

Derivational affix awareness and L2 development

Research has only rarely tried to study how the knowledge of derivational morphology develops for second language (L2) learners (cf. Horst & Collins 2006; De Clerq & Housen 2019). However, some research has indicated that awareness of derivational morphology can affect the ease with which one acquires new words in the second language (e.g., Webb & Sasao 2013). The aim of this paper is to explore both how the frequency of derivational morphemes compare between course books for L2 Swedish and L2 Swedish writing (number of morphemes and lexemes which they occur in), and to discuss the concepts of *affix* and *morpheme* in relation to L2 knowledge and awareness of a language.

According to a usage-based perspective of language learning we could expect that the frequency with which one meets different affixes could affect vocabulary development (cf. e.g. Ellis et al. 2015). Nevertheless, some of the most common derivational affixes in Swedish do not have a very clear meaning in relation to the stem and hence if we want to test this hypothesis this needs to be born in mind. For instance, Swedish *be-* as in *betyda* 'to mean' is not so clearly related to the verb *tyda* 'to interpret/decipher', but what does this mean in relation to whether *be-* should be seen as a morpheme in present-day Swedish or in L2 Swedish?

In this paper I present which affixes that are most frequent at different proficiency levels in L2 coursebooks and L2 learner essays and relate this to the compositionality of the words which they occur in to explore the possibility that these might be identified by learners and made use of in their learning of the language. Further, I use this to explore the concepts of *affix* and *morpheme* in relation to L2 knowledge of a language and how derivational morphology can be incorporated into language teaching. Not surprisingly, morphological complexity counts show that lemmas at more advanced levels tend to be more polymorphemic and the ratio of words that contain derivational morphemes is much higher in the productive writing of learners at B1–C1 levels than at A1 and A2.

The study is based on the Coctail corpus (Volodina et al. 2014) and the SweLL pilot corpus (Volodina et al. 2016). In addition, some comparisons will be made with L1 reference corpora. Following Holmquist (2021) I will also explore what *hapax legomenas* can tell us about the awareness which learners have of morphemes.

References

- De Clerq, B. & Housen, A. (2019). The development of morphological complexity: A cross-linguistic study of L2 French and English. *Second language research*, 35(1), 71–97.
- Ellis, N. C., Brook O'Donnell, M. & Römer, U. (2015). Usage-based language learning. In B. MacWhinney & W. O'Grady (Eds.) *The handbook of language emergence*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. 163–180.
- Holmquist, K. (2021). Nominaliseringar i inläraarsvenska en korpusanalys av affixanvändningen i inlärares skriftliga produktion, kursböcker i svenska som andraspråk och modersmålstalets skrivna svenska. Magisteravhandling (15 credits), University of Gothenburg.
- Horst, M. & Collins, L. (2006). From faible to strong: How does their vocabulary grow?. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 63(1), 83-106.
- Volodina, E., Pilán, I., Rødven-Eide, S. & Heidarsson, H. (2014). You get what you annotate: a pedagogically annotated corpus of coursebooks for Swedish as a Second Language. *Proceedings of the third workshop on NLP for computer-assisted language learning*. Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings 107 (10), NEALT Proceedings series 22 (10), 128–144. <https://ep.liu.se/ecp/107/010/ecp14107010.pdf>
- Volodina, E., Pilán, I., Enström, I., Llozhi, L., Lundkvist, P., Sundberg, G. & Sandell, M. (2016). SweLL on the rise: Swedish Learner Language corpus for European Reference Level studies. In N. Calzolari, K. Choukri, T. Declerck, S. Goggi, M. Grobelnik, B. Maegaard, J. Mariani, H. Mazo, A.

Moreno, J. Odijk & S. Piperidis (Eds.). *Proceedings of LREC 2016*, Slovenia. European Language Resources Association (ELRA), 206–212. <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1604.06583v1.pdf>
Webb, S. & Sasao, Y. 2013. New directions in vocabulary testing. *RELC Journal*, 44(3), 263–277.