

# Testing Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland and Iceland:

*A comparative study on testing Scandinavian language comprehension on Finnish and Icelandic senior high school students*

Carl-Mikael A. Teglund



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**Institute for Educational Research**  
**University of Oslo**

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*For my family and friends;  
for without your support,  
I'd be nothing.*

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*A comparative study on testing Scandinavian language comprehension on Finnish and Icelandic senior high-school students*

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, Universitetet i Oslo

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# Abstract

This thesis highlights first and foremost the language teaching controversies in Finland and Iceland, applying a critical eye on the outcome of the mandatory language teaching of Swedish in Finland and Danish in Iceland. But its aim is also secondly to describe, present, and test fundamental concepts and criteria which are thought to underpin good language testing. Discussing the importance of the interface and different perspectives between Language Testing (LT) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, the thesis interconnects these two main research questions in order to explore learners' test-taking scoring specifically and in general assess the validity and reliability of the language test exclusively carried out. It is well needed research, since excellent testing of how much the students know and do not yet know helps the learning process immensely. Poor testing – on the other hand - may however result in negative backwash for the test taker.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to test the Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland and Iceland on Finnish and Icelandic youths (17-19 years of age) having nearly completed their language education in respectively Swedish or Danish. After attending this mandatory language education for about six years, the Finnish learners understood 32% of the formal language in the news report and 36% of colloquial dialogue. The Icelanders understood 41% of the news report and 25% of the dialogue. This means that average outcome of the test in both countries is in general deficient after undertaking the mandatory language education of respectively Swedish or Danish. However there are huge differences within Finland concerning test scoring to take into consideration. In Vaasa, the mean average was 52% and in Mikkeli it was down to 24%. This should be compared with Iceland's national scoring average of 25%. Linguistic background of test takers or language learners does therefore not seem to have a large impact. Rather, it seems that regionalism, accessibility to native speakers of the target language, and also the sense of purposefulness in the education seem to top linguistic background. The results indicate also that it is not any direct difference between understanding dialogues containing slang, normal colloquial tempo with an irregular or informal syntactical structure and understanding a formal speech containing more advanced terminology but has a slower speed of speech thus being more structured.

When it comes to testing and teaching languages, technological equipment is important for the outcome. This became evident on the dialogue portion for Iceland. The equipment used recording the Swedish test for the Finnish-speaking test takers turned out with better quality than the Danish test for the Icelandic-speaking test takers (for reasons presented in the study). It is, however, not likely at all that it would make more than 10-20% difference in average understanding, probably leaving Iceland with an average mean on five instead of three out of 12 possible points. With this in mind, Iceland and Finland have approximately the same (about 30-35%) average understanding of their mandatory Scandinavian language which they are to learn.

This thesis suggests that it is essential to examine not only final linguistic products of tests but also that language tests be more communicatively relevant for the second language learning-process. The future of SLA requires proper student evaluation in order to illuminate the issues hindering second language advancement.

The Scandinavian Language Test is available online:

<https://scandinavianlanguagetest.wordpress.com/>

**Keywords:** *Second Language Education (SLE), Second Language Understanding (SLU), Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Language Testing (LT), Language Tests, Test Administration, Scandinavia, Iceland, Finland*





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# List of Abbreviations & Terminology

**Executive language skills = Writing and Speaking**

**FL = Foreign Language**

**L1 = First Language/Mother Tongue**

**L2 = Second Language**

**LT = Language Testing**

**Recipient language skills = Reading and Listening**

**SLA = Second Language Acquisition**

**SLE = Second Language Education**

**SLT = Second Language Teaching**

**SLU = Second Language Understanding**

**Target = The language you are about to learn**

**Transfer = The language(s) you have as L1(s)/ your linguistic background**



# Introduction

## Testing language comprehension

Advances in the study of thinking and learning (cognitive science) and in the field of testing (psychometrics) have stimulated people to think in new ways about how students learn and what they have previously learned, what is therefore worth testing, and how to obtain useful information about student competencies. This dissertation is about Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Second Language Education (SLE), but first and foremost on Language Testing (LT). The aim is to test second language comprehension connected to general conceptions on what it means to have a sufficient proficiency and command of a language for a particular purpose. I have chosen the Nordic region specifically as a case for covering the mandatory education of respectively Swedish in Finland and Danish in Iceland. What is the outcome of this education, really? Would the Finnish/Icelandic average senior high school student be able to follow and understand a normal colloquial conversation with a young Dane or Swede after the mandatory education in Danish/Swedish is complete? The basic idea with the test is to expose Icelanders/Finnish-Finns who only have experience with their school-taught Danish/Swedish to a test on comprehension of dialogues containing slang, normal colloquial tempo and an irregular or informal syntactical structure and compare this with their understanding of more formal speech, e.g. a news report.

According to my own belief, the problem with most language tests today is that most test administrators want the test taker to perform a language as clear and correct, and as close to the textbook criteria as possible; therefore, the performed language is succinct and quite far from true-life and colloquial language usage.

When researching the SFI (Swedish For Immigrants) homepage for IT-based language testing (It-baserade sfi-prov, 2011-03-01) all of the conversations, monologues, and dialogues are typically regular, and conducted, above all, with an unnatural pace and clarity (for a native speaker). I believe that SLE ought to resemble more first language (L1) education. Therefore the testing should also focus on the spontaneous usage of the language, and on the understanding of colloquialism. An Icelandic student in Danish may very well know how to conjugate irregular Danish verbs and may very well receive the highest grade by remembering glossaries, but the student's actual knowledge is worthless if it cannot be applicable for communication with native speakers. A theoretical know-how of a language is worth nothing if it cannot be used and performed practically.

## The Nordic speech community

Once a language dies, a part of human culture is lost – forever. I think this would also be a valid observation regarding speech communities. This dissertation is about the Nordic speech community and the schools' role in keeping it intact. The Nordic speech community is the idea that the people of the northernmost region in Europe who live in - or in countries formerly belonging to – the Scandinavian countries mutually understand one another even though they have different mother tongues. There is also a need of explaining the division about what is considered Scandinavia, the Nordic countries, and what is considered as not being any of the above. It can be a complicated and rather confusing question to say the least – even for people living in the area. Scandinavia is *only* the three countries of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. The term "the Nordic countries" refers to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden *as well as* Finland and Iceland, and the associated territories thereof (Greenland, the Faeroe Islands, and the Åland Islands). This is so due to linguistic, territorial, political, and cultural reasons that go as far as a thousand years back in history and earlier.

The Scandinavian main languages, Swedish and Danish, are used as bridges between Scandinavia and its peripheries. But Swedish is also important for Finland because it is used for bridging the cultural gap between the two main cultural communities within Finland – Finnish-Finns and Swedish-Finns<sup>1</sup> and Iceland is too small a country to be institutionally self-sufficient with all the types of specialized higher education that the country needs access to. Danish enables Icelandic students easy access to study in Denmark and also in Norway and Sweden. Likewise, in the Finnish higher education system which is much more institutionally self-sufficient, Swedish opens doors to study in the Scandinavian countries, thus broadening the options for Finnish students. Both Icelandic and Finnish respectively are relatively small main-languages without any other real speech community where they can be understood in. It is simply not enough for practical reasons to rely on a speech community solely with the Faeroe Islands in Iceland's case, or with Estonia in the case of Finland.

There is no denying that the fellowship of language is the most important thing that binds the Nordic countries together. If we all would start solely to use English in more and more domains, it would be an impoverishment of the reservoir of all our knowledge and tools for intra-cultural communication within our region. This is so because a bit over 80% of Nordic residents have Danish, Norwegian or Swedish as the language of which they have as a mother tongue. All together about 20% speak Finnish, or Icelandic or a number of minority languages. To be able to keep the community together – if that is what to be desired - the minority seemingly has to adjust to the majority. But recognition of

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<sup>1</sup> A Finnish-Swede would be a person of Finnish cultural and linguistic background living in Sweden, while a Swedish-Finn is a person belonging to the cultural Swedish-speaking minority of Finland. In English, the usage of the adjective and the noun is different from that in Swedish and other European languages when referring to ethnicity and nationality. Immigrants arriving to the United States have always been designated "the other way around"; with the adjective indicating the ethnic or national origin and the noun indicating the new country of residence (the citizenship), e.g. "Swedish American", never "American Swedes". This has led to much linguistic confusion, especially in traditionally homogeneous countries such as Germany, Sweden, and Finland, because of the native population not being very accustomed to foreigners.

this need has also to come with a greater understanding and respect for smaller languages that thrive within the Nordic region.

Maintaining the Nordic speech community requires constant development of the possibilities for strengthening language comprehension. The school systems are important tools in order to guide students down the path to the future of communication.

## **Objective and scope**

This study attempts to contribute to the knowledge of the Swedish language training in Finland to Finnish speaking Finns, and in Danish for Icelandic pupils in Iceland. The thesis will research Finnish and Icelandic students' language acquisition of respectively Swedish or Danish after completing the mandatory foreign language education in their home country. Audio testing of the students' understanding of casual colloquial dialogues and news reports will be used. The dialogues have been collected in Copenhagen and Stockholm, or nearby areas, thus locating the most commonly spoken Swedish and Danish in their standardized form from the Stockholm- and Copenhagen areas. Not much of a regional accent of the standardized language will therefore be heard, but standardized language pronunciation typical to these capital cities. The dialogues must be as authentic and close as possible to what the students would hear if they would interact with other Nordic youths. As such it will contain slang and colloquial expressions. This approach will be complemented with a scrutiny on the methodology itself behind the whole testing field – to put the test itself under the magnifying glass and investigate its structure, scoring, and design to see if the test can be said to be reliable and valid. The final discussion of this last question is meant to compound theory, method, and final result in one.

## **Research Questions**

1. After the Finnish and Icelandic students have nearly completed their language education in respectively Swedish or Danish, how much of normal colloquial dialogues in standardized Swedish or Danish do they understand? Would their language skills enable them to participate and contribute in a discussion with other Nordic youths?
  - 1a. Are there any differences between the respectively Finnish and Icelandic students in their Scandinavian language comprehension after almost being finished with their mandatory language education?
  - 1b. Are there any differences noticed in the test results between the students' understanding of colloquial language and formal language usage?
2. According to the standard definitions on how to assure test reliability and validity as stated in the methodology chapter, can the test constructed for this thesis be said to have test reliability and validity?

## **Delimitation**

The students who will be assessed will be of age 17-19. Most Finnish Finns and Icelanders have in this age group studied the foreign Nordic language for about six years, starting at around the age of 13 in both countries. In consideration of this linguistic study, there will only be attention given to the test takers' linguistic background, such as parents' native languages etc, and therefore will not mention demographic characteristics, such as race, family income, religion or gender. Geographically I will concentrate my study on usage of language from the speakers' countries' capital areas – Stockholm and Copenhagen. Since it is not the results of learning one's mother tongue which will be assessed, it will be important to look out for and exclude from the study any Icelandic students with a mixed Danish-Icelandic parental background, or those who have been living for instance in Denmark. In Finland, there are at occasions marriages between persons from the two cultural ethnic groups – Finnish-Finns and Swedish-Finns. Therefore there are a lot of young people in Finland who should be seen as more or less bilingual from birth. There is also much contact between Finnish-Swedes and Finnish-Finns, through different culture organizations etc. It is therefore important to make sure that the students assessed for this dissertation are monolingual (Finnish or Icelandic) speakers from birth. As far as possible, they must also have a background from school or geographical living from a monoethnic/monocultural surrounding (i.e. the school of choice, neighborhood, friends, etc.) and they will have attended the foreign Nordic language courses during primary education as having begun training in their other Nordic language at a secondary education level.

It is the students' comprehension of speech which is the concern of this thesis, not an evaluation of the teaching of these subjects. Therefore the type of teaching that the students receive is beyond the scope of the dissertation. Though the type of teaching is vital for the outcome, a study also focusing on the teaching would take too much time and effort for only a MA level essay. There are, however, many different types of Second Language Teaching (SLT) methods. The Grammar Translation Method and the Direct Method - or "Berlitz's Method" - are among the most commonly used teaching techniques, the former just for practical reasons. In the Western world, foreign language learning in schools was once synonymous with the learning of Latin or Greek. These languages were taught not because the learners should use the language in daily life, but because these classics were considered important for higher education and for one's upbringing. They were taught by means of the Grammar Translation Method: focus on grammatical rules, memorization of texts, written exercises and the medium of instruction was in the mother tongue, with little active use of the target language. Furthermore, the vocabulary was taught by means of lists of isolated words. To this day this method remains a standard methodology for language instruction in some educational institutions (Brown, 2000:15). However, according to the "Berlitz' Method" SLL should be more like learning a L1: lots of active oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no or very little translation, and little or no analysis of grammatical rules. Important to have in mind regarding this method is that classroom instruction is conducted exclusively in the target language. "Berlitz" type schools still exist, and their language

teaching methods are commonly used in the International Baccalaureate schools and in other private language schools, where students are highly motivated and native-speaking teachers may be employed. However, in the national public school system, this method tends to be looked upon as being too uneconomical for the tax payers to bear (Brown, 2000:78).

Most testing of any school subject would be a so-called achievement test, which would have the goal of measuring how well the test taker has achieved course goals. Because of the objective and scope of this thesis, it will neither contain course goals nor any closer look at what each class has been focusing on in class. It is the overall achievement and language proficiency which are of interest.

## **Methodology**

To achieve the objective of this study I will address the question regarding comprehension through an audio test for the students in order to test their ability of hearing and understanding colloquial Danish and/or Swedish. The collected test information will be prepared as quantitative data. Quantitative data provide one basis for evaluation, and securing such data should be a first task. They are unlikely to contain much information about the particular context in which a school is working. Rather, the collecting and analyzing quantitative data are in this study a first attempt that may help raise key questions for further research beyond the MA level.

In this chapter I will describe the survey process, explain what is important to have in mind when constructing a language test, what language tests ought to include, and how my personal language test for this specific dissertation was made and what it incorporates. The methodological analyses on the outcome of the test will however be presented in the discussion & analysis chapter at end of the thesis.

### **Survey methodology and research design**

This research is built by data collected from various Icelandic and Finnish schools where I had students (17-19 years of age) undergo a Scandinavian language test in order to assess their Scandinavian language comprehension. A second goal was also to examine the language test itself as well, by examining the test takers' scoring, in order to assess its accuracy through reliability and validity- checking.

This type of research follows a quantitative research design and is closely related to survey method/design in keeping with my aim in gathering the data; according to the authors Rea and Parker, there is no better method of research for collecting and analyzing detailed and numerical information about a large population (Rea & Parker, 2005:5). This helped me in sampling linguistic characteristics of a limited group of the young population fairly fast, which then became a basis for preliminary reflections about the larger population as a whole. In total, 286 pupils have undertaken this constructed language test in two countries (143 each) and in a total of seven different schools. Even though the collection of material is fairly large, it is important to stress that I believe it cannot be said to depict the absolute image on what level the Scandinavian language comprehension is on within these two opposite countries. It might, however, be said that it is a valid research for indication of trends and tendencies of Scandinavian language comprehension in Iceland and Finland today.

The meaning with this test is to collect as much data as possible to be able to do a quantitative survey later on in the result section. Quantitative analysis often gives the researcher more of an ability to generalize from a small sample to the larger group population (Bryman, 2008). However, in this case the samples were not randomly drawn from the larger population of young persons. Another way to test language acquisitions would be to conduct oral tests by interviewing test takers. This would

however be extremely time-consuming. Another drawback would be that these oral tests would only be representative for these individual students. Instead of interviewing several students which would only reflect the opinions of those students (albeit in much greater depth), my choice of research design allows the data to reflect and paint a much broader picture of the younger Finnish and Icelandic population at large. With oral tests, (such as interviews) attitudes and statements about the education would be easier to include in this research. This could potentially be an interesting and possible continuation for future research on the subject. However, one should not underestimate the improved legitimacy quantitative data and analysis lends to research in the eyes of other social sciences and outside disciplines, as well as the impact on policy makers. Maybe the results will be able to be used as a wake-up call for policy makers in Iceland and Finland regarding their language education.

In addition to the main survey data collection, I was also fortunate enough to be invited to hold a few classes myself, both in Iceland and in Finland. This gave me the opportunity to better grasp how much the students truly understood their respective Danish and Swedish. Since I was there inside the classroom all the time during the test, it is important to stress that my presence in the classroom may have had an influence on the actions of the students. In one class in Iceland, some pupils asked their teacher why they had to study Danish, and that they would rather study the Swedish language. The influence of the researcher's presence is well documented in almost all guides on qualitative research methods. Bryman (2008) provides a good, brief overview of these factors and how to take them into consideration. Investigator's presence is however not anything I believe to have had any greater impact on the scoring of my language test. Since my own observations were merely supplemental to my own understanding of their Scandinavian language comprehension, I do not feel it detracts from the reliability or validity of the main data analysis.

Finally, regarding the undertaking of this research, I want to stress that lack of resources was one of my largest disadvantages. It did not limit my scope of my research but it made it difficult for me as a researcher to construct a language test to be fully satisfied with. Truthfully, I lacked the material to record and construct the kind of quality test I wished for. This had an obvious impact on the performance of my test and therefore also, naturally, on my results. As both my time and resources were fairly limited, it was however a relief that the research design I chose allowed me in gathering a large amount of data in a reasonably short amount of time and for relatively little cost.



## Considerations and objectives regarding language tests

*Jephthah used the pronunciation of the word 'shibboleth' as a test to distinguish his own men from the Ephraimites, who could not pronounce 'sh'.<sup>2</sup> Those who failed the test were executed. According to the Book of Judges, chapter 12, forty-two thousand Ephraimites failed this language test and got brutally slaughtered by the banks of the Jordan river.*

(Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shibboleth>)

This ancient and brutish tale of this specific language test is from the times of the Old Testament, and is probably – if true – one of the oldest records of language testing. Any of Jephthah's own men killed in error might have wished for a more reliable test, however.

Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Many variables are involved in the acquisition process. But what is language, really? What does it mean when we say someone knows how to use a language? What are the linguistic differences between the first and the second language? I have already stated my own belief several times that SLE ought to be as closely resembled to FLE as possible. This is due to many reasons.

First off, I have observed from personal experience as a language teacher and student of multiple second languages, it is extremely hard to achieve fluency in a foreign language solely within the confines of the classroom, and therefore real-world approaches should be used as tools in order to target language comprehension. This could be carried out by theater and acting within the classroom where the students have to be able to handle certain situations only with the usage of their knowledge in their second language, or carried out online on the Internet while chatting with other pupils who would be native speakers in the target language. Methods like this not only make the learning process much more enjoyable for the learner, but also takes the learning process out of the classroom setting. Secondly, a theoretical know-how of a language is worth nothing if it cannot be used and performed practically. Knowing a language rule simply does not mean you will be able to use it in a communicative interaction (executive skill) or while trying to follow an interaction (receptive skill) (Brown, 2000). Thirdly, it is my assumption that the main objective of learning languages is to develop the ability to interact successfully, internationally and globally, using languages as tools for new communication. To be a better learner in the process one has to test one's comprehension and outcome of the education which has been undertaken. Excellent testing of how much the students know and do not yet know helps the learning process immensely. Poor testing may result in negative backwash for the test taker (Hughes, 2003). Due to the risk of negative backwash many language teachers harbor a deep mistrust of tests and of testers. This mistrust is, frequently but not always, well-

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<sup>2</sup> The spelling would be /ʃ/ in the International Phonetic Alphabet.

founded. For example, if government officials handed out a national standardized writing skills test, all of which were arranged by multiple choice, students might feel pressured to study by isolating components rather than practicing the skill of fluent writing itself. This is clearly undesirable (Hughes,2003:1). It is therefore important to ask ourselves both as learners and educators why we test our language skills and for what purpose.

These considerations are well-substantiated when it comes to official testing such as national standardized tests, as earlier mentioned, but also for testing on a smaller scale level. How will each student be evaluated and why?

1) Is it the individual student who is being evaluated on the basis of his or her presentation of a discipline's knowledge?

2) Or is it the common knowledge of the discipline that is evaluated through the student's presentation of his or her knowledge?

(Granheim, 1990:119)

When it comes to for instance national standardized tests, the motive is to evaluate the common knowledge of the discipline as a whole whereas if the test would be carried out by a teacher for his/her class the intention would most likely be to investigate each individual student on the basis of his or her own knowledge of the specific discipline. This would be a belonging to the so called theoretical consideration of the test. When constructing a language test these considerations are of great importance.

Furthermore, one has to settle for what part of language usage is desirable to exam and evaluate, and why this part particularly. There are four parts of language usage: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. These four parts can then be divided into two bigger chunks; receptive (listening and reading) and executive (speaking and writing) language skills. All forms of administrative undertaking in constructing a language test start with deciding what exactly to measure among these substantially different parts of language tools. According to my own experience as a language teacher and learner, it is much safer concentrating on one part at a time, at least within the greater divisions of receptive and executive skills. Most tests however use two differentiated parts of the language, but then focusing on one receptive and one executive tool at a time.

Another thing to bear in mind when testing listening skills is repetition. Most teachers let their students listen to a recording at least twice, and sometimes up to three times when they test language listening comprehension. This means that the student has much time to let all the information given to him or her sink in and is therefore more likely to give more correct answers about the information. However, this is not the case in real life dialogues. Then there will be disturbing and inconvenient background noise and you will only be able to hear a dialogue once, in most cases. When you practice in order to build up student vocabulary one should exercise this by repetition. It is surely an excellent

way in teaching. But if you want to test practical knowledge of a language, then repetition should not be exercised since it is far away from a real life situation.

So how do we assess student knowledge? Roughly speaking, there are four types of language tests: proficiency tests, achievement tests, diagnostic tests, and placement tests (Hughes, 2003:13).

Proficiency tests are designed to measure people's ability in a language, regardless of any training they may have had in that language beforehand. Proficient, or to be proficient in a language, means having sufficient command of a language for the particular purpose. In this aspect it is important to point out that it means to be proficient for the specific tasks that will be undertaken for those who pass. One good example of a proficiency test is the TOEFL test which non-native English speakers have to take in order to attend this program (Comparative and International Education), for instance. Most teachers are unlikely to be responsible for proficiency tests. It is much more probable that they will be involved in the preparation and use of achievement tests. These are directly related to language courses and their purpose is to establish how successful individual students have been in achieving objectives of a course or program (Hughes, 2003:13).

Diagnostic and achievement tests are used to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses. These are the best suited for pinpointing out weaker students being able to help them achieve course objectives whereas placement tests, as their name suggests, are intended to provide information that will help to place students at the stage of the teaching program most appropriate to their abilities (Hughes, 2003:15,16).

As mentioned, language tests are tricky to make and deal with. If the test proves itself to be inaccurate the risk of negative backwash would be immense. But what makes a test inaccurate? There are two main sources of inaccuracy. The first of these concerns test content and test techniques. According to Hughes, for instance, there is absolutely no way we can get a really accurate measure of students' abilities by means of a multiple choice test. We may be able to get an approximate measure, but that is all. The risk of guessing and being a lucky striker is of course bigger if it the test-taker is confronted by alternatives of answers where one is correct rather than coming up with the answer all alone (Hughes, 2003:3). These problems could be dealt with if you have enough items to choose from, but it is hardly possible for a classroom language teacher to design and use such tests frequently.

Another major problem with testing is the lack of reliability. In short, one can say that a test is generally reliable if it measures something consistently. On a reliable test you can be confident that someone will get more or less the same score, whether they happen to take it on one particular day or on the next, mood etc; whereas with an unreliable test the score is quite likely to be considerably different, depending on the day on which it is taken. Unreliability may be caused by the interaction between the person taking the test and features of the test itself. Human beings are not machines and we therefore cannot expect them to perform in exactly the same way on two different occasions, whatever test they take (Hughes, 2003:4). As a result, we expect some variation in the scores a person

gets on a test, depending on when they happen to take it, what mood they are in, how much sleep they had the night before etc. To be able to trust the tests put together, one has to minimize the obstacles of inaccuracy and the problems with reliability. Validity on the other hand is concerned about mainly two things; generalization of the results – in other words use them for explaining the knowledge level of the bigger populace (are the numbers representative), and, in short, am I right – do I have any right (out from the data I have presented) to answer my own research questions?

However, what can be done is to ensure that the tests do not increase this uncertainty by having unclear instructions, ambiguous questions, or items that result in guessing on the part of the test takers. It is therefore important to provide clear and explicit instructions. Test writers should not rely on the students' powers of telepathy to elicit the desired behavior. It is also important to let colleagues criticize drafts of instructions to be able to avoid problems. Spoken instructions should always be read from a prepared text in order to avoid introducing confusion (Hughes, 2003:14).

## **The Scandinavian language comprehension test**

This test is a short-answer proficiency test assessing listening comprehension of spontaneous and colloquial usage of a language, but in the most frequently occurring mainstream dialectal variant of the language, comparing it with a formal language usage of a news report. The test is intended for Finnish-Finns and Icelanders at ages 17-19 when having completed/nearly completed their mandatory language education in Swedish or Danish. The test only measures receptive language skills and therefore the students will have the questionnaires handed out to them in their own native language, Finnish or Icelandic. It is important to remember that I only want to test the utmost practical command of a language, not grammatical ability etc. In scoring a test of a receptive skill (listening) there is no reason to deduct points for errors of grammar or spelling. The test is divided into two separate parts; one dialogue and one news item, each about two minutes. After each part the test taker is given two minutes to fill in the empty slots for each answer. There are eight scores for the dialogue portion and twelve for the news portion. The dialogue (see appendix II) is exactly the same in both languages (Swedish and Danish) containing the same information and following the same pattern, but in different languages. The manuscript was written in English so that the persons of whom I received help constructing the dialogue use their own words in their own colloquial language. The assistants are young students themselves, one boy and one girl, living in the capital regions of each country (Stockholm in Sweden and Copenhagen in Denmark). The news item (see appendices IV and V) could of practical reasons not be the same, since it is recorded from a genuine radio broadcast. However, it would be advisable in the future to stage a radio or TV news item to make them authentic and identical. I wanted to have a complementary part on to see if there was any difference between their understanding of colloquial language and strict news anchor language (see definitions on page 34). This language test firstly starts with a brief introduction and instructions to what the test taker is expected to do and shortly what assignments will follow (see appendix I). All recorded instructions are given in the test takers' native language and are pre-written in order to secure clarity. For reasons explained in the chapter above, repetition of the dialogue nor the TV news item will not be used, so the test taker will only be able to hear the recordings once.

The test is a sc. short-answer test. These kinds of tests are commonly used, particularly in listening and reading tests. Advantages over a multiple choice test are that guessing will contribute less to test scores and that cheating is likely to be more difficult. Furthermore, it is more in depth than a multiple choice test (because the test-taker has more freedom of elaborating an answer) but also simpler to grade than an essay style examination (since it is more precise and focused) (Hughes, 2003:79-80). I believe that short-answer tests should have a frontrunner role to play in serious language testing. Furthermore, the technique is becoming more commonly used. Computers are now being used within TOEFL for example to transcribe and score even short-answer tests reliably and quickly. Therefore there should be no reason why short-answer items should not have a place in even the largest testing program.

I have been testing listening skills as a path to get a good and feasible understanding of the students' proficiency in the language they have been studying. This means that I do not focus on course goals and aims of a curriculum but rather on what they understand of real usage of the language. According to my own experience as language teacher and learner, I know that the listening skill is the most important tool you have while being exposed to a foreign language. Through listening, you can passively get more information which you store in order to achieve a greater executive mastery. To pick up important parts in a conversation and not miss out on different forms of information given to you, would then be the level of proficiency which would be considered as a precondition for being "proficient". Proficient, or to be proficient in a language, means having sufficient command of the language for the particular purpose; in this case picking up enough information from an ongoing dialogue in order to conceptualize the correct understanding of the gist of what has been said. Listening is comprehension and through a better intellectual capacity of a language it is possible for further development in contributing in a dialogue in a more executive way.

I constructed the test in such a manner that there would be little need for the test taker to have much sociolinguistic comparative skills, like sensitivity to differences in dialect or variety. In Finland it is much harder since most Finns are more used to hear Finland-Swedish rather than original Swedish from Sweden, and the linguistic exposition of Swedish vary regionally a lot in Finland as well. I chose Vaasa, Oulu, and Mikkeli as the representatives for the linguistic picture of Finland. In Mikkeli there have never been any Swedish-speaking minority and it is situated closer to Russia than to Sweden. Vaasa, on the other hand, could be said to be the capital of the Swedish-Finns, where they are a certain majority if one include all neighboring areas surrounding Vaasa municipality. Oulu, a town high up in the north of Finland, has had a considerable Swedish-speaking minority but it is very small as it is today, but the town is on the shore to the Baltic Ocean meaning therefore that it is situated closer to Sweden rather than to Russia. This means that I expect a higher test score in Vaasa than in Oulu, for instance. But also that the scoring would be expected to be considerably higher in Oulu than Mikkeli.

The teachers in Swedish are also able to choose freely on what type of Swedish they want to educate; mainland-Swedish or Finland-Swedish. According to my experience there are very few Icelanders as well who are able to master the Danish accent. This is also the case with the teachers themselves. This becomes a problem when most Danish speakers do not speak Danish like the Icelandic students are accustomed to. The whole idea of this test is therefore to see how much the students would understand of mainstream Danish and Swedish, the type of language which is being used by most native speakers. However, one important factor of the test is the level of colloquial informality of the spoken language they have to comprehend. This is an important factor because it is this language students will be confronted with if they go abroad meeting up with other people in their age group. An example of the use of different varieties of e.g. English is that of an African-American student who indicated that she would not consider using Ebonics<sup>3</sup> in class, where Standard American English would be the appropriate choice. On the other hand, she would probably be understood as either affected and

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<sup>3</sup> Informal slang language of the African-American community in the USA.

pretentious or joking, were she to use Standard American English in informal conversations with other young African-American students (Bachman, 1990:95). It is therefore important for younger learners to have at least some understanding also of the informal usage of a language if these languages ought to work as bridges between mainland Scandinavia and its peripheries.

In constructing this test I have been using mostly the book *Testing for Language Teachers* by Arthur Hughes (2003), but also my own experience from my teacher education and experience as a teacher. I have been working out my manuscript for the dialogue I constructed through a list prepared by Hughes which includes specifications which ought to be incorporated in a well-adapted listening test.

According to Hughes, these specifications can be grouped into three different sections of which our listening understanding of a language consist of: ***the operational section, the informational section, and the interactional section***. The main objective when trying to follow a discussion or a dialogue is to follow what is being said and through that to obtain the gist of the communication being undertaken. This is the operational section of our listening skill. Our informational sector of our language comprehension is built on obtaining the factual information and recognizing and understanding certain main areas which are important ingredients in a dialogue between two persons. Equally important the listener must also be able to understand requests for information which the counterpart in the dialogue wants the listener to convey. To be able to achieve the factual operational goal one must be able to recognize and understand all the requests for information being given to you as a listener, but also to be able to recognize and understand opinions of different sorts, suggestions, expressions of preferences, complaints, speculation, comments, and excuses – all important and frequently occurring ingredients in a normal colloquial dialogue. Lastly within this section would be to follow a narration when the speaker is describing something which he or she will do or has already done. However, in order to really contribute later on in a dialogue the listener needs to understand the interaction parts in a dialogue.

The interaction section would be that section where the speaker is somewhat confirming that the listener actually is obtaining the information (main goal of the operational – main – section) and is willing to contribute further to a dialogue. Understanding and recognizing certain items as greetings and introductions, expressions of agreement (or disagreement), indications of uncertainty, and opinions might be the most important items to search for in a dialogue and to learn by heart when studying a new language and can be considered as the basics in learning receptive conversation skills in a foreign language. All this can be defined as recognizing the speaker's purpose of wanting a dialogue in the first place. When obtaining a higher level of language knowledge being able to contribute in a dialogue in a more executive way, the language learner will be able to send out his or her own signals of informational items, resulting in the language learner being able to comprehend the last part in the interactional section, namely recognizing signs of understanding from the counterpart (Hughes, 2003:161). I have constructed a conceptual map down below of my own in order to better depict the variants of sections and sub-groups to the listening skill. The three subcategories which the

listening skill consist of (the operational section, the informational section, and the interaction section) each have one bubble and are connected to the listening skill- bubble in the center of figure 1. Each subcategory- bubble has itself connections to other bubbles which these subcategories consist of and they are all connected through the clean strokes which are drawn between the bubbles. They are each marked with different colors to facilitate the understanding of the conceptual construction I have made and to separate them apart, but one can also follow the strokes which also indicate the connections.



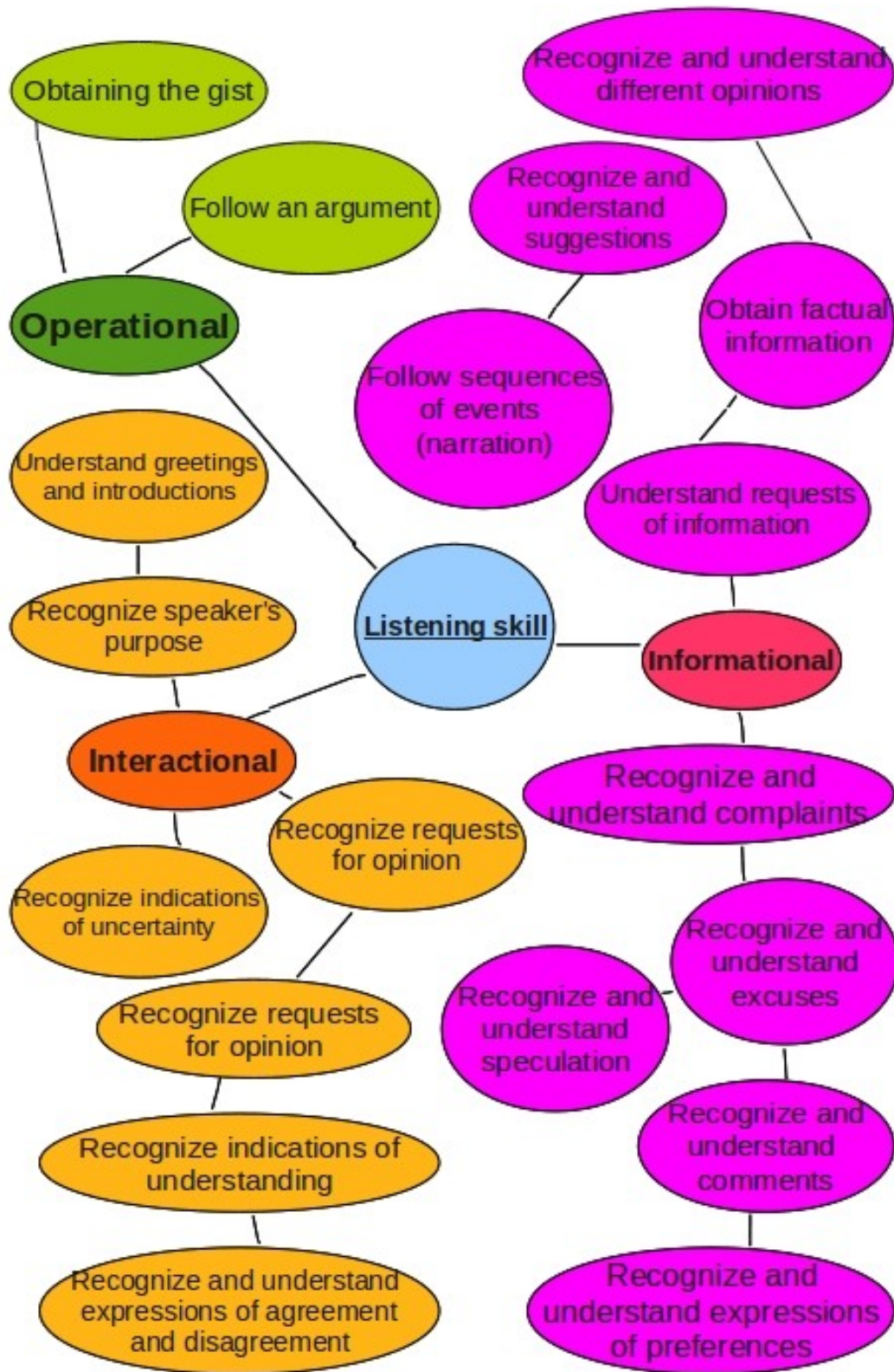


Figure 1: Conceptual map on listening skills

The main difference between colloquial language and a formal language usage lays, as earlier mentioned, mostly in the choice of wording and expression. As in the example with the different forms of American English (Ebonics versus Standard American), it can be important to distinguish between colloquial and formal language depending on the situation. A phraseology which would be appropriate for a news anchor at a radio or TV show would probably not be well-founded at a social gathering with one's age peers. Another difference between casual conversations and more formal language usage is speed of speech. Speed of speech is expressed as words per minute (wpm) or syllables per second (sps). Reported average speeds for samples of British English are:

	wpm	sps
Radio/TV	160	4.17
Conversations (casual)	210	4.33

(Tauroza & Allison, 1990:12)

As stressed before, I have been concentrating on the receptive skill (listening) and dealing with this type of language learning and acquisition. This does not measure an individual's total language capacity due to all languages' complexity and the complexity of the tools we humans have when understanding (and using) language.

For further research, a better type of testing would be to be desired in order to get an even better picture on Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland and Iceland - a test on also the executive level of a language. Tandefelt (1988) proposed seven different topics which I believe should be considered to be included in such a test for future research on the field:

- 1) Amounts of pauses and their length
- 2) Speed of the communication: words and syllables per minute
- 3) Recurrence
- 4) Eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions
- 5) Lexical density
- 6) Lexical variation
- 7) Variation in using verbs

(Tandefeldt, 1988:200)

In the future, beyond this study, it would be interesting to have the task in constructing and carrying out such a more complex test, which surely would indicate more correctly each pupil's own individual skills in the language assessed. However, this smaller study will hopefully show indications of tendencies in the Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland and Iceland.

For the full test survey instrument, please consult the appendices I-V at the end of this dissertation.

## Literature review

There is an immense body of literature in the field of SLA and LT and all the theories and practices which underpin the research field. In this chapter, I would like to – briefly – give an overview of the literature I have been drawing ideas and findings from.

There are a broad variety of scholars belonging to different branches and faculties who have researched the field of second language education and language testing. The impact of language learning and research on language issues in the Comparative and International Education academic field of study has been focused on educational challenges. For instance, multilingual societies and language of instruction issues, and how this affects the decisions for policy makers within the educational sector (e.g. Brock-Utne & Zubeida, 2010; Granheim et al, 1990). Lots of material has also been linked to the civic education sector within Comparative and International Education and dealt with language tests for citizenship testing. Within the other interdisciplinary school of the cognitive and behavioral sciences, second language acquisition has been given a fair amount of attention. Here, the focus has been on speech production and the psychological achievements of the second language learner (e.g. Bachman, 1990). Thirdly, there is the linguistic science which focuses on mother tongue vs. second language constructions and the various structural differences of each language being examined. There is no research overview on SLA, or any underlying sub-field, that can ignore the implications of the studies within linguistics and language structure. However, there has been a copious amount of research within the field of linguistics, including: acquisition process, affective factors, fossilization, negative and positive transfer, bi- and multilingualism, and how this affects SLA (e.g. Chomsky, 1995 & 2001; Pienemann, 2003).

For my background information on Iceland and its linguistic situation I examined both history books (Karlsson, 2000; Hjálmarsson, 1999) and researched material on language education previously conducted (Hauksdóttir, 2001). In regards to Finland, the language debate remains a common issue, present in almost everything ever written about Finland. I have tried to use both Finnish literature and Swedish literature to cover the historical context in order to get a fair picture of the country's history (e.g. Tandefelt, 1988; Ivars, 2002; Dahlstedt, 1982), and also to combine this with literature from a person with a neutral country background (Lavery, 2006). Especially the book *Dialog och särart* by Bladh & Kuvaja (2005) is very useful indeed since the authors are of both cultural identities. The need for covering Nordic history and languages in general to get a better and broader picture of the topic was important and there are many valuable books written on these subjects which have been included into this research and are to be found in the reference list on page 96 (in e.g. Harstad, 2009; Brock-Utne, 2001; Huss, 1999; Gustafson, 1997; Karker, 1997). Especially the book *Nordens Historia* by Harald Gustafson proved a beneficial book to read due to its brilliant overview and depth of Nordic history easily and pedagogically explained. Along with the Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, this book still attempts to share the history of all of the Nordic countries, including as well the peripheries Finland and Iceland.

Pedagogical research is of great importance to examine when conducting research of this magnitude. These books focus on teachers' profession, student-instruction, learning-processing, and in general the functioning operation involved therein (Brindley, 2001; Hauksdóttir, 2001; Heinonen, 2009; Pellegrino et al, 2001; Brown, 2000). Hughes (2008) is especially helpful when it comes to guiding language teachers into how testing ought to be understood and carried out in the best way possible.

Pertaining to the methodological groundwork, I concentrated primarily on Alan Bryman's book *Social Research Methods* (2008). Additionally, I used Rea & Parker (2005) to gain a firm understanding of survey processing and both quantitative and qualitative research, both of which affect my thesis. To reach the conclusion, this research is certainly interdisciplinary and nuanced, reaching disciplines such as pedagogy, cognitive science, behavioral science, linguistics – all in different shapes: the study of language form, the meaning of language, and of language in context.

## **Ethical considerations**

My data collection involved a great deal of in-class activities to be able to perform the testing of the Icelandic and Finnish students' Scandinavian language comprehension. It was important for the test takers to feel secure, and to understand their grades would not be jeopardized or affected by the testing. Furthermore, in no way should a test taker feel inadequate if they did not understand the recordings I made of them. Also, great care was taken to maintain the student participants' anonymity. Therefore, no names had to be signed onto the test. The only background information I wanted and needed about the students before they would do my Scandinavian language test, was (apart from knowing their age, 17-19) about their linguistic background; *Does anyone have parents from Sweden/Denmark?*, *Are there any Finnish-Swedes in the class?*, *Have anyone been living in Denmark?*. All these questions were asked beforehand to their instructor who of course knew the answers to the inquiries. I therefore did not collect any information from the students themselves. This was one way for me to make the students feel more comfortable with having me there, plus it facilitated the research since it would be more tedious to hand out forms about their own background, potentially feeling too personal for the students themselves. Apart from that, I did not collect any other identifiable personal information from the students. While a researcher must take into account the quality of their research design, participants are not inanimate test subjects, so one must ethically also take into account the desires of all of those involved, including administrators worried about their students time away from class to participate.

I have earlier stressed on in the study that teachers somewhat fear testing, because of the negative backwash it might produce. Examples of this could be that the test taker feel that he or she does not understand anything of what I as a native speaker of Swedish have to say when addressing them in my version of Swedish and therefore feel that their education has been futile. I have – I hope – made it so that no unnecessary negative backwash has been produced. It is, however, something I have been quite concerned about. I came to learn that this is the risk with all forms of learning and – especially – testing.

While the data set will be available to other researchers in order to promote the transparency and collaborative effort which is central to the scientific method, participants are identified by number of their scoring in the data and no other identifiable information will be shared. The schools are not mentioned by their names either, as of ethical consideration for school personnel.

## **Theoretical rationale**

*"A theory of SLA is really an interrelated set of hypotheses and/or claims about how people become proficient in a second language."*

//Brown, 2000:68

In this section, I will foremost define my thoughts and ideas about education and educational curriculum development. Secondly, I would like to explain the reason for writing this dissertation, why it is important, and how I have theoretically divided the thesis into two separate parts: one, describing the Scandinavian community language comprehension in Finland and Iceland, and two, describe the making and problematic factors with a language test and language testing in general terms, but also examine the theories and already existing literature from scholars which relate to the topics of interest.

For a study to develop, a theoretical rationale is of great importance. All educational tests, whether used in the classroom or in a large-scale context, are based on a set of scientific principles and philosophical assumptions -- or at least they ought to be.

First, every assessment needs to be grounded in a theory about how people learn, and how knowledge and understanding progress over time. Secondly, all tests need to assume a position on what kind of tasks are most likely to elicit important knowledge or skills from students. An excellent test should be likely to enhance the learning-process and show the student, if possible, that he or she knows more than he or she believes to know, or at least pursues further education or information on the subject. Third, every assessment is premised on certain assumptions about how best to interpret the evidence from the observations to draw meaningful inferences about what students know and can do (Pellegrino et al, 2001). In this section, these issues are discussed and further developed with examples from earlier scholars and reports on theories and ideas.

## **Theories on education and educational curriculum development**

Much of my own thoughts and ideas regarding language education in particular are based mostly on a very pragmatist view on how teaching (and learning) should be performed and achieved. This pragmatist perspective on education is a line of thought which draws back all the way to Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, in his essays regarding education development, made a clear distinction between what he called 'useful' and 'ornamental' knowledge, and advocated the former. This pragmatist perspective on education supply grew more substantial through the writings of John Dewey. The basic idea of this philosophy is that education ought to encourage personal thought and the student should learn through 'real problems', which means through issues with direct personal concern to the learner (Lauglo, 2002:133).

The key to education is 'learning to learn' and therefore this craves a curriculum which adapts this approach through a more practical learning-process. Through real-world situations and problems really useful knowledge will be achieved since both theoretical and practical learning is included at the same time in the process. And by deemphasizing the importance of intellectualism in society and stress the importance of useful practically applicable knowledge, this pragmatist perspective has helped to reduce the misconceptions which might have been (and, however, still are shared by many) about status and applicability between 'pure' and 'applied' knowledge, between theory and practice (Lauglo, 2002:136).

This, according to me, is the foundation which second language education ought to rely on and not the theoretical part too much since the theoretical know-how of a second language is worth nothing if it cannot be used and performed practically.

The student will of course also get more motivation in learning a new language if she or he feels that the education has relevance for his or her own life. One thing that could affect this opinion, is whether or not the language is used in the learner's daily life or if the learner is confronted by the language. This will be explained more in detail below in the background chapter on the differences between foreign languages and second languages.



## Theoretical frameworks of testing SLA

Testing is considered a way to systematically measure a person's ability or knowledge, and it is formalized as a set of techniques or procedures (Brown, 2000). Testing also plays an important part in language learning and evaluation in classroom settings, but can also, as earlier mentioned in the methodology chapter, lead to some serious negative backwash.

There is a vast selection of theories on second language acquisition, language testing, and second language testing specifically, and I have read numerous amounts of them during my research on testing SLA in Finland and Iceland. I had of course also a great deal of help from my earlier teaching education where theories on knowledge acquisition and theories on how we learn are frequently occurring. In brief, there are many different theoretical frameworks to use as springboards when it comes to describe and/or explain the learning-process and its generation. Many SLA and LT researchers have discussed the roles of testing and its role in SLA. First, I would like to describe a selection of theories on language learning and acquisition which I believe are the most prominent, and the basics. I would also like to describe my own basis to where I start from when I reason about language learning and its proceedings. It is important to denote, however, that various theories do not need to exclude or eliminate the others. One should rather see them as different aspects when it comes to development of understanding SLA.

In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, language testing techniques were heavily influenced by structural linguistics, whose ideas on testing L2 learners were of course heavily influenced by the academical school within SLT at the time, namely the Grammar Translation Method (Brown, 2000). The analysis of language favored focus on grammatical rules, memorization of texts, and learning in, so-called, isolation. That means grammatical knowledge would be learned in its own context, vocabulary out of glossary memorization etc (reported for instance by Bachman, 1990). The more basic theoretical schools within second language learning would be the theory of *Universal Grammar* (UG) which the famous scholar Noam Chomsky is seen as one of the frontrunners for, and the *Processability Theory* (PT) developed by Manfred Pienemann. Briefly the two theories can be described as two different starting points when looking at SLA. UG concentrates a lot on why small children have such an easy time (or so it seems) learning their L1, and PT focuses solely on the developmental functions in the learner when learning a new language (Heinonen, 2009:18,19).

In these days, a widespread adoption of the so-called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, language tests tend to include more practical tasks predicting real-world settings (Brindley, 2001:143). The communicative theories focus therefore on the testing of communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures (Brindley, 2001:140). This also goes well hand-in-hand with my own understanding of language learning, as has been described up above, and interconnects with one of the more intriguing theories on language teaching taught today, namely the TPR- strategy. This is a teaching strategy I came across as a teacher student and I fancy this idea of teaching. Total

Physical Response (TPR) is based on this learning-by-doing approach, and interconnects with the pragmatic standpoint of view on education as described in the subchapter above. The method is “based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth .. when [we have] decoded enough of the target language, speaking appears spontaneously.” (TPR World, <http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html>) This also reflects on my own experiences as a second language learner (especially Danish, Icelandic and Spanish).

As we can notice by its premises, the TPR method (founded by James Asher) is heavily influenced by the research of Noam Chomsky and his focus on what has been known as “the logical problem” (Heinonen, 2009:18); “*why do most children learn language syntax<sup>4</sup> so easily?* The rejection of the structural linguistics was by Chomsky built on these premises, that structural linguistics was efficient for phonology and morphology, because both have a finite number of units that the linguist can collect but not sufficient for syntax, reasoning that an infinite number of sentences could be uttered, rendering a complete collection impossible (Chomsky, <http://www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/19720629.htm>) and (Chomsky 1995, 2001). The very sympathetic approach towards SLA which this view may result in is very well described by the TPR- school: “*Babies don't learn by memorizing lists; why should children or adults?*” (TPR World, <http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html>)

In the language learning-process, there is a separation between receptive (listening and reading) and executive (speaking and writing) language skills. Earlier in this study I indicated my own belief that it is through passive participation (the receptive category) we open the gates to further acquisition of a target. This has not explicitly been addressed (not that I found in any of the material I researched) by the followers of the theory of the UG, but must be said to be closely related to the idea of an inner human basic comprehension of languages and all of its various structures and components. There are, however, other ways at looking at the issue, which could be just as accurate. There are, however, those who would assume the totally opposite position, saying; it is the executive language skills which guide us first and foremost to and enable more language acquisition. Again, we see a difference between the UG and the PT school, where the proponents of the Processability Theory would say that it is the performance of a language instead of the possible competence which both indicate knowledge but also enable more knowledge of and to the language learner (Heinonen, 2009:20). Its founder Manfred Pienemann says in his entry “*Processing perspectives in SLA research and their compatibility*” in the compilation *Handbook of second language acquisition* that;

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<sup>4</sup> Do notice the special attention on syntax, not phonology or morphology.

*“language acquisition studies ... ought to place special emphasis on [both] the interface between the processor and grammatical knowledge, since [grammatical knowledge] is only accessible through [direct oral usage], especially in SLA, where it cannot be taken for granted that individual utterances are representative of the structure of the underlying linguistic system.” (Pienemann, 2003:709)*

Pienemann is of course correct in his exposition of SLA, which leaves my own conclusion on the subject to be somewhat of a mixture between my own standpoint of stressing the receptive skills and the importance of a practical know-how perform also stressed earlier and which is also interconnecting with the pragmatist perspective on education developmental theory. Furthermore, with this statement, I at least interpret Pienemann in a way that research on linguistic competence and research on process ability, would be able to give a lot to each other if only the two dispositions realized that they together can contribute better to an improvement of theoretical frameworks of SLA.

Another issue of importance which affected LT, which I have been taking into considerable thought, is the role of the mother tongue. What role has the mother tongue when learning another language? How should a test be constructed in the way that it should – or should not – take ethnicity into consideration of the test taker and his/her own linguistic background? L1 and its affection on the learning-process of the second language , a process called transfer, has been given much attention in language research and has also strongly been questioned and rejected by some scholars. But it is safe to say that there is still the strongest support for the claim that mother tongue and earlier achieved linguistic skills affect SLA. Especially the researchers attached to the UG theory and its frameworks have been writing much on the discussion of transfer and SLA, needless to say with a doubtful point of view (Heinonen, 2009:20,21).

As one may discern, there is a clash between the supporters of the universal grammar theory (born with an inner grammatical understanding) described further by Asher in his theories of “Infant Body Language” (TPR World, <http://www.tpr-world.com/what.html>), and advocates on the importance of the transfer theory (mother tongue to target language). The most prominent theoretical framework, referring to the latter, is highly disputed.

According to the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), there are inherent difficulties and challenges with learning a second language from another language family tree. The CAH states that learning outcomes can be foreseen as to know the linguistic background of the language learner. When the structural groundwork of the languages is equal, comprehension and acquisition is facilitated, meanwhile a differentiated structural groundwork of languages will aggravate comprehension and acquisition of the target language (Heinonen, 2009:20).

There are, however, more things which will influence your ability to learn another language than your own mother tongue. Bachman (1990), for instance, has looked at factors such as personality, background knowledge, and experience of the target language (emotional attachments and other initial reactions when thinking about the country where the language is spoken or when hearing the language etc.). Other motives such as language status, studiousness in general, educational surroundings and equipment are all factors for research in order to accurately predict the outcomes of language acquisition or language acquisition probabilities and reasons thereof. But it stands clear to me that relationship between transfer and target is important.

It is because it is extremely important, in theory and in practice, to remember that assessments do not exist in isolation, but must be closely aligned with the teaching, the learning-process, and the goals which are being expressed in the curriculum. Therefore are theories on each and every single part of the learning chain which leads to language comprehension important for the understanding of the subject of testing SLA.

# Background

First and foremost it is my interest in languages and language education that took me to this point in my own education. For this dissertation, my interest in the Nordic region and the Nordic co-operation, especially regarding languages, has importance. Therefore, these matters will be addressed in this chapter in order to give the reader a better understanding of the setting this language education takes place in, and why such education exists in the first place.

*“The key to understand a subject's tradition and identity is embedded in its history; where the subject has its institutionalized context, its roots, and its justification.”*

//Hauksdóttir, 2001:481

## Second languages and foreign languages

The term foreign language has not been used in this thesis until now, not to cause too much confusion. However, a brief subchapter mentioning the division between second languages and foreign languages is needed to clear up this confusion that might be an issue otherwise. It is also important for the understanding of the outcome of the paper since it might affect the results. Although it might do that, second language acquisition (SLA) will be used more or less all through this dissertation, but the terms will be distinguished when it is relevant for the results. It is also mentioned here in the background section because of that it is a relevant discussion on language learning that the reader ought to know about.

First, note that the terms *second language* and *foreign language* do not measure how well you speak or comprehend the language in question. It simply defines in what environment you are using – or more correctly, learning - the language. The major difference between them both is that a foreign language is not used at all in the domain of which the speaker lives and interacts with other people. That means that the foreign language plays no major role in the community and is primarily learned only in a classroom setting.

In Sweden for instance, English has become a constant L2, since people are confronted by the language in everyday life – in commercials, games, movies, television broadcasts, etc. Most Swedes use at least a little bit of English every day, perhaps without knowing it. However, Spanish, French, or German, languages which are also taught (one of them) in Swedish schools are most likely not used in everyday life even though a person studied the language in grammar- and senior-high school. Swedish is on the other hand an L2 language for many Finns because they are confronted by Swedish a lot because of close contact with Sweden or by having contacts with Swedish-Finns. A language may

very well “travel” from being a L2 into becoming a FL, and the other way around. As explained before, English has become more or less a new L2 in Sweden. But in Oulu (Finland) for instance, there were many Swedish-Finnish inhabitants about 100 years ago, and Swedish had an active role in the town's administration. But now that the Swedish-Finns are ever-diminishing, it is not that common for Finns to be confronted with Swedish any more in Oulu. This is also the case of Iceland, where Danish was at least more heard on the island about 60 years ago when Iceland was a part of the Danish Kingdom. Nowadays, Danish has become a typical FL. This is because Danish is next to never used on the island and the common Icelander has hardly ever encountered a real Dane if s/he has lived his or her whole life in Iceland.

## **Linguistic co-operation in the Nordic countries**

The Nordic countries make up a region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic which consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden (all of which use a Nordic Cross flag) and their associated territories of the Faeroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Islands. Scandinavia is sometimes used as a synonym for the Nordic countries, although within the Nordic countries the terms are considered distinct – with Scandinavia only referring to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Even though other countries geographically could also be seen as a part of the Nordic region (for instance Canada and Russia) they are not Nordic. This is because "Norden" (or Scandinavia as the term is more colloquially called in English) is a geographical area combined with cultural and political shared traits (Karker & Molde, 1983:9). Almost 25 million people live in these Nordic countries. Most their inhabitants know, speak or understand fully or to some extent at least one of the Scandinavian languages; Danish, Norwegian and Swedish.

According to the Nordic Ministry itself, the inter-Nordic language unity and language comprehension has for decades been considered as the main component of Nordic co-operation. This implies that Scandinavians proper (Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians) are able to communicate with each other by using their own language. However, the situation for the non-Scandinavian Nordic countries (Finland and Iceland) has been complicated. Their majority population has not been able to use their own languages within the Nordic co-operation but have been expected to use Swedish or Danish. In practice, this has been a major obstacle for many people wanting to take part in inter-Nordic conferences, workshops etc. English has been viewed as threatening the very essence of the Nordic unity. This is due to teaching English as a second language in most schools in the Nordic countries today, and the immense popularity of American pop culture. As these and other factors have boosted the English skills of the inhabitants of the Nordic countries, the interest for the neighboring countries and their languages is diminishing. The EU also increasingly uses English as a main medium of communication. All this put together has resulted in English now being seen, by some linguists and other researchers, as a threat to the Nordic countries' own relatively small languages (see Brock-Utne (2001) and Huss (1999)).

Both of these scholars describe a situation where Norwegian (Brock-Utne) and Swedish (Huss) are settling into a kind of minority/majority language configuration in Norway and Sweden regarding some domains within the society. An increasing number of scientific publications, mainly doctoral dissertations, are released in English only. In certain courses at many universities, lectures and written exams are also held exclusively in English (Brock-Utne, 2001) - both in Sweden and in Norway. According to Huss, in the foreseeable future, Swedish may become more and more like an informal intimate-sphere language after classes in the Nordic academic world, and in the course of time English may even become the leading language on the university level in Sweden. Collectively, some scholars, for instance those whom I already referred to (Huss and Brock-Utne), state that this would lead to an

increase in inequality, because proficiency in a *de facto* foreign language would become a general prerequisite for success in society.

Harmonizing with the general goals in other fields of Nordic co-operation, the Nordic language cultivation bodies have co-operated since 1954, and in 1978 the Nordic Language Secretariat was founded. The purpose was to "strive for the preservation and strengthening of the Nordic linguistic community and to promote inter-Nordic language comprehension". The Secretariat was formally closed down in 1996, but the co-operation between the separate language councils in the Nordic countries continues much on the same basis as before, now as the Nordic Language Council. The separate minority language agencies mentioned above as well as the Language Councils for Inuit and Faroese are included in this co-operation. Every year, a Nordic Language meeting is organized in one of the Nordic countries, the themes varying from inter-Nordic language comprehension and the threat of English facing the Nordic languages to language issues related to official language policies, IT, and the public media (Huss, 1999). The aim of the Nordic Language Council is to strengthen and stimulate interest for knowledge and understanding of all the cultures and languages that thrive within this Nordic region (Karker & Molde, 1983).

Current ventures on strengthening the Scandinavian language comprehension are *SvenskaNu* in Finland and *Túngamálatorg* in Iceland. These are undertaken by the Nordic Council and are available online at [www.svenskanu.fi](http://www.svenskanu.fi) and [www.tungumalatorg.is](http://www.tungumalatorg.is).



## **Present day situation**

If the scholars who have been researching neighboring-language understanding in the Nordic countries are correct, the Nordic language speech community is crumbling and the understanding between the different people in the region is deteriorating. A study from Lund University which has been undertaken by a researcher team from the Nordic Language Council indicates that Nordic residents show a greater and greater difficulty in understanding each other. This applies particularly to young people. And not only has the understanding of Scandinavian languages worsened in Finland and Iceland, but it seems that the mutual understanding between the Scandinavian languages also has deteriorated over the decades (Nordisk Sprogråd, 2002). This reveals that at a closer investigation of comprehension of Swedish, Norwegian and Danish in the Nordic countries shows that quite substantial changes have taken place since the 1970s. According to the study, young people in the Nordic countries are considerably worse at understanding each others language compared to the generation of their parents. Other earlier studies from other researchers show the same trend, both in Iceland (Hauksdóttir, 2001) and for the Finnish-Finns, (European Commission, 2006). There have been several opinion polls in Finland carried out by a great number of different organizations and caretakers, and they show a somewhat divided picture. The willingness still to belong to the Nordic cultural and political community is very strong and looked at as being of great importance among the Finnish interviewees (93%) and it shows it is equally important for them to be associated as being “Nordic”. But on the other hand, only 27% of the interviewees answered that they believed it was a good thing that Finns were taught Swedish, and stated that it would be better if they would communicate in English with the rest of the Nordic countries (Magma, 2008:8).

The situation is about the same in Iceland, indicating that Icelanders have severe problems in understanding real-life spoken Danish. A study from 1982 indicates that Icelandic students in age peer 15-20 have a harder time understanding, and especially speaking, Danish rather than Swedish or Norwegian (Börestam, 1984:129). However, the Icelandic variant of Danish, which sounds mostly like a mixture of all the Scandinavian languages put together, has proved itself to be quite a success when communicating with citizens of other Nordic countries apart from Denmark (Hauksdóttir, 2001:186).

## Iceland and Danish

Icelandic is a North Germanic language, and main language of Iceland that has been spoken in the region since the country became inhabited about 1100 years ago. The language has in total approximately about 320,000 native speakers. Most of the original settlers of Iceland came from Western Norway. Icelandic is therefore an imported language, or more precisely derived from Norwegian (but also from areas in what is now respectively Sweden and Denmark) as spoken at the time of the settlement. However there were people with many different dialects of Old Norse who made it to Iceland - from Sweden, all over Norway, and even from the British Isles (who then mainly spoke a language that could be understood by a speaker of Old Norse). Therefore, it seems that the settlers decided to go for one dialect and then stick to it, because the Icelandic language as it is today consists of very few regional dialects. Most likely the language spoken was influenced by all of the Old Norse dialects, and variants at the time, coined *dönsk tunga* (Danish tongue). In the period from 1350 to 1550, coinciding with the total loss of independence and the coming of Danish rule, the difference between the Scandinavian languages and Icelandic grew still larger. The Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes were still able to communicate with each other in their own language, but the languages had grown by such a large extent that it was impossible for them to understand the Icelanders. The Scandinavians had adopted several changes in their own language: the old inflection system of words became simplified, the invention of new Old Norse words became stagnant and the vocabulary grew instead by loan words from German (Plattdeutsch) (Niederdeutsch) (Karker & Molde, 1983:114).

The efforts of the government in Copenhagen to make Danish the official language of Iceland have left in their wake many Danish terms in official documents, but with little lasting impact on colloquial speech. The rural population remained faithful to their own ancestral language, while Danish borrowings were used only by a restricted class of elderly educated people who were heavily influenced by Danish culture and lived only in Reykjavik. So when the struggle for the purification of Icelandic from all Danicisms began in the 19th century, the groundwork had already been laid. The purification campaign was such a success that Danish borrowings were almost completely eliminated. Only a few terms by then stable in the spoken and administrative language survived. During the 19th century, the Icelandic authorities implemented a stringent policy of linguistic purism. This tendency got even stronger and more popular during the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Iceland experienced its liberalization from the Danish rule (Karker & Molde, 1983).

Tendencies developed, and during this time Icelanders got even more nationalistic. This is also to be reflected in the curriculum for the history subject where Denmark is consistently pointed out as an imperialist enemy of Iceland and a root of much disparity and burdens in Iceland (Hauksdóttir, 2001:139). It was however decided that it was important for Iceland to continue the bonds with the rest of the Nordic countries. From time to time there have been arguments on whether it would be more beneficial for Iceland to teach Norwegian or Swedish, rather than Danish. These two other

Scandinavian languages are closer pronunciation-wise to Icelandic than Danish is. But due to historical reasons, Danish became the language of choice for education, even after the Icelandic independence. The decision makers argued that the fact that Danish was the Scandinavian language linguistically farthest away from Icelandic, and it was only an advantage to learn specifically Danish since it would enable them to understand all the other – considered easier<sup>5</sup> – Scandinavian languages, as well (Hauksdóttir, 2001:186).

Today, Icelanders are rarely confronted with proper Danish and have in general little experience of using their school-Danish after senior high-school graduation, if they choose to stay in their home-country. However, Icelandic is a very small language (only a little bit more than about 300 000 native speakers) and much literature, movies, other TV broadcasting, etc. is in Danish or English.

Icelanders begin their obligatory studies in Danish in grade 7 (12-13 years of age) and study it thereafter for six years (until you graduate at the age of 19). This is a basic beginner's course in Danish which almost all Icelanders attend. However, if you have parents from Sweden or Norway you are able to skip the Danish education and study Swedish or Norwegian instead, but on a higher level (therefore requiring a better initial command of the language) (Narby, 1998; & Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið).

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<sup>5</sup> From an Icelandic point of view.

## Finland and Swedish

Finland is by law a bilingual country. The two national languages of Finland is Finnish and Swedish. This means that they are equal in a juridical sense. Finnish, which is spoken by about 90% of the population, is however a Finno-Ugric language that is completely differentiated from the rest of the national Nordic languages, which are all Germanic languages. In Finland, municipalities are classified as bilingual if the minority language is spoken by at least 8% of the population or by 3,000 persons. In 2007 there were 416 municipalities in Finland, of which 43 are classified as bilingual and 19 Swedish speaking (Kunnat, <http://www.kunnat.net>). Official bilingualism does not mean however that all Finns are *de facto* bilinguals. Actually, for most Finnish speakers in monolingual areas, Swedish will remain a foreign language taught in school but never used in everyday life. Bilinguals, balanced or dominant, are a minority covering mainly people who live on bilingual areas of the country (Finland proper) and have an opportunity to use both languages in natural surroundings (Ahtola, 2007).

Finland belonged to Sweden for around 800-600 years. This has made an impact on the country; socially and linguistically. There is archaeological and philological evidence for a continuous and Swedish or Germanic presence in Finland from prehistoric times. And according to the archaeological evidence, the Åland Islands and the areas which are now the Finnish county Pohjanmaa shared the Viking Age Scandinavian culture (approx. 700-1000 AD). However, the areas were deserted during a period of 200 years and then resettled once again by Swedes. In earlier historical research, the Swedish arrival in Finland during the medieval times was most often linked to the crusades in the 12th century. However, most of the people who went to what is now Finland during these excursions did not stay. Still, earlier population expansion from Sweden to Finland was mostly made up by farmers, especially from Sweden's eastern shores (Ivars, 2002:47). Contact between Sweden and what is now Finland was considerable also during pre-Christian times, but during the Middle-Ages contacts became even more frequent when more and more farmers started to migrate to Finland from Sweden. This was the first so called incorporation of Finland into the Swedish realm. Österland (Eastern land) was the original name for this Swedish realm's eastern part and the term Finland first became popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and onwards (Bladh & Kuvaja, 2005:11). In historical research on the history of Sweden, the term Sweden proper is used in order to distinguish those territories that were fully integrated into the Kingdom of Sweden, as opposed to the dominions and possessions of, or states in union with, Sweden. Sweden proper included what is now Finland. This is also proved by the fact that only the real estates of the Kingdom was given representation in the Swedish Parliament, and Finland was amongst these (Pan-Montojo & Pedersen, 2007). An interesting fact is that this was not the case for Skåne in the south or Jämtland in the west, since they got annexed to the Sweden proper much later and were looked upon as dominions, not real estates/sc. lands.

During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Finland became more and more integrated into the medieval European – and Swedish - civilization. But even though Swedish was the language of the elites in Finland during this time, no single official or national language existed in the medieval and the early modern times. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, later than in mainland Sweden, Latin was the only language of the Church. In Finnish cities, German was, according to the sources at times more frequently spoken than Swedish. As the Swedish Kingdom grew larger due to its Baltic expansion, German became the lingua franca<sup>6</sup> of the new imperial kingdom. Swedish along with German were the main languages of the administration, but proficiency in Finnish of the Crown's local servants was common. Finnish was also used as a language of command in the Swedish kingdom's armies, along with Swedish<sup>7</sup> (Lavery, 2006:36). Following the Swedish defeat in the Napoleonic wars and the signing of the Treaty of Fredrikshamn in 1809, Finland became a true autonomous principality, a constitutional monarchy within the Russian Empire and the title "Grand Prince of Finland" was added to the long list of titles of the Russian Czar. The concept of a Finnish "country" in the modern sense developed initially during the 19<sup>th</sup> century under Russia (Bladh & Kuvaja, 2005:11,12). During the last decades of Russian rule in Finland, Russian policies changed aiming more at termination of Finland's autonomy. It was a part of a larger policy of harmonization and russification pursued by the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian governments which tried to abolish cultural and administrative autonomy of non-Russian minorities within the empire. However the russification campaign resulted in Finnish resistance, starting with petitions and escalating to strikes, passive resistance (including draft resistance) and eventually to active resistance, even to the assassinations and other attacks on Russian government officials. After the 1917 February Revolution the position of Finland as part of the Russian Empire was questioned. Since the head of state was the Czar of Russia, it was not clear who was the chief executive of Finland after the revolution. As the Communists seized power in Russia, the Finnish government declared independence. After a brief flirtation with monarchy, Finland became a presidential republic with huge problems between highly antagonistic political groups in the country. This led to a civil war which split the new country in two halves (Bladh & Kuvaja, 2005).

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<sup>6</sup> A lingua franca is a language systematically used to make communication possible between people not sharing a mother tongue, in particular when it is a third language, distinct from both mother tongues ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua\\_franca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua_franca), 2011-04-20).

<sup>7</sup> Most likely of practical reasons to ensure that all your soldiers understood the commands given and stood in order, even during extreme pressure or perile (A/N).

The most peculiar part of the Finnish culture is that there has been several large-scale language changes. First, many inhabitants switched from Finnish to Swedish (especially in what is now called Finland proper) and then since the 19th century in the opposite direction, from Swedish to Finnish. When Finland and Sweden went separate ways in 1809, the percentage of the population being Swedish-Finns was about 20%. Nowadays, it is somewhere between 5 to 6% (Tarkiainen, 2008). This is surely a drastic change. Oulu (Uleåborg) is a perfect example of this language shift and also happens to be one of the cities I have visited in order to receive my research material. According to statistics from 1848, from a municipal school in the town, only 15 of the 162 registered pupils were registered as Finnish-speaking only. This was the case in most schools at the time and Oulu was seen as mainly a Swedish-speaking town. In 1880, 8% of the population was native-speakers in Swedish. Today, however, there is only one Finnish-Swedish school in Oulu called "Svenska Privatskolan", and the Swedish-speaking minority is very small. At the time being of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish started to disappear as a written language in Oulu more and more. The last Swedish newspaper was put under censorship by the Russian officials and was forced to cease its publication in the year 1900. The Swedish-Finns still had some sort of impact on municipal politics until around the 1920s. At this time Swedish had played out its role completely as a written language in the town. It was also during the 1920s the bilingual street signs (which are still being used in most other bigger Finnish towns and cities) were put down and changed to monolingual Finnish street signs only. At the end of the 1920s, Oulu had become almost completely Finnish, with only a very insignificant Swedish-speaking minority remaining (Hansson, 1982:93-111).

Today, although specifics differ a bit between municipalities, Swedish is studied by Finnish-speaking students in Finland from grade 7 as a mandatory subject, therefore studying it in six years, until graduation, just as in Iceland with Danish. It is however free to choose Swedish as an eligible subject from grade 5. Meanwhile, Swedish-speaking Finns have to start to learn Finnish in grade 3 (Svenskfinland, <http://svenskfinland.fi/education.htm>; & Opetushallitus, [http://www.oph.fi/koulutus\\_ja\\_tutkinnot](http://www.oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot)).

# Results

The results of this paper will be presented in this chapter. First, I will present the undertaking of the test (the fieldwork report) and after that I will present the results of each country, including Finland's three separate divisions: Vaasa, Oulu, and Mikkeli. Lastly the test itself will be examined on the matter of its validity and reliability. These results will then be analyzed and discussed further down in the Discussion & Analysis- chapter.

## Fieldwork report

For receiving my findings I traveled to Finland and Iceland to collect the material needed. The first fieldwork trip was to Iceland, followed by Finland. From previous experience of living abroad as a Swede in several other Nordic countries, my role as a researcher was strengthened by the familiarity I felt with the field of (name your study here), and from experiences of discussing these matters with Icelanders and Finns in the past. This experience also worked for me as a springboard for further data gathering in testing the Scandinavian language comprehension in respectively Iceland and Finland.

As described in “Methodology”, I technically and practically prepared myself beforehand by finishing a background reading on the research field and on testing preparation. The manuscript for the dialogue portion of the test was written before my first fieldwork trip to Iceland with Hughes (2003) as a guideline as to what to include. I wanted the dialogue to be as authentic and fluent as possible and also as close to a natural situation for the pupils as it could get. Therefore I chose having my dialogue within a school setting, being between a boy and a girl who just finished writing a test in mathematics. The persons who helped me doing the dialogue were Swedish and Danish-native speakers, so I had to go to Denmark and Sweden recording the various dialogues. Sadly the quality of the Swedish dialogue turned out a bit better than the Danish one. The technicalities of the construction of the dialogue have been mentioned above, but it is of importance mentioning it here in the result chapter as well, since it will have an influence.

After this, I had to try to find one Danish and one Swedish news item. This went fairly fast with finding several good recordings, but it turned out it was quite difficult to find anything of similar likeness. Essentially, the different elements have to be counted within the different recordings to see if they are similar enough. This problem is also mentioned above in “Methodology”, but will also be discussed further down below when discussing test validity and, especially, reliability.

I contacted the schools myself finding the contact information through the different sources I have in both countries. E-mails were sent out to several schools in order to receive as many candidates as fast as possible. My goal was set high, because a large cohort testing, with many test takers, is basically

needed in order to be able to draw any fruitful conclusion from the scoring. The larger the group of people you test, the higher significance value the test will have. I was able to test 143 students in both of the two countries (286 total), in seven different schools, and in 13 separate classes. I was also fortunate enough to be invited to hold a few classes myself, both in Iceland and in Finland. This gave me the opportunity to better grasp how much the students really understood of respectively Danish and Swedish.

I visited three different towns in both Finland and Iceland, but it is only in Finland the towns are of value to mention for the outcome of the study. In Finland it is much harder since most Finns are more used to hear Finland-Swedish rather than original Swedish from Sweden, and the linguistic exposition of Swedish vary regionally in Finland as well. I chose Vaasa, Oulu, and Mikkeli as the representatives for the linguistic picture of Finland. In Mikkeli there have never been any Swedish-speaking minority and it is situated closer to Russia than to Sweden. Vaasa, on the other hand, could be said to be the capital of the Swedish-Finns, where they are a certain majority if one include all neighboring areas surrounding Vaasa municipality. Oulu, a town high up in the north of Finland, has had a considerable Swedish-speaking minority but today is quite small. The town is on the shore to the Baltic Ocean, meaning that it is situated closer to Sweden rather than to Russia. This means that I expect a higher test score in Vaasa than in Oulu. The scoring would be expected to be considerably higher in Oulu than Mikkeli. In Iceland there are, on the contrary, few dialects (next to none) and therefore should regionalism not be of any considerable impact.

The test itself takes very little time to carry out, about 10-15 minutes, even though it was time-craving to administer. It was therefore fairly easy to get access to many schools in both countries. The testing starts by handing out the blanks to the students. The test forms are handed out bottom up consisting of two papers stapled together: one for the dialogue (part one), and the second for the TV/Radio recording (part two). Under each the test taker is supposed to fill in the correct answer in the blank (or space provided) below the question. There are twelve questions on the questionnaire for the dialogue portion and is scored with one point for each (correct answer given?) question asked. The test taker receives the questionnaire in his or her own native language and is supposed to fill in the answers in this language as well. For the TV/Radio recording - the second part - the students get a test form with eight questions asked. There is one point (awarded for each right answer?) as well in this section.

Before, in the middle, and after the test is completed, the test takers will receive instructions from a voice speaking their native language. After the introduction, the dialogue begins and after allows a two minute break for the students to fill in the blanks answering the questions asked, showing how much they understood of the dialogue they just heard. After that follows a brief instruction passage where the students are asked (to rate the difficulty level?) if it was hard to understand and that they now should prepare for a more formal way of speaking; presenting the news recording. The Danish news item is about the peculiar date 10/10/2010 and that there were many couples around the world and in Denmark who wanted to get married on that date; the Swedish news item is about the Swedish strain



of wolves and about them being on the verge of being extinct since their gene-pool is alarmingly small. The news also brings up that there is a hunting season at the moment on an aforesaid number of wolves in Sweden. As mentioned earlier, I tried to take up an equal share of different aspects and linguistic issues within the separate recordings. Both recordings mention dates, numbers, names of persons mentioned in the recording, etc. After the news recording is finished there is a voice declaring they now have two minutes more to fill in all the questions and then wishes them all a good day. All instructions were carried out with a clear and natural voice as to make the test takers accustomed and relaxed, giving them the necessary information for the task to come. As the students finished I collected the questionnaires and complemented them (Swedish or Danish) on that they were very good at understanding Swedish/Danish. Since the test is on assessing language comprehension (listening skill), they are to answer in their mother language, making it easier for them to answer more rapidly and fluent without restraint of second language writing problems.

After the test is completed, and all the material is gathered, comes the grading. In Iceland the grading was not an issue, as I speak Icelandic. However, due to the fact I do not speak Finnish, I requested a considerable amount of help from Finnish-speaking colleagues. When the grading was done and the test forms were all counted, I recorded all the scores in Open Office Spreadsheet in order to have all the numbers together jointly in diagrams and lists to maximize visualization and clarity. The core data (the numbers) is enclosed in the appendices.

Apart from presenting a diagram visualizing the scoring, I also prepared my data in calculating **1)** average, **2)** median, **3)** mode, and **4)** standard deviation. I also calculated the average in percentages understood by the test taking cohort. I also noted certain trends and frequently recurring and protruding features and observations regarding the collected answers from the test takers. All of which, put together, I hope can share an insight in what an Icelander or a Finnish-speaking Finn understand and has capacity to recognize in formal and non-formal Danish or Swedish respectively. Subsequently, I will now present the findings.

## Scoring in Iceland

During my fieldwork trip to Iceland, I went to four schools and visited seven classes in total. As said before, there are not much regional differences in Icelandic and therefore is the data from Iceland collected without regional considerations. All schools but one were situated in the capital (Reykjavik) area, with the last school being situated more to the countryside. The classes I got access to were a wide range; some were weaker and some considerably stronger. There were also differences in school equipments. Some schools were well-equipped with stereo sound surround system and one school had only a casual CD-player. This might have had influence on the scoring. Class size might also have an affect on learning and testing outcome. In Iceland the classes were almost always quite big (about 30 pupils in each), but there was one which was considerably smaller (about 10-15 pupils). The students were in general very well-behaved and listened carefully to my own and to the prerecorded instructions given to them. This of course facilitated the understanding of the recordings. However, in the case of Iceland, the quality as mentioned was above the level of my own satisfaction. I fear that my own short-comings coming to technical issues might have had quite an impact on the scoring in Iceland specifically, but on the other hand the somewhat bad quality might be compared to the disturbing and inconvenient background noise which is almost always the case when you get confronted by a person talking to you in real life. But more on that later down below in the chapter about test validity and reliability.

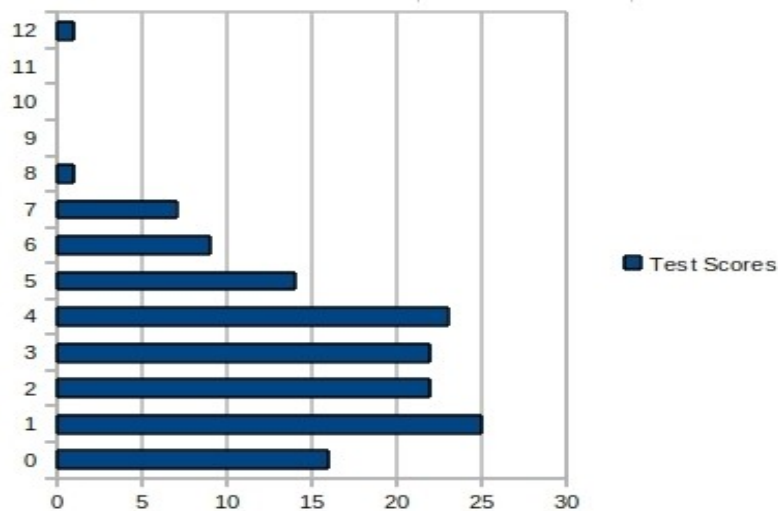
There are many factors which made my own assumption on the outcome of the Scandinavian language test in Iceland vary a lot. On one hand, Icelandic is a Germanic language. In fact it could be called the Latin variant of the Germanic languages since the language has not been changed much and has maintained most of the features which the other Germanic languages left behind and that the vocabulary is closely related not only to Old Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, but also to Old English and Old Dutch. This should give the Icelanders an advantage over the Finns since the Finns do not speak a Germanic language as a mother tongue, but a Finno-Ugric one. But on the other hand, Iceland is geographically very distant from Scandinavia and most Icelanders who live on the island hardly ever meet a real Dane or other Scandinavian people. This is of course a major disadvantage. Another issue is that the Danish language has become associated with Danish imperialism (mentioned in the background chapter) leaving the fact that Denmark has a generally bad reputation amongst many Icelanders. Combined with the growing popularity of the English language, that Denmark is a really far-away country for the Icelanders, Danish has become a rather unpopular language. There are indications however that show on a somewhat changing trend after the financial crisis in 2008. Before the Icelandic financial crash in 2008, I myself felt that the US was the country which Iceland and Icelanders looked up to the most and wanted to be associated with. In 2006 the American army also left the island for expanding its presence in Iraq. This, put together with the financial crisis which was seen as has its roots in the US, most likely made many Icelanders sense a cultural belonging to America was slightly ill-defined. My own assumption is that the negative trend in Scandinavian language acquisition in Iceland is therefore changing slightly because of these factors.

Down below I will present the results of the language test carried out in Iceland. Firstly, I present a bar graph (*figure III on page 60*) to better visualize the numbers presented in the list. Highest possible scoring on the test is 12 for the dialogue and eight for the TV/Radio recording. At the bottom of this page I also have a table defining the grading scale and test taker attendance. The left bar on the figure shows the scoring possibilities and the right bar depicts how many pupils scored each score.

As seen from the numbers presented below, there is a definite concentration in scoring between points *one* to *four* and then the scoring frequency drops drastically. Almost no one of all the 143 students who did the test in Iceland received a higher score than *seven*, leave out the student who scored *eight* and the one who received the highest score possible, 12. The average understanding percentage wise of the dialogue turned out to be 25%, or *three* points scored on the test result (the mean score of the test). That is to say, according to the test, if the Icelandic pupils would travel to Denmark and engage in a dialogue with a Dane s/he would understand about 25% of what s/he would receive of the information. That is of course, if the test results accuracy would be trusted, an indication of poor average comprehension of the Danish language. From the list in figure II, it is also noticed that the most common score of the samples (the sc. “mode”) is *one* followed by *four*. The median, in other words the point of which separates the higher values from the lower, is *three* for the dialogue. The median supplement the mean in showing what is “normal” for an Icelander when it comes to scoring. This however showed that the median had the same value as the mean average, i.e. *three*. However, the presentation of standard deviation shows that the variance in scoring is not that great after all. The standard deviation is used basically to see how representative an average is for the rest of the results collected. If the standard deviation number is *zero* there is no deviation at all. If the standard deviation would indicate a higher number it would of course also indicate that the average mean would not be representative at all and therefore would make the test less relevant. My test indicates that from the numbers that I have collected from Iceland, the standard deviation is 2.1 from the dialogue part, which is a fairly low number. This indicates that the average mean is also tolerably representative for the rest of the data.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	16
1	25
2	23
3	23
4	24
5	14
6	9
7	7
8	1
9	0
10	0
11	0
12	1
Participants in total	143

**Figure II: Scoring frequency table of the dialogue test in Iceland**



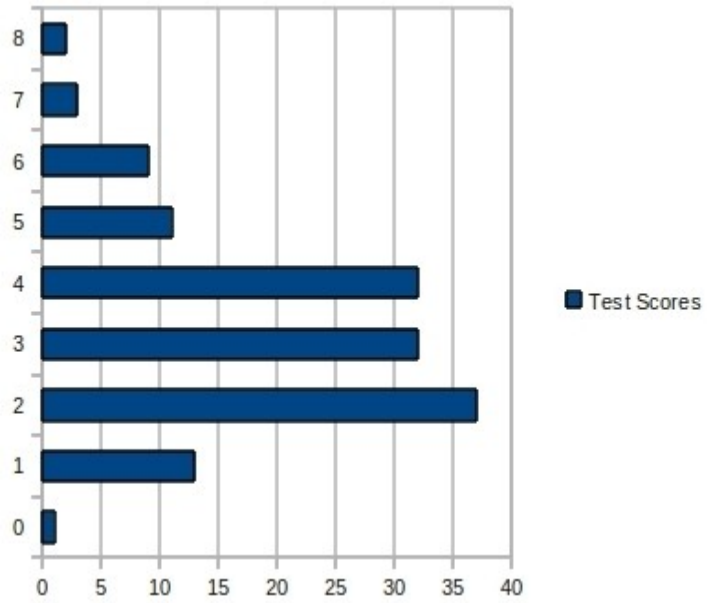
**Figure III: Graph bar of the dialogue test in Iceland**

In general, my assumptions on the differences between the ability on understanding non-formal language and formal language were true in the case of Iceland. As mentioned on page 34 by the quotation by Tauroza & Allison (1990), a formal conversation is at a slower speed and should be clearer as well for the listener to grasp.

The average mean of the TV/Radio section of the test showed 3.3 out of eight possible scores. That is an average scoring of 41%. This indicates that the Icelandic students understand quite a lot (almost half of what is being said) from a Danish TV/Radio- broadcasting. This scoring is of course on a satisfactory level. However, the median is slightly different from the average mean, being at 3.0. This would perhaps signify the average mean is not representative. But on the other hand is the standard deviation even lower in the news report section (presenting 1.5) and the difference between the mean and the median is practically insignificant, 0.3. Consequently my conclusion is that the average is representative for the scoring. The most common score for the TV/Radio- broadcast is, as seen on page 61 below in figure IV, two, with 37 people having that score result. However, there were indeed many who scored just a bit more than that as well, with 33 people each scoring three and four.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	1
1	13
2	37
3	33
4	33
5	12
6	9
7	3
8	2
Participants in total	143

*Figure IV: Scoring frequency table of the TV/Radio test in Iceland*



*Figure V: Scoring of the TV/Radio test in Iceland*

### ***Characteristics of the exam answers received in Iceland***

<sup>8</sup>Again, Icelandic is related to Danish and to all other Germanic languages. The assumption would therefore be that Icelanders would have an easier time understanding joint Germanic vocabulary. This is not necessarily so, however, due to the fact of the Icelandic innovation language policy when it comes to borrowings from other foreign languages. New words are carefully, in most cases, replaced by Nordic/Icelandic equivalents, and in many cases the words become totally different from what the word would be in Danish or other Germanic languages. For example, the Icelandic word “tölva,” which means “computer” in English, and is also referred to as “computer” in Danish. Another example is “veitingastað,” which is Icelandic for the English term “restaurant.” In Danish this word is “restaurang,” which would be easy to understand for speakers of most other European languages. This means that even though the languages are closely related, Icelandic has developed on its own. Furthermore, it means that Icelandic students would maybe have sometimes a hard time to guess what a word is in Danish or English because their original word they want to translate from their mother tongue is completely different. This is a situation which would not necessarily be the same for an American learning Danish or Swedish, or vice versa. However, much of the roots in the language is genuinely the same as in other Germanic languages, which would help the Icelanders in gaining easier access to both English and Danish.

Now to the presentation of the Icelandic test takers' answers in brief, starting with strengths and then showing what they failed at.

The Icelanders seemingly learn the Danish numerals pretty well. In the test, dates and numbers were included in order to test the test taker on this part and the results were good. Almost everyone answered correctly on the question inquiring how many years the Danish couple had been married (30) and how many couples wanted to get married at the same time breaking a world record in South Korea (7000). The test takers in Iceland also had very good scoring on the first three questions in the dialogue portion, about what the teens had been doing (taken an exam in mathematics), and how the Danish boy and girl felt they did on the exam (the boy was nervous and felt it was a tough exam, meanwhile the girl said she did well and had an easy time with math). In the conceptual map on listening skills on page 33, it is noticeable that this covers many bits within both informational and interaction skills, for instance understanding and recognizing complaints, speculation, and indications of uncertainty. Another question which most people were able to answer correctly in Iceland is about which subject the two teens are discussing (correct answer: mathematics). Concerning the weather, last question in the TV/Radio- listening test, about half of the test takers had the right answer (sunny/warm/sunshine, etc.). When asked about names, I have given a score for being able to answer at least one of the names correctly (surname and/or forename). Most test takers had the family name correct (Hansen), but failed on the forenames, almost always leaving out the male's name (Jimmy). In

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<sup>8</sup> To better follow the discussion on the characteristics of the answers received, please consult the appendices- chapter for a review of the test sheets and correct answers and/or the test's current homepage, <https://scandinavianlanguagetest.wordpress.com>.

the Danish news article many Icelanders confused the forename of the girl (Helle) with another female name, *Tine*. This is so, I believe, because of the numerals 10/10/2010 are pronounced in Danish “*tiende i tiende tusen og ti*” which has a lot of the sound “ti” in it. This fact most likely confused the listener thinking of the Danish name *Tine* leaving out the other information given about the names mentioned in the news report.

On the negative side, the test takers had serious problems with obtaining factual information, such as where the two persons were at (in what setting) or information given when the next exam is taken place. The correct answers are that the teens in the dialogue are in school and that the next exam is in two weeks. The last one might be because of failure to understand the “real” Danish pronunciation of the word “*uge*”, meaning “week”, because of its distinguished articulation, or lack of the same. The word is pronounced [ɔ:æ'], with “ɔ:” representing a long “o” sound in English, such as in the word “doom”, followed by a shorter and definite “æ”, like the first sound of the English word “apple”. This must be compared with the Icelandic word “*víkja*”, which sounds much more like Swedish, “*vecka*”, or the English word “week”, therefore far away from the Danish equivalent. It is the same with the Danish word for “bowling”, which is “*bowle*”. There were not many Icelandic pupils who gave an answer to this question (what the Danish boy would do during the evening). It would however appear to be easy for a person with basic knowledge of English to guess what it would mean. But as said before, Icelanders tend to invent new words for things that come from the outside world. “Bowling” is thus called “*keila*” in Icelandic, making it perhaps hard for an Icelandic native speaker to have an easy guess on the word “*bowle*” (which is the correct answer). Furthermore, the Danish word has also a difficult pronunciation. In phonetics it is spelled [baʊ'lə], with “aʊ” representing the sound of the English equivalent of the word “bow”, and “ə”, which is the first sound in the word “undo”. Other words the test takers in Iceland had seemingly a hard time with are “*vand*” (water) and “*slikk*” (candy), which were the answers to what the boy and the girl were drinking and eating during the dialogue. In all there were only three test takers who scored this question correctly. There were also few people who understood the word “*Sydkorea*” (six people), and most people also had problems with the word “*rådhus*”, which is “City Hall” in English.

On the question asking about when the two teens will meet up again, I have not given a score for the answer only “at lunch time”, but on “tomorrow” (the correct answer being tomorrow by lunch). This is because I feel that if the test taker writes tomorrow he or she at least understand the gist of the suggestion. If anyone wrote “around lunch” it could mean they think it is around lunch the very same day or in two weeks, leading to much more confusion in a dialogue. In the dialogue I also wanted to have with agreement but also disagreement (please consult the listening skills), so that the initial suggestion by the boy that they ought to meet up at campus is turned down by the girl and later on they agree on meeting up outside her house.

Quite a substantial number of test takers (in both Finland and Iceland respectively) have sadly believed that the answer to the first question to where the two teens are at the moment in the dialogue portion of the test is “at the cafeteria/in a restaurant” (correct answer is “the school”). This is of course so because of that the teens are eating snacks and drinking water. What goes against this assumption though is that, as we have seen, not many test takers were able to answer the question on what the teens were drinking and eating.



## Scoring in Finland

As explained above in the “Methodology”, I wanted to get the right linguistic picture of Finland, therefore visiting three different towns of which I believe are good representatives for Finland's Finnish-speaking Finns language wise; Mikkeli, Oulu, and Vaasa. In Mikkeli there have never been any Swedish-speaking minority and it is situated closer to Russia than to Sweden. Vaasa, on the other hand, could be said to be the capital of the Swedish-Finns, where they are a certain majority if one includes all neighboring areas surrounding Vaasa municipality. Oulu, a town high up in the north of Finland, has had a considerable Swedish-speaking minority but it is very small as it is today, but the town is on the shore to the Baltic Ocean meaning therefore that it is situated closer to Sweden rather than to Russia. This means that a higher test score in Vaasa than in Oulu was to be expected. But also that the scoring would be expected to be considerably higher in Oulu than Mikkeli. In the case of Finland, the difference between learning a FL or a L2 has an impact. Regionality plays a role, particularly in Finland, as is seen from the test results down below in the following subchapters. My assumption that I draw from this is that if the language is taught as a FL the language learning process will take more time and will give less results but if the language is taught in a L2 environment the learning has far more potential in becoming a success, simply because it will appear more relevant and applicable for the learner. But before presenting the differences between the Finnish towns, Finland will be presented as a whole.

During my stay in Finland, I visited three schools and two classes in each school. As said before, there are much regional differences in Finland linguistically. However, when it came to technological facilities within the schools there were not much difference, and all schools, in general, were well-equipped. However, in one school the technology failed and I had to use a smaller scale CD player, exactly like the case in Iceland. Generally, I doubt it had any effect on the outcome, however, since there were no complaints that the students did not hear enough (which I asked after the test) and in general the sound quality was very good. In all the other schools (and in this school as well, but the CD I brought did not work with their equipments) there were surround systems for the sound. It was only in one school in Iceland that this was the case. The class sizes were about the same as in Iceland, with an approximate average on 25-30 students in one class. As in Iceland there was one exception with one smaller group. From the numbers I received I cannot see any direct combination between smaller classes and better scoring, but between technological equipment in class and better outcome. As an example, it was in the class that had a surround sound system in Iceland which had the only person scoring a full score (12 points). In Finland the outcome seemingly was not affected much by the technological mishap I had, since it was that particular school which scored the best scores in Finland. However, it could of course be said that they would have received an even higher score with better equipments, such as a surround sound system. The quality of both the dialogue and the recorded news item about the Swedish strain of wolves were on a highly satisfactory level. I went to Finland after Iceland and had better familiarized myself with what programs to use for recordings and the equipment I had when recording the Swedish test for the Finnish-speaking test takers, which was of

better quality than the Danish test for the Icelandic-speaking test takers. This might not only be a positive thing, since inconvenient background noise (such as other people talking, music, traffic noises, etc.) are almost always the case in a real-life experience in an active conversation. It is seldom so that you are able to sit down and carefully and slowly go through exactly what your conversation partner is trying to say to you. I will come back to this issue down below in the section about test reliability and my criticism of the same.

In the background section it is explained that Finnish is not a Nordic or a Germanic language, but a Finno-Ugric language. It is not related to any other national language in Europe but Estonian. Sami, which is only a minority language of the native inhabitants in the north of Scandinavia and not a national language in any country, is also a close relative. This means that Finnish is completely different from all other European languages apart from Estonian. This is so nevertheless if the language is a Germanic, Slavic, or a Latin language (the three big language families in Europe). This fact that Finnish-speaking students have no possibilities in finding sc. "hooks" (i.e. words which sound the same, for instance "restaurang" in Danish or "hatt" in Swedish when a Dane or a Swede want to learn English or German) is definitely a draw-back for them, making it harder for a Finn to learn the basics of a new Germanic language (i.e. Swedish or English). On the other hand, Finland is also populated by a quite large (6%) Swedish-speaking minority and is situated geographically much closer to Scandinavia than Iceland. This is surely an advantage. However, these vary as well from region to region in Finland. There are areas where there has never lived a Swedish population, and the east of Finland is obviously closer to Russia than to Sweden, despite the relative closeness to Sweden compared with Iceland's geographical position in relation to Denmark.

As described in the background section, Finland belonged to Sweden and was a Swedish sc. land among the other three for about 700 years. But from the turn of the last century, about 120 years ago, Finland started really to push back Swedish and in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century many Swedish-Finnish fled to Sweden due to hardships in Finland caused by the many wars Finland had to undergo and the poverty. This diminished the positioning of Swedish as a national language in Finland severely and Swedish is not only steadily shrinking, but also the popularity/status of the language is generally very low amongst Finns. There has been a lot of discussion regarding this and it has been said that Finland is mixed up in a language strife. The mandatory subject "Swedish" is often named pakkoruotsi by those who oppose the current situation (the term means "forced Swedish" and is a derogatory term). Many people, such as in Iceland, feel they are not good enough in the language and prefer English plus many Finns regard Swedish as a less relevant language since the Swedish-speaking minority is so small and that the level in English is relatively high in both Sweden and Finland respectively. As in the case with the Icelandic history education during the Danish era, I have been told that the Swedish era is also described in a less embellished manner. However, I have no collected proof of this since it rests outside the framework of my dissertation.

Due to the somewhat tense discord between the different folk groups in Finland, Swedish has a bit of a bad reputation amongst the Finnish students in general. But as a consequence, it seems that mainland-Swedish is far more popular than the Swedish-Finnish variant spoken by the minority in Finland. As mentioned in the background section, teachers are able to choose between what style of Swedish they teach. According to the teachers I have met up with they try to give a focus on both ways of talking Swedish. But interestingly, when the teachers have been asking their students what type of Swedish they want to learn they almost always answer mainland-Swedish, according to the teachers interviewed. This indicates of course a status difference in how the Finnish students look at the different dialectal variants of Swedish. It could even indicate that Finnish students are more interested in learning that kind of Swedish spoken in Sweden and consider the Swedish-Finnish variant as redundant, not Swedish as such. Without giving the subject too much attention, it is important to denote that most Swedish-Finnish dialects (there are of course many of them) have many – especially – pronunciation features of which they share with the Finnish language. Finland-Swedish has of course adopts features, especially pronunciation habits, from the more dominant language, Finnish, it has come in touch with. This is probably the case with any minority language. However, it is important to remember that the pronunciation of Swedish by a Swedish-speaking Finn is different from that of monolingual Finnish native speaker. This difference is also of interest since this might very well affect the outcome of the test. If the test taker is more accustomed hearing Swedish spoken by Swedish-Finns rather than Swedish by native Swedes, which is most likely so, it would probably mean that they would understand Finland-Swedish dialectal features better than those linguistic features of mainland-Swedish. On the other hand, as described above, Finland-Swedish seemingly has a lower standard in the eyes of many Finnish teenagers than Sweden-Swedish, which thereof complicates the image slightly.

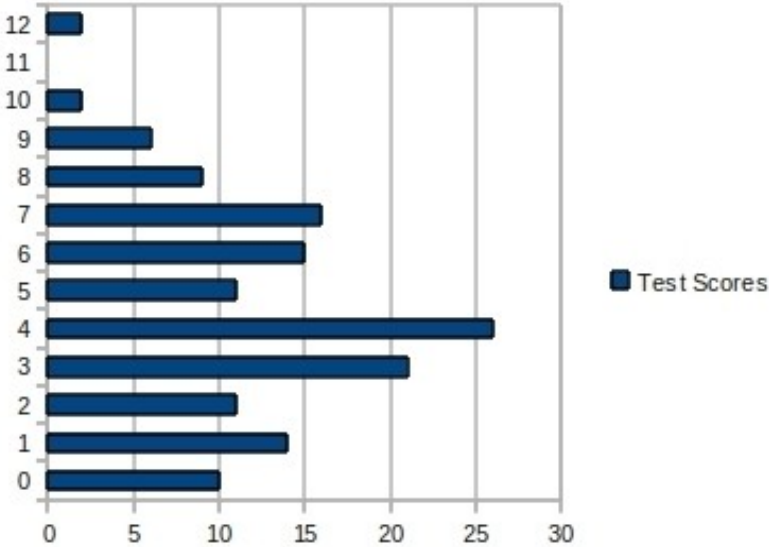
Down below I will present the scores received from the language test in Finland in a bar graph and a table of the grading.

In the case of Iceland, the scoring was indeed sampled in one place (from the score one to four). In Finland's case, the scoring is much more spread out, indicating a greater inconsistency in the test takers' language abilities in Finland. This is best described by the great regional differences, mostly between Mikkeli and Vaasa. The average understanding percentage wise of the dialogue in Finland is 36%, or 4.4 (mean average) in counted points. However it is not plausible to say that a Finnish-speaking Finn would understand 36% of a normal dialogue with a Swede over all. This is again so because of the great regionalism in the scoring frequency. The mode (the most frequently occurring score) is four, which 26 test takers scored, followed by three. After that there is quite a gap down to the third most frequently occurring score, seven, which is scored by only 16, followed by one, which is scored by 14 test takers. That the variance in scoring is greater in Finland's case has already been pointed out, but can be further explained with the help of that the median for the dialogue is only four thus slightly different than the average mean on 4,4. This difference (0.4) is not significantly important, but indicates the wider spreading of numbers compared with Iceland's test results. The

standard deviation for the test results is 2.7, which is not a particularly high number. This indicates also that the average mean is representative for the results. For the table and the graph bar which present the outcome of the dialogue test in Finland, see below.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	10
1	14
2	11
3	21
4	26
5	11
6	15
7	16
8	9
9	6
10	2
11	0
12	2
Participants in total	143

*Figure VI: Scoring frequency table of the dialogue test in Finland (total score)*



*Figure VII: Graph bar of the dialogue test in Finland (total score)*

In Iceland the difference between the average understanding of formal versus informal language usage proved my assumption that it would be easier understanding a formal language usage at a slower pace than a non-formal variant which is faster. However, in the case of Finland, this image is altered.

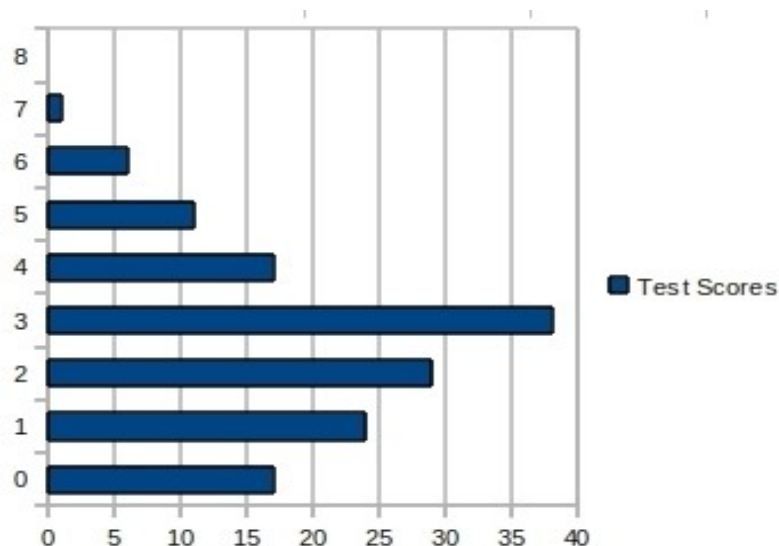
As we can see in the table of scoring frequency for the TV/Radio- language test in Finland (figure VIII) the division in scoring is far more concentrated this time. Between points one to three it is the

highest scoring frequency, with the mode on 38 people scoring three points, and after that the scoring frequency drops significantly. There are issues which contradict the point of view that formal language usage would be easier to understand since it is in a slower pace, and that the speaker is more likely to use academic or a specialized vocabulary making it hard for a second language receiver to catch up. This must most likely be the case in Finland. It could be also that Finnish-speaking Finns are more likely to get engaged in dialogues and casual talking with Swedish-Finns or Swedes but are less likely to listening to Swedish radio or watching Swedish television shows, thus failing on understanding formal Swedish usage. The average score in the TV/Radio- section is 2.6, meaning 32% of understanding. That is quite alike to the scoring of the dialogue part (on 36%) which could instead conclude a consistency in the Finnish-Finns' understanding of the Scandinavian language test, and an inconsistency in the case of Iceland. Again, the median is about the same as the average mean, three, and the standard deviation is very low (1.6), meaning that the average mean is representative for the scoring in general in this section. Interestingly, no one received the highest score in this part in Finland.

For the table and graph bar, see down below and on the following page:

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	17
1	24
2	29
3	38
4	17
5	11
6	6
7	1
8	0
Participants in total	143

*Figure VIII: Scoring frequency table of the TV/Radio test in Finland*



*Figure VIX: Graph bar of the TV/Radio test in Finland (total score)*

### ***Characteristics of the exam answers received in Finland***

Finnish is not related to Swedish at all. This is so despite the fact that Finland and Sweden are close geographical neighbors. This means that Finns assumingly would have a hard time picking up new words, simply because they cannot guess what the word means. For instance, the Swedish word “skola” is easy to understand for a English- speaking person, as it is related to the English word “school” and sounds basically the same (like “school” but with an open [a], like in the first syllable in the word “amazing”, at the end). This is not equally easy for a Finn to know without having to learn the language from basics, since the Finnish translation of the word is “koulussa”, thus completely different. However, Finns have an easier time than Icelanders, since they are geographically closer and that they are able in many regions to meet Swedish-speaking people. This makes it unclear about what the outcome should be in general when it comes to Scandinavian language understanding in Finland.

The test results in Finland were in general better than in Iceland when it came to understanding the dialogue but the test scores were more spread out, indicating an uneven situation in language acquisition with some student scoring relatively high, and others very poorly. In brief I will present the most prominent features of the test scoring.

It came to show that the first two questions asked in the dialogue- section were easily understood by most Finns since these are questions which most people were able to answer correctly. These two questions were meant to see if the test taker understands the gist of the dialogue, asking about the setting - where the teens in the dialogue are and what they have been doing (correct answer is that they are in school and they have been writing an exam in mathematics). Not as many people in Iceland have been answering that they are in a restaurant or a cafeteria, which indicates that the question asked needed no further clarification. But it is, as pointed out in “Methodology”, important to have easily

comprehensible instructions and this goes for the questions asked as well in an exam form. Students are not meant to sit and wonder about the meaning of the question but instead think about what the correct answer is according to all the information which has been given to them. As pointed out above, the Finnish students almost always also answers the correct answer on the question what they have been doing (a test). This might be because the Swedish word “test” is used in the dialogue along with “prov”, which also means test in Swedish. It might have turned out differently here if the word “prov” was only to be used since the former word is of course a direct loanword from the English language and is therefore much easier to understand. However, the Finnish word for “prov” is “koetta” which is considerably differentiated from the Swedish word, and leading to the assumption that Finnish-Finns are really well-educated in English and are therefore able to guess from the English transfer language. The same situation would be with the word “zoo” (mentioned in the TV/Radio-section along with the more Swedish sounded word “djurpark”, basically meaning “animal garden”). Many test takers in Finland were able to score the correct answer on this question. The ability to recognize and understand complaints is embedded in the dialogue as well (see the conceptual map of listening skills) in the question about how the boy felt about the exam, even though the attitudes towards the exam is . Another strength is that they seemingly are pretty good at catching names. As with the Danish language test in Iceland, I have given one point to the test taker if s/he has been able to answer at least one of the names (forename and family name) correctly (Anders Carlgren, in this case). Finland (the name of the country is the same in Swedish and English) is also mentioned in the TV/Radio- part and there were few who failed this question, although some wrote wrong answers (such as “Norway”, etc) to this one. Different from Iceland and the Icelanders, the Finns were in a much larger scale able to understand and recognize suggestions concerning time and place. This is represented in the dialogue with the questions about “when the next exam is”, and “where and when they should meet up next time”. The answers to these questions are of course the same as it was in the case of the Danish dialogue (see above).

In Finland, they had a far greater problem with numerals, and many test takers failed the question in the TV/Radio- portion which asks about how many wolves there are left to hunt down legally in Sweden at the time when the news report takes place (two). Several students also failed the question about what the participants in the dialogue are eating and drinking (candy and water), but here the test results were at least better than in Iceland regarding this question. The most peculiar thing with the test results in Finland is that there were relatively few who were able to guess which animal the news report is about (wolves). Some test takers wrote “rabbit” or “fox”, but actually a majority of the test takers in Finland (with Vaasa as an exception) thought that the news report was about bears. This was the case in both Oulu and Mikkeli, and why this is so is hard to tell. Wolf is called “susi” in Finnish and “varg” in Swedish. Bear on the other hand is “karhu” in Finnish and “björn” in Swedish. It is also bewildering that so many got it wrong since the word “varg” is mentioned about eight times in the news report. Since none of these words are even close to each other it is very hard to describe why the

test takers answered the way they did. Perhaps they were just guessing and then thought of the most common animal they could think of?

### ***Scoring in Vaasa***

Vaasa is a city situated on the west coast close the middle of Finland. Population-wise Vaasa is bilingual with the Swedish-speaking Finns and the Finnish-speaking Finns similar in population. Furthermore, the regions on the countryside outside of Vaasa are all monolingual Swedish, or with a Finnish-speaking minority. It is also the biggest city (about 60,000 inhabitants) with the most Swedish-Finns living there, so it is safe to say that Vaasa is somewhat of a capital for the Swedish-Finns and an important center for Finland-Swedish culture. Vaasa is also very close to Sweden, being a twin city with Umeå, a Swedish city on the Swedish eastern shore. Because of the great Swedish population in Vaasa, it was even more important to ask whether any of the students in the class parents were Swedish-speaking natives. In the two classes I had the opportunity to visit, there were two students who were not able to attend this test for this reason.

In this study Vaasa is the city to represent that part of Finland which has the most contact with the Swedish and presumptively would receive the best average scoring. From what is presented in the tables and bar graphs down below we can see that this is an accurate presumption. Vaasa had the best scoring overall, with two test takers receiving a perfect score (Iceland had one in total). Not a single student in Vaasa received zero points on the dialogue.

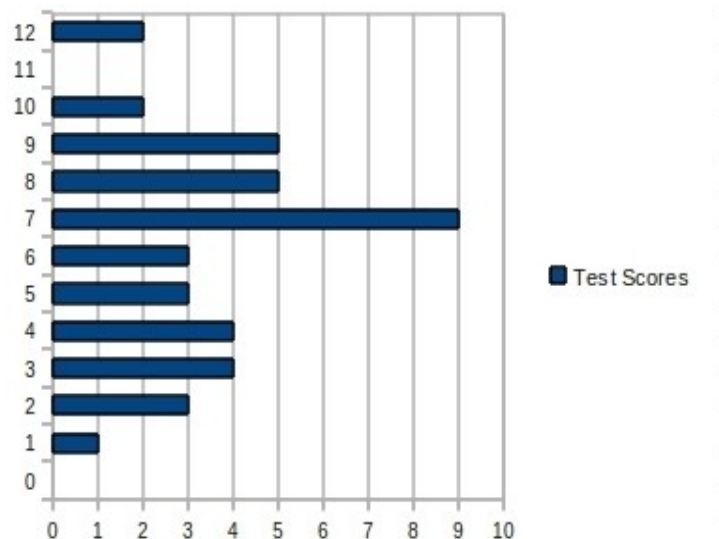
In total there were 41 students who took the test in Vaasa. The average score for the dialogue section on the test in Vaasa is 6.3, while the median is seven, indicating that there are a few test takers who are making the average test score appear a bit better than it is. On the other hand it is not much difference (0.7), and the scoring results are comparatively evenly divided. That means also that the average Finnish-speaking student, after almost finishing his or her Swedish education in Vaasa, understands a bit over half of what is being said (52%) in a normal dialogue between two Swedes. The standard deviation for the dialogue test is 2.7 which is a relatively low number, as pointed out before.

On the next page the graph bar and the table for the dialogue test in Vaasa are presenting these numbers for further clarification:



Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	0
1	1
2	3
3	4
4	4
5	3
6	3
7	9
8	5
9	5
10	2
11	0
12	2
Participants in total	41

*Figure X: Scoring frequency table of the dialogue test in Vaasa*



*Figure XI: Graph bar of the dialogue test in Vaasa*

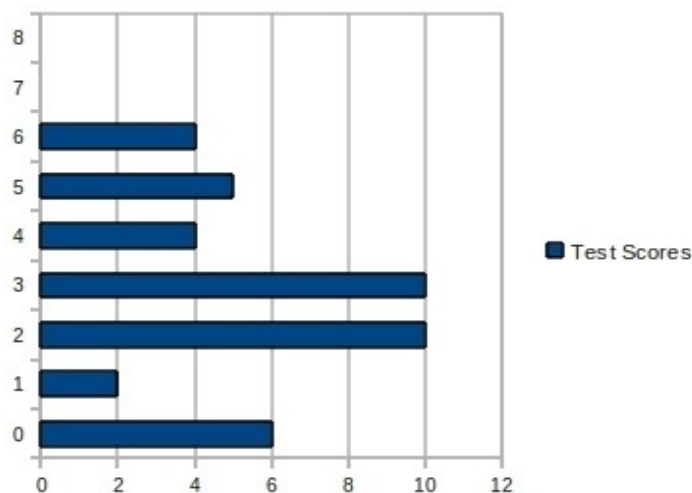
As mentioned earlier, my own assumption was that it would be easier understanding a news report because of the slower tempo. However, the data collection in Finland counters that depicting an opposite outcome. This is even more so in Vaasa. The average understanding of the news report turned out to be 36%, or 2.9 correct points out of eight. This is not particularly a bad score, and 36% of understanding corresponds to my own expectations on the outcome overall. But it is definitely a lower score than the 52% score received on the dialogue test. The median here is three, therefore corresponding almost perfectly with the average mean. The standard deviation turned out 1.8 for the

TV/Radio test in Vaasa, which is also a low number, indicating that the average percentage scoring of 36% is a representative scoring for all the test takers in Vaasa.

However, there were differences in Vaasa as well, with some students scoring above average and some under. The reason for this is probably related to network of friends and social environments, amongst other factors. Many Finnish cities and towns are divided somewhat between the two language groups, and it is varying from person to person to what degree he or she (don't use second person "you") socializes with Swedish-speaking Finns as a Finnish-Finn, even in Vaasa. But in general the scoring is relatively even, as we can see in the figures XI and XII below.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	6
1	2
2	10
3	10
4	4
5	5
6	4
7	0
8	0
Participants in total	41

*Figure XII: Scoring frequency table of the TV/Radio test in Vaasa*



*Figure XIII: Graph bar of the TV/Radio test in Vaasa*

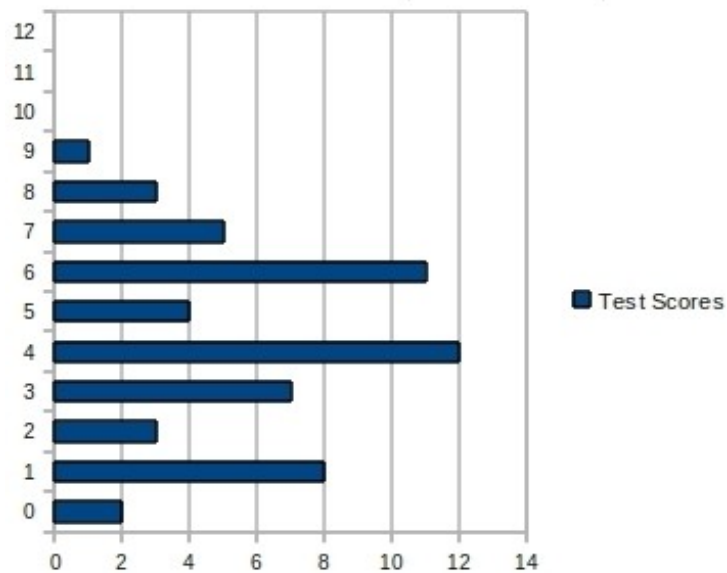
## Scoring in Oulu

As described in the background chapter about Finland and the Swedish language, Oulu is a perfect example of the linguistic history of Finland. The city is situated in the north of Finland, and located on the coast it is relatively close to Sweden. It is quite a big city with around 145,000 inhabitants, being the sixth most populous city in the country. The city is referred to as a language island, i.e. a number of native speakers of Swedish live here being disconnected with other parts of the Finland-Swedish community. Until the 1920s the city was more or less bilingual and up to the mid 19th century, the city was solely administrated (or administered) in Swedish. Nowadays, as mentioned in “Background”, the Swedish-Finns are diminishing in Oulu and their population is very small (about 0.5%). But because of the city’s history, and that it is still harboring a small Swedish-speaking population in addition to being closer to Sweden than to Russia, I let Oulu represent the middle section of Finland’s Scandinavian language understanding, in between Vaasa and Mikkeli.

As seen in the numbers in the figures XIV and XV which indicate the scoring frequency in Oulu, the city is representative for what could be called a somewhat middle way of Swedish language knowledge in Finland. The scoring in Oulu is more diverse than in Vaasa and the most common score (the mode) is *four* (scored by 12 people), followed by *six* (which was scored by 11 students), and after that it was eight people who only scored one point. In total there were 56 test takers in Oulu, and no Swedish-speaking student were represented in the class. The average mean outcome for Oulu on the dialogue is 4.3 with a median on about the same (four). Thus, percentage wise this is quite a good understanding, at 35% on the dialogue. The standard deviation is low, 2.3.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	2
1	8
2	3
3	7
4	12
5	4
6	11
7	5
8	3
9	1
10	0
11	0
12	0
Participants in total	56

**Figure XIV: Scoring frequency table of the dialogue test in Oulu**



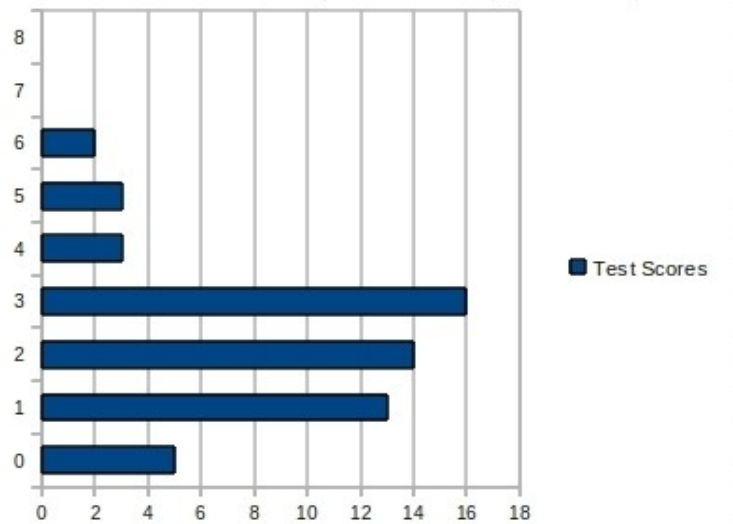
*Figure XV: Graph bar of the dialogue test in Oulu*

The understanding of the news item follows the same trend as can be seen in Vaasa and in the total scoring outcome of Finland. In Oulu the scoring were the most even between the two sections in the test, respectively 35% (dialogue) and 29% (TV/Radio). The average score in Oulu is 2.3, the median is two, and the standard deviation for this section of the test is 1.5. The test results in Oulu on the TV/Radio section is also concentrated to one spot on the scale, between three and one with respectively 16 and 13 test takers scoring this much. There were few who scored above three and no one scored the highest score of eight on the TV/Radio section. However, proportionately speaking, it seems that the test takers in Oulu were better at understanding formal speech, which is probably enunciated clearly but contains more academic and formal vocabulary, than the test takers in Vaasa. This is indeed interesting information, and might be described that the students in Vaasa are more accustomed hearing casual Swedish when they socialize with their Swedish-speaking friends, but rarely listen to Swedish radio or television broadcasts. In Oulu, the Swedish-speaking minority has a fairly high average age and the students are not likely to have Swedish-speaking friends, thus leaving the only time when they hear Swedish is during the Swedish lessons in school. This language usage is of course more standardized and formal.

This is further visualized on the next page in the figures presented for Oulu.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	5
1	13
2	14
3	16
4	3
5	3
6	2
7	0
8	0
Participants in total	56

*Figure XVI: Scoring frequency table of the TV/Radio test in Oulu*



*Figure XVII: Graph bar of the TV/Radio test in Oulu*

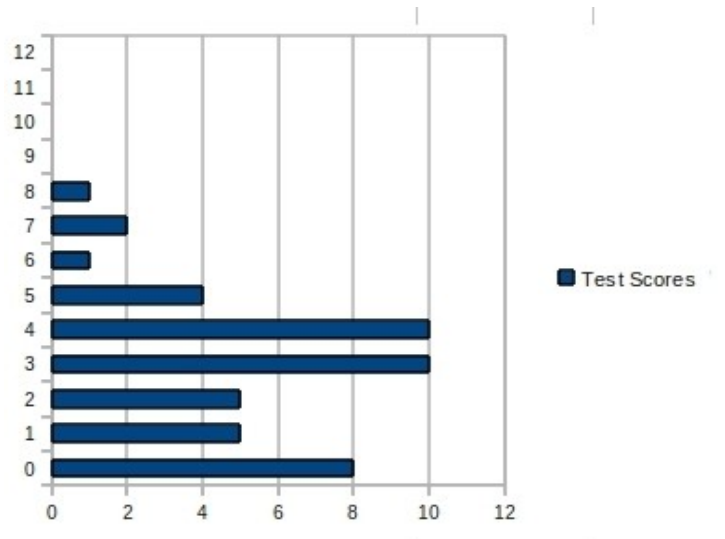
### ***Scoring in Mikkeli***

Mikkeli is a town in the southeast of Finland. The town is monolingual speaking Finnish, much closer to Russia than to Sweden, and has never ever had a Swedish-speaking minority living there. Mikkeli municipality is also one of the municipalities which recently have been proposing for the Finnish government to allow Russian to be taught instead of Swedish. I believe that Mikkeli is a well identified example of that part of Finland where Swedish is less practicable and also less used. The chance that inhabitants in Mikkeli hear Swedish spoken by native Swedes is very little, unless the person travels to the western parts of the country or elsewhere.

My assumptions were of course that Mikkeli ought to score poorly on the test and that the test takers would have problems understanding both dialogue and news report. This turned out to be true when it comes to the dialogue, but false concerning the news report. As we can look at on the numbers presented in figures XVII and XVIII, most of the 46 test takers in Mikkeli scored somewhere between three and four, and the average score is on three (same as the median). This means a percentage-wise score on 24% correct understanding of the Swedish dialogue, which is 1% lower than the average percentage of Scandinavian language understanding of the dialogue section in Iceland (25%). The standard deviation for the dialogue section in Mikkeli is 2.0, which is, as mentioned before, a low standard deviation number in this context.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	8
1	5
2	5
3	10
4	10
5	4
6	1
7	2
8	1
9	0
10	0
11	0
12	0
Participants in total	46

***Figure XVIII: Scoring frequency table of the dialogue test in Mikkeli***



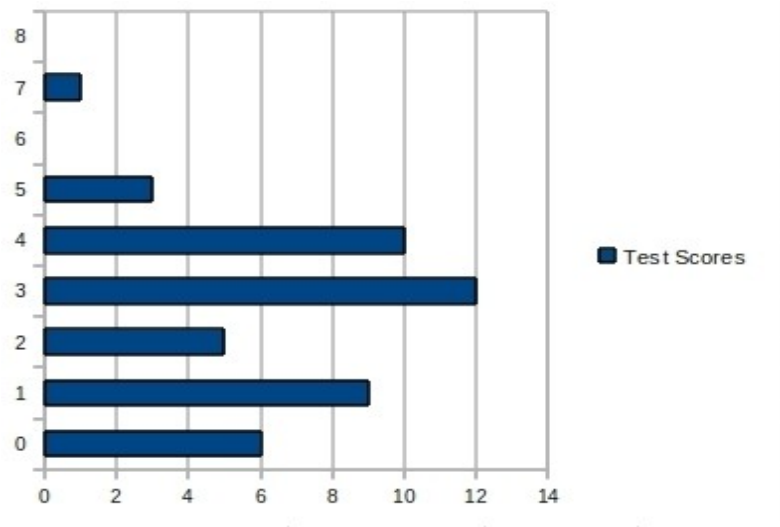
**Figure XIX: Graph bar of the dialogue test in Mikkeli**

The test takers in Mikkeli scored poorly in the dialogue section but had scored higher than those in Oulu in the portion of understanding of the news report. Percentage wise the scoring is 32% in Mikkeli compared with 29% in Oulu, or in points scored 2.6 compared with 2.3. As in Oulu, the scoring is concentrated in the lower-middle section, with 12 people scoring three and 10 people scoring four. That one person scored seven pulls the average score up a bit of course, but in general the scoring is even and centered to the same position on the table as is presented below in figure XIX. The standard deviation is on 2.0 in this measurement.

On the next page, the table and the graph bar visualize the outcome of the last section of the testing of Scandinavian language comprehension in Mikkeli.

Grading Scale	Scoring Frequency
0	6
1	9
2	5
3	12
4	10
5	3
6	0
7	1
8	0
Participants in total	46

*Figure XX: Scoring frequency table of the TV/Radio test in Finland*



*Figure XXI: Graph bar of the TV/Radio test in Mikkeli*



## Scoring in general

In the end of the appendices chapter, all the test scores are enclosed, Iceland and Finland separately. This is important to do because there are certain trends in the scoring, but also irregularities which are easier to demonstrate from the original documentation. A steady and consistent scoring is also an indication of test reliability.

The scoring is divided into two columns, separating the dialogue part from the TV/Radio section. The scoring per person is on the same line to simplify observations trends and possible irregularities. The scores indicate that the different sections are having a relationship to each other. A frequently reoccurring score for a test taker in both Iceland and Finland is three points on the dialogue and two points on the news report. Other reoccurring numbers are one and one or four and three. At least most of the scoring appears to be fairly even between the two sections. A difference exists between people and not between a person's individual scoring, which is the main reason why national average goes up, or down. However there are examples which contradict this.

In Finland there is one test taker who scored 12 out of 12 possible points on the dialogue section, but only two in the TV/Radio section. If a majority of the scoring would behave like this it would mean that this test would be less reliable, and thus less relevant. What could have caused the Finnish student to score full points in one section and only 25% (below Finnish national average) on the other? Maybe it is an indication on lack of test relevance after all. Perhaps the student was bored by the lack of difficulty, or distracted by other matters in life, or possibly, the test taker truly struggled with the TV/Radio section and not with understanding the dialogue.

When looking at the numbers it is also important to have in mind that the total score on the second part is only eight points possible. It is easy to believe that the scoring difference is greater because it differs four points between the first and the second part of the test.

# Discussion & Analysis

## **In retrospect**

Before discussing the data in more depth, I want to briefly go through the initial debate concerning SLA and the basis of my own test. What do we know about language learning and how do we test what we learn? First of all, the ability to communicate with these conventionalized systems of symbolic sounds is learned (as opposed to biologically inherited, such as the case with animal sounds, etc.). These primarily vocal sounds work within a speech community or culture to convey the meanings that the inhabitants of that particular speech community have decided them to represent. For example, the word “cat” is not a word which sounds anything like the noises a cat makes. Nor does it resemble the animal it stands for. Therefore the learner (let it be a child experiencing its own mother tongue or a second language learner) has to learn these conventionalized symbols by heart and build up a supply depot with as many symbolic abstractions as possible. This is what we would in daily speech call a vocabulary, the basics of a language.

Many variables are involved in the process of learning all these new symbols - a new language. It has been argued that grammar is the stem of a language, and that might very well be true. But without its base, this stem is worth nothing. In my methodology chapter I argue that a theoretical know-how of a language has no significance if it cannot be applicable in practical use. This would be in accordance to this discussion on the importance of enlarging vocabulary; words are the single most important feature in language acquisition, according to myself.

Few if any people achieve fluency in a foreign language solely within the confines of the classroom. In my dissertation there have been examples of many different theories on how to learn a second language, a L2. These theories of SLA are all interrelated sets of hypotheses and claims about how people become proficient in L2s. In brief it can be said that my own conclusion, after perusing the material on this subject, is that SLE ought to be as closely resembled to FLE as possible. This additionally follows the discourse above that the most important issue in SLA is enlarging vocabulary by learning the conventionalized symbols of the target language. To be a better learner in the process, testing of comprehension and outcome of the education must be undertaken. Excellent testing of how much the student know and do not yet know helps the learning process immensely. Poor testing may however result in negative backlash for the test taker. There are therefore theories on SLT as well describing on how language testing ought to be and what should be included.

My own test, constructed solely for the purpose of this dissertation, is referred to as a short-answer proficiency test, meaning the assessment of listening comprehension during spontaneous and colloquial usage of a language. This test was executed in the most frequently occurring mainstream dialectal variant of the language compared with a formal language usage of a news report. This is so not only because these variants are included in what I research to find differences between formal and non-formal language understanding in Finland and Iceland concerning Scandinavian languages, but also because in accordance to my own experience as a language teacher and learner exists a difference in how we tend to understand different forms and shapes of a language.

It is important to denote that tests by themselves do not improve teaching and learning, regardless of how effective they are at providing information about student competencies. Many factors affect instruction and learning, including the quality of the curriculum, the experience and skills of the teachers, and the support students receive outside of class, particularly at home. It is also essential to keep in mind that any assessment operates within constraints, and that these constraints can limit the tests' ability to provide useful information. Due to time and material constraints, there are problems with introducing ideal language tests congruent and to assess learners properly due to limited teaching schedules. Also constraints like lack of fiscal resources available for developing an assessment and the amount of instructional time available for its administration may vastly restrict the evidence the test can provide about the test taker's learning and acquisition.

In addition, classroom factors such as class size and opportunity for teachers to interact with one another can affect teachers' ability to profit from the information that is derived from the tests. Then while new tests can enhance the available information about student competencies, their full potential can be fully realized by removing all the external constraints which have nothing to do with the tests themselves. Although, the potential of how better testing can benefit language education in the learning process is significant in the way that they inform teachers and educational staff about how much the student is learning and thus can give better feedback to the students, which in turn enhance learning and acquisition.

## The outcome

In my thesis I have been testing Scandinavian language comprehension in Iceland and Finland on senior high school students. I have carried out these testing visits with constructing my own test presenting it to 286 test takers in total, 143 in respectively Finland and Iceland. This thesis highlights first and foremost the language teaching controversies in Finland and Iceland, putting a closer looking-glass on the outcome of the language teaching of Swedish in Finland and Danish in Iceland. This controversy is the topic of a constant debate regarding the mandatory teaching of these languages (respectively Danish and Swedish) in Iceland and Finland. This thesis aims secondly to describe, present, and test fundamental concepts and criteria which are thought to underpin good language testing (as seen in the discussion above).

The outcome does not mince matters; Icelandic and Finnish learners have not achieved a satisfactory proficiency level or command of the languages (Danish and Swedish) as concluded and demonstrated by this test. After attending this mandatory language education for about six years, the Finnish learners understood 32% of the formal language in the news report and 36% of the informal dialogue. The Icelanders understood 41% of the news report but only 25% of the dialogue. The average score for the Icelanders concerning the news report is on the other hand fairly good. There are also vast regional differences within Finland to take into consideration. In Mikkeli the average score is down to 24% of understanding of the dialogue, which is slightly the same as the average score in Iceland, only 1% below Iceland's national average. In Vaasa however, the average scoring is the highest of all, of 52%. Oulu is somewhere in between, being more representative for the national average of Finland, with a 35% understanding. On the second part of the test, the TV/Radio section, there was a total different picture, as noticed. As said before, the average score in Iceland for this section is 41%. In Finland, it is 9% lower (32%). The average understanding of the news report was also fairly the same in all three cities in Finland, meaning that the national average for this section is much more representative for the outcome than it was for the dialogue section.

One important aspect with this test is of course that the Swedish dialect used is purposefully mainland-Swedish, and not Finland-Swedish, for the Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland. Would there have been another outcome in Finland if the news report would have been in Finland-Swedish, for instance? Upon first impressions of a question, the answer might appear easy to give, but it is intentionally more perplexing and complicated. It is a fact that Finland-Swedish has adopted features (especially pronunciation habits) from the more dominant Finnish language. This would appear to make it easier to understand for a Finnish native speaker. But it is important to remember that the pronunciation of Swedish by a Swedish-speaking Finn is different from that of monolingual Finnish native speaker.

According to the teachers I have met up with in Finland their students want (if asked what they would prefer) rather to learn mainland-Swedish instead of Finland-Swedish. However, according to the teachers, they try to give attention to both ways of speaking Swedish. But this would indicate an

interesting issue, nonetheless. It shows that there is a status difference in how the Finnish students look at Sweden-Swedish and Finland-Swedish.

If the test taker is more accustomed hearing Swedish spoken by Swedish-Finns rather than Swedish by native Swedes, which is most likely so, it would probably mean that they would understand Finland-Swedish dialectal features better than those linguistic features of mainland-Swedish. On the other hand, as described above, Finland-Swedish seemingly has a lower standard in the eyes of many Finnish teenagers than Sweden-Swedish, which complicates it all and no sure conclusions can thus be made regarding the issue thereof.

What might then be the cause of the results and how should the data be interpreted?

### ***Transfer vs accessibility to native speakers and regional (dis)advantages***

My own belief regarding transfer and SLA, that transfer language (see page 41-44 in the theoretical frameworks for testing SLA- chapter) is of extreme importance, has somewhat been falsified. Linguistic background of test takers or language learners does not seem to have as large an impact as thought initially. However, the second part of the test shows that it indicates significance. Again, it is important to have in mind that Icelandic is a Germanic language and closely related to Danish, and Finnish and Swedish are two extremely different languages with few similarities. My assumption was that it simply will reflect from language acquisition what linguistic skills a learner has in his or her backpack from earlier on. A person with Italian as a mother tongue ought to have an easier time learning Romanian and French than she or he should have learning Xhosa, simply because Romanian and French is of the same language family as the language learner's mother tongue, while Xhosa is not. Despite these facts however, it seems that regionalism, accessibility to native speakers of target language, and the sense of purposefulness in the education seem to top linguistic background. Language acquisition is dependent on all these factors. As interpreted from my data, a person being a native speaker of a – for example – Slavic language would have almost the same likelihood in achieving an acceptable level of proficiency in a Germanic language as if s/he would try to learn another Slavic language, if only the language learner exposed him- or herself more to an environment associated with the target language.

This means that it ought to be hard to predict any sort of general outcome in advance for either country. From one aspect, Icelandic is a Germanic language. In fact it could be called the Latin variant of the Germanic languages since the language has not been changed much and has maintained most of the features which the other Germanic languages left behind. The vocabulary is closely related not only to Old Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian, but also to Old English and Old Dutch. This should give the Icelanders an advantage over the Finns since the Finns do not speak a Germanic language as a mother tongue, but a Finno-Ugric one – a completely different language family. From another aspect, Iceland is geographically distant from Scandinavia and most Icelanders who live on the island hardly

ever meet a real Dane or other Scandinavian people if they don't leave their island. It is important to remember that Iceland is an island in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, somewhere between Norway and Canada, and south of Greenland, its closest neighbor. This is a major disadvantage, according to this conclusion and would explain the lower scoring in Iceland.

As discussed earlier, Finnish is not related to any other national language in Europe but Estonian. Sami, which is only a minority language of the native inhabitants in the north of Scandinavia and not a national language in any country, is also a close relative. This means that Finnish is completely different from all other European languages apart from Estonian. This is so even if the language would be of a Germanic, Slavic, or a Latin language origin (the three big language families in Europe). This fact that Finnish-speaking students have no possibilities in finding so-called "hooks" (i.e. words that sound the same, for instance "restaurang" in Danish or "hatt" in Swedish when a Dane or a Swede want to learn English or German) is definitely a drawback for them, making it harder for a Finn to learn the basics of a new Germanic language (i.e. Swedish or English). However, Finland is also populated by a quite large (6%) Swedish-speaking minority AND is situated geographically much closer to Scandinavia than Iceland. This is surely an advantage. Yet, linguistic background and conditions varies from region to region in Finland. There are areas where there have never lived a Swedish population, and the east of Finland is obviously closer to Russia than to Sweden, despite the relative closeness to Sweden compared with Iceland's geographical position in relation to Denmark. Mikkeli's situation ought to however be compared with Iceland because of that they share the same regional disadvantages, i.e. a bad accessibility to native speakers of the target language and being far away from the principal country in question.

This controversy is dealt with in the background chapter on page 35 dealing with my assumption on the differences between foreign languages and second languages when it comes to SLL. The term "second language" has been used in this dissertation not to cause too much confusion and, additionally, because it is outside of my research's framework. However, it is important to point out that Swedish would be counted as being taught as a second language in Vaasa, but as a foreign language in all other test regions (Oulu is however a doubtful case). These two terms – second language and foreign language - do not point out how necessarily well you will learn a language or how much you already know. It simply defines in what environment you are using – or more correctly, learning - the language. Danish was taught more like a second language before than it is today, simply because until 1944 Iceland was a part of the Danish Kingdom. This, together with regional (dis)advantages might be the conclusive reason for explaining the outcome of the results.

Even though the teachers in Oulu reportedly told their students to visit the center shopping mall which has bilingual "road signs", and that there is a Swedish school in Oulu, the city is in most aspects completely monolingual.

According to the data presented, these issues seem to lead to a sense of lack of purposefulness for the average second language learner in Mikkeli (and most likely also Oulu) and Iceland. This sense of

lack of purposefulness leads to a worsened motivation for learning the language which, at last, leads to worse results and outcome. This leads to the different underlying attitudes towards the target languages that might be a suitable explanation for interpreting the test results.

### ***Attitudes and outcome***

Surely, if you study a language you are being exposed to from time to time in the language's native society or have a relative closeness to a region where the language is spoken by natives you are more likely to value the education you are given in that language.

This introduces some very intriguing questions, which might have influence on the outcome of any language learning: Why are these learners attempting to acquire the second language? What are their purposes? Are they motivated by the achievement of a successful career? Wanting to pass a foreign language requirement? Or perhaps, wishing to identify closer with the culture and people of the target language? That the student feels the education received is purposeful and of great importance stands as reason alone. What links together both of the mandatory subjects, Swedish and Danish, is that the targets of the education, the grammar- and senior high school students in Finland and Iceland do not seem to believe that this education is purposeful or meaningful. What would be the answers to all these questions above? Would it perhaps only be they study it because they have to, not because they want to? Surely, herein lays an important mission for teachers and policy makers: to make young Finns and Icelanders feel that it has a purpose to learn Swedish and Danish.

In Iceland, this might have changed a bit recently. As indicated in the background chapter, the Danish language has become associated with Danish imperialism leaving the fact that Denmark has a generally bad reputation amongst many Icelanders. The growing popularity of the English language, combined with Denmark located relatively faraway from Iceland, Danish has become a rather unpopular language. There are indications however that show a somewhat changing trend after the financial crisis in 2008. Before the Icelandic financial crash in 2008, I myself felt that the US was the country which Iceland and Icelanders looked up to the most and wanted to be associated with. In 2006 the American army also left the island for expanding its presence in Iraq. This, put together with the financial crisis which was seen had its roots in the US, most likely made many Icelanders sense a cultural belonging to America was slightly ill-defined. My own assumption is that the negative trend in Scandinavian language acquisition in Iceland is therefore currently changing slightly because of these factors.

As described in "Background", from the turn of the last century, about 120 years ago, Finland started to push for having Finnish as the main language in the country and in the mid 20th century many Swedish-Finnish fled to Sweden due to hardships in Finland caused by the many wars Finland had to undergo and the abundance of poverty. All of this diminished the positioning of Swedish as a national language in Finland severely. Now, Swedish is not only steadily shrinking, but also the

popularity/status of the language is generally very low amongst Finns. There has been a lot of discussion regarding this and it has been said that Finland is mixed up in a language strife. The mandatory subject “Swedish” is often named pakkoruotsi by those who oppose the current situation (the term means “forced Swedish” and is a derogatory term). Many people, such as in Iceland, feel they are not good enough in the language and prefer English. Plus, many Finns regard Swedish as a less relevant language since the Swedish-speaking minority is so small and that the level in English is relatively high in both Sweden and Finland respectively. As in the case with the Icelandic history education during the Danish era, I have been told that the Swedish era is also described in a less embellished manner. However, I have no collected proof of this since it rests outside the framework of my dissertation. But due to the somewhat tense discord between the different folk groups in Finland, Swedish has a bit of a bad reputation amongst the Finnish pupils in general.

As noticed, the political atmosphere surrounding both subjects are basically the same (not only their background therefore) and the discourse in both countries regarding this mandatory education harbor so many similarities.

### ***Differences between formal and colloquial language understanding***

The main difference between colloquial language and a formal language usage lays as mentioned in the background chapter is the choice of wording, expression, and speed. It is undetermined which is harder and which is easier to comprehend, especially after surveying the data presented here in this dissertation. A formal language usage might include more difficulties in wording and expressions, using terminology that might be unfamiliar and strange for some people, especially learners of the language in question. In formal language, syntax and diction are essential for proper grammar, whereas idiomatic phrases and sentence fragments are factors of comprehending colloquial language. The informal language usage is also characterized by a faster average speed of speech (see page 34). But colloquial language does also include understanding cultural norms of certain idiomatic phraseology.

As explained in previous subchapters, Iceland received 41% in the average understanding of the formal news report and 25% on the non-formal, casual dialogue section. Finland, on the other hand, had an average on 32% on the TV/Radio test section and 36% in the colloquial dialogue section.

As we can see there are obvious differences. The most striking difference is that the scoring in Iceland is huge when it comes to differences between formal and informal language understanding. In Finland it is relatively even, with almost the same understanding of both sections. Why was there such a difference between the test results in Finland and Iceland when it came to understanding formal language? Could the Swedish recording of the news perhaps be much harder than the Danish news report? What contradicts assumption is that the quality in the Swedish news report is a bit better than in the Danish one, concluding that at least the Finnish-speaking Finns in Vaasa ought to have had a



greater test score on the news. Another assumption is what has earlier been discussed: Finnish-Finns are more likely to meet Swedish-Finns and Swedes because of the geographical closeness. Icelanders are – of course – not, to the same degree. This would probably explain the worse outcome of the Icelandic Scandinavian language comprehension in the dialogue, but would leave the reader confused concerning the TV/Radio broadcast, since the scoring here is significantly higher than Finland's test results.

Perhaps it is not as strange as it might appear. As mentioned in the “Background” and the “Introduction” section, Icelandic is a very small language, with few native speakers (around 320,000). This means of course that there will be relatively little supply of TV channels, music, movies, games, and other sources of entertainment as compared to other countries, such as the United Kingdom or Denmark. In conclusion this leads to that Iceland imports a wide range of entertainment material from abroad, and most Icelanders are used to reading Danish magazines, cartoons, or watch a television program which is in Danish, let it be with Icelandic subtitles. Finland is bigger and has more material of its own since Finnish is a language with more native speakers (about 5 million people). This could also be another plausible explanation to the outcome of the test concerning the formal language usage part. Perhaps it is far-fetched, but could it be that the answer to this is that casual Danish language is harder to understand than more formal Danish, and formal Swedish language usage is harder to understand for a second language learner compared to colloquial Swedish?

### ***Test validity, reliability, and critique***

In this subchapter, I will examine the language test itself in order to assess its accuracy through reliability and validity checking. Firstly, it is important to know what reliability and validity is. As explained in the “Methodology”, reliability, briefly, is used to see if the test is consistent. A test's consistency is for instance measured by scoring frequency. If the scoring is gravely diverted and differ too much between test taker to test taker, the test results might not be reliable. This is of course given that the test takers have the same linguistic background and about the same kind of given prerequisites of scoring. It is also important to bear in mind that reliability is something that is estimated, not measured. Here there is somewhat of a difference between a qualitative (estimations) and a more quantitative (measurements) approach towards treatment of research data.

Validity on the other hand is concerned about mainly two things as I see it: are we able to generalize the results – in other words use them for explaining the knowledge level of the bigger populace (are the numbers representative), and, in short, am I right – do I have any right (out from the data I have presented) to answer my own research questions? If the reliability variable is concerned the data outcome of the study, validity concentrates on collection methodological concerns in order to question how valid the result really is.

Instructions are a vital part of these methodological concerns. These must be written and presented in a clear and unambiguous manner. There is one question in the forms I handed out which might be a bit imprecisely asked or was somewhat unclear (see appendix II and III). Some students in both Iceland and Finland have been answering “at the cafeteria” when it ought to be “at school” (correct answer is “the school”). This is so probably because the teens are eating snack and drinking water. What goes against this assumption is that, as we have seen, not many test takers were able to answer the question on what the teens were drinking and eating. Other ways to secure test validity is not to have unclear instructions, ambiguous questions, or items that result in guessing on the part of the test takers. I was therefore careful with writing all my recordings into a manuscript before sampling all my instructions (see appendix I).

Other issues concerning methodology than instructions would be how to test. There is no way denying that the average score in both countries would have been much higher had they seen the two dialogue participants. Visualize language is also a part of these conventionalized meanings of which I described above and body movements and facial expressions help tremendously when it comes to understanding what the other side of the conversation wants to convey. Sadly, due to lack of time and resources, plus that it simply was not practically possible, this aspect of language testing did not take place. It is however a feature which ought to be considered for further research in the future.

During the end of my fieldwork I encountered a teacher who gave me a valuable tip on what she thought would have perhaps altered the outcome for the test. I wanted to test the receptive skill listening and not the receptive skill reading, and certainly not how fast someone was able to read the questions asked on the forms. During my testing I had the test forms upside down or told the students that they must not look at the forms before the test starts but after that they can write down answers while the recording is played and they do not have to wait. It was important for me to have the test forms in their native language so I would eliminate all other language barriers and only be able to test listening skills. However, this teacher told me that I should have let my test takers read through the test beforehand and then start the test. This would give slow readers but fast listeners a better chance in performing at their best. The fact that the forms are in Icelandic or Finnish (enclosed in the appendices English versions are included), that they receive double information basis (one from myself when I talk with them and one time from the CD, prerecorded), etc. minimize the risk of both negative backlash (see “Methodology”) and that slow readers have a hard time to follow with the tempo. However I believe that it is a good precaution to take and I would guess that the test would be more accurate when eliminating even this hindrance. I am, however, very thankful for this input the teacher gave me, and I believe this to be something to keep in mind for further research in this field. A huge problem with much testing is the lack of reliability. As explained in the beginning of this subchapter, one can say that a test is generally reliable if it measures something consistently.

On a reliable test you can be confident that someone will get more or less the same score, whether they happen to take it on one particular day or on the next, mood etc; on an unreliable test the score is quite

likely to be considerably different, depending on the day on which it is taken. We expect some variation in the scores a person gets on a test, depending on when they happen to take it, what mood they are in, how much sleep they had the night before etc. There must therefore be variations, but not to the extreme. One of the test takers in Finland scored for instance 12 in the dialogue section and only two in the TV/Radio section. If all the test scores which are enclosed in appendix VI and VII would be as diverse as this one, the test would surely be estimated by most people, including myself, as having a low reliability. However, now the scoring is fairly well distributed. What is noticeable when looking at the scores is that the different sections are having a relationship to each other.

A frequently reoccurring score for a test taker in both Iceland and Finland is three points on the dialogue (25%) and two points on the news report (25%). Other reoccurring numbers are one and one or four and three. At least most of the scoring seem to be fairly even between the two sections and there are a difference between people and not between a person's individual scoring which is the main connection to explain the national average.

Again, when researching the numbers it is also important to have in mind that the total score on the second part is only eight points possible. But it is easy to believe that the scoring difference is bigger than it is because it differs four points between the first and the second part of the test.

Would the test results then be applicable on the rest of the Icelandic populace? Actually, from my own experience of living there: yes. About 30% correct understanding seems to be rather representative for the island as a whole when it comes to Scandinavian language comprehension.

But the test itself might lack validity, partly because of this divide in scoring between the formal- and the informal section of the Danish test in Iceland. Again, I feel the quality of the Swedish dialogue especially turned out a bit better than the Danish dialogue. There are also some quality differences between the Danish and the Swedish recorded news report. Another issue which might have interfered with the outcome of the test is that it was impossible to make the formal section with the TV/Radio broadcast exactly alike. This leads to this section being harder to measure when it comes to validity and reliability. The recordings share traits such as: recognizing names, numbers, time of year, loanwords from English, and name of countries. However, clarity, speed of speech, a more or less complicated vocabulary usage, etc. might vary. This might have been the reason why the Icelanders scored much better than the Finns on the TV/Radio section. What contradicts this is that the quality in the Swedish news report is much better than in the Danish radio broadcast, as previously mentioned. This concludes that at least the Finnish-speaking Finns in Vaasa ought to have had a better test score on the news. Again technology and quality is extremely important. Instead of emphasizing class size and classroom dynamics, I want to stress the great importance of having satisfactory equipment, especially when it comes to testing. From the numbers I received I cannot see any direct combination between smaller classes and better scoring, but between technological equipment in class and better outcome. If something becomes unclear for the test takers or other factors concerning technological circumstances interfere with the test outcome, the validity of the test will be severely damaged. All

dialogues and instructions must be like they are intended, and especially given in an equal and even degree of quality between the units being measured. The quality of both the dialogue and the recorded news item regarding the Swedish strain of wolves were on a highly satisfactory level.

I went to Finland after Iceland and had better acquainted myself with what programs to use for recordings. The equipment I had when recording the Swedish test for the Finnish-speaking test takers was of better quality than the Danish test for the Icelandic-speaking test takers. This might not only be a positive aspect, since inconvenient background noise (such as other people talking, music, traffic noises, etc.) is almost always the case in a real-life experience during a conversation. It is seldom that one is able to sit down and carefully and slowly go through exactly what your conversation partner is trying to say to you. The most important factor is that the quality ought to be even between the two testing units (in this case Finland and Iceland), and this was, according to myself as a researcher, not entirely the case with this test.

Does all this mean that the Scandinavian Language Test is valid or not? In this aspect, no; it is not a valid and representative test on the behalf of the Icelandic pupils, especially concerning the dialogue results in Iceland. However, it is an indication on tendencies in the Icelandic school system that the Danish education in Iceland is not as good as the policy makers want it to be. It is also important to denote that even if the quality was worse than with the Swedish dialogue, it was not impossible to hear what was said. Out of curiosity of the validity of the recorded test, I have tried this test on a Faroese colleague of mine. Faroese is the language which is the closest related to Icelandic. The Faeroe Islands are still today a part of the Danish Kingdom and therefore study Danish beginning at age nine (instead of 13 as in Iceland). The Faeroe Islands are also a well-integrated part of Denmark and Danish is used quite often on the islands since the administration and law enforcement is Danish. But, as pointed out earlier, they do share the linguistic prerequisites with the Icelanders. My colleague had the test played for her and she had all the answers correct. With this said, it is still important to denote that the test lacks in validity regarding this aspect, but that despite the quality issues proves a point regarding current trends with Icelandic Scandinavian language acquisition and education in general. How much difference would better quality make for the outcome in Iceland? It is not likely at all that it would make more than 10-20% difference in average understanding, probably with an average mean of five instead of three out of 12 possible points. This would still mean an average understanding less than, for instance, the average percentage for Vaasa (52%). With this in mind, Iceland and Finland have about the same (!) average understanding of their mandatory Scandinavian language which they are to learn.

All testing ought to be as accurate as possible, but it should also be relevant for the students and test their abilities in real situations. I believe, therefore, that this kind of testing languages has a purpose to fulfill in the future. A relevant test is both valid and reliable, but also able to communicate purposefulness to the language learners so that they feel they are in situations where they want to improve and score even better next time.

The Scandinavian Language Test is available online for everyone to examine of their own and make up their own opinion regarding the test's design and formulation:

<https://scandinavianlanguagetest.wordpress.com>

## Conclusion

The main purpose of this dissertation is to test the Scandinavian language comprehension in Finland and Iceland on Finnish and Icelandic students having nearly completed their language education in respectively Swedish or Danish. After attending this mandatory language education for about six years, the Finnish learners understood 32% of the formal language in the news report and 36% of colloquial dialogue. The Icelanders understood 41% of the news report and 25% of the dialogue. The results indicate that it is not any direct difference between understanding dialogues containing slang, normal colloquial tempo with an irregular or informal syntactical structure, and understanding a formal speech containing more advanced terminology but has a slower speed of speech thus being more structured. Generally speaking, to answer the main research question that no, they would not understand that much of a normal dialogue in their second language, and they would have serious problems with participating and contributing in a discussion or meeting with other Nordic youths. It was only the Finnish city Vaasa that had acceptable scoring for the intended purpose. This mean that average outcome of the test in both countries is in general deficient after undertaking the mandatory language education of respectively Swedish or Danish.

When it comes to differences between Finland and Iceland, are there two main differences to point out. First, Icelanders seemingly have an easier time with formal Danish but at a slower speed of speech rather than casual Danish which is faster and contains much more slang. The scoring in Finland is on an average level very equal between the test's two different parts – the dialogue and the news report. Linguistic background of test takers or language learners does therefore not seem to have as a large impact as thought initially. Rather, it seems that regionalism, accessibility to native speakers of the target language, and also the sense of purposefulness in the education seem to top linguistic background. However, it is still difficult clearly to separate the concepts between learner's competence and performance in language test situations. People communicate with conventionalized symbols and meanings within a certain speech community, not only orally but also visually. This would have altered the outcome if visualization would have been taken into account. Regarding technological equipment, it came out clearly that it is vital for good testing. From the numbers I received I cannot see any direct combination between smaller classes and better scoring, but certainly between technological equipment in class and better outcome.

The most applicable explanations to what this thesis has present are that **1)** the test has low validity (but an acceptable estimated reliability) concerning the dialogue results in Iceland because of bad quality on the dialogue, and/or **2)** Icelandic is a very small language, with few native speakers and therefore have relatively little supply of TV channels, music, etc. This mean that they have to import magazines, cartoons, or watch a show on the TV which is in Danish, let it be with Icelandic subtitles. There is also an important difference between in what context the languages are taught. The Icelandic Danish education is characterized by that it is a foreign language, not a second language, education

being taught. This is because Danish is next to never used on the island and the common Icelander has hardly ever encountered a real Dane if s/he has lived his or her whole life in Iceland. This could explain the somewhat perplexing research data. Does all this mean that the Scandinavian Language Test is valid or not? In this aspect, no; it is not a valid and representative test on the behalf of the Icelandic pupils, especially concerning the dialogue results in Iceland. However, it is an indication on tendencies in the Icelandic school system that the Danish education in Iceland is not as good as the policy makers want it to be.

As mentioned before, technological equipment is important for the outcome of a test, as evident on the dialogue portion for Iceland. After I went to Finland following Iceland and had better familiarized myself with what programs to use for recordings, the equipment I used recording the Swedish test for the Finnish-speaking test takers was of better quality than the Danish test for the Icelandic-speaking test takers. It is not likely at all that it would make more than 10-20% difference in average understanding, probably with an average mean on five instead of three out of 12 possible points. This would still mean an average understanding less than, for instance, the average percentage for Vaasa – 52%. With this in mind, Iceland and Finland have about the same (about 30-35%) average understanding of their mandatory Scandinavian language which they are to learn.

In conclusion, regarding language tests, this dissertation suggests that it is essential to make language tests more communicatively relevant for the second language learning process. Excellent testing of how much the students know and do not yet know helps the learning process immensely. Poor testing may result in negative backwash for the test taker. All testing must be as accurate as possible, but it should also be relevant for the students and test their abilities in real situations predicting real-world settings (in line with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles). Therefore, this type of testing languages has a purpose to fulfill in the future. A relevant test is both valid and reliable, but also able to communicate purposefulness to the language learners so that they feel they are in situations where they desire to improve and achieve maximum test scores. My hope is that by reviewing advances in the sciences of how people learn and how such learning can be measured, and by suggesting steps for future research and development, this dissertation will help lay the foundation for a rigorous discussion and further leaps forward within the field of assessment. The main goal is to carry out new educational assessments that better serve the goal of equity but also can entertain and make the young students feel more enthusiastic about learning these languages. Needed are tests which help all students learn, excel, and succeed in their SLA in a fair and balanced manner. The future of SLA requires proper student evaluation in order to illuminate the issues hindering second language advancement.

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# Appendices

## Appendix I - Instructions

Instructions which are given to the students before, during, and after the test:

Hello, and welcome to language testing in Swedish for Finns/Danish for Icelanders. You will now listen to a dialogue in Swedish/Danish which is recorded between two teenagers living in Stockholm in Sweden/Copenhagen in Denmark. They use a modern language in a normal conversation speed with slang and colloquial language. You will be hearing the dialogue only once so please, listen very carefully all through the dialogue. After the dialogue is finished you will get three minutes where you will fill in the questions on the form in front of you. Answer each question as well as you can. You may now turn the test paper around. Good luck!

---

Was it hard to understand the dialogue? Next up is a news report from Swedish/Danish TV. Please try to follow what is said and conveyed. What topic is the report about? After the clip is finished you will get three minutes where you will fill in the questions on the form in front of you. Answer each question as well as you can. You may now turn the test paper around. Good luck!

---

Thank you for taking part in the language test in Swedish for Finns/Danish for Icelanders. Have a good day!

## **Appendix II - The Dialogue**

The dialogue I figured out is taking place directly after a written exam. Both students are now finished and are discussing the exam together. Dane/Swede 1 (a girl) feels really good about the exam meanwhile Dane/Swede 2 (a boy) was extremely nervous and feels he has failed the test. The exam was in mathematics.

---

**Dane/Swede 1:** Hi ya, how are you?

**Dane/Swede 2:** I'm fine, how are you?

**Dane/Swede 1:** Well, I'm OK. It was nice to get that over with at least.

**Dane/Swede 2:** I definitely agree with you. I don't feel so well actually. It was easier than I expected but I was so nervous before the test so I think I made a lot of errors because of that.

**Dane/Swede 1:** Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. Here - have some water and candy. It will make you feel better for sure!

**Dane/Swede 2:** Thank you so much. So by the way, how did you do on the test, do you think?

**Dane/Swede 1:** I think it was a pretty easy exam actually and I am sure I did OK.

**Dane/Swede 2:** Oh good for you. Well I have always had problems with math.

**Dane/Swede 1:** Well these are like things that you either know or you don't. I got down to study this quite a lot but most of the things were just common sense.

**Dane/Swede 2:** Hey maybe you can help with the next exam?

**Dane/Swede 1:** I guess I could do that? When is the next exam anyways?

**Dane/Swede 2:** It's in two weeks from now. After Easter, you know!

**Dane/Swede 1:** Ah..yea, now I remember. Yea OK I can do that. So what are you doing tonight?

**Dane/Swede 2:** I will take some friends with me to go bowling. You want to join?

**Dane/Swede 1:** I can't, I have to fix my car till the weekend sadly. What about tomorrow?

**Dane/Swede 2:** Tomorrow sounds fine. When?

**Dane/Swede 1:** How about during lunch? And we can eat lunch together going through some fun math problems.

**Dane/Swede 2:** Sounds like a plan. OK I see you around noon then at campus?

**Dane/Swede 1:** Can't we meet up at my house first? And then we go to the campus?

**Dane/Swede 2:** OK I see you there then!

**Dane/Swede 1:** OK take care now and try to forget about this test!

**Dane/Swede 2:** I'll try, thank you and see you tomorrow.

The End!

---

## Appendix III - Dialogue questionnaire and answers

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1. Where does the dialogue take place?

Correct Answer: In a school

2. What have the two Danes/Swedes been doing?

Correct Answer: They have been doing a school-exam

3. How did the Danish/Swedish girl feel she did on the test?

Correct Answer: Very well

4. How did the Danish/Swedish boy feel he did on the test?

Correct Answer: Not that good

5. What are they eating/drinking?

Correct Answer: Candy and water

6. What kind of school subject are they discussing?

Correct Answer: Mathematics

7. When will the next exam take place?

Correct Answer: In two weeks, after easter

8. What will the Danish/Swedish boy do this evening?

Correct Answer: Bowling with his friends

9. Why can't the Danish/Swedish girl join him?

Correct Answer: She will take care of her car

10. When will they meet up again (day + time)?

Correct Answer: Tomorrow at lunch-time

11. Where will they meet?

Correct Answer: At the girl's house

12. What will they do?

Correct Answer: Study for the examination



## Appendix IV - Danish TV/Radio Section's Questionnaire and Answers

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1. What date is it this news item dealing with (day/month/year)?

Correct Answer: 10/10/2010

2. What is it that many people want to do on this date according to the news?

Correct Answer: They want to get married

3. What special building is frequently mentioned in the news report?

Correct Answer: The town hall

4. What are the names of the couple mentioned in the news report?

Correct Answer: Jimmy and Helly Hansen

5. How long have they been a couple?

Correct Answer: 30 years

6. What other country than Denmark is also mentioned in the news report?

Correct Answer: South Korea

7. This country broke a world record on this day in having the most couples ever at the same place. How many couples were participating?

Correct Answer: 7000

8. How is the weather on this day according to the news report?

Correct Answer: It is a sunny and warm weather

## Appendix V - Swedish TV/Radio Section's questionnaire and answers

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1. There is a licensed hunt right now in Sweden on a special kind of animal, according to the news. What animal is it?

Correct Answer: Wolf

2. How many are there left to legally hunt down, according to the news?

Correct Answer: 2

3. Sweden's minister of environment is being interviewed in the news report. What is his name (mentioned three times)?

Correct Answer: Andreas Carlgren

4. The minister of environment is also saying that puppies of this species are going to be released into the wild. From where are the puppies taken?

Correct Answer: The zoo

5. When does he want to release the puppies into the wild?

Correct Answer: In the spring

6. From what neighboring country do the Swedish government want to import more of these animals?

Correct Answer: Finland

7. Why will they not be able to import more of these animals from this country this year?

Correct Answer: They don't have enough time

8. Why is it, according to the minister, so important to import new individuals of this species into Sweden?

Correct Answer: To enlarge the gene-pool/to get new blood into the Swedish strain of wolves

## Appendix VI - Data Collection from Iceland

These are the numbers collected from the schools in Iceland:

Dialogue (12)	TV/Radio (8)
2	3
3	4
6	1
1	4
5	3
0	1
3	4
2	4
1	5
3	4
4	5
0	2
1	2
2	3
4	2
1	4
1	4
4	4
4	4
2	4
7	4
4	6
3	4
3	3

3	5
4	4
1	3
4	1
5	3
6	2
3	4
4	4
5	2
4	3
7	3
4	4
4	3
4	4
1	0
6	3
2	2
4	3
2	2
5	5
3	3
4	6
2	5
12	8
5	5
4	6
2	7
7	6
1	2
0	2

2	3
2	2
7	5
5	3
2	2
0	2
2	2
3	6
5	2
3	2
5	1
4	2
2	5
4	6
6	4
1	2
3	1
1	2
1	2
1	1
0	1
0	2
4	3
6	3
5	2
1	2
3	3
2	5
2	4
7	8

6	4
3	5
7	7
2	4
7	5
0	3
1	5
4	7
7	6
3	3
3	4
1	4
4	2
2	3
3	3
0	2
4	4
4	4
1	1
1	2
3	2
2	3
2	1
1	1
3	4
2	2
0	1
3	2
0	3
5	3

0	3
0	2
0	2
1	3
3	1
0	1
0	2
1	4
2	2
5	3
3	3
1	4
1	2
0	2
4	2
5	3
4	4
2	3
2	2
8	3
1	3
5	3
1	4
6	4
5	6
1	4
3	3
4	4
5	5

## Appendix VII - Data Collection from Finland

These are the numbers collected from the schools in Finland:

Dialogue (12)	TV/Radio (8)
9	5
8	2
7	5
7	2
7	4
7	2
2	0
5	2
4	3
7	4
9	6
7	1
8	2
4	5
2	0
5	4
12	2
3	2
3	3
4	0
3	0
7	2
8	3
2	0
6	2



6	0
7	3
10	3
1	3
8	5
5	3
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