

# **THE ENGLISH PRESENT PERFECT IN FINNISH 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE EFL TEXTBOOKS**

Bachelor's thesis

Riina Vornanen

University of Jyväskylä  
Department of Languages  
English  
May 2014

## JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta – Faculty Humanistinen tiedekunta	Laitos – Department Kielten laitos
Tekijä – Author Riina Vornanen	
Työn nimi – Title The English present perfect in Finnish 7th grade EFL textbooks	
Oppiaine – Subject Englanti	Työn laji – Level Kandidaatin tutkielma
Aika – Month and year Toukokuu 2014	Sivumäärä – Number of pages 16
Tiivistelmä – Abstract <p>Kielioppi ja sen opettaminen ovat aina olleet keskeinen osa kielen tutkimusta ja opetusta, minkä johdosta teorioita siitä miten kielioppia tulisi opettaa on runsaasti. Sen sijaan tutkimusta erityisesti englannin oppikirjojen sisältämästä kieliopista on tehty vain vähän, vaikka oppikirjat ovat usein iso osa opetusta.</p> <p>Tutkielmassani tarkastelun kohteena on neljä yläasteen ensimmäiselle luokka-asteelle suunnattua oppikirjaparia ja se miten niissä opetetaan englannin perfektin. Tarkoitukseni oli tutkia ensinnäkin millaisia tehtäviä kirjoissa on perfektin opettamiseen ja toisekseen millaista kieliopin opettamisen suuntaa kirjat sisällön perusteella edustavat. Tutkimus on lähtökohdiltaan laadullinen ja sisältöanalyysin pohjana käytin Ellisin käyttämää koodausjärjestelmää.</p> <p>Analysoidut kirjat olivat keskenään hyvin samankaltaisia. Tehtävät olivat pääasiassa rajattuja tuottamistehtäviä ja tehtäytyyppejä ei ollut monipuolisesti. Lisäksi kirjoissa esiintyneet tuottamistehtävät kuten käänöslauseet, vaativat oppijalta lähinnä mekaanista kielioppimuodon tuottoa ja toistoa. Englannin perfektin merkityksen ja käytön ymmärtämiseen ei analyysin perusteella oltu panostettu. Näiden lisäksi kommunikatiivisuus ja deduktiivinen ote sääntöjen oppimiseen olivat heikosti esillä, joten sanoa kirjat edustavat lähinnä traditionaalista kieliopin opettamista. Jatkotutkimusta ajatellen olisi hyvä ottaa tarkasteluun myös eri kielioppiasioita sekä eri tasoille oppijoille tehtyjä oppikirjoja.</p>	
Asiasanat – Keywords Grammar, foreign language teaching, textbooks, English present perfect	
Säilytyspaikka – Depository JYX	
Muita tietoja – Additional information	

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 Introduction .....	2
2 Grammar in language teaching .....	4
2.1 Defining grammar .....	4
2.2 Grammar teaching .....	5
2.3 The present perfect .....	6
3 Data and methods .....	7
4 The present perfect in teaching materials .....	9
4.1 General findings on the methodological options .....	9
4.2 This way up .....	11
4.3 Key English .....	12
4.4 Smart Moves .....	13
4.5 Spotlight .....	14
5 Discussion .....	15
6 Conclusion .....	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	19
Primary sources .....	19
Secondary sources .....	19

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Although grammar teaching as an area of linguistics and language teaching has been studied extensively, the Finnish EFL teaching materials particularly in regards to grammar have not been of much interest and instead it has been seen important to look at the discourses and biases the materials convey. Yet, Finnish teachers rely quite heavily on the EFL books and on a recent study on pronunciation teaching, Tergujeff (2013) noted that the teaching methods and contents which were not covered in the EFL books, were then not covered by the teachers at all. Since EFL books seem to have a great impact on the language teaching it should be also of importance how the language is taught. Furthermore, as the new national curriculum for Finnish schools is to be approved in 2016, there will be new textbooks designed and published and it would be good to first note on how the what the current textbooks have to offer so proper changes for the better can be made.

This study is about grammar teaching in Finnish EFL (English as a foreign language) books. The focus is on the books for 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the first year of upper comprehensive school and the aim of this study is to see how one grammar item, the present perfect, is taught in the Finnish EFL text books. As already mentioned there are no notable studies on grammar teaching in Finnish EFL books but for example Ellis (2002) has studied the methodological options used in EFL grammar practice books. In his study Ellis concluded that the books relied heavily on traditional grammar teaching by using mainly controlled production operations and explicitly describing the grammar items. As my aim is to look at how the present perfect is covered in the Finnish EFL books the research questions for this study are:

1. How is the English present perfect taught in Finnish EFL books?
  - a. Which methodological options are used?
  - b. What kind of an approach do the books have on teaching grammar?

The approach of this study is qualitative and comparative. The aim of this study is not to make generalizations about grammar teaching in Finland or evaluate the books as such since it is impossible to say how and how effectively the books would actually be used in a classroom. In order to narrow down the study I chose to concentrate on one grammar item only and chose the present perfect as it is not usually formally taught until the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The purpose is to compare the contents of the books through the present perfect and to see what kind of methodological options are used, are the similarities between the books and what kind

of approach they have on grammar teaching. The method used for the analysis is qualitative content analysis.

This paper is constructed so that first there is a brief overview of the theoretical background of the study which includes defining what grammar is, introducing the main historical approaches to teaching it and lastly discussing the English present perfect. The second part of the paper includes presenting the data and methodology of the study. In the third section the results of the analysis will be first overviewed and then discussed briefly.

## **2 GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING**

### **2.1 Defining grammar**

Thornbury (1999: 1) defines grammar as “a description of the rules that govern how language’s sentences are formed”. Traditionally grammar has been the study of the linguistic forms on sentence level and what syntactical and morphological rules are there in a language. *Collins Cobuild advanced learner’s English dictionary* (2006) gives two slightly differing definitions for the word *rule*: “rules are instructions that tell you what you are allowed to do” and “the rules of something such as a language or a science are statements that describe the way that things usually happen in a particular situation”. These definitions coincide with Thornbury’s (1999: 11) explanation on how there are two basic types of grammatical rules: prescriptive and descriptive. Prescriptive rules are predetermined and tell how language should be used and descriptive rules are about how the language is actually used by people. On top of this grammar also communicates meanings and is therefore an important phenomenon which a hearer/reader needs in order to make sense of meaning in case of deficient contextual information (Thornbury 1999: 4). This way of defining grammar as rules which correspond to both structure and meaning is the definition adopted in this study.

Grammar is a system but there is not just one grammar of English language, instead there are different models on how that system is described. A grammar can be descriptive, prescriptive, pedagogical, theoretical, traditional or a reference grammar to list a few. Pedagogical grammars are what people in everyday talk often refer to when talking about grammar. Leech (1994) divides grammars roughly into three varieties: the academic grammars, the teachers’ grammar and pedagogical grammars. Academic grammars are, as Leech explains, descriptive and very theoretical and even though pedagogical grammars can be very descriptive they are

meant for language learners and for that reason are not nearly as theoretical as the academic ones. Teachers' grammar is sort of a balancing act between these two opposites in that there is a need for deep theoretical understanding in order to explain pedagogical grammar for students.

Pedagogical grammars are based on simplified, generalized rules of a language, called pedagogical rules, and they are designed especially for foreign language teaching. The rules that pedagogical grammars give are often only on the sentence level, which means that although the learner obtains a reason for using a certain form, s/he does not really gain proper understanding of when to use that form (Hughes and McCarthy 1998: 268-269). Leech (1994: 21) also notes that although the simplified rules are necessary for learners, a pedagogical grammar should not be taught as a fixed and whole truth on the subject. A discourse grammar is a grammar which takes into account that grammatical decisions are often made on the discourse level rather than sentence level in order to create for instance organization and coherence (Hughes and McCarthy 1998; Thornbury 1999).

The approaches to teaching grammar base themselves on certain definitions of what is grammar. Since grammar can be defined and modeled in different ways it is unavoidable that it can be taught in many ways as well. In this study it is assumed that since EFL textbooks are designed for language teaching the books analyzed in this study are pedagogical grammars.

## **2.2 Grammar teaching**

Historically the instructional approaches to teaching grammar can be divided into three: focus on forms (FoFs), focus on communication and focus on form (FonF). Focus on forms refers to the traditional approaches to grammar which emphasize that grammar is essential to learning a language and see grammar as forms, certain rules to be taught. Traditional approaches, such as Grammar Translation, Audio-Lingual Method and Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP), focus heavily on teaching the prescriptive grammar structures of the language on sentence level and therefore they have been criticized on ignoring the communicative aspect of language and the practical needs of the learners. Ellis (2006) also notes that the traditional approaches have quite generally been agreed to not being a very good or efficient way of teaching grammar for communication purposes. The second wave of approaches is the focus on communication which was influenced by Hymes' theory of communicative competence. According to Hymes (1972 as cited in Fotos and Nassaji 2011), a language learner needs

communicative competence, the ability to use the language on top of linguistic competence which is basically the knowledge of the grammar. The third take on grammar teaching is the Focus on Form which in a way combines the two earlier wide approaches. In FonF linguistic forms are given attention but within meaningful communication and as they come along. The earlier versions of FonF were about incidental learning and following the learner's internal syllabus but the broader take on FonF includes also preplanned learning which does not leave the learner so much to their own devices. In recent years the importance of communication as a part of grammar teaching has become widely accepted although there is a wide range of opinions on how it should be involved. (Fotos and Nassaji 2011).

The approaches described above seem to revolve around the issue of communication and what role it should have in grammar teaching. Some more current issues in teaching grammar are listed by Ellis (2006): which grammar items should be taught; when the chosen grammar should be taught and what should the teaching be like? Ellis further discusses whether grammar teaching should be massed or distributed, intensive or extensive, integrated or separated, explicit or implicit. *Massed* teaching refers to grammar teaching done in a short period of time and *distributed* is over a longer period. *Intensive* teaching focuses on a certain grammar item/s in a short time when *extensive* teaching deals with a range of items in that same time. In *integrated* teaching the grammar forms are not given so much attention and instead are taught alongside other language items and intended to be learned more implicitly than in *separated* teaching. Lastly *implicit* information is held unconsciously and stored in the brain so that it is fast and easy to access for communication purposes whereas *explicit* information is conscious and verbalisable, in generally concerns metalanguage. Traditionally grammar teaching has been distributed, explicit and separated as its own area of language teaching. (Ellis 2006).

### **2.3 The present perfect**

In order to narrow down this study I chose to focus on only one grammar item. The grammar item is the present perfect which in Finnish EFL books is generally referred to as 'perfekti' which is the Finnish grammar term. Although students encounter the English present perfect already in primary school, it is usually not formally taught until the first year of upper comprehensive school, which is why it was chosen for this study. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman et al. (2002) note that the whole tense-aspect system of English a great challenge for learners

because of how tense-aspect combinations such as the present perfect and the simple past do not have clear boundaries and they overlap each other to some extent.

In the English language when referring to time there are two grammatical categories: the *tense* and the *aspect*. Although the present perfect might be called the present perfect tense in some grammars in theory it is a combined form of the present tense and the perfect aspect. The perfect aspect is formed with the perfect auxiliary verb *have* and the perfect participle *-ed* (also called the past participle). The present tense then is marked by having the perfect auxiliary *have* in the present tense (have, has). (Greenbaum 1996: 81). The basic definition of the present perfect is that it refers to “a situation in past time that is viewed from the perspective of the present time” (Greenbaum 1996: 270) which means that although something happened in the past it still is relevant to the present moment. According to the Longman Grammar (Alexander 1988) one of the main mistakes the learners of English make is to use the present perfect in place of the simple past or the simple present.

### 3 DATA AND METHODS

As stated earlier in the introduction the research questions for this study are:

1. How is the English present perfect taught in Finnish EFL books?
  - a. Which methodological options are used?
  - b. What kind of the approach do the books have on teaching grammar?

In order to answer these questions the data for this study was gathered from four Finnish workbook-textbook pairs of English. The books were chosen on the basis that they are all designed for teaching English as a second language for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and they are also the most recent ones published and therefore most probably still used in schools. The book series used are *Key English 7* (Haavisto et al. 2002; 2003), *Spotlight 7: faces and places* (Haapala et al. 2012), *Smart moves 1* (Folland et al. 2005; 2009) and *This way up 1* (Folland et al. 2005). *Key English* and *This way up* are the older series which probably are no longer in use in many schools because of the newer follow up series *Spotlight* and *Smart moves* by the same authors. The books were looked at as textbook-workbook pairs since they are meant to be used together and complement each other. There are no other publishers in Finland who would provide EFL books designed for 7<sup>th</sup> graders, which means these books undoubtedly show the basis of grammar teaching in Finland for the last few years.

This study is qualitative in nature and therefore not aiming for generalizations although done by using content analysis. The term content analysis is often used quite loosely to refer to simple gathering and summarizing of data (Cohen 2007: 475) but in this study it means that the data was systematically coded, categorized and analyzed. The data gathered from the studied books includes instances where the focus is on the English present perfect including descriptions of the grammar item, examples as well as any exercises and tasks.

I started the analysis of the data by looking through all the books, both text- and workbooks, and marking all the items which dealt with and seemed to focus on the present perfect. In all of the books there were clearly named sections for grammar items including the present perfect but I also looked for any present perfect heavy texts or exercises focusing on it outside those grammar sections. After identifying the parts with the present perfect, I coded and categorized them based on Ellis' (2002:158) categories of methodological options as seen in Table 1. This system of methodological options is the result of Ellis' analysis of EFL grammar practice books and the methods employed in them to teach a grammar point. Ellis' system is divided into of three main categories: *explicit description*, *data* and *operations*. I will from here onwards refer to the main category *data* as *the data option* simply in order to avoid confusion with the general data of this study.

The coding was done by first dividing all instances of the present perfect according to the main categories and then further into the subcategories. The main category called explicit description concerns the explicit-implicit nature of grammar instruction and the subcategories here are *supplied* (the grammar point is explained) and *discovered* (the learner needs to discover the rule on their own). *The data options* category includes all examples of the grammar item. I coded examples in the category data options even if they were part of a task or exercise but were not required to be altered in anyway. This means that I did not count as data options for example translation or fill in the gap sentences, but sentences which are only meant to be read aloud I did. The data options category has three subcategories: *source*, *text size* and *medium*, which all are further divided into two. The source of the data option can be either *authentic* (originally from a real-life context) or *contrived* (designed for the teaching material). The text size means that the examples are either *discrete sentences* or a more *continuous* text. Lastly the medium for the examples can be either *written* or *oral*. In his study Ellis does not explain further what he means by oral data options but in this study it refers to examples given orally by the teacher or from a recording. This means that I only coded a data option as oral if there was an instruction to listen to examples.

The third main category for the methodological options is *the operations* which refers to the exercises and tasks and it has three subcategories: *the production, reception and judgment*. I coded each of the operations into only one of these subcategories based on what their major function seemed to be. The production operations cover producing language by writing or speaking, and they can be *controlled* (produce certain sentences or text) or *free* (produce your own sentences). The division between controlled and free is not strict but rather a continuum, which means that some of the exercises are more controlled than others. The *reception* operations involve comprehension tasks which are either *controlled* (students can decide how much time they need for processing the information) or *automatic* (students need to process the form in real time). Lastly, the judgment operations are divided into *judge only* (decide on the correct form) and *correct* (decide if the given form is correct and if not, correct it). The last category seen in Table 1 is the category *communication* and it is not part of Ellis's options but added for this study. I looked at all the operations and coded them as having communication if there were clear instructions for doing the operations or parts of them as pair- or groupwork.

## **4 THE PRESENT PERFECT IN TEACHING MATERIALS**

### **4.1 General findings on the methodological options**

Although the four book series analyzed in this study differed from each other, they also had some common features. First off, in all of the books there were clearly named, separate sections for teaching grammar items and, as seen in Table 1, in all four book series there was an explicit description of the grammar item. Although all books included an explicit description of the rules, in three out of four series there was also some attempt to encourage learners to discover the grammar rules by themselves (see example 1). The explicit description of the grammar rules was also mainly included in the textbooks instead of having them side by side with the exercises.

The data options in each book series differed from each other only slightly and all the examples were coded as contrived simply because there was no indication of their authenticity. When it comes to the text size, the discrete sentences were clearly preferred over more continuous texts in the grammar sections. In fact, there were only two instances of continuous texts: a short letter in the *This Way Up* -workbook and a whole text unit in the

*Spotlight* -textbook. Then again in both *Smart Moves* and *Key English* the grammar section was placed between the units which notably employed the present perfect. In this sense these books did have continuous data as well but I did not count them as such since they were not referred to as examples and could be argued that a learner would not have known to look them as such.

As for the operations, the production ones were clearly the most popular and most of them were controlled. The reception and judgment operations were clearly less popular as seen in Table 1. The largest differences between the book series could be found in the operations category. The more detailed results on the book series are presented next. Because of the limitations of this study I will only give the most notable results on each series.

TABLE 1. *Methodological options in EFL books*

Books			This way up	Key English	Smart Moves	Spotlight	Total
<b>Explicit description</b>	supplied		x	x	x	x	4
	discovered		x	x	x		3
<b>Data options</b>	source	authentic	-	-	-	-	0
		contrived	x	x	x	x	4
	text size	discrete	x	x	x	x	4
		continuous	x	-	-	x	2
	medium	written	x	x	x	x	4
		oral	-	-	-	x	1
<b>Operations (n=89)</b>	production	controlled	12	14	16	23	54
		free	2	2	0	2	5
	reception	controlled	0	2	0	1	3
		automatic	0	0	0	0	0
	judgment	only	6	3	2	4	9
		correct	0	0	0	0	3
			20	21	18	30	89
<b>Operations which include communication</b>			3	7	3	7	20

## 4.2 This way up

The *This way up* –series is clearly the oldest one of the four analyzed series, published in 1999. This series had the smallest amount of exercises on the present perfect and the only one which had separated the grammar exercises into one section instead of having grammar as smaller sections along the units. There were three features involving the methodological options which made it different from the other series. The first one is that only in *This way up* a continuous written example was provided as the basis for discovering some of the rules concerning the present perfect. In both *Smart Moves* and *Key English* the discovering of the rules was instructed to be done on the basis of discrete sentences and in *Spotlight* there were no instructions for discovery.

The second feature of *This way up* was that it was the only book which compared the present perfect to another tense-aspect combination. In the workbook the grammar section on the present perfect opened with an activity to discover the rules, it was followed by some controlled production operations. After this there was a discovery exercise for the rules of when to use the simple past and when to use the present perfect and finally four judgment operations on the subject. At the end of the book, on the Test Yourself -pages there were two more such judgment operations. Since *This way up* is the oldest of the four books, it was rather surprising to see it as the one that gave attention to the meanings as well as the structure of the grammar item right from the start. The other books did have one or two grammar revision exercises which included more than one tense at a time but they were clearly more focused on the structure of present perfect through translating sentences between Finnish and English.

The third notable feature is that, as seen in Table 1, *This Way Up* has the most judgment operations. Although none of the judgment operations were actually about corrections, there were clearly two types of exercises. In the first type of judgment operation, as seen in Example 2, one has to judge which tense to use and give reasons why. In the second type, as in Example 3, one has to decide the tense for the given verb and then produce the correct form instead of simply choosing.

EXAMPLE 2. First type judgment only operation (Folland et al. 1999a: 159)

1 Perfekti vai imperfekti? Valitse aikamuoto ja perustelee valintasi.

1. The weather *has been* / The weather was fantastic yesterday.
2. *Have you ever gone* / *Did you ever go* to the cinema alone?
3. Dad *hasn't come* / Dad *didn't come* home from work yet.
4. What *has happened* / What *happened* to the hero in yesterday's film?
5. Who *has painted* / Who *painted* this old picture?
6. Shakespeare *has written* / Shakespeare *wrote* "Romeo and Juliet".
7. I *haven't read* / I *didn't read* yesterday's paper yet, don't throw it away.
8. My brother, who is 12, *has never liked* / *never liked* cleaning his room.
9. When *have you written* / *did you write* your home composition?
10. Maggie *has been* / Maggie was unhappy since her husband died.
11. We *haven't seen* / We *didn't see* you for a long time! How are you?
12. Our neighbours *have built* / Our neighbours *built* their house two years ago.

EXAMPLE 3. Second type judgment operation (Folland et al. 1999a: 159)

2 Kirjoita suluissa oleva verbi joko perfektissä tai imperfektissä. Lue lause tarkkaan ja selvitä, miksi valitsit perfektin tai imperfektin.

*go	1. The Johnsons _____ on holiday to France last summer.
*wake	2. I _____ up too late this morning.
ski	3. My dad _____ 300 kilometres this year.
*see	4. _____ you _____ the latest James Bond film?
not / phone	5. You _____ your granny yet.
*meet	6. My sister _____ her boyfriend five years ago →

### 4.3 Key English

In the *Key English* workbook in seven out of twenty one operations pair work was instructed, which means there were more communicative exercises than in the other books. But then again, only three of these exercises were designed to be done as a pair: one was a board game for practicing the present perfect, the simple past and the past perfect, and two were translating sentences with the instruction *työskentele parin kanssa* 'work with a partner' as in Example 4.

The rest of the communicative operations were simply translating sentences and filling in the gaps, with the instruction for pair work as a side note *Vuorottele parisi kanssa kysyjänä ja vastaajana*. 'Take turns with your partner asking and answering the questions' as seen in the example 5. These exercises do not very require or motivate pair work and the communication part of the operation is quite mechanic.

EXAMPLE 4. A communicative exercise, translation (Haavisto et al. 2002: 53)

**8** Työskentele parin kanssa.  
Toinen teistä on A ja toinen B. Vaihtakaa lopuksi osia.

A	B
Kuinka kauan olet ollut tässä koulussa?	How long have you been in this school?
For half a year. How about you?	Puoli vuotta. Entä sinä?
Vähän yli vuoden.	For a little over a year.
Have you enjoyed your time here?	Oletko nauttinut ajastasi täällä?
Kyllä olen. Mutta koulupäivämme ovat liian pitkiä.	Yes, I have. But our school days are too long.
I think so too.	Niin minustakin.
Do you belong to any clubs?	Kuulutko mihinkään kerhoihin?
Kyllä. Minun koulussani on yli kaksikymmentä kerhoa.	Yes. We have / There are over twenty clubs in my school.
What languages have you studied?	Mitä kieliä olet opiskellut?
Olen opiskellut englantia ja ruotsia.	I have studied English and Swedish.

EXAMPLE 5. A communicative exercise (Haavisto et al. 2002: 65)

- 5** Kirjoita kysymykset englanniksi.
- 1 Onko seitsemäs luokka ollut mielenkiintoinen?
  - 2 Onko sinulla ollut paljon kotitehtäviä?
  - 3 Oletko ollut poissa (*menettänyt*) yhtään koulupäiviä?
  - 4 Oletko suoriutunut hyvin uusissa oppiaineissasi?
  - 5 Ovatko uudet opettajasi olleet mukavia?
  - 6 Onko kouluruoka ollut hyvää?
- Vuorottele parin kanssa kysyjänä ja vastaajana.

#### 4.4 Smart Moves

*Smart Moves* -series had the smallest number of exercises on the present perfect and they were quite scattered throughout the book. The specific grammar section on the present perfect contained eight operations but there was also one operation among the exercises for the following unit; three operations preceded the grammar unit on the past perfect; two operations were in the last unit and four operations on the Test Yourself -extra pages. On top of that, the variety of methodological options was also poor as seen in Table 1. Except for two judgment only –operations the operations were all controlled production. translating sentences, filling in the verb and writing specific sentences based on pictures.

In the *Smart Moves* workbook the present perfect had its own five page grammar section in the middle of the exercise section of chapter 9 and there is also one controlled production operation among the exercises on the chapter 10. Chapter 9 was the first chapter in the textbook that had a few instances of the present perfect and the grammar item is found also in the chapter 10. Similarly in *Key English* workbook the grammar section on the present perfect is placed between the sections of texts 3A and 3B, which both included the present perfect, although text 3A only had one operation on the grammar item whereas 3B had five.

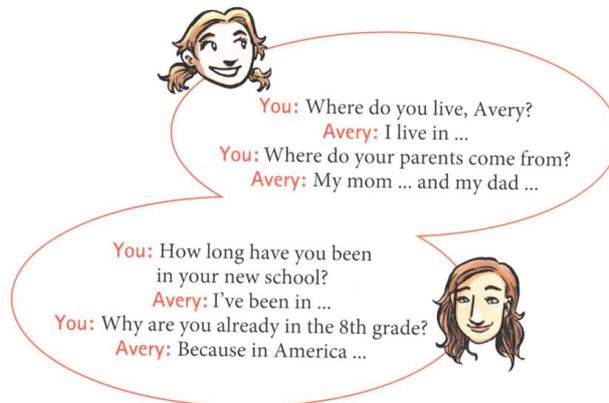
## 4.5 Spotlight

*Spotlight* was the only book pair which supplied the explicit grammar information without instructions for discovering the rules. Then again, this was also the only series where the explicit description was in the workbook instead of the textbook. While the other textbooks only had a separate grammar section with explicit descriptions, the *Spotlight*'s text book interestingly had a short text, separated from the main chapter, with notable use of the present perfect and eight operations covering the grammar item. The pages on which the operations were located on were labeled as *Grammar Talk* but the target grammar item was not named or explained explicitly.

Although *Spotlight* had almost twice as many operations as the other series as seen in Table 1, there was not a notably bigger variety of them. All of the operations in the textbook were either production or judgment only operations. There was however some difference on how controlled the production operations were. The most controlled type of production operations was simply reading them out loud sentences or filling in sentences with certain forms. The second type was exercises which gave a clear model and target for production, but some freedom on the order and amount (see examples 7 and 8). In the example 7 the exercise required students to go through the base text in pairs, to use it as an example for their conversation and to use the present perfect in the process. In the example 8 the students were asked to quite mechanically ask questions from each other. The exercises coded as free production were very short as seen in the example 9 but at least the students were given the opportunity to decide on the meaning of the sentences they produce unlike in the controlled production operations.

EXAMPLE 7. Less controlled production operation (Haapala et al. 2012a: 53)

- 1 Keskustele parin kanssa. Se, joka vastaa kysymyksiin, kuvittelee olevansa Avery.



EXAMPLE 8. Less controlled production operation (Haapala et al. 2012a: 57)

- 4 Kyselkää vuorotellen toisiltanne "Oletko koskaan ollut...?"



EXAMPLE 9. Free production operation. (Haapala et al. 2012b: 96)

**69+** Kirjoita kaksi kysymystä perfektissä.

1 Has \_\_\_\_\_ ?

2 Have \_\_\_\_\_ ?

## 5 DISCUSSION

Although Ellis (2006) notes that the traditional approach to grammar teaching is no longer seen as a particularly good way, it is clearly still strong in the EFL books analyzed in this study. Traditionally grammar teaching has been as distributed, explicit and separated as its own area of language teaching (Fotos and Nassaji 2011). In all of the books there were clear grammar sections and explicit descriptions and metalanguage were used, which clearly refers

to the explicit nature of the traditional approaches. Although there were some attempts to guide students to discover the rules, they were quite mechanical with fill in the blanks sections with instructions to see the explicit descriptions given on the workbook. In these books the grammar seems to be taught as *distributed*, over a longer period of time. The grammar teaching can be said to be *separated*, as opposed to *integrated*, since three of the books always had one grammar item per unit and the present perfect was mostly not taught in comparison to other grammar items.

Another feature in the data which confides with the traditional approaches is the lack attention given to communication. Traditional approaches focus heavily on teaching the prescriptive grammar structures on sentence level opposed to FonF approach in which grammar items are given attention within context of meaningful communication (Nassaji and Fotos 2011). Although arguably it can be a challenge to provide students with opportunities to meaningful communication in a classroom setting, in the books analyzed here the instructions for any kind of communicative grammar practice were few. Only 20 operations out of 89 had instructions for some kind of group work but since the exercises themselves were often quite straightforward production operations, the meaningfulness of the conversations is questionable. Then again it must be noted that the exercises in the books can be modified quite easily to include communication to varying degrees. It can be argued that because of this it is not necessary to have groupwork mentioned in the instruction. However, it is still very noteworthy that the operations have for most part been designed to be done as individual work and it certainly doesn't encourage teaching grammar through groupwork or set an example for it.

The most predominant methodological feature was controlled production operations with 54 occurrences which are in line with Ellis's (2002) findings. The few free operations were quite poor in both number and length and although judgment operations were the second most popular, there were still few with only nine occurrences in total and reception operations were quite nonexistent with only three. The controlled production operations were concerned with only the basic structure of the grammar item as they were typically mechanical filling in the gaps and translating sentences, and the meaning and use of the grammar were left in the explicit descriptions, even if they are also an essential part of what grammar is per Thornbury's (2006) definition. Then again, it could have been expected since all of the four EFL books are clearly pedagogical grammars with simplified rules focused on the sentence

level and as Hughes and McCarthy (1998) have stated, a proper understanding of the meanings conveyed by the grammar cannot truly be gained and is not even the aimed at.

Connected to the understanding of the grammar item is also the fact that all of the books had separated the grammar items from each other. In all the books the present perfect had practically no explanations or operations, with the exception of *This way up*, on how it relates to other grammar items. This goes against the information that relating the present perfect to other tenses is the most difficult feature for learners to comprehend and learn (Larsen-Freeman et al. 2002; Alexander 1988). Since the diversity of operations is so narrow and most are very controlled production, it seems very likely that teaching the students how and when to use the present perfect has not been the goal.

## 6 CONCLUSION

To answer the research questions of this study I conclude that all of the books were first of all very similar to each other. They mainly employed production operations which were mostly very controlled. The diversity of the different operations was also small. Based on the results, all four books have the traditional approach to grammar teaching.

One of the main limitations of this study is that it is very narrow. Only a small number of books were analyzed, designed for one age group only and the focus was on only one grammar item. In addition, as already mentioned, the books are basically done by only two teams of designers which on one hand could be argued to decrease the reliability of this study but then on the other hand the fact is that there are no other Finnish EFL textbooks made for 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the last ten years. However, the coding was done very systematically and on the basis of a previous study so the results are to that regard reliable.

Since there is little research done on the Finnish EFL books and the grammar in them, there clearly would be space for new studies on the subject. This study only shows that the books the four books analyzed here are traditional and similar to each other. It would be interesting to know whether the results of this study could be found in other EFL books, for other grammar items as well as for other levels of study. Would there be differences with the importance given to communication or would FonF approach come up on books of certain skill level? As teachers in Finland do according to studies rely on textbooks heavily, it would be very important to have information on what they actually consist of in order to keep up the

quality and to keep them updated. Furthermore, since the new Finnish national curriculum is now underway, the English teaching in Finland is bound to change in some ways and it would be important to see how the new books interpret the grammar teaching.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary sources

- Haapala, M., Kangaspunta, R., Lehtonen, E., Peuraniemi, J., Semi, L. and Westlake, P. (2012a). *Spotlight 7 textbook: faces and places*. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy.
- Haapala, M., Kangaspunta, R., Lehtonen, E., Peuraniemi, J., Semi, L. and Westlake, P. (2012b). *Spotlight 7 workbook: faces and places*. Helsinki: Sanoma Pro Oy.
- Haavisto, A., Kangaspunta, R., Lehtonen, E., Peuraniemi, J. and Westlake, P. (2002). *Key English 7 courses 1-2 textbook*. Porvoo: WS Bookwell Oy.
- Haavisto, A., Kangaspunta, R., Lehtonen, E., Peuraniemi, J. and Westlake, P. (2002). *Key English 7 courses 1-2 workbook*. Porvoo: WS Bookwell Oy.
- Folland, T., Haavisto, A., Heinonen, M., Nieminen, A. and Woods, M. (2005). *Smart Moves 1 texts*. Keuruu: Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Folland, T., Haavisto, A., Heinonen, M., Nieminen, A. and Woods, M. (2009). *Smart Moves 1 exercises*. Keuruu: Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Folland, T., Tervaoja, M., Allonen, M-L. and Moore, W. (1999a). *This Way Up. Exercises 1*. Keuruu: Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Folland, T., Tervaoja, M., Allonen, M-L. and Moore, W. (1999b). *This Way Up. Texts 1*. Keuruu: Otavan Kirjapaino Oy.

### Secondary sources

- Alexander, L. G. (1988). *Longman English Grammar*. New York: Longman Inc.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Collins Cobuild Advanced learner's English Dictionary. (2006). Glasgow: HarperCollins.
- Ellis, R. (2002). Methodological Options in Grammar Teaching Materials. In Hinkel, E. and Fotos S. (Eds.) *New perspectives on grammar teaching in second language classrooms*. New York: Routledge. 155-179.

- Ellis, R. (2006). Current issues in the teaching of grammar: an SLA perspective. *TESOL Quarterly* 40 (1): 83-107
- Fotos, S. and Nassaji, H. (2011). *Teaching grammar in second language classroom: integrating form-focused instructions in communicative context*. New York: Routledge.
- Greenbaum, S. (1996). *Oxford English grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, R. and McCarthy, M. (1998). From Sentence to discourse: discourse grammar and English language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly* 32(2): 263–287
- Larsen-Freeman, D., Kuehn, T. and Haccius, M. (2002). Helping students Make appropriate English verb tense-aspect choices. *TESOL Journal* 11(4): 3-9
- Leech, G. (1994). Students' grammar – Teachers' grammar – Learners' grammar. In Bygate, M., Tonkyn, A. and Williams, E. (Eds.)(1994). *Grammar and the language teacher*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall International. 17-30.
- Tergujeff, E. (2013). *English pronunciation teaching in Finland*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Thornbury, S. (2006). *How to teach grammar*. Harlow: Longman.