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**Idiolect Change in
Native English Speakers
Living in Sweden**

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1. Introduction

Moving from one country to another often involves a change in language. Even when migration is between countries that share a language, local differences in lexicon and phonology will make a newcomer linguistically conspicuous and may force her/him to change the way s/he speaks (Trudgill 1994). When an individual moves to a country where the dominant language is something other than his/her first language (L1), the L1 may undergo attrition if the individual communicates primarily in a second language (L2) (Cook 2003).

Because English is the most widely used language for international communication, it may be less common for native speakers of English than for speakers of other languages to find themselves in a situation in which they have no opportunity to speak their native language. Does that mean that the L1 of native English speakers undergoes no change when they migrate? Anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise. As one example, despite continuing to speak, read, and write in English every single day, when the author of this paper visits her native United States, people sometimes tell her she “sounds foreign”. Several other native English speakers living abroad have reported similar reactions, as well as occasionally finding it difficult to retrieve words in English, or finding that the L2 word comes to mind more quickly than the English word. Some report having had difficulty speaking English and/or translating words and grammatical structures directly from the L2 rather than using the appropriate English equivalent.

This paper examines the issue of idiolect change in expatriate native English speakers from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. Thirteen native English speakers living in Sweden acted as informants for this study, and were interviewed about their language backgrounds as well as given a list of sentences to evaluate to test their sensitivity to false cognates and constructions patterned on the Swedish language. The results of the interview and the acceptability test are analyzed to develop a clearer picture of the nature of idiolect change and identify possible areas for further study.

2. Theoretical Background

The aim of this paper is to determine whether the idiolect of native English speakers living in Sweden, a country in which English is not an official language but is a commonly used second language (Sharp 2007), undergoes any change with prolonged residence abroad. Secondary aims of this paper are to identify the nature of any idiolect change and factors contributing to this change.

While some informants may incorporate aspects of Swedish into their English, as described in section 4 below, this paper does not attempt to assert that there is a variety of English particular to Sweden, with a standard set of features. Instead, this paper uses the term “idiolect change” to refer to alterations in individuals’ way of speaking their native language. An “idiolect” is a language variety “characteristic of an individual speaker” (Coulmas 2005: 234). Furthermore, some of the idiolect changes may be due to a dialect contact situation, in which speakers of different varieties of English influence one another (Trudgill 1994). This approach differs from many studies on L1 attrition, as Jarvis asserts:

The lion’s share of such studies [of L2 effects on the L1] has looked at language loss as a societal, sociolinguistic phenomenon, focusing on language shift or language death affecting entire speech communities. Fewer studies have looked at language loss as an individual, psycholinguistic phenomenon, focusing on processes of L1 attrition in individuals. (Jarvis 2003: 82)

The questions asked of the informants, described in further detail in Section 3, were constructed with the following hypotheses in mind:

- That the idiolects of native English speakers living in Sweden do change with prolonged residence abroad;
- That idiolect change can take one or more of the following forms:
 1. difficulty in finding words or otherwise expressing oneself in English;
 2. inadvertent code-switching into Swedish when speaking English;
 3. use of non-standard grammar and collocations;
 4. borrowing from other varieties of English;
 5. phonological changes.
- That idiolect change may be caused by:

1. learning and using Swedish;
2. prolonged exposure to the errors common to native Swedish speakers using English;
3. being part of an English-speaking community that includes speakers of different varieties of English than one's native variety; and
4. rough-tuning one's English to be better understood by non-native speakers of English.

2.1 The Effect of L2 on L1

The belief that an individual's first language affects his/her acquisition of a second language is a commonsense one, although theorists of language acquisition do not take this for granted (see Gass and Selinker 2008: chapters 4 and 5). While the current consensus is that an individual's L2 is influenced by his/her L1, this relationship is not unidirectional. The L2 can also affect the L1, particularly when an individual lives in an environment in which s/he uses the L2 more than the L1 (Cook 2003: 1; Cenoz 2003: 64). Pavlenko (2003) has identified five ways in which an L2 can affect an L1:

[...] a second or additional language may influence the first in all areas of language, whether phonology, morphosyntax, lexis, semantics, pragmatics, rhetoric, or conceptual representations (Pavlenko 2000) [...] The proposed analytical framework theorises instances of L2 influence on L1 as evidence of one or more of the following five phenomena:

- (1) *borrowing transfer*, or addition of L2 elements to the L1: e.g. lexical borrowing [...];
- (2) *convergence*, or creation of a unitary system, distinct from both L1 and L2: e.g. the use of the same phonetic realisation rules for French and English /t/, which results in a moderately aspirated stop, different from both L1 and L2 values [...];
- (3) *shift*, or a move away from L1 structures or values to approximate L2 structures or values: e.g. semantic extension of [meaning] [...];
- (4) *restructuring transfer*, or incorporation of L2 elements into L1 resulting in some changes, substitutions or simplifications [...];
- (5) *L1 attrition*, i.e. loss of (or inability to produce) some L1 elements due to L2 influence: e.g. acceptance of syntactically deviant L1 sentences under the influence of L2 constraints [...] (Pavlenko 2003: 33-4).

These five phenomena are revisited in section 4.3.

Much of the existing research of the effect of the L2 on the L1, and L1 attrition in particular, has focused on individuals who have become isolated from their home country and from other speakers of their native language (Cook 2003: 12; Jarvis 2003: 85). Fewer studies of this

nature have been conducted on English speakers, who have more opportunities to use their native language while living abroad. In Sweden, the general population's knowledge of English is at a level that makes it possible for a person who knows English to carry out all essential life activities without ever learning Swedish. Nonetheless, English speakers in Sweden may find themselves in another situation described by Cook: "the L2 user who is part of a minority in a culture may be socialising with a group of fellow L1 speakers. Over time these isolated L1 communities may evolve their own languages" (Cook 2003: 14). As stated above, this paper does not argue that there is one particular Swedish variety of English. However, the possibility that individuals become "out of touch" with their native variety is a real one. The informants in this study identified themselves as speakers of four different varieties of English: Australian, Irish, British, and American. Each of these varieties, in turn, consists of a number of regional and class dialects. However, in Sweden, native English speakers are a linguistic minority, and often find themselves in the same social and professional circles. Such a situation may also be a factor in idiolect shift. As Trudgill says, "[w]e are influenced by the way people around us talk. A British person who goes to America for six months may well come back sounding more American than when they went away" (Trudgill 1994: 55). The idiolect of a person who receives little feedback from other speakers of his/her own variety may begin to diverge from that variety, particularly when there are other influences present (Porte 2003: 107).

2.2 Previous Studies: Models

Nash (1982) and Porte (2003) are among the few studies on L1 change in native English speakers living in L2 environments. Nash's study on "Pringlish" examined the influence of Spanish on English speakers from the mainland US living in Puerto Rico. She found that the longer an individual lived in Puerto Rico, the more likely s/he was to find borrowed words and structures from Spanish acceptable in English, and the more likely s/he was to use such borrowings him/herself.

Porte observed conversations among native English speakers who were longtime residents and English teachers in Spain. He recorded many instances of code switching, including code-mixing (replacing a word or phrase in English with one from Spanish), loans (Anglicizing a Spanish word or choosing a false cognate of the desired Spanish term in English) and code blending (applying English morphology to a Spanish word), particularly when the teachers discussed aspects of their work specific to the Spanish education system. However, Porte concluded that “there is no evidence that the L1 of these subjects has suffered significant attrition even after so many years of residence in Spain” (Porte 2003: 117). This may be in part due to the fact that language teachers have a high metalinguistic awareness; those in other professions may experience different effects on the L1.

This paper was modelled on different aspects of both Nash’s and Porte’s studies. Similar to the “Pringlish” study, informants were tested for their sensitivity to “Swenglish” constructions. They were also interviewed about their own experiences of idiolect shift. Eight of the 13 informants were university teachers of English, as in Porte’s study. Porte examined whether “certain elements of the L1 may be adversely affected, not only by the inevitable erosive consequences of L1 deprivation brought about as a result of long-term residence abroad, but also by certain features of the local everyday teaching and social context” (Porte 2003: 107), and this paper does as well.

3. Methodology and Data

3.1 Informants

Interviews were conducted with 13 native English speakers living in Sweden. Three were men and ten were women. Three were in their 30s, four were in their 40s, three in their 50s and two in their 60s. The length of time they had lived in Sweden ranged from 5 years to 40 years. Eleven of the 13 had a Swedish spouse or partner.

Two of the informants identified their native variety of English as Australian, two Irish, five British, and four American (there are, of course, regional and class sub-varieties within these

varieties). Eight were actively working in academia with English as one of their teaching and research areas, and an additional three had worked as English teachers in some capacity in the past. All said that they were functional in Swedish, with 11 of the 13 saying that they felt “very” or “quite” comfortable speaking Swedish in most situations. Eleven of the informants reported using English in some capacity every day, while two said they tend to speak English less frequently, but at least weekly, when talking to family members in their home countries.

All but one of the informants had studied at least one foreign language in addition to Swedish. Four had previously lived in a country other than their home country or Sweden in which they had to use a language other than English. Six had spent a significant amount of time in a region of their home country or in another English-speaking country where the dominant variety differed from the one they grew up speaking.

3.2 Acceptability Test

In the first portion of the interview, subjects were asked to examine a list of 34 sentences, some of which were intended to contain mistakes commonly made by native Swedish speakers in English, so-called “Swenglish” errors, and evaluate whether the sentences were acceptable or unacceptable in English. This portion of the research is modeled on the “Pringlish” test described by Nash in her work with native English speaking migrants to Puerto Rico (Nash 1982). A similar study has also been done on L1 Russian speakers in Israel (Laufer 2003). The purpose was to identify whether informants were sensitive to common mistakes made by Swedish speakers in English, or whether their exposure to Swedish and “Swenglish” had caused non-standard forms and expressions to enter their idiolect.

The sentences were chosen from teaching materials intended for Swedish speakers learning English: various websites with exercises proposing to help Swedes improve their English, and a handbook created by a private language school for employees of the Swedish postal service. The sentences were designed to contain a “Swenglish” error for students to find and correct. Four of the

34 sentences given to the informants were intended to be error-free, so that informants would not immediately assume that all of the sentences had errors.

The sentences were chosen more or less at random, but there are three potential flaws in the methodology. One is that sentences with errors that native speakers seemed highly unlikely to make, such as errors in subject-verb agreement or, for the most part, word order, were excluded from the acceptability test from the beginning on the grounds that they would be too obvious. In hindsight, the sentences should have been chosen completely randomly. Another flaw that emerged while the test was being administered was that some of the sentences had ambiguities that confused the informants which were unconnected to the intended “Swenglish” error. For example, the sentence “From the slopes of these lines the value of x could be calculated”, which was intended as a word order error, baffled several informants who had not had an opportunity to use trigonometry since leaving school. Another sentence, “I don’t know her very well, but she seems like a very sympathetic person”, was intended to be “Swenglish”, as “sympathetic” is a false cognate of *sympatisk*, or “nice”, but one can describe a person as “sympathetic” in English as well, albeit under slightly different circumstances. The third flaw is that some of the sentences would be considered correct in some varieties of English and not in others, further blurring the results. However, this yielded some interesting insights with regard to informants’ degree of adherence to a particular variety of English.

The sentences were checked against Brigham Young University’s British National Corpus (Davies: <http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies: <http://www.americancorpus.org/>) and on Google (www.google.com) for their prevalence in real-life situations. Because some of the correct phrases were not found in the corpora, the corpus searches were not considered to be completely reliable. For this reason, a control group of native English speakers who had not been exposed to Swedish was asked to evaluate the sentences as well.

Informants were given the sentences in writing. They were asked to read through the sentences quickly and not to analyze them too deeply, but were given as much time as they wanted. They were allowed to read the sentences aloud and to ask questions of the interviewer. For each sentence they were asked to choose from four options indicating whether they thought the sentences were correct and comprehensible.

The control group evaluated the sentences via an online questionnaire. The social networking site Facebook was used to invite people to complete the questionnaire and to allow them to forward the link to others to complete. The respondents were told that the sentences were written by Swedish students of English and instructed to read the sentences quickly and not to spend too much time analyzing them. The only personal data collected on the control group was the country or countries they grew up in, their current country of residence and the length of time in that country, so that respondents who were not native speakers living in their home country could be identified and removed from the data set. Three individuals were removed from the data set on these grounds. The control group contained 38 total respondents: 17 Americans, four Australians, two Canadians, and fifteen British English speakers.

A complete list of the questions, their presence or absence in Brigham Young University's British National Corpus and Corpus of Contemporary American English and on Google, the control group's responses and the informants' responses are included in the appendix, and the results are analyzed in section 4.1.

3.2 Personal Interview

Following the acceptability test, informants were interviewed about their own experiences of idiolect shift. A complete list of interview questions is listed in the appendix. The questions focused on informants' language backgrounds and the range of possible influences on their English, how often they currently use English and with whom, and whether they had noticed any changes in the way they speak English since coming to Sweden.

4. Results and Analysis

As described in section 3, there were two parts to the data collection: an acceptability test, in which both the informants living in Sweden and the respondents living in their home countries judged the “correctness” of sentences, and an interview in which the respondents living in Sweden were asked about their own experiences of idiolect shift.

4.1 Acceptability Test Results

Informants were given 34 sentences, some of which are found in both the British and American corpora, some of which were found in one corpus and not the other, and others which contained “Swenglish” errors. For each sentence, informants could choose from the following options: 1) This sentence sounds fine to me; 2) I wouldn’t say it that way, but it’s not wrong; 3) There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean; and 4) There is a mistake in this sentence and I don’t understand what they mean.

Interestingly, there was no absolute consensus on any of the sentences, that is, there was no sentence for which all the informants chose the same option. However, six sentences were found to be acceptable by all or nearly all of the informants, that is, all of the informants, or all but one chose either option 1 or 2. Those sentences were:

- Sentence 1, *I’m afraid he will not be able to attend the meeting;*
- Sentence 2, *Have you been home for the holidays this year?;*
- Sentence 4, *John is responsible for managing the transition;*
- Sentence 27, *Could you contact the travel agent?;*
- Sentence 31, *Could you please book a room at the Hilton?;*
- Sentence 32, *Four couples are coming to dinner tonight.*

Four sentences were also found to be unacceptable by nearly all of the informants, meaning all or nearly all chose either option 3 or 4:

- Sentence 10, *Does this business have many concurrents?;* for which 10 informants chose option 3 and 3 chose option 4. The difference may lie in the informants’

familiarity with the Swedish word *konkurrent*, which means “competitor”. This false cognate sometimes appears in Swedish-English business discourse.

- Sentence 20, *You have to be consequent with children or they won't respect you.* (“Consequent” is a false cognate of *konsekvent*, which means “consistent”.)
- Sentence 22, *He finished his exam in 2002.* (“Exam” is a false cognate of *examen*, which refers to a university degree.)
- Sentence 24, *She's very good in organizing parties.*

Out of 34 sentences, then, the informants more or less agreed on the acceptability or unacceptability of only ten. There was little correlation between informants' native variety of English and their assessments of the sentences, meaning that there were no sentences which all the speakers of, for example, British English agreed were correct or incorrect.

Results were similarly mixed in the control group. There was no absolute consensus on the correctness or incorrectness of any one sentence. Some of the sentences for which all or nearly all of the respondents chose either option 1 or 2 were the same as in the informants' group: sentences 1, 2, 4, 31 and 32. However, there were five additional sentences that all or nearly all the members of the control group found acceptable.

- Sentence 8, *Various methods were used to research this question;*
- Sentence 11, *My judgment of the situation is that the problems stem from a simple miscommunication;*
- Sentence 15, *Have you an opinion on the matter?;*
- Sentence 16, *She's really engaged in local politics.*

There were three sentences that all or nearly all of the members of the control group found unacceptable: sentence 10, sentence 20 (also identified by the informant group) and sentence 30, *He worked for Google already in the 1990s.*

The control group also differed from the informant group in that the respondents' varieties of English did appear to play a role in their assessments. In three cases the British English speakers' responses differed noticeably from the rest of the control group:

- Sentence 3, *I don't see your name here. Are you registered on the course?;* which all but one of the British English speakers found acceptable, while all but two of the Americans, Australians, and Canadians identified as having an error;

- Sentence 9, *The public at the concert loved his performance. They gave him a standing ovation*, which 10 of 15 British English speakers found acceptable, while only 4 of the 23 Americans, Canadians, and Australians did;
- Sentence 21, *From the slopes of these lines the value of x could be calculated*, which all but two of the Americans, Australians, and Canadians found acceptable, while 9 of 15 British English speakers identified as having an error.

Because of the small sample size, and ambiguities in the sentences that became clear in the testing process, very few conclusions can be drawn from this data. However, this does demonstrate the saliency of the concept of idiolect, since there was little consensus on any of the sentences. These results also imply that the teaching materials from which the sentences were drawn, intended to be examples of typical Swedish errors, may be promoting too limited a standard for the English language, as many in both the informant group and the control group found many of these “Swenglish” sentences to be quite acceptable. It is interesting and possibly worthy of further study that the control group’s responses showed some differentiation correlated to their native varieties of English, while the informant group’s responses did not.

4.2 Interview Responses

As described in section 3.2, informants were interviewed about their own experiences of idiolect change. It may be useful at this point to return to the research question, whether the L1 of native English speakers living in Sweden undergoes any change with prolonged residence abroad, and if so, what the nature of this change is and what the factors contributing to it are.

4.2.1 Reactions at Home

One question asked of the informants was, “When you visit your native country now, do people there ever comment on the way that you speak? What do they say?” The majority of the informants said “yes”:

(1) Yes, that I have an accent, and I reply, are you sure it’s me with the accent? My English is more corrected to be a sort of a standard English than an Australian English. I articulate more. You can speak Australian English without opening your mouth. I think because of my profession, I work teaching English as a second language, so I think I’m careful with the way I pronounce, because if I just spoke my ordinary relaxed

Australian English I think students would miss a lot of what I say, and also other Swedish people that I speak English to. So I think I've corrected so that I articulate better, or I articulate more, so it's my pronunciation.

(2) Yes, they say my accent has changed, and I concur with that because I am aware that I try to pronounce nicely so that I am understood, so that my home language, my Yorkshire accent, is not as strong. When I speak with my brother or friends from school in Doncaster I can slip straight into it. With e-mail or MSN we don't talk so much, but when I do talk to my brother I slip back into it, because I'd rather spend time talking than spend time talking about the way I talk. [...] I think I speak nicer English now that I live in a foreign country because I need to make myself understood in my own language. When I moved to Sweden I became more aware of the words that I use at home with my husband and children that wouldn't be understood to a European.

(3) Yeah, I think so, they think I have a different accent now than I had then, and even if I don't blend the Swedish word in, I have a hard time finding the English word and I have to describe it to them. Usually every other year I go home. But I don't talk to them a lot.

(4) Yes. Where are you from? And when I say I'm from Seattle, they say, you don't sound like you're from here. I've gotten comments that I have a slight accent.

(5) Yeah. They notice that I can't come up with words. That I have to, not constantly, but often ask "What is that called again?" There's a lot of metalanguage, at least from me. That just reminded me that people comment on my pauses, that I don't say "um" anymore, I say "em". A little bit of pronunciation, and I guess, discourse markers, they can react to as well. I might say "jo" when I'm about to say something, and they'll be like "what does that mean?" Sometimes a "nej" slips in there. My sisters have mentioned that sometimes I sound weird, but they don't name it all the time. But if we talk about it then they recognize that something's different.

(6) When I've come to Sweden and the times I did go back, they thought I'd lost me [sic] accent.

(7) Yes, they do. They say I sound Swedish, I sound British, I often get, people often ask me if I'm from England, they say I don't use any slang, that I tend to pronounce everything very... my enunciation has changed, that I don't know the current slang. And part of that, not only not knowing the words in slang, but also that I tend to speak, for example, in complete sentences when I'm speaking. They say I sound like a teacher, often, as well. Which is, I think, because I am a teacher, it's partly that, and partly the accent and choice of words. [...] Well, also influenced from Swedish. I think both. Both from teaching and Swedish. It's hard to tell which is which. And people do comment on it. [Colleague], who sits here – sits here, there you go! – has her desk here, said I also sound like a Swede.

(8) Yes, sometimes my parents comment that I seem to say things in a strange way. I seem to have picked up a number of American expressions, it seems, from television and from colleagues. And there are a few cases like that where I don't have the clear difference between British and American English anymore.

(9) Yes. That my English is old-fashioned, mostly. Sometimes sort of the first couple of days, something like "I can hear you're just coming from Sweden." Sort of a different melody.

Several different aspects of language emerge here. Eight of the informants said that people at home remarked on their accent, pronunciation, or "melody". Two noted difficulty finding words in English. Three mentioned having consciously changed their way of speaking to be more easily understood. There does not seem to be any relationship between the time spent in Sweden and whether informants answered "yes" or "no" to this question. Both the informant who had been in Sweden the shortest amount of time (5 years) and the longest (40 years) answered "yes", while those who said "no" had been in Sweden from 19 to 28 years. Those four informants said:

(10) No. Sometimes they comment on the fact that they don't notice anything unusual, because they think they should.

(11) Never. In fact, when I meet people I haven't met for forty years, they say "Well you're just exactly the same!" Which is, for me, a great compliment. I would hate to think that I would change. I feel very strongly about that.

(12) Well, I'm sure my English has changed, but not to the extent that people react at home. I think probably I've got one of these neutral accents, because it's a London accent as well, so it's very neutral and therefore pretty easy to understand. So I've never had any problems with people trying to understand what I'm saying. But I don't understand half the people in my own country. So it just depends on the accent.

(13) No, haven't been influenced enough. I don't think my English speaking voice has changed since I was a child. I can put on a Glasgow accent if I want to. But for my friends that have known me for years there's no change. I don't think I sound Swedish!

Despite having answered "no" to the question above, the informant who made statement 13 above had lived in the United States for several years, and elsewhere in the interview said, "I think the US has had an influence on my Rs, some people say I sound a little American but this was in the 70s and early 80s." When asked if she ever found herself using words that belong to another variety of English, she said, "Yes, because of being in America. So I would say garbage instead of rubbish." When asked if she ever found herself pronouncing words differently than in your native variety, she said "Yes, that also happens, because I'm influenced by my time in America."

The two informants who were speakers of Irish English (statements 10 and 11) both answered "no" to this question, and both had explanations for why their accent had not changed.

One said:

(14) My hypothesis is because Northern Irish English is quite extreme accent-wise, which means it's not very useful outside Northern Ireland. So outside Northern Ireland I modify my accent to make it more intelligible and acceptable, so my real Northern Irish Accent is fairly unmodified. So that's why people in Northern Ireland don't notice that I sound strange, because I speak the Northern Irish that I always spoke.

So in some sense, this informant's English has changed, but like the informant from Yorkshire, she is able to switch back to her native dialect at home.

The other Irish English speaker said:

(15) I never tried to sound English in any way. I went to a teacher training college, and it was a Catholic teacher training college, and very many of my friends were Irish or had come from an Irish background by the fact that it was Catholic. And I think that there was a very strong sense of an Irish identity there, or at least in the group that I went around with. But we did see that, and I have experienced that with other people that we would meet, who, when they came to London they felt that they had to change their identity, or that they didn't want to sound so Irish. And that has never been anything... I think it has to do with your own sense of identity, it is very important for me to sound the way, where I come from, you know? I've never tried to change.

This informant, then, made a conscious attempt not to change the way she spoke, as a matter of personal principle.

In summary, nine of 13 informants said that their friends and relatives in their respective home countries had noticed a change in their idiolect.

4.2.2 Varieties of English

During the interview, one informant said, “Because my English is fairly straight middle-of-the-road I haven’t been aware of adapting to anyone, except if I was speaking with someone with very poor English.” The idea of having a “middle-of-the-road” accent, or a “neutral accent” (statement 12), raises an interesting issue: what is neutral? Four of the five British English speakers acknowledged the occasional use of American terms, but when asked “Do you ever find yourself using pronunciations from other varieties of English than their own?” three of the four replies were:

(16) Not yet. I haven’t done that yet. [Amused]

(17) It would never occur to me to use anything American!

(18) No, I haven’t got that far. Except if it’s a really American word, then I’ll just jokingly try to pronounce it like I think an American would.

These responses imply that the informants found something humorous or objectionable in the idea of sounding American.

Three informants said that they consciously changed their accent to be better understood. Those informants came from Australia, the United States, and Yorkshire (an area of England with a distinct regional accent). There is no particular reason why British English, particularly Received Pronunciation (RP), should be inherently more understandable to non-native speakers than other varieties, other than it has been the closest thing to an international teaching standard. Even in the United States, RP is considered a prestige accent by many. There may be a certain amount of pressure on speakers of other varieties to adjust toward RP in an international setting, unless one

makes a conscious decision not to, as the Irish English speaker did in statement 15. Interestingly, that informant was the only one who mentioned experiencing explicit pressure to use RP:

(19) You asked me a question, did I ever find myself changing my accent, and I remember the only time here was in the lab at the A level, when we had to do an exam in phonetics, and we had to read out sounds in RP, and I remember sitting in the box, we used to have earphones – I don't think they do that nowadays! – it was an obligatory part of your exam at A level, and I remember sitting there and thinking "I hope nobody's listening to me!" And I was saying /bɑ:θ/ instead of /bæθ/ because I would normally say /bæθ/, and there were a whole lot of words that had to be pronounced according to the way they're written in RP, and that was expected of us that we should, that was the pronunciation that they were requiring of us teachers. And that's the way you were expected to teach your pupils when you would come out, perpetuating this RP.

However, one of the British English speakers feels that the current trend is away from British English and toward American English:

(20) I feel very sensitive about these issues as well. And I find myself sometimes using the American term because I think that that's probably more global. So I have a great humility. I'm very humble about my own language, English English, I don't think that that is the global language, I think the global language is going to be more and more American. And so I try to adapt my vocabulary. And there are words that I just love using because they are so funny, like "bangs". I mean, "bangs"! (laughs) So I'll always use them, especially when talking to my American friends, I'll always say "oh, your bangs", because I just think that's hilarious. And they make fun of me and I make fun of them and it's OK. And there are words, exactly, like "flat" and "apartment" and I find myself using "apartment" more and more now, I must admit, because it works better.

In summary, four of the informants indicated that they had felt internal or external pressure to conform to the British English variety known as RP, and three of the informants who speak varieties of English closest to RP expressed surprise or amusement at the idea that they might adopt a different variety of English, which indicates that idiolect shift may be closely connected to the perception of a prestige variety of English.

4.2.3 Code Switching

The issue of code switching, both between English and Swedish and between different varieties of English, was discussed in the interviews. Informants were asked "Do you ever switch between two languages in the middle of a conversation, a sentence, or a word?" All of the informants answered "yes" to this question, although several said they found it undesirable and tried not to:

(21) All the time. Well, obviously they have to understand both languages, so my family, and people I work with here who speak both.

(22) Yes. I have an English friend, and if I want to say something to her and my children are around, if it's something humorous and I don't want the children to hear, I'll say it in Swedish if it's not a word they would

recognize. Words like *Skatteverket* [“the Swedish tax authority”], *lagom* [“an appropriate amount”], that happens too.

(23) I probably did it just this morning, but I was so angry that I don’t remember what I said. I just change up the words, maybe I say “*Jag visste inte att du skulle vara så late*” [“I didn’t know that you were going to be so late”].

(24) I try not to, and when it does happen it irritates me. I think because it feels like it breaks up my thoughts, fragments my thoughts, and I end up feeling – what’s the word? – inarticulate if I can’t finish a sentence in the same language. [...] I just had a feeling that, if we’re going to speak English, that we can’t mix it. And [my husband] has the same... I remember at one point [my husband] and I would code switch a lot, still, when we went back to English after [our son] was born and I remember being in a store looking for something and code switching a lot and him being bothered by that and saying, “Can we choose one language and stick to it?” So we’ve made a conscious effort not to do that, mostly for the boys. And it just felt like a slippery slope. If I started throwing in Swedish words, then they can start throwing in Swedish words.

(25) Well, I probably do, just as I was saying there about *arbetsförmedlingen* [“the Swedish employment agency”] and stuff. I mean, you do code-switch. And some of those questions there, some of those examples would be examples of code switching. Which I probably would do without... well I would know that I would be doing it. To be very honest, I’m not really all that concerned about that. I’m not a purist by any means, as long as people understand what I’m saying, and I really don’t mind. I have never been like that. Of course, if you’re teaching... it depends on what you’re doing.

(26) Oh yes. Certainly. Often when speaking Swedish I will, at the lunch table for example, which is a very important situation, I will put English in the middle of my sentences when I don’t need to, for effect, and sometimes I will use Swedish in my English as well [...] speaking to colleagues about any kind of Swedish phenomenon. It’s also kind of this loan translation... things like “go to the system” to buy wine, which is neither Swedish nor English. My husband will talk about “easy beer” or “Have you done your declaration?” or all these child care things, like *dagis* [“preschool”], if you have kids here you take them to *dagis*.

(27) Yes, I do that often. Not so much if I’m talking to a native speaker, but if I’m talking to a non-native speaker who speaks extremely good English, but I know the word in Swedish, especially all these academic descriptions here, like UFN and AFN and *utbildnings- och forskningsnämnd* [“education and research committee”], I mean, how can I say that in English? It just doesn’t come into my head because I’ve learnt the words in Swedish. So all the terminology that we use in our jobs, if I can get away with saying them in Swedish mid-conversation, I will.

(28) Yes. I really try not to. But sometimes it’s very very easy. And I think it happens, oddly enough, mostly when I’m speaking English with people, like here, and I know they speak Swedish, I can code-switch. And I think it’s for normal reasons, that if I’ve experienced something in Swedish, sometimes it’s hard for me to express that in English, because I have the words already since I’ve experienced it there, and then I just switch over to use those words. When I’m speaking Swedish and I go to English, it’s mostly because I’ve just forgotten, I can’t quickly come up with the word, and then I just use the English word. And then it often happens that as soon as I say the English word I’ll remember the Swedish word of course and then I’ll say the Swedish word after that. So I would say from switching to Swedish, it’s because it’s easier, and also because it’s also to capture that that’s how I’ve experienced it. Switching to English is mostly because I’ve just forgotten.

(29) Definitely with other people who speak both languages, socially. But if it were in a professional situation, I mean, in the classroom I would never do it. I might acknowledge what a word would be in Swedish, but I would never use a Swedish word when I’m speaking English to students. I never use Swedish words with the boys, except I have four words that I always use. *Saft* [“juice”], *nyponnsoppa* [“rose hip soup”], *fika* [“to have a coffee break”], *fritids* [“after school program”]. That’s because for me they’re so culturally-specific that, *nyponnsoppa* is not, but we just don’t drink rose hip soup. It felt like a brand name somehow, and it just sort of became that. But socially, if I meet [English-speaking friends], then I might use Swedish words and not really care about it because I know that they understand what I mean. Especially if we’re talking about something that is work-specific or in a certain domain and everybody knows what it is and everybody else has experienced that, then I’m more likely to use the Swedish word. But I’m always aware of it.

(30) There are certain words that exist specifically in Swedish, yes, I would do that. That specific level of code-switching. I mean sort of things like *kursplan* [“syllabus”], words to do with work, that sort of thing, *kursutvärdering* [“course evaluation”], that sort of thing, where it just seems wrong to talk about it in English.

(31) Very rarely. Probably only when it's a bilingual or multilingual discussion going on anyway, people around who understand two languages and probably just quicker to say whatever it is in English because it's a well-defined thing that, I can't give an example at the moment, but everybody's going to understand anyway, rather than me hunting around for a good Swedish expression to explain, or vice-versa. So I will say, "Can't you go across to the *försäkringskassan*?" rather than "Why can't you go across to the social insurance office?" Because then you have to explain what that is in Swedish anyway.

In many of the above statements, the informants showed a high level of awareness about the circumstances in which they would use a Swedish word or phrase, gave concrete examples of the sort of phrases they would use, and most do not believe that they switch into Swedish inadvertently. Their belief was borne out in the interview situation; with one exception, the informants spoke very precise English and seemed to choose their words carefully, using Swedish words only when giving examples – while the recording device was on. When the recorder was turned off, and the informants felt they could speak with the interviewer in an informal way, many immediately started including Swedish terms in the conversation. This demonstrates that code switching, while pervasive, is controllable.

In his study, Porte (2003) noted:

It would be important to study whether or not these subjects behave differently in their production and tolerance of deviance when speaking to a native-speaker from outside this closed community. Two subjects from the same closed speech community here may feel at liberty to use such 'tolerated' deviance on the assumption that interpersonal communication may thereby be enhanced or facilitated" (Porte 2003: 118-9).

Many informants in this study asserted that any code-switching that they do is in the company of other people who they know understand both languages, though some exceptions were noted in the following section.

4.2.4 Attrition and Missing Domains

Several of the quotes in section 4.2.3 indicated that informants sometimes code switch into Swedish when they have temporarily forgotten a word in English, or that they would employ Swedish terms when speaking about particular domains. Those issues are explored further in this section.

Informants were asked, "Have you ever been so immersed in a foreign language that you momentarily had difficulty finding words or expressing yourself the way you wanted to in

English?” Twelve of the thirteen informants readily answered yes to this question. Some of them offered more specific details:

(32) Yes. I'm looking for a word or a concept, cause I mix a lot, which amuses people, but it's because I find that just that concept is better described – like this word *lagom* [“an appropriate amount”] in Swedish, I can't find a word that describes it as well in English – so even though I might be speaking English I pull in the Swedish word because it works so well. It's not, perhaps, that I can't find it – sometimes I lose it momentarily – but it's just that I think that one suits better, so it seems a waste to use a word that doesn't work as well.

(33) Been there, done that. Nouns, descriptions, one time it was a “realtor”. For the life of me I could not come up with that word, I said funny things, I said “real estater” and I was like, “that doesn't sound right” but I didn't know what it was. In Swedish I knew exactly what I wanted to say. [...] A lot of times even in the same sentence I begin with Swedish and end with English if I find a more appropriate word. But I think more Swedish, because even when I call my mom I sometimes answer questions in Swedish without realizing it to her. She thought I was talking to someone else. The last time I did that I didn't understand why she didn't understand me, then I realized I had spoken and explained the whole situation in Swedish. It's kind of embarrassing.

(34) Yes. It doesn't happen as much now. I can't think of any examples, but I recognize that feeling of searching and searching for the right expression and not being able to find it. I have a hypothesis about myself which is that it happened a lot that I couldn't find the right expression in English in the couple years before I had kids. At that point I had lived here for several years and I was speaking Swedish most of the time. I was working primarily in Swedish and [husband] and I were speaking mostly Swedish. And since I've had children, and speak only English with them, that my English has been reactivated.

(35) Oh yes, on a daily basis. Even now. Often a Swedish word will come first, but still even a Spanish word might come first. *Can you think of a recent example?* Yeah, it was the word *destafar*, and I couldn't think of how to say it in English. I don't know how your Spanish is, but it means salience, to be salient. And I couldn't work out how to say it in English, or Swedish, but the Spanish was right there. And that was like, two weeks ago.

(36) Yes, especially in Swedish, and I feel it quite often, especially if I've been speaking a lot of Swedish beforehand, and then I will give a lecture or something and suddenly the word is not there. And so I have to use strategies to work around the word. Suddenly it comes, but then it's too late. *Are there other domains where you only use the Swedish words?* For example, my sons are ice hockey crazy, and for me it's natural to use all the ice hockey terms in Swedish, not in English, because I never even saw ice [at home].

(37) Yes. And one particularly vivid memory is when I was on a vacation [at home], and I only had one child then and he was very young, and he got sick, and I was so stressed out that I couldn't speak English. I was kind of yelling at my brother-in-law that he had to get the car and we had to go to the hospital, and I realized later that I said it all in Swedish and he didn't understand me. And I was just very, kind of, stressed. And I couldn't seem to think how to say that.

(38) Yeah, when my mother come, or actually when we went [home] just before my father passed away [...] the eldest one was six months, and I got so used to saying *blöjor* [“diapers/nappies”] and *dagis* [“preschool”] and things like that that I just couldn't think of the English words. And I would say it to my mum, so she learned very quickly what *dagis* was, and *blöjor*, even though these days I would use the English word. But at that stage it was *dagis* and *blöjor* instead of “day care” and “nappy”.

(39) Yes. I can't give a specific example, but it happens especially with words I don't use very much. So, for example, words that have to do with buying a house. When I've talked about the whole process of buying a house, the financial aspects of it and the terms involved, and things like mortgages and escrow and things like that, when I've talked about that with my siblings at home, I don't always, I can't always think of the words immediately, the words I need to know, because I've done that in Swedish, I've never done that in English. *Are there any other domains like that, where you don't have the vocabulary in English?* Sometimes taxes, insurance... things related to employment, contracts and things, benefits.

(40) I have difficulty finding words sometimes in English now, I would say. It's not so bad, but I can clearly struggle. I get difficulty sometimes, yes. It's words that you don't use so often that you have to process and try to find, and then it's just easier to get the Swedish one sometimes. I suppose I have more words to do with

things like tax and things like that, because I didn't work full-time [at home], I've only worked full-time here, so probably that sort of administrative language I have more experience with the Swedish than the English.

(41) Oh yes. It was a long time ago, because at work I'm switching back and forth all the time, but before I was in this job, when I was working entirely in Swedish all day, I mean, I can remember, when I'd been in Sweden for about five years, and I think that was probably important that it was about five years that now I was beginning to feel really comfortable in Swedish, I was working entirely in Swedish, using Swedish at home, and then suddenly the place I was working at, they would say "We have visitors coming in from the States tomorrow, can you take care of that visit, since you are an English speaker?" And I just went blank. I just couldn't do it. It was gone completely. And I said somebody else had better do this because I can't remember the words. It really was, that was an awful feeling.

The one informant who initially answered "no" to this question quickly qualified her answer:

(42) I don't think so. Sometimes you have to search for a word, and I have noticed, sometimes in fact when I go home [...] that I'm not as fluent, sometimes I'm a bit halting and have to think before I say certain terms that I wouldn't be using on a regular basis, that has happened. And sometimes I tend to use expressions not least associated with child, what would you say, maternity terms, because I was never pregnant, that wasn't part of my discourse [...] before I came to Sweden. I became pregnant here and had my children here, and those terms which are associated with childbirth and pregnancy that I was using, that meant something to me, are very often terms that I don't always know the English equivalent to them because it's not vocabulary I was using or was interested in the least in until I became involved myself.

While there is a great deal of variety in the statements above, indicating that this is by no means a uniform process, there are a few patterns. Many informants reported occasionally having trouble finding the exact words and phrases that they wanted in English. Strategies for dealing with this differed; in the example given in statement 32 the informant deliberately chose a more appropriate Swedish word, in statement 33 the informant created a new term in English, while in statement 35 the word occurred to the informant in a third language before Swedish or English.

Nearly all of the informants identified domains for which they lacked the appropriate vocabulary in English. This is an area where the amount of time spent in Sweden, or perhaps more accurately, the stage of life one is in when one leaves one's home country, is highly relevant. Many of the respondents had come to Sweden as young adults, and/or after meeting their Swedish partner or spouse, and therefore, had particular life experiences for the first time in Sweden, such as full-time work and paying taxes, buying property, having children, and in one case, exposure to ice hockey.

In addition to the domains for which informants lacked vocabulary because they had left their home country before having particular life experiences, there is also the issue of domain loss

when it comes to slang and other neologisms. In four of the interviews the informants indicated that their idiolects may have stagnated when they moved to Sweden. As noted in section 4.2.1, one informant said that people in her home country sometimes remarked that she didn't use slang, and another was told that his English was old-fashioned. Other informants said:

(43) I feel like my English stagnated a little bit when I left [home], because I feel it's moved and I haven't. Just a couple of words, but I thought, "hmm, OK!" Especially talking about the younger generation, my nieces and nephews, I listen to them and think, "oh, that's interesting!"

(44) Also things that have come since I left the English-speaking world, we had a discussion in the translation course, whether car windows were "tinted" or "toned". And I couldn't think of it, you know, I had to look it up or Google it or whatever. I still can't remember which it was.

Several informants reported having difficulty speaking English during periods when they were spending most of their time speaking Swedish. In these situations the individuals were in the position of immigrants who experience L1 attrition due to lack of use. One of the informants was in that situation at the time of the interview, as she had been speaking Swedish both at work and at home almost exclusively for some time. It was clearly a struggle for her to speak English during the interview. Several informants who had experienced difficulty speaking English in the past, such as in statement 41 or 24, found that they were able to regain their ability to speak consistently in English when they started using it regularly again.

It is also noteworthy that nearly all of the concrete examples of word borrowing given are nouns. An area for further study would be to examine whether some types of lexical items are more likely than others to be borrowed from an L2 into an L1.

4.2.5 Rough-tuning

As demonstrated in the quotes in section 4.2.1, several informants acknowledged modifying their way of speaking to be more easily understood. Informants were asked "Do you think you speak English in more or less the same way with everyone that you speak English to?" The answer to this question may be obvious. Even if one never leaves one's home country one still adjusts one's register depending on the listener; one usually speaks to one's boss and one's children in very

different ways. However, the informants in this study may find themselves adjusting more frequently than they would if they were living in their home countries. Most of the informants said that they do often have to adapt their way of speaking to different situations and different listeners:

(45) No, I think I adjust. Well if I'm speaking to a non-native speaker I would speak more carefully, more slowly, pronounce better, when I'm talking to my friends [from home] I use more slang, you know, you have this familiar language that you use with each other. Maybe I can't do the same with people, like Swedish speakers here, or even people perhaps from England or America might not get it either, you know what I mean? So not a drastic difference, but just some things.

(46) No, the English I use with my husband and children is different to the English I use with foreigners, English as a second language. With those who are not from the [same country], no, not in the same way that I use language at home. Depending on the relationship you have with that person, I change it to fit the relationship.

(47) No. I adapt it, I speak differently in the classroom, I try to be more aware of the fact that I'm speaking to non-native speakers. As a language teacher you simplify your speech. And I realized it, actually, this week, how much I've done that because [colleague] asked me to come to her pronunciation class and read a passage so they could hear my variety of English and they were supposed to transcribe what I said. She also wanted them to see if they could hear a difference between [colleague]'s English and my English. So I felt free to read it as I would if I was talking to people from [home]. And once I did I could almost hear the way my mother would have read it in the background. And I realized that, yeah, the English I speak in the classroom is artificial, really, in a way.

(48) Yes, I think so. *With students?* I try to speak clearly, I try to speak slowly, even though I probably speak very fast with them, I don't know, but I do not speak pidgin English when I'm speaking to them, I try to speak normally. Because I find that myself very irritating, when someone is speaking to me, pronouncing everything very clearly, as if I'm some sort of half-wit. So I like to speak clearly so they can understand what I'm saying without slowing down to a ridiculous pace, I've never done that.

(49) No, I modify my English depending on the speaker's proficiency. Certainly with students I would tend to modify my English. And with my kids I make an effort to use an extended vocabulary and explain words if necessary... I try to make sure I don't simplify my English too much when I don't need to. I make a conscious effort to use my vocabulary actively.

(50) No. Register comes in there and I have to adapt my English to who I'm talking to, absolutely. I mean my children, for example, I'm a mother, my colleagues, which I would regard as my friends; in meetings, where I would be required to be more formal, and with my students, where I'm required to be the teacher. So I have all these different registers. I would adapt my vocabulary to who I'm speaking to because a non-native speaker, my job is to get them to understand me, so therefore my vocabulary would change dramatically. If I speak to a native speaker and a native speaker from my own country, I can start using idioms and in-jokes which only we could understand, and I see very clearly cultural differences between my colleagues as well, and so I would adapt and I would be sensitive and culturally sensitive as well in my language choice.

(51) It depends on the listener. Of course. You're talking about just pronunciation, or content, or... [Interviewer: *Pronunciation and choice of words.*] Oh, definitely. If I was speaking to [other people from the same home country], some Swedish people that understood English listening to us and they didn't know us, they'd probably think we hated each other, because that's just the way [we] make fun. [...] But like, I've met you for the first time, I couldn't use those words. It's more of a neutral language, I suppose, in content, and I have to cut down on the slang too.

(52) No. With my students I tend to slow down, use less slang, simpler words sometimes, depending on the level of students. I tend to use more slang, I think, talking to [people from the same country] than I even would with other native speakers, because I assume that you know the same words I do. I think in general I speak to the staff who have different varieties of English, I think I tend to speak pretty much the same, but I definitely speak differently to the teachers than I do to the students.

(53) Generally I would say yes. Because of my job I speak faster with my colleagues than I would with my students. In generally, with students probably no matter where they come from I would speak more slowly, more clearly anyway just as part of the teaching situation. But in general, with colleagues I would generally speak full-speed.

(54) No. Very definitely not. When I'm at an international conference or something like that, which is three or four times a year, something like that, I will be speaking careful what I call "Brussels English", which is awful. No idioms, no jokes, no irony, lots of long, bureaucratic-sounding words, and just awful. But you have to speak it to be understood, or not to be misunderstood. And that's not just the language as such, it's sort of choice of phrasing and humor. Avoid British irony, it gets misunderstood. And consciously simplify. [...] I do this sort of consciously all the time, adjusting the level of difficulty to whomever I'm talking to. And sometimes I guess wrong completely and make a fool of myself, I'm speaking much too simply to somebody who has a university degree and just done a PhD in unemployment insurance or something like that. So I do consciously adjust, yeah.

Ten of the 13 informants gave specific examples of rough-tuning their speech. It is not clear whether this constant adjusting for non-native speakers of English, in many cases students, has any effect on the informants' idiolect outside of those situations. A question for future research is whether habitually rough-tuning one's speech has any effect on one's idiolect outside of those specific situations in which rough-tuning is necessary.

4.3 Summary and Analysis

Data collection for this paper was designed around several hypotheses, outlined in section 2. Below those hypotheses are revisited in light of the data described above:

1. The idiolects of native English speakers living in Sweden change with prolonged residence abroad. Most of the informants reported that there had been changes in their way of speaking that were noticed in their home countries. Some of these changes were similar in nature to Pavlenko's five phenomena describing L2's effect on L1, presented in section 2.1, which were *borrowing transfer, convergence, shift, restructuring transfer, and L1 attrition* (Pavlenko 2003). However, the degree to which these phenomena were present in the informants' speech in the interview situation was for the most part minimal and controllable. A thorough investigation of these phenomena would require a syntactical and phonological analysis of the informants' everyday speech and a comparison with the speech of speakers of the same varieties who had not lived abroad.

2. *Idiolect change can take one or more of the following forms:*

- *Difficulty finding words or otherwise expressing oneself in English.* All informants reported having had at least occasional difficulty in finding words or expressing themselves.
- *Inadvertent code-switching into Swedish when speaking English.* While most of the informants reported that they engaged in code-switching, most indicated that they were conscious of doing so, and would not do so when speaking to a person who did not know Swedish. This was borne out in the interview situation, in which most informants did not code-switch while they knew they were being recorded, but did code-switch once the recorder was turned off.
- *Use of non-standard grammar and collocations.* With one exception, informants' speech came across as standard in the interviews. On the acceptability test, informants were not more likely than the control group to identify "Swenglish" sentences as acceptable, although they were more likely than the control group to be able to understand false cognates.
- *Borrowing from other varieties of English.* Several informants said they use words from other varieties of English, while fewer claimed to borrow ways of pronouncing words. In the responses to the acceptability test, there was no pattern with regard to informants' variety of English, in contrast to the control group, where several sentences elicited different responses from the British English speakers than from the rest of the respondents.
- *Phonological changes.* Several informants reported that changes in their accent had been commented on by people in their home countries, but to what degree any phonological changes are influenced by Swedish and to what degree they are influenced by other varieties of English is unclear.

3. *Idiolect change may be caused by:*

- *Learning and using Swedish.* All the informants in the study described themselves as comfortable speaking Swedish. Many informants reported that there were times when they found it easier to use a Swedish word than an English one.
- *Prolonged exposure to the errors common to native Swedish speakers using English.* The results of the acceptability test indicated that the informants were not more likely than the control group to accept “Swenglish” errors.
- *Being part of an English-speaking community that includes speakers of different varieties of English than one’s native variety.* Several informants who work with other native English speakers said that they would choose different words when speaking to colleagues who are speakers of a different variety of English. One informant reported that the difference between British and American English was no longer distinct for him.
- *Rough-tuning one’s English to be better understood by non-native speakers of English.* Nearly all informants reported frequent rough-tuning but it is not clear what effect this may have on their idiolect. It would seem that rough-tuning is situation-specific for this group of informants, as none of them used overly-simplified speech in the interviews.

Several of the hypotheses, then, are not supported by this data, while others may be worthy of further study. Most of the informants have experienced some degree of idiolect change, but not to a degree that could be called attrition. Just as Porte concluded in his study of English teachers in Spain, “there is no evidence that the L1 of these subjects has suffered significant attrition” (Porte 2003: 117), except in the case of one informant. Other informants reported having experienced in the past a situation that could be called attrition, but were able to recover their ability to speak English effortlessly when they resumed using it regularly.

5. Conclusion

Porte's study of EFL teachers in Spain raised the concern that individuals whose authority as English teachers depended largely on their ability to provide a native speaker model of the language were at risk of losing one of their primary qualifications if their prolonged residency abroad had altered their English. (Porte 2003: 104). If this was of any concern for the informants in the present study, many of whom are English teachers, it would seem that there is no need to worry. While the data indicates that most, if not all, of the informants have undergone some degree of idiolect change as a result of living in Sweden, the effects have in most cases been minor. Informants are able to control most aspects of idiolect change, like code-switching, though some exceptions were noted, such as in situations of extreme stress, or lack of knowledge of the English equivalents for domain-specific terminology.

The study elicited some interesting results with regard to varieties of English. While informants did not necessarily indicate a greater tolerance for "Swenglish" than the control group when evaluating sentences in English, they did show a lesser degree of adherence to a particular variety of English, or in other words, a greater tolerance for grammatical constructions and word choices considered standard in another variety of English but not considered standard in their own. Furthermore, several informants reported being aware of or even consciously using words belonging to another variety of English or being told that their vocabulary or accent had changed to sound more like another variety of English. This type of change could even be considered positive, not least for English teachers, as English as a lingua franca moves further and further from native-variety standards to a more neutral international means of communication.

Several possible new research areas were identified in this study. One is to investigate more deeply whether habitually rough-tuning one's speech, particularly to make oneself better understood to non-native speakers of one's L1, has any wider effect on an individual's idiolect outside of the situations in which the rough-tuning takes place. Another is whether native English speakers feel any pressure to conform to a variety of English other than their native variety in an

international context, and the social and linguistic factors contributing to this. A related issue is whether English speakers living outside their home countries become more tolerant of the differences between their native varieties and other varieties, as the difference in the acceptability test results between the informant group and control group seemed to indicate.

In the interviews, nearly all the informants said that people in their home countries commented that the way that they speak had changed since they moved to Sweden. They gave examples of code switching and borrowing of Swedish words into English. This identifies a need for an examination of informants' natural language in non-interview conditions, with an analysis of its phonology and syntax, and whether any generalizations can be made about which lexical items are more likely to be borrowed.

In summary, this paper has provided evidence that native English speakers' idiolects do change with prolonged residence abroad, even in a situation in which speakers are able to use their L1 regularly, but that these changes are relatively minor. This paper has also provided evidence that further study of the nature of these changes is warranted, particularly as concerns phonology, syntax, and adherence to particular varieties of English.

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Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. How old are you, if you don't mind me asking?
2. What is your occupation or occupations, or what do you spend most of your time doing?
3. How long have you lived in Sweden?
4. Tell me the story of how you came to be living in Sweden.
5. How comfortable are you speaking Swedish?
6. Where are you from, and/or what variety of English did you grow up speaking?
7. Growing up, were there any people you spent a lot of time with that spoke differently from most of the people around you?
8. Can you name all the places you have lived that may have had an influence on the way you speak?
9. What languages have you studied?
10. What language(s) do you currently speak in your home/with your immediate family members, and if more than one language, what is the balance?
11. What languages do you use on a regular basis outside your home?
12. Are there any languages that you used to speak on a regular basis but do not now?
13. When you visit your native country now, do people there ever comment on the way that you speak? What do they say?
14. Have you ever been so immersed in a foreign language that you momentarily had difficulty finding words or expressing yourself the way that you wanted to in English? Can you give an example?
15. Do you often speak English with people who are not native speakers of English?
16. Do you often speak English with native speakers of English who speak a different variety of English from yours?
17. Do you often speak English with native speakers of English who speak the same variety of English as you?
18. Do you think you speak English in more or less the same way with everyone that you speak English to?
19. Do you ever switch between two languages in the middle of a conversation, a sentence, or a word? Are there situations in which or people with whom you do this regularly?
20. Do you ever find yourself using words that belong to another variety of English than your native variety? For instance, British "flat" vs. American "apartment"?
21. Do you ever find yourself pronouncing words differently than in your native variety of English? For instance, American "gaRAGE" vs. British "GARage"?

Appendix 2: Acceptability Test

The portion of the sentences that was searched for in the corpus is in italics.

1. *I'm afraid he will not be able to attend the meeting.*

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: 17,000+ hits for "I'm afraid I will not be able."

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	12	31
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	7
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	0	0
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

2. *Have you been home for the holidays this year?*

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: No hits, but "Did you go home for the holidays" 9 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	10	20
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	16
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	0	1
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	1

3. *I don't see your name here. Are you registered on the course?*

British Corpus: 3 hits

American Corpus: No

Google: 66,000 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	6	15
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	3
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	4	20
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

4. *John is responsible for managing the transition.*

British Corpus: 5 hits

American Corpus: 4 hits

Google: 54,900,000 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	11	20
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	16
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	0	1
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean. 1 (Br)	0	1

5. *I don't know her very well, but she seems like a very sympathetic person.*

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: 4 hits, different meaning

Google: 2100 hits, different meaning

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	7	26
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	8
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	5	3

There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	1
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6. This gives the possibility of obtaining information on the source of the problem.

British Corpus: 4 hits

American Corpus: 4 hits

Google: 185,000 hits, top hits all related to high technology, computing

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	1	7
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	4	18
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	7	11
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	1	2

7. The customer service department has the responsibility for dealing with complaints.

British Corpus: 14 hits

American Corpus: 17 hits

Google: 1,650,000 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	4	26
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	8
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	8	3
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	1

8. Various methods were used to research this question.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: 7 hits

Google: 32,000 hits, top hits seem to be American

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	9	35
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	2	3
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	2	0
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

9. The public at the concert loved his performance. They gave him a standing ovation.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: some hits, but not from native English speaking countries

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	4	14
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	4	13
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	5	11
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

10. Does your business have many concurrents?

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: No hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	1
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	0	2
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	10	4

There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean. 3 31

11. My judgement of the situation is that the problems stem from a simple miscommunication.

British Corpus: 1 hit
 American Corpus: No hits
 Google: 6200 hits, most top hits not native English

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	3	19
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	5	18
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	5	1
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

12. We will treat this topic in the two sections that follow.

British Corpus: 4 hits
 American Corpus: 2 hits, both theological
 Google: 11,200 hits, most top hits not native English

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	6	15
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	15
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	4	7
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	1

13. If you add five with six you get eleven.

British Corpus: No hits
 American Corpus: No hits
 Google: one hit for "two with two"

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	5
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	4	18
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	9	15
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

14. There is a high probability for rain tomorrow.

British Corpus: No hits
 American Corpus: No hits
 Google: 11 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	15
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	5	7
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	7	16
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

15. Have you an opinion on the matter?

British Corpus: 51 hits
 American: 60 hits (archaic?)
 Google: 18,200 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	4	16
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	6	22
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	3	0
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

16. She's really engaged in local politics.

British Corpus: 2 hits
American Corpus: 13 hits
Google: 771,000

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	3	27
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	4	10
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	6	1
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

17. Are these figures actual?

British Corpus: No hits
American Corpus: No hits
Google: 851 hits, top hits used in a different sense

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	2	7
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	2	17
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	9	13
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	1

18. My son started gymnasium this year.

British Corpus: No hits
American Corpus: No hits
Google: 408 hits, top hits from non-native English sources

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	2	4
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	0	16
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	11	16
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	2

19. She has spent her entire career in the banking branch.

British Corpus: No hits
American Corpus: No hits
Google: 611 hits, top hits different context

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	3	12
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	2	9
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	8	15
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	2

20. You have to be consequent with children or they won't respect you.

British Corpus: 2 hits, social science, different meaning
American Corpus: No hits
Google: 39,900 hits, technical meanings

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	1	0
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	1
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	11	20
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	17

21. From the slopes of these lines the value of x could be calculated.

[word order]

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: No hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	3	16
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	11
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	6	10
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	3	1

22. He finished his exam in 2002.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: No hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	15
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	0	10
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	12	7
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	1	6

23. My father just got a new job. He controls passports at the airport.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: No hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	5
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	2	5
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	11	24
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	4

24. She's very good in organizing parties.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: 3,680 hits, most top hits appear to be non-native

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	6
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	1
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	12	31
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

25. They say that the nature around Lund is beautiful.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: 1 hit

Google: 3220 hits, non-native

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	5
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	17
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	10	16
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

26. We are six people in this department.

British Corpus: 1 similar hit

American Corpus: 1 similar hit

Google: some similar hits, none with the same meaning

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	5	0
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	16
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	5	22
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

27. Could you contact the travel agent?

British Corpus: Standard, not checked

American Corpus: Standard, not checked

Google: Standard, not checked

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	12	34
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	3
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	0	1
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

28. I have not seen him during the last weeks.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: 2 similar hits

Google: No exact hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	2
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	13
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	8	23
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	1	0

29. There is no place for another desk in here.

British Corpus: No hits for physical objects

American Corpus: No hits for physical objects

Google: 2 hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	5	14
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	3	20
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	5	4
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

30. He worked for Google already in the 1990s.

British Corpus: No hits

American Corpus: No hits

Google: 340 hits, top hits foreign

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	0	0
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	6	1
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	7	29
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	8

31. Could you please book a room at the Hilton?

British Corpus: Standard, not checked
American Corpus: Standard, not checked
Google: Standard, not checked

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	11	35
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	3
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	1	0
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

32. Four couples are coming to dinner tonight.

British Corpus: Standard, not checked
American Corpus: Standard, not checked
Google: Standard, not checked

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	12	34
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	4
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	0	0
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

33. There's some newly-made coffee in the kitchen.

British Corpus: No hits
American Corpus: No hits
Google: 200 hits, top hits non-native

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	4	13
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	6	19
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	3	6
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

34. The university's education is offered on campus as well as by distance.

British Corpus: No hits
American Corpus: No hits
Google: No hits

	Informants (Total: 13)	Control Group (Total: 38)
This sentence sounds fine to me.	3	3
I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong.	1	12
There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean.	9	23
There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.	0	0

Appendix 3. Acceptability Test: Informant Responses

Numbers in the table represent: 1) This sentence sounds fine to me; 2) I wouldn't say it that way, but it's not wrong; 3) There is a mistake in this sentence, but I understand what they mean; and 4) There is a mistake in this sentence and I don't understand what they mean.

Question numbers correspond to the questions in Appendix 2 above.

Question #	American	American	American	American	Australian	Australian	British	British	British	British	British	Irish	Irish
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
3	1	2	3	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	3	1
4	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1
1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	3	1	1
6	3	2	2	4	2	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	3
7	3	2	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	1	3
8	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	1	1
9	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	1	3
10	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3
11	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2
12	1	1	1	3	1	2	3	3	2	1	3	2	1
13	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	2
14	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3
15	2	3	2	3	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
16	1	3	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	3
17	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	3
18	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	3	3	3
19	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	2
20	1	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
21	1	3	3	2	1	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	1
22	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
23	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
24	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
25	2	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
26	1	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	3
27	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
28	4	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2
29	1	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	1	3	3	1	2
30	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2
31	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
32	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
33	1	2	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	3
34	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	3

