

# El uso de combinaciones de palabras con *que* en un corpus de aprendices suecos de español como lengua extranjera

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Title: *El uso de combinaciones de palabras con que en un corpus de aprendices suecos de español como lengua extranjera.*  
English title: The Use of Word Combinations with *que* in a Corpus of Swedish Learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language.  
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### Abstract

Previous research in phraseological studies has approached the difficulties that learners of foreign and second languages have to produce word combinations derived from idiomatic- or phraseological principles. Using the theoretical framework of Sinclair's idiom principle and applying a corpus-based methodological approach to contrastive linguistics and the study of interlanguage, I have analyzed the use of Spanish word sequences by Swedish learners. I argue that Swedish learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language overuse different word combinations due to mother tongue influence (Swedish), and as a consequence of different accommodation strategies in their interlanguage. The differences in function and frequency of use of these combinations decrease proportionally with the development of learners' knowledge and skills in the target language.

The thesis presents a quantitative and qualitative analysis of word combinations with *que*: *lo que*, *de que*, *algo que*, *dice que* in 135 texts (corpus SAELE-Swedish students of Spanish as a foreign language) produced by 45 Swedish learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language (27 women and 18 men), at two Swedish universities. The sample represents 25.4% ( $P < 0.005$ ) of the total of 177 students (universe) enrolled in academic courses in Spanish as a Foreign Language. The study is contrastive corpus analysis of argumentative texts written by intermediate-level Swedish learners of Spanish (Corpus SAELE compiled by the author) which was compared with two control groups: one of native speakers of Spanish (control corpus of Spanish CEDEL2) and another of native speakers of Swedish (control corpus of Swedish ARGUS).

The main research question was to examine whether Swedish learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language tend to use different word combinations with *que*: (*lo que*, *de que*, *algo que*, *dice que*) than Spanish and Swedish-natives. In addition, I have aimed at: (a) to carry out a survey based on sociolinguistic data obtained from students and (b) to investigate if the level of proficiency of Swedish learners of Spanish Foreign Language corresponded to A2-B1 within Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Due to its polysemous nature, *que* has a high frequency of use in the Spanish control corpora (3.45%). The Swedish equivalents *att* appeared with a frequency of 3.75% and *som* with of 2.13% in the Swedish control corpus. In the corpus SAELE *que* appeared with a frequency of 2.95%.

The study has shown the differences in use and frequency in the production of Swedish learners with Spanish and Swedish speakers. The combination *dice que* seems to be the most frequently used by Swedish learners of Spanish as a foreign language, although it was 21.6 % more frequent among the Swedish learners than Spanish-speakers (control corpus CEDEL2) and 13.44 % than among Swedish-speakers (control corpus ARGUS). The overuse of the combination *dice que* could reflect a tendency by Swedish learners of Spanish to use formulations typical of speech rather than of writing. In addition it was found that Swedish learners of Spanish use the combination *algo que* (0.4%) double as often as Spanish-speakers and *lo que* equivalent to *det som* 6.57% and to *vad som* 7.47 % more frequently than Swedish-speakers. It shows learners linguistics *continuum* if you consider that *lo que* is the combination most frequently used by Spanish-speakers and the Swedish equivalents to *algo que* were the combinations most commonly used by Swedish-speakers.

The analyses of the essays by the Swedish learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language participating in the present study showed that their skills conformed to level A2 to B1 (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) according to the analyses of their essays. The learners produced some word combinations similar to those produced by Spanish natives, but made some errors in their written production. It was found that individual differences among participants with regard to age, length of study of Spanish in Sweden or a Spanish-speaking country could be another factor to take in account. A comparison of the Swedish learners with more advanced students of Spanish (level B1-B2), indicated that the latter used particle in a way that is directly proportional to the preferred choice by a native speaker.

Pedagogical conclusions will be used to develop concordance and collocation-based exercises as a way of raising students' awareness of the use and function of recurrent words combinations with *que* in their written production.

Keywords: Corpus linguistics, Contrastive analysis, Learners corpus, Spanish as a Foreign Language, Word combinations, Idiom principle, Collocations, Interlanguage.

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