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The multivoiced English-for-young-learners subject in Sweden: Spaces for plurilingualism?

Abstract

Already in primary school in Sweden, English is one of several language subjects within a larger curriculum. Despite this, the curricular space for the English subject to leverage and contribute to plurilingual competence has hitherto received little attention. This study centres on the construction of the primary English subject in the 2011 (revised 2018) curriculum, also in relation to other language syllabi, using the concept of ‘voice as perspective on topic’ (Linell, 2009) to analyse ideologies that are salient, backgrounded, and absent in the English syllabus and those transcending language syllabi boundaries. Findings show that different voices are salient in the English subject in years 1–3 and 4–6, constructing an oral-based and fun subject contra an increasingly academic and communicatively-focused subject respectively. Monoglossic ideologies in English language teaching are challenged insofar as English is not positioned as a language belonging to specific nations or speakers. However, there exists no explicit space for plurilingual competence in assessment, where instead pupils’ monolingual performances are assessed. In addition, unlike other language syllabi, the English syllabus contains no explicit mention of multilingual awareness-raising of languages in the learners’ repertoire, thereby limiting explicit space for plurilingualism. Nevertheless, across the language syllabi, a functional view of language is salient, where communicative strategies, language form for functionally justified ends, and text genres form part of the core content of the education. This creates implicit spaces for teaching and learning in the English subject to leverage and contribute to developing underlying functional linguistic proficiency (see Cummins, 2000, 2007).

Keywords: English for young learners, English syllabus in Sweden; ideological and implementational space; languages in the curriculum; plurilingualism

Det flerstämmiga engelskämnet i den svenska grundskolans tidigare år: utrymme för flerspråkighet?

Sammendrag

Engelska förekommer tidigt som ett av flera språkämnen i den svenska läroplanen, redan innan högstadiet. Trots detta har engelskämnets utrymme i läroplanen och dess roll för flerspråkig kompetens och flerspråkiga praktiker hittills fått lite uppmärksamhet. Denna studie fokuserar på konstruktionen av engelskämnet i kursplanen (läroplanen för grundskolan reviderad 2018) även i relation till övriga språkämnen, genom att tillämpa begreppet röst som perspektiv (Linell, 2009) som analysverktyg, i synnerhet vilka röster

i den engelska kursplanen som är framträdande, i bakgrunden eller frånvarande, samt vilka som överskrider språkämnenas gränser. Resultaten visar att olika röster framträder i kursplanen för engelska på lågstadiet visavi mellanstadiet, då ett muntligt inriktat och 'roligt' respektive alltmer kommunikativt inriktat och akademiskt ämne konstrueras. Monoglossiska ideologier utmanas i den mån engelska positioneras som ett språk som inte tillhör bestämda nationer eller talare. Det finns dock inget explicit utrymme för flerspråkig kompetens i kunskapskraven, där istället elevernas prestationer i ett 'enspråkigt modus' ska bedömas. I kursplanen för engelska, till skillnad från kursplanerna för svenska som andraspråk och modersmål, finns dessutom inget explicit omnämnande av flerspråkig medvetenhet avseende elevernas hela språkliga repertoar, vilket begränsar utrymmet för flerspråkighet. I alla kursplanerna är dock en funktionell syn på språk framträdande, där kommunikativa strategier, språkets form för funktionella ändamål och textgenrer konstruerar en del av det centrala innehållet. Detta skapar implicit utrymme för undervisningen i engelskämnet att använda och bidra till utveckling av (fler)språklig funktionell kompetens (Cummins, 2000, 2007).

Nøkkelord: Engelska i grundskolans tidigare år; kursplan i engelska i Sverige; ideologiska och implementerade utrymmen; språkämnen i läroplanen; flerspråkighet

Introduction

Since 1962, English has been a compulsory subject in Swedish schools, with teaching fluctuating over the years between starting in upper primary (from year 4) to lower primary (before or from year 3). Currently, aside from the Swedish subjects—Swedish (Swe) and Swedish as a second language (SSL)—English is the only compulsory language subject at all levels of compulsory education in Sweden. By the final year of primary education, pupils may be studying other language subjects such as Mother Tongue (MT) and Modern Languages (ML), the latter of which could be considered to be in line with one of the European Council's 2002 Barcelona goals to introduce "teaching of at least two foreign languages from a very early age" (European Council, 2002, p.19). Therefore, English is situated as part of a larger language curriculum that contains provisions for language education in several languages.

The "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014) in research on education in school settings is now putting heteroglossic ideologies of language at the forefront, reflecting a focus on the plurilingual learner. Despite this, a division of language competence into separate language subjects, like in the Swedish curriculum (*läroplan*), may reflect a monoglossic ideology of parallel monolingualism (Heller, 1999). This may further entail "few opportunities for the emergence of multilingual meaning-making" (Rosén, 2017, p. 52). Curricula can, however, make explicit reference to multiliteracy, like in Finland where it is one of the transversal competences of the curriculum (Paulsrud et al., 2020, p. 6) which can then permeate the teaching across subjects. Also, plurilingualism can be made an explicit goal of the language subject in its syllabus, such as in

Denmark and Norway where affordances for teachers and pupils in language subjects to draw upon and contribute to plurilingual competence are made explicit in the English syllabus (see Ministry of Children and Education, 2019; Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019). In the Swedish context, *pluri/multilingualism (flerspråkighet)* is explicitly mentioned in the MT syllabi (Paulsrud et al., 2020) and upper secondary English and SSL syllabi (see Hedman & Magnusson, 2019; Hult, 2017). I, however, would contend that ideologies of language manifest in syllabi may transcend language subject divides and create such affordances implicitly. Therefore, in spite of English being separated into a separate language subject in the syllabus, within a curriculum that does not have multiliteracy as an explicitly stated transversal goal, possible explicit and implicit spaces for the English subject at primary level to leverage and contribute to plurilingual competence for all pupils merit investigation.

As syllabi are often not monologic or ideologically consistent (Johnson, 2011), but are instead multivoiced (Hellberg, 2002) containing multiple perspectives, I use the concept of ‘voice as perspective on topic’ (Linell, 2009) as an analytical tool in line with overarching aim of this study: to explore the ideological construction of the English subject in syllabi documents, with a focus on the primary level. More specifically, I investigate the first research question: *What ideologies of language teaching and learning construct the English subject syllabus at primary level in Sweden, (a) independently and (b) in relation to other language syllabi?* To address (a), the English subject is considered through the voices present in the English syllabus at primary level. In addressing (b), analysis involves identifying the voices present in other language subjects at primary level: Swe, SSL, ML, and MT. Here, I aim to illuminate voices that transcend the language subject divide as well as voices absent in the English syllabus but present in other language syllabi. These findings will be used to discuss the second research question: *What space is there in the syllabi documents for teaching and learning in the English subject to leverage and contribute to plurilingual competence?* The study therefore has a focus on the English subject and does not aim to provide a full analysis or discussion of education in other language subjects or of integrated multilingual curricula (see Meier, 2014).

The paper begins with the theoretical framework for the study and the lens through which the analysis and discussion is formed. This is followed by contextualising the current study with a historical perspective of ideologies and influences in English syllabi in compulsory education. After this, I provide an overview of the analytical procedure employed in the study before presenting the findings. The paper ends with a discussion of the findings and with suggestions for further research.

Theoretical framework

This study investigates the ideologies constructing the English subject in education policy documents—syllabi (*kursplaner*)—at the national level. In this study, I adopt a descriptive view of ideologies as the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and worldviews which are socially shared and implicit (Bax, 2018) and are manifested through language or social practices. As teaching social practices are outside the scope of the study, I draw upon the concept of *voices* (Dufva, 2003, derived from Bakhtin, 1986) to identify what ideologies on language teaching and learning are present in and across the language syllabi. This study, in turn, also takes as its point of departure the theory that all syllabi documents are *multivoiced* (Hellberg, 2012) containing traces of others' voices from before, around and beyond the syllabus text (Hellberg, 2002, p. 83).

This study draws upon the concept of *voice* as the embodiment of perspectives, beliefs, and world-views through language. As words and utterances are produced, their “abstract, formal, immaterial” (Linell, 2009, p. 114) forms are used to bring to life and construct “meanings, opinions, attitudes and thus reflections of [...] world-view[s]” (Dufva, 2003, p. 133). Ideologies are present in the production processes of texts, and the concept of *voice*, even when analyzing a written text, can maintain the connection to the printed text being produced by people who hold, produce, negotiate and sustain perspectives and ideologies. On the other hand, voices need not be associated with specific people. In spite of this, voices “can be directly tied to ideologies” (Hellberg, 2012, p. 388). Thus, in this study, the concept of voice focuses on the ‘voice as perspective on topic’ (Linell, 2009) or the ‘generalized voice’ dimension, that is, a “generalized perspective on a topic or topical domain” (Linell, 2009, p. 116), without forgetting that these texts were produced by (and for) people. Multiple perspectives on the topic of language teaching and learning can exist, and when producing a syllabus text, curricular content may become the site of ideological struggles of different social forces (Englund, 2005, as cited in Wahlström, 2016). Hence, the ideologies manifested in syllabi and curricula texts are the result of compromises according to dominating social interests (Torpsten, 2007). Despite a syllabus text giving “an appearance of consensus” (Hellberg, 2002, p. 84), in the text there may emerge harmonizing, competing, contradicting, and contrasting voices, of which some are dominant and others more subordinate when in dialogue with one another (Hellberg, 2002, 2008, 2012; Magnusson, 2013). As a result, some elements in the text are given prominence or salience, while others are backgrounded (Fairclough, 2003). While Hellberg (2008, 2012) and Magnusson (2013) analysed the dialogicity of the Swedish/SSL syllabi, identifying the text’s main voice (“the Ego”) that is in dialogue with (an)other voice(s) (“the Other”), I follow Hellberg (2002) by not aiming to determine or point out the text’s “own” voice, but instead focus on what voices are present, salient and backgrounded. This is due to the limitations of dialogicity through linguistic forms (see Method section). Instead,

this study assumes as crucial to “investigate what is absent, what is not said” (Wodak, 2006, p. 604) and thus explores the absence (Magnusson, 2013) of voices in the English syllabus, but present in other syllabi.

In this study, school subjects are seen as social constructions (Goodson, 1989). As part of the process of constructing the syllabi in Sweden, the Swedish National Agency of Education (Swedish *Skolverket*, henceforth SNAE) consults academics, teachers, trade unions, and authorities before sending proposals of syllabi to be approved by Parliament. Therefore, while ‘generalized voice’ is a perspective “tied to a group of sense-makers, rather than a single individual” (Linell, 2009, p. 119), the voices represented in the syllabi cannot exclusively be attributed to policy makers who, in turn, are not removed from social and historical conditions and circulating discourses. Instead, in constructing the syllabi, policy makers here are seen as *ideology brokers* in that “their central activity is the dissemination and reproduction—rather than the creation—of language ideologies” (Heinrich, 2012, p. 19). A further important factor is that one voice in the syllabus can be expressed by several individuals, or many voices can be expressed by one individual (Hellberg, 2002, p. 83). For these reasons, the study does not seek to identify whose voices are manifested, but instead to investigate the construction of the English syllabus by the voices.

It is beyond the scope of the study to investigate how this construction is interpreted by teachers and pupils in classroom settings, as the syllabi in Sweden are legal documents, and therefore *de jure* policy. Nonetheless, this study acknowledges the special influential power (Kjelaas & van Ommeren, 2019) syllabi have to “set boundaries on what is considered educationally normal or feasible” (Johnson, 2011, p. 128). Therefore, voices in this study, albeit generalized perspectives on teaching and learning languages, do not merely form content of a text, but are ideologies embodied in written language, which (may) have an effect on classroom practices: A policy can, on the one hand, open up opportunities for teachers to enact certain stances through their teaching practices, yet, on the other hand, a policy can create *ambiguous spaces* (Hornberger, 2006) where practices are neither explicitly afforded nor forbidden (Wilans, 2016).

Monoglossic and heteroglossic ideologies of language

Monoglossic ideologies of language maintain the belief that monolingualism is the norm. In this assumption, the monolingual speaker is held as the standard whereby the linguistic practices of monolinguals are those which are deemed legitimate (García, 2009, p. 115). Monolingual approaches to English as a Foreign Language rest on assumptions that the best approach to teaching English is monolingually (even if teachers and pupils share the same language), that the best teacher is a native speaker and that using other languages in the classroom will be at the expense of learning English (see Phillipson, 1992). Furthermore, in

assessments where learners are required to perform monolingually, the native speaker is positioned as the ideal and model speaker-hearer (Grosjean, 1989). Other linguistic resources and codes that multilingual learners rely on and use to communicate and learn are overlooked (Shohamy, 2011). Monoglossic ideologies of language can also be manifested in language education through the separation of languages thought to be those pertaining to the nation-state and the other—foreign—languages belonging to another nation-state (García & Li Wei, 2014). Languages in a multilingual speaker's own linguistic repertoire are likewise viewed as being separate, autonomous systems and must be kept separate when learning and using the languages. Any mixing of the languages, as in codeswitching, “is often seen as a sign of linguistic and cognitive deficiency” (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 53) or “are explained away as the product of careless language” (Grosjean, 1989, p. 5).

In this study, I explore the spaces for plurilingualism, one of a range of heteroglossic ideologies of language from different disciplines describing the fluid languaging practices of speakers, such as *translanguaging* (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Li Wei, 2014), *translingual practice* (Canagarajah, 2013), *polylingualism* (Jørgensen, 2008), and *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010). Heteroglossic ideologies view an individual's language practices and communicative competence as comprising an interrelated, interdependent and interactive repertoire (see *interdependence hypothesis*, Cummins, 2000) as well as knowledge of linguistic and cultural resources (Council of Europe, 2018; García & Li Wei, 2014). This linguistic repertoire is not static, and communicative competence is thus transversal and includes all languages acquired or learnt throughout all stages of education (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 39). In practice, plurilingual speakers draw upon an innate ability to select from the language(s) they have acquired (Li Wei, 2010), and in communication can act along a continuum of *language modes* (Grosjean, 2013), from performing monolingually to using different language resources (codeswitching or translanguaging) directly in communication (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 15). In terms of language development, therefore, the focus lies on the speaker developing the ability to leverage and employ the different, and perhaps varying mastery of, linguistic resources in their repertoire in accordance with the communicative context (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 38), or developing *multicompetence* (Cook, 2003). From these perspectives, plurilingual users of languages should not be compared to monolingual, native-speaker competence, nor is a user's plurilingual competence expected to be equal in each of the four skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing) within and across the languages in the repertoire (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 38). When learning a new language, learners do not start from scratch, but instead draw on, or transfer, general non-language specific competences from a *Common Underlying Proficiency* (Cummins, 2007). This underlying proficiency encompasses aspects such as

conceptual elements, metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, pragmatics and phonological and morphological awareness (Cummins, 2007).

Heteroglossic ideologies of language have contributed to a shift in perspectives on languages in the education setting, with proponents arguing for inclusive approaches to language education whereby the speaker's "multiple, complex, hybrid, multimodal practices" (Vallejo & Dooly, 2020, p. 5) are in the centre. Even when there is an aim to develop multilingual competence in two or more languages, languages are typically divided into separate subjects with separate syllabi (Cenoz & Gorter, 2012). Despite this separation, a multi/plurilingual stance (Ollerhead et al., 2018) can create spaces for teachers and pupils to develop plurilingual competence by leveraging all linguistic resources in the learners' repertoire. Such leveraging could be made by activating existing knowledge of and in the languages that the learners know; linking new knowledge, language learning and literacy skills to existing knowledge in all the languages learners know; and using a range of the pupils' plurilingual resources and practices including interaction, individual tasks and resources (Ollerhead et al., 2018, pp. 5–6). All languages are thus intellectual resources (Lo Bianco, 2001) in the language learning process.

Ideologies in English subject syllabi: Historical perspective

In the 1960s, the growing belief that younger children are superior language learners, as well as that more years of language learning would raise standards, led to governments across Europe lowering the starting age for English (Rixon, 2019). While English had been a school subject in Swedish secondary education since 1878, it was in 1962 that it became compulsory for pupils from year 4. Over the years, the beginning of English instruction in schools hovered around year 3 or 4, but from 1994, school providers have had the choice to start from year 1 (age 7). From 2018, pupils are guaranteed 60 hours of teaching in the English subject by the end of year 3 (age 9–10), increasing to 220 hours between years 4–6 (ages 10–13).

This study takes a synchronic approach to analysis by investigating what ideologies are manifested in the 2011 (revised 2018) syllabi for language subjects in one national context. Nevertheless, I also recognize that remnants of voices from previous curricula and social contexts may also be present, and thus I turn to a previous review of ideologies in English syllabi. Malmberg (2000) explores the views of language and language teaching in the English and modern language syllabi in Sweden from 1962 to 2000. Though there have been shifts in conceptions towards language teaching, communication and communicative skills have been central in the syllabi from the beginning (Malmberg, 2000, p. 14). Conceptions of language teaching in the 1962 curriculum (*Lgr 62*) were influenced by audiolingual methods popular at the time, with a focus on forming

habits and avoiding errors. In the aim to move away from grammar-translation methods and reduce the role of translation in teaching, the syllabus in the 1969 curriculum (*Lgr 69*) favoured a monolingual (target language use-only) approach. This monolingual approach continued through the subsequent curricula, though due to influences of another, communicative-based approach that gained traction during the coming decade.

The growing interest in *communicative competence* in language teaching (Bardel, 2019) led to a radical shift in the 1980 English syllabus. Henceforth, instead of focusing on avoiding language errors and isolating focus on linguistic forms, the focus was on a functional view of language with the aim to not only develop the four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) but also to develop sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence. In addition, an affective goal for teaching was introduced to the syllabus through the explicit aim for teaching in the subject to lead pupils to wanting and daring to use the language (Malmberg, 2000, p. 16). By the 1994 curriculum, communicative competence and intercultural understanding had gained favour and now became central parts of the syllabi for English. Strategic competence and developing strategies for compensating for insufficient command of the language were also key. From 2000 onwards, increased digitalization has also been influential on language syllabi, with digital literacy being a key focus of the 2018 revisions to the curriculum as a whole. Though there have been shifts in influences on the syllabi, it is worth noting that the English syllabi for the younger years generally prioritize oral communication and interaction, where the use of pictures and illustrations, movement games, dramatizations and other pleasurable and playful activities are encouraged, and written forms and linguistic analysis are emphasized to a lesser degree (Sundin, 2001). An influence that can be found in the current syllabus is that of the Common European Framework Reference for Language (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2018). While the previous syllabi had already adopted the functional view of language that the CEFR also promotes, the 2011 syllabus, following the CEFR, now organises content according to communicative modes of reception, production, and interaction, and the supplementary commentary materials for English (*kommentarmaterial*) now connect the levels in the Swedish system with the threshold A1–B2 levels.

Plurilingualism¹ in English syllabi

One part of the Council of Europe's focus since the late 1990s has been *plurilingualism* and *plurilingual competence*. According to the Council of Europe (2018), plurilingual competence concerns individual speakers who flexibly draw upon features from an interrelated linguistic and multimodal repertoire to recognise cognates, express themselves, understand, make themselves understood and mediate between speakers with no common language (p. 157–162). In two other Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark, the respective English syllabi have made explicit drawing upon other languages pupils know and spaces for English subject to contribute to underlying language proficiencies in. In Denmark, the English subject syllabus states that while “the focus is on English, sometimes it is often relevant to include other languages in order to gain a deeper understanding of languages in general” (Ministry of Children and Education, 2019, p. 5, my translation). It also puts forth the point that, as pupils study both Danish and English, “the English subject has a special opportunity to support parts of the content in Danish, for example by having work with the same reading comprehension strategies” (Ministry of Children and Education, 2019, p. 6, my translation). Later it raises the possibility of collaboration across language subjects to develop metalinguistic awareness in terms of similarities and differences between languages, texts, and cultures (Ministry of Children and Education, 2019, p. 27). Metalinguistic awareness is also manifested in the English syllabus in Norway, which states that “[l]anguage learning refers to identifying connections between English and other languages the pupils know” (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, pp. 2-3). Although this was also present in the 2013 syllabus for English (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013), the new curriculum makes this more visible in the aims for each stage of education. At primary level, the English syllabus includes competence aims for pupils to discover, explore, and discuss similarities between English and other languages the pupil is familiar with (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019, pp. 5–7). The extent to which the English syllabus in Sweden at primary level affords drawing upon and contributing to plurilingual competence has yet to receive attention and is thus explored in this study.

¹ The Swedish term “flerspråkighet” can be translated as “plurilingualism” or “multilingualism”. I have chosen to use the term “plurilingualism” in this study as this term focuses on the individual speaker (in this case the pupils learning in the context the syllabus is written for) and their repertoire, as opposed to the existence of multiple languages in a geographical space, e.g., classroom/school/region/country and used separately (CoE, 2007, p. 10).

Method

Close textual analysis was conducted of the syllabi for the language subjects English, Swedish, SSL, ML,¹ and MT (except national minority languages²) in the *Curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and school-age educare*, revised 2018 (SNAE, 2018a). While the Swedish National Agency of Education has published English translations of the syllabi, analysis was carried out on the original Swedish versions in order to keep the analysis grounded in the ideologies in *de jure* policy. The texts were read individually in their entirety before focussing on those sections pertaining to years 1–3 and 4–6. During this stage, I noticed that the knowledge requirements for the language subjects do not assess the pupil's ability to compare and contrast languages (with the exception of MT). Furthermore, there is no overall language assessment, and the assessment for the English subject is independent from assessment in other language subjects. I therefore noted this as a finding, but in the closer textual analysis, I focussed on the knowledge requirements for the English subject, which are for the end of year 6. After familiarising myself with the texts and noting initial reflections, I deemed the introductory paragraphs of the syllabi to be more fruitful for discussions of ideologies of the (named) languages themselves, as opposed to ideologies on language teaching and learning. While interesting and worthy of attention, this is beyond the scope of this study and is thus not explored further in this paper.

I then used an abductive method (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2018) which focussed primarily on content (Hellberg, 2002), where I first identified different foci of voices from the texts themselves, in a recursive process developed from reading of the syllabi. I used this to construct a coding scheme including the focus of the content of the voices and the linguistic form through keywords or phrases characteristic of the voices found in the syllabi (see Appendix). I then gave names to the voices to aim to capture the values and worldviews of the voices, as opposed to attributing them to any specific person or group (see Appendix for further reading on the values and world-views). In some cases, an “in vivo” name was given to the voice where there was not enough information to attribute it to a particular ideology (see Appendix). The coding scheme was used to analyse the voices through subsequent readings of the text. The sentence was not considered as the unit for analysis (i.e., one sentence equates to one voice). Instead, a voice could extend over one sentence, one part of a sentence, or one word or even be embedded within a word functioning as an umbrella term. Examples from the English syllabus are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Examples of operationalisation of voices in analysis of English syllabus

Example bullet point from English syllabus (SNAE, 2018b)	Example of operationalization of voices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Simple</i> presentations (English years 1–3) 	<i>Adapted</i> voice is present here in one word. This was established by seeing that in English years 4–6, the word “simple” does not precede “presentations”.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations, <i>instructions, messages, narratives and descriptions</i> in continuous speech and writing (English years 4–6) 	<i>Non-fiction</i> voice is present here in parts of the sentence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language phenomena to clarify and enrich communication <u>such as pronunciation and intonation, spelling and punctuation, politeness phrases, and other fixed language expressions and grammatical structures.</u> (English years 4-6) 	The <i>Functional</i> and <u>language form</u> voices take part of the sentence each and join together in one bullet point. They merge under one umbrella term as both the functional and language form voices involve language phenomena, but with different ideologies on the purpose and function of them.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Daily life and living conditions in different contexts where English is used</i> (English years 1-3 and 4-6) 	<i>Cultural</i> voice is present here in one whole bullet point

After identifying the voices, I paid closer attention to the content of the voices to identify any difference in emphasis. An example where there was a difference in lexical choice, which was not considered to be a difference in focus, was in the *non-fiction* voice. While in the English syllabus, the *non-fiction* voice refers to “instructions and descriptions”, it calls them “instructional and descriptive texts” in the Swedish syllabus. Conversely, a difference in focus was identified in the the *digital literacy* voice in the English, Swe and SSL syllabi. In the English syllabus, the *digital literacy* voice uses the word “skills” (*kunskaper i*), while in the Swe and SSL syllabi it uses “knowledge of” (*kunskaper om*). This indicates a difference in focus between implicit and explicit knowledge of digital literacy in the English and Swedish subjects syllabi. Noting lexical differences allowed me to also identify possible contradictions across the language syllabi.

The coding scheme first allowed me to identify which voices were present in the syllabi, as well as those absent in the English syllabus but present in other syllabi. To establish which voices have prominence or salience contra are backgrounded, I looked at the proportion of space occupied by the voices in each syllabus separately. This was considered for each syllabus, such that the voice that occupied the most space in the syllabus at hand was considered salient, regardless of, for example, whether it occupied almost half of the space in one syllabus, while in another it occupied about a third. For the purposes of this study, no quantitative cut-off points were made to determine salient, included, or backgrounded voices. Instead, those voices with the most space in each syllabus were determined to be ‘prominent/salient’ and those with the least space to be ‘backgrounded’.

In spite of the potential to use voices as a tool to analyse dialogicity, a full analysis was not possible. As Hellberg (2012) noted in the Swedish syllabus in the 2011 curriculum, due to the absence of contrastive connectors (e.g., *but*, *although*), negations (*not*, *never*), deontic auxiliaries (*must* and *must not*) as well as very few causal adverbs (e.g., *therefore*, *because*, *so*), the dialogicity of the voices was almost non-existent compared to previous curricula. Therefore, I instead identified where voices joined or connected within the sentence level, or bullet-point level in the case of the core content. For example, in one bullet point in English years 1–3, “simple instructions and descriptions”, two voices join together — the *adapted* and the *non-fiction*. In one bullet point in the MT syllabus, “pronunciation of the mother tongue compared to Swedish”, the *language form* and *comparative* voices join.

What follows is a presentation of key findings of the analysis of the multivoiced construction of the English subject, first independently and then in relation to other language syllabi. In this paper, I have used the English translation of the syllabus (SNAE, 2018b) of selected quotes to exemplify the findings merely for ease of reading. At the time of writing, SNAE had not published English translations of the supplementary commentary materials, and so the English translations of quotes provided here are my own.

Findings

Table 2 below shows the name and focus of those voices from the language syllabi that I raise in the Findings section. For the full list of codes and keywords in the analysis for this study, please see the Appendix.

Table 2: Name and focus of identified voices from the language syllabi for discussion

Name of voice	Focus of the content of the voice and keywords/phrases
Adapted	Form of language being adapted to the learners' level
Aesthetic	Forms of expression such as music, drama, drawing or other art forms
Comparative	Comparison made between the language of study and another language the pupils know
Confidence	The pupil's self-confidence in using language
Critical literacy	Explicitly analyzing language/texts/sources messages and/or the authors' intentions with texts, taking a critical and questioning stance to reading
Cultural	Ways of living and traditions
Digital literacy	Reading, writing, finding information through and communicating via digital forms and the internet. Can also include focus on how to interact in digital environments.
Fiction	Literature, but can also include about authors' lives

Functional	Language as a means for communication, for different purposes and to different recipients. This can include explicit focus on how texts are constructed for the different purposes and audiences, but also communication strategies, without a strong focus on accuracy
Individual	The pupil's interests, experiences and pre-knowledge
Language form	The importance of explicit knowledge of aspects of language related primarily to grammar, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation (separate from that of functional uses of those language aspects e.g., to enrich communication etc.)
Non-fiction	Non-fiction genre texts
Norms	Accuracy according to generally accepted norms in a given community
Productive and interactive modes	Communicating in or formulating one's own ideas in written or spoken forms
Receptive modes	Understanding spoken or written forms

a) *Construction of the primary English subject in the English syllabus*

The salient voice across most of the English subject syllabus is the *functional* voice, with a focus on pupils' developing communicative competence involving written and oral comprehension, oral interaction, and the ability to adapt their language to the context. In the primary level English syllabus, the *cultural* and *individual* voices are present at all stages, working to position the English subject content as focusing on the learner's interests as well as the world around them. More specifically, the *individual* voice in the English 1–3 and 4–6 syllabus positions the content of communication in the English subject to be on “subject areas that are familiar to the pupils”. The *cultural* voice establishes that pupils should develop knowledge and understanding of “daily life and ways of living (and social relations in years 4–6) in different contexts and areas where English is used”. However, the salient and backgrounded voices construct the English subject differently between years 1–3 and 4–6, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Salient and backgrounded voices in the English syllabus

Salient	Backgrounded
Overall: Functional, Receptive Purpose: Functional, Cultural Years 1–3: Individual, Adapted Years 4–6: Functional, Language form Knowledge requirements: Functional, Receptive modes	Overall: Norms, Critical literacy Purpose: Critical literacy, confidence Years 1–3: Productive modes, Aesthetic Years 4–6: Adapted, fiction Knowledge requirements: Digital literacy, Individual

Albeit a backgrounded voice, the *aesthetic* voice in English 1–3 connects with the *receptive* and *productive modes* voices to construct the subject at this stage as a

‘fun’ subject with various aesthetic forms of expression, such as songs, rhymes, and dramatizations. In the supplementary materials, a voice focusing on oral forms of language in language teaching for years 1–3 is present, pointing to research suggesting that oral input is effective for pupils’ confidence in using language (SNAE, 2017a, p. 13). Therefore, this voice works to construct lower primary English as a predominantly oral-based space. In the core content for years 1–3, the *adapted* voice joins with the *non-fiction* voice, in that pupils understand and/or produce “simple” forms of “instructions, descriptions and messages”. Yet, the *adapted* voice does not appear alongside the *fiction* voice where “films and dramatized narratives” are sources for receptive modes of communication. At this stage, therefore, English is only emerging as a subject for developing literacy skills for the wider schooling context in relation to non-fiction texts. The *adapted* and *fiction* voices become backgrounded, however, in years 4–6, and both oral and written forms are emphasized (SNAE, 2017a, p. 13). Furthermore, the *non-fiction* and *digital literacy* voices are present, resulting in the construction of the English subject for this age group as an increasingly academic subject.

A significant shift in English years 4–6 from years 1–3 is the increased salience of the *functional* voice. This voice brings in a range of linguistic and communicative elements to construct the English subject — from (a) comprehension strategies and how words and phrases are used in different communicative situations, to (b) communication strategies to make oneself understood to compensate for linguistic level and (c) language phenomena to clarify and enrich communication. The *language form* voice appears in years 4–6 through the formulation “language phenomena” (*språkliga företeelser*) exemplified as “pronunciation and intonation, spelling and punctuation, politeness phrases and other fixed language expressions and grammatical structures”. In the “production and interaction” section, the *functional* voice joins to the *language forms* voice to construct the study of language forms appropriate only when it is functionally justified.

In the knowledge requirements, the *functional* voice is most prominent. Despite an absence of an explicit voice suggesting that the pupils are being assessed on functional skills in English specifically, it is reasonable to consider that, as these skills are framed under the construction of the named language English, the pupils’ competence in English is being assessed³. A noteworthy finding is that the *comparative* voice, although present in relation to the *cultural* voice in the knowledge requirements, is absent in relation to other languages the pupil knows in all parts of the syllabus.

Although the *critical literacy* voice is present in the overall purpose and aims of the English syllabus, it is not present in the core content or knowledge requirements at primary level. Therefore, this element of literacy is positioned as something for more advanced or older learners at secondary level. Also present in the purpose for the English subject is a *norms* voice through the formulation “linguistic security” (*språklig säkerhet*), which the supplementary materials relate

to developing mastery of language forms and precision and complexity of the pupil's language (SNAE, 2017a, p. 7; cf. Ortega, 2019, p. 28 where "linguistic security" is related to confidence in one's linguistic ability). While plurilingualism has emerged in the English syllabus at upper secondary (Hult, 2017), in the 2018 English syllabus for compulsory education, there is no explicit mention of it. Therefore, I turn to implicit spaces for the English subject to draw upon and contribute to plurilingual competence by exploring voices that transcend language subject syllabi boundaries.

b) Construction of the English subject in relation to other language syllabi

All the language syllabi are multivoiced, and thus the English subject is not the only place where all the aforementioned voices are present. The focus of this section is to explore the voices that transcend more than one language subject. As the prominent voice in all the language syllabi was the same—the *functional* voice—in this section I elaborate on the findings of this voice. I then turn to a combination of voices which were absent in the English syllabus: the *comparative* and *language form* voices.

All the language syllabi contain a prominent *functional* voice, reflecting a unified view of language teaching and learning across the language subjects. Across the syllabi, the *functional* voice joins with the *non-fiction* and *fiction* voices to establish aims for pupils to work in all language subjects with instructive and descriptive texts, as well as narratives (with the exception of ML). In some parts of the Swe, SSL and MT syllabi, however, the *functional* voice has a different emphasis. In addition to emphasizing the view of language as a means of communicating in different situations and for various purposes and recipients, it focuses on pupils developing explicit knowledge about how different texts are structured and typical language features of different types of texts. Although this focus is much more salient in the Swe and SSL syllabi than the MT syllabus, the *functional* voice in all these syllabi puts forward writing strategies for producing different kinds of texts — something which is absent in the English (and ML) syllabus.

While the *functional* voice is salient in the purpose section and years 4–6 core content, it is absent in relation to language development in years 1–3, unlike in the Swe, SSL, and MT syllabi. In the SSL supplementary materials, the *functional* voice puts forward that pupils need instruction in all communicative strategies from the beginning (SNAE, 2017b, p. 17). However, working with functional language strategies in English years 1–3 is directly challenged in the supplementary materials, where it states that "pupils in the lower years do not need to consciously work with adapting language to the recipient or purpose" (SNAE, 2017a, p. 15), and that the pupils' linguistic repertoire is likely to be too limited to use communicative strategies in production such as reformulations (SNAE, 2017a, p.15). This contradicts the *functional* voice in the ML syllabus which includes focus on communicative strategies, including multimodal forms ("gestures"). This contradiction is more salient as the ML subject is also

positioned by the *adapted* voice as a subject for learners with limited knowledge of the language at this stage. Nonetheless, it must be noted that teachers are given agency to work with the strategies in English years 1–3 if they deem it relevant for the pupils (SNAE, 2017a, p. 16).

Explicit heteroglossic ideologies of language appear in the SSL and MT syllabi through the joining of *language form* and *comparative* voices, framing language form as an area for drawing upon and developing plurilingual linguistic knowledge. The SSL supplementary materials emphasize that teaching crosslinguistic awareness of language form is not dependent on teachers being able to speak all the languages that the pupils know (SNAE, 2017b, p. 15). Rather they can teach pupils how to think for themselves about structures of their own mother tongue(s), as this “metaknowledge facilitates learning” (SNAE, 2017b, p. 15). In the SSL syllabus years 1–3, these voices put forward an explicit comparative element with the pupil’s mother tongue(s) concerning direction of reading, forms and sounds of letters, pronunciation, and basic, everyday-level words. This is nonetheless only temporary, as in years 4–6 the *comparative* voice is absent. On the other hand, the connection of *comparative* and *language form* voices remains throughout the primary MT syllabus, with focus on pupils comparing basic structure and pronunciation of the mother tongue and Swedish in years 4–6. The *comparative* voice in relation to *language form* is, however, absent in the Swe and English syllabi.

Discussion and conclusion

Monoglossic ideologies of English language teaching continue to prevail in Sweden (Källkvist et al., 2017). The 2011 (revised 2018) English syllabus for compulsory education does not explicitly mention plurilingualism or afford opportunities for other languages in the pupils’ linguistic repertoires being used in the classroom for contrastive purposes, unlike the SSL and MT syllabi. The absence of the *comparative* voice in connection with *language form* voice in the English and Swe syllabi restricts the space for developing multilingual awareness and metalinguistic knowledge in the language learning process of these two compulsory language subjects. Instead, drawing upon languages for contrastive purposes is positioned as relevant only for pupils who do not have Swedish as a ‘mother tongue’. Finally, the lack of comparative voice in assessment in all the syllabi with the exception of MT, in turn, constructs language assessment as monolingual and pupils as being assessed in ‘monolingual mode’ (Grosjean, 2013). Therefore, there are no spaces for assessing plurilingual competence, but parallel monolingual (Heller, 1999) competences instead.

While monoglossic ideologies of language are linked to nation-state ideologies, the salient *cultural* voice in the purpose section in the English subject establishes that pupils should develop knowledge and understanding of “living

conditions and cultural phenomena *in areas and contexts where English is used*” (my emphasis). Here, the voice has moved away from the concept of English-speaking countries, opening up space for the English subject to enter the “bilingual education realm” (García, 2019, p. 628), as it moves ideologies away from the construction of “the teaching as a separate alien language that belongs to a distant nation with a distinct culture” (García, 2019, p. 628). Furthermore, while no explicit accent or dialect is mentioned in the English syllabus, the supplementary materials state that “clearly spoken English can for example also be performed by people who do not have English as their first language” (SNAE, 2017a, p. 12). This statement positions English as a global language and part of the repertoire of a growing number of non-native speakers (see Graddol, 2006). Nonetheless, much as the *norms* voice in the purpose of the English subject does not explicitly link to native speaker norms, as precision is to be determined, a certain form of norms is nevertheless alluded to. Without an explicit voice on *which* norms, it remains open as to whose norms determine precision of language. On the one hand, this means a monoglossic ideology of language may not be challenged². However, it is important to remember that there is space in the syllabus, which creates potential for rejecting the native speaker as the benchmark of success.

Although multilinguals may possess underlying non-language-specific literacy and academic proficiencies, Cummins (2000) emphasizes that transfer is not automatic and that “there is usually also a need for formal instruction in the target language to realize the benefits of cross-linguistic transfer” (p. 39). In line with this, the findings indicate that the same functional ideology of language across the language syllabi creates spaces for education in the English subject to not only draw upon, but contribute to developing underlying functional linguistic proficiencies. For example, the fact that the language subject syllabi include instructive, descriptive, and narrative texts affords the potential for teachers to draw upon and develop pupils’ discourse competence across multiple languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2014). Therefore, teachers have the opportunity to create integrated syllabi where the same kind of texts could be worked on in each of the syllabi, drawing upon pupils’ plurilingual competence (Cenoz & Gorter, 2013, p. 597). In addition, opportunities are opened up for the language subjects, including English, to draw upon and develop knowledge and skills related to language form for communicative purposes, communication strategies, and digital literacy across named language divides. Although explicit knowledge of text genres is not present as a specific knowledge area in the English syllabus core content, educators are also not forbidden from planning their teaching to allow for this. Finally, as the *individual* voice in the English syllabus core content states “subject areas familiar to the pupils”, there exists the possibility for the English subject to

² See, for example, SNAE, 2019, where help for teachers to evaluate pupils’ competences in English are to be determined against the extent to which the content of their communication is intelligible for a person with English as their native language.

draw upon and develop conceptual knowledge that the pupils have from other subjects in the curriculum, as well as from their own interests outside of school.

It remains to be seen whether growing discussions on plurilingualism in research and education in Sweden and other Nordic countries will establish a more salient presence in future language syllabi in Sweden to counter the monoglossic ideology of language that persists. As it stands, this means a teacher's 'multi/plurilingual stance' (Ollerhead et al., 2019) is even more important. While ideological spaces (Hornberger, 2005) in curricula "carve out *implementational spaces* at classroom [...] level [...] language educators and users, in turn, must 'fill up' [these spaces] with multilingual educational practices" (Johnson, 2011, p. 129). Likewise, although what can be considered "educationally normal or feasible" (Johnson, 2011, p. 128) can be framed or limited by policies, agency is in the hands of school providers and teachers to create implementational spaces, which "serve as wedges to pry open ideological ones" (Hornberger, 2005, p. 606). The possibility of implementing plurilingual educational practices may, however, be linked to the extent of teacher knowledge about multilingualism (Hedman & Magnusson, 2019; Lundberg, 2019), and thus it is important for teacher education and in-service training to address issues related to multilingualism, multilingual awareness-raising, and teaching for transfer (Cummins, 2008) across language subjects.

However, it is important not to forget the influential power macro-level policies have (see e.g., Hedman & Magnusson, 2019). Therefore, for example, by merely including a knowledge area or mention in the syllabus that pupils should compare their languages may not be enough to establish heteroglossic ideologies of language when pupils are to be assessed on how they perform monolingually (see Shohamy, 2011). Or, as Flores and Schissel (2014) put it:

It is only when assessments are designed in ways that affirm the dynamic practices of emergent bilingual students that teachers can truly begin to provide spaces that allow and even encourage students to use their entire linguistic repertoire in ways that empower them while providing them with the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century (p. 475).

Furthermore, as each knowledge area of the core content does not need to have equal weight (SNAE, 2017a, p. 10), even if multilingual awareness-raising, for example, was included, it would not need to be a key feature of the education. Therefore, explicit inclusion of multilingual competence and multiliteracy in the overall aims of the curriculum may be needed so that it can permeate the teaching of all subjects, including English.

Another constraint that may dictate what is 'educationally feasible' is the number of hours allocated to the subject. As the English subject has very few hours in lower primary (60 hours total in years 1–3 compared to 680 in Swedish/SSL), limits can be perceived as to how much of other languages and

language subjects can ‘come in’ (especially if they do not form part of the assessment). However, ‘time on task or maximum exposure to a language’ is not the only determining factor in academic achievement (Cummins, 2000, p. 174). Learning in one language subject may contribute to underlying language proficiencies, which can be drawn upon, or transferred, when learning in another language subject. From this perspective, studying one language would not necessarily ‘take away’ from learning in another, provided the educational environment allows for this transfer (Cummins, 2000; Ganuza & Hedman, 2018, 2019).

To conclude this study, I wish to reiterate that my focus lay on the construction of the English subject and thus did not aim to present a full analysis or discussion of the ideological construction of language education policy in Sweden. Such research would provide fruitful additions to the understanding of plurilingualism in the Swedish curriculum. The findings show that, although there is no explicit mentioning of plurilingualism in the 2018 English syllabus, there is implicit space for the English subject to leverage and contribute to plurilingual competence, despite the lack of plurilingual competence in assessment. Nonetheless, ultimately, national level policies do not exist in a vacuum, independent of social action on the local level. As this study did not aim to explore the English subject at the local level in primary schools, to further expand our knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning in the English subject in Sweden, future research would also need to explore the perspectives and practices in the English subject of teachers and pupils at primary level.

About the author

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Appendix

The following table presents an elaborated coding scheme used for the analysis. The names of the voices have been translated into English in keeping with the language of the article. The focus of the content of the voice is a description written by the researcher. Some additional reading sources have been provided for readers in order to provide more information about the ideology/world view that I tried to capture with the name I attributed to the voice. Therefore, it must be stressed that, in line with the analytical and theoretical lens the study adopts, the voices in the syllabus cannot be attributed to the specific authors themselves. The final column presents examples of keywords/phrases from the syllabi to illuminate more of the operationalization of the voices in the analysis. As the analysis was carried out on the Swedish version of the syllabi documents, the keywords/phrases are presented in Swedish.

Name of voice	Focus of the content of the voice	Example keywords/phrases from syllabi
Adapted	Form of language being adapted to the learners' level	<i>Enkla; tydligt talad engelska</i>
Aesthetic	Forms of expression such as music, drama, drawing or other art forms (see e.g., Alexandersson & Swärd, 2015)	<i>estetisk(a)</i> , concrete examples such as <i>musik, sånger, drama(tiseringar)</i> etc.
Comparative	Comparison made between the language of study and another language the pupils know ("In vivo" name given to the voice)	<i>(språk) i jämförelse med (språk)</i>
Confidence	The pupil's self-confidence in their ability (to use language) (see Ortega, 2019. NB: in this article, Ortega calls it "linguistic security", however, as "linguistic security" was used differently in the Swedish curriculum, I decided to go with an "in vivo" name for this – English translation of "tilltro")	<i>Tilltro till sin (språk)förmåga</i>
Critical literacy	Explicitly analyzing language/texts/sources messages and/or the authors' intentions with texts, taking a critical and questioning stance to reading (see e.g., Janks, 2010; for an overview in Swedish, Jönsson & Jennfors, 2017).	<i>Källkritik, värdera information, ords värdeladdning</i>
Cultural	Ways of living and traditions (see e.g., Kramsch, 1995, for discussion on traditions of separation of language skills from culture in language teaching).	<i>kulturell(a), levnadssätt, traditioner, seder</i>

Digital literacy	Reading, writing, finding information through and communicating via digital forms and the internet. (see e.g., Gilster, 1997). Can also include focus on how to interact in digital environments.	<i>Digital(a), medier/verktyg, på internet, webbplatser, språkbruk samt möjligheter och risker vid egen kommunikation i digitala medier</i>
Fiction	Literature, but can also include text about authors' lives ("In vivo" code, translated from Swedish "skönlitteratur")	<i>Skönlitteratur, berättande texter/berättelser, poetiska texter/dikter or any concrete examples of types of literary texts e.g., kapitelböcker, sagor etc.</i>
Functional	Language as a means of communication, for different purposes and to different recipients. This can include explicit focus on how texts are constructed for different purposes and audiences, but also communication strategies, but without a strong focus on accuracy. (see e.g., Gibbons, 2006)	<i>Kommunicera/kommunikation, olika syfte/mottagare</i>
Identity	Identity ("In vivo" code – this word appeared once, in the MT syllabus. It was not clear which ideology of identity was being used).	<i>identitet</i>
Individual	The pupil's interests, experiences and pre-knowledge (see e.g., Vinterek, 2006, about "innehållsindividualisering" — individualization of content —, amongst other forms of individualization, and the influence of "barncentrerade pedagogiken" on the curricula).	<i>välbekanta för eleven/eleverna, elevnära, intressen, erfarenheter</i>
Language form	The importance of explicit knowledge of aspects of language related primarily to grammar, spelling, punctuation and pronunciation (separate from that of functional uses of those language aspects e.g., to enrich communication etc.) (see Malmgren, 1996, p.54—5 on <i>formalisering vs funktionalisering</i>)	<i>Språkliga företeelser, grammatik, uttal, ord</i>
Learning strategies	Language strategies that can be used for learning. This could involve using tools for learning or strategies for remembering (see e.g., Börjesson, 2012 for overview)	<i>Hjälpmedel, ordböcker, stödord, tankekarta</i>
Mother tongue as a resource for learning	The mother tongue as a resource for learning languages or in other areas ("In vivo" code)	<i>Modersmålets betydelse för egna lärandet; modersmål som medel för språkutveckling</i>

Motivation	Developing pupils' interest in learning (see e.g., Dörnyei's research on motivation)	<i>Stimulera intresse för</i>
Multimodal	Types of texts which combine different modes e.g., text and images, etc. (see e.g. Björkvall, 2019).	<i>Texter som kombinerar ord, bild, ljud, med länkar</i>
Non-fiction	Non-fiction genre texts (see e.g., Schmitt, 2017 for types of "faktatexter")	<i>Sakprosa, faktatext, or examples of such as instruerande/instruktioner, förklarande/förklaringar, beskrivande/beskrivningar or the types of books e.g., uppslagsböcker</i>
Nordic and minority languages	Knowledge of the other Nordic languages as well as the official minority languages in Sweden ("In vivo" name for the voice, see also Language Act 2009, in Sweden, Kulturdepartementet, 2009)	<i>Nordiska språken, nationella minoritetsspråken</i>
Norms	Accuracy according to generally accepted norms in a given community	<i>Normer, korrekthet, språklig säkerhet</i>
Productive modes	Communicating or formulating one's own ideas in written or spoken forms (see e.g., Council of Europe, 2018)	<i>Formulera sig, kommunicera... i tal och skrift</i>
Receptive modes	Understanding spoken or written forms (see e.g., Council of Europe, 2018)	<i>Talad språk/texter or examples of spoken and written forms e.g., intervjuer, filmer, dialoger etc. but in combination with förstå(else) rather than formulera sig</i>

¹ The syllabus for Modern Languages encompasses all languages offered with the exception of Chinese, which has a separate syllabus within the framework of 'language choice'. At the time of the study, very few pupils in Swedish schools opt for Chinese within 'language choice' at primary level, and thus this syllabus has not been included as part of the analysis. Provisions for Modern Languages also exist within the framework of Pupil's choice' (*Elevers val*), which allows the pupil to dedicate an additional 177 hours across the whole of compulsory education to a subject with the purpose of deepening and broadening their knowledge (Skolverket, 2019) of which Modern Languages is one of a wide range of options. For Modern Languages within this framework, there is a separate syllabus which spans year 4–9. However, a very small number of pupils in Swedish schools opt for Modern Languages in 'Pupil's choice' and thus the syllabus for modern languages in the framework of 'Pupil's choice' has not been included as part of the analysis.

² The Mother Tongue subject is an umbrella term for tuition in the national minority languages and mother tongues other than Swedish. In the case of Mother Tongue for national minority languages, this subject has special rights and the additional purpose of language preservation and language revitalization, with each language having its own syllabus. Furthermore, content and knowledge requirements are separated based on whether it is as a first or second language. Within the scope of this study, which does not explore legitimations of language, language rights or constructions of first and second languages, Mother Tongue (and the abbreviation MT) are thus used in this paper to refer to the Mother Tongue subject for languages other than national minority languages, for which a singular syllabus exists, and has the purpose of language development.

³ This is the case in the help for assessment where English is emphasized in relation to the four skills (<https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/grundskolan/bedomning-i-grundskolan/bedomningsstod-i-amnen-i-grundskolan/bedomningsstod-engelska-grundskolan>).