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Do teachers Report Using Swedish during English Teaching?

Rapporterar lärarna användningen av svenska under engelskundervisningen?

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Preface

We hereby declare that we have been equally involved throughout the working process. Both of us conducted and recorded the interviews. The transcriptions and analysis of the data were done in full cooperation. The study was written together on an online document which both of us accessed. We recorded and transcribed the interviews together and we made the analysis of the materials in full cooperation. Our signatures below confirm the cooperation between the authors:

___________________________  __________________________
Emma Andersson               Yakub Khwaja
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Abstract

This empirical degree project explores the use of Swedish in foreign language learning such as English and the subsequent consequences. For this study, we explored the positions of researchers regarding the topic and investigated how, when and why three teachers in Sweden used the Swedish language during English teaching. The study provides an overview of theories and literature regarding the use of first language during foreign language teaching. Some findings suggest that the first language should not be excluded in second language acquisition but incorporated with limited use. However, it could be problematic to incorporate the Swedish language for the students with different origins. In that scenario, the students would be forced to acquire a foreign language through their second or third language. The study also connects these findings and research to the theoretical background of the socio-cultural views in the classrooms and the zone of proximal development. The method used for this study was a qualitative data collection in the form of semi-structured interviews with three primary teachers. The results show that these teachers reported using the Swedish language with variations thus the common reason for usage of Swedish during English learning would be for instructing purposes. Moreover, research suggests that maximising the target language during foreign language learning would expose the students to utilize the target language and that if the teacher would overuse Swedish during foreign language teaching the students would not sense the need to practise the language. The study also investigates when and how the teachers believe their students are exposed to the English language. The participants agreed upon that the exposure of the English language occurs on daily basis for the students moreover, participants would also agree that most of the exposure would be extramural. Our major conclusion is that incorporating the Swedish language in English learning should be considered with care. Some research suggests that the first language may provide enough scaffolding for the students however, the teachers may find several variations of providing the scaffolding for the students without the incorporation of the Swedish language.

Key Words: L1 in L2 learning, Teachers perspective, Language development, ESL classroom, EFL classroom
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1. Introduction

As part of our teacher training education at Malmö Högskola, we undertook several VFU (practicum training) courses at partner schools located in nearby cities in the county of Skåne. These courses, which lasted four weeks each, centred on the grades 4-6, with children aged between 9 and 12 years. During the courses, we noticed on many occasions that the teachers used Swedish to provide instructions for the students during the English classes. These instructions were given both orally and written on the whiteboard. Upon being asked why the Swedish language was used, one teacher replied that the purpose of providing Swedish instructions was because “the weak students would fail to keep up, and that the other teachers in the school agreed to never provide instructions in English”. Often, when we have been working as substitute teachers in English classes, the students have informed, that their teacher has never spoken English nor provided them with English instructions. We wondered, how would the teacher know that the students would fail to understand without providing them with English instructions? Moreover, we discovered that the less the teacher used English during the classes, the less the students used the English language for communicating with each other. An exception was one teacher who only spoke English during the classes. Moreover, the teacher used her body language and images to provide students with scaffolding. During these classes, the students became more comfortable with trying to communicate with each other by using the English language.

Skolverket (2011) expresses that the purpose of the English teaching in the grades 4-6, is to provide the students with opportunities to develop their abilities of:

- understand and interpret the content of spoken English and in different kind of texts,
- express themselves in speech and writing,
- using linguistic strategies to understand and make themselves understood,
- adapt language for different purposes, recipients and contexts, and
- reflect on the living conditions, social and cultural phenomena in different contexts and parts of the world where English is being used (p.32).
Furthermore, Skolverket (2011) also states in the core content that for the receptive abilities, students are to listen to and to read oral and written instructions and descriptions, respectively. This emphasizes the importance of the teacher using the target language during the foreign language teaching in order for the students to develop language strategies to understand the content of spoken English. In the knowledge requirements, in order to pass the requirements, Skolverket states that the student should be able to understand the most important content of spoken English. This also indicates that the student must be given instructions in English in order show their understanding by commenting on the content as well as acting upon the given instructions (2011, p.33-34).

Throughout the years, a wide debate regarding the use of the first language during the second language learning has been present. Cook (2001) maintains that the first language should be implemented during second language learning for scaffolding purposes (2001, p.402).

However, Lundgren (2002, p.26) maintains that English is a foreign language in Sweden consequently to the students having different backgrounds. The author also highlights that children with different backgrounds would have difficulties learning a third language through a second language. Camerooon (2001, p.13) states that all the children have different backgrounds and experiences which should be taken in consideration by the teacher.

However, Salmona-Madrinan (2014) maintains that cross-linguistic language learning, which means learning a language through the first language, is ideal for second language acquisition. Moeller and Roberts (2013) argues that the target language should be dominating in foreign language learning environment. Several teachers argue that their vision is that the target language should be in focus during second language learning, thus the usage of first language as support when the language is not sufficient (Cook, 2001). However, integrating Swedish in English teaching could be problematic if the classes were not monolingual (Lundgren, 2002).

Meyer (2008) maintains that in many cases the students might only be exposed to the English language in the classroom, therefore, most of the teacher’s language use should be that of the English language. The author also argues that this would depend on the abilities the language classes possess. However, the target language should be maximised in the classroom and that it should be the aim of every classroom (2008, p. 147). Lundahl (2014, p.170) mentions that in Sweden, the children may be exposed to the English outside the classroom. For example, by watching television, playing computer games and listening to music. This would require the children to own tools such as computers, tablets or accessibility to multimedia tools. In
various parts in Sweden, this might not be affordable for all the families therefore the only exposure to English might be in the classroom. Both of us have met students that only had access to multimedia in school and therefore unable to accomplish various homework at home. These students had to attend an extra class for external assistance with homework.

1.1 Purpose statement

We will investigate if teachers report using Swedish in English classes. The purpose of this degree project is to research how the teachers perceive the usage of Swedish when teaching English, we will also investigate what research states regarding first language usage in foreign language teaching.

1.2 Research question:

- Do teachers report using the Swedish language in English teaching?

- If so, when, how and why do teachers include Swedish in English learning?

- To what extent, does teachers reflect that it is appropriate to use the Swedish language?
2. Literature Background

In this chapter, we will present what research states concerning the use of first language in foreign language learning environment as well as the background theories to our research question. This section aims to display the concept of usability of first language in foreign language classroom. It also highlights the perspective of the students.

2.1 Background Theories

This section will describe the zone of proximal development as well as the socio-cultural theory developed by the philosopher Lev Vygotsky.

2.1.1 The sociocultural theory & the zone of proximal development

Vygotsky developed the theory regarding the children’s learning environment. The fundamental basis of this theory is that children learn by interacting with each other. Moreover, the children learn from their parents thereafter they share their experiences and learn from each other. One example would be if a child was exposed to English at home and felt encouraged to use his or her abilities in English during class, the other children would be engaged to listen and follow his or her example. This indicates, as has been claimed by Vygotsky (1980), that social interaction is significant for the students’ development and learning abilities. Therefore, it is vital that language is taught in rich social environments where the students are given the opportunity to interact with each other while practising the target language. This would require the teachers to encourage the students to use the language for instance, if the teacher used the English language during class they would be providing an example for the students, thereby encourage the use of the target language.

Consequently, collaboration between students would develop the students’ skills well enough to accomplish further advanced linguistic tasks that would be too challenging to accomplish by themselves. Vygotsky’s theory regarding the zone of proximal development (ZPD) explains the difference of what a learner could achieve through scaffolding one day in order to accomplish the same task without scaffolding the following day.
It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1980, p. 86).

This indicates that, the learner would follow the example of adults as the learner would gradually be able to accomplish various tasks. When teaching foreign language, the teacher could for example, provide instructions in the target language as scaffolding which would thereby lead to the students to accomplish the task without scaffolding.

2.2 Teaching English as a foreign language

When teaching English as a foreign language Harmer (2007, p. 132) maintains that there are many arguments for the teacher to speak English in the classroom. The main reason would be that the students would involve in social interaction and cooperation among the other students thereby speaking English would become a natural aspect for them. The author also mentions that disallowing the first language should not be encouraged by the teacher because the mother tongue is closely connected to the students as well as the teacher. Harmer (2007) adds that the teacher is unable to control the student’s spoken language in the classroom, however, that the spoken language by the teacher should be English (Harmer 2007, p. 132-133).

Stoltz (2009, p. 145) highlights that the common opinion of the teachers remains that English should be the spoken language while teaching in order for the students to develop their language. However, the author mentions that explaining certain tasks such as grammar rules in the foreign language would be too difficult for the students to understand as they would not have been learning the language long enough. Stoltz (2009) investigated how the Swedish language was being used during the French classes. The author discovered that the teacher began speaking the French language only to be explaining the same sentence in Swedish. This lead to the students answering the teacher using the Swedish language (Stoltz 2009, s. 150 - 151). The author defines this process as the teacher would be codeswitching between the languages, which is when the teacher combines languages. This type of teaching creates an environment where the students becomes comfortable by using the Swedish language instead of the foreign language. The author maintains that language acquisition is enhanced by social
interaction among the students, therefore the language use is something transmitted to the students from the teacher (p. 146).

### 2.3 Maximising the target language in foreign language teaching

Moeller and Roberts (2013, p.25) highlights that the teacher should create an environment for foreign language teaching. In order to create a learning environment where the foreign language (target language) is the standard, the learning should encourage risk-taking, as it would lead to the students learning from their mistakes (Moeller and Roberts, 2013, p.23). According to the authors, it is vital that the teachers create an environment where the students are free to practice the target language without reprisal. Therefore, it is vital to develop an effective framework where the learners would overcome their anxiety of learning the target language (Moeller and Roberts, p.24). The authors maintain that the result of maximising the target language in the classroom would “develop higher language proficiency for students, as well as promote intrinsic motivation for learning a FL” (p.35). Furthermore, it would develop the student’s language abilities. Additionally, maximizing the target language in the classroom would create an engaging language experience, which would make language learning more appealing to learners. Moeller and Roberts (2013, p.26) exemplifies that there several methods for teaching the target language without implementing the first language. For example, when the teacher would be introducing vocabulary, the authors encourage the teachers to use images which would enhance the textual input as well as recognition. By using images as scaffolding to introduce new vocabulary to the students, the need to implement the first language would be eliminated. Furthermore, Moeller and Roberts (2013) adds that when the teacher are introducing new grammatical concepts, they should use a story in order to serve as “rich context allowing learners to fill in the linguistic gaps that may occur” (p.26).

However, Meyer (2008) argues that the target language should be maximised during the foreign language learning, therefore, the primary role of the first language would be to provide scaffolding to the students to anchor foreign language concepts to the first language using translation activities and code switching within challenging activities, particularly for activities that would require the students to translate certain words for example, in order to understand language structures and grammar rules. This, according to Moeller and Roberts
(2013, p.31) would be unnecessary. Accordingly, the authors maintain that teachers typically resort to use their first language when teaching grammar. This could be problematic according to Lundgren (2002) when teaching students with different mother tongues. Moeller and Roberts (2013) points out that the grammar can be:

/…/ presented in a context that would allow the students to discover rules of grammar on their own, thereby processing more deeply and enhancing comprehension. This results in a greater sense of accomplishment and promotes self-efficacy, the realization that with effort they can achieve their goals. /…/

One way to introduce this inductive approach when introducing a grammar concept is to select a story or very short text that introduces varied forms of one (p.31).

Lightbown and Spada’ (1999) investigated the impact of implementing Spanish during English teaching. Spanish in this case was the first language with most of the participants being of Spanish heritage. Their research presented that exposing the students to the English language during English learning acquainted them to the language. Consequently, oncoming tasks that would be considered difficult were more readily accepted by the students. Moreover, the researchers discovered that the students had knowledge of advanced questions and, therefore, could provide answers as a result of being exposed to these types of questions (1999, p. 104).

Ulla Lundgren (2002) highlights Murphy’s theories regarding the use of English usage in EFL classroom. The author maintains that language should be thought with culture integration for further language development. Since the students have different backgrounds, the teacher should have student centred education with content. Thereby the usage of the target language would have a purpose in the classroom. However, the author questions the native speaker ideal (2002, p.50), which is that the students in Sweden for example would be learning British English since that would inhibit the language development as well as discourage the students to communicate in the classroom. While integrating culture into the language learning, the student’s desire to learn would increase. Lundgren (2002) interviews a teacher called Bosse, who mentions that the schools lacked understanding of cultures belonging to children from different background. Therefore, the teacher used students a resource during the English learning. These students were given the opportunity to present their cultures and backgrounds
during the English classes whilst the other students were paying attention and listened. These types of activates would encourage the use of English as well as develop the students cultural understanding (Lundgren, 2002, p.153).

Lundgren (2002) explains that several difficulties that occur regarding the student’s motivation in English are often connected to the general school situation. The author maintains that many students find it embarrassing to express themselves using the English language, therefore, on many occasions the students would be anxious of being wrong in front of their classmates. Furthermore, Lundgren (2002) claims that both the desire and motivation are strong driving forces for learning languages. It is, therefore, significant that teachers use the target language in the classroom most of the time and that they encourage students to converse and interact. The author also states that one significant reason for the teacher to teach using the target language is children of foreign origin. Their abilities to develop would be endangered if they are forced to learn English through Swedish. An increased use of the task language would enhance the students to make an effort to listen and try to understand what is being said in the classroom as well as to develop strategies to understand the content of spoken and written English (2002, p. 21-23).

2.3 Should the first language be implemented in foreign language learning?

If the teacher would teach English as a second language learning in a monolingual class, with students having a common first language, Cook (2001, p. 403) argues that the first language should not be avoided in the classroom by teachers and students during the second language learning. One major reason would be that the first language already has been implemented in alternating language methods such as the methods utilized to learn the first language or various subjects and that these methods should be an opportunity to create links between the first and second language. This would allow opportunities for the teacher to convey meaning and explain grammar as well as organise the class: “The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs” (p. 402). This indicates that there might be possibilities in the classroom to combine the first and second language in the language learning for knowledge purposes. Furthermore, Cook (2001)
agrees that the target language should be the one spoken by the teacher during the classroom but that there would be a space and opportunity for the first language to occur as part of scaffolding. Turnbull (2001 p. 535) highlights that the foreign language should be maximized during the period of learning the task language as this would affect and benefit the proficiency of the student. Both authors agree that the teachers should maximise their use of the target language and in order to provide support for their students, the teachers could make limited use of the first language to explain words.

Salmona-Madrinan (2014) defines that the foreign language acquisition gets affected by the mother tongue and that such process is titled cross-linguistic connections. Moreover, the author maintains that it is useful to contain cross-linguistic connections from the foreign language learning to the mother tongue within the classroom. Salmona-Madrinan (2014, p. 47) claims that it is disappointing that during language teaching, most of the teachers are convinced that using the first language in a foreign language classroom is harmful for the language learning. The author states that the language acquisition is a process with several stages for the students to advance. Salmona-Madrinan (2014, p. 54) highlights that the students have different amount of exposure to the language outside the classroom, reasonably, due to the different backgrounds of the students. Therefore, it is important that the teachers implement the first language during the English learning. The author mentions that avoiding first language associations during the language teaching would be impossible since the students will continuously make associations to their mother tongue thereby connections will always occur between languages. Salmona-Madrinan (2014) argues, “In the early stages of second language acquisition, learners process the new language, making connections with their mother tongue. The links between both languages can make learning contexts even richer” (2014, p. 57). Madrinan (2014) maintains that her study demonstrates the importance of developing the mother tongue during the first year of immersion school. Accordingly, students that possesses good abilities in their first language would acquire the second language more easily. However, the study was conducted in a Spanish class where the Spanish and English teachers would work together and in parallel ways to ensure the second language acquisition for the students. Moreover, the author pointed out that it would be interesting to conduct the same study in a bilingual class because that would be the way for the teacher to work (2014, p. 63-64).
2.4 Complications of only using the target language

Meyer (2008) states that because there are various factors in all the classes (for example, different stages of pre-knowledge, ages, background etc.), there should be variations regarding the number of implementations of first language in English teaching. Cameron (2001) highlights that it is important that the teacher knows the student’s prior knowledge when teaching English as a foreign language. Meyer (2008) argues that gradually the first language use, should be dismantled as the student’s advances in their language abilities. Meyer (2008) advocates that the target language should be used as much as possible. If the teacher would overuse the first language, the students would not have the need to utilise the use of the target language because they would always be given the opportunities to use the first language (2008, p. 147).

However, the students may require time to adjust and be accustomed to new surroundings, such as the classroom procedures. Therefore, forward exposure would lead to the occurrence of confusion in the class and anxiety for several students. Confused students would be frustrated; consequently, it would stop the process of learning. The students would be forced to learn the language without scaffolding, the teacher would need to assist the students to develop their skills well enough to accomplish further advanced linguistic tasks that otherwise might be challenging which would require the teacher and the students to work with the zone of proximal development. Therefore, it is vital that the teacher perseveres with the students initially using their first language as scaffolding during EFL learning (Meyer, 2008, p.147-148). The author mentions the importance of teaching communication strategies as a method to maximise the use of target language. This would benefit the students as they would be able to use synonyms and antonyms as well as their body language, which would provide the students with opportunities to practice speaking by using the second language. (Meyer 2008, p. 156-157). Gibbons (2016) mentions that for the students to be exposed to language situation, pair work or group work would be significant for the language development because they would use each other as support. Moreover, various language situations would occur that would not if they were studying individually (2016, p. 58). The author highlights that when practising the language, the students must be given the opportunity to communicate as well as collaborate. Ellmin (2011, p. 13-18) argues that the relationship between the students and environment is an encounter where the learning occurs. The author advocates that security
and the density in interactions between the students and the environments are two main concepts that would lead to methodical work where the student's social skills would improve. This would develop into the children learning by interacting with each other which is the fundamental basis of the socio-cultural theory developed by Vygotsky.

2.4 Exposing the students to the foreign language in the classroom

Estling Vennestål and Lundberg (2012) explain that the students’ language development depends on the amount of language usage in the classroom. As students desire to watch movies, talk or do exercises, the language should be used in a context to reality. The author mentions the importance of the teacher using the English when speaking, which advances through the lessons and becomes more important. It is significant that the students practise the foreign language and receive the opportunity to hear the language from various sources, for example, the teacher or other students. Hundeide (2006) claims that there are several conditions for acquiring a language; the main condition would be the ability to use the language. Vygotsky (1980) emphasizes the importance of interaction, especially for language acquisition. The socio-cultural classroom is based on the dialogues between the students and the teacher (Hundeide, 2006, p.34-38).

Estling Vannestål and Lundberg (2012) advocates that according to the objectives and the guidelines of the national curriculum, the teaching of English should be conducted entirely in English from the first day. To begin with, the pupils should get used to being surrounded by the target language. By conducting the classes in the foreign language, it would require greater concentration of students when listening to the language as well as trying to understand the language. Some teachers may provide translations between the languages for the pupils. The translations, however, could prevent the language development for the students with another mother tongue. These students risk being blocked in their language development if they are forced to go through Swedish to learn English. Opposed to translating between the languages, Estling Vannestål and Lundberg (2012) writes that the student could ask questions in Swedish and that the teacher could repeat the question in English before answering the question using the target language (2012, p. 23-24).
3. Methodology

This chapter covers several considerations made for the research study. These include introduction of the research method, choice of data collection, participants, procedure, material, analyses of data for the interviews and the ethical considerations.

3.3 Qualitative data collection

Alvehus (2013, p.81) states that writing a qualitative case study is a convenient way for the researcher to come close to a phenomenon in order for further investigation. Alvehus (2013, p.80) adds that interviews help the researcher to ask questions regarding the feelings, emotions and motives of the interviewee. These interviews are, according to the author, varied and nuanced. This would benefit our study because we wanted to investigate how, when and why the teachers report using Swedish in English teaching. Therefore, we would require detailed and nuanced answers from the participants. Reinecker and Stray-Jørgensen (2013, p.207) claim that through qualitative data collection the author may extract tiny data analyses and still gain beneficial results. Therefore, we decided to use qualitative data collection in the form of interviews.

3.4 Semi-Structured interviews

Our method of data collection was semi-structured interviews with prepared questions (see appendix 1). The interviews were conducted with three teachers. According to Alvehus (2013) the importance of these interviews is the topic rather than the questions themselves. Our purpose of the interviews would be that we would ask questions that would engage the teachers to respond with more than just one sentence and elaborate on their answers since the aim of our study was to investigate how, when and why the teachers reported using Swedish in the English classes. It was decided that interviews would be method to work with to investigate our research questions. Therefore, our interviews could be done in a manner seen as a conversation. The prepared questions were opened for follow-up questions, depending on the given answers from the participants. We chose to work with semi structured interviews because that would provide us with different answers as well as providing the correspondent with an opportunity to affect the interview (Alvehus, 2013, p.83).
3.3 Participants
This section will explain the selection of the participants as well as their backgrounds.

3.3.1 Selecting participants
The study began with us contacting English teachers from various schools in southern Sweden by sending them an email (see Appendix 2). We attended a meeting where teachers from the county Skåne attended, and asked for email contacts to find participants. We received many emails, but some of the individuals we contacted were not teachers of English nor were they teaching the grades 4-6. Therefore, we did not include them in the study. The other English teachers that participated in this study were contacted through our partner schools (VFU). We wanted to interview teachers with different years of experience, especially one that was recently graduated, because we wanted to investigate if the newly graduated teacher would of majority use the English language during English teaching since that has been pressed upon us in our education. Therefore, we decided to interview at least one teacher with experience of working less than one year and teachers with more than ten years’ experience. The teachers were also selected by their geographical location being nearby us. Since our choice of method is qualitative it could not be representative for a location nor generalized.

3.3.2 Presentation of the participants
This section will present the backgrounds of the participants that were interviewed for this study. In total, there were three interviews made with three different teachers.

Table 1: the years of experience that these teachers had and how many years they have taught English in the grade 4-6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants:</th>
<th>Teacher 1 (T1)</th>
<th>Teacher 2 (T2)</th>
<th>Teacher 3 (T3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience:</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of teaching English:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0,5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the table above it is visible the teachers with 16 years of experience (T1 and T3) did not teach English throughout the years of teaching. T3 did not graduate as a qualified teacher of English and spent a year extra of education to become qualified. T2 recently graduated and started to work as a primary teacher within six months.

Table 2: the grades that the teachers are teaching English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 2 it is visible that T1 teaches in two grades, both fifth and sixth graders. Whilst T2 and T3 are teaching English in one grade each.

Table 3: the number of minutes that the teacher teaches English per week and the number of minutes that their students have English. Teacher 1 teaches English in three classes which are two sixth grade classes and a single fifth grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants:</th>
<th>Teacher 1</th>
<th>Teacher 2</th>
<th>Teacher 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minutes per teacher:</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes per students:</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table was included because we aspired to investigate the amount of exposure of English students were gaining in school. The table also explains that teacher 1 is teaching English in two grades, some of the classes are divided into half classes. The teacher explained that each student was receiving 130 minutes of English education per week. Teacher 2 and Teacher 3 elaborated that the number of minutes they were teaching were also the same as the students were learning, since they taught one full class each.
3.6 Procedure

We wanted the interviews to be as convenient as possible for the participants. Therefore, they were asked to decide the location of the interviews. Thereafter, we explained the ethical considerations before starting the interview. The participants were asked to accept the terms of recording before proceeding to the questions. During the interviews, notes were taken for further elaboration. We conducted the interviews in Swedish because we wished to obtain detailed answers from the teachers, who were believed would be comfortable expressing themselves in their first language. To obtain detailed answers regarding how, when and why Swedish was being used in the English teaching, we would require having the interviewees being comfortable, therefore, collecting nuanced data.

3.5 Materials

The materials used for this study were computers for composing the text and smartphones to record the interviews for later transcribing. A printer was used to print some of the sources cited in the study.

3.7 Analysis of data

We began our analysis of the data by listening to the recordings. Thereafter the interviews were transcribed in full text. The answers were then translated into English, according to Alvehus (2013) this would be affected by our own interpretation. To be as detailed to the original answers as possible, we listened to each interview several times. Alvehus (2013) maintains that recording an interview would make the participant uncomfortable but we choose to record the interviews, in order to collect detailed data collection which would otherwise be based on the notes taken by the interviewer. Alvehus (2013) highlights that the data collected would be different from the actual answer by the interviewee, and we wanted to obtain the full answers.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

During the period of writing a degree project, certain principles must be followed, Vetenskapsrådet (2002, p.6) states that there are four demands that must be met during the period of writing scientific essays. There is one demand for information, one demand for compliance, one demand for confidentiality and one demand for usefulness. To fulfil these
requirements, the participants were before the interview, informed that because the participation was optional they could leave the interview at any time. In our letter (see appendix 2) we described that the participants would remain anonymous during the interview. Therefore, each participant was given a pseudonym during the interview. The pseudonyms afterwards changed to the name Teacher and given a number. The letter also informed that the collected data was only accessible by the authors of this study and will be destroyed once the study has been published at MUEP.
4. Results and Discussion

This section will provide an overview of the interviewee’s answers corresponding to the literature background. Each question will be separated into headings.

The questions asked for our study were as follows:

- Do teachers report using Swedish in English as a foreign language teaching?
- If so, when, how and why is Swedish being used in English learning?
- To what extent does teachers report it appropriate to use Swedish in English learning?

4.1 Do you use Swedish in English teaching?

T1 replied that he/she used the Swedish language sparingly during the lessons, especially when teaching fourth graders. T2 replied that he/she used the Swedish language sometimes and T3 replied that Swedish was being used during the English lessons as much as the target language. The use of Swedish in English teaching was confirmed all the participants. However, they agreed that the teacher ought to use the English language most of the time when teaching English. Stoltz (2009, p. 145) mentions that it would be common for the teachers to use the Swedish language during English teaching because that would be the language they would be comfortable using. The author adds that the common opinion of the teachers is that English should be the spoken language while teaching in order for the students to develop their language abilities.

4.2 When do you use Swedish during the English classes?

Upon being asked when Swedish was being used, T1 replied that it was used when difficulties occurred in the classroom regarding instructions that were crucial for the students to understand. The teacher would also use the Swedish language to explain grammar rules regarding the English language. This answer would be supported by Stoltz (2009), whom mentions that explaining certain tasks such as grammar rules should be done using the Swedish language. Explanations in the foreign language would be too difficult for the students to understand as they would not have been learning the language long enough. However, Moeller and Roberts (2013, p.26) exemplifies that there several methods for teaching the target language without implementing the first language. They believe that using stories when teaching grammatical concepts, could eliminate the need of implementing the
first language. Furthermore, T1 further explained that during such times when the students did not understand given tasks, he/she asked the students who understood the given task in English to provide explanations to the class in Swedish. This was also a method used occasionally to ensure that the students would understand the instructions.

T2, on the other hand, stated; “First, I always speak the sentence in English, and everyone (the students) sits as question marks and then I feel that I must take it in Swedish so they would know what to do”. Stoltz (2009) maintained that when using the Swedish language to explain what has been spoken in the foreign language eliminates the use of the target language for the students. As in his study, the students never felt the need to utilize their abilities to speak in the foreign language. The interviewees statements also correspond to that some teachers may use their first language while teaching since that would be within their comfort zone as well as a time when the teacher would believe to be in control.

T3 reported that the Swedish was used mainly for instructions and for explaining the tasks to the students. Furthermore, T3 mentioned that in the classes, he/she varied between the languages while instructing the students with the tasks, T3 added that the students asked for more use of the English from the teacher during the classes in order to practise. Consequently, the teacher now uses both languages equally. Moeller and Roberts (2013) maintains that the teacher could provide scaffolding while teaching the students in the foreign language. The use of the first language could be minimized while using images and body language while instructing the students. However, if the teacher would be teaching a monolingual class with similarities between the student’s backgrounds, the implementation of Swedish would be supported by Salmona-Madrinan (2014) whom elaborates that when teaching children in their early stages of second language acquisition, the learners would be making connections with their mother tongue throughout the process. This could be utilized in order to create richer contexts when teaching (2014, p.57). Moreover, if T3 was teaching a bilingual class with differences in the student’s backgrounds, the use of Swedish could endanger the student’s language acquisition as they would be learning a third language through their second language (Lundgren, 2002). T3 added that:

I have been using a lot of English with the older students but when I have the fourth graders I try to support them in Swedish. I try to use a lot of English but
I'm not there to 100%. Now I have started writing written instructions in English. For example, by asking do you like this or this ... and stuff.

T3 also mentioned that the reason that Swedish was used more in fourth and fifth grade was because the fourth graders had not received any teaching in English. Lundgren (2002) maintains that the teacher’s previous experience and background is vital for the formation and perception of teaching as well as for forming the student’s desire for learning. Several answers in Lundgren’s study reflected to critical incidents in the teachers’ own lives that affected their view of language and meaning of language teaching. Therefore, when teaching a foreign language, it is crucial that the teachers are confident in their abilities to use the language. This could reflect how confident the teachers might be during English teaching. Consequently, the Swedish language may have been used not only for the students but also for the teachers themselves.

4.3 How and why do you use Swedish in English teaching?

T1 replied that Swedish was being used rarely, for example, in various situations where clarification would be more suitable for the students if the Swedish was being used. It was used in a manner that the students were given the opportunity to explain the task or the instructions to each other. T1 also stated that during explanations and conversations, mainly English would be used. But in some situations, where the students became frustrated when failing to understand, the teacher would use the Swedish language. Furthermore, T1 explained that the decision of the language choice was based on instinct due to the student’s reactions when misunderstanding the teacher. Correspondingly, T1 maintained that using the English language too fast or advanced would make the students frustrated as well as impossible for fourth graders to understand. Accordingly, T1 mentioned that the Swedish use in the classroom, would gradually decrease as the students were getting more confident by using the language. The main use for Swedish in English teaching would be:

- Have one student clarify the instructions whenever the other students struggled to understand certain tasks.
- When the students required explanation regarding grammar and rules, for example differences between regular and irregular verbs, T1 would explain using the Swedish language.

- Sometimes explain the given task using Swedish, when the students felt uncertain of what to do.

- If any situations would occur where the students would argue or almost fight, the teacher would have to address the situation using Swedish.

Meyer (2008) maintains that the students may require time to adjust and be accustomed to new surroundings, such as the classroom procedures. Forward exposure to the English language could lead to the occurrence of confusion in the class and anxiety for several students. Confused students would be frustrated; consequently, it would stop the process of learning. Gibbons (2013) highlights that the teacher must implement scaffolding in language teaching in order to assist the students to develop their skills well enough to accomplish further advanced linguistic tasks. Such tasks might otherwise be too challenging for the students to accomplish by their own therefore, the teacher and the students should work with the zone of proximal development. For example, it is vital that the teacher perseveres with the students initially using their first language as scaffolding during EFL learning (Meyer, 2008, p.147-148). However, Gibbons (2013) and Moeller and Roberts (2013) maintains that the teacher could use scaffolding in the form of images, body language and explained tasks.

This question was not answered in detail by T2 whom explained that the Swedish language was used so the students would understand the given instructions and so they would know what to do, as well as to avoid chaos in the classroom. T2 explained that the reason for using Swedish was because of the students’ lack of understanding. As a result, the students would not accomplish their tasks as well as becoming restless. The teacher would also give the students their homework by using the Swedish language. The main use for Swedish by T2 would be:

- Explaining instructions to the students.
- Providing students with their tasks.
- Translate texts.
- Providing the students with homework.
- Translate spoken words, for instance, when saying a sentence using English thereafter translating the same sentence using Swedish.
- Avoid the occurrence of chaos in the classroom.

Overall, the interviewee added that he/she would disengage discussions in the classroom because the discussions frequently would have incorrect topics. Notably, it was written on the whiteboard that the students should remain silent. Vygotsky maintains that when working with the zone of proximal development, the students need scaffolding. This could be provided by the teacher effectively, as well as by the students. The sociocultural theory depends on the cooperation and interaction between students. These methods of working could have been applied as there was an inexperienced teacher in the class as the teacher had been teaching for approximately six months. Lundgren (2002) explains that the key for learning would be the classroom climate. The author describes that if students would fear being wrong in front of their classmates, they would not develop their abilities. As a result, the students may create chaos and stay unfocused during the classes. Moeller and Roberts (2013) advocate that the key of education would be for the teachers to engage and to structure the student’s self-confidence. Therefore, it is significant that the environment of the classroom engages the students as well as allowing the students to make mistakes (2013, p. 35).

T3 reported that he/she would use Swedish during the fourth grade because the students did not receive any previous English education. The Swedish would be used for instructing the students, meanwhile writing, reading and watching movies would be accomplished in English. T3 underlined that students in the sixth grade asked the teacher to speak more English in order to gain more practise. Consequently, instructions spoken as well as written were now given in the English language. T3 reported that using Swedish would be effective for the students to understand the instructions; consequently, the students would be able to work on an equal pace. By initially using Swedish for the students, no one would misinterpret their duties. The main use for Swedish by T3 would be:

- Providing instructions during the first years of learning.
- Explaining certain tasks and grammar.
- Talking about content of a book or film that the students watched or read.

All the participants confirmed that they used Swedish while instructing the students. Skolverket (2011) states, in the national curriculum, that students should, at the end of the sixth grade, be able to understand and interpret given instructions in English. Both T1 and T3
specified that they provided instructions in English. Throughout the fourth grade, T3 instructed the students by using Swedish. T2 had been teaching for six months and provided instructions by using Swedish only. This indicates that some of the parts where the teachers would use Swedish might have been beneficial for the student’s language learning process if they were given the instructions in English. Consequently, their understanding would be further developed for the context. The connection between the languages could develop the learner’s abilities in reading especially in order to progress an understanding of what the students read. T3 would have the students discuss the content of the text in Swedish but thereafter report using the English language.

It is important for the teacher to possess good abilities within English when teaching, as the students will learn while sense the importance of the subject. If the teacher fails to utilize English while teaching and provides the instructions using the Swedish language, the students will be discouraged to use English themselves, therefore, failing to work with the zone of proximal development (Lundgren, 2002). Accordingly, the author declares that the students’ request that the lessons should be fun as well as exciting. Therefore, the teacher must possess knowledge of the subject as well as an understanding of teaching methods that will stimulate the students. If not, the students would fail to learn. Furthermore, Moeller and Roberts (2013), and Lundgren (2002) advocates the importance of safety in the classroom for the students and that the teacher must be able to create a permissive classroom and be assertive. This would result in the teacher developing an understanding of their students’ self-esteem, consequently allowing them to speak without restrictions in the classroom. Subsequently, the students would motivate each other by interacting and supporting by using the English language. Therefore, the scaffolding would be crucial in order for the students to later use the language on their own.

4.4 When, would you say would be the appropriate time to use the Swedish language in English teaching?

T1 mentioned that the teacher ought to use the target language substantially. The exceptions for using Swedish would be to ensure that the students would understand the importance of various tasks or content. T1 advocated that using Swedish initially during the first year of
English learning would be appropriate but that the teachers gradually had to move towards usage of the English language.

T2 advocated that English language should be used as much as possible. Depending on the classes, there could be exceptions, for example, when the teacher had to simplify content of the texts. T3 responded that using Swedish during reading and writing would inhibit the students’ language development. The interviewee advocated the use of English to instruct the students or to explain content.

These answers by the interviewees would not be surprising especially when Stoltz (2009, p. 145) highlights that the common opinion of the teachers is that English should be the spoken language while teaching. Harmer (2007, p. 132) points out several arguments for the teacher to speak English in the classroom. The main reason would be to engage interaction between the students thereby speaking English would become a natural aspect for them. Gibbons (2013) maintains that the students need to get exposed to the English language during the classes. Harmer (2007) mentions that the mother tongue is closely connected to the students and that the teacher is unable to control the students spoken language in the classroom. However, the spoken language by the teacher should be English (Harmer 2007, p. 132-133). Moeller and Roberts (2013) does provide several examples in order for the teacher to avoid using the first language in foreign language teaching. Lundgren (2002) maintains that foreign language should be thought with culture integration as the students would have different backgrounds, this would result into student centred education with content and also utilize the need of foreign language usage. Cook (2001) maintains that excluding the first language would not be beneficial for the students. Accordingly, Salmora-Madrinan (2014) maintain that the teacher’s opinion of only utilising the English language is sad because the first language would have a role in foreign language acquisition. However, the study was not conducted in a bilingual class therefore implementing Swedish could either be beneficial for the language development as well as inhibit the student’s language abilities.
4.5 When and where, would you say the students are exposed to the English language as most?

Accordingly, all participants claimed that watching movies, reading blogs, using social media and playing computer games was where the students would gain most of their exposure to the English language. All the participants maintained that students would be exposed to English in their home environment. This aligns with the statement of Lundahl (2014, p.170) whom states that the students are being exposed to the English language a lot more than the teacher would anticipate especially through media devices such as tablets, computers and smartphones. T3 maintained that most of the exposure to English would appear unknowingly for the students and that most of the students preferred listening to songs with English lyrics.

All participants agreed upon that the home environment being the main residence of the students’ exposure to the English language. However, Madrinan (2014) clarifies that the exposure to the English language differs between the students, and in various situations some students may only be exposed to English within the classroom especially when learning a foreign language such as French and Spanish (Stoltz, 2009, p.45). Moreover, this factor was not alleged by any of the participants as well as the clarification of where the students would receive exposure to the English language with their communicative skills. The exposure to English may occur outside of the classroom, but the school might be the only location where the students may practise the language. A significant factor for the language development is amount of time when learning a language, both in term of total time allocated for English outside the classroom as well as the organization of the time in school (Estling and Vannestål, p. 26). The authors suggest that in order to reach beneficial amounts of English exposure, it is crucial that the teachers collaborate and work thematically for subject integration. Thereby, the students would maximize their exposure to the language. This would stimulate a versatile use of the target language, and promote the language learning by creating contexts. The foreign language teaching should target activities that would stimulate the students to accomplish tasks on daily basis exclusively tasks that students could utilize outside of school. In order to create a natural approach to foreign language use, the teacher should include several contexts and subjects to the language teaching (Estling and Vannestål, p. 26-27).
4.6 Discussion

The use Swedish during English classes was confirmed by all the participants. However, they agreed that the teacher ought to use the English language most of the time when teaching English. The common reason for using the Swedish language in English learning was for instructing the students in tasks and general classroom activities. Nevertheless, T1 responded that the Swedish language was used sparingly. When Swedish was used, the students were given the opportunity clarify the instructions to each other. The response given by T2, that the sentence would initially be spoken in English and, consequently explained in Swedish, conflicts with Meyer’s (2008) theory that the foreign language should be the dominating language in foreign language teaching. The overall explanations from the participants were as follows:

- Ensuring that the students understood the instructions.
- Explaining the rules of grammar.
- To handle difficult situations such as students becoming frustrated.
- Avoiding chaos in the classroom.
- Assisting the students to progress in their tasks.

The interviewees agreed that the Swedish language could be integrated within limits. The common explanation for integrating Swedish would be to ensure that the students understood the task or the content. Salmona-Madrinan (2014) claims that during the early stages of second language acquisition, connecting the languages could be beneficial for the student. Estling Vannestål and Lundberg (2012) maintain that switching between the languages during foreign language learning, would stimulate and challenge the students’ needs. Lundgren (2002) advocates that it is essential that the teachers maximise their use of the target language in the classroom but that the teacher ought to be patient with their pupils, or else they would become confused. Moreover, teaching students with different backgrounds would inhibit their language development if the teacher implemented Swedish since the students would be forced to learn a third language through their second language (Lundgren, 2002). Meyer (2008) maintains that confused students would be frustrated, and this, consequently, would stop the process of learning. Therefore, it is vital that the teacher persists with the students initially using the Swedish as scaffolding during English learning.

Salmona-Madrinan (2014, p. 53-57) highlights the significance of incorporating the first language in second language acquisition. The study maintained that when the teacher used the
target language in the classroom, a further cultural sensitive environment was created therefore enhancing the learning and communication for children. Consequently, the use of the first language would be useful for the pupils at certain stages of the language development especially at the early stages when learning new languages. The authors advocate that the first language could be incorporated when introducing major differences between the foreign language and the first language for example, when acquiring grammar. As the pupils would get accustomed to foreign language, the teacher could reduce the first language use and progress towards additional target language use. This theory would disagree with Estling and Vannestål (2012, p.27) whom advocates the significance of exposing the students to situations that requires the use of a second language. Consequently, to develop their acquisitions, subsequently English teaching should be challenging, interesting therefore the level of language teaching should be above the student’s abilities (2012, p. 26-27).

T1 maintained that the use of Swedish language in the classroom occurred when many students failed to understand given tasks in English. Therefore, the teacher requested one of the students who understood the task to provide explanations to the other students, primarily by using English. If the students failed to understand, they would be allowed to explain the task in the Swedish language. According to Vygotsky, the sociocultural classroom would require opportunities for the students to learn from each other. T1 exemplified the method of implementing Vygotsky’s theories by having the students teach each other. T3 also mentioned that the students wouldn’t be sitting on their own consequently, be able to support each other with discussions.

Gibbons (2016) advocates the importance of the teacher using the target language to provide an example for the students but that the Swedish language may be applied in limits as scaffolding for the student. For example, when introducing new content, the students would progress with greater understanding of the context. (p. 141). Meyer (2008) mentions that overusing the first language in foreign language teaching would lead to the students losing their desire to practise the foreign language. This aligns with Stoltz’s (2009) theory regarding overusing Swedish in foreign language teaching. Consequently, the students would always be given the opportunity to use the Swedish. One example would be when the teacher uses the Swedish to instruct the students; therefore, the students would become uncertain when using
the English language. Lundgren (2002) advocates that the teacher ought to be confident if the students are to gain confidence in expressing themselves in front of the class.

Estling-Vennestål and Lundberg (2012) states that the significant factor for the students’ development is the teacher. The teacher must be able to arouse curiosity in the classroom as well as motivating the students to learn. Therefore, the language environment should be stimulating, communicative and activating. Because the children largely teach themselves, by listening to the teacher, it is essential that the teacher can use the language in a natural way and possess enough skills to be a linguistic model. Moreover, the participants agreed that the students were being exposed to the language outside the classroom through media such as, blogs, videos, games and music. Lundahl (2014) maintains that the students are getting more exposed to the English language than the teacher would know.
7. Conclusion

This study presented the reports of three teachers and their usage of Swedish in the classroom of English teaching. The answers presented that it is more common to implement Swedish in English teaching than we anticipated, however there were only three participants therefore our results could not be generalized. The study also shows that some research supported first language use within limits in order to provide scaffolding and increase the confidence of the students.

The results displayed that in numerous situations, such as instructing the students, the Swedish has been commonly used by our participants. Our conclusion is that when teaching English, the implementation of Swedish should be done with care. We believe that it is significant that the teacher gets to know the students as well as their prior knowledge. When teaching the English language, it is important that the teacher takes the students with different mother tongues in consideration. As research states, the target language should be maximised during the foreign language learning; therefore, it is vital that the teacher practises the target language most of the time when teaching, including when instructing the students. Moreover, the national curriculum in Sweden states that the students should be able to understand and interpret the contents of oral and written instructions. Therefore, the teacher is obliged to instruct the students using the English language. As cited research in this study the teacher could thereby use scaffolding in form of images as well as the body language. This would also eliminate the need of implementing the Swedish language. The exposure to the language is crucial for the students’ language development. According to Gibbons (2016) the teacher should expose the students to language situations by speaking the target language. However, it would be difficult for the teacher to control the spoken language by the students, consequently the teacher should engage them to practise the English language. The participants agreed that most of the exposure to English occurred outside the classroom. We would argue that the classroom environment might be the only opportunity where the students may practise the language. That said, one difficulty by only using English is that this would create difficulties regarding the understanding for the students, especially during their first year of foreign language learning. However, upon further reflection, there is a connection between the languages, which may be used by the learners. This could result in a progression of deeper understanding of the subjects within English learning when being explained further.
by using Swedish. The teacher also needs to find variations of scaffolding for the students in order to eliminate the need to use Swedish.

7.1 Limitations

We believe that when completing an empirical study, we lacked experience within research and qualitative data collection. We felt uncertain of how to ask the questions to the participants without being questioning. Completing this study, we desired to be as objective as possible but there is a possibility that the participants provided us with answers they believed to be correct rather than being truthful. In the email that we sent to the teachers, we explained that the topic was about the classroom environment rather than usage of Swedish in English classes. Perhaps preparing the teacher with the correct topic could have provided us in further detailed answers however, it could also prepare the teachers to provide us with answers they believed we wanted to hear.

Our study was limited by the number of participants consequently; our results cannot be generalized or be observed as a representing result. There were not many teachers willing to participate. On the aftermath, we should have worked to find participants within longer distance as well as accomplish observations in classes. We estimate that through observations we would be able to progress an understanding of the Swedish usage by the teachers. If this was a study for six months, we trust that more data could have been collected as well as creating this essay into a multi-case study with a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. This would generate into finding more participants willing to contribute in our study for example by visiting the schools. Because of only having three participants, the results cannot be generalized, as we cannot explain the usage of Swedish in English classes in Sweden.

This study has provided us with several perspectives regarding the implementation of Swedish in English as a foreign language learning, as well as a greater understanding of the importance of the teacher using the target language but providing enough scaffolding for the students.
7.2 Further research

The teachers expressed their interests and excitement of this topic. Moreover, many studies suggest that when teaching English, the first language may be incorporated. However, some studies imply that when learning a foreign language there are students with various backgrounds acquiring the language. It would have been interesting to observe if studies conducted in bilingual classroom atmospheres would have the same conclusion as the studies conducted in monolingual classrooms.

For further research, we would wish to observe the relation between the classroom environment and the connection for the usability to English as well as the language development and later compare the findings. It would have been interesting to gain the perspective from international teachers teaching English as foreign language, and analyse their opinions regarding the use of the first language. Consequently, we would be able to compare the differences in the national curriculums regarding instructing the students.
8. References


Turnbull, Miles. (2001). There is a role for the L1 in second and foreign language teaching, but ... *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57 (4), 531–540.


Appendix 1

Background questions

1. Hur länge har du undervisat i Engelska? (For how long have you been teaching English?)
2. Vad är din vision med din klass? (What is your vision with your class?)
3. Hur tänker du kring val av klassrumsuppsättning? (how did you think regarding the choice of classroom consultation?)
4. Hur många timmar/minuter i veckan undervisar du engelska? ( How many hours/minutes per week do you teach English?)
5. Hur många timmar/minuter i veckan läser eleverna engelska? (How many hours/minutes per week do your students study English?)

Questions regarding the usability of L1 during L2

1. Använder du svenska under engelsk undervisningen? (Do you use Swedish during English teaching?)
2. När använder du svenska under engelskundervisningen? (When do you use Swedish during the English teaching?)
3. Hur använder du dig av svenskan? (How do you use the swedish language?)
4. Varför pratar du svenska under engelskundervisningen ? (Why do you use the Swedish language?)
5. När anser du att det är rätt att prata svenska under engelskundervisningen?(When would you say it is right to use the Swedish language during English teaching?)
6. När tror du att dina elever utsätts för engelska? (Where do you think your students are exposed to English?)
7. Var tror du eleverna utsätts för engelska som mest? (Where would you say your students are exposed for english at most?)
Appendix 2

Hej …….(recipient)


Vi skulle uppskatta om du som behörig lärare i engelska skulle vilja medverka i en intervju där du får uttrycka hur du arbetar samt upplever engelskundervisningen. Intervjun beräknas att ta ca 15 – 20 minuter.

Värt att notera är att vi i kvalités syfte kommer att spela in intervjun. Däremot kommer samtlig information kopplat till dig och skolan behandlas konfidentiellt samt att du förblir anonym. Enbart Yakub & Emma kommer att ha tillgång till det samlade intervjumaterialet.

Det samlade materialet kommer att raderas efter examensarbetets uppladdning på MUEP (en databas för Malmö Högskolas publicerade examensarbeten).

Plats & Tid för intervju bestämmer du var som passar bäst!

Vi hade uppskattat om du hade kunnat tänka dig att delta i denna intervju som för oss studenter är väsentlig! Då vi önskar att göra intervjuerna under veckorna 5-6 hade vi önskat ett svar så snart som möjligt.

Om du har några funderingar kring medverkande är du hjärtligt välkommen att kontakta oss på:

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