LSP and translingual practices:
Zooming in on English

Maria Kuteeva
Department of English
Stockholm University

maria.kuteeva@english.su.se

Outline

- Conceptualisations of English in current research

- English in multilingual settings

- Continuum between standard and non-standard language uses

Some metaphorical descriptions of English

'Trojan horse' (Cooke 1988), 'Hydra' (Rapatahana and Bunce 2012), 'Killer language' (Skutnabb-Kangas 2003), 'Tyrannosaurus Rex' (Swales 1997), 'Cuckoo' (Phillipson 2006), 'Lingua Frankensteina' (Phillipson 2008), 'Red Herring' (Hultgren 2020).

The dominance of English has been said to be causing 'linguistic imperialism' (Phillipson 1992), 'linguicide' (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1995), and 'epistemicide' (Bennett 2007 based on Bonaventura Santos).

Conceptualisations of English as an object of study

- **Standard English** (e.g. Crowley 2003, Milroy & Milroy 1999, Murray 2017)

    "correct" language of the educated, often associated with a native variety and the language of literature

- **World Englishes** – varieties in the inner, outer, and expanding circles (e.g. Kachru 1990)

- **English as a lingua franca** (e.g. Mauranen 2012, Jenkins 2015)

    'any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice and often the only option' (Seidlhofer, 2011: 7)
    'second-order language contact' between different 'similects' (Mauranen 2012)

- **English as "a local practice"** (e.g. Pennycook 2010) –

    – e.g. focus on practice and how language use is tied to particular locations and times, rather than language as an abstract code (as in e.g. Saussure, Chomsky)

- **English as "a translingual practice"** (e.g. Canagarajah 2013, Li Wei 2018)

    – challenges the assumption that sharedness and uniformity of norms are required for communicative success
    – 'Translanguaging is using one's idiolect, that is one's linguistic repertoire, without regard for socially and politically defined language names and labels' (Li Wei 2018: 19)

Theoretical understandings of multilingualism as a set of separate parallel systems

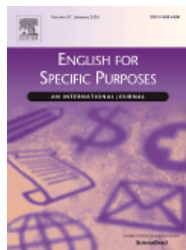(e.g. parallel language use in the Nordic countries)

Or as a set of semiotically porous and dynamically interacting resources

(e.g. 'metrolingualism' Pennycook and Otsuji 2015)

English at the multilingual university in Sweden?

artwork by Staffan Nihlén, thanks to Caroline Kerfoot

Trends in conceptualisations of English across sub-fields of applied linguistics

Survey of English at SU

investigated the use of English at various levels of education and writing for publication

Student survey sample (N=4,524)
Participants' L1s - over 90 languages reported:

75% - Swedish, **3% - English**
22% - other languages (e.g. Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, German, French, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, etc.)
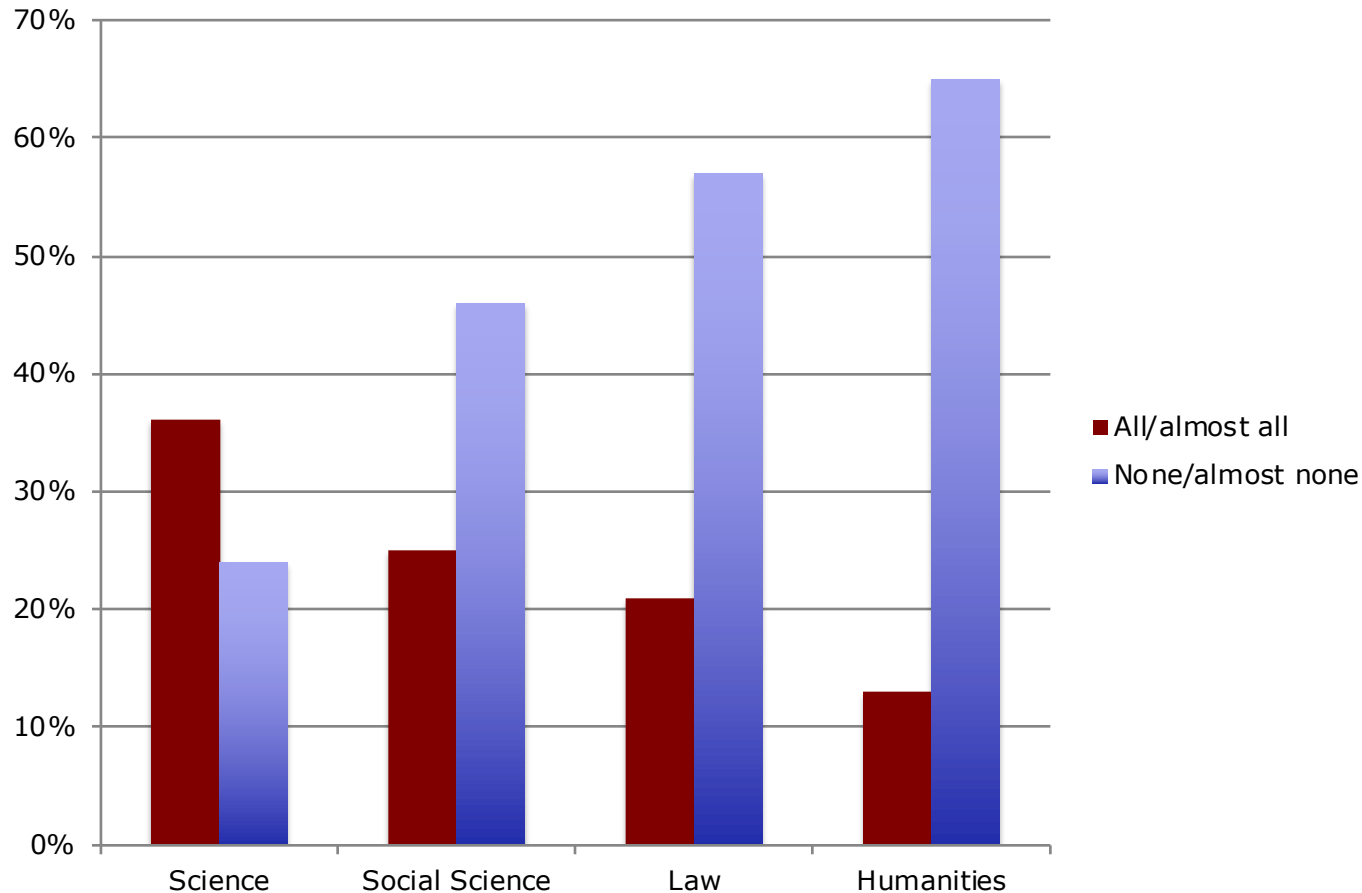

Staff survey sample (N=668)
Participants' L1s - over 30 languages:
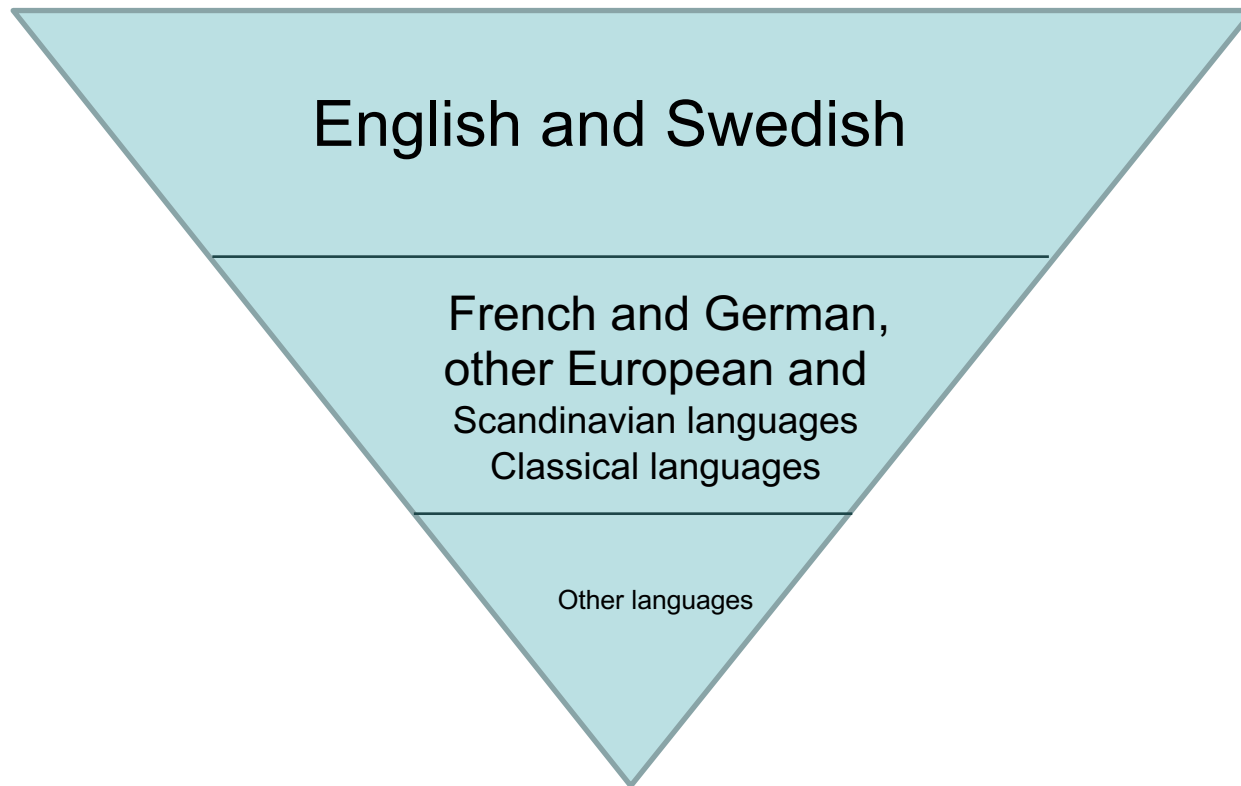
68% - Swedish, **8% - English,** 5% - German
2% - Finnish, 2% - Spanish
15% - other languages (e.g. Arabic, Danish, Latvian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, etc.)

Bolton, K. and Kuteeva, M. 2012. English as an academic language at a Swedish university: Parallel language use and the 'threat' of English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 33* (5), 429–447.

Lectures in English at SU

Bolton, K. and Kuteeva, M. 2012. English as an academic language at a Swedish university: Parallel language use and the 'threat' of English. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 33* (5), 429–447.

Visibility of languages in the survey comments

English and Swedish

French and German,
other European and
Scandinavian languages
Classical languages

Other languages

Visualisation based on Kuteeva (2020)

English-medium programme in Business Studies

- every educational context constructs 'its own language regime' (Busch 2015).

- Survey of Swedish (n=30) and international (n=28, 15 L1s) students and follow-up interviews:
  - Study participants perceived English as the main but not only language used to communicate in academic contexts;
  - they would need several languages in their future careers;
  - Swedish students perceived themselves to be very good at English and regarded English as "their" language;
  - International students talked about "Swedish English" as a kind of local variety.

Kuteeva, M., Hynninen, N., and Haslam, M. (2015) . "It's so natural to mix languages": Attitudes towards English-medium instruction in Sweden. In A. Linn, N. Bermel, G. Ferguson & C. Hadjidemetriou (Eds.), *Attitudes towards English in Europe*, pp. 193-212. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter Mouton.

Students' perceptions of standard English, lingua franca and translingual practice in EMI

Focal study participants

Student	L1	Previous EMI experience	Other reported languages
Alex	Swedish	IB programme in Sweden	English
Robin	Swedish	None	English
Sam	English/Swedish	School in the US, IB in Sweden	English, French, German
Pat	Hindi	EMI school and university in India	English, Japanese
Kim	German	Boarding school in the UK	English, Spanish, Swedish

11

English as a lingua franca? – Kim and Sam

- there's been **like a dynamic in the group for those that are on the same language level to stick to each other** because it makes working just a lot easier. (Kim)

- since then I have sort of **tried to find at least people who speak Swedish or English**. (Sam)

Translingual practices – Alex and Sam

- we tended to sometimes digress **and just started speaking Swedish because it felt like faster** and … you remember that 'Oh, now I'm talking in Swedish again' so you mix it with English again **so I think that you tend to sometimes not to think about when you- when you use the different languages**. (Alex)

- we **usually switched to Swedish or sometimes we even had full study sessions in Swedish** and all we would do is read in English and then go back to Swedish. (Sam)

Translingual practices - Kim

- Kim: … **sometimes like even during the lectures when you're like commenting on- on something, I usually do that in Swedish**. It's not necessarily English. It's like switching back and forth. It really depends, so [..]

- M: So, during a lecture in English, you comment with your classmates in Swedish

- Kim: It's **like- yeah, if the person next to me like says something it's mostly in Swedish so we like, comment on it**. But I mean of course if it's a classmate that isn't Swedish, it would be English but-

- M: So Swedish is more like a student language like-

- Kim: **It's like our secret hidden language**. ((laughter)) I don't know, yeah, it became like that in a way actually

Translingual practices - Pat

- if I am the only person who is- or how I shall put- if we are three or four people and three people know Russian or they in some way- and **I am the only person who don't know Russian then the conversation will probably end up speaking all these three persons Russian and I was like standing there probably**- it depends … if I see that I have something in that conversation for me to learn or experience then I will probably ask them to speak in English but otherwise I will just [..] (Pat)

NOTE: Russian is "a metaphorical example" (Pat)

Students' perceptions vis-à-vis positionings

- Alex, Sam, and Kim function as **language regulators** (of **standard English**) for their peers in different assignments prepared in groups.

- But! both all three are **flexible enough** to adjust their language uses, or 'standards of English' in Sam's case, and to **participate in English-Swedish translingual practices**, even if they involve the use of what they describe as '**Swenglish**' (Alex) or '**creole**' (Kim).

- Pat positions herself as an **effective communicator with other L2 users** of English, regardless of their proficiency level.

- Pat is the **least attuned to translingual practices** and may feel excluded when they take place.

Perceived linguistic hierarchy of Sweden

(visualised by Hult 2012: 242, based on Josephson 2004)

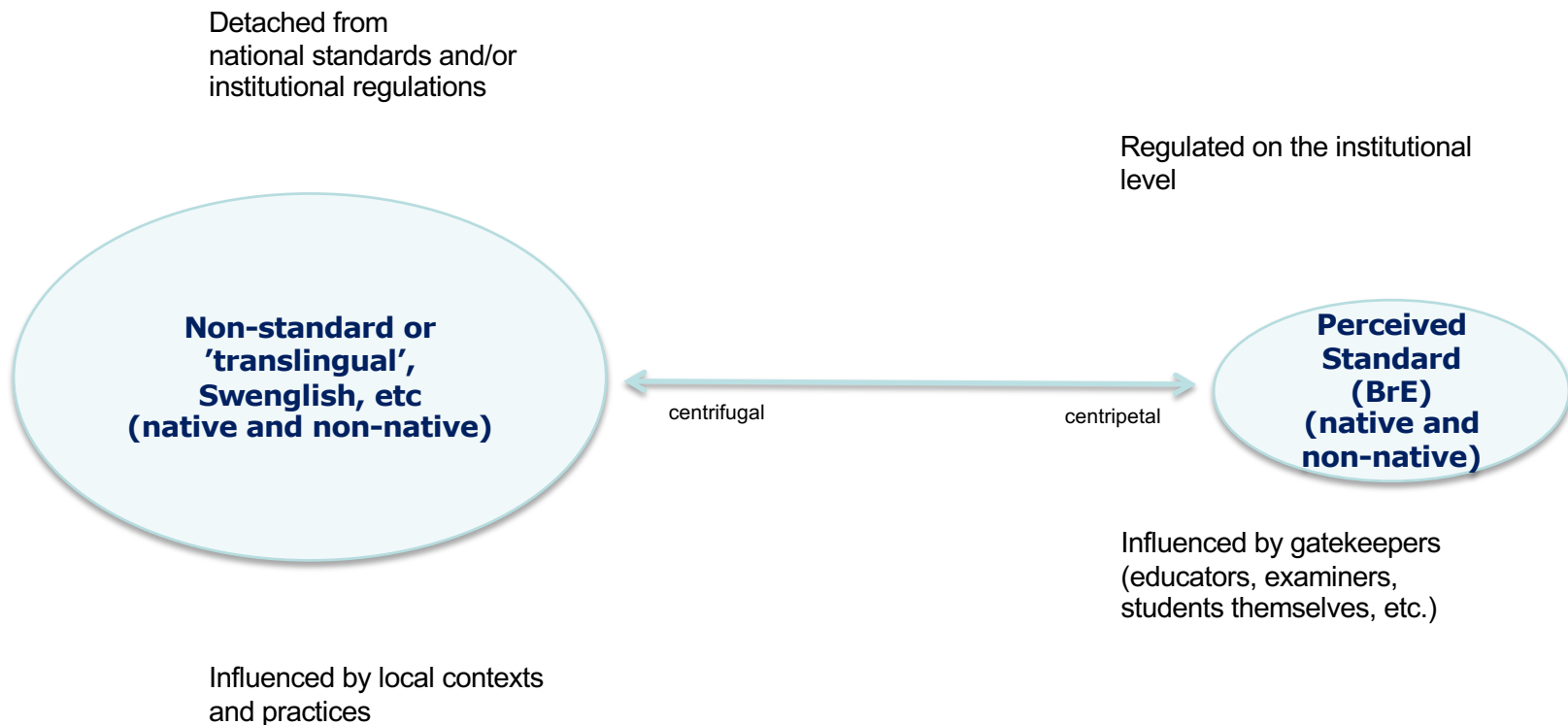*- can it be applied to different kinds of Englishes?*
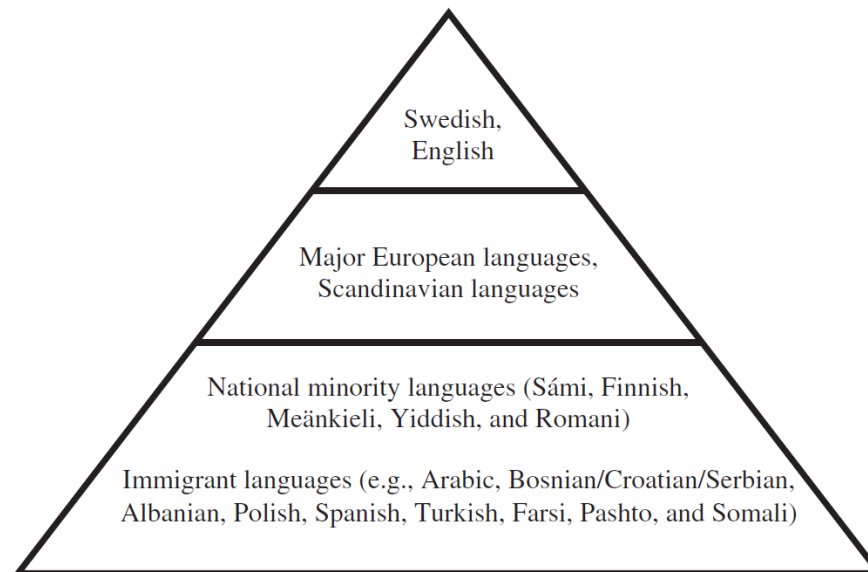
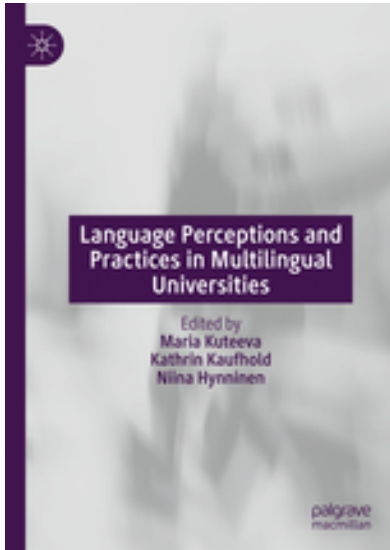(A visual representation based on Josephson, 2004, p. 128)

FIGURE 1. The linguistic hierarchy of Sweden.

Implications

- Native varieties of English are valued by the study participants but they **do not necessarily enjoy the same status** (cf. Söderlundh 2012).

- English in English-medium instruction contexts can be viewed along the **continuum** of standard versus non-standard language uses.

Sliding "double standards" of English

Detached from
national standards and/or
institutional regulations

Regulated on the institutional
level

**Non-standard or
'translingual',
Swenglish, etc
(native and non-native)**

centrifugal   centripetal

**Perceived
Standard
(BrE)
(native and
non-native)**

Influenced by gatekeepers
(educators, examiners,
students themselves, etc.)

Influenced by local contexts
and practices

Kuteeva, M. 2020. Revisiting the 'E' in EMI: Students perceptions of standard English, lingua franca and translingual practices. *International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education,* 23(3), 287-300.

Language Perceptions and Practices in Multilingual Universities

Edited by
Maria Kuteeva
Kathrin Kaufhold
Niina Hynninen

Paldies!

Thank you!

maria.kuteeva@english.su.se

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maria_Kuteeva/research