Case Study of an L1 Swedish English Learner: An Evaluation of Contrastive Analysis

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Abstract: This paper has sought to examine the validity of contrastive analysis by researching the predictability of errors in the language production of a second language English speaker. To achieve this goal, the linguistic differences between English, and the test subject's first language, Swedish, were examined. Following this venture, predictions were made about possible negative transfer in our subject's language production.Predictions were based on the idiosyncratic phonological, syntactic, morphological, and lexical characteristics of Swedish. To test these predictions, four interviews were given over the course of several months in an attempt to confirm or disconfirm these predictions. The subject's language production was isolated as a txt. file for corpus analysis. Word frequencies and contextual language usage were analyzed and discussed at length. Based on the accuracy of pre-interview predictions, it was concluded that contrastive analysis may be a modestly effective tool for making general inferences about possible interlanguage episodes and language learner difficulties.

KEYWORDS: Contrastive Analysis, Corpus Analysis, Language Transfer, Interlanguage

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the popularity of contrastive analysis has waned as error-analysis has presented itself as perhaps a preferable approach for analyzing and interpreting L2 learner errors. Lennon (2008) describes the limitation to CA as follows "The contrastive analysis model works best in predicting phonological error. However, errors of morphology, syntax, lexis, and discourse are imperfectly predicted by contrastive analysis"(p. 4).

Although contrastive analysis may have limitations we suggest that it is still a valuable tool for analyzing potential struggles a language learner may encounter, when developing a second language. Wong (2009) suggests that contrastive analysis is a viable way to predict language difficulties experienced during second language acquisition.Ledo (1957), the founder of contrastive analysis, suggested that these difficulties arise from differences that exist between the language to be acquired and the speaker's native language.

This paper will take a deeper look at the validity of contrastive analysis by examining language differences between English and Swedish, making informed predictions about possible errors an L1 Swedish English speaker might produce based on linguistic markedness, and procuring data from case analysis that might support or contradict these predictions. Since the authors of this paper 1.) cannot speak Swedish, 2.) have very limited interaction with Swedish people, 3.) have never visited Sweden, and 4.) have no family from Scandinavia; it may be fair to suggest that researcher bias is at a minimum. It is, for this very reason, that Swedish seemed an ideal choice forcontrastive analysis. Choosing a language, which the authors can speak, may have affected the predictions and resulting accuracy of the research.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The notion that an individual's native language, which naturally developed during their adolescent years, may influence future interactions with language learning is certainly understandable; perhaps even intuitive. This may be why CA was greeted with genuine interest, as-well-as genuine criticism from the onset.

CA was first formulated by Dr. Lado in 1957 (Wong, 2009, p. 54) in a book entitled Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied Linguistics for Language Teachers. Researchers criticized this method of interlanguage analysis in the following generations. As Swan (2008), and other proponents of CA suggest, some of the criticism of CA may have derived from a push in the 1970's to reject behaviorism, opting instead for a model of second language acquisition which credits unconscious mechanisms as the driving force behind second language acquisition (p. 392).

Regarding CA's subsequent criticisms, Richards (1984) describes the emergence of Error Analysis as spawning from an assertion that CA is overly theoretical, and perhaps too subjective. As Kellerman (1987) points out, theoretical biases held by the researcher affect their interpretation of interlanguage and transfer events.

Another major criticism, as Richards elaborates, is that CA is concerned solely with analyzing two juxtaposed grammar sets (p. 4). Ultimately, criticisms of CA have focused mainly on its deficiency in addressing individual learner experiences.

Stevens (cited in Richards 1984) took this criticism a step further by suggesting that "errors", or interlanguage, should not be viewed as failures, but rather successes. He describes interlanguage as inevitable events in language that indicate progress in second language acquisition. Stevens asserts that these events should be viewed as successful steps to L2 acquisition. This view seems to regard language learning as approximations to a target language; a whittling down of errors until the learner is left with a desired final product.

In the 1970's, there were many proposals to revise CA based on linguistic distinctions existing between two language sets. Eckman (1977) proposed to revise CA to include typological markedness in CA analysis to not only better predict which areas are difficult for a language learner, but also the degree to which these areas will pose difficulty.

3.0 REASON FOR STUDY

While Stevens's view of "errors" as successes is certainly a more positive viewpoint, there is a discrepancy between this viewpoint and the tests typically used to gauge language proficiency. Tests, such as TOEIC and TOEFL, do not treat errors as successes, nor do they award points for errors which may display language progress.

As language teachers, we are set with the task of improving students' TOEIC and TOEFL scores. As such, it is of particular interest to better understand all available language analysis methods; potentially helping students develop closer linguistic approximations needed to demonstrate proficiency in standardized testing scenarios. Teachers employing CA will be able to examine the markedness of the language to be acquired, and hence make informed decisions about teaching strategies. The merits of analyzing a student's native language seem difficult to refute from an academic standpoint.

It should be noted that the authors of this paper are not discrediting a more customized approach, but rather feel that CA, in conjunction with other methods of individual learner analysis, may still have anoteworthy place in second language acquisition analysis. This study will hopefully shed light on how effective CA endeavors are in helping students understand interlanguage events in the context of second language acquisition.

4.0 LANGUAGES INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY

This paper will seek to examine similarities and contrasts existing between English and Swedish. Both languages have many similarities; perhaps more similarities than dissimilarities. Both are Germanic in ancestry and share a very similar grammatical structure; particularly concerning subject, verb, and object placement. As Brook (2010) states "Some linguists and educators believe that because Swedish and English are so closely related in many respects, including their common syntax and phonology, English should be 'relatively easy for Scandinavians to learn'" (p. 26). This belief on the part of linguistics and educators is congruent to the position held by contrastive analysts.

In fact, recently, Sweden ranked first globally on the EF English Proficiency Index, making Sweden the most proficient speakers of English as a foreign language in the world (English First, 2013, p. 6). Falk (translated in Airey, 2004) states "Sweden is one of the countries in Europe with the highest percentage of bilinguals or multilinguals in its population. Approximately seventy-five percent of all adult Swedes can hold an everyday conversation in English" (p. 3).

It is hard to know whether linguistic similarities have a causal relationship regarding facilitated English acquisition among Swedes. The researchers of this paper are not aware of any studies suggesting such a claim. It is simply noted that many similarities exist, and Swedish people seem to exhibit an exemplary proficiency regarding English language ability.

5.0 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The data obtained for our research were samples of English produced by an L1 Swedish speaker during four separate interviews. To obtain this sample of English, several newspaper articles were presented to our subject, followed by extensive interviews. Two of the interviews were recorded as sound wave files for transcription purposes. Two of the interviews were conducted online, using the Etherpad software Titanpad, to gather writing samples from the subject. The newspaper articles were merely presented to give the discussion a topic to aid discourse. The topic of the article was not necessarily closely adhered to throughout the discussion. The newspaper articles intentionally dealt with the topics of population, drug use, and income to stimulate the use of English/Swedish cognates. The cognates "personer", "narkotika" and "inkomst"were intentionally targeted for usage analysis.The last article was an exhaustive list of Swedish/English cognates chosen to discuss language difficulties our subject may have experienced during his progression through English as an L2.

The interviews were designed to either confirm or disconfirm prior predictions made about possible L1 Swedish transfer during English language production. To do this, multiple interviews,conducted by each of the researchers separately, were needed to provide the wealth of data necessary to evaluate the accuracy of prior predictions.

The subject's language production was isolated as a txt. file for corpus analysis. AntConc, a corpus analysis software was used to assist in language analysis. This program helped the researcher analyze the corpus in terms of word frequency, and contextual language usage.

6.0 ENGLISH LEARNER PROFILE

For the sake of confidentiality, this paper will refer to our subject as "Angus." Our subject revealed during the first interview that the 1980's American TV show "MacGyver" was a very substantial influence and motivation for him to learn English. The name "Angus" was chosen as an homage to the main character of this series (Angus MacGyver).

At the time of this study, 2013, Angus was a 28-year-old student living in Tokyo and studying English and Japanese at Temple University. Angus was born in Umeå, which is a town in the northern part of Sweden with a population of roughly 100,000 inhabitants. Angus first began studying English through the Swedish elementary school system when he was 10 years of age, but admits that he did not actively take an interest in English until his later years of junior high school.

Angus moved to Atlanta, USA in 2000 as part of an America/Sweden exchange program. This afforded Angus an opportunity to develop his English ability at a relatively early age. Angus cites this as being a crucial element in his L2 language acquisition.

6.1 MOTIVATION

During our first interview, Angus mentioned many motivators that compelled him to learn English from an early age. These included MacGyver (a technologically savvy American TV action hero), Zelda& Final-Fantasy (Japanese video games exported to Western countries with English-dubbed storylines), and American and British music (particularly rock and hip-hop). As Angus stated:

> "…like most of our television shows and all the movies is not dubbed, so for me it was just like, I really wanted to understand what like MacGyver was about. Like I wanted to see like MacGyver and I wanted to understand what MacGyver said to people so uh, of course we could read the subtitles but it still, like I still wanted to like know it by just the words. So, MacGyver was my major inspiration of like learning English."
>
> (Appendix A, Angus interview)

7.0 PRE-INTERVIEW PREDICTIONS: CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Before conducting the interviews, it was necessary to make predictions about errors made by an L1 Swedish English speaker based on language differences. Below, are listed several predictions based on 1.) Phonological distinctions, 2.) Grammar distinctions, 3.) False friends: English/Swedish cognates, and 4.) Plural morphology.It would not be feasible to create an exhaustive list of every possible error an L2 English speaker could make, so for the sake of brevity, we will focus mainly on these four major categories.

Some possible unpredictable errors could relate to language developmental struggles our subject has overcome during his own personal pursuit of English as an L2. This, being a major criticism concerning the limitations of contrastive analysis, is worthy of evaluation within the data.

7.1 LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

The following sections will address differences in phonology, grammar, lexical and plural

morphology. The data will be analyzed and evaluated based on these predictions. Finally, predicted limitations in CA's scope will be discussed.

7.1.1 PHONOLOGICAL DISTINCTIONS

According to Pekka and Löfstedt (2010), the Swedish language has 17 pure vowel sounds, which "feature nine long vowels and eight short vowels" (p.7). Even with this large number of vowel sounds, it has been suggested that there are still some difficulties for Swedish L1 learners of English when pronouncing certain words with similar syllable nuclei, or minimal pairs (Felder, 2009).

It may, therefore, be possible to predict that our subject may produce words with meaningsdifficult to comprehend or distinguish from other similar words. Minimal pairs are words that only differ in one phoneme, in this case perhaps vowel nuclei, illustrated with words like "been" and "Ben", or "pin" and "pen" (Barlow, 2002, p. 58). Our subject may have trouble distinguishing between words such as "Reap", and "Rip."

Another distinction concerning phonology is related to the timing and intonation of the Swedish language. It could be suggested that the timing of the Swedish language is especially unique in comparison to English, and therefore could be a possible source of negative transfer. The Frankfurt International School discussed the characteristics of the Swedish language as follows:"Swedish, unlike English, is a tone language. This means that it can distinguish word meanings by differences in pitch. This may result in the production of statements in English that sound like questions, or sentences that sound incomplete (particularly sentences ending with a two-syllable word)" (Shoebottom, FIS, 1996). This may lead to cases where declarative sentences take on an interrogative appearance.

7.1.2 GRAMMAR DISTINCTIONS

The Swedish language, although similar to English, has some distinguishing characteristics. One such feature has to do with subject-verb agreements. As Källkvist & Petersson explain, "One thing that many Swedish learners have difficulties with is the English subject-verb agreement in third person singular. There are various explanations as to why Swedes seem to find English subject-verb agreement difficult but one reason might be that this type of grammatical feature does not exist in Swedish" (Källkvist & Petersson, 2006). Considering that the act of adding an "s" to second-person verbs seems to be a more marked feature of English, it is feasible to predict that our subject will make some performance errors of either commission or omission involving +s verbs conjugations.

If we look at the sample of the Swedish language below (Figure1), we can see why this aspect of English may be difficult for Swedes. Notice how the verb (gillar = like) remains unchanged when paired with the various subjects "jag" (I), "han" (he), and "de" (they):

FIGURE1: Swedish Subject-Verb-Object Formation

1st person singular: Jag gillar glass. (I like ice cream.)
3rd person masculine singular: Han gillar glass. (*He like ice cream.)
3rd person plural: De gillar glass. (They like ice cream.)

7.1.3 FALSE FRIENDS: COGNATES

Another pre-interview prediction was made with respect to misuse of English/Swedish cognates. The influence of English on modern Swedish has resulted in the addition of many "English" words to the Swedish lexicon. Unfortunately, some of these words may not have retained their original English meaning, and could possibly create some difficulty for Swedish learners of English. As Brooks suggests, although some English words have been adopted and remain cognates many other adopted English words have evolved to take different meanings or connotations. This can cause confusion when Swedish learners of English when attempting to translate them back to English. An example of this is the word "babysitter."As Brooks states, babysitter is"a common English word denoting a person who watches a child while his or her parents are away, has been adopted into Swedish to mean a specific type of baby or high chair, which can lead to sentences such as: 'Your son is in the babysitter.'" (Brooks, pg. 30, 2010) Based on this, we could imagine a case of words like this (and perhaps others) being used in incorrectly.

In her paper titled "Your son is in the babysitter", Brooks provides a list of several common false friends existing between Swedish and English. During the final interview, we discuss a long list of English/Swedish cognates with Angus, and ask him to identify which words have caused him confusion during his English language acquisition.

Using the same sentence from figure 1, we can get a clear idea how "false friends" can cause trouble for Swedish English learners. Please pay attention to the object "glass" (ice cream) in Figure 2:

FIGURE2: Swedish/English Cognate

Jag gillar glass. English translation: "I like ice-cream."
Possible sentenceinvolving negative transfer: "I like glass."

Other interesting English/Swedish cognates are words such as "hamstring", which means hoarding, and comes from the word "hamster" (literally means acting like a hamster);

"ful", which sounds like "fool", but is used to describe an ugly person; and "kissa", which sounds like "kiss", or "kisser", but means to urinate (Lynch, 1998).

7.1.4 PLURAL MORPHOLOGY

Another problem regarding English "loan words" is the different meanings and morphologies these words take when used in different languages. For example, in English, the word "claim" has a meaning akin to "a right to", whereas the same word in Japanese (クレーム/kureɪ mu) has a much more negative connotation analogous to "a complaint." In addition, the English word "claim" is subject to a morphological +s plural indicator, while the Japanese word "kuremu" is not.

Swedish also has many "false friends" which could create negative transfer regarding proper meaning and morphology. As Philip Holmes and Ian Hinchliffe (1997) point out in their book entitled "Swedish: An Essential Grammar", some words that are "non-count singular" in English, are conversely "count plural" in Swedish. The authors offer this example to illustrate their point (please note that the plural morpheme in Swedish is represented here by "er"):

income (English non-count singular) inkomst(er) (Swedish count plural)

(pg. 36)

The opposite is also sometimes the case; as Holmes and Hinchliffe go on to give the following example:

knark (Swedish non-count singular) narcotics (English count plural)

(p. 36)

Looking at the examples mentioned above, perhaps it is possible to make some predictions about possible "errors" our subject will make in relation to perceived "proper English" phonology, grammar, vocabulary, and morphology.

7.1.5 PREDICTED LIMITATIONS

Knowing our subject's background, particularly that he has spent so much time in America, some of these predicted grammatical events or interlanguage may have already been noticed and corrected. Therefore, multiple interviews were needed to find small language idiosyncrasies in a large amount of data.

Another limitation is that our subject has lived in Japan for over five years, and has been studying Japanese. Perhaps some language transfer will be attributable to his lengthy stay in

Japan, and his vigorous Japanese language study. Living abroad has undoubtedly exposed our subject to more non-Swedish language interactions.

8.0 RESULTS: POST INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

Earlier in the paper, many predictions were made about how L1 influence might be present in the data we obtained from our subject. These predictions included: phonological, grammar usage and morphology, and cognate usage and morphology. From this point on, the paper will address each of these points in succession.

It might be useful at this point to readdress these predictions and analyze how they match up to the data.

8.1 PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Earlier in the paper, it was mentioned that L1 Swedish speakers of English sometimes have difficulty with minimal pairs. Although this was not abundantly present in the data, a few incidents could be used to attest to this prediction.

In one part of the interview, our subject, Angus, mentioned the name "MacGyver" as a personal source of inspiration to study English. When he first said the word, it was somewhat unintelligible because of his pronunciation mah/GEE/vah (mʌgivʌ). When the subject noticed there was difficulty understanding his pronunciation, he repeated it, this time with an intentional change in pronunciation that appeared to be for the researcher's benefit. During the second production, he sounded the word out slowly with more emphasis on the second vowel: mah/GAI/vah (mʌgʌɪ vʌː). This was noted, and the subject was asked about it again during the post-interview. At that time, Angus made known his perception that even though Swedish has "many vowel sounds", Swedish people still seem to have difficulty saying words with "difficult English vowel sounds."

He mentioned the brand name "Rice Crispies" to make his point clearer. According to Angus, "Many Swedish people say like 'Reese' (ɾis) Crispies, you know? They have to like really think about it" (Angus, personal communication, 2013).After Angus was asked to repeat several minimal pairs, there seemed to be less difficulty producing the vowel sounds. This suggests the production may be a conscious effort. It was also mentioned that "These words were like sometimes hard to hear" (Angus, personal communication, 2013).

Along with distinguishing certain vowel sounds, it has also been noted earlier in this paper that the Swedish "intonation" could possibly transfer into English.This may create an effect of seemingly continuous run-on sentences, and question-sounding statements. Although the data did not seem to attest to the latter (unintentionally produced question-sounding statements), there was some evidence of the former (sentences that seemed to continue without a definitive ending). This can be witnessed to some degree in many of the statements made by our subject, but particularly in the following example:

(Responding to the question “What aspects of English were particularly difficult for you?”)

> “Partly it was like, maybe it was like pronunciations. I would say like people in Sweden are usually very confident about their English, because it's not like, they don't know that it's bad until they go abroad. So like, when I went to Atlanta when I was like 16. I thought I was like perfect in English, but then I like realized I had some limits. And it was like things I couldn't, you know, explain and that was probably the first time I knew that you know like I have to change some things or maybe my pronunciation needs to get better … my vocabulary needs to ya... but also I think it’s like the internet now is a big thing … like all the things I read on the internet is usually in English..so I would say like... that kinda expanded my vocabulary a lot…. so ya…”

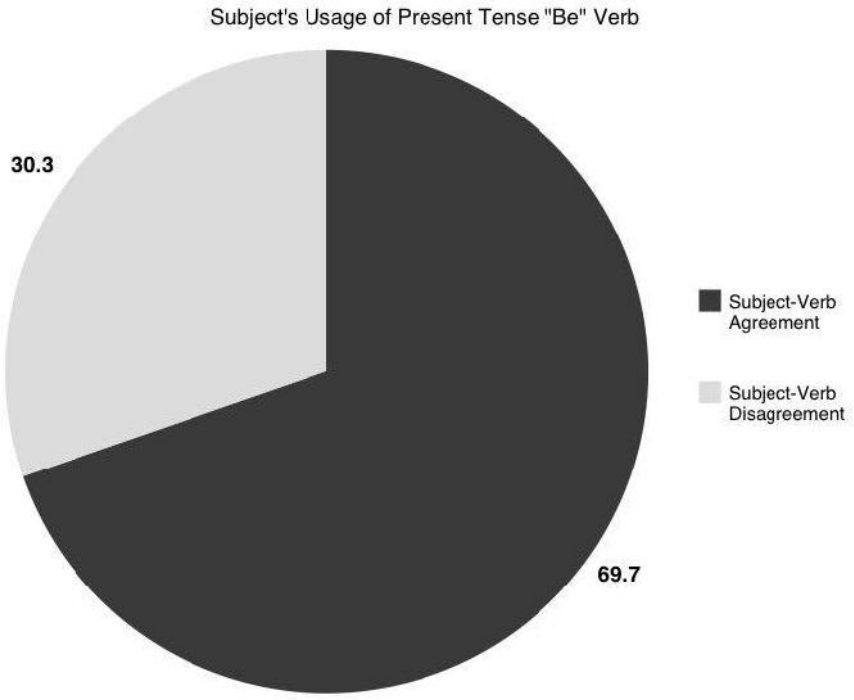
(Appendix A, Angus interview)

Intonation is a speaking strategy used by English speakers to let the interlocutor know if the person is finished speaking, or has more to add. Generally, a rise in intonation lets the interlocutor know that the speaker has more to add, while a drop indicates the speaker is finished. In Angus’ case, almost every sentence “ended” with a rising intonation, creating an illusion that the speaker had never really completed his thought.

8.2 GRAMMAR ANALYSIS

Earlier in this paper, a prediction was made about the possible presence of grammatical transfer involving subject/verb agreements betweensubjects and verbs. This indeed was attested in many places in our data. Using the AntConc corpus analysis software, it was determined that Angus used the verb “is” 33 times. Of the 33 times, 10 were instances where the subject was plural, and “are” is the commonly accepted conjugation. Interestingly, there were no mistakes with other conjugations of the “to be” verb. Figure 4, below, illustrates the frequency with respect to subject-verb disagreement.

Figure3: Corpus Analysis - Accuracy of Present Tense “Is” Verb



Looking at the examples below, we can see a few examples of subject/verb agreement errors:

1.) "…because in Sweden, everything is in uh... like most of the television shows and all the movies is (are) not dubbed…"
2.) "…video games… because all the games in Sweden is (are) not translated into Swedish"
3.) "like the letters is (are) the same but the pronunciation is different. Like it's more like Japanese. Like our vowels is (are) like a i u e o, and the American ones is (are) like A orU or I or E…"
4.) "Mainly immigrants that um… either refuse to work andis (are) like happy to live on social welfare or people who like has (have) a hard time adapting to Swedish society... I guess…

As previously mentioned, this grammar event was only present with respect to "is/are" be-verbs, as was not witnessed with other "+s" third person morphemes (as predicted). During the post-interview, my subject asked me to reveal what "mistakes" he had made. Upon mentioning this "mistake" to the subject, he replied "Oh yes, that is very hard", revealing that the learner was aware of this difficulty prior to the interview. It can be said from this that awareness did not prevent the occurrence in our subject's speech production, further attesting to the perseverance of this error.

8.3 FALSE FRIENDS

Although there was a prediction made about cognates being used incorrectly in terms of meaning and morphology, there did not seem to be much evidence for this in the data. Several weeks after the interview, the subject was asked to identify as many English/Swedish cognates as he could in the transcript of our interviews. He identified many, such as “auction” (Sw. auktionen), and“interest” (Sw. intresse). All cognates he identified were used correctly within the data. Cognate usage was analyzed by N-grams generated by the corpus analysis software.

At first. the +s error in “pronunciation(s)” seemed to verify the earlier prediction, but closer examination revealed that “pronunciation” is not an English/Swedish cognate (Swedish = uttal), and so cannot be said to attest to our prediction.While examining the transcript, we wondered if perhaps “pronunciations” was a transfer from the usage and/or morphology of the word “uttal.” This was disconfirmed during the final interview when Angus stated,“No you can't write "uttals" It’s always just uttal.”

Throughout our data, Angus not only used cognates in correct context, but also with consistently accurate morphological construction. This contrasted with our earlier prediction. As stated before, this may be the result of his experience living in America, and his genuine interest in the English language in general.

8.4 UNPREDICTED LANGUAGE EVENTS

Our subject displayed a tendency during the interview, and even more so during the post-interview (perhaps when he felt more relaxed) to overuse passive sentence formations. The example below could be used to illustrate this phenomenon:

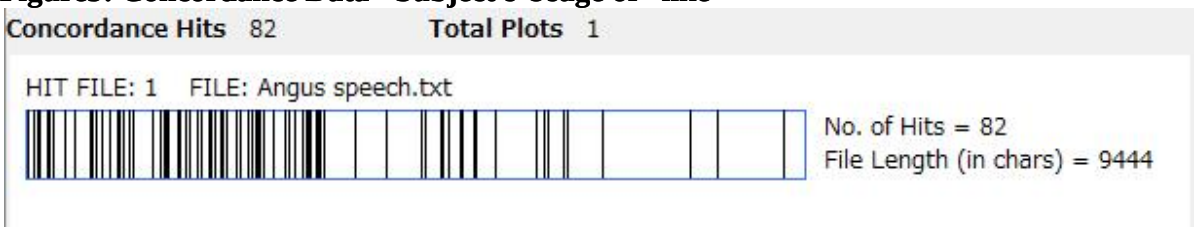
> “...and the interest that was like shown, it was like pretty big, like 42 countries, from 42 countries it was like shown a lot of interest...” (Appendix A, Angus interview)

This preference for passive formations is not interlanguage, but rather a style of speaking that seems somewhat atypical compared to native discourse; particularly regarding frequency.

Our subject also tended to use the “ya” in his language production. This may come from the Swedish word “ja”, meaning “yes”, being used quite frequently in Swedish language production. In addition, the word “jag” meaning “I” is often a homophone with “ja”, as the “g” is not always pronounced (Angus, personal communication, 2013).

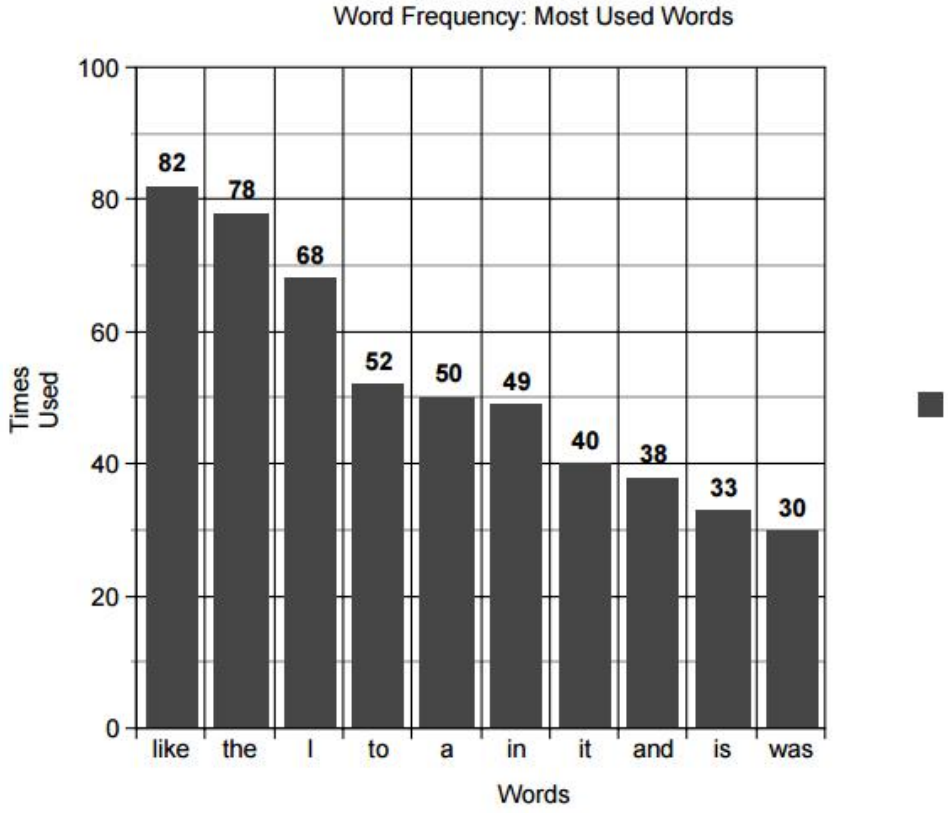
Another unpredicted event was regarding the word “like.” Our subject had a propensity to use the word “like” quite frequently in his language production. Using the AntConc corpus analysis software, it was discovered that “like” was the most frequently used word; appearing 82 times in the data. Below, in figure 5, you can see a concordance plot of when Angus used like in conversation.

Figure5: Concordance Data - Subject's Usage of "like"



Analyzing the concordance plot of "like" usage, we can see it was much more prevalent during his first and second interview; perhaps the result of initial nervousness.Altogether, Angus produced 1,755 words during our interviews. According to our corpus analysis, 534 words were non-repeating, original words. Figure 6 shows us a list of Angus' most produced words.

Figure6: Word Frequencies



9.0 CONCLUSION

Although some of the predictions made at the onset of this study were not supported, possibly a result of the subject's extended stay in America, a considerate amount of the predictions was indeed accurate. Evaluating the grammatical and phonological features of the Swedish language before engaging in a discussion with the L1 Swedish English speaker did allow the researcher to make some informed predictions about the subject's English language usage, particularly with respect to subject-verb agreements, and phonological production. We conclude, therefore, that learning about the grammatical features of a student's L1 can, to some extent, better inform instructors regarding possible interlanguage events and language learning difficulty.

Using CA to make knowledge able predictions regarding student-specific language difficulties seems to have a valid place in language instruction. This study may support the use of CA as one method to familiarize language instructors with the areas of potential difficulty for L2 learners of English, but more research needs to be done.

9.1 LIMITATIONS

This was a case study, and as such, it was restricted to one subject (n=1). Drawing data from one subject makes it difficult to assume equivalent results can be expected from larger populations. Also, the nature of the study makes replication a very laborious prospect.

C.A. cannot account for the multifarious differences in language output, perhaps the result of different experiences the learner encounters during their language skills progression, but it still may have practical applications for better understanding L2 language acquisition. Grammatical and phonological differences between languages may create subtle and enigmatic miscommunications resulting in potentially reduced intelligibility between interlocutors.

APPENDIXA - Spoken
Recorded Interview

Researcher: Alright, can you describe the article? Please try to give as much information as possible.

Angus: Yes. It's about this like guy who owned a town and then he sold it to some Vietnamese guys for like 900,000 dollars because he was like he's been living there for like a long time and he just decided to auction it out and the interest that was like shown, it was like pretty big, like 42 countries, from 42 countries it was like shown a lot of interest as far as I could, ya... that is what I know, basically.

Researcher: Ok. What about a “mayor”. Did you read anything about a mayor?

Angus: Ya the... the guy who owned the city before and he was actually like the mayor, right? I think so. And then he step, he stepped down as mayor of the city because he had to like move, he moved from city and he, he sold it so...

Researcher: About you, where are you from? What's the name of your town, and what are the people like?

Angus: Ok. My name is -----, and I'm from a town in North Sweden called Umeå. I would say the people are quite nice, a bit like reserved, but in general, it's like a nice atmosphere, but the thing about like North Sweden is that nobody talks to each other, it's like very ya... very reserved.

Researcher: You live in Tokyo now. What are you doing in Tokyo?

Angus: I'm wor (false start) ... um I'm studying right now, but I used to work for like four years in a Japanese restaurant, but now I'm a student.

Researcher: Why did you come to Japan?

Angus: In the beginning, it was just like because of my brother, like I had... he had interest a bit, like he was interested in Japan so he moved here when he was like sixteen and then he started university in Japan, so I had like good opportunities to visit Tokyo and then I just liked it and uh ya basically decided to stay, get a job and stay in Japan and ya…

Researcher: When did you first start studying English? Do you remember some of your first English classes? How'd you feel about English?

Angus: Ya I do actually. It was really fun because, in Sweden, everything is in uh... like most of our television shows and all the movies is not dubbed, so for me it was just like, I really wanted to understand what like MacGyver was about.

Researcher: Sorry?

Angus: Oh ya, MacGyver. Like I wanted to see like MacGyver and I wanted to understand what MacGyver said to people so uh, of course, we could read the subtitles but it still, like I still wanted to like know it by just the words. So, MacGyver was my major inspiration of like learning English. And like that and like video games because all the games in Sweden is not translated into Swedish. If I play like a Final Fantasy game or if I play like a... like a Zelda game when I was a kid, everything was in English. And it sucked when you were like you know, like seven and you couldn't understand what like the main character was saying, so when I started school, I was actually like really hyped up about like I wanted to learn and I wanted to know like what Link said to Ganon (characters from a Nintendo game entitled "Zelda").

Researcher: What are some difficulties you had learning English, and how did you get

over them?

Angus: Partly it was like, maybe it was like pronunciations. I would say like people in Sweden are usually very confident about their English because it's not like, they don't know that it's bad until they go abroad so like, when I went to Atlanta when I was like 16, I thought I was like perfect in English, but then I like realized I had some limits and it was like things I couldn't, you know, explain and that was probably the first time I knew that you know like I have to change some things or maybe my pronunciation needs to get better … my vocabulary needs to ya... but also, I think it's like the internet now is a big thing … like all the things I read on the internet is usually in English. So, I would say like... that kinda expanded my vocabulary a lot…. so ya…

Researcher: What's different between English and Swedish?

Angus: It's pretty much the same. Like the structure's the same basically. But like the pronunciation is like way different... like the letters is the same but the pronunciation is different. Like it's more like Japanese. Like our vowels is likeア,イ,ウ,エ,オ(ə, i, u, e, o) and the American ones is like A or U or I or E.

APPENDIXB – Written

Recorded Online

Researcher: Here is the first article (there are two) ... Please read it and I'll ask you some questions. Does Sweden have a problem with narcotics?

Angus: Well I would not say it's a major problem in Sweden.Drugs are very expensive and we don't have a big drug culture in general.We never experienced what the Americans would refer to as "an epidemic" Drugs are more expensive than America. Way more! It's very hard to smuggle drugs into Sweden And due to the cold climate hard to produce. Sweden is quite isolated.

Researcher: What springs to mind when you hear the term "drug addict"?Do you imagine an American situation?

Angus: Like people who would sell their moms TV to get high? Well I've seen it. My friend Daniel who passed away in 2010 stole his mothers wedding ring.

Researcher: Wow, I'm sorry to hear that. Are you addicted to anything? Either good or bad. I know you like to play video games.

Angus:I'm addicted to alcohol I guess. But I have no problems with not drinking for a few days. Yeah video games that too. That's more of a hobby tho. I think the owning part is half the fun.

Researcher: Do you view addiction as a choice or do you feel people have no control over their habits?

Angus: I mean I think the drugs themselves are not like the major cause for the addiction. It's usually the situation in life we are in, people around us or mental instability.

Researcher: So, you would say that drugs are a form of escapism?
Angus: In a way yes. Actually definitely. Depends on the drug tho.

Researcher: The article talks about how our brains are wired. How would you say your brain is wired?What kind of thinker are you?

Angus:I'm wired to be a drinker, of at least enjoy alcohol a lot. My brain is. I think alcoholism has a lot to do with out alcohol tolerance and the way we feel when we drink People who go crazy cuz of alcohol or people who feel like bad when drinking probably won't use it as a "drug". People like me who feel relaxed and calm when drinking, plus have a pretty high tolerance are in the dangerzone.

Researcher: Thank you for discussing this topic with me.

Angus: My pleasure.

APPENDIX C - Spoken

Recorded Interview

Researcher: Take 2-3 minutes to skim the article. Is there a big difference in wealth where you're from? You know, uh between rich and poor people say.

Angus: Probably one of the lowest gaps in the world so… like Sweden is one of the lowest… like poor and rich people gaps.

Researcher: Are most people rich?That is my…uh…image of Sweden.

Angus: Depends what you compare to. Like most…most people are what Americans would refer to as upper middle class.

Researcher: Do those people live in the cities?Are people in the countryside poor?

Angus: Nope. It's fairly equal. The countryside is not like uh dependent on farming etc. like the Chinese so…

Researcher: Are there any distinctions between city people and country folk?

Angus: Most people on the countryside commute to the cities… a bit.

Researcher: I see. So, Swedish people don't have an image of country-side people

Angus: Not the same way as people from the US I guess. Where like country folks is almost like a sub culture. I was actually born in the countryside. In a village of 300 people. Moved to the city when I was 15.

Researcher: Was this a drastic change for you?

Angus: A bit, but not in a bad way. They had way more people from different cultures at the school in the city. People where like skateboarding and stuff. It was pretty cool.

Researcher: It was more international?More foreign people?

Angus: Way more.

Researcher: From Finland?

Angus: No, only one finish guy in my class so…

Researcher: Are Finnish people viewed as "foreign"?

Angus: Finish people, hmm... Kind of…Mostly Iraq, Somalia, Iran or Palestine. Yeah…

Researcher: Really? There were a lot of middle-eastern people in your high school in Sweden?

Angus: Tons.I can show you my high-school yearbook

Researcher:I believe you

Angus: Sweden is the go to country for people who want to make a good life in Europe.

Researcher: Was there any discrimination against middle-eastern people?

Angus: Nope not really. Sweden is a nice country. I… Many people would want to live there.

Researcher: Yes, I imagine Sweden is a nice place to live. Who, uh would you say, are the poor people in your country? Which people are the poorest?For example, farmers, construction workers or...

Angus: People living in the suburbs or outside of the city core in bigger cities like Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö… It's a… a pretty big problem. Unemployment can be up to like 70% It's maybe the opposite of America... America like has more poor in the inner-cities.

Researcher: Seriously? 70%? That seems hard to imagine.

Angus: Ya, it's a big problem in Sweden.

Researcher: Why are they unemployed? Is there a problem with education in those areas?

Angus: Segregation. Cultural differences.

Researcher: Segregation? Which group is being segregated?

Angus: Mainly immigrants that um… either refuse to work and is like happy to live on social welfare or people who like has a hard time adapting to Swedish society... I guess.

Researcher: Interesting. How can these people better adapt to Swedish society? Are they learning the language and adopting the customs of Swedish people?

Angus:I think it was cause of nativity from the Swedish government. Our first wave of migrants in the 70s and 80s adapted fairly easy

Researcher: Sorry? Nativity? Did you mean naivety?

Angus: Yes, naivety. Sorry. They were mainly from former Yugoslavia, Finland, Chile, Greece and Italy. The second wave in the early 90s where Arabs and West Africans. We probably did not expect the difference in culture. These people who like immigrated to Sweden didn't try to get… fit in with Swedish culture.

Researcher: There was a clash?

Angus: Yes, kind of. The growing no go zones in some parts of Sweden is an answer to that I think. What we can do to better the situation for people in these areas is debatable so… The problem with the generous welfare system is that it does not motivate for example a Somalian family to make an honest living.For people who escaped civil war and… and starvation 130,000 yen a month is more than enough. But their kids are getting frustrated, there for the unstable situation.

Researcher: Is that enough to live comfortably?

Angus: Definitely. Well depends on how you view comfortable. Probably won't buy any PlayStation for their kids. But food and room will always be there.

Researcher: So, when these peoples' kids grow up, are they given the same opportunities as other Swedes?

Angus: Yup. Free Healthcare, free schools… even universities are free.

Researcher: Well, thank you for talking with me again about this topic.

Angus: Any time.

APPENDIXD- Written

Recorded Online

Researcher:I have a quick question about Swedish. In an earlier interview, you used the word "pronunciations" with an "s". This is not typically used this way in English. Is the word for pronunciation "utall" in Swedish? Can you say "utalls" with an "s" ending in Swedish?

Angus: No you can't write "uttals" Its always just uttal.

Researcher: How about "Ja"? Do people in Sweden ya "Ja" a lot?

Angus: All the time

Researcher: Is it a question? Like "Right?" It's more a confirmation Like Jag gillar glass, ja? Or something like that?

Angus: No We use "Eller hur" for "right"

Researcher: How do people in Sweden use "ja" as a confirmation? Is there an English equivalent? Is it like an exclamatory "Yeah"?

Angus: Yes that's a good comparison It's the same as the Germans basically.

Researcher: I have this image that Swedes, and perhaps Germans as well, use "ja" a lot when speaking. Maybe more so than English speakers. Would you say that's true? I mean more than English speakers say "Yeah."

Angus: That is true.

Researcher: Did you have a chance to look at all the words on the list? When you were initially learning English, or even now, did you have trouble with any of the words on the list? For example, I noticed that "hamstring" in Swedish means hoarding, or collecting a lot of items, whereas, in English, it is used to describe a part of the body.

Angus: Before I used to make a few mistakes Lately no. For example in Sweden we call spicy food "hot food" So I used to say like "this curry is so hot" That took a while to get used to

Researcher: Did this list surprise you? Were there words which you remember specifically having trouble with? Are there any words which you think many Swedish people have trouble with? Or maybe foreign people learning Swedish have trouble with...

Angus: One big problem for some is the pronunciation of: She, show.. Well anything with "Sh" We tend to wanna pronounce it chee instaid of she. The "ch" sound is extremely common in sweden Also the English "R" can be hard for sweds to get right We use a rolling R much like the Spanish

Researcher: Can you tell me more about your stay in America? How long did you stay? Where did you live? Did you experience any culture shock? Was it difficult to communicate at first?

Angus: It was in the year 2000, stayed in Central Atlanta. The biggest shock was how overweight everybody was Also the food I tought was amazing I had no real problem with communication

Researcher: Do people generally eat healthier food in Sweden?

Angus: Yes definitely.

Researcher: I'm going to jump topics here a bit. Do you feel like a different person when you speak English? I mean compared to when you're speaking Swedish or Japanese.

Angus: I used too but now it's such a big part of everyday life With English When speaking Japanese I feel different How did you use to feel different when you spoke English?

Researcher: Can you describe that? Also with Japanese…

Angus:I wasn't used to it, and I guess didn't really known how to express myself properly.

Researcher: Do you feel you express yourself in English as well as you express yourself in your mother tongue, Swedish?

Angus: Yes. Almost better at times English is a more emotional language

Researcher: What do you mean? Can you elaborate on that? How is English emotional compared to Swedish? That is an interesting statement.

Angus: Well for example the word "I love you" or "I love this" is way easier to use in English In Swedish the word for I love you (jag älskar dig) carries so much more weight and is rarely used. Also swearing in Swedish carries more weight English has a good balance in that sense

Researcher: What do you mean? How does swearing carry more weight in Swedish? Do you mean that Swedes reserve swearing for serious occasions, while English speakers use swears more frequently?

Angus: Exactly. The swear words in English are not as heavy If you say like "shut up" to someone in Swedish it's way ruder.

Researcher: So, you mean saying something like shut up, which is very light in English, has strong implications in Swedish? What is the worst thing you can say to someone in Swedish?

Angus: Horunge

Researcher: I don't know what that is, but it sounds bad. Maybe I'll ask you the definition after this interview.

Angus: Haha. That's probably a good idea.

Researcher: Last question: Did you know that Sweden was ranked number one in the EF English Proficiency Index worldwide? That means Swedes are the most proficient, according to the index, in speaking English. Why do you think that is?

Angus: Hmm....I have no idea.We never dub anything, movies tvshows etc i think that might have helped. We are interested in American movies and t.v. shows.

Researcher: I think we're out of time. Thanks again for allowing me to ask you some question.

Angus: No problem.

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