Wings 7 blue and cultural understanding

A task-oriented analysis of cultural content in the text– and workbook

Wings 7 blue och kulturell förståelse
En uppgiftsorienterad analys av det kulturella innehållet i text- och arbetsboken

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate how culture is represented in the *Wings 7 blue* textbook and workbook and what implications this may have on learners’ cultural understanding. The research questions are: How is culture represented in the textbook and workbook *Wings 7 blue*?, and What cultural understanding is promoted through the task design of the learning material *Wings 7 blue*?

The analysis of the learning material draws on the theoretical framework of the Swedish researcher Ulrika Tornberg. The result of our analysis, and first research question, displays that the main focus of the cultural content in the *Wings 7 blue* textbook is on the mainstream national culture of Britain, typical British behavior, and linguistic readiness.

Cultural understanding may be seen as either general cultural understanding, based on Tornberg’s two first perspectives, or as intercultural understanding which can be found in Tornberg’s third and final perspective. The result of the analysis of the tasks shows that both types of cultural understanding are promoted in the workbook, but the possibility for learners to develop their own intercultural understanding is limited, which is the answer to our second research question. This leads to the conclusion that the learning material, by itself, does not cover the complete aim for cultural understanding in the National Syllabus.

One might argue that the material should only be seen as a complement to the other tools of the teacher, who can compensate for any missing information in his or her communication with the class. However, according to the large National survey for English, teachers of English mostly use published learning materials and tend to trust that these correspond to the aims of the steering documents.

**Keywords:** *Wings 7 blue*, learning materials, tasks, (inter)cultural understanding
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Introduction

As future teachers of English, we have chosen to investigate the role of the learning material *Wings 7 blue*, which has recently become available on the market. In the material we have focused on how culture is represented and how cultural content can be categorized, since in our opinion, the cultural representation is extremely important for international understanding. The Swedish Curriculum for the compulsory school system Lpo94 states that:

It is important to have an international perspective, to be able to see one’s own reality in a global context in order to create international solidarity and prepare pupils for a society that will have closer cross-cultural and cross-border contacts. Having an international understanding also means developing an understanding of cultural diversity within the country. (Skolverket, 2006a)

In acknowledgement of Sweden as a society of multiple cultures, pupils are not only to prepare for cultural encounters outside of national borders but also within. The National Syllabus for English, which recognizes the importance of international perspectives, explains why English is such an important language for in the following way:

English is the mother tongue or official language of a large number of countries, covering many different cultures, and is the dominant language of communication throughout the world. (Skolverket 2000)

Since it is expressed that English covers a wide spectrum of cultures one has to ask what the term culture exactly stands for and how culture is to be approached in the teaching of English. According to a governmental survey, *Läromedlens roll i undervisningen* (Skolverket 2006b), the vast majority of English teachers in Swedish secondary schools use textbooks as the underlying structure for education. Teachers tend to trust the material to be the foundation for their pupils’ learning and that it will fulfil the requirements of the curricular texts.¹ (Skolverket 2006b)

¹ En majoritet av lärarna i engelska och samhällskunskap instämmer helt eller delvis i påståendet att läroböcker säkerställer att undervisningen överensstämmer med grundskolans läroplan och kursplaner. Läroboken har således en legitimerande funktion i lärarnas arbete: så länge de följer en lärobok upplever de att de kan vara säkra på att undervisningen följer läroplanens mål, innehåll och principer. Man kan således konstatera att lärarna överlämnar mycket av sitt handlingsutrymme till läroboksproducenterna och att läroböcker spelar en viktig roll för att konkretisera styrdokumenten. (Skolverket 2006b)
This brings us to the issue of textbook writers’ influence on formal education and their implementation of curricular texts. The content of the Syllabus with regard to culture is not specific, but open to interpretation. Nevertheless, it does state that:

The school in its teaching of English should aim to ensure that pupils develop their ability to reflect over ways of living and cultures in English-speaking countries and make comparisons with their own experiences (Skolverket, 2000)

The cultural content expressed here consists of ways of life, cultures in English speaking countries and pupils’ own experiences. How learners are supposed to work with this content is summarized in two words: reflection and comparison. In addition, the syllabus states that the ability to reflect and make comparisons will eventually lead “… to an understanding of different cultures and inter-cultural competence” (Skolverket, 2000). The important questions which each interpreter of this document has to ask here are: What are pupils to reflect upon, what are they to compare with and how are they to do this? As we see it these aspects would be explicit in tasks designed along with textbook materials and when teachers merely present pupils with textbook materials, it is the textbook authors who are privileged to decide on what cultures and ways of living that represent the English-speaking world. This leads us to the conclusion that different interpretations, by teachers and textbook authors, may lead to the promotion of various types of cultural understanding in the teaching of English as a foreign language in the secondary school. It is important not to forget that pupils’ previous experiences of, and exposure to, English culture also play a significant role in forming their cultural understanding.

**Aim**

Our aim is to investigate how culture is represented in the selected learning material and what implications this may have on learners’ cultural understanding. In order to fulfill our aim we have formulated two research questions;

- How is culture represented in the textbook and workbook *Wings 7 blue*?

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2 The term intercultural competence in this context could be replaced, here and onwards, by Ulla Lundgren’s (2002) definition of “intercultural understanding”.
• What cultural understanding is promoted in the task design of the learning material *Wings 7 blue*?

This first question focuses on the actual content of the learning material. The second question places the focus on what cultural understanding is made possible. Our overall focus will be on the workbook rather than the textbook since we believe that it is through *engaging* in the tasks that learners gain knowledge about different cultures as well as prepare themselves for their role in the society as global citizens.


**Literature review**

**Previous research**

In this chapter we present previous research to do with culture in language pedagogy in Sweden relevant to our study. We also discuss the possible contribution of our study to the research area.

Tornberg has studied the treatment of culture in the teaching of foreign language in Swedish settings. In her doctoral thesis *Om språkundervisning i mellanrummet – och talet om “kommunikation” och “kultur” i kursplaner och läromedel från 1962 till 2000* (2000) she presents the three aims of her study, which are to develop analytical interpretations of "communication" and "culture" to use these as guidance for an analysis of historical educational material, and to discuss didactic consequences of the analysis in a democratic classroom meeting context (pp. 24-25).

She explains that she has chosen discourse analysis as her research method since she is interested in studying/analysing the discursive meaning of “culture” and “communication” in various contexts. Tornberg’s study concludes numerous results, where the developed perspectives on culture and communication can be seen as one of them. The three perspectives on culture are: culture as “a fact fulfilled”, culture as “a future competence” and culture as “an encounter in an open landscape” (pp. 58-90). These are of special interest to us and we will return to them in the presentation of our theoretical framework. Tornberg sees that, depending on which perspective on culture one takes, one comes to different cultural understanding (p. 58). She found all of these perspectives present in the Syllabus 2000, according to her interpretation.

Furthermore, Tornberg has carried out an analysis of learning materials in the subject of German used in Swedish secondary and upper secondary schools. She came to the conclusion that the perspectives are represented in the material, but in a disproportional way. This indicates to us that the perspectives also may be found in learning materials for EFL.
Tornberg’s method of analysis is however, in our opinion, not clear. With this dissertation we will apply her theories to our choice of material and by that, exemplify how to use her theory in practise.

Another important issue that we will deal with is intercultural understanding. In her doctoral dissertation *Interkulturell förståelse i engelskundervisningen - En möjlighet* Ulla Lundgren (2002) conducted a study on the concept of intercultural understanding within three different discourses: authority discourse, research discourse, and teacher discourse. These discourses were identified in order to “examine the prospects of developing intercultural understanding through English as a foreign language (EFL) in the Swedish comprehensive school” (p. 265). By intercultural understanding Lundgren primarily refers to the ability to understand that people construct the world differently, each according to their own culture.

Lundgren argues that the development of this ability is especially important in order to meet in solidarity and mutual respect in the internationalised Swedish society, where cultural encounters occur constantly. Because of its international perspective and status as a *lingua franca*, Lundgren considers the subject of English as extra prominent in the development of intercultural understanding in education. (pp. 17-20) Lundgren’s results show that the National Syllabus avoids questions to do with cultural complexity. The consequence, can be that teachers, pupils, and authors of learning material, among others, will take their own views for granted. Therefore it is possible for a teacher to direct and conduct education in which culture is tied to nations. In other words there is a risk with the National Syllabus that traditional culture- and realia education will be prioritized over a *personal* inter-cultural understanding (p. 221).

Our view is that Lundgren’s results and remarks are important to the discussion regarding how and why learning materials may differ while still fulfilling the directives of the National Syllabus. Furthermore it explains why the definition of intercultural understanding still is very unclear among both teachers and pupils.
In *Kultur i språkundervisningen*, Eva Gagnestam (2005) presents a study conducted on teachers’, teacher trainees’ and pupils’ perceptions on culture and language within the subject of English at upper secondary level. Gagnestam’s findings point to different perceptions of culture and its role in language teaching. Gagnestam’s view correlates with Tornberg’s in that it recognises the need for change in the ways culture is touched upon in the subject of English in Swedish schools (pp. 153-54).

**Summary**
The previous research shows how culture has been and is approached in teaching and learning of the modern languages in Sweden. The research of Gagnestam shows that there is a gap between the theoretical discussion of the concept of culture and its practical adaption. Both Lundgren and Tornberg, who are in agreement with Gagnestam, bring up the issue of the simplistic approach to culture in the National Syllabuses in which the complexity of the culture is not dealt with. Tornberg and Lundgren take their reasoning further and contribute with their interpretations of the concept of culture in curricular texts. Tornberg does this by developing the three analytical perspectives on culture, and Lundgren discuss the concept of intercultural understanding.

We agree with Tornberg’s and Lundgren’s theoretical discussions, but we also feel that there is a need for additional practical research and this is one of the reasons we intend to apply their theories in practice. This is done by our analysis of learning materials intended to be used in teaching English as a foreign language at secondary school. We hope that this might lead to practical consequences for teachers when choosing materials for their learners.

**Theoretical framework**

**The concept of culture**
The concept of culture is complex and not easily defined, as there is an abundance of definitions. What first springs to mind is perhaps the aesthetic notion of it, also referred to as “Culture with a capital C” (Askadou, Britten & Fashi 1990 quoted in McGrath, 2002, p. 211). In its traditional sense this definition of culture was, according to Stuart Hall (1997), the embodiment of “…the best that has been thought and said’ in a society
… represented in the classic works of literature, painting, music and philosophy – the ‘high culture’ of an age” (Hall, 1997, p. 2). Although the notion of high culture is still present in modern society it has rather become a marker of taste, as the aesthetic concept of culture has been extended to include all sorts of human practice of creativity; art, design, music, literature, dance, the cinema, sports, cooking etc.

Another definition of culture, in which the aesthetic is certainly included, is one of anthropology and sociology. Hall (1997) asserts that culture within these disciplines refers to “… whatever is distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of a people, community, nation or social group.” (ibid.) and “… the ‘shared values’ of a group or of society” (ibid.). H.H. Stern (1992) describes the term way of life as “… typical behavior in daily situations, i.e. personal relationships, family life, values systems, philosophies, in fact the whole of the shared social fabric that makes up a society” (p. 207). Further he states that this is the concept of culture from which culture teaching in schools derives.

According to Hall (1997), culture is a process of meaning, which is produced, exchanged and negotiated through the use of language as a representational system. To belong to the same culture in this sense means that the members share meaning through a common language; that they “… share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world in, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways.” (p. 4) Language is here to be understood in a wider perspective, which Hall (1997) explains as follows:

This does not mean that they must all, literally, speak German or French or Chinese. Nor does it mean that they understand perfectly what anyone who speaks the same language is saying… (ibid.)

Hall (1997) asserts that the shared meaning of cultural groups, i.e. the ways in which we construct our reality, “… influence our conduct and consequently have real, practical effects.”(Hall, 1997, p. 3) Hall stresses the cultural practices of the participants of the same culture; the meaning given to certain people, objects and events around us dependent on the context and of our frameworks of interpretation.

Things ‘in themselves’ rarely if ever have one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning…It is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them-how we represent them-that we give them a meaning. (ibid.)
In our opinion, Tornberg (2000) agrees with Hall that culture is to be seen as a process where meaning is shared and created. Her own definition of culture is presented as “… an ongoing shaping and re-shaping process through contingent communication.” (p. 282)

As mentioned in our section previous research, Tornberg has developed three analytical perspectives on culture (culture as: a fact fulfilled, a future competence, and as an encounter in an open landscape). These three perspectives point to different interpretations of the concept of culture in contemporary curricular texts in foreign language teaching. In Tornberg’s opinion, culture in the first and second perspective is regarded as a product, while it is a process in the third.

A fact fulfilled
The first perspective “a fact fulfilled” “… implies a conception of culture as nationally defined, where cultural differences are seen mainly as difference between different national cultures” (Tornberg, 2000, p. 283). In addition, it suggests that cultures can be studied objectively. The perspective includes both an aesthetic and an anthropologic concept of culture, since culture is regarded as cultural artifacts as well as the distinctive ways in which people from different societies or social groups live their lives.

However, in this perspective the term “way of life” is simplified since it does not cover the wide spectra in the anthropological sense, nor does it account for the multitude of cultural groupings within modern society. Rather the way of life refers to cultural phenomena that are typical for members of the same national state, which is more or less presented as factual knowledge.

In “A fact fulfilled” Tornberg (2000) asserts that the development of cultural understanding among learners lies in the comparison of national communities. By doing this, the distinctive character of individuals is molded into what she refers to as an “abstract we” (p. 86); a homogeneous national identity, which is to be compared with a likewise “abstract them”.
Tornberg states that the individual can, at best, make neutral comparisons of what is considered as “we” and “them”, and the relationship between these homogeneous cultures, but that

…if my distinctive character differ prominently from the generalized, e.g. the typical Swedish “we” - the cultural reference point of teaching, there exists a risk that I, who has different experiences, feel excluded and marginalized.¹ (Tornberg, 2000, p. 87, our translation)

In Tornberg’s opinion this perspective merely enables learners to become passive recipients and consumers of constructed mainstream cultures and realia mediated by teachers and learning material (p. 86). In our understanding, her opinion implies a generalized image of the cultures of the target language and that of the learners, which, within the language classroom is not explicitly questioned and meaning is reproduced rather than negotiated.

Our view is that, “a fact fulfilled” is partly what Claire Kramsch (1993) claims to be the traditional way of culture teaching in language education. In this perspective there is an idea of objective native cultures or target cultures, and culture teaching consists of “the transmission of information about the people of the target country, and about their general attitudes and world views” (Kramsch, 1993, p. 205). The diversity of cultures within the boundaries of modern nation states makes it difficult to speak of a shared national culture. In the teaching of culture in the foreign language classroom it will no longer suffice for educators, if it ever has, to provide learners with national or mainstreamed cultures to represent countries of the target language. Neither can educators take for granted that all of the learners share the same point of reference from where they are to perceive these cultures.

In Kramsch’s view (1998), “Culture is a process, that both excludes and includes, always entails the exercise of power and control” (p. 9). As members of a community, we identify ourselves jointly as insiders against others who then become outsiders, but that “Only the powerful decide whose values and beliefs will be deemed worth adopting by the group” (ibid.). She further states that this is particularly true in terms of national

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¹ “...om min särtart avviker markant från det generaliserade, t.ex. den typiskt svenska “vi” – kulturen som undervisningen utgår från, föreligger risken att jag, som bär på andra erfarenheter, känner mig exkluderad eller marginaliserad.”
culture and that the matter of representation always has been a difficult issue to deal with in the study of language. Or in other words:

Who is entitled to speak for whom, to represent whom through spoken and written language? Who has the authority to select what is representative of a given culture: the outsider who observes and studies that culture, or the insider who lives and experiences it? According to what and whose criteria can a cultural feature be called representative of that culture? (ibid.)

According to Markos Dendrinos, textbooks in EFL aimed at presenting “… reality in today’s Britain over-represent the white middle-class population” (as quoted in McGrath, 2002, p. 210) and their ways of living. His view is that the great variety of minorities populating the country is absent or nearly absent in these books.

Generally, an idealized version of the dominant English culture is drawn, frequently leading populations of other societies to arrive at distorted conclusions based on the comparison between a false reality and their own lived experiences in their culture. (ibid)

The distorted conclusions one may draw from the mere representation of dominant cultures, are also one of Michael Byram’s (1997) concerns. Byram believes that:

When individuals interact, they bring to the situation their own identities and cultures and if they are not members of a dominant group, subscribing to the dominant culture, their interlocutor’s knowledge of that culture will be dysfunctional. (Byram, 1997, p. 39)

We agree that if authors of published material for teaching in the subject of English adopt this approach to culture, the cultural content will consist of representation of mainstream cultures in English-speaking countries. People from minority cultures may occur in the texts, but when language learners are asked to compare their lives with the one represented, these people are treated as spokesmen of entire groups. This does not allow for learners to reflect upon the differences between individuals.

**A future competence**

In Tornberg’s second analytical perspective on culture, “a future competence”:

…an assumption is expressed that there is an individual behavioral skill to be developed with reference to cultural know-how to behave appropriately when confronted with native speakers and situations in the target language, and/or to a competence to compare and reflect on differences and similarities between different national cultures, an “intercultural” competence. (Tornberg, 2000, p. 283)
Tornberg’s (2000) use of the term intercultural is similar to a description made by Kramsch (1998):

The term cross-cultural or intercultural usually refers to the meeting of two cultures or two languages across the political boundaries of nation-states. They are predicated on the equivalence of nation-one culture-one language, and on the expectation that a “culture shock” may take place upon crossing national boundaries. In foreign language teaching a cross-cultural approach seeks ways to understand the Other on the other side of the border by learning his/her national language. (Kramch, 1998, p. 81)

One of the major features in the development of intercultural competence within this perspective is, according to Tornberg (2000), to equip pupils with prescriptive and general models on how to turn cultural barriers into cultural bridges in any given situation and in any future cultural encounter with native speakers of the target language.

As with the perspective “a fact fulfilled,” we believe that culture as “a future competence” is predicated on the perception of homogeneous cultures. The concept of culture is extended to comprise values and world views. Byram (1997) claims that successful communication is not only a matter of efficiency of information exchange but also about the establishment and maintenance of relationships.

According to him the efficiency of communication “… depends upon using language to demonstrate one’s willingness to relate, which often involves the indirectness of politeness” (Byram, 1997, p. 4). According to Byram (1997) the ways of being polite vary from one language and culture to another, which is a “… symptom of a more complex phenomenon: the differences in beliefs, behaviors and meanings through which people interact with each other. He further states that unless relationships are not maintained through politeness these differences may cause cultural conflicts.

Tornberg (2000) questions whether it is likely or even desirable to avoid cultural conflicts, in language learning, by not emphasising the differences between cultures, especially since prescriptive models of behavior are based upon the premises of mainstream national cultures. Hence the language learners’ mastery of mainstream models is no guarantee for acceptance in encounters with the target community (Tornberg, 2000, pp. 77-78). This can be exemplified by the inability to predict who, when, or where such encounters will take place.
In our understanding, learning materials developed according to this perspective might present learners with texts on how to behave and what to say in various situations, such as at the dinner table, the bus station or when doing business in the target language. An example of a communicative task within this perspective would be to enact such situations in a role-play.

**An encounter in an open landscape**

Instead of imposing a predetermined homogenous culture on the language learners from which they are to departure in their understanding of foreign cultures of the target language, culture teaching from the third perspective put emphasis on cultural diversity within the classroom. In this perspective, each learner is allowed to express his, or her, own thoughts and beliefs, become aware of the values of those present and participate in a collaborative creation of meaning through open-ended communicative action. Tornberg (2000) draws upon Kramsch (1993) who claims that the foreign language classroom can constitute a culture of its own:

> In the foreign language class, culture is created and enacted through the dialogue between students and between teacher and students. Through this dialogue, participants not only replicate a given context of culture, but, because it takes place in a foreign language, it also has the potential of shaping a new culture. (Kramsch, 1993, p. 47)

According to Tornberg (2000) it is not through the comparison of mainstream cultures that we come to understand one another, but rather through the differences between individuals in unique face-to-face encounters. She explains the perspective an encounter in an open landscape as “The space which is created when two different views meet between the borders of what is you and what is me ...” (p. 79, our translation⁴). She asserts that within this open landscape, “… we can gain a sudden and unpredicted insight into the differences between us. It is through the understanding of these differences that we can come to realize how we relate to each other” (ibid., our

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translation). It is in an interaction between the participants that a change in the condition, which forms the view of cultures outside the classroom, can be created. If the authors of the teaching material have interpreted the concept of culture according to Tornberg’s third perspective this would be visible in the communicative tasks. The focus here is on the learners’ possibility to share their values and opinions with each other, and to discuss without a predetermined outcome.

Lundgren’s (2002) analysis of The National Syllabus for English and the curriculum Lpo 94 can be related to Tornberg. However, her analysis aims at the interpretation of the term intercultural understanding presented in the authoritative texts, which all educators are obligated to relate to. Lundgren defines intercultural understanding as an ability to understand that there are several ways of constructing reality and to act according to this insight. The insight is gained when the subject comes into contact with others who perceive the world differently and by the individual’s realisation that he or she will not remain unaffected by this meeting. According to Lundgren intercultural education should enable pupils to compare their own views with those of others and allow for the questioning of what is taken for granted. (Lundgren, 2002, p. 35).

By combining Tornberg’s and Lundgren’s terminology we have reached the conclusion that Tornberg’s first and second perspective mainly lead to general cultural understanding, while Tornberg’s third perspective heavily leans towards intercultural understanding as defined by Lundgren. The difference between intercultural and general cultural understanding would then be seen as the difference between understanding gained through personal interactions, and general cultural realia.
Method

Selection

Our choice of the material *Wings 7 blue*, (Mellerby et al., 2008a, b, c) consists of a textbook, a workbook with related worksheets from a teacher manual which all are new publications within the Wings-series. The Wings series is popular in contemporary schools and a material that we most likely will come across in our future profession. The textbook is divided into six thematic sections: “Music”, “Clothes”, “Food”, “In the House”, “In Town” and “Life in Britain” and comprise both factual and fictional written texts: descriptions, short stories, dialogues depicting real-life situations, lyrics, words- and phrase lists and texts written in first-person narrative indicating the person exists. The opening chapter of each section in the Textbook is called “Before you start” and contains a summary of what the learners will study, what they will find in the section and a list of goals of what the learners are supposed to master after they have finished working with the section, e.g. “After you finish this section you should be able to … Know the names of some British cars” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 101). This is followed by an overview of the contents of the section in the textbook and workbook, with brief presentations of the texts and the titles of the related activities. Each section ends with a part called “Evaluation”, where pupils are asked to write down their opinions about the section, to self-assess themselves e.g. on how they have achieved the goals stated at the beginning of the section and on how they can improve their English further.

The workbook follows the textbook sections with activities to each text. In addition, it has a section with reference guides, such as the phonetic alphabet, grammar rules, how to write a formal letter etc. The activities are divided into the following categories: words and phrases, reading, speaking, writing, listening and grammar.
Procedure

The aim of this chapter is to provide readers with an overview of how we have proceeded in our analysis of the cultural contents in the textbook and in our evaluation of the tasks in the corresponding workbook of the learning material *Wings 7 blue* from the perspective that the learners’ engagement in these may lead to different cultural understanding. We aim at describing this procedure as thoroughly as possible. As Bo Johansson and Per Olov Svedner (2006, pp. 104-105) state, the reader should be able to reach the same conclusion as we have by reading our text. Starting with our method of analysing the textbook we will describe the four steps included, and then proceed describing the different steps needed to apply a task-specific analytical model to the workbook.

Textbook

We consider Tornberg’s three cultural perspectives as typologies, while our main method when analysing the textual contents in the textbook is typological analysis. Identifying typologies is the first step in this kind of method. According to Amos Hatch (2002) “Typologies are generated from theory, common sense and/or research objectives ...” (Hatch, 2002, p. 153). In our opinion, Tornberg’s perspectives can be used both for culture, as content, and how the content is implemented. As a consequence the focus of these typologies will change depending on what kind of material is being analysed, i.e. the cultural contents of the texts in the textbook and the tasks in the workbook. In the analysis of the textbook we have only used the typologies “a fact fulfilled” and “a future competence”, as we believe that Tornberg’s third perspective “an encounter in an open landscape” can only be visible in the analysis of tasks as it is primarily concerned with the negotiation of meaning between learners.

The second step in our analytical process has been to read the material repeatedly with one of the particular perspectives in mind. As Hatch (2002) points out this is done to see if there is evidence that the typology can be found within the material (pp. 153-154).
The third step in the analysis of the cultural contents of the textbook has been to pose guiding questions to the texts in order sort the data into the typologies. The first question has been: What is the text about?

By asking this question to the text we have gained general information of what the learner encounters when reading the material. In order to gain insight into the cultural content of the text, with specific reference to our interpretation of Tornberg’s first perspective, we have focused on how people, places and cultural artefacts are depicted in the text, i.e. on representation. Our second question has therefore been: How are people, places and cultural artefacts presented within the text? Thirdly, we have tried to identify Tornberg’s second perspective culture as “a future competence”, by asking if there are any displayed behavioural models in the text, i.e. if the text indicates certain skills that the learner should obtain in order to act properly in encounters with the culture(s) studied.

The fourth step has been to look for patterns, relationships and themes within the typologies and to categorize the data. These categories are presented in the analysis chapter. Out of these categories, we have made broad statements about the cultural content of the textbook as a whole by giving representative examples from the data.

Workbook
Tornberg’s three perspectives have also been used in the analysis of tasks together with an adaption of Rod Ellis’ framework for describing tasks (2003, p. 21). Our analysis of tasks is here presented in four steps. In the first step, we have looked through all the activities presented in the workbook and decided if they are tasks or exercises. In this selection process we have used Ellis’ definition of tasks, which distinguishes between tasks and exercises. “Tasks are activities that call for primarily meaning-focused language use. In contrast, exercises are activities that call for primarily form-focused language use.” (p. 3). By this Ellis means that the role of the participants in tasks is to primarily function as language users who “… must employ the same kinds of communicative processes as those involved in real-world activities” (ibid.), while the role of the learner in an exercise is to focus on the structure of the language. In our interpretation, examples of tasks would for instance be a discussion or the writing of a
letter, while an exercise would e.g. be a grammar activity where the aim is to learn the correct form.

When the tasks within the workbook have been identified, we have moved to our second step in the analytical process in order to determine to what extent Tornberg’s three cultural perspectives are present in the tasks. Our model consists of Ellis’ five components: goal, input, conditions, procedures, and predicted outcomes (Ellis, 2003, p. 21) together with questions added to ensure that the framework can be used in our study of the text material. Our model framework is displayed below.

**Analytical framework for describing tasks**

When describing a task, the goal of the task is a starting point to understand the predicted outcome. The following questions have been used to limit the goal analysis to contain results useful in our study: What aspects of communicative competence can the task contribute to? What possibilities to compare and reflect over cultural values are enabled by the task? When asking these questions our assumption is that the reflection, comparison, and contribution is made in English in accordance with the ordinances in the National Syllabus, which specify communicative skills as writing, reading, listening, and speaking.

In our understanding the input consists of all the information a learner needs to complete the task, including task instructions. Input can be given in various ways for instance through written text, listening extracts, pictures etc. When analysing the input of a task the following question has been applied: What is the input to the task?

The conditions of a task, in our framework, determine if the task can be completed by a single, active learner. This, according to Ellis (2003), leads to one-way communication. In such one-way task, one participant is performing the task and the rest of the participants are passive receivers of information (Ellis, 2003, p. 51). To us this is relevant since we can establish that Tornberg’s third perspective cannot be found in one-way tasks, as “an encounter in an open landscape” demands at least two active participants, a two-way task. In a two-way task “… all the participants are active” and they “are obligated to participate in order to complete the task…” (Ellis, 2003, p. 88).
To our analysis the two-way task merely indicates if a third perspective could be present, since it is not an absolute condition. The question we have applied to the tasks regarding conditions is: Can the task be completed by a single, active learner?

An analysis of procedures describes how the task should be performed. Some of this outcome may be visible in other analyses within our framework, although the focus here is specifically on the procedure, which includes the role of the learners. To exemplify what we mean by role of the learner; Learners might be asked in the task instruction to perform the task as a member of a particular group which he or she has not chosen to identify with, or to be given the opportunity to speak for him/herself. The latter constitutes that Tornberg’s third perspective is present in the task. The question used to determine the procedures in the task would be: How is the task to be performed and what role are the learner(s) asked to obtain when performing the task?

With reference to our study, the predicted outcome describes what the task should lead to with regards to cultural understanding. Learners may gain an understanding of how people in the target cultures live, cultural artifacts, but also on how to behave when meeting people from foreign countries. The question related to this component is: What might the task lead to in regards to cultural understanding?

When analyses of all the individual components for a task have been completed, this task has been grouped with other tasks where the answers to the questions have been similar or the same. This matchmaking has been done after the complete workbook has been examined. In the last step we have investigated the different groups and identified typical task types of each.
Analysis

The content of the Wings 7 Blue Textbook

The Wings 7 blue Textbook largely focuses on Britain. The language presented is British English and the contexts within the texts are foremost British, why these categories have been identified in the typologies/perspectives in the contents of the textbook.

Typology/perspective one: “A fact fulfilled”  
*National culture defined through comparison with other national cultures*

In this category differences and similarities between national cultures are emphasized in order to state what is British and what is not. The comparisons made are especially between British and American and/or Swedish national culture. The comparison between British and American culture, in terms of vocabulary, is visible at the beginning in four of the six sections of the book. Here one can find a wordlist in British English and in Swedish translation to the introductory listening comprehension on items related to the theme of the section. Selections of the words from the wordlist are placed in a table with headings in the shape of the Union Jack and, in the same table, the equivalents in American English are stated under the Stars and Stripes E.g. in section two “Clothes” on page 32: pants- shorts, wellington boots – rubber boots; in section three “In the Kitchen” on page 58: cooker-stove, tea towel – dish towel; in section four “In the House” on page 86: flat – apartment, bath-bath tub and in section five “In town” on page 106: petrol station – gas station, pavement – sidewalk. (Mellerby et al., 2008a)

In section three “Food” there is a spread with examples of “Popular British dishes” on one page and on “Popular American dishes” on the other (pp. 70-71). Some of the examples of the British dishes are similar to the American ones, although the former are more thorough and descriptive, e.g. the examples of turkey on the “British page” has “Many kinds of stuffing (dried bread, onion, parsley, spices, butter and apples/raisins/walnuts).” (p. 70) while the American is simply “Often stuffed…” (p. 71)
In the text “How do you like the food?” (pp. 60-61), a dialogue between four pupils on their taste in food, food is nationally defined with examples of British/English food in contrast to food of other nations.

What’s your favourite food? – Traditional English dishes like steak and kidney pie, roast beef with Yorkshire pudding and gravy… I prefer Italian food. I love all kinds of pasta and pizza. I like Chinese food as well and Indian food is so spicy. (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 61).

The theme is further discussed with what it means to be British and what is considered British is stated in the dialogue “Fish n Chips” as two teenagers discuss the food they have ordered.

-The fish is fantastic, but I prefer thinner, crispier chips. Like the kind you get at McDonald’s. -You’re joking! Do you really like McDonald’s more than fish and chips? What kind of Englishman are you? (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 64).

As a sequel to this dialogue is the text “Fish n chip facts” in which one can read that “British chips are usually made from fresh potatoes and are much thicker than are the thin American French Fries.” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 65). In section six in the part called “Traditions in Britain” (p. 146) the text “Christmas” begins with a clear reference to the Swedish celebration of the holiday on Christmas Eve, by the following statement: “Christmas Eve, the 24th of December, is not a holiday in Britain …” (ibid.). Further on in the text there are more explicit references made to state the differences between British and Swedish celebrations of Christmas, e.g. “There are no special Christmas games like the ones we have in Sweden, where we dance around the Christmas tree. “ (ibid.)

A typical way of life
The textbook generalizes the British way of life by describing for instance typical food and traditions. Some general statements that are made in the Textbook about British people are: “… it is true that British people drink more tea than most other peoples in the world” (p. 154), that most of the houses in Britain have a fir tree during Christmas, that they usually eat Christmas dinner “… at midday or early afternoon” (p. 146) and when eating fish n chips it is with salt and vinegar. There are also texts which imply the royalist views of British people as in the description of Guy Fawkes Night, a national-
bound tradition celebrated due to the failed attempt to overthrow King James’ Parliament, and the importance of the Queen’s Christmas message to the nation (pp. 146-149).

The majority group depicted in this book is British teenagers, especially in the dialogues, whether discussing school lunch, drinking tea and looking in the latest fashion catalogue, going shopping, having family dinner or arguing with parents. In the dialogue “How do you like the food” four teenagers sit in a school dining hall, and share their opinions about the school lunch and their eating habits. Apparent from the text is that parents in Britain pay for their children’s school meals, or provide their children with packed lunch from home. Also, that the teenagers presented in the dialogue are dissatisfied with the meals served at school as “It all looks the same and it all tastes the same …” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 60) and “There’s no nutritious value whatsoever in this crap” (ibid.).

There is, however, only one part of the textbook which has a clearly stated focus on British teenagers, namely “Teenage life in Britain” (pp. 126-129) in section six. This part consists of two texts written in first-person narrative and is about the lives of 14-year old Joshua Lord and 15-year old Jessica Law. The texts are to be viewed as two opposite samples of how teenage life can be, e.g. single parent home, low income, public school versus nuclear family, double income, and private school. Parents and teachers are other groups which are represented in the Textbook, although mainly from the viewpoint of teenagers. For example in “Teenage life in Britain” where Jessica Law explains that the reason why she goes to a private school is “… because my parents think we’ll get a better education.” (p. 128) and where Joshua Lord describes his teachers as “… fairly strict …” (p. 127). Representations of parents and parenthood where adults are allowed to speak for themselves can be found in the dialogues “Tidy up” (pp. 92-93) and “What’s for dinner?” (p. 68). In “What’s for dinner” (ibid.) which is situated around the dinner table in the home of the Roberts’, the parents are depicted as rather authoritarian figures of the family, as they lead the conversation and do all the serving.
National culture artifacts

The cultural artifacts in the textbook are presented as typical, popular or famous phenomena and they are mainly focused on Britain. Many are, in our opinion, likely to be already known by the learner. What the textbook does is to put them in a context and describe it more thoroughly in English in order to provide the learner with a better understanding of these. Typical such artifacts would be Harry Potter, cricket, Princess Diana, David Beckham, The Beatles, Madame Tussaud’s, and Shakespeare, not to mention the English school uniform.

In section six there is a part called “Famous British people” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, pp. 150-151) with descriptions of six celebrities, notably from England. In each description the person’s background and characteristics are mentioned, why he or she received attention as well as the commitment made to society, be it to the nation in times of war, to charity work, for world peace or as an advocate of animal rights. The description of Princess Diana begins with the fairytale notion of how an anonymous “… young nursery school aid” (p. 150) became Princess Diana when she “… married Queen Elizabeth’s son Charles, the Prince of Wales …” (ibid.) which depicts her as a commoner although she belonged to the aristocracy. Diana is also depicted as someone who was famous for her looks, beloved and admired by the entire world, especially by “… millions of girls …” and who, after her unhappy marriage to the prince, “… spent a lot of time doing charity work” (ibid.).

The text on another British cultural artifact, fish n chips, in “Fish n chip facts” (p. 65) does not only provide the reader with a description of how the dish is made, but also with a historical overview. This text is an example of a text that belongs to two categories. The wear of school uniform is mentioned on several occasions, e.g. in Teenage life in Britain where Joshua and Jessica describe their particular uniforms and in “New Clothes” as a reason to why Tina has to rush home: “I’ve got to get home and wash and iron my school uniform or I’ll have nothing to wear to school tomorrow!” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p.35)
Typology/perspective two “A future competence”  
*Linguistic readiness for different situations and behavioral models*

The category consists of linguistic readiness and behavioral models which are apparent in reappearing parts of each textbook section named “Useful phrases”, but also in dialogues based on these phrases. For instance in section five the input to the dialogue “How stupid of me” (p. 108) originates from “Asking the way” (p. 107). Another example would be the relationship between “In the shops” (pp. 38-39) and “Shopping” (p. 37) in section two. The “Useful phrases” in “Shopping” (ibid.) aims not only at providing the learner with phrases they may use in certain situations, in an English speaking context, but also with phrases they may expect to hear. E.g. “Have you got this one in other colours?” (ibid.) respectively “Are you looking for something special?” (ibid.).

Non-verbal manners is in *Wings 7 blue* mostly ascribed to the people depicted in the texts, i.e to those who are regarded as British, and not something which it is explicitly stated that the learner should act according to. It is rather a matter of what the learner should expect in encounters with British culture, which is e.g. described in “Traditions in Britain” (p. 146) and in the text “Tea”:

> If you visit a British house you will probably be offered tea instead of coffee, and if you stay at a hotel there will most likely be a tray in your room with a kettle, cups and teabags so you can make yourself a cup of tea at anytime (Mellerby et al., 2008a, p. 154).

Other examples of what behavior, verbal as well as non-verbal, can be found in the dialogue “What’s for dinner?” (p. 68). Here the family father states that their guest, according to his mannerisms, should be served first. The guest, who is a friend to the daughter in the family, addresses the adults as Mr. and Mrs., give polite answers, and do not talk unless she is spoken to, except when complimenting the food. The phrases used here can be studied in “Eating out” and “Table talk” (pp. 66-67), two pages of “Useful phrases” on the subject having dinner at a restaurant, or in someone’s home in the target language.
Tasks

Framework for describing tasks put into practice
This section starts by showing three examples of task analysis according to the adaption of Rod Ellis’ model for description of tasks. They each represent one of Tornberg’s three perspectives, which we can show in our discussion of the different task components. These examples are included since they will bring a better understanding to the rest of our findings in this chapter.

Task one
30 An interesting character
Write a fact sheet about a famous British person. It can be about an athlete, actor, writer, singer or whoever you find interesting! (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 133)

Task two
34 Jumbled dialogues 1
“Jumble” means “en röra, ett virrvarr”. In a jumbled dialogue the lines are in the wrong order. On Worksheet 12 there are two dialogues like this.
1. Read the lines
2. Write the two dialogues correctly in your notebook. Start with the lines written in bold.
3. Read the dialogues with a partner until you know them by heart and can act them out.
   (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 71)

Task three
26 Discuss!
Work in groups of 3-4 and discuss the following issues. Use English all the time!
1. What are your responsibilities at home regarding house work?
2. What is a fair amount of housework for a teenager?
3. Do girls and boys normally have the same responsibilities at home? Why? /Why not?
4. Who normally has major responsibility for housework in a family? Why?
5. What happens if you don’t do the housework you are supposed to do?
7. At what age should children starts helping around the house?
8. What different tasks in the household do you think children and teenagers can do?
   (washing, doing dishes, cleaning, ironing, gardening, washing the car, cooking etc)
   (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 92).

As mentioned earlier, our adaption of Ellis model includes goal, input, condition and procedure, and predicted outcome. Each of these components will help us understand the task better from different perspectives and together they form the task design. In order to compare some of the way that the components can differ depending on the task design, which includes but is not limited to Tornberg’s perspectives, the task examples will be analysed component by component.
The goal of task one, when it comes to developing the communicative abilities, is to practice written English, while it focuses on speaking the target language in task two and task three. Engagement in reading English texts is included as a natural part of collecting and sorting information. In task one there is also an explicit goal connected to learners’ approach to the culture of the target country as learners are to collect facts on a famous British person. The adjective British, in our opinion, reveals that the life of this person should be studied because he, or she, is a member of a nationally defined culture. This goal can be seen as interpretation of the aim that “The school in its teaching of English should aim to ensure that pupils develop their ability to reflect over ways of living and cultures in English-speaking countries” (Skolverket, 2000), which can be found in The National Syllabus for English as a foreign language in Swedish compulsory schools. This is also the only task wherefrom the results of the goal analysis successfully has identified one of Tornberg’s three perspectives. In task one, the learner is to study British culture through finding facts, and writing, about one “British spokesman”, it can therefore be stated that task one could be used to fulfil Tornberg’s first perspective, culture as “a fact fulfilled”.

Input is another component when describing tasks. In all of these three tasks learners receive input in the form of written instructions of the tasks. The information for task two also consists of two jumbled dialogues in worksheet twelve, (Mellerby et al., 2008c, p. 107) where the both dialogues are connected to eating and food. In these dialogues learners are provided with readymade phrases as “Never mind I’m not very hungry, Let’s have crisps, [and] Help yourself. There isn’t very much” (ibid.). When it comes to the input in task one it can be argued that since the textbook contains the text “Famous British people” (Mellerby et al., 2008a, pp. 150-151), this text can be also seen as an input to the task, even if it is not clear in the task instructions. In “Famous British people” the learners might get ideas on how to write a fact sheet i.e. what to include and how to structure the content. In task three the eight questions regarding what issues to be discussed can be seen as the main input. By the study of input one can only gain insight into what kind of information learners have access to, which in our opinion is not enough to decide what cultural understanding this may lead to. However input has an important role when it is combined with other components to show the complete task design.
The analyses of the two components, condition and procedure, are demonstrated together since we believe that these are linked to each other in a logical way. The condition of task one points to the task being a one-way task, which is understood from the sentence “write a fact sheet about a famous British person” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 133) As a consequence of this, the full responsibility for completing the tasks lies with the learner. How the learner is to proceed is only partly stated in the task instructions. As mentioned previously, the learner is supposed to write a factsheet. It is, however, not specified which sources the learner is to gather information from, which opens for various options. The learner needs to both collect information and then display this information as writer.

In contrast to task one, the other tasks are two-way tasks, which imply the active participation of at least two learners. In task two, dialogues are to be completed and acted out in pairs. The learners are first asked to change the order of the sentences to form correct dialogues and afterwards to learn these by heart and act them out. Since the dialogues are predetermined, the role of the learners is not to be speakers in their own rights. Tornberg’s perspective culture as “a future competence” can be found in this task since the learners work with fixed phrases, which can be used in future encounters with English-speaking people. Task three differs from task two in procedure, although it too is a two-way task. The learners are to discuss the questions in the instructions, although the answers are not stated or fixed. Rather the learners are asked to give their own opinions and explain their views, which can be shown in the two following questions: “Do girls and boys normally have the same responsibilities at home? Why? /Why not? [and] Who normally has major responsibility for housework in a family? Why?” (p. 92). The role of the learner in this task is to be a speaker in her own right, who negotiates meaning together with the other participants. In this kind of communication meaning is produced by learners rather than reproduced. By analysing the conditions and the procedures of this task we have been able to identify it to contain Tornberg’s third perspective, which is culture as “an encounter in an open landscape”.

The main purpose of analysing the predicted outcome is to show what kind of information connected to cultural understanding learners might gain by engaging in particular tasks. This step will also help us clarify previous findings when it comes to
the presented perspectives in the tasks. The outcome of task one is a factsheet about a famous British person. The cultural understanding gained from this task depends on the input, however the limitation implemented by “British” forms the learner’s view specifically around a national cultural group. This indicates that task one belongs to Tornberg’s first perspective. Due to the uncertainty of the possible linguistic readiness this task may result in, there is no guarantee that the gained knowledge would help in future unknown situations, nor is the learner allowed to share his or her opinions with others within this task. Therefore, our conclusion is that, in task one, only Tornberg’s first perspective is to be found.

The predicted outcome in task two is a complete dialogue. The dialogue contains phrases that might be used in future situations involving communication in English. Since the focus is on learning proper verbal behavior, we argue that task two is to be placed in perspective number two. The predicted outcome of task three is a discussion. It can be suggested that the understanding learners have gained partly, or fully, is dependent on their peers’ views on life, which can differ. This in our opinion qualifies task three for Tornberg’s third perspective. However, since there are no models of behavior or nationally defined realia to be understood this exclude Tornberg’s two first perspectives. As can be seen above the predicted outcome corresponds directly with the overall view of which of Tornberg’s perspectives that can be found in each task.

**Identified groups – tasks with different perspectives to culture**

While engaging in analysing the tasks some general observations regarding the possibility of predicting the occurrence of Tornbergs’ three perspectives were made. The first observation was that an analysis of the predicted outcome components would be enough to determine which perspectives that are represented, since the predicted outcome is the result of goal, input, conditions, and procedures. It is important to note that a task can contain one or several cultural perspectives. In our opinion all the different components are still needed to obtain a full understanding of the task design.

To further analyse the task design we have chosen to group the different tasks depending on which of Tornberg’s perspective(s) that is/are present. In the next section
these groups have been labeled “A” to “E”, and examples of different task types within the group are shown.

Table 1. Distribution of task types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives:</th>
<th>“A fact fulfilled”</th>
<th>“A future competence”</th>
<th>“An encounter in an open landscape”</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>13 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group D</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group E</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occurrence</td>
<td>21 tasks</td>
<td>14 tasks</td>
<td>9 tasks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of tasks within the Tornberg’s cultural perspectives both as individual tasks, but also combined in the groups defined below. In total 37 tasks have been categorized of which 21 tasks contain Tornberg’s first perspective, 14 tasks contain the second, and finally nine tasks contain the third perspective. This is possible since a task can contain more than one perspective. The group membership is determined by the wording of the task, the application of the theoretical framework, and its result in the form of which culture perspectives that can be found within the task.

**GROUP A: Tasks that only contain Tornberg’s first perspective**

The first task type of our final analysis that is identified, within Group A, is “True or false statements”. When carrying out this type of task learners might be engaged in all kind of communication such as writing, reading, and/or listening. The statements that learners will work with, within this task type, can be either fixed by the workbook or created by one learner and answered by another. A typical example of this task type would be the task “True or false?” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 10) from the first section in the workbook. The input to this task is a text about U2, an Irish pop-group, together with written, and thereby fixed, statements that can be found in the task instructions. To complete this task the learner should read the text and then decide which statements are
right or wrong. Examples of statements from the task are: “Larry Mullen was 14 years old when he put a notice on the notice board in his school in London” (ibid.) and “The winner of the talent show in Limerick in 1978 was U2” (ibid.). A total of six tasks including the “True or False statements” task type have been identified in the workbook. The predicted outcome of this task is an identification of the correct facts about U2. The cultural understanding that may be gained, from engaging in this kind of task, is connected to national defined culture.

(Occurrence: 5:13, 3:13, 1:7, 6:11, 6:37, 6:27)

A second task type within Group A is “fact-based writing”. The predicted outcome of tasks belonging to this task type would be an article, or a fact sheet, about some aspect of nationally defined realia. The task “An article” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 132) from section six is a typical example of such task type. In this task a learner is asked to imagine that he/she is “… a journalist and work for a magazine for teenagers” (ibid.) and that he/she “… is going to write an article about young peoples’ lives [sic] the UK” (ibid.). The learner is then advised to look for facts, which can be used for this article, within the different texts in section six. A total of five tasks in the work book belongs to this Group A task type.


The third, and last example of typical task types identified within this group, is a type called “Summary”. This task type requires the learner to summarise texts that he/she has listened to, or read, and the summary presentation can be made orally or in writing. In “Food facts” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 68), from section three in the workbook, two learners are to read two different texts, from worksheet ten and eleven located in the teacher manual, and re-tell the content of them to each other. The texts discuss the origin of bananas and pineapples and the learners can read about historical facts such as: “Early in the 16th century a priest brought some roots of the banana with him to America” (Mellerby et al., 2008c, p. 105) and that “In 1493 Christopher Columbus and his men were the first Europeans to see a pineapple” (p.106) as well as “Almost two hundred years later, a portrait of King Charles II of England shows the king getting a pineapple as a present!” (ibid.) The cultural understanding promoted through this task.
type is also connected to the perspective where cultural is seen as national defined and the task type can be found in three different instances in the workbook.

(Occurrence: 3:27, 6:14, 3:36)

GROUP B – Tasks that only contain Tornberg’s second perspective

The first task type that is identified within Group B is one we refer to as “Role play in a general setting”. While engaging in these tasks learners are to enact certain situations in the target language, using role cards provided by the teacher manual. These cards give instructions to the learners on what roles to play, and suggestions on phrases to be used. The phrases that learners are to use can be found in texts where the content is situated in English speaking countries, such as Britain or in some cases the USA. Therefore it is possible to assume that the “national” culture of these countries is imbedded in the language the learners will use. However, the tasks are not nationally defined, since it is only stated what kind of situations and general locations the role plays takes place in, i.e. in shops, at restaurants etc. The predicted outcome of the task type is for learners to gain speech patterns for future encounters with English-speaking persons.

An example of this task type is “Role play – At the restaurant” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 67) in which learners are asked to work in pairs and enact a scene that takes place in a fast food restaurant. The positions of the learners are to act the role of “Danny”: “… who doesn’t care much for the fast food” (Mellerby et al., 2008c, p. 101), and “Josh”: “… who is a big fan of fast food.”(ibid.). Another example would be “Role play: Tidy your room!” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 140) which is designed in the same way as the previous task. Here too, the learners are to act in pairs, this time as father and son, respectively father and daughter. This task type can be found in seven different instances in the workbook.


The second task type in Group B is called Jumbled dialogues. An example of such a task type has been given in the description of the components in the analytical framework in the previous chapter and another example is the task “Jumbled dialogues” in section two (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 35). The learner is to read jumbled dialogues about shopping, write these “… correctly” (ibid.) and read the corrected versions until
memorised. In our opinion, this task aims at a specific verbal behavior which is presumed to be applicable when shopping for clothes using the target language. This task type can be found in six instances in the workbook. The cultural understanding that may be gained from both this, and the previous, task type is an understanding of how to interact accordingly, in future situations.

(Occurrence: 1:8, 2:9, 3:34, 3:35, 4:20, 5:20)

GROUP C- Tasks that only contain Tornberg’s third perspective

The only task type identified within Group C is “the opinion-based personal discussion”. This kind of task is always carried out with learners working in pairs or groups. Learners are given different issues to discuss and the cultural understanding they gain is directly related to their classmates’ opinions which can differ. There are only three tasks within this task type which can be found in the workbook. The task “Discuss!” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 92) has been already analysed within the framework for perspective three and will not be further discussed in this section. The task “Describing people, again” (p. 15), in section two, and the task “Question for discussions” (p. 47), from the same section, are the other two tasks within this task type. In “Describing people, again” learners are to discuss clothes in fashion magazines or mail order catalogues. The starting questions for the discussion are: “Discuss the clothes in English – do you find the clothes nice? What would you like to wear? Why? [and] “Do you like the same clothes?” (p. 15). We believe that the keyword in this type of task is “why”, which indicates that learners’ opinions are asked for and that they will gain insight into each other’s opinions. The key question “why” is also to be found in the task “Questions for discussions” and it is combined with another question such as: “Would you like to work as a model?” (p. 47)

(Occurrence: 2:15, 2:31, 4:26)

GROUP D Perspectives one and two

The perspectives of Group D can only be found in one task. The task type of this group is therefore easily identified as being “Role play – in a nationally defined setting”. “Role play – in a nationally defined setting” is similar to the characteristics of the task type “Role play – in a general setting” described in Group B. The difference is that the situation to be enacted is restricted to a specified national location enabling the learners
to focus on the target culture. The one task containing this task type is “Role play – At the dinner table” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 67). The scene is situated in a British family where one of the learners is to imagine herself as a Swedish student staying in Britain for a couple of weeks, while the other learner is to act the role as the mother of the family serving her guest typically British dishes. It is notable that the task instructions includes not only references to the textbook, but also guidelines on how to behave properly; “… and even though you don’t like it all, you tell Mrs. Daley that everything is delicious” (Mellerby et al., 2008c, p. 102)

Group E Perspectives one and three

In the same way as for Group C and D, there is only one task type identified within Group E. Due to the combination of two different perspectives, i.e. culture as “a fact fulfilled” respectively as “an encounter in an open landscape” there is no straightforward label of this type. However, “national limited opinion-based discussion” may serve as an illustration. Significant for this task type is that the open discussion from Group C has obtained input which might limit the context surrounding the discussion. The input significance has been described previously, but within this task type national boundaries have been added as a condition. Examples of such boundaries would be: topics around typically national phenomena, comparison between national cultures, learners positioned as members of a national culture etc. In the task “Discuss - Foreign food!” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 66) learners are to discuss food habits within different national cultures such as “What is typically American, French, Italian, Thai, and Japanese food? [and] Why do you think we eat more foreign food today than before?” (ibid.) Comparing and reflecting upon differences between generalised views of nations can be found in the task “Traditions in Britain” (p. 131) in section 6. Learners are to read a text on traditions in the UK (Mellerby et al., 2008a, pp. 146-149) before engaging in discussions about how these differ from traditions in Sweden, on topics like “Why do you think there are things that are alike and things that are very different?” (Mellerby et al., 2008b, p. 131) This task type promotes both a cultural understanding on a nationally-limited subject and the possibility to gain an understanding of the participants’ opinions.

(Occurrence: 1:18, 1:35, 3:19, 3:20, 6:20a, 6:20b)
Discussion

As part of our closing discussion we show how we have answered the research questions and fulfilled the aim of this study. We discuss the result of our analysis and tie these conclusions to previous research and our own thoughts together with an explanation of our view on how this work can be used and expanded further.

Our first research question, How is culture represented in the textbook and workbook *Wings 7 blue*? can be divided into two parts. The first part would be regarding the cultural content in the textbook, while the other part focuses on cultural representation in the workbook. In order to fully answer the first part we must look at the meaning of cultural content, and in what forms it can be presented. We believe that cultural content could be views and opinions as well as facts and information regarding different groups, areas, people etc. that helps the learner to form an understanding. In our study of the textbook we used Tornberg’s (2000) cultural perspectives as references for our mapping of the texts into different categories. The categories have helped us define and explore the cultural width in the material. As categories, National culture defined through comparison with other national cultures, a typical way of life, and national culture artifacts all fall into Tornberg’s first perspective. In the same way, linguistic readiness for different situations and behavioral models describes cultural content within Tornberg’s second perspective. The reason for not using Tornberg’s third and final perspective “an encounter in an open landscape” was that it is simply not possible for a text to explicitly promote this perspective, without having the text mapped with one, or both, of the other perspectives.

As described in our analysis the emphasis of the textbook, and thereby our categories, is heavily on Britain and British material, which is also true for the linguistic readiness and behavioral models. From a factual point of view, the texts aim at presenting national culture to the learner and it provides information regarding British food, traditions, cultural artifacts, and way of life.
Even though the aims of teachers and local work plans can vary somewhat from the National Syllabus, we question if Britain alone can represent all other English-speaking countries and if the mainstream culture of Britain can represent the diversity of cultures within the country. The National Syllabus in the subject of English states:

The school in its teaching of English should aim to ensure that pupils develop their ability to reflect over ways of living and cultures in English-speaking countries and make comparisons with their own experiences (Skolverket, 2000)

Our belief is that the interpretation possibilities of the syllabus do not allow neglecting of the English cultural multitude. As a consequence, and teaching implication, Wings 7 blue would need to be presented with additional learning material, or discussions, around other cultures in class, in order not to be too biased towards Britain.

Our analysis of the representation of culture in the workbook consists of an analysis of the task instructions, Input in our analytical framework, regarding cultural understanding. Since the tasks in the workbook refer to the textbook as input, it is natural that the cultural representation in the workbook is similar to the textbook. The exceptions are mostly related to tasks including comparisons, which in our opinion is not enough to differentiate the levels of cultural content in the workbook, and hence the teaching implications, from the textbook.

Our second research question, “What cultural understanding is promoted in the task design of the learning material Wings 7 blue?”, is aimed towards understanding if Tornberg’s three perspectives can be found in the learning material and thereby her view of cultural understanding from the curricular texts. The focus will be on the workbook rather than the textbook since we believe that it is through engaging in the tasks that learners gain an understanding of different cultures.

As stated in our theoretical framework we have identified two types of cultural understanding that can be promoted in the learning material: a general cultural understanding and an intercultural understanding. Learners might gain general cultural understanding when culture is interpreted according to Tornberg’s first two perspectives: “a fact fulfilled” and “a future competence” which means that the cultural
knowledge learners obtain is national defined and generalized. Our understanding of the term intercultural understanding is taken from Lundgren (2002) which, as we see it, corresponds to Tornberg’s third perspective. Cultural understanding is here to be gained through “an encounter in an open landscape” and not as cultural realia or general models for behavior. The consequence is that intercultural understanding can only be acquired through personal meetings, which in a classroom setting can be stimulated by encouraging open-ended discussions.

Depending on the task design, one, both, or none of the cultural understandings can be promoted in the material. The task design is determined by the included task component characteristics from our analytical framework. In our task analysis we have grouped tasks with similar component characteristics into task types. By this we have been able to link task types and identify a pattern which reveals that depending on what cultural perspective(s) are present, the task design changes. The most frequently appearing task types include, but are not limited to: “True or false statements”, “Fact-based writing”, “Summary”, “Role play in a general setting”, “Role play in a nationally defined setting”, “Jumbled dialogues”, “Opinion-based personal discussion”, and “National limited opinion-based discussion”. By this, it is quite obvious that the authors of Wings 7 blue have spent time to ensure that the tasks contain variation, but also to give learners a sense of recognition by repeating the task types in different sections of the workbook.

Each task can either contain one, several, or even lack a cultural perspective according to Tornberg’s definitions as per our discussion around different cultural understanding above. These combinations of perspectives have been labeled into groups, and it should be noted that some groups have not been found⁵, for instance all three perspectives together, even though they still can be constructed from a theoretical point of view.

To us this indicates that the workbook has not been designed to primarily show variance in cultural understanding. In our opinion the uneven spread of the existing task types within our defined groups further strengthens this hypothesis.

⁵ See Table 1. In our Analysis chapter
An expected distribution pattern of task types would be rather even in order to firmly secure the promotion of overall cultural understanding as required by the National Syllabus. However it is very clear that task types including Tornberg’s third perspective, “An encounter in an open landscape,” solely, or in combination with another perspective, are rare and that to each such task type only a few tasks can be tied. This is the direct opposite to what Tornberg and Lundgren recommend and a possible explanation to this gap could be a lack of knowledge of Tornberg’s and Lundgren’s research by the authors of the learning material. Such explanation is not investigated, or validated by for instance interviews etc, but could be seen as an example of what could further be added to this dissertation.

The consequence of the uneven representation of task types is in our opinion that the workbook, and thereby the complete learning material, does not put enough emphasis on Tornberg’s third perspective and intercultural understanding. One might argue that the material should only be seen as a complement to the other tools of the teacher, who can compensate for any missing information in his or her communication with the class. Gagnestam (2005) has shown though, that this method only would be successful as long as the teacher would know and practice the definition of cultural understanding. (pp. 152-153) Since this, according to Gagnestam, is not always the case, we would argue that there is a significant risk that the Wings 7 blue users will gain less the ideal amount of overall cultural understanding. The material, however, gives a fair representation and promotion of Tornberg’s two first perspectives, which can be summarised as the traditional way of promoting general cultural understanding.

By answering the two research questions, and discussing the answers, the aim of this dissertation, “... to investigate how culture is represented in the selected learning material and what implications this may have on learners’ cultural understanding” has been fulfilled. In summary the Wings 7 blue learning material does not represent Tornberg’s three perspectives in an even way and therefore the intercultural understanding by engaging in the material may be limited.

Our hope is that this dissertation can be used as an inspiration to teachers, in their search for suitable learning material, from a cultural point of view.
To us the implication has also been that we are better placed to understand the importance of relying not on textbook and workbook only when teaching. Additionally we have gained insight into a possible way of critically examining and analysing learning materials.

We believe that with further analysis of other learning materials, new task types can be identified and the trustworthiness of our method strengthened. In the same way, we hope that future authors of learning material can use our paper as an example on how to capture Tornberg’s and Lundgren’s wish for a larger emphasis on intercultural understanding in the classroom, using Tornberg’s third perspective, with different task types. Future studies could also include follow-up interviews with users of Wings 7 blue from different educational settings and comparisons of learning material for other languages than English.
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