Teachers' perspectives on translanguaging in EFL classrooms:

Discourses around its use in Swedish upper secondary schools

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Abstract

This research focuses on teachers' perceptions of the term translanguaging in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Swedish upper secondary schools. In Sweden, EFL classrooms are characterized by multilingual environments with a diverse set of learners with different backgrounds. This diversity forces teachers to continuously adjust their teaching approaches based on their judgment of what will benefit students' proficiency levels. This study aims to explore how English teachers perceive the concept of translanguaging, how they apply it, and how they argue in favor of or against it in EFL classrooms. The data are conducted through teacher interviews with four different teachers at a single Swedish upper secondary school. The insights gained from the interviews are analyzed and compared with previous research in the field of language education. The study aims to enhance our understanding of teachers' perceptions and practices of the term translanguaging in the EFL classroom, with a specific focus on teachers' perspectives. The presented results indicate that teachers perceive the term translanguaging to be a vague concept, resulting in a vague implementation in the classroom and a preference for primarily adopting an English-only approach. The study also revealed that teachers found the Swedish syllabus unclear regarding the concept of translanguaging. Additionally, the study uncovered that the diverse ways in which teachers use their linguistic resources in the classroom are connected to the fact that the Swedish syllabus does not specify to what extent Swedish should be used in the EFL classroom. Finally, the study revealed that teachers mainly employed spontaneous translanguaging in their classrooms when considered necessary.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Given the diverse range of learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, teachers must consistently make conscious pedagogical decisions that they consider most beneficial for students' English language acquisition. A possible approach is to encourage students to use their full linguistic repertoire to gain knowledge in the target language. This pedagogical concept is known as translanguaging and describes in which ways multilingual individuals use their full linguistic repertoire to communicate and make meaning in the classrooms (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017). In recent times, translanguaging has gained popularity, with numerous studies conducted in the field of language education. Researchers such as García and Wei (2018) argue that the pedagogical concept of translanguaging has proven to be beneficial for multilingual students' language acquisition and goes beyond the idea of strict language separation. However, it is important to remember that it should not be seen as a substitute for English; instead it should be used as a tool for language learning (Garcia, 2009).

Based on the syllabus for Swedish upper secondary school, teaching in the subject of English should aim to help students develop their ability to use different techniques for effective communication and problem-solving when language proficiency is inadequate. Teaching should also aim to provide students with the chance to develop all-round communicative skills. Additionally, teaching in the subject of English should give students the opportunity to develop plurilingualism where students' proficiencies in different languages interact and support each other (Skolverket, 2021). While the current syllabus does not explicitly mention translanguaging in EFL classrooms, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) has highlighted the importance of translanguaging in EFL classrooms to help facilitate students' learning outcome (Skolverket, 2022). Incorporating translanguaging in the classroom can be done with different resources, such as multilingual materials or different language apps. This helps students to use their proficiencies in different languages as a tool to develop their understanding and production of the target language. Using translanguaging in the classroom is also beneficial for other reasons such as making students feel more confident and comfortable to engage in classroom discussions (García & Wei, 2018).

While multilingualism is recognized to enhance linguistic awareness, recent research suggests that learners' may not fully optimize it, and that education is crucial in this content (Fuster, 2022). Fuster (2022) describes how the concept of translanguaging is understood as rather unclear, as different researchers have developed different models and given the concept various meanings. Consequently, the Swedish syllabus may be perceived as inadequately adapted to today's society, potentially hindering teachers from helping students achieve the full benefits of their whole linguistic repertoire. Since there is ambiguity in the concept of translanguaging, it becomes accurate to investigate how teachers perceive the concept of translanguaging. Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze teachers' perspectives on translanguaging in EFL classrooms in Swedish upper secondary schools. Additionally, it aims to explore the reported use of it, and the reasons behind teachers' choices. To achieve this, interviews with English teachers are conducted, which will be examined and discussed within this study.

1.1. Research questions

The research situated in EFL classrooms in Swedish upper secondary schools aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of translanguaging?
2. In what ways do English language teachers report to use translanguaging in the classrooms?
3. How do teachers argue in favor of or against using translanguaging in the classrooms?

2. Theoretical background

The following section begins with a definition of the concept of translanguaging, followed by an exploration of its usage in the classroom based on previous research on the topic and the 2022 Swedish syllabus documents. The importance of the key terms, s*pontaneous translanguaging and pedagogical translanguaging,* will be explained in the context of translanguaging in EFL classrooms. Additionally, it is important to consider the policy documents that generally frame the way English is approached in school contexts. Since these documents have been recently updated, it is crucial to examine what the recent documents state in connection to translanguaging. For the purpose of this thesis, the Swedish syllabus will be included in the background section and later be part of the analysis as well.

2.1. The concept of translanguaging

Translanguaging is a term that can refer to various aspects of multilingualism and has gained attention in the last few years. The term reflects the shift from monolingual ideologies to multilingual ideologies in the study of multilingual education. This shift in multilingual education is characterized by the increased diversity of the population (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Fuster (2022) discusses different meanings of the term translanguaging and emphasizes that the meaning of translanguaging can be perceived as somewhat vague, due to it being extended in different directions (Fuster, 2022). If teachers recognize the benefits of harnessing students' linguistic repertoires for learning, this could lead to a deeper cognitive level, ultimately improving language development in academic contexts (García & Wei, 2018).

Cen Williams (1994) first introduced this concept, primarily to describe a pedagogical approach that involves incorporating two languages within a single lesson. Williams's research suggests that if input (reading or listening) is in one language while output (speaking or writing) occurs in another language, this will serve as an effective teaching strategy to achieve language proficiency (Baker, 2006). The pedagogical approach differs from traditional bilingual education, which often segregate languages within the classroom. In contrast, translanguaging encourages the use of multiple languages in the classroom to facilitate communication and language learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

Cenoz and Gorter (2014) advocate for pedagogical translanguaging, aligning with Williams´ (1994) work. This aspect of the term translanguaging is based on the concept of multilingual education, which involves using different languages in the classroom to promote multilingualism (Cenoz & Gorter, 2014). In contrast, García and Wei (2018) advocate for a spontaneous translanguaging approach in education which supports the use of cross-linguistic practices where students can utilize their full linguistic repertoire for both language and content acquisition (Fang et al, 2022). This aspect of translanguaging primarily focuses on the analysis of existing bilingual

practices, rather than teaching strategies, which are more associated with Williams' work (Garcia, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, the concept of translanguaging can refer to different aspects of the term translanguaging. Fuster (2022) explains that spontaneous translanguaging only involves informal communicative practices that cannot be easily applied by teachers as an approach in the classroom, while pedagogical translanguaging is based on the concept of multilingual education (Fuster, 2022). Additionally, pedagogical translanguaging is different from spontaneous translanguaging because it is pre-planned for teaching languages or content. Spontaneous translanguaging can however be used pedagogically to develop students' awareness about the way languages are used in natural communication (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020).

2.2. Translanguaging in EFL classrooms

Translanguaging has been applied in educational settings for a long time to facilitate learning. According to Garcia (2009), linguistic flexibility emerges when students understand both the language and the content in the classroom, allowing them to use languages in a flexible manner to enhance their understanding. Regardless of the planning by teachers on how and when the students should use which language, multilingual students often challenge or adapt the language norms in the classroom as they expand their linguistic knowledge (Garcia, 2009). Garcia (2009) also mentions that EFL education should create space for both languages to be used when needed. The use of translanguaging in education is highly notable since it questions the typical norms for language use in the classroom. These language norms change over time and may vary depending on the educational level, schools, or geographical region (García, 2009).

In the realm of language education, the concept of "repertoire" has gained attention, which not only refers to the target language but also to the entirety of the learner's linguistic knowledge. It is important to point out that Garcia employs the term "linguistic repertoire" to extend beyond the concept of language. Her perspective suggests that individuals do not speak multiple languages, instead they draw from one single linguistic repertoire. Cenoz and Gorter prefer the term "language repertoire" which refers to a group of different language systems (as cited in Fuster, 2022). When acquiring a new language, multilingual speakers tend to naturally draw connections between their prior linguistic knowledge and the new language. Allowing multilingual speakers to use their entire linguistic repertoire within the classroom will make them more effective learners and users of the target language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). However, the monolingual focus in the target language can prevent students from using their prior linguistic resources in many cases. Cenoz and Gorter (2020) mention that multilingual speakers have a rich repertoire, as they can compare elements of their different languages and use their resources in a cross-linguistic manner. This observation corresponds with Cummins´ (2017) exploration of cross-linguistic manner, where students actively focus on identifying similarities and differences between the languages used in the classroom. The syllabus for upper secondary schools mentions that teaching should aim to provide students with the chance to develop all-round communicative skills (Skolverket, 2021). In order to do so, Siegel (2022) emphasizes that teachers should provide students with scaffolding, which can come in the form of providing models of language use, using students' full linguistic repertoire and providing students with tasks to set them for future academic narratives (Siegel, 2022).

2.3. Translanguaging in the Swedish Curriculum

Hult's (2017) examination of the previous 2011 syllabus for Swedish upper secondary school reveals a noteworthy contradiction. The 2011 syllabus advocates for English instructions to be additive and foster plurilingualism with the support of different language interactions, while emphasizing that teaching English should be conducted in exclusively English (Hult, 2017). However, the current syllabus does not explicitly address the concept of translanguaging in EFL classrooms either, even though The Swedish National Agency for Education has emphasized the significance of utilizing translanguaging in EFL classrooms to enhance students' learning outcomes (Skolverket, 2021). This may lead to confusion about how and to what extent translanguaging should be used in the classroom. It is crucial to remember that translanguaging should not be considered a replacement for English instructions or a justification for students not acquiring English proficiency; instead, it should serve as a complement in English education, striking a balance to provide students with the opportunity to improve their English proficiency (Garcia, 2009).

While the Swedish curriculum should function as a guiding framework for teachers, various factors influence its implementation in the classroom. Ennis (1990) analyzes the diverse perspectives of John Goodlad et al. (1979) curriculum implementation and its complexity and subjectivity. Goodlad's (1979) curriculum perspective includes different domains that shape its use in the classroom. These domains involve official documents developed and approved by the government, teacher's interpretation, which vary depending on their values and beliefs and the implementation of the curriculum in the classroom (Ennis, 1990). The curriculum is not just a strictly followed document, instead, it allows teachers to interpret it differently and therefore, teachers' interpretations influence how they implement it in the classroom (Ennis,1990). In addition, the findings of Yuvayapan (2019), indicate that various factors shape teachers' attitudes towards translanguaging approaches in the classroom. The findings also indicated that translanguaging can be seen as either an obstacle or a benefit, influencing whether teachers implement the approach in their classrooms or not. These attitudes are shaped by factors such as teachers' previous experience, education, and background. Yuvayapan (2019), therefore suggest that in order to help students learn a second language, educational institutions need to encourage a positive attitude on the concept of translanguaging (Yuvayapan, 2019).

3. Method

This study employs a qualitative research approach, primarily using reflexive thematic analysis as the key method with interviews as the primary data collection method. The choice of using reflexive thematic analysis in this exploratory study is based on its capacity to uncover meaning-based patterns and themes within the qualitative data. Furthermore, it prompts the researcher to recognize and address potential biases. The choice of using interviews as the method for data collection provide insight into teachers' different experiences and reasons for making certain language choices in EFL classrooms. In the sections that follow, we will delve deeper into the methodology.

3.1. Participants and teacher interviews

In this study, interviews were conducted with four different teachers working in the same school in Stockholm, Sweden. In order to gain clarity and an understanding of their teaching philosophies and experiences, interviews took place on two separate occasions with all the participants. Upon

transcribing the first interviews, additional questions arose and were brought up in a second interview in order to gain clarity. The intentional decision of having all four participants from the same school was driven by the desire to ensure a communality in the type of students they encounter. Among the four, three teach English 5 and 6, while the fourth focuses on English 7, providing this study with a mix of perspectives across different English proficiency levels. The gender distribution comprises three females and one male, with ages ranging from 29 to 57, which also provides the study with diverse viewpoints. General information about the participants age, educational background, years of experience as English teachers (in Sweden or elsewhere), L1 and additional languages spoken is presented in Table 1 below. The variation of the participants' background gives the reader a broader understanding regarding the application of translanguaging in EFL classrooms. To ensure confidentiality, all participants have been anonymized with pseudonyms and the names provided in Table 1 do not represent their actual identities.

Table 1

Participants' background information

Participants	Age	Educational background	Teaching experience	L1	Additional languages
Teacher 1 "Adam"	57	Teacher in upper secondary school, English and History	26 years	English	Swedish Spanish
Teacher 2 "Maria"	55	Teacher in upper secondary school, English and Swedish	18 years	English and Swedish	French
Teacher 3 "Saga"	29	Teacher in upper secondary school, English and Swedish	5 years	Swedish	English German
Teacher 4 "Dana"	34	Teacher in upper secondary school, English and Swedish as a second language	6 years	Swedish and Persian	English Spanish

To successfully collect a diverse range of data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with pre-set questions in open-ended format. This method was chosen for its flexibility, allowing the participants to express their perspectives, while striking a balance between consistency of data collection and exploration of unexpected insights. The open-ended format also encourages participants to elaborate on their responses. For the first interview, a questionnaire with an open-ended format was used. This questionnaire was specifically created for conducting a qualitative analysis of teachers' perspectives on translanguaging and its use in EFL classrooms. The questionnaire is structured into three different sections, covering background information, teaching experiences, and the reported use of translanguaging in the classroom (Appendix C).

3.2. Reflexive thematic analysis

The dataset is analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. The results of the analysis are presented as themes that are conceptualized as meaning-based patterns identified in the qualitative interviews. Additionally, this method encourages the researcher to acknowledge and address

potential biases. In this paper, teacher interviews were recorded and then transcribed which is a "key phase" of data analysis within qualitative methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The most common form of transcription is "verbatim", which treats the data holistically. Verbatim transcription includes verbal and nonverbal utterances, which also includes partial words, stutters and laughter (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Reflexive thematic analysis, like any research method, also has its disadvantages. When exercising this approach, it is important to consider potential subjectivity. Reflexive thematic analysis can be highly subjective since it relies on the interpretation and judgment of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to remember that the analysis remains grounded in relevant theoretical and methodological principles. Since this study primarily involves qualitative data and involves people's experiences, reflexive thematic analysis is the preferred method for this exploratory study.

3.2.1. The six-phase analytical process

Braun and Clarke (2019) have proposed a six-phase process to help researchers identify and address crucial aspects of a reflexive thematic analysis. It is important for the researcher to remember that the analysis is not a linear process. Instead, it requires the researcher to move back and forth through the six-phases to gain different interpretations of the data. Therefore, it is essential to view the six-phase process as a set of guidelines, rather than rules (Braun and Clarke, 2019). In this study the six-phase process presented below was followed. However, while presented sequentially, navigation occurs back and forth between these phases.

In phase one, the 'familiarization' phase, it is crucial to read, re-read and transcribe the entire dataset. To develop a deep familiarity with the data and to identify relevant information related to the research questions, each interview recording was listened to before transcribing it. During the transcription, breaks, pauses, longer pauses and tones were captured. The transcription conventions used in this study is based on "tools for analyzing talk" by MacWhinney, B. (2023) (Appendix D). In phase two, codes serve as the fundamental building blocks which later contribute to the formation of themes. In this study, coding was conducted using the function ´comments´ in Google Drive. This gives the transcription a structure and is an example of how to minimize the risk for double-codes in data. When phase three begins, the coded data undergoes analysis to explore how different codes may be combined based on shared meanings, forming themes. It is crucial to emphasize that themes do not reside in the data waiting to be discovered. Instead, the researcher must construct the relationship among multiple codes and examine how this relationship informs a given theme. The theme "Translanguaging as difficult to apply in the classroom" clearly emerged among others. However, when analyzing the coded data, a concurrent narrative emerged and was constructed as a separate theme "English-only approaches in the classroom". In phase four, the researcher needs to review the potential themes in relation to the entire dataset. It is usual to find that certain themes may not effectively serve well as meaningful interpretations of the data or fail to provide information that addresses the research questions. In accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2012) framework of essential questions for theme review, I, as the researcher, employed these questions to ensure the coherence of the emerging themes. These questions were also employed to ensure that the themes are assessed as to how well they offered the most appropriate interpretation of the data concerning the research questions.

Braun and Clarke (2012, p. 65) framework of essential questions:
- Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?
- If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research question)?

- What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include and exclude)?
- Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme thin or thick)?
- Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?

During phase five, the researcher is tasked with delivering a comprehensive analysis of the thematic framework. At this point, the names of the themes did undergo a final revision, looking within the collected data for a short extract that could be used when naming the themes. This is a way to enhance the clarity and relevance by incorporating an extract to highlight its key aspects. The 'final' phase, producing the report, would occur at the end of the analysis. An important task at this point would be to determine the order in which themes are presented. In this study, the theme "Translanguaging as a complicated term" was reported first, as this theme provided a gradual entry point into the wider analysis for the reader. The logical sequence led to the report of "Translanguaging as difficult to apply in the classroom" next. This theme introduced how teachers' perception of translanguaging influences its application in the classroom. The teachers indeed had some difficulties of applying translanguaging in the classroom, which led to the emerging theme reported next, which is "Translanguaging used spontaneously in specific circumstances". Finally, the vague use of translanguaging led to the last theme "English-only approaches in the classroom", which is teachers' replacement for a translanguaging approach in the classroom.

3.2.2. Reflexivity and Positionality

In line with Braun and Clarke's (2019) reflexive thematic analysis, it is crucial to address the researcher's influence in shaping the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasize that reflexivity involves recognizing how the researcher's background and biases can impact the analysis of the data. In my role as the researcher, my educational and personal background may have influenced the interpretation and selection of the themes. Growing up in Sweden with Swedish as my second language, there were numerous challenges in the school environment that led me to explore language use in the classroom. Teacher education provided insight into how language use can be beneficial for second language students through the concept of translanguaging, a strategy that I believe would have supported my own learning in the classroom. Through experiences as a language learner, the motivation to improve the second language education for other students motivates this research. By explicitly acknowledging these aspects, I aim to enhance the validity of the analysis, while also drawing on previous research to bridge the gap between the explicit content from the interviews and subjective interpretations.

3.3. Ethical considerations

When conducting research that includes human participants contributing to the collected data, it is important to address ethical considerations. A consent form was provided to protect the interests of the researcher and the participants, in order to meet the GDPR requirements while avoiding any unclarity (Appendix B). The participants firstly received an information letter through email, that provided information about the study and a question to participate in the interviews (Appendix A). On the day of the first interview, the participants reviewed and signed a consent form, which explicitly outlines what the study is about, the extent of involvement in the study and the intended use of the collected data. The information letter and consent form explicitly state that participation is voluntary, allowing the participants to retreat at any given moment. Additionally, the information letter and consent form highlight the anonymity of participants, achieved by excluding the names of both the teachers and the school. As mentioned earlier, the teachers have

been anonymized with pseudonyms, referring to the teachers as Adam, Dana, Saga and Maria, which is not the actual names of the teachers. Similarly, the school has been anonymized with a pseudonym, referred to as Runna School, which is not the actual name of the school either. This measure has been taken to avoid completely dehumanizing them. The use of pseudonyms for both teachers and the school was explicitly stated in both the information letter and the consent form. Additionally, it was mentioned that the interviews would be recorded in audio format.

4. Results

This section reports on four main themes concerning teachers' professional beliefs regarding translanguaging, both as a concept and its application in the classroom. The collected data from the interviews is analyzed in accordance with the six-phase process outlined in the methodology section. In the transcribed data, transcription conventions were used to convey the interaction dynamics (Appendix D). The main themes that could be generated from the interviews are described more specifically in the sections below.

The following sections report on the four main themes that were generated from the analyzed data:
- Translanguaging as a complicated term.
- Translanguaging as difficult to apply in the classroom.
- Translanguaging used spontaneously in specific circumstances.
- English-only approaches in the classroom.

4.1. Translanguaging as a complicated term.

Although the participants held diverse beliefs about the term translanguaging, most of them found translanguaging to be a vague concept. In Extract 1, Maria expresses a concern about potentially misapplying translanguaging in the classroom due to its complex nature:

> 1) I mean &-um (.) I would say that translanguaging is a complicated term. It's not just about using Swedish in the classroom. You need to find a balance (..) So when do you use it (..) in the wrong way? (Maria)

Some teachers also reported that encouraging students to use translanguaging as a tool could lead to an overuse of Swedish in the classroom. This was explained in the following terms by Saga:

> 2) Translanguaging is using more than just English to help students gain knowledge. But (..) it's not as easy as it sounds because (..) I mean &-um, okay, so my experience is that Δ if you let students use Swedish once, they would overuse it Δ. (Saga)

Adam also highlights the complexity of the term translanguaging, noting that teachers lack the necessary education to incorporate translanguaging into the classroom. Therefore, Adam suggests that translanguaging strategies may not be effectively integrated as we can see in the following Extract:

3) When you say translanguaging you mean using Swedish in the classroom? I mean (..) it's such a vague concept and I'm not !really! sure if it was covered during my university studies. Personally, Δ I'd rather stay away from that Δ. (Adam)

It is evident that the majority of the teachers perceive translanguaging to be a complex term. Some teachers also point out that translanguaging involves more than just bringing different languages into the classroom. However, the vague description in the syllabus makes it challenging to know that it goes beyond incorporating different languages as Dana expresses in Extract 4:

4) Well &-um (.) when you say translanguaging, the first thing that comes to mind is incorporating different languages into the classroom but (..) &-you_know, it's also about building relationships, which of course is mentioned in the syllabus, but not !explicitly! in terms of using translanguaging for that purpose. It's like, &-yeah, you could build relationships through translanguaging, but I always have a question of whether teachers know this or not, &-you_know. (Dana)

In summary, teachers perceive translanguaging to be a challenging concept. Concerns about potential misapplication, the overuse of it and the lack of knowledge among teachers show the difficulties in understanding the concept. Dana's insight on using it for building relations adds an important aspect. However, the main issue is perceived to be the unclear guidance in the syllabus, again, leaving teachers unsure about the concept.

4.2. Translanguaging as difficult to apply in the classroom.

Given that the majority of the participants found translanguaging to be a difficult concept, implementing it into their classroom teaching was reported to be an even greater challenge. For example, Adam suggested that translanguaging could result in students using their resources in a cross-linguistic manner, potentially impacting the target language negatively. In Extract 5, he illustrates this concern with an example of differences in article usage between Swedish and English, which led Adam to express a concern about incorporating translanguaging into the classroom:

5) One thing that worries me is when languages affect each other negatively. For example, a challenge for my students is the use of !definite! and !indefinite! articles. &-you_know (..) "He is student" instead of "he is !a! student". Δ &-yeah_yeah &-you_know Δ. (Adam)

The reasons behind teachers' reported hesitancy to use translanguaging stem from a desire to avoid an approach they feel they don't fully understand. For instance, Saga expressed a sense of uncertainty about teachers' knowledge of translanguaging based on the vague guideline from the syllabus:

6) Honestly, I'd say that one challenge is figuring out how to effectively use translanguaging in the classroom. The ∇ guidance ∇ (..) in the syllabus is so unclear. I think that causes confusion for many teachers and serves as a reason for them to avoid using it in the classroom, Δ &-if_you_know_what_i_mean Δ. (Saga)

Not only do the teachers voice concerns about incorporating translanguaging in the classroom, but they also express concerns regarding their lack of knowledge and its potential impact on students as seen in Extract 7:

> 7) I'd say that the most challenging thing with applied translanguaging would be (..) the risk of teaching students !incorrectly!. If I'm uncertain about how to use a specific teaching method, I'm not comfortable teaching it !at all!, since I could convey something inaccurate to the students, really. (Dana)

As seen in the above Extracts, teachers also find the concept of translanguaging to be complex to apply. Concerns about how languages might affect each other negatively, confusion on how to effectively apply it due to unclear syllabus guidance and the fear of teaching students incorrectly highlights an overall need for clearer instructions and support for teachers to apply the concept more effectively.

4.3. Translanguaging used spontaneously in specific circumstances.

Since the majority of teachers perceive translanguaging as challenging to apply, it is evident that most teachers did not report using pedagogical translanguaging in the classroom as Saga expresses in Extract 8:

> 8) Normally, I prefer my class to speak English (.) of course. Sometimes students may insert a Swedish word into a sentence. But overall (..) Δ it's mostly in English really Δ. (Saga)

Even when some teachers discussed their use of translanguaging in the classroom, the approach reported is spontaneous translanguaging, using it if necessary, within a specific context. We see this expressed in Extract 9 and Extract 10 with opinions from Adam and Dana respectively:

> 9) I mean (..) I think (.) I am kind of limited there. I like to keep it one hundred percent English until there is a difficult concept or a student has difficulty with the English. !Then!, I am okay to bring in Swedish in order to find different ways to express one self. (Adam)

> 10) I usually do my tasks in English **(..)** but I let my students (.) &-um, use google translate if necessary. (Dana)

In Extract 11, Maria also elaborated the reasons behind using spontaneous translanguaging in the classroom, providing support for her approach based on the syllabus:

> 11) We need to stick to the !syllabus! to get everyone on board. So, we really need to speak primarily English during the lessons (..) If a student doesn't understand a specific word, I don't mind translating it in !that! context, Δ but not otherwise Δ. (Maria)

Given the perceived difficulty in using pedagogical translanguaging, most teachers reported sticking to English-only in the classroom. However, when employing translanguaging, they report using spontaneous translanguaging in specific situations, for challenging concepts or allowing students to use Google Translate.

4.4. English-only approaches in the classroom.

Given that the majority of the participants found the concept of translanguaging to be challenging, the teachers reported that they prefer not to apply translanguaging in the classroom. This results in primarily using English-only approaches to avoid the use of translanguaging as expressed in Extract 12 and Extract 13 with opinions from Maria and Dana:

> 12) I prefer to mainly use the target language (..) I think it is !crucial! to speak and hear it as much as possible when learning a foreign language. (Maria)

> 13) I believe that the EFL classroom should be kind of (..) &-um (.) like a portrayal of an English speaking country. It should prepare the students for the real world and I see myself !and! ∆ other teachers as role models of course ∆. (Dana)

Not only do the interviewed teachers indicate a preference for using an English-only approach in their teaching methods, but they also report actively encourage learners to use English in the classroom. This encouragement is often conveyed through reminders such as "repeat that in English please" or "Don't speak Swedish". The following explanations were provided for adopting these practices in Extract 14 and Extract 15 from Adam and Dana:

> 14) When I notice that students speak Swedish, I encourage them to speak English. And (..) when they ask questions in Swedish I usually ask them to repeat it in English. I think this is important for students to get &-um (.) comfortable with speaking English. (Adam)

> 15) A lot of students tend to be good at listening or writing (.) but when they start to speak they get uncomfortable. So (..) &-um (.) that's why it's !really! important to encourage them to speak English. (Dana)

Not only do the teachers report to encourage students to speak English, but they also report to make conscious decisions on how to encourage English usage in the classroom, considering the students' proficiency level and their receptiveness depending on the specific day. We see this expressed in Extract 16 and Extract 17 with opinions from Adam and Saga:

> 16) Sometimes &-um (.) I discuss different !strategies! with the learners when it fits into our lesson for that day or week. If it is the right time, we discuss strategies on how to paraphrase questions in English if they are unsure of how to do it. (Adam)

> 17) Normally, I use English-only in the classroom, but depending on the group I have (..) sometimes I just (.) just switch to Swedish. (Saga)

Most teachers reported to use English-only approaches due to challenges with the concept of translanguaging. They also encourage English usage among the students, arguing for its effectiveness to enhance students' proficiency levels.

5. Discussion

The aim of this research is to explore teachers' perceptions of translanguaging, their reported use of it, and how they argue in favor of or against its implementation in EFL classrooms in Swedish

upper secondary schools. Interviews were conducted to identify and analyze themes while considering the researchers´ interpretations and reflections throughout the process. In this section, the research questions are discussed more explicitly in the light of the presented results and previous research presented in the background section. Furthermore, limitations and implications are provided, offering insight and recommendations for further teaching and learning practices.

The questions behind this study were:
1. What are teachers' perceptions of translanguaging?
2. In what ways do English language teachers report to use translanguaging in the classrooms
3. How do teachers argue in favor of or against using translanguaging in the classrooms?

Based on the results presented above, we can say in connection to research question number one, it is evident that the majority of teachers perceive translanguaging as a complicated or vague concept, which can be linked to the results presented in the study by Fuster (2022), stating that different researchers have given the concept various meanings. Some teachers also express a concern that if students are allowed to use Swedish once, they might excessively overuse it. This corresponds with Garcia's (2009) observation that multilingual students often challenge the language norms in the classroom. It also corresponds with the criticism raised by Cenoz and Gorter (2017). If teachers allow students to use spontaneous translanguaging freely, the majority language would be used more extensively than the target language in the classroom. Some teachers also highlight that while translanguaging could potentially enhance relationships in the classroom, they feel a lack of full support from the syllabus to implement it effectively. This perspective could be explained by the understanding that allowing multilingual speakers to utilize their entire linguistic repertoire will make them more effective learners of the target language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). It can also be explained by the understanding that translanguaging can create a more inclusive learning environment, leading to increased academic success (Sahlström, 2021). However, the concern regarding how to use it, the fear of misusing it, or the risk of overusing it can be explained by the fact that neither the 2011 syllabus nor the current syllabus explicitly address the concept of translanguaging in EFL classrooms. Despite the Swedish National Agency for Education acknowledging the use of translanguaging in EFL classrooms, specific guidelines on its implementation or extent are not explicitly mentioned. For example, it is mentioned that translanguaging should not serve as a replacement for English instructions; instead, it should be used with balance to improve English proficiency (Garcia, 2009). Therefore, it is up to the teachers' judgment to decides to which degree it should be used in the classroom (Källkvist et al, 2017). This raises questions for the teachers trying to follow the syllabus, such as what quantity qualifies as a replacement and what degree constitutes a balanced use? Which leads us back to the understanding of translanguaging being perceived as a vague concept.

In relation to research question number two, teachers expressed a concern with implementing translanguaging in the classroom, whether due to cross-linguistic issues, uncertainties about how to effectively use translanguaging, or concerns regarding the risk of teaching students incorrectly. For example, students struggling with using definite and indefinite articles can be explained as multilingual students drawing from their linguistic repertoire in one language and transferring it to the target language. This observation aligns with the findings of Cenoz and Gorter (2020) and Cummins (2017), who explored cross-linguistic influences, suggesting that multilingual speakers tend to compare elements between the languages used in the classroom. The concern regarding how to effectively use translanguaging can be connected to the syllabus for Swedish upper secondary schools (Skolverket, 2022). The syllabus mention that English teaching should

give students the chance to develop correctness in their language usage. In contrast, it should also give students the opportunity to develop different strategies for effective communication and problem-solving when language proficiencies are inadequate. From the syllabus guidelines presented above, it becomes apparent that teachers might struggle with potential confusion, prompting questions such as: if the goal is to develop correctness in English usage, does this imply that translanguaging should be regarded as incorrect? In contrast, if students are encouraged to use different strategies to solve problems, could translanguaging be considered a practical strategy, even if it can be viewed upon as incorrect? Even though teachers reported challenges with implementing translanguaging in the classroom, they also reported that it could occur if students expressed a need for it. For example, if a difficult concept emerged, if a specific word is misunderstood or that students use Google Translate if necessary. In the examples provided, it is evident that the teachers use spontaneous translanguaging in the classroom, utilizing it only if needed in a spontaneous manner. The reported use of Swedish if needed and its use depending on the group, students' proficiency level and students' receptiveness during the specific day, reinforce the findings of the study by Källkvist et al. (2022). The findings demonstrate a pattern of conscious reasons behind translanguaging in the classroom as well as the findings that Swedish serves as a tool for capturing students' attention.

In connection to research question number three, all teachers emphasize a preference for English-only in the classroom. However, the results indicate that teachers avoid using translanguaging since they lack knowledge about the concept, resulting in a preference for an English-only approach. It is important to consider that teachers lack of knowledge regarding the term translanguaging could be an effect of the translanguaging concept being extended in different directions resulting in a vague guideline in the syllabus (Fuster, 2022). Encouraging students to use English-only through reminders such as "repeat it in English" was mentioned. This aligns with the findings of Källkvist et al. (2022) who uncovered that such practices are common among teachers in the classroom, even though this approach may prevent students from using their whole linguistic resources to gain knowledge (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). As mentioned earlier, multilingual students often challenge language norms, which makes it natural for teachers to utter these reminders. In 2011, the Swedish School Inspector investigated language use in English classrooms for grades 7-9. The findings indicated that fifty percent of the investigated classrooms exclusively used English, while fifty percent of the students in those classrooms reported that their classmates did not consistently use English-only approaches (Skolinspektionen, 2011). As mentioned earlier, there could be a correlation between multilingual students challenging language norms and English teachers' reminders to use the target language in the classroom. However, some teachers use Swedish when necessary. It appears that teachers' own use of Swedish in their practices might also be the reason to why they frequently need to utter these reminders, which does not align with their beliefs in maintaining an English-only environment.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the limited scope of this study, which involves a restricted number of participants within a single school in Sweden, may impact the findings. Additionally, this study did not explore how teachers' L1 could impact the use of translanguaging in the classroom. However, the identified gap in teachers' knowledge about the concept of translanguaging and its application in the classroom highlights a crucial area for professional development. Therefore, pedagogical implications are discussed for the purpose of future research. For example, it is essential for teachers to make conscious decisions regarding the concept of translanguaging in their teaching practices, considering students learning outcomes and the potential impact their choices could have on them. While teachers demonstrate the

possibility for an English-only approach to develop learners' language proficiency, learners with low proficiency levels could feel excluded to actively engage in the classroom and face challenges due to language barriers. According to the syllabus (Skolverket, 2022), learners should be able to adjust their English in situations where these types of language barriers emerge. In order to help teacher make conscious decisions, teacher education should make teachers feel confident and capable using translanguaging practices. In order to make this possible, another potential aim for future research could be to make the syllabus more explicit regarding the concept of translanguaging to ensure future teachers understanding of the concept. Striking a balance is crucial in this context. The more narrowly defined something is, the harder it becomes to include situations that slightly deviate from it. In contrast, if it is too broadly defined, it can be applied to a wide range of situations, resulting in vagueness. This is a potential implication for practical applications of translanguaging concept in the classroom and future research could explore this aspect further, building on the findings in this thesis.

6. Conclusion

This study has explored and analyzed English teachers' beliefs and practices involving translanguaging. The study aimed to enhance our understanding of the beliefs and language choices made by teachers in EFL classrooms in Swedish upper secondary schools. Through Reflexive thematic analysis and teacher interviews, it has been highlighted that teachers find translanguaging to be a challenging concept to comprehend, and therefore, challenging to apply in the classroom. This difficulty leads to a vague use of spontaneous translanguaging and a preferred English-only approach in Swedish EFL classrooms. The teachers explained that their reasons behind spontaneous translanguaging were primarily used if needed, to clarify and ensure understanding. They also expressed awareness of the impact their language choices could have on the students' learning outcomes. Overall, the study discovered that the interviewed teachers mostly used an English-only approach. All teachers shared a common belief in students right to understand, aligning with the syllabus (Skolverket, 2022). However, individual teacher' practices varied based on their professional judgement and understanding of the syllabus. The teachers also highlighted that the syllabus is somewhat unclear in connection to the term translanguaging, leading to a predominant English-only approach. Additionally, differences emerged between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practices. A challenge with implementing translanguaging in the classroom is the lack of knowledge about the concept among teachers, leading to a lack of confidence in the classroom.

This study adds information to how EFL teachers perceive translanguaging and its implementation in the classroom. The research uncovered more interesting information than anticipated, opening up different opportunities for future research. As mentioned earlier, the limitations of this study are based on the limited number of participants from the same school, making it difficult to generalize the findings to teachers on a broader level. However, studies by Källkvist et al. (2017) and data from the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2011) validate the results of this study, suggesting that the tendency among teachers in the results is similar regardless of sample scope. Improvement of the study's method could include integrating observations to gather additional data to determine whether teachers practice what they advocate. Additionally, there are many other aspects related to English teacher practices and their language choices in Swedish EFL classrooms to further investigate, such as explicitly asking them questions about the syllabus and dig deeper into its impact in the EFL classroom. Looking ahead, teacher training

programs should focus on educating EFL teachers about translanguaging, bridging the gap between their beliefs and practices. Effort should also be made to focus on the syllabus, making it more explicit. In conclusion, this study pushes boundaries through its emphasis on a qualitative analysis of translanguaging in EFL classrooms, suggesting that the unclear guidelines in the Swedish syllabus contribute to a vague perception of translanguaging, resulting in a preference for English-only approaches among teachers in the classroom.

7. References

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8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix A

Information letter

Dear [Name],

I hope this message finds you well. My name is Bella Constantine, and I am currently pursuing my studies to become a subject teacher in upper secondary school, with a focus on Swedish as a second language and English. I am currently in the process of conducting research for my research project and have chosen to focus on the concept of "Translanguaging". In my research project, I aim to gain a deeper understanding of how this concept is perceived and applied in English classrooms by various teachers in upper secondary schools.

To achieve this, I am kindly requesting the opportunity to schedule two interviews with you. The first interview would take approximately 20-30 minutes of your time. Following this, we would schedule a second interview approximately 3-4 weeks later. The purpose of the second interview is to delve further into the topic and provide a clearer context for my project.

You do not need to prepare in advance and everything is completely anonymous where consent agreements required will be duly provided and respected. Instead of using the actual names of the teachers and the school in my thesis, I will use pseudonyms. To aid in my analysis of the collected data, I would appreciate your consent to record the interviews. This will ensure accurate analyzes while maintaining the anonymity of all participants.

I sincerely hope that you would be willing to participate in my research project. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,
Bella Constantine

8.2. Appendix B

Teacher consent form

Marina-Bel Constantine

Bella.constantine@hotmail.com/0736004161

_____

Teachers´ perspectives on translanguaging in English classrooms

Who I am

My name is Marina-Bel Constantine, and I am a student at Stockholm University, doing a research project.

What the project is about

This project is about teachers' perceptions on the concept of translanguaging, its application and teachers' beliefs regarding its implementation in EFL classrooms in Swedish upper secondary schools.

What participation involves

Participation is voluntary and includes two separate interviews conducted with a two to three-week interval between them. The interviews will take about 15-20 minutes each. With your consent, I will audio record and transcribe the interviews. In the unlikely event that sensitive issues should come up in the interview or for any other reason, you can ask to stop the recording. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from participating at any time.

What will happen to the data

The collected data will be used in this project, which constitutes my coursework. I will not mention any real names and instead use pseudonyms. Any data containing sensitive information or information that could reveal the identity of the participants will be removed.

The information you provide will be handled with care. The recordings will be kept in a safe space and will be deleted after the conclusion of the project in line with GDPR.

Contact details

For any further questions, please don't hesitate to email me at: Bella.constantine@hotmail.com

Supervisor: Josep Soler, Josep.soler@english.su.se

Marina-Bel Constantine
Bella.constantine@hotmail.com/0736004161

_____

Consent to participating in the research project
”Teachers´ perspectives on translanguaging in English classrooms”

I have read and understood the information about the study in the document **”Teachers' perspectives on translanguaging in English classrooms”**. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and I have had them answered. I may keep the written information.

☐ I consent to participating in the study described in the document **”Teachers' perspectives on translanguaging in English classrooms”**

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Place, Date: _____

8.3. Appendix C

Interview questionnaire:

Background and participants' own language biography:
- Can you please introduce yourself and provide some background information about your journey as an English language teacher in Sweden?
- What motivated you to become an English language teacher, and how long have you been teaching?
- When and how did you learn English?
- Which languages do you speak other than English and when and how did you learn them?

Teaching Experience:
- How would you describe your teaching philosophy and approach when it comes to teaching English as a second language in Sweden?
- What are some of the common challenges you've encountered while teaching English in Sweden, and how do you address them?
- Are there any specific teaching strategies that you find particularly effective in helping students achieve English language proficiency?

Translanguaging in the Classroom:
- Translanguaging has become an important concept in language education. How would you define translanguaging, and what role does it play in your English language classroom?
- Can you share some specific strategies or techniques you use to incorporate translanguaging into your teaching methods?
- Have you encountered any challenges when implementing translanguaging in the classroom, and how do you address them?
- What benefits have you observed from using translanguaging as a pedagogical tool in English language instruction?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?

8.4. Appendix D

Transcription conventions:

Based on tools for analyzing talk by MacWhinney, B. (2023)

Transcription conventions	Code	Example	Notes
Pauses	(.)	I mean (.) okey	Placed between the words where a pause occurs
Longer Pauses	(..)	Maybe (..) this is the case	Placed between the words where a pause occurs
Filled pause	&-	&-um or &-you_know	Fillers with underscore count as one word. Placed before the utterance
Speaking faster	Δ	Δ If you say so Δ	Placed before and after the faster-speaking utterance
Speaking slower	∇	∇ I think so ∇	Placed before and after the slower-speaking utterance
Putting emphasis	!	We must stick to the !syllabus!	Placed before and after the emphasized utterance