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# Monolingual and Bilingual Pupils' Attitudes towards English Language Learning

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## Abstract

This paper examines how the attitudes are towards the English education, in a school, among pupils in ninth, eighth, and sixth grade, and if monolingual and bilingual pupils feel that they have any advantages or disadvantages when learning English. This study also describes how teachers influence and establish attitudes among their pupils towards the English education.

Both questionnaires and interviews were used in order to collect data valuable for the research questions. The results are thereafter discussed in relation to relevant background information, for example Gardner's (1991) theory about attitudes towards language learning and Ladberg's (1994) theory about second language learning and bilingualism.

The results show that pupils' attitudes influence on the English education, that teachers' attitudes influence and establish pupils' attitudes towards the language learning, and that many of the bilingual pupils feel that they have advantages when learning English.

Keywords: attitudes, monolingualism, bilingualism, teachers' influence, second and third language learning, English education.

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## **1. Introduction**

As English is one of the three core subjects in Swedish schools, it is important that all students have the same opportunity to learn the language. Attitudes are said to play a significant role in language learning (Gardner, as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p.149), and therefore negative attitudes towards English can lead to less knowledge and understanding of English in Sweden in the future. By identifying both positive and negative attitudes towards learning English, teachers have the ability to create more positive attitudes towards the English education among their pupils. In addition, Sweden has become a multilingual country, and the schools might have to take into account that monolingual and bilingual pupils approach the English education under different conditions since their language backgrounds differ. The notions above lead to this paper's research questions which are outlined below.

### ***1.1 Research Questions***

The research questions are:

- What attitudes do pupils have towards the English education and do teachers' attitudes influence their pupils' attitudes towards the language learning?
- Do monolingual and bilingual pupils feel that they have any advantages or disadvantages when learning English?

## **2. Background**

This section contains background information about attitudes and motivation in language learning, attitudes to bilingualism, conditions for foreign language learning, and teachers influence on foreign language learning.

### ***2.1 Attitudes and Motivation in Language Learning***

People are not born with attitudes, instead the environment and education affect a learner's attitude towards the language he or she is about to acquire (Gardner as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p. 149). Attitudes are said to be "*an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent*" (Gardner as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p.149). Therefore language learning is affected by the motivation that pupils bring to class, because effort, desire and positive attitudes towards language learning are important since learners are said to acquire a language easier if they have a positive attitude than if they

have a negative attitude. These attitudes can refer either to the people speaking the language in question, or what the new language can be used successfully for (Gardner as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p.149).

In a report made by Skolverket (2007), pupils in Sweden got to talk about their attitudes to school and learning. They answered that it is important to understand why they learn something and what the knowledge can be used for. Pupils with positive attitudes are more likely to acquire a language, than those who cannot see the reasons why they should learn the language (Skolverket, 2007). However, positive attitudes can come from the achievement of learning a language, and a positive outcome can be motivating for a person to study a new language (Gardner, 1991). Garrett says that “attitudes will serve this kind of two-way function” (2010, p. 21), being both an input for learning, and an output when learning a new language because if a person has a positive attitude towards learning a language, his or her motivation to learn is higher than if the person has a negative attitude, and also because a person can get a higher motivation to continue to learn another language if he or she has already learnt a new language successfully (Garret, 2010). Examples could be an achievement within a social context in school or an application for a new job that demands knowledge in a particular language (Gardner, 1991). In the report from Skolverket (2007), eighty-two percent of the bilingual pupils like to learn English in comparison to sixty-seven percent of the monolingual pupils. When having positive attitudes, a person can learn a language easier than if he or she has a negative attitude towards learning languages because the learner feels that a positive outcome can be a result of learning the language (Ladberg, 1994).

People feel the need to study language because they want to be able to work and study abroad and therefore the attitudes towards language learning are more positive. Another positive input is that people travel more nowadays, and they want to be able to speak to people in the countries they visit. Language learners understand the positive sides to learning English, and therefore they will have a more positive attitude than those who do not see the beneficial outcomes of learning a new language (Hoffman, 1991).

## ***2.2 Attitudes to Bilingualism***

Both Hoffman (1991) and Baker (2001) describe the negative attitudes that language learners have towards bilingualism, for example that bilinguals will have difficulties to function in both languages, or even to control either one of the languages. It is called semilingualism, and Baker describes that some people believe that “the group is regarded as not having ‘sufficient’ competence in either language” (2001, p. 9). Another negative attitude that language learners have towards bilingualism is that bilinguals do not put enough effort in either language because they think it is time saving to switch between the two languages instead of trying to use either one consistently (Garrett, 2010). Furthermore, many people believe that if a person has two or more languages they will outplay each other (Baker, 2001).

On the other hand, other researchers argue that two or more languages do not conquer, but complete each other and help one another to fill out missing gaps in both languages. Many languages provide a wider understanding, because people can use their languages to view facts from different perspectives instead of one (Ladberg, 1994). Since languages do not interfere with each other, people are not limited to learn only one language. It is an advantage to know many languages when learning a new one because it has been proven that people who know many languages learn a new one easier than those people who only know one language (Ladberg, 1994).

## ***2.3 Conditions for Foreign Language Learning***

Hoffman (1991) argues that bilingual pupils need to continue to develop their first language, and as Skutnabb-Kangas states in her article “controlling your native language and having the possibility to develop it, is a condition to be able to learn a foreign language” [my translation] (1975, p. 37). Those bilingual students who get the chance to continue to develop their mother tongue are more successful in learning a second language, than those who do not get the same opportunity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1975).

Several factors contribute to a successful learning of a new language, and according to Spolsky (1989), second language learning depends on a model where  $Kf = Kp + A + M + O$ .  $K$  means the knowledge and the skills that a person has;  $Kf$  means the knowledge acquired over time, and  $Kp$  means the knowledge in the second language and in the mother tongue.  $A$  means physiological, biological, intellectual, and cognitive factors that can affect the person;  $M$  means a

person's personality, attitudes, motivation, and anxiety, and *O* means how often a person get the chance to use the language (Spolsky, 1989).

English would be easier to learn if pupils with Swedish as their second language were taught in their first language and not in their second because they struggle not only with the new facts, but also the language the facts are written in (Ladberg 1994). On the other hand, bilinguals have “knowledge about the abstract character of language” (Myers-Scotton, 2006, p. 339), and therefore they can understand that a sentence might get another meaning when the word order changes. They also understand change of time in verb-forms better than monolingual children, and are therefore seen as having advantages when it comes to grammar (Myers-Scotton, 2006).

Before, pupils were seen as blank papers, and the knowledge was moved from the teachers to the pupils. Nowadays, interaction has become more and more important when learning a new language, and many teachers support and interact with their pupils in different contexts, such as giving feedback, questioning-answering, and turn-taking (Chaudron, 1990). Interaction is important because of three factors:

1) only through interaction can the learner decompose the TL structures and derive meaning from classroom events, 2) interaction gives learners the opportunities to incorporate TL structures into their own speech [...], and 3) the meaningfulness for learners of classroom events of any kind, whether thought of as interactive or not, will depend on the extent to which communication has been jointly constructed between the teacher and learners. (Chaudron, 1990, p. 10) [TL = target language, my comment]

Inbar-Lurie (2010) says that students who learn a new language in only the target language do not show better results than those who learn in both the target language and their first language. People question whether to reject language one totally, or to see it as a compliment when learning English. Teachers who favour target language argue for the importance of using the language one is about to acquire, while opponents argue that language one can be an important part since pupils bring knowledge to the classroom in their first language which can be used when learning their second language. Many teachers alter between their two languages, and teach for example

grammar and in-class activities in their first language, while they communicate and interact with the class in their second (Inbar-Lurie, 2010).

#### ***2.4 Teachers' Influence on Foreign Language Learning***

The Pygmalion Prophecy stems out of the notion that what a person expects from other people is likely to come true since the first person puts his or her faith into the others' ability to succeed. Therefore, teachers' expectations of pupils are also likely to come true because if the pupils feel that their teachers expect more from them, they have a higher chance of succeeding than if their teachers expected less (Center for Teaching Excellence, 2009).

Pupils' attitudes towards learning languages are influenced by their teacher's attitudes and the attitudes incorporated by teachers are difficult to change, because the teachers have the power to establish, but also keep certain attitudes within the classroom (Lasagabaster and Huguet, 2006). Teachers' influence on their pupils' achievements are common knowledge within the science of education, and full support from their teachers is important for pupils when trying to learn a new language (Ladberg, 1994).

Teachers do not only influence, but also establish pupils' attitudes towards their own language and towards language learning (Gardner, 1991; Ladberg, 1994). When planning an education in English, teachers should focus on pupils' interests and on the importance of learning a second or third language because "*a person's language develops particularly through a close communication with important people about important things*" [my translation] (Ladberg, 1994, p. 199). In a study made by Clark (1995) pupils said that their language education was repetitive and that the things they learnt in school did not match the things they would talk about outside their classroom. Two important inputs when learning a new language for the pupils in this study were the relevance in what they learnt and what the language could be used for. Teachers who consider multilingualism as being a positive element in school will be more open to use second language learners' experiences and to work close with the teachers who teach mother tongue when they are teaching in mixed classes (Hoffman, 1991).

### **3. Design of Study**

The purpose of this section is to provide information about the aim and data. Furthermore, a detailed description of the research method will be given, and finally the scope will be presented.

### ***3.1 Aim***

The aim of this paper is to answer the research questions using both questionnaires and interviews to investigate pupils' attitudes towards the English education, how teachers' attitudes can influence and establish pupils' attitudes, and if there are any advantages or disadvantages being monolingual and bilingual when learning English.

### ***3.2 Data***

The questionnaire can be found in the appendices. It focuses on the pupils' attitudes towards their English education; if they like to learn English or not and if they think it is important or not; why they learn English, and if it is useful or not. It also focuses on the pupils' feelings towards being monolingual or bilingual; if they think it is easier or more difficult to learn English being bilingual, and if they have any advantages or disadvantages being monolingual or bilingual, and if these factors influence their ability to learn English. However, many pupils did not answer the last two questions, about whether it is easier or more difficult to learn English being bilingual, and if bilinguals or monolinguals have any advantages or disadvantages when learning English, and therefore one can assume that they did not fully understand the questions. The data might have been more accurate if there had been four questions, instead of two, asking the same questions, but the monolingual and bilingual pupils in separate questions, and this should be taken into consideration when analyzing the results.

The data comes from thirty pupils from ninth grade, thirty pupils from the eighth grade, and fourteen pupils from the sixth grade. Thirty-seven of the pupils have English as their second language and thirty-seven of the pupils have English as their third language. Some pupils might speak more than three languages, but since this study only distinguishes between monolingual and bilingual pupils, the latter fall under the same category, i.e. bilinguals.

Furthermore, the data also contains answers from the two interviewed teachers and their reactions to the pupils' answers in the questionnaires and how their own attitudes can influence and establish their pupils' attitudes towards learning English. The teachers were both female, and one was teaching English, while the other one was teaching Swedish as a second language. Since the two teachers teach different subjects, they target different aspects in the study which makes it possible to draw deeper conclusions from the results.

### **3.3 Method**

Denscombe argues that the decision of which research method to use should be based on the method most valuable for the investigation (2007). According to Østbye, Knapskog, Helland and Larsen (2004) questionnaires are suitable when it comes to collecting a large amount of data, and therefore questionnaires were used because a quantitative amount of data was needed in order to answer the first part of the research questions in this paper. Ramage, Bean and Johnson (2009) provide information for what questions to ask, how to ask them, and how to match the questions to the research aim. Their main line of thoughts has had an influence on the questionnaire design. When filling out the questionnaire, the pupils knew about the purpose of this study, and what their answers would be used for. They were aware of their anonymity. However, by knowing about the purpose, the pupils might have been influenced in one way or another. On the other hand, it would not have been ethical to keep the purpose from them, and they might not have wanted to fill out the questionnaires without knowing the purpose.

The study was carried out among ninth, eighth and sixth graders during four days and the pupils had approximately forty minutes to fill out the questionnaires. I was present during the time they filled out the questionnaires which gave them the possibility to ask questions about parts they did not fully understand, but at the same time the result might have been affected by this since the answers the pupils got from me might have pointed them in one direction or another suited for the research questions. However, it is important that the pupils had the chance to ask because otherwise they might have felt that the questionnaires were too difficult to fill out, and maybe they had skipped more questions than just the last two questions. The questionnaires given to the pupils were all in English; however, some of the pupils answered in Swedish, and therefore a translation had to be made of some answers. This might have had an impact on the results, but if the pupils were not allowed to answer in Swedish when they wanted to, they might not have wanted to fill out the questionnaires at all. Another negative aspect one has to consider when using questionnaires is that pupils might skip questions or give unclear answers, and these unclear answers cannot be clarified because the usage of questionnaires does not leave any room for additional questions. On the other hand, pupils at this young age might feel that interviews are more difficult because they are more personal than questionnaires.

Furthermore, interviews were also used in this study to be able to answer the part of the research question about how teachers' attitudes can influence and establish pupils' attitudes

towards their English education. Denscombe (2007) says that one method does not need to eliminate the use of another, and by using two different methods, he argues that you can either question what the result tells you, or add more examples to your discussion. Since two teachers were interviewed another perspective was added to the study, which will deepen the knowledge and understanding of how teachers' attitudes can have an impact on their pupils' attitudes towards their English learning because this method targets a different aspect of the study in comparison to the questionnaire that targets the pupils' attitudes towards their English education. The two teachers were chosen for this study because they teach different subjects and that will deepen the analysis in this study since they can add two different perspectives to the first about the pupils' attitudes. The teachers were separately interviewed because otherwise they might have influenced each others' answers. Both interviews took place in a classroom, and one lasted approximately eleven minutes, while the other lasted approximately fifteen minutes. The interviews were recorded because it is useful to have the possibility to go back and listen to the interviews again if needed. The data can be seen as being more accurate if it is recorded in comparison to taking notes since subjective interpretations are avoided. The interview questions are presented in the appendices. The teachers were also informed about the purpose of the study and about their anonymity.

### ***3.4 Scope***

The data comes from a school in a medium sized city in the southern part of Sweden, where 20 percent of the pupils have an immigrant background, often in second or third generation. The scope is pupils in the sixth, eighth, and ninth grade learning English as their second or third language, but also two teachers, one that teaches English and one that teaches Swedish as second language. The two teachers gave answers connected to different groups of pupils because the first teacher teaches mixed classes, and the other teacher teaches some of the pupils who have English as their third language. The data is analyzed with focus on the differences between what attitudes the pupils have towards their English education, and if the teachers' attitudes influence and establish pupils' attitudes towards their language learning. In addition, if there are any advantages or disadvantages being monolingual or bilingual. On the other hand, the data will not be analyzed with consideration to gender, age and/or social difference, and/or their grades in English.

## 4. Results

This section contains a description of the collected data, and it is divided in six sub-sections where each section contains a figure which shows how the respondents answered the questionnaires. Each section also contains the answers to the open questions connected to the questions asked in the figures, and a summary with the over-all results. Finally, there is a general summary for the whole section.

### 4.1 Attitudes to English Education

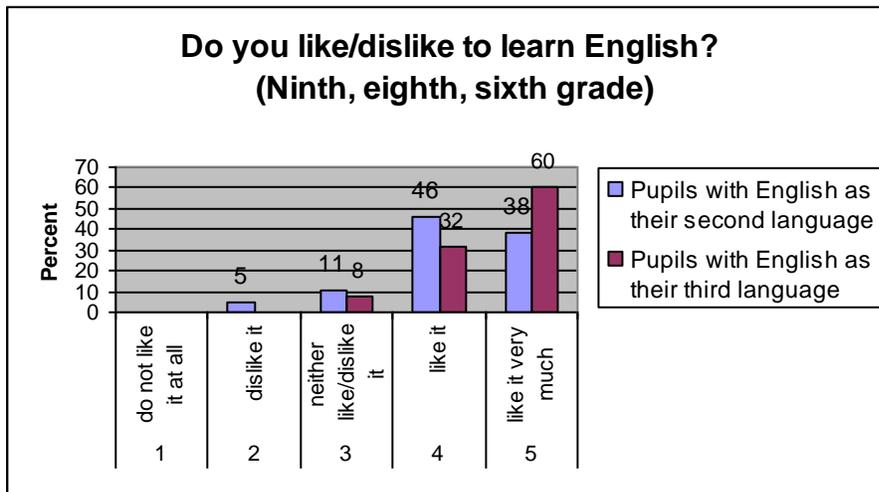


Figure 1. Liking or disliking English

Figure 1 shows that most of the pupils either like to learn English or like it very much. More pupils with English as their third language either like it or like it very much while more pupils with English as their second language either dislike it or neither like it or dislike it.

#### *Why do you like it/not like it? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils think it is fun, good, and important and useful for communicating with people, studying and working abroad and when they were travelling and watching movies, but some also thought it is boring and difficult, and that their teacher is boring. “I like to travel, and to be able to talk with others you have to know english. When I get older I think I would like to study in another country a short time. It’s very good to know english if you’re going to work on a job that has international connections”, “Our teacher is really booooring”.

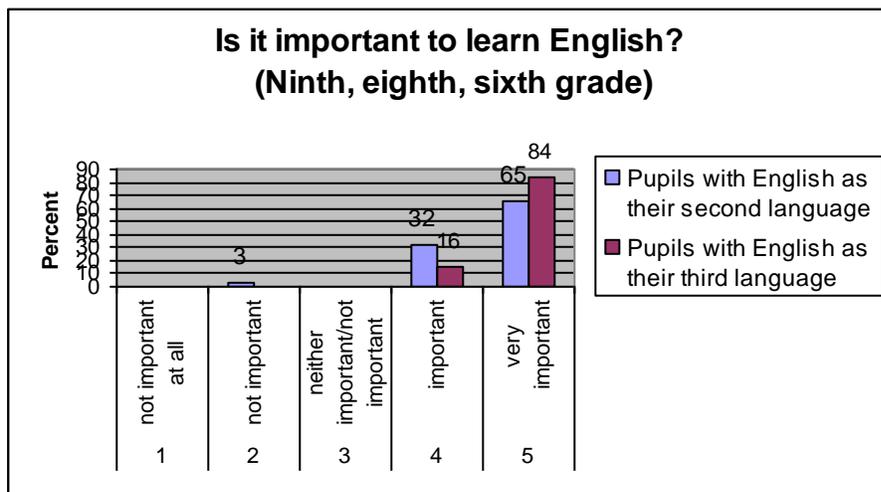
### *English as Third Language*

The bilingual pupils think it is fun, important and good because English is spoken in many countries, and therefore they could talk to people when travelling, studying or working abroad. “it’s funny and good to learn another language”, “It’s fun and I like to learn new english words, to write and speak and I want to live in america and work on Teen Vogue so if im going to a meeting I have to speak english”.

### *Summary*

Over-all more pupils with English as their third language like to learn English than those pupils who learn English as their second language. In addition, most of the pupils like it because they want to be able to communicate with people and to study and work abroad. Some of the monolingual pupils dislike learning English, while there is no one who dislikes it among the bilingual pupils.

### **4.2 Importance of Learning English**



**Figure 2. The importance or unimportance of learning English**

Figure 2 shows that almost all pupils think it is important or very to learn English. A few of the monolingual pupils think it is not important to learn English, while non of the bilingual pupils think it is not important.

### *Why is it Important/not Important? English as Second language*

For monolingual pupils English is important because of the globalization and communication with other people, the usage of English at a future job, information and TV shows and movies are

in English, and travelling. Some think it not important because in Sweden we speak Swedish. “The world is getting more global and it is very important to be able to communicate with people from all over the world. English is and universal language”, “I don’t think that it is important because we are in Sweden and we speak swedish”. “You can talk with people from other contries”, and “because you can understand each other easier if both have learnt English, and it is also easier to get a job abroad if you can talk English” [my translation].

### *English as Third Language*

For the bilingual pupils English is important when travelling and communicating with relatives and people from other countries, and work or study abroad. “The communication with other people in the world would be very hard if we didn’t have any in common language”, “It’s very important because if you want to go somewere and you don’t know the language, you can speak english and he/she will understand” and “Because when you become an adult and get a job, then you have to be able to speak English” [my translation].

### *Why do you learn English? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils learn English for communication, for travels, and because they have to and it is important. “To talk with people around the world”, “Because I have to” [my translation]. “It’s a class in school”, “for our own sake, when we get older and when you travel abroad”.

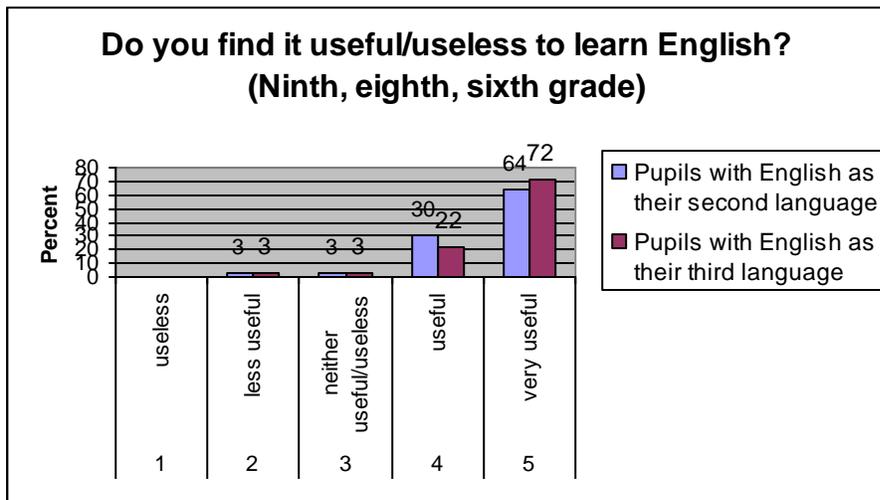
### *English as Third Language*

The bilingual pupils need it for communication; it is important; they have to and to get a work abroad. “To comunicate with people who isn’t from Sweden”, “It’s a big language and you can talk english wherever you go”., and “I have too... :P”. “because I want to get a job and to be able to speak with them who do not speak English” [my translation].

### *Summary*

Most of the pupils think it is either important or very important to learn English because they want to have the ability to communicate with people outside of Sweden. They also want to travel, work and study abroad. Some of the pupils with English as their second language think it is less important because they live in Sweden and talk Swedish.

### 4.3 Usefulness of Learning English



**Figure 3. The usefulness or uselessness of learning English**

Figure 3 shows that almost all pupils think it is either useful or very useful to learn English. A few of the pupils think it is less useful or neither useful nor useless to learn English.

#### *Why is it useful/useless to learn English? English as Second Language*

For the monolingual pupils English is useful for communication with people when they travel and in future jobs, but some do not need it because in Sweden we talk Swedish. “If I get a job in a different country it’s important to talk/understand english. And also when you travel”, “To be able to speak with people in other countries. To be able to waork or study outsea”, and “We speak swedish in Sweden”.

#### *English as Third Language*

For bilingual pupils English is useful when travelling or communicating with people outside of Sweden, but also when listening to music or watching a movie. For example “when you are on vacation, you can comunicate with the people. And if you want to work abroad it’s very important” and “Useful when your in another country where they don’t speak swedish”,

#### Summary

Over-all the pupils think it is useful to learn English because they want to be able to communicate with people who do not speak Swedish, and they want to travel, work and study

abroad. For some pupils in the eighth grade who have English as their second language, English is not useful because they say that people speak Swedish in Sweden.

#### 4.4 Variation in English Education

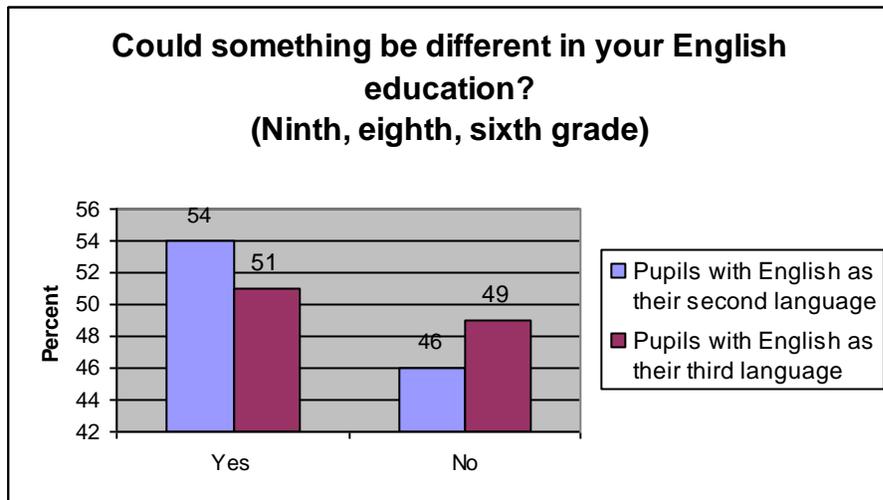


Figure 4. Variation in English

Figure 4 shows that there are more monolingual pupils than bilingual pupils who think something could be different in their English education.

#### *How do you think you learn English the best? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils learn the best by reading English books, listening and speaking with the teacher and people from other countries, in school, and from TV and media. “When the teacher talk to me and we have a conversation” and “When you talk a lot and if you write short stories and so. Also to watch English movis with English subtitles”.

#### *English as Third Language*

The bilingual pupils learn the best by reading English books, speaking to each other and their families, listening to people, watching movies without Swedish subtitles, paying attention in class, and in small groups. “By listening and reading. Especially reading. If I watch an english movie I sometimes have english subtitles” and “When you only talk english in class. Homework, grammar exercises and stuff like that”.

### *How do you think you would learn more English? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils think they would learn more by reading, writing, speaking and communicating with the teacher and each other; when it is more fun and they get to make individual choices, and if they got to go to an English speaking country. “If the teacher talk to me and ask me questions so I can answer”, “More teamwork, if students got to choose what to work with they would get work motivated”, “Practice in school and go to countrys there they speak English”, “If we started talking more english not just on english lesson”.

### *English as Third Language*

The bilingual pupils want more communication with the teacher and each other; others want to travel more and others want more variation; some say that listening to music would help. “If the teacher spoke English the whole time”, and “if we were obligated to speak English in class” and “if you would have more English in school. And, if you were obliged to talk only English to each other”.

### *What could be different? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils want more speaking and communicating, reading, listening, and movies/TV watching, and harder lessons and a better teacher. “That we talk more English in the class in the English lessons”, and “Using more media, like TV and books. More speaking and pronunciation”. “More teamwork, if students got to choose what to work with they would get more motivated”, “variation” [my translation]. “talk more English in the lesson” [my translation], “by being smaller groups and more teachers in English, so you get a greater chance to answer questions or whatever it is” [my translation],

### *English as Third Language*

The bilingual pupils want more speaking, reading, discussing, spelling, visiting other countries, and a larger project. Some want nothing to change, and some want a new teacher. “More fun in the classroom. More speaking, listening, spelling and pronunciation”, “New teacher?”, “More useful words (spelling), more speaking... like a big project!”.

### Summary

Over-all more pupils want something to be different with their English education than those who do not want something to change; moreover, more monolingual pupils want something to be different in their English education than the bilingual pupils do. The pupils say that they learn the best by reading and speaking English; furthermore, they say that they would learn more by communicating with each other and the teacher, by visiting other countries, and when the education is fun and varied.

### 4.5 Third Language Acquisition

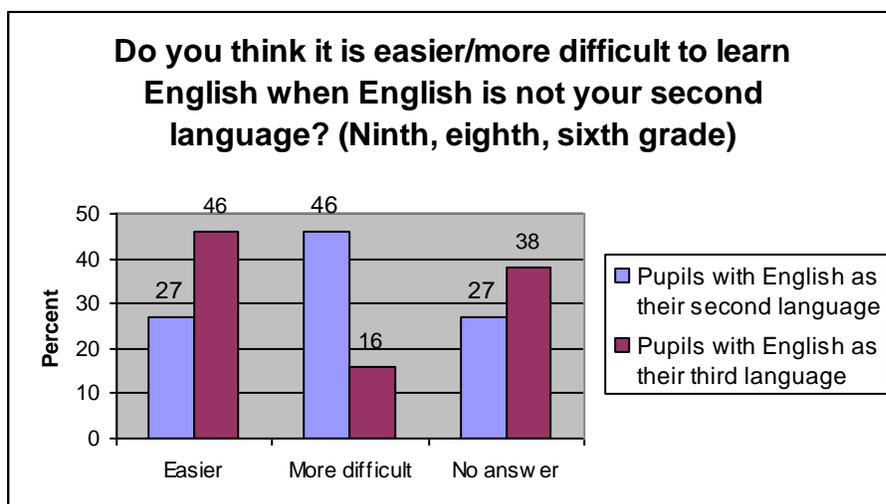


Figure 5. Third language acquisition

Figure 5 shows that more bilingual pupils think it is easier to learn English when being bilingual, and more monolingual pupils think it is more difficult to learn English when being bilingual.

#### *Why do you think it is easier/more difficult? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils say that it is easier because you have already learnt another language and you know how to learn better, but it is more difficult because you have another language to think about, to control and focus on, and you might mix the languages; it is easier to learn only two, and because you have to learn Swedish really good first, and because English is taught in Swedish and not in the person's first language. "Because then you have another language to think about too", and "you have already learned another language so you know how you learn the best "you new how to learn better", "because you have three languages to think about, and in addition the teacher teaches in Swedish and not in the person's first language" [my translation].

### English as Third Language

The bilingual pupils say that knowing two languages before learning a new could be easier because they have knowledge about, can relate and compare to other languages, and sometimes they understand better in English than in Swedish. Some also answered that it depends on interest. On the other hand, some say that it will be more difficult since it is another language to keep track of. “Sometimes there are words that are similar to Spanish. You can also compare grammar to your second language”, “it will be easier because I have learnt two languages already” [my translation], and “another language to keep track of” [my translation].

### Summary

Over-all, the monolingual pupils think that it is more difficult for bilinguals than it is for monolingual to learn English, while over-all the bilingual pupils think that it is easier for them to learn English than it is for those who are monolingual. Some pupils think it is more difficult because bilinguals mix languages and it is difficult to keep track of three languages instead of two. On the other hand, some pupils think that it is easier because bilinguals know two languages already; they can relate and compare the languages, and they know how to learn languages the best way.

### 4.6 Monolingual or Bilingual

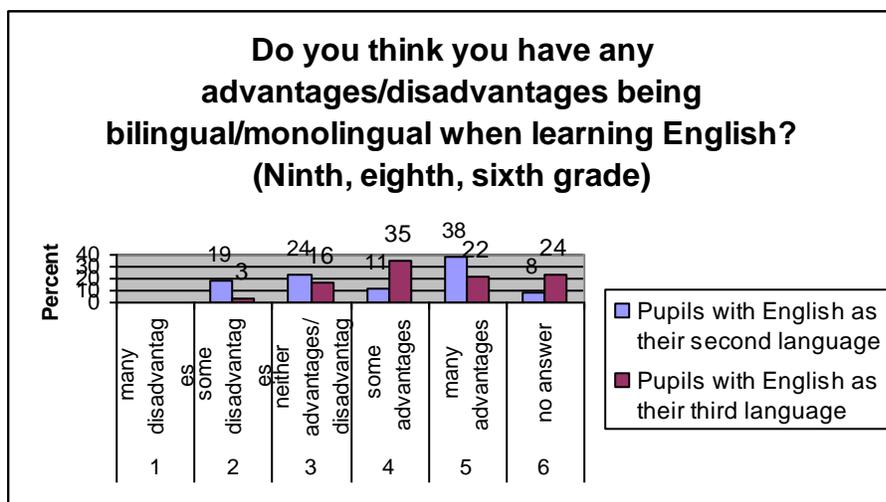


Figure 6. Monolingual or bilingual

Figure 6 shows that more monolingual pupils think that they have disadvantages being monolingual when learning English, while more bilingual pupils think that they have advantages

being bilingual when learning English. However, more monolingual pupils think that they have many advantages being monolingual when learning English, while more bilingual pupils think they have some advantages being bilingual when learning English.

#### *Why do you think you have advantages/disadvantages? English as Second Language*

The monolingual pupils think they have disadvantages because bilinguals can see pattern of words and grammar, and it might be easier to learn another language when you already know two. They also think they had advantages because the bilinguals have to learn Swedish grammar first; they do not have as much to learn as bilinguals and it is easier to learn just two languages because one can mix them otherwise. "I think it's easier to just have one language", "I think it's easier to just have one language", and "You get to know different type of grammar which leads to better grammar in other language", and "I think it can be both advantages because you usual talks different languages and disadvantages because its much to control.

#### *English as Third Language*

The ninth graders think they have advantages because they know, can compare, and see similarities between the languages, and because you have learnt a language, and therefore it is easier to acquire another. They think they have disadvantages because you have many languages to focus on, and because English is taught in Swedish. One said it depends on interests in learning a language. "As I said it depends on the person if he/she want to learn english or not. If he/she wants than its easier to learn", "I compare the languages and learn faster", and "I have some advantages because it's easy for me to learn English when I speak French Cause there are some words that are similar and it makes it easier to understand French words in English". "it would be easier for me if the English education was in Arabic".

#### *Summary*

Over-all there are more pupils with English as their second language who think that they have disadvantages being monolingual when learning English. Moreover, there are more pupils with English as their third language who think that they have advantages being bilingual when learning English. The pupils with English as their second language think that bilinguals have advantages because they know many languages already and they can compare the languages, but

they also think that monolinguals have advantages because they have only two languages to control and they do not mix the languages. The pupils with English as their third language think that they have advantages because they have already learn another language and they have therefore an easier time to acquire another, but some of them also think they have disadvantages because they have many languages to focus on and because the education is taught in contrast to Swedish.

#### ***4.7 General Summary***

Over-all, the monolingual and bilingual pupils either like to learn English or like it very much, and there are only some monolingual pupils that dislike learning English. Most of the pupils like it because they want to be able to communicate, study, and work outside of Sweden in the future. In addition, most of the pupils in both categories think that English is either important or very important as well as useful or very useful to learn because they want to travel, work, and study abroad. A few monolingual pupils think it is less important and less useful to learn English because in Sweden people speak Swedish.

Furthermore, more than half of the pupils in both categories want something to change in their English education. In addition, more monolingual pupils want something to be different in their language learning, than the bilingual pupils want. Almost all pupils think they learn the best by reading and speaking, and they want a more varied and fun education as well as more communication with the teacher and each other.

Many of the monolingual pupils think it will be more difficult for the bilingual pupils to learn English, while many of the bilingual pupils think they will have an easier time. Many pupils think that bilinguals will mix their languages and that it will be more difficult to control three languages instead of two, and therefore the monolingual pupils will have advantages when learning English. On the contrary, many pupils think that the bilinguals will have an easier time because they have already learnt a second language; they can compare their languages and they know how to learn the best way, and that they therefore have advantages when learning English.

## **5. Result from the Teacher Interviews**

The first teacher thinks it is important to be interested in the things you are supposed to learn. She says that it “will be so much easier to learn a language if you have more than one language already [...], and if you are interested in languages you will continue to be interested and continue to learn more language after that also”. The second teacher answers that it is easier to reach those pupils who have “the desire, to have that, it will be easier if you have it from the beginning. It is, of course, always more difficult to reach children who do not have the desire from the beginning”, and she furthermore says that the parents’ attitudes are important because they will affect the children’s attitude. “The parent have a great impact, their, the parents have a great impact on what attitudes the children will have, or have”.

The first interviewed teacher says that attitudes are one of the most important factors when it comes to learning languages. She says “you need to be motivated, and maybe especially when it comes to languages because there are so many different parts when it comes to language study”. She continues with “the major part is the attitude; I mean that goes with all subjects of course because if a pupil isn’t interested in learning the language, [...] it is, it will definitely show in the results”, and “there are so many different parts when it comes to language study. I mean it is not only speaking and writing; it is also grammar that takes a lot of time”. Furthermore, she argues for the importance of knowing why one is supposed to learn something “you don’t understand the reason to why you learn the stuff, you will find it really, really difficult to learn it”. In addition, the other teacher agrees that attitudes are important; she argues that “they are important; it is hard to say how important, but of course they mat, that it matters”.

Both teachers agree that their own attitudes are important when teaching. The first teacher says that the intermediate teachers “they aren’t actually really, really interested in it; they are not English teachers; they are our former, our former “intermediate level teacher” [my translation], and [...] “even though they are good at English that’s not their main subject, and not really interested in it. And, I think that in those cases the attitude from the teachers definitely shines through”, and in addition the other teacher says that “it is of course Alpha and Omega; how I as a teacher behave around my own subject. If I show that I think it is fun, and that it is important, that is, that reflects, that mirrors”. She continues with “those teachers that one learnt the most from were those who really enjoyed their subjects”.

The first teacher says that she think that the students want more speaking because they have talked about the importance of speaking when learning a new language. “I as a teacher;

I think that it is really, really important to speak a lot of English, [...] we usually talk about how important it is to dare to speak English otherwise you will, I mean that's the most important thing about learning English I think". The other teacher believes that they answered that because speaking is more spontaneous and creative. The pupils get the chance to contribute and be a part of the lesson. "One can co-operate; one can listen to each other; one can learn from each other. There is a lot going on. It is more spontaneous, often in, during a lesson when you focus on the oral because one cannot keep control as a teacher. You give the word to the pupils, so it can really go in either direction".

Smaller groups was the answer the first teacher gave to what she wanted to be different with the English education, while the other one answered that she wanted more interaction with English-speaking pupils from other countries. "[Y]ou can mix it a little with, with speaking in a natural context, maybe, with pupils who, English-speaking pupils from England and USA. One can blog together, and to learn by speaking with someone who knows the language".

Both teachers agree that bilinguals feel that they have advantages when learning English. The first teachers says "I definitely think that they have an advantage because they are aware of the structure, that there are many different structures in languages", and "for example word order is, not always does a sentence have the same word order in different languages, and they are aware of this already, and the also know that there could be differences when it comes to time". The other teacher says that "first and foremost, research shows that language learning is stimulated when there is a second language in the plea. And, then it is of course like that one has a base to build on. One can compare; one can learn the language and look at it from different perspectives". The teachers mutually think that if pupils have difficulty with talking Swedish, they might have a more difficult time learning English because English is taught from a Swedish perspective. The first teacher says that "when I teach grammar it's going to be too difficult for me to teach it from English to English. I mean difficult to, to talk about nouns, and adjectives [...]. I have to say it in Swedish" however, she says that "I also think that the teachers should think of the idea to look up some words in the kids' mother tongue, for example really, really important words when it comes to grammar structure", and that "the school, they need to be open-minded and maybe teach both maths, English and history, biology, and use the kids' mother tongue also".

“Swedish has to be maintained; one has to have the Swedish and practice and, in Swedish actively during the same time as they study English of course, and then it will be two new languages to keep in mind” says the second interviewed teacher. In addition, the second teacher says that “I wish that the co-operation with the teacher who teach mother tongue would have been better because it is proved, as said before, that those pupils who get to maintain and get support in their mother tongue are more successful in school in comparison to those who do not get that support”. The second teacher says that there is a difference between those pupils who move to Sweden “they do not learn English in the same way in Asia many times. There is a difference in education, and there are some of the pupils who get here and study Swedish at the same time as they get to meet English as the first time” and those who are second generation immigrants “they have advantages, just because they get in contact with so many different languages all the time, and they get to code-switch and change language in different situations”.

### *Summary*

Both teachers say that to be interested and have a desire to learn is crucial when it comes to language learning. In addition, they say that positive attitudes are important in language education. The first teacher says that her own attitudes are important when teaching English and the second teacher agrees and says that her interest for the subject is important. Both teachers agree on the importance of speaking when it comes to language learning, and the first teacher wants smaller groups in her English education, while the second teacher says that communication with native speaking pupils from other countries could be a positive input in the English education. They mutually believe that bilingual pupils have advantages when learning English, but they agree that pupils who have a difficult time with Swedish might have a more difficult time to learn English. Both teachers would like to work closer together with the teachers who teach the pupils native language because they think that might help the bilingual pupils with their education.

## **6. Discussion**

In this section the results are being discussed and related to the background information. Salient patterns are illuminated in order to create a comprehension and wider knowledge about how pupils’ attitudes are towards the English education, how teachers’ attitudes influence and

establish pupils' attitudes, and if monolingual and bilingual pupils feel that they have any advantages or disadvantages when learning English.

### ***6.1 Attitudes Influence the English Education***

Gardner says that if a person has a desire to learn something this is a positive input because pupils who learn something new with a positive attitude have an easier time learning it than if they have negative attitudes (as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p. 149). A conclusion in figure one could be as Gardner describes it, that pupils have a desire to learn English because they think it is important. Furthermore, a second conclusion to this can therefore be that pupils who think that learning English is important also have positive attitudes towards both the language and the learning itself, and therefore also learn it easier. As the second interviewed teachers says "the desire, to have that, it will be easier if you have it from the beginning. It is, of course, always more difficult to reach children who do not have the desire from the beginning".

As Hoffman (1991) argues, language learners are motivated to learn English because they feel they need it for communication with people from other countries. As seen in figure three, almost all pupils are convinced about the usefulness of learning English, and only six percent in the monolingual category, as well as six percent in the bilingual category think that English is either less useful or neither useful nor useless to learn. The monolingual pupils believe that English is useful "if I get a job in a different country it's important to talk/understand english. And also when you travel", and if you want "to be able to speak with people in other countries. To be able to waork or study outsea". People feel the need to study English because they want to be able to work and study abroad (Hoffman, 1991), and the pupils with English as their second language will use English to be able to work and study abroad in the future for example which in one perspective can be seen as a desire to learn something. Without studying English, the pupils might not get the chance to do the things they desire to do because they lack competence in English. There is a beneficial part in learning a language, and that in turn give them the motivation and positive attitude that Gardner (as cited in Spolsky, 1989, p.149) argues is important when learning a new language. In addition, the first interviewed teacher agrees that positive attitudes are important when learning a new language because "you need to be motivated, and maybe especially when it comes to languages" since "the major part is the attitude; I mean that goes with all subjects of course because if a pupil isn't interested in learning

the language, [...], it will definitely show in the results”, and “there are so many different parts when it comes to language study. I mean it is not only speaking and writing; it is also grammar that takes a lot of time”.

In his article Gardner (1991) says that when a person acquires a new language, positive feelings towards learning languages will occur, and this in turn will influence the willingness to learn another language; “attitudes will serve this kind of two-way function” (Garrett, 2010, p. 21). Furthermore, many scientists claim that positive attitudes towards learning languages will affect a person’s capability to acquire the language in question (Gardner, 1991), and as the first interviewed teacher says “it will be so much easier to learn a language if you have more than one language already [...], and if you are interested in languages you will continue to be interested and continue to learn more language after that also”. Positive connotations towards learning a new language will motivate the pupils to learn a third language. One of the respondents in ninth grade answered “as I said it depends on the person if he/she want to learn english or not. If he/she wants than its easier to learn”. The respondent thinks that learning English has more to do with interest than bilingualism, and this claim in addition to what Ladberg (1994) argues that a person who has positive attitudes towards learning a new language will probably have an easier time learning it than the person who has a negative attitude. One of the respondents who dislike learning English also thinks it is useless to learn English because “we speak swedish in Sweden”. Neither does this respondent have any positive attitudes towards English, nor can he see any positive outcomes from learning English, and therefore he might have a more difficult time to acquire the language, than if he could feel that the language was useful to learn.

There are a higher number of pupils who learn English as their third language who like it, than those who learn it as second language according to Skolverket (2007). As seen in figure 1, thirty-two percent of the bilingual pupils like it, while forty-six of the monolingual pupils like it which means that there is a difference between the result Skolverket (2007) obtained and the result in this study. A higher percentage of the monolingual pupils like to learn English, than the bilingual pupils; however, more bilingual pupils like it very much than the monolingual pupils do, which mean that the data in this study can be said to correspond in a way with the result that Skolverket (2007) obtained.

Nowadays, when Europe is more open to immigration and migration, it has become important for people to study languages, because they want to be able to study and work abroad.

People also travel more now than they did before, and therefore communication is important as well (Hoffman, 1991). One of the sixth graders learns English “for our own sake, when we get older and when you travel abroad”. So, his attitude towards learning English is positive because he wanted to be able to communicate with the people in the country where he travelled to. Furthermore, in the report from Skolverket (2007), the result showed that it is important for pupils to understand why they are supposed to learn something. The first interviewed teacher said that “if you don’t understand the reason to why you learn the stuff, you will find it really, really difficult to learn it” which shows that she think it is important to understand why one learns something, and when putting this in comparison to what the pupils in the report said, one can come to the conclusion that pupils get a higher motivation to learn something new if they understand why they are supposed to learn something. In addition, the report also argues for the value of knowing what the new knowledge can be used successfully for in the future (Skolverket, 2007). As one of the girls in sixth grade who learn English as third language puts it: “It’s fun and I like to learn new english words, to write and speak and I want to live in america and work on Teen Vogue so if im going to a meeting I have to speak english”. Learning English is important for her since her goal is to work abroad, and she feels the necessity to speak English with her co-workers. She understands what her language learning can be used successfully for and therefore she has a motivation to learn English. This thought corresponds with what Clark (1995) said in her article that the pupils needed to see the relevance between what they learn and what they use it for because otherwise they will not have the motivation needed in language learning.

The results in figure four show that fifty-four percent of the monolingual pupils, in comparison to fifty-one percent of their bilingual classmates answered that something could be different in their English education. It is interesting because one could connect the fact that fewer monolingual pupils like to learn English, with the fact that they also want their English education to change more than the bilinguals do. In the study by Clark (1995) the result showed that many pupils think that their education should be more varied and that their lessons often was about the same thing over and over again. One of the respondents in eighth grade who has English as her second language thinks the same and says that there could be more “variation” [my translation] in their English education. As Clark (1995) argues pupils need variation to keep them motivated because too much of the same thing will lower their motivation. Two of the bilingual pupils say that “more fun in the classroom. More speaking, listening, spelling and pronunciation” could

change their attitude towards their English education as well as “more useful words (spelling), more speaking... like a big project!”. The first quotation is filled with examples of what could be different within the pupils’ English classes, and they can be connected to the will to get a more varied English education. It seems to be important for the pupil that her language lessons are varied and filled with different assignments instead of being about the same all the time. Also, the second answer argues for the fact that pupils want variation in their education. He claims that a bigger project containing a lot of different parts in language learning would help his to be more motivated in the lessons.

### ***6.2 Bilingualism, Beneficial or Confusing?***

Even though the monolingual pupils do not have any experience themselves concerning how it is to learn English when being bilingual, their attitudes are torn between whether it is easier or more difficult to learn English when one already has two languages. They think it can be more difficult “because then you have another language to think about too”, and in addition many of monolingual pupils say that their bilingual classmates have two languages to keep track of, in comparison to themselves who have only one language before learning English. However, at the same time one of the other respondents say that “you have already learned another language so you know how you learn the best”. As Ladberg (1994) writes, many scientists argue that people who know many languages have an easier time to learn another, which the second teacher agrees with when saying that “one has a base to build on. One can compare; one can learn the language and look at it from different perspectives”. Many of the monolingual pupils do not share the same attitude towards learning English when being bilingual with the teacher since they believe that it is more difficult because bilinguals mix the languages, and they have more words and languages to control. At the same time there are other pupils who’s attitudes are more positive towards bilingualism which state that it must be easier because “you new how to learn better” as a bilingual.

It seems like some of the monolingual pupils think that the bilingual pupils suffer from what Baker calls semilingualism which means that “the group is regarded as not having ‘sufficient’ competence in either language” (2001, p. 9). In comparison, the bilingual pupils think that knowing two languages before learning a new could make it easier because they have knowledge about, can relate and compare to other languages, and sometimes they understand

better in English than in Swedish. As one girl describes her own situation “sometimes there are words that are similar to Spanish. You can also compare grammar to your second language”; she has a positive attitude towards being bilingual when learning her third language, in this case English. In addition to this, the first teacher also agrees that she think that the bilingual pupils have advantages when learning English. She claims that the pupils with English as their third language “have an advantage because they are aware of the structure that there are many different structures in languages”. She says that bilinguals have a better understanding of different structures within different languages than those who have learnt only one language. Some of the bilingual pupils say that English is easier because they have learnt two languages already, and they are used to talk more than one language. Furthermore, one of the bilingual respondents says “I compare the languages and learn faster”, and one of the others says “I have some advantages because it’s easy for me to learn English when I speak French Cause there are some words that are similar and it makes it easier to understand French words in English”. On the other hand, another says that it will be more difficult being bilingual since it is another language to keep track of.

Hoffman (1991) describes one of the more negative sides that people have towards bilingualism which is the notion that people who speak two languages will have difficulties to function in both, or even master either one. However, some of the sixth graders with English as their third language think that there are more positive sides to be able to speak more than one language; “it will be easier because I have learnt two languages already” [my translation] is one of the respondent’s answer. In addition, the second interviewed teacher says that “they have advantages, just because they get in contact with so many different languages all the time, and they get to code-switch and change language in different situations”. However, some of pupils seem to agree with what Hoffman (1991) describes because they think it can be more difficult to learn English as their third language because they have to control more than two languages at the same time; a pupil argue that it is “another language to keep track of” [my translation]. People who use both their languages can be seen as not putting enough effort in either language because they think it is easier to just switch between the languages (Garrett, 2010). Furthermore, many people believe that if a person has two or more languages they will outplay each other (Baker, 2001). In comparison, Ladberg (1994) argues that people who mix languages should not be seen

as less capable of learning another language, because it shows that they can acquire knowledge in more than one language.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1975) and Hoffman (1991) argue that pupils who get the chance to continue to develop their mother tongue will have an easier time learning a second language. As one can see in figure six, only three percent of the pupils with English as their third language thought that they had disadvantages being bilingual in comparison to the nineteen percent of their classmates who thought they had disadvantages being monolingual when learning English. A conclusion can be that children who are allowed to continue to learn their first language will have an easier time to learn a second. The result in figure six shows that children with more than one language feel they have less disadvantages when learning a new language than those who have only one before they learn a second. In addition, one can draw the conclusion that these pupils have probably had the chance to continue developing their first language before learning their second and third. Furthermore, the second teachers argues that “I wish that the co-operation with the teacher who teach mother tongue would have been better because it is proved, as said before, that those pupils who get to maintain and get support in their mother tongue are more successful in school”.

Myers-Scotton (2006) says that bilingual children have “knowledge about the abstract character of language”, and the ability to understand that if a person changes the word order within a sentence, the meaning might also change. In addition, bilinguals understand time better than monolinguals, and they can see that the time changes in a sentence when a person changes the verb. Myears-Scotton (2006) therefore says that bilingual pupils sometimes have an advantage in comparison to there monolingual classmates. The first interviewed teacher also says that “for example word order is, not always does a sentence have the same word order in different languages. And, they are aware of this already, and the also know that there could be differences when it comes to time”.

### ***6.3 Teacher Influence***

Teachers’ attitudes establish and maintain pupils’ attitudes towards learning a new language (Gardner, 1991; Ladberg, 1994). In the interview with the first teacher, she said that she thought that our former intermediate level teachers, who teach a lot of different subjects, are not as enthusiastic as those teachers who teach only English for example. She argues that there is a

difference between “real” English teachers and those who teach English among many other subjects. She claims that “even though they are good at English, that’s not their main subject, and not really interested in it. And, I think that in those cases the attitude from the teachers definitely shines through”. To conclude, she says that it is better having a teacher who has a positive attitude towards the subject he or she teaches, than it is to have a teacher who does not show interest and/or positive attitudes towards the subject because if the teacher is less interested in English for example, the pupils are also more likely to find English less interesting than as if they had an enthusiastic teacher.

Those teachers who see multilingualism as a positive element in school are more welcoming to use second language learners’ experiences when teaching in a mixed class (Hoffman, 1991). “I think that the school, they need to be open-minded and maybe teach both maths, English and history, biology, and use the kids’ mother tongue also” is an answer taken from the interview with one of the teachers. As Hoffman (1991) claims, some teachers are more open-minded towards multilingualism and therefore also more open to work closer with teachers who teach mother tongue. “I also think that the teachers should think of the idea to look up some words in the kids’ mother tongue, for example really, really important words when it comes to grammar structure” says the first interviewed teacher. Furthermore, English would be easier to learn if pupils with another language than Swedish as their first language would be educated in their own mother tongue as one of the pupils in sixth grade who has English as third language says “it would be easier for me if the English education was in Arabic”. In addition, one of the sixth graders who has English as second language says that “[...] the teacher teaches in Swedish and not in the person’s first language”. Already, in sixth grade the pupils can see the importance of understanding the language the new language is taught in to be able to understand how to learn the new language. Pupils who have two different languages have to struggle not only with the facts, but also with the language that the facts are written in (Ladberg, 1994).

One of the respondents in eighth grade who learn English as second language dislike to learn English, and to the question why he dislikes it, he answers that “our teacher is really booooring”. As Lasagabaster and Huguet (2007) state, teachers have the power to establish their pupils’ attitudes and attitudes incorporated by teachers are difficult to change. The respondent’s answer can be an indication that because he thinks that his teacher is boring, he himself feels the same way about the English education. In addition, the second teachers argues

that “it is of course Alpha and Omega; how I as a teacher behave around my own subject. If I show that I think it is fun, and that it is important, that is, that reflects, that mirrors”. As Ladberg describes “[A] person’s language develops particularly through a close communication with important people about important things” [my translation] (1994, p. 199), which could be connected to both answers above about the boring teacher and how teachers should act around their own subjects. The pupil’s answer shows that he does not have a close communication with an important person about important things because he think his teacher is boring and therefore he is likely to feel the same thing about the English education.

Spolsky (1989) formulates a model for how pupils in school acquire a second language. He says that  $Kf = Kp + A + M + O$  where  $M$  means the factors that affect the language learning such as personality, attitudes, motivation, and anxiety. Since most of the pupils in both categories have a positive attitude and like to learn English, a conclusion could be that  $M$  in this case has a positive impact on the pupils’ ability to acquire the new language.  $O$  relates to the situation when a learner of a new language gets the chance to speak the language. One of the respondents thinks that “if the teacher spoke English the whole time” her  $O$  would be more sufficient, and also another respondent says that “if you would have more English in school. And, if you were obliged to talk only English to each other” she would learn more. So, the teacher can have an impact on how often the learners of a new language get the opportunity to use the language they are trying to acquire. If pupils feel that their teachers expect more from them, they are more likely to achieve these goals than if their teachers expected less (Center for Teaching Excellence, 2009).

Those teachers who favour target language learning the most argues that it is important for the pupils to be exposed to the new language to acquire not only the context around the language, but also confidence in the new language; on the other hand, opponents say that L1 can be seen as an important part in learning the new language, and the knowledge the pupils bring to the classroom in their first language can be used in learning the second language (Inbar-Lurie, 2010). He further says that teachers use their L1 mostly when teaching grammar and in-class activities, and that they tend to use the target language more when it comes to communication and interaction with the class (2010). “When I teach grammar it’s going to be too difficult for me to teach it from English to English. I mean difficult to, to talk about nouns, and adjectives [...] I have to say it in Swedish” is the first teachers answer to if teaching English in

contrastive to Swedish will have a negative impact on bilinguals ability to learn English. In contradiction, she continues by saying “I think that it is really, really important to speak a lot of English [...] we usually talk about how important it is to dare to speak English otherwise you will, I mean that’s the most important thing about learning English I think”. So, she admits that she needs to speak Swedish when teaching grammar, but at the same time she is convinced that speaking English is the best way to learn it. One of the respondents says that “if the teacher spoke English the whole time” she would learn more. Another pupil answers “that we talk more English in the class in the English lessons” to the questions what could be different in your English education. Many of the respondents seem to agree that more speaking would help them to learn more English. When learning a new language, teachers today know that interaction such as feedback, questioning-answering and turn-taking is important (Chaudron, 1990). As one of the pupils in ninth grade who has English as second language puts it “if the teacher talk to me and ask me questions so I can answer” when asked how he could learn more English.

#### ***6.4 Concluding Remarks***

The result shows that pupils own attitudes are important when they are trying to learn a new language, in this case English. In addition, the result also shows that teachers’ attitudes influence and establish pupils’ attitudes towards the English education. Furthermore, many of the pupils and both teachers think that being bilingual is beneficial when learning English; however, some of the monolingual pupils believe that there could be difficulties because bilinguals have to focus on three languages instead of two. Also, more bilingual pupils seem to have a more positive attitude towards learning English than bilingual pupils have.

In the future, it would be interesting to do a larger study within the same area, collecting more data than in this research to be able to pose more general conclusions than I have been able to do in this paper. In addition, a study comparing pupils’ attitudes and their results in English would be interesting as well.

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## Appendix I Questionnaire

Female: \_\_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_

If you do not speak Swedish at home; what language do you speak?

\_\_\_\_\_

At what age did you start learning Swedish? \_\_\_\_\_

At what age did you start learning English? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you like/dislike to learn English? (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5
Do not like not at all	dislike it	neither like it/ dislike it	like it	like it very much

Why do you like it/not like it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Is it important/not important to learn English? (circle one)

1	2	3	4	5
not important at all	not important	neither important/unimportant	important	very important

Why is it important/not important? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why do you learn English? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Do you find it useful/useless to learn English? (circle one)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Useless              less useful              neither useful/useless              useful              very useful

Why is it useful/useless to learn English? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you think you learn English the best? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you think you would learn more English? \_\_\_\_\_

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Could something be different in your English education? (circle one)

Yes                                      No

What could be different? \_\_\_\_\_

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Examples: More/less reading, writing, speaking, listening. More/less grammar, spelling, pronunciation etc.

Do you think it is easier/more difficult to learn English if English is not your second language? (circle one)

Easier

More difficult

Why do you think it is easier/more difficult? \_\_\_\_\_

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Do you think you have any advantages (fördelar)/disadvantages (nackdelar) being bilingual (tvåspråkig)/monolingual (enspråkig) when learning English? (circle one)

- 1                      2                      3                      4  
many disadvantages    some disadvantages    neither advantages/disadvantages    some advantages
- 5  
many advantages

Why do you think you have advantages (fördelar)//disadvantages (nackdelar)?

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Thank you for your help!

/Josefin

## **Appedix II Questions to the Teachers**

1 Many pupils like to learn English, and they also think is it important; do you think that this is crucial for their possibility to learn a new language?

2 Why do think it is crucial/not crucial?

3 How important do you think that attitudes are when learning a new language?

4 Why is it important/not important?

5 Are you own attitudes important when teaching? Pygmalion prophecy?

6 Why/why not?

7 Why do you think that most of pupils answered that they wanted more speaking in their English education?

Is there something you think could be different with the English education in school?

8 Many of the bilingual respondents answered that they feel they have advantages being bilingual when learning English, what do you think?

9 Some of the monolingual pupils answered that they thought the bilinguals would have a more difficult time to learn English because they had three languages instead of two to focus on, what are you thoughts on this? Do you agree/disagree? Why/why not?

10 Since English in Sweden is taught in contrastive to Swedish, do you think that has a positive/negative impact when multilingual people try to learn English?

11 Would it be better if English in Sweden was taught in English only?

### **Appedix III Transcript Teacher 1**

Q Many pupils like to learn English, and they also think that it is important; do you think that, that this is crucial for their possibility to learn a new language?

A do you mean if, if they, if they need to learn English in order to learn another language also?

Q I mean if, if they think that it is important will they learn easier than if they thought it was not important?

A yes definitely I think so, I think that any language that you learn will, it will be so much easier to learn a language if you have more than one language already I think, and if you are interested in languages you will continue to be interested and continue to learn more language after that also.

Q and how important do you think that attitudes are when learning a new language?

A I think that like that is, the major part is the attitude; I mean that goes with all subjects of course because if a pupil isn't interested in learning the language, or math or civics or whatever it is, it will definitely show in the results. You need to be motivated, and maybe especially when it comes to languages because there are so many different parts when it comes to language study. I mean it is not only speaking and writing, it is also grammar that takes a lot of time, and if you are not motivated and you don't understand the reason to study grammar than it's gonna be really, really tricky. And of course in a way it's the same with math, if you don't understand the reason to why you learn the stuff, you will find it really, really difficult to learn it. Well, I think to be motivated is really really important

Q And, are your own attitudes also important when teaching?

A yes, definitely, I think that it is a really, really good questions when it comes to especially teaching the English language because we start to teach English from the fourth grade here, a little bit already in the third grade, but basically in the fourth grade, and some teachers that teach English from the fourth grade, they aren't actually really, really interested in it; they are not English teachers; they are our former, our former "intermediate level teacher" [my translation], and they are more into maybe science, and math, and Swedish, and even though they are good at English that's not their main subject, and not really interested in it, and I think that in those cases

the attitudes from the teachers definitely shines through. I think that the pupils can see if the teacher if that is not his or her favourite subject. And, I think it is a great thing if you actually have an English teacher from the very beginning, I think it is a big difference. And, I think that the teachers would agree with me. I mean probably. I've spoken to other teachers, and they don't. I think that they are good at it, but they don't really like it.

Q And, why do you think that most of the pupils in the questionnaires answered that they wanted more speaking in their English education?

A I think it's because they all, they think that it is so much fun to speak English, they really really like it. For example in my class, year six, do you mean that they answered that?

Ya, they did

Than I understood you right, as soon as we have a speaking activity the talk and talk and talk forever, they can talk about anything, and they are really, really good at it. The problem is that we have other skills to, to practice, we need to practice writing, and reading, plus I have 22 students in my classroom when I have English, and not all 22 like to speak. Even though it feels like I have so many hands in the air, I mean I just look at it, maybe I have 12 hands in the air, the rest of them are actually quiet. And, they don't want to speak, maybe they like to, but they don't have the guts to, they don't really, really dare to do it,

Q Would they do it in smaller groups?

A in smaller groups, yes, but some of them still prefer writing and reading. So, I have to do all skills, to practice all skills. And, but I can really, really tell from year six that they are so into it. As soon as we speak, and many of them like it, but some of them also think that it's a really really difficult, and they are afraid that I'll give them the question when we are talking in front of the class, and so on, so but I think that also I as a teacher; I think that it is really, really important to speak a lot of English, and I think and I hope that they answered it because they know that we usually talk about how important it is to dare to speak English otherwise you will, I mean that's the most important thing about learning English I think. To be able to speak English with other people who do not speak the same language as you do.

Q Is there something you think could be different with the English education?

A Yes I definitely think that there should be smaller groups. I mean as we are 28, so already I have another teacher helping me with six of them, the ones that have quite big difficulties when it comes to both speaking and writing English, so I have a good situation with only 22, compare to having all 28 of course, but still 22 is quite a lot when it comes to what we for example just spoke about, giving all pupils the opportunity to speak English because even though I put them in smaller groups many times, there will still be students that stay quiet, unfortunately. For example last year when they were just fifth graders I had them in groups of fourteen, and that was really, really good, so I was happy to have that opportunity, so when we were having English the half the other ones were having math, and then we switched, and that was just perfect.

Q okay, so many of the bilinguals feel that they have advantages being bilingual when learning English, what do you think?

A I definitely agree, I think that they are, in some points there are things that when it comes to learning English that makes more difficult for them, but I definitely think that they have an advantage because they are aware of the structure, that there are many different structures in languages I mean, for example word order is, not always does a sentence have the same word order in different languages, and they are aware of this already, and they also know that there could be differences when it comes to time, and when it comes to, the structure I guess, so I think that they have an advantage.

Q well, many of the, or some of the monolingual pupils answered that they thought that bilinguals would have a more difficult time to learn English because they have three languages to focus on instead of two, do you agree or...?

A well, sometimes it is more difficult for them. It depends on how, how well they speak Swedish, because as you know we learn English from a Swedish perspective, not from their own mother tongue perspective, so of course sometimes they can look at a word in Swedish and they won't know it, and then of course it's gonna be really, really tricky to, to learn it in English, if you don't know it in Swedish, but in my group of, in this class, I don't have that many student with those difficulties with Swedish, but for example in year eight, I also teach in year eight, I have a couple of students, and I often have to explain words to this person that I'm thinking of, in

Swedish first before he could know them in English. So definitely in both cases it is a disadvantage of course to learn English from a Swedish perspective.

Q That's my next questions. Since English in Sweden is taught in contrastive to Swedish, do you think that this has a positive or negative impact when multilingual people try to learn English?

A I think it has a negative impact, I think that, I think it's the way it has to be, for example when I teach grammar it's going to be too difficult for me to teach it from English to English, I mean difficult to, to talk about nouns, and adjectives because it's gonna be too tricky, I have to say it in Swedish, to help them understand, it's gonna be too many tricky words, but I think that teachers we must understand that for those who have big difficulties with the Swedish language we should try to stick to English as much as possible during the lessons just to, kind of give all pupils the same opportunities to learn English. And, I think that other classes with pupils with greater difficulties in Swedish than I have, that is even more important of course, but in my case I think it's okay. And, I also think that the teachers should think of the idea to look up some words in the kids mother tongue, for example really, really important words when it comes to grammar structure and stuff like that, that you could, in for example, if you have in some schools you might have ten pupils who speak , I don't know, Chinese, just for an example maybe you should look that up with their, what do you call it, their teacher that teach them their mother tongue, just to make sure that they really, really understand the stuff.

Q So you think it would be easier for them to learn English if they had their teacher who teach their mother tongue,

A Yes, sometimes I think that could be a good idea to co-operate with those teachers also. But, that of course depends on how well they speak Swedish. In my case or actually, in this case at this school,. I don't think it's that important because our, our students speak Swedish quite well, even though they have other mother tongues than Swedish but if you compare it for example to schools where the kids come from other countries maybe last year it's going to be really tricky and I think that the school they need to be open-minded and maybe teach both maths, English and history, biology, and use the kids mother tongue also.

## **Appedix IV Transcript Teacher 2**

Q Many of the pupils who responded to my survey said that English is fun to learn, and that it is important. Do you think that it is, that their attitudes are important for their ability to learn English?

A Yes, I definitely think that, that it is about. The desire, to have it, it will be easier if you have it from the beginning. It is, of course, always more difficult to reach children who do not have the desire from the beginning and I often notice that the attitudes, the positive attitudes grow with the help from the parents that push on at home. The parent have a great impact, their, the parents have a great impact on what attitudes the children will have, or have.

Q How important do you think the attitudes are?

A For just the learning, or?

Q Mmm

A They are important; it is hard to say how important, but of course they mat, that it matters. They are important.

Q Now, I was about to ask, how important are your own attitudes when teaching? I think about if one expects things from the pupils or if one teaches with special attitudes when one...

A It is of course Alpha and Omega; how I as a teacher behave around my own subject. If I show that I think it is fun, and that it is important. That is, that reflects, that mirrors. So, they, that is Alpha and Omega. And, what one remembers from the time one went to school are those; it is those subjects that one thought were the funniest. Those subjects that one learnt the most from; those teachers that one learnt the most from were those who really enjoyed their subjects. So, it was.

Q Why do you think that most of the pupils who responded to my survey answered they wanted more speaking in their classes? That they wanted to talk more?

A I believe that speaking is more challenging; it is; it is also that I think that one can be more creative in another way in oral language learning. One can co-operate; one can listen to each other; one can learn from each other. There is a lot going on. It is more spontaneous, often in, during a lesson when you focus on the oral because one cannot keep control as a teacher. You

give the word to the pupils, so it can really go in either direction. So, it is more spontaneous; I believe it to be more co-operation, and more creative. It is Challenging because it is of course nervously, a little nervously to talk in front of your class, and of course because the pupil gets the chance to be more active in a way. One gets to be a part, feel that one contributes with something.

Q Is there something you think should be different with the English education in school?

A I think that the teacher here at \*\*\*\*\*-school work in a fantastic way to stimulate the pupils' desire and curiosity and to get them to create language on their own. So, it should be like; it should be them who create the language and by that I do not mean that they should repeat in the same way as I did when I went to school, just repeat and read a text, instead they should be creative and I think that is what we do here at \*\*\*\*\*-school. It has much to do with how they meet the pupils in their environment, and what they are interested in. They use modern technology. What was the question again?

Q The question was if you think something should be different?

A, so if I compare with my own... different from what?

Q if you had wished for something else, that the English education was more about speaking, or reading, or if you something is missing? From the pupils perspective.

A Yes, maybe, maybe you can mix it a little with, with speaking in a natural context, maybe, with pupils who, English-speaking pupils from England and USA. One can blog together, and to learn by speaking with someone who knows the language. It could be that.

Q My next question is that many of the bilingual pupils who responded to my survey said that they feel that they have advantages being bilingual when learning English. Do you think about that?

A I definitely think that it is true, first and foremost research shows that language learning is stimulated when there is a second language in the plea. And, then it is of course like that one has a core to build on. One can compare; one can learn the language and look at it from different perspectives. I can discuss mine, a text in my first language and understand it in a way with help from a teacher who teaches my native language for example. And, one gets another understanding. But, this has both bilingual and Swedish pupils the same base in because English

is both their second language. Then it will be the third language for pupils with Swedish as their second language. But, I think that it is definitely an advantage. Definitely.

Q Can you see any disadvantages, because there were some of the pupils with Swedish as their first language, and English as their second language, who thought that the bilinguals would have disadvantages being, can you see any disadvantages? Do you agree, or disagree?

A Perhaps if one has a really difficult time learning Swedish, and one has its hands full with learning that language. Maybe, it will take a longer time to learn two languages at the same time. Two foreign languages, not that it would be more difficult, but that it takes more time because the Swedish has to be maintained; one has to have the Swedish and practice and, in Swedish actively during the same time as they study English of course, and then it will be two new languages to keep in mind. And, if it will be more difficult I cannot answer; it will perhaps take a longer time and be more demanding in some situations.

Q Since English in Sweden is taught in contrast to Swedish, do you think that it has a negative or positive impact on those who are bilingual before learning English? Will it be more difficult for them who have Swedish and another language?

A Yes, I have noticed that many of my pupils who come from Asia, and have moved from Thailand and China and Vietnam have a more difficult time with English, just because they do not learn English in the same way in Asia many times. There is a difference in education, and there are some of the pupils who get here and study Swedish at the same time as they get to meet English as the first time. There are no movies on TV that, with the speech in English in the same way as we have here. The English is not as available in those countries, I assume I am not a hundred percent sure, but it seems like it, in comparison to Sweden. So, they have, when they get here a huge challenge, and in those pupils I notice that it is really difficult and tuff. But, for those pupils that I teach that are second generation immigrants and who are born here. Then I notice, then I think that they have advantages, just because they get in contact with so many different language all the time, and they get to code-switch and change language in different situations, and then, then, I think that anyway.

Q Do you think it would have been an advantage if English was taught in English only?

A That is a really tricky questions. There are both advantages and disadvantages with that approach. I think that it is important to be able to discuss the new language in a language that one knows, and it is what we work with here in Swedish as second language education where the teachers who teach the mother languages, like support. Then, it is of course, everyone knows that you learn the language best when being abroad. If I want to learn Polish, I travel to Poland, because there one is exposed to the language. It is impossible to take a short cut through the mother tongue; one has to step outside and try. So, there are probably both pluses and minuses. I cannot fully answer if it is the win win because I think. There are pluses and minuses.

Q I thought about the thing you said about using the teachers who teach mother tongue, do you use their mother tongue when learning...

A I wish that the co-operation with the teacher who teach mother tongue would have been better because it is proved, as said before, that those pupils who get to maintain and get support in their mother tongue are more successful in school in comparison to those who do not get that support. But, I wish that I would have a better co-operation with the teachers who teach mother tongue, so we together could walk through the things that are going on in school, those texts, those assignments, together. And explain them in both Swedish and in the native language, but that is impossible here in \*\*\*\* anyway because the teachers who teach mother tongue have to cover the whole city and they are not here all the time. Did I get away from the question now?

Q No, we are still talking about using the mother tongue...

A No, but it is important. It is really important. And to be able to discuss and obtain pre-understanding in their native language in order to learn a new language that is difficult. It is very valuable and I also know that when I have sent a text to teachers who teach mother tongue, and asked him or her to go through this with my pupils, they have discussed the text, and the pupils has obtained pre-understanding in their native language, the concepts, the new concepts will also be explained in both languages. [my translation]