

English influence on the Swedish vocabulary 1800–2000

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1. Introduction

The present study is the result of a project intending to investigate the development of the Swedish vocabulary between 1800 and 2000, financed by The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. This paper is based on the two reports published on the influence of English during this period (Stålhammar 2002, 2003).

The aim in collecting and analysing the material was to get as complete an overview as possible of the lexical borrowings from English (including words imported via English). This was done by tracing the diachronic distribution, i.e. establishing when the different words entered the Swedish vocabulary, here defined as printed matter registered in major dictionaries or in electronic corpora. These loanwords were also categorized by area of use, in order to trace the causes and channels of word importation. For a better understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic borrowing, the material was divided into different types of loans (primarily direct loans or translation loans) over the period. The overriding aim was to obtain a better understanding of when, why and how words are imported from another language.

Since the material available differs in many important respects with regard to the two centuries analysed, each century is analysed separately. Comparisons are made throughout and in the study.

2. Previous research

Changes in vocabulary are generally seen as “convenience borrowings” (Singleton 2000), caused by the need for new words to denote new concepts and objects, (Aitchison 1981, Barfield 1953, Lehmann 1962, Stern 1931, Ullmann 1962); occasionally other, more specific, culture-related causes have been mentioned (Williams 1976).

Loans into Swedish during the 19th century have not received much attention; instead research into other Nordic languages had to be consulted for the classification in this work, especially an early study by Jespersen (1902) on Nordic loanwords, which also constitutes the basis of later studies, like Graedler (1998) on Norwegian. Jespersen illustrates his thesis that the “stream of culture” is reflected in loanwords by enumerating some 70 words from various aspects of English culture such as sports, games, politics, social life, transport by rail and by sea (Jespersen 1902:502). All are defined as terms for objects and concepts internationally introduced by Englishmen (although several of the words listed are loans from French).

Among other sources of Nordic reference material are Norwegian 19th century dictionaries as described by Graedler (1998) who characterizes the vocabulary in this material as an expression of an emerging Norwegian middle class interested in social and cultural influences, besides the obvious trade terminology.

Among later studies, a few investigate the first part of the 20th century, e.g. Bergsten (1915), Dahlstedt et al (1962); Stene (1945) for Norwegian. In contrast, the postwar period of the 20th century is well covered, both for Swedish (Chrystal 1988, 1991; Edlund and Hene 1992; Ljung 1985, 1988; Svartvik 1999), Norwegian (Graedler and Johansson 1997, Graedler 1998, Johansson and Graedler 2002) and Danish (Davidsen-Nielsen et al 1999, Hansen and Lund 1994, Sørensen 1973). In the Swedish studies, the focus of major works such as Chrystal and Ljung is on the integration of recent direct loans from English.

In contrast to these qualitative studies of small numbers of words, the present investigation is quantitative and aims to cover all English loanwords registered during the period, distributed over time, subject areas and loan types.

To compensate for the scarcity of research on the 19th century, more attention was devoted to this period. In particular, as part of the aim to understand the mechanisms behind word loans, an attempt was made to trace the rate of word loans for different subject areas.

3. *Material*

3.1. The 19th century

Since 1893, the Swedish Royal Academy has published a dictionary similar to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, providing etymologies and dates of first occurrences, including those of semantic changes. However, unlike the OED,

the Swedish Academy's Dictionary (*Svenska Akademiens Ordbok*, SAOB, here used in its electronic version, OSA) is neither updated nor finished (during the project, the letter S was finalised), which obviously affects any diachronic investigation aiming to include periods later than the publication of the first volume. With few exceptions, this dictionary could thus only be used for the 19th century. The editorial board's principle to avoid foreign words unless adapted to Swedish usage results in obvious difficulties where investigations of loanwords are concerned. A contemporaneous Swedish dictionary of foreign words (Ekbohrn 1878) was used in an attempt to cover this area. Roughly four fifths of the total material (810 words) were found in SAOB.

To compensate for the lack of material in SAOB after the letter S, a 19th-century dictionary was used (Dalin 1850–1855), together with the major contemporary dictionary of the Swedish language (*Nationalencyklopedins Ordbok*, NEO, published 1995–1996), which is largely based on SAOB (including its archives for letters later than S).

Norwegian dictionaries from the 19th century (cited in Graedler 1998) were shown to include 0.5 – 2% (25–200 words) of English origin. The Swedish equivalent used in the present investigation (Ekbohrn 1878) is of an encyclopaedic character, explaining foreign words and names. The percentage of English words amounts to ca 1% (less than 300 words), a share rather similar to Graedler's Norwegian material. Additionally, a comparison was made with the material presented in Bergsten (1915), where ca 300 words were included.

In order to compare first occurrences in English and Swedish and thus get some idea of the rate of word importation in different subjects, the OED was used for words imported during the 19th century.

3.2. The 20th century

For the reasons indicated above, other dictionaries had to provide the material for the 20th century. Here, NEO was complemented by more recent dictionaries of new words introduced between the 1940s and the 1980s (*Nyord i svenskan från 40-tal till 80-tal*, NO, 1986), later updated by an additional volume (*Nyordsboken*, NY, 2000). Specialised dictionaries and encyclopaedic works have also been consulted (Ayto 1999, Lewenhaupt 2001, Tingbjörn 2003), as have other dictionaries of loanwords in Swedish or other Nordic languages (Filipovic 1999, Graedler and Johansson 1997, Hansen and Lund 1994, Seltén 1993, Sørensen 1973). A considerable number of words were added on the basis of excerpts mainly from contemporary journalism,

available in electronic corpora (<<http://spraakdata.gu.se/lb/konk>>, <<http://skolan.presstext.prb.se>>). As seen from the publication dates of the material, there is a concentration on the second half of the century and a corresponding lack of coverage between ca 1900 and the mid-forties, as will be shown in the tables and graphs for the period.

For both centuries, and for most of the dictionaries involved here, etymologies may vary: SAOB and NEO prefer Latin and Greek etymologies, irrespective of date, word form or source (thus, *video* has only a Latin etymology). The Swedish dictionaries of new words (NO, NY) suffer from lack of consistency compared to e.g. their main Norwegian equivalent (Graedler and Johansson 1997), and very few of the other dictionaries date their material. In such cases, electronic concordances (the largest starting in 1990) have been used, which obviously results in exaggerated figures for the last decade.

As always, translation loans in any language are the most difficult ones to notice (and the easiest to accept); hence this is the category where the largest loss of registered material may be suspected. This important and interesting area deserves a separate study, including that of translation loans of phrases and collocations. Unfortunately, the present study includes only such translation loans that are registered as such in the dictionaries used, with the addition of examples from excerpts from other sources.

4. Results

The results of the study are subdivided by century, owing to differences in the material, cf. above.

In the following, loanwords are given in their Swedish form, followed by their English origin in square brackets in those cases where there are other alterations than mere compounding.

4.1. 1800–1900. Brief historical background

During the 19th century, Sweden experienced the beginning of the same industrialisation that was already well established in Britain. Terms for trade, transports, and new products, especially in the iron and textile industries, naturally figure among English loanwords from this period, as do names of new produce from the British colonies. This development was favourable for the growth of a middle class set on self-improvement through education: both England and Sweden saw the beginning of major dictionaries (the OED and

SAOB, respectively), and of a multitude of other dictionaries, encyclopaedias, handbooks and other informative printed matter, the primary source material in this part of the study. In Sweden, the press became known as the "third estate" and consequently journalism is also the second most important source material. The translation of literary works increased, and although this is a small source, it contains the largest proportion of vocabulary still in use, i.e. words of a non-specialised, general nature. The distribution over decades is shown in Table 1, where the last column shows the number of sources used by SAOB, indicating the growth in publications over the century.

Table 1. Distribution of English loanwords and sources 1800–1900

decade	loanwords	sources
1800–1809	34	303
1810–1819	44	359
1820–1829	35	359
1830–1839	56	565
1840–1849	89	697
1850–1859	63	681
1860–1869	92	782
1870–1879	94	884
1880–1889	154	1216
1890–1900	152	1612

4.1.1. Subject areas

The following areas were selected in order to reflect major historical changes over the entire period (with the exception of one additional category, entertainment, the same categories are used for both centuries).

Technology and industry, the largest category, including e.g. terms for machinery: *donkeypanna* [*donkey boiler*], *konverter* [*converter*] or parts of machines: *fläns* [*flange*], *krankaxel* [*crank-axle*], *schackel* [*shackle*]; processes: *fotografi* [*photography*], *puddla* [*puddle*], products: *film*, *grammofon* [*gramophone*], *revolver*; or new materials: *celluloid*, *ebonit* [*ebonite*], *koks* [*cokes*], *makadam* [*macadam*].

General vocabulary consists of words outside the categories above; the largest single group here is foodstuffs and similar substances: *curry*, *lapskojs*

[*lobscouse*], *skäggtobak* [*shag tobacco*]; here are also miscellaneous groups such as geographic concepts: *kanjon* [*canyon*]; professions: *clown*, *reporter*; non-specialised objects like *fingerskål* [*finger bowl*].

English cultural concepts is one of the largest groups including both ancient concepts and novelties, covering objects and concepts associated with culture in English-speaking countries, e.g. *samvælde* [*Commonwealth*]; *speaker*; *yankee*, *bumerang* [*boomerang*].

Science is the category where terms are shown to travel fastest (calculated as the difference between first occurrences in the OED and SAOB, respectively). This is particularly the case in chemistry, owing to the international reputation and contacts of the Swedish chemist J.J. Berzelius.

Sport, e.g. *jockey*, *steeplechase*, *turf*, *golf*, *cricket*, *tennis*, *rugby*, *fothboll* [*football*], *rekord* [*record*]. This is one of the largest groups, with a majority of direct loans still in use.

Maritime transport, e.g. *klipper* [*clipper*], *rigg* [*rig*], *månräckare* [*moonraker*], *skajsel* [*sky sail*], *kapsejsa* [*capsize*]. This group includes a large proportion of phonetic loans, i.e. forms rendering the pronunciation of a word rather than its written form, indicating borrowing through spoken rather than written communication.

Flora & Fauna mirrors the introduction of new species, e.g. *advokatpäron* [*avocado pear*]; *korthorn* [*short-horn*], *ponny* [*pony*]. Here, different dog races dominate, e.g. *pointer*, *setter*, *spaniel*, *terrier*.

Fashion, in particular textile materials, e.g. *cheviot*, *kalikå* [*calico*, from Ind. Calicut, an example of how English also acts as a language of transfer], *mollskin* [*moleskin*], *velvetin* [*velveteen*]; also a few terms for items of clothing, like *plastron*, *smoking* [*smoking jacket*], *ulster*.

Trade is a group with relatively few examples, but also the category with the largest proportion of direct loans, most of which are still in use. e.g. *budget*, *cash*, *check*, *manager*, *trust*.

The distribution of the more than 800 words is shown in Table 2 in numbers and percentages in descending order.

Table 2. Distribution over subject areas

Tech	Gen	Eng	Sci	Sport	Mar	F&F	Fash	Trad	Tot
187	119	119	106	92	70	62	36	19	810
23%	15%	15%	13%	11%	9%	8%	4%	2%	

Compared to the 20th century, the distribution over subject areas in the 19th century seems to indicate that English loanwords belong to rather specialised areas; technology, science, and words for cultural concepts in English-speaking countries make up more than half of the total.

4.1.1.1. Rate of introduction in different subject areas

In order to trace the communication routes and the mechanisms behind word loans, the difference between first occurrence in the OED was compared with that in SAOB. 800 word loans were found (the discrepancy in most cases being due to unclear etymologies, or extended use of very common words, e.g. *blink*, *body*, *rock*), 123 of which were imported within 10 years of their first occurrence in English. The largest proportion was seen among scientific terms (more than one third of the total were imported within ten years), followed by technical terms (approx. one fifth needed less than ten years to reach Sweden). On the other hand, basic cultural concepts such as *angelsaxare* [*Anglo-Saxon*], *city*, *klan* [*clan*], *parlament* [*parliament*], *speaker*, were introduced surprisingly slowly, a fact that may indicate a certain lack of earlier communication between the two countries. The large proportion of slowly introduced maritime terms may be explained by the preponderance of oral use and the consequent delay in written use.

How slowly or rapidly words in different subject areas have travelled is seen in Table 3, where subject areas are organised in descending order of their share of rapid loans.

Table 3. Distribution of loanwords according to rate of introduction

subject area	100–1000 years	11–100 years	0–10 years	total
Science	5%	51%	37%	106
Techn	31%	41%	20%	187
F&F	40%	57%	13%	62
Eng	50%	37%	12%	119
Maritime	52%	32%	11%	70
Fashion	33%	39%	11%	36
Sport	43%	36%	10%	92
General	53%	39%	5%	119
Trade	37%	53%	5%	19

4.1.2. *Types of loans*

The different loanwords have been divided into *direct loans* and *translation loans*, or *calques* (including a small number of examples of semantic change). Direct loans have in turn been divided into those with or without adaptation to Swedish spelling and morphology; loans based on oral/aural communication; loans based on eponyms, i.e. proper names, and loanwords from other languages imported via English.

Direct loans constitute the largest group, numbering ca 660 words (80%), 40% of which (265 words) have not been altered. Among those adapted to Swedish usage, oral/aural loans are a small group of ca 50 examples; almost all are technical or maritime terms, reflecting the need for oral international communication in the workplace. Eponyms are found in ca 40 words, and loanwords imported via English are roughly the same number.

Translation loans number ca 160 words (20 of which involve semantic change), i.e. 20%. In most cases (nearly 100) the entire word has been translated: *guldkantad* [gilt-edged], *rödskinn* [redskin] *samvälde* [commonwealth]. When only one part has been translated and combined with an existing, established word, the reason seems to be the need for explanation or organisation: the loanword denotes some special subcategory within the nomenclature (*blisterstål* [blister-steel], *kvarterdäck* [quarter-deck], *filfisk* [filefish]).

As stated above, translation loans are by their nature difficult to notice and there may thus be examples that have not been registered. They are often believed to be the most readily accepted form of loanword (cf Ljung 1985, Chrystal 1991); however, the low share in this material, and their low rate of survival as compared with direct loans (a large proportion of the direct loans are still in use, according to present-day dictionaries) seem to contradict this theory.

The comparatively modest extent of adaptation may seem surprising, seen both quantitatively and qualitatively: one third of the loanwords remain unaltered, despite differences in pronunciation, spelling patterns and morphology, and adaptations in spelling remain slight, e.g. loss of mute final *-e*. Even in cases where Swedish pronunciation rules would result in altered pronunciation, e.g. *ayrshire*, *jack*, *spray*, *lawntennis*, the English spelling is preserved. This tendency to prefer the original, foreign spelling will also be seen in the following century, when attempts to introduce more “Swedish” variants, e.g. *jos* [juice] are shown to fail. It may be interesting to compare loan techniques in other languages where the

English pronunciation, rather than spelling, is rendered, e.g. Estonian, or when transliteration into another alphabet results in a phonetic form, e.g. in Russian (*spiker* for Eng *speaker*) or Japanese (*sarariman* after Eng. *salary*).

4.2. 1900–2000

The distribution over decades is shown below in Table 4. The rise in the period 1950–1959 can easily be explained by the great influx of new concepts and artefacts in the postwar years. The rise in the 1990s, on the other hand, is due to the possibility of finding and dating first occurrences in the corpora available from 1990; some of the words dated as if introduced in the 1990s were probably in use earlier. There is, however, no readily available explanation of the remarkable peak in the 1960s.

Table 4: Distribution over decades 1900–2000

1900–1909	129
1910–1919	137
1920–1929	147
1930–1939	174
1940–1949	276
1950–1959	662
1960–1969	829
1970–1979	352
1980–1989	401
1990–2000	628
1900–2000	3734

4.2.1. Subject areas

In order to facilitate comparisons between the two periods, the categories were preserved, though with some modifications: Maritime terms were enlarged to include all kinds of transport (including personal travel), and the category Entertainment was added in order to cater for the importance of this new industry. Selected examples are given below, followed by a table showing the distribution and a comparison with the figures from the 19th century.

Technical terms reflect the history of the century: here are weapons (*browning, maskingevär* [*machine gun*], *atombomb, kärnvapen* [*nuclear weapon*], *scudmissil* [*scud missile*]) as well as terms from the automobile industry (*bränsletank* [*fuel tank*], *choke, kofångare* [*cow-catcher*], *truck*) and a wide variety of inventions still in use (*bandspelare* [*tape recorder*], *centralvärme* [*central heating*], *databas* [*data base*], *pacemaker, plywood, radar, radiator, radio, transistor*). Medical terms dominate (*akupunktur* [*acupuncture*], *födelsekontroll* [*birth control*], *hjärndöd* [*brain death*], *hormon* [*hormone*], *klon* [*clone*], *vitamin*), probably because of the general interest in these areas; there are also many scientific terms that occur in several different disciplines (*abstract, peer review, referensgrupp* [*reference group*], *standardavvikelse* [*standard deviation*], *sampel* [*sample*], *uppdragsforskning* [*commissioned research work*]).

Terms for cultural concepts in English-speaking countries are now considerably fewer and belong to everyday life rather than politics (*cockney, cowboy, pub, best man*). Sports terms are still mostly imported with no or few changes. While some belong to previously introduced sports, the majority denote sports introduced during the 20th century (*agility, badminton, basketboll* [*basket ball*], *bordtennis* [*table tennis*], *bowling, hanggliding, squash, speedway*). The category Transport, i.e. the extended category corresponding to Maritime terms for the 19th century, includes terminology from general tourism (*charter, duty-free, sightseeing*) as well as air travel (*airbus, apex, business class, flight, jetlag*). Maritime terminology is now limited to freight terms (*container, ro-ro-fartyg* [*ro-ro ship*]). Also terms in Flora & Fauna have decreased: among plants, we find some exotic fruits (*lime, ugli*), among animals, dog races still dominate (*boxer, pitbull*). Fashion has increased its share, both of terms for new materials (often brand names that sooner or later turn into generic denotations (*courtelle, fleece, lycra, nylon, orlon, tweed*) and items of clothing (*blazer, boots, cardigan, dress, jeans, jumper, pullover, shorts, twinset*). The cosmetics industry, with its international advertising, is now everywhere dominated by English terms (*aftershave, bodylotion, conditioner, formula, make-up*). The increase in Trade terminology represents the growing importance and general interest in economic issues; although it is still an area where direct loans dominate, there is now a difference between terms that concern the general public, where translation loans are frequent (*e-handel* [*e-trade*], *ekonomiförpackning* [*economy packet*], *kreditkort* [*credit card*], *postorder* [*mail order*], *själobetjäning* [*self-service*]), and terms for financial concepts, mostly direct loans (*benchmarking, cashflow, franchise, management, trainee*).

The new category of Entertainment is one of the largest, including varieties of music (*blues, country, jazz, rap, rock*), musical equipment (*jukebox, keyboard, stereo, studio*), various types of live performance (*gatuteater [street theatre], happening, musikal [musical], ståuppkomiker [stand-up comedian]*) or in the media (*casting, infotainment, public-service radio, såpa [soap], video*).

General is defined in the same way as for the 19th century and thus comparable: the growth seems to indicate an even stronger influx of English loanwords in everyday life. A large part consist of abstract concepts (*approach, blackout, brainstorming, comeback, deadline, flopp [flop], hobby, image, lobbying, status, trend*), where political concepts mirror the history of the century (*balkanisering [balkanization], finlandisering [finlandization], dominoteori [domino theory], icke-våld [non-violence], euroskeptiker [Euro-sceptic]*), but there are also concrete objects, both foodstuffs (*bacon, broiler, chips, cocktail, cornflakes, juice, milkshake, popcorn*) and a mixture of others (*carport, folder, gangster, gäng [gang], pussel [puzzle]*).

Table 5. Distribution over subject areas

Tech	Gen	Eng	Sci	Sport	Trpt	F&F	Fash	Trad	Ent	Tot
739	1304	29	377	303	97	48	227	236	374	3734
20%	35%	1%	10%	8%	3%	1%	6%	6%	10%	

With the exception of the considerably increased category General, Technical terms remain the largest category, still followed by Scientific terms (now with a slightly smaller share) sharing its position with the new category Entertainment. Next follow Sports terms, whose share is slightly smaller than during the 19th century. In contrast, both Trade and Fashion have increased their shares. In spite of its extended definition, Transport terms have a smaller share than Maritime terms had during the previous period. Flora and Fauna occupy a considerably smaller part now, but the smallest category is that of concepts associated with English-speaking cultures – most terms in this area probably having been introduced before the 20th century (some similar concepts may be found in the large group termed General).

Taken together, the distribution may be said to mirror an era of technical progress (technical and science terms) coupled with affluence (trade, fashion) and leisure (sports, entertainment). The bias towards specialised knowledge, noticed for the 19th century, is no longer seen; on

the contrary, the considerable growth of General loans may indicate a greater proportion of English loanwords in all areas of life.

4.2.2. *Types of loans*

Again, the proportion of direct loans far outnumbers that of translation loans: roughly two thirds (64%) are direct loans, one third (36%) translation loans. The increased proportion of translation loans compared to the 19th century (with 80% direct loans and 20% translation loans) may be due to the sometimes lively debate surrounding the influence of English on the Swedish vocabulary. It may also be explained by the different composition of the translation loans (less specialised subject areas, more general vocabulary) in the 20th century when the general public is more liable to meet loanwords than before. As shown in the examples above, there is a tendency to translate loanwords that may reach wider groups.

It should be mentioned that the facility of Germanic languages to form compounds may contribute to a larger impact of English word loans than is seen from the figures: although there is inconsistency especially in the definitions of the recent Swedish dictionaries of new words, as a rule they do not define compounds where one part is a loanword as having an English etymology. A count of loanwords including such compounds indicated that the figures for the 20th century would rise by approximately 10% (and consequently add to the share of direct loans).

As for other categories analysed for the 19th century, the number of oral/aural loans has decreased and changed from professional terminology to informal language (*fejka* [*fake*], *hajpa* [*hype*], *nörd* [*nerd*]). The number of eponyms is still limited (with a smaller share) and is mostly made up of brand names (*browning*, *Harris tweed*, *yaleläs* [*Yale lock*]). A somewhat surprising new category has appeared: pseudoloans, i.e. words formed on English patterns, but deviating from existing English words (*body* [*bodystocking*], *centilong*, *happy end* [*happy ending*]). The mere fact that such words are created may be taken as an indication of the influence of the English language.

5. *Conclusion and discussion*

In any comparison between English loanwords in the 19th and 20th centuries, the quantitative differences are striking: the latter period has nearly five times as many loans (with the proviso that the material for the two periods has important differences). The majority of the total of the ca

4,500 words fill lexical gaps, i.e. they once entered the Swedish language together with some new concept or entity. This is only to be expected in a world where English is the only true *lingua franca*, and where English-speaking countries dominate production and research in most areas. English loanwords may thus be seen as a reflection of the state of the world – which is perhaps the reason for reactions against what is seen as an exaggerated impact on the Swedish language.

On the other hand, English words account for only a small percentage in running text, generally between one half and two per cent (Ljung 1985:157–162), a natural consequence of the structure of the language, where functional words like pronouns, auxiliaries, etc. necessarily dominate. Still, many people complain that English dominates – which may be true on another level than that of mathematics: loanwords are often nouns that tend to be central to the understanding of a text. Thus they carry more weight than their statistical due.

English loanwords also tend to be used in contexts designed to attract attention, like advertising, or by language users who are associated with power and/or money, like economists, technical specialists, and scientists.

Complaints about the omnipresence of English may thus be the case of confusing the messenger and the message: dislike of a commercialised, globalised world dominated by English-speaking cultures is expressed as criticism of the language used in this world.

As for the development in quantitative terms, there has been a steady increase over the entire period, with steep peaks after WWII. The early beginning and the gradual development are sometimes disregarded, as if the importation of English loanwords started after WWII, but other historical facts corroborate earlier influences. The large groups emigrating to the United States in the 19th century provided personal contacts and individual involvement that should not be underestimated. The steadily growing numbers of books translated from English (Torgerson 1982), together with a more than doubled import of English books 1911–1936 (while the import of German literature was more than halved) are other signs of a growing interest (SOU 1938:32). On a more official level, political discussions concerning the choice of first foreign language in schools strongly advocated English even before WWII (SOU 1938), i.e. at a time when Sweden is generally believed to have been strongly biased in favour of the German language and German culture.

The distribution over different subject areas seems to reflect general developments in society while also confirming the impression that English loanwords are associated with a certain prestige: the high and growing numbers in such areas as fashion and entertainment point to such motivations.

Contrary to common belief and recommendations, direct loans far outnumber translation loans. International contacts obviously play an important part: direct loans dominate in sports and scientific terminology. In some areas, there seems to be a difference between translation loans for general usage as opposed to direct loans for specialists (e.g. in trade and technology). Differences between subject areas, however, seem to confirm the prestige of the English language: the areas of fashion and entertainment address the general public, yet they have the highest rates of direct loans.

Analysing the development of any language is a fascinating task, but it is also a reminder of the importance of keeping a constant and consistent record of changes. The comparison with the OED, in particular, underlines the loss that the Swedish language has suffered, and will continue to suffer in the absence of an updated historical dictionary: when the final volume of SAOB is published, more than 150 years will have passed since the first lexical entry was finalised. Yet languages are forever changing and are never finalised. Learning about language change helps us understand ourselves as language users.

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