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Teachers’ Perspectives on Recently Arrived Pupils and English Teaching

Lärarperspektiv på nyanlända elever och engelskundervisning

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Abstract

Nowadays, many schools around the world are a mixture of children who come from different places and for different reasons. The Swedish school has not been an exception of these mixtures of children who have different identities, cultures, and languages. In 2015, Sweden experienced a high immigration peak compared to the previous years and for this reason, the Swedish school system needed to adapt to the newly arrived children that came into the classroom.

The purpose of this research project is to investigate teachers’ experiences and perceptions of meeting the varying needs of recently arrived learners in English teaching in years 4-6. The aim of the thesis is to explore what are the main challenges in teaching English and how the teachers adapt their English lessons and develop methods and strategies for teaching recently arrived pupils.

This study was conducted with semi-structured interviews as a qualitative method, with five English teachers who have a complete degree in teaching education, and all of whom have newly arrived children in their classes.

Based on analysis of the data, three main conclusions have been drawn in this study. Firstly, all the teachers participating did not know the difference between concepts such as immigrants and newcomers; secondly the teachers do not use a special method or strategies when they teach newly arrived children, and finally, this study shows that the teachers do not know how to face the newly arrived children’s needs, and they do not feel that they have the competence that they need in this field.

Keywords: Newly arrived children, newcomers, second language learning, education, methods, strategies, multilingualism.
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1. Introduction

When I started this journey in teacher education, there were many questions that I had as a future teacher. Many of those questions have been answered over the years of study, and I have also acquired experiences during many years as a substitute teacher. However, one question still remains, for my future profession as a teacher I want to know more about how to include newly arrived children in English teaching and learning.

Every day, people move from one place to another around the world, for one reason or another. Some years ago, more specifically in 2015, several countries were involved in a war crisis and thousands of people were forced to leave their country, their culture, their identity and their language (Swedish Migration Agency 2018). Many of these people were going to different countries in Europe and Sweden was not an exception. Sweden was one of the countries that people came to in order to get away from that terrible situation in their home countries in hope for a better life and future.

During 2015, a significant proportion of refugees chose to apply for asylum in Sweden. As a matter of fact, Sweden is a country that constantly receives immigrants from different countries and for different reasons every day. However during that year 2015, Sweden faced a significant increase in immigration, more than 162,000 people sought political asylum, which is twice as many as in 2014. More than 80,000 were minors, of whom 37,000 arrived without a parent or guardian. In other words, they were unaccompanied minors that applied for asylum in Sweden. This was a dramatic increase compared to approximately 7,000 in 2014 (Swedish Migration Agency 2018).

One consequence of a continuous flow of refugees is, of course, an increased number of immigrant children in Swedish schools. Exactly, a year ago I experienced an episode in my place of work that left me thinking about it for a long time. This situation did not happen directly to me, but to a teacher, hereby called Kalle, who received a new pupil in one of his classes. This new pupil had arrived in Sweden some months earlier, so, for this reason, he did not speak any Swedish of course, and he did not have a basic knowledge of English either. Kalle's mission at that moment was to teach him and introduce him to the Swedish society. I wondered and asked myself what would a
teacher do in this case? And once again the question that I have had for a long time came to mind. This project was born out of the desire to know how to teach newly arrived children who have neither culture nor language nor anything in common with English teachers.

In the Swedish Curriculum for the Compulsory School 2011, The Swedish Board of Education (Skolverket), highlights the fact that “The education should meet all students’ needs and promote the pupils’ further learning and acquisition of knowledge based on pupils backgrounds, earlier experiences, language and knowledge” (p, 10). However it seems, in my experience, as if this is easier said than done. Therefore, this study sets out to examine the teachers’ perspectives on recently arrived children and English teaching. It questions whether Swedish schools are prepared to meet all the needs of newly arrived children and whether or not the newly arrived learners receive an adequate education.
2. Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this research project is to investigate teachers’ experiences and perceptions of meeting the varying needs of recently arrived learners in English teaching in years 4-6. Thus, the overarching question in this study is:

How do some teachers in years 4-6 adapt English teaching to meet the needs of recently arrived pupils with varying backgrounds, knowledge and language skills?

The following sub-questions are used to explore this topic further:

- What are some of the main challenges in teaching English to newly arrived learners?
- How do teachers adapt their English lessons and develop methods and strategies for teaching recently arrived pupils?
3. Literature Review/ Background

This section presents the theoretical perspectives and key concepts used in this study. Firstly, I will explain and define the concept “newly arrived children” followed by some established approaches to including newly arrived pupils in the Swedish school system. Secondly, I will clarify some key points about language acquisition theories linked to English. Thirdly, I will explain how the teachers’ role might facilitate language acquisition. Fourthly, I will explain the concept of multilingualism as it relates to Swedish schools. And finally, I will describe how this topic relates to the National Curriculum.

3.1 Newly arrived children as a definition

In this study, one of the terms that I will use frequently is “newly arrived children” or “newly arrived”. According to Axelsson and Nilsson (2013), “Newly arrived pupils is the term used in both the academic and education policy discourse in Sweden to describe students arriving from abroad during the time of primary or secondary school and who do not yet master the main language of instruction, i.e. Swedish” (p.137).

According to the Skolverket (2017) newly arrived pupils, are newcomers for four years after the child has begun schooling in a Swedish school. After the first four years, children still need support based on their needs and conditions.

However, according to Bunan (2010), the term newly arrived refers to children who have migrated to Sweden, for any reason, it could be as a refugee, for work, to seek asylum or through family reunions. Fundamentally, the term newly arrived defines a person who recently arrived from abroad into a new country (Axelsson & Nilsson, 2013). Bunan (2010) is focused on children who are not proficient in the Swedish language. Additionally, Skolverket (2016) explains that pupils can become Swedish citizens if they, for example, have been living abroad and have not attended Swedish schools previously.

Skolinspektion (2009) also defines this term as pupils who do not have Swedish as a mother tongue or people who do not speak the Swedish language when they start their
education in Sweden. The governmental organizations emphasize the fact that newly arrived pupils are a heterogeneous group with varied school backgrounds, such as culture, language, style of life, religion etcetera.

Most of the newly arrived pupils have in common that they have broken away from the context in which they previously lived and that they usually do not have Swedish as their native language (Skolverket, 2016).

3.2 Newly arrived pupils and the Swedish School System

According to the Swedish Migration Agency (Migrationsverket, 2018), the refugee crisis in Syria caused the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden to be historically high. In total, 35,369 children applied. Most immigrants came from Syria (51,338), Iraq (20,858), Afghanistan (41,564) and Somalia (5,465). In 2016, this number has declined considerably, but it is still a point of preoccupation and discussion for the country. Sweden is constantly trying to improve in strategies to integrate and assist all the refugees in various ways.

The Swedish goal for integration in the society is that everyone in Sweden should have equal rights, obligations, and opportunities. Integration affects many different areas of society (Statistiska Centralbyrå, 2018). It is crucial for all the immigrants to be integrated into the Swedish society as soon as possible. For children, school is the most important way into the Swedish society.

According to The Swedish School Law (Skollagen) and an international treaty, such as United Nations, Sweden has the obligation to give education to all children that live in Sweden, and that includes newly arrived children as well (Skolverket, 2016).

3.2.1 Swedish Educational system
The National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2015) provides information about the education system for newly arrived children and it states the following:

All children and young people aged 7-15 must attend comprehensive school from about the age of 7. “Comprehensive school is compulsory, and compulsory schooling applies for years 1-9” (p. 2). All children have to attend for nine years from elementary school and it is free.

All newly arrived children between 3 and 18 years old who live in Sweden have the right to education and childcare regardless of whether they are registered or not in the municipality. Concerning asylum-seeking children, it is the municipality of residence that decides which school they should attend. All children are entitled to primary school, but children who are not registered in Sweden, for example, asylum seekers are not required to attend school (Skollagen, 2010: 800, 7 chap, 2§).

All newcomers in Sweden should receive a designated place in elementary or secondary school within a month from the day that they arrived in the country. The pupil's previous knowledge or experience should be investigated and documented. This mapping should be the base for both class placement and teaching form (Skolverket, 2016).

According to Utbildning för nyanlända elever (2016), one of the most important concerns for newly arrived pupils is to master the Swedish language as soon as possible. When the pupils are proficient in Swedish, it is easier for them to succeed in the rest of the subjects. English is a core subject, equal to Swedish, mathematics, science studies and social studies; if the pupil does not have knowledge in the Swedish language it will affect the learning of these subject areas. Many schools introduce English as a subject as early as in the 1st grade and it has the same focus as other subjects.

3.3 The socio-cultural perspective of learning

In order to develop and acquire a language, learners need to be orally active in roles or situations where they face opportunities for language and social development. The socio-cultural perspective of learning is dominant in Swedish schools today. There are
many theories about language acquisition, but this approach to learning is based on Lev Vygotsky’s work on development, learning, and language. This theory is about how children develop cultural abilities in the area of language acquisition and cognitive development. Vygotsky stated that “The child is an active learner in a world full of other people” (Lighbown & Spada, 2013). This theory implies that learning occurs in social interaction, where the pupils share their knowledge with other people, and that different social environments can have different outcomes for the learning process of individuals. Therefore, what children learn, and the rate at which they learn, depends on the social atmosphere that surrounds the children (Cameron, 2001).

The socio-cultural perspective involves pupils’ development and learning through social collaboration or situations that we find ourselves in (Gibbons, 2002). Furthermore, Vygotsky introduced the very well-known concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). ZPD is defined as the range of tasks that a child can perform with the help and guidance of others but cannot yet perform independently, this means that every child should be challenged and also appropriately scaffolded in order to learn English (Skolverket, 2011).

Language development happens because we interact with others, which means that children do not learn because they have developed, they develop because they learn. In other words, Vygotsky argues that the child is an active learner surrounded by other people with interaction (Gibbons, 2002). Thus, learning English occurs in interaction with others. Gibbons (2002) also states that learning is influenced by the relationship we have with people in our environment. The pupils' relationships with each other in the group are of equal importance.

Consequently, according to this view, learning English, Swedish or any language occur in interaction with others. Second and third language acquisition will benefit from communication and interaction with adults or with other children (Gibbons, 2002). Since English is a foreign language in Sweden, teachers should use this theory to make students actively work together and interact with each other. This is an essential tool to develop the English language because learners communicate and share knowledge through conversations and interactions.
3.4 The Teachers’ role in facilitating language development

The teacher has an important role in supporting learners’ language development. Skolverket (2011) emphasizes that the most important factor in pupils’ learning process is the teacher. The teachers’ competence to teach a newly arrived pupil is, therefore, a crucial factor for school success. Learning is the teachers’ ordinary focus in the classroom (Skolverket, 2011), but the teachers should also provide emotional support (Alisic, Bus, Dulack, Pennings & Splinter, 2012).

This is also confirmed by Gibbons (2002), who stresses the importance of the teacher in language development. The teacher is the one who provides support and scaffolding for children. Vygotsky also argues that the teacher should actively promote the development and learning by supporting the learning process. The teacher has to be aware of this and guide children’s spoken language development. According to Lundahl (2014), the spoken language develops when the children are involved in an active listening and reasoned speaking activity, in whole class or in small groups.

3.5 Multilingualism in the Swedish school.

Today Sweden is a multilingual society with around 150 different spoken languages. The Swedish classrooms have become increasingly multicultural and linguistically heterogeneous. Around 20% of the pupils have another language than Swedish as a mother tongue (Skolverket 2012). The European Commission (2007) defines multilingualism as “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives” (p. 6). According to Ladberg (2003) mother tongue or L1 is the language that a person learns first as a baby, in other words, it is the language that a person has been exposed to from birth. Many children grow up with several mother tongues. Nowadays the people who are living in Sweden learn more than one language at school. At the website of Skolverket, there is an article called “Forskning om flerspråkighet” that mentions that according to Eurobaroter, 2012, 86% of the Swedish population speak English and about 40% indicate that they speak very well and use it daily (Skolverket 2017). Multilingualism is a visible phenomenon in Sweden and the Swedish National
Curriculum for Compulsory School (Lgr11) highlights this thesis: Language is the primary tool human beings use for thinking, communicating and learning. Having knowledge of several languages can provide new perspectives on the surrounding world, enhanced opportunities to create contacts and greater understanding of different ways of living (Skolverket 2011, p, 32).

Language is essential for personal development and it enhances social identity (Ladberg, 1999). Being multilingual is an advantage for both the child and for the society and, to be multilingual, or to master many languages at the time, it is not a problem for learning (Skolverket, 2012). According to Axelsson and Nilsson, 2013, for developing the language involves social practices

Central to the education of the multilingual student is a socio-culturally supportive environment including social and cultural processes for everyday life within the family, at school and in society. Factors influencing second language development are the individual’s emotional answer to the school in form of self-esteem, anxiety, frustration and other affective factors (p.140).

3.6 The National Curriculum

The Swedish National Curriculum does not contain any specific section regarding the education of newly arrived pupils, but it considers that the education has to be equal for everyone, regardless of whether he/she is Swedish or not. Integration is one of the most important goals in this country. The Swedish integration politics’ ambition is that all the people in Sweden should have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities (Statistics Sweden 2018).

Equality is something that clearly emerges as a norm in the National Curriculum: “Teaching should be adapted to each pupil’s circumstances and needs. It should promote the pupils’ further learning and acquisition of knowledge based on pupils’ backgrounds, earlier experience, language and knowledge” (Skolverket, 2011, p, 10).

The school aims to ensure that all children and students participate both socially and in their learning, at the same time The National Curriculum states that, “The school is a social and cultural meeting place with both the opportunity and the responsibility to
strengthen this ability among all who work there” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 9). In other words, the school is a social and cultural arena where all the children should feel valued for who they are and that “the education should meet all students’ needs and promote the pupils' further learning and acquisition of knowledge based on pupils’ backgrounds, earlier experience, language and knowledge” (Skolverket, 2011, p. 10).
4. Methodology

The following chapter outlines the methodological choices I made for this paper. First, I will explain the process of collecting the qualitative data for this study. Secondly, I will include detailed information regarding the settings, participants, and finally the procedure and the ethical consideration.

4.1 A qualitative data collection

This study is based on a qualitative approach. This is a method of collecting qualitative data usually involves direct interaction with the individuals or direct interaction in a group setting. According to Bryman (2008), “In qualitative research, the perspective of those being studied—what they see as important and significant—provides the point of orientation” (p. 393). Bryman (2008) states that qualitative methods are characterized by results which are formulated in words, while quantitative methods are characterized by numbers. The main methods for collecting qualitative data are individual interviews, observation, focus groups and action research.

The main purpose of using this kind of research method is to understand the experiences and attitudes of the teachers that are relevant to this study. This approach will help me to understand and answer questions about the “what”, “how” and “why” of a phenomenon rather than “how many or how much” (Denscombe, 2009).

4.2 Settings and participants

The names of the informants and the schools are not the real names. For this reason, I decided to name the schools School A and School B. The informants are referred to as Alex (teacher A), Beatriz (teacher B), Camilla (teacher C), Daniela (teacher D) and finally Erik (teacher E).
I selected the schools out of practical reason, these are schools I have knowledge of through my work and studies as a teacher candidate. Both are located in the county of Skåne (southern Sweden) and in the same municipality. According to the municipality website, newly arrived children are welcome to all schools in this region. In this municipality, as well as all the other municipalities in Sweden. The teachers map or gather information of all the newly arrived children’s previous knowledge. This knowledge is then used to place the pupils in a suitable class.

Both schools are located in an area with mainly middle-class families and a very low percentage of immigrants. Therefore, most of the pupils at the schools have Swedish as their first language. For this reason, the staff at these two schools do not have many experiences in receiving newly arrived pupils, but according to their principals both schools are expecting to receive increasing amounts of children in August 2018.

School A is a primary school which covers the years 4-9. There are about 300 pupils attending the school and there are two classes in each level. This school does not have a preparation class, and therefore the students are integrated directly into regular classes. This school has 10 newly arrived children in total, who are divided into different regular classes.

School B is also a primary school, it covers the years K-9 and it has around 900 pupils with 15 newly arrived children attending the school. There are two classes at each level. 10 newcomers are distributed in preparation classes and the rest are integrated into regular classes. The newly arrived pupils can either be placed in a preparation class (förberedelseklass) or they are integrated directly into a regular class. The aim is to create a safe and positive educational situation for the pupil. The aim of the preparation class is to enable the pupil to learn the basics of the Swedish language as quickly and efficiently as possible as the same time as the different subjects in the curriculum.

The focus of this study is on the English teachers’ perspectives. The participants were initially contacted personally and via E-mail, with a short introduction to the purpose of my investigation. They received all the information orally and later written in E-mail (see Appendix 1). During the research period, I received a tip from my supervisor about a teacher of English who has worked for many years with newly arrived children and this teacher was also included in this research project.
All the teachers from School A and B who teach English in grades 4-6 were contacted, but only 5 were able to participate in the interviews. All of them are teachers of English. The interview was conducted in English, however, the participants were able to respond in the language that they felt most comfortable with. The teachers were selected based on three criteria: firstly, the teacher should have a master in teaching; secondly, they should have newly arrived children in their class at the moment of the interview; and finally, they should teach English. All five teachers have worked as teachers for many years, and they have been working at different schools.

Below, I will briefly describe each participant and their backgrounds (see table 1).

Table 1: Participants of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number of newly arrived children</th>
<th>Amount of time the students have English</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 1: Alex</td>
<td>Teacher, years 4-9</td>
<td>1 pupil</td>
<td>120 minutes/week</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 2: Beatriz</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher, years 1-6</td>
<td>3 pupils</td>
<td>120 minutes/week</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 3: Camilla</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher, years 4-6</td>
<td>1 pupil</td>
<td>120 minutes/week</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 4: Daniella</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher, years 4-6</td>
<td>1 pupil</td>
<td>120 minutes/week</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher 5: Erik</td>
<td>Primary School Teacher, years 4-6</td>
<td>14 pupils</td>
<td>60 minutes/week</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alex has worked at school A for the past 6 years. He is Swedish. He graduated with a Master of Education in Secondary Education in the subjects, English, Swedish and Swedish as a second language in 2006. Alex teaches Swedish and English. Alex has one newly arrived pupil. The pupil has been in this school the last 2 years and she speaks Arabic as a mother tongue.
Beatriz has worked at school A for 8 years. She is Swedish. Beatriz graduated as a teacher of Swedish and English. She teaches English and she has three newly arrived pupils in total, and two of them have lived in Sweden for the last two years and the other one has been in Sweden for three months, however, he has been in this school only for a month. All of them are attending the same grade. According to the timetable, Beatriz has two English lessons a week with one hour each lesson.

Camilla has worked at School B for 4 years. She is from Afghanistan and she speaks Arabic as a first language and Dari and French as additional languages. Camilla graduated as a primary school teacher for grades 4-6 in Sweden. She worked for two years as a teacher for newly arrived pupils in a preparation class for years 6-9. Camilla worked in this group because she could communicate with the newly arrived in Dari and Arabic. In other words, she was able to function as a bridge between the students’ first language and Swedish. At this moment Camila teaches one pupil that arrived a year ago in Sweden.

Daniela has worked at School B for three years. She is Swedish. She is a teacher in grades 4-6 in the subjects Swedish, English, Mathematics, and Science. At this moment she teaches English in all 4th grades. In one of the 4th grade classes, there is a student who came to Sweden less than a year ago. The pupil is attending preparation class to learn Swedish, but he also attends the subject English sometimes in Daniela’s class.

Erik has worked for almost 20 years as a teacher. He is Swedish. Erik has worked almost only with newly arrived. He is working at another municipality school than the other participants. At this school, there are around 900 students (it is located in northern Skåne). Erik works in a preparation class grades 4th to 6th, at this moment he is teaching 14 newly arrived from many different countries. In the preparation class, he teaches Swedish, Mathematics, Sciences, and English. Erik was included in this project as an informant since he has an extensive experience in how to work, support and include newly arrived children in the English class.

4.3 Semi-structured Interview
According to Denscombe (2009), the most common type of semi-structured interview is the personal interview. This type of interview is very easy to arrange because it only includes two people: a researcher, and an informant. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are in-depth interviews, it gives the interviewer an opportunity to make a list of topics which will be treated and questions which should be answered. This kind of interview involves open-ended questions, open-ended questions are those questions that require more thought and more than a simple one-word answer. These questions give the informant the opportunity to develop a complete answer. The semi-structured interview also provides the opportunity to add or explain different questions during the interview (Bryman, 2011).

4.4 Procedure

All participants were asked in advance if they would like to cooperate in this project and they were informed what the project was about. The interviews were conducted on several different occasions during two weeks at the respective school. However, there was an exception with Erik, since we are located in different places in Sweden and it was impossible for me to travel to his place of residence in order to conduct in an interview in person. For this reason, we communicated first through several emails conversations and then we carried out an interview over the telephone.

Moreover, all the interviews depended on the teachers' schedules, and the interviews were carried out during the teacher's planning time. The interviews took around half an hour each, and I used the same interview guide during all the meetings (see appendix 2).

All the interviews were recorded by using a mobile phone, however before I began the recording each respondent was asked for permission to record the interview. An interview guide was used in all the different interviews with questions which were carefully prepared. Each teacher received the same interview questions and they did not receive a time limit. Each interview was digitally stored on a private computer after being de-identified.

All the interviews were conducted in the English language, but the teachers had the opportunity to answer in the language that they felt more comfortable with. All the
teachers who were interviewed answered the questions in Swedish and the quotes in the result section are translated into English by the author.

As explained before, the interview process took around three weeks, all the interviews were conducted on different days at respective schools. However, in the third week one additional interview was added. After finishing all interviews, the audio files were transcribed into written documents. The transcribed interviews will help to analyze, capture and reflect over what the participants said, this data will help to answer the relevant questions of this project.

4.5 Ethical considerations

This project has followed the four ethical guidelines that all the research projects should follow when research involves human subjects. According to Vetenskapsrådet (2017), the basic individual protection requirements are divided into four general main research requirements.

The first one is the consent requirement which means that the informants themselves have the right to decide on their cooperation. According to this requirement, the consent form was given before the interview (see appendix 1). Secondly, the confidentiality requirement which means that the participants were informed in advance about the fact that their personal information would be anonymous and would be used only according to the purpose of this investigation. Thirdly, is the information requirement which means that the interviewers have informed the interviewees about the purpose of the project. Finally, the requirement of usage means that the informants were informed that the survey of this project will be published on the internet and that everyone can read it.
5. Result and Discussion

This section will provide and analyze the data collected through the semi-structured interviews conducted with five teachers. It is organized according to the three main content areas: firstly, the teachers’ perspectives on teaching newly arrived pupils, secondly, the main challenges in teaching English to newly arrived learners; and finally, how teachers adapt their English lessons and develop methods and strategies for teaching recently arrived pupils. These categories are logical since they will answer the main research question of this project: How do some teachers in years 4-6 adapt English teaching to meet the needs of recently arrived students with varying backgrounds, knowledge and language skills? The presentation of the result will be supported by relevant quotes that were transcribed and translated into English by me.

5.1 Teachers’ perspectives on teaching newly arrived pupils

The focus of this part is to present the information collected around the second part of the interview. Many of the questions aimed at exploring what the teachers know about newly arrived children, and how much they know about how to teach pupils who learn English as an additional language.

One of the problems that was brought up during these interviews was the meaning of the term “newly arrived children” because the specific definition was unknown to the teachers. Four out of five teachers thought that this project was about immigrants, and because of this misunderstanding I had to explain the meaning according to Skolverket. Skolverket (2017) states that: “Newly arrived pupils, are newly arrived for four years after the pupil has begun schooling in the Swedish school. After the first four years, students still need support based on their needs and conditions” (Skolverket, 2017).

In the interviews, all five teachers reported that they have been working with young learners for many years, but four out of five had only begun working with newly arrived children very recently, in some cases for only some months. But most of them agreed
when they explained that it is very hard to work with these children because the teachers have not received any education about how and what to teach. The only information and education that the participants have received regarding newly arrived children is about education policies, such as Nilsson and Brunar (2016), who state that: “Newly arrival children’s formal positioning in the educational system is based on this legal categorization and regulated in school legislation” (Skollagen 2010: 800; Skolförordningen 2011: 185). According to the 4 chapter 1a § in the school regulation (Skolförordningen), regardless of background, all children who come to Sweden should be offered appropriate placement in a school within a month of their arrival (Skolverket, 2016). So as mentioned before, the teachers have not received any information about methods or any focus regarding language development.

All the teachers commented on the fact that they have no formal training regarding how to integrate newcomers into their classes. Beatriz states that "(…) you should have a basic knowledge about how, what and when to teach, especially when you teach a new language to them. Many times they have to learn the Swedish language at the same time as English, without us having a language in common”.

All the teachers agree on the fact that the newly arrived pupils that come to Sweden should have basic knowledge of English, but many times they do not even have that. Erik, who is the teacher that has been working during his entire career with newly arrived, he says “(…) I have never received a special education or course that is more specific for how to teach newly arrived children. (…) I have had to acquire my knowledge on my own (…) Skolverket has given courses to the teachers, but they have not been a big help to face this dilemma”.

The teachers that were interviewed feel that they do not have the suitable qualifications or capacity to teach newly arrived children appropriate. Teachers believe that they have the knowledge of English as a subject, as a language, but they do not know how to meet the individual learners’ needs. Skolverket (2016), states that “(…) teachers must design and adapt all teaching to provide support and stimulus based on the student's requirements and needs” (p, 28). According to the teachers they cannot accomplish what Skolverket states. At the same time, Skolverket (2012) mentions that Skolinspektionen is aware of this situation that the teachers do not having sufficient knowledge of how to handle the education situation with multilingual students.
5.2 Challenges with educating newly arrived pupils

All the five teachers express the difficulty with having newly arrived children in their class. For instance, one of the teachers said “to have newly arrived children in class is a big challenge”. When the teachers specifically talked about challenges regarding teaching newly arrived children English, two main categories emerged in the data: communication, and children’s traumatic experiences.

5.2.1 Communication

In order to develop and acquire a language, the learners need the opportunity to communicate. Daniela explains that she finds it difficult on the whole to communicate with the pupils. Furthermore, Beatriz states as well that the communication is a challenge because many times there is a communication problem not only with the pupils but also with the parents. Daniela also agrees with Beatriz when she argues that it is a challenge to communicate with the newly arrived children’s parents. She explains that most of the time she writes down and collects all the things or the information that she would like to speak to the parents about and then she brings them to a parent meeting, where she has an interpreter who translates the meeting. The lack of the ability to communicate with the newly arrived children is a struggle that teachers have to face every day, says Erik. Beatriz replied that the difficulties occur when she tries to give instructions that are important for the pupil and they do not understand, she says (…) we need to have a common language, Swedish or English to be able to communicate with each other, (…) when I explain something to my pupil and he does not understand I have to call another classmate so he or she can translate it into their own mother tongue. Bunar (2010) explains it is very important for the relationship and interactions between different actors in school as one of the most important factors for the pupils' development and school progress.
The other teacher Alex mentions that (...) the effort that the teachers in general have to go through to be able to communicate with their newcomers. The pupils are learning new words every day and they use them quite a lot, but it is a long process, and it takes many months. Nevertheless, from the first day you can see a development. This development can take a long time or can be quick, it all depends on the pupil (Skolverket, 2016). Ladberg (2003) agrees and states that this development takes time, however, she further explains that this development also depends on the teacher and her way of planning activities which stimulate the pupils’ ability to communicate

5.2.3 Traumatic experiences

There is another key issue that the teachers have to face, according to Erik. He says that "we as teachers have to face the traumatic experiences that the newly arrived has from their home countries”. Alisic, Bus, Dulack, Pennings & Splinter (2012) mentions that the teachers not only teach academics skills, but they also provide emotional support to the pupils; they think that the teachers affect pupils in a positive way when it comes to process their experiences of war and disaster. These teachers know what to do to assist children efficiently after traumatic exposure. Axelsson and Nilsson (2013) state that frustration, as an individual’s emotion is a factor that influences the language development. Likewise, Erik believes that the teachers need to be aware of this when aiming for an inclusive education, he says that:

“(…) many times the children who came to Sweden did not have the possibility to attend school in their home country, that could maybe be because the school was bombed or they had just started school. All of my pupils did not attend school in their home country at all, they have missed many years of education”.

Nilsson and Axelsson (2013), claim that Gibbons idea is to give support to the pupils, not to create anxiety and frustration, as this can lead to the students to give up and ultimately opt out of school.
5.3 Adapting English Teaching to Newly Arrived Pupils

All the five teachers express the idea to adapt English lessons with methods and strategies. All of them agree that they have to do it for guiding, supporting and developing the newly arrived children’s learning process. Four methods and strategies emerged in the data: Firstly, they use cooperative learning and interaction. Secondly learning materials, thirdly, mother tongue education, and finally, only English, therefore it is important to plan a variety of different types of tasks or activities.

5.3.1 Cooperative learning and interaction

The five teachers emphasized and gave a great importance to the different styles and methods for teaching English. They said that everything depends on the different needs and conditions of the pupils. Alex mentions that he had used the English language quite a lot in different activities, all the time. Eriks’ idea is to make the students speak, to interact with each other, maybe many times they say something wrong, and his strategy is not to correct the mistakes, Erik says that this makes them feel more comfortable when speaking. All the teachers have something in common and it is that all incorporate cooperative learning tasks or activities, this means that the pupils have the opportunity to collaborate in groups. By doing those kinds of activities they develop the ability to interact with each other, and this interaction supports their language development, integration as well as making their time more enjoyable (Ladberg, 2003).

Camilla mentions that in many cases if someone in the group does not understand a word or has difficulty with understanding a concept there is always someone who can explain to the others what it means in their mother tongue. Bunar (2010) mentions that there are advantages that exist when the teachers organize cooperative groups in the classroom, and this advantage is that the children build social relationships and create positive learning outcomes. Bunar (2010) states also that all the actors in the school work toward for the same purpose, to create a positive learning outcome for the pupils. However, Axelsson and Nilsson (2013) indicate that the pupils often feel insecure when
they are participating in a regular class, and it is due to the lack of support from the school. Therefore, it is very important to teach newly arrived children different strategies to acquire and develop the English language. All the teachers have to improve the learning community together.

By using cooperative learning tasks, the students develop their ability to interact with one another. All the teachers claim the same as Camilla, she says: “My focus is to give the students more opportunities to discuss orally in groups, the manner to develop the language, to give them the opportunity to communicate with each other”. This social interaction, especially verbal interaction promotes the students' language learning, and it is vital for language development and this is how children learn (Gibbons, 2002). Gibbons also uses the concept of scaffolding as a situated help for newly arrived pupils, (...) “Scaffolding is in accordance with Vygotsky’s view on learning as a collaborative learning and the need for assisted performance as a component of his notion of the zone of proximal development, (...) Scaffolding, defined as being temporary, future oriented and with a focus on how to do things as comprising components of challenge and support” (Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013).

5.3.2 Learning materials

One of the points on which all the teachers agreed was regarding learning materials. They use suitable approaches in the classrooms to motivate pupils such as basic level in English books, exercises books, songs, films, games, and Internet sites. Textbooks and other material are mainly in English, without any Swedish or other languages as help.

Alex based most of his lessons on internet sites such as The British Council, and he explains that “(...) I used basic English for my newcomers, for example, songs, easy texts, games, and describing pictures. To play games or sing songs are a crucial role in supporting language development because through a game they have the opportunity to acquire words that are linked to developing different skills (Ladberg, 2003).

Beatriz argues: “(...) I have tried to use all that I have and I can do, for example, I usually use pictures, flashcards, films, body language etcetera, to describe or explain something. (...) I have to try to find the way that they can learn English, but if we do not have a common language it is more difficult, but it is not impossible”. In this case,
the teacher should use non-verbal ways to communicate, to show the meaning of different things, by using simple chunks, for example, to sit down, turn on the light and showing them what turning on the light means by doing the action themselves after that the teacher or another person inside the classroom demonstrated the action (Lighbown and Spada, 2013).

Moreover, Erik concedes as well “(…) we watch some film or we sing, I want to do it enjoyable (…) I think that I use the same methods that teachers can do in 2nd or 3rd grades, and I use basic forms as 'I like…', 'I do not like…’ etcetera”. Camilla argues that “(…) I normally adapt the material depending on the child's knowledge and ability to take in new knowledge (…) as teachers, we have to puzzle our own materials so that it benefits the students”. According to Ladberg (2003) the children's’ development begins when the teacher finds activities that the children find interesting, this can be the first steps towards language acquisition.

5.3.3 Mother tongue Education

One of the points on which all the teachers agreed that the teachers incorporate learning tasks using the mother tongue, also called the first language. Many times there are children that help each other using their mother tongue as a tool by explaining concepts, meanings or words to each other. Children can use that strategy if they have other classmates who speak the same language.

Alex explains: “(…) I used the method to use the first language as a bridge in order to learn a new language, especially when there were subject-specific terms, but I am thinking almost the same as when I teach Swedish”, he means that the students are able to translate those subject-specific terms in their L1. He uses the same method when he teaches Swedish. Camilla also uses her mother tongue in order to help the pupil: “(…) if I notice that the pupil did not understand I usually translate it in Arabic or in one of the languages that I know (…..) for my own lessons, I have to visualize myself in the student's place and do the task or activity detailed and then I think that the student will understand the content”. According to Ladberg (2003), it is easiest to learn, read or write, in the language that the pupils master the best and that helps to develop the second language, Ladberg (2003) also explains that if the teachers deny the use of the language that they master the best, we deny them to think.
The mother tongue should be used as a resource in learning and in teaching, this resource gives more opportunities for interaction (Kaya, 2014). Nevertheless, researchers have proved that multilingualism is beneficial and the Swedish National curriculum states that: (…) “The teaching should help the pupils to master their knowledge of the structure of the mother tongue and become conscious of its importance for their own learning in different school subjects” (p, 83).

The Swedish educations policy guarantees native language teaching (SFS 2010:800), it is a right for all newly arrived pupils. This is important for language learning and language development. When pupils are able to demonstrate or show the knowledge in his or her own language, it enhances self-confidence and increases the motivation to study (Skolverket, 2016). Having access to their mother tongue also facilitates language development and learning in different areas. ”The teaching should help the pupils to master their knowledge of the structure of the mother tongue and become conscious of its importance for their own learning in different school subjects” (Skolverket 2011, p, 83).

5.3.4 Only English

All the teachers who were interviewed think that although they use texts to develop the writing skills they focus much more on the oral skills. The children are given more opportunities to speak and practice the language orally than in writing. Erik mentions that he speaks English as much as possible. “First I speak English all the time, I think that they have learned to switch between the languages, when we have Swedish as a subject, it is only the Swedish language that everybody speaks, and when we have English everybody speaks English in my classroom”.

Erik’s idea is that the pupils communicate orally, he says:

My idea is that they speak English, I do not pretend that they write perfectly, that skill will develop in the future. Of course, I focus on special words that they have to learn and I think that those words or sentences are important, but it is important to write a long text. Oral and listening skills are the most important initially.
As a conclusion, for a varied education support of the newly arrived children’s learning, the teachers should develop method and strategies to support each student, moreover, the education has to be as varied as possible and Skolverket states this:

The school should promote the harmonious development of pupils. This should be achieved by means of a varied and balanced combination of content and working methods. Shared experiences and the social and cultural world that make up the school provide scope as well as the preconditions for learning and development where different forms of knowledge make up a meaningful whole. The reciprocal exchange between the pedagogical approaches of the preschool class, the school, and the recreation centre can together help to enrich the pupils’ development and learning. (Skolverket 2011, p, 12)
6. Conclusion

In summary, during this long trip, around ten weeks of investigation and analyzing, I interviewed five different teachers, most of the interview questions were conducted about their own experiences around newly arrived pupils and English teaching. In other words, my purpose of the study was to examine and to find out about teachers’ appreciations about this theme. When I started to investigate I had trouble finding the right guideline, or ideas for this research, almost all the facts, the research, the studies and the investigations that exist were regarding pupils’ perspectives.

To summarize this section of this thesis or study, three conclusions have been drawn. Firstly, I discovered that the five teachers participating in this study do not know the difference between concepts, such as immigrants and newcomers. Secondly, I realized that they use the same methods and strategies that they use when they teach pupils who have Swedish as a first language, for example, cooperative learning, interaction, mother tongue as a bridge, and to speak as much English as possible. At the same time, the teachers that were interviewed emphasize that it is quite difficult to teach and give the time that everybody needs when you have 24 different children at almost the same level in English and one or two pupils who need to be taught at a completely different level. Finally, I discovered that the teachers do not know how to face the newly arrived children’s needs and they do not feel that they have the competence in this field.

The findings suggest that there is a need for teachers to complement their education regarding teaching newcomers. All the teachers in my interviews find it hard to teach English by only using English when they teach pupils who have a small or no knowledge at all in English. They do not know how to teach them a new language without having a language in common.

It could be very helpful as a teachers of English to understand the difficulties that they will encounter at the moment when they are trying to teach English. It is very important for us, as teachers, to know how we can help newly arrived learners to acquire the English language. However, to carry this out, teachers of English need to know how to help newcomers acquire another language that perhaps are their second or third language, at the same time as that they are learning Swedish.
Skolverket and Skolinspektionen have thought about the newly arrived children, but this information is more guided to the legal part and not how teachers should act and what they should do when they face this kind of situation. These institutions have forgotten about the teacher.

This will conclude that our job as future teachers is to support, guide and help all the newly arrived children individually to reach the goals, and we have to create opportunities for all students to achieve the objectives of education in equal conditions. In order to help them, we need help first. We need support and guidance from Skolverket to be able to help the newly arrived children.

### 6.1 Limitation of this study

There are some limitations that might affect the reliability of the findings in this degree project that should be mentioned. Firstly, I want to acknowledge that this project focuses on the teachers’ perspectives, due to this, and to the time limit of my study the number of participants had to be limited. Only five teachers were interviewed. However, more teachers could have increased the reliability of the conclusion chapter. Secondly, the data could have been collected in other schools from others municipality, if time had allowed it. And finally, an additional limitation could be that four out of the five teachers did not have previous experiences teaching English to newly arrived pupils.

### 6.2 Further research

First, it is necessary to conduct further researches in this area, and not only from the teacher's perspectives but also the student's perspectives, since the increase of newly arrived pupils is a current issue in Sweden. Bunar and Nilsson (2016) have the same point of view when they state that: “(…) The positions and conditions of newly arrived pupils in schools is generally an under-researched area in Sweden, which means that there is a limited amount of research material or other assessments to consult.” Observations or questionnaires could have been used to gather more data from the teachers.
7. References


Appendix 1 - Consent form
(Samtyckesblankett)

Studieansvarig: (Student)
Jacqueline Bustos (Kelly)

Studerar vid Malmö Universitet, Lärande och samhälle.

Utbildning: Grundlärarutbildning – inriktning grundskolans åk 4-6
Nivå: Grundskolans årskurs 4-6, 240 hp


Deltagandet i studien är frivillig och deltagarna kan när som helst dra sig ur från studien. Endast vuxna mellan 20 och 70 år gammal kan delta i denna studie. All data är konfidentiell, informanterna kommer att kodas (anonymiseras), för att varken informationen eller du som informant, kommer ska kunna identifieras. Nämns namn eller platser under intervjun kommer dessa att kodas i transkriberingen.

Examensarbetet ska lämnas ut till ett antal opponenter, examinator och till min handledare på Malmö Universitet. Examensarbetet ska komma att publiceras på Malmö Universitet hemsida för studenter och eventuellt i andras sökmotorer. Resultatet av intervjuerna kommer att kunna användas för att få svar på frågeställningen i mitt examensarbete.

Härmed tillfrågas Du om deltagande i studien Malmö den _____/______2018
Appendix 2 - Interview Questions

Vilken utbildning har du? Hur många år har du jobbat inom läraryrket? What kind of education do you have? How many years have you worked in the teaching profession?

Vilka ämnen undervisar du i? What subjects do you teach?

Hur länge har du undervisat? Hur länge har du undervisat i en flerspråkig skola? How long have you been teaching? How long have you been teaching at a multilingual school?

Har du ett annat språk som moderstål än svenska? Do you have another mother tongue than Swedish?

Har du andraspråklever just nu? Do you have second language learners right now? How many in total?

Vad är din kunskap om och inställning till flerspråkighet? What is your knowledge about and attitude towards multilingualism?

Vilket språk pratar du när du undervisar? Which language do you speak when you teach English?

Känner du att du är kompetent att undervisa engelska till en flerspråkig grupp? Do you feel you are competent to teach English to a multilingual group?

Tror du att det finns behov av speciella färdigheter när man lär ut engelska i ett flerspråkigt klassrum och i så fall vad är de och har du de speciella färdigheterna? Do you think there is a need for special skills when one teaches English in a multilingual classroom and if so what are they and do you have those special skills?

Tar du särskild hänsyn till elever med en icke-svensk bakgrund när du undervisar engelska? Do you take special consideration to pupils with a non-Swedish background when you teach English?

Hur planerar du dina lektioner med andraspråklever? How do you plan your English lessons if you have second language learners?
Använder du något speciellt material när du undervisar andra språkelever? Do you take special consideration to pupils with a non-Swedish background when you teach English?

Vilken metod använder du för att undervisa? Which method do you use when you teach English to second language learners?

Använder du något speciellt material när du undervisar andra språkelever? Do you use any special material when you teach second language learners?

Hur påverkar materialvalet omfattningen du använder svenska i undervisningen av engelska? How does the choice of material affect the way in and the extent to which you use Swedish teaching English?

Anser du att svenska är grundspråket i dit engelska klassrum? Would you consider Swedish as the base language in your English classroom?

Hur använder du svenska när du lär ut engelska? How do you use Swedish teaching English?

Vilken metod använder du för att lära ut nytt ordförråd? What method do you use for teaching new vocabulary?

Hur anpassar du lektionerna till andraspråkseleverna? How do you adapt your lessons to second language learners?

Finns det något du vill ändra på i dina lektioner? Finns det något du vill göra på dina engelska lektioner? Is there something that you would like to change in your lesson? Is there something that you would like to do in your English lessons?

Finns det något annat som du vill berätta om andraspråkselever som kan vara viktiga när man lär ut ett nytt språk? Is there some else that you would like to tell me about second language learners that can be important when you teach a new language?

Vad vill du förbättra i din engelskaundervisning? What would you like improve your English teaching?