# THE VALUABLE TEXTBOOKS:
## A study on relationship values and attitudes in an EFL-textbook series

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Yksi yleissivistävän koulun tavoitteista on opettaa oppijoille arvoja ja asenteita. Nämä arvot ja asenteet näkyvät muun muassa opetussuunnitelmassa ja sitä myöten myös opetuskäytänteissä ja oppikirjoissa. Oppikirjatekstien välittämät arvot ja asenteet eivät ole kuitenkaan peräisin yksinomaan opetussuunnitelmassa lausutuista tavoitteista, vaan myös oppikirjantekijöiden maailmankuvat vaikuttavat niihin – joko tietoisesti tai tiedostamatta – teksteihin valittujen näkökulmien ja kielenkäytön kautta.

Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin millä tavoin lukion englannin oppikirjatekstit käsittelevät ja kuvaavat eri parisuhdemuotoja ja mitkä parisuhdearvot ja -asenteet vaikuttavat tekstien taustalla. Tutkimuksessa analysoitiin neljää Suomen lukiossa laajalti käytetyn *In Touch*-oppikirjasarjan tekstiä, jotka käsittelivät ihmissuhteita. Tutkimuksessa nojattiin kriittisen diskurssintutkimuksen käsitykseen kielenkäytön tehtävistä ja vaikutuksista, ja metodina käytettiin kriittisen diskurssintutkimuksen keinoja ideologisten implikaatioiden, ja siten myös arvojen ja asenteiden, osoittamiseen diskursseissa.

Tutkimus osoitti, että oppikirjateksteissä esiteltiin parisuhdemuodoista avioliitto (sekä rakkausavioliitto että järjestetty), avoliitto sekä seurustelu. Tutkimuksen mukaan tärkein parisuhteisiin liittyvä arvo oli valinnanvapaus, joka liittyi muun muassa parisuhdemuodon valintaan sekä eroamiseen. Muita arvoja olivat pysyvyys ja sitoutuminen, käytännöllisyys sekä yhteensopivuus. Asenne rakkausavioliittoa kohtaan näyttäytyi pääosin kielteisenä: avioliitto kuvattiin vanhanaikaisena ja idealistisena instituutiona, koska se perustuu vain harvoin toteutuvaan sitoutumiseen. Järjestetty avioliitto puolestaan kuvattiin käytännöllisenä ja menestyksellisenä parisuhteenmuotona, ja asenne sitä kohtaan oli positiivinen. Asenne avoliittoa kohtaan osoittautui positiiviseksi: avoliitto kuvattiin nykyaikaisena ja yksilönvapauteen perustuvana parisuhteenmuotona, joskin uusperheen tapauksessa ongelmatkin olivat mahdollisia. Asenne eroon oli myös pääosin positiivinen, sillä sen katsottiin toteuttavan jo mainittua valinnan vapautta. Parisuhteen ongelmallisiin tilanteisiin ei teksteissä annettu eron lisäksi muita vaihtoehtoja.

| Asiasanat – Keywords Critical discourse analysis, textbooks, values, attitudes, relationship |
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In schools learners are educated to encounter the requirements and opportunities in life. Therefore, the time one spends in school embraces a large scale of goals to achieve, ranging from general learning skills to computing skills and to knowledge of different school subjects. One of the several aims of schooling is to teach positive values and attitudes to the learners.

In addition to teaching practices, one major object that carries and mediates value- and attitude-loaded ideas is the school textbook. As Rice (2005: 407) states, textbooks "signify constructions of reality and ways of selecting, organizing and prioritizing knowledge". There are, however, several instances that determine how knowledge is prioritized and selected and, thus, which values and attitudes the textbooks actually mediate. Firstly, the National Curriculum sets the general objectives for teaching and learning and, secondly, the textbook authors both aspire to follow the given objectives but also affect the explicit and implicit contents by selecting from which perspectives issues are handled, i.e. what are the subtopics to them, how ideas are constructed and expressed and how they are supposed to be treated in the lessons. It is, however, to be borne in mind that not all values and attitudes are incorporated deliberately but unconsciously in the texts.

One topic that is considered worth covering across the range of school subjects and is, therefore, included in the Finnish National Curriculum and consequently in the upper-secondary school textbooks, is relationships (in this study the term *relationship* refers only to intimate interpersonal relationships, excluding for example friendships). The objective of the present study is, then, to find out how EFL-textbooks introduce the topic of relationships to the learners, which different forms of relationships are presented in the texts, how they are described and, furthermore, what are the relationship values and attitudes behind the texts.

The present study leans on the discursive theory of language. According to it, discourses are not only samples of written or spoken text, but, as Fairclough (1992: 63) defines, "language use as a form of social practice". Futhermore, discourses always serve a certain purpose, be it for example communication or creating identities and they both reflect and construct reality (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003, Gee 1999, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009 and Van Dijk 1998). The reflection and construction of reality also

applies to the ideological dimension of language use, including values and attitudes: through discourses people show their world views and, on the other hand, influence those of other's.

Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA), which is one of the many approaches to discourse studies, is particularly engrossed in investigating, for example, how power and hegemony are practiced, and by whom, and how and what ideologies are promoted through discourses in societies. As the present study aims at examining values and attitudes conveyed through discourses, it touches the ideological dimension of discourses and, therefore, finds CDA as a useful method for the discourse analysis. Since there is, however, no one ready-made template how to conduct critical analysis for all purposes and for all types of discourses, several sources were used in order to create a suitable analytical framework for the specific purposes of this study.

This study is situated in the field of second language teaching and critical discourse studies. Although second language textbooks have been studied from a variety of critical perspectives, for instance, whether they treat ethnic minorities and women and men equally or not, no research concerning relationship values and attitudes in school textbooks seem to have been done. For this reason, the present study can be considered contributing to knowledge about language textbooks as it provides information on one specific, unexplored ideological dimension, i.e. relationship values and attitudes, in one EFL-textbook series, *In Touch*, contemporarily widely used in Finnish upper secondary schools.

The paper consists of seven chapters. After the introduction in chapter 1, chapter 2 presents EFL-textbooks, their characteristics and the role they have in teaching and learning English. The terms *value* and *attitude* are defined and characterized in chapter 3. In that chapter also the term *discourse* is defined, the discursive perspective to language is introduced and the interconnection between values, attitudes and discourses is discussed. Chapter 4 in turn concentrates on the issue of how values and attitudes are present in school textbooks, from where they derive and what their effects on students may be. Also previous studies with related aims are presented in that chapter. Chapter 5 moves to introducing the research design of the present study; its methodological framework, data, analytical framework and the path of the analysis. In chapter 6 the main findings of the analysis are reported, and in chapter 8 the findings are briefly discussed and conclusions, implications and suggestions for further studies are made.

## 2 EFL-TEXTBOOKS

In this chapter, divided into three sections, I will introduce the EFL-textbooks. In the first one I will define the term *textbook* and also provide information for its basic characteristics; in the second section I will introduce the discourses found in EFL-textbooks, and finally in the last section I will touch upon the social context of the use of EFL-textbooks. Because this study concerns Finnish EFL-textbooks used in the upper secondary school, all the ideas presented here are situated in that context.

### 2.1 Definition and characteristics

School textbooks have gained a stable status among other teaching media as an essential tool for learning and teaching (e.g. Karvonen 1995: 11, Lähdesmäki 2004: 217). In fact, teaching is often heavily based on the texts and exercises that the textbooks offer. This probably results from the fact that the prepared teaching material lightens the burden of a language teacher: s/he is not obligated to invent new teaching material for one's courses, which would require a vast amount of time, but one can rely on the planned and already processed material provided in the textbooks. Naturally, a teacher is not bound to the material the textbooks contain but one may choose which topics, texts and exercises one wants to cover in the lesson, mould them to meet the particular needs and purposes of the class, and use other sources of information as well (Johnsen 1993: 17).

There is some variation in the way the term *textbook* is comprehended. In a narrow sense a textbook can be thought to be one volume of a textbook series that have been produced for educational use, or a "package" which also includes an exercise book and a teachers' guide (Karvonen 1995: 12). Recently also the student's edition of the book often includes a CD of the key texts, and occasionally listening comprehension exercises; however, the majority of the material is still only accessible by the teacher, whose guide includes all the correct answers as well as suggestions for exercises and exams. In a somewhat broader sense, also a book that has originally been written for other than educational purposes can be regarded as a textbook (Johnsen 1993: 25). Examples of that sort of books could be plays, novels or comic books. In the present study, the term *textbook* refers to one volume of a textbook series (that also includes

exercises attached to the topics and texts and the scripts of listening comprehension tasks that are provided in the teachers' guide).

Textbooks, in the narrow sense of the term, are products of group work: there is usually a group of textbook writers, photo- and text suppliers involved in the process of producing a textbook (series), and a publisher who administers the marketing of the completed book (Karvonen 1995: 12). This implies that a textbook is a result of compromises (ibid): individual textbook writers, having distinct backgrounds and expertise, may have somewhat dissimilar ideas on what is important and how topics should be presented in order to be comprehensible and motivating for both the students and the teachers. Publishers, for their part, are concerned with the quality and the attractiveness of the books also from the profitability point of view: the textbooks have to be competitive in the markets. Thus, the participants in the textbook production have to be flexible in order to come to a solution on the matters discussed in different phases of the writing process. Furthermore, textbook writers and publishers have to take into consideration the requirements the National Curriculum has on teaching a certain course and on teaching in general.

Textbooks are constantly updated. As the National Curriculum is elaborated from time to time in regard to, for example, its view on the nature of learning and the topics and contents of different subjects, textbooks aimed for the use of schools are modified accordingly (e.g. In Touch ja lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet) In addition, the textbooks have to be revised in terms of the information and the topics they introduce (Karvonen 1995: 11): to teach relevant and current matters, issues close to the world the students encounter in real life, is a fundamental task of the school.


## 2.2 Texts in EFL-textbooks

Textbook texts can be viewed as a genre of their own, as Lähdesmäki (2004) has done in her study. For instance, characteristic of this specific genre is that important words – to which attention is to be paid and which are often tested for – are in boldface or italics (Karvonen 1995: 24). Furthermore, texts are usually accompanied by vocabulary lists and various kinds of exercises for the purpose of learning the contents, structures and vocabulary included in the text together with different general language skills, such as reading and interacting.

While in other textbooks, such as biology or philosophy, there may be only one genre, the "textbook genre", used, a salient feature of EFL-textbooks is that they "contain many sorts of texts with a rather comprehensive selection of both genres and topics" (Lähdesmäki 2004: 54). This means that the textbooks contain a number of separate texts that are not usually connected to each other but represent different genres and deal with separate issues, but simultaneously contain the general textbook genre, at least in respect to vocabulary lists and exercises. This difference derives from the different purposes of language and other textbooks: the main purpose of, for example, biology textbooks is to provide information on certain issues, whereas in EFL-textbooks the focus is, as Lähdesmäki (2004: 272) states, both on the content and the various linguistic aspects of the texts, such as genres and structures.

Moreover, EFL-textbook texts can be characterized in three different categories, that is, as either authentic, modified or self-written (Lähdesmäki 2007: 54-55). Authentic texts are those that have been taken from their original context, such as an article in a magazine or a radio program, and attached to the EFL-textbook as such. Authenticity is one of the objectives of the textbook writers since it offers an opportunity to familiarize oneself with real, authentic language use in other than educational settings (Lähdesmäki 2007: 54). Modified texts, for their part, are texts that have also been taken from their original context but have been modified to meet the requirements of the educational situation by, for example, simplifying structures and replacing challenging vocabulary with an easier one. Self-written texts are obviously those that the textbook writers have composed themselves for the specific needs of their audience. Texts of all of the three types can occur in one textbook.

## 2.3 What is learnt through the texts?

As already briefly mentioned, an essential function of EFL-textbooks is that they provide an extensive selection of various genres and topics (Lähdesmäki 2007: 54). This feature of the textbooks originates from one of the educational goals of which the National Curriculum (LOPS 2003: 88) says that students must gain opportunities to read and handle English texts that have varied functions, purposes and that occur in different contexts. In addition, there are several larger thematic contents, such as technology, environment and social life, that are to be dealt with in many school subjects including

English, and some that are especially attached to learning English, such as the English speaking cultures (LOPS 2003: 88-89). The objective is to acquire new information, deepen the already known, to learn to discuss different issues and to take one's own stand on them – in English, of course.

In addition to the variety of genres and new information on certain topics, there are many other matters that are to be learnt through using EFL-textbook texts (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272). Firstly, students are supposed to learn grammar and structures of the English language, and secondly, to communicate and interact. Thirdly, through using the texts in multiple ways the students are to develop their learning strategies and to learn new ones. Fourthly, the texts are to mediate "positive attitudes towards target culture and their people" (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272) and, thus, generate tolerance based on cultural understanding.

What the students actually learn, however, depends not only on the personal appreciations, interests and motivation, but also on the way the texts are handled, that is, how teachers teach and approach them (Luke et al. 1989: 251). Luke at al. (1989: 252) state that "tacitly and intentionally, teachers will emphasize and de-emphasize, select and exclude." This means that teachers make evaluations about what is worth emphasizing and important for the students to learn, and what is not that relevant. Furthermore, as Luke et al. continue, the students learn from the evaluations and decisions made by the teacher what is important in texts and what kind of knowledge they are expected to know. In addition, the students soon learn to make conclusion of what contents and skills are likely to be tested in examinations and, thus, what is to be mastered in order to do well in them (Olson 1989: 238). Often the decision may be based on the personal preferences of the teachers, but also the existing tests that the students are to take may influence the contents and manners of teaching (Johnsen 1993: 15). For example, in the Finnish upper secondary schools one of the major factors that guide the decisions made on what is taught and learned is the matriculation examination that takes place at the end of the students' school career. This means that since EFL-teachers know what kinds of skills are tested in the examination, they emphasize those in their teaching in order to fulfil their responsibility of preparing their students for the examination. The tasks in the matriculation examination often require the ability to extract the main points of a text, answer some detailed questions about the content and to know specific vocabulary and structures. While these skills are expected in the matriculation examination, they are also practiced in the lessons and in the course

examinations. In fact, in the advanced level the course examinations may be old matriculation examinations.

As Karvonen (1995: 24) states, textbook texts are meant to raise discussion between the texts and the students and their pre-existing knowledge. This purpose probably is fulfilled in respect to the language skills and the content knowledge of the students but the depth of the process may vary tremendously: sometimes it may be left on the level of learning individual words and understanding the explicit message of an extract, whereas, when devoting enough time and effort, the texts can be interpreted in more depth by taking a more analytical approach to them. After all, not all contents of EFL-textbook texts are visible and explicit, but the texts also reflect a certain view of the world (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272) with certain appreciations, values and attitudes.

Although texts may be treated somewhat superficially in the EFL-lessons, this does not mean that the students would take the information provided as granted and not take a critical approach to it. As Fairclough (1992) and Wallace (2003) state, people are generally speaking critical about what they hear and read, and this naturally applies to upper-secondary students as well. Fairclough (1992: 75) further states that texts are not unambiguous but objects of various distinct interpretations. In addition to the way the text in question is handled, it has been found that the individual interpretations of the same text are influenced by the student's personality, gender and the pre-existing values and attitudes (Anyon 1981, cited in Kalmus 2004: 471). However, when reading in a foreign language the implicit messages in the texts may not be clear to the students, at least in great detail.

In conclusion, if a teacher blindly follows the instructions in the books and tight timetables, and does not give any attention to the deeper meanings in the texts, it is presumable that the students do not pay special attention to them either since their main concern is to manage the tests and examinations they have, in which the more "superficial" linguistic skills and knowledge are appreciated. In contrast, if a teacher pays attention to those deeper messages, the students are probably to learn to read texts critically in a foreign language, to pay attention also to the subtle messages they mediate and how those can be constructed in the foreign language.

Since the focus of the present study is on the textual dimension of discourse and not on the discursive practices, I will not go further in describing how texts are or should be used in order to help students to read more critically. I content myself with mentioning that the ability of reading critically is an essential skill that should also be practiced in

EFL-classrooms among other language skills. By doing that the students can learn what embedded messages the texts contain and how the English language, its grammar and vocabulary, can be used for mediating them (Wallace 2003).

In this chapter I have brought out some aspects of EFL-textbooks, their special characteristics and functions as teaching material. Next the focus will be on the nature and functions of values, attitudes and discourses, and their interconnection.

# 3 VALUES, ATTITUDES AND DISCOURSES

In this chapter I will discuss *values, attitudes* and *discourses*. Firstly, values and attitudes are defined and characterized as parts of ideological dimension of social beliefs. Secondly, the discursive point of view to language is introduced and, finally, the connection particularly between discourses and values and attitudes is touched upon.

## 3.1 Definition and functions of values

According to Rokeach (1973: 6-7), values are enduring prescriptive or proscriptive beliefs that "have cognitive, affective and behavioural components": a person has an idea what is and what is not desirable, one can be emotional on the value-related matter, and the values also affect the way a person acts in certain situations. In addition, values are not separate cognitions but they form value systems. According to Rokeach (1973: 11), the values a person possesses are ordered hierarchically in the value system after their importance. Although value systems are seen as fairly stable, values or the hierarchy of them can be changed "according to the changes in society and the new experiences of the person in question" (Rokeach 1973: 11).

Values can be categorized into instrumental and terminal values (Rokeach 1973: 7). Instrumental values concern morals and competence: "behaving honestly and responsibly leads one to feel that he is behaving morally, whereas behaving logically, intelligently or imaginatively leads one to feel that he is behaving competently" (Rokeach 1973: 7). What is in focus in regard to these values is, thus, the process or behaviour more than the outcome of the action. Terminal values, for their part, can also be divided into two: there are values that concern an individual personally, such as

health, intelligence and efficiency, and those that concern the social world in particular, such as politeness, co-operation, freedom and equality (Van Dijk 1998: 75).

Furthermore, values can be categorized according to the contexts they occur in. That sort of categories are, for example, family values, political values and work values (Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006: 70). The categorizations of values seem, however, to be somewhat overlapping since some of them are more general than others. This can be seen, for example, when comparing the value categorization of two distinct studies: the term *sexual values* has been used referring to values concerning for instance divorce, adultery, homosexuality and abortion by Ester, Braun and Mohler (2006: 72), whereas *relationship values* has been used by Meier, Hull and Ortyl (2009) referring to values concerning, for instance, premarital sex, homosexuality and cohabitation. It seems that there are many similarities between the values focused on in these two studies, such as gender, and at least sexual values seem to be incorporated in relationship values.

Possessing values is no inborn property of human beings, but values are rather being learnt, acquired, and changed, in various kinds of contexts and social practices in the childhood and throughout one's entire life (Van Dijk 1998: 74). Although it is commonly acknowledged that values are fundamental to all cultures, there is some controversy about the extent to which values are shared by the members of societies. Van Dijk (1998: 74) and Rokeach (1973: 4) state that there are a relatively small number of values there, and most of the people in a certain culture, if not in the whole world, share the same values. This is to say that many basic values, such as truth, equality and beauty, are values that many people appreciate and use as criteria for evaluations, for example when forming an opinion on something. Thompson (1990: 88) claims, however, the opposite:

> It cannot be plausibly assumed that there is a core set of values and beliefs which are widely shared and firmly accepted by individuals in modern industrial societies, and which thereby bind individuals to a common normative framework, for it seems likely that there is a fairly high degree of disagreement and disaffection.

Thompson (1990: 88), thus, interprets the instability and disagreement in societies as being a consequence of the diversity of values people possess. To this Van Dijk (1998: 76-77) replies that the disagreements and problems between individual people, as well as between cultures, do not originate from different values but rather from distinct inner hierarchies of their value systems and conceptions of the values. For instance, two people may value both honesty and politeness, but if these are seen differently in respect

to their importance, the evaluations and actions the people take are presumably different. Furthermore, two members of the same society can agree that equality is a good and important value. For one equality may mean that, for example, men and women should be treated as not having any biological differences that are based on their gender, whereas for the other equality could mean that men and women are to be treated with the same respect but also taking into account the differences they seem to have. These two different views on equality have also different implications: one may want to fight for the equally long maternity/paternity leaves because of one's idea that, based on the value of equality, both parents have the right to stay at home with the baby for the same period of time; the other might think that a house wife should be equally respected for her work at home as a working woman or her husband is.

When it comes to the diversity of the contents and hierarchy of values, Ester et al. (1994, cited in Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006: 8) argue that "values in Western societies have become detached from traditional institutions and authoritative forces (such as the church) and increasingly find their legitimation in personal choices and preferences." On these grounds it appears that although values are social by nature, i.e. they are acquired in social reality and they are shared by a group or groups of people, in today's society authoritative parties are not regarded as important in defining and choosing values for individuals as before. Instead, everyone may choose distinctive values and contents for them from sometimes marginal alternatives, according to their personal preferences. Thus, Western societies are not as homogeneous in regard to their value systems as they have been.

In summary, I would say that there is a certain range of values that are at least to some extent common to all cultures and societies. It seems, however, evident that there is diversity about how the values are understood and ranked, and, therefore, how they affect people's evaluations and actions.

Values have several functions in the social life of human beings. Firstly, values are used as standards (Rokeach 1973: 13). This means that people evaluate themselves and their actions as well as others and their actions according to the values they possess. For example, a Finn might regard Finnish people more hard-working than Russian people, and, therefore judge Finns as a better folk. Thus, values can also be used for defining one's identity and self-enhancement (Van Dijk 1998: 76), e.g. We are hard-working and We are better than They are. In addition, according to the evaluations, one can decide whether there is something to be opposed to or argued about (Rokeach 1973: 13). One

example of this is the tension between the Western world and China because of the difference in appreciation of democracy: democracy, which is a value treasured in the Western countries, seems to be lacking in China. West opposes the Chinese government on the issue and tries to influence so that democracy could gain a better foothold in the communist country.

Furthermore, values or value systems can be seen as "general plans for conflict resolution and decision making" (Rokeach 1973: 14). In other words, people do not have to create new criteria for making decisions or choosing between alternatives in every novel situation, but they can base their decisions on the already-existing schema regarding the most desired values.

Moreover, values are used for justifying one's decisions and actions (Rokeach 1973: 13 and Van Dijk 1998: 76), which is possible because of the hierarchical nature of value systems and the various possible contents and interpretations of values. According to Van Dijk's (1998: 77) example, "few racists openly defend inequality, but will self-present themselves as emphasizing the relevance of nationalism and their own freedom (from being 'mixed' with others)". Thus, equality is ranked lower than nationalism and freedom in the hierarchy of the value system of racists. In addition, they have given a specific content to the concept of freedom, that is, the freedom from other races. Consequently, this group of people justifies their actions that may restrict the human rights of the others by the more important values of nationalism and freedom. This way, although all values are positive as such (Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006: 8), they can also be used for negative purposes.

Values are not directly observable but indirectly in the form of people's attitudinal and evaluative statements and actions (Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006: 8). For example, on fourth of March there was a law passed in Mexico that allows same-sex couples to get married (Barovick et al. 2010: 7). This legal act can be seen as a result of the change of values, ideologies and attitudes in the context of Mexico: the value of freedom (by a specific understanding of it) and the ideology of liberalism have gained ground in the societal level, and, therefore, the attitudes towards homosexuals and their will to have the right to get married are now tolerant and positive. Thus, the values of the people of Mexico have turned into action, this time in greater scale in the form of a new law and, in turn, the law mirrors the values of the country.

## 3.2 Definition of attitudes

Attitudes are "beliefs about specific objects or situations" (Ester, Braun and Mohler (2006: 8). These beliefs are based on the evaluations a person has made on the objects and situations in question, and, consequently, an attitude can be characterized as an "evaluative disposition" that usually affects the person's thoughts, emotions and actions (Smith 2005: 106). Depending on the values, and the evaluations a person makes based on them, attitudes may be either positive or negative (Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006:8). Attitudes may concern a wide range of issues, such as "politics and religion, domestic and international issues" (Rokeach 1973: 95).

Attitudes are fundamentally about realizing things and being in relation to them (Smith 2005: 107). That is, in order to be able to take an evaluative disposition to an object or a situation it is obvious that one has to have encountered it and acknowledged its existence, and defined one's relation or "distance" to it. In addition, it has been claimed that the object of an attitude must be considered important enough (Smith 2005: 107): there is no reason to feel negative or positive about something that has no relevance whatsoever to one. Furthermore, Smith (2005: 108) argues that the relationship between the person possessing the specific attitude and the object of the evaluative disposition is reciprocal: it is actually the object that raises the negative or positive attitude in the person, that is, the possessor of the attitude does not create the attitude but it is given, whereas the active role of the person in the relationship is realized in slanted speech and other actions regarding the object. Consequently, as Smith (2005: 108) argues:

> Attitude, then, is neither an actual reaching for this or that, nor a neutrally open state of affairs in which no reaching is more likely than any other, but a disposition (in the sense of deployment) to reach.

As stated before, values are "the basis of all processes of evaluation" (Van Dijk 1998: 74), and since attitudes have been defined as "evaluative dispositions" (Smith 2005: 106), it can be concluded that attitudes are also based on values. To be more precise, according to Rokeach (1973: 95), attitudes are embodiments of the values they are based on. The connections between values and attitudes are not, however, always straightforward. Rokeach (1973: 96) states that "A given attitude held by different persons need not to be in the service of the same value, or the same subset of values."

He illustrates the statement with an example that although two persons may have a positive attitude towards socialized medicine, one of them may base one's attitude on the value of equality, whereas the other on the value of family security. One could also claim that this idea functions the other way around as well: despite the same value as the basis of evaluation, people may have differing attitudes towards objects or situations. For instance, although two people of a society that receives immigrants have the value of freedom as the basis of their evaluation on the matter of immigration, one may have a negative attitude towards it as one sees that one is denied the freedom from the others (see example by Van Dijk in 3.1), whereas the other may have a positive attitude towards it as s/he considers it being an act of giving everybody the freedom to live where it is comfortable and safe.

On the other hand, Rokeach (1973: 96) also says that "certain values will more often be related predictably to a given attitude than other values", due to their "logical relations" or "the specialized domain of specific social institutions". Thus, it is natural that for example religious attitudes are related to religious values and political attitudes to political values.

Attitudes, similarly to values, are not entirely stable but they can be changed. In fact, the value and attitude change is researched time and again, both nationally (e.g. for instance in America (e.g. Rokeach: 1973) and in Finland (e.g. Pirttilä-Backman, Ahokas, Lähteenoja and Myyry: 2005) and internationally, comparing situations in different countries (e.g. Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006).

I now phrase the approach that is taken in the present study in regard to the two terms. Firstly, since the focus is on the different forms of relationships and on the descriptions of them in the EFL-textbook texts, the values and attitudes searched concern, consequently, human relationships. As Meier, Hull and Ortyl (2009), I will also use the term *relationship values*. This category of values may include any values that are connected with relationships of which some examples are love, faithfulness, commitment, financial security and racial homogamy (Meir, Hull and Ortyl 2009: 510). When it comes to attitudes, the terms used in the present study are derived from the study of Ester, Braun and Mohler (2006). In their research on worldwide value change they use the term *pro-marriage attitude* referring to the level of regarding marriage as an important and positive institution in contrast to the idea of it being outdated. Because attitudes can be both positive and negative (Ester, Braun and Mohler 2006: 8), there can also occur an *anti-marriage attitude*. To proceed with this logic, there may also be, for

example, attitudes called *pro-cohabitation attitude, anti-cohabitation attitude, pro-divorce attitude, anti-divorce attitude, pro-polygamy attitude, anti-polygamy attitude*, and so on. In the present study, thus, attention is given to the different forms of relationships that are represented in the texts and the attitudes that are interpreted to be embedded in them.

After defining *values* and *attitudes* and discussing their functions in people's mind and behaviour, I now move to discuss what *discourses* and their functions are and, finally, how they are connected to values and attitudes.

## 3.3 What is discourse?

The term *discourse* has been used in various ways, partly because of the different starting points distinct disciplines have on looking at the relationship between language and social life. A common definition of *discourse* in the discipline of linguistics regards both written and spoken tokens of language as samples of discourses, but also emphasizes the significant role of the interaction between interlocutors and the social context of the discursive situation (Fairclough 1992: 3). In order to discuss the term in more detail I will shortly introduce the definitions of *discourse* given by three pioneers in the study of discourses; Teun A. Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough and James P. Gee.

For Van Dijk (1998: 193-199) there are many alternative definitions for the term discourse. According to him, the main meaning of discourse is that of *communicative event.* This term of communicative event can, for its part, be seen in either restricted or extended sense. The restricted one is used when referring to the product of a communicative event, that is, to a spoken or written piece of text, whereas the extended meaning is used when referring to the actual performance, including other participants in the event and the features of the context. When using this definition of discourse, the focus is always on a unique token of a language.

One can, however, see *discourse* in a somewhat more abstract sense, that is, as an abstract type or genre of language. This means that the focus is on the properties that some texts, or communicative events, share, and not on tokens. Examples of types of language could be jokes, newspaper articles and school essays. Furthermore, when referring to discourses as genres, one may mean genres such as "*political discourse, medical discourse* and *academic discourse*" (Van Dijk 1998: 196). As known, for

example these genres can be distinguished from each other by the different terms and sociolinguistic and pragmatic conventions used in the particular discourses. Finally, in the broadest sense of the term, *discourse* can be seen to refer to all the communicative events (both products and performances), types and genres of discourse in a specific period of time and/or culture.

In his definition of discourse, Fairclough (1992, 2003) emphasizes the role of the social aspect to language use that is always present: language is never used in a vacuum but is both affected by and affects the situations, processes and social contexts involved. Consequently, discourse is not only a sample of a linguistic system of a language, neither a solitary activity, but "language use as a form of social practice" (Fairclough 1992: 63). As seen, Fairclough takes into account both the linguistic and the social aspects of discourse. Both of these aspects can also be traced in his view of discourse being always 'three-dimensional', including dimensions of texts, discursive practices and social practices. For Fairclough, the term *text* means either a spoken or written sample of language, but it also can refer to visual images or to "texts which are combinations of words and images" (Fairclough 1992: 4), such as newspaper articles and movies.

The term *discursive practice* is, on the other hand, used to refer to discursive situations and the processes that take place in a situation when a text, or a text producer, interacts with an addressee. Those kinds of practices are, for example, teaching, having a family dinner or reading a newspaper. The processes that take place in discursive practices are text production, interpretation and consumption. Fairclough (1992: 78) also states that "the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors". When considering first text production, this means that, for example, the way a speaker formulates one's message depends on such matters as to whom one is talking and in what kind of situation: for instance, if the interlocutor is a friend, the speaker could choose to use more colloquial words and structures of language; if the interaction takes place in a business meeting, the speaker is likely to use more formal language, structured by the conventions of business meeting discourses, such as opening the meeting and asking for a permission to speak. Secondly, the interpretation of a text can also depend on the interlocutors and the social context at hand; there are a myriad of possible interpretations of texts in accordance to the interpreters' previous knowledge, beliefs, values and so on, an in accordance to the place, time and manner the discourse event takes place. Furthermore, the interpretation

of a text also depends on the personal characteristics of the interpreter: some people are more sensitive than others when it comes to construing meanings of texts. When taking part in the same communicative situation someone can take offence on how another person formulates one's ideas, whereas someone else can regard the statements being purely factual and including no innuendos. Thirdly, the consumption of discourse varies. For example, when one is reading a novel for entertainment, one is not likely to skip any chapters or parts of the text but to read it through with concentration; when one searches and reads articles and books in order to familiarize oneself with a particular subject one is doing research on, one is likely to skip many parts and to focus on the ones that are relevant. The type of consumption also varies in regard to the audience of a particular discourse. School textbooks are, for example, collectively used by teachers and pupils or students, whereas e-mails are usually discourses between either two persons or members of a restricted group of people.

The third dimension of discourse is called, as formerly mentioned, *social practice.* With this term Fairclough refers to "the institutional and organizational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice" (Fairclough 1992: 4). This is to say that the nature of a discourse also depends on the larger scale social context the discursive practice is taking place in. For example, discourse practices can be realized differently according to the social classes of the people involved in the event. Furthermore, institutions such as government, economic systems and education provide a range of possible practices that can be utilized in an individual discursive event, but which at the same time restrict the way language may be used.

Fairclough uses the term *discourse event* when talking about the whole discursive situation, which always includes all of the three dimensions: text, discursive practice and social practice. The dimensions are intertwined in many respects, as seen in the examples given above, and, therefore, they should not be analyzed totally separated from each other: a text is a part of discursive practice which is a part of social practice; social practice affects discursive practice which affects text.

Fairclough further distinguishes two different uses of the term *discourse*. Firstly, when used without an article, the term refers to "language use seen in the above three-dimensional way" (Fairclough 1992: 4). Secondly, the term *discourse* used with an article refers to the different discourse types that can be differentiated by their genres or

styles. Two examples of that kind of usage of the term could be the discourse of medicine or discourse of women's magazines.

Similarily to Fairclough, Gee (1990 and 1999) sees the term *discourse* having multiple meanings depending on the context it is used in and the way language use is viewed in general. To clarify his conception of *discourse,* he differentiates between Discourse (written with a capital letter) and discourse (written with a small letter). Discourse (with a small letter) refers to language in use, that is, how language performs activities and establishes, maintains and alters identities; with this term only linguistic ingredients of communicative situations are taken into account. When alongside with linguistic matters also extra-linguistic matters, such as "ways of acting, interacting, feeling, believing, valuing, together with other people and with various sorts of characteristic objects, symbols, tools, and technologies" (Gee 1999: 7) are considered, Gee talks about Discourses.

According to Gee (1999: 18), "the key to Discourses is 'recognition'". He explains this further so that when one can be recognized to have a certain kind of an identity or to perform a specific activity (such as an identity or activity of a doctor, teacher or traveller) by the way one uses both language and extra-linguistic substances, one can be said to have "pulled off" a Discourse (Gee 1990 and Gee 1999). In other words, with the help of Discourses one can show the others who one is and what one does. To illustrate this a little with an example, a Discourse of a EFL-teacher in a comprehensive school could involve clear and in some situations overemphasized pronunciation, patterned ways of signalling to the pupils what they are supposed to do (such as demonstrating opening a book and simultaneously saying: "Open your books, please."), standing in front of the group when teaching and walking among the pupils when monitoring their work, and using the blackboard for marking homework on it. This Discourse can easily be recognized as that of a comprehensive school EFL-teacher because we are familiar with the linguistic and non-linguistic conventions and characteristics that play an important role in that Discourse.

Many varieties of the Discourse can be included under the term of *Discourse of a comprehensive school EFL-teacher*: as Gee (1999: 18) states, differences can occur as long as the Discourse in question is still recognizable, and actually Discourses often change in time. For instance, discourses used by today's EFL-teachers differ from those used by EFL-teachers thirty years ago, but also EFL-teachers in the same school in the same period of time perform differently in their work. This change and variation are

probably partly due to the new knowledge we have on how language is learnt and what language skills are important for a pupil, which is reflected in the behaviour and teaching methods teachers use. In addition, new technology provides teachers with equipment, tools to be utilized in teaching and learning, which also changes the Discourse.

According to Gee (1999: 38), everyone has multiple identities and activities to which one takes part in, and, therefore, is a member of numerous Discourses. A teacher, for example, can have an identity of a mother or father, of a jogger, bus traveller and a karaoke singer, which all involve a separate Discourse. In conclusion, Gee (1999: 7) says that "all life for all of us is just a patchwork of thoughts, words, objects, events, actions, and interactions in Discourses."

As in the example of an EFL-teacher and the change this particular Discourse has faced in time, one can see that an EFL-teacher of today has not created the Discourse but it already existed before he or she even became a teacher. A teacher and his or her use of the Discourse may change the Discourse itself and the world it is used in, but the Discourse will remain even if the particular teacher stops performing it. By this path of idea Gee wants to say that people do not only use Discourses in order to interact and communicate with each other, but people are "carriers" (Gee 1999: 18) of Discourses; we actually epitomize them.

In this paper the concept of *discourse* is not understood only as a sample of written text or speech but as a communicative event that involves also the social intercourse, i.e. the context and participants. However, the textbook texts with topics connected with relationships, that is, the semantic dimension of the discourses, form exclusively the data and research subjects of the study, whereas the pragmatic dimension (cf. Rocci 2009: 15) of those particular discourses is only relevant concerning interpretation: the meanings given to the structures and vocabulary in the texts is only one of many possible interpretations. Furthermore, because of the aims and nature of the study, the term *discourse* is not used in the meaning of Discourse (Gee 1999).

## 3.4 The nature and functions of language

From the discursive point of view language is regarded as essentially social and functional (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 14). Firstly this means that language is

always used, as can clearly be seen in the above definitions given to "discourse", in social interaction. Secondly this means that language use always serves a certain purpose. Halliday, whose Systemic-Functional Theory of Language is widely used among discourse analysts, distinguishes three separate functions of language which can, however, be simultaneously in operation (Halliday 1978: 257). Those functions are the ideational (as representing the world), interpersonal (as creating social relationships and identities) and textual (as means of communication) functions (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 15).

Moreover, basing his categorizations to the general functions of language by Halliday, Fairclough (1992: 64) identifies "three functions of language and dimensions of meaning which coexist and interact in all discourse" for the purposes of textual analysis. These three functions of language are the identity, the relational and the ideational. The identity function of language refers to how discourses create and mould one's identity. The relational function of language refers in turn to the ways relationships between interlocutors are expressed and constructed. The third function of language, the ideational, refers to the ways discourses convey values, attitudes, ideas and beliefs about the world.

As many researchers (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003, Gee 1999, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009 and Van Dijk 1998) have stated, discourses both reflect and construct the social world. The three functions of language introduced above indicate that discourses have power in many respects: they contribute, for example, to transmitting values and world views, and creating relationships and identities. Furthermore, the effect of discourses is not restricted to making change in the "mental" world, but discourses can also contribute to making changes in actions and in the concrete world, of which Fairclough (1992: 8) gives many examples: "Texts can also start wars, or to contribute to changes in education, or to changes in industrial relations, […] changes in urban design [...]." It can, thus, be concluded that the power of discourse lies in its ability to influence change both in the minds and in the world.

Furthermore, even though one would not aim at affecting other's identities or values, language cannot be used totally objectively, but the linguistic choices one makes always reflect one's personal (or socially shared) presentations of the world (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009: 16,18). Gee (1999) expresses this as follows:

> When we speak or write we always take a particular *perspective* on what the "world" is like. This involves us in taking perspectives on what is "normal" and not; what is "acceptable" and not; what is "right" and not; […] what is the "ways things ought to be" and not; […]. But these are all too perspectives on how we believe, wish, or act as if potential "social goods" are, or ought to be, distributed. (Gee 1999: 2)

> Grammar simply does not allow us to speak or write from no perspective. (Gee 1999: 4)

Thus, language use represents certain point of view of the world, and creates reality accordingly. For example, political groups view social issues from certain perspectives, fight for their interests and, therefore, present their ideas in a way that makes the ideas look, be their realistic and truthful or not, logical and favourable. In a more general level, language also has an important role in the socialization process of children (Karvonen 1995: 23). Through their parents, schools and other social contexts children are exposed to language and texts that reflect certain kinds of view of the world. As long as the conceptions are consistent, they appear self-evident and logical to the children, and they acquire them. Many times the views acquired in childhood are, however, challenged by opposite ones later in the life (Van Dijk 1998: 246). (This idea will be developed further in 3.5.)

The social aspect to language use is not, however, seen only in the power that can be exercised through it but also in the way meaning is negotiated in interaction. On the one hand, a language user, a speaker or writer, creates meaning by making choices between the many possibilities in respect to, for example, vocabulary, genres and structures and uses the ones considered appropriate and suitable in the given context and for one's purposes (Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009). On the other hand, the language user does not solely create the meanings but they are negotiated with the interlocutors in the context in question (Verschueren 1999: 59): the receiver makes one's interpretations based on what is expressed, how it is done and what is the context (e.g. in a larger text, in an interactive situation or in a certain society) in which the interaction takes place. It can be, therefore, said that the meanings of language are not unambiguous but language can be used and interpreted in various ways.

## 3.5 Values and attitudes in discourses

The occurrence of values and attitudes in discourses is discussed in this section. Many of the ideas presented are from sources that concern mainly ideology but touch also the subjects of values and attitudes. Even though values and attitudes are not always

explicitly mentioned, they can be considered to be included in the subject, i.e. they are embedded and implicated in texts similarly to ideologies: ideologies are based on certain values, and they also incorporate and express certain attitudes (Van Dijk 1998: 74).

Every piece of discourse is based on a certain perspective of the world, including for example values, ideologies and attitudes (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003, Gee 1999: 2 and Van Dijk 1998). The consciousness of the fact that one mediates one's personal (or socially shared) perspective varies, however, according to the contexts and the participants of different discursive situations, that is, this may happen either intentionally or unintentionally. For example, parents may intentionally aim at transmitting certain values they regard as important to their children in some situations, whereas sometimes they might not recognize that what they say and how they express themselves actually mediate their appreciations and beliefs. That is, people are not always aware of the fact that their discourses are ideologically charged and can affect the interlocutor (Fairclough 1992: 90).

Another important characteristic of the occurrence of values and attitudes is that they can appear both explicitly and implicitly in discourses. According to Van Dijk (1998: 239), explicitness is frequent in propagandist discourses and in those in which "ideological explanation, justification or legitimation is at stake", that is, when the aim is to clearly pronounce in what a group believes, what it appreciates and strives for. In contrast, implicitness is exploited often when, for example, an ideology behind a discourse is tried to be kept hidden, or the public image of one's own group is tried to be maintained as positive as possible (Van Dijk 1998: 269). It is, however, to be kept in mind that values, ideologies and attitudes can be mediated implicitly even though it is not the intention.

The existence of values and attitudes in discourses can be traced in at least three things: in linguistic structures, inclusions and exclusions, and social events (Fairclough 1992: 88, 2003: 145). Firstly, a speaker or writer expresses one's world view, i.e. reflects it in speech or writing, in the structures and vocabulary one chooses to use in texts. For example, one may choose to use modality in a way that implies how one sees things *should* or *should not* be done, or to describe matters in positive or negative light by using adjectives and nouns with certain kinds of connotations. Secondly, it is not only crucial what is selected to be included in a discourse but it is worth paying attention to what is left out since omission may lead to a biased representation of certain

matters and overrepresentation of others (Van Leeuwen 2009: 282). For instance, one can omit the subject of responsibility by using passive voice or nominalization, or present only the perspectives to a matter that are advantageous for one and leave out any inconvenient ones.

Thirdly, as in regard to any meaning making through or in discourses, also value- and attitude-related meanings are constructed in context by negotiation. This means that they cannot be simply "'read off' from the linguistic items" (Kress 1985: 30), but "meanings are produced through interpretations of texts, and texts are open to diverse interpretations" (Fairclough 1992: 88). In other words, although people have certain values and attitudes that are reflected in their texts, the meanings and the importance of the text highly depends on the interpretation of the receiver, and, therefore, one text may bring about several distinct interpretations of the values and attitudes the speaker/writer possesses. According to Fairclough (2003: 57), the possibility of diverse interpretations of the same text in regard to the values it contains derives, at least partly, from the distinct "knowledge and recognition of such value systems". This is to say that, for example, if a person is familiar with the value of individual freedom, one notices more easily the references to that value, be they supportive or opposing. The variety in the value and attitude awareness of people, together with the fact that value-loaded messages are often implicitly embedded in texts, result in that people do not always notice the value- or attitude loaded messages in texts.

As Fairclough (1992: 87) claims, the effect of texts on people is most powerful when the audience comes to think that what is said is logical and common sense (which is often the aim when, for example, using certain theme-rheme structures or making presuppositions). Fairclough (1992: 65) adds, however, that since the text itself is not the sole carrier of the ideological features, including values and attitudes, but it involves the interpretation of the receiver as well, "an analyst may not assume too much power to the text at hand". This is to say that there is no straightforward pattern as to how and to which extents texts affect people but an analyst may only form one's personal interpretations and explanations of texts and, based on those, make assumptions of the kinds of effects there might occur.

In this chapter I have defined and characterized values, attitudes and discourses and their functions. In addition, I have discussed why and how values and attitudes exist in discourses and how they may affect receivers in a discursive event. Next these ideas will be applied to school textbooks.

# 4 VALUES AND ATTITUDES IN SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

Similarly to other texts, school textbook texts contain attitudinal and value-loaded ideas. In this chapter I will discuss the sources from which those ideas originate, what is their purpose and how they can affect the readers of the texts. In addition, I will introduce some previous studies related to the present paper and its aims.

## 4.1 The sources, goals and effects

"A school's primary function is to help pupils fulfil educational goals" (Johnsen 1993: 227), including at least informational knowledge, different kinds of competences, values and attitudes (e.g. Apple 1990 and Johnsen 1993). Thus, the fact that textbooks and teaching in general touches values and attitudes is a conscious goal.

When it comes to which values and attitudes are – either intentionally or unintentionally – brought forward and mediated in textbooks, the subject of *selection* emerges as significant, starting from the compilation of the curriculum. Firstly, the selection of school subjects that is included in the curriculum indicate the values the educational system possesses: some subjects are excluded as unimportant, and the included ones are valued to different extents which can be seen, for example, in the amount of time dedicated to them (Selander 1990: 143-44). Secondly, the curriculum defines some more precise topics and point of views to the subjects, such as environment, interaction and writing an argumentative essay in the case of EFL, that are to be covered in the lessons, which also results in an exclusion of some perspectives and inclusion of others (Lähdesmäki 2004: 272). In addition to this selection of topics that implies certain values behind them, the curriculum also explicitly pronounces some values and attitudes that are intentionally to be taught in the lessons, two examples of those being tolerance and international co-operation in the Finnish National Curriculum (NC p.3). Puolimatka (1995: 202) argues that although curricula often take in contradictory views on matters, it is typical of them that they mostly reflect the prevailing ideologies and, thus, values and attitudes.

Selander (1990: 143-44) states that the "textbook is basically framed by the institution (e.g. the educational system)" as textbook writers are to meet the

requirements of the educational goals defined in the curriculum in their products. This means that the selection regarding what is important and what is unimportant is transferred from the directive curriculum to the classrooms, for instance, in the form of the textbook. The requirements of the curriculum are not, however, the only matter that influences the choices made about textbook texts but also the textbook writers' views of the world, "taste, interest, a sense of what is pedagogically sound, a sense of what is appropriate for the age or training of the students" affect it (Johnsen 1993: 15). Thus, the point of view and the examples the textbook writers consider to be appropriate in regard to a certain topic, be it a self-written or an authentic text, reflect their appreciations; that is, some things may be emphasized and others given no attention (Johnsen 1993: 15). Furthermore, as is the case in all discourse, also in textbook texts the choices of linguistic structures and vocabulary convey – either explicitly or implicitly – values and attitudes (see 3.5): the world view of the textbook writers also influences "the very language of the textbook" (Johnsen 1993: 15). It can be, thus, concluded in Rice's (2005: 407) words that textbooks and their texts "signify constructions of reality and ways of selecting, organizing and prioritizing knowledge".

Despite the fact that textbook texts contain both intentional and unintentional, and explicit and implicit value- and attitude-loaded messages in them, it cannot be concluded that the learner would automatically acquire those particular values and attitudes for themselves. Firstly, the interpretation of the texts by individual learners ultimately defines what values and attitudes there actually are in the texts for the learners to acquire (Fairclough 1992: 88). Secondly, learners as readers of textbook texts are thought to be automatically critical, at least to some extent (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003 and Wallace 2003). This means that they consider and evaluate what is been told to them and do not simply accept everything they hear or read. (The ability to criticism depends, however, on the amount of experience one has with discourses, that is, little children cannot necessarily be very critical.) In fact, it is assumed that the extent to which a learner accepts or rejects the information, values and attitudes of the texts depends on the previous knowledge, values and attitudes the learner possesses (Kalmus 2004: 470). In other words, if the values and attitudes in a textbook text are in agreement with those of a learner, they presumably only reassert them. On the other hand, if they are in contradiction, they are likely to be evaluated and, then, either rejected or accepted. This way also the values and attitudes in the textbooks may be incorporated in the value system and set of attitudes of a learner and later on function in

turn as part of the basis of evaluative processes (Gilbert 1989: 70). Thirdly, socialization of this kind "is a cumulative process influenced by various agents, events, experiences, and discourses, of which textbook discourse is merely one" (Kalmus 2004: 470). Thus, learners are exposed to many kinds of influences in many sectors of life that contribute in creating one's own perception of matters. It can be, thus, concluded that textbook texts "*may* mould social beliefs, attitudes, and values" of the learners (Kalmus 2004: 470). For this reason it is not unsignificant what values and attitudes are actually mediated through the texts since, as discussed in chapter 4, values and attitudes are not only part of mental beliefs but also affect the way people behave and, for instance, treat each other.

## 4.2 Previous studies

School textbooks have been studied much from different perspectives, but not least in respect to the ideologies and values they represent and mediate. For example, there have been studies on how history books in the USA in contrast to those in Japan present the events of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima (Crawford 2003), what kind of ideologies Norwegian science textbooks mediate (Knain 2001) and how Korean English textbooks "promote a sense of globalization" and "a sense of Korean national identity" (Yim 2003). The two major interests of American social scientists and humanists studying ideologies in textbooks seem to be at the present in the biased ways ethnical and cultural minorities are represented, and in sexism (Ndura 2004: 144).

There has been done some research on ideologies and values in school textbooks in Finland as well. The main focus seems to be at the moment - and has been for some time – on sexism. Alongside the current feminism and equality discussion in the Finnish society, attention has been paid to the ways in which school textbooks represent women and men in society in general and in relation to each other. This is has also been often the perspective when studying language textbooks in master's theses in subjects such as Finnish as a second language (e.g. Salmu 2002) and English (e.g. Hjorth 1997, Piironen 2004 and Laakkonen 2007).

Among the many studies, there were no such to be found, either domestic or foreign, which would have particularly studied relationship values and attitudes in any school textbook. The only one with somewhat similar research aims was Varrio's pro gradu

thesis (2006). In her study she examines six English books with the method of content analysis, one from each decade from the 1950's until 2000's, aiming at finding out how "the representation of the ethical aims of education […] mentioned in the curricula change through the period of 1950 to 2005 in the middle school/comprehensive school English textbooks" (Varrio 2006: 66). She divides the found values into six: religious, metaphysical, nature related, social ethical, interpersonal and personal values. Her conclusions are that the values in English textbooks have changed but not radically. What she, however, considers significant is the change in how the values are presented: nowadays conceptions of what is right and what is wrong are not as explicitly stated as before but the values are implicitly embedded in people's stories in order to allow the learners to create one's own "ethical framework" (Varrio 2006: 156). According to her, this kind of approach to teaching ethics is based on postmodern thinking and humanist attitude that emphasizes the importance of independent and critical thinking of learners.

As relationship values and attitudes may be related to general interpersonal and personal values, I now briefly introduce Varrio's findings in regard to those values in two of the newest English books in her data. Firstly, the textbook *News Headlines 2* published in 1996 was seen to reflect such interpersonal values as individualism, tolerance (in respect to for example race and appearances), politeness, honesty, openness and balance. Personal value mainly emerged in respect to responsibility, criticality and different kinds of skills, such as language, social and scientific skills. Secondly, the textbook *Key English 9* from the year 2004 was seen to convey interpersonal values of accepting multiculturalism, collectivity and intercultural understanding. The personal values found were, for example, critical judgements (as in media literacy), renewing patterns of thinking and acting, responsibility and respecting the rights and freedom of individuals.

None of the interpersonal or personal values found in the texts were mentioned in respect to relationship, but concerned other social issues. However, as values of that nature can also touch relationships, the findings of the present study will be compared with the ones presented above.

The present study aims at supplementing the work in the field of educational textbook studies as no research on textbook values and attitudes from the particular perspective of relationships was to be found. In this study the analysis of relationship values and attitudes is conducted using a series of EFL-textbooks as the source of the data and CDA as the method. Next I will present the research design in detail.

# 5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is a discourse analytical study that aims at finding out how EFL-textbook texts represent relationships and what kinds of relationship values and attitudes are there behind the texts. In this study the term *relationship* refers solely to intimate interpersonal relationships, excluding for example friendships. Next the research design of the present study – its methodological framework, aims and research questions, data, analytical tools and the path of the analysis – will be fully introduced.

## 5.1 Methodological framework

As the present study is based on the discursive theory of language and its functions, the methodology similarly originates from discourse studies and, especially, from the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis. Next I will briefly present the aims and interests of both of them.

Discourse studies are a multidisciplinary area of studies with a variety of methods and approaches (e.g. Fairclough 1992, Pietikäinen and Mäntynen 2009, Van Dijk 1985). The general interest of discourse analysts - be they humanists or social scientists - is the relationship between discourses and social life, that is, the effects of discourses to social life and the ways people use discourses to make the wanted effect. As discussed in section 3.3, discourses can be seen to include various dimensions which Fairclough (e.g. 1992, 2003) has named *text*, *discursive practice* and *social practice*. A discourse analyst can naturally choose to focus on only one of these dimensions, according to one's interest. What is, however, to be borne in mind is that the main focus is not solely on the language in any of these dimensions, but also on the social aspect to it.

Despite the overlap, one can make some general categorizations on what is analyzed when examining each of these dimensions of discourses. Firstly, when doing textual analysis attention is paid on forms and meanings of language (Fairclough 1992: 74). In this sort of analysis vocabulary (for example metaphors), grammar, cohesion and the structure of the text are examined. Secondly, when analyzing discursive practices the focus is on production and interpretation of a particular discursive situation, some examples of what is examined being the force of utterances, coherence of texts and

intertextuality (Fairclough 1992: 80-81). Thirdly, discourse analysis can stem from the interest on social practices, i.e. researching the ways discourses function in the social reality, and how they constitute and establish, for example, identities, ideologies and hegemony.

The linguistic analysis, the analysis of the text itself, involves the aspect of interpretation. This derives from the already-discussed idea that the meanings of words and utterances are not stable but are negotiated in each communicative situation at hand. Therefore, as Fairclough (1992:75) states, "texts are usually highly ambivalent and open to multiple interpretations". This characteristic of discourses has at least two consequences. Firstly, a discourse analyst can not give an exclusive interpretation on any text, but has to be open to further suggestions by other analysts. Secondly, because the meaning of a discourse can vary in regard to the interpreter, the power of discourse should not, however, be overestimated (Fairclough 1992:65).

As mentioned before, there are various approaches to discourse studies (such as Content Analysis, Grounded Theory, Narrative Semiotics and Objective Hermeneutics (Titscher et al. 2000)) that can be applied according to one's discipline and aims of the study. One of those is Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA), on which the method of the present study also rests. One of the main principles of CDA, in addition to the ones shared with discourse studies in general (see 3.3 and 3.4), is that it makes a critical approach to discourses in society, as its name suggests. It is thought that reality can be transformed and constructed and, especially, unbalanced power relations and inequality can be established and preserved, and ideologies promoted through discourses (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003, Gee 1999, Van Dijk 1998, Wodak 2001). Thus, the major issues researched in CDA concern different kinds of social problems and, particularly, how they are created and preserved through discourses. Because of this clear stand to social issues in societies, Van Dijk (2001b: 96) states: "CDA does not deny but explicitly defines and defines its own socio-political position. That is, CDA is biased – and proud of it."

A further idea of CDA is that, for example, ideologically or politically biased texts do not usually explicitly pronounce the ideas that are to be promoted but they are often embedded in the discourses and they, therefore, often remain unrecognized by the readers or hearers (Van Dijk 2001a: 358). For this reason, as Fairclough (2003: 205) states, a careful analysis of the particular text must take place in order to research the means by which power and inequality is preserved and enhanced, and to prove the

existence of hidden messages in the discourse. Wodak (2001: 10) refers to this aim of CDA as "enlightenment and emancipation".

Although all CDA consider social issues and discourses from a critical perspective, the criticism can, however, be conducted in somewhat different ways and extents, and for slightly different purposes. Rogers (2004: 3-4) identifies three distinct views on being critical. Firstly, an analyst may aim at uncovering "power relationships and demonstrate inequities embedded in societies" through one's analysis (p.3). Secondly, an analyst may point to and make a certain social problem observable and try to solve it "through the analysis and accompanying social and political action" (p.4). That kind of problems are, for example, issues of inequality between genders, social classes or races. Thirdly, one may make "an attempt to describe, interpret, and explain the relationship between the form and function of language" (p.4). In this case the focus is on the inequality of different language patterns or varieties, i.e. why and how some of them are more valued in societies than others.

Furthermore, although the main concern of CDA is not language in itself but the functions and outcomes it may have, the methodology rests substantially on linguistic analysis (Meyer 2001: 25). This is because it is the linguistic devices that are used for, for instance, hiding responsibility or highlighting other party's negative sides (Van Dijk 2001a: 361), and thus, creating certain meanings. In addition, as in all discourse analysis, context is considered to have a significant role in creating meaning in CDA.

There is, however, no one comprehensive set of linguistic categories, that is, a ready-made analytical framework, that would be applicable for all CDA, but the framework has to be tailored in accordance to the research questions and aims at hand (Meyer 2001: 25). For example, if one aims at investigating how a newspaper presents and reports events or debates concerning immigration, that is, the attitudes or ideologies behind the discourses, one is to choose the specific linguistic features that are seen to create such meanings and to include them in one's analytical tools. An analytical framework in CDA may include such linguistic domains as phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, and touch, for example the following linguistic properties: stress and intonation, syntactic structures, coherence, speech acts, turn taking, genres and intertextuality. (e.g. Fairclough 1992, 2003, Van Dijk 1998, 2001b). The relevance of the different linguistic devices also depends on whether the data is spoken or written.

Despite the great investment on linguistic analysis, CDA does not leave the study on that level but aims especially at interpreting and explaining how language is used for

certain purposes (Thompson 1990: 294). However, interpreting and explaining meanings in discourses is dicey since, as earlier explained, "the meaning of a symbolic form is not given, fixed, determinate" (Thompson 1990: 294) but they are "always dynamic and open to new contexts and new information" (Wodak 1996: 17-20, as quoted in Titscher et al. 2000: 146) This means that an analyst has to have a humble attitude towards one's work and acknowledge that there could be other distinctive or additional interpretations and explanations to the matter.

## 5.2 Research questions

In this study I will analyze texts from the series *In Touch* within the framework of the following research questions:

1) What forms of relationships does the EFL-textbook series *In Touch* present in its texts? How are they defined and described?
2) What relationship values are there behind the texts?
3) What kinds of attitudes towards the different forms of relationships are there behind the texts?

Based on what I have described above (chapter 4), I assume that texts concerning relationships handle the topic from a certain selected perspective and also convey relationship values and attitudes. The aim of the present study is, thus, to examine what those perspectives, values and attitudes are in the data.

In addition, the aim of the study is not to assort the origins of the perspectives or the relationship values and attitudes (i.e. for instance, the curriculum or the personal world views of the textbook writers), nor to specify whether they are intentionally or unintentionally incorporated in the texts. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this paper cannot provide the ultimate truth about the texts and the values and attitudes they convey considering the idea that all discourses can have several distinct interpretations and explanations depending on the person who does the interpretation and explanation. For this reason I neither try to assert what values and attitudes the student studying the texts actually perceive or adopt, but to analyze which relationship values and attitudes *may* be perceived in the texts and *may* be adopted by the students.

**5.3 Data**

The data of the present qualitative study consists of four texts from the EFL-textbook series *In Touch*. This particular textbook series was chosen because it is currently used in many Finnish upper secondary schools and has, thus, an extensive audience. The series consists of eight textbooks aimed at the use of each of the eight courses provided in the Finnish secondary schools. They contain both texts and exercises and include also a Student's CD/CD-ROM with the key texts and some exercises. For each of the courses there is a Teacher's File that includes, for instance, suggested answers to the exercises, the scripts for the listening comprehension texts and extra material, a Test Pack and CDs and cassettes. Furthermore, the textbooks follow the guidelines provided in the National Curriculum and have grouped the topics to be handled accordingly. For instance, the texts in the textbook for the third course handle dreams, education and working life, whereas those of the sixth course deal with science, technology and enterprise (In Touch ja lukion opetussuunnitelman perusteet). The textbooks are further divided into units each of which concerns one topic of the course and include several texts and exercises. The texts within a textbook are categorized and labeled according to their function: there are *Key texts* that are the main texts of the units, *Key listening*-texts that are meant for practicing listening comprehension and of which the script can be only found in the Teacher's File and *Read on*-texts that are meant mainly for reading comprehension. The units also include a *Get going*-item that functions as the introduction to the unit in question and can also contain texts, such as songs or poems. Each of the textbooks contain four units, except the third contains three, and each of them contain at least one *key text* and one *read on*-text.

The data consists of four texts from which two are found in the textbook *Up close and personal* (Davies et al. 2001) targeted for the use of the first English course in the upper secondary school, and one in the Teacher's File of the same course. All of the three texts are part of the third unit of the textbook called *Shared lives* that deals with the topic of relationships. The text *She's got mail* (p. 48-50) is labeled as the key text and *People change and forget to tell each other* (p. 59-61) as the read on-text of the unit. The text *Perfects partners?* is the key listening-text of the unit and its script is, therefore, to be found only in the Teacher's File (Davies et al. 2002a: 65-67). The fourth

text *Happily ever after?* can be found on pages 58-59 in the textbook *A world of difference* (Davies et al. 2002b) targeted for the use in the fourth course. It is one of the two key texts of unit three *Opposites attract*. I assume that all the texts are self-written by the textbook authors since there are also authentic texts, for example from novels, in the textbooks and the source is always mentioned in the context, which is not the case with these particular texts.

   *She's got mail* consists of nine email messages between three persons: Sharon, Debbie and Steve. Six of them are from Debbie to Sharon, two from Steve to Sharon and one from Sharon to Debbie. The emails handle dating, and the positive and negative characteristics of a boyfriend. *Perfect partners?* is in turn an extract of a TV show called Perfect Partners (though supposedly it is a self-written text by the textbook authors) and is in the form of a dialog. There are three participants in the dialog: an engaged couple Sarah and John and the host of the show who asks the couple questions and tries to find out how well they know each other. The third text, *People change and forget to tell each other*, is a story of a divorced couple, their children and new partners, and the new situation they live in. It consists of an introduction to the text and five stories told by the participants in the situation: Stephanie (42, the ex-wife), Claire (14, the daughter), Stevie (16, the son), Sean (41, Stephanie's new boyfriend) and Mark (43, the ex-husband). The fourth text, *Happily ever after?*, is thematically closest to the topic of the present study: it handles different forms of relationships on the general level and then provides examples in the form of stories of three different kinds of relationships. The introductions to the whole text and to each of the stories are told by a narrator, whereas the three stories are told by either one of the parties of each of the couples. In the analysis it is referred to the first couple as C1, the second as C2 and the third C3.


## 5.4 Analytical tools

Although in this study the focus of the discourse analysis is on relationship values and attitudes, and ideologies are left aside this time, the approach to the data is extracted and adapted from sources that deal with analysing ideological features in texts. This procedure is arguable because of the fact that ideologies are actually based on certain values, and that the people devoted to some ideology also have certain kinds of attitudes to matters. As Van Dijk (1998: 96) formulates it, "ideologies are representations of who

we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents." Thus, because ideologies contain values and attitudes, those can be in turn examined with the same means as ideologies.

In the present study the analytical tools include of the following linguistic devices: presuppositions, semantic roles, themes and rhemes, wordings (including metaphors), evaluative statements, cohesion and modality. Next I will briefly discuss each of the devices included in the framework and analyzed in the texts.

*Presuppositions* are certain kinds of implications. According to Verschueren (1999: 33-34) presupposition is something "that must be pre-supposed, understood, taken for granted for an utterance to make sense". Fairclough (2003: 55-56) distinguishes three different sorts of presuppositions: existential (i.e. what exists and what not), propositional (i.e. "what is or can be or will be the case") and value presuppositions (i.e. what is desirable). Existential presuppositions, for example, can be found in possessive structures and definite noun phrases (Yule 1996: 26). By saying, for instance, "my husband" one implies that one has a husband. In addition, by saying "the depression" one implies that there is a depression which is taking place in the world.

Presuppositions may have an ideological or otherwise biased function, as Van Dijk (1998: 269) explains:

> [B]ut it may well be that the presupposed information is questionable or not true at all. That is, in this case it is obliquely asserted to be true, but without emphasizing such an 'assertion'.

Thus, by searching for presuppositions made in text a discourse analyst can make conclusions about what the producer of a text regards as true, or what one wants to present as the truth.

The categorization used in the analysis of *semantic roles* is by Kroeger (2005), including the roles of agent, experiencer, recipient, beneficiary, instrument, theme, patient, stimulus, location and accompaniment (see Kroeger 2005: 54-55 for more details). According to Van Leeuwen (2009: 282), "social actors may be "activated", given an Agent role, or "passivated", given a Patient role". Thus, the semantic roles in the data are analyzed in order to find out who or what are presented as taking actions, i.e. responsible for the situation, who or what as experiencing things and who or what as objects of actions.

Sentences and clauses as messages can be divided into *themes and rhemes*. "[T]he Theme of a clause extends from the beginning up to, and including, the first element

that has an experiential function – that is either participant, circumstance or process." (Halliday 2004: 85). The theme of a clause can be labelled as the topic or, moreover, the point of departure to the message (Halliday 2004: 64 and Verschueren 1999: 138). The theme can be either unmarked (i.e. the subject in declarative clauses) or marked (i.e. any other sentence constituent); an unmarked theme "is the choice made if there is no special reason for choosing something else" (Fairclough 1992: 183). Thus, marked themes can be considered especially important when analyzing beliefs, values and attitudes since they may convey a special point of departure to a matter. A rheme in turn is everything that follows the theme; it can be labelled as the comment to the theme (Verschueren 1999: 138).

According to Fairclough (1992: 185), "meanings are typically 'worded' in various ways". This means that, as in respect to linguistic structures, language users also make choices about the vocabulary, such as verbs, nouns and adjectives, they use in the texts they produce. Furthermore, the choices contribute to creating variation in meaning, i.e. different kinds of connotations about matters. Thus, through the *wordings* one uses one often gives an evaluation or opinion about matters (Van Dijk 1998: 270).

One important type of wordings is metaphor. Fairclough (1992: 194) defines the function of metaphors in the following way:

> [M]etaphors are not just superficial stylistic adornments of discourse. When we signify things through one metaphor rather that another, we are constructing our reality in one way rather than another. Metaphors structure the way we think and the way we act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way.

In other words, metaphors show the things to which a producer of a text associates the matters of discussion, and can that way reveal, for instance, one's attitudes and values.

*Evaluative statements* are "more or less explicit or implicit ways in which authors commit themselves to values" (Fairclough 2003: 171). According to Fairclough (ibid), this kind of statements can be made in many ways. An explicit evaluation can be given, for example, by using an adjective or a noun to describe an object (e.g. "The boy is brilliant."). A more implicit evaluation can be expressed, for instance, by using an "affective mental process verb" (p. 171), which entails evaluation (e.g. expression "this medicine helps you sleep better" implies that it is desirable to sleep well).

*Cohesion* refers to the relations clauses or sentences have to other clauses and sentences, either between contiguous clauses or over greater quantity of text (Fairclough 1992: 235). Halliday (2004: 540-547) distinguishes three primary kinds of functional

relations: elaboration, extension and enhancement. In the case of elaboration the idea of a clause is amplified by another clause which, for instance, rewords, describes or exemplifies the meaning. In the case of extension, for its part, one clause adds something new to the idea of another. Surface cohesive markers, such as "and", "moreover", "but", "however", "or" and "instead", may be used for expressing extension. Lastly, in the case of enhancement, one clause defines the idea of another by references to, for example, time, manner, cause and condition. Surface cohesive markers, such as "then", "while", "if – then", "like" and "similarly", may be found to express enhancement. Cohesion is not, however, always shown explicitly but it has to be inferred otherwise, that is, through other properties of the language used (Sanders and Spooren 2009: 199).

According to Van Dijk (1998: 270), the analysis of the functional relations between clauses and sentences in a text is important "because [the relations] manage the way statements are understood in relation to other ones". For example, cohesion can reveal an ideological or attitudinal, i.e. biased, perspective on what has caused a certain situation and what are the consequences of it.

The many forms of expressing *modality* signal one's attitude towards the content of the utterance, that is, they express "factuality, degrees of certainty or doubt, vagueness, possibility, necessity and, even permission and obligation" (Verschueren 1999: 129). Modality can be signalled through, for example, so called "categorical assertion" (Fairclough 1992: 158). These assertions are realized in simple present tense and are considered to express determined commitment to what has been uttered. Some other possible ways of expressing modality are modal auxiliary verbs (e.g. must, may and can), modal adverbs (e.g. probably and obviously) and modal adjectives (e.g. possible, likely) (e.g. Hodge and Kress 1988: 123 and Halliday 2004). In addition, modality can be signalled either implicitly or explicitly: when modality is made explicit by stating, for example, that "I think…", the statement is treated as subjective, whereas when modality is left implicit, for example, in "it's probably…", the statement is treated as objective (Fairclough 1992: 158-159). As Fairclough (1992: 161) states, objective modalities "allow partial perspectives to be universalized".

**5.5 Path of the analysis**

After choosing the textbook series *In Touch* to be the source of the data texts, I began to read through the tables of content, the titles of the texts and the texts themselves in all of the eight textbooks of the series in order to select the suitable texts for the analysis. The criterion of the selection was that the texts had to somehow deal with the topic of relationships or describe at least one form of them and not only mention it, so that conclusions about the relationship values and attitudes behind the texts could be made on the grounds of the analysis.

Using this criterion I found, contrary to my expectations, only four suitable texts for the analysis. The apparent reason for this is that there are eight English courses in the upper secondary school at the moment and a wide range of important topics to cover in them. Therefore, there simply is not enough room for individual topics to occur in great number. The four texts can, however, be seen as the crystallization of what the textbook writers have considered to be the central aspects to the topic of relationships; they have chosen to include some aspects in them and exclude others. These four texts function, thus, as the representatives of the ideas, values and attitudes the textbook writers either intentionally or unintentionally have incorporated in the texts concerning relationships.

After selecting the appropriate texts for the analysis I analyzed them one at a time. Firstly, I read them through in order to gain a general picture of the thematic and structure of the texts as wholes. Secondly, I applied the analytical framework I had produced for the study by combining tools from different sources (e.g. Fairclough 2003 and 1992, Gee 1999, Halliday 2004, Hodge and Kress 1988, Kroeger 2005 and Van Dijk 1998) to the texts. As the texts are in the form of stories presenting the characters' personal viewpoints (only the text *Happily ever after?* including a description of the present situation of different forms of relationships), the assumption was that no explicit teaching of values or attitudes was to take place but that they were embedded in the structures and vocabulary.

The tools for different linguistic features were variably applicable to the texts: some of them were seen as relevant to all of them in revealing the relationship values and attitudes behind the texts, whereas some were relevant only in certain texts, and, therefore, not all of linguistic features described in the analytical framework were analysed in all texts. The chosen features were, however, analyzed in a text throughout

in order to conduct a careful study and to also notice the implications more difficult to see without proper analysis. The analysis does not involve pictures or other visual elements but focuses only on the actual texts. Also in the case of the text *Perfect Partners,* which is both in written and spoken forms, only the written text and its linguistic features were analyzed.

My rather mechanical analysis highlighted several topics of interest in the texts. Next I wrote coherent text on the findings I made, dividing them according to the different linguistic features that were separately analysed. After this writing process concerning all the four texts the different topics, i.e. descriptions of different forms of relationships and relationship values and attitudes, became even more apparent: there were topics that were shared by all the texts and those that created variety. At this point I was able to select the major findings of the texts to be presented in chapter 7.

Furthermore, since individual linguistic elements create meaning co-operatively (being intertwined with each other), their effects overlap considerably. Consequently, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition, not all findings are introduced from the perspective of all the linguistic properties that are involved in creating the particular meaning. Instead, the most relevant property or properties are selected.

## 6 FINDINGS

Now I will turn to the findings of the present study. This chapter is divided into two sections as follows: in the first section I will examine the ways in which the various relationships are defined and described in the data; the second section concerns itself with the values and attitudes found in the data. In the examples from the texts, I have used bold face for emphasis because parts of the text *Happily ever after?* are in italics in the original.

### 6.1 Definitions of relationships

In this section I will examine the diverse fashions the concept of a *relationship* has been defined in the textbook texts. Except for the introduction to *Happily ever after?*, all the texts are in the form of stories of individuals or couples and, thus, present relationships from personal viewpoints. This means that the textbook writers have selected some

examples that are to represent the different forms of relationships and their characteristics. The different relationships-forms found in the texts are cohabitation, marriage (both love match and arranged marriage) and dating. That selection is under examination in this section which is, consequently, divided into three subsections, each corresponding to a single definition and how such a definition is arrayed.

### 6.1.1 Cohabitation

Cohabitation as a form of relationship is on display in two of the textbook texts, occurring side by side and often contrasted to marriage in the textbook chapters *Happily Ever After* and *People change and forget to tell about it*.

In *Happily ever after?* C2 (referring to the second couple in the text, as explained in section 5.3) represents couples that live in cohabitation. At the moment, according to the text, they have lived together for three years, and before that that they had dated for an undetermined period of time, as stated in the following Example:

Example 1.

"*One of the things that attracted me to Victoria was the fact that the subject of getting hitched never passed her lips **all the time we were going out together**", says Simon. "I knew we were compatible right from the word go because we're both very career-oriented and we don't waste time sweating the small stuff.*

Example 1 further implies that they have had consent on the form of their relationship from the start as Simon evaluates that it was only positive that Victoria did not dream about getting married at some point. Overall, the similar kind of thoughts and priorities seem to be one of the templates of their relationships.

In addition to the compatibility of the parties, the relationship of C2 is founded on trust, practicality and freedom. These issues are addressed in greater detail in subsections 6.2.2 and 6.2.4 and for that reason they will not be discussed here.

In *People change and forget to tell each other*, it is told that Stephanie has been married to Mark but now lives with Sean, whereas Mark has moved out and now dates Diana but does not live with her. Consequently, Diana is referred to as Mark's "girlfriend", but, despite the fact that Sean lives with Stephanie, he is referred to as Stephanie's "boyfriend" and not as a *partner*. There is no explicit reference to cohabitation either – although it is clearly cohabitation that is the form exhibited here,

meaning basically that Stephanie and Sean live together unmarried – but the references are merely to "living with [him/her]", as in "Sean, my boyfriend, has been living with me, Claire and Stevie for six weeks now"; "When Sean moved in with us it was strange"; "My mother has been living with Sean for a while now".

As seen, there is some variation on the word-choices, however: sometimes it is written that Stephanie and Sean live together, whereas at times this unit is also expanded to include the children as well. Consequently, the decisions adults make in regard to their relationships do not only affect themselves but also the children. This also applies to what is required from the children in the new situation when their parents have divorced from each other and have new girl- or boyfriends, as can be seen in the statement of the last sentence of the introduction to the whole text: "[t]hey are now **all** learning **to adapt** to the new situation and new relationships".

It is this expanded meaning of a relationship that brings in the sometimes troublesome conflicts arising from the new societal situation: to counter the expected difficulties in relation to the children and what they might experience in this newly formed family unit, adaption is offered as the balancing solution. In attitudinal terms, adaption is offered as the natural response to the changing (or developing) situation. Thus, the parties seem to be searching for and constantly negotiating their roles in the family, trying to settle and adapt to the situation.

Stephanie states to have acknowledged the possible problems of the new situation in advance, as shown in Example 2:

> Example 2.
>
> I was afraid of how the kids would cope and that we might get on each other's nerves all the time. It seems things are working out fine, though. I love Sean and I hope Claire and Stevie will learn to love him, too.

For her part, Claire saw "it was strange" when Sean moved in with them, explaining this by telling that she was used to living only with her mother and Stevie and that "[i]t's all these small everyday things that bug [her]". What is interesting in this is that in Claire's account there are three clearly separate stages visible, as she implicitly acknowledges that she had already got used to the life without their father. Thus it cannot be understood only as a transitory stage between the two family units, but as a separate family unit on its own. Indeed, neither Stevie nor Claire show any hopefulness that their father would reunite with their mother. However, showing a great deal of adaptability

also in the new situation Claire concludes that "I suppose we'll all get used to living under the same roof one day."

Stevie seems to have analyzed the new situation at home carefully, as he compares the present situation with the past: "It gets complicated very fast – I never realized how easy I had it when my parents were together." He thinks, however, that quite likely Sean is "okay" and that his somewhat strange behaviour arises from his insecurity in terms of Sean's function and role in the new situation. Stevie also acknowledges that it is important not only to his mother but also to Sean that he likes them, and he is furthermore convinced that Sean is not trying to take his father's place: "And I do like him, but there is no way I could ever like him more than my dad. I know, I know, he's not trying to take my dad's place. I really do understand that." Despite this he feels guilty about enjoying Sean's company even if he likes his father more.

As for Sean, he admits that it is not always easy to live together with Stephanie and her children. According to him the problems in the new situation derive from the problematic relationship to the children, as "Claire and Stevie both seem to resent [him] a bit", "they are somehow jealous of [him] living with their mother" and [he] find[s] it difficult to act naturally with them". In addition, the only problems he has had with Stephanie are closely connected to this very matter, as can be seen in the following Example:

> Example 3.
>
> The only times we've fought have been about Claire and Stevie when I've happened to say something a little bit negative about them. Small things like putting their dirty dishes into the dishwasher or cleaning their rooms more often. I try not to nag but even small things like that are enough to drive Stephanie mad and she starts shouting at me to mind my own business. Maybe she thinks I'm criticizing her as a mother.

It seems that he feels it is impossible to relate to the role and function of Stephanie's partner in relation to the children, especially in matters of discipline, as Stephanie is very sensitive about her children and might think that he is criticizing her as a mother. Thus, his problem appears to crystallize in his question: "[S]hould I treat them like a son and daughter or just friends?"

Not only is the family unit in which Sean has replaced their father as the companion of Stephanie experiencing great challenges due to the changed framework, as there is also the father of the children and his life where to the dismay of the children there is now a woman. Claire feels that their father's girlfriend is trying to take their mother's

place, and acknowledging that although their father's new friend is most likely only trying to be friendly, such behaviour is still mostly evalued as insufferable: "[s]he probably just wants to be friendly with me but it still drives me crazy".

Mark himself was "totally gutted" when Stephanie revealed to him that she wanted a divorce, admitting that the news came as a surprise because Mark had considered them an ideal couple. He admits that he is not totally over their divorce, since he says: "Funny, I suppose I still feel a bit jealous, even after all these years." Furthermore, he is jealous about his children as Sean "get[s] to see much more of [his] kids than [he] will, which bothers the hell out of [him]".

As seen, as a whole the text brings forth various problematic issues regarding the new situation not only from the perspective of the adults but the children as well. It is perceived that the new situation is somewhat "complicated", although "[n]othing dramatic" has happened. On the other hand, at least Stephanie and Claire show some degree of optimism concerning their prospects of a happy future as a family, as seen in the following Examples:

> Example 4.
>
> It seems things are working out fine, though.I love Sean and I hope Claire and Stevie will learn to love him, too. (Stephanie)
>
> Example 5.
>
> I suppose we'll all get used to living under the same roof one day. (Claire)

It can also be concluded that, as implied in the text, adults have the freedom and prerogative to abandon a relationship and start new lives (this issue will be discussed in more detail in 6.2.2.2), and the children are to, if not to approve their parents' choices, at least to adopt to the situation and to learn to love their parents' new partners, i.e. to behave maturely.


## 6.1.2 Marriage

Marriage as a form of relationship is on display in two of the textbook texts, *Happily Ever After* and *People change and forget to tell about it*. In this subsection I will consider it in relation to cohabitation and its two manifestations, as *love matches* and *arranged marriages*.

**6.1.2.1 Love match**

There are some word-choices that seem to equate marriage with cohabitation in *People change and forget to tell about it*. Firstly, as already mentioned, the relationship between Stephanie and Sean is not directly referred to as *cohabitation* but they are merely said to "live together". As far as Stephanie and Mark are concerned, the word "marriage" is not used many times in the text, and at one point where their son Stevie refers to his parents' marriage, he refers to it euphemistically: "It gets complicated very fast – I never realized how easy I had it when my parents were together." With this expression, it seems, marriage is equated with cohabitation since they are both considered to mean being or living together.

   Stephanie's relationships to Mark and Sean are described somewhat differently when approached from the perspective of love. In reference to Stephanie and Mark, in both instances where the issue is mentioned the expression "to be in love" is used, whereas with Stephanie and Sean the verb form "to love" is used instead. This seems to imply that the nature of the emotion is different in these two cases. According to the New Oxford American Dictionary (2005-2009), "to be in love" is defined as "to be infatuated with", "to be besotted with" and "consumed with desire for", whereas "to love" means "to care very much for", "to feel deep affection for", "hold very dear" and "to be devoted to". "To love" also has the meaning of "be infatuated with", yet "to be in love with" carries more prevalently the connotation of a fleeting crush, whereas "to love" connotes more serious and long-lasting feelings. Analyzing these words, then, one could interpret that the text treats the marriage of Stephanie and Mark primarily as based on evanescent feelings of love, whereas the relationship between Stephanie and Sean as based on something more permanent and serious. This conceptual difference could be understood through Stephanie's account in the beginning of her narrative, where she states that when she and Mark married, she was "very young", implying that their marriage was based on naïveté. This naïveté is then contrasted with her as an adult and as someone with more life experience and thus understanding better what "to love" actually means and what it entails; it is implied that now she is able to base her relationship on more permanent things than mere feelings. Concerning Sean, hoping that "Claire and Stevie will learn to love him, too", Stephanie sees love as something that can be learnt, and thus, that it requires work sometimes. When it comes to her and Mark's marriage, she seems to imply that they never learnt to love each other

accordingly so that they could have felt a required kind of deep affection and devotion for each other.

In *Happily Ever After*, the wife of the first couple (C1), Carrie, gives two reasons as to why she wanted to marry in the first place: firstly, cohabitation did not feel permanent enough and, secondly, she had "*always been a sucker for layers of chiffon, angelic bridesmaids, sobbing in-laws*", and other ceremonial, material elements in the wedding occasion itself. For his part, her boyfriend Greg did not want to marry at all because he thought "*he was not the marrying kind*", and because of this fundamental difference between them Carrie felt that she "*had to twist his arm a bit to bring him round to [her] way of thinking*". Thus, unlike other couples in the text, C1 were in conflict with their contradictory wishes regarding their relationship: whereas Carrie yearned for commitment, Greg was afraid of it, as he was "*not the marrying kind*" and "*commitment-phobic*", and possibly the loss of freedom to change his mind and leave if necessary.

Finally, however, Greg submitted to Carrie's wish, and the effects of this are described by her as overtly positive, as seen in Example 6:

Example 6.

*But getting hitched does seem to have brought out the best in my commitment-phobic husband. His brain seems much better equipped to deal with emotional issues. Now that we are married, he lies awake at night making empire-building plans for our future, and conjuring up suitable names to go with the surname Shepherd. He's also managed to keep up an almost caveman-like mantra of 'my wife' in conversations for the past eleven months now. Call me old-fashioned, but I think it sounds a lot more romantic than 'my partner'.*

Before the marriage Greg was against and afraid of it. Now, after getting married he seems to have been changed into a more emotional and sensitive person, quite likely the result of embracing this new paradigm of commitment-based marriage: he makes huge plans for the life they now permanently share and is obviously enthusiastic to have children. Carrie feels about all of this very positively, seeing it even romantic.

What is worth closer attention at this point is the agency of the first sentence of the Example that is given to an inanimate noun "getting hitched", or marriage. The choice of giving marriage the role of the agent in the above quote gives the impression that marriage in itself can take on an action, or at least have an influence on the events and procedures that follow: the credit for the improvement that are visible in Carrie's husband is given to marriage and not to Carrie nor Greg. The choice to treat "getting hitched" as the subject of the sentence exposes the overall function of the sentence:

Carrie wants to defend the choice of marriage, and especially her endeavour to persuade Greg into it, by telling that the overall results of the marriage are solely positive. Furthermore, giving "getting hitched" the agency in the sentence places Greg in the position of what has been influenced (grammatically "my commitment-phobic husband" is an object-complement). Overall, the text treats Greg as a person who is influenced by things and other people instead of someone who actively functions himself to bring about change. In addition to what marriage has affected in him, Carrie has managed to "bring him round to [her] thinking" about marriage, to engage and marry him.

**6.1.2.2 Arranged marriage**

One of the three representatives of different forms of relationships in *Happily ever after?* is arranged marriage in the context of Asian people living in Britain. The couple is described as "young, happily married, proud parents of a one-year son". The foundation of the arranged marriage seems to be in the Sikh traditions (Example 7) and deliberate choice of the suitable spouse, a process which parents and the prospective husbands and wives contribute to (Example 8) and which is evaluated, at least in this story, as a guarantee for a successful marriage (Example 9). These ideas can be seen, for instance, in the following examples:

> Example 7.
>
> "*Arranged marriages have been part of the Sikh way of life for generations and I wasn't about to start breaking with traditions.*
>
> Example 8.
>
> *My parents listened to and respected my views, but they were also able to take a more level-headed approach to the whole matter […]*
>
> Example 9.
>
> *As far as I'm concerned, kashif and I are very well suited. Divorce will never be an option for us.*

**6.1.3 Dating**

In this subsection I will touch upon another form of relationship, namely, dating (referring to going steady in contrast to going out). The first textbook chapter that I will

analyze is *She's Got Mail*, in which relationships of four adolescents, Sharon, Debbie, Tony and Steve, are described.

There are several ideas to be found in *She's got mail* that contribute in the definition and description of dating it gives. Firstly, going steady is distinguished from going out, as, for instance, Sharon says that "[she and Steve] did go out together once – for about five minutes", but tries to appeal to Debbie not to leave Tony since "[they]'ve been together for so long. In contrast, it seems that going out functions as an opportunity to get to know each other and to "fall madly in love" before actual dating can start.

Secondly, people may see differently the stage and situation of their relationship, as can be seen in the cohesion created with the descriptions of each of the three characters, Steve, Debbie and Sharon. Steve thinks that Sharon still has feelings for him and is jealous about him after their five-minute-date, and refers to their relationship as if they had already been together: "[It]'s time you got over us and pulled yourself together. I know you'd like to get **back together** [...]. Anyway, must dash 'cos me and Debbie have got a date tonight". In contrast, Sharon gives the impression that she was not that interested in him in the first place: "He was all over me like an octopus. Believe me, your Tony is worth ten of him." Furthermore, Steve thought his and Debbie's date went well as he, for instance, boasts to Sharon that "[Debbie] must be really keen on [him] because she had tears in her eyes the whole time [he] was telling her about himself". Debbie, however, had a strikingly different opinion of how well the date had gone as she describes it as a disappointment and that "[i]t was a relief to escape". Although Steve's egocentricity might be somewhat exaggerated to make the text more interesting, the plot of the story was based on the distinctive ideas of the characters and the changing relationships that were the result of those ideas.

Thirdly, the issue of jealousy is raised in the text: it is possible that one is envious of the other's boy- or girlfriend, as the evaluations that Debbie and Steve make about Sharon who opposes their relationship presuppose: "Sharon, you're just jealous!" (by Debbie), and "[a]nyway, must dash 'cos me and Debbie have got a date tonight" (by Steve). Further ideas the text conveys are those of the possibility of leaving one's boy- or girlfriend when a more attractive one is met, and the important characteristics of a boy- or girlfriend. These are, however, discussed in subsections 6.2.2 and 6.2.5.

The text *Perfect partners?* introduces an engaged couple, Sarah and John. It is not mentioned whether they live together or separately, but that they have dated for two years and three months. Overall, the text does not explicitly tell much about the nature

of their relationship or their shared history. The questions and conversations around them presuppose, however, that their relationship involve such things as cooking for one another (at least Sarah has cooked for John as she guesses his favourite food to be her chilli con carne: "It's got to be my chilli con carne. He really loves it. He can't get enough of it"), giving presents (Sarah: "It was your birthday present." and "What have you done with all the other presents I've given you?") and travelling together (John: "You're no fun to travel with, anyway. You're such a moaner. Remember Teneriffe? We had a week of moaning because of the price of sun oil").

However, the main perspective that supports the whole story of the text seems to be, as the title of the text suggests, whether the couple is, or can be, perfect and, more closely, the impression the couple itself has on their compatibility. This issue will be discussed in 6.2.5 in more detail.

## 6.2 Relationship values and attitudes

In this section I will present what kinds of values and attitudes seem to be embedded in the texts regarding the relationship-forms introduced in the previous section. This section is divided into five partly overlapping subsections according to the values found: modernity and traditions, freedom of choice, permanency and commitment, practicality and rationality, and compatibility.

## 6.2.1 Modernity and traditions

The value of modernity appears in the very beginning of the text *Happily ever after?* The first paragraph of the text provides an introduction to the whole textbook text and is quoted at length in Example 10, where marked themes are emphasized in bold face and unmarked in italics.

Example 10.

**If Britain is anything to go by,** marriage has never been less in fashion. [...] **In little more than a generation**, Britain, like all western countries, has seen a sea change in lifestyle choices. *Circumstances that were strictly taboo in our grandparents' days* are now commonplace. *Expressions like 'living in sin', 'getting into trouble', or 'making an honest woman of her'* are only used humorously nowadays. *Cohabitation* is often preferred to marriage, **and, compared with thirty years ago**, there are far more options open to British people of all ethnic backgrounds about the kind of family life they want to pursue. **Yet, even in this new liberal climate**, the ideal of lifelong commitment is still held in high regard. **In a recent survey**, over

60% of people in Britain said that while marriage might not work out for some, it is nevertheless 'the best kind of relationship', especially if you want to start a family.

The introductory paragraph starts with two statements, i.e. marriage is not in fashion anymore, but there has been a change in lifestyle choices. This point of departure, that is, change, is further elaborated by the use of temporal adverbs and, especially, by the use of several marked themes with reference to time, as seen above. These marked themes function as the starting point to many of the sentences in the paragraph forming cohesion, which seems to emphasize the importance of the temporal aspect of change.

Considering how this development is described in the past-present continuum, e.g. in the contrasts between past and present, this development is seen as largely positive. Earlier there was only a single form of relationship that was acceptable, whereas today the options are several. The forms that were unacceptable before (the word "circumstances" presumably refers to cohabitation or to sexual relationships involving no living together, i.e. intimate relationships other than marriage) are described as being commonplace today and thus acceptable, in stark contrast to what the situation was like before. Furthermore, the mention of such expressions as "living in sin", "getting into trouble" and "making an honest woman out of her" and the notion that they are "only used humorously nowadays" seems to convey that the restrictive ideas of the past, worded in the expressions, are nowadays considered rather ridiculous and, therefore, abandoned. On the contrary, people now have the freedom to prefer what the text calls the "circumstances" to marriage if they like, and their choices are tolerated and respected, thanks to the liberal mentality. In other words, as the idea of one single acceptable form of relationship is deridingly abandoned, the liberation from this restrictive ideology through the instrument, the freedom of choice, is seen as positive.

In addition to this, there was another factor found as well, realized in some existential presuppositions, that seems to strengthen the impression that one single option in regard to relationships is not enough, and, therefore, the development towards greater freedom is positive. The first example is the ending to Example 10, here quoted again for clarity in Example 11:

Example 11.

In a recent survey, over 60% of people in Britain said that while marriage might not work out for some, it is nevertheless **'the best kind of relationship'**, especially if you want to start a family.

In this example the combination of the definite article and the word "kind" function in favour of the presupposition that there are several types ("kinds") of the matter in question, of which one is now under discussion.

Example 11 seems to presuppose that not only are there various types of relationships but that they can be ranked in terms of their quality, as "the best kind of relationship". According to the text, more than sixty percent of British people consider marriage as "the best kind of relationship", at least if a couple wants to have children. Implicitly, however, there exists the assumption that there are then other kinds of relationships that are the second-best, etc., also when starting a family. Curiously, the expression is marked with quotation marks in the text, which could imply that as an idea it is of the people that had participated in the survey, quoted by the textbook writers. Yet on the other hand, the presence of the quatation marks can be interpret to emphasize the relativist view (that is also apparent in "if you want to start a family") where, in the myriad number of different possibilities, there can be no one best kind of relationship for everyone.

This kind of relativism is also supported by the presupposition in what Carrie (C1) says about Greg's reasons to not wanting to get married: "*Greg used to protest that he wasn't **the marrying kind**, but I always said that it was because he hadn't found the kind he wanted to marry*". In the quotation referring to Greg and his protesting, the presupposition is directed to a person and one's characteristics. Based on the first clause one can presume that there are people whom marriage suits and those whom it does not suit, and, therefore, there must also be the "living-together kind". In addition, the latter clause gives rise to the assumption that there are different types of people of which some match together and some do not.

The examples above and the introduced ideas raise one further viewpoint to the matter. In the clause which says that "marriage might not work out for some" "marriage" is the agent for the intransitive action "to work out", and "some", that is, "people", are treated as beneficiaries. The emphasis is, thus, given to "marriage": instead of stating that the couples themselves could be responsible for what happens to their marriages, which could be the case if the sentence were formulated for example as "some people don't know how to/ cannot make their marriage work", it appears to be implied that it is the marriage that does not succeed in itself. This impression is reinforced by the verb choice of "work out". It seems as if marriages, or any relationships, are to "work out" without any effort given by the parties in order to make

it work. As it was also presupposed earlier that marriage does not suit everyone, it can be concluded that if marriage is to fail, the cause is not in the actions people take but in the suitability of marriage as an institution and the persons, and their (inborn) characteristics, living in it. This also leads to the idea that people are not actually responsible for what happens to their marriage since they cannot change their personality.

As seen, one of the embedded values in the text *Happily Ever After?* is modernity, from which arises the interesting question concerning the representation of marriage and whether it is shown as something positive. This text attaches to it rather negative elements, at least in the modern-traditional continuum, as the institution of marriage is described as old-fashioned, both explicitly and implicitly.

The idea that marriage is old-fashioned can be seen in the very first sentence of the text when it states: "marriage has never been less in fashion". As known, if something is in fashion, it is regarded as modern and desirable, i.e. with positive attributes, whereas when something is out of fashion, it is regarded as outdated and it is laden with negative attributes. Not only this, but the text states that marriage has never been so out of touch with modern society as it is now.

In addition, the semantic role of "marriage" is of significance as it functions as an inanimate agent in this particular sentence: it gives the impression that marriage is able to act in its own right or that the active role of people is diminished. Consequently, the sentence appears to imply that there is actually nobody affecting what happens or has happened and that the situation has developed by itself to be what it is in its present state, i.e. people do not value marriage as they used to do. In other words, the emphasis seems to be more on marriage and its unpopularity than on the people who evaluate the different kinds of relationships.

Another reference to marriage being old-fashioned can be found in the C1-story: one of the effects of marriage on their mutual life is the change in terms in which they refer to each other, as elaborated by the wife in Example 12.

Example 12.

*He's also managed to keep up **an almost caveman-like mantra** of 'my wife' in conversations for the past eleven months now. **Call me old-fashioned**, but I think it sounds a lot more romantic than 'my partner'.*

Here two references are made not to marriage as a whole but to one aspect of it. Firstly, the description of how the husband has in the marital life been calling his wife with "*an almost caveman-like mantra*" refers with humour to a primordial state in the evolutionary chain of human development. On one level this could point out that the husband is a rather simple person, but, on the other hand, considering the humorous tone of the statement, such an expression could also mean that the whole concept of hierarchically evaluating and actually esteeming the roles of the partners based on the relationship's "level" (marriage here designating a hierarchically higher level in comparison to legally unbinding and unofficial relationships) as ancient. Neither of the interpretations exclude each other, and together they could also explain the wife's underlying humour, as it is possible that it is exactly this kind of "primordial masculinity" that the wife appreciates in her husband's behavior. Furthermore, imagining and granting the right to the reader to call her "*old-fashioned*" the wife actually agrees that the idea is understood nowadays most likely as an old-fashioned one, as romantic as it may be.

The idea of marriage being old-fashioned is also linked to the references made on the traditional nature of the institution, discussed in more detail below, as I will now concentrate on the value of tradition.

One way to equate marriage as being old-fashioned is to equate with traditionality. The following extract, Example 13, refers to traditions somewhat implicitly:

Example 13.

Those wishing to walk down the aisle **promising to love and honour till death them do part** are on the decrease, while divorce rates in England and Wales have soared in recent years.

Significantly, the language used to describe the subject of the clause is taken from the vows given when getting married in the Christian ceremony, and taken as such, "promising to love and honour till death do part" is overtly ceremonial language. Slightly archaic in its structure (the verb form in "till death them do part"), this phrase seems to define the marrying people primarily as the ones who value traditions and naively believe in the promises that the institution of marriage seems to give regarding the success of a relationship.

What is also worth noting is that the original and profound elements connected to marriage as an institution (such as, why to be married and what marriage stands for) are in many respects reduced to the word "tradition", and, thus, what seem to be left of the

institution in today's society are the external form and name, the habit of getting married. Although there are features of the traditional view in today's marriages, one could argue that they have been altered to reflect the "new liberal climate", i.e. individuals may accept some aspects of marriage but reject others. For example, commitment is connected to marriage but has gained new conditions and liberties. One of those new conditions that can be found in the present text is that cohabitation, and sex almost invariably attached to it, before marriage is not out of question, as is the case according to the "traditional" view on marriage. This can be seen in the opening line of C1: ""*We tried living together for a while, but it just didn't feel permanent enough*," says Carrie."

Another condition found is that commitment is no longer seen as necessarily permanent but it can be broken if seen necessary or preferable, i.e. marriage does not always last "till death do us part" but rather "till life do us part". (Although the kind of devaluation of commitment is by no means a new phenomenon, its increase is greatly seen as a current phenomenon as the text itself states [cf. Example 11]).

Thus, when the original meaning and contents of marriage has been forgotten, reduced and changed, what is left is the tradition without hardly any explanation why marriage has been viewed as the "right" form of relationship. Instead, it is increasingly seen as traditional and acceptable simply because it is something "people do because their ancestors did as well". This kind of thinking can clearly be seen in the text: the choice of marriage has reasoned mainly with the traditional aspect and commitment (although, as explained, in its new form), whereas cohabitation among other alternatives has been justified by freedom of choice and concrete, practical reasons.

Thus, the introduction has a slightly negative tone when referring to marriage as an old-fashioned and traditional institution, since it is presented to be, at least to some extent, in contradiction with the modernity and "liberal climate". However, whereas C1 is connected with the represented traditional ideology and customs of getting married (as in "[o]ne couple for whom the idea of wedded bliss **still** holds true are Greg and Carrie […]," directly following the introduction, and "I've always been a sucker for layers of white chiffon, angelic bridesmaids, sobbing in-laws, tossed bouquets, and tin cans on the back of the car", C3 is explicitly connected with both modernity and traditions, as in the following examples:

Example 14.

In many ways, they epitomize **the modern nuclear family** in Britain today: young, happily married, proud parents of a one-year-old son – **and Asian**.

Example 15.

”*Arranged marriages have been part of the Sikh way of life for generations and I wasn't about to start breaking with tradition.*

Although arranged marriages seem to be less adjusted to the modern thinking and, in contrast, adhere to the traditions, C3 has been described as a modern family. The reason for this seems to be, however, in somewhere else than their appreciation of traditions (which is emphasized throughout the story of C3), namely, in that Britain is nowadays a multicultural society and, thus, a family originated in Asia is a sign of modernity in the street view. In addition, the presence of Asian people who are faithful to their habits also create variety in the range of relationship-forms in society and, therefore, supports the current appreciation of diversity also in that area of life.

Overall, the story of C3 gives a positive picture about the Sikh tradition to arrange marriages. In fact, Sabeen explicitly corrects the fallacious impression many people have, namely, that "young Asians [would be] forced into marriage against their wishes". On the contrary, she describes how she and her parents collaborated on finding a suitable husband for her, and that the result was good: "*As far as I'm concerned, Kashif and I are very well suited. Divorce will never be an option for us.*"

### 6.2.2 Freedom of choice

Freedom of choice was the most frequently emerging value in the texts, becoming evident in many linguistic devices. This subsection will tackle to broad variety of examples that denote the visibility of freedom of choice behind the text. It is divided into two parts, where first I shall examine the theme generally and secondly concentrate on a few themes that are seen as belonging to the scope of freedom of choice on the relationship-level.

### 6.2.2.1 Freedom of choice as a reoccurring theme

The value of freedom of choice is a reoccurring theme throughout the text *Happily ever after?*, starting with the general overview and background to the stories of the three couples. The first implicit reference to the possibility of choosing is made already in the first sentence of the chapter ("Marriage has never been less **in fashion**", where it is implied that marriage, or any other form of relationship, is a question of popularity and, therefore, of popularity and preference, as well. Consequently, it is implied that there are several different options, each enjoying popularity to various degrees. Marriage, the text says, has never been less appreciated than now, and naturally something else is commanding high popularity in its stead. Thus, people are free to choose the kind of relationship they want to pursue from the range that is available "on the market".

According to the text, the freedom of choice has not, however, always prevailed but is a rather new phenomenon. This idea is explicitly expressed already in the third sentence of the text: " In little more than a generation, Britain, like all western countries, has seen **a sea change in lifestyle choices**". The idea of change (that was already touched upon in regard to the aspect of temporality in context of modernity) and how it has taken place in society is elaborated in Example 16:

> Example 16.
>
> In little more than a generation, Britain, like all western countries, has seen a sea change in lifestyle choices. Circumstances that were strictly taboo in our grandparents' days are now commonplace. Expressions like 'living in sin', 'getting into trouble', or 'making an honest woman of her' are only used humorously nowadays. Cohabitation is often preferred to marriage, and, compared with thirty years ago, there are far more options open to British people of all ethnic backgrounds about the kind of family life they want to pursue. Yet, even in this new liberal climate, the ideal of lifelong commitment is still held in high regard. In a recent survey, over 60% of people in Britain said that while marriage might not work out for some, it is nevertheless 'the best kind of relationship', especially if you want to start a family.

This extract shows implicitly at least some aspects to the causes and consequences of the change that has been spoken of, namely that there has first been a change in the perception concerning relationships and what is considered appropriate. This "change of mind" is gradually put into action in the form of several kinds of relationships. The reference to the prevailing situation, "this new liberal climate", summarizes what is being seen to be the result of the change of mind: individuals have the freedom to choose in what kind of relationships they want to live, and the choices are accepted and respected by the other members of the community. This development of the moral code

has not, however, resulted in disapproval or disappearance of marriage but has placed it into the array of many possible forms of relationships. Thus, the freedom of choice is seen in the text as a direct consequence of changes in societal norms.

In Example 16 there is one sentence to which I want to pay closer attention, the particular extract being quoted in Example 17:

> Example 17.
>
> Cohabitation is often preferred to marriage, and, compared with thirty years ago, **there are far more options open to British people of all ethnic backgrounds** about the family life they want to pursue.

In the emphasized part of the passage the agency is given to the dummy subject "there" which in principle does not refer to anything concrete. One consequence of its use is that no actual subject is considered to be responsible for the actions or the situation being talked about. In this particular clause, it seems, it is not important where the freedom or different alternatives come from, which could be expressed for instance by the use of an active agent, but the mere existence of the options. In addition, using this particular structure with a dummy agent the whole "British people of all ethnic backgrounds" can be treated as beneficiaries (instead of, e.g., agents, which would be the case if the clause was formulated instead as "British people of all ethnic backgrounds have far more options…"), highlighting the positivity of having many options.

### 6.2.2.2 Matters of choice in the relationship-context

As the point of departure is that people nowadays possess the freedom of choice, the text also presents four matters concerning relationships where this freedom can be exercised, those being the suitable form of relationship and spouse for them, whether to have children and whether to continue staying in a relationship or not.

Firstly, in addition to the ideas about a range of options concerning different relationship-forms presented in the introductory paragraph, there are some further points in the stories that support the view. For example, the theme of personal freedom is expressed in the metaphorical description of C2's attitude and plans to marry: "After three years of living together, they say that marriage is simply *'not on the agenda'* ". This sentence is open to the interpretation of personal freedom: it is because of the

personal freedom that a human being is able to exercise one's choice, thus including in or excluding certain aspects from one's life. In other words, there are no universals that would or should suit everyone, as everyone is considered to choose their ways also in respect to the form of relationship they want to pursue. What is presumably meant by marriage not being "on the agenda" is that the couple, having the possibility not to abide under certain norms (i.e. that marriage is the only acceptable way), exercise their freedom to prioritize their lives, simply considering other things than marriage to be more valuable to them.

Another example can be found in the story of C3, where the at least partial freedom to choose the relationship form is present, in contrast to what could be assumed of an arranged marriage, as it is said that "[*a*]*rranged marriages have been part of the Sikh way of life for generations and **I wasn't about to start breaking with the tradition**"*. Here it is shown, by using the verb *break*, that in the Sikh culture it is assumed that couples follow traditions and allow their parents, or other elders, to arrange their marriage. On the other hand, the same clause implies that the couple has an option and could have disagreed and objected to tradition, yet have decided not to.

Secondly, the right to exercise the freedom of choice thematically also concerns the freedom to choose the partner to oneself, an idea which becomes apparent in the stories of C1 and C3. Concerning C1, Carrie reports about her and her husband's debate about whether to marry or not: "*Greg used to protest that he wasn't the marrying kind, but I always said that it was because he hadn't found **the kind he wanted to marry**"*. In the emphasized clause Greg, Carrie's partner, has the semantic role of an agent, and "*the kind he wanted to marry*" functions as the patient. The patient in turn expresses what Greg experiences, i.e wants, namely, to marry a certain kind of a person. This implies that one has the right to choose the spouse according to one's personal wishes.

In the story of C3 the aspect of choosing the spouse is in the centre, as can be seen in Examples 18 and 19:

Example 18.

*There's been a lot of talk about young Asians being forced into marriage against their wishes, **but most Sikhs believe that there has to be consent on both sides if marriage is to work out successfully**.*

Example 19.

*But that doesn't mean to say that **I accepted** the first boy **they suggested**.*

Example 18 refutes the public belief in the West that arranged marriages are conducted against the wishes of the husband and wife and, on the contrary, states the assent of both parties being one of the priorities of Sikh people in order to make the marriages work. That the priority of mutual consent is of utmost importance is emphasized by the use of the modal verb *has to* in the meaning of strong necessity. This belief in the necessity of the approval of the parties themselves and the rejection of forcing people into marriage is proved to be true in Sabeen's family, as Sabeen comments on the dialogue between her and her parents, as in Example 19. Thus, Sabeen's freedom of choice functions in conversation with the suggestion of her parents, but Sabeen seems to have the control over the final decision. Example 20 describes further the collaboration between Sabeen and her parents:

Example 20.

*My parents listened to and respected **my views**, but they were also able to take a more level-headed approach to the whole matter, more able to see things in a prospective husband that I might not have seen. My mother can spot whether a man is kind and considerate at twenty paces, whereas my father is very shrewd when it comes to finding out whether a man will be a good provider or not.*

This extract reveals that, regardless of Sabeen's freedom to make the final decision about her husband, the parents' role is by no means diminished to insignificance, as grammatically *"[m]y parents"* functions as the subject and *"[Sabeen's] views"* as the object of listening and respecting in the sentence, and not the other way around.

The third matter on which people have, according to the text, the freedom of choice is whether to have children or not. This idea is, firstly, conveyed in the introduction to *Happily ever after?*: "In a recent survey, over 60% of people in Britain said that while marriage might not work out for some, it is nevertheless 'the best kind of relationship', especially **if you want to start a family**", where the clause with the conjunction "if" emphasized in the example expresses a conditional idea. In this case the conditioning concerns the subject of starting a family and, thus, implies that one has the possibility to choose whether to start a family or not. In addition, "you" functions as an experiencer who *wants* something in the clause. This contributes to the implication that the matter of having children is actually a matter of choosing based on one's wishes. A similarly-themed idea is expressed by C3: " *If we did decide to go our separate ways, there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because **we've also made up our minds not to go in***

*for a family*". In this extract Simon (C2) states explicitly that they have decided on the matter of having children, implying that ultimately to have or not children is their choice.

Fourthly, separation is seen as a matter of choice in the data. To this aspect of freedom of choice refers not only the text *Happily ever after?* but also *People change and forget to tell each other* and *She's got mail*. Next the findings connected to this theme in each of the three texts are presented.

In the text *Happily ever after?* the issue of freedom of choice in connection to separation emerges in the stories of C2 and C3, although in case of C3 it is only implied once, whereas in case of C2 it is referred to a lot. The reference to the issue in the story of C3 is made in the very last sentence where Sabeen says that "[a]*s far as I'm concerned, Kashif and I are very well suited. Divorce will never be **an option for us**". Although the explicit message of the sentence is that Sabeen and Kashif are not going to divorce at any point, the wording carries the presupposition that the option for divorce or staying together does exist. Thus, C3 has chosen one of the options, that is, not to separate.

In the story of C2 the possibility to separate is a major topic that is approached especially from the perspective of freedom. Simon describes their view as follows in Example 21:

> Example 21.
>
> *I'm sure that if one of us **wanted to exit the relationship** for any reason, the other would respect that wish. In fact, we've already drawn up an agreement dividing the house and all our property right down the middle **should we decide to split**. If **we decided to go our separate ways**, there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because we've also made up our mind not to go in for a family as neither of us feels that we are particularly cut out for parenthood.*

Firstly, the matter of possible separation is approached from the perspective of wanting and deciding. It is, thus, implied that the couple has the freedom to make decisions also about the duration of their relationship based on their wishes. In addition, the existence of the possibility of separation is also conveyed through the wordings used to describe it, as there always seems to be a door open for either one to "*exit*" the relationship, as if exiting a house. Moreover, the phrase "*if we did decide to go our separate ways*" presupposes, by the use of the possessive pronoun "*our*", that the "*separate ways*", in fact, exist and one can, therefore, return to one's own way and follow it when so decided.

Secondly, the freedom to choose whether to stay together or leave the relationship seems to be regarded more as an individual right than a shared one: "*I'm sure that if **one of us wanted to exit the relationship for any reason, the other would respect that wish***". Here the experiencer wanting to separate is either one of the couple, so even though the sentences that follow refer to the decision to separate as being mutual (as the experiencers of wanting and deciding are "we"), the impression the quoted extract and the text as a whole give is that the mutuality springs from the original decision to give the freedom to leave to both of them as individuals: they have both pledged to let the other go if s/he so wishes. Moreover, because the freedom to leave is given to them both separately, if the situation comes when one of the parties wants to leave, the other is not to restrict the other's freedom by disagreeing or questioning the other's right or reasons behind the decision, but rather to settle with the decision and respect it.

This kind of an idea entails, however, a paradox: if one wished to leave the relationship and the other not, and if indeed this freedom to leave was to be respected by the one still wanting to continue in the relationship, it would mean that s/he would have to renounce his or her freedom of choice. Thus, the freedom would not come to fruition in the other's case.

In general, the freedom to choose whether to continue a relationship or not seems to be a salient feature in the story that has been chosen to represent cohabitation. Although separation itself is described as neither positive nor negative, the underlying aspect of freedom seems to be regarded positively: firstly, it is, as seen, something that is to be respected. Secondly, the freedom to leave is contrasted with having no possibility to leave a relationship because of children, a situation which is described with a negatively-tinged metaphor, "*trapped*":

Example 22.

*If we did decide to go our separate ways, **there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because we have also made up our minds not to go in for a family** as neither of us feels that we are particularly cut out for parenthood. Some of our relatives see this as very self-centred, but they are usually the one **trapped in emotionally-bankrupt marriages**, staying together for the sake of the kids.*

From Simon's perspective it seems that although the relationships of some of their relatives do not work anymore, they have to stay together because of the children, whereas Simon and Victoria are free to do what they want because they do not have to take children into consideration. However, even children do not seem to be a reason that

would inhibit Simon and Victoria from separating if they wanted to do it: not having children only spare them from the "*emotional fallout*" after the separation.

As mentioned, the issue of freedom to choose separation is also apparent in the text *People change and forget to tell each other*, which will be discussed next. The following extracts are from Stephanie's and Mark's narratives respectively from the text in which the subjects of the clauses are emphasized:

Example 23.

**I** was in love with Mark and **he** was in love with me when **we** got married – twenty years ago. **I** was very young then. Two kids and three careers later, **I** started feeling **we** didn't have very much in common anymore. **I** had an affair but that wasn't why **I** wanted a divorce. **People** change and if **they** forget to tell each other about it, **they** are in trouble. **We** were. **Mark** was shocked when **I** first said that since **we** were not in love with each other anymore, **we** might as well get divorced and start new lives.

Example 24.

**I** was totally gutted when **Stephanie** first told me **she** wanted a divorce. **I** had though **we** were more or less an ideal couple. **We** never argued. Suddenly **Stephanie** just said **she**'d changed and so had **I** and **it** would be better to separate.

The idea that a relationship always involves two parties can be seen in the use of the subjects: Stephanie and Mark both got married, were in trouble, got divorced and started new lives. In addition, Stephanie could say that they were not in love with each other because that would require mutual love, which was obviously lacking at least from her part. The text gives the impression that although the decision about the future of the marriage naturally involved both of the spouses it was not shared in the sense that it was based on Stephanie's wishes and not Mark's, as Stephanie was the one who thought that they had both changed, were not in love and did not have very much in common anymore and thought it would be better to separate, whereas Mark had thought that they were "more or less an ideal couple" as they "never argued", and mentioned the subject of both of them having changed as Stephanie's idea and not his. Thus, since Mark did not appear to have any wishes to separate or start a new life but, on the contrary, was shocked by what Stephanie said, the decision to get divorced was fulfilled because of Stephanie's individual wish, which forced Mark to start a new life, too. (There is, however, nothing said about the decision-making regarding Stephanie and Sean's relationship, for example about Sean moving in with them.)

At the point when Stephanie seems to have begun to realize that her relationship with Mark had changed, that is, they are not in love and do not have that much in common

anymore, she evaluates the situation in regard to what should be done. She says: "Mark was shocked when I first said that since we were not in love with each other anymore, we **might as well get divorced** and **start new lives**". Here she seems to imply that their problems are not that great that they could not be solved, but that they can choose either to stay together or get divorced, and that there is no reason for not choosing divorce since they are not in love with each other anymore. Furthermore, she presupposes that one can start a new life, that is, not only turn to another chapter but to begin all over again.

Mark reports to this by saying that "[s]uddenly Stephanie just said she'd changed and so had I and it would be better to separate". The change has affected their marriage unnoticed in the time passing but when it is realized, no effort in order to restore it is made. Mark, as quoted above, recalls what she said, Stephanie evaluates further that divorce would be a better option than staying in their marriage, and it, therefore, seems that she expects that her life will take a turn for the better when she has the chance to leave the marriage behind and start a new life.

Also the text *She's got mail* implicitly refers to the freedom to separate in how Sharon gives a piece of advice to Debbie after she has met Steve: "Take my advice – forget all about Steve and stick with Tony". Before this Debbie has only told Sharon that she has met Steve and that "[she goes] weak at the knees just thinking about him", but has not mentioned anything about Tony or about leaving him. Sharon's line, however, supposes, firstly, that there is the possibility to leave one's boyfriend when one meets a better one, and secondly, that Debbie is actually considering leaving Tony for Steve. Sharon's assumption proves to be true, since in the next email Debbie gives reasons why Steve is a better option. It could also be interpreted that the existence of this kind of a presupposition indicates that the idea of leaving one's boy- or girlfriend for someone else is taken as granted and, thus, considered an acceptable and normal behaviour.

### 6.2.3 Permanency and commitment

The values of permanency and commitment were implicitly or explicitly touched upon in all four texts. In *She's got mail* and *Perfect Partners?* there was lack of permanency since the couples separated, and in the latter the possible commitment connected to the

couple's engagement was broken. In *People change and forget to tell each other* in turn permanency is rather connected to Stephanie and Sean's relationship in cohabitation than to Stephanie and Mark's marriage, as it is broken thought divorce. That is, Stephanie appears to assume that the relationship between her and Sean will last since she hopes that the children, in time, will learn to love Sean, and Claire too assumes that "[they'll] all get used to living under the same roof some day". In addition, the commitment that Stephanie and Mark had vowed to each other when getting married does not seem to be, at least for Stephanie's part, appreciated much, which can be seen in Stephanie's rather light-hearted comment on divorcing: "Mark was shocked when I first said that since we were not in love with each other anymore, we might as well get divorced and start new lives".

In the text *Happily ever after?* the values of permanency and commitment are both present. In fact, permanency of relationships can be seen as a starting point to the whole text as the idea is included already in the title of the text. The phrase is often used in the end of fairytales when the characters of the story have finally found and got each other and live happily together for the rest of their lives. The phrase as the title of the text about relationships implies that relationships are meant to last or that people hope they last. The question mark after the phrase, however, gives an impression that it is debatable whether people can live in their relationships happily ever after.

The doubt about the chances to commitment and permanency in relationships continues in the introduction. It is not said that commitment and permanency would not be good values and something to strive for, but it is implied that they often do not come to fruition, as seen in Example 25:

> Example 25.
>
> Those wishing to walk down the aisle promising to love and honour till death them do part are on the decrease, while divorce rates in England and Wales have soared in recent years.

In Example 25 the agent of the clause ("Those") is complemented by a non-finite clause that conveys that some people wish to get married and have the marriage last. This wish is, however, looked at a particular perspective that can be noticed in the context: even though there are still people who wish to have a lasting marriage, the reality is that married people often get divorced, and many modern people do not even get married in the first place. Example 26 adds to this impression (a marked theme emphasized):

Example 26.

Yet, even in this new liberal climate, the ideal of lifelong commitment is still held in high regard. In a recent survey, over 60% of people in Britain said that **while marriage might not work out for some**, it is nevertheless 'the best kind of relationship', especially if you want to start a family.

Here it is explicitly pronounced that many people today still value commitment and permanency in relationships. Furthermore, the second sentence in Example 26 specifies the first statement by connecting commitment to marriage and, thus, defining it as a positive feature of marriage, according to the people. However, the idea of the possibility to have an unsuccessful marriage is given the theme position in the second sentence and, therefore, it functions as the point of departure to the idea of marriage being the "best kind of relationship", as if reminding the reader of the divorce rates mentioned in the beginning of the text. As the prime values connected especially with the institution of marriage are commitment and permanency, and since the realization of them is challenged by the evidence of the increase of divorces, it seems that the value and relevance of marriage itself is reduced.

In addition to the introduction to *Happily ever after?*, the values of permanency and commitment emerge also in other parts of the text. For instance, the story of C1 starts with Carrie's evaluation of their former cohabitation: "*We tried living together for a while, but it just didn't feel permanent enough*". Here she implies that permanency is, in her opinion, a positive matter which is more closely interlinked with marriage than cohabitation and which was the deciding factor in favour of marriage in her case. Furthermore, Carrie does not mention divorce at any point but, on the contrary, comments on how Greg seems to be committed to her as well: "*Now that we are married, he lies awake at night making empire-building plans for our future, and conjuring up suitable names to go with the surname Shepherd.*"

The commitment connected to marriage is referred to as "an idea" a few times in the text. For example, after talking about commitment and marriage in the introduction, C1 is introduced as "one young couple for whom the idea of wedded bliss still holds true". Thus, the "idea" connected with marriage is commitment. Furthermore, directly after the story of C1 it is commented that "one couple who probably couldn't agree less with Carrie's idea of marital heaven are Victoria Priestly and Simon Burroughs", as if summarizing and evaluating the story. The term "idea" can be interpreted to refer to

something abstract rather than concrete, to someone's viewpoint as well as to something overtly colored by unrealistic expectations and conceptions, that is, idealism. Also worth noting is that the word "idea" is only used when referred to marriage and not when referred to cohabitation in the text.

The given examples also provide information on how the "idea" is seen and, thus, what the attitude towards it is: both of the metaphorical words ("bliss" in "the idea of wedded bliss" and "heaven" in "Carrie's idea of marital heaven") carry a strong flavour of hyperbole, which gives the impression that the already-mentioned idea is naïve. In this way, both the idea of a lasting marriage and the people who prefer marriage are referred to as idealistic and naïve. Thus, Carrie's positive views on marriage are quickly turned into naiveness.

In addition, whereas Carrie seems to regard commitment as one of the most important aspects of a relationship, C2 appears to value freedom the most, as discussed earlier. Those two values can be seen as opposites when it comes to the permanency of a relationship, and as can be interpreted in the already-quoted sentence: "One couple who probably couldn't agree less with Carrie's idea of marital heaven are Victoria Priestly and Simon Burroughs". Thus, commitment is not valued by C2. This interpretation is also supported elsewhere, as Simon says:

> Example 27.
>
> *If we did decide to go our separate ways, there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because we've also mad up our minds not to go in for a family as neither of us feels that we are particularly cut out for parenthood. Some of our relatives see this as very self-centred, but they're usually the ones trapped in emotionally-bankrupt marriages, staying together for the sake of the kids.*

Here Simon states that the reason why their relatives stay in their unhappy marriages is their children. It is not explicitly said whether this is only Simon's interpretation or whether the relatives have told this themselves. Either way, the idea of staying together because of the children implies, then, that it is not commitment that is valued by not separating. In addition, in C2's case, even children would not seem to be a reason to continue in the relationship, as they say that without children "there wouldn't be any emotional fallout" in case of separation, which in turn implies that if they had children, there could/would be some emotional fallout in case of separation.

There is one further notion on the subject of commitment and permanency in regard to the representatives selected for the texts. Thus, in the text *Happily ever after?* which

presents different relationship-forms logically includes stories of couples that are together. Noticeably, none of them, however, have been together for a long time, as long as ten years, but they are all rather young couples: C1 is "one young couple [...] who tied the knot last June", C2 have lived three years together, adn C3 "have been together since their arranged marriage two years ago". The stories of these representatives do not, thus, tell the readers what the future of the relationship is but only announce the ideas and wishes of the couples. The text *People change and forget to tell each other* provides the only example of a couple with a longer shared history, i.e. fifteen years, but which ends in divorce. Moreover, in the two other texts the couples, i.e. Debbie and Tony, Sarah and John, neither stay together. It can, thus, be concluded that permanence and commitment are not greatly present in the stories of the couples selected to the texts.

### 6.2.4 Practicality and rationality

The values of practicality and rationality emerge in the stories of C2 and C3 in the text *Happily ever after?* This can be seen, for instance, in what C2 says to be the foundation of their relationship and how they describe marriage, as illustrated in the following example:

> Example 28.
>
> After three years of living together, they say that marriage is simply 'not on the agenda'. The couple see their bond of trust and their practical responsibilities – a mortgage and a joint bank account – as more important than a marriage licence.

Here C2 refers to marriage simply as a piece of legal paper. This conception is not further explained but one can understand this to mean that the main difference between marriage and cohabitation is that marriage is official and cohabitation is not. Thus, marriage can only outbid cohabitation in formality and official status. However, they seem to think that marriage licence does not guarantee commitment or trust, but that their mutual "trust and their practical responsibilities" bind them together, and, therefore, those things are more important than making the relationship official by marriage.

The feature of practicality in the relationship of C2 extends to the possibility of separation and how they have already anticipated it: "*In fact, we've already drawn up*

*an agreement dividing the house and all our property right in the middle should we decide to split.*" Actually, the exit of either one is so carefully planned that such a thing is as if expected. Moreover, the impact the possible separation is thought to have on the couple is more of practical than emotional nature, as seen in the following example:

> Example 29.
>
> "*If we did decide to go our separate ways, there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because we've also made up our mind not to go in for a family as neither of us feels that we are particularly cut out for parenthood.*"

Thus, the separation would influence their material property, but because they are not planning to have children, they do not expect to suffer from "*emotional fallout*". Additionally, the expressions "*exit relationship*", "*go our separate ways*", "*emotional fallout*" used in their story are very clinical: they give the impression that separating is somewhat easy and does not harm the parties. Thus, Simon and Victoria regard themselves as able to handle the possible separation as practically and rationally as their relationship overall.

The appreciation of practicality and rationality in the story of C3 appears in the way and on the grounds spouses are chosen: the process involves the parents who have a "*more level-headed approach to the whole matter*", and the characteristics of a good husband include being "*a good provider*". In addition, C3 contrasts their arranged marriage that is based on these more practical and rational matters and is, therefore, to be successful with today's, apparently western, marriages of which many are "*based on superficial things like looks and lust*" and which therefore "*end up in divorce courts*". This comparison implies that rationality is important for a relationship to endure.

### 6.2.5 Compatibility

The value of compatibility came up in all the four texts. In *Happily ever after?* Simon makes an evaluative statement about his and Victoria's suitability to each other:

> Example 30.
>
> "*I knew we were compatible right from the word go because we're both very career-oriented and we don't waste time sweating the small stuff. We're very close but also very open and honest with each other*".

Thus, here compatibility is connected with such personal features or appreciations that are shared with both partners, and it is regarded as a positive and important matter in a relationship. Similarly, the importance of compatibility and the partner's characteristics can be seen in the story of C3: the choice of the prospective husband was made based on his characteristics, as it is said that *"[m]y mother can spot whether a man is kind and considerate at twenty paces, whereas my father is very shrewd when it comes to finding out whether a man will be a good provider or not"*. In addition, C3 states that they are "*very well suited*", which in turn leads to a further statement that "*[d]ivorce will never be an option for [them]*". Thus, their suitability is regarded as crucial to the success of their marriage.

As for the case of Stephanie's narrative in *People change and forget to tell about it*, the theme of time and change is intertwined with compatability, as in Example 31:

Example 31.

I was in love with Mark and he was in love with me when we got married – twenty years ago. I was very young then. Two kids and three careers later, I started feeling we didn't have very much in common anymore. I had an affair but that wasn't why I wanted a divorce. People change and if they forget to tell each other about it, they are in trouble. We were. Mark was shocked when I first said that since we were not in love with each other anymore, we might as well get divorced and start new lives.

Stephanie's main idea seems to be the change (as present in the title of the chapter as well) that has taken place in her and Mark, and which is backgrounded with the temporal cohesion: first, twenty years ago as she was still young, they were in love and got married, but then her situation changed along with having children and several careers, and she found herself not loving Mark anymore. As change is naturally connected with passing time, also Stephanie consequently sees this personal change as the reason for the alteration in the relationship between Stephanie and Mark: they did not have very much in common any longer, i.e. as much as they used to have, and they were not in love with each other anymore as they used to be. The consequence of this change in them and their relationship ultimately causes Stephanie to want a divorce. Thus, compatibility seems to be valued by Stephanie as she is ready to get divorced at the point when she and Mark are not that compatible anymore.

The subject of compatibility is the main theme in *Perfect partners?* This theme becomes visible at the very beginning of the text as the host introduces the show as one that "brings couples together". Thus, the purpose of the show is that by answering the

questions the couple does not only have a chance of winning a good prize but they also come to see how perfectly they suit each other.

When one follows the course of events, and compares the initial situation with the end result, one can see that the goal of the show is not fulfilled. First, Sarah and John appear to regard themselves as a good couple if not perfect, since they have decided to take part in the Perfect Partners-competition. In the beginning Sarah and John also state for a certainty, in the form of categorical assertions, that they know each other well, as seen in the following example:

Example 32.

Host: So, how long have you two been together?
John: Er, two years.
Sarah: And three months.
Host: Great, plenty of time to know one another.
Sarah: That's right, there's not much I don't know about John. Is there, John?
John: Right. And I know everything there is to know about Sarah –good and… not so good.

As the show proceeds, Sarah and Joh come to learn that apparently they do not know each other as well as they thought. The false beliefs start coming into light already in the beginning, when John says that there are also "not so good" sides in Sarah. This evaluation catches Sarah by surprise and for which she demands explanation: "What do you mean, not so good?" In addition, under the second question Sarah seems to be considerably certain about the correct answer as the first sentence of her line includes the modal verb "got to", and the other two are in the form of categorical assertions, as seen in the following extract:

Example 33.

Sarah: It's got to be my chilli con carne. He really loves it. He can't get enough of it.
Host: Headphones off, John. So, your favourite food? What is it?
John: It's got to be my mum's chilli con carne. I love it. Can't get enough of it.
Sarah: What about mine?
John: It's OK.
Sarah: What d'you mean OK?
John: Well, you could use a bit less chilli.
Sarah: It's called chilli con carne, in case you haven't noticed.
John: Well that doesn't mean people have to cry when they eat it.
Sarah: That's it! Don't expect me to cook for you again. I'm never going to… [Bold face added.]

John's line, being almost identical with that of Sarah's, reveals, however, that Sarah's answers is not totally correct but errs in the crucial point, that is, who can prepare the best chilli con carne. When Sarah learns that John prefers his mother's chilli con carne

to hers, she asks for an estimation on her version. As John does not give as a glowing estimation as she expected, she replies to him with a sarcastic utterance ("It's called chilli con carne, in case you haven't noticed"), to which she gains a sarcastic reply from John too ("Well that doesn't mean people have to cry when they eat it"). This dispute ends in Sarah's threat to never cook for John.

When analysing the cohesion of the text, it emerges that each of the questions with the discussion around them causes tension between the couple, which is also the case in Example 33. The tension enlarges as the show gets further and results in harsher language use towards one another. This is illustrated in Example 34 from the end of the text:

Example 34.

Host: Sarah, could you put the headphones on please? (pause) Thank you. OK, John, if Sarah could choose any country in the world to visit, what would that country be?
John: Well, she likes surfing and sailboarding, so I guess Australia would be her first choice.
Host: You can take the headphones off, Sarah. And the question: what country in the world would you most like to visit?
Sarah: Er, Australia.
Host: Congratulations! So you'd like to go surfing and sailboarding.
Sarah: No I'd like to get as far away from him, as possible.
John: Suits me fine. **You're no fun to travel with, anyway. You're such a moaner**. Remember Teneriffe? We had a week of moaning because of the price of sun oil.
Sarah: It was expensive!
John (to the audience): Then she started using cooking oil instead and **went redder than a baboon's backside.**
Sarah: Well at least I don't use aftershave that smells of pig sweat.
Host: I think it's time for question five.
Sarah: I think it's time he had his engagement ring back. Here you are. **I never liked it anyway. You have about as much taste as warm water.**
John: I agree. I've got no taste at all. Why else would I go out with you? Anyway I'm happy it's over.
Host: Question five…
Sarah: Don't even think about phoning me.
John: Why would I waste my phone bill on you?
Host: Whose turn for the headphones?
Sarah: Wrap them round his throat, why don't you?
John: Freedom at last! It was like a two-year jail sentence being with you…

After learning new things about and making somewhat offensive remarks on one another during the competition so far, question number five triggers a continuum of mutual insulting and, finally, culminates in the separation of the couple. In addition to the exhibition of the incompatibility of the couple, Example 34 also shows some of the features that they do not value in one another and which, thus, contribute in their incompatibility. Although Sarah and John do not characterize each other with positive

expressions, their appreciations can be, however, derived from the negative evaluations they give. Thus, as John answers to Sarah's wish to travel alone instead travelling with him that "[s]uits me fine. You're no fun to travel with anyway. You're such a moaner", it can be interpreted that being a complainer is not seen as positive feature in a partner. Furthermore, Sarah says that "at least [she doesn't] use aftershave that smells of pig sweat", implying that John does and that it is disgusting. She further jeers at him by stating that he has "about as much taste as warm water", meaning that he is not very fascinating but a bore. These evaluations logically imply that it would be better favourable if he smelled good and was fascinating.

It can be, thus, concluded that, in contrast to the purpose of the show and the couple's beliefs in the beginning, the show reveals how poorly Sarah and John actually know each other after two years and three months together and that they do not, after all, make a perfect couple, bringing them step by step farther away from each other. However, this rather dramatic result of the game and the text as a whole is presumably meant to be humorous and to ridicule TV-shows like Perfect Partner. If nothing else, the text confirms the idea found in the other texts too that compatibility is an essential factor for the success of a relationship, and names some features that are valued in a partner.

In *She's got mail* the value of compatibility is touched upon as the characters discuss who they want to date and what the crucial characteristics in a partner are. In the text Sharon and Debbie evaluate both the boys, Tony and Steve, a lot in respect to their positive and negative characteristics. Sharon advises Debbie not to leave her boyfriend Tony because he is "kind and decent, and [they]'ve been together for so long", and, thus, seems to appreciate these features in a male. Debbie, for her part, describes Tony in the following way:

> Example 35.
>
> But my Tony is not exactly Mr Personality, is he? Dances like a penguin, and his dress sense! I mean, he makes my dad look fashionable. Yeah, okay, he's a nice person and he wouldn't hurt a fly and all that, but he's just like a pair of old slippers really – too shabby to take anywhere but too comfortable to throw out.

Thus, she seems to regard being personal and fashionable as positive characteristics and Tony as nice but boring. On the contrary, Debbie's first impression of Steve is that he is gorgeous because he is good-looking, sexy and romantic. After their first date she changes her mind about Steve and says that he is a "jerk" and "poser", and "loves

himself". This is the conclusion that she makes because Steve spent the whole time telling about and praising himself. After the date Debbie is ready to take Tony back as he now appears more attractive to her than Steve.

As a summary, it seems that the girls value such features in their boyfriends as good appearances, being nice, interesting, romantic, fashionable and sexy. If, however, being nice is put against being sexy, good-looking and romantic but also self-sufficient, being nice wins.

# 7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to find out what forms of relationships the EFL-textbook series *In Touch* presents, how they are described and defined, and what relationships values and attitudes there are embedded in the texts. In the theoretical framework I provided the background to these research aims with several viewpoints to EFL-textbooks, conceptions of values, attitudes and discourses and their interconnection, i.e. how values and attitudes appear in discourses. Also the methodology of the study was based on the discursive approach to language, and analytical tools of critical discourse analysis were applied in order to discover the named values and attitudes in the texts. The data consisted of four texts that handled the topic of relationship. These texts were from the EFL-textbook series *In Touch* which is now widely used in Finnish upper secondary schools.

The examination of the data texts indicated that the texts presented the relationship-forms of cohabitation, marriage (both love match and arranged marriage) and dating. This range of different forms of relationship can be seen to represent the diversity of alternatives that the text *Happily ever after?* claimed, that is, today there is not only one approved relationship-form but one may choose from a range of them.

The variety of relationship-forms selected to the texts seems to follow two principles. The first principle is that the texts include different relationship-forms that are common today and, therefore, concern many people. For example, although marriage is not as valued institution as before, it is still common and deserves its place in the texts. Similarly, people often live in cohabitation nowadays, and this option is presented in two stories in the texts. When it comes to dating, it is a relationship-form that usually precedes any of the other forms of relationship (excluding arranged

marriage) and therefore touches most people. Another reason for the presence of dating in the texts could be that it is topical to many of the readers, that is, the upper secondary students.

The second principle is that the selected variety should not, despite the first principle, be too stereotypical. This can be seen when considering the relationships in *People change and forget to tell about it* and the story of Sabeen and Kashif (C3) in *Happily ever after?* In the first of these two, a happily married couple with children, which could be regarded as stereotypical, is not chosen to represent family life but, instead, a divorced couple and the parties with new partners are on view. In addition, as arranged marriages are not traditionally seen as part of the western culture, C3 seems to transgress the stereotypical conceptions by bringing multicultural flavour to the range of possible relationship-forms.

The relationship values found in the texts are modernity and traditions, freedom of choice, permanency and commitment, practicality and rationality, and compatibility. The paramount value found is freedom of choice, which was seen as the right of an individual and, thus, something positive that is applicable to many aspects of relationships as well: the relationship-form, the spouse, having children and separation. Comparing marriage and cohabitation, the latter one was described as practicing a greater deal of freedom, being characterized as more positive in that respect. Marriage was also described as old-fashioned which was seen as a negative feature of the institution.

Permanency and commitment were values most closely connected with marriage: although those features of a relationship were appreciated and striven for in some of the stories, the texts also implied that the fruition of them is not highly realistic. This way marriage was described as idealistic and naive and, therefore, in that sense negative. Furthermore, freedom to leave was at many points considered to be more valuable than commitment in the stories.

Practicality and rationality were values that were most closely connected to cohabitation and arranged marriages. Practicality seemed to label cohabitation overall, and especially to make possible separation easier. In respect to arranged marriage, practicality and rationality concerned the selection of the future spouse. In both cases practicality and rationality were seen in a positive light.

The value of compatibility was found in all the four texts. It seemed to be a crucial criterion when selecting a partner, and a crucial factor of a successful relationship. Also

the partner's characteristics contributed to the compatibility of a couple. Some of the valued characteristics mentioned in the texts were being open, honest, kind, considerate, fascinating, good-looking, sexy and romantic.

From the descriptions of the different relationship-forms and the evaluated values connected to them one can make conclusion what kinds of attitudes there are towards the relationship-forms. As dating as a form of relationship was not closely characterized and the only value connected to it, that is, compatibility, was only treated as an important factor for a successful relationship, there were no particular attitudes towards dating seen in the texts. However, there were certain attitudes to be detected towards the other relationship-forms, together with separation. Thus, as the love match was described as an old-fashioned relationship-form and closely connected with the value of commitment which was, for its part, evaluated as a naive idea, the overall attitudes towards love-match seems to be negative. Cohabitation in turn was described as being based on such values as freedom and practicality and rationality and, therefore, the attitude seems to be positive. Practicality and rationality as positive values are also connected to arranged marriage. In addition, arranged marriages are viewed as parts of traditions but, contrary to love matches, in this case traditions were seen in a positive light. Thus, the attitude towards arranged marriage seems to be positive. Furthermore, separation was treated in the text as a natural solution to relationship problems and as an exercise of freedom. This way the attitude towards separation seems rather positive. In sum, the attitudes found in the texts were more or less pro-cohabitation, pro-arranged marriage, pro-separation and anti-love match attitudes.

As seen, the present study confirmed the assumption that there is a certain perspective taken to the issue of relationship in the data texts, although the perspective is mainly implicitly embedded in the texts. One of the general themes in the fourth course is individual's choice, and this theme seems to be taken as the perspective in regard to relationships as well. Although one message to the students is, thus, that they have to make their own decisions and there is a range of options to choose from, the texts seem to guide the students to a certain direction with the underlying values and attitudes: as the attitude towards marriage (referring to love match, since arranged marriage is not introduced as a real option for Westerners) is somewhat negative but rather positive towards cohabitation, it seems that cohabitation is more recommended than marriage.

In addition, the theme of separation was seen to be highly emphasized in the few texts on relationships: in *Happily ever after?* the theme of relationships was introduced to the readers from that particular perspective (among some others), C2's relationship was labelled by the possibility of separation, and in the rest of the texts separation was executed. Moreover, separation was seen as realization of one's freedom of choice and, therefore, its acceptability was not challenged at any point. Separation was also described as a rather natural solution to a problematic situation in a relationship, be it marriage, cohabitation or dating and, in fact, as a solitary solution: no constructive possibilities to solve the problems and save and improve the relationship were given. One could argue that this viewpoint introduces a biased idea on how relationships can be handled.

When comparing the findings of the present study with those of Varrio's (2006), some similarities can be seen. Although Varrio's study discussed values on a general level, the same values can also apply in regard to one sector of life, in this case relationships. Thus, the interpersonal values Varrio found in the textbook from the year 1996 and which also corresponded to the values found in the this study were individualism, tolerance, honesty and openness. Of those individualism and tolerance correspond to the value of freedom of choice which is practiced at the level of individuals and which commands and requires tolerance. Honesty and openness were in turn characteristics valued in a partner. The textbook from the year 2004, for its part, conveyed such interpersonal and personal values as accepting multiculturalism, renewing patterns of thinking and acting, and respecting the rights and freedom of individuals. These correlate especially with the values of modernity and freedom of choice that were found in this study. Some of the values also included in the two textbooks in Varrio's study were politeness, balance, responsibility and criticality. Of these only responsibility was hinted in the texts of the present study, but it was mostly given to objects or circumstances than to the people in the relationships (see 6.2.1 Example 10 and 6.2.5 Example 31). In conclusion, it seems that liberalism and relativism are at least two prevailing ideologies that also have an influence on EFL-textbooks and the values they convey and mediate.

Since it is impossible to say whether the values and attitudes embedded in the texts are intentionally or unintentionally there, it would be interesting to interview the textbook writers and ask them whether they are aware of the fact that their texts mediate values and attitudes, what values and attitudes they think they mediate, and what they

say about the results of the present study. In addition, further research could be done in order to find out what values and attitudes the readers of the textbooks recognize in the texts and which of them are acquired and which not. Moreover, similar kinds of studies should be conducted concerning other EFL-textbook series used in upper-secondary schools but also in other school levels in order to find out what relationship values and attitudes they convey and mediate, and whether the values and attitudes are similar or distinct, when compared with other textbook series.

Textbooks are an essential tool for teaching and learning English at school having a wide audience (Karvonen 1995: 11, Lähdesmäki 2004: 217), and since they can also have an effect on their readers and their world view (Kalmus 2004: 470), it is not insignificant what ideas the texts in them represent. For this reason the present study can be considered important as it fills a niche by providing new information on the unexplored aspect of relationship values and attitudes in EFL-textbooks. I acknowledge, however, that the findings of the present study are based on one person's interpretations and further study could reveal additional or even somewhat distinct values, attitudes and perspectives in the texts. Moreover, there was at least one aspect that could not be taken into account in the analysis and which could affect the descriptions of the different forms of relationships and the values and attitudes in the texts, namely, that some of the structures and vocabulary analyzed as expressing value- and attitude-loaded ideas may be actually chosen in order to familiarize the students with them. On the other hand, if the case was this, the particular structures and vocabulary could have been arranged in a different way in order to avoid certain kinds of implications.

Regardless the rather small number of suitable texts to be analyzed, the study was successful: by the means of carefully selected and versatile analytical tools it was possible to contemplate the data in detail and from several point of views and, in that way, a range of relationship values and attitudes embedded in the texts were found, and the aims of the study were fulfilled.

In addition to the valuable findings on how different relationship-forms are represented and what specific relationship values and attitudes are there behind the texts, it was also important to illustrate that textbook texts do not treat (social) issues objectively but approach them from a certain perspective. Thus, I hope that this study would contribute in awakening language teachers, including myself, to critically evaluate and analyze the teaching material they use and also to guide their students to criticality.

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# APPENDIX

**Text 1: She's got mail**
(In Touch 1, pp. 48-50)

(1)

To: Sharon
Subject: Tall, dark stranger

Hi Sharon!

You won't believe this! I was at the club the other night and I met this drop-dead-gorgeous guy called Steve Bradley. Does his name ring a bell? Anyway, he started chatting me up and somehow your name came up. Is it true that you two used to go out together? How come you never mentioned him? I go weak at the knees just thinking about him.

Luv
Debbie

(2)

To: Debbie
Re: Tall, dark stranger

Dear Debbie

Don't tell me you've been taken in by that jerk, Steve Bradley. Yes, we did go out together once – for about five minutes. He was all over me like an octopus. Believe me, your Tony is worth ten of him. He's so kind and decent, and you've been together for so long. Take my advice – forget all about Steve and stick with Tony.

Ciao for now
Sharon

(3)

To: Sharon
Subject: Tony is history

Hi Sharon!

I know, I know. But my Tony's not exactly Mr. Personality, is he? Dances like a penguin, and is dress sense! I mean, he makes my dad look fashionable. Yeah, okay, he's a nice person and he wouldn't hurt a fly and all that, but he's just like a pair of old slippers really – too shabby to take anywhere but too comfortable to throw out.

By the way, sexy Steve phoned me up today and asked me out to that new French coffee bar we were talking about. Très romantique, eh? So it's au revoir to Tony, I'm afraid.

Luv
Debbie

PS Any tips on how to make Steve fall madly in love with me?

(4)

To: Sharon
Re: Bad breath Bradley

Sharon, you're just jealous! Why else would you write stuff like that? Just because you and Steve broke up doesn't give you the right to badmouth him. Whatever you say, we're going out on Saturday and that's that!

Debbie

(5)

To: Sharon
Subject: A blast from your past

Sharon!

Hi babe! Remember me? Sure you do or you wouldn't be bitching about me! Debbie sent me your last email which had alot to say about 'Yours Truly'. Nice to know I still stir up such strong emotions after all this time. Honestly, Sharon, it's time you got over us and pulled yourself together. I know you'd like us to get back together but there are plenty more fish in the sea and I'm sure you'll find another boyfriend soon. He just won't be in the same league as me, that's all. Anyway, must dash 'cos me and Debbie have got a date tonight. I'm wearing those tight black leather jeans that used to drive you wild. Remember?

Cheers
Steve

PS Why not check out this website if you've got nothing better to do tonight? http://www.dr.smiley/brokenhearts

(6)

To: Sharon
Subject: It must be love

Hi Sharon

You missed a great evening. Me and Debbie got on like a house on fire. I think she must be really keen on me because she had tears in her eyes the whole time was telling her about myself. She even dumped some other guy - Tiny, or Timmy or something - so that she could just be with me. Pity she had to leave early but, in the words of the song, 'We've only just begun'.

Steve

PS I'm going round to her place tomorrow evening to show her that video of me working out. Wait till she sees the size of my biceps!

(7)

To: Sharon
Subject: Help!

Sharon,

Oh no! I've made a terrible mistake. I spent two hours in the coffee bar with you know who and this is what I learned:

1 He's great looking
2 He's great with women
3 He's a great guy
4 All the girls at the gym fancy him like mad

I know all this because he spent two hours telling me. He loves himself. He talks about nothing else. When I couldn't stand it any longer, I got the waiter to dial my mobile phone number and say I was needed at home right away. It was a relief to escape! If I'd stayed any longer I would have poured my cappuccino all over those awful black leather trousers of his. What a poser! Sharon, I wish I'd listened to you. I should have trusted you. Can you ever forgive me?

Debbie

(8)

To: Sharon
Re: That's what friends are for ...

Hi Sharon,

Thanks for being so understanding. I don't deserve it. I feel such a fool. You were right - Steve is a major jerk. He turned up at my house yesterday with a video of himself working out! I would have had more fun watching paint dry. I told him that I
didn't think things were going to work out between us but he said he loves 'chicks who play hard to get'. Aaaaaargh! Come back Tony, all is forgiven!

Love
Debbie

(9)

To: Sharon
Re: Sorry, but…

Sharon, what do you mean, you're now dating Tony?


**Text 2: Perfect Partners?**
(In Touch 1, Teacher's File, pp. 65-67)

*Host*: Good evening and welcome to Perfect Partners – the show that brings couples together. And on tonight's show we have a couple from Norwich, Sarah and John. Welcome to the show!
*Sarah*: Thank you.
*John*: Thanks.
*Host*: So, how long have you two been together?
*John*: Er, two years.
*Sarah*: And three months.
*Host*: Great, plenty of time to know one another.
*Sarah*: That's right, there's not much I don't know about John. Is there, John?
*John*: Right. And I know everything there is to know about Sarah –good and… not so good.
*Sarah*: What do you mean, not so good?
*Host*: OK, here we go. Now you know the rules. Three questions each and if you give the same answers then it's an all-expenses-paid holiday for two in the city of romance – Paris! OK, who's first with the headphones?
*John*: Ladies first.
*Sarah*: Alright, here we go. OK. I'm ready!
*Host*: Now, John, she can't hear what you're going to say. So think hard about the right answer. OK. Question number one. If Sarah could choose between a romantic candlelit dinner with you or a night out with her friends, which would she choose?
*John*: Easy, she'd spend the evening with me.
*Host*: You're sure of that?
*John*: No doubt about it.
*Host*: Sarah, time for you to remove the headphones. You have a choice between a romantic dinner with John or a night out with your friends.
*Sarah*: I'd spend the evening with John. Could I invite my friends along as well?
*John*: I thought you liked my company.
*Sarah*: I do. I just thought it would be nice, you know to…
*John*: To what? Go on say it.
*Sarah*: Well they are good fun – Jess and Jodie – aren't they?
*John*: Are you saying I'm not good fun? Is that it? I mean I thought…
*Host*: Now, now… Now it's John's turn for the headphones. Would you put them on, please? OK, Sarah, question two: what is (dramatic pause) John's favourite food?
*Sarah*: It's got to be my chilli con carne. He really loves it. He can't get enough of it.
*Host*: Headphones off, John. So, your favourite food? What is it?
*John*: It's got to be my mum's chilli con carne. I love it. Can't get enough of it.
*Sarah*: What about mine?

*John*: It's OK.

*Sarah*: What d'you mean OK?

*John*: Well, you could use a bit less chilli.

*Sarah*: It's called chilli con carne, in case you haven't noticed.

*John*: Well that doesn't mean people have to cry when they eat it.

*Sarah*: That's it! Don't expect me to cook for you again. I'm never going to…

*Host*: Sorry to interrupt you two lovers but it's now Sarah's turn with the headphones. OK, John. Question number three: what does Sarah like most: A) Brazilian blend, B) Latte, or C) Cappuccino?

*John*: Cappuccino.

*Host*: And Sarah, will you please take off the headphones. You had a choice between Brazilian blend, Latte, or Cappuccino.

*Sarah*: Cappuccino.

*John*: That's what I said.

*Sarah*: How did you know?

*John*: Well you've always liked him. Ever since that film – what was it? – Titanic.

*Sarah*: That's DiCaprio, you idiot! He was talking about coffee.

*John*: How was I to know? Daft name for an actor anyway.

*Host*: Headphones please, John. OK, Sarah, here comes question four. John has a motorbike, right?

*Sarah*: Yes.

*Host*: Well, if it broke down, would he try to fix it himself or take it to the garage?

*Sarah*: John would fix it himself. He loves messing about with engines. He's not very good at it, mind, but he loves messing around with them.

*Host*: Over to you, John. The motorbike's broken down. Do you take it to the garage or fix it yourself?

*John*: Fix it myself. There was a problem with the carburettor last week. Cleaned it out with a toothbrush and it's as good as new.

*Sarah*: Was it a red toothbrush?

*John*: Yeah, why?

*Sarah*: A red Mickey Mouse toothbrush?

*John*: That's right.

*Sarah*: I brought you that from Disneyland.

*John*: Er…

*Sarah*: It was your birthday present.

*Host*: Time for our next question.

*Sarah*: You said you liked it.

*Host*: Headphones, please, Sarah.

*Sarah*: What have you done with all the other presents I've given you?

*Host*: Sarah, could you put the headphones on please? (pause) Thank you. OK, John, if Sarah could choose any country in the world to visit, what would that country be?

*John*: Well, she likes surfing and sailboarding, so I guess Australia would be her first choice.

*Host*: You can take the headphones off, Sarah. And the question: what country in the world would you most like to visit?

*Sarah*: Er, Australia.

*Host*: Congratulations! So you'd like to go surfing and sailboarding.

*Sarah*: No I'd like to get as far away from him, as possible.

*John*: Suits me fine. You're no fun to travel with, anyway. You're such a moaner. Remember Teneriffe? We had a week of moaning because of the price of sun oil.

*Sarah*: It was expensive!

*John* (to the audience): Then she started using cooking oil instead and went redder than a baboon's backside.

*Sarah*: Well at least I don't use aftershave that smells of pig sweat.

*Host*: I think it's time for question five.

*Sarah*: I think it's time he had his engagement ring back. He you are. I never liked it anyway. You have about as much taste as warm water.

*John*: I agree. I've got no taste at all. Why else would I go out with you? Anyway I'm happy it's over.

*Host*: Question five…

*Sarah*: Don't even think about phoning me.

*John*: Why would I waste my phone bill on you?

*Host*: Whose turn for the headphones?

*Sarah*: Wrap them round his throat, why don't you?

*John*: Freedom at last! It was like a two-year jail sentence being with you…


**Text 3: People change and forget to tell each other**
(In Touch 1, pp. 59-61)

Five years ago Stephanie and Mark got divorced after a fifteen-year marriage. Their children, Claire and Stevie, live with their mother but see their dad regularly. Six weeks ago, Sean, Stephanie's boyfriend, moved in with them. They are now all learning to adapt to the new situation and new relationships.

Stephanie, 42: I was in love with Mark and he was in love with me when we got married – twenty years ago. I was very young then. Two kids and three careers later, I started feeling we didn't have very much in common anymore. I had an affair but that wasn't why I wanted a divorce. People change and if they forget to tell each other about it, they are in trouble. We were. Mark was shocked when I first said that since we were not in love with each other anymore, we might as well get divorced and start new lives.

There was a time when things got really ugly and crazy. That was when Mark was moving out. We yelled and screamed at each other and fought over what furniture he could take. It was awful. We even sawed a table in two, although the end result was that neither of use had any use for it afterwards.

Sean, my boyfriend, has been living with me, Claire and Stevie for six weeks now. I was afraid how the kids would cope and that we might get on each other's nerves all the time. It seems things are working out fine, though. I love Sean and I hope Claire and Stevie will learn to love him, too.

Claire, 14: When Sean moved in with us it was strange. I'm not used to anybody in our house except my mum, Stevie and me. One of the first things he did was start to move things around – chairs, tables, you know. It really bothered me. After a couple of weeks, I couldn't find anything in the kitchen anymore and all these strange foods started showing up in the fridge. I'm really glad that we have two bathrooms in the house. I wouldn't want to share one with him! It's all these small everyday things that bug me. I suppose we'll all get used to living under the same roof one day.

I see Mark, my dad, twice a month mostly. I'm afraid I don't like his latest girlfriend, Diana, very much. I think she's trying to take the place of my mother – giving me advice on how to do my hair, relationships and so on. She probably just wants to be friendly with me but it still drives me mad.

Stevie, 16: My mother has been living with Sean for a while now. I guess he's okay, but I can tell he doesn't quite know what to do with me. Should he treat me like a kid, a son, a friend, or what? I know it's really important to him that I like him. (And I know it's really important to my mum, too.) And I do like him, but there is no way I could ever like him more than my dad. I know, I know, he's not trying to take my dad's place. I really do understand that. But how come I feel so guilty when I have a good time with him and my mum? It gets complicated very fast – I never realized how easy I had it when my parents were together.

Sean, 41: I've been living with Stephanie and her kids for six weeks now. It's not always easy. Claire and Stevie both seem to resent me a bit. Nothing dramatic, but still… I don't know why. I guess they are somehow jealous of me living with their mother after all these years they've had her all to themselves. Maybe they are afraid that somehow I'm taking their mum away from them. I find it difficult to act naturally with them – should I treat them like a son and daughter or just friends?

Stephanie and I love each other and get along fine. The only times we've fought have been about Claire and Stevie when I've happened to say something a little bit negative about them. Small things like putting their dirty dishes into the dishwasher or cleaning their rooms more often. I try not to nag but even small things like that are enough to drive Stephanie mad and she starts shouting at me to mind my own business. Maybe she thinks I'm criticizing her as a mother.

Mark, 43: I was totally gutted when Stephanie first told me she wanted a divorce. I had though we were more or less an ideal couple. We never argued. Suddenly Stephanie just said she'd changed and so had I and it would be better to separate. We fought a lot at the time of the divorce and after I moved out we never even spoke to each other for three years.

Stevie and Claire come and stay with me over the weekend twice a month and we get along fine. But I can see they aren't very keen when Diana, my girlfriend, comes over. I hear Stephanie's now living with this guy Sean. That's the first time, as far as I know, that something like that has happened since our divorce. I asked Stevie about him but he didn't want to talk about it. Funny, I suppose I still feel a bit jealous, even after all these years. He'll also get to see much more of my kids than I will, which bothers the hell out of me.

**Text 4: Happily ever after?**
(In Touch 4, pp. 58-59)

If Britain is anything to go by, marriage has never been less in fashion. Those wishing to walk down the aisle promising to love and honour till death them do part are on the decrease, while divorce rates in England and Wales have soared in recent years. In little more than a generation, Britain, like all western countries, has seen a sea change in lifestyle choices. Circumstances that were strictly taboo in our grandparents' days are now commonplace. Expressions like 'living in sin', 'getting into trouble', or 'making an honest woman of her' are only used humorously nowadays. Cohabitation is often preferred to marriage, and, compared with thirty years ago, there are far more options open to British people of all ethnic backgrounds about the kind of family life they want to pursue.

Yet, even in this new liberal climate, the ideal of lifelong commitment is still held in high regard. In a recent survey, over 60% of people in Britain said that while marriage might not work out for some, it is nevertheless 'the best kind of relationship', especially

if you want to start a family. One young couple for whom the idea of wedded bliss still holds true are Greg and Carrie Shepherd, who tied the knot last June.

*"We tried living together for a while, but it just didn't feel permanent enough,"* says Carrie. *"You see, I've always been a sucker for layers of white chiffon, angelic bridesmaids, sobbing in-laws, tossed bouquets, and tin cans on the back of the car. Greg used to protest that he wasn't the marrying kind, but I always said that it was because he hadn't found the kind he wanted to marry. I must admit that I was the one who popped the question – more than once I might add – and I had to twist his arm a bit to bring him round to my way of thinking. But getting hitched does seem to have brought out the best in my commitment-phobic husband. His brain seems much better equipped to deal with emotional issues. Now that we are married, he lies awake at night making empire-building plans for our future, and conjuring up suitable names to go with the surname Shepherd. He's also managed to keep up an almost caveman-like mantra of 'my wife' in conversations for the past eleven months now. Call me old-fashioned, but I think it sounds a lot more romantic than 'my partner'.*

One couple who probably couldn't agree less with Carrie's idea of marital heaven are Victoria Priestly and Simon Burroughs. After three years of living together, they say that marriage is simply 'not on the agenda'. The couple see their bond of trust and practical responsibilities – a mortgage and a joint bank account – as more important than a marriage licence.

*"One of the things that attracted me to Victoria was the fact that the subject of getting hitched never passed her lips all the time we were going out together"*, says Simon. *"I knew we were compatible right from the word go because we're both very career-oriented and we don't waste time sweating the small stuff. We're very close but we're also very open and honest with each other. I'm sure that if one of us wanted to exit the relationship for any reason, the other would respect that wish. In fact, we've already drawn up an agreement dividing the house and all our property right down the middle should we decide to split. If we decided to go our separate ways, there wouldn't be any emotional fallout because we've also made up our mind not to go in for a family as neither of us feels that we are particularly cut out for parenthood. Some of our relatives see this as very self-centred, but they are usually the one trapped in emotionally-bankrupt marriages, staying together for the sake of the kids."*

Kashif and Sabeen Kapoor probably wouldn't see eye to eye with Victoria and Simon. In many ways, they epitomize th emodern nuclear family in Britain today: young, happily married, proud parents of a one-year-old son – and Asian. Their respective families moved from Punjab in Northern India to settle in Britain over forty years ago. Sabeen and Kashif have been together since their arranged marriage two years ago, and Sabeen says she wouldn't have had it any other way.

*"I never doubted my parents' ability to select a good husband for me,"* claims Sabeen. *"Arranged marriages have been part of the Sikh way of life for generations and I wasn't about to start breaking with tradition. But that doesn't mean to say that I accepted the first boy they suggested. There's been a lot of talk about young Asians being forced into marriage against their wishes, but most Sikhs believe that there has to be consent on both sides if marriage is to work out successfully. My parents listened to and respected my views, but they were also able to take a more level-headed approach to the whole matter, more able to see things in a prospective husband that I might not have seen. My mother can spot whether a man is kind and considerate at twenty paces, whereas my father is very shrewd when it comes to finding out whether a man will be a good provider or not. So many marriages today are based on superficial things like*

*looks and lust, and that's why they end up in the divorce courts. As far as I'm concerned, Kashif and I are very well suited. Divorce will never be an option for us."*