Stakeholder beliefs in English-medium instruction for young learners in Sweden

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While several studies have investigated English-medium instruction (EMI) or content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in Swedish upper secondary and tertiary education, few have investigated such programmes in Swedish primary schools. This paper explores perceptions among staff and students about affordances and constraints in the learning of content and languages, drawing on data from a larger longitudinal case study of an English-Swedish bilingual primary class during Grades 4-6. Data consisted of semi-structured interviews with a school leader, 12 teachers and 22 students as well as fieldnotes and photographs from classroom observations. Thematic analysis of the data revealed the belief among staff that learners acquired English naturally by being 'forced' to use it in English-medium subjects taught by native speakers of English. The use of Swedish among students in these subjects was generally seen as a potential scaffold when communicative difficulties arose, as students who were more proficient in English could translate and provide their classmates with explanations of difficult concepts in Swedish. However, staff and students nonetheless voiced concerns about students' content learning as well as about limited development of subject-specific language in Swedish, which could have implications for their future Swedish-medium studies. Meanwhile, although multilingual students' mother tongues were valued by the students themselves, participants did not acknowledge them as legitimate learning resources for use in the mainstream classroom, where only English and Swedish were allowed to be used in interaction.

Keywords: English-medium instruction, CLIL, native English-speaking teachers, English-Swedish bilingual primary class, stakeholder beliefs

1 Introduction

As a world language used in business, media, and education, English has a high status in Sweden (Hult, 2012; Toth, 2017, 2018; Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014). Although Swedish is the most common language of instruction in Swedish schools, an increasing number of Swedish compulsory schools offer programmes in which subjects such as Mathematics and Science are taught through the medium of English. According to a survey by the Swedish National Agency for Education, approximately 9400 students, or 1% of students in Swedish compulsory schools, were enrolled in English-medium programmes during the

2008/2009 school year (Skolverket, 2010, p. 24). Several studies of such programmes at the upper secondary level in Sweden have used the label content and language integrated learning, or CLIL (Lim Falk, 2008, 2015; Sandberg, 2017). However, while 'CLIL has a clear objective of furthering both content and language as declared in its title, EMI [English-medium instruction] does not (necessarily) have that objective' (Dearden, 2014, p. 4). Yoxsimer Paulsrud (2014) has concluded that EMI is more appropriate to describe such programmes in the Swedish context, where there are no explicit guidelines or teacher training for CLIL. These English-medium programmes generally lack the balance between content and language that CLIL offers in theory; English is simply the vehicle for content instruction. In the present study of a Swedish primary school class, the term EMI is used in accordance with terminology in the Swedish Ordinance for Compulsory School (Utbildningsdepartementet, 2011, p. 185), which regulates such programmes in compulsory school (in Sweden, this refers to primary school, Grades 1-6, and lower secondary school, Grades 7-9). According to the Ordinance, no more than 50% of instruction in these programmes may be in English.

Content-based approaches have been implemented as a way of providing learners with increased exposure to the target language. Canadian programmes of early total French immersion are often held up as a successful model for other language learning programmes, including CLIL. However, as the implementation of these approaches varies widely between contexts, the success of immersion programmes may not necessarily be transferable. Factors such as teachers' language proficiency, participants' language backgrounds, starting age, amount of exposure, and status of languages differ between programmes. Further, while CLIL is ideally considered to employ a 'dual-focused approach' (Coyle, 2013, p. 245), in which both content and language aims are given priority, in practice, studies have found that the integration of content and language can be a challenge (Leung, 2005; Skinnari & Bovellan, 2016). Although content teachers often have subject expertise, they may not be trained in second language perspectives, therefore lacking an awareness of how to provide explicit support for students' language development.

In many content-based programmes that aim for the acquisition of English, a high-status language, plurilingualism and 'the significance of plurilingual competence' (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 18) may be overlooked, as minoritised languages may be perceived by stakeholders as having less value. Therefore, although teachers may express positive views of bilingualism, this may only refer to the languages taught at the school, and not encompass students' first languages that have low prestige (see Skinnari & Nikula, 2017).

1.1 Previous research on stakeholder beliefs in content-based approaches

A number of studies have investigated stakeholder beliefs in content-based approaches at various levels of education. In a study of students' and teachers' views regarding EMI at a university in Indonesia, Floris (2014) found that while EMI was thought to potentially help students learn English 'more efficiently' (p. 52), it was also found that many students lacked sufficient proficiency in English to be able to cope with the demands of the English-medium content. This thus compromised the 'ability of students to understand lessons, to read textbooks, to prepare assignments and examinations, and to participate in classes actively' (Floris, 2014, p. 55). Similarly, within secondary education, while studies of learner

beliefs in content-based approaches have generally found that learners believe that the programmes help them to develop confidence in using the language and contribute to improved language proficiency (Coyle, 2013; Hüttner, Dalton-Puffer, & Smit, 2013), it has also been found there is a 'lack of attention to language issues in the CLIL classroom' (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016, p. 122). Other studies of CLIL teacher beliefs have thus concluded that there is a need for language awareness tasks in content instruction, suggesting that teachers would benefit from such a focus in teacher training programmes and professional development (Lo, 2017; Skinnari & Bovellan, 2016).

Similarly, in a study of CLIL teacher beliefs at the primary level in Finland, Bovellan (2014) found that 'content plays the primary role in CLIL and foreign language competence, achieved while learning content, is a by-product' (p. 173). However, learning content through an additional language involves a number of challenges. A study of stakeholders' perspectives regarding primary school CLIL in Catalonia has found that although satisfaction with the programmes was generally high, low achievers were found to struggle with the content, and a majority of students had difficulty speaking in English (Pladevall-Ballester, 2015). Likewise, a study of a CLIL programme in Poland suggests that younger learners may not benefit from 'learning cognitively demanding subjects through English' (Otwinowska & Forýs, 2017, p. 476), as they may have difficulty with comprehension, vocabulary retention, and productive skills. In a study comparing CLIL and non-CLIL groups at two primary schools in Slovenia, Pizorn (2017) has found that CLIL students had comprehension difficulties with some of the activities, and cautions against 'the assumption that foreign language proficiency will automatically improve for all students' (p. 160).

As is generally the case in other contexts, English-medium subject teachers in the Swedish context often tend to prioritise content rather than language. In a study of Swedish university physics lecturers' attitudes about English-medium teaching, Airey (2012) found little focus on language issues among participants, and suggests that this could pose a problem for students' development of disciplinary discourse. This concern is likewise addressed in Lim Falk's (2008) study of a CLIL class at a Swedish upper secondary school, as well as in a later study of CLIL student texts (Lim Falk, 2015). Further, in a study of CLIL student perspectives at upper secondary school, Sandberg (2017) found that content instruction delivered 100% in the target language was considered to be challenging. EMI teachers may likewise find content instruction that is 100% in English to be challenging for students, as seen in a study of EMI at two Swedish upper secondary schools (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014, p. 126). Strategies allowing for the use of Swedish were thus seen as potentially relieving students' stress (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014, p. 127). While these studies have considered stakeholder beliefs in at the tertiary and upper secondary levels in Sweden, little research has addressed Swedish EMI programmes at the primary level.

1.2 Theoretical considerations and research question

Content-based language learning programmes draw on theories of second language acquisition (SLA), which highlight the role of increased exposure to and interaction in the target language (see Long, 1996). For immersion programmes, several key features with implications for pedagogy and potential outcomes have been identified, such as support in the form of bilingual teachers

and a classroom culture which is 'that of the community from which the students are drawn' (Swain & Johnson, 1997, p. 8). Further, attention to the linguistic demands of such programmes requires appropriate resources in terms of materials, teacher training, and staff development (Swain & Johnson, 1997, p. 9). Explicit instructional support is required in order for learners to move beyond the conversational fluency, or *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS), that may develop through interaction, to develop *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP) that is needed for academic success (Cummins, 2008).

The present study takes an ecological approach as its theoretical point of departure (van Lier, 2008), examining the interrelationship between the context of the Swedish EMI programme and the actors directly involved in the programme, namely staff and students. In educational settings that involve learning an additional language, studies of classroom language ecologies may be used to explore actors' beliefs about languages in a context (Blackledge, 2008; Cross, 2016), as well as 'to explore how social ideologies, particularly in relation to multilingualism, are created and implemented' (Creese & Blackledge, 2010, p. 104). Within an ecological approach, the concept of affordances in the classroom environment provides a way of analysing what is perceived (and acted upon) by the actors in question. In this study, affordances as well as constraints (here conceptualised as perceived lack of affordances) are considered in relation to languages and content, as articulated by participants or observed in the context. Affordances may include practices such as pedagogical scaffolding (van Lier, 2008) or translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), while constraints may be perceived as contextual factors that impede teaching and learning, such as communication difficulties.

While structural conditions such as top-down policies generally determine the organisation of educational institutions and implementation of programmes such as EMI, ideological assumptions influence these programmes as well, as they shape stakeholders' beliefs about languages and learning. In this study, beliefs are defined as 'lay theories of teachers and learners and constitute the complex cluster of intuitive, subjective knowledge about the nature of language, language use and language learning, taking into account both cognitive and social dimensions, as well as cultural assumptions' (Hüttner et al., 2013, p. 269). Within studies of teacher cognition, it has been shown that teachers' pedagogical beliefs have been found to influence classroom practices (Borg, 2006; Bovellan, 2014; Hüttner et al., 2013), and 'dynamic and situated beliefs among learners influence the language learning process' (Sylvén, 2015, p. 254). By examining both teachers' and learners' beliefs, it may be possible to shed light on assumptions about languages and content learning in the classroom context (Ellis, 2008). This case study therefore aims to explore ideological assumptions as expressed by staff and students within the context of a Swedish primary EMI programme, investigating the following question: What affordances and constraints do staff and students in the Swedish-English bilingual primary programme perceive in terms of languages and content learning in EMI?

2 Methodology

This paper draws on data gathered using tools from linguistic ethnography (Copland & Creese, 2015) from a longitudinal case study of a class during

Grades 4-6 in a Swedish compulsory school offering EMI. In the larger study, audio recordings of lessons (63 hours 40 minutes in total) and artefacts such as policy documents, instructional materials, and student texts were collected in addition to the data used in this study. For this study, the primary source of data was semi-structured interviews (14 hours 46 minutes in total) with 13 members of staff and 22 students, as well as fieldnotes and photographs from classroom observations that were used for triangulation.

2.1 Data collection

The school was selected on a pragmatic basis, as it offered EMI in Grades 4-6 at the time of the study and the school head agreed to allow access. After the study was presented at a meeting of Grade 4 teachers, one teacher indicated interest in participating, and arrangements were made to visit the class. At this visit, students were given oral and written information about the study in Swedish and in English as well as a consent form, to be signed by them as well as their parents/guardians in accordance with guidelines for ethical research set forth by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet, 2011). Following this, visits were made to the class during four data collection cycles, the first of which was three weeks in Grade 4. During Grade 5, the class was visited for four weeks during the fall term and twelve weeks during the spring term, the latter coinciding with a planned Science unit. The final data collection cycle in Grade 6 was for a period of three weeks.

2.2 The context

The study took place in a large urban compulsory school in Sweden with a linguistically diverse student population. At this school, English and Swedish were the languages of instruction, with English as the working language of the school. All members of staff were therefore expected to be fully proficient in English in order to communicate with their international colleagues, many of which had limited proficiency in Swedish. These native English-speaking teachers, who came from countries such as Canada and Australia, were recruited to teach certain subjects in English. In these English-medium subjects, Swedish translations of keywords were usually posted in the classrooms or mentioned in lessons.

Aside from keywords, there was little focus on language in the content subjects. In fact, the school did not have any particular focus on second language perspectives outside of the subject Swedish as a second language (SSL), neither in teacher recruitment nor in the school's in-service training. Rather, the school provided an English-intensive environment, exposing the students to English in content subjects as well as in English as a subject, which consisted of 240 minutes per week in Grade 4 and 180 minutes per week in Grades 5 and 6. In these lessons, much of the focus was on using English in class discussions. No particular level of proficiency in English was required of students for enrolment; however, most students had some experience with English lessons from previous schools.

In addition to its English language profile, the school culture was in many ways similar to that of schools in English-majority countries. For example, the school was described as having a strict approach to behaviour management.

Excerpt 1. Interview in Grade 4 with Diana, a Swedish-medium teacher

på nåt sätt känns det som att det är just samma kultur här i skolan som jag hade i [lärarens hemland] /.../ Här finns många motiverade elever och föräldrarna som väljer den här skolan, dom har ju syfte och baktanke, att /.../ utveckla engelska språket /.../ [så] får eleverna läsa i klassrum där finns ah regler /.../ där dom kan koncentrera

<somehow it feels like it is the same school culture as the one I had in [teacher's home country] /.../ Here, there are many motivated students and the parents who choose this school, they do have the aim /.../ to develop the language. /.../ to have the students study in classrooms where there are rules /.../ where they can concentrate>

(Note: Interviews were conducted in Swedish or English, according to which language participants chose; extracts from interviews in Swedish have been translated to English. See Appendix for transcription conventions.) Rules that Diana mentioned, such as prohibiting the use of mobile phones during class, were also mentioned by students as a reason that parents had chosen to enrol them at the school. Swedish staff members highlighted this stricter culture as particularly appealing as well, in that it was considered to promote a better learning environment as compared to 'regular' Swedish schools, which were seen as less disciplined.

2.3 Participants

Thirteen members of staff agreed to participate in the study: one school leader, four teachers who taught their subjects in English (hereafter EMI teachers) and eight teachers who taught primarily through Swedish (hereafter SwMI teachers). In Grade 4, the class teacher was the SwMI teacher Erika, who taught the subjects of Social Sciences, Mathematics, and Science primarily through Swedish, while both English and Swedish were used in teaching English. In Grades 4 and 5, Erika's SwMI colleagues Bert, Karin, and Diana taught Music, Swedish, and SSL, respectively, and the EMI teacher Sarah taught Art. For Grade 5, the class teacher was the EMI teacher Peter, who taught Mathematics, Science, and English, while the SwMI teacher Karin taught Social Sciences. In Grade 6, the EMI content teacher Ellen taught Mathematics and Science, and the EMI content teacher Mike taught English. Swedish and Social Sciences were taught by the SwMI teacher Frank, while the SwMI teacher Rana taught SSL and the SwMI teacher Barbro taught Music. All but one of the teachers taught the participating class at one point or another during the study (one SwMI teacher who taught a different class was invited by one of the SwMI teachers in the class to join an interview).

Out of a total of 32 participating students (ages 10-13 during the study), 22 students from the class agreed to be interviewed. Of these, 13 students spoke other languages such as Arabic in addition to Swedish at home; however, none of the students indicated that English was their mother tongue. Some students spoke more than one of these languages at home and several were enrolled in Mother Tongues (MT), a non-compulsory subject offered after school to students who meet the qualifications (students must use the language in daily communication with a parent or guardian, and at least five students in the municipality must qualify). Most multilingual students were born in Sweden; however, a few were newly arrived (less than four years in the country). Only

two multilingual students attended SSL, while the others were placed in Swedish as per their (and their parents') wishes.

At the beginning of each interview, participants could choose to be interviewed in English or Swedish. Most interviews took place in Swedish, except for the native English-speaking teachers and three students who chose English. Over the course of the study, some participants left the class and others joined it, which meant that not all of the staff and students participated all three years. Several students were initially reluctant to be interviewed, with some only agreeing to participate later in the study. Interviews with students (and staff) were therefore conducted at different stages of the study, which is indicated in the extracts included here. Questions in the staff interview guides addressed topics such as language and education backgrounds, prior teaching experience, expectations regarding bilingual instruction, and approaches to support for students, while student interview guides included questions about language backgrounds, prior schooling, and thoughts about language and content learning in the EMI programme. Interviews were audiorecorded and transcribed, and content analysis (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) was used to identify salient themes in the material.

3 Findings

Major themes that were found are presented below in terms of affordances and constraints according to the focus of the research question.

3.1 Affordances in the EMI programme

The school leader Nina explained that the school benefitted from being able to hire teachers from outside of Sweden to teach in English, as there was a shortage of qualified teachers in Sweden. Meanwhile, for EMI teachers who had recently received their teacher's qualification, the school provided the opportunity to gain teaching experience. For the SwMI teachers, the school's international staff allowed for an exchange of ideas and experiences between people from different cultures, as well as the opportunity to use their knowledge of English. Several participants mentioned the role of English as a global language, stating that advanced proficiency in English would facilitate students' future endeavours such as studying abroad.

3.1.1 More English

Both staff and students mentioned the high level of English offered at the school. Nina explained that students were given English textbooks of a more advanced level than their peers in other schools, and the school also offered an 'Advanced English' group after school in which students could further develop their oral skills. In addition to the increased exposure to English, there were also many opportunities for interaction in English, as the SwMI teacher Erika explained below:

Excerpt 2. Interview in Grade 4 with Erika, a SwMI teacher

> *så jag försöker få in engelska ord, bara så att dom utsätts för ord hela tiden /.../ I femman tvingas dom å använda det när dom har helt engelskspråkiga lärare /.../ Det blir ju mer naturligt för dom att prata engelska, jag tror, när dom verkligen får en engelskspråkig lärare*

> <so I try to get in English words, just so they are exposed to words the whole time /.../ In fifth grade they are forced to use it when they have teachers who speak only English /.../ It becomes more natural for them to speak English, I think, when they really get an English-speaking teacher>

Erika's colleague Bert, a SwMI teacher, echoed this sentiment, stating that although students got English in 'regular' schools, he did not feel that they got it in a natural way there.

Students also felt that they were learning more English than they had in their previous schools, as there was less use of Swedish in English classes taught by native English-speaking teachers. One student, Nea, explained it in terms of hearing and speaking more English:

Excerpt 3. Interview in Grade 6 with Nea, a student

> *man lär sig mycket mera engelska, om man vill liksom kunna bra engelska /.../ för att man pratar engelska, typ ganska mycket /.../ och man hör engelska hela tiden*

> <you learn a lot more English, if you like want to know good English /.../ because you speak English, like pretty much /.../ and you hear English all the time>

Another student, Tanja, stated that she had surpassed a friend at her former school in terms of English proficiency thanks to the EMI programme. Likewise, the SwMI teacher Barbro mentioned a former student who, after changing to a different school, had achieved the highest grade in English without any effort.

While students and staff alike saw the increased exposure to English as beneficial to students' language learning, the SwMI teachers expressed the belief that being forced to use the language with the native English-speaking teachers developed students' speaking skills. As Erika pointed out, while students could revert to using Swedish with Swedish-speaking teachers such as herself, this was not an option with the English-speaking teachers who did not know Swedish. Mike, one of the EMI teachers, believed that using a language was the best way to learn it, describing his own previous experiences of being forced to use another language to communicate when living abroad. Sarah, an EMI Art teacher, explained that students had 'no choice but to try to communicate' with her in English. This interaction with the EMI teachers thus provided a linguistic environment that was believed to promote language development (Long, 1996).

3.1.2 Swedish as a means of support

Although English was the language of instruction in Science and Mathematics in Grades 5 and 6, the use of Swedish in peer interaction provided support for students who struggled with English, as more proficient students could facilitate communication with the English-speaking teachers. For example, when explanations of difficult concepts were not understood by some of the students, the EMI teacher Ellen explained that she recruited help from their classmates: 'I try to get a friend of theirs to explain it to them in Swedish'. EMI teachers were thus afforded the opportunity to draw on some students' bilingual competence in Swedish and English for clarification purposes in subjects such as Science (see Toth & Paulsrud, 2017), as well as to encourage participation from less proficient

students. Likwise, the SSL teacher Rana encouraged students to make connections between Swedish and their mother tongues, as she believed in demonstrating the value of the students' full range of linguistic resources.

3.2 Constraints in the EMI programme

While students' use of Swedish in English-medium subjects was generally perceived as a resource in solving communication problems, this was not the case for all EMI teachers. For example, during a Grade 5 Art lesson with the EMI teacher Sarah, some students chose to discuss the assignment in Swedish amongst themselves, rather than asking Sarah for clarification of her instructions for an assignment. However, they were reprimanded for their use of Swedish in Sarah's class, as described below:

Excerpt 4. Fieldnotes

> When students are heard speaking Swedish, Sarah [EMI teacher] reminds them, 'English please, boys and girls. Maybe you've forgotten in the weeks we haven't seen each other, we speak English in Art class. We speak it to each other and we speak it to me.' Students resume working silently.

The students were thus silenced, their utterances limited to mostly whispered requests and responses in Swedish to their classmates.

3.2.1 Communication and comprehension difficulties

In addition to the English-only policy in Art, other communication difficulties arose due to some EMI teachers' limited knowledge of Swedish. The SwMI teacher Frank explained that he and his Swedish-speaking colleagues occasionally had to aid the English-speaking staff in providing information to students and parents in Swedish.

Excerpt 5. Interview in Grade 6 with Frank, a SwMI teacher

> *jag får ju många gånger, ge dom, egentligen såna här frågor som dom borde få från sina egna mentorer, men då får jag ta det på svenska, som 'här är det som gäller för veckan, det är det här som ni ska veta nu' /.../ ibland vid utvecklingssamtal så får man ställa upp som svensk lärare, å sitta med som tolk, bara för att tolka från engelska till svenska till föräldrarna /.../ Vi som svenska lärare, vi ser ju på ett annat sätt, i och med hur vi själva är uppfostrade i svensk skola, mot dom engelska lärarna som kommer utifrån, från dom engelska skolsystem*

> <I often have to give them [the students] these kind of questions that they should get from their own mentors, but then I have to take it in Swedish, like 'Here is what is going on this week, this is what you need to know now' /.../ sometimes at development talks you have to help out as a Swedish teacher, and be along as a translator, just to translate from English to Swedish for the parents /.../ As Swedish teachers, we see things differently, as we ourselves were raised in the Swedish school system, compared to the English teachers who come from outside, from the English school systems>

Frank mentioned that students also turned to him for help with various social issues, as they preferred to discuss these issues in Swedish rather than using English with EMI teachers.

Comprehension was another difficulty for some of the students, particularly with regard to English-medium Science. Although the school provided after-school support for Science as well as for other subjects, the language of these support sessions was determined by the instructional language used by the teachers.

Excerpt 6. Fieldnotes

> As part of their contract, teachers are available after school during help sessions, in which students have the opportunity to ask for further explanations of the lesson content. Help sessions for subjects taught in Swedish are held in Swedish by Swedish-speaking teachers, and help sessions for those subjects taught in English are held in English by English-speaking teachers.

Students thus did not receive subject support through Swedish (nor any other language aside from English) in EMI subjects. As the SwMI teacher Karin pointed out, 'those teachers who have them in Science, for example, and Math /…/ don't speak Swedish /…/ there is no extra back door that you [as a Swedish-speaking student] can open up when you don't understand, because the person standing there doesn't speak Swedish'. The native English-speaking teachers' lack of knowledge of Swedish thus posed a challenge when it came to explaining difficult concepts to students. As the student Bachan pointed out, understanding Science in English became a double burden.

Excerpt 7. Interview in Grade 6 with Bachan, a student

> *alltså jag har fortfarande lite svårt med engelska, å när jag ändå har svårt med engelska OCH NO, då blir det ännu svårare för mig å förstå det. Å när man frågar henne [NO-läraren Ellen] igen så här, 'Vad menade du?' då förklarar hon så här jättedåligt*

> <I still have a little trouble with English, and since I have trouble with English AND Science, it's even more difficult for me to understand it. And when you ask her [the EMI Science teacher Ellen] again, like 'What did you mean?' then she explains it like really badly>

The SwMI teacher Barbro stated that language gaps were an even greater issue for some newly arrived students, who had limited proficiency in both languages of instruction.

Excerpt 8. Interview in Grade 6 with Barbro, a SwMI teacher

> *vi har elever som har inte svenska som förstaspråk, å inte engelska som förstaspråk. Dom kanske har sorani, eller arabiska, eller persiska. Å vissa av dom här är nyanlända /…/ å har dom inte då ens svenskan, å inte har engelskan, då blir ju svenska /…/ det första andra språket, om man säger så /…/ å då kan vi inte ens förklara engelskan, om man inte kan svenska*

> <we do have students who don't have Swedish as their first language, nor English as their first language. They may have Sorani, or Arabic, or Persian. And some of these are newly arrived /…/ and if they don't even have Swedish, and don't have English, then Swedish becomes /…/ the first second language, so to speak. /…/ and then we can't even explain the English, if you don't know Swedish>

Although Barbro believed that many students did well in the English-medium environment, she felt that knowledge of at least one of the languages of

instruction was needed. She explained that although the school provided a number of support structures (such as the after-school subject support), it could nonetheless be a burden for newly arrived students to be learning both languages of instruction while trying to process the content. The newly arrived students in the class stated that they spent a substantial amount of time studying at home, where they received help from their parents. However, such help was not available to all of the students in the class.

In addition to comprehension issues, many students had difficulty expressing themselves with clarity in English, particularly in Science. When Tahire, a student, had trouble understanding, she often felt unable to formulate her question to Ellen, an EMI Science teacher. Tahire sometimes turned to a classmate for help, but she generally preferred to wait and see if someone else asked. Consequently, this meant limited opportunities for her to demonstrate her knowledge in oral interaction with the teacher. Although her classmate Hadar was frequently asked to assist with translations or explanations, he could see that it was problematic for those of his classmates who struggled with English, as their communication with the teacher suffered.

3.2.2 Limited development of subject-specific language in Swedish

While content comprehension and communication in English were at times challenging, teachers and students alike also mentioned concerns about how the English-medium content instruction would affect students' development of subject-specific language in Swedish. Although key vocabulary terms were provided in Swedish as well as English (see excerpt 9 below), the EMI teacher Ellen pointed out that students did not work with the terms in Swedish, and thus missed opportunities for repetition that could have helped them develop their knowledge in both languages.

Excerpt 9. Interview in Grade 6 with Ellen, an EMI teacher

> there's an emphasis on keywords /.../ in English and Swedish, as like one of the big things they want to make sure students are getting both vocabulary, I guess. But I don't know how effective that is /.../ I'm only speaking in English, every time they're hearing the words, they're hearing the English words, so they might see the Swedish words once, or write it down once, but they're not sort of getting that repetition with the Swedish words /.../ There are definitely students that wouldn't know certain words in Swedish /.../ that you would normally learn in grade six Math /.../ I   can definitely see that being a problem for them in the future

Several of Ellen's Swedish colleagues confirmed her concerns. Paula, a SwMI teacher, mentioned that she and her colleagues had heard from teachers at upper secondary school that students who had attended the English-medium programme were unable to keep up in Swedish-medium subjects that had been taught in English, such as Science. Her colleague, Bert, agreed:

Excerpt 10. Interview in Grade 5 with Bert, a SwMI teacher

> *Ja, vi befinner oss i Sverige, å det negativa kan ju vara att, när dom här eleverna försvinner från, från [den här skolan], å går ut till gymnasiet, då kan det vara termer å ord som, som dom tappar, när dom kommer till gymnasiet. Nu ska det ju inte vara så, därför att det ska finnas keywords, å det*

ska finnas ehm... Ja, en form av ordlistor... Eh... som ja, som bygger upp eh elevernas naturliga förmåga, då. Vet inte riktigt om det funkar riktigt

<yes, we are in Sweden and the negative part can be that when these students leave [this school] and go to upper secondary school, then there can be terms and words that, that they lose, when they get to upper secondary school. Now, it's not supposed to be like that, because there are supposed to be keywords, and there are supposed to be uh... yeah, a kind of vocabulary lists... uh... that well, that builds up the students' natural ability, then. Don't know if it really works>

Bert's statement, as well as those of his colleagues, indicated a question as to the efficacy of the instructional approach in terms of promoting students' bilingual development in the various subjects. As they pointed out, simply exposing the students to Swedish keywords was not necessarily enough.

Teachers' concerns about students' future studies in Swedish were echoed by the students, such as Bachan's revelation below:

Excerpt 11. Interview in Grade 6 with Bachan, a student

min mamma vill att jag ska byta skola nu igen nästa år /.../ för att i nian, eh, eftersom vi lärt oss allting på engelska nu, på gymnasiet är allting på svenska /.../ det är så här lite svårt å komma in också för det är så många /.../ Mamma, hon har vänner som har haft svårt, alltså deras barn har haft svårt i gymnasiet nu med ämnena som är på engelska

<my mom wants me to change schools again next year /... / because in ninth grade, uh, since we've learned everything in English now, at upper secondary school everything is in Swedish /.../ it's like a little hard to get in [to an English-medium upper secondary school] because there are so many [applicants] /.../ Mom, she has friends who have had a hard time, that is their children have had a hard time at [Swedish-medium] upper secondary school now with subjects that are in English [at this school] >

Although Bachan wanted to stay at the school for another year, she agreed with her mother that it was important to consider how the more or less English-only approach in certain subjects would impact her Swedish-medium studies at upper secondary school. Her classmate Hadar also felt that they should have been learning each subject in both languages, as he explained below:

Excerpt 12. Interview in Grade 6 with Hadar, a student

ibland är det, alltså när jag kan orden på engelska, men inte svenska å så där /.../ å så då måste jag använda Google Translate /.../ jag tycker jag borde kunna dom på svenska och engelska båda, men jag kunde bara på engelska /.../ det är typ så här NO ord som man använder på NO och på matte ibland /.../ på NO-lektionen får vi bara prata engelska, å på svenskalektionen får vi bara prate svenska

<yeah, sometimes it's that, that is when I know the words in English, but not in Swedish and stuff /.../ then I have to use Google Translate /.../ I think I should know them in Swedish and English, both, but I only knew them in English /.../ It's like Science words that you use in Science and Math sometimes /.../ in Science we are only allowed to speak English, and in Swedish we are only allowed to speak Swedish >

Hadar's classmate Namo agreed, saying that although he knew many mathematic terms in English, he did not know them in Swedish. Students and

staff thus indicated that the programme's lack of focus on use of subject-specific language in Swedish could constrain students' opportunities in their future studies.

3.2.3 Limited space for languages other than English and Swedish

With regard to languages other than English and Swedish, participants indicated that they had no place in the mainstream classroom, as they were generally not permitted due to concerns that students would then make inappropriate comments. Meanwhile, although many multilingual students wanted to maintain their mother tongues through MT, this possibility was constrained by factors such as the number of students who qualified. Languages with too few students, as was the case for Yasmin, did not meet the qualification.

Excerpt 13. Interview in Grade 6 with Yasmin, a student

> *Så då borde man liksom ha alla dom språken som alla har. För att hela skolan är ju bara arab- liksom arabiska mest, alltså. Om dom är från ut- en annan [sic] land, då är det bara arabiska. Det är jättenågra från mitt land*
>
> <so then you should like have all the languages that everyone has. Because the whole school is just Arab- like mostly Arabic, that is. If they are from another country, then it's just Arabic. There are really few from my country. /.../ But we should still like have a teacher who talks with us and writes with us, like our language, so we don't forget it>

As Yasmin explained, 'larger' languages such as Arabic had sufficiently large numbers of students and were thus offered in MT, whereas her language did not qualify.

4 Discussion and implications

The views expressed by the study's participants revealed that English was highly valued, and that they considered the EMI programme to be a means to increased English proficiency. However, while some students gained confidence in their ability to navigate the English-medium content, others continued to struggle with this, in some cases choosing to leave the school. As most teachers did not have training in second language perspectives, there was little explicit focus on the linguistic demands in the content (Swain & Johnson, 1997). In the present EMI context, this could thus have implications for students' learning of content as well as language development.

4.1 Content learning

As content-based approaches involve students learning content in an additional language, it is clear that teachers need to be aware of the language demands of their subjects in order to provide support for developing students' academic language proficiency (see Cummins, 2008; see also Lo, 2017; Skinnari & Bovellan, 2016). In the absence of affordances such as explicit instructional strategies for scaffolding content learning in an additional language, students who have limited proficiency in the instructional language have an added burden in processing cognitively demanding subjects as well as demonstrating their

knowledge (Floris, 2014). Further, as young learners have generally had little instruction in the target language prior to the content-based programme, they may have difficulty with comprehension (Otwinowska & Forýs, 2017; Pižorn, 2017). In this study, content instruction by native English-speaking teachers was a constraint for some students in terms of comprehension and communication.

4.2 Language development

Studies have shown that content teachers seldom focus on language issues (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016), as language has traditionally been the domain of language teachers. Content-based approaches are often premised on the underlying assumption that exposure to and interaction in the target language promote its development among learners. This assumption was reflected in this study, as the interaction in English in the EMI context was perceived by staff as an affordance (van Lier, 2008) that contributed to students' increased confidence in speaking English (see Coyle, 2013; Hüttner et al., 2013).

In the EMI lessons in this study, Swedish was represented by key vocabulary terms and oral student interaction, but no particular attention was paid to stimulating students' use and development of subject-specific language in Swedish. Thus, familiarity with English terms came at the expense of Swedish in English-medium subjects (see Lim Falk, 2015). In terms of students' future Swedish-medium studies, this was a matter of concern. As languages other than English and Swedish were not allowed in the mainstream classroom, multilingual students were not given the opportunity to use all of their linguistic resources. The school's focus on English (and to a lesser extent Swedish) to the exclusion of students' other languages therefore risked invisibilising minoritised languages such as those mother tongues spoken by multilingual students (see Skinnari & Nikula, 2017). Prevailing local ideologies privileging English (see Toth, 2017, 2018) thus conflicted with plurilingual aims endorsed by supranational policy documents.

4.3 Future directions

Although the beliefs expressed by participants in this case study are not necessarily representative of staff and students in other EMI programmes, these findings may nonetheless have implications for EMI educators in Sweden and other contexts, as well as with other age groups. Among other things, they demonstrate the necessity for instructional approaches such as translanguaging that incorporate multiple linguistic resources (see for example Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Lin, 2015; Toth & Paulsrud, 2017) in order to promote students' content learning and multilingual development. As this study focused on a small sample of teachers and students in Swedish primary EMI, it would also be of interest to explore the parents' perspectives, as they are generally the actors behind decisions to enrol students in primary EMI programmes. In addition to this, as the present study did not include data on student outcomes, future investigations could explore the connections between beliefs and learning outcomes. More studies are thus needed in order to gain a broader picture of Swedish primary EMI and the conditions for learning in such programmes.

As Leung (2005) points out, 'successful outcome of second/additional language learning cannot be taken for granted' (p. 250). It follows that

stakeholders and policymakers who are involved in EMI need to be aware that English in fact does not come 'for free', and instead ask themselves what can be done about the challenges associated with learning through an additional language, in order to provide optimal conditions for learning both content and languages. Teacher training, recruitment policies, and professional development that reflect an awareness of these challenges are therefore important considerations for such programmes.

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Appendix 1. Transcription key.

/…/	= text has been deleted
text	= word or utterance in English
text	= word or utterance in Swedish
<text>	= English translation of utterance
[text]	= added information about what is happening (not speech)
TEXT	= emphasised word or utterance
…	= pause or trailing off of speech