Discourses on Lgbtq Topics in the English Language Teaching in Upper Secondary Education in Sweden

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This essay looks at the discourses on LGBTQ topics in English language teaching aimed at upper secondary schools in Sweden. The purpose is to find out how the discourses are created by analyzing a set of textbooks as well as interviewing teachers. The method employed in this study is critical discourse analysis supported by queer theoretical perspectives. Together these frameworks help to show how the social relationships that affect LGBTQ people are affecting the educational setting in English. The study finds that a separate set of discourses appear to affect textbooks and teachers. The textbooks in this study appear to be affected by discourses that favor non-LGBTQ people while the teachers in this study appear to be affected by discourses that favor LGBTQ people.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, English as a second language teaching, LGBTQ, interviews, textbook analysis, queer theory
1. Introduction

In the area of second language teaching, questions of sexual and gender identity may not be the most obvious topics to discuss. However, for LGBTQ students, the ability to express their identity in a second language can be crucial to their learning. Hence one may ask the question of how English language teaching can provide opportunities for LGBTQ students to explore their identities in a second language. One way to understand the relationship between LGBTQ people and language learning is to analyze textbooks, as textbooks can function as a lens into the educational context. However, textbooks are not the only area of education. It is the teachers and their management of material such as textbooks or their own material that may play the greatest role in language learning. The primary focus in this text will be on the perspective of sexual minorities, or LGBTQ people. The discourses surrounding LGBTQ people in language learning can be found by analyzing textbooks and relating this to teachers’ considerations of learning material as well as their thoughts on LGBTQ topics in their education.

1.1 Aims and questions

This text aims to answer how discourses in the educational milieu of upper secondary school ESL can take form in relation to LGBTQ people. Furthermore, the study will investigate the discourses on LGBTQ people in educational material for English students in Swedish upper secondary schools. Moreover, the study will investigate the perspectives that teachers in English offer in relationship to material and their teaching when it comes to LGBTQ topics. The study questions are the following:

- How are LGBTQ people represented in course material, such as textbooks for ESL for upper secondary school?
- How much are the LGBTQ relations and social conditions presented in the textbooks?
- In which ways do the textbooks contribute to discourses surrounding same-sex relations and transgender lives?
- How do teachers relate to the usage of material, and what are their perspectives on LGBTQ topics?
2. Background

This section will put forward previous research on LGBTQ people and education. It will present the way in which LGBTQ topics have been encountered in educational settings and problems that surround this topic. Furthermore, it discusses the functions that textbooks play in the formation of identity and the role it plays in the context of education. In this section one can find a framework for stages of normalization of LGBTQ people; going from rejection/intolerance to acceptance which later can lead to tolerance, and finally to a sense of normalization. The theoretical points are situated in different settings and thus demonstrate the nuances within the stages.

2.1. The Situation in Sweden

A report made by one of the teachers’ unions in Sweden, Lärarnas Riksförbund (LR) produced in 2013 titled “Om sexuell oriertering och identitet i skolan” showed some problematic numbers in terms of the work with LGBTQ issues in Swedish schools. The research was made from a mail survey that was sent out to 2600 teachers from elementary school up to upper secondary school. Out of this number of teachers 1211 teachers responded. The study shows that there are still some problems in terms of the attitudes to LGBTQ topics within Swedish schools. From this study one can discuss the summary of the answers and point towards the issues that are raised by LR, as well as the suggestions they offer.

In the summary LR presents attitudes in schools regarding tolerance to gay, lesbian and bisexual teachers, and students, as well as tolerance to transgender teachers, and students. The summary also points toward personal attitudes in a similar fashion. Here, 71% of the teachers claim that the schools they work at have a tolerant attitude towards homosexual and bisexual teachers. 17% claim that they do not know about the attitudes in their school and 10% claim that there is not a tolerant attitude at their workplace (LR, 2013, 8). Furthermore, the authors show that while there is still a general notion that there is a tolerant attitude towards LGB people, some teachers still feel uncomfortable working with a non-straight person, which can indicate that there is a lack of tolerance. This is shown in the study as LR found that 45% of the teachers responded that they think they would be uncomfortable working with a teacher who was openly homo- or bisexual, whereas 25% responded that they do not know how they would feel. More respondents mentioned that they would be uncomfortable if there was a transgender person involved (Ibid.).
When it comes to fundamental values of sexual orientation and different identities, a majority (70%) of the teachers feel safe in dealing with these types of questions, while 28% answered that they feel they need to know more about it. At the same time, the report states that only half of the teachers say that they can handle conflicts and harassment that are due to sexual identity. 25% responded that they do not know whether the school can handle these issues or not. According to the authors of the study these numbers are highly problematic (LR, 2013, 9). Indeed, they show that a significant number of teachers cannot handle conflicts and harassment related to LGBTQ people; the numbers show that schools are not a safe environment for LGBTQ students.

It can be interesting to note that in Swedish studies, gays and lesbians are grouped together under the term *homosexual*, whereas one can argue that there are likely to be different attitudes towards homosexual men and homosexual women. It could be argued that lesbian women and gay men tend to have different experiences in how they are viewed, which can lead to question if the study considers that there could be different attitudes toward homosexual women or homosexual men. As the study itself problematizes, when one speaks of attitudes it can also be a matter of how they see themselves rather than how they act. One can question whether non-LGBTQ teachers are completely aware of their behavior and attitudes when it comes to their treatment of LGBTQ people. While believing that they are providing positive images, they may still project negative images of LGBTQ people.

The report closes with suggestions on how to improve the situation and to facilitate the inclusion of LGBTQ people in the educational environment. In this they declare that they are to work with a project called “Öppna klassrummet”, an open classroom. The aim is that no student or teacher should feel unsafe in their expression of sexual or gender identity in school, and that schools should function as a sanctuary for them (LR, 2013, 10). Furthermore, the project suggests that we need to investigate teaching material to include LGBTQ perspectives, and that the state should investigate rules, regulations, and the curriculum to see whether they actively work for the safety of LGBTQ people. Moreover, the study suggests that there is a need to examine the goals for examination for teachers, so they can have ground to stand on in terms of LGBTQ questions (ibid.).

In conclusion, the LR study shows that there are problems in Swedish schools when it comes to issues that affect LGBTQ people. It could be said that there is a lack of proper means for teachers to talk about LGBTQ issues as there may even be troubles for teachers to work with LGBTQ people as indicated by the study. One could make a statement that the situation in school is undergoing changes in the perspectives on LGBTQ people and that there is
a potential for discursive change that takes form in acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. From this, if one considers different stages of development, it could be said that the situation in Sweden appears to reside within a relatively tolerant stage, which could be on the path towards making LGBTQ+ topics normalized. However, the acceptance appears to exist within a spectrum of power relations that favors heterosexual and cisgender1 people, as the cisgender and heterosexual teachers have some issues when it comes to students and colleagues who are LGBTQ+ as well as having some problems with addressing LGBTQ+ topics. Thus, there appears to be some resistance towards normalizing LGBTQ+ topics in the educational context.

2.2. The Curriculum

The curriculum in Sweden has two parts that can be valuable to consider for this essay. One part is the section on school values, the other part is the aims for the subject English. In the section on values, there is an explicit statement made that no student should be discriminated based on gender, or sexuality. In relation to this, there is a notion in the curriculum which states that there needs to be an ongoing work against discrimination directed towards students (Skolverket, 2010, 5). This can play an important role in the ways that discrimination that LGBTQ+ people face and how the educational system works to hinder this process of discrimination. One can also look into the English version of the curriculum. Here, one can find a statement that no one should be discriminated based on sexual identity or transgender identity (Skolverket 2013, 4). The English version features an open recognition of transgender identity unlike the Swedish one. Although this is stated in the curriculum there are still, as demonstrated by the LR investigation, issues with this type of work. The effect of this change in the curriculum remains to be seen.

Furthermore, one can examine the section for the subject English that states that language learning does come with learning about the social conditions of people where English is spoken (Skolverket, 2010, 53). This can be argued to include LGBTQ+ people. However, as it is not explicit that there should be topics of sexuality and gender, these aspects do not appear as central in English language teaching.

As the curriculum states that all students should be free from discrimination and English language teaching should include understanding of social and political conditions where English is spoken it could be argued that English language teaching should include the

1 Cisgender: a person who has not undergone a transition. Their gender identity corresponds to the gender assigned at birth.
conditions LGBTQ people face. One can, however, problematize the fact that there is no direct reference to the safety of LGBTQ students as of the 2011 curriculum. This can affect the ways in which LGBTQ themes are presented and discussed in a second language setting in Sweden. The arguable lack of reference to LGBTQ people in the curriculum can affect the materials used for English language teaching in Sweden.

2.3 The Importance of LGBTQ Perspectives in an ESL Setting

The conditions affecting identity construction for LGBTQ students do not leave them when they enter a classroom setting. It can be very important for both LGBTQ and non-LGBTQ students to be able to explore and learn about LGBTQ life conditions and identities as it affects their means to understand themselves and each other. The school environment, as shown by LR’s study, is affected by issues when it comes to the treatment of LGBTQ people. To ignore these issues in an ESL setting can be problematic for LGBTQ students as it can hinder their identity expression in a different language. One can take another look into problems that have been discussed by various researchers when it comes to the factors that affect LGBTQ students, especially in an ESL setting. For example, Stephanie Vandrick wrote on the issue of teaching LGBTQ topics in an ESL classroom with questions of sexuality and the importance of providing ESL settings with LGBTQ narratives, both for LGBTQ people and those who are not LGBTQ.

Although the study by Vandrick is focused on an American setting, the arguments that the author makes can be applied in other places where ESL is being taught as well. One reason is that these educational ideas can be applied in other language learning contexts. One may also note that, in the study, Vandrick points to certain aspects that are currently stated in the Swedish curriculum, namely that students should acquire knowledge about the social relationships where English is spoken (Skolverket, 2010, 53). Therefore, while the curriculum already mentions the importance of social conditions one can look at more points made by Vandrick to motivate the importance of this issue. First, the author raises questions on the responsibility and considerations of that within the classroom. Secondly, Vandrick discusses the issues that one can face with teaching these questions.

As Vandrick mentions, a problem that is faced is that there is an issue with how LGBTQ questions are often put in special learning classes, which, according to the author, does not improve the conditions for them. The author argues that there is a responsibility on teachers to discuss LGBTQ topics in every aspect of life rather than conducting classes that specifically focus on LGBTQ questions. She argues that LGBTQ topics should be incorporated in
the everydayness of a learning situation. For, according to the author, learning a language is more than acquiring words, it is also packed with contents, which often comes with a set of values (Vandrick, 2001, 4).

Furthermore, Vandrick mentions that there are indeed LGBTQ students in most classrooms, and others may have family members that are LGBTQ; everyone has some relationship to LGBTQ people regardless of their own experiences with sexuality and transition status. Furthermore, the author argues that if LGBTQ students are not given the means to explore their identity their learning abilities may be affected. It is not only a matter of justice but of “educational development and equity” as Vandrick writes (Vandrick, 2001, 5). From this, one can argue that if schools do not talk about LGBTQ issues, then schools risk privileging heterosexual discourse. The chances to fully express one’s identity in a second language can be lost for LGBTQ students, if neither teacher nor material could provide a view for them. In turn this can privilege heterosexual structures in language learning. It is of importance to be talking about LGBTQ perspectives regardless of one’s own orientation, for according to the author, non-LGBTQ teachers are considered a respectable authority with enough distance to the issues which can ease the chances for non-LGBTQ students to connect with the subject. However, it may be hard for a straight teacher to feel knowledgeable in the subject, which can impact their will to talk about the topic (Vandrick, 2001, 6).

The means to explore identities are further acknowledged by Jacqueline Dumas who argues that being granted a language to express one’s identity has highly motivating factors for learners. Those who have their identities validated as inside the norm may have high motivation in the language learning processes while those who are outside the sexual norm, may find themselves unmotivated (Dumas, 2008, 5). From this one can argue that if one encounters discourses that can have a negative impact in terms of LGBTQ topics, or that have heterosexual privileged norms, LGBTQ students will likely fall behind in their motivation for language learning. Therefore, it is crucial in a learning situation to recognize the expressions of sexual- and gender identity for the motivation of students, especially for LGBTQ students.

In a similar vein, linguistic researchers Rhodes and Coda point to issues that appear when one does not include LGBTQ-topics while being taught a second language. A crucial point made by the authors is that a lack of sexual identity issues that include LGBTQ people prompts a continuation of othering them (Rhodes and Coda, 2017, 1). The pedagogical challenges that the authors brought up from their study include: institutional sanctions, lack of materials, conservative student culture, and notions that LGBTQ topics are
irrelevant (Rhodes and Coda, 2017, 4). While the study was conducted in an American setting, these issues, as one may find, are not exclusive to an American educational setting, as similar issues have been presented in the study by LR (2013). These issues presented by the authors can be used to point towards a hegemony where heterosexual identities are favored in the classroom which is made manifest by the lack of inclusion of texts that deal with LGBTQ people.

Further issues that can be addressed are the functionalities of language that normalizes heterosexuality and marginalizes homosexuality. In an article discussing the issues of sexualities in ESL settings Cynthia Nelson points to an important factor of the hidden symptoms of heterosexual privilege. In the essay, she points to the issue of when teachers assume that any conversation on sexual identity bears little relevance to language acquisition or is marginal to teaching. Interestingly enough, as Nelson writes, these remarks on sexual identity are already a part of language teaching. “Husband, wife, wedding ring… anniversaries, in laws, boy/girlfriend: all are the currency of everyday social intercourse for the heterosexual” (Harris qtd. in Nelson, 1999, 4). At the same time, references to LGBTQ identities are regarded as sexual identity issues and these identities are sexualized (Nelson, 1999, 4). What this demonstrates is how a learning situation can favor heterosexual identities by framing their lives as the everyday, normal state of life, while LGBTQ topics become the sexual other. One can argue that a lack of recognition of the diversity of sexuality can be a way that a hegemony favoring heterosexuality is reified in textual events. An observation that can be made is how non-LGBTQ sexualities and gender identities are centered on the functions of language, one is included and not discussed, while the other is either excluded or put in a position outside the everyday context. The textual processes that marginalize LGBTQ people are especially effective when LGBTQ people are not given the means to express their identities. What is seen is that non-LGBTQ identities take a vital role in most ESL material by not including the stories of LGBTQ people, or the heterosexual life is made normative and non-debated. These aspects can be regarded as part of a hegemony that favors heterosexuality.

2.4. The Role of Textbooks in Identity Formation

An aspect that can be further touched upon is the role of textbooks and identity. Yuh-Yun Yen writes on the functions of textbooks in an EFL and ESL setting from a sociocultural perspective on learning. The text points to how identity and language learning, through textbooks, come into play. Although Yen’s text is focused on the context of ethnic identity in
relationship to English language learning one can argue that the role of identity construction that Yen discusses can be applied to more than ethnic identity, for textbooks are a valuable part in any educational setting. Furthermore, they can function as the constituent of texts that are representative of the educational discourses. Yen quotes Altbach who writes that textbooks are “the most powerful and pervasive educational technology…they serve several important functions in schooling” (qtd. In Yen, 2000, 22). The importance of textbooks and language learning should not be understated.

Yen discusses the ways in which learning a second language involves processes where the learner also takes on a second identity. An important point by the author is that learners undergo an identity negotiation process in the learning of a secondary language. Not only do they negotiate the use of a new language, but they are also learning to mitigate their identities in a process of learning a language (Yen, 2000, 34f). Moreover, Yen argues that texts are highly important in the language learning process. In this context, textbooks serve as an authority of educational practice. They form a stable ground that can ensure that each learner can positively interact with the texts at hand for their identity shaping process (Yen, 2000, 36f). Consequently, it can be stated that the learner has gained an increased centrality in the context of teaching. One can argue that it is important to be able to identify with the material used for teaching, otherwise one may lose opportunities for learning. Furthermore, the subject positions of the students should be considered in a learning environment, even in textbooks, as they, too, are part of any learning environment. However, not every aspect of social identity and conditions may be able to be expressed in textbooks, but the topics of sexuality and gender identity are major parts of our identities. Thus, assuming a sociocultural type of learning, it is valuable to consider the means that ESL teaching provide for students to express their sexual and gender identity.

Another aspect that has been considered by Paiz (2015) is the point of view in terms of sexual identity and textbooks. In the article, Paiz discusses the issues with textbooks and heteronormativity, based on earlier studies of heteronormativity in classrooms and expressions of heteronormativity in textbooks, from the author’s own research. Some points from the article will be taken into consideration, for it presents issues that LGBTQ people face in an educational setting. One of these issues that Paiz mentions is that teachers were resistant to talk and discuss LGBTQ issues, while students were likely to want to discuss them. According to Paiz this becomes a way for heteronormative discourse to remain uncontested (Paiz, 2015, 5f). The author points to a potential to reduce the impact of such discourses by allowing students to engage with material that deals with LGBTQ issues. Material that is part of the
educational institution can work as a source to create favorable views towards lgbtq people (Paiz, 2015, 6f). Another issue that Paiz mentions is that when the textbooks present a limited scope of identity the ability to learn the language is impacted. When the learners may not identify themselves with the characters made available in the textbooks, their will to learn the chosen language is likely to be impacted in a negative way according to the author. (Paiz, 2015, 7f). One could argue that if teachers do not engage with lgbtq topics and the textbooks do not include texts about or with lgbtq people, a discourse which favors heterosexual people is in place.

From what has been stated about the perspectives of lgbtq studies and the role of textbooks, one can consider the functions of the textbooks as an element that upholds potential hegemonies. The absence of lgbtq representation may be part of a hegemony that ignores the conditions of lgbtq people. It is important to consider the tools that teachers have available to them for lgbtq-students to be able to express their identity. However, as previously stated, understanding of the conditions and cultures that affect lgbtq people around the world can be important source of knowledge even for non-lgbtq students. A crucial question is whether the material at hand is sufficient for a positive identity formation process for lgbtq-students. In this case, one can argue that a lack of options for lgbtq students to explore their identities or find themselves represented may lead to a hegemony that favors the narratives of heterosexual, and/or cisgender people.

2.5 Transgender Issues

Transgender related theories and issues are not always part of queer theory: therefore, a discussion on the various perspectives in terms of transgender research and theories on transgender experiences is necessary. As with most points in studies about lgbtq people there are common grounds for transgender people and lgb people, but there are also some significant differences of experience. This section will put forward the theoretical outlook on transgender perspectives detailing the conditions of transgender individuals and discourses that affect them. There has been a rapidly growing discussion around transgender people. As such there has been a continuous shift in perceptions of terms and understanding of trans people. For example, terms such as “transgendered” may appear problematic today while it has been used by earlier scholars who favor a trans-centered perspective. However, some of the aspects that have been pointed out when it comes to transgender people can be discussed and provide meaningful perspectives for this study. The issues of conditions and language
that affect trans people overlap in plenty of ways, but there are some issues that are specifically related to a marginalization of trans people. From this point of view, one may consider the relationship between the transgender subjectivity and notions of gender as they are perceived today.

In *Invisible Lives* Vivian K Namaste points out crucial issues affecting transgender people. She points out how there are problems with queer theory that excludes the life conditions of transgender individuals. Furthermore, she writes on certain conditions transgender people face in their everyday life, and how certain structures function to marginalize transgender people. Namaste problematizes the viewpoints by queer theorists who view gender as performative; she states that this view of gender as performance puts transgender people under the lens of performance rather than viewing the lives of transgender individuals for their actual conditions. The effects of transition cannot simply be reduced to performing gender; it is also the embodiment of a gendered experience. These facts are then lost by a queer theoretical focus on subjects and performances (Namaste 2000 9ff, 23). It is as if queer theory cannot conceptualize the existence of transgender people, as the performance of gender is not possible to theorize for a trans person. While one can problematize the theoretical viewpoints of queer research, it is the dominant perspective on LGBTQ-research and thus one needs to take these points into consideration when committing oneself to research on LGBTQ-topics. The issue of performance as related to transgender identity is brought forward, as the validity of transgender identity appears only in performance while there is much more going on. In the problems that Namaste points out, one can find discourses that affect the perceptions of transgender people as well as means to potentially counteract a cissexist hegemony that is apparent in plenty of research regarding the lives of transgender people.

Namaste further points to certain issues in how ethnographic studies have had problems in addressing the subjectivity of transgender people, as well as understanding the circumstances affecting the conditions of trans people. Namaste mentions a study by the sociologist Leon Pettiway on the lives of transvestite and transgender prostitutes. As she points out the study has problematic elements on the terms of subjectivity for the people being studied. In terms of their gendered reality, Namaste writes that Pettiway produces an image that relates to transgender people as naturally women although male in some aspects of presentation. This is a position that appears to hold the transgender individual’s expression formed for a non-transgender audience (Namaste, 2000, 29ff). Namaste highlights a problem in the writing of transgender people. Namely a reduction of one’s own narrative, and an
adaptation of narratives for an audience outside the transgender experience. In the presentation of transgender experiences there is a lack of agency for the transgender person.

Another problematic mode of research that Namaste brings up is the sociologist and gender studies scholar Janice Raymonds, known for her work titled *The Transsexual Empire*. Namaste highlights the problematic construction of ideas regarding transgender existence that is found in Raymond’s work. Namaste points out that the type of work that has been carried out has called transgender existence a medical process only that transgender existence is a discourse of medicalization of the female body. These theories have led to an academic discourse that marginalizes the experiences of transgender individuals. According to Namaste it reduces the complexity of transgender experiences by only connecting it with medicinal practices. Rather than seen as a human phenomenon, transgender people are framed as a medicinal phenomenon that is not a natural experience of gender. (Namaste 34f).

One can find a discourse in which the transgender procedure is focused as one phenomenon rather than a complexity of conditions. Likewise, subjective experiences of gender for trans people are debated by non-transgender people, which can be problematic if one considers the power that is generated through the production of those texts.

In conclusion, what appears central to discourses on transgender people, especially transgender women, appears to take form in a fixation on the assigned gender of the subject. The maleness of the subject, and male-like appearance is often pointed out which disregards the personal experiences of the trans person. One can argue that the discourses on transgender women are filled with a preoccupation of maleness. The transwomen’s own experience and understanding of their gender is rarely accounted for; there is instead the clinical approach of a male transgressing into female territory which holds the transgender woman stuck in being regarded as male and never fully female, while at the same time being deemed non-male.

Another author who discusses the issues that transgender people face and establishes a theoretical framework for this is Caterina Nirta. The author accounts for further issues that transgender people encounter in the institutions of law and medicine that they pass through. One of these is the gender recognition act that accounts for the affirmation of a transgender person’s gender transition, which can be a sort of end mark of the transition that fully affirms that they have successfully become male or female. Another point that Nirta talks about is the process of othering the transgender body. While not every transgender person undergoes a medical transition, documents highlighting the conditions are part in a generative discourse of perceptions on transgender identity. Nirta discusses the gender
The context of how transgender identity is established can be meaningful to show the relationship between text and transgender conditions. The processes to reaffirm one’s gender identity that were put forward in the gender recognition act, as Nirta writes, contain meaningful semantics on the regulation of transgender bodies. The gender recognition act while functioning as a path to give trans people a chance to have their gender recognized has discursive functions that are rooted in a heterosexual, cis-focused binary sense of gender recognition. One of these that Nirta comments on is the fact that the transgender subject must display a certain desire to want to become the desired gender. There appears little room for an individual approach to a transgender sense of being, which some transgender people feel they belong to as written by Nirta (2017, 110). Although the gender recognition act grants transgender people the right to be recognized as the gender they are transitioning to, they must still find themselves within conventions that are denying them their own experiences authenticity. It shows an aspect that fails to capture the subjective experiences of transgender people.

More on the issues of transgender marginalization in relation to the body is what Nirta calls the monstrous body; the body of the other. In the chapter “The Monstrous Body” the author accounts for the imagery affecting transgender people’s bodies as they have been made into monstrous bodies. She furthers the discussion in a section titled “Othered Bodies” The idea of transgender bodies as symbolically monstrous points to the materiality of the space that transgender individuals occupy. It can act as a point in which part of the marginalization of transgender people is expressed. One can briefly mention the ideas of the monster to gain an understanding of what meaning is carried through in how transgender people have been othered to it. Nirta observes the perspectives of embracing the marginalized as a center of its own as a means to negotiate the spaces of marginalization that transgender bodies occupy. While the gender recognition act may serve to give transgender people a chance to be regarded as the transitioned gender, it still denies aspects of the transgender subjectivity in embracing one’s transgender identity.

The idea of a monstrous body has according to Nirta played a significant role in the establishment of the self. The ideas of a pureness that needs to have the border of impurity plays a crucial component in the configuration of the image of the transgender body as monstrous. A crucial phenomenon that Nirta points to is what she calls a paradox in the ways that transgender people must relate to gender to achieve medical transition. The transgender person is made to adapt a non-transgendered relationship to the body to “become” a transgender body. This paradox frames trans people into what one can call
borders of gendered narratives. The relationship that a transgender person has to their body often results in regarding oneself as the other, rooted in discourses outside oneself. One can consider the narrative of the wrong body that often appears in the semantics of transgender narratives can be questioned. It is inevitably a narrative outside of the actual subjective experiences for many transgender people that one must adapt to. As Nirta states, it can be regarded as a position of the transgender body as wrong, that the more it resembles the cisgender body it becomes right (Nirta, 2017, 244f). Furthermore, the narrative of the wrong body assumes a medicinal practice that seeks to diagnose the transgender person’s state of being. There is a set of behaviors and emotions that one is expected to experience which is also outside of the subjective experiences of trans people (Nirta, 2017, 248). Moreover, the trope of the wrong body experience has become a way to emphasize negativity within transgender experiences. As Nirta states, this form of thinking considers the cisgender experience as right, and free from negativity, which inevitably trans people must then subordinate themselves to (Nirta, 2017, 250). For transgender people they must in a way adapt to these ideas in discussions of their bodies. For many transgender people, the issue of framing oneself as a stable narrative while being regarded as the instability is likely to come with issues in identity formation. As Nirta points from stories of transgender people there is often an ascribed narrative that does not fit every transgender person, yet they all must relate to one narrative to make sense to the world. Rarely do the transgender individuals’ experiences and relationship to being transgender come into account in terms of medical transition. This has caused troublesome narratives in terms of how transgender people may come to understand themselves but also how cisgender people understand trans.

In conclusion, an area of marginalization regarding the transgender body, as Nirta has touched upon, is found in an area of otherness that is found under a hegemony favoring the non-transgendered body. This establishes a space that turns the transgender body into the body of the monstrous other. In some cases, it appears that the transgender body both challenges the idealized heterosexual body by its implied deviance to what is normal. However, as transgender bodies as well as cisgender bodies are neither stable nor fixed, the imagery of the transgender body will often be established as a perversion of the stable self. The hegemonic transgender image appears as one that can neither be male nor female. The transgender body becomes the instability that is framed as the other to the cisgender stability. In contrast to the gender recognition act, the monstrous body frames the embracing of transgenderness as a position that non-transgender subjects’ views as an undesired state as
well as often taking on discourses where the transgender subject may never become their transitioned gender.

3. Research Method

The method for this study is based on critical discourse analysis (CDA) as Norman Fairclough has developed it. First the theoretical approaches to language will be presented. Second, there will be a presentation on how the method will be applied. Third, this section includes a presentation on the material that has been analyzed. Finally, there will be a discussion of the method and how it has been used.
3.1. Approaches to Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis takes the notions of discourse and relates it to social practice. CDA is a mode of analysis which considers the construction of power relations between social groups. Here, one looks at cases where asymmetrical power relationships are manifested in text, as described by Wardhaugh, and Fuller (Wardhaugh, Fuller, 2016, 298). These power relations are realized through different means in the generation of discourses. Any situation that deals with texts can be of consideration for the critical discourse approach. Furthermore, the main use of the theory will be from the perspective of Norman Fairclough on hegemonies and functions of hegemonies. As the background suggests, contemporary society has a hegemony that is privileging heterosexual identities. However, as Fairclough’s theoretical approach suggests text production does not always represent the hegemonies. The theory part will consist of a presentation of the social theory of discourse that takes form in critical discourse analysis, later the discursive context affecting LGBTQ people. To apply CDA to textbooks designated for upper secondary school is to analyze manifestations of power dynamics can exist in school, to observe the tensions of change that occur in relationship to the proposed theme. One can find the relationships of power in terms of sexuality and gender identity in the school environment by using a critical discourse approach on textbooks.

One can consider how social practice and discursive practice is part in the creation of subjects. Namely that categories and groups of humans are established through text production and consumption. The creation of categories becomes the formation of subjects which is the general concern of the critical discourse analysis. Briefly, the formulation of subjects can be regarded as the way textual events generate positions of categories of groups of people. Norman Fairclough’s model of discourse is applied in the study in combination with the background that plays a part in the understanding of discourses that deal with LGBTQ people.

In Fairclough’s understanding of discourse, the perspective on discourse analysis is taken into a social and political context. Discourse is from Fairclough’s point of view a means of social practice; the use of language cannot be taken out from the context of social relationships. Fairclough writes that the method comes with an implication that language is socially conditioned and socially generative. From this point of view, language is related to action and creation of categories, which is related to representation of groups that are part of these categorizations (Fairclough, 1992, 63). The way language is used is rooted in the social practices and conditions that generate categories of individuals. Discourse is not
only shaped by the social structures, but it also constitutive; as Fairclough states, “discourse is a practice of not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning” (Fairclough, 1992, 64). As participants in language we take part in the creation of discourses and norms as well as being governed by them.

An important dimension within the social approach to discourse that Fairclough discusses is the management of text. Text in this sense can be regarded as instances of language which appear as either spoken or written (Fairclough, 1992, 71). The analysis of text takes its roots in the fact that an act of signification can be grounded in the relationship of meanings between signifiers. Fairclough writes that the analysis of text can be organized in accordance to four major categories; vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure. These can be conceptualized to be “ascending in scale: vocabulary deals mainly with individual words, grammar deals with words combined into individual words, grammar deals with words combined into clauses and sentences, cohesion deals with how clauses and sentences are linked together, and text structure deals with large scale organizational properties of texts” (Fairclough, 1992, 75).

Furthermore, the concepts of intertextuality and interdiscursivity are core concepts in Fairclough’s discourse analysis. According to Fairclough, intertextuality is the fact that each text is linked together with other texts. That is, every text that is consumed or produced relates to other texts, and the link between these texts is part of a formulation of discourse. This form of textuality is made manifest in different forms, as there can be direct references to other texts or some text may allude to other forms of text. The intertextual perspective points towards how each form of text is related to each other (Fairclough, 1992, 84f). Each text that is produced has a relationship to another text. The textual choices that a producer makes are inevitably tied to another textual property. The ties that a text has to subject positions can function with the generation of knowledge to these subject positions and be constituent of discourses.

More crucial concepts in Fairclough’s analysis of discourse are ideology and hegemony. In his discussion he draws upon the Althusseran and Gramscian viewpoints of ideology and hegemony. Ideology as understood by Fairclough is the relationship between the material constructions of social relationships and processes ongoing in the physical world, and the realm of language production that take form in a reproduction of relationships of domination (Fairclough, 1992, 87). In any discussion of discourses, it is important to consider how ideology and hegemony are conceptualized and the basis of this conceptualization serves the analyst in their location of discourses.
Under the discussion of ideology Fairclough argues that “ideology invests language in various ways at various levels, and that we do not have to choose between different possible ‘locations’ of ideology” (Fairclough 1992, 87f). The crucial issues in discussions of ideology are whether it is ruled by structures or events. In this case Fairclough proposes that there is a dialectal relationship between the structures and events unfolding. It can be important to bear in mind that Fairclough dismisses the certain linguistic perspectives that propose that ideologies are in the text. The author argues that certain ideologies can be traced; however, the text itself does not directly participate in the ideology, nor does it represent an ideology (Fairclough, 1992, 88f). One cannot fully claim that a text takes an ideological position, but one can find how certain textual passages may be related to a specific set of ideological positions. Moreover, the text is required to be placed in relationship to the context as well as the location of the textual event. Hegemony, on the other hand, plays a part that can be uncovered textually, and this is, according to the author, found in the relationship between subjects and a dominant structure that is located within textual passages (Fairclough, 1992, 90). The notions of hegemony have been discussed earlier where the functions that have been mentioned are the relationship between subjects considered heterosexual and those who are homosexual, as well as cisgender and transgender. One can use this viewpoint to uncover hegemonies that are favoring the heterosexual, cisgender individuals merged with the aspects rooted in queer theory.

When one considers the theoretical conceptualizations of Fairclough’s discourse analysis one considers the elements of social and cultural changes that can take form in textual events and appear in changes in discourse. Discursive change takes form in problematizations of certain conventions that appear in contradictions between the textual producer and the one being produced. These problematizations, or dilemmas as Fairclough calls them appear when conventions are in their changeable state and people try to find their place within this discursive change resulting in creative ways of expressions to adapt to social change, which generates new discourse (Fairclough, 1992, 96).

The application of this form of critical discourse analysis can take form in analyzing the way in which texts can make appearances in the creation of the relationships between subjects. With this in mind, the functions the chosen texts have in relationship to structures should be taken into consideration. This will take root in the research that has been accounted for, which discusses the subject positions of LGBTQ people and the relationship to the social structures that affect their lives.
3.2 Method Presentation

The methodology is based on Norman Fairclough’s approach to CDA. This method accounts for how textual markers can account for the reproduction of hegemonic structures. To operationalize this, one will need to look at textual events from the textbook and place them in a meaningful context to find the relationship that exist between the textbooks and LGBTQ people.

Furthermore, the analysis will be backed up by semi structured interviews with ESL teachers in Swedish upper secondary schools. The questions for the interview are formed to try to find answers as to how teachers talk about and make use of material in relationship to LGBTQ topics in their education. The answers to the interview will be related to the texts of the material and can show how certain discursive patterns may appear. The interviews were collected from teachers who had responded to a mail sent out to a random selection of schools. Out of all these mails, five people would participate for the interviews. The interviewed teachers come from different schools and have different backgrounds. They also teach at different programs. This can affect the results to their answers and methods they may use. The interviews were carried out through a google forms document, and phone interviews as well as an in-person interview.

The analysis of the textbooks will follow a series of questions that can collect text to be used for analysis. The questions are based on the assumptions one can make from the background dealing with ideas of representation, if one can find any texts or people who are related to LGBTQ topics. The following questions can give answers to the study questions and highlight aspects of the discourses affecting LGBTQ individuals. Furthermore, these questions will be brought up for the analysis to answer how the text can affect discourses about LGBTQ people:

-What texts, if any, can one find within the spectrum of human rights, culture, love and gender?

-Do these sections include any narrative about LGBTQ people? if so what are they about? if not what do these texts contain?

-Is there any specific section that focuses on LGBTQ issues?
3.3. Research Material

The collection of data has been taken from a selection of textbooks that are used in ESL teaching in Sweden following the questions from previous chapter. Furthermore, there are five teachers who were interviewed. The interviews were semi structured and followed six standardized questions and some received follow up questions where it was possible. The interview questionnaire functioned to give answers about the ways that teachers make use of learning material and the application of learning material in relationship to lgbtq topics.

A total of five interviews were conducted, three of them on phone, one through a google forms documents following the same standard questions as the others, and one was made in person. The first three interviewed participants named “Teacher 1-3” were done by phone, “Teacher 4” interviewed in person, and “Teacher 5” answered the interview questions on google forms. It should be stated Teacher 4 teaches at secondary school level and not upper secondary, but their answers can be argued to be meaningful in the context of education even though it is not fully within the focus of this study. The books that have been chosen for analysis are: Blueprint A (2010), Blueprint B (2010), Solid Gold 7 (2016), Viewpoints 1 (2011), Viewpoints 2 (2012), and Viewpoints 3 (2014).

3.4 Method Discussion

The research used different approaches in collecting data. This can lead to different kinds of answers to the research questions. Firstly, the collection of text as approached from textbooks and interviews show different results. As one can find there were texts that could be related to lgbtq questions, and two texts that had a correlation with them. For example, one could go into all the texts about love and find certain passages that are gender neutral thus less affected by a certain discourse. However, one can argue that because the lack of representation the relevance of gender-neutral terms may be lacking for the lack of inclusion of lgbtq people could be a strong enough indicator of a particular discourse. Secondly, the interviews were carried out in different forms which may bear an impact on the results.

Another aspect that may have an effect on the results is the different types of interviews that were employed to collect data. One could argue that there are different capabilities to generate results depending on how the interview is carried out. This effect was clearest when it came to the answers made with the questions on the forms rather than in the
form of face-to-face interviews or phone interviews, since there was no ability to ask to follow up questions to that person, who also provided the shortest forms of answers. One could consider that there may be a difference in how the interviewed may answer in a phone interview or if they are interviewed in person. However, one can follow a similar interview schema with both in person interviews and phone interviews as they both are live communications. One can also argue that the results bare little difference between these types of interviews, and that the difference in results may be due to the participants and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewed in that setting. The reasoning for the different interview forms was that each participant would choose their own way to be interviewed where they could feel comfortable to talk about lgbtq topics that can be personal and rather sensitive. The issue of sensitivity can be argued to have impacted the study results. The interviewed were asked questions that would not be considered too pressuring to answer to guarantee their level of comfort. There were certain questions, or responses that could have been elaborated in more depth to find a response. For example, they could have been asked about their awareness of the different issues that lgbtq people face based on their unique sexual or gender identity. With that in mind, it can be said that one can gather a view on the teachers’ perceptions by having more open-ended questions over questions that are specific.

Furthermore, it could be of consideration that teachers are teaching at different levels, and different programs. The interviews show that there are some different approaches to different students. This is something that can impact the ways teachers use to talk about lgbtq issues. With that said, the interviews show that there are some common grounds that these teachers share. It provides a variation that shows different considerations, but there are also some general trends to be found.

Moreover, how much the interviews have shown in terms of what the teachers provide students when it comes to lgbtq topics can be questioned. Many of the interviewed teachers brought up that they use discussions to tackle the topics, but the depth of these discussions was not clarified. This can result in a lack of reliability for analysis as one may not come to terms with the implementation of the use of discussions. Furthermore, one can argue that how the teacher relates to text may not have been fully explored which can have an impact on the interpretation of the results. However, one may still find plenty of use in terms of understanding the functions of a hegemony favoring heterosexuality and how it can be challenged, which the interviews have shown, thus one can find enough text which are enough for analysis. Despite this, one can also point to that one could interview the teachers on the actualizations of discussions in this area.
The teachers who participated in this study teach in different schools, as well as teaching on various levels and programs. This can affect the results for the study, for the teachers employ different means to teach based on their setting. Despite the uniqueness of the situations the study may still show certain aspects of teaching from the interviews.

The use of critical discourse analysis can show the relationship between language and social relation. In this study, the relationship between construction of sexual identity and the impact of can be challenged in an educational setting. Unlike what previous research has stated, the authority that textbooks may have on educational practice can be contested. The use of the exploration of material used for school contrasted with teachers who are relating to this material can show the existing relationship between these two instances. This relationship as demonstrated shows that the authority of the textbooks can be contested, for the interviewed teachers did rarely make use of the textbooks as they would rather craft their own material.

4. Results

This section will present what has been found in the textbooks and later present a section of the answers from the interviewed teachers. The presentation of the textbooks is based on the questions that have been presented in the method section. The interviews are shown as a summarized version from the responses.

4.1. Textbooks

*Blueprint A*

*Blueprint A* is a textbook aimed for the English 5 course. Divided in eight chapters with three narratives to each narrative. It has general topics as well as topics on human rights, ideas on gender identity. In the chapter titled *Under Construction* one can find that the book is opening discussions on terms of gender (Lundfall et.al, 2010, 115). One narrative in specific is about a woman named Norah who decides to live as a man for more than a year (Lundfall et.al, 2010, 129). One can argue that this text follows a transgender narrative and holds positions on terms of a transgender subject, without necessarily being a story about a transgender person. Although it is a story about a cisgender woman, disguising herself as a
man, one can argue that the text is alluding to transgender experiences without the transgender subject.

**Blueprint B**

*Blueprint B* is a textbook for the English 6 course. The book is structured similarly to *Blueprint A* with six chapters each containing a set of narratives, as well as study questions that one can find at an own section of the book. The book has one chapter about experiences of love and one about cultural identity. In these chapters one cannot find any clear references to LGBTQ people and their experiences.

**Viewpoints 1**

*Viewpoints 1* is a textbook designated for the English 5 course. The book contains five chapters, each with a running theme. Each chapter has a varying amount of narrative texts followed by glossaries and follow-up questions to each narrative. From an overarching view there appears to be no chapter that deals about human rights issues or cultural stories. There is however a chapter that focuses on narratives of love. In the book there are no clear references to LGBTQ people.

**Viewpoints 2**

*Viewpoints 2* is a textbook designated for the English 6 Course. Similar to Viewpoints 1 it contains a set of chapters focused on certain themes. The themes that one can find within this book are: issues about being young or growing up, topics on love, and social issues both contemporary and historically. Neither of these chapters include any narratives that relate to LGBTQ people.

**Viewpoints 3**

This textbook is aimed at the English 7 course. It follows a similar structure to the other books within the same title for the other courses. Like the other books in the *viewpoints* series there are no narratives that have a specific relationship to LGBTQ topics nor are there narratives about LGBTQ people in those that can be connected to the topic. However, there are few passages on human rights, and the focus may appear more on topics of culture. Although there is a narrow focus on human rights and social conditions, it can still be mentioned that there are no LGBTQ people included in any of the other sections either.
Solid Gold 7

Solid Gold 7 is a book aimed at English 7 students. This textbook contains short narratives from various aspects of life. The focus of the book is stated as “mainly on political and social issues, living conditions and cultural features in different parts of the English-speaking world” (Eva Hedencrona et. al., 3 2016). This book does include a section of the book entitled The Danish Girl which is about Lili Elbe, who is known to be one of the first transgender women to undergo bottom surgery.

What can be seen in these textbooks is that there appear to be no stories about same-gendered love in the chosen textbooks. Rather, they all appear to be stories about heterosexual lives and narratives. Neither do the textbooks include social conditions and issues pertaining lgb people. However, there are two narratives that deal with transgender topics and the images that these narratives project will be analyzed further.

4.2. Interviews

In this section, the interviews will be presented one question at a time, with a summarized version of their answers which aims to represent as closely as possible to each teacher’s. One can find more of these interviews in the appendixes which is a translated version in English to Swedish from the interviews. The answers contain the points of views from individual teachers and their reflections of how things are. Thus, they cannot offer a complete view of the contemporary situation in Swedish schools, but they bring in some meaningful points that can be used in contrasts to the textbooks, to find more about the educational discourse when it comes to lgbtq questions.

1. In which way are you working with lgbtq-questions?

Teacher 1: At our school we have an educational board that deals with value questions and treatment plans. We talk plenty about norm critique and there we talk about lgbtq-issues which we take into the courses. I take this in by reflecting on my values and discussing ways to use the material to bring in lgbtq people.

Teacher 2: I liked to put a questioning perspective into my practice, to use norm critical pedagogics. I like to bring in discussions about structures and relationships and how we live as people and sexual identity comes in there. Outside of the
classroom the colleagues are not as dedicated as I am. But there is an openness to that the youth can be who they want. We also have certain thematic weeks such as love week where we talk about our sexual identities.

Teacher 3: We talk a lot about lgbtq issues, for example the availability of gender-neutral toilets as well as ensuring with the librarians that that considers lgbtq perspectives. In social studies we brought in a transgender person to discuss their experiences, when discussing identity and gender. We also have students who are currently undergoing a transition. In English, we do not talk too much specifically about lgbtq in English, but we have headlined that students can work with where we can include lgbtq topics.

Teacher 4: In the English subject we make use of a textbook which includes love letters, and one of these have a letter to lovers of the same gender. I think it is important to talk about it from the perspective of equal rights and value. In social studies I take in roleplaying. When students say something that can be homophobic I react and make a discussion about it. I want to consider the fact that everyone at this school is not straight so it is important to make sure they feel safe.

Teacher 5: I am trying to challenge my own worldview and listen to other people’s thoughts, my word choices, and how I treat others, to be accepting for every one’s situation in life and for what values I stand for.

1. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up lgbtq-questions in your teaching?

Teacher 1: It is an obvious part of the education. We often discuss about how characters can be interpreted and where we talk about assumptions there of sexuality.

Teacher 2: I am positive to it, at least in higher grades where the students have some more experience and maturity to be able to discuss these issues. My method usually does resolve to debates about certain subjects where its pro or against. As there is a rising traditionalism I use this type of method to ensure that students can empower their arguments against non-progressive ideas and those who are more traditionalistic.
will realize how empty their arguments are. I do not think I am converting anyone, but I think it has some effect.

Teacher 3: It is actively taking into consideration in social studies, have not really reflected over it, but I will take it into English, that is how Swedish teachers work as well, they are actively moving to take in different kinds of texts.

Teacher 4: I do not back down to bring these types of books into my teaching. Maybe it is that I like to provoke students, specifically in this environment. I enjoy taking every opportunity to discuss everyone’s equal value. I think that by taking every opportunity I can is important and fun. I do not think that maybe everyone in this building does, but I think that maybe as a social studies teacher I must do it. And maybe I do it more because of that teacher role.

Teacher 5: I have not included but would gladly do it as it gives a forum for discussion to work with different texts.

2. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about LGBTQ-questions at your workplace?

Teacher 1: Different generations between the colleagues may have different views, but you can always discuss these topics. We have courses on the topics that we can share with each other. The conditions can always improve but there are ongoing discussions.

Teacher 2: The air is clean and open but that does not mean that it is optimal. A lot of older teachers have some issues with this and think it is not valuable to talk about that much. Students are more open about these topics. This can affect the students that an open teacher leads to open students and closed teachers lead to closed students. I believe however that we need to have a questioning perspective where we do not remain silent to social issues.

Teacher 3: We have a very open climate; the students are very open and accepting to LGBTQ. It is easy for the students as well as the colleagues to come out. So, the
environment is open when students can come out about their homosexuality or transsexuality. The students feel safe among their peers as well as the personnel.

Teacher 4: We usually discuss how to approach these topics. Since we have students who are struggling with who they are and their identity. I feel we have been successful since students often write back and tell they feel freer in their thoughts at our school than at upper secondary schools.

Teacher 5: Pretty good, but sadly it is not something that is prioritized within my area.

3. **Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about LGBTQ-topics?**

Teacher 1: The textbooks do not offer much so we must make our own material, where we usually talk about the material rather than explicitly LGBTQ texts, yet there is a consideration of the inclusion of LGBTQ topics.

Teacher 2: I do not use a textbook, I rather craft my own material. Older teachers rather stick to the textbooks, they mention the common experience, and do not have as much norm critical experiences in them, if you want norm criticism, you must make it yourself. It clearly affects the identity of the students. Those who grow up in regular “cis-homes” are likely not thinking about this. I think that four out of ten of the students do not even know what cis is, and seven out of ten of teachers.

Teacher 3: It would be great if there was more. We have been working with something called “Öppna Skolan”2 I also received a mail from Natur och Kultur that included LGBTQ topics. We lift books with LGBTQ topic which is improving in quality with time.

Teacher 4: Yes and no. In social sciences there is plenty, but not as much in English. There are also times when I may be unfamiliar with certain terms but then I make use

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2 Öppna Skolan (Open School) is material made by MUCF (The Department for Youth and Civil Society Questions) that serves as supplementary material to teachers regarding LGBTQ questions
of Google, such as the meaning of transsexual. But if I want to discuss this topic I think the material is enough.

Teacher 5: No, however I do not know everything about every material available.

4. How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?

Teacher 1: I do not think that many are actively thinking about it as it is not in the curriculum for English. It is likely that lgbtq topics come into the margins of English. It becomes secondary when it really should not.

Teacher 2 To me when it comes to a new area of lessons I look into myself and what I read at university and try to make something out of that. It usually comes down to what kind of class I have and how I adapt to that and to me I think it is more about how I interact with the students pedagogically. For example, with mechanic class I may force them to meet their own mirror in terms of views on gay people by acting in a stereotypically gay manner for them, it usually works as an eye opener to them.

Teacher 3: Due to working at a small school I do not have that many colleagues in the subject. But when we discuss this, we talk about the images we present the students with. For example, when it comes to marriage it does not have to be woman/man but can be woman/woman. Or maybe we are talking about family jurisdictions, of domestic partnership we can show images of same gendered couples. We want the students to think of lgbtq lives as natural.

Teacher 4: It usually comes naturally as one can find some text about it, for it is a part of the core contents. If it does not exist there is always some free material out there. I often tend to seize the opportunity to discuss with the students and provoke them a bit. Since it is a Christian school they have some Christian values with them that sometimes mean they are a bit more conservative than others, and I try to open them to the world.
Teacher 5: I do not have any direct material rather I work with the core values in all my subjects.

5. Do you think there is a difference in choice of material when you work with LGBTQ-questions compared to other questions? If so, how?

Teacher 1: If it is actively a part of the knowledge requirements then it is easy to take with. When it comes to equal treatments and such you must consider a different approach, such as, how the books are written and the author’s thoughts.

Teacher 2: I think I am more conscious of what I am saying when I talk about relatively loaded subjects. Where I need to keep myself neutral in the classroom when I present subjects. But outside of the classroom I can be more on the offensive to deconstruct the students’ thoughts when it comes to their traditionalistic views.

Teacher 3: As LGBTQ questions are a very personal subject manner to many students I tend to be more careful with how I plan it. It is easier to talk generally about topics such as racism or sexism for example. It is important to not point anyone out. We have teachers talk about their trans- homo- and bisexuality and then you are a part of that process differently. We make personal and positive and show the students that they are not alone.

Teacher 4: To me I try to find a thread, such as everyone’s equal worth. While not fully botanized in the whole. I would not choose material with all too provocative pictures. You cannot really serve any pictures that you want to seventh or eighth graders.

Teacher 5: Maybe, as one wishes that it should be extra good for many may feel more vulnerable in this area.

The responses from the interviews show that there are some common approaches when it comes to handling LGBTQ questions. All the teachers try to incorporate LGBTQ issues, one way or another, in their teaching and have a positive attitude toward LGBTQ topics. There exist some different approaches, but one can find some general trends as to how these issues are being
tackled by the teachers. These approaches appear to be using discussions and portraying the LGBTQ people in certain instances. The biggest differences appear in terms of collegial responses, and more detailed didactic or pedagogic approaches from the teachers. Some had colleagues who did not appear to be as positive to LGBTQ questions as themselves. Moreover, other teachers may also prefer roleplaying over a specific form of text or using media events over a short story. The choices that these teachers make also appear to be related to their students’ programs. Although there are different considerations based on program and school form, there appear to be some common ground between the teachers. Overall the teachers that were interviewed appear to bring up LGBTQ issues in their teaching one way or another and are actively working with these issues.

5. Analysis

Moving on to the analysis of the material, one can find that there is a difference between the images of LGBTQ people from the textbooks and from the teachers. The textbooks can be said to have problematic elements that could be part of a hegemony that favors a heterosexual way of life, while the interviewed teachers take a different, more inclusive, approach. First the points of consideration that can be found from the textbooks will be analyzed. Second, the answers from the teachers will be analyzed and contrasted with the textbooks. The points that one can make of the textbooks are that there is a lack of representation of LGBTQ people, as well as presenting a non-LGBTQ mindset when LGBTQ topics appear. One can find some narratives that present transgender narratives, but these narratives can be said to be part of a hegemony that favors a cisgender narrative. The quantitative side of representation of LGBTQ topics is clearly lacking especially for LGB people. Even so, the qualitative aspects demonstrate problematic sides.

First, it can be important to investigate the significant lack of representation of homo- or bisexual experiences when it comes to narratives of love. One can consider the otherness of same gendered love as constructed in the lack of such narratives within the textbooks. It can indicate an asymmetrical power relationship between same-gendered relationships and heterosexual relationships, for the love between heterosexual people is significantly disproportioned to non-heterosexual relationships. One can point to what previous research has mentioned in terms of lack of representation of LGBTQ topics, as practices which constitute LGBTQ people as other which can have a negative impact on LGB people’s identity construction. This can be a marker of a relationship that excludes LGBTQ
people from the language learning process. It can play a part in a hegemony that considers LGBTQ people as the other, as they cannot participate on similar grounds as non-LGBTQ people.

Next, one can consider this in terms of the generation of knowledge of subject positions that can be made through the textuality, or rather lack of textuality in the chosen textbooks. The subject positions within the category of sexual identity as observed from the textbooks is only showing heterosexual individuals, leaving lesbian, gay and bisexual people in the margins. This issue makes itself apparent in the textbooks. One example of the mentioned subject positions are the narratives of love that are a part of all the textbooks. None of these include any narrative of same gender love. Thus, the nodes of knowledge that are generated in relationship to love do not allow for expressions of love between people of the same gender. In conclusion, what one can find from this lack of representation is that the textbooks seem to perpetuate a hegemony favoring heterosexual people.

Moving on to the texts that present a form of LGBTQ narrative, starting with the story of Lili Elbe as presented in *Solid Gold 7*. The excerpt from the *Danish Girl* presents the story of Lili as one that can be related to an othering of the transgender body in relation to identity that bear little mind to the agency of transgender subjects. As one can read in the synopsis of the text: “Einar reveals his true longing to be a woman and, as a woman calls himself Lili (Hedencrona et al. 2016, 50). There is also a picture of Lili where it is stated “Real life Einar as Lili” (Hedencrona et al. 2016, 53). These instances present the person in question as more the assigned gender than what the person has transitioned to. Furthermore, the narratives present the character as being two people in one body, where it is either Einar or Lili who is manifested, rather than a stable singular person. Following the perspectives given by Nirta as well as Namaste, there are the issues that form a removal of transgender subjectivity. One can argue that this section of the text does not provide the transgender subject with her own agency over her own gender. Instead the text forms a narrative that withholds a hegemony which disempowers transgender people. The agency of their gender is denied by calling a woman a man. Moreover, one can argue that the story presents transgender individuals through a lens of a confusion of dualities. It could be said that the remarks of Lili are that she is simultaneously both Einar and Lili while also being two separate entities in one person. All in all, the main line of textuality that can be found is that the maleness of Einar is what appears to be contrasted with Lili which could be connected to a discourse that always views the transgender woman as male, rather than being the gender they have transitioned to, which falls into a discourse that disempowers transgender people.
The other textbook that can be argued to include a transgender narrative is found in the *Blueprint A* textbook with the article about Norah; a cisgender woman who lives as a man for more than a year (Lundfall et. al. 2010, 129f). While the story is not about a transgender person, one can still find certain passages that contain textual remarks which relate to transgender experiences. This can be contrasted with texts about transgender people and find that there is a relationship there, which can point to that this narrative operates on a hegemonic discourse that disfavor the experiences of transgender individuals.

The text about Norah presents the narrative of a woman acting as a man for a year. While living as a man one can point to certain passages that suggest a transgender narrative, as the narrative describe events such as finding proper clothing that makes a person appear more masculine and using a prosthetic to imitate a penis (Lundfall et. al. 2010, 129f). This textual event can be related to the narratives of transgender men by finding similar descriptions in *Traversing Gender* about them. One can argue that it creates a textual formation that removes the gendered experiences of other trans men. It takes the experiences of transgender people outside of a transgender context, as it portrays the experiences of trans men without their gender being recognized in the act of transition.

The chapters dealing with transgender issues in the textbooks can be said to contain problematic elements in relationship to transgender people. One is the lack of transgender terms while talking about transgender experiences. Furthermore, the relationship to the body can be argued to be related to notions of the monstrous body. It can be argued that such narratives position the transgender subject as someone who is their assigned gender even though they would have undergone a transition. For example, in the text about Lili, one can argue that the narrative follows a similar pattern of what Namaste has brought up, namely that the transgender person’s life before transition becomes a hallmark to their sense of self.

The text in question can be a reification of such discourse by referring Lili as *him*, as well as stating that it is Einar that is appearing as Lili, rather than Lili presenting as herself, where the latter would be more likely as a discourse which holds closer similarities with a narrative from the transgender position in mind. The story of Norah, too, is partial to this, in the sense of a man being referred to as a woman. However, one should bear in mind that such stories exist and are not always part of a transgender person’s life. To be narratives that deny the realization of a stable transgender life, which is part of the issues that both Namaste and Nirta have discussed. Hence, the texts can be argued to be affected by discourses that frame transgender lives similarly to what has been described as the Monstrous body. What one can find within these texts is that there are potential relationships towards discourses on
transgender experience which falls into a devaluation of transgender subjectivity, as their gender is often the assigned gender rather than the transitioned gender.

To summarize, the textbooks that have been analyzed can be argued to be upholding certain hegemonic structures that favor the stories of heterosexual and cisgender people through the lack of representation of same gender love in their narratives. Furthermore, there is a possible discourse of a cisgender perspective that ignores the lived experiences of transgender individuals through the framing of transgender lives and considerations of gender identity. The inclusion may be a form of the discursive movement, but the failure to account for a positive imagery points to certain contradictions in the generation of subject positions which may further the marginalization of transgender individuals. One may argue that discursive change in terms of transgender marginalization is an ongoing process. However, as the language does not take away the transgender narratives from a marginalized position one can argue that rather than challenging the hegemonies that allow transgender marginalization, the textbooks reify them. Like the non-existence of lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the textbooks, the lexical formulations for expressions of transitioning people are lacking. There are no textual passages that contain an explicit reference to transgender subjectivity. Transgender narratives become an exotic subject where one can discuss the intricacies of gender rather than acknowledging the experiences of transgender people. One can find discourses that disfavor transgender narratives by contrasting the chosen texts with the concepts that have been raised earlier. While the story may feature a representation of a transgender person the text does not account for a positive transgender subjectivity.

The interviewed teachers are aware of issues that LGBTQ people face in their lives. To work with these issues, the teachers stated they applied norm critical strategies in their teaching (Appendix 1-4). This practice shows that the teachers are aware of conditions that affect LGBTQ people, and that they are working towards the inclusion of LGBTQ in their teaching. It can be argued that it marks a difference in the discourses between the textbooks and the teachers. Normative critical pedagogy put in a Swedish context has roots in LGBTQ areas, and thus the educators appear to be shaped by such practices. This can point toward that there may be a discursive change when it comes to LGBTQ issues in education.

Furthermore, similarly to what Paiz pointed out there can be some resistance from some teachers when it comes to teaching LGBTQ issues. As Teacher 2 mentions, there are those who do not find teaching about these topics in education meaningful (Appendix 2). However, because of the interviewed teachers having a perspective of inclusion one can point
towards the potential of a change in the educational discourse when it comes to LGBTQ topics in school.

Unlike what was found in the analysis of the textbooks, there was one teacher who had textbook material that included LGBTQ people. This was found in the form of same gender love in letters which this teacher found useful for their teaching (Appendix 3). However, this was the only case of textbook use, and one can contrast this to the majority of textbooks that, as mentioned, have some problematic aspects when it comes to this topic. It could also be mentioned that the other teachers did not use textbooks (Appendix 1, 2, 4, 5). In terms of the interviewed teachers, textbooks do not appear to be the major form of method to include LGBTQ topics in education.

All but one of the participants answered to be working with LGBTQ topics in their subjects. Teacher 5 did not work as much as the others with these questions but was aware of their own position in relationship to issues that LGBTQ students may face (Appendix 5). It shows that although this teacher does not explicitly work with the topics, they are still considering practices that affect LGBTQ people. In this sense, one may want to consider the theoretical distinctions between queer and transgender studies in the teachers’ responses. When asked about LGBTQ topics they did not think of only one of either gender or sexuality. Rather they discussed both aspects at their own level of understanding.

The most common form of inclusion in terms of LGBTQ topics that the teachers mentioned were discussions, rather than using texts about LGBTQ people. For example, when asked explicitly gay stories, this was not something that the teachers used. Another point in a similar current is that as most teachers pointed out there is little material for the teachers themselves, so they need to make their own (Appendix 1 and 3). This can be problematic as it is then up to the teachers to find and be responsible for the material. According to Teacher 1 this is due to the lack of LGBTQ topics in the curriculum (Appendix 1). Another problematic aspect that some teachers pointed out is that not everyone of their colleagues are interested in lifting LGBTQ topics (Appendix 1 and 2). There is no basis for students to engage with these topics on their own in the English subject. However, while the topics relating to LGBTQ individuals are in the English subject the teachers carry an awareness of these themes in their teaching. While the English material in terms of textbooks are not including LGBTQ topics generally, the interviewed teachers are including of LGBTQ topics and do not appear to resist discussing these topics. The awareness and a sensitivity to the topic shows that the interviewed teachers do put up for a hegemony where LGBTQ people are included and their lives are a part of the everyday experiences. Moreover, the teachers discuss how they make
use of images, and texts where LGBTQ people appear in everyday situations as exemplified by Teacher 3 (Appendix 3). This shows an awareness of the issues that have been pointed out previously: LGBTQ discussions often become an area of its own, teachers are trying to move away from those issues. Thus, one can argue based on the responses that through their work they challenge a hegemony that can favor heterosexuality.

The issues of difference between notions of transgender identities and sexual identities can be found in the interviews, in some respects. In the responses the teachers are both addressing issues of sexuality as well as issues affecting transgender people. They respond in a manner which could be regarded as responses that indicate a perspective that is aware of the different aspects that LGBTQ people face. For example, teacher 2 makes observations on how students and teachers come to understand terminology relating to transgender people. They also mention ideas as to increase awareness of sexuality (Appendix 2). Based on this one could claim that there appear to be an inclusion of LGBTQ topics that considers the specific issues that LGBTQ people can face from the teachers in this study.

Because English language learning does not exist outside the context of other forms of education one ought to consider the different educational situations that students encounter. The interviewed teachers mention that they work with LGBTQ topics outside the English subject. Contrary to what Paiz pointed out, the resistance to discuss LGBTQ topics does not appear to be prevalent from the teachers that were interviewed for this study. Thus, one can argue that processes that marginalize LGBTQ people are not as apparent in this context. However, one can make the argument that the students may still not fully gain the tools to engage with their sexual identity fully in their second language if they are not given the language to express their identity in their second language. Similar to what previous researchers have stated, while they may find themselves included in the broader sense, one may claim that there is an element of marginalization if they are not given the language to express their identity in a second language.

The differences between what is found in the textbooks and responses from teachers could suggest that these two exist in a hegemonic struggle. On the one hand, there are the teachers who break away from discourses that disfavor LGBTQ people, unlike the textbooks that appear to be more rooted in hegemonies which function to place LGBTQ people as the other. One can also point to something that Teacher 2 discusses that there are some teachers who find LGBTQ issues in education unnecessary (see Appendix 2). This can point to the argument that not every teacher proposes a hegemony favoring LGBTQ topics, while some are in favor of the topics not all of them are. However, the interviews could suggest that there
is a majority of teachers who have a positive image on lgbtq topics and who wishes to use this in their education. With that in mind, one can conclude that the interviews show that there is a different discourse from the teachers in comparison to the textbooks. Since the teachers, who are from different areas, are teaching with means to include lgbtq people, while the textbooks are not including lgbtq topics. As stated by previous researchers, the lack of inclusion of lgbtq topics points to a hegemony affected by heterosexual discourse. However, the impact of the textbooks can be contested, as can be exemplified by teacher 3’s response about students being comfortable with coming out to the teachers (Appendix 3). It could be said that the role of the teacher, at least for the teachers interviewed in this study, is more important than the material they use. However, for teachers who may not be knowledgeable in the subject, or aware of the issues lgbtq people face, lgbtq students will likely be affected negatively by that. However, if one considers the results of the interviews, it could be said that the teachers in this study appear to strive towards a discourse that favors lgbtq people. Finally, there exists proof that there are teachers who teach English can strive towards an inclusive approach to lgbtq topics.

6. Conclusion

The images and discourses of lgbtq people in educational contexts can be said to be in a changing, queer, position. One can find that there may be a hegemonic contradiction between teachers and material available to them. While the material appears to be affected by discourses which marginalize lgbtq people, based on the interviews, teachers themselves appear to be less inclined, to take part in heteronormative discourse. Due to the lack of representation of lgbtq people in the textbooks, students become more dependent on educated teachers who are willing to discuss these issues. When it comes to presentations of lgbtq people the textbooks are lacking as there are no narratives that deal with these issues in a manner that are favoring a discourse that offers positive means for identity construction for lgbtq people.

The textbooks’ lack of acknowledgment in terms of lgbtq subjects, in particular for gays, lesbians and bisexuals, can indicate that the material for English language is affected by hegemonies that favor heterosexuality. Moreover, the qualitative problems when it comes to transgender topics can indicate a hegemony favoring non-transgender subjects. They appear to present problematic discourses in relation to these topics. If one considers the problems that LR pointed out, it can be said that this attitude is not challenged by the
textbooks, but rather they are affected by similar discourse. One can find, however, that this hegemony can be challenged by teachers who are actively working towards including LGBTQ people in their English teaching. Thus, one can argue that there is a discursive change that is currently ongoing in the English subject; it appears to take a direction towards a stage of normalization. But due to the lack of LGBTQ topics in the curriculum for English it is apparent as represented from the textbooks that there is a challenge if one is to strive towards a discourse that includes LGBTQ people. In conclusion, English teaching in Sweden does appear to be inclusive of LGBTQ topics, and teachers appear unaffected by the potential discourses. One could conclude that the textbooks exist in a discursive relationship with a hegemony favoring heterosexuality, which can affect LGBTQ students, while teachers may be situated in a different framework. At least the teachers in this study appear to be. From this point of view, the power that textbooks may have over teachers can be questioned, as it appears that teachers are more central in the ideas being projected. It can be concluded that English education has some hope to become a place for inclusion of LGBTQ people.

Researching discourses about LGBTQ can be seen as a continuous project. There will always come textbooks to analyze in terms of their presentations on subjects, and teachers’ perspectives on these questions can change. It is also possible to expand and interview more teachers. Moreover, it is possible to analyze more textbooks. Alternatively, one can apply different forms of questions in relation to the subject. While this essay focused more on the general lack of subjects or individuals, one can apply different ideas on discourses as well. For example, one can collect textual passages of relevance from the narratives of love that may form discourses that bear an effect on constructions of sexual identity for a further analysis of the construction of a sexual identity in a heterosexual context.
References


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Appendixes

Appendix 1 Phone Interview Teacher 1

1. In what ways are you working with LGBTQ questions?

“There are different levels to this, specifically the work places we have an internal educational board that deals with common value questions, treatment plans and that level. It is pretty overarching on the subject. Norm criticism is talked about and there we can talk about LGBTQ-issues. We are trying to get this to spread into the courses.”

And how do you do to achieve that?

“It starts with my own. You must reflect over your own. For example, treatment, something that you do not always think about. We discuss ways to use material that is not only about cis-people.”

2. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up LGBTQ-questions in your teaching?

“It feels like an obvious part of the education. Me and my colleague discuss how we look at different texts and how they are interpreted. How characters are interpreted and such, what is it that one has understood and what do we think about these characters. The students get an image of the character pretty quickly. We usually have open talks about how we come to understand the characters. We question the students as to what makes us think they are straight or such.”

3. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about LGBTQ-questions at your workplace?

“In terms of the colleagues there are various generations with varying views. However, it is never a problem to discuss. A question is how much we really know. We have courses on the topics. One colleague took a course about jämställt.se. We can discuss on one level. In terms of the students, we have norms as well. Among teenagers it is rather sensitive, it is easy to take words as slurs. But when you discuss
it seriously it rarely feels as if there are any issues. Prerequisites can always improve, very diplomatically speaking, discuss in the colleague how to handle situations. We don’t want to put out fires.”

4. Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about lgbtq-topics?

“In terms of textbooks, no, it something that we have to develop by ourselves. We do not deal specifically with lgbtq-issues, but rather talk about the material. Where we discuss texts that are not really possible to define. We look to the internet, but the supply is rather bad. It is often exceptions, and that may be on the side of an actual process of inclusion.”

5. How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?

“I do not think that there are many who are actively thinking about it. It is often very focused on course. For example, in religion the curriculum states it.”

You could say that lgbtq-questions are often put in the margins?

“yeah exactly. If you only think about it but we are not reflecting enough about it. If it is not in the curriculum it becomes secondary, but it should not have to be that way.”

Do you think about including books that contain lgbtq narratives?

“To take in books that challenge the norm? absolutely, it is good to challenge notions of what you are and similar notions. And this is something that we strive for in school.”

6. Do you think there is a difference in choice of material when you work with lgbtq-questions compared to other questions? If so, how?

“If it is actively a part of the curriculum, and knowledge goals. To us we mainly consider the norms and such. As we do not work specifically with material related to lgbtq-questions.”
Appendix 2 Phone Interview Teacher 2

1. In what ways are you working with lgbtq questions?

   Before I start, I want to mention that I am a young teacher, I graduated 2010, which is likely a divide between my viewpoints and from older teachers, I think that I get in more than a lot of the older teachers. However, it does not prove too much. I try to apply norm critical perspectives and talk about issues such as post colonialism, and similar, and there I bring in lgbtq-points as well. I appreciate an intersectional perspective. This works especially well in higher level courses where you talk more in depth with these topics. Older teachers appear to be accepting only because it can appear that society is more accepting as of now.

2. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up lgbtq-questions in your teaching?

   “I think we can use it in higher levels than on the basic courses. Where they can have more theory to stand on. First graders can also be a little more immature and so these types of discussions can be rather fruitless. But in English 7 in particular when using an intersectional perspective, I can consider these types of texts. We usually have debates and such and then I prepare material for such things rather than using narratives. Sometimes give a bit uncomfortable topic such as arguing for and against lgbtq. Where I try to put students in the other team so to speak”.

   -Like you take a student who you know is homophobic to argue for lgbtq issues?

   “yeah there is a growing traditionalism and rejection of progressivism and through making people discuss these topics those who are progressive can refine their arguments while the traditionalistic students can learn to see how wrong they are. Through using norm critical approaches in mind.”

   -Do you think that this has an effect?
“Sometimes, I do not think I’m converting any one. But the students who are more homophobic get to understand that their arguments are based in fallacies. I think it’s different now than it is how it was ten years ago there are less openly homophobic students, or rather they are not as open about it, when they are brought out to discuss things they notice how wrong their arguments are.”

-But you use more discussions over actual texts if I understood you correctly?

“Media is not isolated to text we mix different medias. We work with this by bringing in the material for different kinds of projects. That usually forms into debate. And discuss the topics. The discussions are parts in how to deal with the material not the ends of the method.”

3. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about lgbtq-questions at your workplace?

“The air is cleaner, and more open. But that does not mean that it is a completely open climate. You can notice this among the older teachers. They can often think of this as silly even. And put it under the rug. But more modern teachers can often have a more neutral perspective. The school board have a more openness and documents promote this openness, but some older teachers still have some issues. Students appear more redo to talk about lgbtq topics than some of the teachers. Students hare more lived experience of this like, changing gender and identify as something other. And some teachers cannot handle it and then we must talk about that why you as a teacher have these issues.

4. Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about lgbtq-topics?

“I do not use a textbook, I rather craft my own material. Older teachers rather stick to the textbooks, they mention the common experience, and do not have as much norm critical experiences in them, if you want norm criticism, you must make it yourself. “
- How do you think this affects the students’ identity creation?

“It’s clearly affecting the students. If you do not expose the students, they will never know. I am thinking that four out of ten of the students do not even know what cis means and maybe seven out of ten of the teachers do not know what cis mean and nine out of ten would even agree with that discussion. I may be crass, but I am hoping it will be better. The material is obsolete.”

5. How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?

If I feel as if I need a new moment, or lesson then I am going to look into myself. What I read from my education. I would never in my life look into a textbook, which is a shame. But with me growing up between the digital and analogue means I may think that an analogous tool may have some value. But with today’s students they are more digital, and that kind of material needs to be explored. It needs to be interactive in a different way. But there is also a difference between different kinds of students of high achieving low achieving students. Lower achieving students may be more comfortable with something hands on. But a generalizing statement may be that society is sorting itself. It is rare that you find a homosexual student at the mechanics program and you will rarely have Nazis at the aesthetics. Which creates different teaching situations.”

- Would you think about including a “homotext” in different classes?

“With the mechanic program, they are less receptive of norm critical pedagogics, so you go right into their mentality. You must break down as much as you can. Where I can be excessive in my pedagogics like act on stereotypes of being gay to show how the student’s views are so absurd. Their eyes really opened then. To meet one’s own mirror. To me I think it is more about pedagogics, as I think more of pedagogics than didactics. I was excessive in my pedagogics to make them see how absurd their images of others are. To me pedagogics goes before teaching materials.”
6. Do you think there is a difference in choice of material when you work with LGBTQ-questions compared to other questions? If so, how?

“how do you mean?”

- Like with racism and such.

Loaded subjects do require some extra thought. If I talk about economics for example its full-on auto pilot. But when discussing more sensitive topics like racism and LGBTQ issues I am more conscious about the choices of material. I am aware that not everyone is going to agree on the subject. And then I am more thoughtful to not be fanatical in the question to be neutral when presenting such subjects. However outside of the classroom situation I can be more pressing with the student’s thoughts and ideas. Be more on the offense of their opinions.”

- How do you think by that?

“with students who think it is strange, I tend to attack their arguments more. Deconstruct their arguments and such. I am a bit harsher but not trying to like completely invalidate their opinions but that does not mean I won’t use more dominant language strategies to prove them wrong.”
1. In what ways are you working with LGBTQ questions?
   “If we consider the common school grounds, then we talk a lot about LGBTQ and we consider the accessibility in the environment. For example, gender neutral toilets and in the library, there should be literature that accounts for LGBTQ people. For example, in social studies we discuss gender and identity. Last year we had a visit from a transgender person to talk about their experiences for social studies.”

   -What about external sources to talk about the subject and other practical considerations?

   “Collegial teaching, we have used the open school and we try to make it visible and open to talk about these topics. We include texts and pictures where homosexual people and transgender people are a part of.”

   -How do you think this have gone by, like how has it been received?

   “We are a smaller school which I think has an effect, and the climate is very open. But I think it is positively received, we have had students coming out to us and when they entrust us with this information it feels extra important to think about it.”

   -More specifically how you work with it in English?

   “Generally speaking, these topics are more considered in social sciences. With English however, we use headlines in English that the students can work with who raises questions and such and these headlines are both a part of English and social sciences.”

2. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up LGBTQ-questions in your teaching?
We work actively with these topics on social studies. We have not really reflected about it but will be taking it into the English teaching. That is how Swedish teachers are working as well, you are moving actively to bring in a variation of texts.

3. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about lgbtq-questions at your workplace?

“We have a very open climate; the students are very open and accepting to lgbtq. It is easy for the students as well as the colleagues to come out. So, the environment is open when students can come out about their homosexuality or transsexuality. The students feel safe among their peers as well as the personnel.”

4. Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about lgbtq-topics?

“It would be great if there was more to work with. We have worked with ‘Öppna Skolan’. We usually try to look at what is best. Recently, I got a mail from Natur och Kultur who gave information of lgbtq material and information but felt like our own was good enough. We try to lift books with lgbtq topics with literature and such it has become better with inclusions of such topics.”

-Do the students react to the material?

“The students do not always feel represented as there is not much of these topics in the usual material. So, we teachers must actively take it in. It is our active choice to ensure that each student can feel as if they are seen. It is not automatically in it and we need to try to step away from heteronormality. But there is a long way to when speaking of teaching material and such.”

5. How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?
“Due to working at a small school I don’t have that many colleagues in the subject. But when we discuss this, we talk about the images we present the students with. For example, when it comes to marriage it does not have to be woman/man but can be woman/woman. Or maybe we are talking about family jurisdictions, of domestic partnership we can show images of same gendered couples. We want the students to think of lgbtq lives as natural as it is.”

6. Do you think there is a difference in choice of material when you work with lgbtq-questions compared to other questions? If so, how?

“would you care to elaborate”

-For example, when it comes to racism and such.

“It is a very homogenous student group. So, when we consider issues such a racism, we rarely have these thoughts from students and we may talk about it with a less personal flair as most students here will not be affected by it as much as they are from lgbtq issues. So, when we consider lgbtq-topics it is like you picture these students who are going through a coming out process or transitioning. It is very important to not point anyone out.”

-How do you think this has worked out?

“You never know how they will respond to this pedagogics, but I think they take it well. We have had many teachers and students who openly talk about their trans- homo- or bisexuality. You are more a part of the processes to handle such things. We are more sensitive to the subject there. Since students are comfortable talking to us teachers we feel like the climate is open.”
Appendix 4 In Person Interview Teacher 4

1. In what ways are you working with LGBTQ questions?

“I am both a teacher of English and social studies. We make use of a textbook that has love letters that includes love letters between people of the same gender. It usually comes up then and we discuss it. I think it is really important to bring up that we have human rights and equality. Since it is a Christian school I press the issue about what the bible thinks and that Jesus words to love everybody regardless of who you love is important. We use a lot of role playing especially in social studies, and then we talk about everyone’s equal value. It may come up that the students have their opinions, and they can have that, but they need to understand that you should not judge. At one time a group of girls came up to me afterwards and thanked me that they felt that they felt that I allowed them to think freely. It is important to note that, as well as not judging, to be able to feel as if you can be who you are. The ceiling is high. I try to address these issues to enable the students to have an open mind, and to help students who are struggling with their own identity. Because there are those at this school who are not straight.”

2. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up LGBTQ-questions in your teaching?

I do not back down to bring these types of books into my teaching. Maybe it is that I like to provoke students specifically in this environment. I enjoy taking every opportunity to discuss everyone’s equal value.

- How do you think this has gone by?

“...I think that by taking every opportunity I can is important and fun. I do not think that maybe everyone in this building does, but I think that maybe as a social studies teacher I have to do it. And maybe I do it more because of that teacher role.”

3. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about LGBTQ-questions at your workplace?

“We usually discuss how we should think and meet the topics. Since we have students who are wrestling with who they are and their identity.”
Would you say you have positive prerequisites?

“I believe that we have positive prerequisites. We usually have students contacting us saying they felt freer here in their thoughts than in upper secondary school. So, I think that it feels good that we have a high ceiling here.”

Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about these topics?

“Yes and no. There is plenty in the social sciences. Some terms I have had to google, like what exactly is meant by transsexual. So, google is being used for that. But to bring something up for discussion I think the material is enough.”

How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?

“It usually comes naturally that there is some text about it. Since it is a part of the core contents. If it does not exist there is always free material. There are some publishers for that. I always try to seize the opportunity when it arrives. If there are comments and such. For example, me too or something similar. At this age they are not always so sure as to how to think. We talk about the material and discuss it. And I like to provoke a bit. A lot of the students have a Christian background, so I like to provoke a bit more there. They have their experiences and may be a bit stuck in their opinions, so I try to provoke them to break away from an all too narrow mindset that many students can have.”

“To me I try to find a thread, such as everyone’s equal worth. While not fully botanized in the whole. I would not choose material with all too provocative pictures. You cannot really serve any pictures that you want to seventh or eighth graders. It could be any form of too sensitive picture, a naked couple, or a starving child. Maybe it is due to me being a visual learner. “

Have you considered anything explicitly gay?
“I have not fully taken in a novel that is explicitly gay. I think that maybe if I was a Swedish teacher I could more easily find those kinds of texts. With English you have to find a text that everybody understands. Maybe I would use a short story and in social studies I would use it to introduce a subject but otherwise I would likely not. I usually pick up the comments I hear. If they say ‘gay’ or ‘slut’ I pick it up and talk about it. When I think about the roleplaying I give them characters with different sexual identity, but you must be careful, so you do not make the student that character. It mostly comes down to lifting the question to ensure that the students do not think that gays or lesbians are the worst thing possible and giving them perspectives how it is to live like that, what you encounter with prejudice and such.”
1. In which way are you working with lgbtq-questions?

“I’m trying to challenge my own worldview and listen to other people’s thoughts, my word choices, and how I treat others, to be accepting for every one’s situation in life and for what values I stand for.”

2. How do you feel about bringing texts/narratives that bring up lgbtq-questions in your teaching?

“I have not included but would gladly do it as it gives a forum for discussion to work with different texts.”

3. How do you think about your possibilities/prerequisites to talk about lgbtq-questions at your workplace?

“Pretty good, but sadly it is not something that is prioritized within my area.”

4. Do you feel as if the available material is enough to talk about lgbtq-topics?

“No, however I do not know everything about every material available.”

5. How do you reason in terms of material choice to talk about these topics in your teaching?

“I do not have any direct material rather I work with the core values in all my subjects.”

6. “Maybe, as one wishes that it should be extra good for many may feel more vulnerable in this area.”