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Using Swedish in the EFL-classroom

An Interview Study on Swedish Upper Secondary Students’ Attitudes towards Teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom

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Abstract
There is very little focus in previous research on first language (L1) use by teachers in the upper secondary English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom from the students’ perspective. In this context and from a Swedish perspective, this thesis examines what attitudes students in the Swedish upper secondary school have towards their teachers’ use of L1 (Swedish) in the EFL-classroom. The method used was qualitative semi-structured interviews, where nine students in total were interviewed. The collected data was then coded, thematized and categorized. The results show that the students mainly believed Swedish should be used when teaching vocabulary, when teaching grammar and for classroom management. They did not believe the L1 should be used by them in questions and answers and in general talk in the classroom. They also endorsed an overall judicious use of Swedish by their teachers and that their use of this language should be adjusted to the specific teaching group. Finally, it can be concluded that further research is needed on how the L1 can be used judiciously in particular situations and on what attitudes students of varying proficiency and age, as well as students who do not have Swedish as their L1 have towards teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom.

Keywords: L1 use, Translanguaging, EFL-classroom, Sweden, Upper secondary school, Students’ attitudes
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1. Introduction

There is an ongoing debate whether or not students’ first language should be used in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in upper secondary school. Some argue that English alone should be used by teachers there, while others argue that the L1, to some extent, could be used in the classroom as well. The Swedish national curriculum for the upper secondary school also says that “teaching should as far as possible be conducted in English” (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a, p. 53). However, a number of studies indicate that teachers actually do use their students’ first language in the EFL-classroom (Degi, 2014; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Sali, 2014; Sharma, 2006). Moreover, although English should mainly be used in the EFL-classroom, some researchers stress that L1 use by teachers could, in some situations, be beneficial for students if it is practiced judiciously (Cook, 2001; Garcia, Flores & Woodley, 2012; Voicu, 2012). In this respect, it can be said that the L1 could have a place in the EFL-classroom after all.

In a systematic literature review that I recently conducted, it was found that the L1 was mainly used by teachers in the EFL-classroom when managing discipline, when teaching grammar and when explaining vocabulary (Beers Fägersten, 2012; Degi, 2014; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Sali, 2014; Sharma, 2006). Moreover, it was found that the teachers in general were positive towards use of the L1 in these situations (Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Sali, 2014; Sharma, 2006). Nevertheless, even though there was much data on what the teachers said, there was very little focus in the analyzed articles on the students’ perspective on teachers’ L1 use. The articles did not conclude, on a larger scale, anything on the students’ attitudes on how the L1 could be used in the classroom by the teachers.

Students’ influence is a very central aspect in the national curriculum for the Swedish upper secondary school. It says there that every student should “actively exercise influence over their education and the internal work of the school” (Swedish National Agency for Education 2011b, p. 11) and that every teacher should “ensure that all students have real influence over working methods, forms and the content of education” (p. 13). In this sense, it is of great importance that students’ influence, including their attitudes, is visualized. This means that teachers should be aware of students’ opinions on the academic content in school.

As shown above, it is important for teachers in the Swedish upper secondary school to know about their students’ attitudes. In this respect, it is of great interest to do an empirical study on the students’ perspective on teachers’ use of L1 in the EFL-classroom. By interviewing nine students in the Swedish upper secondary school, the attitudes these students have towards teachers’ use of Swedish in the EFL-classroom will be examined.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to examine what attitudes Swedish upper secondary students have towards teachers’ use of the L1 in the EFL-classroom. The aim is specified by the following research questions:

- When do the students think their teachers should use the L1?
- When do the students think that their teachers should not use the L1?
- To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1?

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1 L1 is here referred to as the students’ first language. However, it must be noted that not all students in Sweden have Swedish as their L1. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity, L1 is used to refer to Swedish in this thesis.
2. Background
In this section, some important background information for this thesis is presented. This information includes what the Swedish national curriculum says about the subject of English as a foreign language in the upper secondary school and the use of English among Swedes in general and young Swedes in specific. In addition, this section comprises definitions of some relevant key terms. Lastly, previous research is presented on advantages of teachers’ L1 use, how teachers use the L1 and teachers’ and students’ attitudes on teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom.

2.1 English in the Swedish national curriculum
English as a foreign language in Swedish upper secondary school is divided into three courses (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011c, p. 2). The first of these courses is English 5, the second English 6 and the third English 7. All these courses contain 100 credits, which are equivalent to about 100 hours of lessons each (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011c, p. 2). Additionally, all courses in Swedish upper secondary school should be adjusted to “the varying circumstances, needs and the students’ level of knowledge” (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011b, p. 5).

The subject of English as a foreign language has five overall goals in the Swedish upper secondary school (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011c, p. 2). These goals are the following:

1) Understanding of spoken and written English, and also the ability to interpret content.
2) The ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech and writing.
3) The ability to use different language strategies in different contexts.
4) The ability to adapt language to different purposes, recipients and situations.
5) The ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used.

(Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011c, p. 2).

Hence, the academic goals not only include listening, reading, speaking and writing development in general, but also development of linguistic strategies and abilities to use language properly in specific contexts.

2.2 Swedes in general, Swedish youth and the English language
The English language has a high status in the Swedish society. Yoxsimer Paulsrud (2014, p. 17) writes that many Swedes encounter English on a daily basis through for example the Internet, social media or movies. Many Swedes also regularly use English in their working life (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014, p. 17). According to Kristiansen and Vikør (2006), 29% of the Swedish population uses English in four days a week or more. Moreover, students at the university level in Sweden are required to have very good proficiency in English as a large part of their course literature is in this language (Airey, 2009; Shaw & McMillion, 2010, p. 21). In relation to this, Beers Fägersten (2012, p. 81) states that there has been recent debate about

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2 Even though this study focuses on students’ attitudes on teachers’ L1 use, some research on how the L1 is used by teachers as well as on teachers’ attitudes on their use of L1 is also included. This is because this would give the reader more background information on teachers’ L1 use. However, the focus in the previous research section is on students’ attitudes.
whether English should attain “the status of a second language rather than a foreign language” in Sweden even though English is not an official language in Sweden.

Regarding Swedish youth in particular, it can be said that their proficiency in English is very high. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education (2004), Sweden came in first place (along with Norway) in a research project in 2002 where English language skills (listening, reading, writing and accuracy skills) were tested on ninth-graders from eight European countries. These results were later confirmed in a similar study from 2011 (ESLC 2012), where Swedish ninth-graders again (along with Malta) had the highest results. Related to this, both Sundqvist (2009) and Olsson (2012) have conducted studies on how much English ninth-graders in Sweden receive from different media outside of school and its relationship to the English proficiency of these students. They both found that these students regularly, for example, listened to music with English lyrics, played computer games or watched Hollywood movies and that this, in turn, had positive effects on their development in English (Olsson, 2012; Sundqvist, 2009). In this respect, it can be concluded that Swedish youth tend to be exposed to English by popular culture outside of school, which enhances their English language development.

2.3 Definitions of key terms
As this thesis deals with teachers’ switching between languages (Swedish and English) in the EFL-classroom, it is relevant to define the term code-switching. Gumperz (1982, p. 59) writes that this is “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems”. Thus, code-switching includes the use of two languages by a speaker in one passage of speech in one specific context. Another key term in this thesis is translanguaging. The term includes, according to Garcia (2009, p. 45), “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds”. She also writes that the term code-switching can be replaced with translanguaging (Garcia, 2009, p. 45). Code-switching is more narrow, like two boxes of languages where they are completely separated, while translanguaging is a big box of language that can be used all the time (Garcia, 2009, p. 45). In this respect, the term translanguaging carries a wider meaning than code-switching as it not only includes switching between two languages in one context but the ability to use more than one language in multiple contexts.

2.4 Previous research
According to several researchers, there are some advantages of teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom. For instance, both Cook (2001, p. 414) and Garcia, Flores and Woodley (2012, pp. 58-60) found in their studies that teachers’ use of L1 can be helpful when teaching vocabulary. They found that students learn the meaning of difficult words more easily if these are judiciously explained in this language by the teachers. Garcia et al. (2012, pp. 59-60) also found that the students’ metalinguistic awareness would be more developed if the teacher practices translanguaging in the classroom. In addition, Cook (2001, pp. 414-415) writes that the L1 can be a resource for the teacher to use in grammar teaching if this language is used judiciously. In relation to both vocabulary and grammar teaching, Cummins (2007, pp. 237-238) found in his study that it is of great importance for the teacher to see the students’ prior knowledge as a tool by which they can develop their L2. Furthermore, Cook (2001, pp. 415-

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3 According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1981, p.70), a bilingual person can both signify a person who has “learned to speak more than one language as a child” or one who can “speak more than one language”.
4 Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2003) explains that the word judicious means that something is “done in a sensible and careful way”. Hence, a “judicious use of the L1” means that teachers should only use the L1 to a certain extent in the classroom.
organizing tasks.

Beers Fägersten, 2012; p. 403-404). However, several studies show that EFL-teachers in reality use the L1 in the classroom for several reasons. The L1 was mainly used to manage discipline, teach grammar and explain vocabulary (Beers Fägersten, 2012; Degi, 2014; Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011; Sali, 2014; Sharma, 2006). The majority of the teachers in these studies were positive towards the use of L1 in the above situations. For example, two out of four interviewed teachers in Copland and Neokleous’ study (2011, pp. 273-276) said that the L1 should be used when translating words from the target language and when explaining grammar. Moreover, three teachers in Sali’s study (2014, pp. 315-316) explained in qualitative interviews that the L1 would be a resource in the classroom when explaining the meaning of English words to the students.

Quantitative research on students’ attitudes towards teachers’ L1 use show that students tend to support teachers’ L1 use in three areas. These are vocabulary teaching, grammar teaching and classroom management (including when managing discipline). Nevertheless, there also tends to be some contradictions among students regarding use of the L1. Two recent questionnaire studies that address this are Kim and Petraki (2009) and Sharma (2006). In both Kim and Petraki’s (2009) and Sharma’s (2006) studies, a high percentage of the students were positive towards teachers’ L1 use when explaining vocabulary. Moreover, Sharma (2006) stresses that students also tend to endorse L1 use by teachers when teaching grammar. However, only a few of Kim and Petraki’s (2009) students believed that this was necessary. Finally, Kim and Petraki (2009) found that a large portion of the students in their study believed teachers’ should use the L1 for classroom management. Conversely, very few of Sharma’s (2006) students believed that the L1 should be used by teachers for this.

There is very little previous qualitative research towards students’ attitudes towards teachers’ use of the L1 at upper secondary level. However, Kim and Petraki (2009, p. 68) interviewed five students regarding this and found out that all of these, in some particular situations, were positive towards teachers’ L1 use. This is manifested in one student’s answer as she said that it would enhance her grammar development if teachers used the L1 (Kim & Petraki, 2009, p. 68). Additionally, Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011, pp. 139-140) interviewed three students on pre-university level on their attitudes towards L1 use by teachers. They found that all three students thought that there were some benefits with this practice in the EFL-classroom. One student specifically expressed that her vocabulary would be developed if the L1 were used by the teachers in vocabulary teaching (Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011, p. 139). Nevertheless, two of the interviewed students stressed the importance of judicious use of the L1 by the teachers and that this language tended to be overused by them (Mahmoudi & Amirkhiz, 2011, p. 140).

5 Besides using a quantitative method in form of a questionnaire, Kim and Petraki (2009) also conducted qualitative interviews with students.

6 Pre-university level in Iran corresponds to the Swedish upper secondary level.
3. Theoretical framework
The theoretical framework for this thesis is presented in this section. This includes the sociocultural theory with a specific focus on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as well as Krashen’s input hypothesis.

3.1 Sociocultural theory and ZPD
Sociocultural theory originates from the ideas of Vygotsky in the beginning of the 20th century (Vygotsky, 1978). The core of the theory is, according to Lantolf and Thorne (2007, p. 201) that reality consists of different artefacts (or items). These artefacts are, in turn, tools that can be used by humans for mediation in the world. This means that humans can use them in order to, for example, communicate with each other or to convey knowledge (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 201-203). Lantolf and Thorne (2007, p. 205) write that there are two types of artefacts, namely physical and symbolic (including language). They also point out that the artefacts are culturally learned, which means that, for instance, a person in the USA has learned a language that he or she needs to master in order to (socially) survive in his or her environment. In this sense, there is always a relationship between learning and a certain context (Lantolf & Thorne 2007, pp. 205-206).

One important aspect of sociocultural theory is the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Vygotsky (1978, pp. 85-86), this means that there is a specific zone in a human being’s development where he or she almost, but not fully, has learned to master something. For instance, this could mean that the learner has acquired some knowledge in English vocabulary but has not learned the meaning of some difficult words yet. However, Säljö (2012, p. 193) and Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, p. 90) write that this thing he or she does not fully master can be learned through so called scaffolding. This means that another person, like a peer or a teacher, helps the student to learn the thing he or she has not yet fully mastered by explicitly teaching him with the help of different artefacts (Säljö 2012, p. 193). Säljö (2010, p. 193) also writes that scaffolding includes the teacher giving the student challenging tasks in order to give him or her a chance to reach his or her ZPD.

3.2 Krashen’s input hypothesis
One theory that can be related to the idea that mainly English should be used in the EFL-classroom is Krashen’s input hypothesis. The basic idea of the theory is that it is necessary for the language learner to receive input from the target language in order to acquire new knowledge in this language (Krashen, 1982, pp. 20-21). Krashen explains that the level of the language that the learner is exposed to should be somewhat higher than the linguistic level that he or she is on. As the learner receives some input in the target language (e.g. by hearing someone speaking this language), his or her acquisition in it will rise as a result of this. In this respect, it is of great importance that the learner is exposed to the target language as much as possible (Krashen, 1982, pp. 21-22). Several other researchers (Cook, 2001, p. 405; Turnbull, 2001, p. 535; Voicu, 2012, p. 214) all draw on Krashen’s ideas as they conclude that mainly the target language should be used in the FL-classroom.

4. Method and material
In this section, the chosen method for this thesis is described together with the selection of informants, the implementation of data collection, the method of analysis, the reliability of the study and the consideration of ethical aspects.
4.1 Method
In order to collect data for the study, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with the students. As the aim of this thesis is to examine what attitudes students have towards teachers’ use of the L1 in the EFL-classroom, this method was considered appropriate to use. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014, p. 143), semi-structured interviews are useful as the students through these are able to explain their attitudes in detail on a certain subject. Hence, by using this approach, knowledge of the students’ attitudes on teachers’ L1 use can be obtained. This would not be possible if, for example, questionnaires would have been used instead since they offer limited abilities of asking the informants supplementary questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 352).

Qualitative interviews entail a topic-centered type of dialogue between two people with the purpose of producing situated knowledge. In addition, questions in semi-structured interviews are more flexibly posed than in structured interviews. Hence, the informants are able to develop their answers more freely (Edwards & Holland 2013, pp. 3, 29). Nevertheless, the questions in semi-structured interviews are structured in a specific order and gives the interviewer a chance to clarify the questions (prompting) and asks supplementary questions (probing) (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 361; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 19).

4.2 Selection and presentation of informants
The selection of informants in this study consists of nine students in Swedish upper secondary school. They attend three different schools in southern Sweden, which will be referred to as the Red, Blue and Green school in this study. The informants were limited to only include students who are currently enrolled in the Swedish upper secondary school and students who are studying English at present. Thirteen students in total were asked to participate in the study, and nine of these agreed to participate in the interview study. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2014, p. 156), this is also an appropriate number of informants to have in a qualitative interview study, as they suggest a number of about 8-25 informants. It is also important to note that this number is just a guideline and may vary from study to study depending on the aim of the research (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 156). Seven of the students are female and two are male. They all have Swedish as their first language. In order to anonymize the students, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2007, p. 64), their real names and the names of their schools are not mentioned in the thesis. Instead, the students were given pseudonyms. More detailed information about the informants can be found in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Swedish as L1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erik</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Green School</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viola</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>English 5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jens</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Blue School</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>English 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linnea</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Blue School</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>English 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agnes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>English 6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frida</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanna</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Red School</td>
<td>Third</td>
<td>English 7</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Red School, which Agnes, Amanda, Frida, Hanna, Olivia and Viola attend, is situated in a town with 6 000 inhabitants in southern Sweden. The school has approximately 400 students. Jens’s and Linnea’s school, the Blue School, is located in a nearby town with 13 000 inhabitants.
The number of students in this school is around 1000. The Green School, which Erik attends, is situated in town in the same area as the two other schools with 17,000 inhabitants. Approximately 1200 students attend this school.

4.3 Implementation
The informants were first contacted privately (both via Facebook and face to face) when they were asked to participate in this study. As this author does volunteer work with young people in his spare time, it was possible to contact some upper secondary students without first contacting the local schools. After the informants (and their guardians) had read the letter of informed consent and approved to be interviewed, the time and place for the interviews were decided. Some of the interviews took place in the schools, while others took place in a local church where this author does volunteer work as a youth leader.

All interviews took place in a quiet room where there was no noise and they were all recorded with a smartphone. McKay (2006, pp. 52-53) addresses the problem of language barriers and stresses that the informants need to clearly understand the interview questions in order to give good answers. Therefore, all interviews were conducted in Swedish and extracts were translated to English for the purpose of this thesis. In order to test the quality of the interview questions, as suggested by Cohen et al. (2007) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2014), a pilot interview was conducted with a person who had recently taken an English course in the Swedish upper secondary school. This interview took around ten minutes, which was also the approximate time for all the other interviews. As it was clear that the student in the pilot study had clearly understood the interview questions, no revisions of these were made after this interview.

In order for the researcher to notice important details, Cohen et al. (2007, p. 365) point out that it is necessary to transcribe the interviews. Consequently, all of the interviews in this research project were transcribed after they were recorded. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 367) write that it is not necessary to transcribe everything that was said during the interviews, but only the relevant parts for the research project. Hence, some parts of the conversations that had no relevance for the aim or research questions of this thesis (e.g. chit-chat about things that were not related to the interview questions) were not transcribed.

4.4 Method of analysis
The method of analysis used in this thesis is a qualitative approach taken from LeCompte (2010), which consists of five steps. The first of these is called “tidying up”, which means that the researcher transcribes the collected material, reads through it carefully and checks that no more data needs to be collected (LeCompte, 2010, p. 148). In this step, the transcribed interviews were read, translated (only the relevant passages) and looked through that these were enough to answer the research questions of this thesis. The second step is “finding items”. This implies that the researcher looks for the most frequent, relevant and significant items that could help answer the research questions of the study (LeCompte, 2010, p. 148). Here, the transcribed interviews were read several times in order to find answers from the students that had a high frequency, were significant and were relevant in relation to the research questions. The third step in the model is “creating stable sets of items”, which means that the researcher compares and categorizes the identified items in order to then make taxonomies (LeCompte, 2010, pp. 148-150). Even though no taxonomies were made, some categories could be derived from the identified items. In the fourth step of the model, the researcher tries to identify patterns in the different categories (LeCompte, 2010, pp. 150-151). In this thesis, some relevant patterns could be derived from the identified categories. The fifth and final step of the model includes that the researcher “assembles structures” in the patterns, which means that he or she groups some of
these together (LeCompte, 2010, pp. 151-152). Here, some of the patterns that were identified in this thesis were also divided into structures.

4.5 Reliability
Reliability means that the collected data in the research project is reliable and that is possible to draw reliable conclusions from it (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 148). Additionally, a study with high reliability should also be replicable by others (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 148). Cohen et al. (2007, p. 151) bring up some points that could decrease the reliability in qualitative interviews. These include, for example, that the researcher asks the informant leading questions, that he or she has structured the questions in a poor order or is biased in his or her interpretation of the answers. These possible sources of error were counteracted by not asking leading questions, organizing the questions in a well-structured way and correctly interpreting the answers. Moreover, the pilot study conducted before the other interviews should also ensure the reliability of the study (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 341). Regarding “correctly” interpreting data, however, it must be noted that pure objectivity does not exist in qualitative research and that the researcher must always do his or her own interpretation of the collected data (Thurén, 2007, p. 173). In this respect, the interpretation of the students’ answers in this thesis is somewhat subjective. Furthermore, the reliability of this study would have been higher if there were more than one person who transcribed the interviews (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 367).

4.6 Ethical aspects
The Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002), henceforth referred to as the Research Council, addresses four different ethical aspects for researchers who collect data that involves human subjects. The first of these is the requirement of information, which means that the researcher must always inform the informants of the purpose of the study. In this study, an information letter was sent to all informants where the aim of the study is described. The second aspect that the Research Council (2002) addresses is the requirement of consent. This means that the informants always have to give their consent before they participate in the research project. The third aspect that the Research Council (2002) addresses is the requirement of confidentiality, which means that the researcher must not give any personal and other sensitive information of the informants to unauthorized persons. Finally, the Research Council (2002) addresses the so-called requirement of usage, which implies that the collected data for the study is only allowed to be used for research purposes. All of these four aspects have been taken into account when collecting data for the study. This has been done by showing the informants and their guardians an information letter (which can be found in Appendix 2 and 3) that they had to sign before the interviews (point 1 and 2), keeping the collected data in a private place (point 3) and not using the data for other purposes than for this thesis (point 4). Moreover, the collected material will also be destroyed when the thesis is finished (point 3 and 4).

5. Results
In this section, the outcome of the data collection and analysis is presented. The section is divided into three subsections, which are 1) When do the students think their teachers should use the L1? 2) When do the students think their teachers should not use the L1? and 3) To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1? Even though the students also stated other things about their attitudes on their teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom, these three categories were the most salient ones that could be derived from the collected data.
5.1 When do the students think their teachers should use the L1?
This section addresses the certain areas where the students think their teachers should use the L1. Mainly, they mentioned three areas where they believed Swedish should be used by the teachers. These were 1) in vocabulary teaching, 2) in grammar teaching and 3) for classroom management.

5.1.1 Vocabulary teaching
The interview study showed that the majority of the students (seven out of nine) believed their teachers should use the L1 when teaching new English words. A number of the students said that teachers’ use of Swedish when explaining the meaning of words could be a resource for them in their vocabulary development. For instance, Viola points out the importance of explaining and clarifying the meaning of a word in Swedish:

**Viola:** When clarifying English words in Swedish, you don’t have to assume that the words mean something they really don’t mean.

Viola says that she would properly understand the English words if these are explained by the teacher in her L1. Hence, she draws on the importance of fully understanding the words. Additionally, Agnes and Jens claim that the teacher should use Swedish when explaining the meaning of more difficult words:

**Agnes:** Well difficult things, like difficult words, are easier to learn if the teacher explains these in Swedish as well and not only in English because then you learn them better.

**Jens:** If there is a really difficult word, you will understand this better if this is explained in Swedish.

Both of the students here point out that their understanding of the English words would be enhanced if their teachers would use Swedish when explaining them. However, Jens’s and Agnes’ answers differ in the way that Jens only claims that the words should be explained in Swedish while Agnes also states that the words could be explained in English as well. Furthermore, Amanda and Frida illustrate the significance of their prior knowledge in Swedish when learning new words:

**Amanda:** When the teacher first explains words and sentences in English and then explains them in Swedish, you also learn them and understand them better as you know these in Swedish from before.

**Frida:** I think translating the English words into Swedish is a good idea, because you already know the Swedish words. Of course you can use English words to explain English words as well, but you will understand the words more precisely and correctly if you use Swedish words to explain the English words.

Amanda and Frida point out that knowing the word in Swedish is a benefit that helps them learn the words easier in English, especially when the teachers explain the meaning of words in the L1. Hence, they both see teachers’ use of L1 as a resource when teaching vocabulary. However, as in the case with Jens and Agnes above, Amanda says that the teacher should first explain the words in English (and then switch to Swedish) while Frida claims that the teacher only should use Swedish when doing this.
5.1.2 Grammar teaching
The area where the students were most positive towards teachers’ use of Swedish was grammar teaching. All students (except for one) expressed overtly that using the L1 when doing this would enhance their learning and understanding of English grammar. One reason was because the students believed that it would be easier to understand the grammar in the L2 if the grammatical rules were compared to those in the L1. Amanda says that:

Amanda: It is easier to understand the English grammar when the teacher draws parallels to Swedish in grammar teaching.

It is clear that Amanda believes that the teachers should use the L1 when teaching grammar as she says that she would find it easier to understand the English grammar if the teacher would compare it to the Swedish grammar. Another reason why the students preferred teachers’ Swedish use in grammar teaching was because grammar includes many difficult words and terms. This is something that Agnes, Erik, Linnea and Olivia all express:

Agnes: I think he [the teacher] may use Swedish when teaching grammar, as there are so many difficult words involved here.

Erik: Some of the grammatical words can sometimes be pretty difficult to understand, so therefore it can be a good idea for the teacher to use Swedish when teaching grammar.

Linnea: I think using Swedish when teaching grammar is a good idea. When explaining more complicated things like grammar, it gets easier to understand this if it is explained in your first language.

Olivia: When she [the teacher] gives grammatical examples in grammar teaching, I think these examples should be in Swedish. Of course she can explain these examples in English as well, but they may be more complicated to understand then, so it’s a good idea that she explains them in Swedish.

All of the four students above think that grammar teaching includes many words and terms that are complicated for them to understand. They believe that if the teachers would use Swedish, their understanding of the words would be enhanced as they would be explained to them in their L1. In this sense, they said that Swedish should also be used by their teachers when explaining grammar. However, it must be said that the students above (with the exception of Olivia) do not claim that their teachers should use English as well in grammar teaching. Although Hanna says that mainly English should be used by the teacher when teaching grammar (see below), she agrees with Agnes, Erik, Linnea and Olivia when she admits that some grammatical terms need to be explained in Swedish as well. After being asked if the teacher’s use of Swedish in any way may enhance her language development she answers:

Hanna: Yes, like when she says a grammatical word, like perfect tense or whatever it is called. If she just says it in English, I wouldn’t fully understand it since I have only learned it in Swedish. So I would understand these words better if these are explained in Swedish.

Hanna’s answer here demonstrates that she also believes that she would understand the grammatical words in English better if the teacher would say these in Swedish. However, as mentioned above, Hanna thinks that the teacher should mainly use English when teaching grammar:
**Hanna:** Grammar teaching should mainly be in English, because then you are hearing it and learning it in English. So the teacher should use English here. She should always use English first, and then use Swedish if you are not understanding the grammatical terms.

Hanna says that the reason she would like the teacher to use English in grammar teaching is because listening to grammar instruction in the target language would improve her development in English grammar. In this respect, she would like the teacher to use the L2 most of the time in grammar teaching, although she believes that the L1 could sometimes be helpful here as well.

To summarize, most students in this interview study believed that grammar instruction in Swedish by teachers would improve their grammar development in English. However, in contrast to the others, Hanna thought that English should mainly be used for this purpose. Nevertheless, she believed that saying some grammatical terms in the L1 would help her to understand these better in the target language.

5.1.3 Classroom management

The students mentioned two specific aspects of classroom management in which they believed that Swedish should be used by their teachers. These were when giving instructions and when managing discipline in the classroom.

5.1.3.1 Giving instructions

Six of the students believed that Swedish (to some extent) should be used by their teachers when giving instructions for assignments. They stressed the importance of fully knowing what to do, which, according to them, was the case if the teachers explained the assignments in the L1. Amanda, Erik, Frida and Hanna all say that this is the case:

**Amanda:** When the teacher goes through an assignment in Swedish and not only in English, you also understand it better since this is your first language.

**Erik:** If there is an assignment that you don’t fully understand, I think using Swedish is a good idea. It is important that you fully understand the assignment.

**Frida:** If the teacher uses Swedish as well as English when explaining an assignment, you understand the assignment clearly and don’t have any questions on it.

**Hanna:** Since Swedish is my mother tongue, this is the language that I understand best. Therefore, I will understand the assignments to 100% if these, to some extent, are explained in Swedish. Otherwise, I would just have understood them to 50%.

Amanda, Erik, Frida and Hanna explain here that their teachers’ use of Swedish when giving instructions for assignments would help them understand the tasks in detail. As the Swedish language is their L1, they say that this language could be a resource regarding their understanding of the assignments. However, Amanda, Frida and Hanna all say that English also should be used by teachers when giving instructions. Nevertheless, they stress that Swedish could be a complement to their use of English here as well. In this sense, they believe that their teachers should use the L1 judiciously.

5.1.3.2 Managing discipline

The majority of the students (six out of nine) expressed that their teachers should use Swedish when managing discipline in the classroom. This includes reprimanding the students when they are too noisy or when they, for example, do not listen to the teachers’ instructions. In the
following extract, Hanna draws on the importance for the teacher to use Swedish when disciplining the students:

**Pontus:** Are there any occasions when the teacher’s use of Swedish may enhance the working environment in the classroom?

**Hanna:** Yes, this can be the case when reprimanding. If she for example says “nu lugnar ni ned er” (calm down in Swedish), this would have much more authority than if she would say “shut up” or “calm down boys” in English. That would sound more like a line from a movie.

**Pontus:** Yes, so you mean that this would sound more awkward than if the teacher used Swedish here?

**Hanna:** Yes, sometimes when she says “please, be quiet” in English, it just sounds funny and her words have no authority. Then it’s better to just say “nu får ni vara tysta” (now you have to be quiet in Swedish).

As shown here, Hanna believes that the teacher should use Swedish when managing discipline as this would sound more authoritative than if this was done in English. She clearly expresses that she thinks the students would listen more carefully to the teacher if she used the L1 instead of the L2 when reprimanding them. In relation to this, she also, in a humoristic way, compares the teacher’s expressions in English here to expressions from movies. Agnes, Jens, Linnea and Viola are of the same opinion as Hanna regarding this:

**Agnes:** I actually believe that it is better for the teacher to reprimand the students in Swedish, because she will be taken more seriously by them then.

**Jens:** The teacher’s words have more power if she uses Swedish when disciplining the students.

**Linnea:** The teacher should use Swedish when telling the class to keep quiet as they will understand that they have to keep quiet if she does this.

**Viola:** The students will perhaps not take the teacher very seriously if she is disciplining them in English.

As these students express that students would take teachers reprimands more seriously if they would discipline them in Swedish, it is obvious that they, in a similar way as Hanna, believe that this would enhance the working environment in the classroom.

Nevertheless, both Amanda and Frida are of a different opinion than Agnes, Jens, Hanna, Linnea and Viola concerning teachers’ use of Swedish when managing discipline. In contrast to those students, they believe that this can be done in English as well:

**Amanda:** I think it almost would be better if reprimanding would be in English.

**Frida:** As for reprimanding when the classroom gets noisy, I think this can be done in English as well as in Swedish.

Here it is evident that Amanda and Frida believe that Swedish does not have to be used by teachers when managing discipline. Amanda also says that she thinks that it would be better to use English when doing this. In this respect, these two students’ opinions differ from these of

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7 Here, Hanna said both “shut up” and “calm down boys” in English.
the other students. However, in contrast to the others, neither Amanda nor Frida give any reasons why they think that English should be used by teachers when reprimanding the students.

5.2 When do the students think their teachers should not use the L1?
In this section, the particular situations in which the students think their teachers should not use the L1 are presented. The most salient of these were 1) in questions and answers and 2) in general talk.

5.2.1 Questions and answers
Several of the interviewed students believed that their teachers should not use Swedish when answering students’ questions in the classroom (regardless if these were posed in Swedish or in English)8. In the following excerpt, Olivia explains why she thinks that this should be the case:

Olivia: When you ask the teacher something, I think she should answer the question in English.

Pontus: Okay. And why should she answer the question in English then?

Olivia: Because, as I said before, then you also learn to answer questions in English. And if you aren’t learning to communicate in English in school, you will not be able to communicate in English in real life either.

Olivia clearly believes that it is important that the students develop authentic communication skills in English which, according to her, is done by speaking English in the classroom. Hence, she stresses the importance of teachers’ use of the target language when communicating with the students. In this respect, she also thinks that the teacher should always answer the students’ questions in English and not in Swedish. Some of the other students also agree with Olivia:

Agnes: The teacher should always answer a posed question in English. It would be very weird if he answered this in Swedish.

Amanda: It is better if the teacher answers the students’ questions in English, because then you get challenged to use English as much as possible.

Frida: When you have discussed something, like an assignment or something, and you ask the teacher “What is the answer to this question?” and he then answers in Swedish, this would not be as good as if he would have answered this question in English.

As Agnes, Amanda and Frida all say that it a good idea that students’ questions are answered by teachers in English, it is clear that they also believe that their language development would be enhanced if this was the case. Moreover, in a similar manner as Olivia, Amanda also states that she would be more encouraged to use English if her teacher would answer her questions in this language. Thus, she highlights the importance of a frequent use of the target language in the classroom.

5.2.2 General talk
Another area where the students thought their teachers should not use the L1 was in general talk. This included, for example, when talking about things not directly related to school in the classroom. Agnes, Hanna and Viola all illustrate the importance of teachers’ use of the target language in general talk:

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8 It must be noted that the questions and answers the students talk about here are not related to the areas where they think the L1 should be used by their teachers.
Agnes: When he (the teacher, author’s notes) talks with us students about things that don’t have anything to do with school, he should use English because then you are learning to communicate in English and how the words are pronounced.

Hanna: It’s not good if the teacher randomly speaks Swedish in the classroom, because then you are not learning any English.

Viola: When generally talking, the teachers should speak English because then you get use to how it sounds and so on.

All three of these students express that their teachers should use English in general talk in the classroom for the reason that they would need input in this language in order to develop their listening and communication skills. When listening to them talking about random things in the classroom, they would learn, for instance, how some words are pronounced or how to properly articulate different expressions in English. Hence, they believe that teachers should only use the target language in general talk.

Nevertheless, Amanda is of a somewhat different opinion than the other students regarding teachers’ use of Swedish in general talk. She says:

Amanda: It’s nice if the teacher shows that he is on our level as well. Therefore, it’s a good idea that he uses Swedish sometimes when generally talking as well as English.

Amanda says here that the relationship between the students and the teacher would be enhanced if he, from time to time, would use Swedish when generally talking and not only English. She says that this is because he shows that he can identify himself with the students when using the L1.

5.3 To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1?
This section presents data on to what extent the students think their teachers should use Swedish in the classroom. The interviews showed that the students supported 1) a judicious use of Swedish by their teachers and 2) that teachers’ use of Swedish should be adjusted to the specific teaching group.

5.3.1 Judicious use of Swedish
Regarding to what extent Swedish should be used by teachers in the EFL-classroom, all students said that they should mainly use English. However, they also said that they, to a certain degree, could use Swedish sometimes as well in order to ensure understanding among the students. This is illustrated in Agnes’, Amanda’s, Hanna’s, Olivia’s and Viola’s answers to the question on how much they think their teachers should use the L1 in the classroom:

Agnes: I think the teacher mostly should use English, but can use Swedish sometimes as well if you for example do not understand some words.

Amanda: English should mainly be used, as it is an English lesson. But Swedish should be used as well in order to make sure that everyone have understood everything.

Hanna: Actually, it would be optimal for the teachers to only use English. But, they should not be too hard if you for example do not understand something. But as I said, as much English as possible. It is an English lesson after all.
**Olivia:** I think my teacher uses enough Swedish. I like that she uses English most of the time and then supplements with Swedish from time to time.

**Viola:** The best thing would be that the teachers would speak English because then you get used to the language. But when you do not understand something, they could explain this a little bit clearer in Swedish after first having explained this in English.

All these students emphasize that their teachers should mainly use English in the classroom, while they, at the same time, express that Swedish could have some complementary functions. For instance, these could be when the students have problems understanding something or if something needs to be clarified to them (that has first been explained in English). In this sense, the students promote an overall judicious use of the L1 by their teachers in the EFL-classroom.

### 5.3.2 Adjust use of Swedish to the specific teaching group

Some of the students believed that teachers need to adjust their use of Swedish to what type of group they are teaching. They say that a frequent use of L1 could be a resource for less proficient students, while an infrequent use of L1 would better enhance stronger students’ language development. Linnea, Jens and Viola are all of this opinion:

**Linnea:** I think you should adapt the use of Swedish after what type of group you are teaching. If there is a group that is strong in English you should also use English a lot since you do not want to stop their development. And if there is a group that is weak in English, like a group with several people from other countries, you can use more Swedish. So I think you have to adapt the use of Swedish to the specific group.

**Viola:** It is difficult to say how much Swedish they [the teachers] should use, but I guess this will depend on what type of class it is.

**Jens:** Using Swedish may be helpful for those who are not very good in English.

Linnea, Jens and Viola say that teachers’ use of L1 would be more helpful for students whose proficiency English is low than for stronger students. Linnea also claims that a frequent use of Swedish in teaching groups with many strong students could actually hinder their L2 development. However, she points out that this could be a useful resource for weaker students. In relation to this, Hanna says that teachers’ use of Swedish is more helpful in lower grades than in higher:

**Hanna:** I think they should have high standards regarding using English in the higher classes. In lower grades, they may use a lot of Swedish but not in higher grades.

Here, it is clear that Hanna believes that teachers should use less and less Swedish the higher grades they are teaching. In this sense, it is possible that she thinks that the L1 could have more supportive functions for younger than for older learners.

### 6. Discussion

In this section, the results and the method used in this thesis are discussed.

#### 6.1 Results discussion

As in the results section, this section is organized according to the research questions of this thesis which are 1) When do the students think their teachers should use the L1? 2) When do
the students think their teachers should not use the L1? and 3) To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1?

6.1.1 When do the students think their teachers should use the L1?

The fact that several of the students said that their teachers should use Swedish in vocabulary teaching shows that this in one area in which teachers’ L1 use is seen as beneficial for students’ language development. The students say that that teaching vocabulary in Swedish may increase their comprehension of more advanced vocabulary in English. These attitudes are in accordance with Cook’s (2001, p. 414) and Garcia et al.’s (2012, pp. 58-60) studies on how the L1 can be a resource in the FL-classroom when explaining the meaning of difficult words. Furthermore, they are in line with the results of Sharma’s (2006), Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz’s (2011, p. 139) and Sharma’s (2006) previous research which showed that students tend to support teachers’ L1 use when explaining vocabulary. Moreover, in relation to Garcia et al. (2012, pp. 59-60)’s study, the students also said that their understanding of the words and metalinguistic awareness may be enhanced if these words were explained in Swedish. Additionally, Amanda’s and Frida’s emphasis on the fact that they already knew the English words in Swedish since before can be related to Cummins’ (2007, pp. 237-238) study on the importance for the teacher to take advantage of the students’ prior knowledge in the L1 in the FL-classroom.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that two of the students (Amanda and Viola) said that the teachers should first explain the words in English (and then explain them in Swedish) while two other students (Frida and Jens) expressed that only Swedish should be used by teachers when teaching vocabulary. Amanda’s and Viola’s answers are in line with Cook’s (2001, p. 414) idea on that teachers should use the L1 judiciously (and not solely) in vocabulary teaching. On the other hand, Frida’s and Jens’ claims are not in line with this as they said that the English words should solely be explained in the L1. In other words, they did not mention anything about that their teachers should switch between English and Swedish (translanguaging, see Garcia, 2009, p. 45) when teaching vocabulary. The fact that Frida and Jens did not mention that Swedish should be used judiciously by teachers when explaining vocabulary is not in line with Krashen’s input hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). This is because Krashen (1982, pp. 21-22) stresses that learners must always be exposed to a frequent use of the target language in order to develop their proficiency in this language.

The students’ positive attitudes on teachers’ use of Swedish when teaching grammar show that this is another area in which they believe that their teachers should use the L1. Thus, they point out that this would enhance their grammar development in English. This can be related to Cook’s (2001, pp. 414-415) ideas that teachers’ L1 use may help the students to more easily understand the target language in the FL-classroom. The students’ attitudes are also in line with the results of Sharma’s (2006) study which showed that students believed that use of the L1 by teachers when explaining grammar would improve their language development. Furthermore, the fact that Hanna and the other students thought teachers should use Swedish when explaining grammatical terms can also be connected to sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 205-206). This is because the students stress that they have learned these terms in Swedish earlier, and that this would help them to understand these terms in English. Hence, the Swedish language becomes an artefact by which teachers’ convey knowledge of English grammar to students.

However, Hanna’s comment on that English should mainly be used by teachers when explaining grammar (with the exception of saying the name of the grammatical terms) shows that there are some contradictions among the students concerning this. This is also in line with
the results of Kim and Petraki’s (2009) study where only a few of the students in this were positive towards teachers’ L1 use in grammar teaching. The fact that Hanna said that she would learn English grammar better if she heard it in the target language is also in accordance with Krashen’s (1982, pp. 21-22) input hypothesis. This is because Hanna stressed that she would need input on the grammatical rules in English in order to improve her grammar development.

Moreover, as in the case with vocabulary teaching, the students’ beliefs that teachers should only use Swedish when explaining grammar are not exactly in accordance with Cook’s (2001, pp. 414-415) research on this. This is because Cook points out that the L1 should be used judiciously and strategically in this area (Cook, 2001, pp. 414-415), which the students in this study (maybe with the exception of Hanna and Olivia) did not say anything about. In a similar way, this is not in line with Krashen’s (1982, pp. 21-22) input hypothesis as the students (other than Hanna and Olivia) did not point out that they would need any grammatical input in the target language.

Several of the students thought that their teachers should use Swedish when giving instructions for assignments. As they highlight the importance of fully understanding every detail of the tasks, they believed that the teacher should use Swedish when explaining instructions. This is, in turn, in accordance with Cook’s (2001, pp. 415-416) research on how the L1 can be used by teachers when organizing tasks in the FL-classroom. The students’ attitudes are also in line with the results of Kim and Petraki’s (2009) study which showed that students tend to support teachers’ use of L1 for classroom management. However, they differ from Sharma’s (2006) results as only a few the students in that study were positive towards teachers’ use of L1 in this area. Finally, the majority of the students who believed their teachers’ Swedish use could be helpful for classroom management also pointed out that the L1 should be used judiciously in this situation as well (see also Cook, 2001, p. 415).

The students’ supportive attitudes on teachers’ use of L1 when managing discipline is in line with Cook’s (2001, pp. 415-416) and Voicu’s (2012, p. 216) research on how this practice by teachers may more easily draw students’ attention to them (see also Kim & Petraki, 2009). Additionally, Hanna’s comment on that saying “shut up!” in English would sound more like a “line from a movie” also illustrates this. Hanna’s words (as well as the other students’) can also be connected to sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 205-206). This is because she has probably learned to listen to her parents when they say “keep quiet” in Swedish, while she has probably learned to laugh at Hollywood movies using the same phrase in English. Therefore, it is also easier for the teacher to capture Hanna’s attention to him or her by using Swedish when reprimanding her. Nevertheless, it must also be taken into account that Amanda and Frida pointed out that disciplining the students can be done in English as well as in Swedish (Amanda even expressed that it would perhaps be better if the teacher’s reprimands were in English). This shows that there were some contradictions between the students with regards to discipline in the classroom (see also Sharma, 2006).

6.1.2 When do the students think their teachers should not use the L1?
The students believed that Swedish should not be used by their teachers when answering their questions, and it is clear that they stressed the importance of developing good communication skills in English in the classroom. This is in line with the fact that the Swedish national curriculum says that every student should develop “The ability to express oneself and communicate in English in speech and writing” (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a, p. 54). Additionally, the students’ attitudes on this can be tied to the ideas of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978) and scaffolding (Säljö 2012, p. 193; Wood
et al., 1976, p. 90). This is because the students highlight the fact that the teacher scaffolds them to develop their communications skills in English when answering their questions in the target language. Furthermore, the students’ assertions are in accordance with Krashen’s (1982, pp. 20-21) input hypothesis as they believe that they would need input from their teachers on how to communicate in their L2 in order to develop this ability themselves.

In addition, Krashen’s (1982, pp. 20-21) input hypothesis can also be tied to the students’ beliefs that their teachers should not use the L1 in general talk. This is because they believe that they would need to hear the teacher speak as much English as possible in order to develop both communication and listening skills in the target language. If they received input from their teacher speaking English, they said that they would also learn how this language sounds and how to properly communicate in it.

However, Amanda’s opinion that she believed that the teacher sometimes should also use Swedish in general talk shows that students have different attitudes on this topic. Amanda’s ideas can also be linked to Garcia et al.’s (2012, pp. 60-61) research on how teachers’ L1 use may develop “supportive bonds” between teachers and students. This is because Amanda believes that the relationship between the teacher and the students may be developed more if the teacher used the L1. Furthermore, Amanda’s ideas can be connected to sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, pp. 205-206) as she stresses that fact that the EFL-lesson takes place in a Swedish context and that the teacher also has Swedish as his L1. Nevertheless, all this presupposes that the teacher and the students share the same L1 which certainly is not always the case in Sweden.

6.1.3 To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1?

The students’ opinions on to what extent English should be used by EFL-teachers tie in with Cook’s (2001, p. 405), Turnbull’s (2001, p. 535) and Voicu’s (2012, p. 214) ideas that teachers should mostly use the target language in the FL-classroom. This is because the students said that teachers should mainly use English in the EFL-classroom. As mentioned above, their thoughts on needing to be exposed to much English in order to develop their skills in this language can also be linked to Krashen’s (1982, pp. 21-22) input hypothesis. Furthermore, it can also be said that teachers’ frequent use of English may scaffold the students so that they reach their ZPD (see Vygotsky, 1978; Säljö, 2012, p. 193). Nevertheless, the fact that the students also said that an overall judicious use of Swedish may enhance their understanding of English can be tied to Cook’s (2001) research on this.

The students’ (Linnea’s, Hanna’s, Jens’s and Viola’s) views that teachers’ use of Swedish has to be adjusted to the specific teaching group shows that they think that there is no preconceived rule on how much teachers should use the L1 in the EFL-classroom. This is in line with the fact that the education in the Swedish upper secondary school should be adjusted to “the varying circumstances, needs and the students’ level of knowledge” (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011b, p. 5). However, it must also be noted that teaching in the EFL-classroom should mainly be conducted in English (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011a, p. 53). Moreover, it is clear that the students believe that the L1 may be more of a scaffolding tool (see Säljö, 2012, p. 193) for less proficient and younger learners than for stronger and older learners. The fact that Linnea also pointed out that it could be harmful for stronger students if the teachers’ overused Swedish is also in accordance with the idea of scaffolding and the ZPD (Säljö, 2012, p. 193). This is because more proficient or older students have a ZPD that needs to be challenged differently than that of younger or less proficient students. For instance, this could mean that stronger and older students need to be exposed to more difficult words in the
target language in order to develop their proficiency in English. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that all learners need input from the target language (see Krashen, 1982; Cook, 2001; Turnbull, 2001; Voicu, 2012), and that English, in this sense, always should mainly be used in the EFL-classroom

6.2 Method discussion

The method used in this thesis had several benefits. For example, the interviews enabled the collection of qualitative data on the students’ attitudes towards teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom. Moreover, the prompting and the probing during the interviews made it possible to ask the students supplementary questions and clarify these if they did not fully understand them. Furthermore, the fact that the interviews were conducted in Swedish made it possible for the students to fully understand the questions. Some students also said that they would only agree to participate in the study if the interview questions were in Swedish.

Nevertheless, this thesis is also limited in several ways. For instance, the selection of informants was only restricted to three schools in three smaller towns in southern Sweden. Hence, it is not possible to generalize the results on a bigger scale (Cohen et al. 2007). The thesis cannot answer what for example students in larger Swedish cities (e.g. Stockholm, Gothenburg or Malmö) think of teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom. In addition, all informants in this study have Swedish as their L1. This means that they may give different answers to the interview questions than those who have another L1. For example, teachers’ use of Swedish may perhaps not be the same resource for a student whose parents are from Iran than for a student with Swedish parents. On the other hand, Swedish is the most common L1 in Sweden. This means that the results of this thesis may be generalized to some extent.

Additionally, there are some factors that may have affected the students’ answers in the interviews. These include, for instance, that they may have been tired or stressed at the time and were thus not able to give explicit answers to the interview questions. Moreover, it must be said that this author knew all the informants before the study was conducted. Hence, it is possible that they may have given different answers if they were interviewed by a researcher they did not know at all. On the other hand, a benefit could be that the familiarity would make the interview situation more honest and not as intimidating for the students.

Furthermore, this thesis is limited in the way that no other methods than interviews were used in it. It would have been interesting to, for example, perform observations in different schools and see how teachers use the L1 in the classrooms. However, due to lack of time, it was not possible to do this in this study. As for time constraints, this was also the reason why no interviews with teachers were conducted in this thesis. Even though it would have been of great interest to examine what the teachers themselves think of their use of Swedish in the EFL-classroom, this was not possible to do this as well within the fixed time frame.

7. Conclusion

The research questions of this thesis were:

- When do the students think their teachers should use the L1?
- When do the students think that their teachers should not use the L1?
- To what extent do the students think their teachers should use the L1?
The area in which the students were most positive towards teachers’ L1 use was grammar teaching. They also believed that they should use Swedish when teaching vocabulary and for classroom management. The latter included both when giving instructions and when managing discipline. This can be tied to research on advantages of teachers’ L1 use (Cook, 2001; Garcia et al., 2012) as well as to previous research on students attitudes on teachers’ L1 use in the EFL-classroom (Kim & Petraki, 2006; Sharma, 2006) and, to some extent, to sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Nevertheless, only a few of the students addressed the importance of a judicious use of Swedish by the teacher in grammar and in vocabulary teaching. This is not in accordance with Cook’s (2001) conclusion that the L1 should only be used judiciously in the FL-classroom. Nor does this tie in with Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis which says that students need to be exposed to a frequent use of the target language in the classroom. The areas where the students believed the L1 should not be used by their teachers were in questions and answers and in general talk. The fact that the students said that this was because they needed to receive input in English in these areas is in line with Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis. Even though there were some minor contradictions concerning the students’ attitudes on teachers’ L1 use in these particular situations, their attitudes on this practice were overall the same throughout the interviews. The students supported an overall judicious use of L1 by teachers in the EFL-classroom. This ties in with Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis as well as with Cook’s (2001, p. 405), Turnbull’s (2001, p. 535) and Voicu’s (2012, p. 214) ideas that FL-teachers should mainly use the target language in the classroom. However, some students said that teacher use of Swedish should be adjusted to the specific teaching group as regards to age and level. This is in accordance with the fact that students may have different zones of proximal development (see Vygotsky, 1978) and that stronger students thus need to be scaffolded differently than less proficient students (see Säljö, 2012, p. 193). To sum up, it can be concluded that all three research questions of this thesis have been answered. Together these have also fulfilled the aim of the thesis, which was to examine what attitudes Swedish upper secondary students have towards teachers’ use of the L1 in the EFL-classroom.

7.1 Further research

The results of this thesis indicate that further research is needed on the extent to which students think their teachers should use the L1 in specific situations in the classroom. For instance, some of the informants claimed that Swedish only should be used by teachers when teaching vocabulary or grammar. Even though they were positive towards teachers’ L1 use in these particular situations, they did not say anything about a judicious use of Swedish here. In this sense, more research needs to be carried out on how the L1 could be used judiciously when, for example, teaching grammar.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to do a study on what attitudes more proficient as well as less proficient students in particular have towards teachers’ use of the L1. The fact that some of the informants in this study believed that weaker students would benefit more from this indicates that the attitudes of these students are important to examine. In relation to this, further research is also needed on students’ attitudes towards teachers’ L1 use as regards to level may differ. Even though three students from each English course were interviewed in this study, their answers to the questions did not differ on a larger scale. Therefore, more studies on this need to be conducted.

Finally, further research is needed on students’ attitudes towards teachers’ L1 use in other geographical areas than the area in which this study was carried out. This especially includes regions where there are many students who do not have Swedish as their L1. For example, it would be interesting to examine what upper secondary students in larger cities think of their
teachers’ use of Swedish in the EFL-classroom. It is possible that their attitudes differ from those of the informants in this study.
References


Olsson, E. (2012). "Everything I read on the Internet is in English". *On the impact of extramural English on Swedish 16-year-old pupils’ writing proficiency*. Gothenburg University, Department of Swedish. Gothenburg: Gothenburg University.


Appendix 1: Interview questions
These are the interview questions of this thesis in the original language. They are divided into two parts, which are 1) background questions and 2) main questions.

**Bakgrundsfrågor**
1. Hur gammal är du?
2. Vilken skola går du på?
3. Vilket program går du på?
4. Vilket år läser du på gymnasiet?
5. Vilken kurs läser du i engelska?
6. Har du planer på att studera vidare efter gymnasiet?
7. Har du svenska som ditt förstaspråk?

**Huvudfrågor (inklusive följdfrågor)**
1. Använder sig din lärare av svenska ibland under engelskletionerna? Om nej, gå vidare till fråga 3. Om ja, a) hur ofta använder sig din lärare av svenska under engelskletionerna? b) Kan du nämna några specifika situationer då läraren använder sig av svenska?
2. Vad tycker du allmänt om att läraren använder sig av svenska under engelskletionerna?
5. Finns det några specifika situationer när läraren bör använda sig av svenska under engelskletionerna? Om inga, gå vidare till fråga 6. Om några, a) Varför är det bra att läraren använder sig av svenska här? Kan du utveckla det?
6. Finns det några situationer när läraren inte bör använda sig av svenska? Om inga, gå vidare till fråga 7. Om några, a) Varför är det inte bra att läraren använder sig av svenska här? Kan du utveckla det?
7. Hur mycket bör läraren använda sig av svenska i skolan? Kan det bli för mycket/för lite svenska?
8. Finns det tillfällen då lärarens användning av svenska kan förbättra din egen språkinlärning? Om inga, gå vidare till fråga 9. Om några, a) Kan du ge några exempel?
9. Finns det tillfällen då lärarens användning av svenska kan förbättra arbetsmiljön i klassrummet? Om inga, avsluta intervjun. Om några, a) Kan du ge några exempel?

10. Finns det något mer du vill tillägga?
Appendix 2: Information letter to the students

Information om undersökning angående gymnasieelevers attityder till lärarens användning av svenska inom engelskundervisningen

Hej!
Mitt namn är Pontus Pålsson. Jag är 25 år och läser just nu till ämneslärare i engelska vid Högskolan Dalarna (jag bor i XXX men studerar på distans).

Nu har det blivit dags för mig att skriva examensarbete i engelska. Syftet med studien i uppsatsen är att undersöka vilka attityder gymnasieelever har till lärares användning av svenska inom engelskundervisningen.


Undersökningen kommer att presenteras i form av en uppsats vid Högskolan Dalarna och när uppsatsen är klar kommer du att kunna läsa den. Självfallet är du helt anonym i undersökningen. Ditt rätta namn eller annan information som skulle kunna identifiera dig kommer inte att finnas med i uppsatsen.

Ytterligare upplysningar lämnas av nedanstående ansvariga.

XXX den 29 januari 2016

--------------------------------------------------
Pontus Pålsson                                                                  Katarina Lindahl (handledare)
h10ponpa@du.se                                                               kla@du.se
[contact information]                                                     023-778681
                                                                                   Höskolan Dalarna
                                                                                   Höskolegatan 2
                                                                                   791 88 Falun

Jag godkänner härmed att delta i ovanstående undersökning.

-----------------------------------------------

Underskrift

Namnfördligandep

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27
Hej!

Mitt namn är Pontus Pålsson. Jag är 25 år och läser just nu till ämneslärare i engelska vid Högskolan Dalarna (jag bor i XXX men studerar på distans).

Nu har det blivit dags för mig att skriva examensarbete i engelska. Syftet med studien i uppsatsen är att undersöka vilka attityder gymnasieelever har till lärarens användning av svenska inom engelskundervisningen.

Din son/dotter tillfrågas att vara med i denna undersökning. Med anledning av att hon/han är elev i gymnasiet och just nu läser en kurs i engelska skulle jag vilja intervjuar honom/henne och höra hans/hennes tankar kring lärarens användning av svenska inom engelskundervisningen. Intervjun är beräknad att ta max fyrtio minuter, och kommer att äga rum någon gång under vecka 5 eller 6 vid en tid som passar honom/henne bra. För att på bästa sätt kunna utvärdera vad som har sagt kommer jag att spela in intervjun. Elevens deltagande i undersökningen är helt frivilligt. Han/hon kan när som helst avbryta sitt deltagande utan närmare motivering.

Undersöknin kommer att presenteras i form av en uppsats vid Högskolan Dalarna och när uppsatsen är klar kommer hon/han och du att kunna läsa den. Självfallet är din son/dotter helt anonym i undersökningen. Hans/hennes riktiga namn samt annan information som skulle kunna identifiera honom/henne kommer inte att finnas med i uppsatsen.

Med anledning av att din son/dotter ännu inte har fyllt 18 år behöver jag din (målsmans) underskrift nedan som ett godkännande på att du låter honom/henne delta i denna undersökning.

Ytterligare upplysningar lämnas av nedanstående ansvariga.

XXX den 29 januari 2016

Pontus Pålsson
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791 88 Falun

Jag godkänner härmed att min son/dotter får delta i ovanstående undersökning.

Underskrift

Namnförtydligande