In what ways does the ELT coursebook "ECHO 6" fulfill the communicative aspects of the Swedish curriculum for English 6?

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Abstract
In this essay, the published ELT coursebook *ECHO 6* is critically examined. The focus of the examination is the communicative opportunities within *ECHO 6*. These opportunities are analyzed and concretized with help from the Swedish Curriculum for English 6. In the results section, the communicative opportunities within five selected chapters are explored in depth. Later, these chapters are discussed and contrasted with relevant literature about English teaching in general as well as communicative language teaching. Our conclusion is that *ECHO 6* does provide students with several opportunities to communicate and develop communicative skills in English. However, there are essential parts missing in order for the textbook to be completely communicative.

**Key words:** Language teaching, *ECHO 6*, communication, communicative language teaching (CLT), students, teacher, language skills and language systems.
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1.0 Introduction

The Swedish school institution appears to be continually under discussion and in the public eye. In *Engelsk Språkdidaktik* Bo Lundahl (2014:24) states that everyone wants to express their opinions, criticism and thoughts on how schools should teach and act. It is not uncommon to read about crisis and hopelessness concerning schools in Sweden, even though studies actually illustrate that, in general, Swedish students are content and satisfied with their education. A study, from 2004, of European students states that 92% of Swedish students enjoy the subject English *much* or *very much* in school. The study also points out that, in comparison to other teachers in Europe, Swedish teachers seem to take a clear communicative approach to the teaching of English. Similarly, teachers of English in Sweden are the group of teachers who actually use the target language the most in classrooms (ibid). As a result, we draw the conclusion that, in general, English is a popular and successful subject in Swedish schools. Therefore, as future teachers we feel it is of vital importance to maintain a high standard of English teaching and develop the subject even further.

As we are of the opinion that communication is the main purpose of English teaching in Sweden, in this essay, our intention is to examine the ELT coursebook *ECHO 6* by Kevin Frato (2015) from the communicative aspects in the curriculum for English 6. *ECHO 6* is specifically written and produced for use in Swedish schools.

Our choice to write this essay together is based on a belief that the teaching profession is one of collaboration, which means that teachers need to be able to work with other teachers at all times rather than individually. In addition, it is essential for a teacher to be able to respect and accept the perspectives of others, as teachers not only have to interact with each other but also with several different groups of people, such as students and parents. Working together also encourages one to take a broader perspective and point of view than working individually would do.

1.1 Language teaching throughout history

To be able to examine the textbook in depth we need to begin with an overview of the history of English teaching and learning. Throughout history, different theories and related approaches to the most effective way of teaching language have been advocated. However, many of these theories and approaches were only promoted for a short period of time. In *The Practice of English Language Teaching* Jeremy Harmer (2015:54-55) states that language
teaching before the nineteenth century was based on the teaching and learning of grammar rules, and the creation of word-lists with help from a dictionary. In the nineteenth century, the approach to second language teaching changed and related curriculums were created. These changes indicated the beginning of the grammar-translation method.

In the grammar-translation method, students were taught specific grammar rules and points through isolated example sentences. The language of instruction was usually the first language. Later the students were supposed to translate the grammar and sentences into the second language. This method stressed three main ideas: 1) students needed to learn specific sentences to learn the language, 2) the spoken language was not important at all, and 3) accuracy was a necessity to manage the second language (Harmer 2015:56).

At the end of the nineteenth century, a new approach was promoted: the direct method. This saw the disappearance of the translation part, which had been particularly popular, from the curriculum. Instead, teachers and students were expected to speak to each other and the grammar rules were to be put in a context. When students experienced grammar rules being used in context in texts or conversations, they should be able to learn the rules more easily. In contrast to the grammar-translation method, the direct method advocated teaching in the second language through dialogues; students were encouraged to take part in conversations (Harmer 2015:56). In the 1920s and 1930s, influenced by Behaviorism, the audiolingual method was introduced which focused on stimulus-response-reinforcement. This method revolved around the drilling of vocabularies and grammatical structures and the formation of good language habits. Students were supposed to make fewer mistakes if they learned language through accuracy based drilling activities. In the audiolingual method few, if any, real-life connections were made and language was rarely put in an authentic context (ibid:56-57).

According to Harmer (2015:57), a communicative revolution in language teaching took place in the 1970s and 80s. Nowadays, most teachers would claim they teach communicatively. One issue regarding communicative language teaching (CLT) is that it is defined differently by different people. However, one of the main aims of CLT is that it focuses on what language is used for, rather than focusing on the form of language, as with grammar-translation. Thus, for some people concerns of CLT are mostly about the spoken language. Another way of teaching CLT is to encourage the students to use the language “functionally” in order to invite, agree or disagree, and at the same time learn about grammatical structures,
such as the past perfect or second conditional. Students will first use the grammar and then be able to reflect and learn about the functions. Whatever specific approach is taken, the main aim of CLT is that the purpose for learning a language is to engage in meaningful conversation; language is communication. Students should be given the opportunity to take part in real, or realistic, conversation.

1.2 English teaching today

The communicative language teaching that developed during the 1970s and 80s still tends to be the general approach advocated, particularly in the west. To be able to communicate in a language there are several language skills that need to be mastered. These skills are often divided into two types: productive skills and receptive skills. The productive skills refer to writing and speaking skills, where students need to produce language. In contrast, receptive skills refer to listening and reading skills, where students need to receive and comprehend language. The two types of skills are closely connected to each other and students rarely practice one skill isolated from the others. However, there might be activities in which one skill is more central than another. In order to learn a second language successfully, all four skills need to be worked on and included in classroom practice (Harmer 2015:297). In order to master the four skills, students also need to work on the language systems. In How Languages are Learned Patsy M. Lightbown and Nina Spada (2013:60) claim that the language systems tend to be divided into five different categories: pronunciation, lexis, grammar, pragmatics and discourse. As the different systems are connected to each other, students need practice in all five categories to successfully learn a language. Thus, all these skills and systems need to be practiced in the communicative classroom.

During our time at university, as teachers-to-be, we have come to believe that using a communicative aspect is THE foundation for both learning and teaching a second language in a successful way. The curriculum for English 6 states the following:

Aim of the subject:

Teaching of English should aim at helping students to develop knowledge of language and the surrounding world so that they have the ability, desire and confidence to use English in different situations and for different purposes. Students should be given the opportunity, through the use of language in functional and meaningful contexts, to develop all-round communicative skills. These skills cover both reception, which means understanding spoken language and texts, and production and interaction, which means expressing oneself and interacting with others in speech and writing, as well
as adapting their language to different situations, purposes and recipients. Through teaching students should also be given the opportunity to develop correctness in their use of language in speech and writing, and also the ability to express themselves with variation and complexity. In addition, students should be given the opportunity to develop their ability to use different strategies to support communication and to solve problems when language skills are inadequate (Skolverket 2011:53) (our highlighting).

We have distilled the aims of the subject to four main aspects:

1. **All-round communication skills** which we interpret as the ability to adapt language to certain situations and audiences; informal as well as formal. The ability to do so requires knowledge in pragmatics, discourse and lexis, in particular.

2. **Reception, production and interaction.** This is interpreted as the ability to use all of the four language skills; speaking and writing (productive) as well as reading and listening (receptive) and also the ability to combine the skills to interact in different ways (interaction).

3. **Strategies to succeed in conversation.** Our interpretation is that students should be provided with strategies to be able to maintain a conversation even if they do not know or understand a certain word, for example. Examples of strategies are rephrasing, negotiating about meaning, or foreignizing.

4. **Correctness.** Our interpretation is that correctness requires explicit teaching of form, i.e. grammar.

The first three aspects are concerned with a communicative way of language teaching. Students should be given the opportunity to practice all four language skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening) as well as the language systems (grammar, lexis, pronunciation, discourse and pragmatics). The ability to communicate also requires strategies for succeeding, all of which are supported by the curriculum. However, in addition to promoting a communicative approach, the curriculum also expresses the need to teach correctness. We interpret this to mean that grammar should be taught explicitly. Since CLT in its purest form is supposed to be taught without explicit grammar teaching, we consider the way the curriculum promotes to be a “weaker” form of CLT. From now on, when grammar is taught explicitly we will refer to it as a weak communicative approach.
The following are the minimal requirements for receiving a passing grade in the course English 6. After each paragraph, we have added in italics which aspects we interpret the requirement to be referring to:

**Knowledge requirements for English 6**

**Grade E**

1. Students can understand the main content and basic details of English spoken at a relatively rapid pace, and in written English in various genres, and in more formal contexts. Students show their understanding by in basic terms giving an account of, discussing, commenting, and drawing conclusions on content and details, and with acceptable results act on the basis of the message and instructions in the content. *Reception, production and interaction.***

2. Students can choose and with some certainty use strategies to search for relevant information and assess the reliability of different sources.

3. Students choose texts and spoken language from different media and in a relevant way use the material selected in their own production and interaction. *Reception, production and interaction.***

4. In oral and written communications of various genres, students can express themselves in a way that is relatively varied, clear, and relatively structured. Students can also express themselves with fluency and some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. Students work on and make simple improvements to their own communications. *All-round communication skills.*

5. In oral and written interaction in various, and more formal and complex contexts, students can express themselves clearly with fluency, and with some adaptation to purpose, recipient and situation. In addition, students can choose and use essentially functional strategies which to some extent solve problems and improve their interaction. *All-round communication skills. Strategies to succeed in conversation.*

6. Students discuss in basic terms some features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used, and can also make simple comparisons with their own experiences and knowledge (Skolverket 2011:60-61) (our highlighting).

To receive the lowest approved knowledge requirement (E) for English 6, four of six knowledge requirements appear to refer to communication skills: *all-round communication skills, reception, production and interaction, and strategies to succeed in conversation.* However, that the grade requires “correctness” is not explicitly expressed.

As noted earlier in this section, to be able to communicate in English, students have to master different language skills and strategies. Most of the statements in the curriculum are interconnected with each other, which means that a learner needs to work with all of the aspects to master the English language. To communicate in a language is not only to be able
to produce it correctly in writing or speaking; it is also essential to be able to receive and comprehend information, notes, comments or instructions through reading or listening. We interpret this to mean that all parts of the curriculum for English 6 aim for one thing: communication. Therefore, English teaching today should take a communicative approach and aim to develop each student’s communicative competence.

1.3 Research question
Since we interpret communication as the main aim in English 6, our ambition is to answer the following question:

In what ways does the ELT coursebook ECHO 6 fulfill the communicative aspects of the Swedish curriculum for English 6?

1.4 Material
The material we have chosen to examine in our study is called ECHO 6, written by Kevin Frato, Alastair Henry and Åke Persson (2015), and published by Natur & Kultur. It consists of two volumes; a main book called Main Issues (Frato 2015) and a complementary collection of short stories, called Short Stories (Henry & Persson 2015). We also aim to analyze the teacher guidelines related to this material. We have chosen to critically examine ECHO 6 because we observed it in use during our time on teaching practice (VFU). Similarly, we have chosen to focus on English 6 because it was the specific course in which the material was used during the VFU period.

2.0 Background
2.1 Communicative language teaching (CLT)
CLT aims to teach communicative competence and how the language can be used for different purposes. In Communicative Language Teaching Today Jack C. Richards (2006:03) states that CLT includes practice in how to be able to modify language to audience and setting, the production of various types of texts and the ability to maintain a conversation. In CLT, students should also learn language strategies such as how to use other words to express something. In comparison to previous traditions, CLT does not usually focus on grammatical competence. Although it is still seen as an important aspect in language learning, it has no communicative impact on the language. According to Richards (ibid), CLT emphasizes the process of communication and not the mastery of forms. In Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers (2001:166) claim that the
intention is for students to interact in conversation with each other during language lessons. Mistakes are not, or rarely, corrected. Students should learn that a failed conversation is the responsibility of both parties and it is never one speaker's fault. A successful conversation is at the same time a joint success. In previous traditions, mistakes were considered bad habits and controlled language production such as drilling and memorizing dialogues, was used to avoid mistakes. CLT does not focus on controlled language production (Richards 2006:04).

In the curriculum for the subject English in Swedish schools it is expressed that the language education should focus on developing a student’s overall communicative competence. As mentioned above, language teaching historically has focused on learning the rules of a language before using it. The purpose was to give students a foundation of structures and grammatical competence before starting to use the language. The term communicative competence was first mentioned by a linguistic named Dell Hymes who claimed that language is primarily a social phenomenon and should be treated as such. Therefore, it is important to learn appropriate language behavior in different situations (Lundahl 2014:139). In CLT-classrooms, the learner’s role is to participate and learn through collaboration with others, rather than from individual performances. In contrast to earlier traditions, students now have to also rely on their own and their classmates’ output rather than on teacher output as the only model. Like Lundahl (2014:139), Richards (2006:04) believes that nowadays the focus on language learning has changed to interaction between a learner and user. It is collaboration which creates meaning. Students learn through meaningful and creative interaction. Learning takes place when students are exposed to the language and are given the opportunity to experiment with it.

CLT procedures in the classroom are hard to describe and give exact instructions for. However, they can be described as “making suggestions”. A lesson can, for example, consist of a presentation of a dialogue which appeals to the students’ interest followed by a discussion about the form and function of the dialogue. This is then followed by practice of the utterances that are central for the dialogue, with the teacher as a model and then by presentations of questions that are relevant for the topic (Richards & Rodgers 2001:170).

2.1.1 CLT materials and activities

In Key Issues in Language Teaching, Jack C. Richards (2015:594) argues that despite advancement in technology, printed textbooks tend to remain as the central resource for
teaching English. Therefore, it would seem that they play an important role in setting standards for the teaching and learning of English and in helping students to succeed. Thus, they are important in order to sustain and support English teaching. A textbook, with extra material, is often used as the core of a lesson and is treated as the content of a whole course, by both students and teachers. However, studies have shown that the texts used in learning materials in schools tend not to be of the same kind as the students are exposed to in real life. Students of English as a foreign language have stated that they also use English to a great extent, through chatting, reading and watching videos. Despite this, it would appear that the internet is rarely used during English lessons in favor of textbooks. Lundahl (2014:55-56) states that textbooks and other materials are used more by teachers with longer experience and less when the lesson has been planned collaboratively by teacher and students.

In CLT, the learning materials play an important role. Their primary role is to promote communicative language use. Text-based materials can take different forms: some can be similar to materials formed for a more structured language teaching, and some bear no resemblance to those used traditionally. Materials in communicative classrooms, such as jigsaw tasks, encourage students to interact with each other in order to receive the full information from a written or spoken text. Other CLT materials take the form of role-plays or dialogues with cue cards etc. Some materials promote drilling activities, which are used in a more interactional format than previously. CLT advocates the use of authentic materials, such as real life texts from the target language (Richards & Rodgers 2001:169). In addition to the material, the activities in CLT-classrooms are essential. According to Harmer (2015:69), students should be engaged in meaningful communicative activities. Such as role-plays that take place in typical environments, creating a newspaper, or other types of activities where students are encouraged to interact with each other. If these kinds of activities are executed, learning a language should develop by itself.

Lightbown & Spada (2013:156) state that the CLT approach suggests that the most successful way of learning a language is not to learn pieces of the language isolated from each other. Instead, students should be introduced to all pieces of a language at the same time and give the opportunity to act freely within the language. Mistakes and errors are supposed to be seen as a valuable part of learning a language since it is a natural step in the process. Students should not focus on accuracy. Instead they should focus on fluency. As CLT mainly focuses on the content of communication, CLT may be seen as a method which includes all different
activities and materials that aim to improve students’ skills in communication. Thus, the CLT approach serves as a contrast to other approaches where language form or grammar is the most central (Harmer 2015:70).

### 2.1.2 CLT personalization and motivation

In *Foreign and Second Language Learning*, William Littlewood (1984:53-55) claims that the most central motive for learning a second language is to create a need for the students to communicate. Motivation to study and learn a language will be stronger if learners perceive a distinct and clear communicative need. Therefore, it is important for a teacher to be aware of this and use material which stimulates and creates a need for communication. This need can be both long-term such as “I want to live abroad one day in the future” or a closer goal such as “I want to talk with my friend in England tonight”. According to supporters of CLT, successful language teaching is based on interaction and activities which teach students how to function in different situations where communication is needed (Lightbown & Spada 2013:215). John Crewe (2011:23) develops this further in *How far do ‘global’ ELT coursebooks realize key principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and enable effective teaching-learning?* and states that, in order to motivate students to engage in these activities, the material used should refer to students’ personal experiences and interests. Students will find tasks more important and realistic if they refer back to themselves. As a teacher, it is central to analyze what material or textbook to use in order to make sure the material has the potential for motivating students to communicate in some way.

Therefore, in order to teach using a communicative approach, it is important to create contexts in the classroom which demand learners to communicate. This can be done effectively by requesting learners to use their own experiences, their personality and opinions. Another helpful way to motivate learners is to help them relate the communication to authentic scenarios. If learners perceive communication in classrooms as realistic and if they feel invited to use their personal opinions/experiences, they will naturally assimilate the language better (Littlewood 1984:97). With the aim to create a textbook focused on the communicative aspect, Crewe (2011:24) states that it should be designed and formed in a way that gives teachers room for improvisation and group adaption. In particular, the questions and activities should be of an open sort. It is also central that textbooks do not attempt to tightly control students’ opportunities to improvise or their inspiration to continue communicating. Hence, the textbook should mainly function as the core of the
communication and the language interaction, and should be used to introduce and inspire students to continue communicating.

2.2 Theories concerning second language learning

In 1970, Stephan Krashen promoted a model called the “Monitor Model” to explain how to learn a second language successfully. Krashen’s model is based on five hypotheses. The first hypothesis contrasts learning and acquisition with each other. Krashen argues that people acquire a language through being exposed to language in a natural way and without paying attention to the form of the language. This is in contrast to the belief that people learn a language more effectively when they pay conscious attention to the form and the rules of the language. The second hypothesis states that if learners are given time, they will monitor and correct their own production and communication. The next hypothesis states that there is no natural order to acquiring a language. “Simple” grammatical rules may be easy for students to learn and understand, but not to actually put into use. In the fourth hypothesis, Krashen claims that acquisition of a language occurs when the learner is exposed to input at a level they already feel comfortable with, together with various input from the level above. The final of the five hypotheses states that learners might have a barrier against acquiring language, even though the input may be at a suitable level for the learner. For instance, a student may find it impossible to learn a language if they have a negative attitude to the target language, or are hampered by emotional states (Lightbown & Spada 2013:106).

Thus, Krashen claims that the most successful way of learning a second language is through informal teaching, when the learner obtains natural input without thinking about forms and grammatical rules. According to Krashen, learners have to be given space to use the language without being corrected or analyzed by a teacher. If they are given this amount of space, the grammatical rules and forms will fall into place naturally (Lundahl 2014:41). Krashen also claims that many students can be turned off language learning when grammatical rules are introduced, since they do not naturally belong in a communicative context. Students need an authentic context to acquire language, and grammatical rules are more or less impossible to introduce in that kind of context (ibid:195).

Lightbown and Spada (2013:115) argue that input and output of various kinds (spoken or written) are important factors in second language learning. Language learning is a result of both input which is processed by the learner and output in form of interaction with others using the target language. In Krashen’s monitor model, which is mentioned above, input is
central. When Krashen launched his model, the notion of input became revolutionary and was seen as crucial for second language learning development. This refers to the fourth hypothesis, which is explained above, the comprehensible input hypothesis. In response to Krashen’s comprehensible input hypothesis, Merrill Swain came up with the comprehensible output hypothesis. This hypothesis states that when learners produce language, they also have to pay more attention to how the meaning is expressed than they do when receiving the language while reading or listening. In interaction with an interlocutor, the learner will be aware of their own limits, and will have to come up with alternative ways or strategies to express meaning. This results in the learner developing in the target language. Swain separates understanding from production, input from output, when it comes to learning a new language. Therefore, when using the target language, both input and output, are important factors in language development since the learner will be aware of language gaps (Lundahl 2014:200).

In Stärk språket, stärk lärandet Pauline Gibbons (2006:37) uses studies which show that second language learning depends on how conversation and communication is used in the classroom. Gibbons (2006:38) also expresses that, a common but ineffective, form of communication in the classroom is when the teacher asks a question he or she knows the answer to. The teacher asks the question, the student answers and the teacher evaluates the answer. This pattern is referred to as IRE - initiating, response, evaluation. Questions of this kind are called control questions and are usually answered with one word or a short sentence. This is a traditional way of transferring and controlling knowledge, which does not demand any real communicative output from the student. The focus is not on the output but on the knowledge of the specific question. In these classrooms, the teacher tends to speak more than the learners. A more effective and beneficial strategy for second language development in the classroom is group work. Three important benefits of group work are firstly that input increases when the student hears other people than the teacher speak. Secondly, output increases as well since the students take turns speaking and they are responsible for their own language production and have to make themselves understood without help from the teacher. The third main benefit is that students learn in different contexts. The language is used for a specific purpose in a meaningful way (ibid:37-39).

To develop in the target language, the group work has to be of a kind which demands conversation and interaction. If the teacher instructs the students to talk about a specific topic,
there are no demands for all students in the group to interact. The result of the group work may be the same if all the students participate or if only one does. In order to encourage them to speak, the teacher has to provide the students with different areas of knowledge. Gibbons (2006:46) suggests that this will result in information gaps being created between the students so they have to interact to fulfill the task. The class can be divided into home-groups and expert-groups. In the expert-group the students search for different information and become experts in the area, which they then share with group members. In the home-group they all have to explain and share their expertise in order for the group work to be successful.

2.3 Language skills

Harmer (2015:297) claims that language learning is based on four skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. As noted earlier, these skills are divided into two categories: receptive and productive. The receptive skills are the skills in which students need to comprehend and receive language, reading and listening. In contrast, the productive skills are the skills in which students need to produce language, writing and speaking. Students learn these skills at an early age and their ability within each skill develops as they become older. All these skills require work on micro-skills. For instance, to master the skill of reading students need to learn to read in different ways such as reading for gist, skimming and scanning and reading for detail. A student needs to master all the micro-skills in order to master the ‘main’ skill (ibid).

2.3.1 Receptive skills

Both Harmer (2015:314) and Lundahl (2014:234-235) state that to practice reading skills students need to be engaged in micro-skills, through reading both extensively and intensively. Extensive reading is when the student reads for gist or for a general understanding. The text is often chosen by the student him/herself. In contrast, intensive reading is when the student reads to find particular information and answers. Intensive reading also includes reading in which students are supposed to read ‘between the lines’ or think behind the words. Students need to learn how to link these different parts of their reading to each other. In addition, they should practice how to move within a text. When working with a text, students need to be given the opportunity to work with it at different stages. For example, before reading, it is beneficial to ask the students to predict what they are about to read and, after the reading, to discuss what they have just read. It is also essential that students discover how to connect what they have read to their own experiences and opinions.
Lundahl (2014:169-171) argues that throughout history, the listening skill is the skill that has been the least practiced in classrooms. However, studies show that the listening skill is as important as the other skills. As with reading skills, students need to practice listening skills through extensive and intensive listening. However, instead of reading texts students should listen for gist or particular details in a spoken text. It is vital that students listen to English produced by other people than the teacher, since English is a language that contains a variety of dialects and accents. Studies show that listening activities in classrooms generally appear to be of the intensive sort. Students mainly practice listening for specific information and answers, and rarely for the gist or general themes. However, in communicative classrooms where students interact with each other and the teacher, the listening skills are practiced more naturally and students practice extensive listening on a more extensive scale (Harmer 2015:303).

### 2.3.2 Productive skills

The writing skill is the skill that both teachers and students appear to find the hardest. Thus, it is one of the most important skills. Harmer (2015:360-365) argues that the writing skills include mastering a number of micro-skills, which is why students and teachers find it particularly hard. Students need to practice all different parts of writing, such as spelling, layout, punctuation, text construction etc. In addition to all these parts, both Harmer (2015:360-365) and Lundahl (2014:284-291), state that students also need to master different genres, such as constructing newspaper articles or application letters etc. Students should also practice how to adapt their written English and learn in which situations what kind of written English is acceptable. This kind of practice is supposed to include working with formal/informal English, contractions, linking words etc. In Swedish schools today, students are rarely asked to simply produce a specific text and hand it in to the teacher. Instead, teachers also tend to focus on the process of writing. The students are given feedback during the writing process, and are asked to rewrite, and evaluate what they have written and develop it further. The main aim is not only the end product but rather the process of how to reach the final piece.

The skill of speaking is another important skill to master. One of the main aims with teaching English is to teach the students how to produce spoken English. A number of students in second language classrooms appear to be reluctant to interact in speaking activities since they feel uncomfortable producing the second language. In contrast, there are always one or two
students that feel comfortable and confident about speaking. Harmer (2015:384-387) claims that the teacher is essential for enabling students to practice speaking skills successfully. The teacher needs to present topics that are relevant for the students, make them feel relaxed, give them time to prepare and allow them to work in pairs or groups. As with the writing skill, the speaking skill also includes working with different micro-skills. Students need to practice different genres of spoken English and understand in which situations what type of spoken English is used. Examples of different genres are debates, speeches, presentations and discussions etc (ibid:388-393).

2.4 Language systems

2.4.1 Grammar

In The Study of Language (2014:88), George Yule states, whether taught explicitly or acquired, a learner still has to master five language systems to become proficient in English successfully. This is supported by Harmer (2015:32-33). One language system a student needs to embrace is the grammar system. This includes knowledge of a number of different things such as the order in which elements/words should be placed in a sentence (syntax), the form of the words (morphology) and how to combine elements to create correct language. Not only do, students need to understand how to construct sentences but also how to make correct choices with word endings. For instance, students need to practice putting a –s on the verb or when to change a noun from singular to plural. One could say that grammar is the knowledge of making correct language choices at the correct time. At some point, students need to have their awareness raised with regards to grammatical rules and the consequences of their choices. This awareness could be raised consciously or unconsciously – as long as the student uses the grammar correctly. Students learn individually and the process of learning the grammar system may be very dissimilar from one student to another.

2.4.2 Lexis

Learning a word is partly a matter of semantics - understanding the meaning of a word and a phrase. According to Yule (2014:114) and Paul Nation (2001:23) in Learning Vocabulary in Another Language to grasp one meaning is the least problematic issue of learning words. What is more complex is a word’s situation, and a word’s full meaning which includes: synonyms, polysemy, antonyms and hyponymy. Thus, words can have many different meanings. For example, there is a difference between reading a book and booking a table. This is called polysemy and can only be sorted out when the word is in a context. Words can
be defined by their relation to other words as well, e.g. antonyms: Full – empty. Synonyms also help define words and it is important to use an appropriate synonym in the context. Another way of defining a word is through hyponymy, e.g. fruit has the hyponyms banana, orange and apple. Fruit is also a hyponym, to the word food. This is a matter of vocabulary hierarchy and works together with antonyms, polysemy and synonyms to give a word its full meaning. Nation (2001:52) argues that students need to understand the different relationships a word might have, such as synonyms and hyponyms, to actually learn a specific word. It is also important to be aware of connotations of a word in different contexts. While chubby is a positive connotation for describing a baby, it might not be as positive when describing an adult (Harmer 2015:25-26, Yule 2014:114-117).

The literal meaning of a word can also be extended and mean something else in a different context, e.g. the word green in a green house and she is green means completely different things. Using words as metaphors helps us express ourselves by creating an image. In order to master a word, language users also have to know word combinations. That means that some words usually occur together in a collocation, for example /hurry up/ or /close the door/. When these collocations are longer they are referred to as lexical phrases. These can be used as building bricks in the formation of language. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about words only meaning. A word is far more complex (Harmer 2015:28, Yule 2014:118, Nation 2001:56-57).

2.4.3 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is a central part of learning a second language. However, Harmer (2015:40-41) argues that pronunciation can be complicated since students are used to the sounds of their first language. Pronunciation can be divided into five different categories: pitch, intonation, individual sounds, sounds-spelling and stress. The significant individual sounds in a language, which are called phonemes, do not carry meaning by themselves but when combined with others they can form words and phrases. Students need to understand that changing one individual sound in a word may change the entire meaning of the word. Individual sounds are created in different parts of the mouth and the difficulty of forming/recognizing the different sounds can alter from student to student. An example of an English phoneme that a lot of Swedish students who learn English as a second language find problematic is the sound /th/ (Yule 2014:40-41).
Sound-spelling refers to the fact that words do not always sound as they are spelled in English. A word may look one way when written and another way when being pronounced. According to Harmer (2015:42), sound-spelling in English can be problematic for many students. For example, the same vowel can sound in a variety of different ways depending on which sound comes before or after. In connected speech some sounds can even disappear since the words merge into each other. A further problem can be experienced with stress. Stress is a term that refers to the point in a phrase or word where we are supposed to lay emphasis. The stress of a word depends on many things such as word-class, origin or how many syllables a word consists of. A word can change its meaning if the stress is not correct, for example the word “export”. If “export” is stressed on the first syllable /ex/ the word is used as a noun. However if the word is stressed on the second syllabus /port/ it becomes as a verb. Words often seem to be stressed in a way that does not appear consistent which is hard for students to understand. Therefore the stress of the English language is a part which needs to be practiced repeatedly (Harmer 2015:43).

Harmer (2015:38-39) also notes that all people have a normal pitch that they operate in, and which may dramatically change in times of tension or in specific situations. In times of fear or excitement, most people change into a higher pitch without even noticing. In contrast, people change to a lower pitch when they are tired or bored. Not only does pitch change on intonation that signals emotion but also helps an English speaker to display the grammar of what they are saying. Moreover, it aids a listener in understanding when someone has finished speaking, is disagreeing or agreeing, asking a question or making a point.

2.4.4 Discourse

In addition to the vital components of a language such as grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, discourse is another system of a language one must master. Yule (2014:140-143) and Harmer (2015:18) define discourse as the ability to construct and organize text in order for it to be coherent as well as cohesive. For a text to be coherent it has to make sense to the reader. For example, the paragraphs need to be in an order that helps the reader understand and follow the text. A coherent text helps the thoughts of the author becoming clear but not, however, if the text is coherent but lacks internal cohesion. Internal cohesion helps the reader to navigate in a text. One example of internal cohesion is lexical cohesion which is the use of certain words that link the text together, e.g. first day and later in the text: second day, which helps the reader to understand the context. Lexical cohesion can also be repetition of words
that help the reader to link the text together. Internal cohesion can also be grammatical, e.g. using pronouns to refer back to a noun already mentioned. Substitution is another technique of cohesion, i.e. to refer back to something mentioned earlier in the text using another phrase or a word. For instance, a substitution is using the word *there* to refer back to a place mentioned earlier. Tense is also important for grammatical cohesion; it is difficult to follow a text that continually changes tense (Harmer 2015:19).

Discourse applies to conversation as well as written text. Yule (2014:143-144) claims that the participants in a conversation need to know when and how to take turns speaking in order to make the conversation successful, which is the discourse of speaking. Discourse markers are also used to help with the discourse of conversation, e.g. *anyway* and *right* show the beginning of a new thread of the conversation. Both participants have to contribute to the conversation and play by same rules to make a successful discourse, e.g. answer a question the other one is asking (Harmer 2015:19, Yule 2014: 142-144).

### 2.4.5 Pragmatics

Students need to learn how to estimate and evaluate a situation. According to Yule (2014:125) the ability to know what kind of language is used in different situations is called pragmatic knowledge. Communication will never be completely successful if students do not know how to express such things as politeness, directness or how to excuse themselves. It is also central to learn that one sentence can mean more than one thing depending on what occasion or situation the sentence may appear in. For example, a sentence can change its meaning depending on one specific word-choice or the way the words are stressed. If students do not know the pragmatics of English they may feel uncomfortable and have difficulty using the second language (Lightbown & Spada 2013:65).

Similarly, Lightbown and Spada (2013:66-67) state that native speakers of English may be offended or insulted if someone does not handle the pragmatics correctly. Therefore, students need to practice and master this part of English. In classrooms where a communicative approach is in use, it is easier for students to practice pragmatics, since a greater amount of the teaching is based on activities that are communicative. Students could practice pragmatics in role-plays where they act in a specific situation and are asked to use English that is appropriate for that specific scene. In addition to this, students in communicative classrooms often work in pair or groups, which can lead to a natural learning of pragmatics since they need to interact with other students (Yule 2014:131-133).
2.5 Strategies

A proficient English learner does not only need to master the language itself. In addition, Harmer (2015:99) states they need different language strategies. English teaching in Sweden is supposed to make students aware of strategies for how to learn a language and to provide advice for how to work on problems that may emerge. Examples of these strategies might be techniques for note-taking, different strategies for reading, how to predict a text and self-monitoring. Studies have shown that students find different learning strategies useful. However, the strategies that work for one student, may not work for another. Despite this, a teacher should encourage students to try different strategies and help them to find the strategy that may benefit them the most. Both Nation (2001:221) and Lightbown and Spada (2013:63-64) suggest there are different strategies for working on different skills and parts of English. For example, successful strategies for working with vocabulary are looking up words in a dictionary, noting them down and doing a quick word review at the end of each lesson.

All English learners, at some point, will be in a situation where they cannot remember a specific word or do not know the word they want to use. In these situations it is important that the learner has strategies to resolve the problem. Harmer (2015:310) suggests strategies that may be useful in these situations are improvising, foreignizing, paraphrasing and discarding. Improvising means that the students invent their own version of the word they are missing - which in some cases can be successful, but in most cases does not make sense at all. Foreignizing refers to students using the word they are missing in their first language and trying to form the word into the second language. Paraphrasing is when the learner uses other words to describe the word they do not remember. If a student cannot remember the word ‘toothbrush’ a suitable paraphrase could be ‘this thing you use to clean your teeth’. The fourth strategy for dealing with a word loss is called discarding. Discarding is when the learner cannot remember a word and, therefore, chooses to not express that thought at all. All four strategies are commonly used by second language learners. However teachers should encourage and practice the more successful ones, which are paraphrasing and improvising. These two strategies are more likely to be correct and understood.

3.0 Method

We have decided to take a mainly qualitative approach to our study. Our aim is to analyze a published language series currently used for the teaching of English in the Swedish upper
secondary school from a general communicative aspect. In addition, we also aim to analyze in what ways this material fulfills the communicative aspects of the curriculum for English 6. Our decision to analyze this language series is based on the relevance in evaluating learning materials. In our opinion, it is necessary to examine learning materials, especially textbooks, since they are often used as the main content in teaching. Both Richards (2015:594) and Lundahl (2014:55-56) claim that, even though the internet and other media are frequently used by teenagers, the printed textbook is still the most regular resource for teaching English. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to analyze textbooks in depth, to be certain that the textbook is at an acceptable level and corresponds to what the relevant curriculum states students should learn. Teachers should also be aware that most textbooks need to be supplemented by additional materials to be adequate and useful in teaching (Lundahl 2014:57-58). According to Lundahl (ibid), there are three different methods suitable for analyzing learning material: 1) to analyze the material with the aim to gain a general idea of the content, 2) to create a list with the aim to analyze a few aspects within the material and 3) to analyze carefully selected parts of the material with the aim to be detailed and analyze in depth. In this essay our ambition is to gain a general overview of ECHO 6: However we have also restricted the topic in order to concentrate in depth on the communicative aspects of the material. Therefore, one could state that we use a combination of the three methods that Lundahl (ibid) suggests.

In the teacher guidelines, the aims of ECHO 6 are stated and that the series contains “Native-like language, authentic and/or carefully selected texts, a wide variety of text types, literary analysis, a combination of contemporary and historical texts, topics and language-use stretching across the English-speaking world” (Frato, Henry & Persson 2015:4).

ECHO 6 Main Issues, together with Short Stories, are designed to fulfill the complex objectives required by the Swedish curriculum for English 6. It is claimed that these two books meet the requirements for working with different texts and introduce various ways of understanding and analyzing and structuring ideas. This is done through working on both receptive and productive skills. The receptive skills are practiced through “identifying types/genres of communication and reading comprehension (overall message and details). Critically examining content. Comparative approaches to information” (Frato, et. al. 2015:4). The productive skills are practiced through: “Responding to ideas. Working with sources.
Communicating and formulating ideas. Formal interaction. Responding to feedback and editing” (ibid).

Although there are teacher guidelines available for ECHO 6, they are fairly limited. The guidelines are separated into 11 chapters, corresponding to those in the main textbook. While advice for how to work with each chapter is presented, the pieces of advice are short and do not provide any further information than already given in the student’s book. For chapter 1, the advice given consists of the following, “In Short discussion students discuss the main reading text and are asked to give personal opinions and viewpoints’ and ‘The Final speaking task asks students to organize a discussion forum on isolated societies and globalization. Students should prepare for this speaking assignment” (Frato et. al. 2015:13). This advice neither gives additional information for the teachers nor does it recommend what additional information teachers should provide their students with. Similar advice is presented in all chapters throughout the teacher guidelines.

In the teacher guidelines for the final writing and speaking task in each chapter, there is a section called Ways of working. In this section, one could be lead to believe that suggestions for different ways of approaching the final tasks would be included. However, this is not the case. The guidelines simply refer back to the main textbook ECHO 6. For chapter 2, the following reference is given: “Students should read the resource section on Short stories (and fairy tales) (p. 190). They should also read Editing and responding (p. 195)” (Frato et. al. 2015:19). As we interpret it, the advice is to basically tell the students what to read in their textbook. As similar references to ECHO 6 are given on several occasions in the teacher guidelines, it would appear that the main recommendation is for the students to work independently with the book.

The teacher guidelines also give correct answers for several of the communicative activities undertaken in ECHO 6. In each chapter, the students are supposed to predict the content and discuss the text before starting to read it. In chapter 3 the guidelines suggest the correct answer to the prediction exercise as:

- Text types: The texts types are 1) a feature article, and 2) a political blog post.
opinions of the pieces. From their titles, they appear to be relatively impartial. Nonetheless, they present two very different views on the problem.

- Images and subheadings: The images show people coping with homelessness in different ways. In the article, the images are of people working together. In the blog post, the image is of a single youth, alone, who we are meant to understand is homeless. (Frato, Henry & Persson 2015:23)

Since the exercise asks students to predict things before they have read the actual text, we consider it impossible to mark their answers as correct or incorrect. Therefore, we view these correct answers presented in the teacher guidelines as irrelevant.

From the arguments and reasons mentioned above, we have made a decision not to include the teacher guidelines in our analysis. We do not believe that the guidelines provide any additional advice or information that cannot already be found in ECHO 6 itself.

We have chosen to analyze the learning material from four aspects we have distilled from the subject aims in the curriculum. The four aspects are:

1. All-round communication skills.
2. Reception, production and interaction.

Each chapter begins with a box presenting how each skill is represented in the chapter. We have looked at the activities for each skill and analyzed them from our four aspects above. For the first aspect, All-round communication skills, we have investigated if the students are given practice in adapting their language to a specific situation and if the activities within the chapter demand any specific language. We have analyzed whether the activities have a clear communicative aim or not.

For the second aspect, Reception, production and interaction, we have examined which skills are being practiced within the chapter.

To analyze the chapters from the third aspect, Strategies to succeed in conversation, we have examined the material to see if each chapter provides the students with any language strategies and if they are given the opportunity to use these strategies in practice.
For the fourth aspect, *Correctness*, we have analyzed the chapter to see if it includes any practice in accuracy, grammar or explicit practice of form.

Since the chapters in *ECHO 6* follow the same structure and the activities are of similar kind we have chosen to examine the first five chapters only. This choice is based on the fact that we do not find it relevant to repeat the same analysis over and over again. We believe a full picture can be given by restricting the analysis to the chosen chapters.

### 3.1 Process

We decided on the topic for this essay early in the process and started by researching background information about language teaching and literature concerning communicative language teaching in particular. During a few intensive days, we found several different published books and articles concerning the topic, which became the start of this essay. We finished our background section relatively quickly and then proceeded with the inspection of *ECHO 6*.

However, it was difficult to find a concrete evaluation tool to use for our examination of the published learning material. Although we were determined to examine whether *ECHO 6* took a communicative approach or not, we were not sure in what way to examine it. We initially tried to analyze the material from three main aspects from the literature we had used in our background section. The three aspects were: 1) Authenticity, 2) Language adaption and 3) Further conversation. With the first aspect, *Authenticity*, we aimed to investigate if the reading and listening activities in *ECHO 6* appeared to be authentic and genuine. The second aspect, *Language adaption*, aimed to examine whether the activities demanded variation of language use and if the students were asked to adapt their language to different situations/audiences etc. The third aspect, *Further conversation*, aimed to evaluate in which way *ECHO 6* invited the students to maintain communication and conversation. We felt these three aspects represented the most central tenants of communicative language teaching.

At this point, we started to examine *ECHO 6* in some depth. We made tables which summarized our three aspects matched to the content of the chapters in *ECHO 6*. In addition to these tables, we made others that covered the language systems and the language skills practiced in each chapter. When we had examined the complete learning material, all eleven chapters, we realized that the results had become too subjective. The content of the tables
mainly consisted of our opinions on ECHO 6, since it was we who had decided whether a specific text felt authentic or a chapter invited the students to maintain communication. The evaluation tool felt too subjective as well and our three aspects lacked relevant resources. Therefore, we had to change evaluation tool and the results. We decided to take a closer look at the Swedish curriculum for English 6. Since the curriculum has been created by Skolverket and could be argued to be THE frame for what to cover in each subject, we considered it a secure resource to use as an evaluation tool. In the aim of the subject we found four main aspects regarding communication. These four aspects were 1) All-round communication skill, 2) Reception, production, interaction, 3) Strategies to succeed in conversation and 4) Correctness. As noted earlier, these four aspects are the evaluation tool we finally decided to use.

4.0 Result
4.1 Overview of ECHO 6
ECHO 6 consists of eleven chapters. Each chapter presents a new topic/area and follows a similar structure. The chapter begins by asking the students to predict the content. To do this, the students are asked to think about what kind of text they are going to read, what assumptions they can make from the title and what the paratext is telling them. After these pre-reading activities, the students read the text. The questions are the same for each chapter: What type of text does this appear to be? What does the title lead you to expect? What do the images and subheadings tell you? It is not expressed explicitly if these pre-reading and post-reading activities are supposed to be done individually or in groups.

After reading the text, the next section (section I) is called Speak about it, which begins by making the learners talk about the text prompted by three different questions. The same first question is asked for each chapter: Where might this text have been published, and who is the author? Who is the intended audience, and how do we know? The next questions are about the topic. An example from chapter 2 reads During the mid 1800s, fairy tales inspired a popular new literary genre. What genre was it, and how did it grow out of fairy tales? The next exercise in the same section is to discuss different phrases from the text. Short extracts from the text are listed with some phrases highlighted, which the students are supposed to discuss.
After these speaking activities, a section (section II) follows called Write about it. This section begins by presenting linguistic facts related to the chapter e.g. idioms or etymology. The following task is called quick-writing where the students are supposed to write a brief reflection on the text. This brief reflection differs from chapter to chapter. For example students can be asked to comment or evaluate.

Section III is called Facts and figures. In this section the students are supposed to study statistics and facts regarding the topic.

Section IV is called Think about it and aims to make the learners read closely and reading critically.

Every chapter ends with a final writing task and a final speaking task. The topics for the writing and speaking task are presented, but the purpose of the text or discussion differs from chapter to chapter. Some examples of these final tasks are constructing informative texts and columns (writing) or special occasion speeches and informative presentations (speaking). The final tasks always include short instructions and advice on how to fulfill the task. On the last page of the chapter there is a box with tips for movies and books on the same topic, as well as listening comprehension and what specific grammar is appropriate to study along with the chapter.

The additional book is called Short Stories written by Alastair Henry and Åke Persson (2015), and consists of different short stories that are related to the same topics as in the Main Issues book. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction about the theme in literature, after which follows an introduction to the two or three short stories representing the theme. After each short story, there are two sections of questions, What happened? and Reading between the lines. Each chapter ends with an Activity Section which includes working with words, phrases and expressions. At the very end, the chapter introduces and explains literature terms such as allusion and intertextuality.

4.2 Chapters in detail
The Main Issues book is divided into eleven chapters which touch upon different topics. The first page of each chapter is an image representing the topic of the chapter. In addition, there is a minor box containing the core content and aims of the chapter. There is also a list of the
skills that will be practiced. In the following five sections we analyze the first five chapters of *ECHO 6*.

### 4.2.1 Chapter 1: Quality of Life.

Chapter one is called Quality of Life. The main issues discussed in the chapter are life choices, happiness and friendship (Frato 2015:5). The reading and writing skills focus is a personal letter, while the listening and speaking skills focus on discussion.

*All-round:* The all-round communicative knowledge is activated and practiced in the writing and speaking exercises. The *final writing task* is to write a personal letter. A personal letter is a form of text which, even though it is informal, requires a specific form and language content. The students have to adapt the letter to a certain audience and to structure the text. This exercise gives them practice in both pragmatics and discourse. For the *final speaking task* the students participate in a discussion. This also requires knowledge of pragmatics and discourse. The students are given a situation, which is to participate in a project-planning meeting. Therefore, they have to adapt their language to a certain audience. They also have to be able to take turns in order to make the discussion successful.

*Reception, production and interaction:* For this chapter, all language skills apart from pronunciation are practiced. The reading practice takes the form of six different letters (Frato 2015:6-13). All the letters are of the same kind; they are personal. The listening is practiced in a discussion (ibid:14,19). Listening is a part of interaction as well as speaking. However, this is not expressed in the book (online). Writing is activated from a “quick-writing” which is to either write a comment on what the learners have read or to evaluate what is quality of life (ibid:15). Lexis is practiced in strategic word work where the students should discuss word and phrases from the texts and in the glossary list which belongs to the chapter.

*Strategies:* There is no advice given for working on explicit strategies. The reading is followed by a section called read closely and read critically. The book also provides questions for discussion on the text. This could be regarded as strategies for reading although the book gives explicit instructions for the final writing and speaking tasks. These instructions concern how a personal letter should look rather than strategies for writing. As for speaking, there are no strategies for working around language problems, such as talking around a word.
**Correctness:** There is no explicit grammar teaching in the chapter. At the end, it is suggested that the student work with irregular plural nouns, uncountable nouns, nouns that can be either countable or uncountable and special plural cases. In the end section of the book, the students can read more, and there are directions for exercises online.

Pronunciation is not practiced.

**Related chapter in Short Stories (1): - Friendship and Loyalties.**

There are two texts presented for chapter one. They consist of a short story called *Crusader Rabbit* written by Jess Mowry and an extract from the novel *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck.

Reading - students read the texts. After each text is a section called *What Happened?* which includes five questions about the text. This is followed by a section called *Reading between the lines* where the students are supposed to analyze what they have read and make interpretations. The last section is called *Opinion* which is a discussion activity where the students should use ideas from the text and their own experiences in the discussion. After the second text, comes the sections *What happened?* and *Reading between the lines*, which both follow the same structure as for the first text. However, in this chapter, the last section *Opinion* is removed.

The chapter ends with an *Activity Section*. The section begins with a box called *Vocabulary Strategies*. It consists of three questions: “Does the word remind you of a word in another language? Are there any clues in the text that can help you? What sort of word is it (noun, verb, adjective, adverb)?” (Henry & Persson 2015:30). After that comes *What do they mean?* where the students are supposed to work with vocabulary + meaning. Example sentences from the two texts are presented with certain words and phrases highlighted. The students’ task is to read the sentences and discuss the meaning of the words and phrases. In addition, they should also translate the language and come up with synonyms. If they do not know a word, they are encouraged to go back to the text and find the word and figure out the meaning and then create a new sentence which includes the word. This part is practicing lexis, as well as speaking and listening since it requires collaboration work. In contrast to the main book, this book does offer advice on strategies.
After the activity section, there is a section called *Connections*. The students are supposed to work in groups and to discuss the two texts they have read together on the theme of the chapter; friendship and loyalty. This is practice for speaking as well as reading since the students have to understand the text in a deeper way to understand the connection with the theme. There is no practicing of correctness or pronunciation. Listening is neither practiced in an explicit way nor as a listening comprehension. However, the texts are available as audio files online. Discourse and pragmatics are not practiced in a greater sense either.

### 4.2.2 Chapter 2: A world of Fairy Tales.

Chapter two is called *A World of Fairy Tales*. In the box with the core content (Frato 2015:21) it says that the main focus of the chapter is how to write fiction and fairy tales.

*All-round:* The final writing task is to write a fairy tale, which requires a certain structural form and adaption of language. The students have to adjust their language for the purpose. To aid them, they are given instructions later in the book. This task practices both pragmatics and discourse. The final speaking task is to hold an instructional speech about something the students know how to do well. Again, this requires specific language and structure, and practices pragmatics and discourse. Lexis is practiced with both *strategic word* work, where the students discuss phrases and words they have read, and from a glossary list that belongs to the chapter.

*Reception, production and interaction:* All skills are practiced. Reading is practiced by reading instructions and guidelines for fairy tales. Listening is practiced through a comprehension task in the form of an informative presentation. Writing is practiced in different activities with a focus on phrasal verbs. The students are required to write sentences with phrasal words such as make do, make good, make up and make believe etc. This practices grammar and lexis. They should also do *quick writing* in the form of evaluating and discussing. Reading is also practiced in the *think about it section*, where the students should read closely, for example to think about what might be written between the lines. They should also read critically which means that they should think about the writer's point of view and purpose. As mentioned above, the final writing task is to write a fairy tale. Speaking is practiced by discussing the texts in the chapter. The final speaking task, as mentioned above, is to hold an instructional speech.
Strategies: There are no strategies for communication in the chapter. There are instructions for how to make an evaluation and give an instructional speech, but there are no strategies for how to succeed in conversation. There are no strategies for succeeding in listening, reading or writing either. It is negotiable if the questions regarding reading are a strategy for reading.

Correctness: Despite the phrasal verbs practice, there is no explicit focus on correctness in the chapter. At the end, the suggestion is to practice relative pronouns and there is/there are vs. it is. This can be practiced in the end of the book in the grammar section and with additional exercises online.

Pronunciation is not practiced.

Related chapter in Short Stories (2): Fairy Tales.

There are two extracts from fairy tales presented in the second chapter. The extracts are from Once Upon a Time by Nadine Gordimer and The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde.

After the first text come the sections What happened? and Reading between the lines (Henry & Persson 42). The first one works as a reading comprehension task where the students should answer question about what happens in the text. In the second section, they are expected to analyze and interpret what they have read. They are supposed to interpret and analyze what makes the text a fairy tale, what the writer's intentions with the text are and if there is a message. The texts provide practice in reading and are also available online as audio files for the students to practice listening.

The second text is followed by a reading comprehension task called What happened?, and then Reading between the lines (ibid). The analysis and interpretation for this text are two events in the text and the message of the story.

The Activity section (Henry & Persson 2015:48-49) is similar as the one in the previous chapter. First comes a box with strategies for vocabulary consisting of the three questions (see p. 30-31). What do they mean? comes next, with work on words and phrases from the texts with the same instruction as in the previous chapter. The chapter ends with the section Connections (Henry & Persson 2015:50) where the students should discuss the theme of fairy tales, the two stories they have read, and how they personally interact with the theme.
Correctness, pronunciation, discourse and pragmatics are not practiced.

4.2.3 Chapter 3: Troubled Youth.
Chapter three is titled Troubled Youth and revolves around issues of youth homelessness and youth issues in general.

All-round: The final writing task is to write a feature story. There are clear instructions on structure and for what purpose and audience it is intended. Therefore, the pragmatic and discourse systems are practiced. The final speaking task is to hold a political proposal. The students are given a purpose for the speech and instructions, which requires knowledge of pragmatics and discourse. Lexis is practiced in strategic word work where the students should discuss word and phrases from the texts and in the glossary list which belongs to the chapter.

Production, reception and interaction: All skills are practiced. The reading consists of feature articles. As additional practice, learners should read closely and read critically which means to re-read and with the help of questions read between the lines and reflect on the writer’s point of view. They should also discuss what they have read. Moreover, in the discussion the students will practice their speaking skills as well. Listening is practiced through the listening comprehension, which is a discussion. Writing is practiced through quick writing, which in this chapter means to write either a description or a reflection. Writing is also practiced in the final writing task, mentioned above.

Strategies: No communication strategies are practiced in this chapter, although reading strategies, such as discussions and questions for the text are included. However, no strategies regarding communication are available.

Correctness: There is no practice in correctness in the chapter. At the end of the chapter there is a suggestion to work with collective nouns, agreement and places where the definite article is used in Swedish, versus no article in English. This can be practiced at the end of the book and with additional exercises online. However, it is not expressed whether this is a group or individual activity.

Related chapter in Short Stories (3): Childhood.
In addition to the third chapter there is a short story, one abstract from a novel and a poem to read. The short story is *Big Brother, Little Sister* by Witi Ihimaera. The extract is from the novel *Sons and Lovers* by D.H Lawrence, and the poem is “Discord in Childhood” also by D.H Lawrence.

After the first text there are three sections *What happened?*, *Reading between the lines* and *Opinion*. As with the previous chapter, *What happened?* consists of a reading comprehension task. *Reading between the lines* analyzes and interprets events from the text. In *Opinions* the students should discuss the theme from what they have read in the text and their views of three statements, e.g. whose fault something is. The second and the third texts are followed by *What happened?* and *Reading between the lines* section (Henry & Persson 81, 83). Both are constructed in the same way as for the previous text. These sections, along with the texts, practice reading, speaking and listening. Listening can be further practiced through listening to texts on audio files which are available online.

The chapter ends with an *Activity section* (Henry & Persson 2015:84-86) which follows the same pattern as for the previous two chapters. It starts with a box of strategies for working with vocabulary, and consists of the same three questions as before (see p.30-31). The *What do they mean?* section works with words and phrases from the different texts. The instructions state that the learners should work in pairs which require them to converse, this practices speaking and listening, as well as work on lexis which is the main focus of the section. The activity section ends with *Connections* which is a discussion of how the three texts handle the theme of the chapter.

### 4.2.4 Chapter 4: Drug Politics.

Chapter four is named Drug Politics and the main issues in the chapter are the war on drugs and international politics (Frato 2015:51). The productive skills in the chapter are to write a pamphlet and to arrange a talk show. The receptive skills are to listen to a lecture and read a political pamphlet.

*All-round:* Chapter 4 practices all-round communicative knowledge in the tasks within the chapter. The *final writing task* is to write a pamphlet. The instructions are brief but clear and easy to follow. In the instructions, it is mentioned that the structure and the language is supposed to be formal, which means that the students are asked to adapt their writing to a
specific setting. This task practices both discourse and pragmatics. The final speaking task is to stage a talk show in which a new law should be discussed. The instructions state that it is essential to think about which audience will watch the talk show and to adapt the language for that specific group. Since the students are supposed to adapt their language depending on the audience, they need to make conscious choices about vocabulary. In this, task pragmatics and lexis are practiced. Lexis is further and explicitly practiced in the strategic-word-work section where the students should re-read and reflect on the meaning of different phrases. In addition to this, there is a glossary list for the chapter where lexis is practiced.

Production, reception and interaction: All skills are practiced. For reading, learners read a political pamphlet. The reading skills are further practiced through the sections read closely and read critically. As in previous chapters, the students should re-read the texts and reflect on it. They should think about what is written between the lines and what the writer’s purpose or point of view might be. In addition to this, the students should also discuss what they have read, which can be regarded as practice in reading as well as in speaking. Speaking is also practiced in the final speaking task mentioned above. The listening skill is practiced in a listening comprehension activity, which takes the form of a lecture. The students also have to listen to each other during the discussion in order to interact. The writing skill is practiced in the quick-writing section, which, in this chapter, is to discuss and evaluate the topic (drugs). Writing is also practiced in the final writing task mentioned above.

Strategies: There are no specific strategies presented in the chapter. The reading is followed by questions which could be seen as a strategy on how to perceive a text. In the section called Write about it, a box with advice on argumentative phrases is included. There are also explanations for how to declare opinions and respond to other’s opinions. This box could be useful for both the final writing and speaking tasks, yet it is more of an instruction on how to express arguments than an actual strategy. There are no strategies for how to avoid communicative language problems that may occur in these activities.

Correctness: There is no explicit grammar teaching, or focus on correctness within the chapter. However, working with irregular verbs is suggested at the end of the chapter with a related section at the end of the book. There are also online exercises where the students can practice their grammar.
Pronunciation is not practiced.

**Related chapter in Short Stories (4): Innocence and Experience.**

Two different texts are presented for the fourth chapter. The first is an extract from a novel called *Blink and You Miss It* by Alex Garland and the second is an extract from *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens.

After each of the two texts, come the sections *What happened?* and *Reading between the lines* (Henry & Persson 2015:97, 105). For the first chapter, the section *Opinion* (Henry & Persson 2015:97) is added as well. *What happened?* is a reading comprehension consisting of question regarding the story of the texts. *Reading between the lines* regards analysis and interpretation of the events in the texts and the writer’s intentions. In the *Opinion* section, the students should discuss who they think the narrator is, a specific event in the text and the writer’s intentions with the title. In these sections, reading, speaking and listening are practiced. Reading is practiced through the two texts, which are also available as audio files online for the practice of listening.

The *Activity section* (Henry & Persson 2015:105-108) follows the same pattern as in the previous chapters. It starts with a box consisting of strategies for vocabulary, which are the same three questions as the first chapter (see p.30-31). *What do they mean?* comes next and is a strategic word exercise where learners work with the meaning of words and phrases from the texts. The instruction is to work in pairs which practices speaking and listening. However, the main focus of the section is lexis. The section ends with the activity *Connection* where the students work in groups and should discuss how the texts deal with the theme of the chapter, which is crime.

**4.2.5 Chapter 5: The Widening Circle of English.**

The fifth chapter is called The Widening Circle of English and the main issues are: Global English and colonialism (Frato 2015:65). The final writing task is to write a newspaper column while the speaking task is to hold an informative presentation. The listening skill requires listening to an interview, while the reading skill is to read a column from a newspaper.
All-round: The final writing task in this chapter is to write a column for an international student publication. The instructions are short. However, they comment that the structure should be informal and that the writer is allowed to express subjective thoughts. In addition, it is noted that the writer is familiar with the audience, which means that the language should be adapted for that specific group. This writing task encourages practice in pragmatics and discourse, since the students are asked to think about structure as well as the audience/situation. The final speaking task is to hold an informative presentation on a variety of spoken English, e.g. American English or Indian English. The instructions give advice for what to include and examples of what could be interesting to mention. In addition, the instructions introduce how to structure the presentation, the importance of using linking words and how to use the correct kind of vocabulary. It also says that the students should be aware of what kind of audience they are presenting for. In this task there is a focus on pragmatics, discourse and lexis. Lexis is further practiced in the strategic word work section where the students should reflect over the meaning of different phrases from the texts, and through working with the glossary list for the chapter.

Production, reception and interaction: All skills are practiced. Reading is practiced through reading texts in column format. It is further practiced in the read-closely and read-critically section. As mentioned before, the students should re-read the texts and reflect over what is written between the lines. They should also reflect over the writer’s intentions and point of view. The students should also discuss what they have read, which can be seen as both reading and speaking practice. Speaking is also practiced in the final speaking task mentioned above. Moreover, the discussion encourages practice of the listening skill since the students have to listen to each other in order to interact in a discussion. Listening is also practiced in listening comprehension, which takes the form of an interview in this chapter. Writing is practiced through the quick-writing section, with discussion and reflection on the topic the chapter covers. Furthermore, writing is practiced in the final writing task mentioned above.

Strategies: The chapter does not include any conversational strategies, such as negotiation about meaning or talking around a word. It can be argued that the chapter includes strategies regarding reading, e.g. discussion questions and the read-closely section. Both activities provide questions that can help the understanding of the texts in the chapter. However, the curriculum requires strategies for communication which are not present in the chapter.
Correctness: There is no explicit focus on grammar or correctness in the chapter. At the end of the chapter there is suggested practice on anonymous 3rd person and apostrophes and this is covered in the grammar section at the end of the book. In addition to the section in the book, there are also exercises online where the students can practice their grammar.

Pronunciation is not practiced.

Related chapter in Short Stories related (5): Colonizers and Colonized.

For the fifth chapter three different texts are presented. The first is an extract from a novel called *A warm welcome to the president, Insh’Allah* by Meera Nair and the second is an extract from a novel called *Things fall apart* by Chinua Achebe. The last one is a poem called “Kidnapped” by Ruperake Petaia.

Each chapter is followed by the sections What happened? and Reading between the lines. As with the previous chapters the What happened? section is a reading comprehension activity related to the texts. Reading between the lines is for analyzing and interpreting the events in the texts and the writers’ intentions. The first text also has the section Opinions which is a discussion question where the students discuss the texts. These sections, along with the three texts, practice reading, speaking and listening. Listening is practiced along with speaking in the discussions. It can also be practiced from listening to the texts which are available as audio files online.

Similar to the previous chapters this chapter ends with an Activity section. The activity section starts with Strategies for vocabulary, which contains the same three questions as before (see p.30-31). Thereafter follows What do they mean? which is a pair exercise where learners work with meaning of words and phrases from the texts. This part focuses mainly on Lexis. It also practices speaking and listening since the activities should be done together. The chapter ends with connections where the students should discuss in groups how the texts bring up the theme of the chapter, Colonization. This part practices speaking and listening since it is a discussion that requires interaction.

The chapter does not practice correctness, discourse, pragmatics, pronunciation or writing.
4.3 Main Issues - resources

At the end of the Main Issues book there is a chapter called Resources. This section contains six different topics: general advice, speaking skills, writing skills, reading skills, sources and editing and responding. The sections referring to the specific speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills are covered earlier in this essay.

General advice

The section called general advice includes advice for working with both productive and receptive skills. The information included covers areas such as formal-informal language, rules for conversation, linking word and phrases. The section includes both concrete advice, such as a list of useful linking words, and more general advice on how to make students’ language more native-like (Frato 2015:170-177).

The general advice section also contains strategies for how to manage the English language, both receptively and productively and how to avoid different difficulties that may occur when using a second language. For example, when students learn a set of linking words, they expand their vocabulary and have back-ups when forgetting a specific word during conversation. In addition to different strategies for avoiding difficulties in English, there is advice for how to vary the language. Several bits of advice are suggested such as finding words/phrases that have the same meaning and trying to vary between them when speaking English. There are also examples for how to change the syntax of the language to improve the rhythm of the sentences. This advice is supposed to be helpful for sounding more native-like. Additionally there are a number of tips for how to structure both spoken and written English, such as using rhetorical questions when introducing a topic and how to structure an anecdote. All this advice can be regarded as strategies for how students can improve their English and become more successful in their language learning (Frato 2015:170-177).

4.4 Resume of all chapters

In these tables, we have summarized all 11 chapters. Table 1 summarizes which skills that are focused on in each chapter. Table 2 summarizes which systems that are included and practiced within each chapter.
Table 1: Skills within each chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>Ch. 1</th>
<th>Ch. 2</th>
<th>Ch.3</th>
<th>Ch.4</th>
<th>Ch.5</th>
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Table 2: Systems within each chapter.

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5.0 Discussion

In this section we are going to discuss in what ways ECHO 6 fulfils the communicative aspects of the Swedish curriculum for English 6. This discussion is based on the theoretical background and the result we have previously introduced.

5.1 CLT in ECHO 6

In our analysis, we found that ECHO 6 indeed promotes communicative rather than grammatical competence. In the material, students are encouraged to use the language in a communicative way. For example, they read and then discuss with their classmates what they have read. Then they write a text. In addition to this, there is an explicit grammar section in the book. It is not included in the chapters but each chapter suggests a specific grammar area which can be worked with. The book itself, therefore, takes a weak communicative approach since the grammar is taught separately. Grammatical competence is present in this teaching
material, but can still be placed under CLT since the main focus is the ability to communicate with others (Richards 2006:3). In general, the activities in ECHO 6 require a social context since they have to be done in interaction with others. When the activities have been completed, there is an opportunity for explicit grammar teaching. This is in accordance with Hymes, who first mentioned communicative competence and believes that language is a social phenomenon. The national curriculum states that English teaching in Swedish schools should focus on the development of an overall communicative competence (Lundahl 2014:139).

The focus of the book is the use of the language and the productive skills. Most of the activities require social interaction, for example, discussions or writing. Therefore, students are forced and encouraged to negotiate meaning and they have to collaborate with their interlocutors in order to make sense of the discussion, or through written communication. This also enables students to produce language in reaction to what the interlocutors say or write. This will make the conversation more lifelike, as in real life it is not possible to write lines for what one is going to say in advance. However, there are some individual performance tasks, such as giving a speech, which are not generally seen as a typical CLT tasks (Richards 2006:4-5).

Each chapter deals with a specific topic. The first text in the chapters introduces the topic. These could be seen as an introduction for conversation. After each text follow discussion questions. Hopefully the students have been inspired by the text to discuss further with their peers. This corresponds to what Richards and Rodgers (2001:170) have suggested as CLT procedures, which includes ”making suggestions”. The book suggests the topic the students can discuss and provides them with questions to make the discussion easier. The activities in the book mainly focus on interaction and conversation rather than on the form and correctness. When interacting there is no focus on right or wrong. However, both the instructions for how to write a specific text and the grammar section show a concern for correctness, as well as communication. For CLT the communication process is the main focus rather than mastery of forms. The purpose of the language lessons should be to interact and not to correct mistakes. Conversation is a joint responsibility and it is up to each person in the conversation to make it successful (Richards & Rodgers 2001:166). Since ECHO 6 is based on communicative activities of different sorts, one could argue that this published material is suitable for the classroom in which in the teacher takes a CLT approach.
5.1.1 CLT materials and activities
The materials provided in *ECHO 6* are mainly text based. The texts are of different kinds and designed for different purposes. The students are given the full texts at once; as such no interaction is required in order to receive the full information. This is not normally encouraged in CLT. However, the use of role-play, cue cards and other forms of communication practice are encouraged. In some chapters role-play is suggested as a way to practice conversation, for example a job interview or debate. Therefore, the speaking activities, as mentioned earlier, mainly require interaction. There are also some individual tasks, such as speeches. Although, speeches are interactive in one way since they are communicative, it is difficult and pointless to hold a speech without an audience. However, any discussion that follows does require interaction. The writing tasks do not require interaction with others and are done individually. This means that the speaking exercises but not the writing exercises correspond to CLT (Harmer 2015:69).

In addition to the physical book, online exercises are suggested as well. These exercises explicitly work with grammar. This is in contrast to a strong form of CLT which does not tend to promote exercises and material that focus on form. According to Harmer (2015:70), all exercises should aim to improve communication skills. Even though it is not in line with the strong form of CLT, it could be argued that explicit grammar teaching improves communication skills among the students, since it might make them more confident and easier to understand. However, all aspects of the language are not learnt or worked with at the same time since *ECHO 6* separates the grammar from the rest. This goes against the strong form of CLT which suggests that the most successful language learning is to not isolate the different pieces from each other but to introduce all components of a language at the same time and provide an opportunity to try out the language (Lightbown & Spada 2013:156).

From the results it can be argued that most of the material is inauthentic which goes against the CLT approach (Richards & Rogers 2001:169). In the additional book, *Short Stories*, there is authentic material, but in *ECHO 6* the texts are mainly made up for the purpose of being in this textbook. The listening comprehension tasks are created for the same purpose, and the speaking and writing activities do not necessarily correspond to real life tasks. In Sweden today, adolescents are exposed to and use English to a large extent on the internet every day. Despite this, Lundahl (2014:55-56) claims that the internet is rarely used in English teaching. The *ECHO 6* book itself does not encourage students to use the internet. On the other hand,
the different themes do. For example, in the chapter Getting there, the theme is to apply for college and jobs. The texts are applications of different kinds and personal letters for job interviews. Online there are plenty of sites offering models and tips for how to write applications, CVs and personal letters. There are also sites providing job ads, while YouTube videos and podcasts explain and give tips on the dos and don’ts of applying for jobs and attending interviews. Although there is a lot of authentic material that gives real advice to be found online, the book does not suggest its use. This is something the teacher should be aware of.

5.1.2 CLT personalization and motivation

*ECHO 6* is a theme based textbook. The themes are contemporary and most of them are possible to relate to for Swedish adolescents learning English. The themes are friendship, fairy tales, youth, drugs, the English speaking world, war, segregation, violence, gender, morals and power and applying for jobs and universities. All of these are themes that Swedish students will come into contact with, in their daily life or in the media. There are a variety of themes which the students can see the immediate use of, such as applying for jobs. There are also themes that can trigger discussion, for example, gender issues or drug politics. Some themes, for example war or segregation, are also important to read about and discuss since they are frequently discussed in society today. As these themes appeal to the interest of Swedish adolescents today, they can help the tasks in the book to feel more meaningful and realistic since they encourage the learners to refer back to themselves (personalization) some more than other. This can help motivate students to engage in the communicative tasks. However, as Crewe (2011:23) discusses, the teacher has to be flexible while working with the different themes since some may appeal to some students and some to others.

Since the chapters are contemporary, working with the book allows the teacher to be flexible and creative. For each theme, there are plenty of articles, newscasts and documentaries to supplement the teaching. The themes that appeal more to students might inspire them to further conversation. However, the tasks are rather closed. Usually there is only one suggestion for a writing or speaking task and they usually have clear instructions which do not encourage improvisation. It is up to the teacher to come up with additional or alternative tasks to the ones in the book. Crewe (2011:24) suggests that contemporary themes are beneficial since they make a successful core of communication and language interaction. Other benefits of the contemporary themes are the opportunities for students to use their own
experience and to express their personal opinions. For some exercises, the opinion is already given. For the debate, for example, the topic to discuss is given and that there should be one team for and one team against. However, the teacher has the opportunity to create tasks and exercises where students are able to express their own opinions.

5.2 All-round communication skill
We interpreted the all-round communication skill as the ability to adapt language to certain situations and audiences; informal as well as formal. The ability to do so requires knowledge in pragmatics, discourse and lexis, in particular.

5.2.1 Discourse
Within almost each chapter in ECHO 6, there are activities where students need to think about the discourse of their production. On several occasions, students are asked to structure their production in an appropriate way for the assignment. In the instructions for both the speaking and the writing activities there are suggestions on what to include and advice for how to structure the piece. A great example from ECHO 6 is found in chapter 5 where the final speaking task is to hold an informative presentation on a variety of spoken English. In the instructions, the student is given advice for how to begin and how to use linking words to create structure in their presentation. The writing task is to write a column for an international school publication and, in the instructions, the students are given tips for how to use an informal structure. Both these activities include instructions related to discourse. Both Yule (2014:142) and Harmer (2015:18) claim that students need to learn how to create coherent texts. One example Harmer (ibid) mentions is that students need to know how to construct paragraphs, since paragraphs will help the reader to understand what the student truly want to present in their text. ECHO 6 does indeed provide a great deal of practice regarding the discourse system.

In chapter 4, the students are asked to write a pamphlet. In the instructions for this writing task it is mentioned that it is essential to begin and end the pamphlet in a suitable way (Frato 2015:187). In addition to concrete instructions about structure, a number of activities advise the students on what vocabulary to use or what kind of language to include. One piece of advice mentioned within several activities is to use linking words to create cohesion and coherence. If the students do not know any linking words or how to use them, they may turn
to the *General Advice* section, where there is a list of useful linking words and how to use them (Frato 2015:175). According to both Yule (2014:141) and Harmer (2015:18-19), it is essential that students learn how to create internal cohesion when writing in English. As an example, Harmer (ibid) mentions that students need to learn words that link the text together and help the reader to navigate within the text. Thus, the instructions about linking words in *ECHO 6* can be viewed as an activity in how to create internal cohesion and structure in production. These kind of activities help the students practice their all-round communication skill.

In *ECHO 6* a number of activities are based on interaction between students. These kinds of activities might actually be seen as activities where discourse is being practiced, since students need to create output that their classmates can follow and understand. Since the students are asked to participate in conversations and discussions, they naturally learn when to listen or when to speak. In addition, they learn how to ask questions, follow up answers and spontaneously keep a conversation going. Harmer (2015:19) argues that one part of mastering the discourse system in spoken English, is to understand when and how to take turns in spoken interaction. Yule (2014:143-144) also states that to master the discourse system, a person needs practice in turn-taking and structuring a conversation. Since *ECHO 6* contains a great many group work activities, students can practice the discourse system within the entire book.

### 5.2.2 Pragmatics

When analyzing the activities in *ECHO 6* we found a number of connections to the pragmatics of English. Almost each activity has some association to pragmatics, even though the students might not be fully aware of this. In chapter 3, for example, the speaking activity is to create a proposal. The instructions for the proposal mention that students need to adapt their language and content to the audience. The same advice is presented for the writing task in chapter 1, where students are supposed to write a fairy tale or a short story. There are also some role-play activities in *ECHO 6* which are opportunities for students to practice pragmatics. In almost every activity, the students are asked to be aware of whom they are writing to or speaking with. *ECHO 6* also presents advice and suggestions for how to vary their English. Lightbown & Spada (2013:65) claim that one part of pragmatics is to be able to change language following audience and situation. In addition to this, Yule (2014:124) argues that to master pragmatics students need to know how to adapt their language depending on
the specific situation. Since *ECHO 6* includes a variety of activities and tasks, the production of English for different situations and audiences, the students are indeed given the opportunity to learn how to adapt their language and practice their all-round communication skills.

Pragmatics is also a natural part of *ECHO 6*, since the students are interacting with each other in many of the activities. In authentic classroom situations, in discussions between students, students use and learn pragmatics unconsciously. In communicative classrooms, the learning of pragmatics is easier, since the students interact with each other as well as the teacher. One central part of pragmatics is being polite and understanding in which situation politeness is necessary (Lightbown & Spada 2013:66-67, Yule 2014:132). Students are polite and excuse themselves naturally when interacting with others. As *ECHO 6* is based on communicative activities, it means that pragmatics is used, both consciously and unconsciously, every day in the classroom.

*ECHO 6* includes a variety of activities in which students need to adapt their language. A number of these activities are discussed above. However, *ECHO 6* also presents questions of different sort. There are both questions with specific answers as well as genuine questions without specific answers. These questions are supposed to help the students to begin the communication, and inspire further opinions and thoughts about the topic. Since the questions are of different sorts, the students need to adapt their answers depending on the question. It is crucial to use activities where all students feel that they have to participate in the discussion. If a teacher mainly uses activities asking for specific information or a special topic, there is a risk that one or two students will participate while the others will simply agree (Gibbons 2006:46). A large number of the questions in each chapter in *ECHO 6* refer to students’ experiences, knowledge and opinions. There are also a number of questions that refer to information in the specific texts and the specific topics. One could argue that the combination of these sorts of questions is effective for learners, since they invite students of all kinds to participate. Since the students are supposed to interact in different constellations, all students will find an opportunity to participate. In addition to this, the variety of questions also demands different answers, which means that the students practice adapting their language to the situation and their pragmatic knowledge. Thus the chapters in *ECHO 6* appear to have clear communicative aims with almost each activity. In addition, the pragmatic, discourse and lexis systems are practiced within each chapter.
5.2.3 Lexis

After reading each chapter in *ECHO 6*, there is an exercise with highlighted words and phrases. This exercise is supposed to expand the students’ vocabulary as they are asked to discuss the meaning of each word/phrase. Each text also has a wordlist at the end of the book which includes a number of ‘new’ words for the students (Frato 2015:225-231). These words are supposed to be learned within the chapter. According to Yule (2014:110), Nation (2001:23) as well as Harmer (2015:25-26), it is easy for students to simply grasp the meaning of a word or a phrase, while it is more complicated to actually learn in which situation the word should be used in and the full meaning of the word. In addition, Harmer (ibid) claims that it is easier to learn the new word/phrase if you meet it in a context. The wordlist in *ECHO 6* includes words taken from the texts. This means that the students have the opportunity to return to the text and discover in which sentence the word is used. For example, “1. The war has **backfired** and brought more **misery** to the peoples it was meant to **relieve**”. Thus students are given the entire sentence to analyze and can study the context of the word, which is a successful way for learning new words and phrases. This helps them understand the meaning of a word with co-text clues.

When we examined the chapters in detail we found the kind of activity mentioned above was included in each chapter. This means that the students practice the lexical system within the entire book. Almost all speaking and writing activities in the book have connections to the lexical system as well. In chapter 1 the students are asked to write a personal letter and the instructions say: “**End your letter with a sign-off phrase such as Cheers, Take care, Best, Love, Lots of love, Hugs and kisses, etc**”. To be able to decide what sign-off phrase to use, the students must be aware of the meaning of each phrase and in what context to use them. This implies that the students need to learn these words and expand their vocabulary. Students need opportunities to work with the meaning of words and they need to learn that their word choice may change the entire sentence (Harmer 2015:28, Nation 2001:52). The written task above is one out of several activities in *ECHO 6*, which has these connections to the lexical system. It is essential that students practice the lexical system, since they need different vocabulary in different situations, and to be able to adapt language and communicate successfully.

5.2.4 Pronunciation

*ECHO 6* contains a number of different speaking activities and each chapter includes exercises which require production of spoken English. A few examples of these activities are:
discussion forums, speeches of different kind and interviews. All of these activities have instructions and explanations in the book, yet explicit instructions or advice for pronunciation are missing in *ECHO 6*. Since the book has a number of speaking activities, pronunciation will naturally be practiced implicitly and the students may possibly learn from other students’ output. However, there is no explicit training in pronunciation. Harmer (2015:38-41) and Yule (2014:39-40) claim that students learning a second language need training in pronunciation to successfully produce spoken language. In addition to this, a lot of students find pronunciation complicated, since they are used to the sounds of the first language (Harmer 2015:38-43). As the activities for each chapter in *ECHO 6* do not include any explicit practice of pronunciation, students who are taught through this book could miss out on essential knowledge.

However, in the last part of *ECHO 6* there is a section called *Speaking skills*. Where there is some concrete information about how to pronounce different English sounds. Additionally there is information about how to stress different words and how different sounds can be combined (Frato 2015:184-185). Since this section is excluded from the activities and there are no references to this section within the chapters, there is a chance that students might simply skip this section. As *ECHO 6* does not promote pronunciation practice on any major scale, it is essential that students are given the opportunity to practice pronunciation in other activities. It is important that teachers who use *ECHO 6* in classrooms are aware of the fact that pronunciation practice is not included in the book, so that teachers know that they need to make an active choice to work on pronunciation with the students.

### 5.3 Production, reception and interaction

We interpreted *production, reception and interaction* as the ability to use all of the four language skills; speaking and writing (productive) as well as reading and listening (receptive), and also the ability to combine the skills to interact in different ways (interaction).

### 5.3.1 Production

The book allows practice in language production with a wide variety of purposes. As mentioned in the result, each chapter in *ECHO 6* begins with asking the students to predict the content of the chapter. The students are asked three specific questions: 1) *What type of*
text does this appear to be? 2) What does the title lead you to expect? and 3) What do the images and subheadings tell you?. We interpret this to mean that after receiving a small amount of input about the chapter the students are supposed to discuss with each other and produce output regarding the chapter and its themes. According to Harmer (2015:384-387), many students benefit from working in pairs or groups, since they feel comfortable with producing spoken English when their audience is small. Since we believe that the themes of each chapter in ECHO 6 could be interesting for students, we argue that the topics for discussion should stimulate the majority of the students. The students are not asked to discuss or use English in a specific way. In contrast they are asked to discuss without restraints and control. Their only limit is the questions, which are helpful questions to begin the conversation with. Krashen’s Monitor model suggests that students acquire a second language when they are exposed to the language without paying attention to the form of the language (Lightbown & Spada, 2013:106). This exercise has a clear aim to practice students’ production of spoken English. As presented in the results, each chapter in ECHO 6 has a final speaking and writing task that the students are supposed to complete. Some examples of these tasks are writing a fairy tale or a column, holding a presentation or staging a talk show. Students need practice in a variety of different writing and speaking genres. Since ECHO 6 has different final tasks in each chapter, the students are indeed given this practice (Harmer 2015:360-365, Lundahl 2014:284-291). Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that the productive skills are practiced in each chapter.

5.3.2 Reception
In addition to the productive skills mentioned above, ECHO 6 includes effective practice in the receptive skills. For reading, students are exposed to different texts where the language has been adapted to the purpose. Therefore, the texts can work as model texts for the production of a text for a specific genre or purpose. As mentioned, the texts are of different genres such as e.g. fairy tale (fiction) and news articles (non-fiction). In addition, the activities given for each text are of different sorts, thus demanding both extensive and intensive reading. Harmer (2015:314) and Lundahl (2014:234) suggest prediction as a beneficial activity concerning the skill of reading. In ECHO 6, the students predict the content within each chapter. The listening texts are such as pamphlets and presentations. In addition, the listening material includes a variety of dialects and accents which is essential for developing the students’ listening skills. However, we view that the listening materials to be of an intensive sort, since the questions mostly require details and specific information. The
students rarely, if ever, listen for gist. Similarly, most practice in listening appears to be of the intensive kind. Intensive listening alone is not said to be the most successful for students. They need to be involved in both extensive and intensive listening (Harmer 2015:303, Lundahl 2014:169-171). The listening tasks are for different speaking purposes, such as debates or interviews. Students need to know how language is used and how to modify it for different purposes, which can be practiced through the listening activities (Richards 2006:3). Each chapter in *ECHO 6* includes practice in the receptive skills.

### 5.3.3 Interaction

As noted on several occasions, the greater part of this learning material is based on activities that demand interaction. An activity which keeps returning is one in which students are supposed to discuss the text they have read in the chapter. The students are supposed to discuss the kind of text and topic, not the use of specific grammar or form. They need to use both their speaking and their listening skills. Krashen has claimed that students learn better from informal teaching, when the teacher takes a step back and gives the students opportunities to use English without being corrected or controlled. When students interact with each other they use English in a more unconscious way, since most of the time they do not feel the pressure of answering correctly or expressing the opinion that the teacher may prefer (Lundahl 2014:41). In *ECHO 6* students are asked to interact with each other. The teacher, however, does not need to be involved in this conversation. According to Krashen’s theories about teaching a second language, these exercises can be seen as ideal tasks for students since they generate a more genuine conversation between students. This task gives practice in combining the listening skill with the speaking skill (Lightbown & Spada 2013:106).

Each chapter in *ECHO 6* has a section called *Speak about it* which includes a variety of exercises where the students work in pairs or groups. The students are supposed to work with the text, the grammar and the vocabulary together. All activities where students are asked to interact with each other are exercises that request both input and output from each student. The different speaking tasks, such as predicting the content or analyzing the topics, are activities in processing other students’ opinions and thoughts. In these activities, it is the students that produce the English and the teacher is mainly a supportive listener. Studies have shown that the use of conversation and communication in a classroom is highly essential for second language learning. Gibbons (2006:37-39) comments that a successful way for learning
a second language is letting the students work in groups or pairs. Students benefit from hearing each other produce English and not only by hearing the teacher produce. It is also beneficial for students to work in groups, since they learn to master their output and adapt it to different situations and conversations. Swain also claims that it is essential that students get the opportunity to create output since it is an important factor for development in the second language (Lightbown & Spada 2015:113). *ECHO 6* contains a great number of group or pair activities, which, as mentioned above, is said to be the successful way for learning a second language. Once again, the students practice combining different skills such as listening when a classmate is speaking, comprehending the information and answering back.

5.4 Strategies

Our interpretation of *strategies* is that students should be provided with strategies to be able to maintain a conversation even if they do not know or understand a certain word for example. Other examples of strategies are rephrasing, negotiating about meaning or foreignizing.

5.4.1 Strategies for communication

*ECHO 6* does not provide students with strategies on a broader scale. In the part of the book named *Resources* there are instructions and advice for how to either write or speak and for working on productive skills. Among other things, there are instructions for how to write a personal letter or to participate in a debate. The part starts with a section called *General Advice* which provides the students with tips on how to communicate through both speech and text. For example, it instructs the students on how to take turns, change the topic and start and stop. It also provides a list of linking words and phrases to make the conversation easier. However, the examples belong to a formal writing process rather than everyday speaking. Examples of the linking word and phrases are *firstly* and *secondly* in order to introduce something, and *in addition* to link something. The resources section gives the students plenty of advice for strategies to succeed in their written communication.

However, there is a lack of advice for how to communicate in an everyday conversation. There is no advice for how to make yourself understood, explain a word when you do not know it or how to negotiate about meaning. At some point, all learners of a language will be in a situation where they do not know a word. Therefore, it is important to have strategies for when these moments occur. The learner could improvise, foreignize, or paraphrase. Harmer
(2015:310) argues that these strategies should be practiced and encouraged by the teacher so students can use them and try them out. The advice in the book, however, is for how to start communicating, not for the next step when you are communicating and need help to develop the conversation further. Similarly, the book does not provide any strategies for how to listen or read. One might argue that the questions following each text could work as a reading strategy, although this is not made explicit and the questions come after the text. This might have worked if the questions were more integrated in the text. When working on the listening comprehensions included in each chapter, the only check is to see if the listener understands. There are no strategies for making the listening easier.

The lack of strategies for working around problems makes it difficult for a learner to become proficient in English. In order to become proficient one must manage the language, which includes knowing how to work around problems. English teaching is supposed to include this. A student must be provided with techniques, such as note-taking and strategies for reading (Harmer 2015:99). Harmer also points out that both strategies for working on receptive skills as well as productive skills are required. Unfortunately, these are not present in *ECHO 6*. It is up to the teacher to provide students with these strategies in order to make the lessons communicative. This book requires the teacher to be competent in his or her way of teaching strategies. In addition, the teacher has to be aware that the students are not automatically given strategies from just reading the book. Neither does it cover different types of strategies or take into account that different students have different ways of learning (Lightbown & Spada 2013:63-64).

5.5 Correctness
We interpreted *correctness* to mean an explicit teaching of grammar.

5.5.1 Grammar
In *ECHO 6* there are activities referring to grammar. Every chapter has an activity where different phrases and words from the text are highlighted. The highlighted language is supposed to be analyzed by the students. Krashen has claimed that it is easy to lose students during grammar teaching. A helpful way for keeping the students’ interest is to teach grammar in a context that the students already are familiar with (Lundahl 2014:195). In the activity with highlighted language, the students meet sentences from the text they have just read. The grammar activity is presented in a context they are familiar with. The students
should, at this point, know the text and the topic, which means that the grammar exercise should be connected to knowledge they already have. *ECHO 6* has tried to make the exercises in grammar and vocabulary as authentic as possible by using language from the texts the students have recently read.

At the end of each chapter in *ECHO 6* there is a short suggestion about which part of grammar is appropriate to study along with the chapter. In the suggestion, there is a reference to the section *Grammar* (Frato 2015:199-224), which is included at the back of the book. The grammar is excluded from the chapter and presented as a concrete collection of rules. When we studied the chapters in detail we realized that the practice of grammar differed a great deal from activity to activity. In chapter 3, the students are asked to write a feature article and the instructions note “Traditionally news journalists write in a formal structure and use a third person narrator”. The precise instructions ask the student to use specific language and grammar, which in this case, means that the student needs to understand and study how to write as a third person narrator. According to Harmer (2015:32-33) and Yule (2014:80), practice in grammar is central for learning a second language. Teachers need to help students raise an awareness of grammar choices and rules. At the same time, it is important to remember that students learn in different ways. Since the grammar practice in *ECHO 6* is not an activity within the chapter, students may not study the grammar if they do not think they need it for the moment. One could say that the grammar system is practiced and developed implicitly, although the main focus of *ECHO 6* may not be grammar.

**6.0 Conclusion**

In this essay we have critically examined *ECHO 6* and studied the communicative opportunities within the textbook. In the results section we have presented a selection of chapters and in what ways students are supposed to work with this specific material. The results have later been discussed and contrasted with relevant literature about communicative language teaching and English teaching in general. These separate sections have enabled us to create a bigger picture of *ECHO 6* and made it possible for us to draw conclusions about the textbook. In order to answer our research question, “*In what ways does the ELT coursebook ECHO 6 fulfill the communicative aspects of the Swedish curriculum for English 6?*”, we have completed a detailed analysis.
We consider *ECHO 6* to be a useful and interesting textbook. In our opinion, it has a structure which is easy to follow, chapters with relevant topics, and exercises that stimulate the different language skills and systems. We believe that *ECHO 6* has a clear intention to provide a communicative learning material, since it includes exercises of different types which in various ways require students to communicate. In addition, the textbook includes focus on all five language systems and all four language skills, which naturally provides the students with opportunities to develop their English language. However, we also consider *ECHO 6* to be lacking in some significant respects which prevents it from fulfilling its ambition to be a fully communicative textbook.

Even though *ECHO 6* includes all five language systems, the systems are included in an unequal degree and in different ways. The pragmatic, the discourse and the lexical systems are included and practiced in each chapter. However, focus on the grammar and pronunciation systems appears to be left out on several occasions. The grammar system is included as an explicit section at the back of the textbook and the chapters suggest references to this section, which means that the students are given the opportunity to practice grammar even though it is left out in the actual chapter. However, while the pronunciation system is also included as an explicit section in the textbook, the difference is that it never appears to refer to instructions for students to actually use this section. This means that students only practice pronunciation if they actively choose to visit the pronunciation section. Therefore, we consider that *ECHO 6* lacks important practice in pronunciation, which is something that numerous students need practice in.

As mentioned earlier, *ECHO 6* includes exercises in all language skills and students practice all skills in each chapter. However, the listening exercises that are available are limited and appear to be simply of an intensive sort. The listening exercises and the questions to each listening exercise focus simply on specific information and students are only asked to listen for the precise answers to each question. These kind of listening exercises are the opposite of the listening comprehension tasks that CLT promotes as successful. Students need a variation between intensive and extensive listening practice. We consider the listening comprehension for *ECHO 6* as one of the biggest flaws of the textbook.

Early in our process of writing this essay, we decided to not use the teacher guidelines available for *ECHO 6*. After we had carefully examined the guidelines we realized that they
were not useful and did not provide the teacher with any additional information, help or instructions. This is obviously another flaw we have found in *ECHO 6*. To use this textbook in class, the individual teacher needs to be aware of the parts that are left out. It is up to each teacher to make this textbook alive and communicative. The chapters and exercises have the intention to be communicative. However, if the teacher simply follows the structure of *ECHO 6* without preparation, we do not think that the execution of the content would be especially communicative. Yet, it is important to remember that this is the case for most textbooks, since it is hard to create a textbook that does not require any work from the teacher in its execution in the classroom.

Therefore, our final conclusion is that although *ECHO 6* does provide the students with opportunities and possibilities to practice communication, the textbook also requires an active and alert teacher who can guide the students effectively through its entirety.
Future research

There are innumerable teaching materials available for the teaching of English and the topic becomes wider every time a new textbook or material is published. In this essay we have mainly examined the communicative aspects in one specific material. However, we consider that ALL textbooks should be examined in detail before being used in classrooms. Therefore, there will always be more research to perform.

Since society is in constant development and school is one of its vital institutions, approaches and methods for the teaching of language and the guidelines for teachers are constantly changing. The curriculum for the Swedish school also changes now and then, which means that the teacher needs to adapt and modify their teaching. For instance, in society today the internet and different kinds of social media form a regular part of our students’ lives. Despite this, the physical textbook (printed or online) is still the most common material used in classrooms. Therefore, we feel that further questions need to be explored:

- Why do teachers appear to be reluctant to working with modern methods and materials for the teaching of English?
- In what ways may the internet be used in classrooms for the teaching of English?
- Is it possible to use social media in the classroom as a resource for teaching English, and in what ways?
- Apart from published textbooks, what other materials could be used as the central content for teaching English?
Literature

Primary literature


Secondary literature
Crewe, J. (2011) *How far do ‘global’ ELT coursebooks realize key principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and enable effective teaching-learning?


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