct tones. In contrast, American English is more dependent on vowel quality.

Conclusions and applications – back to the classroom

The discoveries, experiences and ideas I have presented above do not prove that the priority of stress and quantity – and the signalling of these contrasts mainly with duration – is superior to other choices of priority. However, we know they have made many teachers and learners more satisfied and – to my knowledge – there is no other coherent and consistent package of pronunciation rules and principles available. The principles presented here are in harmony with the state of the art in Swedish prosody and they have been an ‘ear-opener’ for many students and teachers. As long as we do not have clear evidence for other didactic positions, I conclude that the suggested teaching strategy is helpful to teachers and learners of Swedish as a second language. It may also provide a dialect independent base for all Swedish speaking regions in Sweden and in Finland and wherever Swedish is taught as a foreign language. Even though the strategies do not prescribe a ‘native-like pronunciation’, they provide a solid ground for further development.

The adult L2 students mentioned in the beginning of the chapter were given exaggerated versions of the sentences they practised, with durations ten times normal durations or more. The exaggerations seemed to be needed in order for the learners to lengthen vowels or consonants at all, and as students repeated the exaggerated utterances they often came out just right. My interpretation of this is that the exaggeration was needed in order to be noticeable for the learners at that particular moment. It is assumed that this will be gradually reduced as the students’ perceptions developed. Certainly it can be said that a lengthening of the teacher’s model utterance by five to ten times and then reduced to double length, rendered the learner’s utterances a perfect timing. Exaggerated durations to teach new phonological contrasts have also been tested successfully by Jamieson and Morosan (1986). As pointed out before, some features are regional and some are stable over the entire Swedish speaking community. I think it is hardly a coincidence that a number of prosodic features shared by the vast majority of Swedish regional accents have appealed to both teachers and students. Teachers, myself and others can exclaim: “Wow, they’re speaking Swedish!” I have also heard (directly from students and reported from colleagues) that many students ask: “Why didn’t anybody teach me this before?”

Another lesson I learned during this journey is that theoretical-phonological and phonetic-acoustic levels are at risk of being confused when they meet in the classroom. At the theoretical level, the Swedish quantity contrast is most often viewed as being primarily associated with the quantity of the vowel and less with the quantity of the complementary consonant, since its length is predictable from the preceding vowel length and thereby seen as redundant. Elert (1970) presents various views on the Swedish quantity contrast where either germination (doubling) of vowel or consonant, vowel length, consonant length, quality or
diphthongization in the vowel, or equal complementary vowel-consonant length is seen as distinctive. Sometimes teachers read or hear about vowel-oriented views and interpret redundant consonant length as less important or even non-existent. This is a confusion of phonological theories trying to mirror the linguistic intuition of native speakers with the needs of non-native learners of Swedish as a second language. The latter need more knowledge and practice with regard to how the target language actually sounds, irrespective of what features are regarded as primary, secondary or redundant. A proper Swedish speech rhythm requires that all stressed syllables are long and this in turn requires a complementary vowel-consonant length in actual speech.

References


Introduction
This chapter discusses the development of international students’ oral language skills in the Swedish classroom through authentic social interaction and the reduction of language anxiety. The learning context of this study relates to a Beginner’s, level II Swedish course. In the Swedish context this categorisation can be identified as approximately equivalent to an A2 level on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). The course is designed both for Erasmus exchange students and international Masters and PhD students at Umeå University. The students come from different countries, with different cultural and language backgrounds and varying language abilities. Some have previously studied on the Umeå University Beginner’s course level I whilst others may have studied Swedish at their home universities. Significantly, the final examination consists of both a written and oral test.

In order to address the needs of this varied intake during my lessons I have chosen to introduce an approach which aims to develop students’ communicative language skills by reporting and discussing recent newspaper articles. In this, I emphasize their potential for small group tasks in developing authentic social interaction. Examples of how interaction occurs are outlined in this chapter, together with a discussion of how this might contribute to reducing learners’ language anxiety. The reduction of language anxiety can be identified as valuable preparation for a final oral examination in which students need to feel secure if they are to cope comfortably with the added stress of an exam situation.

Theoretical background
Drawing on the work of Vygotsky (1978) it can be proposed that the act of language learning is an essentially social activity in which learners build their knowledge through the help and scaffolding from more knowledgeable peers or teachers. Interactions in language classrooms are important social activities for students through which they not only construct knowledge, but over time build confidence and establish their identity as competent language users. In this process Vygotsky argues that learners make progress with the help of others when supported adequately in operating within a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). He hypothesises that learners can be stretched beyond what they are able to do alone, so long as the extent to which they are stretched is well-judged to be within the reach of the learner. This he terms the ZPD.

In the context of this study interaction in the classroom refers to the conversations between teachers and students, as well as amongst the students themselves. Students’ participation
in interactions can help them enrich their linguistic resources and build their confidence to communicate with others in Swedish.

Of relevance also to this study is the theme of language anxiety. There has been a rich seam of research in this area. For example, Humphries (2011) conducted a study which provided evidence of how language anxiety may have a substantially negative impact on performance. The findings indicated that if students are worried about performing in the second language, their processing capacity for the second language tends to be greatly reduced, resulting in a severely negative impact on performance. Her findings indicated that production may suffer when students are nervous, making them less effective communicators as a result.

Linked to this, studies by Aida (1994); MacIntyre and Gardner (1991); Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986); Koch and Terrell (1991); and Price (1991) stress the importance of the teacher’s role and highlight what can be done to minimize language anxiety in the classroom, with the overall conclusion being that it is the responsibility of the instructor to find ways of achieving this. This conclusion is exemplified in the findings of a study by Price (1991) where she asked highly anxious students how language classes could be made less stressful. They suggested that it would be less intimidating if the instructor were more friendly and encouraging, rather than behaving as an authority figure. This reflects my own classroom experience, where students have said that they find it less stressful inside a language classroom if the teacher is more of a friend, addressing them with their first name and, of course, encouraging them. When this occurs their self-esteem is more likely to improve and their anxiety diminishes.

Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) lends further support to this argument in the findings of her study which indicate that many people find foreign language learning particularly stressful, especially in the classroom situation. Foreign language anxiety frequently shows up in testing situations. Students commonly report that they know a certain grammar point but forget it during a test or an oral exercise when many grammar points must be remembered and coordinated simultaneously. If the student realizes she/he is making preventable errors during the test, anxiety – and errors – may escalate. Test-anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. Test-anxious students often put unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure. In considering the nature of oral tests, it is pertinent to note that these may have the potential of provoking both test- and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students. From this finding Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) concludes that reducing stress by changing the context of foreign language learning is the more important and considerably more difficult task. However, when foreign language learning takes place in a formal educational setting where evaluation is inextricably tied to performance, anxiety is likely to continue to flourish. As teachers and researchers therefore we are faced with a considerable challenge in finding ways to reduce levels of anxiety to a point where the learner is able to demonstrate their competence within a relatively non-threatening environment.
The study - Oral examination procedures

The course discussed here, as described in the syllabus, includes an examination consisting of both a written and oral test. The oral examination is conducted by the students themselves choosing a topic to talk about for 10-15 minutes. They may use PowerPoint or transparencies to support their presentation. Students are expected to present their topic to the whole group, describing and explaining it fully and then being prepared to answer any questions from the listeners. Generally I encourage students to choose subjects that make them feel comfortable and secure in that they actually have their own knowledge of what is to be conveyed. This approach is supported by Lindberg (2005) who proposes that ‘It is easier to convey a well-known content that you have good knowledge about than a content that you feel unsure of’, (author’s translation). Already at the beginning of the semester / course, students will be given tips on topics that they can choose from and start preparing, for example: to talk about their home country, their hometown, their country’s traditions, a journey they have made, student exchanges in other countries, comparisons between Sweden and their home country, food and culture, the diversity of interests (sports, music, literature, writers, dance, animals), and other similar topics. Student outcomes for the course are evaluated by the teacher, based on the following syllabus requirement for this level: ‘To pass the course, students should be able to demonstrate the ability to read and understand short, simple newspaper articles, both orally and in writing and to summarize the main points of simple newspaper articles’. (Learning, Swedish for International Students, Beginners II, A2 level).

Assessment measures - A framework for reference

The above assessment procedures are much influenced by a European set of guidelines developed by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe, 2001). The Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) consists of various levels of descriptions to measure language skills in listening, writing, speaking and reading. The levels are described using the following categories: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. The aim of the Reference Framework was to provide a set of common reference points for all languages. The simplicity of these reference levels has proved popular, resulting in rapid adoption by many countries, both within Europe and beyond (version in Swedish is now available – see Skolverket, 2007). The following excerpt from the CEFR framework illustrates their influence on the assessment task design implemented at Umeå University in the course discussed here (Swedish for International Students, Beginners II, A2 level).

I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. I can use a number of phrases and sentences in a simple way to describe my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present and most recent job’ (p.26).

Developing oral language ability - Preparing for the test

A variety of approaches can be employed to effectively prepare students for the oral examination. In this paper, I focus on a procedure where students are asked to select and
report on a recent newspaper article once a week in small groups. In this task students have ample opportunities to practise their communicative language skills, whilst engaging in social interaction with others. Similarly, group members have the opportunity to interact by asking follow-up questions or adding their own comments. A further benefit to be gained from the task is that the selected articles are about Swedish society, providing opportunities for intercultural learning to occur incidentally.

In such classes student numbers can be quite large for the organisation of interactive tasks (approximately 20-25). Ensuring that students efficiently use the time in the classroom and providing opportunities for them to speak as much as possible, means that it will be important to divide the class into small groups of about 5 per group. Following a first round of article presentations in each group, new groups are arranged where they meet and present again to new participants. This procedure gives them an opportunity to orally present and re-present their article, thus feeling increasingly more secure in their presentation. By providing such small group opportunities to all participants they feel safer and more relaxed with each other so tend not to become blocked by the anxiety of speaking in front of relative strangers when presenting to the whole group. The importance of a safe and relaxed environment is confirmed by Liu & Hong (2010), Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), Choudhury (2005). In support of this claim Lindberg (2005, p 96) argues that, ‘It is easier to perform a task in a well-known informal setting than in an unfamiliar formal setting’. Lindberg also claims: ‘That many feel fear of speaking in front of a large group is well known. Additionally, speaking in a foreign language that you do not understand very well may be an almost insurmountable task’ (author’s translation), (p 97). At the end of the 12-week course, just before the final oral examination, all participants have reached the point where they know each other quite well and have gained substantially greater confidence in giving group presentations. This approach seems to prepare them well for the final exam presentation.

Classroom processes in the development of presentation skills

When students join the A2 class at the beginning of the semester initial phrases or ‘starter’ phrases are introduced as a preparation for the newspaper presentation tasks. These include such examples as: My article is about ... This article is about…. I’ll present an article ... The article I would like to present is about ... Students are also encouraged to prepare a glossary (Swedish/English) for the article they plan to present, giving some helpful further guidance for other team members in the group as they listen and understand. During the presentation the others in the group have the possibility of asking questions such as ‘What does that mean? What does this word mean? Can you repeat? I don’t understand? Why?’ Sometimes the words and structures of the articles are quite difficult to explain in Swedish and then it will be natural that they translate certain words and phrases into English (mostly International students have at least an intermediate level knowledge of English, often using it as a lingua franca). However, it is important that everyone in the group keeps up with what the articles are about so they can then comment on them and discuss the content. This motivation to understand and engage in commenting is often felt more strongly as the group members get to know one another better and behave supportively towards each other. Understandings are further supported if each group member brings copies of their article for the group to
look at during the presentation, enabling other team members to see the image and title / headings. Evidence over time has indicated that some articles may stimulate the thoughts of students, bringing comparisons with their own home countries in terms of perhaps - social structures, politics, social issues and other areas of society that may be organised similarly or differently. As they interact students practise both listening to others and making their own contribution to the discussion. Their vocabulary is noticeably extended every time they talk about new articles each week. Students also learn from each other and record new words and phrases during the presentation. My task as a teacher is to monitor the groups continuously, listening and helping with pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, as well as assisting with the understanding of the articles, where necessary.

Many researchers in recent years have emphasized the relationship between interaction and learning. Evidence indicates that students are encouraged to participate in speaking tasks and seem to find it easier to take part and interact in oral activities when they are organised in small groups (Young, 1990). Dobao (2014) compared pair work with small group work, finding that small group interaction resulted in noticeably more examples of L2 vocabulary learning than pair interaction. Long & Porter (1985, p 207) shed further light on this area of research, commenting that: ´There are at least five pedagogical arguments for the use of group work in second language (L2) learning. Their concern is the potential of group work for increasing the quantity of language practice opportunities, for improving the quality of student talk, for individualizing instruction, for creating a positive affective climate in the classroom, and for increasing student motivation´. As a teacher of these classes, I have observed that working in groups may often be more dynamic than pair work – there are more people to react within a group so the opportunities for discussion are considerably increased. The learners, who feel inhibited to say something in front of the class or the teacher, often find it much easier to express themselves in front of a small group of their peers.

The following section provides two illustrative examples from an article presentation in a small group which was recorded with 2 students (Example 1), together with one student that just came by to give some information during the recording. Example 2 is from a group of 3 students. All students in both examples are from Germany. Below is an excerpt from each of the recordings, with an English translation inserted for the non-Swedish speaking reader (shown in italics).

Example 1

\( S1=\text{student} \)
\( S2=\text{student} \)
\( T=\text{teacher} \)
\( (S3=\text{student, interacts for a short time}) \)

\( S1: \) Min artikel är från sista veckan...
\( (My \text{ article is from the latest/final week}) \)
\( T: \) Förra veckan.
\( (last \text{ week}) \)
Note:(Sista/Förra). These vocabulary items both mean ‘last’ in Swedish, but each may only used in specific and quite different contexts.

S1: Ja, förra veckan, och heter `Ikea öppnar om 2 år’. Den här artikeln handlar om Ikea här i Umeå och författaren berättar om att 100 butiker i gallerian på Ikea-området ska öppnas.

(Yes, last week and its called ‘IKEA opens in 2 years’. This article is about IKEA here in Umeå and the author says that around 100 shops in the mall at the IKEA site will open.)

S1: Gallerian kostar lika som Ike.
(The mall costs the same as IKEA)

T: Lika mycket som…
(just as much as)
S1: Ja, lika mycket som …
(Yes, just as much as)

S1: Jag tror det blir mellan nitton… nipton…. nittio hyresgäster?
(I think it will be between, nineteen… nineton…. ninety tenants?)

T: Ja, nittio!
(Yes, ninety!)

S1: … och hundra.
(…and one hundred)

S2: Det är otroligt många!
(It’s incredibly many!)

S1: Ja! Och man vet inte vilka affärer som ska öppnas men säkert är att Clas Ohlson och Willys ska flytta in där.

(Yes! And you don’t know what stores will be open in the mall but it is clear that, for example Willys and Clas Ohlson are two of the stores that will move into the mall.)

S2: Jaha!
(Really!)

S2: Kanske också små affärer och caféer?
(Maybe also small shops and cafés?)

S3 Comes into the room

S3: R har ringt mig för han vill komma hit och han har sagt att han är lite….?
(R has called me to say that he wants to come here and he has said that he will be a bit…hm…?)

T: Försenad?

S3: Ja, lite late.
(Yes, a bit late)

T: Lite försenad…

S3: Ja, lite försenad. Han ville att jag skulle säga att han är lite försenad.
(Yes, a bit late. He wanted me to tell you that he would be a bit late).

Commenting on the above dialogue, the selected sample presents evidence of authentic interaction between students and teacher occurring throughout, as students engage in understanding the article and getting access to some new local information. From the
perspective of language development, some error corrections of words/phrases occur during the presentation both through questions from the students as well as direct comments from the teacher. The students often repeat these corrected words and phrases, in an effort perhaps to commit them to memory. In one instance a student struggles to find the correct word: ‘Jag tror det blir mellan nitton..., nioton..., nittio hyresgäster?’ without giving up and asking for help. There are also a number of examples of peer authentic interactions throughout the dialogue, for example:

S2: Det är otroligt många!
St: Ja! Och man vet inte vilka affärer som ska öppnas men säkert är att Clas Ohlson och Willys ska flytta in där.

The example below is also an excerpt from a recording with three students.

Example 2
S1= student
S2=student
S3= student
T= teacher

S1: Artikelns berättar om en mötesplats för studenter utan alkohol. Emma berättar att hon är… haha…responsible?
(The article is about a meeting place for students without alcohol. Emma is …
[laughs nervously]… responsible?)
T: Ansvarig
St: Ja, hon är ansvarig för projektet och det ska fungera som en nattklubb och som ett nattöppet café.
(Yes, she is responsible for the project and it should work as a night club and as a late night café).
S1: De säger att det ska vara en klubb utan alkohol för de säger att det finns, … hur säger jag… behöv…?
(They say that it will be a club without alcohol because they say there is…… how do you say behöv…?)
T: Behov.
(Need)
St: Ja, behov av en mötesplats för studenter utan alkohol.
(Yes, a need for a venue without alcohol for students.)
S2 och S3: Det är jättebra!
(That’s great!)
St: Ja, det ska heta Vita Huset!
(Yes, it will be called the White House!)
S2: Vita Huset, haha?
(The White House [laughing]?)
St: Ja, haha, det är projektnamnet.
(Yes, [laughing] it’s the project name)
T: Bra, var kommer det att ligga?
(Good, where will it be?)
St: De vet inte än, det är en fråga som ….. eh… remains?
(They don’t know yet, it’s a question that …err… remains?)
T: Det är en fråga som återstår.
(It’s a question that remains)
St: Ja, det är en fråga som återstår.
(Yes, it’s a question that remains).
St: Det är en jättebra idé därför att om du vill dansa och du inte vill dansa 
…. drunk?
(It’s a great idea because if you want to dance and you don’t want to dance… drunk?)
T: Full.
(Drunk)
St: Ja, du vill inte dansa ..... among… människor som är fulla.
(Yes, you don’t want to dance among people who are drunk).
T: Bland människor.
(Among people).
St: Ja, bland människor som är fulla.
(Yes, among people who are drunk).
St: Jag älskar att dansa sin alcohol.
(I love to dance sin [Spanish word] alcohol)
T: Utan.
(Without)
St: Ja, haha, utan.
(Yes, [laughing], without).
S3: Måste klubben tjäna pengar?
(Does the club have to make money?)
St: De säger att de sökt pengar till finansieringen. Men … hur säger jag probably?
(They say that the organization has sought money for the funding. But…, how do you say probably?)
F: Förmodligen.
(Probably)
St: Ja, förmodligen måste de inte tjäna pengar.
(Yes, probably they don’t need to make money.)
St: Ja, och förmodligen blir platsen på Campus.
(Yes, and probably the place will be on the University campus.)

This example also shows the authentic interaction between the students and the teacher where the use of authentic fillers, corrections of words and the student asking for the correct words are much in evidence. Here, the student appears eager to learn unfamiliar words and tries repeatedly to use them correctly, for example:

St: Jag älskar att dansa sin alcohol.
T: Utan.
Throughout the interaction the atmosphere was very calm, safe and relaxed and there was much laughter and smiling between the group since they had come to know one another quite well over a period of some weeks. You could tell that they had a good time and enjoyed doing this exercise together.

Following the recording of article presentations I also took the opportunity to ask students their opinions about the fear of doing oral examination and what could reduce the level of anxiety. The following transcription provides some examples of their opinions, from our discussion, conducted in English.

St: In Germany it’s like a lot of people I know of are very, very afraid of the oral examinations and would do anything to prevent doing one because you never know what kind of person or professor you get who is sitting in front of you and asking the questions. If you are lucky you get a good one and then you have like a good experience and the next one is going to be good as well or might be good, but if it goes horribly wrong at the university the first time because the person is asking very, very complicated questions – well, it even helps if someone is smiling. I had a professor who talked to me and he was very friendly and throughout the oral examination he was smiling at me and that helped so much because it was like OK, I’m doing something right, I guess, so I could continue like that, but if someone is like a stone-faced and doesn’t do anything, how should you know that you are doing the right thing, and then you will get so intimidated. Because of the distance and the hierarchy that you know that they are above you, it can really, really intimidate you.

S2: Yes, It’s often that the older professors are the stricter, and more distanced they are of course. I prefer younger professors in their thirties. They are much nicer and much friendlier.

St: I was lucky because my first oral examination was with a professor and I was lucky enough that I said the right things so he had a good first impression of me and after that he was very helpful. If I had been very bad at that oral examination he would have had a very bad impression of me and that would be not so helpful so it’s really, really depending on the impressions, and that’s not right I think.

S3: Yes, the first impression is very, very important. There is one professor at our university and if the first impression with him, from his point of view, is not right then you will not be on the same wavelength and he won’t be as...
friendly to you as he is to other people. He is friendlier to older students than to the younger students in the lectures.

St: It helps a lot that the professors here in Sweden are addressing the students with their first name and are acting as a friend. Then you become much more relaxed in class. That is a nice feeling: Oh, the professor knows my name! It would never happen in Germany!

The above discussion reflects the findings of several researchers who highlight the importance of finding a way to achieve a non-threatening environment in the classroom, acknowledging that it is the instructor who is responsible for creating a less stressful context for foreign language learning. Where these students discuss the importance of appearing friendly and of lowering the distance and the barrier between professor and student, they stress the responsibility of the instructor for simulating an authentic interaction in the classroom and testing situation. Whilst this may often be a difficult simulation to achieve, where the student is operating with a quite low level of fluency in the foreign language, nonetheless, the skilled instructor can help to lower the barrier considerably by using such paralinguistic features as nodding, smiling and using fillers such as ‘mm’ ‘of course’ and ‘yes’ to help maintain the communicative flow.

Discussion
My observations indicate that the students become more comfortable in the classroom environment when they are given the opportunity to practice oral presentations during the semester so that when they take their final oral examination they do not feel particularly anxious, but appear both relaxed and secure. This incidental evidence is broadly confirmed in the follow-up discussion with students, above. It is interesting to note here that the recording of the article presentations was made at the end of the semester, and comparing these with the article presentations made at the beginning of the course, it seems that the students became more and more friendly and relaxed towards one another during the course. From experience, I have found it important to create opportunities for oral exercises in different groups right from the beginning of the course. Through this technique everyone gets to know one other and a good learning environment is quickly established, where everyone feels safe and dares to speak. This approach of making a good and safe learning environment is supported by several researchers such as, Lindberg (2005), Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), Choudhury (2005) and Liu & Huang (2010).

One possible difficulty in planning for such a student-led approach to preparing for oral presentations may be that sometimes some of the students have forgotten to prepare and bring an article to class. Occasionally students are also absent from the lesson and only a few of the student group actually attend, so there are no opportunities to reorganise the groups and repeat the presentations. One solution for the first difficulty where students have forgotten to complete the preparation of an article is to ask them to tell the group some personal news, for example: what they did last week or yesterday. With this procedure an interaction can occur, enabling others in the group to ask follow-up questions or add something to
the conversation. Most importantly, an authentic interaction will occur and all students are included in the activity. As Allwright (1984: 3) suggests: ‘…interaction is indeed the principal mechanism through which classroom learning is managed’ (…) ‘interaction is best seen as the key process whereby learning is managed, through the creation and exploitation of learning opportunities’. Another key contribution to effective teaching and learning is the strategy adopted by the teacher in creating time to act as a facilitator, walking around to all groups listening to each student in the group so that everyone feels that they are getting the support and help they need. Adopting this technique of individual monitoring brings the added advantage that the teacher is freed from the usual role of instructor-corrector-controller, allowing her/him to wander freely around the class and give more attention to students who need additional individual help.

Conclusion
Second language researchers and theorists have long been aware that anxiety is often associated with language learning. Anxiety has been a focus of research in foreign language education since the early 1970s. However, Liu & Huang (2010:1) say that ‘more research is called for in this area to determine how and to what extent foreign language anxiety and motivation interact with each other to affect language learning outcomes’. Linked to this proposal, Zgutowicz (2009) suggests that further investigation about learning and how to create a good learning climate for learning another language is an area for future consideration. Liu & Huang (2010: 7) also emphasize that ‘investigations in a variety of settings with students who have differing backgrounds are urgently needed to better understand the relationship between anxiety, motivation, and performance in the target language’.

As an educator it is important to acknowledge the existence of foreign language anxiety and try to make the learning context less stressful for the students. According to Liu & Huang (2010) it is necessary for language teachers as well as learners to try to find ways of reducing anxiety levels, since research has shown that anxiety has very negative consequences and affects students’ performance in the target language. Liu & Huang (2010:7) suggest that ‘Setting realistic and achievable goals, building a relaxing classroom environment (…), providing more chances to learners to use the language and encouraging (…) learners often (…), have been recommended to be effective in reducing anxiety levels’.

The example discussed in this chapter offers one procedure for letting students work in smaller groups so they get to know each other and reduce the anxiety as much as possible. Working in small groups and presenting an article brings the additional advantage of creating more opportunities to talk and interact with each other and practise for the oral examination.

Opportunities for learners to be actively involved in a linguistic interaction can valuably contribute to an increase in their own production. A challenge often faced by teachers is the difficulty of creating a relaxed environment in the classroom where students feel they can develop their learning of the foreign language without feeling anxious. Teachers must emphasize that it is okay to say things even if they are not said correctly and it is okay to guess
an unknown foreign language word. This could reduce the fear of negative evaluation and increase their self-esteem.

References


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THE GROUP AS A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING

Anita Malmqvist & Ingela Valfridsson

Introduction
Small group interactions in the foreign language classroom have been the subject of a growing body of research over the last ten years or so. For an overview see Storch (2013). A substantial portion of studies have been aimed at evaluating the merits of peer feedback in terms of promoting language development in general and the quality of written output in particular. Others have been focused on the nature of the interactions, on power relations and manifestations of identity, or on the effect of various types of grouping (e.g. Leeser, 2004). Yet another extensively studied area is the co-construction of knowledge, in particular as displayed in collaboratively produced learner texts (Malmqvist, 2005; Reinders, 2009). The present study explores the functions of group interactions in two different types of foreign language learning tasks. More specifically it compares how the same triads of students work on co-constructing a piece of text as well as providing feedback on individually produced output.

Background
Since the mid 1990s research on second and foreign language learning has benefited substantially from the inclusion of sociocultural theory into the epistemology (c.f. Ortega, 2012: 214). Based specifically on Vygotsky’s theories about mediation, i.e. that there is no direct link between the outer world and our cognitive processes, great interest has been taken in the role of talking about language in peer groups or between teacher and learners, thus using language as a mediating tool. The talking is also a means to co-construct knowledge with others before internalising it, making it your own. A third central concept in sociocultural learning theory is the zone of proximal development, the distance between what a learner is capable of on his own and what he manages with the help of a grown-up or a more capable peer. (See Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf, 2011)

The underlying concepts of sociocultural theory – mediation, internalising and zone of proximal development – are key elements in group work characterized by exploratory talk (Mercer, 1995: 104) and in other ways of collaborative work in student groups. These concepts also make a distinction between ‘thinking in the head’ and ‘thinking in talks’ (Säljö, 2000: 107) possible and meaningful.

Central to the collaborative dialogue, a “dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building” (Swain, 2000: 102), is verbalization. Through verbalisation thoughts are “objectified” and made “available for scrutiny” (Swain, 2000: 104). A prerequisite for successful dialogues or small group discussion is also that the participants are “focused on learning processes rather than performance.” (Storch, 2004: 475)
Situated in the theoretical framework of sociocultural theory and inspired particularly by the Vygotskian concept of the zone of proximal development, peer response in classroom settings is not new (Løkensgard Hoel, 2001: 11–12), but has attracted increased attention both in research and in pedagogy in recent years. Contrary to the traditional view of classroom writing as an individual, isolated activity, carried out by an isolated learner, receiving response from an expert teacher as the sole recipient of the text, the sociocultural or socio-interactive perspective conceptualises writing as an on-going dialogue between the writer, the text and its recipients. Thus, writing is part of an extended social context, where the text is constructed by writer and reader alike, who both have their specific functions within a jointly interpreted discourse. The response group, in this framework, forms a community of praxis and the dialogue in the group takes the form of a meaning-making and knowledge-constructing process. (Løkensgard Hoel, 2001: 17–20) Writing as a social activity means that we write not primarily to express ourselves, but to take part in dialogue with others. In the process of writing the text, certain conventions must be observed, so that “a temporarily shared social reality” (Rommetveit, 1974, cited in Løkensgard Hoel, 2001: 39) is created. The response sessions, in this view, can be seen as occasions for negotiating meaning, for clarifying, extending, and revising the text in order to secure this shared social reality.

In the literature various aspects of peer response have been evaluated. A number of studies focus on the impact of peer response on students’ revision behaviour and quality of writing. Tsui and Ng’s study (2000), inspired by conflicting views regarding the benefits of peer comments, found that although teacher comments were more favoured and induced more revisions than did peer comments, the latter still play a number of important roles in the process of writing. First, peer reviewing enhances a sense of audience. Second, reading peers’ writings helps raising awareness of the need to express one’s ideas in a clear, organised language. The third benefit is that peer response encourages collaborative learning as students have an opportunity to clarify and negotiate meaning and gain mutual support. Fourth, it fosters ownership of the text as learners can make their own decisions about incorporating their peers’ comments or not, contrary to their treatment of teacher comments.

The second claim made by Tsui and Ng is supported by for example Lundstrom and Baker (2009), who investigated, which of the two activities involved, giving or receiving feedback, is most beneficial to improving writing. After measuring seven writing aspects, global as well as local ones, they found that students who had been taught to give peer feedback improved their overall writing abilities more than students who were taught to receive feedback. Thus, it seems that by reviewing others’ writing, students learn to critically read and evaluate their own written products and make appropriate revisions. Similarly, Crinon and Marin (2010) in a study which involved French students in grades 4 and 5 writing explanatory texts, came to the conclusion that the students who adopted the role of tutor progressed the most as regards knowledge transformation and producing clear and coherent texts.

Group interactions, however, involve not only cognitive processes but also emotional aspects. As pointed out by Swain (2013), emotions cannot be ignored in understanding language learning nor in fact any learning. In a short sequence from a dictogloss task analysed from different perspectives she identifies how a number of emotions such as self-pride, admiration,
trust, frustration, or excitement are displayed, which together with cognitive processes are constituted in, and derived from, the dialogue. Emotional manifestations thus need to be considered when exploring the learning that takes place in small-group interactions.

Another issue, which may influence individuals’ readiness to accept their peers’ suggestions for improvement of individual products, is the degree of personal investment in the product. According to Norton and Toohey (2011) the notion of investment refers to learners’ variable desires to engage in social interactions and communities of practice they are involved in. Students may position themselves differently according to different contextual variables, for example type of activity, reflecting learners’ complex and changing identities. (Norton & Toohey, 2011: 420–421) In the present study the same triads of students are involved in two different problem-solving activities. This design facilitates a comparison of the participants’ varying degrees of investment in providing and taking up feedback when co-constructing a piece of text and providing comments on individually produced output respectively.

Aim and research questions
In the literature on small-group interactions in the language classroom there is some evidence that task type has an influence both on the quality and quantity of peer responses (e.g. Philp et al., 2010; Källkvist, 2013). Provided that peer response is conducive to learning, different tasks would have different impacts on learning. The aims of the present study are to find out, how group interactions differ according to the type of group activity participants are involved in and what implications this may have for participants’ development of skills in the foreign language. The study is guided by the following research questions:

- What linguistic and textual phenomena are discussed in the group interactions?
- In what way may the group members’ comments and competencies contribute to individual language development?

The present study

Participants
The study involves six students enrolled in a first semester university course in German as L3. Five are native speakers of Swedish and one speaks Finnish as L1 and Swedish as L2. All participants speak and English as L2. The students were all eligible for university level German studies in Sweden, having completed Secondary Education and taken German up to a minimum of Stage 3 in the Swedish Curriculum for Modern Languages, which roughly corresponds to A2 or B1:1 of the Common European Framework of Reference. These students worked together in permanent groups in all lessons concerning translation exercises and process oriented text production throughout the semester.
The groups, see table 1, were set up in the first week of the semester, when neither the students’ individual proficiency levels nor their language biographies were known. Thus, the grouping can be described as impressionistic. The students’ names are pseudonyms.

**Data collection and analysis**

In the text production course the students prepared individual drafts outside of class, trying to implement the characteristics of a specific text genre, and sent the drafts to their peer response group a few days before the lesson. In the peer response session they were required to give feedback on the other students’ text drafts using a response sheet (c.f. Løkensgard Hoel 2001: 215). In the two text types discussed in this paper – summary with comment and argumentative texts – there is no correct text version; the best solution is the most coherent and convincing text. This means a text can be structurally and argumentatively more or less successful. Linguistically, however, it can be assessed by correctness. Together these dimensions result in two scales: more successful–less successful and correct–incorrect.

The focus of the translation course is linguistic correctness, i.e. to find a correct and adequate way of expressing a given content. For the translation classes the students individually prepared a translation of the same short Swedish text at home. In their peer groups they were asked to discuss and agree on one joint version. In this case the structure and content were set, and the task was to transfer it to correct and idiomatic German. This means negotiation and argumentation were necessary when the individual solutions differed. For the translations the best solution is a text whose content corresponds to the original and which is linguistically correct. The two scales are thus correct–incorrect for both content and linguistic form.

All peer group discussions, lasting between 30 and 60 minutes, were audio recorded. Group 1 spoke mainly German, whereas Group 2 used Swedish. The recordings were subsequently transcribed using standard orthography but with some markers for pauses and oral language specifics.

In this study we have chosen to focus on two groups performing the same tasks. This allows for comparison between tasks as well as between groups. The different dimensions of comparison are indicated by the two-directional arrows in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Participants and tasks</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 1 (ABC)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 2 (KLM)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At this point it is important to inform the reader that the Swedish educational setting differs from that of many other countries in that students are trained from early on to work in groups and to share their products with peers.

Analysis of peer group discussions
In the following section four different characteristics of the peer group discussions are highlighted – the first two from discussions of translation tasks, and 3 and 4 from text production tasks.

The English translations of the excerpts are provided to enable readers who do not understand Swedish or German to follow the interactions and are not aimed at being expert translations.

1. Comparison facilitates noticing
In our first example, Kirsti, Lena and Michael are working on their joint translation. They always start by each reading their solution aloud. This verbalisation makes comparisons between different lexical and grammatical choices possible, which in many cases leads to one of them noticing an error in their own text. In Excerpt 1 Lena immediately admits that the auxiliary *ist* sounds much better than *hat* in this sentence.

**Excerpt 1**

K: Jag skrev *das auch renoviert worden ist*. [I wrote *das auch renoviert worden ist*.]
M: Jag också. [Me too.]
L: Jag skrev med *hat*, men *ist* låter ju mycket bättre. [I wrote with *hat*, but *ist* sounds much better.]

In the other group, with Anna, Bea and Carl, they also have different solutions, but they are less prepared to just accept a change. They often ask who has looked up an item in a dictionary, for instance in excerpt 2, where Bea and Carl have used a dative form (*ihm*) in the dependent infinite clause and not an accusative form as Anna correctly has (*ihn*). Anna tries to defend her choice referring to syntax, but Carl contests this by asking if she has looked it up.

**Excerpt 2**

B: *Jemanden droht auch ihm zu ermorden* ['Somebody(acc) threatens also him(dat) to murder.]
C: *Jemand droht ihm zu töten* ['Somebody(nom) threatens him(dat) to kill.]
A: *Jemand droht auch ihn zu ermorden. ihn oder ihm?* ['Somebody(nom) threatens also him(acc) to murder. *ihn* or *ihm*?]
C: *drohen* mit Dativ. [*drohen* with dative.]

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A: *jemanden ermorden*. Meiner Meinung nach muss man ... ja-a *ihn* wählen weil/ also das ist Akkusativobjekt zu *ermorden*, nicht zu *drohen*. *jemand droht ihm*, das könnte man sagen, aber *jemand ermordert jemandEN* ['somebody(acc) murder'. According to me you have to ... well, choose *ihn* because/ that is the accusative object to *ermorden*, not to *drohen*. *jemand droht ihm*, you could say that, but *jemand ermordert jemandEN*

C: Vielleicht, ja. Hast du es nachgeschlagen? [Maybe, yes. Have you looked it up?]

A: Ja. Nein, das ist mein Denken. [Yes, No, that’s my thinking.]

As Anna is the scribe in this group she is in a position to choose her suggestion for their joint text, even though it is based solely on her “thinking”.

2. Comparison promotes discussion
In other cases when the group members have presented different solutions they try to find the pros and cons with all of them before deciding on one of them, finding a compromise or creating something new. On the whole the joint translations are substantially more accurate than any of the individual texts. In excerpt 3 Kirsti, Lena and Michael present three different solutions:

Excerpt 3

K: *Man konnte nur das Tor von Entfernung betrachten*
M: *Das Tor konnte nur von fern gesehen werden*
L: *Jaha. Man konnte nur/ ja just, jag har bytt plats, den Torweg von weitem betrachten*

They then discuss what might be the best translation of *på avstånd* (‘from a distance’), the use of an active or passive clause and what main verb to use. Their joint translation shows traces of all three individual translations: *Man konnte nur das Tor von weitem betrachten.*

Occasionally, however, a group choose an erroneous form. In excerpt 4 Kirsti, Lena and Michael present three different varieties for forming a passive:

Excerpt 4

L: *die auf Soldaten streng bewachen wurden*
K: *die von Soldaten streng bewacht wurde*
M: *die streng bewachtet von Soldaten war*
After the students have read their individual translations aloud, the discussion sways back and forth between a collective focus on a specific item and individual thinking. Lena’s choice of preposition is quickly dismissed. Then Kirsti, the scribe in the group, brings up the difference in word order. She tries to establish the structure of the sentence and thereby manages to involve Michael in the discussion. Lena seems less interested and discovers that her finite verb does not agree with the subject. Kirsti supports this by saying that it must be _wurde_. Then there is a pause for a while. Lena breaks the silence by pointing out that _von_ governs the dative. Michael has apparently been concentrating on the word order and says that he would like to have “die von Soldaten streng bewacht wurde.” Kirsti on the other hand is more interested in the verb form at this point – should it be _bewacht_ or _bewachtet_. This is the start of a lengthy passage with long pauses intertwined with Kirsti’s verbalized efforts to find a rule or a pattern that would help her find the correct verb form. Once she has found a verb to compare with, she is so confident that she does not listen to Lena’s objections to the validity of this comparison:

*Excerpt 5*

"It must/ _bewachen_ – _bewacht_ – _bewachte_ – _hat_ bewach... tet. It’s just like _arbeiten, gearbeit-et_. I’m sure it’s _bewachtet_."

L: Men är det inte bara sånt som slutar på t och d så sånt som blir … ett sånt extra-e på? "But, isn’t that just things ending with t and d that get … an extra-e?"

K: Då är det ju ett sånt fall, väl? "Then it is a case like that, isn’t it?"

Kirsti’s translation was originally correct, but somehow she was lead astray by Michael’s choice of verb form. A more common case, however, is that one of the group members knows the explicit rule and is able to explain a grammatical feature so well, that others willingly accept that their suggestion was not correct. In *Excerpt 5* Anna, Bea and Carl discuss whether the nominative or the accusative is correct for the appositional word _Schutzengel_:

*Excerpt 6*

B: […] _bekommt Brinkmann einen Leibwächter, der Schutzengel, […]_

A: Ich habe: […] _bekommt Brinkmann einen Leibwächter, den Schutzengel, […]_

Anna is writing the beginning of the sentence and both Bea and Carl tell her what to write. When they get to the apposition, Bea notices the difference:
Excerpt 7

B: und ich habe ja der Schutzengel, der [and I’ve got der Schutzengel, der]
A: Ja, ich habe/ [Yes, I have/]
B: Du hast den Schutzengel. [You’ve got den Schutzengel.]

Carl intervenes with a question about the gender of Schutzengel. Both Anna and Bea know that it is a masculine noun, and Bea laughingly states a rule: “vielleicht eine Berufsbezeichnung” ['maybe a profession']. When Anna asks what she should write, Bea decides that the accusative is appropriate:

Excerpt 8

A: Schreibe ich jetzt den oder der?
B: Wir können ja den sagen, weil … bekommen.

Some observations on the translation task
In all these examples and excerpts from the group discussions it is obvious that the participants are all engaged in trying to find a correct German rendering of the original Swedish text. They discuss what is the most appropriate word choice and also syntactic and morphological issues. It is also obvious that the students listen carefully to the suggestions of their peers.

3. Feedback on local aspects is accepted with or without questioning
In excerpt 9 Kirsti, Lena and Michael discuss local aspects related to the grammar and vocabulary of Michael’s text, more specifically the plural of Kurs, where Lena expresses her insecurity and asks a direct question, to which Kirsti immediately produces an answer. Neither Michael nor Lena expresses doubts as to Kirsti’s solution.

Excerpt 9

L: Hmmm […] sen undrar jag här … i början här … jag vet inte om man kan göra så … es wird mehr und mehr Internetkursen und … kursen … är det -en? […] [I wonder here … in the beginning … I don’t know if you can do that … es wird mehr und mehr Internetkursen und … kursen … is it -en?]
K: -e, -e tror jag bara att det är. Tror du det också? [-e, I think it’s just -e. Do you think so, too?]
M: Ja, det kan jag gå me på. [Yes, I accept that].
Michael seems to trust Kirsti’s grammatical knowledge, as he accepts her suggestion immediately. Although she is convinced that she knows the answer, she downplays her confidence by asking Michael’s opinion. She might not want to sound too confident for fear of being considered arrogant or too focused on grammar. Lena is aware that grammar is not her expert field, she is not afraid of losing face by exposing her knowledge gaps and consequently does not hesitate to take advantage of Kirsti’s competence.

In excerpts 10 and 11 below, the second triad of students, Anna (A), Bea (B) and Carl (C) are involved in interactions about their individually produced texts. The task is to read two newspaper articles about camera surveillance in public places and to write a piece of text comparing content and structure as well as grammar and vocabulary, according to some guidelines provided by the teacher. In excerpt 10, Anna opens the interaction by suggesting some additions to Carl’s text. The group has decided to speak German, which is the target language in the course.

Excerpt 10

A: Ja […] solltest du vielleicht erklären was über die Texte f… für solche Personen, die die Texte nicht gelesen haben [Should you not explain about the texts … to people who have not read them]
C: Ja, worüber … eh … [Yes, what they are about]
B: Hmm.
A: Na … jetzt … jetzt weißt du, [Now you know]
C: Ja
A: dass alle können … alle die Texte kennen aber … man sollte vielleicht immer schreiben so … eh [that everybody can … knows the texts … maybe you should always write so …]
C: So man … irgendwo am Anfang… die zwei Texte hinaus Süddeutsche Zeitung [so you … somewhere at the beginning … the two texts from Süddeutsche Zeitung]
A: Ja, viel … vielleicht … sollten die … die Namen der Zeitungen hier am Anfang […] [Yes perhaps … the names of the papers here at the beginning]
C: Schon am Anfang ja [Already in the beginning, yes.]
A: und viel… auch … ich möchte die … die Namen der Schreiber haben […] du … eh … ja, wer … wer hat [and I would prefer … to have the names of the authors … who …]
B: das geschrieben [wrote it]
A: die … die Artikeln geschrieben … aber hier hast du ja gut … Süddeutsche Zeitung wann und alles stimmt DA … aber dann der Schreiber [wrote the articles … but here you have a good … Süddeutsche Zeitung when and where and everything is OK THERE … but then the author]
C: es genau [precisely]
Anna has read the instructions carefully and noticed that information about the source of the text is missing in the introductory passage. She draws Carl's attention to this and also explains that the addition is important for those who have not read the articles that the task is based on. Carl accepts Anna’s suggestion without questioning it. Anna further advises Carl to add the names of the authors of the articles to be compared and Bea contributes by completing the sentence with the correct verb form. Anna notices that in another passage all information is included and makes a positive remark on that. She takes the lead from the beginning and it is obvious that she is well prepared and confident that her suggestions are relevant for improving Carl’s draft. Bea is engaged in the interactions, tries to make a contribution and finally manages to do so. Carl does not display a need to position himself as the author of the text but is confident enough to suggest a suitable position for the information to be added.

In excerpt 11, the same group is providing feedback on Carl’s text but, as will become clear, the participants position themselves quite differently. This time Bea initiates the discussion and brings up a phrase which she regards as problematic because a preposition is missing. Anna supports Bea’s suggestion that the preposition nach must be added, whereas Carl at first expresses doubts but in the end, having asked explicitly if the two partners are both convinced, accepts and adds the preposition.

Excerpt 11

B: Also, ich habe eine Frage … also … die erste … eh … Stück … also der Textinhalt des Artikels von eh … SZ ist meiner Meinung NACH soll man … soll man nicht NACH einfügen? Oder kann man so schreiben? [I have a question … the content of the article from … is meiner Meinung NACH should you not include NACH? Or can you write it like that?]
A: Ja, ist … ist … meiner Meinung nach … ja [Yes it is … meiner Meinung nach … yes]
B: Ja. [Yes]
C: Seid ihr hundertprozent … sicher? [Are you a hundred percent … sure?]
B: Ja. [Yes]
C: OK, ja. [OK, yes]
B: meiner Meinung nach … also … according to my … so … ungefähr so
C: Ja? Ja wenn ihr sicher sind dann … [Yes? Yes if you are sure … ]
B: Ja [Yes]
C: Ja? … sicher SEID [Yes? … sicher SEID]

The reason that this time Carl is not prepared to accept the suggestion without questioning it, might be that it is initiated by Bea, to whom he does not seem to attribute the same high level of competence as to Anna. It is not until Anna has supported Bea’s opinion and Bea has assured him that they are absolutely positive about the necessity of including the preposition
and has even given an explanation that he accepts and adds nach. That he is concerned about correctness is displayed, when at the end he changes his erroneous verb form sind into the correct seid. At a later stage in the response session it is confirmed that the interactions have facilitated learning, as Carl, when the triad is discussing Bea’s text draft, spontaneously uses the phrase with the preposition nach:

C: Ja … und … nach meiner Meinung nimmst du auch die … die wichtige Themen … heraus … das wichtigste … [Yes … and … nach meiner Meinung you pick out the important themes].

4. Feedback on global aspects is a threat to ownership

The last section of this chapter presents an example of interactions on global aspects of individually produced output. Excerpt 12 involves Kirsti (K) and Lena (L) providing feedback on Michael’s (M) text, which presents arguments for and against campus studies vs. internet-based courses.

Excerpt 12

L: Det är litet så här att det hoppar … alltså … till exempel det här … borde ju stå med … det där … Det hör ju liitet samman. [The structure is not quite logical … so … for example this should go with … that … They belong together.]

M: Hmmer. Jag tror … jag vet inte … om jag vill flytta upp det där. [Hm … I think … I don’t know … if I want to move that up there]

L: […] sen det här … du skulle kunna flytta hela den här … för det har egentligen […] det här argumentet … har som egentligen ingenting med det här å göra. [and then this … you could move all of it … because really … this argument … hasn’t really got anything to do with this]

M: Så … kan man inte flytta det typ hit? [So … couldn’t I just put it here instead?]

L: […] det här skulle passa bättre på … här … för det här är ju verkligen en … ett minus […] Förstå du hur jag menar? Du skulle … [This would fit better … here … because this is really a … a minus. Do you understand what I mean? You should….]

M: I så fall … hellre att jag då … ändra den här litet mer. [In that case … I’d rather … change this a little more]

A closer look at the interactions reveals that it is the structure of the text that is being negotiated. In Lena’s opinion it is not coherent, the order of certain passages ought to be altered and some pieces of information should be rearranged. Michael is not prepared to accept Lena’s suggestions, makes counter-moves and in the end decides on a solution of his own. He seems to consider himself an expert on his own text, having invested considerable
personal capital into it. He obviously does not recognise Lena’s competence in this field. Still, Lena’s comments, which may at first have been perceived as a threat, force him to reflect on the text structure and gradually make him aware that it is not perfect and may need to be improved.

A comparison of excerpts 9 and 12, involving the same participants, shows how the group members position themselves quite differently in the interactions. As experts on textual vs. language aspects respectively, Lena and Kirsti make contributions accordingly. The two excerpts are examples of how the group members’ individual strengths and competencies may contribute to collective language development.

Some observations on the text production task
Common characteristics of excerpts 9–12 are that the participants all make contributions that at least partly reflect their respective competencies. They are confident in their role as response providers and take it seriously, they trust their peers but at the same time display varying degrees of scepticism and take up the response with a critical eye. The interactions focus on both local and global text levels. There is also evidence of individual language development, as in continuous text drafts, which because of space limitations cannot be included in the analysis. In addition, various types of uptake from the peer reviewing sessions can be identified.

Conclusions
The participants in the two groups in this study have all taken the sharing of text drafts and giving of response seriously. They are well prepared for the response sessions and take an active part in the discussions, thus taking responsibility for joint as well as individual products. All discussions are carried out in a respectful manner. The participants listen to each other and try to reach consensus in cases of difference in opinion.

There are, however, also a few differences between the groups. First of all as regards the choice of language. Whereas Group 1 uses Swedish, Group 2 has opted for German. Since all teaching is in German the decision for this language might be a matter of perceived status of the discussions. They can be seen as part of the teaching, or as something separate that is more linked to studying done outside the classroom. Also the students’ self-assessment of language competence might be a factor influencing the language choice.

Apart from perceived competence of oneself as well as of the others, also personality traits of the individual participants are important factors for the content and outcome of the group discussions. In Group 2 for instance, Carl seems to be particular about the descriptions and suggestions made by authorities. He often asks if the others have used a dictionary or a grammar book to find support for their claims.

As regards tasks both similarities and differences can be identified. Concerning the local text levels in both task types, i.e. vocabulary and grammar, the participants do not seem to perceive a need to maintain a feeling of ownership of their text thus managing to keep a
distance from themselves in their role as authors. This makes them largely accept their peers’ suggestions for improvements without questioning.

The text production task on the other hand requires a great deal of creativity, as the content is not given but must be individually produced. This may be the reason that suggestions for improvements on the global level are not accepted without questioning. The authors may perceive a need to defend the ownership of their text by not accepting their peers’ proposals for improving text structure. Apparently they are not prepared to attribute more expert competence to others than to themselves and the proposals seem to be perceived as threats.

The work in the groups involved comparison of text drafts, verbalisation of hypotheses, and respectful discussion of language phenomena. A general finding is that these components contributed to enhanced awareness of linguistic structures, of text genre characteristics and of the specific profile of one’s own competence as well as that of peers. Since awareness is seen as being beneficial to language learning (Svalberg 2007), also peer group discussions are important factors for learning.

In this small-scale study all participating students showed a willingness to co-operate and were on a comparable language proficiency level. If students show symptoms of social phobia, dislike group work or are too far apart in their language competence, the benefits of peer group sessions might be more limited.

References


READING AND THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Monica Egelström & Ulla Damber

Introduction
In this chapter we will use guidelines developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2012b) describing the responsibility of school to develop students' language and literacy competences as a starting point for a discussion of language and literacy education with a particular focus on students' reading development.

Literacy, in today's multi-literate and multilingual world, functions as a gatekeeper to participation in the society. Language and literacy are tools for communication, tools for learning, as well as fundamental elements of each individual's identity formation (Straw, 1990). Language, identity and culture may be seen as dynamic entities. In addition, the functions of literacy constitute cultural capital, which on an individual basis may reflect the relationship between knowledge and power (Heath and Street, 2008; Gee, 2001). In other words, language and literacy are crucial parts of the knowledge base that teachers are assigned to empower their students with during their school years. Such intentions are also clearly manifested in the policy documents for the Swedish compulsory school, which also highlight the fact that language and literacy develop within the realms of all school subjects and are by no means restricted to the Swedish language classroom.

A multitude of studies give evidence of the indisputable relationship between children's home background and students' language development and literacy outcomes at both group and individual levels (Frederickson and Petrides, 2008; Rutter and Maugham, 2002; Stanovich, 2000; Yang, 2003). Swedish studies indicate that the gap between different schools has increased in recent years, both in terms of results and the distribution of students with different socio-economic backgrounds (Myrberg and Rosén, 2006; Skolverket, 2009). Thus, the implementation of language and literacy education in school seems more important than ever. At the heart of this mission we find teachers and preschool teachers. Emergent literacy, when children start to discover the functions of print, get curious about books and start playing with sounds and written symbols, is a crucial phase of children's literacy development. Internationally the links between children's socio-economic background and their emergent literacy development have been observed (Hargrave and Sénéchal, 2000; Sénéchal and LeFevre, 2002). In Sweden however, thanks to language and literacy learning activities initiated by the preschool teachers, emergent literacy skills do not differ to the same extent as in countries where preschools are less common (Samuelsson et al., 2005). In other words, preschool and school have the potential to make a difference, something that will be exemplified and discussed below.

After the initial section, where some language and literacy aspects of education are discussed with reference to guidelines developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education
(Skolverket, 2012b), the emphasis in this chapter is on what preschool teachers and teachers can do in order to enhance children’s and student’s competences as listeners, communicators and readers. With respect both to cognitive theories of literacy learning and sociocultural perspectives on learning, we support the idea that oral activities and dialogues constitute platforms for meaning-making both in spoken and written language (McKeown, Beck and Blake, 2011). What then do teachers need to be aware of, if language and literacy development across the curriculum is the goal? We will discuss some possible answers to this question below, first in relation to preschool teachers’ work, then targeting elementary school teachers, middle school teachers and teachers in the later school years. By “middle school” we refer to grades 4 through 6, and “later school years” refer to lower and upper secondary school.

Curriculum
In the Swedish school context, language and literacy development traditionally has been a responsibility of the early school years and a responsibility for teachers of Swedish or Swedish as a second language (Skolverket, 2007; Fast, 2007). In Swedish contemporary society, the demands on communicative competence of its citizens, both in oral and written language, has increased radically during the second half of the 20th century (Skolverket, 2007). Further, communicative patterns have changed, moving towards an increased use of new media, making new demands of reading and writing competences (Selander and Kress, 2010). To meet these new challenges, a need for literacy education throughout students’ entire school careers and in all school subjects has increasingly been stressed (Heller and Greenleaf, 2007; Garbe et al., 2010). Cross-disciplinary approaches have also increasingly been emphasized in the Swedish National Curricula. New general guidelines for teachers have also been developed by the Swedish National Agency for Education, in order to underline the importance of language and literacy in all grades and all subjects in Swedish schools (Skolverket, 2012b). We will briefly look into some key points in these documents.

The aim of the guideline document (Skolverket, 2012b) is to clarify and underline language perspectives of education prescribed in different National Curricula (Skolverket, 2010a; Skolverket, 2010b; Skolverket, 2011; Skolverket, 2012a) throughout the entire Swedish school system, perhaps with particular emphasis on children and adolescents. The guidelines state the responsibility of Swedish schooling is to regard language as an essential part of all students’ learning. As a consequence of the relationship between the development of a child’s identity and her or his language development, the work with developing students’ language and literacy proficiency is to be carried out from pre-school throughout the entire school system. The guidelines describe oral and written language abilities as well as an intertwined relation between oral and written competencies as central to learning and identity development. Similarly the guidelines note the fact that for many students the completion of grade 9 in the compulsory school means the end of a student’s formal education concerning the development of her or his spoken and written language, since upper secondary school programs differ greatly in the amount of such education offered. In addition, not all students progress to upper secondary school. The guidelines therefore state that every teacher, regardless of where in the school system he or she might work, should aim at contributing to the student’s
language and literacy competence. The responsibility for this work rests on the individual teacher as well as on teams of teachers working together.

Of interest also is the relation between the subjects of Swedish/Swedish as a second language and other content area subjects described in the general guidelines (Skolverket, 2012b). Extensive responsibility is allocated to the Swedish/Swedish as a second language teacher to develop students’ basic communicative abilities in both oral and written language. This responsibility does not, however, imply that the subject area of Swedish also carries the full responsibility for dealing with specific content area language or texts from other school subjects. Since language and literacy abilities are described as both central tools and important content in students’ subject area development (Alvermann, 2002; Biancarosa and Snow, 2006), the guidelines prescribe that the development of students’ content area knowledge must not stop at learning subject specific facts. Students also need to develop knowledge of the content specific language as a means to build their understanding and communication competence specific to the subject. As texts can differ a lot between subjects, students also need education in meaning making in these specific contexts during their whole schooling. In order to fulfil this task, the guidelines state that teachers need to specify what language and literacy demands students meet in different subjects. Such work is described as collaborative work including teachers from different school subjects, preferably involving teachers of Swedish and Swedish as a second language.

The National curricula for pre-school, the compulsory school, and upper secondary school (Skolverket 2010a; Skolverket 2010b; Skolverket, 2011) state the obligation of Swedish schools to meet every child and youth at his or her individual level of language development, to adapt education to each child and student, and to develop students’ language and communicative competences. The teacher should, based on the individual’s actual knowledge and abilities, lead and stimulate the student to new knowledge and areas. To fulfil such goals the guiding document (Skolverket, 2012b) emphasizes the need for a communicative educational environment. Such a communicative setting is sometimes described as multi-voiced involving possibilities for all students’ participation in the educational context to express themselves, listen, and communicate (Dysthe, 1996). Through speaking, listening and dialogue about specific subject area content new knowledge construction is promoted according to the guiding documents. Students’ experiences and interests are described as important points of departure when planning and implementing courses.

Preschool
As mentioned in the introductory section, the preschool literacy environment and the activities undertaken in this environment have the potential to make a great difference for children’s starting point in their literacy explorations. In a five-year longitudinal study of emergent literacy, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) found that preschool children with early decoding skills and some letter knowledge often had been guided by an adult to focus on the language during shared book reading in the home. In a later study Sénéchal (2006) gave evidence of direct linkages between parents’ story book reading, children’s preschool vocabulary and the frequency of children’s reading for pleasure in middle school. In addition,
reading comprehension results in grade 4 could be indirectly linked to early storybook exposure.

What are the main aspects teachers at this stage have to be aware of in this literacy work? First, to create an early interest in reading is a major challenge for the preschool teachers. Read-alouds have an important function to let children encounter fiction which stimulates their interest in reading books. Second, language and literacy development may be positively affected by read-alouds. However, reading aloud is not enough, if the goal is to stimulate children’s vocabulary growth and linguistic awareness. Several previous studies indicate that the potential for language learning that read-alouds offer is not used (Beck and McKeown, 2001; McGee and Schickedanz, 2007; Meyer et al., 1994; Robbins and Ehri, 1994; Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998). In particular, the expansion of children’s vocabularies is an important part of the preschool teachers’ work. To meet this challenge adults need to direct activities towards vocabulary and invite children to use new words themselves, thus making words their own in new meaningful contexts, such as within the realms of thematic work. Furthermore, for effects on vocabulary, explicit vocabulary exercises can be linked to the reading activities (Hargrave and Sénéchal, 2000).

In a study of 39 preschool practices in the northern and southern parts of Sweden, the reading of children’s literature in preschool was explored (for details see Damber, 2012; Damber et al., 2013). Student preschool teachers and preschool teachers in in-service training carried out semi-structured observations during one week, and wrote narratives describing the observed week. Three researchers, employing researcher triangulation, analyzed the narratives and the statistics describing the results of the observations. Each researcher made individual analyses of the data, before joint analyses were performed. The results indicated that read-alouds most often occurred once a day in connection with meals and children’s rest. The read-alouds were seldom planned or embedded in a context. Books were randomly chosen. Follow-up activities occurred only on 27 per cent of the reading occasions. The conclusion was that read-alouds primarily had a disciplinary and not a didactic focus, as most of the reading occasions had the aim to create peace and quiet in connection with the so-called reading rest. In preschools with print rich environments, in which activities that take place in a meaningful context, for example within the realms of thematic work, the potential increases to enhance more far-reaching effects on children’s learning, encompassing literacy, language, and general knowledge (Fast, 2008).

Fortunately, the view of reading and writing as an intertwined process has trickled into many Swedish preschool practices, as children themselves tend to engage in (pre-) writing before they try to decipher the alphabetic code. For young children, drawing, playing and talking are all symbolic activities forming bridges to literacy (Dyson, 1997). Different marks on a paper represent children’s own experiences, feelings and ideas, in addition to enhancement of phonological awareness (Liberg, 1990). In other words, children’s explorations of printed matter, often in informal settings, make them detect resources for communication embedded in the use of script (McLane and McNamee, 1990). The principle that symbols convey meaning is, thus, explored at individual levels in accordance with each child’s knowledge and capacity. Together with language games, frequent well planned context embedded read-
alouds, and numerous affordances of explorations of the functions of print we maintain that Swedish preschools can create good conditions for children’s emergent literacy development (Samuelsson, et al., 2005). Thus a foundation for formal reading instruction is created, which will be described in the following section.

Early years
A majority of children arrive to the first day of school with great expectations. They are now going to enter the readers’ and writers’ society. As mentioned in the introductory section, different socio-economic background factors as well as different biological and cognitive resources and prerequisites may make the journey to ownership of the written language very hard for some children. However, teachers’ actions and ways they relate to their students may have great impact on the course of events (Frith, 1999). The importance of early interventions is well underpinned in earlier research (Hulme and Snowling, 2011; Stanovich, 2000; Wolff, 2011). However, the amount of reading plays a significant role in the development towards sight-word reading and fluency in reading (Vaessen and Blomert, 2010). When the enterprise of decoding poses problems and reading comprehension is weak, what should the teacher do in order to sustain the children’s interest in reading? An example of such an inclusive practice will be described below.

The aim of the study was to explore school classes with higher levels of achievement in reading comprehension than could be expected with regard to the students’ socio-economic background factors and their language background (Damber, 2009; Damber et al., 2012). Questions included how these classes differed in terms of teacher- and classroom-related factors, that is, factors, which are possible for teachers or schools to influence. Which attitudes towards reading and schooling would those students and teachers display? The data set included 94 overachieving and 94 underachieving classes with similar socio-economic background factors and similar percentages of second-language students were selected from a sample including all the 1092 grade three classes in Stockholm. These classes were then compared using statistical analyses of reading comprehension test results, teacher questionnaires and student questionnaires. Even though indirectly related factors, such as a positive classroom climate, frequent voluntary reading, the use of authentic literature and teachers long experience of teaching did characterize the overachieving classes, no differences between the two groups of classes were found regarding teachers’ choices of teaching methods, or their ways to stimulate reading. If it had not been for the fact that the teachers in the overachieving classes had longer teaching experience, it would have been possible to draw the conclusion that the teacher does not make much difference.

However, eight over-achieving multilingual classes were identified in schools located in a low-income, low-educated, multicultural suburban area. Since the role of the teacher was of particular interest, in-depth interviews were carried out with teachers active in those classes, in addition to the statistical data collection. The joint analyses of quantitative and qualitative data indicated that teachers’ ways of relating to their students emanated as an important feature in the high-achieving classes as the deficit discourse was replaced by future oriented
pedagogy characterized by aesthetic activities, dynamic assessment, strong framing, abundant reading of fiction and lots of writing (Damber, 2009).

These classrooms could be described as polyphonic environments where the children learnt to trust their own capacity to learn and their capacity as meaning-makers. Dialogues, role-playing, listening, writing and reading were inter-twined activities and children's literature played a major role both as a source of knowledge and as a source of interest. The students were part of a communicative context where their language learning as well as their reading and writing development was boosted.

Other key components were the library and the librarian. The library supplied new literature and literature relevant to thematic work carried out in the classrooms. The librarian started with “book talks” in preschool class and took an active part in the planning of the reading and writing activities. During vacations the library offered reading materials and the parents were encouraged by the teachers to bring their children regularly. No drop in reading levels during vacations was observed when the students’ reading comprehension levels were tested (Damber, 2009). The teachers managed to create a learning environment where learning for life took place, and not only learning for school. When the students were later interviewed about their school experiences many of the comments dwelt on the context of the learning activities. One girl described the classroom more like a work place than a classroom. She explained that the students realized that the activities were important and that what they did in the classroom would enable them to reach their goals also outside the classroom. The concept of authenticity is applicable, both regarding learning experiences, texts read, the reading experiences, the writing assignments and the relationship between the teacher and the students. Fiction replaced reading primers, letters were sent to real recipients, children's texts were read out loud to the class and discussed. One girl explained how the teachers inspired her when she was a young school girl:

Generally, I want to take in knowledge now. /…/ this hunger for reading and more knowledge… They [the teachers] inspired me when I was really young and I developed this love of…. of… school! /…/ It is mainly about inspiration. /…/ But students need that feeling that there is someone who believes in you!

In the last sentence of the quotation she links the well being in school with the conditions for success and the importance of teachers’ rejection of the deficit discourse.

Middle years and later years
Somewhere in grades 3–4 in Swedish compulsory school, education increasingly relies on texts, which include the use of more abstract language. Chall and Jacobs (2003) describe that reading seems to become an even more important factor in the development of knowledge in these grades. Chall (1996) also points out how reading development in these grades gradually shifts from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”. That is, the focus in the reading shifts from the more technical aspects of reading (like learning to decode, obtain a fluent reading etc.) to comprehension processes, like using vocabulary knowledge, prior knowledge and employing
different comprehension strategies to make meaning out of varied and increasingly more complex texts. In Chall’s study (1996), this shift caused more challenges for some students than for others. Chall describes how students from low socio-economic home backgrounds were able to follow normative peers’ development through grades two and three, but by grade four reading scores began to decline. Word meanings was the first and most obvious area to slip. Low-income students, for example, had more difficulties in defining academic and more uncommon words than a normative peer group. This phenomenon is named “The Fourth Grade Slump” which roughly indicates the grades in which the phenomenon begins to appear (Chall, 1996).

To meet a challenge of such the “Fourth Grade Slump” teachers’ engagement in students’ reading development in all subject areas and throughout the school system is described as necessary (Heller and Greenleaf, 2007; Garbe et al., 2010) and instruction in reading comprehension seems a particularly important focus (Calfee, 2009; Pearson, 2009). One way offered is explicit instruction on reading comprehension strategies (Wharton-McDonald, 2006). Since 1970s and 1980s cognitive psychology in the reading research area have tried to identify different cognitive and metacognitive strategies involved in the process of meaning making from text (Dole et.al., 2009). Cognitive strategies are here described as “mental routines or procedures for accomplishing cognitive goals like solving a problem, studying for test, or understanding what is being read” (Dole et.al., 2009: 348). Metacognitive processes refer to procedures to “monitor and assess their on-going performance in accomplishing a cognitive task” (ibid: 349). By, for instance, the study of skilled readers and their way of working with texts, a number of strategies have been found and described as important to apply here. For example skilled readers activate prior knowledge ahead of and during text reading, summarize and make predictions during reading, monitor comprehension and clarify unclear parts of text and structure information from text (Pressley, 2006; Guthrie, 2004).

Different instructional programs have been designed on the basis of research on reading strategies. Commonly those programs are grounded in a sociocultural approach out of Vygotskys theory of the social origin of human mind and cognitive development (Gavelek and Bresnahan, 2009, Vygotsky, 1978). Concepts like “Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)” (Vygotsky, 1978: 84) and learning in collaboration with a more knowledgeable other have been used to design programs providing both guidance to and practicing of different reading comprehension strategies. One of the earliest programs, perhaps a precursor for other similar models (Wharton-McDonald and Swiger, 2009), is Reciprocal Teaching (RT) (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). In this program four different reading strategies are taught to and practiced by students; predictions by activating prior knowledge related to text reading, questioning to monitor understanding of text, clarifying unclear or difficult parts of the text, and summarizing important information from the text. The strategies are processed one at a time through group discussions of texts. The teachers initially hold a leading role in small group discussions and model how to work with the strategy. Gradually, as students improve in employing the strategy, they take over the leading role in the discussions. This model has been found effective in developing students reading comprehension and strategy use by a number of intervention studies (e.g. Alfassi et al., 2009; Reichenberg, 2008; Sporer et al.,
Another model, partly similar to RT, is Concept Oriented Reading Comprehension (CORI) (Guthrie, 2004). A key component in CORI (as well as in RT) is a focus on the development of reading comprehension strategies. Five to six different reading strategies are processed such as activating students’ prior knowledge when reading, searching for information in text and organizing text graphically. One difference between RT and CORI is the CORI-model’s framing in subject area classroom contexts. The model is developed and studied by intervention studies (e.g. Guthrie et.al. 2009; Guthrie et.al. 2004) in later elementary grades to middle school years in science education classrooms. With adjustments the authors argue the model ought to be applicable to other subject area contexts as well. Another difference between RT and CORI is the emphasis in the CORI-model on motivational and engagement aspects to improve student’s reading comprehension. Guthrie and colleagues (2004) describe engagement as constituted by motivation and cognitive strategies and identified by students actively interacting with texts as opposed to passive reading and writing activities. Such engagement is regarded to correlate with achievements in reading comprehension (Guthrie et.al. 2004). To enhance reading engagement, instruction needs to be directed towards motivational aspects of reading as well as the strategy instruction previously described.

Four different motivational aspects are described in the CORI-model. First, instruction needs to be directed towards content goals, like understanding something more deeply or building new knowledge. The opposite, goals directed towards skills and performances, have been shown to be less effective in developing children’s knowledge (Guthrie, 2004). Second, since students’ involvement constitutes a central theme in this educational model, students need to be offered possibilities to choose what texts to read and what questions are formulated in response to the texts. Third, texts that are used must deal with topics that are interesting and appealing to students. At the same time they must be relevant to the area of study. This aspect underlines the importance of using a variety of text types in all subject areas of the curriculum, including fiction as well as non-fiction, and simple as well as more complex texts. Finally, motivation practices also mean promoting collaborative work in reading instruction. We emphasize the importance of taking student differences into consideration when planning collaborative activities, as different students might need different learning situations. The fundamental idea is that learning is a social act enhanced by a collaborative and communicative educational pattern, comparable to what Alvermann (2002: 201) calls “participatory approaches” in education.

Final discussion
As described throughout this chapter, the teacher plays a vital role in enhancing child and student language and literacy development. Some research even suggests that the teacher is crucial for the possibilities of children and students to develop their abilities and succeed in school (e.g. Flynt and Brozo, 2009; Hattie, 2009). Some concepts recur in the sections above, concepts like content focus, a supportive, interactive and communicative learning context
and students’ genuine interest in content as a driving force to literacy development, from preschool into the school years. For the teacher who wants his or her classroom to reflect the qualities indicated above, the issue of skills must not interfere with the holistic principle permeating the classroom practice. Evidently, skills practice is a daily activity, but skills are practiced within the framework of meaning-making. The teacher’s vital role in directing the focus of the activities and preparing the ground for communicative and inclusive classroom climate should not be underestimated.

It seems clear that it is most important for all teachers to regard language and literacy as a central didactic aspect of all education and in all subject areas (Alvermann, 2002; Heller and Greenleaf, 2007). Further, it is important that teachers do not consider language and literacy competences as developing automatically once a basic ability is developed. Rather, students’ active engagement in teacher guided activities is fundamental to many students’ possibilities of developing their language and literacy competences. It is also important that teachers utilize an inclusive approach to education, which means that students’ diverse backgrounds and experiences are used as a starting point for learning. In this chapter we advocate a polyphonic learning environment and participatory approach to literacy learning (Alvermann, 2002).

Language and literacy activities may, however, be regarded as a challenging task by teachers. Subject area teachers might not consider the development of students’ language and literacy abilities as their responsibility (Hall, 2005). Another challenge might lie in a lack of confidence among teachers of how to best include literacy aspects in different subjects (Garbe et al., 2010; Hall, 2005). One way of overcoming the hesitation among teachers might be on-going professional development of pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers (Hall, 2005). Intervention studies of reading instruction projects show promising results on teaching performance (Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Guthrie et al., 2004). Another way to develop teachers’ didactic skills and awareness is offered when literacy experts are educated, experts who engage in teacher collaboration as well as in student-oriented activities (IRA, 2006). In this way, inspiration and guidance for all the teachers at a school is conveniently available. Finally, an aspect found in school systems that perform well is that the teachers are given possibilities for cooperating and learning from each other (Barber and Mourshead, 2007). School practices are to a large extent influenced by teachers’ purposes of and reflections on their work (Schön, 1983; Alvermann et al., 1990). Enhancing teachers’ possibilities for cooperating, discussing and learning from each other are therefore central to promoting didactically well considered strategies and activities aiming at enhancing students’ language and literacy performance across the curriculum.

Teachers need to realize that the work with children and student language and literacy development is not just a matter of dealing with technical aspects of the learning processes. Which may be “the best” educational models or techniques must always be a matter of debate as varying contextual, as well as individual factors, may influence the choices teachers have to make. Since language is described as related to personal identity development and plays a salient role in learning, the awareness of the close linkages between language, literacy and identity is necessary (Alvermann, 2002; Flynt and Brozo, 2009; Skolverket, 2012b). Therefore, teachers must be able to build relationships with all their students in order to enable them
to actively participate in the process. The teacher needs to relate to the young individuals’ interests and experiences and show that they really care about the students’ development. In short – children and students need to be met with interest and respect to enhance language and literacy development.

In this chapter, studies employing different research methods have been referred to, in order to provide a picture of the teacher’s role. Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods studies and intervention studies are referred to. We are convinced that different research methods help to shed light on literacy education from different perspectives. No single method could by itself do justice to the broad spectrum of studies and approaches that the field of literacy offers. Therefore, we find it both valuable and important to relate to empirical work employing different methods. We welcome future research, where the classroom, the teacher and the class, as a group, are targeted by the use of mixed methods. If teachers are to develop an interest in new research, the complexity of the classroom, experienced by teachers in the every-day life, needs to be addressed and problematized.

References


I I

A GLIMPSE THROUGH THE KEYHOLE INTO TWO PRIMARY LITERACY CLASSROOMS

Carin Jonsson & Berit Lundgren

Introduction
With this particular article, two sub studies in two different classrooms’ practices in different schools focusing writing development, will be presented. One of the described and analysed classrooms concerns a grade 5 year group and the other a grade 6. The authors, Carin Jonsson and Berit Lundgren have collected data through observations of processes in the classrooms and interviews with teachers as well as with students. Jonsson and Lundgren have also collected students’ written products linked to specific themes.

Over the years as researchers we have observed how teachers plan their teaching, organizing space and time with the aim of scaffolding learning processes through cooperation and interactions among the students. We have also noted teachers’ variation of alternatives in the assessment of their own teaching process as well as the students learning processes in literacy and, more specifically, in writing (Jonsson 2010, 2012; Lundgren 2010, 2011b). Through the study of a range of classrooms over some years we have observed the variation of teaching practices in the subject area of Swedish regarding content, form and structure. These variations might depend on the challenges of teaching a heterogeneous student group including different cultures, social classes, gender and languages. In the curriculum no guidance is given about how to teach, only about what to teach. Therefore it is of importance to conceptualize teachers’ work about literacy in these classrooms. We view literacy competence as offering the possibility of being able to express oneself in writing and to develop one’s own knowledge and understanding, through the written word and with the help of multimodal texts. It is a pedagogical challenge to be able to meet and accompany the student on his or her path to critical awareness, enabling him/her to grow as a person and as member of society.

Conceptualizing critical literacy as care for the self stretches literacy educators in important ways. It forces us to rethink the multiple purposes of our literacy pedagogies and also re-theorizes the role of audience in composing in having opportunities for students to compose to a primary audience of one: themselves. (Morrell 2008, p 182)

The explanations above have implications for didactics and for a knowledge-theoretical position where language is treated as a foundation for thought and communication and a prerequisite for change and development (Jonsson 2012; Lundgren 2012, 2013). According to us it is difficult to find concrete wording in the curriculum that handles conceivable consequences of “taking account of” the students’ experiences from a critical literacy perspective where the teacher is expected to ‘walk the talk’ in terms of power.
The studies accounted for in this article are part of two larger research projects, where literacy practices, in schools as well as outside school, and the digitalization of children’s literacy development and teachers’ professional practices in literacy teaching are studied. Drawing from the theoretical frameworks a key assumption that underlies this article is that literacy development might be supported by feedback from the teacher. Another key assumption is that a communicative, reflective and critical perspective is useful for developing literacy.

The aim of this article is to describe and analyze how two teachers are working with writing in the literacy classroom in terms of power. The two studies presented in this article will be analyzed and discussed from a critical perspective using the concepts: access, design and de/re-construction as tools (Janks 2010).

Theoretical frame
The theoretical standpoint of this article has a sociocultural and textual mediation approach. Within this perspective, language is the root for learning and teaching where interaction and scaffolding between teacher and students are crucial to construct processes of cognitive development (Gibbons 2006; Janks 2010). Teaching and learning thus comprise a linguistic comprehension process with expectations, that are influenced and examined in each different school context with its values and norms of which the student is a part (Bourdieu 1977).

People have dispositions integrated in their thinking from earlier experiences (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Bourdieu 1977; Fairclough; 1989, 2001; Winch et.al, 2006; Barton, 2007). Those dispositions are forming and controlling the person’s actions and thinking. The dispositions also have an impact in the different social practices the person is involved in as the person is part of a social society (Bourdieu 1977). Experiences of teaching, learning and comprehension processes, which are focused on in this article, might generate social actions such as language and literacy actions, events and practices, which if they are conceptualized, can cross boundaries. They might be reformed and lead in new directions towards future possibilities (Dewey 1916/2004, 1938/1997; James 1906/ 2003; Martin 2009; Janks 2010). To understand actions and events, practices follow great challenges which can in some senses all be related to language and discourses (Luke, 1997; Fairclough 2001; Fairclough 2012).

Language competence, as a starting point to be able to deconstruct, reconstruct and communicate a content in a specific context, constitutes a theoretical foundation for both critical discourse analysis in general and critical literacy in particular (Fairclough 1992, 2003, 2012; Morrell 2008; Martin 2009; Janks 2010). The socio-political critical stance that is laid out here is based on the fact that discourses constitute non-neutral social politically and culturally loaded systems that contain both power and knowledge (Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Martin 2009; Janks 2010). Within the described standpoints above where language is dependent on and contextualized in the society three approaches to literacy will be described namely: critical literacy, multimodality and text genres.
Critical literacy

Within critical literacy there is an explicit interest in issues that concern how linguistic tools can be used to gain power to be able to conceptualize what the language is hiding. ‘Critical’ encompasses a shift from what is taken for granted to the underlying assumptions that influence and control our understanding and our actions (Morrell, 2008; Janks, 2010). Critical literacy involves multimodal and unconscious cultural conceptions and concerns both the power of language and the power to master the language: the relationships between the reader and the writer and text; ideas, values and attitudes. The concept of critical literacy includes an understanding of how text, context, medium, intention and action constitute intertwined parts of a whole situated practice (Kress 2000, 2003; Morrell, 2008; Janks 2010). With critical language competence and literacy competence it is possible for persons to create knowledge of the society they live in as norms, values and democratic principles (Freire 1970/1996; Dewey, 1916/2004).

Today’s information society brings with it multimodal transitions within different media that demand new knowledge and insights about text. In Janks’ (2010) opinion, Kress and van Leeuwen have helped us appreciate the significance of design from a critical perspective through the relationship between words and images as multimodal texts.

Janks’ (2010) starting points for critical literacy are concepts such as design, access, deconstruction, reconstruction and domination in order to emphasise the critical perspective of literacy. The concept of design challenges and examines established conceptions of what text is or can be. Access focuses on who is given access to linguistic usage and variation in both genres as discourses but also how access takes place. Deconstruction means that the teaching analyses the type of text and identifies typical linguistic characteristics and structures, while reconstruction refers to how the students can build their own texts. The term domination is used to describe those structures, often underlying ones, that show who is allowed to write, what type of language is used, what distinguishes a text, or what creates and distinguishes a prevailing custom in the classroom (Janks 2010). For example, design, without an understanding of domination might risk ending up in unconscious reproduction, stagnation and exclusion. This in turn leads to the attendant question ‘Who gets access?’ (Janks, 2010: 26).

Critical literacy in teaching contexts is in concrete terms a question of the student’s possibilities to perceive, dissect and examine meaning by constructing and deconstructing different types of text (Janks 2010). Furthermore, teaching from a critical literacy perspective endeavours to create opportunities for the students to detect dominant linguistic expressions and how these contribute to passing on different genres’ values and norms (Comber, 2001; Morrow & Torres, 2002; Janks, 2010; Lundgren, 2013a, b). With this, follows an expectation of a kind of teaching where the students have the opportunity to develop into participative, involved and conscious readers and writers. What is required is a teaching setting that both accepts and discusses issues of content, language and use of language from the perspective of both the individual and society. Teaching critical literacy requires a democratic setting where the teacher has the knowledge and ability to meet and handle the experiences and perceptions that the students already have (Freire, 1970/1996; Lindner et al, 2012; Lundgren, 2011a, 2013a).
Critical literacy and multimodality

Multimodality offers an understanding of text as a communicative event (Kress, 2000, 2003; Alba-Juez, 2009; Daley, 2003; Cope and Kalantzis, 2009). Events might be multimodal and from this it follows that the concept of text involves both what is said and why, and in what context something is communicated. Text as an expression of discourse refers to language as socially situated actions. Actions which in themselves are multimodal since they encompass several semiotic multimodal systems and express several functions at the same time (Kress, 2000, 2003; Liestøl, 2006; Unsworth, 2006; Jewitt, 2008; Alba-Juez, 2009). The focus in semiotics is on the product and the understanding and use of meaning-bearing and indicative signs and symbols. From a socio-semiotic perspective people are surrounded by a common system of transmitted messages which together make up a text that can be understood by those who recognise it (Kress 2000, 2003; Janks 2010). With knowledge and awareness of the semiotic resources or modalities, represented for example in textbooks or digital teaching materials, the visualisation of the additive and/or complementary effects of encounters with pictures and written text follows. A multimodal concept involves both pedagogical and aesthetic variations in and conditions for forms of production and communication in words and pictures. This refers partly to what medium is used and partly to conventions concerning meaning creation as a social action in speech, writing and the use of pictures. In this chapter combined linguistic actions are referred to, which, through their boundary-crossing use of resources, co-exist in the situation (Kress, 2003; Unsworth 2006; Jonsson 2012; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Hultin & Westman 2013). The entire text is interpreted by means of a subjectivity formed from understanding, knowledge and accessibility.

Critical literacy and text genres

The third concept underlying the paper is known as systemic functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 2004; Martin and Rose, 2007a, 2008; Martin, 2009), briefly introduced here. Distinctive features of SFL have similarities with the semiotic perspective focused on meaning-making resources. Thereby grammar is seen as a meaning-making resource and text as a semantic choice, embedded in a social constructed context.

SFL is also the foundation for genre-based literacy (Martin, 2009). Martin’s concepts for working with texts are similar to Janks (2010) concepts for critical literacy (see above). Martin points out the importance of understanding the context within the written text. Thereafter follows a deconstruction of the written text: to analyse the content and the language, to be able to write a joint construction of a text in the same genre for example between students in a class. Finally the students are able to write an independent construction of a text. Martin takes a critical perspective as a starting point for deconstructing a text with focus on the language use. It is important that students can detect the structure of a particular genre to be able to write a specific text of their own (Gibbons 2006). Knowledge of these structures, however, is not sufficient alone; the student also needs knowledge and insight referring to the content, purpose and typical linguistic traits of a genre (Geijerstam, 2009; Holmberg, 2010). Students need to know what words and concepts are appropriate and how they function in different genres. Through students’ need to understand and to gain access to the text, they have to formulate and answer questions such as: Who has written the text? What is
the dominant perspective? How do I challenge structures of power? A critical perspective is necessary for achieving this (Martin, 2009; Janks, 2010).

The Swedish curriculum

With a demand for everyone’s right to a language, in a Swedish school context, at system level, distinct teaching settings based on linguistic encounters and dialogue are advocated in order to be able to work profitably towards a society characterised by humanism (Swedish Government Official Report, 2002: 58). In the National Curriculum requirements are more or less expressed that the students shall be offered schooling that takes into account their abilities, interests and personalities (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2011; Anderberg, 2009; Johansson and Sandell Ring, 2010; Heilä-Ylikallio, 2010; Damber, 2012; Jonsson, 2012; Lundgren, 2012). The general guidelines in the Swedish school curricula say that students should be able to keep their bearings in a complex reality, where there is a vast flow of information and where the rate of change is rapid (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011: 9-10). The students must also be able to see and understand their own reality in a global context. Many issues that are taken up in school are attributed an ethical dimension that should ‘permeate schooling in order to provide a foundation and support pupils in developing their ability to form personal standpoints’ (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011: 9-10). The curriculum for Swedish in compulsory schools begin with an introductory paragraph describing the subject and its usefulness. Thus, the structure of all compulsory school curricula is as follows: Rationale and aim of the subject, Core content and Required knowledge (The Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011). In the core content section, the subject’s distinguishing characteristics are emphasised alongside all the teaching elements to be taken up. The stated purpose of Swedish as a native language for years 1-9 is for the teaching to result in students being able to express themselves, adapt their language to different aims, recipients and contexts, distinguish linguistic structures and to evaluate information from different sources (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2011: 222-223). The aims also propose that students, through the teacher’s teaching (indicating transmission), shall be given opportunities to develop knowledge of how they can formulate their own opinions and thoughts in different types of texts. The teaching shall also aim to help students develop their ability to create and process texts individually and together with others (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2011: 222).

The core content is described in three blocks of three school years each. For years 4-6, for example, the teaching should cover the structure of the language and various strategies for writing different kinds of text (genres), which is intended to help students understand the message a text conveys. Teaching must also emphasise the fact that different kinds of text (genres) have specific linguistic characteristics and a typical construction. In the Swedish syllabus, the core content also consists of ‘Texts which combine words, pictures and sounds, such as web content /…/ textual content, structure and typical language features’ (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2011: 225).

Required knowledge at the end of year 6 includes an expectation that all students shall be able to give both an oral and a written account of the content of a text. They should be able to give
and receive instructions and ask questions. They should be able to read, relate and formulate their own descriptive, argumentative and instructional texts.

Critical literacy in two classrooms
Both of the classrooms in focus here are summarized in this section. Study 1 is placed in a Swedish grade 5 class during a Swedish lesson. Data has been collected through observations and written texts, including planning and comments from the teacher and students on their own written work. Data for study 2 has been collected through observations and students written texts in one Swedish grade 6 class during the Swedish as a mother tongue lesson. The prerequisites for classroom 1 are briefly described here. In classroom 1 the students were asked to write individual factual texts on a subject of their choice using the computer as a tool. The task encompassed the subjects of Swedish (mother tongue) and Art. Information searches were made using both printed and web-based sources. The school librarian assisted the students by suggesting suitable search paths for both text and pictures. The writing project took place over a period of four months.

The teacher’s aims and goals were for the students to learn how information texts in different topics are presented. The crucial point here is that the goals, set by the teacher, involved using the content as a tool to understand the structure of an information text. The students were expected to practice writing and understanding the genre, among other things by means of clues such as sub-headings, paragraphs, pictures and diagrams for example. They were also expected to practice searching for and maintaining a critical attitude to information from printed sources and the Internet. To avoid copying sources verbatim the students were required to word their texts using their own key words and points. Finally, the information texts were completed with a front cover including the title and name of the author, together with a summative list of sources. The text was presented orally using a large-screen projector and subsequently reworked according to the student's peer responses and suggestions before printing of the final document. The text was required to contain one or more pictures inserted digitally by the student. There were no restrictions on what artwork to include, other than that the students were to search for pictures using permitted links. Clip Art was particularly recommended. During the presentation, authors had to explain why they chose their particular subject and describe any difficulties they had in finding material, also clarifying which search paths they had used. The class audience for their part were asked to give a general response regarding reading value taking subject and clarity into account.

In classroom 2 the teacher planned the lessons using the National Curriculum as a guide (The Swedish National Agency for Education 2011). The aims and goals of the lessons in classroom 2 were for the teaching to facilitate students’ learning of written argument through writing a letter to a newspaper editor. The teacher introduced the new theme area since the students had not worked with this kind of text before and she distributed the outline plan. It became evident, however, that students had read letters to the editor in young people’s magazines outside school. The students’ suggestions as to why people write to newspapers varied between complaining, praising and stating an opinion, and what they thought people
often wrote about. The following topics were suggested: buildings, nature, rats, rubbish and crows, and sport.

A letter to an editor can be identified as a critical text, given that the students were supposed to write their opinion and argue for it. Therefore the teacher gave explicit instructions on the white board complemented with examples from newspapers about how a letter to the editor must be structured. The students were to ‘describe the problem/praise/opinion’ as clearly as they could under the opinion item. Under argument the students were to write about why they held particular opinions and make the purpose clear. Additionally, a solution to the problem was to be suggested, in particular if the letter were a letter of complaint it was to be concluded with ‘a little twist’ as a summary of their opinion. The points that characterise a letter to the editor created a model for the students writing. The students were also instructed to think about spelling, sentence construction and paragraphs but no teaching around the topics was done. In interaction with the students, the teacher explained and defined some of the important concepts that characterise a letter to the editor, for example publish, representative, opinion, anonymous and respond.

The final product, the students’ letter to an editor with a free choice of topic, was for the most part fairly short, consisting of fewer than 90 words and the content was situated in the local community. All the texts had a heading, an opinion and a signature.

Reflections and considerations
The aim of this paper is to describe and analyse teaching within the subject area of Swedish (mother tongue) in two classes. In this section a summary and reflection of the results for the presented classrooms’ activities will be developed, relating these to aspects of access, design, deconstruction and reconstruction.

The two studies indicate that the students in each classroom, in the specific school contexts, seem to be able to handle and follow the classroom routines, attitudes and collective norms that the teacher has built up over time through continuity, with different literacy events such as writing content area and argumentative texts. The fact that project 1 involves keyboard word-processing as the tool and project 2 includes writing with a pen as the tool may be considered insignificant here. The studies also show that the teachers’ aims and goals with their teaching have a direct underpinning in the curriculum through their written plans for the classes. Additionally, dialogues going on in the classrooms confirm the teachers’ intention to relate the tasks to values and communication goals stated in the curriculum. There are examples of teachers’ placing weight on social responsibility and on developing students’ ability to communicate with each other. The teachers’ comments regarding the students’ texts have references to the plan for teaching genre or factual texts. The comments partly pay attention to the individual student’s understanding and ability to work independently and partly to the content in the texts and its special design.

The results show that with a free choice of topics in combination with the design of the task, both problems and opportunities arise. Free choice of topics means that the students
must be able to work independently, see structures, use language adequately and use previous experiences. The students are offered the potential power to choose what they want to investigate and write about, but this also includes limitations that have to do with the student’s previous experiences, interests and knowledge. However, students show that they are to a very great extent able to choose a topic and to some degree adapt the content of the text taking the construction and linguistic characteristics of the particular type of text into account.

Limitations in the above described praxis can be expressed in terms of students’ lack of access, reconstruction and design. It is thus not the content per se that leads to what has to be paid attention to in the text. From the studies presented here it is evident that issues concerning access, reconstruction and design of factual texts have to be explicitly taught according to the content (Hajer, Maaike and Meestringa Theun, 2010). With the task comes a multimodal, cross-boundary text and subject effort that places complex demands on both teacher and students.

A focus on the semiotic resources or modalities represented in the factual texts in classroom 1 reveals that students seek and find complex and aesthetic variations, and conditions for production and communication in words and pictures. Here, compound linguistic actions are staged that co-exist through their boundary-crossing design and are formed by the individual student’s understanding, knowledge and ability (Kress, 2000, 2003; Janks, 2010). What also can be seen in classroom 1 is that the students are partly responsible for carrying out their own task and partly responsible for how classmates’ efforts are received, primarily during the presentations of the finished texts. Classroom 1 shows that the students have a definite interest in design and image management. At the same time, they lack words and concepts to talk about and meet a picture’s expression and ‘language’. It appears that the teacher’s aim when inserting pictures into the written text is principally concerned with the use of technology and tools rather than the picture itself as an expression and as content.

With a focus on genre in the analysis of classroom 2 data, the introductory dialogue between teacher and students concerns a letter to an editor and the students’ engagement in groupwork, reading letters together. This task creates a situation-bound language, linked to both the reading of a letter to the editor and the students’ own experiences of this in their social lives outside school (Gibbons, 2006). In classroom 2, all activities and explicit instructions about how to write a letter to the editor aim to enable the students understand the function of the genre. When the teacher asks what a letter to an editor might contain and what the letter’s purpose might be, she is drawing on students’ diverse knowledge to relate this to the topic to be studied (Janks, 2010). The teacher thereby takes the students’ understanding as her starting point, activating this through an everyday practice and then leading the students from here into the school’s concept system (Barton, 2007). Reading letters to the editor in a journal for teenagers aims also to build the school task on the students’ pre-understanding and everyday language. In this process it could be said that the teacher deconstructs the what and the why of the letters to the editor. The students are also given support to help them understand the nature of a letter to an editor and to become aware of the specific terminology it uses to create structure (Gibbons, 2006; Hajer and Meestringa, 2009). Significantly, the importance of
specific language use for an argumentative text is not taught and thereby the students may fail to get access to the form of an argumentative text or to have the possibility of reconstructing a text.

By applying a critical literacy perspective to the analysis of both classrooms it becomes clear that a critical understanding of the relationship between text, context, teachers’ intentions and actions, as well as the students’ actions, presupposes that both teachers and students can understand and handle the consequences of access, design and de-/re-construction. But it is unclear in these tasks whether the students have enough content knowledge to get full access. This question constitutes a demand for a mutual literacy setting where both teachers and students are involved in developing themselves as critical multimodal readers and writers. A critical literacy perspective, in terms of reading and writing multimodal texts, establishes the fact that both words and pictures in themselves contain modelled, interpretable and conveyed meanings according to Janks (2010). The curriculum’s wording contains few structural prerequisites and opportunities for critical literacy teaching where the student learns how to be able to critically understand, function in and reconstruct a society where the context and multimodal text create the power of language. With particular reference to the concepts of access, reconstruction and design, the classroom evidence seems in fact to contain implications for the further development of teaching and learning practice. The results first and foremost constitute a potential basis for continuation, both for the teacher’s and the students’ learning about the complexity and design of multimodal texts and genre. However, in handling this potential there is a critical need for an appropriate meta-language in order to use, explore and discuss the co-articulation of verbal and visual texts in practical pedagogy, in classroom contexts. The teachers emphasise important building blocks for the students to be able to complete the task. It is evident that explicit teaching offers the possibility of both giving students a meta-language for talking together about design and genre and unpacks (deconstructs) a model for writing, thus opening up the potential for understanding and later reconstructing and redesigning text (Janks, 2010).

To conclude, teaching from a critical language and literacy perspective endeavours to create opportunities for students to detect dominant linguistic expressions and understand how these contribute to passing on the norms and structures of different genres’ and multimodal texts (Comber, 2001; Morrow and Torres, 2002; Janks, 2010). The students’ texts in themselves contain a wealth of material that is still not fully utilised. Here there is a substantial amount of material that can be used as genuine teaching material if the teacher herself sees the opportunity. This opportunity may challenge and confront the teacher’s perception of what text is or can be when observing, thinking about and describing content as critical knowledge.

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SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION DESPITE LIMITED LINGUISTIC RESOURCES

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Setting the scene
In the Swedish context, all students who have completed their nine years of compulsory schooling have a good command of Swedish (or Swedish as a second language) and have reached at least level B1:1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) in English. From the age of 12–13 they can start learning a second foreign language. If they continue learning the languages in upper secondary school they can acquire the qualification for studying at university – B2:1 for English and A2 for other languages.

Since English is very much present in media and other areas of society, and language teaching in Sweden has a communicative focus, the students use the language in speaking and writing both in and outside of school. This means they are confident users of English and are able to produce various types of texts. In the second foreign language, the third language (L3), however, their linguistic resources are limited, which often leads to feelings of frustration and inadequacy, because they cannot produce texts at a corresponding level.

The Swedish curricula for languages are based on the CEFR. Here it is stated that language teaching should aim for communicative language competences, which not only entail linguistic competences but also sociolinguistic and pragmatic ones (Council of Europe, 2001: 13). The description of the identified levels is in the form of can do-statements. In this way the focus of assessment has turned away from the deficits in learners’ performance to a more positive focus on their abilities and competences.

Research on for example writing in a second or foreign language has, however, to a large extent maintained a strong interest in explaining the errors and mistakes in the products (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 53). In contrast, our contribution seeks to investigate how learners, in our case learners of German as a foreign language, even with very limited linguistic resources manage to convey a message in their written texts. The article describes two ways of tracking the success – in the first case by asking native speakers of German to read and mark any passages that are difficult or impossible to understand, in the second case by analyzing how learners employ some selected linguistic means for their meaning-making. Hereby Systemic Functional Grammar serves as a theoretical framework.

Theoretical background
In foreign/second language research, the distinction between learning the second and any further foreign language is widely acknowledged and the concepts of “Third language learning”, meaning any foreign language after the second one, and “Multilingualism” have
been accepted. Nevertheless, in many studies multilingual learners are studied as if having a monolingual background. In fact, typology of languages, sequence of learning, gained proficiency, interruptions and re-starts of learning periods, learning contexts and individual factors are just a few points which make the issue more complex (Jessner, 2008).

Trilinguals have more than two linguistic systems at their disposal, which interact in multiple directions with each other. Though this is also dependent on the languages involved, it is hypothesized that they create soft boundaries between languages; their language systems are permeable (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011).

L3 learners are also more experienced foreign language learners in the sense that they potentially have gained higher meta-linguistic awareness, have more knowledge about strategic behaviour and have already explored their own learning style (Hufeisen, 1998). One outcome of these competences is a higher ability to reflect on, manipulate and control language(s), for example by using a wide range of learner strategies in receptive and productive language skills. Trilinguals appear to be more able to decide consciously about the appropriateness and possible modification of certain strategies (Cenoz, 2003; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011).

Hammarberg (2009: 18) argues that exploring the L3 learning process offers the opportunity to study “how a complex pattern of prior linguistic knowledge is utilized by the learner” when acquiring an L3. For this reason, much literature deals with particular cross-linguistic influences of L3 learners. Cross-linguistic influences are described as “the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin, 1989: 27). Reporting on some studies with L3 learners (e.g. Dewaele, 1998; Ringbom, 1987; Williams & Hammarberg, 1998), Odlin (2003) argues that the specific characteristics of cross-linguistic influences of each learner constitute an interplay between proficiency in each language, language typology and recency of the languages in the learner’s active repertoire.

Writing in an additional language

Regarding the ability to write, a large body of research for L1 and L2 has been published to date. In L2 writing research, at least three main areas of inquiry can be located: focus on the cognitive process of writing and its sub-processes planning, transcribing, and reviewing; focus on the produced text, especially fluency, accuracy, and structure; and focus on sociocultural aspects, i.e. all aspects concerning the context of writing (Cumming, 2001; Hyland, 2011; Silva, 1993).

Silva (1993: 657) states that on a surface level, L1 and L2 writing seem to be quite similar in the sense that writers “employ a recursive composing process, involving planning, writing, and revising, to develop their ideas and find the appropriate rhetorical and linguistic means to express them”. Despite this similarity, it is also obvious that L2 composing is more difficult, less effective and in some respects different from L1 composing.

Generally, researchers agree that regarding the sub-processes of writing, novice L2 writers spend much time on text generation instead of on planning and revising (Roca de Larios et
al. 2008; Sasaki 2000; Victori 1999). Due to a limited set of linguistic resources, they develop a form focus while composing, i.e. spend much time on retrieval of adequate words, syntactic structure and grammar. This form focus takes up much of the writing time due to less fluency and more pauses. For these reasons the generation of complex ideas may suffer (Cumming, 2001; Manchón & Roca, 2008). More skilled L2 writers tend to develop a greater diversity of problem-solving activities, i.e. strategies, to deal with these constraints. On the one hand, they learn to gain control over their ability to organize the writing process consciously and, as a tendency, put more effort in planning and revising their texts (Kieft et al., 2006). On the other hand, strategies are employed to deal with cross-linguistic difficulties and search for the appropriate words and phrases. One of the main features in this respect is the use of the L1. Wang (2002) for example reports that students used their L1 in organizing L2 texts and that L1 use decreased with growing L2 proficiency. All the writer characteristics mentioned are general and apply more or less to learners of any (second, third, etc.) foreign language, but may vary depending on several other variables.

Research that particularly examines the special characteristics of L3 writing, is rare. There are some studies in the Basque context, which look at the special effects of bilingualism in third language acquisition. The findings of these studies are important, but not altogether comparable to learning two foreign languages consecutively.

Cenoz and Gorter (2011) showed that students tend to use the same strategies in the same kinds of texts written in different languages. This could indicate that strategies are transferable. In informal writing, learners furthermore transferred terms or structures from other languages, when they either faced a problem or when they thought it would fit their communicative message more appropriately. There seems to be a correlation between proficiency in the L3 and the amount of transfer from L1 and L2 – the higher the proficiency, the lower the number of influences from L1 and L2.

Bouvy (2000) looked at L2 and L3 texts written by trilingual university students and classified examples of cross-linguistic transfer. She found that syntactic and morphological influences were of low percentage, whereas the number of lexical cross-linguistic influences was very high.

Langegger-Noakes (2011) compared essays and short texts written by beginner and intermediate university students, who had English as their L1, French as L2 and German as L3. In her study, English mainly influenced the German texts. Furthermore, she could identify a higher number of transfers of form than meaning (88).

In general terms, these findings suggest that lexical forms of the L1 mainly affect accuracy in additional languages. Especially, automaticity in language use seems to be the decisive factor. Languages that are learned in a natural environment (e.g. in the home) and even an L1, which has little in common with a newly learned language, can have strong influences. In L3 texts written by learners with lexically similar languages, lexical cross-linguistic influences mainly from their L1 seem to be a very common phenomenon.
An interesting aspect discussed by Canagarajah (2006) and Cenoz & Gorter (2011) is that transfer does not necessarily have to be unconscious. With growing language learning experience, higher control over linguistic systems, and more meta-linguistic awareness, transfer can also become a means for learners to compensate for their own linguistic limitations and to negotiate meaning in informal writing contexts. This observation, however, partly belongs to the larger discussion about writing skills and strategies. A general finding is that high competences in previously learned languages seem to be an indicator for higher achievements in a third language (see Sagasta Errasti, 2003).

In order to illustrate some concepts discussed in the theoretical background, two small-scale empirical studies will be presented below. They depart from the notion that writing is a complex activity involving many concurrent components that must be coordinated interactively, reflectively and recursively (Ortner 1995: 325–326; cf. Hayes 1996: 5). It is a tool for problem-solving and at the same time in itself a complex problem-solving activity. This is not least the case in L2/L3, where learners learn to write in the foreign language alongside learning the language itself and navigating between two or more linguistic systems (cf. Hammarberg 2009). Many important insights into these aspects can be gained by studying such processes as argued by for example Harklau (2002: 329).

Getting the message across

Aims
As described in the introduction, the majority of previous studies of L3 writing have been error analyses, thus traditionally focused on deficits in learners’ written production rather than on what they actually succeed in communicating. The present study differs in that it sets out to examine to what degree learners of L3 German in the early stages of learning manage to produce understandable written output as judged not by teachers but by native speakers of German. A second aim is to identify and try to explain problematic areas at various linguistic levels. The study reported here is a shortened and adapted version of Malmqvist (2006).

Material and method
The data consist of 18 short texts produced by four adult learners, two males and two females, who participated in a German beginners course. They had all had some exposure to German through relatives, travel or temporary work but no formal instruction. The texts were collected on four different occasions, mid-term and end of term over a period of two semesters. The four sets of texts roughly cover a scale from A1 to B1:1 of the CEFR. The length of the texts varied from 85 to 507 words and they were produced outside class with access to dictionaries and grammars.

Three native speakers of German, all exchange students and two of them with no knowledge of Swedish, were asked to read the texts independently and to spontaneously mark words and passages that were incomprehensible or caused misunderstanding. In the next step the total number of clauses were counted and compared to the number of clauses where a word or a phrase had been marked. Finally, the passages that had been marked were analysed.
and classified according to orthography, syntax, lexis, and semantics. The purpose of the classification is not to highlight the errors as such but to point to areas that these readers indicate as being more or less incomprehensible.

Results
In the following section some of the main findings will be analysed and discussed. After a general observation examples from various linguistic levels will be given.

Communicative success or failure?
A striking introductory observation is that the main portion of the written productions, 510 out of a total of 564 clauses (90%), are understandable, although plenty of examples of learners’ interlanguage at various levels occur. The words and phrases that were classified by the informants as being incomprehensible thus occur in only 10 per cent of the clauses produced.

Syntax
Examples (1) and (2) illustrate how omitted function words may lead to confusion. A common cross-linguistic influence from L1 Swedish concerns the use of relative pronouns. As Swedish, and English, allow the omission of relative pronouns under certain conditions, this pattern tends to be transferred into German as a FL, which is illustrated in example (1). Similarly, the Swedish subordinate conjunction att may be omitted, while the German corresponding dass may not, so that in sentences such as (2) a German reader fails to understand how the clauses are connected.

(1) Probleme mit […] der Umwelt er lebte in [= in der er lebte]

(2) Ich hoffe Ø ich wieder gesund bin schon.

In teaching German as a FL, verb conjugation is an area which, along with inflection and use of case forms, has traditionally received a strong focus. However, in the present study there is no evidence that incorrect verb forms should cause problems in understanding the message. Examples (3) to (6) illustrate how there may be other components of the verb phrase that obstruct the reception of the message.

(3) […] dass ich mein Zimmer stauben muss.

(4) Meine Schwester ist heiratet.

(5) Ich will eine Arbeit, wo ich entwickeln kann.

(6) Aber eines Tages fühlt der Frosch ihn seltsam.
In (3) the verb *stauben* ('dust') is intransitive and consequently cannot take an accusative object (*mein Zimmer*) and *heiratet* is the third person singular present tense ('marries'), not as intended in (4), the past participle used attributively, corresponding to Swedish *gift* 'married', which in German is *verheiratet*. In (5) an object noun, e.g. *ein Talent entwickeln* 'develop a talent' or a reflexive pronoun *mich* is missing. Although the latter would not be idiomatic German, it is probably what the writer intended, influenced by the Swedish corresponding expression 'utveckla sig'. The verb *fühlen* (6) is either transitive, collocating with nouns like *Schmerz* 'pain' or *Mitleid* 'compassion', or reflexive *sich fühlen*. The use of *ihn*, the accusative of the personal pronoun *er* may be due to a confusion of the personal and the reflexive pronouns, which in the first person singular would be identical (*mich*).

**Lexis: Adverbs**

A number of adverbs may prove problematic for Swedes learning German, e.g. *schon, ziemlich, nur, fast*, which in teaching materials are generally referred to as *smaord* 'little words'. The learning problem might partly be caused by the fact that mental representations, which facilitate learning, are not available, and partly because in teaching materials they are often presented in lists without context. Sentences (7) to (9) are examples of adverbs used incorrectly in their contexts.

(7) Für eine große Familie ist eine Million **nicht ziemlich viel**.

(8) Niemand über dreißig kann mich verstehen, nicht meine Lehrer und **unbedingt nicht** meine Eltern.

(9) Sie verkaufen Zeitschriften so **spät**. Es ist **nur** elf Uhr.

*Nicht ziemlich viel* 'not quite much' as in (7) does not make sense at all; *nicht besonders viel* 'not very much' is the idiomatic expression to be used in this context. *Unbedingt* (8) cannot precede *nicht*; the intended combination is *überhaupt nicht*; another variety would be *durchaus nicht*. Example (9) causes confusion, because *so spät* 'so late' is incompatible with *nur elf Uhr* 'just eleven o’clock’ in the following sentence.

**Lexis: Word classes**

German word classes are much less flexible than for example in English. In the early stages of the learning process, when linguistic categories are not fully internalized and the learner struggles to fit the large amounts of information at different levels into the correct “boxes”, it is natural that categories are occasionally mixed up. Another factor that should be taken into account, particularly as regards vocabulary, is that learners at elementary levels have had limited exposure to the target language and so have only encountered a small portion of all the units that constitute the language. Examples (10) and (11) reflect that word classes are still vague categories but also that information in dictionaries is not correctly interpreted.

(10) **Nachher** jeden match hat er ein Kick bekommen.
Nachher ‘after that’ is an adverb but is confused with the preposition nach ‘after’. In (11) the writer wants to find the German equivalent of the Swedish mat och boende ‘food and lodging’. The dictionary gives both the noun Wohnen and the adjective wohnhaft but the learner fails to choose the contextually appropriate alternative. Learners who are more aware of how word classes are distinguished are likely to pay more attention to relevant information in dictionaries.

**Lexis: Swedish homonyms**

As already mentioned, the construction of relative clauses is an area where cross-linguistic influence from L1 is particularly strong. Swedish learners of German as an L3 tend to use the conjunction wie ‘as, like’ in all positions where the Swedish som occurs. Som is both the most common relative pronoun and a conjunction ‘as’. In German, relative pronouns are an elaborate category, where the pronoun in most cases coincides with the definite article but the choice of form depends on its function in the clause. Examples (12) and (13) illustrate how the Swedish pattern is transferred into German and causes reception problems. Similarly, the Swedish comparative conjunction som corresponds both to als ‘as’ and wie ‘like’. In (14) the reader’s confusion is caused by the fact that a 16-year-old, who is in fact a teenager, is compared to a teenager.

(11) [...] habe Geld für Essen und wohnhaft

(12) Sie war eine schöne klassische Gitarre, wie Greg für eine lange Zeit gewartet.

(13) Musik war was er brenne für, der land wie er sehnte sich nach.

(14) Er war Greg, 16 Jahre alt, wie ein Teenager, und er hatte natürlich viele Probleme.

**Lexis: Phrasemes**

Phrasemes are lexical units that need special attention in FL learning and teaching. They are stored as units in the mental lexicon and must be kept intact when reproduced (Burger 2010: 17). If an element is omitted or exchanged the phrase may be incomprehensible. Example (15) makes no sense at all for anyone, who does not know the Swedish phrase ha fullt upp med något ‘be very busy doing something’, in German mit etwas voll beschäftigt sein.

(15) weil beide machen voll mit seine Alkoholproblem.

**Semantics**

Hammarberg (2009) and others argue that cross-linguistic influences are more likely to occur the more closely related the languages involved are. Because of their common origin the relationship between Swedish and German is particularly close, and semantic interference
thus is potentially strong with false friends as an area worth special attention in teaching and learning. Examples (16) to (18) illustrate this. In (16) the writer describes his experiences of learning German at school but uses the verb *studieren*, which can only refer to the university level in German. (17) is an example of extension of meaning, as *Raum* ‘room, space, scope’ is made to cover the meaning of *Zimmer* ‘room’ as well. Swedish has only one word, rum.

(18) is taken from a political allegory comparing top politicians’ debates with life in a duck pond, for which there is a metaphor in Swedish, *ankdamm*. In German there is no corresponding metaphor but if there had been one, the word to use would have been *Teich* ‘pond’, not *Damm* ‘dam’.

(16) Deutsch *studiere*

(17) dass ich sollte mein *Raum* sauber machen.

(18) Die Wut im *Damm*

Conclusions
A finding that was already mentioned in the introductory lines of the result section but deserves to be highlighted again is the fact that even in the first year of exposure to the target language most of the communication (= 90%) is successful. The study thus shows that learners even in the early stages of L3 learning succeed in transmitting a message. Furthermore, it identifies certain areas, mainly concerning syntax, lexis and semantics that prove problematic, a majority of them caused by influences from L1 but only a few from L2 English. The results are thus in line with Langegger-Noakes (2011), who found that the main cross-linguistic influence on the learners’ L3 was from L1, not from L2.

A rather unexpected result is that morphological errors, e.g. *Musik spielen mit meine Freude* or *Er nachseht in seinen Tasche*, did not seem to disturb the native speakers or obstruct communication. This is contrary to what in contact with teachers of German as a FL seems to be a wide-spread assumption and which underlies the strong focus on the morphological system in teaching, at least at elementary and intermediate levels. In view of the results of the present study, it seems advisable to consider a more balanced division of instructional foci in the classroom. If we want to encourage learners to express their thoughts and feelings in understandable language even at early stages, which is laid down as a goal in FL curricula and which may have positive motivational effects, we need to recognize the importance of dedicating time and effort to lexis and semantics, too, not mainly to morphology.

Tracing ways of making meaning
The second example makes use of categories from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to trace the efforts of two learners of German as a third language to make meaning.
The underlying assumption of Functional Grammar is that a “language is a resource for making meaning, and meaning resides in systemic pattern of choice.” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 23) Language helps us “to make sense of our experience, and to carry out our interactions with other people”, i.e. grammar acts as an interface between the context, our experience, and the social processes on the one hand, together with wording and text on the other. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 24) In SFL theory all texts are seen as having three metafunctions and can be analyzed accordingly: the construal of experience (the ideational metafunction with experiential and logical as two components), the enactment of personal and social relationships with other people (the interpersonal metafunction), and thirdly the construction of text (the textual metafunction) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 29–30).

Examples of studies using SFL as a framework for analyzing learner texts are scarce. Byrnes (2009) studied the use of the grammatical metaphor nominalization in texts written by 14 English-speaking learners of German at intermediate and advanced level. In the texts written by the more advanced learners these de-verbal and de-adjectival nouns appeared more frequently. This illustrates that the students were moving towards a more academic style of text production.

In this case study, however, texts written by learners at beginners level are analysed and the focus is on the experiential component of the ideational metafunction. Here the clause is seen as “a representation of some process in ongoing human experience” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 59), and the carrier of the process is the verbal group. In SFL there are three basic categories for process clauses depicting different ways of describing our ‘outer’ or ‘inner’ experiences: material (doing), mental (sensing) and relational (being), and three borderline processes: behavioural, verbal and existential processes.

Participants and materials
The participants of this case study are given the names Nelly and Andrea. They both have Swedish as their first language and have learned English at school. Andrea also had learned some basic German at school, has a good command of Greek, and has studied English at university level.

The texts analyzed here are exam tasks in two beginners courses in German delivered as netbased courses over one semester (levels A1 and A2:1 according to CEFR; cf. the students in the study described above). The students could take the tests using any computer with Internet access. They were allowed to use course materials, but the time limit would have restricted extensive use of printed or web-based dictionaries and grammar books.

After the first course they were asked to write four short descriptive texts of around 50 words each on the following themes: (1) my favourite season, (2) my dream profession, (3) a description of a picture with three people and (4) my relation to animals. The exam task after the second course was to discuss or describe two of these three themes in about 150 words each: (1) the idea of having a meat free day every week, (2) the amount of sport on TV and the importance of sport in society, (3) a school memory.
Results

Table 1 shows some quantitative data about the texts. ‘Text 1’ consists of the four short texts from the first course, and ‘Text 2’ of the two texts from the second course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nelly Text 1</th>
<th>Andrea Text 1</th>
<th>Nelly Text 2</th>
<th>Andrea Text 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process clauses</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the first course they both wrote around 220 words. Nelly produced more processes (38 compared with Andrea’s 34), which means her text contained more dominant clauses. The texts from the second course are significantly longer, although the number of process clauses is more or less the same.

In their texts Nelly and Andrea have used material, mental, relational and verbal process clauses. They have in other words chosen to express acts of doing, sensing, being and saying. Their choices of process type show interesting differences. Some of these are linked to text genre, some might be reflections of personality.

![Figure 1. Types of processes](image)

In both Nelly and Andrea’s first texts the relational processes make up around half of the processes (47 and 53 % respectively). They describe what someone or something is (*Der Frühling ist warm* … ‘The spring is warm’) or has (ich habe viele Patienten ‘I have many patients’). Since the participants were asked to write descriptive texts their choices are adequate. A fair amount of the processes in Nelly’s first text are material processes, 42%. She has used verbal groups that describe an actor doing something, e.g. *singen, verdienen, trösten, spielen* (‘sing, earn, console, play’), but also intransitive verbs like *aufwachen, scheinen, wohnen* and *kommen* (‘wake up, shine, live, come’). Only one fifth of Andrea’s processes are of this type. In her text the processes are – apart from the relational ones – more evenly distributed in material, mental and verbal processes. Nelly on the other hand uses very few mental and verbal processes.
Andrea has chosen to liven up the picture description with a short conversation between the three people. Nelly has written a fairly long description of her relationship to animals.

In both texts from the second course the relational processes constitute the largest group (making up 46% and 38% of the processes respectively). In these texts, too, they identify and categorize phenomena with the help of the verb sein (‘be’). Fairly often these clauses are of the intensive type attributing values to a human or non-human carrier, e.g. X ist besser, ist gesund, ist gut, ist sehr lecker (‘X is better, is healthy, is good, is very tasty’). In quite a few cases ich (‘I’) is the carrier or the person identified (ich bin ein Vegetarier; ich war siebzehn Jahre alt ‘I’m a vegetarian, I was seventeen years old’), but also facts and different kinds of things are carriers or people identified: Diese Reise war eine erstaunliche Erfahrung; Ein Vorteil mit Sport an dem Fernseher ist das Menschen oft sehen Sport zusammen (‘This trip was an extraordinary experience; An advantage with sport on TV is that people often watch sport together’).

A remarkable difference between texts 1 and 2 is the frequent use of mental processes in text 2. Since, in this case, they had the opportunity to put forward arguments in favour of something this is consistent with the text genre, albeit they still do this from a personal, more emotional perspective with verbs like sehen, finden, glauben (‘see, find, think’). Although this is “very typical of casual conversation” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 198), these processes offer the opportunity to use a syntactically more complex language, i.e. to form clause complexes by verbalizing facts or things as dependent clauses and not as nominal groups: Ich hoffen das mehr Menschen in der Welt Vegetarischer werden; ich glaube, dass ich verliebte mich in der Stadt dann (‘I hope that more people in the world become vegetarian; I think, that I fell in love with the city then’). These examples contain several morpho-syntactical errors but are nonetheless evidence of more developed linguistic and pragmatic competences.

In text 2 Nelly uses fewer material processes compared with the first text, whereas Andrea produces more. This may be explained by their different interpretations of what constitutes a good argumentative text, but the fact that Andrea has chosen to describe a school memory might also have contributed to the relatively high proportion of material processes in her second text. Verbal processes are rare or even non-existent in the texts from the second course.

Conclusions
The use of SFL as the framework for analyzing the four texts in this small study has proved valuable. Even this fairly shallow categorization of processes in the texts has shown that the students have the ability to produce texts that conform to text genre norms. This in turn might be evidence of successful transfer of competences acquired in their first and other languages.

Another finding is the evidence of syntactic complexity that is evoked by certain process clauses. Both learners use mental processes where they add facts in the form of dependent clauses rather than as noun phrases (cf. I see that she is here as compared to I see him). This may be identified as evidence of language learning.
There are differences between the texts, but they are within genre norms. The explanation of the differences could therefore be the fact that these two text producers have managed to add a personal touch to their texts and to show some aspects of their personalities – even at this early stage of their learning.

Some concluding remarks
The two small-scale studies presented above show that foreign language learners are able to produce written texts that are understandable and pragmatically of high quality adhering to text genre norms.

Above all, the two studies show that these learners’ ability to produce written texts goes far beyond what is expected at level A2 according to the CEFR:

I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate need. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something. (Council of Europe, 2001: 26)

It is apparent that these learners are able to produce more elaborated texts representing more diverse text types, e.g. descriptive and argumentative texts and not just “simple notes”.

The two studies also make it evident that you find what you are looking for. If you want to track down lexical and morpho-syntactic errors you will easily find examples in the analyzed texts using traditional grammar as a framework. If, on the other hand, you want to find out what the students can do, i.e. what skills and competences they have acquired, you need to put other theoretical frameworks and other methods to use.

Even though the students who have produced the texts analysed here are beginners in German, they show good competence as text producers. This is most certainly evidence of the transferability of a generic competence – at least between languages and cultures with similar text genre norms, in this case between Swedish, English and German.

References


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