Reading Matters

An Exploration of ELT textbooks in Sweden and their approach to reading

Läsning är viktigt

En undersökning av läromedel för Engelska och deras förhållningssätt till läsning

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Abstract

The present thesis investigates to what extent contemporary ELT textbooks include reading materials as well as what types of texts are being used and what reading strategies they seemingly promote. Additionally, the study analyzes whether there is a noticeable discrepancy in teaching materials designed for the vocational and university preparatory and considers whether the design of the current textbook is representative of the current view of reading as a teaching tool as reflected in official policy documents. Through the means of a content analysis of a total of six in use ELT textbooks, the study discovers that few ELT textbooks include a satisfactory amount of reading materials and that there is a significant discrepancy between teaching materials intended for the separate orientations of upper secondary school in Sweden. It is also discovered that the set of textbooks largely reflect the current view of language teaching. The study concludes that the current practice of language teaching is ill-suited to counter the development of declining reading literacy and suggests an alternative methodology in extensive reading.

Keywords: extensive reading, reading, ELT textbooks, second language learning, second language acquisition, teaching methodology

Sammanfattning på svenska

Denna studie utforskar till vilken grad nutida läroböcker i engelska inkluderar material för läsning samt vilken typ av texter respektive läsförmågor som premieras. Därtill analyseras materialet för att uppdaga huruvida läromedel utvecklat för yrkesrr- respektive högskolestudieförberedande program särskiljer sig, samt huruvida kursböckerna är representativa för nuvarande styrdokument - både internationellt och nationellt. Genom bruk av en innehållsanalys av totalt sex läroböcker fastslås att få av kursböckerna innehåller rikligt med material för läsning, samt att det existerar en mätbar diskrepans mellan yrkes- och högskoleförberedande läroböcker i termer av både innehållsmängd och kvalitet. Studien styrker även tesen att dagens läromedel i stort reflekterar nutida styrdokuments syn på läsning som undervisningsverktyg. Slutligen så dras slutsatsen att dagens klassrumspraxis är olämplig för att vända den negativa utvecklingen inom elevers läsförståelse och att alternativ metodik bör införas som komplement, här i formen av vad som kallas "extensive reading".

Nyckelord: läsning, läromedel, språkinlärning, språkdidaktik

Contents

1 Introduction

Literature and reading has been a perennial feature of the teaching and learning of English since the introduction of compulsory schooling in 1962. Few would disagree with the notion that reading literature is central to acquiring a language. Reading comprises numerous aspects that do not only develop students' reading ability but also their overall language skills. For example, students expand their vocabulary as well as improve their writing ability whilst mastering the art of reading (Day and Bamford 35-37). It is worrying therefore that recent PISA-studies show a decline in reading ability among Swedish learners, a pattern that can be traced back to 2000 (Skolverket, "PISA 2012" 12). To add insult to injury, an official report from the Swedish government shows that even though Swedes in general have a positive attitude to literature and good reading habits, the younger generations spend less time on reading and that consequently, reading ability will most likely continue to decline in the near future (Statens Offentliga Utredningar 11-12). Similar downgrading of reading and literature in general is reflected in the syllabus for English at upper secondary level, as the reading of literature is not even directly mentioned as part of the overall purpose with the subject of English (Skolverket, *Gy11* 53). Furthermore, many teachers can vouch for the difficulties with introducing literature in class. Students are reluctant to read and many fail to see its purpose, and as it cannot be taken for granted that students will read outside of class, the problem must be addressed within the realm of school itself. Finally, the use of coursebooks may present yet another obstacle for reading in the classroom. Textbooks are condensed in order to include a variety of different language features and are thus deprived of longer literary texts. As a result, reading is reduced to information searching and students scan the pages to fill in the gaps in their exercise book rather than absorbing the text as a whole.

Consequently, the following study will gauge whether contemporary English language teaching (ELT) textbooks are likely to reverse the negative development in learners' reading literacy. The subsequent review suggests that the set of elected coursebooks are not well-fitted to resolve the problem at hand, but that more drastic measures are required. One possible solution is the use of supplementary strategies such as extensive reading, which revolves around the idea of regular voluntary reading in class with the aim of developing good reading habits among the learners (Day and Bamford 6). To that end, the study suggests that the current practice of language teaching – symbolized through a set of ELT textbooks - does not promote reading literacy to a satisfactory level, but that supplemented with reading of extensive nature it has the potential to do so.

1.1 Research questions and aims

The aim of this thesis is to analyze a set of current English language teaching coursebooks in order to determine what kind of reading they promote, as well as what kind of skills are overlooked and whether there is a discrepancy in the teaching materials designed for the vocational and university preparatory programs respectively. The analysis will be undertaken with the hope of contributing to the discussion of alternative methods. The findings of the study will be discussed in relation to mainly Stephen Krashen's thoughts on the implementation of extensive reading programs in the ELT-classroom. However, it should be noted that there are no claims of scientific validity regarding the parts about extensive reading as the concept and methodology is solely introduced as a potential supplementary addition to the current practice of language teaching.

The research is based on the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Swedish ELT coursebooks include reading materials and what types of texts are being used?

   - Is there a discernible discrepancy in literary content between ELT coursebooks designed for the vocational and the university preparatory programs of upper secondary education?
   - Do the gathered coursebooks reflect the current view of reading as a teaching tool as represented by the Swedish upper secondary curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference For Languages?

2. Judging by the analysis of said coursebooks; what kind of reading strategies do ESL coursebooks seem to promote, and what kind are overlooked?

2 Background

The following section provides a motivational context for the present study. The section details the current educational situation in Sweden and account for the most prominent views of language use today, as well as its implications for current policy documents and classroom practices. Finally, the section presents previous research on the use of coursebooks in English as a second language (ESL) and/or English as a foreign language (EFL).

2.1 The current educational situation in Sweden

In 2012, Swedish schools participated for the fifth time in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a triennial international survey that strives to evaluate the educational systems of sixty-five countries through the testing of 15 year olds' knowledge and skills. The primary areas covered include mathematics, science and reading literacy ("About PISA", *OECD.org)*. Rather than simply evaluating how well students perform in relation to their respective nation's curriculum, PISA aims to measure skills relevant for their future professional lives. Emphasis is placed on the abilities of analysis, reasoning and presenting one's ideas in a structured manner (Skolverket "PISA 2012" 6).

The common denominator from a Swedish perspective is the decline in results across the board. Swedish students perform significantly below average in all tested subjects, but even more troublingly, they also perform worse than their Swedish counterparts of previous PISA-studies. Alarmingly, Sweden is the nation with the worst development among all participating countries (Skolverket "PISA 2012" 32). Furthermore, similar subject-specific studies such as Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which test reading ability and mathematics among learners in Year 4 and Year 8 respectively, corroborate the data from PISA's study. In other words, the results of PISA amplify an already detrimental developmental pattern apparent within the Swedish educational system (Skolverket "PISA 2012" 32).

PISA's analysis of the Swedish learners' reading literacy is of particular interest for this thesis as it is reasonable to assume that poor reading ability in one's first language will affect one's success in learning and/or acquiring a second language. First and foremost, PISA defines reading literacy as the ability to understand, use, reflect upon, and engage with texts to reach one's goals and develop one's knowledge in order to participate in modern society (Skolverket, "PISA 2012" 12). By those criteria, the students are subsequently divided into five different levels of reading literacy, where level one represents a failure to comprehend anything but the least complex of assignments, whilst a level five reader can manage highly complex texts. Level two represents the required level for continued education in the form of upper secondary school. In Sweden, a staggering 23 % of participants fail to reach level two and are thus ill-equipped for continued educational success (Skolverket "PISA 2012" 12).

The decline in results in Sweden prompted the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to launch an investigation in order to determine how to improve the Swedish school system. This report, *Improving Schools in Sweden: An OECD Perspective*, was published in 2015 and identifies several challenges facing the Swedish school system in addition to the low and decreasing performances internationally. One example is the lack of a consistent and clear steering system due to the decentralized nature of the Swedish school system. In short, the system cannot be considered to foster equity (OECD 56). However, the OECD report also acknowledges one of few bright spots within the Swedish school system, namely its students' high achievement levels in English as a foreign language. Swedish learners in Year 9 excelled in both reading and listening compared to the other fourteen countries that participated (OECD 30). This finding contrasts greatly with the general pattern of decline in Swedish learner results. To maintain the high levels of English proficiency, preventive action must be taken, especially considering the rapidly declining reading literacy levels reported in Swedish - as common sense tells us that an inability to read in ones native tongue will affect one's ability to do so in a foreign language - and the shifts in the culture of reading presently taking place.

In addition to the decline in reading literacy levels among Swedish learners, the Swedish Government Official Report, *Läsandets Kultur* (*The Culture of Reading*), identifies certain worrying tendencies and presents three possible explanations to the decline in reading ability among young readers. The increased use of computers and the Internet is one possible explanation, as is the overall decrease in reading habits and especially willingness to read among young people. Finally, the report speculates that Swedish elementary schools, due to structural changes such as the decentralization of the Swedish school system, show signs of a deteriorating ability to teach reading (Statens Offentliga Utredningar 58). In other words, the youth read less in favor of the computer, and schools are ill-equipped to replace the time that students previously spent on reading outside of school. As a result, future generations' reading literacy is threatened. To counter this development, the report states that young readers must be exposed to both nonfiction and fiction to a greater extent. Reading comprehension is a vital component of language competence and the educational system must strive to make young readers realize that reading has a value of its own. Furthermore, the report concludes that reading comprehension is a cornerstone of theoretical thinking and thus of most school subjects (Statens Offentliga Utredningar 30-31). In short, it is held that a developed reading ability will lead to better performances in other fields than language as well.

2.2 The current view of language

The current syllabus for English at upper secondary level (Gy11) is greatly influenced by the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR), which functions as a shared basis for the development of language syllabi, examinations and ELT textbooks across Europe. In order to facilitate the communication across national borders necessary in a European Union characterized by free movement, the CEFR largely disregards reading and other receptive skills in favor of communicative, or rather interactive, abilities (Council of Europe 1). The language learner is redefined as a social agent, who has specific work related tasks to accomplish in society, and consequently needs to develop a range of language skills and in particular communicative language skills, including linguistic and pragmatic competence (Council of Europe 9-13). Reading is seemingly treated as a latent ability, and appears to be taken for granted, which is surprising considering the developments in reading literacy presented by PISA.

Similarly, the current curriculum in Sweden reflects a view of language teaching primarily concerned with the communicative aspects of language. Interaction is both the ends and the means of language teaching, with meaningful input and output being key concepts alongside the opportunity to produce both written and oral language in authentic contexts. The main goal is for learners to use English functionally in the global community, and consequently four out of five key requirements revolve around providing the learners with opportunity to develop their productive language skills (Skolverket *Gy11,* 53-54). The central contents of English 5 - the fundamental English course at upper secondary level - include no more than two strictly literary elements, one requirement being as vaguely defined as "[dealing with] literature and other types of fiction". This leaves the implementation of full-length literary works into the classroom solely in the hands of the individual teacher and most commonly, teachers will introduce a token novel each semester that students are expected to read and analyze in the shape of a book review for example. Rarely are students allowed to read for the sake of reading itself. The remaining demands for the receptive language skills (listening and reading) focus on texts of a non-literary character, instructing teachers to introduce students to texts that are "instructive, summarizing and argumentative" (Skolverket *Gy11*, 55), as well as to develop the learners' ability to find, research and scrutinize texts of various kinds. Furthermore, scientific texts and manuals are to be included as well. In short, reading is considered a central language skill, but it is given subordinate status compared to the productive language skills: only one out of five key requirements of English teaching

cover reading, and the type of reading promoted by the curriculum is geared towards information searching and task-related reading rather than extensive reading of literary works.

Considering the development patterns within literacy levels and reading habits of the Swedish youth, it is a matter of some concern that other aspects of language learning is prioritized above reading. To assume that all students have a functional reading literacy is a fallacy, as PISA 2012 clearly shows. It remains to be seen to what extent the same pattern of neglecting reading is evident in ELT coursebooks, as the CEFR functions as a guide for the design of coursebooks as well as the curriculum, which directly relates to one of the thesis' research questions regarding the design of contemporary ELT coursebooks in Sweden and its implicit view of how to develop reading ability.

2.3 Previous research

English language teaching (ELT) coursebooks is a well-researched area and the topic has been approached from many different perspectives. Most commonly, researchers evaluate the overall usability of coursebooks as teaching tools or account for classroom attitudes to the use of ELT coursebooks. There are also individual studies of the usage of ELT coursebooks as cultural artifacts as well quantitative studies of textbooks' reading passages and what their content represents. In short, the field of ELT coursebooks is vast and evolving, but given the limited purpose of this thesis, some approaches to the field will be left unaccounted for.

2.3.1   Previous research about ELT textbooks

Leslie Sheldon analyzes the relationship between the commercial and the pedagogical demands of ELT coursebooks. In her article, Sheldon investigates classroom attitudes to the use of ELT coursebooks as well as common theoretical and practical problems with their implementation. Finally, a set of qualitative criteria for future evaluation of ELT textbooks is presented (237). When it comes to the attitudes towards ESL coursebooks, Sheldon concludes that most teachers consider textbooks "necessary evils" since they ease the burden of planning, but at the same time are highly limited as teaching tools. The limitations are mainly due to the publishers' ambition to make coursebooks suitable for all learners in all situations, and by doing so fail to recognize the restrictions of the actual classroom (Sheldon 239). Other criticisms include the failure to adapt textbooks to current pedagogical theory, and being unaware of the implication of the theories. Sheldon goes on to present no less than seventeen aspects to consider when assessing coursebooks in order to establish a universal foundation for evaluation, ranging from layout to overall value for money (242).

Peter Chou discusses the advantages and disadvantages of ESL coursebooks as well as what teachers can do to improve their teaching. Chou states that the advantages of ESL coursebooks are often related to their practicality: they ease the burden of planning, function as ready-made syllabi of what to teach and consistently test the four basic language skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing (Chou, *ITESLJ.org*). The drawbacks with the use of ESL coursebooks range from their repetitive nature to their disconnection to the local culture, as textbooks are designed for a global audience. Chou also argues that coursebooks are unsuited for certain types of language learning, they typically do not provide enough depth to benefit language acquisition as a whole (Chou, *ITESLJ.org*). As a solution, Chou specifically recommends outside reading materials (*ITESLJ.org)*. He considers reading central for the development of students' language ability and claims that it can also enhance student motivation, as students are no longer limited to the formulaic nature of the reading passages included in the coursebook. In conclusion, Chou acknowledges the benefits of ESL textbooks but suggests that additional effort to include outside materials must be taken.

In their 2012 thesis, Sandra Danielsson and Malin Lundberg aim to develop a deeper understanding of the use of textbooks in the ESL classroom. By means of a content analysis of five textbooks designed for elementary school in Sweden, they strive to discover whether the coursebooks meet the requirements of the relevant curriculum (Lgr11), and why and to what extent teachers make use of them (Danielsson and Lundberg 23). The study shows that nine out of ten participating teachers made regular use of ESL coursebooks and that most listed the textbooks' function as ready-made syllabi as the primary reason for using them. According to the authors, this confirmed a previous study conducted by Skolverket in 2006 regarding legitimizing aspects of coursebooks. The teacher who did not make use of ESL coursebooks claimed textbooks restrict one's ability to design lessons based on the interests and knowledge of one's students. Eight out of the ten participants did however emphasize that they, in addition to the textbook, made use of outside materials and designed their own activities to complement the coursebook (Danielsson and Lundberg 29-30). Finally, Danielsson and Lundberg conclude that the analyzed textbooks met the requirements of the curriculum and note that the textbooks emphasize communicative abilities (51).

Fatma Gümüsok (2013) explores the usage of literature in contemporary EFL coursebooks in Turkey, analyzing a total of twenty-two coursebooks from different levels in order to see how much space literature is allocated in the average EFL textbook today (Gümüsok 114).

Through a quantitative analysis of literary texts and references used in the twenty-two textbooks, ranging from elementary to advanced level, Gümüsok concludes that whilst literary texts are in fact included in ELT coursebooks, they are not preferred as reading passages (128). Instead, most reading passages are in the form of articles and use a referential rather than representational language, and as such do not encourage readers to use their imagination and creativity (Gümüsok 130). Gümüsok concludes by quoting Yıldırım to the effect that despite the numerous advantages of using literature in language teaching, literature has become a "peripheral instrument to improve reading skills" (131). Consequently, teachers are left solely responsible for their learners' exposure to literary texts in order to develop their reading literacy.

As it serves the purpose of answering several of the thesis's research questions, regarding the amount of literary content Swedish ELT coursebooks contain as well as what kinds of reading seem to be promoted within them, Gümüsok's methodology has in part been adopted in the present thesis. Specifically, the division of texts into categories of reading passages, literary genres and texts used to teach one of grammar, writing, speaking or listening.

3 Method

The present thesis proceed by way of a content analysis of a total of six ESL coursebooks for English 5 under the current syllabus for upper secondary education in Sweden (Gy11). By a page-by-page analysis of the selected coursebooks, all reading passages - a portion of text intended to develop and test students' reading ability - will be divided into categories of fictional text or nonfictional text in order to measure the amount of literary content as well as to determine what type of texts are being used to practice reading literacy. Fiction is defined by scholar Chris Baldick in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as the "general term for invented stories, now usually applied to novels, short stories, novellas, romances, fables […] most plays and narrative poems are also fictional" (*Oxfordreference.com*). In other words, a fictional text has the purpose of telling a story from the world of imagination and/or being entertaining and can be categorized according to one of the major literary genres: fictive story, play or poem. All of which will serve as subcategories for the division of reading passages by text type. A nonfictional text, on the other hand, takes place in the real world and can take the form of newspaper stories, personal accounts and magazine articles etc.

Furthermore, the analysis will establish to what extent the included texts are accompanied by exercises of grammar, speaking, writing and/or listening - or whether they function solely as reading passages - in order to determine if texts and tasks are being utilized in order to promote reading literacy and/or other abilities. The analysis will also compute the various tasks included in the coursebooks to see what language skills are given preference, and whether they reflect the current educational instructions presented in policy documents both domestically and internationally. Finally, the coursebooks that make use of separate versions for the vocational and the university preparatory orientations– the *Blueprint* and *Viewpoints* series - will be compared internally to gauge whether there are any observable differences in the materials in terms of access to and/or quantity of literary content etc.

The elected sample of ESL coursebooks represent both the vocational and the university preparatory orientations of the Swedish upper secondary school and have been collected from active teachers who use or have used the sampled coursebooks. The coursebooks are assumed to be representative of current educational standards and conditions. The sixth and final coursebook, *Echo 5*, is divided into two separate units: *Main Issues* and *Short Stories*, one consisting of regular content designed according to the curriculum in general and the other being targeted towards reading. The other five coursebooks do not include a separate book for the reading of fictional texts. As previously stated, all six coursebooks adhere to the current curriculum of upper secondary education *(Gy11)* and the course English 5. Any further information about the coursebooks is provided below. The complete list of analyzed coursebooks is as follows:

- *Blueprint Vocational*
- *Blueprint A*
- *Viewpoints Vocational*
- *Viewpoints 1*
- *Pick & Mix*
- *Echo 5: Main Issues* and *Short Stories*

4 Analysis and results

The following section presents the findings of the content analysis of the gathered material, adhering to the research question regarding the extent of reading materials in ELT coursebooks used in Sweden. The analysis also aims to discover whether there are any discernible discrepancies between coursebooks designed for the vocational contra the university preparatory programs. *Viewpoints Vocational* and *Blueprint Vocational* are specifically designed for the vocational orientations, and are thus of special interest for this particular aim, whilst both their namesakes and the other remaining titles are targeted towards the university preparatory programs.

4.1.1 *Viewpoints Vocational*

Viewpoints Vocational (2011) is geared towards vocational students and is designed to answer to the current syllabus, but can also be connected to the equivalent proficiency levels of the Common European Framework (CEFR) (Gustafsson and Wivast, "Viewpoints Voc.*"* 3). The coursebook contains five different themes and each unit consists of an authentic literary text, carefully selected to create interest among the students. Accompanying each texts are vocabulary, grammar, translation and writing exercises aimed at increasing students' vocabulary and language correctness (Gustafson och Wivast, "Viewpoints Voc.*"* 3).

In addition, the coursebook includes a specific section of model texts for students to use as templates when writing a text in English. It should be mentioned that the number of reading passages equals the total of both fictional and nonfictional texts whilst the columns dedicated to fictional texts, literary genres and reading passages incorporated with other language skills are all overlapping – that is to say, they are all subcategories of the overarching category of reading passages. Having clarified that, the results from the content analysis of *Viewpoints Vocational* is presented below:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
16	16	15	Excerpt from fiction	12	66	65
			Play	-		
			Poem	2		
			Short story	1		

Table 1: Reading passages in Viewpoints Vocational

Table One shows that *Viewpoints Vocational* is constructed largely around authentic, literary texts. The coursebook makes use mainly of excerpts from fiction (75 % of the texts included), which can be an extract from a novel, book, film (dialogue) or other forms of storytelling that are not retold in full in the coursebooks. The other literary texts make up 19 % of the coursebook's reading material and the non-literary and autobiographical texts make up the remaining 6 %. Reading materials are allotted more than a third (38 %) of the entire coursebook. Furthermore, all texts are accompanied by various exercises of other language skills than reading, and these tasks are given virtually the same amount of space as the reading itself. A further analysis of the distribution of tasks is presented below:
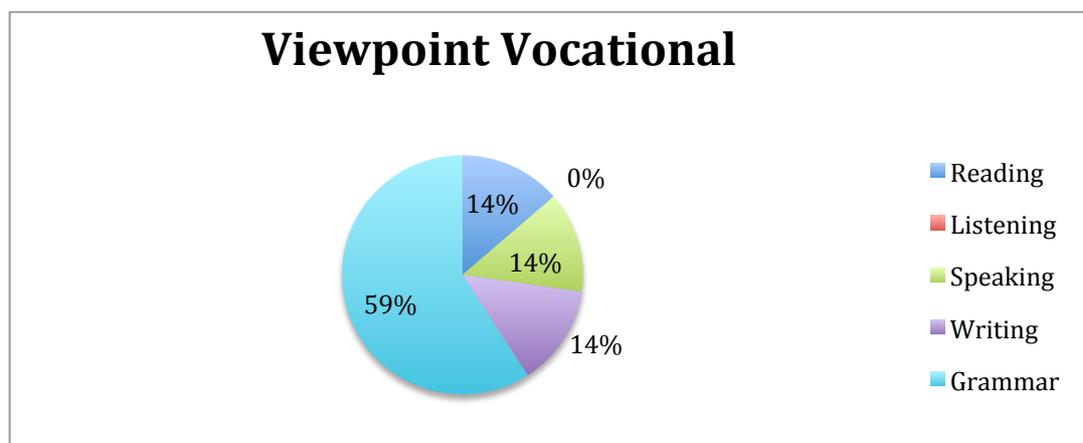

Figure 1: Tasks by language skill in Viewpoint Vocational

Viewpoints Vocational (2011) comprises a total of 110 tasks, excluding all numerical and/or alphabetical subtasks. For example, a task covering the past simple tense with twelve fill-in-the-blanks sentences is defined as one task rather than twelve. The division of tasks has been carried out after what language skill has been the primary focus of the task. Figure One shows that the primary focus of *Viewpoints Vocational* is to develop students' grammatical skills since more than half of the combined tasks had to do with grammar. Receptive language skills (listening and reading) make up roughly 14 % of the exercises, while listening tasks are noticeably absent. Productive language skills (writing and speaking) accounts for double the amount of tasks (30) as the receptive language skills and make up 27 % of tasks in total.

4.1.2 Viewpoints 1

The university preparatory version of *Viewpoints* (2011) consists of 240 pages (compared to the 176 pages of its vocational equivalent), and is similarly designed in accordance with both the Swedish syllabus and the CEFR. There are five overarching themes with units designed to match the theme in content and message. Each unit consists of a number of authentic literary

texts selected to create interest and the accompanying tasks of grammar, reading, writing and speaking (Gustafsson and Viwast, "Viewpoints" 3). In addition, the coursebook includes a section of model texts for students to emulate. The results are presented in the table below:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
19	19	17	Excerpt from fiction	12	124	76
			Play	-		
			Poem	2		
			Short story	3		

Table 2: Reading passages in Viewpoints 1

Similarly to its vocational counterpart, the reading materials of *Viewpoints 1* (2011) are made up of largely authentic literary texts. There are an additional three texts compared to *Viewpoints* Vocational, and seven texts are shared by both versions of the coursebook. However, it should be noted that five of the shared texts are significantly longer in *Viewpoints 1*; only the two poems available in both versions are identical. It should also be noted that *Viewpoints 1* includes almost twice the amount of reading material than its vocational counterpart. Almost two thirds (63 %) of the reading passages are made up of excerpts from fiction. The non-literary texts were again autobiographical and made up roughly 11 % of the total reading material. There is a significant increase in pages of reading material compared to the vocational version as 52 % of *Viewpoints 1* is made up of reading materials compared to the 38 % in *Viewpoints Vocational*. Consequently, there is a slight increase in the amount of pages of complementary tasks as well (76 compared to 65). Once more, all texts included are incorporated with exercises of other language skills as well as reading. A further analysis of the tasks is presented below:
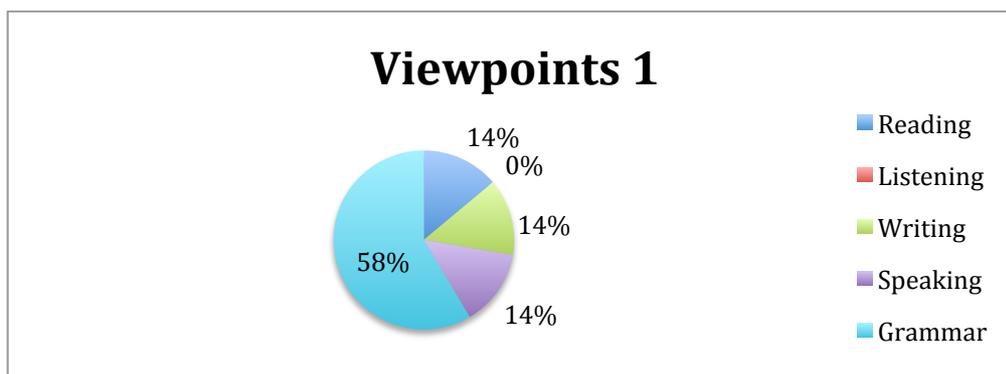
Figure 2: Tasks by language skill in Viewpoint 1

Figure Two shows that *Viewpoints 1* (2011) comprises a total of 130 tasks following the criteria established above. As was the case with its vocational counterpart, *Viewpoints 1* emphasizes grammatical exercises as evident by the fact that the 76 grammatical tasks outnumber the amount of tasks for reading, writing, speaking and listening combined (54 tasks). Writing and speaking exercises make up for 36 tasks compared to the 18 reading tasks. Again, there is a total absence of listening exercises and as a result the productive language skills outweigh the receptive ones on a ratio of 2:1.

4.1.3 Pick & Mix: Engelska 5

The third coursebook selected for analysis is Simon and Tove Phillips' *Pick & Mix*. The coursebook is developed in line with the requirements of the current curriculum, but unlike the two versions of *Viewpoints* included, states no direct relation to the CEFR. The authors recommend two approaches to the material, one being thematic and one being skills-based. Regardless of approach, the preface makes clear that each chapter provides opportunities to practice the basic language skills (Phillips and Phillips). In other words, every unit consists of a text section, a listening section, a speaking section and a thematic writing section. Furthermore, *Pick & Mix*'s preface describes each unit as containing a grammar section intended to provide "the main grammatical areas that students need to know", and the coursebook also includes a section named "Extra material" which includes templates and instructions for various written assignments (Phillips and Phillips). The results from the analysis of *Pick & Mix* is found below:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
20	20	2	Excerpt from fiction	-	50	36
			Play	-		
			Poem	-		
			Short story	2		

Table 3: Reading passages in Pick & Mix

In contrast to the *Viewpoints*-series, *Pick & Mix* contains a clear majority of nonfictional texts. Only 10 % of identified reading passages are fictional, which marks the study's lowest count. The same is true in terms of quantity of pages of reading materials as well. The two included literary texts are both short stories seemingly created for the purpose of the coursebook as no authors are mentioned. The non-literary reading passages are divided into the following categories:

Types of nonfictional texts: *Pick & Mix*	
Introductory text	10
Article	3
Factual text	2
Argumentative essay	1
Job ads	1
Message board	1

Table 4: Nonfictional reading passages in Pick & Mix

The most common type of nonfictional text in *Pick & Mix*, the ten introductory texts, serves to present the topic of each unit and are consequently very brief, most often being no longer than a page. Further findings include the fact that *Pick & Mix* allots only 22 % of its content to reading, a very low number compared to the previous coursebooks presented in this study.

Unlike the two versions of *Viewpoints,* where the text serves as a starting point for the remainder of the unit, *Pick & Mix*'s thematic and skills-based unit-design does not directly relate to the texts included. Hence, the allotment of tasks related to reading is relatively low (16 % of the coursebooks), but it should be noted that the rest of the units are made up of

tasks related to the other major language skills, and that these tasks are all thematically connected to the text of their respective unit. In total, 138 pages (roughly 62 %) are dedicated to non-reading related material. One similarity between *Pick & Mix* and the previous two coursebooks is that all texts are incorporated with tasks connected to other language skills than reading. A detailed account of the task allotment in *Pick & Mix* is available below:
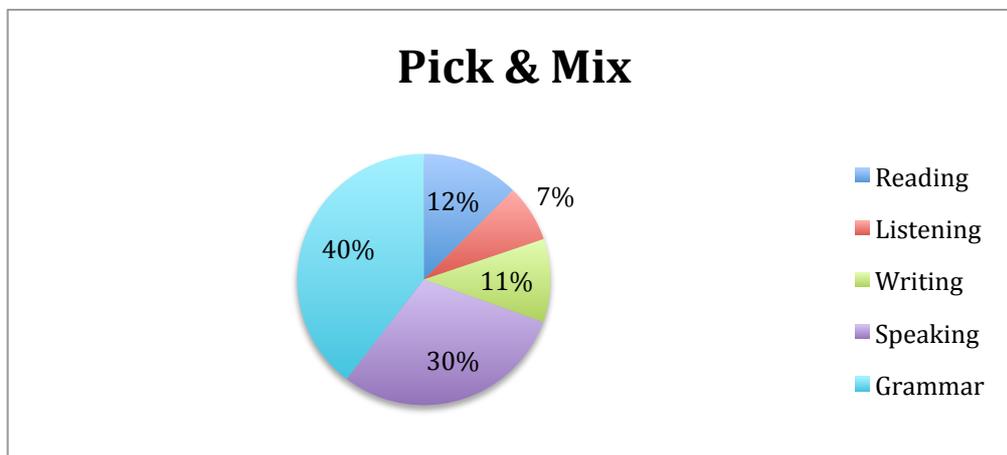

Figure 3: Tasks by language skill in Pick & Mix

Pick & Mix comprises a total of 177 tasks. It continues the emphasis on grammar (70 tasks) present in the coursebooks but introduces listening exercises, which are absent in the *Viewpoints*-series. Combined with the 22 reading comprehension-tasks, the receptive skills make up a total of 35 tasks, roughly a fifth of all tasks. However, there is still a discernible and emphatic preference for the productive language skills since speaking and writing accounts for no less than 72 tasks (41 %) divided between a very high count of 53 speaking tasks and a more moderate 19 writing tasks.

4.1.4 Blueprint Vocational

Blueprint Vocational consists of six thematic chapters with a mixture of fiction and nonfiction and contains 270 pages in total. Each unit includes the following sections: "Read & React", "Reflect & Share", "Word Work", "Focus on Listening", "At Work", "Further Studies" and "Speaking & Writing". The coursebook also contains a referential section named "Guide to Speaking & Writing" (Lundfall 7). There is more than one text per theme and the reading and the listening-exercises are sometimes interrelated. For example, the students might be given the first part of a story in text and the final part(s) through an audio recording. The results from the content analysis of *Blueprint Vocational* is presented below:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
20	20	11	Excerpt from fiction	10	56	47
			Play	-		
			Poem			
			Lyrics	1		
			Short story	-		

Table 5: Reading passages in Blueprint Vocational

Just as *Pick & Mix* includes both fictional and nonfictional texts, Table Five shows that *Blueprint Vocational* does the same. However, the latter provides an almost even split between fictional (55 %) and nonfictional texts (45 %) and thus, does not greatly favor either category of reading passages unlike previous coursebooks. Out of the eleven literary texts, 91 % are excerpts from fiction. *Blueprint Vocational* also introduces new text types in the form of lyrics and "Dialogues", the latter being extracts of dialogue from scenes in movies (which have been categorized as excerpts from fictions). The nine non-literary texts are divided into the following categories:

Types of nonfictional texts: *Blueprint Vocational*	
Article	5
Blog	2
Ads	1
Interview	1

Table 6: Nonfictional reading passages in Blueprint Vocational

Blueprint Vocational includes a relatively low amount of reading materials for its size, as only 21 % of its entirety is devoted to reading passages – the lowest recorded percentage of the study - whilst keeping with the tradition of incorporating each text with practicing and t esting of other language skills. Once again, the thematic build of the coursebooks makes for a slightly lower percentage of tasks directly related to the reading of texts (17 %), but as was

the case with *Pick & Mix* there is some overlap in terms of tasks as the units are designed to test all four major language skills. In total, *Blueprint Vocational* comprises 183 tasks divided as follows:
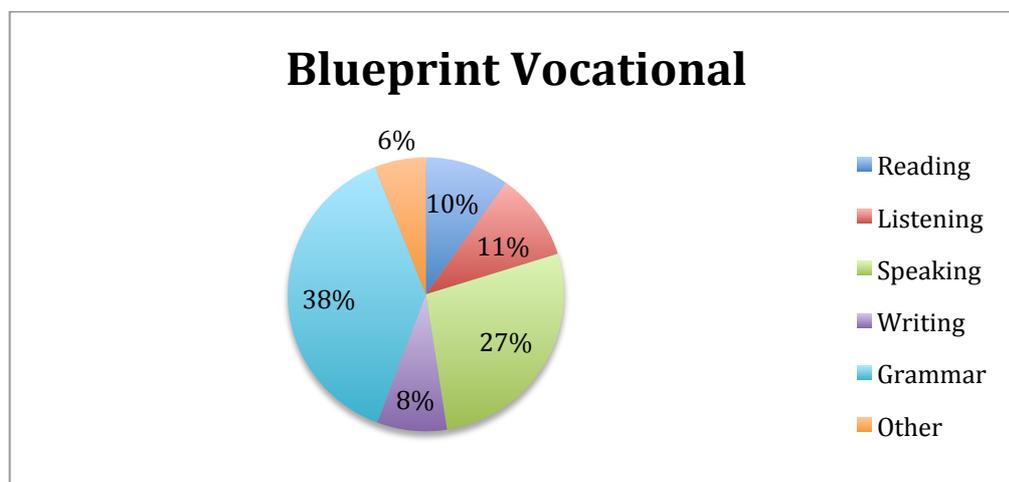

Figure 4: Tasks by language skill in Blueprint Vocational

Following the precedent set by previously presented coursebooks, *Blueprint Vocational* greatly favors grammatical tasks as evident by the total of 70 tasks included. Figure Four also shows that productive language skills such as writing and speaking make up almost double the amount of tasks compared to the tasks related to either reading or listening comprehension. A further observation is that *Blueprint Vocational* also includes 11 tasks that cater to none of the four major language skills specifically, but rather aims to develop learner autonomy by having the students perform further studies on their own.

4.1.5   Blueprint A: Version 2.0

Blueprint A contains a total of 336 pages (compared to its vocational counterpart's 270 pages). The textbook was initially designed for the preceding curriculum but *Version 2.0* has been updated from a previous edition to better correspond to the current syllabus. Every chapter includes oral and written exercises, and the book also contains specific guide sections for the two. The same sections of skill testing as previously seen in Blueprint Vocational follow each reading passage. Some of the revisions from previous versions of the book include adapted or rewritten material and *Version 2.0* also introduces the "Focus on Music"-section as found in the vocational version (Lundfall, Nyström and Clayton 6). Unlike *Viewpoints*, the two installments of *Blueprint* designed for English 5 share neither texts nor themes. The only instance of a shared feature is the lyrics to a song present in both versions. Despite their significant differences in terms of content, *Blueprint A* does follow the same

thematic design as its vocational counterpart but consists of eight units rather than six and thus includes more reading passages and reading materials. Below you will find the results from the analysis of *Blueprint A*:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
24	24	10	Excerpt from fiction	6	97	53
			Lyrics	2		
			Comic strip	1		
			Short story	1		

Table 7: Reading passages in Blueprint A: Version 2.0

As was the case with its vocational counterpart, *Blueprint A* is fairly balanced in its inclusion of text types, even if it does favor nonfictional materials somewhat. Table Seven shows that out of the literary texts, it is once again excerpts from fiction that are most frequent, accounting for approximately a fourth of the book's reading material. *Blueprint A* also introduces the comic strip as a text type. The nonfictional texts include the following:

Types of nonfictional texts: *Blueprint A*	
Article	5
Informational	5
Autobiographical	3
Quiz	1

Table 8: Nonfictional reading passages in Blueprint A: Version 2.0

In total, 29 % of *Blueprint A* is devoted to reading materials and 16 % to text-related tasks. As was the case with previous coursebooks, all texts have tasks related to various language skills. The longer texts also include comprehension questions mid-text in addition to the usual post-reading exercises. *Blueprint A* includes a total of 204 tasks, including the tasks of the specific grammar section at the end of the book, which seemingly is characteristic of the *Blueprint-*

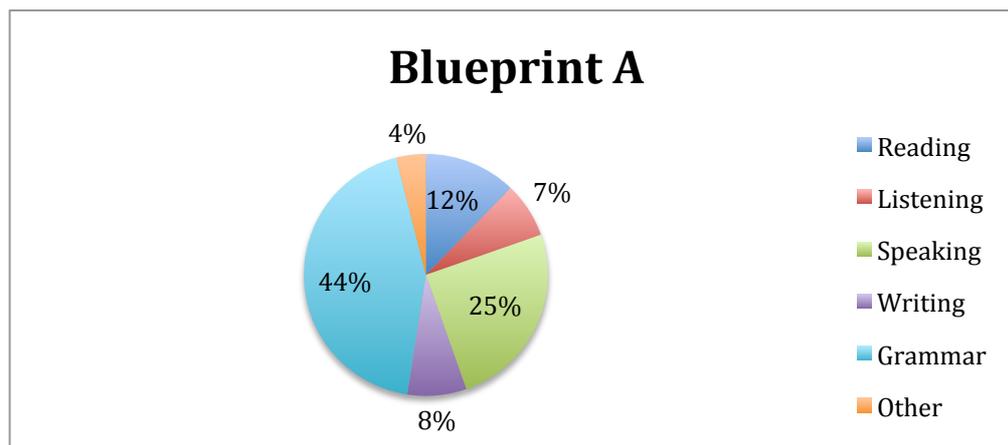series. A complete breakdown of the tasks goes as follows:

Figure 5: Tasks by language skill in Blueprint A: Version 2.0

Figure Five establishes that *Blueprint A* shares the tendencies of previous coursebooks. Grammatical tasks (89) make up almost half of the combined exercises and are bolstered by having a separate section for additional grammatical work. Furthermore, the receptive language skills – listening (15) and reading (25) – are greatly outnumbered due to the relatively significant presence of speaking tasks (51). In total, receptive language skills make up 40 tasks compared to the productive language skills that account for 67 tasks. Similarly to *Blueprint Vocational*, speaking is given the most prominent role of the basic language skills. The same tendency is present in *Pick & Mix* as well whilst the *Viewpoints*-series has an almost even divide between its three included language skills (listening tasks being the noticeable absentee). It should also be noted that *Blueprint* too, includes tasks designed for other purposes than to develop the four major language skills – even if it does so to a lesser extent (8) than *Blueprint Vocational* (11).

4.1.6 Echo 5: Main Issues and Short Stories

Echo 5 is made up of two separate parts (*Main Issues* and *Short Stories*), but is presented as a package and, consequently, the two parts are treated as complementary pieces rather than as two separate entries. *Echo 5* boasts 343 pages in total and is designed solely for the university preparatory programs and is closely tied to the current syllabus. The focus of the textbook is the knowledge of genre, fiction and global issues (Frato, *Blurb*). *Main Issues* contains ten different genres, complete with themes, texts and tasks of all varieties, whilst *Short Stories* is built around ten authentic novellas from the English-speaking world. Each short story is followed by language- and analytical exercises. In short, as the back cover of the coursebook states, "*Main Issues* provides the facts and *Short Stories* the fiction" (Henry). However, it

should be noted that each unit in *Main Issues* also revolves around a text and that the tasks of the unit are of complementary nature rather than the units being divided by language skill. It is thus more reminiscent of the *Viewpoint*-series than the other coursebooks. The complete analysis of *Echo 5* is available below:

Number of reading passages	Number of reading passages incorporated with grammar, speaking, writing and listening	Number of fictional texts	Literary genres and number		Number of pages reading	Number of pages of complementary tasks
20	20	11	Excerpt from fiction	-	158	90
			Play	-		
			Poem	1		
			Short story	10		

Table 9: Reading passages in Echo 5: Main Issues *and* Short Stories

Table Nine presents two interesting tidbits. Firstly, it establishes that *Echo* 5 is the coursebook with the highest amount of reading materials in terms of total pages (158), which accounts for almost half of the book's content (46 %). Percentage wise, *Echo 5* is second to *Viewpoints 1,* which dedicates a study's high of 52 % of its entirety to reading materials, but *Echo 5*'s 158 pages of reading materials significantly exceed *Viewpoints 1*'s 124. Secondly, it is the only coursebook in this study that includes unaltered literary texts since both the poem and the ten short stories (or novellas) are seemingly provided in full length. In the previous coursebooks, the norm has been to include excerpts rather than complete texts (excluding *Pick & Mix,* which includes neither excerpts from fiction nor unaltered texts). Similarly to some of the previously analyzed coursebooks, *Echo 5* provides a mixture of fictional and nonfictional texts albeit with a slight preference for the fictional text (55 %). The nine nonfictional texts include a number of various text types, summarized below:

Types of nonfictional texts: *Echo 5*	
Article	3
Informational	2
Blog	1
Email	1
Interview	1
Chat	1

Table 10: Nonfictional reading passages in Echo 5

As has been the case repeatedly throughout the present analysis, *Echo 5* ties the reading of texts to tasks of various language skills. It should be noted, however, that there is an almost even distribution of tasks in *Short Stories*, except for the unique lack of speaking tasks. It should also be noted that the authors of *Echo 5* consider the discussion-tasks following every text to be listening activities and they have consequently been categorized as such. Furthermore, *Echo 5: Main Issues* shares the disposition of the *Blueprint*-series by including a specific section for grammar tasks, and *Echo* 5 also presents the highest amount of pages of complementary tasks as well as of tasks in general. The 211 identified tasks is yet another studies high and are distributed as follows:
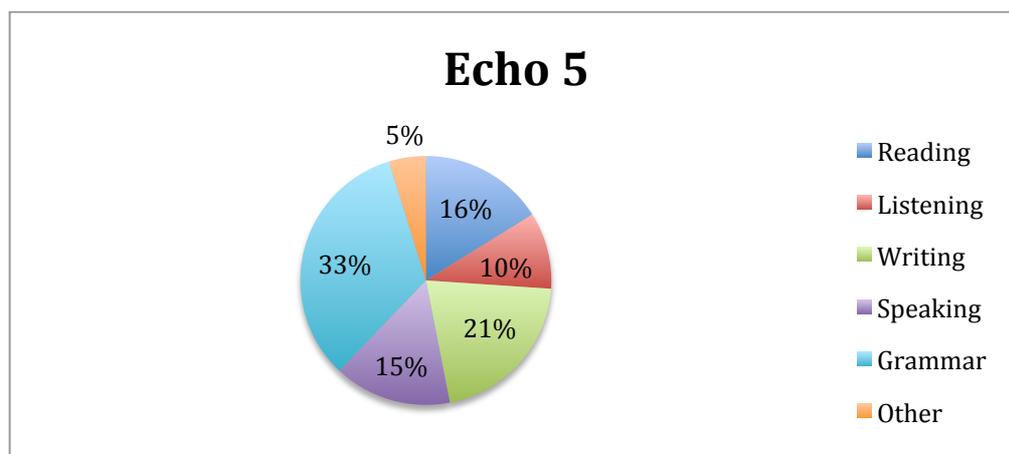

Figure 6: Tasks by language skill in Echo 5 (Main Issues and Short Stories)

Similar to its peers, Figure Six shows us that the prominent skill tested in *Echo 5* is the grammatical competence of the learners. However, the 34 reading tasks and 44 writing tasks reported deviates from the norm set in this study as very high numbers. Nonetheless, the productive language skills still represent a larger presence than its receptive equivalent by a count of 76 tasks (36 %) to 55 tasks (26 %). Another unique feature of *Echo 5* is the 10 tasks categorized as "Other", which all emphasize literary terminology and concepts – something that enables a deeper immersion between the textbook and the teaching of literature.

4.1.7 Summary of results

The major findings of the content analysis are presented in a pair of summarizing tables. The first table includes the information about the extent and types of reading materials included in Swedish ELT coursebooks, and the second details the distribution of reading passages per text type:

Coursebook	Pages of reading materials (% of the book)	Reading passages (# of fictional texts)	Most frequent text type (#)
Viewpoints Vocational	66 (38 %)	16 (15)	Excerpt from fiction (12)
Viewpoints 1	124 (52 %)	19 (17)	Excerpt from fiction (6)
Pick & Mix	50 (22 %)	20 (2)	Article (3)
Blueprint Vocational	56 (21 %)	20 (11)	Excerpt from fiction (10)
Blueprint A	97 (29 %)	24 (10)	Excerpt from fiction (6)
Echo 5	158 (46 %)	20 (11)	Novella (10)

Table 11: Summary of reading materials in the study

Table Eleven shows that half of the analyzed coursebooks include a significantly higher amount of reading materials than the others, which is true in particular of *Echo 5* and *Viewpoints 1*. There is a clear discrepancy in the extent of reading materials between vocational and university preparatory editions of the same coursebook, and it is equally evident that fictional texts are preferred as reading passages. Table Twelve details the division of all 119 reading passages included in the set of coursebooks:

Text type	# (% of total)
Excerpt from fiction	40 (34 %)
Short story	17 (14 %)
Poem	5 (4 %)
Lyrics	3 (3 %)
Comic strip	1 (<1%)
Nonfictional	53 (45 %)

Table 12: Frequency of text types in total

The distribution of fictional and nonfictional texts is fairly even when all six coursebooks are presented together, but it should be noted that *Pick & Mix* only includes two fictional texts of a possible twenty and thus is chiefly responsible for leveling out the numbers. Excerpts from fiction is by far the single most frequent text type, accounting for a third of all reading materials presented, as the nonfictional category includes a large variety of text types, including articles, blog posts, email transcripts and others.

4.2 Discussion

The following discussion is based on the findings of a limited, but representative study of a total of six ELT coursebooks designed for the course English 5 of upper secondary school in Sweden. Two of the analyzed coursebooks adhere to the vocational orientation, whilst the remaining four are intended for the university preparatory programs. By means of page-by-page content analysis the study has strived to answer the research questions presented in the introduction and while it is not unreasonable to assume that most ELT coursebooks follow roughly the same patterns and tendencies as the six presented in this study, further research would be necessary to establish whether the results of the study could indeed be generalized. That said, the sample investigated should at least allow one to hypothesize that a more comprehensive study might result in similar results.

The main focus of the study is an investigation of to what extent reading materials are included in current ELT coursebooks, as previous research has established that the main redeeming quality of the coursebook is its function as a ready-made syllabus (see Sheldon, Chou and Danielsson and Lundberg). The ELT coursebook is practical as it instructs the teacher of what to teach and includes built-in testing of all four basic language skills (the practicality of the coursebook as teaching tool is facetiously labeled here as *the convenience hypothesis*). In other words, the ELT coursebook is an embodiment of the curriculum. Its content and disposition is therefore significant as it- either implicitly or explicitly - promotes a certain view of language and how to teach it. It is therefore of some concern that only one of the analyzed coursebooks (*Viewpoints 1*) devotes more than half of its content to reading materials whilst three (*Pick & Mix, Blueprint Vocational* and *Blueprint A*) allot less than a third to reading materials. *Echo 5* contains the most pages of reading materials (158), but it should be noted that it is divided into two parts in order to be able to emphasize reading. Based on the findings of this study, it is safe to conclude that reading is not the primarily focus of contemporary ELT coursebooks. Considering the current development of language learners' reading ability and the declination in reading habits among the youth (see 2.1 and 2.2), this is problematic. Furthermore, this design of ELT coursebooks is out of step with current second language-acquisition theories. Noted linguist Stephen Krashen established back in 1982 that the key component for the acquiring of a second language is access to large quantities of comprehensible input (*Principles and Practice* 21-22). Krashen's input hypothesis is one out of a total of five second language acquisition-hypotheses presented in

the updated version of *Principles and Practices in Second Language Acquisition,* originally published in 1982 (2009).

The input hypothesis deals with how language learners develop from their current level (i) to the next (i+1). Language acquisition then, boils down to the learner understanding language above the level of their current competence. This is made possible by new content (books for instance) or extra-linguistic information (context, knowledge of the world etc.) being made available in large quantity. Once the input is understood the competence of the language learner evolves (Krashen, *Principles and Practices* 21-22). Krashen argues that the classroom is highly suitable since it can provide the necessary comprehensible input (i + 1) required. Even though he is mainly concerned with speaking fluency, the same principle can be applied to the receptive ability of reading as well, provided that language students are given adequate and significant input through texts – which, evidently, is not the case within the coursebooks presented here.

In terms of literary content among the reading materials presented in this study, a majority of coursebooks (all but *Pick & Mix)* either favored fictional texts or displayed a fairly even division between fictional and nonfictional reading passages. This differs from the findings of Gümüsok's research, where the majority of reading passages were of non-literary nature (see section 2.3.1). Excerpts from fiction made up the overwhelming majority of the literary texts (40 out of a total 66), followed by short stories (17), poems (5), lyrics (3) and a single comic strip. This shows that even if the included content is deemed adequate in terms of quantity, there is a clear preference for fragmented and intensive reading of texts adapted to a specific learning outcome. In some cases, the comprehension questions connected to the text even appeared mid-text as well as afterwards, intensifying and highlighting the intensive – or comprehension testing – nature of reading in school. On the basis of the content in the coursebooks presented here, it seems fair to say that even if the reading of literature is not as peripheral in the Swedish EFL classroom as in Gümüsok's study, it is still not as central as it should be.

This point is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that although *Gy11* acknowledges the need for outside reading materials in the form of fiction, it does so very vaguely and places it solely in the hands of the individual teacher (55). The current design of textbooks teaches students that reading is never the purpose, but rather the tool to reach other language related targets. Obviously, textbooks cannot be expected to include entire novels for pragmatic reasons but an approach like that of *Echo 5* where its second part, *Short Stories*, consisted solely of authentic and non-altered novellas may be more suitable to promote reading literacy

as it presents longer, uninterrupted, texts from the English-speaking world, thus providing both authentic input and meeting the requirements of *Gy11* (53-55).

One of the more alarming findings of the study is the significant variance discovered between vocational and university preparatory editions of the same coursebooks in terms of both access to reading materials and the testing of the same. For instance, the vocational edition of *Viewpoints* contains barely half of the amount of reading materials than its university preparatory equivalent. Furthermore, the two share only seven texts of which all but the two poems (available in full) were longer in *Viewpoints 1*. Even the accompanying tasks were different, where the ones constructed for vocational studies were briefer and less demanding. One example is that the reading comprehensions tasks related to the texts in *Viewpoints* 1 required the students to revisit the text and support their answers with examples from it, a requirement which was not replicated in *Viewpoints Vocational*, where the learner is asked instead to simply repeat various details from the text. The difference in the nature of the tasks is not demonstrated by the study, but it is a general observation made from the analysis of the source material. The same tendencies are present in the second pair of vocational and non-vocational editions in the *Blueprint*-series, albeit not to the same extent. The discrepancy in reading materials is less significant, but instead the two share neither themes nor texts.

Considering the fact that English is a shared subject across the various orientations, this discrepancy is not only somewhat surprising but also in direct conflict with the requirements of the curriculum. *Gy11* clearly states that each student should be given the same opportunity to develop regardless of preexisting differences in knowledge levels and socioeconomic background (6). That is not to say that it all education – or by extension teaching materials – must be identical (Skolverket, *Gy11* 6). However, the briefer vocational editions cannot be said to give their students equal opportunity to develop reading literacy and overall language competence as it simply does not provide the same amount of input. Differences in themes and topics are acceptable, since learners choose their orientation for reasons like interest and so forth, but differences in quantity (and quality) of content is not. In other words, the vocational editions do not prepare the students for further studies to the same extent as their counterparts, nor can they be said to be as demanding despite the fact that they provide the same level of qualification in terms of eligibility for further studies (in this instance moving on to the follow-up course of English 6). The significant discrepancy between university preparatory and vocational editions of the same coursebook, and its potential consequences, is an area for further study.

As stated in the introductory chapter of this thesis, the current curriculum is greatly influenced by the *CEFR*. As a result, emphasis is placed on the communicative, or productive, language abilities rather than its receptive components – as is evident by the fact that four out of five key requirements revolve around the development of productive language skills (Skolverket, *Gy11* 55). Similarly, Danielsson and Lundberg's study of the use of ELT coursebooks in the elementary schooling setting concluded that the coursebooks corresponded to the curriculum (Lgr11), and that they emphasized communicative abilities (see section 2.3.1). The same tendency is prevalent in this study, as the analysis of tasks – related either directly to the reading passages or through theme – showed an emphatic preference for grammar, but also for the development of productive rather than receptive language skills. All six coursebooks analyzed displayed a fairly significant preference for productive language tasks, three of them even distributing the tasks in a 2:1 ratio (or higher) in favor of productive language skills. Furthermore, two of the coursebooks neglect to include listening exercises at all – further corroborating the claim that current textbooks emphasize productive language skills over their receptive counterparts.

In terms of reading as a teaching tool, the coursebooks make use of the reading passages included in the coursebooks as a source from which students extract information they then convert into output in the form of comprehension, writing, or discussion tasks, never allowing them to read for its own sake. As stated above, the nature of the tasks related to the coursebooks' sampled literary texts have not been accounted for in detail in this study. However, the dominant position of productive language skills-tasks compared to their receptive counterparts at least superficially supports the claim of reading (and/or receptive language skills) being a secondary concern of language instruction, as productive language skills are primarily concerned with output in terms of writing and speaking.

As we have seen above (2.3.1), previous studies of ELT coursebooks have shown that they are highly limited as teaching tools. Sheldon attributes their insufficiency to the desire to be suitable for all learners in all situations, but also suggest that coursebooks often fail to adhere to current pedagogical theories or at least to account for their implications. Chou, on the other hand, notes that ELT textbooks are unsuitable for certain areas of language learning since they do not provide enough depth to benefit language development. He makes special mention of the need for outside reading materials to make up for the deficiencies of the ELT coursebook. This study, by and large, corroborates these findings. Even if Swedish ELT coursebooks are

designed only for Swedish learners of English, they are still trying to be useful for a vast and diverse crowd. As we have seen above, the coursebooks' division of content is also dichotomous with central pedagogical theories, especially that of input presented above. Again, this is necessary from a pragmatic standpoint, but it nevertheless contradicts the same principles of equal opportunity for all presented previously. No matter how diverse a coursebook is in text types and topics, it will always alienate a number of students who do not find the texts interesting or relatable. The same can be said about the token novels introduced by some teachers to make up for what they perceive as a lack of literary content in coursebooks. Both scenarios, I will suggest below, can be remedied by extensive reading programs.

Before doing so, it should also be noted that the preference for fictional texts within the coursebooks is tangible and poses an interesting question of what the division of texts says about what the authors of the textbooks think is conducive to reading literacy. Interaction with fictional texts seems to be considered a key component to promote literacy within ELT coursebooks. As has been stated before, outside reading materials are both necessary to provide adequate amounts of input (see Chou) and required by the curriculum (see *Gy11*). However, as shown by the various institutional studies and reports (see 2.1), the current way of teaching language has failed to equip learners with the skill set necessary to improve reading literacy. The following section will therefore introduce a methodology that at least in theory addresses all of the deficiencies of the current practice. Keep in mind that this is solely speculative, and the presented methodology should be seen as a complement and not an alternative to the present way of doing things, but the author of this thesis firmly believes that the approach could work if implemented correctly.

Extensive reading (ER), as the approach is called, is closely connected to the input hypothesis introduced above and is largely attributed to Stephen Krashen and Richard R. Day and Julian Bamford respectively, but the concept of extensive reading was introduced as early as in 1917 by Harold Palmer, who defined it as "rapidly" reading" book after book" (qtd. in Day and Bamford 5). Palmer contrasted the term with intensive reading, which he defined as "take a text, study it line by line […] comparing, analysing, translating, and retaining every expression that it contains (qtd. in Day and Bamford 5). Subsequently, extensive reading has been more concerned with content rather than language which contrasts to the other three recognized ways of reading today: skimming, scanning and intensive reading (Day and Bamford 6).

To address the perceived "literary crisis", Krashen introduces what he calls "Pleasure reading", an approach to language teaching where reading is both the ends and the means of the exercise and it is both voluntary and autonomous. Pleasure reading is not intensive reading – reading as preparation for assignments or for answering questions of content – but reading for the sake of reading itself (Krashen, *Principles and Practices* 164). Pleasure reading is comprehensible by its definition (as students choose for themselves what to read) and provides a large quantity of input. Krashen expands on the idea of pleasure reading in *The Power of Reading* (2004), now calling it free voluntary reading (FVR). Arguing that FVR is "the missing ingredient" of both first and foreign language instruction, Krashen presents no less than 54 empirical studies of which 94 % corroborate his theory of free voluntary reading being at least as beneficial – and in most cases more beneficial than the traditional skill-based reading instruction prevalent in contemporary ELT coursebooks (*The Power of Reading* 1-16). Krashen also presents the reading hypothesis, which states that in-school FVR results in better reading comprehension, writing style, vocabulary, spelling and grammatical development (*The Power of Reading* 17).

Richard R. Day and Julian Bamford present a similar idea to that of Krashen's in *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* (1998), labeling the approach extensive reading (7). An extensive reading approach is - as defined by the *Longman Dictionary* - "intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading" (qtd. in Day and Bamford 6). Applied to the classroom context, students are given the opportunity to – in class - read anything they want for a sustained period of time. Ideally, there is a great variety of comprehensible reading materials available. Reading is considered its own reward, meaning that the students are not expected to answer comprehension questions or filling in the blanks of their texts, as is the norm in the presented ELT textbooks. Day and Bamford's theory is similar to Krashen's in many ways, and consequently the authors make many claims that mirrors Krashen's about how extensive reading develops not only reading ability but also language competence in general, especially in terms of vocabulary but also the knowledge of the target language, the world, as well as various text types (Day and Bamford 16-17). However, there are some differences between Krashen's and Day and Bamford's theories. Whereas Krashen largely disregards accountability in the terms of tasks and/or assignments related to reading, Day and Bamford acknowledges that teachers need to be able to evaluate their students and document that basis of judgment for performance reviews etc. (86). The authors suggest several methods of doing

so whilst still maintaining the extensive reading approach, specifically "the reading notebook" where students keep track of their own progress, but also the traditional book report where students are asked to share their reflections and reactions to the books they have read (Day and Bamford 87).

Krashen and Day and Bamford's ideas function as a framework for the minimum requirements for the implementation of an extensive reading program. First and foremost, students must have access to a large quantity of reading materials either through a well-stocked school or public library or, alternatively, through access to a digital library of electronic reading materials. Enriching the students' print environment in this matter (obviously discounting electronic resources) results in more reading and, over time, literacy development. Secondly, actual lesson time must be allotted to reading (Krashen, *The Power of Reading* 58-60, 85). A final requirement of an extensive reading program is that its methodology reflects the desire to transform the classroom into a reading community. Bamford and Day present a number of in-class activities meant to further extensive reading and to help students realize that reading is a valuable and worthwhile activity. In short, the implementation of a successful ER-program requires guidance, counseling and activities that encourages and allows students to read as much as possible. It requires access to large quantities of reading materials, and teachers who embrace the methodology and lead by example. As Bamford and Day puts it, "the essential conditions for extensive reading are a teacher's enthusiasm for reading and encouragement of students to read" (167).

The current practice of language teaching, as illustrated by the ELT coursebooks' emphasis on adapted and/or shortened texts and the inadequacy of clear instructions on how to implement reading to an adequate extent in the current policy documents, clashes greatly with Krashen and Day and Bamford's ideas of what makes reading beneficial for the development of reading literacy and overall language competence. As previously discussed (see 2.1, *The Culture of Reading*), the Swedish government's suggestion to counter the development of declining reading literacy was to expose learners to both nonfiction and fiction to a greater extent. It was further argued that since reading comprehension is such a vital component of language competence, the educational system should aim to make young readers realize that reading has a value of its own – all of which falls well in line with what Krashen, Day and Bamford propose through their research. It is thus suggested that by implementing extensive reading programs, that the current practice's shortcomings

concerning reading literacy *may* be remedied. At the minimum, extensive reading programs and their compatibility with the Swedish school system is a worthy topic for further study.

5 Conclusion

Reading is one of the four basic language skills and reading literacy is achieved by reading large quantities of written text, preferably of the fictive kind. Reading leads to improvements in writing, vocabulary and many other aspects of overall language competence and is therefore vital to acquiring a (second) language. Reading comprehension is also a cornerstone of theoretical thinking and thus of most school subjects. Consequently, reading should be a central component of any curriculum and ESL course, which currently is not the case, despite the fact that almost a fourth of Swedish year 9 learners tested by PISA in 2012 failed to read at a level necessary for continued educational success. Due to an increased emphasis on communicative and/or productive language skills in current policy documents, reading is a peripheral activity in the contemporary ESL classroom. Through a content analysis of six ELT coursebooks now in use, covering both the vocational and the university preparatory orientations of Swedish upper secondary school, the claim that reading is a secondary concern of current language teaching practice has been corroborated. Only two out of the set of coursebooks included a (relatively) ample amount of reading materials. The reading materials were most frequently in the form of excerpts from fiction, showing that the authors of the coursebooks primarily consider interaction with fictional texts to be conducive to reading literacy. Other frequent fictional text types included novellas, or short stories. Nonfictional texts made up a significant portion of the total reading passages (45 %). All texts – fictional or nonfictional - were primarily connected to tasks of grammar, but also to productive language skills, further intensifying the intensive, or scanning, nature of reading within ELT coursebooks, but also mirroring the current predominance of the communicative language abilities of interaction either through text or spoken language.

In addition, the study has shown that students enrolled in vocational programs do not receive the same amount of the already somewhat limited input as students in university preparatory programs. ELT coursebooks designed for vocational students include fewer texts, less pages of reading materials and tasks of a less demanding nature. As this goes against official policy documents, the discrepancy between vocational and university preparatory ELT coursebooks lends itself to further research. As briefly stated above, the study has established that the type of reading promoted in current ELT textbooks are of the intensive kind, meaning that the activity is designed for students to meticulously read the included texts

line by line and then perform various tasks, most frequently requiring the learner to produce output. Reading of the extensive kind is seemingly not possible within the confinements of the ELT textbook, largely due to its requirement of access to plentiful input, and is therefore overlooked.

Although there is a respectable amount of reading materials included in some of the analyzed coursebooks, it is most likely not sufficient in terms of quantity of input to be an effective tool to develop reading literacy – and by extension overall language competence (nor does the introduction of one or two novels per semester make up for the deficiency). In terms of providing enough content for overall language development, the coursebook will always fall short as a teaching tool since it is required to include all four major language skills in a very limited amount of space. In doing so, the writer of the coursebook is forced to prioritize, and as this study shows, more often than not it is receptive language skills and in-depth reading that gives way for grammatical and/or productive language exercises. In order for language teaching to truly advance learners' reading literacy, teachers must turn to outside reading materials, and it is this study's recommendation that they do so by thoroughly researching and then (possibly) implementing extensive reading programs.

To summarize, this study has shown that ELT coursebooks are not primarily concerned with promoting reading literacy. Nor do they provide the necessary amount of input required to promote reading literacy. The analysis has also unraveled a significant discrepancy between the coursebooks intended for use in the vocational orientations compared to their university preparatory counterparts. Furthermore, a clear preference for the practice of grammar and productive language skills was discovered in the set of coursebooks through the distribution of the language tasks, sorted by the primary language skill practiced. It has also been established that coursebooks predominantly (excluding *Pick & Mix*) make use of excerpts from fiction to promote literacy. Finally, it has been suggested that a complement to the current practice could be the introduction of extensive reading programs, rather than the vaguely described inclusion of outside reading materials demanded by the curriculum.

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