



*School of Education, Culture
and Communication*

Codeswitching in Swedish EFL classrooms

Practices and insights from teachers and teacher students

English for Teachers in Secondary and
Upper Secondary School: Degree project
ENA314

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the situations in which code-switching takes place in EFL classrooms. The paper focuses on why code-switching takes place, and whether it benefits or limits students' learning, according to teachers and teacher students in Swedish upper-secondary schools. Three teachers and four teacher students participated voluntarily in this study, as well as four of the participating teachers' students. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the transcripts were thematically analyzed. In addition, observations of four lessons with four different classes were conducted. The results show that codeswitching is used with the purpose of teaching, being understood, or understanding in the EFL classroom. Based on the interviews and observations, codeswitching was found to be a common strategy in the classrooms.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, codeswitching, upper secondary school, Sweden, teaching English, qualitative study, thematic analysis, benefits, limitations.

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1 Introduction

During the time I have studied to become a teacher, I have both been observing and practicing as a teacher of English and Swedish. This opportunity has allowed me to see how different teachers teach and how different students learn. I have realized that language teachers have more demands on them, compared to teachers of other subjects, to advance their pedagogical strategies, as has been evidenced by studies in the field of instructed second language acquisition (Santos, 2016). Hence, as a future English teacher I have understood the importance of using different pedagogical strategies in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

Language production is much more than being able to say words; it is about communicating and the strategies we use to do so. Apart from how meaning is conveyed, it is also about how it is received and perceived by the recipient. In linguistics, there is a term called codeswitching, which is one of the communication strategies that can be employed (Coulmas, 2013, pp. 121-123). Codeswitching means that an individual changes language in the middle of a conversation or in a sentence. This can happen consciously but also unconsciously (Coulmas, 2013, p. 124). Codeswitching is also a sign that a person knows two or more languages. I have developed an interest in investigating codeswitching in EFL classrooms as a teacher student after observing it during my practicum. I am interested in documenting teachers' and teacher students' perspectives on this phenomenon since it is important to know whether, and if yes how, it may benefit students' EFL learning.

Codeswitching occurs during English lessons when teachers and students choose to switch to their first language (e.g., Swedish) or switch from their L1 to their L2 (i.e., English), or even a third language or more languages. In recent years, studies in the field of conversation analysis (CA) in particular have shown that codeswitching can be an interactional resource for the students and the teachers (Sert, 2015, p. 124). Therefore, this study about codeswitching in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom can be important and will hopefully contribute to teachers' pedagogical strategies in the EFL classroom, as there are not many studies in the Swedish EFL context that combine teachers' practices with classroom observations.

1.1 The aim of this research

The main purpose of this study is to explore the use of English and Swedish in the EFL classroom and contribute to the knowledgebase of English language teaching with regard to the use of codeswitching when teaching English in a Swedish upper secondary school. In particular, the study aims to shed light on the situations in which codeswitching takes place during English teaching, why it happens and if it benefits students' learning, according to teachers and teacher students. The study explores both experienced teachers' and teacher students' perspectives since teacher students' perspectives are equally important for the future and are rarely included in research. This study is timely as it is crucial for teachers to know what benefits students' language learning, especially since there is an ongoing debate between researchers on the use of multiple languages in teaching English.

1.2 Research question

Since the aim of the study is to explore the use of English and Swedish in the EFL classroom and contribute to the knowledgebase of English language teaching with regard to the use of codeswitching, the following research questions have been designed:

1. In which situations do the participating English teachers and teacher students use codeswitching in the classroom?
2. What are the benefits and limitations of codeswitching in the EFL classroom, according to the participating teachers and teacher students?

2 Background

In this section the research literature that forms the framework for the studied phenomenon will be presented. In section 2.1 Codeswitching in language classroom, the focus will be on the codeswitching that occurs between teachers and students in the EFL classroom. In section 2.2 Translanguaging, the term translanguaging will be presented and compared to codeswitching. In section 2.3 Codeswitching as a tool in the EFL classroom, the focus will be on how one can use codeswitching as a tool in the EFL classroom.

2.1 Codeswitching in language classrooms

In 1849 the Swedish school system added English as a subject and in 1944 it became a mandatory subject in Sweden (Hult, 2012). It has been argued that an *English-only* policy has increasingly been employed in English language classrooms in Sweden (Amir & Musk, 2014). That is e.g., that one should not codeswitch in the EFL classroom. However, Cook (2001) claims that codeswitching can be inevitable since the teachers and their students often speak the same L1 and because of that it should be seen as something natural. Furthermore, Cook (2001) argues that the use of codeswitching is a learner-preferred strategy (p. 242). Similarly, Bahous et al. (2013), state that codeswitching in pedagogical contexts should be seen as something that adds to learning since the use of several languages over time creates a change in the phonology, lexis, and structure of the integrated languages.

There are different types and structures of codeswitching that one can use. Poplack and Scheu (2000, as cited in Jingxia, 2010) have identified three different types of codeswitching: *tag-switching*, *inter-sentential switching*, and *intra-sentential switching*. Tag-switching is when one chooses to insert a tag phrase from one language into an utterance from another language. Inter-sentential switching is what occurs when an individual says one sentence in one language and the next in another language. Lastly intra-sentential switching is when an individual switches language in a sentence or a phrase, and this is said to be occurring more than the other types of codeswitching (Poplack & Scheu, 2000 as cited in Jingxia, 2010).

In EFL classroom, different types of codeswitching, including *teacher-initiated codeswitching*, *teacher-induced codeswitching*, and *student-initiated codeswitching*, have also been identified (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005). Üstünel and Seedhouse's (2005) study is based on the sequential organization of teacher-initiated and teacher-induced codeswitching and its relation to pedagogical focus in foreign language classrooms. Their study was carried out in EFL classroom at a Turkish university. They claim that codeswitching occurs in the EFL classroom for different reasons and that it is used by both teachers and students to teach and learn a foreign language in "a complex, fluid and dynamic interactional environment" (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005, p. 322). The teacher-initiated codeswitching occurs when a teacher codeswitches between languages e.g., when a teacher switches from English to Turkish to explain a word and then switches back, multiple times. Teacher-induced codeswitching is when the teacher uses one

language when it is their turn to encourage or “induce” students to take turn in the other language, e.g., when a teacher says a word in English and then asks the students for a translation in Turkish. Furthermore, there is student-initiated codeswitching which is for example when students mix Turkish and English while speaking or provide an utterance in Turkish in the EFL classroom (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005).

A study by Bahous et al. (2013), which was carried out in Lebanon in a multilingual higher education environment, showed that teachers switch between languages when they want to reinforce what is explained in English, especially in connection with difficult terms and concepts in a text. Teachers change the code when, for example, teaching grammar and seeing their students' "blank faces" during an explanation or when the students actually say that they do not understand what the teacher is saying (Bahous et al., 2013, p. 360). Aus der Wieschen and Sert (2021) have done a study which was carried out in a Danish third-grade EFL classroom, where a pattern of divergent language choices was observed. Through their study they documented the divergent use of languages (Danish and English) by teachers and students especially when problems of understanding emerge in classroom interaction (Aus der Wieschen & Sert, 2021), a finding that could be compared to the results of Liebscher and Dailey-O’Cain’s (2005) study on conversations in advanced foreign classrooms where students codeswitch. Their results indicated that codeswitching occurred when students lacked necessary knowledge in the L2.

In addition, Bahous et al. (2013) also discuss that students can choose to codeswitch when, for example, they want to make sure that they have understood something correctly. Approximately 70% of the students in Bahous et al. (2013) study reported that they change code when they want to emphasize or clarify an idea, and 80% of the students in the study claimed that they learn more and better when the teacher codeswitches during teaching. It has been shown that codeswitching does not necessarily hinder students' language learning but can instead be used as a tool that develops their language learning (Bahous et al., 2013). Codeswitching may be a strategy for social interaction and communication to develop, and it leads to progress of one's knowledge, tolerance, and understanding of others (Bahous et al., 2013).

Ferguson (2003, as cited in Wei & Martin, 2009) emphasizes how codeswitching in classrooms can be used effectively as a pedagogical tool and a communicative resource in the classroom. Wei & Martin (2009) emphasize the impact that codeswitching can have on students' learning and behavior in the classroom, and on the emotional climate in the classroom as well as the

processes of identity formation and negotiation. However, they also write that one should keep in mind that there have not been many studies on the affective and social aspects of codeswitching in educational contexts (Wei & Martin, 2009). The researchers also highlight that teachers, and sometimes even students, choose to bring a shared or local language into the classroom to increase the chances for the students to develop their learning (Wei & Martin, 2009).

Although previous studies and previous school managements considered that there should be an English-only policy in the classrooms it has been shown that codeswitching does not have to be a consequence or a proof of insufficient knowledge of the English language (Wei & Martin, 2009). Instead, it has been argued that teachers' use of codeswitching in a strategic way may indicate a high level of communicative competence (Raschka et al., 2008). Raschka et al. (2008) address in their study how codeswitching actually works in the classroom. They argue that there should be a theory on how codeswitching should be used in the classroom; both temporally and functionally, strategically, and tactically (Raschka et al., 2008, p. 169). They also point out that even though teachers should have an intuitive knowledge of whether codeswitching should be used depending on which classes and students they have, there is not much research done on the area. Raschka et al. (2008) believe that pragmatic demands, such as what is said to be done and what is actually done, lead to tolerance, acceptance of, and active participation in codeswitching for the participants to achieve their goal.

Wei and Martin (2009) point out that individuals in their everyday life switch between two languages in social interactions, educational contexts, and especially in the classroom, but in during educational contexts and in the classrooms , codeswitching is considered inappropriate. Because of this the teachers who had chosen to codeswitch were accused of sabotaging the language policy in Malaysian school (Wei & Martin, 2009). According to the policy, codeswitching was forbidden as it was considered a lack of communication skills, which means there was an English-only policy. Despite this, codeswitching has continued to take place in different environments such as EFL classrooms (Wei & Martin, 2009).

2.2 Translanguaging

Translanguaging is a term that has come to be used more and is believed to be able to replace codeswitching in research literature (Lin, Wu & Lemke, 2020). Williams and Baker (cited in

Wei, 2017, p. 21) argue that “translanguaging is not an object or a linguistic structural phenomenon to describe and analyze, but it is a practice that involves the dynamic and functionally integrated use of different languages and language variants. In addition, it is a process of knowledge construction that goes beyond language.” Similar to codeswitching, translanguaging is a strategy that can be used by either bilingual or multilingual speakers. It is about switching between several languages and can be valuable when learning a new language (Toth, 2018). Translanguaging refers to individuals’ use of all linguistic resources in communication with others and in one’s thoughts. Research has shown that multilingual speakers use their language experience based on the situation they are in and cannot keep their languages separate (Torpsten, 2018). Translanguaging is a strategy used by both teachers and students to facilitate the communication that takes place but also to increase the ability to understand (Toth, 2018).

The difference between translanguaging and codeswitching is that translanguaging can be seen as an overarching term that includes codeswitching (Garcia & Li, 2018). But translanguaging and codeswitching are based on two different perspectives, as codeswitching is based on languages and that languages are separate units, while translanguaging is based on speakers and avoids the view of languages as separate. Translanguaging is about emphasizing how language is used in an integrated way and can be used in daily life, but also as a pedagogical strategy (Garcia & Li, 2018).

Fallas Escobar (2019) analyzed a translanguaging-by-design activity. The study was conducted with students who completed their bachelor’s degree in an EFL program at a Costa Rican university. The students were shown pictures of graffiti in Spanish and were asked to discuss these with the help of all their linguistic repertoires. The students in Fallas Escobar’s study used translanguaging in a purposeful and principled way, for example when referring to Spanish graffiti or giving an explanation. Thus, they did not do so due to lack of knowledge but demonstrated that they could use their entire linguistic repertoire to discuss the subject in a skillful and successful manner. Fallas Escobar (2019) concluded that students feel more confident and that their fear of making mistakes in the classroom decreases when they are allowed to use translanguaging. With an English-only classroom policy, they are limited and choose to sometimes use their mother tongue secretly. In addition, it has shown that translanguaging has made it possible for students to make comparisons between languages and to be able to develop their language skills and understanding (Fallas Escobar, 2019).

2.3 Codeswitching as a tool when teaching EFL

Teachers apply and adapt their teaching and learning methods to the demands of the students in the classroom (Santos, 2020). Li and Walsh (2011) argue that teachers' beliefs affect their perceptions and judgements of teaching and learning interactions in the classroom, which results in a range of teaching styles. In second language acquisition, interaction and communication are important, because learning occurs through them (Säljö, 2010). In a classroom, language has a central role, and individuals with different linguistic backgrounds communicate using different languages (Garcia, Barlett & Kleifgen, 2007). Students in Swedish upper secondary school are supposed to have the opportunity to develop their abilities to use strategies to create understanding and be understood in English (Skolverket, n.d.). This could include using skills in other languages, if needed, as a tool in the EFL classroom, which is confirmed by Raschka et al. (2008).

Foreign language teachers often codeswitch between two languages. For example, the teacher can codeswitch between Lebanese and English depending on the need of using the strategy (Bahous et al., 2013), such as when teaching grammar or when a student needs a clarification of a term (Bahous et al., 2013). Since English is a widely spoken foreign language, one should keep in mind that people are on different proficiency levels (Santos, 2020). This means that the students in a classroom can be on different levels regarding their knowledge in the English language and therefore different strategies should be used by teachers when teaching.

Codeswitching is something that can occur in all classrooms but not to the same degree as when teachers teach a second or foreign language. In an EFL classroom, one automatically is in a bilingual classroom where codeswitching can and probably will take place (Soderberg Arnfast & Jorgensen, 2003). This is something that can be applied to the Swedish EFL classrooms where the National Agency of Education is followed (Skolverket, n.d.). Thus, codeswitching is a method that could be beneficial for students.

3 Method

In this section, the method that was used in the study will be presented. In section 3.1, the choices that have been done regarding the method will be presented with the help of literature. In section 3.2, the participants will be presented. In section 3.3, the data collection procedure

will be presented. Lastly in section 3.4, how the research ethic principles were applied to the study.

3.1 Method

This is a qualitative study based on interviews with teachers and teacher students as well as observations in classrooms. The choice of interviews was motivated by the belief that interviews encourage broader and honest answers and can enable the researchers to receive in depth information on the actual usage of codeswitching in the EFL classroom. As it was of great interest and importance to gain deeper knowledge about the subject (Patel & Davidson, 2011), this particular method was chosen instead of a quantitative study. Qualitative methods facilitate opportunities to question and understand the underlying reasons of the informants' answers (Denscombe, 2009, pp. 232-233). As an addition to the interviews, I got the opportunity to observe four English lessons held by three experienced teachers and one teacher student. By choosing to combine interviews with classroom observations, I got the chance to compare answers to some of the actual classroom practices and thus by using both interviews and observations as my method to collect data I could validate the findings better (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p.107).

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study were three active and four future upper secondary English teachers. The three certified teachers had approximately 15-20 years of experience at the time of the data collection, while the four soon-to-be-graduated English teachers were working extra as substitutes. The participants all worked at different upper secondary schools in Sweden. Indirectly, of course, some of the students of the experienced teachers and of one of the teacher students participated in this study as well since they were a part of the observed lessons. The main participants will henceforth be referred to as Teacher 1, 2 and 3 and Teacher student A, B, C, and D, which reflects the order of the interviews conducted with them.

3.3 Data collection

Each of the interviews was recorded and took approximately twenty minutes. I prepared 12 questions with follow-up questions (see Appendix 1). The interviews were conducted both in person and online via Office Teams. I received both profound and natural answers from the

informants since they were given the opportunity to develop their own ideas and give explanations for their views and what they considered to be important (Denscombe, 2009, p. 267). The interviews were semi-structured, and I was flexible with the order of the questions, depending on the informants' answers (Denscombe, 2009, pp. 234-235). This made it possible for the informants to be comfortable and be able to speak freely. Furthermore, it gave the informants the chance to develop their thoughts and opinions regarding the topic. The informants were well informed that their participation was recorded, that their participation would be anonymous (see Appendix 2 – Letter of request) and voluntary, and that they could terminate it whenever they wanted. This is something that is a contributing factor for the informants to feel safe to speak freely but also to strengthen the reliability of the study. Since the reliability of the answers was so important for me, I was careful with not showing my own thoughts and beliefs regarding the subject (Denscombe, 2009, pp. 244-245).

Furthermore, data was collected through observations of lessons held by the three teachers and one of the teacher students. I was personally present in the classrooms for each observation since I wanted to be able to both record and take notes during the observations (Patel & Davidson, 2011, pp. 98-99). I used fieldnotes and focused on what kind of codeswitching was being used and when and why it was being used. I examined if the three different ways of codeswitching, i.e., *teacher-initiated codeswitching*, *teacher-induced codeswitching*, and *student-initiated codeswitching* (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005), were being used. Since I wanted to observe what actually happened and not affect the natural environment in the classroom, I tried to act discreet and blend in, in order to not draw attention to me. I did this by sitting in a discreet place in the back of the classroom, where I could nevertheless have an overview of the whole class (Denscombe, 2009, p. 279). Furthermore, I avoided interaction with the participants, except in the beginning when I presented myself and got approval from the students to videorecord their lesson (see Appendix 3). Each observed lesson took approximately 45-80 minutes, and I stayed the whole time because the more time I was there, the more comfortable the participants became, and forgot that I was there (Denscombe, 2009, p. 280).

3.4 The analytical procedures

I analyzed the data by conducting a thematic analysis, which means I coded every statement from the interviews and through them themes were generated. I transcribed each recording

by listening through each interview, and then I compared the transcripts with the recorded interviews. By doing this, I was able to thoroughly check that nothing significant had been lost in the rough transcripts. After that, I proceeded to extracting relevant statements and built a collection of 237 statements. Once this was done, the data were coded and categorized to provide a general overview of the results. Finally, four themes that I considered to be of value for the study could be formulated: *Teachers' attitudes towards codeswitching*, *Teachers' experiences with codeswitching in the EFL classroom*, *Teachers' perceptions of students' codeswitching*, and *How teachers should manage codeswitching*. These themes were developed from the statements rather than being predetermined; hence the themes were generated using an inductive approach. Furthermore, I translated some of the statements from Swedish to English, since a couple of the informants felt more comfortable to do the interviews in Swedish.

Thereafter I watched the video recordings of the observations and compared them to my fieldnotes. When I watched the video recordings I first doublechecked if there were any instances of codeswitching that I had missed to write down in my field notes. Secondly, I compared each finding from the observations to the findings from the participants interview answers. Furthermore, I chose to transcribe specific dialogues that could be compared to my findings collected through the interviews. Hence, the specific dialogues could be put in some of the generated themes.

3.5 Ethical considerations

In this study, the Swedish Research Council's (2017) ethical principles and guidelines have been followed. The informants have been informed about the purpose of the study and that their participation was voluntary, i.e., that they could cancel their participation at any time. In doing so, the requirement of information and the requirement of consent have been followed (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). In addition, the requirement of confidentiality has been taken into consideration by hiding the names of schools, staff, and even municipalities. All the collected data have been kept safe so that unauthorized individuals cannot get hold of it. As all material and all the information that has been collected have been kept confidential, the requirement of use has also been considered. All the informants have been offered to read the study report when it is done and have been given contact information so that they can ask questions or end their participation (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017).

4 Results

In this section the results from interviews and observations will be presented on the basis of the four themes: *Teachers' attitudes towards codeswitching*, *Teachers' experiences with codeswitching in the EFL classroom*, *Teachers' perceptions of students' codeswitching*, and *How teachers should manage codeswitching*.

4.1 Teachers' attitudes towards codeswitching

The core of the theme *teachers' attitudes to codeswitching* is the participants' positive and negative beliefs about codeswitching in the EFL classrooms. It is mostly seen as positive since it opens possibilities for the students to use it as a tool to develop their language skills. Since we live in a multicultural society, the majority of the informants believe that we should take advantage of as many languages as possible:

I think, of course, if you know several languages and you can use it and complete the talk and keep on talking, I think it's really nice and I kind of love it. I think it's fun. (Teacher 3)

Teacher 3 believes that one advantage with codeswitching in the EFL classroom is that the communication flows when one allows the students to use both Swedish and English. The teacher claims that in the teaching process, codeswitching should be seen as an important resource to improve the language acquisition and a strategy to make learning easier:

Sometimes codeswitching is disturbing, but sometimes it is also a good break from everything that is so theoretical in school, but most of the time you learn from it because you know which words you are lacking, and you know which ones you should find out more about. And then you learn to use them. So, I think codeswitching is an asset. (Teacher 3)

The teacher believes that codeswitching is an asset to use in the classroom since it keeps the students active and allows them to communicate and allows both them and the teacher to acknowledge what they need to improve. By using codeswitching in the EFL classroom as a strategy, it becomes something positive. The teachers state that it is of great importance to create a safe place for their students. They believe that the students should be able to dare to make mistakes or try different strategies to learn the English language. Hence the teachers believe that allowing and using codeswitching in the EFL classroom will create this safe place:

I think it is important that students feel that they are in an environment where they can get... use Swedish, for example throw in a Swedish word in the middle of an English sentence. Because they do not know the word, so then they can throw it out and then they can get an answer to what it is. So, I guess most of the time I believe it is good, an asset. (Teacher student C)

Most of the teachers believe that codeswitching can function as an advantage for the students' knowledge development, though it should be used with care, so that another language does not replace the target language. By allowing codeswitching, they give the students the opportunity to use it as: tool while learning an English.

Yeah, well I believe that it is a resource for the students when they for example have Swedish as their first language... then why shouldn't you be able to use it? Like, use it to be able to understand a second language, that is... I don't believe you can just learn a second language by only using the second language. (Teacher student B)

I think communication is most important. We want to convey our messages to each other. So as long as we can understand each other, I think codeswitching is a tool we should use. (Teacher 3)

However, although most of the participants believe that codeswitching is an advantage in the EFL classroom, some teachers believe that codeswitching can be a disadvantage, and they would rather not use it at all in their EFL classroom:

I believe that in English seven... I think we should speak only English with emphasis on we should. (Teacher 2)

I do not think there are any advantages to codeswitching, but I think you could say there are disadvantages instead. (Teacher 2)

The teachers believe that codeswitching is a disadvantage because "in the EFL classroom, we are learning to use English and therefore we shouldn't use another language" (Teacher 1). Two of the experienced teachers would prefer to not use codeswitching in their EFL classroom. However, this is not something that all the participants agree on:

Learning goes faster when codeswitching is allowed. I think, yeah. It is important to use codeswitching as a tool in the EFL classroom, like, why wouldn't you? (Teacher student D)

To summarize, all the teacher students and one of the experienced teachers believe that codeswitching is a resource in the EFL classroom.

4.2 Teachers' experiences with codeswitching in the EFL classroom

The theme *Teachers' experiences with codeswitching in the EFL classroom* is about how the teachers believe that they use codeswitching and how some of them actually have been using it and worked with it in the EFL classroom, according to the recorded observations. A lot of times the teachers choose to codeswitch to Swedish when they see that the students have not understood some aspect of the subject matter:

Either you have to explain in English first and then you have to switch to Swedish and explain in Swedish. And then you continue in English and make another codeswitch. So, it's like you're doing it all the time because you see that there are so many different levels of knowledge in the class. It sort of happens automatically. (Teacher student A)

If they don't know the word, I try to explain it, but otherwise if it is, for example, that I have presented something with instructions, I think that it is a more open environment, that one can use some Swedish words as well. (Teacher student C)

Yeah, yeah, a lot, yeah. Most of the time I speak English in the classroom, but sometimes I see pupils frowning and then I understand. Oh no, I'm saying something that either they don't like to hear, or they don't understand. And then I, I didn't explain it I might give some keywords in Swedish. (Teacher 3)

But otherwise, if there are easier words, I try to describe them, but with other words in English as much as possible. But sometimes I might say the words in Swedish and then switch back, since they might not be familiar with a word. (Teacher student D)

Sometimes when teachers look at their students they can see by the look on their faces if they comprehend what is being thought. Something that was seen in one of the observations where *Teacher student D* taught English literary history was that s/he described an old tool in English in other words, by explaining how to use it and what it looked like for the students to understand. But in the end, when s/he saw that some students still did not understand, s/he gave the term in Swedish as well.

Another situation where teachers use codeswitching is when teaching grammar to the students.

When we study grammar, we speak Swedish most of the time because we are contrasting between Swedish and English. (Teacher 3)

Grammar is interesting because a lot of time it is hard to only teach it in English and sometimes, I must codeswitch so that the students understand the terms. (Teacher 2)

While teaching grammar, a strategy to use is codeswitching since the students already know the topic terms in Swedish. Furthermore, teachers 1 and 2, who did not want to use codeswitching at all in their classrooms and considered it forbidden, actually use it themselves many times but also ignore when their students codeswitch.

If I have a lecture or presentation, everything is in English. I never say anything in Swedish. I have English as my mother tongue, so I stick to English during the lessons. (Teacher 1)

We have kind of made an agreement in the class, which states that we are only going to speak English to each other in the classroom. (Teacher 2)

If I show the students that I will only speak English during the class, eventually they must follow my lead. However, it is easier to do this if you are the student's teacher from the first year in upper secondary school. (Teacher 2)

These are statements from the two experienced teachers who believe that an English only classroom is a policy that should be followed. Furthermore, the teachers seem to believe that if they

only speak English, the students will follow. However, one can see how teacher 1 during an observation both allows codeswitching and uses it:

Excerpt 1: Observation of teacher 1's lesson

- 01 T - Today we will focus on social studies
- 02 S1 - Va?
- 03 T - Social studies
- 04 S1 - Vadå, vad är det?
- 05 T - Samhällskunskap

Excerpt 2: Observation of teacher 1's lesson

- 01 T - In America there is a government... en regering (highlights the word)
- 02 T - Who can vote in America?
- 03 S2 - Eeh an American... medborgare
- 04 T - Yes, American citizen

Excerpt 1 includes both student-initiated codeswitching in line 04, where the student is asking for the meaning of a word. And the student is given the word by the teacher in line 05, which means there has been a student - induced-codeswitch. And excerpt 2, line 01 the teacher uses a translation to Swedish, when emphasizing a word. This shows us that even though the teacher who believes that they don't use codeswitching and believe that it should not be done in the EFL classroom, they still use it when it is needed and allow their students to do it. It seems that codeswitching can sometimes be felt to be inevitable in an EFL classroom.

4.3 Teachers' perceptions of students' codeswitching

This theme is about teachers' perceptions of their students' use of codeswitching, that is, when and why students use codeswitching. Furthermore, some of the statements that have been made will be compared to a few observations. In some classrooms, the teachers argue that the students are only allowed to speak English, but if one considers the observations, one can acknowledge that the students, despite the teacher speaking English, ask questions in Swedish. Alternatively, they utter part of the sentence in English but replace a few words in Swedish.

When they switch to Swedish, I say could you say that in English please? I don't understand what you are saying? But sometimes I let it slip. (Teacher 2)

It also happens when the teacher has a lecture and asks for a word in Swedish. This may be for the purpose of giving students a clarification of a word. At the same time, the teacher can make sure that the students understand the word. On such occasions, the teacher has encouraged the students to switch languages. When asking the teachers if students tend to switch language a lot, one of the teachers answered:

Some students just want to speak English all the time, while others are perhaps a little shy or something. They mix both Swedish and English. (Teacher 1)

When the students are unsure of their knowledge, they tend to switch between English and Swedish. Hence, the students use codeswitching as a tool when they feel that they need it. However, according to some of the participants, the students also codeswitch in situations where they have been asked to do so:

Sometimes they may have to explain a term in Swedish when I have mentioned it in English. For example, I might say what's the name of XX in Swedish? (Teacher student A)

These kinds of situations are initiated by the teacher and not the students, hence a teacher-induced codeswitch occurs.

When asking the teachers if there are occasions (e.g., examinations) where students stick to the English language without a reminder from the teacher, one of the teachers answered:

On the other hand, they are very good at speaking English when we have seminars and oral presentations and assignments and so on. So yeah, they are great at sticking to English when required. (Teacher 1)

In some situations, the students do not switch to Swedish at all in the EFL classroom, e.g., when they have an oral presentation. In these situations, the students are often examined and have had time to prepare and are aware that they will be graded on their performance.

Still, the students sometimes do not find the right word and then choose to switch to Swedish:

If they as an example lose a word or do not remember what the word is called, then they can switch to Swedish instead. It actually happens often. (Teacher student A)

Because they often throw in a Swedish word when they do not know what to say or when they get a little frustrated that they cannot explain something, then they say it in Swedish. So, they codeswitch between English and Swedish. (Teacher student B)

Several of the teachers also said that some students switch to a third language when neither English nor Swedish is enough:

Well, two students spoke Arabic to each other. They were both weak in Swedish and English, so they used Arabic as a tool to help each other in the English subject. (Teacher student B)

Teacher student B gave an example of how the students use their third language as a tool to help each other understand and develop their knowledge when their knowledge in Swedish and English is not enough. In addition, observations show that students choose to help each other when one of them has difficulty understanding what is in a text or following instructions that have been given:

Excerpt 3: Observation of teacher 3's lesson

- 01 S1 - Kan vi inte bara diskutera if we agree or disagree?
- 02 S2 - Vadå? Ska vi ta en i taget?
- 03 S1 - Eeh, yes, if we start by reading the first one together...
- 04 S2 & S3 - Okay
- 05 S2 – Did you understand what kind of sickness the character had by reading the first chapters?
- 06 S3 - Yes because you got a lot of information
- 07 S2 - Yeah, eeh, and a lot changes with him very fast
- 08 S1 - Yeah and there is like rykten...
- 09 S2 - Gossip?
- 10 S3 - Rumors?
- 11 S1 - Yeah rumors, hehe

Excerpt 3 demonstrates an instance of student-initiated codeswitching. Student 1 starts speaking Swedish but in the middle of the utterance switches to English in line 01. Student 2 responds in Swedish, but Student 1 keeps on speaking English. Further on, all three speak English, and when Student 1 cannot remember an English word and says it in Swedish, the other two provide alternatives. This means that the students help each other by using both Swedish and English.

Comparing the experienced teachers with the teacher students, one can notice that the latter are more accepting when students use codeswitching than the experienced teachers. However, one of the teachers is more accepting and during the observed lesson sat down while students were codeswitching and listened and sometimes interjected an English word. Furthermore, Teacher student D encouraged the students to codeswitch a few times during the observation, by asking them if they knew a word in Swedish.

4.4 How teachers should manage codeswitching

This theme is about how the teachers' attitudes towards codeswitching affect how they believe one should work with codeswitching in the classroom and whether one should do it at all. As previously mentioned, some teachers believe that an English-only policy should be followed while others focus on using English as much as possible. Hence, how the participants believe teachers should manage codeswitching is affected by their attitudes towards codeswitching:

In other words, from a teacher's perspective, I think you should try to use English as much as possible, because it spreads to the students, but still allow them to use their knowledge from Swedish or another language to be able to apply it when they learn English. (Teacher student B)

Teacher student B's statement here is a good example of how *most* of the participants believe one should use codeswitching in the EFL classroom. However, two of the experienced teachers have consistently stated how important it is to have an English only classroom and they believe that the obvious way to manage codeswitching is to not include it:

I believe that... in general, the level of knowledge in Sweden is so high that we actually can demand that our students should be able to be in a classroom where only English is spoken. (Teacher 1)

To be honest I prefer an English-only classroom. I believe that in an ultimate world, English would be the only language in the EFL classroom. (Teacher 2)

One of the teachers has chosen to enter into an agreement with the students to ensure that the students, but also the teacher stays on "the right path". And in regard to particular situations, one can see a consistent answer among teachers and teacher students, that the language should only be English as it can otherwise lead to a reduced score:

But I do not think that you should have "English only all the time", but that it can be certain parts of the lesson or some information or something like that, but the majority should be in English, but I do not think you can draw that line and say that everyone must speak English, because it can inhibit people who can actually speak, but maybe do not dare. (Teacher student C)

When there is a situation where the purpose is to examine the students, for example when we have a book talk, then they must only speak English. Instead of codeswitching, they need to find strategies, for example use other words. Otherwise, there can be a negative impact on their grade. (Teacher student B)

The participating teacher students and one of the experienced teachers believe that because we live in a global world and that we should take advantage of all the languages around us. According to the teachers there are situations where one has to adapt to the students and take a step back from how oneself might think it should go in the classroom:

When there are so many students who can neither speak Swedish nor English properly, then you have almost no choice. Then I think that you must codeswitch. (Teacher student A)

When a teacher is in an EFL classroom where there are students who know multiple languages, it can be an advantage since the languages can be used as tools. In these situations, the teacher can choose to switch between Swedish and English, and sometimes the students can choose to switch to a third language if needed.

Sometimes if two students have the same third language, it is most likely that one is stronger with English, and then that student can help the other one with understanding a task or a text etc. (Teacher 1)

What is important is that the students are in an environment where they get the opportunity to develop their language acquisition:

English only policy is not a climate I want but of course I encourage them in the English lesson to speak English. But I won't punish the students when codeswitching. I believe it is a good strategy. (Teacher student D)

Instead of limiting the students or putting them in situations where they feel uncomfortable, the teacher allows the students to use codeswitching as a strategy:

You have to be kind of aware which language is being used, we were supposed to speak English, or we are speaking English. We should go back to the English language, and these are words you do know so, but otherwise, if you only speak English and don't allow codeswitching, you will exclude students from the lesson because they don't understand. (Teacher 3)

I think the more languages you know, the more books you can read, and the more people you can talk to and learn from. So, I believe in having a classroom where we can use all language knowledges. (Teacher student D)

How teachers should manage codeswitching in the EFL classroom is affected by their attitudes on codeswitching. The participants who prefer an English only policy in the classroom believe that it is the right way to work. But a pattern that can be seen is that teacher students and one of the experienced teachers have a positive attitude towards codeswitching and believe that it is a

resource that one should take an advantage of. Furthermore, the teachers have to include all their students in the teaching, which means that codeswitching could be unavoidable.

5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to shed light on the situations in which codeswitching takes place in EFL classroom, why it takes place and whether it benefits students' learning according to three teachers and four teacher students. Based on the results from the interviews and observations, there are differences of opinion among the participants, just as researchers have an ongoing debate about the use of several languages in the EFL classroom. One example is that the teachers codeswitch from English to Swedish and back again because when they teach grammar the contrast between the languages, hence they believe that codeswitching is a useful tool.

Furthermore, the teachers believe that codeswitching is a beneficial strategy to use so that the students can create an understanding and increase their language skills. Most of the participants believe that codeswitching is beneficial for the students in the EFL classroom, since it will create a safe environment for the students to speak and dare to make mistakes. This will lead to the students develop their English language skills. Similarly, Wei and Martin (2009) imply that it is very important for teachers to see what positive impact codeswitching can have on students' learning and behavior in the classroom and how it can be an effective tool for pedagogy and communicative resources in the EFL classroom.

On the other hand, something that has emerged in the results is that the participants believe that one should be careful about how much codeswitching is allowed in the classroom, as it may happen that instead of codeswitching a language change happens. The students of these teachers have also, during examinations, adhered to using English only, as choosing to codeswitch to Swedish can affect their grades negatively. As the students in an EFL classroom are to learn English, the participating teachers try as much as possible to stick to English but believe that if they do not allow codeswitching, they will exclude students. Some of the participants believe that it is important for teachers and students to be aware that in the EFL classroom they should and are supposed to talk English. So even if they occasionally codeswitch between English and Swedish, they should go back to English.

According to previous studies, the English-only policy has been gaining ground (Amir & Musk, 2014), but according to the results in this study and in line with recent research, there is a tendency to tolerate codeswitching. However, one should keep in mind that these results have been reached by interviewing only three teachers and four teacher students and observing four lessons. Two of the experienced teachers believe that the English only policy is the ultimate goal to achieve and that they stick to it, but in their lessons, they actually acted against the policy. This shows that even though these teachers believe that codeswitching is a limitation in the EFL classroom, they cannot avoid using it. Like Li and Walsh's (2011) study, the present one thus shows that what teachers believe and what they actually do in the EFL classroom might differ. This can be connected to that codeswitching being inevitable in the EFL classroom (Cook, 2001). Cook argues that codeswitching is a learner-preferred strategy and Wei and Martin (2009) emphasize how it can develop students learning. Likewise, the results from the interviews and observations have shown that most of the participants perceive codeswitching as beneficial for the student's development.

As Bahous et al. (2013) mentioned in their study, codeswitching occurs in different situations, e.g., when there is a lack of understanding in EFL or when the teacher wants to emphasize something. Similarly, the result from this study has shown that teachers codeswitch in situations where they can see on their students faces that they do not understand what is being thought or when they want to make sure that the students have perceived what is being thought correctly. Furthermore, it has been shown that the students choose to codeswitch when they e.g., help each understand a task or when they do not know how to say a specific word.

How often codeswitching occurs and why it occurs depends on the teacher and the students. If teachers believe that codeswitching can be beneficial in the EFL classroom, they can choose to allow and use it in their teaching, since teachers' beliefs affect their perceptions and judgements of teaching and learning interactions in the classroom (Li & Walsh, 2011). This study, similar to Üstünel and Seedhouse' (2005) study, showed that both the teachers and students used codeswitching. Furthermore, through both interviews and observations the three different ways of codeswitching, *teacher-initiated codeswitching*, *teacher-induced codeswitching*, and *student-initiated codeswitching* (Üstünel & Seedhouse, 2005) were demonstrated.

6 Conclusion

In summary, this study has shown that the majority of the participants tolerate the use of code-switching, while some want to ban it in principle in the EFL classroom. Despite this, the results show that those teachers who claim not to use codeswitching actually do so and even allow it in their classrooms. This suggests that codeswitching may be almost impossible to avoid. This does not mean that the participating teachers and teacher students do not advocate speaking English, but rather that they use codeswitching as a strategy that can be beneficial for developing students' skills. However, these results cannot be generalized as they are only based on a limited number of participants.

In conclusion, I claim that codeswitching takes place when the purpose is to teach, when someone wants to clarify that something is correctly acquired and when someone wants to be understood by the perceiver. Based on the literature and the results that have emerged from my interviews and observations, codeswitching is a strategy that could be inevitable. Furthermore, the use of multiple languages in teaching English is becoming a reality and what can be seen by these results is that the future upper secondary English teachers are evolving with this development and that the English-only policy is on decline. Finally, I believe that this study contributes to teachers' and future teachers' pedagogical strategies in EFL classroom since its findings show that, in line with recent research and literature, codeswitching has become more accepted and is used in multiple situations to teach and learn English.

For future research it would be important to include more participating teachers and teacher students to provide a better insight into the situations where codeswitching occurs, why it happens and if it benefits the students' learning in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, observations during longer periods of time with a couple of classes should be included to get a broader and more valid result. It would also be interesting to do a study from a student perspective on codeswitching in the EFL classroom.

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Appendix 1 – Interview guide

1. What do you think about codeswitching in the classroom?
2. Do you usually use codeswitching in the classroom?
 - a. If so, why?
 - b. If not, why not?
3. Do you think there are benefits to codeswitching?
 - a. If so, what are the benefits?
4. Do you think there are disadvantages to using codeswitching in the classroom?
 - a. Which / why?
5. Do you usually do it in specific situations?
 - For example when teaching grammar, speaking skills or when giving instructions, making explanations, during group work, - “English language teaching”
6. Do you think that the use of codeswitching affects the students' use of it?
7. Do you think that codeswitching can benefit students' learning?
8. Do you think that codeswitching can lead to problems for students learning?
9. Are there specific situations where you have noticed that your students use codeswitching?
10. Do your students change code in the classroom?
 - a. If so, is it usually only between Swedish and English or even other languages?
 - b. What do you think about it?
 - c. Could you give an example of that?
11. Do you encourage your students to speak only English in the lessons?
12. Do you think that an English-only classroom is the ultimate?
 - a. If so, why?
 - b. If not, why not?

Appendix 2 – Letter of request

Dear XXX

Please accept this letter as a formal invitation for voluntary participation in my degree project. My name is Atosa Bigdeli, and I am a teacher student at Mälardalen University in Västerås. I am currently attending the ninth term within the subject teacher program and writing my degree project in English studies.

The research that I hope to conduct for my degree project is on “code-switching in the English classrooms” and the main purpose of my study is to explore the use of English and Swedish in the classrooms and eventually contribute to the knowledge-base of English with regard to the use of codeswitching when teaching English.

I hope you can participate in this study with an interview which will take approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be audio-recorded with your approval. As a respondent, you will be anonymous, and the recordings will be deleted after they are transcribed. Thus, any personal information or other sensitive information will be confidential, and participant names nor the names of the schools or students will not be revealed. As a participant, you may at any time choose to cancel your participation, even after the interview has been completed.

Since my study is about what happens in the classroom, I would also need to observe one or two of your lessons. If possible, I would like to record the lesson with an audio or video recorder in order to have a more complete observation. This recording will as the previous recording be deleted after being transcribed and the participation will be kept confidential. No personal information will be revealed, and pseudonyms will be used in transcription. I will follow the guidelines of ethical conduct proposed by the Swedish Research Council (2017).

If you would like to participate, I would be grateful if you could let me know which time and date suits you the best. Please do not hesitate to contact me at XX@student.mdh.se in case you have any questions or thoughts.

Kind regards,

Atosa Bigdeli

Appendix 3 – Letter of consent

My name is Atosa Bigdeli, and I am a student studying at the teacher education program at Mälardalen University. I am carrying out a degree project on the languages used in English language classrooms and therefore I want to conduct observations during your lessons. To be able to perform this study, I need to record the lesson I am observing in order to be able to review it for research purposes.

No personal information will be collected during these observations, and the research follows GDPR guidelines and ethical research guidelines of the Swedish Research Council.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You can at any time withdraw from the project. You as a participant will remain anonymous and the recordings will be deleted after the project is complete.

This form hereby declares that _____ on the date _____ agrees to participate in the observation conducted by Atosa Bigdeli.

I want to thank you for your time and your participation in advance! Please do not hesitate to contact me at XX@student.mdh.se in case you have any questions or thoughts.

Kind regards,
Atosa Bigdeli