

Beyond The Surface of Language Learning:

An Analysis of EFL Textbooks and Their Representation of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Cultures

Juliette Lejonord
Ämneslärarprogrammet



Degree essay: 15hp
Course: LGEN2A
Level: Advanced level
Term/year: VT2022
Supervisor: Zlatan Filipovic
Examiner: Victoria Rolfe

Keywords: EFL textbooks, representation, cultures, Kachru's circles, CDA

Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyze EFL textbooks used in Swedish upper secondary schools to investigate the representation of Kachru's three Circles of English – the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle – as well as their cultures. The study contained both a quantitative and a qualitative approach, collecting data from three EFL textbooks. The quantitative part collected data showing to what extent each of the three circles were represented and whether it differed, while the qualitative part – conducted through a Critical Discourse Analysis – studied prevalent themes in the books to investigate how the representations differed and what the implications of that difference might be. The quantitative findings showed that Inner Circle countries and cultures were represented to a far greater extent than Outer and Expanding Circle countries and cultures were, in all three textbooks. Two prevalent themes were found, *The British Empire and Colonialism* and *Classic English Literature*, which provided the basis for the critical discourse analysis. The findings of this analysis suggested that Outer Circle countries and cultures were marginalized and stereotyped, while Inner Circle countries and cultures, and to some extent the Expanding Circle as well, were represented as dominant powerholders with hegemonic control. A critical approach towards EFL textbooks was called for as a pedagogical implication, and a need for further research within the field of EFL textbooks – particularly in a European context – was emphasized.

Table of Contents

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 | Textbooks and Politics | 3 |
| 1.2 | Aim and Research Questions | 4 |
| 2 | Theoretical Background | 5 |
| 2.1 | English and Globalization | 5 |
| 2.2 | The Power of Language | 7 |
| 2.3 | Critical Discourse Analysis | 8 |
| 2.4 | Defining ‘Text’ | 10 |
| 3 | Previous Research | 10 |
| 3.1 | Representation of English Cultures | 11 |
| 3.2 | Positioning English as an International Language | 12 |
| 4 | Method | 13 |
| 4.1 | Sampling | 14 |
| 4.1.1 | Textbooks | 15 |
| 4.2 | Ethical Considerations | 16 |
| 5 | Results | 16 |
| 5.1 | Frequency of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Representations | 17 |
| 5.1.1 | Solid Gold 2 | 17 |
| 5.1.2 | Pick & Mix 2 | 21 |
| 5.1.3 | Blueprint B | 24 |
| 5.2 | Critical Discourse Analysis: The British Empire & Colonialism and Classic English Literature | 26 |
| 5.2.1 | The British Empire and Colonialism | 27 |
| 5.2.2 | Classic English Literature | 29 |
| 6 | Discussion | 31 |
| 6.1 | Discussion of Findings | 31 |
| 6.2 | Pedagogical Implications | 32 |
| 7 | Conclusions | 33 |
| | References | 35 |

1 Introduction

Textbooks are a natural part of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom and serve as an aid not only for students learning English, but also for teachers teaching English. Matsuda (2012) argues that textbooks bring validity to language education, act as a “high prestige source of input” (p. 168), and provide a different style of language input than the teacher’s. The question is, however, whether teachers of EFL in general are aware of what the contents of EFL textbooks might convey, beyond the surface of language learning. Matsuda (2012) proceeds by stating that textbooks not only provide language input, but also “express, reinforce, and construct a certain view of the world” (p. 168). The perspective that EFL textbooks portray is generally focused on the so-called “standard varieties”, i.e. British and American language and culture, while other varieties are rarely represented (Matsuda, 2012, p. 170).

These so-called standard varieties are what Kachru (1992) refers to as the Inner Circle in his three-circle model of World Englishes. In addition to the Inner Circle, there is the Outer Circle, consisting mainly of old British colonies such as India and Singapore, where non-native varieties of English are used. Lastly, the Expanding Circle is made up of EFL countries such as China and Sweden (Kachru, 1992). However, as previously mentioned, EFL textbooks mainly focus on standard varieties of English, i.e. The Inner Circle. But what about the Outer and the Expanding Circles? Are they represented in EFL textbooks, and if so, how? If not, why? This raises many questions concerning power and representation in EFL textbooks.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2012), textbooks enforce a certain cultural knowledge on teachers and students that more often than not embody Western values and beliefs. The representation is often based on stereotypes, and “seem to be impervious to the challenges posed by heightened cultural consciousness and identity formation that globalism has created—a testimony to the dominating agency exercised by the Western publishing industry” (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 21). Still, these kinds of textbooks continue to be a natural part of EFL classrooms everywhere (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Lack of representation in textbooks has been subject to much criticism in the field of textbook analysis, which, according to Karlsson (2011), shows that textbooks are inherently connected to power. Not political power, nor power over contentious issues, but instead the fundamental power over the individual and

society and the idea of an “Us” and “Them”. Textbooks are, therefore, abstract expressions of the so-called “hidden curriculum”, that enforce certain values and beliefs (Karlsson, 2011), in this case inherently Western ones. But what about the official curriculum?

In the curriculum for the Swedish upper secondary school, it is stated that “[s]chools must help students to develop an identity that can be related to and encompass not only what is specifically Swedish, but also that which is Nordic, European, and ultimately global” (Skolverket, 2013, p. 4). Furthermore, in the syllabus for the subject of English in upper secondary school, the importance of giving students the opportunity to develop an understanding of social issues, living conditions, and cultural structures is emphasized, focusing particularly on different contexts and areas of the world where English is utilized. (Skolverket, 2020). Both the curriculum and the syllabus clearly express an expectation for education to have a *global* perspective. This shows that the subject of English – and, inevitably, EFL textbooks – is expected to not only favor Inner Circle, Western, standard varieties, but instead include all parts of the world where English is used. The question is whether EFL textbooks in Sweden actually represent a variety of Englishes, or not?

1.1 Textbooks and Politics

During the first half of the 1990’s there was a radical shift in the political management of the Swedish education system, mostly characterized by the decentralization reform. The shift in political management included the abolishment of the committee on education materials, ultimately ending government reviews of Swedish textbooks in 1991 (Ammert, 2011). Since then, some brief reviews of education materials have been done by the Swedish National Agency for Education, but the procedures are no longer standardized nor reoccurring (SOU 2021:70).

In 2021, an inquiry conducted at the Ministry of Education and Research proposed that a new committee for education materials should be established in order to secure high quality content (SOU 2021:70). The committee should consist of teachers as well as representatives from educational research, the education materials branch of industry, education agencies, and student organizations. The main purpose of the committee would be to develop quality criteria for the review of education materials, regarding content, language, accessibility, and pedagogical adequacy. This would, according to the proposal, contribute to a well-functioning education materials market with more appropriate products and reasonable price levels, resulting in better conditions for all teachers (SOU 2021:70).

However, the National Agency for Education disapproves of this proposal, one of the reasons being that the Agency already has connections to actors in the education materials business. The Agency claims that they have very good experiences from cooperating with actors in the industry without them being formally represented in a consulting committee (Skolverket, 2021). How, exactly, this cooperation usually is realized is not further specified. At the time of writing, the Ministry of Education and Research has yet to move the issue forward.

Without standardized quality criteria, it is the individual teacher's responsibility to make sure not only that the education materials correspond to the curriculum and syllabus, but also to ensure the materials' suitability and adequacy. It is vital for teachers in Sweden today to develop deeper knowledge about education materials, specifically textbooks, but more importantly, teachers need the right tools to analyze said textbooks (Ammert, 2011). When it comes to EFL textbooks, it is important to understand that it is not only a matter of education, but also what is *beyond* the surface of language learning. Who holds the power? Who is represented? Or, as Luke puts it:

These ultimately are curriculum questions about whose version of culture, history, and everyday life will count as official knowledge. They are questions about pedagogy and teaching: about which modes of information and cognitive scripts, which designs and genres, shall be deemed worth learning; what kinds of tool use with reading and writing will be taught for what social and cultural purposes and interests.

(Luke, 2012, p. 5)

1.2 Aim and Research Questions

As previously stated, there are many questions regarding the representation of different cultures in EFL textbooks. Many of these questions seem to be answered in the research already conducted in the field. However, there is little research conducted on EFL textbooks and representation in Sweden, which is why the aim of this study is to analyze EFL textbooks used in Swedish upper secondary school to investigate the representation of the three Circles of English as well as their cultures. Therefore, the study aspires to investigate and answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent are Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle countries and cultures represented in EFL textbooks?
2. In what ways are the cultures represented? Are they represented in different ways? How?
3. What are the implications of the representation of said cultures in EFL textbooks?

This paper will continue with a theoretical background that provides an overview of central concepts and sets the scene for the forthcoming parts. The following section will contain an overview of relevant previous research in the field of EFL textbooks in relation to power and representation. Moreover, a method section will be provided where frameworks, sampling, and ethical considerations will be considered. The paper continues with its main part, the results. These will then be analyzed and discussed. The paper will be concluded with suggestions for further research as well as pedagogical implications of the study's results.

2 Theoretical Background

This section provides a brief historical overview of the globalization of the English language, focusing on key concepts central to this study such as English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), English as an International Language (EIL), World Englishes, and Kachru's three-circle model. It further goes on to explain the relationship between language and power, followed by a theoretical background on the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis, ending with a delineation of what the concept of 'texts' encompasses in the context of this study.

2.1 English and Globalization

The English language was up until the 16th century spoken exclusively by native speakers geographically limited to the British Isles (Jenkins, 2014). The history of its expansion is characterized by imperialism and colonization, the language acting as an instrument to, often ruthlessly, subjugate, oppress, and colonize different cultures, religions, and peoples (Kachru, 1992). Today, the language has reached nearly every corner of the world, and the majority of its speakers are not native speakers of English (Jenkins, 2014). The total number of non-native speakers is difficult to calculate, partly due to conservative ideas of what counts as non-native speakers; but, either way, it far surpasses the number of native speakers. The ESL

speakers, i.e. non-native speakers learning English in a native English-speaking country, are usually distinguished from speakers of EFL, i.e. non-native speakers learning English in a non-English-speaking country (Jenkins, 2014). The international status of English is, then, as Kachru puts it: “rightly justified on the basis of the numerical strength of its non-native speakers” (1992, p. 355).

The ever-expanding globalization of English gives way to new and different ways to approach the language. EFL learners become learners of EIL and ELF too, as the purpose of learning English more and more has shifted from learning for the sake of communicating with native English speakers, towards using English as a means to communicate with speakers of different first languages than one’s own (Jenkins, 2014). The cross-cultural spread of the English language has created linguistic innovations and creativity, expanded cultural identities, and produced new varieties of the language. The singular “English” does not convey the full spectrum of the language, meaning that this globalization and multiculturalism calls for the plural “Englishes” (Kachru, 1992). Kachru (1992) emphasizes these many varieties and cultures with the concept of World Englishes, a term that further accentuates this changing and ever-growing sociolinguistic profile of English.

Kachru (1992) provides further clarity in the idea of World Englishes with his three-circle model (see figure 1). His model, being one of many, is regarded as one of the most influential and esteemed categorizations of the spread of English in this field of study (Jenkins, 2014). In his model, Kachru divides World Englishes into three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. These circles “represent the types of spread, the patterns of acquisition, and the functional allocation of English in diverse cultural contexts” (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). The Inner Circle includes the so-called “traditional cultural and linguistic bases” of English, meaning the UK, US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Kachru, 1992, p. 356). This circle is labeled as *norm-providing*. The Outer Circle is comprised of countries where institutionalized ESL varieties are spoken, generally referring to countries or regions that have suffered extensive colonization, such as India, Kenya, Bangladesh, Ghana, and Pakistan. This circle is referred to as *norm-developing*, meaning that the norms produced by the Inner Circle are reproduced and further developed here. Lastly, the Expanding Circle refers to EFL countries, i.e. the majority of the rest of the world, where the English language holds no historical or official significance. Some examples of Expanding Circle countries are Sweden, Japan, Egypt, Brazil, and Nepal. This circle is labelled as *norm-dependent*, meaning that the speakers generally do not reproduce or develop different varieties, but instead depend on the traditional Inner Circle norms (Kachru, 1985, 1992).

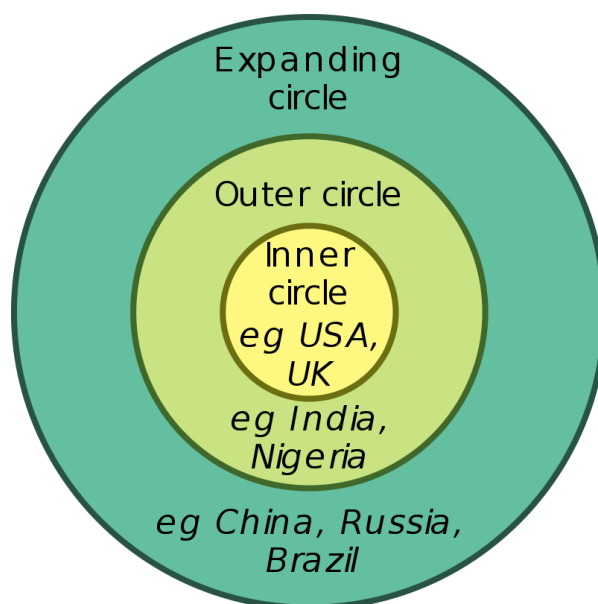


Figure 1: Kachru's Three Circles of English

Note: From “Teaching World Englishes” by B. B. Kachru, in B. B. Kachru (Ed.), *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures* (p. 356), 1992, University of Illinois Press.

2.2 The Power of Language

There is an intrinsic relationship between language and power that shapes not only everyday interaction, but also people, education, cultures, and discourses. Language is, therefore, never neutral, as it always carries some form of ideological meaning which aims to favor someone's interests (Lewinson et al., 2015). The struggle over power is ultimately a struggle over “the control of information and interpretation” (Luke, 2012, p. 5).

However, in the same way that language can be used as a tool to hold power in already privileged hands, language can also be used as a means to empower people who hold none. By understanding language, it is possible to understand the context in which it operates, and through this, become empowered:

Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world. [...] In a way, however, we can go further and say that reading the word is not preceded merely by reading the world, but by a certain form of writing it or rewriting it, that is, of transforming it by means of conscious, practical work.

(Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 35)

Understanding that the word and the world are interconnected is understanding that words are never “just words”. It means that a word is given meaning beyond its syntax, relating to values, beliefs, knowledge, choices, and interests. As Gee puts it: “Words are consequential. They matter. Words and the world are married.” (2008, p. 15). Therefore, it is crucial to be critical of language usage and pose questions such as: “What is ‘truth’? How is it presented and represented, by whom, and in whose interests? Who should have access to which images and words, texts, and discourses? For what purposes?” (Luke, 2012, p. 4).

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

In order to delve deeper into the relationship between language and power, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) can be applied as a tool to understand how language is used to marginalize, oppress, and silence (Lee-Johnson & Henderson, 2019). CDA is a framework – although it is so broad and multifaceted that it can be seen as many frameworks in symbiosis – that combines critical social studies with studies of language in order to describe, interpret, and analyze language and meaning making, power and inequality, discourse and the social world. CDA has become increasingly popular since the 1970’s, although the field of discourse analysis go back as far as to the beginning of the 20th century (Rogers, 2011).

The concept of discourse carries many different meanings and cannot, therefore, be limited to one single definition. According to Gee (2008), a distinction between little ‘d’ discourses and big ‘D’ Discourses has to be made. Gee uses the term discourse with a little ‘d’ to simply define “language in use”, whereas big ‘D’ Discourses can be defined as:

[...] ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities (or ‘types of people’) by specific groups. [...] Discourses are ways of being ‘people like us.’ They are ‘ways of being in the world’; they are ‘forms of life’; they are socially situated identities. They are, thus, always and everywhere social and products of social histories.

(Gee, 2008, p. 3).

Fairclough, on the other hand, defines discourse as the social practice of language use, meaning that it is “a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64). Studying the field of discourse analysis, then, means studying what happens in communication and

interaction, and how goals in social practices are being reached with the help of language and meaning making (Rogers, 2011).

A critical approach to discourse analysis, on the other hand, does not only take interest in social practices, but also their implications “for inherently political things like status, solidarity, the distribution of social goods, and power.” (Gee, 2011, p. 28). This transdisciplinary set of methods and theories that is CDA is widely utilized in educational research; however, because of its widespread and multifaceted nature, there is seldom focus on solely one approach to CDA but instead it is more common with merged hybrids (Rogers, 2011). Nevertheless, what the several methods and theories of CDA have in common is the fact that they are “an analysis not only of what is said, but of what is left out; not only what is present in the text, but what is absent” (Rogers, 2011, p. 15).

Fairclough’s approach to CDA has over time become more and more directed towards issues of social change such as globalization (Rogers, 2011). He emphasizes that all contemporary globalization processes have an inherent language dimension, meaning that globalization as social change is a process “involving dialectical relations between diverse social elements [...], always including discourse” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 476). Furthermore, Fairclough (2011) also highlights the relationship between texts and social practices, one aspect being that texts *affect* social practices and structures, the other aspect being that texts *are affected by* social practices and structures. The social agents of the texts are both enabled and constrained by these social practices and structures. One causal effect of texts’ impact is that texts can change people’s knowledge and beliefs as well as attitudes and values on certain matters. Another causal effect, however, is the ideological one, meaning that power, exploitation, and domination is established through texts (Fairclough, 2011). Fairclough gives much emphasis to the ideological effects of texts as a major concern for CDA, “primarily because such representations can be enacted in ways of interacting socially and inculcated in ways of being in people’s identities” (Fairclough, 2011, p. 123).

In order to analyze texts using CDA, Fairclough (1989) suggests a model based on three dimensions of discourse: (1) texts, (2) interactions, and (3) contexts. These three dimensions of discourse correspond to Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (see figure 2). The first dimension concerns the formal features of a text and is called *description*. The second dimension is called *interpretation* and concerns the relationship between the text and interaction, meaning that the text is seen as the “product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26). The third and last dimension is concerned with the social effects of aforementioned

processes of production and interaction; this stage is called *explanation*. By using this model, it is possible to offer a kind of interpretation of the highly intricate and imperceptible phenomena of language as a social practice (Fairclough, 1989).

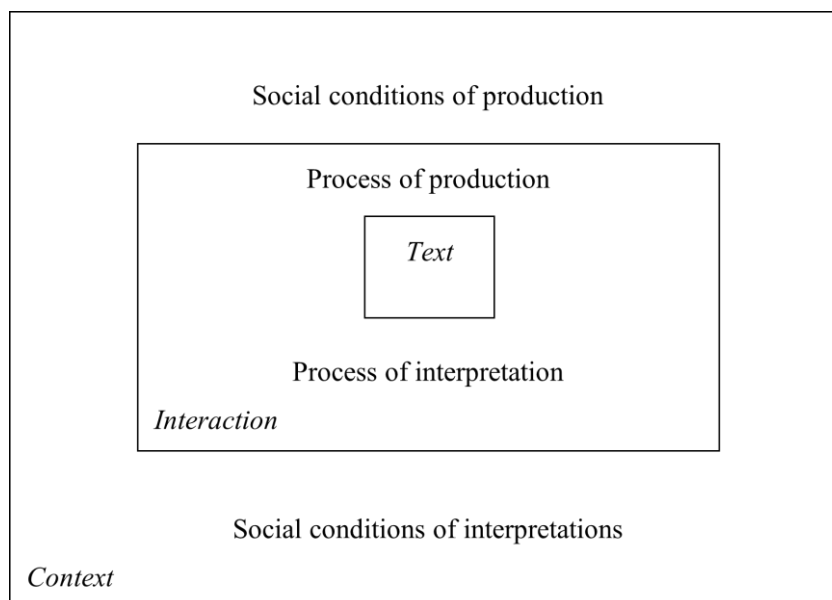


Figure 2: Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of CDA

Note: From *Language and Power* (p. 25), by N. Fairclough, 1989, Longman.

2.4 Defining 'Text'

In recent years, the definition of 'texts' has become much broader than the traditional definition of what a 'text' is. Löthagen Holm (2016) puts emphasis on "the expanded concept of texts" (Sw. "det vidgade textbegreppet", own translation), meaning that texts encompass other communicative and meaning-making features that are transmitted through other types of media, such as pictures, films, spoken language, music, etc. Although this is a much-needed progress in the science of texts and literacy, this study will stay within the more limited, traditional definition of what a 'text' is. In the particular context of this study, a 'text' is defined as "the main body of a printed or written work" (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.).

3 Previous Research

The following sections provide an overview of previous research in the field of EFL textbooks. The first section contains studies regarding the representation of cultures in English textbooks and the implications of said representations, while the second section

provides a summary of studies investigating whether the international status of English is mirrored in textbooks as well as potential implications and calls to action.

3.1 Representation of English Cultures

A recent study in the field of culture and representation in EFL textbooks is one conducted in Iran by Tajeddin and Pakzadian (2020). This study aimed to analyze the contents of three EFL textbooks produced for the generalized EFL market, focusing on the representation of World Englishes with regard to varieties and cultures. It was based on Kachru's three circles, using Pfister and Borzelli's framework to categorize the cultural aspects that were found. The study had a quantitative approach, drawing data partly from the frequency of references to Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles in the texts, and partly from the frequency of native vs. non-native accents in the textbooks' audio tracks. The findings revealed that Inner Circle countries were addressed more than Outer and Extended Circle countries, and native speaker accents outnumbered the non-native speaker accents by far, which led the authors to conclude that the content of EFL textbooks should not be restricted to British and American varieties and cultures but should instead be provided with authentic cultural contexts from countries in all three circles (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020).

A study conducted by Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw (2021) provides a critical content analysis of a locally produced EFL textbook series used in a high school context in Inner Mongolia, China. This study aimed to examine the cultural content of the textbook series, specifically focusing on the representation of multiculturalism as well as underlying power relations. Kachru's concentric circles were used as a framework to investigate the occurrence and representation of multicultural variables such as race/ethnicity, social class, etc. The findings of the study reveal that these are represented in a stereotypical way and that they lack diversity. The power relations are distinct, the results showing that Inner and Expanding Circle countries are represented as dominant, whereas the Outer Circle countries are marginalized. The authors call on teachers of EFL to go beyond the texts and teach students about diversity, varieties of English, and power relations to help students take on a critical multicultural perspective of EFL learning (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021).

A similar study was conducted by Lestariyana and Nurkamto in 2022, this time analyzing and examining two international EFL textbooks used in an Indonesian context. The methodological approach was inspired by Xiang and Yenika-Agbaw's study (2021), using Kachru's concentric model as a means to investigate the representation of a number of

multicultural variables. The findings reinforce the evidence of the above-mentioned study, showing that Inner Circle cultures were highly dominant, and that most of the representations were stereotypical and unbalanced. The authors call on EFL textbook authors to create more multicultural content with the purpose of teaching students to recognize cultural diversity (Lestariyana & Nurkamto, 2022).

Applying Critical Discourse Analysis, Yuen (2011) investigated the representation of foreign cultures in two EFL textbooks used in Hong Kong secondary schools. The findings showed that African and Asian cultures were represented to a less extent than English-speaking, Western countries. This was exemplified by showing that the representation of entertainment-related terminology mostly included phenomena such as Spiderman, Harry Potter, and Hollywood. In the same way as previously mentioned studies, it was concluded that the textbooks' contents are stereotypical and fragmented, adopting a "tourist's perspective" (p. 464). The author emphasized that the publishers in the textbook industry are largely responsible for the lack of multicultural content, but suggested that educating teachers to become critical textbook users would, in the long run, enable them to strengthen the quality of EFL textbooks (Yuen, 2011).

3.2 Positioning English as an International Language

A recent study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2021) aimed to investigate whether a set of locally produced Vietnamese EFL textbooks were tailored to convey the English language as a tool for intercultural communication. This was accomplished by focusing on two questions: To what extent is multicultural communication portrayed, and who is positioned as a user of the English language? According to the findings, the textbooks prepared students for communication with "Anglophone English users" (Nguyen et al., 2021, p. 184) but neglected other types of intercultural English models. The authors called for an EIL oriented approach in the development of EFL textbooks to encourage both globalization and multilingualism (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Two other studies, both conducted in a Chinese context, enforce the result of the above-mentioned study. Both of these studies, using Kachru's concentric circles as a point of departure, investigated locally published EFL textbooks with the purpose of examining the role of the English language and culture. The findings of both studies suggest that the representation of English is narrow and shallow, indicating that Anglo-centric ideologies obstruct the portrayal of English as international, global, and cosmopolitan phenomenon (Lee

& Li, 2020; Xiong & Qian, 2012). Xiong and Qian especially emphasize that an “intercultural understanding of both the global and the local” (2012, p. 75) must be adopted in order to develop a multicultural curriculum.

The above-mentioned studies and their results are of great relevance as they contribute to the field of EFL textbook analysis in relation to cultural representation and English as an international language. However, very little research in the field has been conducted in a European context, which might serve as an obstacle since pedagogical cultures differ in different parts of the world. One study closer to a Swedish context is one conducted by Syrbe and Rose (2018) in Germany. This study aimed to analyze three textbook series, including audio tracks, in order to evaluate whether they have a global orientation and live up to EIL standards. This was conducted by qualitatively analyzing ownership of English, target interlocutors, models and norms of English, and culture depiction in each textbook. The findings showed that British models of English were overrepresented as the norm. Furthermore, both language users and culture were depicted as something static, meaning that the textbooks showed no “fluid, diverse, and flexible cultures in lingua franca contexts” (Syrbe & Rose, 2018, p. 160). The authors conclude that the textbooks should have been made more comprehensive through incorporation of World Englishes and more focus on varieties and cultures outside the Inner Circle (Syrbe & Rose, 2018).

4 Method

This textbook analysis study has a mixed methods approach where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed. The framework used as a point of departure for the evaluation and analysis of the EFL textbooks is Kachru’s three Circles of English (1992). Kachru’s model (see section 2.1) is used in both the quantitative and the qualitative part of the study to classify the countries and cultures into more manageable categories to analyze and evaluate.

The quantitative data collection and evaluation is based on the frequency of references to Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries and cultures. To ensure the validity and reliability of the data collection, Pfister and Borzilleri’s framework (1977) for evaluating cultural material in textbooks is used. The framework is used with the purpose of creating a more manageable data collection and classification, where culture is divided into five categories: “1) family and the personal sphere, 2) the social sphere, 3) political system and institutions, 4) environmental sphere, 5) religion and the arts” (Pfister & Borzilleri, 1977, p.

103). The first category, family and personal sphere, includes for example eating, shopping, and family relationships. The second category, the social sphere, includes for example leisure, attitudes, nationality, etc. The third category, political system and institutions, involves government, education, law, justice, etc. The fourth category, the environmental sphere, includes geography and natural resources, to mention some. The fifth and last category, religion and the arts, includes literature, music, arts, history, holy places, etc. (Pfister & Borzilleri, 1977).

Some data cannot be inserted into any of these five categories, which is why, for this particular study, two more categories are included in the framework. One of the categories is ‘the business sphere’, which includes corporates and businesses connected to certain cultural contexts. The other category is ‘famous people’, including for example authors, scientists, athletes, royalty, etc. During the collection of data it was assessed that in order to provide data that correspond to the representation of cultures in the textbooks, famous people should be included as they represent a vital part of this representation. This is similar to parts of Yuen’s framework (2011), which includes the categories ‘persons’ and ‘products’.

Drawing conclusions from the quantitative data, a qualitative approach was incorporated in order to understand the data on a deeper level. The qualitative part of the study was based on Critical Discourse Analysis, especially focusing on Fairclough’s three-dimensional model (see section 2.3). This framework was incorporated in order to examine and provide an understanding of the implications of the results of the quantitative data.

4.1 Sampling

Three textbooks from three different EFL textbook series for Swedish upper secondary school were selected for this study: Studentlitteratur’s *Solid Gold 2* by the authors Eva Hedencrona, Karin Smed-Gerdin and Peter Watcyn-Jones (2015), Gleerups’s *Pick & Mix 2* by Tove Phillips and Simon Phillips (2021), and Liber’s *Blueprint B* by Christer Lundfall and Ralf Nyström (2018). Since there are no official or public statistics on the sales of EFL textbooks in Sweden, the selection of textbooks has been based on other criteria which are specified below.

The publishing companies Studentlitteratur, Gleerups and Liber are three of the largest educational publishing companies in Sweden (SOU 2021:70). The three textbooks were therefore selected as typical examples of textbooks used in upper secondary English in a Swedish context. The selection was also based on the contemporality of the textbooks; hence,

the chosen books were published between 2015 and 2021. Furthermore, the textbooks are all targeted specifically at the English 6 course and were selected as such for the purpose of comparability. The choice to study textbooks aimed towards the English 6 course was based on accessibility and availability. Due to the specifics of the other criteria, i.e. selecting three books that were (1) published by different publishing companies, (2) published by some of the largest publishing companies, (3) no more than ten years old, and (4) aimed towards the same English course, the textbooks available for the study that met all the requirements were textbooks intended for the English 6 course.

Worth mentioning, however, is that the sampling might affect the outcome of the results. Analyzing textbooks from a different upper secondary level than English 6 could change the findings of the study as the contents would be different. Since English 5 is mandatory for all upper secondary students, such a sampling might have been more representative of what kinds of cultures Swedish EFL learners encounter. In a similar manner, textbooks aimed at English 7 requires more complex content which implies that the cultural content would be more complex as well; hence, providing a different kind of findings.

The collection of quantitative data was limited to the texts connected to the reading skill in the textbooks. This limitation was done since running texts provide cultural contexts in a way that grammar or quiz sections do not. The texts were both fiction and non-fiction texts of different kinds, such as extracts from fictional books, articles, or factual texts. Poetry was not included in the limitation. The total number of texts that were analyzed for the quantitative data collection were 34 in *Solid Gold 2*, 16 in *Pick & Mix 2*, and 27 in *Blueprint B*.

Four texts were selected for the qualitative part of the study. The selection was based on the quantitative findings, which showed that two themes were especially prevalent in the data. These two themes were *Classic English Literature* as well as *The British Empire and Colonialism*. Two texts on the theme of classic English literature, and two texts on the theme of Britain and colonialism were therefore selected from the three textbooks as material for the critical discourse analysis.

4.1.1 Textbooks

Solid Gold 2 (Hedencrona et al., 2015) is a textbook that contains texts of varying genres, such as fiction, non-fiction, magazine features, and biographies, divided equally into nine different chapters. The authors call the book ‘new and provocative’ and point out that the focus of the textbooks is “mainly on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in

different parts of the English-speaking world” (Hedencrona et al. 2015, p. 3), connecting to the English syllabus for English 6. They emphasize that the textbook is supposed to make the students “aware of how culture influences communication” (Hedencrona et al., 2015, p. 3). The authors of the textbook end their introductory section by stating that they “hope that *Solid Gold 2* will help you move ahead in your English studies, [...] broadening your knowledge and understanding of the world in which English is used” (Hedencrona et al., 2015, p. 3).

Pick & Mix 2 (Phillips & Phillips, 2021) is a textbook divided into ten chapters, which, in turn, are divided into sections based on the four major skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The authors describe the book as ‘unique and innovative’ and argue that this textbook is the only tool a student needs in order to achieve the aims for English 6. The opportunity to use the textbook with two different approaches, a “traditional themes approach” or a “selective skills approach”, is especially emphasized (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 1).

Blueprint B (Lundfall & Nyström, 2018) is a textbook that is divided into seven chapters, which, similar to *Pick & Mix 2*, are divided into sections based on the four skills. The texts are chosen for the purpose of both relating to and challenging the students’ own ideas and experiences. The authors point out that the textbook is related to events, opinions, ideas, feelings, relations, and ethical issues. It is stated that the textbook begins with an introductory chapter that introduces the students to the global world language that is English, and continues with texts and themes that affect and engage (Lundfall & Nyström, 2018).

4.2 Ethical Considerations

Although the authors and publishers of the textbooks are ultimately responsible for the content of the textbooks, it is important to mention that any potential criticism that this study might generate is not aimed at either authors or publishers, but instead at the cultural context which the textbooks are part of. Furthermore, the study aims to be unbiased in its analysis and evaluation; however, similar to the cultural bias of the authors, I, too, am a product of my cultural context and its values.

5 Results

The purpose of this study was to analyze EFL textbooks used in Swedish upper secondary school contexts to investigate the representation of the three Circles of English as well as their cultures. In order to do this, data was collected on the basis of (1) investigating to what extent

Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries and cultures are represented, (2) analyzing whether the cultures are represented in different ways, and in that case, how, and (3) evaluating what the implications of the representation of said cultures might be.

What follows is both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the representation of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle cultures in the textbooks *Solid Gold 2*, *Pick & Mix 2*, and *Blueprint B*. The findings of the study are divided into two sections, the first one presenting the quantitative findings, and the second one presenting the qualitative findings.

5.1 Frequency of Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle Representations

This section provides the quantitative findings of this study and is divided into subsections based on the three analyzed textbooks. Data is provided showing the frequency of the three concentric circles with Pfister and Borzilleri's framework (1977) for evaluating cultural material in textbooks, adding the two categories 'business/corporate' and 'famous people'. The section provides an understanding as to what extent the three concentric circles and their cultures are represented in the three textbooks.

5.1.1 Solid Gold 2

The total number of references to countries and cultures in the *Solid Gold 2* textbook was 424. Categorizing these references using Kachru's three concentric circles, the results show that Inner Circle countries and cultures were referred to a total number of 335 times. Outer Circle countries and cultures were referred to 42 times and Expanding Circle countries and cultures a

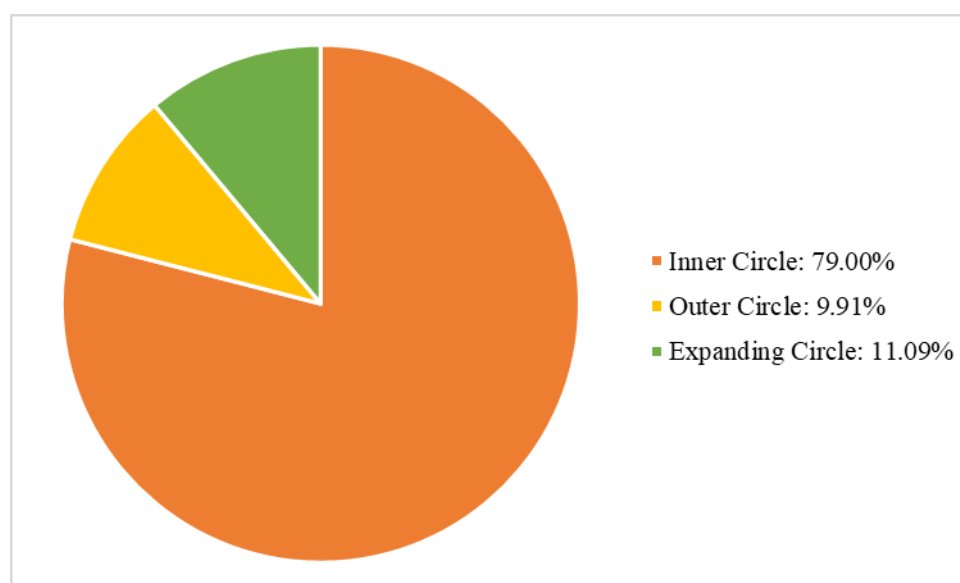


Figure 3: References to cultures in *Solid Gold 2*

total number of 47 times. Calculating the percentage, the Inner Circle comprises 79.00% of the references, while Outer Circle comprises 9.91%, leaving the Expanding Circle with 11.09% of the total amount of references to cultures in *Solid Gold 2* (see figure 3).

Merely by looking at these initial percentages, it is clear that the representation of Inner Circle countries and cultures is dominant in *Solid Gold 2*. These 79% percent are comprised of references to USA, UK and Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Looking at Table 1 below, the calculations show that USA as well as UK and Ireland by far outnumber the other Inner Circle countries in frequency. While USA make up more than a third of the total number of references to Inner Circle countries and cultures, UK and Ireland make up close to half of them. In contrast, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand comprise not even 15% of the total number of Inner Circle references together.

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|--------------|-----------|------------|--|
| USA | 118 | 35.22% | Arts/history: 40 Business: 8 Environmental: 21 People: 34 Political: 14 Social: 1 |
| UK + Ireland | 167 | 49.85% | Arts/history: 84 Business: 3 Environmental: 14 People: 55 Political: 5 Social: 6 |
| Canada | 13 | 3.88% | Arts/history: 9 Environmental: 2 People: 2 |
| Australia | 3 | 0.90% | Arts/history: 1 People: 2 |
| New Zealand | 34 | 10.15% | Arts/history: 15 Environmental: 8 People: 8 Social: 3 |

Looking at the categorization of cultural themes, it is evident that the category that contains arts, history, humanities, music, etc. and the category of famous people are the most common ones. The former category, in the tables shortened to “arts/history”, mostly contain classic literature such as *The Old Man and the Sea*, *A Room of One’s Own*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. The classics, as seen from the examples above, are mostly written by American or British authors. The arts/history category within the rest of the Inner Circle countries is mostly comprised of more contemporary literature such as *Mister Pip*, *Oryx and Crake*, and *The English Patient*. The people category, in line with the above-

mentioned classic literature, mostly contain British and American classic authors, such as The Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens and F. Scott Fitzgerald, but also more contemporary authors as well as scientists, doctors, and actors.

The least represented circle in *Solid Gold 2* is the Outer Circle, with only 9.91%. The Outer Circle countries that are referred to are Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Pakistan, and South Africa. India and Pakistan are the most frequent Outer Circle countries, with just over 40 respectively 21 percent (see Table 2). Most of the references to Pakistan have to do with Malala Yousafzai and the Pakistani Taliban, whereas the references to India mostly are comprised of Indian authors such as Anjali Joseph and Aravind Adiga, as well as some of their most famous works, for example *Saraswati Park* and *The White Tiger*. Other examples of references to Outer Circle cultures are Jamaica's Usain Bolt, the system of Apartheid in South Africa, and Kenya Wildlife Department.

Table 2: Frequency of references to Outer Circle cultures in *Solid Gold 2*

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|--------------|-----------|------------|---|
| Ghana | 5 | 11.90% | Arts/history: 4 People: 1 |
| India | 17 | 40.48% | Arts/history: 7 Environmental: 6 People: 3 Social: 1 |
| Jamaica | 3 | 7.14% | Environmental: 1 People: 2 |
| Kenya | 1 | 2.38% | Environmental: 1 |
| Pakistan | 9 | 21.43% | Arts/history: 2 Environmental: 2 People: 2 Political: 1 Social: 2 |
| South Africa | 7 | 16.67% | Arts/history: 5 People: 1 Political: 1 |

The 11.09% of the of references to countries and cultures in the *Solid Gold 2* textbook which make up the Expanding Circle are scattered over as many as 17 countries (see Table 3). The references to individual countries and their cultures are difficult to draw conclusions from, since they are few in numbers. However, looking at all the Expanding Circle countries together, it is possible to discern a pattern. Most of the people mentioned are historically important scientists such as Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, and Galileo Galilei, or other famous people in history such as Johannes Gutenberg, Joseph Schumpeter, and Émile Zola.

Comparing which categories occur within the different circles, it may be noted that while arts/history, people, and the environmental sphere can be found in all circles, the business category does not exist within the representation of the Outer Circle. In contrast, the business category has a total of 11 references in the Inner Circle, most of them being American. Another comparison is that while the Expanding Circle countries are rarely referred to if counted individually, there is still a total of 17 countries mentioned, in contrast to the six Outer Circle countries.

Table 3: Frequency of references to Expanding Circle cultures in *Solid Gold 2*

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|---|
| Austria | 3 | 6.38% | Arts/history: 1 People: 2 |
| Brazil | 1 | 2.13% | Social: 1 |
| China | 2 | 4.25% | Environmental: 1 Political: 1 |
| France | 8 | 17.02% | Arts/history: 1 Environmental: 2 People: 3 Personal: 1 Political: 1 |
| Germany | 6 | 12.77% | Business: 1 Environmental: 2 People: 3 |
| Greece | 1 | 2.13% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Iran | 1 | 2.13% | People: 1 |
| Italy | 5 | 10.64% | Arts/history: 2 Business: 1 Environmental: 1 People: 1 |
| Japan | 2 | 4.25% | Environmental: 2 |
| Netherlands | 1 | 2.13% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Poland | 1 | 2.13% | People: 1 |
| Portugal | 1 | 2.13% | People: 1 |
| Russia | 2 | 4.25% | Environmental: 1 Social: 1 |
| South Korea | 2 | 4.25% | Arts/history: 1 Environmental: 1 |
| Sweden | 5 | 10.64% | Arts/history: 3 People: 2 |
| Thailand | 5 | 10.64% | Arts/history: 1 People: 1 Political: 1 Social: 2 |
| United Arab Emirates | 1 | 2.13% | Environmental: 1 |

5.1.2 Pick & Mix 2

The total number of references to countries and cultures in the *Pick & Mix 2* textbook was 313. The findings show that Inner Circle countries and cultures were referred to a total number of 239 times. Outer Circle countries and cultures were referred to 35 times and Expanding Circle countries and cultures a total number of 41 times. The Inner Circle comprises 76.36% of the references, while Outer Circle comprises 11.18%, and lastly, the Expanding Circle with its 12.46% (see figure 4).

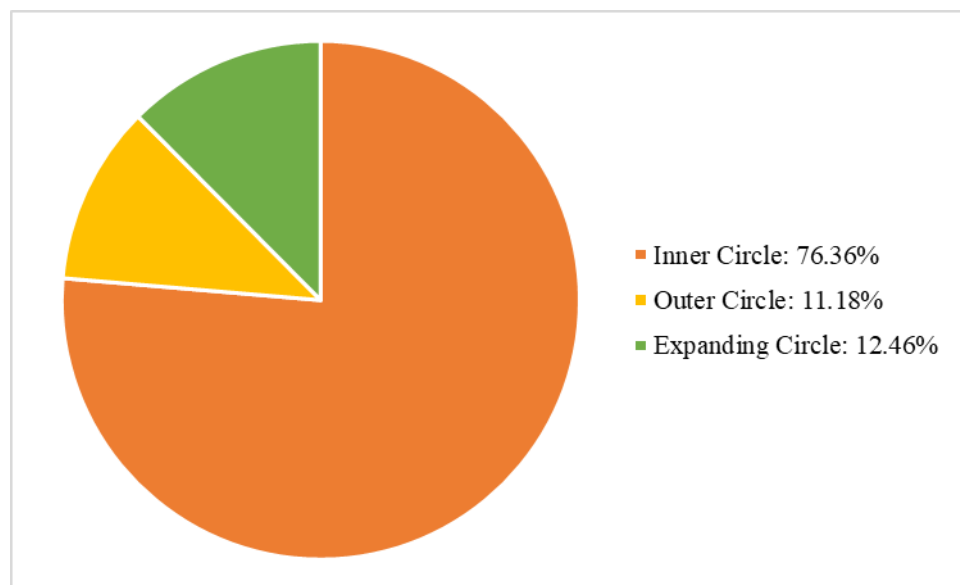


Figure 4: References to cultures in *Pick & Mix 2*

Similar to *Solid Gold 2*, the representation of Inner Circle countries and cultures by far outweighs the other concentric circles with its 76.36% in *Pick & Mix 2*. However, as can be seen in Table 4 below, the references relate to USA, UK and Ireland, Canada, and Australia, but there are no references to New Zealand whatsoever. The distribution of references between the different Inner Circle countries is otherwise quite similar to *Solid Gold 2*, the difference being that UK and Ireland make up more than two thirds of the total number of references to Inner Circle countries and cultures, while USA constitutes a little over one quarter of them.

The most common cultural themes within the Inner Circle are, like *Solid Gold 2*, arts/history and famous people. Except the occasional artist, nearly all of the people mentioned are authors of classic works, such as Oscar Wilde, Daniel Defoe, Edgar Allan Poe, and Tennessee Williams. Another particular category of famous people that is featured in *Pick & Mix 2* is British royalty such as Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and Henry VIII. Many of the

cultural themes within the Inner Circle have to do with British imperialism and the colonization of other countries, such as Australia. The arts/history theme of Australia has exclusively to do with concepts such as “European explorers”, Britain shipping convicts to Australia, and these two previously mentioned themes in relation to Aboriginal Australians.

Table 4: Frequency of references to Inner Circle cultures in *Pick & Mix 2*

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|--------------|-----------|------------|--|
| USA | 65 | 27.20% | Arts/history: 19 Business: 7 Environmental: 10 People: 19 Political: 5 Social: 5 |
| UK + Ireland | 164 | 68.62% | Arts/history: 79 Business: 2 Environmental: 14 People: 64 Personal: 2 Political: 2 Social: 2 |
| Canada | 4 | 1.67% | Arts/history: 2 People: 2 |
| Australia | 6 | 2.51% | Arts/history: 3 Environmental: 2 Social: 1 |

With its 11.18%, the Outer Circle is the least represented circle in *Pick & Mix 2*. The eight countries that are included are Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, and Sri Lanka. What these countries have in common is that they are all represented as countries colonized by the British Empire. Some of the countries, such as Ghana, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Singapore are only mentioned this one time. In contrast, the

Table 5: Frequency of references to Outer Circle cultures in *Pick & Mix 2*

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|--------------|-----------|------------|---|
| Ghana | 1 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Hong Kong | 1 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 1 |
| India | 20 | 57.14% | Arts/history: 8 Environmental: 7 People: 1 Social: 4 |
| Kenya | 1 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Nigeria | 3 | 8.57% | Arts/history: 2 People: 1 |
| Singapore | 1 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 1 |
| South Africa | 7 | 20.00% | Arts/history: 5 People: 2 |
| Sri Lanka | 1 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 1 |

country that is undeniably most frequently represented is India with just over 57% (see Table 5). Most of the references have to do with Britain’s colonization of India, but there are also some social themes regarding the duality of being both American and Indian and dealing with that in forming one’s identity.

The representation of the 15 countries and cultures of the Expanding Circle, which can be seen in Table 6, make up just over 12% of the total references to countries and cultures in *Pick & Mix 2*. The data is scattered similarly to the data of the Expanding Circle in *Solid Gold 2*, although some patterns might be found. For example, environmental themes regarding geography are visible, some examples being Berlin, Barcelona, Rome, and other European capitals. Mozambique and Rwanda are referred to as new members of the Commonwealth.

| Table 6: Frequency of references to Expanding Circle cultures in <i>Pick & Mix 2</i> | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
| Egypt | 2 | 4.88% | Arts/history: 1 Personal: 1 |
| France | 3 | 7.32% | Arts/history: 1 Environmental: 1 People: 1 |
| Germany | 2 | 4.88% | Environmental: 1 Political: 1 |
| Greece | 7 | 17.07% | Arts/history: 2 People: 4 Social: 1 |
| Italy | 8 | 19.51% | Arts/history: 4 Environmental: 3 Personal: 1 |
| Japan | 1 | 2.44% | Social: 1 |
| Mozambique | 1 | 2.44% | Political: 1 |
| Poland | 2 | 4.88% | People: 2 |
| Portugal | 1 | 2.44% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Russia | 3 | 7.32% | People: 1 Political: 2 |
| Rwanda | 1 | 2.44% | Political: 1 |
| Spain | 3 | 7.32% | Environmental: 2 People: 1 |
| Sweden | 4 | 9.76% | Environmental: 2 People: 2 |
| Switzerland | 2 | 4.88% | Environmental: 2 |
| Zimbabwe | 1 | 2.44% | Environmental: 1 |

5.1.3 Blueprint B

In the textbook *Blueprint B*, there was a total number of 210 references to countries and cultures – far less than the other textbooks. The Inner Circle countries and cultures were referred to 175 times, which adds up to just over 83%. The Outer Circle countries and cultures were referred to 7 times, i.e. 3.33%, and, lastly, the Expanding Circle a total number of 28 times, adding up to 13.33% (see figure 5).

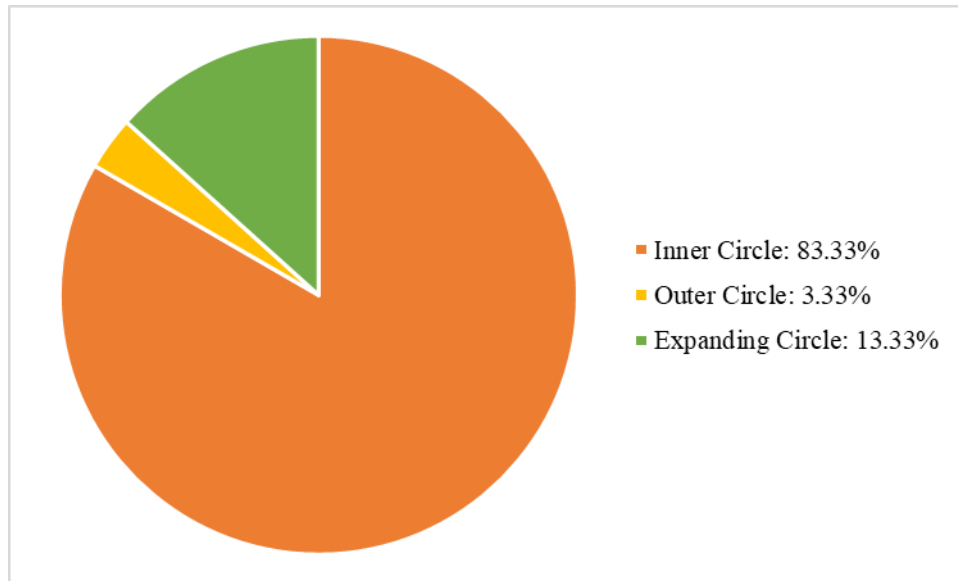


Figure 5: References to cultures in *Blueprint B*

Similar to *Solid Gold 2* and *Pick & Mix 2*, *Blueprint B* has a far higher representation of Inner Circle countries and cultures than the other two circles, reaching up to more than 80% (see Table 7). There are references to all Inner Circle countries, like *Solid Gold 2*, but contrary to both other textbooks, the most represented country in *Blueprint B* is USA with nearly 60%. The same goes for Australia with its almost 11%, compared to *Solid Gold 2*'s 0.9% and *Pick & Mix 2*'s 2.51%. Although UK and Ireland are most referred to after USA within the *Blueprint B* textbook, the references to the British Isles are far less compared to the other textbooks.

The references to UK and Ireland had, for the most part, to do with classic literature, similar to the other textbooks. There were also some specific references falling into the political sphere, regarding the suffragette movement. Many of the references to Australian culture had to do with Aboriginal Australians, some examples being Murrinh-Patha, the Stolen Generations, and Wadeye. While many of the references to American culture had to do with classic literature and their authors, similar to the previously analyzed textbooks, many of

the references had to do with more contemporary people and concepts such as Meryl Streep, Gigi Hadid, and Oprah Winfrey, as well as Tinker Toys, Mountain Dew, and the Super Bowl.

| Table 7: Frequency of references to Inner Circle cultures in <i>Blueprint B</i> | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|--|
| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
| USA | 101 | 57.71% | Arts/history: 23 Business: 10 Environmental: 18 People: 28 Personal: 1 Political: 13 Social: 8 |
| UK + Ireland | 49 | 28.00% | Arts/history: 14 Environmental: 11 People: 18 Political: 5 Social: 1 |
| Canada | 5 | 2.86% | Arts/history: 2 Environmental: 1 People: 2 |
| Australia | 19 | 10.86% | Arts/history: 2 Environmental: 11 People: 1 Political: 3 Social: 2 |
| New Zealand | 1 | 0.57% | Social: 1 |

The textbook with the least references to Outer Circle countries and cultures is by far *Blueprint B* with its 3.33%. The countries referred to are India, Jamaica, Kenya, Pakistan, and Singapore, as seen in Table 8. The references are as follows: ‘India’, ‘Indian’, ‘Kenya’, ‘Kenyan’, ‘Jamaican’, ‘Pakistani’, and ‘Singapore’. The countries and nationalities are all referred to in the same short story, which unfolds at a hairdresser, and refer to different kinds of hairstyles and where they supposedly originate.

| Table 8: Frequency of references to Outer Circle cultures in <i>Blueprint B</i> | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|-------------------------------|
| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
| India | 2 | 28.57% | Environmental: 1 Social: 1 |
| Jamaica | 1 | 14.29% | Social: 1 |
| Kenya | 2 | 28.57% | Environmental: 1 Social: 1 |
| Pakistan | 1 | 14.29% | Social: 1 |
| Singapore | 1 | 14.29% | Environmental: 1 |

The 13.33% of references to Expanding Circle countries and cultures are, like the previous textbooks, scattered over several countries (see Table 9). Chile is the most commonly referred one, the reason being a text about the Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571. Portugal and Spain are briefly mentioned as colonizers, and Indochina as being colonized.

Table 9: Frequency of references to Expanding Circle cultures in *Blueprint B*

| COUNTRY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE | CULTURAL THEMES |
|-----------|-----------|------------|---|
| Argentina | 1 | 3.57% | Environmental: 1 |
| Chile | 2 | 7.14% | Environmental: 2 |
| China | 1 | 3.57% | Social: 1 |
| France | 4 | 14.29% | Environmental: 1 People: 3 |
| Germany | 1 | 3.57% | People: 1 |
| Indochina | 1 | 3.57% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Indonesia | 1 | 3.57% | Environmental: 1 |
| Italy | 3 | 10.71% | Business: 3 |
| Palestine | 3 | 10.71% | Environmental: 2 People: 1 |
| Portugal | 1 | 3.57% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Somalia | 1 | 3.57% | People: 1 |
| Spain | 1 | 3.57% | Arts/history: 1 |
| Sweden | 1 | 3.57% | Business: 1 |
| Thailand | 1 | 3.57% | Social: 1 |
| Tunisia | 1 | 3.57% | Environmental: 1 |
| Uruguay | 5 | 17.86% | Environmental: 3 People: 1 Political: 1 |

5.2 Critical Discourse Analysis: The British Empire & Colonialism and Classic English Literature

This section provides the qualitative findings of this study and is divided into subsections based on two themes. With Fairclough's three-dimensional model for Critical Discourse Analysis as a point of departure, an analysis is provided of a total of four texts from the textbooks. The first section presents an analysis of two texts on the theme of the British Empire and colonization in *Pick & Mix 2* and *Blueprint B*. The second section provides an analysis of two texts on the theme of classic English literature in *Solid Gold 2* and *Pick & Mix*

2. The content of the text, the discursive practice of the text, and the sociocultural practice of the text are analyzed to form an understanding whether Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle countries and cultures are represented differently, and, if so, how. This will also provide an idea as to what kind of implications these representations might have on a sociocultural level.

5.2.1 The British Empire and Colonialism

One of the chapters in the textbook *Blueprint B* is called “Culture Clashes”, and contains a text called “When Cultures Clash” by Chris Anderson, which is the subject of this critical discourse analysis. The theme of the text revolves around colonialism, and “encountering the unknown” versus “the white man’s attitude” (Anderson, 2018, p. 180). Anderson uses *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe as a starting point in the introductory paragraph, setting the scene by mentioning Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circle regions. The Inner Circle countries mentioned are England and Australia, one being the colonizer and the other the colonized. The Outer Circle countries are not mentioned explicitly, but from this sentence: “England, Spain, Portugal and France were among the nations who expanded their territories in Africa, America and Asia.” (Anderson, 2018, p. 180), it can be deduced that ‘the territories in Africa and Asia’, in fact, refer to Outer Circle regions. Expanding Circle countries can also be seen in the quote above, being represented as colonizing countries.

In the text, there is evidence that suggests that Inner Circle countries, specifically Britain, are represented as the agents of the text. One example of this is “the expansionist powers [...] travelled far to discover the unknown”, referring to British colonizers, positioning them as subject. Another example of this is the quote “European colonizers were ‘hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labour and profitable land.’”, contrasted to the quote “there were [...] ‘native peoples to be dominated, variously exterminated, variously dislodged” (Anderson, 2018, p. 182). While the substance and explicit meaning of the quotes express criticism towards the colonial powers, the sentence structures suggest something else. While the people belonging to the Inner Circle culture are positioned as active subjects, agents of the story, the people belonging to the Outer Circle cultures are positioned as passive objects. These examples suggest the Inner Circle culture is represented as the owner of the story.

There is also evidence of Othering, in the wording of this quote: “What aspects of our own existence do we find mirrored in theirs?” (Anderson, 2018, p. 180). The writer takes on an us vs. them mentality as the active subject “we” is contrasted against “theirs”, referring to ‘their existence’. This sentence finalizes a paragraph which up until this last sentence has

contained sentences with colonizers as the subject, and expressions such as “foreign cultures”, “the heart of the unknown”, and “complete strangers from other cultures” (Anderson, 2018, p. 180) as objects. Drawing from that evidence, it might be deduced that the active subject “we” in this context is, in fact, an extension of the colonizing Inner Circle culture, while “theirs” refers back to “foreign cultures”, which in this case can be understood as Outer Circle cultures. This evidence, too, suggests that the ownership of the text belongs to the Inner Circle culture of Britain.

Another text on the same theme is one called “A Common Wealth: The Sun Always Shone” from the textbook *Pick & Mix 2*. The text concerns the British Empire and their history of colonialism. Similar to the text from *Blueprint B*, Britain is generally represented as active subjects, and other countries – primarily Outer Circle countries – are more often objects of the sentences. The quote “The British government took over control of India” (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 107) is an example of this, where ‘the British government’ is the subject and ‘India’ is the object. In a similar fashion, ‘Britain’ is referred to as the subject and ‘Nigeria and Ghana’ are referred to as objects in this next quote: “Britain gained control of some areas on the west coast, such as Nigeria and Ghana” (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 107). These examples suggest that the Outer Circle countries are represented as passive objects, whereas Britain’s Inner Circle culture is portrayed as an active subject, i.e. the owner of the text.

The next level of Fairclough’s model is the discursive practice of the text and has to do with the production and reception. The two texts are produced favoring Inner Circle countries, and to some extent even Expanding Circle countries, positioning them as owners of their story. Although Britain is explicitly criticized in the texts for its violent history, what is implicit is that the producers of the texts fail to take on a perspective that positions the colonized Outer Circle countries as owners of their history. The reception of the texts, being in a pedagogical context, ultimately depends on what questions are asked before, during, and after reading. The intended readers, the students, may implicitly assimilate the notion that Inner Circle cultures are superior to Outer Circle countries. Students who come from Outer Circle countries might experience Othering since they are represented as someone not belonging to the in-group.

Looking at the collected evidence from the wider, sociocultural perspective – Fairclough’s third level – there is an apparent, unequal power relation between Inner Circle cultures and Outer Circle cultures. Quotes such as this one from *Blueprint B*: “What courage did it take from colonizers to enter compact jungles and explore the heart of the unknown?”

(Anderson 2018, p. 180) strengthen the claim that unequal power relations are reproduced through the implicit meaning of the texts. The ideologies behind a history of colonization and institutionalized oppression are reproduced which facilitates the marginalization of already marginalized groups.

5.2.2 Classic English Literature

The ninth chapter in the textbook *Pick & Mix 2* is called “English Literature”, and contains a text called “English Literature: A Brief History”. The text provides a timeline of information regarding literary eras, from the Old English age up until modern times. In the introductory paragraph, the authors of the text state that “[t]he history of English literature [...] is not only limited to the British Isles, but includes all literature written in English” (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 194). This opening statement suggests that different literary cultures from all over the English-speaking parts of the world are included in the forthcoming text. However, working through the text, it is evident that the perspective is almost exclusively British, with the occasional, brief insertion of American authors along with their works.

The Renaissance section provides an implicit reference to Outer Circle countries: “trade, war and exploration were creating stronger cultural links to other parts of the world” (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 197). The Romantic age section continues on the same line: “Colonisation brought curiosity about unknown and exotic parts of the world, which also influenced many authors of the time” (Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 199). Analyzing ‘what is left out’ (Rogers, 2011), the expressions ‘other parts of the world’ and ‘unknown and exotic parts of the world’ may be interpreted as Outer Circle countries, meaning that the ‘cultural links’ are probably connected through colonialism. What these cultural links mean for English literature history, however, is omitted. The structure of both sentences provides evidence that suggests that Inner Circle countries – in this case, Britain – are portrayed as the owners of classic English literature and history. ‘Many authors of the time’ were influenced by these ‘unknown and exotic parts of the world’, implicitly suggesting that the authors are strangers to these parts of the world, but familiar with colonialism. The authors, then, must belong to Inner Circle cultures.

The last part of the text is called “The (Western) Canon” where the static canon of English literature is criticized and problematized:

Today, however, we are aware of the fact that the traditional canon was created by a Western cultural elite and is therefore somewhat ethnocentric. Most famous authors of so-called ‘classics’ are white middle-class men, a fact that challenges the validity of the canon. The idea of a canon also gives rise to questions such as ‘What is art?’ and ‘Who decides what is good art?’

(Phillips & Phillips, 2021, p. 203)

The canon is criticized, but there are still no references to authors of other cultures. Outer Circle cultures are not represented, but instead marginalized. The static canon that is criticized in the quote above is the same static canon that is upheld and even validated by this text.

Similar texts can be found in the textbook *Solid Gold 2* in the short section “Authors of the English-Speaking World”. This section includes an overview of authors of classic works from Britain and America, as well as a historical timeline similar to the one in *Pick & Mix 2*. Calling the section ‘authors of the English-speaking world’ opens up for the interpretation that both Inner and Outer Circle cultures are represented. Turning to the overview of authors, it is only the Inner Circle that is represented as active agents in the history of English-speaking literature. The timeline over English literature focuses on British literary history as subject. In this text, Outer Circle countries are not even implicitly referred to. British culture is positioned as superior, and, unlike the canon section in *Pick & Mix 2*, it is not problematized whatsoever.

Similar to the findings regarding the theme of colonialism in the previous section, the findings of this theme overall suggest that Inner Circle countries and cultures are favored as they are positioned as owners of English literary canon. Although this is briefly problematized, the producers of the texts still fail to include literature and historical perspectives from other English-speaking parts of the world. The readers receive information that is presented as facts, although the history and literature offered in the books are merely representative of a small part of the English-speaking world.

Analyzing the texts from the wider sociocultural perspective, there is evidence to suggest that the power relation between the Inner and Outer Circle countries and cultures appears unproblematic, but is far from it. The hegemonic nature of the texts reinforces the unequal power structures of imperialism. The historical and institutionalized privilege of Britain is reproduced, marginalizing Outer Circle history and literature.

6 Discussion

This section will provide a discussion of the study's quantitative and qualitative findings. The first subsection will discuss the findings in relation to previous research and the two most prevalent themes found in the textbooks. The second section will discuss the pedagogical implications of the study's findings.

6.1 Discussion of Findings

The quantitative findings clearly show a lack of representation of both Outer and Expanding Circle countries and cultures, in all three textbooks analyzed. The vast difference in numbers suggests that English is not represented as a global or international language, but is instead positioned as traditional and static in the representation of cultures. These results are in line with the majority of previous research in the field, which conclude that the Inner Circle is portrayed as dominant, whereas the Outer Circle is represented as marginalized and stereotyped (Lestariyana & Nurkamto, 2022; Syrbe & Rose, 2018; Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021; Yuen, 2011). The norm-developing nature of the Outer Circle should position these cultures as important for the expansion and future of the English language; however, the Outer Circle is not positioned as such in these textbooks.

Even though the English language has an important position in Outer Circle countries, the data shows that even the Expanding Circle is represented to a further extent in the textbooks than the Outer Circle, similar to previous research (Xiang & Yenika-Agbaw, 2021). English as a European lingua franca seems, from the findings, to be portrayed as superior to Outer Circle countries and cultures. The evidence of this European superiority can be further reinforced by the fact that the quantitative data shows that not all Inner Circle countries are represented to a similar extent. While USA and the British Isles are extensively represented in all textbooks, the representation of Canada, New Zealand, and Australia is scarce. The results further show that New Zealand and Australia are repetitively represented as colonized by the powerful British empire. This suggests that it is not a matter of representing the Inner Circle as superior, but rather USA and European countries. Investigating this idea further, the results show that it might not be the Inner Circle countries that are represented as superior, but perhaps, rather, the countries of the Global North.

The qualitative findings of the two themes "The British Empire and Colonialism" and "Classic English Literature" reinforce the notion that another power relation might be more relevant than Kachru's concentric model. The critical discourse analysis of the two themes,

although separated at first, show symptoms of the same phenomena – Eurocentrism and a reproduction of both a Western canon and hegemony. Positioning the British Empire as agents, subjects, of the story, and countries such as India, Australia, Nigeria, and Ghana as passive objects of the story reproduces a colonial narrative of oppression and marginalization.

Be that as it may, the gruesome history of British colonialism should hardly be excluded from the textbooks either, as this would conceal a vital part of the history of the English-speaking world. However, continuing to position Britain as the agents of history does little to oppose its structural power, resulting in – although the purpose might be the complete opposite – a preservation and even enforcement of harmful stereotypes and structures.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study provide evidence that suggests that the representation of different cultures of the English-speaking world in EFL textbooks is unbalanced. What the findings do not show, however, is *how* the textbooks are used in classroom practices and what the students actually learn. Then again, what the findings *do* suggest is that a critical approach towards EFL textbooks must be maintained and encouraged.

This critical approach towards the content of EFL textbooks should be employed by both teachers and students. Firstly, EFL teachers must be aware of the unequal representation of different English-speaking parts of the world in EFL textbooks. Secondly, EFL teachers need tools to uphold a critical approach in the selection of course materials. This second suggestion is in line with Yuen's study (2011), which emphasizes that teachers should be educated to become critical textbook users and consequently strengthen the quality of EFL textbooks. This would imply that textbooks representing a more extensive and inclusive picture of the English-speaking parts of the world could be chosen, resulting in students learning about global English cultures and not just from the perspective of Inner Circle cultures. This is in line with both the curriculum as well as the English syllabus, which state that the global perspective is important and that students should learn about cultural structures in different parts of the world where English is used – implying that not only a British and American perspective should be favored.

The nature of all texts, however, is that they are never neutral but rather ideologically charged, one way or another (Lewinson et al. 2015). Choosing textbooks that represent the Inner, Outer, and Expanding Circles to a more equal extent, would, therefore, not take away from the fact that the ideology of the texts still favors someone's interests. It is, hence, vital

that students learn strategies for analyzing, questioning, and problematizing the content of texts. One way to approach this is through the concept of critical literacy, i.e. by questioning and challenging issues of power in texts and discourses (Janks, 2009). By applying critical literacy, the students can learn to question and problematize the textbooks beyond the surface of language learning.

7 Conclusions

The aim of this study was to analyze EFL textbooks used in Swedish upper secondary school to investigate the representation of the three Circles of English as well as their cultures. The study, therefore, aspired to answer three research questions, using both a quantitative and a qualitative approach: (1) to what extent are Inner, Outer and Expanding Circle countries and cultures represented in EFL textbooks, (2) are the cultures represented in different ways and, in that case, how, and (3) what are the implications of the representation of said cultures in EFL textbooks?

The study found that Inner Circle countries and cultures were represented to a far greater extent than the Outer and Expanding Circle countries and cultures. Furthermore, the findings of the study showed that the cultures generally were represented in different ways. One prevalent theme of the findings, The British Empire and Colonialism, suggested that Inner and to some extent even Expanding Circle countries were represented as agents of the texts, whereas Outer Circle countries were portrayed as passive. Another theme, Classic English Literature, showed that the Western canon almost exclusively gave way to Inner Circle countries, often dismissing and silencing Outer Circle literature altogether. The findings suggest that the implications of this unequal representation are that Outer Circle countries and cultures are marginalized and stereotyped, while the Inner Circle countries and cultures, and to some extent the Expanding Circle as well, are represented as dominant powerholders with hegemonic control.

To provide further insight into the field, studies of textbooks similar to the ones mentioned in section 3 should be conducted, but in a European and specifically Swedish context. Furthermore, due to the limitations of this study, audio tracks were not included as materials to be analyzed. This is, however, something that should be studied further in order to explore the representation of not only different English-speaking cultures, but also English-speaking varieties. Using Kachru's concentric circles, it would be possible to provide data showing whether one circle is more represented than others and whether this has any

implications. Further insight could also be provided within the field by studying teacher attitudes toward the representation of English cultures and varieties in EFL textbooks. Is the lack of representation of, for example, Outer Circle cultures problematized at all? If so, how? How are the textbooks used in the classroom, and are students provided with tools to analyze, problematize, and question these power structures? Lastly, the findings suggest that perhaps a different model for investigating power and representation in EFL textbooks should be used instead of Kachru's circle model, using concepts such as the Global North or examining Western hegemony in EFL textbooks.

References

- Ammert, N. (2011). In: N. Ammert (Ed.), *Att spegla världen: läromedelsstudier i teori och praktik* (pp. 17–24). Studentlitteratur.
- Anderson, C. (2018). When Cultures Clash. In: C. Lundfall & R. Nyström (Eds.), *Blueprint B* (pp. 180–182). Liber.
- Collins English Dictionary. (n.d.). Text. In: *Collins English Dictionary*. Retrieved May 8, 2022, from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/text>
- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and Social Change*. Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Routledge.
- Freire, P., & Macedo, D. P. (1987). *Literacy: Reading the Word & the World*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers.
- Gee, J. P. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacies: ideology in discourses*. Routledge.
- Gee, J. P. (2011). Discourse Analysis: What Makes it Critical? In: R. Rogers (Ed.), *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education* (pp. 23–45). Routledge.
- Hedencrona, E., Smed-Gerdin, K., & Watcyn-Jones, P. (2015). *Solid Gold 2*. Studentlitteratur.
- Janks, H. (2009). *Literacy and Power*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869956>
- Jenkins, J. (2014). *Global Englishes*. Routledge.
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In: R. Quirk & H. G. Widdowson (Eds.), *English in the World: Teaching and Learning the Language and Literatures* (pp. 11–30). Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. B. (1992). Teaching World Englishes. In: B. B. Kachru (Ed.), *The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures* (pp. 355–366). University of Illinois Press.
- Karlsson, K. (2011). Läroboken och makten – ett nära förhållande. In: N. Ammert (Ed.), *Att spegla världen: läromedelsstudier i teori och praktik* (pp. 43–62). Studentlitteratur.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2012). Individual Identity, Cultural Globalization, and Teaching English as an International Language: The Case for an Epistemic Break. In: L. Alsagoff, S. L. McKay, G. Hu, & W. A. Renandya (Eds.), *Principles and Practices for Teaching English as an International Language* (pp. 9–27). Routledge.

- Lee, J., & Li, X. (2020). Cultural representation in English language textbooks: A comparison of textbooks used in mainland China and Hong Kong. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 28(4), 605–623.
- Lee-Johnson, J., & Henderson, L. (2019). Using Social Media to (Re)Center Black Women's Voices in Educational Research. In: R. Winkle-Wagner, J. Lee-Johnson, & A. N. Gaskew (Eds.), *Critical Theory and Qualitative Data Analysis in Education* (pp. 222–235). Routledge.
- Lestariyana, R. P. D., & Nurkamto, J. (2022). International Textbooks Analysis Used for EFL Students: A Critical Content Analysis of Multicultural from Kachru's Models. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 3(2), 248–256.
- Lewison, M., Leland, C., & Harste, J. C. (2015). *Creating Critical Classrooms: Reading and Writing with an Edge* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Luke, A. (2012). Critical Literacy: Foundational Notes. *Theory Into Practice*, 51(1), 4–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.636324>
- Lundfall, C. & Nyström, R. (2018). *Blueprint B*. Liber.
- Löthagen Holm, A. (2016). *Att utforska verkligheten*. Skolverket.
- Nguyen, T., Marlina, R., & Cao, T. (2021). How well do ELT textbooks prepare students to use English in global contexts? An evaluation of the Vietnamese English textbooks from an English as an international language (EIL) perspective. *Asian Englishes*, 23(2), 184–200. DOI: 10.1080/13488678.2020.1717794
- Pfister, G., & Borzilleri, P. (1977). Surface Cultural Concepts: A Design for the Evaluation of Cultural Material in Textbooks. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 10(2), 102–108.
- Phillips, T. & Phillips, S. (2021). *Pick & Mix 2*. Gleerups.
- Rogers, R. (2011). Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis in Educational Research. In: R. Rogers (Ed.), *An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis in Education* (pp. 1–20). Routledge.
- Skolverket (2013). *Curriculum for the upper secondary school*. Skolverket. <https://www.skolverket.se/publikationer?id=2975>
- Skolverket (2020). *Engelska (Ämnesplan). [English – Syllabus]*.
- Skolverket (2021). *Yttrande över betänkandet Läromedelsutredningen – böckernas betydelse och elevernas tillgång till kunskap (SOU 2021:70)*. <https://www.regeringen.se/4b00f7/contentassets/a8a49f71a17b45efb53b54862ffd8916/statens-skolverk.pdf>

- SOU 2021:70. *Läromedelsutredningen – böckernas betydelse och elevernas tillgång till kunskap*. <https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/2021/08/sou-202170/>
- Syrbe, M. & Rose, H. (2018). An evaluation of the global orientation of English textbooks in Germany. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 12(2), 152–163. DOI: 10.1080/17501229.2015.1120736
- Tajeddin, Z. & Pakzadian, M. (2020). Representation of inner, outer and expanding circle varieties and cultures in global ELT textbooks. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education* 5(1), 1–15. DOI: 10.1186/s40862-020-00089-9
- Xiang, R., & Yenika-Agbaw, V. (2021). EFL textbooks, culture and power: A critical content analysis of EFL textbooks for ethnic Mongols in China. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(4), 327–341.
- Xiong, T., & Qian, Y. (2012). Ideologies of English in a Chinese high school EFL textbook: A critical discourse analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 32(1), 75–92.
- Yuen, K. (2011). The representation of foreign cultures in English textbooks. *ELT Journal*, 65(4), 458–466.