Minding the English trap: A crosslinguistic pedagogical approach to teaching the V2 rule to young German L3 learners in Sweden

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Abstract: Based on a case study with four teachers of German L3 at Swedish lower secondary schools, this article explores: a) the teachers' pedagogical views on the role of English L2 in L3 teaching, and b) how they make explicit crosslinguistic references to English when teaching German. The analyzed interviews, observations and lesson plans suggest that the participants have positive views on crosslinguistic pedagogy and that they also apply it in their practice, for example by making trilingual comparisons of word order when highlighting the V2 rule. Based on the findings, it is suggested that English can function as a bridging language between Swedish L1 and German L3.

Auf die englische Falle achten: Ein sprachenübergreifender pädagogischer Ansatz zum Lehren von der V2-Regel im Fach Deutsch als L3 in Schweden.
Anhand einer Fallstudie mit vier DaF-Lehrkräften in Schweden (Sekundarstufe I) wird in diesem Beitrag Folgendes ausgewertet: a) die pädagogischen Überzeugungen der Lehrkräfte betreffend den Einfluss des Englischen im L3-Unterricht, und b) wie die Lehrkräfte explizite sprachenübergreifende Verweise auf das Englische im Deutschunterricht äußern. Die analysierten Interviews, Beobachtungen und Unterrichtsentwürfe deuten darauf hin, dass die teilnehmenden Lehrkräfte positive Auffassungen in Bezug auf sprachenübergreifende didaktische Ansätze haben und dass diese auch in der Praxis umgesetzt werden, z.B. indem die Lehrkräfte trilinguale Vergleiche der Wortstellung anstellen, um die Verbzweitstellung (V2) hervorzuheben. Aus den Ergebnissen geht hervor, dass Englisch die Funktion einer pädagogischen Brückensprache zwischen Schwedisch als L1 und Deutsch als L3 erfüllen kann.

Keywords: tertiary language (L3), language teacher cognition, grammar teaching, crosslinguistic pedagogy, V2 rule; Drittsprachen, Sprachlehrerkognitionen, Grammatikunterricht, sprachenübergreifende Pädagogik, V2-Stellung

1   Introduction

The aim of this article is to explore what role English as a second language (L2) can play in a crosslinguistic pedagogical approach to teaching German as a third language (GL3), by providing examples of how teachers view and use English as a linguistic resource when teaching GL3 in a classroom environment where Swedish is the majority L1. German is a relatively small language choice in Swedish schools, with less than 90.000 students learning it as a modern language (the official name of the subject) in compulsory school (Skolverket 2023). English, on the other hand, is a mandatory core subject and its curricular status is significantly different from that of the three foreign languages that Swedish students can study als L3 from year 6, namely French, German and Spanish (cf. Bardel/Gyllstad/Tholin 2023: 226; Eurydice 2023: 56). Although technically a foreign language, English also has a societal status in Sweden close to that of a second language (Bardel et al. 2023: 224–225) and is, hence, "a special case among languages" (Falk/Bardel 2010: 188).

Given the strong societal position of English and the fact that Swedish students generally have a high level of proficiency in English (cf. Directorate-General for Education 2012: 41–47; EF Education First 2022: 36; Snoder/Laufer 2022: 1248), it can be argued that this L2 has a potential to be a pedagogical tool in the teaching of tertiary languages (L3). The present study investigates how a group of Swedish teachers of GL3 view and refer to English when teaching a specific grammatical feature to young[1] beginners, namely the verb-second placement (the V2 rule) in German. This is a particularly interesting case for a study on crosslinguistic pedagogy (XLP) because the V2 rule (according to which the finite verb appears in the second position of the clause) is a common feature in both the L1 Swedish and the target L3 German, but not in the L2 English (cf. Bohnacker 2006: 447–449).

Moreover, English as an L2 could be seen as a key to enhance further language learning in a multilingual spirit, in which a previously learned language is used strategically as "an asset when learning a new language" (Falk/Lindqvist 2022: 155). For example, it has been suggested that "English could and should function as a kind of ice-breaker and this way create an openness to linguistic diversity" (Jessner 2008: 42), thus being "a door opener to future foreign language learning" (Jakisch 2014: 202). In a similar vein, Otwinowska (2014: 104) states that "it would be advisable to make language teachers aware that English, the international lingua franca, can bridge the gap between the native language of the learners and their other languages". Building on these approaches, the term *bridging language* will be used in this article to refer to the function of English as a possible point of

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[1]   The definition of young learners used here refers to Swedish lower-secondary students, aged 12-16, which is the earliest point in the Swedish educational system where students typically start learning an L3. The teaching situation in which the present article is set is, hence, specific and essentially different form situations where older learners start learning German as an L3 at upper secondary schools or later.

reference in L3 instruction, which the teacher can use to point out, highlight and draw the students' attention to crosslinguistic differences in cases where the bridging language structurally differs from the L1 and the L3 (e.g. the V2 feature). In this sense, the reference to the L2 and its potential influence is used to bridge the 'gap' that occurs when Swedish learners would *not* transfer a structure from the L1 to the L3 and rather resort to the L2 (i.e. the bridging language) as a transfer source. The article thus makes a contribution to the L3 research field by discussing a crosslinguistic pedagogical approach that is well-aligned with European policies on multi-/plurilingualism (cf. Council of Europe 2007: 7 and 2020: 30–31). Based on collected data from the four participants, the article sets out to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Which pedagogical views on the role of English and its influence on GL3 teaching do the participants display?

RQ2: How do the participants make explicit crosslinguistic references to English in their planned and performed GL3 teaching?

2 Theoretical background

The present study adopts a sociocognitive perspective on language teaching and learning (Atkinson 2014), according to which cognition cannot be separated from the social context and the individual (teacher and/or student) is involved in constantly ongoing interactions with the ecosocial environment. Background languages with different social statuses, as well as their links in the learner's mind, are seen here as constituent parts of the pedagogical environment in which L3 teaching and learning takes place. Therefore, this study is theoretically based on three areas of particular relevance for the conceptualization of a crosslinguistic pedagogical approach in L3 teaching, namely: a) the ontological distinction between L2 and L3; b) previous research on teachers' beliefs on multilingualism and the role of English in L3 teaching and learning, and; c) XLP as an approach that "supports bridges between languages studied or known by learners" (Ballinger/Man Chu Lau/Quevillon Lacasse 2020: 265).

2.1 Applying the notions L2 and L3 in research on language teaching

The notion L3 (cf. De Angelis 2007; Hufeisen/Neuner 2004a; Williams/Hammarberg 1998) builds upon the distinctions introduced in the factor model by Hufeisen (1998 and 2000), who suggests that different factors, mainly cognitive, are involved in the learning of a first language (L1), a first foreign language (L2) and any other language thereafter (Lx). The rationale for differentiating L2 and L3 in language teaching is that there is a qualitative difference between the two (cf. Hufeisen 1998: 171; Jessner/Cenoz 2007: 158) and that L3 learners, unlike L2 learners, bring certain knowledge and strategies to the table

thanks to their prior experience of learning a foreign language. L3 is conceptually different from L2, since it is "influenced by the degree of bilingualism already attained by the student" (Jessner 2008: 34), which in Swedish L3 classrooms refers to the presence of English as a mutual L2. In Sweden, as in many other contexts, German is introduced in schools *after* English.. Since the students with Swedish L1 already have the experience of learning a foreign language (English L2), German as a school subject has the status of an L3.

2.2 Teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards background languages in L3 teaching

Research on teacher cognition has pointed out the indisputable links between teachers' thinking or beliefs and their decision-making in classroom practices (cf. Borg 2006 and 2019). It is therefore important to take teachers' stated pedagogical beliefs and attitudes into consideration when languages in educational contexts are discussed. With the multilingual turn in language education from the past decades (cf. Aronin/Jessner 2015; Cenoz/Gorter 2015; Conteh/Meier 2014a; May 2019; Ortega 2013), multilingualism, multilingual approaches and learners' previous background languages are today seen as assets in language teaching and learning (Conteh/Meier 2014b: 3; Juvonen/Källkvist 2021: 1–6), not least by many L3 teachers (see e.g. Falk/Lindqvist 2022: 161–163; Haukås 2016: 8–10).

Previous research has, however, also noted more conservative viewpoints on this topic, where some teachers believe that background languages can interfere with the learning of a target language (De Angelis 2011: 227; Goldenberg 2013: 9). When it comes to the influence of English, referred to as a "lingua frankensteinia" by Philipson (2008: 251), there are some documented reluctant stances among GL3 teachers in Scandinavia. In the Swedish GL3 teacher discourse, the derogatory term *English illness* (cf. Falk/Lindqvist 2022: 166; Håkansson/Pienemann/Sayehli 2002: 269) refers to negative transfer from English. Falk/Lindqvist (2022) noted that comparisons with English (unlike those involving Swedish) were not encouraged by the GL3 teachers in their study, where one teacher saw English as both an error and "an insult" (163) and that "comparisons with English [were] 'forbidden' in their classrooms when it comes to grammatical structures since this would render ungrammatical sentences" (164). This viewpoint of the GL3 teachers is in clear contrast to teachers of French L3 in the mentioned study, who instead regarded transfer from English as a productive strategy. A similar difference was reported in a Norwegian study (Haukås 2016) on L3 teachers' pedagogical beliefs about multilingual approaches, where the teachers of German stand out compared to their colleagues of French and Spanish. Although all teachers reported drawing on the learners' knowledge of both L1 Norwegian and L2 English to enhance the learning of the L3, Haukås' results indicate that the two German teachers preferred making crosslinguistic comparisons with L1 Norwegian, as illustrated in the following quote:

Jan feared that a focus on L2 English in L3 German class might lead to more language mistakes. He had noticed that some students unconsciously transferred linguistic patterns from L2 English, which led to what he called bad German. 'Things just get more right if they think in Norwegian', Jan stated. (Haukås 2016: 10)

In this particular case, the teacher's viewpoint could be seen as more than a mere belief, but rather a displayed (negative) attitude towards a crosslinguistic approach that would also include explicit references to English, thus disregarding its pedagogical function as a bridging language that could help draw the learners' attention to the similarities between the L1 and the target L3.

2.3   Multilingual and crosslinguistic pedagogies

The promotion of multi-/plurilingual competence is contained in the European framework of reference for languages (Council of Europe 2020: 30–31), which implies the need for multilingual pedagogical approaches where the core idea is that boundaries between languages should be softened in education (cf. Cenoz/Gorter 2015: 4). The rationale for such pedagogy is that crosslinguistic connections and linking of known languages can help learners increase their language awareness and develop language learning strategies (cf. Cummins 2007: 229; Séror/Gentil 2020: 370–371). It is also suggested that multilingual teaching activities can have a positive effect on students' motivation (cf. Lyster/Collins/ Ballinger 2009: 378). A multilingual pedagogical approach takes the role of all previously learned languages into consideration, acknowledging the "ongoing interactions between the different language stores of the multilingual speaker/listener" (Rast 2010: 162). From an L3 perspective, this implies that features from both L1 and L2, as well as the use of learning strategies and techniques from the experience of learning and mastering the L2 (and possibly other learned L3s), are sources of transfer that can be used as pedagogical tools to promote language teaching and learning (cf. Ballinger et al. 2020: 265–267).

In the last decades, several terms for multilingual approaches have been introduced. A commonly used umbrella term for the acknowledgement and encouragement of background languages and varieties in social, cultural and educational domains is *translanguaging* (cf. García 2011; García/Li 2014). This term also taps into societal and political discourse about spontaneous language use and the status of regional and minority languages (cf. Fuster/Bardel 2024: 1–5) and is thus not exclusive to language teaching as a craft. More specific to the educational domain is *pedagogical translanguaging*, which refers to "intentional instructional strategies that integrate two or more languages and aim at the development of the multilingual repertoire as well as metalinguistic and language awareness" (Cenoz/Gorter 2020: 300). A related approach, relevant for the present study, is XLP (cf. Ballinger/Lyster/Sterzuk/Genesee 2017; Ballinger et al. 2020). It is defined as a "pedagogy that supports bridges between languages studied or known by learners, and its impact on learning and teaching" (Ballinger et al. 2020: 265), thereby adding emphasis to the role of

formal teaching. Therefore, XLP is applied to the specific instructional context of L3 teaching in Sweden and is used in this article to discuss GL3 teachers' deliberate inclusion of crosslinguistic references to L2 English when teaching GL3, thereby shedding further light on the notion of English as a bridging language in L3 teaching.

3   Method

The present article reports on findings from three data sets (see Table 1) collected within a research project on grammar teaching at four lower secondary schools in Sweden[2]. The data stem from four participant teachers, one from each school, and consist of interview transcripts, fieldnote documents with photos, as well as lesson plans and artefacts crafted by the participants. A qualitative content analysis (Graneheim/Lundman 2004; Mayring 2022) was conducted on all three data sets.

Table 1: Overview of data collection

	Data set	Procedures and instruments
1	Individual interviews	Semi-structured interview following an interview guide (see Appendix); 4 interviews (length: 36-52 minutes) recorded and transcribed by the researcher; Conducted 2-4 weeks before classroom observation;
2	Fieldnote documents	Ethnographic fieldnotes documented by the researcher; 12 observed lessons = 3 consecutive lessons of 40-65 minutes with each (n=4) teacher; Elaborated into interpretive summaries with context provided; Includes photos taken of the whiteboards and artefacts used; Includes summaries of post-observational oral reflections with the participants immediately after each lesson
3	Lesson plans and other artefacts	Each participant's general outline for the 3 consecutive lessons to be observed (drafted after the interview and shared with the researcher before the first lesson); Materials for lesson activities (documents, print-outs or photos of documents)

3.1   Participants

The four teachers in this study, henceforth denominated Teachers A-D, were recruited using a purposive non-random convenience sampling (cf. Mackey/Gass 2016: 175). Two inclusion criteria were applied, namely an official national certification for teaching German as a modern language (i.e. GL3) and at least five years' experience of teaching it at the lower secondary level. Novice teachers were excluded from the sample because experienced subject teachers are more familiar with the professional discourse and can more easily articulate their pedagogical knowledge and beliefs (cf. Gudmundsdottir/Shulman 1987: 61; Basturkmen 2012: 288). The participants, who all work at urban lower secondary schools in the Stockholm area, were contacted by the researcher and accepted the invitation

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to share their pedagogical thoughts and practices. Some relevant background variables are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Overview of the participants

Teacher	Subjects taught	Teaching experience	Mother tongue
Teacher A	German, Swedish	21 years	Swedish
Teacher B	German (both L3 and L1), English	22 years in Sweden + 5 years in home country	German
Teacher C	German, English	27 years	Swedish
Teacher D	German, English (+ qualified for Swedish)	27 years	Swedish

As can be seen in Table 2, Teacher B is a native speaker of German, unlike the other participants. However, this is not estimated to have any significant influence on the results compared to other individual differences stemming from the professional life stories of the four participants. Most of Teacher B's long professional experience is gained within the Swedish school system, and this experience is believed to play a decisive role in shaping a teacher's thinking and practices (cf. Borg 2019: 1153–1155).

3.2   Instruments and procedures

The individual semi-structured qualitative interviews were the first data to be collected. They took place some weeks before the classroom observations. Interviews were chosen because they constitute "an interactive practice in which knowledge, meanings and narratives are jointly produced" (Vähäsanten/Saarinen 2012: 493) and allow for an "interchange of views […] about a theme of mutual interest" (Brinkmann/Kvale 2015: 4). The procedure was based on an interview guide covering also other areas of GL3 teaching practices than those reported in the present article. Crosslinguistic pedagogy was thus not the main topic of the interviews, but soon emerged as a recurring theme that also appeared frequently in the observed lessons.

The interviews were conducted in Swedish, audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The quotes in this article were later translated into English and written up orthographically using transcription labels (cf. Appendix) inspired by a simplified overview of the HIAT conventions in English (Schmidt 2008). The translations posed a challenge, especially when it comes to everyday and metaphorical language (cf. Yunus/Hartman/Lucassen/Barton/Russell/Altun/Sturgiss 2022: 4), since compromises had to be made regarding both faithfulness to the Swedish original and readability and accessibility of the final report (cf. Nikander 2008: 226). The translations of the quoted parts were therefore assessed by a native speaker of English with a solid knowledge of colloquial Swedish, with the aim of preserving the conversational style of the Swedish original (cf. Aronsson/

Cederborg 1997: 85) without risking the intelligibility in English. An overview of question types and examples of answers are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Interview questions and answers making references to English

Type of question	Question asked [(+) = follow-up question]	Example of answers provided
Explicit question about the relation to English/other languages	*One theory is that it is the English sentence structure that has an impact on our students. What do you think about this theory?* (+) *Do you think German teacher colleagues might have a different view?*	"Oh yes, it is [because of] English. Definitely. I am convinced of that. Without any doubts" "I guess they think the same, because many students have so much contact with English" "And especially with English […] Because the funny thing is that […] English affects them more than Swedish does ((laughing))"
	Do you think we can raise our students' awareness of the V2 phenomenon if we also show them examples from other languages?	"But then there are some [teachers] who think we should not expose [students] to incorrectness. I mean, it's not incorrect in English here, but the question is if we maybe complicate things if we show it in written form too. I don't really know."
Question about syntax teaching in general where references to English seemed likely to occur (with implicit expectation from the interviewer)	Have you noticed that your students make syntax errors in German? (+) *Prompting the incorrect sentence "*und dann ich spiele Fußball*"*	"((smiling)) Oh yes, it is this, a bit of this English, English word order. That they, ahh, you know what I mean" "Well, the thing is that English comes through. And that is very interesting. That you don't depart from the Swedish, but the English word order"
	(+) *What do you think of this type of error?*	"It is kind of sad in a way. I think that [the students] should be made more aware of this" "It sounds a bit odd. And I still think it _is_ odd"
	(+) *What do you think is the main reason for it to occur?*	"And I believe it comes from English and having learned it that way when one learned English. Although you learn lots of English outside school as well. So, I think this is having an impact actually"

The second data set consists of 12 lesson observations documented as ethnographic fieldnotes (Walford 2009: 117–120), mainly as bullet points, written down by the researcher from a position at the very back of the classroom. For ethical and practical reasons, no recording was done in the classroom, which poses challenges since it is impossible for the observer to catch everything that happens in the room and there is no recording of the events to review afterwards. However, since the lessons were typically no longer than 50 minutes and the researcher was familiar with the context, content and materials used, it was a manageable task to collect relevant qualitative data under these circumstances. Some photos were taken of the whiteboard and artefacts used and these were later added to the fieldnote documents and grouped with the corresponding event that was observed. This helped recognizing and remembering the context and was a useful supplement to the notes written down under time constraints by a single researcher. Added to the fieldnotes are also

summaries of the teachers' oral accounts and evaluations shared with the researcher immediately after each lesson (see Table 1).

The third data set consists of outlined plans for lesson cycles, submitted to the researcher in the time frame (2-4 weeks) between the interview and the first observed lesson of each participant, as well as other teaching artefacts used during the lessons. The participants were given a material from a textbook chapter on morning routines, based on which they were asked to plan for a cycle of three consecutive lessons with their year 7 groups. It was made explicit that the application of the V2 rule in adverbial-fronted main clauses was the grammatical focus of the unit and the teachers were free to design the lesson cycle in any fashion preferred. The degree of detail varied across the four submitted documents, but all teachers clearly indicated which activities they had outlined for each individual lesson. The other artefacts were documented by photos taken in the classrooms or mailed as a file to the researcher after the lessons.

3.3   Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (Graneheim/Lundman 2004; Mayring 2022) was employed because it is a pragmatic method to seek answers to the research questions (Downe-Wamboldt 1992: 320) with an openness to new themes that might emerge during the coding process (White/Marsh 2006: 39). The interview data were the first to be analyzed. As units of analysis, the answers to each question (including follow-up questions) from the interview guide were used, since they would be large enough to provide a coherent context for the identified meaning units[3] (cf. Graneheim/Lundman 2004: 106). Hence, passages from all four participants' transcripts were aggregated into one text per interview question, in which meaning units were identified and condensed, i.e. shortened in a way that preserves the core of the content and context (ibid.). The meaning units were labeled with one or several codes and the codes were later grouped in clusters and categories. The codes relevant for the two research questions are presented in Table 4. As can be seen in the table, the analyzed content could be assigned to two overarching domains: 1) pedagogical beliefs about the influence of English in GL3, and 2) pedagogical knowledge (stemming from experience) about the role crosslinguistic links between L1, L2 and L3 might play in GL3 teaching.

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[3]   It is important to note that the term *meaning unit* in this text refers to the constellation of words or statements that relate to a central meaning, following the definition of Graneheim/Lundman (2004). Other sources, such as Downe-Wamboldt (1992), use the term *unit of analysis* for this. It should not be confused with the way the present text uses *unit of analysis* to refer to larger sections of the interview transcripts (adhering to Graneheim/Lundman's use of the term).

Table 4: Examples of qualitative content analysis of interview data

Condensed meaning units (source)	Code	Main category[4]	Domain
"students have so much contact with English" (unit of analysis = interview question Q12)	Extramural English	Multilingualism	Pedagogical belief level
"[students should] use all available linguistic resources" (Q12)	Multilingual approaches		
"there is nothing wrong with [using] English there" (Q15)	Attitudes to English in teaching		
"they need to compare the German sentence with the Swedish sentence" (Q7)	Bilingual contrast	Crosslinguistic comparisons	
"it's like in Swedish, it's not like in English" (Q11)	Trilingual contrast		Pedagogical knowledge level
"when they spell *ich* with a capital I" (Q15)	English influence + Students' errors	Transfer	
"because there is another word order in English" (Q12)	English word order	Syntax	

With the categories and codes obtained from the interview data as an analytical starting point, the content analysis was extended to the second data set. The fieldnotes with bullet points from the lessons (each considered a unit of analysis) were first processed into a coherent running text, chronologically describing the unfolding events from the observed lessons (i.e. an interpretation by the researcher). Meaning units were then identified, labeled and categorized across these interpretive texts and the summaries of the post-observational reflections. The appropriateness of the coding was finally checked against the bullet points to ensure that the codes assigned corresponded to what was originally documented during the observed lessons. An example of an analyzed passage from the second data set is presented in Table 5:

Table 5: Example of qualitative content analysis of observational data

Unit of analysis	Lesson 3 with Teacher B
Observational bullet point	"B continues: '*Guut*! And the best help for you here is: translate each sentence to Swedish'"
Interpretive summary (running text with context provided)	*Summarizing the exercise, Teacher B's concluding advice to the students to prevent them from entering "the English trap" [quoted = my wording, inspired by metaphor originally used during a lesson with Teacher C] is to always translate their written German sentence to Swedish, thereby enabling them to check whether the word order deviates from what the students perceive as standard Swedish.*
Codes assigned	bilingual contrast; comparing word order; translation
Categorization	crosslinguistic comparisons

Finally, the third data set was screened to determine whether there were contents in the lesson plans and other collected artefacts that were related to the categories and codes obtained from the content analysis of the previous two sets and that could, hence, provide a better understanding of the phenomena addressed by the research questions. The face

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[4] Some codes are assigned to multiple categories as there is a natural overlap in the meaning of the utterances. For the sake of readability and to enable a clear overview, only one main category is presented here, acknowledging, however, that there are other ways to visually display the categorization of the content analysis.

validity of the categorization of the obtained codes was also checked in a deliberation with a teacher and researcher colleague who suggested some clarifications and adjustments. In addition, a member-checking procedure was employed to assess the global trustworthiness of the analysis by sending an early version of this text to the participants themselves and ask them to point out possible misinterpretations or other errors.

4 Findings

The topics that emerged from the analysis of all three data sets, including both reported beliefs and reported practices, will now be summarized and presented in the following two themes, which closely correspond to the two research questions:

1) Pedagogical views on English as a bridging language in GL3 teaching

2) Applications of crosslinguistic pedagogy in GL3 teaching practices

4.1 Pedagogical views on English as a bridging language in German L3 teaching

Overall, the teachers in this study do not display negative attitudes towards the use of other languages in teaching situations, and several of them express positive beliefs about multilingualism. As an example, the positive attitude of Teacher C, who even mentions translanguaging explicitly in the interview, can clearly be sensed in the following excerpt:

And we are living in an amazing time. I mean, [the students] will probably learn more languages. The alternative is everyone speaking English only. (Teacher C, interview)

She concludes that language learners should be encouraged to use all linguistic resources available, not the least in classrooms, and shares positive memories of previous students who had other mother tongues. Consequently, she also has positive attitudes towards using English as a bridging language and does not think that other teachers of GL3 nowadays have negative viewpoints in this regard. The following interview passage illustrates this well:

Interviewer: And do you think that our German teacher colleagues would have a different opinion on this topic [the English influence on the students' German]?

Teacher: No way. I doubt that. I think everybody understands what is going on here. Also, we *do know* that translanguaging, that, there is nothing negative about mentioning: *I am, you are, he/she/it is* [when teaching German grammar]. We do have _some_ verb conjugations in English, but German has _even more_ forms.

Interviewer: I mean, that is exactly what some teachers apparently have, at least traditionally, been opposing. That you should kind of not even mention English when teaching German.

Teacher: Oh no, I do that all the time. I mean, I just think that is translanguaging. We have to use all the linguistic resources we have. […] Even all languages. I think it is super important to compare languages, all the time. (Teacher C, interview)

None of the four teachers talk about the English influence on their students' German as something negative. They conclude that transfer from English generally does not hinder the intelligibility of the students' utterances, although they state the importance of making the students aware that some transferred sentences might be regarded as errors in the target language. On this topic, Teacher A makes a comparison to non-native-like Swedish, where an utterance is perfectly comprehensible although it contains grammatical errors that to some extent might come across as a bit annoying to an interlocutor.

When it comes to transfer and crosslinguistic influence, Teacher B reports having observed several English traces in her students' German. Examples brought up are the transfer of *-ing* forms and verb constructions with an auxiliary verb, such as **sie ist schwimmen*. To her knowledge, none of her students have another L1 than Swedish. Therefore, Teacher B concludes that these constructions are probably influenced by the L2, since "many students have so much contact with English". Teacher C also reports the general observation among her colleagues that the influence of English is so strong that some students nowadays write better compositions in English than in their L1 Swedish.

Regarding the non-application of the V2 rule in German, several participants explicitly refer to it as "the English word order". In the interviews, they report noticing how their students produce V3 constructions even in fairly basic sentences in German and they all somehow link this phenomenon to the influence of English. Teacher A's answers below constitute a good example:

((smiling)) Oh yes, it is this, a bit of this English, English word order. That they…
/Ah, you know what I mean. (Teacher A, interview)

After a few turns of clarification, it becomes clear that Teacher A is referring to sentences where the V2 rule is violated. When asked when she usually notices this error type in her students' production, the answer comprises another reference to English:

((3 sec)) It depends. And it is also, well, it differs between groups. And it depends on how much English they get influence from and, like... /But generally, I guess it is in grade 7. (Teacher A, interview)

When hearing the ungrammatical example "*und dann ich spiele Fußball*" from the interview guide, she finally exclaims:

Yes, that's it. _Exactly_ what I meant. _Ex-act-ly_ that word order. It is very common. (Teacher A, interview)

The other three teachers also report coming across this ungrammatical word order in their students' German. Some of them express a surprise that the students transfer the English verb order rather than the Swedish one. On one occasion, Teacher D calls this quite "peculiar". In conclusion, all four teachers clearly report and display pedagogical beliefs that the influence from the background L2 English and its word order is the most salient factor that causes ungrammatical V3 sentences in the students' production in L3 German.

Some of the teachers' pedagogical views on crosslinguistic influences are also reflected in comments made while they are making explicit references to English. A rich example is found in Teacher C's introduction of the lesson cycle, where she caters for a thorough discussion on the role of English L2 influence. The students are first asked the rhetorical question which language they hear the most in their spare time. This is followed by a point made by the teacher that the students cannot remain unaffected by all the English surrounding them in their everyday lives. During the second lesson, when she is about to introduce verb placement as the main content of that day's classroom work, Teacher C contextualizes the content by telling the students that it is important to pay attention to verb order when narrating consecutive events in German, "so that one does not get caught in the English trap". A similar reference is made by Teacher A when she points out an alleged English influence on an ungrammatical non-V2 sentence in German, which she concludes with a personal comment: "I tend to opine, that you should be more influenced by Swedish here [interpretation: not by English]" (Teacher A, lesson 3).

According to the teachers, they generally do bring up and make comments on the English influence they believe is related to the breaking of the V2 rule in German. For example, Teacher D reports that he usually tells his students: "do you understand, look here, it [the word order] is exactly the same as it is in Swedish, it is _not_ as it is in English". In his experience, students sometimes state that the ungrammatical V3 order in German "just sounds better in their minds" and that they have a tendency to forget his explanations about the necessity to invert the verb. Therefore, Teacher D stresses the importance of constantly reminding the students about the crosslinguistic differences when it comes to word order.

4.2 Applications of crosslinguistic pedagogy in German L3 teaching practices

In the lesson plans submitted prior to the lesson cycle (see 3.2), only Teacher C explicitly defined an activity built on crosslinguistic comparisons with English, which was to be introduced in the first lesson within a context of defining the clause elements. As Teacher C carefully explained in the submitted document, the overarching aim of this part of the lesson cycle was to activate the students' metalinguistic understanding of the verb and its

placement. Figure 1 shows the key to the activity, which consisted of a short text about a first-person narrator's morning written in Swedish, English and German:

Jag går upp kl 06:30. Först duschar jag och sedan tar jag på kläder. Därefter äter jag frukost och sedan läser jag min tidning. Klockan 07:10 borstar jag mina tänder och sedan lämnar jag mitt hem och går till jobbet.

I get up at 6:30. First I have a shower and then I put my clothes on. After that I have breakfast and then I read my newspaper. At 07:10 I brush my teeth and then I leave my house to go to work.

Ich stehe um 06:30 auf. Erst dusche ich und dann ziehe ich meine Kleider an. Danach esse ich Frühstück und dann lese ich meine Zeitung. Um 07:10 putze ich meine Zähne und dann gehe ich von meinem Zuhause zur Arbeit.

Figure 1: Teacher C's text in Swedish, English and German with some clause elements color-coded

As the activity was introduced according to the plan, the students' first task was to analyze the clause elements in the three versions of the text by coding them with markers in different colors. They were also instructed to discuss if they can spot any difference in the color sequences and put words to the patterns. Once the activity was completed and reviewed, Teacher C finished the exercise by asking the students to summarize what happened to the adverbial-fronted sentences in the English version of the text. A student was quick to provide the correct answer: "the verb came in the third position". This highlighting and drawing the students' attention to the English sentences with V3 order created a clear contrast to the German sentences with V2 order and related in a clear way to explanations given previously during the same lesson.

In the second lesson, Teacher C revisited the crosslinguistic differences in verb order in adverbial-fronted sentences as an opening activity. Drawing on an example sentence from the previous lesson, she first wrote the sentence in Swedish and asked the students for a German translation. Then she asked the class to provide an English translation as well. As she wrote the English sentence on the board, she asked the students to pay attention to what was happening with the sentence. Referring to the teacher's explanation from the previous lesson, a student provided a quick and adequate account of the V2 rule and the fact that English is not a V2 language, whereby the verb in this case can come in the third position. Teacher C praised the student for the explanation, but suggested a crosslinguistic clause analysis on the whiteboard to verify this. The ensuing analysis was visualized with circles around the verb in all three versions of the sentence and an added number "2" or "3" next to the verb, as shown in Figure 2:
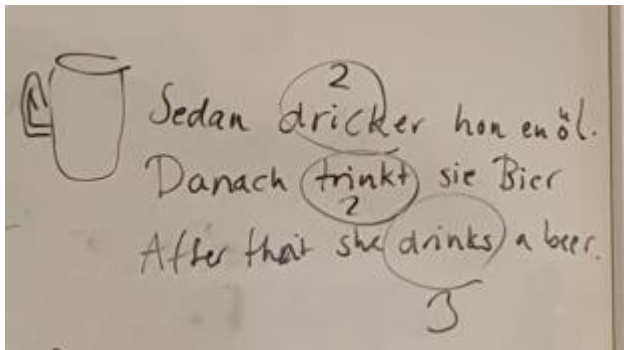
Figure 2: Trilingual arrangement of sentences with highlighted verb elements

Another crosslinguistic pedagogical take was observed during the second lesson with Teacher C when she showed a Youtube video for learners of German in which the content creator[5] mixes German and English. Teacher C commented the fact that the Youtuber is mixing the languages "wildly" in a seemingly positive fashion, confirming thereby her own positive beliefs about a multilingual approach to language teaching (see 4.1). Also in the third lesson, Teacher C made a crosslinguistic reference to English when she concluded one of the aims of that day's lesson: "to retell several events and becoming aware of the fact that the word order in German is similar to the Swedish one, _not_ the English one". Similarly, the "not" was strongly stressed by Teacher A (lesson 3) when she explained that, unlike Swedish and German, English is not considered a V2 language that requires the verb inversion.

In a similar fashion, Teacher D introduced an adverbial-fronted German sentence during his first lesson and stressed that the word order would have been different in English. Teacher D repeated this crosslinguistic reference several times over the course of the lesson cycle. On those occasions, he made sure to draw the students' attention to the fact that the verb element can occupy the third clause position in English but that this does not hold true for German or Swedish. Teacher D also made a spontaneous crosslinguistic reference during a recapitulation activity (lesson 3), in which he prompted the students with four adverbial-fronted sentences in German, one of which was written with the verb in the third position. He clarified that the word order is the same in German and Swedish, but that English differs in this kind of sentence. These careful reminders were frequently stressed by Teacher D in the interview (see 4.1), suggesting an alignment of his stated pedagogical beliefs and observed teaching practices when it comes to these crosslinguistic features.

Furthermore, Teacher B was observed making recurring crosslinguistic references to English when explaining syntax. During lesson 2, she introduced a teaching activity by turning to the students with the words: "and sometimes I talk about the English word order, right, do you remember?", to which some students nodded affirmatively. She then wrote three

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sentences, two in English and one in German, on the board (see Figure 3) and commented on them carefully by referring to the constituent clause elements:
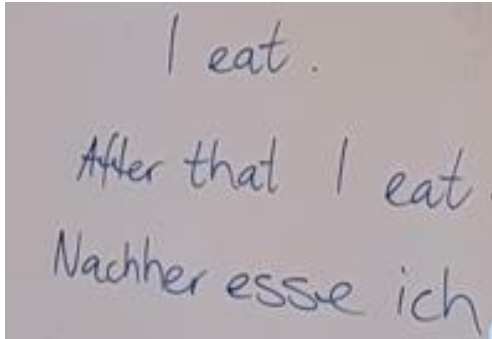

Figure 3: Teacher B's example sentences in English and German

Once the German sentence was added, she commented on the order of the clause elements and made a point about the difference between the second English and the German sentence. As the two sentences were now clearly contrasted to each other, Teacher B pointed to the board and summarized her point by saying:

> So, this is now our difficulty. We are so used to… /And sometimes you think in English, and sometimes you get the wrong word order. But actually, it is very easy. (Teacher B, lesson 2)

During the same lesson, Teacher B provided another activity in which the students had to tell apart sentences in German with correct word order from those written with an ungrammatical V3 order. As she drew arrows indicating necessary verb inversions (see example in Figure 4), she commented: "and here you can clearly _feel_ the English". At the wrapping up, she also called upon the students to double-check whether some German sentences they had produced had taken an English detour. Teacher B finally concluded the activity by stating: "And the best help for you here is: translate each sentence into Swedish".
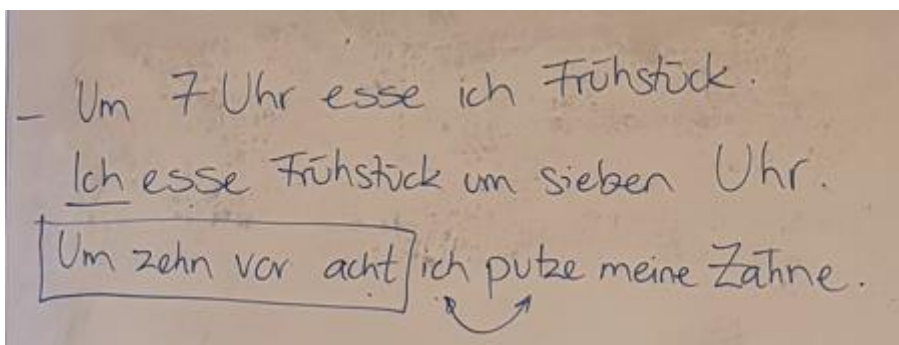

Figure 4: Arrows pointing out the need for inversion in an incorrect V3 sentence

5   Concluding discussion

The results presented in this article show that the participants, based on their professional experience as L3 teachers, hold and articulate pedagogical beliefs about the influence of English on both teaching and learning of German L3. They seem well aware of the fact that English is an omnipresent extramural L2 in Sweden's educational context (cf. Sundqvist 2009: 28–30) and display merely positive attitudes towards multilingualism in general and crosslinguistic pedagogical approaches to L3 teaching in particular. The crosslinguistic pedagogical (XLP) approach includes making explicit references to English as a previously learned L2, with the aim of raising the students' awareness about possible subconscious transfer. This can be interpreted as a way to efficiently draw on learners' existing language knowledge and language learning experiences (cf. Hufeisen/Neuner 2004b: 5) and is in line with the idea of softening boundaries between languages in education (Cenoz/Gorter 2015: 4).

Furthermore, the teacher beliefs presented in section 4.1 constitute a clear contrast to the notion of *the English illness* that has occasionally been referred to in studies on GL3 teaching and learning in Sweden (Falk/Lindqvist 2022: 163; Håkansson et al. 2002: 269), as well as to the belief that "[t]hings just get more right" if the students think in their L1 instead of in English L2 (cf. Haukås 2016: 10). Thus, the warning issued by Teacher B of "falling into the English trap", contained in the title of this paper, is a particularly interesting utterance that shows which role English can play in crosslinguistic L3 pedagogy. It should not be misinterpreted as reluctance to use English in GL3 classrooms. On the contrary, it was rather uttered as a conscious affirmation of the awareness-raising pedagogical potential the L2 has as a so-called bridging language between L1 and L3 in a crosslinguistic teaching approach.

The influence of English on teaching and learning of GL3 was a theme specifically addressed by some of the interview questions in the present study. This, alongside the Hawthorne effect, which is hard to avoid in classroom-based research (cf. Brown 1992: 163–167), may have had an impact on the participants' choices as to what and how to teach in the observed lesson situations. Although these effects should not be ignored, the analyzed data show that all four participants by and large apply XLP in their GL3 teaching. The displayed variety of crosslinguistic procedures, activities and approaches observed in the study and reported in section 4.2 are, as this paper suggests, authentic pedagogical performances, rooted in and drawing from the professional knowledge base of the four participants. This includes knowledge about the educational context, where most L3 learners have attained a high level of proficiency in English (Directorate-General for Education 2012: 41–47), which is a core subject in the Swedish school, and where learners are exposed to a high degree of English input from an early age (cf. Bardel et al. 2023: 249). Hence, L3 teachers in Sweden have a pedagogical space where they, in the spirit of the multilingual

turn in language education (see 2.2), can foster crosslinguistic practices (cf. Séror/Gentil 2020: 369) that include references to features in at least two background languages, one of which (i.e. the L2) is a non-native foreign language.

An XLP approach can be particularly fruitful when teaching about grammar or language structures where similarities and contrasts between the L1, L2 and L3 can be clearly and pedagogically pointed out (such as the V2 rule for verb placement). As shown in this study (see 4.2), the observed lessons contain several explicit crosslinguistic references to English, such as trilingual comparisons of word order and specifically pointing out and putting words to the English V3 order in adverbial-fronted clauses, thereby creating a clear contrast to the V2-languages Swedish and German. The deliberate inclusion of references to English structures as a pedagogical tool to making the V2 feature more salient suggests that English is here used as a bridging language that helps draw the students' attention to the crosslinguistic similarities between Swedish and German. A bridging language in this sense also serves the function of raising L3 students' overall metalinguistic awareness (cf. De Angelis 2007: 121; Falk/Lindqvist/Bardel 2015: 227) and making them more conscious about potential language errors stemming from transfer from a previously learned L2 (cf. Bardel 2019). Given that the participants showed awareness about this phenomenon in the interviews and that they later addressed it in the observed teaching, this furthermore suggests a correspondence between stated beliefs and actual teaching practices, which is not always the case in previous studies on language teachers' cognition and practices (cf. Basturkmen 2012: 291).

In conclusion, the present study makes an individual contribution to the field of language teachers' cognition, beliefs and practices, suggesting that GL3 teachers' thinking and instructional practices may be influenced by the cognitive as well as the sociolinguistic role that English can play in GL3 teaching and learning, considering students' attitudes toward and proficiency in English. Another implication of the results is a suggestion that the syntactic V2 rule is a teaching content in GL3 where an XLP approach that includes references to English can be particularly applicable. However, a limitation is that the study solely focuses on teachers' perceptions of crosslinguistic pedagogies and does not take students' perceptions or actual learning performances into consideration. The latter is, hence, an area that could usefully be addressed by future research.

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Appendix

Questions from the interview guide used in the study:

Q7: Imagine you are about to introduce a new grammatical content to your students. How do you mostly go about with the planning and design of the lessons?

Q10: Have you noticed that your students make syntax errors in German?

 +Follow-up: prompt the ungrammatical sentence *und dann ich spiele Fußball* and ask for a reaction.

 +Follow-up: What do you think of this type of errors?

 +Follow-up: What do you think is the main reason for it to occur?

Q11: One theory is that it is the English sentence structure that has an impact on our students. What do you think about this theory?

 +Follow-up: Do you think our German teacher colleagues might have a different viewpoint on this?

Q12: How do you think we could adapt our teaching to make our students more aware of the verb order in German?

Q15: Do you think we can raise our students' awareness of the V2 phenomenon if we also show them examples from other languages?

(Note: The questions were originally written and asked in Swedish. The interview guide also contains questions about other aspects of GL3 teaching not covered in this article.)

Transcription labels used:

Inspired by guidelines provided by Schmidt (2008).
- […] omitted utterance
- [within square brackets] added clarification or replacement by word referred to in the context
- … / indicates the boundary between aborted and new utterance
- _Stressed words_ in italics and surrounded by underscores
- *Italics* used for word mentioned in foreign language
- ((3 sec)) Measured pauses within double brackets. (Micro-pauses are not included)
- ((non-phonological phenomena)) within double brackets

Kurzbio:

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