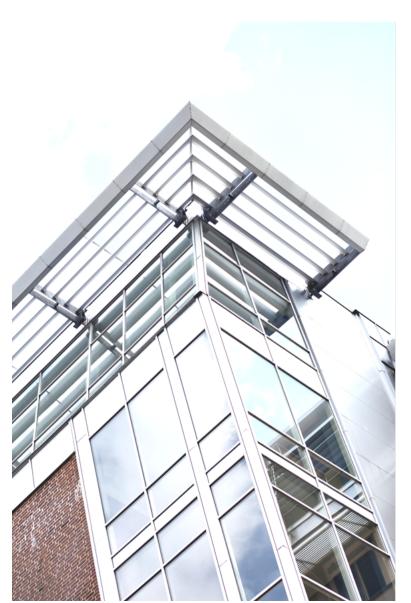# Content and Language Ideology in Textbooks

How English Language Textbooks Reflect the Syllabi for English Teaching in Sweden

Author: Emma Bovin

Supervisor: Dr. Claes Lindskog

Term: Fall 2015

Course: ÄENC51 English IV

Individual Research Project (15 hp)

English Teacher Education

Campus Helsingborg

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to investigate English language textbooks and the way they adhere to the curriculum and syllabi for English language teaching in Sweden. It will also look at what language ideological elements that these textbooks represent. The background section reviews language ideology in general, while also attempting to present the language ideological attitudes that are currently dominant in Sweden. The literature review looks both at the way ideology is usually manifested in textbooks, as well as the roots of English language teaching in Sweden. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative content analysis (CA) is used in order to investigate both the curriculum/syllabi, and the textbooks. Through a close reading of the textbooks, a division of the textbook content has been made in order to match the topics brought up in the curriculum and syllabi. The general curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school presents a general ideology of democratic values and humanism, while the syllabi for English focus on linguistic competence versus cultural and societal understanding. There is some evidence also of the "struggle for power" between Swedish and English. The most frequently occurring texts where those relating to cultural and societal understanding, which could in turn be related to democratic values. Prior to the research it was believed that the role of English would be more prominent in the textbooks, however, this proved to be untrue. Understanding where the English language comes from and its role in the world was not given much space; only a few of the textbooks brought it up.

Keywords: Textbook analysis, language ideology, syllabi analysis, Sweden

Table of Contents

Content and Language Ideology in Textbooks: How English Language Textbooks Reflect the Syllabi for English Teaching in Sweden

"A language is more than just a means of communication. So powerful is its symbolic value that language is often perceived as an institution, an entity in its own right" (Oakes, 2001, p. 18).

There is quite a long tradition of foreign language education in Sweden. The undisputed ruler of foreign languages in Sweden is English; researchers have even claimed that it is on the verge of taking the role of an official second language (Hyltenstam, 2004; Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014). However, the divergence in language ideological attitudes is noticable. The fear of allowing English to replace Swedish, and thus losing cultural traditions stands against the view of English as a tool for understanding an increasingly global world.

The ambivalence is apparent both in the 2005 government proposition *Best language – A unified Swedish language policy* (my translation)[1], and in the curriculum for English at upper secondary school. In *Best language* (Swedish Parliament, 2005)*,* the importance of Swedish as the dominant language is juxtaposed against the importance of multilingualism. Furthermore, in the curriculum for English the idea that teaching should predominantly be done in English is a foil to the notion that the students should develop pluralinguistic skills (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011).

This aim of this essay is to investigate how, and in what ways, English language textbooks produced in Sweden reflect the Syllabi for English (with some references also to the general curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school). The research questions are as follows:

1. In what ways do English language textbooks in Sweden reflect and adhere to the Swedish National Agency for Education's curriculum and syllabi for English in relation to the content covered?

---

[1] *Bästa språket – en samlad svensk språkpolitik.* Accepted by parliament in December 2005.

2. What language ideological components can be found in the curriculum and syllabi, and how do these appear in the material used in English language textbooks in Sweden?

Theoretical Background

The theoretical background introduces the concepts of language ideology as a whole, as well as language ideology in Sweden. It also provides a literature review on previous research on ideology in textbooks, as well as English language teaching (ELT) in Sweden.

Explaining Language ideology. Defining the term language ideology is not entirely unproblematic, seeing as there has been ambiguity concerning the definition of ideology itself (Hawkins, 2001). Overall, it seems that language ideology is an undeniable fixture in society. One can assume that it explicitly or implicitly permeates such large social institutions as schools, and consequently the teaching materials schools use.

The term ideology is said to originate from Destutt de Tracy, a French philosopher, in 1796 (Woolard, 1998; Rehmann, 2013). In their book *Language as Ideology,* Hodge and Kress (1993) make an attempt to summarize the various themes and ideas of language ideology into a single definition:

> a systematic body of ideas organized from a particular point of view. Ideology is thus a subsuming
>
> category which includes sciences and metaphysics, as well as political ideologies of various kinds,
>
> without implying anything about their status and reliability as guides to reality (p. 6).

The definition Hodge and Kress has created thus seems to incorporate the themes that are generally emphasized in discussions on ideology.

Friedrich (1989) puts forward the interpretation of language as a "verbal process by which the individual relates ideas and emotions to sound and other material symbolism in terms of a code and in the context of a society and its culture, and their respective, interrelated histories" (p. 302). Furthermore, Taylor (1990) discusses variance in concepts of language, claiming that there is a difference between the concepts of voluntaristic and institutionalist language. Voluntarism assumes that specific agents voluntarily perform individual acts of language, and are therefore solely responsible for their own linguistic success. Institutionalism instead postulates that language is its own institution, meaning that language exists separately from the linguistically practising individuals.

Language ideology in context. One of the acknowledged priorities within language ideological research is to investigate and understand "language beliefs and practices of social groups as strongly connected to group interests within society" (Kroskrity, 2000, p. 2). Language ideologies accentuate the perceived ideas speakers have about language use, and how typically political and social characteristics are integrated into discourse (Silverstein, 1979; Irvine, 1989).

Kroskrity (2000) further promotes language ideology as a cluster concept. One of the first notions is that language ideologies are mere "perceptions of language," and these ideological perceptions of what is "true" or "real" lead to attempts promoting certain political-economic interests (p. 8). In Sweden, the unified language policy which establishes Swedish at the top of the language hierarchical structure is guided by the same sort of political-economic objectives. It can be seen both in the relationship between English and Swedish, and also between Swedish and minority languages.

Language ideologies are not only owned by its local sociolinguistic systems, they are also the possession of the "linguists and ethnographers who have mapped the boundaries of languages and peoples and provided descriptive accounts of them" (Irvine & Gal, 2000, pp. 35-36). If these mappers believe in particular oppositional concepts (between groups in society or between linguistic variants), this will also become apparent in the language ideology they help create. As a result, groups or linguistic aspects that are in conflict with the governing ideological system are often disregarded (p. 38). This implies that anything which is inconsistent with the language ideological beliefs in Sweden will either be explained away or completely left out of the textbooks used for English language teaching in upper secondary school. Technically, it should be possible to spot what language ideology the textbooks present by looking at inclusion and exclusion of material.

Swedish language ideology. Delimiting language ideology is not uncomplicated, seeing as there are various definitions and interpretations of it (Woolard, 1998). Not much previous work has been done on language ideology in Sweden; neither on general language ideology, nor on language ideology in relation to such institutions as the upper secondary school. Nevertheless, there are some texts which are relevant to language ideology in Sweden. In his doctoral thesis *Debating Swedish: Language Politics and Ideology in Contemporary Sweden,* Milani (2007) creates a case study looking at the debate surrounding the promotion of Swedish, language testing for citizenship and mother tongue instruction. The major argument in his thesis is that language ideological struggles in Sweden involve the relationships between languages, and how the state should or should not interfere with these struggles. He further connects this to the ongoing globalisation, explaining that in Sweden a "range of conflicting ideologies were mobilised and came into mutual struggle", especially pertaining to the status of Swedish in relation to English and other languages (p. 23).

Likewise, Wingstedt's doctoral dissertation *Language Ideologies and Minority Language Policies in Sweden* (1998) also concerns the language ideological atmosphere in Sweden. She looks at language ideology against a historical backdrop as well as in a contemporary setting; she attempts to frame majority versus minority languages. In her thesis, she describes a survey conducted with the goal of investigating contemporary language ideologies in Sweden. Several paradoxical perspectives became apparent. Specifically, there were inconsistencies in attitudes relating to the "significance of the mother tongue as well as aspects of societal multilingualism" (p. 343).

As a contrast to the ideas of language discord in Sweden, Oakes (2001) instead suggests that Swedes have a relatively tolerant attitude towards taking advantage of English as a tool for global communication. He suggests that, despite periods of time where ideas of purism operated against foreign language influences, languages regarded as the lingua franca have been allowed to affect the Swedish language (pp. 65-66). He therefore proposes that it is not unreasonable to want to accept English as the "new" lingua franca in order to gain extensive access to the European and global arena (p. 135).

Literature Review

The focus of this section is ideology in textbooks and English language teaching (ELT) in Sweden.

Ideology in language textbooks. This research project deals mostly with invisible language ideology; by analysing the interrelationship between the political steering documents and English language textbooks in Sweden it is believed that certain language ideological attitudes will be brought to light. All language textbooks are produced with certain underlying objectives, whether they be social, cultural or political. Pennycook (2001) argues

that by analysing textbook content, one can make "ideological systems and representations transparent" (p. 81). Furthermore, Curdt-Christiansen and Weninger (2015) suggest that since textbooks are usually commissioned, "official" texts, the study of them promotes the understanding of both overt and covert ideologies (p. 4). No research reviewing language ideology in English language textbooks in Sweden have been located so far. Nevertheless, there are several studies concerning language ideology in English textbooks from other parts of the world.

Looking at ideology in English textbooks, Ping (2015) discusses "political and ideological dimensions of cultural representations in English language textbooks" in China (p. 164). The main obstacle in English textbooks tends to be the skewed cultural representations which in some cases can interfere with goals of cross-cultural understanding. She found that while a number of different national cultures where included, Chinese culture was clearly promoted over all others. The same tendencies were found by Or and Shohamy (2015) while researching how the depiction of Arabic and Hebrew cultures differed in Israeli textbooks. Depending on the origin of the textbook, cultural references were biased towards either Arabic or Hebrew representations. The apprehension towards controversial topics or deviating cultures often led to stereotyping. Thus these representations can also be said to hinder the creation of cross-cultural understanding (p. 120).

English language teaching in Sweden. The realisation that Swedish citizens would be shut-out from the world by focusing only on the national language has been imperative to the fast-growing influences of foreign languages (Cabau-Lampa, 1999). English has become the most important foreign language, and it has even been stated that English is on the verge of being recognised as a second language in Sweden (Hyltenstam, 2004, p. 52). Because of its global nature and Swedes' fondness of cooperation across international borders, the English

language is everywhere in Swedish society. English affects Swedish through new words, code-switching between English and Swedish in everyday situations, and by English being the language of choice in a growing number of domains in Sweden (Yoxsimer Paulsrud, 2014, p. 18). The result is a slight resistance to these qualities of English, even though they are still apparent in everyday situations.

English became a compulsory subject in Swedish upper secondary schools in 1962. It was meant as a "tool for democratisation in the educational environment, which was to have impact on Swedish society as a whole" (Cabau-Lampa, 1999, p. 405). She concludes that knowledge and teaching of English is essential for Swedes in terms of international networking in almost all fields. Hyltenstam (2004) points out that the political aspects of English in Sweden somewhat obstruct the full potential of English language teaching. He argues that a decision needs to be made on whether teaching should boost English in order to present it as a second language, or whether English should simply continue to be regarded as a foreign language (p. 59). In relation to my research project, *Blueprint C: Version 2.0* is the only textbook that could be mentioned as an attempt to boost English as a second language. Of the textbooks analysed, it alone seems to advocate the importance of English in Sweden and in the world.

Overall, the way English is taught in Swedish schools is indicative of certain language learning attitudes; language teaching is meant to teach "communication, professional skills and citizen education (Thavenius, 1995, p. 474 as cited in Oakes, p. 168). Looking at the curriculum and syllabi for English in Sweden, it is quite apparent that specific emphasis is put on this aspect. It is important to note that ELT in Sweden is not an isolated phenomenon. Instead it is undertaken in school; a political institution. While language teaching in Sweden has previously had a fondness for extensive grammar work, it has become apparent that language awareness and communicative skills now share the spotlight. These changes in turn

represent an ideological sentiment; in a fast-growing and changing world there is need for communication and understanding. Oakes (2001) further suggests that Swedish identity has taken on internationalist and modernist elements, notably highlighting that literature studies in Swedish schools have taken on domains such as pluralism and social understanding (p. 163). American language and culture is dominant in Swedish society, and there is a contemporary tendency to use American English in textbooks of English (as opposed to the traditional British English). A majority of the textbooks analysed for this study seem to favour American English in the texts written by the producers.

Method

This research project concerns English language textbooks for the upper secondary school in Sweden, and in what ways they reflect or adhere to the Swedish National Agency for Education's curriculum and syllabi for English. This project investigates textbook content in relation to themes of the topics covered. It also attempts to find correlating areas in the curriculum and syllabi. All the textbooks chosen for the study have been developed in Sweden for Swedish upper secondary school, which leads to the assumption that the production has been influenced by the political documents for English in Swedish upper secondary school. The main source of information will thus be the material which is intended for the learners.

Twelve textbooks aimed towards the subject of English in Swedish upper secondary school have been found. The selection process has simply been based on easy access, as it is not completely uncomplicated to acquire the textbooks when one is not in direct relation to upper secondary school. The textbooks can be divided into three categories, as they are produced for the three different levels of English at upper secondary school. The unequal division in these categories is also due to accessibility. The textbooks were not chosen because of their

publication dates, but simply because there was a need for a larger number of textbooks in for reliability and validity reasons.

   The publication years range from 1995 to 2014, with seven of the textbooks having been published before the school reforms of 2011[2]. These books were therefore constructed for a different curriculum and different syllabi. Granted, the changes made in the previous syllabi for English are not remarkably substantial. The "character of the subject" and "content of communication" of the subject as a whole is almost exactly the same in the previous syllabi as in the present one. However, one obvious difference is that the syllabi for 2011 demand more cognitive work from the students. They have to meet explicitly stated criteria in order to reach the current grades; students are expected to not only know facts, but also understand their own learning processes. Before the beginning of this research it was believed that there would be a greater difference regarding text content between the books published before and after the 2011 school reforms. Yet, it was possible to observe that in many ways the older textbooks coincide to a high degree with the syllabi for 2011 as well. It was difficult to decide whether this is due to contemporary ideological values persisting change, or a result of outdated English language textbook production in Sweden. Either way, the topics and themes of the chosen textbooks for English remain rather homogenous despite the fact that their publication dates range from 1996 to 2014. Most of the books produced for the syllabi of 2011 do present a higher degree of cognitive demands. There are more areas (such as leading questions and extra work) which require further understanding of the texts studied in the books produced for the 2011 syllabi.

A list of the books is presented below (grouped according to level):

English 5:

---

[2] In 2011, the Swedish school system underwent a series of large reforms. The relatively low target achievements were the basis for these reforms, and the reform commission put forth the suggestion for completely new curricula and syllabi, as well as a new marking scale (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2015, pp. 19-20).

Frato, K. (2013). *Echo 5: Main issues*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.

Gustafsson, L., & Wivast, U. (2011). *Viewpoints 1*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Hallberg, E., & Backemyr Nyberg, E. (2014). *Engelska 5 – Outlooks on.* Malmö: NA Förlag AB.

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1995). *Impact 4.* Stockholm: Liber AB.

Hedencrona, E., Smed-Gerdin, K., & Watcyn-Jones, P. (2007). *Progress gold a.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lundfall, C., Nyström, R., & Clayton, J. (2008). *Blueprint a: Version 2.0*. Stockholm: Liber AB.

English 6:

Gustafsson, L., & Wivast, U. (2012). *Viewpoints 2.* Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1996). *Impact 3.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell/Liber AB.

Hedencrona, E., Smed-Gerdin, K., & Watcyn-Jones, P. (2008). *Progress gold b.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Plith, H., Whitlam, J., & Weinius, K. (2003). *Read & proceed: New interactive edition.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

English 7:

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1997). *Impact 4.* Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell/Liber AB.

McKay, C., Brodin, M., Clayton, J., & Webster, C. (2013). *Blueprint c: Version 2.0.* Stockholm: Liber AB.

The chosen method of investigation for this essay is content analysis (hereafter referred to as CA). CA has become a widely used qualitative analysis method; it is applicable to many fields of research (Domas White & Marsh, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Overall, qualitative CA is supposed to analyse language with the purpose of classifying text into

categories that illustrate complementary ideas. These categories can "represent either explicit communication or inferred ideas" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This is applicable on the present research project; the themes and topics of the chosen textbooks will hopefully represent and uncover the themes and topics of the corresponding curriculum and syllabi. I will use a type of summative content analysis that is commonly favoured for investigating latent content in for example textbooks. The analysis will be grounded on both quantitative and qualitative data – the frequency count of certain themes in the textbooks will lend credibility to the idea that there are correlating themes in the curriculum and syllabi for English.

The data collection process began with close readings of the curriculum for English at Swedish upper secondary school, as well as the three different syllabi for English 5, English 6, and English 7. The main topics were analysed and grouped together in order to make the information more approachable. Subsequently, the textbooks were analysed in a similar manner in order to identify and make a frequency estimate of topics and themes. The frequency count was used as quantitative data in order to understand qualitative information such as context/implied meanings. The themes and topics of the textbooks were then compared with the themes and topics brought up in the curriculum and syllabi for English.

The data collection showed that some topics are all-encompassing, while some are specific to one or two of the syllabi. Some of the texts were marked down for more than one topic, seeing as they incorporated several of the areas covered in the syllabi. Throughout the data collection process it became apparent that some topics were more predominate than others; the broader and more general topics were often preferred. However, the difference in numbers could also be due to the sometimes subjective nature of qualitative research.

Some of the topics in the content sections of the syllabi seem rather vague, and should admittedly be defined more explicitly than what is done in the syllabi. The procedure for topic

definition was done by means of dictionary work, i.e. defining the topics on a word level. Nevertheless, arranging the texts into different categories is still subjective work and might look different if the research was conducted by someone else. Notes were also made of the different text types brought up in the syllabi and the corresponding numbers in the textbooks. Even though the method for defining text types was more straightforward than analysing the different topics, the analysis was still qualitative. Consequently, the results may vary from researcher to researcher.

Results

The table below presents the statistical data collected during the analysis phase. The left hand column presents the topics brought up in the syllabi for English, while the three right hand columns notes the corresponding texts in the textbooks.

Table 1.

Content of communication (syllabus)	Books for English 5	Books for English 6	Books for English 7
Students' education, societal and working life	69	28	18
Current issues	51	30	16
Events and Processes	14	25	11
Thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings	98	85	45
Relationships	43	37	14
Ethical issues	38	30	9
Content and form in fiction	42	31	53

Living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions	68	72	29
Social, political and cultural conditions	58	64	20
The spread of English and its position in the world	3	3	6
Historical conditions (English 6-7)	5	39	16
Existential issues (English 6-7)	4	31	32
Subject areas of scientific nature (English 7)	6	5	5
Cultural expressions in modern times and historically (English 7)	3	24	29
Authors and literary periods (English 6-7)	1	6	16
Themes and ideas in film and literature (English 6-7)	5	31	54
Strategies for developing language awareness/how language is learned	30	47	50

Discussion

This part features a separate discussion of the curriculum and syllabi for English, along with a discussion on the topics presented in the textbooks.

Curriculum

Even though it is not the main focus of this essay, it is useful to look at the curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school in order to investigate what ideological currents can be identified.

Themes & topics. The curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school is a political document created by the public administrations. As a result, it is bound to present a plethora of explicit and implicit political and ideological opinions. The first sentence of the curriculum reads: "the national school system is based on democratic foundations" (Swedish National Agency for Education "Curriculum for upper secondary school" 2013, p. 4). Throughout the curriculum there are continuous references to the inviolability of human life and the importance of compassion. The internationalisation of Sweden (and the world) is put in relation to developing an "identity that can be related to and encompass not only what is specifically Swedish, but also that which is Nordic, European, and ultimately global" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2013, p. 4). This presents perhaps the most interesting ideological issue regarding the teaching of English. There is a wish for internationalisation and globalism, but at the same time there is still the apprehension that English will supersede Swedish in the public space (Hult 2010; Hult, 2012; Milani, 2007).

Syllabi

This section discusses the different syllabi for English at upper secondary school. These findings will be used later on in the discussion concerning the relationship between syllabi and textbooks.

Themes & topics. It is possible to detect two larger overarching themes when looking at the national syllabus for English at Swedish upper secondary school. Namely, the development of linguistic skills, and the development of cultural and societal skills. On the topic of linguistic skills, the syllabus for English reads as follows:

> Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills cover both reception, which means understanding spoken language and texts, and production and interaction, which means expressing oneself and interacting with others in speech and writing, as well as adapting their language to different situations, purposes and recipients. (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011 "Aim of the subject," para. 1)

This description is relatively all-encompassing; it provides a basis for the development of English linguistic skills, while still leaving a lot of freedom on the subject of how this will be achieved. The general focus when it comes to linguistic competence seems to be on communicative skills, as well as developing the ability to adapt language use for different purposes and situations.

The concept of correctness is only briefly addressed. There is one single sentence relating to correctness in written and spoken English. This in turn presents an interesting point for ideological reflection. This dismissal of language correctness (together with the references made in the syllabi to the importance of communicative competence) could suggest a slight shift in language ideology. Instead of simply being an academic achievement, the objective of learning English is to gain access to the wealth of global communication. Previously in English language curricula and syllabi in Sweden, the main focus has been the capacity for structure and and correctness according to British English standards. Current language teaching in Sweden instead tends to to use American English in written and spoken form.

Because of former paradigms and current contemporary ideas there is a debate in Sweden concerning linguistic accuracy versus communicative competence in English language classrooms (Hult, 2012, p. 232). Looking at the language ideological currents in Sweden, there are worries regarding the English language succession versus the role of Swedish. However, there is also the idea of English as a necessity in a global world (Hult, 2010, p. 158).

When it comes to the development of cultural and societal competence, the syllabus presents the following ideas:

> Students should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge of living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. Teaching should encourage student's curiosity in language and culture, and give them the opportunity to develop plurilingualism where skills in different languages interact and support each other.
> (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011 "Aim of the subject," para. 2)

Very much in accordance with the general curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school, this section relates to the development of students towards becoming "citizens of the world." The teaching of English should be directed towards cultivating empathic and understanding members of society. The focus on cultural and societal competence promotes the learning of English beyond linguistic form alone; it stimulates content learning as well (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010, p. 11). Coyle et al. suggest that reading or discussing text content (that makes no specific references to the form of English) will still lead to language development, as well as a greater understanding of the text content. In that way, reading texts which deal with living conditions and social issues will further both language skills and humanistic skills. This theory seems to have been incorporated into the syllabi.

The syllabi for English 5, 6 and 7 are fairly similar. They are more specific than the general syllabus and delve into the sub-themes that should be dealt with at each level. For instance, the syllabus for English 5 introduces literature with focus on form and content. In the syllabi for English 6 and 7, the literature aspect is developed further, and emphasis is put on explicit literature criticism and understanding. The same is done for the different types of texts that should be presented in teaching. The complexity factor increases for each level of English. Attention is to varying degrees directed towards ideas of learning how to learn (or meta-learning); students should learn "how words and phrases […] create structure and context" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, *English 5* "Core content: Reception," bullet point 7). The should also be able to process "their own and others' oral and written communications […] and adapt these to their purpose and situation" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, *English 5* "Core content: Production and interaction," bullet point 3).

These sentiments are later echoed, and further expanded, in the syllabi for English 6 and 7. The same structure is evident also for the development of cognitive skills – students should learn strategies for listening, reading and contributing to discussions in the English language classroom, and eventually be able to apply these to situations in society. Finally, English 7 is the highest level in Swedish upper secondary school and should serve to prepare students for further university studies. English 7 is not an obligatory upper secondary course, as compared to English 5 and English 6, and the content of this course is more explicitly linked to the development of advanced analytical skills.

Syllabi data

The following section discusses the relationship between syllabi and the different textbooks. Focus is put both on the topical and the textual similarities and differences that were found while collecting the data.

    Content of communication. Quite a few interesting patterns emerge during the data collection process of these textbooks. First of all, one has to take into consideration that there is a skewed sample of textbooks. There are six textbooks directed towards English 5, four textbooks produced for English 6, and only two for English 7. One reason for the difficulty in obtaining textbooks for English 7 could be because English 7 is an elective elaboration course in Swedish upper secondary school. Not as many students participate in this course as compared to the other two. Furthermore, the syllabus for English 7 puts greater focus on analysis of more complex texts, and this in turn might lead to teachers selecting authentic texts from other sources for this purpose. Alternative material is often brought into English language teaching, as textbooks usually have the downside of not containing material that is completely up to date (Nilsson, 2006, p. 9)

Some of the topics brought up in the "content of communication" sections of the syllabi are noticeably ambiguous; almost any text could be said to fall into these categories. The most striking examples are "thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings," and "students' education, and societal and working life" (Swedish National Agency for Education, 2011, English 5/6/7 "Core content: Content of communication," bullet point 1). As the texts were sometimes registered for more than one topic, the numbers stated in the table might not correspond with the number of texts in the textbooks. Hence, one can easily discover that the aforementioned topics are frequently recurring at least in the textbooks produced for English 5. 98 instances of "thoughts and opinions" were found, as well as 69 items concerning

students' education. Similarly, texts relating to "living conditions, attitudes, values and traditions" and "social, political and cultural conditions" also seem to appear on a regular basis in the textbooks – items regarding living conditions were found in 68 and 72 texts for English 5 and 6 respectively, while elements of the second topic were located 58 and 64 times respectively. The deviating numbers for the English 7 textbooks, with 29 and 20 instances found, should be due to the previously mentioned dilemma of there being only two available at the time of the research project.

From an ideological point of view, it is interesting that these topics should be prominent in the English language textbooks. Examining the curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school, it becomes apparent that teaching should aim at developing certain fundamental values. The most prominent of these are human rights and fundamental democratic values, as well as encouraging students to develop their own uniqueness as individuals (Swedish National Agency for Education "Curriculum for upper secondary school" 2013, p. 4). The overarching themes regarding cultural and societal skills mentioned at an earlier stage of this project, are further incorporated into the syllabi for English. Overall, these ideas can be connected to a more general idea of ideology; these are values of Swedish society as a whole, not only for English language education in Sweden (Thornberg & Oguz, 2013; O'brien, 2007).

While it is interesting to note what topics have the the highest correlation between syllabi and textbooks, it is also fascinating to examine the topics where there is low correlation. Chapelle (2009) claims that from an ideological point of view, excluding topics could sometimes make ideas and values more conspicuous than including them (p. 145). She found that French language textbooks in the northern United States contain very few references to Canada, where French is one of the official languages. There is a tendency to connect French only to the nation of France, and she argues that whatever topics are included or excluded in

textbooks will reflect the ideological considerations of the pedagogical decision makers. This could be likened to the way English language textbooks in Sweden seem to favour either America or Great Britain, even though there are many other countries where English plays a significant role as first or official language. In some cases, it might be a matter of textbook capacity where there is only room for the largest English cultures. However, it could also show a discrepancy between the idea of cultural and societal understanding presented in the syllabi, and the reality the English language textbooks display.

When doing a meta-reading of the syllabi for English, it seems as if the role of English should be an important aspect of English language teaching. In this analysis, the phrase "the role of English" is understood firstly as a tool in itself for understanding the position of the English language on a global scale. Before the start of this research project, it was hypothesised that the spread and role of English would be emphasised throughout most of the textbooks, seeing as a large amount of focus is directed towards this in the different syllabi for English. It was thought that focus would be on the position of the English language as a global common denominator. However, it became quite obvious that the textbooks analysed for this project do not demonstrate many references to the position of English. It was only found three times in the textbooks for English 5 and 6, and six times in the textbooks for English 7. Here there seems to be a mismatch between the political (and ideological) steering documents, and the way they have been treated in the production of textbooks.

The role of English is also understood in relation to the exploration of living conditions, societal issues, ethical and existential issues in parts of the world where English is used. The syllabi put quite a lot emphasis on the importance of global knowledge about the world, where English is the medium of instruction rather than the material being analysed. Such explorations are evident in most of the textbooks, with texts written by authors representing different societies and cultures.

However, there are parts in the syllabi where the role of English is treated more as a cognitive function needed to strategize for and embrace learning. The syllabi clearly state that students should be given the tools to process the English language and understand its function in the world. This does not seem to translate as well into the textbook material. Looking at the textbooks one gets the feeling that the students are expected to learn English without considering or debating why it is important, even though these matters are highlighted in the syllabi. The reason for this suggestion is that there is no actual discussion in the textbooks on the importance of English teaching. Such a low correspondence between the syllabi and the textbooks might suggest that this cognitive function is meant to be taught by other means, or that it is not deemed as important enough to fit in a textbook.

Textbooks

This section goes deeper into textbook analysis. Firstly, there will be a discussion on the different introductions. Seeing as some of the introductions are written in Swedish and some in English, one can make interesting language ideological observations. One section is dedicated to the idea of meta-learning and cognitive skills. In this case it means analysing the different language resource sections. Finally, there is a discussion of the common themes, as well as the discrepancies, and how these can be connected to either language ideology or larger ideology.

 Introductions. Overall, it seems as if the textbooks which use an English introduction want to make an ideological statement on the importance of English, while the introductions in Swedish are merely tools for describing the structure of the books. The aforementioned struggle between Swedish and English can be a reason for this. In the case of this study it becomes apparent that the textbook producers favour the use of Swedish in their

introductions. Only three (*Progress Gold A*, *Progress Gold B*, and *Blueprint C: Version 2.0*) out of the twelve textbooks introduce their textbooks in English. Curiously enough, *Blueprint A: Version 2.0*, which is supposed to accompany *Blueprint C: Version 2.0*, has an introduction in Swedish. This might exhibit a belief that students of English 5 need more language help through code-switching than students who take English 7.

It is interesting to note the differences between the different textbooks in regards to the introductions. Firstly, some textbooks begin straight away with a list of contents instead of an introduction. The prefaces for the two *Progress Gold* textbooks are almost identical; they discuss the importance of understanding how culture influences communication and how English is a tool to achieve greater understanding of the world. The same can be said for the introduction used in *Blueprint C: Version 2.0*. This corresponds to the ideals presented in the syllabi as well. As for the other textbooks (with Swedish introductions), they focus on describing the content of the textbooks rather than describing the role of English.

Language varieties. Focusing instead on varieties of English, certain tendencies are more prominent than others. The older textbooks[3] lean more towards British English than those published after 2011; the newer instead tend to favour American English. Even though it is possible to make this distinction through CA, almost none of the books acknowledge the language choice made. The only textbook which makes explicit references to the language variety is *Blueprint C: Version 2.0*. The writers state that they have chosen to use standard American English throughout the book for consistency reasons. The textbook makes references to American scientists, and in many other ways it focuses on American identities and values. Using American English could have interesting learning implications, as this is the only book which deals clearly with the role of English in the world as a whole. Using only

---

[3] Refers to the textbooks published before 2011.

the American framework presented in this textbook could nevertheless create a skewed projection of the English world.

Meta-learning. All of the textbooks analysed for this research project have specific resource sections meant to create additional learning opportunities. There are no discernable differences between the books in relation to what level of English they are created for. Four of the textbooks only have language exercises directly following the different texts. The other eight books have separate resource sections, in addition to having language development segments accompany the different texts. One textbook stands out among the others in regards to this; *Engelska 5 – Outlooks on* dedicates one of its five chapters to what the authors call "learn how to learn." This chapter presents strategies on how to read, listen, speak, write, search, and proofread. Constant references are made to the corresponding syllabus for English 5 throughout this chapter, consequently one can see that this particular textbook is created with the syllabus in mind. Overall, *Engelska 5 – Outlooks on* probably follows the syllabus for English 5 more closely than any other textbook analysed for this project.

Language skills. The other textbooks with extra resource sections bring up topics similar to each other. There are strategies and ideas on how to write certain kinds of texts (text types in the books correspond closely with those mentioned in the accompanying syllabi), as well as how to develop speaking skills. In the syllabi, the parts about language skills are more implicit than explicit; they are embedded in the larger sections on reception and production of language. It is therefore interesting that the textbooks put a lot of explicit effort into developing these skills. In the resource sections students are encouraged to think about their own learning and language development. Ideologically, this can be related to Thornberg and Oguz (2013) concept of analytical and free-thinking citizens of the world.

Common themes. This part looks closer at some of the larger themes that occur frequently in a majority of the textbooks. The common denominator is that these themes do not deal with English as a language. Instead they are content based and deal with topics relevant to the syllabi.

Cultural differences/living conditions. This is the most frequently occurring theme. In a more global world it is important to give all students the chance to succeed; displaying different cultures is a way to create reference points for everyone regardless of background and experiences. This is also in accordance with the overall ideological goal of creating tolerant and sympathetic members of society. Most of the textbooks describe cultures from different parts of the world, however, it seems that South Africa and China dominate this arena. The syllabi state that students should understand cultural differences and living conditions in the parts of the world where English is used. Using China as a reference culture is a bit curious seeing that English is not their main language. However, one reason for this could be that China is an important economic and political player in the global world. Knowledge about "powerful" cultures can thus be beneficial for students in their future roles.

Some texts deal more specifically with students who experience a culture clash, i.e. by moving from their birth country to an English speaking country. Different living conditions are often integrated into the texts about culture, displaying how culture can change living conditions. Most textbooks consist of large amounts of texts which deal with cultural differences. Despite this, Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) both suggest that there is usually a bias towards western culture; the comparisons tend to focus more on differences from the West than why these differences exist and what they actually imply. The tendency to favour the individual national culture can lead to distorted ideas of reality if not countered by

the teacher (Ping, 2015, p. 177). As a teacher it is therefore important to make sure students are aware of any bias that might be present.

Gender. This is also a common theme, and one that is highly relevant to the syllabi topic of students' education and social life. Curiously enough, not all of the textbooks bring up specific gender issues even though this is an important subject in contemporary society. One textbook stands out in respect to gender discussions: *Blueprint A: Version 2.0.* It has an exhaustive chapter on gender identities and the fluidity of gender (a modern topic that has only recently been given media space). One can look at the general curriculum for Swedish upper secondary school to explain the inclusion of these topics; it exemplifies the essential curriculum idea of how all humans are equal.

Five of the textbooks either have full chapters or some texts dedicated to gender issues, and most of them concern feminism. Quite a few texts deal with historic female struggles such as votes for women. An understanding of historical conflicts such as this is relevant for understanding the cultural and social conditions of today's world, something that is highlighted in the syllabi.

Racism. Racism is a current and relevant topic, and it is brought up in all textbooks to a varying degree. It is often used as a complement to the texts on cultural differences, but there are separate sample texts on for example Martin Luther King JR, Nelson Mandela, Oprah and Jackie Chan. They have all had to overcome some type of racial stereotyping, and are presented as role models because of their work against prejudice. The inclusion and discussion on racism is of course highly ideological; the curriculum for upper secondary school highlights the importance of creating "international solidarity" (Swedish National

Agency for Education, *Curriculum for the upper secondary school*, 2011 "Tasks of the school," para.7).

Discrepancies. Some interesting discrepancies presented themselves during the analysis phase. The most notable pertains to the role of English, and teaching the English language.

Role of English. Only one textbook (*Blueprint C: Version 2.0*) deals directly with the actual teaching, and role of, English in Sweden and in the world. It features general texts about the effects of globalisation and English, as well as narratives by people who are affected by these changes. In most of the other textbooks this seems to be latent in the resource sections. The resource sections thus symbolise the development of linguistic skills that are mentioned in the syllabi. As mentioned early in the analysis, there are two fundamental ideas in the syllabi for English: cultural and societal aspects, and linguistic aspects. These ideas are presented fairly equally in the syllabi and therefore it was believed that the textbooks would share the same division. This was not the case, however. There is definitely more focus on the content of communication than on the cognitive skills which lie behind language learning. The resource sections deal with language learning to some extent, but it is rather basic. It is quite likely that the textbooks are intended as a collection of easily accessible authentic texts, and that these texts in turn will be a stepping stone for developing linguistic skills. The lack of explicit acknowledgment of English might also be connected to the previously mentioned concern of English versus Swedish in Swedish society.

Conclusion

The aim of this essay was to investigate how and in what ways textbooks of English adhere to the curriculum and syllabi for English teaching in Sweden. During the research process it

became apparent that English language textbooks in Sweden adhere to the curriculum and syllabi mainly through texts about humanism and cultural understanding. These subjects perhaps suggest more of a connection with general school ideology than language ideology, but there is evidence of language ideology as well. Certainly, the way introductions are used can be seen as evidence for certain language ideological concerns. By using either Swedish or English in the introductions, the textbook authors (knowingly or unknowingly) adhere to the ideological values presented by Milani (2007), Wingstedt (1998) and Oakes (2001).

It is also interesting to note the areas where textbooks do not adhere to curriculum or syllabi. Considering how the English language permeates Swedish society through a multitude of different mediums, it is curious that the role of English is not given much regard in the textbooks. The lack of a deeper discussion surrounding the background for English teaching in Swedish schools feels strange. Students are told by various authorities that they need to know English, but they are given very few reasons why in the textbooks. And this is despite the fact that textbooks are a common source of English in a school setting. In light of this, teachers need to be aware of how ideological attitudes form textbook content, and that all inclusions or exclusions of materials can tell us something about authors' ideological positions.

Textbooks are a good starting point in the English classroom, as they seek to provide authentic texts and exercises for language learning. As this project has shown, however, there are things that teachers should be aware of. The textbooks are written and produced by people with their own specific opinions and perspectives on language learning and the importance of English; there is always a political agenda behind it. Whether it is implicit or explicit is not always clear, but it can be found through various analyses. Therefore, teachers should be careful in selecting what texts are studied. If there is a large amount of texts concerning American values and cultural traditions, teachers will have to balance that with material from

other parts of the English speaking world. Also, if there are texts displaying favouritism towards a specific opinion or topic, teachers should be ready to highlight various other views on the matter. This is needed in order to give students that chance to develop critical thinking skills, and also be able to scrutinize texts and materials in order to form nuanced values.

One limitation to this research project is the selection of textbooks. Due to location issues the textbooks had various publication dates; some before the school reforms of 2011 and some after. This means that the procedure and analysis of this project is limited to the available textbooks. For further research it would be interesting to conduct an analysis of all English language textbooks on the market, in order to see how the results would change due to the larger scope. It would also be fascinating to conduct a study which investigates how teachers and students view language ideological attitudes in textbooks. In that case one might analyse whether language ideology is something that is at all taken into consideration. Researching if and how teachers work around any type of biased texts would be valuable in order to further highlight language ideologies.

References

Primary sources

Frato, K. (2013). *Echo 5: Main issues*. Stockholm: Natur & Kultur.

Gustafsson, L., & Wivast, U. (2011). *Viewpoints 1*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Gustafsson, L., & Wivast, U. (2012). *Viewpoints 2*. Malmö: Gleerups Utbildning AB.

Hallberg, E., & Backemyr Nyberg, E. (2014). *Engelska 5: Outlooks on*. Malmö: NA Förlag
    AB.

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1995). *Impact 1*. Stockholm: Liber AB.

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1996). *Impact 3*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell/Liber AB.

Hargevik, C., & Hargevik, S. (1997). *Impact 4*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell/Liber AB.

Hedencrona, E., Smed-Gerdin, K., & Watcyn-Jones, P. (2007). *Progress gold a*. Lund:
    Studentlitteratur.

Hedencrona, E., Smed-Gerdin, K., & Watcyn-Jones, P. (2008). *Progress gold b*. Lund:
    Studentlitteratur.

Lundfall, C., Nyström, R., & Clayton, J. (2008). *Blueprint a: Version 2.0*. Stockholm: Liber
    AB.

McKay, C., Brodin, M., Clayton, J., & Webster, C. (2013). *Blueprint c: Version 2.0*.
    Stockholm: Liber AB.

Plith, H., Whitlam, J., & Weinius, K. (2003). *Read & proceed: New interactive edition*. Lund:
    Studentlitteratur.

Secondary sources

Cabau-Lampa, B. (1999). Foreign language teaching in Sweden: A long tradition. *Scandinavian
    Journal of Educational Research, 43*, 399-408.

Chapelle, C. A. (2009). A hidden curriculum in language textbooks: Are beginning learners of French at US universities taught about Canada? *The Modern Language Journal, 93*, 139-152.

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Curdt-Christiansen, X. L., & Weninger, C. (2015). Introduction: Ideology and the politics of language textbooks. In X. L. Curdt-Christiansen & C. Weninger (Eds.), *Language, ideology and education: The politics of textbooks in language education* (pp. 1-8). London: Routledge.

Domas White, M., & Marsh, E. E. (2006). Content analysis: A flexible methodology. *Library Trends, 55*(1), 22-45.

Friedrich, P. (1989). Language, ideology, and political economy. *American Anthropologist, New Series, 91*, 295-312.

Hawkins, B. (2001). Incorporating tensions: On the treatment of ideology in cognitive linguistics. In R. Dirven, B. Hawkins & E. Sandikcioglu (Eds.), *Language and ideology. Volume I: Theoretical cognitive approaches* (pp. 1-22). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Hodge, R., & Kress, G. (1993). *Language as ideology.* London: Routledge.

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*, 1277-1288.

Hult, F. M. (2010). Swedish television as a mechanism for language planning and policy. *Language Problems & Language Planning, 34*(2), 158-181.

Hult, F. M. (2012). English as a transcultural language in Swedish policy and practice. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*, 230-257.

Hyltenstam, K. (2004). Engelskan, skolans språkundervisning och svensk språkpolitik. In Svenska språknämnden (Ed.), *Engelskan i Sverige: Språkval i utbildning, arbete och kulturliv* (pp. 36-107). Stockholm: Nordstedts Ordbok/ePan.

Irvine, J. T. (1989). When talk isn't cheap: Language and political economy. *American Ethnologist, 16*(2), 248-267.

Irvine, J. T., & Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, polities and identities* (pp. 35-83). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Kroskrity, P. V. (2000). Regimenting languages: Language ideological perspectives. In P. V. Kroskrity (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, polities and identities* (pp. 1-35). Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.

Milani, T. M. (2007). *Debating Swedish: Language politics and ideology in contemporary Sweden.* (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm University.

Oakes, L. (2001). *Language and national identity: Comparing France and Sweden.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

O'brien, L. M. (2007). A school for everyone? The Swedish school system's struggles to reconcile societal goals with school and classroom practices. *Childhood Education, 83*(6), 374-379.

Or, I. G., & Shohamy, E. (2015). Contrasting Arabic and Hebrew textbooks in Israel: A focus on culture. In X. L. Curdt-Christiansen & C. Weninger (Eds.), *Language, ideology and education: The politics of textbooks in language education* (pp. 109-125). London: Routledge.

Pennycook, A. (1994). *The cultural politics of English as an international language.* London: Longman.

Pennycook, A. (2001). *Critical applied linguistics.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ping, Q. (2015). Ideologies in primary English textbooks in China. In X. L. Curdt-Christiansen & C. Weninger (Eds.), *Language, ideology and education: The politics of textbooks in language education* (pp. 163-180). London: Routledge.

Rehman, J. (2013). *Theories of ideology: The powers of alienation and subjection.* Leiden: Brill.

Silverstein, M. (1979). Language structure and linguistic ideology. In P. R. Clyne, W. F. Hanks & C. L. Hofbauer (Eds.), *The elements: A parasession on linguistic units and levels* (pp. 193-247). Chicago, IL: Chicago Linguistic Society.

Skolverket. (2015). *Skolreformer i praktiken*. Retreived from http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/publikationer/visa-enskild-publikation?_xurl_=http%3A%2F%2Fwww5.skolverket.se%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FBlob%2Fpdf3553.pdf%3Fk%3D3553

Skolverket. (2011). *English*. Retrieved from http://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.174543!/Menu/article/attachment/English%20120912.pdf

Riksdagen. (2005). *Bästa språket – en samlad svensk språkpolitik.* Retrieved from http://data.riksdagen.se/fil/26D308F0-0FFD-4F4E-9863-2D75620A1FF1

Taylor, T. J. (1990). Which is to be master? The institutionalization of authority in the science of language. In J. E. Joseph & T. J. Taylor (Eds.), *Ideologies of language* (pp. 9- 26). London: Routledge.

Thornberg, R., & Oguz, E. (2013). Teachers' views on values education: A qualitative study in Sweden and Turkey. *International Journal of Educational Research, 59*, 49-56.

Wingstedt, M. (1998). *Language ideologies and minority language policies in Sweden: Historical and contemporary perspectives.* (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm University.

Woolard, K. A. (1998). Introduction: Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In B. B. Schieffelin, K. A. Woolard & P. V. Kroskrity (Eds.), *Language ideologies: Practice and theory* (pp. 3-47). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Yoxsimer Paulsrud, B. (2014). *English-medium instruction in Sweden: Perspectives and practices in two upper secondary schools.* (Doctoral dissertation). Stockholm University.