Chapter 12

Re-examining English-only in the EFL classroom of a Swedish school: a conversation analytic perspective

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Introduction

There are varying claims about the number of English second language speakers, with figures between 100 million and 400 million (Baker 2011: 84). Similarly, the numbers who have learnt English as a Foreign Language also varies with estimates ranging from 100 million to 1100 million. According to Crystal (2012: 5) 'English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language—in over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil—and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools'. Similar observations have been made of the EU, where English is understood to be the most widely taught foreign language (Cenoz and Gorter 2013: 591). While English has made a clear and profound impact on language teaching

around the world, less obvious, or perhaps more contentious, is the issue of what role L1s should play in the ELT classroom.

A common pedagogical reason for implementing an English-only policy is that the approach will increase opportunities to use the target language. One contextual justification for doing so is that students have limited opportunities to use the target language outside of classrooms. Although an English-only policy is a sensible approach for many teachers, the last decade or so has seen a fair amount of debate regarding this issue (cf. Turnbull and Dailey-O'Cain 2009). There are several dimensions to this debate ranging from pedagogical to economic to ideological (cf. Kumaravadivelu 2003). The debate stems from Lambert and Tucker (1972), who argued 'two languages should be kept rigidly separate' in bilingual immersion classes. Arguments vary from the belief that the L1 should be used judiciously (Cook 2001) to opinions like those put forward by Turnbull (2001), who cautions that teachers who rely on their L1 for teaching purposes might give students the 'green signal' to do the same. Despite varying degrees of support for the use of the L1 in the classroom, Cummins (2007) points out that 'the monolingual principle' is still common practice.

Although debates like this are hugely contentious and widely discussed, very little research has been carried out on how language teachers actually enforce a one-language policy. Classroom interaction research that does exist has examined the language-policing practices of teachers in foreign language contexts (Amir

2013a; Amir 2013b; Amir and Musk 2013). This chapter aims to narrow this empirical gap by investigating whether and how an English-only policy helps accomplish the goals of a lesson, and what impact such a policy has on the sequential organisation of classroom interaction. Furthermore, this chapter investigates how different sub-categories of language-policing practices align or disalign with classroom teaching.

Task-in-process and English-only rule-in-process

Previous studies have either examined the written text of, or the discourse that is produced as a result of enforcing, language policy. Recently, a third strand of research has emerged, which looks at the actual interactions that manifest as a result of carrying out language policies. This strand of research is referred to as practised language policy (Bonacina 2010), which has developed in response to Spolsky's (2004) call to look at the actual practices of language policy.

This call is similar to appeals made in classroom interaction research to place more emphasis on task-in-process rather than task-as-workplan. Here the belief is that although (lesson) plans, as with language policies, outline learning objectives and suggest ideal communicative behaviour, what actually transpires in an activity or classroom may deviate from intended goals. Previous research has demonstrated that although task-as-workplan can influence interaction (Jenks 2006: 2), there are

a number of other aspects that influence task-in-process (e.g. the way the pedagogical focus interacts with the interactional organisation of the classroom), learners' reinterpretation of the activity (Seedhouse 2004: 95), and the participatory structure of the tasks (Jenks 2006: 2).

Therefore, attention is better placed on what actually happens in the classroom, as it allows the researcher to understand how participants come to an understanding of work plans and policies (see Seedhouse 2004 and Jenks 2006 for a fuller discussion). Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis are well placed to investigate this idea because both methodologies are interested in understanding participants' own perspectives (cf. emic perspective: Seedhouse 2004: 119), as they are managed in and though interaction.

This study applies the task-as-workplan and task-in-process distinction to the examination of language policy: a language policy is viewed here as a work plan and what actually happens when participants enforce this policy is the process (i.e., language policy-in-process). Based on this distinction, this chapter examines how language policing shapes the teaching of English as a Foreign Language practices. Language policing is understood to be one of a family of practices that belong to *micro-level language policy-in-process*: that is, the normative, situated enforcement of a target-language-only policy. In the context of this study, the shift of focus from workplan to process—what actually happens in the classroom—allows for an understanding of how language policy is upheld and

negotiated in interaction (Seedhouse 2004: 93-5). This dynamic perspective on language policy-in-process captures the moment-by-moment and turn-by-turn changes of policy *in situ*, as opposed to the conceptualisation of a workplan as conceived by policy makers. Moreover, language policing shares some features with repair, but the repair source in language policing is always a normatively deviant medium. In common with repair, the principle distinction between self- and other-policing is one that members orient to with respect to their placement (in relation to the trouble source), initiator techniques and trajectories (cf. Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977: 365-9). Further features of doing language policing include multimodal aspects of form ranging from prosody to gaze, as well as the location of policing in the public, private or semi-public space of the classroom.

The research findings are based on an EFL classroom in a Swedish school. The medium of instruction for all teaching is Swedish except for foreign languages. For the workplan, the English language teachers of this school have prescribed an English-only policy that is enforced through a teacher versus pupils' point system in the school. Each lesson starts with a clean slate of 40 points, which are sometimes written on the board. A point is deducted for each Swedish word spoken by the pupils. Points may be added if Swedish is spoken by the teacher. When 1000 points have been accumulated, the pupils are rewarded with a free period to watch a movie.

The data were collected in grade 8 and 9 classes taught by one native English (American) speaker between 2007 and 2010. The analysis of data is informed by ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis, which requires recording, transcribing, and analysing naturally occurring talk-in-interaction. For the purposes of this study, a collection of incidences of language policing were compiled in order to find similarities and differences between varying sub-categories of language policing.

This chapter will show in which contexts practising the English-only rule dis-aligns or aligns with the teaching of a grammar lesson. This chapter is particularly interested in uncovering how the classroom participants themselves orient to the English-only rule when it is lived out in practice, through interaction in the classroom. In other words, the focus will be on demonstrating *if* and *when* the lived out practice shows alignment or disalignment with the pedagogical goals.

General language practices

This section will highlight some of the general practices of implementing language policy. Amir (2013a) has shown that if the sanctity of the English-only classroom is broken (i.e. Swedish was spoken), then there are a number of practices for implementing language policy. In other words, if Swedish is spoken, there is a continuum of approaches that can be used in the classroom, ranging from doing no

language policing at all to the most explicit type of implementing language policy (i.e. language policing). Several implicit actions and formulations could also be used to uphold the English-only rule between these two extremes. By way of illustration, one of the implicit ways of doing language policy is shown in Extract 1 below (i.e. when the teacher enters the classroom where only Swedish is being spoken, her greeting in English switches the medium of classroom interaction to English).

Excerpt 1. Hi, Good morning.

((Before the teacher enters the classroom, several students are talking in Swedish))

Participants: K = Karen (the teacher), M = Mia, L = Linda, J = Jenny, the rest of the class

1. L: xxx (som pratar engelska och sen xxx)

          xxx (who speaks english and then xxx)

2. M: xx (tell me where you've been) xxx tack xx (vi ska köra ettan och

                  xxx thanks xx (we'll do one and

3.   sedan läsa)

          then read)

4. K: ((teacher enters the classroom))°hi,good morning° does everybody

5.   have their blue books with them- their reading books

6. J: Xx

7. M: Please

8.   K: let's yeah let's do that to⌐day

9.   ?   L°yeah:°

10.   M: What

11.   K: you read your book and you write the best answers you ca::n in the
              little blue book

We can see that the pupils are speaking Swedish before line 4, which is the default language for these participants. It should be noted that for these participants the EFL classroom is the only place where an English-only rule is enforced through a points system. In line 4 the teacher greets the class in English as she walks into the classroom, which in turn shifts the medium of interaction.

This excerpt shows that Swedish is the default medium of communication for the pupils before the EFL lesson is officially opened. The greeting in English establishes an English-only interactional frame. The greeting, like all other implicit methods of doing language policy, is the most common way of administering the English-only rule. For the most part, establishing and maintaining the English-only rule 'sufficient[ly] for all practical purposes' is a routine matter (cf. Zimmerman 1971: 227), for instance when addressing the teacher or when the lesson begins.

There is very little deviation from English-only practices in the public space of the classroom (e.g. in procedural contexts; Seedhouse 2004), but there are occasions when Swedish is spoken. For instance, Swedish is more likely to be spoken during

interactions between pupils. Language policing is not likely to be enforced when pupils engage in short code-switching exchanges. However, language policing is frequently enforced when pupils speak Swedish across several turns. Yet, there are only 20 occasions of language policing in 20 lessons, which implies that the English-only rule is a routine matter for these participants. In this context, the English-only rule itself is seldom challenged. There are, however, cases when pupils contest whether uttering a proper noun in Swedish breaks the English-only rule. This should be no surprise because theoretically speaking the English-only rule cannot cover all pedagogical contingencies (Heritage 1984: 128). These grey areas result in some type of negotiation, though the teacher often has the last word.

In the next excerpt, for instance, the teacher utters a Swedish place name, which results in a discussion of language policy.

Excerpt 2. You said a Swedish word!

Participants: Karen (K, teacher), Sara (S), Jess (J), Peter (P), Carl (C), Dexter (D)

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1      K:      it's like my husband when he's with (.) people from

2              ↓norr↑land, (.4) he speaks like with a norrland's (.4)

3              accent, =you know he's greek >I mean he does(n't xx this)< (.3)

4              so i- (.) a:nd, ((S turns around))(.6) when he's with people=

5      S: →    =>YOU SAID A ⌈SWEDISH WORD,<     ⌉ ((turning back))

6      K:                  ⌊ from SMÅland he spea ⌋ ks (.4) sm- a
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7		s::måland (.2) accent¿
8	J:	((to S)) °we're not ⌐in the holy classroom.°
9	K:	∟WHICH SWEDISH WORD DID I S↓AY
10		(.) ((S turns back and moves her finger in the air))
11	S:	u⌐:h⌐ sing whatever.
12	P:	∟karen?⌐
13		(.7)
14	K:	sing:?
15	J:	what?
16	S:	NO WHAT¿ NO:T CITY.
17		(.)
18	K:	a CIty? (.5) I'm alLOWed to say a CIty.
19		(.3)
20	S:	not really (.) gotta say the swedish is ⌐a city in ⌐
21	C:	((to K)) ∟can we use the com⌐puter
22		in your room.
23	S:	°engl⌐ish⌐°
24	D:	((to K)) ∟oh ⌐ ⌐right now I remember
25	K:	((to C)) ∟here there you go¿
26		(1.1)
27	J:	((to S)) gothenburg
28		(.)
29	S:	((to J)) ⌐yeah

30   D: ((to K)) ⌞this might be ⌜ too   late   ⌝ but,

31   S: ⌞>just like that<⌟

32   (.3)

33   K: ((to D)) no it's not too late thank you and you'll be: sitting

34   there next ti:me.

35   (.2)

36   D: (>oh actually?<)

37   K: okay?

38   D: ((to K)) >what's this?<

39   (.4)

40   K: ((to D)) a permission slip to be ⌜fil:med   ⌝

41   J: ((to S))   ⌞I don't know what⌟ norrland

42   K: ⌜an'⌝ participate in the study.

43   J: i ⌞s,⌟

This excerpt is set in a computer laboratory. Sara, Peter, and Jess are seated in a row at their computers carrying out individual tasks. Karen and Adam, who are sitting behind the aforementioned pupils and off-camera, have been having a semi-private chat about English accents and how people adapt their accents, which the teacher exemplifies with reference to her Greek husband. In line 5 Sara polices the teacher with a blunt accusation that she has spoken Swedish. In overlap, the teacher continues and uses another proper noun (Småland) in Swedish, which has no alternative in English. This is followed by another pupil jumping into the

interaction and giving an example of a Swedish city (Göteborg) that has an alternative in English (Gothenburg). This lengthy discussion disrupts the task the pupils were assigned, and also dis-aligns with the pedagogical focus. Despite this, the interaction is conducted in English.

Another issue to be raised at this point is the effects of doing language policy on task work. Explicit forms of doing language policy (i.e. language policing) put on hold the prior task until the language policing trajectory concludes. By way of exemplification, I refer to an episode where Mikael and Sara are sitting next to each other in the computer lab. They are working on individual tasks: Mikael is using computer software to make an album related to an immigration project. Prior to this excerpt, Mikael seeks help from Sara regarding techniques for using software related to his task.

Excerpt 3. Mikael, are you speaking English?
Participants: K = Karen (the teacher), S= Sara, M= Mikael

1   S: <what are you doing there>

2   (.)

3   M: the date

4   (3.1) ((Mikael continues working in the text box))

5   M: ö: va ska (de va för) datum (här)? ((types on the keyboard))

            uh: what date should (it be here)?

6		(.)
7	S:	nineteen twen'y three
8		(.)
9	M:	sto' ju där ja¿
		said there of course
10		(1.1)
11	K:	Mi↑kael: are you speaking english
12		(.)
13	S:	yes: ((smiles and turns towards the teacher))

In this excerpt, we can see that both English and Swedish are being used. In lines 1-3 Mikael and Sara are using English but, after a pause in line 4, Mikael switches to Swedish and asks what the date is while he types in a text box. Sara responds in English and gives the required year. In line 9 Mikael responds in Swedish again. When the teacher initiates policing in line 11, the task at hand not only gets disrupted, but the talk trails off at a tangent where the pair end up contesting that Mikael has been speaking Swedish. Ironically, the contestation is carried out in English, which does align with the pedagogical goal of speaking English. Earlier, Sara and Mikael were orienting to the task: Sara was helping Mikael to sort out problems related to the task even though the medium shifted between English and Swedish. This illustrates that when individuals are singled out, task completion is disrupted.

Let us briefly comment on another important effect of doing language policing, one which concerns face-threats. When an act of language policing occurs in a procedural context addressed to the whole class, it is like any ordinary act of classroom management (i.e. there is minimal face threat). On the other hand, language policing can lead to face threats when individuals are singled out (cf. excerpt 1). By way of exemplification, let us consider the above-mentioned case once again, when the teacher polices Mikael when he is seeking help in Swedish from Sara. When the teacher asks Mikael if English is being spoken, he turns and smiles sheepishly. Sara provides a verbal response, which may act to minimise the face threat of Mikael using Swedish.

This example has illustrated how language policing treats various language practices as problematic and, in doing so, disrupts task completion. In contrast, the following excerpt illustrates a case where language policing does not disrupt the flow of task completion. The following sequence takes place when Hanna and Malin are working on a quiz with the help of the internet. The excerpt begins with Hanna asking Malin in Swedish about the terminologies of the quiz.

Excerpt 4.

1   Hanna: var ä den dära the capital city (.6) of iraq
2   where is that dä ⌈måste va afgsk⌉
                      it must be afghsk

3	Malin:	⌞°(prata) engel⌟ ska°
		(speak) english
4		(.4)
5	Hanna:	yes (.6) wait
6		(.4) ((H. starts writing 'afghanistan' on question sheet))
7	Hanna:	it's afghan ⌈ist-¿⌉
8	Malin:	⌞(x ⌟x)?

In lines 1 and 2, Hanna speaks mostly in Swedish in trying to complete the task. Malin, in quiet speech, speaks in overlap by policing Hanna's use of language. After a short pause, Hanna in line 6 acknowledges the request to use English and displays her engagement with the task by telling Malin to wait. Hanna's response in line 6, and her subsequent answer in English in line 7, demonstrate that language policing can be managed, and responded to, so that task completion is minimally disrupted.

Conclusions

This chapter has given a brief illustration of some of the practices used to do language policy. I have claimed that the teaching context shapes the management of the English-only rule. Rather than examine language policy from a workplan perspective, which represents the bulk of what has been done in the literature, this

study has uncovered how the English-only rule was lived out in practice. This investigation is in response to Seedhouse's (2004) call for a task-in-process, rather than the task-as-workplan, focus. In the context of this study, the shift of focus from workplan to process (i.e. what actually happens in the classroom), allows us to understand how the English-only rule shapes classroom practices (Seedhouse 2004: 93-95).

Although this study is empirically grounded, the findings are based on one native-English (American) teacher. The teacher did not demonstrate any difficulties in practising an English-only policy (i.e. she could speak in English for the entire lesson with little difficulty), which might not be the case for teachers who do not speak English as an L1. While this is purely speculative, future research may want to examine classrooms with teachers from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Another important issue that should be looked at in future research is grade levels. In this study, the English-only rule is introduced in grade 7, and the pupils consequently have been socialised into language policy by grades 8 and 9. Future research should examine students with varying degrees of socialisation into the English-only rule.

With these limitations and research gaps in mind, this study contributes to the literature by examining a particular sociolinguistic context and educational level in Sweden. While numerous investigations of the ELT classroom have been conducted in settings around the world, relatively very few studies have examined

EFL classrooms in compulsory schools in Sweden. The issue of language policing (as manifest in classroom practices) is significant, as teachers, policy makers, school managers, language researchers, and pupils and parents all have strong opinions regarding whether the L1 should be part of ELT. While the focus here has been on describing the 'local' pedagogy, the study has global significance because questions of language policy concern most language teachers. The issues addressed here are therefore not limited to ELT; parents and students of any age group, level of education, and language are also affected by language policy and policing.

Transcription Conventions

The transcription conventions have been adapted from Jefferson (2004) and Musk (2011)

(.5)	Pauses in speech of tenths of a second
(.)	Pause in speech of less than 0.2 seconds
yeah=	Equal sign: latching between utterances
=yeah	
⌐yeah	Opening square brackets between adjacent lines: opening of
∟mm	overlapping talk
yeah⌐	Closing square brackets between adjacent lines: closure of
mm ⌐	overlapping talk

lis-	Dash: cut-off word
sh:::	Colon: prolonged previous sound
(swap)	Words in single brackets: uncertain words
(xx)	Crosses in single brackets: unclear fragment; each cross corresponds to one syllable
dä ju så	Words in italics: code alternation (Swedish)
that's how it is	Words in grey italics: translation of code alternation (in line above)
,	Comma: 'continuing' intonation
.	Fullstop: a stopping fall in tone
Anne Frank	Text in bold: typed text appearing on the computer screen
Anne Frank	Text in bold with a line through: text erased on the computer screen
((*slaps desk*))	Double brackets: comments on contextual or other features, e.g. non-verbal activities
[katy]	Names in square brackets: changed for reasons of confidentiality
AND	Capitals: noticeably louder than surrounding speech
¡OH!	Encompassing exclamation marks: animated or emphatic tone
really	Underlining: speaker emphasis
°crap°	Encompassing degree signs: noticeably quieter than surrounding speech

hi	Encompassing dollar signs: smiley or chuckling voice
>what's this<	Encompassing more than and less than signs: Noticeably quicker than surrounding speech
no	Encompassing asterisks: other distinguishing voice quality
((*croaky voice*))	Double brackets + asterisk: description of feature encompassed by asterisks
.nhhä	Initial full stop: inbreath
?	Question mark: rising intonation
¿	Upside-down question mark: partially rising inflection
↓norr↑land	Arrows: marked falling or rising intonational shift at these points, respectively

Abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EM	Ethnomethodology
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language