Computer use in the English classroom
A comparative analysis of English teachers’ thoughts and practices regarding computer use in the English classroom

Datorbruk i det engelska klassrummet
En jämförande studie av Engelsklärares tankar och bruk gällande datorbruk i det engelska klassrummet

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Abstract
Society changed when it entered the 21st century when technological gadgets like the computer and tablets made our society technologically dependent. The aim of this study is to examine Swedish Secondary and Upper Secondary English teachers’ attitudes towards computer use in the English classroom. The study was carried out by using a qualitative method: semi-structured interviews. A total of 17 teachers offered their thoughts on the subject. The results show that there are both differences and similarities between the Secondary school teachers and Upper Secondary School teachers. The Upper Secondary teachers have a much more positive attitude compared to the Secondary school teachers who have a more neutral attitude. The Upper Secondary School teachers are more positive because of the 1:1 initiative while the Secondary School teachers more neutral as a result of the limited computer supply, which was problematic whenever they have classes that are larger than the amount of computers available at hand.

Keywords: Computer use, EFL classroom, Teachers’ thoughts, Teachers’ practices, English
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1. Introduction

Society changed when it entered the 21st century when the increasing amount of gadgets like the personal computer, smartphone and tablet made our society much more technologically dependent. These devices are everywhere and they all have their benefits, making it possible for people to write, watch media or read the news whenever they need to. Each device is connected to the Internet, enabling people to access news and work on the go. As our society adapted to this new technology, workplaces and institutions started integrating technology with their daily work. One example of an institution that is integrating technology is the Swedish school. Various technological devices are now becoming more accessible for both staff and students. A report by Skolverket (2015) shows that most Swedish teachers have their own work computer, provided by their school, and 90% of the students in Swedish upper secondary school are also given one. The impact of computer access is apparent, as teachers can now use material that has previously been much harder to get hold of. Furthermore, Internet makes it possible for computers access Internet media such as YouTube, BBC and online encyclopedias. For example, teachers can show clips of accents found on YouTube, find poems available on the internet or give examples of pop-culture. However, the report also showed that the range of possibilities and tools (software) available is not fully utilized by teachers. Instead, teachers find it problematic that students use computers more often in the classroom and the reason seems to be that teachers feel uncomfortable using them, stating that they require more ICT education (Skolverket 2015: 6). In addition, Internet access requires a decent broadband connection, which can be expensive. Schools and families may not be able to afford a stable Internet connection, which means that not everyone has access to the internet.

Computer software like Word, PowerPoint and Skype make it possible for students to study in a new manner. Word, a word processing program, is an attractive tool for any written assignment, as it not only comes with a proofreading system, but also with a built-in dictionary. It becomes an excellent tool for learning, writing, research and homework. Students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia benefit greatly from a computer as the aforementioned word program checks for grammatical errors by highlighting and explaining them (https://support.office.com, 2016). Furthermore, Computers have access to information that cannot be found in textbooks. The information available is global and invites the rest of the world into the classroom.
1.1 Aims

This study aims to examine Secondary and Upper secondary school English teachers’ attitudes towards computer use in the English classroom. Furthermore, the study also examines how English teachers use computers and their ideas regarding the effect of computers on L2 learning.

The research questions are as following:

- What are English teachers’ attitudes and ideas about using computers in L2 teaching?
- What are teachers’ views on the effects of computer use on L2 learning?
- When do teachers use computers in the L2 classroom and what are their reasons for using them?

2. Background

This section will present previous research that is relevant for this study. In 2.1, previous research on the effect of computers on teaching in general will be presented to give an overarching understanding of this paper and to exemplify how computers can be used. In 2.2, research on the effects of computers on second language (L2) learning is presented to show some examples of how computers can affect learning. In 2.3, previous studies on teachers’ attitude towards computer use in the classroom will be presented in order to illustrate teachers’ thoughts on the subject.

2.1 The effects of computers on teaching in general

According to the School of Education (2016) teachers can access the internet in order to find ready-made lesson plans and different sorts of materials (such as texts, articles on different topics, videos and songs). However, when using a ready-made lesson plan it is important to read it through and consider whether it suits the students’ knowledge (2016). Other general examples of how computers can be utilized in teaching can be found in Mongan-Rallis’ (2000) “How to” guidelines series. Mongan-Rallis’ guidelines were based on input she received from the University of Minnesota Duluth on her own lessons at that university. Her guidelines present examples of how teachers can use computers. For instance, teachers can replace writing on the board by projecting their notes onto a screen so that the whole class can
see. By doing so, teachers enable students to read notes more easily than making them read handwritten notes. Another example is that teachers can use PowerPoint instead of slides or pre-prepared overhead transparencies (Mongan-Rallis 2000).

Computers can also have a negative effect on teaching, especially if teachers do not know how to use them. Mary Burns (2010) explains that in order for computers to have a positive effect on teaching, teachers must have the knowledge needed for handling them. Burns’ article uses the results from two reports from The Chronicle of Higher Education and Walden University (2010) which stated that only 39% of the teachers reported moderate or frequent use of technology in the classroom. The reason seemed to be a lack in education. According to Burns (2010), a “technology professional development framework” for teachers, called the 5Js, can result in better use of computers and a positive effect on teaching. The 5Js are described as following: (1) job-related; computer use should be planned according to the goal/s of the lesson, (2) just enough; teachers should prioritize knowing “just enough” to help them complete the task, (3) just in time; professional development should support teachers’ learning when they are ready to both learn and apply what they learn with students, (4) just in case; teachers should be aware of that computers can break and therefore plan a “just in case” task and (5) just try it; teachers should apply what they have learned and communicate their experiences with both co-workers and coaches (Burns 2010). Burns’ concludes by stating that the 5J approach is an effective development framework that ensures that computer use will have a positive effect on teaching as it makes sure that teachers are well prepared for computer use.

In contrast to studies that show either positive or negative effects, some researchers claim that computers have no effect at all on teaching. For instance, a study by Falck, Mang and Woessmann (2015) show that the positive and negative effects of computers cause a null effect, which results in no impact on teaching. Their study is based on previous empirical evidence that showed computers having no effect on teaching (Falck, Mang & Woessmann 2015: 2). The hypothesis was tested by using information on specific uses of computers in the classroom from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) from 2011. The TIMSS data consists of a survey on how teachers in each subject have their students use computers for three specific activities: search for ideas and information (on the internet), practice skills and procedures, and process and analyze data (Falck, Mang & Woessmann 2015: 1). They found that computers did not have a significant effect on teaching.
as the students’ achievements did neither improve nor deteriorate. As stated earlier, the null effect consisted of positive and negative effects of computers: using a computer to find information or ideas had a positive effect on gathering information or finding ideas while using the computer to practice skills and procedures had a negative effect. Using computers for processing and analyzing data had zero effect. To overcome this null effect, Falck, Mang & Woessmann (2015: 23) proposed that teachers should use computers for teaching in cases where it has a positive effect and avoid using it where it has a negative effect.

2.2 The effects of computers on L2 learning

According to research done by the Foreign Service Institute, reaching functional proficiency in a language takes about four to six years (Blake, 2013, p.2). There are some ways to speed up the process, such as increasing the exposure to the target language. Blake (2013: 2-3) explains that the most efficient way to increase students’ exposure is to travel to areas where the target language is spoken and immerse oneself in the society and culture of the target language. This process of learning a language is called second language acquisition (SLA), which can be achieved by immersion, and is what Blake bases his study on. However, traveling is very expensive and consequently many students chose not to study abroad. Here, according to Blake (2013: 2-3), is where computers could be useful. He states that one of the reasons why formal L2 teaching is often unsuccessful is that students encounter either too little of the target language or that the input they do receive is of poor quality. By using a computer, however, the students can access the web to find websites or videos of the target language and thus increase their exposure to authentic target language. On the other hand, using computers to their full potential requires the aforementioned knowledge of how to use it in practice and for learning. Technology only provides a set of tools. These tools are methodologically neutral and require a learning strategy in order to result in positive effects such as acquisition. Blake applies the aforementioned SLA approach more specifically by stating that “L2 is best learned and taught through interaction” (Blake 2013:3). However, when it comes to computers it could be argued that they are not humans and thus cannot interact. Yet, research has shown the opposite: “People’s interactions with computers, television, and new media are fundamentally social and natural, just like interactions in real life (Reeves & Nass 1996: 5). According to Reeves & Nass (1996: 26), when interacting with a computer’s user interface and/or avatar users reacted politely. In an SLA context, then,
computers could have a significant impact on acquisition since people (i.e. language learners) feel that computer interaction is similar to the sensation of interacting with a real human.

Another example of how computers can be beneficial for L2 learning is when students use computers outside of school in order to play computer games, watch movies on YouTube etcetera during their spare time. A study conducted by Sundqvist (2009) showed that engaging in English activities or coming in contact with English outside of school (extramural English) had a significant positive effect on students’ oral proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. Her study had seven extramural English activities: reading books, newspapers/magazines, watching TV, watching films, surfing the internet, playing video games/computer games and listening to music. She measured extramural English by using questionnaires and two language diaries that spanned one week each. The diaries were used for recording how much time students spent on extramural activities. Additionally, Sundqvist used five interactional speaking tests in order to collect speech data. Her findings not only showed that extramural English had a significant effect, the type of activity mattered as well: activities that required students to depend on their own language skills and required some productivity had a larger impact on both oral proficiency and vocabulary knowledge than the passive activities (Sundqvist 2009: 145, 163).

Second language learning is often taught in order to practice the major language areas and skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing (Levy 2009: 769). This approach is called the modular approach and is helpful because it divides each skill into segments much like how a curriculum is constructed (Levy 2009: 770). An article written by Levy (2009) describes how technologies (with an emphasis on computers) have been used by teachers for practicing each language skill. For instance, Levy (2009: 770-771) explains that using Computer Assisted Language Learning software or authoring software for practicing grammar could be beneficial as the program emulates some of the qualities of an expert teacher, such as correcting grammar or pointing out grammatical errors (Levy 2009: 770-771). Additionally, practicing writing by using Word is excellent as it facilitates writing flexibility by making it easier for writers to manage their texts (Levy 2009: 772). However, Levy highlights a possible problem with Word’s auto-correcting and error highlighting function: these functions

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1 Authoring software is software that lets users create content, such as texts and/or movies.
were designed for native speakers and can therefore not correctly identify L2 learners’ errors² (Levy 2009: 773). Levy (2009: 773) suggests that students should instead rely on peers and work with peer reviewing via e-mail. By using Word’s Track Changes function, students can e-mail texts to other classmates and get feedback that way instead. This approach, according to Levy, not only provides for context-specific feedback, but promotes collaborative writing as well. Another example of when computers can be beneficial for practicing writing is when students write web blogs. While Word and its correcting functions promote academic writing, blogs can be used to promote informal kinds of writing as the focus can be self-expression and creativity (Levy 2009:773). However, informal writing does not make incorrect grammar acceptable and blog-based tasks tend to require extensive monitoring by teachers (Levy 2009:773).

The language skill that benefits the most from computer-assisted language learning technology is speaking and there is a multitude of applications that let users record both audio and video (Morales 2014: 23-24). Tugrul (2012) investigated how teachers can design and implement a speaking course that combined face-to-face interaction and the recording of videos on the computer. Her participants consisted of 82 students from the undergraduate marketing course at a private university in Turkey. The research process consisted of an activity on group project presentations that was split into two phases: a recording phase where she recorded students’ in-class group project presentations, which were used as her material, and a discussion phase where she rewatched the presentations with the students and teacher/s and then discussed the students’ performance together. To evaluate the project, she handed out a survey to each participant (Tugrul 2012: 136). The survey measured five variables: (1) oral presentation skills, (2) Communication skills, (3) Career skills, (4) the participants’ motivation to learn and (5) the results of the course evaluation. The three skills were based on the needs of the business world (Tugrul 2012: 134). Oral presentation skill was measured by five criteria: the ability to manage speaking tone, i.e. control its sound (dull/monotone/frustrated tone etcetera.), manage body movements, hold the attention of the audience/s, maintain adequate eye contact and respond effectively to questions. Communication skill was measured by three criteria: the ability to speak effectively to groups, communicate an appropriate level of detail and communicate orally. Career skill had five

² For instance, errors made by Swedish L2 learners written Swenglish (show me your leg instead of show me your ID) will not be detected at all, resulting in a grammatical mishap.
criteria: ability to get a job, expected performance on the job, ability to conduct business meetings, ability to make professional presentations and the ability to teach new employees how to work. Learning motivation was measured by two criteria: the will to work hard and the will to study more in order to be more knowledgeable of the presentation topic. For evaluating the course, statements like “the use of recording software for discussing projects was…” and “overall, this course was…” were used to measure what the participants’ thoughts of the course (Tugrul 2012: 134-137). Tugrul used two types of scales for scoring: a 7-point Likert-type scale that was used to measure variable 1-4 and a 4-point scale for the course evaluation. Her results showed that recording the students’ presentations and discussing them had a strong, positive effect on all of the skills: oral skills, communication skills and career-related skills were thought of by the students to be easier to practice when they had access to the recordings (Tugrul 2011:137). Furthermore, students felt more motivated when computers were integrated and their experience of the course was overwhelmingly positive (Tugrul 2011:137).

Computers also give students access to different ways of practicing reading comprehension. Chun (2001) did an empirical study on whether or not the tools available online (internet glossaries, dictionaries and audio narration) could help learners with reading and reading comprehension. Her study had students read in a web-based program called netLearn. NetLearn is an online program where students participate in a virtual year of study abroad (Chun 2001: 377). There were 23 participants who were all enrolled in a second-year German Course, learning German as an L2 (their L1 was English). Each participant was instructed to read two texts and then write a summary in English of everything they could remember of the texts (Chun 2001: 377). Each text had a limited amount of tools available: when reading text 1, students were able to look up words by either clicking on a glossed word, which was linked to an internal glossary, or by using an online German-English dictionary. Students also had access to an audio recording of text 1 (Chun 2001: 378). For text 2, the students had access only to the online German-English dictionary. Each student’s actions (navigating within the program and using the tools) was recorded by a program called ActionCatcher. The recordings made it possible to find out the time spent on a task and how many times students made use of the tools available. The results showed that the students understood text 1 better than text 2 likely because of the access to both the glossary, online-dictionary and audio narration (Chun 2001: 391). Having access to only the online-dictionary was cumbersome and not as seamless as the internal glosses since the online dictionary required more effort and
interrupted the reading process. Chun (2001: 391) concludes that access to instantaneous vocabulary help from an internal glossary can be beneficial to L2 reading and that further research is needed in order to find out if using web-based programs has a short-term or long-term effect on students’ learning.

Additionally, audio narration has also been used for listening comprehension. As of today, there are specific websites that offer hundreds of books or stories digitally, for instance kindersite.org (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 87). Verdugo & Belmonte (2007) studied the effect audio narration had on the listening skills of 220 Spanish L2 six-year-old students. They believed that the use of digital stories could have a significantly positive effect on children’s understanding of linguistic structures, vocabulary, sound patterns and prosody as they tend to be visual, interactive and reiterative (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 89). They based their study on the theory that stories at an early stage of language acquisition can be an effective way of contextualizing and introducing new language by making it meaningful and memorable (assuming that the stories are interesting) (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 87). They carried out a quasi-experimental research study in six state schools in Madrid. Their sample consisted of two groups: an experimental group (105 students) and a control group (103 students). Both groups had the same teacher in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and six EFL teachers in total participated in the project. Instruction-wise, the control group received two regular English language lessons which consisted of teacher instructions and an EFL textbook specifically targeted at Spanish learners. The experimental group had similar instructions, except that their second lesson was devoted to working with a selected number of digital stories from Kindersite.org (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 89). For data collection, two printed pre- and post-tests were used. Both groups had similar results during the pre-test while the final test showed that the experimental group largely outperformed the control group (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 97). However, they conclude their study that to reach better results and a more significant effect on listening comprehension required Computer Assisted Language Learning software that is optimized for students of all ages (Verdugo & Belmonte 2007: 97).

In summary, it can be said that computers can have a positive effect on L2 learning but that it requires optimization. All of the previous studies here serve as examples of how researchers have used Computer Assisted Language Learning in order to practice the four major language
skills. However, it is important to keep in mind that many of these studies used software that was specifically designed for testing a certain skill and only that skill.

2.3 Previous studies on teachers’ attitudes towards computer use in the classroom

A report by Skolverket (2015) showed that access to computers in Swedish school (elementary school and upper secondary school) had improved in recent years. The report states that all Swedish schools more or less strive to reach a 1:1 computer-student ratio. This initiative has been more successful in upper secondary school where an estimate of three out of four upper secondary school students have access to a computer/tablet, as compared to the 2012 report where only two out of four students had access (Skolverket 2015: 4). Middle school also saw an increase from one out of ten students to one out of four students. The increased number of computers in school led to them being used more often by both teachers and students (all ages). Students use computers for homework and during class while teachers use them for all kinds of tasks (Skolverket 2015: 4). However, the report states there is still need for competence development as all teachers asked for more help with using computers. Teachers ask for better IT-support and better pedagogical IT-support in order to use computers more comfortably (Skolverket 2015: 8-9).

Another study on EFL teachers’ attitudes towards computer use was made in Turkey by Aydin (2012). Her sample group consisted of 157 Turkish EFL teachers who were given a background questionnaire and a five-question scale survey a survey with questions about their use of computers (Aydin 2012: 219-220). The results showed that 70% of the EFL teachers used the internet, e-mail services, word processing, and presentation software quite well, and used excel/spreadsheet software to a limited degree, yet 60% had problems with any other type of software and felt uncomfortable using that type of software (webpage authoring software, databases and multimedia authoring software like Adobe Premiere). Furthermore, 89% considered computers as effective tools for teaching and learning. Teacher attitudes were overwhelmingly positive towards computer use, yet the lack of education and training resulted in a negative attitude towards integrating computers with the content of the curriculum (Aydin 2012: 228-230). The study concluded with a recommendation on how to

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3 1:1 is an initiative that aims to always have computers or tablets available for teachers and students.
help EFL teachers, for instance by offering sufficient education in a wider amount of computer software.

Kim (2008) did a small-scale study on how computers could be used with a constructivist approach (which promotes student-centered learning). Ten L2 teachers were interviewed and asked about their thoughts on computer technology in the classroom. Kim drew three implications from his findings. Firstly, the teachers used computers to access supplementary resources found on the internet and as an instructional tool. The teachers consequently limited the use of computers by making very selective, controlled and conditional use of it. Such use limits the scope by making the computer a tool that can only be used in a classroom instead of making it a tool that promotes learner autonomy, which means that the participants were unable to work with a constructivist approach (Kim 2008: 255). Kim thus concluded that educational programs for teachers need to offer education in computer use and include demonstrations on how a constructivist approach can be used. Secondly, the teachers’ perception of computer use was still based on a teacher-centered teaching paradigm instead of a student-centered one. Computers were not fully utilized since teacher-centered teaching emphasized computer use in a classroom setting (Kim 2008: 255). Thirdly, if the teachers fail to realize which role computers have in a constructivist learning environment, they will most likely still control and limit the use of computers. Awareness and flexibility was found to be paramount in order to broaden the use of computers. A paradigm shift from a teacher-centered view to a student-centered view was therefore considered necessary to ensure extensive use of computers. Kim concludes the study by stating that teachers’ attitudes and learning paradigms needed to change or adjust in order for computers to be fully utilized (Kim 2008: 255).

3. Material and methods

This case study is qualitative and uses interviews as its method. Interviews were used because they are well suited for studying attitudes, motivations and behaviors (Denscombe 2010: 104). The original idea was to use a mixed method that would include a quantitative survey as well, but due to time constraints, I did not manage to collect a sufficient number of responses and the qualitative dataset ended up being larger than the quantitative. Since the purpose of the mixed method was to use the quantitative data in order to control the validity of the qualitative data, the idea was scrapped and replaced with a purely qualitative method. A more fleshed out and proper mixed method could, however, generate more generalizable results.
3.1 Data collection

The data was collected by doing seventeen interviews. The interviews were done by me, either by visiting schools or by using Skype. All but three interviews were done face-to-face, online interviews being used in the case interviewees did not have time for a face-to-face interview.

Each interview (both offline and online) started with an introduction to the topic (See Appendix 1). The interviewees had all been given the questions that were to be asked in advance, in order to avoid any misunderstandings. I started the interview by introducing myself, the topic, the questions and the purpose of the interviews and by giving a thorough explanation of each question to make sure that all of the participants understood them. Furthermore, I assured them that they were to be anonymous and that they had every right to decline or stop the interview at any time. This option was given in order to both show respect to the participants but also to assure them that participation would not affect their regular work schedule. The teachers were also given the option to do the interviews in either Swedish or English in order to avoid making them feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. Finally, I told them that there was no right or wrong answer and that the only thing of any importance was their own opinion on the topic.

Nineteen semi-structured questions were asked, either in Swedish or English (depending on the choice of the interviewee). All but one question yielded good data. Question 12, which asked whether or not the different curriculums affected computer use, was based on the assumption that the three curriculums (one for English 5, 6 and 7 in upper secondary school and the three in secondary school (English for year 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9) had noticeable differences. However, there were no pronounced differences in the curriculums, resulting in no effect on computer use and none of the interviewees stated that the curriculums affected their use of computers in the English classroom.

3.2 Participants

The interviewees for this case study were eight secondary school teachers and nine upper secondary school teachers. All but one had Swedish as their L1 (the other had English as their L1) and all of the interviewees were working teachers. Since the participants are anonymous,
they are identified here with the help of two abbreviations: ST (Secondary Teacher) or UST (Upper secondary teacher) + a consecutive number.

All but 3 teachers worked in Karlstad. They all saw the request for participants in the previously mentioned Facebook group and agreed to be interviewed. All interviewees had a bachelor or Master’s degree in education and in English⁴. Only three of the seventeen had worked for more than five years, making the group slightly biased as many of the participants begun working around the same year that the 1:1 computer-student initiative became the norm (see Table A).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years of work exp.</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UST2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UST3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
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<td>UST5</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ST8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Teacher’s degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Ethical considerations

Each interviewee was given information about their rights as participants and how the data were to be used. I began every interview by reading the rights out loud and informed them

⁴ All of the interviewees had a teacher’s degree of some sort but out of the 17 participants, only ST8 stated that he had a teacher’s degree. Their original responses are represented in Table A.
that participation was voluntary. Information regarding the codes of ethics is of importance and is necessary in order to make the interviewees feel comfortable with their participation (Denscombe, 2010, p.64). Oral consent was given by each interviewee before the interview began. All of the questions were asked by me, but the interviewees had access to the questions a couple of weeks before the interviews were held.

4. Results and analysis

This section will present the results and analysis of the qualitative data collected in this case study. Each section represents one research question: 4.1 deals with general attitudes towards computer use, 4.2 is about the teachers’ views on the effects of computers on L2 learning in the classroom and 4.3 deals with when and why the interviewees claim to use computers.

4.1 Secondary and upper secondary school teachers’ general beliefs towards computer use in the English classroom

Generally, the secondary school had a more neutral attitude and the upper secondary school teachers had a more positive attitude towards computers use in the English classroom. However, there were many similarities. For example, all teachers tended to see their students as digital natives (See Prensky 2013), which to them meant that they more or less lived in the digital world. Therefore, using computers in class was natural. Other similarities were found as well, such as the use of computers for assessing and collecting assignments. They all used online platforms like Google Classroom\(^5\) to facilitate the tracking of large groups of students which was seen as efficient as it saved a lot of time. Both groups also used the same kind of material from the internet: short clips from YouTube and contemporary news and articles.

The upper secondary school teachers had a more positive attitude towards computer use in the English classroom than the secondary school teachers. Possibly, this positive attitude had to do with the fact that upper secondary school students all have access to their own computer (see Skolverket [2015: 4] in section 2.3). To find out whether or not the 1:1 ratio had an impact on the upper secondary teachers’ positive attitude, I asked if a limited accessibility to computers (e.g. having to struggle with booking computers in advance) could affect their

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\(^5\) Google Classroom is an online learning platform created by Google. It lets users create folders for each class where students can hand in assignments and receive feedback and grades.
view. The answer was a firm yes, stating that any tool that required any sort of planning was generally avoided since it required more effort and time. Therefore, upper secondary school teachers were positive towards computer use because it was efficient and part of their work. None of the upper secondary teachers had a negative attitude towards computer use, but UST2 felt that computer use has created a new set of skills that has replaced an older one:

I think we’re in an interesting phase when it comes to language and using computers in the language classroom because it can facilitate a lot but I think we’re losing a certain skillset as we gain a new skillset. So I think it’s really important to learn to use the variety of tools that are offered by the computer, not just word processing but all the different tools that a laptop can afford. But… There’re also certain things that are being lost. However, there’s a lot of potential. (UST2)⁶

UST2 specified that the replacements of skills was more apparent in writing tasks, explaining that his students seemed to replace manual proofreading with the automated language check in Word. His students were becoming more and more dependent on computers, with the growing risk of losing the skills that did not require a computer. He felt that being overly dependent on computers could affect students negatively if they were to end up in situations where they cannot use computers, such as when they have to write an essay by hand.

There is a slight difference in the responses from both groups in that the secondary school teachers seemed to choose to work with computers whereas the upper secondary teachers saw computer use as a part of their work, which explains why none of the upper secondary school teachers expressed thoughts that could be understood as if they had made an active choice to work with computers.

Some of the upper secondary school teachers’ enjoyed using computers when they taught because computers made it possible for them to act more independently. According to UST3, having to rely on textbooks when creating assignments felt like a liability. Access to material found on the internet made it easier for him to create assignments:

⁶ All quotes from the teachers have been transcribed exactly as they were given, including all grammatical inconsistencies.
So, well… I’m not a big text-book fan myself so I like using the computer as a technical tool to be able to work more independently in order to produce more of my own material and I believe that the students appreciate it as well. Not all of them but some of them. (UST3)

Most of the upper secondary school teachers stated that access to computers made it easier for them to teach outside of class. UST2 stated that he often attended several school related conferences during school hours:

I do a lot of teaching when I’m not in the classroom with Google classroom. And with Google classroom, it’s in real-time so I can be at a conference in Stockholm and still teach… And the students that are shy about coming up and asking me a question can send me a question in the chat and everybody sees it and that’s really nice… The public form of the digital classroom means that any question is answered for everyone to see. (UST2)

Additionally, all of the upper secondary school teachers considered the computer a valuable tool for teaching and planning, and also for special needs students. However, all of the upper secondary school teachers stated that computer use only had positive effect if it was used properly and that they tended to take a more dominant role in the classroom when computers were used. A dominant role in this context was explained by UST2, UST3 and UST4 as “to work according my instructions”, they controlled how the students work whenever they used computers. In other words, they tended to work with computers in class as according to a teacher-centered teaching paradigm (See Kim (2008) in 2.3).

When it comes to computer use, the secondary school teachers had a more neutral attitude than the upper secondary school teachers. None of the secondary school teachers had a 1:1 ratio, which meant that they had a limited amount of computers. Most of the time, the use of computers required some kind of booking in advance and in some cases there were more students than computers. For this reason, all of the ST teachers were less enthusiastic about using computers in the classroom than their upper secondary colleagues. Furthermore, the secondary school teachers stated, more often than the upper secondary teachers, that while the computer is a great tool it is at the same time a problematic tool: "Generally speaking,
computers can be a great asset in the classroom if it’s used correctly and a nuisance if it’s used incorrectly. That’s my general stance on that. So my opinion is quite neutral, there are pros and cons” (ST3). All of the secondary school teachers wished for the same 1:1 ratio found in upper secondary school and stated that many of the problems they experienced with computer use in class were caused by the limited supply.

ST2, ST3, ST4 and ST6 felt that it was only natural to have a positive attitude towards computer use as computers are such a big part of their students’ daily lives. Having a negative attitude would not only make it harder to establish a good relationship with the students, it would also prevent society from entering the classroom. It is an integral part of society now (See Morley 2014) and not using computers would seem almost unnatural and could make lessons feel outdated or irrelevant. According to ST2, it was important to make computer use seem like a natural part of her lessons:

I think it’s completely natural [to use computers] and I have to say that my attitude is quite positive. I don’t want to work against it but work in order to make computer use seem natural. If not, the students might think “oh wow, today we’re using the computers” or “Oh, we’re using our phones today?” I mean we’re already glued to our phones today, so we might as well use it in school. (ST2) (My translation)

Three out of the eight secondary school teachers stated that using computers during class affected their students’ motivation, increasing their will to work and learn. The increase was an effect of how user-friendly computers were. It created a sense of independence, which their students appreciated. ST2 added to her statement above that since computers are such a big part of their life outside of school, using them in class could make students more comfortable and confident. ST1 stated that it was only natural to use computers since her students were digital natives: “I think that the computer is an effective teaching tool in the classroom. The bulk of the students are digital natives anyway. They are more than equipped and it is one avenue to capture their interest” (ST1). The secondary school teachers mentioned computer use as a motivation increaser whereas the upper secondary school teachers tended to talk about it as a familiar tool instead.

Only UST3 stated that the computer made it easier to work independently. A possible explanation could be that the other teachers’ schools use textbooks more than UST3’s school.
ST5 explained that she used a digitized version of a textbook instead. The digitized version was used for projecting the content of the book onto a screen to make it easier for the entire class to read. However, the digitized version had a homepage where students could log on and do assignments on the webpage instead, which ST5 used whenever she had access to computers.

All of the upper secondary school and secondary school teachers stated that using computers was positive for L2 teaching as it helped teachers globalize the classroom. Globalizing the classroom meant that the Internet enabled both teachers and students to access global information. Another positive aspect of using computers in the L2 classroom was the amount of tools that computers offered, such as word processing programs and tools for presentations. This was used to a similar extent in both groups, such as using software like Word and Powerpoint for writing and oral tasks.

Finally, all the teachers thought that computers made teaching English a lot easier and more enjoyable. The previous reasons stated above (e.g. online platforms, projector for showing clips) removed many of the issues such as not having to bring a lot of papers or sort out access to a TV whenever a movie were to be shown. The amount of material and information available on the internet made work that much easier. For instance, UST2 stated that overall his work had become much easier since he started using computers: “I think it makes it easier simply because of the accessibility to information and to tools. I don’t have to get them, they’re everywhere. So in that sense it’s easier…” (UST2).

4.2 The effects of computers on L2 learning

Both groups of teachers thought that using computers had a positive effect on the learning of English. For example, UST3 used computers for almost all of his lessons for the reason that the content of the English curriculum was open to personal interpretation, which makes it possible to use material that is not necessarily made specifically for teaching. Therefore, computers were a great resource for his lessons:

That means that the computer and the internet becomes a great resource for us when teaching English. We can access a lot of American, British… Any English speaking country, any site from those countries. We can use news, find articles from newspapers all over the world from English-speaking countries. (UST3)
When asked about advantages of computer use in the English classroom, all of the interviewees mentioned the aforementioned access to authentic English content, which made it easier to work with the section in the curriculum on exposure to culture and language. This was also mentioned when the teachers gave examples of good material on the internet. All but ST3 and UST6 used YouTube and thought it was excellent for finding authentic spoken English content. ST3 explained that he had not gotten around to using it but was aware of YouTube’s potential use and UST6 preferred to use TED talks instead.

The use of learning platforms was also mentioned as advantageous as they made it possible to gather and store material in one place. Learning platforms were more time efficient than having to collect assignments and page through piles of papers. UST4’s school used Itslearning, which to her was great as every assignment was to be handed in there, making management easier. Furthermore, UST2 stated that using Google Classroom made it easier for him and his students to work in unison. UST2 added to his statement, explaining that he also records his lessons:

Like when I have a new assignment I record the presentation and answer the questions they ask and then post it to my classroom page so that the few that weren’t there can access it there or if you don’t remember it it’s there. If you need to see it three or four times, it’s there and you don’t have to ask me three or four times. You can just watch the video, it becomes like a tutorial about a lesson. (UST2)

All of the interviewees believed that computers were advantageous when doing writing tasks. Software like Word was considered valuable since it came with grammar control, reducing the amount of time teachers had to spend on correcting students’ grammar. Furthermore, all of the teachers felt that Word had a significant effect on students with dyslexia. Not only did it help with their writing, it included a greater sense of inclusion to the rest of the classroom. No longer was it apparent that a student was using a computer because he/she had dyslexia. In fact, all but UST3, UST4, UST7, ST5 and ST6 stated that the way they carried out writing tasks had changed after they started using Word, mentioning changes like larger essay tasks and working with sources more often.
Computers were also beneficial for presenting new tasks as teachers no longer needed to waste time writing on the board. Four secondary and six upper secondary teachers (ST1, 2, 6 and UST 3, 6 and 7 did not mention PowerPoint or Prezi) felt that a Powerpoint or Prezi presentations was more efficient and clearer than using the board. The teachers also felt that oral presentation tasks benefitted from computer use, as they found it much easier to compile a text for a presentation and present it with PowerPoint. UST4 had an overwhelmingly positive attitude, stating that using the whiteboard was pointless: “You just save so much time by using computers, like writing on the whiteboard is just so pointless when you can save so much time with PowerPoint or Prezi.” (UST4)

UST4, 6, 8 and ST 2 and 3 said that using computers for reading comprehension was useful. ST4 explained that she thought that by using online learning sites (she mentioned and used Readtheory.org⁷), students could practice their reading comprehension in a more effective way. ST3 explained that the initial reading practice came from reading the content on the site, since the site has more on offer than reading tasks (such as grammar tasks etcetera.). ST2 and UST4, 6 and 8 used Readtheory as well and shared ST4’s thoughts on its benefits and uses for practicing reading comprehension. The rest of the interviewees used books for reading comprehension instead.

As previously mentioned, both groups of teachers considered computers to have a positive effect on L2 learning. However, only the secondary school teachers mentioned that their students thought that computer use was more fun and enjoyable than working with a textbook. This again seemed to relate to the limited access to computers in secondary school. Every instance of computer use seemed to be unique and therefore more enjoyable for the secondary school students.

Disadvantages with computer use were also mentioned by both teacher groups and with both groups they gave similar examples on disadvantages. All of the upper secondary and six out of the seven secondary school teacher (ST1-7 and UST1-8) agreed with that the amount of distractions that could be found on a computer was an issue. It is simply too easy to become distracted by websites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Netflix. UST5 said that the

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⁷ Readtheory is a site that offers students texts that are customized to the students’ reading capability, which is measured in levels that are raised or lowered based on performance on tasks.
distractions were an issue but not a big one: “When they become distracted and surf sites like Facebook and Instagram and do things they are not supposed to do is an issue… Even though I cannot say that it happens too often, but it happens.” (UST5) (My translation) However, in contrast to all the other teachers, ST5 expressed no issues with distractions. Computers were only used when she decided to use them, which suggested they were used for very specific tasks and if the students were aware of it, they might focus more on the task than on other things.

Another disadvantage mentioned by all of the teachers except ST5 was that computers were a reliability and a “crutch” in that many students had to use their computers in order to finish most of the written tasks given to them. However, ST5 did not use computers for writing tasks and did thus not feel that computers were a reliability and/or crutch. She believed that her students were too young to use computers and learned faster by writing by hand. Yet, when students relied too much on Word’s grammar check, they stopped learning the ability to look for errors manually. Punching in an entire sentence into Google translate does not work and the result is in many cases completely incorrect. ST4 said that the biggest issue for her was when the students turned on an “auto-pilot” and wrote entire texts in Swedish that they translated in Google Translate:

A disadvantage is when they write entire Swedish texts in Google translate without thinking of the English translation and rely on the auto-correct function in Word. They stop thinking about language. They don’t think actively about language and stop learning… (ST4) (My translation)

Furthermore, ST4 told about a class that had never written anything using a pen and paper. Not only could this class not write with a pen, when they did try to write, their writing style was eerily similar to the font styles found on Word. Many students could not write the letter A and instead used the @ symbols. ST4 had to spend an entire year on teaching that class how to write and argued that computer use should not be allowed for writing during year 1-3 since they apparently can become too dependent on writing on the computer.

Another issue was raised by UST5, who thought that the advanced translation software available made it possible for upper secondary students to translate too much. The issue is not necessarily the translation software but that it is possible to translate entire webpages and
documents, which to UST5 meant that students could avoid exposure to English. It removed a lot of the effort that is necessary when learning as his students simply relied on the translation functions instead of learning the words.

Being dependent of computers was a hot topic and all the teachers thought that being too dependent could become an issue. UST2 gave an example about a student with dyslexia, where the student was offered access to reading software that read texts aloud. Obviously, students with learning disabilities have the right to access software and tools to help with whatever issue they have. However, the issue was when students without any disabilities relied on the same software. To UST2, the fact that so many students without a disability relied on text-to-speech software could mean that they were not learning how to read properly. In fact, all of the teachers printed texts whenever they did a reading assignment. The reason was that they believed that human eyes were not used to reading on a computer screen. Some students simply worked better when they did a reading task with a pen and paper, making computer use the less beneficial option. Their opinion is very much a contrast to ST2 and ST4’s statement on using websites for reading comprehension, since they believed that Readtheory was the better option for practicing that skill.

Furthermore, the vast amount of information available on the internet was also seen as a double-edged sword since there is a lot of good material on the internet but there is also a lot of bad material. Both groups seemed to define bad material as material without reliable sources. The many websites available on the internet have made source criticism much more important than before, which emphasizes the need to teach students that material available on the internet is not always reliable and is in many cases used for spreading false information or rumors. For instance, UST7 forbade her students to use Flashback:

I think the bad material is the material that isn’t true, things that my students find on Facebook or Flashback or things like that. That does not have any criticism behind it and is based on prejudice. I don’t allow them to use that for their assignments but sometimes I can tell quite clearly that their own opinion has been based on that kind of material and that’s why we try to work quite extensively with source criticism. (UST7)

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8 Flashback is a Swedish forum that promotes “true freedom of speech” and tends to spread false rumors.
Another example of bad material was given by UST9, who highlighted a problem with access to authentic English material. According to UST9, just because the content is authentic does not mean that it is good English: consequently, teachers need to check regularly so that students are always reading high quality texts.

4.3 When do the teachers use computers in the L2 classroom and what are their reasons for using them?

Both groups used computers in a similar manner and for similar reasons as well. Firstly, all but ST5 used computers for writing, mainly because it was a lot easier to write on a computer and find information on a topic. ST5 stated that she believed that her students wrote faster by hand since it required less effort. Instead, she used computers for practicing listening by showing different clips on accents. In addition to writing, all the teachers liked to complement their writing tasks with oral PowerPoint presentations.

A common theme in the upper secondary group was that many of the teachers used computers almost constantly. UST2, UST3, UST4 and UST9 stated that they used computers for most of their lessons by either using a PowerPoint or for showing YouTube clips. For instance, UST2 started his lessons by showing a relevant short clip:

> Like one of the things I like to do is begin my classes with a short video. Cause it takes their attention to where I am. First a short clip, 2-3 min, because it’s easier for them to change from one screen [their computer screens] to another screen [projector screen] and once the clip is over, there I am.\(^9\) (UST2)

UST2 added to his statement by explaining that he used computers primarily because “that’s how people are going to work in the future” (UST2). It was not simply because it was beneficial for teaching and learning but also in order to prepare students for university and future work. UST5 used computers whenever it felt natural, such as for writing. He would also use computers for discussing topics and tell students to look up information on the topics. For instance, one assignment UST5 liked to do was to have his students spend twenty to thirty minutes on finding a news article and writing a short essay on it that was to be briefly presented at the end of class. ST2 and ST4’s computer use depended on whether or not it

\(^9\) UST2’s classroom has a projector screen that to the right of where he usually sits in the classroom.
suited the task. If their students found computer use to be beneficial for the task at hand, both teachers would let their students work on the computer.

All of the teachers used computers whenever they needed to find or use authentic English content. For instance, UST9 stated that she used computers as much as possible because computers can help enhance the learning and raise the interest of the students:

They can talk to other people using English throughout the world or within the class. So that’s one thing… Another thing that has helped them learn English… It’s so easy to adapt the material to what interests the students. If I know that I have a class that’s very interested in music I can easily just play a song, put on Spotify… use songs more. Before I had a computer in the classroom, before I could do that, I had to plan the use of music a lot more and it took a long time to plan how to use a song but now we can just… If I see that okay we need something else, something… Like a five minute thing and the students are tired or whatever… We can put on something that triggers their interest. I can be more flexible when it comes to their learning and with the material we use and that will enhance their learning. They can co-write, work with each other and write texts together which is helpful when learning English. But mostly because it gives you the opportunity to bring the world into the classroom and that’s motivating for the students, to get to see and experience real English and not just English for the classroom use. (UST9)

UST1 stated that his computer use was more or less based on working with formative assessment, which he believed helped students learn more. Furthermore, UST1 did not use computers just because he had access to them, but because he believed it promoted students’ learning. He gave an example of a planned assignment with computer use in mind:

This is something I do more or less always. I don't wish to use computers simply because they're there but because I believe that there are tools that promote students' learning. I'll give you an example from yesterday. We did a listening exercise, preparing for the National Tests (on paper). Having listened to the recording, I encouraged the students to compare their answers and if there were any words they didn't know. Each student pair logged onto Padlet, a digital whiteboard, and shared their word lists. Then, the students were encouraged to help their friends by adding
explanations if possible. A projector was used. If there were words the students didn't know, I stepped in (we didn't have much time, otherwise I would've asked them to look them up). Thus, the use of computers was planned (i.e. when, where, how, why). (UST1)

The ST group used computers in an identical manner compared to the UST group. Computers were more or less always used for writing tasks and for projects that required gathering information. For instance, ST4 created a task where the students were to write a horror story:

…[S]o I had them write a horror story and I have students in my class that aren’t that great at writing in English… But when we use the computer, they feel less anxious about it and it feels more fun to do. They can look for errors much faster and I can help them in an easier way when they use the computer. (ST4) (My translation)

A common reason for when the ST group to use computers was precisely what ST4 stated, that they thought that their students found computer use more fun than writing with a pen or pencil. ST6 stated that many of the tasks she did on the computer tended to be finished by almost all of her students. Using computers in order to raise student motivation seemed to be the most common reason in this group. ST6 stated that computer use made self-discovery learning occur more often since the students were so invested in the tasks. Other than that, the ST group used the computer for similar tasks stated by the UST group. Furthermore, only one out of seventeen thought that the extent of computer use was affected by the different classes. The rest of the teachers would do minor adaptions to ensure that the computers were used properly in their classes. ST4 stated that she had to use computers less in one class:

Sometimes I do use computers less depending on the class I have. There’s one class where computer use hasn’t really worked out and resulted in an incident… That class would either play games or download shooting games… And they drew some really nasty pictures of other classmates. So for that class I decided to use computers less, otherwise I use it to the same extent in every class. (ST4) (My translation)

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10 Self-discovery learning refers to learning by independent learners who set up their own learning goals and decide their own learning paths. (See Bruner 1961)
Other identical patterns were also found in the results. Both groups expressed issues with using computers for exams. The biggest reason was that using computers for exams either required too much effort (such as making sure that nobody cheats etcetera.) or was forbidden, which it tended to be during the national writing tests in English. In fact, some (ST2, UST3, UST4 and UST6) of the teachers stated that they would do smaller written tasks in order to practice writing for the national tests.

Another similarity was that even though eleven out of the seventeen teachers stated that they liked to use computers as much as possible, zero claimed to use computers for speaking assignments. ST2 thought that computer use was not suited for speaking practice. UST2 thought that using computers for speaking tasks was less effective:

> There are some personal interactions that cannot be recreated on the computer such as reading body language, like asking someone if they understand is something you can see on their body language which is not possible on Skype and this is something kids need to learn how to deal with. But when it comes to most situations I move towards doing it on the computer. (UST2)

In sum, both teacher groups considered the computer good for teaching and learning and thought that it had a positive effect on learning. 16 out of the 17 teachers used computers for writing tasks and used the internet as a source for information and authentic English content. When it comes to the problems of computers inviting students into distractions, it was mentioned more by the upper secondary school teachers and less by the secondary school teachers. However, a more neutral attitude (i.e. both positive and negative) towards computer use was more common in the secondary school teacher group, which was caused by the limited computer supply.

5. Discussion

The present case study aimed at finding out about English teachers’ attitudes towards computer use in the English Classroom. A total of 17 teachers offered their thoughts on the subject. Even though it is still a relatively small sample, it could potentially serve as an indication of the attitudes of Swedish English teachers in general as the answers were relatively consistent between the respondents, although no such generalization is possible to
deduce from the current material. With that said, some of the results are worthy of discussion and can be compared with the previous research in the field.

The results showed that the majority of the group had a positive attitude towards computer use in the English classroom. Out of the seventeen interviewees, only one mentioned a need for further education on computer use, which could be seen as contradictory to the report by Skolverket (2015, see 2.3). This discrepancy could be linked to that many of the participants began their career as teachers after the investment on a 1:1 computer-student ratio, which explains the overwhelmingly positive attitude. The fact that the secondary school teacher group asked for more computers is also interesting, as they were not worried about requiring more education and instead wanted the same 1:1 ratio. However, the participants did not mention using software outside of Word, PowerPoint and Prezi. According to the study by Aydin (2012, see 2.3), her teachers thought that it was hard to use computers for tasks other than writing and oral presentations. The fact that only two out of the seventeen interviewees mentioned that they used computers for reading practice could suggest that the sample group may not be aware of how teachers can use computers when practicing other language skills and thus need education on software outside of writing and presentation, even if they do not identify this need themselves. This could suggest that the teachers might be uncomfortable with using computers for practicing other skills than writing and oral presentations. However, it is important to consider that time has passed and measures could have been taken after the report by Skolverket (2015) was published and the results in this study could represent those measurements.

On the other hand, the teachers participating in the present study could be aware that computer use is not suitable for everything and thus use it only where they find it effective. As pointed out by Falck, Mang and Woessmann (2015, see 2.1), having students practice practical skills on a computer was less effective and had a negative impact on learning. The sample group might have experienced this during their own lessons. However, instead of finding out where computer use is effective via trial and error, it is my opinion that teachers should instead have access to guidelines and tutorials on how teachers can use computers when teaching. As of now, guidelines on how teachers can use computers do not seem to exist. This could explain why the report from Skolverket (2015) indicates that teachers require more education on computer use. These guidelines should only work as suggestions since the teachers in this study thought that the lack of guidelines (in this case the curricula) allowed
them creative freedom in compiling material and what methods to use. The guidelines should only serve as a starting point for teachers that are beginners at using computers and not remove any creative freedom in creating lessons and tasks.

One reason as to why the teachers did not want to use computers for speaking tasks could be that they actually are difficult to use for that purpose. Giving a class a discussion topic and then tell them to work in pairs is simply faster than having them set up the computers and start the recording software. This begs the question if it is actually effective to use computers for every task. The results of this study showed that the teachers tended to use computers whenever it felt “natural” or made sense. Not a single interviewee mentioned recording oral presentations, which could mean that the teachers either chose not do so because it takes time or because they were not aware of how computers can be used for speaking tasks. This again highlights the need for guidelines in order to clarify when to use and not to use computers.

A problem with working in school after the 1:1 initiative is that new teachers could become too attached to working with computers. If the teachers are used to computers themselves, they might have problems with looking at work from a different perspective. This is also the case with pre-1:1 teachers, who tend to work less with computers since they are used to working without computers. This becomes problematic as the results of this study and previous research (Falck, Mang & Woessman & Levy, See 2.1 & 2.2) showed that computer use can have both a negative and positive effect on learning. However, if pre- and post-1:1 teachers were to discuss their results, they could find a balance and perhaps a starting point for the aforementioned computer guidelines. This could ensure that the guidelines are not biased and instead based on a balanced approach to computer use.

Writing tasks were almost completely done on the computer as they considered writing on the computer to be easier to do and manage. These results agree with the findings of Levy (2007, see 2.2), which showed that using software like Word for writing could be beneficial because of the auto-correct function and the effortless text management. However, many of the teachers felt that Word was making self-awareness of grammatical errors less important since students depended on the auto-correcting function of Word. Instead of learning from the auto-correct, students became used to the auto-correct function. It begs the question of if the students become unable to detect grammatical errors because of the auto-correcting function, which could have a significant negative impact on the students writing skills since if the
students actually do not learn grammar, they will never learn how to write in English. This could be linked to Levy again, who also highlighted a problem with the auto-correcting and error highlighting function. The results seem to agree with Levy (2007) in that they both consider Word as beneficial and problematic for learning writing.

Additionally, ST4 and UST5’s examples of how their students used translation software to translate large pieces of texts shed light on a potential issue. Learning a language requires effort to actively studying how the target language is structured, learn its vocabulary etcetera. However, using software to completely remove any sort of effort means that the entire point of studying a language is lost. If students rely on translation software instead of learning the language, they will not be able to learn at all. Students need to be aware of that learning a language has always required effort and it is the teachers’ duty to make sure that they know. This further proves that computer use needs to be structured and well-thought-out in order to avoid having a negative effect on learning. With that said, it must be mentioned that many of the interviewees wanted to be of use for this study and could exaggerate their stories. ST4’s story should most likely be taken with a grain of salt as it is highly unlikely that a class used computers in primary school.

In contrast to the majority of the responses regarding Word, ST5 had no issues with that as she did not use Word. This highlights a potential solution: to remove Word completely. Many of the participants mentioned that they had their students write by hand in order to practice for the national writing test in English. It may be interesting to ponder on if that truly is a solution, especially today when people rarely write by hand. Nevertheless, the story told by ST4 about the class that did not know how to write by hand is also quite alarming. Today’s school is integrating computers more and more, with the goal to have 1:1 in every grade. However, teachers need to discuss whether it actually is good for students to use computers at an early age. In this specific case, ST4 noticed the issue at an early stage, but what were to happen if it went by undetected? That class would have to either repeat an entire year or attend to additional lessons on how to write by hand, resulting in severely halting the progress of that class. This all seems to point towards that computer use at an early age could be detrimental if not implemented with proper caution and pedagogical planning.
6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine secondary and upper secondary school English teachers’ attitudes towards computer use in the English classroom. The qualitative method of this paper made it possible to find differences and similarities between the secondary school teachers and the upper secondary school teachers. The results show that the upper secondary school teachers had a positive attitude towards computer use and the secondary school teachers had a more neutral attitude towards computer use. The difference in attitude seemed to be the result of the difference in computer supply; the upper secondary school teachers’ students had their own computers whereas the secondary school teachers’ students had a limited amount of computers. The results also show that both groups consider computer use to have a positive effect on teaching and learning, stating that access to authentic English content and YouTube made their teaching better and had a positive effect on their students’ learning process.

Furthermore, the teachers used computers for practicing writing, presentations and listening. They considered computers effective both for writing and as a complement for students’ presentations. Listening practice was done with the use of YouTube, which made it possible for students to listen to authentic spoken English. None of the teachers used computers for speaking tasks, stating that the lack of body language made it less effective than face-to-face discussions. Nonetheless, the previous research of this study indicate that computer use is effective for practicing writing, listening and oral presentation tasks and should be used by more English teachers. Even though this study has a small sample, it represents some of the attitudes towards computer use in the English classroom held by Swedish English teachers.

It would be interesting to study students’ attitudes towards working on the computer, such as if computer use raises or lowers their motivation. Previous research presented in this study suggest that computer use increases students’ motivation to learn languages, so it would be interesting to see if that is the case in the other subjects as well.
References


Appendix 1: Interview questions

- Male ( ) Female ( ) Other ( )
- Subjects (if any) other than English?
- Years of work experience:
- Degree:

*Guidance*
This interview focuses on your own opinions regarding the use of computers in the English classroom. Computer use in this case means using Word, Power point and the internet. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. What is your opinion on the use of computers in the English classroom in general?
2. What do you think are advantages of using computers when teaching English?
3. What do you think are disadvantages in using computers when teaching English?
4. In what kind of teaching situations would you prefer to use computers? When and why?
5. In what kind of teaching situations do you prefer not to use computers? When and why?
6. Are there occasions where you create a lesson or an assignment with computer-use in mind? If yes, could you give an example?
7. Are there occasions where you have specifically decided not to allow computer use? If yes, could you give an example and explain why?
8. Is the extent to which computers are used dependent on the specific group of students you are teaching? If yes, in what way does the specific group of students influence computer use? If no, why not?
9. In what way do you think the use of computers in the subject English can help students learn English?
10. If you were to use computers, when would you encourage students to use computers?
11. If you were to use computers, when would you discourage computer use? Could you explain why?

12. How do the different English courses (English 1-6 in Kindergarten-9, 5-7 in upper secondary school) affect how computers are used in those specific courses? Do you feel that there are some courses that are more suited for using computers than others? Why? In what way?

13. What kinds of material do you like to use from the internet? What are the reasons behind your preferences?

14. In your opinion, what examples are there of good/bad material on the internet?

15. Do you use YouTube for your lessons? If yes, how? If no, why not?

16. Would you say that the way writing tasks are carried out in your classes is in any way influenced by word processing programs? If yes, how? If no, why not?

17. Would you say that the students’ writing skills have in any way changed after the introduction of word processing programs? If yes, how?

18. Would you say that the introduction of computers have changed your way of teaching or could change your way of teaching? If yes, how? If no, why not?

19. Would you say that being able to use computers in the classroom makes it easier for you to teach English? If yes, how? If no, why not?