

# Swedish Writing Exercises Assisted by Translation Software: A Case Study With a Japanese Learner

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**Abstract**—This study examined the benefits of writing exercises assisted by translation software for learning Swedish. The participant was a Japanese individual, an advanced-level English and French speaker, and an intermediate-level German user. Prior to the survey, he had taught himself Swedish for several months. He wrote 15 texts and received feedback from a native Swedish speaker after every exercise. To assess his progress, two tests were conducted. The first test included 100 fundamental Swedish words, and the second questioned the present, past, and passive forms of 50 verbs. He had known 30 out of the 100 words before the research, but correctly identified 97 after completion. Moreover, the participant correctly answered only 49 out of the 150 verb forms at first, but the writing practice enabled him to identify 144 forms correctly. From the abovementioned results, this study concludes that the writing exercises efficiently enrich the lexical and grammatical knowledge of Japanese learners of Swedish.

**Index Terms**—grammar, Swedish, translation software, vocabulary, writing

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Importance of Sweden and Swedish in the World

Sweden has maintained one of the highest Gross National Income (GNI) per capita figures in the world. Additionally, welfare, education, and academic research in Sweden are highly acclaimed. Sweden is considered as a model by many countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022).

Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian belong to the North Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family (Crystal, 2010). It is spoken by approximately 10 million native speakers and has the status of an official language in Sweden as well as Finland, which had previously been ruled by Swedes, and in the Åland Islands, an autonomous Swedish-speaking region.

Swedish and English share several grammatical similarities, including syntax. For example, Swedish is based on the S-V-O, S-V-C, and S-V-O-C structures. The auxiliary verb *ha*, meaning “have,” and past participle usually occupy the sentence without other elements: *Jag har sett den här filmen förut* (“I have watched this film before.”). A past participle used for the same structure is placed at the end of the sentence in other Germanic languages such as German: *Ich habe diesen Film schon einmal gesehen* (“I have watched this film before.”) (Schenke et al., 2016). Moreover, relative clauses in German require a reversal of the auxiliary and main verbs, for example, *der Film, den ich schon einmal gesehen habe* (“the film I have watched before.”). On the other hand, the Swedish verbs *har sett* “have seen” in the Swedish equivalents *filmen som jag har sett tidigare* retain a syntactic similarity to English. Therefore, English speakers can learn Swedish more easily than German speakers.

Foreign learners of a language need to first analyze the similarities and differences in grammar and vocabulary among Swedish, German, English, and other languages they have learned, to learn Swedish more efficiently. The position of the verb in the second place of the sentence is common in Swedish and German, so it is not difficult for a German speaker to follow this grammatical rule when communicating in Swedish.

To use Swedish correctly, English- or German-speaking learners must learn grammatical rules that are different from those of English or German. It takes some time to get accustomed to the neutral form of adjectives used as adverbs. It is comprehensible if we consider the use of the neutral form as an abbreviation of the phrase *på ett ...t sätt*, meaning “in a ... way”.

In Swedish, suffixes that function like definite articles follow nouns instead of the articles that precede them (Holmes & Hinchliffe, 2013). For example, the common noun *form* “form” becomes *formen* when it means “the form.” Similarly, the neutral noun *ord* “word” changes into *ordet* “the word” in the definite form. Suffix combinations such as *studenternas* “of the students,” which include the plural suffix *-er*, the definite suffix *-na*, and the possessive suffix *-s*, are difficult for many learners because they are different from those used in English. Learners need to become accustomed to the definite and plural forms of nouns and adjectives in Swedish. Many nouns, such as *ord* “word,” *språk*

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“language,” and *exempel* “example,” require no suffix for their indefinite plural forms, but need an additional suffix *-en* for their definite plural forms.

Definite articles are placed before combinations of an adjective and noun in German and several other European languages, so it is relatively easy for English or German speakers. The use of a definite noun after a definite article and an adjective, such as in the Swedish language, seems redundant to foreign learners. The German adjective and noun *das schwedische Alphabet* “the Swedish alphabet” do not contain an additional suffix in the noun. However, the neutral suffix *-et* is included in the Swedish equivalent *det svenska alfabetet*. Moreover, the structures of passive forms are also particular because auxiliary verbs such as *vara* “be” or *bli* “become” can be omitted to build passive forms.

#### B. Possible Interference by the Learner’s First Language

The first language (L1) of the participant in this research was Japanese. Therefore, this section will discuss some of the most common difficulties faced by a Japanese speaker, when learning a European language.

Japanese-speaking learners of Western languages, including English, French, and German, frequently face problems when choosing a singular or plural form, because they often need not explicitly show plurality in Japanese. For example, the English noun *progress* is usually uncountable; however, Japanese learners often pluralize it.

The Japanese language primarily distinguishes perfect and imperfect voices but does not explicitly differentiate between past and past perfect tenses. This ambiguity negatively affects many Japanese learners’ tense choices when writing in a foreign language. Despite the absence of specific past perfect forms, tense differences are usually shown with *mae* or *izen*, both of which mean “before”.

A grammatical form that includes *-teiru* generally indicates the present progressive tense, such as *tabeteiru* “is eating” and *miteiru* “is watching” (Kaiser et al., 2013). However, that form can describe a perfect aspect with an adverb such as *mō* “already”: *Tanaka-san wa mō eki-ni tsuiteiru* “Mr./Ms. Tanaka has arrived at the station”. This unclear distinction sometimes affects Japanese speakers in choosing the correct tense in a passive sentence: e.g., *Ano chihō wa jishin-de higai-o uketa* “That region was damaged by an earthquake” and *ano chihō wa jishin-de higai-o uketeiru* “That region is (has been) damaged by an earthquake”. Both sentences are correct in Japanese.

No articles are required in Japanese; therefore, articles are often missing in texts written by Japanese speakers. Learning about the usage of articles in a European language presents another difficulty for them. Although definite articles appear less frequently in Swedish than in English or German, the use of definite suffixes is also difficult for Japanese speakers.

#### C. Benefits of Translation Software

Translation software programs have often been considered as ineffective translators because they generate unnatural translations when the target language has a different word order in sentences. However, automatic translation programs can support writing exercises through translating relatively similar languages, such as English and Swedish. For example, Lawson et al. (2019) advocate the benefits of translation software for the U.S. transportation industry.

#### D. Significance of Writing Exercises for Knowledge Enhancement

Writing exercises are often used to enhance students’ grammatical and lexical knowledge. Memorization using word lists may be effective for passing an examination; however, knowledge that is not connected to sentence contexts is often forgotten quickly. An effective approach to enhance knowledge is practicing writing with the topics chosen by the learner. Although the topics may be limited, learners get the opportunity to spontaneously express their opinions and ideas in the target language.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corder (1967) focused on the importance and benefits of L2 learners’ speech and writing errors for language teaching and posited that the existence of “transitional competence” may have been acquired and thus continued to develop. Learners’ errors and their imperfect L2 began to be considered positively as unavoidable but indispensable elements in the process of second language learning. Corder (1993) emphasizes the significance of learners’ L1 as the basis for L2 learning. His hypothesis underlines that, in their acquisition process, most L2 learners borrow their L1 vocabulary, grammatical features, and structures to facilitate their learning. Selinker (1972) suggested the term *Interlanguage*, defining it as “a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner’s attempted production of a target language norm” (p. 214). However, the term *Interlanguage* has had no unanimous definition yet, and has been interpreted differently. For example, Ellis (1994) employs this term as “the system of implicit L2 knowledge that the learner develops and systematically amends over time” (p. 354). The provisional language knowledge of L2 learners has been measured for various purposes, including error analysis.

Ringbom (2012) performed a comprehensive analysis of recent vocabulary studies in Sweden and Finland to explore positive and negative transfers from learners’ L1 when learning a foreign language. Poort and Rodd (2017) examined how etymologically shared Dutch and English words (hereafter “cognates”) benefit the English vocabulary identification of 41 native Dutch speakers who are fluent in English and statistically compared their average lexical decision time for cognates and noncognates. The researchers observed that cognates significantly facilitated the participants’ selection. Wolter and Gyllstad (2011) investigated native Swedish-speaking English learners’ reaction time

for L1–L2 collocations and L2-only features and suggested that the generally slower reaction times appeared to be more associated with a lack of priming for individual words. Uni (2019) asserted that the shared Latin-origin vocabulary among English and Scandinavian languages benefits learners of Swedish and Danish, especially when acquiring basic vocabulary. Ringbom (2007) highlighted that orthographical and phonetic similarity primarily fostered the lexical learning of an etymologically related target language. Meanwhile, such learning is frequently impeded by grammatical, lexical, and phonetic elements that differ from learners' L1. Jódar-Sánchez (2016) explored Finnish speakers' phonetical interference when pronouncing Spanish. Most Spanish words have an accent in the penultimate syllable, while in Finnish, the first syllables are accentuated. For example, *museo* means “museum” in Spanish and Finnish but with different accentuated syllables. Incorrect pronunciation and intonation often diminish an interlocutor's comprehension of not only individual words but also whole sentences; therefore, learners must control their own phonetic interference. Learners must first pay attention to grammatical, lexical, and phonetic discrepancies between their L1 and L2 and then repeatedly produce and increase self-corrections. Phonetic self-corrections must take place in speaking activities whereas vocabulary self-corrections can be easily performed in writing exercises.

Masny (1997) investigated the relationship between L2 writing and language awareness and emphasized that writing activities enabled learners to ponder the reasons of their errors and learn the target language more explicitly than passive learning activities such as reading. Svalberg (2007) reviewed recent studies on language awareness and identified the importance of enhancing the depth of learners' knowledge through consciousness-raising. Svalberg's (2016) study proved the benefits of consciousness-raising for the enhancement of learners' self-confidence in their proficiency and spontaneous output. Furthermore, Dörnyei (2002, 2003) advocated the advantages of motivation and spontaneity for L2 learning.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participant's Details

The participant was a Japanese speaker, who had attained an advanced level in English and French, and intermediate level in German. He had studied Swedish by himself for several months, as he was interested in Swedish and wished to live in Sweden. He practiced writing in Swedish almost daily with the help of a native speaker who corrected his text.

#### B. Objective

This study examined the benefits of writing exercises assisted by translation software for learning Swedish. The participant, a Japanese speaker, was asked to write in Swedish for a month and receive feedback from a native Swedish speaker after every exercise. The author hypothesized that frequent writing practice in Swedish would enhance the lexical and grammatical knowledge of Asian learners of Swedish.

Many studies on Asian English learners have analyzed errors. For example, Wu and Garza (2014) explored the characteristics of errors produced by native Mandarin speakers. The most frequent errors were observed in subject–verb agreement, a type of mistake that is also common among Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, and Malay speakers because grammatical persons or numbers do not affect verb conjugations in their L1 (Hoshino et al., 2009). The absence of definite articles is also commonly observed in writing by Asian learners since the definite articles do not exist in Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Malay, and Indonesian.

Moreover, the frequency of intonational errors caused by L1 tones is high among Chinese English learners (Zhang et al., 2008). On the other hand, intonational issues less frequently affect native speakers of nontonal languages such as Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Urdu, Indonesian, and Malay. Since errors differ depending on learners' L1 and target language, it is important to examine learner's errors in Swedish to identify specific areas of improvement for Asian learners of Swedish. This study examined 11 texts written by the Japanese participant but excluded four other texts because they included personal information of the Swedish corrector. Through analyzing a Japanese speaker's Swedish writing, major errors by the speakers of an Asian language can be more accurately predicted.

#### C. Fundamental Vocabulary Test

Two check tests with identical content were administered before and after the writing exercise to verify the improvement in the participant's Swedish proficiency. These were a vocabulary tests that included 100 basic Swedish words, and a grammatical test comprising 50 verbs in the present, preterit, and passive forms. Swedish words that are similar to their English equivalents, such as *bok* “book,” *hand* “hand,” *fisk* “fish,” and *fot* “foot,” were not included in the vocabulary test. The listed nouns were not limited to the most frequent nouns such as *ben* “leg,” *kropp* “body,” *öga* “eye,” and *öra* “ear,” as various types of fundamental vocabulary are beneficial for writing exercises and enhancing lexical and grammatical knowledge.

##### (a). Nouns

*användning* “use,” *arbete* “work,” *år* “year,” *årstid* “season,” *barn* “child,” *ben* “leg,” *besök* “visit,” *betydelse* “meaning,” *bil* “car,” *blad* “leaf,” *blomma* “flower,” *bokstav* “letter,” *brand* “fire,” *byggnad* “building,” *dåtid* “past,” *del* “part,” *djur* “animal,” *dryck* “drink,” *fågel* “bird,” *färg* “color,” *födelse* “birth,” *fördel* “benefit,” *framtid* “future,” *gren* “branch,” *handel* “commerce,” *himmel* “sky,” *huvud* “head,” *inläring* “learning,” *jämförelse* “comparison,” *konst*

“art,” *kontor* “office,” *kön* “gender,” *kropp* “body,” *kunskap* “knowledge,” *kvinn*a “woman,” *lärare* “teacher,” *ledare* “leader,” *likhet* “similarity,” *ljus* “light,” *ljud* “sound,” *luft* “air,” *maskin* “machine,” *mat* “food,” *månad* “month,” *mening* “sentence,” *öga* “eye,” *öra* “ear,” *pengar* “money,” *översättning* “translation,” *plånbok* “wallet,” *regel* “rule,” *resa* “travel,” *sak* “thing,” *sätt* “manner,” *skada* “damage,” *skäl* “reason,” *skillnad* “difference,” *smak* “taste,” *sol* “sun,” *språk* “language,” *stad* “city,” *stavelse* “syllable,” *sten* “stone,” *stol* “chair,” *svar* “answer,” *tåg* “train,” *tidning* “newspaper,” *timme* “hour,” *träd* “tree,” *utbildning* “education,” *vecka* “week,” *tid* “time,” *val* “choice,” *vatten* “water,” *vän* “friend,” *vetenskap* “science”.

#### (b). Adjectives

*billig* “cheap,” *bullrig* “noisy,” *dålig* “bad,” *dyr* “expensive,” *enkel* “simple,” *fuktig* “humid,” *hö*g “high,” *känd* “famous,” *kort* “short,” *långsam* “slow,” *låg* “low,” *mjuk* “soft,” *mörk* “dark,” *nuvarande* “current,” *plötslig* “sudden,” *rolig* “funny,” *senaste* “latest, recent,” *stor* “big,” *svår* “difficult,” *snabb* “quick,” *torr* “dry,” *tung* “heavy,” *tunn* “thin,” *utsökt* “delicious”.

Before the participant practiced writing for this study, he had kept a journal about his daily activities in Swedish. He had known basic words such as *dryck* “drink,” *mat* “food,” *sak* “thing,” and *vatten* “water,” but he had not expanded his vocabulary to a more advanced level. For this reason, he asked a native Swedish speaker to communicate with him and help him enrich his lexical and grammatical knowledge.

Before interacting with the native speaker, the participant had correctly identified a total of 30 nouns and adjectives, including *bil* “car,” *billig* “cheap,” *dyr* “expensive,” *pengar* “money,” *plånbok* “wallet,” *hö*g “high,” *utsökt* “delicious,” *år* “year,” *månad* “month,” and *vecka* “week.” While doing written exercises for the study, he was allowed to use a printed English-Swedish dictionary and translation software. However, he endeavored to minimize the use of the software to enrich his proficiency as autonomously as possible.

#### D. Grammatical Test

The grammatical test used in this study included the present, preterit, and present passive forms of 50 basic Swedish verbs that were essential for basic communication in Swedish. Several verbs, such as *kalla* “to call,” *rekommendera* “to recommend,” and *reservera* “to reserve,” which resemble their English counterparts, were excluded from the test.

Before the writing practice, the participant correctly identified 18 present forms of frequently used verbs: *äter* “eat,” *betalar* “pay,” *dricker* “drink,” *förstår* “understand,” *ger* “give,” *gör* “do, make,” *hör* “hear,” *köper* “buy,” *lagar* “cook, repair,” *lä*r “teach,” *läser* “read,” *öppnar* “open,” *ser* “see,” *skriver* “write,” *talar* “speak,” *tar* “take,” *tänker* “think,” and *väljer* “choose”.

##### (a). Present Forms of the Listed Verbs

*använder* “use,” *äter* “eat,” *avslutar* “finish,” *begär* “request,” *berättar* “tell,” *besöker* “visit,” *betalar* “pay,” *börjar* “start,” *bygger* “build,” *drar* “pull,” *dricker* “drink,” *får* “get,” *föreslår* “propose,” *förklarar* “explain,” *förstår* “understand,” *frågar* “ask,” *ger* “give,” *gör* “do, make,” *hör* “hear,” *kastar* “throw,” *känner* “feel,” *klipper* “cut,” *köper* “buy,” *lagar* “cook, repair,” *lämnar* “leave,” *lä*r “teach,” *läser* “read,” *öppnar* “open,” *översätter* “translate,” *raderar* “erase, delete,” *räknar* “count,” *rättar* “correct,” *säljer* “sell,” *ser* “see,” *skapar* “create,” *skickar* “send,” *skriver* “write,” *smakar* “taste,” *stänger* “close,” *talar* “speak,” *tar* “take,” *tänker* “think,” *tror* “believe,” *trycker* “press,” *tvättar* “wash,” *upptäcker* “discover,” *uttalar* “pronounce,” *uttrycker* “express,” *väljer* “choose,” *visar* “show”.

However, the past tenses of *göra* “to do, make,” *se* “to see,” and *ta* “to take,” were not answered correctly, because the forms of *gjorde* “made,” *såg* “saw,” and *tog* “took,” include irregular consonants that are not included in their English counterparts. In all, he successfully identified 15 past forms: *ät* “ate,” *betalade* “paid,” *drack* “drank,” *förstod* “understood,” *gav* “gave,” *hörde* “heard,” *köpte* “bought,” *lagade* “cooked, repaired,” *lärde* “taught,” *läste* “read,” *öppnade* “opened,” *skrev* “wrote,” *talade* “spoke,” *tänkte* “thought,” and *valde* “chose”.

##### (b). Preterit Forms of the Listed Verbs

*använde* “used,” *ät* “ate,” *avslutade* “finished,” *begärde* “requested,” *berättade* “told,” *besökte* “visited,” *betalade* “paid,” *började* “started,” *byggde* “built,” *drog* “pulled,” *drack* “drank,” *fick* “got,” *föreslog* “proposed,” *förklarades* “explained,” *förstod* “understood,” *frågade* “asked,” *gav* “gave,” *gjorde* “did, made,” *hörde* “heard,” *kastade* “threw,” *kände* “felt,” *klippte* “cut,” *köpte* “bought,” *lagade* “cooked, repaired,” *lämnade* “left,” *lärde* “taught,” *läste* “read,” *öppnade* “opened,” *översatte* “translated,” *raderade* “erased, deleted,” *räknade* “counted,” *rättade* “corrected,” *sålde* “sold,” *såg* “saw,” *skapade* “created,” *skickade* “sent,” *skrev* “wrote,” *smakade* “tasted,” *stängde* “closed,” *talade* “spoke,” *tog* “took,” *tänkte* “thought,” *trodde* “believed,” *tryckte* “pressed,” *tvättade* “washed,” *upptäckte* “discovered,” *uttalade* “pronounced,” *uttryckte* “expressed,” *valde* “chose,” *visade* “showed”.

Passive forms can often be constructed by a partial modification of infinitives; therefore, 16 passive forms were correctly answered: *äts* “eaten,” *betalas* “paid,” *dricks* “drunk,” *förstås* “understood,” *ges* “given,” *görs* “done, made,” *hörs* “heard,” *köps* “bought,” *lärs* “taught,” *läses* “read,” *öppnas* “opened,” *ses* “seen,” *skrivs* “written,” *talas* “spoken,” *tas* “taken,” and *tänkas* “thought.” Although the participant correctly identified its present and past forms, he could not write *väljs/väljes* “chosen” perfectly. The participant correctly answered 49 out of 150 verbs before the writing practice.

##### (c). Present Passive Forms of the Listed Verbs

*används* “used,” *äts* “eaten,” *avslutas* “finished,” *begäras* “requested,” *berättas* “told,” *besöks* “visited,” *betalas* “paid,” *börjas* “started,” *byggs/bygges* “built,” *dras* “pulled,” *dricks* “drunk,” *fås* “gotten,” *föreslås* “proposed,” *förklaras* “explained,” *förstås* “understood,” *frågas* “asked,” *ges* “given,” *görs* “done, made,” *hörs* “heard,” *kastas* “thrown,” *känns* “felt,” *klippas* “cut,” *köps* “bought,” *lagas* “cooked,” *lämnas* “left,” *lärs* “taught,” *läses* “read,” *öppnas* “opened,” *översätts* “translated,” *raderas* “erased, deleted,” *räknas* “counted,” *rättas* “corrected,” *säljs/säljes* “sold,” *ses* “seen,” *skapas* “created,” *skickas* “sent,” *skrivs* “written,” *smakas* “tasted,” *stängs* “closed,” *talas* “spoken,” *tas* “taken,” *tänkas* “thought,” *tros* “believed,” *tryckas* “pressed,” *tvättas* “washed,” *upptäcks* “discovered,” *uttalas* “pronounced,” *uttrycks* “expressed,” *väljs/väljes* “chosen,” *visas* “shown”.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

##### A. Text 1

*Jag har lärt mig svenska själv för* (→ *i*) *flera månader. Jag utövar svenska som hobby eftersom jag är intresserad i* (→ *av*) *Sverige. Jag skrev till exempel flera svenska meningar i min dagbok varje dag. Det är dock svårt att skriva mer komplexa saker. Jämförelse* (→ *Jämförelsen*) *mellan engelska och svenska ord är intressant. Om jag har* (→ *får*) *tid vill jag besöka Sverige i framtiden.*

“I have been learning Swedish myself for several months. I practice Swedish as a hobby because I am interested in it. For example, I wrote several Swedish sentences in my diary every day. However, it is hard to write more complex things. A comparison between English and Swedish words is interesting. If I have time, I want to visit Sweden in the future”.

A native Swedish speaker who examined Text 1 pointed out three words to be corrected. First, the Swedish preposition *för* had to be changed to *i* “in, for” before a duration. Second, the Swedish preposition *i* “in” is rarely used after *intresserad* “interested,” but *av*, which also means “of,” is more suitable. The Swedish noun *jämförelse* “comparison” was corrected to that with the definite suffix *-n*. Moreover, *har* “have” in the clause *om jag har tid* “if I have time,” can be replaced with *får* “get, receive”.

The translation software helped the participant write *mer komplexa saker* “more complex things,” as he was unsure of the appropriate Swedish suffix for the adjective *komplex* “complex” before the indefinite plural word. It also assisted him in writing *i framtiden* “in the future,” where *framtid* “future” was followed by the definite suffix *-en*.

##### B. Text 2

*Idag gick jag till ett café* (→ *kafé*) *och drack etiopiskt kaffe. Det var utsökt. Baristor bryggde kaffe med sifon. Det var intressant som ett kemisk* (→ *kemiskt*) *experiment. Kaffe från olika länder i världen serveras i café* (→ *kafé*). *För flera dagar sedan drack jag latin-amerikan* (→ *latinamerikanskt*) *kaffe. Det finns* (→ *fanns*) *en tydlig smakskillnad mellan de olika kaffesorter* (→ *kaffesorterna*). *Jämförelsen av vanliga saker också* (→ *moved after möjliggör*) *möjliggör många upptäckter.*

“Today, I went to a café this evening and drank Ethiopian coffee. It was delicious. Baristas brew coffee with siphons. This was interesting, similar to a chemical experiment. Coffees from various countries around the world are served in the café. Several days ago, I had drunk Latin American coffee. There was a clear difference in taste among the different types of coffee. Comparison of usual things also allows many discoveries”.

According to the Swedish informant, the French loanword *café* in the first sentence was acceptable; however, *kafé* “café” is a more common spelling. The participant coined the word *chemisk* to express “chemical,” which should be spelled *kemisk* in Swedish. The singular neutral suffix *-t* was also required to conform to the neutral noun *experiment*. The translation software correctly proposed the phrase *i världen* “in the world.” If the participant had attempted to translate without its assistance, he would have translated it by using a combination of *den* “the” and *värld* “world.” In Swedish, *världen* “the world,” comprising the definite suffix *-en* instead of a definite article, is the most appropriate. The coined adjective *latin-amerikan* was corrected to *latinamerikanskt*, the singular neutral form of the adjective *latinamerikansk* “Latin American.” Additionally, *finns* “is found” in the phrase *det finns* “there is” was modified to *fanns* “was found” as a part of *det fanns* “there was.” The definite suffix *-na* was added to *kaffesorter* “types of coffee.” The informant suggested the position of *också* “also” be after *möjliggör* “allows”.

##### C. Text 3

*De grammatiska könen på franska har viss kontinuitet från ordets ursprung på latin* (→ *latinska*). *Många franska ord som slutar med -e är mestadels feminina eftersom vokalen ursprungligen var -a på latin* (→ *latinska*). *Många franska ord utan -e i slutet var också feminina ord från forntiden. Det är min strategi för att memorera substantivkönen.*

“The grammatical genders in French have some continuity from the words’ origins in Latin. Many French words ending in *-e* are mostly feminine because the vowel was originally *-a* in Latin. Many French words without *-e* in the end were also feminine words from the ancient times. That is my strategy for memorizing the noun gender”.

The Swedish corrector informed us that the spelling *latin* was incorrect, and should be changed into *latinska* “Latin,” which includes an adjectival suffix *-sk*. This error was caused by directly translating from English. Proposing words

such as *de grammatiska könen* “the grammatical genders,” *ordets ursprung* “the word origin,” and *substantivkönen* “noun genders” significantly assisted the participant who lacked the appropriate level of lexical knowledge.

#### D. Text 4

*Den list* (→ *Listan*) i detta meddelande visar exempel på lånord av *vestlig* (→ *västerländskt*) ursprung på japanska. Holländska ord *lånas* (→ *lånades*) vanligtvis på 1700-talet eftersom holländska representanter *har* (→ *hade*) handlat med japanska köpmän under den perioden. Engelska, tyska och franska ord *lånas* (→ *lånades*) från början av *Meiji Era* (→ *Meiji-eran*) mellan 1868 och 1912, *vesterniseringsperioden* (→ *västerniseringsperioden*) i Japan. Tyska *medikala* (→ *medicinska*) ord *lånas* (→ *lånades*) ofta på japanska, men deras användning är mindre *frequent* (→ *frekvent*) nuförtiden. Många *kulinära* (→ *kulinariska*) termer *lånas* (→ *lånades*) från franska och italienska.

“The list in this message shows examples of loanwords of Western origin in Japanese. Dutch words were usually borrowed in the 18th century because Dutch representatives had been trading with Japanese merchants during that period. English, German, and French words were borrowed from the beginning of the Meiji era between 1868 and 1912, the period of Westernization in Japan. German medical words were often borrowed into Japanese, but their use is less frequent nowadays. Many culinary terms were borrowed from French and Italian”.

The incorrect word combination *den list* resembles its English equivalent, but it must be rectified as *listan* “the list”. The false word *vestlig* may have been coined due to a negative transfer from the German adjective *westlich* “Western”. The correct Swedish adjective *västerländsk* “Western” derives from *västerlandet* “the West”. The indefinite neutral suffix *-t* is added to *västerländsk*, as it is preceding the neutral noun *ursprung* “origin” in the sentence.

The participant used the present passive *lånas* “are borrowed” instead of the past passive *lånades* “were borrowed.” The present form *har* “have” in *har handlat* “have traded” had to be corrected to the preterit form *hade* “had” to construct *hade handlat* “had traded” to describe commercial relations between Japan and the Netherlands. These tense errors might have been caused by the participant’s L1, because the distinctions between the present and past, or between the past and past perfect are sometimes unclear in Japanese.

The historical term *Meiji era* is written *Meiji-eran* “the Meiji Era,” which includes the definite suffix *-n* at the end. The participant may have used the compound word *vesterniseringsperioden* due to interference from the English *Westernizing*. The Swedish word *västernisering* “Westernization,” derived from the noun *väster* “west,” was followed by the genitive suffix *-s*. To produce the meaning “the period of Westernization,” they were connected to the Swedish *perioden* “the period,” which comprises the definite suffix *-n*. The participant used the incorrect adjective *medikala*, while *medicinska* was the most appropriate adjective for “medical.” The adjective *frekvent* “frequent” was written in English. Another similar analogy was observed in the incorrect adjective *kulinära*, which phonetically resembles French *culinaire* “culinary,” but it must be spelled *kulinariska* in Swedish. This text demonstrated the imperfection of analogical translations.

#### E. Text 5

1. Lånord som inte kan översättas med ursprungligt japanskt ord för åd:

Dessa lånord är svåra att översätta, så de lånas (→ lånades) direkt med viss fonetisk justering (→ justering).

2. Lånord som kan översättas med ursprungligt japanskt ord för åd:

Dessa ord anses ofta vara mer imponerande (→ imponerande) eller eleganta än ursprungliga japanska ord.

“1. Loanwords that cannot be translated using the original Japanese vocabulary:

These loanwords are difficult to translate, so they were borrowed directly with some phonetic adjustments.

2. Loanwords that can be translated using the original Japanese vocabulary:

These words are often considered to be more impressive or elegant than original Japanese words”.

The software assisted the participant in translating the English phrase *loanwords that cannot be translated* with the correct word order in the target language. The Swedish *inte* “not” and *kan* “can” in the relative clause *som inte kan översättas* “that cannot be translated” are placed opposite to those in the main clause, such as *detta ord kan inte översättas* “this word cannot be translated.” Translation software programs are beneficial as they provide appropriate suggestions.

The term *ajustement*, which is observed in the following sentence, means “adjustment” in French. It may have been used due to a negative transfer from French and was rectified to *justering* “adjustment.” Moreover, the participant wrote *imponerande*, like the French *impressionnant* and Spanish *imponante* “impressive”; however, the correct Swedish term is *imponerande*, originating from Latin *imponere* “to impress”.

#### F. Text 6

Konsonanter i slutet är svåra att uttala för många *japanska* (→ *japaner*): t.ex. *art*, *top*, *book*, *puff*, *bad*, *club*, *dog*, *curve*. Dessutom är konsonantkluster som [st], [sp], [sk], [kt], [pt] och [ft] hårda: t.ex. *cost*, *crisp*, *task*, *fact*, *opt*, *soft*. Som ett resultat är germanska språk, där dessa konsonantkluster ofta förekommer, svåra för de flesta *japanska* (→ *japanerna*).

“Consonants at the end are difficult to pronounce for many Japanese: *art, top, book, puff, bad, club, dog, curve*. In addition, consonant clusters such as [st], [sp], [sk], [kt], [pt], and [ft] are hard: *cost, crisp, task, fact, opt, soft*. As a result, Germanic languages, in which these consonant clusters occur frequently, are difficult for most Japanese speakers”.

In the first sentence of this part, the participant spelled the Swedish adjective *japanska* “Japanese” instead of *japaner* “Japanese people.” A similar error is also observed in the third sentence, wherein the Swedish noun requires the definite suffix *-na*, as the definite article *de* is used in *de flesta* “the most.” Translation from English negatively affected the participant unused to difference between Swedish adjectives and nouns related to nationalities.

#### G. Text 7

*Jag är intresserad av **Nederland** (→ **Nederländerna**). Jag har lärt mig nederländska själv som en hobby, så jag har grundläggande kunskap. Den nederländska ortografin är mer fonetisk än den tyska. Jag antar att dess ortografi tillåter nederländska att skilja den från tyska. Tyskar kanske föredrar att behålla likheten mellan tyska ord av latinskt ursprung och latinska ord. Svenska och holländska tillhör olika grenar av den germanska språkfamiljen. Det finns dock ett kontinuum mellan **tre språk** (→ **de tre språken**). Konsonanten *t* i många tyska ord ändrades till *z* eller *tz*. Därför observeras **regulära** (→ **regelbundna**) likheter. Flera ord som *tidning* (tyska: *Zeitung*) och *tåg* (tyska: *Zug*) förblir lika mellan svenska och tyska.*

“I am interested in the Netherlands. I have been learning Dutch myself as a hobby, so I have a basic knowledge. The Dutch orthography is more phonetic than the German orthography. I guess that its orthography allows Dutch to distinguish itself from German. Germans may prefer to maintain the similarity between German words of Latin origin and Latin words. Swedish and Dutch belong to different branches of the Germanic language family. However, there is a continuum between the three languages. The consonant *t* in many German words changed to *z* or *tz*. Therefore, regular similarities have been observed. Several words such as *tidning* (German: *Zeitung*) and *tåg* (German: *Zug*) remain the same between Swedish and German”.

*Nederland*, written by the participant, was incomplete and corrected to *Nederländerna* “the Netherlands,” which includes the plural noun *länder* “countries” and the definite suffix *-na*. The words *tre språk* “three languages” after the phrase *det finns dock ett kontinuum mellan* “there is however a continuum among” were changed into *de tre språken* “the three languages,” to which the definite plural article *de* “the” and the definite plural suffix *-en* were added. The participant wrote *regulära* because of the transfer from the English adjective *regular*. The Swedish informant proposed *regelbundna* “regular” as the most appropriate translation.

#### H. Text 8

*Det **malayiska** (→ **malajiska**) språket används (→ **användes**) som ett lingua franca för handel i Nusantara, nuvarande Malaysia och **Indonesia** (→ **Indonesien**). Indonesiska är en variant av **malayiska** (→ **malajiska**). De två språken är ömsesidigt begripliga, men de anses olika av politiska **skälen** (→ **skäl**). Den **malayiska** (→ **malajiska**) dåtiden är gjord med en kombination av *sudah* och ett verb. Futurum görs med en kombination av *akan* och ett verb. Den passiva formen skapas av prefixet *di-* och ett verb. Den etniska majoriteten i Malaysia är **malayer** (→ **malajer**). Indonesier består av många austronesiska etniska grupper. De flesta språk i **Indonesia** (→ **Indonesien**) tillhör den austronesiska språkfamiljen.*

“The Malay language was used as a lingua franca for trade in Nusantara, present-day Malaysia and Indonesia. Indonesian is a variant of Malay. The two languages are mutually intelligible, but they are considered different for political reasons. The Malay past tense is created with a combination of *sudah* and a verb. The future tense is created with a combination of *akan* and a verb. The passive tense is created with a combination of the prefix *di-* and a verb. The ethnic majority in Malaysia are Malay. Indonesians consist of many Austronesian ethnic groups. Most languages in Indonesia belong to the Austronesian language family”.

The participant used *används* “is used” instead of *användes* “was used” because he may not have been familiar to past passive forms. Moreover, he wrote *Indonesia* despite its Swedish form *Indonesien* “Indonesia.” He spelled *skälen* to make an indefinite plural form of the Swedish noun *skäl* “reason”; however, *skälen* “the reasons” is only used as the definite plural form. The Swedish noun also functions in an indefinite plural form. This grammatical feature is significantly confusing for learners who know English, German, or Dutch. The writer spelled *malayiska* and *malayer* to respectively mean “Malay” and “Malays,” due to an interference from its English equivalent. However, the correct Swedish forms were *malajiska* “Malay” and *malajer* “Malays,” spelled with *j*. The translation software correctly proposed *austronesiska* “Austronesian” when the participant intended to write *austronesiska etniska grupper* “Austronesian ethnic groups”.

#### I. Text 9

*Det hebreiska alfabetet består av 22 bokstäver och kommer från det feniciska alfabetet, ett gammalt alfabet utan småbokstäver. De första hebreiska bokstäverna heter **aleph, beth, gimel** och **daleth**.*

“The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 letters and is derived from the Phoenician alphabet, an ancient alphabet without lowercase letters. The first Hebrew letters are called *aleph, beth, gimel, and daleth*”.

The combination of a definite article and a definite noun appear in the text: *det hebreiska alfabetet* “the Hebrew alphabet” and *det feniciska alfabetet* “the Phoenician alphabet.” The noun *bokstäverna* “letters,” which comprises the plural suffix *-er* and the definite suffix *-na*, is included in *de första hebreiska bokstäverna* “the first Hebrew letters.” Familiarization with these combinations facilitates learning of Swedish grammar.

*Aleph kan härstamma (→ ha härstammat) från ett oxhuvud. Beth kan komma (→ ha kommit) från ett hus. Gimel kan härstamma (→ ha härstammat) från en kamel. Daleth kan komma (→ ha kommit) från en dor (→ dörr). Varje bokstav är baserad (→ baserad) på formen på en sak eller kropp del (→ kroppsdel).*

“Aleph may have originated from an ox’s head. Beth may have come from a house. Gimel may have originated from a camel. Daleth may have stemmed from a door. Each letter is based on the shape of a thing or body part”.

The participant wrote *dor* to mean “door,” which was corrected to *dörr* “door.” The infinitive *härstamma* “to originate” was changed to *ha härstammat* “have originated.” Similarly, *komma* “to come” was changed to *ha kommit* “have come.” The tense adjustment appeared to be difficult for the Japanese learner. The Swedish past participle *baserad* “based” was spelled incorrectly as *based*, although the correct Swedish form derives from *basera* “to base” and includes the suffix *-d*. The participant used a combination of single words *kropp* “body” and *del* “part,” instead of the correct compound word *kroppsdel* “body part”.

*För att särskilja två ljud har flera bokstäver en variant med en prick i de mitte (→ mitten). Prickarna utelämnas ofta i skrivna texter för vuxna. De grekiska och latinska skrifterna kommer också från det alfabetet. Med tiden började greker och romare att använda små bokstäver.*

“To distinguish two sounds, several letters have a variant with a dot in the middle. The dots are often omitted in written texts for adults. Greek and Latin scripts also come from that alphabet. Over time, the Greeks and Romans began to use lowercase letters”.

The Swedish word *mitten* “the middle,” which includes *mitt* “middle” and the definite suffix *-en*, was spelled *de mitte*, whose second part is identical to the German word *Mitte* “middle.” Swedish requires no article for the abovementioned noun.

#### J. Text 10

*De senaste jordbävningarna i Turkiet är en av de värsta katastroferna sedan upprättandet av den turkiska republiken (→ republiken). Dessutom är (→ var) Syrien (→ Syrien) allvarligt skadad. Jag hoppas att ledarna kommer att återställa och återuppbygga dessa länder så snart som möjligt.*

“Recent earthquakes in Turkey are one of the worst disasters since the establishment of the Turkish Republic. In addition, Syria has been seriously damaged. I hope the leaders will restore and rebuild those countries as soon as possible”.

One of the topics in this text was February 2023 earthquakes in Turkey. The translation software proposed *de senaste jordbävningarna i Turkiet* “recent earthquakes in Turkey.” The country name *Turkiet*, which includes the neutral suffix *-et*, is difficult for foreign learners to find without software assistance. The participant spelled *republiken* “the republic” without the definite suffix *-en* because he may have guessed that the article *den* “the” before the adjective *turkiska* “Turkish” appeared to be enough as a definite noun. In addition, *är* “is” as part of *är allvarligt skadad* “is seriously damaged,” was changed to *var* “was” to describe it as a past event. This can be an interference caused by the unclear distinction between present and past passive forms in the participant’s L1. Furthermore, *Syrien* “Syria” was spelled with its English form due to a negative transfer from English. The phrase *så snart som möjligt* “as soon as possible,” suggested by the translation software, was correct. It is an advantage of machine translation that it often suggests idiomatic phrases as complete units.

*När jag var liten ville jag lära mig alla mina utländska vänners modersmål. Det är (→ var) mitt främsta motiv (→ motiv) för språkinlärning (→ språkinlärning). För närvarande har jag dock ingen möjlighet att använda främmande språk förutom engelska och franska.*

“When I was little, I wanted to learn the mother tongue of all my foreign friends. That was my major motive for language learning; however, I have currently no opportunity to use foreign languages except English and French”.

The present form *är* “is, are” in the second sentence of this text was corrected to *var* “was, were,” as the participant had written about the past. The tense incoherence may have been influenced by the learner’s L1, although the participant intended to stress that his main motivation remains till date. The participant spelled *motif* instead of the correct Swedish word *motiv* “motive.” This error was caused due to the French word *motif* “motive,” or its German counterpart *Motiv* “motive,” wherein the consonant *v* is pronounced [f]. Moreover, the compound Swedish word *språkinlärning* “language learning” was misspelled *språklärning*, as *lärning* resembles the English word *learning*.

#### K. Text 11

*Jag skriver lite om malajiska. Den malajiska ordstrukturen som används för jämförelse är enkelare (→ enkla) än den engelska. Inga stamförändringar observeras. Inlärningen av många former är en främst svårighet för germanska språk. På malajiska kan adverb göras genom att lägga till dengen ”med” eller secara ”på ett ... sätt” före adjektiv. Secara är mer formell än dengen. Modersmålslärare av språk med komplexa grammatiska regler har fördelar eftersom de snabbt kan vänja sig vid främmande språk.*

“I write a little about Malay. The Malay word structure used for comparison is simpler than that used in English. No stem changes are observed. Learning many forms is the primary difficulty in Germanic languages. In Malay, adverbs can be made by adding *dengan* ‘with’ or *secara* ‘in a ... way’ before adjectives. The latter is more formal than the former. Native speakers of languages with complex grammatical rules have advantages because they can quickly become accustomed to foreign languages”.

The participant explained several features of Malay grammar, which is simpler than that of English and Swedish. The comparative adjective *enkla* “simpler,” derived from *enkel* “simple,” was spelled *enklare* because the participant might not have been familiar with the stem’s phonetic change from *enkel* to *enkl-*.

When the participants searched for words equivalent to “native speakers,” the translation software suggested the Swedish compound noun *modersmålstalare* “native speakers,” literally meaning “mother-tongue speakers.” As the use of an adjective is preferred, *infödd* “native” can be used, as in *infödd talare* “native speaker” or *infödda talare* “native speakers”.

V. DISCUSSION

After the participant finished writing the abovementioned texts, he successfully identified 97 Swedish words in the test; however, he could not identify *fuktig* “humid,” *mörk* “dark,” and *vetenskap* “science.” The last word can be easily learned when the learner becomes aware that the German noun *Wissenschaft* “science” shares the same structure, namely, a combination of the German verb *wissen* “to know” and the suffix *-schaft*, which is equivalent to the English suffix *-ship*.

Table 1 demonstrates the crucial grammatical and lexical features that the participant noticed while practicing writing in Swedish. Relatively easy features may not hinder learning if learners have learned another Germanic language, such as German, Dutch, Danish, or Norwegian. Moderately difficult features may also confuse Germanic language speakers as a plural suffix *-ar*, *-or*, *-er*, or a zero ending is included in plural indefinite forms.

Relatively difficult features are the most time-consuming points for most foreign learners, except for Danish or Norwegian speakers. Irregular passive forms, such as *byggs/bygges* “is built,” *läses* “is read,” *säljs/säljes* “is sold,” and *väljs/väljes* “is chosen,” can be efficiently learned through continuous exercise. Writing exercises with topics of the learner’s choice can be one of the best ways to master the hardest and most unique features of the Swedish language.

TABLE 1  
CRUCIAL GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL FEATURES OF THE SWEDISH LANGUAGE

| Relatively easy  | Moderately difficult   | Relatively difficult  |
|--|--|---|
| V2 word order<br>e.g., <i>Jag köpte en bok igår.</i> “I bought a book yesterday.”; <i>Igår köpte jag en bok.</i> “Yesterday, I bought a book.” | Adjective declensions<br>e.g., <i>snabb</i> “quick, fast” (singular common); <i>snabbt</i> (singular neutral); <i>snabba</i> (plural)                  | Present passive forms<br>e.g., <i>används</i> “is/are used”; <i>betalas</i> “is/are paid”   |
| Present conjugations<br>e.g., <i>betalar</i> “pay”; <i>skriver</i> “write”; <i>dricker</i> “drink”; <i>köper</i> “buy”                         | Comparative forms<br>e.g., <i>enklar</i> “simpler” < <i>enkel</i> “simple”; <i>större</i> “bigger” < <i>stor</i> “big, large”                          | Past passive forms<br>e.g., <i>användes</i> “was/were used”; <i>betalades</i> “was/were paid”   |
| Preterit conjugations<br>e.g., <i>betalade</i> “paid”; <i>skrev</i> “wrote”; <i>drack</i> “drank”; <i>köpte</i> “bought”                       | Superlative forms<br>e.g., <i>enklast</i> “simplest” < <i>enkel</i> “simple”; <i>störst</i> “biggest” < <i>stor</i> “big, large”                       | Supine forms<br>e.g., <i>betalat</i> “paid”; <i>skrivit</i> “written”; <i>druckit</i> “drunk”; <i>köpt</i> “bought”                                 |
| Adverb forms<br>e.g., <i>snabbt</i> “quickly”; <i>relativt</i> “relatively”; <i>positivt</i> “positively”; <i>allvarligt</i> “seriously”       | Plural indefinite forms with an additional ending<br>e.g., <i> dagar</i> “days”; <i>veckor</i> “weeks”; <i>månader</i> “months”; <i>böcker</i> “books” | Definite articles: <i>den</i> (singular common); <i>det</i> (singular neutral); <i>de</i> (plural)<br>e.g., <i>den stora butiken</i> “the big shop” |
| Prepositions<br>e.g., <i>i</i> “in (+ place), for (+ duration)”; <i>på</i> “at, on, in (+ place, way of doing)”                                | Plural indefinite forms without endings<br>e.g., <i>språk</i> “language(s)”; <i>skäl</i> “reason(s)”; <i>ord</i> “word(s)”                             | Singular definite forms<br>e.g., <i>grammatiken</i> “the grammar”; <i>språket</i> “the language”; <i>ordet</i> “the word”                           |
| Genitive case<br>e.g., <i>en persons</i> “a person’s”; <i>ett lands</i> “a country’s”  | Compound words<br>e.g., <i>modersmålstalare</i> “native speaker(s)”  | Plural definite forms<br>e.g., <i>språken</i> “the languages”; <i>orden</i> “the words”   |

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the benefits of writing exercises assisted by translation software for learning Swedish as a foreign language. The participant knew 30 out of 100 words before the study, but correctly identified 97 words after the activity. Moreover, the participant correctly answered only 49 out of the 150 verb forms before the writing practice. He was able to correctly identify 144 words after the writing practice; however, the words *begär* “request,” *begärde* “requested,” *begäras* “is requested,” *föreslår* “propose,” *föreslog* “proposed,” and *föreslås* “is proposed” were incorrectly identified. From the abovementioned results, the present study concludes that the writing exercises significantly enriched the lexical and grammatical skills of a Japanese-speaking learner of Swedish.

A major limitation of this case study was the small number of participants. In future studies, learners from different countries should be invited to participate. If various texts written by learners speaking different L1s can be compared,

detailed characteristics that differ depending on their L1s can be analyzed. As for common errors occurring regardless of L1, Swedish-language teachers can explain them in class to any category of learner.

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