

Ragnhild Ljosland*

Teaching through English: Monolingual Policy Meets Multilingual Practice

Abstract

The present paper proposes to explore the boundaries of Teaching Through English by discussing situations where English meets other languages within the teaching and learning situation and in the surrounding environment. In contrast to the view that the English language is taking over whole areas of society in a process of domain loss, the paper shows that even within officially English medium study programmes there is a certain scope for multilingual practices. Through looking in more detail at actual language use in a range of communicative situations within the study environment, the paper seeks to build a more detailed understanding of what constitutes a sociolinguistic domain, and where its boundaries are. The paper is based on a case study of an English medium MSc programme at a Norwegian university.

1. Introduction

Although the idea of Teaching Through English (hereafter referred to as TTE) at the outset means that teaching and learning activities should take place in English, in reality the case is not always clear-cut. Campus life encompasses a range of different situations, not all of which are teaching and learning activities, but which are still part of the student's overall experience. Furthermore, activities that can be categorised as teaching and learning activities are not always teacher-driven and therefore not as easily controllable in terms of which language or languages are used. This opens up for the theoretical possibility of using more languages than just English within the TTE study environment, such as the national language(s) of the host country or any native or second languages that international students or staff may bring to the environment. Given such a case of multilingual practices within a TTE study programme, there is a need to address the question of how far the TTE policy extends, or whether a discrepancy between language policy and everyday practice entails a challenge to the definition of TTE itself.

TTE is defined in this paper as follows: A study programme is a TTE programme if it has been advertised as being English medium in the prospectus, and/or there is an official policy that teaching and learning activities should take place in English. It differs from Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programmes in that language learning in itself is not an explicit learning outcome in TTE programmes (Hellekjær/Westergaard 2003). In TTE programmes, English is used for content learning, but not purposefully for language learning. However, the hypothesis of this paper is that *a micro-level study of linguistic interactions in an officially TTE study environment may reveal quite diverse actual everyday language usage*. It therefore involves questioning the premises of the definition of TTE: Which activities are perceived to be teaching and learning activities and which are not? Are all teaching and learning activities empirically found to be conducted monolingually in English? The paper will introduce a distinction between “core” and “fringe” activities, and argue that only the “core” activities are perceived as required to be in English by the students and staff of a case TTE study programme. The paper will also look at instanc-

* Ragnhild Ljosland
Centre for Nordic Studies
UHI Millennium Institute
Kiln Corner, Kirkwall, Orkney
KW 15 1 QX Scotland
ragnhild.ljosland@orkney.uhi.ac.uk

es of code-switching in everyday communicative events in a TTE study environment in order to explore breaking points between languages and communicative situations.

1.1. Literature review

Although national languages predominate in European higher education, English medium study programmes are becoming more common throughout Northern and Western Europe (Maiworm/Wächter 2002, Ammon/McConnell 2002). In Scandinavia, higher education has been identified as a sector of society where the use of English is increasing at such a rate that it is felt to require special monitoring. In order to address this, reports were commissioned where the aim was to assess any development towards **domain loss** in a number of sectors, including higher education. Such reports were made for Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, The Faroe Islands and for the Sami languages, all summarised in Höglin (2002). This was followed up in Sweden by Gustavsson et al. (2002), in Norway by Språkrådet (2005), and in Denmark by Sprogudvalget (2008). The Swedish and Norwegian governments also, as a result, developed language policy documents (Ringholm/Pagrotsky 2005 and Kultur- og kyrkjedepartementet 2008). Common to all the said reports and policy documents is the recommendation of parallel language usage within the higher education sector as a means to protect the Scandinavian languages against the spread of English, while at the same time promoting the internationalisation of higher education. At the same time, the topic was also scrutinised by independent research (see for instance Airey 2004, Brandt/Schwach 2005, Christensen 2006). In parallel to the development of these government reports and policies, a debate arose in Scandinavian academic circles concerning domain loss. The core of this debate was a discussion of how to balance the need for a *lingua franca* for research and higher education purposes against the possible risk of domain loss for the national languages and also the possible disadvantages that may come with working in a foreign language (see for instance Simonsen 2002, Mæhlum 2002).

The research underlying the present paper was occasioned by this concern for the future of the Scandinavian languages as academic languages, and was thus undertaken from a domain loss point of view. In the aforementioned domain loss reports and official government policies made in the Scandinavian countries, domain loss is defined as the gradual replacement of one language by another within a certain sector of society, such as for instance higher education. The definition of a **domain** as a sector of society, however, somewhat differs from Joshua Fishman's definition of what constitutes a sociolinguistic domain (Simonsen 2002, Fishman 1970). Fishman's definition, on the one hand, focuses on the micro-level by defining sociolinguistic domains as situations that resemble one another regarding participants and social roles, location and the topic of conversation, and where the speakers systematically choose one language over the other (1972: 17, 30). In the Scandinavian domain loss reports, on the other hand, the focus so far has been on the macro-level by treating areas such as "research" and "higher education" – or even "academia" – as domains more or less a-priori. Some attempts have been made, however, to refine the definition of particular domains, for instance by Kalleberg (2004), who specifies clusters of activities within the "domain" of academia which may differ in terms of their language use, and by Brandt/Schwach (2005), who introduce the concept of sub-domains. An attempt to reconcile the micro-level and the macro-level view of domains was made by Ljosland (2007), adapting Keller's (1994) model of invisible hand processes in language change in order to link the micro-level and the macro-level in a process of domain loss. This was achieved by viewing a language switch in a sector of society as an accumulation of individual acts within a framework of external conditions.

As already mentioned, the hypothesis of this paper is that *everyday language usage in a TTE study environment may prove to be more multilingual than the official English medium policy gives the impression of*. Indeed, Lehtonen et al. (1999: 2) remark:

Embedded in the idea of T[eaching] T[hrough] E[nGLISH] is that all course-related activities – not only reading requirements – take place in English: lectures are delivered in English, essays are written in

English, required reading is in English and exams are set and taken in English. However, it is likely that the reality does not necessarily correspond with the idea. Many learning-related activities are likely to take place in the native language(s) of the students and teachers [...]. Therefore, T[eaching] T[hrough] E[nGLISH] does not necessarily equal learning solely through English.

A similar finding is made by Tange/Lauring (2009), whose study aims to identify communicative practices emerging from a management decision to implement English as a corporate language in traditionally Danish speaking organisations. Among its main findings is the observation that speakers in such a work environment tend to form clusters based on their linguistic backgrounds (Tange/Lauring 2009). This type of language clustering “ [...] takes the form of informal gatherings between the speakers of the same national language [...]” within the multinational workplace (Tange/Lauring 2009: 224). Language clustering was found to occur along with “thin” communication, defined by Tange/Lauring (2009: 226-227) as withdrawal from non-essential exchanges such as gossip, small-talk and storytelling if they were required to be in English, instead performing mainly formal and task-oriented communication in the corporate *lingua franca*. What this type of behaviour highlights, is the high level of mastery required to be able to engage in registers such as gossip, small-talk and story-telling in a second or foreign language.

Language clustering behaviour was first observed in Marschan-Piekkari et al.’s (1999) study of the multinational Finnish-owned corporation Kone. This study also observed how language clusters transcended geographical borders by interaction between distinct, but mutually intelligible languages such as Castilian Spanish, Mexican Spanish and Italian, or German and Austrian (Marschan-Piekkari et al. 1999: 434).

In the light of Lehtonen et al. (1999), Marschan-Piekkari et al.’s (1999) and Tange/Lauring’s (2009) observations, the present paper seeks to challenge the presumption which seems to be inherent in the Scandinavian political discourse on domain loss that when a higher education programme claims to be TTE, English is omnipresent and can easily be mapped as forming part of a single linguistic domain. Rather than assume that language usage within TTE study programmes is uniform, the present paper wishes to draw attention to the variety of communicative activities which form part of everyday life in a TTE study programme, examining which language or languages are habitually used in each type of activity in the form of a case-study.

By analysing instances of code-switching, this paper attempts to go back to Fishman’s (1972) definition of sociolinguistic domains. Applying Fishman’s (1972) theory to the micro-level study of one particular TTE study programme would reveal if the language of interaction changes when either the participants and/or their social roles, the location or the topic of conversation changes. The interest here is chiefly on inter-sentential code-switching, as inter-sentential code-switching may indicate possible candidate breaking-points between domains in Fishman’s (1972) sense of the term. However, as intra-sentential code-switching was also observed in the case-study, this type of code-switching will also be briefly touched upon.

2. Materials and methods

The present paper is based on a case study of an officially English-medium MSc programme at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway (Ljosland 2008). The study was originally intended to investigate the causes of domain loss for Norwegian in favour of English within the higher education sector in Norway. The study may thus be characterised as an instrumental case study (Stake 2000: 437), defined as a case-study where the case in question is regarded as an instance of a certain phenomenon, which the study seeks to investigate, instead of being interested in the case itself for its own intrinsic value.

The case in question is NTNU’s Industrial Ecology programme. This programme was chosen for the case study following an initial questionnaire survey in 2004 of 51 departments within NTNU (that is, all departments excluding modern languages, linguistics and applied linguistics), which yielded a return rate of 82%. The survey asked the administrative heads of department to

indicate language use in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, course literature and scientific publications, and the degree to which language issues were discussed within the department. This questionnaire was meant as an aid to placing the 51 departments within a language choice triangle, as used by Gunnarsson/Öhman (1997) (see figure 1), except for “Swedish” being replaced by “Norwegian”. The department to be contacted for the in-depth case study would ideally lie somewhere near the “English only” corner of the language choice triangle. In their reply, Industrial Ecology indicated that they were at the time planning to reorganise and start giving all of their tuition in English. The claim on their part that all tuition would be in English from the autumn of 2005 on seemed to make the Industrial Ecology department suitable for the case study. The new language policy was put into effect in 2005, with the case study being carried out in the first term of all-English-medium tuition. This gave a opportunity to be present at the transformational and implementational phase of the department’s language switch.

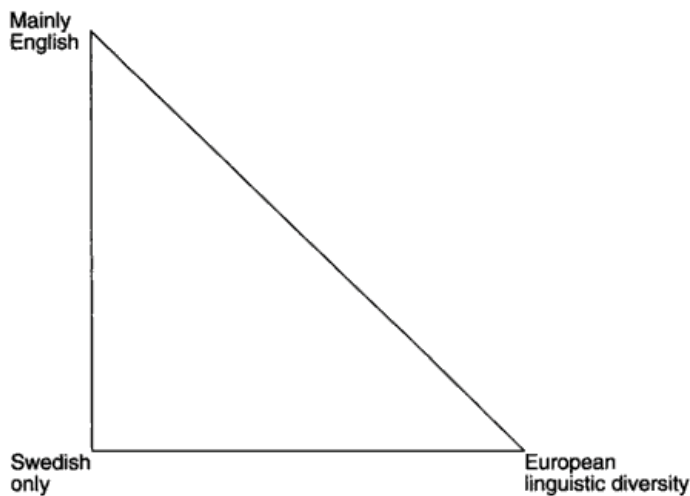


Figure 1. The language choice triangle, from Gunnarsson (2001: 289)

The staff of the case department at the time of the case study consisted of one programme leader, two members of the managerial team, two part-time administrative officers, two employees of the Life Cycle Assessment laboratory, two postdoctoral researchers, 14 PhD students (who in Norway are considered to be part of the staff and often have teaching duties) and four research assistants. In addition to these, there were established contacts with academic staff from other departments, who would regularly give guest lectures. There were 7 students doing the full Masters, one of these being from Ghana and unable to speak Norwegian, and 6 being from Norway. In addition, 11 other Norwegian students were enrolled in one or more modules from the Master’s programme, but were studying for a different degree. Six exchange students attended the programme for shorter periods of time (one-two terms). These were native speakers of German, Austrian German and Spanish. All of the students were competent in English, as competence in English at upper secondary school level or the equivalent was among the entry requirements to the course. Some students were also competent in other languages at various levels.

Once contact with the case department was established, the methods employed were mainly in the qualitative research tradition, with some initial support from questionnaires. In the spring term of 2005, which was the term before the language switch, questionnaires were posted to all members of staff in the case department, and also left in a communal pigeonhole for the Masters students. The intention was to get a broad overview of employees’ and students’ opinions about the forthcoming language switch. It also provided an entry point through which to get in contact with informants for qualitative interviews, although further recruitment was necessary for the students,

as the new Masters students had not yet arrived at this point in time. This round of questionnaires yielded 9 replies from staff; which is a discouraging 31% if one does not count the external guest lecturers. Two Masters students also replied. Because of the impossibility of gaining statistically significant results from such a small group, the questionnaire was used mainly as a way to get in contact with informants for in-depth, qualitative interviews, and the results of this questionnaire will not be referred to further in this paper.

The research then moved on to qualitative, semi-structured interviews with the management, staff and students from the Master of Science in Industrial Ecology programme. Each interview was between half an hour and an hour long (depending on how talkative the interviewee was) and allowed for spontaneous follow-up questions. As part of these interviews, members of staff were asked to describe which language or languages they would normally use in a range of situations within the department. The students were asked for their reasons for enrolling, in particular whether or not the tuition language played any part in their decision to enroll. They were also asked to describe their experiences during the first term, as the majority of student interviews took place near the end of the autumn term of 2005. In total, 15 interviews were made with employees and students from the case department:

- The programme leader, spring 2005.
- 1 employee from the "Life Cycle Assessment" laboratory, autumn 2004 and autumn 2006.
- 1 PhD student, autumn 2004.
- 6 MSc students, including 1 non-Norwegian, and also including 1 elected student representative, spring (2)/autumn 2005 (5). One of these students was interviewed twice: once in the spring of 2005 and once at the end of the autumn term of 2005.
- 3 students from other degree programmes, studying modules from Industrial Ecology, autumn 2005.
- 1 non-Norwegian exchange student, autumn 2005.

In addition to these interviews, the case study also made use of observations. Throughout the first term of English-medium tuition, observations consisting of field notes and audio recordings were made during lectures, lab work and group work. One class was observed in all campus-based activities relating to one core module from September to December 2005. This meant one 90 minute lecture and one 2-hour lab work session per week. In addition, occasional observations were made of group-work organised by the students themselves outside of these set hours, and general "hanging around" the student and staff areas, engaging in informal conversations without being captured on tape, in the "bricoleur" tradition (Postholm 2005: 35).

3. Results

Although the Industrial Ecology programme had been purposefully selected for the case study on the grounds that it from their questionnaire response **seemed** to be near the "English only" corner of the language choice triangle (see figure 1), realities were, unsurprisingly, not as clear-cut as their new language policy intended. Despite the official English-medium policy, the MSc programme in Industrial Ecology was found to be far from a monolingual environment. Around the core of teaching and learning activities, there was a fringe of activities and communicative situations taking place in Norwegian. Furthermore, activities which must be characterised as teaching and learning activities did not always take place solely in English, in spite of the language policy. Instead, a range of languages were used in a flexible and versatile manner.

3.1. General outline of everyday language use

In the following description of everyday language use from the case study, details will be given of observed language use, along with habits as described by informants in the interviews. In order

to fully describe the scope of diverse language use, not only what may be termed “core” teaching and learning activities are included, but also “fringe” activities which nevertheless form an integral part of the student experience.

3.1.1. List of communicative situations

Core teaching and learning activities:

(1) Lectures. As part of the lecturing situation must be counted not only the lecturer’s lesson, but also questions and comments from the students during the lectures and the lecturer’s replies to these; overhead foils or Powerpoint presentations used in the lecture; student activities such as discussion groups or short tasks to be solved within the lecture; the students’ note taking. Around the lecture is a fringe of informal activity such as conversations among the students before and after the lecture and similar conversations between students and lecturer(s). Such interactions are referred to below in (5). The course literature was all in English.

(2) Lab work. This includes the lab assistant’s instructions to the student group as a whole; the lab assistant’s interactions with smaller groups of students or single students; the students’ interaction with each other in pairs, or in smaller or larger groups; the language of the assignment text which the students are to solve in the lab session; the students’ written answer to the task at hand; and the language on the computer screen. Also embedded in the lab work situation is a fringe of social interaction in the form of informal conversation, consisting for instance of chatting or joking among the students interspersed with the lab work. Again, this is listed under (5) below.

(3) Examinations and dissertations. This includes the language of the exam questions for written exams; the language of the students’ written answer; the language of oral exam questions and the students’ answers; and the language of student dissertations.

(4) E-learning activities: This includes the language of the MSc programme’s internet and intranet pages; its Virtual Learning Environment; and e-mail activity.

Activities which are not core teaching and learning activities, but nevertheless form part of the student experience are:

(5) Social interaction: This includes informal conversations between classes; informal interaction interspersed with class work; lunch breaks with students and/or staff; and official parties such as the programme’s Christmas party.

(6) Situations relating to the student democracy: This includes the election of student representatives and meetings with these.

In the case study, situations 1, 2 and partly 5 were observed by the researcher, while situations 3, 4, 6 and partly 5 were described by students and members of staff in the interviews.

3.1.2. Language use within the listed communicative situations

The resulting picture of everyday language use within these situations was that none of the listed activities could be described as being monolingually in English. Lectures were held in English, but surrounding activities such as student discussions and problem solving, student questions and conversations immediately before and after lectures were observed to take place both in Norwegian and in English. Overhead foils and Powerpoint presentations used in lectures were mostly in English, but were observed to contain Norwegian texts now and then. The following extract illustrates the “fringe” surrounding the lecture, where the lecturer, in Norwegian, asks a student for assistance immediately before the start of the lecture, and then proceeds to start his lecture in English (extract 1):

(1)

1 Lecturer: Hvor står denne vanligvis?

1 [Lecturer: Where does this usually stand?]

2 Student: Hm?

2 [Student: eh?]

3 Lecturer: Hvor står denne vanligvis?

3 [Lecturer: Where does this usually stand?]

4 Student: Denne her? Her, ja.

4 [Student: This one? Here, yes.]

5 Lecturer: Okay. (Pause.)

6 Lecturer: **Maybe we should start here? Sorry about the delay, I didn't remember this morning
7 that there was some manual labour involved in my job today, so I'm a little bit delayed with
8 this. I have forty-nine slides and almost two hours. We will get through it.**

Lab work activities (2) showed an even more multilingual pattern. The students were encouraged to do their lab work in groups, leaving it up to the students themselves to form these groups. As was also found in the studies by Tange/Lauring (2009) and Marschan-Piekkari et al. (1999), the students tended to form groups depending on their linguistic backgrounds. German speakers from Germany and Austria worked together, discussing their work in German; Spanish speakers worked together, discussing in Spanish; and Norwegian speakers worked together, discussing in Norwegian. As an Austrian exchange student described in his interview (extract 2):

(2)

1 Austrian student: [...] [S]ometimes, because there are also some Germans, and when you know you
2 are only working in a pair, you most of the time speak German.

Another example is the following, where two Norwegian students who are working together and sharing a computer, after having been speaking in English for a while discover that a non-Norwegian speaking student has left them. Realising that they are now alone, and sharing their native language, they become aware of the awkwardness of continuing to speak in English (extract 3):

(3)

1 Norwegian student 1: Yeah. The e-mails.

2 Norwegian student 2: Okay.

3 Norwegian student 1: So what ... [indistinguishable]

4 Norwegian student 2: That's why.

5 Norwegian student 1: This is the only one I know where the program is actually ... (laughs) Okay.
6 **Men nå kan vi vel snakke norsk.**

[5 Norwegian student 1: This is the only one I know where the program is actually ... (laughs) Okay.
6 **But now we can speak in Norwegian, can't we.**]

7 Norwegian student 2: **Ja. Det kan vi faktisk. Det er litt sånn at når man først snakker sammen, så
8 blir det sånn.**

[7 Norwegian student 2: **Yes. Actually, we can. It's a bit like when you are already talking together,
8 it goes like that.**]

9 Norwegian student 1: **Ja. Man får liksom litt lyst til å spørre hva som er best. Burde vi snakke
10 engelsk, eller burde vi snakke norsk?**

[9 Norwegian student 1: **Yes. One kind of feels like asking what's best. Should we speak in
10 English, or should we speak in Norwegian?**]

(Norwegian student 2 laughs)

In such group work sessions, one student, namely the one from Ghana who was alone in her linguistic background, usually worked with a group of Norwegian students who spoke in English in her presence. However, code-switching behaviour was also frequently observed, as is discussed below.

Examinations and dissertations (3) were at the outset meant to be in English. However, the language of the written examination in the module which was observed during the case study was challenged by a group of students. Around a month before exam time, this group of students contacted the module leader claiming that since they were not studying for the full International Masters degree, but only taking individual modules from the programme as optional modules while studying for a Norwegian medium degree, they should be allowed to take their exam in Norwegian. This was found to be in accordance with the university's general regulations for Norwegian medium programmes. The module leader felt that allowing this would be unfair for the foreign students, and initially gave the students a negative answer to their request. However, the student representative then pointed out to the module leader that the university's general regulations say that if the tuition language is not Norwegian, students have the right to have their exam in the language of tuition *in addition to* Norwegian. A few days before the exam, the students were informed that those students who were not part of the International Masters programme would be able to choose whether to do their exam in English or Norwegian, while the students enrolled in the full International Masters programme would have to do their exam in English. The module leader was, however, not happy with this solution. This story shows, though, that even in a highly formal and controlled linguistic environment, as an exam is, the English-only norm could be challenged.

E-learning activities, as in (4), and e-mails, were described as being mostly in English, but with some Norwegian. The Ghanaian student complained in the interview that e-mails and intranet pages which she was required to read, were sometimes in Norwegian (extract 4). In particular, she mentioned the university's general student intranet pages, as opposed to the pages specific to the Industrial Ecology programme, and e-mails which were sent to all students to do with general matters, again not specifically to do with the Industrial Ecology course.

(4)

1 Student: There was a theft here, for instance. And a note was sent out. An e-mail was sent out in
2 norsk. At ... Sometimes when I get messages, I look at it, and I am not very comfortable going for
3 somebody to explain it to me. I feel bothering. But [name of administration officer] wrote it in ... She
4 just sent me an e-mail, a short translation, that there was a theft here, so maybe when we aren't in our
5 offices, we should lock it, because somebody can come in.

6 Interviewer: Yeah.

7 Student: And steal something.

8 Interviewer: Does that kind of thing happen often, that you get e-mails in Norwegian?

9 Student: Yeah. And this, the page, the NTNU ... is it "Innsida" [intranet pages] or ...

10 Interviewer: Oh yeah

11 Student: Or "It's learning" [virtual learning environment]. Is it "Innsida"? They advertise most of
12 the things in Norwegian. Yeah. And so it's difficult for me to know what it's about. It's only
13 sometimes that they write in English. But sometimes I assume it doesn't concern me, that's why it's
14 in Norwegian. (Laughter)

15 Interviewer: Yeah. (Laughter)

16 Student: (Laughter) But I might be wrong, it might concern me. But I don't know.

This student also described how she was unable to read general notices and signs on walls and doors in the campus, and all in all seemed to find herself in an English-medium programme which was like an island surrounded by a sea of Norwegian.

In situations of social interaction (5) and speech situations to do with student democracy (6), the interviewees described a mixed linguistic reality. Many said that people were for the most part pragmatic, speaking in their mother tongue with others who knew that language, and in English if someone present preferred it. This type of preference-related strategy was generally prevalent in most informal, oral situations.

3.2. Code-switching

Code-switching was also a frequently observed phenomenon in the case study. This would occur both in formal, oral situations such as lectures and in more informal situations such as group work or social conversations, although it was less common in formal situations, where English tended to dominate. Oral code-switching during lectures mostly consisted of explanations of English terminology. It was also sometimes triggered by a student, as in the following extract, where a student puts up his hand to ask a question during a lecture. In the preceding part of the lecture, the lecturer has been speaking in English (extract 5):

(5)

1 Student: How is it that the coast of the South Pole is overfished?

2 Lecturer: It is, yes.

3 Student: **Isfiske?**

[3 Student: **Ice fishing?**]

4 Lecturer: **Isfiske, ja.** Krill, for example. It's not used for human food, but for **fiskemel**, as it's called
5 in Norwegian.

[4 Lecturer: **Ice fishing, yes.** Krill, for example. It's not used for human food, but for **fishmeal**, as it's called
5 in Norwegian.]

More commonly, code-switching was heard in less formal situations, such as group work in the laboratory. Here the text on the computer screen or in the problem set at hand, or the lecturer having spoken about the topic in English, would inspire the students to use English. At the same time their natural preference for their native language would inspire them to use that language. The following extract from a group work situation exemplifies this (extract 6). It involves two student groups, one containing three Norwegians and the Ghanaian student, and the other containing Norwegians only. The mixed group has been working in English.

(6)

1 Norwegian student 1: Should we ask the other group what they are doing?

(The student leaves the group and approaches another group, consisting of Norwegians, on his own.)

2 Norwegian student 1: Hey, boys! **Er dere i full sving, eller?**

2 [Norwegian student 1: Hey, boys! **Are you in full swing, or?**]

3 Member of the other group: **Er vi det? Næææ ... Ja, nei ...**

3 [Member of the other group: **Are we? Nah ... Yes, no ...**]

(laughter and undistinguishable chatter in Norwegian)

(Ghanaian student and two other Norwegian students arrive)

4 Norwegian student 1: Can we ask you what you decided to do? Because we ... So, we just stand on
5 discussing how to attack the whole problem. Because we have totally incomparable matrixes here, so

6 Student from the other group: Well, we've just ... We're gonna start out by calculating the same
7 matrixes with the input-output and the LCA database.

In the light of Fishman's (1972) theory of linguistic domains, one would expect code-switching to occur at points in the conversation where either the topic, the participants/roles or the location of the conversation changes. This does indeed happen in extract 6, however, it is not entirely clear whether it is the change in participants or the topic change which causes the code-switching (line 4). Student 1's native language is Norwegian, and so is the native language of all of the students in the group which he approaches. Although Student 1 has been speaking in English with his own group immediately before this extract, working on the assignment, he chooses to address the other group partly in Norwegian, although he is still in the laboratory and he is about to ask a question regarding the assignment which they are all attempting to solve. His initial greeting "hey, boys" (line 2) is in English, but plays on the Norwegian greeting "hei, gutter", and could be seen as a compromise. He then code-switches to Norwegian, and gets a reply in Norwegian. Then two significant things happen at once: The other members of his group, including the Ghanaian student, arrive. And at the same time, student 1 ends his contact-making part of the conversation and instead starts explaining the more serious business about the problems that his own group is having with approaching the assignment, and asks the other group for help (lines 4-5). Either of these changes in the situation could have triggered student 1's switch to English, according to Fishman's (1972) theory. The switch could have been triggered by student 1's move from the "fringe" activity of saying hello to the "core" learning activity of discussing the assignment, or it could have been triggered by the arrival of the other group members, and among these most significantly the Ghanaian. In this instance, it is probably more likely that the arrival of the Ghanaian student triggered the code-switching, rather than the topic change.

Another instance of code-switching which seems related to extract 5 in that it appears to be triggered by a change in interlocutors is the following (extract 7):

(7)

1 Lecturer to Norwegian student: Kopiere på ... Ja. Kopier alt over på maskina. Bare få det på maskina,
2 ikke jobbe fra ...

[1 Lecturer to Norwegian student: Copy everything to ... Yes. Copy everything over to the computer.
Just get it on the computer,
2 don't work from the ...]

3 [To everybody:] **Alright. I think most of the groups have gotten the ... So those groups that do
4 not have it working now, you just look to the side group, so you just sort of get an overview of
5 what you've done while we're waiting for the computer to get online.**

The situation here is that the lecturer, during group-work, has been helping a Norwegian student. While he is doing this, he speaks with the student in Norwegian (lines 1-2). Then, realising that other students are probably also having the same problem, he suddenly decides to address the whole class. In doing this, the lecturer switches to English (lines 3-5). His reasoning seems to be that as long as he is just speaking to one student, and this student is Norwegian, he is not obliged to speak in English, although he is clearly engaged in a teaching activity which is part of the officially English medium course. When addressing everyone, however, he does act in accordance with the language policy. This illustrates the kind of pragmatic attitude which was prevalent throughout the case study: despite the English-only policy, multilingual practices were commonplace.

The configuration of interlocutors was, however, not the only influencing factor for code-switching observed in the case study. The following transcript (extract 8) shows a situation where the interlocutors remain the same throughout. The language of conversation switches from Nor-

wegian to English nonetheless – this time in order to mark a topic change. In this excerpt, a group of students, who are all Norwegian except for student 5, are working on preparing a presentation:

(8)

1 Student 1: Kan vi bare definere ordet **perform**? Og så lager vi et lite skuespill om LCA? Og så bare 2 er vi ferdig.

1 [Student 1: Can we not just define the word **perform**? And make a little play about LCA (Life Cycle Assessment; the name of the module)? And then 2 we're just finished.]

3 Student 2: Ja. (laughter)

3 [Student 2: Yes. (laughter)]

4 Student 1: (laughter)

5 Student 2: Skuespill er fint. Det blir jo en monolog, da. For det er én som skal presentere.

5 [Student 2: A play is good. It will be a monologue, then. Because one person is to present it.]

6 Student 3: Ja, det blir sånn. (laughter)

6 [Student 3: Yes, it will be like that. (laughter)]

7 Student 1: Da kan de andre spille en person.

7 [Student 1: The others can act as one person.]

8 Student 2: De andre blir statister.

8 [Student 2: The others will be extras.]

9 Student 4: Og så kan noen være karbondioksid og sånn, og.

9 [Student 4: And some can be carbon-dioxide, and that, too.]

10 Student 1: Akkurat.

10 [Student 1: Exactly.]

11 Student 5: **Global warming potential.**

11 [Student 5: **Global warming potential.** (This expression is generally used by the group as a loan-word in Norwegian too, so what language this utterance is “meant” to be in, is ambiguous.)]

12 Student 4: Mm.

12 [Student 4: M-hm.]

13 Student 1: **Maybe ... ah. Like, maybe I just download it to ...** [The group continues their work in English.]

The significant code-switch here is in line 13, where student 1 initiates a switch to English. One could argue that it is the non-Norwegian student 5 who initiates the switch by saying “global warming potential” in line 11. This expression is, however, frequently used by the students and staff as a loan-word in Norwegian too, so it may not necessarily be perceived as a deviation from speaking in Norwegian. It would, however, be unusual for student 5 to speak in Norwegian, as her knowledge of the language is limited to a basic understanding, and she generally prefers speaking in English. What happens in line 13, however, seems to support Fishman’s (1972) theory. Here, student 1 not only switches to English, but also initiates a change in conversation topic and turns his attention back to the computer screen. The combination of code-switching and the shift in the

focus of attention to the computer screen signals to the rest of the group that the joking which student 1 initiated in line 1 is now over. The group then proceeds to work seriously on their presentation.

The joking here may be seen as a form of social interaction which is not directly part of the learning activity, but rather as a “fringe” around the learning situation. The code-switch to English here signals a move into the “core” learning activity of preparing the group’s oral presentation. At the same time, joking may be a register which at least some of the students may not fully master in English, as the study by Tange/Lauring (2009) suggested for the registers of gossip, small-talk and story-telling, which may partly explain student 1’s initiative to speak in Norwegian in line 1.

4. Discussion

As the present case study has shown, even an officially English-medium study programme proved to be more multilingual than the official English-only policy would seem to indicate. Although initially selected for their English-medium policy, the MSc programme of the case study proved to employ a pragmatic attitude to multilingual practices in the study environment. That puts this particular case further in the direction of the “linguistic diversity” corner of the language choice triangle than initially assumed, although the exact point on the graph is not known, as no attempt was made to quantify the measures of each language.

This finding has implications for how we understand language policy surveys. The present case study illustrates a very understandable discrepancy between official language policy and everyday language use, which proves that surveys of language policies, such as Ammon/MacConnell (2002) or Maiworm/Wächter (2002) must be taken as just that: Surveys of language policies only, and not necessarily of sociolinguistic realities.

This again has consequences for our understanding of the concept of “domains” and “domain loss”, in the sense that these terms have been used in the Scandinavian discourse. If one wishes to use the term “domain” to describe an arena for language use within society, one must, at the very least, deconstruct these arenas and look at smaller pieces at a time. As this article has shown in the case of higher education, a “domain” is likely to consist of very diverse situations, which may display a range of language uses. Steps in the right direction have been made by Brandt/Schwach (2005) and Kalleberg (2004), arguing for the division of “the academic domain” into “sub-domains” or “clusters” of communicative situations.

The way to proceed may be to attempt to identify patterns of language choice within smaller sub-categories of activities within the higher education setting. Situations where speakers move from one language to another, as in extracts 1, 3, 6, 7 and 8 above, may prove particularly helpful in trying to identify what triggers a particular choice of language. In the excerpts discussed in this paper, the triggers seem to be

- (1) The number of interlocutors and their language preferences. In pairs or smaller groups, the students and lecturers seem to feel that they are permitted to choose a language other than English if everyone present understands this language. The preferred language is often the mother tongue of the interlocutors, be it Norwegian, German or Spanish. When speaking to a bigger group, such as the whole class, or to a group including someone who does not share this “other” language, the preferred choice is English.
- (2) The type of situation or activity involved. I would very tentatively suggest that the speakers themselves understand some situations as “core teaching and learning activities”, and that these situations make the speakers more inclined to use English in accordance with the policy. Meanwhile, other situations are understood as “fringe” situations, where a range of languages, most notably the speakers’ native language(s), seem permitted to the speakers. “Fringe” situations include social interaction, informal conversations before and after lectures and other types of conversation not directly to do with the “core” teaching and

learning activities. In these situations, the dictate of the official language policy feels more remote.

What Blom/Gumperz (1972) have termed metaphorical code-switching – where the change of language indicates a shift in the situation or roles – may indicate that the speaker wants to signal a move from a “fringe” situation to a “core” situation or vice versa. In the present material, extracts 1, 6 and 8 may perhaps be interpreted this way, although in the case of 1 and 6 the interlocutor factor also plays a role. However, this kind of pattern was not consistent throughout the material from the case study, and a certain amount of caution is needed before drawing final conclusions.

Going back to the discussion of how we should understand domains and domain loss, the study of inter-sentential code-switching could be a way to approach the problem of finding the boundaries around a domain. This could lead to more specific descriptions of **sub-domains**, which would benefit the Scandinavian debate and attempts to assess the situation. Such an approach should be based on Fishman’s (1970: 19) definition of linguistic domains, as follows:

Domains are defined [...] in terms of institutional contexts or socio-ecological co-occurrences. They attempt to designate the *major clusters of interaction situations* that occur in particular multilingual settings. Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic, appropriate though they may be for analyses of individual behavior at the level of face-to-face verbal encounters, are [...] related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations.

The reason for choosing instances of intra-sentential code-switching for further analysis, as this article has done, is that these give us an opportunity to analyse the breaking points where we can test the boundaries of such “major clusters of interaction”. A definition of a domain should, rather than just be defined a-priori as a sector of society such as higher education, be based on observations of which types of interaction situations go together, which factors seem to participate in determining the language choice, and where the breaking points are that indicate the borders.

5. Conclusions

In this specific case study, a newly introduced policy that English should be the official medium of the study programme did not stop speakers from using their diverse linguistic competences. Multilingualism is part of everyday experience and in the debate about domain loss in higher education official language policies are only one part of the story. Even a case specially selected for its English-only policy turned out to offer greater linguistic diversity than initially believed. Would we, in reality, be able to find any cases where an English-only policy is enforced so strictly that the “local domain” of higher education is in danger of being completely “lost”? The number of clear-cut cases is probably low. On the other hand, although policies are not adhered to one hundred percent, they are still important in influencing attitudes and the general feeling among speakers for what language is “correct” and “suitable”, which is an important factor for future language survival or non-survival within a sector of society.

Another important finding is that borders between domains or sub-domains are blurry, and must necessarily be so. Realising this, domains are better defined bottom-up, by first observing actual language use and then looking for patterns, rather than presupposing that whole sectors of society undergo language shift as one entity. This means that a domain loss then consists of a gradual change in linguistic behavioral patterns within a “cluster of interaction” by an accumulation of single, but related, events. There is scope for future research in the form of a study of domain loss where changes in such patterns are quantitatively mapped over a period of time. Such a study should pay particular attention to the breaching points where speakers are observed to switch from one language to the other. A domain loss may perhaps be described over a period of time if speakers are observed on average to switch to English more frequently than before under certain circumstances, for instance when starting a lecture or initiating a study-related conversa-

tion. Further research in this direction would require a more easily quantifiable and more systematic approach to field observations than the present study has employed.

References

- Airey, John 2004: Can you teach it in English? Aspects of the language choice debate in Swedish Higher Education. In Wilkinson, R. (ed.), *Integrating Content and Language: Meeting the challenge of a multilingual higher education*. Maastricht: Maastricht University Press, 97-108.
- Ammon, Ulrich/McConnell, Grant 2002: *English as an Academic Language in Europe*. Duisburger Arbeiter zur Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft, 48. Frankfurt am Main/Berlin/Bern/Brüssel/New York/Oxford/Wien: Peter Lang.
- Blom, Jan Petter/Gumperz, John J. 1972: Språkstrukturers sosiale betydning: om kodeskifte i et norsk lokalsamfunn. In Larsen, M. B./Loman, B./Pride, J. B./Bernstein, B./Agheysi, R./ Fishman, J./Blom, J. P./Gumperz, J. J. (eds.), *Språksosiologi*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 97-127.
- Brandt, Synnøve S./Schwach, Vera 2005: *Norsk, engelsk og tospråklig i høyere utdanning. En pilotstudie om bruk av engelsk i fem fagtilbud ved fire læresteder*. NIFU-STEP Arbeidsnotat 18/2005.
- Christensen, Martin 2006: *Danske universiteters udbud af engelsksproget undervisning. En undersøgelse af et felt i hastig udvikling*. Speciale ved faget engelsk. Copenhagen: Institut for Engelsk, Germansk og Romansk, Copenhagen University.
- Fishman, Joshua 1970: *Sociolinguistics. A Brief Introduction*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Language Series.
- Fishman, Joshua 1972: The Relationship between Micro- and Macro-Sociolinguistics in the Study of Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When. In Pride, John B./Holmes, Janet (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 15-32.
- Gunnarsson, Britt-Louise 2001: Swedish, English, French or German – the Language Situation at Swedish Universities. In Ammon, Ulrich (ed.), *The Dominance of English as a Language of Science. Effects on Other Languages and Language Communities*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 287-318.
- Gunnarsson, Britt-Louise/Öhman, Katarina 1997: *Det internationaliserande universitet. En studie av bruket av engelska och andra främmande språk vid Uppsala universitet*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet.
- Gustavsson, Åke/Emtell Olofsgård, Emilia/Fridén, Lennart/Hanseklint, Kjell/Kurtén Lindberg, Birgitta/Ringman, Agneta/Sellén, Birgitta/Shafan, Dan/Tingsgård, Tone/Westerberg, Bengt/Melander, Björn/Åström, Christer 2002: *Mål i mun. Statens offentliga utredningar*, 27.
- Hellekjær, Glenn Ole/Westergaard, Marit 2003: An exploratory survey of content learning through English at Nordic universities. In van Leeuwen, Charles/Wilkinson, Robert (eds.), *Multilingual Approaches in University Education. Challenges and Practices*. Uitgeverij Valkhof Pers, Universiteit Maastricht, Nijmegen, Maastricht, 65-80.
- Höglin, Renée 2002: *Engelska språket som hot och tillgång i Norden*. In series: TemaNord 2002: 561. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.
- Kalleberg, Ragnvald 2004: Forskningsformidling, knippeinstitusjoner og norsk som fagspråk. In Simonsen, Dag Finn (ed.), *Språk i kunnskapssamfunnet. Engelsk – elitens nye latin?* Oslo: Gyldendal akademisk, 85-111.
- Keller, Rudi 1994: *On Language Change. The invisible hand in language*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Kultur- og kyrkjedepartementet 2008: Mål og mening. Ein heilskapleg norsk språkpolitikk. *Stortingsmelding* 35, 2007–2008.
- Lehtonen, Tuula/Lönnfors, Pearl/Virkkunen-Fullenwider, Anu 1999: *English or not English: that is the question! Teaching through English at the University of Helsinki*. Helsingin yliopiston Opintoasiaintoimiston julkaisuja 18/1999. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.
- Ljosland, Ragnhild 2007: English in Norwegian academia – A step towards diglossia? In *World Englishes* volume 26, number 4, November 2007. Oxford/Boston: Blackwell publishing, 395-410.
- Ljosland, Ragnhild 2008: *Lingua franca, prestisjespråk og forestilt fellesskap: Om engelsk som akademisk språk i Norge. Et kasusstudium i bred kontekst*. PhD thesis, Department of Scandinavian Studies and Comparative Literature, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- Mæhlum, Brit Kirsten 2002: Engelsk eller norsk? In *Samtiden* 4/2002, 130-137.
- Maiworm, Friedrich/Wächter, Bernd (eds.) 2002: *English-Language-Taught Degree Programmes in European Higher Education. Trends and Success Factors*. ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. Bonn: Lemmens Verlags- & Mediengesellschaft mbH.
- Marschan-Piekkari, Rebecca/Welch, Denise/Welch, Lawrence 1999: In the shadow: the impact of language on structure, power and communication in the multinational. In *International Business Review* Vol. 8, No. 4, 421-440.

- Postholm, May Britt 2005: *Kvalitativ metode. En innføring med fokus på fenomenologi, etnografi og kasusstudier*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.
- Ringholm, Bosse/Pagrotsky, Leif 2005: *Regeringens proposition. Bästa språket – en samlad svensk språkpolitik*. Prop. 2005: 06/2 [online]. <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/05/07/61/d32f62b5.pdf> (accessed 28 April 2008.)
- Simonsen, Dag Finn 2002: Å velge bort norsk. Om begrepene 'domene' og 'domenetap' anvendt på skandinaviske land. In *Norsklæreren* 2/2002, 5-17.
- Språkrådet 2005: *Norsk i hundre. Norsk som nasjonalspråk i globaliseringens tidsalder. Et forslag til strategi*. Oslo: Norsk språkråd.
- Sprogudvalget 2008: *Sprog til tiden. Rapport fra sprogudvalget*. København: Kulturministeriet.
- Stake, Robert E. (2000): Case studies. In Denzin, Normann K./Lincoln, Yvonna S. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 435-454.
- Tange, Hanne/Lauring, Jakob 2009: Language management and social interaction within the multilingual workplace. In *Journal of Communication Management* vol. 13, no. 3.

