The Intersection of English Education Policy in Sweden and Teacher Agency

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Abstract

Researchers have examined how teachers come to make sense of language policies in their practice. These studies explored the relationship between language policies and teacher agency in various contexts. The aim of the study was to explore English upper secondary school teachers' agency in Sweden, since the Swedish educational language policy expects English teachers to include various functions that English serves in societal domains and to interpret and make sense of the policy locally. Qualitative methods were employed for this purpose. Semi-structured interviews were employed to interview five teachers and inductive qualitative content analysis was used to analyze their answers. The results show that, as in other studies, teachers can feel constrained by the policy documents, adjust the syllabus because of their personal beliefs, and adapt their practices due to local policies at their school. Additionally, the results suggest that there might be a risk in the future that students who are not proficient in English might be locked out of certain societal domains in Sweden. In conclusion, by being affected by these various factors while interpreting the educational language policy, the interviewed upper secondary school English teachers have created diverse and varied local operationalizations of the Swedish educational language policy for English.

Keywords: policy implementation, teacher agency, language policy, LP, educational language policy

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1. Introduction

In Sweden, teachers are expected to interpret and operationalize the educational language policy locally (Hult, 2018). This might affect the ways that the educational language policy is put into practice, since it opens for several valid interpretations of the syllabus, even though the end result might be different from teacher to teacher.

Furthermore, scholars have in recent years started to examine how teachers come to make sense of language policies in their teaching. For example, teachers have been found to be constrained by top-down policies (see Farrell & Guz, 2019; Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011), and teachers justify practices, even though they go against the prescribed language policy, through personal beliefs (e.g., Bloch, Guzula, & Nkence, 2010; Valdiviezo, 2010). Teachers also react and respond to various social and cultural realities in their contexts, such as speaking with students in their mother tongue even though the language for instruction is another one (e.g., Ambatchew, 2010; Hélot, 2010; Mohanty, Panda, & Pal, 2010; Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

However, research still needs to be done to verify the transferability of these findings to other educational contexts and whether these factors take a different shape in these different contexts or not. In addition, Phillipson (2006, 2008, 2009) argues that the English language serves specific functions in various social and cultural domains. Thus, there is a need to explore whether teachers are aware of this fact and whether they adjust their teaching of English for such purposes or not, especially since the English syllabus in Sweden requires that teachers engage with multiple functions of English (Hult, 2017).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to analyze the perceptions of English teachers at upper secondary schools[1] in Sweden to explore how they make sense of the syllabus and the functions of English in their teaching. The following research questions guide the study:

1. How do teachers of English in Sweden interpret the upper secondary school syllabus for English?

2. What functions of English, both locally and globally, do English teachers in Sweden identify?

3. What factors affect the choices English teachers make regarding what to include in their teaching?

4. In what ways do teachers of English in Sweden describe putting the language policy in practice, and what examples do they give for their practice?

In order to explore these questions, I interviewed five upper secondary school English teachers in Sweden. A qualitative content analysis was then used to analyze their responses with a deductively generated interview guide and an inductive coding. The teachers were asked to identify different functions of English and to interpret parts of the policy documents while reconstructing their pedagogical practice. The results suggest that the interviewed English teachers from southern Sweden face similar challenges and make use of similar mechanisms to adjust their practice as teachers in other language policy contexts do. This includes factors such as feeling constrained by the policy documents, adjusting the syllabus because of personal beliefs, and adapting ones practice due to institutional motivation. The results also suggest that there is a perceived risk that some students might be disenfranchised from taking part in certain Swedish societal and cultural domains due to their lack of proficiency in English.

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[1] Upper secondary school is the term that will be used in this essay for the Swedish term *gymnasieskola*. The *gymnasieskola* consists of both vocational and college preparatory programs.

What follows is a previous research section that first defines language policy and then explores theories and previous research on teachers as active policymakers. A theory section follows and is based on Phillipson's (2006, 2008, 2009) theory on the functions of English and empirical research by Hult (2017) on Phillipson's proposed functions extended to language policy and the Swedish educational language policy. Then the methods for data collection and analysis are presented. Finally, the findings are presented.

2. Previous Research on Language Policy and Teacher Agency

Language policy research has seen a shift from researching language policy from a top-down perspective to a perspective where other actors than the nation state are examined as potential agents of language policy. This is why one can conceptualize language policy in an expanded sense, where language policies are understood to be complex and the results of several factors. For example, various actors can interpret the top-down policy differently, discourses surrounding the policy can affect the way it is implemented, and there can be language policies rooted in the local contexts (see Johnson, 2013; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996; Shohamy, 2006). Moreover, within an expanded theoretical framework of language policy, some scholars have highlighted teachers as key actors in how language policies are negotiated and altered in educational practice (Menken & García, 2010a; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996).

2.1 Conceptualizing Language Policy

According to Johnson (2013), language policy (henceforth, LP) does not have a universally accepted definition. In fact, there are several definitions from different scholars and they emphasize certain aspects of LP in their definitions (Johnson, 2013). Therefore, in this essay, I have opted to base my definition on Johnson (2013) and Shohamy (2006).

Johnson (2013) defines LP as "a policy mechanism that impacts the structure, function, use, or acquisition of language" (p. 9). This definition, Johnson (2013) notes, includes official top-down policy text and unofficial, covert, de facto, and implicit practices, that are all connected to beliefs and practices on language. Unlike overt and explicit policies, which are either written or spoken, implicit language policies are policies that are not enshrined in official policy and still occur, whereas covert policies are policies that are intentionally hidden by either a top-down or bottom-up actor (Johnson, 2013). Policies can either be *de jure* or *de facto* policies or both. The *de jure* policies are the explicit and official policy texts, whereas the *de*

facto policies are the policies that are observable in practice, regardless of whether these practices are enshrined in official policy texts (Johnson, 2013; Shohamy, 2006).

Consequently, a LP is not only the result of governing bodies. Johnson (2013) also argues that LP creation is an active process where various actors can shape how any given policy is put into practice. Therefore, a multidimensional view of LP is embraced, where several actors, beyond the nation state, can participate in the LP process. Similarly, Shohamy (2006) states that

> LP can exist at all levels of decision making about languages and with regard to a varieties of entities, as small as individuals and families, making decisions about the languages to be used by individuals, at home, in public places, as well as in larger entities, such as schools, cities, regions, nations, territories or in the global context. (p. 48)

Thus, both Shohamy (2006) and Johnson (2013) argue that language policies can exist at all levels of society. Additionally, Johnson (2013) suggests that policy texts are affected by language ideologies and policy discourses that exist in their socially and culturally situated contexts (Johnson, 2013). Accordingly, based on these sources, I also define LP in an expanded sense, where the factors discussed above are held to be true.

This expanded definition of LP allows for examining the agency of actors who are involved in the various levels of the LP process. One layer in this is the educational context and the actors who are involved in that process make up the educational language policy. However, in terms of teacher agency to create *de facto* policies, Shohamy (2006) argues that, in most cases, teachers and other educational staff unquestionably enact the top-down mandated LP and ideology that is present in curricula, textbooks, and other material. Shohamy (2006) further argues that this is a result of teachers not being part of the LP creation process.

2.1.1 Language Policy as Negotiated with Ideological and Implementational Spaces

In contrast to Shohamy (2006), other scholars have highlighted teacher agency as a key factor in LP negotiation. Menken and García (2010a) argue that teachers have an especially crucial role in LP implementation since they, in their classrooms, have the final say on its implementation. Menken and García (2010a) comment that "educators *always* seem to negotiate the language education policies they enact in their schools" (emphasis in original, p. 2), and that "educators at the local level hold as much responsibility for policymaking as do government officials" (pp. 3-4).

In the same fashion, Ricento and Hornberger (1996) argue that teachers are at the center of the LP process. Ricento and Hornberger (1996) divide the LP process into layers where legislation and political processes make up the outer layer and moving towards the center are states and supranational agencies, then institutions, and, at the center, teachers. According to Ricento and Hornberger (1996), policies travel from one layer to another and, in turn, are interpreted and re-interpreted by the different actors as they move across these layers. This, they argue, affects the end result of how a policy is put into practice (see also Hult, 2014, pp. 165-168). In other words, a policy is filtered through the various actors and layers with the end result being several, sometimes competing, *de facto* policies (Menken & García, 2010b).

These processes of interpretation and re-interpretation are linked to the concept of implementational and ideological spaces. Ideological and implementational spaces are the opportunities that educators can use to strengthen multilingual education in their teaching (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). As argued by Johnson and Freeman (2010),

> there is often implementational space that local educators and language planners can work
> to their advantage and ideological space in schools and communities, which opens
> educational and social possibilities for bilingual learners and potentially challenges
> dominant/hegemonic educational discourses (pp. 14-15).

Consequently, ideological and implementational spaces in a LP can lead to certain practices in teaching depending on how individual educators make use of these spaces and what spaces they open or close with their own interpretations (see Hornberger & Johnson, 2007; Johnson, 2013; Johnson & Freeman, 2010).

As an illustration of implementational and ideological spaces creating *de facto* competing policies, Hornberger and Johnson (2007) explored how Title III in the US federal *No Child Left Behind* policy came to be negotiated by two administrators at the school district of Philadelphia. The first administrator came to create ideological and implementational space for developing an additive bilingual policy at the school district. However, the next administrator came to close that space, and instead created ideological and implementational space for a policy that focuses on transitioning bilingual student into English speaking classrooms. Both administrators leveraged Title III in *No Child Left Behind* and personal beliefs to justify the LP that they created (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). Thus, even if the LP from the top-down might seem non-negotiable, the interpretations from the individual educators affected how it came to be appropriated and operationalized locally.

2.2 Factors Affecting Teacher Negotiation of LP

Thus far, the discussion has focused on highlighting that teachers do, in fact, serve a role in the LP process. However, if teachers are "(re)constructing language policies in schools … and ultimately implement their own" (Zakharia, 2010, p. 162), then this raises the question of what factors contribute to the choices that teachers make. Factors identified in the previous research are that teachers adjust their practice based on top-down policies, their personal beliefs, experiences, and reactions to local social and cultural contexts.

2.2.1 Top-down Mandated Policies

Although this study does not embrace the view that teachers are mere implementers of top-down policies, a top-down LP can limit teacher choices (Hornberger & Johnson, 2007). Likewise, a top-down LP can "sculpt and/or normalize educational practices" (Johnson & Freeman, 2010, p. 14). The effects of legislative LP (such as curricula) should not be underestimated because nation states support laws through the judicial system and punish those who do not follow it (Shohamy, 2006). Moreover, states have access to resources that are not available to other actors engaged in LP, such as operationalizing a LP *through* legislation (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). For example, Farrell and Guz (2019) observed how a teacher, even when they did not support the practice, came to implement extensive reading in their classrooms because it was mandated by the syllabus. Likewise, Palmer and Snodgrass Rangel (2011) observed, in their study of the effects of high stakes testing in bilingual classrooms in Texas, that all teachers felt pressured to adjust their teaching to better prepare their students for the tests mandated by the new official policies. Therefore, the effects that top-down official policy texts potentially have on teachers should not be ignored.

2.2.2 Personal Views and Beliefs Affecting Language Policies

Another factor that affects practitioners are their personal beliefs. Studies (e.g., Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Farrell & Guz, 2019; Li, 2013) that explore teachers' stated beliefs and their actual classroom practices have shown that practices are sometimes highly affected by stated beliefs and sometimes diverge from them. Farrell and Guz (2019) noted how the teacher in their study, even though they were aware of research that state the benefits of incorporating students' first languages, came to legitimize an English-only policy. This was due to their personal belief of the necessity to immerse oneself to acquire mastery in a language (Farrell & Guz, 2019). Similarly, Li (2013) observed that the teacher in their study came to focus on communicative approaches in their teaching instead of translation based ones due to their own

held belief that the ability to successfully converse with other people is the primary motivation for learning a new language.

Personal experiences and beliefs affecting teachers can be observed in relation to teacher interpretations of LP as well. Teachers negotiating LP entails that there is a leeway for interpretation where teachers who are supposed to enact what is the same official LP, might interpret and/or enact it differently. For example, Hult (2018) explored Swedish pre-service teachers' interpretations of the English syllabus in group work projects. One teacher came to note that their group dynamic left a lot to be desired, which Hult (2018) suggests shows how the pre-service teacher had received direct experience of how strongly held personal beliefs can "sometimes lead to interpretive divergence or even deadlock" (p. 255).

Another example of interpretive divergence can be found in Valdiviezo's (2010) study. She explored how bilingual teachers in three indigenous communities in Peru negotiated a contradictory LP for revitalization of the indigenous Quechua language. While there was a genuine interest in wanting to contribute to revitalization of the indigenous Quechua language, many teachers came to close implementational spaces for revitalization by subscribing to the contradictory LP practice of borrowing terms from Spanish and translating them into Quechua (Valdiviezo, 2010). This was a result of the teachers personally holding deficit beliefs of the Quechua language (Valdiviezo, 2010). However, other teachers in the study came to open implementational spaces for Quechua revitalization (Valdiviezo, 2010). For example, one teacher was motivated by their own beliefs and sought out vocabulary from the indigenous community to use in their teaching (Valdiviezo, 2010).

Similarly to the teachers who held deficit beliefs of Quechua, Bloch et al. (2010) observed, in a South African context, that some teachers taught mathematics in English because they did not recognize that Xhosa could or should be used for such purposes (Bloch et al., 2010). Another finding was that one teacher used posters in English since the handwritten posters in

Xhosa were not seen as professional as the English ones (Bloch et al., 2010). Thus, they justified their practices with their own beliefs and opinions on the differences between the use of Xhosa and English in education.

2.2.3 Language Policies due to Local Realities

In addition to making choices based on their personal beliefs, teachers also adjust their teaching as a result of local realities. Teachers legitimize adaptations of LP based on the needs of their students. For example, as already mentioned, Palmer and Snodgrass Rangel (2011) found that teachers were constrained by a high-accountability testing LP; however, the teachers in their study also tried to add elements of authentic teaching in their classrooms. The teachers actively tried to find opportunities to move away from the constraints created by teaching to the test (Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011).

The phenomenon of adjusting teaching as a result of students' needs has been observed amongst teachers who are new to the profession. For example, Hélot (2010) studied two student teachers in France negotiating the rigid French LP in their local bilingual communities. Both teachers drew on their own bilingual backgrounds to accommodate the needs of their bilingual students, and, in turn, felt obligated to break away from an internalized French-only policy. Hélot (2010) notes that the results indicate that even teachers who do not have much teaching experience negotiate language policies to implement their own LP.

Other practices that teachers have been observed to use to accommodate to their students' local realities is the use of languages in creative ways. For example, the use of code-switching and translation has been observed in several contexts. This has been observed in the linguistically diverse Ethiopian classrooms of Addis Abeba (Ambatchew, 2010), and schools for minority language communities in rural Vietnam (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). In the same fashion, Mohanty et al. (2010) noted that, in India, teachers from a school with English as the language of instruction and teachers who taught English to minority language students both

came to incorporate local languages in their teaching. Moreover, in the case of the multilingual practices in minority language students' classrooms, Mohanty et al. (2010) argue that these teachers "defend the linguistic (and cultural) hybridity of the classrooms as inevitable and necessary in the real-life local context" (p. 227). The teachers in these studies work in direct opposition to the locally mandated languages of instruction to accommodate what they believe are the pedagogical needs of their students as a result of the social realities they live in.

Besides incorporating students' local languages in their teaching, teachers can also adapt LP by changing what they teach in a certain language. For example, Zakharia (2010) explored how teachers in Lebanon at a school in Beirut negotiated the LP of the bilingual education system, which is centralized nationally but decentralized locally. With institutional support from the school, the teachers used implementational and ideological spaces to adjust their teaching of French and Arabic fuṣḥá with topics that relate to the students' daily lives and concerns (Zakharia, 2010). Thus, the teaching recontextualized the languages for local purposes; the teachers moved away from idealization of French culture and gave Arabic fuṣḥá relevance beyond its religious functions (Zakharia, 2010). As a result, the teachers altered the LP and resisted the top-down ideology that was enshrined in it.

The examples in these two sections exemplify how LP can come to take different shapes when put into practice. Teachers are not mere implementers of policy. As shown, there is potential to alter or resist a LP when it is put into practice. Moreover, teachers adapt their practices, effectively creating several language policies. Teachers open up implementational and ideological spaces, sometimes leading to different practices within the scope of explicit LP. Yet, teachers can also be the ones to close such spaces. LP processes are complex, and teachers participate in this arena where policies are interpreted, negotiated, and practiced.

3. Theoretical Foundation: Functions of English

Apart from embracing the concepts of LP as negotiated and teachers as active agents within LP negotiation, the present study also applies the theory of functions of English proposed by Phillipson (2006, 2008, 2009) as its theoretical lens. Phillipson's model is based on his critique of the concept of English as a *lingua franca* and presents a model for conceptualizing the functions English serves in society. Additionally, Hult (2017) has shown that Phillipson's model is a useful tool for analyzing English educational policies to examine what implementational and ideological spaces are present within them. The present study builds upon Hult's research by moving the focus from the discourse in the top-down policies to the interpretations of individual teachers and how these put the educational language policies in Sweden into practice.

3.1 Functions of English

To understand Phillipson's critique, one needs to have a basic grasp of the concept English as a *lingua franca.* When referring to English as a *lingua franca*, it "generally seems to imply that the language is a neutral instrument for 'international' communication between speakers who do not share a mother tongue" (Phillipson, 2008, p. 250). However, there is also a research field of English as a *lingua franca*. The scholars active within English as a *lingua franca* research study speakers who do not have English as their first language and who often use English to communicate with other speakers who do not share their first language (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011). Furthermore, English as a *lingua franca* research moves away from using 'native-speakers' of English as the frame of correctness (see Jenkins et al., 2011; Modiano, 2009).

Phillipson critiques both the general use of the term English as a *lingua franca* and the research field of English as a *lingua franca*. Phillipson (2009) argues that the term English as a

lingua franca makes the false assumption that "the language is neutral, free of cultural ties, and serves all equally well" (p. 338). Instead of English being a neutral *lingua franca*, Phillipson (2008, 2009) proposes that English more aptly can be described as a *lingua economica, academica, cultura, emotiva,* and *frankensteinia*.

English functions as a *lingua economica* when it is used in business, for promoting goods and services, and for promoting neoliberal free-market corporate interests (Phillipson, 2008). English also functions as a *lingua economica* when globalization from a neoliberal perspective is promoted through it (Phillipson, 2006, 2009). Phillipson (2006, 2008, 2009) further suggests that English can be used for scientific and educational purposes, such as using English for conducting and participating in research or as the language needed to partake in higher education, and, as a result, English functions as a *lingua academica*. Thirdly, English can function to promote cultural and social norms of societies, nation-states, organizations and social classes (Phillipson, 2006, 2009). There is a risk that these norms end up being Anglo-American cultural and social norms, since the US and UK serve as strong actors who promote English language learning worldwide (see Phillipson, 2008). When cultural and social norms are promoted through English, it functions as a *lingua cultura* (Phillipson, 2006, 2009). Fourthly, English is defined as a *lingua emotiva* when it is used as the language of producing and identifying with popular culture from Hollywood movies, the music industry, and more (Phillipson, 2006, 2009). Additionally, as a *lingua emotiva*, English is used for consumerism and pursuit of personal pleasure (Phillipson, 2008). Finally, if the spread of English affects the use of other local languages subtractively, then English functions as a *lingua frankensteinia* (Phillipson, 2008, 2009).

3.2 Functions of English Extended to Language Policy

Hult (2017) extends Phillipson's framework to explore "what implementational and ideological spaces for English teaching exist in a curricular document" (p. 268). In his analysis, Hult focuses on the relevant LP documents for Swedish upper secondary schools.

In this expanded framework, *lingua academica* relates to how language policies address the need for English in academic contexts and the language conventions appropriate for academic contexts (Hult, 2017). *Lingua economica*, Hult (2017) argues, is concerned with the importance of learning English "for the advancement of neoliberal ideas" (p. 268). This involves, for example, preparing students as competitors in global working sectors such as finance or science and technology (Hult, 2017). Additionally, Hult (2017) notes that *lingua cultura* can be observed in an educational LP when the policy addresses the ownership of English amongst students and teachers, and the social and cultural contexts that the language is situated in (for example, the language being culturally situated in English dominant contexts or in other contexts). Similarly, *lingua emotiva* refers to what authentic materials are employed in teaching, the contexts these materials are derived from, and whether the policy allows for highlighting economic, social and political values inherent in the material (Hult, 2017). Finally, by analyzing whether the proposed aim of learning English is to additively or subtractively learn the language in relation to other languages in the educational LP, one can examine whether English serves the function of a *lingua frankensteinia*[2] or not (Hult, 2017).

Applying the extended theoretical framework on the Swedish syllabus for English and general curriculum, Hult (2017) observes how the syllabus and curriculum situates the functions of English in Sweden. *Lingua academica* and *lingua economica* do not receive much explicit

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[2] Hult (2017) uses the term *lingua tyrannosaura*, a term used in Phillipson (2006) and referenced in Phillipson (2008) based on Swales (as cited in Phillipson, 2006). However, in this study, the term *lingua frankensteinia* is employed since it is the term used in Phillipson (2008, 2009). Both terms compare English to a monster that threatens the existence of other languages in countries where English is historically not the first language.

attention in the syllabus; however, *lingua academica* and *lingua economica* are emphasized in the descriptions of the various college preparatory and vocational programs in the general curriculum (Hult, 2017). In contrast, Hult (2017) notes that *lingua cultura* and *lingua emotiva* receive considerable amount of attention in the syllabus. English is presented as a *lingua cultura* that includes the social and cultural contexts of the traditional bases of English but gives teachers the option to include post-colonial and other contexts as well (Hult, 2017). Additionally, English is also a *lingua cultura* embedded with Swedish values of globalization (Hult, 2017). In terms of *lingua emotiva*, Hult (2017) observed that it intersects with *lingua cultura* and that the implementational space is broad in scope, allowing for a vast variety of material from different cultural contexts to be used. However, Hult (2017) concludes that there is a risk that *lingua academica* and *lingua economica* functions "become overshadowed by sociocultural dimensions" (p. 277) in teaching since they are less prevalent in the syllabus.

4. Methodology

This study aims to expand the research in LP negotiation by exploring the concept of teacher agency and LP negotiation in a Swedish educational context. Since the educational language policy in Sweden, as mentioned earlier, expects teachers to operationalize it locally, teacher agency is central to the interpretations of the syllabus and should be explored. Semi-structured interviews were employed for data collection to explore this. The methodology begins by situating the study in the Swedish educational context and then discusses the method employed for data collection, the participants, the method for data analysis, and ends with a discussion about the strengths and limitations of the study.

4.1 The Swedish Educational Setting

The Swedish educational setting is one where the National Agency for Education publishes the general curricular documents and the syllabi for the various subjects on a national scale. The general curricular documents state the values that the school system should impart and the aims of the various vocational and college preparatory programs. Then there are the syllabi, where each subject has a syllabus of its own that highlights the courses within that subject. The syllabus document highlights the aim of the subject; the core content and knowledge requirements for each specific course are also in the syllabus. In this setting, the top-down educational LP could be said to consist of the syllabi for the various languages that are available for Swedish school students to learn, the aims that relate to language proficiency in their vocational or college preparatory program documents, and the choices that individual educators make.

However, the curricula and syllabi in Sweden are not in the form of course structures or lessons; the curricula and syllabi are in the form of "broad content parameters that are designed to be operationalized by teachers locally" (Hult, 2018, p. 250). In other words, teachers are

expected to interpret the current syllabus when they design and plan their lessons for content that they wish to teach (Hult, 2017). Thus, this opens for opportunities where teachers can interpret the syllabus differently and act upon it differently from one another, since there is space for maneuverability in the syllabus (Hult, 2018). The syllabus and general curricula leaves the implementational spaces and ideological spaces open for teachers to interpret and act upon, unlike the more rigid ones in other regions (e.g., Hélot, 2010; Nguyen & Bui, 2016).

Consequently, the syllabus places trust in the professional judgment of teachers to design relevant lessons and select relevant content for teaching, and teachers have a high degree of autonomy when it comes to interpretation and implementation of the LP. If teachers are encouraged to operationalize the Swedish syllabus locally, then it is of interest to know how these teachers come to make sense of the syllabus in their teaching.

4.2 Participants

English teachers at Swedish upper secondary schools were recruited to participate in this study. This was achieved through a purposive sampling strategy. A purposive or strategic (see Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015) sample is one that is handpicked by the researcher for a specific purpose to satisfy the needs of the study (Nunan, 1992; Seidman, 2006). This kind of sampling does not try to paint a representative image of the wider population from which it was sampled; it seeks participants who are most well suited to answer the research questions (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). I used a criteria-based strategy to identify who to include in the study. The criteria-based sampling is a purposive strategy that uses a set of criteria that are predetermined by the researcher to identify and recruit participants to answer the research questions (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). The criteria that were used in this study were that the participants had to be teaching at least one of the upper secondary English courses (English 5,6,7) and be employed at upper secondary schools in southern Sweden. As a result of this inclusive criteria, teachers of all levels of teaching experience were able to participate in

the study. The choice to include teachers from all levels of teaching experience was made to be able to compare the reflections of teachers who are early in their teaching career with those that have been teaching for several years.

After defining the criteria, the participants were recruited through email and telephone communication. Schools were contacted from four municipalities in southern Sweden using their online lists of upper secondary schools in their respective municipalities. Although I tried to get in contact with all schools in the respective municipalities, many did not respond, some were not possible to reach due to lack of contact information, and one did not offer the English courses at their school. These schools were therefore excluded. Both schools with college preparatory and vocational programs were contacted. The principals were first emailed and then called if they had not responded within a week. The principal either directly gave me their teachers' contact details or forwarded my initial email to their English teachers. After establishing contact with the individual teachers and explaining the purpose of the study, I arranged a date, time and place for the interviews to be held.

Worth mentioning is that two of the participants were not recruited through the formal recruitment process of asking the principal first. These participants were instead contacted directly due to personal connections with a contact at the school who gave me their contact details. It should also be noted that although one of the participants were, at the time of interview, teaching the introductory program for newly arrived migrants at their school, they were still included in the data because they were a licensed upper secondary school teacher and had taught the courses English 5 and English 6 during the previous semester. The participants and their characteristics, such as educational background, teaching experience, currently taught courses, and the type of school they are working at are presented in **Table 1**.

Participant	Educational background	Teaching experience	Courses	Type of School
Tobiasz	Master's in Higher Education from Malmö University	10 years	Eng 5, 6, 7	Private school with a digital and graphic design profile, aesthetic and technology programs
Klara	KPU[3] at Lund University	1 year	Introductory program for newly arrived students, previously Eng 5, 6.	Private school with natural sciences and social sciences programs
Eloise	Master's in Higher Education from Lund University and Kristianstad University	8 months	Eng 5, 6	Private school with a business profile, natural sciences, social sciences, and economics programs
Amanda	Currently VAL[4], has a Master's in Language and Linguistics from Lund University	3 years	Eng 5, 6	Private school with social sciences programs
Stephen	Master's in Higher Education from Malmö University	9 years	Eng 5, 6, 7	Private school with a business profile, social sciences and economics programs

Table 1. Participants' background information.

The participants were recruited from schools in southern Sweden. Each participant was given a pseudonym to ensure their anonymity. To ensure their anonymity, what municipality the teachers worked in is not listed and the profile of the school, at which they worked, is given instead of stating the name of the school. In total, there were five participants. Although deliberate efforts were made to try and include both public and private schools, all participants came from private schools because the public schools did not show interest in participating.

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[3] *Kompletterande pedagogisk utbildning* (KPU) is a higher education program specifically targeted at providing the pedagogical core subjects and teaching license for people who have studied other subjects at higher educations and want to become teachers.

[4] *Vidareutbildning av lärare* (VAL) is a higher education program specifically targeted at teachers who are currently employed but do not have a degree in teaching and are therefore not licensed teachers.

Consequently, this study has a focus on private school teachers and their interpretations and described practices.

4.2.1 Ethical Concerns Regarding the Data Collection Procedures

Besides giving pseudonyms, other ethical considerations were made regarding the data collection. According to Christoffersen and Johannessen (2015, p. 46), there are four main requirements that need to be considered to protect the integrity and identity of the participants. Firstly, the participants have to be informed about the purpose of the study (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015), which they were through the emails and at the start of the interviews. Secondly, the researcher has to receive the participants' consent with the stipulation that the individual participants can withdraw from the research project at their discretion (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). The participants were informed of this and their consent was gathered at the start of the interview. Thirdly, the researcher has to anonymize the participants and protect the participants' personal information (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). To ensure this, the audiorecordings were deleted when they were no longer needed, and the transcriptions did not include personal information.

4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

One way of exploring how these teachers made sense of the syllabus is through interviews. The data consisted of transcripts of teacher interviews and teaching material that teachers have used in their teaching. All interviews were audiorecorded and complemented with notes taken during the interviews.

Interviews can have varying degrees of structure, ranging from unstructured (or open) interviews with open questions to structured interviews with questions that have fixed answers (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015; Seidman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews are open in the sense that they usually do not have predetermined questions, rather they have general

themes that are explored (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). According to Christoffersen and Johannessen (2015), the semi-structured form is flexible because it provides more elaborate answers and allows for the interviewer to adapt to the social context of the individual. Being able to adapt to the social context of the individuals allowed for more probing questions that related to the school structure and/or profile and the effects that this might have on the choices that the teachers have made in their teaching. Likewise, the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for the teachers to provide with rich descriptions of how they put the LP into practice.

4.3.1 The Interview Guide and The Interview Process

Semi-structured interviews are usually facilitated with an overarching interview guide listing the general themes and questions that were used (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). In this study, an interview guide was developed using the considerations of how to conduct interviews from Christoffersen and Johannessen (2015, pp. 86-87) and Seidman (2006). To answer my research question of what functions of English teachers identify and what factors might affect the choices teachers make, the interview guide included themes and general topics based on the functions of English (*economica, academica, cultura, emotiva*), and the previous research on the functions of English in Sweden.

The first section of the interview guide gave information about the study and was devoted to practicalities such as permission to audiorecord, receiving informed consent, and more. The second section of the interview guide was devoted to background information. These questions are important since they establish trust between the participant and the interviewer (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). In other words, these questions established some sense of rapport with the participants, which is to make the participant feel at ease with the interviewer (Seidman, 2006).

The next sections of the interview guide were divided into two parts. The first part consisted of questions aimed at interpretations of the syllabus and how these affect classroom practices. These questions involved statements from the syllabus and were divided into general statements from the aim of the subject and material from the core content. The general statements from the aim of the subject were selected because of their generality, so that the teachers would have to interpret and specify the functions of English that they identify. The material from the core content were chosen because, as noted by Hult (2017), there are many opportunities one could make use of when it comes to deciding what type of material and what social and cultural contexts to include in one's teaching. The other part of these sections consisted of general questions to probe the teachers' language awareness about the functions of English in Swedish society.

For the sake of consistency between the interviews, the questions relating to interpretations of the syllabus were standardized. In other words, I found it necessary, for the purpose of this study, that the same questions were asked to all participants (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015). This eased the analysis of the answers and increased the reliability of the study because it allowed for direct comparisons to be made between the teachers' answers. Follow up questions were asked when I wanted the participant to clarify something or when I felt that the participant might not have answered the question fully. Almost all of the questions were open-ended, due to the flexibility that such questions allow for (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015; Drisko & Maschi, 2015). Additionally, since interviews should end with a moment for debriefing and rounding off the interview (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015), the interview guide concluded with a debriefing moment and with a request for the teachers to provide me with teaching material that they have used. The interview guide was developed through feedback from my supervisor to ensure that the questions were not leading, and so that

the questions remained open-ended and reflected the purpose. See **Appendix 1** for the complete interview guide.

4.3.2 Transcription Procedure

After the interviews, I transcribed them in a word processing program (Seidman, 2006). Although there are no universal procedures when it comes to how one should transcribe interviews, there are some standard choices one has to make, such as whether or not one should transcribe every utterance, include repetitions, pauses, etc. (Kvale, 2008).

Kvale (2008) argues that the choices one makes in terms of what to include and exclude in the transcription depends on its intended use. The intended use of the transcripts was to analyze the meaning within them and I therefore transcribed the interviews into formal written English (see Kvale, 2008, pp. 94-97). Repetitions, pauses, filler words, etc. were therefore not included in the transcripts. Additionally, all interviews were conducted in Swedish and were translated to the best of my ability to retain the meaning in English. Clarifications noted during the transcription process were commented in brackets **[ ]** after the utterance when it occurred in the recording. Laughter and clear audible shifts in intonation that were in the audiorecordings were included in the clarifications as well. Additionally, I only transcribed the parts of the interview that were relevant for the analysis. As a result, I did not transcribe the background information or practicalities. Seidman (2006) notes that there is a risk involved with being selective in the transcribing process, namely that of prematurely assessing what is of importance in the data. However, the background information was not excluded from the study; the background information was used to describe the profile of the participants. As a result, I hope to have reduced the risk involved with transcribing select parts of the interviews.

4.4 Qualitative Content Analysis

The method applied to analyze the transcripts and teaching material was a qualitative content analysis with an inductively and deductively generated coding scheme based on the functions of English and principles of LP that were discussed earlier. Qualitative content analysis is descriptive in its focus, but may involve interpretations of meaning as well (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). This makes it well suited for the purpose of this study since its focus is on how teachers describe and exemplify their negotiation of the English syllabus in Sweden.

Qualitative content analysis categorizes material with codes to analyze reoccurring themes and meanings that are present in the material, and the codes can be deductively or inductively generated or both (Drisko & Maschi, 2015; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2017). For the purpose of this study, I coded the material with inductively generated themes. These were developed and defined while reading the participants' answers and the provided teaching material through inductive reasoning. The themes that appeared in the reading were related to the beliefs the teachers have about the different functions of English and the factors that influence how they negotiate select parts of the syllabus in relation to these beliefs. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2017), themes in qualitative content analysis can be expressed in "a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire document" (p. 320). Accordingly, the coding procedure involved interpreting and marking the codes where they appeared in the transcripts.

4.5 Limitations and Strengths

There are some limitations to observe with the study and the first is with regard to the validity of interviews. Seidman (2006) poses the highly relevant question of whether one can truly know if the participant is telling the truth during the interview or not. This relates to the issue of construct validity. Construct validity refers to how accurately the operationalization of terms

and categories portrays the phenomenon that is being examined (Christoffersen & Johannessen, 2015; Nunan, 1992). Christoffersen and Johannessen (2015) argue that to increase the construct validity one can make use of several methods or materials. Therefore, to circumvent this problem, the participants were asked to provide real examples of material that they have used in their teaching. Some of these are brought up in the analysis to exemplify the teachers' interpretations and to strengthen the analysis. In addition, the issue related to the teachers' interpretations could be said to be circumvented since the participants are asked to interpret the syllabus. Thus, they provide direct interpretations of the syllabus during the interviews.

The second limitation is with regard to the generalizability of the results. Since this is a qualitative study, and since the number of participants are limited, the results are therefore not generalizable beyond their original contexts. It should be noted that generalizability was not a stated goal of the research design, since, in most cases, qualitative research tries to be meaningful in its context (Drisko & Maschi, 2015). In addition, according to Zhang and Wildemuth (2017), it is not the responsibility of the qualitative researcher to ensure that the results are applicable in another setting; however, the researcher is responsible "for providing data sets and descriptions that are rich enough so that other researchers are able to make judgments about the findings' transferability to different settings or contexts" (p. 324). Even though the findings might not say something about how most teachers come to make sense of LP in their practice, it could say something about the process of interpreting a LP and putting that LP into practice. Thus, the findings could be transferred to other settings to examine similarities and differences between the two settings and potential factors that might contribute to such differences.

5. Analysis

The analysis is divided into the themes that were found during the coding process. The analysis starts off with examining *lingua cultura* and *emotiva* functions in teaching. Then it describes *lingua academica* functions and that is followed by *lingua economica* functions. Finally, the analysis ends with a discussion on *lingua frankensteinia* and a function identified during the reading that I have termed *lingua privilegia*. The analysis shows that English teachers in Sweden have to take into account similar factors in their negotiation of the educational language policy as teachers in other contexts do. For example, the teachers came to describe different practices from one another, and they included *lingua academica* language assignments due to personal beliefs that such English language functions are necessary to know. Some of them included *lingua economica* functions more extensively than others due to their local school contexts.

5.1 English as a Swedish *lingua cultura* for *lingua emotiva* purposes

Lingua cultura in an educational LP can, as mentioned earlier, be found in the way that the LP addresses the ownership of English amongst teachers and students and how the language is situated in specific contexts (Hult, 2017). When asked to interpret the statement that "[t]he English language surrounds us in our daily lives" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, p. 1), the teachers positioned English as a *lingua cultura* in Swedish society. However, if *lingua emotiva* is the language of Hollywood and pop culture (Phillipson, 2006, 2008), then, as the extracts below highlight, English is framed as a *lingua cultura* for *lingua emotiva* purposes.

> You will find English on the television, news, or the mass media that we consume. It is also important to remember social media as well. (Tobiasz)

> You see, hear, and read English everywhere. This is a bit subconscious for the students, since they do not realize how much English is present in their lives and popular culture. (Eloise)

> English is everywhere. The internet, media, and popular culture are all in English. Here in Sweden, we consume a lot of English media. (Amanda)

The English language is positioned as a tool for the Swedish population to consume these cultural expressions. In other words, English is presented as a tool for cultural consumption. This is later echoed in their answers when asked what forms of cultural expressions that they believe that their students partake in.

> They spend a lot of time on social media, but also music, movies, news, and literature. (Amanda)

> Literature, music, debates, everything. … It is unthinkable for me that in a country like Sweden you would have students that do not know English. (Tobiasz)

> Although it might sound odd to speak of Swedish culture, somebody who is raised in Sweden is going to consume culture from the US and other English-speaking countries. (Klara)

Tobiasz and Klara both root English as an integral part of Swedish culture, where English is "represented as part and parcel of modern Swedish life" (Hult, 2012, p. 239). Somebody who is raised in Sweden is expected to consume culture in English. In other words, the ownership of English is framed as a *lingua cultura* rooted in Swedish culture and identity. In addition, the language also primarily serves a receptive function in these extracts since English is framed as a language for consuming culture and social media in Sweden. Social media is a space where students can engage in both producing English and be receptive to it, but for the other forms of cultural expressions, the students are going to, as Klara states, "consume culture from the US and other English-speaking countries".

5.1.1 Situating English in Teaching Material

Although English is framed as a language within Swedish culture, English was situated in an Anglo-American and post-colonial sphere when the teachers were asked to interpret and give examples of how they treat the statement "different contexts and parts of the world where English is used" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, p. 1) in their teaching.

> I often define it as English being an official language, which, of course, removes a lot of countries where English is used a lot. (Eloise)

> I do not only think of the US or the UK. I think of past colonial nations such as South Africa. (Amanda)

> These parts of the world are primarily countries where English is the official language. (Stephen)

This was reflected in assignments by Stephen and Amanda where students had to work with countries where English is either an official or dominant language. One aspect to note in these interpretations and assignments is that the English language is not situated in contexts where English is not an official or second language such as Sweden. Therefore, the teachers have come to close the ideological and implementational space identified by Hult (2017) for exploring other contexts where English is used than the ones where it is an official or dominant language.

When prompted to interpret the statements "Literature and other fiction", "Contemporary and older literature", and "film and other media" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, pp. 3, 7, 11), the material was usually rooted in Anglo-American contexts by the teachers; however, Klara chose to diverge from these contexts. For example, she described working with authors from post-colonial contexts, such as Indian and African authors, and expressed regret and sadness over the inclusion of only English and American authors in the course textbook. Shohamy (2006) argues that textbooks, among other practices in an educational LP, can serve

as agents who promote a certain ideology, and as Bovin (2015) has noted, English textbooks for upper secondary schools in Sweden orient themselves towards the US and the UK in terms of cultural references and linguistic norms. Although the ideological and implementational spaces in the syllabus have moved away from orienting itself towards the Anglo-American contexts (see Hult, 2017), the textbook Klara is working with has not embraced this space. Thus, Klara is challenging the current discourse reflected in the textbook by aligning herself with the space in the syllabus for including non-Anglo-American contexts.

Drama
Pride and Prejudice (1813. Only pick this one if you love drama.)
Of Mice and Men (1937.)
The Old Man and the Sea (1952)
War and Peace (1869 Warning! 1392 pages!)
A Tale of Two Cities (1854)

Adventure
Treasure Island (1883)
Romantic
Great Expectations (1849)
Sense and Sensibility (1811)

Horror
Dracula (1897)
Frankenstein (1818)
Books by H.P Lovecraft (1905-1937 Complex language.)
Books by Edgar Allan Poe (ca 1839)

Crime
Sherlock Holmes (by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, simple language)
Crime and Punishment (1866 Hard! If you want a challenge and bragging rights.)
The Name of the Rose (Don´t even think of trying to just watch the movie)

Sci-fi/Fantasy
Lord of the Rings Trilogy (Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers, The Return of the King) (1954, rather complex language)
The Picture of Dorian Gray (Could also be considered drama. Difficult, old-fashioned language).
Catch-22 (1961)
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886)
The Time Machine (1895)
The War of the Worlds (1898)

Figure 1. List of literature to choose from (Stephen)

On the other hand, Stephen used a self-made list (see **Figure 1**) of works that he saw as classics that have "stood the test of time"; the list featured mostly Anglo-American and a select few European authors. As mentioned earlier, individual educators can create competing *de facto* policies through their individual interpretations (Menken & García, 2010b). Likewise, as exemplified by Valdiviezo's (2010) study, teachers can hold beliefs that motivate and lead to different practices even though they are working within the same policy framework. Considering this, Stephen's and Klara's answers are noteworthy since their interpretations are at odds with each other, where the former embraces some sort of literary canon, which closes

the implementational space for post-colonial authors, and the latter rejects the inclusion of only Anglo-American authors in the course textbook, which embraces the space in the syllabus to include other contexts than Anglo-American ones. Consequently, there is what Hult (2018) refers to as interpretive divergence between the teachers since they are interpreting the same statement but inject different held beliefs that lead to different described practices.

Finally, Amanda described working with Anglo-American contexts such as Australia and the US but applied critical perspectives to the material. Bloch et al. (2010) note how personal beliefs can affect how receptive teachers are to working with certain material in their classrooms, and Amanda used the textbook as a starting point for topics in which she had a personal interest. She has, for example, worked in-depth with colonialism and masculinity and gender norms. This was motivated by her belief that her students find it more enjoyable when she is personally interested and deeply knowledgeable in a topic. These topics are then complemented with documentaries, short video clips, poems, and novels to critically examine beliefs and norms in different contexts and build upon the textbook texts. As mentioned before, when *lingua emotiva* is extended to LP, it refers to whether the policy allows for highlighting sociocultural values in media through critical literacy (Hult, 2017), and there is space in the syllabus, which Amanda's practice reflects, that states that students should be given opportunities to develop their "ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, p. 2). Thus, although Amanda is not moving away from the textbook and other material rooted in Anglo-American contexts, she does not overlook the values inherent in them.

5.2 English as an inescapable *lingua academica*

In terms of *lingua academica* and the use of English for higher education purposes (Phillipson, 2006, 2008, 2009), the teachers expressed some sort of consensus on the use of English for

academic purposes in Sweden. When asked to reflect on how their students are going to make use of English in their future studies, all teachers mentioned that the students who choose to study at any form of higher education will have to make use of English in their future studies to access course literature and other information in English.

> They will need English to manage their future studies. (Amanda)

> The course material is, in most cases, in English, and the seminars might be in English as well. It is definitely necessary for these students to understand that language. (Stephen)

> I find it really important to be able to read course literature and express oneself academically in English. They should be able to study at higher forms of education. (Klara)

> It does not really matter what they are going to study. Most fields in their future studies have some of their course literature in English. (Eloise)

> There is an expectation that you, as a Swedish citizen, especially if you are going to study at universities, have to be proficient in English. (Tobiasz)

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering the importance assigned to English for academic purposes in Sweden (see Salö, 2010), as indicated here by statements such as "definitely necessary", "really important", and "have to be proficient", the teachers came to address *lingua academica* in their teaching. For instance, Tobiasz regularly included analysis of media in his teaching. He stated that he usually works with essay writing and focuses specifically on academic conventions such as language precision, essay structure, use of transitional phrases, and Oxford style of referencing. Likewise, Stephen worked with formal essays while working with George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The essay focused on the use of either Harvard or Oxford referencing system and formal essay structure as can be seen in **Figure 2**.

Your task is now to explain, in detail and with textual evidence, how Orwell discusses communism through his book. The essay will should be written in the essay format (12 pts, 1 ½ line spacing) and using conventional structure (information can be found below). In terms of size, I think about two pages should be enough but there is no upper limit.

Formal essay structure:
Title: Must be clearly linked to what the text is about.
Thesis statement: Describe what you are going to talk about in the essay.
Text body: Contains multiple *paragraphs* that all bring forward an *argument*, backed up with *evidence* and your *motivation* as to why the evidence supports your argument.
Conclusion: Repeats a short version of the key arguments. Explain why your arguments matter. Include no new arguments.

You **must** use proper quotation in this essay using the Harvard or Oxford citation system. Aside from the text itself, you are required to use at least one external source in the essay. If any of the links do not work, just google it. By external source, I mean a source that is not the book. Failure to use sources will result in an F.

Figure 2. Formal essay assignment (Stephen)

Similarly, both Amanda and Eloise described working with formal language and appropriate structure for academic purposes while working with argumentative texts. In addition, Eloise points out that she does not believe that her students understand "what formal English is and what the purpose of formal English is". She continued by explaining that she includes formal English because there is a need to build up the students' proficiency in academic and formal English.

> They do not understand that sometimes we do these things in the classroom for their sake.
> It is about helping them, not so much because it is something I have to do. (Eloise)

Hult's (2017) claim that there is a risk that *lingua academica* functions might not be sufficiently addressed due to the extensive focus on sociocultural material in the syllabus does not seem to ring true for these teachers, and that raises the question of why this might be the case. One plausible reason might be that the discourse surrounding *lingua academica* in Sweden

> helps reinforce unstated beliefs so that teachers come to believe not only that what they
> are doing reflects explicit policies but that the policies are generally in the best interest of
> the students. (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996, p. 417)

Additionally, as the study of Zakharia (2010) exemplifies, the teachers could be making use of their agency and language awareness to negotiate and reconstruct the national policies due to contextual factors. The importance of knowing English for academic purposes and what this entails, as identified by the described practices of the teachers, makes teaching the appropriate text forms and language used at higher education a priority. Likewise, since these teachers work at college preparatory programs, their students are expected to apply for higher education programs. There they are most likely going to encounter similar texts, further reinforcing the believed necessity of teaching relevant *lingua academica* assignments. Although the syllabus does include general statements that could be interpreted by teachers to open up spaces for *lingua academica* language functions (Hult, 2017), it does not explicitly mention the construction of essays and use of referencing systems. The teachers are thus, through their language awareness and choice of assignments, integrating *lingua academica* language functions in their teaching as a result of negotiating these factors in their local realities, "rather than separating the classroom from the outside world" (Zakharia, 2010, p. 177).

The material from the syllabus connected to *lingua academica* functions was addressed differently by the teachers. Tobiasz did not describe addressing popular science texts or in-depth scientific texts. Stephen worked with articles from "Science Illustrated, History Channel … Forbes", whereas Klara, Amanda, and Eloise used articles and videos found on the internet. Additionally, Amanda and Eloise stated that they worked with textbooks and used examples from these to address popular science texts.

5.3 *Lingua economica* for future international workers

Unlike *lingua academica* functions, the teachers responded differently on the extent of how much English their students will make use of in their working lives. Klara, Eloise, and Stephen did not, as the excerpts below show, consider that all of their students will make use of English for *lingua economica* purposes.

> It depends on their ambitions. Some, for example those who study to become engineers and work for these large corporations, will have to make use of English. If you do retail or storage work, you will get by fine with a very limited knowledge of English. (Klara)

> It is not guaranteed at all that you are going to need English if you work in Sweden, but many companies in Sweden do business internationally. (Eloise)

> Those who work in predominantly Swedish companies and low-income workers will not make use of English unless their company is international as well. (Stephen)

In contrast, Tobiasz noted that for his students it is "crucial for them since their professions are international ones". It is noteworthy that *lingua economica* functions, in these answers, always relate to professions from a globalized perspective. There is a parallel to be drawn here to the earlier discussion that the teachers did not include Sweden as a context and part of the world where English is used in their assignments. English is not framed as a language for national communication, rather it is a language for connecting internationally. Thus, English is described as a *lingua economica* for students who might end up as future global competitors in sectors where English is often used, such as finance, science, or technology (Hult, 2017).

When asked to interpret the statements "manuals", "reviews", "formal letters" and "agreements", the teachers minimized the importance of these *lingua economica* related materials in their teaching, as the following examples show.

> These small ones, like reviews, manuals, and more, are easy to forget about. (Amanda)

> I have not personally dealt with manuals in my teaching. … The manuals are supposed to be included in English 5, but English 5 feels more as if it is a communicative course. (Klara)

> I do not work a lot with formal letters. … I have not actually worked with manuals that much. If one interprets this as instructions, then you could say that you have worked with this with every assignment that you hand out. (Eloise)

Thus, this corroborates Hult's (2017) claim that *lingua economica* functions, at least the ones identified in the syllabus, might "become overshadowed by sociocultural dimensions" (p. 277).

The teachers were asked to elaborate on why this is the case. Klara framed these materials as hard and more appropriate for students that are more proficient, whereas Amanda, Eloise, and Tobiasz referred to some sort of professional responsibility to find suitable material for their students that they cannot fulfill due to a lack of time. Tobiasz was not bothered by this fact, stating that "the syllabus and curriculum are secondary" to getting his students comfortable in speaking English. On the other hand, Amanda and Eloise feel constrained by the statement, since they expressed a wish to include these materials in their teaching, but due to a believed lack of time and experience were not able to. This is comparable to the teachers in Palmer and Snodgrass Rangel's (2011) study, who also stated the lack of time as a reason for not fulfilling the expectations mandated by the LP, which led to them having to choose what parts of the curriculum to prioritize. However, in contrast to those teachers who prioritized making sure that their students passed the test or maximized their grades (Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011), Eloise, Amanda, and Tobiasz focused on material and subject areas that they were knowledgeable in or found personally enjoyable. This could perhaps be because these teachers do not feel the same pressure created by high-stakes accountability tests since they, as mentioned earlier, work in a LP context that promotes local operationalizations of the educational language policy (Hult, 2018).

5.3.1 The Schools with Images to Maintain

The notion that *lingua economica* could be viewed as being minimized by the teachers in their interpretations of the syllabus does not mean that *lingua economica* functions were entirely excluded by the teachers. However, *lingua economica* functions in the interviews revealed a distinction between teachers who worked at schools who advertised themselves with a specific profile and those who did not. For instance, Tobiasz worked at a school that advertised itself as

creating the future workers in digital media. Similarly, Eloise's and Stephen's schools described themselves as places to prepare oneself for a future in finance and business. One aspect identified in the material was that the teachers who worked at schools with these work-related profiles came to include *lingua economica* related assignments more extensively. Due to the fact that these assignments prepare the students as future workers in their respective sectors, they address English for *lingua economica* purposes (Hult, 2017). As exemplified by the extracts and in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** below, there is a clear connection between the program and the material that is employed.

> I gave them a list with words for them to translate and they were then supposed to use this vocabulary in a fictional business role-playing scenario. (Stephen)

> A concrete example is the game developer students … . Everything that they use to document their work, for example, the high concept documents, is in English. This assignment is perhaps not directly connected to the subject of English but is connected to the general objectives of their program. (Tobiasz)

> We had this assignment where they were supposed to write about a business leader, and during that assignment I gave them a couple of phrases that they could use from the business world that are more formal. (Eloise)

Role 1: The Big Cheese
As the head of human resources, your job is to talk to the three employees and make a decision as to who should be terminated. In order to keep the company afloat, you must save a total of 20.000 crowns every month. This cannot be done through increased production, at least not in the short term. Instead, someone has to go and you need to make the call. The Grizzled Veteran is clearly stuck in the past, but he has been with the company for a long time and firing him could make a lot of the workers angry. The Futurist has a really nice education and has introduced some very promising suggestions so far, although nothing has yet been implemented and he/she is not very popular. The Golden Child is lazy, but well connected and firing him might be risky, since he still has his father´s ear.

Figure 3. Extract from Business role-playing assignment (Stephen)

The High Concept Document
Ernest W. Adams

A high concept document is primarily a sales tool, although you can write one for yourself as well, just as a way of keeping a record of ideas you've had. Think of it as a résumé for a video game. The point of a résumé is to quickly convey a job applicant's qualifications and try to get him an interview with the hiring manager. The point of a high concept document is to try to get a meeting with a producer, the chance to "pitch" the game. It should communicate rapidly and clearly the idea of the game—to whet her appetite and make her want to hear more about it. It doesn't matter that you haven't thought through all the details. You'll almost certainly end up changing several of the features during development anyway. The real point is to convey how much fun the game is going to be.

- **Player motivation.** This is a short statement that indicates what the player is trying to accomplish in the game—his role and goal. This helps indicate what sort of person the player is. He can be driven by a desire to compete, to solve puzzles, to explore, or whatever.

- **Genre.** Indicate the genre of the game, or if it is a mix of genres, indicate that.

- **License.** If you intend for the game to exploit a licensed property, say so here. Also include any facts and figures about the property's popularity, recognition value, and appeal to particular markets—but no more than a sentence or two.

- **Target customer.** What kind of person will buy this game? If age or sex is relevant, indicate that; more important, tell what other kinds of games they like to play.

Figure 4. Extracts from *The High Concept Document* by Ernest W. Adams (Tobiasz)

Consequently, for the teachers at these schools with certain images, *lingua economica* functions are not overshadowed by sociocultural ones and the *lingua economica* functions are reflected in assignments related to the assumed future working lives of the students. One aspect noted in Eloise's and Stephen's interviews is that they both addressed this due to requests and decisions from their respective school's management. In Stephen's case, the school even worked with cases where they tried to involve companies from the business sector.

> We had this real estate broker case, where we worked together with a real estate agency to make advertisements for their magazines. They were here and spoke about the work that they do and then acted as judges for the students' real estate sales pitches. (Stephen)

The school management, who can be placed at the institutional level (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), have had a more direct influence on the inclusion of *lingua economica* assignments and targeted language in the case of Eloise and Stephen. As Hornberger and Johnson (2007) argue, LP negotiation "at each institutional level creates the opportunity for reinterpretation and policy manipulation" (p. 527), and for Eloise and Stephen, the school management serves as a channel through which the policy has been reinterpreted and practices related to the school image are motivated. If one is cynical to the managements' requests, one could argue that the school is constraining the teachers through their requests. However, both Stephen and Eloise note that their respective managements do not examine nor limit their classroom practices.

In the case of Tobiasz, he even notes a disconnect in his response between the assignment and the subject of English. He connects it to the general objectives of the program instead. As Hult (2017) notes, the implementational spaces for including *lingua economica* are spaces that teachers need to open up themselves, and Tobiasz does so by referring to "the general objectives of the program". The document from **Figure 4** highlights that the high concept document is a sort of video game sales pitch that outlines the main functions of a proposed video game. As such, this is a teaching material with a real connection to the potential future work lives of Tobiasz students.

In conclusion, as Menken and García (2010b) emphasize, individual educators' agency is always in a relationship with the local context in which the LP is being operationalized, and that there are external factors in their locally situated contexts that can either support or constrain the individual educators' policy implementation. The choice to include assignments targeting *lingua economica* functions of English and what assignments to include is, as noted above, ultimately the teachers' own choice. However, their local contexts might have steered them towards the implementational spaces to include *lingua economica* related assignments.

Johnson (2013) points out that while ideological spaces can open up for potential implementational spaces, these spaces have to be embraced by language educators for there to be an outcome from said ideological spaces, and that these ideological spaces "can also be strengthened by other language policies" (p. 104). Thus, considering that Amanda and Klara do not include *lingua economica* assignments tailored towards their students, and the fact that Tobiasz, Eloise, and Stephen do, indicates that the inclusion, or lack thereof, of *lingua economica* language activities could be motivated by different language policies at the school layer. For Tobiasz, Eloise, and Stephen, the schools they work at present themselves as the places where future business and digital media workers are produced, and these local school policies exist and affect their own interpretations of the national policy documents.

5.4 *Lingua frankensteinia* or *lingua privilegia*?

Lingua frankensteinia functions of English were mostly absent from the interviews and were not addressed by the teachers in their teaching. In terms of identifying *lingua frankensteinia*, namely, a fear of English affecting other languages subtractively (Phillipson, 2008, 2009), only Klara explicitly noted a fear that English might be "taking over" Swedish in key societal domains such as academia and to take part of culture in Sweden.

> I personally find it hard to imagine how you would be able to take part of culture and scientific texts if you do not have proficiency in English. At the same time, I do not think that Swedish should, from a language politics perspective, be pushed aside by English. It is important to preserve our language as well and work towards that goal. (Klara)

For the other teachers, *lingua frankensteinia* could be said to be reflected in the previously noted necessity they assigned proficiency in academic English. However, they did not describe their attitudes towards this necessity. Thus, although English might be seen as a threat to Klara, the other teachers did not address it as such.

However, although *lingua frankensteinia* functions were not addressed or noted by the teachers, a fear regarding students who do not possess the necessary proficiency in English to use it in certain key domains was observed in some of the interviews. Tobiasz, Eloise, and Klara stated that proficiency in English "opens up the door" to the globalized world, and Stephen stated that English is required to become a "world citizen". If English opens the door to the world, then that door is closed for students who do not possess the necessary proficiency, or the key, to open that door. In this sense, English does not only function as a *lingua frankensteinia*, rather, what emerges from this data is that English functions as a *lingua privilegia* for the individual, where privilege and status are associated with proficiency in English.

> I fear that the end result of not being proficient enough in English is that they are going to apply to the program for their dream job and then drop out due to the difficulty. I also fear that they might decide to not apply to the program at all because they see themselves as inadequate. (Eloise)

> I am going to speculate, and I want that to be on the record. Students who do not have a high proficiency in English limit themselves to Swedish. These students are limited to taking part of culture in Swedish and limit themselves to culture from Sweden. Students who are highly confident in their English tend to look beyond the Swedish sphere. These students are going to participate in the global discourse. (Tobiasz)

In the above extracts, Tobiasz and Eloise fear that their students might not be able to access key societal domains. The fear is not that these domains have been overtaken by too much English; the fear is that the students do not have enough proficiency in English to partake in these domains. Eloise's concerns almost mimics one of the concerns raised by Salö (2010) in his concluding remarks on the language situation at Swedish higher education, namely that, in a worst case scenario, students who are not proficient enough in English are going to drop

out of their programs. Therefore, English functions as a *lingua privilegia* to disenfranchise students who do not have the necessary proficiency to participate in these domains.

Additionally, there is an ethnic dimension to this discussion of status and privileges, as both Tobiasz and Klara worry about the newly arrived migrants in Swedish society, who, according to them, are usually not proficient in English. This becomes an issue since, as Shohamy (2006, p. 147) argues, speakers of minority languages in a society end up marginalized and excluded compared to speakers of the dominant languages of that society. Likewise, Phillipson (2008) notes that "English is the language of elite formation, social inclusion and exclusion" (p. 251) in many past colonized nations, and the concerns raised by these teachers hint at Sweden moving towards a similar fate. In Sweden, there is a linguistic hierarchy that places Swedish and English at the top, other Scandinavian and major European languages (French, German, Spanish) in the middle, and minority languages at the bottom (Hult, 2012). The newly arrived migrants who lack proficiency in both Swedish and English and will need to become proficient in both languages. Otherwise they run the risk of not finding the key to open the door to the world. However, there is also a growing risk that the door to participate in Swedish society might end up locked as well.

6. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to analyze the perceptions of five English teachers in Sweden to explore how they make sense of the syllabus and the functions of English in their practice. The essay aimed to answer the aim with four research questions, namely:

1. How do teachers of English in Sweden interpret the upper secondary school syllabus for English?

2. What functions of English, both locally and globally, do English teachers in Sweden identify?

3. What factors affect the choices English teachers make regarding what to include in their teaching?

4. In what ways do teachers of English in Sweden describe putting the language policy in practice, and what examples do they give for their practice?

These were explored through combining the conceptualization of teachers being active policymakers (Menken & García, 2010a, 2010b; Ricento & Hornberger, 1996), and the theory that English serves a certain function in societal domains such as academia, culture, business, and more (Phillipson, 2006, 2008, 2009).

With respect to the interpretation of the syllabus, the teachers showed numerous and diverse practices. For example, when interpreting what literature and fiction they employ and the social and cultural contexts English these are situated in, one teacher almost exclusively oriented themselves towards Anglo-American authors, whereas another teacher actively sought authors from post-colonial contexts. Their described practices revealed an interpretive divergence (Hult, 2018). Yet, at times, the teacher interpretations reflected some sort of consensus as well. None of the teachers rooted their material in other contexts where English is

neither an official or historically dominant language, even though the syllabus allows for such interpretations to be made (Hult, 2017). Similarly, the teachers also did not actively work with the material related to working life that is in the syllabus, citing a lack of time as a reason for this, thus corroborating Hult's (2017) claim that these might become unprioritized in favor of sociocultural material.

The second question to answer is what functions of English (*economica, academica, cultura, emotiva, frankensteinia*) the teachers identified. The teachers noted that some functions were more rooted in a Swedish context, whereas others were more rooted internationally. In Sweden, English is firmly rooted for consumption of cultural expressions and to be able to participate in higher education. Turning towards the global stage, English was situated as a language for Swedish workers in international businesses, and as a language to "open the door to the world". Phillipson (2006, 2008, 2009) has argued that there is a fear that English can function as a sort of monster that affects other societal domains subtractively. However, only one teacher addressed the role of English in Sweden as such; the other teachers were worried that some of their students were not proficient enough in English to participate in these societal domains. I have termed this as English functioning as a *lingua privilegia*, which is when privileges and status are associated with proficiency in English. The idea that status and privilege is associated with English in societies where it is a dominant language is not a new one (see Phillipson, 2008; Shohamy, 2006), but the concerns noted by the teachers might hint at Sweden moving towards a similar direction.

Regarding the third question, the factors that were identified as affecting the teachers' described practices are their personal beliefs and their local contexts. For example, as noted above, the teachers described working differently with literature, which was a result of differently held personal beliefs regarding what contexts to include in their teaching. One factor identified in the analysis was that the identified importance of academic language functions,

and the fact that the teacher were working at college preparatory programs, might have steered them into including essays, referencing systems, and text structure as parts of their teaching, even though these are not explicitly addressed in the syllabus. Likewise, the teachers who worked at schools that advertised themselves as the places where the future workers in business and finance or digital media were created came to include assignments related to these future working lives. This indicates that their local institutions might have affected their practice.

The final question to answer is how the teachers came to describe putting the language policy in practice and what examples they give of their practice. The analysis, and the summary here, shows that each teacher described working with a wide range of material that were affected by various factors in their local contexts. In turn, this has created diverse and varied local operationalizations of the Swedish educational language policy. The educational language policy has been reinterpreted through the various layers and the end result are several educational language policies (Menken & García, 2010b). Thus, English teachers in Sweden do have a crucial role in how the policy is implemented (Menken & García, 2010a).

While this may be true, it also raises questions for future research. Firstly, considering the exclusion of material related to the potential working lives of students, more research needs to be done to establish whether there is indeed a lack of these materials being addressed by English teachers in Sweden. It might be the case that teachers on vocational programs, who were not interviewed in this study, might be more predisposed to include such material. Secondly, the importance of *lingua academica* functions of English raised by the teachers and inclusion of assignments targeting academic conventions raises the question whether these are sufficiently addressed in the syllabus for teachers with students enrolled in college preparatory programs. This is relevant since if essays are commonly employed by some teachers, then this begs the question of whether they should be included in the syllabus. Finally, if the fears of the teachers are true concerning students who lack the necessary proficiency in English, then there

is a need to understand this better as well, since there might be a risk that these students might end up disenfranchised and excluded from participating in Swedish society.

Finally, returning to the aim of the study, namely how English teachers operationalize the LP in Sweden, some implications have arisen from the analysis. What the analysis brings to light is the crossroad where the Swedish LP and the factors that affect the teachers' practices intersect. The teachers must choose what path to walk on, and whereas some teachers are going to turn left, others are going to turn right, and the end results are diverse and varied implementations based on the professional judgments from the teachers. These choices do not exist in a vacuum, they are always in relation to the factors that surround them in their daily lives (see Menken & Garcia, 2010b).

What still needs to be done is for teachers to be made aware of their agentive role as the ones who choose a certain path and that there might be other paths available to them. One way to foster this awareness is through teacher education or government policies, where student teachers and active practitioners are engaged with the research within this field so that they are well equipped to understand their role as policymakers. However, there is a paradox in doing so, since this would mean that one would need to embrace top-down policies to address the lack of bottom-up initiatives by teachers. Should teachers sacrifice part of their autonomy to foster more autonomy in the future? In addition, one would need to place trust in the top-down policymakers to actually implement such policies, and it might not be in their interest to do so.

Another option to foster teachers' awareness would be through bottom-up teacher initiatives, where teachers in their local contexts collectively come together to learn from one another and share their interpretations and ways of putting the policy into practice. This would have to be adapted to the local context and would not delegate the responsibility of becoming an active and aware policymaker to somebody else but teachers. There is a risk with this proposal, namely that it would require that the teachers who are aware of their policymaking

actively engage with colleagues so that they too can become aware of their own agency to affect their practice. Although that risk exists, these bottom-up initiatives are available for teachers to engage with right now, and they serve to place teachers in charge of their own profession. Delegating this responsibility to other actors is comparable to telling these other actors that these issues are ones that teachers should not or cannot solve themselves. Thus, I would rather want to inspire teachers and other educators from bottom-up so that they can see themselves as active policymakers. I hope that this study is part of that process and engages those who wish to understand their participation as active policymakers through their decisions, beliefs, and the factors that constrain or support them in their local context. However, whatever the future holds for engaging teachers with their agency, it is crucial for all policymakers to remember, as Tobiasz puts it, our noble and moral duty as educators to ensure that each individual student flourishes.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Intervjuguide

Formalia
Kort om projektet
Erhåll samtycke
Informera om anonymitet + rätt att avbryta intervjun och deltagande
Uppmana frågor vid oklarhet
Tillåtelse att spela in

Bakgrund
Utbildning
Erfarenhet (år inom engelskundervisning)
Undervisande kurser (Eng 5/6/7)

Tolkningar av funktioner i ämnesplanen

Du kommer att få se olika kort med formuleringar som är tagna från ämnesplanen. Jag vill att du förklarar vad de betyder enligt dig och att du sedan förklarar hur du behandlar detta i din undervisning.

    a) Generella påståenden från ämnets syfte.

> **" i olika sammanhang och delar av världen där engelska används "**
>
> Återkommande formulering i Ämnesplanen och Ämnets syfte

> **" syfta till att eleverna (…) kan, vill och vågar använda engelska i olika situationer och för skilda syften "**
>
> Utdrag från Ämnets syfte

> **" Det engelska språket omger oss i vardagen "**
>
> Ämnesplanens inledande ord

b) Socialt och kulturellt situerade material.

"film och andra medier"

(Engelska 5, 6, 7)

"Skönlitteratur och annan fiktion"

(Engelska 5)

"Samtida och äldre skönlitteratur"

(Engelska 6)

"Samtida och äldre skönlitteratur och annan fiktion inom olika genrer"

(Engelska 7)

Texter av olika slag och med olika syften, till exempel...

manualer, populärvetenskapliga texter och reportage (Engelska 5)
formella brev, populärvetenskapliga texter och recensioner (Engelska 6)
avtalstexter, fördjupande artiklar och vetenskapliga texter (Engelska 7)

Från Reception i Centrala innehållet

Engelskans funktioner i samhället – Ställ följdfrågor

1. Vilka möjligheter skapar färdigheter i engelska för dina elever?

2. Vad för olika former av kultur tror du att dina elever tar del av med hjälp av engelska?

3. Vilken roll spelar engelska i dina elevers sociala liv?

4. Hur tror du att dina elever kommer att använda sig av engelska i sina arbetsliv?

5. Hur tror du att dina elever kommer att använda sig av engelska i sina framtida studier?

Övrigt

Fråga efter material från undervisning
Har du något du vill tillägga? Har du några frågor? Något du vill förtydliga?
Tacka för deltagande

Interview guide

Formalities
Explain project shortly
Ask for consent
Anonymity + Right to cancel interview and right to withdraw participation
Encourage questions in the case of uncertainty
Permission to audiorecord

Background
Education
Experience (teaching experience in English)
Current courses (Eng 5/6/7)

Interpretations of functions in the syllabus

You are going to be shown cards with statements from the syllabus. For each one, I want you to explain what the statement means to you and explain how you address this in your teaching.

    a) General statements from the aim of the subject.

> **" in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used"**
>
> Reoccurring statement within the syllabus

> **" should aim at helping students (…) so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes"**
>
> Excerpt from the Aim of the subject

> **" The English language surrounds us in our daily lives"**
>
> The first words of the syllabus

b) Socially and culturally situated material.

> **" film and other media"**
>
> (Engelska 5, 6, 7)

> **" Literature and other fiction"**
>
> (Engelska 5)
>
> **" Contemporary and older literature"**
>
> (Engelska 6)
>
> **" Contemporary and older literature and other fiction in various genres"**
>
> (Engelska 7)

> **Texts of different kinds and for different purposes, such as...**
>
> **Manuals, popular science texts and reports** (Engelska 5)
> **formal letters, popular science texts and reviews** (Engelska 6)
> **agreements, in-depth articles and scientific texts** (Engelska 7)
>
> Taken from Reception in the Core content

Functions of English in society – Ask follow-up questions

1. What opportunities does proficiency in English open up for your students?

2. What forms of culture do you believe that your students consume through English?

3. What role does English play in your students' social lives?

4. How do you expect your students will use English in their working life?

5. How do you expect your students will use English in their future studies?

Other

Ask for material that they have used in their teaching
Do you have anything you would like to add? Questions that have arisen? Something you would like to elaborate on?
Thank them for participating