

SI LOS NÚMEROS CANTARAN...

Melodifestivalen 2021: Melodi Nummer Sju

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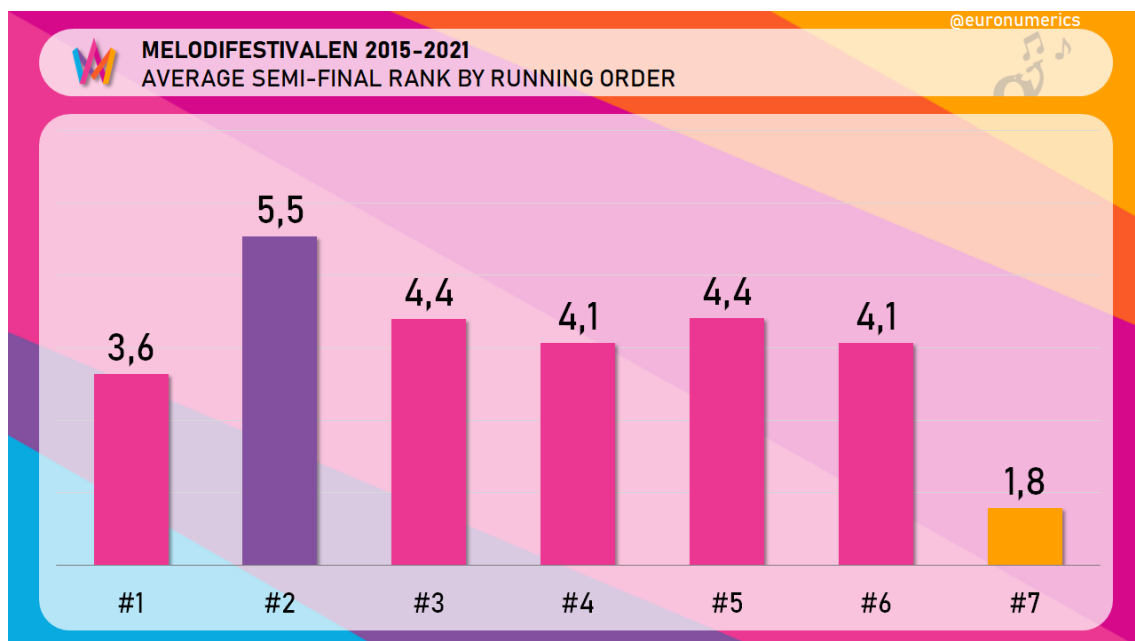
For Eurovision, there are televisions that make improvised national finals at the moment and others in which every detail is taken care of. As we will see in this article, the Melodifestivalen leaves nothing to chance. The order of performance, so fashionable lately, and the language of the songs speak, and a lot, of the options of each participant.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RUNNING ORDER

As we have already shown in this blog, the running order influences the performance of the participants in the Eurovision final. As of 2013, this order was no longer mostly random to make it more attractive. This allows the organizers to put the songs on as a convenience, for example, by reserving the performances that create the most excitement for last.

Melodifestivalen is Sweden's preselection for Eurovision. In recent years it consists of 4 semi-finals of 7 participants each. The two most voted go straight to the final and the next two go to the second chance, Andra Chansen. Since 2018, a voting system by age groups has been used.

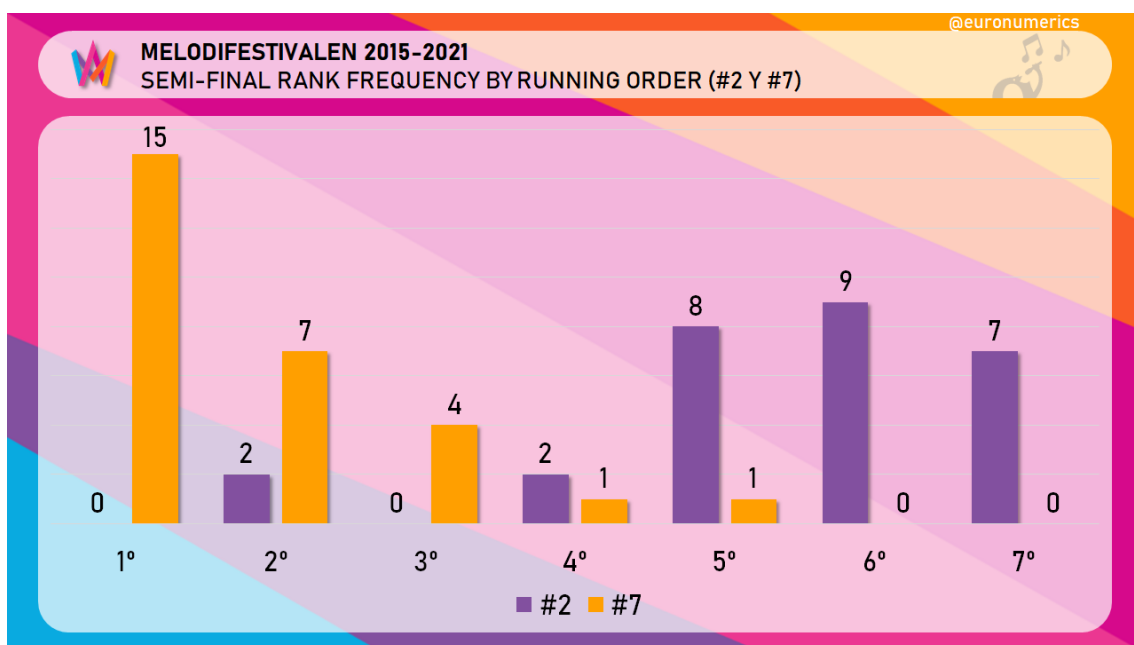
In our case, the order of performance in the Melodifestivalen is also decided by the organizers. If we look at the history (as of 2015, with 7 participants per semi-final), one number stands out: **the average position of those who act seventh, the last place, is a scandalous 1.8**. Only once did the song that performed seventh not even make it to Andra Chansen: Margaret with *Tempo* (2nd semi-final of 2019). And only once again a seventh in the order finished 4th and went to Andra Chansen: Felix Sandman with *Boys with emotions* (1st semifinal of 2020).



On the other hand, **the worst position to start from is second, with an average of 5.5.** In Eurovision happens the same, the second place is, in absolute terms, the worst position to act. In these years, only 4 songs out of 28 managed not to be eliminated: John Lundvik with *My turn* (1st semifinal of 2018) and Malou Prytz with *I do me* (2nd semifinal of 2019) were classified as second and direct to the final, while Dolly Style with *Rollercoaster* (4th semi-final of 2016) and Lillasyster with *Pretender* (1st semi-final of 2021) had their second chance by qualifying fourth.

Crossing both data, of the 28 semi-finals analyzed, only in the 2nd semi-final of 2019 the second to act was ahead of the last to do so. This devastating data, at the very least, should undermine the morale of those who act second.

In the following graph you can see the accumulated history of positions depending on whether they acted second (purple) or seventh (orange). It is clearly seen that those who act seventh mostly qualify directly for the final (1st and 2nd positions) while those who act second accumulate in the elimination positions (from 5th to 7th).



The second best position to act, in absolute terms, is the first. It is a strategic position that the organizers should reserve for good performances that hook the viewer and make them watch the program. Therefore, they have an average of 3.6. Here we have had a bit of everything in terms of results. In this position it is statistically worse than singing seventh and better than singing second. However, it is not statistically better or worse than performing between third and sixth.

In this other category, from third to sixth place in the order, the averages revolve around 4, which is the average theoretical position. With respect to them, it is always better than being the second in statistical terms, although with the third this statement loses force.

In short, we can make **3 groups according to the order in which they act:** a first group with the seventh, which is synonymous of *Finalen*, another group with the second, who will be eliminated; and another group with everyone else, who are a lottery. In other words, the

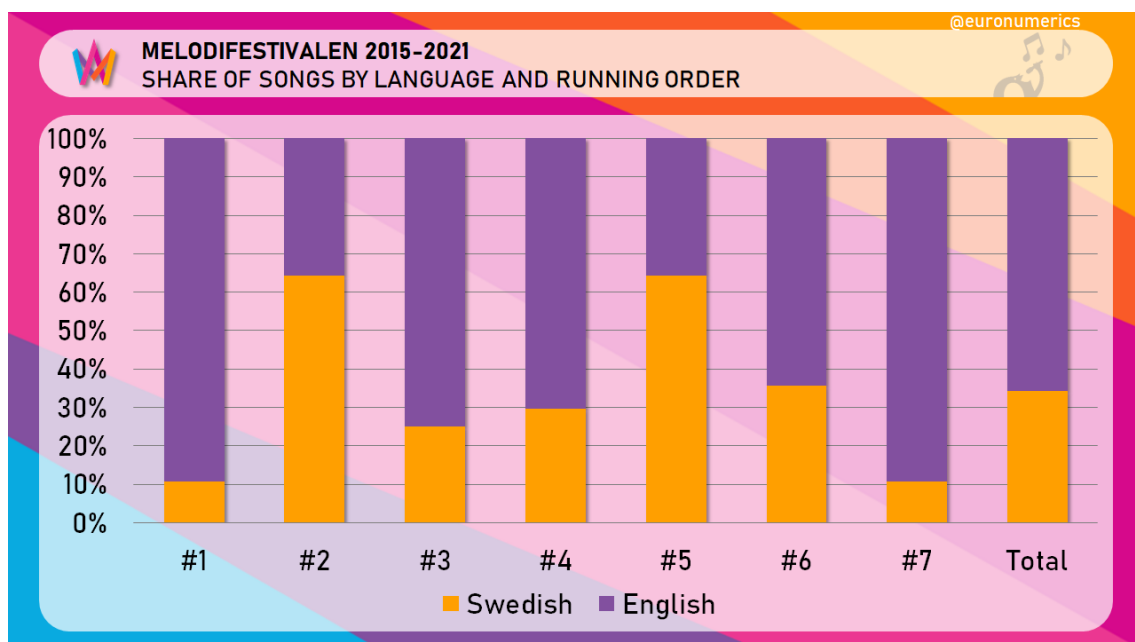
Melodifestivalen semifinals have 2/7 safety and 5/7 excitement. At the very least, excitement wins.

THE SWEDISH, THAT GREAT UNPRESTIGATED

Sweden has not sung in Swedish in Eurovision for many years, since 1998, specifically. And it seems that it will continue to be that way for a long time. The songs performed in English finish in the semifinals at an average position of 3.44 while the average for those in Swedish is 5.05. They are not equally represented either and **the national language appears in approximately one out of every 3 songs.**

Although they are underrepresented, if we wanted them to have the same opportunities as the English songs, they would be randomly distributed in the order of performance. Therefore, **are the two languages equally distributed in the order of performance?** Well the answer is no and a resounding no.

Ideally, for each position it would also be true that 1 in 3 songs is written in Swedish. However, in positions like the second or seventh, precisely the ones we have seen the most influential, this is far from being fulfilled. In the following graphic you can see the distribution of the songs by language according to the acting position.



Of the songs that have performed in second place, two thirds have been in Swedish, that is to say, twice the normal number. Absolutely none of them (18 in total) even reached Andra Chansen. As we saw before, the two songs that reached the final starting from this position were in English, *My turn* and *I do me*.

If we look at the last ones in the order, of the 28 songs only 3 have no English lyrics. Two of them were performed by the same singer: Jon Henrik Fjällgren in 2015 and 2019 (3rd semi-final in both cases). Like Danny Saucedo with *Dandi Dansa* (1st semi-final of 2021), these songs qualified

first for the final. We can interpret from this that, although singing in Swedish may be weighed down, if you do it last, you will be successful.

In contrast, only 1 of the 10 songs that performed sixth and in Swedish went straight to the final: Magnus Carlsson with *Möt mig i Gamla stan* (2nd semi-final of 2015). Not even Clara Klingenström (4th semifinal of 2021), with a good result in the final, could do it this year.

Among those who acted first there is also a great imbalance. **Only three semifinals of the last 28 have been opened in Swedish** and in all three cases they were minimal Andra: Samir & Viktor twice in 2016 and 2018 and ... Jon Henrik Fjällgren, once again, in the fourth semifinal of 2017 together to Aninia.

In summary, it is shown that the order of performance in the Melodifestivalen is well studied. However, as it is not a random order, we cannot determine how much of a song's success or failure is due to the song itself or the order in which it performs. Only with a purely random order could the effect of order and language be identified.

Conclusions:

- The order of performance and the language of the songs is well studied in the Melodifestivalen.
- In the semifinals, the seventh order is synonymous with success, while the second is synonymous with failure.
- The songs in Swedish are few and they are placed in positions with few possibilities.

EXTRA: NEW VERSION EUROLABTOP 1.1

Following your requests, from the blog we have launched a small improvement of Eurolabtop. Remember that with this spreadsheet you can save your Eurovision tops and draw interesting conclusions from them.

In this version 1.1 we have added 5 years to fill in, from **2012 to 2015**, in addition to the last 6 years already available (2016 to 2021). On the other hand, in the comparison section, **we have expanded the number of countries that you can view to 3**. The graph will now show the path of the selected countries in the last 10 years.

If you already completed your tops in version 1.0, remember that you can copy them and move them to version 1.1.

Here you can download the new version EUROLABTOP 1.1 (see website).