

# En or ett, un or una?

A comparative study on the assignment of grammatical gender to borrowings  
in Swedish and Spanish

Victor Åstrand

BA thesis, General Linguistics

Center for Language and Literature, Lund University

Supervisor: Gerd Carling

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## Abstract

In recent years, experimental studies on gender assignment to borrowings in languages such as German and Dutch have observed variation in gender assignment in relation to dialectal areas, among other factors. However, many issues related to gender assignment have yet to be fully understood, and the sociolinguistic variation has not been properly investigated. The objective of the present study is to compare the linguistic and sociolinguistic criteria for gender assignment, and expand the study by comparing two different languages. I collected 50 loanwords shared between Swedish and Spanish, and let over 160 native speakers of the respective languages, with a variation of sociolinguistic backgrounds, determine what gender they preferred for these nouns. The results indicate that a range of factors influence gender assignment to borrowings, which in Swedish are more centred on semantic criteria than they are in Spanish, for which formal criteria are comparatively more influential. Variation in gender assignment in regard to sociolinguistic factors was also observed, related to age, gender and dialect. These results may serve to reveal more about the gender systems of the two languages investigated, as well as about what criteria are relevant for gender assignment to loanwords on a greater scale and how it varies across different sociolinguistic groups.

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# 1. Introduction

Although grammatical gender is a common feature in Indo-European languages, no gender systems in this family could be deemed perfectly predictable in regard to their gender assignment (Corbett, 1991). Some gender systems, such as that of Spanish, are frequently dubbed transparent, and are considered to be relatively easy to break down and explain (Corbett, 1991; Pérez-Tattam et al., 2019). Others, such as that of Swedish, are more often described as opaque and more difficult to understand (Liljegren, 1996; Van Epps et al., 2021). Previous studies have been conducted which have investigated the gender assignment systems of these two languages (see Smead, 2000; de la Cruz Cabanillas et al., 2007; Källström 1996; Kilarski, 2004, *inter alia*), but few have done so through experimental studies on loanwords. This thesis aims to fill this gap, by investigating gender assignment to loanwords, but also by doing something novel, and put the study into a new context by comparing the gender assignment of the same borrowings used in these two languages.

The objective of this thesis is to investigate the process through which gender is assigned to modern loanwords in Swedish and in Spanish, and how this gender assignment varies within the speaker communities. This is interesting for a number of reasons. Swedish and Spanish have a shared origin in Proto-Indo-European (PIE), which had a three-gender system consisting of feminine, masculine and neuter. Swedish retains the neuter, while feminine and masculine have been combined into the “common” gender (Kilarski, 1997; Van Epps & Carling, 2017), and Spanish retains only the feminine and the masculine (Caldevilla Rodríguez, 2017). As Swedish and Spanish are Indo-European languages with two different gender categories, this could make for an interesting comparison in relation to the influence of the gender categories themselves on gender assignment, together with the influence of other factors, some of them unique to either of the two languages. Corbett (1991) describes the borrowing of nouns into languages with gender systems as a “continuously running experiment” (p. 71), since their assignment of gender will allow us to verify the rules of gender assignment for the language which we are investigating, as they are applied in the present moment.

The studies previously conducted on gender assignment specifically have reached different conclusions. While certain tendencies have been observed related to polysyllabicity (Kilarski, 2004) and the plural suffix (Källström, 1996) in gender assignment to Swedish nouns, the difficulties of applying the formal and semantic criteria to a satisfactory degree to make gender assignment more predictable have led many authors to resort to factors such as semantic similarity and homonymy to explain gender assignment (Källström, 1992; Mickwitz, 2010). In contrast, the studies on Spanish have generally been more successful in establishing factors more akin to rules than mere tendencies. Aspects such as the final phoneme and the biological sex of the referent have to a greater extent been able to explain the gender adaptation of loans (DuBord, 2004; de la Cruz Cabanillas et al., 2007; Morin, 2010).

What previous studies sometimes have failed to consider to a sufficient degree is the fact that the gender of nouns tend to exhibit sociolinguistic variation within the speaker community, based on factors such as age and gender. Some authors, such as Poplack, Pousada and Sankoff (1981), have stated that “[o]nce a borrowed noun is assigned a gender by *whatever* criteria, there is generally unanimous agreement among speakers” (p. 25). Others have found that gender assignment varies even among native speakers (see Callies et al., 2012 for German; Franco et al., 2018 for Dutch). Such a study has yet to be conducted on either Swedish or Spanish.

## 1.1 Research aims and research questions

This study aims to investigate what factors influence gender assignment to modern loans in Swedish and Spanish, and to compare these two languages in regard to linguistic and sociolinguistic factors. Modern loans are here defined as those having entered the respective languages after the year 2000. Few studies have been conducted on the gender assignment to loanwords in these two languages that have included sociolinguistic factors in their analysis. This study aims to conduct an experimental questionnaire study, and expand into a new context by comparing the two languages, which could reveal more about gender assignment to loanwords on a greater scale. The study has an emphasis on sociolinguistic factors, and the variation related to the age, gender, education and dialect of the speakers will be investigated.

The research questions for this thesis are the following:

1. What linguistic criteria correlate with the assignment of gender to new borrowings in Swedish and in Spanish?
2. What sociolinguistic and extralinguistic variation can be found regarding gender assignment to borrowings?
3. What similarities and differences, in regard to the previous research questions, can be found between Swedish and Spanish?



## 2. Background

### 2.1 The concept of gender

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

In order to understand gender assignment, it is first necessary to understand the concept of gender itself. Hockett (1958) defines gender as “classes of nouns reflected in the behavior of associated words” (p. 231), which signifies that the main component of gender is syntactic agreement. This disqualifies classifiers, such as the numeral classifiers of Chinese and Japanese, from falling within the definition of “gender”, as they do not show agreement (Corbett, 1991; Aikhenvald, 2000). Regarding the use of anaphoric pronouns, e.g., *he* and *she*, in a language such as English, the situation is less clear. Corbett (1991) points out that most scholars agree that these present syntactic agreement, and therefore English qualifies as having a gender system. For the purpose of this thesis, however, the main interest is not the likes of the pronominal gender system present in English, but the more universally accepted nominal gender systems. Gender systems can be referred to by a number of different names, such as “noun classes”, and “grammatical gender systems”. They are based on a number of criteria, and must be separated from natural gender systems, which are primarily or exclusively based on the natural characteristics of the referent, such as their biological sex (Batliner, 1984; Corbett, 1991). When using the term “gender”, this thesis henceforth refers to nominal grammatical gender, unless otherwise stated.

#### 2.1.2 Criteria for gender assignment

All gender systems of the languages of the world can be placed on a scale defining the criteria on which the assignment of gender is mainly based. On one extreme, this scale has systems which are completely semantic, and where the semantic content of the word determines its gender regardless of its phonological form, exemplified by Tamil (Arden, 1910; Corbett, 1991). The other extreme has the systems which are fully formal, where the gender, in contrast to semantic systems, would be assigned solely based on the phonological and morphological form of the noun, a close example of which is the phonological assignment system of Qafar, an East Cushitic

language (Corbett, 1991; Hayward, 1991). Naturally, the gender systems of most languages, including the Indo-European languages, fall somewhere between these two extremes. For these hybrid systems, both the *morphological*, *phonological* and *semantic criteria* are taken into account when assigning a gender to a new word, albeit to different extents in different languages. Due to this, the assignment criteria are likely to overlap, and as a result, gender is not always predictable (Corbett, 1991).

### 2.1.3 Gender and borrowings

In addition to these three basic criteria, an interesting situation arises when it comes to borrowings, or loanwords. As the gender assignment rules are part of the linguistic competence of the native speaker (Corbett, 1991), borrowings allow one to test these rules, even on words that might be very unlike native vocabulary. When a new borrowing enters a language, it tends to be assigned a gender according to its meaning and form, just as any other word would (Corbett, 1991; Callies et al., 2010). However, in addition to this, some authors have argued for special assignment rules in the case of borrowings, which are not applied to native words. Regarding the terminology, in this thesis, the terms “borrowing” and “loanword” will be used interchangeably to refer to words adopted from one language and incorporated into another.

#### 2.1.3.1 Analogy

One such special assignment rule that is suggested to be applied to borrowings is *analogy*. According to Poplack, Pousada and Sankoff (1982), analogy involves the association of a loanword with a native word, either due to having a semantic equivalent in the host language, or due to its phonological form being similar, as in the case of homophony, for example. In their study of anglicisms in Puerto Rican Spanish, Poplack, Pousada and Sankoff (1982) found that 84% of borrowings could be assigned an analogical gender in Spanish. An example of semantic analogy is the noun *butterfly*, which was assigned the feminine gender when used in Spanish due to the Spanish equivalent *mariposa* taking this gender.

#### 2.1.3.2 Markedness

Another rule, which has been notably discussed in regard to the gender system of Spanish, is the theory of *markedness*. Some authors have argued that unless there is a specific reason for a

borrowed noun to be assigned the feminine gender, it will always be assigned the masculine (Prado, 1982). Harris (1991) even questioned the usefulness of the label “masculine” altogether, as he claims it just signifies the absence of any grammatical manifestation of the feminine gender. He therefore claims that the masculine gender is marked in no way whatsoever, and that the final *-o*, which is typically associated with the masculine, is lexically unmarked. Similar tendencies have been claimed and observed in Swedish for the distinction neuter/non-neuter, where the non-neuter, i.e., *en*, would be the unmarked gender (Liljegren, 1995; Mickwitz, 2010).

The theory of markedness thus suggests that all nouns by default would be assigned the unmarked gender unless there are other specific factors or indications which gives them a reason to be assigned the marked gender. Corbett (1991), however, is sceptical, and argues that if one gender has more members than the other, it already has the odds in its favour when it comes to assigning the gender to a new noun. He brings up the example of Russian, in which the majority of new borrowings from German end up being assigned the masculine gender. The reason for this, he states, does not appear to be due to the fact that the masculine gender is unmarked, but instead that many German loans end in a consonant, and would therefore be assigned to the first declension type in Russian, and with it the masculine gender. A similar tendency has been shown in Spanish, where Clegg (2010) demonstrated that 90% of the invented words in his study were assigned masculine gender purely on the basis that they ended in a consonant, regardless of the semantic content of the word.

### **2.1.4 Nouns with unstable gender**

In addition to the nouns whose gender is firmly established among the speakers, some languages feature problematic nouns whose gender is unstable (Corbett, 1991). These unstable nouns may take agreement with more than one gender, without the meaning changing. This might be due to a conflict of factors, as although most nouns tend to be predictable on the basis of the information a speaker stores in the lexicon, overlapping factors might cause different speakers to prefer different gender assignment for a certain noun in a certain context. Such variation is more common between speakers than within the individual idiolects of speakers, and is particularly common in loanwords which have yet to be firmly established in the language (Poplack, Pousada

& Sankoff, 1982; Corbett, 1991). According to Corbett (1991), semantic factors usually take precedence when there is a conflict of factors.

## **2.1.5 Sociolinguistic and extralinguistic factors**

### **2.1.5.1 Sociolinguistic factors**

The criteria inherent to the borrowings themselves are not the only factors relevant to the assignment of gender in a language. There exists meaningful sociolinguistic variation between speakers due to differences in dialect, age, gender, education, etc. (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997). Differences in gender preference exist within, as well as between, dialectal communities, but the magnitude of these sociolinguistic differences and how they specifically affect the principles of gender assignment appears to differ between languages and dialects. For example, one tendency observed among the dialects of Swedish which preserve the feminine and masculine genders is that older people tend to prefer traditional gender forms to a greater extent than younger speakers, and gender and education level also appear to have an influence (Rabb, 2007; Van Epps & Carling, 2017).

### **2.1.5.2 Extralinguistic factors**

Extralinguistic factors are factors that influence language variation while themselves not being based in linguistic structure. In addition to the sociolinguistic factors, extralinguistic factors that are likely to have an effect on gender assignment include establishment (Poplack, Pousada & Sankoff, 1982; Franco et al., 2018), as well as formal recommendations (Muñoz-Basols & Salazar, 2019). The degree of establishment of a noun refers to how established it is in the speaker community, which mainly involves how often it is used. Poplack, Pousada and Sankoff (1982) indicated early the impact this has on the consensus on gender assignment among speakers, while Franco et al. (2018) demonstrated that while it has an effect, the degree of consensus likely does not uniquely depend on its level of establishment. The formal recommendations referred to by Muñoz-Basols and Salazar (2019) concern how the advocacy by official institutions responsible for language regulation can affect the stability of a gender and how it is used by speakers, such as the inclusion of a word in a national dictionary.

Finally, it is relevant to mention the concept of transference from the grammatical to the conceptual level, which possibly could have an influence on the variation in gender assignment. Casado, Palma and Paolieri (2021) demonstrated in their recent psychological study how the sex of the speaker primes the activation of information connected to the grammatical gender and the sex stereotype of a noun. This means that female speakers have a faster reaction time and stronger connection for nouns that are grammatically feminine or typically related to feminine concepts, and vice versa. It is not impossible that this also has an influence on the assignment of gender.

## 2.2 Gender and gender assignment in Swedish

The Swedish and the Spanish gender systems have a common ancestor in Proto-Indo-European (PIE). In the case of Swedish, together with English, Dutch and German, it has descended from Proto-Germanic (Pereltsvaig, 2017). Of the three genders of Proto-Germanic (feminine, masculine and neuter), Standard Swedish retains the neuter gender, in addition to the gender frequently referred to as “common” or, in lack of a better term, “non-neuter” (Källström 1996), which was formed through a merging of the feminine and masculine genders (Kilarski, 1997). In this thesis, the term “non-neuter”, which is preferred by authors such as Källström (1996) and Holmes and Hinchliffe (2013), will be used. The reason for this is that the term “common” seems to be ambiguous due to the homonymous category used in languages such as Spanish, as Corbett (1991) points out, and it is therefore inappropriate to use in the context of the gender categories of Swedish nouns. The neuter nouns take agreement that typically ends in *t*, such as *ett stort hus*, “a big house”, whereas the non-neuter take agreement that typically ends in *n* or is unmarked, such as *en stor bil*, “a big car”. According to *Svenska Akademiens Grammatik* (The Grammar of the Swedish Academy) (Teleman et al., 1999), approximately 75% of all nouns are non-neuter, and the remaining 25% are neuter. Apart from these two nominal genders, certain dialects of Swedish, such as Jämtlantic, retain the feminine and the masculine gender categories (Van Epps & Carling, 2017), and Standard Swedish also presents masculine and feminine gender in its pronouns, such as *han*, “he”, and *hon*, “she” (Källström 1996). As the investigation concerns the nominal gender categories of Standard Swedish, this is of limited relevance to this thesis.

### 2.2.1 Semantic criteria

Regarding semantic gender assignment, Källström (1996) notes that there is a strong tendency for nouns denoting humans to take the non-neuter gender. This is not surprising, since non-neuter consists of the feminine and masculine gender categories combined. Kilarski (2004) states that animate nouns could be said to be the prototypical members of the non-neuter category, whereas mass nouns are the prototypical members of the neuter. Liljegren (1995) adds to this that the prototypical non-neuter is concrete, as it has a physical presence and no temporal beginning and end. Some semantic tendencies in Swedish can be seen in Table 1. This table was compiled by Källström (1996), and collects rules noted by several previous authors. He notes, however, that the table is not definitive and should serve merely as a list of hypotheses, and that formal assignment rules perhaps are of greater importance.

**Table 1: Proposed semantic tendencies in Swedish gender assignment (From Källström, 1996).**

Gender	Meaning
Non-neuter	Human beings, animals, time concepts, plants, names of lakes and rivers, tools (including vehicles), dishes and meals, currencies, units of measure (except weights), articles of clothing, dances, works of writing, individualised countable entities.
Neuter	Geographical names except lakes and rivers, berries, letters of the alphabet, linguistic expressions (as metalanguage), units of weight, noises, substances, collectives.

### 2.2.2 Formal criteria

As for the formal gender rules, there are different aspects which might have an impact on the assignment of gender, such as the final phoneme and the syllable structure of the noun. Kilarski (2004) demonstrated in his study on gender assignment that the three most important variables for gender assignment are the plural formation of the word, followed by its suffix, and finally its polysyllabicity.

### 2.2.2.1 Plural suffix

The predictability of the gender of a noun from its plural suffix has been stated by authors, such as Källström (1996), to be perhaps the most reliable factor for gender assignment. This, however, supposes that the plural of the noun is known before the gender is assigned, and renders it useless in the case that it is not, as in the case of a new borrowing.

### 2.2.2.2 Suffix

For the suffix, or the final sequence, of the nouns, in relation to gender assignment, it has to be noted that it is usually not the final phoneme, but the final syllable or even final sequence, that can be useful in determining the gender of a noun (Källström, 1996; Holmes & Hinchliffe, 2013). As most of these sequences are mainly related to native words with final sequences such as *-skap*, and *-dom*, which are sequences that are unlikely to be exhibited in borrowings from foreign languages outside of the Germanic group, few sequences could be said to be relevant in a greater context. The one which is possibly relevant for this study, as it is more likely to occur in borrowings, is *-a*, which is typically assigned non-neuter gender according to Källström (1996).

### 2.2.2.3 Polysyllabicity

Regarding the phonological factor of polysyllabicity, the data of Kilarski (2004) demonstrates that although non-neuter is preferred both for mono- and polysyllabic nouns, the preference for non-neuter is slightly weaker among monosyllables. Källström (1996) states that for monosyllables, the gender assignment of Swedish reaches its highest degree of arbitrariness.

## 2.2.3 Ambiguous nouns

### 2.2.3.1 Variation with no change in meaning

In addition, there are a number of nouns in the native vocabulary of Swedish which exhibit variation in their gender assignment, and could take any of the two genders without the meaning changing (Teleman et al. 1999). Some of these genders vary in the standard language, such as *poäng*, “point”/“score”, and *membran*, “membrane”, while others mainly vary dialectically, such as *apelsin*, “orange”, and *näbb*, “beak” (Teleman et al., 1999).

### 2.2.3.2 Mass/count distinction

Another important type of noun to mention are those for which the difference in gender signifies a difference in the mass/count distinction (Teleman et al., 1999). This is exemplified by a noun such as *öl*, “beer”, where *en öl* means a beer in the sense of “one portion/bottle of beer”, while *ett öl* instead has the meaning of “one kind of beer” (Teleman et al., 1999).

## 2.3 Gender and gender assignment in Spanish

The Spanish gender system has evolved from the gender system of Latin, from which it retains the masculine and the feminine nominal genders. The words which in Latin had the neuter gender were adopted into either masculine or feminine in modern Spanish (Penny, 1991; Caldevilla Rodríguez, 2017). The prototypical member of the masculine is typically characterised by the vowel *o* in word-final position together with the article *un*, such as *un hermano alto* “a tall brother”, whereas the feminine typically ends in *a* and takes the indefinite article *una*, such as *una hermana alta* “a tall sister” (Harris, 1991). In contemporary Spanish, the distribution between the two categories is relatively even, and Bull (1965, in Clegg 2010) indicates that 52% of all nouns are masculine, 45% feminine, while 3% are ambivalent and depend only on semantic criteria. Although some rests of the neuter gender can be found in the pronouns, such as *lo* (Ojeda, 1984; Caldevilla Rodríguez, 2017), as this thesis only aims to investigate nominal gender, it needs not be discussed further.

### 2.3.1 Semantic criteria

Regarding the semantic factors, nouns denoting males have a strong tendency to take the masculine gender, whereas those denoting females tend to take the feminine gender (Real Academia Española, 2010; Caldevilla Rodríguez, 2017). An example of two words which are similar in their phonological form but differ in grammatical gender are *la madre*, “the mother”, and *el padre*, “the father”. Especially when referring to animate nouns, the gender tends to designate the biological sex of the referent, whereas no such claim can be made when it comes to the designation of inanimates, where it merely serves as a grammatical category (Real Academia Española, 2010). The masculine is claimed to be the unmarked gender in Spanish (Prado 1982; Harris, 1991; Real Academia Española, 2010), and it is often used with a generic meaning. As



such, *los padres* could both mean “the fathers” and “the parents”, and *el gato*, “the cat”, refers to a generic cat unmarked for gender, while *la gata*, “the (female) cat”, necessarily refers to a female cat, and can not be used for males (Real Academia Española, 2010).

### 2.3.2 Formal criteria

The system for assignment of grammatical gender in Spanish is frequently referred to as relatively transparent and straightforward (Corbett 1991). Corbett (1991) also refers to Spanish as having a phonological assignment system, as opposed to a semantic. When it comes to native words, there are certain rules, or tendencies, that serve to indicate the gender of the nouns. As for the phonological form, Clegg (2010) summarises previous research which has concluded that the word endings *-a*, *-d* and *-ión* are feminine, while *-l*, *-o*, *-r* and *-e* are masculine endings. This can be put into perspective by the theory of markedness, mentioned previously, which would suggest that the so-called “masculine” endings are in fact not masculine at all, but unmarked. If one follows this view, it would not only be the noun endings *-l*, *-o*, *-r* and *-e* that tend to be assigned the masculine gender, but all possible endings except for specifically *-a*, *-d* and *-ión*, which are the endings classified as feminine by Clegg (2010). These tendencies are, however, not rules. It is generally not possible to predict the gender of a given Spanish noun purely based on its form, and exceptions are common (Harris, 1991). The endings perhaps typically perceived as the baseline for feminine and masculine, *-a* and *-o*, respectively, themselves have exceptions that can be found among the base vocabulary, such as *el día*, “the day” (masculine), and *la mano*, “the hand” (feminine). As demonstrated by Clegg (2010) in his study, over 90% of nouns with non-typical endings could be assigned the masculine gender.

### 2.3.3 Ambiguous nouns

#### 2.3.3.1 Common nouns

In addition to the more regular masculine and feminine nouns, Spanish is a language which has a group of nouns that could be referred to as “common nouns”. Similar to the nouns referred to as “common” in Swedish, these nouns primarily denote people, and the same form of the nouns is employed in the feminine as well as in the masculine gender (Real Academia Española, 2010). Examples include *turista*, “tourist”, *intérprete*, “interpreter” and *modelo*, “model”; all of which

can take either masculine or feminine agreement depending on the biological sex of the referent (Real Academia Española, 2010).

### **2.3.3.2 Dialectal differences**

There also exists some dialectal differences, where a word might be predominantly masculine in one dialect, and feminine in another, or vice versa. The noun *sartén*, “frying pan”, exemplifies this, as it typically takes masculine agreement in the speech of a European Spanish speaker, whereas among Latin American speakers the feminine gender predominates (Real Academia Española, 2005).

## **2.4 Previous studies**

### **2.4.1 Studies on loanwords**

Regarding studies on gender assignment and loan adaptation in Swedish and Spanish, a number of studies have been conducted. Most of these studies have focused almost exclusively on the analysis of nouns that can be found in certain corpora, such as newspapers or online fora, and few, if any, have been carried out methodically using a questionnaire. Some previous studies on Swedish and Spanish will be presented briefly.

#### **2.4.1.1 Swedish**

The previous studies conducted on gender assignment and loan adaptation in Swedish have usually focused mainly on words borrowed from English. One such study is the study by Kilarski (2004), and another by Mickwitz (2010).

##### *2.4.1.1.1 Kilarski (2004)*

The study by Kilarski (2004), which already has been touched upon previously regarding gender assignment in Swedish, compared Swedish, Danish and Norwegian in regard to the gender assignment to anglicisms by assembling a corpus of dictionaries. After analysis using the MANOVA procedure, Kilarski found that over 90% of all loanwords in Swedish were assigned the non-neuter gender. About 96% of animate nouns were non-neuter, together with 64% of mass nouns. The results after evaluating semantic, formal and analogical criteria, as mentioned

previously, are that the main criteria for gender assignment are, in order of importance, the plural formation, the suffix, and the polysyllabicity of a noun. Over 95% of nouns whose plural ended in *-r* or *-s* were non-neuter, while not a single noun with plural ending in *-n* was consistently assigned this gender. Regarding the suffix, close to 98% of nouns with the suffixes *-er* and *-ing* are non-neuter, while the majority with the suffixes *-ment* and *-ery* are neuter. 88% of polysyllabic nouns are non-neuter, while the same number for monosyllabics is 82%. In addition, Kilarski noted how both in Swedish and Danish the vast majority of nouns are assigned the non-neuter gender, which may indicate an ongoing expansion of this gender in the Scandinavian languages, but he does not speak of an unmarked gender.

#### *2.4.1.1.2 Mickwitz (2010)*

Mickwitz (2010) examined the morphological and orthographic adaptations of loanwords from the English language in Swedish, noting that few deeper examinations of gender assignment to loanwords have been conducted in Swedish. Her study was based on Sweden Swedish and Finland Swedish newspaper corpora. In her material, 89% of the nouns were non-neuter, and she hints that the non-neuter appears to be the unmarked gender in Swedish, despite authors such as Kilarski (2004) being critical of this categorisation. This could mean from a diachronic perspective that Swedish, similar to English, might lose a gender and only have a single gender category in the future. The conclusion of her study was that the semantic or morphological similarity with native words was a significant factor in the assignment of gender, and she noted that if a homonym exists in Swedish, loanwords are usually assigned the same gender as this. Her study also confirmed that loans with an animate referent with very few exceptions are assigned the non-neuter gender.

#### **2.4.1.2 Spanish**

As for Spanish, numerous studies have been done on the topic of gender and borrowings, most of which have focused mainly on anglicisms, perhaps due to the presence of both languages in many speech communities in the Southern USA.

##### *2.4.1.2.1 DuBord (2004)*

One such study is the study by DuBord (2004). This study investigated the gender assignment to English words used in the Spanish that is spoken in Arizona. DuBord's method consisted of

interviewing eighteen Mexican-American speakers of Spanish, and the interviews were then analysed and the gender assigned to anglicisms was examined. The main criteria analysed were biological sex, phonological gender and analogical gender. The results showed that the most important factor for gender assignment was the biological sex of the referent, followed by the phonological gender and finally analogical gender. Close to 75% of the anglicisms were assigned the masculine gender. Additionally, close to 8% of the tokens exhibited variation in their gender assignment, which DuBord attributed to their not being greatly integrated in the Spanish lexicon, and the linguistic insecurity of the speakers.

#### *2.4.1.2.2 de la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2007)*

A second study is the corpus based study of de la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2007). The study examined the gender assignment of English loanwords in Spanish in the technological field by analysing five different issues of four magazines addressed at computer users. Approximately 82% of the gendered terms were masculine, and 18% were feminine, which according to the authors is not unexpected, as the masculine is considered the unmarked gender in Spanish. The authors also observed some writers alternating between the two genders of one and the same word. When trying to deduce the reason for the gender assignment, the authors found it difficult to discern whether the cause of a noun being assigned the masculine gender was mainly a factor such as its phonological form, or simply because the masculine is unmarked. In the end, they opted for choosing the “unmarked gender criterion” as the main factor for the gender assignment when it ended in a phoneme unfamiliar in Spanish. Finally, their conclusion was that the most important criterion was the semantic criterion, followed by the phonological criterion, the unmarked gender criterion, and finally the analogy criterion.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodology of this study is inspired by the methodology of Franco et al. (2018), yet the present study aims to put their methodology into a new context by incorporating sociolinguistic aspects, and by examining and comparing the gender assignment of Swedish and Spanish. By investigating the same words in the same contexts in both languages, the two languages will be compared in order to examine what similarities and differences can be found. In each of the two

languages, the goal is to try to deduce which factors appear to have the greatest influence on the assignment of gender to modern loanwords, and how gender assignment varies within the speaker community. This will be done by examining the gender preference and variation for a number of semantic and formal criteria, as well as by reviewing the variation between different sociolinguistic groups and the establishment of the borrowings. The data of the two languages will then be compared with regard to these criteria.

## 3.1 Data collection

### 3.1.1 Questionnaire

The data is collected using a digital questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire contains sociolinguistic questions about the background of the participants, such as their age, sex and mother tongue, as well as dialectic information about where the participant and their parents grew up, and the highest achieved education level of the participant and their parents. Thereafter follow sentences containing a loanword. A total of 50 loanwords are examined, which are the same in the questionnaires for both Swedish and Spanish. The choice of words can be seen in Table 2 and will be motivated further below. The participants are given a sentence which includes a borrowing, and preceding this noun in the sentence is an empty spot, “( )”, where the participants are required to indicate whether they prefer *en* or *ett*, for the Swedish questionnaire, or *un* or *una*, for the Spanish questionnaire. The task is a forced choice task, which means that participants are required to answer every question with one of the two articles, and there is no alternative to skip a question. This is to ensure that participants will answer all questions using their inherent language skills, even if they might not feel confident in the perceived correctness of their answer. In the case that a participant might not have knowledge of a certain loanword, 21 of the borrowings are accompanied by an illustrative image. In Figure 1, an example of a sentence in the questionnaire can be seen, the rest of which can be found in Appendix 1.

Doge är (\_\_\_) meme som har spridits på internet. \*



Typiskt exempel på meme med Doge.

- ☐ en
- ☐ ett

Doge es (\_\_\_) meme que se ha difundido en Internet. \*



Ejemplo típico de meme con Doge.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

**Figure 1: Example of a sentence from each questionnaire.**

The sentences were primarily drafted by finding a sentence containing the word together with its article in one of the corpora used for this study, Korp for Swedish and CORPES XXI for Spanish, or by searching for the word in an advanced search on the search engine Google (google.com). Some of the sentences had their original sentence in Swedish, others had theirs in Spanish, and the sentences were subsequently translated into the other respective language in order to maintain a similar context for the words in both languages. Alternatively, sentences were constructed from scratch where the loanword itself is described in the sentence in which it occurs. This, together with the pictures, was to ensure that the participants knew the semantic content of the words, and to ensure that the sentences were as natural as possible for a native speaker. Many of the sentences found in a corpus, as well as the ones constructed, were adapted for the task by having the relevant loanword occur in the middle or end of the sentence. The purpose of this was to facilitate the naturalness of the task for the respondents by having the borrowing occur in the flow of the example sentences, instead of at their very beginning.

In the questionnaire, the sentences are presented with the answer alternatives shuffled, making them occur in a random order on every question. This is to prevent subjects from gaining a preference for either of the articles due to it always occurring in the first or the second slot. Unfortunately, due to limitations with the questionnaire, the same was not possible for the order of the loanwords without confusing the structure, and the borrowings were therefore presented in the same order for all participants. The only difference in structure between the questionnaire in Swedish and in Spanish is that the Spanish questionnaire had five additional sentences not present in the Swedish version. The reason for this is the fact that feminine nouns beginning with a stressed /a/ in Spanish take the singular article identical to the masculine, while all other agreement is feminine (Real Academia Española, 2010). The questionnaire thus asks about the same words as were asked about in Swedish, while there are extra questions added to five of the borrowings where speakers are tasked with assigning a singular determiner *este* or *esta*. This option was added to words which were suspected of being pronounced with an initial stress by Spanish speakers, in order to ensure that the seemingly masculine article is not merely a phonetic adaptation of the feminine. Additional nouns also have this task in order not to make the purpose overly obvious for the respondents. The words who have the determiner task are *app*, *tablet*, *anime*, *akita* and *haiku*.

### 3.1.2 Word sample

The loanwords collected are all nouns, 30 of which have their origin in English, and 20 have their origin in Japanese. Since borrowings from English are more prevalent in both Swedish and in Spanish than those from Japanese, these constitute 60% of the sample as it facilitated the search for nouns with varied semantic content and phonological form. The reason English and Japanese are chosen as the languages of origin for the borrowings is mainly that they are languages without nominal gender, which according to some authors, such as Corbett (1991), could have an impact on gender assignment. In addition to this, they are also distinct when it comes to their form, as Japanese words usually end in a vowel and have a relatively simple syllable structure, compared to English words. They are also from different language families, and since Japanese is from a different language family than both Swedish and Spanish, the morphological factors are expected to be virtually nonexistent for these borrowings. Regarding the formal criteria, the words collected have a varied syllable structure, including both mono-

and polysyllabic words, and as final /a/ appears to have an effect on the gender assignment both in Swedish and in Spanish, this was also included in the words collected. Additionally, a few words have an initial *a-* which optionally could be stressed, in order to examine whether this affects the gender assignment of the article in relation to the determiner in Spanish. The number of syllables and the final phoneme of the borrowings are both estimated using the pronunciation in the national dictionaries SAOL (Svenska Akademiens ordlista) and DLE (Diccionario de la Lengua Española) if represented, and the pronunciation in the language of origin if not. As for the semantic criteria, the nouns examined are both abstract and concrete, animate and inanimate, and mass and count nouns, for example. Since the concept of abstract nouns could be hard to define precisely, the concept from Liljegren (1996) is followed here, and abstract nouns are defined as those that either have a temporal duration, with a beginning and an end in time, or those that do not have a physical existence in space. In Table 2, the borrowings examined in this study can be seen, and in Tables 5 and 6, further below, their respective formal and semantic criteria are exhibited.

The objective was to collect borrowings that were modern, preferably having entered the languages after the year 2000, in order to better control the establishment factor. However, due to limitations in the form of the corpora and dictionaries, together with the desire for the nouns to be used in both Swedish and Spanish and for them to fill a range of formal and semantic criteria, some words have a longer history in the languages. A notable example is *smog*, which was registered in the Dictionary of the Swedish Academy (SAOB) as early as 1953. The establishment of the words tested is therefore different, both in terms of their history in the language, and in terms of their relative frequency of use. Tables A-D, found in Appendix 1, show the relative establishment of the words, based on the number of tokens in the respective corpora, and whether or not the words are listed in the national dictionaries.

**Table 2: Word sample used in this study.**

Origin	Borrowings
English	app, captcha, chat, cookie, countdown, dumpling, emoticon, fashionista, fidget spinner, firewall, gigabyte, hackathon, incel, laptop, livestream, look, meme, nickname, outfit, quiz, remake, selfie, smartphone, smiley, smog, software, tablet, viagra, vibe, youtuber.



<b>Japanese</b>	akita, anime, emoji, geisha, gyoza, haiku, hikikomori, ikigai, izakaya, keiretsu, kombucha, mochi, netsuke, onsen, sake, sudoku, tanuki, tofu, torii, yukata.
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### 3.1.3 Participants

The participants were recruited digitally through personal contacts. The objective was to reach over 150 responses from a heterogeneous group of informants, both in terms of gender, age, dialect and educational background. By using a larger sample of participants with diverse backgrounds and a smaller sample of words, compared with Franco et al. (2018), sociolinguistic factors are likely to more clearly come to light. The trade-off is that the tendencies related to the formal and semantic criteria of the borrowings themselves might not be able to be observed as clearly.

## 3.2 Variables

### 3.2.1 Variables influencing gender assignment

Based on previous studies, formal and semantic criteria are expected to have a significant influence on gender assignment both in Swedish and in Spanish. The semantic criteria will be centred on, but not limited to, the *animacy*, the *abstractness* and the *mass/count* distinction in Swedish (cf. Kilarski, 2004; Liljegren, 1995), while in Spanish the main focus is the *biological sex* of the referent in the cases this exists (cf. Real Academia Española, 2010). While the morphological criteria are predicted to be of limited importance, especially for the borrowings from Japanese, the phonological structure of the borrowings is expected to influence gender assignment. For Swedish, this is related to features previously mentioned, such as *polysyllabicity* (Kilarski, 2004), and the *final /a/* (Källström, 1996). For Spanish it is instead mainly related to whether the nouns exhibit typically *male or female endings* (cf. Clegg, 2010). The *unmarked gender* in Spanish is taken to be the masculine (cf. Real Academia Española, 2010), and although the classification of the non-neuter as the *unmarked gender* in Swedish is a bit more controversial, this thesis follows Mickwitz (2010) and Liljegren (1995) and assumes the non-neuter gender as unmarked. Due to issues related to space, the analogy criterion will not be

included as a variable in this study. Table 3 and Table 4 summarise the criteria expected to be significant for the gender assignment, and Table 5 and Table 6 show their distribution among the borrowings used in the study.

**Table 3: Variables expected to influence gender assignment in Swedish. Based mainly on Kilarski (2004), Källström (1996), Liljegren (1995) and Mickwitz (2010). Further explained in section 2.2.**

Factors favouring non-neuter.	Factors favouring neuter.
Animacy, concreteness, individuality, polysyllabicity, final /a/, unmarked gender.	Inanimacy, abstractness, mass/collectivity, monosyllabicity.

**Table 4: Variables expected to influence gender assignment in Spanish. Based mainly on Clegg (2010) and Real Academia Española (2010). Further explained in section 2.3.**

Factors favouring masculine.	Factors favouring feminine.
Male sex, final /l/, /o/, /r/ and /e/ (or non-typical ending), unmarked gender.	Female sex, final /a/, /d/ and /jon/.

**Table 5: Distribution of word sample based on semantic criteria. Criteria further explained in section 2.**

Semantic criterion	Number of borrowings
Abstract	25
Concrete	25
Animate	7
Human	5
Male	4
Female	1
Inanimate	43
Mass	6
Count	44

**Table 6: Distribution of word sample based on formal criteria (parentheses refer to different pronunciations of *viagra* in Swedish and Spanish). Criteria further explained in section 2.**

Formal criterion	Number of borrowings
One syllable nouns	7
Two syllable nouns	23 (24)
Three syllable nouns	14 (15)
Four or more syllables	5
Final consonant	25
Final vowel	25
Final /a/	9

### 3.2.2 Variables influencing gender stability

In addition to the variables mentioned which are expected to have an effect on gender assignment to a specific gender, previous studies also indicate that the level of *establishment* of a borrowing is likely to have an effect on the stability of the gender, i.e., the consensus among the speakers (cf. Franco et al., 2017). In addition to this, *formal recommendations* is another variable that could prove to contribute to stabilising the gender assignment (cf. Muñoz-Basols & Salazar, 2019).

### 3.2.3 Sociolinguistic variables

The sociolinguistic factors investigated are the *gender*, *age*, *dialect* and *education level* of the speakers. It is likely that variation will be exhibited between different dialect groups, both in Swedish and in Spanish, and variation could also occur depending on the age and the education of the participants (cf. Real Academia Española, 2005; Van Epps & Carling, 2017). Based on previous research, if variation is exhibited between the gender of the speakers, it is more likely for Spanish than for Swedish, due to the nature of its grammatical gender system (cf. Casado, Palma, Paolieri, 2021).

## 3.3 Data analysis

### 3.3.1 General tendencies

Once the data has been collected, the borrowings are examined for tendencies related to the variables investigated. This is done with regard to semantic, formal, and sociolinguistic criteria, in order to try to identify if any criteria correlate with a stronger preference for a certain gender. Establishment and formal recommendations are also examined to investigate if they had any correlation with the variation in gender assignment. This is done for both Swedish and Spanish. Subsequently, the tendencies of the two languages are compared.

### 3.3.2 Statistical analysis

The significance of the results will be evaluated using a t-test in Microsoft Excel, which allows one to calculate to what extent two sets of data are different from each other. The result of the

test is called the p-value, which ranges from 1, in the case the sets are identical, to 0, in the case that they are completely distinct. A value below 0.05 is usually considered a significant difference, and will also in this thesis be used as the point of reference for significance. Since the t-test compares precisely two sets of data, the variables that present more than two criteria will need to be distributed into two different sets, or compared separately, in order for the t-test to be applicable. This is relevant for a factor such as age, and the groups compared will depend on the results for the variable in question.

Additionally, all tests are unpaired, since no samples are identical for multiple criteria, and two-tailed, since the values are expected to be both higher and lower than the average preference for a certain gender. The exception to this is in the case of establishment and formal recommendations, as they will be compared based on the agreement on the gender assignment among the respondents, and as the rate of agreement will vary in relation to the maximum value of 100%, the test will therefore be one-tailed in this case. In addition, since any individual noun could be assigned a majority of either of the two genders of the respective languages, the variance for the linguistic criteria is assumed to be unequal for the purpose of the t-test. The sociolinguistic groups, on the other hand, are assumed to have equal variance, since they will be compared according to their total preference for the unmarked gender, which is likely to exhibit less variation than the gender assignment of the individual nouns.

### **3.3.3 Establishment**

In regard to the establishment of the nouns, the corpora Korp and CORPES XXI are used for the respective languages in order to establish the respective degrees of establishment of the borrowings in the two languages. Korp is a corpus developed by Språkbanken, from the University of Gothenburg, and contains texts from newspapers, books and modern online forums. CORPES XXI is a corpus developed by the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) composed of documents and transcriptions from the 21st century, including books, newspapers and verbal conversations. The total corpora are used for both languages in order to attempt to define how established, or common, a certain borrowing is in the general population. More tokens for a loanword is interpreted as its being more established, and although it is not possible, other than manually, to control the context of the nouns, all tokens were included to give a general

understanding of their establishment. For a word such as *cookie*, it was thus not possible to remove the tokens referring to the baked goods while keeping those referring to the blocks of data, so this number must be referred to critically. Another defect when comparing Swedish with Spanish is the differences in relative size, and to a certain degree content, of the two corpora. In addition to the tokens, the borrowings will also be compared based on whether they are represented in the national dictionaries Svenska Akademiens ordlista (SAOL), or Diccionario de la Lengua Española (DLE). The amount of tokens for the borrowings in the respective corpora and their being or not being listed in the national dictionaries can be seen in Tables A-D in Appendix 1.

### **3.3.4 Sociolinguistic factors**

The participants are grouped by gender, age, perceived dialect and educational background, in order to examine if these factors correlate with preference for a certain gender. While gender is simple to divide into two groups, age needs to be divided into age groups in order to facilitate the handling of the data. The age groups are ten-year intervals, with the exception of the oldest at 50+ years old being put into a single group due to the difficulty of reaching a larger quantity of older participants for the study, and the division of the youngest into one group for those 18-24 years old and another for participants who are 25-29 years old. This division is due to a large number of the words being related to technology, and the cut between the two groups is also the border between the generational cohorts “Millennials” and “Generation Z”. As the ultimate has been dubbed “digital natives” (Turner, 2015), the distinction could conceivably prove to make a difference. The educational background is divided into two groups, one for those who themselves or whose parents have graduated from university, and the other for those without university background, as finer distinctions will be difficult to reliably make.

#### **3.3.4.1 Dialect**

The case of the dialects is perhaps the most complex, as there are a myriad of ways to divide the Spanish and the Swedish language into dialectal groups. What complicates the matter further is the fact that the verbal dialect of the participants is not known, and what is known is only where the participant and their parents grew up, and thereby are likely to have acquired their dialect.

Since no meticulous distinctions can be made with regard to dialect, the participants therefore need to be divided into dialectal groups based on rather rough distinctions.

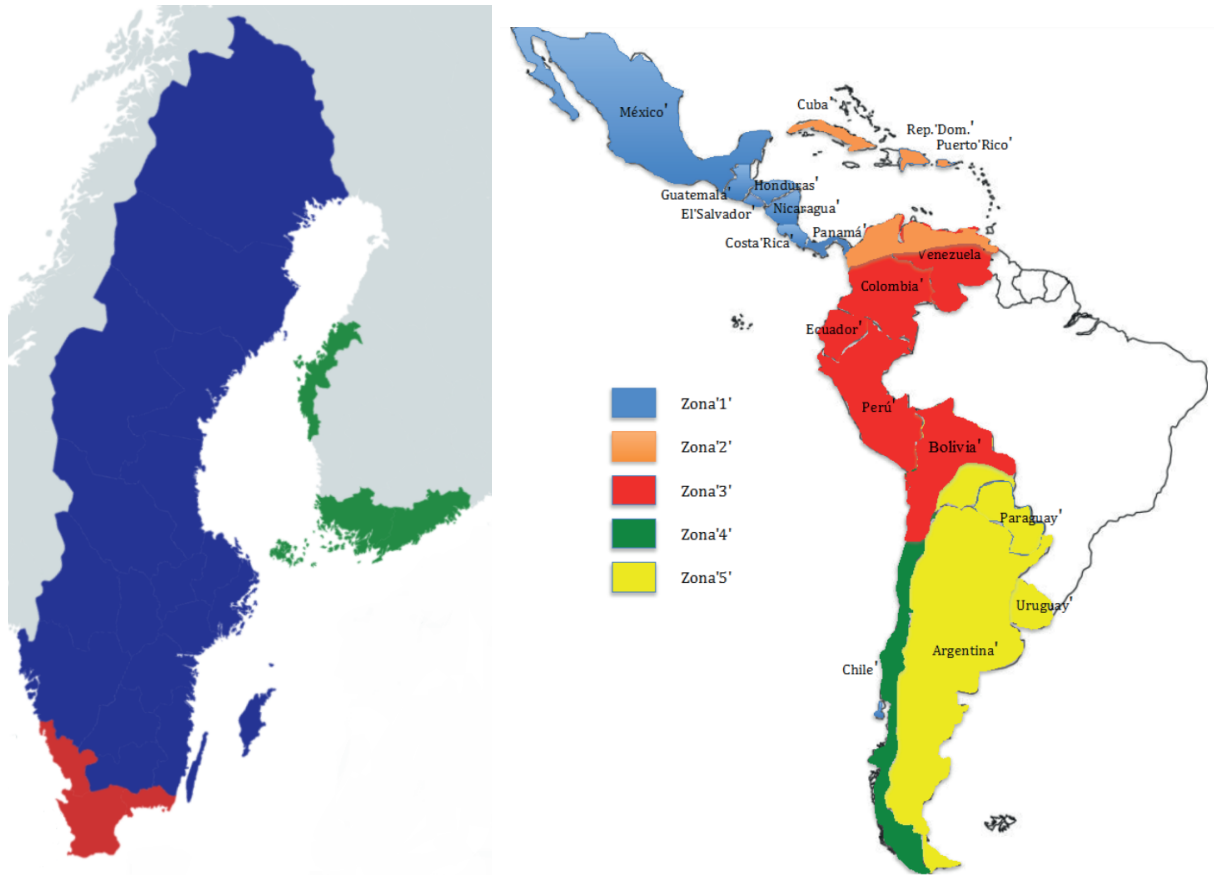
#### *3.3.4.1.1 Swedish*

Following Elert (1994), the three major dialectal groups for the division of Swedish are Southern Swedish (Sydsvenska), Central Swedish (Centralsvenska) and Finland Swedish (Finlandssvenska). This is perhaps the most basic division one can make of the dialects of Swedish, and it is necessary to keep it simple as it facilitates the distribution of the speakers into clear dialectal groups. Southern Swedish, according to Elert (1994), incorporates the dialects of the formerly Danish territories of Skåne and Blekinge, as well as southern Halland. Finland Swedish, in turn, is the dialectal group of the Swedish dialects of Finland, while all other dialects of Swedish are categorised as Central Swedish. It is known that even within these dialectal groups there is significant dialectal variation, but due to the difficulty of establishing the specific dialect that the respective participants are most likely to have, this division is necessary for the distribution. The geographical borders of the dialectal areas can be seen in Figure 2.

#### *3.3.4.1.2 Spanish*

As Spanish is spoken on multiple continents and in several countries, perhaps it is not surprising that even more basic divisions of the dialects often include several different groups. For this analysis, the distribution of the dialects of America into five zones by Henríquez Ureña (1921, as cited in Quesada Pacheco, 2014) will be followed. Zone 1 encompasses Central America; Zone 2 contains the Caribbean islands and the north of the South American mainland; Zone 3 the inland of Venezuela and Colombia, as well as Ecuador, Peru and parts of Bolivia and Chile; Zone 4 encompasses the central and southern regions of Chile; and Zone 5 encompasses all of Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay, and a smaller part of Bolivia. These five zones of the dialects of America can be seen in Figure 3. Finer distinctions can be made within all these dialectal areas, but for the purpose of this thesis, these major areas serve the purpose of dividing the respondents into dialectal groups to examine if it has any effect on the gender assignment. The final dialectal area not visible on the map is of course that of Spain, which, although also possible to divide further into dialectal regions, will here be treated as a single unit to facilitate the handling of the data. This could be criticised, but as the recruitment of European speakers of

Spanish for this study aimed for them to be speakers of the standard dialect of Peninsular Spanish, the margin for error due to dialectal differences within the group should be minimised.



**Figure 2 (Left): Swedish dialectal groups. Blue signifies Central Swedish, red signifies Southern Swedish and green signifies Finland Swedish. After Elert (1994).**

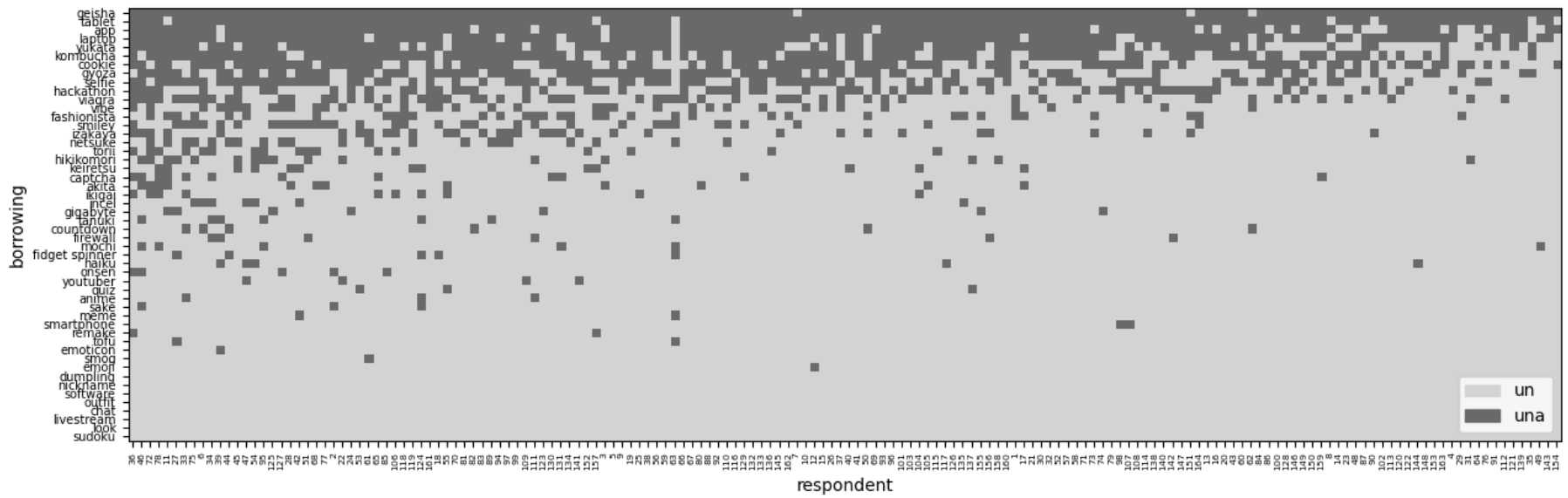
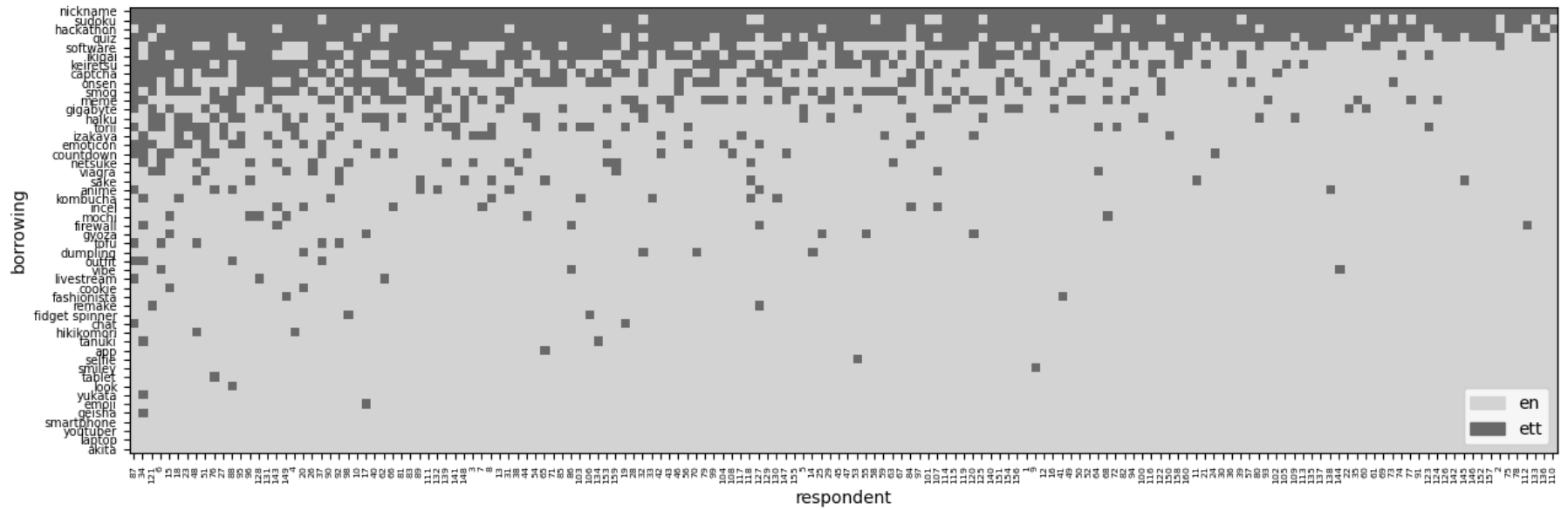
**Figure 3 (Right): Dialectal distribution of Spanish in America (After Henríquez Ureña (1921), in Quesada Pacheco, (2014)).**

## 4. Results

Once the data had been collected, the borrowings and their gender assignment were categorised and examined. All participants who did not answer that Swedish was their native language, for the Swedish questionnaire, or Spanish, for the Spanish questionnaire, were removed. Two outliers, who had chosen the same gender for every word and whose data were judged to be

unreliable, were also removed. This left 160 answers for Swedish and 165 for Spanish. The results after these changes can be seen in Figure 4, for Swedish, and Figure 5, for Spanish. The x-axis shows the respondents, each of which have been assigned a number based on the order in which they answered the questionnaire; the y-axis shows the borrowings. A lighter shade of grey signifies that the respondent chose the article *en*, for Swedish, or *un*, for Spanish, for the word in question, whereas the darker shade signifies an answer of *ett*, or *una*, respectively. For example, for the Swedish material, respondent number 51 chose the article *en* for the word *haiku*, while respondent 76 preferred *ett*. Likewise, for the Spanish material, respondent 34 chose the masculine *un* for the word *selfie*, and respondent 39 picked the feminine *una*. The tendencies for the different criteria will be presented for Swedish and for Spanish to examine which appear to have been influential for the gender assignment. For the sake of simplicity, all percentages will be rounded to the nearest integer.





**Figure 4 (Above): Plot of article chosen per participant per loanword (Swedish).** The x-axis shows respondents; the y-axis shows borrowings. A lighter shade of grey signifies that the respondent chose the article *en* for the borrowing in question, while a darker shade signifies a choice of *ett*.

**Figure 5 (Below): Plot of article chosen per participant per loanword (Spanish).** The x-axis shows respondents; the y-axis shows borrowings. A lighter shade of grey signifies that the respondent chose the article *un* for the borrowing in question, while a darker shade signifies a choice of *una*.

## 4.1 Swedish

### 4.1.1 General observations

For the Swedish material, as Figure 4 makes apparent, the non-neuter article *en* was the most preferred gender for the total material, and it was chosen in 85% of all individual assignments. Only 4 words had a majority of speakers choose *ett* as their preferred pronoun: 8% of the total. The total material had an average agreement rate of 91% for the respective words, which for the English material was 92% and for the Japanese was 89%.

### 4.1.2 Semantic and formal criteria

The results from the Swedish material based on semantic and formal criteria, as well as establishment and listings in SAOL, are shown in Table 7. Significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ), meaning that the difference between the two levels is significant, are italicised. The number of borrowings for each semantic and formal criterion can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, and the establishment is represented in Tables A-D in Appendix 1.

**Table 7: Results related to linguistic criteria from the Swedish questionnaire. Significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) are italicised. “Criterion” signifies the general criterion, and the “level” is the specific criterion. “Preference for non-neuter” exhibits in what proportion of total choices for borrowings of the respective criteria the non-neuter gender was chosen by the respondents. “Agreement” shows to what extent the respondents chose the same gender article for borrowings of the specific criterion, where 100% means all respondents always chose the same article.**

Criterion	Level	Preference for non-neuter	Agreement	p-value (t-test)
<i>Total material</i>		85%	91%	

<b>Abstractness</b>	Abstract	75%	88%	<i>0.007</i>
	Concrete	95%	95%	
<b>Animacy</b>	Animate	99%	99%	<i>0.0003</i>
	Inanimate	82%	90%	
<b>Mass/Count</b>	Mass	92%	91%	0.178
	Count	84%	91%	
<b>Polysyllabicity</b>	Monosyllable	80%	89%	0.657
	All polysyllables	86%	91%	
	Disyllables	88%	92%	-
	Trisyllable	79%	89%	
	Four or more syllables	95%	95%	
<b>Final phoneme</b>	Consonant	82%	91%	0.410
	Vowel	88%	91%	
	/a/	93%	93%	0.092
	Not /a/	83%	91%	
<b>Establishment</b>	25 most established	-	93%	0.106
	25 least established	-	89%	
<b>Listing in SAOL</b>	Yes	-	91%	0.461
	No	-	91%	

#### 4.1.3 Sociolinguistic criteria

Table 8 shows the distribution of the respondents based on sociolinguistic criteria and the preference for the non-neuter for the respective groups. The sample was heterogeneous, and all groups do not contain the same number of participants. The total number of the genders male and female does not reach 160 due to some respondents not indicating their gender. As some

speakers, such as those who indicated that both they and their parents had grown up in both Stockholm and Skåne, could not be placed into a single dialect group, they were not counted in the dialect statistics. Additionally, since only one participant indicated that she and her parents had grown up in Finland, Finland Swedish was not included in the analysis.

**Table 8: Distribution of sociolinguistic categories for respondents of the Swedish questionnaire. Significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) are italicised. “Sociolinguistic category” signifies the general sociolinguistic category, and the “level” is the specific criterion. “Preference for non-neuter” exhibits in what proportion of total choices the non-neuter gender was chosen by the respondents belonging to the given sociolinguistic group.**

Sociolinguistic category	Level	Number of respondents	Preference for non-neuter	p-value (t-test)
<i>Total material</i>		<i>160</i>	<i>85%</i>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	67	85%	0.959
	Female	89	85%	
<b>Age</b>	18-24 years old	58	85%	-
	25-29 years old	17	86%	
	30-39 years old	25	87%	
	40-49 years old	23	86%	
	50+ years old	37	82%	<i>0.0006</i>
	Total 18-49 years old	123	86%	
<b>Dialect</b>	Central Swedish	57	85%	0.874
	Southern Swedish	90	85%	
<b>Education</b>	University background	120	85%	0.056
	No university background	40	83%	

## 4.2 Spanish

### 4.2.1 General observations

Similar to the dominance of the non-neuter in Swedish, it is equally evident in Figure 5 that the masculine gender was preferred more than the feminine in the total material. The masculine was chosen in 81% of all instances. 8 words had a 100% consensus among the informants on what gender it should be assigned, and all of these had *un* as their preferred article. 9 words had a majority of respondents chose *una*, which is 18% of the words in the material. The total material had an agreement of 90% among the respondents.

Since there was a large degree of coherence for all 5 words where the participants were asked both to choose an article *el/la* and a demonstrative *este/esta*, these are not taken into the general discussion, and the focus of the general observations are the indefinite articles assigned to the 50 borrowings.

### 4.2.2 Semantic and formal criteria

Regarding the semantic and formal criteria together with establishment and listing in the DLE, the results are shown in Table 9. Also here significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) are italicised. The number of borrowings for each semantic and formal criteria can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, and the establishment is represented in Tables A-D in Appendix 1.

**Table 9: Results related to linguistic criteria from the Spanish questionnaire. Significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) are italicised. “Criterion” signifies the general criterion, and the “level” is the specific criterion. “Preference for masculine” exhibits in what proportion of total choices for borrowings in the respective criteria the masculine gender was chosen by the respondents. “Agreement” shows to what extent the respondents chose the same gender article for borrowings with the specific criterion, where 100% means all respondents always chose the same article.**

Criterion	Level	Preference for masculine	Agreement	p-value (t-test)
<i>Total material</i>		<i>81%</i>	<i>90%</i>	
Abstractness	Abstract	87%	91%	0.155
	Concrete	75%	89%	

<b>Animacy</b>	Animate	79%	93%	0.861
	Inanimate	82%	90%	
	Female	2%	98%	-
<b>Mass/Count</b>	Mass	81%	88%	0.993
	Count	81%	91%	
<b>Polysyllabicity</b>	Monosyllable	84%	95%	0.803
	All polysyllables	81%	90%	
	Disyllable	77%	90%	-
	Trisyllable	84%	89%	
	Four or more syllables	89%	89%	
<b>Final phoneme</b>	Consonant	83%	94%	0.606
	Vowel	79%	87%	
	/a/	57%	78%	0.028
	Not /a/	86%	93%	
<b>Establishment</b>	25 more established	-	93%	0.038
	25 less established	-	87%	
<b>Listing in DLE</b>	Yes	-	94%	0.109
	No	-	89%	

### 4.2.3 Sociolinguistic criteria

In Table 10, the distribution of the participants based on sociolinguistic criteria can be seen, together with their respective preference for the masculine gender. For the sake of convenience, the dialectal groups of Henríquez Ureña (1921, as cited in Quesada Pacheco, 2014) have been renamed to match the geographical area of the group. These areas can be seen in Figure 3. Since no participant indicated that they or their parents were from Zone 5, mainly composed of

Argentina, that leaves 4 zones in America in addition to Spain. The 5 zones, or areas, will henceforth be referred to as “Central America” (1), “Caribbean” (2), “Peru/Ecuador” (3), “Chile” (4) and “Spain”. Although the group “Peru/Ecuador” was given this name due to the overwhelming majority of those belonging to this group being from these two countries, it also includes one respondent from central Bolivia and one from northern Chile. As can be seen, the sizes of the groups are disproportionate, and the groups of 18-24 year-olds, speakers from Peru/Ecuador, and speakers with a university background are notably overrepresented. Additionally, the majority of the Caribbean speakers are in the age group 50-64, and the speakers from Peru/Ecuador are especially prevalent in the youngest age group. Only the groups “Central America” and “Caribbean” as well as “Chile” and “Spain” are compared using a t-test. This will be discussed in the following section.

**Table 10: Distribution of sociolinguistic categories of respondents of the Spanish questionnaire. Significant p-values ( $p < 0.05$ ) are italicised. “Sociolinguistic category” signifies the general sociolinguistic category, and “level” is the specific criterion. “Preference for masculine” exhibits in what proportion of total choices the masculine gender was chosen by the respondents belonging to the given sociolinguistic group**

Sociolinguistic category	Level	Number of respondents	Preference for masculine	p-value (t-test)
<i>Total material</i>		<i>165</i>	<i>81%</i>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male	78	83%	<i>0.002</i>
	Female	82	80%	
<b>Age</b>	18-24 years old	79	81%	-
	25-29 years old	28	82%	
	30-39 years old	35	81%	
	40-49 years old	7	83%	
	50+ years old	16	79%	0.183
	Total 18-49 years old	149	81%	

<b>Dialect</b>	Central America	20	80%	0.113
	Caribbean	11	83%	
	Peru/Ecuador	118	82%	-
	Chile	8	76%	0.094
	Spain	8	82%	
<b>Education</b>	University background	138	81%	0.667
	No university background	27	81%	

## 5. Discussion

Following is a discussion examining the influence the different criteria have had on the gender assignment for the borrowings investigated. The general tendencies are first evaluated and put in relation to previous studies, and then the sociolinguistic differences are further examined. This is due to the fact that there is little mention of sociolinguistic factors in previous studies on gender assignment. First, this is done for Swedish, and then for Spanish. Following this, a comparison is made between the tendencies observed in Swedish and in Spanish and conclusions are drawn in relation to previous studies conducted on the subject. For the preferences for the different genders in the two languages, as well as for the rates of agreement between the speakers in regard to different criteria, and the significance, p-values, of the results, the reader is referred back to Tables 7, 8, 9 and 10.

### 5.1 Swedish

#### 5.1.1 Relation to previous studies

For the Swedish material, the average preference for the non-neuter at 85% is higher than the native lexicon, at 75%, but also lower than previous studies, such as Kilarski (2004) and Mickwitz (2010), which both were closer to 90%. The results, however, are comparable, and one



can imagine that one key difference is that these two studies both worked with corpora, while the present study attempted to collect a balanced word sample in regard to semantic and formal criteria, which might not have had the same distribution as the total native lexicon.

#### **5.1.1.1 Semantic criteria**

The results seem to support the claim by Liljégren (1995) that the prototypical non-neuter is concrete, at least if one considers the 95% preference for this gender at very high (95%) agreement among the participants, compared to the 75% preference of abstract nouns for the same gender. 75% could still be said to be a relatively high preference for the non-neuter, compared to the 75% average of the native lexicon, so the connection between the neuter and the abstract criteria is weaker than that of concreteness and non-neuter. In any case, with a p-value of 0.007 the difference between the two factors is significant, and concreteness must be considered a significant factor for gender assignment in Swedish.

Another prototypical criterion of a non-neuter noun is animacy, suggested by Kilarski (2004) *inter alia*, and the results of this study confirm this claim, similar to the results of Mickwitz (2010). 99% preference for the non-neuter is convincing for animate nouns, and with a p-value of 0.0003, the results are notably significant. Inanimate nouns are closer to the average of 85%, being assigned the non-neuter in 82% of choices, which does not give as clear an indication for any gender preference. Due to the significance of the results, animacy must also, uncontroversially, be considered a significant factor.

That mass nouns are the prototypical members of the neuter gender, again suggested by Kilarski (2004), does however not seem to hold true according to the results of this study. Mass nouns were in fact assigned the non-neuter to a greater extent than count nouns, 92% vs 84%, which instead suggests that the opposite could hold true. Although not significantly different ( $p=0.178$ ), the difference is definitely surprising. However, by the way the questions are phrased in the questionnaire (such as "...a smog is formed, which..."), the mass nouns are likely better interpreted in the context as individualised countable entities, which would then render the comparison fruitless. This might be part of the reason why the results are not comparable.

### 5.1.1.2 Formal criteria

Regarding polysyllabicity, though the tendency does not appear to be as clear as more syllables attracting more non-neuter responses, the results are similar to those of Kilarski (2004) when polysyllables are counted as a group. Our 5 percentage point difference between 91% non-neuter for polysyllables to 86% for monosyllables is similar to the 6 percentage point difference Kilarski (2004) demonstrated with 88% vs 82%. However, the results of this study suggest that the difference is not significant ( $p=0.657$ ), and the difference in polysyllabicity can therefore not be treated as more than a slight tendency.

Although more final suffixes could not be investigated, the preference for the non-neuter for nouns ending in /a/, as claimed by Källström (1996), appears to hold true to some extent, and while the difference between this final phoneme and others is not significant ( $p=0.092$ ), it could perhaps be considered as near-significant as it is below 0.10, and it nevertheless exhibits a tendency. Its not being significant does, however, make it more difficult to conclude that the final suffix would be the second most important factor for gender assignment, as claimed by Kilarski (2004). Nevertheless, the tendency for nouns ending in consonant > vowel > /a/ to increasingly be assigned the non-neuter gender is clear in this material, with the increasing preference of this gender at 82% > 88% > 93%.

For both of the formal criteria, it is additionally worth mentioning the disproportionate sizes of the samples, since fewer than 10 out of the 50 words investigated are monosyllabic or end with /a/. This lowers the reliability of the results. Nonetheless, the results demonstrate similar tendencies as observed by previous studies, and must still be considered reliable to some degree.

### 5.1.2 Sociolinguistic factors

Though the variation for some sociolinguistic factors in the total material is greater than for others, all factors demonstrate variation, which sometimes is constrained to certain words. This variation is discussed here.

### 5.1.2.1 Gender

Just as both men and women are at the average of 85% for preference for the non-neuter gender with a non-significant variation between them ( $p=0.959$ ), the variation for specific words is comparatively minor. The greatest difference in preference is no greater than 10%, which it is both for *viagra* and *captcha*. In both of these cases, it is the women who have the greatest preference for the non-neuter, but due to the miniscule size of the variation, the results suggest that the gender of the speakers can not be considered a significant factor with regard to gender assignment to loanwords in Swedish.

### 5.1.2.2 Age

In regard to age, it is especially the older age group aged 50+ that deviates by being the only age group with a preference for the non-neuter below the average of 85%. The difference between this age group and the totality of the younger age groups is significant ( $p=0.0006$ ), and this variation is magnified in the case of certain words, many of them related to technology. In almost all cases, it is the younger age groups that have a stronger preference for the non-neuter. A notable case is that of *meme*, which 90% of respondents aged between 18 and 39 years old assigned the non-neuter gender, while for the group 40+, the same number was only 47%. Comparable are the results of *hackathon*, with a preference of 93% vs 70% for the same age groups, and *software*, at 60% vs 40%. These three concepts could all be considered modern and novel, and therefore it is likely that they are more prevalent in the younger age groups, and if their establishment here is higher, the agreement on gender assignment is also expected to be higher. The same variation can not be observed for other borrowings related to technology, such as *laptop* and *livestream*, which were overwhelmingly assigned the non-neuter gender by all age groups.

Other borrowings which demonstrate variation based on age were *ikigai* and *keiretsu*. For these nouns, the majority of those aged 18-49 prefer the non-neuter gender, at 58% and 62% preference, respectively, compared to the older groups aged 50+ who prefer the neuter gender with 62% and 57% for the respective words. This disagreement is likely to have a different cause, as one could expect young people to be as unlikely to have had contact with these two terms originally from Japanese as older people are. Perhaps this difference in preference could be

related to some sort of changing of gender preferences, where young people are slightly more likely to prefer the non-neuter gender over the neuter gender, as suggested by Mickwitz (2010). Since the difference between the oldest age group investigated and the younger is significant, age must be considered a significant factor that correlates with gender assignment in Swedish, as indicated by the results.

### 5.1.2.3 Dialect

For the dialects, the perceived differences are minor and not significant ( $p=0.874$ ). There are a certain number of words which demonstrate minor variation, but the words themselves do not appear to have any specific traits in common. The three words with the greatest variation between dialects, a variation of between 12 and 15 percentage points, are *meme*, *gigabyte* and *onsen*. As previous studies have demonstrated dialectal differences in relation to gender, it is not unlikely that dialect could have a significant influence on gender assignment, but based on the results of this study, it does not appear to have a major impact in this case. One wonders if the categorisation of the dialects is part of the reason why, and if one would have gotten different results if dialects were chosen and sampled more carefully for speakers.

### 5.1.2.4 Education

The variation based on education level, while not significant ( $p=0.056$ ), must still be considered an important factor due to being near significant. An especially notable case was that of *sudoku*, which 100% of participants with no university background assigned the neuter gender, compared to 86% of participants with a university background. It is always odd to observe a 100% agreement within any group, and the reason for this variation is not obvious. The only other major difference for an individual noun was the 10 percentage point difference for *captcha*, assigned the non-neuter gender by 43% of those with a university background, compared to 33% of those without. While these two borrowings do not have anything obvious in common, for education level to correlate with gender assignment is not unheard of, as authors such as Rabb (2007) and Van Epps and Carling (2017) have observed variation within traditional dialects of Swedish. While not in a position to draw any conclusions regarding the variation, and since the sample based on education does not appear to be correlate disproportionally with any other

sociolinguistic factor, what can be done is to conclude that, while not significant, education level appears to be a notable factor for gender assignment to borrowings in Swedish.

#### **5.1.2.5 Establishment**

Finally, establishment appears to have a slight effect on the agreement on gender assignment among the participants, as the 25 more established borrowings had a higher agreement rate among the respondents of 4 percentage points, as compared to the 25 less established. This difference is not surprising given previous studies, such as Franco et al. (2017), and it shows a tendency while not being significant ( $p=0.106$ ). Whether or not the borrowings are listed in SAOL does not appear to affect the consensus on gender assignment notably, and the difference between those listed in SAOL and those not is not significant ( $p=0.461$ ).

## **5.2 Spanish**

### **5.2.1 Relation to previous studies**

Regarding the general observations of the Spanish results, the results are comparable to previous research. The preference for the masculine gender in 81% of occurrences is similar to the 82% of de la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2007) and not too dissimilar to the 75% of DuBord (2004). As the present study and the two mentioned use different methods for their investigation, this strong preference for the masculine when assigning gender to loanwords is likely to be significant, and all of these proportions are notably higher than the 52% masculine of the native lexicon, following Bull (1965, in Clegg 2010). The unmarked gender is likely to be part of the reason for why this might be, but if one follows authors such as Corbett (1991), a possible cause is also that the sample of the borrowings might not be representative of the native lexicon for semantic content and phonological form.

#### **5.2.1.1 Semantic criteria**

Although there is not too much reason to expect that abstractness would have an influence as impactful on the gender assignment in Spanish as it appears to be in Swedish, the difference between concrete and abstract nouns of 12 percentage points, while not being significant ( $p=0.155$ ), still appears to show a tendency too large to ignore as mere chance. Unfortunately,

previous studies have not explored this criterion, and therefore it is difficult to relate the results to other studies and to deduce the possible reason for the abstract nouns having a somewhat stronger preference for the masculine than the concrete have. Of course, the variation could be related to the representativeness of the sample, as many of the nouns with the greatest preference for the feminine, such as *geisha*, *tablet* and *laptop* are concrete, which might skew the results. As female biological sex is often suggested to be the strongest indicator for feminine gender, perhaps these results are not too surprising considering practically only concrete beings can be biologically female. Nevertheless, though not significant, the difference is surprising, but as further speculation is unlikely to come up with any firm conclusion, further research will need to be conducted on the relation between the semantic content of Spanish nouns and their gender assignment, which incorporates factors other than biological sex.

More expected, however, is the not significant ( $p=0.861$ ) difference of only 3 percentage points between animate and inanimate borrowings. *Geisha*, the only semantically female noun, was unsurprisingly assigned the feminine gender by almost 100% of respondents. Biological sex is frequently referred to as the most important factor for gender assignment, for example by DuBord (2004), so this factor was expected to be more impactful than the distinction animate/inanimate. The other animate nouns were mainly assigned the masculine gender, and a notable outlier was *fashionista*, which was assigned the masculine by only 79% of respondents, despite the masculine generally being used as the generic gender. One could imagine that being a *fashionista* typically is considered feminine, and respondents might therefore have imagined a *fashionista* as a woman. Nevertheless, as most animate nouns are common nouns, they are inherently genderless and could without controversy be assigned any gender based on the biological sex of the referent. This makes further discussion more related to social psychology than linguistics, and thus less relevant for this thesis.

What was also expected was for the Spanish gender assignment not to make a difference between mass nouns and count nouns, which also proved to be the case, as both were assigned the feminine in 81% of all instances ( $p=0.993$ ). Since this was not expected to demonstrate variation, no further comment is needed, and the results suggest that the mass/count distinction is not a significant factor for gender assignment in Spanish.

### 5.2.1.2 Formal criteria

Polysyllabicity is another factor that was not expected to be overly influential in Spanish, and the stronger preference for the masculine for the monosyllables over the polysyllables with 3 percentage points is not significant ( $p=0.803$ ). One could imagine that monosyllables perhaps are less likely to end with a typically feminine suffix and thereby have a stronger preference for the masculine, but there is nothing about the syllabicity itself that suggests a preference for one gender or the other. No borrowing with four syllables or more was assigned the feminine gender by a majority, which might be part of the reason for the seemingly inflated preference for the masculine for these nouns.

When authors such as DuBord (2004) and de la Cruz Cabanillas et al. (2007) declare that the phonological criteria are second in importance only to the semantic, what they refer to is generally the suffix or the final phoneme. It is therefore not surprising that the final phoneme is a significant factor for gender assignment, specifically final /a/. Out of the three types of final phonemes compared, final /a/ exhibits a much weaker preference for the masculine gender than the borrowings with final consonants or other vowels, and this difference in gender assignment is significant ( $p=0.028$ ). It is interesting that although /a/ typically is considered to be a main indicator of a feminine phonological form (Harris 1991; Clegg 2010), it still was assigned the masculine gender in more than 50% of instances. With the exception of female biological sex, which was overwhelmingly assigned the feminine gender, final /a/ is the strongest indicator for feminine gender assignment, and in spite of this it is more often assigned the masculine gender. This, if anything, supports that the masculine is the unmarked gender in Spanish, and feminine phonological form on its own does not appear to be able to counteract its influence. Nevertheless, the results appear to support previous studies that have shown the final /a/, or the feminine phonological form, to be the second most important indicator for feminine gender assignment. Additionally, the fact that 83% of nouns ending in a consonant were assigned the masculine gender is comparable to, but not quite as notable as, the 90% of Clegg (2010).

### 5.2.2 Sociolinguistic factors

Also for the Spanish material did the borrowings exhibit sociolinguistic variation. The variation could be considered more extensive than that of the Swedish material.

### 5.2.2.1 Gender

Though the difference between the preference for the masculine gender for the total material was no greater than 3 percentage points between men and women, for specific borrowings these differences were more prominent, and the difference between the two groups is significant ( $p=0.002$ ). Just as women have a slightly stronger preference for the feminine gender than the men have, so too do they prefer the feminine for particular loanwords. The borrowing with the greatest difference between males and females is *yukata*, which 77% of men and 63% of women assigned the masculine gender, and women thereby have a stronger preference for the feminine by 14 percentage points. Other nouns with a notable variation between the two genders of 10% or more are *captcha*, *selfie*, *smiley*, *gyoza*, *keiretsu* and *netsuke*. These words do not appear to have any certain characteristic in common, but something they all share is that there is a general disagreement for all of these words. It thus appears that women have a slightly greater tendency to opt for the feminine gender in situations of doubt than what men have. This tendency is not definitive by any means, but it is notable, and it does compare to other studies which have attempted to connect the grammatical gender with conceptual gender, such as Casado, Palma and Paolieri (2021).

### 5.2.2.2 Age

While the answers of the different age groups tend to be relatively uniform, for certain words there is notable variation between the different groups. The variation, at least when comparing the younger age groups with the older age group aged 50+, which was the only one with a preference for the masculine gender below the average of 81%, is not significant ( $p=0.183$ ). The borrowing with the largest variation was *selfie*, which 74% of the participants aged 40+ assigned the masculine gender, while the younger age group 18-39 preferred the feminine gender and only assigned it the masculine gender in 44% of occurrences. Another borrowing with an even larger variation was, again, *hackathon*, which the age groups aged 40+ had the strongest preference for masculine for, at 91%, while 18-39 year-olds only assigned the masculine in 57% of instances. Despite the differences for the total material between the oldest and the younger not being significant, this variation is notable, and one has to reflect on the reasons why the variation might be strong for these specific words. Both *selfie* and *hackathon* are once again two novel concepts, and while the older age groups had more agreement and a stronger preference for the masculine,



it is doubtful that this is due to higher establishment in this age group. Perhaps the older respondents to a greater extent opt for the unmarked gender for lesser known words, while the younger speakers, who likely are more frequently exposed to selfies and hackathons in their daily lives, are more involved in the discussion about the gender assignment. Perchance the feminine gender is expanding and this has yet to catch up to the older participants. This is, of course, mere speculation, and further studying the age-related variation in gender assignment in Spanish is required in order to be able to draw any relevant conclusions. It is also relevant to mention how the age groups are disproportionate, which surely affects the results. Nevertheless, the results suggest that age is not a significant factor for gender assignment in Spanish.

### 5.2.2.3 Dialect

As expected due to the vast dialectal extension of Spanish and its documented differences, dialectal variation is exhibited both on the total material and for specific borrowings. Since the number of dialect groups used in this study is five, the t-test can not be used to compare all groups at once, and the comparison of the groups “Central America” and “Caribbean” ( $p=0.113$ ), as well as “Chile” and “Spain” ( $p=0.094$ ), which are groups of similar size, show the differences are not significant. However, as the p-value is close to 0.10, the results for these groups could be considered near significant. For some nouns, all dialectal groups individually prefer the same gender, and the variation is exhibited only in the degree of agreement, such as *hackathon*, which reaches from 100% preference for the masculine for the Caribbean speakers to 53% for Peruvian/Ecuadorian, and *cookie*, from 100% preference for the feminine from Spain to 50% for Central America. For other loanwords, all American dialects prefer the same gender, while Spain prefers a different one, such as for *laptop*, *viagra* and *yukata*. The greatest variation of all is demonstrated by *selfie*, which is assigned the masculine gender by 52% of speakers from Peru/Ecuador and 55% from the Caribbean, and by as much as 88% of speakers from Spain. Meanwhile, 100% of speakers from Chile and 80% from Central America assign it the feminine gender. These ultimate regions are not geographically coherent, and therefore it becomes more difficult to draw any specific conclusions from the results other than to observe that there is notable dialectal variation for gender assignment in Spanish. While the results are not believed to be entirely misleading, the imbalance in the sizes of the groups is a significant problem, and

further studies wishing to explore dialectal variation should aim for an as evenly distributed sample as possible.

#### **5.2.2.4 Education**

Education level does not exhibit any significant difference for the total material ( $p=0.667$ ), and few borrowings show variation for this factor. The greatest variation is for the loanword *viagra*, which 66% of those with university background and 52% of those without assigned the masculine gender. While not in a position to connect education level to erectile dysfunction, the fact that *viagra* together with *laptop*, *cookie* and *selfie* are the 4 words with a variation of 10 percentage points or greater leads one to believe that there perhaps is a dialectal imbalance in the sample, as these specific borrowings exhibit notable dialectal variation. In any case, the results indicate that education level is not a significant factor for gender assignment to borrowings in Spanish.

#### **5.2.2.5 Establishment**

For Spanish, the difference in 6 percentage points between more and less established borrowings in regard to agreement is significant ( $p=0.038$ ), and follows the same trend as the previous research that has found establishment to be a significant factor. In addition, the difference of 5 percentage points between the agreement of borrowings listed and not listed in the DLE is not significant ( $p=0.109$ ), but might indicate a possible trend. It is unclear whether the relatively low p-value is due to the dictionary acting as a unifying force, or if other factors are involved.

### **5.3 Comparison**

Comparing the distribution and the sociolinguistic variation of the gender assignment to the borrowings in Swedish versus in Spanish, there are a number of variables which proved to be significant, but these tended to be different for the two languages.

#### **5.3.1 General tendencies**

Generally, although Swedish has been described as opaque and Spanish as transparent when it comes to gender assignment, the rate of agreement among the respondents for the gender assignment was similar for the two languages, both being close to 90%. This suggests that even

among native speakers, the judgement of what gender is most appropriate for a borrowing is not obvious in either language.

The general preference for the two genders by the speakers was similar for the two languages, as the non-neuter gender in Swedish was chosen in 85% of all choices, compared to the 79% of the masculine in Spanish. For both languages, these genders were chosen notably more than for the native lexicon, and though it is uncontroversial to attribute part of the reason to the unmarked gender in Spanish, the discussion has not been so one-sided regarding this categorisation in Swedish. Except for female biological sex in Spanish, no criteria had a preference for the “marked” gender greater than the proportion of the unmarked gender in the respective languages. In other words, for almost every criterion, the masculine for Spanish and the non-neuter for Swedish were always preferred by the speakers. The status of the unmarked, or dominant gender, appears to be similar for the languages, and one could assert that the results support authors such as Liljegren (1995) and Mickwitz (2010), which support the categorisation of the non-neuter as unmarked in Swedish. This, of course, presupposes that the sample of words used in this study is representative for the total lexicons of the languages, which might not necessarily be the case.

### **5.3.2 Linguistic criteria**

While it is unsurprising that the results show that concreteness and abstractness are influential in the gender assignment of Swedish, the results for Spanish are more unexpected. Though the results are not significant in Spanish, as they are in Swedish, abstractness still is the semantic factor with the notably lowest p-value, and therefore perhaps the most influential of these factors in Spanish. Perhaps this shows a tendency that a larger sample of words might show more clearly, and while not significant, the results nevertheless suggest that there might be a stronger preference for abstract nouns to take the masculine gender compared to concrete nouns, which one could compare with the significant tendency for concrete nouns in Swedish to be assigned the non-neuter gender.

Regarding the influence of animacy, while in Swedish the trend is clear and the results are significant, it is unsurprising that animacy is not a significant factor in Spanish, for which the biological sex of the referent is known as the primary criterion for gender assignment. For

Spanish, animacy itself therefore appears not to be enough to influence gender assignment on its own, and even for a word such as *fashionista*, where the masculine was expected to be used as the generic gender, the choice appears not to have been obvious to the respondents. Considering the nature of what the gender systems themselves are based on, it appears logical that the neuter/non-neuter system would be primarily based on concreteness and animacy, while the feminine/masculine system is based on biological sex.

Whereas it was expected for differences related to animacy and concreteness to be significant in Swedish and not in Spanish, the concordance in the results of the borrowings differing in the mass/count distinction was not. The results indicate that neither for Swedish nor for Spanish is the mass/count distinction a significant factor for gender assignment to borrowings. As mentioned previously, this result could be related to the phrasing of the questions in Swedish, and only using the indefinite article likely limits the possibilities of referring to mass nouns as uncountable entities in this language.

Regarding the polysyllabicity of the borrowings, the trends in both languages are not significant. As the word sample is no larger than 50, the representativeness of the sampling can be questioned, especially since monosyllables and trisyllables had a similar preference for the dominant gender in both languages, while the disyllables diverted. While a larger sample could solve this problem, the results of this study indicate that polysyllabicity is not a significant factor for the gender assignment of either Swedish or Spanish.

Contrastingly, the results imply that the final phoneme is a significant factor in Spanish, and appears to show a tendency also in Swedish, where it is not significant. The final /a/ is a recognised factor favouring the feminine gender in Spanish, and more surprising is perhaps its influence in Swedish, where it shows a p-value of 0.092 compared to other final phonemes. Both languages share the trend of all individual final consonants most strongly preferring the unmarked gender, while final /a/ has the weakest preference for this. Final /a/ is the most influential formal factor in both languages, according to the results, and since it is not significant in Swedish when in Spanish it is the only significant of the linguistic factors, one could perhaps

sustain that the formal criteria carry a greater importance in Spanish than in Swedish, at least in regard to the criteria investigated.

In addition, the tendencies related to establishment show to be significant in Spanish, yet not in Swedish. It is not clear why the establishment of the borrowings would affect the stability of the gender more in one language than in another, and one wonders if a different sample would have given a different result. In neither language are the differences in agreement significant in regard to whether the borrowings are listed in the national dictionaries, though the p-value is notably lower for the Spanish material. The fact that more of the borrowings are listed in SAOL, 28, than in DLE, 16, could have influenced these results. Once again, the sample is likely to have had an impact, and another possible reason for the differences in p-value could, of course, be that the Royal Spanish Academy has a stronger influence on what gender the speakers prefer to use than what the Swedish Academy has. Nevertheless, regarding the formal recommendations criterion, the results are not significant.

### **5.3.3 Sociolinguistic criteria**

While gender does not appear to be the cause of any variation in more than two seemingly unrelated loanwords and is not significant in Swedish, the variation is more widespread and is significant in Spanish. The preference for the feminine by the female respondents is notable, as discussed previously, and demonstrates a tendency for a difference in sociolinguistic variation between Swedish and Spanish. Since the Swedish gender system could be said to be based more on animacy than on biological sex, this perhaps shows a difference between the two systems transferred to the conceptual level.

Some occurrences of variation between different age groups can be observed in both languages. When this occurs, it is generally at age 40 or 50 a limit could be drawn, where one tendency is present in the younger population, and another in the older. While for Swedish the difference between the older and the younger group is significant and the trend is mainly that there is a stronger preference for the unmarked gender and greater concordance in the younger population, the trend for the Spanish material is the direct opposite and is not significant. This could be due to an issue in the representativeness in the sample of participants, especially in regard to the

disproportionate sizes of the groups, but it could also be related to different trends in the two languages. If connected to a change in gender preference, one could suggest that the position of the neuter gender in Swedish is weakening. A similar statement could not be made for Spanish. It is also notable that there was sociolinguistic variation in both languages for words related to technology. *Hackathon* exhibited variation in both languages, for example, and if one believes that the greater consensus on gender assignment is related to higher establishment, such as among the younger population in Swedish, since that the trend is opposite in Spanish, this argument appears to fail. The reason for the variation is therefore inconclusive, and the presence of sociolinguistic variation related to age is especially notable for Spanish.

The dialectal differences for Spanish are greater than those of Swedish, though none of the differences examined in this study are significant. While there are slight differences for the gender of individual words in the case of Swedish, the Spanish dialects for certain words have directly contradicting preferences. This is perhaps not overly surprising considering the global distribution and the history of the Spanish language, leading to greater differences between the dialects than for Swedish. One must also not discount the number of dialectal categories for the Spanish material being greater than for the Swedish due to difficulties of identifying the dialects of the Swedish participants. This could possibly have affected the results. Analysis of significance using t-test also proved insufficient due to the dialectal groups of Spanish. Stronger tendencies or conclusions are difficult to sustain, and further exploring the reasons for interdialectal differences in gender assignment between different languages is a topic that could be interesting to explore in the future, together with an additional method of analysis.

Finally, while the results indicate that education level is not a significant factor in either of the two languages, the p-value of 0.056 for Swedish is much lower than the 0.667 of Spanish and could be considered near significant. Why the difference would be greater for one language than for the other is difficult to pinpoint, though the results imply that the difference in gender assignment and gender preference in Spanish is more related to dialect, while in Swedish it is more related to education level, which perhaps in turn could be linked to other factors such as socioeconomic status. Once again, for both languages the sizes of the two groups compared are disproportionate, which lowers the reliability of the results. Also here are further studies needed

to investigate the sociolinguistic variation and determine what the cause of the difference between the two languages might be.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, various tendencies have been observed regarding gender assignment to borrowings in Swedish and in Spanish. While the general gender preferences across the total material are comparable, the influence of the different criteria varies between the two languages. Swedish appears to have more of a semantic core, where animacy and abstractness expectedly demonstrate to be significant criteria, while for Spanish it is typically the biological sex of the referent. A slight influence of the formal criteria, such as the final phoneme, can be noted in Swedish, yet the impact of this category is notably stronger in Spanish, where the results also indicate it is significant. The extent of the influence of establishment and formal recommendations on how much the respondents agree about the gender assignment to a borrowing also differs between the two languages, where the results indicate that establishment is a significant factor only in Spanish.

The sociolinguistic variation in both languages was mainly concentrated to variation related to the age, dialect, and gender of the respondents. While the main trend in Swedish was for older participants to prefer the neuter gender more than the younger, in Spanish there was additionally a significant tendency for female participants to prefer the feminine gender more than male participants, and there was notable dialectal variation. While no definite conclusions can be drawn, and more research is needed to investigate the causes of this variation, one could suggest, as done by Mickwitz (2010) *inter alia*, that the status of the neuter gender might be weakening in Swedish. For the Spanish material, one could also indicate that the apparent preference for the feminine gender by women might be related to the structure of the gender system transferred to the conceptual level, which has no parallel in sociolinguistic variation in Swedish due to this system being based on animacy. In any case, as this study to a certain extent is exploratory, multiple tendencies have been observed, and further research is needed to properly investigate them.

In the greater perspective, it is interesting to note how the significance of the sociolinguistic factors, in regard to gender assignment to borrowings, varies between Swedish and Spanish. This suggests that there are a range of factors that cause a difference in gender preference, and that it is a multifaceted phenomenon. Attempting to understand gender assignment is a difficult task, and while it is known that differences related to the linguistic criteria of the nouns themselves are relevant, that sociolinguistic criteria would have an influence that is language specific shows that more research with more factors is needed in order to better understand the complicated category of grammatical gender and gender assignment.

## **6.1 Suggestions for future research**

In the present study, many tendencies have been observed which in future studies might be interesting to investigate further. For example, it would be interesting to further study the sociolinguistic differences, such as those related to age, to see whether there truly is more coherence in the gender assignment among certain age groups across a greater number of words. It is also relevant to investigate the reasons for the variation in gender assignment between different dialects, perhaps especially so for the case of Spanish. Finally, the tendencies observed related to the nature of the two gender systems in relation to their semantic cores could be interesting to compare to other languages, such as a three-gender language like German, to see if one can observe any patterns related to both the biological gender of the speaker and the animacy or abstractness of the referent. Hopefully this thesis will serve as a starting point for more comparative studies related to gender assignment.



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# Appendix 1

The questionnaires used in the study and the tables showing the establishment of the borrowings used in the study are presented below

## Establishment of borrowings used in the study

**Tables A-D: Establishment of borrowings in Swedish and Spanish. “Frequency” refers to the number of tokens in the corpora Korp, for Swedish, and CORPES XXI for Spanish.**

**Table A: Establishment of borrowings from English in Swedish. “Frequency” refers to the number of tokens of the borrowing in the corpus Korp. “In SAOL?” exhibits whether the borrowing is listed or not in the Word list of the Swedish Academy (SAOL).**

Borrowing	Frequency	In SAOL?
App	164721	Yes
Look	119498	Yes
Outfit	81605	Yes
Laptop	71431	Yes
Chat/chatt	41875	Yes (chatt)
Selfie	37469	Yes
Smartphone	23948	Yes
Smiley	21441	Yes
Software	13858	Yes
Viagra	12163	No
Meme/mem	11905	Yes
Quiz	11619	Yes
Remake	10882	Yes
Livestream	7114	No
Cookie	6539	Yes
Nickname	6000	No
Tablet	5866	No
Vibe	5161	No
Countdown	3530	No
Youtuber	3143	No

**Table B: Establishment of borrowings from Japanese in Swedish. “Frequency” refers to the number of tokens of the borrowing in the corpus Korp. “In SAOL?” exhibits whether the borrowing is listed or not in the Word list of the Swedish Academy (SAOL).**

Borrowing	Frequency	In SAOL?
Emoji	10368	Yes
Anime	8579	Yes
Sake/saké	7276	Yes
Tofu	6317	Yes
Haiku	2786	Yes
Geisha	2363	Yes
Sudoku	2111	Yes
Akita	515	No
Kombucha	298	Yes
Gyoza	142	No
Onsen	130	No
Izakaya	106	No
Yukata	73	No
Hikikomori	66	No
Mochi	49	No
Tanuki	15	No
Keiretsu	13	No
Ikigai	11	No
Torii	8	No
Netsuke	4	No



Gigabyte	2818	Yes
Firewall	2742	No
Hackathon/hackaton	2126	Yes (hackaton)
Smog	1299	Yes
Fashionista	1153	Yes
Captcha	977	Yes
Fidget spinner	918	No
Incel	845	No
Emoticon/emotikon	317	Yes (emotikon)
Dumpling	195	Yes

**Table C: Establishment of borrowings from English in Spanish. “Frequency” refers to the number of tokens of the borrowing in the corpus CORPES XXI. “In DLE?” exhibits whether the borrowing is listed or not in the Diccionario de la Lengua Española (DLE).**

Borrowing	Frequency	In DLE?
Software	10682	Yes
Tablet/tableta	2067	Yes (tableta)
Look	1742	Yes
Chat	1511	Yes
App	1335	No
Smartphone	1274	No
Remake	535	Yes
Viagra	520	Yes
Laptop	507	No
Selfie/selfi	288	Yes (selfi)
Meme	253	Yes
Firewall	236	No
Smog	195	No
Youtuber	81	No
Outfit	75	No
Gigabyte	74	Yes
Emoticon/emotición/emoticono	63	Yes (emoticon/emoticono)
Cookie	61	No

**Table D: Establishment of borrowings from Japanese in Spanish. “Frequency” refers to the number of tokens of the borrowing in the corpus CORPES XXI. “In DLE?” exhibits whether the borrowing is listed or not in the Diccionario de la Lengua Española (DLE).**

Borrowing	Frequency	In DLE?
Anime/animé	1138	No
Tofu	306	Yes
Geisha	238	Yes
Haiku/haikú	194	Yes
Sudoku	73	Yes
Emoji	57	Yes
Hikikomori	29	No
Sake	20	Yes
Mochi	17	No
Onsen	16	No
Akita	12	No
Izakaya	10	No
Kombucha	9	No
Yukata	7	No
Ikigai	4	No
Tanuki	4	No
Torii	2	No
Gyoza	1	No
Keiretsu	0	No
Netsuke	0	No

Fashionista	51	No
Smiley	40	No
Captcha	34	No
Countdown	32	No
Nickname	32	No
Hackathon/hackatón	30	No
Quiz	24	No
Vibe	11	No
Livestream	5	No
Dumpling	1	No
Fidget spinner	0	No
Incel	0	No

## Swedish questionnaire

### Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

Hej och tack för att du vill delta i den här studien! Denna enkät har tagits fram för att undersöka hur modersmålstalare av svenska bestämmer grammatiskt genus på lånord. Du kommer att presenteras ett antal meningar som innehåller ett nymodigt ord, och det är upp till dig att bestämma om du föredrar "en" eller "ett" framför ordet. Kanske är det så att du själv är osäker på vilket alternativ du föredrar, och välj då det som du själv anser vara mest naturligt. Enkäten innehåller 50 frågor och ska inte ta mer än 5-10 minuter att svara på. Du som deltagare förblir helt anonym, och varken namn eller mejladress registreras. Tack för ditt deltagande!

---

\* Required

1. Hur gammal är du? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 18-24 år
- ☐ 25-29 år
- ☐ 30-39 år
- ☐ 40-49 år
- ☐ 50-64 år
- ☐ 65+ år

2. Vad har du för könsidentitet? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Kvinna
- ☐ Annat/Vill inte uppge

3. Vad är ditt modersmål? Ange ett eller flera språk (t.ex. svenska, arabiska). \*

---

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

4. Var i Sverige växte du upp (upp till 12 års ålder)? Ange en eller flera städer eller landskap. Är du uppväxt i ett annat land än Sverige, uppge istället landets namn. \*

---

5. Var växte dina föräldrar upp (upp till 12 års ålder)? Ange en eller flera städer eller landskap. Om någon är uppväxt i ett annat land än Sverige, uppge istället landets namn (t.ex. "Finland och Malmö"). \*

---

6. Vilken är din nuvarande bostadsort? \*

---

7. Vilken är din högsta avslutade utbildning? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Ingen avslutad skolgång
- ☐ Grundskola
- ☐ Gymnasium
- ☐ Universitetsexamen
- ☐ Annan eftergymnasial utbildning

8. Vilken är din/dina föräldrars högsta avslutade utbildning? Markera ett eller flera alternativ. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Ingen avslutad skolgång
- ☐ Grundskola
- ☐ Gymnasium
- ☐ Universitetsexamen
- ☐ Annan eftergymnasial utbildning

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

## Instruktioner

Den första av enkätens två delar innehåller lånord från engelskan. Frågornas utformning beskrivs här kort. Varje fråga innehåller en mening med en anglicism, och framför denna står en parentes innehållande ett understreck. Svara på frågan om du i denna lucka föredrar "en" eller "ett" genom att klicka på ett av alternativen under meningen. Känner du dig osäker så uppmuntrar jag dig till att säga meningen högt, och försöka föreställa dig vad du hade sagt i en verklig situation.

9. Doge är ( ) meme som har spridits på internet. \*



Typiskt exempel på meme med Doge.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

10. En liten mängd data som webbsidor kan lagra på besökarens dator kallas för ( ) cookie. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

11. Man kan få åtkomst till Instagram på telefonen genom att ladda ned (\_\_\_) app. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

12. Ett degknytte med fyllning är (\_\_\_) dumpling. \*



Exempel på kinesiska dumplings, eller dumplingar.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

13. Den här figuren, som ska likna en glad katt, är ett exempel på (\_\_\_) emoticon. \*

( ^ ω ^ )

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

14. Någon som bryr sig mycket om mode och kläder kan kallas för (\_\_\_) fashionista.

\*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

15. Genom att vända en kamera mot sitt eget ansikte kan man ta (\_\_\_) selfie. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

16. Två prickar och ett streck är allt som krävs för att rita (\_\_\_) smiley. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

17. När man gör ett konto på en webbsida där man inte använder sitt riktiga namn väljer man istället (\_\_\_) nickname. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

18. Om man vill testa sina kunskaper är det lätt att hitta (\_\_\_) quiz på internet om något man är intresserad av. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett



06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

19. Att något har (\_\_\_) vibe man tycker om betyder ofta att man gillar känslan det avger. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

20. Någon som anser sig leva i "ofrivillig celibat" kallas för (\_\_\_) incel, från engelskans "involuntary celibate". \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

21. För att kunna ladda ned en video från t.ex. Youtube kan man behöva skaffa (\_\_\_) software. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

22. Till skillnad från andra telefoner kan (\_\_\_) smartphone både ladda ned appar och söka på internet. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

23. Nyligen skapade Disney (\_\_\_) remake av filmen Lejonkungen från 1994. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

24. Om man har lagring för en miljard byte, då har man totalt (\_\_\_) gigabyte. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

25. När det var tio sekunder kvar till det nya året påbörjades (\_\_\_) countdown. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

26. För att avvärja dataintrång när man använder internet är det viktigt att man har (\_\_\_) firewall. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

27. Leksaken som består av ett kullager och tre blad och som går att snurra på kallas för (\_\_\_) fidget spinner. \*



Exempel på fidget spinner.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

28. Producerar man videomaterial på webbplatsen Youtube är man (\_\_\_) youtuber. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

29. Kläderna man har på sig är vad som också kan kallas för (\_\_\_) outfit. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

30. En bärbar dator är (\_\_\_) laptop. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

31. iPad är ett exempel på (\_\_\_) tablet. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

32. Istället för att ringa kan man skriva till sina kompisar i (\_\_\_) chat. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

33. Har man problem med impotens kan man ta (\_\_\_) viagra. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

34. I stora städer där det är mycket luftföroreningar bildas det ofta (\_\_\_) smog som kan innebära fara för hälsan. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

35. På bland annat Youtube och Facebook kan man titta på inspelade videor, och vill man se något direktsänt kan man också titta på (\_\_\_) livestream. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

36. Genom att ändra klädstil och skaffa ny frisyr kan man skaffa sig (\_\_\_) look som är mer på modet. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

37. Ett sådant här test som är lätt att lösa för människor men svårt för datorprogram är (\_\_\_) captcha. \*



Captcha med lösningen "sclt ..was here".

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

38. Ett evenemang där programmerare träffas och programmerar tillsammans under en intensiv period är (\_\_\_) hackathon. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

Instruktioner:  
Del 2

Den andra och sista delen av enkäten handlar om lånord från japanska. Konceptet är detsamma som föregående del, men bland de japanska lånorden kan det förekomma ord som de flesta inte är särskilt bekanta med. Gå på din naturliga språkkänsla för att bestämma om du tycker orden passar bäst som "en" eller "ett".

39. Inom shintoismen tror man att (\_\_\_) torii kan hålla borta dåligt inflytande av onda andar. \*



Exempel på torii. "Flytande torii" vid helgedomen Itsukushima.  
*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ en  
☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

40. På festivaler och vid andra festligheter i Japan är det typiskt, särskilt som kvinna, att ha på sig (\_\_\_) yukata. \*



Två sorters yukata.

Mark only one oval.

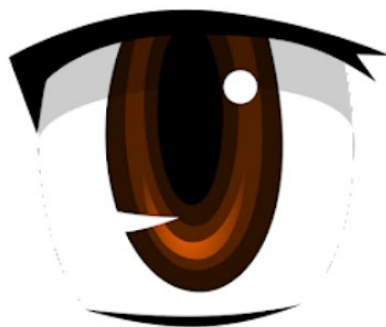
☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

41. Anime är en sorts animerad film från Japan. Pokémon är ett exempel på (\_\_\_) anime som är väldigt populär. \*



Öga i typisk anime-stil.  
Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

42. Om man är i Japan och vill ta sig en drink och äta lättare mat kan man gå till (\_\_\_) izakaya. \*



"Asari", izakaya i Tokyo.  
Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett



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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

43. Bilden visar japanska dumplings, eller dumplingar. Man kan fylla (\_\_\_) gyoza med t.ex. kyckling, fläsk eller vegetariskt innehåll. \*



En tallrik gyoza.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

44. Kombucha är en fermenterad tedryck. Det är viktigt att ha en bra mängd socker för att få (\_\_\_) kombucha som har en bra balans mellan surhet och sötma. \*



Framställning av kombucha.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

45. Att känna att man har ett syfte och en mening med livet brukar sägas vara vad det handlar om att ha (\_\_\_) ikigai. \*



Illustration av innebörden av ikigai.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

46. Hundrasen akita har sitt ursprung i Japan. I mankhöjd kan (\_\_\_) akita bli uppemot 70 cm. \*



Hund av rasen akita.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

47. Mitsubishi är ett exempel på ett stort japanskt företagskonglomerat som äger stora delar av den japanska industrin. Denna företagsgrupp är det man kallar för (\_\_\_) keiretsu. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

48. För att tydligt förmedla en känsla i ett elektroniskt textmeddelande kan man skicka (\_\_\_) emoji. \*



Emoji med glatt ansiktsuttryck.  
Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

49. Det här populära logikspelet där man ska placera ut siffror i ett rutmönster är (\_\_\_) sudoku. \*

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

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

50. Tofu görs på sojaböner och kan tillagas på olika sätt. På bilden syns (\_\_\_) tofu av fast typ. \*



Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

51. En japansk kortdikt med ett speciellt versmått som traditionellt skrivs på tre rader är (\_\_\_) haiku. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

52. Miniaturskulpturen på bilden är exempel på (\_\_\_) netsuke av elfenben. \*



Netsuke föreställande en hare.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

53. En person som isolerar sig från samhället, stänger sig inne och inte har något socialt liv kallas för (\_\_\_) hikikomori. \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

54. En japansk het källa med spa är (\_\_\_) onsen. \*



Onsen i staden Semboku i Japan.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

55. Den japanska sortens mårhund som syns på bilden är (\_\_\_) tanuki. \*



Tanuki på ett zoo.

Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett



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Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

56. Sake är en japansk alkoholhaltig dryck bryggd på ris. Kvaliteten på (\_\_\_) sake beror bland annat på riset som använts vid bryggningen. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

57. Mochi är en japansk efterrätt gjord av ris. På bilden syns (\_\_\_) mochi med smak av grönt te. \*



*Mark only one oval.*

☐ en

☐ ett

06/01/2022, 17:19

Enkät om tilldelning av grammatiskt genus

58. En traditionell japansk underhållare, typiskt en kvinna med vitmålat ansikte, är ( ) geisha. \*



Mark only one oval.

☐ en

☐ ett

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## Spanish questionnaire

### Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

¡Gracias por participar en este estudio! Este cuestionario se ha creado con el fin de investigar cómo asignan el género gramatical a las palabras prestadas de otros idiomas los hablantes que tienen como primera lengua el español. Se le va a presentar unas frases que contienen palabras novedosas, y usted debe decidir si prefiere "un" o "una", o en ciertos casos "este" o "esta", delante de estas palabras. En algunos casos, puede que usted no esté seguro de qué alternativa prefiere, y en tal caso por favor elija lo que le parezca más natural. El cuestionario contiene 55 preguntas y tarda entre cinco y diez minutos en completarse. La participación es completamente anónima, y no se registrará ni su nombre ni su dirección de correo electrónico. ¡Gracias por su participación!

\* Required

1. ¿Qué edad tiene usted? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 18-24 años
- ☐ 25-29 años
- ☐ 30-39 años
- ☐ 40-49 años
- ☐ 50-64 años
- ☐ 65+ años

2. ¿Cuál es su identidad de género? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Hombre
- ☐ Mujer
- ☐ Otro/Sin respuesta

3. ¿Cuál es su lengua materna? Indique uno o múltiples idiomas. Por ejemplo "español, quechua". \*

---

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

4. ¿Dónde creció usted (hasta los 12 años de edad)? Indique una o múltiples ciudades y países. Por ejemplo "Madrid, España". \*

---

5. ¿Dónde crecieron sus padres (hasta los 12 años de edad)? Indique una o múltiples ciudades y países. Por ejemplo "Madrid, España y Lima, Perú". \*

---

6. ¿Cuál es su lugar de residencia actual? \*

---

7. ¿Cuál es su nivel educativo más alto terminado y aprobado? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Ninguno
- ☐ Educación primaria
- ☐ Educación secundaria
- ☐ Educación universitaria
- ☐ Educación superior no universitaria

8. ¿Cuál es el nivel educativo más alto terminado y aprobado por sus padres? Indique una o más alternativas. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Ninguno
- ☐ Educación primaria
- ☐ Educación secundaria
- ☐ Educación universitaria
- ☐ Educación superior no universitaria

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

## Instrucciones

La primera de las dos partes del cuestionario contiene palabras prestadas del inglés. A continuación, se explica brevemente la estructura de las preguntas. Cada pregunta contiene una frase con un anglicismo, y delante de este hay un paréntesis que contiene una línea sin texto. Indique si usted en este espacio en blanco prefiere "un" o "una" haciendo clic en una de las alternativas debajo de la frase. Si está inseguro, le recomiendo que diga las frases en voz alta para intentar imaginarse qué habría dicho en una situación real.

9. Doge es (\_\_\_) meme que se ha difundido en Internet. \*



Ejemplo típico de meme con Doge.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

10. Una pequeña cantidad de datos que un sitio web puede almacenar en el ordenador, o la computadora, de un usuario es (\_\_\_) cookie. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

11. Para poder acceder a Instagram por medio de un teléfono móvil, o celular, se puede descargar (\_\_\_) app. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

12. Después de haber descargado Instagram, puede cargar y compartir fotos con (\_\_\_) app. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ este  
☐ esta

13. Un trozo de masa relleno es (\_\_\_) dumpling. \*



Dumplings en un restaurante chino.

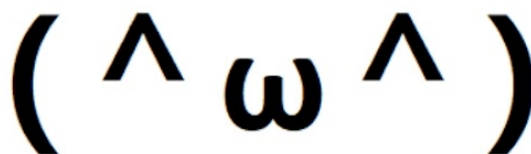
*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

14. Esta figura, que tiene la apariencia de un gato feliz, es (\_\_\_) emoticon. \*



Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

15. Alguien que tiene un gran interés en la ropa y la moda es (\_\_\_) fashionista. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

16. Tomarse una foto a sí mismo con una cámara frontal es (\_\_\_) selfie. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

17. Basta con dos puntos y una raya para dibujar (\_\_\_) smiley. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

18. Al crear una cuenta en una página web en la cual no utiliza su nombre real, uno tiene que escoger (\_\_) nickname. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

19. Si uno quiere poner a prueba sus conocimientos, es fácil encontrar (\_\_) quiz por Internet que trata de algún tema interesante. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

20. Si algo tiene (\_\_) vibe que da gusto, significa que la sensación que emite da gusto. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

21. Alguien que considera que vive en "celibato involuntario" es (\_\_) incel, palabra proveniente de la expresión "involuntary celibate" en inglés. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una



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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

22. Para poder descargar videos de Youtube, uno tiene que conseguir (\_\_\_) software. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

23. A diferencia de otros teléfonos móviles, o celulares, (\_\_\_) smartphone puede descargar aplicaciones y acceder a Internet. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

24. Recientemente, Disney creó (\_\_\_) remake de la película "El rey león" de 1994. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

25. Si hay almacenamiento para mil millones de bytes, en total hay (\_\_\_) gigabyte. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

26. Cuando quedaban diez segundos para el Año Nuevo comenzó (\_\_\_) countdown. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

27. Para protegerse de ataques cibernéticos cuando se utiliza Internet, es importante contar con (\_\_\_) firewall. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

28. El juguete que consta de un rodamiento de bolas con tres aspas y que puede girar es (\_\_\_) fidget spinner. \*



Fidget spinner de color rojo.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

29. Alguien que produce videos en la página web Youtube es (\_\_\_) youtuber. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

30. La ropa que uno lleva es lo que también puede llamarse (\_\_\_) outfit. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

31. Un ordenador, o una computadora, portátil es (\_\_\_) laptop. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

32. iPad es (\_\_\_) tablet de la marca Apple que es muy popular. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

33. iPad Mini también es de la marca Apple. El tamaño de (\_\_\_) tablet es menor que el tamaño estándar de iPad. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ este  
☐ esta

34. En lugar de hacer llamadas, uno puede escribir mensajes a sus amigos en (\_\_\_) chat. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

35. Si uno tiene problemas con disfunción eréctil, puede tomarse (\_\_\_) viagra. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

36. En las ciudades grandes con altos niveles de contaminación atmosférica, puede producirse (\_\_\_) smog que puede ser perjudicial para la salud. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

37. En Youtube y Facebook uno puede ver videos grabados, y si quiere ver algo en vivo, también puede ver (\_\_\_) livestream. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

38. Cambiándose el estilo de vestir y haciéndose un nuevo peinado, uno puede conseguir (\_\_\_) look que está más a la moda. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

39. Esta especie de prueba, fácil de resolver para los humanos pero difícil para los programas informáticos, es (\_\_\_) captcha. \*



Captcha con la solución "sclt ..was here".

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

40. Un evento en el que los programadores se reúnen y programan juntos durante un periodo intensivo es (\_\_\_) hackathon. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

Instrucciones:  
Parte 2

La segunda y última parte del cuestionario consta de palabras prestadas del idioma japonés. La lógica es igual como en la parte anterior, pero entre los préstamos del japonés puede haber términos con los cuales usted no esté tan familiarizado. Por favor, siga su sentido natural lingüístico para decidir si considera que a las palabras les sirve mejor la forma "un" o "una".

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

41. En la religión sintoísta, se cree que la presencia de (\_\_) torii puede ahuyentar a los espíritus malignos. \*



"Torii flotante" del Santuario Itsukushima.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

06/01/2022, 17:19

Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

42. En festivales y otras festividades de Japón es típico, especialmente como mujer, llevar (\_\_) yukata tradicional. \*



Dos tipos de yukatas.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

06/01/2022, 17:19

Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

43. Anime es un tipo de película de animación de Japón. Pokémon es un ejemplo de ( ) anime que es muy popular. \*



Ojo en el estilo típico anime.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

44. El primer episodio de Pokémon se transmitió en el año 1997. El protagonista de ( ) anime es un niño llamado Ash Ketchum. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ este  
☐ esta



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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

45. En Japón, si uno tiene ganas de tomar alcohol o comer algo ligero, puede ir a (\_\_\_) izakaya. \*



"Asari", izakaya en Tokyo.

Mark only one oval.

☐ un

☐ una

46. La imagen muestra dumplings de Japón. Puede rellenar (\_\_\_) gyoza con contenido de pollo, cerdo o verduras, por ejemplo. \*



Un plato de gyozas.

Mark only one oval.

☐ un

☐ una

06/01/2022, 17:19

Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

47. Kombucha es una bebida de té fermentada. Es importante tener una buena cantidad de azúcar para producir (\_\_\_) kombucha que tenga un buen equilibrio entre acidez y dulzor. \*



Elaboración de kombucha.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

48. Sentir que hay un propósito y un sentido de la vida es lo que significa tener (\_\_\_) ikigai. \*



Ilustración del significado de ikigai.

Mark only one oval.

☐ un

☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

49. La raza de perro akita tiene su origen en Japón. De altura, (\_\_\_) akita puede crecer hasta 70 cm. \*



Perro de la raza akita.

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

50. Un perro de la raza akita famoso es Hachikō. En Shibuya en Tokyo hay una estatua de (\_\_\_) akita. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ este  
☐ esta

51. Mitsubishi es un ejemplo de un conglomerado empresarial japonés que controla gran parte de la industria japonesa. Este tipo de grupo empresarial es lo que es (\_\_\_) keiretsu. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

06/01/2022, 17:19

Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

52. Para expresar claramente la emoción de un mensaje de texto electrónico, uno puede enviarlo con ( ) emoji. \*



Emoji con la cara feliz.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

53. Este juego de lógica popular, en el que hay que colocar números en una cuadrícula, es ( ) sudoku. \*

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

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

54. Tofu se elabora de la soja y se puede preparar de diferentes maneras. En la fotografía se ve (\_\_\_) tofu de tipo firme. \*



*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

55. Un poema corto japonés de un formato de verso especial que tradicionalmente se escribe en tres líneas es (\_\_\_) haiku. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ un  
☐ una

56. Uno de estos poemas más famosos es el poema de despedida del poeta Bashō. Bashō escribió (\_\_\_) haiku después de enfermarse. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ este  
☐ esta

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

57. La estatuilla en miniatura de la imagen es (\_\_\_) netsuke de marfil. \*



Netsuke que representa una liebre.

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

58. Una persona que se aísla de la sociedad, se encierra y no tiene una vida social es (\_\_\_) hikikomori. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

59. Un baño termal japonés tradicional es (\_\_\_) onsen. \*



Onsen en la ciudad de Semboku en Japón.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una

60. La variedad japonesa de mapache que se ve en la foto es (\_\_\_) tanuki. \*



Tanuki en un zoológico.

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un  
☐ una



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Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

61. Sake es una bebida alcohólica japonesa que se elabora con arroz. La calidad de (\_\_) sake depende, entre otras cosas, del arroz utilizado en su elaboración. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

62. Mochi es un postre japonés hecho de arroz. En la foto se ve (\_\_) mochi con sabor a té verde. \*



*Mark only one oval.*

☐ un

☐ una

06/01/2022, 17:19

Cuestionario sobre la asignación del género gramatical

63. Alguien que trabaja como artista tradicional de Japón, típicamente una mujer con la cara pintada en blanco, es (\_\_\_) geisha. \*



Mark only one oval.

- ☐ un
- ☐ una

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