Grammar in coursebooks?

An examination of how three coursebooks for the subject of English in Swedish upper-secondary school take account of grammar

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Abstract

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In almost all teaching, in all of the school subjects, teachers use materials to help them conduct their work. But how do coursebooks that are designed for the subject of English in Sweden tackle the subject? This study aims to investigate how coursebooks for the subject of English at Swedish upper-secondary school take account of the subject area of grammar. To cover this aim two research questions were formulated, namely:

In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English at upper-secondary school take account of grammar?
In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English take account of grammar in relation to what is said in the syllabus?

The method of this essay consists of a content analysis of three coursebooks used at upper-secondary school. To support the analysis, the concepts of deductive and inductive approach to grammar teaching were used to categorize the books. The results show that grammar is featured in connection with a text or a theme to various degrees in the books. One of the books has a clear deductive approach to grammar presentation. The other two have either a clear inductive approach or a mix of both of them. All of the books examined can be considered to adhere to what the syllabus says regarding grammar. Based on the results one can say that it is important for teachers to reflect on the material they use.

Keywords: English, English grammar, Grammar instructions, Teaching materials, Coursebooks, Textbooks, Language
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Introduction

Grammar is like the subject of math; you have to practice, again and again and again before you learn it fully. When you think you know what it is all about you find that there are more and more details of it when you dive deeper into the subject. Furthermore, even if grammar is, unlike math, not a school subject on its own, it is still in my view a very important “subject” to learn. The reason for this importance of grammar is to make sure that you have a good command of and comprehension of written as well as spoken language. In a study by Sioco and De Vera (2018, p. 90-91), they showed that junior High school students in the Philippines have a lacking knowledge of the subject-verb agreement. They also say that the Philippines is a country with traditionally high competence in English. The fact that students in a country with traditionally high competence of the language lack knowledge shows that the teaching of grammar is very important for mastering the structure of a language.

Materials produced by teachers themselves and coursebooks are the most widely used teaching materials in Swedish schools. Teachers have also a high regard for the quality of the coursebooks they use (Lärarnas Riksförbund, 2014, p. 8). In addition to this Reichenberg (2014, p. 86) found that content is the most important factor for teachers in Sweden when choosing their teaching materials. Skolverket (2018, pp. 55-57) provides information which indicates that teachers also use coursebooks as a guide when structuring their teaching. Some teachers, according to Skolverket, compare coursebooks with the syllabus to see how they correlate, and some would even rely on the coursebook to represent the syllabus to the extent that they do not even consult the syllabus. Since coursebooks and other forms of teaching materials are an integrated part of today’s teaching, these books could have a great impact on what the students learn in school. As a result, it is important to examine how the books that are specifically designed to be used for teaching, handle the issue of grammar. From personal experience I have found coursebooks helpful when attempting to teach grammar to learners, that is also a motivation for this area of study.

All teaching in the Swedish compulsory school and the non-compulsory upper-secondary school is governed by the steering documents from Skolverket via the curriculum and the subject-specific syllabus. Therefore, it is adequate for this study to take into consideration the
syllabus’ words regarding grammar within the subject of English. In the upcoming section, the aim and the research questions will be specified.

Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate how coursebooks for the subject of English at Swedish upper-secondary school take account of the subject area of grammar. This study considers two research questions:

- In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English at upper-secondary school take account of grammar?
- In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English take account of grammar in relation to what is said in the syllabus?

Definitions of grammar

As a start, when researching grammar and coursebooks the logical starting point would be to discuss definitions of grammar. Because of this, the following section covers definitions of grammar, both definitions of the term grammar and the syllabus’ words concerning grammar.

Definitions of the term grammar

As a starting point in defining grammar one can examine how a dictionary defines it. When searching for the word “grammar” in *Oxford Learner’s Dictionary* one is presented with three definitions. The first is the most relevant one for the present study and it states: “the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences” (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*, n.d.). The other two definitions concern a person’s knowledge of grammar and a book containing grammar rules (*Oxford Learner’s Dictionary*, n.d.).

To follow what the dictionary says, Thornbury (1999, p. 2) indicates what grammar is when he writes that it is the study of syntax and morphology of sentences. He continues by saying: “it is the study of linguistic chains and slots” (p. 2). In addition to Thornbury’s definition of grammar
one can examine how Estling Vannestål defines this linguistic area. Estling Vannestål describes it as a system of how words make sense and continues with the claim that: “[w]ords are like bricks – grammar is like mortar and to build a wall (language) you need both” (Estling Vannestål, 2015, pp. 32-33). Her words about bricks and mortar could be seen as similar to what Thornbury says about chains and slots and how they build the language. Another way of defining grammar is presented by Yule (2017, p. 90), and he describes it in the following way: “[t]he process of describing the structure of phrases and sentences in such a way that we can account for all the grammatical sequences in a language and rule out all the ungrammatical sequences […]”. In addition, he also mentions grammatical competence as accurate use of words and structures (Yule, 2017, p. 216). One can see a common thread in the words from Thornbury, Estling Vannestål and Yule in that they are similar in describing grammar as the structure of the language. This may be further set in relation to the definition given at the outset of this discussion: “the rules in a language for changing the form of words and joining them into sentences” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, n.d.). Here is a very clear and precise definition of grammar that also corresponds with what the previous sources say. To summarize, presented above are three authors’ words of grammar definitions and a dictionary’s definition of what grammar is. This gives some thoughts about what the term grammar means, but also shows that this term is not easy to define when one examines it closely. Still, the dictionary’s words are most applicable to what is intended for this essay, that grammar is the rules in a language and how to change words and form sentences.

Grammar and the syllabus

The following section covers how the syllabus refers to grammar, including both the version from 2011 and the version from 2021 of the syllabus. Since Skolverket does not provide a translated version of the new syllabus, from Swedish to English, quotes that are not the same in the two versions will be translated by me.

How does the syllabus for the subject of English at upper-secondary school cover grammar as a subject area? The revision of the syllabus in 2021 resulted in a change concerning how grammar is mentioned. The term grammar was never mentioned in the 2011 version of the syllabus, whereas in the 2021 version it is. Under the heading “Core content”, which covers what the teaching in a given course should include, it now says:
Linguistic phenomena, including, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical structures and sentence construction, spelling, cohesion, internal and external structure and adaption, in the students’ own production and interaction. (Skolverket, 2021a, my translation)

This quote is from the core content for the course English 6, which this study focuses on, but similar extracts for English 5 and 7 can be found as well. One can see from the quote that grammatical structures and sentence construction are explicitly mentioned in the 2021 syllabus. Still, this and corresponding quotes for English 5 and 7 are the only direct mentions of grammar in the syllabus (Skolverket, 2021a). Skolverket provides some clarification with the following passage in their commentary material:

Another is grammatical structures which is used as a collective term for the language’s different structures concerning how words are inflected and put together for linguistic expressions. […] What grammatical structures or what types of words that are central to the students’ production and interaction are not stated. (Skolverket, 2021b, p. 17, my translation)

Here they clarify what they mean with grammatical structures, that it is how words are inflected and put together. However, they do not state what grammatical structures they wish to be included and motivate this with a saying that the syllabus is built on communicative contexts and not grammatical progression (Skolverket, 2021b, p. 17).

Furthermore, in the aim of the subject one can find a passage that says “[t]hrough teaching students should also be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language in speech and writing, and also the ability to express themselves with variation and complexity” (Skolverket, 2021a). This quote does not in fact mention grammar, however, grammar is mentioned in Skolverket’s own commentary of the syllabus in relation to what is said in this quote. Concerning correctness in their use of language, Skolverket writes the following: “[t]hat includes an increasing ability to use the language’s vocabulary, phraseology, pronunciation,

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1 “Språkliga företeelser, däribland uttal, vokabulär, grammatiska strukturer och meningsbyggnad, stavning, textbindning, inre och yttre struktur samt anpassning, i elevernas egen produktion och interaktion.”

2 “En annan är grammatiska strukturer som används som ett samlingsbegrepp för språkets olika mönster i fråga om hur ord böjs och sätts ihop till språkliga yttranden. […] Vilka grammatiska strukturer eller vilka typer av ord som ska uppmärksammas anges däremot inte.”
spelling and grammar” (Skolverket, 2021b, p. 9, my translation)³. Skolverket suggests that grammar is covered under the phrasing “Correctness in their use of language” which shows that grammar is mentioned in the syllabus both implicitly and explicitly. The above-mentioned quote is also the same as in the previous version of the syllabus, which did not mention the term grammar. One could see this as an indication that Skolverket covered grammar implicitly in the old version since Skolverket makes that reference themselves.

However, even if the syllabus supports teaching about grammar as one of many aspects within English as a subject, that is not the same as teaching about it with teaching materials. Textbooks constitute one of several ways of teaching about grammar, but it is not the only way. Skolverket states what should be taught but, not the specific way to teach the content.

Background

This background section is divided into three parts. These parts take account of grammar teaching, theoretical perspectives applied in this study and previous research respectively.

As additional information one should also mention that in this study the terms “coursebooks”, “textbooks” and “teaching materials” are used interchangeably as a definition for books used in upper-secondary school in English classes. A term like “teaching materials” could be interpreted to include other forms of materials, but in this text, it means coursebooks unless otherwise indicated.

Grammar teaching today and through time

All teaching is a product of its time. The different views on teaching methods have changed through history when different ideas have come to surface. Therefore, coursebooks might also reflect the approach or method that is popular for a certain time period. In addition, authors of coursebooks usually try to adapt their books to the syllabus that regulates the teaching. Because of this, a historical overview of grammar teaching is interesting, and especially what can be

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³ “Med det menas en växande förmåga att använda språkets vokabulär, fraseologi, uttal, stavning och grammatik.”
said about today’s views, which might have an influence on how coursebooks treat the subject area of grammar.

Concerning the teaching of grammar Thornbury (1999, p. 21) writes: “In the last century the architects of language teaching methods have been preoccupied with two basic decisions concerning grammar:

- Should the method adhere to a grammar syllabus?
- Should the rules of grammar be made explicit?”

Both of the points raised by Thornbury are relevant to this essay’s research questions. There is the question if grammar rules should be made explicit, which is relevant for how teaching materials take account of grammar. The other is relevant concerning what Skolverket states in the syllabus.

Thornbury also presents some methods that have been used in grammar teaching. The *grammar-translation* method (late nineteenth century) focused heavily on explicit rules of grammar. The *direct method* (turn of nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and *Audiolingualism* (1950s) took a step back from the focus on grammar rules. Here the focus was instead on speaking and that grammar is learnt the same way as children learn their mother tongue. The *natural approach* (1980s) took it a step further and had virtually no focus on grammar. The reason was that language structures would through time be learnt naturally the same way we acquire our first language (Thornbury, 1999, pp. 19, 21; Brown & Lee, 2015, pp. 19-27).

Hymes coined the term communicative competence which means how we use language, not only what we say but when we say and how we say things (Mesthrie, 2009, p. 5). With this as a basis, the language teaching approach known as *Communicative Language Teaching* (CLT) grew (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 30). The CLT has two different versions, one that supports focus on grammar called Shallow-end CLT and one that rejects it called Deep-end CLT (Thornbury, 1999, p. 22).

Brown and Lee (2015, p. 466) say that today’s language teaching favors at least some kind of method with form-focus. Thornbury (1999, pp. 24-25) discusses how to look at today’s view of grammar in school. They write that attention to form is necessary, but that focus on form does not mean that one should only present strict rules. Thornbury (1999, pp. 24-25) then
discusses further about how grammar ought to be taught now and mentions consciousness-raising which is put in relation to Krashen’s view that acquisition is an unconscious process, but that other scholars claim that it is an active conscious process. Thornbury draws the conclusion that focus on form and consciousness-raising can be put together to something he calls, paying-attention-to-form argument. He writes, “[t]hat is to say, learning seems to be enhanced when the learner’s attention is directed to getting the forms right, and when learner’s attention is directed to features of the grammatical system” (Thornbury, 1999, p. 24). It is also evident that Brown and Lee agree with Thornbury that today’s focus of grammar teaching is directed to getting the form right. Different ideas are popular at different times, therefore different grammar teaching methods are of interest in relation to what the coursebooks do.

Theory

Grammar teaching can be categorized as either explicit or implicit. The first means that you clearly teach the actual grammatical rules. On the other hand, implicit means that you have no focus on forms of the language in the classroom and that this comes naturally through progression. Lundahl (2012, p. 42) states that the purpose of the Swedish education system is to give the students implicit knowledge. Nevertheless, explicit teaching can still be used to achieve implicit knowledge. Out of these two, explicit instruction is more advocated in teaching (Brown & Lee, 2015, p. 466).

The explicit grammar teaching can be recognized with two different approaches, namely deductive and inductive. When using the deductive approach, one teaches a concept with a presentation of certain rules attributed to the area. Concerning the inductive approach, one provides the students with enough information to be able to draw conclusions and thereby uncover the grammatical rules (Brown & Lee, 2015, pp. 466-467; Harmer, 2015, p. 56). Thornbury (1999, p. 29) mentions that one can see deductive as rule-driven learning and inductive as discovery learning of grammar. Both the deductive and the inductive approach should be seen under the umbrella of explicit grammar teaching since they target the same goal of understanding the rules. The categories of explicit and implicit grammar teaching and the deductive and inductive approaches within the first will support the analysis in this essay as a theoretical framework.
With this framework as a basis one can identify the patterns of the grammar approach in coursebooks. This means patterns that might have consequences on language teaching. As mentioned in the introduction, with reference to Skolverket (2018), coursebooks might have a great influence on how teachers teach. Therefore, this framework will support the analysis on how the coursebooks in this study might affect the teaching.

Previous research on the teaching of grammar from materials

Concerning the previous research investigated for this study, many of them engage with other languages than English. Despite the fact that several articles cited here regard other languages, they are still relevant since they all cover how coursebooks take account of grammar.

In the nine coursebooks for English language teaching that Nitta and Gardner (2005, p. 7) examined, they found that all books followed a grammar approach which presented the rules and then put it to practice. This is something that they call Presentation-Practice. Both deductive and inductive approaches to grammar teaching were in the presentation stage of the books. They explain that in most of the books grammar was presented through tasks where the students needed to figure out the rules. However, some books also featured deductive explanation of the rules. Another perspective on deductive contra inductive approach can be found in Vold (2020, p. 16). She found that two French language coursebooks for upper-secondary school in Norway favored a clear deductive approach to grammar teaching.

A recent study with focus on how coursebooks impact the teaching of grammar was conducted by Clifton who investigated eight textbooks aimed at beginner-level learners in the French language. The focus of the study was on how grammatical terms were used in the presentation of French relative pronouns (Clifton, 2019, p. 31). The conclusion is that many of these textbooks use grammatical terms that are not defined (Clifton, 2019, p. 39). All of the textbooks explained the term relative pronoun but used other terms, such as subject, verb and noun without defining them (Clifton, 2019, p. 36). The target level of this study might not be the same as the level in this essay, nevertheless it is still relevant to investigate a study that deals with grammatical terms in coursebooks.
Fernández (2011) investigated six college-level beginner text books in Spanish, focusing on how the books cover the Spanish preterite. Her study found that all of the books explained this in the same way by directly presenting the information with a detailed instruction that consisted of clear, concise and fabricated examples (Fernández, 2011, p. 163). In the context of this study one could see that the books Fernandez examined were following the deductive approach, based on presentation of the certain grammar rules. An interesting aspect in her discussion is the one about how teachers influence those who produce coursebooks. She argues that publishers produce books that they can be confident in that they will in fact sell on the market. Because of this, textbooks are produced to represent what teachers expect them to be and that is, as Fernandez terms it, a classic approach to grammar teaching and textbook formation. This kind of market approach is described as an obstacle to innovation in this field since publishers provide books that are traditional (Fernandez, 2011, p. 166).

In another study, Tammenga-Helmantel and Maijala (2019) examined grammar of the German language in textbooks. Their study focuses on textbooks for the German language in Finland and The Netherlands and also textbooks with a general perspective without a specific first language in mind. The different categories of textbooks were compared with several aspects. They found that many of the Dutch textbooks presented grammar within each chapter in special sections. Many had repetition of certain grammar aspects and categories for old and new grammar. The Finish textbooks have focus on repetition and evaluation of the grammatical rules (Tammenga-Helmantel & Maijala, 2019, pp. 569-570). They conclude that grammar has a prominent role in all of the textbooks that they examined. They also said that some of the books, specially the Finish books, use newer and innovative pedagogical ways (Tammenga-Helmantel & Maijala, 2019, p. 579).

In another research article from Criado and Sánchez (2009) one can read about the teaching of English as a second language in Spain and how coursebooks that they examined comply with official regulations. They studied how the coursebooks for English comply with the Communicative language teaching method, which is the method that is used in the Spanish teaching regulations. They categorized certain activities in the books based on how well they could be considered to be communicative in their goals. The result showed that the coursebooks could be considered to be communicative even though that varied among the books analyzed (Criado & Sanchez, 2009, pp. 12-13). This study gives relevance for how coursebooks tend to comply with official steering documents.
Method and material of study

To conduct this study, three coursebooks aimed for the course “English 6” were analyzed and compared with the focus on how they take account of the subject area of grammar. English 6 is the second course for the English subject at the Swedish upper-secondary school, studied in the second year at the level. This term means that this course is the sixth level of the English language at the overall education system in Sweden. According to Skolverket (2021b), this level is to be compared to the B2.1 level in the CEFR.

The books that were examined as a part of this study are as follows:

*Pick & Mix 2*, written by Phillips and Phillis and published in the year 2015 by the publisher Gleerups. This book has a clear focus on the four language skills. All of the chapters are divided into sections concerning different skills, namely: “Warm-up”, “Reading”, “Listening”, “Speaking”, “Writing”, “Grammar” and a section called “Express Yourself”. There is also a color-coding for each section, grammar is for instance coded with the color red.

*Solid Gold 2*, written by Hedencrona, Smed-Gerdin and Watcyn-Jones and published in the year 2015 by the publisher Studentlitteratur. *Solid Gold 2* consists of two main parts. The first part consists of chapters with texts of various genres, mainly fictional, while the second part contains exercises for named texts and language aspects. Together with each text is a word list which is provided at the very end of the book. There is a section in the second part called “resource section” that explains for instance studying techniques, academic writing and rhetoric.

*Viewpoints 2*, written by Gustafsson and Wivast and published in the year 2018 by the publisher Gleerups. *Viewpoints 2* consists of a structure with six themes which include three to five chapters within each theme. Almost all of the chapters in the themes have the same structure divided into five skills. These skills being namely, reading, listening, speaking, writing and language. In addition to the themes are two additional sections: one devoted to grammar and one devoted to model texts. The aspect of grammar can be found both in the language sections in the chapters and in the specific grammar section.
Both *Pick & Mix 2* and *Solid Gold 2* are in their first edition while *Viewpoints 2* is in its second edition.

These books were selected with the help of an upper-secondary school teacher, with the only criterion that they should be aimed at the course “English 6”. There are no formal requirements for coursebooks to follow the syllabus. However, the books considered in this study claim to follow what is prescribed for “English 6”, therefore it is a good idea to consider how well they follow the syllabus. They were all written and published before the syllabus for the English subject was revised in the summer of 2021 which could constitute both a problem and an opportunity for the present study. Firstly, the books were written during the guidance of the 2011 version of the syllabus and therefore one cannot expect them to adhere to what is said in the 2021 version. However, when there is a new version of the syllabus it gives an opportunity to examine how well the books adhere to what is said in this version. As a limitation to this study, only the physical versions of the books were examined, thus omitting possible digital resources to them. This also provides for a comparison on equal terms between these books with comparison of the books based on the same factors between them. Digital versions of the books could vary greatly between how they are formed and therefore this provides for and equal comparison.

**Coursebook analysis and material evaluation**

Concerning evaluation of coursebooks, McGrath (2016, pp. 32-33) writes about three main methods to coursebook evaluation. These methods are as follows the impressionistic method, the checklist method and the in-depth method. The first one aims at giving a rather superficial idea of the book where one might focus on the overall structure or specific parts of the book. The second method, the checklist method, is the most unbiased one where the idea is to specify certain criteria and tick off the same if they appear in the book. Finally, in the in-depth method one goes a step beyond the book and tries to see if the book lives up to its own claims and ideas.

This study adopts a version of the in-depth method when analyzing the coursebooks. With the in-depth method one or two areas of the materials are chosen, rather than the entire work (McGrath 2016, pp. 33-34, 57). In the present study the coursebooks were examined in relation
to the aspect of grammar, which was analyzed based on what the syllabus states concerning this area. In relation to materials evaluation, Lundahl (2012, p. 58) states that how the materials adhere to the syllabus is one of the central points to the analysis of coursebooks.

Procedure

The study was conducted by briefly examining the books through a holistic perspective. This was done to identify the overall structures of these books. This varied from exclusive focus on texts followed by exercises and chapters that contained both texts and exercises. Through this examination specific grammar sections were found in two of the three books investigated. Out of named finding some samples of the specific grammar parts were selected for further analysis. For the book with no named grammar sections, the parts in the book that contained exercises to the texts and named language exercises were examined with the focus on grammar terms.

Results and analysis

In this section the findings are presented based on the framework explained under the heading theory. Consequently, the two main sections concern deductive and inductive approach to grammar teaching. In addition, there is also a concluding section with a direct comparison of the books.

Deductive approach

In both *Pick & Mix 2* and *Viewpoints 2* one can find explicit deductive grammar instructions. *Pick & Mix 2* is structured based on the particular language skills speaking, writing, listening and reading. The grammar pages in this book are as follows: “More about nouns”, “Numbers and quantifiers”, “Passives and -ing forms”, “Will would etc.”, “More on adj./adv.”, “Conjunctions”, “Relative clauses”, “Phrasal constructions”, “Apostrophes” and “British vs American”.

In *Pick & Mix 2* every chapter has a special theme where one can say that all of the sections within the chapter more or less cover said theme. However, the grammar sections are harder to
categorize within these themes. For instance, the first chapter is named “Shop till you drop” and all of the sections within have some connections to shopping or spending your money (pp. 8-30). The grammar section for this chapter is about nouns, but there are no direct connections between nouns and shopping. When shopping one is buying things and the word class noun concerns, among others, concrete things. This argument is somewhat disproven with the noun section explaining for instance names, titles and collective nouns (pp. 26-27). In addition, the second chapter is called forever young and the noun section concerns numbers which could be interpreted to cover the same theme with age concerning numbers (p. 50).

*Pick and Mix 2* must be considered to be deductive in its approach. The reason for this is that all of the grammar sections have clear presentations of the rules in question. In all the sections concerning grammar there is a clear structure with first presentations and then tasks. As an example of how it is presented, the first grammar section, about nouns is presented here. Nouns are presented first with regard to names, titles and collective nouns then, there are tasks about these three aspects. For instance, the first of these tasks is as follows:

A. **Translate the following sentences, using capital letters where appropriate and remembering to include all necessary punctuations:**

1. Förra påsken hälsade fröken Jones på familjen Carter i Alperna.

[...]

B. **Add capital letters to the film titles where appropriate**

1. the best years of our lives

Then there is also a C part with the task of writing sentences with collective nouns in singular and plural. The noun section continues with description of compound nouns and abstract nouns and with different tasks concerning these aspects (pp. 26-29).

Likewise, the dedicated grammar section in the back half of *Viewpoints* 2 could be seen as very similar to how grammar is handled in *Pick & Mix 2*. In the grammar section there are parts devoted to verbs, nouns, articles, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, linking words, formal and informal language and common irregular verbs. These sections provide both explanations and exercises. The presentation consists of explanations of certain grammatical phenomena which are then followed by an exercise on said phenomenon. Under the section “Verbs” there are for
instance several subsections defined as “A. How the -ing form is used […] B. How to use the infinite form” and continues in the same way (pp. 236-237). These examples are followed by a translation exercise and fill the gap exercise respectively. This approach must also be considered to be deductive since it starts with the presentation and ends with the exercises. There is also in Viewpoints 2, under the heading grammar, a section on linking words which is important in order to learn to write good texts, but it is difficult to say if linking words can be categorized under grammar within the framework of the definition of grammar within the present essay. Linking words help bring out the logic of ideas, but they are not necessarily part of building a correct sentence within the rules.

The syllabus has a passage in the core content that clearly includes grammatical structures and sentence construction (Skolverket, 2021a). The deductive approach in Viewpoints 2 and Pick & Mix 2 can be said to adhere to these words from Skolverket. This is evident since these books give a presentation of the specific rules which are then followed by exercises.

**Inductive approach**

In Viewpoints 2 one can also find language sections integrated within the chapters. In these sections one can find grammar instructions and exercises. In addition to this one can also find other types of tasks such as exercises concerning vocabulary knowledge and trying to find synonyms (pp. 69-70). A conclusion one can draw based on these grammar instructions is that they are often directly connected with the text that is preceding them. For example, one text is called “On the Dirty Side” and it uses the adjective “affluent” as a noun in “the affluent”. The following language section then explains how to use adjectives as nouns (p. 106). Other examples of this is when they use sentences from a text to explain participle clauses (p. 118) or when they explain subordinating conjunctions and instruct the reader to reread the introduction of the foregoing text to find their own examples. Here one can see that the book engages the reader in connecting the grammar with the texts and thus gives incentives to learn the grammar.

In Solid Gold 2 there are no presentations or exercises under the label of grammar as in the other two books. In the foreword one can read: “[i]f you need to revise some grammar, the Grammar section from Solid Gold 1 is included in the digital material, backed up by interactive
grammar exercises” (p. 3). This information suggests that a grammar section is included in the previous book of the series aimed at the course “English 5”.

With regard to specific grammar exercises the following information is provided in the book: “In Solid Gold 2 all the grammar exercises are in Grammar in Action 3 in the digital material. Here in the book there is a section called ‘Use of English’ where in order to complete the exercises, a good knowledge of grammar is needed” (p. 195). Thus, this book provides some exercises concerning language and grammar. An example of the exercises under the heading “Use of English” is called “Sentence-changing”. The following extract is an example of the sentence-changing exercise (p. 195):

   Complete the second sentence so that is has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the words given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

   1 Why wouldn’t he give you his email address?
   **REFUSE**

   Why ______ you his email address?

In the resource section there is a part called “ON WRITING” and in this part they provide the readers with instructions for written language. They give examples based on language and use grammatical terms. For example, instructions on writing a letter include: “make greater use of the passive tense than in more informal writing (It is found…, Research has shown… etc.)” (p. 160).

To some of the texts there are exercises about verbs. These exercises are connected to the extent that the theme is the same as in the text. For instance, the first text in the book is about communication and the verb exercise is called: “[f]ocus on verbs to do with speaking and listening” (p. 188). The following is an example of said exercise:

   Focus on verbs to do with speaking and listening

   Complete the definitions below with a suitable verb. […]
One could argue that this book exhibits an inductive approach to grammar since there are tasks where clues are given but the rules are not explained. The recently mentioned verb exercise could give students signs to how verbs function in a sentence without discussing strict rules. The same is true for the sentence-changing task that could give students opportunity to reflect on how to create complete sentences.

Coursebooks do not need to follow the words presented by Skolverket in the syllabus, only the teaching itself has to. Still the books themselves claim to be aimed at the teaching of English based on, in this case “English 6”, and therefore one can try to find connections on how they follow the syllabus. Furthermore, as with all three of the books examined in this study, Solid Gold 2 was written when the 2011 version of the syllabus was used. Therefore, one cannot expect Solid Gold 2 or the other two books to cover grammar according to the new formulations. Even if there are no deductive grammar explanations one can still argue that this book follows the syllabus. The syllabus states in the aim that students should develop correctness in their use of language (Skolverket, 2021a) and this is something that must be concluded that this book does support. Exercises in Solid Gold 2 such as find the mistake (p. 359), on verbs (p. 188) and sentence sentence-changing (p. 195) must be considered to enhance correctness in language. The syllabus uses the term grammatical structures and an exercise type such as find the mistake clearly brings the learner’s attention to this.

Comparison

In Viewpoints 2 grammatical aspects can be found on different occasions, both in relation to certain texts and in a dedicated grammar section. If one only considers the dedicated grammar section, one can say that this section follows a deductive approach to the teaching of grammar since it follows a format of presentation of rules and then exercises. However, concerning the grammatical aspects that are within the different chapters one could consider them to be both inductive and deductive. For instance, the mentioned exercise where the students were encouraged to reread the introduction of a text can be seen as inductive since it gives the learner

To _________ someone is to criticize them angrily because they’ve done something wrong.
room for personal exploration. Furthermore, there are also exercises that are provided with explicit explanations for the certain rule that the exercise is aiming for.

A common thread between the books examined is the connection to a text or a theme. In *Solid Gold 2* and *Viewpoints 2* there are exercises that connect to the texts that the students have read. This is most clear in *Viewpoints 2* where examples from the texts are used to explain grammatical rules or have the readers find examples of rules from the texts. Further below follows a table with a direct comparison between the three books. This is to further clarify the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Solid Gold 2</th>
<th>Pick &amp; Mix 2</th>
<th>Viewpoints 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presents grammar rules</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where in the book is grammar featured</td>
<td>Inductively throughout in various exercises</td>
<td>Once in each of the separate chapters</td>
<td>In the separate chapter under the heading “Language”/In a separate section under the heading “Grammar”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises on grammar rules</td>
<td>Inductive</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
<td>Inductive/Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional language exercises</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion and conclusion**

My aim with this study was to investigate how coursebooks for the subject of English take account of grammar as a subject area within English. As I expressed in the introduction, grammar is a very important subject area to learn to become professional user of the language,
therefore two research questions were formulated to investigate this. The research questions for this essay were as follows:

- In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English at upper-secondary school take account of grammar?
- In what ways do coursebooks for the subject of English take account of grammar in relation to what is said in the syllabus?

As a help to analyze the coursebooks the concepts of deductive and inductive language teaching were used in the results section to support the analysis of how grammar is represented in them. In the results Solid Gold 2 was defined as inductive in its approach to grammar since there are tasks where students are given clues to reflect on how different features work in a text. One can see an example of this in how verbs could function in a sentence. Furthermore, Pick & Mix 2 could be said to have a deductive approach to grammar. The approach to grammar in Pick & Mix 2 can be compared to the grammar teaching method Grammar-Translation. This had a heavy focus on the presentation of grammatical rules, which were then followed by exercises (Thornbury, 1999, p. 21). However, this method had as the name suggests a stricter focus on translation between the target language and the mother tongue.

On the other hand, Viewpoints 2 was concluded to follow both the inductive and the deductive approach depending on the context in the book. Nitta and Gardner (2005, p. 7) found that English language coursebooks apply a Presentation-Practice to coursebooks where they present the rules in some way and then let the learner practice. This was mostly with an inductive approach for the presentation. On a general note one can say that this was true in this study as well during the instances when grammar was accounted for in connection to a text. However, when grammar was presented separately the approach was instead deductive.

Tammenga-Helmantel and Maijala (2019) and Ferenandez (2019) pointed to examples where grammar tended to be explained with the specific rules in the textbooks. These two examples could be seen as similar to the analysis of Pick & Mix 2 and Viewpoints 2 with the deductive take on grammar teaching. In coursebooks examined by Clifton (2019, pp. 38-39) many grammatical terms were used without being defined and she discusses how this might affect the learner negatively. This could also be true for Solid Gold 2 in how it uses the grammatical
terms. If the learner does not know the meaning of a certain term that results in a higher responsibility on the teacher to provide the student with that knowledge.

One could also make the argument that the sections with texts of various genres in all of the coursebooks in this study provide implicit grammar learning. When reading certain texts, the learner is exposed to correct and authentic language use which might result in the learner acquiring the target language. This argument would be in line with the Natural Approach that would replicate the way a learner acquires the mother tongue (Thornbury, 1999, p. 21).

So how do these three coursebooks adhere to what the syllabus says about grammar in the subject of English? First one has to keep in mind that the books examined were written before the revised version of the syllabus in 2021, which makes it reasonable to have both versions in mind.

Solid Gold 2’s approach to grammar could be seen as a sign that this book was written under the 2011 version of the syllabus, simply since there are no stated grammar presentations. However, that is not the same as not learning grammar from this book. There are, as mentioned, exercises that give the students room for reflection of grammatical terms and sentences. This is also what makes it adhere to the 2021 version as well. The 2021 version of the syllabus includes phrases like “grammatical structures” and “sentence construction” for instance which points out that the teaching should include this (Skolverket, 2021a). On the other hand, Pick & Mix 2 and Viewpoints 2 could still be seen as adhering to the new version of the syllabus to a greater extent since they have clearer presentation of the grammar rules. Criado and Sánchez (2009, pp. 12-13) showed that the coursebooks they examined mainly had an approach that followed the official regulations. As a concluding remark on the syllabus one must say that it governs what the teaching should include, not how it should be carried out. Therefore, a coursebook does not have the requirement to include, for instance grammar.

Thornbury (1999, p. 24) discusses how grammar, in a second language, is best achieved through teaching that has some kind of focus on getting the forms of the language right. Brown and Lee (2015, p. 466) also point out how today’s teaching ought to have focus on linguistic forms. Coursebooks offer teachers a guidance for their teaching, but they are not the universal solution. For instance, if teachers want to provide their students with a deductive presentation of grammar rules, then Solid Gold 2 would not give them that. If they instead want to teach grammar
inductively *Pick & Mix 2* would not offer the best support. How a teacher makes use of a book is dependent on the teacher’s own preference, however the books examined in this study all give the learner an opportunity to reflect on language structures. Therefore, one can conclude that teachers can use these books to improve the students’ correctness in language use.

Still, what book a teacher chooses might affect the teaching. One can see that Lärarnas Riksförbund (2014, p. 8) writes that teachers have high confidence in the quality of coursebooks and that coursebooks together with self-produced materials are the most widely used in schools. In addition, Skolverket (2018, pp. 55-57) writes that some teachers rely on the coursebooks to represent the syllabus to the extent that they do not even read the syllabus. In such case, there could be a risk that the books themselves determine how or what the students are taught. Therefore, it is important that teachers still reflect on the material they use. If teachers do not reflect on the materials they use that might result in the teachers unknowingly giving their students teaching based on the deductive or inductive approach.

**Final remarks**

The books in this study are only representative of themselves and for the course they are aimed at. Therefore, one cannot draw a general conclusion for all English-language coursebooks in the Swedish upper-secondary school. A limitation on this study is also that only the books’ physical versions were examined. If other components, such as digital components, of the books had been included in the analysis that could have had an effect on said analysis. However, to only focus on the physical versions of the books gave them equal terms between them.

The results in this study are that all three books try to connect its grammar content to either theme or text. *Viewpoints 2* is most prominent in this accomplishment out of the three where grammar exercises are several times directly connected to a proceeding text. *Solid Gold 2* has tasks in relation to texts, with some of them connected to grammar. Finally, *Pick and Mix 2* tries to incorporate grammar into the theme of the chapter to various degrees. One could also see different signs of deductive and inductive approaches in these books. To sum up, earlier Thornbury (1999, p. 24) was referenced on how learning seems to be enhanced when teaching is focused on getting the forms right. As a result, one can say that *Solid Gold 2* gives opportunity to reflect on this, but *Viewpoints 2* gives opportunity to both reflect and study the direct rules. For further study, one could investigate how teachers use coursebooks in their classrooms.
References

Primary sources


Secondary sources


