A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS IN SWEDEN

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to analyze two English textbooks used in Sweden from a sociolinguistic perspective. This is a qualitative study, and the Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric (Atar & Erdem, 2020) consisting of six items was used to analyze the textbooks. The items of the rubric were applied to the textbooks, and the results were discussed in relation to English language teaching. The results showed that the two textbooks in focus were in line with most of the sociolinguistic issues raised in the rubric. However, there were some issues with the linguistic ecology and the case of English as a linguistic capital for the elites. Accordingly, this study contributed to the literature by evaluating two textbooks systematically with regard to sociolinguistic issues, and it offered some suggestions for pedagogy.

Keywords: *Sociolinguistic textbook evaluation, English textbooks, Englishes, Intercultural communicative competence, English language teaching, Sweden*

1. INTRODUCTION

The English language is the most spoken language of the world with 1,268,100,190 total users around the world with 369,704,070 first language (L1) speakers and 898, 396, 120 second language (L2) speakers (Eberhard et al., 2020). Considering the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS) for English, in its primary country the UK, it is 1, which means that it is used in education, work, mass media and government at the national level and in one of its former colony Pakistan, EGIDS is 1 as well. However, in Sweden, it is 4 and English is used only in the educational context (Eberhard et al., 2020). This, in turn, means that although English language is a global language, its use in each context and polity varies depending on whether English has reached in a particular context through colonization, or through being adopted as a core subject taught at the compulsory school levels and beyond.

With regard to the spread of English beyond the British Isles, it spread mainly through the British Empire's colonization in the late eighteenth century in particular in Asia, Africa, Australia and Americas. Further contribution to the spread of English includes the birth of American English as a new variety in the United States of America, and the fact that English is the language of the USA, which is a major economic, political, and military force throughout the contemporary world (Philipson, 1992). The subsequent American imperialism has extended the political, economic and cultural influence over areas beyond its boundaries. In short, it may be suggested that English has become a global language it is used in commerce, science and technology, diplomacy, art and formal education throughout the world.

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While English has been established for centuries now in the colonial contexts, it is quite a recent phenomenon in mainland Europe (McCarthur, 2003). In the European context in particular, English language is the leading foreign language in nineteen countries out of twenty five European Union countries excluding the United Kingdom and Ireland, and especially in Sweden (89%), Malta (88%) and Netherlands (87%) (European Commission, 2006). Even after the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU, English remains the official language of Ireland and Malta. Despite the fact that European Union is multilingual in a dual sense where most population knows one more language other than their mother tongue, these other languages are not equally spread over Europe (European Commission, 2006), and English remains the most used (51%) other language both among L1 users as well as L2 users in the European continent (European Commission, 2006, p. 4).

2. THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF ENGLISH IN SWEDEN

Until 2009, there were no official languages in Sweden, but with "the Swedish Language Act" (språklagen) Swedish was made "the principal language in Sweden" (SFS, 2009, Section 4 p. 600). In the education arena, English has been taught as a compulsory subject since 1962 (Swedish Government, 1962). English is taught from grade 1 now with the new curriculum (Skolverket, 2018) and as a core subject along with Mathematics and Swedish. While English is not the default language used in the Swedish environment, English language has a high prestige and a constant presence in Sweden (Lundahl, 2014) through daily consumption of entertainment media in English as watching them without dubbing is a big part of life in the Swedish society. With the advent of the internet, English is used and heard even more through extramural English (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016) both by school going children and adults in Sweden.

With the history of the spread of English as a global lingua franca briefly stated above in both the colonial and non-colonial European contexts, it is pertinent to mention that together with the other established Englishes (Kachru, 2006), the status and distinctiveness of English in the European context or Euro-English is unique just like other Englishes in the socio-linguistic realities of the local contexts. Extending Kachru's model to the unique sociolinguistic context of English in Europe, Berns (1995) calls it an exciting, challenging, and creative social and linguistic phase of their history where students and scholars can equally observe this sociolinguistic history and the development of English in Europe. In a completely similar pattern of other established Englishes (for example, Pakistani English in the second circle) where the local languages bring in the socio-cultural context to English, in the Swedish context as well, spoken, written and produced English also adds culture specific contexts of Sweden to the English language.

In this regard Swedish English educational spaces are unique sites within the matrix of Euro-English English language teaching. Within the Swedish education, at the compulsory school

level, the syllabus of English as well clearly marks the role and importance of English by stating that "the school is responsible for ensuring that each pupil on completing compulsory school can communicate in English, both in spoken and written language" (Skolverket, 2018, p. 15). At this point, textbooks play an important role as a resource in formal language learning environments just like in other schooling contexts.

Textbooks provide a framework for teachers by ensuring coherence, providing creative teaching ideas and offering rich input (Yılmaz & Aydın, 2015). The quality textbooks is of great importance, and a special attention should be paid while selecting them. Nguyen (2015) suggests considering various variables in textbook evaluation. However, Lundahl (2014) argues that no textbook can cover the variety of texts that learners should get in touch with as a part of their study of English, and, therefore, further appropriate textbooks should be selected by the teacher. He suggests three criteria for evaluating material for teaching: the syllabus and the curriculum, the teacher and the pupils.

So, as argued above, in the sociolinguistic approach, languages are not seen as homogenous entities. Until quite recently, second/foreign language learning/teaching studies focused on standard accents and ignored non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard accents/dialects (Geordie or Birmingham accent). This of course poses some problems: Students learn only the standards; however, the percentage of people who use standards is very low and in fact, the number of people who use English as a second or foreign language is much more than the number of the native speakers. For instance, according to Cook (2008), only a minority of people use Received Pronunciation in the UK. As Jenkins (2006) argued, English became a lingua franca and the non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers. Hence, she suggested that instances from other cultures should also be included. One of underlying effects of communicative competence, a widely adopted concept in the field of English Language Teaching, is setting the norms of British and American culture as the target ignoring the context and learners' needs throughout the world (Çetinavcı, 2012). Specifically the realm of the outer and expanding circles have been ignored (Byram, 1997; Phillipson, 1992), Considering these issues, designing the teaching of English according to sociolinguistic issues is essential, and as an indispensable part of language teaching, textbooks should be prepared accordingly. When the literature was checked, it was seen that there was not a textbook evaluation rubric that specifically focused on sociolinguistic issues except for Atar and Erdem (2020). In the literature, two studies used this rubric to assess English textbooks (Atar & Erdem, 2020; Genç & Meral, 2020). Both of these studies focused on the English textbooks that were used in public school in Turkey. Genç and Meral's (2020) study analyzed one high school English textbook using the Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric (Atar & Erdem, 2020), and the results showed that the assessed textbook was in line with some of the issues raised in the rubric. However, there were also various issues. For instance, there was a lack of non-native to non-native and native to non-native instances of interaction. In addition, only two dialects of English were provided: British and American. The other native and non-native accents were lacking. Atar and Erdem (2020) studied another

textbook used in Turkish public high schools as well, and the analysis demonstrated that in line with Genç and Meral's (2020) findings, the textbook needed improvements in providing genuine speakers of non-native and non-standard accents of English. Hence, it was suggested that instead of using standard accent vocalizations for the speakers that were depicted as non-natives, genuine non-native speakers should be provided. Moreover, they suggested that the textbook should have focused on different ways of culture and perspectives rather than mostly providing general and simplistic cultural knowledge about cities or historic places. On the other hand, another study (Langeborg, 2010) analyzed the textbook Third Time (Bermheden et al., 1998), which is used in in this study, from other perspectives. Langeborg (2010) studied the readability of Third Time (Bermheden et al., 1998); however, there were no studies on the two textbook from a sociolinguistic perspective.

In line with Lundahl's guidelines, but in order to capture the sociolinguistic issues in language teaching to investigate whether the nuances of Englishes are acknowledged in the academic level or not, this study uses the Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric developed by Atar and Erdem (2020) to assess two textbooks used in Sweden. In support of their scale, Atar and Erdem (2020) argued that different social variables should be acknowledged to have a descriptive approach and calls for using rubrics to evaluate textbooks as they help the evaluator remember some issues, and more importantly increase the objectivity, reproducibility and credibility of the evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2000). Although there are many checklists suggested for evaluating textbooks (e.g. Alemi & Mesbah, 2013; Litz, 2002; Nguyen, 2011, 2015), most of them do not focus on sociolinguistic approaches directly as suggested by Nguyen (2015). Though studies evaluating textbooks mostly focus on the content of the books (Vanha, 2017), evaluation studies dwelling on a sociolinguistic perspective are lacking. To fill this gap, Atar and Erdem (2020) developed a rubric by which English language teachers and researchers can analyze a textbook through a sociolinguistic lens. Following the rubric, this study evaluates two English textbooks of grade 9 from the Swedish context.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study has a qualitative design, and it analyzes two English textbooks (Third Time, Engelska För År 9 Textboken (Bermheden et al., 1998) and Sparks 9 (Taylor, 2018)) used in Sweden using the Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric developed by Atar and Erdem (2020). In this sense, this study is a qualitative Document Analysis. Document Analysis is the examination of a document to have conclusions about it via different approaches such as Content Analysis, Interpretive Approach and Critical Approach (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The current study adopts an Interpretive Approach in Document Analysis. It involves focusing on meaning in the content, which is assigned by textbook authors, teachers and students (Jupp & Norris, 1993). The rubric consists of six items, and the two textbooks were analyzed in accordance with these six points in the rubric. The items of the rubric can be seen in Table 1:

THE CRITERIA	Assessment		
Does the course book …	Yes	Partly	No
1. provide non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard (e.g. The Birmingham accent or Geordie) accents/varieties of English?			
2. provide native-non-native and non-native-non-native instances of interaction?			
3. include examples of successful bilinguals?			
4. promote intercultural communicative competence?			
5. consider the linguistic ecology of learners and their L1 (or other languages as well)?			
6. alter the case of English learning among only the elites of the country?			

Table 1. The Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric (Atar & Erdem, 2020)

The context of the study is Sweden. The Swedish National Curriculum is based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001). CEFR is a reference document describing the knowledge and skills language learners need to develop in a foreign language. It provides basis for development of curriculums, textbooks and language tests. The CEFR describes language activities and competencies at six main levels: A1 (the lowest), A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2 (the highest). It was created by the Council of Europe as a part of the project "Language Learning for European Citizenship" between 1989 and 1996.

The syllabus for English in the Swedish National Curriculum, Lgr 11, is based on CEFR's guidelines. According to Lundahl (2014, p. 26), the syllabus shares CEFR's view of language development and the view of progression. Building on our previous discussion on the contexts where Englishes are used, the syllabus also clearly mentions that teaching in English should provide the pupils with opportunities to develop their skills in order to "reflect over living conditions, social and cultural phenomena in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used." (Skoslverket, 2018, p. 34)

With CEFR and Swedish syllabus as guidelines, textbooks are created locally in Sweden, but some English medium schools use books published and created in the UK and the USA as well. Textbooks are provided free of cost to students. As for the two books that were analyzed in this book, the first one is Third Time, Engelska För År 9 Textboken (Eng. Translation: Third Time, English for year 9 Textbook) (Bermheden et al., 1998). The second one is Sparks 9 (Taylor, 2018), prepared for 9th graders as well.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis undertaken via the rubric will be provided below. Firstly, the results of the analysis on Sparks 9 (Taylor, 2018) will be presented. Then, the analysis of Third Time, Engelska För År 9, Textboken (Bermheden et al., 1998) will be given.

4.1. Sparks 9 (Taylor, 2018)

Below, the summary of the findings according to the rubric were given. Then, the discussion and examples were provided one by one depending on each item in the rubric.

THE CRITERIA	Assessment		
Does the course book …	Yes	Partly	No
1. provide non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard (e.g. The Birmingham accent or Geordie) accents/varieties of English.	x		
2. provide native-non-native and non-native-non-native instances of interaction?	x		
3. include examples of successful bilinguals?	x		
4. promote intercultural communicative competence?		x	
5. consider the linguistic ecology of learners and their L1 (or other languages as well)?		x	
6. alter the case of English learning among only the elites of the country?		x	

Table 2. The summary of the analysis of Sparks 9 (Taylor, 2018)

1. Does the course book provide non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard (e.g. The Birmingham accent or Geordie) accents/varieties of English?

The book Sparks 9 is very inclusive in terms of the names of the countries mentioned (e.g. Kenya and India) beyond the countries of the Global North and inner circle countries (Kachru, 2006). The textbook's inside cover contains a colorful world map without any distinctions or hierarchies, or even labeling of continents compared to the other textbook Third Time (Bermheden et al., 1998) which contains only maps of the inner circle countries. As regards the varieties of English, the overview of all four units clearly marks regional variants in the texts with British English, American English, Australian English, and South African English as seen below.

Units	Suggested focus	Text types	Regional Variants (in the texts)	Grammar
1. PASSIONS	Speaking		British English American English	
2. ON THE MOVE	Listening		American English British English	
3. NEWS	Digital literacy		British English American English	
4. FOOTPRINTS	Reading		British English	

	Writing		American English	

Table 3. The units of Sparks 9

> 2. Does the course book provide native-non-native and non-native-non-native instances of interaction?

The text provides names, and place names from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds as well as providing instances of interaction among different groups of people. As regards our distinctions of native-non-native and non-native-non-native, it is slightly problematic to make a clear cut decision here as all sections belong to a particular variety. For example, the textbook begins with a unit entitled ''Young and Passionate'' where the dialogue takes place in British English among two characters Amina and Charles. In this regard, they are two native speakers of British English, but in terms of inclusivity as compared to Third Time (Bermheden et al., 1998), where majority names were from Am-Anglo majority population, this textbook includes Asian, African and Middle Eastern sounding names as well. As Alptekin (2002) and McKay (2011) suggested providing non-native accents and the varieties of English is essential in achieving competence in English with regard to a sociolinguistic perspective. Hence, this textbook seems to satisfy this point in the rubric.

> 3. Does the course book include examples of successful bilinguals?

The textbook provides various sociolinguistic contexts including focus on characters from outer circle countries. The unit called "News" deals with various aspects of news, and it presents a four-page interview of a Computer Scientist from the University of Pune, India by a British Journalist. Although the text does not include any other language except English, it makes it inclusive in terms of gender, inclusivity of the Global South and outer circle English speakers where the underlying implication is that the speaker is a successful bilingual.

Figure 1. Successful bilinguals (p. 90)

> 4. Does the course book promote intercultural communicative competence?

The book brings in diverse examples and contexts from outside Sweden, but primarily from diverse contexts of the US and the UK. For instance, unit one includes a four-page interaction between Amina and Charles without making their identities, ethnicity or linguistic backgrounds problematic. Another example is of Wangari Maathai from Kenya, and in the section on online dating, three profiles of Fatima, Craig and Sue are shown in a neutral tone

without any hierarchies or special references to their heritage backgrounds and so on. Therefore, it can be concluded that the book promotes intercultural communicative competence; however, it lacks local Swedish diversity and intracultural communication, stories and profiles from the language groups within Sweden.

> 5. Does the course book Consider the linguistic ecology of learners and their L1 (or L2 and other as well)?

Linguistic ecology simply means the sum of all languages in a country. Sweden is a small multilingual and multicultural country with many people born outside of Sweden, and 20% of students at the compulsory school level are from an immigrant background (Lundahl, 2014). With many languages spoken in Sweden, this ecology of languages or backgrounds or a clear local context is missing in the texts and pictures/photos of the book. However, there are various examples from the textbook where people both from minority and majority backgrounds are presented in the units, but some of them do not make any reference to Sweden or any of its cities. For example, "The light of my life" is a section of a unit where two characters Megan White & Reyansh are two scientists in the USA, whereas Reyansh is a British Indian. In the text there is a reference to his accent as well as the problems in arranged marriages.

Figure 2. Indian culture

> 6. Does the course book alter the case of English learning among only the elites of the country?

There are various examples of a mix of rich and poor people; however, there are not many specific references to Sweden in the book. One example is a story of Asad from the novel The Same Stars by Gail Davison who makes the journey from Afghanistan to Europe. In addition, as mentioned in the Methodology section, this textbook is provided free-of-charge in Sweden, which may decrease the social inequalities in accessing opportunities for English language learning.

4.2. Third Time, Engelska För År 9, Textboken (Bermheden et al., 1998)

Here is the summary of the findings from Third Time according to the rubric:

THE CRITERIA	Assessment		
Does the course book …	Yes	Partly	No
1. provide non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard (e.g. The Birmingham accent or Geordie) accents/varieties of English.		x	
2. provide native-non-native and non-native-non-native instances of interaction?	x		
3. include examples of successful bilinguals?		x	
4. promote intercultural communicative competence?		x	
5. consider the linguistic ecology of learners and their L1 (or other languages as well)?		x	
6. alter the case of English learning among only the elites of the country?		x	

Table 4. The summary of the analysis for Third Time

1. Does the course book provide non-native (e.g. Indian English) and non-standard (e.g. The Birmingham accent or Geordie) accents/varieties of English?

The textbook includes characters mainly from the inner circle. For example, Chapter 3 is called South Africa, and it has two sections entitled "The rise of a nation" and "I see you" respectively as well as two tracks included in the chapter called "Nelson Mandela" and "Surfer's Paradise". On the page called "appetizers", where discussion questions and activities are listed, one project description clearly states: "Would you like to know more about that far away exotic nation? Imagine going on a holiday to the country where the oceans mean…" So, although quite a few pages have been spent on including countries other than the UK, and USA, the wording "exotic nation" disaligns with objectivity and inclusion.

2. Does the course book provide native-non-native and non-native-non-native instances of interaction?

Overall, the textbook provides instances of these types of interaction, and there are many different people and cultures. The book provides bilingual contexts. For example, section 3A "The rise of the nation" asks why people in South Africa speak Afrikaans, a dialect of Dutch, and later asks why South Africans speak English as well? It presents people from different ethnic backgrounds.
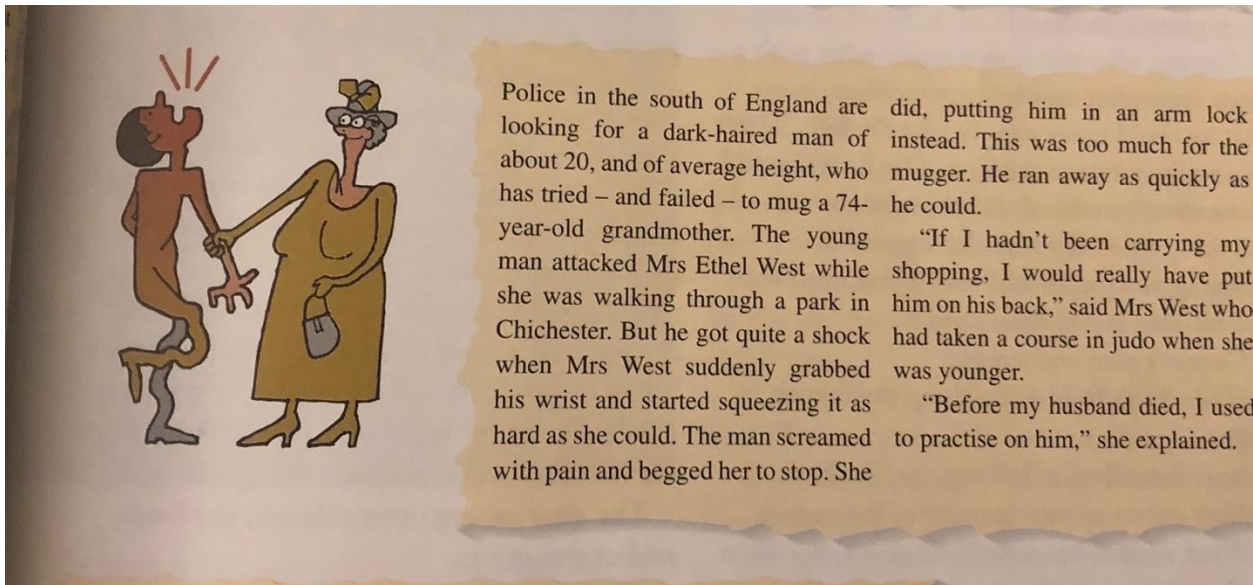
3. Does the course book include examples of successful bilinguals?

It may be argued that the textbook may need improvements in setting successful examples for the learners by providing more genuine bilinguals. There are non-native speakers in the study, but they often speak with a standard accent, which is a bit far-fetched although it is possible. Hence, it is suggested here that instances of successful bilinguals should be provided more as this makes learning a language more realistic and effective (Matsumoto, 2011).

4. Does the course book promote intercultural communicative competence?

In terms of intercultural competence, there are various examples of the meeting of several cultures, but not all examples can be taken as promoting inclusivity or intercultural competence. For example, on page number 13 in section 2A, the section called "Crimes that went wrong" provides one example as follows: "Police in the south of England are looking for a dark-haired man of about 20, and of average height, who has tried – and failed – to mug a 74-year-old grandmother. The young man attacked Mrs. Ethel West while she was walking through a park in Chichester." While the example shows a man of color (as shown in the picture), the interaction is unequal in terms of the depiction of the man as "dark-haired" while the grandmother's color is not mentioned. With regard to intercultural communicative competence, this example can be considered a negative example. While there are other

examples of criminals in this section, their color or race is not mentioned. The invisibility of other colors marks "the dark-colored" man's crime.

Police in the south of England are looking for a dark-haired man of about 20, and of average height, who has tried – and failed – to mug a 74-year-old grandmother. The young man attacked Mrs Ethel West while she was walking through a park in Chichester. But he got quite a shock when Mrs West suddenly grabbed his wrist and started squeezing it as hard as she could. The man screamed with pain and begged her to stop. She did, putting him in an arm lock instead. This was too much for the mugger. He ran away as quickly as he could.

"If I hadn't been carrying my shopping, I would really have put him on his back," said Mrs West who had taken a course in judo when she was younger.

"Before my husband died, I used to practise on him," she explained.

Figure 3. Crimes

The textbook Third Time mentions the following locations in its chapters as well: South Africa, African Woods, Adelaide, Baltimore, Melbourne, Los Angeles, Louvian, Brussels, Belgium, Auschwitz, Poland, Ireland, Britain, America, Dublin, Countries of Europe, Black Valley, London, England, India, South African Village, Johannesberg, Robben island, Cape Town, Jeffrey's Bay, Galapagos island, Oregon, Bolton, Paris, Italy, Arnhem, Limerick and New York. The countries and cities mentioned are mostly from the Global North, but also they include South Africa for a focus of two chapters and more. The inside pages of the book cover; however, show the map of the British Isles and the United States of America hereby marking two important countries in the Anglophone sphere. Then, it can be suggested that this textbook provides instances of intercultural encounters, and it supports the development of intercultural communicative competence; however, there are some problems such as covert racism or the contexts are usually from the western part of the world.

5. Does the course book consider the linguistic ecology of learners and their L1 (or L2 and other as well)?

The linguistic ecology of Sweden is again often missing in this textbook as well. Neither are there many references to Swedish varieties or other migrants' languages spoken in the local context. There are few examples from the Swedish context such as "They play frogs", and an Australian woman with ties to Sweden writing a letter about the Swedish MidSummer traditions. While it does not take into consideration any Swedish words, the discussion section engages in cross-cultural comparisons with references to Swedish culture, Britain, Scandinavia, America and Japan.

6. Does the course book alter the case of English learning among only the elites of the country?

While there are many examples from elites of Anglophone countries, for example, princess Diana, Madonna, Charles Darwin, and Nelson Mandela, local heroes or local figures are missing from this textbook. It sometimes provides examples and stories from a wide socio-economic background such as Auschwitz, Poland and Daman family in Brussels resisting the Nazis as well.

To sum up the analysis of the two textbooks, they seem to satisfy most of the points in the rubric while Sparks 9 seems to satisfy the points a bit more considering sociolinguistic issues. When the analysis of the two textbook is considered, it can be argued that they satisfy the first four points of the rubric in general. Although it is not at a very high level (especially Third Time), still it can be suggested that they provide interactions of standard and non-standard varieties. Also, they provide some instances of successful bilinguals. However, there should be more real successful bilinguals as this sets a realistic goal for English learners (Matsumoto, 2011). Moreover, the fact that the people in the textbooks have an accent should not be seen as a problem, and they should be given a place in the textbooks as standard accents are not the realm of English as a lingua franca in the global world (Alptekin, 2002; Cook, 2008).

On the other hand, the textbooks need some improvements in terms of the final two points. Trying to alter the case of English learning is really significant from a sociolinguistic perspective (McKay, 2011), because as Bourdieu (1977) argues, linguistic capital is significant in societies. This means that learning English can be a linguistic capital by which speakers assert their status and the recipient decides how much to recognize that authority. In this sense, learning English can strengthen the powerful even more while weakening the people already in the lower layers of societies. The rich usually have better chances of learning English through their wealth and social relationships, and this increases their social power further. Even if they may not be that good at content knowledge, a subject and skills, English is seen as a social capital, and they can outperform their peers easily, which further aggravates social inequalities. In this sense, these two textbooks, and in fact all the other English textbooks, should take this into consideration. On the other, the fact that these two textbooks are free-of-charge can be seen as a positive factor as disadvantaged groups can also have access to English learning, at least to some extent, thanks to them.

5. CONCLUSION

The spread and expansion of English as a global language have increased through contact with diverse socio-cultural contexts of the Global North and the South. From the British Isles to its former colonies, and now in the European context, English has a unique and established position. The Englishes from the inner core or mostly from the British and American contexts are familiar varieties which are generally speaking more accepted varieties, and it is needless to say that this is partly due to the fact that the media and entertainment industries are mainly from Hollywood and United Kingdom. This has had an impact on generations after the Second World War, and these cultures are considered as 'normative' cultures and contexts. However, the majority of the English users come from non-native backgrounds, and in Applied Linguistics and with the rise of the scholarship of Englishes, other varieties other than British and American varieties have also become more and more 'talked about' in the academic circles.

Textbooks are one of the important resources for teachers to carry on the business of English language teaching. Even though many other materials are used by teachers to supplement the missing elements, if any textbooks mirror some aspects of the discourses present and absent from a particular educational space, such as inclusion of non-native-native interaction contexts and different countries and cultures, this reflects the position of English as a lingua franca and the world Englishes.

The findings of this study via Document Analysis by applying the Sociolinguistic Textbook Evaluation Rubric on two Swedish textbooks revealed that they mostly conform to the first four items in the rubric. However, they need some improvements in the others. There are

some differences between two textbooks as well. For example, Sparks 9 includes a wide variety of characters and locations from around the world, but Third Time (Bermheden et al., 1998) generally includes the inner core and Global North, specifically UK and USA contexts in detail. Still, they provide a variety of people considering their accents/dialects and native-non-native status, and they also provide instances of successful bilinguals. These features may have positive effects on learners as they are provided with the contents that can enable them to see what they can achieve by learning foreign language learning, which probably contributes to their motivation. This can also decrease their foreign language learning anxiety as bilinguals are more realistic targets for them in comparison to native speakers of standard accents.

Finally, this study has some limitations. First of all, it focused on only one level (9th graders) and only the ones available for free in state school. Even in this grade, there are several other textbooks available in the country as mentioned in Methodology. In this sense, this study reported the analysis of the two specific textbooks, and thus it had no aims of making any generalizations about the textbooks in Sweden with regard to sociolinguistic issues. However, this gap can provide a basis for future studies, and researchers in Sweden or other countries can study other English (or other second/foreign language) textbooks to sketch the general picture of the English textbooks in Sweden (or in other countries). We believe that this will be a beneficial contribution considering the role of English as a lingua franca and the status of Englishes in the 21st century.

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