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English

How Textbooks Teach Rhetoric:  
An Analysis of Oral Tasks in Textbooks  
Developed for the English Subject in  
Swedish Upper-Secondary Schools

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Degree Project Essay

Spring Term 17

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## Abstract

Rhetoric has been a part of education since ancient Greece and even though it faded away and disappeared for a long time, it was quite recent reintroduced in the Swedish curriculum. This reintroduction is clearly reflected in the European council's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, and in the English subject syllabus in the Swedish 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school. Teachers may find this reintroduction challenging, and may need support in their teaching, support which textbooks for language education should provide. The question becomes how supportive these textbooks are, and how they chose to present rhetorical appeals, communicative strategies, argumentation and democratic awareness. This essay takes a critical look at how rhetoric is presented in tasks through instructions and terminology in the textbook series *Blueprint 2.0*, designed for the progression English 5, 6 and 7. This essay also focuses on the assumptions about persuasive-and argumentative speech in this popular teaching material and how those assumptions might steer teaching and learning in the English subject. The result shows that the chosen textbooks are vague about the rhetorical purposes in the oral tasks, which teachers must compensate to create a progression aligned with the subject syllabus. Rhetoric is not only useful for students in the classroom, but also in their civic life. It can also broaden students' democratic awareness and critical thinking, which is needed in today's society. In our society, citizens should not only be able to argue for their opinions and persuade others, but they should also be respectful of others and diplomatic.

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# 1. Introduction

The National Agency for Education's *English subject syllabus in the 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school* clearly expresses how important students' development of speaking abilities and communicative strategies are. Students should develop abilities to "express [themselves] and communicate in English in speech [...] and to use different language strategies in different contexts" (2). Since the syllabus explicitly and implicitly expresses the importance of rhetorical training, I argue that teachers should include rhetoric in language education. However, given the quite recent reintroduction of rhetorical training, they might lack the training in rhetorical education and pedagogy needed to teach English this way.

When teachers find themselves in a situation where they need support and help, they may turn to textbooks developed for language education. However, the authors of the textbooks might not define rhetorical training or useful terminology in a manner that is aligned with the educational goals of the syllabus, which means the textbooks become an ineffective guide for teachers. Some teachers may question the need of textbooks in the classroom, and the extent to which teachers use textbooks in their classroom do differ. Nevertheless, the European council's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, the base of steering documents for language education in Europe, encourages teachers to use textbooks. The *Framework* argues that when teachers must make minute-to-minute decisions in the classroom, they can benefit from the support that textbooks provide and can use them to develop students' learning (141). However, if textbooks are vague in their presentation of rhetorical training, teachers must complement with other material themselves. In addition, they should include both rhetorical terms and practical exercises when teaching rhetoric.

However, the problem is that teachers may not be comfortable with, or have any interest in, learning more about rhetoric on their own. In addition, many teachers may lack the time required to prepare lessons and search for supplementary materials for tasks for students to

work with, such as historical background and communicative-and rhetorical strategies.

Therefore, as the *Framework* argues, textbooks should support to teachers in the classroom.

This essay takes a critical look at how rhetoric is presented in tasks, instructions and terminology in textbooks designed for progression in English 5, 6 and 7. It focuses on the assumptions about persuasive-and argumentative speech in popular teaching material and how these assumptions might steer teaching and learning in the English subject. I selected the *Blueprint* 2.0 series A, B and C after speaking with five different teachers in different upper-secondary schools, who all informed me that they use *Blueprint* and no other textbook. In addition, I searched the web for textbooks published in Sweden that include various kinds of oral tasks, which the *Blueprint* series does more than other textbooks.

My result shows that the *Blueprint* series features tasks that include rhetorical training, with progression sequences and knowledge development aligned with the subject syllabus for English 5, 6 and 7 in the 2011 curriculum. However, the *Blueprint* series presents rhetorical training only vaguely, asking students to perform oral tasks and use rhetorical-and communicative strategies without giving them support in form of instructions and task descriptions. This is problematic because teachers and students might misunderstand the rhetorical purpose of the oral tasks, and might oversight important knowledge that rhetorical training can provide. Students may also benefit from the self-confidence they can receive by using rhetorical-and communicative strategies they learn through rhetorical training. If they do not learn these strategies, there is a risk that they practice and perform oral tasks without an understanding of the rhetorical purposes.

## 2. Background

According to Gideon O. Burton in his web handbook of rhetorical terms, *Silva Rhetoricae*, rhetoric may be simply defined as “the study of effective speaking and writing and [...] the art of persuasion.” Another definition of rhetoric is presented on the web source of *Nationalencyclopedia* in an entry by Birgitte Mral and Kurt Johannesson, where rhetoric is

defined as the art of speaking or writing effectively. They maintain that rhetorical training includes practical exercises and theoretical usage. The art of rhetoric is therefore both receptive and productive; it includes communicative abilities in the four language arts: speaking listening, writing and reading (par.17). In addition, Mral and Johannesson state that education in art of persuasion, and public speech has changed over time and has adapted a much broader perspective than the education of men and the elite (par. 20).

Undoubtedly, rhetoric has a long and complicated history in civic education. In his doctoral thesis *Värlighet och mannafostran: retorikutbildningen i svenska skolor och gymnasier 1724-1807* (*Virtuous eloquence: Rhetorical education in Swedish schools and gymnasiums 1724–1807*), Stefan Rimm states that rhetorical training has been a feature of education since ancient Greece and Rome, and was during those periods a natural part of education and general knowledge for citizens. Rhetoric, grammar and logic consisted of the three parts of education called the *trivium*, and the same is true in Renaissance humanist and Medieval education. During the 1200's, rhetoric was taught in Swedish schools for the first time, even though it was intended for the elite at first. Swedish education expanded in the middle of the 1200's, and rhetoric was taught to broader range of students (63-73). The natural sciences dominated education in Europe during the 1600's, when rhetoric was taught in advanced education (74). The Age of Enlightenment affected education during the 1700's when education was dominated by theology and the study of Latin. As a result, interest in rhetoric started to fade away (80). Consequently, the legacy of rhetorical education and training completely disappeared during the 1800's. As Mral and Johannesson explain in the web source of *Nationalencyclopedia*, the decline of rhetoric came about because it was seen to be old-fashioned and mechanical in comparison with the romantic view of language and poetry. In addition, some writers, such as Ibsen or Strindberg, furiously attacked rhetoric as dangerous and built upon lies, which impacted on others' opinions as well (par. 15).

Almost a century later, rhetorical training became more essential again. In the

chapter “The Study of Rhetoric in Scandinavia” of the anthology *Scandinavian Studies in Rhetoric: Rhetorica Scandinavica 1997-2010* published in 2011, Jens. E Kjeldsen and Jan Grue points out that rhetorical training and studies in higher education were reintroduced in Sweden during the 1960’s, although they were focused on literature studies. Studies of rhetoric in higher education was established during 1980’s and expanded during the 1990’s (12). Rhetoric influenced higher education before it impacted on education in upper-secondary and secondary schools.

The impact of rhetoric has also been seen on the Swedish labour market, especially in the 1960’s. In *Den nya muntligheten eller retorikens plats i informationssamhället (The new orality or rhetoric’s place in the new media-society)* published in 1999, Rolf Hedquist states that rhetorical training started to be more important in society during the 1960’s (89). In particular, the unfolding media society developed aspects of speaking abilities and put new demands on Swedish society. Desirable qualities for people on the labour market were democratic awareness and empathy, but also authority and a broader communicative awareness, which are capacities that rhetoric can cultivate (97). Communicative awareness covers argumentation, inspirational speech, discussions and listening. Hedquist points out that this change was met with mixed responses by citizens, who felt that it was difficult to live up to. Hedquist argues that the implementation of communicative competences among workers and other citizens had to start with leaders and higher forces to grow, since they had to demonstrate benefits of rhetorical-and communicative strategies (94-95).

Before the 2011 curriculum, rhetoric was not mentioned in steering documents. As Lenita Jällhage argues in her newspaper article “Retorik i skolan stärker elever” (Rhetoric in education strengthens students), published on the web source of the Swedish newspaper *Dagens nyheter* in 2008, some of the most influential rhetorical researchers insisted on reintroducing rhetoric in language education before the 2011 curriculum (par. 3). Researchers argued that rhetoric had long been a relatively untouched subject in Swedish education, unlike

in many other countries such as USA, which needed to change. When arguing for this reintroduction, researchers pointed out how rhetorical training was used in other countries' education as an inspiration, and argued that it should be used in language education from secondary school to upper-secondary school. Furthermore, Jällhage quotes rhetorician Christer Hanefalk's argument: "Now it is time for everyone to regain the language and learn how to hear what the authorities actually say [...] and students should not only compete with each other but with the whole world. We need to give them a language" (par. 2, my translation). The rhetoricians argued that if rhetorical training was not a part of education, Swedish students may have fallen behind in rhetorical training, compared to other countries, and might have become weak on the global-and national labour market (par. 14).

Researchers in rhetoric succeeded to impact on language education: the 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school included rhetoric in language education. In her web article *Retorik ska förberedas i klassrummet (Rhetoric should be prepared in the classroom)* published in 2011, Cecilia Olsson Jers states that rhetorical training should become an obvious part of education in the language arts, aligned with the curriculum of 2011. In the syllabus for Swedish 1, it is explicitly stated that students should work with rhetoric (par. 1). In addition, rhetoric has provided a new metalanguage in language education, which teachers must learn (par. 16). Olsson Jers points out that students have not experienced any progression of oral tasks and speaking abilities from secondary school to upper-secondary school. For this reason, what students are missing is not understanding *how* they should perform the oral tasks, but understand *why* they should perform them (par. 3).

Students are not only helped by rhetorical training when performing oral tasks in the classroom, but also in everyday life. In his book *Argumentationens Retorik (The rhetoric of argumentation)* published in 2013, Hellspång takes the position that since teachers in Swedish upper-secondary schools have started to employ two-way communication, in which teachers include students in discussions and response, students need strategies to engage (52).



Moreover, Hellspong emphasises the importance of students expressing their opinions: “it is becoming more important for children to be able to give their reason for their claims in school because this is the point at which they enter the public sphere” (52, my translation). Dialogues in classrooms between students give them more room for the use of argumentation, and put pressure on students to engage in discussions. What is more, he argues that after student councils were established in Swedish schools during the 1950’s, in which students get together to make decisions with other students, they need to develop their competencies in arguing effectively. In order to take a stand on their opinions, students need to learn communicative strategies (53). In today’s school, these forums are important for school democracy and students’ influence, and are an example of when students may use rhetorical competences they learned in language education. Furthermore, Hellspong argues that members of a modern democratic society need communicative abilities that can be developed through the study of argumentation. As a result, education has a responsibility to prepare students for these situations and teach effective communication that is useful in civic life (52).

As Hellspong argues, one way to help students develop communicative competences for effective speech is to teach argumentation. He points out that an argument is by nature a dialogue, but a speaker can be either passive or active when giving a response. Argumentative dialogue deals with an open question about an issue which participants can view from different perspectives. However, the premises of the argument must be of a convincing character and supported by reason. Equally, the aims of argumentation may be conflict resolution, influence, the search for knowledge, and deliberation (24-26). The different aims of argumentation are important to recognize, and for teachers to acknowledge when choosing oral tasks with argumentative purposes.

In both the classroom and in civic life, students need to be able to take a stand on contested issues and use the strategies of persuasive speech that can help them achieve their goals. In the chapter “Democratic Dialogues” of anthology *Scandinavian Studies in Rhetoric:*

*Rhetorica Scandinavica 1997-2010*, Hellspong defines persuasion as “promoting an opinion” (131). He argues that persuasion needs to be balanced or else it becomes manipulative communication. Nonetheless, strategies of persuasive speech can support speakers’ confidence and can help them develop abilities such as critical thinking and democratic awareness. One of Hellspong’s main points is that: “in civic relations, language is an investment in trust. We must be assured that words do not deceive us” (136). In other words, he points out that citizens of a democratic society must be able to think critically so that they are not fooled or manipulated, which is how they develop their democratic awareness (136). As stated by Hellspong, persuasive speech can provide important knowledge and strategies in language education. However, it is important for teachers to teach it rightfully and explain how it can be used for manipulation, in correlation to oral tasks that include persuasive speech.

Persuasive speech can be used for different purposes, and we need to understand the differences between persuasive discussions and persuasive debates in order to separate them and understand the situations in which they may be used. If textbooks provide oral tasks with these purposes, teachers should know what differences and objectives these contain. As Hellspong explains, a persuasive discussion aims at raising problems and plays an important role in politics for a democratic society. Persuasive debates, on the other hand, aim to convince the other party to radically change his or hers standing on issues (147). In particular, Hellspong emphasises the speaker’s challenge of being trustworthy and connecting with listeners when speaking, especially in debates. The speaker needs to trust listeners in order to influence them, and needs to be receptive to others points of view in order to become a democratic person (133). It is important for teachers to be aware of the differences between debate and discussion so they actively chose the suitable argumentative tasks to use in their classroom.

The challenges of trustfulness, connection with and influence of others can be

understood in terms of Aristotle's rhetorical triangle. In *Conversations in American Literature: Language · Rhetoric · Culture*, Robin Dissin Aufses, Renée H. Shea, Lawrence Scanion and Kate Aufses define the triangle as the connection between speaker, reader and content. If a speaker is aware of the world around him or her, and understands how a topic is perceived by others, he or she will become an effective speaker. Clearly, the speaker is the one who delivers the speech and the reader is the audience who the speaker addresses. Furthermore, a speaker should know what values and feelings the audience holds in regards to a topic before delivering a speech. The triangle is a useful communicative strategy for understanding the rhetorical situation of a speaker interacting with an audience (3-5). This is important for students to understand because they are often asked by teachers to interact with an audience, and are supported by understanding the connection between themselves, their speech and audience.

I have explained the history, development and usability of rhetoric for the understanding of why and how the reintroduction is important for teachers to embrace. Professors have influenced the development of the curriculum through their statements in the popular press and emphasised the usefulness of rhetorical training. The many aims of rhetorical training will support the development of a range of competences that students can acquire in the classroom, and additionally support teachers with material and terminology. Given that rhetoric has been considered to be a tool for manipulation, it is necessary for teachers to understand its many uses in education.

## 2.1 Research in the Field

There are only a few studies of how the rhetorical appeals are taught in school, especially in Swedish upper-secondary schools. In her doctoral thesis *Klassrummet som muntlig arena: att bygga och etablera ethos* (*The classroom as an oral arena: Building and establishing ethos*) Cecilia Jers Olsson presents a study of students practicing rhetorical training in a Swedish

upper-secondary school, focusing on the appeal *ethos* and its implications for democracy.

*Ethos* is one of three rhetorical appeals, together with *pathos* and *logos*, defined by Aristotle as the appeal exerted by the speaker's character. *Pathos* appeals to emotions, and *logos* appeals to reason (31-32).

To collect her empirical material, Olsson Jers studied twenty-nine students and their teacher in Swedish 1 at an upper-secondary school, and collected empirical material by observing the class. In addition, she did deep interviews and recorded the students' oral presentations, focusing on their oral tasks. The students were asked to participate in group discussions and to perform argumentative speeches, with different kinds of topics concerning social issues. As a result, she was able to observe that students perceived a task to be rhetorical only if it was explicitly presented to them as such. If the task was not presented as rhetoric, the students established their own purposes, which detracted from their rhetorical training. In addition, the students' engagement with argumentative tasks were connected to their interests. When they had the opportunity to select the topic, the results were better in terms of the students' preparation, performance, and grades. The engagement was especially clear in the students' use of *pathos* and *ethos* during their performance, which impacted on their use of rhetorical strategies such as body language (233).

Furthermore, the results of Olsson Jer's study showed that some of the students delivered the oral task with ease because they knew what was expected of them when delivering a speech and addressing an audience. These students were talkative and used to speaking up inside and outside the classroom, and they knew that others would listen to them. However, those students mostly performed the oral tasks by heart and did not build their understanding of communicative-and rhetorical strategies. She states that other students — those who felt insecure and were less talkative in and outside the classroom — had of course also worked with oral tasks during their nine years in school, but were uncomfortable speaking in front of others. They had never understood how rhetorical training could support

them when performing a speech because their teachers had not explained those theories to them. Moreover, Olsson Jers points out that the clear majority of the students were inspired by the new rhetorical knowledge that they had learned in Swedish 1 and chose to take the elective course “Rhetoric” to learn more about rhetorical training (237).

Rhetorical training in classrooms has been studied in other countries as well. In their article “Teaching Rhetoric Today: Ancient Exercises for Contemporary Citizen,” published in *Academic Journals* in 2016, Julie Dainville and Benoit Sans present their study of the effects of reintroducing rhetorical tasks in Belgian education in a secondary school, over a three-year period. They argue that teachers should teach students to argue from reason in support of their claims, and that rhetorical training gives students skills such as creativity, self-esteem and empathy (1). As stated by their curriculum, rhetoric training should be a part of education, although the authors argue that many teachers have neither the knowledge or tools to execute it in their classrooms (5). The hypothesis that Dainville and Sans base their research on is: “regular practice of rhetorical exercises such as those used in Antiquity can stimulate several skills like open-mindedness, curiosity, creativity, empathy, tolerance or proudness” (1). For inspiration, they studied tasks used in ancient Greece, and developed exercises designed to develop understanding of the rhetorical appeals *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. These exercises were based on a two-part argument, in which students must learn to take two different points of view of a given problem. In this case, students were asked to create arguments to support each side, and convince others in both situations (2). Furthermore, the results of Dainville and Sans’s study demonstrate that rhetorical training supports students to show great progress in argumentation, by using desirable communicative strategies. By working with the rhetorical appeals, students became more aware of their *ethos* and were able to use *pathos* to develop their arguments that provoke emotional response. Moreover, Dainville and Sans point out that both students and teachers believed that the competences that are taught in class are also used in other contexts. The teachers stated that the communicative strategies students learn from

rhetorical training are beneficial outside the classroom: “for instance, [students] take benefit from them and apply them in their class meetings, or even in their everyday relations and discussions at school” (5). Moreover, Dainville and Sans argue that rhetorical training supports students to develop their technical ability, which: “allows them to better understand other opinions and to train their minds’ flexibility” (5). The terminology of rhetoric supports practice, and without it students often fall into irrelevant discussions or misunderstand the purpose of the tasks (4). They conclude by arguing that rhetorical training can provide knowledge that is needed in today’s democratic society where citizens should be respectful in their interactions with others, but also always view speech critically (5).

Textbooks should support students’ rhetorical training and language development in classrooms. How rhetorical training is used in textbooks is explored in the article “Rhetorical Strategies in Chinese and English: A Comparison of L1 Composition Textbooks” by researchers Ming-Tzu Liao and Ching-Hung Chen. They analysed three English and three Chinese textbooks, used for language learning. By comparing and contrasting these textbooks, they found many similarities and differences. The Chinese textbooks are built upon contrastive rhetorical studies of social and cultural processes that have become more distinct during the 1990’s, because citizens have never been dared to argue with Chinese authorities before. Moreover, the textbooks were influenced by persuasive speech. Liao and Chen state that in the English textbooks, students were encouraged to use persuasive speech by “using reasonable and ethical methods”, which were not explicitly expressed in the Chinese textbooks (6).

Furthermore, the rhetorical appeals were used as strategies in all textbooks, as presented both explicitly and implicitly in Liao and Chen’s study. In the English textbook, students were encouraged to appeal to others with *logos*, by using well-known facts and historical events to argue for their points. However, the Chinese textbooks focused more on historical events and used quotes from ancient, influential people. As far as the rhetorical

appeals were concerned, both Chinese and English textbooks emphasized how important *pathos* are for arguing and reasoning with others. *Ethos* was also included as an important part of argumentation, although it was only explicitly mentioned in the English textbooks (14). Liao and Chen state that all the English textbooks wanted students to use lot of adjectives when describing an issue, and they argued that: “some audiences are not persuaded by reason alone”, meaning that the adjectives would paint a more vivid picture of the issue (14). What is more, they argue that the link between speaker, audience and content was emphasised in all three English textbooks. The textbooks stated that students should base their content on their audiences’ values for a stronger impact (17). They conclude that Chinese textbooks may be influenced by English textbooks when it comes to explaining the use of rhetorical strategies, although Chinese textbooks rely much more on history and tradition when explaining *logos* than the English textbooks do (18).

Even though research of rhetorical training in education is limited, the few studies that have been made report important results. Olsson Jers, Dainville and Sans have discovered a range of positive outcomes of rhetorical training in education. They have demonstrated how rhetorical-and communicative strategies support students’ performance of oral tasks and development of important competences. Liao and Chen provided an overview of rhetorical training in textbooks developed for language education, as an example of how rhetorical training is used in other countries’ language education.

### 3. Analysis

#### 3. 1 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The European council’s *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* is the base for learning, teaching and assessing language education in Europe, and therefore the foundation of steering documents of language education. Speaking tasks are an extensive part of the *Framework*, which exemplifies oral tasks as “public address (information, instructions,

etc.) and addressing audiences (speeches at public meetings, university lectures, sermons, entertainment, sports commentaries, sales presentations, etc.) (58). I argue that these oral tasks presented by the *Framework* are built on rhetorical training, because rhetorical training includes public speaking and addressing different kind of audiences. Moreover, the *Framework* gives examples of when students perform speeches or addresses an audience: in school, public situations, work related situations and even with friends. It specifies that students should develop their communicative strategies in education for managing and understanding all these situations inside and outside the classroom. The speaking abilities that students should work with are defined as “overall spoken production; sustained monologue: describing experience; sustained monologue: putting a case (e.g. in debate); public announcements; addressing audiences” (58). I maintain that this content implicitly and explicitly suggests that students should work with tasks that include rhetorical training. For instance, I argue that public announcements, sustained monologues and debates are examples of communicative activities that require rhetorical training in order to be effective and useful.

Moreover, the *Framework* points out that it is important to use strategies as it may be difficult for students to perform tasks without support. The *Framework* states that: “strategies (general and communicative) provide a vital link between the different competences that the learner has (innate or acquired) and successful task completion” (159). I claim that the presented communicative strategies include rhetorical strategies, which is an important tool for supporting students. As the *Framework* points out, strategies must complement the tasks in order to promote students’ language learning.

### 3. 2 English subject syllabus in the 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school.

In *Engelsk språkdidaktik. Texter, kommunikation, språkutveckling* (English language pedagogy. Texts, communication and language development) published in 2012, Bo Lundahl divides the English subject syllabus into three categories: strategies, use of language, and



language adaptation. I chose to focus on use of language and strategies, and argue that rhetorical training is a part of these categories.

As far as strategies are concerned, Lundahl argues that they should be categorised as language learning strategies and communicative strategies, even though it is hard to separate them. As he points out, communicative strategies are stated in the subject syllabus as: “a tool for the students to use for problem-solving and to use for effective communication” (161). Moreover, the knowledge requirements section of the subject syllabus points out how important it is for students to understand and use a range of different communicative strategies, and choose the right one depending on the situation that they are in. For example, the syllabus emphasizes the use of communicative strategies: students should be given opportunities to develop “the ability to use different language strategies in different contexts and [...] the ability to adapt language to different purposes, recipients and situations” (1).

Furthermore, communicative strategies develop with progression in English 5, 6 and 7. English 5 refers to communicative strategies explicitly: teaching should cover “[s]trategies for contributing to and actively participating in **discussions** related to societal and working life” (4). In particular, students should learn to use strategies when actively engaging in discussions as a tool for effective communication. English 6 develops communicative strategies further: teaching should cover “[s]trategies for contributing to and actively participating in **argumentation, debates and discussions** related to societal and working life” (7). Students should not only participate in discussion, but also in argumentations and debates, which will broaden their all-round communicative skills. For that reason, this suggests that that students should practice a range of communicative strategies for problem-solving and effective communication. Moreover, English 7 develops the communicative strategies even further: students should learn to use “[s]trategies for **drawing conclusions** about the spoken language and texts in terms of **attitudes, perspectives, purposes and values**, and to understand **implied meaning**” (11). In other words, students should not only perform and

practice communicative strategies, but also develop their critical thinking to understand what others imply when speaking and writing.

Concerning Lundahl's categorisation of "use of language", English 5 refers to the use of language explicitly: students should learn to "**give reasons for their opinions, discuss and argue**" (3). English 6 develops the use of language further: students should learn "how **attitudes, perspectives and style** are expressed" and "[h]ow language, picture and sound are used to **express influence** in such areas as **political debate and advertising**" (7). As in English 5, students should argue and give reason for their views; however, they should also learn how to interpret attitudes, perspectives and style. Therefore, this suggests that that is not only important to use persuasive speech, but also to understand how others use it.

Finally, English 7 requires students to work with "**debates**, in-depth reports and lectures" (11). Additionally, they should learn to "**argue from different perspectives [...]** and **give reasons for their views**" (11). English 7 refers to rhetorical awareness explicitly: students should be given opportunities to study "[h]ow **stylistics** and **rhetorical** devices are used for different purposes and how language is used as an **instrument to exercise power**" (11). Here, rhetorical devices are explicitly mentioned for the first time. To summarize, students should work with both practical and theoretical tasks to fulfil the knowledge requirements.

### 3.3 Terminology for Method

The three main means of persuasive speech are the rhetorical appeals *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. In his web handbook of rhetorical terms *Silva Rhetoricae*, Gideon O. Burton defines *logos* as reason and appealing to listeners' sense. For example, a speaker may refer to statistics or other solid proof to convince listeners, and may give provable arguments to present a message and support a claim. *Ethos* focuses on a speaker's own character. Examples of *ethos* include characteristic qualities, as good merits or personal features, that make a speaker trustworthy.

*Pathos* appeals to listeners' emotions and has a psychological influence, and a speaker must convince listeners by impacting on their emotions. In addition, a speaker must be aware of how and when certain emotions arise, and can use strategies as applauding, sounds or visual material to arise feelings.

In each textbook in the *Blueprint* series, the authors have divided the oral tasks that include rhetorical training into categories. Most of *Blueprints* categories are described as argumentative or persuasive in the chapter Speaker's Corner, which is to be found at the back of the books. The oral tasks in all three textbooks refer to the chapter Speaker's Corner, which includes task descriptions and a few strategies for students to use when planning and performing oral tasks. However, Speaker's Corner is optional to use.

Oral tasks that feature rhetorical training in *Blueprint A* include team debates, speeches, and talk shows. In the debate tasks a class is divided into larger groups, arguing against each other on a given topic. In the speech tasks students prepare individually, choosing a topic to present in groups or for the whole class. In the talk show tasks students focus on an on a popular topic or social issue. The tasks are often lead by one student, with other students separated into groups and arguing against each other. However, they often take on a role as another person with a specific opinion. *Blueprint B* uses the same three categories, except that speech evolves into argumentative speech. The categories in *Blueprint C* are developed even further as class debates, marketing debates, formal speeches, informal speeches and impromptu speeches. In class debates, students are given topics to debate in groups, and in marketing debates students focus on how to persuade others as sales workers. The formal speeches are often longer than the informal speeches, and are built on a given structure that is demonstrated in Speaker's Corner. Oral tasks in the *Blueprint* series that I do not categorize as rhetorical training are tasks that include drama, poetry and cartoons.

### 3.4 Method

I asked five teachers at five different Swedish upper-secondary schools what textbook they use in their English education. They all answered that they use the series *Blueprint 2.0 A, B* and *C*, and no other textbook, without any further explanation. Moreover, the *Blueprint* series includes various kinds of oral tasks, which I took in consideration when choosing textbooks. The *Blueprint* series are designed to be used throughout upper-secondary school, starting with *Blueprint A* in English 5, then *Blueprint B* in English 6, and *Blueprint C* in English 7.

My analysis of the oral tasks is based upon criteria for evaluation, presented in *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching* by Ian McGrath (31). The evaluation is divided into two parts, a first-glance evaluation and a close evaluation. The first-glance evaluation starts with a general list of criterion, promoted by McGrath. He suggests that textbooks should be evaluated on the basis of the extent to which they support teaching and learning, context relevance, and how they appeal to learners (35-36). Moreover, textbooks must support teaching and learning, as suggested by Lundahl in *Engelsk språkdidaktik*, and the *Blueprint* textbooks include some task descriptions and information. Almost every task has authentic topics and uses relevant social issues, which I claim has context relevance and is appealing to students. Therefore, I decided that the material fulfilled the first-glance evaluation and moved on to the close evaluation.

### 3.5 The *Blueprint* series

My assessment of the rhetorical tasks in the *Blueprint* series is based on the following checklist of criteria.

1. Does the material have a range of oral tasks that allow students to practice rhetorical awareness or training? How many?

In regards to the first criterion—number of tasks that enable rhetorical awareness or training—I counted and categorized the oral tasks, which showed that approximately half of the oral tasks include rhetorical training, as demonstrated in table below:

Blueprint	Oral tasks	Including rhetorical training
A	18	10
B	16	8
C	19	11

It is important that textbooks present a range of oral tasks that promote rhetorical training since there are many rhetorical-and communicative strategies that students benefit from practicing in the classroom. As suggested by Hellström in *Argumentationens retorik*, strategies do not only support students in their classroom, but also in everyday life (24). In relation to this, students may be supported in a range of different situations by using different strategies they learn in their classrooms. That is why textbooks should provide more than one oral task including one type of situation and strategy. As presented by Olsson Jers in her doctoral thesis *Klassrummet som muntlig arena*, students perform many different oral tasks that improve their all-around oral performances (233). To promote progression and knowledge development, teachers and textbooks should offer a number of oral tasks that allows students to work with rhetorical training throughout their education. In addition, the curriculum for upper-secondary school promotes many different knowledge requirements, in which students should practice their English and develop many different competences. Each book in the *Blueprint* series includes at least three different types of tasks with rhetorical training, and the different tasks give students opportunities to practice a range of different competences and work with different knowledge requirements.

2. Does the material align with the English subject syllabus in the 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school and offer the progression sequences and knowledge development stipulated by the syllabus? If so, how and how not? Does the material also correspond to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Language's* guidelines of oral tasks and speaking abilities?

Moving on to the second criterion, concerning progression sequences and knowledge development aligned with the English subject syllabus, I focused on communicative strategies and use of language, as suggested by Lundahl in *Engelsk språkdidaktik* (156). The textbooks should be formed to fit language learning development sketched by the English subject syllabus for English 5, 6 and 7, and recognise the progress of rhetorical training and persuasive speech. In English 5, students should be given the opportunity to work with strategies for participating in discussions related to social and working life. Moreover, they should learn to give reasons for their opinions, and argue by taking a position of an issue. The oral tasks in *Blueprint A*, including rhetorical training, are divided evenly in the tasks team debates, speeches and talk shows. As far as these tasks are concerned, the subject syllabus for English 5 never explicitly mentions them. However, the tasks present opportunities for students to argue for their opinions and work with issues relating to social and working life. Correspondingly, *Blueprint A* promotes many opportunities for students to argue about different social issues and working life.

Furthermore, students in English 6 should have develop those communicative abilities acquired in English 5, and continue with a progression from these. However, the tasks in *Blueprint B* are the same as in *Blueprint A*, and present the same opportunities for learning. On the other hand, the task descriptions in *Blueprint B* are a bit more developed with more informative presentations about the issues they present. In English 6, students should also learn how politicians and advertising can influence themselves and others, however, this is not presented or explained in *Blueprint B*. Moreover, the syllabus states that students should

be given opportunities to study “how language, pictures and sound are used to express and influence people” (7), which only is lightly touched upon in Speaker’s Corner. If presented right, the tasks in the *Blueprint* series may provide students opportunities to think critically by taking different approaches about issues. Under these circumstances, I argue that the progression sequences and knowledge development in *Blueprint B* are too vague, and must be acknowledged by teachers to support students.

In English 7, the demands on students’ knowledge development are higher, which *Blueprint C* corresponds well to. Generally, the textbook uses several different kinds of tasks, in which students can develop the abilities they acquired in their previous course. However, stylistic and rhetorical devices are never explicitly mentioned in *Blueprints’* task descriptions, and neither is any description about how language is used to exercise power. Students need to be supported by communicative strategies or information for drawing conclusions about implied meaning, value and purpose, but the textbooks’ task descriptions does not provide these kinds of strategies or descriptions.

In conclusion, the *Blueprint* series follow an accurate progression in regards to the range of tasks in each book, however, the support given by task descriptions are reduced in *Blueprint B* and *C*, although the knowledge requirements are more demanding in English 6 and 7. The task descriptions and support in *Blueprint A* should develop more in *Blueprint B* and *C* in regards to the communicative-and rhetorical strategies that should support students, to be align with the knowledge requirements.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* is the base that education and textbooks should be built on, so the tasks in the *Blueprint* series should match these recommendations. The tasks cover the recommendations very well as a series so it is important that teachers use the whole *Blueprint* series, for the sake of including the recommended range of tasks. Moreover, communicative strategies that function as a link between students’ competences and the tasks are emphasized by the *Framework*, and are used

to some extent in the *Blueprint* series. These strategies are mostly presented in the chapter Speaker's Corner, therefore teachers and students must go to Speaker's Corner when working with these tasks to understand the strategies. As a result, if students and teachers do not use the chapter Speaker's Corner, the *Blueprint* series can fail to promote learning.

3. Is there explicit or implicit support of communicative-and rhetorical strategies? For example, instructions, definitions, justifications. Does the material use rhetorical terminology and give definitions of the rhetorical appeals, *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*?

Moving on to the third criterion, concerning support students should be given by strategies and rhetorical means, I focused on how the tasks in *Blueprint A*, *B* and *C* use instructions, definitions and justifications. As Olsson Jers argues in *Klassrummet som muntlig arena*, students perceive a task to be rhetorical only if it is explicitly presented to them as such. In addition, Dainville and Sans argue in *Teaching Rhetoric today* that, without terminology of rhetorical training, students often fall into irrelevant discussions or misunderstand the purpose of the tasks (5). The *Blueprint* textbooks are vague in these regards. For example, the Speaker's Corner of *Blueprint A* encourages students "to find arguments to support your view and try to predict possible counter-arguments in order to turn them to your advantage" (121). Clearly, the meaning and use of counter-arguments might not be clear to students, and therefore explanation is needed. In addition, the Speaker's Corner of *Blueprint B* and *C* encourage students to use rhetorical strategies to improve their performance of oral tasks. These strategies are parallelism, repetition, anecdotes, humour and speech sound effects, which are presented without any support as instructions. Likewise, persuasive speech is mentioned in the Speaker's Corner of *Blueprint C*, but without any specific instructions. As a result of this ambiguity, students might misunderstand the purposes of the oral tasks. As suggested by Olsson Jers, students who understand the function of the rhetorical appeals *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* can adapt them in other situations (237). When students understand how the appeals can be used, they are able to understand others use of



them. In particular, Olsson Jers demonstrates how *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* can be used in both practical tasks and in theoretical teaching. On the other hand, students must be supported with instructions and definitions to understand and use the appeals. In other words, is not enough to just perform oral tasks without the terminology provided by textbooks or the teacher (237).

The rhetorical appeals *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* are never explicitly mentioned in the *Blueprint* series. However, students are asked to use different rhetorical and communicative strategies to appeal to their listeners. In Speaker's Corner in *Blueprint A* and *B*, students are encouraged to create a "breath-taking introduction and a memorable conclusion" although it is not further explained how this can be done. What it more, in *Blueprint A*, students should appeal to their listeners: "take them riding along your sentences as if on a roller-coaster whining in every curve, screaming with joyful fear and excitement in every loop!" (222). The textbooks never explain how this can be done, although it would be possible for the textbook to give support in the form of instructions and descriptions of the rhetorical appeals, especially with *pathos* that appeals to an audiences' feelings.

Furthermore, a speaker's use of pictures and sounds are all strategies of the rhetorical appeals, which is important for students to be aware of. As argued by Hellström, the rhetorical appeals are used in advertising and in politics to influence people (136). Likewise, they can be used for manipulation. *Blueprint C* suggests that students should use *pathos*: "when you refute opposing arguments, use your voice to make it clear you find them worthless" (245), which demonstrates how language can be used as exercising of power. However, the textbooks should present how others use the rhetorical appeals for manipulation and exercising of power, rather than ask students to practice using the appeals in this perspective themselves.

#### 4. Does the material emphasis democratic awareness?

Moving on to the fourth criterion, concerning the promotion of democratic awareness, I have tried to demonstrate how education must promote democratic awareness. In the *Blueprint* series, students work with argumentation and debates, but mostly for their own

practice, rather than in order to understand how others use it to exercise power. As Hellström argues in *Scandinavian Studies in Rhetoric*, all citizens must show respect by listening to others with different opinions (136). However, the *Blueprint* series never emphasize this. As Hellström states, citizens must be critical of the media and politicians if they are to avoid being manipulated (136). *Blueprint C* suggests that students should “refute opposing arguments, use your voice to make it clear you find them worthless” (245), which demonstrates how language can be used as means of exercising of power. As Hellspong points out, it is important to talk about how persuasive speech may be used as manipulative communication. On the whole, the *Blueprint* series mostly show and use democratic awareness in the topics of the oral tasks, which include equality, feminism, racism and rights for employees. It is important for students to acknowledge these topics, although it is not enough to emphasis democratic awareness.

5. Does the material explicitly or implicitly use the rhetorical triangle? Are students allowed to choose their own topics?

Moving on to the fifth criterion, concerning the rhetorical triangle, I found that none of the textbooks explain it, even though students are encouraged to address various audiences and to catch their interest. As Dissin Aufses, Shea, Scanion and Aufses argue in *Conversations in American Literature*, the rhetorical triangle should be used to understand the connection between a speaker, reader and content (3). Students can use the triangle to interpret situations, for example, when planning and performing oral tasks in the classroom. However, the tasks descriptions or instructions in Speaker’s Corner never support students by providing strategies for understanding the connection. As a result, students probably will perform oral tasks without a rhetorical objective.

Olsson Jers argues that students who chose their own topics will perform tasks better, because they may become more motivated (233). The *Blueprint* series often predetermines topics, which primarily concerns social issues and other important subjects. I

argue that it is more important that students get opportunities to work with relevant social issues, than get opportunities to choose their own topics that may not concern social issues. The English subject syllabus in the 2011 curriculum for upper-secondary school also emphasises the importance of working with different social issues. This is explicitly expressed: students should develop “the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used” (2). However, the *Blueprint* textbooks use the same kind of tasks including relevant social issues repentantly, so students may choose one of these tasks with a topic that they find more interesting. The main point is for teachers to emphasise the importance of social issues, instead of having students arguing about other topics.

#### 4. Discussion

By comparing and contrasting the *Blueprint* series to textbooks to similar educational contexts in other countries, we can get a sense of what textbooks can do and what role they can play in education. The *Blueprint* series compares in many regards to English textbooks and the Chinese textbooks studied by Liao and Chen. The authors contrast those textbooks in that they present the rhetorical appeals differently. The *Blueprint* series often encourage students to use *pathos* when appealing to their listeners, while the English and Chinese textbooks focus more on *logos*. Both the *Blueprint* series and the English textbooks emphasize the use of *ethos*. In contrast, the Chinese textbooks never explicitly use *ethos*, focusing instead on *logos* by encouraging students to support their claims with references to historical events. Considering that *Blueprint* mostly focus on *pathos*, students might lose some important competences. One of these competences is democratic awareness, which *ethos* supports. Likewise, the *Blueprint* series are not as concerned with ethical issues as the English textbooks are. These different perspectives of the rhetorical appeals are interesting because they reflect the countries’ history and culture. For Chinese citizens, historical events and

people are important proof in arguments. However, European citizens may not find historical events and people as important. This is an interesting find, although exploring it further is beyond the scope of this essay. Moreover, the textbooks contrast in their use of the rhetorical triangle. Liao and Chen argue that Aristotle's rhetorical triangle is used in the English textbooks, but the *Blueprint* series does not even refer to it. Dissin Aufses, Shea and Scanlon demonstrate the triangle's usefulness in language education, and I claim that it should be further explained in the *Blueprint* series to fulfil its purpose.

What is missing in the *Blueprint* series is instructions introducing the tasks, which is problematic because students might misunderstand the purpose of the tasks without them. As Olsson Jers argues, students perceive a task to be rhetorical only if it is explicitly presented to them as such. In the same way, Dainville and Sans argue that students practicing tasks with clear rhetorical purposes develop better arguments and improve their all-around speaking abilities. Their study shows that rhetorical training in education not only promotes confidence in students who struggle with oral tasks, but also helps them to understand strategies which may help them develop their speech. In *Argumentationens retorik*, Hellström points out how strategies can help students to overcome situations in their civic life that may have set them back. Also, Olsson Jers argues that students want to know why, rather than how, rhetorical training functions, which emphasizes the importance of task description and strategy explanation. Nonetheless, the *Blueprint* series offers little reasoning about rhetorical training in its task descriptions, which makes it necessary for teachers to compensate with material or other support.

My results also show that the *Blueprint* series emphasize formal debate, which is problematic because students practicing debates aim to radically change others' points of view without being respectful or listening to the arguments of their opponents. In addition, the textbooks do not offer explanations of decorum and the importance of respect. Formal debates are a common task in the *Blueprint* textbooks. What is more, debate is explicitly mentioned in

the subject syllabus, which emphasizes its use even more. The question becomes if this kind of education shapes the kind of citizen we want in a democratic society? I argue that it could create a hard and disrespectful climate in classrooms, working spaces and other situations in life. An alternative to formal debates would be to change the character of the argumentative tasks from formal debate to argumentative dialogue. Students can still deal with social issues and learn to support their claims with reason, while also deliberating with others in a respectful way. We want our colleagues, bosses and friends to argue for their points, but also to be respectful of other points of view.

I have tried to demonstrate how important democratic awareness is and that it needs to be taught in school, as supported by Hellström and Olsson Jers. In the *Blueprint* series, students work with developing arguments, although mostly in order to practice and develop their own speaking abilities, rather than in order to develop their democratic awareness. It is important for students to become better speakers, although I argue that they would also benefit from learning how to be respectful and diplomatic. As Hellström states, all citizens must show respect by listening to other points of views with different opinions to be democratic, which I claim could be made with the help of the rhetorical appeals and two-folded arguments. As demonstrated by Dainville and Sans, tasks including two-folded arguments support students practicing to taking two different points of view of as issues and argue for both, which help them to understand others' objectives. Moreover, Olsson Jers demonstrates how *ethos* can support students to become democratic citizens, but to produce that result in a classroom, teachers must explicit teach it. As mentioned, the *Blueprint* series mostly encourages students to use *pathos* when appealing to listeners, although *ethos* is as important. However, if students make others feel worthless, they are not acting as democratic citizens, which I argue is an incorrect way of teaching rhetoric. Because the task descriptions in *Blueprint* never explicitly expresses how important it is to show respect and listen to others, teachers must complete the tasks by enlightening this.

## 5. Conclusion

Rhetorical training can be difficult to execute in the classroom, and teachers may find it difficult to learn more on their own. The time for teachers to find supplementary materials for tasks may be restricted, although the effort is worthwhile considering the benefits it provides in language education. With reference to available research, we can understand the usefulness and importance of rhetorical training. There are studies that demonstrate the opportunities that rhetorical training provides, both in regards to rhetorical-and communicative strategies and critical thinking. Teachers searching for textbooks to use in their classroom should look for a textbook that offers a range of different tasks, features task descriptions, and highlights rhetorical devices. The *Blueprint* series is very useful in many perspectives, although it lacks in clarifying rhetorical purposes. Therefore, teachers must complement these textbooks with other material to make the rhetorical purposes clear to students. Rhetorical training in relation to the English subject in Swedish upper-secondary schools seem to be an untouched field of research, but the much larger field of rhetoric provides a solid starting point. I propose that more studies of rhetorical training in the English subject should be executed, especially studies with empirical material of students' use of textbooks. I believe this essay will increase teachers' understanding of how rhetorical training and persuasive speech can provide competences that are useful in education and in civic life.

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