On Terms with Speaking

Teachers’ views on intelligibility and correctness of phonological aspects of English in Swedish schools

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Sammanfattning

Denna kvalitativa studie undersöker gymnasielärarens inställning till begriplighet i engelskundervisning och bedömning utifrån styrdokumentens skrivning om uttal. Förhållningssätt till standarder och styrdokumentens framhållande av engelskämns kommunikativa funktion diskuteras dels i ljuset av att engelskan har blivit ett kontaktspråk mellan talare vars modersmål inte är engelska, dels genom att fokusera på uttal generellt och på frågeintonation specifikt.

Eftersom antalet icke infödda engelsktalande är vida fler än infödda och det är mycket svårt att nå upp till idealet att tala som en infödd, problematiserar forskare detta ideal, och framhåller strategier som effektiviserar kommunikation.


Keywords
Intelligibility, ELF, correctness, diversity, communicative framework
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Introduction

In the national curriculum for upper secondary school, *Läroplan, examensmål och gymnasiegemensamma ämnen för gymnasieskola 2011*, (henceforth referred to as Lgy 11) I perceived a gap between learning objectives in pronunciation and in the scope of input, since oral production ought to be “clearly and freely” whereas input should cater for comprehension of varieties of English. The Swedish terms reflect the recurrent terms ‘accuracy’ and ‘fluency’ in teacher training literature such as Harmer’s (2007). Sound production and prosodic features are both articulatory features that provide fluency and clarity, which in turn can be transformed into the term intelligibility. This dimension was deepened when I studied English as a Lingua franca, ELF, which is a cross-sectional scientific field of applied linguistics that has defined a shift in the status of English that has spread to the effect that it is an international contact language. It relates to the term World English that gathers the different regional varieties of English that have emerged in specific part of the globe.

In English Language Teaching, ELT, the goals are to attain native-like pronunciation. This can seem to be difficult to question, but researchers such as Seidlhofer (2009) show that what happens with English when it is used in international settings. Teaching English as a foreign language, EFL, often entails imitation and aims of Standard British English, StBrE, or General American, GA, whereas the majority of ELF-interlocutors use a language that is not their L1. Teaching can entail a focus on how speakers convey content efficiently, but a native speaker of English or an NSE-oriented approach often focuses more on form. Since most students are likely to interact with other non-native speakers of English, NNSEs, once they have finished school, linguists advocate an ELF-oriented phonology syllabus.

**Purpose**

The aim of the present study is to investigate and analyse teachers’ views on what is important to teach and to assess in relation to standards and function, since intonation and stress in interrogatives are regarded as important for intelligibility in international settings as well as in settings with NSEs. The sociolinguistic standpoint that learners can be efficient communicators thanks to pragmatic skills will also be looked into. Primary sources are the curriculum for upper secondary schools and interviews with teachers.

These are my research questions:

1. How do teachers instruct phonological aspects such as intonation and stress?
2. What are teachers’ views of the criteria in the curriculum as to assessing intelligibility?

3. What are teachers’ views on pronunciation and phonology regarding sociolinguistic means to achieve communicative efficiency and traditional values of standardness?

**List of abbreviations and acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELF</td>
<td>English as a Lingua Franca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENL</td>
<td>English as a Native Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>General American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSE</td>
<td>Native speaker of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNSE</td>
<td>Non-native speaker of English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Swedish as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second language Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSL</td>
<td>Learner of Swedish as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StBrE</td>
<td>Standard British English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE</td>
<td>World English(es)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background**

This section will bring an overview of concepts relevant for learning languages and teaching English as a foreign language and then follows a description of the ELF-paradigm. This is followed by a comparison of EFL and ELF.

English has been taught in Sweden since the 1930’s with different learning outcomes. Ideals and learning aims have changed from correctness achieved by imitation to a pedagogic communicative framework focusing on interaction. To use Thornbury & Slades’ terminology (2006), pedagogy today serves transactional, informational or interpersonal communicative goals.

From competing with German as a popular foreign language, English has won the first place and is a compulsory school subject in Sweden. Indeed, the status of English in Sweden is strong to the point
that some think of it as a second language rather than a foreign one. It is however taught under the label of a foreign language.

**Second Language Acquisition**

This section will describe major theoretical concepts of relevance to the study.

Interrogatives are in Crystal’s words (2004, pp 48-51) “sentences which seek information”. Wh-questions, alternative questions and yes or no-questions have an interrogative structure. Tag questions have the interrogative structure at the end and they require a yes or no-answer, too. Crystal points at the role of intonation in tags as when the final tone rises it means asking for an answer and when it falls, the speaker actually tells a fact.

**Theoretical Concepts and terminology**

In SLA research, much is said about what happens when people acquire a second language compared to acquiring their first. The features that are simply acquired in the first one have to be processed cognitively in an L2 and success depends on many factors. What happens from a cognitivist standpoint is that the learners discover differences and similarities. The linguistic proficiency in the L1 is used to process features in the second and enables learners to hypothesize, to generalise and to question.

Some, but not all research work done in SLA has made its way into guidance books or have been incorporated into teacher training programmes. In their book on relations between pedagogy and SLA research, Ellis & Shintani show Kumaravadivelu’s findings (2014, p 32) that there are three main conceptual lines along which pedagogical discussion are often held: the language-centred, the learner-centred and the learning-centred types of approaches. CLT, or communicative learning teaching, is closest to a learner-centred approach. Relevant to phonology is the audio lingual method that Kumaravadivelu places next to language-centred approach (henceforth “approach” is the term used for what have also been called teaching methods). The audio lingual method stresses input and bans use of L1 when learning the L2. This can be explained by its ideational closeness to behaviourism, which sees errors as harmful and to be avoided. Although errors are signs of bad habits, they can be rectified by corrective feedback.

However, feedback to oral production creates pedagogical challenges to rapport, the relation between learner and teacher. Furthermore, language is not warranted to develop if teachers recast or corrects while learners are speaking, Ellis & Shintani explain (2014, pp 280-281). This may depend on the linear nature of speaking, eg it happens in real time, and requires attention and focus on the part of the listeners compared to readers, who can go back to the text to check their understanding. Additionally, oral activities play a central role for identity, very much due to its interactional nature.
As we have seen, not meeting the standards has been problematic. The term interlanguage may imply that the speaker has not yet arrived at the desired linguistic destination or that speaking is variable and not fixed. According to Thornbury & Slade (2006, p 101) it refers to a variable linguistic system and it describes speaking that shows signs of L1 phonologically, syntactically or lexically, when the speaker code switches. We can compare this view to how Long (1991) expounds on the matter of focus on form in interaction that Ellis & Shintani show (2014, p 144). What is elsewhere called top-bottom learning entails that learners discover rules and patterns through experience, e.g. speaking. Long’s view that these discoveries are what constitutes development has come in use under the umbrella term of Task Based language Teaching. Related to this problem-solving work is sociocultural theory, inspired by Vygotsky, that sees interaction as the most important means of developing linguistic proficiency. When learners negotiate form and meaning, their joint efforts create understanding.

The comprehensible output hypothesis by Allen (referred to in Ellis & Shintani (2014, p 207), was one result of a discussion on participation as the deciding factor. Swain picked up the glove and moved forward to sociocultural theory, as she emphasized collaborative dialogues and mediation for linguistic development. That is, if language is used as a tool for thinking (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p 217).

Therefore, in interaction, communicative strategies pertaining to sociolinguistics may be more helpful than correctives. Phrases, chunks, idioms and other formulaic features can be helpful in transactional situations of the information retrieving type. Research work done outside of the educational setting by Mauranen (2006) found that interlocutors with different L1 prevented misunderstandings by resorting to proactive resources by engaging in clarifications and repair strategies.

We have seen that the pragmatic skills of paraphrasing, reformulating, repetition and asking for clarification have showed to be important. If Swain’s (2006) claim that interlocutors will learn through language is taken into account, it makes sense that plurilingual learners who code switch make use of pragmatic skills.

Walker (2010) explains one of the more prominent features for intelligibility, nuclear stress, as the part of an utterance that is highlighted by intonation. Fluent speakers mark prominent words in word groups and they make pauses in the right places. In 1994, Dalton & Seidlhofer (referred to in Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p 11) addressed “the crucial and all-pervasive role that intonation and key in particular plays in conversation management, influencing the management of topics and of turns, the identification of information status and the signaling degree of speaker involvement.”

All this can have implications for teaching. In their pedagogical construct, teachers can practice CLT actual language use or oral production in interaction, deductively or inductively. Furthermore, it can be claimed that oral production is a cornerstone in identity construction. Following that argument, learning can benefit from instruction that accepts variation in output, diversity in individual styles and in levels of proficiency.
Practical aspects
Conversation means symmetric rights to the participants, according to Thornbury & Slade (2006). In classroom situations where a teacher is present, participants have asymmetrical rights. This is a key difference between authentic communicative situations outside classrooms where no linguistic “judge” is present.

Contrastively, speaking as performance presents other demands on the speaker than in interaction, of relevance to the discourse of authenticity as well as on what English will be used for. Thornbury & Slade also point to the fact that “conversational ability is not necessarily a sign of a sophisticated grammar” (2006, p 214). Albeit, communicative efficiency can be helped by making learners aware of form, according to Long’s study and theory from 1991 explained in Ellis and Shintani (2014, p 144).

English as a Lingua Franca, ELF

Concepts and terminology
Practical aspects
According to Jenkins, the differences between English as a foreign language and as a lingua franca play an important role for teaching, since

ELF belongs to the global Englishes paradigm in which all Englishes are seen as sui generis rather than as attempts to approximate a native speaker version, whereas EFL belongs to the modern foreign languages paradigm, according to which the learning of English is no different from the learning of any other foreign language, with the goal of learning being to approximate the native speaker of the language as closely as possible. (2010, p 24)

Walker and Jenkins proscribe a pedagogical approach to teaching that addresses ELF-related aspects of phonology. They recommend that teachers advocate a linguistic approach that is positive towards multilingualism and sees language as a tool to serve us instead of the reverse. Jenkins also presents a correlation of what is teachable and possible to assess with what is possible to learn. It is no secret that the influence of L1 can create disturbances in pronunciation, but discrepancies in the phonological systems can make it difficult for learners to perceive and therefore to produce single phonemes as well as combined sounds. Jenkins (2000) reports that consonant clusters can present substantial problems in ELF, but other features traditionally taught in ELT such as the distinction of voiced and unvoiced sibilants do not impede communication. Of relevance to this study is that tonic (nuclear) stress placement “is crucial for intelligibility in international language teaching”, as Jenkins says (2000, p 24). Her study showed that intonation was the indicator that provided most reliably to intelligibility when the other cues for question formulation failed: form and interrogative pronoun or adverb.
Surprisingly, interrogative only did not warrant effectiveness, but rising intonation in final position helped.

To summarize, what Jenkins and other researchers of ELF have found is that approximation to an NS-like pronunciation is not only unnecessary to communicate effectively in international settings, but it is also an unrealistic goal.

EFL and SLA versus ELF

It is common to hear custodian attitudes towards language in times of change. Practitioners and linguists express doubts, fearing that an international version of English challenges established norms and standards. Whatever position taken, the pedagogical ramifications of linguistic change are difficult to embrace for any party. On one hand, NNSE-practitioners may take a positive position to standards considering the status they have gained through hard work learning English, and on the other, NSEs are likely to experience a threat that the unquestioned prestige concomitant to being an NSE is now being eroded.

Firth and Wagner called for a change in the view of SLA between 1997 and 2007, says Tarone (2007) in her report of their model of the sociolinguistic processes that inform the development of SLA. The view that language develops in social context and that it is socially mediated thereby latches on to Vygotsky and sociocultural theory.

So, where traditional EFL pedagogy focuses on output, the ELF paradigm converges with SLA theories in the view that social contexts, each with their own discourses build language skills rather than proficiency. The dyad can also converge in the view on errors as signs of progress. Those who regard them as deficiency may do so based on the belief that errors are harmful, in a behaviourist-oriented approach to learning mentioned above.

Jenkins’ phonological syllabus

As to phonological building blocks, the Lingua Franca Core refers to Jenkins’ findings of the features that are important for communicative efficiency. The phonological features that are central for intelligibility in international interactions are:

1. Rhotic [ɻ] [used] rather than other varieties of /r/ [i.e. rhotic, and using an approximant realization of /r/] Intervocalic /t/ rather than [ɾ]
2. Variations of [θ], [ð] and [ɫ] allowed i.e substitutes for these sounds, such as /f, v/ or /s, z/ or /t, d/ for /[θ], [ð]/ were permissible and do not impede communication,
3. Other phonetic requirements: Aspiration of the fortis plosives /p/, /t/ and /k/ Fortis/lenis differential effect on preceding vowel
4. Consonant clusters: No omission of sounds in word initial consonant clusters. Omission permissible in middle and final clusters
5. Vowel sounds: Maintenance of distinction between long and short vowels L2 regional variation acceptable (provided that it is consistent), [ɜː] to be kept
6. Tonic/Nuclear stress: Nuclear stress production and placement when used appropriately to signal meaning (2000, pp 158-159)

Besides presenting a syllabus of elements vital for intercultural intelligibility, Jenkins also asks: “Intelligible for whom?”. Her question relates to the topic of linguistic ownership and of who ought to judge pronunciation: an NSE or an NNSE listener. Walker (2010) sets intelligibility apart from accentedness by referring to Derwing & Munro’s (2008) results: “A speaker can have a very strong accent, yet be perfectly understood.” (in Walker 2010, p 18). Walker’s handbook on how to teach relevant features in phonology for international intercultural communication builds on Jenkins’ work. He asserts that pronunciation features are the main source for communicative breakdowns and not, as one might think grammatical ones.

Seidlhofer declares: “It may be that what is distinctive about ELF lies in the communicative strategies that its speakers use rather than in their conformity to any changed set of language norms” (2009). Björkman (2010) goes further by saying that pragmatic ability, and not proficiency, is critical for communicative effectiveness. Some examples of strategies for understanding are to label speech acts: “it’s a question”, to paraphrase: “so you mean that...”, to repeat others’ utterances and to explain and to request.

To conclude, there are more to speaking than pronunciation, however important the phonological parts are to the whole.

**Theories and curriculum**

Lgy11, the Swedish national curriculum is the manual for teachers, setting the agenda for everyday work with teaching and assessment. Here follows a brief outline of how its content relates to theories defined above.

To begin with, the commentary appendix, *Alla kommentarer för engelska*, to Lgy11 states that teaching is to be conducted in English. Here, the role of oral input is emphasized. Since the text declares that teaching is supposed to support self-esteem and motivation through linguistic ability, it may also be understood as an indication of oral input as a motivating factor for students to develop communicative strategies. The text explains its previous wording “eleven kan, vill och vågar” thus: “The verbs can, wants to and dares all stress linguistic proficiency and affective abilities regarding attitudes.” (Lgy11, p 6)

In the grading criteria section, oral presentation is separated from oral interaction. For the latter, Lgy11 correlates to the idea that accuracy and fluency can be defined as measurable skills in earlier SLA
Fluency relates to linguistic flow and that the student speaks without interruptions or hesitations that would disturb communication. In the curriculum, correctness is regarded as an attainable goal: "Through teaching students should also be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language in speech and writing, and also the ability to express themselves with variation and complexity" (Lgy11, p 1).

By stating that "Fluency relates to linguistic flow and that the student speaks without interruptions or hesitations that would disturb communication", the curriculum also declares that learners’ linguistic development happens in social interaction. (Alla kommentarer för engelska, pp 6-7). This view is found also in the section on production, where learners’ goals are to: "produce oral language and different texts on their own and jointly with the support of different aids and medias." (Lgy11) The grading criteria are clarity, fluency, and for the highest grade (A) the ability of maintaining a discussion, seen in the criterion in English 5 for upper secondary school: ”In addition, students can choose and use well-functioning strategies to solve problems and improve their interaction, and take it forward in a constructive way.” (English version of syllabus for English, p 4)

As Global Englishes are presented as varieties in their own right, some linguists have made attempts to standardize English for international purposes. Here, the term ELF refers to descriptions of how English is used among NNSEs. As Jenkins (2000) states, ELF relates to WE, but is not linked to regional boundaries. The curriculum takes this development into consideration as it emphasizes linguistic variety as well as the communicative functions rather than formal correctness (in the commentary section, p 3). Lgy11 defines the communicative focus thus: “Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills cover both reception, which means understanding spoken language and texts, and production and interaction, which means expressing oneself and interacting with others in speech and writing, as well as adapting their language to different situations, purposes and recipients” (Lgy11, p 1). The excerpt corresponds with sociolinguistic and socioculturalist theories.

Another reference is made to multilingualism and diversity which closes in on the ELF-paradigm: ”Teaching should encourage students' curiosity in language and culture, and give them the opportunity to develop plurilingualism where skills in different languages interact and support each other.” (Lgy11, p 1)

Moreover, the topic of extramural sources is touched upon together with a declaration on metalinguistic awareness: ”Teaching should also help students develop language awareness and knowledge of how a language is learned through and outside teaching contexts.” (Lgy11, p 1)

So far, Lgy11 converges with a communicative language teaching approach in that it paves the road for teaching “sociolinguistic appropriateness”, which are Ellis & Shintani’s words (2014, p 33). Given what is stated in Lgy11 on goals for output, teachers are free to choose either an NSE-approximation
ideal or a corpus research based syllabus for pronunciation. Teachers can provide role models with an expectation of NSE-like oral production on the grounds that there will be learners who want to become native-like in their pronunciation or who want to know how to ask questions in the “right manner”. Of the plethora of course books on the matter, one will suffice: Brazil (1995), who declared that the use of rising and falling intonation and pitch signal dominance and control, especially the rise-fall-rise pattern. This is contradicted by Levis’ research (1999), indicating that intonation in yes/no-questions “plays a minimal role in successful interaction between speakers from different varieties of English”.

Method and Material

This section will describe what sources the study used, what procedures were chosen and why, problems adjacent to them, followed by the methods of analysis chosen, equally with justifications.

Selection

The information sources were selected and not randomly assembled. When I searched for informants through my social network, the advantage of interviewing informants who take an interest in the subject was provided. I was interested in studying pedagogues who were bilingual themselves or had such professional training to qualify for teaching a diverse linguistic array of learners if ages ranging from teenagers to adults. Initially, I observed two lessons in an upper secondary school. These gave me ideas of what to look for, but the observations will not be treated in the results and discussions sections. The observations were made in the classroom of a teacher (teacher A) in an upper secondary school who was unable to respond to the full and who was unable to listen to the recordings. When the search for upper secondary teacher seemed vain, I found a compulsory school teacher (teacher C) willing to participate, but these interview data were discarded when teacher B and D turned up. If I were to use data from compulsory school I would run a risk of complicating matters since compulsory school is governed by a curriculum of their own.

The schools represented here, B and D, each cater for more than 500 students but differ with respect to socioeconomic and demographic representation. School B is centrally situated, with students coming from a vast area south of Stockholm and the students are of diverse ethical origin and adults. School D is an upper secondary north of Stockholm, with few immigrant students.

Triangulation

After the interview questions I was inspired by the observations and by Björkman’s (2010) findings of final rising intonation to create a list of utterances that in different ways deviated from standards and
norms. She found that the use of final rising tones was the most efficient cue to mark an utterance as a question when syntax, interrogative pronoun or adverb was missing. The incitement to include tag questions with different final tones and non-standard tags also came from experience from internship practice, where teachers instructed tag questions, but also on findings in the VOICE corpus of recurrent invariable tag questions in ELF interactions, such as ‘isn’t it? No? By adding a recorded sequence of 16 utterances that the informants listened to, the interview data was meant to be provided with additional data, in accordance with Denscombe’s definition of triangulation (1998, p 71). The tag endings were created to resemble corpora based findings of utterances with invaried tag endings in ELF-settings. Tag questions are held to be significant for StBrE but are not seen as GA components. I varied the rising and falling final intonation in order to elicit response of understanding, i.e. intelligibility despite non-standard syntax with the last two utterances being in fact one statement pronounced with a final falling and a rising tone respectively. This material was included in the interviews, except for in the case of informant B, whose responses were added at a second meeting.

**Informants**

**Informant B**
Female, age 34, teacher of English and religion in adult education school since 2001. Her L1 is Balutchi, a minority language in Iran, close to Kurdish “and I master Bosnian, Turkish, Arabic and I know some words in Hindi from movies and have got some influences from Polish, Russian as well via Bosnian.” She grasps some Spanish via English.

**Informant D**
Male, age 52. His linguistic background is Swedish as L1 and he lived for many years in the U.S and in Great Britain. He has taught English, Swedish as a second language, SAS, and Swedish in Swedish upper secondary school for 25 years.

**Procedure**
The study is mainly qualitative, with quantitative elements. I observed two lessons in one school (A) which sparked the idea of variable intonation. I interviewed four teachers in four different schools. Of the four informants, three were able to respond fully, one of whom (C) is a teacher in the compulsory school and in the end I chose two (B and D). In addition to the interviews, informants B, C and D listened to 16 utterances that I had recorded for the purpose.
Qualitative data

Interviews
I wanted to interview monolingual and multilingual teachers with learners of each category, since I assumed that the latter would be prone to express views on phonological variations that relate to ELF and WE. In so doing, the study took a teachers’ perspective.

By following a list of questions but letting the informants speak freely and encouraging them to extend, I wanted to gather data in both a holistic and detailed way, according to Holme & Solvang’s (1997) definitions. The semi-structured interview procedure closes in on how theory-based case studies are conducted, according to Denscombe (1998). Although I tried my best not to reveal my attitude to the informants’ replies, my standpoints may have been visible to the informants. The interviews were conducted mostly in Swedish and I translated them afterwards into English. When transcribing the recordings, I found new questions which I asked by e-mail.

Recording of 16 utterances
I met teacher B twice at the university campus and teacher D once at his school. After the first interview that lasted 61 minutes, I created the list of utterances. Informant D was available later, so by then I had the list ready and the interview included them. In total, teacher B, C and D all listened to and commented on the recorded material.

Ethical aspects

Informed consent
Prior to observing and interviewing, I informed students and teachers of the topic of my study and of how I planned to conduct it. I offered to let the teachers to read my texts to make sure they would not be misunderstood. I recorded the talks despite the possible effect on the informants because I wanted to focus on conversational flow that is lost when I have to take notes. Another reason was the advantage of following up after listening. The informants were informed that the recordings would be erased after use. Anonymity was guaranteed to all, to warrant the research ethical code of informed consent and participation (Holme & Solvang, 1997, p 335).

Data treatment
I transcribed the interviews by listening to the sound files several times to look for details, in correspondence with Denscombe’s (1998) description of criteria for case studies. I transcribed, printed the transcriptions and counted words and phrases related to previously defined themes.
Methods and procedures of analysis

The interviewees’ replies to my questions were combined with their spontaneous reflections. The data was categorized using colour marking pens in the transcribed material to sort out views and justifications behind teaching practice. Each topic was given a subtitle under which the responses were gathered.

A lot of the assembled data led to numerous ideas that had to be discarded. Some of them are connected to learning a second or a foreign language, others to teaching practice and organisation of tasks.

Reliability

Informants who take an interest in the topic will be able to provide in-depth answers, as Holme & Solvang (1998) say. Nonetheless, there seems to be a risk of positive bias in that teacher B was familiar with the ELF-paradigm. She was also more available on a short notice than teacher D. Since I was unable to observe the informants’ teaching, the study might have weak reliability and there is no other data on how the informants teach than what they said.

Validity

By listening several times to the interviewees’ responses and by comparing them, I was able to back up my initial impression of the informants’ views and standpoints. However, the shorter span of time given for teacher D may have affected the results.

The process of translating from my and the informants’ L1 also adds to risking discrepancies in semantic nuances. One disadvantage of few sources is the slim possibility to generalize.

Results

In the following, the results will be presented thematically.

Data types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Informant/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>61 minutes</td>
<td>Teacher in adult education school, Informant B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to the recording of 16 utterances</td>
<td>23 minutes</td>
<td>Informant B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview and 16 utterances</td>
<td>61 minutes</td>
<td>Teacher in upper secondary school, Informant D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.
Interviews and responses

Informant B

The informant teaches adult students of both genders. Her student groups are plurilingual and heterogeneous “with older academics who have studied the language in theory and younger drop outs from compulsory school.”

Instruction

Teacher B said “I teach all the English sounds of pronunciation and teach the students the differences between for example voiced and unvoiced consonants and I make parallells to (un)usual sounds in different languages. Then they practise the sounds that they find most problematic, by discovering more words that contains these features. Mostly I use the same planning (of teaching) on all levels.”

The informant emphasized intonation and stress as markers of interrogative functions as paramount for intelligibility. She said that she instructs intonation and stress in utterances overtly, because her students ought to understand what constitutes a question and the function of stress as a conveyor of meaning.

The informant said that she teaches strategies as well as suprasegmental features. She is aware of the LFC and she teaches individuals with a great span of linguistic background.

Assessment

Teacher B’s replies indicate an NSE-focus in assessing, although she emphasised learners’ right to keep their personal, individual accents. When assessing students, the informant stated that they are to be understood by speakers of English. She stressed a broad range and flexibility in teaching which justifies her teaching StBrE as well as GA. GA is a salient feature in her own pronunciation.

She said that it is important to read Skolverket’s texts using “your own judgment, with a pinch of salt. Assessment requires independent thinking and reasoning.”

L1 influence on English

As to L1 influence from Swedish, teacher B encountered grammatical instances. She said she thinks that influence on pronunciation, be it from Swedish or other L1’s, is very important because it allows for signs of individuality. The informant expressed a positive view towards influence from Swedish, because “We’re used to the dialect. It’s not as enervating to listen to as French, where speakers always end with a rising final tone. I have to focus to be able to follow that kind of accent.”

She seldom hears young native Swedes put stress in the wrong place, “compared to people who are ten years older, who sometimes have trouble producing voiced sibilants which the younger students distinguish from unvoiced, and the same goes for fricatives.”
Teacher B expressed a benign attitude towards WE. She did not think that an Indian accent can affect intelligibility, and “It’s about what your ears like to hear. If you’ve decided you don’t like it, you’re not comfortable with a dialect (then) you won’t understand it, because your primary attitude can impede you, a hindrance that often is unconscious. Open your ears and recognize, recognize an accent.” Influence on pronunciation is a topic in her class room practice. She lets her students know that an Indian accent is also English. “It has been of use there for two hundred years. No one can claim it isn’t valid or right!”

Teacher B said she sees input and output as equally important for development. It becomes clear that tolerance to varieties and keeping a listening ear to other perspectives and aspects, are a motto for her teaching. More than once students have told her of teachers whose condescending attitudes vis-à-vis their pronunciation have crushed their confidence.

When assessing, teacher B masks her listening in order to elicit speech from the really shy students, as speech anxiety is something she is very familiar with. Her personal experience of being “utterly shy”, especially when speaking Swedish in front of an audience, has come to use as a motivating ingredient in her teaching.

As a contrast, she enjoys speaking English. Then she talks “as another person. It’s like acting”, she added, “and I like to use my teacher me”. Her own accent is a result of input and influence from media. This is clearly one important source of English also for Swedish adolescents, she added. “With all the possibilities to not only listen, but to interact through Skype and such, they are bilingual today. English is not a foreign language anymore”.

**Problematic issues and breakdowns**

Teacher B said that students who do not say much in their first course may very well be more extroverted in a successive course, when they team up with a completely new set of students, “where they will be completely unknown”.

The informant said that she has students who suffer from speaking anxiety to the extent that they cannot stand in front of the rest of the group. Knowledge of their speaking anxiety makes her treat these individuals differently in assessment. “I place myself in front of one group pretending I listen to them, but in fact I listen to another group. When they think my attention is directed elsewhere, they speak” she explained. She also adjusts the assessment setting accordingly, by letting students make recordings at home that they publish on YouTube. The teacher assesses without the student being present.

As to communicative breakdowns, teacher B could recall lexical gaps leading to problems. “The students all have dictionaries and (they) flicker through them all the time”.

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Response to the 16 utterances
Teacher B said: "It's about how to ask questions using the right word order and use the right intonation. At first you stated something and then you turned it into a question. After that, you put an erroneous verb as well, have instead of haven’t. Sometimes it was the wrong melody, sometimes the wrong verb.” The informant categorized “you have seen the film didn’t you”, and “this isn’t your cat ” (Appendix 2) as incorrect in the doubling of negatives.

The informant did not see every utterance as a statement, since intonation and tag transformed them into questions. She teaches tag question in the basic courses and sometimes even at upper secondary level course, as a repetition. She justified this as a means of avoiding misunderstandings, and by her view that “…in StBrE they’re more meticulous, whereas in GA you can settle with a ‘Right?’ That’s a bit of cheating.” It is important that students get this right in exams, she added. She said that she uses tags in her GA-influenced English, because “there is a more formal GA variety”.

Intonation conveys attitude
Teacher B’s reacted to the recorded material as attitudinal. “Where you speak of the cat, you say this isn’t your cat, right, you’ve stolen it? There is attitude and when you ask about the film you question, criticize the student indirectly: You’ haven’t seen it, have you? ”. The informant’s use of the pronoun implies that she contextualized the recorded material as a situation in which I exposed an attitude towards another person, possibly a student.

On the question of if these features would make the utterances difficult to understand outside of the class room, the interviewee responded; ”You never saw the film, the context expresses that you ask ”Why are you talking about it, you never saw it? Attitude”. She said that the first and the last can be unintelligible, the last one being “a challenge…(it’s) a directive and then a question mark but then you continued so…it becomes difficult to grasp, sort of ’hey, will there be anything else? Is it a question, or will it continue…some kind of hesitation.”

The informant pointed at context and paralinguistic means of communication. “In a context where you can hear tone you can still understand, and the facial expression will make it possible to read in your face your attitude and your set of values. But in a telephone conversation, it could be misunderstood. “And the last one, where you make a statement but don’t finish it….’You will hand it in on Thursday’ is a directive in the falling final. It would not work as a question.”

Informant D
Teacher D teaches in the technical programme, and the majority of his students are male and D said he teaches primarily native Swedes.
Instruction
Teacher D’s instruction is explicit in that he teaches the grammatical elements in how to ask or form questions such as yes/no-questions and the do construction:”…but this is rather easy and they ought to have learnt this.” The informant continued: “I don’t teach intonation or stress but I emphasize the importance of being polite, as accommodating to situations and in expressions with would and such. I wonder why, maybe because it doesn’t seem to be a problem, or perhaps because I don’t think it’s a problem.”

“Tag questions are included in my crash course in English one and two because then I’ve tried to make a concentrate of all necessary grammar”. He considered tag questions as a measuring tool of analytical abilities and memorizing, “…that is, a pretty high understanding of English grammar”, he added.

Teacher D mentioned minimal pairs, and reported problems to occur mostly in distinction of /æ:/ and /e/, i.e. bad and bed, and occasionally between bear and beer. He intervenes every time he hears someone make an error in minimal pairs: ”…because it’s important, everything that impedes understanding the way I conceive of it and the difficulties to comprehend I have to meddle in.”

He sees intelligibility issues occur in morpheme-, phrase- and sentence levels. He said: “When there is a long…a phrase that is weird, not just minimal pairs, I say: ‘Rephrase one more time. Did you…? Sorry, can you say that again?, that sort of thing I’d say”.

Assessment
Teacher D said that he has never raised grades because of pronunciation performance that approximated StBrE or GA. Rarely, and then only because it was difficult to understand, did he downgrade a student, “or if I had the impression that a native speaker wouldn’t understand.”

L1 influence on English
When teaching SAS, teacher D said that he helps students with English too, especially one student from Afghanistan, for ten minutes each session. Syntactically, some of his L1 interferes with intelligibility, such as doubling of the subject, but not phonologically. “Considering his age there ought to be more disturbance than there is”, the informant concluded. He replied to the question if he has encountered English strongly influenced by Swedish phonology, that his pupils “pronounce very well regardless of what variety they speak. Some have difficulties to pronounce simple v, to distinguish /dj/ and /tʃ/ and some say /kɹəntri/.”

”They can speak whatever kind of accent they like but they should be consistent, we have said. Most of the students speak an American variety, except for in “After Eight” and “after shave”, because this is something they’ve heard all their lives, but this is minor stuff. But then, most teachers speak British English. I think there’s still a difference in status and prestige in that many teachers think that we should teach British pronunciation. This is more of an aesthetic issue, and I told students previously
that they ought to be consistent, but I don’t anymore, because there are very few deviations. There are grammatical deviations, but in phonetics seldom…so that it becomes unimportant.”

He accepts that varieties are presented by actors in order to show various prosody patterns and accents in course books. “For instance, when talking about oil production in Angola, there is a need for the appropriate accent to illustrate this. Apparently, we could teach any kind of English, as long as it exists somewhere”, the informant said, and he stated later on:”We don’t teach English in order for other Swedes to understand it.”

Problematic issues and breakdowns
Teacher D teaches two groups of students that differ significantly as to speaking. One group simply does not function, as they shout rather than speak, and they never or hardly ever utter a word in English voluntarily. This contrasts starkly with the other group, where seven students are proficient to the grade level A and where students interact in English most of the time. There is however one student who never utters a word in English, except if he is unaware of the teacher’s presence.

Teacher D described breakdowns in student interaction as when “one pupil cannot find the phrase in English for what s/he intends to say and then chooses to turn silent or takes a long detour, such as a paraphrase, to express what they intended or that the turn taking does not work because someone is dominant that is when the communication of the group of four formation stops.”

Response to the 16 utterances
As to the sixteen utterances, teacher D saw incorrectness as intruding on intelligibility: “The wrong tag makes me start to think about something else than content and so I’m lost for the rest of it. Therefore, these issues impede my understanding.” In the 16 utterances, the informants found non-standard form (incorrect) tag endings. Informant D found that this impeded his comprehension. He said that although some of the tag questions were incorrect, he did not think they would become incomprehensible even to a native speaker. In his view, it was their resemblance to the Swedish phrase “eller hur” that made teaching tag questions justifiable. This argument carries the comparative approach that is visible in Lgy11.

Summary of results
This section lists the important results in connection the research questions.

How teachers instruct phonological aspects
Teachers instructed phonological aspects overtly by examples and by letting students practise, compare and produce in general accordance with the communicative framework.
Intonation is central for intelligibility to Teacher B but is not given any significance by Teacher D. To teacher B interrogatives are important elements to teach, and stress is taught as a means of conveying meaning. Teacher B emphasized intelligibility in terms of consonant distinction of voiced and unvoiced [s], [z] versus [t] and [θ] and stress as a conveyer of meaning. She referred to suprasegmental linguistic features and did not mention elision of vowels or contracted forms.

Teacher D was in strong favour of formal aspects of grammar, which affected his understanding in areas pertaining to phonology. As to pronunciation and phonology, he regarded regionally situated varieties of English as valid. Since he was not in favour of pragmatic skills, it can be assumed that he does not teach repetitions and reformulation.

It appeared that students frequently fall back to speaking their common language Swedish, and that these teachers find it problematic. Teacher D told of a student who never speaks a word in English: "He simply refuses”.

**Assessment criteria in relation to intelligibility**

Both informants referred to collegial discussions as vital to form an assessment basis, claiming that professional experience is central when judging and forming an opinion of students’ proficiency levels.

Both agreed that the terms employed in Lgy11 can be translated into intelligibility, and they both reported to have an NSE in mind when assessing. They shared the view that the assessment criteria in the curriculum as to intelligibility are rather vague. They did however agree with the idea that correctness is an attainable goal, which Lgy11 carries.

**Communicative efficiency versus standards and correctness**

Both teachers aim for NSE-approximation in their teaching. Teacher B expressed pro-diversity views and saw pragmatic skills as important, while teacher D expressed an anti-pragmatic view.

Teacher B favoured both linguistic diversity and strategies rooted in sociolinguistic definitions of what helps communicative efficiency. Both claimed to instruct structures pertaining to StBrE.

Both informants addressed the problem of silent students, which teacher B solved by masking assessment procedure and by adjusting the assessment situation. Teacher D could not rectify the matter with his current instruction or assessment practice.

Both informants recalled failing student interaction and said that lexical problems were a source of breakdowns. Surprisingly, pragmatic skills were not mentioned as a resource of importance or priority in communication. Teacher B said that she teaches pragmatics, without pointing at particulars. Teacher D even thought that paraphrasing and code switching were examples of communicative breakdowns.
Speaking anxiety

Both informants expressed views on oral production and pronunciation as ways of constructing identity. Teacher D’s example of classroom practice revealed a view on progressively more challenging situations for oral production as students went from paired work, via smaller groups to interaction in larger groups. Teacher B also referred to group and pair work. It can be assumed that their shared practice emanates from considerations of the challenges to self-esteem that oral production presents. This implies a correlation between speaking and construction of identity.

In assessment, both teachers advocate co-assessment to ensure reliable and equal grading, but they treat their students differently with respect to speaking anxiety. Teacher B considered the phenomenon as real and by organizing assessment accordingly the learner does not have to endure what s/he perceives of as inattentive or hostile audiences.

In contrast, teacher D was slightly sceptical towards some students’ speaking anxiety as real while others’ as putative and a means to avoid the threat of face in oral presentations. One conclusion is that he sees students as capable of avoidance strategies vis-à-vis assessment.

Discussion

Discussion of results

This section will discuss the outcome of the interviews conducted with teachers B and D.

To sum up, both teachers had previous knowledge of the ELF-paradigm, both agreed that fluency and accuracy are possible to interpret as intelligibility factors and they claimed to intervene or to give instant corrective feedback when intelligibility was endangered in student-student interactions or in student-teacher interaction. These statements point towards a focus on function that mostly adheres to what they included in phonology, namely the suprasegmental, lexical and phrasal levels. One linguistic feature that teacher B paralleled to intelligibility was the distinction of s-t. The functional focus in teacher D’s corrective feedback can be understood as a corrective recast, one that Long proscribes but Lyster asserts is counterproductive (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p 145). He says that it is important that the teacher does not shift focus from communicative efficiency to linguistic features. If the student used the wrong tense and the teacher understood the utterance, it is not productive to correct tense if it has not been the pedagogical issue at hand.

Teacher B justified teaching of s-z distinction with reference to NSE-oriented goals. If we look back to Jenkins’ (2000) claim that failure in distinguishing between voiced and unvoiced sibilants do not impede understanding, the attention given to it belongs to traditional ELT. On one hand it is possible to see ambiguity in teaching as a reflection of a curriculum that is ambiguous on the matter and on the other hand, students might require instruction in NSE-approximation, although this was not looked
into. The informant expressed a holistic view of the communicative framework by saying that she teaches strategies as well as suprasegmental features. Her combination of phonemes in articulation and learners’ comparisons of linguistic patterns close in on the learner-centered approach. She also seems to join Swain’s (2006) claim that interlocutors will learn through language.

As to communicative breakdowns, Walker stresses that “students’ success in speaking tasks is all too often limited because of problems they have with the pronunciation of key vocabulary” (2010, p 145). What often seems to be neglected is that by practicing nuclear stress the students is also led to understand the difference between auxiliary verbs and main verb. Walker shows that in any variety of English, the sentence “I CAN do it” is a bit odd, since the auxiliary is mainly given stress in its negative sense. As a consequence, lexical errors might very well in fact be a product of faulty pronunciation in grammar.

Teacher D’s view that paraphrasing and code-switching ware signs of communicative breakdowns corresponds more to the audiolingual method than to CLT, as explained by Ellis & Shintani (2014, p 32). If code-switching is placed within the same umbrella term of approximation as grammatical deviations (although it is lexical), it is proof of not keeping to standards. Then the fact that recent research by Walker (2010) points at errors on pronunciation are the main source for breakdowns rather than grammatical could be met by using arguments from Long (1991) whose focus on form has shown to improve general linguistic development. Nonetheless, it does not follow sociocultural theories, where interaction is central.

Where teacher D claimed to focus on differences in L1 phonetic systems he interpreted these as L1-interference to be avoided, with reference to NSE standards. His mentioning of elision and contracted forms also point at regional proximity as important. Moreover, it corresponds with the audio lingual method, which stresses inductively taught grammar and “performing dialogues scripted in L2”, as Ellis & Shintani explain (2014, p 227). He maintained that his own focus on accuracy affects his perception of intelligibility, despite the fact that he understands the content conveyed, on morpheme- and phrase level in tag questions.

Teacher B said that she compares Swedish to English, drawing on similarities and she referred to multilingualism as a competence, since she encourages her students “to stick to their Russian or Polish Englishes”, by which she meant their L1-influenced accents. By so doing, her view closes in on methods that require the use of L1, such as the translanguaging approach (Ellis & Shintani, 2014, p 227). Albeit, her response to the utterances was directed at grammar as well as at tonal patterns, being a vehicle for attitude. A focus on correctness is thereby visible as well as the traditional ELT view proclaimed by Brazil, that pitch announces “dominance and control” (1995). Hence, it is possible that she concurs to the idea that complex grammatical constructions require cognitive and mnemonic competence and that this justifies teaching tag questions.
As to the informants’ benevolent or tolerant attitudes towards speaker’s variability in pronunciation, it was noted that they related to NSEs as the target listener when assessing the target language. The English language as pertaining to a region or a place seems to be valid in teacher D’s opinion, with reference to WE in teaching and assessment. Considering that Lgy11 says little on the matter, teachers might have internalized inner circle preferences positions that they use as guidance, although there is no evidence of grades being affected. Teacher B’s considerate attitude towards ELF did however not affect her position towards NSEs as paragons and judges. Both examples can be related to what Walker points to when he presents concerns expressed of the effects of ELF, as he points at an undercurrent of confusing “different” with “deficient”, that would not be accepted to other systems (2010, p 52). Instead, ELF dynamically serves communicative purposes while being equally able to provide depth and precision as any native English.

To conclude, a local variety ought to be acceptable in accordance with both teachers’ reported view on the role of in WE-related input and what is stated in the curriculum. Since the question of who decides what is intelligible is only partly answered, teachers will be free to grade students much to their own likings, making it possible to pass in any accent or variety. The results from this small-scale study imply that the role of assessing oral production requires the teachers to assume a native-like identity themselves.

**Classrooms as a multilingual locus**

Although an international setting differs from a classroom in that there is no tutoring, no pedagogical goals to attain, it is still of interest to see if and how teachers address the varieties of phonetic systems represented in plurilingual student groups.

In school, interlocutors are learners, with rather homogenous proficiency levels. In the classrooms, norms are presented overtly and negative feedback can be provided in cases of non-standard production and non-standardness is not kept. All these factors differ from real international settings, according to Björkman (2013), where interlocutors are users or speakers of language, not learners. Informant D agreed: “The classroom is after all an artificial thing, since I speak English with my students, who also speak English.” His line of reasoning was that although classrooms can have multilingual learners, it is difficult to claim that classrooms in Sweden are ELF settings since students can use their common L1, Swedish, to resolve linguistic problems. One might want to protest against this argument with reference to the fact that students have the right to instruction in preparation for life after school. This right is stated in Lgy11.

Nevertheless, if we assume that the majority of teachers of English in Sweden are NNSEs, the task of assessing students’ intelligibility in oral production might benefit from a framework founded on an explicit acceptance of influence from other languages. This would improve validity in grading.
especially for learners whose first language is not Swedish, since they cannot be expected to use their intuition in intonation and stress, as Jenkins sets forth (2006).

When comparing the teachers’ linguistic backgrounds and their learner groups it became clear that speaking anxiety is a problem in both. One source might be found in teachers’ view that L1 can interfere. Walker addresses this and asserts that the importance of learners’ background changes significantly from an ELF approach (2010, p 139). He maintains that the concept of L1 as a ‘friend’ rather than a ‘foe’ would improve significantly if teachers use the learner’s L1 in order to achieve competence in ELF pronunciation. This requires a view that English can be and should be taught as an international language. If the diversity is taken seriously, teachers can do what Pedro Luchini did. He created a programme based on the LFC but adapted it to meet his Chinese learners’ needs (in Walker, 2010, pp 140-141).

**Shared views**

The interviewed teachers’ views on what constitute intelligibility in questions seem to converge with ELF in the communicative and functional goals of distinguishing them from statements by explicit teaching of the lexicogrammatical feature of word order. Intonation and stress were said to be useful to meet demands of politeness. The informants did not perceive of different final tones in tag questions as conveying different meaning, but as expressing demanding versus dubious attitudes. Hence, the “wrong” intonation would only vaguely influence intelligibility, as it is subjectively based on individual liking, and correctness would not be influenced if judged by tonal qualities alone. What the data might yield is that deviations from grammatical norms can render utterances unintelligible. It might imply that the teacher instructs grammar in several ways, possibly inspired by Long (in Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

**Varieties and preferences**

Both informants reported that StBrE is regarded as the preferable variety by teachers in general, while most of the learners speak with a GA accent. None of the informants voiced any preference for their students’ pronunciation, but both spoke GA themselves. Thus both seem to concur with Smith’s (1992) view, explained by Walker (2010) that accent and intelligibility are separate phenomena. Nevertheless, teachers have to be able to meet with students’ wishes for native-like pronunciation instruction in some form and the informants reported that their goal was to approximate to NSE-standards. By imitating NSEs, the teachers’ own pronunciation was affected positively, which made them recommend their students the same modus operandi. Behaviourist theories may underpin this line of reasoning that the informants claim is a motivator.

Furthermore, it seems to rely on assumptions of learners’ personal interests mediated through extramural input, which means learning resources outside the school environment. If learners do indeed interact orally outside school it might be helpful, but if learners’ extramural input mainly
consists of written interaction, such as internet tech forums and gaming, it may not. This may be the case of informant D’s students, who all take the technical program. The dysfunctional group might then benefit even more from instruction in conversation. As Harmer shows, student-teacher communication can provide feedback efficiently via digital platforms just as online courses (2007, p 194).

The concept of authenticity resonates in teachers’ construct to meet requirements of linguistic variation as well as in their spontaneous responses in the discussions of classroom situations. Input should reflect the world as it is, a world that includes not only different accents but lexical varieties, too, the informants agreed. But, at the other end of a continuum that begins with authenticity there is artificiality. For instance, the class room is a construed, artificial situation in the sense that teachers speak a foreign language with learners, informant D said. His and teacher B’s view that learners ought to imitate an idol, in order to create “typical”, or NSE-prosodic patterns, clashes with authenticity as an ideal on a personal level. It may adhere to post-modern eclecticism underpinning the idea that individuals can assume personas, and here it would serve educational purposes of linguistic development.

**Regional proximity and cognitive processing**

On the note of development, cognitive aspect of learning a language came into view in different ways. Teacher B justified teaching tag questions with reference to cultural aspects (“British are meticulous”), whereas teacher D argued that the cognitive analytical processes involved when producing them cater for intellectual practice. From this follows that being able to maintain verbal precision requires both analysis and memory skills, and therefore the ability to produce correctness, as in tag questions, is an achievement in itself, and does not a priori carry values in belonging to an inner circle culture. These are speculations. What is clear is that the distinguishing components of interrogatives and statements are lexicogrammatical in word order and phonological in nuclear stress and intonation. However, within the ELF paradigm, the importance of intonation to convey meaning is disputed since it is difficult to generalize and thus difficult to teach.

Moreover, attitude can be equally linked to intonation or it can be a part of a regional pattern. Similar views are to be found in Thornbury & Slade (2006, p 235) who state that politeness strategies are difficult to learn, with reference to Ellis’ observations from 1994. So, when informant D referred to politeness as an important component to instruct, he may be guided by his personal experience of StBrE or GA. This can be concluded partly from his views on the importance of regional proximity and partly from his emphasis on rolemodeling.

Nonetheless, the informants implicitly concurred to the idea in the ELF-paradigm that speakers have the right to express themselves phonologically. If acknowledged consistently, linguistic diversity can be a part in the construction of identity.
Discussion of methods
As mentioned, I conducted two observations in an upper secondary school. By walking around, my presence was marked and I had the impression that students’ oral activity changed at several occasions. This and limited access to classrooms made me abandon further observations, and I focused on case studies. These are used to elicit informants’ view of what is important. Therefore, the questions are useful to some extent, as the study cannot be said to reveal truth. What the interviewees say spontaneously will direct and lead. As Holme & Solvang (1998, pp 79-80) say, the qualitative procedure of interviewing has the advantage of flexibility in that the interviewer’s managing roles is lessened compared to other kind of studies. It is still possible to guide the interviewee by using semi structured questions.

Another advantage in using a qualitative methodology is the possibility to make additions to existing material. As the process of analysis is not linear, but rather pendulous from responses that lead to new questions back and forth, the data can be deep, as it came from few sources whose responses shed light on the question from several angles, according to Holme & Solvang (1998, p 79).

Conclusions

Possible effects and ramifications
I assumed that a multilingual teacher who teaches multilingual students would be more inclined to provide the variation in pronunciation that relates to ELF and WE. The results corroborate the assumption. Nonetheless, based on what informants reported, the reasons for teaching intonational patterns and placement of stress are mostly NSE-oriented. This can lend support from tradition and on the belief that input and instruction is provided in StBrE or GA, both agreed to be high status varieties.

Given the data of students’ reluctance to speak English in classrooms, they are at risk, since speaking is not a fixed item to memorize, but a skill that has to be practised. In relation to these dynamic characteristics, the concept of authenticity should be given attention. Students’ use of extramural material is often seen as a warranting usefulness and of interest to learners. The role of input also depends on the idea of authenticity, in that learners should be able to imitate “real” English, by preference spoken by natives. This was reported to be the case in both interviews, but both also reported speaking anxiety to be a problematic issue. Frequent use of digital resources that warrant oral practise in privacy might be a key success factor to overcome speaking anxiety. Harmer (2007) presents a variety of virtual learning.

This thesis takes, as has been said, teachers’ perspectives. If teachers take for granted that students are motivated to speak when they are given native English input and they contrariwise become silent,
teachers might want to ask for other solutions. In fact it might be a dire necessity when considering silent students’ rights of achieving higher grades.

Then, in order to explicate the NSE-approximation rationale, we can make use of the concept cultural capital from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. An NSE-oriented view in assessment will add to the students’ cultural capital of being judged by inner circle criteria. However, since a high prestige variety is not a defined criterion in the curriculum for higher grades, it becomes a covert criterion if used when assessing oral production.

To conclude, the positive view on diversity and the international linguistic and communicative reality that students will end up in after school are unsupported by the curriculum.

Judging by the informants responses as to assessment, there seems to be of particular interest to investigate international schools and NSE teachers. Informant D said that NSEs ought to know what is correct. This assumption could be examined by studying if NSE teachers are more prone to conforming to normativity than NNSEs. If yes, on what grounds – and how do they define normativity? If no, what would they focus on, and moreover, how do they define intelligibility?

To sum up, meeting the requirements of the communicative framework seems to justify provision of other features than traditional ELT features with an NSE-focus. We do not need to look further than to the recent trip abroad to see that we all use pragmatic features in interaction. At the restaurant or in the taxi, we repeat and clarify ourselves without hesitation. The question of correctness seldom, if ever, arises. These situations do not require complexity, admittedly, but neither do many of the tasks in use in ELT. If these components improve our communication, why do we not teach them? Seidlhofer (2011, p 184) sums it up with reference to Housen and Kuiken (2009) thus: “In short, tasks are designed not to develop communicative proficiency as such but proficiency in conforming to native-speaker norms.”

Admittedly, keeping all aspects of inclusivity in mind will be difficult. The curriculum offers a reminder on the matter:

“All students should be stimulated to grow through tasks and opportunities to develop in accordance with their potential. All students should meet respect for their person and work. Students should become aware that new knowledge and insights are the prerequisites for personal development. A positive attitude should be created to learning, and to creating such an attitude amongst students with negative school experiences. The school should strengthen students’ belief in themselves and in the future.”  (Lgy11, p 8)
Notes

1) "Engelska bör lika lite som andra språk delas upp i separata moment som lärs in i en given turordning. Både yngre och äldre elever berättar och beskriver, diskuterar och argumenterar, även om det sker på olika sätt, på olika språkliga nivåer och inom olika ämnesområden. De olika kompetenser som ingår i en allsidig och kommunikativ förmåga har sin motsvarighet i ämnets struktur. Till dessa hör förmåga att behärska språkets form dvs. vokabulär, fraseologi, uttal, stavning och grammatik."

2) "Nej, jag har nog aldrig höjt betyget p.g.a uttal. Ytterst sällan har jag däremot sänkt betyg p.g.a uttal -- då om jag inte förstår vad som sagts. Eller inbillat mig att en native speaker inte skulle förstå."

3) Att ämnesplanen använder uttrycket *olika sammanhang och delar av världen* där engelska används och inte begreppet *länder* kan ses mot bakgrund av engelskans ökande närvaro i allt fler sammanhang. Språkområden sammanfaller inte alltid med nationsgränser. Det engelska språket används också som internationellt kommunikationsspråk även mellan personer som har andra modersmål. (Alla kommentarer till engelska, p 6-7)
References

Björkman, B. (2010). ‘So you think you can ELF’: English as a lingua franca as the medium of instruction. Hermes 45.


Appendix

1. Interview questions
To begin with, what is your professional background? For how long have you been teaching?
What is your linguistic background?
How would you define your student group as to proficiency level?
To what degree is/are your group/s bi, multi- or monolingual?
What kind of communicative obstacles have you come across in student interaction?
What kind of communicative obstacles due to pronunciation have you registered?
What is your view on L1?
What would make an utterance unintelligible?
What matters, according to you, in pronunciation?
What is your approach to pronunciation and its role in ELT?
In the curriculum “tydligt” is separated from “med flyt” and “ledigt”. How do you understand “tydligt” in the curriculum?
What kind of attitudes towards pronunciation have you met, from students, from parents, from colleagues?
How do you address intonation and stress?
Have you witnessed situations where they caused misunderstanding or communicative breakdown?
If yes, how did you respond, react, intervene?
What did you suggest, how did you instruct, or recommend your students to do when this happened?
Would you say that there is a preferred way to intonate and place stress?
If yes, what makes this way preferable to other(s)?
What do you think of extramural interaction and activities as a linguistic resource to learning English?
What are your thoughts on the criteria in the curriculum?
What do think of the wording “I interaktion”…”tydligt, ledigt, med flyt” with respect to helpful/not helpful? Clear/vague?
2. 16 utterances

Listen to the following utterances and tell me if you think they differ:

Question I. Intelligible – unintelligible continuum. Did you find anything that made any one utterance difficult to understand? If yes, what? Describe or explain.

Question II. Did you perceive any attitudinal differences in the utterances?

A.1 This is your cat, isn’t it? Final rising intonation
A.2 This is your cat, isn’t it? Final falling intonation

B.1 You’ve seen the film, didn’t you? Final rising intonation
B.2 You’ve seen the film, didn’t you? Final falling intonation

C.1 You’ve seen the film, haven’t you? Final falling intonation
C.2 You’ve seen the film, haven’t you? Final rising intonation

D.1 You never saw the film, did you? Final rising intonation
D.2 You never saw the film, did you? Final falling intonation

E.1 You never saw the film, didn’t you? Final rising intonation
E.2 You never saw the film, didn’t you? Final falling intonation

F.1 This isn’t your cat, is it? Final rising intonation
F.2 This isn’t your cat, is it? Final falling intonation

G.1 This isn’t your cat, isn’t it? Final rising intonation
G.2 This isn’t your cat, isn’t it? Final falling intonation

H.1 “You will hand it in on Thursday” Falling or levelled final intonation
H.2 “You will hand it in on Thursday” Rising final intonation
3. E-mail correspondence

Teacher B

Hej!

Teacher B replied

Jag går igenom samtliga engelska uttalsljud och lär eleverna ex. skillnaderna mellan ljudade och o-ljudade konsonanter och drar paralleller med olika språks (o)vanliga ljud. Sen får de öva på de ljud de anser sig ha mest problem med, genom att komma på fler ord som innehåller uttalen. Oftast kör jag samma planering på nästan samtliga nivåer.
Vad menar du med PPP?

Hoppas att detta förtydligade ngt 😊

Hälsningar

Teacher D

Hej igen.
Har du eller någon kollega höjt betyget för en elev på grundval uttal? Om ja, skulle du säga att det grundades på det vi talade om som av högt värderat, brittiskt färgat (prosodi, idiom, ordval) respektive ett amerikanskt influerat uttal?

Om du hellre vill svara på telefon, går det utmärkt: xxxxxxxxxx.

Allt gott!
Boel

Teacher D replied

Nej, jag har nog aldrig höjt betyget p g a uttal. Ytterst sällan har jag däremot sänkt betyg p g a uttal -- då om jag inte förstått vad som sagts. Eller inbillat mig att en native speaker inte skulle förstått.

Förresten, Boel, borde inte din uppsats utmynna i en radikal omdaning av engelskämnet i svensk skola? Jag menar, ELF har ju ett annat mål än dagens?

Lycka till!