Global English and Listening Materials
A textbook analysis

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Abstract

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Abstract: This paper focuses on listening materials used in English language teaching in Sweden, especially in respect to the concept of global English. Global English could briefly be described as the linguistic, cultural, politic, and economic influence of English in the world. This influence concerns two aspects of English, namely the usage of English as a lingua franca in international communications, as well as the great range of English varieties that are used today. The purpose of this research is to study how varied listening materials are and how, when and why they are used in the classrooms. I conducted a two-part investigation to study these matters. The first part of the investigation focuses on teachers’ usage of listening materials and is based on a questionnaire handed out to five teachers. I found that the teachers varied much in their usage of listening materials. In the second part of the investigation I compare the listening materials provided by two Swedish textbooks on English, one from 1994 and one from 2003. Here I focus on the speakers’ varieties, rate of delivery, and instructions given for listening exercises. I found that both books featured a majority of speakers from the British Isles and America, and very few non-native speakers. The more recent book featured a larger degree of varieties outside the areas of Britain and the USA, as well as a larger degree of American English when dividing the varieties by the time these were spoken. RP (Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American) were also less dominating in the textbook from 2003. The rate of delivery was generally slower in the older textbook. The results from this investigation suggest that some changes seem to have occurred between the publishing of the two books. However, a focus on English as a lingua franca, where the aim is proficiency in efficient cross cultural communication rather than in the English spoken by native speakers, does not seem to have influenced the textbooks studied here. It is difficult to appreciate whether or not changes like these have taken hold in Swedish classrooms, as teachers use many different listening materials and in many different ways.

Nyckelord: Listening materials, listening comprehension, global English, textbook materials, English as a second language (ESL), varieties, dialects, rate of delivery
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1. Introduction and aims

The fact that English is an international language and the most wide-spread lingua franca in the world raises questions as to how listening skills are taught in Swedish schools today. The Swedish course plan for English A (upper secondary school) states that pupils should "understand clearly enunciated speech from different regions, on subjects which are not entirely unfamiliar" (Skolverket, 2007a). Listening comprehension is an essential aspect of language learning, and there is consensus among linguists that listening skills involve complex processes which take much practicing to master. Thus, listening in language learning must be varied, pedagogical, and last but not least, structured to prepare the students for interactions where English is used outside the classroom. From my experience I have noticed that many of the materials used in listening comprehension only seem to cover a small range of tasks, with few variations in the speakers’ rate of delivery and variety spoken. That is, the majority of the speakers in these listening exercises use Standard English with Received Pronunciation (RP), speak quite slowly and always with a clear enunciation.

Using recordings of spoken English (such as audio recordings, music, or films) can be one way of bringing “the world into the classroom”, by presenting the linguistic and phonological, even cultural, variation of English. I believe that such an international perspective is an important aspect of using listening exercises, though certainly not the only one. It is thus important to examine what these exercises are used for in the classroom, i.e. what is the purpose of the task at hand?

My aim in this paper is to study the assortment of listening materials, as well as to determine how, when, and why listening materials are used in the classroom. To achieve this I have posed a number of questions:

1) What materials do teachers use in the classroom and how do they use them?
2) What variety of English and rate of delivery do the speakers in listening materials use?
3) What types of instructions are given for the listening activities?
2. Background
In this background I will focus on some important aspects of “international English” and listening skills. The background is divided into four parts, relevant to the topic of the study. First I look into the curriculum for English teaching in Swedish upper secondary school. Second, I present some important aspects of language in general, and English in particular, which serve as a background to the third part, where different perspectives on international English are examined. The fourth and final section deals with aspects of language pedagogy and listening.

2.1 The national curriculum

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, 2007b)

The present national curriculum for the non-compulsory school system (Lpf94) was implemented in 1994, and marked a shift from previous national curricula. While earlier curricula placed much importance on how to teach languages, Lpo94 was less rigid, leaving more place for teachers’ interpretations and choices of pedagogy, and took a step towards making the communicative and cultural components of language learning the main goal, instead of near-native proficiency (O’Neill, 2006).

The current national curriculum takes an international approach towards the subject of English, where “communicative abilities” are vital, and the basic goal is to provide the students with “the language skills necessary for international contacts” (Skolverket, 2007b). Cultural knowledge is also seen as an important part of language study; one of the aims is to broaden the “perspectives on an expanding English-speaking world with its multiplicity of varying cultures” (Skolverket, 2007b). The course plan states among its “goals to aim for”, that pupils should:

- “develop their ability to communicate and interact in English in a variety of contexts concerning different issues and in different situations”
- “deepen their understanding of English as spoken in different parts of the world, and improve their ability to understand the contents communicated by different media”
- “reflect over [sic] ways of living, cultural traditions and social conditions in English-speaking countries, as well as develop greater understanding and tolerance of other people and cultures” (Skolverket, 2007b)
2.2 English and the world

In order to understand the role which English has today, and why it is considered an international language, some key-terms have to be explained, along with some relevant information on some aspects of English.

2.2.1 Definitions

There seems to be little doubt that English is a global language. Kachru & Nelson, for example, describe English as “the most widely taught, read, and spoken language that the world has ever known” (1996:71). However, what we mean by the word *global* seems to be a matter of definition, and it can be difficult to see where the line between *global* and *international* should be drawn. The terms are closely related and often used interchangeably, but there are nevertheless some slight differences. *Global* means the whole globe, or rather, what is global concerns the whole world, with or without taking nationalities into consideration. If we speak of the global economy, for example, it is the economy that the whole world participates in. *International*, on the other hand means ‘between nations’, and is used to explain interaction which involves more than one nation (LDOCE, 2005). Thus the word *international* has a wider range when it comes to usage, from interactions between just a few nations, to interaction on a world-wide scale.

The concept of a *global* world is also connected to the discourse of *globalization*. The idea of globalization is complex and multidimensional, and one of many ways in which the word can be used is to describe global capitalism (Kellner, 1997). Within a historical context, globalization is often described as the present discourse that has replaced the national or nationalistic discourse, as the industrial age has changed into an age of information. Globalization is perhaps best understood as a process of global expansion, where fields such as economy, education, travel, and politics are becoming increasingly global, as opposed to national or local (Ishiyama, 2005). There seems to be a widespread belief today that our perception of the world is no longer as restricted to national barriers as it once was. Borders formed between cultures and languages seem to have replaced many geographical borders, at least in theory. Globalization is linked to culture, economy, and history, and it is often used in contexts such as business, technology, communication, education, and language. The term *localization* is sometimes used together with globalization, to ‘problematize’ the notion that the world is changing in one direction only. Miranda Joseph acknowledges two ways of interpreting localization. Either as capitalism being and needing to be flexible and adaptable
to local cultural relations, or, as a dialectical feature of globalization, both intensifying the power of capitalism and providing opportunities for resistance (2002:184-185).

2.2.2 Lingua franca
The idea of English as a global language and world lingua franca has gained increasing attention over the last decades. The number of people speaking English as a native language is estimated between 309 million and 337 million people (Gordon, 2005; Crystal, 1997:61). Media, education, the Internet, and cultural imperialism are often described as factors contributing to the spread of English as a lingua franca in the world. According to a Newsweek article (Power, 2007), the speakers of English as a second or third language outnumber native speakers by three to one. But the major reasons behind the spread of English from a historical perspective are undoubtedly the British Empire’s colonialism and the USA’s status as a world power since the mid-20th century (Cenoz & Jessner, 2000:vii).

In order to provide an understanding of the role English plays as a world language today, a discussion of the concept of lingua franca is required. The wish for a “universal” way of communicating developed long ago, and both linguists and philosophers experimented with constructed languages for the purpose of creating universal auxiliary languages (http://ne.se/artikel/229200). However, such languages proved to be unsuccessful in gaining large speech communities (Svantvik & Leech, 2006:5) and the whole idea of universalism has been heavily targeted by postmodern critics such as Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984:xxiii-xxv). Nevertheless, the dream of a world-wide lingua franca, now in the form of English, seems as desired and problematic as ever (Crystal, 1997:x-xi; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006:17). Lingua francas have historically been important in fields where international contact emerged as a result of trading, military actions (such as colonization or military seizure) or in arenas such as religion and higher education, which benefited from international accessibility.

Lingua francas are adopted where there is a need for communication between groups that speak different languages. A lingua franca develops when many different language groups learn a specific language and use this language for inter-lingual communications amongst them. The language used as a lingua franca is often the language of prestige among the lingua franca speakers, and this prestige is often a result of power structures (Trudgill, 2000:132).
The best-known lingua franca is perhaps Latin, at least in Europe. It spread through the power of the Roman Empire, where it mixed with the local languages, and became known as Vulgar Latin in the Roman enclaves. Although this language split up into mutually unintelligible Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish, Romanian, Portuguese) when the military and economic power of the Roman empire gradually decreased, Vulgar Latin was used as a mutual Lingua Franca at the time. Local variation of course existed, but as long as the Romans held their control over the areas where Vulgar Latin was spoken, mutual comprehension was necessary. The written language of the Romans, called Classical Latin, survived much longer without changing much, primarily due to the adoption of Latin by the Catholic Church (Ecclesiastical Latin) as well as the language’s function in education and diplomacy (Encyclopædia Britannica).

2.2.3 Varieties, standards, dialects, and accents
The terms dialect, accent and variety differ slightly in meaning. Accent is used for differences in pronunciation within a language, while dialect refers to differences in grammar and vocabulary, as well as pronunciation (Trudgill, 2000:5). The word variety is used by Trudgill as a more neutral term, in the sense that the differences which set one variety apart from the next do not need to be specified (2000:5). However, it is difficult to keep these terms apart when it comes to language usage, as they partly overlap. There is always a degree of mixing going on, and there exist no clear-cut boundaries between varieties, so linguists often speak about a dialect (or accent, or language) continuum, where the differences are apparent at the ends, but where there is a considerable mixing taking place in the center (Trudgill, 2000:3). Dialects and accents are often thought of as geographically situated, and although this is true in the majority of cases, it may not always be the case. RP for example, is labeled a ‘non-localized’ accent by Trudgill, since its speakers are not confined to any particular region of England. Instead they share much more in their social position (or occupation), cultural background and class (2000:7). As the example with RP might have demonstrated, geography is just one of many contributing factors which influence what dialect and accent one speaks. As language and identity are closely related, aspects such as social status, class, ethnicity, culture and even sex are other influential factors (2000:13).

I have chosen to use variety in this sense throughout the paper, including the investigation and the analysis.
Varieties and dialects are associated with the division between *standard* and *non-standard* English. While dialects are mainly a product of differences in geography and social status, sex, ethnicity etc., the difference between standard and non-standard English has to do with the prestige and tradition of these dialects. A *standard* is a dialect which has gained special status as the language of state, legal system, education, academia etc. Used primarily in writing, it is a set of rules in grammar, spelling, and syntax that is acknowledged as “correct”. (Trudgill, 2000:5-7). Today there exist many standards, for example American, British, Australian, and Jamaican Standard English. It is easy to confuse the standard-nonstandard features of language with the formal-informal continuum. According to Trudgill, the “difference between standard and nonstandard […] has nothing in principle to do with differences between formal and colloquial language” (2000:6). The level of formality has to do with choices in vocabulary, the way of structuring sentences, and pragmatic discourses, such as politeness (Trudgill, 2000:82-83). Standard and non-standard speech, on the other hand, have to do with how closely the vocabulary and grammatical structuring of the Standard variety is followed (pronunciation is not included in the definition of Standard varieties). Non-standard speech is often considered incorrect as it may break the rules of the Standard variety. But non-standard varieties are as rule-goverered as the Standards are, with their own set of grammar and lexis, and should best be judged by themselves (Trudgill, 2000:8).

2.3 Global English

Global English is a concept with many different implications and meanings, depending on who is using the term. Some theories and models have been proposed to systematize, conceptualize, and analyze global English, and there are many different views on how we should deal with English as a global language. I will here try to present some of the main linguistic theories on global English.

2.3.1 Terminology

That English is a global language is a view shared by most linguists, but this has also led to a proliferation of terms, including *global English*, *international English*, *English as an International Language (EIL)*, *World English/es*, *New English/es* etc. Rubdy & Saraceni (2006), who look at global English and its implications for English Language Teaching (*ELT*), describe three critical perspectives in dealing with English from a global and educational point of view: *Standard English*, *World Englishes*, and *EIL*, also known as *English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)*. The first one concentrates on the traditional usage of British or
American Standard English as a model for foreign language teaching. The second perspective highlights English variation around the world, and aims to make the variety used in one particular area the model for teaching English in that area. The third notion, ELF or EIL, is based on the usage of English by native, second, and foreign speakers alike, where foreign language learners are educated in a world-wide standard which most English speakers, whether they are native or non-native speakers, can easily comprehend. Though an international standard does not (yet) exist, English used according to the idea of ELF or EIL is not uncommon in fields such as business, technology, and international politics, at least if it is not understood as a homogenous variety (Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006:6-8).

The English-speaking world is generally divided into three different categories based on language learning and language usage: English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL), and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). While the first term is easily understood, though not always unproblematic, the division between ESL and EFL needs some explaining. The latter is used for speakers who think of English as a foreign language and who expect to use it in restricted areas (such as travel or reading), while the former is used for speakers who acknowledge English as a second language. In other words, bilingualism is necessary for ESL speakers in order to gain access to important structures and domains within their society (Kachru, 1990:19). Kachru maintains that it is important to hold EFL and ESL apart, because these groups differ as much in attitudes, motivation, or regarding reasons for learning as does the setting (historical, geographical, and social) in which their learning takes place (1990:16). Jenkins, on the other hand, points out that while ESL and EFL are useful terms, they should nevertheless be used with care as they are “fuzzy at the edges” (2003:14). English usage within the Swedish context is often referred to as a second language, though a strict division, like the one presented by Kachru above, would definitely place Sweden as an EFL country (Strevens, 1992:36; McArthur, 2001:8).

2.3.2 Models and theories

Linguists differ in their views on how English should be perceived as an international language. McArthur presented one of the first models for international English in 1987, where World Standard English (WSE) formed the center of a circle. This center was surrounded by another circle divided into standards based on large geographical areas, such as American Standard English and Caribbean Standard English. Localized and national varieties, such as Quebec English, South African English and Japanese English, and non-localized varieties,
such as BBC English and African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), were placed outside the second circle (McArthur, 1987:11). Another widely used model for international English categorization is Kachru’s concentric circles. This theory focuses on the power structures between different varieties and how they interact with each other. First we have the ‘inner circle’ for the traditional English native-speaking sphere (Britain, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, Ireland). This circle is described as ‘norm-providing’. Attached to the inner circle is the ‘outer circle’, those nations where English is used as a second language (India, Singapore, Nigeria, Pakistan and more), and this sphere is described as ‘norm-developing’. Connected with the outer circle is the ‘expanding circle’, where Kachru puts nations where English is expanding as a foreign language (China, Israel, Indonesia, Zimbabwe and more), and these are labeled ‘norm-dependent’ (Kachru, 2005:101-2; Jenkins, 2003:15-16). In other words, the inner circle is most influential on the expanding circle, while the outer circle is in the process of creating its own English, influenced by inner circle varieties and influencing them in return.

Other models have been proposed to improve on or challenge Kachru’s circles. Yano (2001) offers a modified, three-dimensional version based on Kachru’s model, where the circles are no longer concentric. The outer circle Englishes have in many cases become established varieties and detached from the inner circle Englishes, a fact also acknowledged by Kachru, who proposes that the outer circle should be labeled ‘functional’ native languages and the inner circle ‘genetic’ native languages. In other words, both Kachru and Yano believe that nativeness is not the inner circle’s exclusive privilege (Yano, 2001:122). The division between inner circle and outer circle is thus the one which will “[i]n due course […] become more obscure and therefore less meaningful” (Yano, 2001:122), while the outer and the expanding circle will remain separate. Yano also includes the division into acrolects and basilects, terms borrowed from Creole studies. The first one is the dialect of prestige, which is used at official events, while basilects are used for more informal interactions between speakers of the same dialect. Yano’s idea is that the localized varieties in the outer circle are used as basilects, while the speakers use an international English as the acrolect (Yano, 2001:123).

Other linguists find the whole idea of inner and outer circles problematic, because it implies that the inner circles are, and should remain, the norm by which all other varieties should be measured. Another model is suggested by Modiano who draws centripetal circles to explain
the role of international English (EIL). Modiano’s model is based on international comprehensibility, where proficiency in English that is comprehensible to most people involved in cross-cultural communication form the inner circle. Those who speak English as a first or second language, but are not proficient in EIL form the second circle, and those who are learners of either regional or standard Englishes form the outer circle (Modiano, 1999:25-26).

David Crystal, among others, uses the plural form “Englishes” to emphasize that there is a great variety of dialects, accents and usage forms in the world today. Crystal also believes that this language plurality should not be seen as an obstacle to developing a standardized global English. In other words, the localization of English into new dialects and languages and the function of English as a world lingua franca should not be understood as mutually exclusive ideas (Crystal, 1999:x-xi).

2.3.3 Global English and education

Most foreign and second language teaching of English has traditionally followed a native standard variety as the model and target language. In Europe, this has meant British English, while other areas have used American Standard English as their target for non-native students to learn. But now that English is categorized as a global language, and used to such an extent as a lingua franca in non-native interaction, this pedagogy has come to scrutiny. Melchers & Shaw (2003) identify the question of which variety should be taught in the expanding circle as three underlying questions. First, it is a question of what exposure to English we should give the learners, in other words, what varieties the students come across when listening to or reading English. The authors point out that school has far from a monopoly on what exposure learners have to English, such as media exposure (where English from the USA predominates in many countries). Second, we need to decide what model should be used, which is “above all the teacher’s usage but also the tapes or written material they are supposed to imitate” (2003:191). The last question is what production target we should aim for, meaning what spelling, pronunciation, grammar and other language skills we want students to adopt as they become increasingly proficient.

What answers these questions get depends largely on the function and purpose of learning the language. While foreign language learning is aimed at introducing students to the target language’s culture and the means of expression used in the language, international language
learning has as its aim to build proficiency in cross-cultural language communication (Melchers & Shaw, 2003:192). The answer often seems to be somewhere between these two. Melchers & Shaw, who describe themselves as liberals in these matters (meaning that “English belongs to everyone”, as they describe this ‘stereotype’), consider a goal for proficiency in international communication as the most useful model of English teaching in the expanding circle (2003:192,193). This means wide exposure to “as many accents and varieties as possible”, cross-cultural communication strategies, and avoidance of cultural specific references in the students’ production of English (2003:192).

2.4 Listening
I will here attempt to define listening and how it works, as well as present some linguistic theories on listening, especially concerning second language learners.

2.4.1 Listening comprehension
On a very basic level, listening might be defined as the reception of acoustic signals which are then structured according to linguistic, situational, and background information, in accordance with cognitive processes and conditioned by memory load (Bejar et al. 2000). However, a definition of listening within language study is more problematic, according to Bejar et al. who state that “there is a general consensus that no uniformly agreed upon definition exists for listening in either native language studies […] or second language studies” (Bejar et al. 2000:1). Several linguists (Buck, 2001; Hedge, 2000) describe listening as a complex process which involves both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge. Bejar et al. (2000:2) define three types of knowledge involved in listening comprehension: linguistic knowledge, situational knowledge, and background knowledge. Linguistic knowledge includes everything from identifying phonemes and grammatical structures to semantics. Situational knowledge has to do with the context of the listening experience, in other words the conditions under which the participants are involved and the setting in which the listening takes place. Background knowledge is the non-linguistic knowledge which the listeners keep in their memory load; general knowledge of the world and how things work, knowledge of the topic at hand and so on (Bejar et al. 2000; Buck, 2001).

In discussing the input processed by the listener, Buck (2001:4) lists important aspects of speech that the listener deals with and which influence the listening situation. These are, among others, phonological modification, stress and intonation, redundancy, and shared
knowledge. **Phonological modification** means that we modify the phonemes in speech. The word before or after can alter the pronunciation of a word considerably, or even make it disappear. This is a rule-governed and regular process, and it thus seldom poses a problem for the listener provided that he or she does not hear it out of context. Consider for example the sentence “I wish you would”, where the [ʃ]-sound of ‘wish’ changes the pronunciation of the word ‘you’. Other important aspects of speech, especially considering the English language, are stress and intonation. The stress pattern gives the listeners clues to what the speaker thinks is important/wants to convey, but also “gives each word an individual form, which is as much a part of the sound of the word as the actual phonemes” (Buck, 2001:5). An example of word stress could be exemplified by the difference between 'present (n), as in contemporary, and pre'sent (v), as in introduce or offer. The intonation pattern is linked to the meaning of what is conveyed, providing the listener with information on sentence structuring and forms (questions, statements, end of sentences etc.), and when it is safe for the listener to reply (Buck, 2001). The raise of tone at the end of a question is a good example of the latter.

Buck (2001) also states that shared knowledge affects the speed and clarity of spoken language. When two people discuss a common interest, the speech tends to go faster, for example. Another aspect of language, redundancy, is crucial in the sense that the listener does not need all the information in order to make sense of what is heard. The speaker expresses words essential to the context more clearly than redundant words, and listeners can use their linguistic knowledge to fill in the gaps, and construct their own meaning. “Because language is redundant, we do not need all the information to be clearly expressed”, writes Buck (2001:6). The subordinate clause of the sentence “it was very windy that day, so windy that we literally had to hold on to our hats” gives redundant information to emphasize the stormy weather. According to Anderson & Lynch, learners of English need to reach “a certain minimum level of proficiency” in order to take advantage of redundant information, and where they benefit from it, while the same redundant information may confuse lower-proficiency learners, because the excess of information for them to process (1988:51). Yet another aspect of speech is that conversations take place in real-time, and even though the listener can ask the speaker to repeat what they just said, the listener must still process the language at the speed that the speaker determines. Real-time processing also means that listeners can only consult their memory in order to access the information conveyed by the speaker. In other words, listening requires automatic processing, something which is acquired
by getting access to both linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge, and this can often pose a problem for second-language learners.

As mentioned earlier, the listener creates meaning by interpreting the information encountered, according to multiple types of knowledge and clues provided by the context. But how do we interpret meaning when we listen? According to Buck (2001), listeners, especially second language learners but also native speakers, are likely to have inadequate interpretations of what has been said. And when the listeners get everything right, their interpretations will nevertheless vary, and sometimes considerably. The variations in interpretation may have to do with our differences in background knowledge: “When we listen we use our background knowledge of the world to set up expectations, and then use those expectations to comprehend what we hear” (Buck, 2001:8). Our interpretations are also affected by our motives, and motivation, for listening. The discrepancy in interpretations can cause misunderstandings and lacking communication. Most of the time, however, this variation does not pose communicative problems, since listeners often share the same explicit information (Buck, 2001), and slight differences are often leveled out by negotiation of meaning.

Listening is closely linked to the situation in which it takes place, meaning the arena where the participants meet, the form of communication, the speakers and their intentions, and the level of interaction between speaker(s) and listener(s). Buck defines two types of roles imposed on the listener depending on the situation. Non-collaborate listening means that the listener only has to interpret the information shared. Collaborate listening, however, demands some type of response. The level of the listener’s obligation to respond depending on the listening situation can be placed along a continuum, where radio shows and recorded listening exercises are placed at one end, and interactive communication based on equal collaboration at the other end. A typical classroom situation, where the teacher does most of the talking, but where the listeners are free to intervene if they want (and dare) to, would be placed somewhere in between (Buck, 2001).

We usually have a purpose for listening, which affects both how we listen and how we interpret meaning. In a discussion of participatory listening, which closely corresponds to Buck’s collaborative definition, Hedge (2000:235) makes a distinction between two types of communicative situations based on different purposes for listening. Listening to small-talk over a cup of coffee, for example, is quite different from receiving instructions from a
superior in order to carry out a specific task. Listening in situations such as informal gatherings often serves a social purpose, and Hedge (2000:235) explains this purpose as *interactional* listening, a term borrowed from Brown & Yule.\(^2\) *Transactional* listening, on the other hand, has the purpose of acquiring information, as in the example of receiving instructions. However, Hedge (2000:235-236) is careful to point out that the purpose of listening cannot always be “neatly divided” like this, since *transactional* and *interactional* listening often shifts back and forth in everyday conversations. Nevertheless, these distinctions can be useful in broadening our perspectives on listening, according to Hedge (2000:236).

### 2.4.2 Bottom-up and top-down processing

According to Buck (2001), there are two main views on how comprehension of language is structured or “processed”; bottom-up processing and top-down processing.\(^3\) Bottom-up processing means that language comprehension is structured in a linear order, starting with acoustic signals processed by the brain into phonemes in order to identify single words. These small units are then put together into sentences (syntax), and later ordered according to semantic knowledge. This literal meaning of a “text” then enters the “next level” where pragmatic knowledge is added (Buck, 2001). Top-down processing, on the other hand, stands for a non-linear view of language comprehension. Buck (2001:3), who believes listening comprehension to be “a top-down process in the sense that the various types of knowledge involved in understanding language are not applied in any fixed order”, explains it as “that different types of processing may occur simultaneously, or in any convenient order” (2001:2).

When Hedge speaks of bottom-up and top-down, she is less concerned with in what order the processes work. Instead she explains bottom-up as using “information in the speech itself to try to comprehend the meaning” (Hedge, 2000:230) and top-down as the “knowledge a listener brings to a text […] as opposed to information that is available within the text itself” (Hedge, 2000:232). This view of top-down and bottom-up processes corresponds to the distinction between linguistic knowledge and non-linguistic knowledge.

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\(^3\) These terms are not exclusive to listening comprehension, but can be applied to all forms of language comprehension.
2.4.3 Listening in ESL teaching

In language pedagogy, listening represents one of four skills, the other three being speaking, writing, and reading. Speaking and listening share the aspect of interaction, but in language pedagogy a division is also made between productive skills (speaking, writing) and receptive skills (listening, reading). The problems of listening comprehension faced by ESL students are many, and these are not exclusively the result of limited knowledge of the target language. Hedge refers to Cherry’s categories of uncertainties which influence how well the listener understands what is being said.4 First, confidence in the language plays an important part in listening. It is common for language learners to have unrealistic expectations, in that they try to understand each and every word spoken to them, instead of aiming at understanding the general points available by the context. Hedge writes that “[l]earners’ anxiety can be exacerbated by a classroom procedure which does not contextualize the text or prepare the topic by activating prior knowledge; in other words, a procedure which asks students to ‘Listen to the text and then answer the questions’” (2000:237). To overcome this problem, and to build confidence in the learner’s ability to understand, Hedge suggests that the teacher takes the pace and length of a listening activity into consideration (2000:237).

The second uncertainty which the students must deal with is the structure of authentic speech, with repetitions, pauses, incomplete sentences, as well as a larger degree of colloquial language, variations in pronunciation, stress and grammar, a pace often perceived as fast etc. According to Hedge, there are strong arguments for using slow, clear recordings of Standard English with familiar accents, especially in the earlier stages of language learning. But she also states that if the purpose of listening is to “develop the ability to deal with listening outside the classroom”, familiarization of the variation in pace and pronunciation, along with learning language strategies and developing vocabulary are much needed (2000:240).

Third, uncertainties can also occur from gaps in the message delivered by the speaker. An important strategy to deal with these gaps is prediction, being able to predict what the speaker will say next, by paying attention to transitions and conjunctions for example. Another uncertainty which influences the listener is conversational strategies, such as agreeing and showing that you take part in the interaction by nodding or filling in, or by asking for clarifications when something is not understood. The fifth uncertainty which Hedge mentions

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is the uncertainty of *language*, which has to do with how proficient the listener is in understanding vocabulary, grammatical structures etc. Uncertainties of *content* have to do with the listener’s lack of background knowledge, which often makes it difficult to understand what is being said. Hedge proposes a “pre-listening stage in which existing prior knowledge can be activated and missing prior knowledge can be introduced” (2000:241).

The last uncertainty Hedge writes about is *visual* uncertainties, which derive from lack of visual support which in turn can give us clues about the spoken massage. Hedge also says that “[n]atural spontaneous conversations can be very difficult for learners as it gives rise to so many of the uncertainties”, so clear settings and topics among other things can be one way of exposing students to authentic speech without too much grief on the their behalf (2000:245).

3. Methods and material

The aims of my study are to find out how listening materials are used by teachers and how varied listening materials are in terms of English varieties used, rates of delivery used, and the tasks of the listening exercises. This study is based on an investigation of a limited number of listening materials and a teacher questionnaire. The first part of the study is based on the data from the teacher questionnaire, which served to find out how teachers use listening exercises in the classroom. In the second part of the investigation, I have analyzed and compared the listening exercises provided by two textbooks intended for English A⁵ in Swedish upper secondary school.

3.1 Questionnaire

The first part of the investigation is based on a questionnaire handed out to seven English teachers at a Swedish upper-secondary school, to which five responded.⁶ The questionnaire was in English. I left the questionnaires at the teachers’ workplace for 4 days, so that they would not feel stressed by a time-limit and since they might have more urgent things to deal with. However, this also meant that I could not be present at the time of their answering the questionnaire in case they had any questions or could not understand it. The questionnaire consisted of 24 questions, all concerned with listening and/or the textbook used, and was divided into four parts. Though it may seem self-evident, I think it is important to point out

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⁵ English A is the ground-level English course in upper secondary school, which is mandatory for all upper secondary students.

⁶ See Appendix 3. The results of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4.
that the questionnaire was anonymous, and that the results from the questionnaire will only be used in this particular study.

3.2 Recordings of listening materials in two textbooks
The second part of the study is based on two upper secondary school textbooks in English, called *Upgrade 2* (1994) and *Solid Ground 1* (2003), both published after the implementation of the current curriculum, Lpo94. The reasons for choosing these books were that they should span approximately 10 years, they should come with recordings on a tape or a CD, and they should have been used recently by teachers in upper secondary school. The last criterion is hard to determine without a major investigation, so I trusted two experienced teachers who suggested books that they used earlier and that they use at present. *Upgrade 2* is intended for classes in vocational programs in upper secondary school. According to the introduction to *Solid Ground 1*, it is not aimed at any particular group, but the teachers I consulted used it mainly with students in theoretical programs.

The time span between the recordings was chosen to see if listening materials had changed over (approximately) a decade, while the difference in target audience was not a conscious choice, but a function of accessibility and time limits. Both books are intended for the course English A.

3.2.1 Comparison of recorded exercises
*Upgrade 2* comes with four tapes of approximately two hours and 45 minutes of recorded materials, and *Solid Ground 1* comes with four CD’s of four hours and 30 minutes of recordings, plus a student CD. The two books have a similar lay-out. They are both divided into 3-5 “units” or “parts” which are further subdivided into 4-8 “chapters” or “texts”. One difference is that while *Solid Ground 1* contains exercises (grammar, speaking, writing etc.) after each chapter, most exercises in *Upgrade 2* are found in the last part of each unit, called “Skills”. Another difference is that *Upgrade 2* has one additional chapter for each unit, labeled “extra reading”. These chapters, plus one of the “regular” chapters, were not included on the tapes. *Solid Ground 1*, on the other hand, has additional parts of some chapters which are to be found in the recordings, but not in the printed text, and one printed text that was not included among the recordings. My view is that the two textbooks are comparable with small

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7 The student CD was not included in this investigation.
differences in content and level of difficulty, and while this would certainly be interesting to investigate further, and could be expected to shed some light on the analysis of listening materials, I believe this goes beyond the scope of my study.

3.2.2 Processing of data
In the analysis of the textbook recordings I have concentrated on studying varieties, rates of delivery, exercise tasks, and, to some extent, whether the speakers use standard or non-standard English. I have found it necessary to distinguish between what I call activity recordings and text recordings. Text recordings consist of those chapters printed out in the textbook, which are read out aloud by one or several speakers following the printed words closely. The texts used in this sense include articles, short stories, chapters from novels and similar types of written texts. Activity recordings, on the other hand, are those recordings which do not come with a written transcription in the textbook. Most of these have specific tasks which are written in the book and/or explained in the recordings, although some of these do not. I have treated these separately for two reasons. The first reason was that text recordings share similar purposes, and I concluded that there was no need to investigate this aspect of text recordings individually. The second reason for this separation was that measuring the Rate of Delivery (RoD) did not seem feasible, since it would be too time consuming to conduct a word count without the manuscripts. Instead, I made RoD estimations of the activity recordings based on my own perception of what rate the speaker used.

Many listening materials, especially the listening exercises, featured multiple speakers. I dealt with each speaker in a recording as a separate case, in order to account for all the varieties spoken, and when possible I also calculated the RoD of each speaker separately.8 In some cases I also separated different, distinguishable varieties spoken by the same person, namely by impersonation, for example when performing the role of a character in the text. This I did for classification of varieties, but not the RoD.9 Some recordings were left out of this investigation, including readings of poems, lyrics, songs, and additional parts of textbook chapters (not found in the written text), and also activity recordings which were not included in the student’s textbook.10

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8 This was impossible, for example, in recordings of dialogue with quick interchanges between two or more speakers.
9 Impersonations of dialects are marked in the investigation as (imp).
10 However, in the analysis of the tasks of the activity recordings, I used all listening material except textbook recordings, and activity recordings not mentioned in the (student’s) textbooks (See 3.1.2; Listening tasks).
Varieties
The varieties used in the recordings were categorized by careful and repeated listening and comparison with other varieties. I studied secondary sources which featured information on differences in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, including, *World Englishes* by Melcher & Shaw (2003) and *English Pronunciation* by Johansson & Rönnerdal (1985). I found Internet sites which featured speech samples particularly helpful (*Sounds Familiar; IDEA; BBC Voices*), as well as explicit and implicit information in the recordings I studied, including information of location and speaker. Examples of explicit information given in the text recordings were names and descriptions of particular locations, while implicit information consisted of for example cultural clues (descriptions of clothes, customs etc), descriptions of climate and so on. I have formed four major categories of English varieties, based on both geography and the division between inner, outer and expanding circles (see Table 1).

Table 1. Varieties studied (and found) in the listening materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British and Irish varieties</th>
<th>North Am. varieties</th>
<th>Other ‘Inner circle’ varieties</th>
<th>‘Outer’ and Expanding circle varieties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received Pronunciation -RP</td>
<td>General Am. E. -GA</td>
<td>Australian English</td>
<td>Foreign accents (For ex. Italian and Swedish accent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary English</td>
<td>Southern Am. English</td>
<td>New Zealand E.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Br. English</td>
<td>New York City varieties</td>
<td>South African E.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Br. E.</td>
<td>AAVE (Ethnic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-western Br. E.</td>
<td>Chicano E. (Ethnic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-eastern Br. E.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories have in turn been split up into a handful of subcategories, based on prominent linguistic features, predominantly in pronunciation, and guided above all by the presence of, and division between, particular varieties found in the listening materials (Table 1). In other words, British and American varieties were subcategorized to a greater extent than other varieties, simply because these varieties made up the majority of the materials.

Word count
Counting the number of words proved to be hard, which has to do with the difficulty of defining what a word is. I had no guidance as how to calculate speed rate so I developed my own method. I have, however, striven for consistency in the way I applied this method. When I counted words I dealt with how the text was spoken, not written. Items usually not regarded
as words “on the page”, were read out aloud by a speaker, and thus counted as words. These included symbols [$, £, %, °], abbreviations [i.e.], and numbers [3:1, ½]. Apart from such differences between the recordings and the written text, I counted the words in the printed text that accompanied the recordings, as I found no cases of added or omitted words in the printed text. In other words, the speakers followed the texts (in this case manuscripts) with exemplary precision.

I counted compounds as one word, although it was sometimes hard to define a word as either a compound or two separate words. Compounds written as one word (chalkboard, drugstore, etc)\(^{11}\) and compounds hyphenated by a [-] or ['] (middle-aged, one-night-stand, o’clock) were treated as one word. Long compounds which were strung together by means of hyphens were counted as many words (for example, no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather). Compounds written as two or more separate words were harder to define according to a consistent model, and I chose to deal with these as individual cases. TV licence, pocket money, phone calls, and per cent, to name a few, were treated as one word. In uncertain situations, words which were separated by spaces were counted as two or more words (for example final exams and paper qualifications).

I counted names of people as multiple words (i.e. the first name as one word and the surname as one word). I also chose to count names of places, companies, organizations, brands etc. as multiple words (for example First Aid Programme, New York etc). I did this because it seemed both more feasible and more applicable (consider for example New York and New York City) and more well-suited for the purpose of conducting a word count (which is, of course, to determine a RoD as valid as possible). This holds especially true in the case of names of organizations, which can be quite long.

Contractions of the verb to be (I’m, it’s, they’re etc.) and other contracted auxiliary verbs (have/has/had, will/would, shall) (I’ll, he’d, we’ve etc.) as well as contracted negations (don’t, aren’t, ain’t etc.) were counted as two words. The contraction let’s was counted as one word, since it was used as a fixed expression. Numbers were always counted as one word, no matter how great (or small) the number (one, twenty-three, 36 millions, 100 thousand and 45 etc.). Abbreviations (for example WHO, UN, UNICEF) were treated as one lexical item, no matter

\(^{11}\) All the examples given here were taken from the textbooks.
if it was spelled out (W-H-O) or pronounced as a word (UNICEF = yuh-ni-sef). Unfinished
word expression, as a result of repairs or interrupted sentences, and meaningful sounds (aha!,
uh-oh, -eh) were counted. Sounds indicating hesitations (ahhh, ummh) and sighs were not
counted and in cases where such sounds were combined with a “real” word, they were treated
as a single word (for ex. umm-yes)

Rate of delivery (RoD)
I rejected too small samples when I calculated the rate of delivery, because the margin of error
would be too large in those cases. I used a stopwatch to time the samples, and since I
reckoned that the timing could be between 0-2 seconds wrong, I only used samples which
were 20 seconds or longer. In the listening materials where the speakers took turns, I
calculated the lengths of the contributions (as long as these were over 20 seconds long). RoD
was calculated by dividing the number of words by the number of minutes. Readings of
headings, subheadings, authors’ names etc were left out while pauses in the middle of the text
(pauses for effect and pauses between paragraphs) were not subtracted from the calculated
RoD. Where all or most samples were short, for example in dialogues, I did not time each
speaker individually, but looked at the total RoD of the recording.

There is an issue of validity concerning manual timing, and I categorized the rate of delivery
according to the spread in RoD’s which I ended up with after the calculations were done. I
decided on the following five categories; <120 wpm\(^{12}\) = ‘slow’, 121-145 wpm = ‘medium
slow’, 146-175 wpm = ‘average tempo’, 176-199 wpm = ‘medium fast’, and >200 wpm =
‘fast’. While this type of categorization is rough, the idea was that this could give more
accurate results in order for me to be able to compare and analyze the RoD of the recordings.
Neither value judgments of RoD, nor any comparison with other studies have been made, and
it would indeed be very wrong to assume that what I have called ‘average tempo’ is to be
considered the ‘normal’ pace of spoken language.

Standard and non-standard
I’ve also looked at whether the speakers use standard or non-standard language. This aspect of
listening was hard to identify for two reasons. First, samples of non-standard speech were
short, and second, it was hard to point out the level of ‘standardization’ in varieties I was not

\(^{12}\) Words per minute
familiar with. For these reasons I only noted the texts where much non-standard English was present. I focused here on grammatical and vocabulary aspects of standardization.13

Listening Tasks
I also studied the types of listening tasks used in the activity recordings. In other words, I examined what instructions were given for the listening exercises. I included all the listening material to analyze these matters, except for the textbook recordings, where no direct tasks were given, but where the chapters rather functioned as starting points for a large number of tasks for the students to complete over a longer period of time. I also excluded the listening material not mentioned in the (student’s) textbooks. This means I have included material not presented in the other studies, including songs, poems, and additional parts of textbook chapters (See 3.1.2).

I used six categories. The first two, listening for general information and listening for specific information, includes exercises where the students have to answer questions, in one way or another, on what they are listening to or have listened to. Specific information would be to recall details such as colors, time of an event, or names. General information, on the other hand, would involve comprehension of content, for example why something had happened in the text. The third category, listening as a preliminary activity to oral practice, is aimed at training students’ pronunciation. This means repeating what the speakers on the recordings say, or using the formulae provided by the exercise to take turns asking each other questions. In the fourth category, answering questions using general knowledge, the students had to use their world knowledge in order to answer the questions, i.e. questions on topics not accounted for in the recordings or mentioned in related texts. The fifth category, listening for discussion/students’ opinions, accounts for recordings intended to lead to group discussions or individually stated opinions on the text. In the sixth category, listening for fun, no specific task was given. Examples of this last category were listening to the ending of a text which the students had worked with, music, or poems. I also looked at whether the activities were “authentic”, meaning that the recording was unscripted, featured regular speakers of English using colloquial language, as opposed to actors or trained instructors. In other words, these activity recordings were not specifically made for the pedagogic purpose of the listening task.

13 See Appendix 2.
but could have appeared outside a language learning situation (for example interviews on a radio show).

### 3.3 Delimitations

At first I was going to do a classroom study and teacher interviews in order to find out how teachers used listening exercises in the classroom and how students reacted to these. I soon abandoned this idea for a textbook study, which initially included four textbooks. Instead I chose to broaden my questionnaire in order to find out how teachers used the materials they have at their disposal. I was also planning to study the level of formality used in the listening materials, but it proved to be difficult to point out where exactly a text could be placed along the continuum between formal and informal.

### 4. Analysis and results

The investigation consists of two parts. The first part is based on the questionnaire and aims to answer when, how, and what listening materials are used. The second part of the investigation, based on the analysis of two textbook recordings, aims to investigate how varieties, rates of delivery, task instructions, and level of standardization are represented in the recordings.

#### 4.1 Teachers’ usage of listening materials

I used a questionnaire to find out what materials teachers use for listening, and how they use these materials. The five informants who answered the questionnaire cannot be said to be representative of all English teachers in Sweden. Nevertheless, below I will present and discuss some of the results of this part of my study.

First, this study showed that teachers vary considerably in how they use the materials they have, what materials they use and what they focus on in their teaching of listening skills. Second, all of the teachers used textbooks which featured recordings of some sort, and four of them used textbooks which provided them with both text recordings and activity recordings. Three out of five stated that they use the text recordings most of the time, and two that they use these all of the time, while activity recordings were used by four informants most of the time, and by one occasionally. Four teachers also found the text recordings ‘very useful’ and

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14 See Appendix 3. For the complete list of results given in the questionnaire study, see Appendix 4.
one informant found these ‘fairly useful’. To the same question for listening exercises two answered ‘very useful, two ‘useful’ and one ‘fairly useful’.

In part II of the questionnaire, I listed eight purposes, or tasks, used in listening comprehension exercises in the classroom. The informants were given three choices as to how often they used these ‘types’ of listening; ‘rarely’, ‘sometimes’, and ‘often’. Most answers were relatively evenly distributed between the three alternatives given, and it is difficult to say whether some listening tasks were more often used than others by these teachers. The comments given on some of these questions were interesting, however. A survey of the results of questions 7-14 can be found in Table 2.

**Table 2. Teachers’ usage of listening tasks (questionnaire)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you use listening materials (both textbook materials and other sources) for:</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Introductory exercises or starters?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Listening for specific information?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Listening for general information?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Introducing a text from the book with students looking at the text simultaneously?</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Introducing a text from the book without students looking at the text?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Exposing students to different varieties of English?</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Presenting authentic situations that students are likely to encounter?</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Listening for inspiration</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Other purposes (see Appendix 4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some differences can be noted in the teachers’ use of listening tasks. First, ‘listening for specific information’ (question 8) such as gap texts, and ‘introducing a text from the book’ (question 10) seem to be the most common, while the majority also seemed to make occasional use of ‘introductory listening exercises’ (question 7), ‘listening for general information’ (question 9) and ‘exposing students to different varieties’ (question 12). More noticeable were the tasks which the teachers rarely used. Three out of five informants answered that they ‘rarely’ used listening materials for ‘presenting authentic situations’ (question 13) and the same number of teachers stated that they rarely used ‘listening for inspiration’ (question 14). One comment given for questions 13 and 14, was that it was “hard to find material”. This aspect is important, but not one which I have studied further. Question
15 dealt with whether they could think of some other purpose for listening than the ones listed above, and one informant commented that they found music useful as a tool in ESL teaching. This is one aspect of listening which I did not ask about in the questionnaire, but it would definitely be interesting to pursue this issue further.

I asked the teachers what additional listening exercises they use. Material from the “Audio-Visual Center”, the Internet, songs, films TV-programs, mp3s and “Computer programs with spoken feedback” were among the answers given (question 18). It would be interesting to know more about spoken feedback provided by computer programs. A guess is that the programs have tasks with either spoken or written instructions, and that spoken feedback is given for the answers which the students type in. The Internet was used ‘sometimes’ by 1 teacher, ‘rarely’ by another and ‘never’ by the remaining three as a source for ‘authentic listening’ (question 17a). The teachers who used this resource named TV shows and news programs as examples of authentic materials which they got from the Internet (question 17b). However, the interest in the resources which the Internet can provide seemed quite big. One comment in response to question 23 (‘Is there anything you want to add concerning listening materials?’) read: “If we had the equipment needed (headphones, access to computers) I would use the Internet as a source for listening! There are numerous possibilities!” Another teacher commented that mp3’s for teachers and students “along with Internet access provides vastly increased opportunities” and that “computer programs are helpful”.

I also asked some specific questions on additional listening exercises. I wanted to know whether the teachers used additional listening exercises for the aspects of listening (or rather, aspects of speech) which I studied in the second part of this investigation. That is, the topics of questions 19-22 were whether the teachers used additional listening exercises to practice (or test) ‘students’ knowledge and comprehension of’ different varieties, rate of delivery, formal/informal English, and standard/non-standard English (See Appendix 3). Four informants answered that they ‘sometimes’ used additional exercises to make students familiar with different varieties of English (question 19), and one answered ‘rarely’. A question on additional usage of listening materials to practice or test students’ knowledge/comprehension of rate of delivery generated the answers, 1 ‘never’, 3 ‘rarely’ and 1 ‘often’, (question 20). Question 22 asked how often teachers use additional listening materials for students’ comprehension and knowledge of standard and non-standard varieties.

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15 Audio-Visual Center, or “AV-Centralen”, are suppliers of recorded pedagogic materials available for Swedish schools.
of English. Four teachers said that they ‘rarely’ used additional listening materials while one teacher said that he/she ‘sometimes’ used materials for these aspects of listening. One comment given for question 22 was that additional exercises featuring “Ebonics” were used for these purposes.

**4.2 Varieties of English**

Notwithstanding the problems of categorizing varieties, some conclusions can be drawn from the analysis. First, extremely few cases of varieties outside of the inner circle were represented in the recordings that I investigated (see Table 3), and samples that featured non-native accents were very small, ranging from 15 to 30 seconds. In fact, even the number of inner circle varieties was quite limited; I could not identify any Canadian English or Caribbean English speakers, for example. A clear majority of the speakers used British or American English. The British speakers were mainly speaking RP (Received Pronunciation) and the majority of the American speakers spoke GA (General American).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers/varieties</th>
<th>British &amp; Irish Varieties</th>
<th>North American varieties</th>
<th>Other varieties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade 2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid Ground 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sp./area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Total: 163 sp.)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Large-scale division of textbook recordings (number of speakers/variety)

*N* stands for number of speakers. *Sp.* stands for speakers.

**Text recordings:** Short introductions by third person party (>20 seconds) not counted (a majority of these spoke RP or GA). Speakers “in the text” counted if text not extremely short (>5-10 seconds).

**Listening tasks:** Instructions not counted (most, if not all of these featured RP-speakers in both textbooks). Speakers “in the text” counted if text not extremely short (>10 seconds).

The counting of speakers shows the spread in varieties, but cannot account for how much one variety was used in relation to other varieties. Also, the comparison of varieties used by speakers in Table 3 (and Table 6 in Appendix 1) did not show any significant differences, and I wanted to investigate this relation further. Given the many short samples of speech in the

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16 I found seven cases of foreign accents, all of which were in the activity recordings provided by Upgrade 2. Among these were five speakers with European accents ranging from heavy to mild, one British English speaker with a mild Indian accent, and one unidentified foreign accent.

17 For a full survey of speakers and varieties, see Table 6 in Appendix 1.
activity recordings, I chose only to count the times each variety was used in the text recordings. If the results in Figures 1 and 2 are to be trusted, there are significant differences between the text recordings of the two books considering the length of time different varieties are spoken.

Figures 1 & 2. Large-scale division of text recordings (according to speaking time)

Varieties from areas other than the British Isles and the USA accounted for only about 1 per cent of the speaking time in the text recordings provided by *Upgrade 2*, while in *Solid Ground 1*’s text recordings it accounted for 10 per cent (Figures 1 & 2). One reason is that *Solid Ground 1* used Scottish, Irish, South African, and Australian English narrators, as well as texts read by southern American and northern British speakers. In *Upgrade 2*, most of the non-RP/GA speakers only had fairly short parts while the narrator spoke RP or GA. The text recordings in *Upgrade 2* also featured more speakers per recorded text with short samples of speech compared to *Solid Ground 1*, and this probably affected the differences between the text recordings as well.18

Another difference between the text recordings in *Solid Ground 1* and *Upgrade 2* is the division between British and American English. In some respects, GA seems to challenge RP’s position as the ‘main choice of variety’ (see Figures 1 & 2). While 60% of the text recordings in *Upgrade 2* consist of British varieties, with 54% of these RP, *Solid Ground 1* uses British varieties 38% of the time, with only 13% RP. Instead, American varieties are

18 Of the printed texts in *Upgrade 2*, three texts represented the language areas of India, Africa (South Africa) and the Caribbean (Jamaica) respectively, according to the authors (*Upgrade 2*, 1994, preface). These were not part of the recorded materials.
used 52% of the time in the recorded texts in *Solid Ground 1*, of which 33% are GA, compared to 39% of the time in *Upgrade 2*, of which 35% are GA (see Figures 1 & 2 and 3 & 4).

**Figure 3. Varieties in the text recordings of Upgrade 2, divided by time of speech.**

![Figure 3](image)

**Figure 4. Varieties in the text recordings of Solid Ground, divided by time of speech.**

![Figure 4](image)

19 The GA/Chicano category is in fact made up by a single, though large, chapter in *Solid Ground*, where the narrator used a Chicano English variety strictly for the dialogue and GA in between. I chose to present them as one category as the narrator quickly switched between these two varieties, often within the same sentence, meaning the margin of error would be too large if I tried to separate them.
In the older textbook, *Upgrade 2*, RP made up most of the British English spoken in the text recordings, while *Solid Ground 1* features a larger amount of *Estuary English* at the expense of RP (Figures 3 & 4). RP and Estuary English may be understood as on a dialect continuum, rather than as two specific dialects\(^{20}\) which meant that I sometimes had trouble defining a sample as one or the other.\(^{21}\) Other British dialects, as well as Irish English, were less common in the textbooks, although some listening exercises in both books included a range of British dialects. In both *Upgrade 2* and *Solid Ground 1*, the introductions of the text recordings and task instructions for the activity recording featured an overwhelming majority of RP-speakers. In the case of the activity recordings instructions, this is most likely an issue of clarity, due to the fact that instructions should not be misunderstood in order for the students to carry out the task successfully. As Figure 4 shows, Irish and Scottish varieties were quite well represented in *Solid Ground 1* but were not represented at all in the text recordings provided by *Upgrade 2* (Figure 3).

North America is known for fewer dialectical differences than the British Isles. Southern American English, non-standard varieties, and the dialect of New England, are nevertheless distinct American dialects. Northern U.S varieties, the English spoken in New York, and Canadian English, among others, are quite distinct varieties as well. Other American varieties than GA were not very common in the textbooks, although New York speech and Southern American dialects, as well as the ethnic dialects *AAVE* and *Chicano English*, were represented in the recordings. As with British varieties, Non-GA dialects were more common in *Solid Ground 1* (Figures 3 & 4), especially varieties spoken in the southern states of the U.S.

### 4.3 Rate of delivery

Some differences in rates of delivery between the textbooks were registered. To simplify matters, one could say that *Solid Ground 1* generally presents spoken texts with faster RoD’s. The majority of the RoD’s of the text recordings are found in category three, average tempo, in both books. However, only about 25 per cent of the text recordings in *Upgrade 2* turned out to have RoD’s over 176 wpm, while the corresponding figure for *Solid Ground 1* was nearly 40 per cent (see Table 4).

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\(^{20}\) This is of course true with many other dialects as well, but these were the ones which caused most problems in my study, as they were frequent.

\(^{21}\) This problem can be illustrated by the categories *RP*, *Near-RP*, and *Estuary/Near RP*, which I used to classify varieties in the first level of analysis before processing these results. See Appendix 2.
Table 4. Rate of delivery in *Upgrade 2* and *Solid Ground 1* (percentage of RoD/speaker)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rates of delivery</th>
<th>Text recordings</th>
<th>Activity recordings</th>
<th>Total representation of RoD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upgrade 2</td>
<td>Solid Ground 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;120 WPM or slow</td>
<td>10 % 5 speakers</td>
<td>0 % 0 speakers</td>
<td>6 % 31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121-145 WPM or medium-slow</td>
<td>31.5 % 15 speakers</td>
<td>22 % 6 speakers</td>
<td>34 % 31 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146-175 WPM or average tempo</td>
<td>33 % 16 speakers</td>
<td>39 % 8 speakers</td>
<td>34 % 20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176-199 WPM or medium-fast</td>
<td>17 % 8 speakers</td>
<td>40 % 21 speakers</td>
<td>20 % 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200+ or fast</td>
<td>8.5 % 4 speakers</td>
<td>9 % 5 speakers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences between activity recordings and text recordings cannot be investigated in detail, because I used different methods (see Methods, 3.1.2). What can be said is that the analysis of the activity recordings shows the same tendency as the analysis of the recorded texts, namely that speakers in the *Solid Ground 1* recordings speak faster. Over half of the speakers in the *Solid Ground 1* activity recordings used ‘medium fast’ or ‘fast’ RoD’s, while only 11% of the *Upgrade 2* speakers fell into the same two categories. The difference here can perhaps partly be explained by the fact that authentic activity recordings were quite common in *Solid Ground 1*, whereas there were none in *Upgrade 2*. The authentic activity recordings featured speakers with noticeably higher RoD’s than other activity recordings and text recordings.

### 4.4 Listening tasks

When I analyzed the listening tasks, or rather the instructions given for listening tasks, either on the recordings or in the text, I used the six categories which can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Tasks in *Upgrade 2* and *Solid Ground 1* (number of tasks/textbook)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks/Activity recordings</th>
<th>Upgrade 2</th>
<th>Solid Ground 1</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening for information /specific</td>
<td>11 tasks</td>
<td>5 tasks</td>
<td>16 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening for information /general</td>
<td>4 tasks</td>
<td>5 tasks</td>
<td>9 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening for oral practice</td>
<td>3 tasks</td>
<td>2 tasks</td>
<td>5 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions using general knowledge</td>
<td>1 task</td>
<td>9 tasks</td>
<td>10 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening for discussion</td>
<td>9 tasks</td>
<td>3 tasks</td>
<td>12 tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening for fun (no task given)</td>
<td>3 tasks</td>
<td>3 tasks</td>
<td>6 tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some activity recordings have been counted more than one time, since they included more than one type of task.

Some texts, especially in *Upgrade 2*, included pictures as part of the task, or to support the recordings. Several of the activity recordings in *Solid Ground 1* were supposed to act as
starting points for discussions, although this was often in combination with other tasks. Most authentic activity recordings were of this type. *Upgrade 2* had no activities of this kind, but featured three exercises where the students were supposed to listen as a preliminary activity to oral practice, a type of task not found in *Solid Ground 1*. Listening for information was the most common task in both books, but the activity recordings in *Solid Ground 1* were more evenly distributed between listening for specific and listening for general information (Table 5). *Solid Ground 1* featured some activities identified as authentic, of which five were noted as such in the textbook. The tasks of these recordings all fell into the ‘listening for information’-category, except for one recording which asked the students questions involving both general and specific information. All authentic activity recordings were interviews. In conclusion, the general impression was that the tasks in *Upgrade 2* were easier as well as less varied.

### 4.5 Other findings

I also looked at the level of standardization used by the speakers in the recordings. There were few non-standard speakers. I counted six instances of non-standard speech (see Appendix 2), in which usage could range from a speaker using just a few non-standard features to his/her using decidedly non-standard English. Depending on what is considered non-standard, some other speakers not noted in Appendix 2 might have used some non-standard features in their speech. Only one text in *Solid Ground 1* featured much non-standard speech in the dialogue, but short samples were found in the recordings in both books. I believe that the ratio of non-standard varieties was better represented in *Solid Ground 1* than in *Upgrade 2*. However, since I found so few cases of non-standard speech, I decided against investigating this further. Speakers of non-standard English are marked ‘Non-standard’ or ‘NS’ in Appendix 2. I also noted where the recordings featured background noise, but did not pursue it further, since this feature was too infrequent to analyze (see Appendix 2).

### 5. Discussion

As this study has shown, listening comprehension and listening materials are a complex field. If it is possible to generalize these results, we can see that some changes have occurred between the recorded materials of a decade ago and more recent textbook recordings. However, the books were used for different types of classes, according to the teachers I asked, and it is hard to say what this change has meant for listening pedagogy or international
perspectives in teaching. While I got some interesting results from the questionnaire, these were quite general and the answers varied considerably. A classroom study might have shed more light on these issues, but classroom studies are time consuming, and might not yield enough information, unless they were conducted over a considerable period of time.

According to this investigation, additional listening materials are used by most teachers either to complement or to introduce the students to aspects of listening not found in the recordings. Additional listening exercises pose an extremely varied and interesting field, but this variation also makes them difficult to study. It is reasonable to assume that teachers who believe variation in listening materials to be important, or who wish to use authentic materials, will use additional listening exercises to fill such purposes. However, this would only hold true as long as appropriate materials can be found with relative ease, and I do not know whether this is the case.

In the second part of the investigation, one can see that variation in dialects and/or accents takes up more space in *Solid Ground 1* than in *Upgrade 2*, which indicates that the textbook writers have become more aware of the international landscape of English, or at the least, that they take this aspect more serious than earlier. Since *Upgrade 2* states that the global world of English was important and that they wished to cover this aspect of English in the book, the latter reason seems more likely. The audience for which the texts are written is another factor to be considered.

Examples of English used as a lingua franca and of varieties outside the inner circle were very few in both textbooks. Outer circle varieties and non-standard varieties were seldom heard in the investigated material, which may be due to the level of difficulty for learners in their first year of upper secondary school (at least with Creole languages and much localized outer circle varieties). Another reason might be that the course book writers believe it unlikely for Swedish learners to encounter situations where proficiency in such varieties are necessary. I do not believe this reason holds for usage of English as a lingua franca, since students are most likely to come across non-native speakers of English, perhaps more often than native speakers and the number of speakers using English for lingua franca communication is far greater than the number of native speakers. I would especially have liked to hear European varieties of EIL/ELF in the recordings, which the students are extremely likely to encounter,
and Asian varieties, since such a large number of people in Asia use English as a lingua franca, and the number of learners is rapidly increasing.

The textbooks of both past and present are, from what I have observed, deeply rooted in what Rubdy & Saraceni (2006) describe as the Standard English model, where either British or American (or both) are used as a model not only for the written language, but for the spoken language as well. The other models explained by the authors, World Englishes and ELF/EIL, have not yet taken hold in English language teaching, although they are much discussed and debated among linguists. Perhaps there will be a change in this aspect of English language teaching in the not-too distant future. There are not many signs of a change in the direction of an EIL perspective in the textbooks studied in this investigation. However, the larger degree of recordings from other areas than the USA and Britain in the later textbook might indicate a change in this direction.

6. Summary and conclusion

In this study I have investigated how teachers use listening materials and compared the varieties and rates of delivery used in recorded materials which accompany two Swedish textbooks for English A students in upper secondary school. I have also examined the instructions given for listening tasks. My aim was to study how, when, and why listening materials were used in the classroom, as well as what varieties and rates of delivery were used in the listening materials, and if there had been any changes between the books from 1994 and 2003.

According to the questionnaire, which five teachers chose to answer, teachers vary considerably in their usage of listening materials. A number of teachers also expressed their interest in using the Internet as a source of listening materials, although three out of five said that they never used the web to present the students with authentic listening. The most common listening task given in the textbooks was listening for information. In the more recent textbook, listening as a starting point for discussion or for stating personal opinions was a common task, whereas in the earlier textbook, no such tasks were found.

The textbook recordings were analyzed and compared, a) in order to see whether the usage of varieties and speech rates had changed in any significant way between the publishing of the
two books, one published in 1994 and the other in 2003, and b) whether new notions of international English, such as *World Englishes* or *English as an International Language (EIL)*, and the pedagogical questions raised by such concepts, would have penetrated into the textbooks. The books I studied were *Upgrade 2* (1994) and *Solid Ground 1* (2003).

I found a few differences between the two books, of which some were of greater importance. Although the recordings of *Solid Ground 1* and *Upgrade 2* had an almost equal distribution of the varieties in relation to the number of speakers, *Solid Ground 1* featured a wider range of varieties when comparing the actual amount of time these varieties were spoken. The quantity of GA in *Solid Ground 1*, was also markedly higher on the expense of RP, which accounted for the majority of speaking time in *Upgrade 2*. I also found that the speakers included in the recordings of *Solid Ground 1* generally spoke faster. This seemed especially true of the activity recordings of both books, which perhaps is not surprising, considering the great increase in authentic activity recordings used in the more recent textbook. However, it is difficult to say for certain whether these differences are due to the different times of writing, the course book writers’ different priorities and aims, or differences in budget constraints. Further studies involving a greater number of textbooks would be needed to explain these matters.

Very few recordings in the books used varieties outside of the inner circle, and inner circle Englishes such as Jamaican English and Canadian English were absent in the studied materials. This I believe indicates that contemporary linguistic concepts, such as *EIL* and *World Englishes*, have yet to inform the course materials. These concepts are not exactly new, but considering the pedagogical issues raised by such perspectives, their absence is perhaps not surprising. Time will perhaps tell whether they will have a larger place in future listening materials.
List of references

Primary sources


Secondary sources


*BBC Voices* [Online] [http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/voices/) [accessed 8 January, 2009]


*IDEA (International Dialects of English Archive)* [Online] [http://web.ku.edu/idea/index.htm](http://web.ku.edu/idea/index.htm) [accessed 8 January, 2009]


Skolverket. 2007b. English. [Online]  

Sounds Familiar? The British Library. [Online]  


Appendix 1

Table 6. Varieties in the recordings of *Upgrade 2* and *Solid Ground 1* (number of speakers/variety)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers/variety</th>
<th>Upgrade</th>
<th>Solid Ground</th>
<th>Total number of speakers/variety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary English</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Central Br. E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Central Br. E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Eastern Br. E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Western Br. E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Br. E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Am. E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Am. E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano (Am.)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian-am. accent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African English</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign accents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of speakers</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Short introductions by third person party (>20 seconds) not counted (a majority of these spoke RP or GA).
Speakers “in the text” counted if not extremely short (>5-10 seconds).
Instructions for activity recordings not counted (most, if not all of these featured RP-speakers in both textbooks). Speakers “in the text” counted if not extremely short (>10 seconds).
## Appendix 2

### Table 7a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text/activity recordings</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Variety (dialect/accent)</th>
<th>Standard/non-standard (S/NS)</th>
<th>Approx. Speed rate</th>
<th>Background noise</th>
<th>Time length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPGRADE 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tape 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 1 –man</td>
<td>New Zealand E</td>
<td></td>
<td>146 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Intro –man</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>122 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrator –woman</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>129 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 1 –woman (old)</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>160 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Intro –woman</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>149 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Narrator –man</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>145 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Sp. 1 –woman</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Total: 1.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2 –man</td>
<td>Br. E (Indian acc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td></td>
<td>139 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Sp. 1</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2</td>
<td>Southern Am. E</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 3</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 4</td>
<td>French accent</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 5</td>
<td>Italian accent</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 6</td>
<td>Greek accent</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 7</td>
<td>Spanish accent</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Sp. 1</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2</td>
<td>South W. Br. E</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td></td>
<td>190 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 3</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td></td>
<td>178 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 4</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td></td>
<td>164 WPM</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Sp. 1</td>
<td>Estuary English</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 3</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 4</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>M. fast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 5</td>
<td>Near-RP/Estuary</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 6</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td>M. slow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 7</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 8</td>
<td>Near-RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 9</td>
<td>Welsh English</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>No Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tape 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Somewhat NS</td>
<td>136 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 1</td>
<td>New York Am. E</td>
<td></td>
<td>174 WPM</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 2</td>
<td>Southern Am. E</td>
<td></td>
<td>183 WPM</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 3</td>
<td>Southern Am. E</td>
<td></td>
<td>176 WPM</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 4</td>
<td>New York Am E</td>
<td></td>
<td>213 WPM</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sp. 5</td>
<td>AAVE</td>
<td></td>
<td>199 WPM</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>RP</td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>effects)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>170 WPM</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
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<td>RP</td>
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<td>107 WPM</td>
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<td>1.33</td>
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<td>124 WPM</td>
<td>153 WPM</td>
<td>173 WPM</td>
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</tr>
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<td>124 WPM</td>
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<td>Av. tempo</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuary English</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Activity</td>
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<td>Slow</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>No Data</td>
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<td>RP</td>
<td>151 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<td>Italian-Am. ac.</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>160 WPM</td>
<td>see Narrator</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Intro –man</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>151 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>160 WPM</td>
<td>see Narrator</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>8.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Near-RP/RP</td>
<td>160 WPM</td>
<td>see Narrator</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5.20</td>
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<tr>
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<td>RP</td>
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<td>total: 10.44</td>
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<td>–</td>
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39
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<th>Sp. 2 –man</th>
<th>Sp. 4 –man</th>
<th>AAVE GA Southern Am. E.</th>
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**Table 7b**

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<th>Text/Activity</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Variety (dialect/accent)</th>
<th>Standard/non-standard (N/NS)</th>
<th>Approx. Speed rate</th>
<th>Background noise</th>
<th>Time length</th>
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<td>175 WPM</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
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<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>144 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9.02</td>
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<td>DM</td>
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<td>186 WPM</td>
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<td>2.08</td>
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<td>7.02</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Av. tempo</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>DM</td>
</tr>
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<td>GA</td>
<td></td>
<td>164 WPM</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6.19</td>
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<td>------</td>
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Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of my C-Essay on global English and listening materials. I will use this questionnaire to get an idea of how listening materials is being used by teachers. (Since these questions are quite general, and since usage of listening exercises might differ considerably between classes, it might be a good idea to think of one particular class.)

Part I

1. How much would you estimate, on average, that you use the textbook in your teaching?

[ ] □ □ □ □

>24 % 25-49 % 50-74 % 75-100 %

Comments:............................................................................................................................
................................................................................................................................................

2. Does the textbook that you use provide you with listening materials?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

3. If yes, which of the following are part of the textbook package (you may mark all alternatives):

[ ] Text recordings on CD-ROM/tapes  [ ] Listening exercises on CD-ROMs/tapes
[ ] Teacher’s guide  [ ] Extra workbook
[ ] Other (write below)

................................................................................................................................................

4. Do the students also get a CD-ROM/tape with the book?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

5.a How much do you use the text recordings (chapters) provided by the textbook?

[ ] □ □ □ □

All the time  Most of the time  Occasionally  Never
5.b How useful do you find the text recordings?

- [ ] Very useful
- [ ] Useful
- [ ] Fairly useful
- [ ] Not useful

6.a How often do you use the listening exercises provided by the textbook?

- [ ] All the time
- [ ] Most of the time
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Never

6.b How useful do you find the listening exercises?

- [ ] Very useful
- [ ] Useful
- [ ] Fairly useful
- [ ] Not useful

**Part II**

How often do you use listening materials (both textbook materials and other sources) for:

7. Introductory exercises or starters (to catch the students’ interest)?

- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………….

8. Listening for specific information (gap texts, true/false questions etc.)?

- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………….

9. Listening for general information (summarizing what speakers have said, answering broad questions, stating opinions on what has been said)?

- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………….
10. Introducing a text from the book (with students looking at the text simultaneously)?

☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………………

11. Introducing a text from the book (without students looking at the text)?

☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Exposing students to different varieties of English, in order to train (and test) comprehension?

☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. Presenting authentic situations that students are likely to encounter?

☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Listening for inspiration (as introduction to a related assignment)

☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:…………………………………………………………………………………………

15. Other purposes:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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Part III

16. What additional types of listening materials do you use (tapes, film, TV, material from “AV-centralen”, the Internet etc.)?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

17.a Do you use the Internet as a source for authentic listening?

☐ Never  ☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

17.b Please give examples of what types of authentic listening exercises you use.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

18. What types of materials do you use to improve the students’ proficiency in understanding spoken English (for example news reports)?

____________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

19. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of: different varieties of English (dialects and accents)?

☐ Never  ☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:________________________________________________________________________________________________________

20. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test student’s listening comprehension considering different speech rates?

☐ Never  ☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:________________________________________________________________________________________________________

21. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of formal and informal English?

☐ Never  ☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments:________________________________________________________________________________________________________
22. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of standard and non-standard varieties of English?

☐ Never  ☐ Rarely  ☐ Sometimes  ☐ Often

Comments: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Part IV

23. Is there anything you want to add concerning listening materials?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

24. Do you have any opinions concerning this questionnaire?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you for your participation!

Björn Eggert

tel no: 0762-308378
e-mail: bjorn_eggert@hotmail.com
## Appendix 4

### Collection of data: Questionnaire

#### Part I

1. How much would you estimate, on an average, that you use the textbook in your teaching?
   - >24%: 0
   - 25-49: 3
   - 50-74: 2
   - 75-100: 0

   **Comments given on question 1:**
   - Apart from novel reading and national test preparations, mostly textbook is used.
   - The better group, the less I use it.

2. Does the textbook that you use provide you with listening materials?
   - Yes: 5
   - No: 0

3. If yes, which of the following are part of the textbook package (you may mark all alternatives):
   - Text recordings: 5
   - Listening exercises: 4
   - Teacher’s guide: 3
   - Extra workbook: 0
   - Other: 0

4. Do the students also get a CD-ROM/tape with the book?
   - Yes: 4
   - No: 1

5a. How much do you use the **text recordings** (chapters) provided by the textbook?
   - All the time: 2
   - Most of the time: 3
   - Occasionally: 0
   - Never: 0

5b. How useful do you find the text recordings?
   - Very useful: 4
   - Useful: 0
   - Fairly useful: 1
   - Not useful: 0

6a. How often do you use the **listening exercises** provided by the textbook?
   - All the time: 0
   - Most of the time: 4
   - Occasionally: 1
   - Never: 0

6b. How useful do you find the listening exercises?
   - Very useful: 2
   - Useful: 1
   - Fairly useful: 1
   - Not useful: 0
**Part II**
How often do you use listening materials (both textbook materials and other sources) for:

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<th>Question</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
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<tr>
<td>7. Introductory exercises or starters (to catch the students’ interest)?</td>
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<td>4</td>
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**Comments given on question 7:**
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**Comments given on question 8:**
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<td>9. Listening for general information (summarizing what speakers have said, answering broad questions, stating opinions on what has been said)?</td>
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<td>3</td>
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**Comments given on question 9:**
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<tr>
<td>10. Introducing a text from the book (with students looking at the text simultaneously)?</td>
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<td>2</td>
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**Comments given on question 10:**
- Harry Potter

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Introducing a text from the book (without students looking at the text)?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments given on question 11:**
No comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Exposing students to different varieties of English, in order to train (and test) comprehension?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments given on question 12:**
No comments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Presenting authentic situations that students are likely to encounter?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments given on question 13:**
- Hard to find material.
14. Listening for inspiration (as introduction to a related assignment)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments given on question 14:
- Hard to find material

15. Other purposes:

Comments given on question 15:
- Music, for text gaps or meaning

Part III

16. What additional types of listening materials do you use (tapes, film, TV, material from “AV-centralen”, the Internet etc.)?

Comments given on question 16:
- AV-centralen, Internet, DVD, VHS, tapes
- CDs like Newsreel or other programmes, Films, Tvs.
- Material fr. AV-centralen, Films, songs, TV-programs.
- Films + Material from AV-centralen
- Video, DVD, MP3, Computer program with spoken feedback

17a. Do you use the Internet as a source for authentic listening?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17b. Please give examples of what types of authentic listening exercises you use.

Comments given on question 17b:
- Tv sometimes
- Tapes
- News programs

18. What types of materials do you use to improve the students’ proficiency in understanding spoken English (for example news reports)?

Comments given on question 18:
- News reports + programs from Av-centralen + listening material from the text-book
- Listening exercises, Tv, Films
- Provbanken, Göteborgs Universitet
- News reports, dialogue
- No other language than English
19. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of: different varieties of English (dialects and accents)?

- Never: 0
- Rarely: 1
- Sometimes: 4
- Often: 0

Comments given on question 19:
- No comments.

20. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ listening comprehension considering different rates of delivery?

- Never: 1
- Rarely: 3
- Sometimes: 0
- Often: 1

Comments given on question 20:
- No comments.

21. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of formal and informal English?

- Never: 1
- Rarely: 2
- Sometimes: 2
- Often: 0

Comments given on question 21:
- No comments.

22. Do you use additional listening exercises to train/test students’ knowledge and comprehension of standard and non-standard varieties of English?

- Never: 0
- Rarely: 4
- Sometimes: 1
- Often: 0

Comments given on question 22:
- Ebonics

**Part IV**

23. Is there anything you want to add concerning listening materials?

Comments given on question 23:
- If we had the equipment needed (headphones, access to computers) I would use the Internet as a source for listening! There are numerous possibilities!
- MP3-teacher’s and students’- along with Internet access provides vastly increased opportunities. Computer programs are helpful.

24. Do you have any opinions concerning this questionnaire?

Comments given on question 24:
- Listening is a very important factor in learning a language- interesting topic!
- Save paper- print double sided!
- It’s good!