



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET

Gaps in alignment

A cross-cultural research on intended and received curriculum in Sweden and Germany.

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Rapportnummer: HT11-2480-13

Abstrakt

Titel:	Gaps in alignment. A cross-cultural research on intended and received curriculum in Sweden and Germany.
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Termin och år:	Ht 2011
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Rapportnummer:	HT11-2480-13

Nyckelord: received curriculum, cross-cultural research on curriculum, intended curriculum, language teaching

Bakgrund: TIMMS, PISA och andra internationella undersökningar har varit viktiga för internationell jämförelse av undervisning och läroplaner. Men inom språkundervisningen saknas fortfarande stora internationellt jämförbara studier. Denna studie är en av de första kvalitativa internationella undersökningar som utförts inom ämnet moderna språk.

Syfte och huvudfråga: Syftet är att studera graden av överensstämmelsen mellan den officiella och den mottagna läroplanen i L3 undervisning i Tyskland och Sverige. Uppsatsens huvudfrågor är vilka skillnader och likheter som existerar i båda länders officiella och mottagna läroplaner, och i vilket förhållande dessa står.

Metod och material: Undersökningen genomförs bland 15-åriga elever med hjälp av enkäter som innehåller öppna frågor. Svaren kategoriseras med hjälp av olika kodningsprinciper. Läroplanen analyseras med hjälp av textanalys. Tolkning av resultaten har utförts utan hänsyn till respektive lands nationella kontext, enligt Rosenmunds "culture-free approach".

Resultat: Studien visar att det finns både likheter än skillnader mellan de två länderna, såväl när det gäller policy-making nivå som på mottagarens (elevens) nivå. Det kan konstateras att det finns en stor brist när gäller samordning mellan den upplevda läroplanen och den intentionella läroplanen i båda länder.

Betydelse för läraryrket: Studiens resultat kan bidra med råd för hur lärare kan förbättra sin undervisning i moderna främmande språk. Främst genom kognitivering av läroplanen och olika sorter av formativ bedömning kan undervisningen åstadkomma en högre grad av harmonisering i samspel mellan den formulerade och den uppfattade läroplanen.

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1. Introduction

Teaching French is universal. All over the world this language is taught in the same way. There is no or few difference if the language is taught in Germany, Russia or Chile. That is at least what many assume. But the reality proves something else: there are nevertheless national differences. This is at least according to the author's own experiences and to subjective reports from language teachers whenever they have been abroad. Reasons for differences are diverse, but at the end of it seems as if they all lead back to the role of the national curriculum for language teaching as they are at the very beginning of every language-learning lesson.

School curriculum in general has a high importance for each nation. Its task is immensely diverse as it tries to predict an unpredictable future and, at the same time, it steers the every-day work of a teacher. On the one hand, a curriculum unites the society's view on its own future as the curriculum defines what students will have to know in the following decades. On the other hand a curriculum is a very important guideline for the daily work on the classroom level. A school curriculum is really one of the linchpins of a modern society. Subsequently it seems to be natural to put the curriculum in focus when carrying out research on the subject of language teaching in an international perspective.

The curriculum developed by policy-makers (the so-called intended curriculum) stands only at the beginning of a transformation process where the curriculum undergoes different interpretations by different personae involved in the process. The teacher transforms the curriculum into the taught curriculum. Assessments tests then show in what way the students have learned the so-called assessed curriculum. Moreover, every student has her own idea about the curriculum and its content, the so-called received curriculum. The teacher is the curriculum-transforming agent and her main task is "to ensure close alignment between the intended, taught, assessed and received curricula" (Kelly 2009: 11). By using the word "the goals", the author expresses that an alignment cannot possibly be achieved at all times. Nonetheless, the teacher should strive for a degree of alignment as high as possible in order to guarantee that the aims expressed in the intended curriculum are transferred. Consequently, the present study strives to answer the question in what way this alignment between the most distant two parts of the L3 curriculum, the intended and received curriculum, is achieved in L3-teaching¹ in two European countries, Sweden and Germany. The aim is to find out what differences exist on the policy-making and the practical level in order to provide a bigger picture of the situation. The description of the situation will further enable the author to provide the L3 teacher but even other language-teachers with information on how improve the alignment between the intended and the received curriculum.

Given the large impact of cross-national studies like PISA and TIMSS one could argue that we already have a clear picture of what is going on and that an additional research on this subject is not required. But this is not the case. Problematic with this type of quantitative research is that they offer rather simplistic comparisons, focusing on readily quantifiable data leading to generalizations instead of qualified summaries (cf. Schmidt 1996). In addition, those studies

¹ L3 refers to third language a student normally acquires in Germany and Sweden. L1 (Language 1) is the name used for describing the mother tongue whereas L2 refers to the first foreign language, which is most likely English. L3 then refers to the third language acquired by the student, mostly referred to in the curricula as "modern foreign language". Those L3 are among other German, French, Spanish or Chinese.

solely examine natural science subjects, whereas a large-scale study on L3 teaching does not yet exist. The present study on L3 teaching will supply the reader with new information, looking beyond the picture drawn by those large-scale studies based on quantitative data from performance-based assessment. In addition, this study even incorporates the students' view on teaching, something that is excluded in the large-scale researches. The aim of this study is to determine the degree of alignment in the respective country. Additionally, it will even compare the degree of alignment and, thirdly, it will try to find solutions in case deviations are detected. The international perspective is of importance as in our highly globalised world nations require an international perspective in order to further improve their national curriculum and teaching strategies in L3 teaching.

This study had some boundaries, mainly connected to funding and time issues. This study will not supply the reader with a generalizable picture of the curricula alignment situation in Swedish and German schools. Instead, it will give a first insight into something that has not yet been looked into. This will be done in a qualitative way, therefore generalizations for the whole of Sweden and Germany can and will not be made. Furthermore, this study does not want to, by any means, criticize the large-scale quantitative studies like PISA and TIMSS. Those types of studies have been the first ones surpassing national boundaries in curriculum research. They supply the participating countries with important information on how policy-making documents and teaching need to be changed in order to achieve improved assessment results. Without their contributions, current national school politics would not be studied with international perspectives, as it is the case currently in Europe. I do not see the present study as a replacement for these types of studies. Instead I promote a different way of looking at international comparative research on the curriculum that can be more informative for the teacher on the classroom level. Further, this study does not cover subjects that concern the issues of the assessed curriculum. Even the subjects of the intended and the taught curriculum are only slightly touched upon in order to interpret the received curriculum. Finally, this study does not supply the reader with any concrete ideas on a specific language that is part of the group modern foreign language. Instead the proposals for solutions will stay on a general level for all L3.

The first part of this essay introduces and defines the research questions. This will be followed by a background in which a concise account of German-Swedish school history will be supplied as well as an overview over the cross-national research on curriculum. The third section deals with the methodology used for carrying-out the research. The last section then presents the results of the research as well as it discusses solutions for problems found during the analysis.

2. Research questions

There is no doubt that much can be learned from cross-national studies like PISA and TIMSS. But they even have some restrictions, as shown above. The present study will supply the reader with information about the degree of alignment between the intended curriculum and the received curriculum in L3 teaching in Sweden and Germany. This is of high importance, as “one of the goals of teaching” (Kelly 2009: 11) is a high degree of alignment between those two type curricula. Further, the aim is to propose solutions in case gaps in this alignment are detected.

In order find out if there is an alignment between the intended curriculum for the L3 and the students' perception of the curriculum, this paper is will try to answer the following research

questions:

1. What different and similar aims have the Swedish and the German national curricula for modern foreign languages?
2. What differences and similarities have the perceived L3 curriculum of 10th grade pupils in the respective country?
3. What relation exists in the two respective countries between the intended and the received curriculum in L3 teaching?

The first question touches upon curriculum theory. It discusses the results of comparative curriculum research saying that each national curriculum represents a different societal context in which they are embedded. It is recognized that parties, activities, and institutional arrangements influence the intended curriculum in each country in its own way (Schmidt 1996). Thus the author's hypothesis is that differences can be found between the Swedish and the German curriculum for L3 teaching.

The second question deals with the issue of curriculum practice. The hypothesis upon this question is based is closely related to the hypothesis employed in the first question. If there are national differences in the intended curriculum, then there will be as well differences in the received curriculum. For the curriculum to turn from the policy-making level to the received, it undergoes a voyage leading to changes: one of the corner stones in the transformation is the curriculum's interpretation by the teacher which is influenced by her background, ideas, attitudes and pedagogical orientation and practices (Schmidt 1996). This intended curriculum then receives a final interpretation by each individual student. Even this interpretation will be influenced by each individual's background, ideas, and attitudes. Thus there are differences between the two countries supposed to be found.

The third question then unites the first and the second question. As soon as we have found similarities and differences in the correlation between these two types of curricula it will as well be possible to determine the degree of alignment. In case of existing deviations, it will be possible to suggest solutions for the teacher in order to close the existing gaps.

The international perspective of this study enables the comparison of two neighbouring countries. With putting the results of the two countries into an international context, enables for the construction of a wider picture of the teaching of the L3. This international picture is of interest as it must be every country's concern to wanting to improve its school system. Aims for the will to improve are among others strive for the maximization of the students' knowledge, reduction of the costs of schooling, acquisition of best-practice examples from other countries or solely feedback on the nation's placement in an international context. Thus this international study on L3 allows the abandonment of a national view on curriculum and broadens the view of all participants.

3. Background

3.1. Previous research

A curriculum is always limited by the national boundaries in which it was developed. Due to that, it is not possible to give a holistic account of the history of the curriculum. Thus, the following account will have a north and middle European perspective, a predominant focus to be found in Swedish and German literature on school history.

The more complex knowledge becomes in a society, the greater the need for an institutionalisation of teaching. Historically, it was the art of writing that led to the development of "schools" in the Sumerian and the Egyptian advanced civilization (3,000 AD). The earliest findings related to schooling are tasks for students written on clay fragments or on papyrus. In ancient Greece, a canon for the classic Hellenic school education was formed. This can be called one of the first curricula as it codifies an education pattern for the general education. These ideas then were adopted in the Roman Empire. The Greek canon built a foundation for the "septem artes liberales" (Seven liberal arts) that strongly influenced the occidental education system far beyond the Middle Ages. These seven liberal arts consist of three oral subjects: 'Trivium' and the mathematical 'Quadrivium'. The different subjects had to be passed in linear succession, several subjects at a time were not taught. Up until the 15th and 16th century, courses given in monasteries and universities kept close to this concept (Apel & Sacher, 2007).

The growth of knowledge in the 16th and 17th century required the creation of new subjects, among others mathematics, natural sciences, geography and history. One of the central figures at that time was the philosopher and "pioneer of education" Comenius (1592-1670). He was one of the first to break with the classical traditions in teaching. He formed a curriculum that defined a progression of workload for each individual age group and for every subject. He was one of the first to come up with parallel courses for students, as opposed to the linear succession in the "septem artes liberales".

During this period the first national school laws were published in Sweden regulating the organisation of the school as well as teaching and the assessment processes. The school law from 1571 was coined by the humanistic education ideal. The following law from 1611 sees the introduction of a twelve year high-school system. The curriculum prescribed the lecture of Cicero, Vergil and others in original language. Until 1724, those curricula were strongly influenced by the clergy. The school law from 1724 was accepted by the assembly of the estates (Rikens Ständer) and therefore received a more secular orientation. It was the first document to contain a weekly schedule of what was supposed to be taught by the teacher. This new law was valid until 1800 (Lundahl 2004).

The end of the 18th century then finally sees a nationalisation of education even in Germany. In combination with this development, the curriculum and its different functions (allocative function, means of standardization and of control) became more important for a nationalized school system. In Prussia, for example, the "General-Land-Schul-Reglement" from 1763 defined where, how and in what way a teacher should teach. At the same time, empirical based didactics and pedagogy are on its rise and they gain more and more influence on the development of a curriculum.

In Sweden, the parliament decided in 1842 the introduction of an elementary school compulsory for everyone. Subjects were among others writing, arithmetic, reading and geography. Christian religion was one of the most important subjects and the clergy still had a lot of influence on these types of schools (Larsson 2011).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the high level of standardization led to a protest-movement called "reform pedagogy" (Reformpädagogik) in Germany. The bureaucratic overregulation and standardization of the teaching-process was seen to put the teacher's freedom in danger. This resulted in the development of a "freer curriculum" during the Weimarer Republic in the 1920s. At the same time in Sweden, the aim of the published curricula was to abolish the learning by heart of the catechism. Instead the focus was on graphic description, the students should be able to understand what they were taught (Larsson 2011).

During the Third Reich, the German tendencies towards liberation were eliminated, the curriculum was forced into line as the ruling party abused schools as a propaganda instrument. All subjects were adapted to Nazi ideology. The traditional separation in different school subjects was kept. At the same time in Sweden, the influence of the clergy on the curriculum slowly was reduced. Science turned into the new ideal for teaching as it was seen to be the new foundation stone for society. After the WW II school received in 1946 the task to educate the pupils to democratic citizens that can assume responsibility (Orlenius 2001).

After the Second World War, the German education system reoriented to the traditions of the 1920s, this took until the 1960s. In Sweden one of the main tasks of schools was to individualise the students' development according to universal regulations that were equal for all. From this perspective it was hoped that institutions could be created that treat all citizens equally and fair (Vallberg Roth, 2002). This can still be said to be the present situation with the Swedish curriculum.

In the 1960s, a discussion started in Germany if the content of the curriculum still was up to date. This led to changes in the appearance and content of the curriculum. Before, the German curriculum was more formed like a syllabus, it was a plan for conducting of a course. But with the introduction of the Anglo-American concept of curriculum this has changed. From that time, the curriculum contains a more holistic description of schools and teaching situations. Not before the year 2000 and the so-called PISA-shock the German curricula were changed into output-related documents. Since then they look like the Swedish curricula that have been goal-based since several decades.

3.2 School systems in Sweden and Germany

The Swedish school system has a high degree of decentralisation, as the local authorities are responsible for financing and organizing education activities. Nonetheless, the overall goals are set out by Swedish Parliament and Government, i.e. school curriculum and course syllabi are national and have to be applied equally throughout the country. The National Agency for Education (Skolverket) is responsible for the gradual developing and revising of curricula. One of their main tasks is to improve equivalence of schools between different local authorities.

After WW II, Germany was politically reconstructed. The Federal Republic was installed, consisting of 16 federal states, called Länder. In Germany, sovereignty is divided between the

central governing authority and the Länder. Every of the 16 German Länder (singular: Land) is headed by its own government. These governments are, among others, responsible for the school system. This results in the Länder having different school organisations and school curricula, issued by the Government of each respective Land. As a consequence, considerable variations exist between the Länder concerning the formulation of national curricula. But the Länder do not have complete freedom in issuing their curricula. Rather, the Kultusminister-Konferenz (KMK) provides guidance containing education standards described as specific competencies and the Länder are obliged to implement them (Hamman 2007).

This study will focus on the curriculum in one Land: Bavaria (Bayern), situated in the South-West of Germany. The capital is Munich. Population-wise, Bavaria is the largest Land in Germany with 13 million inhabitants. This Land's curriculum will be more closely examined in this comparative study due to the author's in-depth knowledge of the education system and the curriculum in this Land. In addition, both in Sweden and Bavaria the curricula were lately reissued (Sweden 2011, Bayern 2009). Another contributing factor is that both school systems have a goal-based curriculum in place.

3.3 International Comparative Research on Curricula

Historically, cross-national research on curricula is quite a young discipline in curriculum theory. As shown above, in each nation a set of educational institutions, stakeholders and pressure groups leads to the formation of a unique national curriculum. Subsequently, "curriculum inquiry focused always on a local point, which is understandable as only a certain type of curriculum is applied in a certain way in a certain school in a certain class" (Connelly, Xu 2010: 328). For a long time, curriculum theory was regarded a national matter which is mainly due to the circumstances that the context-boundedness aggravates every cross-national comparison, attempting to compare curricula across borders this can lead to misunderstandings.

Only over the past two decades, curriculum has gained attention as a topic of international comparative research. It was not before 1989 and the introduction of the "culture free approach" that a methodology was available enabling a cross-national research on curriculum. This method enabled researchers to primarily focus on the general features of organization and neglected the context in which an organization is located. The first study then was carried out in 1992 comparing tendencies in primary- and lower secondary education (Rosenmund 2006). But even if the results of Rosenmund and other researchers have considerably increased knowledge of the outcomes of curriculum-making in terms of structure and content, less is known across countries with respect to processes enacted in order to select, organize and implement content in schools. Even the major international comparative studies such as TIMSS and PISA, which did not appear before the mid-1990s, largely excluded curricular issues in the interpretation of results. It was not until the middle of the 2000s, that these studies integrated the curriculum as a major organizing concept in the consideration of how educational opportunities are provided and what factors influence the effective use of these opportunities. TIMSS 2011, finally, examines the curricular goals, how the educational system is organized to facilitate the implementation of these goals, and how effectively these goals are attained (Mullis et al 2011).

PISA, TIMSS and other international comparative studies and assessments have a purely quantitative and numerical approach in curriculum research. Their interest lies in rendering curricula comparative in a quantitative way. In these studies, teaching receives a very mechanical

understanding: curriculum creates an input. The teacher then, as the agent for the correct implication of the input, is responsible for correct teaching, leading to the student being successful in the assessment. This perspective is understandable, as the aims of those quantitative studies are to give a cost-effective, quick glance at education systems. But this way of looking at teaching has a couple of drawbacks from a pedagogical perspective. Firstly teaching cannot solely be reduced to a technical matter. Teaching is a very complex situation that involves contact between human beings. This seems to be forgotten in the studies shown above, as they treat pupils as black boxes catalyzing the teacher's implemented curriculum and spitting out the attained curriculum, i.e. the student outcomes in terms of measurable knowledge and attitude. Quite a simplifying view given the fact that even the TIMSS 2001 framework states:

“students vary in their prerequisite knowledge and skills and the support they receive from their homes as well as the motivation and interest” (Mullis et al 2011: 90).

Furthermore, research has shown that the day-to-day classroom activities are likely to have more direct impact on student's achievement in some subjects than others (Mullis et al. 2011: 91). But all of these influences on the individual level are not taken into account in a quantifying approach to curriculum and teaching. These approaches solely show the surface of how school works. Among others, they fall short of showing the full impact of a curriculum as they exclude the fourth factor, the "perceived" (Linde 2006) curriculum.

So even if the numerical approach might be satisfying on an institutional level, this seems not to be the case for the teacher who is supposed to have a perspective on each individual she teaches in her classroom on a day-to-day basis. The large-scale, quantitative studies might be of interest to compare larger groups in cross-national studies. However, on the classroom level, these questions are not of primary concern. There, one of the most important questions is how every individual student can best be supported in order to achieve improved results.

Another issue is that most of the large-scale studies on curricula are carried out in the nature science subjects. Even when looking for minor studies, it was nearly impossible to find studies that incorporated the scope of the present study, i.e. language teaching. One of the few examples was a curriculum comparison of modern language teaching in two countries (Erdem 2010). This article could unfortunately not be retrieved, even though it would have been informative for this study as the abstract indicates:

“Qualitative data collection techniques have been used, since the aim of this research was to compare the similarities and differences of the 2005 Language Curriculum in Turkey to the Language Curriculum in Ireland”.

This lack of research in the field of language teaching is due to the fact that some school subjects are regarded to consist of universal elements (mathematics), whereas others are described as "parochial" (history, geography). This existing dichotomy opens up for the question where the subject "modern foreign language" is situated. L3 teaching can not be counted among "universal subjects" as the progression in language learning is always influenced by one's mother tongue as well as other contextual issues having an influence on the way language is taught and learned. In addition, language teaching includes as well the field of "cultural knowledge". Even this part of language teaching is strongly linked to contextual limitations. Research has shown that teaching

”cultural knowledge” is mostly biased on a country’s stereotypes about the target country (Maijala 2008). Nonetheless, I want to argue that language teaching is not a ”parochial” subject in its entirety. The Council of Europe has developed through a process of broad consultation and scientific research over several decades the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR):

“This document provides a practical tool for setting clear standards to be attained at successive stages of learning and for evaluating outcomes in an internationally comparable manner (...) (and) is increasingly used in the reform of national curricula” (Council of Europe 2007).

This would not have been possible if the process of language learning and teaching were not universal. Consequently, this section shows that a comparison of language curricula and teaching across borders is regarded as possible as it primarily consists of universal elements that can be compared to each other. In addition, this section proves that this study will be one of the first international studies on L3 teaching.

4. Theory

4.1 Curriculum theory

The word 'curriculum' is derived from the Latin notion of *running a course*. A curriculum, then, is a *course to be run*. There are many, sometimes contradicting, definitions of the word curriculum to be found. This is explained by Schwab (1960) who argues that, “depending on the times and the circumstances, the appropriate focus for curriculum concern is one of four factors or commonplaces – student, teacher, subject matter, and society. With each reshuffling of the relationship of these commonplaces, a different definition of curriculum emerges” (179). This statement from the 1960s is still valid today, as the term curriculum is even nowadays not used universally throughout the world (Connelly and Xu 2010).

The following definition of the term curriculum is quite broad, but it merges many other descriptions of what a curriculum *should be* from a legislator’s perspective. A curriculum is the ”most concrete form of the ministerial regulation of teaching, by describing aims, contents, methods and assessments” (Christ 2007: 72). Compared to guidelines or *syllabi*, a curriculum contains general descriptions for schooling in its whole. Syllabi, on the other hand, are more concrete and define the way in which specific courses should be run in specific school forms and age groups.

The study of, and research on, the curriculum is called curriculum inquiry (Connelly, Xu 2010). One part of curriculum inquiry is *curriculum theory*, which ”is the scholarly attempt to chronicle, interpret, and ultimately understand the processes whereby social groups select, organize, and distribute knowledge and belief through educational institutions” (Englund 1990: 93). Englund’s definition implies that curriculum has a central place in society, as it is a product of this society. But a curriculum does not only have a central place in society, it is as well important for the society as a whole as ”governmental regulations of education always have an influence on the education system on the whole, but as well on the economy, knowledge, working sphere and private sphere of a citizen.” (Christ 2007: 78) Thus, schools in general and the process of

curriculum creation in particular are the battlegrounds of competing political, economic, and cultural interests situated in historical contexts. Each interest is mobilized to convince the citizenry what is correct, appropriate, or necessary in order to provide an adequate education for children and youth (Connelly, Xu 2010). Thus the curriculum can be said to be one of the most important documents for our societies as it contains the society's consensus of how schools are seen at the moment of the curriculum's creation as well as it sets a course for what society should look like in the future.

4.2 Curriculum practice

Even though curriculum theory is of importance, it may not be forgotten that teachers transform curricula and make use of it on a daily basis. Already in the 1960s, Schwab heavily criticized the theorizing of curriculum. Given the fact that the curriculum is the linchpin in a teacher's everyday work, he claimed that the focus in curriculum inquiry needs to be on the description and critique of what really happens in schools as every day teachers carry out the practical implementation or theorising of the curriculum (Lovat 1988). Curriculum practice is so important to examine, as a curriculum solely constitutes an expression for agreed compromises required for a desired development on a policy making level. But a curriculum does *not* give practical recommendations for the teacher's work, as for example teaching manuals would do (Linde 2006: 48). Thus it is the teachers' task to reflect on all the circumstances in the classroom in order to design a course to be run, as "nothing practical happens in isolation but always in relation to people, places and things (...). The context is central to all curricular" (Connelly, Xu 2010: 237). Linde (2006) refers to this process of a teacher's reflection on the curriculum and the subsequent implementation as *transformation*. This process describes the reality that it is not the curriculum defining on its own the content of a lesson. Instead, it is the teacher who transforms by means of interpretation the intended curriculum into the taught curriculum, applied to the context of where teaching is carried out. Curriculum practice is closely connected to curriculum theory, as the two of them are linked with each other.

Linde says, in accordance with other authors, that several actors influence the implementation of the curriculum on the practical level. He describes that all the involved actors influence the implementation of the curriculum in all areas. This ongoing interpretation of the curriculum results for the student in the "taught knowledge" (*stoff*). This *stoff* is nearly unique in history in every teaching process, even if there exists a certain amount of stable structures like, for example, the curriculum. Interestingly enough, the Swede Linde (2006) introduces in the discussion of the transformation process a very important factor that seems to be widely ignored in Anglo-American curriculum research (cf. Connelly, Xu 2010). Linde is one of the few emphasizing the students' perception as an important factor in the transformation process. This explains as well why Linde suggests a different way of analysing the application of a curriculum compared to other scholars. He states:

"the starting-point is not the analysis of a curriculum and then to find factors that hinder the correct carrying-out. Instead, the starting-point is the factual instruction, i.e. through observations on the classroom level to identify what the real-taught consists of" (Linde 2006: 49).

This makes sense, as the teachers' incorporation of trends and reactions to changes in society is supposed to precede the political dimensions of curriculum changes. This is due to the fact that

the formulations of curriculums are, to some degree, a codification of teachers' transformation of those changes (Linde 2006). In the attempt to identify "what the real-taught consists of" (Linde 2006: 49), the students' perspective on teaching is the final step in the *transformation* of the curriculum. The students' view of the curriculum creates the so-called *received* curriculum. This aspect describes what the students have understood from what was taught on classroom level in combination with their own expectations. The received curriculum is "what is ultimately in the minds – and some say hearts – of the students" (Middlewood 2003: 67). Research on received curriculum was not so much of importance in times when the student was considered an empty bottle to be filled with knowledge. But over the last half a century, a change in paradigm has taken place, putting the learner in focus. An example for this is among others the task-based approach employed both in Sweden in Germany (Nieweler 2006): the students are not any longer supposed to be passive in the classroom, instead they should think, try out and examine themselves. The teacher is no longer fully controlling everything happening in the classroom. Instead, the students build their own ideas and theories of world surrounding them. This includes as well the (implicit) production of theories about the curriculum. Thus students play an important part in the transformation process of the curriculum as they have their own received curriculum.

What is actually received by the student is said by Kelly to be "an equally important, or even more important concern, (...) (the) received curriculum must be seen as the teacher's or planner's responsibility" (2009: 11). Curriculum studies are, according to Kelly, supposed to be concerned with the relationship between the intention as expressed in the intended curriculum and the reality, as expressed by the received curriculum. In case that they differ from each other he calls this the existence of a "gap" or he calls it "mismatch". And as long as the parts of received curriculum still leave gaps, those need to be filled. According to Coleman (2003), each principal and senior staff is responsible for the received individual student. These are the reasons why the author of this study is so eager to find out to what degree a mismatch exists in Sweden and Germany. The natural next step then will be the suggestion for the amelioration of the situation directed towards the classroom teacher, as she is the most intermediate agent for the transformation, carrying the largest responsibility for the students' received curriculum.

5. Methodology

The first part of this section will explain the methodology for curriculum comparison, whereas the second part will describe the semi-quantitative methods used in order to gather and analyze the information supplied in the interviews. The third section will then explain how the different results can be connected and compared.

5.1 Cross-language research

The research compares two countries. Given the fact that the two countries use different official languages, it can be challenging to produce reliable material due to existing language barriers (cf. Squires 2009). The languages in question here are Swedish and German. The researcher's working level of the two languages in question as well as in-depth cultural knowledge about schools and school systems in these countries is deemed to minimize these types of issues. Nonetheless, it is expected that minor language-issues can have an influence on the results. This is not deemed to happen in the creation of the questionnaire, where native speakers will be involved. All the more, language-issues are likely to appear during the coding of the answers.

The danger is in that during the coding process, if carried out in one of the other languages, might lead to one language dominating the other, thus falsifying the responses as one language is given more attention than the other. The same is as well expected to be the case if reporting the results is carried out in the one or the other language. To solve this dilemma it was decided to connect the two research languages by means of a neutral, third language. The choice was English.

5.2 Cultural free approach

Rosenmund (2006) has suggested different models for the cross-national comparison of curriculum, among others the "culture-free approach", developed in the 1990s. This theory, originating from work organization theory, enables a cross-cultural approach of policy documents. It is based on the assumption that

"any organization (...) is essentially the same worldwide. Given similar circumstances the structure of the organization – the basic patterns control, coordination and communication."
(Cray, Mallory 1998: 24)

The theory is based on contingency theory and concentrates on the identification, description and analysis of structural similarities. It assumes that there will be convergence in organizational culture in similar structural situations because of functional similarities. It looks after structural similarities, explains residual variance and is focusing on convergence. The culture-free approach is a general approach to organizations, neglecting the context and thus allowing for quasi-experimental research designs as used in natural science. Rosenmund suggests this method even for the comparison of national curricula, as even they are supposed to have similarities given their functions which are directing the teacher in its work, leading to a desired output on the students' side.

This method has some drawbacks: the first is that it is not clear how and if "comparable" cases across countries can be identified. The other question is if relevant variables can be defined and operationalized while ignoring the context. But these issues are easily solved. The context of creating and implementing the curriculum in the two countries concerned does not significantly differ. It was already shown in the history of the curriculum, that over the last centuries the differences between the formal aspects of the curriculum have been relatively small. Even today there are no significant differences perceivable in the creation process. In both countries, the national parliament decides on the need for a new curriculum, which then is created by the respective school ministry. Both the Swedish and the Bavarian curriculum are formed as aim-orientated curricula, i.e. it regulates what performance level a student should have achieved in a certain stage. The implementation of the curriculum is the school ministry's and each teacher's responsibility. The latter one is supposed to discuss this step with colleagues in her school. Assessment is carried out and corrected by the teachers themselves. In addition, the strong influence of the CEFR in the process of curriculum making and consequently even in student's assessment enables the international comparison of goals language learners have achieved. The CEFR has, over the time, increased influence leading to a (international) standardization of language teaching and learning (Nieweler 2007).

Another factor enabling cross-national analysis of language curricula is due to the fact that both the Swedish and the Bavarian Curriculum are output-orientated curricula. That means that they are not controlling and prescribing the way in which teaching has to be carried out. Instead, this

type of curriculum solely describes the aim of the courses. This then gives more freedom to the teacher during the implementation of the curriculum. Sweden has had this type of curriculum for a longer time, whereas it was not before 2004 that it was introduced in Bavaria. The main reason for the introduction there was that all the countries that had a good result in PISA 2000 had in common an output-orientated curriculum. But nonetheless we need to be aware of the fact that the culture free-approach as suggested by Rosenmund (2000) contains as well the risk that information gets lost during the interpretation and the translation process. Other, alternative methods that have as well been posted by Rosenmund could not be applied to the present study, mainly due to limitation in the author's resources. Rosenmund describes an alternative, context-bound method as employed by the authors of the TIMSS study, called "discourse method". Applying this method, researchers from different countries interpret their observations in their own way, followed by the presentation of the results to their fellow researchers. Those then question and discuss the culture-bound concepts from their viewpoints until a common concept of understanding is developed. This method would have enabled the inclusion of the cultural context and facilitated a wider and deeper-going view on the curriculum.

5.3 Method for curriculum comparison

The following section will introduce the reader to methods employed in this research employed to compare both the intended as well as the received curricula in Sweden and Germany.

5.3.1 Intended curricula

As shown in the foregoing section, the cultural-free approach will be employed while comparing the two intended curricula in Sweden and Bavaria. This means that existing contextual differences are not seen to have a decisive influence on the intended curricula. Given the fact that this research is interested in L3 teaching, the L3 curricula from these two countries will be examined. According to the definition of curricula as mentioned in the background of this paper, a curriculum is the "most concrete form of the ministerial regulation of teaching, by describing aims, contents, methods and assessments" (Christ 2007: 72).

The Swedish and the Bavarian curriculum have approximately the same structure. They contain a general part describing the general and interdisciplinary aims of the type of school in question. This is followed by a part describing the general aims of each individual subject. In this case, in both countries the L3 are all united under the name *Modern Foreign Languages*. This means that disregarding what language is taught by the teacher, all languages have the same aims as set out by the curriculum for modern foreign languages. So this single curriculum is then valid for the teaching of German, French, Spanish, Italian, Chinese or even English which can be a L3 in Germany (L2: Latin or French). Thus the curriculum has a multiple use. The next step then is the presentation of the aims of the courses to be taught in the different grades (cf. Skolverket 2011; ISB 2011)².

Because this study is interested in comparing curricular for language teaching, the general part will not be taken into account. Additionally, the more syllabus-like individual course plans are as well not of interest as they are already too distant from our definition of what a curriculum is. Thus the choice for the comparison of the intended curriculum falls on the part generally

² In the following, whenever the word "curriculum" or "intended curriculum" is used followed by a country's name, the author refers to one of the two respective documents.

describing the aims of each subject. The aim of the curriculum analysis in this essay is to show similarities and differences between these two texts, they will undergo a textual analysis. Porter (1997) describes curricula analysis as the systematic process of isolating and analyzing targeted features to be found in the content of the curriculum. Through systematic analysis of the two curricula a comparison and contrasting of various aspects across multiple curricula is possible. Based on the cultural-free approach by Rosenmund, the textual analysis method suggested by Porter will be employed in the following research.

5.3.2 Received curricula

5.3.2.1 A semi-quantitative approach

In order to gather information on the students' received curriculum, quantitative methods will be used. The data will be collected with an open-ended questionnaire. Nonetheless, due to the nature of the empirical materials collected the analysis of the responses will be based on qualitative methods.

The reason for choosing a qualitative method was due to the fact that firstly, quantitative research on curriculum already exists. Instead, qualitative research is still lacking in this subject. Secondly, the advantage of qualitative data is that it can, at a relatively low cost, provide a rich description from respondents. In comparison to interviews with focus groups, due to the respondents anonymity, I argue that often more honest responses can be elicited by means of questionnaires (cf. Jackson, Trochin 2007: 307). Thirdly, qualitative research enables a thick description. It is not looking for a generalization. Instead it focuses more on the description of a problem as seen by respondents. Subsequently, a quantitative approach, which aims at generalization, could cause misleading results, missing important items. Instead, this study acknowledges that the results cannot be generalized. The advantage is that the responses are supposed to give insights into new aspects of cross-curriculum comparison.

An open-ended question gives freedom to the respondent, as possible answers are not suggested as in comparison to a structured questionnaire. The respondent answers in her own words. This type of question aims at gathering a full expression of an opinion, inclusive nuances, allowing investigators better access to the respondents' true feelings on an issue. Another advantage is that the answers are quite reliable, as respondents have the chance to respond more freely as compared to more traditional standardized quantitative questions. One of the most significant advantages is that they allow the investigator to capture more aspects in a question than with fixed response possibilities. One of the drawbacks of open-ended questions is the diversity of responses. In addition, it presupposes that the respondent can read, understands the questions, knows how to write and knows as well how to put the mental concept connected to the question into words. The respondent's answer is very reliable, but the danger is that the respondent only answers what comes to mind, whereas standardized questions might have acted as a "helper" in the answering process (cf. Geer 1988).

At the beginning of this research the employment of informant group interviews were considered. These types of interviews would have supplied more deep-going responses to the same questions that were asked in the open-ended questionnaire. The advantage of this type of group interviews would have been that the researcher would have been able to ask more in-depth questions that could have unveiled issues that the questionnaire did give access to. On the other hand, it would

not have been able to interview that many respondents in the short time in which the essay was supposed to be finished. In addition, travelling would have required funding that was not available for this study. Nonetheless, the responses gained by means of the open-ended questionnaire are deemed to give an equal good initial insight into the way received curricula in language teaching can look like in Sweden and in Bavaria.

5.3.2.2 Open-ended questionnaire

The aim with the usage of the questionnaire is that the students are supposed to reflect and to express their ideas on their received curriculum. During the creation process of the questionnaire it seemed to be most advantageous to ask the students general questions about their view on the curriculum, as they are not supposed to have in-depth knowledge. The questions in the questionnaire are based on the hypothesis that the received curriculum is influenced by two factors, the taught curriculum and the personal curriculum. Together they form the received curriculum. It cannot be assumed that the students are fully aware of the curriculum for L3. Thus the most immediate way for them to experience the intended curriculum will be by the teacher's way of teaching. The interpretation of what is experienced on the classroom-level is influenced by the personal curriculum. The personal curriculum expresses the personal aims most students are likely to have whenever participating in an L3-class. These two factors then lead to the creation of the cognitive or perceived curriculum. The assumption of this connection leads to the following questions that will be asked in the questionnaire:

1. What are your personal aims with attending a foreign language class?
2. What do you think are the aims of foreign language teaching?
3. What do you experience are the aims of foreign language teaching?

The first question relates directly to the students' perspective and is expected to activate the students' thinking about language teaching and their own aspirations. Question number two asks directly how the students perceive the received curriculum. Question number three then asks about the student's experiences in light of the taught curriculum.

5.3.3.3 Selection process

As this study does not aim for a generalization of its results, the selection of respondents was quite straightforward: access has been given to one school in Germany and to two in Sweden. The three schools are all situated in larger cities. The sample population are the 10th grade students in these three L3 classes, consisting of thirty-one students in Sweden and thirty in Germany. The determining factor for selecting these classes was lead by accessibility and not by other possible factors such as background or the student's grade achievements.

The teacher handed out the questionnaire to her class. She was instructed to give ten minutes to the students for answering the questions. In addition, sufficient time had to be given to the students to read the cover letter attached to the questionnaire. Further, the students were asked not to collaborate while answering the questions. After ten minutes, the teacher circulated an envelope in which students placed the questionnaires. The envelopes then were sent by mail to the researcher.

5.3.3.4 Data analysis

The analysis of qualitative data is not as simple as the researcher's task is the reduction of

voluminous amounts of text-based data without losing the embedded meaning. In addition, this approach should be transparent.

The material was already transcribed when returned to the researcher, as the answers came in written form. The analysis process started, as described by Kvale (2009), with reading and rereading the answers. This then slowly evolved into the coding process, key-words were attached to a textual segment in order to facilitate the later identification of what was said, resulting in an in-depth coding of the material. Codes are concise and define the action or experiences described by the respondents. During this process, the data was compared in the hunt for differences and similarities leading to selections of new data and writing down new data and fixation of theoretical notations. This then was followed by a more focused coding, and the analysis shifted slowly from a descriptive level to a more theoretical level, leading to a “satisfaction” of material where no new insights or interpretations were expected to be found from additional codes. The aim was the development of codes embracing the students’ experiences.

In terms of codes, both inductive codes and a-priori codes exist. A-priori codes means that the researcher uses already existing codes and applies them to the text, i.e. they are already developed before the examination is carried out. The inductive method means that new codes will be created during the coding process. In this study, the analysis process will see the application of a mix of both code types. Seen that the questions concern different types of curricula and that the answers will finally compared to the intended curriculum, comparability in the codes needs to be achieved. In order to do so, the different categories named in the intended curriculum acted as a ‘spine’ supplying a-priori codes. Answers that lie outside the reach of this spine will be inductively treated, as they lead to the creation of new codes.

The next step is the presentation of the results, which is an enumeration and description of the different codes in order to give a more balanced picture of the answers. This enabled a weighting of the responses, making it clearer what codes are in the focus of the student’s curriculum and what codes are marginalized in comparison to the intended curriculum. This ensured as well a better cross-national comparability of the students’ perception and comparability with the intended curriculum, where the policy-makers have not intended a weighting.

5.4 Ethical Aspects

The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR) developed research ethics principles in humanistic-social scientific research. In the following, some of the main principles shall be matched against the procedure in this study. This was carried out in order to make sure already in the preparation phase that none of those principles were breached by this study.

Regarding information to research participants, the researcher should inform those involved in the research project. The participants have the right to determine themselves if they want to participate or not. All participants have the right that the highest possible confidentiality is given to them. Personal information needs to be stored in a way that unauthorized do not have access. Information collected about individuals shall only be made use of for the aim of the research project. According to HSFR, the compliance of participation in this study needs to be documented.

First of all, no personal information was collected. The questionnaire was sent to the two contact teachers in the respective countries who then distributed the questionnaire to the pupils. In a letter enclosed with the questionnaire, the students were informed about the general aims of the research, the methods used, the risks involved in the research and contact details for the research. The pupils were informed that participation was voluntarily and that the participant had the right to stop filling in the questionnaire whenever wanting to do so. As the compliance to participate in research needed to be documented, the top of the questionnaire contained the phrase: "By answering to questions, I comply to participate in this study".

Due to the HSFR standards, an additional problem with this research are that the participants are between the age of 15 and 16, thus they are legally minors. According to rules set out by HSFR, the student may only be part of the research process without having to ask her parents as long as she understands the effects the research can have on her. In the present study, it is assumed to be the case that the student can understand what effect her answering can have. The student did not need to supply her name on the form. The questions used are not seen to be compromising. The question themselves were not dangerous for the student as they could not be traced back. The teacher handing out the formula was requested to circulate an envelope where the students placed their forms. The last student in the class then was asked to seal the envelope and hand it back to the teacher. Thus the information could not leak. As soon as the questionnaires arrived to the researcher, the envelope was checked if the seal was not broken. In case the envelope's seal was broken, the questionnaires would not be made use of in the present research. The seals were not broken upon the envelopes' arrival at the researcher's home.

6. Results

6.1 Analysis of the curriculum

Both the Swedish and the Bavarian curricula are defined for "modern languages", i.e. they are not specific for one language, but they are valid for all teaching of a second foreign language. The Swedish and the Bavarian curricula both have a general part describing the overall aims of schools. The next document then is a description of the general aims and contents of every subject. This then is followed by a syllabus, i.e. a course plan or guideline that details the aims of teaching in every grade or course group. The following analysis shows the general terms of what should be taught in the L3 both in Sweden and Bavaria according to the intended general curricula for modern language teaching (cf. Skolverket 2011; ISB 2011).

The curriculum for modern languages is in both countries have been published in continuous text, aggravating a textual analysis. In order to prepare the ground for the analysis, elements in the curricula describing actual aims of modern language teaching have been isolated and are presented in the following.

The Swedish curriculum contains the following ten aims:

1. Development of knowledge in the target language and the surrounding world
2. Trust in ones ability to use the language
3. Ability to communicate comprehensively
4. Ability to express oneself with variation and complexity
5. Strategies for problem solution in linguistic situations

6. Knowledge about the culture in the target country
7. Stimulus of curiosity for the target language and culture
8. Multilingualism
9. Meta-knowledge about language learning
10. Criticism of the sources

The following six items could be isolated from the Bavarian curriculum for modern foreign languages:

1. Intercultural ability to perform and to communicate
2. Communicative ability
3. Multilingualism
4. Dealing with texts and media
5. Intercultural learning (geography, respect for other cultures)
6. Learning strategies (team, meta-knowledge about learning, presentation competences)

In order to give a concise overview enabling the comparison of the two curricula, the following table presents and juxtaposes the content in the national curricula for modern foreign languages. Whenever two descriptions were uniform or were deemed to have the same aim they were juxtaposed. In case an equivalent is missing in the one country, this is marked by a -.

Sweden	Bavaria
Development of knowledge in the target language and the surrounding world	Intercultural ability to perform and to communicate
Trust in ones ability to use the language	-
Ability to communicate comprehensively	Communicative ability
Ability to express oneself with variation and complexity	Ability to express oneself with variation
Strategies for troubleshooting in linguistic situations	-
Knowledge about culture in target country	Intercultural learning (Geography, respect for other cultures)
Stimulus of interest in the target language and culture	-
Multilingualism	Multilingualism
Metaknowledge about language learning	Metaknowledge about language learning
-	Learning strategies (Team, metaknowledge about learning, presentation competences)
Criticism of sources	Dealing with texts and media

Table 1 Intended curriculum Sweden and Bavaria

Communicative ability is one of the common aims of these two curricula. This is no surprise as this term combines the four skills that are the foundation stone for all language learning: speaking, reading, writing and listening. These four skills are part of key qualifications and basic skills in our cultures. For the L3 teacher, it is a challenge to teach those skills (Nieweler 2006). In terms of intercultural learning, the definition of the term differs between the countries. Whereas the Swedish curriculum requires the student to obtain knowledge regarding living conditions and social questions in the target country, the Bavarian wish as well for "respect for culture" and "different mindsets" to be achieved. Nonetheless, both curricula have the aim to teach intercultural competence based on sociocultural orientational knowledge (Nieweler 2006).

Multilingualism is defined as "the conscious use of cross-language language learning experience" (Nieweler 2006: 60). The concept describes the incorporation of knowledge acquired in other languages and its usage while acquiring L3 (and additional foreign language). Meta-knowledge about language learning refers to "the ability to plan and assess ones own language learning" (Nieweler 2006: 128). Even if both curricula contain "recommendations on teaching", these sections touch different subjects. The only point they have in common is that L3 teaching is supposed to be carried out in the target language.

In terms of differences, the following can be concluded: even though both curricula mention the usage of texts, only the Swedish curriculum refers to source criticism. The Bavarian curriculum departs from dealing with texts and media, but those solely should supply the underlying base for reading and listening comprehension as well as for creation of texts. Even if both systems - the teaching of L3 learning strategies (i.e. meta-knowledge about language learning), only the Bavarian curriculum prescribes in more detail what kind of strategies this involves. In terms of

stimulation of interest in the target language and culture, this point is completely lacking in the Bavarian curriculum. The same applies to the teaching of troubleshooting abilities the students in Sweden have to acquire.

Given the analysis and comparison of the general aims of the two curricula the following step outlines a horizon of expectations for what the pupils will reply in the two countries concerned. Understood, these expectations depart from the assumption that the teacher interprets intended goals in the same way as the researcher does, that the intended goals are wholly implemented and that the student understands the implementation while building her received cognitive curriculum for the L3. In terms of language ability, I did not expect to find too many different aspects between the countries. The four abilities, speaking, reading, listening and writing are well grounded in both curricula. The same applies to multilingualism and meta-knowledge about learning. Differences were expected to appear in the fields of learning strategies, dealing with texts and media as well as intercultural knowledge. This is due to the fact that the national curricula differed on these points.

6.2 Questionnaires

The following section presents the answers to the three questionnaire questions from the German and Swedish 10th grade students. The distribution of answers in percentage is illustrated by means of tables. It needs to be kept in mind throughout the presentation of results that different tables are not comparable with each other. This is due to the method of questionnaire analysis representing a mixture of a-priori and inductive codes. A reason for the incomparableness of tables is mainly due to the application of inductive codes, leading to different categories for each question.

The first question relates to the student's own goals in the acquisition of L3. The next question asks about the received curriculum, which in turn is expected to be related with the performance the student sees in the classroom, the curriculum as intended by the teacher. The assumption is that the answers in the three questions are related to each other. The section is separated in three subsections of which the first two are uniform. They contain, separated by country, the results. First of all, the results for each of the three questions will be presented. Secondly, the results of the analysis of the responses to the question on the received curriculum will be set in relation to the intended curriculum. In order to facilitate for the reader the reception of the results, the following two subcategories are constructed in the same way.

6.2.1. Sweden

6.2.1.1 No Goals and Grades

In figure 1 it can be clearly perceived that the three main the Swedish respondents have for studying the L3 are Lifelong Learning as well as achievement of Communicative Ability and Grades.

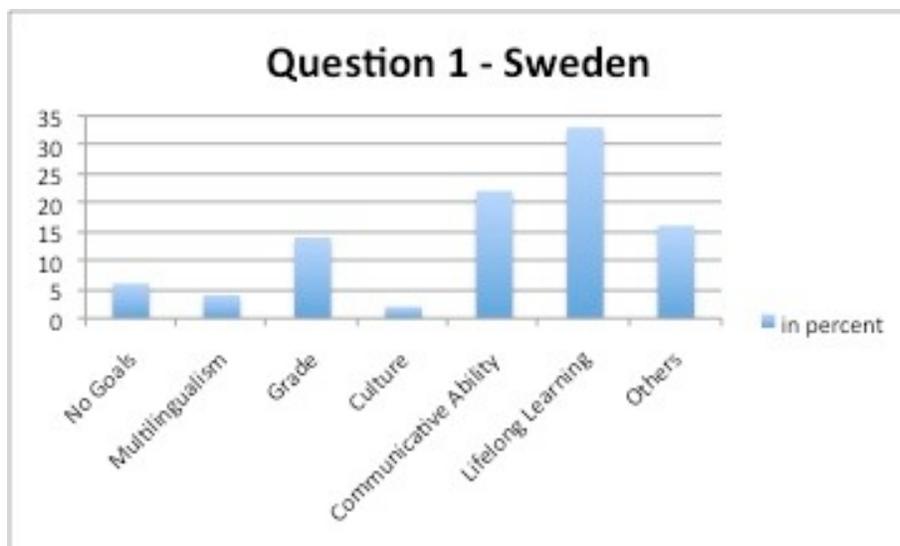


Table 2 Responses question 1³

Generally, the Swedish students participating in the survey have different reasons for learning L3. Thirty responses to the first question led to forty-nine analytical units in the segmentation process. All analytical units were allocated to a different category. Each category title describes what the subsumed analytical categories have in common.

The three units in the *No Goal* category describe the students' lack of personal motivation for studying a L3: "I do not have any bigger aims with studying a modern foreign language". These responses are of interest, as internal motivation for learning is seen to be the most contributing factor for a successful learner (cf. Nieweler 2006). Nonetheless, there must be an external factor that makes the students study the language as in Sweden L3-studies are not compulsory. And indeed, there are some incitements set by the Skolverket. Mainly, this is the granting of so-called "meritpoäng" (additional points) upon passing certain stages of L3 teaching. Those points can be an advantage during the application process at university. The category *Grades* shows that there are respondents studying L3 for this purpose. They write for example: "I have chosen the modern foreign language as an individual choice as I need the additional points". It needs to be asked if the spur set by the government really is of help for the students, as already the achievement of the pass-grade (E) will enable the student to get the degree point. Consequently, at least one respondent has quite low ambitions: "I will be happy if I only manage the pass grade".

Only two units touch the subject of multilingualism as it is described in the intended curriculum both in Sweden and Germany: "I want to be able to speak as many languages as possible in order to speak with all types of people when I am abroad". The two answers in this category express the respondents' will to be able to communicate with a large variety of people. Another unit solely containing two units is the one concerning cultural knowledge. Only a few respondents have as a personal aim to learn more about the target culture: "(My aim is) to learn more about the culture and to understand the content".

The largest majority of the units, twelve respectively fifteen, touch upon two other reasons for language learning: the first one is that the student wants to acquire a communicative ability by

means of the L3 class. This means that both the productive and the receptive skills are trained, i.e. reading, listening, writing and speaking (Nieweler 2006). The other category represents the students' approach to language learning from a lifelong learning perspective. That means that the student is planning on making use of the language even outside or after the L3 class, i.e. in working life, with moving to the target country, vacation or working life. Regarding working life, two different attitudes could be perceived in the answers. The first one is that having studied a L3, this means an additional qualification for their CV: "It is even an additional qualification to speak several languages when applying for a job". Whereas the other one is a more general focus on the use of language at work. Those respondents want "to be able to employ the language in (...) future working life". Usage of the foreign modern language during stays abroad, probably both on business and in leisure, is mentioned. Thereby, the language is considered "as useful if you are abroad". Three respondents are even planning on moving to a country where the target language is spoken. Therefore these respondents want to learn the L3.

As stated, the acquisition of communicate ability is the other main reason for studying a modern foreign language. Even though subsumed under the same category, the units are fairly widely spread. Whereas some respondents wish for to be "able to have a simple conversation in the modern foreign language", others have higher aims: "at the end of high school, I want to be able to speak fluently the language I have learnt." Nonetheless, the majority of the units concern the basic level of communication. This means that most of the respondents solely want to learn the basics in the language, it is not their aim to be able to converse fluently. Knowing this now, it needs to be asked what the respondents understand by using the word "communication". Even if communication as defined by the curricula embraces the four skills, it does not seem as if the respondents mean the same. This is due to the fact that the units are dominated by words like "speak, understand, have a conversation, make myself understood". Thus it seems as if the students' focus predominantly lies on spoken interaction. Written interaction seems to be neglected in the respondents' concept of communication. Thus it can be assumed merely basic knowledge in spoken interaction to be one of the main aims for the respondents.

6.2.1.2 Wishful thinking

The second question concerned the received curriculum. The answers give a broad picture of the students' personal view of the curriculum. As shown in figure 2 we can see that the three largest categories are Lifelong Learning, Communicative Ability and Cultural Knowledge.

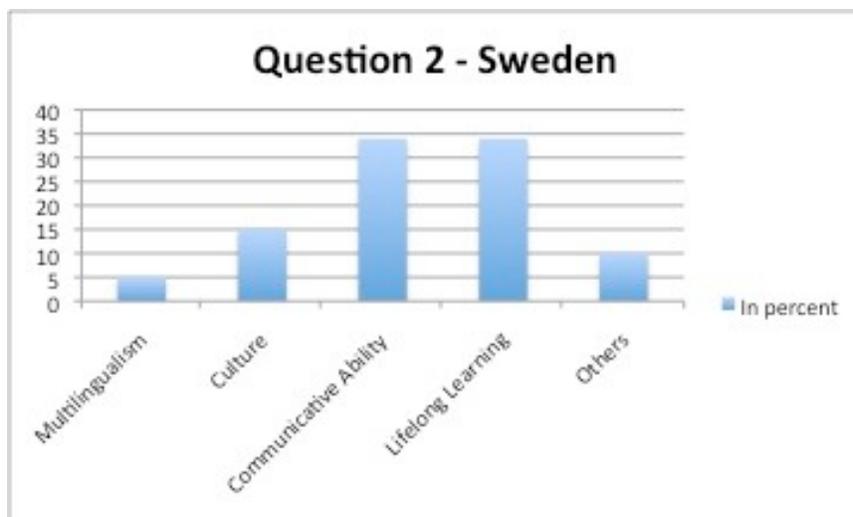


Table 3 Responses question 2

The first unit, Communicative Ability, contains thirteen units. Once again, the respondents rarely define the respondent's interpretation of the concept Communicative Ability. Only in three responses, one of the skills is named explicitly. Only one respondent names all four of them. She thinks that students should learn "to understand general messages and texts as well as be able to have conversations and to write texts". The rest, again, define Communicative Ability more as the ability to communicate verbally, never naming explicitly the paper-based skills. One student writes that the curriculum's aim is to enable the student to master "a situation where you need to make yourself understood by means of a foreign language."

A reason for the exclusion of the paper-based communication skills could be so-called "wishful thinking". Generally, students in the classroom seem to think that writing in the L3 is quite difficult and therefore try to avoid doing so. It is assumed that students are excluding the written code in their answers as they experience the written code as difficult to acquire and produce, thus they prefer a shift to spoken language. Thus this can lead to the type of "wishful thinking" described above.

For the category Cultural Knowledge, five units could be spotted. One of the respondents writes, "I think as well that one should get insights in countries where the language is spoken". Two of these units even go further and attribute to the teaching of the L3 the aim "to teach the students to understand world languages in order to be able to integrate with other cultures on a different level".

In terms of the Lifelong Learning, twelve units could be spotted. The section above shows that the students' aim is to make use of the language even after they have completed their L3 class. The same is assumed by the students to be the goal in the curriculum.

"I believe that the goal is to get students to learn as much of the language so that they can communicate internationally with other languages besides English."

The area where communication in L3 happens is less defined by the students' answers as compared to the first question. There is only one student writing about travelling, another student specifically mentions preparation for Higher Education. She thinks teaching L3 should "give the

students greater possibilities to study abroad.” But further, the students do not explicitly express in what areas they think the curriculum says that they should be prepared. One student attributes very high aims to the teaching of the target language. She assumes that the aims of L3 teaching are “that we, the younger generation, are able to improve our country and are able to communicate with more foreign countries. Or are able to translate different languages of the people immigrating into our country.”

Multilingualism, as mentioned in the Swedish and the German curricula, is only named twice: “I think the aim with reading a foreign language is to get an insight in other languages”. Another one assumes that the aim is “to teach the students several languages so that they acquire more knowledge”. Even though knowledge is not explained specifically, it is assumed that this concerns a multi-linguistic approach.

A student only once names the issue of grading: “all I need to know in what subareas to perform and that no one should be left behind.” This is quite astonishing given the fact one would assume that grading is one of the linchpins for all teaching – as this is quite often the measurable outcome of teaching, what grade you got in a certain subject. Nonetheless, all except for one student do not write about grading.

6.2.1.3 Classroom level

The third question inquired about the students’ experience of L3 teaching in the classroom. This question is of interest, as it will help to explain the students’ received curriculum. The aim is to find out in what way an alignment exists between the students’ received curriculum, the intended curriculum as expressed by the student’s experience in the classroom, and the students’ wishes.

The following table visualizes the distribution in percentage of the categories applied while coding the answers. The category Other contains quite a significant share of the data with about 20%. This is due to the fact that this category contains all the units that could not be placed in a category, as some respondents’ answers simply did not fit the question. Further, this category contains those categories that only consisted of one item. In case the sum of the percentage supplied exceeds 100%, then this is due to rounding.

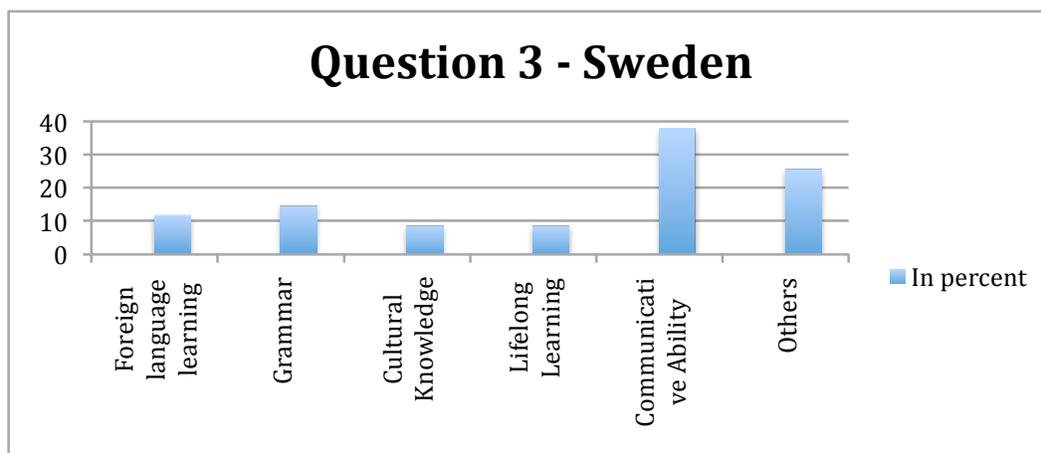


Table 4 Responses question 3

In the analysis process, a new category was formed in comparison to the other two questions. It bears the title Foreign Language Learning. Seen that it solely contains four items it is part of the general category “Others”. Even only being a minor category, it feels important to show its content as it describes the students’ passive attitude to learning. They described the aims with work on the classroom-level with quite similar words: “That we learn something new every day and that we advance after the end of the period”. Thus teacher seems to be supposed to organize the lesson in a way that enables the students “to learn something new”. Moreover, these utterances show a lack of identification with the subject, the respondents see themselves as passive actors but not active in the learning process. This is quite interesting in light of task-based approach, as the students themselves are expected to take action and to be active in language acquisition instead of solely being receptive.

Another category that was emphasized in this question was the one concerning grades. Five units were found in which students emphasized grading as one of the main aims of teaching. The respondents experience that they “learn for the exam and meet the goals for the aims set out”. This again is a category that should ideally not exist, as it should not be the aim of language teaching that the student solely learns to get a good grade. This category, with solely five responses, is integrated in the category Others.

The category Culture solely received three answers. That means just a couple of students see on the actual classroom level that cultural knowledge is taught. In the answers, two times the words “as much as possible” were found. That means that those students who were aware of an on-going teaching of the target culture described efforts of the L3 teacher. Given the fact that the majority of the respondents have not mentioned target culture teaching it is not possible to draw any conclusions.

The category Lifelong Learning, that took a lot of place in the other responses, is reduced in this question with solely three units. Again, the respondents show awareness that they will benefit from learning modern languages in the future: “The basics will help us for sure once in the future when we are abroad”. With significantly fewer students having named Lifelong Learning as a part of the daily teaching compared to the prior section, it is assumed that the students experience that the actual teachers does not prepare them sufficiently for the future use of the L3.

Thirteen units contained the category Communicative Ability. This category, again, can be subdivided. First of all, here the respondents mention only four times the category of “overall communicative ability”, but at least they wrote all in the same way about language teaching: “We are supposed to learn the basics”. On the other hand, the other nine units concern communicative ability and its different elements. All of these units mentioning one of the four skills that are common in language teaching, one student even mentions all of them: “I think it is that we should be able to read, write, listen and speak”. This means that even if students have not mentioned these aspects in the section about the received curriculum, at least the teacher provides this meta-knowledge and the knowledge itself on the classroom level.

6.2.1.4 The three questions

The analysis of the answers shows that the personal goals, the received curriculum and the received curriculum are dominated by Lifelong Learning and Communicative Ability, in the last case mainly the theme “spoken language”. These are the two linking themes in the answers.

Concerning the aims, the students answer Lifelong Learning, Communication and Grade. In the second question, Lifelong Learning and Communication as well as Cultural Knowledge are among the top three. Lifelong Learning and Cultural Knowledge and Communicative Knowledge are among the top three in the third answer.

6.2.1.5 Alignment intended – received curriculum

The comparison between the received and the intended curriculum shows that there is a gap in alignment between these two types of curricula. In terms of the ability to communicate comprehensively the students mostly see oral communication in the centre, lacking the holistic approach the curriculum. Points not named by the students are the strategies for troubleshooting and that they acquire meta-knowledge about language learning or how to deal critically with sources. On the other hand some respondents experience the teaching of multilingualism. In addition to that stimulus an interest in the target language and culture is not named. The same is the case for the ability to express oneself in variation as well as trust in one’s ability to use the language. The following Table 5 enables a quick glance at the alignment.

Intended Curriculum Sweden	Received Curriculum
Development of knowledge in the target language and the surrounding world	
Trust in ones ability to use the language	
Ability to communicate comprehensively	
Ability to express oneself with variation and complexity	
Strategies for troubleshooting in linguistic situations	
Knowledge about culture in target country	
Stimulus of interest in the target language and culture	
Multilingualism	
Meta-knowledge about language learning	
Criticism of sources	

Table 5 Intended curriculum vs. received curriculum

This table is based upon the responses to the question on the received curriculum. If a certain area in the intended curriculum was touched by the respondents in the questions on personal aims or taught curriculum then this area will not be checked. Even if a certain category has been checked in Table 5 this does *not* mean that every single student incorporates this category in her received curriculum, nonetheless this subject has been touched by the respondents’ utterances on the received curricula. Further if a category is checked, this does *not* mean that the students’ answers touched the category in its entity. The aim of this table is to give a general graphical overview over the alignment between the intended and the received curriculum.

Additionally, it needs to be kept in mind that even if the responses by the students have not shown that they are aware of what they are supposed to learn, that does not mean that they have not acquired the competence in question. Many of us acquire skills implicitly, but we cannot express them when being asked about them. Thus we may not simply assume that the students do not have the competences as set out by the curriculum. Nonetheless, it would be ideal if the students would have more meta-knowledge about what they are supposed to learn. Thus the gaps in the alignment between the student's received curriculum and the intended curriculum are worrying. The research on the Swedish curriculum shows that a lot of work still needs to be carried out in order to close the gaps in the alignment.

6.2.2 Germany

An overall of 30 students from one L3 class in a Bavarian Gymnasium responded to the questionnaire. The coding of the responses from Germany was more difficult than the same process with the Swedish responses. This has two reasons. The first one was that it felt as if many respondents had not read the questions with the responses sometimes lacking a relation to them. The unfitting responses mostly contained criticism of the L3 teaching and the curriculum. An example for this is the following excerpt: “studies of the L3 communication (i.e. oral communication) does not seem to be in the foreground”. This was an answer to the question about experiences of L3 teaching on the classroom level. For the coder, these types of negative responses could be dealt with in two ways: either they could be not included into the coding as they were unfitting. The other option would have been to interpret the answers. For example an interpretation of the negative answer shown above would have been that L3 teaching instead focuses on written communication, this barely being an insecure assumption not based on evidence. Thus it was decided to not include these responses during the coding process. Nonetheless, it needs to be asked why the respondents did not answer the questions but instead showed an eagerness to criticize L3 teaching, something that was not experienced to the same extent with the Swedish responses.

The other contributing factor to aggravate the coding process was that the respondents tended to not answer the third question. A reason for that could be that the time given for the respondents to answer the questionnaire was not sufficient. Another one was that the teachers who distributed the questionnaire did not give the total of the time allotted.

6.2.2.1 L3 for future working life

The first question contained forty-four items. Table 6 shows the results of the analysis.

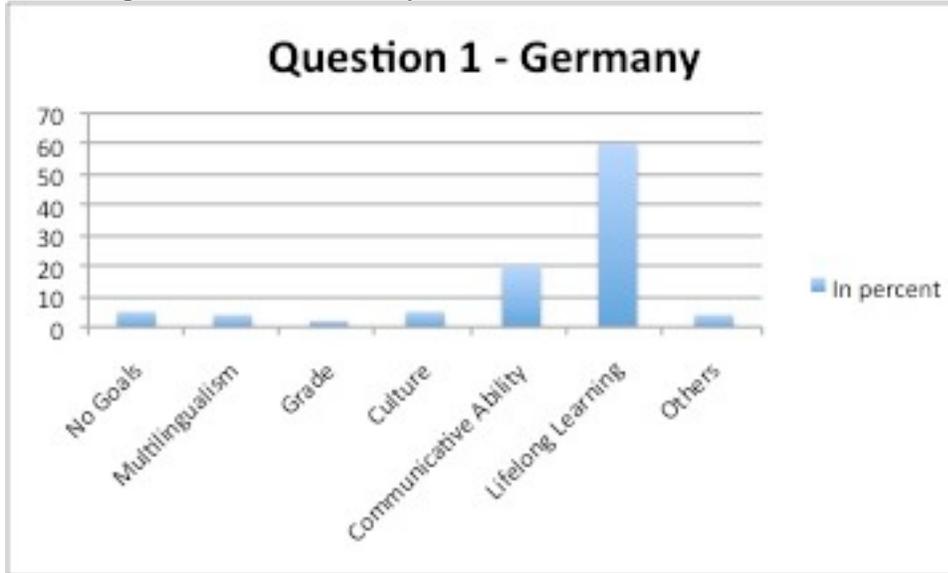


Table 6 Responses question 1

The responses are dominated by the category Lifelong Learning, 60% of the respondents have the usage of the language in future life as a personal aim. This response can even be further subdivided, the majority of the respondents want to make use of the language in future working life: “I want to be able to be proficient in the target language to be able to find work abroad.” Another student even writes, “I do not want to be unemployed”, thus she hopes for the L3 proficiency to contribute to her finding a future occupation. For most of the respondents it was important to have knowledge in the target language in order to secure an occupation. Only a couple write that they assume that they will require the language when they are actually at work, one of the respondents had as a personal aim “preparation for working life where the language is in use.” Five responses in the field of Lifelong Learning touched upon the subject travelling: “I want to be able to communicate with people abroad, that I get around abroad and can as well ask the way”. One student thinks “that it is quite important to speak a foreign language whenever going abroad”. Three respondents even mentioned that they can imagine moving to the target-country for a longer term and then they would require the foreign language: “Maybe I will emigrate in a couple of years, and then it will be helpful to speak L3.”

20% of the respondents have as a personal aim to acquire Communicative Ability. In these cases, except for one, the respondents did not specify closer to what extent they want to command the language. Instead it again becomes obvious that the students mostly define communicative ability as the ability to converse in the foreign language, as in the following example: “I want to have such a good command of the language that I do not have communication difficulties when speaking the L3 with other people.” Once again the verbs to speak, to converse and to talk were visible in the coded answers, whereas the written language was not mentioned.

Only one respondent mentioned that she learns the L3 for grade reasons, the same applies to the category Multilingualism. Two respondents were interested in “knowledge about the target

culture and the target country” in the category Culture. But those are solely minor categories as the dominating one is Lifelong Learning.

6.2.2.2 Lifelong Learning and Communicative Ability

In the answers to the second question, which was about the received curriculum, it was noticeable evident during the coding process that a major share of respondents wrote things like “No idea”, “Personally, I assume that”, “I have not thought about the aims”. More than one-fifth of the responses contained one of these fragments in which the students showed awareness that they lack information about the curriculum. Thus in Table 7 a new category is mentioned that is used to describe the students having “No Idea”, i.e. that some of them even lack an explicit received curriculum.

About 14% of the respondents assumed that Lifelong Learning is among the aims of the curriculum. One student writes that she assumes that “you are being prepared in school for the use of the L3 in working life”. Another one assumes more that school prepares for the use of the target language in daily life: “all the skills that we need in daily life: to be able to talk freely, discussion and politeness.”

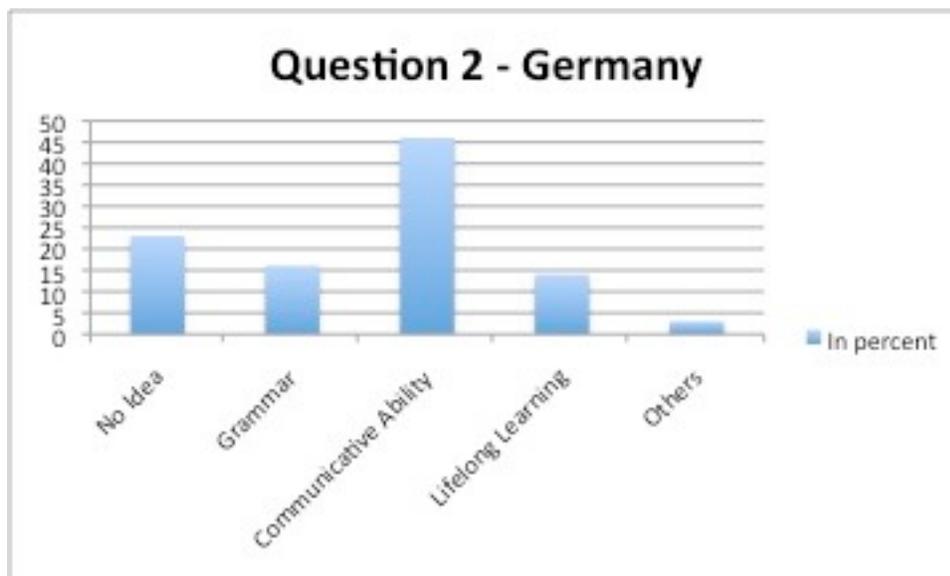


Table 7 Responses question 2

The responses were dominated by the students’ assumption that the aim of L3 teaching is to acquire a communicative ability. Again, this is supposing not the communicative ability embracing the four skills. Instead the students’ definition is the “ability to communicate with other people”, i.e. oral communication stands in the foreground. One student names even that “there is much emphasis on being able to communicate orally” according to her received curriculum. Only two respondents explicitly name communication in written form. Two of the students assume the mixture of different abilities, “it is the aim of L3 teaching that the students learn the target language on a broad spectrum. There is neither the communication nor the written tasks or listening in the foreground”. Only one student answered, “The curriculum is focused on writing in the L3”. Otherwise, the respondents mostly excluded the written language. Another factor was the students’ answers regarding grammar. This category contains the students naming

“knowledge of vocabulary and grammar” as their assumed aim of language teaching. This category embraces both grammar and vocabulary, as the respondents always named these two areas together.

6.2.2.3 It depends on the teacher

Asked about what she experiences to be in the centre in the classroom teaching, one student answered, “It depends on the teacher. With the one you speak a lot, in the other teacher’s class you write a lot and in the third teacher’s class you make a mixture or just nonsense.” Thus she states clearly that she sees that the taught curriculum depends upon the teacher and her skills, motivation and knowledge.

Most of the other twenty-four categories were concerned with the Communicative Ability. The answers were broad and touched all the different aspects that are part of this ability. Mostly named were listening and reading comprehension, “listening to texts and working with them afterwards”. Another factor that was often named was oral expression and pronunciation. A couple of students see that “a clear, fluent oral expression” is taught by the teacher. In terms of the level of achievement three respondents write about “basic level of knowledge in the target language.” Written expression is solely mentioned once: “the aim is to bring closer the L3 and to encourage the students to speak and write”.

The part Cultural Knowledge seems solely to be reduced to teaching history, as this is the only item that is mentioned by all three respondents in this category.

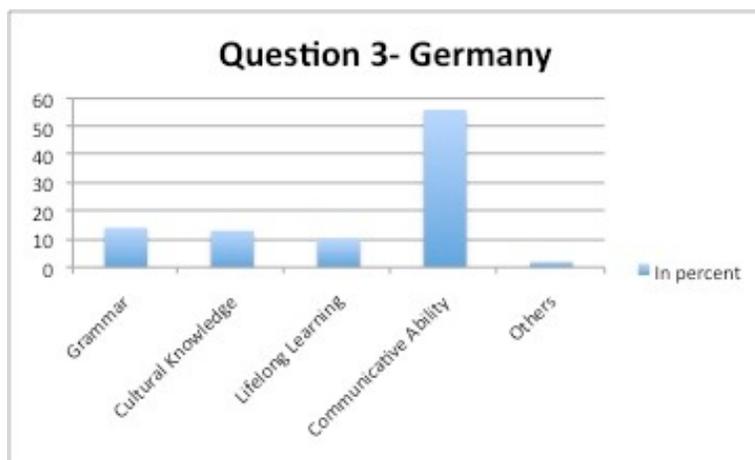


Table 8 Responses question 3

6.2.2.4 Alignment intended curriculum – received curriculum

The analysis of the German responses shows that the personal goals of the students are circulating around Lifelong Learning. The received and the taught curriculum are strongly dominated by the category Communicative Ability. Nonetheless, the three questions are interlinked. This is due to the fact that these two categories are not mutually exclusive as the students’ ability to use the language in the future presupposes that they have acquired communicative abilities. Another indication for the connection is that the theme “spoken language” is used throughout all answers.

Intended curriculum Bavaria	Received curriculum
Intercultural ability to perform and to communicate	
Communicative ability	
Ability to express oneself with variation	
Intercultural learning (Geography, respect for other cultures)	
Multilingualism	
Meta-knowledge about language learning	
Learning strategies (Team, metaknowledge about learning, presentation competences)	
Dealing with texts and media	

Table 9 Matching intended curriculum vs. received curriculum

The connection between the second and the third question shows that there is a certain type of alignment between the taught curriculum and the received curriculum, at least in the aspect named most often, namely Communicative Ability.

Thus there is a triangle relation between the received, the taught and the intended curriculum. It seems as if the taught curriculum is in a close relation to the received curriculum, whereas the intended curriculum seems to be quite distant from these two. The Bavarian curriculum emphasises Communicative Ability, but does not solely define it as knowledge in spoken language, it emphasizes as well teaching the written language. In terms of lifelong learning, the curriculum does not state what the preparation is deemed to be for. This can be due to the reasons shown in the background, that many different factors influence the school system. Intercultural learning and multilingualism are touched upon by some students, but they seem not be broadly spread knowledge among the students. Learning strategies were not named at all. Dealing with texts and media is partly included in the answers used by the students, even if not singularly, they are including in “communicative ability”. The respondents do not mention intercultural learning. An overview over the alignment is shown above in Table 9.

6.3 Solutions

The aim of this section is to present solutions for problems perceived during the reporting of the results. The advice on remedy teaching will stay on a general level, as this study supplied a first overview of the situation regarding the received curriculum in two countries. Nonetheless, ideas named in this section can be of help in every classroom for to improve the degree of alignment.

6.3.1 Lifelong learning

As shown, there are some issues that need to be addressed by the teacher in order to improve the alignment between the received and the intended curriculum. Linde (2006) states, that the starting point for changing the curriculum is the factual instruction that happens at the actual classroom-level, which are trends and reactions to changes in society. But this cannot be fully applied, as this would lead to a total reduction of the intended curriculum to just a bare minimum of items.

Nonetheless, Linde's hypothesis can be employed in terms of the students' hypothesis about why they are learning the L3.

It is a common ground that everyone wants to know why she has to or is learning a specific thing, this applies even for modern language learning. Nonetheless, the intended curriculum does supply neither the learner nor the teacher with information as to why L3 is part of the curriculum. Naturally there are historical and socio-political as well as economical reasons that lead to the implementation of foreign languages into the intended curriculum (cf. Englund 1990). But this is not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum, subsequently the teacher cannot transform the why of the language teaching to the students. In addition the students themselves do not have any orientation as to why they are learning the language. The importance of the why becomes obvious through the students' own hypothesis as to why they are attending a L3 class. The problems with this hypothesis is that the students use a distant future in order to justify why they are learning the language, instead of looking for stimuli for language use in their daily lives. It is the teachers' task to motivate learning a L3. First of all it can be discussed in class but as well among modern foreign language teachers why they are teaching the language, what the aims of the single language teacher are. These common aims then can be included in every day teaching. In addition, Nieweler (2007: 136) provides a whole list of activities that can be an everyday stimuli for the student to learn the language, among others he names usage of authentic material in L3 like newspapers, watching television, use of the internet and native speakers. It is important for the students to be set in an environment where they experience that the target language can (and must) be made use of. The problem with reasons for language learning that lie in the future is that if motivation is lost it can be experienced to be difficult to build it up again when there are distant aims. Are there, instead, ongoing motivational stimuli surrounding the student it is more likely to retrace her motivation. In terms of a long-term solution it seems as well of high importance to take up in the general description of the subject modern foreign languages the future use of the foreign language as imagined by the policy-makers. With a non-existing description of something that is of high importance for the sixty respondents to this questionnaire it seems important to take action in this question both in a short term and a long term solution.

6.3.2 Communicative Ability

Other issues that were quite dominant in the respondents view of the received curriculum was the one-dimensional view on what Communicative Ability is, as well as that many other categories to be found in the intended curriculum were not mentioned by the students. This means that the awareness about the curriculum in its entity is quite reduced from the students' views. Thus remedy teaching needs to be carried out.

The first step is the cognitivation of the different aspects by means of introduction of the curriculum to the students. In general, the curriculum is supposed to be discussed at the beginning of each term in Sweden, whereas this is not the case in Germany. The discussion of the curriculum in Sweden seems to have an influence on the respondents in the present study, as solely the answers from the Bavarian students led to the creation of the category "No ideas". Thus it can be recommended that even in Bavaria the curriculum should be discussed with the students. Nonetheless, this process that should not stop at the point where students are discussing with the teacher. As stated in the task-based approach, the students need to work actively with the material, this embraces as well the curriculum. Hattie's meta-meta analysis "Visible Learning" aiming to present and test 138 factors that can be of importance for improved students'

achievements mentioned “formative assessment” (SKL 2011: 40) as a very important part in the student’s work with the curriculum. This type of assessment describes the ongoing and forward-looking assessment of students’ achievements. The result of tasks carried out by the students is checked against aims set out in the curriculum (SKL 2011). This feedback is one of the cores for learning (Lundahl 2011). In order to be able to provide feedback, the students need to be aware of the aims that are laid out in the curriculum. Another possibility to improve the students’ lack of information regarding the curriculum is the use of self-evaluation (Lundahl 2011). This forces the students to work systematically with the criteria. Different variations of self-evaluation exist; one is for example for the teacher to hand out a simplified checklist based on the curriculum before the students are handing in their essays. They then acquire tools to carry out self-corrections, but they are as well confronted with existing aims. Another possible solution is that the students carry out partner evaluation. In these cases, they get a pre-flight checklist showing qualities required for each task prior to completing the task. Then the students swap their work with another student who evaluates in what way all the points on the checklist were followed or not (Lundahl 2011). There are many possibilities to be found that can improve the student’s general knowledge about the intended curriculum by means of formative assessment.

Seen that the teacher is the agent for the implementation of the intended curriculum on the classroom level it becomes quite clear what there is stated by Hattie (SKL 2011): it is not improved content in curricula and syllabi that automatically improves the students’ results. What is most important in the work with the curriculum is the way in which the teacher deals with it in her classroom. Even if the extent of work with the curriculum on the classroom-level depends on the age group, this is work that should be started as early as possible with methods adjusted to the target group. But in case of the respondents to the questionnaire, students at the age of 16, the analytical and conceptual abilities of the students are quite well developed. Thus curriculum content can easily be cognitivized. Cognition is not supposed to do the teaching, but it should support students in becoming their own masters of their learning as a part of the task-based approach.

The results of this study thus put pressure both on teacher and on students in asking them to work more actively with the curriculum in order to increase the degree of alignment between the intended and the received curriculum in both countries

6.3.3 What there was not being talked about

Seen the results of the analysis of the Swedish and the Bavarian questionnaires, the students did not show awareness of the fact that the intended curriculum wants them to acquire meta-knowledge about language learning, the ability to express oneself with variation and dealing with texts and media, as those categories were missing in responses from both countries. Even though there can be multiple reasons for the lack of these categories in the answers, it seems to be important to address those categories not named in this work. As stated above, the lack of an explicit awareness of the existence of these categories in the intended curriculum does not exclude the students’ knowledge about those categories. Nonetheless one can assume that, having read the results, that these ‘silent’ categories need to be treated more often and maybe even more explicit than this has been done so far on the classroom level.

Meta-knowledge about language learning embraces learning strategies, something that can be difficult for a teacher to transfer as it can be experienced by the students to be boring. Many of

the students often are convinced that they already know how ‘their’ language learning works. Thus new stimuli need to be found that motivate the students to work with these questions. Therefore, a study day in collaboration with other L3 teachers and the psychology teacher could be organized, letting the students carry out different experiments about and research on their way of learning and memorizing.

Dealing with texts and media can often not be trained sufficiently as the teacher’s working load is high. As a result of that the textbook is used as the dominating medium in language teaching, not enabling the teaching of source criticism. The first step would be to abandon the textbook and to incorporate authentic material into language teaching. For example, articles from different newspapers reporting about the same event in the target language can be used in order to introduce the students to different perspectives. In addition, the newspaper’s coverage of an event can be compared to that in the home country.

Even the ability to express oneself in variation can easily be trained. Among others, students can be asked to rewrite a history from the textbook in several ways: an email to a friend, an entry in a blog, a letter to an editor or as a bedtime story.

The teacher introducing these types of exercises should always introduce them with referring to the aims in the intended curriculum. Further, these exercises should be followed by an ongoing formative assessment. Like this, these categories named can be made more explicit and there will be a higher chance that the students are in their received curriculum aware of them.

7. Final discussion

7.1 Summary

This study shows that a cross-national comparison of the curriculum is possible by means of the culture-free approach, as introduced to curriculum research by Rosenmund (2000). Nonetheless, it is not always possible to fully exclude the background during the interpretation process. For example it needs to be asked why the German students were not able to answer the questions on the received curriculum. Reasons for that can be due to national peculiarities, so as that the curriculum is not widely discussed with the students in the Bavarian Classroom or that it has only been for a comparatively short time span that a goal-based curriculum is in place. These issues do not prevent the carrying out of the culture-free approach, but they aggravate it.

Regarding the intended curricula, it could be found out that there were no major differences between those two. The ‘obligatory’ parts of language teaching are found in the two curricula, in the same way as they are mentioned in the CEFR: communicative ability, intercultural knowledge and language learning strategies. The items that do not have an equivalent in the other curriculum, for example “Trust in one’s ability to use language” feel more as if the obvious is being stated instead of this being an important part that was forgotten by the other country. Additionally, some categories see a more significant emphasis like “Dealing with texts and media” in the Bavarian Curriculum, compared to “criticism of sources” as stated in the Swedish curriculum. Given that the two curricula were recently published it feels as if the influence of the CEFR manages to influence the creation of the national curriculum, as already stated in 2007 by the Council of Europe. In addition to that it can be assumed that the internationalization of these both countries even has an influence on the curriculum design. Thus it seems as if these two

neighbouring European Countries have a more or less common curriculum in L3 teaching. In addition, these results show that foreign languages are not parochial subjects, meaning that further cross-cultural research on language learning even by means of quantitative methods is possible.

The qualitative analytical method employed enabled the thick descriptions (Jackson, Trochin 2007: 307) from the questionnaires, focusing on the description of problems as seen by respondents. Kvale's (2009) suggestions on coding could be employed for the coding of the data and lead to numerous categories that could differ from question to question and from country to country. Further, the diversity of the answers did not make it possible to analyse every part of the answers, as it would not have been possible in the scope of the study.

In reply to the second research question, both similarities and differences could be found in the perceived L3 curriculum of 10th grade pupils. In both countries, the students' reality is the assumption that Communicative Ability is at the core of L3 teaching. But the students solely see oral communication in focus, mostly excluding the written performance as the natural complement. This seems to be "wishful thinking" as the acquisition of the written code is experienced by most of the students as more difficult.

Lifelong Learning occupies the second place in the received Swedish curriculum, i.e. students assume that the study of the L3 is supposed to prepare them for future working life, when they are abroad or when they are looking for work. But this category does not exist in the intended curriculum. So the students' experience it in the taught curriculum, have it as a personal aim and include it in the received curriculum they seem to be make a meaning of something they experience but that they cannot categorize. Thus it seems as if the students are building hypothesis in order to explain to themselves why they are learning the target language. The second place in the Bavarian responses is occupied by the category "No Idea", i.e the students state that they lack knowledge on what the intended curriculum contains. A reason for that could be that the Swedish students normally once a year discuss with their teachers the intended curriculum, whereas this is not a day-to-day practice in Bavaria, where the curriculum allows for a lower degree of student influence. Another difference is that the Bavarian students are explicitly naming that they want to learn grammar and vocabulary, whereas the Swedish respondents expect that to a much lower degree. The Swedish students, on the other hand, expect to a much higher degree that the L3-lessons prepare them for the future, whereas this solely plays a minor role for the Bavarian students.

In terms of the taught curriculum, respondents in both countries see to a large degree Communicative Ability at the centre of all language teaching, followed by acquisition of knowledge in grammar.

Regarding the relation between the intended and the received curriculum in L3-teaching it can be stated that there is a larger degree of alignment in both countries between the taught and the received curriculum than there is between the received and the intended curriculum. Both countries show in the taught and the intended curriculum a downsizing of the intended curriculum. Thus the teachers as transformer (Linde 2006) have not managed to transport the intended curriculum in its entity, as it would have been the ideal case (cf. Kelly 2009). Additionally, the students' view on the received curriculum is not totally the same in the two countries, as differences are perceivable. Nonetheless, it feels as if the bigger majority of

response-categories are unanimous in the two countries. Due to this correlation it can be stated that the degree of the gap in alignment in these two countries is roughly the same, even if minor non-generalizable national differences are perceivable.

The results of this study show that the gap of alignment between the received and the intended curriculum needs to be reduced in both countries. This is done by several means. Among others, the curriculum's content should be cognitivized to a larger extent during the language lessons. This can be done by means of an on-going formative assessment or other means enabling the student to actively work with the content of the intended curriculum. Additionally, teachers need to work directly with categories written in the curriculum that have not been named by the students in the questionnaire, even this with the aim to achieve a higher degree of cognitivation of this content. Furthermore, the stakeholders in each country need to define the aims of why L3 are taught.

7.2 Further research

At the beginning of the study I assumed to find many differences between the two countries, both on the intended level and the perceived level. At the end of this research I can state that I have been proven wrong. Even though there are differences between these two countries, no major differences could be perceived on both levels. The results show that the degree of alignment is not yet satisfying and that there is still a lot of work to be carried out by the teachers but as well by the students and the policy-makers in order to find a solution for the issues raised.

One of the first general issues remarked while carrying out this study is that there has not yet been enough research in the field of the received curriculum. This research has shown that to carry out this type of research that is completely ignored by the large-scale studies such as TIMSS and PISA other methodological approaches are needed. But with the introduction of the task-based approach it becomes more and more important to see what the students assume and, even more important, what they do NOT assume that they can do in order to improve their work (and subsequently results) in the classroom. Thus more research on the received curriculum and the effects of a received curriculum showing gaps needs to be carried out.

One of the most important results of this study has been that it is important to acquire an understanding about the implicit aims of students studying a foreign language. In order to achieve a generalizable picture of the situation, more research needs to be carried out. This can be done by means of quantitative research. The results then can be matched against the same research carried out on the level of the policy makers responsible for the intended curriculum. It must be the aim to come to a compromise in society on why foreign languages are taught at school. This will facilitate both the students' and the teachers' future work.

The quite comprehensive data material accumulated in this study by means of the questionnaire allows for further interpretations. Unfortunately, this would have gone beyond the scope of the study. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to further interpret and discuss the categories from the different questions in relation to each other. This would give further insight into the connection between the personal aims, the received and the taught curriculum upon which more recommendations for successful teaching could be based.

Last but not least, a classroom teacher can easily reproduce the study in case she is interested in the alignment between the received and the intended curriculum in her L3 classes. All

information for the correct procedure is supplied in this study. As an alternative in order to facilitate the analysis process the questionnaire can as well contain multiple-choice questions consisting of items detected in the received curriculum in this study. Carried out in either way, it will supply the teacher with important information about her class. And it is only by means of research that teachers are able to further develop and improve their teaching and, at the end of the day, their profession.

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