The Use of the L1 in the Swedish EFL Classroom
- A Study Based on Students’ Opinions and Experiences at Upper Secondary School

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Abstract

According to the Swedish syllabus for the Upper Secondary School, English should be taught predominantly through the medium of the target language. This study examines when and why students at upper secondary school prefer to use Swedish rather than English during English lessons. The project was carried out among 14 students at an upper secondary school in Southern Sweden using a qualitative methodology, based on interviews with the students in focus groups. The participants used for this study went to two different programs; a Social Science program and a Care and Treatment program. The results showed that all the participants claimed the use of English in the classroom to be extremely low (with an exception for the teacher) and that they actually would like to use more English. However, there was a major insecurity among many of the participants regarding speaking English when others were listening. Also, another obstacle that prevented the use of English was that it felt unnatural in many communicative situations especially since the students shared the same L1.

Keywords: English, L1, CLT, EFL classroom.
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1. Introduction

Richards and Rodgers (2001) state that foreign language teaching during the 20th Century has gone from having a focus on translation and using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction to highlighting the importance of instead using the target language as much as possible, when communicating in the classroom to achieve the greatest level of proficiency in terms of learning outcomes. In other words, the emphasis on a communicative approach in the English classroom is clearly shown (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In addition, the following extract can be found in the syllabus for English in Swedish upper secondary schools:

Teaching should as far as possible be conducted in English. (Lgy11:53).

This quote makes it quite clear that in foreign language teaching today, at least regarding teaching English in Swedish schools, students and teachers are encouraged to communicate in the target language as much as possible, preferably without using their first language at all. This is also evidence of how the English language is valued in society – that students are more or less expected to have quite good prerequisite knowledge of the language already and are also meant to develop this knowledge during their years in school, as an advantage or perhaps even a necessity for their working and social life in the future. As Svartvik and Leech (2006) point out, school reflects society; therefore, the importance of the English language will also be noticeable in the curriculum (Svartvik & Leech, 2006).

This essay will concentrate on communication in the English classroom, with a specific focus on the use of the students’ first language (henceforth L1) and its importance during lessons.

1.2 Aim and research question

It has been the experience of many teachers and classroom observers that even though the syllabus for English makes it clear that the aim is having the students using the English language as much as possible during lesson time, the students do not actually use the target language especially much – although their teacher constantly communicates in it.

The aim with this study is to examine when, and why, students are using their L1 in the classroom where English is taught as a foreign language. This study among students in upper
secondary school was conducted using qualitative methods drawing from interviews with students.

This essay is based on the research questions:

- *In which situations* do students experience that they prefer to use their L1 rather than the target language in the EFL classroom?
- *Why* do the students prefer using the L1 in the EFL classroom?
2. Theoretical background

In this chapter, the background and previous research in relation to the topic of this study will be presented. Firstly, there will be a general presentation of the communicative perspective on language teaching. Thereafter, communicative language teaching as an approach and previous research within the area of the use of the first language in the EFL classroom will be presented.

2.1 A communicative perspective on language teaching

With a historical perspective on how English has been taught in Swedish schools over the years, it could be claimed that there has been a shift from a focus on form to a focus on function. Estling Vannestål (2007) describes how one main distinction can be drawn between formal and functional theories of grammar. Formal grammar is mainly concerned with the form of grammatical structures, and such linguistics often aim at discovering features of universal grammar. In contrast, functional grammarians see meaning as the starting-point of grammar, and are thus usually more interested in how people use grammar for various communicative purposes in different contexts (Estling Vannestål, 2007:27).

Abrahamsson (2009) highlights the fact how language teaching during the last 40 years has gone from a traditional teaching methodology based on form, rules and the written language with strong influences of imitation and translation tasks, to an approach which instead advocates strongly a focus on the communication of meaning in language teaching, with creative language production and interaction at the center (Abrahamsson, 2009).

There is a difference between an approach and a method. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), based on Anthony’s model, an approach is the level at which assumptions and beliefs about language and language learning are specified. A method, however, is the level at which theory is put into practice and at which choices are made about the particular skills to be taught, the content to be taught and the order in which the content will be presented (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:19). The focus on communication in language teaching in schools today is an approach which Richards and Rodgers (2001) explain as ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (henceforth CLT). CLT is described as a theory of language teaching, which starts from a communicative model of language and language use. CLT emphasizes speaking and listening, and the target language is aimed to be used constantly in teaching. Furthermore, just
as Abrahamsson (2009) stated, Richards and Rodgers argue how CLT marks the beginning of a major shift within language teaching in the Twentieth Century and that the general principles of CLT today are extensively accepted around the world (Richards and Rodgers, ibid:151). Before CLT, a method called ‘Grammar Translation Method’ (henceforth GTM) was used. In contrast, this method implied a focus on reading and writing and a major component of the lesson was devoted to translating sentences into and out of the target language. GTM also meant that during lessons, the students’ native language was the medium of instruction (Richards & Rodgers, ibid: 6).

Moreover, Harmer (2007) explains how activities in CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing is at least as important as the accuracy of their language use (Harmer, 2007:69). Also, Harmer notes how CLT has left an indelible mark on teaching and learning – resulting in the use of communicative activities in language learning all over the world (Harmer, 2007).

Further, the communicative method in language teaching is strongly advocated in the Common European Framework of Reference (henceforth CEFR). The CEFR was put together by the Council of Europe and works as a guideline used to describe achievements of foreign language learners in Europe. The emphasis on communication is noticeable through the whole CEFR in different contexts, for example:

The Common European Framework provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. (CEFR: 2).

However, even though the CEFR together with the syllabus encourages language teachers to be communicative, the situation of the L1 in the classroom also needs to be considered in terms of a humanistic approach, which means that the students need to feel secure and comfortable with their teacher and classmates. According to Stevick (1990), proponents of a humanistic approach have often attached great importance to the anxiety felt by students. For example, Stevick himself has sometimes expressed how students are ‘laying their lives on the line’ every time they open their mouth in the classroom (Stevick, 1990:64). In addition, Stevick notes how the term ‘humanism’ has been used variously, but succeeds in extracting five key concepts:
• (H1) Feelings, including both personal emotions and esthetic appreciation. This aspect of humanism tends to reject whatever makes people feel bad, or whatever destroys or forbids esthetic enjoyment.

• (H2) Social relations. This side of humanism encourages friendship and cooperation, and opposes whatever tends to reduce them.

• (H3) Responsibility. This aspect accepts the need for public scrutiny, criticism, and correction, and disapproves of whoever or whatever denies their importance.

• (H4) Intellect, including knowledge, reason, and understanding. This aspect fights against whatever interferes with the free exercise of the mind, and is suspicious of anything that cannot be tested intellectually.

• (H5) Self-actualization, the quest for full realization of one’s own deepest true qualities. This aspect believes that since conformity leads to enslavement, the pursuit of uniqueness brings about liberation.


To summarize, it is clear that language teaching has gone through many changes over the last one hundred years. Referring back to the notions form and function, it could be claimed that GTM has a focus on the form of language, since it is a method which highlights grammar, translation and the accuracy of language. Nevertheless, CLT instead focuses on the function of language, since this method put emphasis on fluency and activities in real or realistic communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:155). In addition, Harmer (2007) suggests that typical activities in CLT are role-play or simulation. For example, students might simulate a television program, a scene at an airport or together put up the simulated front page of a newspaper. Another typical activity in CLT is where the students have to solve different kinds of puzzles, and can only do so by sharing information (Harmer, 2007:69). As a result, it could be claimed that language teaching has gone from having a focus on form to a focus on function. A possible explanation for this could be what Lundahl (2012) notes: English has become a global language, and having knowledge in how to communicate in the language is more or less a necessary prerequisite in today’s society (Lundahl, 2012:81). Additionally, Littlewood (1984) claims that the main motive for learning a language is that it provides a means of communication – a person is therefore most likely to be motivated to learn a second language if he or she perceives a clear communicative need for it (Littlewood, 1984:53).
2.2 Advantages with using the L1 in the EFL classroom

Some researchers argue that using the L1 in the EFL classroom actually could be beneficial for students in certain situations. Prodromou (2008) argues that we need to break the stranglehold of negative perceptions of the mother tongue in the classroom – there are actually some great advantages with using the L1, but there is also a danger with overusing it (Prodromou, 2008:5). In relation to the advantages with the use of the L1, Harmer (2007) reflects how translation between the languages could be something positive – especially for the teacher concerning the review of how well the students have understood vocabulary and grammar (Harmer, ibid: 133). Similarly to Harmer, Voicu (2012) notices the advantages regarding the aspect of grammar if using the L1 – she claims that translation exercises could be really advantageous when there are grammar points which are causing problems for the students (Voicu, 2012). Lastly, Mahmud (2012) suggests that using the L1 simplifies the learning of the target language by facilitating the creation of a tension-free learning atmosphere by promoting close proximity between teacher and students (Mahmud, 2012).

Furthermore, Harmer (2007) emphasizes the importance of relationships between the teacher and the student – using the L1 provides opportunities for the establishment of good relationships since exchanging jokes and discussing aspects of the students’ lives is easier and feels more natural if it occurs in the mother tongue (Harmer, 2007:133-134). Aspelin (2001) also takes this in consideration; he claims that relations are seen as something which happens unintentionally through interaction between humans. Moreover, he also notices how the curriculum emphasizes the significance of teachers working vigorously with the creation of social relations in the classroom (Aspelin, 2001). Furthermore, Aspelin suggests that these relations between the teacher and the students should be formed in the interaction involving the subject matter of the lessons (Aspelin, 2001). However, if this is the case, some less proficient students will probably have a hard time forming a social relationship with the teacher if they find the subject difficult – especially since the students are expected to communicate in a foreign language.

Pre-intermediate students are something which Harmer (2007) takes in consideration. He argues that if the teacher wants to converse with the students with regards to what they want or what they need, it would be of great advantage to do this in the students’ L1 compared to trying to discuss it in English. Also, Harmer implies that some students actually would make
more rapidly progress if the use of the L1 is allowed in the EFL classroom (Harmer, ibid: 133).

In contrast, Littlewood (1984) argues that in an atmosphere where learners feel anxious or insecure, they are likely to be psychological barriers to communication – this could be an obstacle to the learning process. Moreover, Littlewood elucidates how one of the most common places where foreign language learning occurs most often – the classroom – can generate situations where the learner feels anxiety and insecurity. Referring to the EFL classroom, students have to produce unfamiliar sounds in front of others. If they do not perform adequately, they may be exposed to comment and correction (Littlewood, 1984:58). As a consequence, this might be one possible reason to why some students feel insecure regarding the use of the English language – the pressure to use a foreign language in front of their peers often at a sensitive age – and would therefore experience some advantages with the L1 to be allowed to some extent in the classroom.

2.3 Previous research on the use of the L1

Regarding the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom, there are a number of studies which show that students’ first language actually have been useful.

2.3.1 Writing skills

For instance, a study made by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) showed how students’ L1 could play a useful role in the language acquisition process. This study was made among Japanese students, who wrote texts which both were directly written in English and texts which instead were written in Japanese and later translated into English. In this study, it became clear that students who had low language proficiency in English were able to produce compositions of higher quality when they translated (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992). Compatible with this study, concerning using translation in the EFL classroom, Chellapan (1982:60) claims that translation can enable the student to grasp the target language easier – the translation can help us understand the impact of one language on the other, which means that the role of the student’s native language can play a positive role in second language acquisition (Chellapan, 1982). Moreover, Stern (1991) states that contrastive analysis in comparing the L1 directly with the L2 is important for the second language learner. As a result, translation in one form or another can play a certain part in language teaching (Stern, 1991).
Additionally, Akyel (1994) carried out a project among 78 Turkish students and their English compositions, written from plans both in English and Turkish. Her results showed that the language used for the plan did not make a noteworthy difference in the quality of the plans written by high-level students – however, it did have an effect on the plans written by low-level students. Therefore, Akyel suggests that students should be encouraged to produce and organize ideas both in their L1 and in the target language (Akyel, 1994).

2.3.2 Linguistic features

Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) looked into the functions of the first language among language learners, within a teaching context that maximizes the target language. In their study, results showed that the L1 seems to play an important role in gaining knowledge of linguistic features of the target language. However, students in their study were well aware of the need for exposure to the target language, but the findings that both languages are necessary for language learning are important to remember. In general, the students’ responses showed that they attributed two positive roles to the L1:

- It may reduce negative emotions in students in classroom environments which might foster such emotions, when they have to deal with an unknown language. By using the L1, these negative feelings can be alleviated.
- It allows for better classroom communication – both between student-teacher and student-student. Using the L1 makes students more confident to ask questions and it also reduces the risk of misunderstanding.

(Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney, 2008).

2.3.3 Social relationships in the classroom

Moreover, Juhlin (2014) described the project involving students at an upper secondary school in Sweden. Her main aim with the study was to find out what students’ thoughts are considering the importance of their relation to the teacher when it comes to learning outcomes. Also, one of the main aims was to investigate to what extent the students were aware of the target language, English, actually being used in the classroom. The results of the study showed that the students were aware that English was mostly used in the classrooms; however, Swedish was used to some extent in a majority of the classrooms. Moreover, the results showed that a majority of the students preferred to be taught mostly in English, but with the help of Swedish. Lastly, the students in the study emphasized the relationship to their
teachers as being vastly important for their motivation and for their results in school – they would rather be taught by a teacher they felt comfortable with rather than by a teacher who taught in the target language only. In other words, the students really valued a relaxed classroom atmosphere based on a good relationship with the teacher. To summarize, the conclusion Juhlin (2014) made from her study was that using the L1 in the EFL classroom actually could be a very beneficial means of forming social relations between the teacher and the students within the English subject. Furthermore the study showed that many students preferred Swedish to be included occasionally in the English classroom.

In a similar research project, Brooks-Lewis (2009) did a classroom-based study among language learners in an introductory EFL course for literate Spanish-speaking adults in Mexico. The material used for the study was questionnaires and learning diaries which were written by the EFL learners – the questionnaires were written in English (their L2) and the diaries were written in Spanish (their L1). The aim with the study was to find out what the participants thought about the inclusion of Spanish in the class, and of its comparison with English. The course started with a constant use of Spanish, and then moved slowly into English. The result of the study showed that the learners offered reasons both for and against the incorporation of the L1 in the EFL classroom. Reasons why the participants appreciated the use of the L1 were, for example:

- being able to understand what is being said.
- being able to participate.
- making the learning meaningful and easier.
- dissolving the sense of rupture in knowledge, along with ideas of forgetting or replacing identity or the L1.
- promoting confidence and a sense of achievement.
- inspiring language, learning, culture, and self-awareness.

However, some participants found the use of the L1 as negative and wanted the teacher to constantly use the English language. Explanations for this were, for example that hearing the teacher speaking English is the only way to learn the language; and hearing the teacher speaking English encourages the learners to listen closely to the structure and pronunciation of the language. Nevertheless, the study showed that including the L1 in the EFL classroom was seen as something beneficial for most of the participants – it could help to reduce anxiety,
to enhance the affective environment for learning and to take sociocultural factors into account (Brooks-Lewis, 2009).

Lastly, Copland and Neokleous (2011) carried out a project based on four teachers teaching English in four classrooms in two after-school Cypriot private language institutions. The study was based on observations in the classroom regarding to what extent the teachers and the students used the L1; it is important to appreciate that the teachers really emphasized the importance of using the target language as much as possible. However, the results of the study showed that the amount of L1 used by the teachers varied significantly – one teacher had 634 utterances in Greek during a lesson, while another teacher only had one. Furthermore, there were often situations where a question was asked by the teacher in English, answered in Greek by the student and responded to by the teacher in English again. It seemed like even though the teacher tried to create a second language learning environment through using the English language in the classroom, the students preferred to use Greek to address the teacher (Copland & Neokleous, 2011).

2.4 Summary

This section has reviewed the communicative approach in language teaching, together with previous research within the area of the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom. There has been a shift in language teaching from having a focus on form to having a focus on function – in other words, how to use the language. Since there is a major focus in foreign language teaching today on a communicative approach, this is also clearly shown in the syllabus for English which states that the target language (in this case, English) should be used as much as possible in the classroom. However, previous research still shows that there are a number of situations when learners prefer to use their L1, both in relation to learning and to their own confidence in the classroom.
3. Method and material

In this part of the essay, the method and the material used for the study will be explained.

3.1 Method

A qualitative method was chosen for this study, where interviews with students provided the source of data. Since the aim with this study was to find out in which situations students express a preference for the use of their L1 rather than the target language in the English classroom, the qualitative method was appropriate to use because of the interest for students’ views and opinions responses encoded using numerical data. According to Bryman (2002), qualitative research involves acquainting oneself with the interviewed persons’ perspectives regarding what they perceive as important and meaningful.

Moreover, the reason that interviews were chosen for this study rather than questionnaires was because the study aimed for a deeper understanding among the participants’ experiences and opinions – also, so that the significance of what they said could be analyzed and not only what they said.

In addition, the interviews were carried out in a semi-structured way. Bryman (2002) explains the use of semi-structured interviews as the researcher having a list of specific themes which are expected to be included during the interviews – a so-called interview guide. The advantage with using an interview guide is that even though there are some prepared questions to be asked, the interviewees can still express their responses in their own ways with unlimited freedom. Moreover, questions which are not included in the interview guide can be asked, if the interviewer makes the connection with something which the interviewed persons have said (Bryman, 2002).

For these interviews, an approach called ‘focus groups’ was used. This means that the interviewer interviews people in groups instead of interviewing them individually. According to Bryman (2002), using focus groups when interviewing often facilitates a discussion among the participants, where both interviewer and interviewees can highlight questions which are relevant and also find a suitable platform to reflect over each other’s opinions (Bryman, 2002). The choice of using focus groups for this study was because of the aim of having the students discussing and conversing with each other, instead of interviewing them individually and just aiming for them to simply answer each question sequentially in the interview. By
using focus groups, the participants’ responses were often expanded and in greater depth since they are discussing different point of views with each other.

In total, there were 14 students interviewed in five different interviews. The choice was to use three students in each interview – however, in the last interview, there were only two students. The construction of the focus groups in the interviews was not decided beforehand; three students who felt willing to participate in the study went when the three other participants came back into the classroom. Out of 14 participants, 12 of them were 17-18 years old since they were in their second year at upper secondary school. However, two students in this survey studied via KOMVUX, a municipally-administered school offering upper secondary school subjects for adult learners. Their age was 27 respectively 29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>7 males, 5 females</td>
<td>17-18 years old, 17-18 years old</td>
<td>Social Science program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also: KOMVUX students</td>
<td>1 male, 1 female</td>
<td>27 years old, 29 years old</td>
<td>KOMVUX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>2 females</td>
<td>17-18 years old</td>
<td>Care and Treatment program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before the interviews were started, the students were informed as a class about the study and its aim. They were also informed that they would be totally anonymous and that neither their names nor age were to be presented in the study. The interviews were made during the students’ regular lessons in English. While the students had their English lesson in the classroom, the interviews with the students were held in a small room close to the actual classroom. The interviews were recorded on an iPhone, the recording functionalities of which were familiar to the author. Moreover, using an iPhone is an advantage since it can easily be taken into the classroom where the interviews were held. Also, the quality of the recording is good and when the interviews are done, the iPhone can simply be connected with the computer to transfer the interviews. Lastly, by recording the interviews, there could be a focus on a conversation between the interviewer and the participants instead of just asking and answering questions.

Also, recording the interviews provides the opportunity to listen to the interviews afterwards and analyze not only what the participants said, but also how they said it. As Bryman (2002)
mentions, this is something which qualitative researchers are often interested in. Once an interview with one group was done, another group came in. It continued in this way until the material needed for the study was collected. The time for the interviews was between 17-23 minutes long.

3.2 Material

For this study, the interviews were chosen to be made among students at upper secondary school. Also, it was assumed that interviewing students who are almost adults would provide the basis for meaningful and unbiased data in response to the interview question.

The participants for this study were students at an upper secondary school in southern Sweden. All of the participants went to the same school, but in two different classes. These two classes are taught by the same English teacher. There are three levels of English at upper secondary schools in Sweden: English 5, English 6 and English 7. English 7 is voluntary for most programs at upper secondary schools. For the purposes of these interviews, interviewees were chosen from students pursuing English 6. In one of the two classes where I did the interviews, both English 5 and English 6 are mandatory. However, in the second class, only English 5 is mandatory – the students themselves are free to choose if they would like to study English 6. The choice to stick to the same level of English for the students, in this case, English 6, can be explained in terms of wanting the students to have the same content in their teaching, based on the same core content and aims from the syllabus for that particular course, so that the answers in the interviews would be compatible.

3.3 Problems and limitations

With this study, there are some factors which could be considered as limitations. To begin with, the choice of interviewing the students in focus groups could lead to the students influencing each other in their answers. For instance, if one of the students expresses his or her thoughts, the other students might agree instead of actually expressing his or her own opinions. Also, one limitation is, obviously, the size of study. Interviewing more students and, perhaps, also do observations in relation to this study would be really interesting regarding the use of the Swedish language in the English classroom. However, this would require much more time and that amount of time was unfortunately not available for this study.
Furthermore, there were only two students interviewed in the Care and Health program, which could have affected the results of this study since they were the only two participants studying on a practical program. However, these two students’ classmates, who went to another program called Industry Engineering program, were all out their practice in relation to their program, so they were not able to participate in this study.

Lastly, on the basis of external validity, it is obviously very difficult to make generalizations of the population, since the size of the study was such small with only 14 participants.
4. Results

This section of the essay contains the results of the study, where the participants’ answers are presented as responses to the interview questions together with a short summary at the end of the chapter.

4.1 General orientation

There were seven questions in the interviews, which in this essay are translated from Swedish into English. Similarly, the participants’ answers are presented both in Swedish and translated by me into English. The presentations of the results will be made on the basis of these interview questions in numerical order. Any follow-up question, related to the original interview questions, will be dealt with under each main interview question. Additionally, these are the interview questions:

- Do you consider the subject English as important? If so, in which ways? Why/why not? Use the scale from 1-7 in your answers.
- Are there moments, during lessons, when you feel insecure or uncomfortable because you are expected to use the English language? If so, when? Why?
- Do you experience that there are situations, during lessons, where you prefer to use Swedish rather than English? If so, when? Why?
- Regarding the use of the target language, English, during lessons; to what extent do you experience that this language is used during the lessons in the classroom? Use the scale from 1-7 in your answers.
- Do you think that there are any advantages with using the Swedish language in the English education? If so, when? Why/why not?
- Would you like your teacher to use only English during the lessons? If so, why? Alternatively, why not?
- Do you consider a good social relationship to the teacher to be important, from a learning perspective?
4.2 Focus group question responses

*Question 1: Do you consider the subject English as important? If so, in which ways? Why/why not? Use the scale from 1-7 in your answers, where 1 is ‘least important’ and 7 is ‘very important’.*

This was the first question in the interviews, to arrive at an idea of how the students valued the English language. Not very surprisingly, all 14 participants answered that they thought English was extremely important in today’s society. Based on the scale from 1-7, these were the answers from the students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale from 1-7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were two clear themes in the participants’ answers to this question; communication and working life. The importance of English in providing a lingua franca in an increasingly globalized world was mentioned by many of the respondents. Also, as mentioned, a few students highlighted the importance of English in relation to getting a job in the future. Below, there are examples of how the students answered the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview / Student</th>
<th>Response in Swedish</th>
<th>Response translated into English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 3</td>
<td>Ja men engelska är ju självklart viktigt. Alla i världen pratar ju det.</td>
<td>Well, obviously it is very important since everyone in the world speaks it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 2 / Student 2</td>
<td>Att kunna engelska är ju självklart väldigt viktigt. Det är ju överallt hela tiden.</td>
<td>Knowing English is really important, because it is everywhere all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 4 / Student 1</td>
<td>Ja det är väldigt viktigt, för att kunna kommunicera med andra i</td>
<td>Yes, it is very important to have knowledge in English to be able to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two students mentioned that English was important in relation to working life. For instance, one student who went to the health care program, which is a program with a vocational orientation, answered that English also was important in relation to her future profession as a nurse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview / student</th>
<th>Response in Swedish</th>
<th>Response translated into English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5 / Student 1</td>
<td>Ja det är ju jätteviktigt. Särskilt när man ska ut på jobb sen. Som jag till exempel, jag vill ju bli sjuksköterska. Och då är det ju många sammanhang där engelskan kan vara viktig.</td>
<td>Yes, it is really important. Especially when you are about to start working, after graduating school. If I take myself as an example, I want to be a nurse. Then, it will probably occur many situations where knowing the English language can be of great significance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 2 / Student 3</td>
<td>Jo men det är ju viktigt med engelska i alla sammanhang, till exempel är det ju bra att kunna engelska när man ska söka jobb i framtiden.</td>
<td>Well, it is important to have knowledge in English in all different contexts and situations, basically. For example, it is great to know English when you are about to apply for a job in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Are there moments, during lessons, when you feel insecure or uncomfortable because you are expected to use the English language? If so, when? Why?

The participants answered that moments when they usually felt uncomfortable when they should use English, were mainly when they were aware of other people listening to them; for example, the rest of the class. It could be situations such as when they were about to have oral presentations in front of the class – but they also experienced insecurity when answering a question asked by the teacher in English or expressing something in English when the rest of the class was listening. Some of the answers are presented below:
To summarize the participants’ answers – from what and how the students explained situations where they feel uncomfortable during lessons in English, it seemed like the students were excessively concerned about what their classmates would think of them if they said something wrong. In other words, the main concern the students had was in relation to situations where they were expected to speak English in front of others.

### 4.3 Do you experience that there are situations, during lessons, where you prefer to use Swedish rather than English? If so, when? Why?

Responses to this question were mainly divided into two themes: when there were difficulties finding a specific word or, that using English in some situations felt unnatural and impersonal. Some participants claimed that if a learner finds a word difficult in English, or if the learner knows what to say in Swedish but not how to say it correctly in English, they preferred to use Swedish instead. Here are examples of how some of the participants expressed themselves:

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<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 1</td>
<td>Ja, typ varje lektion. Om man ska ställa en fråga, man vet att alla andra lyssnar, man vet vad man ska säga på svenska men kanske inte hur man säger det rätt på engelska, då vill man helst inte säga något.</td>
<td>Yes, more or less every single lesson. Let’s say if you should ask a question, you know that everyone in the classroom is listening; you know what to say in Swedish, but maybe not how to say it correctly in English. Then you prefer not to say anything at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3 / Student 2</td>
<td>Alltså jag vill ju helst inte prata engelska i grupp, framför alla. Det blir så allvarligt då. När man reser och ska prata känns det mer lättamt och så, folk kan skratta i klassrummet om man säger fel.</td>
<td>I prefer not to speak English at all when I am in a group, in front of everybody. It feels so serious. However, when I travel and speak English, it feels easier, you know. But when in class, people can laugh at you and stuff if you say something wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5 / Student 1</td>
<td>Hela tiden! När man ska prata. Vet inte men det känns bara läskigt… Man är rädd att bli skrattad åt.</td>
<td>All the time! When you are about to speak. I do not know why, it just feels scary. You are afraid that other people will laugh at you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, many students expressed opinions that using English could feel impersonal and unnatural since the students, of course, were fully aware of the fact that they shared the same L1 – Swedish. Some participants then claimed that speaking English to each other spontaneously in the classroom mostly felt weird, except for using English in certain tasks and communicative activities conducted by the teacher.

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<tr>
<td>Interview 4 / Student 3</td>
<td>Om man inte kommer på något ord man ska säga, alltså svåra ord, då använder man ju hellre svenska.</td>
<td>If I cannot find the specific word I am looking for when I am about to speak, difficult words. In that case, I prefer to use Swedish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3 / Student 1</td>
<td>När jag inte kan något ord. Då pratar jag hellre svenska än att säga fel på engelska.</td>
<td>When there is a word I cannot find. Then I prefer to speak Swedish rather than to risk saying something incorrectly in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 1</td>
<td>Det blir konstigt att sitta och prata med varandra på engelska liksom, när man pratar om något allmänt eller så, som kanske inte tillhör någon uppgift.</td>
<td>It feels weird to sit and talk to each other in English, like when you talk about general things that might not be a part of a certain task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 2</td>
<td>Ja, det känns löjligt om typ jag och min bänkompis pratar engelska med varandra och inga andra i klassrummet gör det, då känner man sig löjlig.</td>
<td>Yes, it feels ridiculous if I and the person I am sitting with in the classroom speaks English with each other and nobody else in the classroom does that, then you feel silly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3 / Student 2</td>
<td>När man pratar om känslor eller om känslsomma saker. Jag tycker det känns konstigt och opersonligt att prata engelska med varandra då.</td>
<td>When you talk about feelings or emotional things. I think it feels weird and impersonal to speak English with each other in situations like that.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Regarding the use of the target language, English, during lessons; to what extent do you experience that this language is used during the lessons in the classroom? Use the scale from 1-7 in your answers, where 1 is ‘least important’ and 7 is ‘very important’.

In the first question of these interviews, all participants agreed that it was vital to possess knowledge in the English language, especially from a communicative perspective. However, when the students answered the question regarding how much English they actually thought that they used in the English classroom, all participants answered that this level was very low.

Moreover, using the Likert scale from 1-7 in relation to this question, these were the students’ response recorded in the form of the histogram below:

Unquestionably, from the results of this scale, all participants considered English to be used to an extremely small extent during lessons. This is specifically interesting regarding the students’ answers in the next questions which are about possible advantages with including
Swedish during lessons in English – many participants, despite their experience of the extremely infrequent use of English during lessons, actually considered that there are no great advantages with using Swedish in the classroom.

4.5 Do you think that there are any advantages with using the Swedish language in the English education? If so, when? Why/why not?

Interestingly enough, bearing in mind the question above where the students explained the use of English to be hardly recognizable in the classroom; a few students’ answers to this question were that they had actually not considered Swedish as beneficial during the lessons in English. Still, results in this study show that the students use Swedish almost constantly in the classroom. Some students, with this opinion, expressed themselves like this:

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<tr>
<td>Interview 2 / Student 2</td>
<td>Nej, inte längre. Inte i denna ålder när vi är så gamla eller så, vi har läst engelska så länge i skolan nu, sen vi var små ju.</td>
<td>No, I do not actually. Not in this age, when we are at upper secondary school and have been studying English in school for so long, since we were small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3 / Student 1</td>
<td>Jag vet inte om det finns några fördelar med det, faktiskt. Egentligen borde vi ha det som regel i klassrummet; att bara prata engelska hela tiden! Vi är ju där för att lära oss det.</td>
<td>Actually, I am not sure that there are any advantages with using Swedish. I think it should be a rule in the classroom; to only use the English language all the time! I mean, we are there to learn the language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, some students experienced the use of Swedish in the classroom to be beneficial in many ways. The advantages with using Swedish in the English classroom, some students claimed, mainly concerned those students who might consider English as a difficult subject. In addition, the students with this view emphasized the importance of having a teacher with the same L1 as the students, even though the students mostly considered it acceptable that the teaching mainly was conducted in English. Three students expressed themselves in the following ways:
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5 / Student 2</td>
<td>Jag tycker det finns många fördelar med att använda svenska ibland i engelskaundervisningen. Till exempel om man inte kan förklara eller inte förstår något.</td>
<td>I think there are many advantages with using Swedish occasionally in the English classroom. For instance, if there is a word you cannot explain or if there is something that you do not understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 2 / Student 1</td>
<td>Jag tycker det kan vara bra om läraren börjar med att förklara något på engelska, men att läraren sedan kan gå över till att förklara på svenska istället om han eller hon ser att en del elever kanske inte förstår.</td>
<td>I think it is good if the teacher starts explaining something in English, but then can switch to use Swedish instead if he or she notices that some students might not understand the instructions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 4 / Student 1</td>
<td>Ja det är ju lättare att formulerar sig på svenska, eftersom det är modersmålet. Då kan det ju vara en fördel om läraren kan använda sig av svenska också, så man vet att man kan ta till svenskam om man har svårt att säga eller fråga något på engelska.</td>
<td>Yes, it is easier to express yourself in Swedish since that is your mother tongue. Then, it can be an advantage if the teacher also knows the Swedish language, so you know that you can use Swedish if you are having a hard time saying or asking something in English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In other words, it seemed like the students who consider the use of Swedish to be beneficial to some extent in the classroom refer to situations where they might feel insecure regarding their proficiency in English. In those cases, having a teacher who possesses knowledge in Swedish could function as a source of security for the students to fall back on, if they feel like their proficiency in English might not be up to the communicative task.

4.6 Would you like your teacher to use only English during the lessons? If so, why? Alternatively, why not?

Undoubtedly, the answers to this question looked very different among the participants – some students claimed that no Swedish should be needed or used during lessons in English at this level (upper secondary school, English 6). These students meant that all the teaching in the classroom could be conducted in the target language, English, since they felt that all students in the classroom would be able to understand at this level. In the dialogue below, the
participants in the interview did not agree; two of the participants wanted English to be used constantly in the classroom while one student argued for the beneficial use of Swedish to some extent in the classroom:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 3</td>
<td>Ja, vi är ju där för att lära oss språket…</td>
<td>Yes, because we are there to learn the language…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ja, jag håller med.</td>
<td>Yes, I agree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jag håller inte med då; nej, det tycker jag inte. För alla har ju inte lätt för det, det måste finnas svenska med i undervisningen så att man förstår.</td>
<td>I do not agree; my answer is no. Because not everyone consider English to be easy, so I think that Swedish should be included in the education so that you understand everything.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the two students above, who expressed their positive thoughts regarding the scenario of their teacher only using English in the classroom, there was only one more student who shared their opinions. In other words – the other eleven participants argued that it actually could be very advantageous to allow the use of Swedish in certain situations during lessons; especially regarding the insecurity of not understanding what the teacher is saying. This is shown in the responses below:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 4 / Student 1</td>
<td>Jag tycker inte läraren endast borde använda engelska, men mestadels. Till exempel, har man en längre genomgång så är det bra om den är på engelska först men sen kanske kortfattat på svenska så att alla förstår.</td>
<td>I do not think that the teacher should use only English, but mostly. For example, if there is a long introduction, it is good to have it in English but perhaps summarize it shortly in Swedish so that everyone understands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5 / Student 2</td>
<td>Jag tycker att läraren ska använda mestadels engelska med oss, men kanske inte alltid. Inte när man kanske pratar allmänt med varandra eller så, eller om det är något man inte förstår. Då är det ju bra om</td>
<td>I think that the teacher should use mostly English during the lessons, but perhaps not always. For example, when we maybe talk to each other in general, or if it is something you do not understand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In that case, it feels good if the teacher also knows Swedish.

4.7 *Do you consider a good social relationship to the teacher to be important, from a learning perspective?*

All 14 participants for this study agreed on the importance of having a good social relationship to the teacher. The main reasons which the students emphasized were that if students felt comfortable and relaxed with their teacher, they also felt more confident to dare using the English language. This is clearly shown in the following expressions from some of the students:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Interview 1 / Student 1</td>
<td>Jag tycker att det är viktigt med en bra relation till läraren, för då känner man sig mer bekväm och man vågar prata mer engelska. Det blir inte lika nervöst med uttal och sådant heller.</td>
<td>I consider a good relationship to the teacher as important, because then you feel more comfortable and you dare to use the English language. Also, you feel more comfortable in pronunciation and things like that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 4 / Student 3</td>
<td>En bra relation till läraren påverkar absolut inlärningen! Till exempel, om man inte är så säker på sin engelska så vågar man nog prata mer om man har en god relation till läraren.</td>
<td>A good relationship to the teacher does absolutely have an impact on the classroom learning. For example, if you do not feel confident with your English, I think you dare to try speaking more if you have a good relationship to the teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5 / Student 1</td>
<td>Det är verkligen viktigt! Läraren är ju A och O. Om jag tar mig själv som exempel, jag hatade ju min lärare jag hade i engelska på högstadiet, hon fick mig att få dåligt självförtroende gällande min engelska och sa att jag inte var alls duktig. Det är därför jag inte vågar prata så mycket engelska idag. Så ja, det är jätteviktigt.</td>
<td>It is really important! The teacher is vital. If I use myself as an example; I hated the teacher I had in English when I went to secondary school. She made me feel insecure and did not give me enough confidence in English, and she told me that I was really not that good in the subject. So yes, it is very important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering the answers above, it seemed like many of the participants argued that in a subject like English it is of *extra* significance having a good social relationship with the teacher, since you as a student often feel exposed in a way which differs from other subjects – because you are expected to use a foreign language when you communicate.

### 4.3 Summary of the results

Results from this study showed that the students would like the teaching to be conducted mainly in English, since they attend the lessons to learn English, but with the help of Swedish. Many students argued that using Swedish during lessons in certain situations were very beneficial in many ways; for example, considering social relationships and reducing the risk of feeling inadequate in their English skills. However, the students’ wishes for the teaching to be conducted mainly in English seemed to concern how the *teacher* should use English in the classroom – the students themselves claimed that it often felt impersonal and weird to use English among each other when they communicated. Lastly, except the teacher’s use of English, all participants in this study agreed on the use of English in the classroom to be very low, which they to some extent felt ashamed about. Lastly, it seemed like one of the most important aspects in English language teaching according to the students, was to have a teacher who was *bilingual* – a teacher that could manage both Swedish and English.
5. Discussion

In this section of the essay, the results of this study will be discussed in relation to previous studies. The discussion presented in this chapter will be divided into four different sub-headings; three of them are themes that have been found in the participants’ answers in relation to the research question for this study. Additionally, the fourth sub-heading contains a discussion regarding the communicative focus in language teaching today.

5.1 Situations in the classroom where the rest of the class is listening

Among the participants, classroom situations where others were listening was the most common answer regarding when the students preferred not to use the target language, English, during lessons. All of the students in this study highlighted the fact that they rarely used English in the classroom – it was only the teacher who was consistent with using the target language. The fact that other people may listen to what the learner is saying seemed to be of great significance when the students chose not to use English, out of fear that someone might negatively evaluate them or comment on some possible mistakes they make while speaking English. The results of this study are comparable with what Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008) found – the participants for that study argued that the use of the L1 could be beneficial because it allows for better classroom communication; the student might feel more confident to ask questions if he or she is allowed to use the L1. Also, since classroom environments might generate negative emotions in students when they have to use a foreign language, these negative feelings can be eased if the students are allowed to use their L1 to some extent.

Furthermore, Littlewood (1984) claims that if learners feel anxious or insecure, they are likely to be psychological barriers to communication, which could be a great obstacle to the learning process. Unfortunately, one of the most common places where foreign language learning takes place most often is the classroom which, among many students, is considered as an atmosphere where they feel the greatest level of anxiety. In addition, regarding the subject of English, students have to produce unfamiliar sounds in front of others and can be exposed to comment and correction if they happen to not perform adequately (Littlewood, 1984:58). According to the results of this study, this was the main reason to why students actually preferred to use Swedish rather than English during lessons – many of the participants explained that they felt really anxious that someone would negatively evaluate their linguistic errors if they tried saying something in English. In this case, as Littlewood (1984) mentions, it
is obviously a serious obstacle for the students in their learning processes if they, as they explained, choose not to use the English language when others are listening.

5.2 Situations in the classroom where the student feels insecure regarding his or her language proficiency in English

Another reason why some students preferred to use Swedish rather than English was because of the insecurity of not being good enough in their English proficiency. It could be both when they were about to say something themselves, but it could also concern a fear of not being able to understand exactly what the teacher is saying when, for example, giving instructions or explaining something. Many of the participants explained that they wanted the teacher to use mostly English, but using Swedish as support – for instance, the teacher could start by explaining in English but then switch to explain in Swedish instead, if the teacher notices that some students do not understand exactly what the teacher is saying. In Juhlin’s study (2014), the results looked very similar – the students in that study highlighted the desire to be taught mostly in English, but with the help of Swedish.

Moreover, the results of this study are similar to what Brooks-Lewis (2009) found in her study about incorporation of the L1 in the EFL classroom. Her results showed that students appreciated the use of the L1 regarding being able to understand what is being said, being able to participate and promoting confidence and a sense of achievement (Brooks-Lewis, 2009). Nevertheless, despite the doubt of not having a sufficiently high level of language proficiency, not all of the participants in this study agreed that the use of the L1 was positive. Some students claimed that they would like their teacher to only use English during lessons, because they are there to learn the language and the way to do that was, basically, to listen when the teacher was consistent with speaking English all the time. However, this regards the skill of listening – not speaking – which means that even though they wanted their teacher to use English constantly, this did not necessarily mean that they themselves should use the language to the same extent. This is also a finding which agrees with the results in Brooks-Lewis’ (2009) study; that some of the participants in her study wanted the teacher to use English all the time because hearing the teacher speaking English is the only way to learn the language.

Moreover, hearing the teacher speaking English makes the learners pay attention to the structure and pronunciation of the language (Brooks-Lewis, 2009).
5.3 Situations in the classroom where the student experiences the use of the English language to feel unnatural respectively impersonal

To begin with, the students in this study agreed on the importance of having a good social relationship with the teacher – in that case, the students explained, there are greater opportunities for learning. Some students also argued that this could be especially important in English, since learners might feel exposed in a different way compared to other subject because you are expected to communicate within a foreign language. As Harmer (2007) argues, the relationship between the teacher and the student is of major importance. Moreover, using the L1 increases the opportunity for good relationships because it feels more natural and relaxed to exchange jokes and discuss aspects of the students’ lives if this occurs in the mother tongue (Harmer, 2007:133-134). As the results of this study show, the participants suggest that a good relationship to the teacher is best achieved through the use of Swedish rather than English. The study by Juhlin (2014) showed very similar results; the participants claimed the relationship to their teacher to be extremely important for both their motivation and for their results. Also, Juhlin concluded the use of the L1 in the EFL classroom to be beneficial in regards of creating good social relationships between the teacher and the students (Juhlin, 2014).

Furthermore, many of the participants in this study emphasized how the use of the English language often could feel impersonal and artificial, since they were aware of the fact that they themselves, including the teacher, shared the same mother tongue. Some students explained how they preferably chose to speak Swedish to each other considering emotions and feelings, or when they just spoke in general about something; for example, what they did during the weekend or how a football match ended. As Aspelin (2001) suggests, relations are seen as something which happens unintentionally through interaction between humans (Aspelin, 2001), which might explain why students choose to communicate via their mother tongue when they interact with each other in the English classroom in situations which are not task-based. In other words, the use of the L1 might be of major importance in the classroom for the students regarding building up a confidence to actually use English and creating relations with both classmates and the teacher. This is an aspect which Mahmud (2012) notes; that using the L1 might simplify the learning of the foreign language by facilitating create a tension-free learning atmosphere by creating closeness with students (Mahmud, 2012).
5.4 The communicative focus in language teaching

As Richards and Rodgers (2001) suggest, there has been a major shift in language teaching over the last years. This shift means that a commonly used method before, the so-called Grammar Translation Method (GTM), has largely been replaced with another method – Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The main difference between these two is that in GTM, the students’ native language was the medium of instruction; while in CLT, the target language is aimed to be constantly used in the classroom. Furthermore, one major difference is obviously, that CLT emphasizes the communicative skills of speaking and listening, while GTM concentrated on writing and reading (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Furthermore, as Harmer (2007) notes, CLT typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing is as important as the accuracy of their language use (Harmer, 2007:69). Obviously, this was not the case in GTM since this method highlighted translation and accuracy rather than fluency.

Additionally, the impact CLT has had on language teaching over the last years is also visible in the syllabus for English in LGY11, which states that the target language should be used as far as possible in the classroom (Skolverket, 2011). Most of the participants in this study wanted the teaching to be conducted mostly in English, which the syllabus clearly argues and which also CLT stands for. However, the students in this study claim, similarly to students in other studies, that the use of the L1 is advantageous in a number of situations. Moreover, students who do not need to endeavor to learn English might not consider the use of the L1 to be as necessary in the classroom compared to students who may have a hard time even passing the course. As participants in this study argued, using L1 can increase students’ confidence – and this might also lead to the students daring to speak English in the classroom. In contrast, having students who do not dare trying to use English during lessons can obviously be considered as a major obstacle to the learning process; mainly to develop their skills in the language, but also because the students have to use English to actually manage to get a grade in the subject.

In a subject as English, where the students might feel exposed since they leave their “comfort-zone” and are expected to use a foreign language instead of their native language, it gets extra important for the teacher to try to create an atmosphere where all students feel confident enough to use English, as the syllabus very clearly states. However, this is – of course – easier said than done. In this study, many students expressed their anxiety of classmates laughing if
saying something incorrectly, or the feelings of nervousness regarding their language proficiency. These results are similar to what Stevick (1990) mentions; that even though the atmosphere in the classroom aims towards being communicative within the foreign language, it is important to also include a humanistic approach during lessons. In addition, Stevick highlights the fact that probably, there are some students in the classroom who feel anxious every time they are about to speak in front of others (Stevick, 1990:64). In other words, it could be claimed that if a humanistic approach is included in the teaching, the students’ self-developments could be enhanced which also affects the learning processes. As the results of this study show, it seems like most students prefer feeling relaxed and comfortable with their teacher and in the classroom, and that there are situations in different contexts where English might not be optional to use. To summarize, even though the syllabus encourages language teachers to be communicative, the results of this study show that some students actually choose not to use English at all during lessons because of feelings of anxiety and nervousness in the classroom. If using a humanistic approach in the classroom to some extent, this might lead towards a tension-free atmosphere where the students experience the teacher not only imparting knowledge, but also facilitating them towards confidence and self-esteem – which might lead to a greater use of the target language in the classroom.

Nevertheless, the question is whether the syllabus, with its aim to always speak English in the classroom, has led to increased learning and motivation among the students; or if it, as many students in this study claim, has led to the students feeling insecure and anxious in the classroom because of the expectations to speak English in class at times. This dilemma, whether the L1 should or should not be included in foreign language teaching, will probably continue to be discussed.
6. Conclusion

The aim with this paper was to investigate when and why students at upper secondary school prefer to use Swedish rather than English in the English classroom. By using a qualitative method for this essay, where the collected data was interviews with students about their experiences, views and opinions; the results show that there are many situations where the students feel uncomfortable with using the English language, even though most of the students want the teaching to be conducted mainly in English. Nevertheless, the size of this study is small which makes it quite unreliable – it would have been really interesting to do this study among more students and perhaps also include observations in the collection of data. However, although this study might be small, previous research shows that the results from this survey actually look very similar to other studies in the same area: that most students experience the L1 to be of great use in the English classroom. To summarize, it seems like many results indicate that the use of the L1 is beneficial – especially concerning the creation of a social relationship between the teacher and the student and to reduce the risk for the students to feel inadequate and anxious during lessons.

The syllabus clarifies that in the subject English, the target language should be used as much as possible. However, one conclusion based on the results of this study could be that in some contexts, English might not actually be optional to use according to students. On the basis of three different evaluative perspectives in the classroom, the results of this study show:

- **Classroom management:** It could be advantageous to use both the target language and, if needed, the L1.
- **Communicative tasks:** The target language should be used, preferably, constantly.
- **Counselling pastoral:** The use of the L1 is necessary.

As mentioned, adding classroom observations to interviews would be exciting to compare if the students’ – or the teacher’s – expectations of their use of English differ from the reality. It would also be of great interest to do this study among more students who study on a number of different programs; unfortunately, because of the limitation of time, this was not possible for this survey in particular. In conclusion, the expectations for this study that students prefer to use the L1 in many situations in the EFL classroom were correct. To summarize, it would be of great interest for further research to continue investigating this area because – obviously
– it could be seen as a major problem that students actually choose not to use English during lessons in the actual subject English.
References


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