



Linnæus University

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Degree project

Language choices in the EFL classroom

A mixed-methods study at Swedish lower-secondary schools



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Abstract

Globalization has led to English being the leading language of communication providing opportunities for pupils to develop their English proficiency in different contexts. In this study, teachers' language choices in the EFL classroom are being observed and the reasons behind them are being discussed during the following interviews. The study aims to increase our understanding of what role the English language as the primary teaching language should have in the EFL classroom at Swedish lower secondary schools to benefit pupils' language learning in the best way possible. Four teachers, that are teaching at two different lower-secondary schools in southern Sweden participated in the study. In total four classroom observations were conducted followed by four semi-structured teacher interviews. The results found during observations and interviews were then connected to the theories of Language Mode, Translanguaging and Codeswitching. The results of the observations showed a slight difference in the use of English and Swedish during teaching. This study concludes that there is a slight variation in what role the English language has in the four observed classrooms. However, the contexts in which it was used were all coherent. Furthermore, the use of Swedish also showed a slight variation but was explained to be used as a tool for explaining, clarifying and ensuring understanding. Finally, the use of translanguaging practices was believed to have a positive effect on pupils' learning outcomes although a slight difference was shown here as well.

Key words:

Classroom observations, Codeswitching, EFL, English as a foreign language, interviews, Language Mode, lower-secondary schools, Swedish EFL pupils, Translanguaging

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Table of contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	<i>Aim and Research questions</i>	2
2	Theoretical Background	2
2.1	<i>Previous Research</i>	2
2.1.1	Language use in the EFL classroom	2
2.1.2	Target language use	3
2.1.3	Use of Swedish in the EFL classroom	4
2.2	<i>Language Theories</i>	4
2.2.1	Language Mode Theory	5
2.2.2	Translanguaging Theory	5
3	Method and Data	8
3.1	<i>Method</i>	8
3.1.1	Classroom observations	8
3.1.2	Teacher interviews	10
3.1.3	Ethical considerations	11
3.1.4	Validity and Reliability	12
3.1.5	Data analysis	12
4	Results	15
4.1	<i>Classroom observations</i>	15
4.1.1	Target language use	15
4.1.2	Use of Swedish	17
4.1.3	The mixture of Swedish and English	19
4.2	<i>Teacher interviews</i>	23
5	Discussion	26
5.1	<i>Discussion of Results</i>	26
5.2	<i>Pedagogical Implications</i>	29
6	Conclusion	29
7	List of References	31

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Observation Scheme

Appendix 2 – Information letter

Appendix 3 – Interview questions

Appendix 4 – Filled in Observation schemes

Appendix 5 – Coding System



1 Introduction

When looking at teaching approaches like Communicative Language Teaching, there is a belief that the EFL classroom should be exclusively English-medium in order to benefit the pupils' learning of English (Källkvist, Gyllstad, Sandlund & Sundqvist, 2017). In Sweden, the English classrooms are multilingual since all pupils speak at least one other language. Furthermore, due to globalization, English is the leading language of communication as well as being the primary language of the Internet. This provides opportunities for pupils to learn and develop their English proficiency in both formal and informal contexts (Education First, 2018). This change in access to the English language should also mean that a change has taken place in the EFL classroom as well when it comes to the use of English as the language of teaching.

Should teaching in the EFL classroom consist only of English, only Swedish, or perhaps a mix of both languages? There might be different opinions about the target language use in the EFL classroom, but both pupils and teachers seem to agree that practicing the target language communication in the EFL classroom is important (The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2001:7, p.23). However, a study conducted by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate showed that 80% of the inspected schools did not give the pupils adequate training in target language communication (The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2011:7, p.23).

According to the English year 7-9 syllabus (Lgr11), teaching should give pupils the prerequisites to develop their understanding of English both orally and in writing. It should also develop pupils' ability to formulate and communicate in speech and writing in English. The purpose of teaching is for instance to develop pupils' understanding of the language as well as their communicative skills. Communicative ability includes for example linguistic mastery and the ability to use strategies to facilitate communication when language barriers arise (Lgr11). When it comes to the use of the target language during the lesson there are however no distinct guidelines in the syllabus for English in years 7-9. Therefore, it is important to increase language teachers' understanding of the role of target language use in the EFL classroom in



order for them to make the language choices that are most beneficial for the pupils' learning.

1.1 Aim and Research questions

The present study aims to increase our understanding of what role the English language as the primary teaching language should have in the EFL classroom at Swedish lower secondary schools to benefit the pupils' language learning in the best way possible.

The following questions will be investigated:

1. To what extent is English used in the selected EFL classrooms?
2. In what context and for what kind of purposes is English used in the selected EFL classrooms?
3. In what contexts and for what kind of purposes is Swedish used in the selected EFL classrooms?
4. What are the reasons for the teachers' language choices in the classroom?

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 Previous Research

The following subsections introduce previous research on the theme of language choice in the EFL classroom.

2.1.1 Language use in the EFL classroom

Brevik and Rindal (2020) did a study where they investigated how target language exposure was balanced with the need for other languages at lower-secondary schools in Norway. Their study showed three main patterns. First, they saw a considerable variation in language use in the classroom. These variations seemed to be dependent on the teacher rather than the pupils or the school (p.935). Secondly, they found that there was minimal use of languages other than Norwegian and the target language (English). However, they found some references to pupils' linguistic repertoires that showed a focus on multilingualism in some of the classrooms (Brevik & Rindal, 2020,



p.937). The third pattern that they found was that pupils perceived it helpful when teachers used Norwegian (p.944).

Emma Agnell (2019) interviewed four English teachers in order to investigate what determines the language choices they make while teaching. The teachers' language choices were then problematized with the theoretical approaches that the target language should be extensively used, but that one should not be prohibited from using the L1 since it can be purposeful and ease language learning if used in a strategic manner. Agnell (2019) found that teachers primarily based their language choices on pedagogical views as well as knowledge about language learning. However, for some of the teachers the choice of language was not always pedagogical nor strategic but rather inadvertent.

2.1.2 Target language use

Target language instruction in the EFL classroom provides pupils with input and target language exposure (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2014, p.418-419; Rabbidge & Chappell, 2014, p.8). Providing target language input is according to the teachers in Inbar-Lourie's (2010) study seen as positive.

There are several reasons for using or not using, the target language in the EFL classroom. One misunderstanding that is common among pupils, is that they need to understand all the words to fully comprehend what is being said (Lundberg, 2010, p.24). This can then lead to situations where pupils insist on a direct translation, meaning that they will neglect the English message because they expect to hear everything in Swedish (Lundberg, 2010, p.24). According to Lundberg (2010, p.24), it is therefore counterproductive to put too much focus on translation. He claims that when texts are translated from English to Swedish instead of focusing on understanding the message this can prevent pupils from developing their communicative abilities (Lundberg, 2010, p.206). Furthermore, Lundberg (2010, p. 24) argues that the goal of communicative language teaching is to learn English via English and that we should not get used to learning the English language through our first language.

The teacher must lead by example, for the pupils to feel comfortable expressing themselves in the target language (Lundberg, 2010, p.26). The pupils learn the



language by listening to their teacher and it is therefore important that the teacher possesses both linguistic competencies as well as being comfortable using body language and facial expressions to help the pupils understand what is being said (Lundberg, 2010, p.26).

2.1.3 Use of Swedish in the EFL classroom

There is a wide variation in the amount of Swedish teachers' use in the EFL classroom (Hall & Cook, 2012, p.285). The amount of first language use has been shown to differ between both countries and institutions as well as between teachers at the same school (Hall & Cook, 2012, p.285). Even though there are differences in how much the first language is used by teachers in the EFL classroom, the reasons for why it is used are similar (Hall & Cook, 2012, p.285-286). According to Hall and Cook (2012, p.286), three categories of situations could be shown in the EFL classroom where teachers often choose to use the first language. These are, for instructing and aiding in target language learning, for social reasons and to manage the classroom (2012, p.286). They also explain that teachers find first language use necessary but they often feel guilty about using the pupils' first language (2012, p.294-295). Furthermore, most teachers believe that the first language should have its place in the EFL classroom but that the target language should be the preferred language in classroom interactions (Hall & Cook, 2012, p.295).

Previous studies have shown translation into L1 to be helpful in expanding the size of pupils' L2 vocabularies in a quick manner (Schmitt, 2008; Lee & Macaro, 2013). In their study, Lee and Macaro (2013) found that the code-switching into Korean when explaining and defining the meaning of English words new to the pupils led to higher levels of learning. Furthermore, their study also showed that the use of only English when defining and explaining new words in English was more time-consuming than using the pupils' L1 (Lee & Macaro, 2013).

2.2 Language Theories

The following three subsections will introduce and describe three language theories that later will be used to analyse and discuss the results found in this study. The Language Mode theory will help in analysing the contexts in which pupils and teachers move between their monolingual and bilingual language modes depending



on different factors. The translanguaging theory will be used when analysing how the language repertoires of pupils and teachers are used throughout the observations and as well as in the answers given through interviews. Code-switching is a part of the translanguaging theory and will be used to describe examples found during observations.

2.2.1 Language Mode Theory

“Language mode is the state of activation of the bilingual’s languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time” (Grosjean, 2008, p. 39).

Language Mode is a theory of how both bilingual and multilingual individuals use different languages they know depending on the context, with whom they interact, their attitude to the language, function of interaction and proficiency level (Grosjean, 2008). Grosjean and Li (2013, p.15) define Language Mode as “the state of activation of the bilingual’s languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time”. The changes between a monolingual, bilingual and multilingual mode can occur quickly.

When two pupils share the same two languages, they may be in the bilingual mode and use parts of both languages in their communication. However, if one of the pupils only shares one of the two languages the bilingual pupil may choose to deactivate one language and therefore be in a monolingual mode. Language Mode can also be seen as a continuum along which pupils move. Factors that may affect this movement can for example be that the pupil is talking to a bilingual who shares the same two languages as they do but who prefers to only talk in one of them (Grosjean. Li, 2013, p.15).

When looking at the Language Mode theory there is something called ‘base language’, which stands for the language chosen in interaction, and ‘guest languages’, which then stands for all other languages brought into the interaction (Grosjean. Li, 2013, p.18).

2.2.2 Translanguaging Theory

Translanguaging is in the academic context, the process of drawing on one’s entire language repertoire. Instead of looking at the languages as separate, where one is



activated and the other deactivated, García (2014) claims that the entire language repertoire is active all the time (p.52).

A movement away from the idea of separating languages in the classroom has been shown in research. It is no longer perceived as deviant to use several languages during lessons (Graham & Cook 2012, 271; García 2014, 59)

In language teaching, translanguaging has stimulated new pedagogical approaches based on the more flexible use of languages in the language classroom. It has also been important in the normalization of bilingual language practices (Prilutskaya, 2021). Williams (1994, 1996) used translanguaging to denote a pedagogical activity that was teacher-initiated and based on the purposeful simultaneous use of two languages within the task. He claimed that the process of bilingual engagement will lead to pupils learning two languages simultaneously. Furthermore, Williams (1994, 1996) stated that translanguaging is a strategy that should be encouraged in language classrooms to promote development in both languages.

Lately, the concept has also become relevant within the field of multilingualism research. It is here used as an umbrella term for incorporating pupils' entire linguistic repertoire in order to thereby achieve communicative goals (García, 2012).

Several studies have explored the act of moving between languages (Cummins 2007; Beltrán 2010). Cummins (2007) claims that pupils that are bilingual speakers develop an "enhanced metalinguistic awareness" and are therefore more likely to benefit from the focus on similarities and differences between the languages used (p.229). Graham and Cook (2012, p.288) describe pupils' own language as a natural reference system used as a pathfinder. According to Beltrán (2010, p.260), pupils' dual language use had the ability to not only deepen the metalinguistic analysis, but also had the ability to multiply opportunities for language learning development within an interaction. Furthermore, by using their first language as a mediating tool pupils can develop a metalinguistic consciousness and improve their language learning outcomes (García, 2014, p.61). This movement between different languages allows for development in multiple languages at the same time (Cummins, 2007). According to Swain (2000, p.206) and Klapper (1998, p.24) the exclusion of pupils' mother tongue might instead lead to resentment and frustration.



In an article written by Sahan and Rose (2021) it was found that translanguaging practices were used by teachers and pupils for a variety of purposes. The most common purposes were when they presented new content and asked questions related to content. They therefore argue that translanguaging practices are primarily used by teachers and pupils for pedagogical purposes that are related to content learning and teaching (Sahan & Rose, 2021). Furthermore, they also acknowledge that previous research suggests that the L1 is used primarily to translate technical vocabulary. However, in their findings, there were no frequent instances of direct translation, which then contradicts the results of previous studies (Sahan & Rose, 2021). Moreover, the findings in this study (Sahan & Rose, 2021) showed that translanguaging practices were used for explaining, presenting and discussing course content.

Translanguaging practices include situations of for example, interpreting between culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, translating and codeswitching (Daniel & Pacheco, 2016, p.654). The following subsection will therefore explore the practice of codeswitching.

2.2.2.1 Code-switching

Code-switching is defined as “the use of more than one language in the course of a single communicative episode” (Heller, 1988, p.1) and “the alternating use of more than one language” (Auer, 1984:1).

The reason for codeswitching can be to indicate solidarity or cultural distance but also to show belonging to a specific group (Richards & Schmidt 2002, p.81). The language selected by an individual, the code, may depend on factors such as age or gender of people in the group, education level, and to whom they are talking (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.516-517).

According to Brown and Anderson (2006), there are three types of codeswitching. The intersentential codeswitch, the intrasentential codeswitch, and lastly the tag-codeswitch. Intersentential codeswitching is when the codeswitch occurs at the boundaries of a sentence or a clause (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512). Intrasentential codeswitching is when the codeswitch occurs in the middle of a sentence or within clauses or words (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512). The last type



of codeswitching, the tag-codeswitch, is when a tag statement is changed to another language (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512).

3 Method and Data

3.1 Method

The methods used for data collection in this study are classroom observations and teacher interviews. The classroom observations have been chosen since the method gives an insight into how often and in what situations the language choices occur. It also provides the opportunity to gather a large amount of data within the EFL classroom context. The teacher interviews then work as a complement to the observations, allowing an insight into teachers' thoughts behind their language choices.

The following subsections present the chosen methods and their advantages and challenges.

3.1.1 Classroom observations

This study contains classroom observations at two schools located in Southern Sweden. At each school two different classes were observed, making a total of 4 classes. During the classroom observations, an observation scheme was used (see Appendix 1). In addition to the observation scheme, notes describing specific situational contexts were also written down.

Observations in a qualitative setting refer to “methods of generating data which involve the researcher immersing [him or herself] in a research setting, and systematically observing dimensions of that setting, interactions, relationships, actions, events, and so on, within it” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.314). The observations will be structured in the sense that an observation scheme will be used to facilitate the recording of details such as when, where, and how often certain types of phenomena occur. This makes it possible to compare behaviors or patterns between the different contexts (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.315).



One advantage of observations is that they provide the opportunity to collect a large amount of data within a particular context (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.315). If used over time and repeatedly, observations can offer a deeper understanding of the context studied (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.315).

One challenge with classroom observation is to maintain the naturalness of the environment (Denscombe, 2018, p.303), also called the observer's paradox (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.315). Therefore, it is important as a researcher to ensure that the impact of oneself is as small and short-lived as possible so that the environment returns to its normal state. My aim is therefore to try and blend into the background and thereby not act as a disturbance during the observation (Denscombe, 2018, p.303). In this case, my placement and time spent in the classroom are two important factors. To minimize the influence of the researcher, multiple observations divided on different days were scheduled as well as placing myself in the back of the classroom to make it possible to get an overview of the classroom without absorbing the pupils' focus.

Another disadvantage of observations is that they typically do not allow access to the participants' motivation for their actions (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p.315). Therefore, observations are often combined with another method, such as interviews.

3.1.1.1 Observation Scheme

The COLT (Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching) was used to define categories of observation of language choice in this study. The COLT is an "observation scheme that provides a macroscopic analysis of L2 classrooms at the level of activity type and the verbal interaction within them" (Spada & Lyster, 1997, p.788).

The observation scheme used in this study was based on COLT for the creation of an observation scheme suitable for the intended focus of this specific study. The observation scheme is divided into two parts, where the first part investigates teacher interaction in L1, L2 and a mixture of both in different contexts. Categories of contexts contained in this part are giving instructions, explaining a grammatical point, explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item, praising, criticizing, asking a display question and asking a referential question.



The second part of the observation scheme looks at pupil interaction in L1, L2 and a mixture of both in four different contexts. Categories of contexts contained in this part of the scheme are: asking the teacher a question, talking to another pupil, answering a question from the teacher and responding to another pupil.

3.1.2 Teacher interviews

In addition to the observations, interviews with the four participating teachers were also performed. Since all teachers share the same mother tongue, Swedish, the interviews were conducted in Swedish. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that there was a prepared set of topics to be addressed and questions to be answered (see Appendix 3), but unlike structured interviews, they left room for the interviewees to further develop and talk more in detail about the topics covered (Denscombe, 2018, p.269). According to Denscombe (2018, p.277), the researcher needs to minimize their influence on the results by being passive and neutral. This means that the researcher hides her personality behind a wall of warmth and responsiveness to the interviewee's words (Denscombe, 2018, p.278). The idea is not to lecture about how it should be but rather to allow the teachers to open up and explain their reasoning behind their language choices in the classroom. The interviews were recorded to make it possible going back and listening to them more than once.

3.1.2.1 Participants

Four teachers participated in the study. Three of them were female and one male between the age of 36-64. They all share the same mother tongue, Swedish. Table 1 shows the participants' age, gender, level of education, teaching experience, mother tongue and other languages that they master.

Table 1. Information about participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Level of Education	Teaching experience	Mother tongue	Other languages
Teacher 1 T1	Female	62	Primary and secondary school	15 years	Swedish	English Spanish



			teacher degree (year 0-9)			German
Teacher 2 T2	Female	42	Primary and secondary school teacher degree (year 4-9)	18 years	Swedish	English French German
Teacher 3 T3	Male	64	Primary and secondary school teacher degree (year 4-9)	34 years	Swedish	English German
Teacher 4 T4	Female	36	Secondary school teacher degree	6 years	Swedish	English

3.1.3 Ethical considerations

During the study, the schools and teachers that contributed to the data must be taken into consideration. According to the guidelines from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (SERA, 2002) it is important to obtain informed consent from the participants. This was done in both written and verbal form prior to the classroom observations and the teacher interviews (see Appendix 2). The participants have been informed of their role in the project and the terms of their participation in accordance with SERA (2002) guidelines. The participating teachers have been informed that their participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any point during the project (SERA, 2002).

Complete anonymity and confidentiality for the schools and teachers involved in the study have been provided (SERA, 2002). This has been done by excluding the names and geographical positioning of the participating schools, as well as the names of participating teachers. Instead, their names have been substituted with T1, T2, T3 and T4. The security of data has also been protected so that names and geographical



positioning may not be wrongfully obtained by unauthorized persons (Denscombe, 2017, p.357).

3.1.4 Validity and Reliability

Reliability is understood in a research context as the extent a result can be replicated and not change (McNeill & Chapman 2005, p.9). In terms of reliability in this study, the advantages are threefold. First, all four teachers were asked the same set of questions, which means that any differences in the collected data could be attributed to the fact that not all participants thought alike. Second, the same observation scheme was used during all the observations. Finally, the data were analysed within the same theoretical framework. However, one of the most significant disadvantages of this study is the small sample size.

Validity means the extent a tool accurately measures what is intended to be measured (Denscombe, 2009, p.425; McNeill & Chapman, 2005, p.9). This study does not purely rely on the informants' self-reported behavior patterns and attitudes since it also looks at the reality of classroom interaction through observations. Second, the interview questions and observation scheme were both grounded in a theory relevant to this study, namely the theory of translanguaging. One thing to take into consideration is the Observer's Paradox (Denscombe, 2009, p.81), i.e., if one aims to observe an event, it may be nearly impossible to ensure that one's presence does not affect this phenomenon. It might be the case that since the teachers and pupils are aware of the researcher's presence, they might alter their behavior. Furthermore, one must also take into consideration the Interviewer Effect; it is impossible to verify to what extent the teachers altered their behavior and responses during the interviews (Denscombe, 2009, p.244). Steps like thoughtful placement in the classroom and a neutral approach in the interviews were therefore taken in order to avoid these phenomena.

3.1.5 Data analysis

The method used for analyzing the collected data is content analysis. Content analysis is a method used to classify written and/or oral data into categories of similar meanings (Moretti et al., 2011). According to Cho and Lee (2014), qualitative content analysis can lead to an understanding of social reality or phenomena through the



interpretation of a variety of recorded communication materials. It also makes it possible to process a large amount of data. However, they also state that there are weaknesses with the method (Cho; Lee, 2014). One of these weaknesses is that the process can be very time-consuming, and the coding scheme can be quite complex (Cho; Lee, 2014).

The recordings from the teacher interviews were then transcribed. This is a necessary step prior to doing the content analysis and makes it easier to compare and find possible patterns between all interviews (Denscombe, 2018, p.395). Parts of the transcribed interview were then used as quotes when illustrating the results (Denscombe, 2018, p.395). The interview transcriptions were then coded and then divided into relevant categories such as the use of L1, use of L2, translanguaging, Language Mode and Codeswitching, before being analysed. The same way of coding and categorizing was then also conducted on the field notes gathered during classroom observations. After the coding and categorizing, the frequency of the units will be counted before the frequency of units as well as their relationship with other units that occur in the text were analysed. The analysis did then link the units and attempt to explain when and why they occur like they do (Denscombe, 2017, p.313).

The main advantage of content analysis is that “it provides a means of quantifying the contents of a text, and it does so by using a method that is clear and, in principle, repeatable by other researchers” (Denscombe, 2017, p.314). However, one disadvantage is that content analysis tends to separate “the units and their meaning from the context in which they were made, and even the intentions of the writer” (Denscombe, 2017, p.314). This can be prevented by carefully thinking through the categories chosen to divide the collected data, making them context-based.

3.1.5.1 Coding

In order to code the data collected through both observations as well as teacher interviews, the transcriptions were coded with the codes found in Appendix 5.

The initial codes are as follows:

L – use of language, divided into L1 and L2

M – Mixture of languages



GI – giving instructions divided into GI1 and GI2

Eg – Explaining a grammatical point, divided into Eg1 and Eg2

Ev – Explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item, divided into Ev1 and Ev2

P – Praising, divided into P1 and P2

C – Criticizing, divided into C1 and C2

DQ – Asking a display question, divided into DQ1 and DQ2

RQ – Asking a referential question, divided into RQ1 and RQ2

TQ- Asking the teacher a question, divided into TQ1 and TQ2

AL – Talks to another pupil, divided into AL1 and AL2

AQ - Answering a question from the teacher, divided into AQ1 and AQ2

RL – Responds to another pupil, divided into RL1 and RL2

C – Codeswitching

TL – Translanguaging

LM – Language Mode

The number 1 stands for the use of Swedish in the different contexts whereas the number 2 stands for the use of English. Each initial code has therefore been divided into two subcategories dividing them between Swedish and English language use.

The codes found in Appendix 5 were developed from the observation scheme used during classroom observations as well as three additional categories (Codeswitching, translanguaging, language mode) that are connected to the chosen theories for this thesis.



4 Results

To make a clear connection to the research questions this section is divided into one subsection describing results found in observations and one subsection presenting reasons for teachers' language choices found during the interviews.

4.1 Classroom observations

In the following subsections, the results of the classroom observations regarding teachers' and pupils' language use are presented.

4.1.1 Target language use

The pattern of starting up a lesson by greeting the pupils in English and going through the lesson plan was found in all four observations. The content of the lessons however differed between the four classes and the results may therefore differ in the use of English in different contexts. In Chart 1 the observed teachers' use of English in different contexts is shown and compared to each other. Furthermore, the total number of instances where English was used found within all observations is also stated.

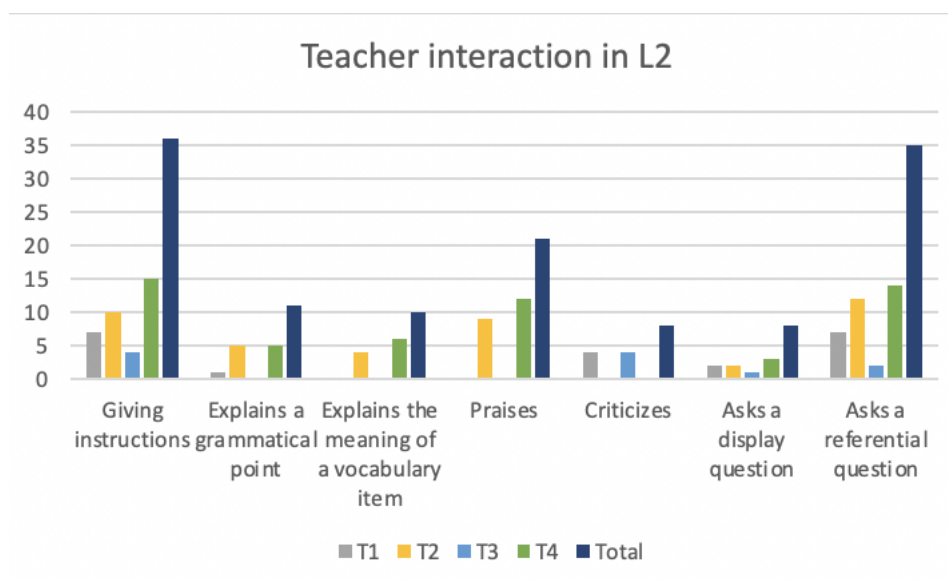


Chart 1: Teacher-pupil interaction in L2

Chart 1 shows that the most commonly occurring contexts where English was used by the teachers were when giving instructions as well as when asking referential



questions. Even though these contexts were the ones with the highest number in total, there is a slight difference between the observed teachers. Overall, T4 is the teacher that used the English language most in all the contexts, closely followed by T2. T3 however, was less keen on speaking in English given the occurrence of numbers in this chart.

Chart 1 also shows an even division between English used when explaining a grammatical point and explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item. This can be because of the difference in the content of the four lessons. Once again it is T2 and T4 that use the English language to a higher extent than T1 and T3 in these contexts.

Furthermore, in Chart 1, T2 and T4 use English in order to praise their pupils when they for example answered a question correctly, whereas T1 and T3 use it to criticize instead. The context of the lowest occurring number of English is when the teachers use the language to ask display questions.

Chart 2 shows in what contexts pupils in different classes used English as well as the total number of instances found within all observations.

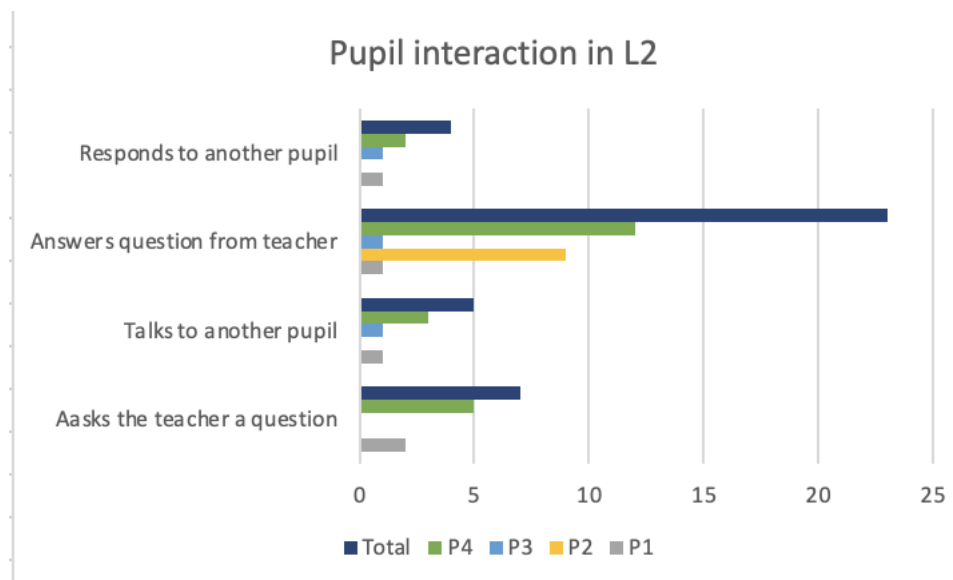


Chart 2: Pupil-pupil interaction in L2

Chart 2 shows clearly that pupils in total mainly used English when answering questions from the teacher. However, pupils in the class taught by T1 had a higher



percentage of using English when asking the teacher a question rather than answering one. Even though this difference is minimal in numbers, it is still present. Just like in Chart 1 which looked at teachers' use of English, the pupils taught by T4 are the ones that use English more frequently during class.

4.1.2 Use of Swedish

In Chart 3 the observed teachers' use of Swedish in different contexts is shown and compared to each other. Furthermore, the total number of instances where English was used found within all observations is also stated.

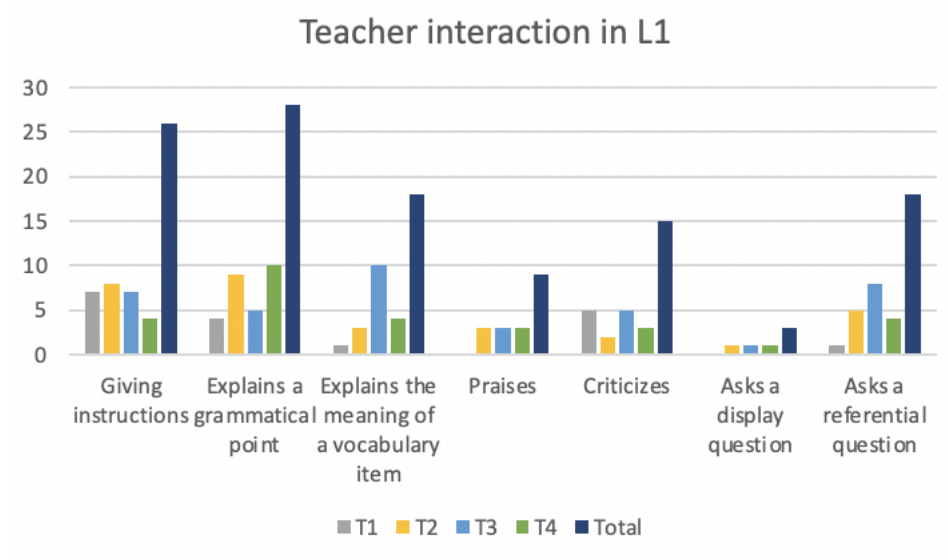


Chart 3: Teacher-pupil interaction in L1

In comparison to the use of English (Chart 1), the use of Swedish is more evenly divided among the different contexts. Just like the teachers gave instructions in English at the beginning of the lessons, they were all followed by a summary of the instructions in Swedish as well. Therefore, the columns in the category of giving instructions are high in Chart 3 as well. However, Chart 3 shows that T4 was less likely to give further instructions in Swedish than the three others. The observations also showed that all the teachers often spoke Swedish when talking individually to pupils in order to explain difficulties found during assignments.

Looking at the highest number of total occurrences, the category of explaining a grammatical point, such as the use of plural s, is the most common context where



Swedish is used by the observed teachers. Although T2 and T4 were the ones most likely to use English throughout the lesson, they are also the ones that most frequently used Swedish in order to explain a grammatical point.

As seen in Charts 1 and 3, T1 did not praise the pupils in either of the languages. T1 and T3 used Swedish to the same extent when criticizing their pupils. The critique mainly concerned unwanted behavior in the classroom. In Chart 1, it was shown that T2 and T4 never criticized their pupils in English. However, there are occurrences in Chart 3 where they both use Swedish in order to criticize their pupils, although this number is low compared to T1 and T3.

Chart 4 shows in what contexts pupils in different classes used Swedish as well as the total number of instances found within all observations.

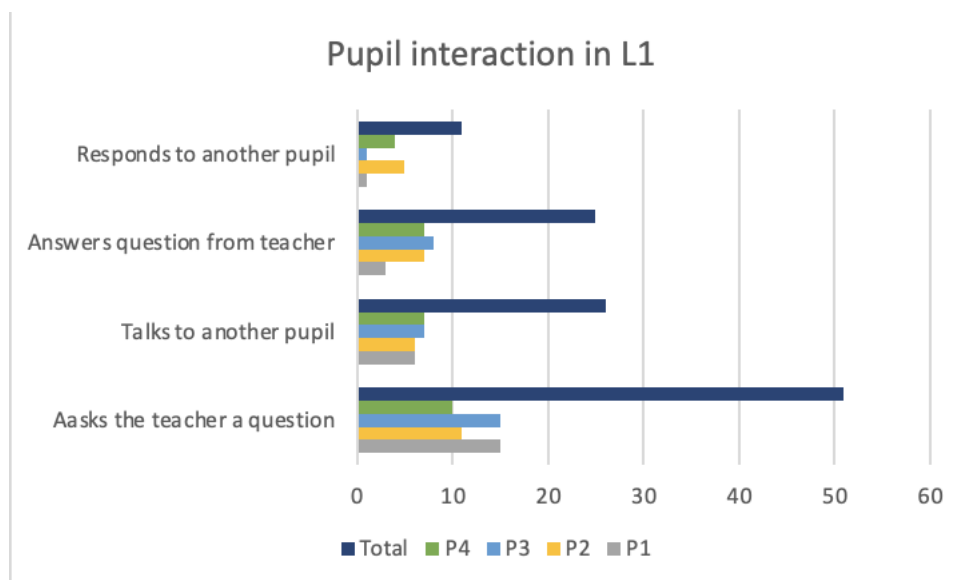


Chart 4: Pupil-pupil interaction in L1

Just like in Chart 3, Chart 4 shows a more even division between the contexts in comparison with pupils' use of English. Chart 4 shows that pupils used Swedish a lot when asking the teacher a question. The difference in content during the lesson may also be one of the reasons for the difference between classes. The pupils taught by T3 have the highest ranking in all contexts except for responding to another pupil. This might derive from the lesson being purely teacher-led and that a greater focus on the teacher was shown. T2 and T4 held lessons that were mainly teacher-led but also



contained discussions or group assignments for the pupils. Their pupils therefore also used the Swedish language more when responding to each other.

4.1.3 The mixture of Swedish and English

Observed situations of mixture use of Swedish and English mixing were mainly found when observing the teachers.

In Chart 5 the observed teachers' translinguaging in different contexts are shown and compared to each other. Furthermore, the total number of instances where translinguaging was used found in all observations is also stated. The categorization of teachers' utterances as being in Swedish, English or mixed was challenging.

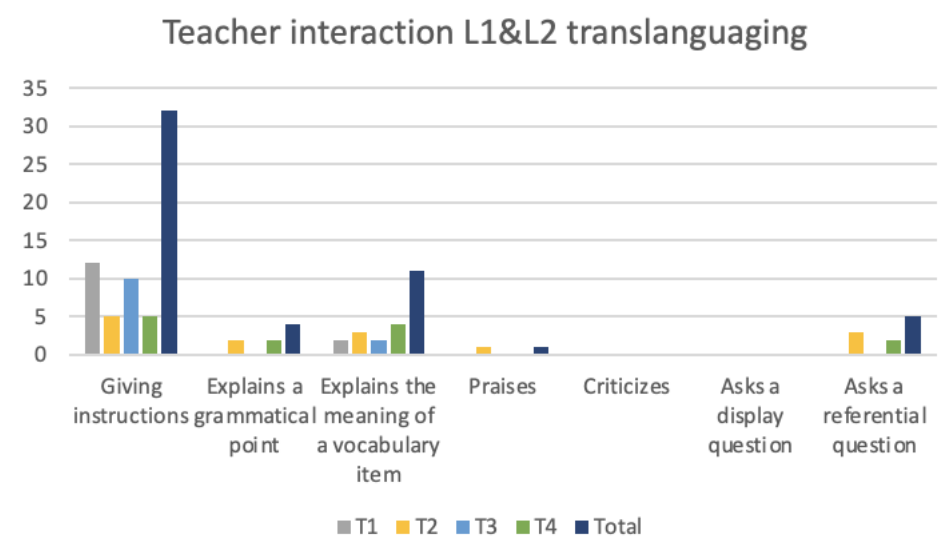


Chart 5: Teacher-pupil interaction mixture of L1 & L2

As shown in Chart 5, a mixture of L1 and L2 was mainly found when the teacher gave instructions. These instructions were found both given individually and in front of the entire class. It is also shown that all four teachers used a mixture of both languages when it came to explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item. T2 also used a mixture of Swedish and English when praising their pupils. Chart 5 shows that T2 and T4 used a mixture of both languages when explaining some grammatical points. Two of the categories, criticizing and asking a display question, are absent in this chart (5) with all teachers.



Chart 6 shows in what contexts pupils in different classes used a mixture of Swedish and English, as well as the total number of instances found in all observations.

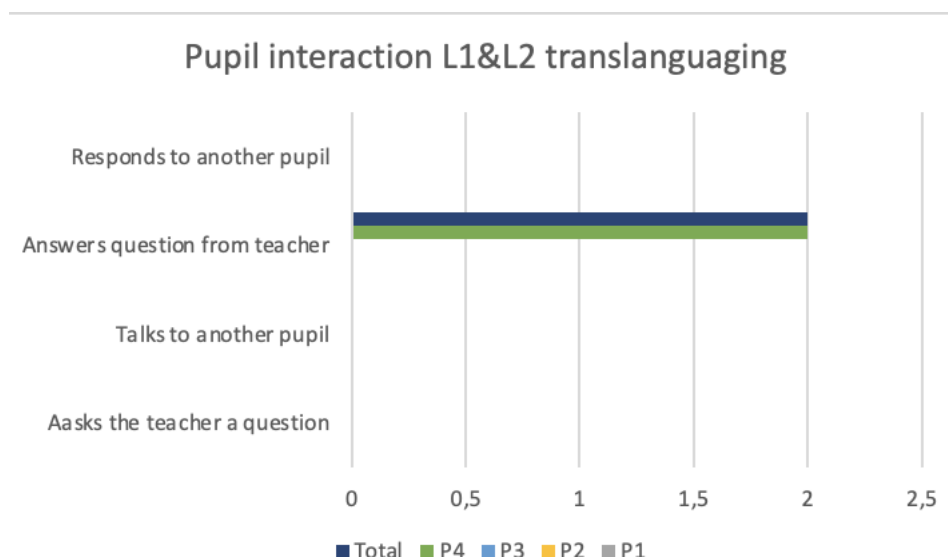


Chart 6: Pupil-pupil interaction mixture of L1 & L2

As can be seen in Chart 6, the occurrences of mixed language by pupils were not as common as by teachers. The only noted ones were when pupils answered questions from the teacher. The only pupil group where a mixed use was noted were the ones taught by T4. However, this can be because the lessons were mainly teacher-led. The focus of the observation was also on the teacher and instances of pupils mixing languages may therefore have been overlooked.

The examples of mixed use of Swedish and English found during the observations were mostly in the form of short sentences or clauses, but also entire conversations like the following example were detected. Each example given uses abbreviations showing which teacher (T1, T2, T3 and T4) at which school (S1 and S2) the example is taken from. The abbreviation P is used for pupil utterances.

Example (1), S1 T2

T2: Most of the time I think you can hear what the plural form of a noun should be, but what is the rule for regular nouns?

P: Man lägger till ett s på slutet (You add a -s at the end)



T2: But how is it with words like bus, that already ends with an -s?

P: Det blir buses (It is buses)

T2: Precis, man lägger på ett -es för att göra om till plural (Exactly, you add an -es to make it into plural)

Example (1) illustrates how the teacher and pupil utilize the range of their available and shared linguistic resources. The teacher allows the pupil to participate in Swedish, rather than imposing an English-only policy. In this interaction, both pupil and teacher are using their entire shared linguistic repertoire to understand and engage in the interaction. The teacher's final statement ('Precis...') shows that the pupil has successfully understood and been able to communicate their knowledge.

Example (2), S2 T3

T3: Can you explain the rule for when to use have and when to use has?

P: Has använder man när det är han, hon eller den/det som gör något och have används till övriga (You use has when it is he, she or it that does something and have is used for the rest)

T3: How would you say that in English?

P: Inte fan vet jag (I don't know, damn it)

T3: Try to say it in English, I do not understand Swedish.

P: Men jag kan ju inte. Fattar du trögt? (But I can't. Are you slow?)

In Example (2), the teacher tries to exclude the pupil's own language instead of utilizing their strongest language, Swedish. The pupil shows by the first answer that they know the rule, but instead of allowing the pupil to participate T3 imposes an English-only policy. This exclusion of the pupil's L1 leads to resentment and frustration as seen in the pupil's last reply (Swain, 2000, p.206; Klapper, 1998, p.24).

Although there were examples of entire conversations like the one above, translanguaging was more commonly found within sentences or clauses. These



occurrences exemplified the use of codeswitching in the classroom. As mentioned in the subsection about codeswitching, according to Brown and Anderson (2006) codeswitching can be categorized into three categories, intersentential, intrasentential and tag-codeswitch. All three of these categories could be found during the observations. Following are some examples noted within the observed lessons. The most common one during these observations was the intersentential codeswitching that occurred at the boundaries of a sentence or a clause (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512).

Example (3), S1 T1

“Please go and sit down in your groups, sätt er i grupperna“

Example (4), S1 T1

“You are going to do this reading comprehension, det är en läsförståelse.”

Example (5), S1 T1

“Du läser texten och markerar rätt svar, so you read the text and mark the correct answer.”

Example (6), S1 T1

“Try to do this one, och sen går du vidare med nästa”

The intrasentential codeswitching also occurred even though not as often as the previously mentioned. The intrasentential codeswitching occurred in the middle of a sentence or within clauses or words (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512).

Example (7), S2 T3

“I have done it here in Klassuppgifter so that you can easily find it”

Example (8), S2 T3

“... create a document in Klassuppgifter and start to write.”

Example (9), S2 T3



“It’s only nutid that we are working with.”

Example (10), S2 T3 – pupil

“Should we work with our...eh... bänkkompis when we do this?”

Example (11), S1 T2

“Good då är det uppgift 4.”

Example (12), S1 T2

Calf det är ju kalv på svenska, but how do you say it in plural?

The last category of codeswitching is the tag-codeswitch. It is when a tag question is changed to another language (Brown & Anderson, 2006, p.512). This category was the least common during classroom observations.

Example (13), S2 T4

It’s not that difficult, ellerhur?

Example (14), S2 T4

We went through this last week, visst gjorde vi?

4.2 Teacher interviews

The teacher interviews were performed in close connection to the classroom observations in order to be able to discuss and recall certain observed events. The interviews were recorded with the help of a mobile phone, and then transcribed word by word. The transcriptions have then been coded with the help of the coding system found in Appendix 5. In this section, the results found in the interviews are presented.

The interviews revealed that the observed classes all contained pupils with the same mother tongue (L1, Swedish). However, all four teachers stated that they do teach classes where pupils speak a variety of languages, making the language choices in these classes a bit different.



The interviewed teachers estimated that they use a higher percentage of English when the communication is in focus compared to when the focus of the lesson is on grammar, where a higher percentage of Swedish is used.

Quote (1), S1 T1 (my translation)

“If we teach grammar there is going to be a lot of Swedish to ensure that the pupils understand. Another lesson that for example builds on oral communication could be around 80-90% and a lesson about a theme I would say 60-70%.”

The main reason given for the use of Swedish during English lessons is that the language is used as a tool in order to ensure that everyone in the class understands what has been said.

Quote (2), S1 T2 (My translation)

“I use Swedish to ensure that everyone has understood the instructions”

Another reason found in the interviews is the use of Swedish in order to help pupils with difficulties that might occur during the lesson. This can for example be explaining grammatical points or explaining an unknown word so that the pupils can work forward with the assignments.

Quote (3), S2 T4 (My translation)

“The main reason that I use Swedish during an English lesson is because I want to make sure that all of my pupils have understood grammatical difficulties or when a word is not understood even through clarification in English”

T1 and T3 claim that they use English mostly when introducing the theme/lesson and when they walk around and talk to the pupils individually.

Quote (4), S2 T3 (My translation)

“I also use English when I walk around in the classroom and talk with the pupils in order to see if they have understood and can work on their own”



Three out of the four teachers believe that the more they use English in the classroom the more the pupils will do so as well. The fourth teacher (T2) however, believes that the use of English can have a negative effect on the pupils because they might find it a bit difficult.

Quote (5), S1 T2 (My translation)

“I would not say that pupils dare to speak more in English if I do so because I can almost feel that sometimes they feel that they are a bit scared because they think that I as a teacher have a pretty good English and that it in that case rather prevent them from talking in English “

When asking about codeswitching and the mixing of Swedish and English, the teachers all agree that most cases this occurs unconsciously in most cases. The most common reason stated for this phenomenon was that it could be a way of further clarifying something that the pupils find difficult.

Quote(6), S2 T4 (My translation)

“... you know I don't really think about it, but I guess it could be a way to further clarify I guess”

A slight difference in the answers given concerning whether to allow pupils to switch between languages was shown in the interviews. T1, T2 and T4 all agreed that they would allow their pupils to switch between Swedish and English since they wanted to achieve a classroom where everyone dares to speak.

Quote (7), S2 T4 (My translation)

“I don't want pupils to feel that they can't express themselves in English and keeps quiet instead. So, I would rather actually that they mix Swedish and English and dare to be active”

T3 on the other hand believes that allowing pupils to switch between languages means that they do not learn to speak properly in English.

Quote (8), S2 T3 (My translation)



“I do not allow my pupils to mix English and Swedish since I believe that this might prevent them from learning how to speak English properly”

5 Discussion

As stated in the introduction, this study aimed to increase our understanding of the role the English language as the primary teaching language should have in the EFL classroom at Swedish lower secondary schools to benefit the pupils’ language learning in the best way possible. The following research questions acted as a guide:

1. To what extent is English used in the selected EFL classrooms?
2. In what context and for what kind of purposes is English used in the selected EFL classrooms?
3. In what contexts and for what kind of purposes is Swedish used in the selected EFL classrooms?
4. What are the reasons for the teachers’ language choices in the classroom?

This section begins by discussing the research questions, in terms of what the data indicated and how the theories of Language Mode, translanguaging and codeswitching can be applied to the results. Finally, the pedagogical implications of the findings are presented.

5.1 Discussion of Results

Based on the data gathered in this research, the teachers’ views and attitudes towards language use and their choices made in the classroom did not always agree with one another. For instance, during the interview T1 estimated her use of English during a lesson like the one observed to be around 60-70% (see Quote 1). However, the data gathered through observation showed that T1 used English to a limited extent (see Chart 1) and was more likely to use Swedish (see Chart 3). T1 and T3 also stated in the interviews that they use English when they talk to pupils individually (see Quote 4). However, the observations showed that Swedish was the language used in individual interactions with the pupils. This finding is therefore contradictory.



The data gathered through observations showed a small variation in the use of English amongst the four teachers. T4 was the teacher who most extensively used the English language during the observations (see Chart 1). The pupils in the class taught by T4 were also shown to be more likely to use the English language during the observation. Although both T4 and the pupils share the same two languages, Swedish and English, tendencies of deactivation of Swedish in this observation have been noted. According to the Language Mode theory explained by Grosjean and Li (2013, p.15), this could be because the teacher (T4) has shown the pupils that she prefers English to be used and therefore even the pupils speak more English during class. T3 was on the other hand prone to using the English language in the observed lesson. This was also shown in the low number of utterances in English from pupils taught by T3. Compared to the observation of T4, this indicates that both the teacher and the pupils of T3 are more likely to be in the bilingual mode, where they use parts of both languages in order to communicate (Grosjean & Li, 2013, p.15).

The results show that English was mainly used when giving instructions as well as when asking referential questions. These contexts seem to be used as an easy way of providing pupils with input and exposing them to the target language, which according to Inbar-Lourie (2010) is seen as something positive.

In comparison to the use of English which was meant as an input and exposure to the language, the use of Swedish was found to function as a sort of mediating tool (García, 2014, p.61) in order to improve the pupils' learning outcomes. The results of the data gathered through interviews show that teachers use Swedish in order to ensure that all pupils have understood and to help them when difficulties arise. This agrees with the findings of Sahan and Rose (2021) that translanguaging practices were used for explaining, presenting and discussing course content.

As shown in Section 4.1.3, several examples of translanguaging and more directly, codeswitching could be found in the observations. Although the amount of translanguaging occurring during the observations differed between the teachers, there was at least one instance per observation. T4 as mentioned before was very keen on keeping the lesson in English as much as possible but still used translanguaging practices, such as tag-codeswitching (Examples 13 & 14). The interviews showed that



translanguaging in most cases occurs unconsciously by the teachers and is explained as an act of clarification of something that is found difficult by the pupils (see Quote 6). T3 states in the interviews that he does not allow his pupils to mix Swedish and English during class since he believes that this could prevent them from learning how to speak English properly (see Quote 8). This exclusion of the pupils' L1 might according to Swain (2000, p.206) and Klapper (1998, p.24) lead to resentment and frustration which could be seen in the observations of T3 (see Example 2). This resentment and frustration were shown through unwillingness to answer. T4 on the other hand argues that the allowance of using both Swedish and English might lead to a more active lesson where pupils dare to speak and express themselves (see Quote 7). In accordance with Beltrán (2010, p.260) the use of pupils' two languages in this case could multiply opportunities for language learning development within the interaction since they could express their knowledge more freely. Furthermore, T2 states in the interview that she does not believe that the pupils dare speak more in English if the teacher does so, rather that it would be preventing because of fear (see Quote 5). Exactly like T4 claims that an open climate where both languages are allowed would benefit the learning outcomes, T2 uses the translanguaging practices to encourage development in both languages (Williams, 1994,1996). According to García (2014), the entire language repertoire is always active. It would be possible to claim that both T2 and T4 share this view on languages.

According to the English year 7-9 syllabus (Lgr11), the pupils should be given the opportunities to develop their ability to formulate and communicate in English. As shown in Section 4.2, the teachers in this study had different approaches to whether this communicative ability could be developed with the help of Swedish or not. T3 for example does not allow his pupils to use Swedish during lessons since he believes that they do not learn English properly by switching between languages (see Quote 8). This study, therefore, shows that there is a need to increase language teachers' understanding of the role of target language use in the EFL classroom in order for them to make language choices that are beneficial for their pupils. This could perhaps be done by adding guidelines in the syllabus for English years 7-9 regarding the use of the target language during the lessons.



5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Based on the observations and interviews, several pedagogical implications can be drawn from this study. Firstly, the language choices made by the teacher during lessons have an impact on the pupils. For the translanguaging practices such as codeswitching to be valuable for the learning outcome, there is a need for conscious choices in alternating between the languages. Secondly, allowing the pupils to alternate between languages has also been shown valuable for interaction and communication (García, 2012). Furthermore, excluding the pupil's first language has been shown to lead to resentment and frustration as stated by Swain (2000) and Klapper (1998). It is therefore important for teachers to teach pupils how to use their first language as a mediating tool in order to develop a metalinguistic consciousness and improve their language learning outcomes (García, 2014). Finally, given the fact that pupils adapt their language depending on whom they are talking to and what preferences that person has, it is in the teachers' interest to make a clear distinction between when they want pupils to activate their bilingual versus monolingual mode during lessons (Grosjean & Li, 2013, p.15). This change in mode can for example be in form of different assignments.

6 Conclusion

This study aimed to increase our understanding of what role the English language as the primary teaching language should have in the EFL classroom at Swedish lower secondary schools to benefit the pupils' language learning in the best possible way. By analysing the gathered data, the conclusion was drawn that there is a slight variation in what role the English language has in the four observed classrooms. Although the extent to which English was used differed, the contexts and reasons for its use were coherent. Furthermore, a variation in the extent to which Swedish was used during teaching was also found. The reasons stated for the use of Swedish were mainly to clarify, explain and ensure understanding of course content. Finally, the use of translanguaging practices was believed to have a positive effect on pupils' learning outcomes by all teachers except one (T3), who instead believed it to be preventing the development of perfect communicative competencies. However, the pupils taught



by T3 were the only ones showing resentment and frustration whereas the other pupils engaged more in the lessons.

The strengths of this study lie primarily in its consistency. All teachers were observed using the same observation scheme and they were interviewed based on the same set of questions. The data was furthermore analysed using the same framework. However, the potential weakness of the study lies within the limited sample size, making the results less generalizable on a larger population of teachers in Sweden.

For further research on this topic, several suggestions could be made. First of all, increasing the number of participants would be recommended to increase generalisability. Regarding the method of observations, improvements could be made. The observations could be conducted over a longer period of time, making it a longitudinal study, in order to gather more nuanced data. Finally, it would also be interesting to explore how the language choices made by teachers affect the pupils' language choices. Regardless of which path future researchers choose, the use of L1 and L2 in EFL teaching undoubtedly merits further investigation.



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Appendix 1

Observation Scheme

School _____ Grade _____ Observer _____ Subject _____
Teacher _____ Lesson (min) _____ Observation No _____ Date _____

Teacher interaction	L1	L2	Mix	Student interaction	L1	L2	Mix
Giving instructions				Asks the teacher a question			
Explains a grammatical point				Talks to another learner			
Explains the meaning of a vocabulary item				Answers question from teacher			
Praises				Responds to another learner			
Criticizes							
Asks a display question							
Asks a referential question							



Appendix 2

Information letter

Hej,

Jag heter Mikaela Adolfsson och läser till ämneslärare i engelska vid Linnéuniversitetet. Denna sista termin av programmet skriver jag mitt examensarbete, med fokus på de språkval som görs i klassrummet av såväl lärare som elever. Syftet med mitt arbete är att utveckla min kunskap inom detta komplexa område, och jag ämnar göra det genom att genomföra klassrumsobservationer samt efterföljande lärarintervjuer, för att på så sätt få en förståelse för hur verksamma lärare arbetar med och resonerar kring de språkval som görs i klassrummet.

Detta mejl är en förfrågan till dig att låta genomföra observationer på dina engelsklektioner samt medverka i efterföljande intervju. Genom att medverka bidrar du med värdefull information till mitt arbete. Din medverkan är helt frivillig och du kan när som helst välja att avbryta din medverkan. All data som samlas in under observationerna och intervjuerna behandlas konfidentiellt och kommer enbart användas i denna studie. Dina svar kommer vara helt anonyma och inget publicerat material kommer kunna härledas till en enskild person – den enda som kommer ta del av den icke anonymiserade datan är jag själv. Observationen beräknas äga rum på två lektionstillfällen och efterföljande intervju beräknas ta ca 20 minuter. Jag avser även att spela in intervjun för att kunna säkerställa att återgivningen blir korrekt.

Med vänlig hälsning,

Mikaela Adolfsson



Appendix 3

Interview questions

1. Hur gammal är du och vilket kön skulle du säga dig tillhöra?
2. Hur länge har du arbetat som lärare och vad har du för examen?
3. Vilket språk är ditt modersmål? Kan du tala fler språk?
4. Undervisar du elever med samma modersmål eller finns det fler språk i klasserna? Påverkar de här eleverna i så fall dina språkval under lektionstid?
5. Ungefär hur mycket engelska skulle du uppskatta att du talar under en engelsklektion?
6. Använder du andra språk i språkundervisningen än Engelska? I vilka situationer? Varför?
7. Under vilka situationer använder du dig av talad engelska under en engelsklektion?
8. Av vilken/vilka anledningar talar du engelska i dessa situationer?
9. I vilka situationer använder du dig av talad svenska under en engelsklektion?
10. Av vilken/vilka anledningar talar du svenska i dessa situationer?
11. Händer det att du kodväxlar när du undervisar? Varför?



12. Tillåter du att eleverna växlar mellan språken? När? Varför?
13. Hur tror du att eleverna upplever det när du talar engelska?
14. Hur tror du att eleverna upplever det när du talar svenska?
15. Är du nöjd med din språkanvändning under engelsklektionerna?



Appendix 4

Filled in Observation schemes

School: **S1** Grade: **7** Observer: **Mikaela** Subject: **English**
Teacher: **T1** Lesson (min): **60** Observation No: **1** Date: **8/4-22**

Teacher interaction	L1	L2	Mix	Student interaction	L1	L2	Mix
Giving instructions	7	7	12	Asks the teacher a question	15	2	
Explains a grammatical point	4	1		Talks to another learner	6	1	
Explains the meaning of a vocabulary item	1		2	Answers question from teacher	3	1	
Praises				Responds to another learner	1	1	
Criticizes	5	4					
Asks a display question		2					
Asks a referential question	1	7					

School: **S1** Grade: **7** Observer: **Mikaela** Subject: **English**
Teacher: **T2** Lesson (min): **60** Observation No: **1** Date: **8/4-22**

Teacher interaction	L1	L2	Mix	Student interaction	L1	L2	Mix
Giving instructions	8	10	5	Asks the teacher a question	11		
Explains a grammatical point	9	5	2	Talks to another learner	6		
Explains the meaning of a vocabulary item	3	4	3	Answers question from teacher	7	9	
Praises	3	9		Responds to another learner	5		
Criticizes	2						
Asks a display question	1	2					
Asks a referential question	5	12	3				



School: S2 Grade: 7 Observer: Mikaela Subject: English
Teacher: T3 Lesson (min): 60 Observation No: 1 Date: 12/4-22

Teacher interaction	L1	L2	Mix	Student interaction	L1	L2	Mix
Giving instructions	7	4	10	Asks the teacher a question	15		
Explains a grammatical point	5			Talks to another learner	7	1	
Explains the meaning of a vocabulary item	10		2	Answers question from teacher	8	1	
Praises	3			Responds to another learner	1	1	
Criticizes	5	4					
Asks a display question	1	1					
Asks a referential question	8	2					

School: S2 Grade: 7 Observer: Mikaela Subject: English
Teacher: T4 Lesson (min): 60 Observation No: 1 Date: 12/4-22

Teacher interaction	L1	L2	Mix	Student interaction	L1	L2	Mix
Giving instructions	4	15	5	Asks the teacher a question	10	5	
Explains a grammatical point	10	5	2	Talks to another learner	7	3	
Explains the meaning of a vocabulary item	4	6	4	Answers question from teacher	7	12	2
Praises	3	12		Responds to another learner	4	2	
Criticizes	3						
Asks a display question	1	3					
Asks a referential question	4	14	2				



Appendix 5

Coding system

Teacher (T) / Learner (L)	Code	Category
T	L1	Use of Swedish
T	L2	Use of English
T	M	Use of both English and Swedish
T	Gi1	Giving instructions in Swedish
T	Gi2	Giving instructions in English
T	Eg1	Explaining a grammatical point in Swedish
T	Eg2	Explaining a grammatical point in English
T	Ev1	Explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item in Swedish
T	Ev2	Explaining the meaning of a vocabulary item in English
T	P1	Praising in Swedish
T	P2	Praising in English
T	C1	Criticizing in Swedish
T	C2	Criticizing in English
T	DQ1	Asking a display question in Swedish
T	DQ2	Asking a display question in English
T	RQ1	Asking a referential question in Swedish
T	RQ2	Asking a referential question in English
L	TQ1	Asking the teacher a question in Swedish
L	TQ2	Asking the teacher a question in English
L	AL1	Talks to another learner in Swedish
L	AL2	Talks to another learner in English



L	AQ1	Answering a question from the teacher in Swedish
L	AQ2	Answering a question from the teacher in English
L	RL1	Responds to another learner in Swedish
L	RL2	Responds to another learner in English
T & L	C	Codeswitching
T & L	TL	Translanguaging
T & L	LM	Language mode