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An Analysis of Swedish EFL Textbooks
- Reflections on Cultural Content and English as an International Language

En Analys av Textböcker i Engelskämnet
- Reflektioner kring Kulturellt Innehåll och Engelska som ett Internationellt Språk

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Preface

This text is a degree project that was written as mandatory part of the teacher education program for the years f-3 at Malmö University in Sweden. This study explores the cultural content of English textbooks used in Swedish classrooms through textbook analysis.

This project was carried out by Amanda Horvat and Katarina Nilsson and the work was equally distributed by the two. Although we were evenly involved in the creation of this text we divided the writing part equally in order to make it more efficient. Generally, Katarina Nilsson was responsible for the writing of the introduction and background. Amanda Horvat was responsible for the writing of the analytical tool and method. All other sections in this text were conducted by both authors.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse the cultural content and representations in three English as a second language textbooks published for Swedish students in years 1-3. The issue of cultural content is very visible in contemporary research on English education today and as English has grown into a global language over centuries, it has also become a culturally diverse language.

The method used in this study is a merge of Critical Discourse Analysis and Multimodality with a norm critical perspective, using a chart developed within the study as an analytical tool.

This study reveals that the textbooks on the one hand consist of a dominant Anglo-American, as well as a Swedish cultural setting where representations of white normative children and adults dominate the text and illustrations. On the other hand, the books show signs of trying to involve a developed perspective on English as an international language (EIL) and interculturality. However, these EIL and intercultural features are probably not enough to help the students who will use these books to develop the intercultural awareness needed later in life when they use their acquired English knowledge with other English speakers across the world.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, culture, EIL, EFL, interculturality, norms, Sweden, textbook.
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1. Introduction

Many English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms are very, or fully, reliant on textbooks as a learning material (Goméz Rodríguez 2015) and this dependence on textbooks is also something that we have seen during teacher-supervised placement in our education. The reasons for the use of textbooks as a main learning material are many. Textbooks have an obvious authority, which makes them very reliable. They can also work as a guideline or support for the teacher as they usually provide wholly linguistic learning content. However, the frequent use of textbooks makes it essential that they consist of content that can provide a well-rounded education for the student using it. Naturally, there are many things that need to be included in these textbooks as there are several important aspects for the students to learn and develop during their EFL education. One of these things is the development of understanding of the language culture (Skolverket 2017). Culture is something that is deeply connected to language and therefore also to language learning. However, there are different ways English culture can be portrayed, since the language and its culture has changed and developed a lot through time.

The relationship between the English language and culture is different than that between many other languages and cultures since English is considered an international language today. English is considered to be a global language as it is used so widely across the world in different kind of ways. For example, it is used as a native language in a variety of countries and as an official language in many other countries as well as it is internationally used as a lingua franca between non-native speakers (McKay 2002). As English is used by many different people from different world contexts, one who learns the language can benefit from developing an intercultural awareness (McKay 2002; Goméz Rodríguez 2015). The importance of intercultural awareness is something that has been noted by several EFL researchers as well as authorities such as the Swedish national curriculum as well the Council of Europe (McKay 2002; Crystal 2003; Nault 2009; Skolverket 2017; Byram et al. 2009). Further, researchers argue that in order to develop intercultural awareness the students need to discover many diverse cultures as well as their own and make comparisons of these in order to gain understanding for how diverse our world is (Kirch 2004; Arslan 2016; Brodow 2005; Lundahl 2014). This will be further discussed in the background section.
A lot of students in Sweden study *English as a second language* (ESL), which makes them ESL learners. However, there are several students who study English as a third or even fourth language due to bilingualism or simply having learnt another language as their second before starting to learn English. Therefore, we have decided to refer to all of these students as *English as a foreign language* (EFL) learners in order to be clearer about what kind of students we are referring to in our text.

Due to the claimed needs for EFL students to develop intercultural awareness, we believe that the EFL textbooks have an important role to play when it comes to providing what is needed to develop this. As future English teachers, we will have a big responsibility in making sure that our students are provided with knowledge of English as an international language and diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, we argue that it is important that we understand what a learning material such as textbooks, which are so frequently used, can provide on the matter. Consequently, we have analysed three Swedish EFL textbooks in order to understand to what extent English is represented as an international language and the cultural content in the books.
2. Purpose and research questions

The aim of this study is to analyse cultural contents and representations in three textbooks for the subject of English published for Swedish students in years 1-3. The purpose is to use English as an international language as a framework for analysing how countries, cultures and cultural identities are represented in three currently best-selling learning materials in Sweden. To explore this topic further we will use the following sub-questions:

- To what extent is English represented as an international language in the textbooks?
- How is culture represented in the textbooks?
3. Background

In this section we will define and present some key theories and concepts for this study. Firstly, we will account for the frequent use of English textbooks in the lower grades in Swedish schools. Secondly, we will explain the concept of *English as an international language* (EIL) and how it works as the framework for our study. Further we will unpack the terms of *culture* and interculturality and how these terms connect to EFL learning. Then we will look at the Swedish national curriculums course plan for English in the years 1-3 and how some of the statements found there can be linked to culture, interculturality and EIL. Lastly, we will give an overview of some of the previous studies made on textbooks for the English classroom in different parts of the world.

3.1 The use of textbooks in EFL teaching

The textbook is a learning material that has been, and still is, very widely used in EFL classrooms around the world. Goméz Rodriguez (2015) claims in his study of cultural content in EFL textbooks that the reason for using textbooks in the classroom varies, however, he suggests that textbooks can serve as tool of guidance for teachers in order to help them reach out to the students through providing them with learning activities and tasks. Textbooks also often provide the learners with many different components of language, such as grammar forms, glossaries and texts (Goméz Rodríguez 2015; Arslan 2016). As textbooks provide so many different components of language learning, it can be of great help to a teacher who does not have a secure identity as an English teacher. According to Englund (1999), another reason that textbooks are so widely used in classrooms around the world is their obvious authority. Textbooks are generally trusted tools and one cannot question or critique a textbook as easily as one can question or critique a teacher (Englund 1999). Textbooks are also generally expected and trusted to connect well to the syllabuses goals and aims (Englund 1999). With that said, it is not very surprising that textbooks are so popular in the EFL classroom. Lundahl (2014) points out that using textbooks in one’s teaching does however come with the important responsibility of making sure that the textbooks content is legitimate and matches the curriculums aims and goals. In Sweden, where our analysis takes place, there are many EFL textbooks to choose from, they vary in size, content and in when and where they were
published, and it is often up to the teacher or each school’s management to decide whether
the books used are legitimate material to use and if it connects to the goals and aims in the
national curriculum. This naturally puts a lot of responsibility on the person choosing the
learning material in a vast selection of publishing houses who all wants to make as big of a
profit as possible. It is therefore essential to have the knowledge needed even when choosing
to rely on textbooks when teaching English.

3.2 English as an international language

In this section we will account for the English language international status and what the
language relation to the world today looks like today. We will also give a brief overview of
how English has developed into English as an international language (EIL) over time.

An international language is a language which is used by people from different countries in
order to communicate with each other (Smith 1976, as cited in McKay 2002). In order for a
language to achieve international status, it must become recognised by all countries around
the world as a global language (Crystal 2003). According to Crystal (2003), a language can
become international in two ways: either by becoming the official language of a country and
therefore being used in official matters such as in the law courts or in the educational system;
or by being prioritised in foreign language teaching. A language can therefore not be
considered international just because it is spoken as a mother tongue in many different
countries, which for example is the case with Spanish (McKay 2002; Crystal 2003).

English is considered a lingua franca, an international language used worldwide by many
different countries. The language lives up to all the requirements stated by Crystal (2003) and
McKay (2002) above. English is recognised by all countries in the world as a global language
today. English has an official status in a variety of countries around the world and it is taught
as a foreign language in a majority of schools globally (McKay 2002, Crystal 2003). English
does thus no longer belong to the typical English-speaking countries, such as the USA,
Canada or Great Britain. The language has grown beyond these borders through migration,
colonisation, industrialisation, trading, as well as with the spread of modern media (McKay
2002, Crystal 2003). The use of English in the world can be seen more clearly through a
model of circles, which Braj Kachru first introduced, our example of Kachru’s model can be seen below.

The smallest circle represents English spread through the migration of English speakers, in other words, the inner circle includes countries where English is used as the primary language, such as the USA, Canada and Australia. The outer circle represents countries where English has gained second language status through colonisation; this circle includes for example India or Nigeria as well as countries such as Jamaica and Barbados where the slave trade has had a major impact on the development and spread of English. The expanding circle is a result of global spread of EFL, for example, the teaching of EFL in Sweden (McKay 2002).

There are in fact more EFL speakers today than native English speakers in the world (McKay 2002). The global use of English has therefore resulted in people of different cultures and perspectives, interacting with each other on a daily basis. As EIL is widely taught across the world, we are faced with the importance of learning to communicate with an intercultural awareness when we use the English language. In the section below, we will account for how culture is connected to EIL and how the use of English requires development of intercultural awareness by its speakers.

3.3 Culture and interculturality

Language is closely connected to culture, and as stated by Nault (2006), the two can be seen as two sides of a coin. When we speak we express ourselves and interpret the conversation in a certain way depending on our cultural backgrounds and therefore the way we act when using a language differs widely across the world in different cultures (Nault 2006). This is
something that is the same when it comes to English. English is an international language, and this further means that it does not belong to a certain country with a certain culture. As well as English is international, its connected culture can also be considered international (Nault 2006). In this section we will discuss culture as a phenomenon and its connection to language as well as interculturality and its connection to EIL.

Culture is a very complex term with many different branches and can therefore be defined and looked upon in several ways. Hall and Hall (1990) write that “culture is primarily a system for creating, sending, storing, and processing information. Communication under-lies everything” (p. 3). Furthermore, Nieto (1999) defines culture as:

the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion. (p. 48)

Further, Kramsch defines culture as a “Membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting” (1998, p. 127). Culture is, whichever way one chooses to define it, a world-wide phenomenon that changes according to context and history across the world. Our different cultural beliefs determine how we are to act and what we are to do in our everyday lives. For example, in our traditions, religions, our music, the way we speak, the way we act and so on.

When we learn a foreign language, we are often simultaneously learning about the culture of the language. For example, when we learn German, we are also learning about the culture that belongs to the German language, which in this case is the culture of Germany, Switzerland and Austria. According to Nault (2006), we can, in most cases, connect a language and its culture to one or a few national cultures, but in the case of English, this is not possible as English does not belong only to one or a few countries. Nonetheless, EFL teaching has traditionally been connected to the inner circle countries, and mainly to the USA and Great Britain. These countries have therefore grown to be seen as the countries where one can find the superior or right culture of the English language (Nault 2006). The fact that English is so overrepresented mainly by the USA and Great Britain as the language target
culture is problematic as it creates a kind of *native speaker ideal* that proposes that there is a right way English should be seen and used (Smolder 2009; Nault 2006). Holiday attempts to describe the concept of the native speaker ideal in culture with the help of other researchers by stating:

The colonialist myth of the ‘autonomous’, ‘organized’, ‘inventive’ Robinson Crusoe ‘civilizing’ Man Friday (Pennycook 1998: 10–16) is implicit in the native-speakerist ‘moral mission’ to bring a ‘superior’ culture of teaching and learning to students and colleagues who are perceived not to be able to succeed on their own terms. The apparent liberalism of learner-centredness conceals the manipulative attempt to improve learner behaviour. The emphasis on close monitoring, ‘learner training’ and precise methodological staging in current practice can be seen as hiding a subtle agenda aimed at ‘correcting’ ‘non-native speaker’ culture (Anderson 2005). (2006, p. 386)

According to Holiday, the native speaker ideal is a way of shaping the rest of the world to fit into the norms set by western white culture, or in other words *Anglo-American* culture. Naturally, one can learn and use English quite well with only having learnt about the Anglo-American cultures represented by the USA and Great Britain. However, Nault (2006) points out that overrepresentation of Anglo-American culture reinforces the view of them as the norm and undermines non-western cultures. This can further have a negative effect on EFL students’ correlation to their English studies (Nault 2006). Furthermore, in 1997, Crystal concluded that 80% of the world’s English speakers are non-native speakers (as cited in Smolder 2009). And this further means that the native speaker ideal promotes that we should speak and act like 20% of the world’s native English speakers, which is quite unreasonable. Holiday stresses that these norms need to be challenged on a daily basis (2006). And according to Smolder, there are in fact English speakers worldwide today who constantly reinterpret the English language and its culture, it is therefore irrelevant to rely on outdated ideals of English culture (Smolder 2009; Nault 2006).

In order to challenge the cultural norms in the English language, EFL teachers have a great responsibility to look beyond the inner circle countries cultures and teach a diverse range of cultures instead in order to help the students develop intercultural awareness (Nault 2006; McKay 2002; Goméz Rodríguez 2015). The *Council of Europe* defines interculturality as:
(...) the capacity to experience cultural otherness, and to use this experience to reflect
on matters that are usually taken for granted within one’s own culture and
environment. Interculturality involves being open to, interested in, curious about and
empathetic towards people from other cultures, and using this heightened awareness
of otherness to evaluate one’s own everyday patterns of perception, thought, feeling
and behaviour in order to develop greater selfknowledge and self-understanding.
(2009, p. 10)

Interculturality requires awareness of other people's ways of viewing the world as well as
one's own way of viewing the world (Lundahl 2014). In addition to this, many researchers
suggest that in order to develop interculturality, cultural self-awareness is required (Kirch
2004; Arslan 2016; Brodow 2005; Lundahl 2014). This is something that the national
curriculums also promote in the aims for the English subject. Arslan states that “Learning
about both own culture and other cultures may be fruitful because learners can have the
chance to see the differences between cultures and they may learn how to tolerate these
differences” (Arslan 2016, p. 224). Further Böcu and Razi states that “Comparing and
contrasting similarities and differences between cultures is said to develop Critical Cultural
Awareness over time” (Böcü & Razi 2016). This further shows us how meaningful it is to
learn about a several diverse cultures across the world and beneficial it can be. This does
however not mean that English lessons should consist of learning meaningless facts about
exotic cultures far away, but rather to make the students aware of how diverse our world is
and to help them develop an open mind.

According to Lundahl (2014), perspectives on culture can be divided into two main
approaches: product- and process-based culture. Product-based culture is perceived as the
traditional view of culture, which often consist of factual information about inner circle
countries and it often presents cultural contexts as typical, different and exotic. This works to
develop an us-against-them mentality, which can further lead to stereotyping and hierarchies.
This can further result in that we differentiate the students’ ethnicities in the classroom and
exclude some of our language learning participants when really the goal is to create an ‘us’
point of view (Lundahl 2014).
A more modern way of viewing culture is process-based culture where, instead of seeing culture as fact based, culture is seen as constantly changing and dynamic. One individual can belong to several cultural groups and is not entirely tied to a culture based on, for example their ethnicity (Lundahl 2014). In process-based culture, diversity is seen as the norm, as each individual belongs to several different cultural groups and no two students can be seen as the same and therefore the us-and-them mentality is invalid in this cultural view.

In our analysis, we will look at how product-based and process-based culture is expressed, and through this we will look at stereotyping and normativity. Norms can be described as implied rules about how we should act and what we should look like (Dahlén 2014). These norms can in many cases be good and needed as they can help us interact with each other in assured ways. However, our societies have many norms that are very negative. It is, for example a traditional norm that white people are smarter, better and more important than non-white ethnicities (Dahlén 2014). This has historically given white people more space and power and this injustice is still relevant around the world (Dahlén 2014). Norms like these can often be difficult to point out, but it is vital that learn to recognise them and challenge them in order to create a more equal world (Dahlén 2014). Further, stereotypes are created in order to organise one’s view of the complex world we live in (Lundahl 2014). Stereotypes can be about class, looks, behaviour, and so on, and according to Kirch (2004) they can in fact sometimes be quite accurate. For example, a stereotype about Swedes is that they are often seen as shy and reclusive and this is something that one can spot quite easily when visiting or moving to Sweden. However, this does not mean that all Swedes are shy and reclusive as a fact. Stereotyping is about assuming that a group of people or a culture is fixed to operate in one single way, when really culture changes constantly (Goméz Rodríguez 2015). It is important to note that stereotypes are not and should never be taken as facts about people (Kirch 2004). Researchers also show how stereotyping can become exaggerated and prejudiced which might lead to racism and discrimination (Goméz Rodríguez 2015; Lundahl 2014). In order to avoid that, Lundahl (2014) stresses that stereotypes should be avoided completely in language education. However, Kirch (2004) does not agree and argues that stereotypes should not be avoided because if we cannot have simplified and prejudiced views of one another, we may develop hostile views of each other instead. Kirch(2004) also points at the importance of having discussions in the classroom about cultural differences and stereotypes.
As part of culture, this study focuses partially on perspectives on identity. The school has a great responsibility in making progress with these needed changes, according to Wernersson (2014), education can be seen from two perspectives, on one hand, education is about controlling and disciplining children into developing and accepting knowledge, values and approaches that are deemed as important and valuable. On the other hand, education opens up for opportunities and gives children the tools to develop abilities and knowledge free of use. These views show us that as well as we can form children into individuals who see different identities as equals, we can also give them the tools to change their societies and their cultures view of different people. The Swedish curriculum also states the schools’ important role in the change for better, which will be stated in the section about the Swedish curriculum.

With EIL as our framework in this analysis, we will consider to what extent the textbooks we analyse help the students develop intercultural awareness. We will look at how and to what extent different cultures are represented in the textbooks, as well as the intended readers own culture as all of these cultural views are essential to EFL learning.

3.4 The Swedish curriculum and CEFR

The Swedish national curriculum closely connects to our study as it is the main guideline to how teaching should be carried out in the classroom and its statements weighs heavier than all other educational opinions and requests. Further, as Sweden is part of the Council of Europe, the national curriculum is widely shaped by their views on education. In this section we will account for what both the national curriculum and the Council of Europe’s framework (CEFR) states about culture, interculturality and EIL.

In Sweden, EFL teaching begins in the years 1-3 in primary school, the years 1-3 is equivalent to the ages 7-9 and it is up to each school to decide when during these three years they should start teaching English. The current Swedish national curriculum was published in 2011 and revised in 2017 and can therefore be expected to be up to date with the current views on ESL learning. In the national curriculum’s course plan for English, the years 1-3 section consists of a core content part which states what the students’ English education should consist of during these three years. The 1-3 part does not contain any knowledge
requirements unlike the older ages, although the core content shows us what the students are to be taught.

In terms of learning about culture in English in the years 1-3, the following can be found in the core content:

- Interests, people and places.
- Daily life and ways of living in different contexts and areas where English is used.

The core content stated above states that teachers should teach the children about contexts around the world where English is used. Further, the national curriculum also has a section in the English course plan that consist of overall goals that concerns all the years that teaches English, and therefore also the years 1-3. In these aims it states that:

Teaching of English should aim at helping the pupils to develop knowledge of the English language and of the areas and contexts where English is used (...) Through teaching, pupils should be given the opportunity to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills involve (...) interact with others in the spoken and written language. (Skolverket 2017, p. 35)

It further states that:

Teaching should also provide pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge about and an understanding of different living conditions, as well as social and cultural phenomena in the areas and contexts where English is used. (Skolverket 2017, p. 35)

And lastly, the ‘aim’ section ends by stating that the teaching of English should give the students the ability to develop the following that can be connected to intercultural competence:

- use language strategies to understand and make themselves understood,
- adapt language for different purposes, recipients and contexts, and
- reflect over living conditions, social and cultural phenomena in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used.
These aims are however intended to be developed over the course of the nine years that the students attend the compulsory school.

The course plan for English in the curriculum is closely connected to CEFR as Sweden is one of the members of the Council of Europe (Skolverket 2017). The council of Europe states that it is of importance to develop intercultural capacity when learning languages as it is the student’s intercultural ability he or she will be depending on when communicating in the language (2001). The National Agency of Education (Skolverket) comments on the statements made in the aim and core content of English by stating that the English subject should give a background and further perspective on different social and cultural context that the students are surrounded by as well as to give opportunities for them to see their own reality in a global context (Skolverket 2017). In the curriculum it is stated that the students should reflect on contexts and parts of the world where English is used. Skolverket comments on this by writing that they purposely did not state ‘countries’ where English is used since the language is used widely today across nations as well as online (Skolverket 2017). They further point out that to mediate an international perspective to the students is part of every school’s main goal (Skolverket 2017). Through these perspectives it is obvious that Skolverket have considered EIL as well as interculturality when designing the curriculum. It is therefore clear that this is what we are expected to teach in the EFL classroom. Further, it is also clear through the curriculum that we are intended to teach the students about their own cultural surroundings (Skolverket 2017). Learning about one's own culture and other diverse cultures around the world is a well-supported approach of teaching intercultural capacity by several researchers (Kirch 2004; Arslan 2016; Brodow 2005).

3.5 Previous research on EFL textbooks

There are plenty of previous studies conducted on cultural content in EFL textbooks, which shows us how important it is to consider how culture is expressed in EFL learning materials. This section presents some key perspectives and ideas from a few studies from around the world.
As we stated earlier, when teaching culture in English, there should be a focus on teaching international culture in order to develop an intercultural awareness as well as establishing a view of EIL. This is important as English is an international language and thus connects to many different cultural contexts. When looking at prior studies of EFL textbooks we found that the amount of diverse cultures represented seems to be quite high. Most of the studies we are presenting have found that EFL textbooks represents many different cultures besides the inner circle countries cultures. In an analysis on university EFL textbooks carried out in 2016 by Böcü and Razi, they find that the books’ diverse cultural content was quite satisfying. Further, Arslan carried out a study in 2016 that also concludes that there is a satisfying amount of intercultural content in the textbooks. However, Arslan(2016) finds that both textbooks he is analysing are lacking the learners national culture which he claims is important in order for the students to develop the ability of seeing and tolerating differences between their own and other cultures, in other words, intercultural awareness.

Some of the studies we have looked at do unfortunately conclude that textbooks mostly provide what we view as product-based culture as they mainly state basic facts about different cultures. In Weninger and Kiss analysis from 2013, they explore two beginner-level textbooks and conclude that the books do consist of diverse culture, but again fact-based culture. And this is not enough to help the students develop an intercultural understanding. This is something that Gomez Rodríguez also finds in his analysis of three different textbooks, and he explains that “EFL materials often include holidays, tourist sites, famous people’s achievements, and food. However, these surface forms of culture are not sufficient for students to understand the target culture.” (2015, p. 168). Lappalainen (2011) also finds this and states that none of the books she studies fulfil the expectations on intercultural education. Therefore, she concludes that the responsibility of teaching intercultural competence lies with the teachers (Lappalainen 2011). The studies briefly presented above mainly gives us a picture of what the cultural content looks like in EFL textbooks for older ages. We will be studying textbooks aimed at younger students than any of the ones presented above, and this result in a different outcome. Nonetheless, it seems that many EFL textbooks does consist of a diverse cultural content, but they are not sufficient in helping the students develop intercultural awareness as they mostly present us with product-based culture.

Most of the textbooks in the different studies above are quite modern which shows that we still have a way to go when it comes to teaching interculturality in EFL learning through
textbooks. In our study, we will analyse the level of diverse culture as well as how well the textbooks we analyse give the students opportunities to develop their intercultural understanding. Our analysis is focused on textbooks for the youngest EFL learners in the Swedish educational system. Therefore, we believe that our research can contribute to the view of what current EFL textbooks offer students in terms of cultural content.
4. Method and Material

This section describes the process applied in our text-analysis of three widely used textbooks for the English classroom. Firstly, we present our theoretical framework, secondly, we describe the analytical tool used in the study. Thirdly, we explain how and why the three particular textbooks were selected for this study and add a general description of them. Finally, we describe the procedure of applying our analysis tool when analysing the different texts.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Eilard (2009), the particular genre of text-analysis has a tendency to merge theory and method. She writes that: “By using discourse analysis, theory and method are, in principle, considered as the same” (p. 442). Consequently, our framework consists of a merge between Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Multimodality with a norm critical perspective which is clarified in this section.

Van Dijk (1993) claims that CDA:“(…) is obviously not a homogeneous model, nor a school or paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotic or discourse analysis” (p.131). In other words, CDA is a perspective in which the objective is to perceive language use as social practice: those who use language cannot function in isolation, they need an environment of cultural, social and psychological frameworks. CDA takes this social context into account and explores the links between textual structures and their function when interacting with the society (van Dijk 1993).

Eilard (2008) writes that: “Discourse analysis makes the relationship between society, language/discourses and people’s consciousness visible” (p. 52) This means that as a user of CDA, you deconstruct a text and reflect on how the text could affect our way of thinking. Specifically, our perception of the world and ourselves, and in what way this influences how we act socially (Eilard 2008). Texts are created with the intention of attracting a certain reader, the implied reader (Iser 1974). An author creates a text wanting to reach out to a specific group of people and adapt it to suit their needs and interests. Iser (1974) claims that
certain norms might be encouraged and relied on because of this and can therefore create a negative presentation of human nature. Since CDA is critical, its purpose is to find these connections and purposes which are hidden in the texts. The importance of exposing hidden messages in EFL books, lies in how they may not be evident for the students reading the text, which results in them not being able to fight against the impressions these messages may convey (van Dijk 1993). This is something we have to acknowledge when looking at material that students will be exposed to since it might work against the goals of the curriculum and guidelines on norms and values.

During the selection process of textbooks suited for our study we noticed that a lot of the material relies on pictures. This made us realise that when creating a CDA study of 1-3, EFL material we have to look at the text as well as the pictures to find out what the books are expressing. The interplay between different means of communication is defined as multimodality. Kress (2010) argues that multimodality is “the normal state of human communication” (p. 1) since writing, image and colour each has its distinct potential for meaning. He uses an example of a street sign that through a picture and a few words tells drivers how to get into a car park. Drivers need to keep their eyes on the traffic, therefore they most likely do not have the time to read a sign. Consequently, the thing that catches the drivers’ attention first is the image and the colours. This scenario can be compared to a student looking through a textbook, without even reading what the text says the student has already received an amount of different impressions. When the student then goes on and reads the text s/he will probably use the impressions gained from the pictures to interpret the meaning of the text.

As part of our CDA we emphasize a norm critical perspective. Skolverket (2009) explains that there are social and linguistic norms and structures (e.g. unequal power structures), that limit people whom is not included in what is considered “normal” in society. In the norm critical perspective, these structures are made visible and then criticized. This perspective strives to work against the norms that could be oppressive and create subordination and exclusion. Dahlén (2014) argues that there are plenty of norms that could be considered to be positive and impossible to live without. They help with regulating how we humans should act amongst each other without having to create rules around everything we do. An example of this would be that we do not have to decide on the distance to keep between each other every time we meet as this is something that is created naturally through norms. However, there are
also norms that encourage discrimination as they decide who and what is accepted and normal or unusual and unaccepted. The extent of stereotypical views of the cultures presented in the books will also be analysed, since they could be considered having a connection to norms. Although Kirch(2004) points to the positivity of stereotypes, we will look at and assess the possible stereotypes with Lundahls(2014) concerns in mind as textbooks cannot regulate the students interpretations like a teacher could. In the Swedish curriculum, the overall goals and guidelines have a specific section on norms and values where it is expressed that the goal for the schools is that teachers should: “openly communicate and discuss different values, views and problems” (Skolverket 2017, p. 13). According to this statement, it is of course relevant to study how values and norms are included in learning materials.

4.2 Analytical tool

In order to organise and guide the text-analysis, we used the research sub-questions in this study as a springboard to develop further analysis categories. This resulted in a chart with detailed questions and categories which we then applied in the analysis of each chapter in each book. This is a model of the chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent is English represented as EIL in the textbooks?</th>
<th>How is culture represented in the textbooks?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is there a focus on inner-circle countries and a native-speaker ideal?</td>
<td>Is culture depicted as product?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is English presented as if it belongs to the “typical English-speaking countries”?</td>
<td>- Defined with facts and traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is a “native-like” fluency encouraged?</td>
<td>- Different cultures seen as exotic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a focus on nation states, national identities and national cultures?</td>
<td>Is culture depicted as process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The outer and expanding circle.</td>
<td>- Different beliefs, values and perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there examples that can be linked to the Lgr11 phrase ‘context and regions where English is spoken/used’?</td>
<td>- Diversity is viewed as a norm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What regions and context are represented?</td>
<td>Is there a focus on culture as linked to nation states and national cultures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is EIL represented in the visual images?</td>
<td>- Are countries connected to specific “typical” facts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is there a variety of countries/regions represented?</td>
<td>How is culture represented in the visual images?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Is it diverse or dominated by a specific culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facts and traditions illustrated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart was developed with inspiration of Lundahls’ book *Text, topics and tasks* (2014), where he suggests different questions that one could use when analysing certain material. We find that these questions are directly connected to the Swedish curriculum where an aim of teaching English is to give students the opportunity to develop their ability to: “reflect over living conditions, social and cultural phenomena in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (p. 32).

4.3 Selection and description of material

With our time frame in mind we decided to limit our study to three textbooks that we could potentially use as future F-3 teachers. By contacting three very well-known publishers in Sweden we found out about some of the best-selling texts among their learning materials for English.

We were able to contact the publisher *Studentlitteratur* through a phone call. According to the employee we talked to, their book *Magic! 1-3* had the most relevant connection to the Swedish curriculum. This is a statement that we found on *Studentlitteratur’s* web page as well (*Studentlitteratur* 2017). The publisher also stated that the book series is intercultural and includes children of all ethnicities (*Studentlitteratur*, personal communication, February 16, 2018).

Through email, we gained information from *Gleerups* about their current material for year F-3 titled *Happy*. We found out that the material they sell the most out of their assortment is the material suited for the third grade. The representative that we communicated with believes that the reason is because most elementary schools do not start teaching English as a subject until then. They expressed that the teachers who use the material are satisfied because of the themes and the way it revolves around topics that the students can relate to. *Happy* was created with the curriculum in mind and has a cultural content that teaches students about everyday life and traditions in the areas where English is used (*Gleerups*, personal communication, February 16, 2018).

The third publishing company we contacted was *Liber*. They were brief in the email we received, and they did not give us a lot of information. However, they wanted to send a
sample of their most popular material series for us to gain our own perception regarding the interculturality of the book. We received the book titled *Join the Quest*, and according to the representative that we communicated with it is connected to the curriculum (Liber, personal communication, February 20, 2018).

The common denominator of these three books is that they are the most popular among three well-known publishers and that they are all claimed to be strongly connected to the Swedish curriculum. This is a strong foundation for why we decided to use these books in our project.

*Magic!* is a series of EFL learning materials for years 1 to 9 written by Maria Robling, Annie Westman and Peter Watcyn-Jones and published by *Studentlitteratur*. In this study we analyse the latest textbook developed for year 3 that was published in 2012. The textbook has 14 chapters and a section at the end that is meant to be combined with digital materials. The book has a total of 111 pages, including the preface, table of content and a “word list”. Looking through the chapters you can see that the pages are dominated by colourful pictures but that there is still a reasonable amount of text considering that this is an EFL textbook. The text also shows a variation between dialogue and simple rhymes and poems.

*Happy* is a series of EFL learning materials written by Catarina Hansson and published by the Swedish publishing company *Gleerups*. We have chosen to analyse the textbook for year 3 in the *Happy* series, this textbook is the most recent textbook published for year 3 from Gleerups according to their website and it was published in 2010. This textbook has 15 chapters with two pages for each chapter and it also includes 5 extra sections and a vocabulary list related to the content in the book. In total the textbook is 44 pages long. The textbook is very colourful and has a lot of pictures to support the English written texts in the book. There is however little text overall in the book.

*Join the Quest* is a series available from the years 1 to 6. In this project we will analyse *Join the Quest* 2 which is created for year 2, it was written by Christine Røen Hansen, Tormod Lien och Patricia Pritchard. The book was published in 2017 and is therefore the most recent textbook we analyse in this text. There are 6 chapters in the book, with an everyday practice section at the beginning as well as a glossary section at the end. The book is 79 pages long in total. Like the other textbooks, it is very colourful and has a lot of pictures. The book also consists of a variation of informative texts, dialogues and songs and rhymes.
4.4 Procedure

When applying the chart to our process we did everything step-by-step. Firstly, we went through the chapters of the books to get a first impression. This initial reading of the three books was also the part that generated the different sub-categories of our chart. Secondly, we took notes of everything we could read or see in each chapter that applied to the questions and categories in our chart. We had our chart in a separate document on the computer to simplify the process of answering the sub-questions directly under each category. As an example, when using the question: “How is culture represented in the textbook?” we would focus on one sub-category at a time taking notes underneath in the chart itself. This left us with three charts in the end, one for each book.

The third step was to reflect on our findings and connecting it to our theoretical framework. We did so by verbally discussing our notes and comparing the different books with each other. Finally, we used our notes and reflections when writing our “Results and analysis” section of the project, answering each sub-question with the collected results of the three books together.

The process of creating and using a chart was inspired by previous research. Arslan (2016) presents his findings in a chart, that works as a checklist, and then creates a discussion around them in his results. The majority of the questions he use can only be answered by “yes” or “no”, amongst others that does not leave a lot of room for speculation. Our questions, on the other hand, can be considered extensive and gave us the room to write down a copious amount of discoveries in our charts. Therefore, we made the decision to create a coherent discussion based on the most important parts of our findings written in the chart and to not include the chart itself in the results.
5. Results and discussion

In this section we will present and analyse our research findings. The three books were studied separately through our analytic tool. As they all raised the same questions and ideas, the analysis of each book is presented and discussed under categories that are linked to our three research questions. They are as follows: To what extent is English represented as an international language in the textbooks?; How is culture represented in the textbooks?

5.1 English as an international language

This section is a discussion on how EIL is represented in the textbooks using the main areas in the analytical tool. This is demonstrated through paragraphs on “inner-circle countries and native-speaker ideal” and “nation states, national identities and national cultures”. How EIL is represented in the visual images of the books is answered throughout all these paragraphs. This also applies to what regions and contexts that are represented in the textbooks because we use them as examples.

5.1.1 Inner-circle countries and native-speaker ideal

Looking at the three textbooks we found several indicators of them taking place in inner-circle countries and regions. Join the Quest 2 overall takes place in four different cultural settings, Scandinavian, British, north American and Australian culture. The content displays these different regions through the text as well as through pictures. In Happy, one can assume that the story takes place in the northern part of the world, the front page picture shows browned leaves on the trees in the background, suggesting it is autumn. In the book, Tim and Sara show us their typical Anglo-American or Scandinavian house and their classroom which has a very Scandinavian look to it. Further Magic! takes us through a lot of different locations without really acknowledging where on the planet this could be. In the beginning and end of the textbook you get to see an illustration where the main characters live, which looks like a typical Scandinavian leaf forest. However, this is not mentioned in the text which leaves it open for interpretation. A lot of the other locations in the book are either made up or simply named as different biomes, “the jungle” would be an example. According to Holiday, the
native speaker ideal works to correct other cultures into white western culture (2006). The western, or Anglo-American culture is considered superior according to current global norms and this is something that all three textbooks display. Anglo-American culture is clearly overrepresented and seen as the safe starting point and home. This further feed an us-against-them mentality, which is closely connected to product-based culture. A further observation into how product-based culture is displayed in the textbooks in the section about culture and interculturality.

5.1.2 The focus on Nation States, National Identities and National Cultures

The focus on countries that are included in the outer and expanding circle is demonstrated in different ways in the textbooks. Join the Quest 2 shows clues of the English language’s international status, for example, in one chapter we are introduced to the Swedish tourist Tim Berglund who speaks English during his visit to Great Britain. It is also shown both through text and a picture what farms looks like in India, which gives clues that India has something to do with English, which it of course does as it is an outer circle country. Although, it is not clearly expressed that English is used more widely than this. After all, the students know that English is used by Swedes, as they are learning it. Further, Magic! and Happy does not clearly connect English to any specific countries at all, which can be interpreted as the authors not wanting to tie English to any certain countries as this cannot be done due to its international status. This does not specifically promote EIL, which does not challenge the students’ assumption of English belonging to the inner circle countries. This is a possible assumption that they could have gained by overrepresentation of the inner circle countries outside of the classroom. However, this could also have an opposite effect where the students actually are given a view of EIL outside the classroom. In order to promote EIL, the textbooks would have needed to clearly show the students that English is used globally. For example, Join the Quest 2 slightly does this through introducing us to a Swede who speaks English. However, we would have wanted more examples from Join the Quest 2, in order to prove that English has an international status. Further, this is also the national curriculum’s opinion as it promotes the idea of students meeting different regions where English is used through their education (Skolverket 2017).
The fact that these books are focused on the inner-circle countries is problematic because English is an international language. As we stated earlier in this text, English is spoken by more non-native speakers than it is by native speakers (McKay 2002). In the Swedish national curriculum, it is stated that the students should meet “Daily life and ways of living in different contexts and areas where English is used.” (Skolverket 2017, p. 36). In Join the Quest 2 and to some content Happy, we are introduced to daily life and ways of living in some of the inner-circle countries. However, English is used globally today and therefore it could be argued that non-inner-circle countries are just as expected in these books as inner-circle countries. Through the textbooks we find that there is a clear under-representation of outer-circle and expanding-circle countries. It is important to provide representation on these countries as well as inner-circle countries in order to teach the students that English is an international language and belongs to whoever acquires it (Smolder 2009; Nault 2006; Lundahl 2014). Choosing to not promote a wide range of contexts in EFL education may promote a traditional view of English that argues that the language belongs to the inner circle countries (Smolder 2009; Nault 2006). This could further promote a native speaker ideal which can create unnecessary pressure on learners to believe that they are supposed to act and speak like English speakers of the inner-circle countries (Smolder 2009). The English language status as international have resulted in people across the world reinterpreting it, rather than mimicking it, which shows us that the native speaker ideal is insignificant (Nault 2006). Further, it is important to learn about outer circle and expanding circle countries as it is very likely that these are the English speakers that our EFL students will interact with in the future. Learning about inner-circle countries, outer circle countries and expanding circle countries as a whole is essential for whoever wishes to be a part of the international society of English, and this further demand that the students develop intercultural awareness.

5.2 Culture and interculturality

In the study of the textbooks, we searched for a diverse intercultural focus. As English is owned and used by a variety of people across the world, it does not belong to a certain culture as another language might. English speakers are likely to use the language when they interact with people from different cultures. Therefore, it is important that speakers of English have an understanding and awareness of the fact that the people they meet and interact with may not see the world from the same perspective as they do (Lundahl 2014). In other words,
English speakers need to have an intercultural awareness. In this section we will discuss the cultural content in these three textbooks using the main areas in the analytical tool. This is demonstrated through individual paragraphs on “culture as product”, “culture as process” and “culture linked to national states and national cultures”. How culture is represented in the visual images are discussed in all of the paragraphs.

5.2.1 Culture as product

Product-based culture promotes an us-against-them mentality and presents diverse cultural contexts as exotic, stereotypical and different (Lundahl 2014). Still, there are several indicators in the three textbooks that promote a view of culture that can be seen as product-based. In one chapter of Join the Quest 2 there is a picture that we took note of. In this picture, there are several people of different cultures shown, there is for example a middle eastern man with a long brown dress and a fez on his head. There is an Inuit baby in typical Inuit clothing and there is a native American girl in typical historical native American clothing and a feather in her hair. There is an Asian man wearing a kimono, wooden sandals and he is holding a fan and there is also a small dark-skinned boy who is wearing nothing but a pair of shorts and holding a lion shaped teddy. This picture can be argued to promote a product-based culture. The different ethnicities are drawn in a very stereotypical clothing where it is assumed that native Americans wear feathers in their hair constantly or that the dark-skinned boy cannot afford proper clothing. This picture shows cultures as facts that will never change as if east Asians wear kimonos and tree sandals on a daily basis today. This truly promotes an us-against-them mentality as they are reinforcing stereotypes, which according to both Lundahl (2014) and Kirch (2004) should not be provided to students through textbooks.

Further, Happy overall lacks cultural diversity within its context. In this book we are mainly introduced to a cultural context where the characters are white, there are some darker skinned children, but they are not immediately involved in the books storyline. Since process-based culture sees diversity as the norm (Lundahl 2014), this argues against the book being process-based. The exclusion of diverse ethnicities as well as cultures, builds up a hierarchy where the white normative culture is seen as superior and this further promotes the us against them mentality which is the main result of product-based culture (Lundahl 2014).
Magic! only represents a small amount of cultural diversity within the books context. This is in a picture in a final section of the book that does not have any connection to the story of Jennie and Jack, who are the two main characters in the book. The final section is called “Magic pages” and it shows a photograph of a black family consisting of a father, a mother and two children celebrating Christmas. This part displays a different ethnicity than the characters represented in the rest of the book, however, there are only white characters throughout the books main story and they all share the same normative culture. In Magic! there is a chapter where Jennie and Jack end up in a jungle. Judging by the location that the story started in, which looks like a Scandinavian leaf forest, the jungle is a place they are not used to. This is also something that is expressed in the pictures of the chapter where the children’s clothes change to the typical “explorer outfit” of beige clothes. The clothes could be compared to the famous, fictional movie character, Indiana Jones (Lucas 1981). They also decide to use their camera and binoculars for the first time and uses words like “funny” and “crazy” to describe the different things that they see and encounter in the jungle. This presents a diverse cultural context as exotic and different which can be considered as product-based culture.

Both Happy and Magic! can be considered to promote product-based culture as well as Join the Quest 2 and Magic! sometimes provides us with quite stereotypical views of some cultures. Neither product-based culture nor stereotypes can help the students develop intercultural awareness and therefore those features in the books are working against what the students are trying to achieve in the EFL education (Lundahl 2014; Goméz Rodríguez 2015).

5.2.2 Culture as process

In order to develop intercultural awareness, there should be an aim to see culture as a process rather than a product. Process-based culture promotes a view of culture as ever changing and here, diversity is the norm (Lundahl 2014). This can also be connected to the idea about intercultural awareness being developed through learning about many different cultures as well as the students’ own culture, which further promotes diversity (Arslan 2016; Böçü & Razi 2016). In terms of process-based culture, Join the Quest 2 mostly gives us an idea of culture being seen as an ever-changing process within the countries we are introduced to.
Here we see many different ethnicities interacting as equals although they have different cultures and interests. Throughout *Join the Quest 2*, we are introduced to children of different ethnicities who tell us about themselves, and therefore different ethnicities and cultures within Kachru’s inner circle countries are given attention as equals. For example, a brown-skinned boy named Tom from New York tells us about his family and the house he lives in. There are also several pictures in the book that shows us children of different ethnicities living and interacting with each other in different contexts. Lundahl (2014) states that, in process-based culture diversity is the norm, which according to current norms is considered norm breaking. Norm breaking culture is however something that is overall absent in both *Happy* and *Magic!* and therefore we would argue that process-based culture is lacking in the two books. Whatever is not norm breaking, is naturally instead normative. The traditional norms of the world are very closely connected to product-based culture where we see non-western cultures and ethnicities as exotic and different (Dahlén 2014). Lundahl states that in order to develop intercultural awareness one needs to understand that people perceive the world differently and therefore also act differently (Lundahl 2014). Simply, in order to achieve interculturality, we need to accept and embrace diversity (Lundah 2014; Arslan 2016; Böcü & Razi 2016). Therefore, process-based culture is essential in EFL learning.

5.2.3 Culture linked to national states and national cultures

The three textbooks show different amount of diverse cultural context that can be linked to different places of the world. We found it difficult to find more than one specific culture that was clearly represented in the textbook *Magic!*. The culture we found is the traditional, normative white culture that we for example find in Sweden. The textbook *Happy* mainly focuses on normative Swedish culture but it does include some Anglo-American culture throughout the book. In this book we get to look inside a classroom which shows a typical Swedish classroom where the children are wearing their own clothes and the teacher is wearing clothes which can be considered casual. This can be compared to Great Britain where the students wear school uniforms and the teachers wear formal clothing. In *Happy* we are also introduced to the concept of a Swedish Christmas where the family puts the presents under the tree as they decorate it, and the father of the family dresses up as Santa Claus. Another part of the text about Christmas introduce us to the idea that Santa Claus comes through the chimney during the night and leaves presents under the tree and this points to the
Anglo-American way of celebrating Christmas. Further, we only found one picture that represent non-Swedish cultural focus, that is the chapter where Tim and Sara are visiting a town that can be assumed to be London, which would then represent English culture. *Join the Quest 2* provides us with cultures from mainly inner circle countries, but also somewhat from outer circle or expanding circle countries. In the textbook we are introduced to school uniforms in Great Britain, farms in the USA, Canada, India and Australia. We are shown pictures and given information about big cities in the inner circle countries such as Sydney, New York and London. *Join the Quest 2* informs us about traditions, hobbies, food and holidays in different countries such as pancake day in Anglo-American culture, football clubs in Great Britain, salmon in Norway and Christmas in Anglo-American culture. Although this book provides us with a lot of diverse cultural information, the cultures presented are mainly those of the inner circle countries.

It is problematic that two of our textbooks lack of diverse cultural contexts and although the third one does present us with diverse cultural places, we see issues in which cultures this book presents and how they are presented. In order to develop intercultural awareness, the students need to meet a variety of different diverse cultural contexts as well as discover their own (Kirch 2004; Arslan 2016; Brodow 2005; Lundahl 2014). Therefore, it is key that English education enables the students to investigate other cultures as well as their own. This is something that the Swedish national curriculum also points to. In the course plan for English, both the aims and the core content states that the students should explore places, people and contexts where English is used as well as explore their own cultural context (Skolverket 2017). Therefore, it is quite necessary that the learning materials used in English includes this if they are to be used as the main learning source. In *Join the Quest 2* we are introduced to different cultural contexts, but mainly to those of the inner circle countries. English is wider than the inner circle countries and there is after all a bigger chance of the students using their English skills when speaking with someone who is not from the inner circle countries in the future (Smolder 2009; Crystal 2003). Therefore, the students need to learn about cultures that are not connected to the inner circle countries.
6. Conclusion

In this section we will discuss the results we found in our analysis. And we will compare our results to the previous research conducted which we presented earlier in the text. We will also discuss how the results of this study will affect our future roles as English teachers for the years 1-3. This section also provides a critical review of the method we used in our analysis and finally we give suggestions for continued research on the subject.

The results of the analysis we carried out on three textbooks shows that two of them leave a lot of room for improvement regarding diverse cultural content. Further, we found that none of the books promote EIL in a satisfying way. The books Happy and Magic! overall provide the reader with a normative Scandinavian culture, and on some occasions Happy provide some normative Anglo-American culture. Join the Quest 2 has far more culturally diverse content. They provide the reader with specific cultural content from mostly inner circle countries. We argue that Happy and Magic! could show a better connection to the Swedish curriculums statement that the students should encounter “Daily life and ways of living in different contexts and areas where English is used” (Skolverket 2017, p. 36). It could be argued that Join the Quest 2 lives up to the statement above, but it is worth mentioning that English is used worldwide and not explicitly in the inner circle countries that the book presents to us.

Further, only Join the Quest 2 lives up to the expectations set by several researchers on how interculturality should be developed. According to some of these researchers, interculturality is developed by learning about one's own culture as well as others (Kirch 2004; Arslan 2016; Brodow 2005; Lundahl 2014). These cultural comparisons are supposed to work as a way of developing a tolerance for other cultures (Arslan 2016). Both Happy and Join the Quest 2 do reflect on some of the readers own culture. Join the Quest 2 also introduces us to some of the inner circle countries cultures which could be argued to help develop intercultural awareness. However, you can only see a minimal amount of cultural content in the books regarding the outer or the expanding circle countries. It is important not to forget that these countries use English widely and it is more likely that the children who learn English on a 1-3 level today will interact with people from the expanding circle countries rather than the inner circle
countries in the future (McKay 2002).

We are however troubled about the fact that there is such a lack of Muslim children in the books as they make up a fair percentage of Swedish children (SCB 2017). Dahlén (2014) refers to an interview with the Swedish rapper Adam Tensta who tells us how 1994 was one of the best years of his life, as they showed the football world championships and two darker skinned Swedish football players were renowned as meaningful for Sweden. This was the first time the rapper experienced that people who looked like him were considered important in Sweden. Children gain confidence from the influence of media, and this includes the learning material they meet in school (Eilard 2009). Therefore, when Muslim children are excluded from the learning material, it creates a gap between the different cultures that exists in the Swedish community. This could lead to the children having difficulties when identifying themselves within the society and could possibly lead to an identity crisis (Nader 2003).

Looking back at the previous research results presented in the background section, we found that our results are quite different from theirs. The earlier research on EFL textbooks overall shows that there is international cultural content provided, but that it is often product based and therefore does not fully provide the students with information that could raise their intercultural awareness (Weninger & Kiss 2013; Gomez Rodríguez 2015; Lappalainen 2011). Through our analysis we found that none of the books we analysed provides us with a satisfying amount of international culture. Only one of the textbooks provides us with information on more than one or two different cultural contexts, and this book mainly presents inner circle countries culture. Our conclusion is that the books could not fully provide the students with the opportunity to develop intercultural awareness, nor do they give us a developed view of EIL. This is something that the textbooks in our prior study seem to do to a wider extent. However, our own study is the only one of the studies presented, that analyses textbooks for the education of the years 1-3, and this could be a natural explanation for our results.

When teaching EFL, the teacher has a great responsibility in making sure that the students’ education includes all of what is stated in the course plan and to create motivating conditions for learning (Pinter 2006). Therefore, to rely blindly on learning materials such as a textbook is unwise, and one should always review the content of any learning material critically. In
terms of international cultural content, we found, through this study that the teacher will most likely have to rely on another learning material or his/her own creations in addition to one of these textbooks. This would be in order to live up to the course plans statements as well as researchers’ opinions on intercultural development in EFL learning.

When analysing textbooks, there is a wide range of methods that one could use, and therefore choosing one of these methods was time consuming for us. However, when realising that our way of looking at EFL books matches with the norm critical perspective, our process got easier. Nevertheless, we ran into a few other obstacles: In creating our sub-questions we drew inspiration from questions found in Lundahl’s (2014) book. These could be considered a bit too open for interpretation, making our analysis process somewhat difficult from time to time. As an example, the question: “How is culture represented in the textbooks?” has so many different layers, since culture is such a versatile concept. It is a concept that influences an endless number of subjects: gender roles, religion, ethnicity, language ability and so on. Therefore, it was a challenge to pinpoint what our research area was supposed to be, since all of the subjects was of our interest. This also had an effect when creating our analytical tool, since we had to create several sub-categories regarding culture to organise and create clarity when analysing textbooks. We believe that our analysis has depth, but we are aware that if we were to focus on one of these categories exclusively, one could obtain a much deeper understanding on the specific subject and its impact on children encountering it in their EFL textbook.

Because of the limited time given for this project we were also limited on how many textbooks were able to analyse. Therefore, we are curious to see a wider range of available textbooks for English in the years 1-3 and how they depict culture. It would be interesting to see continued research on this in order to find books with even more cultural diversity in them. Further, as the Swedish curriculum does not state any knowledge requirements for English in the years 1-3, there are also no requirements to start developing intercultural abilities at this point. This is however a requirement for later years in the English subject and an overall goal (Skolverket 2017). Thus, it would be interesting to see how the book series we analysed represent culture in textbooks they have published for the later school years in English. Simply, we cannot give a full picture of these publishers’ ideas on how the national curriculum should be taken on. It would also be interesting to consider what the prior research represented in this study shows us on textbooks for the older ages and if Swedish
textbooks would give similar results to the ones published in other countries. Another interesting research area would be to find out how this subject around culture has developed throughout the years in EFL textbooks due to the fact that the curriculum has been changed several times, therefore, changing the requirements for the content of the books.

In conclusion, the books of our research could generally have provided us with more cultural diversity and a wider sense of EIL, we feel that the authors could have challenged cultural norms further which would result in a richer content. There is most likely a lot of books used for EFL learning that would be more satisfying regarding the things that we are looking for. But, the fact that these kinds of books still need a lot of improvement leaves room for even more research regarding the subject and we feel that, as future teachers, we will always seek for the material that best matches our way of teaching.
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