Divided by a common language
A comparative study of preferences for, and use of, American and British English vocabulary among students in Swedish upper secondary and tertiary education

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Abstract

This comparative study aims to discover and demonstrate the potential division in preferences for, and use of, AmE and BrE vocabulary by examining the possible influence of variety shift, motivation, gender, and language contact among 181 EFL students in one upper secondary school and one university in Sweden. Accordingly, the material, a questionnaire, was distributed to probe the preferences and potential inclination factors through solicitation of background information and personal attitudes towards English. Additionally, through a selection process within the questionnaire, to determine the division in actual variety use, the respondents chose between 30 variety-dependent synonyms randomly divided into two separate columns. The results demonstrate a self-reported preference for AmE among upper secondary students, which seems to derive from its high frequency of use, and a preference for BrE among students in tertiary education, due to the more appealing sound of pronunciation and the status which it is believed to signal. Additionally, intrinsic motivation is shown to be more frequent among students who prefer BrE. The differences in variety use are, despite some minor connection to variety shift, essentially identical regardless of variety preference, motivation, EFL level and student gender, with AmE being used most frequently. However, none of the respondents used exclusively one variety without alternating between the two in at least one instance, but the extent of inclination seemed to depend on the variety with which one had had the longest contact.

Keywords

American English; British English; EFL; variety preference; variety use

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1 Introduction

The explication of the relationship between American English (AmE) and British English (BrE) in terms of vocabulary preference and use among students of English as a foreign language\(^1\) (EFL) has gradually become an increasingly important aspect in foreign language education. Accordingly, it is mandated that ‘in teaching [sic] students should meet written and spoken English of different kinds […] also with different social and dialect features’ (Skolverket, 2011:53). However, recent data show that AmE acts as a supervariety among the varieties of English (Mair, 2013) and one which, with exceptions, tends to lead recent changes in the language (Leech et al. 2009:253). Scotto di Carlo (2013:73f.) further argues that a small sample of the vocabulary appears to carry an altogether obscure meaning across the two varieties. The British *waistcoat* and *nappy*, for instance, are virtually unintelligible to the American audience.

Nevertheless, the properties of the two varieties in relation to foreign language education are still not completely understood and it is, among other things, unclear which variety is primarily preferred and used by Swedish upper secondary school students in *English 5*, *6*, and *7\(^2\)*, and teacher trainees for employment in the equivalent upper secondary education, an important area of research due to the anticipated linear progression in language proficiency. Consequently, it is of interest to analyse predetermined attitudes towards the two varieties and subsequently compare actual vocabulary use between the categories of *vehicles*, *food*, and *apparel*, areas selected on account of their particularly high frequency of lexical differences.

1.1 Aim and research questions

The aim of this comparative study is to determine the potential division in preferences for, and use of, AmE and BrE vocabulary among EFL students in upper secondary and tertiary education in Sweden by examining the following points:

- Which vocabulary variety is self-reportedly preferred by EFL students in Swedish upper secondary and tertiary education, and to what extent do variety shift and motivation influence these preferences?

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\(^1\) *English as a foreign language* refers to the process through which non-native speakers of English learn English in a country where it has no recognised official or legal status (Harmer, 2007:19).

\(^2\) *English 5*, *6*, and *7* refer to the three sequacious courses in EFL for upper secondary education in Sweden in accordance with Skolverket (2011). Each course covers approximately one year of study.
• Which vocabulary variety is actually used by EFL students in Swedish upper secondary and tertiary education in relation to vehicles, food, and apparel, and to what extent do student gender and language contact influence this use?

1.2 Scope

For this study, AmE and BrE are selected primarily for their current global presence and for their function as reference norms for other smaller varieties (McArthur, 2005:31). Thus, the remainder of this paper is, through an analytic\(^3\) and heuristic\(^4\) perspective, to account for the two varieties through data collected via a questionnaire (see Appendix A). Also, prior theories, models, and reports regarding Americanisation\(^5\), language didactics, vocabulary learning, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, variety shift, and the current state of research are examined in order to enable analysis of variety preference and actual use. However, it should be mentioned that only specific vocabulary items differ between the two varieties, some of which were chosen here, whereas, in terms of core content, the vocabulary is virtually identical.

2 Theoretical background

In this section, theories with regard to the research area are presented and discussed to determine possible reasons for the potential division in vocabulary variety preference and use among EFL students in upper secondary and tertiary education.

2.1 American and British English

It is important to recognise the difficulty in defining AmE and BrE considering their many regional accents, e.g. General American (GA) and Received Pronunciation (RP). Consequently, for this study, the notions of AmE and BrE are henceforth analysed in view of Standard English. Trudgill (1999) argues that this standard is best referred to as the language described in grammar reference books and one which typically does not pertain to any particular accent. However, due to some minor differences across certain geographical areas, the standard variety is often divided into a number of subvarieties, such as American and British Standard English.

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\(^3\) A research approach through which the area of research is examined from a constituent perspective (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:25ff.).

\(^4\) A research approach through which the area of research is examined without preconceived assumptions (Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:29ff.).

\(^5\) In the following, Americanisation refers to the action of making a language more American in character.
At present, as claimed by Crystal (2003:6) ‘a quarter of the world’s population is already fluent or competent in English […] In the early 2000s that means around 1.5 billion people’. Similarly, Thomas (2015) concluded that only 360 million, c. 24 %, are native speakers. As a result, it is imperative to take into account recent studies of English variety preferences within the European Union. In practice, as claimed by Modiano (1993; 2000; 2002a, b), and Mollin (2006:46) European non-native speakers opt for a mid-Atlantic variety, with alternations between AmE and BrE characteristics.

In comparison, as claimed by Svartvik & Leech (2006:150), AmE and BrE represent c. 83 % of all native speakers of English in the world, with c. 66 % using AmE and c. 16 % using BrE. The two varieties are also currently the principal native speaker models aimed for in the teaching of EFL. However, as mentioned by Svartvik & Leech (2006:152.), since the beginning of the 20th century, AmE has acquired a superior influence to BrE, in terms of vocabulary, grammar, spelling and pronunciation, mainly through the increasing influence of American popular culture, media, and technology. This is further discussed in the next section.

2.1.1 Americanisation
Svartvik & Leech (2006:233) argue that AmE not only influences native and non-native speakers through different educational channels, but also through films and television networks by extramural acquisition, i.e. the acquisition of language through external sources outside the intentional language learning in school (Bengtsson, 2014:2). Hence, the distinction between the varieties may become progressively smaller. For instance, Macquarie Dictionary (2016) and Baker (1945) put forward that Australian English (AusE), although being a descendant of BrE, has begun to adopt certain AmE vocabulary, e.g. truck, elevator and freeway, while still preserving BrE terms such as petrol, boot and tap. A similar trend is happening in BrE, albeit to a lesser extent.

2.2 Language didactics
Harmer (2007:23) provides detailed explanations concerning the manner in which vocabulary learning can be ensured among EFL students. Accordingly, the variety or varieties to which students are exposed and learn ought to be established in careful consideration of the specific aim of the teaching. Either students adopt one particular variety or they implement pluricentricity according to which they adjust their language become implemented in the classroom, the most effective alternatives for an appropriate
pedagogical model in learning the vocabulary construction of the language seem, according to Harmer (2007), to be *Inner Circle* varieties, such as AmE and BrE. Furthermore, in order to establish a standard with which students can assess their performance, it should be entirely appropriate to deem an utterance incorrect if two or more varieties are mixed, e.g. alternating between the AmE diaper and the BrE nappy.

On the other hand, Jenkins (2004) suggests that students should be introduced to the reality of World English. Thus, it must be ensured that they are not overwhelmed by the diversity when, in the more advanced EFL levels, they are made aware of the existence of other varieties. Nevertheless, Kuo (2006:219) claims that language should be considered more than mere international intelligibility. Although inaccuracy may be tolerable to a certain extent, as in *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF) (Hülmbauer et al., 2008:27), it is up for debate whether to regard it an appropriate learning model. Therefore, as claimed by Kuo (2006:213ff.), in order to secure proficiency, the pedagogical model should ideally be based on a native speaker variety.

### 2.2.1 Vocabulary learning

In language development, a rich vocabulary may be considered one of the most essential prerequisites of any learner (Read, 2000). Accordingly, as the vocabulary of an individual increases, the ability to read and interpret texts also improves, consequently increasing the vocabulary in an ongoing virtuous spiral (Lundahl, 2014:334). However, a common issue is the vocabulary and spelling differences between AmE and BrE. Although generally accepted in ELF, Harmer (2007:24) suggests that, in learning, it should not be considered appropriate to both write, e.g. *colour* and *color*, or *waistcoat* and *vest*. Instead, students are recommended to make an active choice to focus on a particular variety of English as a model to which they can aspire and, above all, use that variety consistently. However, despite this choice, Harmer (2007:24) argues that students should still be made aware of other varieties in order to demonstrate differences.

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6 The global spread of English is generally discussed in terms of three concentric circles, i.e. the *Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle*. Accordingly, the *Inner Circle* refers to the regions in which English is used as a first language, e.g. the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The *Outer Circle* encompasses the countries in which English is used as a second language, e.g. India, Ghana, and Pakistan. Lastly, the *Expanding Circle* refers to the countries in which English is used as a foreign language, e.g. Sweden, the Netherlands, and Poland (Kachru, 1992).

7 Lingua Franca is a bridge language commonly used in order to enable communication across language barriers where two or more parties do not share a common language (Svartvik & Leech (2006:7)).
2.3 Variety shift

There are still many more reasons for choosing a particular code or variety in a language. As put forward by Holmes (2013:53ff.), in a community where the majority of the population uses a certain variety, the one of the minority is often gradually replaced. Similarly, if the high prestige variety is required for employment, the speed of the shift tends to increase substantially, whereas the rate is seen to decrease in populations where the minority variety is used at home or among relatives.

2.4 Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

In order to better define the different driving forces of learning, the rather extensive concept of motivation is generally divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the former of which seems to derive from the idea that the greater the investment in learning, the greater the gains in learning (Hattie, 2012:47). In comparison, extrinsic motivation demonstrates a shallower learning of surface features and completion of work, regardless of the standard, to achieve praise or similar rewards (Hattie, 2012:47). Thus, intrinsic motivation may appear to be more beneficial in terms of, for instance, vocabulary learning, since the intrinsically motivated individual has a greater desire to discover all possible aspects of any newly encountered word.

However, Hattie (2012:47) claims that the ideal language learner should preferably not blindly pursue knowledge in one direction. Instead, a combination between the two may result in more beneficial outcomes in which the students learn for the sake of acquiring knowledge while they, simultaneously, aspire towards rewards, such as graduation and employment.

2.5 Current state of research

In examining the preference for, and use of AmE and BrE vocabulary among EFL students in upper secondary and tertiary education in Sweden, research into the attitudes of upper secondary school teachers and the view of the general public in Sweden regarding the two varieties may provide the background information required for generalisation.

Accordingly, in Tioukalias’ (2010) study involving six male and six female upper secondary school teachers, a minor difference between the preference for AmE and BrE was discovered, with seven out of twelve preferring BrE. However, this preference for
BrE was primarily found among the generally older staff, whereas the younger teachers were more inclined towards AmE. Furthermore, in justifying their preferences, they described BrE as *nice, formal, correct, and intelligent*, whereas AmE was defined as *friendlier and down to earth*.

In a similar study of 59 upper secondary school teachers, Jensen (2010) found that 51% claimed to use BrE. However, none of the respondents used exclusively one variety, but rather alternated between them within certain areas.

In Lidblad’s (2009) study of attitudes and preferences towards English among 60 adults in the Swedish general public, it was discovered that male respondents preferred AmE, whereas the female population held a preference towards BrE. However, in reality, both genders mixed the two varieties in generally the same way.

Lindell (2014) studied 97 upper secondary students’ ability to distinguish between AmE and BrE vocabulary, as well as their previous influences of the two varieties. The results showed that only 30% of the participants were able to distinguish between AmE and BrE vocabulary, with the lexical item *petrol*, for instance, being correctly identified as a BrE word by 55% of the participants. Consequently, the results indicate that Swedish students alternate between the vocabulary varieties and are, to some extent, unaware of the differences. Furthermore, it was shown that 78 students mainly come into contact with AmE through television. Nevertheless, 6 students stated that they mostly watch BrE television. Additionally, it was shown that the students were more exposed to AmE than BrE through extramural acquisition.

Finally, Sewell (2015) put forward, in a study regarding 62 Korean first year college students, that 30 students preferred AmE, while only five students preferred BrE. The majority of the students indicated a preference towards AmE due to it being more common. Six students furthermore indicated that AmE was *cooler and more popular*. However, it was also shown that this inclination towards AmE depended upon their familiarity with said variety and a desire to avoid the additional complexity of confronting differing accents.

### 3 Material and method

In accordance with Denscombe (2009), the material and method, which constitute the basis for interpretation and analysis, are presented and discussed in the following
section. This is done in order to justify the choice of method and application of previous research, as well as to critically review the methodology in terms of reliability and validity.

3.1 Material

To account for the respondents’ variety use, preferences, and potential inclination factors, a questionnaire was distributed to elicit background information regarding the respondents’ gender, current level of education, reasons for studying the subject, former residencies abroad, contact with AmE and BrE film and television, preferred English variety, and reason for preference. The questionnaire was, moreover, based upon *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English* (Leppänen et al., 2011), a national survey on English in Finland, which provided valuable input regarding the formulation and structure of the questions, e.g. accounting for the respondents’ personal relationship to the English language.

The questionnaire was further divided into two separate columns comprised of a list of 30 variety-dependent synonym pairs randomly ordered within corpus sentences based on the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA) and the *British National Corpus* (BNC). However, modifications have been implemented in order to obscure variety-specific nouns, adjectives, and verbs which would compromise the sentences. Furthermore, as a result of the quantity of variety differences, the vocabulary was primarily based upon the suggestions provided in *Oxford Dictionaries - Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar* (2016) and selected on account of corpus frequency. Nevertheless, it is important to have in mind that since AmE is the dominant variety (Mair, 2013), BrE tends to borrow and adopt many words and structures, potentially decreasing the differences over time.

3.1.1 General considerations

As put forward by Denscombe (2009:225f.), questionnaires are not only economical in view of the amount of possible collectible data in relation to the cost of material and time, they are also easily arranged in comparison with methods such as interviews due to standardisable answers and *closed-ended questions* which facilitate the respondents’ ability to reply by eliminating the risk of misinterpretation. However, to prevent

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9 *Closed-ended questions* refer to a question format in which respondents are limited to only answer according to a predetermined set of alternatives (Dillman et al., 2009).
potentially inconclusive answers and low frequency of responses, a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions\textsuperscript{10} were used.

With regard to the second part of the questionnaire (see Appendix A), the impracticality of verifying for honesty is overcome by the option of remaining neutral or writing an alternative answer instead of only deciding on either the AmE or BrE alternative. Furthermore, by personally distributing the questionnaire, it is possible to provide assistance if uncertainties in the formulation impede responses. However, in terms of researcher bias, it is important to recognise that the BrE variety is used to formulate the questions, possibly influencing the respondents’ answers.

3.1.2 Delimitations
The vocabulary applied in the second part of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) was delimited to three categories, vehicles, food, and apparel, selected on account of their particularly high frequency of lexical differences. Synonyms such as the AmE gasoline and the BrE petrol are sorted in vehicles, the AmE eggplant and the BrE aubergine in food, and the AmE vest and the BrE waistcoat in apparel. Accordingly, by accounting for the percentage of respondents who have chosen a particular lexical item, it was possible to determine the use for each variety in relation to a certain vocabulary area.

The questionnaire was additionally comprised of ten synonym distractors intended to avert the respondents’ attention and thereby render it more difficult to recognise the variety of each lexical item. The data may otherwise be compromised since it allows for identification and selection of the alternative which pertains to the preferred variety.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was distributed to a total of 181 respondents: 68 students in level 5, 58 students in level 6, and 18 students in level 7 in one upper secondary school in the south of Sweden, as well as 19 teacher trainees at the G1 level\textsuperscript{11} and 18 teacher trainees at the G2 level\textsuperscript{12} in one Swedish university.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} Open-ended questions refer to questions that allow for respondents to personally formulate an answer without being limited to a predetermined set of alternatives (Dillman et al., 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{11} The G1 level of English refers to the first level of tertiary EFL-studies in Sweden.
\item \textsuperscript{12} The G2 level of English refers to the second level of tertiary EFL-studies in Sweden.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
3.2 Method

The questionnaire was designed to collect information through direct contact in order to increase participation and thereby also the answering frequency. However, due to lack of time and resources for rectification of questions, a pilot study was primarily conducted on seven non-participating respondents so as to generate more clearly formulated instructions in the questionnaire.

Additionally, the solicitation of the respondents’ background information was conducted on the basis of the concepts presented in prior theories, models, and reports (see 2 Theoretical background) regarding AmE and BrE, Americanisation, variety choice in teaching, vocabulary learning, variety shift, and motivation. Hence, the possible influence of variety shift was calculated in view of preferred English variety and reason for preference, motivation in view of reasons for studying the subject, and language contact in view of former residencies abroad and contact with AmE and BrE films and television networks.

Finally, a chi-square test was applied to account for the statistical significance of the students’ responses. The function of the chi-square test is to assess the probability of whether or not the observed differences may have arisen by chance (Pearson, 1900). Accordingly, for this study, a chi-square test13 calculating for a 2 x 2 contingency table has been applied. In cases where the significance level reaches below .05, there is a probability of 95 % that there is a difference between the two sets of values.

3.2.1 Validity and reliability

As a consequence of the questionnaire’s delimitation, i.e. allowing the respondents only to select the by its reliance on students being willing to make evident their own opinions most appealing variety, to indicate neutrality, or to submit an alternative answer, the validity of the study attains relatively high standards. However, due to complications in verifying for honesty, it is restricted on questions concerning personal background information, variety preference and use.

In comparison, reliability is reached through the application of closed-ended questions which facilitate the comparability of the results. Furthermore, through the involvement

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of one upper secondary school and one university, the 181 respondents may suffice to make a generalisation.

3.2.2 Ethical considerations

In accordance with the four requirements of ethical consideration mandated in *Forskningsetiska principer inom humanistisk-samhällsvetenskaplig forskning* (2002), the respondents are protected in terms of the demands of *information, consent, confidentiality, and utilisation*. Firstly, the demand of *information* has been addressed, i.e. the respondents have been informed of their role in the study and what is required of them, that participation is voluntary, and that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time. Secondly, the demand of *consent* has been addressed as the respondents have agreed to partake in the study and signed a written permission stating that their responses will be used as material for analysis. Additionally, since the youngest participants were 15 years old, a legal guardian’s consent was not necessary, a requirement which is otherwise obligatory if the respondents are younger than 15 years of age. Thirdly, as endorsed by Patel & Davidson (2011:74f.), to address the demand of *confidentiality*, i.e. anonymization, statements have been given to the participants concerning voluntary participation and anonymization of personally identifiable data, e.g. name of school and respondent. All information has been processed and examined statistically, resulting in unidentifiable individual responses. Finally, the demand of *utilisation* has been followed, which means that information regarding the respondents must not be used for other purposes than for this study.

4 Results and analysis

In this section, results generated from the material are presented and analysed in view of the manner in which the respondents’ self-reported preferences correlate with the potential division in actual use between the two varieties. These individual preferences are contrasted with both factors of variety shift and underlying motivational drives. Likewise, vocabulary use is discussed with regard to EFL level, gender, residency abroad, and impact of film and television.
4.1 Variety preference

In analysing variety preference, with regard to inclination factors and motivational drive, any demonstrable connections, or lack thereof, to actual variety use may provide further clarification for potential preference tendencies in the use of vocabulary.

In Figure 1, the distribution of variety preference among the respondents is shown across the five EFL levels between upper secondary and tertiary education.

![Distribution of variety preference](image.png)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Level 5</th>
<th>Level 6</th>
<th>Level 7</th>
<th>Level G1</th>
<th>Level G2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>47 (≈ 69 %)</td>
<td>33 (≈ 57 %)</td>
<td>9 (50 %)</td>
<td>7 (≈ 37 %)</td>
<td>8 (≈ 44 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>12 (≈ 18 %)</td>
<td>18 (≈ 31 %)</td>
<td>8 (≈ 44 %)</td>
<td>11 (≈ 38 %)</td>
<td>8 (≈ 44 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5 (≈ 7 %)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 2 %)</td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4 (≈ 6 %)</td>
<td>6 (≈ 10 %)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 6 %)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 5 %)</td>
<td>2 (≈ 11 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi-square test shows a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) across EFL levels in terms of variety preference. Accordingly, upper secondary students are shown to prefer AmE, while students in tertiary education prefer BrE. The division seems, moreover, to vary depending on the years of study, with a gradual decrease for AmE preference and a contrasting increase for BrE preference across the upper secondary levels.

Furthermore, the respondents, with regard to age, demonstrate comparable tendencies to the findings put forward by Tioukalias (2010), in which seven out of twelve upper secondary school teachers claimed to prefer BrE. This tendency was primarily found among the generally older respondents, whereas the younger ones tended to prefer AmE. The division in variety preference seems therefore, at least to some extent, to depend upon age and years of study. As the EFL levels progressively become more advanced, the number of people who prefer BrE gradually increases.
4.1.1 Inclination factors

It is also of importance to analyse the respondents’ personal reasons for variety preference. Therefore, the preferred variety is compared with the pertaining factor for inclination. In the questionnaire (see Appendix A), these factors were primarily presented in the form of multiple choices based on data put forward by Holmes (2013) concerning variety shift, i.e. *it is used at school or in my working place, it is used by my partner, family or relatives, and it is used to signal a higher status (prestige)*. As claimed by Holmes (2013:53ff.), the reason for choosing a particular variety may depend upon the number of speakers, since the variety of a minority seldom persists, or the signalled prestige which may be required for employment. However, if the minority variety is used by a partner, family or relatives, the rate of the shift tends to decrease.

Additionally, the option of providing a personal answer has resulted in added categories and a minor adjustment in the calculation of the first multiple choice alternative, i.e. to cover a wider area of use, instead of being limited to school and working place. The most commonly suggested personal additions were e.g. *Television* [lvl.5; female; AmE], *Sounds better* [lvl.6; female; BrE], *I find it more formal* [lvl.7; male; BrE], *Media, TV, films, Internet etc.* [lvl.G1; male; AmE], and *It has a wider use in my environment* [lvl.G2; male; AmE].

The next figure, Figure 2, shows the overall distribution of preferences with reference to the underlying reason for variety inclination among the respondents.

![Distribution between variety preference and inclination factors](image)

**FIGURE 2.** Distribution between variety preference and inclination factors
There is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) among the inclination factors between the two varieties. Respondents in upper secondary and tertiary education prefer AmE primarily due to its frequency of use, much in accordance with Holmes’ (2013:55ff.) claims on increased variety shift regarding communities wherein the majority of the population uses a particular variety. In view of similar claims, BrE is preferred on account of its more appealing sound and its supposedly signalled status, as commented by two respondents regarding their preferences for BrE: *I find it more formal* [lvl.7; male; BrE]; *More correct* [lvl.7; male; BrE].

Similar to data presented by Tioukalias (2010:18), in which BrE is described as *nice, formal, correct, and intelligent*, comments in relation to BrE preference in this study are almost unanimously: *It sounds lovely* [lvl.G1; female; BrE]. Furthermore, while in previous studies AmE is described as *friendlier* and *down to earth*, the respondents in this study primarily gave comments such as *It is the most common one* [lvl.7; male; AmE] and *Music and films made this more attractive* [lvl.G2; male; AmE]. Likewise, Sewell (2005) found that 30 of his 62 student respondents preferred AmE mainly due to it being more common, while five students preferred BrE. Six students also said that AmE was *cooler* and more *popular*. It was also shown that the preference for AmE depended upon their familiarity with said variety and to avoid the additional complexity of confronting differing accents.

To conclude, inclinations towards AmE seem to be driven by its general frequency of use, whereas BrE remains a preferred variety due to its distinctive pronunciation and perceived formality.

### 4.1.2 Motivational factors

The multiple choice alternatives in this study regarding the respondents’ main reason for studying EFL are categorised and analysed based on the descriptions put forward by Hattie (2012) with reference to two of the most important motivational drives in education. According to Hattie (2012:47), intrinsic motivation derives from the pure enjoyment of learning, whereas extrinsic motivation arises out of the prospect for external rewards. On account of these descriptions, the alternative *I find the language fascinating*, is categorised as an intrinsic instance of motivation, whereas *to better communicate while travelling abroad, to improve my chances of employment, and to*
pass my studies are all categorised as extrinsic instances of motivation. Figure 3 shows the overall distribution of preference with reference to motivation.

![Figure 3. Distribution between variety preference and motivation](image)

There is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between variety preferences and motivational factors, where extrinsic motivation shows to be less frequent in not only tertiary education, but also among students who prefer BrE. Nevertheless, as claimed by Hattie (2012:47), a language learner’s motivational drive should ideally derive from a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic instances of motivation due to the beneficial outcomes in the acquiring of knowledge and the aspirations towards rewards. These criteria are, however, only fulfilled by a very low percentage of the population, demonstrating no apparent connection between mixed motivational instances of motivation and variety preference.

Furthermore, it is important to recognise that the option of providing a personal answer, to a certain extent, was compatible with, and did not compromise, the data retrieved from the previously discussed closed-ended alternatives. In the compulsory level 5, the nearly unanimous answer was: I’m forced [lvl. 5; female; AmE] and Well we kinda have to [lvl. 5; male; AmE]. In level 6, a course which is not compulsory for every respondent, the personal answer given was: Talk to my relatives [lvl. 6; female; AmE]. Thus, it is possible to interpret a slight shift in opinion which becomes even more evident in the voluntary level 7: I’m good at it & it’s a universal language [lvl. 7; female; AmE] and Improve merits and for fun [lvl. 7; male; BrE]. Nevertheless, at the university levels, the shift in motivational drive from extrinsic to intrinsic, as detected in the upper secondary levels, is terminated, at least in terms of personal answers.
answers appear instead to be extrinsically influenced: To become a teacher of English [lvl. G2; female; BrE].

In the results regarding the distribution of variety preference (see Figure 1), there is an evident trend which shows that both intrinsic motivation and BrE preference increases steadily from upper secondary to tertiary education. Thus, it appears as if teacher trainees are more intrinsically motivated towards English and simultaneously more likely to prefer BrE. Likewise, the largest intrinsically motivated population is identifiable among the individuals who prefer BrE regardless of EFL level.

4.2 Variety use

The division in use between the two varieties of English among the respondents may be statistically organised to account for not only the general use, but also the use across the five EFL levels in order to show, in *apparent time*\(^{14}\), whether actual use progressively changes from lower to higher levels. Hence, one lexical item from each synonym pair (see 3.1.1 Delimitations) was individually selected by the respondents with regard to appeal. However, if a pair was inferred to carry an unfamiliar meaning, it was possible to submit an alternative answer or to indicate neutrality by selecting both AmE and BrE. Accordingly, in Figure 4, the overall distribution of vocabulary variety use is presented.

\[\text{FIGURE 4. Distribution of variety use}\]

\(^{14}\) *Apparent time* refers to a progression in time in which people of different ages are selected for study in order to instantaneously demonstrate potential individual development over time. In contrast, *real time* suggests an act of studying a group of people over a set amount of time, documenting their gradual progression and development (Bailey, 2002).
The differences in variety use between upper secondary and tertiary education are statistically non-significant as essentially identical results are shown regardless of EFL level. Similar to the findings by Lidblad (2009) with regard to inconsistency between variety preference and actual use, these data demonstrate no apparent connection to either variety preferences or motivational attributes. However, some connection to the inclination factors can be found. As put forward by Holmes (2013:53ff.), in a community where the majority of the population uses a certain variety, the one of the minority is often gradually replaced. In this case, the variety of the majority, AmE, replaces the one of the minority, BrE. Nevertheless, the data indicate that despite personal attitude towards a particular variety, the actual use remains generally unaffected. Yet, it seems that teacher trainees, who prefer BrE, use slightly more AmE than do upper secondary students, albeit to a seemingly non-significant extent.

Furthermore, it is imperative to recognise the recent studies of English variety use within the European Union put forward by Modiano (1993; 2002a, b), and Mollin (2006:46) wherein non-native speakers of English are shown to opt for the mid-Atlantic variety, alternating between AmE and BrE. The respondents in this study, in a general division of variety use, demonstrate a similar tendency, although generally more inclined towards AmE vocabulary.

The explanation of this distribution of responses may be contrasted to prior claims by Svartvik & Leech (2006:150ff.) concerning the pivotal role both varieties play in EFL classes. Accordingly, the non-existence of personal suggestions to the synonyms, as advised in the questionnaire, may derive from the predominance and frequency of these lexical items within the educational context. Moreover, Svartvik & Leech (2006:150ff.) also state that AmE is used by c. 66 % of the native speaker population while, simultaneously, being the preferred target variety in the teaching of English. Thus, as shown in Figure 4, the reason that the majority of responses indicate a clear preference for AmE may be rationally explicable as it coincides with the extent to which AmE is spread among native speakers. Nevertheless, data presented in Figure 4 with regard to BrE contradict the claims of Svartvik & Leech (2006), i.e. a use of BrE among c. 16 % of the native speaker population. Therefore, the preferences for the two vocabulary varieties may instead depend on them functioning as native speaker models aimed for in education. However, whether all vocabulary differences with regard to AmE and BrE show the same general division is further discussed in the next section.
4.2.1 Vehicles, food, and apparel

To demonstrate whether the division in variety use is dependent upon certain lexical fields rather than on a general division in use between the two varieties (see Figure 4), the extent to which the 30 synonym pairs, selected on account of their particularly high frequency of lexical differences, are used by the respondents ought to be determined. Accordingly, variety dependent synonyms such as *hood/bonnet* are arranged within the lexical field of vehicle-related terms, *eggplant/aubergine* within food-related terms, and *suspenders/braces* within apparel-related terms. The synonym pairs are, moreover, divided evenly for each previously mentioned category with 20 lexical items each.

In Figure 5, the overall distribution of variety use with reference to vehicle-related terms among the respondents is presented. However, due to small differences between the EFL levels, the replies from all respondents were conflated. Consequently, in view of the size of the population, the probability for skewed results is reduced and does thereby allow for generalisation.

![FIGURE 5. Distribution of variety use (vehicles)](image)

In Figure 5.1, a more detailed representation of the distribution of variety use with reference to *vehicles* is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hood/Bonnet</td>
<td>149 (~82%)</td>
<td>17 (~9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>15 (~8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defroster/Demister</td>
<td>132 (~73%)</td>
<td>29 (~16%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
<td>19 (~10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck/Lorry</td>
<td>162 (~90%)</td>
<td>15 (~8%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (~2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline/Tetrol</td>
<td>113 (~62%)</td>
<td>66 (~36%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License plate/Number plate</td>
<td>95 (~52%)</td>
<td>77 (~45%)</td>
<td>2 (~1%)</td>
<td>6 (~3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk/Boot</td>
<td>127 (~70%)</td>
<td>46 (~25%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>7 (~4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn signal/Indicator</td>
<td>81 (~45%)</td>
<td>85 (~47%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
<td>13 (~7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffler/Silencer</td>
<td>26 (~14%)</td>
<td>136 (~75%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
<td>17 (~9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windshield/Windscreen</td>
<td>96 (~53%)</td>
<td>75 (~41%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
<td>8 (~4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking lot/Car park</td>
<td>123 (~68%)</td>
<td>52 (~29%)</td>
<td>4 (~2%)</td>
<td>1 (~1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![FIGURE 5.1. Detailed distribution (vehicles)](image)
In total, eight word pairs were shown to be preferred in AmE and two in BrE. However, one word pair *Turn signal*/*Indicator* showed a minor difference between upper secondary and tertiary education. Accordingly, *turn signal* was used slightly more frequently than *indicator* in tertiary education (*turn signal* 51%; *indicator* 46%), whereas an opposite trend was seen in upper secondary education (*turn signal* 46%; *indicator* 54%).

The frequency of the lexical items was verified in COCA and BNC (see Appendix B). Accordingly, with regard to the division between *defroster* and *demister*, the higher use of AmE may partially result from the particularly low frequency of the BrE synonym, given that it would appear less familiar among the respondents. However, despite both appearing more frequently in COCA, the distinction between *muffler* and *silencer* is specifically noteworthy since these are the only lexical items with a clear BrE preference of use. The reason seems to be that *silencer*, as well as *indicator, muffler, hood, bonnet, trunk, and boot*, is polysemous in English. Therefore, it does not only carry the same definition as the AmE *muffler*, which in *Oxford Dictionaries - Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar* (2016) is defined as ‘a device fixed to the exhaust of a motor vehicle to reduce engine noise’, but also the definition which is used for *silencer* in both varieties, i.e. ‘a device used to reduce the sound of a gun as it is fired’.

Since *silencer* is common in both varieties, the context in which the homonyms are presented is important. The context used in the questionnaire (see Appendix A), is therefore designed to transmit the intended definition so that the selection of variety use can be correctly made by the respondents. Furthermore, the Swedish *ljuddämpare* is correspondingly polysemous as the BrE *silencer*. Thus, given that *silencer* appears more frequently in COCA, the respondents may have come into contact with the AmE use of the word and subsequently concluded that the Swedish translation should carry the same polysemous meaning. Similar influences from Swedish might have caused certain lexical items to appear more familiar to the respondents. For instance, the AmE *defroster* functions as a loanword adopted into Swedish\(^\text{15}\), and through *calque*\(^\text{16}\), the words *number plate* (*nummerplåt*), *windscreen* (*vindruta*), and *parking lot* (*parkeringsplats*) carry an identical word-for-word meaning into Swedish.

\(^{15}\) In verifying for English loanwords in Swedish, Collinder’s (1983) *Stora ordboken* is used.
\(^{16}\) *Calque* refers to the rendering of a text or utterance from one language to another through word-for-word translation (Yule, 2014:52).
To conclude, since the respondents alter between the two varieties on differing words, a possible explanation suggests confusion as a result of overwhelming diversity during their EFL learning, L1-interference, misinterpretation of the definition of a word, or lack of contact with one of the two synonyms. As put forward by Harmer (2007:24), students, although recommended to make an active choice to focus on a particular variety of English as a model to which they can aspire, should still be made aware of other varieties to demonstrate differences. They should be able to adjust their language in accordance with the context in which the lexical items appear, granted that the variety to which they are exposed and learn in EFL classes has been established (Harmer, 2007:23). Accordingly, Harmer (2007) and Kuo (2006:219) argue that an utterance may be deemed incorrect if two or more varieties are interspersed, e.g. using both the AmE diaper and the BrE waistcoat. Since the results show a diversified application of the two varieties, the concerns put forward by Jenkins (2004) regarding the possibility of students being overwhelmed by the diversity may have come to pass. Nevertheless, two respondents (one in level 7 and one in level G2) consistently chose AmE vocabulary with regard to vehicle-related terms, one of which preferred AmE, whereas the other preferred BrE.

Similar to the division of lexical items with regard to vehicles, Figure 6 shows the overall distribution of preferences among the respondents with reference to food.

![Figure 6: Distribution of variety use (food)](image)

In Figure 6.1, a more detailed representation of the distribution of variety use with reference to food is presented.
In total, eight word pairs were shown to be preferred in AmE and two in BrE. However, one word pair Appetizer/Starter showed a minor difference between upper secondary and tertiary education. Accordingly, appetizer was used slightly more frequently than starter in tertiary education (appetizer 59%; indicator 35%), whereas an opposite trend was seen in upper secondary education (appetizer 42%; starter 54%). Additionally, chips and crisps are divided fairly equally in tertiary education (chips 51%; crisps 49%), while in upper secondary education, the division is more distinct (chips 78%; crisps 15%).

The differences demonstrated in the general division in lexical items on the subject of food-related terms prove non-significant with only minor dissimilarities in data between the different educational levels. As a result, the significance of the lexical items is shown in terms of the frequency in COCA and BNC (see Appendix B). It is important to recognise, however, that preferences for certain lexical items might result from interference from loanwords in Swedish, i.e. aubergine, chips, and zucchini. Accordingly, the word chips is especially relevant since it refers to two different kinds of food which occur in similar contexts. In Oxford Dictionaries - Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar (2016), the word chips in AmE refers to ‘a wafer-thin slice of potato fried or baked until crisp and eaten as a snack’, which is also the Swedish definition of the word. However, in BrE, it is defined as ‘a long rectangular piece of deep-fried potato’. Therefore, due to polysemy, the corpus frequency should be considered with some scepticism. Additionally, the words starter, corn, and sweets are polysemous in English, increasing their general frequency.

Similar to Figure 5, regarding the lexical differences of vehicle-related terms, the results suggest variation in the application of AmE and BrE due to either confusion or overwhelming diversity, L1-interference, misinterpretation of the definition of a word,
or lack of contact with certain synonyms. Nevertheless, the lexical differences in food-related terms received the highest frequency of variety consistency. Among the respondents, three in level 5, one in level 6, two in level 7, and three in level G2 showed to prefer an exclusive use of AmE. Additionally, all but one respondent in level 7, who said to prefer South African English, stated to personally prefer AmE.

Similar to the previous divisions in lexical items, Figure 7 shows the overall distribution of preferences among the respondents with reference to *apparel*.

![FIGURE 7. Distribution of variety use (apparel)](image)

In Figure 7.1, a more detailed representation of the distribution of variety use with reference to *apparel* is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AmE</th>
<th>BrE</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspenders/Braces</td>
<td>87 (≈ 48%)</td>
<td>80 (≈ 44%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
<td>12 (≈ 7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantyhose/Tights</td>
<td>26 (≈ 14%)</td>
<td>148 (≈ 82%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
<td>5 (≈ 3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanny pack/Dam bag</td>
<td>89 (≈ 49%)</td>
<td>63 (≈ 35%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
<td>27 (≈ 15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrobe/Dressing gown</td>
<td>123 (≈ 68%)</td>
<td>42 (≈ 23%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>15 (≈ 8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaper/Nappy</td>
<td>134 (≈ 74%)</td>
<td>38 (≈ 21%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (≈ 4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweater/Jumper</td>
<td>135 (≈ 75%)</td>
<td>35 (≈ 21%)</td>
<td>6 (≈ 3%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtle neck/Polo neck</td>
<td>78 (≈ 43%)</td>
<td>95 (≈ 53%)</td>
<td>3 (≈ 2%)</td>
<td>4 (≈ 2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneakers/Trainers</td>
<td>130 (≈ 83%)</td>
<td>24 (≈ 13%)</td>
<td>3 (≈ 2%)</td>
<td>3 (≈ 2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest/Waistcoat</td>
<td>115 (≈ 64%)</td>
<td>58 (≈ 32%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
<td>6 (≈ 3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washcloth/Flannel</td>
<td>57 (≈ 32%)</td>
<td>115 (≈ 64%)</td>
<td>1 (≈ 1%)</td>
<td>7 (≈ 4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![FIGURE 7.1. Detailed distribution (apparel)](image)

In total, seven word pairs were shown to be preferred in AmE and three in BrE. However, one word pair *Turtle neck/Polo neck* showed a minor difference between upper secondary and tertiary education. Accordingly, *turtle neck* was used slightly more frequently than *polo neck* in tertiary education (*turtle neck* 62% ; *polo neck* 38%), whereas an opposite trend was seen in upper secondary education (*turtle neck* 39% ; *polo neck* 56%).
In relation to the general divisions in lexical items regarding vehicle- and food-related terms, the dissimilarities between upper secondary and tertiary education with regard to apparel demonstrate only minor differences and thereby non-significant data. Moreover, the significance of the lexical items is shown in terms of frequency with regard to COCA and BNC (see Appendix B). As previously mentioned, potential misinterpretations of certain lexical items may occur as a result of polysemy and/or loanwords in Swedish. For instance, the words tights, jumper, vest, and flannel are used as loanwords in Swedish. However, vest (väst) and flannel (flanell) are only phonologically similar, but would almost certainly affect the results. Additionally, the words tights and flannel, the ones with the highest BrE use, both refer to two different items of clothing and may therefore be encountered within the same context. However, the definition of tights does not only coincide with the AmE pantyhose which Oxford Dictionaries - Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar (2016) defines as ‘a woman’s close-fitting garment made of nylon or other knitted yarn, covering the legs, hips, and bottom’, but also to a term which is present in both varieties, i.e. ‘a garment resembling a pair of tights worn by a dancer or acrobat’. The Swedish tights, however, does not refer to women’s thin nylon tights, which was the intended meaning, but rather to the definition used in both AmE and BrE.

Through calque, the words bathrobe (badrock) and polo neck (polokrage) carry an identical word-for-word meaning into Swedish. Furthermore, the words braces, tights, jumper, trainers, and flannel are polysemous in English and thus rely on context. Consequently, the corpus frequency should be considered with certain scepticism.

Despite variation in the application of AmE and BrE among the different lexical items, one student on level G2 demonstrated exclusive use of, and preference towards, AmE. Similar to the findings presented by Jensen (2010) and Lindell (2014), none of the respondents used exclusively one variety without deviation in every category. As found by Lindell (2014), only 30 % of students appear to be able to distinguish between AmE and BrE vocabulary much due to them being unaware of the differences.

4.2.2 Gender
Lidblad (2009) found an identical use of AmE and BrE between males and females in the general Swedish public. Consequently, for this study, males and females are divided
into two groups respectively, depending on educational level, in order to draw a parallel to variety use. The figure below shows the division in use with reference to gender.

![Figure 8: Distribution between variety use and gender](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Upper secondary education (males)</th>
<th>Upper secondary education (females)</th>
<th>Tertiary education (males)</th>
<th>Tertiary education (females)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AmE</td>
<td>1,066 (≈ 61 %)</td>
<td>1,560 (≈ 60 %)</td>
<td>394 (≈ 62 %)</td>
<td>310 (≈ 65 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BrE</td>
<td>570 (≈ 33 %)</td>
<td>840 (≈ 33 %)</td>
<td>221 (≈ 35 %)</td>
<td>163 (≈ 34 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>14 (≈ 1 %)</td>
<td>43 (≈ 2 %)</td>
<td>10 (≈ 2 %)</td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>90 (≈ 5 %)</td>
<td>137 (≈ 5 %)</td>
<td>5 (≈ 1 %)</td>
<td>7 (≈ 1 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 8. Distribution between variety use and gender

There is no significant difference between gender and educational level in terms of variety use; similar to the general division in variety preferences (see Figure 4), AmE is more frequently used by males and females in both upper secondary and tertiary education. Moreover, in relation to the three previously mentioned categories of lexical items, the results are fairly consistent with AmE as the more often used variety. Similarly, the findings previously put forward by Lidblad (2009), which demonstrate an identical usage tendency between males and females, are also seen among the respondents of this study. Accordingly, both genders alternate between the lexical items of each vocabulary variety to essentially the same extent.

On closer examination of these frequent alternations between AmE and BrE, the mean of 62 %, measured out of the distribution of responses from both genders, is more inclined towards the AmE vocabulary. Thus, as claimed by Svartvik & Leech (2006:150ff.), this is potentially due to the pivotal role AmE plays in EFL classes as it currently is the preferred target variety aimed for in Swedish education.

4.2.3 Residence abroad

In analysing the prominence and frequency of possible extramural acquisition among the respondents, the connection between vocabulary variety use and language contact may be determined. Accordingly, as presented below, Figure 8 demonstrates the overall distribution of the respondents’ former residences abroad with reference to variety use.
There is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between the former Inner/Outer Circle residents and the hitherto permanent residents of the Expanding Circle in terms of variety use. However, only a minority of five respondents indicated former residence in an English-speaking country for a continuous period of a minimum of three months. Each of these respondents also specified that they primarily communicated in English during their stay. In total, two of the respondents have previously lived in the United States, three in the United Kingdom, and one in Ghana, India and Ireland respectively.

Among these respondents, an inclination towards BrE can be detected. One of the two respondents who resided in the United States indicated to not only use BrE more frequently, but also to have a generally more positive attitude towards it. In comparison, the opposite answer is given by the other respondent, consequently implying a connection between variety preference and actual use. However, as shown among the former residents of the United Kingdom, the preference for BrE is constant regardless of personal attitude. Hence, the deviation between the former Inner/Outer Circle residents and the residents of the Expanding Circle appears not to be a result of any of the previously analysed factors in relation to variety preference and use.

4.2.4 Film and television

Due to the limited sample population with previous residency in an English-speaking country, the potential connection between language contact and variety use is further examined by accounting for film and television consumption. Accordingly, in Figure 9 the respondents are divided into three separate groups, designed to indicate whether...
they most frequently come into contact with the language through AmE film and television, BrE film and television, or both to generally the same extent.

There is a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) across all categories, where the results presented in Figure 10, point towards a connection between variety use and film and television consumption. It is, among other things, found that the actual use of AmE vocabulary is more prominent among students who spend a larger amount of time watching American, rather than British, film and television. The underlying factor appears to be the previously discussed Americanisation.

Svartvik & Leech (2006:233) put forward that AmE does not only influence both native and non-native speakers of English through different educational channels, but also through extramural acquisition, e.g. films and television networks. However, it is important to recognise that the distinction between the varieties may become progressively smaller. Svartvik & Leech (2006:233) argue that AusE, as a result of this extramural acquisition, has a continuously increasing influx of AmE vocabulary despite originating from BrE. AusE has also begun to adopt certain AmE vocabulary, such as *truck*, *elevator* and *freeway*, into the local vocabulary while still preserving BrE terms such as *petrol*, *boot* and *tap* (*Macquarie Dictionary*, 2016; Baker, 1945). Similarly, it is shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7 that the majority of the words used by the respondents in this study are of AmE origin. Lindell (2014) furthermore showed that 78 out of 97 students mainly come into contact with AmE through television, whereas 6 students stated that they most frequently watch BrE television.
The distinct inclination towards AmE is, despite some minor connection to variety shift, seemingly uninfluenced by variety preference, motivation, EFL level, and student gender, and may instead derive from the division in vocabulary variety use among the respondents who frequently come into contact with AmE film and television. Similarly, the vocabulary variety use of BrE increases on account of BrE film and television consumption. Consequently, film and television appear to be dependent variables in determining variety use.

5 Conclusion

This paper argues that the division in self-reported variety preferences generally inclines towards AmE among upper secondary students and towards BrE among students in tertiary education. The reason seems to be that AmE is preferred due to its frequency of use, whereas BrE is preferred on account of the more appealing pronunciation and the status which it supposedly signals. Additionally, intrinsic motivation is shown to be more frequent among students who prefer BrE.

The differences in variety use, on the other hand, are essentially identical regardless of the EFL level and the gender of the respondent, with AmE being used in the majority of the cases. None of the respondents used exclusively one variety without alternating between the two in at least one instance, consequently demonstrating no significant connection between self-reported preference and actual use. Thus, the mid-Atlantic variety is, to a varying extent, shown to be used by every respondent. However, the inclination towards one or the other variety seems to be dependent on the amount of contact with that particular variety, especially contact from film and television.

5.1 Didactic implications

The prominence of the mid-Atlantic variety may be a result of insufficient emphasis on vocabulary differences between AmE and BrE in EFL classes, and/or, as argued by Svartvik & Leech (2006:233), a progressively decreasing distinction between the varieties. As claimed by Harmer (2007), the variety to which students are exposed and learn in class should be carefully established. Accordingly, an utterance interspersed with alternations between AmE and BrE should be deemed incorrect (Harmer, 2007:23f.). However, as shown in the results with regard to the frequency of variety alternations in actual use, the respondents principally use English for intercultural
communication with regard to EFL, in which variety confusion or L1-interference may be tolerable to a certain extent (Hülmbauer et al., 2008:27). Accordingly, the mid-Atlantic variety may most assuredly be regarded as a model to which students can aspire. Moreover, it is advocated that ‘in teaching [sic] students should meet written and spoken English of different kinds […] also with different social and dialect features’ (Skolverket, 2011:53).

5.2 Limitations

As a consequence of the particular lexical items selected for the material of this study, the preference for each vocabulary variety in terms of *vehicles, food, and apparel* may have been unintentionally affected due to the existence of polysemy in English, as well as calques and loanwords in Swedish. Therefore, the corpus frequency and the actual use of each of these affected lexical items ought to be sceptically considered. Moreover, the irregular distribution of respondents across the EFL levels has to be acknowledged with regard to the proportional division in variety preferences and actual use. Consequently, a wider population and a different set of variety dependent lexical items are required for generalisation.

5.3 Future research

Since the vocabulary variety use of AmE increases as a result of the consumption of AmE film and television while, simultaneously, frequent contact with BrE television results in an inclination towards BrE, the immense impact of digital media and variety use among EFL students ought to be studied more closely. Furthermore, in order to show whether the variety of the teacher influences the variety preferred and used by students, additional studies regarding variety preferences, and actual use, among teachers are necessary.
References


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Pearson, K. (1900). “On the criterion that a given system of deviations from the probable in the case of a correlated system of variables is such that it can be reasonably supposed to have arisen from random sampling.” *Philosophical Magazine Series 5*, 50(302): 157-175.


Appendices
Appendix A: Questionnaire

WRITTEN PERMISSION

I hereby grant permission to Mattias Bergström to use this survey as material for analysis.

Participation in this study is voluntary. All data that can be used for personal identification, e.g. name of school and name of individual respondent, will be removed prior to the submission of the survey to the Linnæus University. All information in this survey will be processed and examined statistically, resulting in unidentifiable individual responses.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Date: ____________

Name of school: ____________________________________________

Signature: ________________________________________________

I hereby grant permission to Mattias Bergström to use this survey as material for analysis, given that my identity will be anonymised.
1. What is your gender?  
- Male  
- Female  

2. What is your year of birth?  
Year: ________________________________

3. What is your place of birth?  
Country: ________________________________

4. What is your mother tongue?  
Language: ________________________________

5. At which level of education are you currently studying?  
- Upper secondary school, English (level): ___  
- University

6. What is the main reason for you choosing to study English?  
- I find the language fascinating.  
- To better communicate while travelling abroad.  
- To improve my chances of employment.  
- To pass my studies.  
- Other: ________________________________

7. Mark the grid below a maximum of three countries (excluding Sweden) in which you have lived continuously for at least three months, the duration of your stay in months, the reason for your stay, e.g. studies or work, and the language used the most while living there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Length of stay (months)</th>
<th>Reason (studies, work, other)</th>
<th>Language used the most</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How often do you watch American television networks/films per week?  
- Every day  
- 4-6 days a week  
- 3-1 days a week  
- Never

9. How often do you watch British television networks/films per week?  
- Every day  
- 4-6 days a week  
- 3-1 days a week  
- Never

10. Which one of the following varieties appeal to you the most?  
- American English  
- Australian English  
- British English  
- Canadian English  
- New Zealand English  
- South African English  
- Other: ________________________________

11. Why do you prefer this variety?  
- It is used at school or in my working place.  
- It is used by my partner, family or relatives.  
- It is used to signal a higher status (prestige).  
- Other: ________________________________
12. Please select the ONE synonym that appeals to you the most (if you do not know the meaning of a word, do not mark either box. If you do not agree with either alternative, please write your own answer in the margins of the page).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Statement</th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>Alternative 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the most <strong>bizarre</strong> thing ever witnessed.</td>
<td>This is the strangest thing ever witnessed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was <strong>worried</strong> about her baby.</td>
<td>She was anxious about her baby.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The child leaned against the <strong>bonnet</strong> of the car.</td>
<td>The child leaned against the <strong>hood</strong> of the car.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fry <strong>aubergine</strong> slices until golden.</td>
<td>Fry <strong>eggplant</strong> slices until golden.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John's jeans had <strong>suspenders</strong> attached to them.</td>
<td>John's jeans had <strong>braces</strong> attached to them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This salad may be served as an <strong>appetizer</strong>.</td>
<td>This salad may be served as a <strong>starter</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing looks as unattractive as a <strong>pantyhose</strong>.</td>
<td>Nothing looks as unattractive as a <strong>tights</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy food can and should be <strong>delicious</strong>.</td>
<td>Healthy food can and should be <strong>tasty</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anyone who travels by car or <strong>truck</strong>?</td>
<td>Is there anyone who travels by car or <strong>lorry</strong>?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The engines originally ran on <strong>petrol</strong>.</td>
<td>The engines originally ran on <strong>gasoline</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She just sat on the stairs eating <strong>biscuits</strong>.</td>
<td>She just sat on the stairs eating <strong>cookies</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because they are so <strong>terrified</strong>, they sit very still.</td>
<td>Because they are so <strong>scared</strong>, they sit very still.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You cannot use the <strong>number plate</strong> for this car.</td>
<td>You cannot use the <strong>license plate</strong> for this car.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A toddler sucked on an <strong>ice lolly</strong>.</td>
<td>A toddler sucked on a <strong>popsicle</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put your money in a <strong>bum bag</strong> around the waist.</td>
<td>Put your money in a <strong>fanny pack</strong> around the waist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jen has sent me this <strong>ugly</strong> paper cover.</td>
<td>Jen has sent me this <strong>hideous</strong> paper cover.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <strong>trunk</strong> in both cars is well proportioned.</td>
<td>The <strong>boot</strong> in both cars is well proportioned.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dry <strong>nappy</strong> shows that the child can retain urine.</td>
<td>A dry <strong>diaper</strong> shows that the child can retain urine.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine had stopped to buy <strong>candyfloss</strong>.</td>
<td>Catherine had stopped to buy <strong>cotton candy</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I walked in the cold without a <strong>sweater</strong>.</td>
<td>I walked in the cold without a <strong>jumper</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get yourself a bag of <strong>chips</strong> on the way home.</td>
<td>Get yourself a bag of <strong>crisps</strong> on the way home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The young woman lay across the <strong>spotless</strong> floor.</td>
<td>The young woman lay across the <strong>clean</strong> floor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Precious</strong> items were supplied by goldsmiths.</td>
<td><strong>Valuable</strong> items were supplied by goldsmiths.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The car's off-side <strong>turn signal</strong> began flickering.</td>
<td>The car's off-side <strong>indicator</strong> began flickering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta interleaved with strips of <strong>zucchini</strong>.</td>
<td>Pasta interleaved with strips of <strong>courgette</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He wore a shirt with a <strong>turtleneck</strong>.</td>
<td>He wore a shirt with a <strong>polo neck</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She had chosen a pair of black <strong>sneakers</strong>.</td>
<td>She had chosen a pair of black <strong>trainers</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan plunged neck deep into <strong>cold</strong> water.</td>
<td>Nathan plunged neck deep into <strong>freezing</strong> water.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The <strong>silencer</strong> on the exhaust had come adrift.</td>
<td>The <strong>muffler</strong> on the exhaust had come adrift.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The headmaster was <strong>angry</strong>.</td>
<td>The headmaster was <strong>furious</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like a fillet with <strong>French fries</strong>.</td>
<td>I would like a fillet with <strong>chips</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An embarrassingly <strong>awful</strong> debut by Mary Smith.</td>
<td>An embarrassingly <strong>bad</strong> debut by Mary Smith.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He was particularly smartly dressed in <strong>waistcoat</strong>.</td>
<td>He was particularly smartly dressed in <strong>vest</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He peered out through the <strong>windscreen</strong>.</td>
<td>He peered out through the <strong>windshield</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people living in Georgia began eating <strong>maize</strong>.</td>
<td>The people living in Georgia began eating <strong>corn</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His suit was cut in grey <strong>washcloth</strong>.</td>
<td>His suit was cut in grey <strong>flannel</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the <strong>car park</strong> turn right and head south.</td>
<td>From the <strong>parking lot</strong> turn right and head south.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She asked if he would like to have some <strong>sweets</strong>.</td>
<td>She asked if he would like to have some <strong>candy</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE!
### Appendix B: Corpus frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>COCA Frequency</th>
<th>BNC Frequency</th>
<th>COCA Frequency</th>
<th>BNC Frequency</th>
<th>COCA Frequency</th>
<th>BNC Frequency</th>
<th>COCA Frequency</th>
<th>BNC Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hood</td>
<td>8,771</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defroster</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track</td>
<td>29,837</td>
<td>11,012</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1289</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>2,255</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gasoline</td>
<td>8,213</td>
<td>7,904</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>8,353</td>
<td>8,213</td>
<td>8,213</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>License plate</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk</td>
<td>8,353</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>7,542</td>
<td>1,550</td>
<td>8,353</td>
<td>8,353</td>
<td>784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn signal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,587</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffler</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windschild</td>
<td>3,616</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>3,616</td>
<td>3,616</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking lot</td>
<td>10,351</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>10,351</td>
<td>10,351</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>2,155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2,155</td>
<td>2,155</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appetizer</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5,356</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>1,288</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td>7,904</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2,118</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>7,904</td>
<td>7,904</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popsicle</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton candy</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chips</td>
<td>11,047</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>11,047</td>
<td>11,047</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French fries</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11,047</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>17,735</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td>1,354</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>17,735</td>
<td>17,735</td>
<td>1,162</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candy</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>1,603</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>10,500</td>
<td>360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspenders</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantyhose</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanny pack</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathrobe</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>1,065</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaper</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>1,712</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweater</td>
<td>5,552</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>5,552</td>
<td>5,552</td>
<td>565</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtle neck</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneakers</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2,455</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>3,197</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washcloth</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>