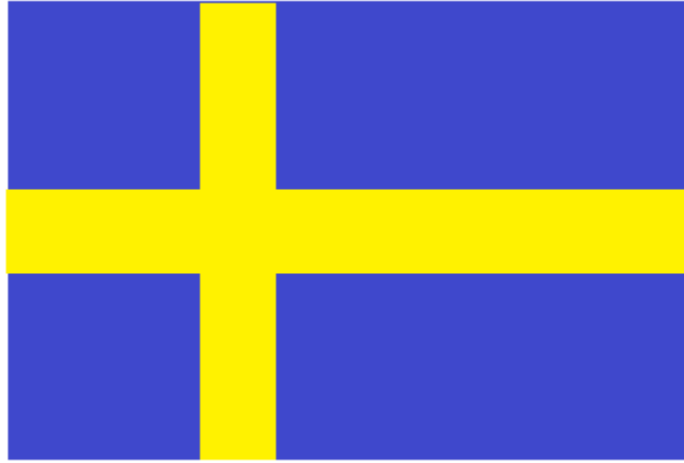


Crazy Swedish



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The Swedish language is full of illogical things that have made it harder for me to master it. Especially when I was little, but even in the present day and especially at times when I have to write something without using a word processor. This paper describes the oddities that I have or have had the most difficult to master.

Translated from Swedish to English by Google translator and Gunnar Björing.

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Index

Basic rules.....	4
The letters and the spelling.....	4
How we read.....	4
Clauses and sentences.....	4
Capital letters and paragraphs.....	4
The key words are nouns.....	5
Events are described with verbs.....	5
How nouns are.....	7
Figures.....	7
The most confusing exceptions.....	8
Ch sounds the same as stj.....	8
Short vowels are not always followed by a double consonant.....	9
Sometimes it is not en but ett.....	11
More is not always –ar.....	12
Var means the same as är but in the past.....	13
-ast is not always more extreme than -are.....	14
Twenty should be called tvåtio.....	17
If Swedish was consistent.....	18

Basic rules

They are really just few rules one need to know, to be able to master most of the Swedish language.

The letters and the spelling

The language consists of a number of sounds which, when joined in different ways, forms the words that constitute the language. Each sound has its own symbol (which are called letters) and each letter always corresponds to the same sound¹.

The letters most frequently used are:

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, u, v, x, y, å, ä, ö.

Besides these, there are some unusual letters, like: **q, w, z, é** and **à**.

When reading or talking the words are spelled through, letters by letter.

1. Besides regarding the letters: **a, e, i, o, u, y, å, ä, and ö** (called vowels). They can be pronounced both fast and slow, depending on the words involved. Where they should be pronounced quickly they are called short vowels otherwise long vowels. To emphasize that a vowel should be pronounced quickly it is followed by two of the same or any of the other letters (called consonants).
- 2.

How we read

We read written text from left to right. The words are delimited by that there are gaps between them.

Clauses and sentences

A clause is the words we want to say in a row without a break, in order to facilitate the listeners understanding. clauses usually begins with the phenomenon/person that is to be described/discussed, for example: **jag** (I), **han** (he), **bilen** (the car).

It then describes what happens:

jag **slår** (I beat)
han **tänker** (he thinks)
bilen **rullar** (the car rolls)

Then follows any addendum about the phenomenon that is what is happening and/or relative conditions:

jag slår Per **hårt** (I beat Per hard)
han tänker **långsamt** (he thinks slowly)
bilen rullar **fort** (the car rolls fast)

If there are several statements that need to be said at the same time for the listener to understand, we take first a little break and then we continue with the next clause and perhaps further next. These different clauses are separated by the sign: “,” sometimes in combination with words such as: **och** (and), **or** (eller). As we have said all the clauses we want to say, we take a little longer pause before we continue. All of the statements that we say before a longer break together form a sentence, such as:

jag slår Per hårt, för han tänker långsamt, och bilen rullar fort

Capital letters and paragraphs

Sentences begin with a capital letter² and ends with a dot³.

- ² A capital letters is a variant of the standard character. The capital letters looks like this:
A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, (Q), R, S, T, U, V, (W), X, Y, (Z), Å, Ä, Ö, (È), (Á).
- ³ Instead of dot, we can use the sign: “!” Which indicates that the sentence should be read as an exclamation or a solicitation. Or: “?” Which indicates that the sentence should be read as a question.

The key words are nouns

The most important words in the language are the words for the things you need, such as food, water and toilet. These and all other words for things are called nouns. There are also a whole host of other nouns that are not things, such as animals and emotions. Most of the words in our language are actually nouns.

One can recognize nouns in that they can be combined with **en** or **en massa**: **en bil** (a car), **en kärlek** (a love), **en massa silver** (a lot of silver), **en massa glädje** (a lot of joy).

If there is more than one unit of a given noun the suffix **-ar** is added.



When we talk about a certain⁴ noun instead of any of that kind, we remove the word **en** before and add **-en** at the end of the noun. Instead of saying the word for this particular noun, we can even say **den**. Moreover, we can be really determined by doing both things at the same time and perhaps point on the thing referred to.

Indeterminate	something decidedly	more firmly	even more firmly
bil	en bil	bilen	den bilen
kärlek	en kärlek	kärleken	den kärleken

- ⁴ If the current noun is so determined that have a unique name, such as a specific person of the male sex, we can adress him with the word **han** (him), or by using the person's name. But then the rule above does not apply. That is to say, we never say **den** about "Kenneth". Nor do we say "Kenneth-**en**".

In written texts we highlight that this is a specific name on a specific person by spelling the name with a capital letter in the beginning. This also applies when we relate to objects with a "personal" name (which is not so common to do except for the geographical locations, cuddly toys and cars).

When we talk about more specific nouns we add an additional suffix: **-na** (bilar-**na**).

If a noun owns something, we describe it either by adding one word that tells that this is the case Anna **har** en cykel (Anna has a bicycle), or by adding **-s** after the noun that owns: Anna-**s** cykel (Annas bicycle), bilar-**s** reservdelar (cars spareparts), bilarna-**s** brister (cars shortcomings).

Events are described with verbs

When a noun is doing something, it is described with words that are called verbs. **Cykla** (cycle), **simma** (swim), and **älska** (love) are examples of verbs.

If we do that at the very moment we add **-r** at the end of the verb, as:

jag cykla-**r**
vi simma-**r**
katten bada-**r**
någon älska-**r**

If we will do it in the future, we'll add words before the verb:

han **ska** cykla
Peter **tänker** simma
vi **kommer att** bada
Anna **planerar att** älska

If it is already done, we describe it by adding **-de**:

Anna cykla-**de**
Pelle simma-**de**
ni bada-**de**

We can also describe that we have already done something in a more vague way, by adding a word before the verb and add **-t** to it:

Olle **har** cykla-**t**
Kalle **hade** simma-**t**
vi **hade** bada-**t**
andra **har** älska-**t**

If the action is performed by someone or something other than the subject of the action we add instead **-s** to the current verb:

cykeln cykla-**s** av Kalle
bilen ratta-**s** av Ulla

We may also, in certain situations add **-nde**, to the verb, in order to express things like:

en skriva-**nde** herre
en fungera-**nde** bil

How nouns are

All words that describe nouns are called adjectives. **Röd** (red), **snabb** (fast) and **stark** (strong) can⁵ be adjectives.

When we describe how a noun is in relation to other nouns we add suffixes: **-are** or **-ast** to the adjective:

min bil är röd = my car is red

min bil är röd**-are** (än din)= my car is more red (than yours)

min bil är röd**-ast** (av alla bilar) = my car is the most red (of all cars)

Sometimes we also add **-e** after **-ast** to describe such things as:

min bil är den röd**aste** du kan tänka dig

Some adjectives, unlike röd, has an opposite. These opposites are formed by that **o-** is added before the word:

adjective	opposite adjective
-----------	--------------------

lika	o -lika = unlike
------	-------------------------

rak	o -rak = unstraight
-----	----------------------------

vänlig	o -vänlig= unfriendly
--------	------------------------------

- ⁵ But they are adverbs when they describe a verb, an adjective or another adverb. For example, **snabb** is adjective in the sentence: en **snabb** bil, but it is an adverb in this sentence: hon springer snabbt. Adverbs are formed as in the example before by adding **-t** to the current adjective.

Figures

All specific number are described with figures. Figures may well be expressed in words and also with symbols called digits. These figures can then be combined to all different numbers.

We only have figures for the first ten integers⁶ in our language, they are written: **0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9**. Other figures are formed by combining these figures in different ways.

Number between nine and one hundred are formed through that the number ten is added after the current figure (perhaps an implied multiplication): *fyrtio*, *femtio*.

Larger numbers are formed through that the word for the current ten potens⁷ is added to the figure:

ett + hundra = etthundra = one + hundred = one hundred

två + hundra + tusen = tvåhundratusen = two + hundred + thousand = two hundred thousand

en + miljon + två + hundra + tio + tusen + två + hundra + fyrtiotre = enmiljontvåhundratusentvåhundrafyrtiotre.

- ⁶ Numbers are either integer or decimal. Integer is used to count objects, such as the number of people in the queue at the kiosk. But all objects is not whole. For example, you can have a half bar of chocolate. Numbers as a half or four and a half, are decimal. Decimals are described through putting a comma after the lowest integer digit, and after it we put the decimal digits, for example: 3,14.

⁷ *10 = tio*.

100 = hundra.

1000 = tusen.

Are examples of ten potenses.

The most confusing exceptions

Ch sounds the same as stj

Some sounds have, for some strange reason, been interpreted to different letters in different words. This applies on, for example:

E-sound, which mostly is spelled with **e** but sometimes with **é** (as in **entré**).

J-sound, which can be spelled with: **j** (**jul**), **dj** (**djur**), **gj** (**gjuta**), **hj** (**hjul**), and with **lj** (**ljus**). Despite that it would have been possible to spell all the words with just **j**: **jul**, **jur**, **jul**, **jus**.

K-sound that oddly enough sometimes is written: **k** (**kappa**), **c** (**camping**), **ch** (**och**), **ck** (**lack**) and **q** (**quenell**). Instead of with **k** all the way: **kappa**, **kamping**, **okk**, **lakk**, **kenell**.

S-sound that can be written **s** (**söka**), **c** (**cykel**), **sc** (**scen**) och **z** (**zenit**).

A sound that can be spelled with **ch** (**chef**), **g** (**geni**), **j** (**jalusi**), **sch** (**schack**), **sh** (**sherry**), **sj** (**sjö**), **sk** (**skena**), **skj** (**skjul**) and **stj** (**ärna**).

Another sound that can be written with **tj** (**tjuta**), **k** (**känna**), **kj** (**kjol**) and **ch** (**chili**).

Å-sound that besides with **å** can be written with **o** as in **offer**.

R-sound that mostly is written with just **r** (**rullar**) but in some cases it is instead **rl** (**karlar**).

V-sound which in rare occasions is written with **w** (**bowling**) or with **u** (**quartzur**).

This means among other things that certain similar spelled words can be pronounced in several ways and then mean different things:

loge (barn, is pronounced as it is written) and **loge** (dressing rooms in theaters, pronounced: **lås**ch)

Polen (the country, pronounced **På**len) and **polen** (for example a battery pole, is pronounced as it is written).

Short vowels are not always followed by a double consonant

In some cases, the vowel is followed by only one consonant, even if it is short:

Right should be right

Kam	kamm
Bom	bomm
Men	menn
In	inn
Kan	kann

The common factor for these words is that the short vowel is followed by **-m** or **-n**. Though to make it extra confusing, there are also words with short vowel followed by **-mm** or **-nn**, such as: **damm** and **lamm**, or **hann** and **vann**.

If the short vowel is followed by **-m** or **-n**, which in turn is followed by a vowel it will sometimes be **-mm** or **-nn**: hammare, rummet, funnen och henne.

In other cases, it will not be so:

Right should be right

planering	plannering
laminat	lamminat
Honom	honnom

In cases where the short vowel followed by **-nn**, which in turn is followed by a consonant it will sometimes be two **-nn**:

finns, gynnsam och minns.

And sometimes not: hantel, infall och hangar.

This strange things also applies to other consonants: mist, talk, trots and halt.
Compared to: knussla, knollra, kuttra, pillra.

In other words, a long vowel is followed by two or more consonants: helt, lekstuga och slöjd.

Furthermore, there are even cases where a long vowel is followed by two equal consonants, like:

Right should be right

kollega	kolega
kommun	komun

The letter k is very special because we never write two k: after each other no matter how short vowel is except in a few words: kökkenmödding och hakkors.

When it should be two k we instead usually writes **ck**:

Right should be right

vacker	vakker
spackel	spakkel
mack	makk

If there happens to be a short vowel sound followed by something that should be spelled: ks. We usually writes: x, and sometimes cc:

right	ought to be right,	or even better,	or at least
sax	saks	sakks	sacks
lax	laks	lakks	lacks
successiv	suksessiv	sukksessiv	sucksessiv

But for that "rule" you can also find exceptions such as: bensinmacks.

And when a word that ends in two equal consonants is merged with another word that begins with the same consonant, we, completely illogical, remove one of these:

Basic words	right	ought to be right
kall + lager	kallager	kalllager
metall + legering	metallegering	metalllegering

Sometimes it is not en but ett

About a quarter of all nouns we do not mix with the **en** word ...

Instead we have decided that it shall be **ett** ... And if we points out an **ett** word we say **det** instead of **den**.

It's called **en bil** but **ett äpple** and when the **äpple** is pointed out we say: **äpplet**, rather than the logical **en äpplen** and **den äppleen**.

If you talk about a man we say, as previously mentioned, **han** instead of **den**. And if it is a woman or a group, we say **hon** and **de**. These, and other similar words, are extremely irregular:

base	pointing out	owning	retrospective
han	honom	hans	sig
hon	henne	hennes	sig
den	den	dess	sig
de, dom	dem, dom	deras	sig

Though it ought to be:

han	hanen	hans	sig
hon	honen	hons	sig
den	denen	dens	sig
de	deen	des	sig

There are more words like that such as:

Base	pointing out	owning	retrospective
jag	mig, mej	min, mitt	mig
du	dig, dej	din, ditt	dig
man	en	ens	sig
det	det	dess	sig
vi	oss	vårt	oss
ni	er	era	er

Though it ought to be:

jag	jagen	jags	sig
du	duen	dus	sig
man	manen	mans	sig
den	denen	dens	sig
vi	vien	vis	sig
ni	nien	nis	sig

More is not always –ar

All plurals are not described with the endings: –ar or –arna (bil, bilar, bilarna). There are exceptions where only one or two letters differ from the rule as:

one	more	pointed out
cykel	cyklar	cyklarna
kvinna	kvinnor	kvinnorna
sko	skor	skorna
ärende	ärenden	ärendena
bank	banker	bankerna
mus	möss	mössen

Though it ought to be:

cykel	cykelar	cykelarna
kvinna	kvinnar	kvinnorna
sko	skoar	skoarna
ärende	ärendear	ärendearna
bank	bankar	bankarna
mus	musar	musarna

Other words violate these simple rules in a much rougher way:

one	more	pointed out
ess	ess	essen
land	länder	länderna
hus	hus	husen
år	år	åren
datum	datum	datumen

When it ought to be:

ess	essar	essarna
land	landar	landarna
hus	husar	husarna
år	årar	årarna
datum	datumar	datumarna

Or worse words that are not even based on singular form such as: **ris** (rice). A piece of this instead named **ett riskorn** instead of as logically should be:

one	more	pointed out
ris	risar	risarna

Var means the same as **är** but in the past

Some verbs do not follow the rules. Instead of doing something about this, we have chosen to continue to use them, and contented ourselves with calling them "irregular verbs". The most common of these crazy things is that the word changes very much between the various forms:

past	then, diffuse	now	future
var	har varit	är	(kommer att) vara

Instead of for example:

varade	har varat	varar	(kommer att) vara
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There are a lot more strange verbs like:

right				Ought to be right			
past	now	future (ska +)		past	now	future (ska +)	
brann	brinner	brinna		brinnade	brinnar	brinna	
satt	sitter	sitta		sittade	sittar	sitta	
sprack	spricker	spricka		sprickade	sprickar	spricka	
bet	biter	bita		bitade	bitar	bita	
teg	tiger	tiga		tigade	tigar	tiga	
fick	får	få		fåade	får	få	
bjudit	bjuder	bjuda		bjudade	bjudar	bjuda	
blev	blir	bli		blide	blir	bli	
kom	kommer	komma		kommade	kommar	komma	
mindes	minns	minnas		minnasde	minnasr	minnas	
trivdes	trivs	trivas		trivasde	trivasr	trivas	
gjorde	gör	göra		görade	görar	göra	
tog	tar	ta		tade	tar	ta	
sa, sade	säger	säga		sägade	sägar	säga	
visste	vet	veta		vetade	vetar	veta	
lät	låter	låta		låtade	låtar	låta	
kände	känner	känna		kännade	känner	känna	
höll	håller	hålla		hållade	hållar	hålla	
hette	heter	heta		hetade	hetar	heta	
bar	bär	bära		bärade	bärar	bära	
drog	drar	dra		drade	drar	dra	
låg	ligger	ligga		liggade	liggar	ligga	
la, lade	lägger	lägga		läggade	läggar	lägga	
satte	sätter	sätta		sättade	sättar	sätta	
slog	slår	slå		slåde	slår	slå	
föll	faller	falla		fallade	fallar	falla	
ät	äter	äta		ätade	ätar	äta	
stal	stjäl	stjåla		stjålade	stjålar	stjåla	
grät	gråter	gråta		gråtade	gråtar	gråta	
sålde	säljer	sälja		såljade	säljar	sälja	
vande	vänjer	vänja		vänjade	vänjar	vänja	
skilde	skiljer	skilja		skiljade	skiljar	skilja	

The rule of adding a **-t** after the verb when we vaguer terms wants to describe that something has been done has, of course, also a number of exceptions, such as:

base	right	ought to be right
känna	(har) känt	(har) kännat
binda	(har) bundit	(har) bindat
tiga	(har) tigit	(har) tigat
finnas	(har) funnits	(har) finnast
har	(har) haft	(har) hart

-ast is not always more extreme than -are

Many relative conditions described with **-are** and **-ast** (eg röd, rödare, rödast), but not all. There are exceptions where only a few letters different from the rule as:

stor	större	störst = big bigger biggest
------	--------	-----------------------------

When it ought to be:

stor	storare	storast
------	---------	---------

And far worse examples, where few letters are preserved through all three forms:

bra	bättre	bäst = good better best
-----	--------	-------------------------

When it ought to be:

bra	braare	braast
-----	--------	--------

Or even worse on the opposite to large:

liten	mindre	minst = small smaller the smallest
-------	--------	------------------------------------

Instead of:

liten	litenare	litenast
-------	----------	----------

And perhaps worst of it is that certain words not even have all forms, for example:

få	färre	? = few fewer
----	-------	---------------

Instead of:

få	fåare	fåast
----	-------	-------

A few descriptive words, just even have one level:

höger	?	? = right (direction)
-------	---	-----------------------

Where it could be:

höger	högerare	högerast
-------	----------	----------

Then for some reason you use **mer** (more) or **mest** (most):

höger mer åt höger mest åt höger

If the noun, the adjective describing, is a **ett**-word for some reason **-t** is added after the adjective:

en– word	ett– word
en vacker anka	ett vackert träd
en vacker bil	ett vackert fordon
en söt raket	ett sött maskingevär

But this exception does not apply if the adjective already ends with **-t**:

en– word	ett– word
en elegant anka	ett elegant träd

If the adjective ends with **-n** with an **en**-word, they will end with **-t** or **-nt** with an **ett**-word. If they, however, end with **-d**, the **d** is changed to a **-t**, and if it ended with **-dd** it becomes **-tt**:

en–word	ett–word
En naken anka	ett naket hus
en klen bil	ett klent hus
en sprängd anka	ett sprängt hus
en ond bil	ett ont fordon
en klädd anka	ett klätt hus
en glad anka	ett glatt träd

In the last example, we add an extra-t without the-dd, to further fuss.

But there is no difference between **en** or **ett**-words if they're even more beautiful, or the most beautiful:

en– word	ett– word
en vackrare anka	ett vackrare träd
den vackraste bil	det vackraste fordon

Or in sentences where **en** or **ett** aren't present:

en–word	ett–word
vackra anka	vackra träd
vackra bil	vackra fordon

If several nouns referred to in a clause, it is, according to the rule, marked with the suffix **-ar** on the noun. But in addition, we for some reason add **-a** to the adjective if it is in the basic form:

right	ought to be right
röda bilar	röd bilar
sköna skor	skön skor
gulliga barn	gullig barn

In this context, the adjective **liten** is extra strange because we believe that it is not even possible to say:

bilarna är för litena, because it should be: bilarna är för små.

In some cases, also the adjectives changes in several ways when there are several nouns that are referred to:

one	several
en skriven regel	tre skrivna regler
en gammal gubbe	två gamla gubbar

In addition, we sometimes also make a difference between whether it is a man or woman that is referred to:

Woman	man
min kära Anna	min käre Olle
den driftiga kvinnan	den driftige mannen

But it is:

Woman	man
min älskade Anna	min älskade Olle

Not:

min älskada Anna

Further, there is a lot of exceptions to the rule that the opposite adjective is formed by adding **o-**:

excist	not excist	excist	contrary to the contrary
tråkig	otråkig ⁸	kul	okul ⁸
ful	oful ⁸	snygg	osnygg ⁹
dum	odum ⁸	intelligent	ointelligent

⁸. The word does not excist.

⁹. The word excist but means something else.

And there are words ending with **-are** which are not adjectives. For example, tillbringare is a noun and not a form of tillbring, thus one can't say:

tillbring	tillbringare	tillbringast
ång	ångare	ångast

Finally, we also have words that end with **-ast** without being adjectives: fantast and pederast. Thus someone who is a pederast is not necessarily more extreme peder than others.

Twenty should be called tvåtio

Numerals up to one hundred would according to the basic rule be:

Noll, ett, två, tre, fyra, fem, sex, sju, åtta, nio, tio,
tioett, tiotvå, tiotre, tiofyra, tiofem, tiosex, tiosju, tioåtta, tionio,
tvåtio, tvåtioett, tvåtiotvå, tvåtiotre, tvåtiofyra, tvåtiofem, tvåtiosex, tvåtiosju, tvåtioåtta, tvåtionio,
tretio, tretioett, tretiofyra, tretiofem, tretiosex, tretiosju, tretioåtta, tretionio,
fyrtio, fyrtioett, fyrtiotvå, fyrtiotre, fyrtiofyra, fyrtiofem, fyrtiosex, fyrtiosju, fyrtioåtta, fyrtionio,
femtio, femtiott, femtiotvå, femtiotre, femtiofyra, femtiofem, femtiosex, femtiosju, femtioåtta, femtionio,
sextio, sextioett, sextiotvå, sextiotre, sextiofyra, sextiofem, sextiosex, sextiosju, sextioåtta, sextionio,
sjutio, sjutioett, sjutiottvå, sjutiottre, sjutiofyra, sjutiofem, sjutiosex, sjutiosju, sjutioåtta, sjutionio,
åttatio, åttatioett, åttatiottvå, åttatiottre, åttatiofyra, åttatiofem, åttatiosex, åttatiosju, åttatioåtta, åttationio,
niotio, niotioett, niotiottvå, niotiottre, niotiofyra, niotiofem, niotiosex, niotiosju, niotioåtta, niotionio.

But they doesn't.

If Swedish was consistent

If all the crazy things described above were eliminated and we kept to the basic rules, written Swedish would look as follows (in *italics*) instead of the current way of writing (plain text).

Somm andra barnar sprinngade jag mykktare änn vad vuxenar görade.
Som andra barn sprang jag mycket mer än vad vuxna gjorde.

Eftersom avståndar varade korrtare i jags värld okk jag tykkede denn kännades uppfrisskandeare att sprinnga änn att gå.
Eftersom avstånden var kortare i min värld och jag tyckte det kändes mer uppfriskande att springa än att gå.

Jag slitade ut alla löparskoar på litenare änn enn år.
Jag slet ut alla löparskor på mindre än ett år.

Jag fårade ny löparskoar för enn par år sedan, de varar deen storaste jag har hart.
Jag fick nya löparskor för ett par år sedan, de är dom största jag har haft.

Menn denn hänndar sällann att jag annvänder deen.
Men det händer sällan att jag använder dom.

Fasst nu sprinngar jag okk varar på väg till jags sysster.
Fast springer jag och är på väg till min syster.

Honns hus ligger någon killometer från jags.
Hennes hus ligger någon kilometer från mitt.

Vi ska drikka kaffe okk äta tårta. Denn ska bli godat.
Vi ska dricka kaffe och äta tårta. Det ska bli gott.

Which is pretty far from the Swedish language of today.