

EVA

ENGLISH VOCABULARY ACQUISITION



The EVA project

Swedish university students often study in a parallel-language situation, with English-language textbooks and teaching and their own writing in Swedish. It is assumed that students will learn English terms and expressions by means of incidental learning, acquiring vocabulary implicitly as they process content.

But that does not always happen, especially among students who have difficulty with English or reading, and even if it does, the words may not be available for active use. It does not even always happen to L2 users in monolingual learning situations, such as overseas students in Britain.

Recent research findings emphasize the importance of cognitive processing of the items to be learned. But how can the necessary focus on form be achieved in content teaching? Research has focused on experimental studies of the learning of general vocabulary from pleasure reading rather than problems of learning terms from study reading in the wide variety of real learning situations.

We have been funded by the Swedish Research Council to compare language learning from study reading and lectures in Scotland and Sweden. Our investigation –English Vocabulary Acquisition EVA starts in 2009 and consists of

- (1) observation of students' and teachers' personal and social practices while reading and attending lectures, the problems arising, and the measures taken by lecturers;
- (2) a semi-experimental investigation of how various teacher measures affect the learning of terminology in the normal teaching situation;
- (3) an experiment to test whether these measure can be shown to have effects.

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