"*Last month, it was a snowstorm*"

A Study of the Use of 'It' as a Dummy Subject by Swedish L2 Learners of English

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Abstract

This study investigates whether Swedish students, at two different levels of study, are able to distinguish between 'it' and 'there' when using the two as dummy subjects. This particular feature was chosen since previous research (e.g. Estling- Vannestål, 2007; Köhlmyr, 2003; Davidsen-Nilsen & Harder, 2001) has shown that Swedish students tend to overuse 'it' in such constructions: something which may adhere to the fact that Swedish only has one corresponding construction with 'det'.

In order to investigate the realizations of dummy subjects, two different instruments were designed to elicit the construction under investigation: a grammaticality judgment task and a fill-in-the-blanks task. The data were collected from Swedish L2 learners of English at two different proficiency levels. The first group consisted of 41 students in their final year of Swedish compulsory school (15-16 years old) and the other consisted of 22 students taking the stage 7 English course in their final year of upper secondary school (18-19 years old).

The results reveal that most students realize the Swedish 'det' used as a dummy subject as 'it' or 'there'. However, a few students in 9th grade also provided 'is', 'we', 'that' and 'this', as possible dummy subjects which may suggest partial mastery of this construction. Moreover, in accordance with the results found in Köhlmyr (2003), this study shows that Swedish students tend to overuse 'it' in these constructions, especially the students in 9th grade. Furthermore, the results suggest that the students in their final year of upper-secondary school use more target-like forms of dummy subjects than those in 9th grade. When comparing the results from the two instruments, there is a similarity with respect to the use of the 'anticipatory *it*'. This is not the case, however, for the uses of the 'prop *it*' and the 'existential *there*'.

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1. Introduction

Acquiring a distinction in a second language that does not exist in the mother tongue (henceforth L1) is known to be difficult for second language learners (e.g. Ellis, 1994, p. 307; Larsen- Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 54; Kjellmer, 2001, p. 330). One such example is split forms where Swedish has one form that corresponds to several different forms in English (Ellis, 1994, p. 307). Previous research shows that a particular split form is problematic for Swedish second language learners (henceforth L2 learners) of English, namely 'it' and 'there' when the two function as dummy subjects (for the definition of dummy subjects, see section 2.2). Standard Swedish only has one form, 'det', which is used as a dummy subject in all contexts. Several researchers (e.g. Davidsen-Nilsen & Harder, 2001; Estling- Vannestål, 2007; Köhlmyr, 2003; Kjellmer, 2001) have observed that Swedish L2 learners tend to overuse 'it' in these constructions, resulting in prescriptively incorrect sentences such as:

(1)* *It is somebody at the door* (Davidsen-Nilsen & Harder, 2001, p. 27). [1]

A thorough review of prior studies (e.g. Kirby & Becker, 2007; Johnson, 2001; Delahunty, 1991) shows that there is a lack of research that exclusively focuses on how the dummy subjects 'it' and 'there' are learnt by L2 students of English. Therefore, there is a need to shed some light on how this particular construction is realized in English by L2 learners. Moreover, it is important to investigate how often students confuse the two and if there is a difference between the errors made by the less proficient students and those who are more proficient. The overall aim of this study is therefore to elicit dummy subjects from students at two levels of study, in order to compare their realizations.

The structure of this essay is as follows. The first section explores the development of L2 English and dummy subjects. After this section, the method, aims and research questions are formulated. This section also accounts for the experimental methodology within SLA, the context, the participants of this study, the instruments used to elicit dummy subjects and the procedures of data collection. The next section presents the results which are examined more thoroughly in the discussion section. The final section summarizes major findings and proposes questions for future research.

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[1] The symbol *indicates that this sentence is ungrammatical.

2. The development of L2 English and dummy subjects

This section is divided into three different subsections. Firstly, there is an account of Processability Theory where we take a closer look at how this theory explains the development of L2 English. Secondly, there is a description of the two English dummy subjects 'it' and 'there', the different constructions in which they appear and the corresponding Swedish constructions. Finally, there is an account of previous empirical work on the realizations of dummy subjects in English provided by L2 learners.

2.1 Processability Theory

The field of SLA is a broad field of research drawing on many different theories, such as behaviorism, innatism, connectionism and interactionism, just to mention a few (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp. 35-44). As noted by Lightbown and Spada (1999, p. 45), there is no consensus among scholars working in the field as to how a second language is learnt. However, many scholars (e.g. Pienemann & Keßler, 2011; Ellis, 1994; Håkansson; 2013) tend to agree that L2 learners pass through different developmental stages when acquiring their L2.

These stages have been formulated within the framework of Processability Theory (PT). PT suggests that "learners [can only] acquire those linguistic forms and functions which he or she can process" (Pienemann & Keßler, 2011, p. 27). The aim of PT is, thus, to determine the order in which L2 learners process different structures in the target language (Pienemann, 1998, p. 5). In this view, the earlier stages need to be processed in order for the L2 learner to be able to process the more complex ones (Skehan, 2008, p 418). Consequently, it is ineffective to teach a complex structure such as subordinate clauses before the L2 learner has passed through the preceding stages (Bardovi-Harlig & Comajoan, 2008, p. 393).

These developmental stages are not language-specific and are therefore the same for speakers of different L1s (Johnston, 2000, p. 2). According to PT, the first stage is characterized by the use of single words and prefabricated sequences, such as 'I don't know' (Johnston, 2000, pp. 20-21). The learner then assigns a category and functional roles to the different words. It is not until this is processed that the learner can subsequently connect items within the phrase. This is particularly evident in the verb phrase agreement in English (Håkansson, 2013, pp. 112-113). From this stage, the learner proceeds by connecting phrases and then eventually sentences (Håkansson, 2013, p. 113). In the last stage, the learner acquires how to connect clauses and how to produce subordinate clauses (Håkansson, 2013, p. 114).

These developmental sequences are learnt in an 'implicational order'. This means that the learner passes through this developmental progression without skipping stages (Ortega, 2009, p. 132). However, as stressed by Lightbown and Spada (1999, p. 85), learners do not leave one stage behind them and then enter another one. Alternatively, Lightbown and Spada (1999, p. 85) emphasize that one should "think of a stage as being characterized by the emergence and increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the disappearance of an earlier one". Furthermore, this developmental progression is non-linear, meaning that each new stage does not always represent the use of a more target- like form (Ortega, 2009, p. 121). For example, within the framework of PT, overgeneralizations of a particular form are seen as indicators of processability. In other words, overgeneralizations made by L2 learners indicate that the learners process the form in question since the learners create their own variety instead of just repeating what they have been taught (Håkansson, 2013, p. 115).

One study within the framework of PT is that of Dyson (2010). He conducted a longitudinal study of two adolescent learners of English with different language backgrounds. Dyson (2010, p. 2) used Emergence Analysis to provide an account of the 'onset' of different grammatical features. In his study, he used stages of development based on the predictions made by PT to account for the subjects' linguistic development. Dyson argued that by determining the 'onset' or the first productive use of a structure, Emergence Analysis traces the point in time at which the learner is capable to process a given feature in the target language (Dyson, 2010, p. 5). Dyson (2010, p. 7) outlines the following stages of development for syntax in his study:

Table 1 Stages of Development for Syntax according to Dyson (2010)

Stage/Procedure	L2 outcome	Morphology	Examples
4 Sentence procedure	Interphrasal Morphology	3SG-s	he eats at home
3 Phrasal procedures	VP morphology NP morphology	Tense agreement Phrasal plural	has seen many dogs
2 Category procedure	Lexical morphology	Plural-s Possessive pronoun	the dogs my dog
1 Lemma	Invariant forms & formulae		How are you?

In addition to this table, Dyson (2010, p. 8) hypothesized that the 'existential *there*' emerges at stage 4. This is highly relevant to my study as it implies that existential propositions are processed relatively late.

Another useful hypothesis for this study, put forward by researchers within the framework of PT, is the 'Unmarked Alignment Hypothesis'. According to this hypothesis, learners at the initial stages only produce utterances using 'canonical word order' (SVO for English). This means that learners at this stage do not arrange information according to "given" and "new". Instead, the subject of the clause always occurs first in the sentence (Pienemann & Keßler, 2012, p. 242). This is relevant for my study as existential constructions with 'there' are used to structure information; an idea that will be elaborated in the following section.

2.2 What is a dummy subject?

There are several different terms denoting the English dummy subjects 'it' and 'there'. Estling-Vannestål (2007, p. 294) uses the term 'preparatory subjects', Delahunty (1991, p. 213) denotes them expletive *it* and *there,* whereas Köhlmyr (2003, p. 125) uses the term 'introductory *it*'. However, for the purpose of this study, the terminology used in Quirk et al. (1985) has been adopted.

In grammar, a dummy is an item that has no semantic content of its own. It is simply there to fill a function in the clause (Huddleston, 1984, p. 59). English has two dummy subjects, namely 'it' and 'there', which function as subjects in different contexts. 'Dummy *it*' can be further divided into three different types: the 'anticipatory *it*', the 'prop *it*' and 'it' in cleft constructions (Hasselgård et al., 2012, p. 304). This study, however, will only focus on the uses of 'anticipatory *it*' and 'prop *it*'.

The 'anticipatory *it*' is used in extraposed clauses where the former subject has been moved to the end of the sentence (Quirk et al., 1985, p. 1391). The purpose of the 'anticipatory *it*' is to give an evaluation of a fact or an action that appears in the extraposed clause (Hasselgård et al., 2012, p. 304). As Hasselgård et al. (2012, p. 304) illustrate, a clause with an 'anticipatory *it*' often has the following structure:

aS	V	sP	S
it +	*be* +	adjective +	*that*-clause
	seem	indefinite NP	infinitive clause
			-ing clause

However, 'it' is also used in in another construction where there is no postponed subject. Quirk et al. (1985, p. 348) call this construction the 'prop *it*'. The 'prop *it*' is mainly used in clauses referring to weather, time and distance (Quirk et al., 1985 p 348). Estling - Vannestål (2007 p. 296) states that the construction with the 'prop *it*' is also used in Swedish, as shown in the following examples:

(2)
    a.   *It's very hot in here*

    [My translation]: **Det** är väldigt varmt här inne.

    b.   *It's not very far to York.*

    [My translation]: **Det** är inte så långt till York.

    c.   *It's very late*

    [My translation]: **Det** är väldigt sent.

(Quirk et al., 1985 p .748)

The other dummy subject in English, that is 'there', is used in sentences where an existence of some kind or occurrence of something is expressed (Biber et al., 2002, p. 412). Accordingly, this use of 'there' is referred to as the 'existential *there*'. The main purpose of the 'existential *there*' is to introduce new information into the discourse (Biber et al., 2002, p. 412). It is most often used with the simple present or the simple past form of 'be'. However, Hasselgård et al. (2012, p. 302) state that the 'existential *there*' can also be used with other verbs denoting existence or appearance, such as: "exist, remain, appear, emerge and occur *"*.

It is important not to confuse the 'there' used in existential clauses with the 'there' used as an adverb. Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1405) stress that the 'there' in existential clauses differs from the 'there' used as an adverb since it lacks the locative meaning of the adverb 'there' and behaves like the subject of a clause. Furthermore, when 'there' is used as an adverb it is placed in the final position while the 'existential *there*' takes the subject position (Hasselgård et al., 2012, p. 301).

Moreover, Hasselgård et al. (2012, p. 301) emphasize that the grammatical concord with the verb phrase is determined by the notional subject. However, in informal English people tend to use the form 'there's' in all contexts, even if the notional subject is in the plural. This is not accepted in standard written English where a verb phrase is required in the plural along with a plural notional subject in 'existential *there*' constructions (Hasselgård et al., 2012, p. 301).

Thus, the 'anticipatory *it*' is used when the postponed subject is a complement clause whereas the 'existential *there*' is used when the postponed subject is a noun phrase (Estling –

Vannestål, 2007, pp. 294, 296). In Standard Swedish 'det' is used in both cases. This is illustrated in the following examples:

(3) *There are some people in the waiting room.* (Quirk et al*.,* 1985, p. 1405)

[My translation]: **Det** är några personer i väntrummet.

(4) *It is a pleasure to teach her*. (Quirk et al*.,* 1985, p. 1392)

[My translation]: **Det** är ett nöje att undervisa henne.

However, as noted by Svartvik and Sager (1996, p. 196), in some dialects of southern Sweden 'där' is used in the same contexts as 'there' which might facilitate the understanding of the uses of 'there' for Swedish L2 learners from this part of the country[2].

2.3 Previous empirical work on dummy subjects

Most studies conducted on dummy subjects describe dummy subjects from a monolingual point of view (e.g. Kaltenböck, 2003; Delahunty, 1991; Kirby & Becker, 2007; Johnson, 2001). Not only do these studies focus on the syntactic and semantic properties of dummy subjects*,* but also on the L1 acquisition of 'it' or 'there'. In addition, there are several studies which have been conducted from a contrastive point of view focusing on how the constructions with dummy subjects are realized in different languages or similarly how the organization of information differs between languages (e.g. Chocholoušová, 2007; Boström Aronsson, 2005). Despite this, and as pointed out by Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006, p. 215), there has been minimal research vis-à-vis this construction from the perspective of second language acquisition.

Yet, there are a few studies that discuss L2 learners' use of dummy subjects. Köhlmyr (2003, pp. 4-5) examined grammatical errors made in 383 written compositions by Swedish L2 learners of English in 9th grade. She found that the majority of errors made in pronominal use was due to the failure to distinguish between 'it' and 'there' (Köhlmyr, 2003, p. 290). Her results showed that these errors were either errors of substitution or omission (Köhlmyr, 2003, p. 126). The majority of errors was that of substitution, where 'there' was most often replaced by 'it' (ex. 5). In the remaining instances, 'there' was either substituted by 'that' (ex. 6) or 'what' (ex. 7*).* However, she only found two cases of substitution of 'it' by 'that' (ex. 8*).*

(5)* *It is a lot of beautiful girls in Sweden* [there]

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[2] The participants of this study do not use this construction with 'där' as a dummy subject even though they are from the southern part of Sweden.

(6)* *And so many people isn't that in Sweden.* [there]

(7)* *If what not finns a ticket I love to go and se…* [there]

(8) * *Thats are wery fantastic to see how they are bilding* [it]

(Köhlmyr, 2003, p. 127)

Interestingly, Köhlmyr (2003, p. 127) noted that 'there' was often replaced by 'it', but 'it' was never replaced by 'there'. This tendency of overuse of 'it' as a dummy subject has also been observed among Norwegian learners in Hasselgård, Johansson and Lysvåg's contrastive Norwegian-English grammar (2012, p. 307). Norwegian has the same 'det'-construction as Swedish has and it is therefore interesting to note that Norwegian learners also tend to overuse 'it' as a dummy subject.

After having given a thorough account of the errors made by the students, Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290) sought to analyze the causes behind these errors. She concluded that occurrences where either 'it' or 'there' was replaced by 'that' were likely to be caused by transfer from Swedish. This conclusion was based on the fact that 'that' is phonologically and orthographically very close to the Swedish 'det'. However, according to Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290), the use of 'it' where one would have expected 'there' could not be accounted for as a transfer error. Instead, Köhlmyr (2003, p. 291) referred to this type of error as overgeneralization of 'it'.

Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290) suggested that this overuse of 'it' could be caused by the fact that the first equivalent of 'det', when looking it up in a dictionary, is 'it'. According to Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290), this could be an explanation as to why learners tend to choose 'it' over 'there'. Moreover, she argued that the orthographical and phonological closeness of 'there' to the Swedish 'där' might dissuade learners to use 'there' as a subject since 'där' functions as locative adverb in standard Swedish.

Dušková (1969, p. 12) conducted a similar study on 50 postgraduate Czech adults in which she sought to investigate the errors they made in grammar and lexis. Among other things, Dušková (1969, p. 23) found that Czech learners confused 'it' and 'there' when the two were used as dummy subjects. The use of 'there' was most problematic for the Czech learners. She found that in most cases 'there' was replaced by 'it', resulting in utterances such as:

(9)* *it is many further points that would have to be solved.*

(Dušková. 1969, p. 35)

However, 'it' was also replaced by 'there' in some contexts which lead Dušková (1969, p. 23) to conclude that these errors were caused by confusion between the two English forms 'it' and 'there' rather than interference from Czech forms.

In a more recent study, Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006) compared the use of 'existential *there*' constructions in several English L1 and English L2 corpora in order to shed some light on how this construction is realized by Spanish L2 learners of English. They found that 'existential *there*' constructions were more common in the writing of Spanish L2 learners than in the writing of native English speakers (Palacios-Martínez & Martínez-Insua, 2006, p. 213). According to Palacios-Martínez and Martínez-Insua (2006, p. 213), the more frequent use of the 'existential *there*' by Spanish L2 learners could be explained by the fact that 'existential *there*' constructions are introduced at an early stage in English teaching and that this construction is learnt as a prefabricated sequence by Spanish L2 learners of English. In addition, Palacios-Martínez & Martínez-Insua (2006, p. 218) observed that these presentative constructions are very common in both Spanish and English.

Furthermore, they found that Spanish L2 learners of English confuse 'it' and 'there' when using the two as dummy subjects. However, as opposed to Swedish and Norwegian learners, the Spanish learners tended to overuse 'there' in these constructions, resulting in sentences such as:

(10) *there is not clear who must be rehabilitation: whether criminals or society itself.* ,

(Palacios-Martínez & Martínez-Insua, 2006, p. 219)

They concluded that the overuse of 'there' by Spanish learners could be caused by the fact that these learners might find it difficult to make a distinction between the locative adverbial 'there' and the 'existential *there*' (Palacios-Martínez & Martínez-Insua, 2006, p. 221).

As previously mentioned, there are only a few studies that investigate the realizations of dummy subjects provided by L2 learners. More research is needed to examine how this construction develops in the interlanguage of L2 learners. Therefore, the present study hopes to shed some light on these constructions by examining how dummy subjects are realized in English by Swedish L2 learners.

3. Method

The main aim of this study is, thus, to investigate how Swedish L2 learners of English (at two different levels of study) realize the Swedish 'det' in English when it is used as a dummy subject. This particular construction was chosen as previous research shows that Swedish L2 learners tend to overuse 'it' in these constructions (see section 2.3). Therefore, other English equivalents of the Swedish 'det' such as '*it*-clefts' or '*what*- clefts' are not considered for this study. The following questions are, thus, addressed in this study:

- What different realizations do Swedish L2 learners provide for the Swedish 'det' when it is used as a dummy subject?

- How common is the failure to distinguish between 'it' and 'there' used as dummy subjects among Swedish L2 learners?

- Is there a difference between the errors made by the students in 9th grade and those made by the students in their final year of upper secondary school?

- Is there a difference between the errors made in the two tasks?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to establish the experimental methodology used for this study. Therefore, the experimental methodology within SLA is outlined in section 3.1. Furthermore, to gain a greater understanding of how the English language is taught in Sweden, a description of the context can be found in section 3.2. As one of the main aims of this study is to compare how this construction is realized by Swedish students at different proficiency levels two groups of participants must be included. These are accounted for in section 3.3. In order to examine how these L2 learners realize the Swedish 'det' functioning as a dummy subject in English, instruments designed to elicit dummy subjects were used. These instruments are more thoroughly described in section 3.4. Lastly, in section 3.5 the procedures of data collection are presented.

3.1 Experimental methodology within SLA

Within the field of second language acquisition, researchers use different instruments in order to gain an insight of L2 learners' knowledge of grammatical features in the target language at a particular stage of development (Lardier, 2012, p. 114). Lardier (2012, p. 114) states that there is a wide range of different elicitations methods such as collecting spontaneous speech, narrative stories or tasks that are designed to elicit a particular grammatical construction in the target language. The use of the latter is preferable when studying structures that are not very frequent in naturalistic speech: which is the case with dummy subjects (Lardier, 2012, p. 114).

Furthermore, as noted by several researchers (e.g. Taylor, 1975, p. 76; Larsen- Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 26), L2 learners tend to avoid structures in the target language that they do not yet master. In addition to this, and as stressed by Taylor (1975, p. 76), it is important to control the learner's linguistic output in order to be able to compare their linguistic knowledge of a particular construction in the target language. For this reason, instruments designed to elicit dummy subjects were chosen for this study.

One such task used within SLA is known as a grammaticality judgment task (GJ). It is a task where students are presented with several sentences, some of which are grammatically correct and some of which are grammatically incorrect. Then, the students are asked to judge whether they think a sentence is grammatically correct or incorrect (Ellis, 1994, p. 705). In some designs of GJs the students are also asked to provide corrections to the sentences that they have indicated as grammatically incorrect (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 18). Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, pp. 18-19) note that these tasks provide information about what learners think is correct or incorrect in the target language at their level of proficiency. Furthermore, if the students are asked to correct the incorrect sentences these tasks can be used to elicit learner language. It is worth noting that Mandell (1999, p. 87) included this step in his study in order to make sure that the students responded to the structure under investigation.

However, many researchers have questioned the reliability and validity of grammaticality judgments (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 19). In a response to this critique, Mandell (1999) and Ito (1997) investigated the reliability of GJs. Mandell (1999, p. 73) tested English L2 learners of Spanish on the verb movement, whereas Ito (1997, p. 89) tested Japanese L2 learners of English on relative clauses. Both researchers found that grammaticality judgment tasks are indeed reliable indicators of learners' L2 competence (Mandell, 1999, p. 92; Ito, 1997, p. 97). Consequently, a grammaticality judgment task will constitute one part of the elicitation procedure for this study.

However, as noted by several researchers (e.g. Ito 1997, p. 89; Pienemann, 1998, p. 273) learners' performance varies depending on the task and one single task cannot, thus, account for learners' knowledge of a grammatical item. Therefore, another elicitation instrument was included in this study.

Another commonly used elicitation instrument within SLA is fill-in-the-blanks-tasks. A fill-in-the-blanks task consists of sentences with a gap in which the student is asked to fill in the appropriate form. This task is used by researchers to study students' performance when dealing with syntactic patterns (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 27). As observed by DeKeyser (1990, p. 150), this task is preferred over multiple choice tasks as it makes the

student focus on the relevant part of the sentence without providing the student with a possible answer. Therefore, a fill-in-the-blanks task was included as a part of the elicitation procedure for this study.

3.2 Context

In Sweden, the English language is first introduced within the first three years of the Swedish compulsory school (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 33). According to the national curriculum, the main aim of studying English is "to develop all-round communicative skills" (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 32). The instruction in English should, thus, focus on helping the students to develop their ability to use the language in different contexts and for different purposes (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 32). Consequently, there is no indication in the curriculum as to what grammatical competence the students are expected to have acquired at different levels of study.

In the first three years of instruction in English, the language is mainly taught through songs, rhymes, simple instructions, descriptions and topics familiar to the students (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 33). Then, between years 4 and 6, the instruction also focuses on "events and activities, views, feelings and experiences" (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 33). The students are also expected to produce simple written and spoken "presentations, instructions, messages, narratives and descriptions" (Skolverket 2011a, p. 34). In the successive three years, the instruction still focuses on "current and subject areas familiar to the pupils" (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 34). In addition, culture and social relations in the English- speaking world are discussed at this level (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 34). The student should also be able to understand oral and written information as well as discussions of current affairs presented in, for example, newspaper articles. The pupils are required to clarify and vary their language by employing more elaborate "pronunciation, intonation and fixed language expressions, grammatical structures and sentence structures" (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 35).

The first group of this study consists of students in year 9. According to the Swedish National Agency of Education (2011a, p. 37), a student in year 9 is required to understand the basic content in English spoken at a moderate pace and in basic texts of different genres. In addition, the student is expected to form simple, understandable and relatively coherent utterances. The pupils should also be able to discuss some features related to different parts where English is spoken in relation to their own situation (Skolverket, 2011a, p. 37).

The second group of this study consists of students taking the stage 7 English course. According to the Swedish National Agency of Education (2011b, p.11), the stage 7 English

course focuses on "theoretical and complex subject areas", such as scientific texts, contemporary and older literature, but also issues related to culture, politics and history of areas where English is spoken. The students are required to adapt their language to different genres, styles and purposes. In order to pass this course, the students need to be able to understand the main content of the course, both in written and spoken English. The pupils are also required to discuss, comment and draw their own conclusions from the topics discussed in a clear, varied and structured way (Skolverket, 2011b, pp. 12-13).

The curriculum offers some general ideas as to what a student is expected to achieve at different levels of study. However, as noted by Ortega (2009, p. 144), people differ greatly in how fast and how well they learn an L2. This individual difference may be due to foreign language aptitude or higher motivation, but also due to greater exposure to the target language as a result of travels, social medias and popular culture.

The two groups chosen for this study are useful to compare as the two levels of study focus on different aspects of the language. The English instruction in year 9 mainly focuses on subjects that are familiar to the students, whereas the stage 7 English course focuses on more complex subjects. Furthermore, the students taking the stage 7 English course have been exposed to and have studied English longer than the students in year 9. It is therefore useful to examine whether the three extra years of instruction and the focus on more advanced texts result in the use of more target-like forms of dummy subjects.

3.3 Participants

Due to the time constraint of this study, a longitudinal study, which involves examining the development of the linguistic performance among a few subjects over a period of time on several occasions, was not possible (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 11). Accordingly, this study uses a quasi-longitudinal design, meaning that the data were collected at one single point in time from different learners at different proficiency levels (Granger, 2004, p. 131).

The initial group of participants consisted of 78 students from two different levels of study: students of English in their final year of Swedish compulsory school (9th grade) and students in their final year of upper-secondary school taking the stage 7 English course. These levels were selected since I wanted to compare the use of dummy subjects at two different levels of proficiency in order to examine whether there is a difference between their realizations of the Swedish 'det' functioning as a dummy subject.

This study seeks to further investigate the use of dummy subjects by Swedish L2 learners of English since there is a difference between the two languages in how the 'existential *there*' and the 'anticipatory *it*' are realized. Therefore, data from participants who indicated an L1 other than Swedish in the questionnaire were not included in the analysis. The final data pool consisted of 64 participants: 41 participants in 9th grade and 22 participants in their final year of upper secondary school.

The first group (henceforth G1) consists of 9th graders (15-16 years old) who have had approximately 7 years of prior classroom instruction in English. Data from this group were collected at two different schools in the small town of Kristianstad. Whereas, the second group (henceforth G2) consists of students in their final year of upper-secondary school taking the stage 7 English course (18-19 years old). They have had approximately 10 years of prior classroom instruction in English. Data from this group were collected from an upper-secondary school in the same town. The two groups were, thus, homogenous with regard to nationality, language background and educational level.

3.4 Instruments

Two instruments were designed to elicit the relevant construction under investigation. A questionnaire was also administered to assess prior years of classroom instruction in English and the students' mother tongue.

The first instrument was a grammaticality judgment task (see Appendix I) consisting of 10 items. The students were asked to read each sentence and then indicate whether they thought the sentence was acceptable or unacceptable. If they indicated a given sentence as being unacceptable, they were then asked to add changes that they felt would make the sentence acceptable. This step was included to ensure that the students did not respond to any construction in the sentence other than the dummy subject and to elicit learner language. The instrument consisted of 4 prescriptively correct sentences containing a dummy subject, two sentences where 'it' had been replaced by 'there' and two sentences where 'there' had been replaced by 'it'. Both instances of the 'prop *it*' and the 'anticipatory *it*' were included. The prescriptively correctness of the sentences was based on the criterion cited in '*English grammar: Theory and use*' (Hasselgård et al., 2012) and '*A comprehensive grammar of the English language*' (Quirk et al., 1985). Furthermore, two sentences without a dummy subject were included as distracter items.

The second instrument was a fill-in-the-blanks task (see Appendix II) where the students were asked to fill in what they thought was the appropriate translation of the Swedish 'det' in 14 different contexts. The Swedish translation of each sentence was given within parenthesis to ensure the use of dummy subjects. The items used in this instrument were designed to elicit 5 instances of the 'existential *there',* 3 instances of the 'anticipatory *it'* and 2 instances of the 'prop *it'*. Four distracter items were also included.

3.5 Procedures

The data were collected during the students' regular English lessons. It was clearly stated that their results would not affect their grade and that they would remain anonymous. Instructions were given orally and written both in Swedish and in English ensuring a misunderstanding of the instructions would not interfere with the results.

The students were first asked to fill in the questionnaire. After that, the students were handed the grammaticality judgment task. It was not until they had finished that task that they were given the next one so as to not give away any clues how to realize the Swedish 'det' in the blank of the fill-in-the-blanks-task. The students were allowed 15 minutes to carry out the two tasks and all participants finished within the time limit.

4. Results

The results of this study are presented in this section. First, the results from the grammaticality judgment task are revealed in section 4.1 and then, those from the fill-in-the-blanks task are presented in section 4.2.

4.1 Results from the grammaticality judgment task

This task was designed to reveal what the students thought was acceptable or unacceptable with regard to the use of dummy subjects. In order to calculate the results, two measures had to be taken into account. First of all, the percentage of students who thought a given sentence was acceptable or unacceptable (see Table 2 below) and secondly, the different alterations provided by the students when they judged a given sentence as unacceptable were counted in percentage and are presented in Tables 3 and 4 below. The distracter items (sentences number 2 and 9) are not included in the results.

Table 2 Results for the grammaticality judgment task

Items	G1		G2	
	acceptable	unacceptable	acceptable	unacceptable
1. It is difficult to concentrate on homework while being on Facebook.	100 %	0	100%	0
3. It is a car on the road.	46.3%	53.7%	36.4%	63.6%
4. Last month, there was a snowstorm.	78.0%	22.0%	63.6%	36.4%
5. There seems like we have made a mistake.	2.4%	97.6%	0	100%
6. This winter, there has been twelve degrees below zero.	31.7%	68.3%	22.7%	77.2%
7. There were a lot of hungry people outside the restaurant.	80.5%	19.5%	90.9%	9.1%
8. It is a big difference between living in Kristianstad and New York.	63.4%	36.6%	27.3%	72.7%
10. There is a long way from Sweden to the United States.	31.7%	68.3%	18.2%	81.8%

A first look at the Table 2 reveals that there is a greater extent of consensus among the students in G2 compared to those in G1 in terms of what they believe is acceptable or unacceptable, with the exception of sentence number 4. For example, sentence number 10 was deemed as unacceptable by 68.3% of the students in G1 whereas the percentages of students in G2 who judged the same sentence as unacceptable were significantly higher (81.8 %). Despite this, there is a similarity between the two groups where the majority of both groups has deemed sentences 1, 4 and 7 as acceptable and the majority of both groups has indicated sentences 3, 5, 6 and 10 as unacceptable. The majority of the students in G1, however, judged sentence number 8 as acceptable while most of the students in G2 have noted the same sentence to be unacceptable.

Sentences number 4 and 7 are considered to be prescriptively correct. Nevertheless, some students have judged these sentences as unacceptable. This finding will be more thoroughly dealt with in section 5.1 where the alterations provided by the students are discussed. These alterations are presented in Tables 3 and 4. They are sorted according to frequency: the most frequent alteration is stated first and the least frequent alternations are stated last.

Table 3 Alterations provided by the students in G1

Items	Student Responses						Total [3]
3	There is a car on the road. (86.4%)	It's a car at the road. (9.1%)	It's a car on the road. (4.5%)				22
4	Last month there was a snowstorm. (33.3%)	There was a snowstorm last month. (22.3%)	Last in month, there was a snowstorm. (11.1%)	The last month, there was a snowstorm. (11.1%)	Last month it was a snowstorm. (11.1%)	Last month there were a snowstorm. (11.1%)	9
5	It seems like we have made a mistake. (95.0%)	There seems like their was a mistake. (2.5%)	It's seems like we have made a mistake. (2.5%)				40
6	This winter, it has been twelve degrees below zero. (78.5%)	This winter, there were twelve degrees below zero. (7.1%)	This winter, has been twelve degroes below zero. (3.6%)	This winter, there is been twelve degrees below zero. (3.6%)	In this winter it has been twelve degrees below zero. (3.6%)	There has been twelve degrees below zero this winter. (3.6%)	28
7	There was a lot of hungry people outside the restaurant. (100%)						8
8	There is a big difference between living in Kristianstad and New York. (60%)	It is a big difference between living in Kristianstad and living in New York. (26.6%)	There are a big difference between living in Kristianstad and New York. (6.7%)	It is a huge difference between living in Kristianstad and New York. (6.7%)			15
10	It's a long way from Sweden to the United States. (100%)						28

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[3] This refers to the number of participants in G1 who indicated that a given sentence was unacceptable and added changes, not the total number of participants overall.

Table 4 Alterations provided by G2

Items	Student Responses						Total[4]
3	There is a car on the road. (100%)						14
4	There was a snowstorm last month. (75.0%)	Last month, it was a snowstorm. (25.0%)					8
5	It seems like we have made a mistake. (100%)						22
6	This winter, it has been twelve degrees below zero. (41.1%)	It has been twelve degrees below zero this winter. (35.3%)	This winter, there has been days with twelve degrees below zero. (5.9%)	This last winter, we reached 12 degrees below zero. (5.9%)	This winter, the temperature has gone twelve degrees below zero. (5.9%)	This winter there have been twelve degrees below zero. (5.9%)	17
7	There was a lot of hungry people outside the restaurant. (100%)						2
8	There is a big difference between living in Kristianstad and New York. (100%)						16
10	It is a long way from Sweden to the United States. (94.4%)	The way from Sweden to the United States is long. (5.6%)					18

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[4] This refers to the number of participants in G2 who indicated that a given sentence was unacceptable and added changes, not the total number of participants overall.

As illustrated in Tables 2 and 3, the students in G1 have provided a greater variety of alterations than the students in G2. As an example, in sentence number 4 the students in G1 provided 6 different alterations whereas the students in G2 only provided two different alternative sentences. Furthermore, the changes provided by the students in G1 are generally less target-like than those provided by the students in G2. This is seen in the following examples of alterations provided by students in G1:

> (11) * *This winter, there were twelve degrees below zero.* [sentence number 6]
>
> (12) * *There seems like their was a mistake.* [sentence number 5]

4.2 Results from the fill-in-the-blanks task

This task was designed to elicit the dummy subjects 'it' and 'there'. In order to calculate the results of this instrument, the occurrences of dummy subject X in a given sentence were counted. Again, the distracter items number 2, 5, 9 and 12 were not included in the results (see appendix II for a list of all items).

Table 5 Results for the fill-in-the-blanks instrument

Group Items	G1						G2	
	'It'	'There'	'Is'	'That'	'We'	'This'	'It'	'There'
1	19.5%	80.5%	0	0	-	0	9.1%	90.9%
3	100%	0	0	0	-	0	100%	0
4	29.3%	68.3%	0	0	2.4%	0	4.5%	95.5%
6	100%	0	0	0	0	0	100%	0
7	17.1%	80.5%	2.4%	0	0	0	0	100%
8	97.5% [5]	0	0	0	0	2.5%	100%	0
10	97.5% [6]	0	0	0	0	2.5%	100%	0
11	46.3%	53.7%	0	0	0	0	54.5%	45.5%
13	87.8%	12.2%	0	0	0	0	77.3%	22.7%
14	95.2%	0	2.4%	2.4%	0	0	100%	0

As illustrated in Table 5, most students realize the Swedish 'det', functioning as a dummy subject, as either 'it' or 'there' in English. However, there is more variability among the students in G1 who, besides 'it' and 'there', used 'is', 'we', 'that' and 'this'. 'Is' and 'we' cannot be considered as realizations of the Swedish 'det', but rather as misinterpretations of the instructions. 'That' and 'this', on the other hand, can be the equivalent of the Swedish 'det' in certain constructions, but not when 'det' functions as a dummy subject. This could

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[5] One student did not fill in this gap.
[6] One student did not fill in this gap.

suggest that these students are not yet able to process dummy subjects (see section 5.2 for a more thorough discussion of this issue).

There is a greater extent of agreement among the students in G2 as to the preferred dummy subject in the different sentences (except in sentence 11). As an example, in sentence number 4, a clear majority (95.5%) of the students in G2 preferred 'there' whereas only 68.3% of the students in G1 preferred 'there' in this sentence. However, just as in the grammaticality judgment task, there is a similarity between the two groups where the majority of both groups preferred 'there' in sentences number 1, 4 and 7. Similarly, the majority of both groups preferred 'it' in sentences number 3, 6, 8, 10, 13 and 14. This was not the case in sentence 11, however, where there did not seem to be a preference for either dummy subject among the students. A small majority of G1 preferred 'there' to 'it', whereas a small majority of G2 preferred 'it' to 'there'.

5. Discussion

5.1 Grammaticality judgment task

The results from the grammaticality judgment task gave rise to two questions that will be discussed in this section:

1. Why do a number of students judge sentences that are prescriptively considered to be correct as unacceptable?
2. Why do a number of students judge sentences that are prescriptively considered to be incorrect as acceptable?

If we turn to the first question, the two sentences judged as unacceptable, even if they are considered prescriptively correct, are sentences number 4 and 7. Sentence number 4 seems to be judged as unacceptable by the students mainly because of the structure of information in the sentence. Most students in both groups provided the alternative sentence:

(13) *There was a snowstorm last month.*

Both constructions are prescriptively considered to be correct, as mentioned beforehand, it is simply a question of information structure. This alteration may, however, confirm the 'Unmarked Alignment Hypothesis' proposed by PT whereby students first acquire the SVO-order, and then start to use other constructions such as adverb fronting in this case (Pienemann & Keßler, 2012, p. 242). This hypothesis may therefore explain why a number of

students preferred the 'canonical word order', as opposed to the sentence with adverb fronting.

However, a few students changed the dummy subject to 'it' resulting in the following sentence:

(14) * *Last month, it was a snowstorm*,

This is an example of an overgeneralization of 'it' observed by Köhlmyr (2003). As noted by Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290), 'there' is orthographically and phonologically close to the Swedish locative adverbial 'där' which might push students to avoid using 'there' as a subject. This may be the reason why a few students have presumed this sentence unacceptable and consequently changed the dummy subject to 'it'.

If we turn to the second sentence that some students indicated as unacceptable, namely sentence number 7, it becomes clear that all students who have deemed this sentence as unacceptable have based their judgment on the fact that the verb phrase is in the plural. It is for this reason they have changed the verb phrase to singular resulting in the following sentence:

(15) *There was a lot of people outside the restaurant.*

 As noted in section 2.2 by Hasselgård et al. (2012, p. 301), this construction with a notional subject in the plural and a verb phrase in the singular, is very common in colloquial English: a point which could explain why these students have provided this alternative sentence. However, this is not considered to be prescriptively appropriate in standard written English. In addition, the concord with the quantifying pronoun 'a lot of' is determined by the noun that it refers to (Biber et al., 2002, p. 234). In this sentence, the quantifying pronoun refers to the noun 'people' (which is used in the plural) and the verb phrase should, thus, also be in the plural. However, this quantifying pronoun might have lead the students to change the verb phrase.

In contrast to the above judgments, there are also instances where students have judged a given sentence as acceptable despite the fact that it is considered descriptively incorrect. In sentences 3 and 8, the dummy subject 'it' was used instead of the prescriptively correct dummy subject 'there'. Sentence number 3 was judged as acceptable by almost one half of the students in G1, whereas a slightly lower percentage of the students in G2 believed it to be acceptable. However, in sentence number 8 the judgment differs between the two levels of study: a small majority of the students in G1 deemed it acceptable, whereas a majority the

students in G2 judged the same sentence as unacceptable. This suggests that the students in G2 showed more target-like intuitions than the students in G1.

The second case to be discussed in this section is sentences where the dummy subject 'there' was used instead of the prescriptively correct dummy subject 'it': namely sentences number 6 and 10. The two sentences contain instances where one would have expected the use of the 'prop *it*'. As noted by Estling- Vannestål (2007, p. 296), the Swedish language, when referring to weather and distances, has the same construction with 'det' as English. It is, thus, surprising that some students have failed to correct these sentences. If we compare the results from sentence number 5, where 'there' was also used instead of the prescriptively correct 'anticipatory *it*', almost all students succeeded in recognizing the fact that the correct dummy subject should be 'it' instead of 'there'. This suggests that these students show more target-like intuitions regarding the uses of the 'anticipatory *it*' than that of the 'prop *it*'.

However, when interpreting these results, one must also take into account that there is a possibility that some students may have found it easier to simply claim that a given sentence was acceptable in order to avoid having to provide an alternative sentence. Indeed, some students may have indicated a sentence to be acceptable even though they considered the sentence as unacceptable: possibly due to the fact that they did not know what alternative sentence to provide. This might suggest partial mastery of this construction.

5.2 Fill-in-the-blanks task

This section discusses the instances in which students have given the prescriptively incorrect dummy subject as well as instances where the two proficiency levels differ in what dummy subject they prefer in a given context.

A first look at Table 5 reveals that 'it' is generally used in contexts where one would have expected the more target- like form 'there'. However, 'there' is never used in the contexts where one would have expected 'it'. These results show the same tendencies found by Köhlmyr (2003, p. 127) where students also substituted 'there' by 'it', but never replaced 'it' by 'there'. Moreover, this finding refutes the explanation given by Dušková (1969, p. 23): that these errors are caused by a confusion between the two English forms 'it' and 'there'. If that were the case for Swedish L2 learners, we would also have found instances where 'it' was replaced by 'there' which has not been the case in this study.

A more plausible explanation for this overgeneralization of 'it' is that proposed by Köhlmyr (2003, p. 290). She suggests that the overuse of 'it' by Swedish L2 learners of

English could be explained by the fact that the first entry found in a dictionary when looking up 'det' is 'it'. However, according to the framework of Processability Theory the overgeneralization of 'it' indicates that existential constructions are indeed processed by the students. They are creating their own versions and they will continue to do so until they have acquired the target-form (Håkansson, 2013, p. 115).

However, there are also a few students in G1 who have used other forms that were not anticipated in this study, such as 'this', 'that', 'we' and 'is'. The phonological and orthographical closeness of the Swedish 'det' and 'that', suggest that the use of 'that' as a dummy subject instead of 'it' or 'there' might be due to transfer (Köhlmyr, 2003, p. 290). These less target-like forms may also indicate that these students do not yet process existential and extraposed structures. Furthermore, this finding might support the hypothesis posited by Dyson (2010, p. 8): that existential constructions emerge relatively late at stage 4.

From these results, it is clear that the students in G2 used more target-like forms compared to those in G1, except in sentence number 11. This sentence was also the only instance in which a majority of students in the two different groups preferred different dummy subjects. A small majority of the students in G1 preferred 'there', whereas a small majority of the students in G2 indicated 'it'. Surprisingly, the students in G1 performed with greater accuracy with regards to this particular sentence since 'there' would be the descriptively correct dummy subject. The fact that the dummy subject was used together with a lexical verb ('remain'), instead of the more common construction with simple present or the past form of 'be', may explain why the students found this sentence difficult.

When analyzing these results one has to keep in mind that the previous empirical work conducted on dummy subjects cited in section 2.3 used naturalistic data or corpus data to investigate the uses of dummy subjects by L2 learners. For this study, however, elicitation instruments designed to elicit dummy subjects were used which might make the students pay more attention to form and, thus, perform with greater accuracy compared to a composition task, for example.

5.3 Tasks 1 and 2 compared

If we assume that the two tasks measure the same type of knowledge, it is surprising to note that in the GJ some students failed to recognize the use of 'there' in sentences where one would have expected the use of the 'prop it'. However, in the fill-in-the-blanks task almost all students succeeded in using the 'prop it' with reference to time. These findings might imply,

as has been debated by several researchers (e.g. Håkansson, 2013, p. 118), that GJs tap on another competence than fill-in-the-blanks tasks do.

If we take a look at the use of the 'anticipatory *it*' and judgments made with respect to the use of this construction in the two tasks, however, there is no such difference. All students in G2 and a significant majority of the students in G1 used the 'anticipatory *it*' in sentences number 3, 8 and 10 in the fill-in-the-blanks task. Accordingly, the two groups judged the first sentence of the GJ as acceptable in which the 'anticipatory it' had been used descriptively correct. In addition to that, the students judged sentence number 5 in the GJ as unacceptable where the 'anticipatory *it*' had been replaced by 'there'. Similarly, they provided the prescriptively correct alteration with the 'anticipatory *it*'.

Finally, if we compare the use of the 'existential *there*' in the two tasks there is a greater variability. In the GJ there were two occurrences of the correct use of the 'existential *there*' and two occurrences where 'there' had been replaced by 'it'. The two instances where the 'existential *there*' was used prescriptively correct were judged as unacceptable by a number of students in the two groups. However, as discussed in section 5.1, some students who judged these sentences as unacceptable responded to other constructions than the dummy subjects. Moreover, sentence number 8, in which the 'existential *there*' had been replaced by 'it'*,* was judged as acceptable by a majority of the students in G1, whereas a majority of the students in G2 judged the same sentence as unacceptable. In the fill-in-the-blanks task there is also a greater variability in the students' preference for dummy subject in the sentences designed to elicit the use of the 'existential *there*' (items 1, 4, 7, 11 and 13). As seen in Table 5 above, some students in the two groups preferred 'it' in these contexts. This is particularly evident in sentences number 11 and 13.

In summary, it seems as if the results from the two instruments show a similarity with respect to the uses of the 'anticipatory *it*'. However, no such parallel was found in the uses of the 'prop *it*' and the 'existential *there*' between the two tasks.

6. Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to investigate the use of the English dummy subjects 'it' and 'there' among Swedish students at two different levels of study. In order to investigate this construction two instruments were designed to elicit the use of dummy subjects.

The results of these instruments show that most students realize the Swedish 'det' functioning as a dummy subject as either 'it' or 'there'. A few students in year 9 did, however, also use 'this', 'that', 'is' and 'we' as dummy subjects. Furthermore, in accordance with the results found in Köhlmyr (2003), this study shows that Swedish students tend to overuse 'it' in these constructions, especially the students in 9th grade. Accordingly, the results suggest that the students in their last year of upper-secondary school use more target-like forms of dummy subjects than those in 9th grade.

When comparing the results from the two instruments, it is clear that the students performed with almost 100% accuracy with respect to the use of the 'prop *it*' in the fill-in-the-blanks task. However, some students failed at detecting the prescriptively incorrect use of 'there' instead of the appropriate construction with the 'prop *it*' in the GJ. It has been argued that this might be caused by the fact that the two tasks measure different competences. With respect to the uses of the 'anticipatory *it*', on the other hand, the results from the two instruments show a similarity.

However, there are obvious limitations to this study such as the limited number of participants and the unbalanced number of participants in the two groups. Consequently, this study does not claim to make generalizations to all Swedish students learning L2 English, but can only show tendencies among this particular group of students. Furthermore, this study investigated the use of dummy subjects through tasks designed to elicit the construction under survey which may have lead the students to focus on form and, thus, perform with a greater accuracy than they might have done in a less form-orientated task.

As previously mentioned, this study has its limitations with respect to the number of participants and it would, thus, be useful to replicate this study with a larger group of participants to see whether the same results would be found. Moreover, the use of a wider range of instruments might offer some more insight into how students process dummy subjects. In addition to that, and as noted by Palacios-Martínez & Martínez-Insua (2006), it is important to conduct longitudinal studies on naturalistic data to analyze the emergence of existential clauses and extraposed clauses in the interlanguage of English L2 learners. In this way, developmental patterns could be determined for existential propositions and extraposed clauses.

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Appendix I: Grammaticality judgment task

Please read through the following sentences and indicate whether you think that they are acceptable or unacceptable. If you **do not think a given sentence is acceptable in English**, **please add changes** that would make the sentence acceptable without changing the meaning of the sentence. Please write neatly and legibly.

Läs noggrant igenom följande meningar och ange om du tror att meningarna är acceptabla eller ej. Om du tror att en mening **inte är acceptabel**, var vänlig att **ange ändringar** som skulle göra att den blev acceptabel utan att ändra meningens betydelse. Vänligen texta tydligt.

1. It is difficult to concentrate on homework while being on Facebook.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

2. Victoria handed him the car keys.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

3. It is a car on the road.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

4. Last month, there was a snowstorm.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

5. There seems like we have made a mistake.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

6. This winter, there has been twelve degrees below zero.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

7. There were a lot of hungry people outside the restaurant.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

8. It is a big difference between living in Kristianstad and New York.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

9. She lived in an apartment with three of her friends.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

10. There is a long way from Sweden to the United States.

Acceptable ☐ Unacceptable ☐

_____

Appendix II: Fill-in-the-blanks task

Please fill in the appropriate word to convey the meaning stated in the Swedish translation with parenthesis. Please only use **one word** per blank space

Följande meningar innehåller ett antal luckor. Fyll i det ord som du tycker passar bäst för att den engelska meningen ska betyda samma sak som den svenska meningen inom parentes. Använd bara **ett ord** per lucka.

1. _____ is a good movie on TV tonight at eight o'clock.
(Det är en bra film på tv klockan åtta ikväll.)

2. _____ never responds to my texts.
(Hon svarar aldrig på mina sms.)

3. _____ is important that you eat a balanced diet.
(Det är viktigt att du äter en allsidig kost.)

4. I hope _____ will be enough time to see all the sights of Paris.
(Jag hoppas det kommer finnas tillräckligt med tid för att se alla sevärdheterna i Paris.)

5. Nobody_____ very surprised when it happened.
(Ingen var speciellt förvånad när det hände.)

6. _____ is time to leave the country now.
(Det är dags att lämna landet nu)

7. In the future,_____ will be no forests left.
(I framtiden kommer det inte att finnas någon skog kvar.)

8. _____ seems odd that he would say something like that.
(Det verkar konstigt att han skulle säga något sådant.)

9. Today, many children _____ their homework while their parents are at work.
(Idag gör många barn sina läxor medan deras föräldrar är på jobbet.)

10. In any case,_____ appears that she has changed her mind.
(I vilket fall som verkar det som att hon har ändrat sig.)

11. _____ remain several problems to be solved.
(Det återstår flera problem att lösa.)

12. She does _____ like vegetables.
(Hon gillar inte grönsaker.)

13. _____ appears to be very little we can do about the problem.
(Det verkar finnas väldigt lite vi kan göra åt problemet.)

14._____ is time for a break now.
(Det är dags för rast nu.)