An Investigation of Learner-Centered Language Teaching Procedures via Three 8th Grade English Study Book Series.

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Foreign language teaching has changed to a great extent during the past few decades. Language teaching is currently viewed as a learner-centered process, where the student is seen as an independent actor whose learning the teacher supports and guides. A favorable learning environment is also presumed to entail concrete learning experiences and communicative activities that can subsequently be reflected on. Another focal intention of foreign language teaching is to contribute to an awareness and tolerance of cultural differences. The learner is therefore encouraged to accept more responsibility of his/her learning in an active and stimulating learning environment, and the teacher is no longer the focal target of interest in the learning process. Moreover, language teaching is also supposed to follow uniform general guidelines defined in the Central European Framework of Reference. All this is the basis for the Central European Framework of Reference, European Language Portfolio, experiential learning, and learner autonomy, which are the theoretical frameworks of this study. The Finnish National Core Curriculum 2004 was also included in this study to place it in a broader context.

This study concerns itself with the ways in which three 8th grade English language study book series, namely Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8, foster learner-centered language teaching procedures. These books were selected because they are all widely in use, represent the two major publishers in Finland, and have been published between 2003-2010. Consequently, the results of this study provide a good overview of the situation of learner-centered language teaching procedure in Finland, and show any progress that may have occurred during 2003-2010. The objective of this study was approached by examining the extent to which the study book editions reflect the European Language Portfolio, experiential learning methods, and learner/teacher autonomy. The textbooks, exercise books, and teacher's materials for each study book edition were examined. The methodology comprised of a two-phased combined methods approach, which first entailed a quantitative analysis, where the data was quantified according to research parameters consisting of 14 learner-centered exercise categories. This was followed by a qualitative content analysis of these exercise categories to examine the possibly different applications of these exercise types. The general educational philosophies of the study book editions were also qualitatively analyzed with regard to their respective views of learning, the European Language Portfolio, experiential learning, learner/teacher autonomy, grammar instruction, self-assessment and reflective activities, and the level of difficulty adaptation.

The results of this study showed that there is very little difference between the Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8. Moreover, there were no statistically significant differences as to the overall proportions of the learner-centered exercises examined, and the only two exercise categories that showed a statistically very high significance were the categories of drama exercises and project tasks. Consequently, Smart Moves 2 can be regarded as incorporating slightly more experiential and autonomous activity types. Having said that, the relatively minor proportion of these activities in the overall number of exercises hinders the grounds to draw broad conclusions based on this finding. However, there were significant statistical differences between the editions when the components (textbook, exercise book, teacher's material) were considered separately and in combination (textbook and exercise book), although their significance in the overall findings of this study is of a lesser importance. Interestingly, only a very few activities were followed by a reflective activity, which is a crucial component in a learner-centered language learning process. On the contrary, the reflective activities were rather few altogether and concentrated on more extensive periods of classwork rather than individual activities. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis showed that the realization of the exercises in Smart Moves 2 was often more learner engaging than in Spotlight 8 or Key English 8. The activities in Smart Moves 2 seemed to require more independent problem solving and creativity and the thematic matters entailed more variation. In addition, there were differences in the implementation of grammar instruction in that the approach adopted in Smart Moves 2 was more learner-centered and involved problem-based grammar rule inference. Similarly, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 were more inclined towards the traditional grammar teaching method which constitutes of specific grammar rule instruction which is followed by a series of exercises.

The findings of this study imply that there has been very little development in the implementation of the European Language Portfolio, experiential learning, and teacher/learner autonomy between 2003-2010. This is an interesting finding bearing in mind that the English study books have been designed by professional foreign language pedagogues, and the learner-centered approaches to language instruction were first ytroduced in the late 1990s or earlier. This raises the question why such learner-centered language teaching procedures are not reflected to a greater extent in the study books although the concept of learner-centeredness has been studied quite extensively. More research is needed on all levels of education to be able to answer this question.

Avainsanat – Keywords
the Central European Framework of Reference, The European Language Portfolio, Experiential Learning, Learner Autonomy, Self-Assessment

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Vieraiden kielten opetus on muuttunut merkittävästi viimeisten vuosikymmenten aikana ja se mielletään nykyään oppilaskeskeisenä prosessina, jossa oppilas on itsenäinen toimija, jonka oppimista ja työskentelyä opettaja tukee ja ohjaa. Nykykäsityksen mukaan ihanteellisen oppimisympäristön katsotaan sisältävän konkreettisia oppimiskokemuksia ja viestintää, joita voidaan käsitellä reflektoinnin kautta. Laadukkaan kieltenopetuksen katsotaan myös edistävän monikulttuurisuutta ja suvaitsevaisuutta. Oppijaa rohkaistaan ottamaan vastuuta omasta oppimisestaan kannustavassa ympäristössä, joten opettaja ei ole enää oppimisprosessin keskiössä. Lisäksi opetuksen tulee mukailla Eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen yhdenmukaisia tavoitteita. Tällainen oppimiskäsitys on eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen, eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja oppijan ja opettajan autonomian taustalla, jotka yhdessä muodostavat tämän tutkimuksen teoreettisen viitekehyksen. Opetussuunnitelman perusteet (2004) sisällytettiin myös tutkimuksen teoriaosuuteen, jotta tutkimuksen näkökulma laajenisi tältä osin.

Tässä tutkimuksessa selvitettiin minkä verran kolme 8-luokan englannin kielen oppikirjasarjaa (Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 ja Key English 8) sisältävät oppilaskeskeisiä opetusratkaisuja. Kyseiset kirjasarjat valittiin aineistoksi siksi, että ne ovat laajasti opetuskäytössä, ne edustavat molempia pääasiallisia oppikirjakustantajia (Otava, WSOY), ja ne on julkaistu 2003–2010 välisenä aikana. Tämän tutkimuksen tulokset antavat näin ollen kattavan yleiskuvan oppilaskeskeisen kielenopetuksen tilasta Suomessa. Lisäksi tulokset paljastavat mahdollisen kehityksen vuosien 2003–2010 välisenä aikana. Tutkimuksen tutkimusongelmaa lähestyttiin tutkimalla minkä verran oppikirjoissa näkyy eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen ja oppilaan sekä opettajan autonomian vahvistaminen. Jokaisen oppikirjasarjan tekstikirja, tehtäväkirja ja opettajan opas huomioitiin analyysissä. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia menetelmiä, joten tutkimusmenetelmällinen ratkaisu on niin kutsuttu combined methods -lähestymistapa. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa aineisto luokiteltiin 14 oppilaskeskeisen tehtävätyypin mukaan, jotka pohjautuvat tutkimuksen teoreettiseen viitekehykseen. Tämän jälkeen sekä määrällisessä analyysissä löydetyt tehtävätyypit että oppikirjasarjat yleisesti ottaen analysoitiin laadullisesti. Näin tehtävätyyppien ja kirjasarjojen laadulliset erot huomioitiin. Oppikirjasarjojen laadullisessa analyysissä kiinnitettiin erityistä huomiota eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen, ja autonomian vahvistamisen näkyvyyteen kirjasarjoissa. Lisäksi tutkittiin kieliopin opetuksessa, itsearvioinnissa ja opetuksen eriyttämisessä näkyviä eroja.

Tutkimuksen tuloksista ilmenee, että kirjasarjojen välillä ei ole juuri eroja kvantitatiivisesta näkökulmasta. Oppilaskeskeisten tehtävien osuudessa ei ollut tilastollisesti merkitsevää eroa, ja ainoat 2 tehtävätyyppiä, joista löytyi tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja olivat draamaharjoitukset ja projektityöt. Toisaalta nämä kaksi kategoriaa edustavat hyvin pientä osuutta tehtävien kokonaismäärästä, joten tuloksesta on vaikea tehdä yleistettäviä johtopäätöksiä. Kirjasarjojen väliltä löytyi kuitenkin tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja, kun kirjasarjojen osia analysoitiin tilastollisesti joko erikseen tai yhdistelmänä (tekstikirja ja tehtäväkirja). Nämä erot ovat kuitenkin kokonaisuuden kannalta vähemmän merkittäviä. Yllättäen hyvin harvan tehtävän välittömässä läheisyydessä oli reflektiotehtäviä, joiden merkitystä oppimiskokemuksen välittömässä läheisyydessä korostetaan oppimislähtöisissä oppimisteorioissa. Reflektiotehtäviä oli kaiken kaikkiaan melko vähän ja ne keskittyivät laajempiin asiakokonaisuuksiin yksittäisten harjoitusten sijaan. Toisaalta laadullinen tutkimus osoitti, että Smart Moves 2:n tehtävät olivat usein luovia, tematiikaltaan vaihtelevia ja usein oppilasta innostavampia ja vaativat enemmän itsenäisiä ongelmanratkaisutaitoja kuin muiden kirjasarjojen tehtävät. Lisäksi kieliopinopetuksessa oli vastaavia eroja, eli Smart Moves 2:ssa kielioppia lähestyttiin oppilaslähtöisestä ongelmanratkaisun näkökulmasta perinteisen kielioppisääntöjen frontaaliopetuksen ja harjoitusten sijaan, mikä oli Spotlight 8:ssa ja Key English 8:ssa yleisesti sovellettu lähtökohta.

Tutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että kirjasarjoissa on tapahtunut hyvin vähän kehitystä eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja autonomian vahvistamisen osalta vuosina 2003–2010. Tulos on mielenkiintoinen, sillä oppikirjasarjat ovat vieraiden kielten opetuksen ammattilaisten suunnittelemia ja oppilaskeskeiset opetusmenetelmät ovat olleet useiden tutkimusten kohteena 1990-luvun lopulta lähtien (eurooppalainen kielisalkku) tai aiemmin. Tämä herättääkin pohtimaan, miksi nämä oppilaskeskeiset menetelmät eivät näy uusissakaan oppikirjoissa enemmissä määrissä. Tähän kysymykseen vastaaminen edellyttää lisätutkimusta kaikilla opetusasteilla.

CONTENTS:

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

ELP= the European Language Portfolio

CEFR= the Central European Framework of Reference

FNCC=the Finnish National Core Curriculum

1. INTRODUCTION

This study examines the ways in which three 8th grade English language study book series foster learner-centered language teaching procedures. This objective will be approached by examining the extent to which the study book editions reflect the European Language Portfolio (ELP), experiential learning methods, and learner autonomy. This topic is interesting because it calls for an interdisciplinary approach containing aspects from the fields of English linguistics and education.

The topic of this study is important, because the study book series is generally an essential component of teaching, and will therefore have a great impact on a teacher's methods of instruction. Therefore, the study book is a key element in the implementation of a desired educational philosophy, such as the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy. That said, it is unlikely that any educational philosophy would be successfully incorporated into the teaching in Finland without being consciously promoted in the study books. This study concerns only lower secondary school material, because the ELP in English language teaching has not been studied comprehensively at that level. Moreover, Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 were selected because Smart Moves 2 and Spotlight 8 are the most recent editions from the two major publishers, Otava and WSOY, respectively. On the other hand, although Key English 8 (WSOY) is an older study book series than the other two, it is still widely used today. Consequently, examining all three study book editions will provide a comprehensive overview into the learner-centeredness of the study book editions currently in use. In addition, it will reveal possible development regarding the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy that may have taken place after the publishing of the oldest edition, Key English 8.

My hypothesis is that the study books include tasks and activities typical of ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy and it is likely that the teacher is encouraged to incorporate aspects of these educational philosophies into his/her teaching. However, since Key English 8 is an older edition than the other books, ELP, experiential learning, and learner autonomy may not be promoted in it as much as in the other editions. I further hypothesize that the use of ELP may be recommended but it is unlikely that the books operate comprehensively within an ELP-oriented approach. In addition, I believe that teacher and learner autonomy are fostered to some extent but the traditional teacher oriented learning model is likely to be the prevailing one.

Examining the role of ELP in the study material provides a different kind of perspective into the currently ongoing discussion of language teaching. Even though the theoretical principles of teaching and learning paradigms have been subject to research quite extensively, there are few studies that have considered the manifestations of these issues in English language study material. The results of this study may therefore be beneficial to the editors of English Language books as well as language teachers and will hopefully draw attention to the changing roles of both the learner and the teacher. If the ELP is comprehensively adopted into use on a national level in Finland, it is highly likely that there will be major changes in foreign languages pedagogy within the following decade. Consequently, examining the ways in which teachers are encouraged to approach and apply the ELP in the study material is very topical and in the common interest of foreign language teachers, educators, and publishers.

This study has two aims.

1) To determine the extent to which and how the ELP is encouraged to be used in English language teaching in three 8th grade secondary school study book editions, namely Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8

2) To determine whether these study books intend to contribute to the growth of teacher- and learner autonomy, and whether the teaching methods proposed are within the experiential learning paradigm and The ELP.

A more general aim is to increase awareness and knowledge about the principles of the ELP, experiential language learning and learner autonomy as part of plurilingual language education. This may contribute to an open discussion of today's language education.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter aims to establish a scientific background for this paper by looking at prior research and results relevant to this study. Essential concepts, such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), the European Language Portfolio (ELP) experiential learning, learner autonomy, and the Finnish Basic Education Core Curriculum (FNCC 2004), will be discussed. Some studies of interest, such as Lepistö's work (2008) on foreign language teachers' perceptions of self-assessment, will also be presented where necessary. However, hardly any studies that focus directly on the use of ELP have been carried out. This might stem from the fact that although the ELP has been under theoretical development for circa two decades, it is still a fairly recent method on the practical level of foreign language education. Having said that, there are some studies in which the application of the CEFR as a part of foreign language teaching has been examined. In addition, the role of self assessment, which is an essential component of learner-centered language instruction, has also been examined in some studies. Others have considered the various types of exercises used in foreign language study books as well. Some of the studies presented here are Master's Theses.

2.1 The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The CEFR is a detailed description of linguistic skills and abilities intended for use with European learners of different languages. According to Little (2007: 1), the CEFR provides a common basis for language syllabi, curricula, evaluation, and study material in Europe. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the transparency and uniformity of assessment on a European level (COE 2003: 44). This is to ensure that educational diplomas are based on the same criteria and are comparable, which should facilitate and encourage European mobility

(Little 2007: 1). In addition, the CEFR describes what the learners need to be able to do in order to communicate in a language and provides effective strategies to pursue this goal.

The Common European Framework of Reference (COE 2003: 11) encourages professional educators to consider the following questions:

- What do the learners need to be able to do with language?
- What do they need to learn in order to use language according to these objectives?
- Why are they willing to study a language/languages?
- What are the language learners like (age, sex, social background, educational background etc.)?
- What kinds of skills, capabilities and experiences do their teachers have?
- What kinds of study books, reference books and materials do they have at their disposal (dictionaries, grammar books, audio visual appliances, computers, software, etc.)?
- How much time can they use to study?

Such an approach calls for co-operation between different educational actors such as teachers and designers of education and diplomas, for example. It also places the learner in the centre of the learning process.

CEFR also incorporates language learning as a life-long process that extends beyond school years. Kohonen (2005: 21) suggests that this idea could be supported by introducing different portfolios for different age groups, such as children (primary school), adolescents (lower secondary school), and adults (secondary school, university and work life). However, both the

teacher and the learner have to be able to monitor the learning progress during this process. For this reason, CEFR includes *The Common Reference Levels* (COE 2003: 46, Little 2007: 22−23; Kohonen 2000a: 21−22) that comprehensively account for any levels of proficiency a learner might possess at a given moment. The six levels of proficiency introduced in CEFR (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2) are the basis of evaluation and assessment and can be divided into additional sub-levels (such as A1.1, A2.1, B1.1, B1.2, etc.), where necessary (Kohonen 2001: 21−22; COE 2003: 56−59). The six main levels of proficiency are classified in the following way (Little 2007: 23):

Table 2.1 *The six proficiency levels of CEFR*

Basic User A		**Independent User B**		**Proficient User C**	
A1	**A2**	**B1**	**B2**	**C1**	**C2**
(Breakthrough)	**(Waystage)**	**(Threshold)**	**(Vantage)**	**(Effective Operational Proficiency)**	**(Mastery)**
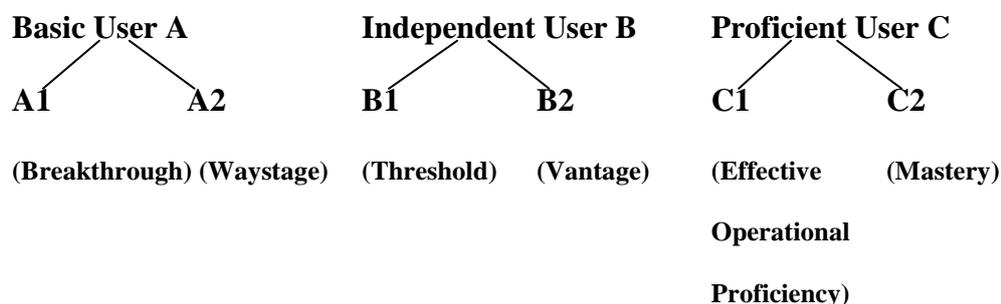
CEFR includes a number of such proficiency descriptions accounted for in detail with regard to different aspects of language use, such as speaking, public speaking, academic writing, creative writing, listening, watching TV etc. Moreover, it determines the levels of proficiency needed to evaluate the language learning process during education and later stages of life on a life-long basis (Little 2007: 1). A more detailed description of the six proficiency levels of the CEFR is presented in table 1 in the Appendix.

Paloniemi (2006) applied the CEFR to German language teaching in a business department as a part of a language teaching development project by creating an institution specific framework for a vocational business language course. The framework contained detailed descriptions of professional communication skills and related situations, language teaching and learning, linguistic aims and objectives, and evaluation criteria. The aims of the project were to unite the language instruction practices in different foreign languages and to increase student motivation. The project was considered successful based on the experiences of the author, as well as student feedback (Paloniemi 2006: 1−10).

2.2 The European Language Portfolio (ELP)

A language portfolio is a "systematic collection of student work that is analyzed to show progress over time with regard to instructional objectives" (Kohonen 2000a: 23). The ELP, however, is a threefold language portfolio that uses the CEFR as its theoretical basis (Kohonen 2000; Little 2000: 53−55). Its main functions are to contribute to the development of teacher and student autonomy, language learning motivation, and self assessment (*ibid.*). It is also designed to promote life-long language learning, *plurilingualism* (discussed in section 2.3) and mobility within Europe (Ushioda 2002: 1; COE 2003; Kohonen 2000).

The three components of the ELP are: *the language passport, the language biography*, and *the dossier* (Kohonen 2005a: 12; Ushioda & Ridley 2002: 1−2; Kohonen 2000a: 24−25). *The language passport* reports the learner's linguistic identity, essential language learning experiences and possible language qualifications in an internationally intelligible format (Ushioda & Ridley 2002: 1−2; Kohonen 2005a: 12). It can also include information on language skills limited to a particular competence, such as spoken language skills, or

knowledge of specific content areas (Kohonen 2000a: 24). *The language biography* is where the learner sets his/her individual learning objectives and assesses his/her progress (Ushioda & Ridley 2002: 2). It also encourages the student to state what he/she can do in each language and to include information of experiences gained within the educational context as well as in other domains of life (Kohonen 2000a: 24; Kohonen 2005a: 12). This is done in the form of *can do –statements* in relation to five communicative activities which are listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, and writing (Little *et al.* 2007: 10). *The dossier* is a collection of the learner's authentic language work samples (Kohonen 2005a: 12). The material included in the dossier should therefore illustrate achievements and experiences documented in the language passport and the language biography. All of these components are put into use in the two functions of the ELP. These are considered in section 2.3.

The development of ELP began in the 1970s (Perclová 2006: 13) by the Council of Europe Modern Languages Group, which makes it a fairly recent pedagogical invention. It was first introduced in Finland in 1998−2000 when an experimental project on the use of ELP was carried out in 15 European countries (Kohonen & Pajukanta 2003: 7–8). Approximately 30 000 students and 1800 teachers of all levels of education ranging from primary school to adult education took part in the project. In Finland, the project was coordinated by Viljo Kohonen from Tampere University and Ulla Pajukanta from upper secondary school of Nokia. The project involved 360 students and 22 teachers of whom 175 students and 12 teachers were from secondary school, 150 students and 7 teachers from upper secondary school and 35 students and 3 teachers from two vocational institutes.

In short, the project revealed that the use of ELP brings a number of new positive aspects to language studying, as long as it does not follow a series of repetitious uninteresting activities

and artificial exercises (Kohonen 2003: 13). During the project, for example, the students and the teacher worked more cooperatively and interactively than before and the student had more responsibility and freedom in his/her studies. The students worked often in pairs, which gave them new kinds of learning experiences as they became each other's teachers. On the other hand, the increased independence and responsibility in the studies caused difficulties to some students (Kohonen 2003: 11, 15−16). Interestingly, the individual task goal setting (Kohonen & Pajukanta 2003: 12) and assessment of the learning process provided an effective means for more advanced students to challenge themselves.

 However, weaker students needed to be motivated twice as much an ELP-oriented language instruction requires more independent effort from the learner. Similarly, Kohonen (2000b: 36−37) argues that some students, most of whom are boys, seem to dislike working with the language portfolio, presumably due to motivational factors. Pollari (1998 cited in Kohonen 2000a: 36) reports similar findings in her unpublished Licentiate's Thesis. The less motivated students tend to settle for minimum performance in their language studies even though they would likely be capable of much better results. One possible explanation for this, along with lack of motivation, could be found in the ways the students are used to studying in school. Since they are accustomed to pursuing aims and objectives being set by the curriculum, study books, teachers, and parents (Kolu 1999: 11), taking more responsibility for one's own learning is challenging to them. Moreover, it is the teacher who has to "[…] help students/language users to see themselves as social actors and agents of their own learning and to develop their intercultural communicative competence and their capacity for intercultural communication and cooperation on a lifelong basis" (Little *et al.* 2007: 17). To be able to do this successfully, the teacher needs to have internalized the theoretical principles of ELP, as well as the pedagogic benefits of its use, which undoubtedly increases their

workload momentarily (*ibid.*). In addition, commenting on and handling learner feedback contributes to the augmented amount of work as well (Kohonen 2000b: 36).

Having said all that, it is not reasonable to think that such challenges are present only when the ELP is used. On the contrary, Kohonen (2000b: 36) also points out the implausibility of there being one particular method that would motivate and evoke the best results in every single learner. This applies to the traditional teacher centered methods as well. However, a teacher intending to work with the ELP should be prepared to encounter some kind of learner suspicion as well as objection (*ibid.*; Kolu 1999).

2.2.1 Pedagogical Function and Reporting Function

The ELP is a pedagogical tool that has two main functions, *the reporting function* and *the pedagogical function* (Little 2007: 10). According to Ushioda and Ridley (2002: 2), the reporting function is an overview of some basic information of the learner and it involves the Language Passport and the Dossier. Moreover, the ELP presents information about the learner's language learning experiences and foreign language use. It also demonstrates actual aspects of the owner's linguistic skills by authentic pieces of work the learner has produced. In addition to allowing the ELP owner to monitor his/her study progress, such an overview of the learner should facilitate the transition from one school to another as the teacher is provided with the essential background information of the student.

On the other hand, the pedagogical function of the ELP is to encourage plurilingualism (discussed below) and cultural broad-mindedness (Kohonen 2005a: 12), and as mentioned

earlier, life-long learning (Ushioda 2002: 1; COE 2003; Kohonen 2000; Kohonen 2005a). The ELP involves the language learner in the learning process and makes it more transparent which should lead to an increased awareness of what is being studied and why. Furthermore, the use of ELP makes the objectives of language studying more apparent to the teacher and the student. It also provides tools and concepts for long-term language studying (Kohonen 2005a: 20). According to Ushioda (2006: 152), this kind of approach increases learner autonomy and motivation because the student is involved comprehensively in the planning and realization of language studying, and should thus experience feelings of responsibility and commitment. The notion of *learner ownership* (Kohonen 2005a: 14) is essential here; it refers to the extent to which the learner experiences independence and possibility to influence his/her studies. Consequently, the use of ELP requires a pedagogical approach different from the traditional one, the goal of which is the development of a thorough knowledge of grammar for a given language (Kohonen 2001: 20). This will be discussed in section 2.3.

Tuominen (2010) made a self-assessment material package for primary school students on grades 3−6, which is in many aspects very similar to the self-assessment tasks characteristic of the ELP. Her Master's Thesis is essentially a report of the creation of a self-assessment material package for primary school students. The theoretical framework of this package was a socio-constructivist approach to learning and teaching, lifelong learning, self-assessment, motivation, and self-esteem. Even though the CEFR was not used as the theoretical basis of the study, the self-assessment material produced by the author followed the principles of the ELP and CEFR. One of the aims of Tuominen's study was to promote informal learning in that not all learning has to take place in a foreign language classroom. Another aim was to contribute to a learner centered learning approach and to shift power from the teacher to the student. Interestingly, there was no empirical component in Tuominen's study.

2.2.2 Plurilingualism and Multilingualism

Plurilingualism in this context refers to the ability to take part in an intercultural interaction where the language user has proficiency in several languages and experience of the respective cultures, which are made good use of in the communicative situation (COE 2001: 168). It is important to differentiate plurilingualism from multilingualism, which is simply the knowledge of two or more languages or the co-existence of languages within a society (COE 2001: 4). A multilingual environment could be created by simply diversifying the foreign language teaching in a given school or by encouraging the students to study other foreign languages beside English to reduce its dominant position. On the contrary, the plurilingual approach emphasizes the fact that as a person's experience of language in its cultural context expands from a domestic language to the language of the surrounding society, and finally to foreign languages of other peoples, the language user's communicative competence develops and adopts new dimensions. Moreover, the resulting communicative competence utilizes all knowledge and experience of languages and related cultures rather than restricts them to isolated linguistic capabilities. This way the language user has a versatile communicative competence of which different parts can be made good use of when interacting with different interlocutors. A plurilingual speaker might therefore switch languages during a discussion or take advantage of other languages he/she has knowledge of when reading a piece of text, for example (COE 2001: 4; Kohonen 2000a: 22−23). Similarly, the speaker might also use even a rudimentary competence in a given language to help out a discussion partner who may have none. This comprehensive plurilingual competence is one of the core ideas that the European Language Portfolio attempts to establish.

2.2.3 Pedagogical Paradigm Shift

As discussed in section 2.1, using the ELP calls for conscious teacher reflection on perceptions of learners, self, class activities, and the intended objectives pursued in class. The teacher should have a thorough understanding of the theory behind ELP use as well as how it may deviate from his/her habitual ways of working in class. This sub-section discusses the pedagogical paradigm shift that is necessary in order to implement the intended use of the ELP.

Kohonen (2001: 11) defines a paradigm as a "systematic pattern of thought or a set of principles and basic beliefs for understanding and explaining certain aspects of reality". Similarly, a pedagogical paradigm refers to the underlying principles and beliefs of teaching. One of the greatest changes in foreign language pedagogy, recently, has been the shift from a teacher-centered learning model to a *learner-centered approach*, which is also crucial in CEFR and ELP. Kaikkonen (2001: 64−69; Kolb 1984: 20−21) argues that in addition to the learner being at the centre of the learning process, modern language education today also calls for a *holistic approach*. This means that the learners engage in the learning process with their entire personality. The aim of such an approach is the development of an *intercultural competence* containing knowledge of the language and culture along with tolerance for cultural and linguistic diversity. According to Kohonen (2001: 66), intercultural learners are "[…] knowing, feeling, thinking and social beings […]" that understand the value of each language and culture as they all are someone's mother tongue and culture. The student should thus develop linguistic skills that enable him/her to function in an intercultural environment in an appreciating manner. Needless to say, the teaching methods used have to support such linguistic development and the teacher is therefore challenged with eliciting the students'

interest in experimenting by themselves and to learn by doing (Kulmala-Rego & Lindgren 2005: 246) as well as expanding the learners' conception of culture (Kaikkonen 2001: 84−88).

Some scholars think that the modern approach to teaching is moving towards a transformative paradigm. The teacher is accordingly seen as an ethical educational specialist that should carry out reflective activities to become aware of his/her work at a deep, even unconscious, level of professional awareness (Little *et al*. 2007: 27−28). The idea that teachers free themselves from their possibly constraining educational beliefs and become professionally cooperative designers of pedagogical learning environments, is also crucial to the transformational learning paradigm (Little *et al*. 2007: 27). The following properties have been identified as essential for transformative learning (Kolb 1984; Askew & Carnell 1998; Edge 2002; Kohonen 2001, 2003, 2005b; Huttunen 2003; Sachs 2003; as cited in Little *et al*. 2007: 27):

1. Realizing the significance of professional interaction for growth

2. Developing an open, critical stance to professional work and seeing oneself as a continuous learner.

3. Developing a reflective attitude as a basic habit of mind which involves regular reflection on educational practices and their philosophical underpinnings.

4. Developing new self-understandings in concrete situations.

5. Reflecting on critical events or incidents in one's life and work history and learning from the personal insights gained.

6. Conscious risk-taking acting in new ways in class and with colleagues.

7. Ambiguity tolerance: learning to live with uncertainty concerning the decisions to be made.

This kind of approach emphasizes the role of teacher self-understanding that is obtained by reflecting on the concrete learning situations encountered with the learners (Little *et al*. 2007: 27). This should result in a deeper understanding of how the students see themselves as learners, what they find motivating and how to maintain their motivation (*ibid*.). Moreover, the teacher should become a researcher of his/her own work who actively seeks ways to develop the curriculum instead of being merely an expert of the formal subject matter being taught (*ibid*.).

2.3 Experiential Learning

The need for intercultural competence arises from the effects of the globalized capital markets, increased mobility of people, and a growing cooperation between different countries, for instance (Kohonen 2001: 8−9). Such societal changes are inevitably reflected in the educational curricula because they are an integral part of the society. According to Kohonen, experiential learning "…provides new perspectives for the fundamental process of redesigning foreign language education…" to answer this need (*ibid*.).

The basic belief behind experiential learning is that experience is a significant factor in learning (Kolb 1984: 20). According to Kolb, this differentiates the experiential learning theory from many other cognitive theories, such as rationalism and behavioral learning theories, which emphasize acquisition, manipulation, and recall of abstract symbols (*ibid.*). However, Kolb (*ibid.*) points out that the experiential learning theory is not intended to replace the other cognitive learning theories but to combine aspects of them into a *holistic approach*. Kolb (1984 : 3) also argues that not only do people learn from experience, but

experience as a learning source is increasingly used even in higher education. In theory, experiential learning combines aspects of *formal learning* with *informal learning* (Kohonen 2001). The former refers to skills learnt in educational institutions and the latter to any learning experiences the learner may have experienced outside the educational institution. According to Kohonen (2001: 23), experiential learning techniques entail many interactive practices that give the participants the opportunity to learn from each others' experiences through the following activities:

- personal journals and reflections

- portfolios, thought questions and reflective essays

- roleplays, drama activities, games and simulations

- personal stories and case-studies

- visualizations and imaginative activities

- models, analogies and theory construction

- empathy-taking activities, story-telling, sharing with others

- discussions and reflection in cooperative groups.

Furthermore, these tasks involve the learners in the learning experience comprehensively in a way that stimulates the learner intellectually and emotionally (Kohonen 2001: 23). The focal idea of these exercises is to both observe the phenomenon or activity and participate in a meaningful task. Moreover, the idea is that the learner is personally involved with the subject matter being studied, rather than just hearing, reading or thinking about it (Kohonen 2001: 29). According to Kohonen (2001: 23), the learning experiences can be enriched by appropriate information technology use as it offers a medium of input for foreign language education, although it may also cause problems if used excessively. However, Kohonen

(2001: 24) underlines the importance of reflection in experiential learning activities because learning from an experience takes place by processing it through reflection. Moreover, according to Kohonen (2001: 29), it is the experience that will result in effective learning when reflected upon in sufficient depth.

2.3.2 The Lewinian Model of Experiential learning

Active experimentation

Trying out what has been learned

Concrete experience

Doing/ Experiencing

P r e h e n s i o n

Transformation

Abstract conceptualization

Learning from the experience

**Reflective observation**

Reflecting on the experince
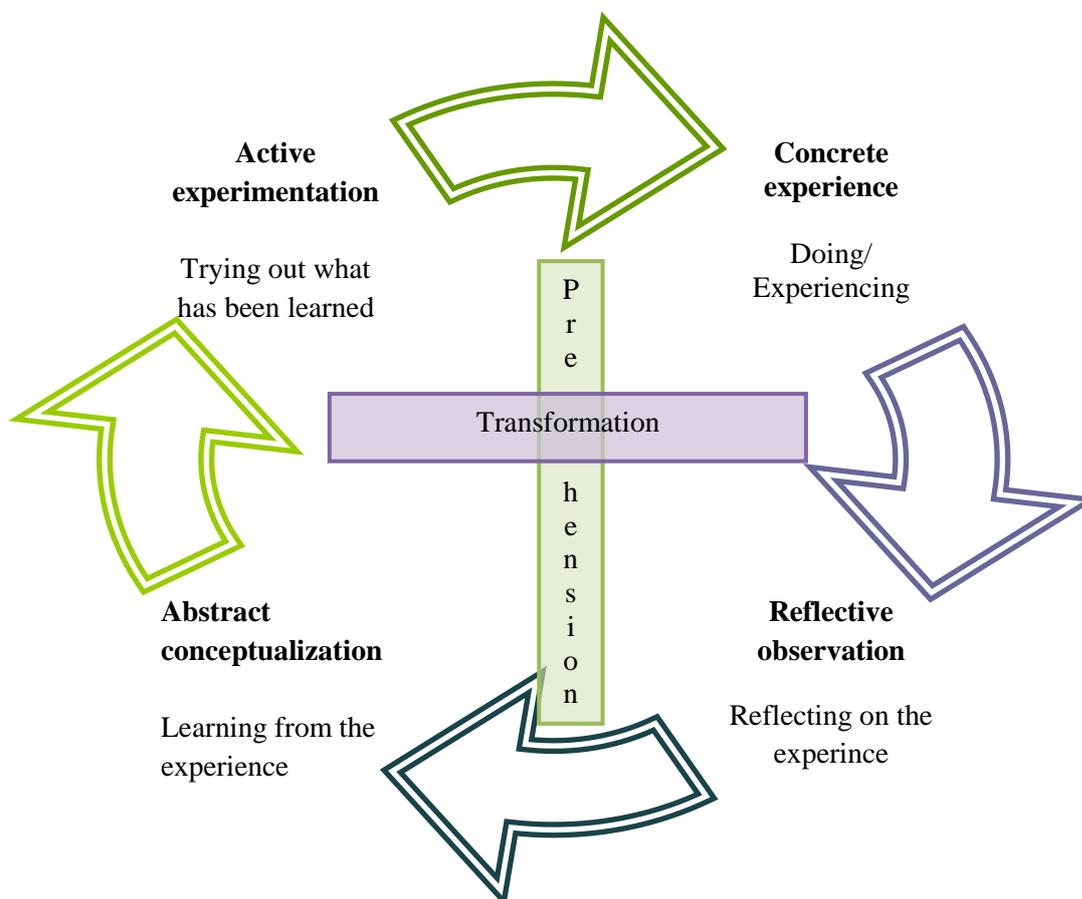
Figure 2.1 *The Lewinian Model of Experiential Learning* (Kolb 1984: 42)

Kolb (1984: 21) describes the functioning of the Lewinian model of experiential learning in the following way:

> "[…]learning, change, and growth are seen to be facilitated best by an integrated process that begins with here-and-now experience followed by collection of data and observations about the experience. The data are then analyzed and the conclusions of this analysis are fed back to the actors in the experience for their use in the modification of their behavior and choice of new experiences. Learning is thus conceived as a four stage cycle […in which…] [i]mmediate concrete experience is the basis for observation and reflection".

The personal learning experience of the student is thus the core idea of experiential learning. The experience familiarizes the learner with abstract concepts by giving them subjective and personal meanings that are created by the immediate experience (Kolb 1984: 21). Furthermore, learning is caused by a "…process of resolution of conflicts between two dialectically opposed dimensions, the *prehension* dimension, and the *transformation* dimension" (Kolb 1984: 27−31; Kohonen 2001: 26). The prehension dimension refers to the learner's personal way of handling personal experience that is generally within two modes of knowing that Kolb calls understanding via 'apprehension' or via 'comprehension' (Kohonen 2001: 27). Moreover, apprehension refers to the tacit, instant knowledge the learner grasps without conscious analytical deduction, or learning without conscious effort, whereas comprehension refers to a more conscious learning process that brings more order and predictability to unconscious sensations (Kohonen 2001: 28). Kolb (1984: 42−44) exemplifies this with a very clear and succinct illustration. Accordingly, the apprehension dimension is everything one tacitly remarks of his/her environment, such as room temperature, background noise, feel of a chair and so on. These apprehended sensations, also referred to as the reality surrounding us (*ibid.*), are very evanescent in nature. However, by consciously reflecting upon the surroundings of that particular situation, one can build a model of those sensations

via the comprehension dimension. Kolb (*ibid.*) describes this process as bringing structure and order to an otherwise unpredictable and constant stream of apprehended information. This model can then be communicated to other individuals, which means that the model will not vanish and may be subsequently applied to other similar situations.

The transformation dimension, on the other hand, refers to the "[…] *transformation of experience through reflective observation and active experimentation"* (Kohonen 2001: 28). Kolb (1984: 51−53) describes the transformation dimension as a set of two processes, *intention* and *extension*, that complement each other. Moreover, a person learns from concrete experiences through intentional reflection which is followed by a subsequent extension of the experience. Therefore, according to Kolb (1984:52), "[…] learning occurs through the active extension and grounding of ideas *and* experiences in the external world[…]" and reflecting upon the essential attributes of these experiences and ideas. The transformation dimension thus refers to this extensive process of bringing sense and order to the apprehended sensations (Kohonen 2001: 28). Kolb (1984: 51−53) exemplifies this process with an example of how one's apprehended conception of a rose is extended by a comprehensive reflection. Let us imagine that a person is looking at a beautiful rose in a vase. He/she transforms his/her apprehension of a rose by intentionally examining its aspects and extending the apprehended image accordingly. The fact that the petals have a coloring that fades from white to a subtle pink extends the prior apprehended information of roses being exclusively red in color. He/she is likely to notice the delicate fragrance that invites the person to pick up the rose and bring it closer to his/her nose, which results in the person pricking his finger on the horny stem of the rose. All these aspects are hence associated with the extended comprehension of a rose. This simplistic example illustrates the role of the transformation dimension in the Lewinian model, which is naturally much more complicated in language learning context. The

learning orientation of the person affects the process; an actively oriented learner may try to maximize the benefit of such a procedure by taking risks and not being afraid of possible failures, for instance. On the contrary, a learner with an excessively reflective orientation may not be willing to take such risks in order to avoid mistakes, and may choose to transform the experiences through reflective observation instead.

As Kolb points out (1984: 68−69; Kohonen 2001: 27−29), the polar ends of the two opposed dimensions thus support *four orientations of learning*:

1) *concrete experience*, intuitional learning with a strong involvement of the learner's individual experiences. The feeling is emphasized over rational reasoning. Discussions in small groups, simulation techniques, use of videos and films as well as the use of examples, stories, and autobiographies are instructional activities compatible with this aspect of learning.

2) *reflective observation, learning by perception*, focus is on understanding the meaning of ideas and situations by elaborate observation. The learner is trying to work out how things happen by attempting to look at them from different perspectives and relying on his/her own thoughts, feelings and judgement.

3) *abstract conceptualization*, which is learning by thinking and involves the use of logic and problem-solving. Thinking and manipulation of abstract symbols is emphasized with a tendency to favor precise conceptual systems. Compatible instructional activities are theory construction, lecturing, and building models and analogies.

4) *active experimentation*, learning by doing with an emphasis on practical issues and getting the task done. The learner tries to make an impact on people and manipulate situations, and even take risks in order to complete the task. The instructional techniques suitable for this orientation include fieldwork, various projects, laboratory and home work, games, dramatizations and simulations, and case studies.

2.3.3 Experiential learning in foreign language teaching

As Kohonen (2001: 29) points out, experiential learning is "…a four-stage cycle combining all of these orientations". Consequently, an experience as such is not sufficient to evoke experiential learning. On the contrary, the experience must be observed thoroughly and consciously analyzed. This reflection should also be followed by "…testing new hypotheses in order to obtain further evidence" (*ibid.*). Moreover, Kohonen suggests that theoretical concepts will not become a part of a learner's frame of reference unless having been experienced at an emotional level. In other words, Kohonen emphasizes the role of an emotional, personal experience. Similarly, the experiential learning model suggests that learning involves an ongoing recycling of experience, reflection, conceptualization and active experimentation. This means that the teacher should be able to provide opportunities for the full development of the cycle (Kohonen 2001: 29). In conclusion, essential requirements of effective experiential second language learning are (Nunan 1992: 29):

1) Varied, comprehensible input in the target language with an emphasis on understanding of the content of the texts and other forms language. Moreover, the language is used as a vehicle of studying the subject matter rather than as an end itself;

2) Learner reflection on language structure as well as explicit instruction of the systemic structure of the language;

3) Comprehensible output with an emphasis on the importance of the learner's productive use of the target language in communication, attempting to further increase fluency and comprehensibility by taking communicative risks and stretching the learner's linguistic skills;

4) Corrective feedback by the teacher and fellow learners, grasping information about the development of the linguistic competence in the target language, and thus aiming at a thorough understanding of the criteria of acceptable and accurate language use through self-assessment and reflection in cooperative learning teams.

What is more, Kolb (1984: 28) emphasizes the fact that the teacher should not only "[…]implant new ideas but also […] dispose of or modify old ones[…]" because "[…i]n many cases, resistance to new ideas stems from their conflict with old beliefs that are inconsistent with them". In other words, in order to facilitate learning, the teacher should bring out the learners' old ideas and conceptions and put them under examination and testing. After this, the teacher should proceed to integrating the further refined ideas into the learners' belief systems (*ibid.*).

2.4 Learner autonomy

If considered from a narrow point of view (Kohonen 2001: 39), autonomy is "…the learner's right to choose the level of engagement appropriate to their own situations". Little (1991: 4) defines learner autonomy as a "…capacity − for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action". In this study, however, learner autonomy is approached from the perspectives of humanistic and phenomenological studies' idea of a person, or learner, in this case (Rodgers 1969; Stevick 1980; Niinistö 1984). Accordingly an autonomous learner is seen as a subject capable of finding meanings independently and achieving learning results under favorable circumstances. The learner's conscious efforts have an important role in this process (Huttunen 1986: 23) which follows that learner autonomy is essentially "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec 1979: 3). Furthermore, an autonomous learner is able to make decisions concerning his/her learning objectives and contents, learning methods or techniques, and monitor and evaluate his/her own learning process and related results (*ibid.*; Kohonen 2001: 36−54). This is thought to be important for two reasons (Little 2001: 46); firstly, if the learners are engaged in the planning and evaluation of their learning experiences from the very beginning, their learning should be

more productive. Secondly, the reflective engagement should help them fully internalize what is being studied in a way that the learnt material becomes a part of who they are. It should follow that the learnt knowledge and skills acquired in the classroom are available to them in the future and in other domains of life.

Achieving autonomy as a learner should not be regarded as a given fact. According to Kohonen (2001), emotional intelligence, i.e. "[…]being self-assured and motivated, being able to wait, following directions and concentrating on the task at hand, turning to teachers and school mates for help, and offering help to others[…]" (Kohonen 2001: 36), is a prerequisite to achieving greater student school success within the experiential learning paradigm. To achieve such a comprehensive knowledge of social interaction, the learner has to be aware of various aspects of his/her own identity and learning. Moreover, the learner should develop his/her competences in three areas of awareness; *personal awareness*, *process and situational awareness*, and *task awareness* (Kohonen 2001: 36−54). In other words, the learner needs to have a clear and well-defined self-image and self-esteem (Personal awareness). In addition, he/she needs an ability to organize the learning process towards a self-organized negotiated language learning experience, the ability to evaluate his/her progress and the required metacognitive and social skills (Process and situational awareness). Thirdly, the learner needs to be aware of his/her own role as an active agent in the learning process as well as of the functioning of language as a system and the way linguistic interaction works (Task awareness). Kohonen (2001: 36) also points out that the development of learner awareness and subsequent learner autonomy need to be accompanied by the professional growth of the teacher. The role of the teacher should therefore be closer to an instructor of the learning process instead of a frontal teaching practitioner.

On the other hand, Little (2001: 45−47) argues that in order to contribute to the growth of learner autonomy, teachers need to have internalized the concept of an autonomous learner as well as "…be able to exploit their professional skills autonomously, applying to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning" (Little 2001: 45). Moreover, the teacher's professional abilities play an important role with regard to fostering learner autonomy. For this reason, equal emphasis should be placed on the teacher's professional growth as on the learner as an autonomous agent.

A socially interactive learning environment is an important factor for learner autonomy. According to Little (2001: 46−47), it has been shown by successful classroom experiments (e.g., Dam 1995, Seeman and Tavares 2000, Thomsen 2000) that there is a social-interactive as well as an individual-cognitive dimension to learner autonomy. This means that the learner is unlikely to fully develop autonomy without sufficient interaction with his/her peers during class activities. Furthermore, fostering learner autonomy will have to be done by various forms of co-operation and collaboration because the shared responsibility for successful class activities can only be achieved by successful student co-operation. According to Little (*ibid.*) this is logical since all learning is achieved through communication, the early form of which is face-to-face interaction.

2.4.1 Three principles of learner autonomy

Little (2000: 50−51) introduces three principles for contributing to the growth of learner autonomy: (i) *learner engagement*,(ii) *learner reflection*, and (iii) *appropriate target language use*. The first principle entails that the teacher has the learner take responsibility for his/her own learning. This is an ongoing process in the classroom and requires *a truly*

reciprocal pedagogical dialogue (*ibid.*). In other words, the demands and goals of the curriculum and short-term individual learning goals should be discussed with the learner. The teacher should also give the learners an opportunity to influence the practical issues in the classroom, such as learning methods used in a particular task, for example. This should evoke feelings of responsibility for one's own learning and commitment which, in favorable circumstances, leads to greater learner engagement. The principle of reflectivity (Little 2000: 51), on the other hand, arises from the fact that it is not possible for the student to consciously take responsibility for his/her learning and then act accordingly without thinking about what he/she is about to do. As a classroom activity, reflection should be collaborative in nature and should aim at illuminating the common process the learners and the teacher are engaged in (*ibid*.). Additionally, the in-class reflective activities should be routinely carried out in the target language (Little 2000: 52) for them to be effective. One possible way of doing this is by considering reflective questions, such as those introduced by Dam (1995): "What are we doing?− Why are we doing it?− How are we doing it?−With what results?−What are we going to do next?" Such reflective considerations should be done in writing because it is then easier to provide the teacher and the learners with some material to reflectively discuss. This should also help the learners to gain some distance from their thoughts and to analyze them more easily (Little 2000: 52). According to the third principle, or that of the appropriate target language use, the learners should be engaged in *exploratory dialogue* (*ibid.*) that requires the use of the target language. In addition, the classroom should contain plenty of written scaffolding works the learners have done, such as posters, notebooks, or games and activities based on target language text. The teacher should also provide the learners with a great amount of target language input by interacting with the whole class, or a group of students, and have the students interact with each other.

2.5 The Finnish National Core Curriculum of Basic Education (2004)

Foreign language teaching in Finland is governed by the general principles of the Finnish National Core Curriculum (FNCC) that is established by the Finnish National Board of Education. In addition, each educational institution has a school-specified curriculum that follows the more general guidelines determined in the FNCC. These curricula may vary according to possible emphases of certain branch(es) of science, subjects, or pedagogies (such as Steiner pedagogy). Finally, in addition to the two factors mentioned above, the actual teaching that takes place is further affected by the beliefs, conceptions, attitudes and individual choices and preferences of the teacher. In this section, section 7.5 (Foreign Languages) of the Finnish National Core Curriculum 2004 will be discussed where necessary. This is to place this study in context with the national foreign language educational policy in Finland.

The aims and objectives stated in the FNCC are the development of communicational skills in a foreign language, to bring the learners accustomed to using their foreign language skills, appreciation of one's own cultural background and that of others', and creating the basis for subsequent language studies (FNCC 2004: 138). Knowledge of the cultural norms, lifestyle, and history of the target language and culture are supposed to increase during secondary school (FNCC 2004: 142−143), which is in accordance with the aims of the ELP and the CEFR. Moreover, the FNCC emphasizes cultural knowledge against the learner's own cultural background as well, which supposedly leads to a deeper understanding of the differences between the two cultures and tolerance of cultural differences. Such an approach is obviously compatible with the aims of ELP, as well.

In general, the FNCC has clear aims and objectives even though the instructional methods to be used are rarely specified. During grades 7−9 in secondary school, the teacher is expected to "…expand the pupil's language skills so as to encompass more demanding social situations" (FNCC 2004: 138). It is interesting that here the learner is referred to as *a pupil*, which does not seem to reflect an intention to contribute to learner autonomy. In addition, written language will receive an increasing amount of emphasis in teaching during these grades. Even though the written skills will need time to develop, one may wonder whether the learners have sufficient opportunities to practice their oral communication skills.

2.5.1 Learning and Communication Strategies

As far as learning strategies are concerned, they are discussed rather vaguely in the FNCC, and therefore, leave plenty of room for the teacher's individual choices and preferences. Dansereau (1985: 210) defines an effective learning strategy as "[…] a set of processes or steps that can facilitate the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information". Moreover, these strategies may vary with respect to various dimensions (*ibid.*); they may be algorithmic (*i.e.* sequences of procedures that remain unchanged over different task types, or, alternatively, they can change according to the demands of the task at hand. For this reason, a learning strategy for grasping the essential focal points of a great number of books may very well be different from a strategy used to familiarize oneself with a new aspect of grammar, for example. However, there are two kinds of learning strategies. Moreover, a learning strategy may have a direct impact on the information studied (primary strategy), or it may have an indirect impact by giving the learner tools to develop his/her cognitive functioning (support strategy) (*ibid.*).

According to the FNCC (2004: 141), the learners "…acquire more strategies characteristic of language learning" and will be using "…various working approaches and learning strategies effective from the standpoint of language studying and learning…"(FNCC 2004: 142). Interestingly, according to the FNCC, the learners will also learn "…to utilize them in learning their native languages" (*ibid.*). The idea that learners should use the language learning strategies in their mother tongue conflicts with the three principles of fostering learner autonomy (Little 2000). This is because comprehensive target language use is the constitutive, focal idea of experiential foreign language learning, the ELP, and development of learner autonomy. Additionally, according to the FNCC (2004: 142), the learners should also engage in "[…] small-scale projects independently or in a group […] and […] evaluate their own work and language skills […] in relation to the objectives, and change their working approaches if needed". Such varying approaches to learning are likely to support most learning orientations (discussed in section 2.3) and enable extensive oral practice. In addition, these aims reflect the main ideas of experiential learning strategies, learner autonomy, and the ELP.

A communication strategy refers to the various tools and mediums that a language user may use to take good use of and activate his/her linguistic capabilities on the whole (COE: 91). The ultimate aim of these strategies is to fulfill the requirements of communication in a given context and to perform the task at hand as economically as possible (*ibid.*). Moreover, communicative strategies can be thought of as communicative applications of the metacognitive principles, which are planning, execution, monitoring the execution, and possible repairing actions (*ibid.*). To put it in simpler terms, communicative strategies refer to the ability to select the most efficient communicative course of action in a given context (*ibid.*).

The FNCC (142−143) also states that the learner is expected to be capable of utilizing feedback given to him/her in an interactive situation. Additionally, he/she should be able to compensate for his/her still developing language skills by using an approximate expression, and be able to monitor his/her own language usage. All these aims are compatible with those of the ELP, experiential learning, and the concept of an autonomous learner. However, bearing in mind that these aims are set up for a teenager who has been learning the language for six years at the most, these aims seem quite ambitious. In addition, the aims for English oral production are very demanding considering the fact that the majority of the learners have few opportunities to practice their oral production outside the classroom. However, according to the FNCC (143), the learners should familiarize themselves with certain idiomatic expressions of English that are typical of oral interaction, as well as some basic interactional strategies, such as giving feedback, maintaining or ending a turn to speak, and beginning and ending a spoken communication.

2.5.2 Learner Evaluation in Lower Secondary School

The purpose of learner evaluation is to determine how well the objectives of teaching and education have been reached (OPHa). In addition, it aims to provide sufficient information on the study progress and class behavior to the student him/herself and his/her caretakers on a regular basis (Perusopetusasetus 1998/852, §10). The evaluation is realized numerically or verbally (unless otherwise directed by the Board of Education), and the grading system ranges from the grades of 4 to 10. The numerical grades correspond to their verbal counterparts as follows (*ibid.*):

- 4 =fail

- 5=pass

- 6=moderate

- 7=satisfactory

- 8=good

- 9=laudable

- 10=excellent

At the end of the lower secondary school, i.e. on the 9th grade, the learners will be given a final grade. Consequently, the Board of Education introduced a criterion for a *good knowledge,* which corresponds to a grade of 8 (OPHb). The focal point of this is to help the teacher direct the evaluation to cover the most substantial aspects of the subject in question and provide a clear criterion for a grade of 8 (*ibid*.). This should also unify the national evaluation criteria to contribute to the general comparability and uniformity of grading. In the English language, the criteria for a grade of 8 are based on the skill level descriptions of the CEFR. Therefore, for a grade of 8, the learner of the English language should have reached the following proficiency levels by the end of the 9th grade:

Table 2.2 Final *Assessment Criteria for a Grade of 8 on 9th Grade of Secondary School*

Listening Comprehension	Speech	Text Comprehension	Writing
B1.1 Functional basic language proficiency	A2.2 Developing basic language proficiency	B1.1 Functional basic language proficiency	A2.2 Developing basic language proficiency

(FNCC 2004: 14)

Please see table 1 in the Appendix 1 for a more detailed descriptions of the six main proficiency levels of the CEFR.

2.6 Research on Foreign Language Study Books

As mentioned earlier, the ELP has not been studied to a great extent in foreign language materials. However, some studies have been carried out on other aspects of foreign language teaching. Satu Isokallio's Master's Thesis (2008) is fairly similar to this study with regard to the research setting, although the perspective is different. Isokallio studied the nature of different types of listening comprehension tasks, pedagogical aims in these tasks, and how the aims of the FNCC were reflected in two comprehensive school Swedish study books, *Färdiga, gå*, and *Klick 7*. The results showed that the study books included seven types of listening comprehension tasks*: repeat, answer freely, listen, choose, fill in, pick up the theme words,* and *check by listening*. Intensive listening was practiced in several *repeat*, *fill in*, and *check by listening* tasks. The rest of the *pick up the theme words*, *answer freely*, and *choose* tasks were intended to help students improve their selective listening. The goals of the curriculum were clearly taken into consideration in the books, even though *Färdiga, gå* seemed more suitable to younger students than its intended target group (3rd grade students). The overall finding was that both of the Swedish books reflected well the aims of the curriculum of that time.

Similarly, Lepistö (2008) studied foreign language teachers' perceptions of self-assessment in primary school foreign language teaching. The research was conducted with a questionnaire to primary school language teachers of whom 10 were teachers of English, 5 of Swedish, and

5 of German. In addition, the study involved an analysis of the self-assessment tasks in two foreign language study book editions' teacher's materials (the former being that of English and the latter of German); *Wow!* (WSOY) and *Mega* (WSOY). The books were selected on the grounds of being the most commonly used study material among the questionnaire participants. The results showed that nearly every participant of the study thought that encouraging students and evoking their motivation was among the most important roles of the teacher. The role of self- assessment was generally perceived as a way to observe one's own learning and emphasizing the student's strengths and abilities. As far as the study book material was concerned, the English study book *Wow!* offered more self-assessment tasks than its German counterpart *Mega*. However, the structuring of the two books was quite similar.

3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology of this study and the editorial information of the study material, which consists of three English language study book editions (Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8). The textbook, exercise book and the teacher's material were analyzed for both editions.

3.1 Methodology

This study was conducted in two phases; the first phase entailed a quantitative analysis of the data in which the extent of occurrence of the activities adhering to the research parameters was determined. This revealed the extent to which the ELP, experiential learning paradigm and learner autonomy are reflected in the exercises. All exercises were notified and those containing several parts were each regarded as separate exercises, provided that they entailed a different task or learner activity. The second phase was a subsequent qualitative analysis of the content of phase one results. This phase had two targets of interest, of which the first one was concerned with the presence of experiential learning paradigm and learner/teacher autonomy in the material. The second one examined how the teacher is encouraged to use the ELP. Moreover, the data was analyzed according to how the pedagogical aims of the study book exercises and teacher's guides reflect the principles of experiential learning paradigm and development of learner autonomy and the ELP. Additionally, the manner and extent to which the teacher's guides of these books promote the use of ELP was considered. Both research phases have separate research parameters which are presented below. Repeatability

of assessment is presumed to be rather good in phase one. Phase two, however, is more apt to researcher dependent variation, because it is more open to individual data interpretation.

The quantitative analysis was carried out by quantifying the data according to the parameters determined below. The parameters have been formulated in the light of the theoretical background chapter of this study. Each parameter is followed by bracketed information to indicate which theoretical aspect(s) (ELP, experiential learning, learner autonomy) it reflects.

Material exercise types:

1. Personal journals (experiential learning)

- Written activities in which the learner writes about his/her daily experiences. Ideally, the written product should be reflective in nature and thematically related to language learning.

2. Reflective essays (ELP, experiential learning)

- A written task in which the learner considers him/herself as a learner or language user. This task can be carried out either as a general reflection or immediately after a learning activity.

3. Self-assessment tasks (ELP, experiential learning, learner autonomy)

- Self-assessment tasks are activities in which the learner assesses his/her functioning as a learner of English or knowledge of the issues studied.

4. Group assessment tasks (ELP, experiential learning, learner autonomy)

- Written or oral assessment that is realized in a group.

5. Group reflection (ELP, experiential learning, learner autonomy)

- Oral reflection realized as a group activity.

6. Discussion exercises (ELP, experiential learning, learner autonomy)

- In these exercises the student is asked to either discuss the text he/she has studied or do other communicative activities.

7. Working in pairs tasks (learner autonomy)

- These activities can be oral or written exercises that are more mechanical than discussion or creative writing exercises. One typical example of an exercise of this category is an "A/B" exercise. It typically involves working on small predestined discussions or grammar exercises in pairs so that the lines or cues are evenly laid out on sheet A and B. The idea of this task is that Student A sees Student B's correct answers and vice versa and then the participants give each other feedback. Alternatively, "talking crossword" –exercises are also quite common. The idea in these exercises is that the other student sees the words written horizontally and the other those that are laid out vertically in the crossword. The words are to be explained or spelled to the other participant. At the simplest level, however, the activities of this category are tasks in which a set of sentences or a small dialogue is read aloud in pairs. Similarly, some exercises involve making small questions to classmates and answering them.

8. Roleplays (experiential learning)

- These are activities in which the learner adopts the role of a character, who is usually either from real life (politicians, celebrities, musicians etc.) or fictional. Empathizing with a character other than one's own personality, such as one from the textbook, is an essential component in roleplay tasks. The distinction of roleplays and drama activities was not always

self-evident, and required a structured approach to the classification. Although the roleplays may include aspects of drama, they tended to be briefer and more concise in nature. Sometimes the instructions of the exercises determined the task as a roleplay, which was an accurate account of the exercise in most cases.

9. Drama activities (experiential learning)

- This exercise category consists of drama activities that are either given scripts or more demanding tasks, in which the learners are instructed to create a drama scene based on specific instructions or a fictional situation/scene. The drama activities are often more extensive exercises than roleplays and may involve plot invention. In addition, they often involve an underlying educational dimension that is related to moral and ethical issues.

10. games and simulations (experiential learning)

- These exercises are typically games played on game boards, word explanation games, or mimicking.

11. Visualizations/imaginative activities (experiential learning)

- These tasks require use of imagination and visualization. The subject matter was often related to the student's imagined future life. The difference between imaginative tasks and empathy-taking activities was not always easily detectable. The differentiating factor proved to be that the imaginative tasks sought to evoke creativity and imagination in the student, whereas the empathy-taking activities were more engaging on a personal level.

12. Empathy-taking activities e.g story telling, personal stories, sharing with others (Experiential learning)

- This category includes exercises that encourage the learner to examine his/her personal opinions regarding the topic and possibly sharing them with others. Alternatively, the subject matter may be one that contributes to learner involvement or identification with the theme. For example, discussing the features of the student's hometown or personal opinions on bullying is likely to result in empathy.

13. Culture tasks (ELP)

- These tasks are often rather small activities involving geographical facts, aspects of culture (music, literature, people), or people of some Anglophone target culture.

14. Project tasks (ELP, learner autonomy)

- These tasks were among the most challenging and autonomous activities found in the data. Generally the projects required the use of external information sources (dictionaries, the internet, libraries etc.) and were often thematically related to the target culture. Extensive project tasks are ideal for the dossier of ELP because they enable the learner to demonstrate his/her language competence without a possibly restrictive or delimiting study book context.

As mentioned above, the second main research question is binary; the first target of examination is whether experiential learning methods are fostered in the exercises and whether there is an attempt to contribute to the development and growth of teacher and student autonomy. The criteria to examine this issue consist of 6 support questions that are presented below.

1. What kinds of in-class activities are promoted in the teacher's guide?

2. Is the teacher encouraged to conduct pedagogical activities that entail active experimentation with language in groups or by oneself? Are these experiences subsequently reflected on?

3. Is the teacher challenged to reconsider his/her own professional beliefs?

4. How is the teacher encouraged to give the learners more responsibility for their own learning?

5. Are the learners encouraged to reflect on language structures as well as given specific instruction on these structures?

6. To what extent is the target language the vehicle of teaching?

The latter part of interest is the presence of the ELP in the teacher's material, which will be approached with four support questions.

1. Is the teacher given information about the structure of the ELP (language biography, language passport, dossier) and its functions in the teacher's guide?

2. Is the teacher encouraged to have the students work on portfolios?

3. Is the teacher advised to set individual learning goals with the learners?

4. Is the teacher encouraged to reflect on/reconsider his/her own working methods?

3.2 The Data

The following three sub-sections present the editorial information of Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8.

3.2.1 Smart Moves 2

Smart Moves 2 was published in 2007 by Otava Kirjapaino Oy and it follows the principles of the FNCC (2004). It is currently Otava's most recent English study material. The Smart Moves series consists of study material for use in grades 7−9 in lower secondary school. The progression of the books has been designed so that on the 7th grade the thematic entities are introduced rather generally, and during the 8th and 9th grades the themes are discussed more thoroughly. The editors of Smart Moves 2 are Tarja Folland, Arja Haavisto, Tiina Huohvanainen, Arto Nieminen, and Marjut Vaakanainen.

3.2.2 Spotlight 8

The Spotlight series is WSOY's most recent English language study book edition. The series currently consists of material intended for use on the 7th and 8th grade of lower secondary school and will be completed with the publishing of Spotlight 9 in the near future. Spotlight 8 came out in 2010. According to Spotlight 8 teacher's material (p.4), the edition aims to provide the learner with sufficient skills and tools to pursue the aims and objectives stated in the CEFR and FNCC (2004). The Spotlight 8 has three main objectives, which are referred to as "the comprehensive solution for teaching and learning". Firstly, it provides the teacher with

sufficient resources to adapt the level of difficulty of his/her teaching according to the needs and predispositions of heterogeneous learner groups. Secondly, it stimulates and encourages the learners to target-oriented language studying in accordance with their abilities. Thirdly, Spotlight 8 aims to capitalize on the available pedagogic technology ranging from overhead projectors to interactive *Smart Boards ®*. The editors of Spotlight 8 are Mika Haapala, Raija Kangaspunta, Eero Lehtonen, Jyrki Peuraniemi, Leena Semi, and Paul Westlake.

3.2.3 Key English 8

The Key English 8 textbook and exercise book were first published in 2003 by WSOY. According to the teacher's material (p. 5), the edition intends to provide usable study material for students with heterogeneous language skills. The editors of Key English 8 (Raija Kangaspunta, Eero Lehtonen, Jyrki Peuraniemi, and Paul Westlake) have also participated in the development and editing of Spotlight 8. Consequently, Key English 8 can be thought of as Spotlight 8's predecessor.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the 14 exercise categories were found in all three editions. The exercises that did not adhere to the research parameters are presented in *the other exercises* category in the graphic representations. In the textbook, *the other exercises* were often listening comprehension or pronunciation tasks. In the exercise books and the teacher's material these exercises were often mechanical writing tasks, such as filling in a missing word, translation of sentences or searching for an expression in the text. In this chapter, the results of the quantitative analysis will first be presented on a general level. After that, the results for each study book edition are individually presented. This is then followed by a thorough comparative analysis of all three editions. A more detailed, qualitative approach to the exercise categories and general findings will be subsequently presented.

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Figure 4.1 illustrates the proportions of exercises reflecting the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in the exercise book, textbook and teacher's materials of all three study book editions considered in this study.
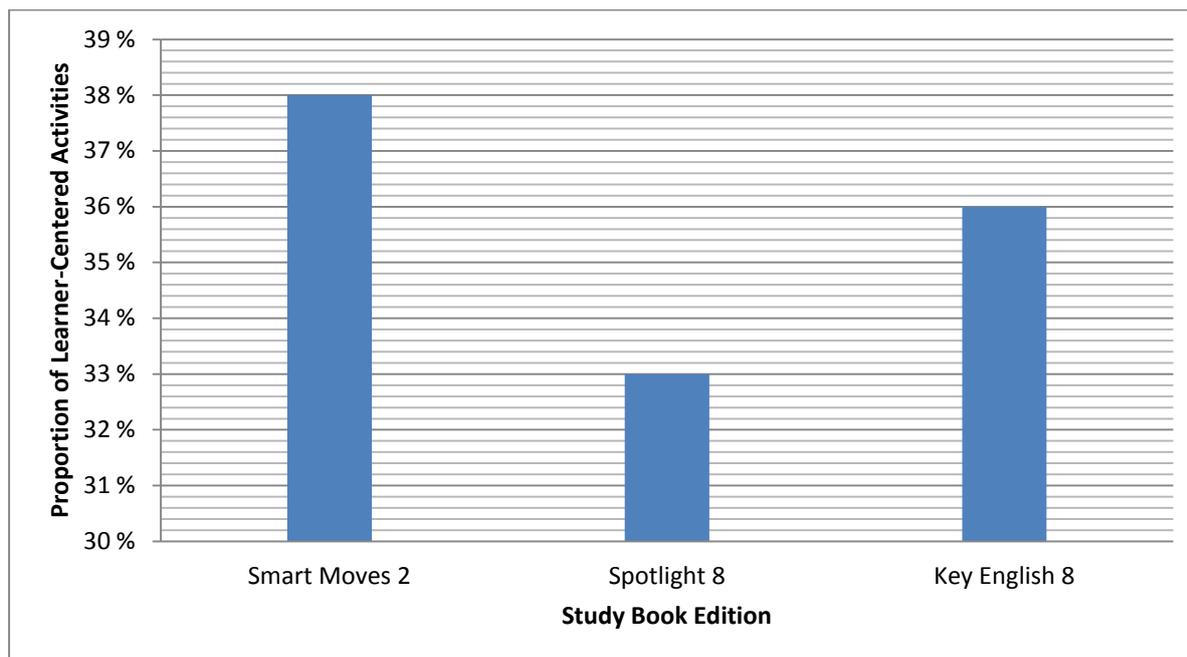
Figure 4.1 *Proportions of Learner-Centered Exercises in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8*

The proportions of exercises reflecting the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 are 38%, 33%, and 36%, respectively. These proportional differences in the total number of exercises are not statistically significant $(p>0.05)$[1]. The significance of the proportional differences in individual exercise categories was also statistically tested unless there were too few occurrences in the category[2]. The proportions of drama activities and project tasks showed a statistically very highly significant difference $(p<0.001)$ and a highly significant difference $(p<0.01)$, respectively. The other exercise categories showed no statistical significance $(p>0.05)$.

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[1] Unless otherwise stated, the statistical test used is a chi-square test. The results refer to the following values: $p<0.001$ very highly significant; $p<0.01$ highly significant; $p<0.05$ significant; $p>0.05$ no significance.

[2] The categories of personal journals, reflective essays, group assessment tasks, and group reflection tasks could not be tested in a chi-square test due to lack of occurrences.

4.1.1 Results of the Quantitative Analysis of Smart Moves 2 study books

The number of exercises in the Smart Moves 2 exercise book and the teacher's guide was 552, and 249, respectively. The textbook did not include any exercises. The total number of exercises was 801. Of the exercise book exercises 35% (n=191), of the teacher's guide exercises 45% (n=113) and of all Smart Moves 2 exercises 38% were consistent with the research categories.
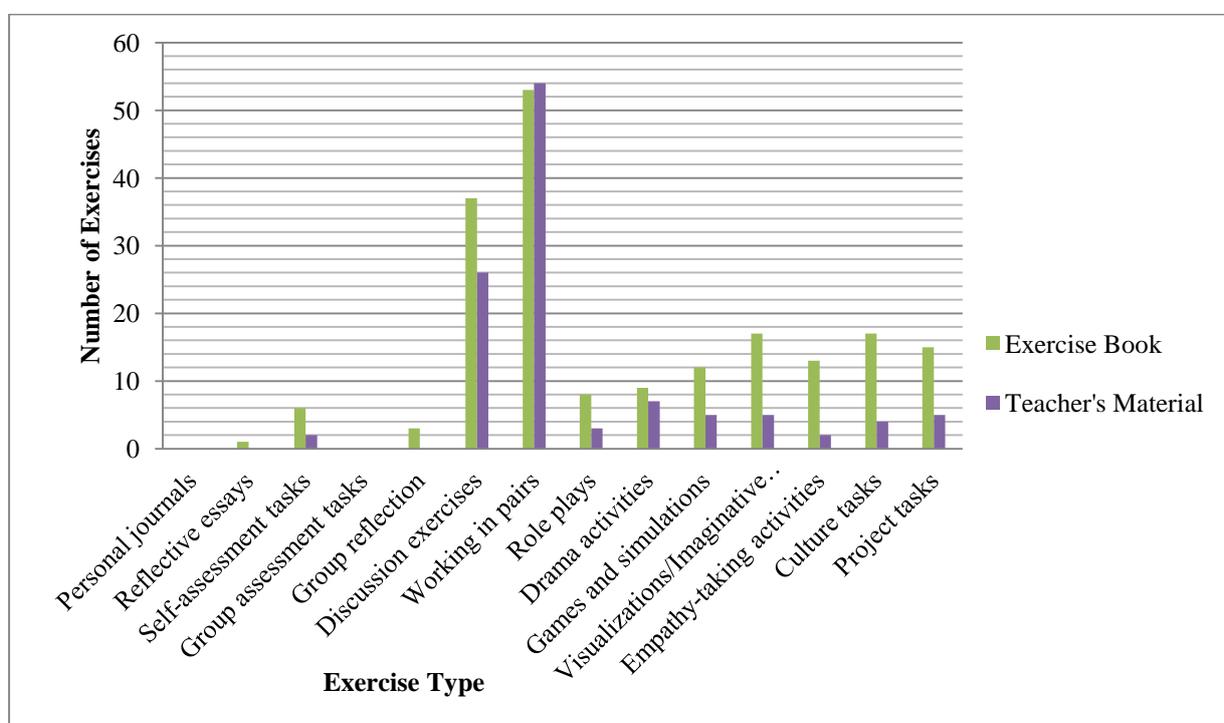
Figure 4.2 *Exercise Types in Smart Moves 2 Exercise Book and Teacher's Material*

Figure 4.2 illustrates the frequencies of the exercise types in the exercise book and the teacher's material. Exercises that were related to the social dimension of language learning, i.e. discussion exercises and working in pairs tasks, are clearly emphasized. Personal journals and group assessment tasks were not found, although there were three group reflection activities. On the other hand, the fact that Smart Moves 2 clearly incorporates most of the

learner-centered exercise types suggests that the edition is relatively versatile. Interestingly, there is a clear emphasis on discussion exercises in the exercise book, whereas the other exercise categories are quite evenly distributed with the exception of group assessment tasks and personal journals, as mentioned earlier. The distribution of the exercises in the teacher's material indicates a clear emphasis on discussion exercises and pair work tasks, although a lower frequency of exercises from most other categories was also found.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 present the proportion of the learner-centered exercise types in the total number of exercises in the exercise book and the teacher's material, respectively. Please note that for the sake of clarity, the exercise categories that were not found in the data have not been indicated in figures 4.3 and 4.4.
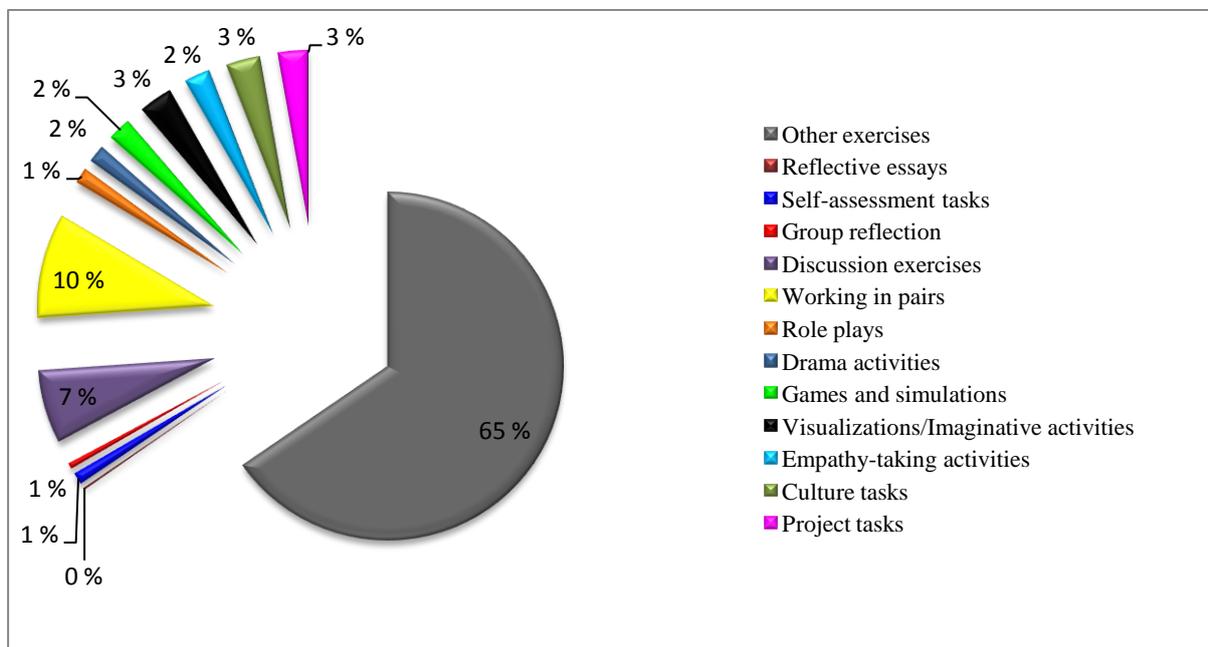
Figure 4.3 *Distribution of Exercises in Smart Moves 2 Exercise Book*
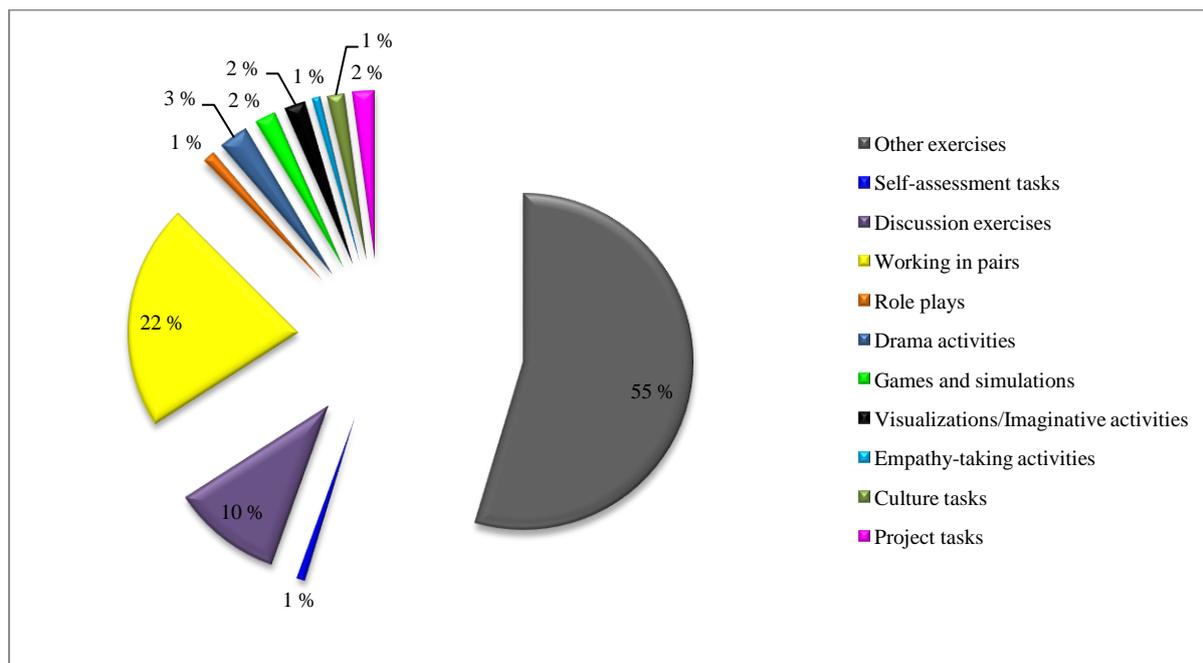
Figure 4.4 *Distribution of Exercises in Smart Moves 2 Teacher's Material*

These pie diagrams indicate that there was a higher percentage of exercises adhering to the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in the teacher's material (45%) than in the exercise book (28%). The greatest difference seems to be the higher proportion of cooperative and communicational exercises found in the teacher's material. In addition, the exercise book includes slightly more reflective exercises. Other than that, there seems to be little variation in the proportions of the exercise types in the exercise book and the teacher's material.

4.1.2 Results of the Quantitative Analysis of Spotlight 8 Study Books

The number of exercises in the Spotlight 8 textbook, exercise book and the teacher's material was 168, 561, and 256, respectively. The total number of exercises was 985. Of the textbook exercises 77% (n=130), of the exercise book exercises 17% (n=98), of the teacher's material

exercises 36% (n=93), and of all Spotlight 8 exercises 33% (n=321) were consistent with the research categories.
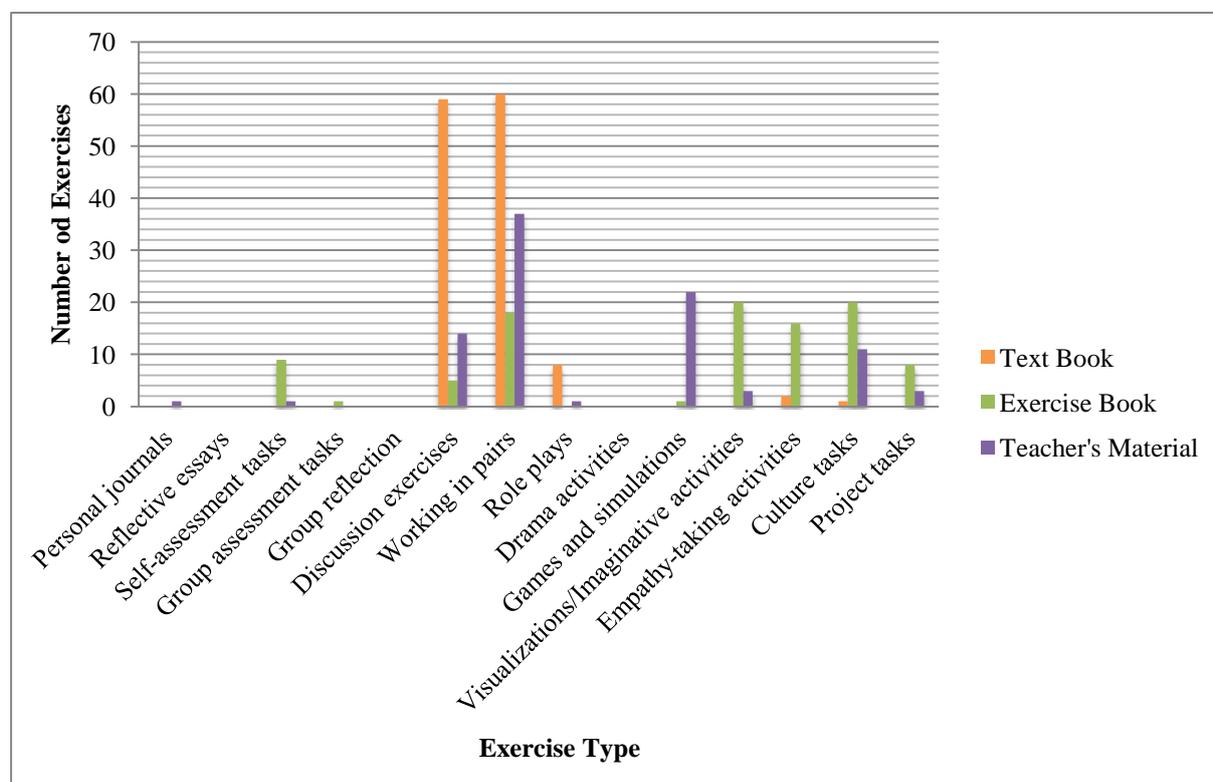
Figure 4.5 *Exercise Types in Spotlight 8 Exercise Book, Textbook, and Teacher's Material*

Figure 4.5 illustrates the frequencies of the exercise types in Spotlight 8 exercise book, text book and the teacher's material. There seems to be a clear emphasis on communicative exercises (discussion exercises and working in pairs). Apart from reflective essays, group reflection, and drama activities, all of the exercise categories are found in Spotlight 8. It is evident that reflection and tasks involving action or drama are not in a pivotal role in Spotlight 8. The exercises in the exercise book are rather evenly distributed and the emphasis seems to be on tasks that evoke the learner's creativity, cultural awareness and social dimension. The text book, on the other hand, is clearly focusing on communicative and

collaborative tasks, whereas the teacher's material concentrates on tasks that involve a social dimension and games.

Figures 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8 present the proportions of learner-centered exercise types in the total number of exercises in the exercise book, textbook, and teacher's material, respectively.
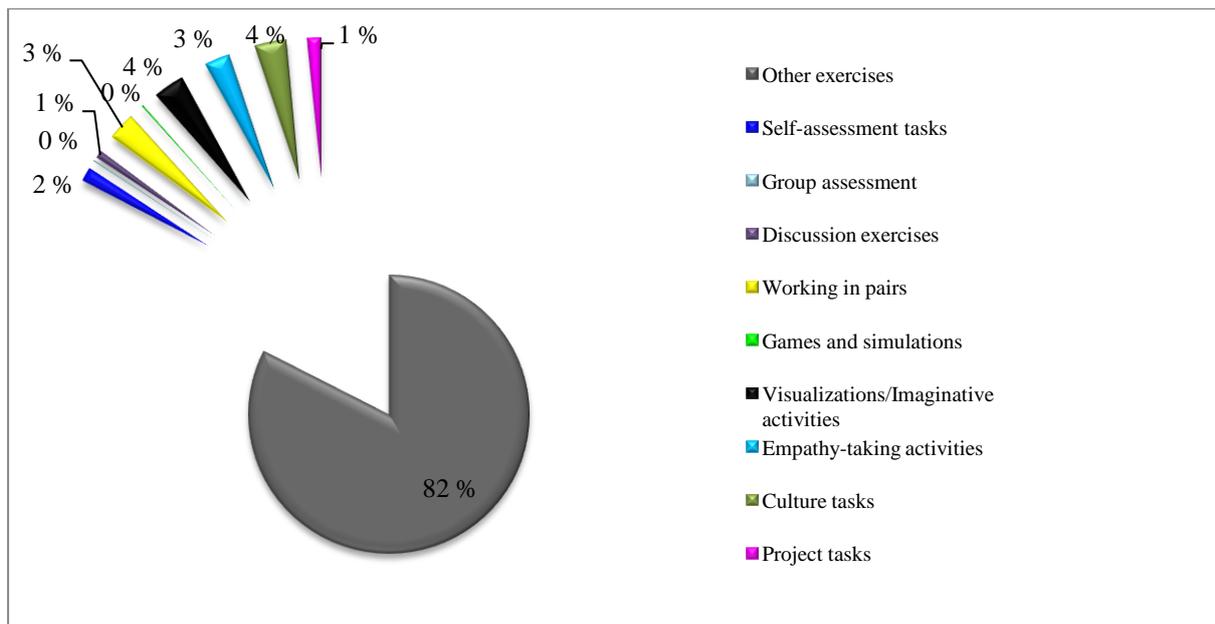
Figure 4.6 *Distribution of Exercises in Spotlight 8 Exercise Book*
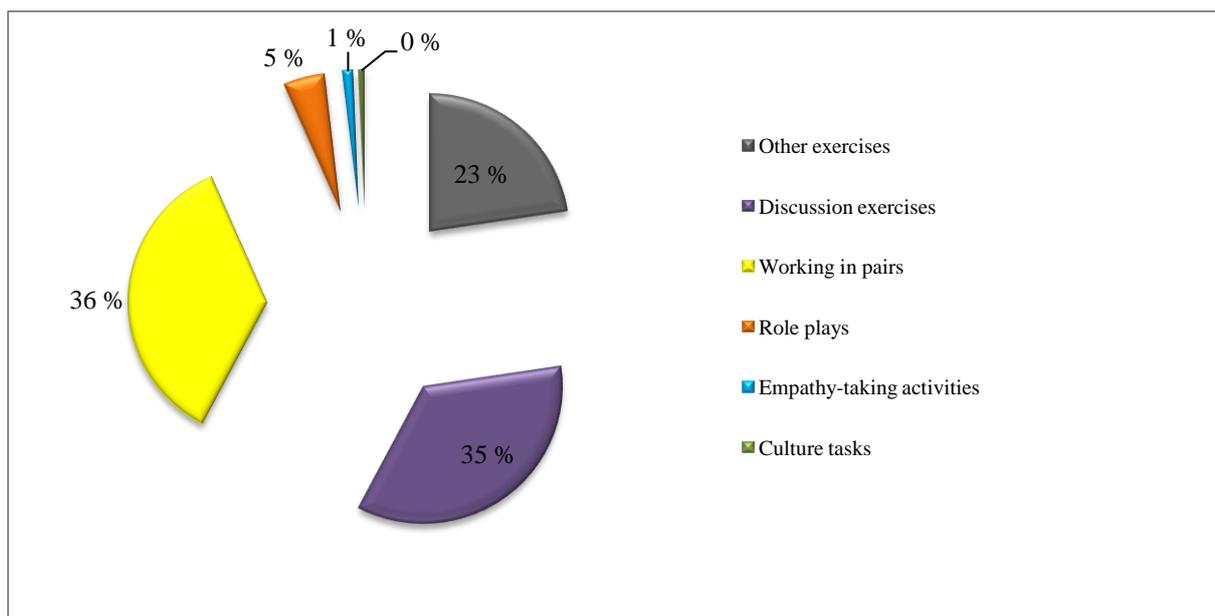
Figure 4.7 *Distribution of Exercises in Spotlight 8 Textbook*
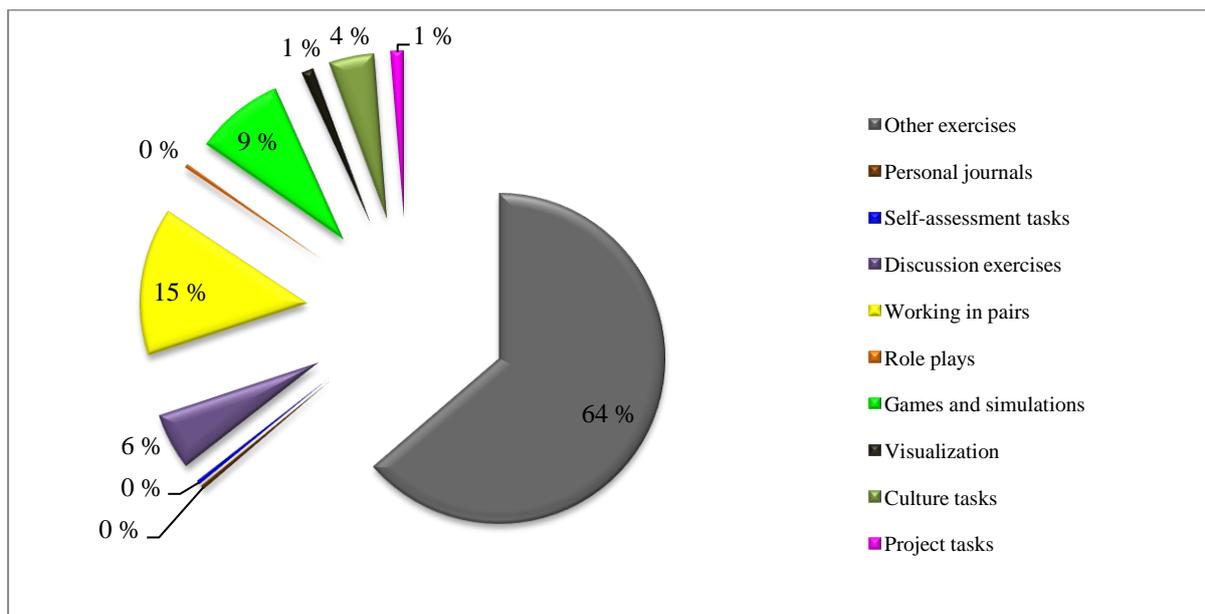
Figure 4.8 *Distribution of Exercises in Spotlight 8 Teacher's Material*

These figures indicate that the learner-centered exercises are very unevenly scattered in the study material. Moreover, the percentual proportion of such activities is much smaller in the exercise book (17%) than in the textbook (77%) and teacher's material (36%). Interestingly, the textbook includes fewer exercise categories than the exercise book or the teacher's material. Similarly to Smart Moves 2, the exercise book includes a wide variety of exercise, although the proportions of each category are small. On the other hand, the textbook includes a relatively high proportion of interactive exercises (discussion exercises and working in pairs tasks) and the teacher's material seems to emphasize games and simulations and pair-work activities.

4.1.3 Results of the Quantitative Analysis of Key English 8 Study Books

The number of exercises in the Key English 8 textbook, exercise book and the teacher's guide was 94, 527, and 120, respectively. The total number of exercises was 741. Of the textbook

exercises 68% (n=64), of the exercise book exercises 25% (n=131), of the teacher's material exercises 60% (n=72), and of all Key English 8 exercises 36% (n=268) were consistent with the research parameters.
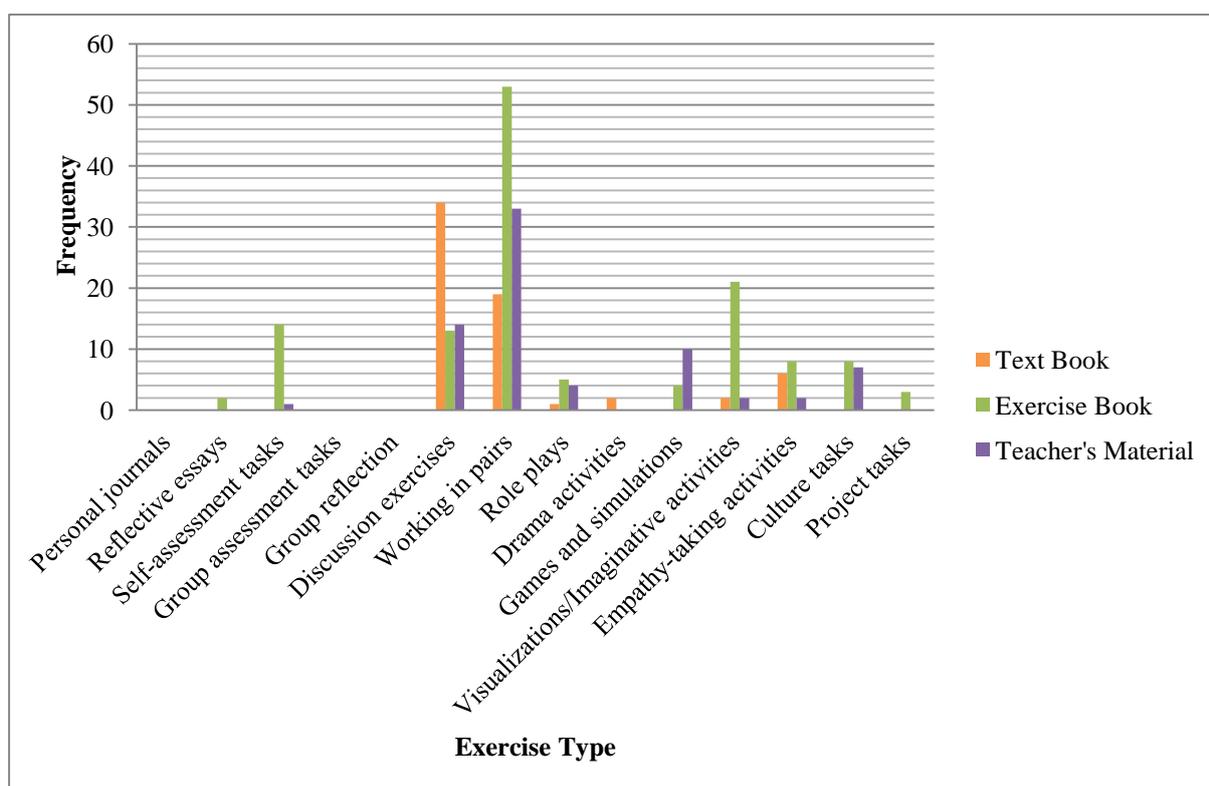

Figure 4.9 *Exercise Types in Key English 8 Exercise Book, Textbook, and Teacher's Material*

Figure 4.9. illustrates the frequencies of the exercise types in Key English 8 exercise book, textbook and the teacher's material. Apart from personal journals, group assessment tasks, and group reflection activities all exercise categories were found. There seems to be a clear emphasis on communicative exercises (discussion exercises and working in pairs tasks), whereas exercises involving concrete experience (e.g. roleplays, drama activities, games and simulations) and learner autonomy (project tasks) are not as frequent. Activities involving culture are rather few altogether. The teacher's material and the textbook seem to emphasize exercise types that are frequently realized in pairs whereas the exercise book includes more

exercise types that can be done individually (self-assessment tasks, reflective essays, and project tasks).

Figures 4.10, 4.11, and 4.12 present the proportions of the learner-centered exercise types in the total number of exercises in the exercise book, textbook, and teacher's material, respectively.
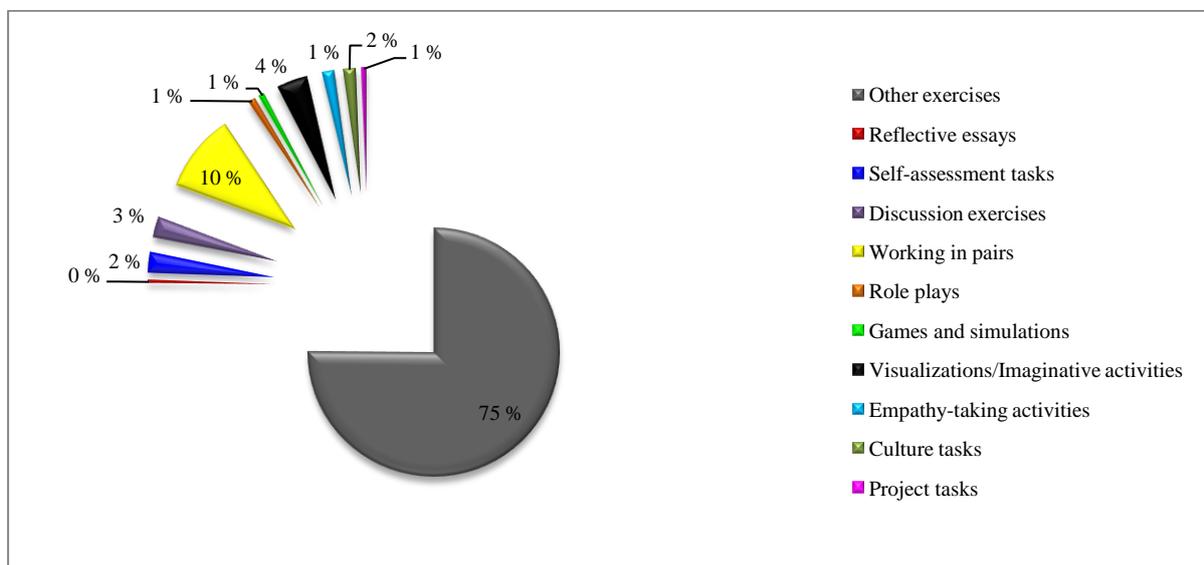

Figure 4.10 *Distribution of Exercises in Key English 8 Exercise Book*
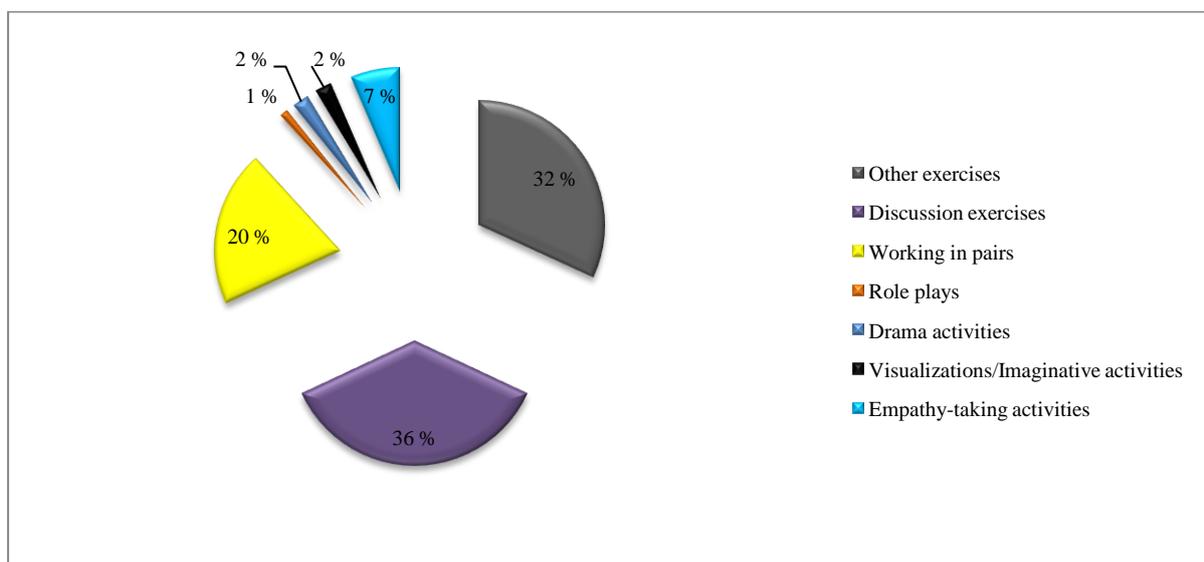
Figure 4.11 *Distribution of Exercises in Key English 8 Textbook*
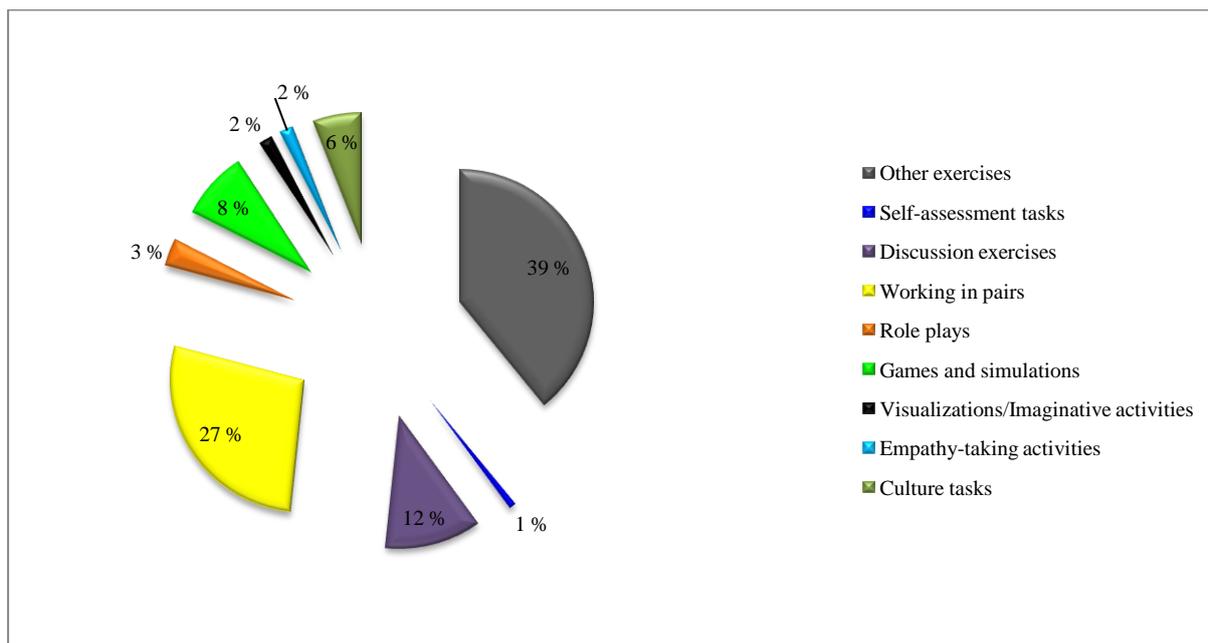
Figure 4.12 *Distribution of Exercises in Key English 8 Teacher's Material*

As in Spotlight 8 and Smart Moves 2, the learner-centered activities are rather unevenly distributed in the Key English 8 exercise book, textbook, and the teacher's material. However, the textbook and the teacher's material seem rather similar with regard to their exercise type distribution. It is interesting that the teacher's material includes more exercise categories than the textbook and yet has a lower proportion of learner-centered exercises. As in the other editions, the exercise book includes a wide variety of exercise types, although its overall proportion of learner-centered activities is lower than it is in the textbook and the teacher's material. The working in pairs tasks is the largest single exercise category in the exercise book and teacher's material, whereas the discussion tasks is the largest one in the textbook. This layout arrangement is different from that of Spotlight 8 and Smart Moves 2.

4.2 Comparison of the Results of the Quantitative Analysis

The following four sub-sections present a comparative analysis of the quantitative results. The comparative results are first presented with regard to the textbooks and exercise books of each edition. This is then followed by an analysis of the textbooks and the exercise books combined to be able to compare the student's material in each edition. After this, a comparative analysis of the teacher's materials in each edition is also presented. A more detailed discussion of the comparative findings is presented in sub-section 4.2.5.

4.2.1 The Textbooks

Figure 4.13 presents the proportions of the different exercise types in the textbook of Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. Smart Moves 2 is not represented in this figure because there were no activities in the textbook.
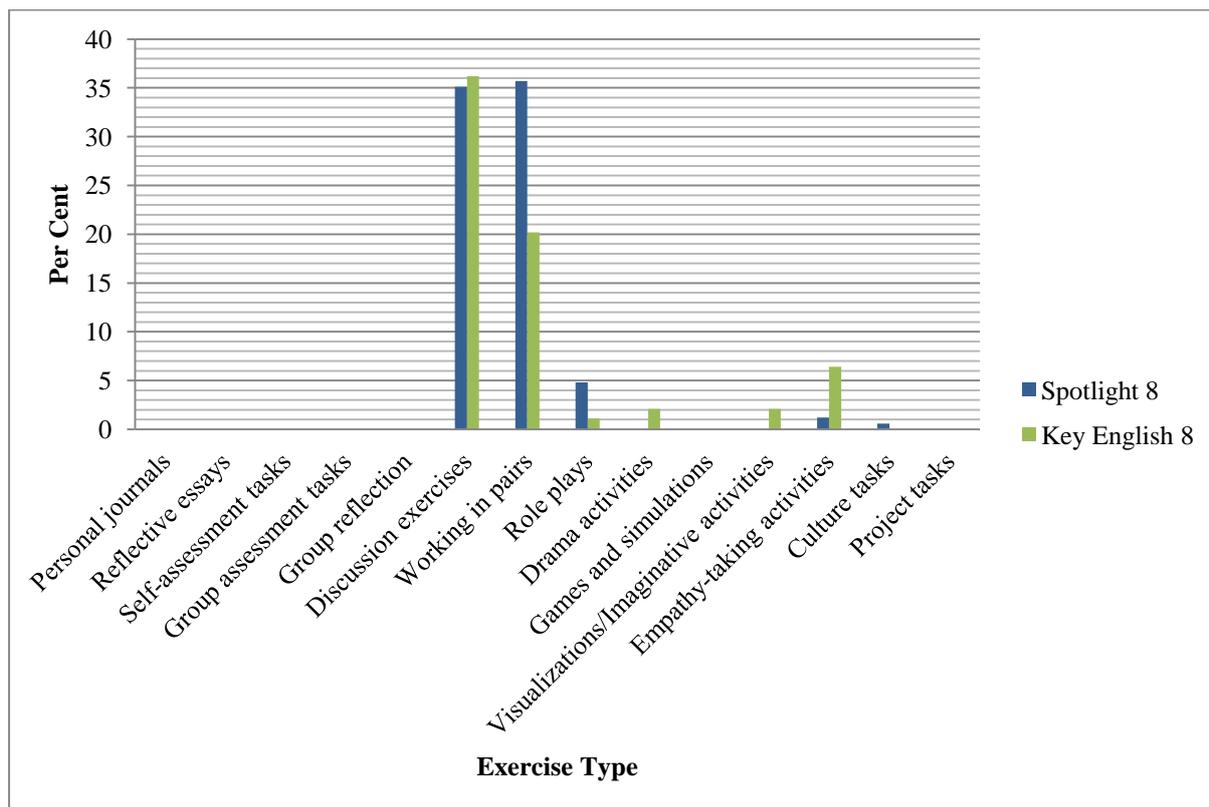
Figure 4.13 *Comparison of Results for the Textbooks*

There is no statistically significant difference (p>0.05) in the overall proportions of learner-centered activities in Spotlight 8 (77%) and Key English 8 (68%) textbooks. However, the categories of working in pairs tasks and empathy-taking activities showed statistically significant differences (p<0.05). The categories of discussion exercises, visualization/imaginative activities, and role plays showed no statistical difference (p>0.05).

4.2.2 The Exercise Books

Figure 4.14 presents the proportions of the different exercise types in the exercise books of each study book edition.
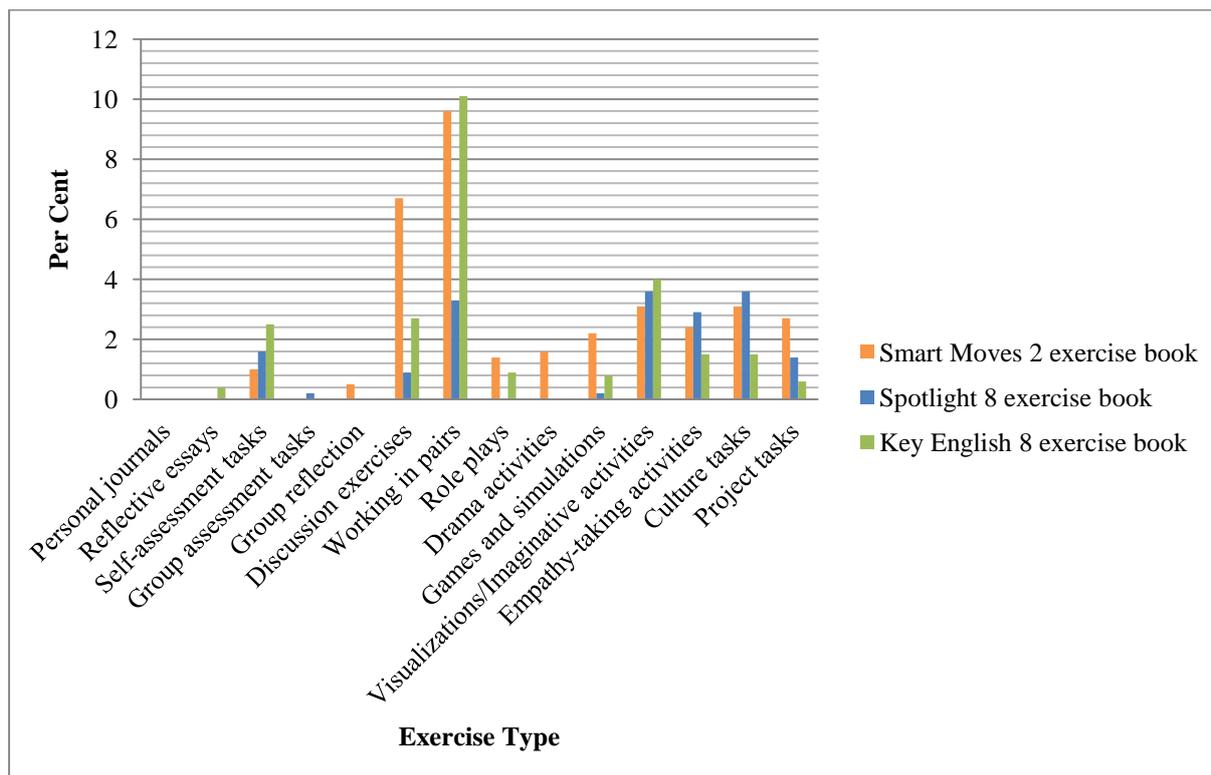
Figure 4.14 *Comparison of Results for the Exercise Books*

The overall proportions of learner-centered exercises in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 exercise books are 35%, 18%, and 25%, respectively. The differences in these proportions are statistically very highly significant ($p<0.001$). Moreover, the categories of discussion activities and drama activities showed a statistically very highly significant difference ($p<0.001$). Similarly, the category of working in pairs tasks showed statistically highly significant ($p<0.01$) differences, and the categories of rolepalys and project tasks showed a statistically significant difference ($p<0.05$). The categories of visualizations/imaginative activities, empathy-taking activities and culture tasks did not show a statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). In addition, some exercise categories could not be statistically tested due to lack of occurrences[3].

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[3] The categories of personal journals, reflective essays, group assessment tasks, and group reflection tasks could not be tested in a chi-square test due to lack of occurrences.

4.2.3 The Textbooks and Exercise Books Combined

As Smart Moves 8 differs from Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 in that there are no activities in the Smart Moves 2 textbook, a statistical analysis including the entire student's study material (textbook and exercise book combined) was carried out. This was done in order to be able to compare the editions without the teacher's material. Figure 4.15 presents the proportions of the different exercise types in the student's study material of each study book edition.
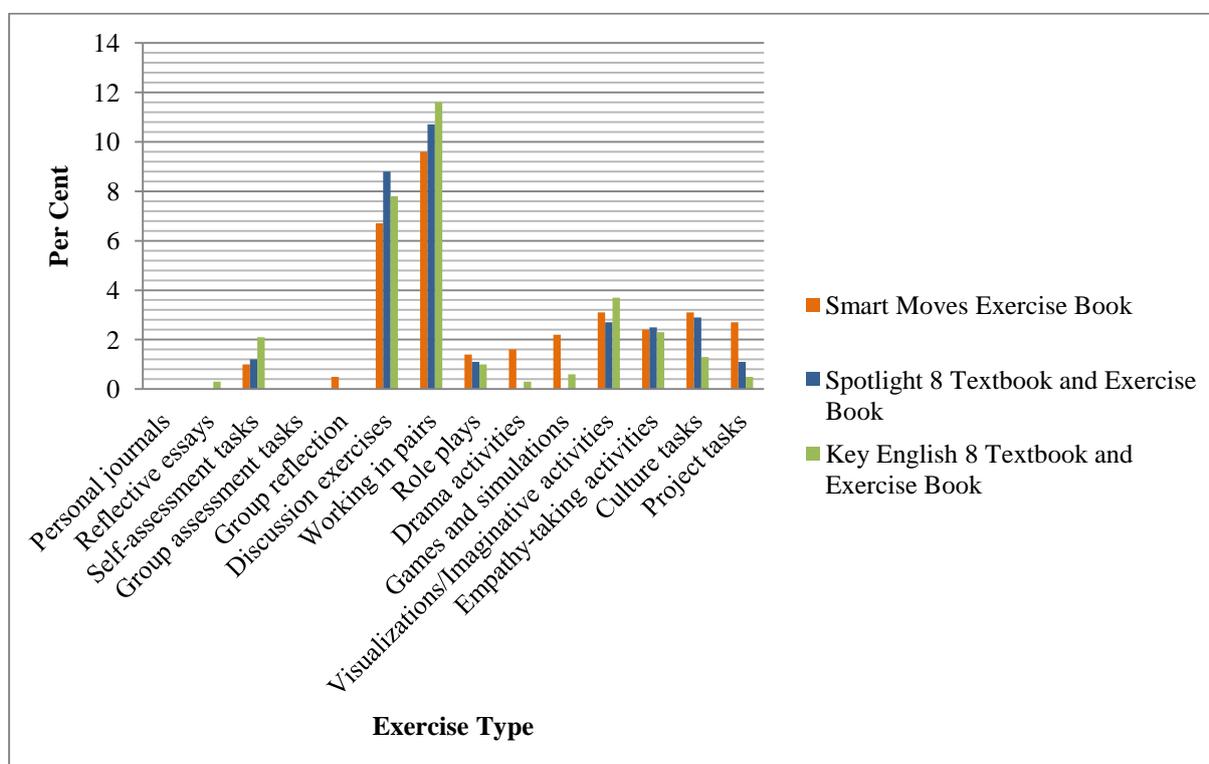
Figure 4.15 *Comparison of Results for the Textbooks and Exercise Books combined*

The proportions of learner-centered exercises in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 student's material are 35%, 31%, and 31%, respectively. These differences are not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The categories of drama activities and games and simulations showed a statistically very high significance ($p < 0.001$). In addition, the category

of project tasks showed a statistically highly significant difference (p<0.01). The other categories either showed no statistical significance or could not be tested due to a lack of occurrences[4].

4.2.4 The Teacher's Materials

Figure 4.16 presents the proportions of the different exercise types in the teacher's materials of each study book edition.
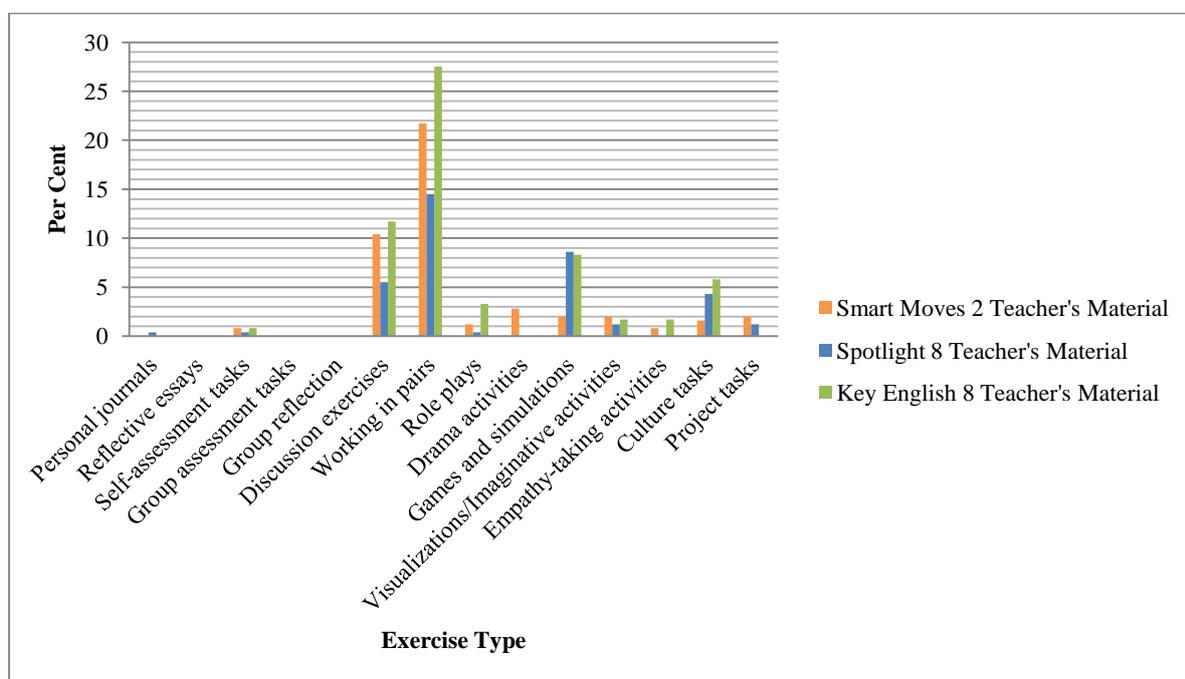
Figure 4.16 *Comparison of Results for the Teacher's Materials*

The proportion of exercises reflecting the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 teacher's materials are 45%, 36%, and 61%, respectively. These proportional differences are statistically very highly significant (p<0.001). The categories of working in pairs exercises, drama activities and games and simulations

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[4] The categories of personal journals, reflective essays, group assessment tasks and group reflection activities could not be tested in a chi-square test due to lack occurrences.

showed a statistically highly significant difference (p<0.01). The other exercise categories either showed no statistically significant differences (p>0.05) or could not be tested due to a lack of occurrences[5].

4.2.5 Discussion of the Quantitative Results

The chi-square test showed no great differences between Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 when the textbooks, exercise books and teacher's materials were analyzed for each edition. This means that no statistically significant differences were found in the overall proportion of exercises reflecting the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy apart from two categories, namely drama activities and project tasks. Since both the drama exercises and project tasks represent a very low proportion of the overall exercises, these findings do not indicate a clear difference in the presence of the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in the study book editions. Additionally, in order to be able to find relevant differences in the level of implementation of these theories, the other exercise categories reflecting the theories in question should also show statistically significant differences. Furthermore, the three editions are very similar as far as learner-centered language activities are concerned, and, on the overall level, there is no statistically justified reason to choose one over the other.

On the other hand, considering the special arrangements drama activities require and the large amount of class time a project tasks necessitates, it might be unrealistic to include a remarkably greater amount of such exercises in any English study book. In this respect, Smart

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[5] The categories of personal journals, reflective essays, group assessment tasks and group reflection activities could not be tested in a chi-square test due to lack occurrences.

Moves 2 does emphasize experiential learning (drama activities) and the ELP and autonomous student work (project tasks) more than Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. Having said that, the activities are not followed by reflection which is, after all, a crucial component in the learning process according to these educational philosophies. Moreover, the fact that the reflective activities were so few altogether that they could not be reliably tested in the chi-square test shows that the reflective dimension is minimal. This is largely due to the fact that the reflective activities were mostly larger periodical self-assessments instead of task-specific reflections. This indicates that a very fundamental aspect of the learner-centered approach discussed in this paper is left unattended. The reflective dimension is discussed in more detail in context with the qualitative analysis of the exercise types in section 4.3 as well as in sub-section 4.4.6 in the overall analysis.

However, analyzing the textbooks and the exercise books showed that the study book editions follow a different kind of organization of exercise types. That said, Smart Moves 2 has all the student's activities in the exercise book, whereas Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 tend to have the majority of discussion and pair-work activities in the textbooks. This follows that the Smart Moves 2 exercise book has a significantly greater proportion (p<0.001) of learner-centered activities than the Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 exercise books. Consequently, the statistical facts for the exercise books and textbooks alone are not fully reliable in the comparative analysis of textbook and exercise books, and will not be considered in more detail. The results of the student's material as a whole, including both the textbook and the exercise book, are discussed instead.

The differences in the overall proportion of learner-centered exercises in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 student's material (exercise books and textbooks combined)

were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). This means that although the total number of exercises in the Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 student's material is higher than it is in Smart Moves 2, they do not have statistically more learner-centered exercises. Moreover, since the Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 textbooks include a relatively high proportion of communicative and pair-work activities, the exercise books of these editions must respectively include a larger proportion of the *other*, traditional exercises (defined in the beginning of this chapter). This follows that Smart Moves 2 does not have significantly less communicative or cooperative exercises despite the fact that there are no activities in the Smart Moves 2 textbook. These assumptions are supported by the following two statistically tested facts:

1) The total number of all exercises in the exercise books of the three editions are little different and yet the proportion of learner-centered exercises showed a statistically very high significance ($p<0.001$).

2) When the textbooks and exercise books were analyzed together, there was no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) as to the proportion of discussion exercises and working in pairs tasks.

However, there are very highly significantly more drama activities ($p<0.001$) and games and simulations ($p<0.001$), and highly significantly more project tasks ($p<0.01$) in the Smart Moves 2 student's material than in that of Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. In this respect, Smart Moves 2 student's material emphasizes experiential learning methods (drama, games) and portfolio collection and autonomy (project tasks) more than the Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. However, as the overall analysis (including the textbooks, exercise books, and

teacher's materials) reported statistical significance only in the categories of drama activities and project tasks, the statistical difference in games and simulations has to be evened out in the teacher's materials. This will be discussed next.

The chi-square test proved that there is a statistically very highly significant difference with relation to the proportion of the learner-centered exercises in the teacher's materials. In other words, Key English 8 has a greater proportion of such exercises. Similarly, the working in pairs exercise category also showed a high statistical significance ($p < 0.01$), meaning that the Spotlight 8 teacher's material includes statistically less working in pairs tasks than the other teacher's materials. In addition, the Smart Moves 2 teacher's material proved to have a highly significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher proportion of drama activities, which is not surprising considering the fact that the other editions' teacher's materials have none. Interestingly, the Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 teacher's materials were proved to have a highly significantly ($p < 0.01$) greater proportion of games and simulations. This is likely to explain the evening out of the result concerning the games and simulations found in the student's material.

It is important to bear in mind that the components of the study book editions (exercise book, textbook, teacher's material) are unlikely to be equally important sources of class activities. One could argue that most teachers use the teacher's material as a resource for extra activities or alternative tasks that are mostly needed under specific circumstances. If this is the case, the tasks in the teacher's material are likely to be introduced only to a part of the students who may need more challenge, extra activities, or just a more suitable exercise. In this respect, the exercise book and the textbook are much more likely to be used as the core than the activities in the teacher's materials. However, conclusions cannot be made only on the basis of the student's material because different teachers may create different learning environments by

using the activities in the teacher's materials according to personal discretions. Therefore, this matter is just something the reader should be aware of in relation to these results.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis of the Exercise Categories

This section entails a more detailed qualitative approach to the actual realizations of the exercise categories in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. Section 4.4 will present an overall analysis of all three editions.

4.3.1 Personal Journals and Reflective Essays

In Smart Moves 2, there was only one reflective essay task in the exercise book. The learner was instructed to write a personal essay about bullying. Although reflective in some senses, this kind of activity does not involve the student reflecting on the working process of a particular activity or on him/herself as a learner. As such, this activity is not ideal to be used along with the ELP because it fails to make the language learning process more visible to the student (Kohonen 2005a). In other words, the idea of reflective essays when used with ELP is that the learner would become more aware of how he/she learns most effectively, and what should be done to pursue that state of affairs. Naturally, this does not mean that writing reflective essays about bullying or other significant issues in the school world would not be beneficial to the learner's emotional growth and moral development.

Similarly, there was only one personal journal assignment found in the Spotlight 8 study material as a whole (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p.369). The learner was asked to keep a

diary on his/her thoughts and daily duties for four days of the week. As such, the task would serve as an effective written English exercise, although the aims and objectives of experiential learning (Kohonen 2001) and the ELP (Kohonen 2005a) are not recognized to a great extent. This means that should the teacher wish to realize the task as a reflective writing assignment, he or she would have to modify it into one. However, as this kind of approach was not promoted in the teacher's material, the teacher's own professional knowledge concerning these pedagogical theories is of great importance. Without any further instruction it is unlikely that an 8th grade language learner would engage in a thorough analysis of his/her English learning.

4.3.2 Self Assessment- , Group Assessment-, and group reflection tasks

The reflective assessment tasks were concentrated on language learning skills, language competence, and aspects of culture. In Spotlight 8 there were a total of 10 self-assessment tasks, 6 of which concentrated on the learner's learning skills and in-class behavior. The remaining 4 activities consisted of 3 self-assessment tasks pertaining to substance knowledge of the recently studied content, and one that tested the knowledge of substance studied in the previous year, or on the 7th grade. Apart from the last mentioned, which was a comprehensive skill test, the self-assessment activities were either presented in the form of statements to be checked if true, or evaluated on a three-level scale. The latter was more common in the tasks concerning content knowledge. This kind of reflection is compatible with the *can do –* statements generally associated with ELP reflection tasks (Little *et al*. 2007: 10) as they tend to reinforce the positive experience in language learning. Moreover, emphasis is put on what the student can do instead of highlighting what he/she is not yet capable of. There was also

one group assessment task in Spotlight 8 that involves a reflective pair discussion about studying for an English exam. The learners are first asked to discuss the number of days they used for studying. After this, they are asked to consider together 7 true/false statements on their exam studying habits, which, apart from the social dimension, is little different from the other activities in this category. What the exercise did not ask them to do was to compare their learning methods, for example, which might have led them to learn something from each other more effectively.

The self assessment tasks in Key English 8 are very clearly divided into those that concentrate on the English language content knowledge (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 5, 81, 147, 151, 201) and those that pertain to the learning skills (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 6, 43, 82, 118, 152, 158, 190, 201). The number of such activities was 5 and 8, respectively. The so-called *can do−* statements (Little *et al.* 2007: 10) usually associated with ELP orientated self-assessment tasks were used in two of the content knowledge activities. These tasks focused on the learners' skills and content knowledge on a broader level (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 81, 151). The remaining two content knowledge self-assessment tasks were more focused on knowledge of a specific chapter or unit in Key English 8 (p. 147) or in the book of the previous year, Key English 7 (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 5).

On the other hand, the self-assessment tasks that pertain to learning skills clearly have different areas of focus in Key English 8. Moreover, these tasks concentrated on learning attitudes (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 6), independent learning strategies (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 43, 118), listening comprehension skills (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 158), and pronunciation development skills (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 190). Some of the self-

assessment activities are intended for structuring the learners' aims and objectives in their English language studies (Key English 8, Workbook, p.152).

Key English 8 and Spotlight 8 seem to have a similar two-level composition in this exercise category. However, in Key English 8, the student is also encouraged to compare his/her reflective answers with his/her fellow students, and is even encouraged to share them with his/her teacher and parents. The activities are also quite extensive in Key English 8, whereas in Spotlight 8 a more concise approach has been adopted. However, the visual layout of the self-assessment chart seems to be quite uniform in both of them. The *can do*−statements (Little *et al.* 2007: 10), that were also found in Spotlight 8, were also used in Key English 8.

There were two reflective essays in the Key English 8 exercise book. In these tasks the learner is asked to elaborate on what new elements he/she has learned and what has or has not been agreeable during a certain course in the exercise book (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 81, 151). Such a task would be very suitable for working with the ELP because it supports the pedagogical function of the ELP (Little 2007: 10) by having the student assess his/her progress. This would presumably contribute to the development of learner ownership (Kohonen 2005a: 14), or the learner's experience of having responsibility and power over his/her learning, which should result in a greater motivation. Should this be successful, the resulting learning environment would be very close to that of the learner-centered approach (Kohonen 2001: 11) discussed in sub-section 2.2.3. In a way, it is very interesting that reflective essays of this kind are only found in the oldest edition but not in the two more recent ones (Smart Moves 2, Key English 8).

In Smart Moves 2 the self-assessment tasks were generally located at the end of each major unit. The learner was typically asked to evaluate his/her study skills, knowledge of the studied language content and cultural facts (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p.98). The exercise book opens with a self-assessment task pertaining to cultural knowledge and language skills that are based on matters studied during the previous school year (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p. 6−13). In this sense, Spotlight 8 and Smart Moves 2 are rather similar, which is logical since it generally is in the teacher's interest to test the starting level of his/her class in the autumn. Interestingly, Key English 8 does not have such an extensive self-assessment activity based on the content of the previous year. However, there were 4 tasks concerning learning skills and 4 tasks concerning cultural knowledge (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p. 6, 98, 181−182, 264−265) in Smart Moves 2. This is quite different from the other two editions considered in this study. Moreover, the Anglophone culture seems to be emphasized to a considerable extent in Smart Moves 2 self-assessment tasks when compared to Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. This is because they make the distinction between learning and language skills. However, the culture related self-assessment tasks in the Smart Moves 2 exercise book are typically placed immediately before the other self-assessment activities. In general, the learner was asked to color "a smiley face" facial expression most consistent with his/her personal opinion (Smart Moves Exercises, p. 58).

Apart from the cultural knowledge tasks, which involved some formal variation, the self-assessment tasks were basically very similar and consisted of the same questions each time. This enables the learner to monitor how he/she develops as a learner, which yields the principles of the ELP, for example. On the other hand, it might also make the activities repetitive to the student, which is one of the challenges that may hinder the effectiveness of portfolio oriented class work (Kohonen 2003: 13). However, there were also two larger self

assessment tasks in Smart Moves 2, which involved the assessment of 4 domains of language competence (listening comprehension, reading comprehension, spoken English, written English) and a general evaluation of study success as well as the learner's goal setting for the English language subject grading. The fact that the learner is involved with the planning of his own language learning and goal setting in such an obvious manner suggests that learner ownership (Kohonen 2005a) is a central concept in Smart Moves 2.

4.3.3 Discussion Exercises

Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 all offer a fair amount of oral communication practice as discussed in sub-section 4.2.5. They are often thematically related to the subject-matter of the corresponding textbook chapter or to some Anglophone culture (Key English 8, Textbook, ex. 1, p. 13). However, some discussion tasks also serve to deepen the understanding and acquisition of some linguistic features or expressions (Key English 8, Textbook, ex. 2, p. 13), whereas others are more traditional, mechanical activities (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex.12, p.75). There are also activities in which the learners are instructed to explain central concepts or ideas to their peers in Finnish (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex 2, p.101). In some instances, the learners are given a choice of doing the exercise either in Finnish or in English, depending on whether they prefer an additional challenge intended for more advanced learners (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex 2 p.101; ex.1, p. 113).

The majority of Spotlight 8 (n=58) and Key English 8 (n=34) discussion exercises are found in the textbook. In these tasks the learners are typically instructed to ask each other questions regarding their personal life experiences (Spotlight 8, Textbook, ex. c, p. 45) and discuss the answers. Alternatively, guided discussions concerning the textbook chapter (Key English 8,

Textbook, ex. 1, p. 45) are also very common. Similar exercises are also found in the exercise book (Spotlight 8, Workbook*, ex. G7, p. 129). Alternatively, some of them encouraged the learners to expand the discussion with their own ideas. For example, having the focal events of a chapter chronologically represented in the form of a narrative pie chart in Finnish was a common activity in the teacher's materials (Smart Moves 2, p. 261; Spotlight 8*, p.141; Key English 8, p.113). Similarly, another narrative chart type common in the teacher's materials was a more traditional list of events that were presented in a chronological order (Smart Moves 2, p. 225; Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 245; Key English 8, p. 142). Similarly, there were larger communicative activities in the Key English 8 textbook that encouraged the learners to discuss their first reactions and possible prior knowledge after reading a text (ex. 3, p.45).

Such exercises not only improve the learner's oral communication skills, but are likely to result in a productive learning situation, where the learners support and even teach each other, as reported by Kohonen (2003: 11, 15−16). In addition, learning to communicate orally is a major factor in becoming a plurilingual language user (COE 2001: 168) who is able to take advantage of all language and cultural skills he/she may have when interacting with others. Moreover, engaging in discussion activities is also likely to positively affect the language learners' inclination to initiate communication outside the classroom as well.

4.3.4 Working in Pairs

Working in pairs tasks is the most numerous learner-centered exercise category in all study book editions considered in this study. These tasks ranged from mechanical exercises done in

pairs (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. 2, p. 45) to more creative exercises, such as oral word explanation activities and simple scripted A/B discussions (Smart Moves 2,Teacher's Material, ex. 3, p. 75; Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 403; Key English 8, Workbook, ex 13, p. 66), although there were some textual content questions as well (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 3, p.16). A particularly innovative pair work activity found in Key English 8 exercise book (My own files, 12) had the learners invent quiz questions on a chapter and have the fellow student answer them. However, the less creative exercise type was more frequently found as an extra activity in an otherwise written exercise. For example, having the learners quiz chapter related vocabulary (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p.297) or ask questions from each other (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p.251; Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 3 c, p. 27) were frequent exercise types in Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material. Also "talking crossword" activities were rather common in Spotlight 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 244) and Key English 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 68−69), although this exercise type was not found in Smart Moves 2. There were also dictations in Spotlight 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 291) and Key English 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 46) in which one of the learners would read a sentence and the other write it down.

Such activities are likely to enable the development of learner autonomy as the learners are required to take charge of their own learning (Holec 1979: 3) during the exercise. On the other hand, as an autonomous learner is presumed to be capable of detachment, critical reflection during the exercise, and independent operation in the learning environment (Little 1991: 4), the favorable effect such activities have on learner autonomy development is debatable. This is due to the fairly strict activity instructions that leave little room for the learners' independent action. For example, doing exercises that involve practicing speech sounds (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 16, p. 21) or reading aloud sentences from previous exercises

(Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex.20, p. 49) require very little autonomous functioning from the students. Interestingly, in Key English 8, such small additional activities are often placed in the margins of the exercise book pages (Key English 8, p. 75 bottom right corner). The idea of this is probably to provide extra activity for the advanced students to avoid idleness and frustration. However, the large number of working in pairs exercises can be misleading due to the nature of these activities since not all pair-work exercises encountered in this study require independent operation nor critical thinking. On the other hand, these exercises enable having the learners work independently for longer periods of time, which may reduce the teacher centeredness of the learning environment.

There were also exercises that require a somewhat different approach from the learner. For instance, for each Spotlight 8 textbook chapter, there is an exercise in the teacher's material in which the learners would first have to find the essential vocabulary and expressions from the text. Then they would study the vocabulary in question independently, and finally test each others' knowledge (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, e.g. p. 442,). Completing this class activity requires notably more effort from the learner than reading aloud English sentences. Moreover, provided that sufficient time is available, he/she would have to evaluate how effectively and how long it will take him/her to memorize the content. Consequently, the learner would have to redetermine the amount of engagement needed which, according to Kohonen (2001: 39), is one of the main characteristics of an autonomous learner. That said, there were also numerous pair work exercises that required autonomous functioning to some extent, even though the concept of the task was more predetermined. These exercises can be carried out even without the teacher's attention with quite good results on the condition that the students are capable of independent work. In this sense, such exercises will undoubtedly

foster learner autonomy even if they do not necessitate the learners to consciously determine their level of engagement.

4.3.5 Roleplays and Drama Activities

The roleplays in Smart Moves 2 are relatively versatile and are likely to have the learner empathize with his/her role. For example, some exercises involved empathizing with the way a foreign student might experience a Finnish school (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 1, p. 100) whereas others introduced a scripted setting where the learners adopt the roles given, such as those of a foreign visitor and a guide (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 10, p. 213). However, the distinction between roleplay and drama activities was not always self-evident because drama activities may naturally include aspects of roleplays and vice versa. Therefore, some of the roleplays are more creative and drama-like, as the learners would adopt the roles of a given text and extend the plot, for example (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 9, p.233).

On the other hand, in Spotlight 8 and Key English 8, there are rather few roleplay tasks altogether. The roleplay tasks in Spotlight 8 tend to be less creative in nature than in Smart Moves 2 and typically involve working on a scene with predetermined English lines, where one of the students imagines he/she is a character from the textbook chapter. While such an exercise may be an entertaining method to review the chapter, it does not necessarily contribute to the development of *intercultural learners* (Kohonen 2001: 66) or cultural broad-mindedness (Kohonen 2005a:12). Similarly, in Key English 8, the roleplays often entailed a fictional interview situation, where a learner adopts the role of a radio reporter (Key English 8, Workbook, My own files, p. 29) or that of a textbook character (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. Texas 3, p. 138). However, a roleplay that involves empathizing with a way a foreign

student might experience Finland is likely to result in an increased awareness of cultural diversity and tolerance (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 1, p. 100). This is one of the aims of the ELP, as established in sub-sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2. In this sense, the roleplays are more versatile in Smart Moves 2 than in Spotlight 8 or Key English 8.

In general, the drama activities require more creativity and emotional involvement than roleplays because the tasks often involve creating a fictional plot with specific characters and then acting it out (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex 10, p.45; Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material p. 67). Similarly, in some of the drama exercises the learners were given a fictional predetermined situation which they should then act out (Smart Moves 2, Exercises ex 2, p.48). There were also drama activities in which the learners are to invent events that precede or follow the plot of a textbook text (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 9, p. 233; Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material *p*. 81). In some cases, the drama exercises may appear to serve a tacit pedagogical objective that is somehow related to the learners' life, such as school life and the challenges of growing up. Consequently, in one exercise the learners would dramatize a scenario on bullying (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex.7b, p. 125) which would be a highly advantageous activity in any educational context. Alternatively, in another drama exercise (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 9 b, p.137) the learners are instructed to create a drama scene based on fictional parents' accounts of various occasions. In another one, the learners dramatize scenes in which a group of adolescents indulge in forbidden activities in a forest, and the park ranger emerges and reprimands them (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 7, p. 249). Such tasks are likely to contribute to the learners' co-operation and communicative skills, and possibly enliven the class atmosphere. Interestingly, these tasks may also have a great impact on the learners' life more generally. Moreover, identifying with a bully and the person being bullied will undoubtedly demonstrate to the learner what it feels like to be either one in real

life. Additionally, it may help the learners understand their parents' perspectives, having fictionally acted as one for a few minutes.

Roleplays and drama activities could both be made great use of by the means of applying the Lewinian model of experiential learning (Kolb 1984: 42) to it. Such learning experiences would indeed yield the four phases of the model (active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization) and would likely result in a deeper understanding of the topic in question through the stages of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. In the light of section 2.3, it is clear that drama activities that pertain to such major factors in the learners' life would be even more beneficial to the learner if realized through the Lewinian model. By doing so, the learner would not only experience the drama situation him/herself, but watch other peers do so, reflect on the experience, and, in the best scenario, learn to empathize with others from the experience. The application of the Lewinian model of experiential learning is explained in the following sub-section.

4.3.6 Games and Simulations

The games and simulations were found in all study book editions. However, there were significant differences in the quality of these activities. Traditional games such as noughts and crosses (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 439, 307) and word explanation games (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 263) were found. However, there are also board games that involve making sentences or working with a field-specific vocabulary (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 54, 154, 208, 254, 234). The use of different kinds of games and simulation as a supplementary class activity seems to be emphasized in Spotlight 8. Moreover, the Spotlight 8 teacher's material includes a good number of games (n=22) that were of various kinds. For

example, word explanation games were encountered. These are activities that entail aspects of a memory game as the words to be explained are distributed on a table face down (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 342−343, 292−293). In addition, there were games in which the learners are asked to give each other instructions on how to behave, such as "scratch your head", or "bend your knees" (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p.183). Interestingly, there was a similar task in Key English 8 teacher's material also (p. 197). However, an especially interesting simulation in Spotlight 8 teacher's material (p. 301−302) involves a map on which the players would place landmarks. The idea is to convey the location of a given landmark to the other player by providing him/her orientational clues in English.

The variety of games and simulations is not as diverse in Smart Moves 2 as in Spotlight 8, and to some extent, in Key English 8. Moreover, the games and simulations in the Smart Moves 2 exercise book are most commonly word explanation games, in which the players, or learners, are asked to explain a certain word without mentioning it to the other participant. There are also variations of this activity, where the learners have to explain animals to each other, but the basic idea is essentially the same. What is more, the Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material includes some traditional board games involving verb tenses (p. 52) or a specific field of vocabulary, such as sports (p. 53). In Key English 8, however, the games and simulations are either very simple word explanation games (Key English 8, Workbook, upper right margin, p.133) or board games that involve making sentences according to a cue in Finnish or English (Key English 8, Teacher's Material, p. 31, 145, 146). There are also games that involve practicing a specific grammatical feature, such as the present perfect tense in Key English 8 teacher's material (p. 85).

The games and simulations are likely to produce a concrete experience of varying intensity to the learners in a favorable classroom environment. This is an essential factor in experiential learning (Kolb 1984, Kohonen 2001) and can be a very productive source of learning if discussed and analyzed subsequently (*ibid.*). However, the tasks did not involve reflective activities afterwards, which follows that the teacher would have to conduct them regardless in order to take full advantage of the experiential learning aspect, as pointed out by Kohonen (2001: 23−29). Especially in games that involve creative language production, such as the verb game in Spotlight 8 teacher's material (p. 54−55), the reflective task after the actual assignment would be utterly important. In this case, the learners may have produced ungrammatical language constructions during the exercises which, if left unattended, may result in the students learning the expressions incorrectly. In addition, subsequent reflection on a language construction, such as using the verb in statement and question clauses in this case, can be highly productive. This is because the board game in question can be applied to all of the 4 dimensions of Lewinian model of experiential learning discussed in sub-section 2.3.2. Moreover, the learners will try out what has been learned (active experimentation) and they will experience the actual activity (concrete experience). They also observe other players and hopefully reflect on the activity afterwards (reflective observation), and are likely to learn from the experience (abstract conceptualization). What this all means, as far as the grammar rule is concerned, is that although the learner may have some presupposition of how language is organized on a syntactic level, it is highly likely that this knowledge is, to some extent at least, inadequate. For this reason, by reflecting upon the exercise the learner can organize and possibly complement his/her conception, or model, of the grammar rule via the comprehension dimension. This means that as the exercise is reflected upon preferably by way of a group activity, the learner's model of the grammar rule is extended to include also the grammatical features he/she failed to produce during the exercise. However, as mentioned

earlier, this kind of approach to playing the game in class was not mentioned in the teacher's guide, nor was the Lewinian model. This emphasizes the teacher's educational expertise and professionalism because the final realization of the games and simulations is, to a very great extent, dependent on the teacher's personal preferences.

4.3.7 Visualizations & Imaginative Exercises

In general, the visualization and imaginative exercises generally attempted to evoke creativity and resourcefulness in the learners. As for Smart Moves 2, some of the exercises in this category involve written English tasks, whereas others involved oral communication between students. For example, in some exercises the learners were asked to describe orally the context of a picture or a comic strip (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 8, p. 175). These kinds of exercises were rather simple and straightforward. However, there were also tasks in which the learners had to use more creativity and immerse themselves more into the task at hand. Such exercises instructed the learners to imagine what they would do if they had all the power in the world (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. E, p.54), write a story using a certain setting (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 8, p.65), or create a school timetable of dreams (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 10 b, p.118). One could argue that such exercises are very fertile sources of personal experience because they are likely to evoke emotions in the learners. However, there was no further reflection pertaining to these activities in Smart Moves 2.

Although grammar exercises may traditionally be regarded as monotonous and involving little creativity, there are some exercises that do not conform to this presupposition in Smart Moves 2. Moreover, there is an oral exercise pertaining to conditional if-clauses, for instance, that involves visualizing one has all the power in the world. Similarly, in another one, the learners

are asked to practice using simple future tense by discussing their visualized future with a pair (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. D, p.77). In some exercises, the learners would also create telephone discussions based on different communicational situations. Such activities are likely to lure the students into learning grammar without necessarily perceiving the activity as a grammar exercise. Moreover, the subject matter and setting of many of these exercises in Smart Moves 2 seem quite topical to a person in their early teenage years. For example, in one of the exercises the learners were asked to read a situational account given by imaginary parents in pairs, and then imagine how the child would feel. From the point of view of experiential learning methods (Kolb 1984) the creative and imaginative experience of these activities is likely to contribute to good learning results if followed by reflection.

Interestingly, the fact that Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 are products of the same publisher is quite noticeable in this exercise category. In Spotlight 8 and Key English 8, the visualization and imaginative exercises are mostly written tasks in which the learner is expected to use his/her imagination. In Key English 8 these tasks are often longer writing tasks that have a resemblance to composition assignments (Workbook, ex. 3, p. 99). Moreover, the learner is asked to write a true or fictional story about a given topic such as a holiday event (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 13 b, p. 19; Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 120; Key English 8, Workbook,ex. 14, p.66), for example. In another exercise of this category the learner is asked to visualize him/herself into a camping centre and imagine the events of the day (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 16, p. 49). However, Spotlight 8 also included some imaginative activities that are quite innovative and amusing, such as composing one-liners to a soap-opera manuscript (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 16, p. 178).

Although such activities undoubtedly develop the learners' language skills in general and may be entertaining to do, they do not involve interactive or reflective dimensions. Moreover, the idea of combining formal learning with informal learning (Kolb 1984: 3) would require some kind of activity that would enable the learner to either access his/her personal experiences or those of others. This could be accomplished with reflection or learner interaction during or after the exercise, for example (for more suitable activities, see section 2.3). Consequently, the benefit of the personal experience, which has a pivotal role in experiential learning (Kolb 1984: 20), is not capitalized on as much as it could be.

4.3.8 Empathy-Taking Activities

The empathy taking activities have similar characteristics in many respects with the imaginative exercises. The differentiating feature is that they involve sharing personal opinions with other peers. In Smart Moves 2 the activities of this category ranged from exchanging opinions about cultural differences to carrying out small scale surveys in class (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 1, p. 197). Some exercises also had the learners present opinions about various matters and then discuss them in pairs or larger groups. Such activities involved describing one's place of domicile (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 2, p. 218) or discussing embarrassing situations in life (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p. 172). However, there were also tasks that involved empathizing with different moods and then reading a piece of text accordingly (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. D, p. 237).

The empathy-taking activities in Spotlight 8 are mostly written tasks as only two of them involve oral language use in the forms of story-telling based on a comic strip and sharing

holiday memories with another peer (Spotlight 8, Textbook, p. 26, 51). The subject matter of these activities is often connected to the learners' preferred free-time activities or culture. For example, in one exercise the student was instructed to write about his/her favorite TV-show (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 13 a, p. 19) and in another, the activity concerned the learner's personal taste for music (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 2+, p. 82). Interestingly, in Spotlight 8, this exercise category involves also activities that are substantially more challenging than the average level of difficulty in exercises of this category. For example, in one exercise the learner is asked to write a counterpart to a column pertaining to attitudes towards the United States of America and the Americans in general (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 16+, p. 99). Such a topic requires a higher register language use and is likely to involve aspects of style and vocabulary that an 8th grade student is rarely fully capable of.

Interestingly, the written empathy-taking activities in Key English 8 are very similar to the tasks of this category in Spotlight 8. They are therefore quite frequently composition-like assignments that involve some personal opinions or experiences. For example, one of the written activities entails a holiday trip the learner may have experienced at some point in time (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. 16, p.50). Interestingly, the proportion of oral exercises is quite high in this category (42%) as 6 out of 14 exercises are interactive. Moreover, the oral empathy-taking exercises involve discussion and reflection on attitudes towards foreigners (Key English 8, Textbook, ex. Steady, p. 78) or bullying (Textbook ex. 2, p. 104), for example. Some of these exercises also involved changing experiences on traveling or an unforgettable personal experience (Key English 8, Textbook, ex. 3, p. 128). All of these themes are very lucrative subjects for discussion. This is because not only is the learner highly likely to be personally engaged in the task at a very high level, but the themes are also important from a societal perspective. Reflecting on and discussing bullying or attitudes

towards foreigners can be very productive in preventing later problems or prejudiced attitudes.

In general, empathy-taking activities are likely to contribute to the learner becoming personally involved with the subject matter. which is one of the pivotal prerequisites of experiential learning. It is interesting that there were few oral exercises of this kind in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. The fact that 42% per cent of the empathy-taking activities were oral in Key English 8 can be misleading, as the total number of activities of this kind was only 14. Furthermore, one would think that the ability to discuss personally involving matters requires more practice than it is given. However, together with the written tasks, oral exercises would be likely to contribute to the intensity of personal and emotional engagement the learners experience during the activities. What is more, oral communication arguably enables peer reflection and feedback quite naturally amidst the activity even though these procedures can undoubtedly be realized after written tasks as well. However, the exercises did not include a reflective dimension that would have given the experience its fullest potential (Kohonen 2001: 29).

4.3.9 Culture Tasks

The culture tasks were most commonly related to the topic of the corresponding textbook chapter. Consequently, in Smart Moves 2, the culture tasks generally reflect the themes of the textbook, many of which relate to some English speaking culture. In some exercises (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 2, p. 26) the learners are asked to fill in basic information of a country (population, name of the capital, languages spoken, currency, etc.). Alternatively,

some of the tasks required more independent work and involved information gathering about the learner's living surroundings followed by a creative exercise (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 1, p. 80).

Interestingly, in Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, the culture tasks can also be found in the form of discussion tips for working on the textbook text. For example, a suggested way of working on a text on Australian aboriginals (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, p.123) entails a cooperative learner activity. Moreover, the learners look for facts pertaining to the history, religion, and current situation of the aboriginals, which are subsequently compared with those of Finland and discussed in more detail. Such an activity is likely to contribute to cultural broad-mindedness and cultural knowledge, since the learners both learn from a new culture and compare it to their own. This will hopefully result in a broader understanding of culture in a larger context and the fact that not all people live in the same way as the Finns. This is, according to Kohonen (2005a: 12), the pedagogical function of the ELP in a nutshell. What is more, such an approach to the theme under discussion is much more holistic in nature than even a series of smaller cultural tasks. This is because the cultural awareness is embedded into the discussion of the text rather than separately done activities.

Similarly, all texts of Spotlight 8 were, to a variable extent, linked to Ireland, the United States of America, or New Zealand. Consequently, the culture tasks involved working with the Anglophone target culture in question. For example, Spotlight 8 exercise book includes tasks (e.g. ex 1, p. 9) in which the learners evaluate a song after listening to it. The songs are performed by an artist of the target culture and therefore serve well to familiarize the students with music and culture possibly unknown to them. Another frequent exercise type involved

working with geographical or economical facts about the target culture (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 157, 173, 231, 295; Spotlight 8, Workbook, p.35).

The culture tasks are related to the corresponding textbook chapter in Key English 8 as well. Furthermore, the topics of the texts are related to the European culture and lifestyle and that of America, Africa, New Zealand and Australia. The activity types range from very simple "make a list of the countries you know in English" activities (Key English 8, Workbook, bottom right margin, p. 7) to more elaborate exercises. For example, writing sentences of one's own on a nation discussed in the text is a typical activity in the Key English 8 exercise book (ex. 4, p, 73). Similarly, there are some activities in the teacher's material that involved searching for the names of European capitals from a map (p. 24) or placing important cities on it (p. 106). There were also instances of more comprehensive written tasks that involved elaboration on American feast days from an American perspective (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. 2, p. 89). Interestingly, special emphasis seems to be put on differences between American and British English in Key English 8 study material, as there are several tasks that pertain to differences of vocabulary between these varieties (Teacher's Material, p. 118; Workbook, ex. 3, p. 101). This differs from the cultural approach adopted in Smart Moves 2 because it emphasizes the understanding and tolerance of cultural differences on a wider scale than on the level of two standardized usages of English. Therefore, the culture tasks in Key English 8 seem old-fashioned when compared to the newer editions.

All in all, the culture tasks are activities that contribute to the general cultural knowledge of the students, and therefore, to an increased tolerance of differences. Although music listening activities and cultural multiple choice tasks, quizzes etc. may seem insignificant in the overall development of cultural broad-mindedness at first, the underlying purpose of these exercises

is quite ambitious. Such exercises intend to contribute to the development of plurilinguality (see sub-section 2.2.2) among the learners. As pointed out in section 2.3, the need for such a broadened set of communicative and cultural skills arises partly from globalization, mobility of people, and a growing cooperation between nations. In this respect, fostering pluricultural individuals into the changing globalized world is an important and challenging task to the education system.

4.3.10 Project Tasks

The project tasks are the most independent and time-consuming activities found in the study book editions. In Smart Moves 2, the project tasks involved a fair amount of language learning in an informal environment, or outside the classroom. In these tasks, the learners were often instructed to search for additional information about a country (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 5, p. 81; ex. 5, p. 216) or another culture-related issue often thematically connected to the textbook chapter (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 15, p.97; ex. 9, p. 244). Interestingly, one of the project topics also concerned immigration to Finland (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 8a, p. 200). Such a topic choice is reflects the philosophies of the CEFR and the ELP and is likely intended to contribute to the development of cultural broad-mindedness and to prevent the development of prejudiced attitudes. When it comes to the working methods used in the projects, the learners were often given a choice of either working alone or in pairs or small groups.

The final realization form of the projects ranged from wall-posters to oral presentations, tourism advertisements, video clips, and small essays. Such activities would be ideal illustrations of the learner's progressing over time in his language studying, and would thus

complement the learner's ELP dossier (discussed in section 2.2) along with other types of language samples (Kohonen 2000a: 23). What is more, the teacher is even given suggestions for suitable extra project activities that involve information searching and creative writing and can be placed into the dossier (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, p. 69). This suggests that in this respect, Smart Moves 2 follows the principles of the ELP and CEFR more than Spotlight 8 or Key English 8. Furthermore, the general suitability of the project tasks for working with the ELP is brought to the teacher's attention in Smart Moves 2 teacher's guide. Placing project tasks into the dossier might also motivate the student to attempt to perform as well as possible, as the project would stay accessible even after its completion. However, this kind of approach was not mentioned in Spotlight 8 or Key English 8, which follows that the way the project tasks are realized, if they are, depends on the teacher's personal beliefs. It would thus be highly beneficial to both the teacher and the learners if the prospects and possibilities of different class activities were explained to a greater extent in the study material.

The project tasks in Spotlight 8 range from simple information searching tasks on target culture tourist attractions (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 222) to more demanding tasks, such as creating a brochure for such an attraction (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 270) or making a profile on an important target culture person (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 320). In the Spotlight 8 workbook, the project tasks tend to be less time consuming and challenging activities, such as postcard pottering (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 5, p.243) or smaller scale information searching on the internet (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 7+, p.119). One of the project tasks even involved characteristics typically associated with roleplay activities (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex G9+, p. 79), as it incorporated a fictional interview of a celebrity which was to be performed in class.

In Key English 8, there are 3 project tasks which pertain to the culture and history of Ireland (Key English 8, Workbook, p.79−80), those of the United States of America (Key English 8, Workbook p. 149−150), or those of Finland (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 200). The projects are all presented in the same form. Firstly, the learner familiarizes him/herself with the corresponding textbook chapter. Then he/she chooses a topic he/she is interested in from a list and searches for additional information. Thirdly, the learner realizes the project in the desired form which can range from a written assignment to posters, mind maps, or tourist brochures. After this, the learner presents his/her work to his/her peers. The final stage is a reflective self-assessment activity in which the learner assesses his/her working process during the project task. The reflection should include assessment of the overall successfulness of the project and the level of difficulty of the task, and what he/she learned from the other students' presentations. The project tasks in Key English 8 are thus rather large, and require quite extensive independent working skills. Interestingly, these 3 project tasks are the only project tasks encountered in this study that have a small task-specific reflective dimension immediately after the completion of the tasks. The reflective activity would be, as discussed earlier, a pivotal requirement of effective use of ELP, experiential learning, or learner autonomy.

Moreover, as the project tasks generally require the highest rate of learner autonomy and motivation of all activities typically conducted at school, and are likely to benefit from self-assessment, these tasks would be ideal to support the use of ELP. What is more, such tasks are likely to develop the learners into more autonomous learners because completing them requires a high level of critical decision making and independent action (Little 1991: 4) and choosing the required level of engagement (Kohonen 2001: 39). As established in section 2.2,

the ELP is intended to be used to foster motivation, autonomy and self-assessment (Kohonen 2000; Little 2000: 53−55), all of which can be contributed to by proper use of the project tasks. In addition, appropriate project task working is presumed to result in development of life-long learning skills (Ushioda 2002: 1; COE 2003; Kohonen 2000; Kohonen 2005a). This arises from the fact that such activities are likely to teach the learner the basics of information searching on the internet or libraries and independent working. Without these skills it would unrealistic to expect anyone to become a life-long learner.

4.4 Overall Analysis of Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8

The following sub-sections present an overall qualitative analysis of Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8. Moreover, sub-sections 4.4.1−4.4.7 will focus on a more analytic discussion of the findings in relation to the hypotheses and aims and objectives of this study. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which the teacher is encouraged to implement his/her instructional activity.

4.4.1 View of Learning

Smart Moves 2 approaches learning as an individual and social process that involves inductive problem solving, and is attained as a consequence of target-oriented activity (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, p.5). Furthermore, the student is encouraged to autonomous learning, which is supported by reciprocal social activities in class. In addition, learner autonomy and responsibility for one's own learning is generally emphasized in Smart Moves 2 teacher's material (p.5). Consequently, there are tasks that contribute to the development of

these skills, such as various project tasks (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p.111). Interestingly, the learning process is not as comprehensively accounted for in the teacher's materials of Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. On the contrary, they seem to emphasize flexible adaptation of the difficulty level, and do not discuss the learning process in other respects.

Smart Moves 2 (teacher's Material, p. 5) and Spotlight 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 4) both name achieving the aims and objectives stated in the CEFR and the FNCC as one of the primary goals of language education. Interestingly, such a discussion is not presented in Key English 8. However, even though it is reasonable to presuppose that the teacher is aware of the aims and objectives of the FNCC, it is interesting that those of the CEFR or the ELP are not discussed in any detail. This may lead to unexpected interpretations of how these methods should be used, as it is unlikely that every teacher in Finland has heard of these concepts, let alone knows how to apply them to their teaching.

4.4.2 The ELP

Smart Moves2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 include activities[6] that could be used in ELP oriented language instruction. Therefore, Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 include 14,5 %, 13,4 %, and 13,0 % of ELP activities, respectively. The proportional differences are not statistically significant (p>0.05). It can thus be said that statistically, the ELP is not focal educational philosophy in any of the editions. However, most of the textbook texts in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 are related to different foreign cultures which would make the thematic context a fertile base for more intensive ELP use. Moreover, language portfolio collection is mentioned as one of the class activities in Smart

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[6] Reflective essays, self-assessment tasks, group assessment tasks, group reflection tasks, discussion exercises, culture tasks, and project tasks are activities compatible with ELP-oriented language instruction.

Moves 2 and Spotlight 8, but the desired usage and the pedagogical dimensions of the ELP are not explicitly discussed.

On the one hand, one may wonder, whether it is the publisher's responsibility to educate the teachers in language instruction philosophies. The publisher's role is, in a way, to produce language instruction material that is accepted and purchased by the public. On the other hand, the study materials are frequently designed by professional educators which means that the material does reflect the desired educational philosophies at the time of its publishing. In this respect, the study books used in class would be the most logical target of development since they would also have a larger impact on the instructional methods used in the field. Either way, this emphasizes the teacher's professionalism. These findings support my hypotheses in that portfolio collection is encouraged to an extent but not as the main educational philosophy in Smart Moves 2 and Spotlight 8 teacher's materials. Interestingly, the ELP is not discussed in Key English 8. In Smart Moves 2, suitable activities are indicated. In Spotlight 8, however, the ELP is rather generally mentioned in the suggested course outline (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 5−6) but no activities are specifically recommended to be used with it. Be that as it may, it is debatable whether Smart Moves 2 and Spotlight 8 can be regarded as promoting ELP use since specific ways of implementation are not discussed.

The underlying effect of the CEFR can be seen in many activities and working methods in the editions which implies that they would likely support ELP-oriented teaching. For example, in Smart Moves 2, the teacher is provided with plenty of versatile approaches to discuss the texts in class. In many cases, these methods underline the similarities and differences between the target culture and that of Finland (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material p. 123). Such an approach is likely to have positive effects on the learners' awareness and tolerance of other

cultures. This can be seen in the way that the texts are often approached from a wider contextual perspective. For example, it is suggested in Smart Moves 2 teacher's material that the discussion of a text that focuses on the Australian way of life should be begun by a general inspection of geography, climate, and the Australian dialect (p.19). In Spotlight 8 and Key English 8, the teacher is not generally given such text discussion tips.

The portfolio collection in general does not involve reports of culture and language experiences the learner might have encountered outside the educational environment. In the ELP, this information would be part of the language biography. Consequently, it seems that the portfolio use in Smart Moves 2 and Spotlight 8 resembles the desired use of the dossier (see p. 8) but does not realize the other two parts of ELP (language biography, language passport). However, it is interesting that the learner is not encouraged to reflect on why language should be studied or what features of language he/she would like to learn. According to Huttunen (2003: 11), such questions are central to language education that follows the CEFR because the learner is likely to put more effort into his/her language studying if he/she understands the possible benefits of doing so.

4.4.3 Experiential Learning

The idea of experience as the primary source of learning is not discussed in the study book editions considered in this study. However, all editions included exercise types that can be used in teaching that reflects the ideas of experiential learning. The proportions of experiential

learning exercises[7] in the total number of activities in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 are 19,5%, 16,5%, and 19,6%, respectively. These proportional differences are not statistically significant (p>0.05). However, these findings support the hypotheses of this study in that experiential learning methods are used but they are not the primary instructional methods. On the other hand, the fact that the teacher is not made aware of the principles of experiential learning methods, nor is encouraged to use them appropriately, is in conflict with my hypothesis. What is more, that the newer editions do not statistically differ from the older ones with respect to the use of experiential learning methods is also contradictory to my hypothesis.

4.4.4 Learner and Teacher Autonomy

Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8 include activities[8] that aim towards greater learner autonomy. The proportions of learner autonomy activity types were 25,1%, 21,8%, and 24,8%, respectively. The proportional differences are not statistically significant (p>0.05). However, these results support the hypotheses of this study in that activities aiming towards greater learner autonomy are found to some extent. However, since each edition includes more than 60% activities that do not reflect ELP, experiential learning, or autonomy, it is reasonable to argue that they are not the prevailing pedagogical philosophies. Another hypothesis I had with relation to this study was that the oldest edition, namely Key English 8, would include fewer learner autonomy activities than the newer editions. Interestingly, this hypothesis was disproved.

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[7] Personal journals, reflective essays, self assessment tasks, group assessment tasks, group reflection activities, discussion exercises, roleplays, drama activities, games and simulations, visualization/imaginative activities, and empathy taking activities are activities compatible with experiential learning methods.
[8] Activity types that aim towards greater learner autonomy are self-assessment tasks, group assessment tasks, group reflection tasks, discussion activities, pair-work tasks, and project tasks.

In addition to the task types that emphasize learner autonomy, the editions included activities that, to an extent, involve the learner in the planning of his/her language studies. Such tasks are learner goal settings, for instance, in which the learner is encouraged to determine his/her objectives in language studying (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p. 131; Spotlight 8, Workbook, p. 8; Key English 8, Workbook, p. 8). Such an activity invites the student to contemplate on the level of engagement needed to accomplish this goal, which is one of focal ideas of learner autonomy (Little: 1991: 4). Moreover, since the student is encouraged to express his/her aims and objectives freely, these activities could easily be a part of the learner's language biography of the ELP. In Key English 8 (Teacher's Material, p. 6), the teacher is encouraged to conduct a class discussion on the general objectives of language studying, working methods used in class and individual learning strategies. Similarly, in Smart Moves 2 (Exercises, p. 19, 102), learning skills are taught in the form of concise information packages. Teaching the learners how they learn most effectively is very likely to help them develop into more autonomous learners because it will contribute to their independent working abilities.

None of the three editions considered in this paper address the teacher or challenge him/her to question his/her teaching methods in general, or with regard to ELP, experiential learning or teacher autonomy. As established in sub-section 2.2.3, such an approach is characteristic of the transformative paradigm (Little *et al*. 2007: 27−28), and would undoubtedly be an effective way to inspect one's professional identity and beliefs. The teacher is not encouraged to look for additional information on any particular teaching method either. Such an approach to professional development would be very effective in updating the instruction methods used where needed. On the contrary, it seems that the teacher is viewed as an independent and untouchable agent in his/her class whose authority and pedagogic methods are not questioned,

as long as they conform to the FNCC. This is logical, of course, but it enables the realization of a number of different instruction practices within the same curriculum. On the other hand, such a situation makes it very challenging to uniformly change or develop the prevailing educational concepts towards greater learner-centeredness.

4.4.5 Grammar Instruction

Grammar instruction was mostly realized in a traditional, teacher-centered manner in Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. This means that the teacher explains and exemplifies a grammatical rule or feature to the learners with the aid of example clauses and diagrams. Such an approach involves frontal instruction and subsequent grammar exercises that are done either individually or in a group. On the contrary, grammar instruction in Smart Moves 2 is based on an approach that fosters learner-centered problem solving. To begin with, studying grammar is justified to the student as learning a universal set of rules and conventions acknowledged by all speakers of English that contribute to clarity and intelligibility of language use (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p.144). This kind of holistic approach (Kaikkonen 2001: 64−69; Kolb 1984: 20−21) is likely to result in an increase of learning motivation. If successful, this approach establishes the learner as an emotionally involved focus of the learning process. Moreover, in Smart Moves 2 (Exercises p.37−38, 128), the learner is typically given a series of language extracts in English, which he/she is first asked to examine. Then the learner is instructed to infer the rule behind the feature and document it in his/her own words (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, p. 76, 128, 146, 178). Since the learner obviously is in the focus of the learning process, the activity is very likely to contribute to the level of motivation and learner autonomy. This does not mean that grammar would not be

specifically instructed where necessary, however. For example, the teacher could let the learners infer the grammatical rule when the feature is discussed for the first time, and use the grammar teaching material as a method to revise the issue in question later.

4.4.6 Self Assessment and Reflective Activities

Self-assessment is emphasized as a part of language education in Smart Moves 2 and the teacher is instructed to ensure that the learners know the criteria with which they assess themselves (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, p. 8). Self-assessment can also be done as a language portfolio activity. One way of doing this would be having the learner select his/her best works, elaborate on what kinds of factors lead to them being successful, and append them into his/her portfolio (*ibid.*). For some students, the suggested role of the language portfolio is simply to improve the finishing and clarity of notes although it can be used more extensively with advanced learners.

In Spotlight 8, the self-assessment tasks are included as a part of the suggested course outline (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 5−6) and the importance of encouraging the learners to pursue their learning objectives through target-oriented activities is emphasized. In this respect, the self-assessment activities could be regarded as belonging to target-oriented schoolwork even though self-assessment as such is not discussed in more detail. In Key English 8, the self-assessment tasks are intended for teaching the learners essential language studying skills and helping them structure their language learning goals (Key English 8, Teacher's Material, p. 5−6). In addition, the self-assessment tasks are encouraged to be done on a regular basis and often in the beginning of a new unit in the book.

However, the reflective activities do not generally take place immediately after a learning activity which, according to Kohonen (2001) and Kolb (1984), diminishes the benefit of the learning experience. This is because the reflective dimension, which is crucial to learning, is left unattended. In contrast, the reflective tasks concentrated on the learner's language learning success and school functioning on a general level for the most part, which leaves them somewhat detached from individual learning activities. Consequently, some of the mistakes or misunderstandings that may have occurred during the activities are not necessarily discussed. Therefore, the learners might have either learned ungrammatical or unpragmatic language use, or simply failed to learn from their mistakes.

Although the reflective and self-assessment tasks were generally placed at the end of a larger unit or entity there were some exceptions to this. For example, in a group reflection exercise (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 1, p. 26), the learners are asked to reflect on what new things they learned about Australia after reading a text on it. Similarly, the project tasks in Key English 8 are followed by a small reflective activity in which the student is instructed to assess his/her working process retrospectively (Key English 8, Workbook, p.79−80). Such exercises serve the purposes of experiential learning and ELP in an ideal manner because the learning experience is immediately reflected on in a way that supports the development of learner autonomy, and communicational and social skills. Furthermore, they also may result in a favorable learning process in which the learners become each other's teachers, as reported by Kohonen (2003: 13). However, such reflections were rare in all of the study book editions.

4.4.7 Teaching Adaptation According to the Students' Level

In Smart Moves 2, the text has been divided into sections so that the first part of the text is intended for the weaker students (Smart Moves 2, Teacher's Material, p. 13), and corresponding, simplified exercises are also available (Teacher's Material, p.74−75). Many of the writing tasks generally begin with a simple approach, such as finding an expression from the text or filling in a blank, where the learner can form full sentences rather easily. However, the tasks get increasingly challenging towards the end of each unit or chapter. This provides the more advanced learners an additional challenge.

Similarly, Spotlight 8 intends to supply sufficient resources for fitting the level of class activities according to the level of the learners. For example, in the beginning of each textbook chapter, there is a Finnish plot outline with some "fill in missing information" type tasks (Spotlight 8, Teacher's Material, p. 29). This is to ensure that all learners understand the focal syntactic structures and the vocabulary of the text. There are also activities that provide the more advanced learners additional challenge, and some exercises are marked with a "+" sign to indicate this (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. G8+, p.27).

According to Key English 8 teacher's material (p. 5), the edition is structured in a way that enables taking into account the different levels of learners as well as time available in class. The focal language learning material consists of the *A-texts* (Key English 8, Textbook, p. 79−80) and activities related to them. Moreover, successful discussion of these texts and activities is the desired basic objective of language instruction. On the other hand, there are also *B-texts* (Key English 8, Textbook, p. 82−83) and *Key Stories* (Key English 8, Textbook, p. 84−86) and related activities that can be discussed to a varying extent depending on time

and need. This material is intended to flexibly complement the A texts and materials where needed. Similarly, there are activities that are suitable for more advanced learners. This material consists of *C-texts* (Key English 8, Textbook, p. 108−114), *Key Extra*s (Key English 8, Workbook, p. 14) and related exercises.

All the study book editions considered in this study employ both English and Finnish as a vehicle of communication and learning. Moreover, English is employed to a great extent in the exercises and texts with the exception of written instructions, which are typically in Finnish. Activities that involve either oral or written translation from Finnish to English, or vice versa, are also common. Similarly, grammar instruction is in Finnish. Interestingly, there are also some discussion tasks that ask the learners to discuss an issue in Finnish (Smart Moves 2, Exercises, ex. 9 b, p. 13). What is more, the learners are occasionally given the choice of language, presumably according to their spoken language skills and fluency in Smart Moves 2 (Exercises, ex.1, p.26). Similarly, in Spotlight 8, there are tasks that use Finnish as the main vehicle of learning, such as listening comprehension tasks (Spotlight 8, Workbook, ex. 2, p. 105). In Key English 8 some of the exercises pertaining to reading comprehension are entirely in Finnish (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. 1, p. 7). Likewise, some exercises involve working with both English and Finnish (Key English 8, Workbook, ex. 5, p. 9). Consequently, English seems to be the main vehicle of communication in most learning situations, and Finnish is used in instructions and difficult oral tasks.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has examined the ways in which the European Language Portfolio, experiential learning, and learner autonomy are reflected in three 8th grade study book editions, namely Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8 and Key English 8. I began my two-phase research by first classifying the exercises found in the exercise book, textbook, and the teacher's material, the criteria for which were based on a theoretical review on prior research. The quantitative results were then tested with a chi-square test. The second phase of this study was a qualitative approach to the editions in general and the exercise categories of phase 1. The qualitative overview of the study book editions was carried out with the aid of the specific support questions discussed in the methodology chapter.

None of the editions considered here conformed exclusively to these theories. The proportion of the exercises adhering to the research parameters was higher in the textbooks (with the exception of Smart Moves 2) and teacher's material than in the exercise books. This is partly explained by the lack of traditional, written exercises in the textbook and the teacher's material. The proportions of exercises reflecting the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy in Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 were 38%, 33%, and 36%, respectively. These proportional differences in the total number of exercises were not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). Smart Moves 2 proved to include very highly significantly ($p<0.001$) more exercises in the categories of drama activities and highly significantly ($p<0.01$) in the category of project tasks. Smart Moves 2 can thus be regarded as having more experiential activities and autonomous tasks that are also suitable for working with the ELP. Other than that, no statistically significant ($p>0.05$) differences were found.

However, the qualitative results showed interesting differences in the exercises in the level of learner centeredness and learner engagement as the exercises in Smart Moves 2 appeared more learner-centered and learner engaging than in Spotlight 8 or Key English 8. In addition, Smart Moves 2 has a more learner-centered approach towards grammar teaching. In this sense, the differences between Smart Moves 2, Spotlight 8, and Key English 8 are greater than the quantitative results imply. However, the differences are relatively subtle. Interestingly, the qualitative analysis revealed that the ways the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy are applied in the study book editions examined in this study are not entirely in accordance with how they should be used ideally. Although student centered activities that are likely to stimulate autonomous and experiential learner activity were found, the tasks did not have any reflective dimensions afterwards. The usefulness of such activities would likely be greater if followed by small reflective activities after significant learning experiences. By doing this the reflection would concentrate on the activity that has just been finished, and learning through reflection would be made possible. This does not remove the need for reflection over a longer period of time that allows the student to assess his/her overall performance. To ensure appropriate use of the learner-centered theories, a brief discussion of essential language teaching methods characteristic to the material would be highly beneficial. This would likely contribute to the success of the intended instructional objectives, as many of the teachers in the field have studied education two or more decades ago and may not have updated their teaching methods or conceptions since.

I had several hypotheses regarding this study. Firstly, I assumed that the study book editions are likely to reflect the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy to some extent, but not as their primary educational theory. The results of this study verified this hypothesis. Secondly, I also hypothesized that the teacher would be encouraged to use the ELP,

experiential learning methods, and activities that contribute to learner autonomy. This hypothesis was mostly disproved, as only the ELP is mentioned as a possible class activity in Smart Moves 2 and Spotlight 8. Thirdly, I also assumed that the most recent edition (Spotlight 8) would reflect the ELP, experiential learning and learner autonomy more than the other editions. This hypothesis was disproved as there was very little difference between any of the editions with relation to these educational philosophies. Finally, I also hypothesized that teacher and learner autonomy would be fostered to some extent, but the traditional teacher-centered learning model is likely to be the prevailing one. This proved to be partly true, as some activities reflecting learner autonomy were found. However, teacher autonomy was not discussed to any extent.

In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that there has been very little change during the years 2004−2010 with relation to the extent of use of the ELP, experiential learning methods, or learner autonomy. This is surprising bearing in mind that the ELP, for instance, was first introduced in Finland in 1998 in an extensive pilot project. Similarly, as discussed in chapter 2, the experiential learning methods and learner autonomy have been researched quite extensively since the 1980s. This suggests that for some reason, these theories have not been incorporated into the study material to a greater extent.

The reliability of this study would have been better if the classification of the exercise types had been done by several researchers. However, this was not possible due to the limited resources and magnitude of this study. Interesting targets of further research would be the visibility of the ELP, experiential learning, and learner autonomy in the study material of other lower secondary school classes and upper secondary school. It might also be interesting

to try to qualitatively classify the research parameters of the quantitative study in order to better focus on the educational theories separately.

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APPENDIX 1

The common reference levels of the Central European Framework of Reference.

Table 1 *The Common Reference Levels: global scale* (Little 2007: 27)

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

APPENDIX 2

Raw data

Table 1 *The Reciprocal Distribution of the Exercise Categories in Smart Moves 2*

	Exercise Book	Teacher's Material	
Personal journals			
Reflective essays	1		
Self-assessment tasks	6	2	
Group assessment tasks			
Group reflection	3		
Discussion exercises	37	26	
Working in pairs	53	54	
Role plays	8	3	
Drama activities	9	7	
Games and simulations	12	5	
Visualizations/Imaginative activities	17	5	
Empathy-taking activities	13	2	
Culture tasks	17	4	
Project tasks	15	5	
Other exercises	361	136	
Total	552	249	

Table 2 *The Reciprocal Distribution of the Exircise Categories in Spotlight 8*

Personal journals			1
Reflective essays			
Self-assessment tasks	9		1
Group assessment tasks	1		
Group reflection			
Discussion exercises	5	59	14
Working in pairs	18	60	37
Role plays		8	1
Drama activities			
Games and simulations	1		22
Visualizations/Imaginative a	20		3
Empathy-taking activities	16	2	
Culture tasks	20	1	11
Project tasks	8		3
Other Exercises	470	38	163
Total	561	168	256

Table 3 *The Reciprocal Distribution of the Exercise Categories in Key English 8*

	Exercise Book	Text Book	Teacher's Material
Personal journals			
Reflective essays	2		
Self-assessment tasks	13		1
Group assessment tasks			
Group reflection			
Discussion exercises	14	34	14
Working in pairs	53	19	33
Role plays	5	1	4
Drama activities		2	
Games and simulations	4		10
Visualizations/Imaginative activities	21	2	2
Empathy-taking activities	8	6	2
Culture tasks	8		7
Project tasks	3		
Other exercises	396	30	47
Total	527	94	120

SUOMENKIELINEN TIIVISTELMÄ

Vieraiden kielten opetus on muuttunut merkittävästi viimeisten vuosikymmenten aikana. Se mielletään nykyään oppilaskeskeiseksi prosessiksi, jossa oppilas on itsenäinen toimija, jonka oppimista ja työskentelyä opettaja tukee ja ohjaa. Vieraiden kielten ihanteellisen oppimisympäristön katsotaan sisältävän konkreettisia oppimiskokemuksia, tutustumista vieraisiin kulttuureihin ja kieliin, ja runsaasti viestintää kohdekielellä, joiden käsittelyä voidaan syventää reflektoinnin kautta. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena on selvittää, minkä verran 8. luokan englannin kielen oppikirjat vastaavat näihin tavoitteisiin. Tutkimuksen teoriaosiossa oppilaskeskeisiä opetusmenetelmiä lähestytään eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen, eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja oppijan/opettajan autonomian vahvistamisen näkökulmista. Lisäksi opetusmetodien muutosta opettajalähtöisyydestä oppijakeskeisyyteen tarkastellaan yleisellä tasolla. Teoriaosuudessa käsitellään myös valtakunnallisia opetussuunnitelman perusteita (2004) laajemman näkökulman luomiseksi.

Mielenkiinto aiheeseen syntyi opettajan pedagogisista opinnoista, joissa työskentelin intensiivisesti Eurooppalaisen kielisalkun parissa. Kielisalkun ja kokemuksellisten opetusmenetelmien käyttöä tarkasteltiin myös yleisellä tasolla opettajaopinnoissa, joten halusin selvittää, näkyvätkö nämä asiat vastaavasti myös käytössä olevissa opetusmateriaaleissa. Ennen tutkimuksen tekoa oletin, että kaikki tutkitut oppikirjat sisältäisivät jossain määrin oppilaskeskeisiä opetusmenetelmiä, mutta ne tuskin olisivat hallitsevassa asemassa. Lisäksi oletin, että uudemmissa kirjasarjoissa olisi enemmän oppilaskeskeisiä tehtäviä. Uskoin myös, että oppijan ja opettajan autonomiaa pyritään edistämään jonkin verran ja opettajaa kannustetaan soveltamaan oppilaslähtöisyyttä

opetukseensa perinteisen opettajajohtoisen opetuksen ollessa kuitenkin vallitseva työmuoto. Oletukseni oli, että uusin oppikirjasarja on todennäköisesti kehittynein oppilaslähtöisyyden suhteen. Jotta ennakko-oletukset voitaisiin vahvistaa tieteellisesti, tutkielma toteutettiin kaksivaiheisena. Ensimmäisessä osassa oppikirjasarjojen kaikki tehtävät luokiteltiin ja analysoitiin kvantitatiivisin menetelmin. Toisessa vaiheessa aineistoa lähestyttiin laadullisesta näkökulmasta. Tarkoituksena oli selvittää onko oppikirjojen oppilaskeskeisyydessä merkittäviä eroja, poikkeavatko käytetyt opetusmenetelmät toisistaan, ja minkälaisia laadullisia eroja eri tehtävätyypeissä on.

Kuten jo edellä mainittu, tutkimuksen teoriaosuudessa käsitellään Eurooppalaista viitekehystä, Eurooppalaista kielisalkkua, kokemuksellista oppimista ja oppijan/opettajan autonomiaa. Edellä mainitut käsitteet ovat kaikki oppilaslähtöistä opetusta tukevia, joten ne liittyvät toisiinsa läheisesti ja niitä voidaan käyttää yhdessä tai erikseen. Eurooppalainen kielisalkku perustuu Eurooppalaiseen viitekehykseen, joka on myös nykyisen opetussuunnitelman tavoitteiden ja arviointikriteerien taustalla. Kielisalkussa on kolme osaa; kielipassi, kielenoppimiskertomus ja työkansio. Näitä ensimmäinen sisältää merkittävimmät tiedot oppijan kieliminän kehityksestä, kuten olennaiset kulttuurikokemukset ja itsearvionnit hänen kielitaidoistaan Eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen arviointiasteikkoon perustuen. Kielenoppimiskertomuksessa oppilas tarkastelee itseään kielenkäyttäjänä ja jäsentää itselleen tärkeitä kielenoppimiskokemuksia. Työkansio sisältää autenttisia näytteitä oppilaan työskentelystä, joissa oppilas havainnollistaa kielitaitoaan valitsemillaan näytteillä.

Kielisalkku on oppijan omaisuutta ja sen yleisiä tavoitteita ovat oppijan ja opettajan autonomian kehittyminen, motivaation kasvu ja itsearviointi. Käytännössä kielisalkulla on karkeasti luokitellen kaksi funktiota, joista ensimmäinen on niin sanottu raportoiva funktio.

Sen tarkoituksena on esittää tiivistetyssä muodossa oppijan kielenopiskeluun liittyvät tiedot. Kielisalkun osista kielenoppimiskertomus ja työkansio toteuttavat tätä tehtävää. Toisaalta kielisalkulla on myös pedagoginen funktio, eli pyrkimys mahdollistaa elinikäinen kielenoppiminen sekä kielten ja kulttuurien tuntemuksen lisääminen. Tällä pyritään kasvattamaan kielenkäyttäjiä, joilla on riittävästi tietoa sekä omasta että opiskeltavasta kielestä ja kulttuurista suvaitsevuuden ja eurooppalaisen identiteetin vahvistamiseksi. Tavoitteena on, että oppija arvostaisi vieraita kulttuureita ja ymmärtäisi erilaisuuden hienouden olematta ennakkoluuloinen.

Kokemuksellista oppimista lähestyttiin tutkimuksessa Kolbin (1984) kokemuksellisen oppimisteorian näkökulmasta. Tässä teoriassa oppiminen mielletään kokemusperäiseksi, kokonaisvaltaiseksi prosessiksi. Muun elämän piirissä koettuja ja opittuja asioita ei eroteta oppimisprosesseista. Kokemuksellisten aktiviteettien lähtökohtana on, että oppimiskokemukset stimuloivat oppijaa sekä emotionaalisesti että intellektuellisti. Pyrkimyksenä on kokonaisvaltainen osallistuminen, jossa oppija observoi ja osallistuu mielekkääseen aktiviteettiin lukemisen ja kirjoittamisen ohella. Kolbin kokemuksellinen oppimisteoria on nelivaiheinen syklinen malli, jonka mukaan oppiminen alkaa konkreettisesta kokemuksesta, jonka pohjalta oppija reflektoi kokemaansa. Tämän jälkeen kokemuksen pohjalta pyritään rakentamaan abstrakti käsitteellinen malli, jonka toimintaa kokeillaan viimeisessä vaiheessa. Kokemukselliselle oppimiselle tyypillisiä tehtäviä ovat esimerkiksi:

- päiväkirjat ja reflektiot

- portfoliot, pohdintakysymykset ja reflektiiviset kirjoitelmat

- roolipelit, draamaharjoitukset ja pelit/simulaatiot

- omakohtaiset tarinat ja tapaustutkimukset

- mielikuvitusta aktivoivat tehtävät

- mallit, analogiat ja teorioiden rakentaminen

- empatiaa vaativat tehtävät, tarinankerronta ja jakaminen muiden kanssa

- keskustelutehtävät ja reflektio ryhmissä

Oppijan autonomialla tarkoitetaan yksinkertaisimmillaan oppijan oikeutta määrittää ja käyttää tehtävän suorittamiseen sen vaatima määrä voimavaroja ja keskittymistä. Laajemmin sillä tarkoitetaan oppijan ja opettajan kykyä tarkastella ilmiöitä ulkopuolisin silmin, arvioida itseään kriittisesti, tehdä itsenäisiä päätöksiä ja toimia itsenäisesti. Tässä tutkimuksessa autonomiaa lähestytään humanismin ja fenomenologian näkökulmasta, joten autonomia mielletään kykynä tutkia ja löytää ratkaisuja itsenäisesti sekä työskennellä tuloksellisesti otollisessa ympäristössä. Yksinkertaistaen autonomialla tarkoitetaan siis kykyä ottaa vastuu omasta toiminnastaan. Oppijan näkökulmasta tämä tarkoittaa itsenäisten valintojen tekemistä omien oppimistavoitteiden sekä oppimistyylien ja -tapojen suhteen sekä kykyä arvioida omaa työskentelyään ja sen tuloksia. Toisaalta opettajan ammatillisen kasvun merkitys oppilaiden oppimisessa unohtuu usein opetustilannetta tarkasteltaessa. Opettajan näkökulmasta autonomialla tarkoitetaan opettajan kykyä tarkastella toimintaansa kriittisesti ulkopuolisena ja lähestyä työtään reflektiivisten kysymysten kautta. Opettajan tulisi näin ollen tarkastella omaa toimintaansa kriittisesti ja välttää urautumista. Sekä opettajan että oppilaan tulisi siis tiedostaa selkeästi mitä he ovat kulloinkin tekemässä ja miksi.

Autonomian kehittyminen ei kuitenkaan ole itsestään selvää vaan se vaatii emotionaalista älykkyyttä toteutuakseen. Toisin sanoen autonomian kehittäminen vaatii varsin kokonaisvaltaista oman toiminnan, tilanteen ja tehtävän tiedostamista. Oppimisympäristön näkökulmasta autonomian kehittyminen vaatii onnistuakseen seuraavat tekijät:

1) oppijan osallistuminen

2) oppijan reflektio

3) tarkoituksenmukainen kohdekielen käyttö

Käytännössä tämä tarkoittaa, että opettajan tulisi saattaa oppilas ottamaan vastuu omasta oppimisestaan. Tämä on pitkän ajan tavoite ja vaatii todennäköisesti vastavuoroista keskustelua oppilaiden ja opettajan välillä opetuksen ja opetussuunnitelman tavoitteiden ja oppilaiden omien päämäärien selventämiseksi. Oppilailla tulisi myös olla mahdollisuus vaikuttaa opetuksen järjestämistä koskeviin ratkaisuihin luokan arjessa. Toisaalta reflektion tarkoitus on lisätä oppilaan tietoisuutta oman toimintansa tavoitteista ja siten lisätä hänen vastuutaan. Sen olisi suotavaa tapahtua luokassa yhteistoiminnallisena aktiviteettina kohdekieltä käyttäen. Tällä pyritään yleisen tietoisuuden ja ymmärryksen lisääntymiseen kielenopiskelun työskentelytavoista ja sen tavoitteista. Kolmannen vaatimuksen mukaisesti oppijoiden tulisi käyttää kohdekieltä vuorovaikutuksessa mahdollisimman paljon oppimisympäristössä, jossa on runsaasti kohdekieltä tarjolla. Toisin sanoen opettajan tulisi keskustella luokan kanssa joko yhteisesti tai erikseen ja luokan seinillä olisi hyvä olla kohdekielisiä julisteita tai muuta kohdekieleen liittyvää materiaalia.

Tutkimuksen aineistoksi valittiin 8. luokan oppikirjat siksi, ettei esimerkiksi kielisalkun käyttöä oltu juurikaan tutkittu yläkoulukontekstissa Suomessa. Lisäksi tutkimuksen aineistoon

saatiin siten kattavasti eri-ikäisiä oppikirjasarjoja kahdelta Suomen suurimmalta oppikirjakustantajalta. Aineisto koostuu Smart Moves 2 (Otava, 2007), Key English 8 (WSOY, 2003) ja Spotlight 8 (WSOY, 2010) kirjasarjoista. Tutkimuksen toteuttamisen aikaan Spotlight 8 oli uusin julkaistu yläkoulun oppikirjasarja, joten tutkielma antaa kattavan kuvan sekä käytettyjen kirjasarjojen sisällöstä että mahdollisesta kehityksestä vuosien 2003 ja 2010 välisenä aikana. Lisäksi kaikki kirjasarjat ovat edelleen laajasti käytössä, joten tutkimuksen tulokset antavat hyvän yleiskuvan oppilaskeskeisen Englanninkielenopetuksen tilasta Suomessa.

Tutkielman tutkimusongelmaa lähestyttiin tutkimalla miten oppikirjojen sisällöissä näkyy eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen ja oppilaan sekä opettajan autonomian vahvistaminen. Jokaisen oppikirjasarjan tekstikirja, tehtäväkirja ja opettajan opas huomioitiin analyysissa. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin sekä määrällisiä että laadullisia metelmiä, joten tutkimusmenetelmällinen ratkaisu on niin kutsuttu combined methods -lähestymistapa. Ensimmäisessä vaiheessa aineisto luokiteltiin 14 oppilaskeskeisen tehtävätyypin mukaan. Luokittelu perustui tutkielman teoreettiseen viitekehykseen. Nämä tehtävätyypit ovat:

1. Henkilökohtaiset päiväkirjat (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

2. Reflektiiviset kirjoitelmat (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

3. Itsearviointitehtävät (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen, autonomia)

4. Itsearviointi ryhmässä (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen, autonomia)

5. Reflektio ryhmässä (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen, autonomia)

6. Keskusteluharjoitukset (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, kokemuksellinen oppiminen, autonomia)

7. Parityöskentely (autonomia)

8. Roolipelit (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

9. Draama harjoitukset (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

10. Pelit ja simulaatiot (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

11. Mielikuvitusta aktivoivat harjoitukset (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

12. Empatiaharjoitukset esim. tarinankerronta, oamkohtaiset tarinat, jakaminen muiden kanssa (kokemuksellinen oppiminen)

13. Kulttuuritehtävät (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku)

14. Projektitehtävät (Eurooppalainen kielisalkku, autonomia)

Tämän jälkeen kvantitatiivisessa analyysissa löydetyt tehtävätyypit ja oppikirjasarjat analysoitiin laadullisesti, jotta tehtävätyyppien ja kirjasarjojen laadulliset erot tulisivat huomioiduiksi. Oppikirjasarjojen laadullisessa analyysissa kiinnitettiin erityistä huomiota eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja autonomian vahvistamisen näkyvyyteen kirjasarjoissa. Lisäksi tutkittiin kieliopin opetuksessa, itsearvioinnissa ja opetuksen eriyttämisessä näkyviä eroja.

Tutkimuksen tuloksista ilmenee, että kirjasarjojen välillä ei ole merkittäviä eroja kvantitatiivisesta näkökulmasta. Oppilaskeskeisten tehtävien osuudessa tehtävien kokonaislukumäärässä (sis. tekstikirjan, tehtäväkirjan ja opettajan oppaan) ei ollut

tilastollisesti merkitsevää eroa, ja ainoat 2 tehtävätyyppiä joista löytyi tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja olivat draamaharjoitukset ja projektityöt. Smart Moves 2:n voidaan siis katsoa korostavan kokemuksellista oppimista ja itsenäistä työskentelyä hieman enemmän kuin muiden kirjasarjojen. Toisaalta nämä kaksi kategoriaa edustavat hyvin pientä osuutta tehtävien kokonaismäärästä, joten tuloksesta on vaikea tehdä yleistettäviä johtopäätöksiä. Kirjasarjojen väliltä löytyi kuitenkin tilastollisesti merkitseviä eroja, kun kirjasarjojen osia analysoitiin tilastollisesti joko erikseen tai yhdistelmänä (tekstikirja ja tehtäväkirja). Oppilaan kirjat yhdistettiin tilastollisessa analyysissa siitä syystä, että Smart Moves 2:n tekstikirjassa ei ollut ollenkaan aktiviteetteja, kun taas Spotlight 8 ja Key English 8 kirjasarjoissa valtaosa kommunikatiivisista tehtävistä oli sijoitettu juuri tekstikirjaan. Tällä tavalla tuloksista saatiin vertailukelpoiset. Tuloksista ilmeni, että Smart Moves 2:n tehtäväkirjassa on tilastollisesti enemmän draamaharjoituksia, pelejä ja simulaatioita ja projektitöitä kuin Spotlight 8:n ja Key English 8:n tekstikirjassa ja tehtäväkirjassa. Tulos on mielenkiintoinen, sillä vaikka Spotlight 8 ja Key English 8 oppilaan kirjoissa oli kaiken kaikkiaan suurempi lukumäärä tehtäviä ja tekstikirjat sisältävät runsaasti keskustelu- ja paritehtäviä, näissä tehtävätyypeissä ei ollut tilastollisesti merkittävää eroa.

Opettajan oppaiden oppilaslähtöisten aktiviteettien osuuksissa oli tilastollisesti erittäin merkitsevät erot. Huomattavasti suurempi osa Key English 8:n opettajan oppaan tehtävistä oli oppilaslähtöisiä muihin kirjasarjoihin verrattuna. Yksittäisistä tehtävätyypeistä paritöiden ja pelien/simulaatioiden osuus oli huomattavasti suurempi Spotlight 8:ssa ja Key English 8:ssa kuin Smart Moves 8:ssa. Draamaharjoitusten osuus oli vastaavasti suurempi Smart Moves 8:ssa kuin muissa kirjasarjoissa. Nämä erot ovat kuitenkin kokonaisuuden kannalta vähemmän merkittäviä. Oppilaan oppikirjojen sisältöä voidaan tietyllä tavalla pitää tärkeämpänä tehtävälähteenä, sillä monet opettajat todennäköisesti käyttävät opettajan oppaan

tehtäviä lisätehtävinä tai eriyttämisessä. Näin ollen luokkatasolla oppikirjojen tehtävät todennäköisesti koskettavat suurempaa osaa oppilaista kuin opettajan oppaan tehtävät. Toisaalta oppikirjasarjan käyttö määräytyy viime kädessä opettajan toimintatapojen mukaan, joten voidaan olettaa valveutuneen opettajan osaavan käyttää hyödykseen sekä oppilaan kirjoja että opettajan opasta soveltuvin osin. Tässä mielessä yleisen tason tulokset, joissa koko kirjasarja on analysoitu, ovat merkittävimmät.

Yllättäen hyvin harvan tehtävän välittömässä läheisyydessä oli reflektiotehtäviä, joiden merkitystä oppimiskokemuksen yhteydessä korostetaan oppimislähtöisissä oppimisteorioissa. Reflektiotehtäviä oli kaiken kaikkiaan melko vähän ja ne keskittyivät laajempiin asiakokonaisuuksiin yksittäisten harjoitusten sijaan, mikä on yllättävää ottaen huomioon reflektion merkityksen oppilaslähtöisissä opetusmenetelmissä. Tämä tulos herättää pohtimaan, ovatko oppilaslähtöiset tehtävät toteutettu oppikirjasarjoissa eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen, ja autonomia-teorian edellyttämällä tavalla. Toisaalta laadullinen tutkimus osoitti, että Smart Moves 2:n tehtävät olivat usein luovia, tematiikaltaan vaihtelevia ja usein oppilasta innostavampia ja vaativat enemmän itsenäisiä ongelmanratkaisutaitoja muihin kirjasarjoihin verrattuna. Lisäksi kieliopinopetuksessa oli vastaavia eroja, eli Smart Moves 2:ssa kielioppia lähestyttiin oppilaslähtöisestä ongelmanratkaisun näkökulmasta perinteisten kielioppisääntöjen frontaaliopetuksen ja harjoitusten sijaan, mikä oli Spotlight 8:ssa ja Key English 8:ssa yleisesti sovellettu lähtökohta. Tässä mielessä kirjasarjojen välillä on suurempia eroja kuin mitä tilastollisen analyysin tulokset antavat ymmärtää.

Tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että kirjasarjat sisältävät oppilaslähtöisiä opetusmenetelmiä jossain määrin mutta ne eivät ole vallitsevassa osassa. Lisäksi oppilaan autonomiaa

vahvistettiin joiltain osin, joskin opettajalähtöinen opetus vaikutti vallitsevammalta. Nämä tulokset vahvistavat ennakko-oletuksiani näiltä osin. Toisaalta, opettajaa ei juuri kannusteta käyttämään oppilaslähtöisiä menetelmiä eikä opettajaa opasteta niiden käyttöön. Tämä tulos ei ole oletukseni mukainen. Oletin myös, että uudemmat kirjasarjat sisältäisivät oppilaslähtöisiä tehtäviä enemmän kuin vanhemmat. Tutkielman tulokset eivät kuitenkaan vahvistaneet tätä ennakko-oletusta.

Tulokset osoittavat, että kirjasarjoissa on tapahtunut hyvin vähän kehitystä Eurooppalaisen kielisalkun, kokemuksellisen oppimisen ja autonomian vahvistamisen osalta vuosina 2003–2010. Tulos on mielenkiintoinen, sillä oppikirjasarjat ovat vieraiden kielten opetuksen ammattilasten suunnittelemia, ja oppilaskeskeiset opetusmenetelmät ovat olleet mittavan tutkimuksen kohteena 1990-luvun lopulta lähtien (eurooppalainen kielisalkku) tai aiemmin. Tämä herättääkin pohtimaan, miksi nämä oppilaskeskeiset menetelmät eivät näy uusissakaan oppikirjoissa tämän runsaammin. Tähän vastaaminen edellyttää lisätutkimusta kaikilla opetusasteilla.