



DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND
LITTERATURES

A Swedish Perspective on Japanese as a Third Language

The Effects of English as Second Language

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Supervisor:	Lars Larm
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Abstract

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Higher Japanese language studies in Sweden are exclusively taught through English textbooks. Previous research within the field of third language (L3) acquisition has studied the effects of mediating languages on L3, but not on Japanese specifically. This paper intended to investigate the effects of mediating English as a second language (ESL) on Japanese language acquisition among Swedish language students. To gather the research data, glossary learning tests in Swedish and English were created. There were 12 participants in total, 7 participants in the Swedish group (SG) and 5 in the English group (EG). The results show a mean value of the test scores at 18,43 for SG and 17,2 for EG. The overall test scoring between the two groups did not greatly differ but the reported experiences show that more participants in EG perceived the test as cumbersome and difficult than the most participants in SG. However, the small sample size and uneven distribution of participants between the two groups make the results statistically insignificant. The current study is perceived as a pilot study and can hopefully guide future researchers within the field to investigate the matter further.

Preface

I would like to thank some people that have contributed this degree's thesis; my classmate Rut Löfgren for peer reviewing this paper, and Daniel Byhman and Marton Toth for setting their time aside to refine the essay linguistically and formally. I would like to thank Christina Lindquist for sharing her knowledge and experience of the research field, third language acquisition, and I would like to thank Kimiko Tsujimoto for refining the Japanese-English learning list items. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to Frida Eliasson and Philip Apraksin who helped me to recruit participants.

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1 Introduction

Third language acquisition is a phenomenon which is not much talked about, nor do many people know what it means. Third language (L3) acquisition refers to the language learning process of learning a language through a second language (L2), which in turn, has been taught via the first language (L1), i.e., the individual's mother tongue. Together they form a chain of languages, dependent on each other (Hammarberg, 2016).

This process of language learning is not always selected by the learner voluntarily, but rather depends on the resources available for the specific language of interest. When it comes to Japanese studies for example, no intermediate or advanced Japanese language textbooks written in Swedish are accessible today on the market. Most of the literature is written in English, which demands the learner to have significant English language skills to learn Japanese on a higher level.

In the episode Tredjespråksinläring (En. third language acquisition) at Språklärapodden (En. The Language-learning-podcast), the host Pernilla Rosell-Steuer (2016) is visited by Tore Nilsson and Ylva Falk, prominent researchers within the field of L3 acquisition research, to discuss their and others' findings. They explain the importance of background languages, the significance of typological similarities between target language and background language, and how the old belief of L1 affecting L3 negatively has been debunked. However, the research they discuss focuses on European languages (mostly Germanic languages), and not languages from other parts of the world, belonging to other language families. This is because there is no research done about L3 acquisition of, for example, Japanese from the perspective of Swedish students studying Japanese.

In spite of the differences between the interest of previous research and the current study, one comment by Ylva Falk in the podcast episode was intriguing.

If you have a multilingual person that knows many languages, then you can see tendencies that a background language, so to speak L2 or L1, on a low level or low proficiency level, readily transfers into a third language on a low proficiency level. But when you reach a higher proficiency level in the third language, then we often transfer words from a language with higher proficiency level (Rosell-Steuer, 2016).

What she states in the comment is an aspect of Japanese L3 learning that this study intends to investigate further. With the background that, even though Swedish people are

known to be excellent English speakers and rank high on the EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) (2020) every year, it doesn't automatically mean that Swedish students studying Japanese master the English language to the same extent as their L1. Therefore, it feels inevitable to think about how the student literature existing exclusively in English affects Swedish language students studying Japanese.

1.1 The **aim** of the study is to investigate third language acquisition of Japanese, among Swedish Language students, with English as a Second Language (ESL) as a mediating factor.

1.2 The **research questions** of the study

1. How convenient is it to learn Japanese through English contra Swedish, for Swedish students studying Japanese?
2. How do the experiences of learning Japanese through English contra Swedish differ?

This research paper is structured in 7 chapters, where the second chapter, *Background*, holds information about previous research in third language acquisition. In the third chapter, *Method*, you can read about the research method, participant information, procedure and data analysis in detail. In the fourth chapter, *Results*, the results of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the two research groups' reports and performances on the test are presented and specified in their respective sections. In the fifth chapter, *Discussion*, the data results are discussed and elaborated on, in terms of the current study's aim and the research questions and followed by a description of the advantages and limitations. In the sixth chapter, *Future directions*, suggestions for future research are proposed. And, at last, the seventh chapter, *Conclusion*.

2 Background

Sakurai's study from 1994, is the only one known to have investigated third language acquisition of Japanese (L3) mediated by English (L2). In the study, two groups were evaluated on their Japanese proficiency level and the degree interference of L2 relative to L3 concerning negative questions and word order. The first group consisted of individuals with either Korean or Chinese as a first language (L1), English as a L2 and Japanese as a L3. The second group consisted of American students studying Japanese in first and second year. It was found that the Asian students experienced some interference from English but not to the same extent as the American students.

Sakurai (1994) contemplates whether the difference in the two groups depends on either the Asian students' level of English, the difference in answering negative questions in Japanese and English, or both.

The second article is an overview of 'up-to-date' research done of third language acquisition from 2010 by Falk and Bardel. To summarize previous research, the authors find it apparent that L1 and L2 have substantial impact on L3 acquisition, and that there are different components that determine whether a L2 is more influential in the L3 acquisition than the L1 and vice versa. This also corresponds with Sakurai's (1994) findings. However, Falk and Bardel (2010) point out that the research has many limitations and stress that the research methods need to be more elaborate to catch the true essence of the phenomenon.

Since Falk and Bardel's overview article in 2010, they have kept studying third language acquisition and published a book called "Tredjespråksinlärning", which maps out what we know about the relationship of L1, L2 and L3 today. Hammarberg (2016), author of the second chapter in the book, describes the theory of speech process in multilingual individuals and how language related information is stored in the brain. He states that languages are subsystems within a larger cognitive system. It has been theorized in previous research that each language has its own lexical system, but that has been proven wrong; every word is stored in a common dictionary and labelled with certain 'language tags' to separate them from each other.

In addition, a commonly occurring phenomenon within language use is *association* (p. 40). Associations between structurally and notionally close words can form within the same language and between different languages, which refers to the process of cross-linguistic transfer (Hammarberg, 2016). Lindquist (2016) notes that L3 learners can benefit from this

cross-linguistic transfer, because it contributes to shortcuts forming between words of the same origin (i.e., cognate). However, it is important to note that the same process can create issues for the learner, such as *false friends*, which refers to words that have different or partially different meanings but can coincide formally or phonetically with the learner's native and target language (Ketevan, & Giuli, 2018).

According to Lindquist (2016), researchers who have investigated how background languages affect word learning and word usage in L3 acquisition distinguish between *transfer of form* and *transfer of meaning* (p. 66). They could see that formal transfer often happened in the early stage of the learning process, while meaning-related transfer often appeared in a much later stage, when the learner has a higher proficiency level in the target language. Furthermore, research about lexical transfer has also found that words of L1 and L2 can operate as *function words* and *lexical words* in L3 (p. 68). It is apparent that function words are often transferred from L2, while lexical words can be transferred both from L1 and L2. Freedborn (1987) explains that function words refer to the structure that links or hold words, phrases and clauses together to form sentences. Meanwhile, lexical words refer to words that hold meaning of our experiences of the world.

To return to Hammarberg (2016), background languages, in a broader perspective, can adopt two different roles; an *instrumental role* and a *donor role* (p. 45). The instrumental role of a background language manifests itself in actively switching codes from one language to another. The donor role refers to the linguistic material that the language can add to the speaker's message and the interpretation of received messages. It is the donor role that researchers mostly refer to when it comes to background languages' impact on the learner's language proficiency. The effect of background languages on L3 can manifest itself through conscious and unconscious transfer of data to the learner, and through clearly unintentional shifts of language in the middle of a sentence.

Which language has the donor role is determined by several different factors informs Hammarberg (2016), such as the *level of topicality* (to what extent the language has been recently used), *skill level* (the learner's proficiency level in a background language), *typological similarities* (the degree of similarities, in concern to specific elements or structural components, between a background language and L3), and the *L2 status* (cognitive and cultural similarities between L2 and L3) (p. 46). It is believed that the language with the highest score in these four factors will be the most regularly activated language in L3

acquisition. Other suggested factors are the age of the language learner and their motivation and emotional attitude towards activating a certain background language.

The relevance of the factor '*level of topicality*' is apparent in L3 acquisition research. However, it should be noted that there are circumstances in which background languages can cause a language attrition rather than successful language acquisition (Mickan, McQueen, & Lemhöfer, 2020). Mickan et al. (2020) points out that competition between words of the same concept in different languages is not uncommon, since they are associated with the same memory cue. This corresponds with Lindquist's (2016) theory of 'false friends.' They explain that the more often retrieved word for the concept can impair the memory of the words of the concept in other languages prior known to the speaker. Furthermore, the researchers reached the conclusion that the source of interference significantly mattered. In their study, they found that the L2 words in English interfered more with retrieval of the L3 Spanish words than L1 Dutch did. Mickan, et al. (2020) notes that this corresponded with previous research done in psycholinguistics, but it contradicts the notion that the dominant L1 interferes the most with L3 acquisition.

The authors hypothesized that the difference in language interference is due to the differences in frequency of use. The more commonly used language is easier to retrieve than the less frequently used language. In other words, when learning a new language through a less frequently used language, the brain's cognitively limited recourses will be busy juggling the retrieval of the L2 and at the same time put effort into learning the L3 (Mickan, et al., 2020).

3 Method

In this paper, Japanese vocabulary learning and English versus Swedish translation were studied between two groups of Swedish students studying Japanese. Considering the lack of research about Japanese as a third language (L3), a research measurement could not be obtained. Hence a new measurement was developed to meet the requirements of the research aim and research questions in the current study, with inspiration from the book “The Routledge Handbook of Vocabulary Studies” (Webb, 2019). Specifically, the paragraph *Target Word Selection* (p. 413), which describe essential elements to take into account when designing a vocabulary assessment test, and *Which Words to Measure?* (p. 380-381), which refers to the importance of choosing words in a sophisticated and deliberate manner.

The test is designed based on the typical ‘school-setting’ type of learning vocabulary; first, a glossary is presented, and then later, a quiz with items from the studied glossary is conducted. This approach is one that many are familiar with from their previous experiences of learning languages in school, which makes the instructions for the research form easier to comprehend. Yet, the element of separating the participants into two groups and giving them different language translations adds a new dimension to the stage.

There were also open- and closed-ended questions in the beginning and end of the form, to shed some light on surrounding factors, such as the participants’ past experiences of learning Japanese and their experiences of the test.

3.1 Participants

The study included two groups of participants with Swedish as L1, English as L2 and Japanese as L3. Invitations to participate was sent via the school platform Canvas. Students willing to participate were randomly assigned to one of the groups and sent a link to respective test. Some participants in turn, offered their help to send the forms onto their connections with Japanese language knowledge.

There were five participants in the English group (EG) (three men and two women) and seven participants in the Swedish group (SG) (four men and three women). Concerning the participants’ Japanese language proficiency level, in SG there were one beginner, two intermediate, two upper intermediate and two advanced, while in EG there were one apprentice, one intermediate, two upper intermediate and one advanced. How many years the participants had studied Japanese ranged between 1 to 7 years in the SG, and 1 to 3,5 years in the EG. All participants in both groups had studied Japanese in Sweden, specifically at

University of Gothenburg with just one exception. Furthermore, 9 out of 12 participants had experiences of studying Japanese in Japan.

3.2 Procedure

Two separate Japanese word test with Swedish contra English translation were created through Google forms and organized in five sections: informed consent, ideographic and language questions, the ‘list-learning’ section, the Japanese word test, and questions about the participants’ experiences of the test, see in Appendix A and B.

In the first section, informed consent, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and the research ethical principles. If they consented to participate in the study, they could proceed to the next page, otherwise the form was closed.

In the second section, ideographic and language questions, the participants filled in questions about their name, gender, level of Japanese studies, how many years they have studied Japanese, at what schools and in which countries they have studied Japanese and which language they prefer to use when translating Japanese words.

In the third section, list-learning, the two groups were each assigned a list of 23 Japanese words to learn, either through English or Swedish translation. The Japanese words were the same in both lists and were ordered in the same fashion. The words in the lists were retrieved from a Japanese N1 language proficiency vocabulary list (ABK, 2014), from English SAT words list (Vocabulary.com, 2020) and from brainstorming everyday words. The words were then translated into the three languages and evaluated on their suitability for the test. The requirement was words that are specific for each language (a loanword version of the word does not exist, or the loanword is not reminiscent of the translation word from one of the languages in the study), satisfying translation in all three languages and words that are unlikely that the participants already know in Japanese. The last criteria were based on the knowledge of the stratified sampling group’s level of education in Japanese.

In the fourth section, Japanese word test, the participants were presented with the test of the just-learned words from the list, but with the Japanese words in a scrambled order, and all kanji characters and katakana removed. The test was designed so that every Japanese word had a list bar with all the translation words to choose from.

In the last section, questions about their experiences of the test, the participants were asked to describe their thoughts about the test in written text, grade the level of difficulty of

the test, and specify whether they translated or searched for descriptions of any English or Swedish word during the list-learning segment.

After the data collection, all written statements from the two groups were organized in a form and answers from the Swedish group (SG) written in Swedish were translated into English.

3.3 Data analysis

To analyze the data, both a qualitative and a quantitative approach were adopted. From the qualitative perspective, the means of correct answers of the two groups were compared. Their answers in the fifth section (questions about their experiences of the test) were also analyzed in light of their performances on the test, along with their answers on the question about their favored translation language from the second section (ideographic and language questions).

From the qualitative perspective, the two groups' 'after-thoughts' were thematically analyzed to see whether the groups' experiences of the list-learning and the test differed or were similar to each other. A thematization was made through outlining common themes in their written statements.

4 Results

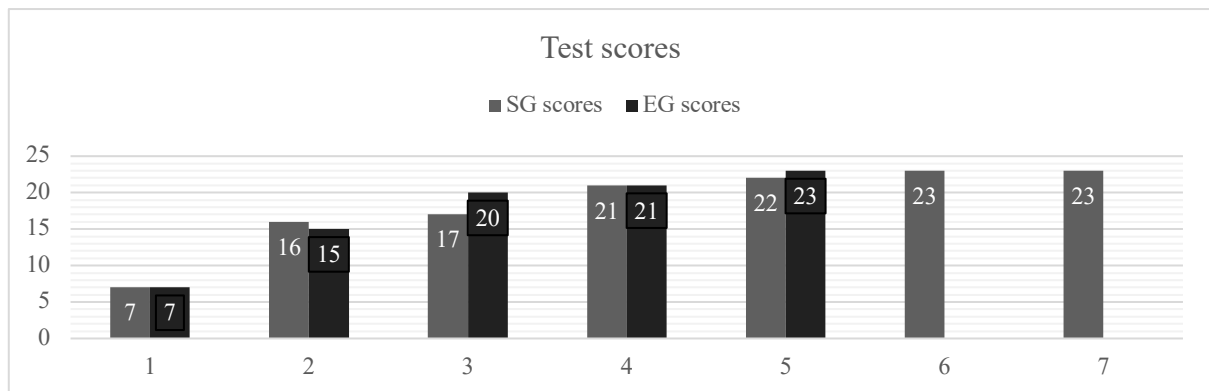
4.1 The results of the quantitative data

In the following table and bar graph each participant's test score is presented (maximum score of the test was 23).

4.1.1 Table 1. Test scores for each participant

Participant:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Swedish group	7 ^{SG1}	16 ^{SG2}	17 ^{SG3}	21 ^{SG4}	22 ^{SG5}	23 ^{SG6}	23 ^{SG7}
English group	7 ^{EG1}	15 ^{EG2}	20 ^{EG3}	21 ^{EG4}	23 ^{EG5}	X	X

4.1.2 Figure 1. Test scores for each participant



Note. The graph shows the distribution of the test scores among the participants between the two groups.

The quantitative data of the test scores showed a mean of 17,67 in the Swedish group (SG) and 17,2 in the English group (EG), with each an extreme data value of 7 in both groups. Removing the extreme values, the mean of the participants' performances in SG was 19,8 and 19,75 in EG. The median had the value of 20 in EG and 17 in SG. Through the same procedure as before, the extreme values were removed, and the median showed instead 21 for SG and 20 for EG.

4.1.3 Table 2. Mean and median values of the tests

	Mean	Mean without extreme value	Median	Median without extreme value
Swedish group	18,43	20,3	21	21
English group	17,2	19,75	20	20

Concerning translation or searching for meaning of the translation words that they did not understand, the results demonstrates that in SG, one participant did not understand many, four did not understand one or two and one did not understand some. In EG, two participants did not understand many, one did not understand some, one did not understand one or two and one understood all.

4.1.4 Table 3. Frequency of translation and/or meaning search

	Yes, many	Yes, some	Yes, one or two	no
Swedish group	1	1	5	0
English group	2	1	1	1

Regarding level of difficulty, one participant in EG considered the test to be difficult (ranging from Easy to Difficult), two participants considered it to be moderately difficult, and two participants considered it to be average. In SG, one participant considered the test to be difficult, three participants considered it to be average and two participants considered it to be pretty easy.

4.1.5 Table 4. Experienced level of difficulty

	Difficult	Moderately difficult	Average	Pretty easy	Easy
Swedish group	1	0	3	3	0
English group	1	2	2	0	0

4.2 The results of the qualitative data

4.2.1 *Translation language of choice.* The qualitative data showed that 11 out of 12 participants from both groups preferred to use English to translate Japanese words, and except from one participant, among all the 11 participants who checked the answer box ‘English’, used English exclusively. The participant reporting not to use English exclusively to translate Japanese words reported that “It simply just becomes English, but I use Swedish too. What I think best describes what I translate.” (SG 5) Furthermore, there was another participant (SG 2) who described occasionally translating words to Swedish, but the process of the translation was still mediated by English (translating the Japanese word into English and then translating the English word into Swedish).

The reoccurring theme of the answers to why most of the participants exclusively preferred translating Japanese words to English was that their Japanese textbooks were written in English, and that it is easier because the majority of translating resources on the internet are in English.

“Because of that all of the textbooks and material I’ve learnt Japanese through have been in English” (EG 1)

“There are more English dictionaries, and it is easier to search for examples on the internet” (SG 4)

Other reasons for favoring English as a translation language for Japanese words among the participants were their special interest in the English language and its words, and English being one’s first language.

“I’m interested in English words, so I know many and have therefore strong English comprehension. Online it is easier to translate in English rather than Swedish, for example, “Jisho.org” which uses English” (SG 1)

“I prefer English’s broad everyday vocabulary and good dictionaries are in English” (SG 6)

“Most of my textbooks have been in English so it just felt easier that way. Also, most of the translated Japanese media I consume are translated into English. English is also a mother tongue for me so it’s easy anyway.” (EG 4)

The only participant reporting that he (SG 7) uses Swedish as much as English to translate Japanese words, explained that what translation language he utilizes depends on the setting, in specific, what language a work task at hand requires. He also explains that he prefers Swedish over English but the lack of satisfying Swedish - Japanese dictionaries and translation applications constrains him to use English more than he wishes to.

4.2.2 Experiences of the Japanese word learning list and test. The first theme is *Statements on level of difficulty*, which is organized as followed; firstly, statements expressing the

level of difficulty to be easy and then hard. In SG and EG, there were participants who considered the assignment hard and ones considered it easy.

Most participants that thought the test was easy referred to the design of the test. Which raises the suspicion of memorization rather than an in-depth understanding of the words.

“The list that pops up with each word was in the same order that the wordlist from the page before with made it easier to remember.” (EG 1)

“Easier than expected, because it was multiple choice test instead of open answers.” (SG 6)

In addition, there was one other participant that ‘indirectly’ expressed that he thought the test was easy, but in words of comparing the test with previous experiences.

“Not much difficult than a normal vocabulary test. I needed to translate some of the words to English to ensure that I understood correctly. Sometimes I didn’t know what the Swedish word meant.” (SG 1)

This participant states that he didn’t think that the test was much harder than a normal vocabulary test, yet he explained that he had to translate some of the words. His statement could be interpreted as, translating or searching for explanation of translation words is commonplace when learning Japanese words, and therefore the test and learning list weren’t more difficult than a standard vocabulary test that he had experienced before.

Many participants who reported the test to be difficult on the other hand referred to the translation words of the test and not the Japanese words.

“Difficult words that I haven’t learned as they require a special context to be able to be used.” (SG 3)

“Hard. Didn’t know all the english words” (EG 5)

However, there was one participant who connected the difficulty of the test with the translation vocabulary and the Japanese words. The contributing factor for the participant to

experience the Japanese words harder than usual was the lack of Kanji. The test was designed to exclude the factor of Kanji recognition and instead focus on the reading, because there is always a risk of assigning one's own translation to the Kanji and not the Japanese reading (which is an aspect that this study does not intend to investigate).

“Fun! Not to say that one can all Kanji fluently, but sometimes it is harder to identify a word when it's just written in hiragana. Some of the Swedish words I wasn't one hundred percent sure of what they meant.” (SG 4)

There were also other aspects, apart from the level of difficulty of the test, that the participants brought to light. The next theme is called *the effects of beforehand unknown translation vocabulary*.

As mentioned in previous research by Mickan, et al. (2020), retrieval of words and meaning of words can be disrupted by previously learned or used knowledge. Which can be seen in the following quote.

“Some Japanese words I knew from before and some were new to me. I felt like I was mixing the English translations up though, since I was unfamiliar with a lot of them before I looked them up from the learning list. It was also a bit tricky since other English translations that I have memorized before came to mind.” (EG 3)

The retrieval of the previously unfamiliar English translation words of the test was interrupted by other memorized words from the participant's past. Additionally, it can be discussed in terms of 'false friends' (Lindquist, 2016); some of the translation items shared formal or phonetical features which interfered with the participants learning and retrieval ability.

Furthermore, another participant noticed a similar effect on his list learning and test performance by the unfamiliar English translation words as participant (EG 3) in the previous paragraph, yet he also points out how excessively time-consuming the process became with all the unfamiliar English translation words.

“When I learn glossary in Japanese. I use a Japanese dictionaries to gauge the full meaning. This helped me to understand the meaning of some of the words when I was unfamiliar with the English word. I did notice that it took me far longer to answer questions where I was unfamiliar with the English translation than those where I

understood it fully. I guess that it has to do with that if the brain also has a proper semantic understanding of the word, then the acquisition becomes easier.” (EG 2)

In the end of his written response, he also contemplates a possible explanation for why the unfamiliar English translations were so much more time-consuming to deal with than those he fully understood. He argues that it might be due to a lack of proper semantic understanding of the words, and that acquisition of words comes easier when the ability of the background language is fully developed. This is a sober explanation that corresponds well with what is known from previous research (Hammarberg, 2016; Lindquist, 2016; Mickan, et al., 2020).

5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of English as second language (ESL) on third language acquisition of Japanese among Swedish language students. The study intended to answer the questions about how convenient it is to learn Japanese through English contra Swedish, for Swedish students studying Japanese, and how the experience of learning Japanese through English contra Swedish differ.

The results imply that the Swedish group (SG) performed better on the test than the English group (EG), however such a conclusion cannot be validated by reason of the data of the study being statistically insignificant. Instead, this paper serves the purpose of a pilot study for future research, rather than a reliable source of generalizable information of the phenomenon studied. Even so, there are some interesting findings derived from the data that deserves attention.

5.1 The findings and answers to the research questions

Concerning the result from table 3, it is apparent that the reported number of words translated or searched for meaning between the two groups differ. In EG there was at least one participant at every level of the measurement, while in the SG the majority (5 participant out of 7 in total) reported that they translated or searched for the meaning for one or two words in the list which shows that most of the participants in SG had no problem understanding most of the Swedish translation words. Together with the result of the translation frequency of the translation items and the scale of difficulty, it is plausible to draw the conclusion that the participants in EG perceived the test to be more difficult than the participants in SG, even though the overall test scores do not demonstrate a remarkable difference between the two groups. Based on the data at hand, a conclusion can be made that, in spite of the test scores following a similar pattern between the two groups, the participants in SG seemed to experience the test as a little more comprehensible than the participants in EG.

Furthermore, some interesting themes of the written statements could be derived from the qualitative data. One such theme concerned the experienced level of difficulty; participants perceiving the test as easy mainly referred to the structure of the test, while participants considering the test to be hard referred to the translation words of the Japanese words (which was found in both groups). Yet, their statements about the level of difficulty do not significantly correlate with high scores for participants who claimed to have an easier

experience due to the test-design, nor with low scores for participants who perceived the translation words to be difficult.

To answer the first research question, how convenient Japanese learning is through English contra Swedish, I would say that the overall scoring of the tests does not indicate that it would be more convenient to have English translation words to translate Japanese words than Swedish translation words, and the same goes the other way around. However, it is apparent that there are many more learning recourses available for studying Japanese through English than Swedish, which therefore makes English a more convenient language to use on a day-to-day basis to translate Japanese words. Yet, in this study, the participants in SG did perceive the test to be easier than the participants in EG and did not have to translate as many words as most of the participants in EG. In addition, taking the two quotes from the theme, *the effects of beforehand unknown translation vocabulary*, into account, it is apparent that some participants in EG experienced noticeable disadvantages from learning the Japanese words through the English translation words. Which speaks for the Swedish translations rather than English translations of the Japanese words to be perceived as more convenient among the participants, despite there being no significant difference between the two groups' test scores.

The answer to the second research question, how the experiences of learning Japanese through English contra Swedish differs, is not self-evident either. The process of learning a third language (L3) through one's second language (L2) is significantly different from learning a L3 through one's first language (referring to previous research, Hammarberg, 2016; Lindquist, 2016; Mickan et al., 2020) and based on the participants answers, the difference between learning Japanese words through English contra Swedish is the number of words translated to understand the translations of the Japanese words. The results indicate that it could be easier and less time-consuming to learn Japanese through Swedish. Yet, it is apparent that the participants have learned methods to cope with the element of mediating L2 English, and it is especially noticeable that that is the case among participants at intermediate to advanced level. For many of the participants, using Swedish to translate Japanese words did not even exist as an option in their minds, which could have had a negative effect on SG participants' performances because of them being unaccustomed to use Swedish as a translation language.

In conclusion, the most noticeable difference between learning Japanese words through English contra Swedish among the participants, was that learning Japanese through Swedish tends to be more direct and unconstitutional than learning Japanese through English. However, the lack of Swedish learning materials of Japanese has created a compensatory way of learning and understanding Japanese through English.

A last remark will be discussed concerning the Japanese textbooks written in English used to teach and learn Japanese in Sweden. As we known from the introduction, Swedish people are great English speakers (EF EPI, 2020), but it is important to remember that Japanese textbooks written in English are made for native English speakers. Every language holds significant cultural components and even if Sweden is greatly affected by countries such as the USA and the UK, the cultures differ to a great extent. There is no guarantee that the cultural components are adopted along with the acquisition of L2 English, which can create problems when learning L3 Japanese for Swedish language learners.

5.2 Advantages of the present study

The first and foremost advantage with the current study is that it highlights an issue that has not been studied before and brings to light a matter of importance for further investigations. The number of students studying Japanese in Sweden are many and the Japan-Sweden relationship among companies is always on the rise. Even though English is a great tool for communication between business partners in Sweden and Japan, there is nothing as effective as being able to speak one's native language.

One further advantage is that this study has shown that that many Japanese language student in Sweden merely use English as a translation language of Japanese words because of the resources available and not for their interest and liking of English rather than Swedish.

5.3 Limitations of the present study

The current study is the first of its kind to investigate L3 Japanese acquisition by L1 Swedish students through L2 English, and therefore no standardized template could be retrieved to assist the modelling of the study's execution. In other words, the study has quite a few limitations.

One such limitation concerns the sample. The sample of the study was too small and unevenly distributed between the groups to count as a statistically significant number of generalizable information. The information given by the participants differed to a greater

extent and their experiences and knowledge of Japanese studies were too divergent to successfully answer the research questions. It happened to be a natural sample matching between many of the participants in the two groups but that was not intended in the first place, which accordingly points to the lack of sample control that should have been present to make a satisfying study-design. In addition, while analyzing the results it came to light that one of the participants in EG even had English as L1 which would be considered as invalid data, but due to the imbalance in the number of participants between the groups, the data was not excluded. Furthermore, there was no idiographic question about age or language interests in the test, which limits the potential to draw any conclusions about generational differences or special interests in Swedish or English word knowledge.

The second limitation concerns the test design and test performance. The method used to collect data was an internet survey, which is not the ultimate research method to use in regard to control for biases. The initial plan was to arrange a test setting with pen and paper, in a room at the university of Gothenburg, but because of the pandemic it would not be possible to arrange. Furthermore, some participants commented that the test design made the test easier (the order of the translation words was the same as in the learning list). This may have contributed to mere memorization of the test items rather than in-depth learning. Memorization of the items was not what the test intended to measure, yet the research method was not designed to control for such element either.

6 Future directions

With the current study in mind there are some suggestions that can be made for future research. Firstly, in order to develop a more sophisticated measurement of Japanese as a third language among Swedish students, one should focus on one specific group of students with similar experiences of Japanese and language proficiency. This could be assessed through a classic placement test. In addition, it would be astute to ask the participants to estimate their Swedish and English vocabulary knowledge and proficiency level to establish their relationship and interest in each language. The reason for such a question is that there could be a great difference between participants performances on the test depending on their individual interests that need to be accounted for.

The second suggestion is that the test would be held in a live setting and not via an internet survey. A live setting allows for more control over compound variables and time management. It can also make it easier to ensure an equal number of participants are assigned to both groups, which in turn can contribute to a more significant result.

A final suggestion concerns the format of the word list. For future research it would be favorable to choose one group of participants from every Japanese language proficiency level and assign them study items that are not yet learned from the higher proficiency level. Then a comparison can be made between the groups of participants with Swedish and English translation of the Japanese words, diagonally and vertically. Specifically, groups at the same level are compared, and the total of all groups are compared to see whether there is an association between Swedish language students' level of Japanese and their performances on the tests in regard to Swedish contra English word translations.

7 Conclusions

With the current study at hand, it is apparent that Japanese as a third language (L3) in Sweden with mediating English as second language (L2) is an issue that yet needs more attention in future research. For a long time, we have failed to pay attention to how the exclusive English students' textbooks on intermediate and advanced level Japanese has affected the Swedish language students learning abilities. Most of the participants in the study favored English as a translation language of Japanese words, yet the question is whether they would answer the same if sufficient Swedish translation mediums existed. This paper cannot successfully describe the relationship between Swedish contra English translations of Japanese words on Swedish students' performances, but this pilot study can show us that one should not hare-brainedly accept the English medium as the indisputably most sufficient way of learning Japanese words for Swedish language students.

There is still so much we do not know about the effects of L2 English on L3 Japanese among Swedish language students, yet with this study the long uncontested element of mediating L2 English on Japanese language education in Sweden is no longer in the shadows but brought to light.

In the future I wish for Swedish to become an integrated part, an alternative for Japanese language students in Sweden, to learn Japanese words on intermediate and advanced level, because I believe that it could be a great complementary element to help students when the English translations does not.

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Appendix A

Informed consent form

Important!

Hello participant in English translation group!

It is important that you read all information in the sections of the form carefully!

Research ethical principles

Information such as name and other sensitive information will not be disseminated, and you will remain anonymous throughout the whole research process, and the information you provide will not be used outside of this study (anonymity and Confidentiality principle).

You can at any given time withdraw your participation, and also decide to what degree you want to participate (The right to withdrawal).

The study aims to investigate third language acquisition among Japanese language students in Sweden. The concept of third language refers to how the language is learned rather than the amount of languages learned; Through Swedish (first language) we learn English (second language) and via English vi learn Japanese (Third language). I want to study how this affects our Japanese language learning ability (Avoiding deceptive practice).

Consent to participate in the study: *

- I consent
- I do not consent

NEXT

Idiographic and language questions

Here are some questions about you and your Japanese experiences

Please write your name: *

Short answer text
.....

What do you define yourself as? *

- Woman
- Man
- Other...

Japanese proficiency level *

- Apprentice
- Beginner
- Intermediate
- Advanced

How many years have you studied Japanese? *

Short answer text
.....

In which countries have you studied Japanese? *

- Sweden
- Japan
- Other...

In which schools have you studied Japanese? *

Short answer text

.....

To what language do you prefer to translate Japanese words? *

- Swedish
- English
- Other...

Why do you prefer that language? *

Long answer text

.....

.....

NEXT

Learning list

The following two images shows the words that you are going to learn in order to take a word quiz later.

To think about:

- On the test there will only be the hiragana reading, not kanji or katakana.
- You can take your time learning the list, but you should preferably do the whole form in one sitting (do not take long breaks while doing the form).
- You're allowed to use study materials to learn the list but do not use them during the actual test.

One last comment; This is not a real test or validation of your Japanese language knowledge, it's intended to investigate other aspects. In other words, do not cram the words as you would to an actual test in school.

English A – Learning list

漢字／カタカナ	ひらがな (読み方)	Translation
手押し車	ておしぐるま	Wheelbarrow
鎌	かま	Scythe
モミ	もみ	Fir (tree)
白樺	しらかば	Birch
風力発電	ふうりょくはつでん	Wind power
基礎	きそ	House foundation
縦樋	たてどい	Downpipes
ザル	ざる	Colander
麺棒	めんぼう	Rolling pin
裕福 (な)	ゆうふく	Affluent
陽気 (な)	ようき	Convivial
魅力的 (な ex. 笑顔)	みりよくてき	(a) Winsome (smile)
濃厚 (な)	のうこう	Rich (flavor)
(お金を) 横領する	おうりょうする	To embezzle (money)
取調室	とりしらべしつ	Interrogation room
落胆	らくたん	Dejection
迫害する	はくがいする	Persecute

侵入 納得できる	しんにゆう なっとくできる	Encroach Cogent
口琴	こうきん	Jew's harp, mouth harp
綱引き	つなひき	Tug of war
縫代、縫い代 ミシン	ぬいしろ みしん	Seam allowance Sewing machine

NEXT

The Japanese word test

Based on the word list you just studied, choose the word in the scroll bar that best translates the Japanese word.

Important to think about:

- Skip the words that you don't know.
- This test is not an actual test or assessment of your Japanese language knowledge.
- Do not seek help of others or use materials that can provide you the right answer while doing the test.

English B – Test

	ひらがな／読み方	Nr.	Translation
1.	きそ		Wheelbarrow
2.	ゆうふく		Scythe
4.	ざる		Birch
5.	ふうりょくはつでん		Wind power
6.	かま		House foundation
7.	めんぼう		Downpipes
8.	ておしぐるま		Colander
9.	ようき		Rolling pin
10.	もみ		Affluent
11.	こうきん		Convivial
12.	おうりょうする		Winsome
13.	しらかば		Rich (flavor)
14.	たてどい		To embezzle
15.	はくがいする		Fir (tree)
16.	のうこう		Interrogation room
17.	みりよくてき		Dejection
18.	なっとくできる		Persecute
19.	らくたん		Encroach
20.	つなひき		Cogent
21.	みしん		Jew's harp, mouth harp
22.	しんにゆう		Tug of war
23.	ぬいしろ		Seam allowance
24.	とりしらべしつ		Sewing machine

Experiences of the test

Here I would like you to answer some questions about the test you just did

Please write your thoughts about the test in whole:

Long answer text

.....

.....

Did you need to translate or search for a description of any of the translation words?

(Concerning the learning list) *

- Yes, many
- Yes, some
- Yes, one or two
- No

How was the test?

- Difficult
- Moderately difficult
- Average
- Pretty easy
- Easy

SEND

Appendix B

Information och samtyckesformulär

Viktigt!

Hej deltagare i svenska översättningsgruppen!

Det är viktigt att du läser igenom varje avsnitt i formuläret noggrant!

Forskningsetiska principer

Uppgifter som namn och annan känslig information kommer inte att spridas vidare, utan du förblir anonym genom hela forskningsprocessen (konfidentialitetskravet). Informationen du anger i formuläret kommer inte att användas till något annat än till denna studie (Nyttjandekravet). Du kan när som helst dra tillbaka ditt deltagande, samt bestämma själv hur mycket du vill delta (samtyckeskravet).

Studien avser att studera tredjespråksinläring bland japanska språkstudenter. Tredjespråk syftar till hur språket är inlärt snarare än hur många språk man kan. Genom svenskan (förstaspråket) lär man sig engelska (andraspråket) och genom engelska lär man sig japanska (Tredjespråket). Jag vill undersöka hur detta påverkar vår japanska språkinläring (informationskravet).

Samtycke till att delta i studien: *

- Jag samtycker
- Jag samtycker inte

NÄSTA

Idiografiska frågor och språkfrågor

Här kommer några frågor om dig och dina japanskaerfarenheter

Vänligen skriv ditt namn: *

Kort svarstext
.....

Vad definierar du dig som? *

- Kvinna
- Man
- Annat...

Språknivå i japanska *

- Lärling (precis börjat)
- Nybörjare
- Medelnivå
- Avancerad

Hur många år har du studerat japanska? *

Kort svarstext
.....

I vilka länder har du studerat japanska? *

- Sverige
- Japan
- Annat...

På vilka skolor har du studerat japanska? *

Kort svarstext

.....

Till vilket språk föredrar du att översätta japanska ord? *

- Svenska
- Engelska
- Annat...

Varför föredrar du det språket? *

Lång svarstext

.....

.....

NÄSTA

Inlärningslista

De följande bilderna visar de ord som du ska lära dig för att kunna ta det japanska ordtestet senare.

Att tänka på:

- På testet kommer endast Hiragana-läsningen komma, inte kanji eller katakana.
- Du får ta den tiden du behöver på dig att öva in listan, men gör helst hela formuläret i en sittning (gå inte iväg och gör annat emellan).
- Du får gärna använda material till att lära in listan men använd inte det under själva testet.

En sista kommentar; Detta är inget prov eller validering av dina japanskakunskaper, utan det avser att undersöka andra aspekter. Med andra ord, öva inte på listan som om du skulle skriva en tenta, utan snarare så att du känner att du kan dem.

Swedish A – Inlärningslista

漢字／カタカナ	ひらがな (読み方)	Översättning
手押し車	ておしぐるま	Skottkärra
鎌	かま	Lie
モミ	もみ	Gran
白樺	しらかば	Björk
風力発電	ふうりょくはつでん	Vindkraft
基礎	きそ	Husgrund
縦樋	たてどい	Stuprör
ザル	ざる	Durkslag
麵棒	めんぼう	Kavel
裕福 (な)	ゆうふく	Förmögen, välbärgad
陽気 (な)	ようき	Gemytlig
魅力的 (な ex. 笑顔)	みりょくてき	(ett) charmerande, älskvärt (leende)
濃厚 (な)	のうこう	Smakrik
(お金を) 横領する	おうりょうする	Att förskingra (pengar)
取調室	とりしらべしつ	Förhörtrum
落胆	らくたん	Uppgivenhet
迫害する	はくがいする	Förfölja
侵入	しんにゆう	Inkräkta
納得できる	なっとくできる	Övertygande

口琴	こうきん	Mungiga
綱引き	つなひき	Dragkamp
縫代、縫い代	ぬいしろ	Sömsmån
ミシン	みしん	Symaskin

Japanska ordtestet

Baserat på listan som du nyss övat in, välj det ord i rullistan som bäst översätter det japanska ordet.

Viktigt att tänka på:

- Hoppa över de ord du inte kan.
- Testet är inte ett prov eller en bedömning av dina japanskakunskaper.
- Be inte någon annan om hjälp eller använd material som kan ge dig de rätta svaren.

Swedish B – Test

	ひらがな／読み方	Nr.	Översättning
1.	きそ		Skottkärra
2.	ゆうふく		Lie
4.	ざる		Björk
5.	ふうりょくはつでん		Vindkraft
6.	かま		Husgrund
7.	めんぼう		Stuprör
8.	ておしぐるま		Durkslag
9.	ようき		Kavel
10.	もみ		Förmögen, Välbärgad
11.	こうきん		Gemytlig
12.	おうりょうする		Charmerande, älskvärt
13.	しらかば		Smakrik
14.	たてどい		Att förskingra
15.	はくがいする		Gran
16.	のうこう		Förhörtrum
17.	みりょくてき		Uppgivenhet
18.	なっとくできる		Förfölja
19.	らくたん		Inkräkta
20.	つなひき		Övertygande
21.	みしん		Mungiga
22.	しんにゆう		Dragkamp
23.	ぬいしろ		Sömsmån
24.	とりしらべしつ		Symaskin

Upplevelser av testet

Här skulle jag vilja att du svarar på några frågor om testet som du nyss gjorde

Skriv gärna dina tankar om testet i helhet:

Lång svarstext

.....

.....

Behövde du översätta eller söka efter en beskrivning av någon av översättningsorden?

(Syftar till inlärningslistan) *

- Ja, många
- Ja, några
- Ja, en eller två
- Nej

Hur tyckte du testet var?

- Svårt
- Medelsvårt
- Medel
- Ganska lätt
- Lätt

SKICKA