

Finnish upper secondary school EFL
teachers' satisfaction with current
textbooks

Master's thesis
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract Oppikirjojen merkitys suomalaisessa vieraiden kielten opetuksessa on kiistanalainen. Oppikirjojen sisältöä ja käyttöä onkin tutkittu lukuisien aihepiirien, kuten esimerkiksi erilaisten sisältöanalyysien kautta (ks. esim. Hietala 2013, Tergujeff 2013), mutta niiden, jotka todella käyttävät oppikirjaa työvälineenään, ääni ei aina ole tullut kuuluviin. Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin suomalaisten lukion englannin opettajien tyytyväisyyttä nykyisin markkinoilla oleviin lukion englannin kielen oppikirjoihin usean ajankohtaisen näkökulman kautta. Nämä näkökulmat olivat oppikirjan valinta, vastaavuus opetussuunnitelman kanssa, kielitaidon eri osa-alueiden harjoittaminen, autenttisen materiaalin hyödyntäminen, opiskelijoiden motivointi, eriyttäminen ja erilaisten oppimistyylien huomiointi. Tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehyksenä toimivat aiemmat tutkimukset mainituista teemoista ja niiden suhtautumisesta vieraiden kielten oppikirjoihin. Tutkimus oli luonteeltaan määrällinen ja se toteutettiin verkkokyselyllä, joka toimitettiin Suomen Englanninopettajat Ry:n sähköpostilistalle. Vastauksia saatiin kaikkiaan 131. Vastausten jakaumat ja keskiarvot tutkittiin, jotta saatiin yleiskuva opettajien tyytyväisyydestä markkinoilla oleviin oppikirjoihin. Lisäksi tutkittiin ristiintaulukoinnilla opetuskokemuksen vaikutusta vastauksiin. Kyselyn tulokset osoittivat, että suomalaiset lukion englannin kielen opettajat ovat yleisesti ottaen varsin tyytyväisiä markkinoilla oleviin oppikirjoihin. Kaikki vastaajat käyttivät oppikirjoja opetuksessaan usein, ja oppikirjojen käyttökelpoisuutta koskevien vastausten keskiarvot useimmilla kyselyn osa-alueilla olivat korkeat. Eniten puutteita oppikirjoissa koettiin olevan eriyttämisessä, eri oppimistyylien huomioinnissa sekä ääntämisen ja kulttuuritietouden opettamisessa. Tarkemmin kohdistettua jatkotutkimusta kaivataan esille nousseista teemoista esimerkiksi oppikirjojen sisältöanalyysien tai opettajien, oppilaiden tai oppikirjantekijöiden haastatteluiden kautta.	
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 COURSEBOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING	7
2.1 Coursebooks: a brief history	7
2.2 Coursebooks today	9
3 ASPECTS OF COURSEBOOKS CONSIDERED IN THE STUDY	14
3.1 Choosing a coursebook	14
3.2 Curricula and coursebooks	16
3.3 Language skills	19
3.3.1 Speaking	20
3.3.2 Writing	21
3.3.3 Reading	23
3.3.4 Listening	24
3.3.5 Grammar(ing)	25
3.3.6 Vocabulary	26
3.3.7 Pronunciation	28
3.3.8 Cultural knowledge	29
3.4 Authenticity	30
3.5 (De)motivating learners	32
3.6 Differentiation	34
3.7 Learning styles	36
3.8 Summary of the considered aspects	38
4 METHODS	39
4.1 Research questions and the questionnaire	41
4.2 Data collection	43
4.3 Methods of analysis	44
5 TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT TEXTBOOKS	45
5.1 Background information	45
5.2 Choosing a coursebook	47
5.3 Curricula and coursebooks	52
5.4 Language skills	54
5.5 Authenticity	56
5.6 (De)motivating learners	58
5.7 Differentiation	60
5.8 Learning styles	61
5.9 Overall evaluation	63
5.10 The effects of teaching experience to satisfaction with textbooks	64
5.11 Summary of the results	66
6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	68
6.1 Limitations of the study	68

6.2 Implications and suggestions for further study	70
6.3 Conclusion	72
BIBLIOGRAPHY	74
APPENDIX 1. THE QUESTIONNAIRE	80
APPENDIX 2. THE ORIGINAL FINNISH RESPONSES TO THE OPEN QUESTION	85

1 INTRODUCTION

Coursebooks have traditionally been considered to have a central role in Finnish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching. As Luukka, Pöyhönen, Huhta, Taalas, Tarnanen and Keränen (2008:64) point out, coursebooks often guide EFL teaching to such a great extent that they can be regarded as underlying, hidden curricula. Kaikkonen (1998:16-17) also explains how published teaching materials have traditionally been “the true curriculum” of foreign language teaching and practically the only factor that directs learning. In practice, the significance of coursebooks can be seen e.g. in a study conducted by Luukka et al. (2008:95), in which they discovered that of the 324 foreign language teachers who answered their survey, 98 percent *often* use textbooks and 95 percent *often* use an exercise book related to the textbook in their teaching. Similar results are introduced by Tergujeff (2013:52), who interviewed 103 Finnish EFL teachers out of whom 97.8 % said they used textbooks in their teaching. Luukka et al. (2008) explain that the influence of coursebooks is based on the fact that publishers are fairly free to decide what aspects they want to emphasize or leave out, which can affect the views of teachers on what is important in language teaching.

Bearing in mind the apparent significance of coursebooks in language teaching, it is only natural that they make an interesting subject of study. In terms of research on textbooks, a distinction can be made between evaluating and analyzing teaching materials (Tomlinson 2003:16). As Tomlinson explains, evaluation aims at making predictions or conclusions about the effects of the teaching material on learners, whereas an analysis focuses on questions such as what items the material contains or consists of, in order to provide objective data on them. Analysis questions are usually answered with “Yes”, “No” or a number or percentage, whereas with evaluation questions, responses such as “unlikely” or “highly likely” are common. Whereas coursebooks have often been analyzed and evaluated by scholars, little research has been done on what the people responsible for making use of them, that is, EFL teachers, actually think of their usefulness. This study

was essentially an evaluation of the teaching materials used by Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers; it aimed at discovering information about the teachers' perceptions of the suitability, usefulness and value of their coursebooks. The actual evaluation was therefore done by the teachers themselves, who have hands-on experience of how well the materials work in teaching.

Tomlinson (2001, as cited by Elomaa 2009:32) argues that most methods of evaluating teaching materials have the problem of subjectivity – what is measured and valued depends highly on researchers' personal opinions. Another problem mentioned by Tomlinson (2001, as cited by Elomaa 2009:32) is the fact that a number of the evaluation methods for teaching materials are used before the material is actually used, which makes the evaluation speculative in nature. These weaknesses are, at least to an extent, avoided in this study in which teachers who have used the books are the ones doing the evaluation.

As mentioned, this study aimed at discovering how satisfied Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers are with the published materials available to them. What was sought was statistical, generalizable information on the subject, which meant that the study had to be quantitative in nature. A survey was chosen as the most practical and relevant research method, as it allowed the gathering of large masses of data in a short time. The data received was also easier to analyze statistically as the participants answered on a scale rather than giving open answers.

The research question that this study tried to answer can be generally expressed as follows: how satisfied are Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers with the coursebooks that are currently available on the market? This very general question was divided into a number of narrower, more specific and detailed questions on different aspects of the coursebooks that were presented in a survey. I did not aim at evaluating the content of coursebooks myself – the statistical information received from the answers of the teachers who answered the questionnaire was expected to provide sufficient

information about how highly teachers value their teaching materials. The purpose of the study was neither to discover information about how the teachers use their coursebooks (for information on that see e.g. Luukka, Pöyhönen, Huhta, Taalas, Tarnanen and Keränen, 2008), but rather, only on what they actually think of the materials.

In this study, the words teaching material(s), textbook and coursebook are used as synonyms which refer to all the material that is included in the published commercial material used by teachers and learners – a textbook and a corresponding CD or other recordings, possibly a separate book for exercises and activities or for grammar items, any electronic materials included, teacher's guides, pre-made learner evaluation materials (i.e. exams) etc. It is therefore worth noticing that, as far as this study is concerned, the term teaching material(s) *excludes* all the unpublished materials created by teachers themselves or any online materials (apart from those of the publisher) that a teacher might make use of.

The actual subjects of this study are the most commonly used Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbook series. These include e.g. *Open Road*, *Culture Café*, *In touch*, *ProFiles*, *On track* and *English United*. The opinions of teachers (N=131) who use one of these series were examined through an online survey, which sought to find out how useful the teachers find these textbooks to be in their teaching. It is important to note here, however, that the aim of this study was *not to compare textbooks with one another* or rank them to discover if one series is superior to others, but rather, to receive a general understanding about how satisfied Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers are with the textbooks available at present – the participants were therefore not asked to identify, which textbook series they were using at the moment of answering the survey.

In the next chapter, the role of coursebooks in language teaching will be discussed, after which I will examine several different aspects of language teaching and coursebooks which formed the main areas of interest in the survey. In the fourth chapter, the methods

of this study will be introduced in more detail, which will be followed by presenting and discussing the results received from the survey.

2 COURSEBOOKS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

2.1 Coursebooks: a brief history

McDonough and Shaw (2003:15) describe recent and current EFL teaching as being influenced the most by a *communicative approach* (sometimes also used as an umbrella term to more than one methodology; *communicative approaches*) to foreign language teaching. As McDonough and Shaw (2003:16) explain, the communicative approach is a response to the critique expressed at the prevailing foreign language teaching methodology in the 1950s and 1960s, which focused heavily, if not exclusively, on language structures and forms, that is, grammatical accuracy, at the expense of communicative competence. In and after the 1970s, a methodology which gave more attention to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in a foreign language started to spread, and this methodology is referred to as the communicative approach (McDonough and Shaw 2003:17). According to McDonough and Shaw (2003:20), this paradigm shift resulted in the appearance of new teaching materials, which were marketed with words such as “meaningful”, “communicative”, “real-life” etc.

Shastri (2010:40) composed a list of the most typical features of the communicative approach. These include, for example, focusing on fluency rather than accuracy, focusing both on the form and on the function of language, learning-centeredness and taking learner needs into account, and, perhaps interestingly, the teacher being prepared to produce their own teaching materials to meet the needs of different learners. Even though this does not mean that the communicative approach ruled out textbooks from teaching, the idea that teachers should be able to supplement published teaching materials with materials of their own is very much present in today’s language teaching. For a full list and discussion of the communicative approach, see Shastri (2010:39-40).

The new approach had many implications on foreign language teaching. Some of these implications, as discussed by McDonough and Shaw (2003:21-28), include the emphasis in new textbooks on functions on language, i.e. the practical uses of language; a wider understanding of the relationship between language form and function appeared in textbooks (e.g. the fact that “Why don’t you ...?” may not actually be a genuine question, but rather, a suggestion); taking topics, contexts and roles into account in communicative situations; focusing on language appropriacy in addition to language accuracy and that communicativeness has to do with all four of the traditional language skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading. (For a more detailed discussion on these and other implications, see McDonough and Shaw 2003:21-28.)

As McDonough and Shaw (2003:40-42) explain, current language teaching pedagogy and materials design has developed further from the communicative approach. The significance of the communicative approach here, as McDonough and Shaw (2003:41-42) point out, is that current EFL textbooks do not show a radically different, new approach to EFL teaching compared to the communicative approach, but rather, the principles of the communicative approach are still present and visible in current teaching materials, even if these principles have been developed further and emphasized differently.

McDonough and Shaw (2003:43-57) compiled a list of features that they find, in general, characteristic of today’s teaching materials – the further developments from the communicative approach that have commonly taken place in language teaching materials. Typical buzzwords of modern textbooks, according to McDonough and Shaw (2003:43), include “real English, authenticity, the sentence *and above* [sic], communication”. The characteristics listed by them include, for example, a multi-syllabus (i.e. that there is no one principle in organizing materials, such as a list of grammar items which are expected to be taught and learned in a specific order, but rather, that the sequencing of the materials is multi-layered and based on, for example, structures, topics, skills, situations etc.); a task-based approach (which refers to making use of activities, where the target language is

used as a medium of communication, negotiation or information-exchange in order to reach a non-linguistic goal, conclusion or outcome) and taking into account individual differences in learners and learning. For a full list and discussion, see McDonough and Shaw (2003:43-57), and for a more comprehensive look at the recent history of foreign language teaching, see Shastri (2010:33-41).

2.2 Coursebooks today

As already mentioned, there is concrete evidence of the importance of coursebooks in Finnish EFL teaching. Luukka et al. (2008) conducted a study on the textual practices in Finnish and foreign language classrooms in Finland. Their survey was answered by 324 foreign language teachers. Luukka et al. (2008:95) discovered that 98 percent of the foreign language teachers who answered their survey *often* use textbooks in their teaching. In addition, 95 percent of them *often* use an exercise book related to the textbook and 90 percent *often* make use of the audio and visual material included. The responses of the learners who answered the survey (2008:96) confirmed the central role of textbooks and exercise books. Luukka et al. (2008:97) also discovered that almost 90 percent of teachers agreed or partially agreed with the claim that textbooks are the single most important teaching material in foreign language teaching. Despite the differences in the teachers' opinions on whether coursebooks provide *all* the material that is necessary in teaching, the report by Luukka et al. gives a fairly good impression of the unquestionable status of coursebooks in Finnish EFL teaching.

There are several possible explanations as to why coursebooks are so commonly used. Elomaa (2009:31) suggests that teachers often base their teaching on coursebooks, because they do not have the resources (e.g. time or energy) to create their own materials that would suit their learners' needs. She also questions the adequacy of many teachers' training with regard to using other, more modern kinds of teaching materials, which could partially explain the heavy reliance on coursebooks. Elomaa (2009:32) predicts that coursebooks will remain popular in the future as well, as they reduce teachers' workload

by providing a useful foundation for teaching that can then be supplemented with additional materials.

From a learner's point of view, Elomaa (2009:31) explains that according to the feedback she has received during her teaching career, learners especially value textbooks as teaching materials. She suggests that the reason for this might be the stability of the textbook – it allows learners to return to and revise previously learned items. A certain sense of authority can also be associated with textbooks – a published material created by several professional authors for teaching purposes is likely to be considered more credible in the eyes of learners than, for example, private materials of single teachers or materials discovered online. Textbooks are concrete and accessible, and the belief that textbooks contain all the language content a learner needs to master is likely to exist among some learners as well as teachers (see e.g. Luukka et al. 2008:97-98).

The central role of textbooks in Finnish EFL teaching is unquestionable. The question remains, however, whether and to what extent this actually guarantees successful EFL teaching and learning. Mares (2003:132), for example, explains that publishers, in general, are reluctant to present non-native-speaker teachers with materials that differ significantly from the existing mainstream materials. According to him, the market is conservative and competitive, which is why new teaching materials face a risk of being rejected if they are too different from the existing ones. Mares (2003:132) goes on to argue that publishers tend to seek something that falls into the category of traditional, acceptable teaching materials and whose market value is increased by twists that often involve “current buzzwords or phrases such as ‘communicative’, ‘multiple intelligences’, ‘authentic dialogues’ ... which are used in the promotional materials but are not necessarily addressed meaningfully in the materials...”. Mares’ (2003) opinion is that current pedagogical knowledge is not the only factor, or the most significant one, involved in the process of getting new commercial teaching materials published.

Similarly, Tomlinson (2003:7) argues that there is little development going on in the teaching material industry, which publishers explain as being an answer to the needs and preferences of learners and teachers. Tomlinson himself suggests that the actual reasons for the lack of progress in the field are economical – the cost and the financial risk of producing a coursebook with a radically new approach are so great that publishers will rather copy features of previous best-selling coursebooks. He also voices his fear that this might have a washback effect on teaching and non-commercial materials, as teachers often mistakenly assume that coursebooks represent the current needs of learners and teachers [or the most recent pedagogical trends] which leads them to try to imitate their coursebooks as they produce materials of their own. Given the indisputable significance of textbooks in EFL teaching, it would obviously be necessary that they represent the current knowledge of language learning and teaching. The aim of this study is not to evaluate whether they do, but I will seek an answer to whether teachers think so.

In spite of these concerns over the lack of development and insufficient usage of the most recent pedagogical knowledge in textbook development, some positive aspects have also been raised. Tomlinson (2003:7-9), for example, composes a list of recent trends in materials development. Among other things, he mentions the positive trends of requiring increased learner investment and discovery, making more use of corpus data (which represents actual language use), making material packages more interactive, trying to involve learners personally and affectively by personalizing topics and texts etc. At the same time, he nonetheless criticizes textbooks for, for example, focusing heavily on listening and speaking at the expense of reading and writing, underestimating both the linguistic as well as the cognitive skills of learners, returning to “the central place of grammar in the language curriculum” etc. (Tomlinson 2003:7-9). It has to be noted here that Tomlinson’s (2003:7-9) comments on “recent” teaching materials can already be slightly outdated. If one believes Mares’ (2003:132) opinions on the slow or non-existent development of modern teaching materials, however, it can safely be assumed that Tomlinson’s (2003:7-9) comments still apply to textbooks today.

Whilst textbooks have been criticized for not developing and changing in the course of time, developing technology has brought new possibilities and demands that have to be taken into account when publishing teaching materials. All recent commercial Finnish EFL teaching materials provide the teacher and the learners with access to some sort of an electronic material package related to the coursebook. Well-designed electronic materials can be useful in foreign language learning and teaching. For example, Derewianka (2003:201) mentions that computer programs can be very helpful in developing lower level reading skills and automaticity, which allows both learners and teachers to focus more on higher level skills. She also points out that computer programs can be used in practicing vocabulary. At more advanced levels, as Derewianka (2003:206) argues, some electronic materials can help develop reading strategies, such as predicting, skimming, guessing unknown words, paraphrasing, seeking cohesive links in the text etc. As regards foreign language production, Derewianka (2003:208-209) is of the opinion that a well-designed electronic material can help develop writing as a process by improving skills from brainstorming to editing.

Derewianka (2003:211-212) explains that there are plenty of electronic materials on the market which "... allow students to work through units of work at their own pace, with the program offering feedback, tracking their process, ...". She does, however, argue that the majority of these packages do not promote human judgment or interaction and can rarely be modified or "integrated into the broader curriculum". Elomaa (2009:31) also mentions that her own experience is that electronic teaching materials are not always suitable for classroom activities. Derewianka (2003:12) suggests that a more successful model for electronic materials would be something which includes little pre-packed content and relies more on computer-mediated communication as a basis of, for example, completing learner projects.

Electronic materials as parts of coursebooks are still a fairly new phenomenon. I therefore consider them highly likely to develop further rather rapidly in the future. Nonetheless, such materials have already become so common that there is cause to include them in this

study. For practical reasons, the decision was made not to ask teacher's opinions on electronic materials separately, but rather, to include electronic materials under the concept of coursebook in the study. As already mentioned, the terms coursebook and textbook are used as synonyms in this study, and they include all the material that is included in the published commercial material used by teachers and learners: books, recordings, electronic materials, teacher's guides, evaluation materials (i.e. exams) etc.

Finnish teachers' views on coursebooks have rarely been studied per se, but some opinions have come up as parts of more general studies. Mäenpää (2005), for example, interviewed six Finnish EFL teachers and (2005:48-49, 63) discovered that, in general, they were satisfied with their textbooks. Especially the appeal of the books to learners was appreciated. On the other hand, some of the teachers thought that the coursebooks were too challenging for weaker learners and, perhaps surprisingly, Mäenpää (2005:64) also reports that one of the teachers criticized her teaching materials for focusing too heavily on spoken language skills at the expense of other language practice - a potentially unexpected view since oral skills are increasingly valued in today's Finnish EFL teaching, which can be seen, for example, in the addition of a separate oral skills course in upper secondary school EFL curriculum in 2009 (Nuorille tarkoitettun lukiokoulutuksen opetussuunnitelman perusteiden 2003 muuttaminen, 2009). A somewhat similar study to that of Mäenpää was conducted by Leppänen (2011), who interviewed nine EFL teachers, the difference being that in her study, there were teachers from primary school, secondary school as well as upper secondary school. Leppänen (2011:59-61) reports that the teachers generally thought that the amount of EFL teaching material available was more than sufficient. However, she goes on to show that teaching materials received a fair amount of critique from the teachers; the coursebooks were criticized for being uninteresting or boring, for not taking different learner proficiencies and styles into account and, in contrast to Mäenpää's findings, for not being challenging enough.

I have now provided some background on the development of modern textbooks and introduced some aspects of them that are currently under discussion. In the next chapter, the viewpoint on textbooks used in this study will be introduced in more detail.

3 ASPECTS OF COURSEBOOKS CONSIDERED IN THE STUDY

In this section, the topic areas of the questionnaire through which the data of this study was gathered are introduced. These topic areas include choosing a coursebook, curricula and coursebooks, language skills, authenticity, (de)motivating learners, differentiation and learning styles.

3.1 Choosing a coursebook

The process of choosing a coursebook is certainly not a simple one, and the choice obviously has a significant impact on teaching and learning through, for example, what kinds of texts and exercises are processed in class. My understanding is that teachers often get to choose the coursebooks they want to use on their own – on the other hand, especially in today's challenging economic situation, getting to choose between coursebooks may be a rare luxury for teachers. In lack of previous research information, the decision was made to include a question on whether the participants have chosen the textbook they use in their teaching. As regards the actual decision-making, several frameworks have been introduced, supposedly to make the process easier and more reliable; two such frameworks are presented here as examples.

McDonough and Shaw (2003:62-71) divide the evaluation process of a teaching material into three stages: external, internal and overall evaluation. The external evaluation, in practice, refers to examining the foreword, introduction or any other part in which the author(s) or the publisher describe their material explicitly, as well as the table of contents, in order to find out what the material promises to be and what it actually consists of. Internal evaluation, on the other hand, means an in-depth examination of actual units in

the material - McDonough and Shaw (2003:67) recommend analyzing at least two units in order to discover to what extent the material fulfills the promises revealed during the external part of the evaluation process. Aspects to be considered during the internal evaluation, according to McDonough and Shaw (2003:67) would include e.g. whether and to what extent different language skills are covered, how authentic or artificial the recordings are, how well different learning styles are catered for, etc. The two processes, i.e. external and internal evaluation, are followed by the overall evaluation of the material, where, as explained by McDonough and Shaw (2003:70), one would consider four general factors: usability (how well the material suits the syllabus), generalizability (are there “core features that make the material more generally useful”), adaptability (can parts be easily added to, removed from or modified in the material) and flexibility (how strict the sequencing and grading of the material are).

Another example of a model for reliable textbook evaluation – and therefore for choosing a textbook – is provided by McGrath (2002:29-56). He divides the evaluation process into two stages: a first-glance evaluation to rule out some alternatives and choose a limited amount of textbooks for further examination, and a close evaluation to make the final decision. According to McGrath (2002:31-32), a division between criteria can be made into general and specific, general referring to features that apply to any quality teaching material regardless of the context of use, such as a readable print, and specific meaning features that can only be assessed in context, i.e. bearing in mind the assumed future users and contexts of use of the textbook – e.g. relevance and appeal of topics or themes in the textbook. McGrath (2002:33) recommends using a personalized checklist to make the first-glance evaluation more effective and reliable. A checklist would include both general and specific criteria which can be applied to the subject textbooks; questions such as “Does the textbook include online materials?”, “Does the textbook suit the age and level of learners?” or “Is the appearance of the book likely to appeal to learners?” could be asked in the checklist and simply answered *yes* or *no*. In McGrath’s (2002:33) suggestion for a checklist, four themes are considered: *practical considerations* (such as availability and affordability), *support for teaching and learning* (which includes e.g. additional components such as

teacher's book, tests, recordings, online materials etc.), *context-relevance* (i.e. suitability for the course, the learners and the teacher) and *likely appeal to learners*.

Following the first-glance evaluation described above, a limited amount of textbooks can be chosen for close evaluation (McGrath 2002:40). Whilst McGrath (2002:54) admits that checklists can sometimes result in somewhat superficial evaluation of textbooks, he (2002:54-55) still recommends using checklists in this more detailed part of the evaluation process as well, due to their practicality, efficiency and reliability. The contents of checklists at this stage may vary significantly, but McGrath (2002:43) lists four general categories that are most often taken into consideration. These include *design* (e.g. layout and overall clarity), *language content* (to what extent different language items and skills are covered), *subject matter* (i.e. topics and their relevance) and *practical considerations* (e.g. affordability but also durability). Ideally, as McGrath (2002:40, 51-54) explains, the checklists would be piloted and revised, the evaluation processes would be completed by a group of professionals and the chosen materials would be tested in practice. Still, the fact remains, as McGrath (2002:53) admits, that no matter how thorough and well-prepared methods or checklists are used, choosing a textbook is to an extent always a subjective process, not an objective one.

In terms of this study, it is fairly irrelevant whether teachers make use of frameworks such as the two above or not. As concluded above, choosing a textbook is a subjective decision, which is why the relevant question – and therefore the one asked in the questionnaire – is what aspects in textbooks teachers appreciate when they are choosing which series to use.

3.2 Curricula and coursebooks

As mentioned earlier, textbooks are sometimes referred to as hidden curricula (Luukka et al. 2008:64) because of the fact that a great deal of language teaching is reportedly heavily dependent on textbooks. There are, however, official and public curricula, the requirements of which teachers as well as teaching materials seek to meet in order to help

learners achieve the aims set in these curricula. In this section, I will briefly discuss the relationship between the Finnish National Core Curriculum and EFL coursebooks.

The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (2003:102) describes foreign language teaching in general as follows:

Instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills: it will provide them with skills and knowledge related to language and its use and will offer them the opportunity to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language is spoken. In this respect, special attention will be given to European identity and European multilingualism and multiculturalism. Language instruction will provide students with capabilities for independent study of languages by helping them to understand that achievement of communication skills requires perseverance and diversified practice in communication. As a subject, each foreign language is a practical, theoretical and cultural subject.

For reasons that can be seen as practical, pedagogical or motivational (for learners as well as teachers), the learning objectives set by the National Core Curriculum are described through the skill levels of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is a widely used basis for language instruction and assessment in a number of European countries. CEFR defines language proficiency as six different levels, which are further divided into sublevels: A1 (the lowest level of proficiency), A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 (the highest level). In the Finnish National Core Curriculum, each of these levels is further divided into two sublevels, so the scale from the lowest proficiency to the highest looks as follows: A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1, B1.2, B2.1, B2.2, C1.1, C1.2, C2.1 and C2.2 (for a full discussion of the reference levels, see CEFR 2001:21-42). The National Core Curriculum sets level B2.1 as the target language proficiency in speaking, writing, listening and reading in level A English, that is, English as a foreign language that has been studied since grades 1-6 of basic education – the most common case in Finland. In practice, this means “the first stage of independent language proficiency” or “managing regular interaction with native speakers” – for more detailed information about the skill levels, see The National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (2003:234-251). Apart from

this targeted level of language proficiency, the National Core Curriculum (2003:102) sets the following as goals for all foreign language instruction:

In addition, the objectives are for students to

- know how to communicate in a manner characteristic of the target language and its culture;
- be able to assess their language skills in relation to the objectives;
- be familiar with their own strengths and development needs as communicators and language learners;
- know how to develop their language skills through strategies that are appropriate to their development needs, study assignments and communication tasks.

As regards assessment, the National Core Curriculum (2003:102) briefly states that all the different language skills should be taken into account. This statement alone validates one of the research questions of this study, namely, to what extent do current EFL textbooks enable the teaching and learning of different language skills.

A common view (e.g. Hyland 2003:96) is that coursebooks are useful tools for teachers because they make it easier to follow curricula as well as reach the goals and cover the language items specified in them. This naturally involves a risk of neglecting some educational aims, language items or language skills if a teacher blindly assumes that a textbook covers everything that is necessary to meet the requirements of the National Core Curriculum. It is therefore important to discover to what extent teachers assume that textbooks are in line with and cover the requirements set by the National Core Curriculum.

Teachers' opinions on how well coursebooks actually agree with curricula have already been reported by Luukka et al. (2008:98), who discovered that 54 percent of the 324 foreign language teachers who participated in the study thought that textbooks correspond *well* with the current National Core Curriculum. This study differed from theirs, however; in that firstly, the participants of my study were upper secondary school teachers whilst teachers working on other levels of education were excluded, and secondly, the survey was distributed to English teachers only, rather than teachers of any subject, which justified asking the same question in this survey.

3.3 Language skills

An important factor in language teaching is developing different language skills. Traditionally, four different skills are named: productive skills of speaking and writing, and receptive skills of listening and reading. Recently, some modern approaches view grammar as *grammaring*, “the fifth skill” – as Larsen-Freeman (2003:143) explains: “... the ability to use grammar structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately”. Whether one wants to adopt this definition or not, grammar is obviously closely related to foreign language knowledge and will be considered as one of the language skills in this study. I will also include the categories of vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural knowledge under this section of language skills – like grammar, they are obviously important aspects of foreign language teaching and do not fit satisfactorily under the traditional four language skills. Vocabulary is often tested in Finnish EFL teaching as a separate area of knowledge, whilst pronunciation is featured in many recent textbook series as a theme of its own. As regards cultural knowledge, any foreign language coursebook mediates – intentionally or not – a representation of different cultures, that is, cultures where the target language is a native language. This can either be explicit (a specific culture is presented and examined as a theme through texts, exercises etc.) or, as Elomaa (2009:109) explains, be present in the particular way of constructing reality that exists in every language.

It is obviously important that EFL coursebooks provide sufficient information and exercise to develop all these different skills. Similarly, one cannot assume that this requirement is met in all coursebooks – Tomlinson (2003:8), for example, criticizes coursebooks for commonly giving greater attention to speaking and listening skills than reading and writing. Mäenpää (2005:63-64) hints that this critique may apply to recent Finnish EFL coursebooks as well. This may appear surprising, as a number of other studies point out a lack of communicative focus in teaching materials (see e.g. Hietala 2013, Tergujeff 2013). Moreover, Huhta, Kauppinen, Luukka, Pöyhönen, Saario, Taalas and Tarnanen (2008) studied a Finnish secondary school EFL coursebook and discovered that approximately

two thirds of the exercises practiced reading and writing, whilst far less attention was given to speaking and listening – a trend more likely to be found in Finnish upper secondary school EFL coursebooks than that introduced by Tomlinson. In light of these contradictory claims and the undeniable importance of developing all of the mentioned skills, it is worth examining what Finnish EFL teachers actually think of the materials in their use – do they cover the different skills adequately or are any of the skills favoured at others' expense? A section of the survey conducted seeks to answer this question. Next, however, I will examine some aspects of the previously listed language skills – speaking, writing, reading, listening, grammar(ing), vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural knowledge, in more detail to examine how they relate to teaching materials.

3.3.1 Speaking

A major question regarding teaching oral skills in EFL is whether to focus on fluency or accuracy (see Folse 2006:30-31) – in other words, whether it is more important that learners are able to produce speech in a foreign language without too much anxiety, hesitation and formulating time, or that the speech they produce is grammatically correct or accurate. Recently, the focus has been on communicativeness (Bygate 2001:18) – the dominant view seems to be that grammatical accuracy is secondary to being able to convey meanings and communicate fluently. Bygate (2001:18), however, warns that simply getting learners to talk is not enough. His summary of requirements for successful teaching of EFL oral skills include practicing different kinds of interaction, improvisation, oral editing skills and communication strategies, separating oral tasks from written ones in terms of conditions, integrating accuracy, complexity and fluency as well as varying the focus between the three.

Folse (2006:53) describes effective speaking activities as follows: “According to second language research findings, activities that are more likely to promote discussion by all students – whether in pairs or in small groups – and at the same time stretch learners' interlanguage are those that require a two-way exchange of information, feature a planning stage, and require a finite answer ...”. Activities like this are still somewhat rare

in Finnish EFL textbooks (see, for example, Hietala 2013), which raises questions over their effectiveness in teaching oral skills.

Hietala (2013) studied how oral skills are practiced in two recent Finnish upper secondary school coursebook series. She (2013:108-109) reports that oral skills are taught unsystematically and that the exercises are mechanical and lack genuine interaction, whilst further aspects such as small talk, conversational strategies, cultural aspects and non-verbal interaction are neglected. Hietala (2013:110) goes on to conclude that even the most recent teaching materials are outdated as regards teaching oral skills, and that “most aspects of authentic oral communication are very much neglected”. As Hietala’s analysis/evaluation was a content analysis conducted by a single person, it is obviously important to find out whether teachers think that speaking skills are presented and practiced adequately in current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks.

3.3.2 Writing

As Hyland (2003:85) explains, teaching materials “are central to writing instruction and are widely used to stimulate, model, and support writing”. The importance of teaching materials in teaching writing relates to the fact that they are often the dominant source of written input for foreign language learners. Hyland (2003:86-92) identifies four different roles played by materials in developing writing skills: *language scaffolding*, *models*, *reference* and *stimulus*. *Language scaffolding* refers to the fact that teaching materials provide examples and extracts of the target language that can be studied, analyzed and discussed. *Models* are representative sample texts which help learners notice differences between genres of writing. By *reference materials* Hyland means materials such as grammars, dictionaries, style guides etc. (most of which are, to an extent, provided to learners by EFL coursebooks, which is why I consider coursebooks *reference materials* as well). Such materials are resources that learners can use in improving their own texts and developing their writing skills. The difference to *scaffolding* and *models* would be that instead of input, *reference materials* are concerned with explicit knowledge. Lastly, teaching materials as

stimulus materials means making use of the materials before or after writing to stimulate and develop ideas for and understandings of the writing process.

Nation (2009:93-95) identifies a number of principles for successful EFL writing instruction under four categories: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. In practice, these principles mean that learners should be able to make use of their own knowledge and experiences in writing; that writing should be practiced extensively and for different, communicative purposes; that writing should also increase language knowledge; that writing should be examined as a process and strategies for different parts of this process should be developed; that spelling should receive attention separated from other feedback on writing and that writing speed should be developed. Nation (2003:95-111) goes on to exemplify how these principles can be realized through different types of tasks. More important for this study, however, is what Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers think about the usefulness of their coursebooks in teaching writing skills.

Hyland (2003:96) makes a list of advantages and disadvantages of coursebooks to writing teachers. Some of the advantages include giving a framework or a structure for a course, following syllabi, which helps teachers keep track on what needs to be covered, providing ready-made resources and language information, being economical and convenient, increasing credibility in learners' eyes etc. On the other hand, Hyland (2003) criticizes coursebooks for being inadequate in meeting individual needs and class heterogeneity, having irrelevant content with regard to learner needs, reducing teachers' creativity, being inauthentic, sometimes culturally inappropriate and expensive for learners. He also lists "a number of common deficiencies" in current textbooks, which, include e.g. cultural biases in texts, presenting grammar separately from different genres of writing, text themes which rely too heavily on personal experiences and "invented and misleading text models" (Hyland 2003:95).

Based on the various identified roles of textbooks in developing writing skills and the advantages and disadvantages listed by Hyland (2003:86-96) as well as the principles introduced by Nation (2009:93-95), it seems reasonable to ask teachers what Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers think about the usefulness of coursebooks with regard to teaching writing.

3.3.3 Reading

Similarly to EFL writing instruction, Nation (2009:6-8) introduces four principles under the same categories which should apply to teaching EFL reading. These principles, as mentioned, are meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. What these principles mean in practice as regards teaching reading is the following:

- 1) Meaning-focused input: What is read should be of the appropriate difficulty level for learners. Nation (2009:6) suggests that learners should be familiar with about 98 % of the vocabulary, which would allow them to guess the remaining part and learn. The purposes of reading should also be varied, e.g. searching information, critiquing texts and reading just for fun.
- 2) Meaning-focused output: Reading should link with other language skills, also productive ones, that is, speaking and writing.
- 3) Language-focused learning: The development of reading should be aided by teaching other language skills, reading strategies such as predicting, skimming etc., and knowledge about different writing genres.
- 4) Fluency development: Learners should be motivated to read – a factor in which the topics and genres of texts obviously play a significant role – and read a lot. Different kinds of reading practice, e.g. speed reading, paired reading etc. can help in developing fluency.

McDonough and Shaw (2003:99) suggest some implications of recent research on effective materials for teaching reading. These include, for example, that the materials should

stimulate interest and not be too familiar as regards the content. The difficulty level of texts should also be appropriate in terms of familiarity, length, complexity and the sheer amount of new words not previously known by the learner. Altering the purpose or the techniques of reading (e.g. speed reading for quick overall comprehension) can also improve learning results. At the same time, McDonough and Shaw (2003:91) criticize current EFL textbooks for the fact that the texts in them are so often specially contrived for pedagogic purposes, non-authentic and therefore not representative of real-life language use. Texts, according to McDonough and Shaw (2003:91), are often not used as a medium for teaching reading skills, but rather, only to introduce new structures or new vocabulary. Such texts, McDonough and Shaw (2003:91) argue, are artificial, lack coherence and do not allow readers, that is, learners, to genuinely interact with the text.

Based on these criteria expressed by Nation (2009:6-8) and the criteria and critique from McDonough and Shaw (2003:99), it is obvious that teaching materials have a major effect on the effectiveness of teaching reading. It is therefore appropriate to ask how well current textbooks fulfill these expectations. I will seek to answer this question in a section of my study.

3.3.4 Listening

Out of all the different language skills, listening is the most widely used (Rost 2001:7) and, possibly, “the least understood and most overlooked” (Nation and Newton 2009:37). As Rost (2001:7) explains, listening is not only a skill which enables understanding spoken language, but also, an important process in acquiring foreign languages. Whether or not one agrees with Rost’s (2001:7) claim of listening being the most widely used language skill – as reading, for example, is very much present at least for foreign language learners – the significance of listening skills as well as the challenges of teaching listening in a foreign language are apparent.

Rost (2001:11) lists the following as aspects in successful teaching of listening: careful selection of input sources, creative design of tasks, helping learners enact effective learning

strategies and integration of listening with other learning purposes. According to him, input should be “appropriately authentic, interesting, varied and challenging”, whilst tasks should allow learners to make use of their own, previous knowledge and experiences. As regards listening strategies, Rost (2001:11-12) names metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies (e.g. predicting, responding), the use of which should be encouraged. Similarly, Nation and Newton (2009:1-16) make a list of “the four strands” of teaching listening skills – meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development – which, essentially, consist of similar principles already explained with regard to reading and writing and emphasize the role of comprehensible input, communicative focus, drawing on learner knowledge and experience, attention to specific language items and developing fluency.

Whilst some of the previously mentioned factors will require effort from the teacher, they nonetheless provide some insight into what qualities teaching materials should possess. Mendelsohn (1998, as quoted by Rost (2001:12)) gives commercial teaching materials recognition for improvements in strategy training, whilst Rost himself (2001:13) accuses both teaching methodology as well as materials design for trailing behind current theory, especially as regards input selection and strategy development. Such contradictory opinions raise questions about teachers’ views on the practicality, usefulness and effect of their teaching materials with regard to developing listening skills. A section of my survey will therefore seek to answer whether Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers find current textbooks to present and practice listening skills adequately.

3.3.5 Grammar(ing)

A question that has divided the opinion between language professionals for a long time is whether foreign language grammar should be taught explicitly or whether it can just be acquired through other contact with the language (see e.g. Nassaji and Fotos 2011:2-10). Other questions debated in relation to grammar teaching are, for example, whether learning should start from rules (deductive learning) or whether learners should discover the rules from language input (inductive learning) and whether grammatical terminology

should be used or not (see e.g. Hudson 1998). At the moment, explicit teaching of grammar is a part of all recent Finnish EFL textbooks, but the use of terminology and making use of deductive and inductive learning are issues which vary between coursebooks. Without attempting to evaluate which methodology is best, this study seeks to find out how satisfied Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers are with their coursebooks with regard to grammar teaching – how effective a tool are coursebooks in that sense?

Thornbury (1999:25-27) defines successful grammar teaching through efficiency and appropriacy. He divides efficiency further into the factors of economy, ease and efficacy. What these factors mean in practice is firstly, that grammar items should be presented briefly rather than introducing more and more rules, secondly, that teachers should be (able to be) economical in terms of planning and preparing materials, and thirdly, that grammar instruction should arouse attention, create understanding, be memorable and increase learner motivation. Appropriacy, on the other hand, refers to taking into account factors such as learner age, learner skills or level, group size, learner needs, learner interests, available resources, previous learning experiences etc. As far as current textbooks are concerned, Thornbury (1999:72) suggests that EFL textbooks, as regards grammar, may be criticized for being demotivating and not representative of real-life language use. He also accuses coursebook texts for often having “an unreal air” to them.

A section of this study seeks to answer whether they find current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks to be adequate in terms of grammar teaching.

3.3.6 Vocabulary

The importance of vocabulary knowledge for achieving any level of proficiency in a language is self-evident and unquestionable. All the other language skills discussed in this section depend on vocabulary – without a sufficient amount of known vocabulary, none of the other skills can be properly developed. Still, Folse (2004:22) claims that vocabulary has not been given nearly as much attention in foreign language teaching pedagogy as other

language skills such as grammar. Folse (2004:22-23) criticizes ESL textbooks for neglecting vocabulary teaching, and even though this critique may not entirely apply to Finnish EFL textbooks, it is worth examining whether teachers think that their coursebooks enable sufficient vocabulary teaching and learning.

An important decision in teaching EFL vocabulary is obviously choosing which words, or multi-word units (see e.g. Nation 2008:121-122), to teach. An approach to answering this question is provided by corpus research, which offers information about word frequency in the English language (Carter 2001:43-44). The self-evident implication of corpus linguistics for textbook design would be focusing on including the most frequent words of the English language in a textbook. Some have gone as far as to claim that through a syllabus based on the most frequent words, *a lexical syllabus*, the most important grammatical structures etc. would be learned automatically without any explicit focus on them - due to the fact that the most common English words include a number of grammatical words such as, for example, prepositions and articles (Sinclair and Renouf 1988 and Willis 1990, both quoted by Carter 2001:46).

In addition to a personal experience, both as a learner and as a teacher, that Finnish EFL textbooks include a significant amount of highly specific, extremely rare, trivial and practically useless vocabulary which is expected to be learned, some more critique has been expressed towards EFL textbooks in teaching vocabulary. For example, Folse (2004:127-159) argues against the "myth" that EFL teachers, textbooks and curricula cover English vocabulary sufficiently. Colmenares (2012:51) makes a case for using corpus analysis in textbook evaluation and claims that current research shows that what is presented in textbooks, in terms of vocabulary and collocations, is not representative of real-life language use. Finnish EFL teacher's views on the usefulness of current textbooks in teaching vocabulary will be examined in my survey.

3.3.7 Pronunciation

As mentioned earlier, the controversy of whether the focus should be on grammatical accuracy or communicativeness has emerged as regards the teaching of speaking. Similarly, two very different views have been expressed with regard to the role of pronunciation in foreign language teaching, especially in case of EFL due to its unique lingua franca status in global communication (see, for example, Seidlhofer 2001:56, 64 and Tergujeff 2013:25-31). On the one hand, the significance of accuracy, that is, not grammatical accuracy but a native-like pronunciation, can be highlighted. On the other hand, it can be claimed that all speakers reflect their identity and cultural background through their pronunciation, which, especially in this time where English is considered a lingua franca, can make having a distinctly non-native pronunciation acceptable, resulting in a shift in focus from accuracy to intelligibility. As Seidlhofer (2001:64) explains, pronunciation teaching has recently experienced such a shift, which can also be seen in moving from practicing isolated forms through sound manipulation drills to practicing interaction through communicative activities, where focus is on the role of pronunciation in discourse. The goal of teaching pronunciation, as she explains, has drifted away from “remedial accent reduction”, that is, trying to reduce the amount of non-native-like features of learner accents in order to be able to imitate native speakers more accurately. The goal of intelligibility remains, but surviving in lingua franca communication has gained more and more focus in pronunciation teaching.

Tergujeff (2013) studied EFL pronunciation teaching in Finland. Among other things, she examined 16 EFL coursebooks, interviewed Finnish EFL teachers and learners and observed Finnish EFL lessons. She (2013:52) discovered that textbooks are used extensively in and out of class and that the contents of teaching and teaching practices are strongly based on teaching materials. Tergujeff (2013:53) heavily criticizes Finnish EFL coursebooks for neglecting the teaching of suprasegmentals – e.g. intonation, rhythm and connected speech. According to her, the absence of such themes in coursebooks results in their absence in teaching as well, as teachers will not introduce and practice topics which are not included in the coursebook.

Seidlhofer (2001:64) also points out that current technology opens new possibilities for pronunciation teaching. In terms of pedagogy and materials development, spoken corpora can give new information of real-life, native and non-native, language use. From a more practical point of view, new technology allows teachers and learners to find an incredible amount of spoken language input with little effort. In addition to these, software for speech recognition and enhancement have become more common, which could help computer-assisted pronunciation teaching by providing accurate data on learner pronunciation. These new options, according to Seidlhofer (2001:64), "have increased the need for good support materials" – in other words, the standards for teaching materials as regards pronunciation teaching have risen. In my survey, I will therefore seek to answer how useful Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers find their coursebooks in pronunciation teaching.

3.3.8 Cultural knowledge

In addition to linguistic features such as vocabulary, idioms, structures, grammar items, pronunciation etc., coursebooks also mediate information about foreign cultures – more specifically, cultures where the target language is spoken as a native language. A number of EFL coursebooks explicitly introduce English-speaking countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, South Africa, India or Australia. Even if such explicit cultural information is not provided, Elomaa (2009:109) argues that the language itself contains a unique construction of reality typical to the cultures where the language is spoken. Similarly, Kramsch (2009:219-220) describes culture as "indissociable from the culture of the speech community that speaks that language; it is also inseparable from the way speakers of the language identify with that community." Teaching about different cultures and cultural awareness has a central role in the National Core Curriculum, which (2003:102) explicitly states:

Instruction in foreign languages will develop students' intercultural communication skills: it will provide them with skills and knowledge related to language and its use and will offer them

the opportunity to develop their awareness, understanding and appreciation of the culture within the area or community where the language is spoken.

Elomaa (2009:108) expresses her own view as a teacher, as she explains how language, culture and intercultural communication are what really makes foreign language teaching meaningful in the first place. At the same time, she points out that teaching about culture is restricted by the fact that there is so much other linguistic content that needs to be taught, which may leave little time for developing cultural skills.

Elomaa (2009:109) calls cultural awareness a “by-product” of language skills. This, however, is not to be interpreted as though she were trying to say that developing cultural skills would happen on its own during other foreign language instruction. Rather, according to Elomaa (2009:109), teaching materials as well as teachers should aspire to mediate traces about the way of thinking and constructing reality that is a part of the target language. Elomaa suggests that teaching materials should motivate learners to find out more on their own about the countries and cultures where the target language is spoken. As regards how this could be achieved, Elomaa (2009:113) proposes using texts which combine elements that are suitable for teaching language items as well as cultural issues. A material which manages to represent authentic language use as well as provide information on the target culture, promote tolerance towards diversity and raise interest in the target culture can, according to Elomaa (2009:113), be seen as successful in achieving one of the pedagogic aims of foreign language teaching. Whether teachers find current Finnish upper secondary school EFL coursebooks successful in developing learners’ cultural knowledge is another theme that my survey seeks answers to.

3.4 Authenticity

Much has been written about the benefits and importance of using authentic materials in foreign language teaching (see e.g. Mishan 2004, Gilmore 2007). Clarke, as quoted by Hyland (2003:92) goes as far as to claim that using authentic materials has almost become a “moral imperative” for language teachers. There are several different definitions of

authentic materials in foreign language teaching, but in lack of an exhaustive one, it may be more constructive to view authenticity as a set of criteria, as Mishan (2004:14-15) does. Her criteria include *provenance, original communicative purpose, socio-cultural function and context* and *activity or interactivity* – the last one not necessarily being a feature of the material itself, but rather, relating to how the material is used in class. At the risk of oversimplifying Mishan's criteria, I would summarize these factors as follows: authentic language in teaching materials is anything that was originally produced by native speakers in an original socio-cultural context to serve a communicative purpose (rather than drawing attention to a linguistic aspect). Authenticity is, however, also constructed by the response of learners to the language stimuli – as Mishan (2004:17) explains, the purpose of the language used in the classroom can “authenticate” materials.

Elomaa (2009:107) defines authenticity as natural language similar to that spoken by a mother-tongue speaker, rather than attempts at simulating that in a classroom. She argues that an adult language learner will see all classroom activity as non-authentic, that is, pedagogic action. Elomaa therefore insists that authenticity, as regards teaching materials, should only refer to texts and recordings, where authentic materials would be the opposite of materials contrived for pedagogic purposes, i.e. any target language material that has not been produced for teaching purposes. The value of authentic materials, according to Elomaa, lie in their credibility and their likely ability to motivate, challenge and inform learners. She claims that the texts and recordings in a teaching material should therefore consist of natural language produced by mother-tongue speakers. (Elomaa 2009:107)

Hyland (2003:92) explains that it is difficult to imitate the genres that learners need to come to contact with by creating texts for pedagogic purposes. According to him, the alterations, which are unavoidable when authentic texts are modified to pedagogic purposes, result in changing the whole nature or genre of the text. Hyland argues that simulated texts tend to lack the cohesion, the coherence, the rhetorical structure as well as the original context that an authentic text carries. Similar critique, as discussed in the section on teaching reading skills, has been expressed by McDonough and Shaw (2003:91),

who criticize texts that have been created to draw attention to certain language forms or vocabulary – which covers a great deal of texts in EFL textbooks – for being artificial and failing to introduce aspects of cohesion, authentic language use and real-life texts. Critique like this obviously makes a case for using authentic texts and other authentic material in foreign language teaching.

Hyland (2003:93) does, however, point out that not all authentic materials are useful in language teaching, as incoherent or poorly structured texts naturally exist even within authentic texts. Similarly, Thornbury (1999:72) points out that authentic texts are often too difficult for EFL learners in terms of new vocabulary and syntactic structure. In addition, Hyland (2003:93) stresses the workload and the amount of preparation required from teachers if they wish to successfully make use of authentic materials and have the learners benefit from them. It therefore seems likely that authentic materials of the appropriate difficulty level being available in a coursebook without a significant amount of preparation would be highly appreciated by teachers. What Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers actually think about authenticity in their coursebooks – whether authentic language use is represented adequately – is a question I will seek answers to in my survey.

3.5 (De)motivating learners

Another aspect considered in this section is motivation. The central role of motivation in language learning, or practically any other learning, is unquestionable (see e.g. Dörnyei 2001, Lasagabaster, Doiz and Sierra 2014). Coursebooks should therefore preferably be able to motivate learners, rather than doing the opposite. Next, I will briefly introduce some studies related to coursebooks and motivation in order to define what aspects make coursebooks motivating or demotivating.

As discussed in the section on choosing a coursebook, the selection process should take into account the predicted appeal of the textbook for learners. Apparently there are cases

where teachers have not fully succeeded in this task, as there is evidence of coursebooks serving as a demotivational factor in language learning. Muhonen (2004) conducted a survey on aspects that Finnish EFL learners find demotivating in their English language classes. The survey was answered by 91 ninth-grade pupils. In spite of the relatively small number of respondents, Muhonen (2004:51-53) reports several demotivating aspects of coursebooks which appeared in the answers. Firstly, as simple a feature as the physical condition of the book was mentioned; a book which appeared used and worn out was considered demotivating. Muhonen (2004:51-53) goes on to report that the themes or topics discussed in the books as well as the uninteresting or even childish texts appeared in the answers of the pupils as factors which reduced learner motivation. Even more frequent were complaints about the exercises, which were described as boring, pointless, meaningless, unchallenging and not varied enough on the one hand, and too difficult on the other. In his article, Ikonen (2003:16) points out that experiences of achievement or success promote enhance learning, whereas failures may cause anxiety and fear of future failures, that is, have an adverse effect on learning, which is one of the reasons why the appropriate level of difficulty is central to learner motivation. Dörnyei (2001:153-154) also mentions coursebooks as a demotivational factor for learners, and Chambers (1999, as quoted by Dörnyei 2001:154) received empirical data of coursebooks being the second most influential factor after the teacher in terms of affecting learner attitudes.

Whether or not the visual elements of a coursebook also have a role in motivating learners is an interesting question - even though common sense would argue for that, Muhonen (2004) does not mention visual elements as a demotivating factor, and Hill (2003:177) argues that using photos, pictures and illustrations in coursebooks is unlikely to affect learner attitudes. Hill (2003:176) suggests that more than half of the pictures or illustrations in EFL textbooks are there for decorative purposes only, that is, there are no exercises or tasks connected to them. Hill's (2003:177) opinion is that such decorative illustrations are unlikely to have "any direct effect on student attitudes to English or to language learning", or, at the very least, that there is a need for thorough longitudinal studies on the subject before such claims can be made. Hill (2003:179,181) concludes that

using such a great amount of pictures for ornamentation only is a waste of effort and opportunity. The decision was therefore made not to include visual elements as a separate item in the survey, but rather, to include them under the larger heading of appearance.

Muhonen's (2004) results suggest that at least the following aspects of coursebooks contribute to the effect that coursebooks have on learner motivation.

- 1) The appearance of the book (its physical condition)
- 2) The relevance of the topics discussed in the books
- 3) The age-appropriacy of the texts in terms of difficulty and topic
- 4) Variation and appropriacy of exercises as regards exercise type and difficulty

In spite of Hill's (2003:177) argument that the illustrations of textbooks do not affect language attitudes or learning, I would also include visual elements under the appearance of the book, because even though Muhonen (2004) did not find visual elements as a demotivational factor, Laitinen (2014:71) argues that the function of illustrations in EFL textbooks is most commonly to motivate learners to read texts by providing them something they can relate to. Whether teachers think current Finnish upper secondary school EFL coursebooks are successful in increasing learner motivation is a question I seek to answer in a section of the survey.

3.6 Differentiation

The fact that classrooms consist of different kinds of learners results in a need for teachers to be able to differentiate their instruction in many ways to suit the needs of all learners. This can be done in a number of ways - differentiation can be put to use through e.g. altering individual learning goals, making adjustments to the teaching content, using different teaching methods and different teaching materials, individualizing the amount of exercises or the time spent on them, making use of different learning environments or different evaluation practices (Roiha 2012:35). It is important to bear in mind that

differentiation may be needed both for weaker learners who have trouble keeping up with the standard pace or level of instruction and for more advanced learners who are not challenged enough by the same standard.

As regards differentiation and textbooks, Marja-Aho (2003:32) argues that differentiation is currently mostly practised through giving additional exercises to the faster learners, which, according to Marja-Aho, is insufficient as it does not match the current understanding of how learning is promoted. The rationale behind this claim is fairly obvious – if the difficulty level of exercises remains the same, that is, not challenging enough for some learners, no amount of additional workload will help such learners develop. For learners who have more difficulties with foreign languages than their peers, Finnish EFL textbook series for primary and secondary schools often include differentiated textbooks which may, for example, contain less exercises or new vocabulary, make use of larger fonts and focus more heavily on central issues only – such alternatives do not exist in upper secondary school textbook series.

Interestingly, most of the recent research on differentiation seems to focus on young learners, whilst little has been written about differentiation in upper secondary school. Differentiation in upper secondary school could perhaps be seen as problematic because of the fact that upper secondary school education, to an extent, aims at succeeding in a national matriculation examination, in which students are essentially compared to each other. Whilst there is no question that talented learners should be helped to achieve their full potential by providing them with enough challenge, differentiating instruction for weaker learners is a touch more problematic. If such differentiation is done by narrowing down or limiting the content that is supposed to be learned, the starting point in the matriculation examination could be seen as unequal. On the other hand, if such differentiation improves the learning results of weaker learners, there is obviously evidence for it. Because of the controversies of differentiation in upper secondary school and the lack of research on the subject, I found it necessary to ask Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers whether they think that current textbooks allow them to differentiate

their instruction sufficiently or whether more opportunities for different kinds of differentiation are needed.

3.7 Learning styles

Previously, I discussed teaching materials in relation to differentiation, which, in practice, refers to individualizing instruction to suit the needs of a single learner. While we are on the topic of individual learning, it seems sensible to discuss different learning styles, as well. Numerous different models and divisions have been introduced to describe the fact that we all learn languages, as well as any other content or skill, somewhat differently. Two such models will be briefly explained here: one introduced by Kolb (1984 and 2000, both as cited by Coffield 2004:60-70), which Coffield (2004:60) describes as the starting point of the “modern learning styles movement”, and one by Dunn and Dunn (Dunn 2003 as cited by Coffield 2004:20-25), which, according to the writer’s personal experience, represents the most common understanding of different learning styles in Finnish basic and upper secondary education.

David Kolb’s model of different learning styles, as explained by Coffield (2004:60), is generally regarded as a ground-breaking and successful way of explaining individual differences in learning. Kolb’s (2000, as cited by Coffield 2004:61) model divides learners, or learning styles, into four categories: *the converging style*, *the diverging style*, *the assimilating style* and *the accommodating style*. *The converging style* refers to a learner whose strengths lie primarily at problem solving and decision making. Convergent learners rely on active experimenting and may be favoured by conventional intelligence tests. *The diverging style*, on the other hand, bases on observation instead of action and makes use of personal experiences and reflection. A divergent learner may be more imaginative and feeling-oriented than other types of learners. *The assimilating style* draws on inductive reasoning and creating theoretical models, and an assimilating learner may appreciate logic over practicality. Finally, *the accommodating style* is a fairly concrete and experimental style, in which putting ideas from theory to practice in a trial-and-error style

may be common. *The converging style* as well as *the accommodating style* are more experimental styles in comparison to *the diverging style* and *the assimilating style*, which are more reflective. The most significant difference between *the converging style* and *the accommodating style* is that the latter relies on concrete experience whilst the former favours abstract thinking. A similar difference exists between *the diverging style* and *the assimilating style*, that is, the more reflective styles, with the former drawing more on concrete experience and the latter being the more abstract style. (Coffield 2004:61)

Another model that has gained popularity is the one introduced by Dunn and Dunn (Dunn 2003, as cited by Coffield 2004:20-35). Dunn and Dunn's model, as Coffield (2004:20) consists of five different variables, which are *environmental*, *emotional*, *sociological*, *physiological* and *psychological*. Whilst plenty of factors such as time of day, temperature, noise level, lighting, motivation and learning groups are included as factors within these variables (Coffield 2004:21), it is the concept of *modality preferences* that has, in the writers experience, become synonymous to learning styles in the Finnish educational system. As Coffield (2004:24) explains, the concept of *modality preferences* refers to a division of learners into *auditory*, *visual*, *tactile* and *kinaesthetic* types based on what senses are the most helpful to them in learning. Auditory learners primarily benefit from hearing – lectures and discussions are among the most useful methods of teaching for them. Visual learners, on the other hand, learn best through reading, illustrations and diagrams. Tactile learners benefit from getting to use their hands – e.g. touching things, underlining or highlighting parts of text, making notes etc. Finally, kinaesthetic learners learn best through moving their whole body – visiting places, acting, building and playing are among the most suitable methods for kinaesthetic learners. (Coffield 2004:22)

As mentioned earlier in the section on the history of coursebooks, McDonough and Shaw (2003:43-57) include taking different learning styles into account as a typical feature of modern textbooks. On the other hand, Leppänen's (2011:59-61) study revealed that Finnish EFL teachers sometimes feel that their textbooks fail to sufficiently cater for different learning styles. In light of this controversy, the decision was made in this study to include

the question of whether Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers find that current textbooks take different learning styles into account adequately.

3.8 Summary of the considered aspects

I have now discussed the aspects of coursebooks that were taken into consideration in this study and examined what is already known about textbooks in relation to the discussed issues. This brief overlook at the role of textbooks in foreign language teaching already revealed a significant amount of questions and controversies – are the textbooks interesting enough, appropriately difficult, do they make use of different learning styles and do they take into consideration the different skill levels of learners, do they represent current pedagogical knowledge sufficiently etc. This study set out to discover Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers' views on such controversies to the extent that it was sensible with the resources available.

Naturally, the amount of information sought after had to be restricted – every question or controversy that came up simply could not be asked explicitly through separate questions. The decision was therefore made to focus on the following larger questions:

- 1) what aspects of textbooks do teachers consider and appreciate in choosing textbooks;
- 2) to what extent do teachers feel that textbooks cover the contents and meet the requirements set by the National Core Curricula;
- 3) how valuable or useful teachers find textbooks to be *in teaching different language skills*; to what extent teachers think that textbooks enable them to differentiate their instruction;
- 4) whether teachers think that textbooks represent authentic language use;
- 5) to what extent teachers think that textbooks take different learning styles into account and
- 6) whether teachers find textbooks motivational for their learners.

These broad questions were chosen, as I believe that through them a good overall understanding can be reached about teachers' views on the general usefulness of textbooks in EFL teaching. Whilst some more detailed questions such as teachers' opinions on exercise types or visual elements in textbooks were not explicitly covered, I believe that this set of questions also covers and reflects such issues to an extent. Obviously, the causes and consequences of teachers' opinions could not be covered in detail in a survey with as many broad topic areas as this one – the aim of this study, therefore, was to present an overall picture of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers' view on the usefulness of textbooks in EFL teaching. In the next section, I will introduce in more detail the previously mentioned research questions of this study and discuss the methodology chosen in carrying out this study.

4 METHODS

The aim of this study was to get an overall understanding of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers' views on current textbooks. The focus was on generalizable information on the textbooks rather than individual, specific opinions – this study attempted to discover what can be said in general about how useful Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers find their textbooks. It is therefore obvious that the nature of my study is quantitative.

The method I chose for gathering data was an online survey. As a research method, a survey – or a questionnaire – has some basic properties which suit this study well. As Dörnyei (2003:9) explains, surveys are, in comparison with other research methods, extremely efficient. They require a relatively small amount of time, effort or resources from the person who devises them, and allow gathering large amounts of data in a short time. Dörnyei (*ibid*) also points out that the data received from surveys – at least the well-constructed ones – can be analyzed rather quickly with the help of modern technology. The same advantages are mentioned by Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195), who explain that surveys enable asking a large amount of questions from a large amount of respondents.

Hirsjärvi et al. (ibid) go on to explain that the methods of analyzing data received from surveys are already there; there is no need to spend time trying to come up with suitable methods of analysis. An additional benefit of surveys, as Dörnyei (2003:8-10) explains, is their versatility. Surveys can be used to receive factual, behavioral or attitudinal information from the respondents. The range of topics and target groups that can be addressed with a survey is practically unlimited.

As regards the potential disadvantages of surveys, Dörnyei (2003:10-14) points out a number of possible hazards. Firstly, the respondents usually fill in questionnaires alone, which means that there is a real chance of misunderstandings or different interpretations of the questions or the scales used. A researcher has little chance of detecting, let alone correcting such issues which affect the validity of the survey. For this reason as well as the fact that most respondents do not want to spend hours completing their answers, the questions in a survey need to be fairly simple. This, in turn, restricts the depth in which issues can be studied in surveys – the data received will be somewhat superficial. The risk of misunderstandings is also pointed out by Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195), who make the point that a researcher cannot know, how clear or unclear the questions and provided alternatives for answers are to the respondents.

Another respondent-related threat mentioned by Dörnyei (2003:10-12) is the fact that people who answer questionnaires seldom enjoy the process, which means that the time and focus given to answering is likely to vary significantly between respondents. Many who receive a questionnaire will never answer it, others answer but fail to return it, some will not read the questions properly etc. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195) also point out that it cannot be known, how seriously the respondents have taken answering the survey. The length of the survey plays a part in the responses; if the respondents know in advance that answering the survey will take hours, they are more likely to leave it unanswered. In addition, a long survey will create fatigue in the respondents, which might lead to inaccurate answering (Dörnyei 2003:14).

In terms of practicality, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009:195) also find some disadvantages. In spite of the supposed effectiveness and effortlessness of surveys, they point out that devising a well-constructed, properly functioning survey does require time and knowledge from a researcher. In addition, the response rate of surveys is usually fairly low in comparison to other research methods.

These fairly concrete issues aside, there are also some psychological phenomena which may affect answering surveys (Dörnyei 2003:12-13). Firstly, respondents sometimes have a tendency to answer in a way that is socially acceptable or desirable, rather than answering sincerely. Moreover, Dörnyei mentions the problem of acquiescence, which means that some respondents may have a tendency to agree with questions or claims that they do not fully understand. Finally, Dörnyei also mentions the halo effect as a phenomenon which may affect the respondents' answers; if the overall impression respondents have on an issue is positive, they might overgeneralize and respond to more detailed questions too positively. The halo effect could easily affect this study as well – if a teacher thinks that the textbook he or she uses is, in general, a good one, he or she might assess all the different aspects of the book too positively.

4.1 Research questions and the questionnaire

As already explained, the major question this study set out to answer was “How useful do Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers find current Finnish upper secondary school EFL coursebooks in teaching?”. This large question was divided into more detailed questions presented in the survey (see Appendix 1). Questions were asked on the following topics: teaching experience, choosing a coursebook (did the participants get to choose which book they use and what aspects of textbooks are appreciated in choosing a textbook), language pedagogy (to what extent the participants feel that coursebooks represent current pedagogical knowledge), curricula and coursebooks (whether and to what extent the participants feel that textbooks are in line with curricula and enable reaching the goals set in curricula), using coursebooks (how often the participants use

textbooks in their teaching), language skills (to what extent the participants find that different language skills are covered in textbooks), authenticity (to what extent the participants find that authentic language use is represented in coursebooks), motivating (whether certain aspects in textbooks are seen as motivating or demotivating), differentiation (to what extent the participants find that coursebooks allow them to differentiate their instruction), learning styles (to what extent the participants feel that different learners are taken into consideration in coursebooks) and overall grade. As no previous, suitable frameworks of textbook-related issues were found, this framework for the questionnaire was based on a subjective choice of the most common and topical textbook-related areas of interest, with the aim of finding a balance between covering as many aspects of textbooks relevant for teachers as possible within the resources of this study and avoiding fragmenting the study into too many specific details. The relevance of these aspects was discussed in section 3.

As regards background information, the decision was made to limit the number of items asked to minimum. This decision was based on reasons of suitability and practicality – attempting to discover complex causal relationships between background factors such as sex, area, size of school, used textbook, major and minor subjects etc. would have been beyond the scope and the resources of this study, whose aim, as mentioned was to discover a general overall picture of the satisfaction of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers on current textbooks rather than determining detailed information on differences between teachers or textbooks, the relevance of which, at least in terms of this study, is questionable. In practice, this meant that the only background information asked was the amount of previous teaching experience of the respondents and the frequency with which the respondents make use of textbooks in teaching.

In total, the questionnaire consisted of 13 closed questions on the previously described topics and one open question at the end, where the participants were given the opportunity to comment on any aspect of textbooks or the survey in general. The closed questions were answered on Likert scale, that is, on a scale from one to five with one

standing for complete disagreement or dissatisfaction and five for complete agreement or satisfaction. The entire questionnaire can be found attached to this paper in Appendix 1.

4.2 Data collection

The chosen research method, as explained, was a survey, which suited the need of gathering and analysing large amounts of data in a short period of time. Due to reasons of practicality, the survey was devised and administrated online by using a platform called mrInterview.

Before the actual administration, the survey was piloted on five kind volunteers: an English teacher who does not teach in an upper secondary school, two upper secondary school teachers who do not teach English and two English teacher trainees. Based on the feedback received from the piloting process, some final adjustments were made to the phrasing of questions and instructions in the survey.

The questionnaire was sent to the mailing list of The Association of Teachers of English in Finland (Suomen Englanninopettajat RY). In other words, the sample was narrowed to teachers who teach English as a Foreign Language in a Finnish upper secondary school. No further limitations took space; within the resources and aims of this study, it was neither possible nor necessary to go for a sample which includes a specific amount of representatives of, for example, different genders, ages, class sizes etc. As mentioned, the only background question asked in the questionnaire was the amount of previous teaching experience in years – other background factors were found irrelevant as the sample represents Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers regardless of anything other than the fact that the participants actually are all Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers. The question on teaching experience was only included in order to see whether it makes a difference as regards the actual research questions.

The survey link was sent out on Monday, March 9th, and in the given answering time of one week the questionnaire had been answered by 129 Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers. By March 20th, when the survey was closed, two additional responses had been delivered, adding up to the total of 131 respondents. A response rate can unfortunately not be given, as there is no information on how many upper secondary school teachers there are on the mailings list of The Association of Teachers of English in Finland. Altogether, approximately 3000 teachers are members in the association, but it can be assumed that the number of upper secondary school teachers within this number is significantly lower.

All answers were submitted and processed with complete anonymity. The information and the instructions given to the participants before answering is attached at the end of this paper, just like the questionnaire itself (Appendix 1).

4.3 Methods of analysis

The distributions of the received responses to each question were examined and will be presented in the following section. In some questions, the mean, that is, the average of the received responses was calculated in order to compare different aspects more objectively. In questions where the participants were asked to evaluate aspects in textbooks on Likert scale from 1 to 5, the mean was counted by coding the answering alternatives with numbers from 1 to 5, with 1 standing for the most negative answer (e.g. *not at all or barely at all, negatively* etc.) and 5 for the most positive one (e.g. *very well, positively* etc.). In addition, the effects of previous teaching experience – the only background aspect considered – were examined through cross-tabulation with the other questions included in the study. Whether any of the trends discovered through cross-tabulation were statistically significant was examined through a chi square test (see e.g. Faherty 2008:139-159). Finally, one open-ended question, or rather, an opportunity for free commenting was provided. These open answers were examined through a fairly simple content analysis, a process explained by Dörnyei (2003:116-117), where each response was read and

categorized under general headings based on the central content of the answer. Due to the small amount of data, the open answers were not coded numerically and processed as quantitative data, as suggested by Dörnyei (2003:117). Rather, where relevant, some open answers were included to give further insight into the quantitative results received. All the original open answers in Finnish can be found in Appendix 2.

5 TEACHERS' SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT TEXTBOOKS

5.1 Background information

In the first part of the survey, the respondents were asked to determine the length of their teaching careers so far and how frequently they use textbooks on their lessons. These were the only questions on participant background considered relevant for the results – in spite of the fact that the aim of this study was to discover a general overall picture on the opinions of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers on their textbooks, the possible effects of teaching experience and the extent to which participants use textbooks could not be ignored in the same way in which many other background factors, such as sex, deliberately were.

Figure 1 presents the distribution of the 131 participants who answered the survey as regards the amount of their previous teaching experience in EFL. The results show that whilst all categories of teachers from those at the beginning of their career to those with over 30 years of teaching experience were represented in a satisfactory amount, the sample slightly favours teachers with the previous experience ranging from 10 to 30 years. If, however, the two first categories are put together to cover the range from 0 to 10 years, it is seen that the distribution of teachers according to their teaching experience is fairly equal between the ranges of from 0 to 10 years, from 10 and 20 years as well as from 20 to 30 years, whilst the category of over 30 years, in spite of featuring a slightly lower number of participants, is also well represented. This allowed examining the rest of the data

received in the survey also to see whether teaching experience has any significant effect on the opinions of the participants on their textbooks.

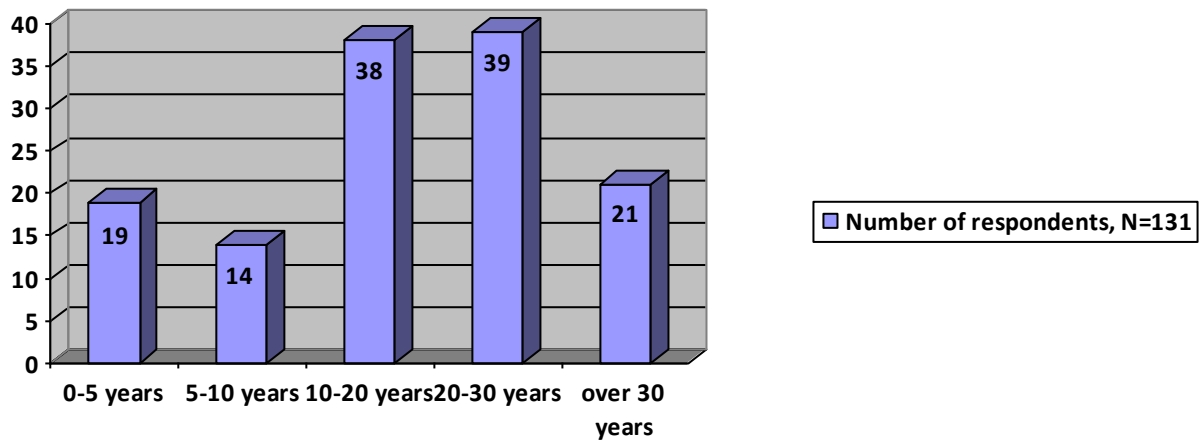


Figure 1. Distribution of responses to the question “For how long have you worked as an English teacher?”

The second background question, one in which the participants were asked to determine how often they use textbooks in their teaching, provided somewhat predictable results. 113 out of the 131 participants responded that they use textbooks *on every lesson or on almost every lesson*, whilst the remaining 18 participants also answered that they *often* use textbooks. This information is in line with the findings of Luukka et al. (2008:95), who discovered that of the 324 foreign language teachers who answered their survey, 98 percent *often* use textbooks and 95 percent *often* use an exercise book related to the textbook in their teaching - 100 percent of the participants of the present study use textbooks *often* or even more frequently, and the number of respondents who use textbooks *on every lesson or on almost every lesson* covered over 86 percent of all participants. Furthermore, the one-sided results received for this second background question made it pointless, or, more specifically, impossible, to try to discover correlations between frequency of textbook use and satisfaction with textbooks. The responses to the second background question discussed above - “How often do you use textbooks in your teaching?” - are presented in Figure 2.

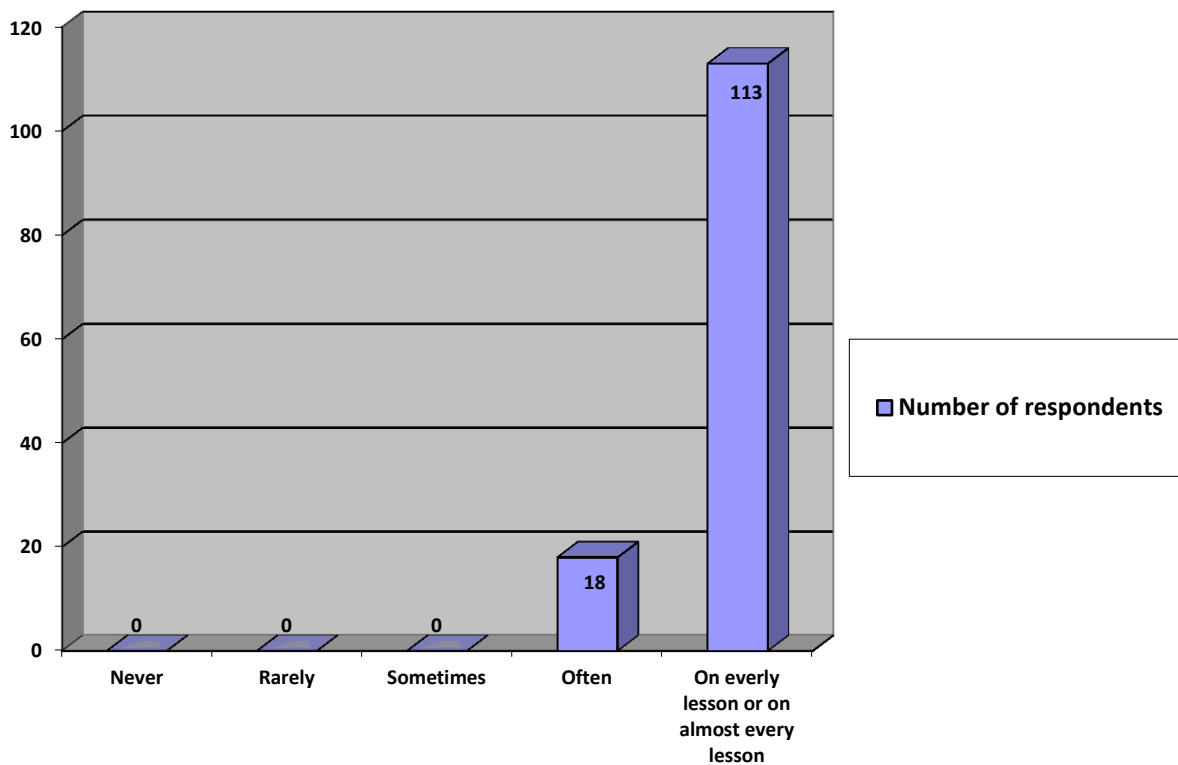


Figure 2. Distribution of responses to the question “How often do you use a textbook in teaching?”

5.2 Choosing a coursebook

After the background questions, the survey moved on to actual research questions, with the second part of the survey focussing on aspects of textbooks that teachers value in textbook selection. In order to determine the relevance of this question, the first question asked on the topic sought to discover how many of the participants had actually chosen the textbooks they use themselves. As can be seen in Figure 3, the textbooks selection process is not similar for all teachers. 39/131 respondents, that is, just below 30 percent of all participants, said *they made the decision* on which textbook to use. 64/131 respondents – almost 50 percent of the participants – responded that they *affected the decision*, whilst the remaining 28 respondents, a little above 20 percent, answered that they *did not affect the decision* on which book they use in their teaching. The cross-tabulation of the responses to this question with the amount of previous teaching experience, perhaps unsurprisingly,

revealed that more experienced teachers have made or affected the choice of textbooks more often than the less experienced ones. In general, it can be said that almost 80 percent of the respondents had at least some sort of a say in choosing the textbook they use, which validates seeking information on what aspects of textbooks teachers value when making the choice.

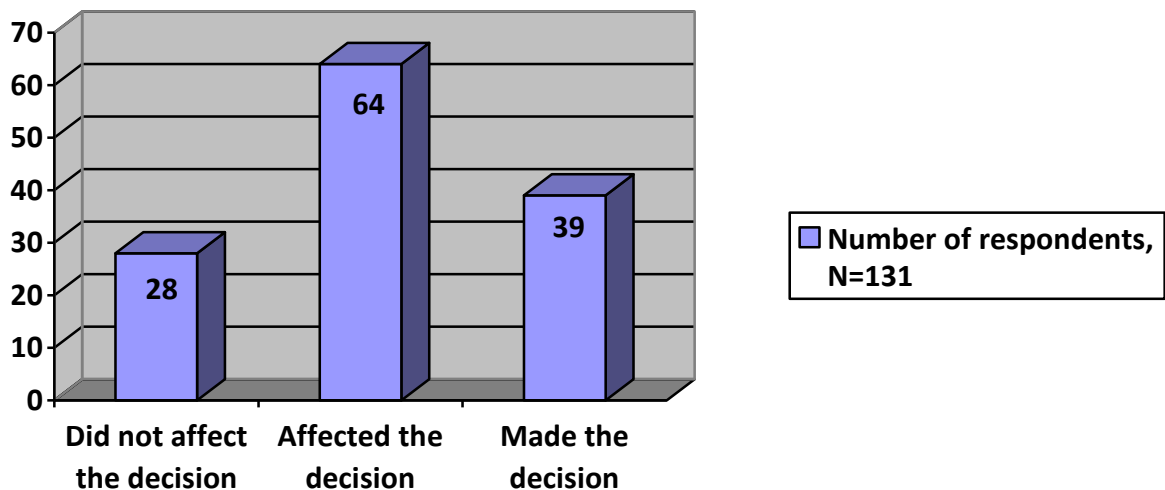


Figure 3. Distribution of responses to the question “Did you make the decision on which textbook to use in your teaching?”

The next question in the survey listed the following aspects and asked for the participants to determine how important they find them when choosing a textbook: correspondence with the curriculum, making use of authentic language, covering different language skills, catering for different learning styles, providing opportunities for differentiation, appearance, price, topics addressed, language structures covered, electronic materials and teacher’s guides or materials. These aspects were, on the one hand, based on the frameworks of McDonough and Shaw (2003) and McGrath (2002) discussed earlier, and, on the other hand, chosen on the basis of the aspects of textbooks otherwise considered in this study, as discussed in chapter 3. Table 1 presents the answers of the participants.

Table 1. Distribution of answers to the question “How important do you find the following aspects when choosing a textbook?” N=131

	Not at all important (1)	Only little important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Highly important (5)	No opinion	Mean
Correspondence with the curriculum	1	0	5	40	84	1	4.58
Making use of authentic language	0	0	5	32	94	0	4.68
Covering different language skills	0	0	0	17	114	0	4.87
Catering for different learning styles	0	1	15	55	59	1	4.32
Opportunities for differentiation	1	3	20	52	55	0	4.20
Appearance	1	3	33	68	26	0	3.88
Price	5	16	41	49	18	2	3.46
Topics addressed	0	2	4	59	66	0	4.44
Language structures addressed	0	0	12	60	59	0	4.36
Electronic materials	0	4	14	49	63	1	4.32
Teachers guide or teachers materials	0	0	4	27	100	0	4.73

As can be seen in Table 1, the question did not bring out clear tendencies or differences in the valuations of different aspects – all of the aspects mentioned were more often seen as *important* or *highly important* than *not at all important* or *only little important*. Perhaps surprisingly, the appearance of the book was not rated as important as most of the other items. Price, in general, was the least valued factor with altogether 21/131 participants responding with *not at all important* or *only little important* on that aspect, whilst only 18/131 respondents found price a *highly important* factor in textbook selection. Still, the following comments were given on price by two respondents:

I've given up using textbooks on 3 courses, because the high price paid by students has not corresponded with the content of the book. (Teacher 1)

The publishers are becoming increasingly greedy: earlier all teacher's materials were free of charge, but now everything costs money... (Teacher 2)

At the other end of the scale, teachers guide or teachers materials were found *highly important* by 100/131 participants – more than 75 percent of all respondents – and 127 out of 131 respondents found this item *important* or *highly important*. The other factor that clearly stands out in apparent importance for teachers is covering different language skills, which was found *important* or *highly important* by all respondents, with 114 out of 131 respondents, that is, 87 percent of all respondents, opting for *highly important*.

An aspect that was clearly visible in the responses to the open-ended question at the end of the survey was the current reformation where electronic materials are becoming more and more common. The following opinions, for example, were expressed:

... In my opinion, coursebooks have not succeeded in transforming at the pace with which the surrounding, especially electronic, world changes. It's not enough just to take the traditional coursebook into an electronic context. The exercise types need to be transformed as well. (Teacher 3)

... Electronic materials are trailing behind a little at the moment, bearing in mind that the electronic matriculation exam is nearing. Otherwise coursebooks are of good quality, but the lack of the inflexibility and humdrum of electronic materials are a problem. (Teacher 4)

I'm especially pleased with the electronic materials, with which even an "old" teacher has achieved a modern touch into teaching ... (Teacher 5)

The controversiality of the topics addressed also became evident in some open answers, e.g. the following:

... Extraordinary topics are needlessly aspired to. I'd like to have more basic texts with their basic vocabularies, that I can expand with my own topical materials. (Teacher 6)

The problem with English coursebooks is that they are so conservative on some issues, for example the diversity of family relations. Swedish coursebooks have recently featured much more diversity than English ones, some of which are actually disturbingly heteronormative, at times even homophobic and transphobic. (Teacher 7)

I wish more attention was paid to equal presentation of topics. ... the actors are predominantly men; the people presented from the fields of music, movies, literature etc. are all men, and almost all of the chapters are written by men ... (Teacher 8)

... There could be more themes on economic life, texts on spending money, controlling one's own budget etc. as well. (Teacher 9)

The final question regarding textbook selection was inspired by the claims of Mares (2003) and Tomlinson (2003), both discussed in chapter 2.2., that textbooks actually evolve slowly as publishers are not willing to take chances on the conservative and highly contested textbook market and prefer to introduce conventional, traditional and generally acceptable materials which do not differ radically from existing ones, which results in the fact that current pedagogical knowledge might not always be represented in new textbooks. As Figure 4 shows, this fear does not seem to be shared by Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers – 87 out of 131 respondents thought that textbooks represent current pedagogical knowledge *well* or *very well*, whilst only 5 respondents – under 4 percent of all participants – felt that this is achieved *inadequately*. The results do, however, seem to leave room for improvement as well, as 36/131 respondents felt that current pedagogical knowledge is represented in textbooks *adequately*, whilst only 20/131 respondents opted for *very well*.

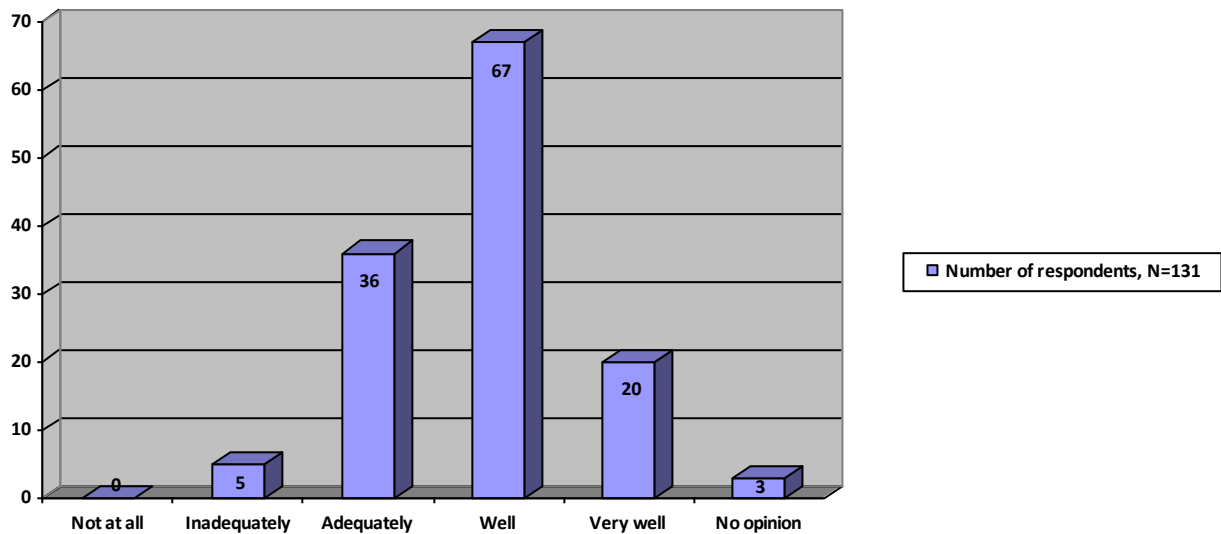


Figure 4. Distribution of responses to the question “To what extent do you think that current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks represent current pedagogical knowledge?”

5.3 Curricula and coursebooks

The next part of the survey focussed on the relationship between curricula and coursebooks. Two questions were asked; on the one hand, how well textbooks correspond with curricula, and, on the other hand, to what extent textbooks make it possible to reach the goals set by curricula. Naturally, it was expected that the respondents mostly concentrate on the National Core Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools when answering.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of the respondents’ opinions on how well current textbooks correspond with curricula. In general, the participants seemed rather satisfied with textbooks in this regard, with only 2 respondents opting for *inadequately*. 86/131 respondents, that is, just about two thirds of all respondents, thought that textbook correspond with curricula *well* or *very well* – a number that is slightly, but not significantly, higher than that given by Luukka et al. (2008:98), who found that out of the 324 foreign

language teachers that participated in their study, 54 percent thought that textbooks correspond well with the National Core Curriculum.

The answers to the second question, to what extent textbooks make it possible to reach the goals set by curricula, are presented in Figure 6. 97 out of 131 participants – just about 75 percent of all respondents – replied that this happens *well* or *very well*, whilst only 2 respondents opted for *inadequately*. Perhaps more interesting than the distributions of responses to either of the two questions on their own would be comparing Figures 5 and 6 to see whether there is any difference between the two distributions. No dramatic differences can be found, however; even if the ratings for the latter question are slightly lower than those for the first, the means of the answers in both questions are around 4, which stood for *well* (see also Table 6).

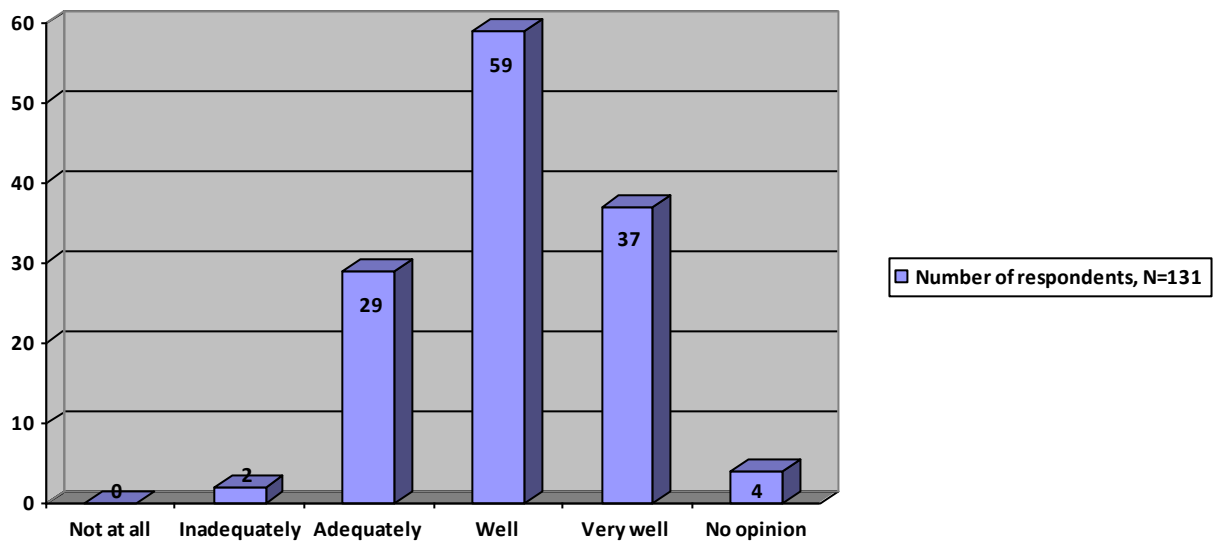


Figure 5. Distribution of responses to the question “To what extent do you think that current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks correspond with the contents described in the curriculum?”

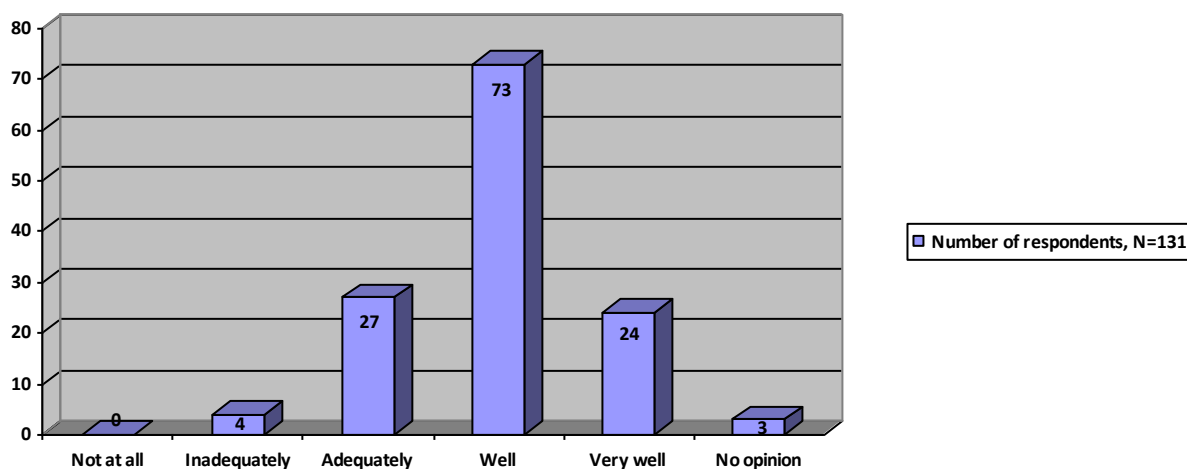


Figure 6. Distribution of responses to the question “To what extent do you find that current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbook enable reaching the goals set by the curriculum?”

5.4 Language skills

One major section of this study focused on different language skills and how well Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers think they are represented in current textbooks. Table 2 presents the distributions of the received responses on the extent to which different language skills are covered. Merely by looking at the responses on the four traditionally mentioned language skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening – several observations can be made. Reading and writing received higher ratings than listening and speaking, with reading, according to the participants’ opinions, being the most comprehensively trained skill. As can be seen in Table 2, just about 15% of all participants thought that speaking and listening are covered inadequately. Whilst 84 participants thought that writing is covered *well* or *very well* and 108 participants said the same about reading, the corresponding number for speaking was 69 and for listening 67.

More revealing numbers, however, appear when looking at language skills other than the four most commonly named, as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural knowledge were included in this study as separate language skills. Whilst grammar and

vocabulary received very high ratings, even exceeding those of speaking, writing and listening, it is pronunciation and cultural knowledge which, according to the results, are not covered to the same extent as the other language skills included in this survey. 36 participants – more than 25 percent of all respondents – felt that pronunciation is covered *inadequately*, whilst the same number for cultural knowledge was 42, that is, over 32 percent of the participants. Only 50 participants, which is less than 40 percent of the respondents, thought that vocabulary is covered *well* or *very well*, and the same number for cultural knowledge only reached 36 – just over 27 percent of all respondents.

Based on these results, the previously discussed criticism of e.g. Folse (2004:22-23, 127-159), who claims that the idea that textbooks cover English vocabulary sufficiently is a myth, McDonough and Shaw (2003:91), who argue that textbook text practice structures and vocabulary rather than reading skills and Hyland (2003:95), who lists problems of textbooks with regard to teaching writing, does not seem to be validated by Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers. On the other hand, the concerns mentioned earlier of e.g. Hietala (2013:108-110), who criticizes textbooks on a number of speaking-related deficiencies, Rost (2001:13) who claims that current teaching materials are out-of-date as regards developing listening skills and Tergujeff (2013:53), who criticizes current textbooks for neglecting a number of aspects in teaching pronunciation appear to be, at least to an extent, shared by teachers. In addition, Elomaa's (2009:109) reference to cultural knowledge as a "by-product" of language skills might be true in current textbooks in a meaning other than that intended by Elomaa (see section 3.3.8).

An issue with the survey concerning this question came up in the responses to the open-ended question at the end, namely, that sometimes teachers find that some language skills are given *too much* attention. Where this feeling may have been present, the participants were not able to express the opinion in their responses to this question. The following comments, for example, reveal the issue:

... Grammar is presented exhaustingly thoroughly ... (Teacher 10)

I would have needed “too much” as an alternative to, for example, the question on language skills. Reading, for instance, is given too much attention in coursebooks, I find, ... (Teacher 11)

Table 2. Distribution of answers to the question “To what extent do you think that the following language skills are covered in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks?” N=131.

	Not at all	Inadequately	Adequately	Well	Very well	No opinion	Mean
Speaking	0	18	43	47	22	1	3.56
Writing	0	7	39	59	25	1	3.78
Reading	0	5	17	57	51	1	4.18
Listening	0	18	46	54	13	0	3.47
Grammar	0	2	26	73	30	0	4.00
Vocabulary	0	5	23	67	36	0	4.02
Pronunciation	0	36	45	40	10	0	3.18
Cultural knowledge	0	42	52	32	4	1	2.98

5.5 Authenticity

The next section of the survey focused on authentic language use, with the question asked being quite simple to what extent the participants thought that authentic language is represented in current textbooks. Figure 7 shows the distribution of the respondents' answers. As can be seen in Figure 7, the general opinion was rather divided, with 25 respondents replying that authentic language is represented *inadequately* and only 10 respondents opting for *very well*. Altogether 65 respondents thought that authentic language is represented *well* or *very well* – a number which covers just about 50 percent of all respondents. With the remaining 41 participants replying to the question with

adequately, the results seem to indicate that there is still room for improvement in the field of authentic language use in current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks. Some open responses commented on authenticity, which reveal that the actual concept itself does not mean the same thing for all EFL teachers, for instance the following:

... The biggest problem, in my opinion, are the recordings of the books. The accents heard on the tapes are not authentic. Naturally, they are targeted at students but they give a wrong impression about how English is really spoken ... (Teacher 12)

I like how the textbook I use includes authentic / contrived texts, rather than texts written by the author. (Teacher 13)

... Secondly, what is "authenticity"? All teaching materials are mainly approved by a native speaker. (Teacher 14)

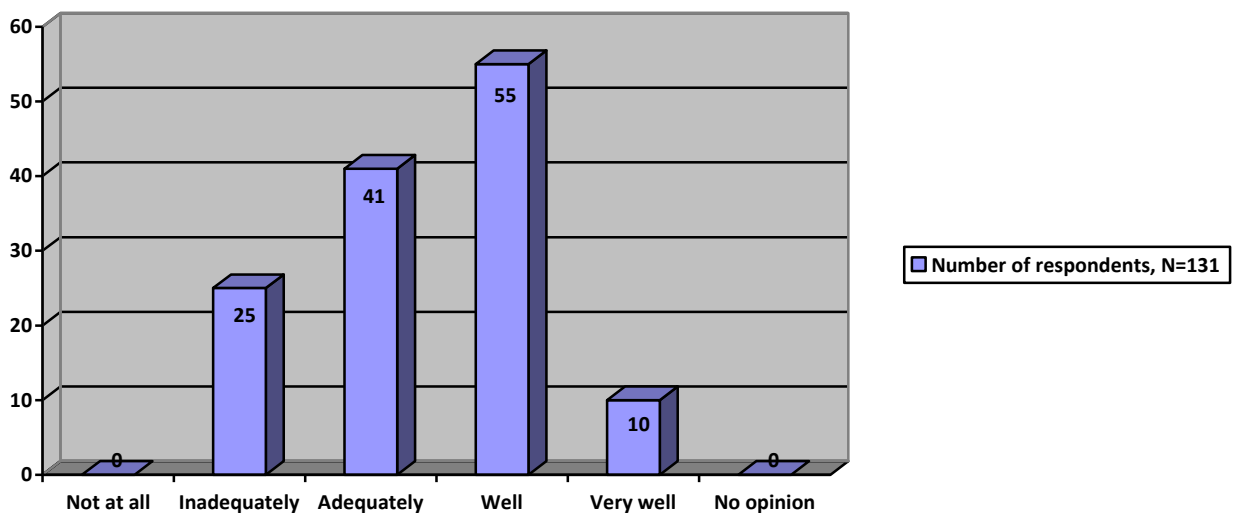


Figure 7. Distribution of responses to the question "To what extent do you think that authentic language use is represented in Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks?"

Merely the fact that teachers are not unanimous on what authenticity actually serves as evidence of the controversial nature of the topic. Defining authentic may be even more difficult in today's world, where English is spoken as a *lingua franca* and a significant amount of English is used in situations involving non-native speakers only, i.e. where no native speakers of English are present. The comment by Teacher 12, "...they give a wrong

impression about how English is really spoken...” is a perfect example about this controversy; should EFL teaching materials include text and recordings written or read by native speakers only or should English as a lingua franca be represented more extensively, and how does one define a native speaker in a world where many achieve native-like language skills in English even though they have not acquired it as a mother tongue?

The participants’ somewhat divided general opinion on authenticity in current textbooks, which reveals that not all teachers are satisfied with the amount to which authentic language use is represented, is thankfully softened by Mishan’s (2004:17) notion that the way in which materials are used in foreign language classrooms can sometimes authenticate materials which, according to traditional definitions of authenticity (see e.g. Elomaa 2009:107), would normally not be considered authentic. Competent teachers can therefore, where they find necessary, make up for the deficiencies of teaching materials in this respect by creating real purposes for language use in the classroom.

5.6 (De)motivating learners

Another question asked from the participants concerned some aspects of current textbooks and their effects on learner motivation. Table 3 shows the studied aspects and the participants’ responses as to whether they think these aspects affect learner motivation negatively or positively.

As can be seen in Table 3, all studied aspects – appearance, topics, linguistic difficulty and exercise types – were mainly seen as factors that motivate learners. Addressed topics was seen as the most motivational factor, with 56 respondents replying with *positively* and an additional 52 with *somewhat positively*. Appearance and exercise types received almost as high evaluations, whilst the level of linguistic difficulty in current textbooks caused more deviation, as 33 respondents thought that the linguistic difficulty of current textbooks affects learner motivation *negatively* – on the other hand, altogether 72 respondents answered the same question with *somewhat positively* or *positively*. Muhonen’s (2004:51-53) results where a number of features of textbooks were listed as demotivational factors can

hardly be supported by the responses to this survey, as all factors asked upon were estimated to have a positive effect on motivation rather than a negative one, with the level of linguistic difficulty being the only factor that stands out as not being a clearly positive factor. The means of the answers in all parts of this question were above 3.5 and mostly around 4, which stood for *somewhat positively*.

The question on motivation was found somewhat problematic by the respondents. There were more *no opinion* -responses than in the other questions of the survey, and some additional comments on the question were left, for example:

The motivation of the students towards the book almost always depends on for example the learner's language skills and the attitude towards foreign language learning: the weak ones certainly won't be motivated by e.g. difficult texts, while the good ones feel that they're not provided enough challenge. Motivation is therefore difficult to assess merely on a general level. (Teacher 4)

All sections of the survey don't really work, e.g. the one on students' attitudes. A student's attitude can be both positive and negative even on a single lesson depending on the text or the exercise. (Teacher 16)

Table 3. Distribution of answers to the question "To what extent do you think that the following aspects in current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks affect learner motivation?" N=131

	Negatively (1)	Somewhat negatively (2)	No effect (3)	Somewhat positively (4)	Positively (5)	No opinion	Mean
Appearance	0	10	10	58	38	15	4.07
Topics addressed	0	10	8	52	56	5	4.22
Level of linguistic difficulty	0	33	13	51	21	13	3.51
Exercise types	0	15	16	61	29	10	3.86

5.7 Differentiation

The next section of the questionnaire focused on differentiation and how well current textbooks enable differentiating instruction to increase or reduce content difficulty. It is here that Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers rated current textbooks by far lower than in the previous questions, with only 26 respondents replying that current textbooks enable increasing content difficulty *well* or *very well*, and merely 14 saying the same about reducing content difficulty. More importantly, 62 respondents felt that increasing content difficulty is enabled *not at all* or *barely at all* or *inadequately*, whilst 67 respondents felt the same way about reducing content difficulty. The average ratings for textbooks in these categories only reach 2.74 and 2.54 respectively, with grade 3 standing for *adequately*. The criticism expressed by Marja-Aho (2003:32) on the insufficiency of the dominant practice of differentiation today - i.e. practically only giving additional exercises to faster learners - is therefore validated by the results of this study. Some open responses also confirmed the finding, e.g. the following:

I would like to have more opportunities for differentiation in both directions ... (Teacher 17)

... The heterogeneity within the groups should be taken into account more ... (Teacher 18)

Differentiation in upper secondary school curriculum is, as mentioned, a controversial topic. Upper secondary school instruction, despite any pious claims of learning skills for life etc., at least to a great extent if not solely aims at success in the matriculation examination at the end of the upper secondary school studies, to which every student should be given an equal chance. This makes differentiating instruction somewhat problematic and may be an explanation for the fact that publishers do not offer differentiated coursebooks for weaker learners on upper secondary school level - something that is not rare on primary and secondary school levels. Nevertheless, the responses received in this study (see Table 4) quite clearly show that Finnish upper secondary school English teachers are not happy with the extent to which current textbooks allow them to differentiate instruction for weaker learners as well as for learners who need more challenging content. This result should be seen as an indicator of the fact

that however controversial the topic may be, teachers feel that it is necessary and not practiced enough in current upper secondary school EFL textbooks. Whilst a competent teacher is once again certainly capable of making up for the lack of opportunities for differentiation in published teaching materials, any improvements of coursebooks in this sense could free teachers' resources for other pedagogical functions and improve the well-being of teachers by reducing the time they have to spend on designing their own materials if they wish to individualize their instruction for learners of different linguistic competence or rate of learning.

Table 4. Distribution of answers to the question "To what extent do you find that current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks enable differentiation ...?" N=131

	Not at all or barely at all (1)	Inadequately (2)	Adequately (3)	Well (4)	Very well (5)	No opinion	Mean
... to increase content difficulty?	4	58	42	20	6	1	2.74
... to reduce content difficulty?	9	58	48	11	3	2	2.54

5.8 Learning styles

The section on motivation was followed in the survey by a question on learning styles, namely, to what extent the participants find that different learning styles are catered for in

current textbooks. Alongside motivation, this was the other section where textbooks scored relatively poorly; 66 respondents altogether found that different learning styles are provided for *not at all or barely at all* or *inadequately*. Whilst 50 respondents responded that this is done *adequately*, only 9 participants felt that current textbooks manage to take different learning styles into account *well* and, what is worth noticing, no respondents opted for *very well*. The mean of the answers, that is, the average score of textbooks where 3 stands for *adequately*, was only 2.50. The results strongly support the findings of Leppänen (2011:59-61) who discovered that Finnish EFL teachers do sometimes find their textbooks inadequate with regard to catering for different learning styles.

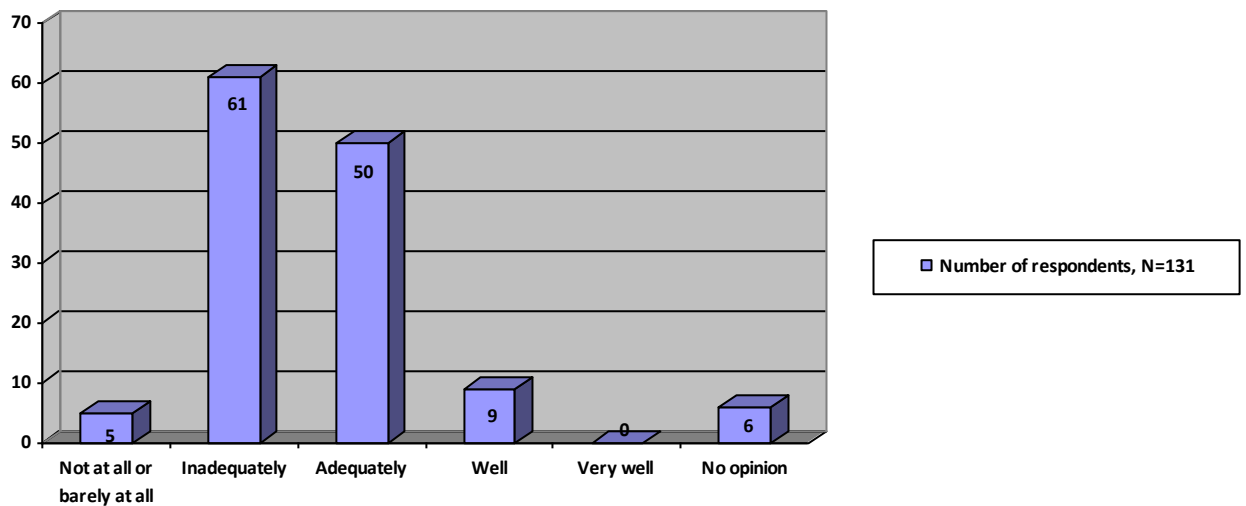


Figure 8. Distribution of responses to the question “To what extent do you think that current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks take different learning styles into account?”

It has to be mentioned here, however, that learning styles as a topic seems to be somewhat controversial for teachers, as well; some open responses expressed critique towards the concept, e.g. the following:

The existence of learning styles has not been confirmed empirically. (Teacher 19)

Last year I read a scientific article on learning styles. According to the author, everyone learns pretty much in the same way. The author felt that the theory about different learning styles exists persistently, even though it cannot be backed up by scientific research. (Teacher 20)

Learning styles, based on these responses, seems to be an area that divides the opinion. Whilst the low mean of the answers to the question on learning styles indicates that Finnish upper secondary school teachers, in general, are not satisfied with the extent to which different learners are catered for in current textbooks, there are also teachers – and, based on the open responses, scholars – who argue against the existence of the whole concept. In any case, as with differentiation and authentic language use, a capable and willing teacher can, at the cost of putting in time and effort, overcome the possible deficiencies of published teaching materials in terms of catering for different learning styles, as well.

5.9 Overall evaluation

Before offering the participants the chance to comment on textbooks or the survey freely with an open-ended question, one more closed question was asked, in which the participants were expected to give current textbooks an overall grade on a scale from 4 to 10 (the most commonly used scale in Finnish elementary, secondary and upper secondary schools), where 4 stands for fail and 10 for excellent. Figure 9 shows the responses. Overall, Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers seem rather satisfied with their current textbooks, as the mean of their answers to this overall assessment is 8.13 - on the scale used, 8 would stand for good. Some open answers also reflected the participants' high general opinions on coursebooks:

In Finland, the standard of coursebooks is excellent. They enable equal and contentwise uniform teaching in the whole country. ... (Teacher 21)

Coursebooks in Finland are excellent and well-made. They help especially new teachers in planning courses and guarantee unified teaching contents to the students regardless of the teacher. ... (Teacher 22)

... English materials are, however, at the top of foreign language teaching materials and envied by teachers of other languages! (Teacher 23)

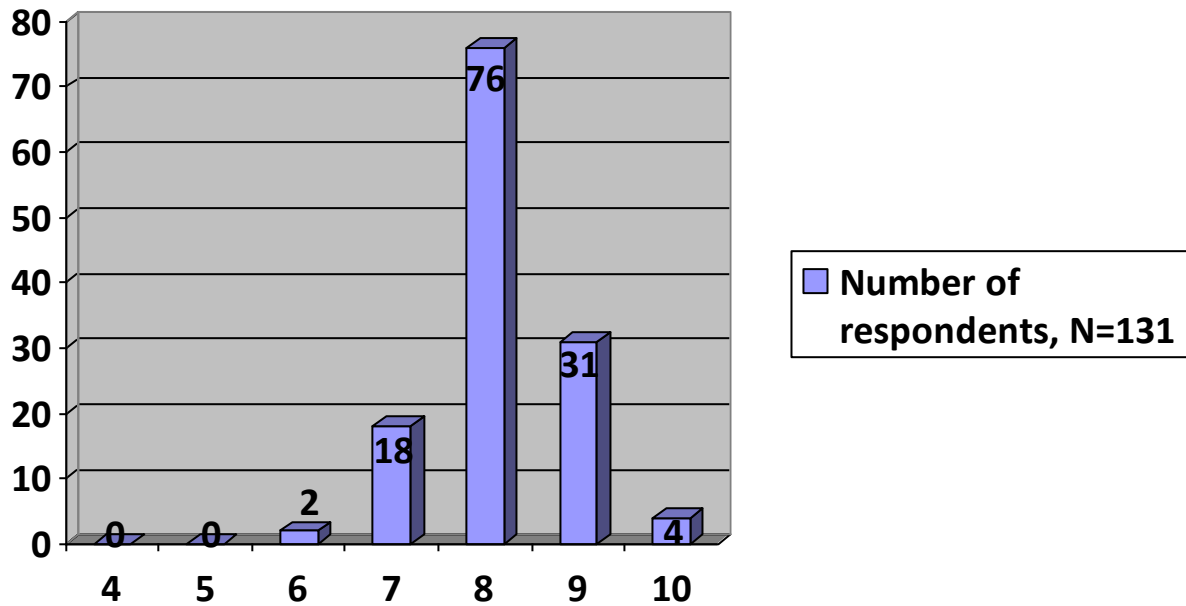


Figure 9. Distribution of responses to the question “Which overall grade on a scale from 4 to 10 would you give current Finnish upper secondary school EFL textbooks on their usefulness in teaching?”

The responses to this final question seem to once again underline the strong position of textbooks in Finnish EFL teaching, as already reported by, for example, Luukka et al. (2008) and Tergujeff (2013). In spite of the possible inadequacies that came up in the more detailed questions of the survey, the overall evaluation indicates a general happiness within Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers with the current teaching materials.

5.10 The effects of teaching experience to satisfaction with textbooks

As mentioned earlier, the only background question in the survey was on the respondents’ amount of previous teaching experience in years. This background question and its effects on the answers were examined through cross-tabulation. The statistical significance of the emerged results was interpreted through a chi-square test (see e.g. Faherty 2008:139-159). In short, the significance is expressed through a number called the P-value, and the

smaller that number is, the more significant the result is in a statistical sense. If that number is smaller than 0.05, the result can be seen as nearly statistically significant, whilst a number smaller than 0.01 reveals statistical significance and smaller than 0.001 means that the results are statistically very significant (for more information, see Faherty 2008:139-159).

Partly due to the fact that the sample was relatively small, only few statistically significant issues were discovered. One example of what was discovered would be, that it appears that more experienced teachers have unsurprisingly had a say in textbook selection more often than the less experienced ones – that is, teachers with more experience have affected or made the choice of textbook more often than teachers with less experience. This fact is presented in Table 5, where the number of respondents in each category of teaching experience and influence of textbook selection is presented, with the corresponding percentages of teaching experience groups also given.

Table 5. Raw figures and percentages of teaching experience groups on the effects of teaching experience on teachers' influence in textbook selection.

		For how long have you worked as an English teacher?			
		0-10 years	10-20 years	20-30 years	over 30 years
Did you make the decision on which textbook to use in your teaching?	Made the decision	4 12.1%	13 34.2%	11 28.2%	11 52.4%
	Affected the decision	7 21.2%	22 57.9%	26 66.7%	9 42.9%
	Did not affect the decision	22 66.7%	3 7.9%	2 5.1%	1 4.8%
P-value \approx .000					

The cross-tabulation process did appear to reveal traces of possibly existing trends, such as that less experienced teachers seemed to be slightly more critical or less positive in their evaluation of textbooks with regard to the perceived effects of textbook appearance and exercise types on student motivation, opportunities for differentiation in textbooks and the extent to which different learning styles are taken into account. Possible explanations may vary from the possibility that recently graduated teachers are more critical towards teaching materials because of their educational background, to the chance that more experienced teachers are able to work with their coursebooks more flexibly.

It has to be noted, however, that the sample, especially after division into four groups according to teaching experience (0-10 years, 10-20 years, 20-30 years and over 30 years), was too small to make reliable generalizations about the effects of teaching experience on satisfaction with textbooks. Table 5 is therefore presented as an example and as the most significant finding of the cross-tabulation process, whilst the other traces of trends are disregarded with only a suggestion that some trends similar to the ones mentioned may exist, but more specific research on the topics is needed before any general conclusions can be made.

5.11 Summary of the results

The most significant findings that have not yet been presented are provided in Table 6, which shows the means of the respondents' answers to the questions on textbooks and current pedagogical knowledge, curricula, authentic language use, learning styles and the overall evaluation of textbooks, as shown in Figures 4-9. In Tables 1-4, the means are already included, and the means of Figures 1-3 are not relevant for this part of the study.

As can be seen in Table 6 and the previous chapter, Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers, at least the ones who answered the survey, seem to hold current textbooks in high regard. All of the participants use textbooks on their lessons often or on almost every lesson, which supports the previous results received by Luukka et al. (2008:95). Textbooks appear to be the dominant medium of EFL instruction. As explained earlier, nearly 80

percent of the respondents had had at least some effect on textbook selection, which, in addition to the fact that teachers are the ones who actually use textbooks, makes information on which aspects teachers find most important when choosing a textbook more relevant. Table 1 presented the answers to the question on this topic, and it was noted that teacher's materials, covering different language skills and making use of authentic language rose as the most significant factors in textbook selection, whilst price and, perhaps surprisingly, appearance were seen as the least important factors.

Table 6. The means of the participants' answers to the questions related to satisfaction with textbooks.

	Mean (= the average score of textbooks or aspects of textbooks on a scale from 1 to 5, except the overall evaluation on a scale from 4 to 10)
Representing current pedagogical knowledge	3.80
Correspondence with the curriculum	4.03
Enabling reaching the goals set by the curriculum	3.91
Representation of authentic language	3.38
Taking different learning styles into account.	2.50
Overall grade on a scale from 4 to 10.	8.13

The remaining questions had to do more directly with textbook evaluation, and in most sections, current textbooks scored rather high marks. The average ratings for textbooks in terms of representing current pedagogical knowledge, corresponding with the curriculum, enabling reaching the goals set by the curriculum, increasing learner motivation through various features (with a possible exception on linguistic difficulty, which scored slightly lower – see Table 3.), as well as covering many of the different language skills examined (with a few interesting exceptions discussed later on – see Table 2.) were, roughly, around 4 which stood for *well* (or *good*) in most questions.

A couple of items, however, were clearly rated lower than the ones mentioned above. In terms of language skills, which was one of the larger subjects of interest in this study, it can be noted that the extent to which listening and speaking are practiced in current textbooks was evaluated somewhat lower than writing and reading. By far the lowest scores, however, were given to pronunciation and cultural knowledge. As regards the other topics included in the survey, representing authentic language, differentiation and taking different learning styles into account stood out as areas where current textbooks were rated relatively low – especially the two latter areas, where the means of the answers fall below 3 which stood for *adequately*, are worth noticing.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Limitations of the study

In this section, some arisen issues regarding the reliability, validity and generalizability of this study will be discussed. These issues include the representativeness of the sample, the level of detail in the study and feedback received from the respondents on what they found problematic while answering.

The survey was answered by a total of 131 Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers, a number which can already be considered somewhat representative as the target group is

fairly narrow. To put the number of respondents into a perspective, it can be mentioned here that there were 366 upper secondary schools in Finland in 2014 (Statistics Finland, 2014). Still, making strong claims on teachers' attitudes or demands towards publishers based on this one study alone would hardly be justified. One has to bear in mind that this study was conducted on a very general level; a number of relevant topics as regards teachers' satisfaction with textbooks were examined, but, due to the resources available, only somewhat superficially. Certain trends, such as that Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers generally seem to think that current EFL textbooks could enable differentiation and take different learning styles into account better than they do at the moment, were discovered and can be considered somewhat reliable. Further and more detailed research, however, is needed on these findings if the causes and effects of such general trends are to be understood more comprehensively.

The open-ended question at the end of the survey produced some very helpful criticism from the participants themselves, which makes it easier to see which aspects of the survey were found unclear or problematic. At times, some respondents seemed to feel that it was difficult to assess textbooks in general, and that it would have been easier to concentrate solely on the textbook they are using at the moment. Two examples of this are provided here:

... What disturbed me in your survey was that you don't ask, which books the respondents use, because there ARE differences between the books. I understand, of course, that you want to be neutral and restrain from comparing different publishers, but the term "English book" is so unspecific that the reliability of the results of your survey suffer. In upper secondary schools, a number of books are usually used side by side: there are coursebooks and grammar books and it's a bit difficult for a respondent to know, which one to talk about under the term "English coursebooks" ... (Teacher 7)

It would probably have been useful to define, which textbooks the respondents are using, as it's hard to answer on a general level, if one has only used one coursebook series ... The usefulness of a coursebook is only seen once it is used. (Teacher 14)

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of this study was not to compare different coursebook series with each other to find out which one is currently favored by teachers, but rather, to

receive an overall understanding of the satisfaction of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers on currently available textbooks. Some participants obviously found this fact challenging while answering and only based their answers on the coursebook they are using at the moment.

The answers are based on one series only because I'm not that familiar with other series ...
(Teacher 24)

When answering these questions, I mainly focused on Open Road, which I have now taught for about 3 years. (Teacher 25)

Furthermore, some participants felt that there are too many differences within the different parts of a single coursebook series to assess them on a general level:

There can be significant differences between the different books of a single series. For example, Open Road Course 8 is an extremely good book, whilst Open Road Course 5 is, especially as regards grammar, narrow, one-sided and the exercises on articles are terrible in that book.
(Teacher 15)

These issues, however, were expressed by only a handful of respondents. As the original instruction for the respondents (see Appendix 1) was to focus on the coursebook they are using at the moment where they feel they are unable to assess current coursebooks in general, these issues were also, to an extent, foreseen and accepted when devising the study. In spite of these reported difficulties, I would therefore estimate that the study served its purpose in discovering the general trends of teachers' satisfaction with current textbooks.

6.2 Implications and suggestions for further study

Based on the results and the issues discussed in the previous section, a number of suggestions for further research arise. The aspects of textbooks that were rated low by teachers, such as the lack of opportunities for differentiation, the insufficient catering for different learning styles and the unsatisfactory extent to which cultural knowledge and pronunciation are practiced, could certainly do with further, more specific attention. In

addition to more specifically targeted quantitative studies, qualitative studies such as interviews of teachers, students, textbook authors and publishers or content analyses of coursebooks could shed light on the cause-and-effect relationships and other details of the phenomena, only the surface of which this study has scratched.

This study alone is unlikely to revolutionize the coursebook industry or begin a new era of modern textbooks. Based on this study only it is not sensible and certainly not my aim to demand radical changes to current teaching materials. If one believes the claims of Mares (2003:132) that publishers, in general, produce very similar materials to the existing, traditional ones with only the addition of “current buzzwords” in promoting them, it would not be surprising to see the words learning styles, cultural knowledge, differentiation etc. appear more often in the promotional texts for new textbook in the future – that is, should this study create any interest among textbook writers or publishers. But to think that this study would result in the actual improvement of textbooks, for example, in the mentioned areas, seems slightly naïve; more evidence, larger samples and studies of greater resources and volumes are probably needed before any such changes can be expected. Still, this study has provided some data on what factors could be taken into account in designing new textbooks, which issues could do with more attention in the process and how Finnish EFL textbooks, which teachers already seem to generally appreciate and very frequently use, could be developed further to fulfil teachers’ expectations and needs even better.

As regards implications for teachers and teacher training, the same basic assumption applies; nothing revolutionary is expected as a result of this one study alone, but what was uncovered could provide useful stimuli for teachers when making use of textbooks or planning lessons and courses as well as for teacher training. Whilst this study has not objectively revealed that current upper secondary school EFL coursebooks neglect certain aspects of language teaching, it has shown that Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers generally consider some aspects less sufficiently covered than others. Therefore, it might be useful for teachers and teacher trainees to closely examine and, where they find

necessary, adjust or add to these teaching materials when making use of them, in order to e.g. create more opportunities for differentiation, cater for different types of learners, cover cultural aspects or pronunciation more thoroughly etc. As regards teacher training, it could be useful to acknowledge the issues that were found neglected in this study and try to provide tools for future teachers to overcome these inadequacies – especially since, as mentioned, textbooks are slow to develop and whilst new series are introduced all the time, actual and concrete development from previous textbooks can be a less frequent phenomenon (see e.g. Mares 2003:132).

The fact that the significant role of textbooks in Finnish EFL teaching has been proven numerous times (see e.g. Luukka et al. 2008, Tergujeff 2013) means that any textbook-related phenomena can heavily impact the quality of teaching and learning. Any research findings, including the ones presented in this study, on such phenomena should therefore be taken seriously – not as unquestionable truths but as issues worth examining and taking into account in the classroom as well as in other contexts such as teacher training, materials design and evaluation etc. Improving teaching materials or the way they are used, for example, in terms of the issues that were discovered as weaknesses in this study, could improve learning (or teaching) results on a large scale. Moreover, such improvements could reshape the language proficiency profile, that is, the overall language proficiency which consists of mastering different language skills, of current and future language users. Even more concretely, any developments of published teaching materials, especially in the areas identified as problematic by teachers themselves, could have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction and well-being, which could have further, far-reaching consequences for a number of different parties ranging from teachers and students to the entire Finnish school system.

6.3 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the general opinions and satisfaction of Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers on the upper secondary school EFL coursebooks currently available. A number of features related to textbooks and teaching and previous research

on these features were presented as a framework for the present study. The data of this study was gathered with an online survey sent to the mailings list of The Association of Teachers of English in Finland. A total of 131 responses were received. The distributions and means of the responses were analysed, as well as the content of the answers to the open-ended question at the end of the survey. The effects of teaching experience to the answers were also studied through cross-tabulation, although little evidence of such effects was found.

What was discovered, on the other hand, were a few aspects, where Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers clearly seem not completely satisfied with current coursebooks. These aspects were covering teaching cultural knowledge and pronunciation, taking different learning styles into account and enabling differentiation. Otherwise, the respondents generally seemed happy with current textbooks overall and as regards teaching different language skills, corresponding with the curriculum and motivating students. Making use of authentic materials was a feature in which the overall satisfaction of teachers fell somewhere in between the two previously mentioned groups.

The value of this study, nonetheless, probably does not lie in any sort of indisputable evidence revealed, but rather, in the trends or traces of trends it may have uncovered and in the further research it could provoke. As suggested, qualitative research methods and more detailed studies on the aspects touched on in this study could make a useful starting point for further research on teachers' views on textbooks or, perhaps more objectively, on the content of textbooks. A number of possible questions for further research have been introduced, and if this study creates interest on any of these questions or in any way provokes critical thinking or new ideas among publishers, teachers or teacher trainees, it will have served its purpose in a way that is more important than what has been achieved so far, which is discovering how satisfied Finnish upper secondary school EFL teachers are with the coursebooks currently on market.

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APPENDIX 1. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Disp14

Hyvä vastaaja,

pyydän vastauksianne tähän kyselyyn, mikäli opetatte englannin kieltä lukiotasolla – myös, vaikka ette opetuksessanne käyttäisi lainkaan oppikirjoja. Kyselyssä käytetään sanaa oppikirja, johon sisältyy tässä tapauksessa kaikki kustantajan julkaisema, oppikirjasarjaan liittyvä materiaali (oppikirjat, tallenteet, sähköiset materiaalit, opettajan materiaalit ym.). Tarkoituksena ei ole vertailla oppikirjasarjojen paremmuutta, joten sillä, mitä oppikirjaa opetuksessanne käytätte - vai käytättekö mitään - ei ole merkitystä. Tutkimukseni tavoite on saavuttaa yleiskäsitystä siitä, kuinka käyttökelpoisena työvälineenä suomalaiset lukion englanninopettajat pitävät nykyisiä lukioenglannin oppikirjasarjoja.

Toteutan Pro Gradu -tutkielmani täysin itsenäisesti - en ole saanut toimeksiantoa miltään ulkopuoliselta taholta, ja tutkimukseni on täysin riippumaton esimerkiksi oppikirjojen kustantajista.

Kun vastaatte, yritäkää ensisijaisesti arvioida kokonaiskuvaa nykyään yleisimmin käytössä olevista lukioenglannin oppikirjasarjoista - mikäli koette jonkin kysymyksen kohdalla, että ette pysty tähän, keskittykää tällaisessa kysymyksessä tällä hetkellä omassa opetuksessanne käyttämäänne kirjasarjaan.

Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie aikaa noin 5 minuuttia. Saaduista tuloksista kirjoitettava Pro Gradu –tutkielma tullaan julkaisemaan JYX –tiedostokokoelmassa (<https://jyx.jyu.fi>), jossa se on vapaasti luettavissa viimeistään alkusyksystä.

Suuret kiitokset vastauksistanne!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Janne Hietala
janne.t.hietala@student.jyu.fi

Opetuskokemus

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt englannin opettajana?

<input type="checkbox"/>	0-5 vuotta		
<input type="checkbox"/>	5-10 vuotta		
<input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 vuotta		
<input type="checkbox"/>	20-30 vuotta		
<input type="checkbox"/>	yli 30 vuotta		

Pedagogiikka			
Missä määrin nykyiset lukion englannin oppikirjat vastaavat mielestäsi nykyistä pedagogista tietoa ja oppimiskäsitystä?			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eivät lainkaan		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittämättömästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittävästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Erittäin hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	En osaa sanoa		DK

Opetussuunnitelma			
Missä määrin tämänhetkiset lukion englannin oppikirjat mielestäsi vastaavat opetussuunnitelman sisältöjä?			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eivät lainkaan		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittämättömästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittävästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Erittäin hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	En osaa sanoa		DK

Opetussuunnitelma2			
Missä määrin nykyiset lukion englannin oppikirjat mielestäsi mahdollistavat opetussuunnitelmassa asetettujen tavoitteiden saavuttamisen?			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Eivät lainkaan		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittämättömästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Riittävästi		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Erittäin hyvin		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	En osaa sanoa		DK

Eriyttäminen4						
Missä määrin nykyiset lukion englannin oppikirjat mahdollistavat mielestäsi eriyttämisen ...						
	Eivät lainkaan tai eivät juuri lainkaan	Riittämättömästi	Riittävästi	Hyvin	Erittäin hyvin	En osaa sanoa
... ylöspäin (= haastavuuden lisäämiseksi)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
... alaspäin (= haastavuuden helpottamiseksi)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Oppimistyyliit						
Missä määrin nykyiset lukion englannin oppikirjat ottavat mielestäsi huomioon opiskelijoiden erilaiset oppimistyyliit?						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Eivät lainkaan tai eivät juuri lainkaan					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Riittämättömästi					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Riittävästi					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hyvin					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Erittäin hyvin					
<input type="checkbox"/>	En osaa sanoa					DK

Yleisarvio						
Minkä yleisarvosanan kouluasteikolla 4-10 antaisit nykyisille lukion englannin kielen oppikirjoille niiden käyttökelpoisuudesta opetuksessa?						
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 Hylätty					
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 Välttävä					
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 Kohtalainen					
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 Tyydyttävä					
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 Hyvä					
<input type="checkbox"/>	9 Kiitettävä					
<input type="checkbox"/>	10 Erinomainen					

Vapaasana						
Haluatko sanoa jotain muuta lukion englannin kirjoihin tai tähän kyselyyn liittyen?						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ei muuta sanottavaa					

APPENDIX 2. THE ORIGINAL FINNISH REPONSES TO THE OPEN QUESTION

Teacher 1) "Olen luopunut 3 kurssilla oppikirjan käytöstä, koska oppilaiden oppikirjasta maksama korkea hinta ei ole vastannut sisältöä."

Teacher 2) "Kustantajat ovat yhä enemmän lukion lompakolla: ennen kaikki opettajan materiaali oli ilmaista, nyt kaikki maksaa..."

Teacher 3) "Hyvä kysely! Ensimmäinen laatuaan, johon olen törmännyt."

Lukion oppikirjasarjoissa ei ole huomioitu sitä, että Suomessa on aikuislukioita, joissa opiskelee aikuisia ihmisiä. Eli kirjojen aihepiirit on poikkeuksetta suunnattu nuorisolle.

Mielestäni oppikirjat eivät ole pystyneet uudistumaan samaa vauhtia kuin ympäröivä maailma, etenkin sähköinen, muuttuu. Ei riitä, että paperinen oppikirja viedään sähköiseen ympäristöön. Myös tehtävätyyppien on uudistuttava."

Teacher 4) "Opiskelijoiden motivaatio kirjaan liittyen riippuu lähes aina mm. opiskelijan taitotasosta ja asenteesta kieltenopiskelua kohtaan: heikot eivät todellakaan motivoitu esim. vaikeista teksteistä, kun taas hyvät kokevat saavansa vähän haastetta. Motivaatiota on siis vaikea arvioida pelkästään yleisellä tasolla."

Sähköiset materiaalit laahaavat tällä hetkellä hieman jäljessä, kun ajatellaan että sähköiset yo-kokeet lähestyvät. Muuten oppikirjat ovat hyvällä tasolla, mutta sähköisten materiaalien puute tai ""jäykkyys"" ja yksitoikkoisuus haittaavat."

Teacher 5) "Olen erityisen tyytyväinen sähköiseen materiaaliin, jonka avulla 'vanhakin' opettaja on saanut nykyaikaisen otteen opetukseen. (Otava, Open Road)"

Teacher 6) "1) Kirjat aloittavat liian helpolla materiaalilla ja päätyvät liian nopeasti taas hyvin vaativaan asiaan. Tämä 'learning curve' on liian jyrkkä."

2) Aiheissa etsitään turhaan erikoisuuksia. Kaipaen perustekstejä perussanastoiheen, joita voin laajentaa ajankohtaisilla omilla materiaaleillani.

3) Rakenteiden opettelu vaatii paljon toistoja. Tehtäviä saisi olla paljon. Myös kontrastiivinen kielioppi loistaa poissaolollaan. Jossain kirjassa oli muinoin yksittäisiä FinnDiff -tehtäviä, jotka olivat aika hyviä."

Teacher 7) "Englannin kirjojen ongelma on siinä, miten konservatiivisia ne ovat joidenkin asioiden, esim. perhesuhteiden moninaisuuden suhteen. Ruotsin kirjoissa on viime vuosina ollut paljon enemmän diversiteettiä kuin englannin kirjoissa, joista osa on jopa häiritsevän heteronormatiivisia, ajoittain homo- ja transfobisiakin.

Kyselyssäsi häiritsi se, että et kysy, mitä kirjoja kukin kyselyyn vastannut käyttää, sillä kirjojen välillä ON suuria eroja. Ymmärrän toki, että haluat olla neutraali ja jättää eri kustantamoiden vastakkainasettelut tekemättä, mutta termi ""englannin kirja"" on siinä määrin epäspesifi, että kyselysi tulosten luotettavuus kärsii. Lukiossa on yleensä käytössä useita kirjoja rinnakkain: on kurssikirjaa ja kielioppikirjaa ja vastaajan on hieman hankala tietää, mistä noista puhuisi, kun puhuu ""englannin oppikirjoista"". Ja on helppoa väittää, että kirjasarja, jota on itse ollut valitsemassa on ""hyvä"", vaikkei se nyt mikään erityisen kaksinen olisikaan – muutenhan sitä tuntisi itsensä ihan idiootiksi :)"

Teacher 8) "Toivoisin kiinnittävän huomiota tasa-arvoiseen aiheiden käsittelyyn. Esim Open Road sarjan kirjassa 5 kulttuurin tekijät ovat lähtökohtaisesti miehiä: kappaleissa esiintyvät musiikin, elokuvan, kirjallisuuden jne toimijat ovat kaikki miehiä, ja lähes kaikki kappaleet ovat miesten kirjoittamia. Tähän ovat opiskelijatkin kiinnittäneet huomiota. Muuten oiva sarja kyllä."

Teacher 9) "Open Road sarjassa liian vähän kulttuuritietoutta muista englanninkielisistä alueista. In TOUCH sarja oli siksi PAREMPI.

OR sähköiset materiaalit ok. Enemmän saisi olla talouselämää käsitteleviä juttuja, rahankäyttöä, oman talouden hallin taan liittyviä tekstejä myös."

Teacher 10) "Käyttäessäni kirjasarjassa (Open Road) kielioppia käydään läpi uuvuttavan yksityiskohtaisesti. Myös suulliseen työskentelyyn laaditut kokonaisuudet ovat ohjeistettu liian yksityiskohtaisesti, ja niissä olevia osioita joutuu karsimaan, jotta opiskelijat eivät täysin kyllästyisi. Tämä taas vie opettajalta aikaa tuntia suunnitellessa. Jatkossa aion kiinnittää erityistä huomiota materiaalin selkeyteen ja siihen, että tehtävien ohjeet ovat nopeasti hahmotettavissa. Myös sähköiset koepaketit tulevat olemaan tärkeitä."

Teacher 11) "Olisin kaivannut vaihtoehtoa ""liikaa"" vaikkapa kielen eri osa-alueita käsittelevään kysymykseen. Vaikkapa lukemiseen keskitytään minusta liikaa oppikirjoissa, ts. tekstit ovat liian pitkiä, ja niitä on hankala käsitellä."

Teacher 12) "Kirjoja on vaikea arvioida kokonaisuuksina koska niissä on toisaalta paljon hyvää ja toisaalta paljon heikkouksia. Kirjojen tehtävät voivat olla todella toistavia ja opiskelijoista puuduttavia vaikka sinällään tehokkaita kielenoppimisen kannalta. Etenkin ensimmäisen lukiovuoden oppikirjoissa on olematon määrä tehtäviä ja tekstejä, joilla voisi eriyttää ylöspäin. Osa opiskelijoista on hyvin edistyneitä ja kaipaavat haastetta, jota toki opettaja voi tuoda muuta kautta tunneille. Kirjojen äänitteet koen suurimmaksi ongelmaksi. Nauhoilla kuultavat aksentit eivät ole autenttisia. Toki ne on tarkoitettu opiskelijoille mutta antavat väärän kuvan siitä miten englantia todella puhutaan. Puhenopeus myös aivan eri kun ylioppilaskokeissa."

Teacher 13) "Pidän siitä, että käyttämäni oppikirja sisältää autenttisia/muokattuja tekstejä, eikä oppikirjailijan kirjoittamia tekstejä."

Teacher 14) "Olisi varmaan kannattanut määritellä, mitä kirjasarjaa vastaaja käyttää, sillä on vaikea vastata yleisellä tasolla, jos ei ole opettanut kuin yhtä oppikirjasarjaa, esim. tällä hetkellä käytössä pääasiassa joko Otavan Open Road tai Sanoman Profiles, jotka ovat

erilaisia. Kirjasarjan toimivuus tulee esiin vasta, kun sitä opettaa. Toiseksi, mitä on ""autenttisuus""? Kaikki oppimateriaalit käyvät pääasiassa natiivin hyväksynnän kautta."

Teacher 15) "Samassa sarjassa voi olla eri kurssien kirjojen välillä suuria eroja. Esimerkiksi Open Road Course 8 on erittäin hyvä kirja, mutta Open Road Course 5 on ennen kaikkea kielioppiasioden suhteen suppea, yksipuolinen ja artikkelitehtävät ovat ihan surkeita siinä kirjassa."

Teacher 16) "Kysely ei oikein toimi kaikissa kohdissa, esim. opiskelijoiden asenteet-kohdassa. Ne voivat olla samalla opiskelijalla kielteisiä tai myönteisiä vaikka samalla oppitunnilla riippuen tekstistä tai tehtävästä."

Teacher 17) "kaipaisin enemmän eriyttämistä molempiin suuntiin sekä lisää kuunteluharjoituksia"

Teacher 18) "Lukion ykköskurssin kielioppi on puuduttava. Aikamuodot jo sinällään iso paketti. Lisäksi tulee vielä ehtolauseet ja liitekysymys."

Oppikirjojen tehtävissä pitäisi huomioida paremmin ryhmien heterogeenisyys. Alkuun selkeitä perustehtäviä ja siitä voisi sitten syventää ja antaa haasteita edistyneille."

Teacher 19) "Oppimistyylien olemassaoloa ei ole voitu tieteellisesti vahvistaa."

Teacher 20) "Luin viime vuonna tieteellisen artikkelin aiheesta oppimistyylit. Sen kirjoittajan mukaan oppiminen tapahtuu kaikilla suunnilleen samalla tavalla. Hänen mielestään teoria erilaisista oppimistyyleistä elää sitkeästi, vaikka sille ei löydy tieteellisiä tutkimuksia pohjaksi."

Teacher 21) "Suomessa lukion oppikirjojen taso on huippua. Ne mahdollistavat tasapuolisen ja yhtäläisen opetuksen sisällöllisesti koko maassa. Puhun kokemuksela, joka on hankittu monesta eri lukiosta, eri puolilta maata."

Teacher 22) "Oppikirjat ovat Suomessa loistavia ja hyvin tehtyjä. Ne auttavat varsinkin uusia opettajia kurssien suunnittelussa ja takaavat yhdenmukaiset opetussisällöt opiskelijoille opettajasta riippumatta. Ne eivät kuitenkaan voi kattaa kaikkia asioita ja kielen osa-alueita täydellisesti. Siksi luokassa on opettaja. Kirjat voivat toimia hyvänä pohjana tunnille ja opettaja muokkaa opiskeltavia asioita ryhmien tason ja erilaisuuden mukaan. Oppikirjojen ei tarvitse antaa kaikkia materiaaleja ja ideoita ja olla "valmiiksi pureskeltuja", onhan luokassa opettaja, jolla toivottavasti on ideoita ja mielikuvitusta."

Teacher 23) "Jonkinlainen "välivaihe" meneillään nyt, kun ollaan siirtymässä enemmän sähköisiin materiaaleihin. Aiemmat kirjat alkavat jo tuntua hieman ajastaan jälkeen jääneiltä, ainakin osassa kursseista, mutta uudet materiaalit vaikuttavat lupaavilta. Autenttisuutta ja kulttuuritietoutta kaipaamaan lisää sekä erilaisia englannin variantteja sekä haastavuutta lisää (toisaalta osalle opiskelijoita haasteeta on nykyiselläänkin riittävästi). Englannin opetukseen on onneksi aina löydettävissä lisämateriaalia, oikeastanon runsauden pulaa, mutta tietysti materiaalin muokkaukseen menee paljon aikaa eikä opettajalla aina sitä ole... Enkun materiaalit on kuitenkin kieltenopetuksen parhaimmista, jota muut kieltenopettajat kadehtivat!"

Teacher 24) "Vastaukset perustuu vain yhteen sarjaan koska muita en niin hyvin tunne. Kysymykset aika yleisellä tasolla ja sen vuoksi vaikea vastata."

Teacher 25) "Ajattelin näihin kysymyksiin vastatessani lähinnä kirjasarjaa Open Road, jota olen nyt opettanut n. 3 vuotta."

Teacher 26) "Mielestäni kirjasarjoissa kaksi tai kolme ensimmäistä kurssikirjaa on selkeästi monipuolisempia kuin loppukurssit. Tulee helposti tunne että tekijät panostavat niihin ja

sitten kun paketti on myyty kouluille muiden kurssikirjojen kanssa tulee kiire mikä näkyy laadussa valitettavan usein.

Nyt markkinoidaan sähköisiä materiaaleja sisältäviä uutuuksia ja koulullamme kävi yksi kustantaja mainostamassa omaansa. Uutuus on ainakin meidän koulullemme liian kallis kun koulu joutuu maksamaan jokaisesta opiskelijasta vuotuisen kurssilisenssin. Joissakin sähköisissä materiaaleissa korostetaan opettajan mahdollisuutta tehdä omaa materiaalia valmiiden lisäksi. Näin aina tuleekin tehtyä mutta en silti ole kirjantekijä vaan opettaja."

Teacher 27) "Englannin oppikirjoissa on mielestäni todella haasteellisiakin tekstejä, mikä on hyvä. Jotkut oppilaat nauttivat niistä, kuten minä itekin, mutta on tietysti oppilaita, esim. luki-vaikeuksista kärsiviä, joille nämä tekstit ovat vaikeita. Siinä pitää sitten katsoa, mitä kultakin vaatii. Toisaalta kaikki oppilaat ymmärtävät englannin tärkeyden."

Teacher 28) "Jos opetusryhmät olisivat inhimillisemmän kokoisia eikä työtä olisi niin mielettömästi, luopuisin kokonaan oppikirjasta ja tekisin oman oppimateriaalini. Tarvitsisin vain kunnollisen kielioppikirjan."

Teacher 29) "Kirjat ovat juuri nyt aika ison murroksen alla, olin juuri yhden kustantajan kirjaesittelytilaisuudessa ja kirjat ovat menossa sähköisempään suuntaan, koska myös yo-kirjoitukset sähköistyvät. Esim. koepaketteihin on tulossa videokuuntelumateriaalia ja tehtäviä. Olet ehkä hiukan jäljessä kirjojen kartoituksessa, kiinnostavampaa olisi tutkia juuri tätä sähköistymistä :) Ops uudistuu, yo-kirjoitukset uudistuvat eli myös opetusmateriaalit modernisoituvat hyvällä tavalla! Tsemppiä gradutyöhön!"

Teacher 30) "Markkinoilla olevissa kirjoissa on isoja eroja. Tuntuu oudolta, että tässä arvostellaan niitä yhtenä ryhmänä. Kommenttini liittyvät käyttämäni sarjaan, eivät yleisesti lukion kirjoihin."

Teacher 31) "Hyvä opettajan materiaali on avainasemassa kirjaa valittaessa. Oppilaat kokevat kirjan ulkopuolisen materiaalin, oli se opettajan oppaasta tai opettajan itse tuottamaa, usein mielenkiintoisemmaksi tai ainakin vaihteluksi kirjan tehtäviin verrattuna. Hyvä opettajan materiaali helpottaa myös opettajan työtä kun kaikkea lisämateriaalia ei tarvitse tuottaa itse. Lukion pitkän kielen opettajalla on tarpeeksi kotihommia korjaamisessa ilman oppituntien valmisteluun liittyvää työtäkin."

Teacher 32) "Vaikka minulla on kirja, olen vuosien varrella laatinut omat suulliset harjoitukset eri aihepiireistä sekä aihepiireistä että kielioppiasioista. Kaikki materiaalini on Moodle-oppimisalustalla opiskelijoiden käytössä."

Teacher 33) "Kirjasarjoissa voisi saman sarjan sisällä olla eri kurseissa tehtävätyypeissä enemmän vaihtelevuutta. Vaikka on tavallaan ""turvallista"", että ne toimivat saman kaavan mukaan, olisi vaihtelevuus kuitenkin piristävää, ja vaatisi vähän enemmän ajattelemista ja tehtävänantoihin perehtymistä. Varmaan toimisi myös oppilaiden erilaisuutta palvelleen."

Teacher 34) "Eihän kirja ratkaise kaikkea, vaan se, kuinka sitä tunnilla käytetään ja mitä tehtäviä kenellekin sieltä valitaan. Kirja on apuväline, johon opettajan ei pitäisi liikaa jumittua."

Teacher 35) "Ulkoasu, layout on joskus liian sekava: opiskelija ei erota aukeamasta keskeisiä osia. Graafisessa suunnittelussa ei myöskään oteta huomioon niitä opiskelijoita, jolla hahmotushäiriöitä: värit sekoittavat, tekstit jäävät värien alle jne."

Teacher 36) "Välillä pohdin pitäisikö suomalaisia opiskelijoita totuttaa myös ""huonoon englanttiin"" eli erimaalaisten ihmisten puhumaan englannin kieleen. Toinen asia mitä pitäisi harjoitella on Intian englantti. Intialaisten osuus on huomattava esim. tietoteknisillä aloilla."

Teacher 37) "On tärkeää opettaa myös kirjan ulkopuolisilla metodeilla ja aineistoilla"

Teacher 38) "Kappalevalinta kirjoissa monta kertaa älytön. Käytössä Open Road-sarja."

Teacher 39) "Minulla on kokemusta vain yhdestä kirjasarjasta."

Teacher 40) "Yleensä jokainen opettaja tuntee vain omassa käytössään olevan kirjan, joten häiritse lukea joka kohdasta 'engl kielen oppiKIRJOISTA.' Joissain kohdissa vaihtoehtona olisi pitänyt olla 'liikaa', koska osa kirjan tekijöistä kuvittelee, että kielioppi opitaan vain suullisia harjoituksia tekemällä ja kirjalliset tehtävät unohdetaan lähes täysin!"

Teacher 41) "Mitä on 'autenttinen kielenkäyttö'? Autenttista tekstiä on esim. tekijänatiivin tekemä teksti eikä ainoastaan internetistä napattu ei-kenellekään tarkoitettu teksti. Sarjaan tilaustyönä tehdyt tekstit ovat arvokkaimpia ja täyttävät kaikki autenttisuuden kriteerit. Esim TIME-teksti ei ole autenttinen: Sitä ei ole kirjoitettu suomalaista lukiolaista varten. Natiivin kirjoittama teksti ON kirjoitettu suomalaiselle lukiolaiselle. Siinä sitä PARASTA autenttisuutta."

Teacher 42) "Kielioppia opettaessa usein käytävä läpi pitkä osuus ennen tehtäviä. Voisi olla pienempi alue, sitten tehtävä jne. Usein menee samalla kaavalla kaikki kielioppiasiat. Paljon suullista, mutta ns. tarkempaa harjoittelua vaativia kirjoitustehtäviä vähemmän. Sarjassa, jota käytän."

Teacher 43) "en"

Teacher 44) "OLEN OPETTANUT VAIN OPEN ROAD -KIRJOJA."

Teacher 45) "Lukion englannin oppikirjat ovat hyvinkin erilaisia, esi, otavan Open Road ja sanomapron Profiles, joten osaan oli vaikea vastata tästä syystä. Open road luottaa liikaa

opiskelijaan esim kieliopin suhteen, kun lähes kaikkien tehtävien vastaukset ovat opiskelijan kirjassa."

Teacher 46) "Tehtävät voisivat olla mielikuvituksellisempia."

Teacher 47) "oppilaita on niin monenlaisia, että kaikkia on mahdoton miellyttää, ja kielitaidon taso vaihtelee aivan valtavasti, joten ilman ""tasoryhmitystä"" heterogeenisissä ryhmissä oppikirjojen vaikeusaste on todella harvoille aivan kohdallaan"

Teacher 48) "nykyisin Helsingin seudulla paljon maahanmuuttajia, suomen kieltä käytetään liian paljon lukion englannin oppikirjoissa"