Code Switching on Flashback

– A Study of Code Switching on an Internet

Based Discussion Forum.

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Abstract.

This essay is a study of how English is used in a Swedish discussion forum called Flashback. The mixing of two languages when speaking or writing is called Code switching. Code switching often occurs in bilingual societies. In Sweden it is possible to say that English is a second language due to the daily encounter with the language through education, but also through different media. The daily encounter with English and the number of English loan words in Swedish might be a reason why code switching exists in Sweden. The material that was analyzed in this essay was collected from Flashback and analyzed with a method based on Sharp's (2001) study of spoken language. The aim of this study was to see how often and in what way the users on Flashback code switched between Swedish and English. The results showed that even though English was used in the discussion, Swedish was the main language. Most of the code switches that were found in the material occurred in mixed units, in other words English was mixed with Swedish.

KEY WORDS: Flashback, code switching, English, Swedish, Sharp (2001), threads, mixed units, unmixed units.

1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a part of many Swede's everyday life both through education but also through TV-series, films, music and, of course, the Internet. The role of English in Swedish schools has undergone a change in the past years, and English is nowadays seen as a second language instead of a foreign language by many due to the fact that many learn and use English outside of school (Sundquist: 2009:28) In the 60's English was a language that was taught in a more formal way to be used in further education and international jobs, but nowadays English is seen as a language by which you can communicate in everyday life (Cabau, 2009:137-38).

The daily encounters with English through different media can be a reason why English gets mixed in to both Swedish speech and texts. The act of mixing languages in text and speech is called **code switching**. In this essay, code switching on a Swedish internet based forum called *Flashback* will be studied. Flashback has almost a million registered members and over 45 million posts in different subjects. This study will be based on a random selection of about 500 posts in order to see how the users code switch between Swedish and English in written text. The posts are written by anonymous users within five different subjects. The code switches will be analyzed and divided into five different types. The method is based on Sharp's (2001) study on code switching in spoken language. However, since this study investigates written rather than spoken language, Sharp's categories have been slightly altered. (See ch. 3).

1.1   Aims

The main aims of this essay are to see how often the users code switch and how they code switch. More specifically, this study aims to find answers to the following research questions:

1. How frequently does code switching occur in Flashback posts?
2. How do the users code switch on Flashback?
3. How common are the different types of code switches?

It is hypothesized that code switches generally contain few words, and that the English words are primarily mixed with Swedish words in a clause or sentence. The reason for mixing words from two languages in a clause is that the foreign language (English) then becomes more easily integrated into the Swedish discourse.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Code switching.

The easiest way to explain code switching is that a person switches between different codes while communicating. These codes can be different languages, varieties or styles. Gardner-Chloros explains code switching as "the use of several languages or dialects in the same conversation or sentence by bilingual people" (Gardner-Chloros 2009:4). Her explanation refers to bilingual speakers that switch between languages, but according to Romaine it is possible for code switching to occur in monolingual communities as well. Romaine maintains that in a general

sense the term 'code' can refer "not only to different languages, but also to varieties of the same language as well as styles within a language" (Romaine 1995:121). In other words, switching between formal and informal speech can also count as code switching. In this study, only code switching between two different languages –Swedish and English – will be investigated.

For people to code switch between two different languages they need to have access to two different codes. It is questionable if a person needs to be entirely bilingual in order to code switch. That is, one can question whether the term 'bilingual' refers to speaking two languages fluently, or just the ability to understand a different language other than the mother tongue. Regrettably, the literature does not appear to discuss this point.

Code switching on the internet, especially in social networks, is a rather new field of research (in comparison to studies of code switching in the spoken language). One study of code switching on the internet is Jaworska's 2014 study of code switching on a German/English internet based discussion forum. Her result showed that the users often played with the language and used German spelling when writing English words, for example "absolut hilariös" instead of "absolutely hilarious" (Jarowska, 2014:63). She argues that this type of code play is not that common in spoken language, but that they are commonly used in this type of written forum. Her conclusion is that this

type of code play creates a new type of language among the users consisting of a mix of German and English.

Androutsopoulos study of multilingualism on social networks (2014) also shows how English is mixed with other languages in texts. His study is based on how a group of Greek adolescents living in Germany communicate with each other on Facebook. The main language of choice is Greek, but German and English also occur. Androutsopoulos argues that many of the English posts on Facebook relate to pop music, but that single lexical words, English phrases mixed with German, and full English phrases also occur (Androutsopoulos, 2014:11). The study also showed that English was as common as German among the adolescents when posting status updates on their profiles, even though they all lived in Germany. Androutspoulos (2014:12) argues that the order of language preferences for all students is "Greek first, followed by equal numbers of English and German". He continues that this order "is remarkable for the frequency of English, which is instructed as a school language and encountered in media and popular culture on a daily basis […]" (ibid). Both Jarowska's and Androutsopoulos' studies are examples of how common code switching is on the internet.

2.2 Different types of code switching.

This section will start with a general overview of some code-switching categories used in the literature before outlining the code-switching categories used in this study in chapter 4.

Code-switching is not just about mixing languages, there are different ways one can switch from one language to another. Romaine (1995: 122) gives an example of three different types of code-switching:

    (1) **tag-switching**

    (2) **inter-sentential code switching** and

    (3) **intra-sentential code-switching**.

To start with, tag-switching is when someone uses a "tag" in one language while the rest of the sentence is in another language. Romaine's example is the use of English tags such as 'you know', 'I mean', 'no way' etc. while speaking in Finnish (ibid.). According to Romaine, this type of code-switching is not that complicated to produce since it does not affect the syntactic aspect of the language, that is, the tag does not break up the clause elements, but it is simply added on before or

after the clause. Furthermore, it is not necessary for the producer to speak two languages fluently in order to use tag-switching.

The second type, inter-sentential code switching, is when a switch occurs at a clause or sentence boundary. One example is when you start a sentence in one language and finish it in another. Romaine (1995:123) exemplifies this with English - Panjabi inter-sentential code switching:

Example 1:
"I'm guilty in that sense /clause boundary/ **ke ziada wsi** English […] [1]

Romaine (ibid.) also quotes an English-Spanish example from Poplack (1980):

Example 2:
Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English **y terminó in español.**
('and finish in Spanish')

The speaker switches languages when the first clause ends. "This type of switching, on the other hand, "requires greater fluency in both languages […] since major portions of the utterance must conform to the rules of both languages" (ibid.).

Finally, the third type of code switching, Intra-sentential code switching, refers to switching within a sentence or a clause. This could be just a word or a string of words that is switched within a text or utterance. Romaine (1995:123) exemplifies this with an intra-sentential switch between English and Tok Pisin:

Example 3:
"What's so funny? Come, be good. Otherwise, **yu bai** go long **kot.**"
('you'll go to court')

It could also be inflectional morphology where a word in one language can get a suffix that is used in another language, for example "shoppã" that is the English word for "shops" with a Panjabi suffix (ibid.). This type of code switching could be seen in Jarowska's study (see 2014:2) where English words are written with German spelling. The problem with Romaine's examples is that she does not fully take into account the difference between a sentence and a clause. This is problematic

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[1] The Panjabi utterance is not translated by Romaine.

since a sentence can contain any number of clauses, and the unit of analysis thus varies greatly. Also, surprisingly, there are no example of one word code-switching. Furthermore, she does not give an explanation of what she considers a 'tag' is either, which makes it hard to see the difference between tag-switching and an intra-sentential switch.

Sharp, on the other hand, gives example of six different types of code switching (Sharp 2001:101). Her study of code switching in spoken language is a study of code switching in two different settings, casual conversation among young adults and business meetings in an international company (Sharp 2001:2). Her study showed that the most common way to code switch among both groups was to use single word code switches in so-called **mixed utterances** (Sharp 2001:111). The 'mixed' utterances are mixed with Swedish words. Swedish affixes (e.g. verb suffixes and definite forms of nouns) may or may not be added to the English code-switch to improve integration in the Swedish discourse. **Unmixed utterances** which are entirely in English were not as common as the mixed ones. Sharp argues that unintegrated unmixed utterances do not blend in with the discourse as much as mixed utterances do. For this reason they stand out more and give the impression that there is more English than there actually is in the discourse (2001:192). Sharp divided her code-switches into **single word switches, strings of words** and **clauses** occurring in either a mixed utterance or an unmixed utterance. Sharp's method of organizing her code-switches are shown below in example 4:

Example 4:
<u>Code-switches occurring in</u>
<u>Mixed utterances</u>   <u>Examples</u>

(1) single word   "Man får **cutta** lite tidigare"
(2) multiple single words   "**Peaken** var inte bra på **sportmarknaden**"
(3) string of words   "Dom har hela **rangen av varities**"

<u>Code-switches occurring in</u>
<u>Unmixed utterances</u>   <u>Examples</u>

(1) single word   "**Sure!**"

(2) string of words   "**Yes at her place.**"

(3) clause   "**I don't believe it!**"

Sharp's way of classifying code switching is more suited to use when analyzing written texts since the model can be applied to single words and not just multi-word elements like Romaine's model. However, for the purposes of this study, her categories have been altered slightly which will be presented in section 3.2.2. The role the English language plays in Sweden will be discussed in the following section.

2.3 English in Sweden.

According to Cabau (2009:134), people who have gone to school in Sweden after World War II speak excellent English. A reason why Swedes in general speak English so well could be that English plays a major role in Swedish education. According to Hult (2012: 232-233), the current curriculum for English emphasizes learning English in order to communicate with native English speakers rather than focusing on the formal aspects of English learning. Even though English is an obligatory subject at school, many both learn and use the language outside of school as well. Today some researchers (like Cabau (2009) and Sundqvist (2009)) consider English a second rather than a foreign language in Sweden since the English language is a part of the everyday society in Sweden. Sundqvist (2009) has studied how out-of-school English affects ninth graders' spoken English and vocabulary. The participants in her study kept a diary of their extramural English activities. The activities were divided into the following seven different categories (Sundqvist, 2009:90):

    (1) reading books,
    (2) reading newspapers/magazines,
    (3) watching TV,
    (4) watching films,
    (5) surfing the Internet,
    (6) playing video games,
    (7) listening to music.

Her study showed that the extramural English activities that had the most positive effect on vocabulary and oral presentation were video games, the internet and reading both books and newspapers since these types of activities force the learners "to rely heavily on their language skills" (Sundqvist, 2009:204).

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Apart from English in the form studied by Sundqvist above, the Swedish language also contains a large number of English borrowings. Many English loan words are well established and are included in Svenska Akademiens Ordlista (SAOL), for example: 'printer' (SV: skrivare till datorn) and 'printa' (SV: skriva ut) (SAOL, 2014). Some established loan words are well integrated, like "printa" that has a Swedish suffix, but it is more common that the English loan words keep their original spelling in newspaper print. (Chrystal, 1988:49). There are also loan words that are interim loans (showing signs of becoming integrated into Swedish) and totally unintegrated loans without additions of Swedish suffixes (Sharp, 2001:29). In Chrystal's study of Swedish newspapers from 1988 the unintegrated loan words were primarily used for "their expressive and emotive character" (quoted in Sharp, 2001:30). According to Graedler's study from 1995 (quoted in Sharp 2001:31-2), English borrowings often function as "stylistic gap-fillers", i.e. they often replace worn-out expressions such as slang words. Borrowings are also often used to add more prestige and authority to, for instance, adverts (ibid.). Graedler also mentions in her study that direct borrowing of English expressions are in some cases used since they are more coherent (Graedler, 1995:223). In other words, there is a smaller chance for misunderstandings. Many researchers have attempted to differentiate borrowings from code-switches[2], but it can be concluded that no watertight criteria (without exceptions) have been formulated. What appears to have been a particular bone of contention seem to be what is here referred to as one-word code-switches. This study will not enter this debate, but will simply treat *all* uses of English as a case of code-switching.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1 Material - Flashback and selection of data.

Flashback.org is a Swedish internet based discussion forum that was founded in 1983 (Flashback, Kontakt, 2014). It started as a printed paper but since 1995 it has also been available online. The purpose of Flashback has always been to spread the freedom of speech, and it has led to situations when the website has been shut down several times (Flashback, Kontakt, 2014). Due to these

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[2] For an overview of the discussion regarding researchers' unsuccessful attempts to differentiate borrowings from code-switches, please see Sharp 2001:9-12.

problems the website is now published from a server in the US instead of from Sweden. On 3 December 2014, the website had 925 472 members and 48 473 062 posts. The website had 8 administrators and 111 moderators that monitor the forum (Flashback, Moderatorer, 2014). Since the members are anonymous it is impossible to know who the average user is. It is also not possible to contact any publisher by email. The only contact information on the site is a post address to New York. The only email-address that is available is for filing complaints or reporting someone for breaking the forum rules.

The forum consists of 15 different headings – called **main Category** in this study. Within each Main Category there are between 1-17 different **sub Categories**. Within each Sub Category there are several different Subjects, and each Subject consists of several **threads** where the members write their **posts**. In some cases there are no Subjects and the Threads are located directly in the Sub Category. Example 5 below illustrates how the thread "Preppy-style" is organized within the Main Category.

Example 5:

Main Category: Lifestyle contains 9 Sub Categories
  Sub Category: Clothes and accessories contains 4 Subjects
    Subject: Clothes and accessories: General discussion contains 11499 Threads.
     Thread: Preppy-style contains 5669 posts.

Example 5 above shows how the threads are organized on the website.

The data used in this study was collected from Flashback during December 2014. The data consists of a total of 523 posts from 5 different threads within 5 different main categories. The data was collected by randomly selecting Main category and Sub category (and also Subject within Sub categories that had Subjects). The first thread that had between 70-150 posts was then selected. The aim of this study was that the data should consist of about 500 post and that is the reason why the number of posts in the threads influenced the selection. The intention of selecting threads within different categories was to avoid discussion within the same subject. The threads that were selected are displayed in Table 1 below:

Table 1 The threads used in the study

Thread number	Main Category	Sub Category	Subject	Thread Name	No. Posts
Thread 1	Food	Candy, food & snacks		What is the most disgusting candy?	119
Thread 2	Lifestyle	Hobby		My hobby = measuring-tape	137
Thread 3	Culture	Movies & movie production	Movies in general	Lucia Movie Night	95
Thread 4	Sport	Exercise, diet & supplementation	Nutrition, diet & supplementation	How wholesome is Fredrik Paulun's musli really?	73
Thread 5	Science	Philosophy		I have been living in Swedish caves for three years, Ask me anything!!)	95

Table 1 displays how the different threads are organized within each main category. Some of the sub categories did not have any subjects and are therefore left blank in the table.

3.2 Method.

3.2.1 Units and types

In this study, a total of 523 posts were reviewed in order to see how often code switching occurred in texts on an internet based discussion forum. The posts that were reviewed were written in five different threads that discussed 5 different topics. Within these posts, code switches occurred 197 times in total. Since the types of code switching are based on Sharp's terms mixed and unmixed utterances, each code switch is counted according to which type it is. Sharp's study is based on spoken language, and it therefore makes sense to discuss 'utterances'. However, this study deals with code switching in *written* texts, and therefore the "utterances" will be referred to as mixed and unmixed **units**. The reason why the term 'unit' was selected as an overall term in the analysis is because Flashback is an informal discussion forum and does not always follow syntactic rules. This fact leads to difficulties in categorizing texts as clauses (or sentences). Also, some posts do not form clauses (or sentences). In these cases, the word 'unit' describes any string of words (without discussing phrase types).

A unit can be either a non-clausal string of words that starts with a capital letter and ends with a period. It can also be a string of words that ends with a new line (instead of a period) and in some cases a list of words. (Table 2 on p.11 illustrates types of units.) In cases where there are lists (for example in Thread 3 where lists of movies occur), one **list** functions as one unit. The introductory heading is included in the list. Other cases analyzed as one single unit - even though they consist of several strings of words - is when the users have quoted English texts. The majority of **quotations** found in the selected data were often separated from the rest of the text by either a colon or quotation marks and are therefore seen as a single unit. Example 6 below illustrates what lists and quotations as single units can look like in the material.

Example 6 of single units:

1. **List that functions as a single unit:**
   (Introductory heading in Swedish included)
   ”Filmer som kan komma som jag hoppas på:
   Exodus
   The Gambler
   Taken 3 (osannolikt att de visar uppföljare)
   Birdman
   American Sniper
   Theory of Everything
   Big Hero 6
   Kingsman
   The Interview
   Big Eyes
   Jurrassic World
   Ex Machina”
   - (Flashback, Lucia Movie Night)

2. **Quotation that functions as a single unit:**
   "The way your dad looked at it, this measuring tape was your birthright. He'd be damned if any slopes gonna put their greasy yellow hands on his boy's birthright, so he hid it, in the one place he knew he could hide something: his ass. Five long years, he wore this Rabone Chesterman up his ass. Then when he died of dysentery, he gave me the measuring tape. I hid this uncomfortable piece of metal up my ass for two years. Then, after seven years, I was sent home to my family. And now, little man, I give the measuring tape to you"
   - (Flashback, My hobby=Measuring-tape)

As can be seen in example 6, the single units in these particular cases of lists and quotations consist of more than one English word. All of the lists in the collected data are counted as occurring in

mixed units due to the fact that they either had a Swedish heading or contained Swedish words in other places.

3.2.2 Types of code switches

Each type of code switch within a unit was counted as one code switch. If a unit contains a code switch involving a single lexical word, this was counted as one. The unmixed single word unit was not used in this study since it did not occur in the material analyzed. If a unit contains several single word code switches, but not in a string of words, each single word code switch was counted as one since each single word switch represents a new switch. Names (for example movie titles) were counted as code switching as well, either as a single word or a string of words depending on the number of words. In cases where a unit only consists of a name (see example 7 below) it was counted as an unmixed unit. The types of code switching that were used to analyze the material occurred either in a mixed or unmixed unit. The categories used to analyze the material are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Categories used in the analysis of the material

Mixed units (Mixed with Swedish words)	Unmixed units (No Swedish words included)
Single word	Quotation
String of words	String of words
---	Clause

As can be seen in Table 2, 'String of words' can be categorized as both a mixed code switch and an unmixed code switching, depending on if it occurs in an unmixed unit or not. In the following chapter, the results of the investigations will be presented.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Mixed and Unmixed units.

As mentioned in section 3.2.1 on p. 9, the 523 posts contained a total of 197 code switches. The code switches were found in 74 different posts. In other words, 14,2% of all posts contained at least one type of code switch. Out of all of the code switches, 94,4% were of the mixed type which means that English was mixed with Swedish words in the same unit. In other words, the Flashback users have no problems mixing Swedish and English words in their posts. Within these mixed units, 49,7% were single word code switches. That is, most Swedish-speaking Flashback users prefer to use no more than one English word at a time.

The use of unmixed units made up 5,6% of the results. The most common unmixed unit among Flashback users were strings of words. These usually consisted of short answers or comments to previous posts. Only 1% of the unmixed units were Clausal units.

Table 3: Mixed and Unmixed units in the analyzed threads.

Threads	Thread name	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Thread 1	What is the most disgusting candy?	15 (88,2%)	2 (11,8%)
Thread 2	My hobby = measuring-tape	25 (89,3%)	3 (10,7%)
Thread 3	Lucia Movie Night	129 (98,5%)	2 (1,5%)
Thread 4	How wholesome is Fredrik Paulun's müsli really?	11 (91,7%)	1 (8,3%)
Thread 5	I have been living in Swedish caves for three years, Ask me anything!!)	6 (66,7%)	3 (33.3%)
Totals:		186 (94,4%)	11 (5,6%)

In Table 3 the result of each thread is demonstrated. Here we can see the numbers of mixed and unmixed units within the threads. As shown, Thread number 5 had the highest number of unmixed units while Thread number 3 had the highest number of mixed units. Over all, all of the threads showed that mixed code switching was the most common way to code switch.

4.2 Code switching on Flashback.

In what follows, the results for each thread will be discussed. Each of the 5 threads will be discussed separately. They will be presented separately since the threads discuss different subjects, and the subject may affect the use of code switches. Number of code switches in each thread and different types of code switches will be presented. The numbers that are presented in each thread are based on the number of code switches that were found within the discussed thread. Different types of code switching within the threads will be exemplified and for sake of clarity, the words that make up the English code switch are presented in italics. Only the types of code switching that were found in each thread will be listed in the tables.

4.2.1 Thread 1 – "What is the most disgusting candy?"

The first thread analyzed consisted of 124 posts of the 523 posts in the material. Code switching occurred in 14 (11,3%) of all posts, and a total of 17 code switches were detected. The results pertaining to type of code switches used are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Type of code switches found in Thread 1 (about disgusting candy)

Code-switching categories:	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Single word	9 (52,9%)	0
String of words	6 (35,3%)	2 (11,8%)
Totals:	15 (88,2%)	2 (11,8)

As can be seen in table 4 above, the code switch types that were most common among the Flashback users in this thread were Single word in a mixed unit and String of words in a mixed unit. They made up 88,2% of all of the code switches made in this thread. Other code switches that were detected were two cases of unmixed string of words. This result shows clearly that code switches in unmixed units (where they are not mixed with Swedish words) were extremely rare. The unmixed strings of words often consisted of a short answer or comment to a previous post. An example is shows below in Example 7:

Example 7: A code switch in the form of a string of words
occurring in an unmixed unit.

Root Beer. Påminde om /…/

Example 7 above is a response to a previous comment where "Root Beer" is seen as a string of words because the switch consists of more than one English word in an unmixed unit. It is seen as a separate unmixed unit since the writer uses a period before continuing the discussion.

4.2.2 Thread 2 –"My hobby=Measuring-tape"

The second thread contained a discussion among users who liked to measure different items. The thread consisted of 137 posts where 19 (13,9%) of them contained code switches and a total of 28 code switches were found. The types of code-switches are presented in table 5 below.

Table 5: Type of code switches in Thread 2 (about measuring as a hobby)

Code-switching categories:	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Single word	19 (67,9%)	0
String of words	6 (21,4%)	1 (3,6%)
Quotation	0	2 (7,1%)
Totals:	25 (89,3%)	3 (10,7%)

As shown in table 5 above, 19 (67,9%) of the code switches were Single lexical word in a mixed unit. As seen in table 4 (results of Thread 1), it is clear that code-switches used in mixed units are again in a clear majority. 2 (7,1%) of the code switches in this thread were unmixed quotations which only occurred 4 times in all of the material. In this study quotations were counted as unmixed units. The quotations are counted as one code switch although the quotation may contain more than one sentence/clause. Two cases of code switched quotations are shown in example 8 below.

Example 8 of code switched quotations:

a) Ett gammalt engelskt Rabone Chesterman på min ära!! (eller Rabååne som man sa förr)Har mätt många mil ser jag.
Var det din far som var i Vietnam förresten? Jag läste något om det på nätet:
The way your dad looked at it, this measuring tape was your birthright. He'd be damned if any slopes gonna put their greasy yellow hands on his boy's birthright, so he hid it, in the one place he knew he could hide something: his ass. Five long years, he wore this Rabone Chesterman up his ass. Then when he died of dysentery, he gave me the measuring tape. I hid this uncomfortable piece of metal up my ass for two years. Then, after seven years, I was sent home to my family. And now, little man, I give the measuring tape to you

b) Vilken dyrbara tråden. Min första tanke kring mätning som hobby var ett citat av den legendariska fysikern - *"The scientists of today think deeply instead of clearly. One must be sane to think clearly, but one can think deeply and be quite insane."* Angående tävlingen, minns en gång att min fysikälskare i grundskola lyckades med få klassrummet att engagera sig på riktigt. /…/

In the first example, a), the author has put a colon mark before the quote. The second author has chosen to use quotation marks in order to illustrate that the text is a quotation. In the majority of cases where quotes were used in the posts, the author somehow separated the quote from the rest of the text with either a colon or quotation marks, and that is why they are counted as one code switch.

4.2.3 Thread 3 – "Lucia Movie Night"

Thread number 3 is slightly different from the other threads. The topic that is discussed is 'Lucia Movie Night' which is an annual movie event where new movies are shown across Sweden before their official airing dates. Since movies are discussed, this thread had the highest number of code switches. Out of 95 posts, 25 (26,0%) contained code switching. Within these 25 posts there were 131 code switches. Many of the movies discussed had English titles, and they are therefore considered code switches. The reason why they are counted as code switches is simply that they contain untranslated English words. They are either coded as a Single word or a string of words depending on the title. The types of code switches found in thread 3 are illustrated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Type of code switches in Thread 3 (about a Lucia movie night)

Code-switching categories:	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Single Word	55 (42%)	0
String of words	74 (56,5%)	0
Quotation	0	2 (1,5%)
Totals:	129 (98,5%)	2 (1,5%)

Table 6 above shows that the types of code switches that occurred in thread 3 were Single words in mixed units, String of words in mixed units (see Example 9 below), and unmixed quotations. As can be seen here, the most common type of code switching in this thread was using several English words mixed with Swedish words. As was presented in previous tables, the mixed units are the most common way to code switch. Below is an example of a user using a string of English in a mixed unit:

Example 9 of a string of words in a mixed unit:
Filmen säljer inte sig själv med sin titel, utan är snarare en *word of mouth* film. /…/

The reason why this thread had such a high number of both Single Word code switches and String of Word code switches are simply because of the movie titles. Some of the posts in this thread consisted only of lists of movies.

4.2.4 Thread 4 – "How wholesome is Fredrik Paulun's müsli really?"

Thread number 4 is a discussion about a special type of müsli. The thread consists of 72 posts and 8 of them contained code switches. A total of 12 code switches were found in the posts. The results of types of code switches found in thread 4 are presented in table 7 below.

Table 7: Type of code switches in Thread 4 (about Paulun's müsli)

Code-switching categories:	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Single word	10 (83,3%)	0
String of words	1 (8,3%)	0
Clause	0	1(8,3%)
Totals:	11 (91,7%)	1 (8.3%)

Table 7 above shows that the most common type of code switch in this thread was Single words in mixed units with 10 (83,3%) code switches. Two other types of code switches did occur in this thread: String of words in mixed unit and Unmixed Clause. However, these types only occurred one time each. Here follow two cases of Single words in a mixed unit that were found in thread 4:

Example 10 of single words in mixed units:

a) *Överhypade* skitgrejor är vad jag vill kalla det. Blanda eget?
Kolhydratsskräcken är dock löjlig, sen när är socker dåligt?"

b) Vad är din ambition, att *kutta* fett? /…/

Examples a) and b) above show how English is mixed with Swedish. In (a) the author has put a Swedish prefix on an English word. In (b) the author uses an English word (cut) but with Swedish spelling, and a Swedish suffix.

4.2.5 Thread 5 – "I have been living in Swedish caves for three years, ask me anything!!"

The last thread analyzed is a discussion about a man who has lived in caves for a couple of years. The thread contains 95 posts, and 8 (8,4%) of them contained code switching. 9 code switches were found in these posts. The types of code switches are presented in table 8 below.

Table 8: Type of code switches in Thread 5 (about living in Swedish caves)

Code-switching categories:	Mixed units	Unmixed units
Single word	5 (55,6%)	0
Strings of words	1 (11,1%)	2 (22,2%)
Clause	0	1 (11,1%)
Totals:	6 (66,7%)	3 (33,3%)

Table 8 above shows that this thread contained the highest percentage of unmixed units. Even though Single words in mixed units were the most common code switches (55,6%), this thread contained both unmixed Strings of words and an unmixed Clause. Example 11 (a) below presents an unmixed English clause and (b) illustrates an unmixed string of words which is not a full English clause (with a subject and a predicate verb).

Example 11:
    a. Den här tråden är episk. Av flera anledningar!
        Även om jag lutar mot att du trollar - *I could not care less!*

    b. *my precious......ahhhhhhh*

The last example has been counted as an unmixed unit since there are no lexical Swedish words in this unit. ("ahhhh" simply refers to a sound).

4.3 Types of code switches used on Flashback.

A total of 197 code switches were found in the 523 posts that were reviewed in this study. All of Sharp's code switching types from (2001) occurred at least once in the material. However, since Sharp's material was spoken, and this study is based on written material, the categories were adjusted to fit an analysis of this material. Table 8 below sums up how many posts were found to contain code switches to English among the 5 threads.

Table 9: Number of posts with or without English code switches per thread

Thread number	(Shortened) Thread name	No. of posts with English CSs	No. of posts with *no* English CSs	No. of posts
Thread 1	Disgusting Candy	14	110	124
Thread 2	Measuring as a hobby	19	118	137
Thread 3	Lucia movie night	25	70	95
Thread 4	Paulun's müsli	8	64	72
Thread 5	Swedish caves	8	87	95
Totals:		**74 (14.2%)**	**449 (85,8%)**	**523**

Table 9 above shows that even though the material consisted of 523 posts only 74 (14,2%) of the post contained English words. This shows that English is a language that is used on Flashback, but that Swedish is the first choice among the Flashback users. In some cases code switching occurred more than once within the same unit, which also indicates that the users are comfortable in using English in written Swedish. Table 10 below shows how frequently the different types of code switches were used. The cell furthest to the right indicates the total number of code switches in the material was 197.

Table 10: Code switches in all of the material.

Type	Mixed	Unmixed	
Single word	98 (49,8%)	0	
String of words	88 (44,7%)	5 (2,5%)	
Quotation	0	4 (2%)	
Clause	0	2 (1%)	
Totals:	186 (94,5%)	11 (5,5%)	197 (100%)

Table 9 above shows, as mentioned earlier, that Single word and String of words in a mixed unit are the most common code switches on Flashback. This also corresponds with the idea that Swedish is the first language of choice. There is no indication anywhere that we are witnessing a general switch from Swedish to English in the discourse.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Frequency

The first research question in this study was how frequently code switching occurs. Code switching occurred in 14,2% of the posts that were analyzed. This implies that more than 1 out of 10 posts contains some sort of code switching. A reason why code switching exists on Flashback could be that Swedes today are so skilled when it comes to using English in writing that they can be considered bilinguals, and they get plenty of English practice both in school and outside of school. This is an attempt to explain why code switching occurs at all - although not strictly necessary. Sundquist's study also shows that extramural English activities improves the English vocabulary, especially for those who engage in activities that rely on language skills such as video games and using the internet (Sundqvist, 2009:204). Based on Sundqvist's study it could be noted that the threads that were analyzed in this study could affect the result. It could be possible that threads that discussed for example video games may have contained a larger number of code switches than the threads in this study. It could also be argued that English is a language that is used on the internet as both Jaworska's and Androutsopoulos studies showed. Androutsopoulos study of Greek youths on Facebook showed that English was used as frequently as German among the participants even though they all lived in Germany (Androutsopoulos, 2014:12). The reason why English is used on the internet could aloe be, as Graedler argues, that it adds prestige and replaces worn out expressions (quoted in Sharp 2001:31-2).

5.2 Code switches on Flashback

The most common way to code switch on Flashback, according to this study, was to insert a single English word in a Swedish text. As mentioned earlier, both Cabau (2009) and Sundqvist (2009) consider English as a second language in the Swedish society. Since the Swedish language has several English loan words, it is no surprise that single word code switches are as common as they are. The study showed well integrated loan words such as "kutta" (see Example 10), an English word with a Swedish suffix and spelling. Some posts also contained full English phrases and quotations without any Swedish translations, which can imply that English is so commonly used on Flashback that explanations and translations are not necessary. Graedler also mentions in her study that borrowings function as "stylistic gap-fillers" (quoted in Sharp, 2001:30), which can be a reason why the Flashback users use English quotations in their posts. Graedler also argues that direct borrowing of English expressions is common since they are more coherent, in other words there is a smaller chance for misunderstanding than if the quotation is translated (Graedler, 1995:223). One of the threads in this study included several English movie titles and movie related words (for example "biopic" and "VIP") which contributed to many code switches in the form of single words and strings. The reason why English words are used while discussing movies could be to avoid misunderstandings.

5.3 Types of code switches used on Flashback

The different types of code switches that were used to analyze the material are based on Sharp's study of code switching (Sharp, 2001). Sharp's types of code switches were adjusted in order to work on texts and not just spoken language. The types that were used in this study were 1) **Single word in mixed unit**, 2) **String of word in mixed unit**, 3) **Unmixed quotation unit**, 4) **Unmixed Clause unit** and 5) **Unmixed string of words**. The reason why Sharp's types were used as a model for this study was due to the fact that her classification of different code switches included single word units, not just strings of words and clauses. The idea was to include "Unmixed single-word unit" as one category in this study, but this type of code switch did not occur in the material that was analyzed and therefore it was dropped.

The code switch that was most commonly used was single word in a mixed unit. The use of this type of code switching occurred 98 times, which corresponds to 49,8% of all code switches found in the material. This result is the same, but lower, than that obtained by Sharp in her study of the spoken language. As many as 88% of all of Sharp's code switches were single word switches, and most of these (84%) occurred in mixed utterances (Sharp 2001:190-191).

In terms of the role subject, or topic, plays on code switching, it is possible to see from the results of this study that the thread that contained the highest number of both single word in a mixed unit and strings of words in a mixed unit is thread 3 that was a thread about a movie event. All the movie titles with an English name were coded as code switches. The reason for choosing threads in different subjects was to be able to see if the thread subject and the number of code switching had any connection, which it does according to the results. Thread number 3 were the only thread that discussed a media related subject and that can be a reason why code switches occurred more often. As Sundqvist's study showed, the extramural English activities that required the highest English skills were using the Internet and video games, which are both media based activities (Sundqvist, 2009:204). The second most common way to code switch were strings of words in a mixed unit. The strings of words that occurred in the material were in many cases movies titles, but it was also common for the users to use English expressions in their posts. It may simply be that it is just as easy for competent users of English to discuss certain specific topics using English words than translating the English words into Swedish. It could further be argued that extramural English activities, for example watching English-speaking movies and discussing them in forums such as Flashback, improves the general command of English. In other words, if a person is engaged in different extramural English activities he or she may regularly use English words when communicating. Finally, Sharp, based on Graedler's study, also explains that worn-out Swedish expressions have a tendency to be replaced by English ones since they often add more prestige and authority (Sharp, 2001:31-2).

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the research questions will be discussed based on the results. The aims were to answer *how often* code switching occurred in some threads on Flashback, *how* the users code switched, and, finally, how common the different types of code switches are.

The material that was analyzed was collected from a Swedish discussion forum called Flashback. Out of the 523 posts that were analyzed in this study, 14,2% of them contained English words. In fact, approximately 1 out of 10 posts had at least one English word in it. Based on the fact that Flashback is a Swedish site, it is my opinion that English appears to occur rather frequently. Despite the fact that 85.8% of all posts do *not* contain any English words, the 14,2% posts that *do* contain English words stand out clearly in the discourse because of the switch of language. That salience affected one's impression of the number of English code-switches was also found in Sharp's study (2001:112). Another reason why one gets the impression that English occurs frequently may be that, English words can be used to add more prestige and give an air of being accurate.

In agreement with Sundquist (2009: 28), it can indeed be argued that English has become a second language –rather than a foreign language – in Swedish society. However, there is no indication in the material that suggests a developing general switch from Swedish to English in the discourse.

The second and third research questions were *how the users code switch* and *which type of code switch that was most common*. Several different types of code switches were used on Flashback. The most common way to code switch was to mix English with Swedish in a unit. This type of mixing strengthens the idea that English is a second language in Sweden rather than a foreign language, and that it is possible to mix the languages without interfering with Swedish syntactic rules. It is possible that the mixing of two languages mean that English words are used as synonyms to Swedish words. The use of unmixed units in the texts, for instance quotations, also occurred in the material. The users used unmixed English units without adding translations or explanations, which suggests that the users assume that everyone understands English. Even though English was used both in mixed and unmixed units, it is undoubtedly so that Swedish is the first language of choice on Flashback.

More precisely, the most common way to mix Swedish and English was to insert one English word into a Swedish unit. The use of this type of code switching occurred 98 times, which corresponds to 49,8% of all code switches found in the material. As can be seen in Table 5 on p. 15, as many as 55 of the single word code switches were found in Thread 3. The reason why this thread had such a high use of single word code switches was due to the fact that the topic of the thread was movies. All of the English-speaking movies with English titles were coded as code switches since they were not translated into Swedish. The decision to code the movie titles as code switches led to a situation where all names (for example candies in thread 1) were counted as code switches. The type that was least used in this material were the unmixed clause, which is a complete English clause. Even though unmixed units occurred, they often consisted of quotations or short strings. Sharp's results also showed that single lexical items were the most common code switch (Sharp, 2001:191). A reason why unmixed clauses were used so rarely and single words so frequently might be because English words are used as synonyms to Swedish ones. It may also be possible that the people who discussed movies in thread 3 found that it added more prestige to use English movie titles even though many of the films have Swedish titles as well.

Code switching is an interesting topic to study since there are no watertight rules regarding what words, phrases and clauses can be code switched. When speaking the speaker has no chance to go back and change the utterance, but when writing a text, the author can erase parts and edit words and phrases before posting them. With that said, it can be argued that code switching in texts is more of an active choice than in spoken language.

This study has looked on code switching appearing in a small material. For further research, it would be interesting to study how the topics on Flashback affect code switching in a considerably larger material. For instance, as mentioned in this study, the thread about movies had the highest number of code switches. Sundquist also mentioned in her study that one of the extramural English activities that improved the English vocabulary the most were video/computer games. Therefore, it might be interesting to study code switching from the perspective of thread topics, for example, to study threads that discuss different video games in order to see if the game that is discussed affects the number of code switches. It would also be interesting to see what types of words are switched to English. In short, in view of the results established in this essay, it would be interesting to develop this type of study further in the future.

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