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Analysis of productive e-learning exercises

A study of upper secondary school English
e-learning materials

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Abstract

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Abstract:

The research focuses on the productive e-learning exercises in upper secondary school English learning materials provided by four publishers in their e-textbooks. Digital learning materials have become increasingly common, and the introduction of the new National Core Curriculum for general upper secondary schools has prompted publishing houses to publish new materials, with an even bigger focus on the digital version. The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive description and a critical evaluation of the variety of productive e-learning exercises that the publishers provide. Previous research on this topic in the Finnish context is very limited and learning materials in general have mostly been studied by master's students in universities.

The materials for the analysis come from the productive e-learning exercises that are related to text chapters in the four publishers' (Sanoma Pro, Otava, Edita, and Studeo) e-textbooks. All the analysed materials are brand new and have not been researched before. The research method for this study is content analysis, which is conducted through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The analysis was conducted by coding the data based on three main categories that are *What is the learner expected to do?*, *Who with?*, and *With what content?*, and in several subcategories under them.

The findings show that the available published materials provide a wide variety of different e-learning exercises for the upper secondary school students. Most often the results of the comparative analyses showed similarities, rather than dramatic differences between the four publishers' materials. With regards to the four characteristics of learning, the results of the study showed that one of them was supported especially well (students' activity and initiative), two were supported well (sense of community and clear, authentic, and demanding exercises), and only one characteristic was not supported well enough (learning skills) by the analysed e-learning exercises.

The current study provides useful data for the, still lacking, learning material research in the Finnish context. The presented findings give insight to the publishers into what factors should be considered when designing exercises for new products. For teachers, the findings can be useful when making use of one of the e-textbooks in the classroom, whilst planning lessons and courses, or when choosing which publisher's material they would like to use next.

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1 Introduction

The new National Core Curriculum (henceforth NCC) for general upper secondary schools in Finland was put into practice in August 2021 (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019) and it brought about a change in the structure of the studies. Also, the Finnish government decided to raise the age that marks the end of compulsory education to 18 years, from the start of autumn term 2021. This change meant that studies in the general upper secondary schools became free of charge for the learning materials, as already was the case in the Finnish comprehensive school (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d., accessed 17 October 2021a). This puts a huge strain on education providers' budgets as providing learning materials is the largest group of expenses (Kuntaliitto 2020), and as the change affects one age group at a time, the need for additional appropriations will gradually increase until the year 2024 (Ministry of Education and Culture, n.d., accessed 17 October 2021b).

These changes have made educational providers tend towards buying e-learning materials since they generally are cheaper than printed books and the distribution of learning materials to all students is more effortless digitally. Due to the change in curriculum, the overall sales of upper secondary school materials grew by 44% in 2021 (Finnish Publishers Association 2022). When looking at net sales figures showing the distribution of sales between printed and digital materials, it is evident that digital materials have become a more prominent part of upper secondary school education year by year. In 2019, the share of digital materials was only around 33% and in 2021 it rose to be over 71%. Upper secondary school digital material sales almost doubled in 2021 from 10.6 MEUR to 20.5 MEUR (Finnish Publishers Association 2022). Another factor that has furthered the use of e-learning materials in Finnish upper secondary schools even before the year 2021 is the change in matriculation examinations becoming digital from the year 2016 onwards, which has called for technological advances in the teaching of all subjects (Ekonoja 2014, 15).

E-learning materials are not a new phenomenon in the Finnish context, but the recent change in curriculum has provided a chance for all publishers to renew their approach to the learning materials they wish to design and publish. The possible full digitalisation of learning materials raises the question of pedagogical effectiveness and versatility espe-

cially when it comes to the exercises that are offered in the digital textbooks. Even though extensive digitalisation of learning materials has been on the way for several years already, there are still some limitations in the digital platforms, such as what additional digital tools are available for students, that influence the process of designing digital learning exercises. As publishers' materials should represent the NCC and its objectives, it is also important to evaluate how well the aims of the curriculum are reflected in the published materials. Also, for the advancement of these digital learning platforms, current materials need to be studied to identify shortages in the exercises that are offered.

There are four major publishers for upper secondary school English materials in Finland: Sanoma Pro, Otava, Edita, and Studeo. All these publishers have extensive e-learning materials designed for the new NCC, and Studeo is the only one that does not publish printed materials at all. With four major players, the competition is tough and the two traditional big publishing houses Sanoma Pro and Otava have had to give way to smaller, newer publishers in recent years.

This research investigates the e-learning exercises that are provided by the four Finnish publishers in their upper secondary school English products. The focus is on the exercises provided through the digital platforms since digital learning materials have not yet been studied thoroughly even though their use in teaching and learning has become more common in recent years. In particular, the materials in focus here have not been studied before since publishers are releasing new materials for the new NCC as they are being taken into use. Accordingly, it is expected that the results will provide useful information for the future to assist in choosing what materials teachers should choose and schools purchase.

The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive description and a critical evaluation of the variety of e-learning exercises that publishers provide. I will explore and analyse different publishers' products also in a comparative manner to be able to give insight into the situation of the market for upper secondary school English materials.

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What kind of variation can be seen in the productive e-learning exercises provided by the publishers?
2. How are the four important characteristics of learning supported in the analysed e-learning exercises? (i.e. sense of community, learning skills, student's activity and initiative, and clear, authentic, and demanding exercises)

This thesis begins by offering the theoretical background in which I review the previous research and theory that is relevant to this study. The theoretical background chapter focuses on three main areas of research that are *learning materials*, *e-learning*, and *materials evaluation*. In chapter 3, I present the materials and methodology used for this study. Chapter 4 provides the results and an analysis of the data that was gathered. Finally, conclusions and areas for further research are identified at the end of the paper.

2 Theoretical background

The following sections present previous research and theory that is relevant to this study. I begin in section 2.1 with introducing traditional learning materials and previous research related to them as well as the framework that guides the design of learning materials in Finnish upper secondary schools. New innovations brought about by the introduction of digitalisation to learning materials are discussed in section 2.2 through the concepts of *digital literacy*, *blended learning*, and *e-textbooks*. Finally, in section 2.3, I discuss materials evaluation and the quality criteria for e-learning materials that will be part of the analysis for the current study.

2.1 Learning materials

English language learning materials, and particularly the EFL¹ textbooks, have been researched for a long time due to their central role in classrooms all around the world (Gray 2013, 2) and the findings have generated change in how publishers, curriculum developers, and teachers view textbooks and other learning materials (Fuchs and Bock 2018, 1). Textbooks have a significance in our multifaceted societies, which does not only include the substance but also how “they normalise ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of understanding” (Macgilchrist 2018, 169). With all learning materials, it is vital to remember that they are more than just tools for mediating knowledge. They always contain and generate underlying norms and values (Fuchs and Bock 2018, 1) that affect the surrounding society (Macgilchrist 2018, 169) as well as the so-called *hidden curriculum* that is taught in schools (Gray 2013, 3). The concept of the hidden curriculum refers to the social meanings, restraints, and cultural values that can be learned from the textbook in addition to the subject being taught, and these shape students in their roles outside of the classroom (Gray 2013, 3).

Textbooks have preserved their status as the most important educational medium in schools worldwide, even though textbook production – including content, design, and educational objectives – has drastically changed over the years (Fuchs and Bock 2018, 1). One part of learning materials that is also important to consider in textbook research is the commercial aspect of the publishing industry, which is a key element in understanding the thought processes behind the contents that are chosen for each book (Gray 2013,

¹ English as a Foreign Language.

2). Especially in the discussion of language textbooks, it is important to note that the language is served in particular ways to the consumers (Gray 2010a, 48) and when language turns into a commodity, it affects students, teachers, and publishers (Gray 2010b, 129), which in turn makes it even more important to research the contents found in all learning materials. As languages can be seen as symbolic entities, there may be effects on the choice of language to study, motivation, and how governments distribute resources for language learning (Gray 2010b, 129). Even though course books are designed to be educational tools, they also embody the reality we live in, and the commodification of the abundance of materials that are available can make consumers “orient towards commodities no longer solely in terms of their use value but in terms of what they signify” (Gray 2010b, 129). In the context of Finnish publishing houses, this could for example mean an orientation towards using materials provided by traditional publishing houses that have an established reputation, rather than choosing to try out materials from an up-and-coming company.

2.1.1 Previous research on learning materials

Research on Finnish learning materials is mainly conducted by master’s students in universities, which means that systematic study on the field is missing (Hiidenmaa 2015, 27). This is also why the studies discussed in this section are only from research presented on master’s thesis papers. Most studies focus on comprehensive school learning materials, with the next biggest sector being upper secondary school materials (Hiidenmaa 2015, 28). Learning material research is usually qualitative, and most of the studies have focused on the linguistic contents of the materials. In addition to theses completed as part of master’s programmes, publishers have also conducted their own research on the practical use of different materials, but these results are naturally usually not public. (Hiidenmaa 2015, 28) A small amount of thesis research has focused on e-learning materials and the changing learning environments where they are used (Hiidenmaa 2015, 35). Furthermore, the effect of printed versus digital learning materials on learning has not been studied thoroughly in Finland (Sankila 2015, 26). The current study aims to gain insight into this limitedly researched area of digital learning materials, as the focus is solely on e-learning exercises.

Different ways of teaching English in upper secondary schools have been studied by Korhonen (2014), who focused on teacher and students’ opinions on different approaches

and their effectiveness. Based on the answers of 96 students and 84 teachers Korhonen argued that innovative ways of teaching were more common than traditional ones, even though traditional methods also had their place in the classroom according to both teachers and students. The results also showed that all four language skill areas, i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking, were equally emphasised in the lessons (Korhonen 2014, 74). The study also found that exercises where students are asked to read aloud or translate text were most common during lessons. The majority of the respondents agreed on the importance of all the four language skill areas, with a focus on discussion exercises during the lessons. (Korhonen 2014, 75) Oral exercises as well as pair and group work exercises were considered the most effective ways of teaching English by both students and teachers. Even though these innovative ways of teaching were the most popular when it comes to efficiency, the more traditional ways, such as translation and grammar exercises, are also widely used in teaching. (Korhonen 2014, 76)

English teachers' satisfaction with textbooks was studied by Hietala (2015), who surveyed 131 teachers' perceptions. His main finding was that the teachers hold current textbooks in high regard and textbooks have a prominent role in almost every lesson they hold (Hietala 2015, 66). Almost 80 percent of the respondents had had the opportunity to influence the selection of the textbook and they found that covering different language skills as well as utilising authentic language were the most significant factors when choosing a book (Hietala 2015, 67).

The use and meaning of e-textbooks was studied through upper secondary school biology learning materials by Minkkinen (2020). The study was conducted by having a questionnaire to 66 students and interviewing two teachers. Compared to printed books, the pedagogical advantages of e-textbooks were deemed to be the ease to use them, high quality of images and videos in them, and their customisability. However, the e-textbooks were found not to inspire learning, as they were uncomfortable to read, and they did not always work as intended.

A comparative study of different publishers' digital and printed English learning materials was conducted by Saarela (2020). The focus was on Sanoma Pro and Otava's materials for all the courses provided in upper secondary school, and the materials were designed for the previous NCC that was taken into use in 2016. Saarela found that the differences between the two mediums were not trivial, and that the digital environment would have

allowed for more versatile exercises, but the possibilities were not fully utilised (Saarela 2020, 44). In both publishers' series, discussion exercises were the most frequent overall and when looking at only the online extra exercises, gap fill exercises were the most common (Saarela 2020, 46). Saarela concluded that the digital version of the book makes for a more useful product since it has features such as a search function and the audio materials are readily available. Nowadays printed books need to be accompanied by a mobile device or a computer to access for example audio files, which makes the e-textbook a more convenient option since all the materials are in one place, and the possibility of having extra materials is made easier with the digital platform (Saarela 2020, 44–47).

2.1.2 The National Core Curriculum

Guidelines for education and learning material production in Finland are produced by the Finnish National Agency for Education, which publishes the NCC for the general upper secondary schools. The NCC gives the general guidelines, but cities and schools compile their own more precise curricula that describe their specific objectives. The current NCC for the upper secondary schools was put into practice in the autumn of 2021 (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019), and it is implemented gradually year by year: in the autumn of 2021, only students who begin their upper secondary school education study along the new guidelines. In Finland, the majority of students study English as their first foreign language, which is referred to as the *English advanced syllabus*². This syllabus is also the one that is in focus in this study.

In the NCC, it is stated that students should be directed towards using digital learning environments, materials, and tools to seek, manage, evaluate, produce, and share information (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019, 10). Digital learning environment use is also prompted by the fact that the teaching of foreign languages is based on a broad view of what can be considered a text. This refers to the fact that a text can be written, spoken, visual, audio-visual, or a combination of these different modes (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019, 89). The goal of upper secondary school English education is for students to achieve level B2.1 (CEFR³) in their English skills in all areas of language knowledge, i.e. inter-

² *A-oppimäärä*.

³ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

action skills, text interpretation skills, and text production skills, when graduating (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019, 91).

The English advanced syllabus consists of a total of eight modules out of which the six first are mandatory. The NCC provides brief descriptions of the individual English modules, and since the learning materials for the first two obligatory modules are studied in this paper, the aims for these specific modules are detailed below.

In the first two modules, students form an overall idea of English as a lingua franca and of their personal development as a user of English. Module one is worth one credit and the focus is on introducing the students to upper secondary school language learning where the target language is utilised as much as possible. The main goal is to develop language awareness and students' own language identity through the studies. (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019, 92–93) Module two is worth three credits and the focus is on English as a lingua franca and international relationships. Enhancing the skills of spoken interaction and broadening cultural knowledge are the key parts of the module. (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education 2019, 92–93)

2.2 Digitalisation of learning

As the world of education becomes increasingly digitalised, textbooks and other forms of educational media are competing even more with each other during this transformation (Fuchs and Bock 2018, 1). This in turn underlines the importance of research on e-learning materials. A concept tied to this change in medium is the *mediality* of textbooks. This refers to a shift from concentrating on “what is a medium” to how different forms of media convey the desired information (Macgilchrist 2018, 169). Textbook studies are generally guided by the idea that the ideologies that textbooks convey are tied not only to the text but also to the way in which images and other material dimensions together become instances of mediation (Macgilchrist 2018, 170). This means that contemporary textbooks are complex multimodal items (Macgilchrist 2018, 171) and should be treated as such when conducting research. These multifaceted multimodal entities should be studied further especially since the digital development of textbooks is extremely rapid nowadays (Macgilchrist 2018, 174).

With complex designs behind the contemporary textbooks, it is also vital to further our understanding of the material dimension of mediality. *Materiality* refers to the exploration of how practices change when the material of the item changes, for example from a printed textbook to a digital counterpart that is read on a tablet (Macgilchrist 2018, 172). Textbooks are traditionally rooted in the practice of physically feeling the material whilst it is in use, and the effects of this practice changing into the digital medium should be studied further to find out the shortcomings and possibilities of this new approach. (Macgilchrist 2018, 173)

A variety of different terms are used to describe digital online learning materials. The Finnish National Agency for Education uses the term *e-learning*⁴ when discussing learning that occurs digitally and *e-learning material* when referring to all the learning materials that can be found on the internet (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022). Therefore, these terms are also used in this study, and they are accompanied by the term *e-textbook*, to more specifically refer to the digital version of a textbook provided by publishers in their own digital platforms.

2.2.1 Digital literacy

A prerequisite for utilising e-learning materials to their full potential is *digital literacy*, which is defined by Hobbs (2017, 6) as the knowledge, skills, and competences that are crucial for success in our digitalised society. Hobbs also emphasises that “people of all ages need the ability to access, analyze, create, reflect, and take action using a wide variety of digital tools, forms of expression and communication strategies” (Hobbs 2017, 6). On average, digital tools change every two to three years and in today’s world knowledge is not fixed and static (Hobbs 2017, 3–4). This means that even if a person has been using digital technologies for their whole life, there is still lifelong learning ahead in this department, and that is where the concept of digital literacy comes to play. (Hobbs 2017, 3–4)

As presented by Hobbs (2017, 4), some of the core competencies for digital literacy include:

⁴ *e-oppiminen*.

- *Attention management*, which refers to the ability to identify, prioritise, and manage information.
- *Communication*, which is the ability to use effective strategies when communicating. This includes for example the making of multimedia documents that make use of sound and images.
- *Digital etiquette*, which refers to the awareness of privacy and security issues that may emerge in the digital world.
- *Search and research*, which is the ability to gather information and to identify what is relevant and reliable.

When it comes to the world of education, digital literacy should be an important part of not only school education but also teacher training. According to Ortlieb et al. (2018, 2) future teachers' effectiveness will be measured by how well they succeed in teaching students to utilise the core competences of digital literacy. When considering teacher preparation in the digital age, Hankey et al. (2017, 97) state that it would be important to ground digital literacy teaching in relevant contexts for students' identities both in and out of school. Also, curriculum design that incorporates digital literacy should draw on multimodalities and collective collaboration between students and teachers. (Hankey et al. 2017, 97)

To help students in both primary and secondary education to prepare for the digital literacy needs that they will encounter in their life after school, digital texts should be integrated into curricula since they are essentially always multimodal (Ikpeze 2018, 30–32). As stated by Ikpeze (2018, 40) “digital tools promote engagement, support differentiation, position students as producers of content, and create spaces in the curriculum to nurture their inquiries or text production while expanding their digital literacy skills”. The learning of digital literacy skills is supported by features that can be found in e-textbooks such as a text-to-speech function and embedded vocabularies (Ikpeze 2018, 31).

2.2.2 Blended learning

To integrate digital literacy teaching into schools in the most effective and appropriate way, it is important to review our understanding of the commonplace techniques for learning and of the environments where these strategies are used. When designing digital learning environments, it is vital to take into consideration the different learning objectives

and outcomes that are possible, since these all call for varied combinations of learning environments that take various pedagogical and technological approaches into consideration. (Demirer and Sahin 2013, 518) Learning environments are often created using multimedia, and to support learning, online exercises as well as online feedback is used (Delialioğlu and Yildirim 2007, 133). This kind of approach to learning and teaching can have multiple terms, but for the purposes of this study it is referred to as *blended learning*⁵.

Blended learning is defined by Mccown (2010, 205) as a technique for learning where more than one mode of learning is introduced to maximise learning results and minimise costs. More precisely, the concept of blended learning refers to the merging of face-to-face classes with computer-assisted language learning, which means that teachers' instruction occurs both in the classroom and in the online environment (Delialioğlu and Yildirim 2007, 133; Kim et al. 2009, 299). Blended learning is not a new approach, and it has been recognised as a possibility to improve teaching by taking the strengths from both traditional face-to-face and online learning (Kim et al. 2009, 300).

One way in which blended learning is especially successful is its versatility and the way in which it promotes autonomy and self-regulation of learners (Van Laer and Elen 2017, 1404). This versatility can be seen, for example, in the fact that it enables the teacher to monitor the time, location, and learning style of the students. Also, the online learning section of the blended approach brings versatile possibilities since teachers and students can utilise for example computers, smartphones, different programs, and educational platforms, which also means that the learners are able to obtain access to external learning media (Alipour 2020, 4). The use of a blended approach aims to ensure that learners are not just passive receivers of new information but active participants in the process (Van Laer and Elen 2017, 1397), and using a wide range of blended learning approaches provides a rich learning environment for both students and teachers (Demirer and Sahin 2013, 519).

⁵ The partly overlapping term *hybrid learning* is not used in this study, since in the Finnish context during the COVID-19 pandemic it was used to refer to learning situations in which some of the students were studying through an online connection due to being in quarantine. This type of hybrid learning is always blended. Blended learning can also be conducted with students present in the same classroom, which is the concept applied in the current study.

Earlier studies suggest that the learning outcomes of students in blended learning are equal or superior to students in only face-to-face or online courses (Delialioglu and Yildirim 2008, 482). Previous research has also shown that utilising blended teaching methods can strengthen pedagogy, make access to information easier, and make learners more engaged whilst also being more cost efficient. (Osguthorpe and Graham 2003, 231–2; Alipour 2020, 3) A study by Alipour (2020, 9) showed that a blended learning approach affected the Iranian EFL students' vocabulary learning positively. She also found that students nowadays require that technology is somehow incorporated into learning, as it helps them to learn in a more enjoyable way (Alipour 2020, 9). This idea is also in line with the findings of So and Lee (2013, 4–7), which show that having blended content made the learning activities more engaging, supportive, and inspiring.

Digital platforms are obviously an important part of blended learning, and Delialioglu and Yildirim (2007, 143) found that it is important not to overload the online part of the studies with content and to specifically determine the amount of time that is used in the digital platform. They also found that metacognitive support in the digital platform plays an important role in overcoming the possible disorientation caused by the overload of information, and therefore the usability as well as simplicity of design should be given special attention in the creation of the digital platform (Delialioglu and Yildirim 2007, 144).

2.2.3 E-textbooks

In its early stages, the e-textbook was only a supplementary learning resource rather than a stand-alone replacement for the printed book (Gu et al. 2015, 28). Still today, many e-textbooks are only replicas of their printed counterparts, but some are specifically designed for the digital mediums (Bikowski and Casal 2018, 120). The e-textbook can thus nowadays be seen as a platform for learning that serves interactive reading material as well as an interface for learning activities (Gu et al. 2015, 26). This is also the approach taken in all the learning materials in focus in the current study.

E-textbooks are described as having the benefits of affordability, portability (Bikowski and Casal 2018, 119), flexibility, accessibility, interactivity (Woody et al. 2010, 947; Daniel and Woody 2013, 22), and learner enjoyment (Gu et al. 2015, 34). However, to

take advantage of these potentially positive features, students need enough time to learn how to utilise the e-textbooks to their full potential (Baek and Monaghan 2013, 3).

Despite these advantages, studies conducted in the 2010s showed that students generally prefer printed textbooks over the digital ones (Woody et al. 2010, 946–8) because reading long texts on screens may be tiring, technological difficulties can occur (Baek and Monaghan 2013, 14), and teachers may not have enough technical knowledge to help in problematic situations that often arise (Gu et al. 2015, 32). Even though digital texts are prominent in our society, there is also a gap between the societal and educational use of technology. Also, the ways in which we use technology in our everyday lives are not necessarily conducive to learning, which indicates that further training into technological competence should be implemented to both students and teachers. (Bikowski and Casal 2018, 121)

Bikowski and Casal (2018, 133) have found that e-textbooks are most effective and engaging when they are specifically designed for the digital platform instead of the printed form, since that way they can exploit the multimodality of the platform better. It is also important that digital platform designers consider how different design decisions impact learners' processing of content (Paek et al. 2017, 1399). E-textbooks have been studied from the point of view of their features, user acceptance, effectiveness, and pedagogical design, but especially their pedagogical design requires increased attention to make teaching and learning more effective (Gu et al. 2015, 37), in an age where learning digitally increases at an incredible volume.

2.3 Evaluating learning materials

Teachers, publishers, and government officials all evaluate learning materials for the same basic reasons: to ensure the effectiveness of the materials, to ensure language level appropriateness, and to ensure that the materials bring forth the desired outcomes (Amrani 2011, 272). Materials evaluation is a constant procedure for teachers, both when choosing a textbook series that they will use for multiple years and when scouting for a one-time lesson activity. Teachers use their previous knowledge and imagination when evaluating how the material at hand will work on their specific students. Some teachers carry out error analysis of materials in use to find out what additional materials the students require to improve their performance. Teachers have a constant possibility of reviewing their

materials and modifying them for every new lesson or group of students (Amrani 2011, 270-271). For publishers, however, the situation is different: they prepare materials for somewhat unknown students. They do have facts about the syllabus in use and class sizes, but for example specific learning techniques that certain teachers might use, cannot be known or considered when publishing for a wide audience. Printed materials already in use cannot be reviewed and modified quickly but are usually in use for years and printing new editions is expensive. Therefore, an error in material for a teacher is usually corrected by the next lesson but for a publisher, major errors may mean a significant loss of revenue. However, with the growth of e-learning materials, this is somewhat changing since the materials can be changed rather quickly and with a lower budget. (Amrani 2011, 271)

Learning materials can be evaluated from different viewpoints and thus it is important to note that analysing materials for what they are, i.e. the content and the ways of working that they guide to use (e.g. pair work), is different from analysing the use of these materials in action in a classroom (Littlejohn 2011, 181). Exercises provided in ready-made published materials are always reinterpreted in the classroom by teachers and students (Littlejohn 2011, 181), and full materials evaluation requires not only detailed analysis of the material itself but also analysis of what teachers, students, and institutions expect from materials, to see how well the two match each other (Littlejohn 2011, 201). For this reason, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the materials in focus is outside the scope of this study.

2.3.1 Quality criteria by the Finnish National Agency for Education

As printed teaching materials have been used and researched for a long time, the criterion for evaluating their quality is well-known and used. However, e-learning materials have not yet been studied extensively, which means that their quality criteria have not yet been standardised (Ekonoja 2014, 15; Uppal et al. 2018, 412). As an answer to this gap in the knowledge of what constitutes quality e-learning materials, the Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022) has provided their own quality criteria for e-learning materials that are presented below. Learning materials' quality criteria obviously depend on the subject at hand, but the following criteria are based on a more general approach.

The pedagogical quality of e-learning materials includes the natural suitability of the material for teaching and learning, the support it provides, and the added pedagogical value that it brings. When assessing e-learning material quality, the most essential part is to note that the material should not just be a collection of texts, pictures, and videos without a pedagogical aspect. This means that assessing the different functional elements that publishers provide in their digital platforms is crucial when evaluating the quality of e-learning materials as a whole. (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022) These functionalities can be for example a search function, linked outside content, or a highlighting tool. High-quality e-learning material is also flexible in how it is used, since many times the expected and designed way of using the material differs greatly from how teachers use it in practice (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022).

Another important factor in determining the quality of e-learning materials is how the material supports the four important characteristics of learning. These characteristics are specified below (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022) and they will be used in this study to evaluate how well the e-learning exercises provided by the publishers in the analysed materials support them.

- Supporting the sense of community and working together by guiding into carrying out exercises in which teamwork has a central role. This can for example be done through working on a shared text, video, or research.
- Supporting the learning skills of students. Exercises that support this are for example ones in which students are required to plan how a certain exercise is carried out, to think about what they already know about the phenomenon that they are about to study, or ones in which students need to evaluate their own performance in an exercise.
- Supporting students' activity and initiative regarding the studied phenomenon. This can be done through favouring exercises in which students are for example required to compare, evaluate, choose, and consider different aspects, instead of only clicking on the right answer.
- Having exercises that are clear, demanding, and authentic since these types of activities are motivating and engaging to students.

Finally, pedagogical quality is also determined by acknowledging the context in which the material is used, which means that operating the e-learning materials and e-textbooks

should not require complex technical or didactic arrangements. Pedagogical quality is a combination of meaningful exercises, the central contents for learning, technical functionality, and visually pleasing materials. (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022)

3 Materials and method

In this chapter, I first present the material that was chosen for this study, providing information on the four publishers. Then I go on to discuss the method applied in this study, followed by the way in which the data was classified to help final analysis. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study.

3.1 Materials

In this study I analyse the e-learning exercises found in the e-textbooks by four Finnish publishers: Sanoma Pro, Otava, Edita, and Studeo. All the examined e-learning materials are meant for students who study based on the English advanced syllabus. The data for this study was collected from the publishers' digital platforms and the examined digital books are made for the new NCC that was introduced to schools in the autumn of 2021. This means that the materials are brand new and have not been studied before.

From the already published materials, the e-textbooks for modules one and two from each publisher were chosen for analysis, since in many schools modules one and two are taught as one study unit from which students receive one grade. Also, since the first module is so narrow in its contents, three out of the four publishers have made the choice of having both modules available as one printed book and e-textbook. All the publishers have made their own decisions when it comes to the arrangement of the contents of the book. As a whole, none of the publishers' materials are available for free. For the purposes of this study, I received access to Edita and Studeo's materials through contacting the publishers via email. I already had access to Otava's materials through practical teacher training, which I completed during my master's studies, and to Sanoma Pro's material, which I received through working for them as a freelance editor.

3.1.1 Sanoma Pro: Elements 1–2

Sanoma Pro is the biggest learning material publisher in Finland and for the new NCC, they released a brand-new English textbook called *Elements* that is a series of seven books that cover all the English modules. All obligatory modules have an e-textbook and a printed "texts and grammar" -book, which does not contain any exercises. The e-textbook

in Sanoma Pro's digital platform is also complemented by a print replica⁶. For the e-textbook, Sanoma Pro offers a 12-month license which includes the books for the full first year of studies (modules 1–4), for the price of 53.60€⁷. This differs from what the other three publishers offer, which is why the prices are not directly comparable. The printed book for modules 1–2 costs 27.50€. Elements 1–2 is divided into eight themes and each theme has two text chapters in them.

3.1.2 Otava: New Insights 1–2

Otava is a traditional publishing house, and it has normally practically divided the learning material market with Sanoma Pro. For the new NCC, Otava revised their previous upper secondary school English textbook *Insights* into *New Insights*, which has a total of seven books, that cover all the English modules. All modules have a traditional printed book with exercises and an e-textbook. For the e-textbook, Otava sells a 12-month license for the price of 33€ and a 48-month license for the price of 44€. The corresponding printed book costs 62.80€. New Insights 1–2 is divided into fifteen sections, out of which two sections are workshops, one is a glossary with exercises, and the other twelve are texts with exercises.

3.1.3 Edita: Quest 1–2

Edita extended their teaching material publishing business with the new NCC, joining the market of upper secondary school English with their new textbook *Quest*, which is a series of seven books, which cover all the English modules. All modules have a traditional printed book with exercises and an e-textbook. In their online store, Edita sells a 12-month license for the e-textbook for the price of 26.05€ and a 48-month license for the price of 29.45€. The printed book for modules 1–2 costs 56.55€. Quest 1–2 is divided into six themes that are all arranged differently, and they have a total of twelve text chapters in them.

3.1.4 Studeo: Me, My Language and I, and English Goes Global

Studeo is a publishing house that produces only digital learning materials, which means that the e-textbooks are meant and designed for the digital platform from the start. For the

⁶ This is referred to as "näkökirja" in Sanoma Pro's digital platform.

⁷ Prices for all four publishers' products were checked from their own online stores on February 1, 2022.

upper secondary school English e-textbooks, Studeo offers a five-year license, which costs 7.70€ for module one and 23.10€ for module two. A difference to the three other publishers is that the English textbook is not a series as the materials for the eight modules are all named individually. For the new NCC, Studeo revised their upper secondary school English materials and the first two modules that are focused on in this study are called *Me, My Language and I*, for module one and *English Goes Global* for module two. Module one is divided into two sections and module two is divided into four sections with chapters to study. Each section has three chapters in them, and out of the total eighteen chapters, two are chapters without a text, i.e. “audio only” chapters.

3.2 Method

In this research I use qualitative content analysis as the method. The basic aim of qualitative research is to find out what is going on in all aspects of social behaviour, which implies that it is person-centred and thus especially appropriate for studies in the field of language teaching. (Richards 2003b, 8–9; Holliday 2015, 50) In qualitative research, the researcher cannot separate themselves from the findings completely, which influences the outlook of the data and the outcomes of the research (Richards 2003b, 8; Holliday 2015, 49). Quantification can also be used alongside a qualitative analysis when it is appropriate for the specific purpose and when it is part of a broader approach (Richards 2003b, 10), which is what is applied in this paper. With qualitative research, it is possible to represent a particular matter and the research does not depend on generalisability (Richards 2003b, 10), which is why it is also a well-suited method for the restricted form of research conducted in this paper. The classic method for analysing qualitative data comprises four steps that are (1) coding, (2) determining themes, (3) constructing an argument, and (4) going back to the data (Holliday 2015, 53-54). Qualitative content analysis allows for the use of a template for the coding process, which can later be revised and fine-tuned according to the needs of the research (Richards 2003a, 269; Dörnyei 2007, 243; Holliday 2015, 51).

The template used in this study is adapted from Littlejohn (2011) who presents nine main components of materials design evaluation (Littlejohn 2011, 184) as well as a comprehensive template called “*the process of materials evaluation*” (Littlejohn 2011, 208–211). When analysing only the aspect of design in materials, Littlejohn (2011, 184) offers

the following nine main components that can be evaluated to reach a comprehensive outlook:

1. *Aims*, which refers to the apparent aims of the material, such as developing certain skills.
2. *Principles of selection*, which covers how tasks, language, and content in the materials is selected.
3. *Principles of sequencing*, which covers how tasks, language, and content is arranged in the materials.
4. *Subject matter and focus of subject matter*, which refers to the nature of the content, such as topics and storylines.
5. *Types of teaching/learning activities*, which refers to what the suggested nature of the activities is, what learners are required to do, and in what way do they draw on the learner's competence.
6. *Participation: who does what with whom*, which means the suggested mode of classroom participation (e.g., alone or in groups).
7. *Learner roles*, which refers to the role adopted by the learners that is suggested in the material.
8. *Teacher roles*, which refers to the role adopted by the teacher that is suggested in the material.
9. *Role of the materials as whole*, which covers how detailed the materials are in their ways of managing the classroom event.

On their own these two templates are too broad for the current study, which is why they are adapted to my own template. The template has three of Littlejohn's nine main components; (5) *types of teaching/learning activities*, (6) *participation: who does what with whom*, and (7) *learner roles*. These are analysed under the three main categories found in the comprehensive template "*the process of materials evaluation*" (Littlejohn 2011, 208–211): (1) *what is the learner expected to do*, (2) *who with*, and (3) *with what content*. These main categories are the three key aspects of learning activities (Littlejohn 2011, 189), which is why they are in the centre of this research as well. The main categories are divided into further subcategories that are explained in detail in sections 3.3.1–3.3.3.

3.3 Data classification

As all four publishers have a different structure in their materials and in the exercises in them, some conditions for choosing the exercises for analysis were introduced to ensure comparability between the publishers. This practice also limits the number of analysed exercises to a reasonable amount. For this study I chose the exercises that were related to text chapters in the e-textbook, which means that for example exercises relating merely to a glossary or a grammar section were excluded. Also, I chose to only include the text chapters that had written text in them, not “audio only”, which some publishers had. I also chose to only analyse exercises that were directly available to students and not a part of teachers’ material or some other extra content. Finally, exercises in which no oral or written production was expected from the students were excluded (e.g. multiple-choice exercises and match exercises that could be completed by only clicking).

Exercise instruction	Task 1	Task 2	Source
You are going to hear five people talk about their experiences of health tourism. Make notes in English while listening. Tell your partner what you learned with the help of your notes.	Make notes in English while listening.	Tell your partner what you learned with the help of your notes.	Elements 1-2, text 8, exercise warm up 8

Table 1: Example of an exercise in Elements 1–2 being divided into tasks

The remaining exercises were then divided into tasks, following Littlejohn’s (2011, 188) definition of a task referring to “any proposal contained within the materials for action to be undertaken by the learners, which has the direct aim of bringing about the learning of the foreign language”⁸. This means that one e-textbook exercise can have multiple tasks

⁸ This definition differs from the most common definition of the term ‘task’, that is the one used in the model of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). For further information on the difference, see Littlejohn (2011, 188).

in it, and they were all analysed as individual items. This process is illustrated in Table 1, which shows how one exercise taken from the data was divided into tasks⁹.

During the initial coding process, I had to exclude two more types of exercises from the final analysis that were ones which covered a larger project (e.g. making a presentation or conducting a survey) and exercises that had a game in them, since dividing these types of exercises into tasks would have been essentially impossible.

Finally, the tasks were coded based on three main categories and the subcategories described below in sections 3.3.1–3.3.3. To improve the reliability of the study, the coding process was conducted twice. With these exclusions to the data and the division into tasks, a total of 648 tasks were left for analysis. Table 2 shows the quantitative distribution of tasks between the four publishers. Out of the four publishers, Studeo has the most tasks in their e-textbooks, with a total of 192. Edita has the second largest number of tasks with a total of 178 and Sanoma Pro has the third most tasks with a total of 153. Out of the four publishers, Otava has the least tasks, with a total of 125, which is a difference of 67 tasks when comparing to Studeo’s material.

	Sanoma Pro	Otava	Edita	Studeo	Total
Tasks	153	125	178	192	648

Table 2: Distribution of the number of tasks between publishers

3.3.1 What is the learner expected to do?

The first main category, *What is the learner expected to do?* was divided into five subcategories that are: *oral response – own thoughts*, *oral response – scripted*, *written response – own thoughts*, *written response – scripted long*, and *written response – scripted short*. In Table 3, these five subcategories are presented and illustrated with real examples from the data.

⁹ All real examples from the data in chapters 3 and 4 have been collected between January and March 2022. As the contents of e-textbooks can be changed by the publishers quickly, it is possible that for example the exercise numbers or instruction texts have changed after they have been documented here.

What is the learner expected to do?	Example of the task instructions	Source
oral response – own thoughts	Discuss the facts and opinions mentioned in the podcast together with your partner.	New Insights 1–2, text 8, exercise 8c
oral response – scripted	Which sound do you hear in the following words? Listen and repeat.	Quest 1–2, text 2, exercise 13
written response – own thoughts	Write your own sentences, each including one target word on the list below.	English Goes Global, text 2.1, exercise 9
written response – scripted long	Translate the following sentences into Finnish.	Elements 1–2, text 11, exercise 11A.2
written response – scripted short	Fill in the story according to the clues.	New Insights 1–2, text 2, exercise 2c

Table 3: What is the learner expected to do? – task division into subcategories

The subcategory *oral response – own thoughts* consists of tasks in which students are asked to for example discuss their own opinions on a matter or to answer questions orally. *Oral response – scripted* refers to tasks in which students are for example asked to take turns reading ready-made sentences or to repeat words. *Written response – own thoughts* subcategory consists of tasks in which for example students are expected to write their own sentences with given words or to write a composition. *Written response – scripted long* and *short* subcategories refer to tasks in which a certain written output is expected. *Scripted short* subcategory consists for example of tasks where students are asked to fill in the gaps with single words or short phrases, whilst in *scripted long* tasks the students

are asked to produce at least one whole sentence, for example by translating a sentence from Finnish to English.

3.3.2 Who with?

The second main category *Who with?* was divided into four subcategories that are: *individual work*, *pair work*, *group work*, and *own choice*. If the task instructions explicitly stated to work in pairs or in a group, the corresponding subcategory was chosen. If there was no instruction stating who to work with and the task was suitable for independent work, the subcategory of *individual work* was chosen. The fourth subcategory *own choice* was added because in some task instructions it stated that you could do the task “either individually or with a partner” or “in pairs or small groups”. Also, if in a task there was no clear indication of who the task is meant to be conducted with, the fourth category was chosen.

3.3.3 With what content?

The third main category *With what content?* was divided into six subcategories by coding the different task frameworks that the contents in the e-textbook provide¹⁰. The six subcategories are: *discuss*, *say*, *fill in*, *answer*, *translate*, and *write*. In Table 4, the subcategories that were determined are presented with real examples from the data.

The *discuss* and *say* subcategories are ones that include only oral tasks, which are mostly conducted by working with someone. *Discuss* tasks are usually free discussion tasks conducted in pairs or in a group with the task framework having leading questions that are there to help guide the conversation. *Say* tasks usually have a framework of presenting a word, phrase, or sentence that the students are expected to say out loud, mostly with a focus on rehearsing pronunciation. *Fill in* tasks are ones in which the task framework is either sentences, a continuous text, or a table that has multiple gaps in it that students must fill in with short phrases or individual words. *Answer* tasks refer to tasks in which the framework is more limiting, with specific questions to which a certain right answer is expected. In *translate* tasks, the task framework specifically guides towards only translating the words, phrases, or sentences the way that they are presented. *Fill in*, *answer*,

¹⁰ This differs from Littlejohn’s (2011, 208–211) original template’s division under this category since it was not useful for the purposes of this paper to study whether the content used in the task was from the publishers’ materials, online, or from the teachers’ own material bank. This division would have probably resulted in most of the tasks being done with the contents that the publishers provided.

and *translate* tasks can be conducted either orally or through writing and individually or working with someone. Finally, *write* tasks are ones that always require written output and the task framework did not fit one of the previous categories. These are quite often creative writing tasks.

With what content?	Example of the task instructions	Source
discuss	Discuss the following questions in pairs or groups.	Quest 1–2, text 3, exercise 15
say	Read the three claims out loud in a small, mixed-gender group	Me, My Language and I, text 3.3, exercise 14
fill in	Fill in the gaps with the help of the Finnish clues.	Elements 1–2, text 1, exercise 1.3
answer	Listen and answer the questions.	New Insights 1–2, text 3, exercise 3f
translate	Translate the following sentences into Finnish.	Quest 1–2, text 4, exercise 5
write	Work in pairs. Write a paragraph of approximately 700 characters for a blog on the topic: Cultural Differences between Finland and the US.	English Goes Global, text 5.2, exercise 11

Table 4: With what content? – task division into subcategories

3.4 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge that there are some limitations to this study. Firstly, the dataset for the study is relatively small. Even though the English language upper secondary school materials from the four main publishers are studied, only exercises available for students in the text chapters were picked for analysis. Therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalised to cover the materials as a whole.

As described in section 3.2, existing templates of materials evaluation were adapted to a completely new one, to fit the needs of this current study. This means that the template has probably not been used in a study before and the categories in it were chosen by me, with for example time restrictions of the current study in mind. When looking at the analysis itself, it must be noted that all exercises were divided into tasks and classified to the subcategories by one person, which potentially decreases the study's reliability. Also, as was stated in section 3.2, it is important to remember that the researcher cannot separate themselves completely from the findings of qualitative content analysis, which influences the outlook of the data and the outcomes of the research (Richards 2003b, 8; Holliday 2015, 49). However, as mentioned in section 3.3., the task coding process was conducted twice to improve the reliability of the study.

Finally, the study is a descriptive materials analysis, showing what kind of exercises upper secondary school English learning material publishers offer. Therefore, it is impossible to make assumptions based on this study on how teachers and students actually use the materials, as teachers might for example encourage students to complete the tasks differently than stated in the instructions.

4 Analysis

This chapter is divided into three sections based on the three main categories that were presented in sections 3.3.1–3.3.3. These sections have the same structure: first, I present a general quantitative analysis of the data, followed by a comparative analysis between the four publishers. Then I go on to present the general qualitative analysis of the data that is followed by a comparative analysis between the four publishers.

The aim of the study is to give a comprehensive outlook of the available e-learning exercises, which is why the analysis focuses mainly on the three main categories set for the data instead of the central focus being on the data divided by publisher. All presented percentages are rounded off to one decimal, which is why the total percentages are not always exactly 100%.

4.1 What is the learner expected to do?

The first main category *What is the learner expected to do?* consists of the tasks being divided between the mode of output that is expected (*oral* or *written*) and the type of it (*scripted* or *own thoughts*). Tasks with written scripted output were further divided by the length of the expected output (*long* or *short*).

4.1.1 Quantitative analysis

In the first main category, the quantitative distribution of the tasks between the five subcategories is quite even, with total percentages ranging from 12.5% to 28.2%. Figure 1 presents the number of tasks in each subcategory and the corresponding percentages in relation to the total number of tasks, which is 648.

The subcategory *oral response – own thoughts* has the largest amount of tasks (183 tasks, 28.2%) and the other subcategory that relates to spoken language as well, *oral response – scripted*, is the subcategory with the fewest number of tasks (81 tasks, 12.5%). Practicing oral skills and being able to convey a message in a foreign language is seen to be of great importance in foreign language teaching, which is why many oral tasks are put into learning materials as well. The importance of practicing oral skills with authentic materials or prompts can be seen in the fact that the two oral skills categories are at the opposite ends of the quantitative results. The *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory consists

for example of discussion tasks where students are asked to tell their own opinions, which is closer to authentic language use than the one word or sentence repetition tasks that the *oral response – scripted* subcategory mostly comprises.

The quantitative results observed for the three written task subcategories correspond to the length of the tasks in question. *Scripted short* tasks appear most often (170 tasks, 26.2%), with *scripted long* tasks coming second (117 tasks, 18.1%) and the *written response – own thoughts* subcategory coming third (97 tasks, 15%). The high frequency of the shorter written tasks is likely due to the fact that these types of written tasks are ones that are most used in class and as homework assignments, since time constraints are always a big factor in upper secondary school education.

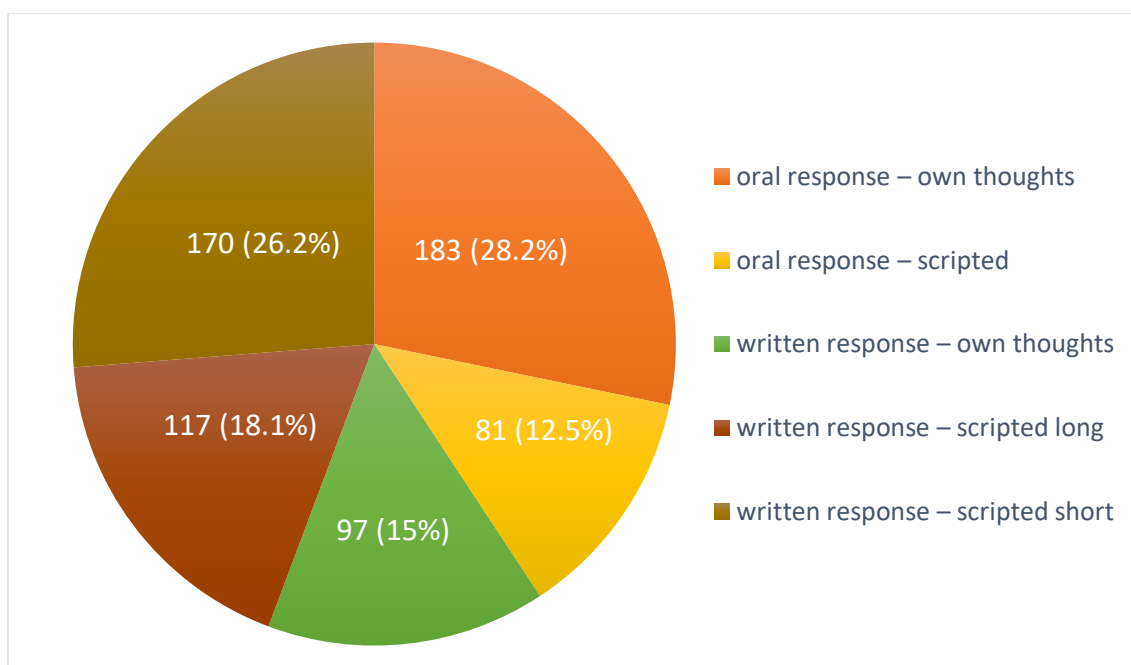


Figure 1: What is the learner expected to do? – general quantitative analysis

In total *oral* tasks take up 40.7% (264 tasks) of the entire amount and *written* tasks 59.3% (384 tasks). The division is quite predictable: even though spoken communicative skills are more and more emphasised in schools, students in upper secondary schools begin to focus on the matriculation examination already during the first modules. As this big exam is held completely in written form and spoken skills are not evaluated in it at all, the practice gained from written tasks is crucial, and this is also reflected in the tasks that publishers provide.

A similar division can be seen when dividing the subcategories based on tasks with *own thoughts* versus *scripted* tasks. 43.2% (280 tasks) of the total are tasks where either oral or written *own thoughts* are expected from the students, whilst *scripted* tasks amount to 56.8% (368 tasks) of the total. The division is slightly surprising when taking into consideration the fact that the tasks in the analysis are from exercises that have a relation to a text chapter in the e-textbooks. However, it is refreshing that nearly half of the tasks are oriented towards students' own opinions and thoughts either in oral or written form, since in the end these types of exercises can be expected to be most useful when it comes to practicing authentic language and they challenge especially the well-performing students more.

Moving on to looking at the division of tasks into different subcategories between the four publishers, a great deal of differentiation can be seen. This can be observed in Figure 2, where each individual publishers' task division deviates from the general quantitative division presented previously in this section, and all of them show unique features. To be able to give a comparable view of the data, the percentages used in all figures presenting the comparative quantitative analyses are in relation to the total amount of tasks each publisher had and each bar in the figures amounts to 100%.

The biggest difference between the publishers is seen in the *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory, which is also the subcategory with the most tasks in total. Otava has the largest percentage of these tasks with a total of 39.2% and Edita has the lowest total of 20.8%. Another big difference concerning the oral tasks is in the amount of *oral response – scripted* tasks that Studeo's material has when compared to the other publishers. Studeo's total of 20.3% is almost double the amount of what the next publisher, Sanoma Pro has (10.5%).

With the written tasks, all publishers have the *written response – short scripted* subcategory as the most prominent even though the percentual differentiation between the publishers ranges from 30.1% to 19.2%. The biggest differentiation in the written tasks is with the *long scripted* tasks ranging from 24.4% to 9.9%, with Studeo having the smallest amount of tasks in the subcategory. *Written response – own thoughts* subcategory has the least amount of differentiation with the task amounts ranging from 18.5% to 12.5%. For three of the four publishers, this subcategory is the one with the second lowest number of

tasks, with Otava having an equal number of tasks for the written *own thoughts* and *scripted long* tasks.

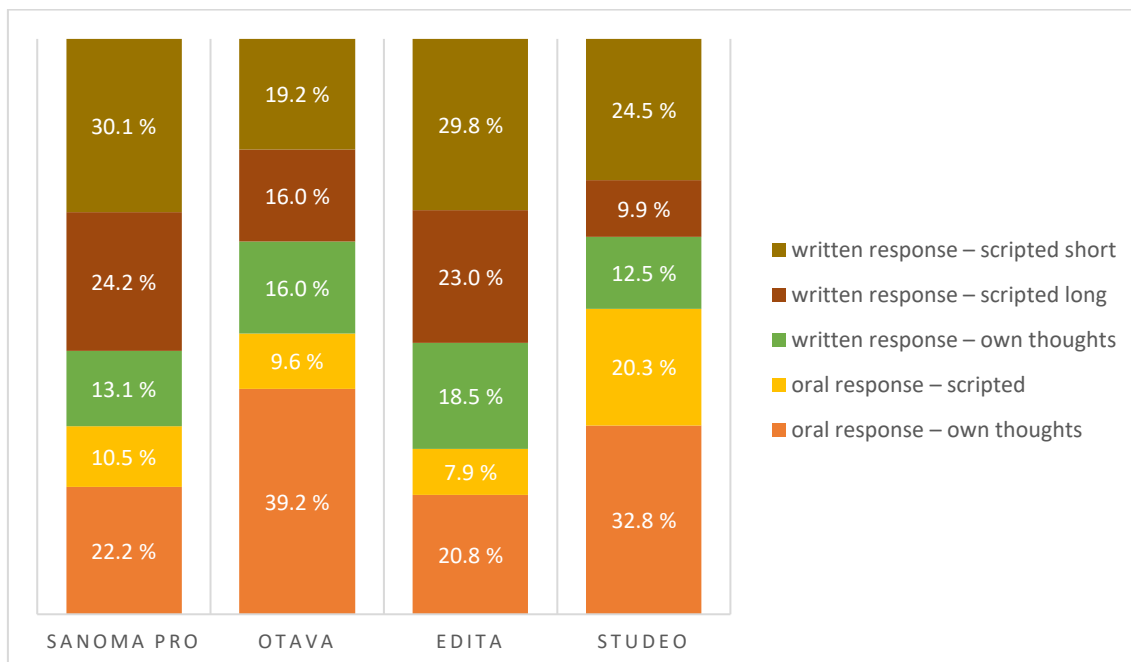


Figure 2: What is the learner expected to do? – comparative quantitative analysis

When looking at the amount of tasks between all *oral* and *written* tasks, two types of divisions can be seen. Otava and Studeo have opted for an approximately 50–50 division, with Otava having 48.8% of tasks being orally produced and 51.2% being written whilst Studeo has 53.1% of oral tasks and 46.9% of tasks are written. Sanoma Pro and Edita have opted for a division closer to 30–70, with Sanoma Pro having 32.7% of tasks being orally produced and 67.4% of tasks being written whilst Edita has 28.7% of oral tasks and 71.3% of tasks are written. It is interesting that from the two traditional publishing houses, Sanoma Pro has stayed in a more traditional division of tasks between oral and written, whilst Otava has taken a different approach to this. Both division decisions differ from the general task division total of 40–60 that was explained earlier in this section.

A slightly less prominent division between the publishers can be seen when looking at the amount of tasks divided between *own thoughts* and *scripted* tasks. Out of the four publishers, Otava is the only one that has more tasks that expect the students' own thoughts (55.2%) rather than a scripted response (44.8%) and these numbers deviate the most from the task division total that was presented earlier in this section. Sanoma Pro

has the most scripted tasks with a total of 64.8%, which is a rather big difference to Otava, but not as dramatic as the one in the oral versus written division.

4.1.2 Qualitative analysis

As was stated in the quantitative analysis, the importance that authentic materials have on practicing oral skills is seen in the fact that most tasks belong to the *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory. The qualitative analysis shows that these tasks with authentic materials are mainly discussion tasks and tasks in which a partner or group members are taught something through for example a summary in the student’s own words. Other authentic, but less frequent tasks found are word explanation, role play, and tasks with answering specific questions. Examples of a task in which students are expected to answer specific questions (Quest 1–2, text 10, exercise 9b) and a word explanation task (New Insights 1–2, text 10, exercise 10c) can be seen in Figure 3, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

The biggest quantitative difference between the publishers was found in the *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory. However, when looking at the qualitative part of the analysis, not a lot of differentiation can be seen. Discussion tasks are the most frequent with all four publishers, and tasks in which a partner or group members are taught something through for example a summary in the student’s own words are the second most frequent in all materials. In addition to these, tasks with specific questions, role plays, and word explanation are found in all materials.

9B Word quest

Take turns asking and answering the questions below. You may answer what you like, but each answer must have at least one word from your list above.

1. How do you feel about putting pineapple on pizza?

B I [Rich text editor toolbar]

✓ 2/2

10c

Work with a partner. Take turns in choosing a word in bold in the word list. Explain it to your partner in English without saying the word itself. Your partner should figure out the word.

'sights' – When you travel, you often go round a new town looking at these. They can be historical monuments, castles, statues or other points of interest.

[SAVE]

Figure 3: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *oral response – own thoughts*

The smallest subcategory, *oral response – scripted*, consists of tasks that have to do with translation, specific pronunciation practise, reading a ready-made text (e.g. phrases, sentences, a dialogue) and reading sentences the students' have written themselves. Other tasks that are found in the materials but are not as popular are tasks with answering questions and correcting sentences. This means that the qualitative analysis reveals a rather broad spread of different types of tasks in a very narrow quantitative amount of tasks. Examples of a task with a ready-made dialogue to be read out loud (New Insights 1–2, text 5, exercise 5f) and a task with translation (English Goes Global, text 4.3, exercise 9) can be seen in Figure 4, which demonstrates two real examples from the data. As can be seen from the examples, *oral scripted* tasks are often a part of an exercise with some other types of tasks before or after the *oral scripted* task.

In this subcategory, a big quantitative difference between the publishers could be seen and in the qualitative analysis, some differentiation is also visible. With Sanoma Pro and Studeo, translation tasks are frequently found in the materials, whilst with Otava and Edita they are basically non-existent and, in their materials specific pronunciation tasks and reading different kinds of ready-made texts are in a more important role. With all publishers, tasks in which students read out loud something they have produced themselves are found, but they are not as popular as the previously mentioned other types of tasks in the analysed materials.

STEP 2 | Now that you have decided which apartment you want, it's time to call the landlord. Read the conversation with your partner.

Landlady: Roselyn Woods.

You: Hello, this is (*your name*) speaking. I'm calling about the apartment that you have for rent. Is it still available?

Landlady: Yes it is. But we do have some requirements for the person who we will rent it to. First of all, we don't allow smokers. Is that a problem?

You: No, not at all. I don't smoke.

Landlady: Good. Secondly, you can't have pets in the apartment and we would like a deposit of £500.

You: Well, I don't have any pets and I think I can arrange the deposit.

Landlady: Would you like to see the apartment before you decide if you want it?

You: I'd love to, but unfortunately I'm still in Finland. I'm moving to England next month because I found a great summer job there.

9 Vocabulary Builder: Prepositions 0/10 p.

Tehtävä

Choose the correct preposition or no preposition at all for each sentence with the help of the text "Lost in Translation". Then translate the sentences in pairs before checking the key.

Prepositions matter because they can change the meaning of a word or a sentence. You can find out what the correct preposition is by Googling or by checking, for example, the [Cambridge Dictionary](#).

1. Have you seen Leikola perform TV?
2. The title of Prom Queen was bestowed Christina.
3. My love of sitcoms can be traced to my childhood!
4. Comedians particular love to observe people abroad.
5. Last night was Wanda Sykes' most successful stand-up gig date.

Figure 4: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *oral response – scripted*

Moving on to the subcategories with written tasks, starting with the *written response – own thoughts* subcategory that has the smallest number of tasks in it. The tasks in this subcategory are mainly ones in which students are asked to write their own sentences, take notes, write a longer text (e.g. a composition or a blog post), or answer specific questions. Other types of tasks, such as writing a poem or a dialogue, are also in the materials, but their presence is very limited. This wide variety is somewhat surprising, since the subcategory is the second smallest in the overall quantitative analysis. However, rehearsing writing out your own thoughts through a multitude of different types of exercises is important since these types of tasks are a crucial part of the matriculation examination. Examples of a longer writing task (composition) (Elements 1–2, text 6, exercise 6.9) and a task in which students are asked to write their own questions (Quest 1–2, text 10, exercise 7) can be seen in Figure 5, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

In the quantitative analysis, the *written response – own thoughts* subcategory has the least amount of differentiation between the publishers and many similarities can be seen in the qualitative analysis as well. Longer writing tasks and tasks in which specific questions are to be answered are found in all materials. Also, note-taking tasks and tasks with writing own sentences are found in all materials, but note-taking tasks are especially frequent in Otava’s materials, whilst tasks with writing own sentences have more popularity in Edita’s materials.

6.9 Write

KIELI-PROFILI

Write four questions about the text in English. Have your friend answer your questions and then answer your partner's questions. You can decide what kind of questions you want to ask. They can be about the facts presented in the text or you can ask your partner to give their opinion on something in the text. Check the word order in question phrases from Grammar I.

1. Write a composition of 700 to 1300 characters on one of the following topics.

1. If I got an extra hour in the day
2. Circadian rhythm - the science behind our biological sleep-wake cycle

0 / 7500

Lisää tiedosto

Figure 5: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *written response – own thoughts*

In the quantitative analysis, the *written response – scripted long* subcategory has the third most tasks with a total of over a hundred tasks. These tasks are mainly ones with questions

to be answered and translation tasks. Other types of tasks that are found in the data but are not as popular are tasks with correcting sentences, dictation, and writing definitions. Examples of a translation task (New Insights 1–2, text 10, exercise 10e) and a task in which sentences need to be corrected (Elements 1–2, text 15, exercise 15.1) can be seen in Figure 6, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

The biggest quantitative difference between the four publishers' written tasks is seen in this subcategory. However, in the qualitative analysis, a lot of similarities between the publishers can be seen. With all four of them, tasks with translation and answering questions are the most prominent in the materials, with Sanoma Pro and Studeo having translate tasks as the most popular whilst with Otava and Studeo, tasks with answering questions are seen most. Tasks with correcting sentences are also found quite often in Sanoma Pro and Otava's materials, whilst Edita and Studeo have opted for tasks with writing definitions, which are not as popular with the other two.

10e

Translate.

You will get the correct answers from your teacher.

1. Njau, kenialainen maahanmuuttaja Britanniassa, ansaitsee elantonsa tullivirkailijana lentokentällä.

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Bulleted list, Numbered list, Undo, Redo, Text color, Background color, Link, Unlink, Table, Insert image, Clear formatting, and Refresh.

2. Hän tarkkailee erityisesti niitä, jotka ovat hermostuneita ja hättäännyvät helposti.

Rich text editor toolbar with icons for Bold (B), Italic (I), Bulleted list, Numbered list, Undo, Redo, Text color, Background color, Link, Unlink, Table, Insert image, Clear formatting, and Refresh.

15.1 Rewrite the sentences

Rewrite the following sentences so that they are in keeping with the text.

1. When Newton looked through the plastic prism, he saw only white light.

2. If Newton had submitted his paper on reflective telescopes to a modern-day university professor, he would very likely have received an excellent grade.

Figure 6: Examples of tasks in the subcategory written response – scripted long

Finally, looking at the quantitatively largest subcategory with written tasks, *written response – scripted short*, most of the tasks are gap fill tasks and find the phrase tasks, in which certain phrases are searched from a text and written down. Other types of tasks that are found in the data but are not as popular are tasks with translation, completing sentences, and crossword puzzles. The qualitative division of tasks is not surprising since the sheer amount of them allows for vast variation. However, at the same time it needs to be taken into consideration that tasks in which less than a sentence of written output is ex-

pected from the students cannot really vary too much in terms of their contents. Examples of a find the phrase task (Quest 1–2, text 4, exercise 7A) and a fill in task (Me, My Language and I, text 2.1, exercise 8) can be seen in Figure 7, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

The *written response – scripted short* subcategory is the most prominent with all publishers' in the quantitative analysis and the qualitative analysis also shows a lot of similarities. Fill in tasks are the most frequent with all four publishers and find the phrase tasks come second with all other publishers except for Otava, that has opted to not have any tasks formatted this way. A significant amount of Edita's tasks in this subcategory are translation tasks. These are also found in Sanoma Pro and Studeo's materials, but they are far less popular.

The screenshot shows a digital learning interface. On the left, there are three tasks under the heading 'Find the expressions in the text.' Each task has a text prompt and a large empty text box for the answer. The first task is '1. kuulen perheeni toisella puolella', the second is '2. alon kääntää kaiken ylösalaisin', and the third is '3. kirje, jota en lähettänyt vanhemmilleni'. Each task has a '2/2' indicator and a checkmark icon. On the right, there is a section titled '8 Vocabulary Builder: Prepositions' with a 'Tehtävä' tab. Below the title is the instruction 'Fill in the correct prepositions. All of them can be found in the text "Be Yourself".' A purple box contains a tip: 'Prepositions are worth paying attention to and highlighting in a text because they simply have to be learned by heart. Find them in the text by searching for key words (Ctrl/cmd + F).' Below this are eight numbered sentences, each with a blank space for a preposition: 1. 'I have a degree [] Human Nutrition and Food-Related Behaviour from the University of Helsinki.', 2. 'Never have I laid eyes [] a more elegant motorcycle!', 3. 'Take a look [] the mirror! No one's perfect!', 4. 'Some people are intimidated by his size, but [] fact he's a big teddy bear!', 5. 'Life is hard, but I've learned to roll [] the punches.', 6. 'Have you ever wondered what your place [] the universe is?', 7. 'I'll never let anyone pick [] my little brother.', 8. 'I have a lot of great people [] my life.'

Figure 7: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *written response – scripted short*

4.2 Who with?

The second main category *Who with?* consists of the tasks being divided between the three ways of working that are *individual work*, *pair work* and *group work*. Tasks in which instructions did not explicitly state one of the three ways were put into a fourth subcategory, *own choice*.

4.2.1 Quantitative analysis

In the second main category the quantitative distribution of the tasks between the four subcategories differs greatly, as could be expected. *Individually* conducted tasks are found most frequently with more than half of the analysed tasks belonging to this subcategory (368 tasks, 56.8%). *Pair work* tasks come second (177 tasks, 27.3%), *group work* tasks third (71 tasks, 11%), and the *own choice* subcategory has the lowest amount of tasks, with the total being only 5% (32 tasks). Figure 8 presents the number of tasks in each subcategory and the corresponding percentual amount in relation to the total number of tasks, which is 648.

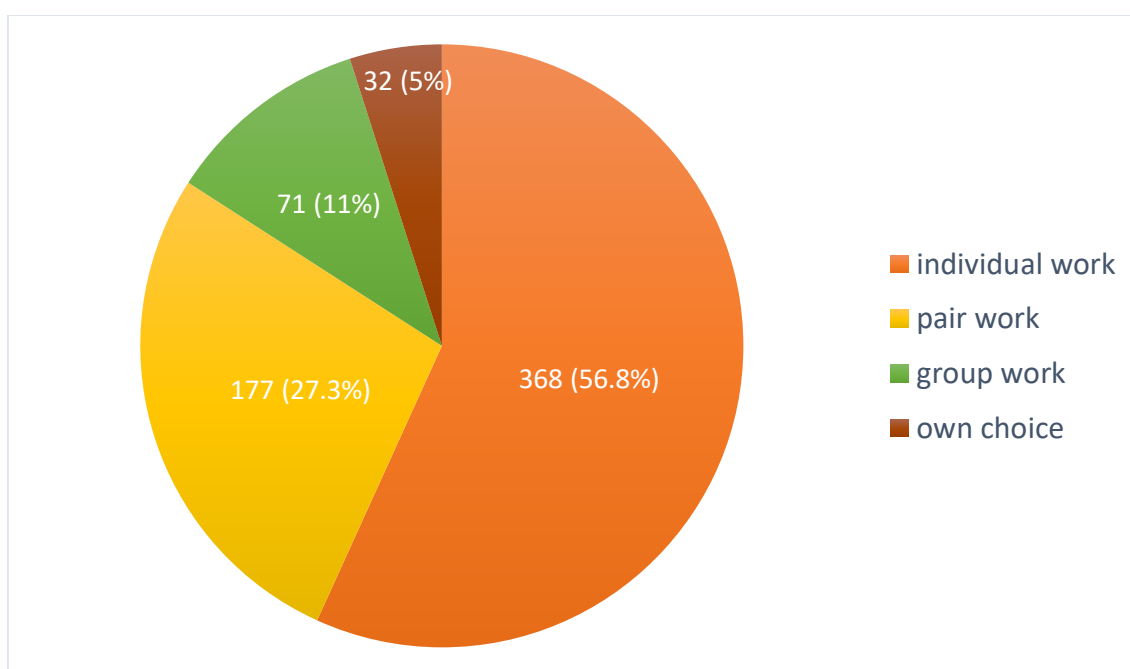


Figure 8: Who with? – general quantitative analysis

The high frequency of *individual* tasks is not surprising since learning materials need to be designed with the idea in mind that most tasks could be conducted individually, since the materials are intended to be used all around Finland by all different kinds of upper secondary school students. The distributions presented here do not directly tell us how students actually conduct tasks in school or at home since all individual tasks could be conducted with someone even though it is not stated in the task instructions. Textbook authors may prefer having *pair work* tasks over *group work* tasks in the materials since they are easier for teachers to arrange and faster for students to complete during lessons. It could also be noted that the *own choice* subcategory is not a proper category, since the

tasks in it vary quite a lot and it was used as an extra subcategory for tasks which were impossible to include in one of the other categories.

Moving on to looking at the division of tasks into different subcategories between the four publishers, not too much differentiation can be seen. The division of all tasks into the four subcategories between the publishers is displayed in Figure 9. Only one publisher's task division resembles the general quantitative division presented earlier in this section, and that is Sanoma Pro.

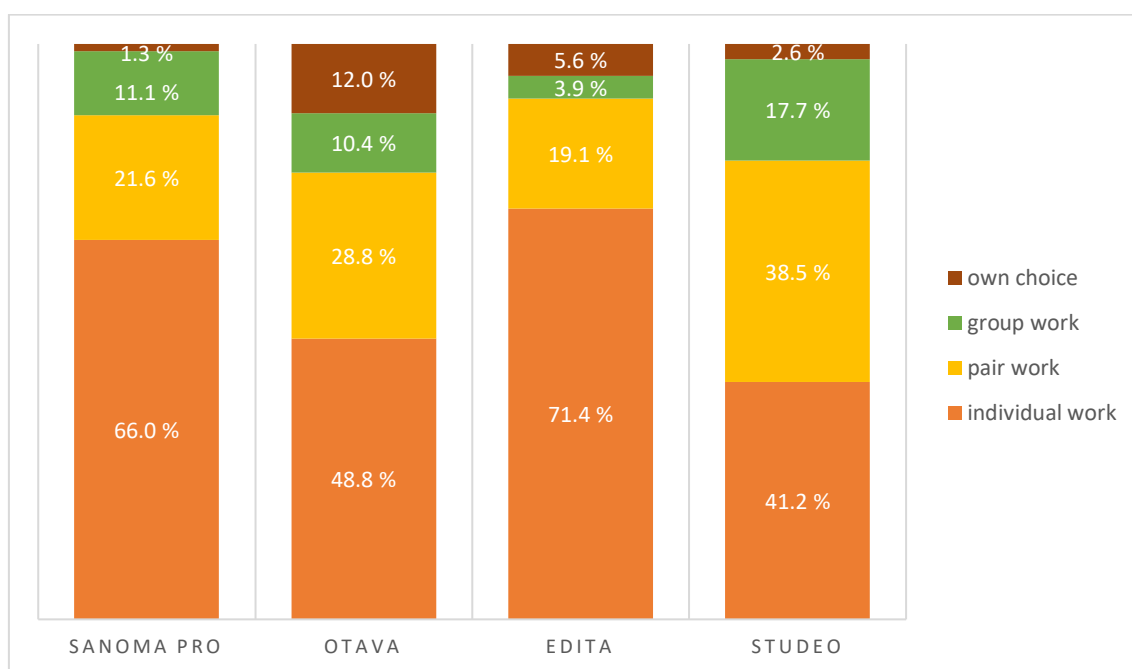


Figure 9: Who with? – comparative quantitative analysis

With three of the four publishers, the difference between *individual* and *pair work* tasks is significant as was also the case in the general quantitative view of all the tasks. Interestingly in Studeo's material, the difference is almost non-existing, with *individual* tasks amounting 41.2% and *pair work* tasks amounting 38.5% of the total. A big difference to the general quantitative view is also the fact that in Edita's material, 71.4% of tasks are *individual* work, with the amount of *pair work* tasks falling below 20% (19.1%). The amount of *group work* tasks ranges from 17.7% to 3.9% of the total percentages between the four publishers, and all four have more *pair work* than *group work* tasks in their materials. As stated before, the tasks placed in the *own choice* subcategory are not exactly valid for comparison and the somewhat large differentiation between the publishers in this subcategory also shows that. Sanoma Pro has the least amount of these tasks with

only 1.3% (2 tasks out of 153) of the total being *own choice* whilst with Otava the percentage amount is 12% (15 tasks out of 125). This is a big difference that could be interpreted in a way that Sanoma Pro's material leaves less room for the students to choose how tasks are conducted, whilst Otava gives the most freedom.

4.2.2 Qualitative analysis

In this section I will focus on the general and comparative qualitative analysis of the tasks in the two subcategories that are *pair work* and *group work*. As was discussed above, *individual* tasks cover most of the analysed tasks in the data. This means that the category has a very wide range of different types of tasks in it, which is why a comprehensive qualitative analysis of the subcategory would be challenging to conduct and not necessarily useful, since an exhaustive and somewhat overlapping qualitative analysis of the third main category "*With what content?*" is presented in section 4.3.2. Also, as the subcategory *own choice* was used as an extra subcategory for tasks to which it was impossible to assign one of the other categories, it will not be analysed qualitatively either.

As can be expected, *pair work* and *group work* tasks are many times used for similar purposes in the materials. Tasks involving translation, answering questions, dictation, and discussion prompts are frequent in both subcategories. Teaching tasks in which students report back to other group members on what they have learned from for example a text, are popular in the *group work* subcategory, whilst oral dialogues and word explanations are more frequent in the *pair work* subcategory. Overall, tasks in the *pair work* subcategory are a little more varied than *group work* tasks, which is expected since the quantitative analysis shows that the *pair work* subcategory has more than double the amount of tasks in it, in comparison to the *group work* subcategory. Examples of a *pair work* task with writing definitions and summarising (English Goes Global, text 3.3, exercise 3) as well as a *group work* exercise in which one group member teaches the others (Elements 1–2, text 11, exercise 11.4) can be seen in Figure 10, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

Tehtävä

Take a closer look at Pieta's blog post "The Serene Silliness of Everyday Existence" with a partner by highlighting unfamiliar words / phrases and writing down English definitions with the help of [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com).



When you both understand and remember every paragraph well, take turns retelling the story in your own words. The mind map below will help you.



Go back to your group of three. Tell the others about the person in your text. Use the key words in the grid to help you. Then fill in the missing information together.



	Henry	Sarah	Thomas
As a child	played mostly on his own		
Likes to work			

Figure 10: Examples of tasks in the subcategories pair work and group work

In the quantitative analysis, Studeo stood out by having a significantly larger amount of *pair work* and *group work* tasks than the other publishers. However, when comparing the tasks found in the four publishers' materials, these subcategories have quite a lot of similarities in them. Tasks with different discussion prompts are frequent with all publishers in both *pair work* and *group work* subcategories. Also, all materials contain various "gamified" tasks, such as word explanation and role play. Oral *pair work* tasks with an explicit instruction to focus on pronunciation are found quite often in three of the four materials, the only exception being Sanoma Pro that does not have any tasks like this. With Sanoma Pro and Studeo, oral *pair work* translation tasks are popular as well as *group work* tasks where students teach others. These are not popular in Otava and Edita's materials. Interestingly, Studeo's material consists of a significant amount of written *pair work* tasks to be conducted together, which is not found in any of the other publishers' materials.

4.3 With what content?

The third and final main category *With what content?* consists of tasks being divided between the type of task framework that the contents in the e-textbook provide. The six different subcategories and task framework types found in the data are *discuss*, *say*, *fill in*, *answer*, *translate*, and *write*.

4.3.1 Quantitative analysis

In the third main category, the relative proportions of the tasks between the six subcategories vary greatly, with percentages ranging from 5.1% to 27.8%. Figure 11 presents the number of tasks in each subcategory and the corresponding percentual amount in relation to the total number of tasks, which is 648.

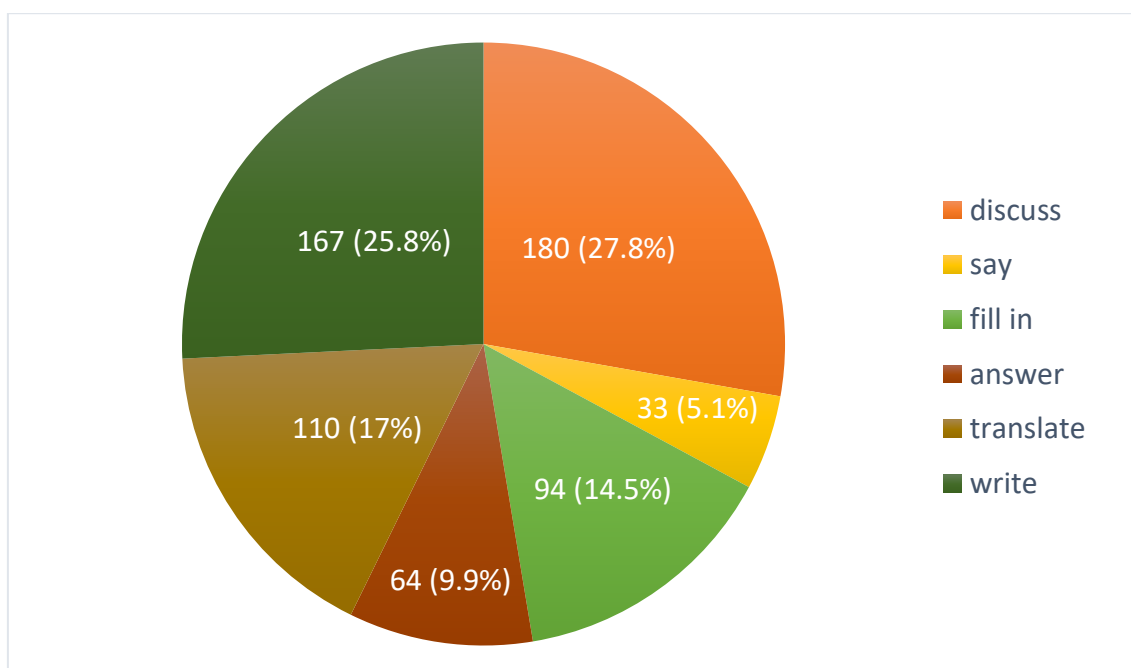


Figure 11: With what content? – general quantitative analysis

The two subcategories with the highest number of tasks are *discuss* (180 tasks, 27.8%) and *write* (167 tasks, 25.8%). This is an interesting finding since both of these subcategories consist mostly of relatively free and creative oral or written tasks, and the tasks in these subcategories have the most variation in the outlook of the task framework. Out of the more strictly framed tasks, *translate* amounts to 17% (110 tasks), *fill in* 14.5% (94 tasks), *answer* 9.9% (64 tasks), and *say* 5.1% (33 tasks) of the total amount of tasks. It is somewhat surprising that tasks in the *translate* subcategory are the third most frequent in the data since these kinds of tasks are usually seen as quite traditional or even old-fashioned in today's school world. On the other hand, the prominence of the *fill in* subcategory is not surprising since tasks that require short written or oral production are quick to complete in school or at home. The small number of tasks that are in the *say* subcategory shows that practicing specific speech sounds or the pronunciation of a single word are not

the most popular exercises for upper secondary school students, and they can also be thought of as being old-fashioned.

Moving on to looking at the division of tasks into different subcategories between the four publishers, not too much differentiation can be seen. The division of all tasks into the six subcategories between the publishers is displayed in Figure 12. None of the publishers' task division is like the general quantitative division presented earlier in this section and all of them have unique features.

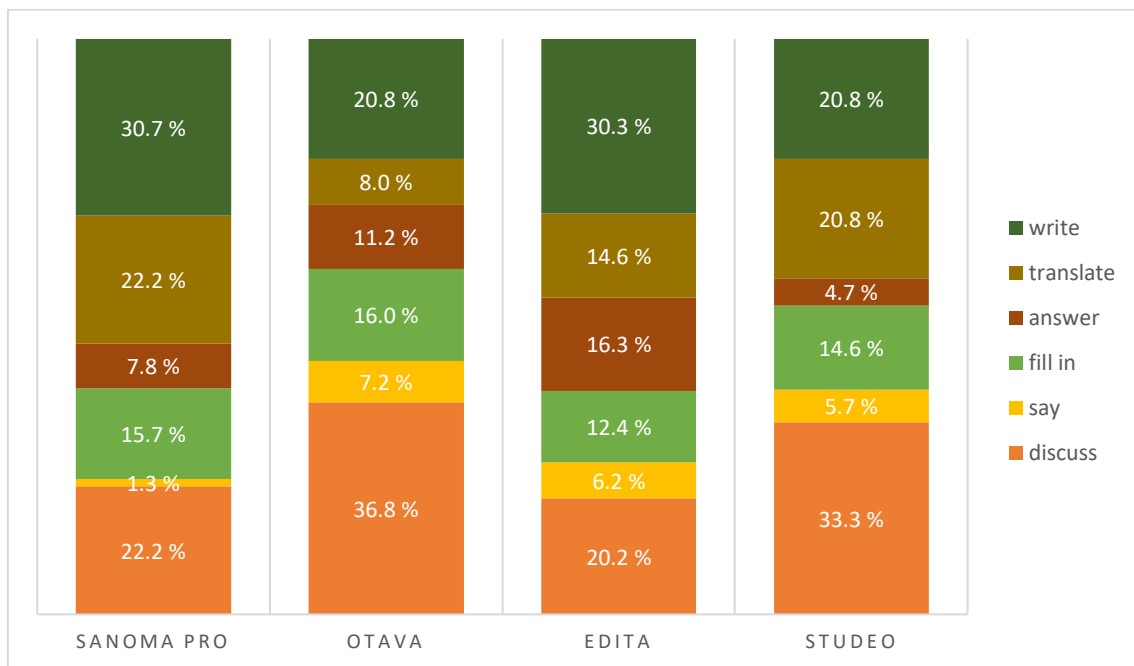


Figure 12: With what content? – comparative quantitative analysis

With all the four publishers, the subcategories *discuss* and *write* that mostly consist of relatively free and creative oral or written tasks, are well represented. The highest percentage of *discuss* tasks are seen in Otava (36.8%) and Studeo's (33.3%) materials whilst *write* tasks take the top position in Sanoma Pro (30.7%) and Edita's (30.3%) materials. Interestingly the *translate* subcategory rises into a shared second place in Sanoma Pro's material with the *discuss* subcategory (22.2%) and in Studeo's material with the *write* subcategory (20.8%). *Translation* tasks are a lot less prominent in Otava's material with only 8% of the tasks belonging to this subcategory, which can be seen as a decision that has been made based on a more modern pedagogical view.

A big difference can be seen in the *answer* subcategory with Studeo having only 4.7% of their tasks belonging to this subcategory whilst Edita's percentual amount rises to 16.3%. A difference between the three other publishers and Sanoma Pro can be seen in the *say* subcategory that only has 1.3% of the tasks, whilst with the other publishers the amount goes to over 5% of the total. However, the total amount of these tasks is so minimal that the difference is not crucial. *Fill in* subcategory does not have too much differentiation between the publishers, with the totals ranging from 16% (Otava) to 12.4% (Edita).

4.3.2 Qualitative analysis

Starting with the *discuss* subcategory, which is also the one with the highest number of tasks, as was stated in the quantitative analysis. Due to this, it is not surprising that the category consists mainly of task frameworks for six different types of tasks. The most frequent tasks are ones with leading questions or talking points that students could or should use when conducting the task and students' expression of their own opinions is expected and encouraged. Other frequent tasks in this subcategory include word explanation, role play, and summarising. Also, tasks with peer feedback and studying tables, graphs, or pictures together with someone are found in the materials, but they are not at all as common as the previously mentioned. The small amount of peer feedback related tasks is rather surprising since it is a skill that is nowadays emphasised more and more in schools, and since the subcategory consists of such a vast number of tasks, it could have been expected that there would be room for more peer feedback tasks. Examples of a task with leading questions (New Insights 1–2, text 14, exercise 14f) and a role play task (Elements 1–2, text 14, exercise 14.8) can be seen in Figure 13, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

As was found in the quantitative analysis, with all the four publishers, the *discuss* subcategory is well represented, but with Otava and Studeo it rises to be the subcategory with the most tasks. When comparing the *discuss* subcategory findings between the four publishers, not a lot of differentiation can be found. All publishers have discussion tasks with leading questions, word explanation, and role play. With Sanoma Pro and Otava's material, the discuss tasks are often isolated or as a part of an exercise that is placed right before the text chapter, functioning as an exercise that engages or warms up the students for the topic ahead. With all publishers, the topics of the discussion tasks with leading questions can be separated into two categories: *everyday life* and *the English language*.

Some recurring themes found in the analysed materials for everyday life discussions are hobbies, relationships with family and friends, moving out, physical and mental health, bullying, school, and traveling. The English language is explored through the topics of: English as a lingua franca, language identity, and different text types (prose, poetry). Both categories found in the materials are in line with the module descriptions of the NCC, which is why it is not surprising that their presence is so significant in all the four publishers' materials. Also, the vast array of everyday topics found in the materials is not surprising since these materials are used right at the beginning of the upper secondary school studies. It is more effortless to ease into studying English in a new school with new people if you can talk about topics close to your own interests and life as it is at the moment.

14f

Discuss the following in small groups.



1. Do you like travelling or is your ideal holiday spent at home? Why?
2. When travelling, do you appreciate comfort or new experiences? Why?
3. What's the strangest food you've seen or tasted while on holiday? Describe.
4. What's the most interesting holiday destination you've travelled to in your own country or abroad?
5. What popular travel destination in your own country or abroad would you want to travel to? Which destination would you like to avoid and why?
6. What are some of the benefits of travelling alone? How about drawbacks?
7. Tell your group your best travel story.
8. What souvenirs have you brought back from travelling?
9. Did the covid-19 pandemic change your attitude towards travelling? How?
10. How do you take ecological concerns into account when travelling?

14.8 Role play



In their work, family counsellors help people with problems in their family life.

Work with a partner. One of you is the counsellor, the other one is the client.

The counsellor will try to find out what the client's problem is. The client will answer the counsellor's questions based on the information given in the exercise. Try to use the phrases and vocabulary from the text whenever possible.

Change roles halfway through.

Counsellor	Client 1
Asiakkaallasi on perhesuhteisiin liittyvä ongelma. Selvitä mikä häntä ahdistaa, mistä ongelma johtuu ja miten se ilmenee asiakkaasi arjessa. Kysy, miten asiakkaasi toivoisi tilanteen ratkeavan. Anna lopuksi oma neuvosi tilanteen ratkaisemiseksi.	Vanhempasi ovat eronneet ja äidilläsi on uusi kumppani, jonka kanssa et tule toimeen. Hän on määrännyt sinulle tiukat kotiintuloajat ja tarkkailee netin, etenkin sosiaalisen median käyttöäsi. Koet, että tilanne toisessa kodissa stressaa sinua ja vaikuttaa muihinkin ihmissuhteisiisi. Asut vuorovaikein molempien vanhempiesi luona, mutta haluaisit muuttaa pysyvästi isäsi luokse.

Figure 13: Examples of tasks in the subcategory discuss

When looking at the second subcategory that consists only of oral tasks, the *say* subcategory has the least amount of tasks, but task frameworks for four different types of tasks are found in the qualitative analysis. This is somewhat surprising since it could be expected that in category that has a small amount of tasks, the tasks would resemble one another the most. The two most common tasks are ones in which students first listen and then repeat, and ones in which students say words or sentences that they have first written down themselves. Listen and repeat tasks have single words, phrases or even sentences

in them, all having a focus on correct pronunciation. These types of exercises are not too popular in schools since native-like pronunciation proficiency is not one of the goals for upper secondary school English teaching and learning anymore. Other tasks that are found in the materials but are not as popular are tasks in which students are asked to read the whole text chapter out loud and tasks in which students first fill in a dialogue or a story and then say it out loud. Nearly all tasks in this subcategory are a part of an exercise which has additional tasks before or after the *say* task framework. Two real examples of listen and repeat tasks from the data can be seen in Figure 14, with one of them having single words that are repeated (Quest 1–2, text 12, exercise 14) and the other having full sentences (New Insights 1–2, text 7, exercise 7e).

In the quantitative analysis, a division between Sanoma Pro and the three other publishers could be seen and in the qualitative analysis, a division into two can be found. In Otava and Edita’s materials many tasks have an instruction to specifically concentrate on a certain “correct” pronunciation when conducting the task. These types of tasks are not found at all in Sanoma Pro and Studeo’s materials. Out of the four publishers, Edita has the most variation in this subcategory’s tasks, by including for example a task in which students must spell out words to their partners.

14 Twist your Tongue

Syllable stress: the rhythm of spoken English is formed by a pattern of beats both on the word and sentence level. When a word contains several syllables, one syllable in the word is given more emphasis than the others. It is called the stressed syllable. The vowel sound of the stressed syllable is longer and louder, and it is often pronounced at a higher pitch than the surrounding syllables. Unstressed syllables fill the space between stressed syllables.

A Listen and repeat the following names of US states. All of them have a different syllable stress pattern.

7e

In pairs, take turns reading these sentences out loud. Practice pronunciation and intonation. Compare your pronunciation with the recording.

- Merriam-Webster, the oldest dictionary publisher in America, officially recognized the usage today, when it added 533 words to its online dictionary.
- The recognition of “they” as a singular, non-gender-specific pronoun comes as its usage grows in popularity, especially among people who identify as neither male nor female.
- However, these adoptees frequently face critics who claim the usage is not “grammatically correct”.
- Over the past few decades, there has been so much evidence that this is a fully established use of “they” in the English language.
- Smith’s announcement on Twitter has received over 14,000 comments – a passionate debate over the validity of “they” taking place in many of them.
- Gillian Branstetter, a media relations manager for the National Center for Transgender Equality, sees Merriam-Webster’s decision as fitting into a larger normalization of nonbinary identities.
- If you are at a restaurant and you found a stranger’s phone at a table, you wouldn’t say, I found his or her phone.
- Lexicographers and linguists are coming out widely in support of “they” as a singular pronoun.

Figure 14: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *say*

As was found in the quantitative analysis, the *fill in* subcategory has nearly a hundred tasks in it, which means there is room for a wide variety of different kinds of tasks, which is the situation found in the qualitative analysis. The most frequent and traditional task found in the data is a gap fill task in which students are asked to fill in a continuous text

or individual sentences with single words or phrases that are presented in the task framework in Finnish. A variation of this is also found in the data, that is a gap fill task in which no clues are given since the parts that are missing can be thought out from the context, for example filling in the right prepositions. Gap fill exercises like this are quite popular since they are good tools for vocabulary practice as the words are practised in a specific context. Another prominent task found in the data is a fill in task with a table to which students are expected to fill in for example a verb that corresponds with a given noun. These kinds of word formation tasks are used to widen the students' lexicon and are quite popular. Other tasks in this subcategory that are found in the materials but are not as popular are tasks in which students are expected to fill in a word that corresponds to a definition, replace one word in a sentence with another, fill in according to an audio extract, or fill in a crossword puzzle. Out of these tasks, usually crossword puzzles are the only ones with Finnish clues in the task framework. Examples of a traditional gap fill task with Finnish clues (Elements 1–2, text 15, exercise 15.4) and a fill in task with a table (Quest 1–2, text 2, exercise 9) can be seen in Figure 15, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

In the comparative analysis of this subcategory, the quantitative analysis suggests that many similarities would be found since fill in tasks have an important and a quite equal part in all four publishers' materials. In the qualitative analysis, some similarities can be found. The subcategory can be divided further into three types of tasks based on the focus of the tasks being either on the studied text, grammar, or broadening vocabulary. In all materials, *fill in* tasks with Finnish clues are used to practice the specific vocabulary found in the corresponding text chapter. Also, even though all publishers have a separate grammar section in their materials, *fill in* tasks are quite often used to explicitly practice different grammar topics, such as prepositions (Sanoma Pro, Edita, Studeo) and irregular verbs (Studeo, Otava). With all other publishers except for Sanoma Pro, fill in tasks with a table are many times used for word formation tasks, as was described above. Otava and Edita also have traditional crossword puzzles in their materials, which are another way of broadening the students' vocabulary.

15.4 Fill in

Fill in with the help of the Finnish clues.

What is good 1. _____ (tieteellinen) writing like? Here are some suggestions to help you 2. _____

(sekä edistämään että parantamaan) your writing. Whether you are a 3. _____ (fysikko) or a philosopher, your text should be

• clear. Try to 4. _____ (poistaa) all unnecessary details and 5. _____ (keskity täysin sisältöön).

• structured logically. Ideas and processes need to be expressed in a logical order. The text should be divided into sections with clear headings, which makes the structure immediately 6. _____ (näkyvä). A structure in which a cause is followed by a description of the 7. _____ (vaikutus) is common in academic writing.

• accurate. Avoid vague and ambiguous language such as about, approximately or almost.

• objective. Make sure statements and ideas are supported by appropriate evidence that demonstrates how conclusions have been drawn and 8. _____ (kokeet on suoritettu). It is also important to acknowledge the influence of the work of others.

9 Word quest

Word formation. Write the verb and the translation of the noun.



Verb	Translation of the verb in Finnish	Noun	Translation of the noun in Finnish
achieve	saavuttaa	achievement	saavutus
		demonstration	
		expectation	
		experience	
		occurrence	
		organisation	
		motivation	
		preparation	
		revision	
		survival	

Figure 15: Examples of tasks in the subcategory fill in

As anticipated based on the findings of the quantitative analysis, the variety of tasks in the *answer* subcategory is fairly small. With this subcategory's tasks, a division into two types of tasks can be done: tasks in which an answer is expected in Finnish and tasks in which an answer is expected in English. In some rare cases, the students get to choose which language to use, even though many times teachers probably encourage to use English as much as possible. The context for the *answer*-tasks in the data usually come from a text, a video, or an audio recording. In a few tasks, students were asked to first research a certain topic online and through that figure out the answers to specific questions. Real examples from the data can be seen in Figure 16, which presents one task with expected answers in Finnish (English Goes Global, text 4.2, exercise 5) and one with English (Quest 1–2, text 9, exercise 3).


The quantitative analysis shows a big difference in the amount of tasks in this subcategory between publishers, and some differences can also be seen in the comparative qualitative analysis. With Sanoma Pro and Edita, questions relating directly to the text chapters are very prominent in the materials, and those questions are found in both languages. Questions relating to some other audio or video that is not the text chapter of the book, are especially prominent in Otava's material, even though these are found in Edita and Studeo's materials as well. All publishers have also specific personal questions for the students in the materials. Even though tasks with expected answers in both Finnish and

English are found in all materials, tasks with answering questions in English are more frequent in all materials.

5 Reading Comprehension: Got It! 0/20 p.  

Tehtävä

Read the text "A Faithful Friend" carefully and then answer the questions in Finnish. Write a concise answer not exceeding 100 characters for each question.

Luetun ymmärtäminen: Avokysymykset  **3 Big picture**

1. Miten perhe päätyi kuitenkin ottamaan uroskoiran?
2. Mitä Boomer teki pentuna Jacobin ystäville?
3. Mikä sai perheen panikoimaan?
4. Mihin tarkoitukseen boerboel on alun perin jalostettu?
5. Minkälainen ratkaisu esti Boomeria säikäyttämästä perheen ystäviä?
6. Mikä teki Boomerista erityisen australialaisen koiran?
7. Mitä Boomerin isännällä oli tapana tehdä työpäivän jälkeen?
8. Mitä Boomerin isäntä teki paluumatkalla eläinlääkärin luota?
9. Milloin Jacob näki Boomerin viimeistä kertaa?
10. Miksi Boomer haudattiin viikunapuun alle?

What made Michaela convinced she could fulfill her dream to become a ballet dancer?

Figure 16: Examples of tasks in subcategory answer

The *translate* subcategory's tasks are the third most frequent in the quantitative analysis and in the qualitative analysis, the tasks in this subcategory can be divided into two types of tasks, ones in which students translate from Finnish to English and ones in which it goes the other way round. The most prominent and traditional *translate* tasks in the data are ones in which a single sentence is to be translated and written down. Orally performed translation tasks are also popular in the analysed materials, and most often they are performed by taking turns with a partner. *Translation* tasks in which only single words are asked to be translated could also be found, but it seems that publishers want to present the translation tasks, as well as the previously discussed *fill in* tasks, in a larger context, i.e. a full sentence, in their materials, which can enhance the learning outcomes. In many cases, translation tasks were a part of a longer exercise which had many different tasks before leading up to the translation part. Real examples from the data can be seen in Figure 17, which presents one task with a traditional written translation task from English to Finnish (Elements 1–2, text 11, exercise 11A.2) and one task with oral translation from Finnish to English (Me, My Language and I, text 2.1, exercise 5).

The quantitative analysis showed a division into two with Sanoma Pro and Studeo having a significant amount of translate tasks, and Otava and Edita giving less prominence to this subcategory. In the qualitative analysis, a different kind of division into two can be seen. The traditional big publishing houses Sanoma Pro and Otava have a more prominent role



in their materials for *translate* tasks from Finnish to English, whilst with Edita and Studeo it is the other way round. As was discussed above, tasks with a translation of a single sentence are the most frequent, and they are found in all analysed materials. However, there is a big difference between Sanoma Pro and the other publishers: in Sanoma Pro's material, the individual sentences to be translated most of the time relate to each other and create a cohesive text or a dialogue. Some tasks in the other materials also have a cohesion between the sentences, but the focus is clearly on translating single sentences, phrases, or words. Studeo is the only publisher with a *translate* task in which a longer text paragraph is asked to be translated.

11A.2 Translate

Translate the following sentences into Finnish.

1. Sometimes my friends would invite me to their house, and I would have to come up with an excuse if I wasn't feeling up to it.

2. Later in my teenage years I started to think that this personality trait meant there was something wrong with me.

5 Vocabulary Builder: Drill Away! 0/1 p.  

Tehtävä

Translate the Finnish sentences into English orally with the help of the vocabulary in the text "Be Yourself". A starts. Click the 'eye' to hide the other side and help each other out by giving clues.



A 	B 
1. Kaksoiset syntyivät ennenaikaisesti, mikä ei ole kovin tavatonta.	1. The twins were born prematurely, which is not uncommon.
2. I have always wanted many siblings.	2. Olen aina halunnut monta sisarusta.
3. Vanhempani kasvattivat minut hyvin, ja lapsuuteni oli onnellinen.	3. My parents raised me well and my childhood was happy.
4. My big brother grew up into a shy young man who had hideously / awfully huge / big ears.	4. Isoveljeni varttui ujoksi nuoreksi mieheksi, jolla oli kauhistuttavan suuret korvat.
5. Mary, vetoan sinuun, anna minun leikata pitkät hiuksesi.	5. Mary, I implore you, let me cut your long hair.
6. John loved me despite my mole.	6. John rakasti minua luomestani huolimatta.
7. Vau, katso itseäsi peilistä! Sinun pitäisi aina käyttää lasia!	7. Wow, look at yourself in the mirror! You should always wear glasses!

Figure 17: Examples of tasks in the subcategory *translate*

Finally, the quantitatively second largest subcategory *write* consists, not surprisingly, of a wide variety of different types of tasks. The most prominent tasks are ones which give a prompt for the students to write a longer text, for example a composition, speech, or a blog text. Other popular tasks in this subcategory include writing own sentences, usually including specific words that need to be used, and find the phrase, in which a useful phrase from the text is focused on to enhance the learning of idiomatic expressions. Other tasks that are found in the materials but are not as popular are tasks with dictation, rewriting false statements to be true, note-taking while listening, summarising a text in the students' own words, and coming up with a definition for a word. Dictation tasks often go hand in hand with the tasks in the *say* subcategory, as audio that dictates certain words, phrases,

or sentences is not really used in the analysed materials with tasks like this. Examples of a task with instructions for a longer writing task (New Insights 1–2, text 5, exercise 5i) and a task for writing own unique sentences (English Goes Global, text 2.1, exercise 9) can be seen in Figure 18, which demonstrates two real examples from the data.

The quantitative analysis of the *write* subcategory shows a division into two with Sanoma Pro and Edita having most of their tasks belong to this subcategory, whilst with Otava and Studeo these tasks come in second, and with an around 10% difference to the other two publishers. In the qualitative analysis between the four publishers, some similarities, and differences in emphasising certain matters can be seen. With the longer production tasks in the materials, which are essentially there to prepare students for one crucial part of the matriculation examination, a lot of different text types and approaches are taken. Sanoma Pro has the widest variety of composition topics, but all publishers have composition tasks in their materials, and most often they are related to the students' lives in some way and in them the students' own voices are heard. When looking at different text types, blogs are represented in all materials, and letters are in all but Studeo's material. Other text types for the written tasks include for example a journal text (Sanoma Pro and Edita), a dialogue (Sanoma Pro and Otava), a fictional story, an email (Edita), a speech, a discussion forum reply (Otava), a video script (Sanoma Pro), a poem, and an advice column (Studeo). It is interesting to see that all publishers have taken their own approach to these text types that students are encouraged to get acquainted with and produce their own text to in a certain style. With the other *write* tasks found in the data, not much differentiation between the publishers can be seen. All publishers have tasks for writing own sentences, completing sentences, writing definitions, and summarising. Also, find the phrase and rewrite/correct sentences tasks are both found in three out of the four publishers' materials.

5i

Create. What's in a blog? Choose one of the topics.

1. Write a reply to Jane's blog. How do you feel about moving out and living on your own? Are you looking forward to it? Or are you still quite happy staying with your family? What sort of challenges do you think you'll face when you live on your own?
2. Write your own blog post about your daily life. Try to make your everyday life sound like an adventure!



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9 Vocabulary Builder: Target Words

0/10 p.

Tehtävä

Write your own sentences, each including one target word on the list below. The meaning of the target word should be evident from your sentence and the word itself underlined.



1. omnipresent
2. predominant
3. familiar
4. influential
5. preferred
6. rapid
7. similar
8. sovereign
9. interconnected
10. windy

Figure 18: Examples of tasks in the subcategory write

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I first revisit and answer the research questions by reviewing the quantitative and qualitative results of the study. The findings related to the first research question are discussed in section 5.1 and the findings related to the second research question in section 5.2. I conclude by discussing the pedagogical implications of the study as well as present suggestions for future research.

5.1 Comparison of productive e-learning exercises

The aim of the first research question was to find out how varied the productive e-learning exercises in the four published materials are. The main results will be summarised here with the help of the division into the three main categories that were used in the analysis.

5.1.1 What is the learner expected to do?

The first main category *What is the learner expected to do?* gives insight into the variation of *oral* versus *written* tasks, as well as tasks with *own thoughts* versus *scripted* output. The division of this main category into five subcategories shows that there is a lot of variation in the tasks in all analysed materials. The sheer quantitative division of oral and written tasks indicates that the wide range of tasks in both modes of output would also allow for a wide variety of different tasks. However, upon closer examination of the comparative side of the quantitative analysis, it could be seen that Sanoma Pro and Edita's division of 30–70 (oral–written), possibly dramatically limits the variety of different *oral* exercises that are included in the materials. It is an interesting finding that out of the two traditional publishing houses, Sanoma Pro has stayed in a more traditional division of tasks between oral and written, whilst Otava has taken a different, more modern approach to this. This reflects the importance of *oral* exercises that has been highlighted in a study by Korhonen (2014, 75–76), who found that *oral* exercises were considered as one of the most effective ways of teaching and learning English by both students and teachers.

When looking at the division between tasks with *own thoughts* and *scripted* output, it is refreshing to see that overall, the materials orient towards nearly half of the tasks having a place for the students' own opinions and thoughts, since these types of exercises can be expected to be most useful when it comes to practicing authentic language. Indeed, authenticity has been found to be one of the most significant factors for teachers in the

process of selecting a new textbook to use in teaching (Hietala 2015, 67). Out of the four publishers, Otava is the only one that has more tasks that expect the students' *own thoughts* rather than a *scripted* response, which shows another modern pedagogical take in their material.

Despite some of the differences in the subcategory divisions between the publishers, all of them have a wide and quite similar variety of different types of tasks in the five subcategories. The *oral* subcategories consist of discussion tasks, tasks in which a partner or group members are taught something through for example a summary in the student's own words, word explanation, role play, tasks with answering specific questions, translation, tasks with specific pronunciation practise, reading ready-made text, and tasks with correcting sentences. A wide variety can also be seen in the written tasks, with tasks such as writing own sentences, note-taking, writing a longer text (e.g. a composition or a blog post), answering specific questions, writing a poem or a dialogue, translating, correcting sentences, dictation, writing definitions, gap fill tasks, find the phrase, and crossword puzzles.

5.1.2 Who with?

The second main category *Who with?* shows data on the variation of the three ways of working. As could be expected, *individual* tasks are the most prominent ones with more than half of the analysed tasks belonging to this subcategory. *Pair work* tasks come second and *group work* tasks third. However, the distributions presented in the quantitative analysis do not directly tell us how students actually conduct tasks in school or at home, since all individual tasks could be conducted with someone even though it is not stated in the task instructions. When looking at the comparative analysis, the most significant finding can be seen in Studeo's material, which has an almost non-existing difference between the amount of *individual* and *pair work* tasks. The least variation and the biggest difference is in Edita's material, in which almost three quarters of the tasks are *individual* work. In her study, Korhonen (2014, 75–76) found that *pair* and *group work* exercises were considered by both teachers and students as the most effective ways of teaching and learning English. From this perspective, Studeo's choice to include a significant amount of *pair work* tasks in their materials is a very reasonable approach.

Unsurprisingly, the qualitative analysis shows that *pair work* and *group work* tasks have little variation between them, and they are many times used for similar purposes in the materials, such as tasks with translation, answering questions, dictation, and discussion prompts. Teaching tasks, in which students report back to other group members on what they have learned from for example a text, are popular in the *group work* subcategory, whilst oral dialogues and word explanations are more prominent in the *pair work* subcategory. In the comparative analysis, tasks with different discussion prompts are frequent and popular with all publishers in both *pair work* and *group work* categories. Also, word explanation and role play tasks are found in all materials. Oral *pair work* tasks with an explicit instruction to focus on pronunciation are found quite often in three of the four materials, the only exception being Sanoma Pro, which does not have any tasks like this. With Sanoma Pro and Studeo, oral *pair work* translation tasks are popular as well as *group work* tasks where students teach others. These are not frequently found in Otava and Edita's materials.

5.1.3 With what content?

Finally, the third main category *With what content?* shows data on the variation of task frameworks that the contents in the e-textbook provide. The division of this main category into six subcategories shows that there is a lot of variation in the tasks in all analysed materials. Looking first at the most prominent subcategory *discuss*, different tasks found in it are tasks with leading questions or talking points, word explanation, role play, summarising, and studying tables, graphs, or pictures together with someone. This wide variety extends to all four analysed materials, and not a lot of differentiation between the publishers can be seen. The large amount of discussion exercises in the materials is likely to be motivated by the fact that they have been found to form the backbone of actual lessons (Korhonen 2014, 75–76), so it is not surprising that textbook authors would respond to this need. In a study on Sanoma Pro and Otava's previous upper secondary school materials, discussion exercises were the most frequent overall (Saarela 2020, 46), and as the results show, this has not changed for Otava. With Sanoma Pro, *discuss* exercises did drop to a shared second place in the results of the current study.

The second subcategory *say* consists quantitatively of the least amount of tasks, but still a variety of different tasks can be seen with tasks in which students first listen and then repeat, tasks with saying words or sentences that the students have first written down

themselves, reading a text chapter out loud, and tasks with filling in a text and then reading it out loud. In her study, Korhonen (2014, 75–76) found that exercises where students are asked to read out loud were one of the most common exercises during lessons. This finding is not supported in the analysed materials since the amount of tasks in this category is so small.

With the third subcategory *fill in*, a wide and quite similar variety of different tasks can be seen in all the materials. Tasks in this category are gap fill tasks with Finnish clues, gap fill tasks without clues, tasks with filling in a table, tasks with definitions, replacing words in a sentence with another, filling in according to audio, and crossword puzzles. In a study by Saarela (2020, 46), the online extra exercises provided in materials by Sanoma Pro and Otava were analysed, and the study found that gap fill exercises were the most common in both of them. This same trend has not continued when the books have turned completely digital, as both publishers' *fill in* tasks amount to only around 16% of the totals.

The subcategories of *answer* and *translate* are ones with the least variety. In both subcategories most tasks can be divided based on what the expected language of the output is. In her study, Korhonen (2014, 75–76) found that translation exercises are widely used in teaching and especially during lessons. With this finding in mind, it is not surprising that the *translate* subcategory rises into a shared second place in Sanoma Pro's material with the *discuss* subcategory and in Studeo's material with the *write* subcategory. However, as has been stated before, the strong presence of translation tasks does not represent modern pedagogical views, and the tasks in this category cannot be too varied. With the percentage amount of translation tasks being over 20% in some of the materials, it is a shame that this is not possible. The context for the *answer* tasks in the data usually come from a text, a video, or an audio recording. A dramatic difference can be seen in the *answer* subcategory with Studeo having only a small fraction of their tasks belonging to this subcategory whilst Edita's percentage amount rises to a significant amount, being over 15%.

Finally, in the subcategory *write*, a wide variety of tasks can be seen, with tasks that give students a prompt for a longer text, writing own sentences, find the phrase, dictation, correcting sentences, note taking, summarising a text in the student's own words, and coming up with definitions for words. All materials have composition topics in them, but Sanoma Pro has the widest variety of them, and most often they are related to the students

themselves, and in them the students' own voices are to be heard. When looking at the variation of different text types, blogs are represented in all materials and letters are in all but Studeo's material. The popularity of blogs as a text type in all the materials is a little surprising since they are not very popular anymore and students in upper secondary schools might not even have ever read a blog text, since their golden era has, at least in the Finnish context, passed. Other text types for the written tasks include for example a journal text, a dialogue, a fictional story, an email, a speech, a discussion forum reply, a video script, a poem, and an advice column.

5.2 Productive e-learning exercises and the four characteristics of learning

The purpose of the second research question was to find out how the four important characteristics of learning provided by the Finnish National Agency for Education (Opetushallitus, n.d., accessed 17 January 2022) are supported, i.e. taken into consideration, in the analysed e-learning exercises. The four characteristics (i.e. sense of community, learning skills, students' activity and initiative, and clear, demanding, and authentic exercises) are explained in more detail in section 2.3.1.

5.2.1 Sense of community

The first characteristic of learning, sense of community (i.e., carrying out exercises in which teamwork has a central role), is supported quite well in all the analysed materials. Individual tasks take up more than half of the total analysed amount, which means that the materials guide for nearly half of the tasks to be conducted with someone. Otava and Studeo's materials support the sense of community especially well, as both have over half of their tasks being something other than individual work. From the different kinds of tasks found in the materials, dictations, tasks with discussion prompts, tasks with teaching others, and word explanation tasks are ones that support the sense of community especially well. These are all found in the four analysed materials, even though their prominence somewhat differs between the publishers. In Studeo's material, a significant number of written tasks are guided to be conducted together, which supports the sense of community especially well, and this is not found in any of the other publishers' materials.

5.2.2 Learning skills

With the second characteristic of learning, the learning skills of students (i.e. planning how an exercise is carried out, reflecting on what the students already know about the phenomenon, and evaluating one's own performance), the findings reveal that tasks themselves did not support this characteristic too well. Firstly, the exercises in the analysis did not have tasks in them that would explicitly state for the students to first plan how to carry out a certain exercise. On the contrary, many exercises consist of several tasks (2, 3 or 4), which also means that the exercises as a whole were explicitly instructed and no negotiation of how the exercise should be conducted was needed.

Tasks that guide the students into thinking about what they already know about the phenomenon they are about to study are found in the data, even though most of the time this is not explicitly stated in the task itself. All the analysed materials have tasks which are used for warming up or engaging the students with the topic before studying the text. These tasks vary a lot between what they are like and between the publishers. With Sanoma Pro and Otava's material, tasks in the subcategory *discuss* function often as warm up tasks. Finally, tasks in which students need to evaluate their own performance in an exercise, were not found at all in the data. A few tasks did encourage for peer review and giving feedback to a partner, but their presence was very limited.

5.2.3 Students' activity and initiative

The third characteristic, students' activity and initiative, is supported especially well in all the analysed tasks since the analysis only covers productive tasks. As exercises in which students can for example only click on the right answer were excluded completely from the analysis, it is not possible to say how prominent they are in the materials in comparison to the productive tasks. However, with the total amount of analysed tasks being 648, it is safe to say that productive tasks are well represented in the materials.

5.2.4 Clear, demanding, and authentic exercises

The final and fourth characteristic, clear, demanding, and authentic exercises, is also supported well in all the materials. Even though the analysis itself does not specifically focus on the clarity of the tasks, some evaluations on the topic can be made based on the coding process. I was able to divide all the exercises into tasks and find a suitable subcategory in

each main category for all analysed tasks, which means that the exercises were clear enough to be analysed in a comprehensive manner. However, many exercises in the materials consist of several tasks (even 3 or 4), which does make the exercise more complicated to understand. Many times, these kind exercises could be divided into different exercises, or the instructions could be stated in clearer steps to help the students.

When looking at how demanding the tasks are, the analysis itself does not give concrete answers, but some comments can be made based on the task examples presented in the figures. Writing a composition on *circadian rhythm* (Figure 5, Elements 1–2, text 6, exercise 6.9), rewriting sentences that have to do with *Isaac Newton* (Figure 6, Elements 1–2, text 15, exercise 15.1), role playing as *a family counsellor* (Figure 13, Elements 1–2, text 14, exercise 14.8), filling in gaps on a text about *scientific writing* (Figure 15, Elements 1–2, text 15, exercise 15.4), and writing own sentences with words like *omnipresent* (Figure 18, English Goes Global, text 2.1, exercise 9) can be regarded as demanding tasks, and these are only a very small sample of the analysed tasks. Even though most of these examples are from Sanoma Pro’s material, this does not mean that their tasks would be more demanding than the others, since examples for the different subcategories were chosen arbitrarily and an equal number of examples were taken from each publisher.

Finally, the analysis results from the first main category *What is the learner expected to do?* show findings related to the authenticity of the tasks. Nearly half of all the analysed tasks orient towards having a place for the students’ own opinions and thoughts, which is a refreshing take by the publishers, as these kinds of exercises can be expected to be most useful when it comes to practicing authentic language. More precisely, the *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory has the largest amount of tasks, and most tasks in it are discussion tasks and tasks in which a partner or group members are taught something through for example a summary in the student’s own words, and these are all tasks that promote the use of authentic language. When comparing the aspect of authenticity in the different publishers’ tasks, Otava’s material stands out. Otava is the only publisher that has more tasks that expect the students’ own thoughts rather than a scripted response, and the *oral response – own thoughts* subcategory is especially prominent in Otava’s material as over a third of the tasks belong to it.

5.3 Pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research

Based on the findings of this study, the analysed materials utilise the digital platforms for a wide variety of different tasks. This may indicate that upper secondary school materials are gradually changing, since in a previous study by Saarela (2020), the main finding was that the digital environment would have allowed for more versatile exercises, but the possibilities were not fully utilised. Also, all the analysed materials support the use of a blended learning approach, since the instructions for tasks are clear and the materials have a lot of exercises in them that can be conducted individually.

Bikowski and Casal (2018, 133) have argued that e-textbooks are most effective and engaging when they are specifically designed for the digital platform instead of the printed form, since that way they can exploit the multimodality of the platform better. Out of the analysed materials, Sanoma Pro and Studeo's e-learning exercises were specifically designed this way since they do not exist in printed form at all. Even so, the current study found that a wide variety of exercises are provided by all the publishers, and certain aspects are emphasised more in some materials than others. This shows that nowadays the digital platforms have features that enable printed exercises to be transformed to the digital form in an effective way, without having to compromise too much.

Examples on the variety of tasks given in the previous sections show that there is a wide array of different kinds of productive e-learning exercises in the upper secondary school English learning materials. However, none of the analysed materials are perfect, and improving them using the present findings as a starting point, could have a positive impact on learning results on a large scale. Therefore, it might be useful for teachers to closely examine, adjust, and add to these materials, based on the group of students they are using the materials with. To take the important characteristics of learning skills better into consideration, teachers could for example modify group work exercise instructions so that the students would only receive a list of things to complete, and they would have to divide them equally between them, to receive the best outcome. Teachers could also add different kinds of warm-up tasks to the lessons before studying a new text, which would make students more comprehensively reflect on their previous knowledge (e.g. vocabulary) on the studied topic. Also, adding self-evaluations tasks to be completed after exercises, would improve the students' learning skills.

By reviewing and modifying the materials in use, more opportunities for differentiation can be created, the materials will better cater to different types of learners, and certain areas of linguistic knowledge can be covered more thoroughly. As was found by Baek and Monaghan (2013, 3), it is also important to remember that in order to take advantage of the positive features of the e-textbooks, students need to be given enough time to learn how to utilise the materials to their full potential. This could also be applicable to teachers, especially in a situation where they have been forced by circumstances to learn how to navigate the new e-textbooks very quickly.

This paper has focused on studying learning materials for what they are, which differs greatly from studying them in-action, as was stated by Littlejohn (2011, 181). Further research is required to find out the actual effectiveness of the e-learning exercises since ready-made published materials are always reinterpreted in the classroom (Littlejohn 2011, 181), and a full materials evaluation also always requires an analysis of what is expected of the materials by their users (Littlejohn 2011, 201). Future research on this topic could also include comparative analysis of the learning materials for different upper secondary school English modules, to see whether the type or number of exercises changes as the studies progress. Studying learning materials is also a way of evaluating the successfulness of a new NCC, which means that there is always room for further research in the field.

6 Conclusion

During the year 2021, a lot changed in the market of Finnish upper secondary school English learning materials. A new National Core Curriculum was put into practice, which meant that publishers renewed their old materials (Otava and Studeo), published completely new ones (Sanoma Pro), and one new publisher even entered the market (Edita). At the same time, the age that marks the end of compulsory education was raised to 18, which meant that upper secondary school learning materials became free of charge. Furthermore, this influenced the rise of digital materials, as the share of them rose to be over 71% and the digital material sales almost doubled.

With these big changes in mind, the aim of this research was to provide a comprehensive description and a critical evaluation of the variety of e-learning exercises that four different publishers provide for upper secondary school English e-learning materials. I also explored and analysed the different publishers' products in a comparative manner to be able to give a more extensive view of the market situation for upper secondary school English materials.

The study revealed that overall, the available published materials provide a wide variety of different e-learning exercises for the upper secondary school students. More often than not, the results of the comparative analyses showed similarities, rather than dramatic differences between the four publishers' materials. This is not too surprising since all the analysed materials are based on the same curriculum. With regards to the four important characteristics of learning, the results of the study showed that one of them was supported especially well (students' activity and initiative), two were supported well (sense of community and clear, authentic, and demanding exercises), and only one characteristic was not supported well enough (learning skills) in the analysed e-learning exercises.

The current study has provided some useful data for the, still lacking, learning material research in the Finnish context. The findings presented in the previous section give insight to the publishers into what factors should be considered when designing learning exercises for new e-textbooks, which types of exercises need more attention in the process, and how e-textbooks, and e-learning exercises more specifically could be developed further to fulfil the needs of all different kinds of students in upper secondary schools across Finland even better. What was discovered in this research also provides teachers with

insight into what the market of upper secondary school English learning materials looks like at the moment. This information can be useful when making use of one of the studied e-textbooks in the classroom, whilst planning lessons and courses, or when choosing which publisher's material they would like to use next.

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