

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

**”IF I WERE A TEXTBOOK WRITER”
– VIEWS OF EFL TEXTBOOKS HELD BY FINNISH
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PUPILS**

A Pro Gradu Thesis in English

by

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”If I were a textbook writer” – views of EFL textbooks
held by Finnish comprehensive school pupils

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Vieraiden kielten opetuksessa oppikirjoilla on ollut pitkään tärkeä asema suomalaisessa peruskoulussa. Oppikirjojen sisällöt ovat heijastaneet eri vuosikymmeninä oman aikansa peruskoulun opetussuunnitelman arvoja, tavoitteita ja sisältöjä. Oppikirjoja on arvioitu jonkin verran opettajien näkökulmasta sekä oppimateriaalien valmistajien näkökulmasta mutta oppilaiden käsityksiä oppikirjoista on tutkittu niukasti.

Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää suomalaisen peruskoulun yhdeksättä luokkaa käyvien oppilaiden käsityksiä heidän englannin kielen tekstikirjastaan sekä heidän unelmiensa tekstikirjasta. Tutkimukseen osallistui yhteensä 17 oppilasta. Tutkielmassa vastataan ensiksi kysymykseen ”Millaisia käsityksiä oppilailla oli englannin tunneilla käyttämästään tekstikirjasta?”. Toisin sanoen, millaisia myönteisiä ja kielteisiä ominaisuuksia heidän mielestään tekstikirjassa oli ja toiseksi kysymykseen ”Millaiseksi oppilaat käsittivät ihanteellisen englannin kielen tekstikirjan?”. Toisin sanoen, millainen heidän unelmiensa tekstikirja oli. Oppilaiden käsityksiä selvitettiin puolistrukturoidun haastatteluaineiston sekä kyselylomakkeiden avulla. Tutkimusmenetelmänä oli sisällön analyysi.

Aineiston kvalitatiivinen analyysi osoitti, että oppilaat arvostivat englannin kielen tekstikirjassaan erityisesti oppilaskeskeisyyttä ja henkilökohtaisten kiinnostusten kohteiden huomioon ottamista. Oppilaat kritisoivat kuitenkin tekstikirjan tapaa käsitellä mielenkiintoisia nuorisoon liittyviä aiheita ja tekstikirjassa olevien tarpeettomien sekä tylsien tekstien määrää. Unelmiensa englannin tekstikirjaan oppilaat olisivat sisällyttäneet tekstejä nuorista ja heidän elämäntavastaan, erilaisista kiinnostuksen kohteista sekä tekstejä, jotka olisivat rohkaisseet heitä kommunikoimaan englanniksi.

Tutkimuksessa tuli ilmi, että oppilaiden on vaikea kuvailla käsityksiään englannin tekstikirjoista. Tämä johtuu siitä, että monilla oppilailla ei ole erityisiä odotuksia tai vaatimuksia tekstikirjojen suhteen. Opettajien tulisikin olla tietoisia tästä ja rohkaista oppilaitaan analyttisemmiksi ja kriittisemmiksi englannin tekstikirjojen käyttäjiksi. He voisivat myös ottaa oppilaat aktiivisemmin mukaan kielten oppimateriaalien suunnitteluun ja tekstikirjojen arviointityöhön – ovathan oppilaat kielten tekstikirjojen ensisijaisia käyttäjiä.

Asiasanat: EFL textbook, content analysis, qualitative analysis, Finnish comprehensive school, pupils

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1 INTRODUCTION

At the time when I first started to outline the topic for the present study, my first and foremost thought was that it should be about some aspect of English learning in which I was personally interested and of which I had personal experience. To be able to understand why I chose Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of foreign language textbooks of English, or EFL textbooks for short, as the topic of my study, it is necessary to go back to my teenage years.

As a teenager, I used to secretly criticise my comprehensive and upper secondary general school EFL textbooks. The texts and the topics discussed in those textbooks were, generally speaking, quite good and they usually passed 'my strict inspection', that is, they fulfilled the 'standards' that I had set in my mind for a good piece of text. However, every now and then there were units and chapters in those textbooks that I was not happy with and, thus, they became the target of my silent teenage criticism. I disliked texts with lots of statistics and technological details and I especially disapproved of chapters discussing theoretical or abstract topics, such as supersonic flights, the greenhouse effect, and the discovery of the laser, because I considered them the most unappealing, useless, and irrelevant for my personal needs. As a result, those texts became the most tedious, and sometimes even the most difficult, for me to study and they left me with the feeling of dissatisfaction.

In comprehensive and upper secondary general schools, one of my favourite school subjects was English. I had often imaginary conversations in my mind with native speakers of English in a big city like London or New York. In my conversations I had, for example, lost my bag and wanted to report it missing or wanted to book a hotel room for a fortnight. Unfortunately, these conversations almost always ended the same way: I suddenly realised that my vocabulary was not large enough for me to explain myself to the English speaking person and so I found myself dumbfounded. As much as I would have wanted it, I did not know how to talk with a native speaker of English about everyday issues and for this I held my EFL textbook very much responsible. If only it had taught me something practical, for example, about travelling abroad as a Finnish tourist, instead of discussing issues that, firstly, did not interest me

and, secondly, I never expected to talk about with a native speaker of English. I believed firmly then, as I do now, that one of the greatest assets of foreign languages is their communicative value and as a teenager I considered it very unlikely that I was ever going to have a conversation with someone in London or New York about the ozone depletion or solar power. EFL textbooks discussing such topics were, therefore, simply 'not good' according to my own criteria and that was enough of a reason for me to criticise them.

After graduating from upper secondary general school, I forgot the troubles I had experienced with my EFL textbooks as a teenager. This was because I was accepted into university and started to read other kind of literature in English besides language textbooks. However, when doing my teacher training in 1999-2000, several years after my own comprehensive and upper secondary school years, I noticed that the relationship of some of my pupils, then teenagers, to their EFL textbook was very much alike my previous relationship with my textbook. Some pupils found the topics and the texts in their textbook boring and thus, every now and then, they lost their interest to study English. The pupils' loss of motivation made me think about EFL textbooks again and this time more seriously than before. Had the EFL textbooks not become any more appealing for Finnish pupils since my own years in comprehensive and upper secondary general schools? Were the materials not more pupil-centred and motivating now than before? As a teacher trainee, I thought so or at least I thought that foreign language teaching methods in Finland had become more learner oriented. Thus, I had assumed, without further thinking that the EFL textbooks published in the late 1990s had began to interest their young audience more, too. After my teacher training, I was not, however, sure about the matter anymore and I began to ask myself questions such as: Why were some of the pupils not interested in their EFL textbook? What features in their textbook did they find particularly uninteresting or undesirable and why? What features did they, in turn, find the most interesting or desirable and why? These questions still in my mind at the beginning of this study, I decided to examine the issue further and find the answers to the questions that puzzled me.

I began the process by reading literature on foreign language teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools and on the use of teaching materials in foreign language lessons. Chapters 2 and 3 of the present study are a review of that

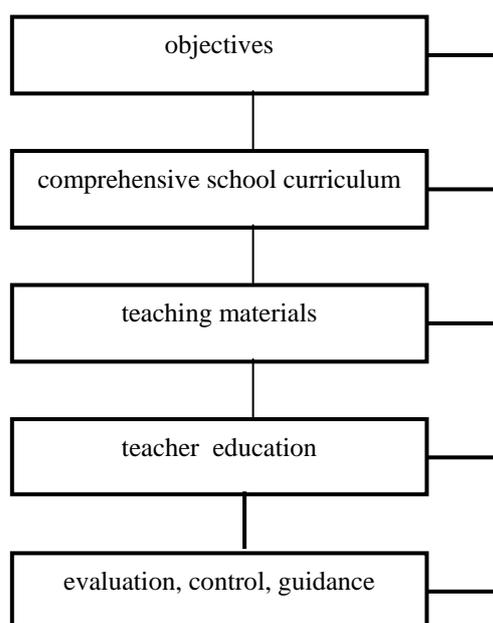
literature. Chapter 4 is a review of the earlier empirical studies on pupils and language materials that were available to me at the time when I collected the data for the present study. Unfortunately, no Finnish studies could be found on the subject. Chapter 5 consists of the two research problems that I created for the study. Their objective was to find out what features Finnish comprehensive school pupils found desirable and undesirable in an already existing EFL textbook as well as in the EFL textbook of their dreams. The qualitative research methods that I used to collect, analyse, and process data for the present study are reported in chapter 6. In addition, the pupils participating in the data collection of the present study are introduced. Chapter 7 is a short description of a popular EFL textbook used in Finnish comprehensive schools. The description is added here to increase understanding of the views that the pupils taking part in the data collection had of the particular EFL textbook. Chapter 8 consists of an analysis of the data and chapter 9 discusses the most important findings of the present study. Finally, chapter 10 evaluates the findings and suggests topics for further studies.

Conducting the present study took me some years. In 2000, I believed that it would take me a few years at most. What I did not take into account and could not foretell then, however, was that I would be offered a job as a primary school English teacher a year later and by accepting the offer, I would not be able to complete the present study in the original timetable. As a result, the writing of the present study became a growing process for me both as a researcher and as an English teacher. As time went by and the present study grew in length, I became more experienced in studying EFL textbooks and in using them in practice. My seven-year-long history with EFL textbooks could, then, very well be described as a truly holistic experience.

2 FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN FINNISH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

To be able to analyse and comprehend the views of Finnish comprehensive school pupils on foreign language textbooks of English, also known as EFL textbooks, it is important to know something about the nature of EFL textbooks used widely in Finnish comprehensive schools and, therefore, to view them first from other perspectives than just that of the pupils'. All commercially produced English teaching materials, be they textbooks, activity books, or teacher guides, used in foreign language education are designed on the basis of what teachers and experts on education consider important for Finnish comprehensive school pupils to learn at any given time. The minds of the teachers and experts, in turn, are influenced, among others, by national and international innovations in language education and by nationally and locally produced comprehensive school curricula, all of which ultimately have an impact on the actual contents of EFL teaching materials. Figure 1 depicts well this interdependence between the design of commercially produced teaching materials and other elements affecting language education in Finland.

Figure 1. The role of teaching materials in the planning of teacher education.
(Viljanen 1982: 97).



The elements contributing to the design of teaching materials are higher international, national, and local objectives, comprehensive school curriculum, people designing the educational materials (usually working in the field of education), as well as the evaluation, control, and guidance of already existing materials and materials still in process. Should one element, for example, the objectives of comprehensive school teaching be altered in some way in Finland, the effects of this alteration would be noticed immediately not only in the design and production of teaching materials but in the other elements as well.

The educational framework within which the design of commercially produced foreign language teaching materials in Finland falls is examined more closely in the following two sections of the present study. In section 2.1, the framework is approached from the viewpoint of foreign language teaching as a national policy in Finnish comprehensive schools (representing the societal circumstances within which the ‘objectives’ are set in Figure 1). In section 2.2, the objectives and guidelines of the National framework curriculum (1994), abbreviated as POPS in Finnish, are examined. They represent the ‘objectives’ and the ‘comprehensive school curriculum’ in Figure 1.

2.1 Foreign language education policy in Finland

In Finland, foreign language teaching in the nine-year comprehensive school is regulated by educational legislation and political decision making. Huhta (1996: 31) reports that the minimum number of foreign language lessons that each municipality and comprehensive school is required to implement, that is, put into practice is suggested by the Ministry of Education. The National framework curriculum, or POPS, that guides the preparation of locally adapted curriculum is, in turn, drafted by the National Board of Education. On the basis of the suggestions made by these agencies, the Ministry of Education then guides the actual realisation and development of foreign language education in Finland, comments Nikki (1992: 14-15). Norris, Aspland, MacDonald, Schostak, and Zamorski (1996: 26-27) explain that this national policy for foreign language teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools was originally designed in the 1970s to ensure, among others, a high level of quality, that is, a

national standard in language teaching and learning throughout the country and also to enable comparisons between different municipalities and comprehensive schools. As a result, general uniformity in foreign language teaching became a virtue in Finland. Until this day, claims Huhta (1996: 32), such things as a uniform system of teacher education, regular teacher in-service education, the availability of only a few textbook packages in foreign languages, POPS, and the fairly small cultural variation and weak social stratification within the Finnish society, have helped to maintain the system, at least partly.

For it was some time after the design of the national policy for foreign language teaching that those working in the field of education noticed great weaknesses in the system. Due to its aspirations for full equality in language teaching between all municipalities and comprehensive schools in Finland, the system had become heavily centralised. Huhta (1996: 31) and Norris et al. (1996: 26-27) mention that the contents of POPS were, for example, specified in detail at the national level and little autonomy was given to municipalities and comprehensive schools in matters such as prioritising foreign languages as a school subject. Pressure towards decentralisation and local curriculum development grew steadily towards the mid 1980s and the new millennium as the needs and interests of local communities and schools became more widely acknowledged, and in 1994, a significant change in the entire educational system took place in Finland.

In the curriculum reform of 1994, the policy to centralise the curriculum planning and development of Finnish comprehensive schools was changed. Huhta (1996: 32) and Norris et al. (1996: 27-34) remark that municipalities and schools were given more autonomy in the decision making and financing of the school system and designing a locally adapted framework curriculum became their responsibility. From the point of view of language teaching, the curriculum reform meant, among others, that only general guidelines were provided about the orientation of school activities and the minimum number of lessons a pupil has to study foreign languages during the nine-year compulsory comprehensive school were provided at the national level. In addition, the objectives and contents of foreign language teaching were no longer outlined in more than broad terms in the new POPS, reports Huhta (1996: 32). Decision

making was thus brought in many ways nearer to individual schools and communities in 1994.

However, in a study by Norris et al. (1996: 29, 34-36), conducted two years after the reform, it was noted that the curriculum reform was not properly institutionalised. As opposed to schools that had a strategy or an organisational capacity for changing the curriculum and had started to implement the new curriculum, there were schools where teachers had little or no conception of the new framework and little had changed in the classroom as a result of the reform. Those schools were often struggling with very limited resources and, thus, had no support for changing classroom practices. In other words, the variations in curriculum reform were great between Finnish schools. This is why Norris et al. (1996: 37) claim that the curriculum reform of 1994 remains to be achieved in Finnish comprehensive schools.

What the future holds for foreign language education in Finland is uncertain. Because the strategy for reforming the entire comprehensive school curriculum is constrained by the financial situation and the lack of organisational capacity in many communities, differences in language education between schools may grow even further. If that happens, the objectives and guidelines of foreign language teaching, discussed in section 2.2, are in the danger of becoming nothing more than words.

2.2 Objectives and guidelines of foreign language teaching at the national level

As any commercially produced foreign teaching materials, produced either nationally or locally, should represent ‘theory put into practice’, the contents of teaching materials should always be in accordance with the particular theory. Foreign language textbooks of English, or EFL textbooks, used in Finnish comprehensive schools make no exception to this rule: as they are almost always produced in Finland, their contents should reflect the objectives and guidelines introduced at the national level, that is, in POPS, to English education. In the following four sections, some of the most important objectives and guidelines of Finnish foreign language education that ultimately have an effect on designing teaching materials are examined more closely.

These are pupil-centredness, integration of the language learning syllabus, sufficient communication skills, and appreciation of multiculturalism, all of which are partly foreign language or English specific and partly similar to the general objectives and guidelines set for all school subjects in Finnish comprehensive schools.

2.2.1 Pupil-centredness

According to POPS (1994: 10-12), all education, language education included, should be based on pupil-centredness and the honouring of human dignity. Consequently, every pupil should be looked upon and treated as a unique individual who possesses different interests and abilities in respect to learning a foreign language and whose life experiences and experiential background are different from anyone else's. Furthermore, the task of foreign language education, as reported in POPS (1994: 9-14), is to support the personal growth of every pupil as a human being and, thus, his or her ethical, cognitive, affective, physical, social, and emotional needs should be taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of foreign language lessons.

Pupil-centred views, or as Sajavaara (1993: 46) calls them "conceptions highlighted in individual progressivism", made their approach to the Finnish educational system in the early 1990s and have since been popular. The shift from subject-centred, content driven curriculum towards more process-oriented, learning-centred practices meant, among other things, a renewed approach towards the foreign language learner. Comments such as "the learner is supposed to be responsible for his own development" (Sajavaara 1993: 46) and "the learner is not treated as an object of learning but as a subject who actively constructs his or her own learning" (Kohonen 1988: 189) describe aptly the ideology that prevails, or at least should prevail, in foreign language teaching in Finland even today.

As more emphasis is nowadays laid in POPS on the active role of the pupil in regard to learning, foreign language education and language teachers in particular are expected to carry out this philosophy in practice. "We emphasise the student's active role in learning. We stimulate our students to formulate problems and to seek information. We continuously experiment with different

methods” explains a representative of a Finnish comprehensive school in a study by Norris et al. (1996: 59). Another representative in the same study continues: “We aim at developing teaching methods in the direction of independent study and co-operative learning”. An active and autonomous learner has, thus, become the central focus for the educational process in Finnish comprehensive school system. The older a pupil gets, the more responsible he/she becomes for setting the objectives for his/her own learning and the more his/her capacity for learning to learn is promoted, argue Folland and Alho (1988: 89) and Sajavaara (1993: 46). There are, however, limits to this autonomy. In Folland and Alho’s (1988: 89-90) opinion, pupils in Finnish comprehensive schools can never achieve or claim to have a perfect autonomy over their own learning process as long as the foreign language education in schools follows national and local guidelines and curricula. Therefore, Folland and Alho (1988: 90) claim, modern pupils should be called ‘self-directed learners’ rather than ‘autonomous learners’.

All in all, attending to the needs and abilities of active, self-directed individual learners is an integral part of pupil-centred language education in Finnish comprehensive schools. However, it is equally important to consider the needs and abilities of different age groups as all pupils represent in foreign language lessons not only themselves but also certain age groups. As members of those groups, they share a worldview and an identity that is typical of their age and most likely have fairly similar interests and life experiences which need to be respected and taken into consideration in the planning and implementation of language lessons (*PK opas* 1983: 10). The strengthening of comprehensive school pupils’ identity and the affective, cognitive, cultural, physical, and social aspects of their worldview are mentioned in POPS (1994: 12-13) as the basis for all education.

2.2.2 Integration of the language learning syllabus

As a school subject, foreign languages offer pupils a good opportunity to integrate their language skills with their knowledge of other school subjects and knowledge of the world and vice versa. In POPS (1994: 10, 68, 71), integration of this kind is suggested to make the learning of new subject

contents easier for pupils and also to further their ability to apply various skills and knowledge creatively and critically to learning. As a result, integration is recognised at the national level, that is, in POPS as one of the objectives of language education in Finnish comprehensive schools and the relationship between languages and other school subjects as well as the outside world is emphasised in language education.

Despite being popular today, integration is not a recent innovation in the Finnish school system. It is mentioned, for example, in Guidelines for language education in Finnish comprehensive schools (*PK opas* 1983: 12-13) as one of the elements to which particular attention should be paid in foreign language education and the guidelines in question are more than two decades old. In Guidelines, the opportunities of integrating the subject contents of foreign languages with the contents of such subjects as mother tongue (Finnish/Swedish), geography, history, music, and art are discussed and in POPS (1994: 69) foreign languages are also reported to integrate particularly well with various cultural and communication studies. The opportunities to employ comprehensive school pupils' knowledge of other school subjects together with their language skills and vice versa seem, therefore, to exist but as always co-operation between teachers is needed and teachers need to be willing to use integration as a learning method.

Addressing the knowledge that pupils have gained outside school, in other words, their knowledge of the world and life itself and all their past experiences, serves as an important basis for foreign language learning. Integrating a foreign language with pupils' everyday life helps them understand the practical value of language learning and this supports the communicative aims of POPS (1994: 68).

2.2.3 Communication skills

In the past, the prevailing foreign language teaching ideology in Finland, as in the rest of Europe, was traditional humanism, argues Sajavaara (1993: 46-47). Most of the attention in language education was then paid to the preservation of classical languages and to the transmission of cultural values from one generation to another. Then, claims Takala (1993: 54, 57-58), in the first half

the 20th century, World War I and World War II changed the nature of language teaching in many European countries, Finland included. As the economic and political relations with other nations became increasingly important throughout Europe, the need for practical communication skills and knowledge of languages such as English, French, and German grew. As a result, traditional humanism was replaced by reconstructionism in many countries and it emphasised the practical relevance of language studies to the social needs and objectives of each nation (Sajavaara 1993: 46). The foundations for modern language education were laid.

In Finland, the shift towards reconstructionism resulted in the promotion of a national policy for foreign language teaching, suggest Sajavaara (1993: 46-47) and Takala (1993: 57-58). According to the policy, Finnish pupils needed to be taught how to communicate in a foreign language or foreign languages that enjoyed a high international and political status. Thus, the teaching of English, French, and German was given more importance in Finnish comprehensive schools' curricula. Russian and Swedish, which had been taught in Finnish schools for a long time already because of the joint history of Finland and Russia and Finland and Sweden, were given equal importance to English, French, and German.

Sajavaara's (1993: 47) article on the role of communication in Finnish foreign language teaching reveals that the philosophy of reconstructionism with societal emphasis remains popular even today. As Finland needs to be able to compete with other countries both commercially and economically, investing in foreign language education and in pupils' communication skills are good ways of ensuring the nation's future. These objectives are also mentioned more or less directly in POPS (1994: 8) but other reasons for supporting the communication skills of Finnish comprehensive school pupils are mentioned there as well. For example, pupils' ability to represent themselves and the Finnish culture abroad and the ability to work with people who represent other cultures and countries both in Finland and abroad are considered important factors in planning foreign language education at the national level (POPS 1994: 8-9, 13). In a world like the present, where boundaries between countries disappear because of varied intercultural contacts and internationalisation, Finnish pupils are more than likely to come into contact some day with people

speaking a foreign language and the aim of communicative foreign language education is to prepare Finnish pupils for just that.

According to POPS (1994: 68-69, 71), Finnish pupils should be provided in the teaching of foreign language communication skills with as much input in foreign languages as possible both orally and in writing. POPS also proposes that pupils should be made familiar with different foreign language accents and dialects and, above all, they should be encouraged to use a foreign language as a means of communication in the classroom. By supporting pupils' receptive and productive foreign language skills, as well as the learning of non-verbal and culture specific communication skills, POPS and Finnish comprehensive schools following the national guidelines aim to provide all pupils with at least a sufficient proficiency in foreign languages with which they can cope in everyday situations outside the school setting (POPS 1994: 68).

2.2.4 Appreciation of multiculturalism

In the language education of today, the teaching of multiculturalism plays an essential role. The philosophy itself is included in the objectives and guidelines of POPS (1994: 32-33) and according to POPS, multiculturalism is to be implemented in all school subjects, foreign languages included. Its objective is to increase pupils' awareness of foreign cultures and to teach them, for example, about equality, human dignity, and human rights. In addition, internationalisation and the unification of Europe and European people are referred to in POPS (1994: 8, 14) as the true challenges of language education. A multicultural Finland is visualised not only as a possibility but rather as a probability for which language education should prepare all comprehensive school pupils.

Kaikkonen (1994: 118) argues that the highest objective of foreign language education is "to let and give a learner a chance to grow beyond the boundaries that are set to him/her by his/her own mother tongue and native culture". More than before, pupils' attention in foreign language lessons is drawn to international matters such as co-operation between nations and their citizens and to peaceful coexistence of all people irrespective of their backgrounds (POPS 1994: 32-33). Pupils are encouraged to keep an open mind towards

those who may look, think, or sound different from them, both abroad and in Finland, because as citizens of a small nation we are dependent on other nations and their citizens and, accordingly, the lives of foreigners can only enrich ours.

As a school subject, foreign languages continue to offer Finnish comprehensive school teachers an excellent opportunity to familiarise their pupils with foreign countries, cultures, and people (POPS 1994: 68-71). Because of the nature of the subject, teachers can introduce their pupils, alongside with the target language itself, the geographical, cultural, and social contexts in which the target language is actually spoken. This, in turn, will increase Finnish pupils' awareness and understanding of the target language as a natural means of communication for people speaking the language as their mother tongue (the target language community) and, also, provide them with a more extensive view on the nature of the language. From an educational point of view, arousing pupils' interest in the study of foreign languages is highly important (POPS 1994: 68). By acquainting pupils with a diversity of contexts that interact with the target language, for example the target language speakers and their ethnic backgrounds, teachers may be able to motivate their pupils more in language lessons and also to convey them a greater appreciation of foreign cultures and people.

2.3 Educational framework surrounding language teaching materials

In the present chapter, foreign language teaching materials have been approached rather indirectly, that is, from the viewpoint of foreign language teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools. The inclusion of this indirect approach is, however, necessary to create a framework for the design of teaching materials which will be discussed more closely in the next chapter. As mentioned in section 2.2, to be useful for foreign language teachers and in foreign language teaching, all materials used in language lessons, commercially produced EFL textbooks included, should be in accordance with the general educational framework regulating the country's language teaching. In Finland, foreign language education in comprehensive schools is heavily influenced by the national language policy which, in turn, is put most visibly

into practice in the form of POPS. All locally produced curricula follow the objectives and guidelines set at the national level.

POPS (1994) emphasises, among others, pupil-centredness, integration of the language learning syllabus, sufficient communication skills, and appreciation of multiculturalism, as its objectives for language teaching. These objectives are partly similar to the educational objectives set for all school subjects in POPS and partly foreign language specific, focusing on language education. They reflect both the needs of an individual pupil and the nation and they are also in accordance with the objectives set by the European council for language education in 1997 to countries belonging to the European Union (Huttunen 1997).

3 TEACHING MATERIALS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LESSONS

In the preceding chapter, it was suggested that foreign language teaching materials used in Finnish comprehensive schools should reflect the higher educational objectives introduced at the national level, that is, in POPS (1994). However, the issue of teaching materials design or the actual contents of teaching materials were not touched upon and, thus, the question “What should foreign language teaching materials be like in the light of the national language policy?” still remains unanswered. In sections 3.1 and 3.2 of the present chapter, these issues are discussed in greater detail and the role of the foreign language textbook in the Finnish educational system is examined in particular. Prior to the discussion, it is, however, necessary to bring up two matters that without any comment at this point of the study might later cause confusion.

First of all, not so many Finnish sources could be found for the present study on the subject of foreign language teaching materials as a means of implementing the national language policy. That is why most of the views presented in the present chapter of the implementation of pupil-centredness, integration of the language learning syllabus, sufficient communication skills, and appreciation of multiculturalism are of foreign origin and as such cannot be considered having been primarily formulated for the Finnish language education system. The views of foreign experts on education offer, however, very valuable information for the present study as they enable the examination of Finnish foreign language teaching materials from a perspective that has not been so widely studied in Finland and, therefore, are an essential part of the present chapter.

The second matter in need of clarification at this point of the study, concerns the definition for the term ‘foreign language textbook’. As the term occurs quite frequently in the present study, it is only appropriate to explain what is meant by it. In short, a foreign language textbook, as seen from the viewpoint of language teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools, is considered to consist of an organised set of teaching materials, usually a variety of texts adapted to the foreign language learners’ language skills, all bound in one book. In addition to pieces of texts, the book might contain text related vocabularies, illustrations, songs, and also some short exercises that

often serve a communicative purpose. Foreign language textbooks used in Finnish comprehensive schools do not, however, usually contain many written activities since pupils have a separate activity book to complement the language textbook.

3.1 Foreign language textbook – the heart of language education

Sheldon (1988: 237) describes language course books as the “visible heart of any ELT programme”, ELT being an abbreviation for English language teaching, and in regard to the language education system in Finnish comprehensive schools, this description has always held quite true. As mentioned in section 2.1, at the time before the curriculum reform, that is, in the 1970s and 1980s stability and consistency of educational methods across municipalities were very highly valued in Finland. Understandably, this uniformity in teaching also reflected the design of commercially produced teaching materials as teams of textbook writers, typically consisting of language teachers, teacher-educators, native speakers, and an occasional applied linguist, as reported by Huhta (1996: 33), wanted to extend the notion of equal learning opportunities to materials used in language lessons. Thus, the number of foreign language textbook series released on the market every year was limited and their contents were quite unified, claims Huhta (1996: 33). Given the system’s aims for uniformity and the shortage of alternative teaching materials on the market, argue Norris et al. (1996: 66), it became possible for commercially produced textbooks then to gain a higher status than any other teaching materials in Finnish comprehensive school system.

Interestingly enough, when Norris et al. (1996: 66) conducted an evaluation of the effects of the comprehensive school curriculum reform in the middle of the 1990s and included in it an examination of the role of the textbook in various subjects, they discovered that little had changed over the years. Although the great curriculum reform of 1994 had given Finnish schools an opportunity to strive for more pupil-centred, individualised, and independent teaching strategies for the first time in their existence, most schools still continued to use traditional commercially produced textbooks as their main teaching resource. Being curious why this was the case, Norris et al. asked

Finnish comprehensive school teachers for reasons for their continued popularity. They found, among other things, that the teachers considered textbooks to provide them with an important framework for progression and coherence as the contents of traditional textbooks still corresponded best with the contents of the comprehensive schools' curricula. Norris et al. (1996: 29) also discovered that teachers favoured textbooks because of the teacher guides associated to each textbook series. These guides were designed to help teachers, for example, in making lesson plans and designing tests for the pupils.

Should Norris et al. conduct a similar evaluation today, they would not find any great changes in the role of traditional textbooks in language lessons since 1996. Although supplementary and alternative teaching materials are well available in language education, largely due to the integration of information technology in the Finnish school system, no material has managed to replace textbooks as the main teaching resource in Finnish comprehensive schools. Their continuing popularity can be explained, at least partly, by the way they are promoted to language teachers. Every year, new textbook series or newly re-printed textbooks are released on the market and in their book promotions and advertisements, teams of textbook writers try to convince teachers that it is their textbook that corresponds the best with the current objectives of POPS. As language teachers need to implement the objectives of POPS in their lessons, that is, to put them into practice they are likely to buy textbooks that are re-printed and well promoted and use them in their language lessons. It is safe to say, then, that a strong consistency between the design of commercially produced textbooks and POPS still exists in Finland – the former relying heavily on the latter.

3.2 Criteria set for a good foreign language textbook

From the viewpoint of language teachers and the whole language education system, a good textbook is, then, one which supports teaching and helps the teacher to attain certain goals in foreign language lessons. Based on what has been said before on the objectives set for language education in Finland, a good textbook should, therefore, be pupil-centred and it should make good use of the

pupils' prior knowledge of other school subjects and of the world. In addition, the book should promote pupils' communication skills and add to their knowledge of multiculturalism. How exactly all this may be accomplished, is discussed in sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 of the present study.

3.2.1 Pupil-centred materials for the whole learner

In designing language textbooks, the same rules apply than in designing any other teaching materials. That is, good planning is everything and in the beginning of the design process textbook writers should think carefully through the criteria that they would like the new textbook to meet when it is finished. Papalia (1976: 70) suggests that textbook writers begin their work by responding to such questions as: What to teach? (content); To whom? (nature of students); Why? (purpose); With what? (material); How to teach (procedural steps, instructional methods and activities); When? (student readiness); Where? (setting); and, finally, How to evaluate and improve learning? (testing, diagnosing, and prescribing). Should writers consider, for example, pupil-centredness an essential criteria for the new textbook, then they should respond to the above questions from the pupils' point of view or, as Nyssönen (1995: 26) puts it, draw some kind of a profile on the assumed reader and his or her needs and abilities before starting the actual writing process. This is because pupil-centred materials are always reader-based by nature and pupils are, alongside with language teachers, the ultimate consumers of the materials (Luke 1988: 64).

As was explained in section 2.2.1, pupil-centredness manifests itself perhaps the most visibly in Finnish comprehensive schools as a consideration of every individual as a human being, a member of his or her own age group, and a constructor of his or her own learning. Consequently, these three criteria form an important basis for foreign language textbook design in Finland and they need to be examined not only from the viewpoint of teaching but also from the viewpoint of textbook contents. This is what the present section concentrates on.

Among those who regard the first criterion, that is individualism, as one of the most essential qualities in foreign language teaching materials are Ericsson

(1986), Stevick (1980), and Widdowson (1990). In his research report, Ericsson (1986: 42) argues that teaching materials exist simply to *facilitate learning* and, thus, in formal foreign language education teachers should pay particular attention, besides the objectives of education (to bring about learning), to the means of education. For only means that take into account individual pupil characteristics can truly promote pupils' foreign language learning and enable teachers to obtain objectives like pupil-centredness in language lessons, notes Ericsson (1986: 42-43). Such pupil characteristics are, for example, knowledge and skills, readiness and motivation to learn, interests and attitudes, learning style, intelligence, creativity, and personality.

Stevick (1980: 200-201) and Widdowson (1990: 13) use phrases such as "humanistic materials for the whole learner" and "humanistic approaches" when talking about individualistic pupil-centred materials, implying that the materials used in foreign language teaching should not focus one-sidedly on the foreign language learner's cognition. Instead, they should involve the learner as a human being who has affective, cognitive, social, and physical qualities, trying to make fair use of all these qualities in a meaningful way. Stevick (1980: 200) claims that in practice pupil-centred materials should always contain something for the emotions, be it beauty, humour, controversy or apprehension, as well as something for the intellect. They should also allow pupils to draw on present realities as well as on their distant future goals. Stevick and Widdowson agree, therefore, with Ericsson (1986: 42-43) that teaching materials need to approach the individual learner from more than one aspect to be considered truly pupil-centred.

Teaching materials that take into consideration not only the needs and abilities of an individual pupil but also those of the age group in which the pupil belongs can be considered pupil-centred as well, argue Crookes and Schmidt (1991: 491-492) and Holden (1983: 45). They present the second important criteria in designing textbooks and claim that as different age groups have different expectations about the contents of foreign language teaching materials, material designers can and should take note of them in order to sustain pupils' motivation. Holden's (1983: 45) opinion is that the expectations of adolescent foreign language learners, that is, 12 to 16-year-olds can be summarised roughly in three criteria: not boring, possible link(s) with other

interests or subjects, and possible use in the world outside classroom. Her advice for material designers is then to link or integrate the language taught with the outside world where possible and to consider carefully the personal interests of the young when designing the contents of teaching materials but not to make too many assumptions about the likes and dislikes of the young. Not even young people do want to spend every lesson learning pop songs or discussing the world's problems.

Ericsson (1994: 5-6), who has studied language teaching materials not only from the viewpoint of an individual pupil but also from that of different age groups, agrees with Holden (1983: 45) on the avoidance of assumptions in the contents of foreign language textbooks. He claims that language textbooks are nowadays too often filled with stereotypes that do not actually attract the young or give them an opportunity to use their own imagination. In other words, the qualities of the characters appearing in the books are depicted in too much detail and the names of the characters, such as Jack and Jill, are stereotypical. In addition, the topics chosen for the textbooks are rarely imaginative in Ericsson's (1994: 5) opinion. He advises material designers, therefore, to include in foreign language textbooks characters who are attractive, distinct, easily recognisable, and easy to identify with and whose images pupils can complete in their own imaginative way. He also suggests that more language textbooks should contain long stories rather than short pieces of texts on separate topics because long stories offer a wonderful secondary world for pupils to be drawn in, allowing them to create their own fantasy versions of the stories, that is, to fulfil themselves.

"Good materials do not teach: they encourage learner's to learn" claim Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 107) and, thus, bring up the third important criteria affecting the commercial production of foreign language teaching materials, textbooks in particular, in Finland. Language textbooks should support the ideology of constructivism and help teachers to implement the ideology in practice to be considered pupil-centred in comprehensive school context. Kohonen (1988: 194) explains that the more an individual pupil is encouraged to take responsibility for his or her own learning and is given, for example, a say on which materials or parts of material are to be used in learning and how, the more independent or self-directed that pupil will

become. Ericsson (1986: 43), too, hypothesises that greater pupil involvement in the learning process will eventually result in better learning results and, therefore, pupils should be provided with materials that truly activate them.

For those who want to produce activating material for foreign language teaching purposes, Hutchinson & Waters (1987: 107) offer the following advice:

Avoid the assembly line approach, which makes each unit look the same, with the same type of text, the same kind of illustrations, the same type and number of exercises. If it doesn't send you to sleep writing them, it will certainly send your learners to sleep using them. A materials model must be clear and systematic, but flexible enough to allow for creativity and variety.

In other words, material designers should remember that language learning is, above all, an active process and because of that pupils should not be treated as passive recipients who will settle for any kind of material. Instead, pupils' creativity should be cherished in a safe way.

Stevick (1980: 200-201) refers to pupils' need to make self-committing choices when using a foreign language textbook and he, too, emphasises the importance of feeling secure when making those choices. He says that unless a pupil is encouraged by the textbook to experiment with the language and to reveal something about him/her to others in the target language, he/ she will avoid taking responsibility for his/her own learning and eventually become passive and withdrawn. In Stevick's opinion, textbooks should, thus, be designed so that they provide pupils with sufficient structure and clarity but still take the pupils' true interests into consideration in their contents. Every pupil should be able to say: "This book contains something I want to know", Stevick (1980: 201) notes.

3.2.2 Meaningful materials that cross boundaries

In section 2.2.2 of this study it was explained that the integration of Finnish comprehensive school pupils' prior knowledge of other school subjects and of the world in general with their foreign language skills and vice versa are set as an objective of education in POPS (1994: 10, 68, 71). It was also suggested that integration of this kind makes the learning of new subject contents easier

for comprehensive school pupils and furthers their ability to apply various skills and knowledge creatively and critically to learning. From the viewpoint of language teaching materials, a good language textbook is then one which helps teachers to attain the objective of integration in practice, making good use of pupils' prior knowledge and skills acquired in and out of school.

Kuure (1995), Kuure and Saarenkunnas (1995), Sinclair and Ellis (1992), Vincent (1983), and Widdowson (1978) have studied the integration of language learning syllabus with other school subjects. They say that foreign language textbooks and materials that include different types of texts, such as news texts, comic strips, and novels as well as topic areas familiar to learners from other school subjects help in learning a foreign language at least in two ways. First, they make reading in the foreign language easier. Kuure (1995: 125), for example, argues that "once the reader is able to identify the topic area and the text type, much of the reading process is guided by previous knowledge". In other words, she suggests that familiarity with different types of texts and topics enable language learners to anticipate and make predictions such as what, where, and why about the texts written in the foreign language and, as a result, the understanding of those texts becomes easier for the learners. Kuure and Saarenkangas (1995: 8) note that learners whose reading skills in a foreign language are weak benefit especially from this predictability.

The second way in which experts on education consider topic areas and text types familiar to learners from other school subjects to help them in learning a foreign language is their ability to engage interest. Vincent (1983: 41), for example, mentions that the contents of chemistry are of interest to the young even in foreign language. She writes: "We no longer need to rely for content on that well-known never-never land inhabited by Mr and Mrs Bloggs, one son, one daughter and one disagreeable dog. Why not bring the excitement of chemistry into the language lesson?". Her opinion is then that real facts and figures are at least as exciting as traditional EFL stories and for that reason language learning syllabus should more often be linked with other school subjects.

Widdowson (1978: 80-81), too, acknowledges that familiar topic areas and types of text have a positive effect on foreign language learners' motivation but his reasons for believing so are slightly different from Vincent's (1983: 41). He

believes that pupils' interest in foreign language texts with a familiar topic or text-type is aroused simply by the texts' relevance to other school subjects, not by their exciting nature.

Here again we might consider the suggestion made earlier that the teaching of language might profitably be associated with other subjects in the school curriculum. If reading passages are combined to form a rhetorical unit dealing with matters relating to these subjects there is a chance that the learner's interest might be engaged and he might be led to recognize the relevance of foreign language study to his other school activities. In this way, the foreign language is represented as having the same kind of communicative function as his own language. (Widdowson 1978: 80).

In other words, Widdowson finds the integration of language learning activities with other school activities motivating because it enables pupils to see the similarity between different school subjects and their syllabi, demonstrating the practicality of foreign language learning to pupils. That is, foreign languages are not an isolated school subject but a useful means of communication in which pupils can express themselves as they do in their mother tongue. Sinclair and Ellis (1992: 213) agree on this with Widdowson but they point out, quite justifiably, that the integration of language learning syllabus with other school subjects can work in the other way as well. Pupils' may be motivated to study foreign languages because they are a "tool for acquiring knowledge about other subjects" (Sinclair and Ellis 1992: 213), meaning that good EFL textbooks can also help pupils to develop positive attitudes towards other school subjects.

The integration of Finnish comprehensive school pupils' language skills with their knowledge of other school subjects is not enough, though, in designing EFL textbooks today. Attention in design should also be paid to the integration of pupils' language skills with their knowledge of the world in general. Foreign researchers such as Holden (1983: 45), Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 107), and Unrau and Ruddell (1995: 22-25) all discuss the importance of this kind of integration and they are unanimous in that language teaching materials should make good use of foreign language learners' prior knowledge and experiences of the world in their contents. This is because materials that link the language teaching syllabus with the outside world satisfy learners' enthusiasm and major expectations better, enabling them to construct their personal interpretations of the classroom texts in a more meaningful way.

The meaningfulness of classroom texts, in contrast, results in better reading and learning, claim Unrau and Ruddel (1995: 22).

Nowadays there are no specific national guidelines for Finnish textbook designers as to what kind of world knowledge they should include in the contents of commercially produced materials to attract the attention of comprehensive school pupils. Nevertheless, many designers seem to agree on the guiding principles behind the use of pupils' existing world knowledge in EFL textbooks, judging by the fairly small variation in textbook contents on the market. These principles resemble strikingly the guidelines set more than two decades ago in National plan for EFL teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools (*Suunnitelma* 1982: 8-9). This plan was originally created to help English teachers and EFL material designers to reach the national standards set for the education of English in Finnish comprehensive schools and it contained, among others, a list of topics to be covered in English lessons (see Table 1).

Table 1: Topics to be covered in EFL teaching (*Suunnitelma* 1982:8-9).

Topics to be covered in EFL teaching	
Individuals and their immediate surroundings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the self • other people • family and friends • living, home, daily chores • clothes and accessories • nutrition and eating • senses, emotions • thinking • body parts, health, illness, cleanliness
Existence and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • existence and possession • motion • production • school and studying • work and professions • leisure time and hobbies • running errands • traffic and travel • media
The nature, countries and nations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature and the weather • Finland and the Finns • rural and urban areas • the countries and cultures of the target language • other countries and nations
Quantity and quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • numbers and amounts • money and prices • age • qualities: colour, size, and shape

Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the present • the past • the future • duration • frequency and generality • the point of time and contemporaneity
Place and manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location and direction • means and methods
Relations and proportions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ordinals and the date • cause, effect and conditions • the definite and indefinite • comparison reference to time, place and people • ratio • combination and separation

As is evident from Table 1, the topic areas were quite strongly linked with pupils' existing world knowledge. However, the National plan for EFL teaching in Finnish comprehensive schools was discovered too centralised and restrictive by Finnish experts on education in the 1990s and in the course of the curriculum reform, the plan lost its national status. It was not revised anymore and its contents, including the topics to be covered in English lessons, were left out of the new POPS (1994).

Today, Finnish teachers and teaching material designers can decide freely what topics, related to pupils' already existing world knowledge, to include and not to include in foreign language teaching. All that is said about the topics in POPS (1994: 69-70) is that they should somehow be linked with pupils' everyday life and their immediate surroundings and that different cultures as well as cross-cultural communication should be made familiar to them. Because of this, textbook designers are free to introduce numerous new topics into foreign language teaching that have not been included in EFL textbooks before and, thus, link pupils' foreign language skills with their knowledge of the world in a number of ways.

3.2.3 Materials that encourage pupils to express themselves

As was mentioned in section 2.2.3, the teaching of sufficient communication skills to Finnish comprehensive school pupils is set as one of the most important objectives of foreign language education in POPS (1994: 8-9, 13, 68-69, 71). In practice this means that comprehensive school system should be

able to provide pupils with language skills with which they can cope in everyday situations outside the school setting, for example, when travelling abroad or meeting people with different ethnic backgrounds. Be the skills in question productive, receptive, or even non-verbal, the foreign language textbook plays, again, quite an essential role in the learning of these skills, suggest Ericsson (1986), Ericsson (1994), Papalia (1976), Stevick (1980), and Widdowson (1983), all of whom have studied foreign language texts as guides for communication.

It is the textbook or some corresponding source of EFL texts that usually provides pupils studying a foreign language with topics for interaction with each other and this, argues Stevick (1980: 202), is what language teaching materials are truly designed for. “[Their aim] will be to say something – or better, to help pupils say something – that is worthwhile and interesting”, he claims. More important than what is actually written in language textbooks is how the books encourage pupils to use their own foreign language skills as a medium of communication in language lessons. A good language textbook not only allows pupils to express their own thoughts, emotions, and beliefs safely in a foreign language but supports and encourages them in various ways in doing so.

Widdowson’s (1983: 11) hypothesis is that EFL texts that draw their topics from learners’ past experiences and, thus, engage the learners’ interest best will achieve communicative use in the classroom. This is because such texts meet two of the most important criteria set for the use and acquisition of a foreign language, that is, familiarity and attractiveness. Should these criteria not be met in EFL texts, material designers would, in Widdowson’s opinion, run the risk of losing the interest of their readership and that way lessen their learners’ willingness to communicate with each other in foreign language in language lessons.

If a particular topic, whether it be pollution or evolution, music or magic, sex or space travel, or whatever, is not seen as significant for the immediate concerns of learners, as keying in with their concept of reality, then it will fail to engage them in the communicative activities of description or explanation or in the exchange of information and opinion. (Widdowson 1983: 11).

From the viewpoint of authentic or even nearly authentic classroom communication, the employment of the knowledge that foreign language learners already have and the maintenance of their motivation play, therefore, a fundamental role in designing EFL texts, argues Widdowson.

Papalia (1976: 89) proposes that “conversation should be based on topics of individual interests”, meaning that all language learners should be provided in language lessons with texts and topics that appeal specifically to them as individuals and, thus, encourage them to develop their individual communication skills. However, he realises that most of today’s material designers cannot cater equally for all language learners’ tastes as they have to “write for the ‘average student’ and attempt to treat items of general interest” (Papalia 1976: 89). This may well discourage some learners from learning a foreign language and make them feel indifferent to some or all aspects of classroom communication. For this reason, Papalia introduces another criterion for EFL texts that he believes promotes communication in foreign language lessons more successfully than learners’ individual interest, that is, the concrete nature of EFL texts and topics.

Foreign language texts that place learners, especially those at the beginning and intermediate levels, in meaningful and concrete life situations encourage them to communicate in language lessons, claims Papalia (1976: 88-89). The reason for this is simple: learners usually find it easier to experiment with a foreign language when the topics of EFL texts, intended for classroom communication, arise from situations learners are exposed to in their immediate environments. In this respect, texts that discuss topics such as general health, feelings, seasons, and the weather make especially suitable and useful teaching material for beginners who are just learning how to question, answer, and make statements in a foreign language, suggests Papalia. Learners at the intermediate levels benefit, in turn, the most from topics like shopping, sports, transportation, and social life because as topics they demand greater language competence from the learner than the beginning-level topics while still remaining very concrete and close to everyday life. At advanced levels, the topics can be developed yet on a higher linguistic plan and they can include, among others, television programmes, theatre plays, stories, and literature, all of which, in Papalia’s opinion, make excellent teaching materials for those

learning how to report, summarise, and make interpretations in a foreign language.

Last but not least, Ericsson (1994: 5) argues that a shift from traditional language textbooks that "are constructed on a basis of a systematic grammatical progression in the form of text units with no common contextual framework" to more narrative, storybook like, textbooks could help to increase learner activity and communication in foreign language classrooms. In his opinion, this is because narrative textbooks leave more scope for creativity in their contextual framework than traditional textbooks do and, thus, allow learners to be more active in language lessons. Unlike traditional textbooks that contain a number of separate topics, narrative textbooks often favour open-ended or incomplete serial stories that are set in an imaginative environment and the qualities of the characters in the stories are only hinted at in them, not depicted in detail. As a result, the narrative approach in EFL textbooks offers plentiful possibilities for learners to complete or fill in the stories themselves, for example, by drawing, modelling or acting, verbally or in writing Ericsson (1994: 6) says. With the narrative approach "every learner has a chance to take part in creating the settings in which the target language is to be practised", and this, in Ericsson's (1994: 6) opinion, is the essence of genuine communication in language lessons.

3.2.4 Materials that increase pupils' cultural and cross-cultural awareness

The fourth official objective of language education in Finnish comprehensive schools is pupils' increased awareness and appreciation of foreign cultures, people and languages (see section 2.2.4). Therefore, a good language textbook should be designed so that it helps a language teacher to attain this goal in practice. That is, at least, the position leading experts on education and the whole of educational system have taken for years in Finland. It was already in 1988, that is, before the great curriculum reform, that language teachers were advised at the national level in Guidelines for the education of multiculturalism in Finnish comprehensive schools (*PO opas* 1988) to start using and producing increasing amounts of multicultural teaching materials in and for their lessons. This advice was given to teachers primarily in the hope of them being more

able to provide their pupils with the language skills they needed to cope successfully in the unifying Europe of the 1990s and also, to help pupils meet the growing demands of globalisation and multiculturalism in Finland and elsewhere. Merely hearing and talking about multicultural understanding, cross-cultural co-operation, and solidarity between nations were not considered to be enough anymore in the Finnish language education system. Comprehensive school pupils across Finland had to be given an equal chance to experience cross-cultural communication firsthand and in Guidelines (*PO opas* 1988: 8, 57-58) it was hypothesised that, among others, good language teaching materials could help teachers achieve this objective in practice.

In Guidelines (*PO opas* 1988: 23-24, 57-59) much emphasis was put on the good quality of multicultural language teaching materials as well as on the suitability of the materials for comprehensive school pupils' age level and language skills. When choosing materials for education, teachers were asked to be especially attentive to such matters as the concrete nature and objectivity of teaching materials and also to make sure that all materials in pupils' use were as realistic, many-sided, and up-to-date as possible. In other words, it was highly recommended in Guidelines that teachers use and produce materials, both informative and entertaining, that contain non-stereotypical information on foreign languages and cultures and that all of the materials discuss contemporary issues with which pupils are already familiar. Presenting comprehensive school pupils with an image that "even in foreign countries there are mummies, daddies, divorce families, doctors, [and] farmers as well as lunch breaks, playground activities etc., not just politicians and their texts" (*PO opas* 1988: 23-24) was hoped and believed to increase pupils' awareness of the similarities and differences between the Finnish culture and other cultures. Similarly, the use of foreign proverbs, comics, jokes, myths, and songs, among others, as teaching materials was expected to work in pupils' favour in language lessons because of the materials' cultural richness and teachers were encouraged to keep an open mind about such materials. All in all, the increased cultural and cross-cultural awareness was hoped by Finnish experts on education to lead at the national level into Finnish pupils' better and more profound understanding of foreigners and their cultures and, thus, prevent any

possible cross-cultural misunderstandings between Finns and other nationalities in the future (*PO opas* 1988: 23-24).

Had the Guidelines (1988) not been so centrally prescribed and detailed, its life span might have been longer than that of a couple of years. In the early 1990s, the book met growing resistance among language teachers in Finland, as did all heavily centralised curriculum planning (POPS 1994: 9) and in the course of the curriculum reform it lost its status in the educational system. At the same time, the pressure from Finnish municipalities and comprehensive schools towards local curriculum development and decentralisation of decision-making grew (see section 2.1) and it resulted in teachers getting more autonomy in decision-making and in the general implementation of cultural and cross-cultural education in the new POPS (1994). The power to set the criteria as to what materials serve the purpose of multicultural education the best in Finnish schools and, also, what materials pupils benefit the most from both in and outside the school setting was thus shifted from Finland's leading educational experts to individual language teachers. Only the objectives for multicultural language teaching were outlined in broad terms in the new POPS (1994: 32, 68-71).

In the absence of standardised national criteria, language teachers in Finland gained, then, the freedom to choose the means and materials with which they aim to increase pupils' awareness and appreciation of foreign cultures, people, and languages and even today that freedom exists. Due to the lack of Finnish studies on the criteria that individual teachers have set for good multicultural language teaching materials since the educational reform (see section 3), it is difficult, however, to define in the present study the specific aspects of multiculturalism that have affected teachers' choice of teaching materials the most during the past decade. The continuous popularity of commercially produced language textbooks, which correspond with the objectives of POPS (see section 3.1), would, nevertheless, seem to suggest that over the years many language teachers have agreed and still agree with the criteria set by textbook writers for the teaching of multiculturalism in language materials. Should this be the case, then many language teachers of today would value materials that encourage pupils to develop an open mind towards people with different backgrounds and materials that teach pupils not only the target language itself

but also about the geographical, cultural, and social contexts in which the target language is actually spoken. This can be concluded from the goals set for multicultural language teaching at the national level (see section 2.2.4) and from the strong consistency that exists between those goals and commercially produced textbook designing.

3.3 The role and features of a good foreign language textbook

In the beginning of the present chapter, the question “What should foreign language teaching materials be like to support the national language policy?” was raised. The purpose of the present chapter was twofold: firstly, to find an answer to the question mentioned above and secondly, to shed some light on the issue of foreign language teaching materials as a means of implementing the national language policy – a subject that has not caught the attention of that many researchers recently. In section 3.1, language textbooks were examined through their role in the Finnish educational system and in section 3.2 the four official objectives of foreign language education, that is pupil-centredness, integration of the language learning syllabus, sufficient communication skills, and appreciation of multiculturalism, were discussed from the viewpoint of language textbooks.

Because of the long history of central curriculum planning in Finland, the history of uniform textbook designing has been long in Finland, too. For decades, teams of language textbook writers have wanted to extend the notion of Finnish pupils’ equal learning opportunities in language lessons to language teaching materials and because of it, the design of commercially produced textbooks and POPS have become relatively consistent, the former relying on the latter. In theory, the curriculum reform of 1994 may have given teachers more freedom in selecting language teaching materials but in practice many teachers still consider commercially produced language textbooks to correspond best with the contents of POPS (1994). Whether they be commercially produced or individually designed, all language teaching materials should meet certain criteria to be able to put the official objectives of foreign language education truly into practice.

To be considered pupil-centred, language teaching materials, and textbooks in particular, should be able to take into account such individual pupil characteristics as age, knowledge and skills, readiness and motivation to learn, interests and attitudes, learning style, intelligence, creativity, and personality. They should also activate pupils instead of make them passive and involve them emotionally, cognitively, socially, and physically. To meet the criteria of integration, language textbooks should be able to make use of pupils' prior knowledge and skills acquired in and out of school and help them understand that languages are a useful means of communication that can be used to acquire knowledge about other school subjects too. Integrative materials should also contain topics that are linked with pupils' everyday life and their immediate surroundings and help pupils make predictions about classroom texts as well as enable them to construct their personal interpretations of the texts in a meaningful way. To encourage pupils to communicate in a foreign language, language teaching materials should contain familiar and concrete topics which attract pupils, engage their interest, and allow them to be creative. Last but not least, to attain the objective of appreciation of multiculturalism, language teaching materials should encourage pupils to be open-minded towards people with different backgrounds and teach them objectively about the geographical, cultural, and social contexts in which the target language is spoken.

Due to the uniformity and limited number of commercially produced language textbooks on the market every year and their continuing popularity among teachers, textbooks have gained a higher status in the Finnish educational system than any other language teaching materials. However high their status should become in the future, language teachers should always bear in mind two very important points. Firstly, classroom texts do not absolve teachers of their responsibility for they are designed only as a guide for language teaching and learning and secondly, they should "restrict neither the curriculum nor the teacher's style of teaching" (Papalia 1976: 89). Alatis, Altman, and Alatis (1981), Papalia (1976), and Williams (1983) warn teachers not to let classroom materials, for example textbooks, become a tyrant in the language classroom and not to let them constrain language education. "By analogy to placing the cart before the horse, [...] teaching practices [should never be determined] by the available materials", argue Alatis, Altman, and

Alatis (1981: 195). Williams (1983: 254) agrees with this view and notes that “the textbook is a tool, and the teacher must know not only how to use it, but how useful it can be” and also that “the teacher takes over where the textbook leaves off, and he or she must be able to assess its strengths and weaknesses”.

4 EARLIER EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON PUPILS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS

So far in the present study, the criteria for good language teaching materials have been approached from the viewpoint of experts on education, only. The views of both Finnish and foreign experts have been presented that certain features are more valuable and desirable in language teaching materials than others because they meet the objectives set at the national level for foreign language education the best. However, as the purpose of the present study is to find out what are the views of those who are the primary users of language teaching materials, that is, Finnish pupils, a change of viewpoint is necessary at this point of the study.

In sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 three earlier studies on pupils and their views of language teaching materials, textbooks especially, will be discussed from the pupils' point of view. An Algerian and an English study will first focus on the features that pupils find desirable and undesirable in their own particular language textbooks. Then, a German study will focus on the features that pupils find more or less desirable in foreign language texts used as teaching materials in language lessons. Section 4.4 will finally summarise the findings of these three studies and discuss the importance and relevance of the findings for the present study.

4.1 An Algerian study

In her study, Cherchalli (1988) studied the reactions of 136 Algerian secondary school learners (96 females, 40 males), aged between 16 and 18 years old, to their English language learning experiences. The learners went to two of the largest secondary schools in Algeria and had studied English as a foreign language since the third year of their middle school (Cherchalli 1988: 49-50). The reactions concerned mostly of the perceptions and opinions that the learners had of their foreign language textbook of English, *New Lines*. By 'perceptions' Cherchalli (1988: 56) referred to the fact-related judgements that the learners made of their foreign language textbook that could be checked later by external criteria. For example, a learner's answer to the question "What

is the most common activity in the classroom?” was considered a perception in Cherchalli’s study, since the right answer could be checked from the English teacher (a right answer existed). ‘Opinions’, in turn, were value-related judgements and as such they had no right answer. Therefore, the answer to the question “Do you like your textbook?” was considered an opinion, since the right answer could not be checked from the teacher. As the present study focuses on Finnish comprehensive school pupils’ value-related views of EFL textbooks, the focus in reviewing Cherchalli’s study will be on the Algerian learners’ opinions only and not on their perceptions.

Cherchalli (1988) conducted her study at a time when foreign language teaching in Algeria had just experienced great changes. The old teaching methods and materials that many teachers and learners had been dissatisfied with throughout the 1980s had been replaced by newer ones. Cherchalli mentions (1988: 2) that one of the biggest changes of the 1980s to bring about improvement in language teaching had been the policy to ‘Algerianise’ the English teaching materials. ‘Algerianisation’ had been believed to affect learners’ motivation positively by being more relevant to learners’ needs. The ‘officials’, as Cherchalli (1988:11) calls the team of teachers and inspectors behind *New Lines*, the more modern Algerian textbook of English, had hoped that the new teaching material would prove to be more successful than its predecessor, *Practice and Progress*. As a locally produced textbook with local issues, people, and places in it, *New Lines* had been believed to be more familiar and thus more interesting to Algerian learners, have a better knowledge of their likes and dislikes, and to have characters that they could easily identify themselves with. Cherchalli (1988:24) argues that as a foreign produced textbook *Practice and Progress* had done just the opposite in the past: learners had found it boring, repetitive, and a waste of time.

Besides using ‘Algerianisation’ the officials had tried to improve the new English textbook, *New Lines*, by making it more communicative. Cherchalli (1988: 23-24) mentions that a wide range of communicative situations had been included in *New Lines* in response to learners’ wishes to have a new textbook with more practical applications than *Practice and Progress*. Learners had wished for dialogues, conversations, games, and songs and the officials had tried to do their best in this respect. They had hoped to create a textbook

that would enable learners to develop their learning potential to the fullest and appeal to their various needs and wants. They had also aimed at modernity and relevance but until 1988 and Cherchalli's study no one knew if the officials had succeeded in their task.

After the completion of *New Lines*, the Algerian officials had carried out a tentative evaluation of the book among teachers. The results of the evaluation, as Cherchalli (1988:25) reports, had revealed, among others, that the teachers considered *New Lines* more relevant to learners' needs, interests, and experiences than *Practice and Progress* by being more communicative. The teachers also suggested that the new textbook activated learners more than the previous textbook because the texts in *New Lines* were closer to everyday life, the topics and activities more motivating, and the vocabulary richer. Cherchalli (1988: 3) comments the tentative evaluation and the general co-operation between the Algerian officials and the teachers as follows:

From the introduction of [*New Lines*] it is clear that predicting how learners learn best and what they need to learn comes from two sources other than the learners. On the one hand there is 'research in linguistics' and on the other hand there are people who foresee the Algerian learners' needs whom I would call the 'officials'. Yet, the ones who do the learning [...] have not been consulted. Their views have been neglected as if they share no interest with teachers. However, if we accept the view that learning is essentially an activity of the learners and that their internal states are crucial to their learning then there are no doubts about the right of the 'officials' to exclude the learners' perspective.

With this statement, Cherchalli clearly criticises the officials' decision to leave Algerian learners' opinion about the success of *New Lines* out of the tentative evaluation. Why had the voice of those who do the learning not been integrated in the evaluation process? For Cherchalli this was inconceivable: to have learners at the centre of the decision-making without letting them decide. Cherchalli calls this "learner-centredness from the 'outside'" (Cherchalli 1988: 31). Furthermore, she (1988: 26-27) complains that instead of approaching the issue of improved foreign language teaching and foreign language teaching materials through learners' experiences, the officials had used teacher predictions in the tentative evaluation. In her opinion, a switch of perspectives was necessary to get a full picture of the matter and, therefore, she took it upon herself, to study the issue further two years after *New Lines* had been taken into wider use in Algerian secondary schools.

Believing firmly learners themselves were the only ones to know for sure how they viewed their foreign language learning experience and their new English textbook, *New Lines*, Cherchalli (1988) turned in her study towards them. She hoped that the findings of her study would contribute especially to the understanding of teachers and textbook writers of the different 'realities', that is, different ways of interpretation, that foreign language learners had of their textbook. In her study Cherchalli (1988: 7) claims: "A better understanding of these [realities] might allow for a compromise between the 'official' and the learners' perspective. This, in turn, could be a major step towards increasing the learners' chances of success". In other words, Cherchalli hoped that her study would help to inform officials and teachers about the way Algerian learners related to *New Lines* and, thus, help teachers to get to know their pupils better and to adapt the teaching materials to their needs.

To elicit information from Algerian learners concerning their foreign language learning experiences, Cherchalli (1988) decided to focus in her study largely on the relation that they had to their foreign language textbook, *New Lines*. She (1988: 55) believed that by focusing on something concrete, in other words, the textbook, she would be able obtain indirectly more data about the learners' language learning experiences than by focusing directly on their experiences. Had she approached the issue the direct way, she might have risked losing a lot of valuable data as a result of the learners not comprehending the abstract nature of some of her questions.

Using several learner-centred techniques, such as class recordings, questionnaires, personal interviews, group discussions, and learner diaries, Cherchalli (1988) tried to form as complete a picture of the secondary school learners' internal subjective representations and interpretations of *New Lines* as possible. She regarded it as extremely important that her data collection methods were truly learner-centred, that is, the data were collected directly from the learners themselves. Choosing the right learner-centred research methods was not, however, easy for Cherchalli (1998: 5), since no one method had yet been scientifically shown to be better than others in researching learners' views. "In most cases, the investigator has to go to the length of developing his or her own instrument for collecting relevant data or has to go

through great difficulties in making decisions on the sorts of existing methods to build upon, knowing that they are not yet well established”, claims Cherchalli (1988:5), explaining her choice to use various additional data collection methods in the study.

For practical reasons, Cherchalli (1988: 53-54) began her study with a questionnaire. The questionnaire constituted the main basis of the study and the rest of the data were supposed to shed further light on the findings of the questionnaire. To develop as relevant a questionnaire as possible for the study, Cherchalli used questionnaires from other studies as an example that she then revised. She also used *New Lines*, both the learner’s book and the teacher’s book, as a source for the statements in the questionnaire. The questionnaire itself consisted of thirty-one ‘yes’/’no’ and ‘agree’/’disagree’ statements that the 136 secondary school learners were supposed to answer by circling the letter in front of the statement that corresponded their answer best. The subject matters of the statements included, among others, the illustrations and songs in *New Lines*, the suitability of the book for self-study, the grammar and vocabulary in *New Lines*, and different classroom activities. The statements that I believe are the most relevant for the present study in the questionnaire are listed in Table 2:

Table 2. Questions related to the appeal of *New Lines* (Cherchalli 1988: 412-17).

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you like your textbook basically? (Statement B1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Yes B) No • The content of most texts and dialogues in the textbook are interesting and enjoyable. (Statement B7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) I agree B) I disagree • The textbook supplies adequate and interesting information on British culture. (Statement B8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) I agree B) I disagree |
|--|

The reason why the statements in Table 2 are so few is largely because there is a great difference between Cherchalli’s and my definition of a ‘language textbook’. The textbook that Cherchalli used in her study, *New Lines*, included texts, grammar, and activities, that is, it was the only EFL book in the Algerian

learners' use during their English lessons. Thus, many of the statements in Cherchalli's questionnaire involved activities, exercises, and grammar as well as texts included in *New Lines*. The textbook that I will discuss more closely in chapter 7 of the present study, *The News Headlines: courses 5-8* (1996), used by the pupils participating in the data collection of the present study includes, in contrast, only texts (a separate activity book with grammar exists). Therefore, all the activities and grammar closely connected with the texts are left out of the study as irrelevant. Furthermore, as the present study focuses on the features that pupils view desirable and undesirable in the texts and topics in their textbook, subject matters such as illustrations, music, and vocabulary lists that Cherchalli included in her study are left out of the analysis as well.

The statements listed in Table 2 were designed to elicit information about the learners' reactions to their textbook on a general level (Statement B1), on a content level (Statement B7), and on a cultural level (Statement B8). Cherchalli (1988: 51) analysed the questionnaire quantitatively because she felt that she could control the data better that way. Reporting the results of the questionnaire in terms of percentages gave her a feeling of confidence to continue her data collection with more qualitative methods: personal interviews, group discussions, class recordings, and diaries.

Cherchalli (1988: 51-52, 61-62) envisaged initially the learner interviews to be carried out on an individual basis. She had planned to use an empty classroom whenever possible to interview an individual learner from a group of volunteers about his or her reactions to *New Lines*. Fairly soon after starting off her interviews Cherchalli noticed, however, that the interviews began to evolve into group discussions. This was because other learners intervened in the individual interviews. As a result, some of the interviews that Cherchalli did in relation with her study were individual interviews and some group discussions.

For the interviews, Cherchalli (1988: 61) wrote a list of 14 predetermined questions that the learners were required to answer. The questions that can be considered the most relevant for the present study are questions 1 to 3 and they involve the learners' general opinion about their textbook (see Table 3):

Table 3. Interview questions about *New Lines* (Cherchalli 1988: 61).

- Question 1: Do you like your textbook? Why?
- Question 2: What do you like best in '*New Lines*'?
- Question 3: What do you like least in it?
- Question 4: What kind of exercises do you like best?
- Question 5: Which type of exercise do you learn most from?
- Question 6: Do you usually work on English outside class?
- Question 7: What activity do you benefit the most from?
- Question 8: What activity do you like best?
- Question 9: Do you have any techniques to help you learn English?
- Question 10: Do you prefer the teacher to explain things in English, French or Arabic?
- Question 11: Would you have liked the book to have the keys to exercises?
- Question 12: How do you feel working in groups?
- Question 13: Do you usually use a dictionary when working on English at home?
- Question 14: What is more important for you: communicating with mistakes or speaking without mistakes but knowing that you cannot communicate?

With her questions, Cherchalli gave the learners an opportunity to explain in their own words what their reactions to *New Lines* were, an opportunity that was not given to the learners when collecting the data with the questionnaire. To Cherchalli's (1988: 52) delight, many learners not only answered the fourteen questions above but also expanded their answers in response to Cherchalli's 'why' and 'how' questions and, thus, brought more light to their answers in the questionnaire.

Of the two remaining research methods, class recordings were used before, during, and after English lessons by Cherchalli (1988:52) to familiarise herself with *New Lines* and the teaching situation in secondary schools where she was conducting her study. Class recordings were also used to help the learners become accustomed to Cherchalli's presence in English lessons. The decision to use a learner diary in the study as a data collection method arose from Cherchalli's need to use an even less controlled technique than an interview when researching the learners' views. As a data collection method learner diary appeared to Cherchalli less rigid since it allowed the learners themselves to make the decision when to write (at school or out of school), how to write (in English, French, or Arabic, often or not so often, and briefly or in length) and, more importantly, what to write or not to write about as regards to *New Lines*.

The results of the study by Cherchalli (1988: 212) revealed that when asked on a general level in the questionnaire: “Do you like your textbook basically?” (see Table 3, Statement B1) most Algerian secondary school learners (67%) claimed to like *New Lines*. However, when presented more specific questions, both in the questionnaire and in the interview, concerning the content of the new textbook, the learners’ opinions about the book began to vary. Cherchalli thought that this might have been because the more specific questions made the learners think more thoroughly about *New Lines* and, as a result, they no longer perceived many aspects of the textbook so favourably. Also, differences of opinion started to emerge between learners of different achievement level.

Cherchalli (1988: 226) found in her study that learners who were considered weak or average in English by their English teacher were generally more satisfied with the textbook content (61.9%) than learners who were strong in English (48.4%). As a possible reason for this difference in satisfaction Cherchalli (1988: 266, 277) mentions the strong learners’ early perception of the non-utility of the texts in *New Lines* for themselves and their future goals. Being a strong learner of English includes in Cherchalli’s opinion, therefore, not only the ability to do well in one’s English studies but also the ability to make independent decisions about the language learning process based on one’s needs. The weak or average learners, in contrast, might not think of the utility of the educational texts presented at them at school that much ahead. Instead, Cherchalli (1988:266) claims, they might have considered the texts in *New Lines* interesting because the texts were chosen for them by the system and thus they could only be enjoyable. In other words, the weak learners believed the system knew better what was good for them and worth learning.

The opinion of Wahiba and Abdelwalid, two learners of English with different achievement levels, exemplify well the assumption above. As a strong learner of English, Wahiba was able to analyse *New Lines* from different viewpoints, find both pros and cons in the book, and even to say which parts of *New Lines* were the most useful. Wahiba summarised the textbook as follows:

“It is an interesting book. What characterizes it is all the various activities: songs, advertisements etc. Thus, monotony is avoided. I like these exercises with scientific orientation. They can be useful for the coming year...[...] The texts are rich in vocabulary but the themes are not interesting and we are forced to learn text that are not interesting. To learn all about the telephone is interesting but I

don't think I'll have to explain somebody how to use the telephone in English" (Cherchalli 1988:265).

In comparison, Abdelwalid, a weak learner of English had a more one-sided opinion about *New Lines*:

"Of course I like my textbook! It shouldn't occur to anybody that books are not good! Books are all good!" (Cherchalli 1988: 234).

He did not view the textbook as critically as Wahiba nor did he think of it as a source that could be subjected to the pursuit of some higher personal goals. It is as if Abdelwalid were used to taking in all the information that the textbook contained without thinking how the information fit his purposes, if it fit at all, and saw nothing strange about that.

On a more general level, that is, regardless of the learners' English skills, the contents of *New Lines* were viewed in Cherchalli's study (1988: 235) as many-sided by the learners who liked their textbook. One learner, Yasmina, even compared the contents of the textbook to a newspaper or a magazine because *New Lines* did not fit the image she had of a typical foreign language textbook:

"There are songs, there are advertisements, it's not like those books where you find lessons, lessons, lessons...now there is no monotony" (Cherchalli 1988: 236).

New Lines was also favoured for its realism; Cherchalli (1988: 235-236) reports that the learners liked, for example, chapters that discussed digestion, driving signs, and asking one's way in a strange place. The quantity and practicality of knowledge were clearly highly valued by the learners.

Those with a different opinion on the content of *New Lines* were dissatisfied, among others, with the style or the tone different topics were dealt with in the book. Cherchalli (1988: 272-273) notes that compared with the previous textbook of English, *Practice and Progress*, *New Lines* was a bit more modern and this apparently did not please some of the learners who were used to the old tradition. Djamel, preferring a more serious tone in texts, said, for example:

“We prefer ‘*Practice and Progress*’ because it has lessons in it. *New Lines* has entertainments [sic]. In *Practice and Progress* there is no waste of time!” (Cherchalli 1988:272).

In his opinion, an EFL textbook could not be both entertaining and instructive. Entertainment was a waste of time, as far as foreign language learning was concerned, and entertaining lessons were not really lessons at all. A learner called Aldjia agreed with Djamel:

“A textbook should normally have texts and questions on those texts. A textbook is meant to be serious but this one...well...(pouting)” (Cherchalli 1988: 272).

New Lines did not correspond to Aldjia’s expectations of a ‘normal’ EFL textbook. For Aldjia ‘normal’ meant serious texts and questions based on those texts. When Cherchalli (1988:273) asked Dalila, another learner participating in the study, what ‘a serious’ textbook was like Dalila answered that it has “a good text, only a few exercises, a little bit of grammar and no pictures”. Perhaps this description would have corresponded with Aldjia’s view of a ‘normal’ textbook.

Besides the textbook’s degree of seriousness, some learners expressed their dissatisfaction with the topic selection in *New Lines*. Cherchalli (1988:373) claims that these learners would have wanted *New Lines* to include more thought-provoking topics that would have stimulated more discussion in English lessons. As a product of ‘Algerianisation’ *New Lines* was perhaps too Algerian for them with Rachid as its main character and Algerian society as its main setting. For example, Fadela said that “the themes are not interesting. It’s always Rachid...he goes...he comes” (Cherchalli 1988: 265) and Safia, who had studied previously in France, thought that by focusing on Rachid and Algeria only the textbook lost all its liveliness and fun:

“I don’t like NL very much especially when I compare it with the book I had before...[...] We had stories that we lived, stories for youth, full of life and fun, but in this book the stories are sad...It’s always Rachid with his studies...He’s there in Touggourt where he was born...he studies and so on...In France it was mainly dialogues. From time to time we had texts but most of the time it was dialogues between young people. The characters were the same throughout the book and it was their life with their adventures etc...” (in Cherchalli 1988: 265).

Adel, in turn, criticised *New Lines* for not discussing enough international issues. He said in a group discussion:

“Miss, we should have texts which tell us how people live in the U.S.A, in Germany etc...etc...Not only what’s happening in Algeria! English is an international language, miss! It’s spoken in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand so why not learn what’s happening in those countries as well as Britain?” (Cherchalli 1988:268)

Cherchalli (1988: 373) suggests that in the future it might be more interesting for learners, especially for those wanting to participate in discussions, if textbook writers included more present-day issues and facts of real world in the textbook with which the learners were familiar and which they considered interesting. Such issues could be, for example, nuclear energy and terrorism, which are usually global and provoke different kinds of thoughts in pupils.

The learners’ opinion about the cultural aspect of their textbook and the information on British culture included in *New Lines* (see Table 2, Statement B 8) were divided more equally between learners of different achievement levels. About half of the learners in each group (weak, average or strong) thought that the textbook supplied them with adequate and stimulating information on British culture. Half of the learners thought otherwise. Those in favour of the book thought that it offered, for example, useful information on how British phone booths operate. Those against the book disliked, for example, chapters with British jokes in them. This was because British humour, and British culture in general, was considered difficult to understand from an Algerian point of view. Although Cherchalli did not study directly the differences of opinion between the two sexes, she (1988: 516) noticed that boys were more satisfied with the cultural aspect of the textbook than girls. She assumed that this was because *New Lines* revolved around a young Algerian man (Rachid) who studied Electronics in England and, thus, boys could identify themselves more easily with his experiences. Girls, in contrast, did not feel that concerned with Rachid’s experiences and would have preferred British culture to be reflected otherwise. Cherchalli (1988: 270) proposes that it would benefit officials designing new EFL textbooks to familiarise themselves better with the cultural likes and dislikes of young people so that in the future learners could be offered even better cross-cultural teaching materials.

4.2 An English study

A few years after Cherchalli (1988) had conducted her study in Algeria, O'Sullivan (1991) carried out a survey of foreign language learners' views of their particular French course book (*Tricolore / Action!*) or German course book (*Deutsch Heute*) in England. O'Sullivan was interested in knowing if the language learners' course books, which were very popular in the English educational system at that time and "characteristically a staple diet of [the learners'] foreign language study" (O'Sullivan 1991: 10), played any role in motivating the learners in their language studies. More specifically, he wanted to find out what the English learners' views of their particular language course book were from the standpoints of:

- (i) [the book's] capacity to arouse [the learners'] interest;
- (ii) the perceived value in day-to-day use of various component features of the course and supporting resources;
- (iii) [the book's] perceived contribution to [the learners'] personal and linguistic development and general motivation for foreign language study. (O'Sullivan 1991: 10).

Altogether 503 learners from 20 secondary schools in Kent, England responded to O'Sullivan's (1991) survey. The survey consisted of a three-page-long questionnaire designed to be completed in fifteen minutes and most of the questions in it consisted of multiple-choice questions presented on a semantic differential scale also known as Likert's scale. O'Sullivan chose this scale as his data collection method because he considered the issues presented to the respondents quite clear cut and also because he wanted to "avoid mystifying [the respondents] or putting them off the questionnaire with a more complex choice" (1991: 10). Learners taking part in the data collection of the survey were, thus, asked to express their opinion or judgement on their foreign language course book simply by ticking boxes. The two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire made, however, an exception to the rule – O'Sullivan asked the learners to respond to them in their own words. Of all the

questions in the questionnaire, those that can be considered perhaps the most relevant for the present study are listed in Table 4.

O'Sullivan (1991: 10-11) began his survey by asking the learners whether they had thought their course book had looked interesting or not the first time they saw it and whether they had anticipated that learning with the book would be enjoyable or boring (*First or early impressions*). He also inquired the learners in section one if their course book had first generated any feelings of anticipation and associated enthusiasm in them for language lessons. The reason why O'Sullivan included these three questions in the questionnaire was because he anticipated the learners' arousal of consciousness, curiosity, and interest as well as expectancy and incentive for their particular course book to have a positive effect on the learners' motivation in language studies.

Next, in section two, O'Sullivan (1991) inquired the learners about the nature of their course book (*Using the course*). He asked the learners, among others, whether they thought the texts in foreign language were 'very interesting', 'sometimes interesting', or 'boring'. This question was included in the questionnaire because O'Sullivan considered foreign language texts one of the component elements of the course book, others being for example illustrations, grammar, and exercises.

Finally, in section three, O'Sullivan (1991) asked the learners about their personal views of some of the outcomes of using the language course book (*Final impressions*). Questions one and two in that section focused on the input provided by the book in two areas: first, language that can be used in everyday situations and second, information about the French/ German people and the way they live, that is, information on the socio-cultural area of the target language. The second to last question in section three focused on the fulfilment of the learners' expectations concerning the language course book and it invited a more subjective response from the learners. Namely, O'Sullivan inquired the participants whether the book had corresponded to their views of a 'typical' school textbook or not, and if not, why. With this question, O'Sullivan intended to identify the learners' broadest final perceptions on their individual language course book.

Table 4. Questions related to the role of the course book in motivating foreign language learners in language studies (O'Sullivan' 1991:10-11).

<p>(a) <u>Section 1: First/ early impressions</u></p> <p>Question 1: Did you find the course looked: interesting [] not interesting []</p> <p>Question 2: Did you feel that your learning with this course might be: enjoyable [] boring []</p> <p>Question 3: Did you look forward to lessons more [] less []</p> <p>(b) <u>Section 2: Using the course</u></p> <p>Question 2: Did you find the texts in the foreign language: very interesting [] sometimes interesting [] boring []</p> <p>(‘texts are interpreted as any organised input for teaching/ learning purposes)</p> <p>(c) <u>Section 3: Final impressions</u></p> <p>Question 1: Did the course teach you language you can use in real situations a lot [] a fair amount [] not much []</p> <p>Question 2: Did the course teach you about French / German people and how they live a lot [] a fair amount [] not much []</p> <p>Was this course typical of what you think a school textbook should be? yes [] no []</p> <p>What did you like <i>most</i> about the course? What did you like <i>least</i> about the course?</p>

O'Sullivan ended his survey and section three with two open-ended questions regarding the features that the learners had liked and disliked the most in their particular course book. These questions were left open-ended because O'Sullivan wanted to give the learners an opportunity both to comment the contents of the textbook in their own words and also to raise some issues that were not covered in the main body of the questionnaire.

Because of the nature of his data, O'Sullivan (1991: 11-12) used both quantitative and qualitative methods in his data analysis. He reported the ‘objective responses’, as he calls the learners’ responses to the multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire, as percentages of the total response. The ‘subjective responses’, that is, the learners’ answers to the two final open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, he reported as a list of learners’ likes and dislikes, representing a consensus of the learners’ views of the most

desirable and undesirable features of their particular course book. Based on the learners' responses to the first two multiple-choice questions in section one, O'Sullivan concluded that well designed foreign language course books have a great capacity to arouse language learners' interest and, thus, generate motivation towards learning a foreign language. Namely, altogether 81.8 % of the respondents answered that they had felt their course book looked interesting the first time they saw it and 72.9% of the learners said they had anticipated that learning with the new course book might be enjoyable. On the basis of these rather positive learner responses, O'Sullivan (1991: 12) concluded that should any foreign language learners' initial enthusiasm for the language teaching material start to cool off and "problems arise with a particular course book, they do so after a period of regular use and usually despite an initially favourable reception from learners". In his opinion, it may well be the factors outside the course book such as the learners' personal relationship with the language teacher that hinder the continuance of the learners' initial enthusiasm for the course book in the long run.

In section two, using the course, a substantial majority of the learners in O'Sullivan's (1991:12) survey opted for the middle response in question two. In other words, most learners (75.6%) considered the foreign language texts in their course book 'sometimes interesting'. The rest of the learners found the texts either 'boring' (13.3%) or very interesting (10.9%). In O'Sullivan's opinion, these learner responses could be interpreted rather positively, that is, foreign language texts were seen as more interesting than boring in the learners' opinion, for the wording of the middle response in question two section two was overall more positive than negative.

All in all, O'Sullivan (1991) rested much of the evaluation of the learners' responses in his survey on the weight of the opinion expressed either at the positive or the negative poles of the semantic differential scale, also known as the Likert's scale. He even worded the multiple-choice questions in sections two and three so that they invited "a clear positive response, a positive response with, perhaps, minor reservations, [or] a clear negative response" (O'Sullivan 1991: 12). Accordingly, the learners' responses in section three were divided clearly into two; those that represented a positive stance and those that represented a negative stance. Learners who had a favourable final

impression of their course book responded that the book had taught either ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ of language for real life situations (altogether 90.4% of the answers in question one section three). The positively oriented learners also thought that their course book had provided them with ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ of knowledge of the target language community and its lifestyle (altogether 80% of the answers in question two section three). Learners who responded negatively to questions two and three in section three (altogether 8.5% of the responses in question one and 18.3% of the responses in question two) found, in contrast, that their particular course book had not taught either much language for real situations nor given them much knowledge about the French / German people.

In the final summative evaluation of the learners’ general views of their course books (‘Was this course typical of what you think a school textbook should be?’), there was again a clear division between the language learners’ positive and negative responses: 86.7% of the learners responded favourably to the statement, whereas 12.9% of the learners did not (O’Sullivan 1991: 12). In his analysis of the learners’ answers to this particular question O’Sullivan observed, however, something very interesting; not all learners who had opted for the latter response, that is the ‘no’ response, had been discontent with their particular course book. Just the opposite, they had found it even better than their existing expectations, hence the negative response to the statement.

The learners’ subjective responses to the two open-ended questions at the end of O’Sullivan’s survey, that is, “What did you like *most* about the course?” and “What did you like *least* about the course?” revealed that the respondents wanted a foreign language learning experience which could be described as “enjoyable, comprehensible, meaningful and practical and which appeals to their instincts both to learn and to engage in social behaviour” (O’Sullivan 1991: 13). This became apparent to O’Sullivan, as he listed the features that at least ten percent of the learners had mentioned as desirable and undesirable in their language course book. In the learners’ opinion, the most and the least desirable features in their course book were the following (see Table 5):

Table 5. The most and the least desirable features of foreign language course books, as reported by the respondents (O'Sullivan 1991: 12-13).

<p><u>Desirable features:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An abundance of illustration. 2. English explanations, especially relating to the structure and functioning of the language. 3. Quizzes (crosswords, games etc). 4. Tapes. 5. Plenty of dialogue, conversation and role-play work. 6. Presentation of real-life, everyday situations. 7. Presentation of the target language community and its way of life. 8. Provision of a vocabulary. <p><u>Undesirable features:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Exercises. 10. Grammar sections (including presentation of verb tenses and paradigms). 11. Tests.
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As O'Sullivan made no distinction between the most desirable and undesirable textbook and activity book features in his analysis (he used the term course book to refer to both teaching materials), an exact specification of the features that the respondents in O'Sullivan's survey appreciated the most in their foreign language texts is somewhat difficult in this review. However, as features five, six, and seven in Table 5 seem to correspond best with the criteria usually set for good EFL textbooks in Finland, those three features will be examined more closely below.

That feature five, "Plenty of dialogue, conversation and role-play work." should be among the most desirable features of foreign language teaching materials, is in O'Sullivan's (1991: 13) opinion a clear sign of today's learners becoming more convinced that the teaching of practical communication skills is indeed one of the most important aims of modern foreign language courses in schools. Nowadays, learners wish to learn foreign languages, among others, because of their great practical value and, as result, practicality is quickly becoming an asset in many teaching material packages on sale every year. Also, the learners' desire for the presentation of everyday situations (see Table 5, feature six) is an illustration of the learners' notion that "meaningful learning takes place when new ideas and experiences can be readily subsumed into existing cognitive structures" (O'Sullivan 1991: 13). In other words, learners prefer teaching materials that link any new information in a foreign language

with their already existing knowledge of the world because it makes the learning of the foreign language both easier and more meaningful for the learners.

Finally, the desirability of feature seven in Table 5, that is, the “Presentation of the target language community and its way of life” reveals in O'Sullivan's (1991:12-3) opinion that quite a few learners (at least ten percent of the respondents in O'Sullivan's survey) are motivated to learn a foreign language because of its cultural integrative value. That is, learners wish to learn a foreign language because they consider it a good way of gaining information about the people speaking the language as their mother tongue and often the learners' attitudes towards the target language community extend to wishing to become accepted as members of that community. For this reason, it is highly important for teaching material designers to include authentic information about the target language community in the language teaching materials.

4.3 A German study

A group of German researchers, among others Apelt and Koernig (1994), Blell (1992), Holldack and Müller (1977), Koernig (1993), and Krück (1986), participated in a longitudinal study that focused on learner motivation during English lessons and on the teaching of English as a foreign language in the city of Potsdam in 1975-1994. Using different data collection methods, such as written questionnaires, interviews, and observation, the researchers inquired the opinion of German comprehensive school pupils, upper secondary general school pupils, and adult students attending different English classes on the English teaching methods and materials used in various schools in Potsdam. The results of the longitudinal study were summed up by Apelt (1996) and all references made in the present review to the results of the German study are based on his article.

Like Cherchalli's (1988) and O'Sullivan's (1991) studies on foreign language learners' reactions to their English learning materials and experiences, the German longitudinal study reported by Apelt (1996: 81-89) is rare in the sense that, unlike the majority of studies on foreign language teaching materials, it approached the issue from the viewpoint of language

learners. Apelt (1996: 81) argues that throughout the study the German researchers were most interested in the personal, social, and societal reasons that maintained the learners' motivation for learning English, as they were considered the key elements in the development of German language teaching and material design. As the present study focuses on the criteria set for desirable foreign language teaching materials and EFL textbooks in particular, the results of the German study on the nature of English teaching materials used in Potsdam and the German learners' opinion on the materials are of special interest and, thus, they will be discussed in more detail below.

In the longitudinal study, two types of inquiries were made among the German learners about the nature of their English teaching materials. Firstly, those that focused on different types of texts (the styles with which the foreign language texts used in language classrooms were written) and, secondly, those that focused on the topics of the texts (what the foreign language texts were all about). In some inquiries, the learners were asked to rank their ten favourite text types or topics (1st, 2nd, 3rd and so on) and in others they were asked to choose the alternative closest to their own opinion among a number of multiple-choice questions. From the 1970s to the 1990s the same trend could be detected in regard to the German learners' taste in text types: the learners were most interested in texts that contained more than just factual information. According to the first inquiries, learners appreciated humorous teaching materials already in 1979, although they played only a minor role in EFL teaching materials until 1989 (Apelt 1996: 83). Altogether, 75-90% of the learners wanted humorous texts to be included as teaching materials in their English lessons and they ranked these texts as the most interesting source of reading (1st position). In 1994, the situation was still very much the same: jokes, comics, and all kinds of humorous materials were popular among the German learners (50-80%), holding positions one, two, and four in the ranking.

In addition to humorous texts, the German learners preferred, throughout the years, also action, narrative, and experience to factual texts. Apelt (1996: 83) reports that especially the comprehensive and upper secondary school pupils wanted to read texts that discussed the problems and experiences of the young. Reading such texts seemed to help the pupils identify themselves with the characters and apply the texts better in oral communication. Interestingly

enough, also poems were popular among the young. Apelt refers to the results of Koernig's (1993) inquiry where 55% of the pupils were of the opinion that reading short poems in English was fun (39 % agreed partly) and 17 % thought that listening to poems in English was fun (54 % agreed partly). In addition, 15 % of the young hoped that the contents of the poems were relevant and meaningful for the young (46 % agreed partly). As to the adult learners of English, Apelt (1996: 83) mentions that those participating in Blell's (1992) inquiry, named stories about human relationships, detective and crime stories, action, travel writing, animal stories, and fictional texts as text types that were the most fun to read in English after humorous texts.

The inquiries made on the topics in the English teaching materials revealed that although the language learners in Potsdam, especially the comprehensive and upper secondary school pupils, had quite a unanimous taste in text types over the years, they did not always agree on the topics that these texts should discuss to be considered interesting. This was particularly true with female and male learners taking part in the inquiries. The most visible differences of opinion between the two genders, as reported by Apelt (1996: 83), were perhaps obtained by Koernig (1993) who discovered that while both female and male learners responded being interested in topics that discussed the everyday life of the young, their definitions on these topics varied quite significantly. Whereas the male participants informed being most interested in topics such as computers/technique, inventions, sports, and history, the female participants preferred topics such as relationships, animals/pets, music, and family matters. Apelt (1996: 84) notes that similar differences of opinion between the two sexes were noticeable even among the adult learners of English: men's definition of interesting topics corresponded mostly to that of boys' and women's definition to that of girls'. However, the differences of opinion based on one's gender were not as great among the adult population as the differences of opinion based on one's occupational background and, thus, the adult learners' personal interests and areas of expertise played a crucial role in defining topics of particular interest in language learning materials.

The inquiries about the motivation of political and historical topics of the English-speaking countries revealed a more unanimous, although quite opposite, reaction among the German learners as both topics were considered

fairly uninteresting by them in the longitudinal study. In 1977, Holldack and Müller asked a group of seventh and ninth-graders whether they considered English teaching materials containing current, political topics interesting. Only 25 % of the seventh-grade pupils and 14 % of the ninth-grade pupils, as reported by Apelt (1996: 83), replied yes to the question. In the inquiry of 1989, no great changes in the percentages were observed: the number of pupils interested in studying politics was still low and the topic itself was not ranked by the German learners among the top ten that motivated them to learn English. In his article Apelt mentions that by the end of the longitudinal study, that is, year 1994, the figures mentioned above were still very much the same.

The history of English-speaking countries did not enjoy great success either as a topic of interest among the German learners at the end of the longitudinal study in 1994. Apelt (1996: 82-83) reports that like political topics, it was not among the top ten favourites named by the learners. He argues, however, that in the beginning of the longitudinal study, the number of learners interested in the history of English-speaking countries was high. In the 1970s, almost two thirds of the learners studying English in Potsdam considered it an interesting topic (a study by Holldack and Müller in 1977, as quoted by Apelt 1996: 82-83). However, for reasons Apelt does not mention in his article, the situation began to change quite dramatically at the beginning of the 1990s and the German learners began to lose their interest in the topic.

What turned out to be perhaps the most popular and motivating of all topics in the EFL materials among the German learners during the twenty-year-long study was the knowledge of the target language community and its culture. Apelt (1996: 82, 84) comments that over the years, the majority of learners participating in the inquiries by Apelt and Koernig in 1994 and by Krück in 1986 wished to learn about people and places in English speaking countries. In Krück's inquiry, as reported by Apelt (1996: 82), 58% of the 1272 learners from grades eight, nine, and ten expressed their interest in the target language community and its culture. In Apelt and Koernig's inquiry, as reported by Apelt (1996: 82), 45 to 55% of the boys and 40 to 75% of the girls from a population that varied between 150 and 170 replied being interested, for example, in the daily lives and hobbies of English speaking children and teenagers. They also reported being interested in British and American sights,

cities, and landscapes as well as in the protection of nature and animals in Great Britain and USA. The majority (83%) of adult students, as reported by Apelt (1996: 88), shared the interest of the young in the target language community and its culture. For them, gaining knowledge of the target language community and its ways was truly “a chance to learn and experience something new” (a direct translation from the comment made by a pupil attending grade seven, Apelt and Koernig 1994 as quoted in Apelt 1996: 82).

4.4 Summary of the empirical studies

In the present chapter, I have attempted, with the help of Cherchalli’s (1988), O’Sullivan’s (1991), and Apelt et al.’s (1996) studies, to throw some light on an area that has not attracted that much interest from the scientific world in recent years, that is, foreign language teaching materials and textbooks in particular from the viewpoint of language learners. As most studies on language materials focus nowadays on such areas as readability, gender roles, vocabulary, and different language learning activities, studies that approach language materials through the pupils’ viewpoint, aiming to discover their views of foreign language texts as well as on different topics those texts are based on, are rare to find. In fact, so much so that during my research process I could find only three earlier empirical studies, none of them Finnish, that were less than twenty years old and that resembled more than slightly the present study. These were the studies of Cherchalli, O’Sullivan, and Apelt. To sum these studies up, I will first examine their research methods and findings below and then discuss shortly the similarities and differences they share with the present study.

The motive for all three studies seems to have been almost the same, that is, to find out what the role of a language course book or some other source of foreign language texts is in motivating foreign language learners in their language studies. To find the answers to their particular research questions, Cherchalli (1988), O’Sullivan (1991), and Apelt et al. (1996) turned in their respective data collections to language learners from different age groups and, unlike many of their colleagues, involved the learners in the evaluation process. All of the researchers used a written questionnaire in their data

collection and had a large research population. For example, Cherchalli (1988: 49) reported having had a population of 106 pupils in her study and O'Sullivan (1991: 10) a population of 503 pupils. In his study, Apelt did not mention the exact number of people who participated in each inquiry in the German longitudinal study by Apelt et al. between the years 1975 and 1994. Nevertheless, he implied that the populations were large in size, varying from hundreds to more than 1200 participants.

The most common data collection method in Cherchalli's (1988: 53-54), O'Sullivan's (1991: 10), and Apelt et al.'s (1996) studies seemed to have been a written questionnaire with multiple-choice questions. Cherchalli (1988: 51), who wanted to have better control of her data and to feel more confident about her study, used 'yes'/'no' and 'agree'/'disagree' statements in her data collection. O'Sullivan, in turn, included questions presented on a semantic differential scale also known as Likert's scale in his questionnaire and Apelt et al. used, among others, rankings from one to ten (1st, 2nd, 3rd and so on) in their inquiries. Although neither O'Sullivan (1991) or Apelt (1996) revealed in their study the motive(s) for choosing multiple-choice questions as the primary data collection method, it is possible that they both may have, for example, considered the collection and analysis of hundreds or even thousands of pupil responses to multiple-choice questions an easier and more time-saving task than the collection and analysis of the same number of pupil responses to open-ended questions. Other explanations for the choice of research methods may, of course, exist but the large size of research population in both studies would certainly account for the use of quantitative data collection methods in the English and the German study.

As quantitative as some of the research methods in all three earlier empirical studies may be, it is the qualitative methods applied in those studies that make them particularly relevant for the present study. Cherchalli (1988), O'Sullivan (1991), and Apelt et al. (1996) all used qualitative methods to support their data collection and later data analysis. Cherchalli included class recordings, personal interviews, group discussions, and learner diaries in her study, O'Sullivan ended his survey with two open-ended questions, and Apelt et al. used learner interviews and observation in their data collections. In each study, the purpose of these methods was to give the language learners an

opportunity to express in their own words their opinion on the research subject in question and, thus, help the researchers form as complete picture as possible of the role of language course books or foreign language texts in motivating language learners in their language studies.

Due to their differences in research problems, the findings of the three empirical studies are less comparable with each other than the research methods. Therefore, it is very difficult and even misleading to draw any common conclusions from them. Findings from individual studies would, however, seem to suggest that well designed foreign language materials have a great capacity to arouse interest in language learners and that learners usually expect their use to be an enjoyable experience (O'Sullivan 1991: 12). Findings would also seem to imply that materials that integrate new information in target language meaningfully with the everyday life of the learners and discuss the target language community and its culture from an identifiable viewpoint are the most motivating (Cherchalli 1988: 235, 516, O'Sullivan 1991: 12-13, and Apelt et al. 1996: 82-84). Equally motivating are materials that provoke thoughts in language learners and encourage them to discuss various topics in a foreign language (Cherchalli 1988: 373, O'Sullivan 1991: 13, and Apelt et al. 1996: 83).

In the following chapters of the present study, I aim to follow the footsteps of Cherchalli (1988), O'Sullivan (1991), and Apelt et al. (1996) and offer yet another learner-centred interpretation of the learner – foreign language textbook relationship. By investigating Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of EFL textbooks, I intend to find out what features fascinate them the most and the least in EFL textbooks and, thus, hope to throw some more light on the little studied subject matter, just like Cherchalli, O'Sullivan, and Apelt et al. My interpretation of the research subject will, however, be more qualitative than any of the researchers referred to in the present chapter and, more importantly, approach the subject matter from the viewpoint of Finnish foreign language learners.

Unlike O'Sullivan, I will not use methods that would invite a certain positive or negative response from the pupils in my data analysis chapter. To me, learner-centredness means more than just collecting data directly from the language learners themselves - it also means giving the learners an opportunity

to express themselves in their own words during the data collection process. Cherchalli, O'Sullivan, and Apelt et al. may have all managed in their respective studies to elicit information that was considered learner-centred enough for their own purposes but to me it seems that each of them were forced to sacrifice the principle of learner-centredness to some extent because of the large size of their research populations. Using a number of different data collection methods, some of them being qualitative and some quantitative, to improve the validity of their studies might have been sensible. However, reducing the findings of their data mostly to numbers and percentages seems somewhat of a pity.

5 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

As noted in chapter 3 of the present study, a typical language textbook used in Finnish comprehensive schools is considered to consist of an organised set of teaching materials, usually a variety of texts dealing with different topics, adapted to foreign language learners' language skills and bound in one book. Accordingly, it is often the texts and the topics that are believed to constitute the figurative 'skeleton' of the textbook and everything else, for example vocabulary, illustrations, and songs, to constitute the 'flesh' on the bones. Although both parts of the 'body' are equally important for the textbook and their common goal is to complement each other, much of the language learners' views of language textbooks and on the features that make them desirable or undesirable tend to be associated with the former, that is, the texts and the topics in the textbook. For this reason, the examination of Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of the features of a good foreign language textbook of English, or EFL textbook, will be limited to the 'skeleton' of the textbook in the present study.

There are two main research problems in this study. They both approach Finnish pupils' views of EFL textbooks from slightly different viewpoints. The first of the two problems relates to Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of the nature of their own EFL textbook, that is, the textbook currently in their use at the time of the data collection. It is:

1. How do Finnish comprehensive school pupils view the EFL textbook they regularly use in language lessons? That is, what kind of desirable and undesirable features do they associate with it?

The objective of this problem is then to find out how favourably the EFL textbook is viewed by the pupils. The second of the two main research problems is:

2. How do Finnish comprehensive school pupils view an 'ideal' EFL textbook? In other words, what kind of desirable features would an EFL textbook of their dreams have?

This is a problem that relates to Finnish comprehensive school pupils' dreams and fantasies. It aims to discover the criteria that pupils themselves would set on an EFL textbook if they had a chance to design one.

6 RESEARCH METHODS

Every study has a history that reveals what happened during the research process. It reveals, for example, how the research problems for the study came to be and how the data for the study were collected. Chapter 6 describes in an autobiographic way the history of the present study and discusses, among others, the problems related to the research process. In section 6.1, the beginnings of the present study are first taken a closer look at and then, in section 6.2, the data collection methods as well as the participants taking part in the data collection are introduced. Sections 6.3 and 6.4 conclude the discussion of research methods with a short description of the data analysis and data processing methods used in chapter 8 of this study.

6.1 The beginnings of the research process

In the introduction of this study, I described the circumstances that led me to choose Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of the desirable features of an EFL textbook as the topic for the present study. I mentioned then that my curiosity for the subject was originally awakened by my personal dissatisfaction towards my English textbooks in comprehensive and upper secondary general schools, and also by my experiences as a teacher trainee a few years earlier. These past experiences had made me want to learn more about Finnish pupils' views of EFL textbooks and the present study seemed to offer a good opportunity for me to examine the issue further.

Carrying out a study on Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of the desirable features of their current EFL textbook and of the EFL textbook of their dreams proved, in all, to be a true challenge. Many a time while searching for supportive evidence for the present study, that is, previous empirical studies and literature on EFL textbooks and texts and topics included in those books, I discovered that such evidence could not be found, at least not the kind in which I would have been interested. The small number of studies and literature that I came across on EFL textbooks or on language teaching materials in general seemed to concentrate, for example, on the vocabulary and activities as well as gender roles portrayed in the materials. Moreover, most of the evidence

approached these aspects from the viewpoint of language teachers or other experts on education, rather than that of pupils. It became clear to me, then, that foreign language textbooks and language teaching materials are not among the most studied aspects of language teaching nowadays and that pupils' views of foreign language texts as well as on different topics those texts are based on have been an even less popular subject of examination. The shortage of supportive evidence was, therefore, one of the biggest problems I had to solve as a researcher when conducting the present study.

The more evident it came to me during the research process that comprehensive school pupils' views of the desirable features of an EFL textbook had not been examined that much anywhere, Finland included, the more eager I became to find the answers to my research problems. I wanted to give Finnish pupils a chance to explain in their own words what kind of EFL textbooks they considered 'ideal' and how successful they thought the textbook writers of their current EFL textbook had been in their work. For once, the assessment of teaching materials would be done not for the pupils but by the pupils. Besides the eagerness to let the pupils' voices be heard I also began to consider my future career a source of motivation for doing the present study. As an English-teacher-to-be, I was interested in learning what features Finnish foreign language learners considered desirable in EFL textbooks and, more importantly, why. By getting to know the pupils' opinion on their already existing EFL textbook and on the textbook of their dreams I thought I would be able to adapt EFL textbooks more efficiently to my own pupils' needs one day and, thus, increase the pupils willingness to use an EFL textbook.

6.2 Data collection methods

Deciding the topic for the present study was relatively easy for me. After all, I had been puzzled both personally and professionally for some time by the views of Finnish comprehensive school pupils on their EFL textbook and was now interested in finding out more about the issue in general. The question of how I was going to study the subject of my choice remained a mystery to me for a while, however. All I knew was that I wanted to use as pupil-centred methods as possible to elicit information, that is, opinions from the Finnish

comprehensive school pupils participating in the data collection of the present study and for me pupil-centredness meant using qualitative data collection methods. I was sure that by such methods only I would be able to reach pupil-centredness and obtain as accurate data as possible on the pupils' views of EFL textbooks and, thus, do as much justice to their opinions as possible. The shortage of supporting literature and previous studies on the subject that would have closely resembled the qualitative study that I had in mind prevented me, however, from relying fully on any already existing data collection method or methods. As a result, I was left quite empty-handed with my design process from the beginning. Little by little, it became clear to me that if I wished to examine comprehensive school pupils' views of EFL textbooks, a subject that apparently has not caught the attention of that many educational researchers in recent years, I had to develop my own data collection methods and that way ensure their relevance in the present study.

Had I initially decided to do a quantitative study and examine, for example, the number of Finnish pupils who consider their EFL textbook good/bad or interesting/boring, I might have met fewer difficulties when designing the instruments for data collection. Almost all previous studies, few though they were, that I could find on English teaching materials in general and that even remotely resembled the study that I was planning to carry out, approached the subject quantitatively. In those studies, the data had been generally collected with different kinds of quantifiable, closed questions, for example, questions consisting of *yes/no* or multiple-choice questions to measure the desired phenomenon and the results were reported as mere numbers and other statistical figures. It might have been easier for me, then, to design a quantitative instrument with the help of these studies than to design a qualitative instrument all by myself when I had no suitable qualitative examples to follow but I decided to carry out my original plans anyway. I was determined not to base my study on fully quantifiable data collection methods and use, for example, solely researcher-formulated predetermined statements from which the pupils participating in the study would have had to choose the ones closest to their own opinions. Instead, I wanted the pupils to express in their own words the views they had of EFL textbooks and in that way make the study as pupil-centred and open-ended as possible. After all, it was the pupils

who were the primary users of EFL textbooks in foreign language lessons, so should it not be them who viewed the textbooks? Who would make a better judge than them?

The data collection methods used in the present study were designed, therefore, especially for the occasion and their main aim was to elicit as detailed information as possible from the pupils participating in this study on their views of EFL textbooks. Since I had not been able to find any record of one qualitative method being better than another in researching pupils' views of already existing English teaching materials or on EFL textbooks of their dreams, I decided to use two instruments in the data collection. The instruments were an individual interview and a two-part written questionnaire. My hope was that together they would reach more insightful results than just one instrument alone.

6.2.1 Individual interviews

The topic of the individual interview was an EFL textbook called *The News Headlines courses 5-8* (1996), currently in the participants' use at the time of the data collection (see chapter 7 for a description of the textbook). This topic was chosen because of the two types of EFL textbook that I was interested in studying, that is, the textbook of Finnish comprehensive school pupils' dreams and the textbook already in their use, the latter seemed like an easier and more concrete topic for the participants to talk about in the interview situation. As I was aiming to obtain as much data as possible from the participants on their views of *The News Headlines* and also as the individual interview was the first of two data collection methods used in the present study and, thus, started the actual data collection process, the concrete nature of the latter topic was of great importance.

For practical reasons, such as my inexperience as an interviewer and the time limits I had set for myself for the data collection, not to mention the young age of the participants, the individual interviews were not conducted completely informally and without a structure. Instead, they focused on twelve themes determined in advance to facilitate the functioning of both the interviewees (the pupils) and the interviewer (me) in the interview situation

which, in all, was quite a new experience for both parties involved. Also for the same reasons, some general questions for the participants were outlined in advance for the interview but the order and the wording of the questions was not in any way predetermined. Usually these questions served as a guide for the theme which was then covered more extensively with further questions emerging naturally in the interview context (see Table 6 and Appendix 1 for the structure of the interviews in Finnish).

Table 6. The schedule of the individual interview.

The theme	General questions
1. The textbook in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Do you like your textbook?’ • ‘Why?’, ‘Why not?’
2. Topics in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What topics have you liked so far the most in your textbook and why?’ • ‘What topics have you liked so far the least in your textbook and why?’
3 Texts in the textbook and their structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What types of texts have you liked so far the most in your textbook and why?’ • ‘What types of texts have you liked so far the least in your textbook and why?’ • ‘What is your opinion on the structure of the textbook (i.e. the textbook has separate stories with separate plots instead of one continuing story)?’
4. The quantity and quality of the texts in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘What is your opinion on the quantity and quality of the texts in the textbook and why?’ • ‘What is your opinion on the length of the texts and why?’
5. Familiarity with different types of texts and topics in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Have you been familiar with the style with which the texts in the textbook have been written?’ • ‘If yes, how?’ • ‘Have you been familiar with the topics discussed in the textbook?’ • ‘If yes, how?’
6. Fact and fiction in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Have you liked the texts based on factual matters / fiction in your textbook?’ • ‘Why?’, ‘Why not?’
7. The contemporaneity of the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Is your textbook still up-to-date?’ • ‘Why?’, ‘Why not?’ • ‘What in your textbook is up-to-date/ out-of-date?’
8. Global vs. local texts and topics in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Has the textbook discussed global/ local topics?’ • ‘If yes, what kind of topics?’ • ‘Are global / local topics important to you?’
9. Integration of the texts and topics in the textbook with other school subjects and with free time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Have you been able to make a further use of the texts and topics in the textbook or the knowledge you have gained through the textbook in other school subjects or outside school?’

	'If yes, how?' 'If no, why not?'
10. The textbook and its communicative elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Do the texts and topics in the textbook encourage conversation in the English lessons?' 'If yes, how?' 'If no, why not?'
11. Optional texts in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Have you been satisfied with the optional texts in the textbook?' 'Why?', 'Why not?'
12. People and places in the textbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Have you been able to relate to the people (characters) and places in the textbook?' 'Why?', 'Why not?'

As Table 6 demonstrates, all general questions addressed to the pupils in the course of the individual interview were open-ended. Many of the questions required the pupils to answer them with more than just one word and also to elaborate on their responses. It was my hope that such questions would encourage the pupils to explain in their own words the views they had of their EFL textbook. Moreover, as subsequent questions began to emerge from the general questions during the interviews, the interview situations often grew into small conversations. This not only helped me as a researcher to elicit more detailed data on the research topic but also made the individual interviews more learner-centred.

In qualitative research, the structure of interviews can vary from fully structured to unstructured depending on the interview's purposes and many a time different researchers refer to interview methods structured alike with different terms. The interview technique that I used in the data collection of the present study can perhaps best be described as resembling Hirsjärvi and Hurme's (1982: 36) as well as Bogdan and Biklen's (1992: 97) 'semi-structured interview' and Patton's (1990: 287) "combination of an interview guide approach and a standardized open-ended approach". As a data collection method, it combines the flexibility of informal, conversational interviews and the thoroughness of standardised interviews and, among others, Patton (1990: 282-287) argues that it is quite an easy way to conduct data collection in a short amount of time with a number of people.

In the present study, all individual interviews were carried out in March 2001 and they took place at the premises of the comprehensive school the pupils participating in the data collection of this study attended. The interviews

lasted from twenty to forty minutes, depending on how talkative each pupil was, and they were recorded with the participants' permission for later analysis. All but two pupils, who were absent from school during the week the individual interviews took place, participated in the interview before filling in the two-part questionnaire, that is, the second of the two data collection instruments used in the present study (see section 6.2). The two remaining pupils participated in the data collection in a reversed order of instruments.

6.2.2 Two-part questionnaire

The second of the two data collection methods used in the present study was a two-part written questionnaire and its topic was an ideal EFL textbook, that is, the EFL textbook of the pupils' dreams. Compared with the individual interview, the questionnaire had a more fixed structure. A group of students from the University of Jyväskylä and two pupils from a comprehensive school in Southern Finland attending the grade seven, among whom I conducted a pilot study, suggested that I make the questionnaire as explicit and easy to fill in as possible for comprehensive school pupils. They also asked me not to include only open-ended questions in the questionnaire but multiple-choice questions as well. Based on these suggestions, I redesigned the schedule of the original questionnaire so that in the end it consisted of a total of 15 questions, five of them being open-ended and ten multiple-choice with subsequent open-ended questions, concerning the EFL textbook of the pupils' dreams (see Appendix 2).

Because of the number and nature of the questions in the questionnaire, the questionnaire was implemented in two parts. Part one included two types of questions: those that inquired the pupils' background (see section 6.2.3) and those that inquired the features the pupils considered essential for an ideal EFL textbook (questions 1-12 in Table 7). Part two of the questionnaire included questions about the types of texts and topics that an ideal EFL textbook would contain in the pupils' opinion (questions 13-15 in Table 7).

Table 7. The schedule of the two-part written questionnaire.

Question number	The theme of the question	Question type
1	• The objective of the textbook	Open-ended
2	• The authenticity of the materials in the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
3	• Familiarity of the topics in the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
4	• Fact and fiction in the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
5	• The contemporaneity of the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
6	• Global vs. local texts and topics in the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
7	• Integration of texts and topics in the textbook with other school subjects	Multiple choice + open-ended
8	• The textbook and its communicative elements	Multiple choice + open-ended
9	• Integration of texts and topics in the textbook with free time	Multiple choice + open-ended
10	• Optional texts in the textbook and the length of texts	Multiple choice + open-ended
11	• Characters in the textbook	Open-ended
12	• Identification with people and places in the textbook	Multiple choice + open-ended
13	• Topics discussed in the textbook	Open-ended
14	• Texts included in the textbook and their structure	Open-ended
15	• An imaginary chapter (a pupil design)	Open-ended

Apart from questions 1, 2, and 15, all questions addressed to the pupils in the two-part questionnaire focused on the same general themes as the questions in the individual interview. The three questions mentioned above were added to the questionnaire simply to deepen my understanding of the pupils' responses and also to get some concrete suggestions on the contents of an ideal EFL textbook (especially question 15). As the topic of the questionnaire was the EFL textbook of the pupils' dreams, in other words, a textbook that did not exist in reality, the pupils were requested to approach the questions from the point of view of an imaginary textbook writer. "If you had a chance to design an EFL textbook, what would it be like?" was the big question addressed to the pupils indirectly in every open-ended and multiple-choice question.

The two-part written questionnaire was handed out to all of the pupils participating in the present study simultaneously in March 2001. Since most of the pupils had already participated in the individual interviews by the time the written data were collected, the subject area of the questionnaire was believed

not to prove as challenging for the pupils as it might have been under different circumstances. The order of the data collection instruments used in the present study was, therefore, chosen to help the pupils for two reasons. One, to concentrate on something concrete and familiar first, that is, the EFL textbook currently in their use in language lessons, and two, to prepare the them for the more abstract questions concerning the EFL textbook of their dreams, addressed to them later in the written questionnaire. It took approximately 45 minutes (one English lesson) for the pupils to fill in the first part of the questionnaire and 15 minutes to fill in the second part.

6.2.3 The pupils

To find answers to the research problems presented in chapter 5 of the present study, I collected my data from pupils attending Finnish comprehensive school. Collecting data from dozens of pupils attending various comprehensive schools around Finland might have been possible within the scope of the present study but as a researcher who was more interested in the insights of a few than the shallow generalisations of the masses, I decided, however, to limit the number of participants in the present study. Thus, the number of Finnish comprehensive school pupils participating in the data collection was small: only 17 grade nine pupils, eight of the pupils being boys and nine girls, took part in the individual interview and filled in the two-part written questionnaire.

The decision to include pupils from grade nine was based on my own perception of how old a comprehensive school pupil should be to be able to examine his or her EFL textbook critically and also to present his or her views of an ideal EFL textbook either verbally or in writing. Pupils attending grade nine seemed to me to be of the right age in this respect: they were senior pupils in Finnish comprehensive school system and, therefore, they had studied their first foreign language the longest and had the most experience of using EFL textbooks.

Ideally, all the participants in the present study would have been randomly selected and they would have been unfamiliar both to me and to each other. In this way, a more heterogeneous group of participants might have been reached in the course of the data collection and the pupils' views of an ideal EFL

textbook as well as on their own EFL textbook would have been more varied. Practical considerations, such as my inexperience as a researcher and the time limits I had set for myself for the data collection, led me, however, to choose the participants for the present study on the basis of the geographical location of their comprehensive school. That particular school was located in a city where I spent much of my free time and, also, I had many contacts in that school. As a result, all the participants knew each other beforehand, even if I did not, by being classmates and the population remained quite homogeneous throughout the study as regards to the pupils' background.

The most relevant background information collected on the pupils for the present study is listed in Table 8.

Table 8. Background information on the participants in the present study.

Pupil number	Question 1: sex (originally: name)	Question 2: age	Question 5: Do you like studying English?	Question 7: Do you use English in your free time?
Pupil 1	M	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 2	M	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 3	M	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 4	M	15	Yes	No
Pupil 5	M	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 6	M	16	Yes	Yes
Pupil 7	M	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 8	M	15	Yes	No
Pupil 9	F	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 10	F	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 11	F	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 12	F	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 13	F	15	No	No
Pupil 14	F	15	No	Yes
Pupil 15	F	16	Yes	Yes
Pupil 16	F	15	Yes	Yes
Pupil 17	F	15	Yes	No

As mentioned earlier, eight of the pupils were male (M) and nine female (F). Apart from one male (pupil 6) and one female (pupil 15), all the pupils were 15

years old. All but two pupils (pupils 13 and 14) replied¹ that they liked English as a school subject and only four pupils (pupils 4, 8, 13, and 17) replied that they did not use English at all in their free time. The most common positive responses to question 5 were “Yes, because it’s easy” (pupils 1, 2, 6, 12), “Yes, because it will be useful for me in the future” (pupils 5, 12) and “Yes, because it helps me to communicate in foreign countries or with foreigners” (pupils 3, 4, 5, 16). The two negative responses were “No, because it’s difficult” (pupil 13) and “No, because I don’t understand everything” (pupil 14). The most common situations where the pupils said they used English in their free time were “When I am abroad” (pupils 5, 11, 12, 14, 16) and “When I use a computer” (pupils 5, 6, 10).

6.3 Data analysis method

As I explained earlier in sections 6.1 and 6.2, to me as a researcher, pupil-centredness meant using qualitative instruments when collecting data for the present study. Accordingly, I wanted to use qualitative methods in the data analysis as well. Reading about qualitative data analysis methods convinced me that since the purpose of the my study was to discover the personal views and interpretations of Finnish comprehensive school pupils of EFL textbooks instead of the factual state of the world, qualitative methods would serve better the data analysis process.

In qualitative research, there is no single data analysis tradition but a wide range of different methods and approaches (Pyörälä 1995: 13, Tynjälä 1991: 388, 390-392). These approaches try to attain various angles to the world and to the phenomenon being studied rather than the objective truth as such. As a result, the goal of qualitative analysis methods is to identify the meanings that people give to the world and find out how they construct various situations around them. Unlike quantitative data analysis methods, qualitative analysis methods do not aim to test and explain hypothesis but to describe and understand different phenomena. This is also the purpose of the present study – to describe how a group of Finnish comprehensive school pupils viewed EFL

¹ Responses translated from Finnish to English

textbooks and to develop as good an understanding of the pupils' views as possible.

Considering that qualitative research accepts the idea of 'multiple realities', a term used by Tynjälä (1991: 391), then it is not relevant to suppose that the notions of reliability and objectivity would be interpreted the same way in quantitative research than in quantitative research. In quantitative research, reliability refers to the consistency of results, should an experiment be repeated later. The notion of objectivity, in turn, contains the presumption of truth and how it can be obtained (Tynjälä 1991: 391). In qualitative research, it is not considered meaningful to test reliability or objectivity in this manner. Each respondent is believed to construct the world differently in every research situation and quite often, the data are collected in a situation where the researcher is in interaction with the respondents. Subjectivity is, therefore, an inevitable part of qualitative research.

To increase research reliability in the qualitative sense of the word, the researcher must document the research process carefully. This includes describing, the following: the target and the purpose of the study, the researcher's role in the study, the data collection process, the respondents of the study, the relationship between the researcher and the respondents, the research time table, the data analysis process, and the research methodology (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002: 135, 138). As a result, the research process as well as the findings of the study become clearer and more understandable to the readers and it is easier for them to evaluate whether or not the results of research are to be trusted.

To find out which qualitative data analysis method would elicit the most information of the data I had collected, I compared and contrasted different analysis methods. On the basis of the literature I found, I considered inductive, or data based, content analysis as the most suitable analysis method for the present study. Content analysis is an umbrella term that is used for a variety of qualitative methods which approach texts by means of categories and try to seek meanings in the texts (Titscher et al. 2000: 55). Inductive content analysis attempts to describe the contents of documents with words instead of numbers and the categories, into which the data are reduced, emerge directly from the data. The assumption is that should the data be organised in a concise and clear

manner, then the informational value of the data increases (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002: 107, 110). This, in turn, enables the researcher to interpret and understand the data better.

Inductive content analysis process can be roughly divided into three parts: one, reducing the data, two, clustering the data, and three, making theoretical abstractions of the data (Miles and Huberman 1994, cited in Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002: 110-111). Table 9 demonstrates the process of inductive content analysis.

Table 9. The eight stages of inductive content analysis process. (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002:111).

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the interviews and transcribing them • Reading the transcribed interviews and familiarising oneself with their contents • Finding and underlining reduced expressions • Making a list of the reduced expressions • Locating similarities and differences in the reduced expressions • Clustering the reduced expressions and forming subcategories of them • Clustering the subcategories to form main categories • Clustering the main categories to form theoretical notions |
|--|

In the following section, I will describe the way in which the data collected for the present study were first transcribed and then processed by means of inductive content analysis, also demonstrated in Table 9.

6.4 Data processing method

Soon after the data collection, all 17 individual interviews were carefully listened to on tape and then transcribed in a manner described in Table 10. Some transcription conventions used in the data processing were also designed specially for the present study. They were, for example, *MI* (referring to male interviewee/pupil number one), *FI* (referring to female interviewee/pupil number one) and *I* (referring to the interviewer/me).

Table 10. The transcription conventions used in the data analysis (Adapted from Hirvonen 1996).

*	unintelligible word
**	unintelligible words / longer stretches of speech
,	brief pause
(4)	pause in seconds
[]	overlapping speech
...	unfinished sentence
()	comments by the transcriber
Bold	clear articulation, slight stress
Artikkeli II.	<i>Italics</i> English

In a study like the present, which does not aim to describe the use of language, for example, in conversation, writing a more detailed transcription of the data seemed rather pointless. According to Alasuutari (1993: 76), transcription conventions used in the analysis of the data should always reflect the nature of the research and should the researcher not be interested in analysing conversation, then writing a very detailed transcription of the data is not worth the effort. As transcribed, the interview data came to consist of 123 pages of text altogether. For an example of the transcribed text in Finnish, see Appendix 3.

After the transcription process, the interviews were read several times. Expressions that occurred the most often in the transcriptions were first underlined and then listed. At that point, the number of subcategories or features that the pupils regarded desirable in their own EFL textbook was twelve alone. As that number, together with the number of undesirable features in the EFL textbook currently in the pupils' use and the number of desirable features in an ideal EFL textbook was much too high to be included in the present study as such, the features were re-examined and clustered again. Unfortunately, this did not make much of a difference either. The number of subcategories remained still quite high and reaching an understanding of the data was difficult. It was not before the data were revised for the third time that the number of desirable and undesirable features in EFL textbooks reached their present scale and the forming of the main categories discussed was accomplished (see sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2). Based on the features clustered in

those sections, I was finally able to begin interpreting the views of Finnish comprehensive school pupils' views of EFL textbooks and, also, answer the research problems of the present study.

7 DESCRIPTION OF *THE NEWS HEADLINES: COURSES 5-8*

To be able to analyse the views that the pupils taking part in the present study had of the EFL textbook currently in their use at the time of the data collection, it is necessary at this point of the study to describe shortly the EFL textbook in question. As mentioned earlier in chapter 5, much of the foreign language learners' views of the nature of their language textbook and on the features that make the textbook desirable tend to be associated with the texts and topics in the book. For this reason, the following description of the EFL book used by the Finnish pupils will focus on these two aspects, that is, the texts in the textbook and the topics that those texts discuss.

The News Headlines; courses 5-8 (1996), referred to from now on as *Headlines*, is the second of the two *The News Headlines* books used quite widely in Finnish comprehensive schools. It is an EFL textbook designed for pupils attending Finnish comprehensive school who have studied English as their first foreign language (A1) since grade three. The first of *The News Headlines* books, *courses 1-4*, is usually used for the first three semesters in the comprehensive school, that is, from the autumn semester of the seventh grade till the spring semester of the eighth grade, and the second of the books, *courses 5-8*, is used thereafter for the next three semesters. Both of *The News Headlines* books contain four courses that are each divided into three units. The units of the textbook are further divided into several chapters and each unit has a topic of its own (see Table 11 below):

Table 11. The contents of *Headlines*.

Course	Unit	Chapter	Topic of the unit
5	14: Earth's Song	Study & Listen: <i>Earth's Song</i>	An imaginary world
		Click File: <i>Earth's Song</i>	
	15: Music, Music, Music	Find Out: <i>Music</i>	Composers, performers, and different types of music
		Study: <i>West Side Story - A Song for All Seasons</i>	
		Read I: <i>Sad Notes - The Secret Diary of Maria Mozart</i>	
		Read II: <i>Death of a Beatle</i>	
		Click File: <i>Music</i>	

6	16: Love	Find Out: <i>Love Is...</i>	Different viewpoints on love
		Study: <i>All You Need Is Love</i>	
		Read I: <i>Thoughts on Noses</i>	
		Read II: <i>Valentine Card</i>	
		Click File: <i>Love</i>	
	17: People and Places	Study: <i>East or West, Home is Best</i>	People and places around the world
		Read I: <i>Home, Sweet Home</i>	
		Read II: <i>First Day at Central High</i>	
		Click File: <i>People and Places</i>	
	18: Teenage Trends	Find Out: <i>Clothes - Just for Fun?</i>	Youth cultures
		Study: <i>Rock Style</i>	
		Read I: <i>Childhood's End</i>	
Read II: <i>Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover</i>			
Click File: <i>Teenage Trends</i>			
19: Entertainment	Study: <i>My Kind Of Film</i>	Entertainment and leisure time	
	Read I: <i>A Day in the Life of Cheeta</i>		
	Read II: <i>Jane Bond and the Midnight Maniacs</i>		
	Click File: <i>Entertainment</i>		
	Story: <i>Big Tex Meets Galactic Witch</i>		
7	20: Working English	Study: <i>Do It Yourself</i>	Working life, professions, and career choices
		Find Out: A selection of Texts	
	21: Troublemakers	Study: <i>Parent Trouble</i>	The rights and the obligations of the young, relationships
		Find Out: A selection of texts	
	22: Landmarks	Study: <i>The Mansions of the Gods</i>	Achievements in the fields of science, arts, and sports
		Find Out: A selection of texts	
		Read I: <i>Strangers Underground</i>	
		Read II: <i>The Family Dog</i>	
		Read III: <i>Bon Voyage</i>	

8	23: Communication	Read IV: <i>The First Shop on the Left</i>	From animal talk to advertisements
		Click File: Course 7	
	24: Spaceship Earth	Study: <i>Colour Prejudice</i>	The Earth
		Click File: A selection of Texts	
	25: In the Same Boat	Study: <i>Animal Passion</i>	Cultures and customs around the world
		Find Out: A selection of texts	
		Study: <i>Thanking Birds</i>	
		Find Out: A selection of texts	
		Read I: <i>Life Isn't Black And White, You Know</i>	
		Read II: <i>The Year I Loved Him Best</i>	
Read III: <i>The Boy Who Sailed with Columbus</i>			
Read IV: <i>The Night the Lights Went Out</i>			
Click File: Course 8			

Because of the variety of units in the textbook, three very different topics can be discussed in English lessons within the same course. On the other hand, the number of chapters in each unit enables discussion on the topic from more than one viewpoint. For example, Unit 18 *Teenage Trends* contains, among others, five chapters (*Find Out*, *Study*, *Read I*, *Read II*, and *Click File*) that are all associated with teenagers and teenage life and, thus, approach the topic of youth cultures from different viewpoints.

In the English foreword of *Headlines* (1996: 3), the textbook writers argue the following: “Every page or spread in the unit has a special function. Their titles, *Start Out*, *Listen*, *Find Out* (bits and pieces), *Talk*, *Study*, *Think* (grammar), *Read*, *Play*, *Work Out* (follow-up) and *Sing*, give you the idea of their function”. In other words, the textbook contains several chapters and activities for classroom work from which the most appropriate for each group of pupils can be chosen. Furthermore, the writers of the textbook mention in the foreword that some of the chapters and activities are meant to be studied individually and some with a partner or in a group (*Headlines* 1996: 4). In courses five and six, most chapters and activities contain basic communication

exercises as well as texts with basic grammar and vocabulary, thus, they have been designed for all language learners regardless of their language skills. Courses seven and eight, in turn, contain various optional reading activities and multiple follow-up exercises which offer all pupils a chance to choose the English teaching materials that they think correspond best with their personal interests and language skills. These materials can be studied either individually or with a partner (*Headlines* 1996: 4).

The analysis of the present study focuses mainly on the pupils' views of courses 6 and 7 of *Headlines* (1996). This is because they were the courses the pupils participating in the data collection of the present study had studied during the grade nine and had the best memory of at the time. All of the courses, units, and chapters in *Headlines* will not, therefore, be dealt with in this study. The examination of the pupils' views of courses 6 and 7 of *Headlines* will further focus on chapters called *Find out*, *Study*, *Read*, *Click File*, and *Story* of each unit (summarised in Table 11). These are the chapters in which most texts are included and which discuss topics most extensively.

8 ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In this chapter, the views of 17 grade nine pupils participating in the data collection of the present study of the desirable features of EFL textbooks will be analysed. The order in which the findings will be described will be similar to that in which the actual data were collected, that is, the findings of the individual interviews will be examined first in section 8.1 and then, in section 8.2, the findings of the two-part written questionnaire will be discussed. As mentioned in the previous section, the approach used in the data analysis of this study will be inductive content analysis and accordingly, special attention in the data analysis will be paid to the ‘multiple realities’ of the Finnish comprehensive school pupils. Here the term ‘multiple realities’ refers to the various views that the pupils had of EFL textbooks.

The features of an EFL textbook that will be discussed in sections 8.1 and 8.2 emerged directly from the data. These are the features that the grade nine pupils named the most and least desirable both in the EFL textbook currently in their use as well as in an imaginary EFL textbook. For the reasons explained before (see chapter 5), only features related to the texts and topics of an EFL textbook were included in the data analysis. Thus, features such as the placement and the size of vocabulary and the amount of illustrations in an EFL textbook were left out of the analysis as irrelevant.

The following analysis will be more descriptive than comparative by nature. Its objective will not, therefore, be to compare the views of, for example male and female pupils or pupils with a high or a low English proficiency, nor will its main concern be to find any similarities and/or differences of opinion between, for example, Finnish comprehensive school pupils and Finnish experts on education. Any such findings in the present study are of secondary importance. The main focus of the present analysis will be on the ways in which Finnish comprehensive school pupils view and describe the EFL textbook in their use and an ‘ideal’ EFL textbook, and on the features the pupils regard as desirable or undesirable in a language textbook.

8.1 Pupils' views of *Headlines*

All of the interviews started off with the question ‘Do you like your textbook?’ which was then followed by a subsequent question ‘‘Why?’’ or ‘‘Why not?’’ depending on the pupils’ answers. The purpose of these questions was to give the pupils an opportunity to express in their own words the views they had of their EFL textbook, *Headlines*. As can be concluded from the pupils’ answers (summarised in Table 12), most pupils thought quite highly of their EFL textbook but managed to give only very superficial explanations for their views (see Appendix 4 for a translation into English):

Table 12. Pupils’ general impression on *Headlines*.

‘‘Pidätkö tekstikirjastasi?’’	‘‘Miksi?’’ / ‘‘Miksi et?’’
‘‘joo, oon oon pitäny joo’’ M1	‘‘mun mielestä tää on ollut hyvin, hyvin tasokas kirja ja tota monenlaista, monenlaista asiaa siitä löytyy, ihan kuunteluista lähtöisin niin tota, ne on mun mielestä ollu, se on mun mielestä ollu ihan riittävä kirja nyt yläasteelle’’ M1 ‘‘siel on semmosia uusiaki asioita kerrotaan niissä kappaleissa ettei niinku, mitä ei oo tienny, et ne on ihan kiinnostavia’’ M1
‘‘kai se ihan ok englanninkirja on’’ M2	‘‘no onhan siin sillee (1) ainakin ne tarinat on parempia kun joku ihan tavallinen teksti (1) sit onhan tuolla jotain turhaaki’’ M2 ‘‘no mitä tääl on näit kaikkii (selaa kirjaa) (1) et on tääl tämmösii juttui niin paljon justii et ei kyl tuu oikeestaa, turhast historian jutskaa mun mielest mis ei oo mitään tekstii ku kuunteli vaa, tai sano vaan ne sanat mitä siel joku semmone tuli’’ M2
‘‘no mun mielest se on ollu ihan hyvä’’ M3	‘‘emmä keksi siitä mitään vikaa’’ M3 ‘‘no siinä on ainaki hyvä sanasto ’’ M3
‘‘et ihan hyvä (1) kaikenlaista’’ M4	‘‘on siel semmosiiki et nauhalta tulee jotain, tekstii’’ M4 ‘‘ja voi kuunnella (2) sit toistaa ite’’ M4
‘‘on se ihan hyvä ollu sillee’’ M5	‘‘jaa (5) kyl siin varmaa jotku ne ei, jotkut kappaleet just (2) täs on sellasia et ihan (3) kivoi ne jotkut (2) ne kappaleet vaikka ju (2) emmä itse asiassa muuta tiedä’’ M5
‘‘joo no (1) mun mielest se on (1) tota yllättävän hyvä’’ M6	‘‘siin on niinku siin on noit kappaleita, ne kappaleet on sellai (1) et siihen niinku kuuluu useampi eri asia siihe yhtee kappaleeseen nii se on ehkä vähä sellai ehkä sekava tai sellane (2) joo (1) muuten se on niinku (1) iha hyvä ’’ M6

“no emmä tiedä, on tää iha hyvä” M7	“tää on, tää on värikäs” M7
“ emmä tiää , se on ollu iha hyvä mut tota näis ois vähä parempi olla jotai, enemmän nuorille, mielenkiintoisempii juttui, niit jaksais lukee ja (1) tälle” M8	“näis on mun mielest jotkut aika tylsii juttui nii ei nihi jaksa perehtyy tunnilla eikä mitää” M8
“mun mielest se on ollu iha hyvä” M9	“no (1) non ollu kans ihan hyvät että (2) son ollu iha (2) sellasta hyvää asiaa” M9
“no on tää mun mielest sillee ihan kiva” F1	“täs on niinku (1) sillee kiva ku on jotai tälläsii erilaisii osuoksii et välil vaa kuunnellaan niinku se, ei koko pidä noit kappaleit vaa jauhaa (1) sillee et jotai muutaki kyl (2) onha se nyt iha, kiva” F1
“no mun mielest se on ollu iha hyvä kirja sillee, mut on se ehkä vähä sekava, toisaalta ” F2	“siel on iha niinku tavallaan monipuolista juttuu, ainakin ne tekstit mitä me ollaan luettu niit <i>study</i> –kappaleita (1) ja tota nii kyl siel niinku, must tuntuu et sanasto niinku on aika laajaa, kumminki” F2 “et on se ihan sillee, vaik se , on sillee se on värikäs ja, ehkä sekava mut kyl sen kaa on hyvin tullu toimee et ei se niinku oo sillee mitää (1) ongelma ainakaan mulla” F2
“no, on tuol ihan kivoja juttuja” F3	-
“joo, on se iha kiva” F4	“mielenkiintosii juttuja, ainaki jotkut” F4
“no on se iha, semmone” F5	“siis sillee ei se oo mikää hirvee tylsä et vaan sillei aika sillee monipuolinen ja sit * juttu sillee, sillee, no ei oo hirveen tylsä lukee, se on varmaa, kiva” F5
“no, emmä nyt tiää, tää on kauheen paksu (naurahtaa)” F6 “on se iha hyvä” F6	“ei sitä jaksa ikinä lukee (1) on tää iha sillee hyvä ku tos lukee tos vieres noi kaikki tärkeimmät sanat” F6
“mun mielest tää on siis paras siis sillee mitä mä oon niinku ala-asteel nähny noit kirjoit mul on ollu eri joka vuos melkee eri kirjat” F7	“et tää [on niinku] sillee paras ollu täs on niinku kaikkii erilaisii siis sillee niinku et, periaattees tietooki saa tästä kirjasta...” F7 “sillee niinku et jos on vaa jotai tarinaa kerrotaa jotai jotkut kuvittelliset hahmot menee jonneki ja jotai tälläst näi täs on niinku sillee, täs on niinku ihan oikeesti elämästä kaikkee niinku” F7 “ja sit asioit saa tietää ja kaikkee” F7
“no jotkut niistä on ollu ihan kivoja, niist kappaleist mut jotkut on ollu taas semmosii et, emmä oo jaksanu lukee niit” F8	“ja vähä tylsiä nii, mä tykkään semmosist fakt, faktoista ja (1) tai semmosii” F8 “nii (1) ja tos ei mun mielest oo ollu semmosii, ne on enemmän semmosii satuja” F8

Table 12 shows, for example, how one of the pupils (F3) could not explain her opinion of *Headlines* at all. This is where the questions 2 to 17 (see Appendix 4) proved to be especially helpful later on in the study.

The objective of the more specific questions concerning *Headlines*, that is questions 2 to 17, was to make the pupils think more thoroughly of their first impressions and the EFL textbook in question. It was hoped that such questions would bring more light to the actual research subject and to the first research problem of the present study, that is, “How do Finnish comprehensive school pupils view the EFL textbook they regularly use in language lessons? That is, what kind of desirable and undesirable features do they associate with it?”. To my delight, most pupils were able to depict and even exemplify their views of *Headlines* in more detail as they were presented with more specific questions regarding the textbook. These views, together with the features that the pupils considered particularly desirable or undesirable in *Headlines*, will be analysed more specifically in sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 (see Appendix 5 for Sample translations into English).

8.1.1 Desirable features in the textbook

Certain features in *Headlines* emerged as the most desirable and interesting in the data. Firstly, they were the textbook’s consideration of everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young, and secondly, the various topics in the textbook and how they responded to the needs of many pupils.

8.1.1.1 Discussing everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young

Although only pupil M8 brought up, in the beginning of his individual interview (see Table 12 above), the young and how *Headlines* should discuss everyday life and the immediate surroundings of its young readers more, several pupils expressed somewhat similar views later on in their interviews. These views were manifested when the pupils were presented with specific questions about the texts in *Headlines* and the topics that those texts dealt with, for example, their familiarity, closeness to everyday life, contemporaneity, communicativeness, and also how easy it was for the pupils to identify themselves with the characters in the textbook. Chapter 21, for example, titled *Troublemakers* that dealt with such topics as having problems with one’s

parents, facing pressure from one's peers, home, and society, runaways, the rights and responsibilities of the young, alcohol and drug abuse, and bullying was mentioned by many as their favourite chapter in the textbook. The following data samples demonstrate why so many of the pupils shared the view.

Parent Trouble, the Study text of chapter 21, seemed to interest the interviewees mainly because of its consideration of the target audience's age and phase of life. In other words, many of the pupils regarded both the text and its topic as well designed for pupils who are 15 or 16-years-old, that is, for grade nine pupils as one of the interviewees pointed out. Consider (1):

(1)

- 135 F6: **on ne sillee** verrattuna johonki ala-astekirjoihin, ku siel oli enemmän niit,
 136 joku, joku ihme, piirrety hahmo tai semmone, et kyl noi on sillee iha mejjän
 137 ikäsille
 138 I: (1) joo, ala-asteen kirjoissako ei sitten ollu niin aiheita tavallaan...
 139 F6: ei ne just kerto aina jostain, jostain kissasta (nauraa) tai jostain
 140 I: (nauraa) ai, niin niin tota (1) osaatsä keksii tuolta jotain semmosta
 141 esimerkkiä mikä ois ajankohtanen aihe
 142 F6: (1) just se *parent trouble*...
 143 I: joo
 144 F6: mut ei ne kaikki oo niin hyvii

As teenagers, many of the interviewees felt they could relate to the problems that the fictional characters were having with their parents in *Parent Trouble* and, thus, the text was considered to touch everybody's daily life. Pupils F3, M1, and F6 referred to this feature in their interviews. (2) is a case in point:

(2)

- 121 F6: (1) no ehkä sit, omassa elämäski on ollu sillee voinu niinku tos, mikä toi on
 122 *parent trouble*
 123 I: joo
 124 F6: nii siinki, sillee (1) et (1) mun mielest ne on kaikist parhaita ja sillee ku
 125 vertaa johonki, johonki satuihi mitä tuol o
 126 I: (1) joo, tavallaan onks siin se oma **kokemus**
 127 F6:mmm
 128 I: tavallaan tietää siitä aiheesta
 129 F6: nii

Some of the pupils also regarded *Parent Trouble* as close to everyday life because it gave them a possibility to compare their own lives and parental

problems with the lives and problems of other people, even though the people described in *Parent Trouble* were truly fictional. Consider (3):

(3)

- 120 I: (3) no tota, onks sun mielestä toi kirja (1) ollu ajankohtanen (1) niinkun, jos
 121 aattelee vaikka (1) ajankohtanen **nuorille**, et käsitellääks siellä semmosia
 122 aiheita jotka on **nuorille** ajankohtasia (2) tai sit ajankohtanen niinkun
 123 **yleisesti** kaikille, siellä käsitellään jotain ajankohtaisia asioita
 124 M4: (2) no vois sanoo että et se **vanhempien** ongelmat niin se
 125 I: mmm
 126 M4: siinä myös kerrotaan (1) minkäläistä on muissakin perheissä kun vaan
 127 omassa
 128 I: joo (2) ja se on ajankohtainen
 129 M4: nii (1) niinku tätä päivää

In addition, *Parent Trouble* was also well liked by the pupils because they thought it encouraged communication and also gave them an opportunity to express their own opinion in the target language. One of the most popular topics of conversation seems to have been different rules in different homes, for example, the right curfew, as (4) demonstrates:

(4)

- 446 M1: no tota (naurahtaa) kyl meil on, kyl meil on sillä tavalla ollu että ei hirveesti
 447 oo näistä keskustelua **synty**ny mutta nyt kun on ollu nää, esimerkiks tää
 448 *parent trouble*
 449 I: joo
 450 M1: mis on tää vanhemmat ja lapset vastakkain nii siit on kyllä tullu
 451 keskusteluu että, hyvin semmone nuoria läheinen asia on sitte herättäny...
 452 I: (1) jokaisella on kokemuksia
 453 M1: nii, se varsinki just et sit jos sanoo, et ei se kyllä välttämättä ihan noin mee
 454 että, kyllä meillä ainaki on ihan selvät säännöt tai jotain semmosta nii, et
 455 justiin tommone, tommone asia on herättäny keskustelua mut ei meillä
 456 niinku kovin muista asioista oo sitte ku, kun ei ne oo niin nuorille läheisiä
 457 mutta (1) kyllähän ne kiinnostavia on, et ei se sitä niinku sitä kiinnostavuutta
 458 pois sulje että (2) joo
 459 I: oottekste sitte keskustellu **suomeks** siitä aiheesta vai
 460 M1: ööö, no kyl me ollaan, me ollaan niinku suomeks keskusteltu ja sit on niinku
 461 että, ollaan me, kyl me enimmäkseen ollaan kyllä niinku englanniks käyty
 462 kanssa niitä että (1) että a:han (viittaa opettajaan) niinku se kysyy meiltä
 463 englanniks että *what's your opinion about this* tai jotain semmoista niin (1)
 464 niin niin (1) ne on kyllä, niitähän on hyvä käydä englanniks niin sit oppii
 465 vähän semmosta esiintymistaitoa (naurahtaa) [tai semmosta nii]

Although some of the classroom conversations regarding *Parent Trouble* had, according to pupil M1, taken place in Finnish instead of English, he mentioned that the pupils' personal experience on the subject had helped them to express

their opinion in English, too. Moreover, their English teacher had encouraged them to use more English during the lessons by asking them questions in the target language. Topics other than troubles with parents, especially those that had not been viewed as very close to the life of the young by the pupils, had not created that much communication in English, pupil M1 admitted. This was also the impression of pupil F3, as (5) illustrates:

(5)

466 F3: en oo kyl (1) emmä oo niinku erityisesti huomannu mut ehkä siin, just siin
 467 *parent troubllessa*
 468 I: joo
 469 F3: nii siin kun on niistä kotiintuloajoista tai
 470 I: (1) just
 471 F3: *
 472 I: (2) keskustelittekste siitä ny sitte suomeks vai englanniks
 473 F3: (3) * englanniks (1) ei me niinku parempi sillee keskustellakaa (2) vaa
 474 luetaan se teksti

Besides *Parent Trouble*, many of the interviewees mentioned the Find Out texts in chapter 21 to be among their favourites because they discussed everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young. The most popular pieces of text were *Problems with Friends*, *Pressure All Around Me*, *Rights and Responsibilities in Britain*, *To Drink or Not to Drink*, and *The Day the River Dried Up*. As unfortunate as it is, many pupils nowadays face the pressure from their peers to think and behave in a certain manner and some pupils even get bullied at school. *Problems with Friends* and *Pressure All Around Me* discuss these issues from the ‘victim’s’ viewpoint and, as one of the pupils pointed out in his interview, thus, touch, upon a current teenage problem:

(6)

312 M1:(1) hmm, joo, tota noin (3) nii, no tietystihän tää niinku tää minkä mä jo
 313 mainitsin, tää *parent trouble* sehän on niinku aina ajankohtainen niinku
 314 säkin sanoit että (selaa kirjaa)
 315 I: (2) että nuoret ja
 316 [vanhemmat]
 317 M1:[nuoret]
 318 ja vanhemmat joo, ja tota (2) ja ja (2) ja tietysti tää *troublemakers* –
 319 kappalekin nii tää on tota, semmonen aihe mikä on niin kyllä aika
 320 ajankohtanen että, että koulukiusaamistahan tapahtuu nykyään aika paljon
 321 nii, se on kanssa

Texts about the rights and responsibilities of British 16-year-olds and the use of alcohol and drugs seemed to arouse interest in the Finnish pupils as well. The explanation of pupil F7 as to why texts such as *Right and Responsibilities in Britain*, *To Drink or Not to Drink*, and *The Day the River Dried Up* appeal particularly to the young audience is illustrated in (7):

(7)

- 129 F7: no, siis sillee et jos niinku ajatellaan et esimerkiks täs niinku kerrotaan
 130 niinku just jostain pojasta joka huumeisiin (*Find Out* –teksti River
 131 Phoenixista) nii vähä hirveesti ainaki mä tun tiedän hirv niinku mun monet
 132 kaverit on niinku käyttäny joskus
 133 I: joo
 134 F7: just tälläsii niinku näit ja sit elä, siis just näitä nuorten asioita mitä tääl
 135 puhutaan ne on sillee niinku (2) ja kaikkii niinku tässäki oli jossain sellane
 136 kappale mitä tapahtuu ku täyttää kaheksantoista mitä just niit kaikkii
 137 velvollisuuksia ja kaikkee se on niinku sillee et tietää ja itelleen niinku tota
 138 on lähelämäs tapahtumassa ja kaikkee tälläst

Like with *Parent Trouble*, the pupils considered these three pieces of text interesting because they dealt with issues on which the pupils already had some personal experience or they thought they might have experience on sometimes in the near future.

8.1.1.2 Meeting the needs of the language learners

When asked about their general impression of *Headlines* in the beginning of the interview, three pupils (M1, F2, and F5) complimented the book for having a variety of texts and topics (see Table 12 in section 8.1). This feature was commented on by several other pupils later in their individual interviews and in the end, they named four characteristics which helped to contribute to *Headlines* being a book with a lot to offer for different kinds of EFL learners.

Firstly, the pupils thought the textbook provided its readers with enough of new information to maintain their interest. For example, pupils M1, M8, and F4 mentioned the teenage trends of the 1950s, the space, and parenting courses as topics that had been rather unfamiliar to them beforehand and had, thus, caught their attention in *Headlines*. Consider (8):

(8)

018 I: nii, mitä mieltä sä oot ollu näistä
 019 **aihe**alueista mitä nää kirjan tekijät on tänne valinnu (2) onks ne ollu
 020 kiinnostavia
 021 F4: (1) on ne (2) kyl noi, nii (2) mul ainaki jäi just mielee toi mikä meil oli
 022 viimeks toi, se, vanhemmuuskurssi...
 023 I: joo
 024 F4: ku siit kerrottii, mä en ainakaa, emmä ees tienny et sellasii on

It was, therefore, the novelty of the topics that triggered the curiosity and interest of the Finnish pupils and, thus, enabled the textbook to respond to the pupils' individual needs as language learners.

The second characteristic that appealed to many of the pupils was the book's ability to address its readers' prior knowledge and experiences on different school subjects. This ability was considered to have been helpful both in the understanding and learning of different school subjects and in the memorising of new information. The school subjects that the pupils considered *Headlines* to address in its contents the most with were geography and biology (the natural sciences), religion, history, and civics. Unfortunately, it proved very difficult in the interview for most pupils to name any specific text or texts in *Headlines* that they thought had addressed the school subjects mentioned above in a successful and memorable manner. (9) is an illustration of this point:

(9)

267 I: niin, ootsä pystyny hyödyntämään tässä kirjassa käsiteltyjä, aiheita muilla
 268 tunneilla sillä lailla ku oot menny bilsan tai mantsan tai yhteiskuntaopin
 269 tunnille ja sitte oot huomannuki et aah se on se sama asia mikä käsiteltii just
 270 englannin kirjassa, tää on tuttua juttua
 271 M9: (8) oon mä välil sillee, huomannu et, niinku me ollaan just käyty
 272 englannissa
 273 I: joo
 274 M9: tota sellasia mitä me ollaan käyty, jossain mitä me nytki käydään toisella
 275 tunnilla
 276 I: joo, just
 277 M9: tai sitte mä oon huomannu että, me ollaan jollain toisella tunnilla käyty
 278 samaa asiaa ku täältä tulee
 279 I: joo (2) muistatsä yhtään tarkemmin jotain esimerkkiä (1) jotain ainetta
 280 missä sä oisit huomannu että tulee vähän päällekkäisyyttä, aineiden kesken
 281 samaa asiaa mutta vähän, eri näkökulmista tai jotain
 282 M9: (2) en muista mitää

A few pupils managed, however, to exemplify their opinion rather well. From among the five pupils (F2, F4, F8, M1, and M6) who remembered

Headlines to have texts on geography or biology, Pupil M1 could name the short *Click File* texts of chapter 17, *Work Out*, which had facts and figures of different countries around the world, mostly English speaking:

(10)

403 I: onks täällä **kirjassa** ollu jotain semmosia aiheita mitä sä oot taas niinku
 404 voinu hyödyntää **muiden** aineiden tunneilla (1) et ois tullu **täällä** ensin ja
 405 sitten huomaaki jossain toisessa **
 406 M1: no joo, no nehän on tota (2) milläköhän sivulla ne olikaan ne, mis oli kaikki
 407 ne *new zealand* ja ne jutut (selaa kirjaa),
 408 [mis oli niitä]
 409 I: [joo ne maat]
 410 M1: maat, joo, niin niitä mä tulin, mä luin niitä jossain vaiheessa ja sitte me
 411 käsiteltiin esimerkiks, olik se nyt, se tais olla just maantiedon tunnilla (1)
 412 tunnilla tota joitain näitä aiheita, justiin niinku maita sun muita, nii sit mä
 413 muistinki et joo että australian virallinen nimihän on *the commonwelth*
 414 *of australia*
 415 [ja]
 416 I: [joo]
 417 M1: semmosta nii ne tuli hirveen hyvin mieleen niinku...
 418 I: joo
 419 M1: tämmöset jos meijän pitää vaik maantiedon tekstiin kirjoittaa että,
 420 austraalian jotain faktoja nii kun niitä on lukenu jo täältä niin niitä tietää
 421 niinku valmiiks, että...
 422 I: aivan
 423 M1: et se on hyvä jos täälläkin on vähän semmosta, semmosta, tavallaan niinku
 424 tietosanakirjasta suoraan mutta (1) mutta mutta kunhan sitä ei niin **hirveesti**
 425 oo niin tota niitä tulee lukeneekskin

Pupils F1 and M8, in contrast, recalled Unit 18, *Teenage Trends*, and more specifically chapter *Read I: Childhood's End* to have addressed their prior knowledge of different religions with EFL learning. *Childhood's End* discusses different rites and rituals that distinguish childhood from teenage and the text mentions, among others, the Finnish confirmation camp and the Jewish Bar Mitzvah as such separating traditions. Having just finished her own confirmation camp in the summer of 2001 had also helped pupil F1 to understand the *Read I* text better:

(11)

326 I: onks **niin päin** ollu sitte et ois käsitelty ensin jollai muulla tunnilla ja sitten
 327 täällä tullu tavallaan se sama asia (1) ja sitten huomais että onki tuttua asiaa
 328 tätä onki sitte helpompi ymmärtää
 329 F1: (2) mmm, no emmä kyllä ainakaa muista sillee niinku, mut esimerkiks
 330 tässä ku on joku tällänen niinku, jotai rippijuttu nii kyllähän niinku, nii
 331 kyllähän sen kaikki tavallaan tietää jo ennestää
 332 I: mmm
 333 F1: ku on ollu rippikoulu sillee kesällä nii

334 I: mmm
 335 F1: kyl se ehkä sit helpommin niinku ymmärtää sen, käsittää tästä niinku, tietää
 336 siitä asiasta jo entuudestaan tai

Pupils M6 and F2 had noted that some of the texts and topics in *Headlines* were familiar to them from their history and civics lessons. Consider (12):

(12)

230 I: joo (2) onks sitte tossa (köhii) englannin kirjassa käsitelty semmosia (1)
 231 asioita ja aiheita joita sä oot voinu sitte hyödyntää myöhemmin jollain (1)
 232 muun aineen tunnilla täällä koulussa esim käsitelty ensin tässä kirjassa jotain
 233 aihetta ja, sit jollain muulla tunnilla sä ootki huomannu et tää on tää sama
 234 aihe mitä englannin tunnilla on ja sit sieltä on tavallaan (1) tullu täältä jo
 235 tukee
 236 M6: öhöö (2) no joissain mun, mielest on just tapahtunu noin et esim hissän
 237 tunnilla nii toi tota (3) sit ei sitä kumminkaa rupee sit mieltii et missä kohtaa
 238 se täs kirjassa oli
 239 I: (1) joo ettet muista mikä kohta se oli
 240 M6: nii just
 241 I: joo (2) onks se sun mielestä hyvä asia et tulee tavallaan
 242 [kahen]
 243 M6: [joo]
 244 I: aineen tunnilla se sama asia
 245 M6: joo sellai että, no täs se on niinku et jos täs se jää jotenki puuttumaa niinku et
 246 mieltii et, et rupee mieltimään että mites toi nyt olikaan niin et eihän toi voi
 247 noin mennä nii sittehä esim hissän tai yhteiskuntaopin tunnilla nii nii tota,
 248 sitte sen, ai niin **niin** se oli tai jotai sillai että se täydentää sitä juttuu
 249 I: mmm
 250 M6: (1) ja jos sitä nyt on miettiny nii tietty se auttaa sitte yhteiskuntaopin tunnilla
 251 et on valmis tai hissän tunnilla, meillähän ei oo enää hissaa sehän loppu jo

Although pupil M6 could not name an exact piece of text in *Headlines* where EFL learning had overlapped with history lessons, he argued well why the textbook had succeeded in its attempt to integrate these two school subjects. By including the same information in the EFL teaching materials than in history materials, the textbook writers had made him think of the texts more and, thus, enabled him to see that different school subjects complement each other.

Pupil F2, in turn, remembered that the Study text of chapter 22, *The Mansions of the Gods*, had overlapped with history materials. Consider (13):

(13)

117 I: (3) onks tässä kirjassa sitten (2) yhdistyny sopivalla tavalla sun
 118 mielestä semmost niinkun uutta ja vanhaa (1) että siel on ollu uutta tietoo,
 119 semmosta tietoo mistä sä et oo ennen niin tienny (1) ja sä oot oppinu tän
 120 kirjan kautta sit siitä asiasta, ja sit tavallaan vanhaa asiaa josta sä oisit tienny
 121 jo vapaa-ajaltas tai sitten jostain muulta koulutunnilta
 122 F2: mmm, no itse asias on, siis tääl on niinku ollu kans sillee et (1) just et, se täs

123 on hyvää et tää ei oo sellain **tarina**, tai et tääl on niinku tälläst faktajuttuu
 124 koska tääl on tosiaan niinku sillee (2) **kerrotaan**, monenlaisist asioist jostain
 125 just niinku esimerkiks jotain maantiedon jutust mitä niinku tietää, mut sit
 126 taas on tääl just niinku uusiiki juttui osa (selaa kirjaa) (1) esimerkiks just tää
 127 kaksakkonen mis on se sarjakuva siitä, aaa siit cesarista seki sillee, siitäki
 128 tavallaan **oppi** sitä historiaa vähän sillee, nii missä ne on
 129 I: (2) [mmm]
 130 F2: [kertautuu]
 131 I: (1) [*]
 132 F2: [joo]
 133 I: onks se sun mielestä oppilaan kannalta hyvä asia et tavallaan menee vähän
 134 päällekkäin että oppii
 135 [jotain]
 136 F2: [on]
 137 koska sit tota varmaan tulevaisuudes joutuu opetteleen**kin** jotain niinku
 138 **englanniks** totta kai eikä vaa lukee jotain niinku vaikka romania et onhan
 139 se hyvä et tulee niinku sellasta, vähän **tietookin** englanniks, sillee

From (13) above, it becomes apparent that pupil F2 viewed *Headlines* positively because she thought it could be used as a way of revising history studies during and even after comprehensive school.

The third characteristic that the Finnish pupils found motivating in *Headlines* was that the book contained a variety of factual and fictional texts and topics. The comments of pupil F1 exemplify well the overall opinion among the interviewees of these two text types:

(14)

139 I: riiteistä nii (2) onks sulla niistä, minkäänlaista mielipidettä et kummat on
 140 enemmän mieleen vai onko se ihan sama mitä, tuolla kirjassa tavallaan on
 141 että onko ne, tarinoita ja mielikuvitusjuttuja vai onko ne faktaa
 142 F1: mmm no, sille se on ehkä iha, hauska lukee välil nit miele, kuvitusjuttuiki
 143 I: joo
 144 F1: niinku mut, onhan se sillee iha hyvä et on välil noit (1) faktajuttuja et mun
 145 mielest tossa on aika sopivasti kumpaaki, et vähän niinku vaihteluu, ku sit se
 146 ois ehkä tylsää jos ois pelkästään niinku faktajuttui siinä, nii se on aika sillee
 147 vähä kuivaa
 148 I: joo
 149 F1: (1) mut sit taas jos siin on pelkästään jotai mielikuvitusjuttui nii tuntuis et se
 150 on joku satukirja vaan
 151 I: joo
 152 F1: et iha hyvä et siin on kumpaaki

During the individual interviews, the fictional texts in *Headlines* were often described as ‘a nice change’ from the more factual texts. The advantages of both text types were acknowledged by many but, as (15) illustrates, they were very different:

(15)

148 M8: **no tota**, no fiktiota on kivempi lukee koska, niis on vähä enemmän tämmöst
 149 tavallaan taruu, mut fakta on siit parempaa et tota siin sit tota samal oppii
 150 jotai

Whereas the fictional texts in *Headlines* were seen as more entertaining, the factual texts were regarded as educational and useful and therefore ‘better’. As (16) and (17) demonstrate, the definition of an ‘educational’ or a ‘useful’ text varied, however, greatly from pupil to pupil. For some, such as pupils M1 and M5, the texts were ‘educational’ because they provided the reader with new information and, thus, expanded his or her general knowledge of the world. Consider (16):

(16)

152 I: että (1) että ei niin tota (1) ootsä sitte pohtinu sitä että, että tota, kummatko
 153 sulle on enemmän mieleen tämmöset todellisuuteen, faktoihin perustuvat,
 154 tekstit vai sitte tämmöset mielikuviutusjutut vai onko molemmat sitte hyviä
 155 M5: varmaan noi todellisuuteen koska ei (2) mmm no täs on niinku sellai on
 156 ollu tota jostain näytelmistä tälläsistä näin niinku se (3) mikä se st, juttu nyt
 157 olikaan mut se oli se...
 158 I: se west side story
 159 M5: joo se, se oli se (1) niin niin tota ne nyt ehkä sehän on sellai yli,
 160 yleissivistävää sitä (2) tota, eiku näytelmiä ku mä en niistä tunne niin
 161 kauheesti et, sellaset on ihan hyviä mut tälläset ihan pelkät tarinat nii, mun
 162 mielest ne ei oo niin kauheen (1) hyödyllisiä ja (1) kyllähän niit välillä voi
 163 olla, et ei se haittaa
 164 I: (2) onks sun mielestä sit tärkeetä et teksti olis hyödyllinen
 165 M5: niin no
 166 [sellai]
 167 I: [millä lailla]
 168 M5: mmm, niin et täst tulis niinku uusia asioita niinkun jossain kappaleis on
 169 tulluki sellai mitä ei oo ennen tienny että (2) äää, nii, et mun mielestä siit on
 170 aika paljon hyötyä, niinkun nää kappaleet olis, kertois jostain niinku
 171 tosiasiosta ja tälläsist

For the others, such as pupils F1 and F2, the factual texts presented a rich source of vocabulary in the foreign language and could, thus, be considered ‘educational’. Consider (17):

(17)

027 F2: mun mielest ne on ollu sillee iha hyvii tai siis sillee niinku just, ku ne on eri
 028 aiheittain nii siel on paljo eri, just sellast eri sanastoo et niinku
 029 I: (2) joo
 030 F2: et se on ihan hyvin sillee menee et esimerkiks meil on ruotsin kirjas siel on,
 031 siel on sillee et et siin menee tavallaan sellanen **tarina** (2) mut mun mielest
 032 se onki vähän **parempiki** sillee tällee et siin on niinku (1) just sillee eri

- 033 aiheita (2) oppii kaikkee, työsanastoo, ja sit se on hyvä niinku, tos, **tän** siinä
 034 työkirjassa, kun on ne sanat, nii siel on aina sit niinku ensin on ne
 035 **kappaleen** sanat tai ne *study* –tekstien sanat, sit toisel sivul on tota nii,
 036 sellast niinku erikoissanastoo esimerkiks siitä työkappaleest oli niinku just
 037 **kaikkee**, niinku sivullinen työhön liittyvää erikoissanastoo mitkä me ollaan
 038 sitten nois * , se on sillee hyvä, oppii paljo

Another explanation by the pupils for the superiority of the factual texts in *Headlines* was the topics' connection with real life. Again, the book's ability to address topics from everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young to the foreign language learning process came up. For pupils F7 and F4 it was important that one could relate to the texts and that the texts had a feeling of realism about them. As a result, they considered the factual texts more interesting and less monotonous than the fictional texts in the textbook, as (18) illustrates:

(18)

- 155 I: keksittyjä juttuja, nii kummastako sä oot sitte ite tykänny enemmän vai
 156 onko sillä mitään väliä minkälaisia tarinoita siellä kirjassa on totta vai tarua
 157 F7: (1) siis mun mielestä on parempi jos se on totta
 158 I: joo
 159 F7: sillee, emmä tiedä, no jaa se vähä riippuu mist kerrotaa, tai mikä se aihe o,
 160 kivempi se on mun mielest jos se on totta, vähä niinku elävästä elämästä
 161 I: (2) mikä, osaatsä sanoa että mikä siinä on tavallaan (1) sillee
 162 F7: parempaa
 163 I: nii
 164 F7: emmä tiedä se on vaa jotenki (2) emmä tiedä ehkä se on jotenki liittää joskus
 165 jostai asiassa omaan elämään tai ajattelee et, emmä tiedä se jotenki ehkä,
 166 monet asiat liittää niinku omaan elämään
 167 I: (1) auttaaks se sitte oppimisessa, kun jos on
 168 [omaa...]
 169 F7: [joo] se on niinku kiin niinku paljo mielenkiintosempaa mun mielest ainaki

The fourth characteristic in *Headlines* that appealed to relatively many pupils and gave them the impression that the book had a lot to offer for different kinds of EFL learners was the variety of texts and topics in the book, whether they were based on fact or fiction. Among those who had liked the comic strips in *Headlines* were pupils M7, M1, M2, F1, and M9. Of these five, pupil M7 did not give any specific explanation why he had enjoyed reading the Study text of Unit 22 *The Mansions of the Gods*, which was written in the form of a comic strip. Pupil M2, who had first had great difficulties in naming his favourite text in the textbook, suddenly remembered *The Mansions of the Gods*

in the middle of his interview and he began to describe in an enthusiastic way how the comic strip had helped him learn new and somewhat rare vocabulary:

(19)

106 I: ja sitte tota, sit viimeks teillä on ollu tää sarjakuva (1) mitä mieltä sä oot ollu
 107 näist
 108 [erilaisist tekstityypeist]
 109 M2: [toi sarjakuva oli mun mielest]
 110 ihan mielenkiintoinen, siis to, vähän erilaisii, tos oli enemmän kaikkii
 111 uusii sanoja ja kaikkii tommosii vähän harvinaisempii
 112 I: joo
 113 M2: toi oli ihan kiinnostava verrattuna noihin muihin
 114 I: just (1) mikä siitä tavallaan, oliko se vaihtelua vai mikä siinä teki siitä eri
 115 M2: se oli **vaihtelua**
 116 I: [harrastat sä]
 117 M2: [ja sit se oli]
 118 I: sarjakuvia
 119 [vai]
 120 M2: [no emmä harrasta]
 121 tai sillee onhan niitä joskus piänen lukenu mut on se kiinnostavaa mun
 122 mielest on lukee sarjakuvaa ku jotain tommost, aika suppeesti tehtyy tarinaa
 123 ku (4) tai siis onhan ne tarinatki kiinnostavampaa ku ei mitää mut ei ne
 124 mitenkää hyvin oo tehty, et onha sillee iha (2) se on kumminki semmost mitä
 125 voi käyttää

Pupils M1 and F1 both commented that the comics in *Headlines* were an interesting and refreshing change from the other texts and pupil M9 explained that he had the habit of reading comic strips in Finnish too, which was why he had enjoyed reading comics in English too.

What was particularly interesting, though, was the way in which the comic strips in *Headlines* had caught the eye of pupil M1. As (20) demonstrates, pupil M1 had familiarised himself well with the contents of his EFL book series in his free time and could, therefore, give many examples of comic strips in both the EFL textbook and activity book:

(20)

100 M1: ja ja no täähän oli, ihan, ihan niinku yllätys tää kyllä mä oon, ku mä oon tätä
 101 kirjaa selailu nii, mä oon huomannu tän että, että tää oli hyvin
 102 mielenkiintoinen tää että meillä oli välillä tämmöstä että, esimerkiks tää
 103 sarjakuvaki ja...
 104 I: saisko niitä sit sun mielestä olla enemmän
 105 M1: (2) no tota, kyl must tuntuu että, tääl on varmaanki mä en tiedä onks
 106 täällä nyt niin paljon niitä sarjakuvia niin kun tässä *study* -tekstissä että,
 107 **työkirjassahan** on sitte semmosia (1) vai oisko täälläki jopa ollu sitte että
 108 (selaa kirjaa), meil on työkirjassa välillä semmosia jotain mustavalko –
 109 sarjakuvia tai semmosia...
 110 I: semmosia pieniä, lyhyitä, vai onks
 111 [ne]

112 M1: [joo],
 113 no ei nyt, ei ne tämmösii pitkii oo että, ne on ehkä semmosii yhden sivun
 114 mittasii tai
 115 [semmosii] (selaa kirjaa)
 116 I: [tän kokosii] (osoittaa Harald Hirmuista sivulla 175)
 117 M1: no tämmösii justii et, tos on just yks esimerkki (1) että täällä niitä nyt ei niitä
 118 niin hirveesti oo mutta, mutta mutta, tämmöset on ihan mielenkiintoisia että,
 119 välillä lukee et jos niis on vaikka esimerkiks justiin tähän, tähän,
 120 kappaleeseen, tähän unitiin kuuluva aihe nii nehän on tietysti, ihan
 121 mielenkiintoisia välillä sillee että...

Having already reflected on the contents of his EFL learning material prior to the interview helped pupil M1 to explain his opinions extremely well. My questions may not have come to him, therefore, as a big surprise in the interview situation like they did to many other pupils.

Besides comics, also music, films, and teenage trends were considered popular topics in *Headlines*. Whereas some pupils, like pupil F7, approached the question of topic choice in the textbook from a more general viewpoint and commented that all of the topics in the textbook had been well chosen and reading about teenage trends had been particularly enjoyable, others were more specific in their comments. Pupils F4 and F8, for example, named Study texts such as *Rock Style* (chapter 18) and *MyKind of Film* (chapter 19) as their favourites. Consider (21):

(21)

014 I: (1) mmm tuleeks sulle mieleen, sähän voit tietysti täältä kirjastaki kattoo jos
 015 sä löydät sillee selaamalla niin (1) jonkun kappaleen joka ois ollu sun
 016 mielestä sit, **kiva lukee** tai ois ollu semmonen mieleinen (1) aihealueenakin
 017 F8: (selaa kirjaa) (2) no **tää** on yks (osoittaa *My kind of Film* –kappaletta), tää
 018 I: joo
 019 F8: yheksäntoista
 020 I: just (1) et sä oot tykänny siitä elokuva-aiheesta sit
 021 F8: joo
 022 I: se kiinnostaa
 023 F8: (1) siinä kysyttiin sitte mielipiteitä ja
 024 I: (1) joo
 025 F8: se oli kiva

Pupil F8 said she had enjoyed *My Kind of Film* because it had led into an exchange of opinions during the language lesson. Pupil F4, in turn, mentioned being interested in *Rock Style* because music was important to her in her free time and pupil F7, like so many of her classmates, said that texts about teenagers interested her currently.

When I brought up the issue of current interests with other pupils in their interviews, also pupil M3 suggested that *Rock Style* was a piece of text that appealed to teenagers. He thought that the text, which examines, among others, the rise of rap music in the 1980s, could catch the attention of the young because of their taste in music:

(22)

131 I: käsitellääks siinä semmosii
 132 aiheita jotka on niinku ajankohtaisia ysiluokkalaisille
 133 M3: no on siinä...
 134 I: ja niin sitte yleensä kaikille
 135 M3: on siin semmosii (1) tässä on just niinku et, mitkä
 136 niinku, aika paljon mun ikäset kuuntelee rappii ja tollee noin (2) kyl siinä on
 137 iha ajankohtast tietoo

Pupil M3, in turn, proposed that in addition to Unit 18, *Teenage Trends*, also Unit 21, *Troublemakers*, was of current interest to ninth-grade pupils because it comprised of texts which were about teenagers and their parents. In (23), he refers to the Study text of Unit 21, *Parent Trouble*, which was discussed in more detail in section 8.1.1.1:

(23)

084 M6: mut (1) hmm (1) joo, paljon täst ty, niinku (1) puhutaan niinkun **nuorten** tai
 085 murrosikästen tota jutuista (1) tässä on sellai erillinen kappale ku *teenage*
 086 vai mikä se oli (1) ja sit tossa nyt mitä me just käytti läpi nii siinäki puhutaan
 087 niinku, nuorten ongelmista vanhempien kanssa ja sellasta että, siit on kyl
 088 tullu jonkin verran ehkä, mut toisaalt onhan se iha meille sillai ihan
 089 ajankohtanen aihe

Although the primary interest of the present study is not to point out, compare, or seek to explain any differences of opinion between the genders, it was interesting to note that certain text and topic choices in *Headlines* created a difference of opinion between the female and male pupils. Unit 16, *Love*, and its Study text *All You Need Is Love*, for example, were well liked by some female pupils, but none of the male pupils commented on these texts in their interviews. (24) illustrates, for example, the thoughts of pupil F1 on love and teenagers in love:

(24)

023 I: nii (1) mitä mieltä sä oot ollu näistä aihealueista mitä nää tekijät on valinnu
 024 tänne kirjaan
 025 F1: **no jotkut** on iha kiinnostavii just sillee mut, että,
 026 [nytte]
 027 I: [voitsä]
 028 antaa esimerkkejä
 029 F1: mmm mitäköhän täs nyt oli henkilöitä mä katon (2) no tää oli ihan kiva, tää
 030 rakkausjuttu (Unit 16 *Love*) ja (2) sitte (selaa kirjaa) (3) jotain niinku just
 031 jotain nuorista ja tällee oli iha kiinnostavii

The topics that, in contrast, had caught the attention of some of the male pupils but that the female pupils more or less disregarded in the textbook, were humour, sports, and vehicles. Pupils M1 and M9, for example, considered it important that in between the more serious texts in *Headlines*, there were texts which were more entertaining and laid-back. As pupil M9 pointed out, humour adds to the motivation:

(25)

170 M9: sillee mut, niinku, kummiski mun mielest siin pitäis olla niinku huumorii
 171 kans siin seassa, siinä tekstissä
 172 I: joo
 173 M9: tollasta vähä (1) tota (1) outoo juttuu
 174 I: **aha** (1) mitä se sun mielestä, jos se teksti on, on semmonen huumoripitonen
 175 ja siinä on jotain outoa niin tota, millä lailla se tekee sen, mukavammaks
 176 M9: jos se tekee sen niinku (1) se on sillee paljo kiinnostavampi ku, siin niinku
 177 tota, jos se on niinku hyvää huumorii nii sit siin nauraaki aina välillä (1)
 178 tai silleen

In addition, pupil M8 revealed that as he himself was interested in sports and motorcycles, texts such as *Don't Judge a Book by It's Cover*, had managed to increase his otherwise low motivation for English language learning and he had been bothered to familiarise himself with these particular texts. The importance of topic choice in *Headlines* for pupil motivation became very clear in his interview.

8.1.2 Undesirable features in the textbook

Not all the views that Finnish comprehensive school pupils had of *Headlines* were, however, as complimentary as described in sections 8.1.1.1 and 8.1.1.2. In fact, some of the views that the pupils expressed were very critical. The

features that the pupils regarded as the most undesirable in their EFL textbook were the overemphasis of the teenage viewpoint and the number of unnecessary and uninteresting texts and topics in the textbook.

8.1.2.1 Overemphasising the teenage viewpoint

Although the majority of the pupils interviewed for the present study considered *Headlines* a textbook which took appropriately into account the age and the phase of life of its target audience in its text and topic choices, there were also those who thought that the textbook overdid it. In other words, they criticised the textbook for overemphasizing the teenage viewpoint in its contents and claimed that the textbook writers' attempt to please their young audience seemed sometimes rather forced.

In her interview, pupil F1, for example, argued that some of the texts and the characters in those texts seemed artificial. She claimed that they gave the reader the impression that the textbook writers had tried to think of topics that would appeal especially to a young audience but had not quite succeeded in their task:

(26)

430 F1: no emmä tiä välillä ehkä tuntuu et ne on vähän sellasii **teennäisii** et ne on
 431 niinku yrittäny että oikee joo tästä nuoret tykkää mut onha se, vähän niinku
 432 teennäistä eikä oikee oo keksiny
 433 I: (1) osaatsä antaa mitään esimerkkejä tuolta jostain, tekstikappaleesta mikä
 434 on tuntunu sitte teennäiseltä lukea
 435 F1: mmm
 436 I: (1) että tota siitä paistaa läpi että se on (1) tavallaan aikuisten kirjoittama ja
 437 aikuiset ajattelee että tästä nuoret tykkää
 438 F1: (1) emmä kyl oikee tiä (selaa kirjaa) (8) emmä nyt oikee osaa sanoo mut
 439 (2) *, se on niin vaikee ku on ollu niin paljon niit kappaleit sillee seiskallaki
 440 nii se on iha seka...
 441 I: [nii aivan]
 442 F1: [* mikä]
 443 oli
 444 [missäki kirjassa]
 445 I:[et mikä oli missäki kirjassa]
 446 aivan joo
 447 F1: mmm (5) emmä oikee tiä

Pupil M6, in turn, suggested that the textbook writers had taken too big a fancy to teenage life and tried to impose the topic too much on their readers in the

textbook. In his opinion, Unit 21 *Troublemakers* and its Study text *Parent Trouble* would have been enough. Despite his personal opinion of the topic, pupil M6 was, however, able to admit that the textbook writers' choice of topics in the book might not have been without its advantages. Consider (27):

(27)

182 M6: niin no, mmm (2) joo no siis että (2) mun mielestä ei tääl oo ainakaa, nyt tuu
 183 mieleen mitään sellasta joka olis muuttunu ihan tyystin (4) joo tosiaan sitä,
 184 nuorten juttua, niinku tota, työnnetään vähä liikaaki ehkä tässä kirjassa
 185 I: mmm, miks sä luulet että ne työntää sitä
 186 M6: niin no, varmaan sen takia et me ollaan sen ikäsiä mut toi (2) niin mut, mun
 187 mielest ei siit välttämättä ihan niin paljoo tarvis, se yks kappale olis ihan
 188 hyvin riittäny ku sit tulee sit melkein jokaises kappalees tai jotain tällästä
 189 (1) nuorten ja vanhempien ongelmia sun muuta (2) mut toisaalt, ihan niinku,
 190 **pistäähä** ne miettimää sillä tavalla

During the interview, pupil M6 realised that by introducing teenage life several times as a topic in the textbook, the writers might have wanted to draw special attention to it and make the young readers think, among others, about the problems that often exist between teenagers and their parents.

Perhaps the most critical of all was pupil M2. (28) and (29) illustrate this well. In (28), he accuses some of the texts in the textbook of having a patronizing tone:

(28)

441 M2: mun mielest täs on kans näit juttuja mitkä on vähä,
 442 turhii tämmöset niinku, painostaa johonki tiettyyn valintaa (1) nää jotkut
 443 jutut, vaikka (selaa kirjaa), mmm, täs on, nää jotkut just *to drink or not to*,
 444 *drink, living at home* tämmöset mitä pitäis tehdä
 445 I: ai ne on turhia
 446 M2: no ei ne oo turhii ne sillee painostaa johonki suuntaan
 447 I: mmm niillä on joku sellane mielipide joka
 448 M2: nii
 449 I: tuo esille omaa mielipidettä
 450 sitten (1) mmm (1) no ootsä
 451 [sitten]
 452 M2: [sit ykspuoleisti]
 453 kattoo niit mä sanoin aikasemminki, ja *studyssäki* just nää
 454 (osoittaa *parent trouble* -kappaletta) et mitataan niinku vanhempien
 455 näkökulmast * tällee kaikkee (2)

In his view, certain topics were approached from one viewpoint only, that is, the viewpoint of adults, and the teenaged readers were denied of a chance to

form their own opinion of the texts and draw their own conclusions about the moral in them. This is further illustrated in (29):

(29)

257 I: joo (2) onks toi ollu, toi kirja sun mielestä ajankohtainen (1) niinkun
 258 **kaikkien** mejän kannalta ajankohtainen, käsitellääks siel asi, ajankohtaisia
 259 asioita josta yleensä niinkun **teijän** ikäiset on (1) onks siellä aiheita jotka
 260 kiinnostaa ja on ajankohtasia just teille
 261 M2: no periaatteessa onhan ne sillee niinku ajankohtasii mut ei ne, mun mielest
 262 täs on kirjoitettu vähän hölmösti ettei tässä mitään tarvitte omast näkökulmast
 263 niin kokonaan ettei sitä, jaksaa sillee kumminkaa
 264 I: nii, että ne kirjoittajat on aikuisia ollu...
 265 M2: nii (1) sillee et
 266 I: (2) paistaaks siitä sitte jotenki läpi se että...
 267 M2: joo, jotenki se paistaa si, vähän läpi, ettei sitä ku (1) oo kirjoitettu ku vähän
 268 ykspuoleisesti mut ei nyt se sillee haittaa kuha oppii

Pupil M2 acknowledged that, on the whole, it is certainly more important that the EFL textbook teaches the target language well and one is able to learn from it than it is for the textbook to offer a variety of viewpoints in its texts. Nevertheless, based on his choice of words in (29), it is possible to detect that pupil M2 was dissatisfied with the way certain texts were presented in *Headlines*.

8.1.2.2 Including unnecessary and uninteresting texts and topics

Not all the comments made on the number of texts and topics in *Headlines* were complimentary, either. There were pupils who criticised the book for including too many texts on too many topics. In addition, they complained that some of the texts and topics in it were too difficult to read, too boring, or, too childish.

In her interview, pupil F1 disapproved the idea of communicativeness in the textbook. She pointed out that in her opinion it was unnecessary to become engaged in a conversation and discuss one's personal life when there were more important matters, such as vocabulary and grammar, to be dealt with in English lessons:

(30)

313F1: no, emmä nyt tiää oikeestaan ku **ei me ny sillee niinku niistä** itse sitä

314 **sisältöö** sillee niinku ajatella niinku suomexks tallee nii tarkasti vaa niinku
 315 siihe että miten siitä opitaan, niit sanoja ja jotai kielioppiasioita, mut ei me
 316 niihi sisältöihi oikee keskitytä (1) enkä mä tiä onkse niin tarpeellistakaa
 317 I: (1) sun mielestä kielen opiskelussa on kumminki tärkeempää se (2) kielioppi
 318 ja sanasto vai
 319 F1: nii (2) koska, vähä, **tavallaa turhaa** se on jos alkaa jotai että nii että
 320 meilläkin oli vanhempien kanssa jotain riitoja ja tämmöst tyylii, * se nii

She explained that it was not the contents of the texts that were of interest to her in English lessons but rather the target language itself.

A very similar way of thinking prevented some pupils from seeing the advantages of integration between foreign languages and other school subjects. As I inquired pupil F7 if she had been able to link the contents of her EFL textbook in lessons other than English, she replied:

(31)

241 I: (1) ootsä, pystyny jollain tavalla, hyödytämään tossa kirjassa kerrottuja
 242 asioita ja, siinä niinkun käsiteltyjä aiheita jollain muulla tunnilla, sillee et
 243 esimerkiks tässä kirjas olis ensiks kerrottu jostain
 244 [historiasta]
 245 F7: [mmm]
 246 kerrotaan just jostain...
 247 I: ja sit niinku ois tullu hissann tunnilla sama asia...
 248 F7: ei ei oikeestaa sillee, ei, mun mielest, kyllä ehkä tääl on jotain mut ei niinku,
 249 sillee et ne on vaa sit, ainakaa mul on sillee et jos niinku hissann tunnil
 250 opetetaa jotain (1) nii seon siin, niinku, periaattees ku aina mul on sillee jos
 251 mä niinku no nyt on englantii ja sitte kuitenkin **hyppään**, jättää sen
 252 **englannin** tunnin ja jättää sen eron siihen hissann et ei niinku ajattele nii,
 253 sillee ristiin

In her mind, she made a clear distinction between learning English and learning other school subjects. What was discussed in language lessons did not involve other subjects and that is perhaps why she was not able to see how English and its contents, including the contents of the EFL textbook, could be linked with other school subjects. As to pupils F1 and M2, they perceived the contents of *Headlines* much too limited to be integrated successfully with the contents of other school subjects. Consider (32):

(32)

272 I: joo (5) mmm (1) onks tässä kirjassa, sitte ootsä huomannu et siinä ois
 273 käsitelty sellasia, aiheita ja (1) ja, **teemoja** tavallaan että sitten (1) sitten
 274 tavallaan sä oot voinu hyödyntää muiden (1) kouluaineiden tunneilla tuolla
 275 vars esimerkiks historiassa tai biologiassa niin, maantiedossa et ois täällä
 276 **kirjassa** ois ollu ois luettu joku kappale ja sit ku on menny hissann tunnille

277 nii sit on ajatellu, meillähän **oli** täst just tuolla, et tavallaan tulee **vähän**
 278 **päällekkäin**
 279 F1: no ei mun mielest oikeestaa, **koska**, kuitenkin sillee jossai niinku, mun
 280 mielest muissa aineissa nii niitä asioita käsitellää paljo **laajemmin**, et täs on
 281 vaa sillee aika suppeesti nii

The pupils viewed the function of their EFL textbook altogether different than that of other school textbooks. Because the actual contents of the textbook were not of primary interest in English lessons but they served the purpose of learning the target language, the pupils did not consider it important that the contents could be integrated with other school subjects.

The texts that were regarded as the most unnecessary in *Headlines* by the pupils were, however, the *Find Out*, *Click File*, and *Read* texts. Of these three, the two first mentioned consisted of several shorter pieces of text that provided the pupils with an option of what to read and the last-mentioned were longer pieces of text that were only occasionally studied in the language lessons. According to the pupils, none of these texts were required reading for the ninth-grade English tests and this may help to explain why so many of the pupils viewed them as extra, or rather surplus, in the EFL textbook. As these texts were not paid as much attention to in the English lessons as, for example, the *Study* texts which were required reading for the English tests, they seemed less important for example to pupils F5 and M6. (33) demonstrates the opinion of pupil M6 on the *Find Out*, *Click File*, and *Read* texts in relation to the *Study* texts:

(33)

130 M6: joo mun mielestä tää on ihan hyvin tehty
 131 I: mmm
 132 M6: tosiaan, niinku yleensähan tota kirjois ei oo näit nii näin paljon niinku yhes
 133 kappalees *find out* ja tälläsiä juttuja et siinähan on vaan niinku, tän kirjan se
 134 *study* tehtävä et nää niinku ehkä, hiukan on (1) niinku liian (1) niinku
 135 semmost tees tehty sellai (1) niinku vähä väkisi tai sellai nää (1) *find outit*
 136 et ei siin välttämättä näitäkään tarvis olla näit *find outteja* et se *study* riittäis
 137 niinku muissa kirjoissahan on vaa se kappale se, mut kyllähän ne niinku jos
 138 ei niihin niin kauheesti jää sellai (1) pysähdy niin ihan (1) hyviähän ne on

Interestingly, pupil M6 extended his comparison of the *Find Out* and *Study* texts in *Headlines* to other textbooks as well. He remarked that in other books, supposedly in other language textbooks, there were no optional texts that

provided pupils with a choice of what to read but only compulsory pieces of text. To him, having an option was not a desirable feature in an English textbook. He claimed that had the EFL textbook contained just the *Study* texts, it would have been enough.

Among the critics were also pupils F6 and F1 who disapproved of texts other than *Study* in their textbook. Pupil F6 said that she simply could not be bothered to read them. Pupil F1, in turn, considered some of the texts boring and, above all, unnecessary because they were not all thoroughly dealt with in English lessons, as in (34):

(34)

152 F1: et iha hyvä et siin on kumpaaki, **paitsi** jotai tälläsii mitä täällä oli niinku
 153 (selaa kirjaa) (4) jotai sellasii, jotai ihme sellasii faktajuttui jostai iha, jostai
 154 **tyylii** jostai **taidemaalareista** nii ei nyt hirvee kiinnostavii oo
 155 I: (1) onks ne täällä *click file*issa tai jossai
 156 F1: no varmaa jossai semmoses (selaa kirjaa) (10) no emmä muista nyt,
 157 kuitenkin sillee, et jostai taidemaalareist on niinku vähä tylsii, et ei me niitä
 158 kyl olla hirveesti käyty, etehkä just kuunneltu sitte läpi vaa
 159 I: (1) joo
 160 F1: (2) kyl se ny sillee viel menee mut, emmä tiiä ehkä ne on vähä turhii
 161 siellä sit

Later on in her interview, pupil F1 also drew attention to the role of the teacher in the language lessons. She argued that the optional texts in an EFL textbook were probably more difficult for the teacher to teach because of the pupils' different reading preferences and that was why it was more useful to have compulsory texts than optional texts in the textbook.

Besides criticising *Headlines* for including too many texts on too many topics, a number of pupils also accused some of the texts and topics in the book of being too difficult, too boring, or too childish to read. *The Mansion of the Gods*, the Study text of Unit 22 written in the form of a comic strip, may have been the favourite piece of text for many in the textbook (see section 8.1.1.2), but almost as many pupils regarded it as the most confusing and difficult text in the textbook. Although the primary interest of the present study is not to point out, compare, or seek to explain any differences of opinion between the male and female pupils, it is interesting, again, to note that certain differences of opinion between the genders did seem to appear in the data. Those who were in favour of the comic strip were mostly male pupils, whereas those against it

were female pupils. (35) illustrates what it was in the comic strip about Cesar that discouraged, among others, pupils F4, F9, F5, and F1 from reading it:

(35)

029 I: onks toi, kaikki aihealueet onks ne sit, menee
 030F4: **ei**, mun mielestä tuol oli jotain niinku, viimeks, oli joku sarjakuvajuttu,
 031 sellane...
 032 I: joo
 033 F4: jostai iha sikavanha juttu nii (1) mun mielest se oli tosi tyhmä, ei
 034 kiinnostanu yhtää
 035 I: (2) joo (2) elikä se oli tavallaan, se oli niin **vanha** juttu et
 036 [se ei]
 037 F4: [nii]
 038 I: enää sitte kiinnostanu (1) mmm (1) olik sillä mitään tekemistä sen asian
 039 kanssa et se oli tavallaan kirjoitettu sarjakuvamuotoon
 040 F4: (1) no ei, mut siin on niin vanhaa **tekstiiki** ettei siit oikee tajunnu

All four pupils described the *Study* text as confusing or incomprehensible. Not only was the story old, that is, it dated back hundreds of years to the times of the Roman rule but it also contained many archaic words and expressions that were hard for a ninth-grader to understand. According to the acknowledgements at the back of *Headlines* (1996:359), *The Mansion of the Gods* is in fact only an excerpt from a comic book with the same title by Goscinny and Underzo (1971). The main character in that book is a Gaul named Asterix. Should one not be familiar with the works of Goscinny and Underzo and, in particular, with the language commonly used in Asterix comic books, then understanding the *Study* text in Unit 22 might not have been as easy as one would have wished.

Those who claimed that their EFL textbook included boring texts were, among others, pupils M8, F9, and M7. In their individual interviews, the pieces of text they named uninteresting in *Headlines* were not the same but still, all three pupils focused on texts which discussed the music of the past. Consider (36):

(36)

012 M8: **emmä tiää**, se on ollu iha hyvä mut tota näis ois vähä parempi olla jotai,
 013 enemmän nuorille, mielenkiintoisempii juttui, niit jaksais lukee ja (1) tällee
 014 I: joo
 015 M8: näis on mun mielest jotkut aika tylsii juttui nii ei niihi jaksu perehtyy
 016 tunnilla eikä mitää
 017 I: osaatsä antaa esimerkkejä et minkälaiset aiheet kiinnostais sitten nuoria

- 018 M8: **no emmä tiää** ylipäättää kaikkii tälläsii, mikä nuorille on läheisii tai jotain
 019 tälläst (2) emmä tiää
 020 I: joo, osaatsä sitte antaa esimerkkejä siitä et, minkälaiset aiheet tuolla on ollu
 021 **tylsiiä** (1) mikä siellä on, sä voi t kattoo tota kirjaa plärätä, jos se, auttaa
 022 virkistämään muistia nii
 023 M8: (selaa kirjaa) se mun mielest täällä alussa ainaki oli joku (4) **just jotai**
 024 **tälläsii** jotai politiikkaa (osoittaa *unit 17 study & listen* -osuutta) tai (1) tai
 025 eläinjuttui (*unit 17* :ssa riikikukkon kuva) tai (2) jotai viiskytluvun laulajii
 026 (osoittaa *death of a beatle* -kappaletta) tai (1) tälläst
 027 I: joo
 028 M8: ja joku *west side story*kin nii, ei kiinnostanu yhtää

It seemed that none of the pupils, M8, F9, and M7, was interested in reading about the music or musicians of the mid and late 20th century. Although it was only pupil F9 who actually said that she was not into ‘old’ music, it is fairly safe to say, based on (36), that pupil M8 also regarded the topic of the *Read II* text in Unit 15, *Death of a Beatle*, as too outdated to be of any interest to him. In addition, he mentioned not being interested in *West Side Story*, the *Study* text of Unit 15, which explains the plot of the famous 1950s musical in a nutshell.

Pupil M7 found it slightly hard to differentiate the texts, discussing music, which he did not like from the songs he did not care for in his EFL textbook. He gave, however, one example of a text that he had thought of as boring in the book and that was the *Read I* text in Unit 15, *Sad Notes – the Secret Diaries of Maria Mozart*. Consider (37):

(37)

- 030 I: (2) joo (3) tuleeks mieleen sitte mitä semmosta mistä sä **et** ois tykänny
 031 M7: (2) **no joo tääl o** jotai iha sikanihkeit lauluja välil
 032 I: (3) joo (1) mitä esimerkiks muistatsä, sä voit selaila sitä kirjaa jos sä löydät
 033 sieltä jonku, mikä siitä on tehny nihkeen
 034 M7: (5) no tääl on vaa välil jotai iha kummii laului (selaa kirjaa) (3) mutta kyllä
 035 aika harvoi
 036 I: (9) onks niistä mikään niistä kappaleista ollu semmone nihkee, käydä läpi,
 037 vai onks ne vaa ne laulut tuntunu
 038 M7: (2) **ei no on näis välil** aika tylsii esimerkiks just tää mutta (osoittaa *sad*
 039 *notes – the secret diaries of maria mozart* -kappaletta) (2) aaa (1)
 040 mut on tää silti iha hyvä ku tääl on kaikkii sanoit käytetää mitä nyt jossai
 041 muis ei oo (2) täs on just näist (2) kaikista, huiluista ja sillee

This piece of text had extracts from fictitious diaries of Maria Mozart, the sister of the famous Austrian composer. Since pupil M7 did not explain in more detail in his interview why exactly he considered this piece of text uninteresting, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions of his views.

Nevertheless, based on his comments on the vocabulary used in the *Read I* text, it is possible to say that even though he might not have been interested in the topic of the text, he found the vocabulary in it quite beneficial.

Music was not the only topic in *Headlines* with which the pupils found fault. Pupil F8 used the word ‘boring’ to describe the *Study* text of Unit 20, *Do it Yourself*, which was about young people who had started their own business, and she also noted that the fictional texts and fairy tales had been rather dull in the textbook. Pupil F3 argued that she had not enjoyed science fiction as a topic in the book and pupil F4 commented that she had disliked the text about space. When asked more specifically, to which of the texts in the textbook they were referring, neither of the female pupils could remember the actual titles of the texts.

Last but not least, pupil F9 accused *Headlines* of including texts and topics that were too childish for ninth-graders and, hence, of not being very interesting to read or study. As (38) illustrates, even her first impression of the textbook was very critical:

(38)

002 I: ensimmäiseks mä haluaisin tietää semmosten asian että mitä mieltä sä oot
 003 ollu ihan yleisesti tästä kirjasta ootsä tykänny siitä, vai et
 004 F9: no se on ollu, ihan hyvä sillee et, tota siin ku siin, siin ei oo, niinku mejjän
 005 ikäsille sillai, just juttui niinku et, ne on enemmänki sit niinku nuoremmille
 006 I: joo (2) osaatsä mikä siinä onks siinä ollu tavallaan ne, **aiheet** vai mikä siin
 007 on tuntunu että ne on liian (1) lapsellisia ehkä kenties
 008 F9: no, aiheet ne on sillee et ne ei oikee kiinnosta niinku (1) ne (1) kyl jotku mut
 009 (1) välil on semmosii et ne ei kiinnosta ollenkaa

Later on in her interviews, see (39), she continued to criticise the textbook but this time she raised an interesting point regarding the topics and the vocabulary in the textbook:

(39)

163 I: sähän sanoit että ne on vähän liian nuorille
 164 F9: nii, kyl tääl on sillai **jotain** niinku juttui mut et, nii nää on sillee aika tylsii
 165 nää enemmän sopii nuoremmille nää, paitsi siis kyllähän täs on niit vaikeit
 166 sanoja mut sitte, niinku mut tekstit ne aiheet, ne on vähä semmosii...
 167 I: mmm
 168 F9: niinku et ne ei oikee, jaksaa kiinnostaa

In her opinion, the vocabulary used in the texts was appropriate for pupils of her own age but the topics were not. As the two were incompatible with each other, she did not regard the textbook as desirable as it could have been at its best.

8.2 Discovering the features of an ideal EFL textbook

As I explained in section 6.2.2, the second of the two data collection methods used in the present study was a two-part written questionnaire and its topic was an ideal EFL textbook. By the time the written data were collected, most of the ninth-grade pupils had already participated in the individual interviews. They were thus familiar with the topic of the study I was conducting and knew that the written questionnaire would touch upon the same themes as the questions in their individual interview. Yet, to make it easier for the pupils to answer the questions concerning an imaginary EFL textbook and, also, to be able to collect as much detailed data as possible from the pupils, I suggested that they approach each of the fifteen questions in the questionnaire from the point of view of a textbook writer. The question that I addressed to the pupils indirectly throughout the questionnaire was “If you ever had a chance to design an EFL textbook, what would it be like?”.

Table 13 shows the pupils’ responses to the first question in the questionnaire, that is, “Were you an EFL textbook writer, what would be the main objective of your textbook and why?” (see Appendix 6 for a translation into English).

Table 13. Pupils’ views of the objectives of an ideal EFL textbook.

”Mikä olisi unelmiesi tekstikirjan tekijänä suurin tavoitteesi?”.	”Miksi tämä olisi tavoitteesi?”.
<p>”Tekisin tekstikirjan joka sisältäisi hyvin paljon erilaisia aihealueita, historiasta nykypäivään. Tekstikirjassa olisi paljon ns. ’study’ tekstejä, jotka pitäisi opetella hyvin. Tekstikirja voisi sisältää faktapohjaisia kertomuksia, mutta fiktiivisiäkin voisi olla vähän. Runoja voisi olla myös välillä. Lisäksi myös enemmän valinnanmahdollisuuksia, - voisi valita kappaleiden väliltä mieleisensä.”</p> <p>M1</p>	<p>”Tämä olisi tavoitteeni, koska tekstikirjan pitäisi olla monipuolinen ja ’ruokkia’ kaikkia opiskelijoita.” M1</p>
<p>”Olisi enemmän fiktiotekstejä ja</p>	<p>- M2</p>

fiktioteksteissä olisi vähän älyttömiä juttuja, mutta voisi olla myös oikeisiin asioihin liittyviä juttuja. Voisi olla myös silleen että olisi mielikuvituksellisia tarinoita jotka jatkuisi seuraavissa kappaleissa esim. olisi 4 kappaletta yhtä tarinaa.” M2	
”Tekisin kirjan jossa olisi jokaiselle mielenkiintoista asiaa. Esim. joku pitää kirjailijoista, joku urheilusta, autoista, sarjakuvista ym.” M3	- M3
”Sellainen, missä on selkeät tekstit ja huumoria.” M4	”Jotta nuoret pitäisivät enemmän englannin opiskelusta.” M4
”Laajan, monipuolisen, yleissivistävän, jossa olisi paljon valinnanvaraa. Kirjan jossa on laaja sanasto kirjan lopussa ja laajat kielioppisivut. Kirjan, joka auttaa kehittymään englannin kielen keskusteluissa. Kirjassa pitäisi olla paljon kuvia, jotka liittyisivät aiheeseen.” M5	”Juuri nämä asiat auttavat ainakin minua kehittymään paremmaksi englannissa.” M5
”Monipuolisen, värikkään, hauskan, opettavan.” M6	- M6
”Suurin tavoitteeni olisi että saisin oppilaat paremmin oppimaan ja kiinnostumaan englanninkielestä.” M7	”Laittaisın enemmän kiinnostavampia juttuja että oppilaat kiinnostuisivat kappaleista ja HALUAISIVAT lukea niitä.” M7
”En oikein tiedä”. M8	- M8
”Monipuolisen, jossa olisi erilaisia tehtäviä (kuuntelu, luetunymmärtäminen ym.y.m.)” F1	”Jotta kaikille tulisi hyvä peruspohja kielen eri ‘aloilla’.” F1
”Sellaisien, että se olisi mielenkiintoinen ja käsittelee laajasti kaikenlaista.” F2	”Koska oppilaat pitäisi saada kiinnostumaan ja pitämään kirjasta → tehokas & innostunut opiskelu.” F2
”Haluaisin tehdä monipuolisen kirjan. Ei liian vaikeita eikä liian helppoja asioita, vaan monipuolisesti uusia ja vanhoja asioita.” F3	- F3
”Haluaisin tehdä mielenkiintoisen, ajankohtaisen ja opettavan. Laittaisın paljon teini-ikäisiä kiinnostavia aiheita jossa myös oppii.” F4	”Tavoitteena olisi nuoren tykkäävän siitä, niin että oppisi.” F4
- F5	- F5
”Värikkään ja ohuen missä on vähän tekstiä ja kappaleet on helppo opetella ja sivun reunassa on sanasto.” F6	- F6
”Haluaisin tehdä kirjan jossa on mielenkiintoisia aiheita, jotka kiinnostavat nuoria.” F7	- F7
”Haluaisin tehdä sellaisen kirjan jota jaksaisi lukea, esim. Sellaisen jossa on ihan faktaa, muta mielenkiintoista tekstiä.” F8	”Haluaisin tehdä siksi sellaisen, koska nykyistä kirjaa en jaksaa lukea koska asia jota opiskellaan ei ole mielestäni tärkeää.” F8
”Semmosen mielenkiintoisen ettei siinä ois mitää tarinoita tai tylsiä kappaleita.” F9	”Et ihmiset ois enemmän kiinnostunu niistä asioista.” F9

Based on the pupils’ responses, it can be concluded that should they have had a chance to design the EFL textbook of their dreams, they would have set fairly similar objectives for the book. Features such as the consideration of the target audience’s age and interests, the educational, informative, and communicative

value of the textbook, and the book's ability to entertain its readers and provide them with optional reading materials emerged the most often in the pupils' responses. As a result, these features of an ideal EFL textbook will be analysed more specifically in sections 8.2.1, 8.2.2, and 8.2.3 of the present study (for the translations of the sample views, see Appendix 7).

In section 8.2.4, the pupils responses to the last question in the written questionnaire will be analysed. This is the question, where the pupils were asked to design a short piece of text in their individual EFL dream textbook using a topic of their own choice.

8.2.1 Focusing on the young and their life style today

In the questionnaire, most of the pupils claimed that were they the writers of an EFL textbook, they would focus on the young in the contents of their book (see Appendix 2, question 5). In other words, their dream textbook would discuss teenage, teenagers, and their life style today. The pupils' explanations for why they would choose such a focus were, for example:

(40)

"Koska kirjan pitää kiinnostaa juuri oppilaita". (F2)

"Käsitteisin eniten nuorille kohdistettuja aiheita, koska nuorethan tätä kirjaa lukevat". (F3)

"Ne kiinnostavat eniten koska esim. aikuisille kiinnostavat aiheet eivät välttämättä kiinnostaisi niin paljon". (M2)

Pupils F2 and F3 emphasised that their EFL dream textbook would focus on the young because it is the pupils attending Finnish comprehensive school who actually study the book. The age of the target audience should, therefore, be a key factor when designing the contents of an EFL textbook. Pupils M2, M4, M7, F9, F1, and F6, in turn, pointed out that different generations have different interests and life experience:

(41)

"Jotta kirja ei tuntuisi niin vanhanaikaiselta". (M4)

”Nuoria kiinnostaa enemmän nykyajan asiat ja heihin liittyvät jutut kuin joillekin vanhankansan ihmisille tarkoitettut jutut”. (M7)

”No on kivempi lukee nuorista kaikkii juttui...paljon kiinnostavampaa ku ne on samaa ikäluokkaa ku ite”. (F9)

”Nuoria kiinnostaa enemmän oman ikäisten aiheet”. (F1)

”Koska mejän ikäset tykkää enemmän lukea asioista jota ehkä itselle on tapahtunut tai ne mun mielestä kiinnostaa enemmän!”. (F6)

As limited as their own life experiences still were as teenagers, reading about issues that they had personally already experienced and were interested in, was more fun to them than reading about the achievements and interests of older generations.

The life style topics that the ninth-grade pupils proposed they would discuss in the EFL textbook of their dreams turned out to be very everyday like. Many suggested they would write about things such as friendship, family, hobbies, music, films, and fashion. In other words, about topics that are included in several language teaching materials even today and are commonly considered to be of interest to the young. However, quite a few of the pupils also expressed their wish to write about topics that are considerably more serious but which still involve teenagers. Consider, for example (42):

(42)

”Nuoren elämän ajankohtaisista aiheista kuten seurustelusta, oman elämän aloittamisesta, ammatin valitsemisesta jne...Ja sitten vähän ikävemmistä asioistakin kuten huumeista ja silleen”. (F7)

”Nuorista, seurustelusta, sexistä, vastoinkäymisistä, ammatinvalintajuttuja, kaikkee nuoria kiinnostavia jujutsuja...”. (F7)

”Aiheena voisi olla vaikka huumeet ym.” (M4)

”Se on siten kiinnostavampaa...esim. nuorten ongelmat / huumeet, miten vaarallisia ne ovat!?”. (F4)

Dating, puberty, sex, and drugs are probably not the first topics that come to a textbook writer’s mind when designing an EFL textbook for they are rather unconventional. Nevertheless, the (42) above reveals that it was some pupils’ dream that more information was provided on these topics to the young, even if it was in foreign language. Pupils F7 and F4, for example, used the adjectives

“unpleasant” and “dangerous” to describe drugs but, still, they both claimed they were interested in gaining more information about them. In addition, some pupils suggested they would include texts about teenagers in trouble or troubled teenagers in their EFL dream textbook because such texts are of interest to the young. Suggestions such as these demonstrate that it was not only pleasant topics that attracted the pupils’ attention in language teaching materials but unpleasant ones, too. The Finnish comprehensive school pupils seemed to be interested in reading both about the ups and the downs of teenage years.

8.2.2 Appealing to various individual interests

Besides bringing up topics that focus on teenagers and their life style today, the ninth-grade pupils also proposed that their dream textbook would appeal to their individual interests. However, the ways they thought it would do so were at least as numerous as there were pupils answering the written questionnaire. Some suggested that to be truly interesting, a dream textbook should discuss topics that are based on fact, whereas others favoured fiction. There were also pupils who considered the secret of textbook appeal to be in the integration of old and new information, and pupils whose dream textbook contained a variety of optional texts. In all, the pupils’ perception of what constituted an individually appealing textbook varied a lot.

Those in favour of more factual texts mentioned, for example, war, famine, politics, economy, nature, and world history as topics they themselves would be interested in reading about in a foreign language (see Appendix 2, question 13). At the first sight, these topics might seem unusually serious for an EFL textbook and do not appear to be of any special interest to the young but as the following examples illustrate (43), there were pupils who found them appealing:

(43)

”Aiheita voisivat olla esimerkiksi sodat, nälänhädät, yhteiskunnallinen epäoikeudenmukaisuus, eri maiden suhteet, UNICEF, NATO yms”. (M1)

”Talous, politiikka, tietotekniikka, yhteiskuntatiede, luonto. Nämä aiheet kiinnostavat minua eniten”. (M5)

”Uutiset, taide ja luonnon mielenkiintoiset jutut. Valitsin nämä koska minua kiinnostaa ne.” (F8)

”Historiaa, [...] luonto”. (F2)

”[...] kansainvälisyys, harrastukset. Nämä ovat varmaan monia nuoria kiinnostavia asioita.” (F1)

The reasons why topics such as these should be included in an EFL textbook were surprisingly similar among the pupils. Although not all of the pupils were able to give examples of the factual topics they themselves would have included in their dream EFL textbook, most pupils preferring fact over fiction were able to say why they would do so (see Appendix 2, question 5). Consider, for example (44):

(44)

”Se on kiinnostavempaa lukee semmosii asioita mitkä on totta.” (F9)

”Koska ne kiinnostavat enemmän nuoria. Lapsille sitten enemmän fiktiota.” (F7)

”Todellisuuteen: Kyllä. Faktatekstejä saisi olla aika paljon, sillä ne kasvattavat hyvin yleistietoa.” (M1)

”Faktaa kannattaa aika paljon käsitellä, koska siinä samalla oppisi uusiakin juttuja esim. historiasta jne. Perustieto saattaisi kehittyä.” (M7)

”Pääosin faktaa. Fiktiosta ei ole välttämättä kauheasti hyötyä muissa aineissa tai jatkossa. Todellisuuden perustuvia aiheita voisi olla historia ja yhteiskuntaoppi.” (M5)

The most common explanations for favouring fact over fiction were, firstly, that fact is more interesting because it is based on what is known as ‘true’ and ‘real’, and secondly, that factual texts are more educating and useful in everyday life. Pupil F7 also pointed out in (44) the importance of the age factor; fiction is mostly for children and as ninth-graders, they were not children anymore. That was why an EFL dream textbook should contain more fact than fiction.

Apart from pupil M4, who wished to include in his dream textbook merely fictional texts, all the rest of the pupils favouring fiction were fairly moderate in their comments (see Appendix 2, questions 4 and 14). They admitted that

even though they preferred reading, for example, imaginary stories, jokes, and comic strips to factual texts in foreign language, they would have still included texts that are based on facts in their individual EFL dream textbooks. As they saw it, both types of texts have their advantages and, therefore, a dream textbook should not exclude either. The pupils' choice for texts and topics in an EFL dream textbook, and the reasons for choosing them, were, for example (45):

(45)

”Kappaleissa pitäisi olla enemmän jännittäviä kertomuksia esim. kertomus *Vanhasta Linnasta* [sic] jne.” (M2)

”Humoristiset kappaleet ovat hyviä. Ehkä pari satua jotka menisivät tunnettujen satujen kaavalla, mutta ei kuitenkaan mitään suoraa kopiota punahilkasta [sic] vaan punahilkka tarina [sic] mutta tapahtumat olisivat erilaisia.” (M2)

”Todellisuuteen perustuvia asioita esim. näyttelijät, elokuvat... mielikuvitukseen esim. keksitty tarina esim. UFOista.” (M3)

”Sarjakuvia, vitsejä, OIKEITA englanninkielisiä sanomalehtiartikkeleita, nuorten omia kertomuksia, tarinoita, asiategstejä. Koska näin opitaan ymmärtämään monipuolisia tekstityyppejä. Ja esim. sarjakuvat ja vitsit ovat hyviä kevennyksiä.” (F1)

”Mielestäni ”normaalitekstit” ovat parhaita, mutta sadut, vitsit, reseptit ovat omiaan värittämään kirjaa.” (F2)

”Sanomalehtiartikkelit, sadut, vitsit ja sarjakuvat. Sanomalehtiartikkelit: ne ovat hyödyllisiä, sadut: niitä on kiva lukea, vitsit: ne ovat hauskoja eikä niitä voi lukea liikaa, sarjakuvat”. (M8)

”Fiktiosta saisi enemmän mielenkiintoisempia juttuja ja se kehittäisi jopa mielikuvitusta.” (M7)

The pupils' explanations are fairly similar. In their opinion, fictional texts are exciting and fun to read. They enliven an EFL textbook, or figuratively speaking 'add more colour to it', and even improve pupils' imagination.

The pupils' responses to questions 3 and 7 in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) revealed that for many, integration of old and new information in an EFL textbook was very important. Only four out of seventeen pupils said that they would not integrate the two, in other words, they would include in their dream textbook merely texts on familiar topics (M3, M4) or texts on unfamiliar topics (M2, F8). The rest of the pupils agreed that were they EFL

textbook writers, they would include texts on both familiar and unfamiliar topics in their dream textbook. As to why they would integrate the two and, also, what their choice of topics would be, the pupils gave, for example, the following explanations:

(46)

“Sekä uusia että tuttuja! Esim. historian & maantiedon & kirjallisuuden teemoilta voisi ottaa sekä vanhoja, että nykypäivän juttuja.” (F2)

“C esim. sisällyttäisin sinne toisesta maailmansodasta tietoa koska se on tuttua. Sisällyttäisin sinne myös tietoa eri aikakausien musiikista.” (M8)

“C. Tuttuja aiheita ovat esimerkiksi kaikenlaiset koulussa opitut jutut jne. Uusia olisi esim. juuri siitä ennätyskirjasta jne. jne.” (M7)

”Uusia asioita: Uusien asioiden käsittely kasvattaa englannin kielen taitoa. Tuttuja asioita: Silti englannin kirjassa pitäisi olla kertausta varsinkin oppilaille, jotka siihen mennessä käsiteltyjä englannin kielen asioita ole aivan vielä oivaltaneet.” (M1)

”Enemmän juttuja josta tietää vähän mutta oppii paljon uutta. Esim. leffoja, muusikkoja, luonnon katastrofi, erilaisista harrastuksista...” (F4)

”Käsittelisin vapaa-aikaa ja urheilua esim. huvipuisto, kavereiden kanssa oleminen. Laittaisin kirjaan uusia aiheita ja vähän myös tuttujaakin.” (F3)

Not all of the pupils could explain why they considered alternative C, that is, the integration of familiar and unfamiliar topics, the best alternative of the given three, but those that could, made some interesting remarks on the different functions that familiar and unfamiliar topics serve. Pupil M1 suggested that he would include familiar topics in his dream textbook because they help pupils to revise and revision would be especially beneficial for those who find studying a foreign language difficult. New or unfamiliar topics he would have included, in turn, in his textbook to improve pupils' proficiency in the target language. Pupils F1 and M5 commented that unfamiliar topics are important and worth reading about in foreign language but as imaginary textbook writers, they would not have discussed these topics in depth in their dream textbooks. Instead, they would have dealt more intensively with topics with which pupils were already familiar. Consider, for example (47):

(47)

”Molempia. Uusina aiheina ottaisin esim. Englannin kulttuurin, jota tietysti on tullut jo hieman muissa aineissa sekä koulun ulkopuolella. Uudet aiheet ovat mielestäni hieman tärkeempiä kuin jo käsitellyt. Uusia asioita voisi hieman vain alustaa, ei käsitellä syvemmin.” (M5)

Among the familiar topics that the pupils would have written texts about in their individual textbooks were history, geography, literature, films, music, sports, and different pastimes. These were topics that the pupils knew well from other school subjects or from their free time but wanted to increase their knowledge of even further. Many of the pupils also hypothesised that should their EFL dream textbook address topics from other subjects and lessons, it would help pupils to learn other school subjects better. Consider, for example (48):

(48)

”Kyllä. Käyttäisin esim. historiaa. Oppilaat oppisivat samalla muitakin aineita ja englantia.” (M7)

”Kyllä, jotta he oppisivat muutakin enkun ohessa esim. mantsaa.” (M4)

”Kyllä. Aineiden osittainen ”yhdistäminen” on kannattavaa, koska jos esimerkiksi jotkut oppilaat eivät välttämättä ole niin kiinnostuneita maantiedon tunnilla käsiteltävistä aiheista. Jos näitä aiheita käsitellään englannin tunnilla, kiinnostusta voi olla enemmän, juuri englanninkielisyyden vuoksi. Aiheita: Faktoja eri maista, yms.” (M1)

”Kyllä. Yleissivistys on tärkeää. Pieni pohjustus kaikkiin aineisiin olisi hyvä.”

(M5)

”Kyllä, sen takii et näkee asioita muultaki kuin vaan yhestä lähteestä.” (F5)

”Kyllä, jos tekee esim. Avaruudesta esitelmää toisella tunnilla sitä englannin kirjan tietoa voi käyttää hyödyksi myös esitelmässä.” (F6)

”Kyllä, esim historia.” (M3)

The unfamiliar topics that the pupils would have discussed in their textbooks included, among others, different world records, the life of the young in other countries, and the target language culture. The last mentioned topic also came up in the pupils’ responses to question 6 in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2). In that question, the pupils were asked whether they would focus on local (Finnish) topics, on global topics, or on both in their individual dream

textbook. The following examples demonstrate why the majority of the pupils chose alternative C as their favourite:

(49)

“C. Sais uutta, että vanhaa tietoa.” (F7)

“C. Tottakai kumpaakin että yleistieto kehittyisi koko maailmasta eikä vain Suomesta. Enemmän käsittelisin (60%) Suomeen liittyviä asioita.” (M7)

”Molempia. Eri maan kulttuurit ovat mielestäni tärkeitä. Suomen yleistieto on myös tärkeä.” (M5)

”C. Jotta lukija oppisi samalla sekä Suomesta että muista maailman ihmisistä. Esim. aiheista voisi olla vaikka maahanmuutot, kulttuurit ym.” (M4)

“C. Enemmän muista maista koska niiden kulttuuri on erilainen ja ihmisillä on erilaisia tapoja, mutta ei pelkästään niitä, olisi sekin mielenkiintoista lukea Suomesta aiheita.” (M2)

“C. Yleisesti koko maailmaa, jotta tulee kansainvälinen kasvatus, mutta myös VÄHÄN paikallisiakin piristykseksi.” (F1)

The pupils considered it important that their general knowledge of both Finland and other countries would increase and that they would learn about other cultures at school as well. Even though Finnish topics may have been more familiar to the pupils, they were very interested in global or inter-cultural topics and as imaginary textbook writers, they would have included quite a lot of information on other countries and cultures in their dream textbooks.

Based on the pupils’ responses to question 10 in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) it was possible to find yet one more common characteristic in the EFL textbook of the pupils’ dreams which increases the appeal of a language textbook. That characteristic was the inclusion of optional texts in the textbook. Although only two of the pupils, M7 and F1, mentioned the benefits of including compulsory texts in the textbook, none of the pupils would have included compulsory texts only in their individual dream textbook (alternative B). Instead, the pupils chose either alternative A, which suggested that all texts in the textbook should be optional or alternative C, which suggested that the textbook should include both optional and compulsory texts. Consider (50):

(50)

”A: jos kirja olisi monipuolinen ja siinä olisi valinnan varaa jokainen saisi lukea itseään kiinnostavia aiheita. Jokaisessa kappaleessa voisi olla yksi yhteinen kappale.” (M5)

”C. On hyvä, että on kaikilla samoja tekstikappaleita, että keskustelua tekstistä syntyisi muitten oppilaitten kesken. On myös hyvä jos saisi välillä myös valita tekstikappaleen joka kiinnostaisi, niin sitä olisi kivempi lukea ja se menisi paremmin ”kalloon”. Vaihtoehtoisia tekst. n. 35% ja loput norm. tekstikappaleita, eli 65%. Vaihtoehtoiset tekst. olisivat pitkiä ja norm. tekstikappaleet lyhyitä.” (M7)

”C. Muutamia vaihtoehtoisia, mutta pääosin (yhteisen opetuksen helpottamiseksi) yhteisiä kappaleita.” (F1)

”C, oppilaalle pitää esittää vaihtoehtoja.” (F8)

”C. Koska on parempi mahdollisuus miettiä mitä kappaletta opiskelee ja niitä vois olla joku viisi ja erittäin lyhkäisiä että ne jää muistiin paremmin.” (F6)

To the pupils, optional texts in an EFL textbook represented variety. By including optional texts in their dream textbooks, they would have provided their imaginary readers with a number of texts from which they could have chosen the ones in which they were truly interested. By being able to read texts that appealed to their individual interests, the imaginary readers would have, in turn, been able to learn English more efficiently, pupil M7 proposed.

8.2.3 Encouraging communication in the target language

Last but not least, one of the most popular features in an ideal EFL textbook turned out to be its communicative value. Although only one of the pupils, that is, pupil M5 mentioned the improvement of comprehensive school pupils' communication skills in English as his main objective as a textbook writer (see Appendix 2, question 1), several other pupils brought up the topic later on in the questionnaire. Consider the following illustrations of the pupils' reactions to question 8, which inquired whether the pupils wanted their dream EFL textbook to encourage classroom conversation:

(51)

”Kyllä, koska oppilaat voisivat puhua aiheista ja ymmärtää joka näkökannalta paremmin ihmisten mielipiteitä.” (F3)

”Kyllä, koska se rohkaisisi oppilaita keskustelemaan toisten ihmisten kanssa.”

(M8)

”Kyllä. Yhteinen keskustelu tunnilla herättää oppilaan aloitekykyä ja osittain opettaa esiintymistaitoja. Samalla kielitaito kehittyy. Aiheita: Vanhempien ja lasten väliset ongelmat, sodat tms.”(M1)

”Kyllä. Kun keskustele toisen oppilaan kanssa aiheesta, niin siinä kumpikin oppii jotain toiselta ja jopa lisää tekstistä / aiheesta.. Jonkinlainen tapaturma / tragedia voisi helposti nostattaa keskustelua muitten oppilaitten kanssa.” (M7)

”Kyllä, se osoittaa mielenkiintoa ja luulen että faktat ovat tällaisia.” (F8)

”Kyllä, koska se tekee niistä mielenkiintoisemman.” (M6)

In all, the pupils' reactions were very positive. Some of them gave examples of topics that, in their opinion, would certainly make pupils talk in the target language in the language classroom and some explained how a more communicative EFL textbook would benefit English learning in general. By including different literary styles such as fact, fiction, and tragedy in an EFL textbook and discussing topics such as world peace, music, and current world events, they, as textbook writers, would be able to catch pupils' attention and arouse their interest. This, in turn, would make pupils more willing to talk in language lessons by using the target language and as a result, they would learn to understand each other's opinions better, they would learn how to make initiative in foreign language, and gradually become better public speakers.

8.2.4 Designing texts for an ideal EFL textbook

All but four of the seventeen ninth-grade pupils participating in the data collection of the present study answered question 15 in the written questionnaire (see Appendix 2). In that question, the pupils were asked to design a short piece of text on a topic of their own choice in their individual EFL dream textbook. This question was included in the questionnaire to find out which topics would be the most popular among the pupils and how the pupils would approach these topics. All examples in this section of the study illustrate the pupils' answers to question 15.

As might have been expected, the pupils based their texts on the topics they had mentioned earlier in the written questionnaire, in questions 1 to 14. Such

topics were friendship, free time, music, alcohol and drugs, relations and racial tolerance between different nationalities, nature, economy, and suspense. Although some of the pupils' designs were less detailed than others, all designs reflected the pupils' personal interests equally and illustrated the features that Finnish comprehensive school pupils value in an EFL textbook and would like to include in their own dream textbooks.

Pupils M9, F6, and F9 designed their texts on friendship. Despite the shortness of their texts, these three pupils managed to describe relatively well the many ways in which a topic such as friendship can be discussed in an EFL textbook and, what is most important, be considered interesting by the pupils:

(52)

“Kappale kertoo ystävydestä. Yhdessä kappaleessa kaksi ihmistä kohtaa ja heistä tulee ystävykset jotka joutuvat toisiaan eriskummallisimpiin seikkailuihin joissa heidän ystävyys vahvistuu.” (M9)

”Roses are red

Violets are blue

I like you

because you are you.” (F6)

“No jos ystävydestä ois nii siin vois olla jotai ihmisii kertomas et millanen on hyvä ystävä ja ystävydestä jotai mielipiteitä. Sit siinä vois olla runoja ystävydestä! Sit siinä vois olla samassa joku tarina jostai ystävydestä.” (F9)

Pupil M9 suggested that in his dream textbook there would be a story about the extraordinary adventures of two friends whose friendship grows stronger with time. Pupils F6 and F9 both mentioned poems on friendship and pupil F9 wanted to include in her EFL dream textbook people's descriptions of a good friend and different opinions on friendship. In other words, the pupils were interested in reading about the topic, whether the text was based on fact or fiction. Although none of the three pupils brought up in their short pieces of text the reasons why they chose friendship as their topic, they might have done so because friendship was something they had personally experienced and it was part of their everyday life (see section 8.2.1).

Similar reasons might have encouraged pupils M4 and F3 to design their pieces of text on music and free time. Consider the following illustrations of how they approached these topics:

(53)

”Teema = musiikki. Voitaisiin kertoa erillisistä [sic] yhtyeistä ja heidän soittimista. Mitä he ovat tehneet että ovat päässeet kuuluisaksi.” (M4)

”Vapaa-aika: Käymme kaverini kanssa elokuvissa ja joskus pidämme illanistujaisia parin kaverin kanssa ja syömme sipsiä ja karkkia ja juomme limua. Joskus vuokraamme jonkun elokuvan ja käymme saunomassa ja pyörimässä lumihangessa...” (F3)

Whereas pupil M4 described in broad terms why he was interested in music, that is, different bands, the instruments that band members played, and the way different bands and musicians had become famous, pupil F3 took a very different approach to her topic. She focused on the plot of her text and gave a detailed description of what would happen in it. Her story, which was written in the first person, was about getting together with friends, eating junk food, and watching a film on television or taking a sauna bath, that is, something that Finnish teenagers might do in real life.

Equally as popular as it was among the pupils to write about teenagers and their life style today, it was to write about things or topics with informative value. Such topics were, for example, alcohol and drugs, relations and racial tolerance between different nationalities, nature, and economy. Pupil F4 designed the following piece of text for her EFL dream textbook:

(54)

”Alkoholi & huumeet:

- minkälaisia on
- nimiä
- vaikutuksia (haitta)
- esimerkki jostain ihmisestä joka on käyttänyt ja päässyt kuiville
- alkoholi: vaikutukset, tunnetilat, nuorten juomistilastot...” (F4)

-

In section 8.2.1, the same pupil expressed her wish to learn more about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and based on her textbook design, it is safe to say

that she wanted other pupils to gain more knowledge of these substances as well. As a textbook writer, she would have included in her EFL dream book information on the effects of drugs and alcohol on the human body, statistics on teenage drinking, and stories of people who have overcome their bad habits. It is impossible to say whether pupil F4 considered at all the level of English that foreign language learners need to have to be able to understand texts on topics such as drugs and alcohol, that is, such texts might prove too difficult, for example, for Finnish ninth-graders to read, but, nonetheless, the intentions of pupil F4 were good.

Before, tourism and travelling were the most common means of meeting large groups of people from different countries and interacting with them. If, for example, a Finn wanted to get to know other nationalities, he or she had to leave Finland to do it because there were not that many people of a foreign origin here. Today, things are different. Immigrants and refugees have become an integral part of Finnish society and in many European countries their presence is even more distinguishable. To provide pupils with enough information on immigrants and refugees in today's world, pupil F1 wanted to address this particular topic in her dream textbook and inform her readers how people relate to foreigners, or non-natives, in different countries:

(55)

“Kansainvälisyys:

- kerrotaan yleisesti, kuinka paljon ulkomaalaisia eri maissa on
- nuoret kertovat oman maansa suhtautumisesta ulkomaisiin ja onko siellä paljon ulkomaalaisia
- tarina, jossa kerrotaan, kuinka nuoret ovat tutustuneet toisiinsa yli kansallisuusrajojen.” (F1)

As she designed her piece of text for teenagers, pupil F1 decided to approach her topic also from the viewpoint of the young and make teenagers from different countries describe how non-native people are viewed in these countries. Furthermore, to emphasise her standpoint, she wanted to include a story about young people, representing different nationalities and making friends with each other, in her dream textbook.

Uncovering the secrets of nature interested pupils F2 and M5 and, thus, they both designed a text about nature in their individual EFL dream textbooks. However, despite having a common topic, these two pupils approached it very differently. Consider the following example (56):

(56)

”Luonto:

- jonkun ’erikoisen’ maan kansalainen voisi kertoa maansa luonnosta ja eläimistä
- faktaruutuja esim. uhanalaisista eläimistä, elämiä & luontoa haittaavista tekijöistä (esim. saasteet, metsähakkuut jne.)
- tietoa siitä, miten asioihin voisi vaikuttaa.” (F2)

”Teema: luonto

Tyyppi: sanomalehtiartikkeli

Uusi ennen tuntematon eläin löydetty. Tutkijat löysivät eilen klo 15.30 uuden eläinlajin, joka tuntuu olevan laiskiaistakin laiskempi eläin. Tutkijat nimesivät tämän uuden eläimen löhöjäksi. Tämä löhöjä on noin 30 m iso ja painaa n. 200 kg ja on ennätysellisen laiska. Elukka ei liikahtanut senttiäkään tutkijoiden tutkiessa tätä eläintä. Löhöjä on hyönteissyöjä. Lisää tietoa siitä ja sen tavoista myöhemmissä lehdissä.” (M5)

Kuva löhöjästä

Pupil F2 was interested, above all, in nature conservation and she expressed her wish to have facts, for example, about endangered species, pollution, and forest cuttings in her textbook. In addition, she wanted to include information in it on how to make a difference in conserving nature. This might have been her way of letting her imaginary readers know that they, too, can take part in nature conservation. To increase the readers’ interest even more in the topic, pupil F2 wanted to include a story about an unusual country and its flora and fauna in the book.

Pupil M5, in contrast, dreamt about writing a newspaper article of an unknown species in his book and he even included a space for a picture of the animal in his design. Although the animal, ‘löhöjä’, does not exist in real life, pupil M5 would have written his piece of text as if it did, by combining fact and fiction. He intended to include in his text detailed information of the mysterious animal, for example, its enormous weight and length, all of which

was the product of his own imagination, but he also wanted his report to have a rather scientific tone to it.

Of all the pupils, pupils M6 and M1 had probably the most unconventional textbook designs. They both chose economy as their topic and they strongly believed that many more teenagers besides themselves would find the topic fascinating. Consider, for example:

(57)

”Teema: talous

Kappaleeseen voisi sisältyä seuraavat asiat: tämän hetken pörssin epävarmuus suomessa [sic] ja ulkomailla. Kappaleessa voitaisiin kertoa jostain yrityksestä esim. Nokiasta kuvia ja vinkkejä vaikkapa sijoittamisesta.” (M6)

”Talous-kappale

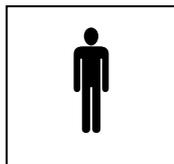
Osakkeet ovat monilla ihmisillä jo nykypäivää. Maailmantalous on kuitenkin monille ihmisille tuntematon käsite. Talouskappale voisi käsitellä talouden käsitteitä, pörssiä, osakkeita, sijoittamista, analyytikoita yms. Tämä aihe kiinnostaa ihmisiä ja oppilaita varmasti. Taloudessa on tulevaisuus! ☺” (M1)

There is no question that pupils M6 and M1 were interested in economy. By using such phrases such as “the economic instability of stock exchange in Finland and abroad” and “Many people are familiar with shares. However, world economy is an unknown concept for many” in the questionnaire, both pupils revealed their true knowledge of the topic. Their personal enthusiasm probably played a big role in their choice of the topic but their choice of words also seems to suggest that they wanted other pupils to learn about economy and large enterprises such as Nokia. After all, “the future is in economy”, as they put it.

Lastly, there were two pupils who were not that interested in writing about teenagers or about topics with certain informative value in their EFL dream textbooks. Instead, pupils M3 and F8 wished to include in their books a thriller. The reason for this, as explained by pupil M3, was that teenagers find horror stories appealing. In his design, pupil M3 did not describe the plot of his story or give away any details of it. However, in her piece of text pupil F8 wrote the actual beginning of her thriller and she even added a picture of a stick figure, portraying the kidnapped boy, in the text. Consider the following (58):

(58)

“Joku jännittävä tarina. Tyyliin joku kauhujuttu. Ne kiinnostavat paljon tämän ikäisiä.” (M3)



”Helsingin Sanomat 13.7.2003

15 – vuotias poika on kidnapattu Tukholmassa 12.7. Calle Berg katosi eilen Tukholmassa. Silminnäkijöitä oli 3 ja he kuvailivat kidnappaajia 2 mieheksi: toinen lyhyt ja tukeva ja toinen pitkä ja laiha. He ajoivat sinistä pakettiautoa...” (F8)

Similar to pupil M5, who wrote about ‘löhöjä’, pupil F8 designed her text to look like a newspaper article. The text was very descriptive but still relatively easy for a ninth-grade pupil to understand. Although the main character of the text was a teenaged boy, the focus in the text was not on teenagers and their life style today but on the kidnapped boy himself. The purpose of this piece of text was, above all, to entertain foreign language learners.

9 DISCUSSION

In POPS (1994), pupil-centredness, integration of the language learning syllabus, sufficient communication skills, and appreciation of multiculturalism, are listed among the most important objectives and guidelines set for education in Finnish comprehensive schools. As foreign language teaching materials should represent ‘theory put into practice’, their contents should correspond with these higher educational objectives and the national language policy. Materials used in language lessons should, therefore, attend to the needs and abilities of active, self-directed individuals as well as to those of different age groups. They should also make good use of pupils’ prior knowledge of other school subjects and of the world, support pupils’ communication skills in the foreign language, and encourage pupils to be open minded towards foreign countries, cultures, and people.

Over the years, commercially produced language textbooks have become the most popular teaching materials in Finnish comprehensive schools because of their strong consistency with the contents of POPS (1994). The great curriculum reform of 1994 might have given schools an opportunity to strive for more pupil-centred, individualised, and independent teaching strategies, however, most schools have continued to use traditional textbooks as their main teaching resource. It would seem, then, that the people producing the textbooks, that is, the experts on education and the people buying the textbooks, the teachers, have agreed on the criteria set for good foreign language teaching and good foreign language teaching materials, EFL textbooks included, for years. However, equally long, the views of those who are the primary users of language textbooks, that is, comprehensive school pupils have been left unstudied on the subject.

The objective of the present study was to find out the criteria that Finnish comprehensive school pupils set for a good EFL textbook, be it a textbook that already exists or an imaginary (ideal) textbook. In other words, it aimed to discover the features that make an EFL textbook appealing to use in the pupils’ opinion. The objective was approached by posing two research problems. The first research question was “How do Finnish comprehensive school pupils view the EFL textbook they regularly use in language lessons? That is, what kind of

desirable and undesirable features do they associate with it?. The second research question was “How do Finnish comprehensive school pupils view an ‘ideal’ EFL textbook? In other words, what kind of desirable features would an EFL textbook of their dreams have?”.

The data for the present study were collected from a group of Finnish comprehensive school pupils. Altogether 17 ninth-grade pupils participated in an individual interview and answered a two-part written questionnaire (see section 6.2). The topic of the individual interview was an EFL textbook called *The News Headlines; courses 5-8* (1996) used by the ninth-graders in their English lessons at the time of the data collection (see chapter 7). The topic of the two-part written questionnaire was an ideal EFL textbook, that is, the EFL textbook of the pupils’ dreams.

The data collected showed that when asked on a general level in the individual interview: “Do you like your textbook?”, most Finnish pupils claimed to like *Headlines* (see section 8.1). However, only a few pupils were able to explain why they thought the book was likeable or what features they thought were particularly desirable in it. When presented more specific questions concerning the content of the textbook, more pupils could explain their opinion and, thus, bring more light to the topic.

One of the two features that the pupils regarded as desirable in their current EFL textbook, *Headlines*, was its consideration of everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young. As teenagers, the pupils felt they could relate to the texts that discussed, for example, problems at home or at school, the rights and responsibilities of sixteen-year-olds, and the pressure to use alcohol or drugs. This was because the texts dealt with issues of which the pupils already had some personal experience or they thought they might have experience of sometimes in the near future. The texts about teenage life were well liked too by the pupils because they thought such texts encouraged communication in the target language and gave the pupils an opportunity to express their own opinions in the language classroom.

Similar criteria were set for good foreign language teaching materials in sections 2.2.1, 3.2.1, 2.2.3, and 3.2.3 of the present study. Both POPS (1994: 9-14) and researchers such as Crookes and Schmidt (1991: 491-492) and Holden (1983: 45) suggested that the interests and life experience of the young need to

be respected and taken into consideration in the contents of teaching materials. As members of a certain age group, teenagers share a worldview and an identity that is typical of their age and material designers can and should take note of this in order to sustain pupils' motivation. Language teaching texts should also draw their topics from the past experience of the learners because that enables them to engage their interest and achieve communicative use in the classroom (Widdowson 1983: 11). This is because such texts meet two of the most important criteria set for the use and acquisition of a foreign language, that is, familiarity and attractiveness.

The second of the two features viewed positively by the Finnish pupils in *Headlines* were the various topics in the textbook and their response to the pupils' needs. According to the pupils, there were four characteristics in the textbook that contributed to this particular feature. The first characteristic was the amount of new information that helped the pupils to catch their interest and maintain it. The second characteristic was the book's ability to address its readers' prior knowledge and experiences of different school subjects. This was considered to be helpful in both understanding and learning of different school subjects and memorising of new information. The third characteristic that the pupils considered motivating in *Headlines* was that it contained both factual and fictional texts and topics. Whereas the fictional texts in *Headlines* were seen as more entertaining by the pupils, the factual texts were regarded as educational and useful and therefore 'better'. The fourth characteristic that appealed to quite a number of the pupils in the textbook and gave them the impression that it took into consideration the needs and abilities of its readers was the variety of topics, whether they were based on fact or fiction.

In sections 2.2.2 and 3.2.2 of the present study, criteria resembling the four characteristics mentioned above were discussed. Researchers such as Holden (1983: 45), Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 107), and Unrau and Ruddell (1995: 22-25) as well as POPS (1994) proposed that among the most important objectives of language education and teaching materials design is to make good use of pupils' prior knowledge and skills acquired in other school subjects and outside school. In other words, it is important to link the knowledge and skills with the language teaching syllabus. It was also suggested in section 3.2.1 that materials used in foreign language teaching should not focus one-sidedly on

foreign language learner's cognition (Stevick 1980: 200-201). Instead, they should involve the learner as a human being with affective, cognitive, social, and physical qualities and, thus, offer him/her something for the emotions, be it beauty, humour, controversy or apprehension, as well as something for the intellect.

Interestingly, the data collected in the individual interviews, focusing on *Headlines*, also showed that some pupils' opinion about the textbook began to vary when they were presented more specific questions about the contents of the textbook. Suddenly, there were features in *Headlines* that the pupils did not regard as desirable and the pupils became quite critical towards the book. One of these features was the overemphasis of the teenage viewpoint. According to some of the pupils, the textbook writers had taken too big a fancy to teenage life, imposing the topic on the readers too much. As a result, some of the texts in *Headlines* and the characters in those texts seemed artificial in the pupils' opinion. Moreover, the textbook writers approached teenage life from one viewpoint only, that is, the viewpoint of adults. This was why the pupils had a feeling that they were denied of a chance to form their own opinions of the texts and draw their own conclusions about the moral in them.

Another feature that *Headlines* was criticised for was the number of unnecessary and uninteresting texts and topics. Texts that were not required reading for ninth-grade English tests or were optional, that is, provided the pupils with a choice of what to read, were simply viewed as surplus by some. As these texts were not paid as much attention to in the English lessons as the compulsory texts, they seemed less important. What the writers of *Headlines* must have considered a great asset in the textbook when designing it, that is, the variety of texts that can be studied either individually, with a partner, or in a group, relatively many of the interviewed pupils considered merely a drawback when using the book.

Equally unimportant for some of the pupils were texts that attempted to engage them in conversation or to link the syllabus of English with other school subjects. The unimportance of these texts was based on the pupils' opinion that it was not the contents of an EFL textbook that mattered in language lessons but rather the purpose that the book served, that is, to learn the target language itself, particularly its grammar and vocabulary. In this case,

what was discussed in language lessons did not involve other subjects and, thus, there was no need to integrate English with other school subjects.

What made *Headlines* uninteresting for some, in turn, were the texts and topics that were seen as too difficult or boring to read or too childish. Historical texts were, for example, accused of being outdated and confusing and fictional tales more suitable for a younger audience. As a result, some of the pupils did not view the textbook as desirable as it could have been at its best.

In section 3.2.1 of the present study, researchers such as Ericsson (1994: 5-6) and Holden (1983: 45) discussed the risks of foreign language materials design. They warned designers not to make generalisations about the foreign language learners in textbooks because not even the young want to read about pop music all the time. Ericsson and Holden claimed that too many assumptions about the likes and dislikes of the young do not attract them nor give them an opportunity to use their own imagination.

Data collected from the Finnish comprehensive school pupils in the two-part written questionnaire showed that had the pupils had a chance to design an EFL textbook themselves, they would have all set fairly similar objectives for the book (see section 8.2). Features that emerged most often in the pupils' responses were the consideration of the interests and the age of the target audience, the educational, informative, and communicative value of the textbook, and the book's ability to entertain its readers and provide them with optional reading materials. Although the objective of the present study is not to compare these features with those that the pupils raised when they were interviewed about *Headlines* or with those that experts on education considered desirable for language teaching materials, it is still interesting to note that certain similarities between the three exist.

In the questionnaire, most of the pupils claimed that had they a chance to design an EFL textbook, they would focus on the young and their life style because it is pupils attending Finnish comprehensive school who actually study the book. As members of a certain generation, the comprehensive school pupils had different interests and life experience than, for example, their teachers and, as limited as their own life experiences still were, reading about something that they had personally already experienced and were interested in seemed more fun to them than reading about the achievements and interests of the older

generations. The pupils suggested that the same would apply for pupils reading the EFL dream textbooks.

The topics that the pupils would have included in their ideal EFL textbook focused on the everyday life of the young. They suggested topics such as friendship, family, hobbies, music, films, and fashion for the book but also brought up more serious topics in the questionnaire. Dating, puberty, sex, and drugs are probably not the first topics that come to the mind of an EFL textbook writer to write about but, however, it was the dream of some pupils that more information would be provided on these subjects to the young, even if in foreign language. In addition, some pupils suggested they would include texts about teenagers in trouble or troubled teenagers because such texts interest the young. Suggestions such as these demonstrate that it was not only pleasant topics that attracted the pupils' attention in foreign language teaching materials but unpleasant ones, too.

Besides bringing up topics that focus on teenagers, the ninth-grade pupils also suggested that an ideal EFL textbook should appeal to their individual interests. The pupils' perception of what constitutes an individually appealing textbook varied, however, a lot. Some suggested that to be truly interesting, an ideal textbook should discuss topics based on fact, for example, war, famine, politics, economy, nature, and world history, whereas others favoured fictional texts such as imaginary stories, jokes, and comic strips. The most common explanations for favouring fact over fiction, or vice versa, were that factual texts were useful and educational to read whereas fictional texts were more exciting and fun.

There were also pupils who considered the secret of textbook appeal to be the integration of old and new information. Integration of, for example, history, geography, literature, films, music, sports, and different pastimes with the language learning syllabus was seen as beneficial. The pupils suggested that should the EFL dream textbook include topics that were familiar to foreign language learners from other school subjects or from their free time, it would help them learn better at school. The inclusion of unfamiliar topics, such as, the life of the young in other countries and the target language culture in the EFL dream textbook was, in turn, suggested to increase learners' general knowledge of inter-cultural topics.

In addition, there were pupils who favoured optional texts or texts with a communicative value. They proposed that in order to appeal to everybody's individual interests, an EFL textbook should provide language learners with a variety of texts from which they could choose the ones in which they were truly interested. By being able to read texts that appealed to their interests, learners would be able to learn English more efficiently and be more willing to communicate in language lessons in foreign language. As a result, the learners would learn to understand each other's opinions better, they would learn how to make an initiative in foreign language, and gradually become better public speakers.

The last question in the two-part written questionnaire asked the Finnish comprehensive school pupils to design a short piece of text on a topic of their own choice in their individual EFL dream textbook. As might have been expected, the pupils based their texts on topics they had mentioned earlier in the written questionnaire, such as, friendship, free time, music, alcohol and drugs, relations and racial tolerance between different nationalities, nature, economy, and suspense. The designs reflected the pupils' personal interests and illustrated the features that Finnish comprehensive school pupils value in an EFL textbook and would include in their own dream textbooks.

To sum up, the findings of the present study support to a great extent the findings of earlier empirical studies conducted by Cherchalli (1988), O'Sullivan (1991), and Apelt (1996), referred to in chapter 4. In their studies, Cherchalli (1988:235-236), O'Sullivan (1991: 13), and Apelt (1996:83) found out that foreign language learners favoured language teaching materials for their realism. Learners, mostly teenagers, were interested in texts that were meaningful, practical and discussed everyday situations and the experiences of the young. Reading such texts seemed to help them relate to the texts better, integrate new information in foreign language with their already existing knowledge of the world, and apply the texts better in classroom conversations.

Similarly to the Finnish pupils, the language learners taking part in the Algerian, English, and German studies had variable views of the topics in their language teaching materials. Cherchalli (1988:272-273, 373, 516) found out, among other things, that Algerian learners' opinions differed on whether their EFL textbook should discuss more traditional (Algerian) or more modern

(British) topics and whether the tone with which different topics were dealt in the book should be more serious or more entertaining. O'Sullivan (1991:12), in turn, noticed that language learners in England had differing views of how much information a foreign language textbook should include on the target language community and its lifestyle. In Germany, Apelt (1996:83) found out that although language learners had quite a unanimous taste in humorous texts, that is, they preferred them to texts with factual information only, as well as in apolitical and unhistorical texts, they did not fully agree on other topics that foreign language texts should discuss to be considered interesting. This was particularly true with female and male learners. Whereas the male participants of Apelt's study were most interested in topics such as computers/technique, inventions, sports, and history, the female participants preferred topics such as relationships, animals/pets, music, and family matters.

Lastly, the studies conducted by O'Sullivan (1991: 13) and Apelt (1996: 82, 84) revealed that a large number of foreign language learners considered the presentation of the target language community and its culture to be perhaps the most popular and motivating of all features in language teaching materials. In the present study, the Finnish pupils expressed their interest in global/ intercultural topics as well but not to the same extent as the English and German learners in their particular studies. For the Finnish pupils, local / Finnish topics were very important, too.

9 CONCLUSION

The present study set out to examine the views of Finnish comprehensive school pupils of EFL textbooks. The subject was first approached from the viewpoint of the national language policy, that is, POPS (1994), then from the viewpoint of experts on education and material designers, and lastly from the viewpoint of language learners themselves. Earlier empirical studies on foreign language learners and their views of language teaching materials were also discussed before the data collected for the present study were analysed.

The objective of the study was to be as pupil-centred, descriptive, and qualitative as possible. Due to the shortage of supporting Finnish literature and qualitative empirical studies on EFL textbooks, it was necessary for me to design my own data collection and analysis methods. As a researcher, I did my best with these methods to attain my objective and was able to find answers to my research problems. I found out that there were four features, two desirable and two undesirable, that had an affect on how favourably Finnish comprehensive school pupils viewed the EFL textbook currently in their use. The desirable features were 'Discussing everyday life and the immediate surroundings of the young' and 'Meeting the needs of the language learners' and the undesirable features were 'Overemphasising the teenage viewpoint' and 'Including unnecessary and uninteresting texts and topics' (see section 8.1). In addition, I discovered that there were three features that Finnish pupils considered desirable in an ideal EFL textbook, those being 'Focusing on the young and their life style today', 'Appealing to individual interests', and 'Encouraging communication in the target language' (see section 8.2).

As the Finnish comprehensive school pupils, that is, the subjects of this study were not randomly selected and their number was small and their background fairly homogenous (they were classmates and knew each other beforehand), the findings of this study are context specific. Therefore, they cannot and should not be generalised. Rather than regard the present study as an approach to attain the objective truth on Finnish pupils' views of EFL teaching materials, it should be regarded as an initial step towards more descriptive and pupil-centred textbook analysis tradition in Finland. At the moment, there is a shortage of similar studies in the country.

In the future, it would be interesting to conduct studies on EFL textbooks with pupils who use different textbook series in their English lessons and whose background is more heterogenous. In addition, other pupils-centred methods could be used in data collection, for example, learner diaries. Pupils could write about their thoughts on EFL textbooks, either currently in use or ideal textbooks, in their own words in their individual learner diaries. As they would have the decision of what to write or not to write about regarding EFL textbooks, the data collection would be less rigid and more pupil-centred than, for example, in the present study. Now, all the questions presented to the pupils in the individual interviews and in the two-part questionnaire were designed by the researcher.

Surprisingly, the most significant finding of the present study concerns the Finnish comprehensive school pupils' overall expectations concerning an EFL textbook. Throughout the data collection, it became apparent that many of the pupils had difficulties in explaining and exemplifying their views of *Headlines* or of their ideal textbook. In the individual interviews, several pupils claimed that they did not have any expectations of *Headlines* and that they had never even deliberated what it was in *Headlines* that made it desirable or undesirable. This was because they had not considered *Headlines* from any other viewpoint than that of a source of the target language. Many associated the contents of the textbook often with, for example, vocabulary, songs, and illustrations in the book. Some pupils even mentioned grammar and listening and reading comprehension when discussing the contents of *Headlines*, even though such activities were included in a separate activity book. In summary, many considered *Headlines* merely a collection of entities or 'tools' with which they could study English rather than a collection of reading materials on different topics written in English. As a result, it was difficult for them to comprehend that the texts and the topics in *Headlines* could have other functions as well besides teach the target language.

The data collected from the two-part written questionnaire support this finding. Although the comprehensive school pupils had every opportunity to set new criteria for EFL textbooks and design the EFL textbook of their dreams, many found it hard to deviate from the traditional criteria and be creative in their textbook designs. In addition, the question that I considered the

most interesting in the questionnaire and had high hopes for proved to be the most difficult one for the pupils to answer. The question was “Why?” (inquiring the pupils’ motives for answering in a certain way). Many left the question unanswered.

It would be worth studying in a few years, whether Finnish comprehensive school pupils have become more analytical and critical as foreign language learners towards EFL textbooks and if teachers encourage them to examine the materials more. According to the current National framework curriculum (POPS 2004: 8, 18) pupils need to be encouraged in taking responsibility for their own learning process and their understanding of the media’s position and importance, that is, their media skills need to be improved in general education. Pupils must also be provided opportunities to compare, contrast, and consider different sources of information and to use media in a meaningful way. As the objectives of the current POPS (2004) are slightly different from those of the previous POPS (1994), pupils’ views of EFL textbooks may have changed as well. Further studies are also needed to find out if teachers are aware of their pupils’ expectations as regards to the contents of EFL textbooks and if they encourage pupils to take part in designing their own teaching materials. It is, after all, pupils who are the primary users of foreign language teaching materials in Finnish comprehensive schools. Should it not be them, then, who take actively part in the designing and evaluation of these language teaching materials, too?

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Appendix 1. The schedule of the individual interview

Oppilaan nimi: _____

1. Pidätkö tekstikirjastasi? Miksi / miksi et?
2. Mistä aihealueista (teemoista) olet pitänyt yhdeksännen luokan aikana eniten? Miksi?
3. Mistä aihealueista (teemoista) olet pitänyt yhdeksännen luokan aikana vähiten? Miksi?
4. Mistä (perus)tekstikappaleista olet pitänyt yhdeksännen luokan aikana eniten? Miksi?
5. Mistä (perus)tekstikappaleista olet pitänyt yhdeksännen luokan aikana vähiten? Miksi?
6. Mitä mieltä olet ollut erityyppisistä teksteistä? Onko niitä ollut monipuolisesti? Mistä olet pitänyt eniten? Mistä olet pitänyt vähiten? Onko jotain ollut liikaa? Onko jotain jäänyt puuttumaan?
7. Mitä mieltä olet ollut tekstikappaleiden pituudesta? Oletko ollut niihin tyytyväinen? Miksi/miksi et?
8. Onko tekstikirja ollut aihealueiltaan ja tekstisisällöltään sinulle muilta koulutunneilta tai koulun ulkopuolelta tuttua asiaa/uutta asiaa? Miten? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
9. Oletko pitänyt kirjassasi todellisuuteen perustuvista aiheista? Entä mielikuvitukseen perustuvista aiheista? Miksi? Onko tämä sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
10. Onko tekstikirja ollut mielestäsi aihealueiltaan ja tekstisisällöltään ajankohtainen sinun kannaltasi? Entä yleisellä tasolla? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
11. Onko mielestäsi olemassa jotain kestoaiheita, joita kirjassa voisi esiintyä ilman, että kirjasta tulisi 'vanhanaikainen'? Onko kirjassa sellaisia?
12. Onko tekstikirja ollut mielestäsi aihealueiltaan ja tekstisisällöltään paikallinen? Entä onko se ollut maailmanlaajuinen? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?

13. Ovatko tekstikirjan aihealueet ja tekstisisällöt olleet sellaisia, että olet voinut hyödyntää niitä muiden koulussa opetettavien aineiden tunneilla? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
14. Onko tekstikirja ollut aihealueiltaan ja tekstisisällöltään sellainen, että se olisi herättänyt oppilaiden kesken keskustelua englannin tunneilla? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
15. Onko tekstikirja ollut mielestäsi aihealueiltaan ja tekstisisällöltään sellainen, että olet voinut hyödyntää tietojasi myös koulun ulkopuolella? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
16. Onko tekstikirja tarjonnut sinulle tekstisisällöltään tarpeeksi valinnan varaa? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?
17. Oletko pystynyt eläytymään kirjan tapahtumiin ja henkilöihin (toisin sanoen tuntemaan yhteenkuuluvuutta niiden kanssa)? Miten (osaatko antaa esimerkkejä)? Onko se sinulle tärkeää? Miksi/miksi ei?

Appendix 2. The two-part written questionnaire

Hyvä oppilas,

Tämä kysely on osa tutkielmaa, jossa selvitetään peruskoulun yhdeksännen luokan oppilaiden mielipiteitä siitä, millainen olisi heidän unelmiensa englannin kielen tekstikirja.

Pyydän Sinua ystävällisesti vastaamaan **omin sanoin** seuraavilla sivuilla oleviin kysymyksiin. Vastaathan huolellisesti, sillä vastauksesi ovat tärkeitä tutkielman onnistumisen kannalta.

Vastauksesi ovat luottamuksellisia eli nimeäsi ei tulla käyttämään kun tutkielman tuloksista raportoidaan.

Mikäli Sinulla on kyselylomakkeen täyttämiseen liittyviä kysymyksiä, vastaan mielelläni kysymyksiisi.

Kysely tulee Jyväskylän yliopiston englannin laitokselle tekemääni Pro Gradu -tutkielmaa varten.

Suuri kiitos jo etukäteen vaivannäöstäsi!

Niina Korpela

Oppilaskohtaisia tietoja (Kysymyksissä kaksi ja neljä ympyröi oikea vaihtoehto)

1. Oppilaan nimi

2. Ikä 14 vuotta 15 vuotta 16 vuotta

3. Kuinka monta vuotta olet opiskellut englantia vieraana kielenä? _____ vuotta

4. Englannin numerosi viimeisessä todistuksessasi 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Pidätkö englannin kielen opiskelusta?

A. En, koska _____

B. Kyllä, koska _____

6. Pidätkö englannin kielestä yleensä?

A. En, koska _____

B. Kyllä, koska _____

7. Käytätkö vapaa-ajallasi englannin kieltä?

A. En

B. Kyllä, _____

3. A. Käsittelisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjassa aiheita, jotka ovat ikäisillesi oppilaille *uusia* (toisin sanoen oppilailla ei ole aiheista vielä kovin paljon / yhtään tietoa)?
- B. Entä käsittelisitkö kirjassasi aiheita, jotka ovat ikäisillesi oppilaille jo *tuttuja* muilta koulutunneilta tai koulun ulkopuolelta?
- C. Vai käsittelisitkö *sekä 'uusia' että 'tuttuja'* aiheita (sekä A että B)? Kuinka paljon 'uusia' aiheita ja kuinka paljon 'tuttuja' aiheita sisällyttäisit tekstikirjaasi?
- ❖ Miksi käsittelisit juuri tällaisia aiheita? Anna esimerkkejä uusista / tutuista aiheista, joita käsittelisit kirjassasi.

4. A. Käsittelisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjassa aiheita, jotka perustuvat *todellisuuteen* (faktatekstit)?
- B. Entä käsittelisitkö kirjassasi aiheita, jotka perustuvat *mielikuvitukseen* (fiktio-tekstit)?
- C. Vai käsittelisitkö *sekä todellisuuteen että mielikuvitukseen perustuvia* tekstejä (sekä A että B)? Kuinka paljon todellisuuteen perustuvia ja kuinka paljon mielikuvitukseen perustuvia aiheita sisällyttäisit kirjaasi?
- ❖ Miksi valitsisit juuri tällaisia aiheita? Anna esimerkkejä todellisuuteen perustuvista / mielikuvitukseen perustuvista aiheista, joita käsittelisit kirjassasi.

5. A. Käsittelisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjassa aiheita, jotka ovat *ajankohtaisia sinulle itsellesi ja nuorille yleensä*?
- B. Entä käsittelisitkö aiheita, jotka ovat *ajankohtaisia koko maailmalle ja kaiken ikäisille ihmisille*?
- C. Vai käsittelisitkö kirjassasi aiheita, jotka ovat *ajankohtaisia niin sinulle kuin muillekin ihmisille* (sekä A että B)? Kuinka paljon nuorille ajankohtaisia aiheita ja kuinka paljon kaiken ikäisille ajankohtaisia aiheita sisällyttäisit tekstikirjaasi?
- D. Vai käsittelisitkö ajankohtaisia aiheita ollenkaan? Käsittelisitkö ainoastaan (kaukana) menneisyydessä tapahtuneita aiheita?
- ❖ Miksi käsittelisit juuri tällaisia aiheita? Anna esimerkkejä ajankohtaisista aiheista, joita käsittelisit kirjassasi.

6. A. Käsittelisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjassa aiheita, jotka ovat *paikallisia* (Suomi, suomalaiset)?
- B. Entä käsittelisitkö aiheita, jotka *koskettavat koko maailmaa* sekä kaikkia maapallon asukkaita ja maita?
- C. Vai käsittelisitkö *sekä paikallisia että koko maailmaa koskevia aiheita* (sekä A että B)? Kuinka paljon paikallisia aiheita ja kuinka paljon maailmanlaajuisia aiheita sisällyttäisit tekstikirjaasi?
- ❖ Miksi käsittelisit juuri tällaisia aiheita? Anna esimerkkejä paikallisista / maailmanlaajuisista aiheista, joita käsittelisit kirjassasi.

9. Käsittelisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjassa aiheita, joista olisi sinulle *arkielämässäsi hyötyä* (toisin sanoen aiheita, joiden tietämystä voisit hyödyntää myös koulun ulkopuolella)?

- ❖ Jos vastaat Ei, kerro miksi et.
- ❖ Jos vastaat Kyllä, kerro miksi ja kerro lisäksi minkälaisia aiheita nämä olisivat.

10. A. Tekisitkö unelmiesi tekstikirjasta sellaisen, että se tarjoaisi oppilaille *vaihtoehtoisia tekstikappaleita* luettavaksi (toisin sanoen oppilaat voisivat valita mitä tekstejä he haluaisivat lukea)?

B. Vai tekisitkö tekstikirjastasi sellaisen, että se sisältäisi vain peruskappaleita, jotka *kaikki oppilaat lukisivat*?

C. Vai sisällyttäisitkö tekstikirjaasi *sekä vaihtoehtoisia tekstikappaleita että yhdessä luettavia tekstikappaleita*? Kuinka paljon vaihtoehtoisia tekstikappaleita ja kuinka paljon kaikille yhteisiä peruskappaleita sisällyttäisit tekstikirjaasi?

- ❖ Miksi tekisit juuri tällaisia tekstikappaleita? Kuinka pitkiä nämä tekstikappaleet olisivat?

KERUUKERTA 2: Unelmien tekstikirjan aihealueet ja tekstikappaleet
Oppilaan nimi _____

Kuvittele, että olisit englannin kielen tekstikirjan tekijä. Millaisen tekstikirjan tekisit ikäisillesi oppilaille? Vastaa *omin sanoin* kysymyksiin 1-3.

13. Millaisia *aihealueita (teemoja)* käsittelisit unelmiesi tekstikirjassa?

Aihealueita ovat

esimerkiksi musiikki, tietotekniikka, luonto ja ystävyys. Mainitse vähintään viisi sinua kiinnostavaa aihealuetta..

Miksi valitsisit juuri nämä aihealueet?

14. Minkä *tyyppisiä tekstejä* sisällyttäisit unelmiesi tekstikirjaan? Erityyppisiä tekstejä ovat muun muassa sanomalehtiartikkelit, runot, sadut, vitsit ja reseptit. Mainitse tekstityyppejä, jotka kiinnostavat sinua.

Miksi valitsisit juuri nämä tekstityypit?

15. Valitse nyt vähintään yksi edellä mainitsemistasi aihealueista (teemoista) ja tekstityypeistä ja kerro millaisen tekstikappaleen tekisit unelmiesi tekstikirjaan. Toisin sanoen **suunnittele unelmiesi tekstikirjaan yksi tekstikappale jostain aihealueesta**. Esimerkiksi aihealueesta *ystävät* voisi tehdä tekstikappaleen, jossa olisi ystävänpäiväaiheisia runoja, mietelauseita ja pieni haastattelu, jossa kaksi kaveria kertoo ystävyystään ja siitä, millaisia asioita he ovat yhdessä kokeneet.

Appendix 3. A transcript example

Oppilas M5

- 001 I: elikä tota (2) ihan ensimmäiseksi mä kysyisin sulta semmosta asiaa että mitä
002 sä oot tykänny tosta
- 003 M5: täst kirjasta
- 004 I: **kirjasta**
- 005 M5: joo no (1) mun mielest se on (1) tota yllättävän hyvä, ehkä sanasto vois
006 olla, hiukan laajempi, se on kyl aika laaja jo nytteki
- 007 I: joo
- 008 M5: mut toi tota (1) jotkut siin on niinku siin on noit kappaleita, ne kappaleet 009
on sellai (1) et siihen niinku kuuluu
- 010 useampi eri asia siihe yhtee kappaleeseen nii se on ehkä vähä sellai ehkä
011 sekava tai sellane (2) joo (1) muuten se on niinku (1) **iha hyvä**
- 012 I: joo (2) no sitte tota (1) tuolla kirjan alussa on tällönen sisällysluettelo
013 missä näky että tää kirja jakautuu eri kursseihin
- 014 M5: joo
- 015 I: kutos kurssi, seiska ja sitte vielä kasikurssi tässä vielä ysiluokalla (1) ja nää
016 kurssit jakautuu sitte tällöisiin
017 [kappalekohtaisiin]
- 018 M5: [mmm]
- 019 I: aihealueisiin missä on eri teemat elikä tässä on ihmiset ja
020 [paikat]
- 021 M5: [joo]
- 022 I: ja sitte on nää (1) tota nuorisotrendit ja niin edellespäin niin tota (2) mitä sä
023 oot tykänny näistä, aihealueista
- 024 M5: no, ne niinku tota, on ehkä **kiinnostavia** sit tota, just mun ikästen mielestä
025 varmaa ja, toi tota ehkä ne on vähä sellasii, jotkut kappaleet on vähä sellasii
026 teesken (1) **teeskenneltyjä** tai sellasia, niinku ettei ne välttämättä pidä
027 paikkansa, mut ihan hyvin siin sit tulee jossain niinkun ihan yleistietoa ja
028 sellastakin niis kappaleis
- 029 I: joo (2) osaatsä antaa jotain esimerkkejä sä voit vaikka kattoo sitä kirjaa
030 niin, jotain semmosia kappaleita mitä sä pidät teeskenneltyinä niin, mikä on
031 sun mielestä
032 [ollu]
- 033 M5: [öäää]
- 034 I: ei aitoja
- 035 M5: missäköhän se yks oli (selaa kirjaa) (2) hmm (2) ei toi (7) hmm (1) voi olla
036 et se ei nytte hyppää silmille *
- 037 I: muistatsä mihin se liittyy
- 038 M5: (1) äää no, yleensäki tääki on tällänen tää (2) tää *rock style* tai tää tässä nyt
039 kerrotaan tota, niinku, noist kaikista aikakau tai niinku viiskyt kuuskyt ja
040 näist luvuilta niin niin tota, siin on ehkä niinku, aika kärjistetysti kerrottu tää
041 juttu ja, sillee
- 042 I: joo
- 043 M5: mut, mut tää niinku iha, hyvä kirja on siinä mieles on tää, mejän
044 saksan kirja on tosi huono siin ei oo sanastoo paljon mitää ja (1) sit siin on
045 ne kappaleetki, vähän sellasia ihan outoja kielioppiiki puuttuu siit kokonaan
046 mut tää on kyl siin mieles ihan hyvä (1) et tota, sanasto aik, tai että tai tää on
047 tosi laaja mut tietty se vähä laajempi viel vois olla ku ei sielt aina kaikkii
048 sanoja löydä
- 049 I: joo (köhii) onks tossa sitte ollu jotain semmosta kappaletta mistä sä oot
050 tykänny kaikista eniten
- 051 M5: jaa
- 052 I: ysiluokan aikana, te ootte kuitenkin aika monta kappaletta käyny jo onks

Appendix 4. Pupils' general impression on *Headlines*

"Do you like your textbook?"	"Why?" / "Why not?"
"yeah, I have liked it yeah" M1	<p>" I think this textbook has been of very, very high quality and it has many, many things in it, starting from the listening comprehensions and well, I've considered it, a sufficient book for comprehensive school" M1</p> <p>"such new things are discussed in it things that I've never even known about, so, they're quite interesting" M1</p>
"I guess it's ok for an English textbook" M2	<p>"well it has sort of (1) at least the stories in it are better than ordinary pieces of text (1) there are some unnecessary pieces of text there as well" M2</p> <p>"well there are all these things (skims the book) (1) there are like so many stories here" M2</p>
"well I think it's been good" M3	<p>"I can't think of anything that's wrong with it" M3</p> <p>"well for one thing it has a good vocabulary" M3</p>
"it's like good (1) all kinds of things" M4	<p>"there are such texts too that are on tape or something" M4</p> <p>"and you can listen to them (2) and repeat" M4</p>
"it's been like ok" M5	<p>"well (5) I think some of them chapters, but not all, (2) it has like (3) some nice texts (2) like in those chapters (2) that's all I know" M5</p>
"yeah well (1) I think it's (1) well surprisingly good" M6	<p>"it has like those units, those units are like (1) like there are several chapters in one unit all belonging to that one unit so it's a bit like confusing and stuff (2) yeah (1) otherwise it's like (1) quite good" M6</p>
"well I dunno, it's quite good" M7	<p>"this is, this is colourful" M7</p>
" I dunno , it's been ok I guess but it would be better if these, were designed for the young, if there were more interesting stories, you'd be bothered to read them and (1) stuff" M8	<p>"I think some of these stories are quite boring, I'm not bothered to read them in lessons or anything" M8</p>
"I think it's been quite ok" M9	<p>"well (1) its been good that (2) it has had like (2) good things in it" M9</p>
"well I think it's like nice" F1	<p>"it's like (1) kinda nice to have these different sections some of them you just listen to, you don't need to read them all (1) like there's something else to do as well (2) it's kinda nice" F1</p>
"well I think it's been like a good book and stuff, but maybe it's a bit confusing too " F2	<p>"it has like kinda many sides to it, at least the texts that we have read those <i>study</i> texts (1) and well there are kinda, I think that the vocabulary is quite large, anyway" F2</p> <p>"like it's kinda, although it, is kinda colourful and, maybe confusing but I've managed to use with it so it hasn't like (1) been a problem for me or anything" F2</p>

“well, there are some nice stories there” F3	-
“yeah, it’s kinda nice” F4	“interesting stories, at least some of them” F4
“well it’s like, like that” F5	“like it’s not very boring like it varies a lot and * like that, well not very boring to read, I guess it’s, nice” F5
“well, I dunno, this is awfully big (laughter) “ F6 “it’s ok” F6	“I’m never bothered to read it (1) it’s like ok like it has the most important vocabulary there, in the margin” F6
“I think this is like the best that I’ve seen in comprehensive school I’ve had a different book nearly every year” F7	“like this [is like] the best this has all the different like, there’s basic information in this book...” F7 “like if there’s like a story that goes on and the fictional characters just go somewhere and something like that whereas this has like, this has things about real life and stuff” F7 “and you learn things and stuff” F7
“well some of them have been kinda nice, some chapters but other have been like, I haven’t been bothered to read them” F8	“and little boring and, I like stories that are fact, fact based and (1) stuff” F8 “yeah (1) and in my opinion there haven’t been any of those here, there have been more like fairy tales here” F8

Appendix 5. Translations of sample views of *Headlines*

(1)

145 F6: **yeah well** compared with some earlier comprehensive school textbooks, when
 146 there was, more like, some, some weird, cartoon character and like, so they are like
 147 more for pupils our age
 148 I: (1) yeah, and earlier comprehensive school books didn't have topics on ...
 149 F6: no they always discussed some, like a cat (laughter) or something
 150 I: (laughter) oh, well right (1) can you think of a text in the book
 151 that would be based on a current topic
 152 F6: (1) well the *parent trouble*...
 153 I: yeah
 154 F6: but they're not all that good

(2)

127 F6: (1) well maybe like, in your own life you've been able to, like what is it called
 128 the *parent trouble*
 129 I: yeah
 130 F6: like in it, like (1) and (1) I think they're the best and like
 131 if you compare them to, like some fairy tales that there are in the book
 132 I: (1) yeah, is it kinda the **experience**
 133 F6: mmm
 134 I: you kinda know about the topic
 135 F6: yeah

(3)

139 I: (3) well, what do you think has the book (1) been current (1) like, if
 140 you consider (1) current for **the young** so does it discuss like topics
 141 which are current for **the young** (2) or topics that are current like
 142 **for everybody**, so that it discusses current matters
 143 M4: (2) well you might say that the thing about **parent** troubles is
 144 I: mmm
 145 M4: it also discusses (1) what it's like in other families besides
 146 your own
 147 I: yeah (2) and it's like current
 148 M4: yeah (1) like up-to-date

(4)

473 M1: well like (laughter) yeah we have, we've kinda had those there hasn't been that
 474 much **conversation** about these in the classroom but now that we've had these, for
 475 example this *parent trouble*
 476 I: yeah
 477 M1: where the parents and the children are against each other so that has created
 478 conversation, it's like because it's familiar to the young so it has created then ...
 479 I: (1) everyone has experiences
 480 M1: yeah, and especially if you say, it doesn't necessarily go like that
 481 that, for example we have clear rules at home or something like that, so
 482 just like, like that has created conversation but other topics we haven't
 483 really, when they're not that close to the young
 484 but (1) they're interesting all right but, so it doesn't mean they're not interesting
 485 (2) yeah
 486 I: have you talked about it in **finnish** or
 487 M1: eerr, well we have, like we have talked in finnish and then like,
 488 we have, well we have mostly talked about them in english
 489 and (1) A (refers to the teacher) she like asks us in english
 490 that *what's your opinion about this* or something like that (1)

491 so (1) they're like, it's good to go through them in english so you learn
 492 like to speak in public (laughter) [and like that]

(5)

493 F3: no I haven't (1) I haven't really noticed but maybe there, in
 494 *parent trouble*
 495 I: yeah
 496 F3: where there's something about the curfews and
 497 I: (1) right
 498 F3: *
 499 I: (2) did you talk about it in finnish or in english
 500 F3: (3) * in english (1) but we don't really talk about them (2) just
 501 read the text

(6)

322 M1:(1) mmm, yeah, well (3) well, of course this that I already like
 323 mentioned, this *parent trouble* it's like always like current
 324 you said it too that (skims the book)
 325 I: (2) that the young and
 326 [parents]
 327 M1:[the young]
 328 and yeah, and well (2) and and (2) and of course this chapter *troublemakers*
 329 well this is well, sort of a topic that is well kind of
 330 current there is quite a lot of bullying at school nowadays
 331 so, that one too

(7)

148 F7: well, like if you like think that for example this is like about a boy that
 149 like died of drugs (*Find Out* –text about River
 150 Phoenix) so at least I know many I'm aware that like many of my friends
 151 have used sometimes
 152 I: yeah
 153 F7: just like these and then life, like things about the young that are included here
 154 they are like (2) and things like there was a chapter here somewhere
 155 about what happens when you turn eighteen and stuff
 156 about responsibilities and stuff it's like things you know of and things that are
 157 like happening to you and stuff

(8)

018 I: so, what are your thoughts about these
 019 **topics** that the textbook writers have included in the book (2) have they been
 020 interesting
 021 F4: (1) yeah they have (2) well, those, yeah (2) at least I remember well the thing we
 022 had last time that, the parenting course...
 023 I: yeah
 024 F4: when it discussed, at least I didn't know, I didn't know that such things exist

(9)

267 I: well, have you been able to take advantage of the topics discussed in this book
 268 and use them in other lessons like when you have gone to a biology or geography or
 269 civics lesson and then you have noticed that oh this is the same thing that was
 270 discussed in the English book already, this is the same thing
 271 M9: (8) I have sometimes, like noticed, like we have just discussed it in
 272 english
 273 I: yeah

274 M9: like, the things we have just gone through, we're going through
 275 right now in other subjects
 276 I: yeah, right
 277 M9: then I have noticed that, we have discussed the same thing in some other lesson
 278 the same thing that is discussed here
 279 I: yeah (2) can you remember more specifically of an example (1) of a topic
 280 that you would have noticed overlaps a bit, between subjects
 281 the same thing but, from a slightly different viewpoint or something
 282 M9: (2) I can't remember anything

(10)

403 I: have there been any such topics in the **book** that you have like
 404 been able to take advantage of in **other** school subjects (1) that they would have
 405 been **here** first and then you would have noticed in some other **
 406 M1: well yeah, well they (2) what page were they on, where all the
 407 *new zealand* and stuff were (skims the book),
 408 [where were they]
 409 I: [all the countries]
 410 M1: countries, yeah, well those I thought, I read at some point and then we
 411 discussed them for example, was it, I think it was in geography lesson (1)
 412 lesson some of these topics, like countries and stuff, so then I
 413 remembered that yeah the official name of australia is *the commonwelth*
 414 *of australia*
 415 [and]
 416 I: [yeah]
 417 M1: things like that so those I remembered really well...
 418 I: yeah
 419 M1: things like if we have to write a text for geography lesson, something like
 420 facts about australia so when you have already read about them here
 421 then you kinda already know that...
 422 I: right
 423 M1: so it's only a good thing if there are some, some, kinda like
 424 dictionary like texts but (1) but but as long as there are not too **many**
 425 of them there then you actually read them

(11)

326 I: what about **the other way** so that the topic was first discussed in some other lesson
 327 and then here (1) and then you have noticed that this is familiar
 328 this is easier to understand
 329 F1: (2) mmm, well not that I can recall but like, here for example
 330 well there's something here, like some confirmation thing or something so,
 331 everybody knows it beforehand
 332 I: mmm
 333 F1: when you have been on a confirmation camp in the summer so
 334 I: mmm
 335 F1: well like it's easier to understand it, like to comprehend this, when
 336 you know about it beforehand or

(12)

230 I: yeah (2) has the (cough) the english textbook discussed things like (1)
 231 things and topics that you have been able to take advantage of later (1)
 232 in some other school subjects for example so that a topic is discussed here first
 233 and, then in some other lesson you have noticed that this is the same
 234 topic that you had in english lesson and then it has kinda (1) been here already
 235 and it has supported
 236 M6: err (2) well in some subjects, I think it's been just like that for example in history
 237 lessons and so (3) but you don't stop to think about where it was before in

238 in this book
 239 I: (1) yeah so you don't remember what part of the book it was
 240 M6: yeah exactly
 241 I: yeah (2) do you think it's a good thing that it's sort of the same
 242 [in two]
 243 M6: [yeah]
 244 I: school subjects the same thing
 245 M6: yeah like well, here it was like if something is unclear to you and like
 246 you start to think that how did it go it can't be like that
 247 so then for example in history or civics lesson well,
 248 then it's like, oh **yeah** it was like that or something so that it like completes the story
 249 I: mmm
 250 M6: (1) and if you have thought about it then of course it helps in the civics or history
 251 lesson that you're prepared, we don't have history anymore, the course finished

(13)

117 I: (3) has the book then in your opinion (2) combined well
 118 old and new (1) that there's something new there,
 119 something you haven't known about before (1) and you have learnt about it
 120 in the book, and then like old things that would have been familiar to you
 121 from your free time or then from other school subjects
 122 F2: mmm, well in fact yes, there have been like (1) just like, what's good
 123 about this is that there's no **one story** here, that there are like factual stories here
 124 because this like (2) **discusses**, many things like
 125 like for example like geography stories that you already know about, but like
 126 then again there are like new things here (skims the book) (1) for example
 127 like this twenty-two which is a comic strip about, err cesar and it's like you,
 128 like **learn** history by reading it, like where they are
 129 I: (2) [mmm]
 130 F2: [it revises]
 131 I: (1) [*]
 132 F2: [yeah]
 133 I: do you think it's a good thing for a pupil if things like overlap a bit
 134 like you learn
 135 [some things]
 136 F2: [yes]
 137 because then in the future you like probably **have** to learn something in **english**
 138 and not just like read something like a novel so it's good that
 139 there's some, some **information** in english, and

(14)

139 I: about rites then (2) do you think, have you got any opinion on which
 140 you prefer or does it matter, what's in the book
 141 whether they're, tales and fantasy or if they're factual
 142 F1: mmm well, it's kinda like, nice to read those fantasy, stories sometimes too
 143 I: yeah
 144 F1: but, it's kinda good that there are those (1) factual stories sometimes and I think
 145 there are enough of both here, they like take turns, whereas it would be
 146 quite boring if there were factual stories only in the book, then it would be
 147 kinda dry
 148 I: yeah
 149 F1: (1) but then again if there were only fantasy stories there it would feel like
 150 a book of fairy tales
 151 I: yeah
 152 F1: so it's like good to have them both

(15)

148 M8: **well**, well it's nicer to read fiction because, they're more like
 149 like fantasy, but fact is better because you kinda learn
 150 at the same time from it

(16)

152 I: well (1) well not that (1) have you thought about the, that, which do you
 153 prefer texts based on what is real, factual based texts,
 154 or then texts that are imaginative or are they both good
 155 M5: probably those factual based because (2) mmm well there's been like
 156 been like something about plays and stuff (3) there was the, the thing about
 157 there was ...
 158 I: the west side story
 159 M5: yeah that's it (1) well yeah well maybe that it's sort of,
 160 educating that (2) well, like I don't know plays that
 161 well and, they're quite good but basic stories are, in my opinion
 162 they're not that (1) useful and (1) well they're ok every once in a while,
 163 I don't mind them
 164 I: (2) do you think it's important that the text is useful
 165 M5: yeah well
 166 [sort of]
 167 I: [like what]
 168 M5: mmm, well that there would be like new things in the book like there have
 169 been in some chapters here that I haven't known of and (2) err, yeah, like I think it
 170 would be quite useful, if like these chapters were, if they discussed like
 171 facts and stuff

(17)

027 F2: I think they have been quite good and like, like there are different topics
 028 there and there are many diff, just like different vocabulary and stuff
 029 I: (2) yeah
 030 F2: and they're like ok like for example in the swedish textbook we have,
 031 like well there's like this **story** (2) but I think
 032 it's like **better** like this that there are like (1) like different
 033 topics (2) you learn stuff, job related vocabulary, and then it's like good, that,
 034 in **the** activity book, where the vocabulary is, well there's always the the
 035 **text** related vocabulary first or the *study* text vocabulary, and then on the second
 036 page, there's kinda special vocabulary for example the job chapter had like
 037 **everything**, like a full page of special vocabulary related with jobs which we have
 038 then* , so it's kinda good, you learn a lot

(18)

155 I: fictional stories, so which have you liked more or
 156 does it matter what kind of stories there are in the book fact or fiction
 157 F7: (1) well I think it's better if they're factual
 158 I: yeah
 159 F7: like, I dunno, well it depends on what the text is about, or what the topic is,
 160 I think it's nicer if it's real, like from real world
 161 I: (2) like, can you tell me what it is that is kinda (1) like
 162 F7: better
 163 I: yeah
 164 F7: I dunno it's like (2) I dunno maybe you sort of connect things with
 165 your own life or you think that, I dunno that maybe,
 166 you kinda relate to things because they're in your own life too
 167 I: (1) does it help then to learn, if there are
 168 [your own...]

169 F7: [yeah] it's like well like more interesting in my opinion

(19)

106 I: and then, you've had this comic strip lately (1) what have you thought
 107 about these
 108 [different types of texts]
 109 M2: [I thought **that** comic strip]
 110 was quite interesting, comp, little different than, it had more like
 111 new words in it and that are less common
 112 I: yeah
 113 M2: it was quite interesting compared with others
 114 I: ok (1) what made it, was it the change or what made it different
 115 M2: it was the **change**
 116 I: [do you often read]
 117 M2: [and then it was]
 118 I: comic strips
 119 [or]
 120 M2: [well not often]
 121 and like well I read them when I was younger but it's more interesting in my
 122 opinion to read a comic strip than something like, a brief story
 123 like (4) or I mean it's better to read stories than not to read anything but they're not
 124 like well designed, like they're (2) they can still be
 125 used

(20)

100 M1: and well this was, quite, quite a surprise this I have, like I have skimmed this
 101 book and, I have noticed that this, that this was very
 102 interesting this that for a change we had things like, for example this
 103 comic strip and ...
 104 I: do you think there should be more of them
 105 M1: (2) well, I have a feeling that, there are certainly I don't know if
 106 there are as many comic strips here as there are in this *study* text that,
 107 **in the activity book** there are some (1) or maybe there have been some even here
 108 (skims the book), sometimes we have those black and white
 109 comic strips and stuff in the activity book ...
 110 I: those short ones, or are
 111 [they]
 112 M1: [yeah],
 113 well no, no they're not long like this, they're maybe one page long
 114 or
 115 [like that] (skims the book)
 116 I: [like this] (points at Hagar the Horrible on page 175)
 117 M1: yeah like that and, that is just one example (1) and there are not that many
 118 here but, but but, these are quite interesting,
 119 to read sometimes and if they are for example like this, this,
 120 chapter, a topic belonging to this unit then they are certainly, quite
 121 interesting to read for a change and ...

(21)

014 I: (1) mmm can you think of, you can of course look in the book if
 015 you find it by skimming (1) a chapter that in your opinion was
 016 nice to, **read** or that you liked (1) the topic too
 017 F8: (skims the book) (2) well **this** is one (points at *my kind of film*), this
 018 I: yeah
 019 F8: nineteen
 020 I: yeah (1) so you have like liked films as a topic
 021 F8: yeah

022 I: you're interested in them
 023 F8: (1) the text asked for your opinion too
 024 I: (1) yeah
 025 F8: it was nice

(22)

137 I: does it discuss topics that are
 138 like current for ninth-graders
 139 M3: well it has...
 140 I: and for everybody in general
 141 M3: there are some things there (1) this has like, there are
 142 like, pupils my age listen to quite a lot of rap and like (2) it has
 143 quite current information

(23)

084 M6: but (1) hmm (1) yeah, it discusses a lot these, like (1) the **young** or
 085 teenagers in its stories (1) there's a whole unit here called *teenage*
 086 or what was it (1) and then there that we just went through it also discusses
 087 like, the problems between the young and their parents and so, it has been discussed
 088 maybe quite a lot, but then again it's quite a current topic for
 089 us kinda

(24)

023 I: yeah (1) what have you thought about these topics that the textbook writers have
 024 chosen for the book
 025 F1: **well some** of them are quite like interesting but, that,
 026 [now]
 027 I: [can you]
 028 give examples
 029 F1: mmm what characters where there I'll look (2) well this was quite nice, this
 030 love story (unit 16 *love*) and (2) then (skims the book) (3) something like
 031 something about the young and stuff it was interesting

(25)

170 M9: like that but, like, anyway I think that there needs to be humour in it
 171 too, in the text
 172 I: yeah
 173 M9: sort of (1) well (1) weird stuff
 174 I: **ok** (1) what do you think, if a text is, sort of written with humour
 175 and there's something weird in it so, how does it make it, nicer
 176 M9: it makes it like (1) it's much more interesting than, like it has
 177 well, if there's good humour in it then you laugh every once in a while (1)
 178 and so

(26)

430 F1: well I dunno maybe sometimes they seem a bit **artificial** and like they
 431 have tried like yeah the young will really like this but it's, like a bit
 432 artificial and they haven't really come up with
 433 I: (1) can you give any examples, of a chapter that
 434 has seemed artificial to read in the book
 435 F1: mmm
 436 I: (1) that it like shows that it's (1) kinda written by adults and the adults think that
 437 the young will like this
 438 F1: (1) I dunno really (skims the book) (8) I really can't say but
 439 (2) *, it's so difficult when there have been so many chapters even in grade

440 seven so it's really confus...
 441 I: [like]
 442 F1: [* what]
 443 was
 444 [in which book]
 445 I:[what was in which book]
 446 right
 447 F1: mmm (5) I dunno

(27)

182 M6: yeah well, mmm (2) yeah well (2) I think there haven't been at least, now yeah
 183 I can't think of anything that had changed completely (4) yeah but really, that
 184 thing about the young, like, it's forced a bit too much in this book
 185 I: mmm, why do you think they do that
 186 M6: yeah well, probably because we are at that age but that (2) yeah but, I
 187 think there wouldn't need to be that much of it, one chapter would have been enough
 188 well like now it's discussed in nearly every chapter or something like that
 189 (1) the problems between the young and the parents and stuff (2) but on the other
 190 hand, like, it **does make** you think like

(28)

441 M2: I think like it has these stories that are a bit like,
 442 unnecessary like this, they pressure you to make a certain choice (1) some of these
 443 stories, like (skims the book), mmm, this is, some of these to *drink or not to*,
 444 *drink, living at home* these say what to do
 445 I: oh they're unnecessary
 446 M2: well they are not unnecessary they pressure you to a certain direction
 447 I: mmm they have like an opinion that
 448 M2: yeah
 449 I: they express their own opinion
 450 then (1) mmm (1) well have you
 451 [then]
 452 M2: [then one-sidedly]
 453 look I said earlier too, and in the *study* things like these
 454 (points at *parent trouble*) like they are approached from the point of view of
 455 the parents* like this (2)

(29)

257 I: yeah (2) has it been, the book current in your opinion (1) like
 258 current **to us all**, does it discuss things, current things
 259 that like people **your** age are (1) are there topics there that
 260 interest you and are current just for you
 261 M2: well basically they are like current but they're not, in my opinion
 262 this has been written a bit foolishly so that you don't have to view it from
 263 your own viewpoint so much so I can't, be bothered
 264 I: yeah, so the writers are adults ...
 265 M2: yeah (1) like
 266 I: (2) does it show...
 267 M2: yeah, somehow it shows, a bit, that it has (1) been written a bit
 268 one-sidedly but as long as you learn it doesn't matter

(30)

313F1: well, I dunno really since **we don't like really**
 314 think about the **contents** of the texts so much in Finnish as we focus like
 315 on what you learn from it, vocabulary and some grammar, but we don't
 316 focus on the contents really (1) and I don't know if it's even necessary

317 I: (1) you think it's more important to learn the (2) grammar when studying a language
 318 and the vocabulary or
 319 F1: yeah (2) because, a bit, **it's kinda useless** if you start like
 320 me and parents had a fight and like, * like that

(31)

241 I: (1) have you, been able in some way, to take advantage of the things discussed
 242 in the book and, the topics discussed in it in other lessons, like
 243 for example this book would have discussed something first
 244 [history]
 245 F7: [mmm]
 246 it discusses something...
 247 I: and then like in history lesson the same thing ...
 248 F7: no not really, no, I think, well maybe there's something here but not like,
 249 like that they are just like, at least I'm like that if something is taught in history lesson
 250 (1) then it is, like, basically like I have always if
 251 I'm like now I have english and then I switch, and I leave it
 252 in the **english** lesson and there's a difference to history so I don't think like,
 253 they cross

(32)

272 I: yeah (5) mmm (1) in this book are there, have you noticed that the book has
 273 discussed topics like, topics and (1) and, **topics** so that (1) later
 274 you've been sort of able to take advantage of in other (1) lessons
 275 espec for example in history or biology so, geography that you have read
 276 a chapter in **this book** and then when you have gone to history lesson
 277 you have realised, well we just **had** this there, that they kinda
 278 **overlap**
 279 F1: well not in my opinion really, **because**, like somewhere, in my opinion
 280 in other subjects those topics are discussed in a **larger** context, and here it's like
 281 quite restricted

(33)

130 M6: yeah I think this has been quite well designed
 131 I: mmm
 132 M6: really, like books don't usually have so many of these in one
 133 unit *find out* texts and stories like these and they have like, this
 134 *study* and these are kinda maybe, a little (1) like too much (1) like
 135 made pre like (1) like they were forced these (1) *find out* texts
 136 and I don't think these *find out* texts are really necessary and one *study* text
 137 would do well like in other books they have just that chapter, but if like
 138 you don't stop in them that much (1) then they're like (1) ok

(34)

152 F1: so it's good that it has both, **apart from** some things like this that was
 153 (skims the book) (4) something like, like factual stories of like, some
 154 kinda **painter** so they're not that interesting
 155 I: (1) are they here in the *click files* or somewhere
 156 F1: well yes sure somewhere like that (skims the book) (10) well I can't remember
 157 now, anyway, painters are a bit boring, so we haven't
 158 really gone through them that much, maybe listened to that's all
 159 I: (1) yeah
 160 F1: (2) they will do I guess, I dunno but maybe they are a bit unnecessary
 161 there then

(35)

029 I: are they, all the topics are they ok, then
 030 F4: **no**, I thought there was something like, last time, there was this comic strip,
 031 or something...
 032 I: yeah
 033 F4: of something really ancient yeah (1) I think it was really stupid, I wasn't
 034 interested in it at all
 035 I: (2) yeah (2) so it was kinda, it was such an **old** story that
 036 [that it didn't]
 037 F4: [yeah]
 038 I: interest you anymore (1) mmm (1) did it have anything to do with it being
 039 that it was kinda written in the form of a comic strip
 040 F4: (1) well no, but it had such old **text** in it that it was hard to grasp

(36)

012 M8: **I dunno**, it's been quite good but well there could be something,
 013 more for the young, more interesting stories, so that I'd be bothered to read and (1) so
 014 I: right
 015 M8: I think some of these stories are quite boring so I'm not bothered to
 016 study them during lessons or anything
 017 I: can you give me examples of topics that would interest the young then
 018 M8: **well I dunno** all these, that are close to the young or something
 019 like this (2) I dunno
 020 I: yeah, well can you give me examples of, topics that have been
 021 **boring** here (1) what it is, you can skim the book, if it, helps
 022 to refresh your memory so
 023 M8: (skims the book) I think there was something here in the beginning some (4) **like**
 024 **this** like politics (points at *unit 17 study & listen*) or (1) or
 025 animal stories (*unit 17* has a picture of a peacock) or (2) some singers from the fifties
 026 (points at the chapter *death of a beetle*) or (1) like this
 027 I: yeah
 028 M8: and like *west side story* well, not interested

(37)

030 I: (2) yeah (3) can you think of anything that you **wouldn't** have liked
 031 M7: (2) **well yeah there are** some really vapid songs sometimes
 032 I: (3) yeah (1) like for example what for example can you remember, you can skim the
 033 book maybe you'll find there some, like what has made it vapid
 034 M7: (5) well there are sometimes some really weird songs here (skims the book) (3)
 035 but not very often
 036 I: (9) has any of the chapters been like vapid, to go through,
 037 or has it been just the songs that have seemed
 038 M7: (2) **no well there are some** quite boring for example this but (points at *sad*
 039 *notes – the secret diaries of maria mozart*) (2) err (1)
 040 but it's still quite good like all the vocabulary used here that ia not used
 041 elsewhere (2) this is like (2) about, flutes and stuff

(38)

002 I: firstly I'd like to know what your opinion
 003 is on this book on a general level have you liked it, or not
 004 F9: well it has been, like ok, well like, like there hasn't been, like for pupils our
 005 age like, like things that, things have been designed for younger pupils
 006 I: yeah (2) can you what in it has it been sort of, the **topics** or what in it
 007 has made it seem like they're too (1) childish and maybe
 008 F9: well, the topics they are sort of that they don't like interest me (1) they (1) well
 009 sometimes they do but (1) sometimes there are those that don't interest me at all

(39)

163 I: you said they were sort of made for younger pupils

164 F9: yeah, well there are like **some** things here but, well these are kinda boring

165 these are better suited for younger pupils these, although there are those difficult

166 words here but then again, like those texts those topics, they are a bit...

167 I: mmm

168 F9: bit like they really don't, interest me

Appendix 6. Pupils' views of the objectives of an ideal EFL textbook

The objectives of my dream textbook	Why?
"I'd make a textbook that would include many different topics, from history to modern day. The textbook would have many so called 'study' texts that the pupils would have to learn well. The textbook could include fact based texts, but also some fictional texts. There could be some poems as well. In addition I would include more optional texts in the book so that one could choose which texts to read." M1	"This would be my goal because the contents of the textbook should vary and the textbook should 'feed' all pupils." M1
"It would have more fictional texts and they would even be slightly crazy, but there could also be some reality based things as well. It could also have like fantasy stories that would continue, for example, the same story would cover four chapters." M2	- M2
"I'd design a book that would have something interesting for everyone. For example, some like writers, some sports, cars, comic strips and so on." M3	- M3
"To have comprehensible texts and humour." M4	"So that the young would like studying English more." M4
"Extensive, variable, educating, with lots of optional texts. A book with a large vocabulary at the back and an extensive grammar. A book that helps you to develop your English conversation skills. The book would have lots of pictures connected with the topics." M5	"These are the things that help me to improve my English." M5
"Variable, colourful, funny, educating." M6	- M6
"My biggest objective would be to make pupils learn better and make them take an interest in learning English." M7	"I'd include more interesting stories so that pupils would be interested in them and they would really WANT to read them." M7
"I dunno". M8	- M8
"Variable, one that has many different activities (listening comprehension, reading comprehension and so on)." F1	"So that everybody would gain basic language skills." F1
"Like it would be interesting and it would discuss many topics extensively." F2	"Because it's important to make pupils take an interest in learning and they need to like the book → effective & enthusiastic learning." F2
"I'd like to design a variable book. Not too difficult or too easy topics, but new and old topics that would vary." F3	- F3
"I'd like to design an interesting, current, and educating book. I'd include many topics in it that both interest the young and enable learning." F4	"My goal is to make the young like it, so that they would learn." F4
- F5	- F5
"Colourful and thin with little text in it and where the texts and chapters are easy to learn and where there's a vocabulary in each margin." F6	- F6
"I'd like to design a book with	- F7

interesting topics, topics that interest the young." F7	
"I'd like to design a book that the pupils would be bothered to read, for example, it would have factual but interesting texts." F8	"I'd like to design a book like that because I'm not bothered to read the current textbook because I don't think its topics discuss important matters." F8
"To be interesting so that there wouldn't be any tales or boring chapters." F9	"That people would take more interest in them." F9

Appendix 7. Translations of sample views of an ideal EFL textbook

(40)

"Because it is the pupils who need to be interested in the book". (F2)

"I would discuss mostly topics that focus on the young, after all, it is the young that read the book". (F3)

"I think they are the most interesting, whereas topics that are written for adults are not necessarily that interesting". (M2)

(41)

"So that the book would not seem that old fashioned". (M4)

"The young are more interested in today's issues and things related to them than they are in old folk tales". (M7)

"Well it's nicer to read about the young...more interesting because you're at that age". (F9)

"The young are interested in topics that involve people their age". (F1)

"Because people our age like to read about things that may have happened to them and I think those things are more interesting!". (F6)

(42)

"Topics that are current to the young like dating, starting your own life, choosing a profession and so on...and then about things that are less pleasant like drugs and stuff". (F7)

"About the young, dating, sex, hardships, choosing a profession, all things that have to do with the young...". (F7)

"Drugs could be one of the topics." (M4)

"They are more interesting that way...for example the problems of the young/drugs and how dangerous they are!?". (F4)

(43)

"Topics such as, wars, famine, social injustice, relations between nations, UNICEF, NATO and so on". (M1)

"Economy, politics, information technology, social sciences, nature. These are things that interest me the most". (M5)

"The news, art and the wonders of the nature. I chose these because I'm interested in them." (F8)

"History, [...] nature". (F2)

"[...] international matters, hobbies. These are certainly topics in which many young people are interested." (F1)

(44)

"It's more interesting to read about things that are real." (F9)

"Because the young are more interested in them. Fiction is more for children." (F7)

"Reality: Yes. A number of factual texts because they are a good source for general knowledge." (M1)

"Facts are worth discussing because one can learn new things, for example, about history at the same time. They might add to your general knowledge." (M7)

"Mostly facts. Fiction is not that useful in other school subjects or in the future. Topics that are based on facts could be history and civics." (M5)

(45)

"The chapters should have more exciting stories for example *The story of an old castle*." (M2)

"Humorous texts are good. Maybe a few tales that would follow the familiar fairy tale pattern but not like the original story of The little red riding hood. The same tale but with different events." (M2)

"Factual things like for example actors, films... imaginary things such as a made up story of UFOs." (M3)

"Comic strips, jokes, AUTHENTIC newspaper articles in English, stories written by the young, factual texts. Because then pupils would learn to understand different types of texts. And comic strips and jokes, for example, liven up the book." (F1)

"I think "normal texts" are the best but fairy tales, jokes, and recipes do bring colour to the book." (F2)

"Newspaper articles, fairy tales, jokes, and comic strips. Newspaper articles: they are useful, fairy tales: it's nice to read them, jokes: they are funny and you can't get enough of them, comic strips. (M8)

"Fiction based stories are more interesting and fiction improves your imagination." (M7)

(46)

"Both new and old! For example history & geography & literature are something old and still current." (F2)

"C, for example, knowledge about the second world war because it's a familiar topic. In addition, I would include information about music during different times." (M8)

"C. Familiar topics such as things learnt at school and so on. New things would be, for example, world records and so on." (M7)

"New things: Discussing new things improves your English skills. Familiar things: an English book should still have revision especially for pupils who have not quite figured out the things taught in English lessons before." (M1)

"More about things that you know little of but from which you can learn a lot. For example, films, musicians, natural catastrophes, hobbies ..." (F4)

"I would discuss free time and sports, for example, an amusement park, spending time with friends. I would include new topics and some familiar topics, too." (F3)

(47)

"Both. As new topics I would include, for example, the English culture that is already familiar from other subjects and outside school. New topics are in my opinion a bit more important than topics that have been discussed before. New topics could be introduced only, not discussed in depth." (M5)

(48)

"Yes. I'd use, for example, history. Pupils could learn other school subjects at the same time as they learn English." (M7)

"Yes, so that they would learn, for example, geography in addition to English." (M4)

"Yes. The partial "combination" of school subjects is useful because, some pupils are not that interested for example, in topics discussed in geography lessons. If these topics were discussed in English lessons, pupils might be more interested in them, just because they are discussed in English. Topics: facts about different countries and so on." (M1)

"Yes. General knowledge is important. A little introduction to all subjects would be good." (M5)

"Yes, because then you learn to look at things from more than one viewpoint." (F5)

"Yes, if you do, for example, a presentation on Space in other subjects, you can use the information included in the English book in the presentation." (F6)

"Yes, for example, history." (M3)

(49)

"C. You would receive new and old information." (F7)

"C. Both, of course, so that your general knowledge of the world, and not just that of Finland, would improve. I'd discuss mostly (60%) things that have to do with Finland." (M7)

"Both. Different cultures are important to me. General knowledge about Finland is important too." (M5)

"C. So that the reader would learn at the same time about Finland and about people around the world. Topics could be for example, immigration, cultures and so on." (M4)

"C. More information on foreign countries because their cultures are different and people have different customs but not just about them. It would be interesting to read topics about Finland ,too." (M2)

"C. Topics about the world in general so that you can have multicultural education but also SOME local topics for the fun of it." (F1)

(50)

"A: if the book's contents were variable and it had optional texts then everybody would be able read about topics in which they were interested. Every chapter could have one compulsory text." (M5)

"C. It's good to have compulsory texts so that they would create conversation between the pupils. It's also good to have an option sometimes, so you can choose a text that interests you and then it's nicer to read it and it's easier to "get it". Optional texts, about. 35%, and the rest, that is, normal texts 65%. The optional texts should be long and normal texts short." (M7)

"C. Some optional texts but mostly compulsory texts (to make teaching easier)." (F1)

"C, the pupils must be presented with options." (F8)

"C. because then you'd have the chance to think about the texts that you study and there could be about five of them and they'd be very short so that they'd be easier to remember." (F6)

(51)

"Yes, because pupils could talk about the topics and understand each other's opinion as well as different viewpoints better." (F3)

"Yes, because it would encourage pupils to talk with others." (M8)

"Yes. Conversations in lessons help pupils to make the initiative and partly teach public speaking skills. At the same time, they improve language skills. Topics: problems between parents and children, wars and so on." (M1)

"Yes. When you talk with another pupil about a topic then both pupils learn something from each other and more about the text/topic. Some event/tragedy could easily create conversation between pupils." (M7)

"Yes, it shows the pupils are interested and I think factual texts are like this." (F8)

"Yes, because it makes them more interesting." (M6)

(52)

"A chapter about friendship. In the chapter, two people would meet and become friends. They would end up in different adventures and their friendship would grow stronger." (M9)

"Roses are red
Violets are blue

I like you

because you are you." (F6)

"Well if about friendship then there could be people discussing what a good friend is like and they could share their opinions on friendship. Then there could be poems about friendship! And then there could be a story about friendship." (F9)

(53)

"Topic = music. The text could be about different bands and the instruments they play. What they have done to become famous." (M4)

"Free time: My friend and I go to the cinema and sometimes we get together in the evenings and eat crisps, sweets, and drink soft drinks. Sometimes we rent a film and take a sauna bath and roll in the snow ..." (F3)

(54)

"Alcohol & drugs:

- what kinds of drugs exist
- their names
- their effects (their cons)
- an example of someone who has used them and overcome the habit
- alcohol: its effects, mood swings, statistics on teenage drinking ..." (F4)

(55)

"Multiculturalism:

- information of non-native people in different countries
- young people discuss how people in their homeland relate to non-natives and whether there are many non-natives in their homeland

- a story about young people making friends across the nations.” (F1)

(56)

”Nature:

- a person from an 'extraordinary' country could tell about the nature and wild life in his or her country
- fact files, for example, about endangered species, about the troubles that animals & nature are in (for example pollution, forest cuttings and so on)
- information on how to make a difference.” (F2)

”Topic: nature

Text type: a newspaper article

A new unknown species of animal has been discovered. The scientists found the new species yesterday at 15.30, and it seems to be lazier than a sloth. The scientists named the new animal *löhööjä*. This *löhööjä* is about 30 m long and it weighs about 200 kilograms and it is lazier than any known animal. The creature did not move an inch while the scientists were examining it. *Löhööjä* is an insect-eater. More information about it and its habits in later issues.” (M5)

A picture
of *löhööjä*

(57)

”Topic: economy

The chapter could include the following information: the economic instability of stock exchange in Finland and abroad. The chapter could discuss an enterprise, such as Nokia, include pictures and have tips for example about investments.” (M6)

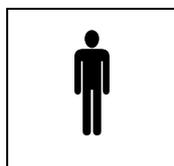
”The economy chapter

Many people are familiar with shares. However, world economy is an unknown concept for many. The chapter about economy could discuss the concepts of economy, about stock exchange, shares, investments, analysts and so on. This is a topic in which people and most pupils are certainly interested. The future is in economy! ☺ ” (M1)

(58)

“An exciting story. Like a horror story. Young people are interested in them.” (M3)

”Helsingin Sanomat 13.7.2003



A 15 – year-old boy has been kidnapped in Stockholm. Calle Berg disappeared yesterday in Stockholm on July 12th. The event had three eyewitnesses and they all said they saw two kidnappers, both of them men: one was short and stout and the other tall and thin. The men had a blue van ...” (F8)