

Towards an In-Depth Understanding of English-Swedish Translanguaging Pedagogy in Multilingual EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This paper focuses on language practices in multilingual English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms in lower-secondary education. Based in the Ethnography of Language Policy, it presents a case study of a lead teacher of EFL and a year-8 class in a large urban multilingual school in Sweden. The study aims to map and understand language practices used in this classroom as being part of a larger sociocultural context, focusing on the perspectives of the teacher and four successively trilingual students who had had between four and eight years of schooling in Sweden. Field notes, lesson observations and interviews revealed that practices can be described as *English Mainly + Swedish*, referred to here as ‘English-Swedish translanguaging pedagogy’. While English was the base language in lessons, Swedish was used judiciously but consistently, serving different specific purposes. Discourse analysis of ethnographic data showed that the teacher’s practices can be traced to his lived experience and to discourses in policy documents. Student participants expressed positive attitudes to the language practices used, which can be explained by them having developed sufficient command of Swedish in the school domain and being loyal to an institutional policy document, their teacher and fellow students.

Introduction

For a long time, Swedish has been serving as common prior knowledge drawn on in classrooms by teachers and students in Sweden (Tholin 2014). With changing language ecology in schools, many educators are now re-thinking these practices so as to better connect with migrant students’ prior knowledge of language. While there is a growing body of international classroom research involving language-minoritized students, to the best of our knowledge, there is as yet no published research in Sweden that explores the learning of EFL in classrooms where many students have a non-Swedish-speaking background. This is unfortunate as students who migrate are under pressure to learn the language(s) of their new home countries quickly to gain access to upper-secondary and tertiary education. Migrant children settling in Sweden are faced with learning two languages: Swedish and English.

Studies have been carried out on secondary-school EFL classroom interaction in Sweden, but without focusing on language-minoritized students (Beers Fägersten 2012; Sandlund & Sundqvist 2016; The Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2011). These studies revealed that EFL teachers often use Swedish in addition to English in the classroom. Toth's research (2017) on content-subject English-medium instruction (EMI) involves primary-school classrooms (aged 10–13) in a school where as many as 48 per cent of the students had a first language (L1) other than Swedish or English. Focusing on the linguistic hierarchy of Sweden, Toth found that in these EMI classrooms, teachers occasionally used Swedish to support learning of science subjects, while other languages spoken by the students were very rarely used. In fact, the school had a written policy that was signed by the students, stating that languages spoken in the home other than English and Swedish were not to be used in the school. Research carried out overseas has yielded similar observations; in EFL classrooms, English tends to be used alongside the society majority language, which is usually the L1 of the majority of the students present (Brevik & Rindal 2020; Krulatz et al. 2016; Macaro 2009; Saxena 2009; Son 2018; Tsagari & Diakou 2015; Üstünel 2016).

These L1-EFL practices have support in classroom research, which has revealed positive effects of the *judicious* use of students' L1 on the learning of L2 grammar and vocabulary. These observations concern all educational levels – from primary school to higher education (Busse et al. 2020; Hopp et al. 2018, 2019; Källkvist 2008, 2013; Kupferberg & Olsthain 1996; Laufer & Shmueli 1997; Lee & Macaro 2013; Nation 2013; Prince 1996; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie 2002; Schmitt & Schmitt 2020; Zhao & Macaro 2016). Recently, a considerable amount of research has emerged in the field of pedagogical translanguaging, which also concerns including and building on student prior languages, linking this to social and epistemic justice (e.g., Cenoz & Gorter 2015, 2021; Creese & Blackledge 2010; García 2009; García & Li Wei, 2014; García & Kleyn 2016; Juvonen & Källkvist 2021; Lau & Van Viegen 2020; Paulsrud et al. 2017, 2018; Paulsrud et al. 2021; Prilutskaya 2021; Tian et al. 2020). Given the uniqueness of multilingual classrooms (Byrnes 2020), classroom translanguaging research typically involves qualitative case studies. Findings reveal greater student participation and positive attitudes in classrooms where translanguaging is permitted or encouraged (e.g., Ebe 2016; Källkvist 2013; Källkvist et al. 2019; Kleyn 2016; Ollerhead 2019; Saxena 2009; Seltzer & Collins 2016).

Early translanguaging research in schools worldwide has been carried out in bilingual classroom contexts (cf., Källkvist et al. in press). Now there is a need for research in *multilingual* classrooms where the teacher cannot realistically be expected to know the range of languages that students bring from their countries of origin.

Our research project, MultiLingual Spaces (cf. Källkvist et al. 2017; Källkvist & Juvonen 2021), was designed to address this research gap. In the present paper, we report a case study designed as part of MultiLingual Spaces of one teacher and one of his multilingual year-8 EFL classes in a large urban school. The aim is to map and gain an in-depth understanding of language practices used by a lead EFL teacher (*förstelärare i engelska*) and his students in a multilingual EFL classroom.

Against this contextual background, we address three guiding research questions:

- (1) What are the language practices in a multilingual year-8 EFL classroom?
- (2) What were language-minoritized students' attitudes to the language practices – were they perceived as helpful?
- (3) What beliefs underpinned the language practices observed?

As our point of departure, below we present key concepts as well as the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of the current study. We then describe the study and its findings, addressing the research questions one by one. We close by discussing our findings against those of prior international research in EFL classrooms and by applying concepts from multilingualism research, to which we now turn.

Individual multilingualism and changing language configurations

State-of-the-art multilingualism research, whether in psycholinguistics (Grosjean & Li 2013) or multilingual education (Baker & Wright 2021; García 2009) employs language *use* (rather than other measures) as the defining criterion for whether someone is a multilingual individual. Thus, a multilingual individual is someone who uses “two or more languages (or dialects) in everyday life” (Grosjean & Li 2013: 5; cf. also García 2009: 48). Multilingualism researchers also agree that language use cannot be divorced from its context (Baker & Wright 2021: 5; García 2009: 47). Research on multilingual individuals' choice of language in communicative contexts shows that it depends on a range of factors: “communicative and affective intent”, “the situation and the interlocutor” (García 2009: 47) and the construct of *domain* (García 2009; Grosjean & Li 2013). Domain is key to our study as we examine language practices in a specific institutional space – the EFL classroom. Grosjean's Complementarity Principle (Grosjean & Li 2013: 12) relates bilingualism to domains:

Bilinguals usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Different aspects of life often require different languages.

Grosjean and Li further say that “bilinguals who cover all their domains of life with all their languages” (2013: 12) are rare, and “a bilingual’s language history can be quite complex due to life events that reduce or increase the importance of a language” (2013: 10). Similarly, Baker and Wright (2021: 8) say that “a bilingual’s ‘stronger’ language may vary depending on the context (e.g. at home, at school, at work, at church, in an online community)”.

In addition to domain, *age* is relevant here since age of acquisition affects performance in additional languages (L2), although there is room for considerable individual variation (Grosjean & Li 2013). Relating this to education, Baker and Wright (2021: 128) say that “children who begin to learn a second language in the elementary school and continue throughout schooling tend to show higher proficiency than those who start to learn the second language later in their schooling”. Not only age of acquisition, but length of exposure to the L2 influences learning; based on his groundbreaking research extending over nearly four decades, Cummins (2017) posits that it takes 5–7 years for migrant students to reach the command of the new language that their non-migrant peers have. The theory of Language Mode (Grosjean 2008) is also relevant here as it explains bilingual and multilingual individuals’ choice of languages.

Language Mode: A theory of bi- and multilinguals’ language choices

Language Mode (Grosjean 2008) is a theory specifically about of how bi- and multilingual individuals activate and use different languages they know depending on their interlocutor, the context, the topic, the attitude to the language, the function of the interaction (such as a language being the target language in a classroom) and the proficiency level; the more proficient an individual is, the more likely they are to activate the language. Language Mode is defined as “the state of activation of the bilingual’s languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time” (Grosjean & Li 2013: 15). Changes from a monolingual to a bilingual or multilingual mode can be very rapid.

Two interlocutors sharing the same two languages may be in a bilingual mode and bring in elements from both languages. The opposite is true if an interlocutor shares only one of the two languages; then the bilingual individual may be in a monolingual mode, deactivating the other language. Language mode is further conceptualized as a continuum along which individuals move depending on a range of factors, so a language may be more or less activated. They can be in an “intermediary language mode” (Grosjean & Li 2013: 15), i.e., between the end points. As Grosjean and Li say, this can be “the case when they are speaking to a bilingual who shares their languages but who prefers to stick to one language” (2013: 15), such as an EFL teacher wanting to use mainly English in the classroom.

A concept in the theory of Language Mode that is important to our analysis is ‘base language’, which denotes *the language chosen in interaction*. Other languages can be brought in and are then conceptualised as ‘guest languages’, brought in as ‘code-switching’, which denotes “the alternate use of two languages” (Grosjean & Li 2013: 18). Summarising the psycholinguistics of bilingualism research on code-switching, Grosjean and Li (2013: 18) say that

[i]t is now clear that code-switching is not simply a haphazard behaviour due to some form of semilingualism but that it is, instead, a well-governed process used as a communicate stratagem to convey linguistic and social information. The reasons for code-switching are many: using the right word or expression, filling a linguistic need (see the Complementarity Principle among other causes), marking group identity, excluding or including someone, raising your status and so on.

We now turn to the ethnography of language policy, which informed our data collection and whose analytical concepts can serve to understand language-in-education policy and on-the-ground, local practices by conceptualising them as being multi-layered, scalar and shaped by people.

Ethnography of language policy

The ethnography of language policy approach to researching and understanding policy (e.g. Hornberger & Johnson 2007; Johnson 2009) provides a methodological heuristic for studying local, micro-level language practices that are nested in layers of policy on wider scales in social organization. This affords a bridge across the practice-policy gap, illuminating the role of people in creating, interpreting, appropriating and sometimes resisting policy discourse (Hornberger 2020).

Education is a societal domain where macro-level policy such as curricula and syllabi is interpreted and appropriated locally through the agency of administrators and educators. A growing number of ethnographies of language-in-education policy in contexts across the world has revealed the powerful role of educators in shaping mono- or multilingual classroom language practices (e.g. Menken & García 2010; see list of studies in Johnson 2013, and Hornberger 2020). In these studies, discourse analysis of micro-level ethnographic data is related to policy discourse on wider scales, often in the form of educational policy texts on a provincial or national scale. Such policy texts are characterised by frequent borrowing of previous text (Johnson 2009), making the analytical concepts of ‘intertextuality’ and ‘interdiscursivity’ key to discovering interconnections across policy discourse. ‘Intertextuality’ refers to how texts derive from other texts on the lexico-grammatical level, whereas interdiscursivity refers to how discourses may connect between different layers of policy (Johnson 2013).

In the context of the present study, language-choice patterns in the multilingual classroom studied (the micro-level, classroom scale) are

examined and related to outer layers: a school language policy (the institutional scale) and the syllabus for EFL in Swedish lower-secondary school (the macro, national scale). We collected ethnographic data in a classroom and selected relevant policy texts on larger scales following formal and informal interviews with our teacher participant. We adopted the ethnography of language policy approach because it can engender an understanding of why educational policy is recontextualised in particular ways in a school and classroom (Johnson 2013).

The study: Data, participants and data analysis

The school was recruited through an email sent to the City Council asking to connect with schools where the majority of students had a non-Swedish-speaking migrant background. Two lead EFL teachers volunteered to participate. This paper focuses on one of them, whom we call Vincent. At the time, he was in his early 30s, a qualified teacher of Swedish and English with six years' teaching experience. An L1 speaker of Swedish, he was born and raised in Sweden. At school, he learnt English (from age 9), German (from age 13) and Danish (from age 16).

We selected one of his classes for this case study, a year-8 class, with students aged 14–16 years old, all of whom had elected to study English fast-track. 'Fast-track' means that they completed the EFL course designed for years 7–9 in two years rather than three. The class consisted of 21 students, most of whom had been exposed to a minority language from birth, still used at home, including Arabic, Bosnian, Hungarian, Indonesian, Kurmanji, Sorani and Swedish. Arabic was shared among four students, Kurmanji among two and Sorani among two. Swedish was shared by all as it was the language of schooling. Of the 21 students, 16 volunteered to participate and filled in a language-background questionnaire, also consenting to participate in an individual interview. Among the 16 volunteer students, we selected four focal students who were successively trilingual users of their L1 and Swedish and English as their L2s. Ethics clearance was gained prior to the launch of the study and each participant signed a form of informed consent. For participants under the age of 15, informed consent was signed also by their caregivers.

Our ethnographic engagement with Vincent lasted for eight months after which he left the school to take up employment closer to his home. On the classroom scale, we collected observation data using an observation schedule, and ethnographic field notes during five English lessons. The observation schedule was used to register basic details of the lessons, such as task types, but was primarily used to record any translanguaging practices. Following the five lesson observations, we collected individual interview data with the teacher and nine of his students, selected because they used a language other than Swedish in the home. For ease of reference, Table 1 provides a breakdown of the data. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 1. Data

Scale; Type of data	Method(s) of analysis	Participants	Quantity
National: Curriculum for Compulsory School, Pre-school Class and the Recreation Centre	Discourse analysis	-	10 pages which constitute the EFL syllabus
Institutional: The school's rules and regulations	Discourse analysis	-	1 page
Classroom: Field notes Photography	Content analysis Discourse analysis	1 teacher 21 students (aged 14–16)	5 lessons (over six months)
Individual: Interviews (audio-recorded, orthographically transcribed) Informal conversations	Content analysis Discourse analysis	Vincent (teacher)	45 minutes
		Adnan (student)	42 minutes
		Amir (student)	31 minutes
		Barzan (student)	33 minutes
		Hero (student)	43 minutes

Of the nine students interviewed, we selected students who were successively trilingual users of their L1 and Swedish and English as their L2s, resulting in four focal students. They were born abroad and exposed to Swedish only after the age of six, which classifies them as successively trilingual (Baker & Wright 2021), having an established L1 prior to being exposed to Swedish and English. All four self-reported that their L1 (Arabic for two of them and Kurmanji and Sorani for the other two) was their strongest language (see Table 2). The purpose of selecting these focal students was to explore whether the use of Swedish in the classroom was perceived as a hindrance or a help. Table 2 provides a description as to their language repertoires, age of first exposure to Swedish, length of residence in Sweden and their grades in English and in their L1, for the three students that attended elective mother-tongue tuition.

Table 2. Focal students, their self-reported language repertoires, grade in English, and mother-tongue tuition (*modersmålsundervisning*); AoA= Age of acquisition; LoR = Length of residence; grades are in the A–F range, where A = the top grade and F = fail.

Student	Age (yr; mons)	Self-reported language repertoire (the strongest language first)	AoA Swe.	LoR in Sweden	AoA Engl.	Grade in English (end of year–9 course)	Mother-tongue tuition (optional school subject) Grade
Adnan	16;11	Arabic Swedish English	11	Ca 5 years	8	B	Arabic A
Amir	15;4	Arabic English Swedish	11	Ca 4 years	4	B	Arabic C
Barzan	15;10	Kurmanji English Swedish	7	Ca 8 years	5	B	-
Hero	15;5	Sorani Swedish English	6	Ca 9 years	9	B	Sorani A

All four self-reported their L1 as their strongest language. Their length of residence in Sweden ranged between four and nine years. Further, they all had a high grade (B) in English and three of them were attending mother-tongue tuition, offered by schools on condition that it is possible to recruit a teacher and at least five students require it.

The interviews were done at the end of the school year, audio-recorded and then orthographically transcribed. Observation and interview data were analysed using quantitative content analysis (Denscombe 2017) to answer research questions 1 and 2, i.e., the purposes for which different languages were used in the classroom, and whether the successively trilingual students found the use of different languages facilitative or not for communicating and learning English in the classroom.

All data, including the textual data from the national and institutional scales, were then analysed using discourse analysis (Denscombe 2017) in order to address research question 3, i.e., map beliefs and discourses that underpinned the language practices observed. Data were coded manually. Below, we present findings pertaining to research question 1.

The presence and purposes of translanguaging

Like the two previous studies of language practices in EFL classrooms in Sweden (Beers Fägersten 2012; Sandlund & Sundqvist 2016), there was English-Swedish translanguaging in Vincent's classroom. English was the base language in all lessons observed, established at the start of every lesson by Vincent writing the lesson outline in English on the whiteboard, exemplified in Image 1 below:

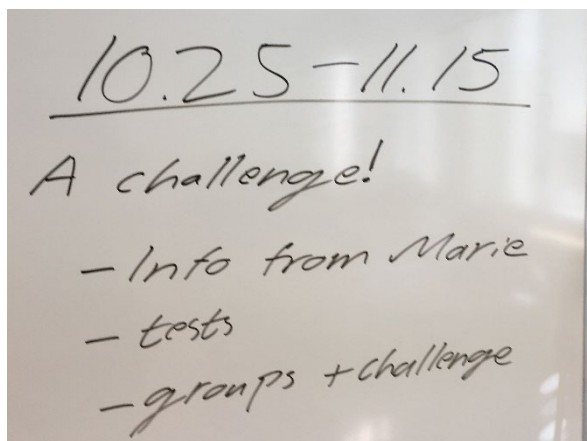


Image 1. Outline of a lesson on the whiteboard

Each lesson began with teacher-led classroom interaction with most students responding in English, but in a few cases they used Swedish. Vincent then usually said "in English please". Students were seated in groups of two to four students, and many of them spoke Swedish to each other. We (Authors 1 and 2) were seated at the very back of the classroom and although we were not able to hear all student-student conversations, we never heard a language other than English or Swedish being used. While students were engaged in task work, Vincent circulated to assist them. Swedish was sometimes policed (cf., Amir & Musk 2013) by Vincent, but not banned from the classroom. Content analysis of our field notes and interview data yielded observations outlined in Table 3:

Table 3. Use of Swedish in lessons

Use of Swedish	Swedish is used by	Purposes of using Swedish
Words were translated into Swedish by Vincent if he considers them difficult. At times, Vincent asked students to translate vocabulary into Swedish.	Vincent and several of the students	The translation helps students understand what is being said.
Grammar patterns and writing conventions that tend to challenge students. Swedish temporarily became the base language.	Vincent and students	For students to understand the grammar pattern and writing conventions.
Quotes from the knowledge requirements in the syllabus. The quotes were embedded as intrasentential code switches.	Vincent	Provide maximally clear information about the grading criteria.
Instructions (some, not all) for the standardised, national test of English	Vincent	Provide clarity about when the test starts and ends, reminding students of the importance of turning up in time.
Informal conversations with their fellow students	Students (most but not all)	1. Comments about events in the classroom 2. Peer assistance during on-task work
Responses to questions from Vincent during teacher-led dialogue	Students (a few)	From interview with Hero (student): Unwillingness to express herself in English due to perceived negative comments from other students.

The most frequent use of Swedish by Vincent involved vocabulary that was translated into Swedish. On one occasion, quotes in Swedish of the knowledge requirements from the syllabus were used to raise students' awareness about what would be required from them, see Image 2:

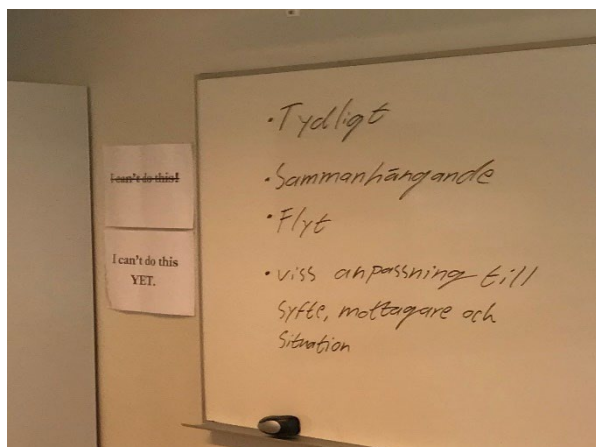


Image 2. Quotes from the knowledge requirements (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011: 6)

The quotes translate as: *Tydligt* = clear, *sammanhängande* = coherent, *flyt* = fluency, *viss anpassning till syfte, mottagare och situation* = some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. Vincent provided this information in a lesson preceding the oral proficiency test. English was the base language and translations were intra-sentential code-switches.

We now turn to research question 2, i.e., examining the four focal students’ perceptions of Vincent’s translanguaging perceptions.

Successively trilingual students’ perceptions of the translanguaging practices

Content analysis of the transcribed interviews was used to record the four focal students’ perceptions and own use of translanguaging, provided in Table 4. Students chose between using English or Swedish in the interview.

Table 4. Students’ attitudes to the classroom translanguaging practices, and their own practices

	Language chosen for the interview	Self-reported language repertoire	AoA Swe.	Content analysis: Need for Swedish to understand or learn English?
Adnan	Swedish	Arabic Swedish English	11	When recently arrived in Sweden, English-Swedish vocabulary lists facilitated Adnan’s learning of both languages. Using Swedish did not facilitate learning English, but Vincent’s provision of task instructions in both English and Swedish was helpful.

Amir	English	Arabic English Swedish	11	No need for Swedish in the classroom. Used an English-English dictionary to look up English vocabulary. If not helped by this, an English-Arabic dictionary was helpful and was needed 20–30% of the time. Vincent’s use of Swedish signalled that the topic was important, which helped Amir to focus.
Barzan	English	Kurmanji English Swedish	7	Comparing different languages is helpful for learning their form. Swedish is helpful to explain English words. Of the languages Barzan knew, Swedish was helpful but not Kurmanji and German.
Hero	Swedish	Sorani Swedish English	6	Explanations in Swedish enhanced Hero’s learning of English. Sorani did not help.

Both Adnan and Amir, who encountered Swedish only at age 11, said that they did not need Swedish when learning English, although Adnan said that English-Swedish vocabulary lists facilitated his learning of both languages when he was a beginner user of Swedish. Amir never used an English-Swedish dictionary for looking up new vocabulary, but an English-Arabic dictionary was helpful at times.

Barzan and Hero, who had had their schooling in Sweden for eight and nine years respectively, both found Vincent’s use of Swedish helpful. They were also unanimous in not needing their L1s to enhance their learning of English.

More details of the students’ perceptions of the classroom translinguaging practices are provided in the next section as we proceed to addressing research question 3.

Discourses and beliefs underpinning the translinguaging practices

National policy: The syllabus for English

The Curriculum, including the syllabus for English, came into effect in 2011 and was revised in 2019 (but please note that the excerpts below are from the 2011 version since the 2019 version had not yet been published at the time of data collection). In Excerpt 1 below, we quote the introductory passages (Swedish National Agency for Education 2011: 32) from the English version of the syllabus:

Excerpt 1

English

Language is the primary tool human beings use for thinking, communicating and learning. Having a knowledge of several languages can provide new perspectives on the surrounding world, enhanced opportunities to create contacts and greater understanding of different ways of living. The English language surrounds us in our daily lives and is used in such diverse areas as politics, education and economics. Knowledge of English thus increases the individual's opportunities to participate in different social and cultural contexts, as well as in international studies and working life.

Aim

Teaching of English should aim at helping the pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used, and also pupils' confidence in their ability to use the language in different situations and for different purposes.

Through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills involve understanding spoken and written English, being able to formulate one's thinking and interact with others in the spoken and written language, and the ability to adapt use of language to different situations, purposes and recipients. Communication skills also cover confidence in using the language and the ability to use different strategies to support communication and solve problems when language skills by themselves are not sufficient.

As can be seen in the excerpt, English is indexed with opportunities to participate in and learn from a range of social contexts, including international study and work. Teaching is to provide students with communicative skills, first "understanding spoken and written English", then "interacting with others in the spoken and written language". The syllabus does not prescribe amounts of target-language use, however, so balancing the use of English and other languages in the classroom is up to the teacher's judgement (Hult 2017). We now turn to the other policy text, the school rules.

Institutional policy: the school rules

The school had its own rule document, posted in public spaces on the school premises, on the school web and in some classrooms, including Vincent's. The text was in Swedish. Excerpt 2 provides the passages that pertain to language use in Swedish and a translation into English:

Excerpt 2

Swedish original (bold in original)	English translation (ours)
Vi visar varandra respekt på hela skolan, detta gäller alla som vistas i skolan.	We show each other respect on the school premises, this goes for everyone present at the school.
Vi samtalar i lugn och behaglig ton och använder ett vårdat språk.	We use a calm and friendly tone and we use non-offensive language.
Vårt språk i klassrummet är svenska om inte lektionen är på engelska eller något annat språk.	The language in classrooms is Swedish unless the lesson is in English or another language.

In this school policy, we see languages and language use indexed with *respect*. The final sentence stipulates languages that may be used, with only Swedish, English and other languages taught in the school being allowed in classrooms. Being mentioned first and in bold print, Swedish was the most important language. In one of our conversations with Vincent, we asked whether students complied with the rules. He responded that students did “buy this” (translated quote from Swedish, field notes) since they realised that everyone present had the right to understand what was being said.

Beliefs: the teacher and four focal students

Discourse analysis of the interview data revealed four themes, here referred to as beliefs. They are provided below, supported by excerpts from the interview transcriptions.

“[W]e must speak a language that everyone understands so that no one is excluded”

The teacher and students share a belief that everyone present in the classroom should be able to comprehend what is being said and thus not be excluded, expressed below by Adnan:

Excerpt 3

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
Adnan: man måste (.) alltså (.) det gäller alla klassrum (.) inte bara engelskaklassrummet (.) man måste prata ett språk där alla kan förstå så att inte någon sitter utanför	Adnan: we have to (.) this applies to all classrooms (.) not only the English classroom (.) we must speak a language that everyone understands so that no one is excluded

Vincent would like there to be more communication in English in the classroom, however, which was a theme in his interview.

“The problem is that students don’t use English enough in lessons”
Students’ use of Swedish in the classroom posed a challenge to Vincent:

Excerpt 4

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Vincent: det är mycket det som är problemet ofta (.) att de liksom inte använder det [engelska] alls eller att de inte vågar eller att de inte kan (.) och mycket av ämnet nu (.) det är att använda det (.) interagera och faktiskt liksom (.) nästan kvantiteten egentligen</p>	<p>Vincent: by and large this is often the problem (.) that they don’t use [English] at all or they dare not or they are unable to (.) and at this stage what is needed is (.) interaction and like (.) quantity really</p>

Vincent consistently used English as the base language in teacher-led interaction and he would like students to speak more English in class than they did. Still, he framed Swedish as a resource.

Swedish is a resource

Vincent framed Swedish as a resource for translating English vocabulary, for explaining grammar and for gaining students’ attention and indexing important information. We witnessed this first-hand when observing Vincent’s lessons and those of the other teacher participant at the school. During teacher-led interaction, classrooms were rarely silent despite both teachers being liked and respected by their students. In Vincent’s own words:

Excerpt 5

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Vincent: om vi då ska prata om någonting svårt så är det ju en mycket, mycket större risk att jag tappar jättemånga (.) men om jag byter till svenska så (.) okej (.) bara skiftet där emellan (.) om de är vana vid att jag pratar på engelska (.) och så skiftet till svenska blir att de blir mer fokuserade (.) det är lättare att förstå om det nu är någonting som jag pratar om som är allvarligt (.) så dels att de kan slappna av lite (.) men de är mer fokuserade för att det är ovanligt att jag pratar svenska (.) och för att det är svårt och det signalerar att det är svårt och då måste de fokusera mer</p>	<p>Vincent: if we then are going to talk about something difficult then there is much much greater risk that I lose many of them (.) but if I switch to Swedish then (.) ok (.) the shift itself (.) if they are used to my speaking in English (.) and the switch to Swedish makes them more focused (.) it is easier to understand if I am talking about something serious (.) so they can relax a bit (.) but they are more focused because I usually don’t speak Swedish (.) and the reason is it is difficult (.) signalling that this is difficult (.) which requires them to focus more</p>

On the topic of using Swedish to translate vocabulary, Vincent told us that as a lower-secondary-school student (school years 7–9), he elected to study the natural-science subjects in English, which was an option offered by his school. Below, Vincent talks about learning biology in English while also using Swedish to enhance learning:

Excerpt 6

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Vincent: man utsatte sig för språket mycket, mycket mer (.) och var tvungen att läsa båda språken (.) och för att lära sig till exempel om biologi (.) måste du kunna på svenska och sen engelska (.) då sitter det ju djupare (.) så mycket det också att man fattar ju hur man lär sig saker genom språken också (.) och det gjorde jättestor skillnad</p>	<p>Vincent: I was exposed to the language [English] so much more (.) and I had to read in both languages [English and Swedish] (.) and in order to learn biology for example (.) we had to know about it in both Swedish and English (.) this makes for deeper learning (.) so one understands how you learn things through the languages also (.) and that made a huge difference</p>

Later on, we learned that he accommodated to students of lower proficiency by using Swedish:

Excerpt 7

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Vincent: jag vet om att de kan olika mycket (.) då får jag ju liksom ta och anpassa mig till den som kanske kan lite mindre (.) men ändå se till att de är med</p>	<p>Vincent: I know that they are not all equally proficient [in English] (.) and then I have to adjust to those of lower proficiency to see to it that they are following.</p>

Like Vincent, the students framed Swedish as a resource:

Excerpt 8

English original
<p>Researcher: do you find that Vincent ever compares different languages to each other?</p> <p>Barzan: Yeah yeah yeah (.) obviously (.) it is also helping (.) because you know (.) sometimes (.) if we have an English assignment (.) for example if we are working on grammar or anything (.) and then we might take an example from another which isn't the same as English (.) so obviously he has to compare to show us that English might be different (.) or the same (.) so he can make it easier</p>

Amir described Swedish as being helpful, not to himself but to many of his classmates:

Excerpt 9

English original
<p>Researcher: do you think it's good that he switches between the languages?</p> <p>Amir: yeah of course (.) because there's a lot of people who actually learned English from Swedish, so it's kind of easy for them</p>

Hero, on the other hand, having had her schooling in Sweden since the age of six, positioned Swedish as facilitative:

Excerpt 10

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Researcher: Vincent använder svenska har vi hört och sett (.) och det gör de allra flesta engelsklärare</p> <p>Hero: ja</p> <p>Researcher: tycker du att det är bra för ditt lärande?</p> <p>Hero: ja det är helt ok (.) ibland vissa saker går inte att förklara på engelska (.) eller det går (.) men att hämta en liknelse på svenska hjälper oss att förstå det bättre på engelska (.) så att vi alltså (.) det fastnar bättre</p>	<p>Researcher: we have seen and heard that Vincent uses Swedish (.) and so do most other English teachers</p> <p>Hero: yes</p> <p>Researcher: does this help you learn?</p> <p>Hero: yes this is quite okay (.) sometimes some things can't be explained in English (.) well it is possible (.) but to use Swedish helps us understand it better than in English (.) it sticks better</p>

As stated above, Vincent used Swedish also as an interactional resource for making students focus on what he was about to say. Adnan provided his perspective on this:

Excerpt 11

Swedish original	English translation (ours)
<p>Researcher: på lektionerna i engelska så har jag märkt att Vincent ibland går över till svenska (.) bara korta stunder (.) märker du det?</p> <p>Adnan: Ja han går över till svenska om han typ sitter och ser att alla sitter och kollar på han och inte förstår vad han menar exakt (.) eller så vill han försäkra att informationen kommit till alla (.) för vissa vågar inte fråga ”vad menar du” eller något (.) då han väljer att ta det på båda språk (.) om det är en väldigt viktig sak</p> <p>Researcher: ja (.) vad tycker du om det?</p> <p>Adnan: Det är bra (.) det är en bra strategi för en lärare.</p>	<p>Researcher: in the English lessons I have noticed that Vincent sometimes switches to Swedish (.) only briefly (.) do you notice this?</p> <p>Adnan: yes he switches to Swedish if he sees that we are staring (.) we don't understand exactly what he means (.) or he wants to make sure that the information has reached everyone (.) because some dare not ask what do you mean or something like that (.) then he chooses to say it in both languages (.) if it is something very important</p> <p>Researcher: what is your opinion of this?</p> <p>Adnan: it is good (.) it is a good strategy for a teacher</p>

No other L1 than Swedish was used by Vincent. Below, Adnan and Amir elaborate on the absence of Arabic in the classroom.

Languages that not everyone understands: “it doesn't feel comfortable”

Having had several years' schooling in Arabic, we expected Adnan and Amir to say that the use of Arabic would aid their learning. Adnan said that he used Arabic sometimes in the classroom, but only for the purpose of having brief private conversations with a classmate. When Amir was asked about the absence of Arabic in the English classroom, it became clear that Arabic was not a legitimate language in the classroom:

Excerpt 12

English original
Researcher: are there rules about language use in the classroom?
Amir: yeah (.) we need to always use Swe (.) English (.) I'm sorry (.) English (.) and we're not allowed to use swear words (.) no swear words
Researcher: how about Arabic in the English classroom (.)s that an option for you at all?
Amir: no (.) but maybe because I have a lot of friends (.) Arabic friends (.) but I wouldn't usually use it because there's a lot of people who don't understand it
Researcher: would you like to use it [Arabic]?
Amir: no
Researcher: no, no?
Amir: it feels weird (.) it's use (.) it doesn't feel comfortable

Amir said that when he encountered an English word that he needed to look up, he tried English definitions first by accessing an online dictionary on his computer or mobile phone. If this was of no help, he looked up the meaning in Arabic:

Excerpt 13

English original
Researcher: do you use an English-English dictionary or do you use an English-Arabic dictionary?
Amir: English sometimes (.) like English-English (.) but if it's really hard English-Arabic.

Barzan and Hero, who had had most of their schooling in Sweden, both said that there was no need for them to use Kurmanji or Sorani for enhancing their learning of English.

Finally, the use of Swedish can be explained by tracing intertextuality and interdiscursivity on the institutional and national scales.

Analysis of intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Analysis revealed a pattern across the national and institutional scales to the classroom and individual scales, illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. *The multi-layered discourses on the different scales studied*

Scale	Data	Type of (language) policy	Type of multi-layered connection
National	<u>Policy document:</u> The Curriculum (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011)	Educational policy document	<u>Intertextual:</u> quotes of assessment criteria
Institutional	<u>Policy document:</u> The school rules	Language policy document (part of school rules)	<u>Interdiscursive:</u> only Swedish and English allowed during EFL lessons
Classroom	Researcher field notes Individual interview data	Classroom interaction	<p><u>Intertextual:</u> Vincent quoted the assessment criteria for oral proficiency (from the syllabus for EFL) in Swedish on the whiteboard</p> <p><u>Interdiscursive:</u> the discourse of everyone’s right to comprehend (everyone present can understand English and Swedish)</p> <p><u>Interdiscursive (from the individual scale):</u> Vincent’s beliefs</p> <p><u>Interdiscursive from the individual scale:</u> students’ need for a good command of Swedish</p>
Individual	Individual interview data	Beliefs	<p><u>Interdiscursive:</u> Vincent’s beliefs shaped by his lived experience that Swedish facilitates learning</p> <p><u>Interdiscursive:</u> students’ need to learn Swedish (a mandatory school subject).</p>

This analysis illuminates how the needs of individuals bear on their endorsement of the use of Swedish in the EFL classroom. Amir and Adnan

needed to quickly learn Swedish as well as English when arriving in Sweden. Vincent had prior experience from using Swedish to support his learning of science-subject content taught in English. These prior experiences and needs bore on their language practices in this EFL classroom. Also, the discourse on the classroom scale of everyone's right to understand what is being said can be traced both to the syllabus for EFL ("pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills involve understanding spoken and written English") and to the school rules, which index the right to understand with respect.

Discussion

The present study aimed to map and understand language practices in an EFL fast-track classroom taught by a lead teacher of English in a large multilingual urban school. Since the presence of English-Swedish translanguaging pedagogy had been mapped in prior research (Beers Fägersten 2012; Sandlund & Sundqvist 2016), an important objective was to gain migrant students' perspectives on this, focusing on students who had an already established L1 prior to migrating to Sweden.

Translanguaging in the classroom involved only English and Swedish, with English always being the base language of each lesson observed. Neither the teacher nor the focal students expressed a need or desire to bring in any of the students' home languages. This can be explained by English and Swedish being the only shared languages in the classroom, given the teacher's and students' belief that everyone present had the right to understand what is being talked about. This belief ruled out any other language being used in whole-class interaction. This practice was also in line with the school rules.

Swedish was positioned as a resource by Vincent, Hero and Barzan for providing the meaning of new English vocabulary, for explaining English grammar and when presenting assessment criteria. Hero and Barzan had had schooling in Swedish for about eight years. In the light of Cummins' (2017) research, according to which 5-7 years are needed before a migrant student has gained sufficient academic literacy in the new language of schooling, the language configurations of Barzan and Hero have changed through schooling such that Swedish is their strongest language in the school domain, even though they self-report Sorani and Kurmanji, respectively, as their L1s. Using Grosjean and Li's (2013) observations about multilinguals' evolving language configurations, Hero and Barzan's statements in the interviews suggest that Sorani and Kurmanji had been reduced from being their languages of schooling to being languages used mainly in the home domain, whereas Swedish had gained increased importance by taking over the school domain.

Studies in the contexts of English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) classrooms in secondary schools in Australia and New Zealand have yielded similar observations: Davy and French (2018: 171) refer to English having developed into their focal high-school students' "academic L1", thus taking over in the school domain. Davy and French bring in high-stakes assessment as a variable at the secondary-school level. This applies to the present study as well, although we did not discuss assessment demands in the student interviews. However, students in lower-secondary schools in Sweden are indeed graded in both Swedish and English, impacting their chances of admission both to the upper-secondary school of their choice and their preferred specialisation.

Amir and Adnan, who were exposed to Swedish later than Hero and Barzan, at age 11, framed Swedish as a resource in a more restricted sense. They said that they benefited from Vincent's switches to Swedish as the base language, signalling that vital information was about to follow, leading them to quickly pay attention. Neither Adnan nor Amir said that they were helped by Swedish when learning English, however, although Adnan said that his prior English teacher's practice of using English-Swedish vocabulary lists helped him learn *both* languages when he was a beginner user of Swedish.

At the time we collected the data, Adnan (who as a year older than Amir) had had about five years' schooling in Sweden, whereas Amir had had four years. Following Cummins (2017), Adnan's five years of schooling in Swedish places him at the lower end of the 5-7-year time range needed for migrant students to reach the academic literacy level of their Swedish-born peers. Adnan's choice to speak Swedish in the interview may be indicative of him being at ease using Swedish at school. Amir, with four years of schooling in Swedish, chose to speak English in the interview. Our results thus support Cummins suggesting that at least five years is needed for academic literacy in the school language to develop.

Amir, with his four years of schooling in Sweden, opted to speak English in the interview. Even though not helped by Vincent's translations of vocabulary and explanations of English grammar in Swedish, Amir was in favour of them because he believed they benefited his classmates. This speaks of Amir's loyalty to his class and his teacher. All four focal students did express deep appreciation of Vincent's teaching skills, and English-Swedish translanguaging may be part and parcel of Vincent as a teacher. Also, English-Swedish translanguaging may have become "the discursive norm of the classroom" (Ebe 2016: 79) as Ebe describes the language-diverse 8th-grade New York translanguaging classroom that she researched.

Other prior research, Saxena (2009), revealed that when two different teachers of EFL in Brunei were compared, one of them allowed translanguaging between Malay (most of the students' L1) and English (the target language) whereas the other did not. Through observation and

interviews with the students, whose age is unclear, but probably early teenagers, the teacher that translanguaged with the students had a stronger bond with them, whereas the teacher who did not translanguaged was perceived as being hard to understand and her classes were less popular among the students. This agrees with findings in Brevik and Rindal's (2020) quantitative study of language practices in EFL classrooms in secondary schools in Norway. They found that most of their student participants (aged 13–15) reported that their English teacher's use of Norwegian (the L1 for the vast majority) was helpful. An interesting finding in this study is that, in general, students found their teacher's use of English to be easy to understand; still they appreciated the use of Norwegian, even if rarely used. Tsagari and Diakou's (2015) questionnaire study of 96 Greek Cypriot EFL students in Cypriot schools report similar findings. These Cypriot students appreciated their teachers' use of mainly English, but also their use of their L1, Cypriot Greek, particularly for defining new English vocabulary, teaching reading comprehension and explaining grammar. Taken together with Brevik and Rindal (2020), Saxena (2009), Lee and Macaro (2013) and Tsagari and Diakou (2015), the finding that the judicious use of the language of schooling alongside English is perceived as helpful for comprehension and learning in EFL classrooms with teenage students seems to be robust, covering a range of locations across the world.

The presence of languages of schooling – Swedish in our context – can be explained by Grosjean's (2008) theory of Language Mode. In our study, Vincent and his students had high levels of activation of Swedish prior to the start of each lesson since Swedish is used on the school premises and when teaching most subjects. Indeed, research in psycholinguistics, reviewed in Wu et al. (2013), has shown that bilinguals cannot fully deactivate one language while communicating in the other. Being the society majority language, Swedish is also the language of the curriculum and syllabi, and intertextual links to the EFL syllabus, which Vincent drew on in order to provide maximum clarity of the knowledge requirements at a point in time when students were about to be assessed on their oral proficiency in English. Bringing such criteria to students' attention is potentially a high-stakes moment for students, who are trying to make the grades for entry to upper-secondary school.

In sum, the classroom studied can be described as a translanguaging space involving *English Mainly + Swedish*. English was consistently the base language in lessons we observed, with Vincent saying that “quantity is needed” in terms of students' use of English at this level. He also expressed frustration that students did not use English all the time during class despite being proficient enough to do so. Vincent's English Mainly policy is in line with recommendations made in course books on the teaching of English in secondary schools in Sweden (Lundahl 2021).

The focal students' self-reported L1s, Arabic, Kurmanji and Sorani, were not used in whole-class interaction as they were not shared by everyone present. This is not a surprising finding since we know from prior research in different parts of the world that when minority languages are not shared, they tend to be relegated to group-, pair- or individual classroom workspaces (e.g., Asker & Martin-Jones 2013; Brevik & Rindal 2020; Gynne 2019; Pacheco 2018; Rodrick Beiler 2020; Toth 2017). In her work on classroom interaction in French primary schools, Bonacina-Pugh (2020) has applied the concept of 'legitimacy': there is "a set of interactional norms of language choice" (2020: 435). In Vincent's classroom, the most legitimate language was English, and Swedish was tolerated and legitimate because it provides a shared resource that can be used on occasions when *all* students need to understand *all* of what is being said.

Our understanding of the four focal students' acceptance of English-Swedish translanguaging in Vincent's classroom brings to the fore six observations that join forces, making the presence of Swedish strong: firstly, all four had had at least four years' schooling in Sweden so they were able to manage well without recourse to their L1s. Secondly, being admitted to the fast-track EFL class may be indicative of them having high levels of language-learning aptitude, so multilingual practices in a recently learned language is not too demanding; thirdly, they appreciate the teaching style and teaching skills of Vincent, and English-Swedish translanguaging pedagogy may be part and parcel of him. Fourth, they abided by the school rules. Fifth, with Swedish being the language of schooling, all students and staff have high activation levels of Swedish during the school day. Sixth, from the perspective of instrumental motivation, students in Swedish education need minimally exactly these two languages when progressing from secondary school to upper-secondary and higher education.

On a critical note, the ubiquitous English-Swedish translanguaging pedagogy supports and augments the language hierarchy in Sweden (Hult 2012), with Swedish and English at the top, followed by European languages, relegating most migrant languages to the bottom.

Conclusion and limitations

We have mapped translanguaging practices, multi-layered discourses, beliefs and attitudes in an EFL fast-track multilingual classroom at a large urban school taught by a lead teacher of English (and Swedish). Focusing on the multi-layered nature of school policy has been instrumental in making sense of the findings of the present study and those of prior research in similar contexts. We have brought attention to the fact that 'English - school-language' translanguaging is appreciated by students in many contexts across the world as such language practices enhance their comprehension of English, their ability to understand complex subject matter such as grammar and challenging vocabulary while relating it to

another language in which students in lower-secondary school are being assessed: the school language.

Our focus on successively trilingual students whose L1s were never used in the EFL classroom revealed that they were in favour of English-Swedish translanguaging practices used by their teacher, whom they were fond of. The classroom studied was a space where student English-Swedish bilingualism was supported by a teacher whose teaching qualification was in exactly these two subjects.

The present study breaks new ground in its focus on qualitative data, revealing the multi-layered discourses and yielding a profound understanding of successively trilingual migrant students' perspectives on English-Swedish translanguaging pedagogy. The field needs more studies of multilingual mainstream EFL classrooms to hear the voices of students who are not EFL fast-trackers and who may be struggling to meet the knowledge requirements for EFL in secondary school.

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