

*Non-Native English Written by Swedes in the 17th and 18th Centuries*

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This paper outlines a new project which focuses on non-native English written by Swedes in the 17th and 18th centuries. The project aims to catalogue, transcribe, and analyze these texts. There is relatively little knowledge of the English language produced by non-native language users from a historical perspective. In particular, the texts provide evidence of the use of English in Sweden at a time in history when no formal instruction existed, and no dictionaries or grammars of the English language were available.

Currently, the English produced by the nobleman Edvard Gyldenstolpe (1679-1709), Count Christer Bonde (1621-1659), and the physician Henric Gahn (1747–1816) is being transcribed. Gyldenstolpe wrote a travelogue in English in 1698, and Gahn wrote a travelogue in English during a tour of England, Wales, and Scotland in 1772. Christer Bonde was Sweden's ambassador to England in 1653-1654. In addition, a young Swedish student, Johan Schult, wrote letters in English to members of the Royal Society in 1703.

In Gyldenstolpe's English writings, it is possible to see language patterns that appear to have a spoken basis. For example, the predominant spelling of the third person plural pronoun *they* as *the* suggests that Gyldenstolpe based his spelling on spoken input, as in (1).

- (1) *The* tells that Julius Ca'sar has been the forst who builded this Tower. When strangers kome to se{e} this place, <the> *the* must leave their sword at the dor, but *the* didn't ask for our sword because our la{n}dlord was along with us, who hat that priviledge to ware his sword...

Furthermore, Gyldenstolpe's text also shows evidence of language features of the period, such as the use of *be* with intransitives, the progressive form, and the subjunctive in subordinate clauses.

The paper argues that the text in (1) exemplifies one type of learner language based on very little, if any, formal instruction. Finally, it is important to identify the various purposes of these texts at a time when the English language still played a very minor role in the international arena.