The View of Culture in Two Textbooks for English

Bilden av kultur i två läroböcker för engelska

Adnan Pervan
Abstract

The syllabuses for English describe culture vaguely and give room for a discussion about what culture is. Consequently, it becomes important to study the cultural view of textbooks because textbooks are one of the main teaching aids in Swedish schools.

The purpose of this degree project is to analyse two English textbooks used at upper-secondary level in Sweden and their implied view of culture. In addition to this I want to find out how Tornberg’s three perspectives on culture are represented in the analysed textbooks. The method used is textual analysis in the form of ideational structure analysis focusing on the contents of text and exercises in the textbooks.

My results show that Blueprint A, one of the analysed textbooks, is characterized by the cultural perspective that Tornberg refers to a meeting in the third place. In the other analysed book, Core 1, a majority of the texts may be connected to the same perspective but there is also a significant amount of texts connected to the other two perspectives identified by Tornberg, an accomplished fact and a future competence.

Key words: culture, English, textbook analysis, teaching, language
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1. Introduction

This degree project work is a part of my teaching degree at Malmö School of Education. The education has been filled with valuable knowledge about the profession of teaching. In a couple of the courses we have been assigned to critically analyse text extracts in the classroom but we have not analysed current English textbooks that we will be using ourselves as teachers in the near future. Consequently, I was left with a lingering feeling that this should have been included and I have therefore decided to take the opportunity during this last term to analyse two widely used English textbooks at upper-secondary schools in Sweden.

The textbook is an important teaching aid in education and every teacher I have met during my teaching practice has used it as a core foundation of their teaching. Although I have personally been somewhat critical to an extensive usage of textbooks in language classrooms, the textbooks are likely to remain my main teaching aid, which is why I want to get more familiar with the structure of some books and the cultural view in them.

A report published by the Swedish National Agency of Education (Skolverket from now on) shows that textbooks are still frequently used in schools and that English teachers use them extensively in their teaching (Skolverket, 2006a). Boel Englund (1999), who has written a report on how textbooks are used in teaching in Sweden, claims that the main reason they are used so frequently by language teachers is because pupils tend to learn languages in steps and the textbooks are generally constructed according to this learning approach. Englund writes that investigations show that 98% of all teachers use the textbooks in their teaching, and that three out of four English teachers use them on a daily basis. Teachers themselves have an influence on what textbooks the schools decide to buy. The major factors that influence this choice are the schools economy and budget, the teacher’s knowledge of the subject, pedagogical outlook and the pupils needs (Englund, 1999). Moreover Selander (1990) says that textbooks are in many cases perceived as an objective source of knowledge by the pupils. Textbooks have a
great amount of “facts” in them in comparison to other texts (e.g. fiction, newspapers) and it is therefore vital that the content, including both illustrations and text, is evaluated Selander argues.

Thavenius (1999) says that textbooks, even though they may be perceived as an objective source by the pupils, do not portray the real world in an objective way. Textbooks are only portraying a selected picture of reality and since they are widely used in schools they are influential on the pupils’ perception of the world outside the classroom according to Thavenius. In addition to this, Thavenius argues that students accept the picture portrayed by the textbooks because they are perceived to contain facts; if the facts are in line with the current norms and values in the society students tend to take them for granted without much consideration or critical thinking. This is why I think that it is crucial to examine the cultural content in textbooks. Finally, the Swedish authorities deregulated the market for textbooks in 1991, which means that any book published after 1991 has not automatically been critically examined and the amount of produced textbooks have risen enormously in the last twenty years (Eilard, 2008). This is yet another important reason why it is relevant to evaluate textbooks today.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this degree project is to analyze two textbooks used at upper-secondary level in Sweden and their implied view of culture. I will use and adapt Tornberg’s three perspectives on culture in order to analyse the texts as well as the exercises connected to the texts. In order to achieve this purpose I will answer the following research questions:

- What view of culture is implied in the chosen textbooks?
- How are Tornberg’s three perspectives on culture represented in the two textbooks?
2. Theoretical Perspective

2.1 Culture and Language

Weather we are thinking of written, spoken or body language human interaction relies to a large extent on language communication. When language is used in communication it is connected to culture in many complex ways. Claire Kramsch (1998) writes that these many ways can be summed up in three different points. When people are speaking they usually refer to things they have experienced and to facts and places around the world. The spoken language also reflects their beliefs, attitudes and values. In both cases language expresses cultural reality. Human beings do not only express their experience through words, they also create experience using their language. They can give language its meaning through their way of communicating it, such as tone of voice, additional body language and facial expressions. Weather language is communicated in a verbal or non-verbal way, language embodies cultural reality. Finally, Kramsch says that language is a system of signs that is seen by people as having a cultural value which is why language symbolizes cultural reality (p. 3).

Before I come back the discussion of the relationship between language and culture we need to look at what culture is and discuss the definition of culture. Generally, culture is very difficult to pin down and define; it is a wide and diverse word with several definitions and interpretations. From an aesthetic point of view one can say that culture includes art, canonized literature and objects with a strong historical value. Viewed from an anthropological point of view culture includes everything that has to do with a group of people such as language, clothes, values, beliefs, behavior, norms, attitudes etc. (Tornberg, 2000). According to Tornberg the latter view of culture has historically tended to look at culture as something homogenous and closely connected to nationality (p. 181). Due to the rise of the national states in Europe during the 17th century and forward politicians and governments wanted to gather people within the boundaries of the national state through education, traditions and different rituals (ibid.). Both these perspectives
on culture are still present throughout the world today but they are losing ground to a new and modern version of the anthropological perspective. Tornberg explains the modern anthropological perspective and says that culture is regarded as an ever changing process that is present everywhere around us (p, 181). According to Gagnestam (2003) everyone is part of culture(s) and everyone is contributing to the changes of culture(s) which means that it is difficult to just stand aside and observe culture as a phenomenon. Culture must therefore be regarded as a process rather than as a product (p. 43).

The diversity of the term culture has led to a debate about whether it can be defined at all. Kramsch provides a general definition of the term, a definition similar to the modern anthropological view of culture,

In summary, culture can be defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards of perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting. These standards are what is generally called their ´culture´. (Kramsch, 1998, p. 10)

Kramsch (1998) is careful to point out, and adds to the definition, that cultures are heterogeneous in their nature. A community’s members must be seen as individuals with different life biographies and experiences, they do differ in age, gender, ethnicity and they also have different political opinions. This means that cultures are sites of constant change but at the same time they are sites of struggle for influence, power and recognition (p. 10). Lundgren (2002) and Tornberg (2000) question whether it is actually necessary and useful to define culture. Every attempt to define culture would mean that it becomes a static product, which is against the opinion that culture is something changing and innovative. When culture is portrayed as a product its parts become distinctive, such as traditions, values or behavior patterns (Lundgren, p. 29). Lundgren views culture as a process that creates meaning, not as a condition. She refers to Street (1993) who himself regards culture as a verb,

In fact there is not much point in trying to say what culture is. What can be done, however, is to say what culture does. For what culture does is precisely the work of defining words, ideas, things and groups. […] Indeed, the very term “culture” itself, like these other ideas and definitions, changes its meanings and serve different often competing purposes at different times. Culture is an active process of meaning making and contest over definition, including its own definition. This, then, is what I mean by arguing that Culture is a verb. (Street, 1993, p. 25, cited in Lundgren, 2002, p. 30)
By highlighting culture’s heterogeneous nature Kramsch indirectly shares Street’s view of culture as a process.

Ajagán-Lester (2000) has in his research focused on how culture divides people and how it creates an insider/outsider relationship between people. He is using the word “construction” when he is trying to define culture and what he means by this is that people tend to divide things into two sides, their own and the other. Everything that is on the other side is viewed as strange and wrong (in most cases). One example he brings up is peoples’ view of religion; people might look at their own religion as a “real” religion whereas religions from another parts of the world are viewed as superstitions (p. 12). Kramsch (1998) also comments on the insider/outsider aspect of culture. In order to identify themselves as members of a group/country/community, people indirectly have to look at themselves as a group of “insiders” towards others, whom they then define directly or indirectly as “outsiders”. Since culture is a process that can divide people (include/exclude) it naturally entails the exercise of power and control (p. 8). Cultures can therefore be a grow ground for stereotypical constructions, something I will come back to in section 2.3.

2.2 Culture and Language Learning

For many centuries a lot of foreign language teaching has been based on the notion that one language is essentially translatable into another language (the target language). When translating something from one language to another, the interaction between the sender and receiver (communication) would function well and the interlocutors would understand each other. This approach to foreign language education has come across difficulties in especially one aspect of language teaching, the teaching of culture. This is because culture is always open to variability and differences and is likely to be a source of conflict when two cultures come into contact with one another (Tornberg, p. 63). Kramsch (1993) argues that one cannot add “culture” as a fifth skill to the other four language skills: speaking, talking, writing and reading. Culture is always present in the
background from the very first day of learning a new language. It exposes the learner’s restriction of developing a communicative competence and challenges his/her ability to understand the world around him/her (p. 1). Gagnestam (2003) also supports this view of language learning and writes that the main purpose of language education is to open doors to the world and its various cultures (p. 11). In addition to this Kramsch (1993, 1998), and Gagnestam (2003) says that it is vital to learn about one’s own culture before one begins the study of other cultures. The foundation of the ability to reflect on similarities and differences between cultures is made up of the awareness of your own culture and cultural heritage. Knowledge of other cultures is viewed as something that can motivate students’ when they are learning languages (Gagnestam 2003).

How is then culture supposed to be thought in the language classrooms today? There is a resistance in the teaching of culture towards teaching a target culture in a way so that culture can be studied objectively. According to Kramsch the teaching of culture should instead be about the search for, and the development of a “third place”. The concept of a third place is best described as a creation of a state in the classroom in which polyphonic communication is made possible (Kramsch, 1993). In such a classroom all pupils are given the possibility to discuss and reflect on culture based on their own cultural backgrounds. Since countries such as Sweden have become multicultural societies it is important that pupils are not asked to base their thoughts on one homogenous Swedish culture (Kramsch, 1993). Tornberg’s third cultural perspective is based on the idea of the creation of the third place in language classrooms.

2.3 Stereotypes

The concept of stereotypes will be discussed and touched upon in the result and analysis section which is why I find it relevant to discuss and define the term. How are stereotypes defined and how are they created if viewed from a cultural point of view? According to Stuart Hall (1997), who is one of the leading researchers in cultural studies, stereotypes should be regarded as a process in which people based on, for example, class, gender, nationality or skin colour are
described with a few and simple characteristics (p. 257). Furthermore Hall says that the attributes and characteristics ascribed to another group (“the others”) are perceived as strange and can be valued in different ways. All the things that are not in agreement with what is regarded as a part of the norm in a society are excluded and referred to as “the other” (p. 259). Kramsch (1998) agrees with Hall and writes that a group’s identity is not a natural phenomenon but only a cultural perception. This means that our perception of a person’s social/cultural identity is to a great degree determined by our own cultural background. The way in which we perceive a person’s language and culture is based on what we have been conducted by our own culture to see, and the stereotypical models are already built around our own (p. 76). According to Kramsch (1998), it is important to notice that societies only impose racial and ethnic categories on certain groups. Whites usually do not identify themselves by the colour of their skin (race) but rather by their cultural origin (p. 86). The reason whites do not identify themselves by race is, according to Dyer, because they are everywhere in representation. Dyer says that since whites are overwhelmingly represented in literature, media, politics etc. they are portrayed as the human norm and therefore they can define themselves as human/people. Being positioned as “just” human is the most powerful tool and the assumption that whites are just humans is not very far off from saying that other people (skin colours) are something different (Dyer, p. 9-13).

In terms of stereotypes and the teaching of English Nicholas McDowell says in his article *Early Modern Stereotypes and the Rise of the English* (2006) that the teaching of English indirectly contains quite a lot of stereotypes. Writers such as Conrad, Kipling and T.S. Elliot introduced stereotypes in the textbooks in which they were presented as facts. In that process teachers became a part of the stereotyping without being conscious of it (McDowell, p.25-34). Early on when the term stereotype was introduced in research it was seen as something negative, something that needed to be excluded from the books. However, Kirsch (2004) argues that even though stereotypes are something negative they do not necessarily need to be a problem, as long as they are not presented as facts. Stereotypes should, according to Kirsch, not be excluded in education but instead brought up to discussion by the teacher in the classroom. In that way pupils will hopefully develop a sense of how stereotypes are created and what they are so that
they can become better at recognizing stereotypes outside of the school context (p. 140). Even though stereotypes can be a useful tool when studying other cultures it is important to remember that national stereotypes are still ethnocentric in their judgment of other cultures since the judgment is based on their own norms and values (p.134). Kirsch argues that stereotypes should be avoided in textbooks and says that there has been a decrease in the presence of stereotypes in school textbooks in recent years. There are, according to Kirsch, however still stereotypes implicitly present in textbooks today and it is possible to distinguish them with a text- and image analysis (ibid.)

2.4 Tornberg’s Three Cultural Perspectives

In her dissertation *Om språkundervisning i mellanrummet – Och talet om “kommunikation” och “kultur” i kursplaner och läromedel från 1962 till 2000* (2000) Ulrika Tornberg examined how the concept of culture is interpreted in Swedish syllabuses and school textbooks for English and German. In connection to her study she developed three perspectives on culture. In this study I have translated these three perspectives into English so that the text becomes more fluent and can be read and understood by non-Swedish readers.

2.4.1 An Accomplished Fact

The cultural perspective *an accomplished fact* assumes that the concept of culture is limited to nationality and that there is a strong connection between one language and one culture. The same view of culture can be interpreted in the syllabuses for modern languages (and English) for the upper-secondary school in Sweden (p. 64). The syllabuses for modern languages and English include the following goals that the pupils need to achieve,
… reflect on living conditions, culture traditions and conditions of society in countries where the language is spoken and develop a deeper understanding and tolerance towards other people (goals to achieve, Skolverket).

According to Tornberg culture is presented as something vague and she claims that these formulations can be interpreted so that living conditions and ways of thinking are not parts of culture, even though such things are included in an anthropological view of culture. According to her the syllabuses are in a way based on an esthetical view of culture (p. 63). She exemplifies this by referring to the syllabuses from 1996 in which there seems to be a close connection between language and culture,

Every new language is foreign in the sense that it – compared to the mother tongue – often is an expression of a different way of thinking, of diverse accounts and another culture. Studies of foreign languages should contribute to the development of understanding other cultures. Knowledge of everyday life, history, geography, conditions of society and religion in different countries is relevant and worth knowing. Such knowledge will give the students a better background story when they are trying to understand movies and literature, when they are listening to the news and when they want to come in contact with other people (my translation) (Syllabuses and grading criteria for elementary school, 1996, p. 8)

Moreover the syllabuses do not discuss the question what cultures should be representing the target language. The reason this is not done is because of the syllabuses concept of homogeneous cultures, in which differences are mainly seen as differences between different nations’ cultures rather than differences of cultures within a nation. Even though one has to deal with ever-changing and dynamic cultures when trying to learn a language such as English, the syllabus view indicates, according to Tornberg, that culture is something static that can be studied objectively, similar to accomplished facts (p. 61). The syllabuses contain terms such as tolerance and understanding, but the problem is that such formulations and terminology tend to assume thinking in terms of differences and disparity. The absence of a critical approach to diversity, change and difference is something typical for the cultural perspective an accomplished fact. For example, it is not only debatable if one can speak of a single typical German culture, but it is also a problem when students are asked to compare the German culture to a homogenous Swedish culture. The language classrooms in Sweden are today filled with Swedish pupils and teachers who have different cultural backgrounds,
and it is therefore difficult for a teacher to define a culture objectively which is why a Swedish national culture does not work as a reference point when pupils are asked to compare cultures (p. 65-66).

In conclusion the cultural perspective *an accomplished fact* views culture as a product that can be studied. The perspective *an accomplished fact* is mostly influenced by the esthetical view of culture and partly by the anthropological.

### 2.4.2 A Future Competence

The cultural perspective *a future competence* focuses on the pupils and the competence they will develop in the future. This means that the competence will be developed over time in order to be used when communicating with people from other cultures. In the syllabuses for English, and for the modern languages, this competence is referred to as “intercultural competence”,

> The ability to reflect on similarities and differences between own cultural experiences, and cultures in the countries where the language is spoken is developed all the time and leads to an understanding of different cultures and an intercultural competence (my translation) (syllabuses for English A)

What is to be learned and understood seems to be beyond the student, and therefore it is something that has to be observed objectively. This means that the student is expected, through teaching, to learn how to deal (communicate) with speakers of the target language in different situations and develop an understanding of other people without communicating with them: there is a lack of “polyphonic communication” as well as purposeful communication. The individual is regarded as someone who stands beyond the things (s)he is supposed to understand and communicate with, which means that there is little room for subjective opinions, values and experiences (p. 72).

The concept of homogeneous national cultures is present in the perspective *a future competence*, just like in the previous perspective *an accomplished fact*. Reflection and comparison of diverse cultures is limited to occur between national cultures, and not between sub-cultures within one culture. The cultural perspective

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2 *Swe. En kompetens för framtiden*
*a future competence* is furthermore about building bridges between mainstream national cultures in order to prevent negative notions and prejudices (Kramsch in Tornberg, 2000, p. 77). Finally, according to Tornberg this perspective has a very similar view on culture as the previous one since it views culture as a product, i.e. as something that is predetermined and can be described and defined objectively (p. 86). This means that this perspective is influenced by and connected to the anthropological view of culture.

2.4.3 Culture: A Meeting in the Third Place

The main difference between the cultural perspective *a meeting in the third place* and the previous two can be found in the view of culture as process rather than as a product. While culture can be viewed as a predetermined product in the previous two perspectives Tornberg describes culture as a “constantly ongoing process without an ending; something that is created in the in-between and is constantly re-constructed as long as people can describe themselves and show who they are” (my translation) (Tornberg, 2000, p. 86). In this third cultural perspective culture is thus about the non-predictable and polyphonic meeting between individuals with different personal opinions, approaches or world views. The really interesting things are the ones that occur during this meeting. This also means that culture is not about the meeting between two different languages and two different cultural systems (cultures), which the two previous perspectives suggest (p. 87).

*A meeting in the third place* refers to a meeting in the “in-between”, to a “third place” that exists between the pupil and the characters in the text. According to Tornberg, differences are not something negative and things that are different are allowed to stay that way without being questioned or criticized. Tornberg has created this third perspective based on Kramsch’s idea of the “third place” and is similar to Kramsch’s expression *a meeting in the third place* (p. 82-83). One of the most important steps in the process of creating a “third place” is that the pupil is given the possibility to alienate him/herself from the general homogenous

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3 Swe: *Ett mote I öppet landskap.* The expression “the third place” was coined by Kramsch in her studies and referred to by Tornberg which is why I think it is an appropriate translation.
culture that is present in their society and meet the texts based on their very own cultural experiences (p. 84).

This approach to culture can partly be found in the English A syllabus for the upper-secondary school in Sweden, in the section called “bedömningens inriktning”,

The assessment shall also be focused on how well the pupil has developed his/hers intercultural competence. The pupil’s knowledge about ways of living and conditions of the society in countries where the target language is spoken together with an awareness of similarities and differences in relation to one’s own cultural experiences should be regarded, as well as the pupil’s awareness of informal rules which in different cultures can affect the communication (my translation) (Syllabus for English A).

Here, the expression “one’s own cultural experiences” indicates an awareness of the diverse ethnic background in Swedish classrooms, and gives the pupil the opportunity to express their own cultural experiences they have had when faced with different people and cultures (p. 240). At the same time the syllabus contains sections talking about cultures that the pupil has to be able to understand and compare with. This is something one can question since it leads to the conclusion that cultures can be studied as homogenous products. Two different perspectives on culture are thus presented in the syllabuses, making them somewhat contradictory (p. 241). Finally the perspective a meeting in the third place differs from the two others since it is closely connected to a modern version of the anthropological culture view.

Tornberg’s three perspectives on culture have been developed for much broader purposes. In this study I will only focus on the three perspectives in order to find out what view of culture is implied in the chosen textbooks. In the method section a categorization of the perspectives together with sub-categories has been made and that categorization is mostly based on Tornberg’s three perspectives.
3. Literature Review

The intention of this literature review is to present a broader understanding of the similar previous research. Since the subject English is a global/international subject I have tried to include international research even though the main focus is on research that has been carried out by Swedish researchers. I am going to present studies analysing the relationship between culture, language, education and teaching. One section is devoted to research by Ulrika Tornberg and her studies of the cultural representation in textbooks and Swedish school syllabuses. Finally, the conclusions of two studies with similar aims to mine, written by other university students, are presented.

3.1 Culture and Language

Regarding the relationship between culture and language learning Eva Gagnestam is a prominent researcher within the field and one of her studies is called *Kultur i språkundervisning – Med fokus på engelska* (2003). In the study she concludes that teachers do not fully understand how to teach about culture in the language classroom and the main reason is that they have not had the opportunity to reflect on what it means to teach about culture at the same time as teaching a language. According to Gagnestam the concept of culture has changed and therefore the teaching of culture needs to be transformed and adjusted to the way we understand and experience culture, identity and nationality. She criticizes the way language textbooks have dealt with the concept of culture earlier and says that instead of focusing on facts when dealing with culture, which language learning has traditionally focused on, culture should be discussed in terms of attitudes, values and ways of thinking (p. 127). Gagnestam would like to see that the starting point of learning about culture begins in the classroom and the pupils’ own cultural experiences, as this correlates much better with the multicultural and globalized
word we live in. In that way the students will be given a better opportunity to achieve the goals of the syllabuses (p. 128). Finally she is critical to many textbooks that are used today since most of them focus on “traditional” English-speaking countries such as Britain, USA and Australia. English should be presented as the world language it is today and include presentations of the many various people and countries who use the English language (p. 128).

Claire Kramsch (1993) has in one of her studies focused on the relationship between cultural knowledge, communicative competence and language learning. Kramsch says that if studies in foreign languages are supposed to include intercultural awareness, then the cultural context of the target language must be explored and, more importantly, clarified. A problem with today’s textbooks, according to Kramsch, is that they all too often portray a culture, meaning that language is connected to one, or very few cultures. If a textbook has this simplistic approach to culture, then the teacher’s own cultural values are easily transferred to the pupils if they are in line with the textbooks. As a solution Kramsch suggest that a third place is created where students can, based on their own cultural experiences, explore the cultures which they come across in the textbooks/education. This means that the individual student will be able to reflect on the differences and diversity between cultures without the interference of the teacher’s cultural values (p. 210-11)

3.2 Culture in Syllabuses and Textbooks

Ulrika Tornberg (2000) is a Swedish researcher who has carried out a significant amount of research regarding the way culture is presented in the syllabuses for English (Syllabus for English at the compulsory school 2000). She argues that the syllabuses attached to the curriculums Lpo94 and Lpf94 describe culture as a product, a culture that can be viewed objectively. Moreover the syllabuses indirectly claim that pupils should be able to single out “typical” characteristics of a culture and that identity is portrayed as something collective: “we” and “them”. They do not urge the reader to seek for differences between cultures, only
“understanding”. The syllabuses portray homogeneous cultures to a high degree and disregard possible subcultures within cultures. Cultures are seen as something homogeneous that can be studied, and culture is in many ways connected to nationality according to Tornberg (p. 257). Moreover, she points out that the tradition of separating language exercises and culture in language teaching has been maintained to a high degree. A positive input into the syllabuses was when “knowledge of cultures” was changed into “understanding of” but unfortunately the grading criteria still holds on to the goal that pupils should have knowledge of cultural traditions (p. 258).

In two degree projects at Malmö School of Education carried out by university students the aim was to analyze the cultural representations of textbooks for the modern languages (German, French and Spanish) used at the secondary level in Sweden. Both studies based their methodology and theory on Tornbergs’s three perspectives. One of the studies (Ballin & Johansson, 2010) concluded that the analyzed textbooks’ cultural representation is closely connected to a product perspective on culture which means that culture is presented as facts that can be studied objectively by the learners in the examined textbooks. The two researchers were also surprised by the strong presence of stereotypical descriptions of collective groups (the French, the Swedes). The second study (Svensson, 2008) had a similar aim but came to a different conclusion. Svensson found that the traditional way of looking at culture (the product perspective) had almost disappeared in the analyzed textbooks and asked if the authors had possibly been inspired by newer studies, such as Tornberg’s study. He found almost no traces of stereotypes in the material but was critical to the great amount of popular- and youth related texts.
4. Material and Method

4.1 Selection of Material

It is not possible within the framework of this study to examine all the English textbooks that are used at the upper-secondary level in Sweden. I have therefore decided to limit the study to two textbooks that are used in the course English A. The two textbooks I have chosen are published by the two largest publishing houses for producing textbooks for English at the upper-secondary level in Sweden: Liber and Bonnier. Both books were published recently and are therefore still used in Swedish schools today.

*Blueprint A* was written by Christer Lundfall, Ralf Nyström and Jeanette Clayton and the version that is analysed in this study is a revised version from 2002. It was published by Liber Utbildning and is mainly used at study-oriented programs. The second book in my study, *Core 1 English*, was published by Bonnier Utbildning as a revised version in 2008 and the authors of the book are Jörgen Gustafsson, Monica Hjort and Eric Kinrade. *Core 1* is primarily used by teachers teaching on practical programs. Both these textbooks include a CD-ROM, working sheets and a teacher’s guide that function as complementary material but I have chosen not to include this material since I have limited this study to the analysis of textbooks.

4.2 Method

In order to analyse the cultural content of the textbooks I will use a textual analysis method presented in the book by Hellspong and Ledin – *Vägar genom texten – handbook i brukstextsanalys* (1997). This book by Hellspong and Ledin is widely used at universities and colleges in Sweden and I have myself had the opportunity to use it in earlier courses. One of the major benefits of this book is that it provides guidance when analysing the structure and content of expository
texts⁴. According to Hellspong and Ledin a textbook is considered an expository
text because the content of the textbook is affected by the context in which it will
be used as well as its adaption and intention for a specific target group (p. 17).
This text type is the opposite of fictional texts such as poems, songs and fictional
literature (p. 14). Even though a textbook contains fictional texts it is still regarded
as an expository text because of its practical use as well as its purpose of teaching
something to its audience (p. 16). It is important to point out that the broad textual
analysis methodology in Hellspong and Ledin is not a concrete template ready-to-
use in any kind of context. Since I am only interested in analysing the cultural
related content of the texts the ideational (content) structure of the text and
exercises are analysed. In order to find out which of the three perspectives
characterizes the two textbooks I first look at the cultural related themes and
propositions of the texts and then relate them to one of Tornberg’s three
perspectives. My analysis proceeds in two steps. First I analyse a text and the
connected exercises/questions in order to connect the themes and propositions to it
and then I place the macro theme (text) in one of the sub-categories in a table
which is presented further down.

### 4.3 Exploring the Ideational Structure of a Text

According to Hellspong and Ledin all texts have three different attributes. They
have a form which means that they contain words and sentences arranged at
various levels, this is referred to as the textual structure of a text. Secondly texts
present their content in a social situation meaning that they create a relationship
between themselves and their readers. This attribute is called the interpersonal
structure. Lastly all texts have something to say, thoughts and values to present to
the reader – the content of a text, referred to as the ideational structure (p. 44).
When analysing the ideational structure of a text the researcher needs to look at
three different elements: the theme, the proposition and the perspective. In my
analysis I only focus on the first two elements (theme and proposition) since they
focus on the content explicitly. The third element (perspective) focuses on the

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⁴ Sw. Brukstexter. Expository texts is a broader term referring to non-fictional reading material
with the purpose of explaining something to an audience.
author of the text and his/hers intentions (p. 42). Even though the intention of the author is an interesting aspect I will not include it in my analysis since my purpose and aim is to analyse the cultural-related content of textbooks.

The content of a text can be divided into themes, referring to the topic(s) of a text. Usually there is a general theme in a text (macro theme) that can then be divided into various smaller themes (micro themes). A macro theme symbolizes what the text is about and can often be identified already in the headline, while the micro theme(s) represent a certain part of the macro theme (p. 117). In order to explain this in a more concrete way let us imagine a text about dictatorship. The headline of the text might be Dictatorship which means that the macro theme of this particular text is the general concept of dictatorship. Further down on the page we find a section about dictatorship in Africa, and therefore one of the micro themes of the text can be connected to African dictatorship. The second element of the ideational structure is referred to as propositions and a proposition is a statement about the theme(s) present in the text. While the theme represents the subject/topic of the text, the propositions represent the message, i.e. what is being said about the subject/topic (p. 122). Not all readers do necessarily perceive the macro and micro themes in the same way, variations may occur due to different pre-understandings or interests. It is therefore very important that the researcher who is analysing the texts at times discusses optional macro themes, and in detail describes why a certain macro theme has been chosen so that the reader is given the possibility to reflect on the choice (p. 35). In order to decide which of the three perspectives the text should be connected to both theme and proposition must be analysed.

4.4 Categorization of Tornberg’s Three Cultural Perspectives

In this section I have divided the three perspectives into different sub-categories with the purpose of describing exactly what each category contains. This is done

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5 This sub-categorization is influenced and based on two earlier studies, both analyzing a similar aspect of textbooks (modern languages). Johansson & Ballin – Kulturella representationer i läroböcker i franska och spanska för gymnasiet (2010) and Svensson – Kulturbilden i läroböcker i tyska i grundskolan (2008). Tornberg’s study is also indirectly a source for the method part since these two studies themselves are influenced by Tornbergs three concepts of culture.
so that it becomes easier to analyse the representation of Tornberg’s perspectives in the books. All the texts in the textbooks will be analysed except for poems and grammatical exercises (focusing only on language). Exercises and questions that are connected to the text and are of more analysing and reflecting type will be included in the analysis. They are included because the questions can sometimes have a great influence on how texts should be read and interpreted. For example, if the text or the questions connected to a text ask the pupils to compare two different cultures or traditions then the text has to be placed in the sub-category called comparison (2B).

1. An accomplished fact
   1A. The first sub-category historical and geographical facts includes texts that contain facts about countries, cities and historical happenings (e.g. the moon landing). The macro theme of a text can be connected to historical and geographical facts.
   1B. Artifacts refer to cultural products that reflect the esthetical perspective on culture (3.4.1) such as theatre, canonized culture and typical dishes. Another example could be a text with facts about the Franklin Memorial statue in Washington.
   1C. Collective descriptions are a part of macro themes that deal with everyday life and lifestyles ascribed to a group of people, such as Italians or the French. Stereotypes in texts are regarded as a part of this sub-category.

2. A future competence
   2A. Cultural preparation is something that is very typical for this perspective and here I include texts that are intended as practice for future communication with people who speak the target language in order to prevent possible disagreement and confusion.
   2B. Comparison between cultures is a part of the syllabuses and macro themes that deal with comparison and urges the students to make a comparison between traditions in England and Sweden is an example of texts regarded into this sub-category. These texts do often contain general descriptions that can lead to a stereotypical view of a certain group.
3. **A meeting in the third place**

3A. *Individ-centred* macro themes only focus on the characters in the text as individuals without taking any, or at least not a significant, consideration to the characters’ nationality, gender, class or ethnicity. Characters in the texts placed in this sub-category are not representative of a group of people (The Italians, all men/women). Questions and exercises connected to these texts open up the opportunity for a polyphonic encounter between the reader and the text since the texts cultural content can be interpreted in many different ways. The pupils are furthermore asked to reflect on the text based on their own experiences and values, and do not need to base their reflections on a homogenous Swedish culture. This means that the pupils have the opportunity to alienate themselves from a general and homogenous national culture when analysing and discussing the text, in opposite to the texts and exercises in sub-category 1 and 2. Since these texts can be interpreted in different ways the pupils own opinions can also be challenged by other voices in the classroom. In summary one can say that these texts have the ability to create a platform in the classroom where a polyphonic encounter can take place.

3B. *Youth culture* is the second part of the perspective *a meeting in the third place* and focuses on macro themes about youth sub-cultures such as media, movies, teenage books etc. These texts share the same attributes as the ones placed in 3A. The only difference is that the texts placed in this sub-category contain more youth related content.

I find it relevant to explain how I distinguish texts that are placed in the two first categories (perspectives) and texts that are placed in the third category. The main difference lays in the view of culture as a product and as a process. Texts that are placed in any of the two first categories portray culture, or cultural phenomena as products that can be studied. In these texts the characters tend to be representatives of a certain group of people which often leads to stereotypical descriptions. Moreover the questions connected to the texts are asking pupils to compare different cultures or countries meaning they have to base their opinions and reflections on one homogenous Swedish culture, i.e. there is not much room
for the pupils to interact with the text based on their own experiences of the subject/theme. These types of questions have mainly, according to Kramsch, the purpose of preventing prejudices between cultures by comparing their differences and similarities (Kramsch in Tornberg, 2000, p. 77). On the other hand, texts placed in the third category portray culture as a process meaning that culture is not something static or predefined. In other words, culture is not something that can be studied objectively by the pupils. Pupils are instead invited to interact with the texts and reflect on the texts based on how they have experienced similar subjects/themes as the ones presented in the texts. In order for this to work the characters in the texts must be presented as individuals with little or no connection to a national culture.

I have constructed the following table which is based on Tornberg’s three perspectives with additional sub-categories. This table will be used for the two textbooks and the placement of themes/texts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. An accomplished fact</th>
<th>1A. Historical/geographical fact</th>
<th>1B. Artifacts</th>
<th>1C. Collective descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A future competence</td>
<td>2A. Cultural preparation</td>
<td>2B. Comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A meeting in the third place</td>
<td>3A. Individ-centred</td>
<td>3B. Youth culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every text is analysed individually and when the theme and propositions of a text is determined I will place it in one of the categories. One macro theme (text) can have several propositions which means it can be placed in more than one sub category. An example would be if a text has the intention of preparing the pupils for a visit at a restaurant in South Africa. If the text contains information and directives about how to behave at a restaurant in South Africa a placement in sub-category 2A (cultural preparation) must be made. If the text in addition to this describes the South Africans at the restaurant in a general and stereotypical way another placement must be made in sub-category 1C (collective descriptions).
In the result section I will present the result of my analysis. The first step will naturally be to provide a relevant overview of the textbooks’ structure and content. Secondly, a table will illustrate how often the three cultural perspectives occur and show, in numbers, which of them is the most common one. The result will thereafter be presented in more detail with text examples in order to show the reader how I have thought when I have determined the macro themes and propositions. Hopefully, this way of presenting the result, will involve the reader so that (s)he is invited to reflect on my decisions. Another option would be to present all the texts I placed in the different categories and possibly say something very shortly about each text. This would however mean that the reader would have less opportunity to understand my process of placing texts in the sub-categories. In the analysis and discussion section I will discuss the implied cultural view and how Tornberg’s three perspectives are represented.

4.5 Discussion of Method

Before I move on to the result and analysis a brief discussion of my choice of method is relevant. First and foremost my study only shows how often Tornberg’s three perspectives occur in the material I have analyzed, and based on that I have concluded the implied cultural view of the textbooks. The three main categories are mainly based on Tornberg’s three perspectives which means that if someone else would have chosen to use Tornberg’s perspectives as a theoretical standpoint there is a possibility that the main three categories would have appeared in a similar way. The sub-categorization is however complex and there is no guarantee that another researcher would have named and categorized the sub-categories in the exact same way as I have done.

The study has only analyzed two out of the used books at upper secondary level and therefore nothing can be said about the general culture view in textbooks used at upper secondary level in Sweden. The study can also not say anything about the possibilities and restrictions of using the textbooks in the language classrooms. How pupils and teachers perceive the texts is something I can only speculate about. My analysis is based on the theoretical and methodical
standpoints I have presented which means that this is not an objective analysis. If the analysis would have been carried out by another researcher there is a possibility that the result would have be different. Hellspong and Ledin say in their book that there is no objective way to decide a texts macro themes and propositions. Instead the interpretation of a text is dependent of the reader’s perspective (p. 123). This is also why I have chosen to call this project the implied cultural view.

My choice of analyzing both questions and exercises as a unit can be questioned which is why I want to clarify why I chose to analyze both of them as a unit. A content analysis obviously focuses on the content of a text but since questions sometimes can directly affect how the content should be interpreted I find it important to include them in the analysis. Furthermore I feel that questions are also a vital part of the textbooks and that they can also portray a cultural way just like texts. A consequence of analyzing both parts as a unit is that more than one theme is connected to a text. The categorization of Tornberg’s three perspectives has therefore been constructed so that both questions and questions can be analyzed together.

Could the result have been different if I included other text genres such as poems and songs? The reason I did not include these two text types was because it would have been difficult to connect any of the perspectives to poems and songs. I have throughout the process come to question this argument since it actually can be possible to connect the first perspective to a song that is a tribute to a country or a person. However, since there is almost no presence of poems and songs in the analyzed textbooks (about 4-5 in total) I do not think an inclusion of these two text genres would have affected the result in any significant way. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that images are another aspect of the textbooks that could have been analyzed. Images, in different forms, are today becoming so common that their impact on students is very strong, both in school and outside of school. Therefore it probably would have been interesting if I had analyzed the images in the textbooks from a cultural perspective but due to time restrictions I could not carry out such a study.
5. Result

5.1 Blueprint A

Blueprint A is divided into nine chapters, each chapter focusing on a certain theme. The themes have been carefully chosen and adapted to popular teenage interests and issues. An example is the chapter called “Get Out! Get Wild!” which focuses on summer camp experiences, something that teenagers can relate to. Most chapters include about 3-4 different texts that are usually not written by the authors themselves. There are both fictional and non-fictional texts. However, after each text there is an exercise section written by the authors. In my analysis I have analyzed the texts together with the exercises since both parts create a unit. Tornberg has in her study carried out an analysis in a similar fashion. In each chapter there is at least one listening task presented together with questions. The listening tasks, together with poems and grammatical exercises, are not a part of this study since they are not considered as expository texts.

In Blueprint A 27 placements of themes and prepositions have been made in the table below. Some texts (and the connected exercises) have had more than one theme registered to them, but that only happened in a couple of the texts.

Table 1: Blueprint A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. An accomplished fact</th>
<th>1A. Historical/geographical fact Total: 0</th>
<th>1B. Artifacts Total: 5</th>
<th>1C. Collective descriptions Total: 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. A future competence</td>
<td>2A. Cultural preparation Total: 0</td>
<td>2B. Comparison Total: 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A meeting in the third place</td>
<td>3A. Individ-centred Total: 10</td>
<td>3B. Youth culture Total: 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 demonstrates to the reader that the perspective/category *a meeting in the third place* is the most common one in *Blueprint A* with 19 placements registered in the table. The 19 placements are divided almost equally in the two sub-categories, with ten of them in the sub-category called individ-centered and nine in the second one referred to as youth culture. In some cases a text’s macro theme has been registered as 3A or 3B plus another sub-category from one of the other perspectives. The least common perspective in this textbook is *a future competence* with only a total of two placements in the table.

Even though the perspective *an accomplished fact* is the second most common perspective it only has a total of 6 placements in the table. As can be seen in the table the sub-category historical/geographical facts cannot be connected as a macro theme to any of the texts in *Blueprint A*. There are some facts in the textbook about different geographical places in the English speaking countries, mostly in the U.K and the U.S, but they are in all cases of not enough significance and are always figuring in the shadow of the main plot of the text. In the first text, about a summer camp experience, New York and two of its areas are mentioned:

Our counselors were all New York college students from Brooklyn and Queens (p. 2). Although there is a reference to the American city New York, and to two of its well-known areas the reference is of insignificant matter since it only has a “context-filling purpose”. Artifacts, the second sub-category of the perspective *an accomplished fact* have been placed in the table five times. The text “The Treason of Images”, for example, is about the Belgian painter René Margitte and two of his most famous painting (p. 198f).

The third sub-category, cultural descriptions, is only placed once in the table but the text “Lollipos and Guns”, which I have given the macro theme cultural descriptions to, is probably the most interesting text to study in the book from a cultural point of view. The text is about two teenage terrorists who take a bus full of innocent school children as hostages in the U.S. The reader can easily conclude that the men, referred to as terrorist, are not American by their names (Artkin and Miro) as well as their opinions and thoughts. Artkin and Miro are described as two non-American teenagers who do not feel integrated into American society and
“miss their real homeland”, a country we do not get to know the name of (p. 87). At one point in the text Miro reflects on how American girls behave compared to the girls in his homeland,

American girls: he could not become accustomed to their blunt sexuality, the clinging jeans, the tight sweaters, the frankness of their faces holding few secrets. In his homeland, sexuality was implied, hinted at, not exactly concealed but delicately veiled (p. 88)

Miro’s and Atkin’s negative experience of the American way of living, and the society as a whole is described as the main reason behind their act. Had it only been for the story, one could not criticize the authors for including such a story in the textbook, it is probably just normal that today’s textbooks bring up current issues (terrorism) to discussion. However, the exercises and questions connected to the text indirectly imply that the two main characters of the text are from a country in the Middle-East. Question no. 5 in the section “Reflect and Share” focuses on the way Miro views American girls,

5. Miro observes differences in girls from his own culture and American girls like Kate. A) What differences does he point out between girls of the two cultures? B) What consequences could this lead to in the relationship between boys and girls from different cultural background? (p. 98)

As this example shows the authors are positioning two cultures against each other: the American culture and a foreign one. First of all we do actually not know what the second culture is yet. Second of all the implication is that all American girls share a culture which lets them dress and behave in the way they want (“American girls like Kate). The implication is that Kate represents all American girls (collective description), which means that no consideration is taken to the multi-cultural nature of American society and its many sub-cultures as well as the millions of girls who probably do not share “Kate’s” cultural background. Miro’s and Artkin’s culture and heritage is indirectly revealed in question no. 7 in the same “Reflect and Share” section,

7. What was the real motive behind the horrific attack on the World Trade Center in New York, September 11, 2001? Is there anything that could justify this act? Has anything good come out of it? (p. 97)

Their foreign names, their view of women, their non-satisfaction with American society, together with the questions about their culture vs. American culture and the World Trade Center bombings are all implications that Miro and Artkin
originate from the Middle-East. There are two texts about terrorism, and in both cases the “bad guys” are from the Middle-East\(^6\) which is why this text must be placed down in the sub-category collective descriptions. This is the only time the reader is presented to people originating from the Middle East.

As I mentioned earlier *Blueprint A* is full of texts with a macro theme that can be connected to the cultural perspective *a meeting in the third place*. These texts are similar in the way that all of them are about meetings between individuals. Even though the individuals are English/American (based on the names and places) they are portrayed first and foremost as individuals who do different things and meet different people. One text is about Jerry, a boy who is on a vacation with his single-mother (widow). Jerry finds a group of boys who he is trying to become friends with even though it would mean putting himself in danger (p. 35f “Through the Tunnel”). The text deals with group identity and the importance of father figures in children’s lives.

Nine of the texts are connected to the sub-category youth culture. In *Blueprint A* many of the texts deal with youth themes such as movies (p. 215f. “Film Review – American history X”), advertisement in movies, music (p. 116f. “Product placement”), and computer games (p. 130f “A Career in Computer Games”). The questions and exercises connected to texts dealing with popular culture have the same kind of structure. They all try to involve the student by asking questions which require the students to give an answer based on their own experiences of the subject. One of the questions in the exercise section connected to a text about computer games (A career in Computer Games) asks the students to reflect, based on their own experiences of computer games, what the possible consequences of intensive computer gaming can lead to (p. 155). The characters in these texts are not representatives of entire countries or all men/women; they are first and foremost all individuals.

Something should also be mentioned about the least occurring cultural perspective: *a future competence*. There are no placements in the sub-category cultural preparation. Some examples of cultural preparation would be texts about how to behave in a restaurant in the U.S, or a dialogue extract of people talking about how to book a hotel room in London. Two examples in *Blueprint A*

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\(^6\) The focus of the other text is mainly on a man who had been taken hostage which is why I did no mark it down as collective description, even though the “bad guys” were of Lebanese origin.
demonstrate the second sub-category in this section: comparison. A letter in the beginning of the book about summer camp experiences (p. 15 f “Dear Mom and Dad”) and the questions connected to the text ask the student to compare their own camp experiences in Sweden with the text, but this is done in a subtle way. The second example is a text in which students are supposed to compare the culture of bungee jumping business in an industrialized country (Sweden) and the bungee jumping tradition in Vanuatu (p. 48f “Bungee Jump – A Ritual or an Adventure”).

5.2 Core 1 English

Core 1 English, also a book used at upper-secondary level in Sweden, has a similar structure to Blueprint A. The whole book covers six different chapters dealing with various themes such as travel, horror and identity. Just like Blueprint A in each chapter there are a couple of written texts with questions as well as one listening assignment. All the exercises/questions are put together by the writers as well as some shorter texts in Core 1. The last chapter (chapter7) is called “Portfolio Skills” and focuses on English grammar, which is why I have excluded it from my analysis. At last I also want to mention that most of the texts are about people and events mainly in the U.S and the U.K.

Table 2 illustrates the number of placements in Core 1 English and the total number counts up to 39, compared to Blueprint’s 27. The reasons why Core 1 has more placements are two: firstly the texts in Core 1 are on average shorter than in Blueprint A, and secondly there are more texts in Core 1 that have been placed down as “two-themed” resulting in a greater number.

Table 2: Core 1 English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. An accomplished fact</th>
<th>1A. Historical/geographical fact</th>
<th>1B. Artifacts</th>
<th>1C. Collective descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total: 7</td>
<td>Total: 1</td>
<td>Total: 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. A future competence</strong></td>
<td>2A. Cultural preparation</td>
<td>2B. Comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 6</td>
<td>Total: 3</td>
<td>Total: 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total: 21 |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| **3. A meeting in the third place** | 3A. Individ-centred |
| Total: 15 | Total: 6 |
| **3B. Youth culture** | |

As can be seen from table 2 the dominant cultural perspective in *Core 1 is a meeting in the third place* with 21 placements in the table, covering somewhat half of the placements in total. The distribution between the two sub-categories is not equal since sub-category 3A has twice as many placements as 3B. At times it is difficult to decide whether a text should be placed in category 3A or 3B, which is why two texts have been placed in both categories. The perspective *a meeting in the third place* is present in the very beginning of the book, already in the first text called “Save Now, Spend Later” (p. 8f). Luke and Cathy are two teenagers with money problems and they solve it in two different ways. The characters’ nationality is not in focus in this text, even though their names suggest they might be from England. The text is linked to a problem many teenagers are facing, independent of where they live or what groups they belong to. Another text is about planning the gap year(s) after high school (p. 23f “Filling the Gap”). Both these texts, together with many other non-contextual texts (3A), open up the possibility for a meeting between the students own experiences and the characters in the different texts.

A similar thing can be said about the texts that have been placed in sub-category 3B. I will use one of the texts to describe in detail how the authors have created a meeting in the third place between the reader and the characters in the texts. “You’re a Legend” is a text about Jess, a girl living in England (the national identity is not the focus in this story), who has troubles choosing a new style. When she is visiting her grandmother she discovers something interesting in one of the rooms,

This was it! Jess had found her look. And it was going to be easy. You could pick up a black leather jacket next to nothing in a charity shop (p. 84)
Jess reflects on her choice and decides to change her style totally. In the exercise section the authors have put together some questions based on the text about Jess. The students are asked to think about if they have ever thought about changing their style, or if they are inspired by any styles (p. 89). Here the students are given the opportunity to reflect on styles based on their own experiences but are also inspired by the character’s change of style. I will give you an example of how the authors could have presented teenage fashion style in a different way so that it would have been placed in the sub-category 2B. Had the text focused more on English girls in general, or if Jess represented “English girls” in the texts and the questions in the exercise section would have asked the students to compare Swedish teenage fashion style with the English one then I would have had to place the text into sub-category 2B and 1C.

An accomplished fact is the second most common cultural perspective in Core 1 with 12 placements distributed between the three sub-categories. The sub-category with most placements is 1A and Core 1 contains several texts with historical/geographical facts about the English language and English speaking countries/places. In the very end of the first chapter there is a text about the English language worldwide (“Q and A about the English language”) or at least you think it will be about English around the world if you look at the different flags on the right hand side of the page (flags of Canada, South Africa, Ireland etc). However the text only contains facts about Britain, the English language and English is only connected to the U.S and Britain in the text,

There are about 427 million people worldwide who speak English (p. 17).
In the Oxford English Dictionary (20 volumes or one CD) there are more than 500 000 words (p. 17).

3. How many words does the average American or Brittish speaker know?
Someone fairly well educated probably uses 4000 to 5000 words in everyday speech (p.17).

In the 5th century AD the Brittish Isles were invaded by Germanic tribes from the continent. (p. 17)

It becomes quite clear that the English language and the “culture” it brings with it is viewed as a product and connected to the U.S and Britain, which is why this text has to be placed in sub-category 1A. The other texts that have been placed in 1A are written as news articles, or stories but have still the intention of being informative and contain facts, such as the Kennedy assassination (p. 101f) and the
demonstrations in Sharpeville (p. 109f). As for sub-category 1C some general collective descriptions occur in the textbooks. The Inuits´ are for example described through the eyes of two westerners in one text as hard-working and adaptable to their environment (p. 180f “Life on the Edge”). This is the only time Inuits´ are mentioned. The two westerners in the same story are the first ones, according to the text, to “explore” a certain part of Alaska even though the Inuits´ have lived in that part of the world for hundreds of year,

… and we´d successfully explored a unique, very rarely seen part of the world [Northern Alaska]. (p. 185)

The least occurring cultural perspective in Core 1 is a future competence, with only 6 placements distributed equally between the two sub-categories 2A and 2B. In one exercise section the students are asked to reflect on how it would be to go to school in an English-speaking country compared to going to school in Sweden. They are also asked to imagine how it would be to work in an English country and what possible difficulties they would face, in this case working as an au-pair (p. 170).
6. Analysis and Discussion

A good place to start the discussion is by looking at an overview of the total distribution of the placements in the table. There are a total of 66 placements in both textbooks, with the three perspectives not evenly distributed. Themes that can be connected to Tornberg’s first perspective *an accomplished fact* count up to 18 placements (27%). The second perspective *a future competence* and themes connected to it add up to a total of only 8 placements (12%). The third perspective *a meeting in the third place* is most common since themes that can be connected to it count up to 40 (61%). These numbers illustrate a very skewed distribution towards the third perspective, which occurs in more than every second text and connecting exercises/questions in the two textbooks. However, this brief numerical analysis can only establish a superficial conclusion about which perspective is most common in both books. What is more insightful in the search for establishing an implied view of culture, is a further discussion of not only how often the perspectives occur but how they are portrayed in each book. I will therefore cover that in section 6.1, as well as discussing the presence of stereotypes in the textbooks. This will lead us to the next section, where I will conclude the implied view of culture in each textbook. In the last section I will discuss further research possibilities.

6.1 Tornberg’s Three Perspectives and Stereotypes in the Textbooks

In my process of analyzing the material I have observed several interesting appearances with regards to Tornberg’s three perspectives on culture. The first cultural perspective, *an accomplished fact*, assumes the strong link between one language and one culture. Culture is, according to this perspective, furthermore
limited to nationality and can be studied in an objective way which means that culture is portrayed as a pre-defined product (Tornberg, p.64). In *Blueprint A* there are few signs of this perspective and the culture in this textbook is almost never explicitly typical “English”, “American” or connected to a specific country. In my study there is not any evidence of the presence of specifically historical/geographical facts in *Blueprint A* but a couple of texts include the presentation of artifacts. In general it can be stated that *Blueprint A* is not significantly characterized by the cultural perspective *an accomplished fact* which means it can be said that this textbook does not portray an esthetical view of culture. *Core 1* on the other hand contains considerable number of texts that can be connected to *an accomplished fact*. Those mainly connect culture as something associated with a nation, mostly England, the U.S. or South Africa. Therefore there is a connection between nationality and culture present in *Core 1*, which means that those texts are not opening up for a polyphonic encounter and there is not much room for subjective opinions.

The second cultural perspective, *a future competence*, aims at preparing the pupils to communicate with target-language speakers in everyday situations in the future. The pupil is regarded as someone who is disconnected and beyond the things (s)he is supposed to understand (Tornberg, p.72), because culture is seen as something objective. In contrast to Tornberg’s study of school textbooks and syllabuses, I did not find a great deal of evidence of this perspective in *Blueprint A* and *Core 1*. In fact, the second perspective was the least present of all three perspectives in the textbooks I analyzed. *Blueprint A* only contained two texts that could be connected to the perspective *a future competence*. In *Core 1* there was a higher presence of his cultural perspective, but nevertheless only a few. None of the texts had the intention of explicitly preparing and training the pupils on how to behave in certain foreign cultural situations such as a visit to a restaurant. Since an anthropological view of culture is closely connected to this perspective it can be stated that neither of the two analyzed books contain texts portraying such a view of culture.

The third cultural perspective, *a meeting in the third place*, is however common throughout both of the chosen textbooks. In texts were preparation for future communication is not in focus, a polyphonic encounter becomes possible and leads to a view of culture as a process rather than as a product. Culture is not
something static and pre-defined, it is instead something that is constantly open for change and the pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on what culture is (Tornberg, p.87). These are common themes in both Blueprint A and Core I and the main characteristic of these texts is that the pupils are allowed to reflect on the texts based on their own experiences, making it possible for pupils to interpret and discuss the texts in their own subjective way. The text about Jess in Core I (“You’re a Legend”, p.84) is an example of a text that can be connected to the third perspective since it portrays a character (Jess) who is first and foremost portrayed as an individual who has troubles deciding what clothes to wear. Jess is not a representative of a group of people and the pupils are allowed to discuss the text without having to take consideration to her nationality. Many of the texts also have youth-related themes, making it easier for the pupils to connect in their own personal way and is in line with Tornberg’s suggestions. In the exercises connected to a meeting in the third place pupils are never asked to compare different cultures or discuss cultural phenomena based on one specific homogenous Swedish culture. Instead, the exercises are set up in an open ended way, such that pupils are encouraged to discuss culture and language from their own perspective and viewpoint.

In terms of stereotypes in the textbooks there is little evidence of explicit stereotypical features in the textbooks. There are not many examples where the textbooks are portraying an obvious, generic picture of national or collective identities such as “All the English” or “All women”. The only two texts that are portraying stereotypes explicitly are “Life on the Edge” in which Inuits as a group are described in a stereotypical way and “Lollipos and Guns” in which Kate is a representative of all American girls and the two boys are representative of a foreign culture, most likely a general middle eastern culture. Stereotypical views and cultural preparation patterns are always difficult to avoid when dealing with language teaching but should be avoided as much as possible since they represent a simplified picture of reality and tend not to deal with all the complexities real life communication requires.

With regards to the discussion about stereotype representation, and who is represented in textbooks (section 2.3) an important conclusion can be made. Even though the ethnicity of the characters is not in focus and though most of the texts are about characters who are not representatives of a group of people there is
generally a high presence of “white” characters in both textbooks. There is therefore a possibility that pupils perceive English as a language mostly spoken by white people.

6.2 The Implied View of Culture in the Textbooks

The purpose of this study has been to analyze two textbooks with regards to the implied cultural view as well as looking at how Tornberg’s three cultural perspectives are represented in the studied material. In the theoretical section I said that culture as a term is difficult to define and that there are various views on the concept of culture. I also presented three viewpoints of culture that Tornberg’s perspectives are influenced by (esthetical, anthropological and modern anthropological). Another important discussion was the one about culture as a process or as a product. My study has showed that Blueprint A to a very high degree is characterized by a modern anthropological view meaning that culture in the textbooks is regarded as a process in a majority of the texts. Culture is not presented as something pre-defined and according to the textbook, many things can be regarded as culture (such as beliefs, values, music etc.). This presentation of culture as a process is in line with what recent researchers, such as Tornberg, have suggested.

In the second analyzed textbook, Core 1, the presence of modern anthropological culture view is lacking, supported by the fact that only about half of the texts can be connected to this view. The other half of the texts can be connected to the esthetical and anthropological view of culture in which culture is presented as a product rather than a process. In Core 1 there is a higher presence of texts that can be connected to historical and geographical facts which indicates that the connection between nationality and culture is more common than in Blueprint A.

Looking at the overall texts in both textbooks, the majority of placements (61%) are of the type that create the possibility for a meeting in the third place meaning that students are given the possibility to interpret the texts based on their
own cultural experiences and subjective opinions. This is particularly interesting in a country, such as Sweden, that has developed into a multi-cultural society and where students do not feel that they share a homogenous cultural background. For that reason it is important that the textbooks portray a cultural view which does not support the implementations of national cultures in language teaching.

6.3 Further Research and Final Words

I have earlier said that my study can only show the representation of Tornberg’s perspectives in the textbooks and based on them I have concluded the implied cultural view. How pupils and teachers perceive the same textbooks with regards to culture is something that would be interesting to analyze and compare the results to my study. One could for example interview the teachers and let them talk about how they perceive the cultural view of the textbooks and how they implement the teaching of culture in the language classroom. Similar interviews could be carried out with students in order to find out how they perceive culture in the textbooks and if they feel that they are given the possibility to actually interpret the texts based on their own experiences of culture. Another interesting study could examine textbooks that are intended for both younger as well as older learners in order to find out if culture is presented in the same way. This would however probably require quite a lot of effort from the researcher since more than two textbooks need to be analyzed. Studies that analyze culture in teaching, and especially in language teaching, should be encouraged since the cultural concept is wide and can be perceived as somewhat abstract. Finally studies on culture can support and influence the writing of future syllabuses for languages.

The experience of carrying out a study about the cultural view in textbooks has been very beneficial for me and I believe it will come in very good use when I begin teaching English as well as history in the near future. During the process of this study I have had to reflect on culture in a way I had not done before and come to the insight that culture, and especially the teaching of culture, is something complex and can be difficult to explain. The way I say culture before I wrote this
degree project is very different from how I view culture now. The main difference lies in my process of reasoning when I teach in class, I am much more aware of how I present “knowledge” and “facts” to the pupils. I try to adapt critical thinking in the classroom when discussions of culture or cultural phenomena take place so that the pupils get the possibility to view things from different perspectives.
References


**Analyzed Textbooks:**

Värnamo