Degree Project
15 credits/högskolepoäng, Advanced level

Learning a New Language in a New Language

Att lära sig ett nytt språk på ett nytt språk

Valerija Artukovic
Emma Eriksson

LL701G
Spring 2017
Grundlärearxamen årskurs F-3
240 credits/högskolepoäng
Final seminar: 2017-03-26

Examiner: Björn Sundmark
Advisor: Anna Wärnsby
PREFACE

Hereby, we both acknowledge that this thesis has been planned, prepared and conducted in full cooperation. We have been equally involved throughout the whole process. This includes formulating aim and research questions, finding previous research and literature as well as finding respondents for the interview. Valerija was the one typing, while Emma was in charge of finding appropriate translations. The interview was carried out and recorded by both of us, as was the transcription. Emma was responsible to make sure the recording apparatus was working during the interview, while Valerija was once again typing to ease the transcription of the interview. The analysis of the materials and the writing of the different sections was done together.

X
Valerija Artukovic

X
Emma Eriksson
ABSTRACT

Swedish school today is a mixture of children who come from different countries and speak different languages. Due to conflicts and war raging in various parts of the world, the refugee stream of people seeking asylum in Sweden has put much pressure on the schools around the country. Studies show that immigrant children fall behind in the education and that students whose first language is not Swedish do not reach the knowledge requirements and goals for English to the same degree of success as other groups of students. The aim for this thesis was to investigate what teachers in a K-3 English classrooms in Sweden do to support immigrant students, and what can be found in previous research to explain such poor performance. The aim was also to explore what methods teachers report using and how these methods are connected to Lgr11 and previous research. The use of Swedish instead of the target language when teaching English seems to be dominating in the schools. Since research found shows that children tend to use their first language when learning additional languages, the use of Swedish becomes demanding and confusing for the immigrant students: they end up having to learn a new language in a new language.

Keywords: Second language (L2), third language (L3), target language (TL), English as a foreign language (EFL), language development, immigrant students, newly arrived, CLIL, code-switching, pedagogical strategies
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................................................... 7
2 AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS ............................................................................................... 8
3 BACKGROUND ........................................................................................................................... 9
  3.1 School enrollment for immigrant students ........................................................................ 9
  3.2 The syllabus and knowledge requirements .................................................................... 10
    3.2.1 The Swedish school culture .................................................................................. 11
  3.3 Linguistic factors ............................................................................................................ 11
  3.4 Social and cultural factors .............................................................................................. 12
  3.5 Motivation and attitudes ............................................................................................... 13
  3.6 L3 strategies .................................................................................................................. 14
  3.7 The impact of the TL on language acquisition .............................................................. 15
  3.8 Code-switching ............................................................................................................. 16
  3.9 Content and language integrated learning ................................................................... 17
4 METHODOLOGY ..................................................................................................................... 18
  4.1 Setting and participants ............................................................................................... 18
  4.2 Interview design .......................................................................................................... 18
  4.3 Procedure for the interview ........................................................................................ 20
  4.4 Analysis of the data ..................................................................................................... 20
  4.5 Ethical considerations .................................................................................................. 21
5 RESULTS .................................................................................................................................. 22
  5.1 The teachers’ educational backgrounds ....................................................................... 22
  5.2 The teachers’ attitudes towards teaching English in K-3 ............................................. 22
  5.3 The teachers’ opinions on using the target language ................................................... 23
  5.4 The teachers’ pedagogical methods and choices ............................................................ 24
  5.5 Learning materials ....................................................................................................... 25
6 DISCUSSION .......................................................................................................................... 26
7 CONCLUSION ......................................................................................................................... 29
  7.1 The limitations .............................................................................................................. 29
  7.2 Future research .............................................................................................................. 29
8 REFERENCES ......................................................................................................................... 31
9 APPENDIX 1 ............................................................................................................................ 35
10 APPENDIX 2 ........................................................................................................................... 36
1 INTRODUCTION

According to the *Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and the recreation centre, 2011* (henceforth Lgr11), “teaching should be adapted to each student’s circumstances and needs,” and “[...] promote the students’ further learning and acquisition of knowledge based on students’ backgrounds, earlier experience, language and knowledge” (2011, p. 10). Thus, all children attending Swedish Primary School should have the same opportunity to reach the knowledge requirements for English, and all other subjects (Lgr11, 2011, p. 9). Yet, students whose first language is not Swedish do not reach the knowledge requirements and goals for English to the same degree of success as other groups of students (Skolverket, 2013; Begler & Ahnborg, 2011; Torpsten, 2012, p. 77–78).

At MAH we have learnt that teaching language should be done in the target language (henceforth TL); when teaching English, the Swedish language should be excluded in order for the new language to develop. This would entail that the immigrant students and students with a different first language (henceforth L1) than Swedish would have the same prerequisites as students with Swedish as their mother tongue. However, we have both witnessed the opposite approach when attending VFU and working at schools in Malmö and Helsingborg. Code-switching often occurs both by the teacher and the students’, and makes Swedish very visible in the language classroom, therefore we will explore the research on the impact using Swedish instead of the target language when teaching English, and whether using Swedish in the language classroom impede the English language development in immigrant children. We hope that find relevant research will enable us, as future teachers, to assist also young immigrants in learning the English language with regards to both their personal and social situations and their different stages of learning.
2 AIM & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With research on teaching English as a third language (henceforth L3) as our point of departure, we aim to investigate what teachers in a K-3 English classroom in Sweden do to support immigrant students’ achievements of the knowledge requirements specified in the curriculum.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What methods do Swedish teachers report using in their K-3 English classrooms to support language development for the immigrant students?
2. How are these methods connected to Lgr11 and previous research?
3 BACKGROUND

For many immigrant children, the language of instruction in schools is often different from the one spoken at home. According to Christensen and Stanat (2007, p. 1), these children need extra support to master the language of instruction, which is a key to success in school. Research shows that children who cannot read, speak or write the language of instruction to the level of their peers show inferior results in school (Skolverket, 2013).
To better understand what immigrant children go through, we begin, in section 3.1, with the procedure for school enrolment and the general prerequisite to get an insight to the Swedish school system. We then, in sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, account for different factors affecting L3 acquisition. We then proceed to 3.6, where strategies on acquiring L3 are presented. We end the background section with 3.7 (use of the target language), 3.8 (code-switching) and 3.9 (CLIL). With these sections we want to present general methods teachers could apply, to make sure immigrant children’s English skills develop equally to those who speak Swedish as their L1.

Despite thoroughly searching for current research on methods to apply specifically to how immigrant students who do not comprehend Swedish learn English, we came to the conclusion that there seems to be a gap in this field of research. Much research was found on bilingual and multilingual children learning additional languages (henceforth AL), but in all these cases, the children already were proficient in the language of instruction. Since Lgr11 makes no distinction between the children’s origin, but clearly states that adjustments are to be made on individual basis, we feel we have no choice but to make the assumption that the English language is most immigrant children’s L3. We have therefore focused our search on general language learning for immigrant students acquiring English as their L3, to be able to make some sort of comparison to our empirical data.

3.1 School enrollment for immigrant students

Every year, more and more people move to Sweden. Some come here voluntarily; however, there are those who come here as refugees. In 2015, approximately 163 000 people sought asylum here. This February Migrationsverket (2017) had already received 3729 applications for asylum. Of these almost 4000 people 1301 were children. It is crucial for these people to
become a part of the Swedish society as soon as possible. For the young children, school is the primal way into the society.

According to 4 chapter 1a § in the school regulation (Skolförordningen), regardless of background all children who come to Sweden should be offered appropriate placement in a school within a month of their arrival (Skolverket, 2016, p. 15). What language the immigrant child is proficient in and whether or not the child has any prior schooling is the first thing that needs to be established (Skolverket, 2016, p. 23). Establishing the language competency level is important for the knowledge evaluation. The knowledge evaluation then determines in what grade the child is to be placed.

When the student is placed in an appropriate class, the principal decides on suitable aids to help accommodate the child’s language and knowledge development. Some of these aids are prioritized time schedules (our translation) and mother tongue tuition; these are directed specifically to help newly arrived students to reach the knowledge requirements to the best of their ability (Skolverket, 2016, p. 12-13). Focus should be on helping the immigrant student to master Swedish as soon as possible; knowing Swedish is crucial for the student to succeed in all subjects in school (Skolverket, 2016, p. 15-17).

English is often introduced as early as in first grade (personal communication, 18 February, 2017), and suitable adjustments have to be made for English as well for the immigrant students not to fall behind. English is a core subject, equal to Swedish, mathematics, science studies and social studies; therefore, the same focus should be put on the immigrant children’s English acquisition and development, as on other subjects. To fall behind in English at an early stage of learning can have a tremendous impact on these children’s future learning and education.

3.2 The syllabus and knowledge requirements

Teaching English in Primary school, aims at helping the students “to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used,” and “[…] pupils’ confidence in their ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes” (2011, p. 32). In the lower grades of Primary school, focus is on communication.
However, there not being any knowledge requirements for English until the end of year 6 combined with the fact that even though many schools introduce English as early as in 1st grade, there is no general legislation forcing schools to introduce the subject at any specific time prior to 3rd grade. Hence, depending on obtaining factors such as school guidelines, and teachers’ prior experience as well as proficiency in the TL an equivalent English tuition can become difficult for both the Swedish and immigrant children.

### 3.2.1 The Swedish school culture

In line with what is stated in Lgr11 (2011), Kroksmark (2013, p. 29-33) writes about the Swedish school culture, where he refers to the principle of equality (own translation); every student should be equally valued and offered the same educational opportunities. Teachers should adapt the prerequisites and challenges based on every individual's own level and scaffold appropriately. This adaption is even more important for the immigrant students, to ensure that they do not fall behind in English. As with all children, maturity at this young age can differ; depending on e.g. gender, and if they are born early or late in the year and the child’s aptitude. Depending on prior linguistic influence, proficiency of English can differ, making it even more important for teachers to be attentive and make proper adjustments in the English classroom. However, despite new recommendations by Skolverket (2016), based on inspections done by Skolinspektionen (2014, p. 7-9), show that only a few schools plan, carry out and adjust aids to accommodate each immigrant child’s individual needs and conditions, in order to help him/her reach the set goals in English. However, it is yet to be seen if these recommendations are to be followed. According to our own experience in VFU and temping we have not seen much evidence of that yet.

### 3.3 Linguistic factors

Cummins (2000), Lundberg (2007, p. 72) as well as Salameh (2012) discuss the positive effects that supporting the immigrant children’s L1 can have on L3 English acquisition. However, statistics show that multilingual children in the Swedish school system often are disadvantaged, which leads to inferior results in school. This disadvantage is linked to
insufficient and weak support in their L1, as well as lack of conditions for reaching the knowledge requirements.

When starting Primary school, all children are in the beginning of developing a formal school language, and, therefore, it is important to have in mind that the immigrant children’s L1 may not be strong enough to be of any support in their L3 acquisition. Mägiste (1984, p. 421) also points out that immigrant children who come from countries where their L1 is closely related to the Germanic languages, will have advantages over immigrant children whose L1 has other origins. Statistics show (SCB, 2013, p. 22–23) that most immigrants who have come to Sweden over the past few years originate from the Middle East. In reference to Mägiste (1984) this would entail that most of the immigrant children enrolling in the early years of Primary school who speak languages not closely related to Swedish or English would experience difficulties learning English. However, even though language resemblance can be of significance when young learners acquire English, it is not the single decisive factor to a child learning English or not. One main factor could in fact be that children are introduced to English at an early age in Primary school, which is not only the case in Sweden, but in some Middle-Eastern Countries, such as Syria, as well.

In addition to previously mentioned research, both Cummins (2001) as well as Cenoz and Jessner (2000) indicate the positive effects between a strong L1 and the ability to learn an L3, in this case English. Cummins (2001) describes the benefits that bilingual education can have on children with regard to their general development, both cognitive and metacognitive. This corresponds with the idea that proficiency in L1 could help promote the acquisition and learning of English since it would enable young learners, if adequately scaffolded, to relate to knowledge previously acquired in their L1 (Cummins, 2001, p. 61-75).

### 3.4 Social and cultural factors

Newly arrived children come to Sweden with previous knowledge and experiences from their home countries cultures, schools, homes and childhood. These previous experiences shape their identities and expectations. According to Hattie (2011, p. 13) and the school inspection (2014, p. 8), these expectations, may determine educational and social performance in school.
Therefore, teachers must have the child’s prior schooling in mind as practice of teaching can differ between Sweden and the country the child comes from.

As previously mentioned, Salameh (2012: pp. 131-153), supported by statistics and research by Skolverket (2016, p. 8) and the Swedish municipal and regional governance organization (Sveriges kommuner och landsting) (2016), recommend teachers get help from mother tongue instructors in order to give young immigrant English learners support to develop and acquire their L3. Unfortunately, resources are scarce; good intentions fall short; all the responsibility falls back on the English teacher. Even experienced English teachers how are used to working with young language learners, may not have the knowledge and experience teaching English as an L3 to immigrant children how are not proficient in Swedish.

**3.5 Motivation and attitudes**

There are many theories on second and third language acquisition, but the one informing the curriculum (2011) is Vygotsky’s sociocultural standpoint on knowledge acquisition: human development is not individualistic (Gibbons, 2002, p. 8). The basis for a child’s language development is captured in what Vygotsky calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is the cognitive gap between a child’s current level of knowledge, and the potential knowledge achievable with the support of a more skilled adult or peer (Gibbons, 2012, p. 36). This means that every child has to be challenged, but also appropriately scaffolded to be able to learn English (Lgr11, 2011, p. 11-12). Consequently, learning English according to this view, occurs in interaction with others, and is based more on shared experiences and knowledge than on the memorization learning (own translation) of grammar and phonetics, that still occurs in many schools where these immigrant children come from.

There is another important social side to children’s development. The social environment and the cultural context that Vygotsky refers to - in particular, the influence of peers teachers, and parents, engaged in interactions with children - are said to be major sources of learning new languages and developing new knowledge (Sveriges kommuner och landsting 2016, p. 43). The impact views on education and on the English language in particular that immigrant children’s parents’ have can deviate from perceptions we in Sweden have on English. The immigrant children’s emotional connection to the English language can also be decisive.
Coming from countries where war is raging, English is most probably used by foreign military forces; hence, the exposure to the English language can come with negative associations.

Another cause affecting immigrant students’ school performance, are the expectations put on them by their teachers. When given confidence in their own capacity through high expectations on their ability to learn, immigrant students can often achieve better results in English (Skolinspektionen, 2014, p. 7). If all these factors are not observed, immigrant students may lose motivation learning English, which may then negatively affect their results (Sveriges kommuner och landsting, 2016, p. 43).

### 3.6 L3 strategies

Piaget’s four stages of development - the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational stage, the concrete operational stage and the formal operational stage - suggest that young language learners follow specific psychological patterns when acquiring their L1 and all AL including their L3 (Pinter, 2015, p. 6-10). Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014) agree, stating that learning English as an L3 at an early age differs from learning when older and refer to Krashen’s monitor model (1982, p. 20-30). This view expects teachers to understand how learning occurs and, just as defined in the curriculum, know how to adapt teaching strategies to facilitate young language learners’ individual needs (Lgr11). Already having mastered an L2 is proven to help when learning an L3 (Cenoz and Gorter, 2011, p. 72-73).

However, when working with young children, Stakanova and Tolstikhina (2014, p. 458) as well as Mhathúna (2015) suggest the essential methods of teaching L3 are based on three principles: role plays, communicative methods, and total physical involvement; all three performed in the TL. Adequate input will produce suitable output (Krashen, 1982, p. 20-30). Littlewood and Yu (2011) continue on the same path, discussing not only the child's innate ability to learn multiple languages simultaneously based on factors such as age, personality, aptitude, motivation and attitudes, but connect these to the teachers’ competence in both TL and pedagogical methods when creating equal opportunities for all students to learn, regardless of linguistic background. According to a study made by the Swedish municipal and regional governance organization (Sveriges kommuner och landsting 2016, p. 42), teachers
feel insecure about how to deal with multilingualism in the classroom. Support from the school management is insufficient, leaving the teacher solely responsible for the adjustments that need to be made in the English classroom. It is up to the teachers own engagement to see to own competency development. The study shows that many teachers feel unmotivated and unsupported by the school management to change their teaching, making the Swedish language still dominant in the English classroom (Skolinspektionen, 2014, p. 7).

3.7 The impact of the TL on language acquisition

Immigrant students are not a homogenous group; they come from different parts of the world, speaking different languages and have different, if at all, experience from school (Sveriges kommuner och landsting, 2016, p. 38). According to Lgr11 (2011, p. 10), every child comes to school with different knowledge and preferred learning styles; therefore they all acquire English in different ways and from different starting points (Gardner, 1983). However, they all have two things in common: in Primary school, according to our interpretation as mentioned in the beginning of our background, Swedish becomes their L2 and English becomes their L3.

The immigrant children are daily exposed to their L2 in the school environment, which gives them plenty of tools to test and try out their newly acquired language skills in Swedish. Being constantly exposed to the TL is, according to Cenoz (2011), and Cummins and Early (2010, p. 61), a major factor to the language not only developing, but being subconsciously developed. Same rules would apply for learning a third, fourth and even additional languages, which implies that English is to be used in the English classroom as language of preference. These views on teaching English are consistent with what we have learnt as aspiring teachers at Malmö University and correspond to great extent to what is written in the syllabus on the use of the TL in English (Skolverket, 2011).

Research by Turnbull and Arnett (2002) and Cenoz (2011) also shows that using the TL to teach English has positive effects on overall language learning. However, there are also studies (Turnbull, 2001; Kim & Elder, 2005; Littlewood & Yu, 2011) that demonstrate that teachers often use L1 in their English classrooms. Ladberg (1996, p. 103) also disagrees with the use of Swedish in FL learning. English and other FL become demanding subjects for
children with foreign backgrounds. Ladberg argues that this has nothing to do with them having too many languages to keep track of. Using Swedish when teaching language becomes problematic, because even as immigrant children progress and learn how to orally communicate in Swedish, they still may be thinking in their L1.

3.8 Code-switching

One effective method of scaffolding young language learners in the English classroom is referred to as code-switching. This is a method often used when acquiring additional languages and occurs when the speaker switches between two different languages: usually when the teacher uses one language and the student answers in another language; or when someone in the middle of one’s speech changes languages (Samani & Narafshan, 2016, p. 716). Code-switching can be an effective strategy when learning a new language, and can often be observed in multicultural societies where speakers mix vocabulary from their L1 and L2 in the same conversation to best suit the purpose of what they are trying to say. Code-switching is a sign of great understanding of language, and is not to be confused with ignorance (Salameh, 2012, p. 7-26); Ladberg, 2003, p. 50). However, depending on the class structure, code-switching in the English classroom can also end up having negative effects. In a classroom where all the students have Swedish as their first and main language, code-switching can be a very efficient method for language acquisition, since the switch is between the child’s strongest language and the new language. This differs from a class setting where immigrant students attend the same class as L1 Swedish students, and the switch then is between two new languages to them. According to Falomir & Laguna (2012, p. 299-300), “learners with a low level of proficiency in the L2 tend to use the L1 as the main source for transferring. In this sense, unless the level of the L2 is high, the influence L2 has on L3 is marginal”, which means that if the immigrant children have a low proficiency in Swedish code-switching between Swedish and English would not be beneficial for them. Both learners and teachers tend to use their dominant language when using code-switching for ease of expression, which in a class with students who do not share the dominant language gives the opposite effect. Instead of facilitating, it makes it more difficult for the immigrant students to understand.
3.9 Content and language integrated learning

Content and Language integrated Learning (henceforth CLIL) is a teaching method that focuses on integrating language and content in the English classroom, or, as Bruton (2013, p. 588) defines it, “educational settings where a language other than the students’ mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction”. This method is not as explored in Sweden as it is in other countries around Europe, but is an effective way to teach English to young learners, since the focus is on content that is inspiring and motivating for the students, which leads to the language being acquired more naturally. CLIL is in many ways connected to the curriculum, where focus is on content that is related to the students’ own experiences and interests (Lgr11 2011, p. 32). The method is very flexible, which can be both a strength and a potential weakness. In some cases, CLIL is merely a means for giving the students a reason to learn English, and the method reflects a communicate-to-learn rather than a learn-to-communicate principle. For some students, this principle may stimulate learning more effectively. CLIL, when used as recommended with the content as the base, is a good way to give immigrant students’ the same prerequisite as L2 students when learning English, since the English language becomes their common ground. CLIL can also be a good way to make sure that the immigrant students acquire the same content knowledge as the L2 students.

How well CLIL works, depends on the teacher and the hard work that needs to be done in order for the lessons and content to meet all the students’ interests on a level that is suitable, motivating and challenging at the same time. If the subject content is too complicated and unfamiliar, it can prevent the English from developing, especially if the instruction is not clear in the target language. Regardless of the teacher’s hard work though, the teacher’s proficiency in English is also an important factor to consider when using CLIL. The lack of teacher proficiency in English, as well as the limited English in young students can complicate the use of TL to the extent required by CLIL; therefore, teacher competency may limit CLIL’s efficiency when used in the lower grades of Primary school. The students need to have developed some English to be able to cope. The focus might need to be on language rather than on content since the child still develops the basic vocabulary for understanding the content (Bruton, 2013, p. 592-293).
4 METHODOLOGY

This section outlines and motivates the methodological choices we made for this paper. We have used a qualitative approach to this study. There are several ways to go about collecting qualitative data: surveys, observations and interviews. We chose to conduct a semi-structured group interview, since the aim of this study was to identify and problematize difficulties and obstacles immigrant students are confronted with when learning English (Bryman, 2011). This also due to absence of engagement from the teachers we have approached which led to shortage of time. This specific strategy was chosen since the focus was to describe, analyze, interpret and make sense of a specific phenomenon.

4.1 Setting and participants

The selection of school and participants was based on convenience. The participants were initially contacted via e-mail, in which we shortly introduced ourselves and the purpose of our investigation (see Appendix 1). A total of five teachers were contacted, however, only two were able to participate in the interview, both teaching K-3. Teacher A is a primary school teacher with 10 years of experience. Teacher B is also a primary school teacher, and has taught for 15 years. Both teachers have experience of teaching English. The participants of this study were all females. This was not intentional, and possible effects of gender are not investigated. The school is a K-6 school, with approximately 340 students attending and 55 employees, and is situated in a predominantly heterogeneous area with a varying socio-economic background. The school we chose to work with for this research introduces English in the early years of Primary school, just as many schools in Malmö do. The interview was conducted in Swedish, once again out of convenience since we wanted the respondents to feel comfortable and speak inhibited.

4.2 Interview design

We used semi-structured interviews, with open-ended questions, when collecting data for our investigation. Kvale (2014) argues that qualitative semi-structured interviews entail the interviewing form where the interviewer has the least control of the subjects being
surveyed. We wanted the interview to resemble a casual conversation, where we, the interviewers, simply provide a framework to ensure that the interview does not go off topic. This was to leave our respondents with greater freedom to answer the questions in their own words and, hopefully, provide us with diverse answers and approaches to our questions. We also had follow-up questions in the form of key-words (stated in our interview guide) that helped us articulate additional follow-up questions for further discussion when the need arose (Bryman, 2011).

For this interview questions were formulated as prompts for the interviewers (see Appendix 2). The questions were constructed using different dimensions. The first dimension, background, was meant to give a clear picture of the teachers’ educational backgrounds and experience teaching English to both L2 and newly arrived students, and their classroom environment. This was simply to give us a better understanding of their chosen classroom strategies and methods. The second dimension, attitudes, was regarding teacher attitudes. This dimension was to give us a glimpse of what challenges these specific teachers may (or may not) experience teaching English. This was of interest since current research shows that newly arrived students in Swedish Primary school encounter difficulties when learning a third language (Sveriges kommuner och landsting, 2016). Statistics also show that students whose L1 is not Swedish do not reach the knowledge requirements and goals for English to the same extent of success as other groups of students (Skolverket, 2016). The third dimension, teaching methods, went on inquiring the use of the TL as a method in regard to research we found by Cenoz (2002), Turnbull and Arnett (2002), Turnbull (2001), Kim & Elder (2005), Littlewood & Yu (2011), that profoundly points to the benefits of the sole use of the TL in classrooms where English is learnt as an FL or AL. As mentioned before, according to Skolverket (2013), students whose L1 is not Swedish do not reach the knowledge requirements and goals for English to the same degree of success as other groups of students. Therefore, we in our fourth dimension, follow-up questions, discuss if there are needs to differentiate teaching English to students with English as an L2 compared to L3.
4.3 Procedure for the interview

The questions were not sent to the participants prior to the interview because we did not want them to be able to prepare the correct answers; we wanted them to speak freely. The participants decided when and where the interview was to take place. Due to the teachers pressed schedules, neither length or place for the interview was ideal. Since both teachers had obligations to attend to, we felt they stressed through our questions, and we could not always get them to elaborate on their answers or engage in a further discussion. The participants’ permission for recording the interview was asked beforehand, and both agreed. We chose to record the interview on a mobile device, to ensure no words or phrases were lost in transcription. Recording also enabled us to listen to the interview again and to accurately transcribe what was said (Bryman, 2011).

Both authors were present during the interview, because both authors are equally involved and engaged in the writing of this paper. One of authors was in charge of the audio device and the other typed during the interview. The decision to type throughout the whole interview was made to facilitate the transcription. Immediately after the interview was completed both authors listened through the audio recording, and looked through the notes, and finished the transcription and analysis.

4.4 Analysis of the data

Post interview, selected parts of the material was transliterated; these parts where directly relevant for our research questions and most of these passages are quoted in the Results section. When transcribing we used intelligent verbatim transcription and translation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This method of transcribing aims to capture what was said, instead of exactly how it was said. When transcribing the interview our main priority was to capture what we spoke about instead of accounting for every word used filler words that our respondents used while they were thinking were left out.
4.5 Ethical considerations

Vetenskapsrådets (2002) ethical guidelines outlines four requirements that need to be adhered to when conducting research involving human subjects: the consent requirement, the confidentiality requirement, the information requirement and the requirement of usage. When meeting the participants they were verbally briefed of their rights to end their participation at any time. They were also informed that the interview material was to be confidential; the content was specifically going to be used for this project. Thereafter we once again explained the purpose of our degree project, and informed them that they could have access to the final version of the paper.
5 RESULTS

This section presents, describes and analyzes the data collected through the semi-structured interview conducted with the two K-3 teachers. We categorized the data under five subsections in relation to our aim and research questions: teachers’ educational backgrounds (5.1), teachers’ attitudes towards teaching English in K-3 (5.2), teachers’ opinions on using the target language (5.3), teachers’ pedagogical methods and choices (5.4), and learning materials (5.5). We have summarized the answers and also provided evidence for our interpretations in form of quotes transcribed and translated into English. The results were then related to the research literature presented in the background section.

5.1 The teachers’ educational backgrounds

Both teachers report that they have worked with young learners, as teachers for over a decade, but they have only recently begun teaching English in the early years of Primary School. In this particular school, English is introduced in K-class, and is continued as a subject in first grade. Teacher A is currently a first grade teacher, and teaches English to a total of 56 students, whereof five are newly arrived children from Syria. Teacher B teaches third graders, but is currently not teaching English. Teacher B has little prior experience of teaching English to newly arrived students. Both teachers’ pedagogical backgrounds, i.e. their inexperience working with younger children, as well as their lack of experience in specifically working with and teaching young immigrant students are the factors contributing to the quality of the answers they gave when interviewed.

5.2 The teachers’ attitudes towards teaching English in K-3

When asked about the fact that there are no knowledge requirements for English in year 1-3, they both stress that this is something problematic, and could cause vast differences in the knowledge acquisition as they start fourth grade.

I: (...) and that there are no knowledge requirements?
B: Bad!
I: You agree with us then? Do you feel that you would like to have knowledge requirements in the third grade?
B: Yes! Absolutely! (...) not only in English, but in all the other subjects as well where knowledge requirements are missing.
A: I agree.
I: So that you get guidelines from higher up that this simply is the requirements?
A: Yes! If it is supposed to be an equal school, then there have to be requirements!

Both teachers agreed that knowing English is important. Being a global language, English is an essential tool to build confidence and help students broaden their views and future opportunities (Lgr11, 2011, pp. 9, 32). The teachers also stressed that all schools should introduce English as early as possible, in K-class preferably.

I: Both of you feel that English should be introduced in first grade?
A: Yes of course! Introducing English in third grade is too late!

Teacher A and teacher B, agree that primal focus should be on the listening and speaking abilities. They hand their students chunks and phrases of words to learn, and, based on those, they develop communicational skills. Both A and B, agree that this should be established before the students move on to learning how to read and write in English.

A: There is so much work in teaching them words before we can start to speak (...) they know quite a bit, but they know of the things they are interested in, what they play.
I: Do you also feel that you work more with communication, teaching them to speak, I mean those are the areas you work with, not grammar..
B: You do not get hung up on those parts. No, you encourage them to speak.

5.3 The teachers’ opinions on using the target language

In contrast to what previously mentioned research argues, both teacher A and B use Swedish in the English classroom, but their reasons to do so differ. Teacher A, who attended Lärarlyftet two years ago, has learned of the advantages of only using the TL when teaching a new language. However, she feels the necessity to include both languages, Swedish and English, in her teaching to make sure all students understand her. Therefore, her the choice to use Swedish to the extent she actually does, is not a choice she is content with, but one she feels she has to settle with. Teacher B however, made an active choice to use Swedish when
teaching English, simply due to the fact that it suited her the best. We can only speculate if teacher B’s choice to frequently use Swedish in the English classroom was due to insecurity about suitable pedagogical methods or her own lack of proficiency in the English language.

A: You switch back and forth between Swedish and English all the time, at least that is what I do. Otherwise they do not understand.
I: So, it becomes a fair amount of Swedish you use in the English classroom?
A: Yes, I am afraid so.
B: I have also heard that you are supposed to only speak English. But I never do (...) I think using Swedish works the best, that is why I do it.

5.4 The teachers’ pedagogical methods and choices

When asked about the inclusion and exclusion of newly arrived students, both teachers say that currently, newly arrived students were included in the regular English classes. However, teacher A clearly pointed out that this applies to the students they have now, since these students are equivalent to their Swedish peers in English. She could not say if exclusion was never to be an option in the future: it all depended on the newly arrived students’ former English education. Even though teacher B, currently did not teach English, she made it clear that she never adjusted the learning materials in English. Again, we are left to speculate why it is so; is it because there is no need for adjustments, or is it simply due to lack of time?

I: Do you have immigrant students in your classroom?
A: Yes, I do, and the ones we have are from Syria and they already know a lot of English. At least, that is how I see it.
I: So, you do not feel the need to exclude them from the regular English lessons? … (...) 
A: Although, they are all from Syria, so this might make a difference.. If they came from Romania for instance, we had lots of them when I was working in kindergarten class, then there is nothing that says they will cope as well as the Syrians.. I think it depends on what country they come from.
I: And what kind of relationship they have to the English language. So you could say that for them, English is their second language?
A: Yes, I believe so.
I: And that Swedish becomes their third.
5.5 Learning materials

Both our interviewees agree with the statement that when learning a new language it is important to be subjected and exposed to the TL. Teacher A has not introduced any books to her students yet. Her focus has been on teaching the students chunks of words and to make them comfortable speaking. Teacher B, even though not scheduled to teach English this semester, still sneaks in English now and then when possible. Due to the short amount of time English can be scheduled in the early years, she tries to sneak in English where possible.

B: I have small doses every day, and always have had (...) Now, for example, I always write the weekdays in English.
A: Yes, I agree, sometimes when I hand out papers I say: “Here you are”, and the students respond in Swedish: “We do not have English now?” And then immediately they get it and answer in English: “Thank you”. And I reply: “You are welcome”.

Teacher B goes on saying that her colleagues do not introduce books in English class before the third grade because they want the students to acquire communicational skills before they move on to other skills, such as reading and writing. However, there is no difference in the learning material that the Swedish students and the immigrant students are exposed to. Both teachers stress that this goes for these particular students. Learning material might differ if the immigrant students show difficulties comprehending. Neither of the teachers saw any difficulties in finding appropriate learning materials for these particular students, and they made it clear that all students, both Swedish and immigrant students, worked with the same tasks.
6 DISCUSSION

Finding relevant research on methods to apply specifically to immigrant students who do not comprehend Swedish, learning English, was not as simple as we had imagined. We expected there to be an abundance of current research regarding immigrant children learning English in a new language, or at least, if not learning English in a new language, in contexts similar to this; after all, we were expecting this, considering the situation prevailing around the world where many people on a daily basis find themselves seeking refuge in countries far away from their homes.

Initially, we found it difficult to define the term for the immigrant children’s English, since different terms for additional language acquisition prevail. We found plenty of research on bilingual and multilingual children learning AL, but in all these cases, the children were already proficient in the language of instruction. Therefore, we eventually decided, for this thesis, that the English language is most immigrant children’s L3. Once we had agreed on this, we found our search and findings more manageable to handle and structure. However, this had no positive impact on our search. We found the research to be insufficient and came to the conclusion that there should be more research conducted in this particular field.

All research found for this thesis agrees with the fundamental values in Lgr11 concerning learning and acquiring language, in this case English, is best developed in contexts where the English language is used (the use of the TL), based on each individual child’s previous knowledge and experience, as well as their personal interests. Basing the teaching on each individual child’s needs, is even more important in classrooms where there are immigrant students learning two new languages simultaneously, Swedish and English. Referring to research found and studied for this thesis, we found no evidence to justify immigrant students’ poor results in English in Swedish Primary school. According to previously mentioned researchers such as for i.e. Cenoz (2003), Cummins (2001) and Stakanova & Tolstikhina (2014), if properly implemented all children have the same opportunity to learn, acquire and develop AL regardless if that AL is their second, third or event tenth. Based on the research read for this thesis and on the answers from our interviews, we come to the conclusion that poor results in immigrant students’ English (Skolverket, 2013) come down to the teachers’ inability to adjust and organize teaching methods according to students’ different needs and abilities. Reasons for this can be as simple as lack of time to plan and prepare. In the early
years of Primary school, the scheduled time for English can be as little as 30 minutes per week, which can also be an affecting factor. However, it can also depend on how proficient, motivated and interested the teachers’ are. Our research disclosed that the teachers in our interview were well aware of different strategies and approaches when teaching EFL. However, they currently did not feel they had any difficulties with the group of immigrant students in their respective classes. Nevertheless, they felt insecure about how they were to handle the situation had the immigrant students’ not been as proficient as they were. This feeling of inadequacy was exhibited in many teachers according to reports (Skolverket, 2013; Skolinspektionen, 2014; Sveriges kommuner och landsting, 2016). There is much strain put on teachers who rarely have much knowledge and experience when it comes to including children, who do not speak a single word of Swedish, into the regular tuition. This can also lead to low expectations on immigrant students’ performance in school (Skolinspektionen, 2014, p. 26; Sveriges kommuner och landsting, 2016). In addition to ever-growing class sizes and the many already existing problems teachers are faced with, puts even more pressure on the teachers.

There are guidelines and recommendations provided by the government regarding the enrollment and handling of the immigrant children; however, for some reason there are difficulties implementing these at school level. It seems there are various difficulties from school to school, as is the extent of the problems (Skolinspektionen, 2014, p. 6-7). Much comes down to the board of education’s inability to provide suitable guidelines for teachers to follow. If provided with such guidelines, teachers could better utilize suitable tools to plan and make necessary adaptations to meet all students’ needs. However, no guidelines and the lack of given resources makes it difficult for teachers to know how to deal with young immigrant students when teaching them English. The teachers in our interview were aware of the many obstacles teachers at other schools experienced, but due to the fact that their own situation was unique in the sense that their immigrant children did not exhibit any particular difficulties learning English in comparison to the Swedish students, and in contrast to what the statistics show (Skolverket, 2013; Begler & Ahnborg, 2011; Torpsten, 2012, p. 77–78) it was not necessary for them to make specific adjustments. However, if our interviewees were to have immigrant children who showed difficulties learning English, they both agreed on not having sufficient experience or the knowledge needed to handle and scaffold these students.
Both teachers make connections to the core content in the curriculum when teaching English and say that they put focus on teaching the students how to communicate in English. They both wanted to create contexts where the students felt safe to speak the language. However, even though content was based on areas of interest and students’ previous knowledge, we question how much the English language actually is stimulated and developed when they both said the Swedish language was the dominating language in the class room. As mentioned previously, our research findings show that using the TL and excluding code-switching in the English language classrooms are vital for the language to be appropriately acquired and developed. Contrary to all positive results research has shown on the use of the TL, our two teachers chose to work in a different way: they use Swedish as the language of instruction. As mentioned before, the reasons for using Swedish in the classroom differs from teacher A to teacher B. Teacher B uses Swedish because it suits her the best. Teacher A on the other hand, wants to conduct classes in the TL, however, when asked why she does not she refers to her students’ inability to understand and comprehend when she only uses the TL. This coheres with what we have observed on our VFUs and seen while temping: the use of Swedish in the English class room is common. We can only conclude that the reason for using Swedish in the English class room is merely convenience and bad habit, and we therefore claim that using any other language than the TL is the reason immigrant students do not reach the knowledge requirements and goals for English to the same degree of success as other groups of students.
7 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to find out what methods Swedish teachers reported using in their K-3 English classrooms to support language development for the immigrant students. We also connect the methods found to Lgr11 and previous research.

To summarize this section of this thesis, two conclusions have been drawn. Firstly, the conclusion is made that the principal and the school administration need to organize guidelines and scaffold teachers to help them acquire appropriate methods on how to include the immigrant students into the regular tuition. The second conclusion that can be drawn is that the Swedish language dominates in the English class room. Evidence shows negative effects not using the TL has on the immigrant children’s opportunity to acquire and develop the English language to the same level of proficiency as their Swedish peers.

7.1 The limitations

This study has some limitations, one of them being the small sample of participants. We only interviewed two teachers at the same school. One might argue that two teachers working at the same school creates both a homogenous group and becomes a geographical limitation. Another limitation is that the sample of respondents consists only of women. An additional possible limitation could be that neither of the interviewed teachers have previous experience teaching English to immigrant students. In turn, this leads to our results not being generalizable or representative for the whole of Sweden.

7.2 Future research

Within the area of L3 learners in a Swedish context it would be beneficial to us as future teachers if research was conducted on what limitations and possibilities the origin of the child’s L1 - if the child speaks a Germanic or non-Germanic language - has on the ability to acquire and develop English. Research presenting successful frameworks on how to include
immigrant students into the English class room in Sweden would also be useful for us as future teachers.
8 REFERENCES


Christensen, Gayle & Stanat, Petra (2007). Language policies and practices for helping immigrants and second-generation students succeed. *The Transatlantic Taskforce on Immigration and Integration, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) and Bertelsmann Stiftung*.


Cummins, Jim & Early, Margaret (2010). *Identity Texts: The collaborative creation of power in multilingual schools*. Trentham Books Ltd. Westview House 734 London Road, Oakhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST4 5NP, UK.


Turnbull, Miles (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but…. Canadian Modern Language Review, 57(4), 531-540. doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.4.531

Hej

Mitt namn är Emma Eriksson. Jag gör min praktik hos på [skolan], och de flesta av er har jag träffat de senaste tre åren. Jag och min klasskompis Valerija Artukovic har nu påbörjat vårt examensarbete och undrar om vi hade fått stjäla en timme av er tid. Då ni undervisar engelska i åk 1-3 skulle vi vilja diskutera vår forskningsfråga med er. Vi har valt att fokusera på nyanländas engelskainlärning i den svenska skolan och är mycket intresserade av att höra hur ni upplever detta i praktiken. Vi tänker oss en gruppintervju, gärna någon gång under v.5 eller v.6, där vi tillsammans kan diskutera och brainstorma detta ämne. Hoppas ni känner er nyfikna och kan tänka er att ställa upp.

Hälsningar / Emma Eriksson & Valerija Artukovic
### 10 APPENDIX 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensioner</th>
<th>Nyckelord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bakgrund</strong></td>
<td><strong>Metoder</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Hur länge har du undervisat i Engelska i F-3? (vilka årskurser undervisar du i? Hur många nyanlända har ni i klassen? Hur länge har de varit i Sverige?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. När börjar man med engelskundervisning på er skola? Finns det någon särskild anledning till detta?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hur relevant, känner ni att er lärarutbildning har varit för er som lärare i engelska på lågstadiet? Känner ni att ni fick rätt redskap med er, eller har ni själva fått utveckla metoder i klassrummet?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Hur arbetar er skola (ni som arbetslag) med läroplanen då det inte finns kunskapskrav för engelska språket förrän i åk 6?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attityder</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kommunikation,</strong> <strong>grammatik,</strong> <strong>hör förståelse,</strong> <strong>läs-/skrivförståelse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Skulle ni föredra att starta engelskundervisningen tidigare/ senare? Varför?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vilka områden i det engelska språket anser du är viktigast? Vad anser du är viktigast för elever i F-3?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Språk</strong></td>
<td><strong>Varför? Om nödvändigt, när?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I vilken utsträckning använder du det svenska språket i engelskaundervisningen?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Känner du dig tillfreds med dina språkval, eller skulle du vilja göra något annurlunda? Isåfall, vad och varför?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vad har influerat din språkundervisning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Varför? Om nödvändigt, när?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kollegor, egna erfarenheter, utbildning</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Undervisnings-metoder | 1. Hur upplever du att undervisningen av nyanlända i engelska skiljer sig från att undervisa icke-nyanlända?  
2. Hur upplever du att undervisningen av nyanlända i engelska skiljer sig från att undervisa dem i andra ämnen  
3. Hur klarar de nyanlända av ämnet engelska?  
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Samarbete och material | 1. Samarbetar du med modersmålslärare för att stödja de nyanlända i engelskundervisningen?  
2. Vad anser du krävs för att kunna stödja de nyanlända eleverna fullt ut i engelskundervisningen? | Material, kunskap, resurser, utbildning |
| Följdfrågor | Vad anser du att en nyutbildad lärare som kommer ut bör tänka på i undervisningen av engelska för nyanlända i F-3 så att de når kunskapskraven? | |